HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

VOLUME 1

by

M. Georges Rigault

THE RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL WORK OF

SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

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PREFACE

[This is the original preface of the author, M. Georges Rigault, Fellow of the French Historical Academy, to the ten-volume history commissioned by the Brother Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. **Editor**]

This volume, God willing, will be the first in a series which will trace the history of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools from its origins up to our own time.

Its author, in evaluating the extent of his task and his responsibility as an historian, will endeavor (with the sterling materials at his disposal) to lay here the groundwork for the monument that the Most Honored Brother Superior General, in realization of a decision formulated by one of the Chapters of his Congregation, has entrusted him to erect.

He has considered that what is expected of him is not a simple compilation, nor monographs nor a series of biographies, but a history properly so called, involving rather broad perspectives, overall views, and the positioning of the work of St. John Baptist de La Salle and the Brothers within a setting of the city of man and of the City of God.

The beginnings of the Institute are bound up very closely with the annals of the French nation and the Church of France. But suddenly in the 19th century and, more decisively, in the 20th, there was a flowering of all the possibilities that the Founder had enfolded in the seed. Today, the disciples of De La Salle belong to all nations and races. Together with other religious families in the Catholic Church, and under the direction of the Roman Pontiffs, they work to establish, in East and West, and ``from pole to pole'' the pacifying and liberating reign of Our Savior Jesus Christ. Their pedagogy and their apostolate have a universal significance.

This accounts for the interest associated with the beginnings of their activity, the vicissitudes of their existence and the manifestation and consequences of their individual and collective virtue. And it immediately justifies the order we propose for the present volume and those which are to follow.

A human institution exists from the beginning and pretty nearly totally in the thought and life of the man who conceived it, who nourished it with his own substance and who brought it into the world's complexities. The work and the worker are one. De La Salle (and we do not think we should have too much trouble proving this) was a marvelous instrument of Providence, and, consequently, in the domain of the `spirit' as in the domain of `charity' (to use Pascal's language) he was what we call a `genius'. We shall investigate and question the `Father' and `Leader' in order the better to know his sons.

The present volume, unlike so many others, will not be an effort to retell the story of a saintly soul. The hagiographers have had their say. Our project is not theirs. While we shall not refuse to be apologetical, (it is legitimate and necessary that a Christian's effort tend always, in the last analysis, toward the glory of God), we shall strive primarily to attain fulfillment in the less lofty sphere of documentary truth, factual discussion, psychological explanation and the investigation of causes.

In developing a synthesis, we shall, of course, use and compare materials accumulated over the centuries by biographers of the Founder and of the Brothers, by Church historians and by historians of education. It is impossible to write about St.John Baptist de La Salle without consulting his first three biographers, one of whom, Brother Bernard , was a disciple of his old age, the other, Dom Maillefer, his nephew, and the third, Canon Blain , his friend.

Of Brother Bernard 's manuscript (entitled *The Wonderful Action of Divine Providence in the Person of the Servant of God John Baptist de La Salle,* Priest, Doctor of Theology, Former Canon of the Cathedral of Rheims and Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Divided into Four Parts, dated MDCCXXI) there remains only a single copybook of eighty-six pages in the Motherhouse Archives. It relates, simply, following the example of the Lives of the earliest monks, the life of the Founder up to 1688; and it was corrected in the handwriting of Canon Louis de La Salle. The importance of this witness, less than two years after De La Salle's death and verified by a member of his own family (the one brother who, during the first phase of the Founder's career, had been closest to his concerns and his undertakings) is evident. We can only profoundly regret the loss of the rest of this document.

Dom Francis Elias Maillefer's original manuscript is preserved in the city library in Rheims.[1] This Benedictine priest, who was librarian in the``arch- abbey'' of St. Remy (and - writes the monastery's necrologist on the 30th of October, 1761 - *in libris comparandis sagax, in ordinandibus solers, in servandis diligens*) has himself recounted the origins and misadventures of his book in an introduction which is hardly a model of serenity (the author's `ego' was involved), but which reveals certain family and Jansenist reactions to the more recent book by John Baptist Blain .

> The plan that inspired me to write this life had been worked out by intelligent people who wanted me to confine myself to a brief life of De La Salle, but adequate to provide an idea of his holiness. They seemed to be satisfied with my book, and, beginning in 1723, when I sent it to them, they were resolved to publish it; but death having taken the one who had volunteered to pay the costs, the matter was never concluded. Since that time I have taken no steps to obtain its publication.
>
> But in 1724 the Brothers of the Christian Schools discovered that I was the author of a life of their founder. They undertook a number of manoeuvres to discover its contents. They sent one of their members to visit me, a Brother Thomas, who, by his solicitations and importunities, made such a plea that I let him have my manuscript, on condition that, if it were published, no changes would be made in it without my consent. He did not keep his word. The manuscript was sent to their house of St. Yon in Rouen and deposited with their Superior-general, who makes that place his ordinary residence. He commissioned a priest in Rouen to write a new life which has been

1 . Ms. 1426, a volume of viii+340 pages in calf-skin. Father Guibert deposited a copy of this work in the Bibliothéque nationale . The Motherhouse Archives owns two copies of Maillefer 's book: one certified by Bishop Pechenard to conform to the Rheims original, and the other, dated August 1, 1766, Rheims, ``bought at bankside'', in Paris, 1770, contains variants.

published in two volumes, in quarto, the reading of which exposes both the poor taste and bad judgment of its author.

Most of the facts he reports in this work are submerged, so to speak, in a confused mass of poorly sorted out reflections. The style is careless, and, while in some places he does not scruple to copy word-for-word from my manuscript, he did not believe himself obligated to say so.

His book has been scorned by persons of good taste. Among other reprehensible things found in it, people complain that he writes indiscreetly about many respectable persons, and, in particular, against Orders and religious Communities which, by their piety or by their wisdom and teaching, have always edified the Church...Finally, it can be said that, in general, his book is a confused collection of badly applied devotional comments, which makes the reading of it insipid and tiresome.

Its failure with the public has given rise to the desire that my book be published, but several considerations have prevented me from doing so. I shall be quite satisfied to clarify my text so as to repair the damage done me by the fact that advantage was taken of my good nature. In the present copy I have made some additions and corrections that I thought necessary since receiving information that I could not have discovered earlier

The copy in question was deposited by Dom Maillefer in 1740 among the manuscripts in the library of which he was the curator[2] and from there the manuscript passed on to the city library in Rheims after the dispersion occasioned by the Revolution.

It is written in a good, flowing, but frugal style. The biographer knew his subject, admired and loved him. Sometimes his chronology stands in need of correction. The gaps in his account are intentional, Maillefer frankly acknowledges them. He meant to avoid colliding with certain individuals and criticizing men whom John Baptist de La Salle had merely endured. Some of these were opponents of the Bull, *Unigenitus* . Canon Louis de La Salle regarded them as friends, and, until his death in 1724, he himself had been numbered among the most active and unyielding members of ``the party''. The Benedictine seems to have cultivated Jansenist sympathies; but between his two uncles he wished to remain at least neutral. perhaps this embarrassment figured heavily in the ``considerations'' which determined him to leave his manuscript unpublished.

Failure to be ``discreet'' with ``respectable'' persons and communities was the complaint made against ``the priest in Rouen''. In 1733 there appeared in Rouen , from the publishing house of Jean-Baptist Machuel , on Rue Damietta, the two volumes of *The Life of M.John Baptist de La Salle,Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*, by M…. The author's anonymity could not have been too difficult to pierce. Since 1712 the Brothers in the diocese of Rouen had as their ``ecclesiastical superior'', Jean-Baptist Blain, former co-disciple of Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort at Rennes and St. Sulpice , and subsequently Canon at Noyen in the time of Bishop D'Aubigne, who, upon being made Archbishop of Rouen , invited Blain to Normandy . Blain was a priest worthy of his priesthood, a man of balanced judgment and proven dedication. He won the friendship of two saints, De Montfort and De La Salle, and, in his writings, he left testimony concerning both of them that posterity has preserved. He had the confidence of archbishops, and, in the diocese of Rouen , he

2 , Ex necrologio archimonasterii Sancti Remigii Remensis. from there the manuscript passed on to the city library in Rheims after the dispersion occasioned by the Revolution.

was inspector of seminaries, pastor of St. Patrick's ,superior of the Hospitalers of St. Francis, superior of the Sisters of Ernemont, and, at the same time, Canon of the Cathedral. There is preserved at the Motherhouse of the Ernemont Congregation, along with portraits of the Canon and of the Founder of the Brothers, a very beautiful crucifix with the coat-of-arms of Maurice Le Tellier , Archbishop of Rheims According to a tradition preserved by the Sisters, this artifact was given by the Louvois family to St. John Baptist de La Salle, who bequeathed it to Blain .

Since Brother Bernard's work was only a sketch, and, since Dom Maillefer 's writing (conscientious, ``brief'', but reticent) was not wholly acceptable, it seemed to Brother Timothy , Superior-general of the Institute in 1720, that the Canon should be commissioned to carry to a successful completion the writing of a biography at once detailed and edifying, capable of being presented at Rome and perhaps later on of becoming the central document in the file for a process of canonization.

Blain was then given Bernard's and Maillefer's manuscripts, from which he did not scruple to borrow, while making the mistake of failing to mention the Benedictine. Here is how he describes his sources:

> This life is written on the basis of exact recollections... and faithful witnesses, who have reported what they have seen, and seen with their own eyes. If their testimony can be suspected, then let no one deserve to be believed. If this history of the life of M. de La Salle, put together from their recollections, carefully assembled by the late Brother Bartholomew immediately after the holy man's death, and then put in order by one of the Brothers; if, I say, such a history finds skeptical readers...who is the historian that deserves to be believed? [3]

Blain adds that having known his subject personally, he ``did not think that he should omit certain facts which took place in his own presence. He speaks as a spectator, indeed as an actor, who at times played a principal role.

Thus, he wrote a faithful book. ``Careless of style'', of course, as Maillefer notes. ``Undisciplined'', the Canon hardly knew how to write. He is much more preacher than historian. And by dint of tedious passages and ``padding'', he succeeds in being tiresome and irritating. And in certain episodes, the technique of endless amplification impels him toward exaggeration. He himself acknowledges that he is not very rigorous about dates. But, with these reservations, it must be said that his book achieved the goal the author intended: it illuminates perfectly the greatness and holiness of John Baptist de La Salle. Moreover, it contributes a quantity of information, difficult if not impossible to obtain elsewhere, concerning the origins and early years of the Institute, and the character of the struggles the Founder had to sustain.[4] Dom Elie Maillefer was not Blain 's only critic. Even within the Institute there were objections, at least, against the indiscreet way in which the Canon wrote of some painful incidents and betrayals. The fact has become known to us through ``a letter of the author of the *Life of M.de La Salle* to the Brother Superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools'', a letter introduced into the second edition of the

3 . Blain , 1733 ed, pp. 113 -- 115.

4 . Volume II includes, as an appendix with special pagination, a ``Digest of the lives of some Brothers of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools who died in the odor of sanctity'', and notably an important biography of the first successor of De La Salle, Brother Barthélemy .

book. According to the biographer's critic, ``there are frightful and ignominious expressions in this book, damaging to the Society of the Brothers''. Why does he reveal ``certain facts and certain irregularities of some of the Brothers'' - even of those who died at their posts ``in the flower of their age''? Why does he insist on regarding these premature deaths ``as a punishment from God''?

The author took a quite lofty tone with his critics: ``their remarks exposed a narrowness of mind and a want of virtue. The source of their complaints was either ignorance or pride''. Holy Scripture, which Blain took as his model, condemned them relentlessly. It would have been difficult to obtain revisions from an author so sure of himself. On the other hand, he could not pretend that the Institute stood behind everything he propounded.

On the whole, the name of Jean-Baptist Blain was to be forever linked to that of John Baptist de La Salle and the history of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. In 1748, while the Canon was still alive, Jacques Lelong , in his *Historical Bibliography* , formally attributed to Blain the book that had been published in 1733.

Sometime earlier a manuscript was edited which in our time (under the shelf number 1242) is the property of the Library of the Chamber of Deputies in the Bourbon Palace. It is entitled: *Historical Eulogy of de La Salle, Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* . The title is followed by the date, ``1740, Rouen ''. (footnote(5)5 A Note to the Reader states: This eulogy is a digest of the Rouen edition of a widely diffused book, published in two volumes, in quarto , in 1733 by Father Blin (sic), doctor of the Sorbonne. Since the Brothers of De La Salle's Institute had it printed for their own use only, people might be pleased to find here the life of this worthy founder stripped of all those commonplaces which are spread throughout the course of the book and which do not so much concern the private reader as they do his own sons.

The anonymous author of these pages - a considerable writer whose work deserves better than to have laid buried for nearly two centuries - was the first of a long line of Blain's adapters and imitators. In the 18th century Père Garreau , a priest in Montis , and in the 19th century Père Salvan and Armand Ravelet (to mention only the biographers) without doing anything original, treated the subject felicitously and most intelligently.

With Brother Lucard and Père Guibert we approach the same shores but we penetrate further into unchartered lands. Brother Lucard, who was Director of the School of Education in Rouen, assembled a treasure of unpublished documents drawn both from the Archives of the Institute and from public archives. These he transformed into *his Life of the Venerable John Baptist de La Salle* (the first edition of which he published in Rouen in 1874, and the second in Paris in 1876, by Poussielgue), and then into the *Annals of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* (in two volumes, published by

5 . In 1927 this ms. had been described by Mr. Fernand Engerand , Deputy for Calvados, to the Brother Secretary of the Institute. The Brother archivist, armed with the necessary authorizations, obtained a very good copy of it; which copy was used in the printing of the Eulogy , published by the Procurator-general in 1934.

Poussielgue in 1883, by Mame and by the Procure, the first volume detailing events that occurred from 1669 to 1725, and the second volume pursuing the account up to the legal reconstitution of the Institute in 1803).

Just before the canonization of Blessed de La Salle, Père Jean Guibert , a Sulpician and superior of the seminary of the Catholic Institute in Paris, was selected to be the official biographer. The Motherhouse Archives were placed at his disposition. His *History of St.John Baptist de La Salle, Former Canon of the Cathedral of Rheims, Founder of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* was hurriedly written.[6] We owe a great deal to these predecessors. But we know that historical truth is slowly accumulated through the efforts and research of successive generations. We know that human assertions have to be verified and that, generally, human judgments are subject to revision. Lucard does not always cite his sources; he edits and, more often, accommodates his documents. Guibert used him profusely and corrected him. But Guibert himself is not immune to oversight, confusion and omission. Besides, some of his interpretations are tendentious.

In these books, commentary (no matter how interesting) is less important for us than documentation. Since the Motherhouse Archives were thrown open to us, and since, in spite of the irreparable losses occasioned by the Revolution, their wealth remains great, we have been able to compare transcriptions with original documents or, in their absence, with very old copies. We have handled the precious autographs of the Holy Founder, the first editions of his writings, the Register of his foundation at St.Yon, and the records of the schools he established. We have scrupulously respected the purport of these documents, verified doubtful readings and, while we have modernized the spelling, we did so with a quite deliberate intention: a history must be legible. Since 17th century spelling, even by its own standards, remains uncertain, varying from one writer to another, and since to the 20th century reader it is a useless burden, we did not think that its literal reproduction (certainly necessary in a simple publication of documents) added any historical value to a document whose authenticity had been previously established.

The external apparatus of erudition is a scaffolding which must be put in place and maintained throughout the time during which one is building, but, once the work is completed, it cannot remain without spoiling the stones and concealing the lines of the building. We have been content in this Introduction to formulate the principles which have inspired our research; and we express our gratitude to our friends the Brothers who, deferring eagerly to the orders of the Most Honored Superior General and to the instructions of the Brothers Assistants, have provided us with a cooperation that has been both persevering and self-sacrificing. And, in particular, may the Brother Archivist receive here the recognition due to him.

Each chapter will include reference to its sources. While the beginning of the First Part, dedicated to recalling the condition of popular education prior to St. John Baptist de La Salle, is quite general, details will become more numerous with the

6 . Ms. 1426, a volume of viii + 340 pages, bound in calf. Father Gilbert placed a copy of it in the National Library. The Motherhouse Archives has two copies of Dom Maillefer 's work: one, conformed to the Rheims original by Bishop Péchenard, the other dated from Rheims, August 1, 1766, ``purchased along the quais'' in Paris in 1870 and presents a number of variant readings.

investigation into the immediate predecessors of the principal subject of this first volume. The Second Part will take up again and complete, as far as possible, the books of Bernard, Maillefer, Blain, Lucard , Guibert and their epigones and scholiasts, in order to explain this history of the Institute down to the death of the Founder. And the Third Part will, we hope, succeed in explaining the spirit, the tendencies, and the fertility of the Lasallian work through an examination and analysis of the documents that the Father has bequeathed to his sons.

Through the use of italics the Index of proper names will facilitate the reconstruction of the whole of our bibliography and the easy relocation of references multiplied throughout the volume. [Editor: This has **not** been done for this version in English]

Georges Rigault

Orleans, May 15, 1936.

Feast of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

PART ONE

THE TRADITION

Popular Education prior to the Founder

of the Brothers of the Christian Schools

CHAPTER ONE

The Beginnings of Popular Education

The mustard seed destined to become a mighty tree: there is nothing more fitting on this first page of the history of the Brothers of the Christian Schools than this description, this symbol, of the Kingdom of God, this brief and striking synthesis uttered by the Eternal Word. ``A man took the smallest of seeds to plant it in his field". It is the seed of humility, of poverty, of mortification and of renunciation. The man (an apostle, a penitent, a hero of work and of prayer, in other words, a saint) inspired by the Spirit, selects the seed, which he loves; and he cultivates it. It is the hidden treasure, for which he sacrifices all his earthly possessions. But in the beginning, he doesn't know what it will grow up to become. Enduring the labors of the day and the heat and the mockery of the worldly-wise and the persecutions of those who have authority over him, he will probably die before the tree reaches its full growth. But he is not anxious for the morrow: he has entrusted his soul to God. And as for his work, it will take care of itself, following God's plan, in the soil and in the historical conditions in which the seed took root, found nourishment, and in which this organism will breathe, where it will give shelter to other creatures and brave the storms.

In the beginning there is an act of faith, involving absolute trust and total abandonment. It was a step taken without clamor, a single word, a seemingly quite simple gesture, but it was final: like the Fiat of Our Lady in the house at Nazareth. And following the *Fiat*, the saints make decisions: Peter abandoned his nets, Augustine took up and read the Epistle to the Romans, and Francis got down from his horse and kissed the leper. The Word was made flesh, and Jesus chose his Vicar, and Christianity won over its greatest doctor, and the freshness of the Gospel spread once again over hardened hearts.

Men who have accomplished great things feel and confess that personally they did not amount to much in what they did. A power guided them, a light shown on the horizon. Conscience heard a command. What was asked for was an unhesitating `Yes' - cooperation ...adherence. Immediately thereafter everything falls into place and converges toward the proposed goal: the results of earlier labors, the wealth of mind and will, daily contingencies, lucky encounters, past and present friendships, even hatreds that have been roused and unforeseen obstacles, defeats and the worst kind of suffering.

God leads the sower into a promising field. What was ``planted" in suffering and ``watered" in sweat and blood comes to such a fruition that we cry out in wonder. We must downplay neither divine power nor human merit: after all, a miracle is not a whim, and effort requires a place to stand. The role of history is to investigate causes, to disclose influences, to make explicit analogies and relationships and to study environments. These are all, of course, approaches and conjectures, so many gropings in the realm of the relative without ever touching the Absolute. But we lay siege, so to speak, to the ``Unattainable", and we have intimations of it and proclaim it. It glistens from regions already explored. After the facts have been verified and classified, after the words and writings have been recognized as authentic, after appearances have been attentively considered, after doctrines have been subjected to analysis and discussion, no one claims to have given the final explanation: the secret of success endures, which is the secret of holiness and the secret of Providence. But it

is then (and not before) that one is in a position to conclude: *Digitus Dei est hic* (The finger of God is here).

St. John Baptist de La Salle, the inspired organizer of popular education, the founder of a society which was established and which exists, grows and strives for perfection for no other reason than the school, the instruction and the Christian education of the sons of the people of the world, was not a meteor in the heavens, a strange and sudden phenomenon, unprecedented, whose appearance and career no one might have predicted. He was ``a great man''. On this point there is hardly a discordant voice: - great in his wisdom, knowledge, energy, spiritual loftiness, great in his undertakings and accomplishments. But at first glance his activity was not surprising. To grasp the wonder of it one must first of all look and reflect. There were no blinding leaps, no gigantic gestures, no thundering...And not only because he loved silence and obscurity. But more because his inspiration was a sovereign `common sense', fortified, sublimated and supernaturalized by an heroic degree of charity. His time, his country, his traditions and beliefs, the noblest aspirations of his ancestors and of his contemporaries led him to the summit which disclosed the future.

This disciple of Jesus Christ, this priest faithful to his priestly duties, had accepted the inheritance of sixteen hundred years of Catholicism. It is impossible for the Church not to teach. The mission of every apostle is to make known its dogmas and commandments. And the truth, whether scientific or transcendent, is expressed in words and writings. It is transmitted by books more so than by oral tradition. The preacher and the catechist, then, stand before their audience like a schoolteacher before his pupils. And if those the catechist must instruct are children, and if they have nobody but him to preserve them from total ignorance, he straightaway becomes an instructor in the alphabet. The manmade `letter' is the voice of Revelation and preserves its deposit. Dense and obtuse minds cannot otherwise receive the Gospel easily: true religion assumes a minimum of culture, a mind that tends to disengage itself from matter. Thereupon, it will of itself strive to illuminate the other spiritual powers. Subordinating the body to the mind and the mind to the will governed by faith, true religion attempts to recreate man, so to speak, as he was before the Fall - ``to the image of God''; it gives rise to reason, armed against the illusion of error, balanced, well fortified, mistress of the imagination, memory and the senses, and, at the same time, knowing its limits and its dependence upon the divine Reason.

In this sense Christianity is inseparable from genuine ``humanism''. Philosophy, along with logic, grammar, rhetoric, poetry and music, and all the ``liberal arts'' enter into the education of a ``cleric'': both the one they receive, and the one they provide the elite among the young. As for the common people, the little ones whose souls are no less open to Christian culture, no less sensitive to the light than the souls of the learned and the wise, catechism and a grasp of the elements prepare them for access to serious study.

We have no intention of writing yet another history of education from the first centuries of our era to the birth of St. John Baptist de La Salle. That would be either a too superficial introduction (full of repetitions and commonplaces) to our work, or it would be necessary to consume several years in the task and fill many volumes. As regards the most distant past, we can assume the established facts and the certain data. The Middle Ages began not only the universities (where the secondary and higher cycles of the human sciences, the *trivium* and the *quadrivium* , were pursued, and were topped off by Theology, Law and Medicine) but also the elementary schools that we call ``primary''. As we are all aware, the failures of that civilization were many. Yet the flame was never extinguished; the Church maintained it, minimally, of course,

during the darker periods, but always prepared to make it burn bright when peace had restored to men the desire to understand and to learn. There was a renaissance in the time of Charlemagne, a renaissance following the ``Iron century'', and then a ``Third Renaissance'', the one at the beginning of modern times, which, in France, occurred shortly after the Hundred Years War where we shall be presently, and where we shall be at the heart of our subject.

Care for minds has always been closely bound up with a solicitude for souls. And the souls above all the most precious have attracted the Church's attention: the souls of poor children whose innocence and destitution deserve, in the spirit of the Gospel, a double privilege. The doctrine was recalled and the practice clearly regulated by the following decree of the Council of the Lateran in 1179:

> The Church of God, obliged like a good and tender mother to provide for the corporal and spiritual needs of the poor, desires to procure for children deprived of resources the faculty of learning to read and to make progress in study; as a consequence, it orders that each cathedral church have a teacher commissioned to instruct freely its clerks and poor school children; that to this teacher there be assigned a benefice sufficient for his subsistence...A theologian shall be established in the other parishes and in the monasteries where, in former times there had been an endowment for such a purpose. No one will demand payment, whether for permission to teach nor for functioning as a teacher...The licence to maintain a school will not be refused to anyone who can prove his ability. Violators will be dispossessed of their ecclesiastical benefices.

Thus, in a few lines was summarized a long tradition; and thus was codified for the future a system inspired by the loftiest charity and respect for spiritual values: knowledge is not bought and sold; and neither the right to learn nor the right to teach depend upon money. No child, whatever the poverty of his family, may be deprived of minimal instruction; and if he has aptitude for intellectual work, he will find teachers to give wings to his aspirations. Earlier on, it had been a question of promoting the recruitment of the clergy; and hence, close to the bishop and his cathedral, future priests were admitted free and provided with the necessary education. Priestly ignorance (ignorance of the human sciences which often goes hand-in-hand with inadequate theology) had been in too many eras a disaster for the faith. Lay people, and especially ``impoverished school children'', were admitted along with clerics. Furthermore, the authorities were not content merely to found or revive episcopal schools. Cities and countryside were also to benefit as generally as possible from the educational zeal of their pastors. The Council required that the ancient scholastic institutions (parochial and monastic schools) be reestablished. And finally it seemed that far from thinking of a monopoly in favor of a religious or civil teaching body, the 12th century Church encouraged the establishment of new foundations wherever a teacher worthy of the name was found and whose orthodoxy (it goes without saying) was beyond suspicion.

It was an excellent plan and one which did not remain a dead letter. Learned inquiries have proved that France in the time of St. Louis was covered with schools, and that in the time of Charles V elementary instruction was hardly less widespread throughout the kingdom than at the end of the last century. But what was the nature of this instruction and who provided it? Was there a simple, coherent and generally accepted program of studies? Where and how were the teachers recruited? What was their educational preparation and what were the conditions of their life? Was there professional communication among them, opportunities to exchange ideas, a system of rank? The elementary schools remained totally outside the organization of the universities. They were left to individual initiative, local goodwill, the benevolence of a ``founder'' - a bishop, a nobleman or the abbot of a monastery. The teacher was,

according to the circumstances, a priest, a religious, a cleric in minor orders or the father of a family. Among the illiterate, the people ``improvised'' a *magister* or he volunteered his services, if only he knew how to read and had a smattering of Latin. Further, he was honored in his modest domain and favored with gifts-in-kind, which were added to the ecclesiastical benefice that he enjoyed or to the income guaranteed him by legal endowment. Most frequently he was secure, acquiring, as the years went by, authority, method and experience. If he had the good fortune of finding someone in his classes, or in his own household, he trained his successor, a pupil or a more or less talented son. But when all was said and done, he was enclosed within a very narrow world, having only small means to renew or broaden his little learning, because he was isolated and because manuscripts were rare and expensive. He taught reading with the aid of an old speller and the parish *psalter*; he knew how to write, of course; but writing was a difficult, quasi-cabalistic art, reserved to lawyers, priests and copyists to whom people entrusted fine parchments ornamented with miniature paintings, and to ``writers'', whom people asked to compose letters. The common people did not write: it was an incompetence with which they learned to cope. As for numbers, as far as the ordinary person was concerned, these had to do with dice and tokens and involved the memory. On the other hand, they had to know their prayers, as well as Christian Doctrine and Plain Chant. Their religious life was intense, and they took an active part in the long Sunday and Feast Day Offices. The pastor questioned the children the Bible and the Gospel. In his pastoral visits, the Bishop supervised the instructions provided by the teacher, who was never to forget that he was primarily an auxiliary of the clergy and the representative of the Church.

On the whole, he was an invaluable auxiliary, one of civilization's noblemen. What is surprising and distressing is that during so many centuries of Christianity this mission was nearly always at the same stage of development i.e., always at the beginning and in a state of disorganization and quasi-anarchy that resembled feudal fragmentation. We must await the second half of the 14th century before we meet with a religious association devoted to popular education by specifying its nature and guaranteeing it a future by supplying it with a continuity of methods, and a regular succession of teachers in a group of schools founded on the same principles and subject to unified directives.

Gerard Groot was the founder of that society in Deventer, in the Low Countries. His was a brief existence (1340--1383), but the last years of his life, laborious and courageous to the point of self-effacement, were sufficient to incite the valor and devotion of others and to create the collective soul of the ``Brothers of the Common Life''. At the outset no vows bound these men, who, priests or layman, felt and declared themselves to be ``brothers'' through study, prayer and zeal and who dwelt under the same roof. They devoted themselves daily to meditation, and several of them would achieve a reputation for mysticism. They were employed in the copying of manuscripts. (The time would come when they would be printers: and to them Brussels owes its first printshops in 1476). But their essential vocation was teaching. And especially they were dedicated to the instruction of poor children, boys and girls. True, it was not long before they attempted (successfully) to open classical colleges, where they paved the way for the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. Nevertheless, they remained committed to their elementary schools, where they emphasized a program that, henceforth, would be identified with primary education: reading, writing and the elements of arithmetic and the `mother-tongue':---whatever was immediately useful to the youth of the working class and the children of craftsmen. The mind was formed, and the soul was equipped. Catholic dogma and

morals were the basis of instruction. The religion which inspired the knowledge and sustained the virtue of the teachers penetrated the hearts and made supple the wills of the pupils. And, according to the ancient traditions of disinterestedness and charity, the Brothers' lessons were free.

Thus, for nearly two centuries there was an elite group of teachers, which gained for the Low Countries a substantial lead in educational matters. Brussels, Gand, Grammont, and Liege were the principal schools of the congregation. John Staendonck, a student of the Brothers, was inspired by their Rule to reform the Parisian college of Montaigu.[1]

Except by way of hearsay, however, France was unaware of the work of Gerard Groot, and if that country profited from it, it was only indirectly. Along with Italy, initiator and mistress of advanced studies, France in relation to elementary education showed no less zeal, but perhaps less boldness. Foreign and civil wars, which ripped France in the 15th century and for forty years thereafter, did not allow her to equip and extend her system of schools. It was all that she could do to prevent its dissolution. It sheltered teachers who were unassuming, anonymous and isolated from one another. However, out of this throng there arose a famous and respected voice: that of the Chancellor of the University of Paris, an orator who played a primary role in the most solemn councils: Pierre Gerson, who took pleasure in catechizing the youth of Paris, and, in his old age, did the same thing for the children in Lyons. He did not think it beneath his dignity and his learning to stoop down to the children, to fix his gaze upon them and offer them ``the milk and honey'' of theology. He questioned and examined them affectionately; and wrote a charming treatise ``On The Duty of Leading Children to Jesus Christ''. There he recalls that the schoolmaster's instruction is the first and most necessary of apostolates:

> Christ supports in all meekness the crimes of Publicans and sinners, even the anger of the false justice of the Pharisees. But his indignation is raised when the Apostles wanted to prevent the little children from coming to Him. This great man has merited what a teacher of our time has said of him - that he was ``a wonderful example of a Catholic teacher''.[2]

And we shall see that the 17th century, wholly preoccupied with religious education, hailed him as a precursor.

Actually, Gerson, the catechist, appeared at the moment when modern times were emerging from the Middle Ages. He completed the line of the spiritual heirs of Charlemagne and Alcuin. After an age of trouble and misery, he proclaimed the period of the rebuilders of civilization. The good arises out of a superabundance of evils. Life springs up out of an apparently desperate agony. Western Europe was emerging from the Great Western Schism. France had been viewed as on the verge of dissolution. And the Protestant Revolution was about to shake the Church and Europe. At the same time signs of renewal were taking shape.

Great discoveries, the marvelous expansion of the arts and literature, fuelled by a better knowledge of antiquity, inspired man with a sense of power. There was, of course, the huge danger of pride, which was not totally dispelled. But there was also reason for legitimate rejoicing, for well-founded confidence, for a surge toward the highest goals. We can never over-estimate our souls, into which God has breathed His life and which He has redeemed with His blood and has filled with His grace. We can never overuse our faculties of thinking and acting, if we use them to bring us closer to the divine ideal, and not out of motives of curiosity nor out of a complacent indifference to results. To respect and love all creatures, to try always to develop in oneself and in others the gifts of intellect, knowledge, power, wisdom and all the gifts of the creative Spirit as far as that limitless limit which is total holiness, the

``perfection of the heavenly Father'' -- that is the Christian humanism that is implicit in the words of the Act of Charity.

Born of the Gospel, the adversary of dictatorship, the enemy of slavery, in the course of history Christian humanism has never ceased to be a factor in the liberation of consciences. It makes every reasonable being a ``person'' with his own autonomy, his end in himself beyond Society and the State and the Race, without advantage to egoism or ``individualism''; since definitively, God is our personal Law and the Law of all our brothers, and the End of every soul within the whole of humanity. During the Renaissance of the 16th century, Christianity detected currents which seemed to pursue the same bent: the pagan thrust of the instincts, which it would have to restrain , and the movement toward wider realms of light, of beauty, of science, toward the conquest of the Earth and the victory of the spirit. Christian humanism could direct this movement, purify it, and provide it with a beneficent strength and a genuine goal.

Humanists are concerned to form men. Victorio da Feltre gathered a few children of noble Italian families around him and, with consummate art and marvelous patience, devoted himself wholly to their education in a sort of oasis where it was good to live in an atmosphere of quiet work, gentleness and Elysian peace. Erasmus was the tutor of the king's son. Who would not be proud to become a teacher and to follow the example of this illustrious author, prince of letters, arbiter of taste and universal scholar? And so, for the young Henry Bourgogne he wrote ``Politeness for Children''; and so, too, he outlined a system of studies and directives for action, the substance of which has been observed by generations of teachers. Francois Rabelais, less restrained, less sensitive and much less ``human'', was to feed his giant, Pantagruel, a huge feast of science and literature. And Montaigne, imagining in his way the ideal gentleman, would devote one of his Essays to ``The Education of Children''.

It is well to note in passing the educational ``manifestos'' of these two qualified representatives of the French Renaissance. They are only ``manifestos''- mental pyrotechnics. Rabelais' giant and Montaigne's gentleman attest, the one, to the formidable intellectual appetite of the contemporaries of Bude, Danes and Vatable, and the other, the refinement of a guest who believes the table overladen and, fearing satiety, prefers to make a selection. All of this stands outside the experiences and realities of education; they were intellectual games offered to the aristocracy, out of which there arose merely the image of some learned man weighted down by his books, some svelte and middling skeptical cavalier. It is an authentic, but incomplete, humanism. What it lacks is depth of soul. And even if somewhere within it one should meet with Christianity, it would be no more than a facade.

We shall have to look elsewhere for that concern which extends to the countless masses and which, on every face in the masses, discerns the image of God. This time we shall turn to an excellent teacher. And, in the language of the Renaissance, we shall meet with maxims of Christian education. We shall listen to the Spaniard, Vives, in his book, *De tradendis disciplinis* :

> let it be a thing well graven in the minds of children that what they are going to receive at school is the cultivation of the spirit, that is, of what is best in us, of what is immortal in us; that this culture has been given by God to the human race as the greatest gift of His paternal indulgence; and that it could not come from any other source; and this is certainly the way they have to follow to please God and to come to Him, in Whom is their supreme happiness. Then they will enter their schools full of respect as though they were entering sacred temples. They will love their teachers as ministers in God's service, as the fathers of their thoughts.[3]

3. Quoted by Goyau, op. cit. , pp. 42, 43. 7

Thus, Vives echoes Gerson. The teachers of childhood and of youth, the lowest as well as the most exalted, are correctly characterized: their vocation is good, and, in a way, priestly; they are called to a quasi-divine paternity. With St.Charles Borromeo and St.Ignatius Loyola, the Renaissance was reunited with the long tradition of the Church, and humanism was completely dedicated to education.

St.Charles Borromeo, whose activities and example had such a powerful influence on the reform of the clergy, created associations of ``priests of Christian Doctrine", especially commissioned to instruct the common people and children in their religion. The founder of the Society of Jesus, a few hours after his election to the generalate, taught a catechism class in a Roman church. It was a symbolic gesture that proclaimed a vast apostolate. Jesuit colleges would quickly spread into all the nations of Europe. A system of education, a program of studies, developed and tested by teachers would be codified in 1599 in the *Ratio Studiorum* . Nearly always the successful competitors of the old universities, teachers of young people among the nobility and of a good part of the youth of the middle class (without, however, their schools being closed to the gifted poor), and possessed of the confidence of kings, the Jesuits consolidated and extended the positions of Catholicism in the face of heresy, implanted an integral faith in souls, and imprinted upon minds the qualities of their logic, their keenness, their literary taste, and preserved decisively for western civilization a humanism penetrated by Christian morality. And one of them, Père Jouvency, repeating in a passage of his *Ratio docendi* the mission of the educator, declares with justifiable pride:

> The saintliest of men thinks of himself as satisfied if he can, through his own efforts, prevent a single offense against God. The zealous teacher preserves from a quantity of faults not only the children confided to his care, but also through these children, their parents and their entire family. In times gone by a civic crown was owed to anyone who saved the life of a fellow citizen. How many crowns does he deserve who snatches so many children from death.[4]

However, without any neglect on their part, but by reason of their preaching and spiritual direction, their evangelization in pagan countries and their apostolate to every social class and race, the sons of St. Ignatius Loyola, beset on every side and pressured to multiply their colleges, did nothing for popular education. It would, of course, be a form of hypocrisy to blame them for this situation. But, while it was inevitable, such a void was no less disconcerting. The spirit of the Renaissance had won over the masses. The diffusion of the printed word had aroused a new desire for learning. People wanted to know what was in these books, printed by the hundreds and thousands of copies, peddled everywhere at increasingly available prices as technology became perfected and popularized: beautiful books, ornamented with wood engravings, but also inexpensive editions from Paris, Limoges or Champagne, chivalric romances that, in other times were told at evening parties, the lives of the saints and collections of prayers that nourished the piety of the humblest households. Not to know how to read became an inconvenience. Soon, at least in the cities, for artisans and shopkeepers, illiteracy would be the source of annoyance and difficulty with clients and with suppliers of equipment and merchandise, indeed, with a better instructed `spouse'. It was a constant reminder of inferiority.

Education also became more simplified when most of the children could be provided with a small book in which their lessons were printed. The printed book was seen as an assistant instructor or a tutor. A century after Gutenberg, his outstanding

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4. Quoted by Compayré *Histoire critique des doctrines de 'l'éducation en France depuis le seizième siècle* , 1904 ed., Vol. I, pg. 203.

and inspired invention produced all of these consequences. It was in a position to satisfy the needs, the curiosity and the ambition to which it had given rise. Vehicle for good or for evil, unleashing error and the coauthor of truth, it proved to be its own remedy.

That printing made the school indispensable was something that the Protestants readily understood. And it must be emphasized here how this religious revolution was, as regards popular education, at once a cause of development and of destruction, a prod and a weapon. Luther advocated and established many schools in Germany. The conquest of the child was necessary to the triumph of heresy. The latter required in its very principle (if not in the first errors of its leaders) the knowledge and the direct interpretation (and, as a consequence, the personal reading) of the Bible, which had become the exclusive rule of faith. ``Free interpretation'' which (since the Church's authority was denied) was necessarily at the base of all belief could not have free play except in an educated mind. Luther might very well take his stand with the nobles and rail (in his moments) against the common people. Nevertheless, he was aware of the full value both of a willing adherence of the people and the influence immediately exercised on conscience by the humblest village schoolteacher.

But his politics succeeded in running contrary to his teaching. The so-called Reform was in the hands of a feudal system that was altogether indifferent to the education of the masses; it was a system that viewed the revolt against the Church and the Emperor as an occasion for independence and a means of satiating its passions and its avarice. The ``secularization'' of bishoprics and monasteries absorbed the revenues which supported educational establishments. Many of them collapsed, and only some of them were restored. Bloody battles exhausted Germany, and the Thirty Years War with its devastation came along to reduce the nation to anarchy.

Without falling so low, France was to suffer similar disorders, experience the confiscation of property, the pillaging of institutions, the destruction of abbeys and churches, and (with the civil wars launched on religious pretexts) the distress of souls and bodies. In 1576, Claude Sainctes, Bishop of Evreux, wrote:

> In other times it was difficult to find a parish, no matter how small, that did not have a house or institution for its school. But...we have to curse the neglect, or, rather, the sacrilegious behavior of our times when we witness gentlemen, parishioners, taking over and appropriating schoolhouses and the properties connected with them, so that it is rare today to find a single school or schoolteacher, not only in the countryside, but in towns and even in the more important cities.[5]

Making allowances for the excessively emotional eloquence and the hasty generalizations that can creep into statements of this sort, it is certain that the educational flowering which, in the springtime of the Renaissance gave such promise, had been swept away in the turmoil. But the cause itself of the disaster prohibited discouragement. To take heresy seriously, to persevere in the hope of suppressing it, to secure from Huguenot proselytizing the consciences of those who were solicited by preachers, controversialists and upstart schoolmasters whose home base was the fields in the shelter of the hedgerows, Catholics would have to build and increase the number of their schools, educate teachers who were at the same time catechists and excellent instructors in reading, writing, arithmetic and grammar. The progress of literature and the definitive development of printing, the restlessness of minds, each man's idea of his own personal value, of his possibilities for action and enjoyment, and, finally, the success of a religious revolution that was infinitely more serious than the heterodoxies and the dissident movements of the Middle Ages and which had removed half of Europe from obedience to Rome - all of this demonstrated that in the

battle the school was the control position and that the minds of children would determine victory and be its reward.

The Provincial Councils of the 16th century and the Ecumenical Council of Trent had reiterated the ancient injunctions concerning parochial schools; and required, along with the assiduous study of Christian Doctrine, the teaching of grammar, and insisted on the right of the poor to instruction and on the need for gratuity. As much as ever the Church considered the education of youth as one of its essential tasks. In anxious days it recalled pastors and the faithful to the realization of this duty. Becoming aware of its role and its responsibilities, the French State planned its contribution which was designed to secure an elementary and professional education for poor orphans and for the children of families living on public charity. The task of finding teachers for these children devolved upon the administrators of asylums and upon the members of ``Bureaux for the Poor''. Thus, the support of royal power was exercised exclusively for the purposes of relief; and it remained extraordinarily cautious.

At the same time several towns decided to maintain tuition-free schools by themselves paying the teachers. The ordinance of Blois, in May of 1579, in its 351st article, refers to such action. By and large, the Communes no longer intended to remain outside the educational system.

Their clearest wish, which appears in the reports of the Estates General for 1560 and 1576, was to have a voice in the selection of teachers, while leaving the direction of the schools in the hands of the clergy, the monasteries, and the confraternities. Elementary instruction would remain tuition-free to the commoners.

The Nobility and the Third-Estate were in agreement in the matter. According to the report to the Nobility in 1560, it was necessary to levy a contribution on the income from ecclesiastical benefices ``in order to hire teachers and literate persons in all towns and villages, for the instruction of poor youth in the Christian religion, in other necessary sciences and in good morals.'' And, daringly, the same report adds: ``Fathers and mothers will be bound under pain of fine to send their children to the schools, and do so either by constraint of the lords or the ordinary judges.'' To legislate the obligation of school attendance in this kind of language was to anticipate the future.

Chancellor, Michel de l'Hospital, ratified the decrees of the Estates in the Ordinance of Orleans. After each petition, he declared that the king deeply desired schools for youth. A desire confirming a wish is a disclosure of complete helplessness. The same problems continued to be raised right up to the end of the century. The Episcopacy for the Southwest, assembled at Bordeaux in 1583, insisted that ``Christians provide by all means that in each parish, or, at least, in the best known and most heavily populated market-towns, there be a schoolteacher.'' And, in the Estates General of 1588, it was the entire clergy, increasingly alarmed by Huguenot propaganda, that looked to the bishops to send into the market-towns as well as into the villages a master, a schoolteacher, to instruct youth, whether the teacher be the pastor, his assistant, or the chaplain of the vicarage, or some other competent person, who would be examined concerning his faith and doctrine by a representative of the diocese and would be hired at the expense of the parishioners obliged to have their children instructed by the said master. [6]

6. G. Picot, *Histoire des États généraux* , Vol. II, pp. 263-4; Vol. III, pg. 175; Vol. IV, pg. 24; Allain op. cit ., pp. 205-6 and 221.

There was no doubt about hopes and intentions. But they were expressed in a fever, in the dark and in tumult. To realize, to actualize them, what was needed, after convalescence and relapse, was a lasting return to peace, sanity and light.

CHAPTER TWO

Seventeenth Century Christianity: Its Educational Ideas and Initiatives

At the beginning of the 17th century the need for popular education seemed to have been quite generally felt. While the spirit of the Renaissance had been impregnated with Graeco-Latin culture and exalted ancient heroes to the heights, it had destroyed neither the structure nor the concept of the `Christian City'. There were many social classes---an hereditary aristocracy, a middle class which, through its restlessness, solidity and wealth, occupied an important place in the State and provided the stock out of which arose the new nobility. Again, there were the city dwellers, who were also hierarchized into their corporations (the common people under the artisans and craftsmen). And finally there were the masses in the countryside, increasingly liberated from servitude and gradually on the way to having access to landed property. Unlike pagan times, there were not two species of human being: master and slave, citizen and Helot, those who had every right to the free exercise of their powers and to the full development of their lives, and those who, looking like men, still, existed only to bow before the others, to prepare their food, to build their houses and to weave the cloth for the clothes they wore. Doubtless, given the pride of caste, regression into a pagan past was always a threat. And racial pride made a reality of that threat, or nearly so, for aborigines and blacks in the American colonies. But Europe, ``at home'', remained faithful to Christian principles: since every soul is created for eternal life, it must be prepared to fulfill its destiny in its milieu whether natural, familial, social and religious. As a consequence, every soul has a right to an education. Of course, given the inequalities of intellect, rank, fortune and privilege, the bases for which practically no one challenged, education had a variety of levels. And educators, following the bent of prejudice as well as the world's wisdom, had only too strong a tendency to neglect `the little ones' in favor of the great, indeed, to abandon their mission to the former in order to dedicate themselves to the latter. There is a clearly defined line between good intentions and action. But one doesn't systematically impel people toward ignorance. It would be a misreading of the text to find a defense of illiteracy in the following passage taken from Richelieu's political philosophy

> As a body which has eyes in all its parts would be monstrous, such would be a State if all its subjects were scholars. One would observe as little obedience as pride and presumption would be commonplace. Literary commerce would absolutely banish business and ruin agriculture.[1]

Of course, there is nothing more here than a criticism directed at a too liberal extension of classical education. In the Estates General of 1614, the most distinguished leader of which had been the young Bishop of Lucon, the opening of elementary schools had once again been sought. Concern for Christian education had obviously inspired this insistence; but a modest knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic, along with instruction in the catechism, did not seem to any of the petitioners at the time to be an introduction to a life of scholarship. It was merely thought of as useful and sought after by fathers for their children.

Spiritual concerns were reinforced by considerations of a more mundane order. A wise policy (and who will say that Richelieu was not wise?) insists upon discipline for all young people. To neglect the early years of a man's life is to pave the

1. Edition of 1698, pg. 113.

way for trouble in a State. A child that is not `trained' follows its natural bent, which is to say, its bad instincts. Even if it does have a depth of goodness, the human environment corrupts it, and bad example sweeps it off its feet. It returns to a state of nature, which is egotistical, greedy, impure and cruel. Allow one or two generations to be thus left to themselves, and we should be faced with a spirit of anarchy and the decadence of morals. If, at the social basis of an enlightened and virtuous elite, there rests a people without faith or law, a rupture of the social bond takes place; between the two parts of the nation there is no longer anything except force. Beneath the surface hatreds accumulate and disorders arise. When supported by numbers the revolt is terrifying.

The 17th century had a sense of the real, and it believed in original sin. In particular it knew that extreme poverty of the type that is not even sure of its daily bread, removes the taste for effort, kills the sense of duty and reduces a man to the appetites of the moment and to the improvidence of the brute beast. Such a society probes the depths of its own wounds. It is familiar with wretched homes, where intemperance alternates with want, and where children multiply, ``receiving physical existence at the expense of the life of the soul''. Children are without counsel, without prayer and without fair and thoughtful correction. Rather, they are subjected to that capricious repressiveness that is more like vengeance. Eventually, they slip away to roam about, ``to play pranks, to trifle and to joke, to fight and quarrel''. These little vagrants put in an appearance at church, but ``only to cause trouble, commotion and scandal, or to sit there like animals'', laughing, punching and abusing one another in front of the Blessed Sacrament - the future ``drunkards and libertines'', following in the footsteps of their fathers.[2]

This picture, whose colors have been borrowed from Canon Blain, had been painted many times before by educational writers. They all had concluded that ``the poor education of children, which is the cause of general corruption'',[3] had no remedy apart from the Christian school. What about `Sunday-school'? Even where the clergy fulfilled this duty, the lessons were necessarily hasty, the questioning superficial, and the explanations poorly adapted to minds that the catechists have no leisure to study carefully. And then once out of church, it was back to the gutter!

Besides, ``in how many parishes, towns and rural areas was Christian instruction sought without being found''? If, at the height of the 18th century, Canon Blain could still raise such a doubt concerning the zeal of some pastors, the question, a hundred years earlier would have been infinitely more embarrassing. The whole of the work of men like Cardinal Berulle, Père Condren, ``M.Vincent'', Père Olier, Jean Eudes and their imitators and disciples was necessarily directed toward the restoration of the dignity of the priesthood and the restoration to a majority of priests of an awareness of their mission, toward enabling, through the founding of seminaries, ecclesiastical retreats and new religious societies (Oratorians, Vincentians, Sulpicians and Eudists) the spirit of the Council of Trent, of St. Charles Borromeo and of St.Francis de Sales to prevail.

The laity had entered into this great movement of spiritual renewal. And the `Society of the Blessed Sacrament', a vast and powerful network of undertakings, apostolic cooperation, supervision and prayer, spread throughout France and, from `the most Catholic kingdom', extending its influence as far as Canadian `New France', meant to return souls to obedience to the Church and to preserve them in the strict and integral practice of Catholicism.

``The Society'' could not remain indifferent to the establishment of popular schools, since that was the `social service' understood to be among its clearest

purposes. ``The State as well as the Church needed people'' willing to instruct ``poor children of both sexes".[4] Great lords, the middle class, bureaucrats and members of the clergy combined in these pious undertakings, directed against heresy, against the relaxation of morals and against the destruction of authority---alliances, for the most part, confidential and involving clandestine action, in accordance with methods of the `Society'. We can imagine it inspiring, or, at least, endorsing the introductory statement to *L'école paroissiale* , to which we shall have occasion to return:

> There remains just one way to the religious education of children, namely the elementary school, for which the great Gerson, Chancellor at Paris, had such a great concern in his time that he himself took the trouble to instruct children in the things necessary for salvation.

In fact, in 1659 ``the Society'' ordered the publication of a report on the necessity of the schools and planned to send it ``to those who had charge of public administration".[5] The Confraternity of Prayer, founded ten years earlier by Adrien Bourdoise, and placed under the patronage of St. Joseph, in order to procure teachers who were genuine educators, was wholly in agreement with the Society''. People who knew how Bourdoise, a leading priest in the Community of Nicholas of Chardonnet, spoke of the magnificent mission of the schoolmaster, and everywhere his letter was read in which he declared that the education of the child was the most urgent of works and that in devoting himself to it soul and body a good priest ``could be canonized.''

Bourdoise himself had been somewhat preceded by a priest from Orleans, Alexander Colas Portmorant, a priest in Pleineselve. A resolute adversary of Père St.Cyran and a disciple of St.Vincent de Paul, Colas Portmorant was a rather curious figure. He had resigned his pastorate in Calais toward the end of 1641, and retired to the village of Vaugirard to think in solitude about the best way of conducting the apostolate. In 1643 he opened a primary school in his own house. Rapidly, giving greater scope to his zeal, he settled near Paris, in the Faubourg St.Victor, where he explained his plan in a book he called, *The Idea of the Family of St.Joseph, Established in the Faubourg St.Victor, Paris, Under the Patronage of the King and the Queen Regent* (published in Paris, by Peter Targa, 1644). He aimed at

> bringing together children from respectable but inconvenienced families and at training excellent teachers, lay or clerical, in order to develop the religious spirit, and to sanctify families and the State.

On the 19th of March 1644, on the Feast of St. Joseph, the young King Louis XIV, his mother and Cardinal Mazarin came to Portmorant's institution to lay the cornerstone for the altar.

But an intrigue mounted by the friends of St. Cyran undermined the work. The Sorbonne censured a new edition of the *Family of St.Joseph* , which contained some daring paragraphs aimed at the monasteries of the day. The assistance upon which Père Portmorant had been counting failed him. He took refuge in his Orleans estate of Portmorant, near Checy, without, however, becoming discouraged, but, rather, pursuing his charitable activity by founding schools and restoring hospitals. He died in 1671. His very interesting idea of a seminary for teachers was only a seed in the wind. And as good a priest as Alexander Colas was, nobody thought of canonizing him.[6]

Waiting for Bourdoise's prophesy to be realized, ``good people of ordinary condition'' - as Père Caron called them - won heaven by preparing the way for ``the great teacher'' who was to come. At Orleans, between 1640 and the end of the century, there was a whole group of these saintly people. The eldest of them was Pierre Tranchot who had belonged to a distinguished family that had supplied the city with several aldermen; while he himself had been a lawyer in the Parlement of Paris. Using his fortune for good works, he bought a building in which to start a school for boys,

where, assisted by his cousin, Louis Tranchot, and his friend, Pierre Aubert, he taught tuition-free. After his death in 1651, his two associates continued on in the school with the funds left them as Tranchot's sole heirs.

The next generation profited to a much larger extent from quite similar instances of dedication. Francis Jogues Bouland, a relative of Isaac Jogues whom the Iroquois martyred, had, according to his account been early in life very far from being a source of edification to the town's people of his native city. ``Converted'' about 1670, in the twenty-five years that followed, he became a man of penance and charity. Tranchot was only able to establish a single school in the Faubourg St.Jean; whereas Jogues endowed several neighborhoods of Orléans with schools, and, like his predecessor, was personally engaged in their operation, ``making himself a child with schoolchildren''. Among his aides, he had René Maubert who, after sharing Bouland's difficult life, went off to prepare for death in the habit of a Trappist monk as a disciple of de Rancé. M.Selorges, a former officer in the King's Guards, also placed himself at the disposition of Bouland. The parish school of St. Euvertus was entrusted to him. Eventually Selorges was ordained a priest, but his efforts, his time and his money remained at the service of the poor. Upon his death in 1695 Francis Jogues Bouland was succeded by Canon Groteste Mahis.

Another member of the Orléans group in the 17th century was Francis Perdoulx Bourdelière who exercized his zeal especially in rural parishes. He took part in the foundation of a great number of schools in the countryside. He was commissioned by the bishop with the religious instruction of converts from Protestantism; and his lessons were published under the title, Catechism on the Gospels .[7]

Such local activity is quite impressive, but, considering the times, it was certainly not exceptional. Throughout France there were premonitory symptoms of a crusade in favor of popular education. In the most glorious period of the reign of Louis XIV the movement took on an accelerated pace. We have seen that it had permanent causes. Perhaps some of the energy it had picked up came from beyond the frontier, contributed to its increase in volume and determined its direction.

We have referred to the Brothers of the Common Life in the Low Countries. Their work had seen its day, but their spirit survived, and their methods were perpetuated, inspiring the educators of northern Europe. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest their influence on the great school founded in 1626 at Cambrai by Archbishop Vanderbuck, or on the `Sunday schools' in Flanders founded initially to dispense religious instruction on Sundays to children who worked in factories throughout the week. Later on these schools provided daily service while continuing to remain open on work-holidays. There were twenty-four such schools in Valenciennes in the course of the 17th century.

Between 1630 and 1670 Northern Europe possessed a great teacher. Inspired by Protestantism and a deeply religious man, Amos Comenius, because of the excellence of his ideas, his labors and his example deserves to be placed at the very highest rank. A Slav and a member of the ``Moravian Brethren'', a student in Germany, a teacher in Holland, Poland, Sweden and Hungary, he finally settled in Amsterdam, where he died in 1671. His principal work is his *Didactica magn* , a synthesis of his educational views, written in Czech about 1630, and rewritten ten years later in Latin, which assured it a European-wide audience.

The *Didactica* advocates a complete system of education, from ``the maternal school'', which, for Comenius is nothing more than the family, with the mother as teacher, to the ``academies'', where an intellectual elite would receive an education

proportioned to its social mission. The elementary or popular school was at the second level: it was to be open to all without distinction and exist in every village; and its purpose was to prepare body and soul for life's activities. The constitutive elements of this school were a single teacher, a few books and the use of the ``mother tongue''. And its clientele were children between their tenth and twelfth or thirteenth years - but all children, whether those of the common people, the middle class or the nobility.

Its program of studies consisted in the reading of manuscripts and printed materials, penmanship, spelling, arithmetic, mensuration, singing of familiar melodies, the elements of geography and cosmography, selected passages from Holy Scripture, the Psalms, hymns and prayers. There was some manual labor and a sort of initiation into the trades. It was an education that was certainly neither overloaded nor indigestible, but rather an integral formation that aimed at developing the senses and the other powers and training the imagination, observation and judgment. The child did not so much need knowledge as he required discernment. Let him not be a passive and ``insensitive spectator'' on the earth. Let him practice ``looking''- at first, interested in ``pictures'', and then aware of the value of ``signs''; let him not generalize until he possesses the facts of experience. In this way he will have a chance to avoid scientific error and know his environment as well as his times and his peers. As for lapses of behavior, he will avoid them only through religious and moral discipline. The school must put the man on the road to his final ``destiny'', which is ``wisdom and holiness''.[8]

This vast overview, this sound development, this tightly bound system, which was not only that of a philosopher but of an educator at grips with the difficulties of his task, could not, in a Christian and reasonable century, remain a dead letter. While the name of Comenius was scarcely breathed in France (doubtlessly because of his Protestantism), his ideas, especially those concerning educational organization, instruction dispensed in the mother tongue, and the role of intuition, would make their way and infiltrate, often by a sort of osmosis that is stronger than our prejudices and our ignorance.

One problem, however, persisted. Should ``academies'' be required to recruit and train teachers for the elementary schools? In the climate of higher studies these candidates ran the risk of being diverted from their vocation; or they might be looked down upon and become isolated. And, yet, even more so than in Catholic countries, the idea of a ``normal school'' must have dawned in countries that were separated from the Roman communion. They no longer had anything but the shadow of a clergy; indeed, some of them had totally destroyed the church hierarchy and abolished the priesthood. To use a modern expression the meaning of which obviously goes beyond the thought of the ``Reformers'', Protestants had ``secularized'' the teaching profession, and they were powerless to hand over the responsibilities for education to priests.

The South of France, faithful to the Church, clung to the antique ideal: the apostolate of the educator was bound up with the apostolate of the priesthood. In principle, the teacher was a cleric. And it was only for the want of a cleric that a layman would be called upon to teach. The perpetuity of the priesthood was the assurance of the perpetuity of education. And if it was a good thing for a few men to dedicate themselves quite especially to the formation of youth, these men should be priests who would add the skill and labor of education to their theological studies.

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8 . Compayré, *Histoire de la Pédagogie* , pp. 101--6; Herment, *Manuel d'Histoire de la pédagogie* , 1922 ed., 1896, pp. 194--200.

Such were the members of the Congregation of Christian Doctrine in the Comtat-Venaissin. Their founder, César de Bus, a gentleman who had returned to God after a very worldly life, resolved to instruct ``the ordinary people of Cavaillon", who had been neglected by their pastors. He was (according to Canon Blain) ``filled with the spirit of St. Charles and thoroughly possessed the divine theology contained in the catechism of the council" (of Trent).[9] With his principal disciple, Roillon, who had been a Calvinist, his task was to protect the Papal Territories from heresy and to combat it in the neighboring principalities of Orange, Provence and Languedoc. Preferentially, they dealt with the children of the poor, and it was for the poor that the Congregation opened schools at the end of the 16th century. But the clientele gradually changed. The priests of the Christan Doctrine were Latin scholars, and they went where Latin drew them, i.e. toward secondary education. And, especially widespread in the provinces of their origin, they became what the Jesuits and the Oratorians were elsewhere.[10]

At the same time in Rome, the Catalan, St. Joseph Calasanctius founded `the Pious Schools". In association with three other priests, in 1597 he brought together about a hundred needy children in the *Trastevere,* and, having supplied them with food and books, he set out to instruct them in a hall loaned to him by Antonio Brendani, the pastor of St. Dorothy's. The work developed quite rapidly, and in 1600 there were more than five-hundred pupils who, henceforth, were dedicated to Christian Education under his guidance. In 1611 Pope Gregory XV raised this congregation to the rank of a ``religious order". Designated by the name ``Clerics of the Poor of the Mother of God for Pious Schools", the new teachers added to the three vows of religion the vow of dedicating themselves to education. Among the Romans, they were called the ``Scolopi Fathers", for short. Not only in Italy, but also in Spain, Germany, Poland and Bohemia their reputation was enormous. After De La Salle had sent one of his Brothers to Rome, he suggested that he seek information concerning the rule of the Scolopi Fathers. They continued in their concern for the poor, to whom they were required to supply their ``best teachers", but they were no longer primarily teachers in elementary schools: their classes were completed by the addition or six intermediate grades in order to include courses in the ``humanities".

Holiness itself seemed, then, powerless to realize the autonomous primary school, possessing its own methods and its own personnel, but, in actuality, that had already been accomplished in education for girls. Success in that area had met with fewer obstacles. While accepting conventual life more easily than men, and attentive to the child from its first stammerings and its first steps, women patiently and joyfully taught children to spell words and memorize numbers, and, as a rule, not being Latin scholars, they had no thought of altering the initial character of their schools.

And thus it was that, following the model of the famous congregation of the Ursulines, founded in Italy about 1535 by St. Angela Merici, and introduced into France by César de Bus and his niece Cassandra, associations of women-teachers were to spring up everywhere during the 17th Century, so numerous and under so many different names that it would be tedious and superfluous to list them all here. Those of them that are associated quite directly with our subject will, later on, have their place

For the moment we shall pause only at the foundation of St. Pierre Fourier, pastor of Mattaincourt in Lorraine, because the method of teaching outlined in 1640 in his True Constitution for the Religious of Notre Dame help us to catch a glimpse of a successful and productive undertaking.

Having summarized the entire educational program (Christian Doctrine, moral formation, reading, writing, arithmetic, sewing and other ``respectable manual work appropriate for girls''), Pierre Fourier explains how the education ``will proceed with greater order, profit and ease''.

> Every school will be divided into three classes. The first will be the class of girls who can read records and other papers written by hand; in the second, those who have learned to read printed books and are already somewhat advanced. And the third class, the little ones learning their ABC's who are beginning to recognize their letters and to join syllables together and to pronounce words.
>
> Classes will be divided
>
> > by Mother Supervisor into several groups or rows or sets. Each group will be composed of sixteen or eighteen schoolgirls, or twenty at the most, all of whom will be watched over, taught and graded by a schoolmistress appointed by the Mother Supervisor.
>
> For reading
>
> > they shall all practice together, by being shown and having them repeat, following some short of a representation, the coupling of letters into syllables and of syllables into words...The Mother Supervisor or the schoolmistresses will strive so that, as far as possible all the schoolgirls of the same schoolmistress each has her own copy of the same book, in order to learn at the same lesson from it and all read together.
>
> Writing also required common work and general rules. Regarding arithmetic,
>
> > because ordinarily some are more advanced in it than other, we shall consider dividing all of this material into two or three, of if need be, four lessons, and we shall teach the rules of these three or four lessons to those whose capacities are best suited.

Numbers and calculations were to be written on a slate or a board or blackboard fastened to a place so visible in the classroom that all those who are studying may easily see and be instructed together.[11]

Classes and ``benches'' corresponding to the degree of learning and intelligence of pupils, a logical and flexible organization, groupings of schoolgirls whom the teacher has well in hand and whom she is able to control with a look and without an excess of effort, ``group instruction'', which keeps attention in suspense, economizes on time, cautiously incited self-esteem and inspired emulation. At the beginning of the 17th century[82], this was an astonishingly advanced program. Pierre Fourier, who had designed it did not have a very wide influence: indeed, his method was unknown beyond the frontiers of his own region. But his spiritual daughters would make the great neighboring kingdom of France the beneficiary of his inheritance. France would make the most of the educational ideas of Pierre Fourier and thirty years later in Rheims Canon De La Salle would observe the sisters of Notre Dame teaching school.

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11 . ``Vrayes Constitutions'' (III Part, Chaps. vi, xi, and xiv), cited by J. Renault, Idées pédagogiques de saint Pierre Fourier, Paris, 1912, pp. 77-9.

12. since, well before the final version of the Rule of the Sisters of Notre Dame, the ``Little Rule'' had been composed, which was the rough draft of the former.

CHAPTER THREE

The Condition of Primary Education
In Seventeenth Century France

Beyond a survey of ideas, theories, tendencies and first efforts, we come now to the common conditions, the day-to-day occurrences in the elementary schools. And since the `new school' was to see the light of day in France, we shall be concerned with the French landscape. It had its points of strength and its defects, its enduring characteristics and others that existed only potentially. A cautious man, patient and firm, a man of great good sense and rare energy could take advantage of it all, provided that God chose him to bring to successful issue a work for which there had been so many hopes and so much preparation.

After the turmoil of the last forty years of the 16th century and the labors of the first forty years of the 17th century, there was a flowering of new educational enterprises. In secondary education, gifted groups of men had selected the seed, watched over its germination and introduced more rational methods for its cultivation. Here the Jesuits remained the most sought-after workers and, at the same time, the most numerous. However, the Oratorians conceded nothing to the Jesuits either in knowledge or in theory, Far from excluding the mother tongue, they made it indispensable during the first years of college; the teaching of history was extensively pursued and the humanities were supplemented by mathematics and philosophy. They also sought to avoid corporal punishment. Compared to these vast undertakings, Port Royal was like a hothouse where students were few and the teachers were distinguished. Here, for beginners there was reading in French. Later on, there was a Latin grammar, composed by Lancelot, which rescued pupils from the gloomy horrors of Despautère. It was a high quality education for a small, select group. However, Jansenism rejected competition and tightly curbed all spontaneity.

The Jesuits' *Ratio Studiorum* , the *Ratio Studiorum* of the Oratorians, Nicole's *Logic* and Lancelot's *Grammaire* , the Fathers' colleges and the houses of Port-Royal-in-the-Fields; in all of this order reigned. The teachers were excellent and students made regular progress; minds and souls were genuinely formed. Here the classical century saw a reflection of itself. But how could it endure the condition of primary education, with its broken paths, its thickets, its poisoned grasses, its wild growths, dead branches and arid stretches?

Doubtless, in some places there was always a dearth of personnel. But, on the whole, the supply reflected the demand. However, volunteers were inadequately qualified, and they did not improve with experience. As a consequence, recruitment, while abundant enough, continued to be uneven.

Everybody was quite agreed on the importance of professional preparation for schoolteachers. As concerns education for girls, the new Congregations would in part fill the void. But the education of boys was less successful. Here initiatives ended in frustration. St.Pierre Fourier assembled four or five young men in his own home and encouraged them to become unsalaried schoolteachers for the love of God. He certainly was thinking about a religious society for which he would, at the appropriate time, write a `constitution' similar to the one he wrote for the Sisters of Notre Dame. After three months of thinking the matter over, the young men left him, without even

having begun to teach class. Alexander Colas Portmorant in Paris and Francis Jogues Bouland in Orleans, anxious for the future of their schools, desired to open `seminaries' for teachers. Their plans failed to take shape. Bishop Buzanval of Beauvais had also to abandon his hopes. As for Père Chennevières, ``a priest who served the poor'', his memorandum to the king concerning ``the unparalleled need for opening a seminary for schoolteachers in every diocese'' was little more than a wish.

Did the first comer, then, have the right to teach, and could he assume it gleefully and nail over his door the sign, *Elementary School*? Actually, tradition, custom and privilege ran counter to such liberty which might easily have become abused. We know that in principle education remained the function of the Church; and many clerics made it their duty themselves to control their parish schools. If that post were occupied by a layman, it was so wholly at the discretion of the pastor. Furthermore, no teacher, if he opened a school on his own initiative, could maintain it without the approval of the ecclesiastical authorities. Often enough approbation was merely temporary and, in case of transgression, revocation was instantaneous.

The nomination of a teacher, as a rule, belonged to the community that supplied room and board, or to the benefactor who raised the revenue for the school. Residential communities, cities and most villages and small towns chose the teacher and contracted with him for the amount of his salary. The candidate submitted his papers, testimonials of good behavior and certificates signed by the pastors or Communes that had previously employed him. Sometimes he had to submit to a public examination of his competence as a teacher.

The bishop, or his delegate, the Archdeacon, would intervene to grant his approval. Some time prior to the Assembly of the Clergy of 1685 the Archbishop of Bourges summoned to his court individuals who had opened an unauthorized school in Issoudun. The defendants were found guilty in the ecclesiastical courts, but, on appeal to the secular courts, they were cleared. The Archbishop placed the matter in the hands of the Privy Council, where his jurisdiction was formally acknowledged.[1]

However, from the scattered data, it would be difficult to single out a law that was both coherent and consistent. The tangle of prerogatives and competencies is one of the most marked characteristics of the *Ancien régime*, which revelled in them, even though it meant multiplying quarrels and lawsuits in which lawyers and judges were able to profit.

Some cities (usually the larger ones, like Paris and Lyons) were indifferent to the choice of teachers. On the other hand, on this score the City of Macon entered into a controversy with the Head Cantor. In Rheims each parish elected a teacher through an assembly of parishioners, and he was confirmed by the ecclesiastical supervisor of schools for the metropolitan church under the supreme authority of the Archbishop. But the ecclesiastical supervisor had to go to law to obtain the recognition of his rights.

We can imagine how difficult would be the situation of a reformer and how cautiously he would have to make his way through these entrenched positions where heavy guns, often aimed at one another, could as quickly be turned on a common foe.

In the larger centers where teachers were more numerous and were able to cooperate to blunt competition, they adopted the weapons of the practitioners of the trades and the mechanical arts': they grouped themselves into guilds or corporations; and they then aspired to a sort of monopoly of elementary education. It was a pretension that was scarcely justifiable in view of the fact that the `liberal arts' (and education obviously fell under that rubric) could, according to medieval ideas, be

practiced freely, without any limitation on the number of participants and without demanding membership in a corporation.[2]

It is true that in 1357 the Parisian elementary schools had rules the purpose of which was to guarantee the proper operation of the classes and a mutual understanding among the teachers. These statutes, frequently changed but always in force, created a sort of juridical bond among the Parisian teachers, a kind of contract to which every newcomer had to conform. The interests of the *beati possidentes* entered into play so as to exclude the possibility of anybody outside their association from making any money without their consent: indeed, they tended to become an exclusive corporation.

These privileged teachers fell into line under the sovereign authority of the Head Cantor of Notre Dame. Claude Joly, who held this title and its functions, tells us why the control of the elementary schools was attached to his office. In 1678 he published ``at François Muguet's, printer to the King and the Archbishop'', a copious volume whose very title is in itself a manifesto:

> An historical treatise concerning episcopal and ecclesiastical schools for the rights of Cantors and Supervisors of Schools of the Cathedrals and Churches of France and especially of the Cantor of the Church of Paris, over the Schools Committed to them against the Initiatives of those who Disturb the Ancient and Canonical Order which must be Maintained for the Good Instruction and Education of Youth , by Père Claude Joly, Cantor and Canon of the Cathedral of Paris in Paris, collator, examiner and director of the grammar or elementary schools of the City, Faubourgs and Suburbs of Paris. [2]

The grammar school was the old educational foundation of the bishops and the parochial clergy: it was the `elementary school' wherein, basically, were taught the principles of syntax, while in the `higher schools' philosophy completed the cycle of studies. It was the school for young clerics and young cantors, for whom the study and practice of the Church's chant was obligatory. All the Latin they learned (and, from the beginning, it was in Latin that they stammered out their syllables), the sacred texts they read and recited, all this knowledge had as its end, initially, to prepare them for their role in the liturgy. They were, then, quite logically, under the direction of the Head Cantor, who was one of the members of the Chapter; and he exercised his authority over these clerical students as the delegate of the Canons and in the name of the Bishop. The Cantor of the Church of Paris, declares Joly, ``was part'' of the School of Notre Dame ``for grammar and human letters because of the ecclesiastical chant that was taught there to the young clerics...'' And he never thought of it as beneath the dignity of his title to supervise ``the first letters'' which, while inferior to others, were, nevertheless, the most important, since grammar is the gateway to all knowledge.[3]

As ``Collator, examiner and director'', Claude Joly was determined that no school should open without his permission; and that no teacher instruct youth before the Cantor had questioned him, recognized him as competent as a teacher and orthodox in his beliefs, and decent in his behavior. The Cantor would issue the diploma of competency as well as the decision concerning the nomination. He inspected classes, supervised the observation of the rules, and punished by fines and dismissed those who broke the rules. Each year he convoked a general assembly of teachers at which provided them his advice, encouragement and useful criticism.

The forty-three parishes of Paris were divided into 167 school districts and each district had a school for boys and one for girls. There were at least 334 people subject to the Cantor. As a rule, there was a single teacher in each primary school; and

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2 . Joly, *Traité historique*, pg.16
3. ibid

because of the teaching methods employed (the `individual' method in which a lesson was given successively, and `one-on-one', to each pupil) there were only a few pupils in each school. If the teacher thought his task was too heavy, he sought help from some very young teacher's aide, who was little more than a tutor; or he asked the least ignorant pupil in the class to act as tutor.

There was no such thing as a school building. The teacher appropriated for school use a room in his own family residence or he leased a dwelling (on the street level or on the upper floors) in which to practice his profession. Since school hours were not interrupted by recess, he had no need for a school-yard. And if, in the larger cities, a child wanted to relax, most frequently this took place in the streets.

Thus, regardless of the age of the pupils or their level of instruction, the entire school was contained within a single room. And in spite of all the episcopal decrees and royal edicts against co-education, it did indeed happen that boys and girls were taught together. In 1570 the Bishop of Paris, Pierre Gondi, threatened to excommunicate teachers who accepted girls into their schools for boys, and schoolmistresses who admitted boys into their schools for girls. Succeeding Archbishops must have renewed the prohibition. In 1654 a decree of Parlement enjoined the Cantor of the church of Paris to keep an eye on his constituents in this regard.

``It is quite exceptional'', writes Blain, ``that people who ply this trade (i.e.the teacher's) fear the dangers of such a mixture.'' [4] The tone is contemptuous, and it retains the echo of pamphlets in which the Grand Cantor was accused of entrusting primary schools ``to keepers of cheap restaurants, to tavern keepers...and to his own footmen''. Malevolence and exaggeration to one side, it remains true that `mercenaries' had no scruples concerning the means of attracting a clientele and of maintaining a prosperous `industry'. While this motley crew included some very fine people, there were a lot of mediocre ones and many scoundrels.

Besides these school teachers of such uneven quality and reputation, there also existed an ancient guild regularly and carefully recruited, which offered its services to elementary education. This was the corporation of Writing masters. As the book replaced the manuscript, this group had lost some of its importance. But, recognized in law and always prepared to defend itself, it survived. Copying texts and composing letters did not provide enough income to enable a man to live ``by his pen''. The writing masters had become teachers of penmanship. They preserved the tradition of embellished letters of reference, and of the handsome flourish, and they surrendered their secrets to their pupils along with the ``gothic'', the ``round'' and the ``slanting round hand''; to which they added lessons in arithmetic, bookkeeping, monetary exchange and even Latin.

Teachers' licenses were granted them only after an examination, the judges of which were attorneys and several delegates of the corporation. They then swore an oath before a royal judge. And it was this civil magistrate (and not a Church official) who enabled them to open a school.[5] Their handwritten sign was the proof patent of their skill. Often numerous in the larger cities, closely knit and highly regarded, they had to be reckoned with. And they were all the more jealous of their privileges and anxious regarding competition in that, basically, there was only a difference of degree between the art of penmanship as they taught it and the lessons in the same art as given in the primary schools. Some teachers' models even vied with the writing masters' in precision and elegance.

The bitterness with which the corporation protected its livelihood is understandable. It felt that the school, provided with all the necessary equipment,

competent teachers and a full program of studies, would spirit away the children who were the major part of its clientele. In their world the writing masters were merely survivors. Progress of both mind and machine had doomed them. They struggled with an energy and a vehemence that is characteristic of despair. In Rouen they denied the right to school-mistresses to teach handwriting on the pretext that the art ``was the property of the male sex".[6] And in Paris they sought a decree from the courts to reserve to themselves a monopoly of this sort of instruction, or, failing that, to forbid teachers in the primary schools to ``give their pupils any samples except monosyllables."[7] The case went undecided up until the last year of Louis XIV's reign. To decree the suppression of the freedom to write would have been too absurd. The restrictions and prohibitions drawn up by the courts had as their purpose nothing more than to prevent the ruin of the writing masters, who, because of their corporate structure, would disappear only with the demise of the *Ancien regime*.

While men who belonged to the past clashed, an institution, certainly not wholly new but destined to serve as the foundation and support for the school of the future, grew apace. ``Evangelize the poor'': such had ever been the Church's watchword:

> Every year take a sum of money from the income from the building fund to help to maintain a schoolteacher; give preference to such an alms rather than to those that are not so necessary or urgent. [8]

So stated Article 8 of the synodal statutes of Chalons in 1662. And in 1678 the Bishop of Arras proclaimed the principle anew:``

> the greatest charity that one can practice in favor of the poor is to procure the means of their education."[9]

Where there were pay-schools, theoretically poor children were to be admitted free and welcomed by the teachers. In fact, most of the poor did not care to use this right. In an environment not their own, they felt rather bewildered and experienced a certain contempt. Out of fear of their dirt and their `vermin', they were shunted off into a corner of the classroom. Naturally, they would return to the streets, and the teachers were careful not to go looking for them.

Many pastors, animated by a zeal for souls, determined to create schools especially for the poor. And primary education progressed under the cover of assistance to schools termed `charitable'. Here, again, it was the Christian idea of tuition-free education---as understood, of course, in an era dominated by social inequality. The Middle Ages had opened the same sort of schools to everybody, the rich and the poor, without asking for anything from anybody. In the 17th century the poor were set apart: they were granted knowledge as an `alms'.

And this happened, moreover, without misconstruing ``their eminent dignity in the Church'' and while placing at their service the best and the greatest servants of God. Not surprisingly we recognize the name of St.Vincent de Paul at the head of the movement:

> In the year 1639, on the fifth day of January (writes Claude Joly) Père Vincent de Paul, Superior of St.Lazare in Paris, General of the Missions, wishing to have some poor children of both sexes belonging to the parish of St.Laurence instructed[10]by a schoolmaster and a schoolmistress, for whom he would pay, presented a list of these poor children, signed in his own hand and certified by Père Lestocq, pastor of St.Laurence, to Père Le Masle des Roche, Cantor of the Church in Paris, in order to have his permission, which was given by the said Cantor.

There is no doubt that the Cantor's control was not initially exercised over the founding and functioning of these new schools. And this is what, in the present circumstances attracted the fascinated attention of Claude Joly, who did not fail to

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7 . Compayré, *Histoire de la Pédagogie* , 1886 ed., pg. 210.

10 . Claude Joly, op. cit. , pp. 397-8.

indicate a transaction, dated the 23rd of March 1646, in which Père Peter Marlin, pastor of St.Eustace, agreed to a rather draconian rule for his school for the poor: he acknowledged the right of the Cantor to license school teachers, who would also be obliged each year to reapply for the confirmation of their powers. Through payment of confraternity dues, the personnel of the charity schools was bound to the teachers' corporation. All precautions were taken to protect the interests of the primary school teachers by forbidding their clientele from frequenting the clerical establishments, which would admit only those children ``genuinely poor and sent by him (the pastor) to them (the teachers) according to a certificate and witness of those who shall have knowledge of the circumstances."[11] Every three months a list of the pupils would be supplied to a supervisor from the Cantor's office in order that he might verify the financial status of the families. We can imagine what annoyances must have arisen out of such an arrangement - secret accusations, inquiries, house searches after more or less justifiable complaints originating with teachers in pay-schools, who were always ready to cry `thief' when the defection of a pupil threatened to cost them the price of a tuition. And, then, a pastor would insist on being the sole master in his own school. The number of charity schools increased, especially in Paris, with the cooperation of the teaching Sisters. Soon, there was hardly a large parish that did not have its own school. The Parisian pastors, working together, thought they might be able to shake off the Cantor's yoke.

It became an accomplished fact, if not an acknowledged right the moment that the Grand Cantor Claude Joly uttered the bitter comment:

> There are those, too, who, either through true or feigned charity, wish to create new schools to which they fear that the Cantor in Paris will not give his consent, because their plan threatens with ruin the schoolmasters and the schoolmistresses in the city's neighborhoods, whom he is obliged to defend for the benefit of the city dwellers. Hence, they have had recourse to higher authorities who have permitted this practice, but only in favor of the poor. But it has never been observed...because they hold themselves independent of the Cantor, who, if he gave them permission, would impose upon them conditions which would enable them to observe what they have been commanded---i.e., to teach only the poor, which is not their intention.[12]

According to our author, the preferential treatment enjoyed by ``public charity schools'' was the occasion for ``offending against justice'', of ``evading the rules established in antiquity'', and of introducing ``disorder and confusion'' into the City.[13] The Cantor intended to prove and reassert his rights; and his book paved the way for legal action.

The litigation, of course, occupied a generation of lawyers. While awaiting what the law had to say, pastors consolidated the positions they had already won: so much so that a counterattack by the primary school teachers (even with the support of the writing-masters) had a chance of succeeding only against a school that had been momentarily neglected or deliberately abandoned by its pastor. In practice, the autonomy of the charity schools, under the direct control and the total responsibility of the parishes, was no longer challenged. Wearied with the war, the contestants consented to compromise; and powerless to achieve anything better, the Cantor was handed a `Platonic victory'. On the 18th of May, 1699, before M.Jousse, notary, the contracting parties,

> animated by a spirit of peace, and in the friendly understanding that should reign among people of their sort, and convinced that their friendly unity would contribute no little to support the opening of charity schools, so advantageous to the public (let it be agreed that) the

11 . Ibid., op. cit. , pp. 399, 402

> pastors would be granted the Cantor's right to name and supervise the teachers in the charity schools within their parishes. [14]

It was in this educational environment that successful experiments were to be attempted and the reform of elementary instruction was to be brought to prosperous issue. The congregations of Religious Sisters who dispensed instruction -*gratis pro Deo* - naturally occupied the largest part. They were unencumbered by the routines and the prejudices of the primary schools; and they preserved their independence in the face of parents who, exempt from all educational expenses and satisfied in the knowledge that their offspring were in good hands, did not dream of getting involved with the regulations. The huge throngs of pupils would demand a change of methods, a rational organization of classes, a collective discipline and group instruction. What are only inconveniences with ten pupils (individual lessons, comings-and-goings in the classroom, wasted time, and assortment of ages and aptitudes) become awful anarchy with a mob of little ones. The system had to change or it would be the end of the school.

In most cities the children of the poor (and of others with them) in the hundreds attended this new parochial school, which was actually the charity school. A huge number had spontaneously responded to the pastor's appeal. With regard to some vagrants and idlers, frequenters of `the gutter', a certain *compelle intrare* was practiced. Against careless families there was no hesitation to draw up and invoke effective sanctions. The poor who, without serious reasons, failed to send their children who were of an age to be taught to school could no longer count upon the help of the parish or of the Welfare Bureau. In 1627 Rheims legislated fines against tradesmen who ``did not see to'' their sons' regular (school) attendance; while prison and even banishment were the punishments for repeating offenders.[15]

France was moving in the direction of compulsory education. When the State finally came to the point of seconding the efforts of the Church and the cities, the tendency to regard truancy as a crime became more clear cut and insistent. The subsidies granted by the King gave some schools a quasi-official character, and to fail to attend them involved disobedience and the suspicion of heresy.

Indeed, in King Louis XIV's eyes the primary school was before all else, a weapon against Protestantism. The reason why, in 1665, he authorized the Archbishop of Vienne and the Bishops of Valence, Viviers and Le Puy to open schools at the citizens' expense, (where city officials had refused to open them)was obviously to create centers of Catholic propaganda within regions dominated by Protestants. After the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes educational politics became high religious politics. In his letter of June 5th 1686 the king imposed upon the children of ``new converts'' the obligation of attending the schools and following parochial instructions and catechism classes. [96]

The Edict of April 1695 subjected all country school teachers, without exception, to the jurisdiction of the Clergy:

> Regents, tutors, schoolmasters and mistresses in small villages will be approved by the pastors of parishes or other ecclesiastical personages who have the right to do so; and the Archbishops and Bishops or their Archdeacons in the course of their visitations will be allowed to question them, if they so judge, on the catechism; if they teach it to the children in the place; if they are not satisfied

14 . Quoted by Ravelet, 1888 ed., pp. 31--2.

96. Babeau, la Province sous l'Ancien Régime , Vol. II, pg. 284.

with their doctrine or their morals; and even at times other than those of their visitations, when they give rise to the same questions. [17]

These texts were a prelude to the major declaration of the13th of December 1698, the undisguised object of which was to return the Kingdom to the unity of the Faith. In its title it refers to the Edict of 1685, ``containing the regulation for the instruction of new converts and their children''. The problem was to test the sincerity of those who had apparently renounced heresy in order to save themselves and their property. Where would profound conviction be more obviously manifested than in decisions concerning the education of children?

There were to be none but Catholic schools, and these were to be everywhere, according to the prescription of Article 9:

> We decree that schoolmasters and mistresses be as far as possible, established in all parishes where they do not yet exist, in order to instruct all children, but especially those whose fathers and mothers have professed the so-called reformed religion, in the catechism and the obligatory prayers; to take them to Mass on all workdays; to provide them with the instruction they require on this subject; and to be careful during the time that they are at the said schools that they assist at all the Divine Offices on Sundays and Feast Days; as well also in order to teach reading and writing to those who may have need of them; and all in the manner prescribed by Article 25 of Our Edict of April 1695, concerning ecclesiastical jurisdiction, as it shall be ordained by the Archbishops and Bishops; and in places where there are no funds, there may be levied on all the inhabitants the sum which is lacking for the support (of a school), up to 150 livres a year for the schoolmaster and 100 livres for the schoolmistress; and that the necessary letters containing the information of diocesan Archbishops, Bishops, and commissioners sent into our provinces shall supply us, shall be dispatched postage free.[18]

As a consequence, the opening of a school was in itself an obligation. And at this point the Church's action was required. The State did not act in the place of the Church, but henceforth it was from the State that the Church would hold its mandate to extend its work of teaching to the tiniest hamlet. The ``commissioners sent into the provinces'', the superintendents of justice, of police, and of finance would supervise the execution of the bishops' orders. And they would intervene in order to have a school opened in cities which, whether by a spirit of thrift or through indifference, or by a secret attachment to Protestantism, appeared refractory. And, as a matter of course, they would enter into the Communal budget the cost of providing for the maintenance of the teachers.

It remained only to draw up the law for compulsory attendance at the schools by those for whom they were intended. Whoever shirked his duty would be a bad Catholic and, therefore, a rebellious subject. No child of the common people who was ready for instruction might evade the royal school. The middle class and the nobility had their colleges or their private tutors. But the availability of this private education was not to provide a shelter for Huguenot allegiance. Article 10 of the Decree attempted to anticipate every situation:

> We enjoin all fathers, mothers, tutors and other persons responsible for the education of children and especially of those whose fathers and mothers have professed the so-called reformed religion just referred to, to send their children to the said schools and catechism classes until the age of 14 years, except for persons in such condition that they can and must have them taught at home by tutors well versed in religion and good morals, or send them to college.
>
> We enjoin pastors to watch over the said children in their parishes with a very special attention, even with respect to those who do not attend the said schools. We admonish as well as enjoin the

17 . Jourdan and Isambert, Recueil général des anciennes lois rancaises , Vol. XX, pg. 251, art. 25 of the edition.

> Archbishops and Bishops to keep themselves carefully informed concerning these children; we order fathers and others who are educated and especially those who by birth and occupation are most eminent, to describe to the Archbishops and Bishops the children they have in their homes, when they inquire in the course of their visitations, so that they can give an account of the instruction in religion the children have received; and to our judges, solicitors and to those gentlemen who render final decisions to make all possible haste application and necessary regulation for the execution of our will in this regard, and to punish those who would be negligent in compliance or who would have the temerity to contravene (our will) in any way whatsoever on pain of fine or some greater punishment, depending on the requirements of the case. [19]

The King, ``the captain of the ship that is the Church'', ``the secular bishop'', was speaking as the head of the French clergy. Every member of the faithful had the obligation of being instructed in his religion---a moral obligation become a legal one. And because the school is the usual place for a child's instruction (for his total education, for the formation of mind and will, which are bound up with, and subordinated to, dogma and God's commandments), the educational imperative derives from ``Catholic duty''.

The law had been stated. Not without difficulty nor reaction, people would search out its application. Children ask for the daily bread of the catechism and elementary knowledge. Bishops, pastors, supervisors, cities, dedicated and pious souls that strove for the most useful work of charity - all of them sought teachers for children.

19 . Idem., op. cit., loc. cit. , pp. 317-8.

CHAPTER FOUR

``The Parish School"

Great school men are born, not made. Their actions proclaim their authority; what they plant takes root; their words resound and reecho; and their example is consistent and reenforcing, while the social environment becomes more amenable and its need for them more insistent. There was more than a coincidence, there was a fixed relation between their efforts and the development of the charity schools and the increasingly lively interest that the public authorities took in the education of the people. The moment has come for us to review the work of the immediate predecessors of St.John Baptist de La Salle. But before doing so, it would be well to examine a book by a theorist to whom they owed a great deal, and whose influence was exercised palpably well beyond its own generation, (we might assume *a priori* and we shall verify it *de facto*) on the Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and on his early disciples.

We want to discuss a book, for a long time famous and reprinted until the middle of the 18th century, but always anonymously, *The Parish School, or the Manner of Teaching Children in the Primary Schools*, by a parish priest in Paris. The royal seal for publication is dated the 14th of July, 1654, and the earliest edition went on sale during the same year ``in Paris, Pierre Targa, printer for the Archdiocese and publisher for the University, Rue St., at the sign of the Golden Sun".[1] An abridged version was published in 1685, in Paris, by the printer, Pierre Trichard, with the title, ``*Methodical Instruction for the Parish School, Drawn up to Assist the Primary Schools ,and dedicated to the Music Director of the Church in Paris, by I.D.B., Priest".* The same initials (in the form `I.de B.') are employed in the preface to the first edition.

The dedication to the ``Cantor" and the special reference to ``primary schools" seem to suggest that the author had the idea of composing a treatise for the use of the three hundred teachers in the schools of the region about Paris. Actually, his purpose was quite different. He was concerned with class sizes much larger than the ten or twelve pupils who would be assembled around a single teacher in a small room.[2] And while ``Père I.D.B's Parish School " was obviously meant for children provided with some financial means, and preferentially for the children of the wage earning poor, it is probable that experience with the charity schools had suggested some of its projects for reform.

In his preface he does not disguise the fact that he is looking at a pretty sad spectacle. ``The present situation" was deplorable. In order for children to receive a Christian education ``bishops, Superintendents of schools, Pastors and Magistrates must" choose schoolmasters and schoolmistresses who are equal to their task and able to be strict observers of the ``rules they are given to follow".

Without saying where his teachers-to-be were to be trained, ``I.D.B.", launching into the matter of their selection, proposed a sort of jury composed of ``a dozen worthy people both clerical and lay". Once judged fit, the candidate would be appointed ``by a letter *gratis* from the Bishop, the Cantor or someone else delegated by them for this purpose", and he would give his ``oath to observe the rules customary in the place, on the pain of dismissal".

Each month a ``Head Prefect" (in Paris it was the ``Head Cantor", elsewhere the superintendent of schools) was to visit ``the schools, the teachers and the pupils,

and after each visit, having duly noted the defects of each one", would assemble the schoolmasters and their assistants at one conference, and the schoolmistresses and their assistants at another, for criticisms and the appropriate corrections. It was in this way that an effort was to be made to obtain unity of principles and methods.

There is nothing further in the book concerning the organization of the faculty. The author accepts things as they are: teachers are of different origins, culture and ideals; they are educators by vocation or they are people making a living. He asks only a greater discernment in the selection of teachers, a greater rigor in their control. He offers his book as a good ``guide'' to primary education, intended to throw up barriers to routine, to inspire and support initiative, to stimulate the exchange of ideas and promote agreement in the solution of problems.

> In the First Part (he writes) you will study the qualities of a good teacher, the conditions of the classroom, the necessary furnishings and the qualifications of the children who are to be admitted. The Second Part deals with piety: theoretically, with the various sorts of catechism lessons, and practically with attendance at the divine offices, processions and school prayers. The Third Part deals with teaching methods i.e., how to teach reading, penmanship, bookkeeping, counting and the elements of Latin and Greek; and it concludes with two chapters on operations and the school register.

At the beginning of *The Parish School* stands the full-length portrait of ``the good teacher''. It is the picture of a Christian who, through his religious faith transforms and supernaturalizes the duties of his vocation: How the schoolteacher must be a man of faith, hope and charity; how he must exercise prudence, and temperance, and clothe himself with courage, identify in some way with justice; and preserve these three theological virtues and four cardinal virtues by the sincerest and most constant humility. Such are the divisions of the first chapter - all very ``Scholastic'' and quite easy to remember. The framework lends itself to the most lavish developments. Truths of experience, psychological observations, counsels of common sense find a place as do general considerations. Since the teacher's behavior is the pupils' most efficacious lesson, we are told what (on the model of the teacher's charity) must be the affection of the pupils one for another, the visitation of the sick by the healthy, the alms of the well-fed in favor of those who are hungry (through the sacrifice of a part of one's dinner or lunch). Similarly, with regard to ``temperance''---and `modesty'' which is a form of temperance---there is the question of the silence which the children must observe in the classroom (including that of the ``observers'', selected from among the better pupils, whose task it is to take down the names of the ``chatterboxes''). We witness a dismissal, silent, without pushing or shoving---a line of youngsters, bodies erect and heads held high, ``civilly greeting all civil people''.

Such behavior reflects the teacher's virtue. Let him be the first to be open to divine grace, to the breath of the Spirit, by a profound faith, a complete confidence and by the gift of self. God will reward him with what is essential to the successful fulfillment of his mission. ``Prudence'': the teacher ``will be satisfied with what children can do''; he ``will know what is normal for them'' by ``consulting'' with their parents, by noting the attitudes and gestures of each pupil and, quite particularly, their reactions to reprimand and punishment. ``Temperance'': he will have to be careful about eating and drinking, be sober for the sake of self-control, modesty and purity, without which professional conscience is imperilled and runs the risk of losing that *maxima reverentia* , that tremendous respect, that is owed to childhood.

The teacher's strength lies in his magnanimity, his perseverance and especially in his equanimity of temper - a composure, a firmness and a gentleness which, taken together, are indispensable to him as much with his pupils as with their parents.

But no quality can take the place of justice. When one is dealing with the human will, and more so, perhaps, when one must secure obedience in the face of children's sensitivities, the supremely important thing is justice. Emphasis on this matter is appropriate, because it involves the delicate problem of corrections. The *Parish School* devotes no less than nineteen paragraphs to the subject of the ``teacher's justice''.

There is an entry on the matter of justice in relation to God, which is the duty of Religion; another on justice in relation to superiors, which is reverence, devotion and gratitude. And then, in what concerns school children, there is the code of offenses, punishments and rewards, along with commentaries for which a young teacher might have genuine need.

``Vindictiveness'' should not be allowed to distort the teacher's sense of fairness. To avenge a personal offense, to get angry, to insult the offending party, to allow oneself to slip into violence - kicks or punches, ear or hair pulling, shaking a pupil by the shoulders or covering his arms with bruises---is to cease to be a judge and to lower oneself to the condition of a participant in which justice is no longer in question and only violence and weakness are the combatants.

There is a complete procedure to be followed so that punishment may be impartial and serve the improvement of the pupil, which is genuine ``correction''. It was important to inquire whether the fault was serious and whether it was voluntary. As far as possible a confession should be obtained. Except where there was danger of scandal, the cause of the punishment should be known to all. The chastised pupil must accept the punishment and submit to it in silence. He was to be warned that any outcry would earn him additional punishment. If he put up a resistance, it would be better to wait until the rebellious flare-up had ``cooled down'': but the punishment had to be meted out, ``exemplarily and in public''.

A special sort of tact, indeed, a certain circumspection, was required in regard to some types of children. A ``new boy'' was not to be corrected on his very first day, before having observed his character, ``tried'' his aptitudes and put his temperament to the test. As for ``spoiled children'', there was no question of sparing them; but since they did not know what it meant to be punished one had to avoid those sudden calls to order and those instantaneous punishments which surprise and dismay children without touching them in the depths of their conscience. They should be ``humbled gently'' and habituated to the spectacle of discipline. They would come to see that every infraction deserved, and brought with it, a punishment that reestablished order. In the case of a collective fault, these children were not be subjected to the rod until after they had witnessed the punishment of their comrades.

When an infraction occurred in the teacher's absence, it was not to be punished unless it was possible to gather certain and corroborating testimony. Armed only with a ``report'' from an isolated pupil, the lover of justice must practice forbearance. If he discovered a culprit through his own confession and he was repentant, the teacher was to attenuate the sanction.

The teacher would contrive not to allow ``obstinate'' pupils to wallow in their sullenness, stubbornness or rancor. He was to facilitate a return to grace by asking them to perform a task that they would like or an activity in which they would find satisfaction. Thereafter, quieted nerves and a happy heart would make them less unruly.

Clearly, the teacher, or at least the ideal teacher of the 17th century, did not intend to use physical punishment or inflict pain except for moral reform and spiritual liberation. But it was also clear that he did not scruple to deal roughly with the child's

body. To the switch and the rod, which were in daily use in the schools, were added two other punishments, less brutal but more frightful: the ``Jail'' which consisted in total isolation in the dark, which might continue on for several hours and was reserved for hardened backsliders or for the very guilty, and the ``Jackass Square'', a kind of pillory for use against the inveterately lazy.

In its childish details, the description of this latter device reveals that pitiless cruelty that attracted the most refined people of the period to places where prisoners were exposed to public view and where executions were held. The ``jackass'' was led up to ``a small manger filled with hay''; he would be wearing the famous ``dunce's cap'', bound ``by an old piece of horse bridle'', and saddled ``with a ragged piece of carpet''. Nearby there would be a likeness of him drawn on a ``one-foot-square'' piece of wood, on which there would be the image of a jackass. Meanwhile, ``the teacher would lead his pupils in hooting at the victim''.

The humiliation was outrageous, and the participation of the rest of the class was shocking; since it is in this fashion that the worst instincts are unleashed. It is a good thing that, as this chapter ends, the book returns to healthier themes. When he praises or blames, the teacher is exhorted to keep in the mind the merits of the pupil he is addressing; he will even go so far as to reflect on the merits of the child's family, which is, basically, to acknowledge the role of heredity and environment. He will hand out little rewards. He will stimulate rivalry, without tolerating jealousy. He will seek out pretense, treachery, flattery and every kind of untruth. He will make war on the greedy by forbidding the trafficking in toys, books and pictures. He will watch over pupils to whom he has delegated some bits of authority---the *decurions* and the *observers* - lest they allow themselves to be corrupted. He himself will give an example of selflessness by asking nothing more in money or in kind than the recompense agreed upon. He will punish theft in the most strenuous way possible by dismissing thieves from school. Thus, honesty and truth, inseparably bound up with justice, was to reign in the school. And the teacher, delivered from pride, self-love and the spirit of domination and ownership, would think only of serving God in the person of his pupils.

Such was the primary school teacher according to *The Parish School*: a man on the way to ``perfection'' and, in effect, a `Religious'. And while, in 1654, he did not exist, he was at least anticipated, described and almost named. The world awaited and beckoned to him.

In the second chapter of the book we are examining we come in contact with the locale of the teacher's activities and its furnishings. ``The hall or classroom'' (for a group of 100 children) should be about 26 feet long, 17 -= 18 feet wide, with a ceiling 12 feet high. ``Paris' heavy air'' required these dimensions. They appear inadequate to us, but the concern for hygiene should be noted. Class was not to be held in any room whatsoever; it required ventilation and light, which would determine the number and positioning of openings, doors and windows. The ``teacher's office'' was to give on to this large room; it was to be laid out and lighted in such a way that the teacher ``could observe the activity of his pupils...outside of class time''.

During bad weather the classroom was to be heated. As a consequence, it was to be equipped with a fireplace around which benches might be arranged. This meant that the flame's heat did not extend very far; from time to time numbed fingers and chilled feet would be advanced to the fireside in order to stir up the blood and the courage.

The teacher was to sit ``in an armchair'' whose seat ``was to be two feet high.[3] The children were to have benches; furthermore, pupils who practiced penmanship

were to take their places at tables ``in the best lighted spot in the room". Each one had his own assigned place. And it is at this point that the author recommends that the poor should be seated apart, since with their coarseness and their infestation they might upset their neighbors.

The walls were to be decorated with holy pictures: a crucifix, painted or in relief, the Blessed Virgin, St.Joseph, St.Nicholas, the patron of school children, as well as the patron saint of the diocese; to all of which there was to be added some representation of ``the general judgment". And there was always to be holy water on hand.

Other pieces of furniture included ``coat hooks", a ``cabinet" for papers, desks, pupils' books, a cupboard containing the teacher's small library, religious objects with which the pupils learn to serve Mass, ``representations of the mysteries", record books and notebooks; the record books for the names and academic results, and the notebooks ``to record absences", and list ``officers" (i.e.,pupils who had a responsibility, or office to fulfill in the class).

The Parish School enumerates the books the teacher should use: Père Ribadeneyra's *The Lives of the Saints* , *The Best Examples* , `` as a source for stories", the diocesan catechism, *The Little Digest of the Mysteries* , the *Paradisus puerorum* , St. Bonaventure's *Little Book of Meditations* , *The Christian Educator* , Louis de Granada's *The Guide for Sinners* , *Despautère's Latin Grammar* .

Finally, reminding us that the 17th century was concerned with the cleanliness of the premises, we are told, under this heading, what were the indispensable piece of equipment: baskets, brooms, scrapers, a bucket and a water can.

And now, into this well furnished room the pupils were preparing to descend. Who would be admitted, who refused admission? ``The children of heretics" were not to be refused, provided they conformed to the program of studies and abstained from expressing their particular opinions. Children who had left other schools would be welcome, on condition that the reason why they left were known and acceptable. On the contrary, those who were once expelled and were seeking reinstatement would be dealt with rigorously; they would be readmitted conditionally and only once. The doors were open liberally to the children of the parish, including the poor, who were to pay nothing.

When the parents delivered their children to the teacher, he was to question the parents concerning the character and the health of the newcomers and their `` ability to read and write"; he had to discover whether the catechism was studied, whether the Sacrament of Confirmation had been received, and whether First Communion was made. He provided some information about teaching methods; and explained why it was thought essential to teach penmanship only to those who had already read rather fluently. Further, he sought information concerning the future that was being planned for the boy, stressed the family obligation to direct the child's vocation ``gently", and inquired as to the ideas that the child himself may have expressed on this subject.

He concluded with immediately practical information: class hours (seven o'clock to eleven in the morning - including Mass - and three hours in the afternoon, with a variation of a half-hour depending on the season of the year);[4] a provision of ink for a small fee, breakfast (at the beginning of the day) and `lunch' taken at school; a brief monthly report on the child's behavior to be sent home; advice with respect to cleanliness `` since politeness and decency are required just as much of the poor as of the rich"; warning against giving money to pupils; counsel against giving credence to children's gossip; and the need for knowing the reasons for a child's absences.

Once admission has been decided upon, the teacher would write the baptismal and the family names of the pupil in a register intended for that purpose, and in which henceforth he will faithfully enter his academic observations concerning ``the behavior and progress'' of the pupil, and, if the occasion should arise, the reason for his leaving school. Everything was to be briefly and precisely noted, so that at a glance the teacher could locate the grounds for his judgments and decisions.

The teacher will know his pupils all the better for having, in a variety of ways, included them as partners in his own educational mission and in the entire life of the school. Since, as a rule, he would have only a single teaching assistant, he was to secure the help of the most intelligent and zealous of his pupils. Of the former of these he would ask especially that they hear their classmates' lessons and their homework; and the names he gave them (taken, as in the Jesuit Colleges, from Roman history) - ``Senators'', ``Praetors'', ``Decurions'' and even ``Emperor'' were designed to generate authority and prestige.

All sorts of responsibilities were the lot of people of good will---both delicate missions as well as humble tasks. Those who shouldered them were called ``general officers''. At the bottom of the hierarchy were the ``sweepers'' and the ``door keeper''; then there were those who collected the writers' blotting powder and ink; the ``chaplain'' (who gathered the leftovers from the meals, for distribution to the poor); the ``readers'' (who each day read a passage aloud from a spiritual writer or from Sacred Scripture); then there were the ``prayer reciters''; and above them the `monitors' appointed to the supervision and improvement of the more frivolous pupils; there were `observers' (who in a low voice called attention to the ``talkers'', formed lines for church attendance and distributed rosary beads); and ``visitors'' (who, by twos, visited the families for a monthly account of the conduct of their classmates; and, finally, there were the ``managers''(who were the general overseers of the other ``officers'').

The primary instruction received by this young group, the fundamental instruction and the real reason for the existence of the parochial school was catechism. Each weekday before the end of class there was a quarter-of-an-hour's explanation and interrogation regarding the Mass, prayers and the Sacraments. The teacher will propose questions, the first of which he will have to ask and repeat two or three times without varying the words. He will ask those who wish to answer and whom he knows are among the more attentive; and having thus repeated it eight or ten times, he will answer it himself, and then propose the second and the third questions in the same way. He concluded with a brief story that had to do with the subject of the lesson.

Two afternoons were to be set aside for the study of the diocesan catechism. Besides that, the teacher was to prepare special catechism lessons to prepare the children for Confession, Confirmation and First Communion. Before all this the teacher would have offered a fervent prayer to God in order to plead for light and strength `` to be able to spread the seed of Christian Doctrine to these young souls''.

The teacher was enjoined to take care to awaken and sustain his audience's attention. It was not permitted that, during one pupil's recitation, the others dive into their books so as to be ready for the next questions. Each pupil must expect to be questioned, following the classmate who was reciting and be prepared to repeat or complete his reply. After this traditional dialogue the catechist was to summarize the themes in an orderly discourse. And, inspiring his pupils to apostolic action, he ``will suggest that they recite this lesson to their parents'' and explain to them also the

contents of the book, so that the family might be inclined to a complete and thoughtful practice of Christianity.

Knowledge and understanding of religious truths would be empty if they did not nourish piety. The age that insisted that ``piety is the man'' assiduously molded the child to piety. A year after the appearance of *The Parish School* there was published by Charles Gobinet, priest and Principal of the College of Plessis-Sorbonne, *his Education of Youth to Christian Piety*, [5] a book that spread rapidly through the older universities and that was to continue to be reedited until 1851. In 1675 Claude Joly published his *Christian and Moral Counsel for the Education of Children* .The anonymous book we have been examining devotes sixty pages (after the fifty given over to ``theory'') to attendance at the Divine Office, the order to be observed in processions, and to school prayers.

Starting on Saturday the children were to begin to prepare for the proper celebration of the Lord's Day. Having sung Vespers, they would return to the classroom to listen to their teacher's exhortations:

> he will admonish them to say three prayers:1) To thank God for all the graces of mind and body they received during the week 2) To ask God's pardon for the sins they have committed 3) To ask God's grace, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, to make a good beginning of the week to follow by a holy observance of Sunday.

On Sunday they were to be at school at eight o'clock in the morning. ``Together'' they would then be conducted to church `in ranks', ``the youngest in coats, even the color of their clothes being the same".[66]. They were kept kneeling from the ``Introit'' to the ``Kyrie'', during the ``Collects'', and from the ``Sanctus'' to the ``Last Gospel'', but they stood during the ``Gospel'' and the ``Preface''. The rest of the time they might be seated, except at the *Et incarnatus est* of the Credo . A part of the afternoon was taken up with catechism and Vespers.

On the vigils of the great feasts the teacher was to give a lesson on the mystery celebrated in the Liturgy. Throughout the course of the weeks, he would take the time necessary to teach how to serve Mass. At ``carnival time'' (the days preceding Lent) no holidays were to be given. Rather, the teacher was to take very great care to see that his pupils were off the streets by teaching them and by taking them to Vespers, and, on the day before Ash Wednesday, to the procession. Throughout Holy Week the teacher, entrusted with the supervision of his pupils, combined catechetical instruction, Office and `visits' to the Repository.

Our ancestors loved processions and they liked them solemn, indeed, pompous. The pupils in the elementary schools took part in them in their parishes, but often enough they disrupted them with their outrageous behavior. I de B. writes:

> We see these children, sometimes four, six, ten or twelve of them, during the procession, running like untethered jackasses, crying and screaming, fighting with one another, parish against parish, with stones and sticks and other weapons; and all of this happens through the negligence of parents and teachers.

It made a fetching scene, but it's clear that the author had very little patience with his subjects. To avoid the disorder they created he advocated a whole system of marshalling, sectioning and processing that would, of course, reestablish an external order, but the most efficacious remedy would consist in the formation of consciences and the strengthening of the faith. A solid structure of daily prayer would support the child's piety---prayers before and after class and ``prayers at the hours'':

> On the hour all pupils will stand, uncover, and, hands joined together, will turn to the crucifix. One of the ``Reciters'' will make the Sign of the Cross followed by a short invocation and the Ave

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6 . The meaning seems to be that the pupils were to be grouped together according to the color of the clothes they were wearing

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They also prayed when the Blessed Sacrament was carried by and when there was an illness or a death among the pupils, the teachers, the benefactors or the parochial clergy; as well as when a family presented a newborn child for Baptism, or when a storm rumbled through.

At the beginning of the ``Third Part'', which includes the last hundred pages (pp.233--335) the author quite deliberately summons up the basic principle of the Christian school:

> Since elementary schools are the seminaries of Christianity, in which one must especially provide the foundations of doctrine and virtue… we use knowledge in order the more easily and the more completely to arrive at that faith.

But since ``the means'' were good, one had to learn how to use them. We shall then come to understand in detail how people thought about elementary education in the mid-17th century.

The child about to be taught his ABC's began with the Sign of the Cross. And then, in his right hand, he took ``a small book of four or five pages, while in the fingers of his left hand he held ``a bit of goose feather'', called a ``pointer''. In the first lesson the teacher would dictate the first three or four letters of the alphabet and had the pupil repeat them, showing them to him by using the ``pointer'' from behind the pupil. After this rough run-through, the teacher would turn the child over to a *Decurion* who would teach the next three or four letters.

Once the alphabet had been learned, the pupil would move on to a ``Speller''. And after the mechanics of assembling letters into syllables had been mastered, he would spell out the words syllable-by-syllable. The teacher ``would show only one syllable at a time and would place his finger over the rest of the word''. The child pronounced the syllable as he indicated it with his ``pointer''.The materials in the ``Speller'' included ``*The Magnificat''* and the *Nunc dimittis* , the *Salve Regina* , the ``*Seven Penitential Psalms*'' and the ``Responses'' at Mass. When the pupil came to the point of reading, he would take in hand the Offices of Our Lady, the Holy Cross, the Holy Spirit, the ``Seven Penitential Psalms'', the Office of the Dead, the daily prayers, and the diocesan hymnal.

The method was a survival of medieval tradition. The aspiring cleric or altarboy had to read and pronounce in Latin before he was able to understand it. But by the 17th century the initial motive had been forgotten; in any case, it was no longer valid, since the school had changed was the French language any longer the irresolute instrument it had been five centuries earlier. People invented arguments to justify tradition: ``The ability to read Latin is basic to French.'' And since the pronunciation of syllables in the mother-tongue is easier, it is important to begin with that language. The simultaneous study of both Latin and French would prove confusing to the child - a situation that would ``greatly inconvenience the teacher''.

``Before reading French'', pupils were to read ``all sorts of Latin''. From the outset there must have been a nearly total divorce between recognizing the external appearance of a word (the letters that composed it and the sounds that vocalized it) and knowing the image or idea corresponding to the words.

Finally, pupils would take up the study of the ``vulgar'' tongue. The differences in the pronunciation of the two languages would be emphasized. And, obviously, French children, accustomed from their earliest years to the sounds of the local dialect, would quickly grasp such differences. They would be drilled in increasingly difficult readings, starting with a small book printed in very large letters, right up to the *Child's book of Courtesy* with its special typography and containing:

all the duties of children both to God and their parents, as well as the propriety and behavior dictated by both Christian and civic politeness.

When a pupil knew how ``to read his `Courtesy' well'', it would be time to teach him penmanship. At the same time, the teacher would introduce him to the deciphering of ``handwritten documents'', so that an intelligent and attentive adolescent would be able to find his way through some very difficult scrawl.

The tables for ``the writers'' were to be ``fifteen or sixteen inches wide,10[7] and six to nine feet long[11] mounted on runners of two – or two and a half feet.[912] They were to be adaptable to the height of the child, and each child was to share an area of twelve, fourteen or sixteen square inches.[10] Armed with the proper equipment (pens, knife, paper, ink and blotting powder) the beginners took their places. The teacher showed them how to shape the pen, to hold and ``control'' it and how to position the body, the arms and the right hand. They would be provided with ``models'': in the beginning these would be letters and words, but when they became quite adept, what they copied were ``receipts and contracts in order to train them in business methods and procedures''.

The work was corrected in the following way: the first thing in the morning the teacher (who had set before him ``a tablet, a pen and a horn of ink'') would call up ``the writers'' two-by-two. As the work of one of the pupils was corrected, the work of the other would follow in turn. But the teacher had them both listen to the comments made on each of the homeworks.

This procession to the teacher's desk would not occur again for the rest of the day. But after `Grace' which followed the pupils' breakfast the teacher would visit those whom he knew to be more lazy in order to observe how they were holding their pens, whether they were being careful or whether they were going too fast. And during the afternoon his peripatetic supervision would be exercised again ``over the greater number of his `writers'''.

Beyond this the parish school did not pretend to compete with ``the famous Writing masters'', to whom the young people applied if they wished to become skilled in this art.

However, they did not leave elementary school without having received lessons in spelling as the normal compliment of their knowledge of penmanship. To this end, they were made to copy ``some story or discourse''. The author was not unaware that the spelling of many French words in his own time was still somewhat fluid, and, as he himself rather amiably puts it:

> To dispute here the best spelling is at the present time such a matter of great controversy that I prefer to say not a word about it For I see that those who have wanted to change the spelling, being excessively attached to their own opinion, have removed too many letters necessary to the pronunciation of the French language. Hence, since neither authors of books, nor printers, nor correctors have followed them, I council the reader to follow the common way until some good writer has settled the problem.

Concerning the elements of arithmetic, these were simple and brief, and their real purpose was to enable pupils to use the French monetary system. By manipulating ``counters'' in a certain way they learned to set up relations between ``livres'', ``sols'' and ``deniers''. This was called ``calculation by casting''. With pen in hand the pupil wrote down the arabic numerals, the value of which was known by their position; the ``four operations'' were performed, beginning with the addition of

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10 . 40-43 cm.
11 . 1 metre 80-90cm
12 . 60-80 cm

``deniers", twelve of which made a ``sol", and of ``sols" twenty of which made a one ``livre".

Certainly it was a sketchy program that in many ways fell victim to rote memory and that, in general, needed to be made more exact. But it was fundamentally sound, and it remained something from which to begin building. The better teachers could add their acute observations and their judicious counsels. To what we have already quoted, we note the following piece of advice (which, while it was uttered in reference to the Classical Curriculum that was reserved for the more talented pupils, still it is easily translatable to the level of primary education):

The method of having several (pupils) recite their lessons quickly is (to ask) them the nouns and the pronouns and the cases of each, one after the other, and the verbs with the person of each one; this is the way (of obtaining recited lessons from pupils) by competition and mutual correction by rivals for class-standing.

Competition between pupil and pupil was a feature of the system of ``camps" promoted by the Jesuits. And the variety of recitation introduced movement into the monotony of the school day, a sort of play that awakened attention and stimulated self-esteem. Clearly, individual instruction had been breached. All that was needed were certain reasonable adjustments and especially the establishment of a guiding principle, in order that the narrowness and exclusivity of individual instruction be demolished and so that in the school of the future nothing of it remain except its excellent, irreducible and central idea - immediate contact between the teacher's mind and the pupil's understanding.

CHAPTER FIVE

Charles Demia

The voices heard up to now may seem indistinct and distant, like the mutterings of a mob. Even *The Parish School* is faceless. We get a glimpse of nothing more than an anonymous choirmaster summarizing the thought and expressing the wishes of the chorus: a *turba magna* of pedagogues. Now, let the chorus be silent, as we attend to the principal protagonists.

Their names are Charles Demia, Nicolas Barré and John Baptist de La Salle. A bishop who was also an educator, G.Audollent, has written that ``these three seemed to have been suited to one another and to have formed a magnificent triumvirate''. Père Barré founded the first school: but ``it was Demia who definitely determined Barré's activity''. And Barré had a direct and decisive influence upon John Baptist de La Salle. Three great cities and three important regions of France framed the essential moment of these lives and provided the soil whose flavor forever attaches to the achievements of these three men: the city and the diocese of Lyons for Demia, Rouen and Normandy for Barré, and Rheims and Champagne for the most illustrious of the three, the founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.[1]

Charles Demia and Père Barré are certainly worthy of comparison with De La Salle. They, like him, were great souls, great hearts, bold, broad and fruitful minds. Their ideas had swifter flight and ascended almost immediately far beyond the arena of their immediate activity. The junior member of this trio had the good fortune to harvest much of the seed the other two had sown: he worked their furrows. He was the one, however, who produced the richest harvest. He was the worker who came at the right time, following the pioneers of an earlier day. He had received God's special grace, a broader mission, and more abundant help. Regarding their relative merits, it does not belong to man to place them on the scales, although the Church has proclaimed the eminent merits of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

We surely do not detract anything from the reputations of Nicolas Barré and Charles Demia by placing them in the ranks of La Salle's predecessors. They join that group with the modesty of authentic and heroic Christians; and perhaps one day something more may be said for Père Barré. They had to have an energy and a kind of genius that doubtless came close to sanctity. Their stories and their characters are fascinating. To cast a mere glance in their direction, as though we scrupled to take pleasure in what we saw, or feared lest we fail in our admiration for De La Salle, or lest we rob him of the honor we bestow on his distinguished predecessors, is the biased posture of the panegyrist who does not know his man, and does not wish to know him.

Indeed, if St. John Baptist de La Salle should be dealt with to the exclusion of the others, we dare say that there would be a void in the noble `trio' that we have been given. But there is a third precursor whose name is forcibly thrust upon us - in indirect but unmistakable relation to Demia, in close, enduring and decisive connections with Père Barré, and as the compatriot, friend and spiritual director of De La Salle, a founder of schools and the founder of a teaching congregation of Sisters, Canon Nicolas Roland. With the addition of this other citizen of Rheims we have restored the triptych in the background of which are depicted the steeples of Rouen, the towers of Rheims and the facade of St. Jean in Lyons. This, then, is the unbroken chain of the predecessors who inspired our Saint.

Charles Demia is placed at the head of this group for two reasons: the first is the one given by Bishop Audollent: Demia's powerful statement fueled the first efforts of Father Barré. And the other is that, while in the genealogy of accomplishments, Demia is, for St. La Salle's Institute, an ancestor from whom it derives part of its heritage, Barré (a genuine patriarch) half through Nicolas Roland's and half without intermediary, transmitted a whole treasury of principles and achievements.

Demia's thought is revealed to us in a text of the first importance. It is a volume, in quarto, printed in Lyons by Andrew Olyer, ``at the expense of the School Bureau'' and entitled ``Rules for the Schools of the City and the Diocese of Lyons , by Charles Demia, Priest, and substitute general promoter for the Archbishop, and director general of the said schools''. The book has no date. But it certainly belongs to the year 1688, the year before the author died. It contains references the latest of which is a decree of the Archbishop, dated the 22nd of April, 1667. And a prefatory notice states that these regulations, the printing of which had been long deferred, were the fruit of ``more than twenty years of experience''. But we shall see that the first school was opened on January 9th, 1667. The dedication, signed by Charles Demia, is addressed to Archbishop Camille Neufville, Count of Lyons, who died in 1689. The Archbishop's coat-of-arms is reproduced on the title page. And at the end of the Preface there appears the coat-of-arms adopted by Demia, a gold heart on a silver monogram of the Blessed Virgin, with the device: *Pauperibus evangelizare misit C. D.* (God has sent Charles Demia to preach the Gospel to the poor).

The celebrated *Remonstrances Concerning the Necessity and Utility of an Establishment of Schools for the Poor* constitutes the first paragraph of the Second Part:``*A Compendium of the Most Important Statutes for the Schools in the Diocese of Lyons, for the Poor as well as for the Rich''.*

As regards the man's biography, it appeared in Lyons in 1829, published by Rusand. It was brought out anonymously, but it has been attributed indisputably to a Père Faillon who was the Director of the Seminary of St. Ireneus and later of the Seminary of St. Sulpice. Its chief source was a manuscript written at the end of the 18th century by Perrin Belin. Not long ago, M.Andrew Chagny, a scholar in Bresse published a biographical account based upon numerous unpublished fragments dealing with ``Charles Demia's early years''. Finally, Gabriel Compayré's *Charles Demia and the Origins of Primary Education* may be consulted, but cautiously: it is a somewhat tendentious survey, but offers important testimony by a master of ``secular'' education.[2]

Demia's features were regular and delicate, his lips firm and the eyes singularly penetrating; he had a youthful air and a somewhat sad gravity, a sense of gentleness and of command, an enduring ardor and a dominating intelligence - such is the way Charles Demia's physical features appear as they emerge from behind a surplice and a crucifix with wide-extending arms, in a portrait preserved by the Sisters of St. Charles. He had been a rich young man, orphaned at an early age and alone. He was born in Bourg-en-Bresse on the 3rd of October, 1637, and his Godfather was Charles Damas, Marquis of Thianges and lieutenant-general for Bresse, Bugey and Valromey, for whom the child's father, Benedict Démia, was secretary. Benedict was an able and diligent businessman who had, after the death of Thianges, the confidence of the new governor, La Mothe-Houndancourt, who had, as Marshal of France, taken over the military operations in Spain and had taken Benedict with him to the Peninsula. While Benedict was returning through the Rhone Valley carrying letters to the King, a sudden illness struck him dead on his horse.

This was in February, 1643, and Charles Demia was not yet six years old. In March, 1645, the child lost his mother. In 1647 the death of his younger brother left him alone in the world and in the care of an aunt, Jaquème Démia. He was serious and fragile. Aunt Jaquème Demia surrounded him with solicitude. For his education she sent him to the Jesuits, who had just opened a college at Bourg. In 1654 the young man went to Lyons to receive the tonsure at the hands of Camille Neufville; and then, deciding to stay on with the Jesuits, he entered Trinity College in Lyons as a student in philosophy. His aunt, after appointing his legal guardian, died in 1659. For five years he seemed to hesitate between the world and the priesthood. He studied law. Learned and the heir to a huge fortune, he gave it all up for God. One of his protectors, the Marquis of Coligny, persuaded him to seek admission to one of the Parisian seminaries. On the 8th of September, 1660 Charles was received into the Seminary of Bons Enfants. He spent very little time there, passed a few days at the Seminary of St. Nicholas of Chardonnay, before finally finding the peaceful portals of St. Sulpice and Père Tronson, the marvelous director who, after guiding Demia, would be the director of John Baptist de La Salle, as well as of Francis de Salignac de Lamothe-Fenelon and of Louis Grignion de Montfort.

With its catechism classes St. Sulpice circulated its seminarians among the children of the common people. It was in this way that it inspired educational vocations. No doubt Charles Demia's vocation existed in germ at this time. A man of clear vision, a man of action and possessed of both moral courage and material resources for action, very early he must have known where he was going.

Ordained a priest on the 14th of May, 1663, Charles returned to Bourg. The following year the Vicar-general of Lyons, Antony Neufville, pastor of St.Just, on the recommendation of Father Hurtevent, Superior of the Seminary of St.Ireneus, commissioned Demia to ``visit the parishes of Bresse, Bugey'' and the surrounding countryside. Antony Neufville belonged to the Society of the Blessed Sacrament: and he deliberately chose assistants who were dedicated to the renewal of the clergy and the faithful.

As Charles Demia wrote in his ``Preface'' in 1688, religious ignorance in this southwestern region was ``profound''. Schools had to be opened and Lyons must lead the way.

The young priest, who henceforth was to live in this great city, pondered how he might strike a blow: In 1666 he sent a letter to the city authorities ``concerning the need for schools to educate poor children''. At that time the writer's entreaties fell on deaf ears, but there were some individuals who decided to support a schoolteacher in St.George's parish. Demia, of course, was among them, as was the pastor of St.Just. From that day on Demia celebrated as a feast day particularly dear to his heart the anniversary of the 9th of January, 1667, the beginnings of the school in St.George and the start of his own life's work.

But he believed that his purposes could not be realized unless public opinion was powerfully awakened, forced to face its responsibilities, and, throughout the whole of France, induced to support the efforts of people of good will and to demand the intervention of political leaders. And so, in 1688 he formally issued his ``*Remonstrances to the Provost of the Guilds, the Councilors and the Principal Inhabitants of the City of Lyons*''. This important document, which we shall examine presently, was ``sent to various places'' through the efforts of Demia himself.

> Père Feret, pastor of St.Nicholas of Chardonnet, had the *Remonstrances* read in several Paris communities, and wrote that they had such an effect that Nicolas Roland, the Theologian in Rheims had resolved (to found a school for the poor); (and he added) that another worthy person was arranging to employ a very considerable sum of money for the same purpose.[3]

In Lyons the movement became unstoppable. On the 30th of December the subject was finally decided upon at the City Hall. A sum of two hundred *livres*, levied annually ``from the general funds'', was henceforth to be allotted ``to found and maintain a public school to teach the poor the principles of the Christian religion,as well as reading and writing''.[4] The school was opened ``near St.Marcel''.

On the 2nd of December 1672 an archiepiscopal order ``appointed a director for the management and general direction of schools''. The man selected was, of course, Father Demia, who was at the same time authorized to select aides, both clerical and lay, from among the distinguished citizens of Lyons. In his *Historical Treatise,* Claude Joly stresses the structure of this organization: the Archbishop controlled all primary schools, both charity and pay-schools. Only those of his pastors had a share in the educational administration who were associated with Archbishop Neufville's representative, Charles Demia, who was also the diocesan promoter for the supervision of the clergy. Along with the priests on the School Board there were a certain number of laymen---magistrates, lawyers and book publishers.[5]

After several years of activity, the Bureau was ``confirmed'' by an archiepiscopal order of the 1st of February, 1679. In May of 1680 the King conferred legal existence upon it by granting it `Letters Patent'.

Henceforth there was to exist in the diocese of Lyons a genuine ministry for elementary education whose orders no one would be able to evade. A decision of the `Privy Council' on May 7th, 1674 ``forbade school teaching without the expressed written permission and approval from the Archbishop'', that is, in fact, of Father Demia. Superintendents and lieutenant-generals were used for the rigorous enforcement of this order. Bishop Neufville demanded that all licensed teachers of both sexes submit in six months time to an examination``of competence and religion'' by the Director-general, if they intended to be continued on in the exercise of their profession.

It was in this way that, on the one hand, tuition-free schools were created for the poor. And in 1680 Demia himself established a school with his own money, by way of example, because he feared that, after him, ``such a holy work'' might ``perish''. Following Demia's example, the Archbishop, on the 8th of January, 1685, set up an annual income of 1200 livres and 10 sols for the schools for the poor; and he stipulated that ``poor children were to be taught tuition-free to read and to write'', to learn the catechism and arithmetic, ``without principals or teachers...or other persons being able'' to claim ``anything whatsoever'' (either personally or through intermediaries) for instruction, furnishings, or for the school buildings.[6]

On the other hand, pay-schools (what Demia called ``schools for the rich'') were subject to the Bureau, and controlled, regulated and compelled to conform as closely as possible to the methods employed in the Director-general's schools.

When, on the 23rd of October, 1689, at the age of 53, Charles Demia, his frail health consumed by tireless activity, died, there were sixteen tuition-free schools in Lyons. The schoolchildren, numbering some 1600, assisted at his funeral. He had ordered that each child receive a coin valued at 3 sols and 6 deniers, a loaf of bread and a gift - for the boys a coat, and for the girls an apron.

But it was his *Remonstrances* that thrust Demia's name upon the attention of his century, first of all, by its lively and imperious style, and then by its special logic. According to one of Bishop Audollent's quite perceptive comments, Demia placed the accent on the `social' value of the school. Appealing to administrators and businessmen in a great city, he set out to prove that schools guaranteed order; and that to educate children meant preparing groups and leaders.

He opened in the style of a skilled orator:

> The illustrious proofs that the Provost of the Guilds and the Councilors of the City of Lyons have at all times given of their zeal to make the city one of the most refined places in the Kingdom, and the piety of its chief citizens, have given rise to the thought in some persons to appeal to the gentlemen of the Council and to the most notable of Lyons' residents that the chief way to achieve the splendor and the magnificence of this great city is to establish Christian schools

How could a splendid external order endure without a parallel harmony within minds and consciences? Where would security be, where would the public welfare be, if ``individuals failed to fulfill their duties to God, to their country and to their family''? And they will fulfill them only if they are taught to do so; since ``into this world they bring nothing but ignorance, sin and a great inclination to evil''.

The children of well-to-do families have tutors and colleges to educate them. More often than not the children of the poor remain as fallen nature has left them. There is neither father nor godfather who has either the leisure or the concern ``to teach them how to live well'':

> The education of the children of the poor is completely neglected, even though it is the most important thing in a State, of which they form the largest part.

Perhaps it will be said that they learn about God ``through sermons and catechism classes'':

> Many of them attend neither, and those who do fail to profit from them in any way, either because most of the instruction that goes on in them is beyond them, or because the sacred seed that is sown there is choked by the corruption of nature and bad companions

This crass ignorance, in which vice takes root, is a public danger:

> Ordinarily, badly educated young people fall into idleness; whence it happens that they do nothing but run around, lolling about town; that they are seen gathering on street corners, where most often they converse in the most dissolute language; that they become indocile, licentious, gamblers, blasphemers, quarrelsome, given to drunkenness, impurity, larceny and brigandage; and that finally, they become the most depraved and fractious persons in the State, of which, being its corrupt members, they despoil the rest of the body, unless the whip of taskmaster, the King's galleys or the judge's gibbet cleanses the earth of these venomous snakes that would infect the world…

Even when physical and moral misery do not raise the specter of revolution, inevitably they create that plague that the 19th century would call ``pauperism''. Unfortunates who beget other unfortunates are from one generation to the next a burden on the community. The subsidies that people would refuse to schools must be given in a much more onerous and far less efficacious form to the hospital and the undertaker.

As to the ruin caused by fallen women, we are fairly familiar with what that can be. ``Poor girls'' have all the more need of moral and religious instruction in view of the fact that their ``weakness is great and upon their good beginnings depends their happy end'':

> Whence, in our opinion, come the disorders and jealousies in homes, so many places of ill-fame in the city, so many abandoned children in hospitals, so much public dissoluteness, except that we have not taken sufficient care of the education of young girls; that we have left them to ignorance, indocility, inconstancy, and, finally to the misery which is the reef whereon most commonly the modesty of this sex ordinarily comes to grief?

Like a trade that must be practiced with complete honesty, a life, if it is to be virtuous and useful, requires an apprenticeship. Every human soul has a `vocation' which is tested and purified and forged in some sort of `novitiate' or `seminary'. The elementary school must be the novitiate of the children of the common people, and, at the same time, provided the children have the talent, the workshop where they will be trained to become master workmen. ``Along with the fear of God and good morals'', they will be taught ``to read, write and calculate'', in order to be `` ready to work in

most professions, there being none wherein this fundamental knowledge does not offer great help and facility in order to advance in the weightiest employments".

Demia describes ``the public schools'' as ``academies for the perfection of poor children''. He was speaking of both moral and artistic perfection. The poor were as virgin territory where there existed all sorts of riches to be mined, which were being lost to nothing more than routine neglect and ancient prejudice. The author goes on cautiously to deal with this prejudice at the very moment he is denouncing it:

> Often we find gold in this mud, and among rocks precious stones, that is to say, people who are just as well, or better disposed toward the arts, science and virtue than the rest of mankind - something that is confirmed clearly enough in a great number of examples.

An elite will rise up out of the masses. The masses themselves will be a reservoir of strength. And, as in the Gospel parable, people will come in search of ``laborers for the vineyard''. The people of Lyons will come to recognize the schools for the poor as real ``training agencies'' and ``market places'', that they train and supply personnel for homes, factories, manufactures, businesses and work places. The time given over to manual labor, ``to buttons, knitting and laces'' will have habituated the children to physical effort and will have adapted them in advance for their jobs. As soon as they will be of an age to begin an apprenticeship properly so called, ``they will no longer be kept'' in school; on the contrary, efforts will be made to find them a job proportioned to their training.

Such is the argument and such is the program of the *Remonstrances.* Before concluding, Charles Demia summarizes his appeal in a number of slogans:

> Crimes are usually committed by those who have been badly educated...Good habits contracted in youth are rarely lost. If some fail in their duty, they return to it more easily, because from childhood they have been sanctified by the yoke of the Lord

He bases himself on the authority of the Council of Trent, on the ``decrees of the Popes, the orders of kings, and the laws of Parlement'', all of which ``favored the furtherance of this holy work''.

Then there occur the crowning appeals: ``to pastors, sacristans, church wardens to those who, being charged with the magistracy, are commonly called `fathers' of the people. Surely, they would be so called for a new reason'', if they opened schools; and ``it would be a far more excellent way than natural fathers, since the latter, having given existence'' to their progeny, leave it ``nothing for its portion but misery and vice in a life which often ends in eternal damnation.''

Every charitable person must regard as one of his primary duties ``the alms of a good education'', which contributes

> not only to the support of the body but also to the nourishment and the perfection of the soul. When we supply the poor with food against hunger and with clothing against the rigors of the cold, these are transient benefits; the former of these is consumed by the body`s heat and the latter by use; but a good education is an enduring alms, and the cultivation of the minds of the young is an advantage that will last forever and from which they will draw benefits throughout their lives By procuring the first tincture of piety and of the arts for a countless crowd of poor people, would not that be giving bread, lodging, furniture, clothing and supplying them with the necessities both for this life and for the world to come? Since by means of their industry they will be in a position to provide themselves not only with all these things and rid themselves of the miseries of life, but further, by the reading of good books and the practice of God's commandments, they will be able to tend efficaciously toward the end for which they have been placed in this world.

Demia suggested ``several other cities of the realm'' as examples for the people of Lyons. (His research had extended as far as Dijon and Orleans.) In Paris, he assured them, ``these establishments'' (i.e., charity schools) had met with great success and continued in excellent order. It was impossible for Lyons to be behindhand.

> After its magistrates had striven with such happy results to provide for the temporal welfare of its citizens, to make this city one of the most considerable in the world of business, most orderly in its buildings, most civilized in its laws, their vigilance being extended even as far as the paving stones on the streets and the dirt in the squares, there is room to hope that they will not neglect this favorable occasion for making their memory illustrious to posterity by applying themselves to the (city's) spiritual well-being through good schools for the poor who, by running the streets and the squares, become the infected sewers of every sort of vice.

It goes without saying that the city's ``health'' is the obligation of its government. But, in the end, it was a matter of the salvation of souls. It was to the Archbishop, the ultimate authority for elementary education and ``the father of the poor'', that ``the final plea was addressed'':

> We hope...that he will not allow this opportunity to slip by to give the paternal signs of his piety and zeal to so many poor children who, through this clumsy essay, implore his authority for the realization of this work.

Lyons, where once ``the great Gerson'' did not disdain to teach children, would then serve as the model for the entire realm, being ``illustrious'' in its Christianity no less than ``flourishing'' in its commerce; obeying God, as well as faithful to its king.

Demia's hopes were realized. Having listened to the clarion call of the *Remonstrances* men of action turned toward the banks of the Rhone, whence the sound had come. And in the ancient city they saw an organism developing that was sturdily constructed and very much alive, even though it was made of disparate parts and its growth was, perhaps, a little too rapid.

The centerpiece of the organism was the School Bureau, whose sixteen ``Rectors'' met periodically at Demia's residence. They regulated accounts, exchanged views and each one kept his colleagues informed of the results of his most recent inspection. Indeed, the members of the Bureau had frequently to visit the elementary schools, question the pupils, ``without waiting to be invited by the teachers'', examine text books, and observe teaching methods. In their reports they indicated defects and abuses. Further, once a year (either in May of September) they went in company with the teachers to visit the parents of the pupils in their homes. Demia had recommended that they make these visits ``prudently''. In principle, it was an excellent idea: knowing the family, one knew the child better; and they gave useful advice to the parents and attempted to encourage them. Relations established in this way, by coordinating the school's action and the influence of the home and by placing the child at the center of what was as far as possible an unbroken circle, made the role of the teacher less difficult.

Article 39 of the Rules preserves the ``formula of profession'' that the Rectors were obliged to recite, first, at their reception and, then, when, ``during the Octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin'', they visited Notre Dame of Fourvière. It is a beautiful statement, filled with the piety that was typical of Lyons, and there appears in it also (a thing to be expected under the circumstances) that devotion to the Child Jesus, so much recommended by the French mystics of the 17th century.

> I, N...prostrated at the feet of the Holy Child Jesus, in the presence of His Blessed Mother and of the entire Heavenly Court, propose, with the help of Heaven, to work to my fullest extent for the support, the advancement and the perfectioning of the schools for the poor, under the leadership of the Director of these schools and according as the Society or the Bureau will judge necessary. I offer this good intention and resolution to Jesus, the Father of the poor, under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, their good other mother, and of the entire Heavenly Court in order that it might be pleased to grant it its blessing.

This commitment bound the laymen and the priests brought together by Demia into a tightly knit group. For the special apostolate defined in the *Remonstrances* he created a sort of new ``Society of the Blessed Sacrament'', confined, however, within

the limits of a single diocese and working out in the open. In the history of popular education we shall come across this sort of association repeatedly, but nowhere so thoroughgoing, so wisely ordered and so rigorously adapted to its ends as in Lyons.

In the system adopted in Lyons teachers were completely under the control of the Bureau. All functioning teachers were enrolled. And the obligation to submit to an examination in order to obtain a `licence' to teach was reinforced by the obligation of a term of probation in a school designated by the Director-general. No teacher in the rural areas or in the suburbs might pretend to teach in the city unless he had provided proof of his pedagogical competence, studied the methods approved by Charles Demia, and promised to follow the Rules. The Director appointed ``trustees or messengers'', selected from among professional educators, ``to control the execution'' of his orders and ``to supervise the quality of each school''.[7] The teachers were called before the Rectors ``to account for what was going on'' in their classes. They appeared in a posture of obedience, but if they were clerics they might remain seated at the meeting, without removing their hats.[8]

There could be no question of being able to eliminate the lay element from pay schools. But, here, as with the members of the Bureau, religion, practiced communally, constituted a fraternal union among the teachers. There were ``Retreats'' for schoolmasters and for schoolmistresses. Every first Sunday of the month they all met at the Director-general's residence: they sang vespers; one of them read a few verses from the New Testament, in Latin, and then a few pages from a book of devotion, in French. Any errors in the readings were publicly noted. After a prayer, they proceeded to select the reader for the next meeting, as well as delegates who, on the following Sunday, would receive Communion at the Masses celebrated for the schools. They would listen to the minutes of discussions and the reports of agents. There was then a conference on catechism, or ``on the proper way to read Latin and French, or on teaching methods. The meeting was closed with a pious meditation.[9]

We see that professional concerns were introduced quite naturally into the framework of a religious service. And it was in this way that the Director meant gradually to realize that unity which, to be enforced and maintained, had to be from the outset and remain something essentially spiritual. They would then move on, without conflict, to professional and even personal matters. Decidedly, since this was not a congregation, but rather a confraternity which, for the welfare of the souls of the teachers, and, as an immediate consequence, for the welfare of the souls of their young pupils, united the teachers of the city of Lyons. In 1676 Demia proposed St.Charles Borromeo as their patron. And on the 26th of April, 1683, at the request of Trustees Rousselet and Differnel,the ``Confraternity of St.Charles was established by the Vicar-general, Père Manes. It was administered by four trustees, lay and clerical,as far as possible, in equal number, granted a deliberative voice to the Rectors of the Bureau, and was served by the priests of another of Demia's foundations, ``the Community of St.Charles'', of which we shall speak in its proper place. The ``Confraternity'' met on the same dates as the general assemblies of the teachers. Admission to the Confraternity was conditioned upon the reception of a `licence to teach' and in consideration of a monetary contribution. Candidates had to promise to

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8 . *Réglements* , art. 24.

9. Arrangements for Assemblies of Masters and Mistresses of Schools in the City and Region of Lyons: *Réglements* , pp. 88--89.

forego the frequentation of taverns, to refuse admission of the opposite sex into their schools, and to fulfill the period of educational probation required by the Director.

This religious and administrative framework was especially constructed for the teachers in the pay schools. It made them a pretty nearly homogeneous group and brought them back under the ancient control of the Bishop. Teachers in the tuition-free schools remained a distinct group. Demia felt that he was freer to recruit them and organize them according to his own views. For them he wrote another chapter of his Rules ; and he called them together in a separate meeting held on the last Sunday of each month.[10] The problem of professional formation had not eluded a mind that saw so far and so clearly. Without consistent selectivity and intensive preparation methodical education was impossible and the future of schools could not be guaranteed. So Demia thought, and it was a thing that he wished were better understood throughout the realm. Unfortunately, his *Important Counsel for the Establishment of Seminaries for School Teachers* has been lost, but his Rules sufficiently reveal his mind. He writes that the ``holy use'' of the school ``requires a novitiate and apprenticeship much more necessarily than the other arts''. ``Regardless of the care we take in opening these institutions'' that are so necessary to society,

> we shall never succeed properly unless we have good teachers to staff them; and we shall never have good teachers until they have been formed and molded to this function.

This is why, in 1672, Demia founded the ``Junior Seminary of St. Charles'' where he ``admitted and educated schoolteachers and poor clerics destined for such functions''. We must not regard this as a ``normal'' school in the modern sense of the term i.e., as a residence school where young people, all of them laymen determined to resume their independence, have come solely to complete their studies by following courses in theoretical and practical pedagogy. Of the two categories of residents that Demia admitted, the first and the most highly considered, the one through which and for which the ``community'' existed was the clerics.

Demia would have preferred to have entrusted his schools to priests who would have been able to fulfill the duties of parochial assistants. This was the classical concept of allying the priesthood to education, and it should not be surprising to find it here. For the clerics in the Seminary there was a professor of Theology and a professor of Philosophy. At St. Charles people were prepared for ordination in an appropriate atmosphere, with a rule that enjoined meditation and prayer. The poverty was extreme and it sustained the spirit of mortification. In jest, people in the world were threatened with being sent to Demia's community to do penance.

Nevertheless, along with the clerical students, lay people were accepted as long as they were celibates or childless widowers. These were the school teachers of whom the Rules speaks and of whom the `Letters Patent' of 1680 also makes mention. As in the case of ``the education of the poor young clerics'', the laymen were guaranteed a ``subsistence''. That for both groups there were lectures on education is beyond doubt. They studied the Director's prescriptions - the document that contained the quintessentials of their duties; besides that, they read *The Parochial School* , and *The Clerical Treasury* , Gobinet's *Education of Youth* , Bonnefons' *Lives of the Saints , etc.*

Were they all ``students-preparing-to-be-teachers'' in the same sense? Those who had not yet possessed their ``licence to teach'' might be so designated; there were also those who, while not belonging to the community, came (at the behest of the Bureau) ``to spend some time in training'' before being employed in the schools.

But (and it was Demia himself who stressed it) these outsiders were not to be admitted except for the want of some better solution. Ordinarily, the teacher in a

school for the poor was a member of the Community of St.Charles; and he ``lived'' there and left it in order to teach his class. This is clearly stated in a text quoted by Faillon from `a contemporary writer':

> Nothing is more edifying than to see each day, morning and evening at the same hours, this community leaving - twelve schoolteachers, each with his assistant, who is also a cleric, going into the different neighborhoods of the city to teach boys brought together in rooms rented for that purpose by their pious schoolmasters.[11]

The twelve teachers with their twelve assistants were clerics. The lay element, obviously a minority, became confused with the clerical mass at St.Charles. ``The contemporary writer's'' silence on this score is understandable in view of the fact that all of the Seminary's postulants, to be admitted, were obliged ``to have a soutane'', and, if possible, ``a surplice and a berretta''.[12]

The founding in 1687 of the schoolmistresses - since known as the ``Sisters of St. Charles''was, so to speak, the counterpart of Demia's purposes. To educate poor young girls, the Director brought together well-behaved, gentle and pious young women whom he trained for their educational mission. This female community was under the care, and in dependence upon, an ``Assembly of Ladies'', just as the male community was administered, maintained and supervised by the Bureau. Quite logically, it became a teaching congregation and the only one of Demia's undertakings that has survived into modern times.

To inspire religious persons who, living in separation from the world, would devote themselves to education is the thought behind the beautiful prayer which concludes the ``Litany Asking God For Good Teachers'':

> Lord, Who has instructed us to ask You for good workers for Your Church, we humbly entreat You to caste the eyes of Your mercy on this multitude of children with which this diocese is filled; they know You through faith, but do not glorify You as they should by their works: give them such competent, zealous and saintly teachers, who will carefully instruct them in the true way of serving You, that we, together, may be able to praise You for eternity. Amen. [13]

For men, traditionally, the ``holy task'' of teaching would be considered as one of the functions of the priesthood. They would be priests forever, but they could remain teachers only temporarily. And it is here, of course, that we must seek out the explanation for a clause in the Rules, which, at first sight, is enigmatic and peculiarly draconian: the schoolmaster was ``licensed'' for three years only. If he had been ``well-behaved during his triennial period'', the Bureau would be able to renominate him and present him to the Director for another triennial period, and, indeed, for a third set of three years Nevertheless, no matter what progress he might have made in his profession, his tenure could never go beyond nine years.

The process did, of course, provide a means for staff renewal and a way of breaking with routine. The Bureau would never abandon one of its servants and would obtain a living for him. But this exclusionary rule was applied most strictly in the case of priests who were in a position to obtain some ``benefice'' or to devote themselves to parochial ministry, since the Founder was unwilling that any person raised to the (priestly) dignity should remain more than two triennial periods without an extraordinary talent and a special examination and test. [14]

The predominance of the clerical element in the Community of St. Charles, the simultaneous presence in the Seminary of clerics pursuing their theological studies

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11 . Vie de M. Demia , pg. 106.

13 . *Réglements* , pg. 56.

14 . *Réglements* , foundation, the 27th of September, 1680, pg. 75.

while intended for the schools and, alongside them, people who were completing their qualification for a teaching career had the effect of quickly altering the original character of the enterprise. After Demia's death pedagogical formation was gradually neglected. The functions of teaching and the clerical state seemed difficult to reconcile, especially for young people who had to respond totally to the demands of their vocation. St.Charles Seminary fell back into the general and prevailing description of institutions of this sort: its seminarians were uniquely theological students, nurtured, taught and trained for the priesthood.

Demia had recognized the principles of ``normal'' [i.e. teacher-training] education for teachers. And he had proceeded tentatively to their application. But founding St.Charles, he failed to conceive in a manner sufficiently precise and sufficiently new the special vocation, the independent and ``total'' mission of the teacher in the popular schools. As a consequence, he obtained only a partial success, and that only during his own lifetime. On the other hand, the schools in Lyons endured as he had organized them until the Revolution of 1789. In the region of Saint Etienne as well as in his native region of Bress, his work had imitators. ``Bureaux'' similar to the one in Lyons were established in his own lifetime at Bourg and at St.Etienne, which maintained relations with the mother-foundation. This portion of French soil was reserved, so to speak, for the initiatives of Charles Demia, and well into the 18th century it remained the heritage of his spiritual heirs.

The program and the methods of teaching were sufficiently developed so that teachers and families were hardly concerned to seek elsewhere for models. Demia had been influenced by *The Parish School*, and it was to this book that he referred his disciples, except in the cases where his Rules had introduced innovations. Chapters three to six of the First Part of the Rules reinforced the book published in Paris in 1654, especially in the schools for the poor: i.e., in what concern the reading of Latin and French, the teaching of writing, arithmetic, and spelling, ``officers'', school furnishings, daily practices, practices for Sundays and Feasts, preparation for the Sacraments, prayers - ``ordinary and extraordinary''.

This pedagogy insisted strongly on silence and activities involving the entire class - what one might call ``rhythmical procedures''.

> Silence (he writes) being absolutely necessary for the good order of the school and for the well-being of the teacher,(the latter) will never suffer any of his pupils to speak without previously having raised his hand to ask for permission; and he himself shall speak as little as possible, establishing certain signs with a bell, or otherwise, for what he will have to say or do in school.

In this quiet and orderly environment short, typically military commands were issued: ``Reader, pay attention!'' ``Writers, get ready!'' ``Take your pens!'' ``Show them!'' ``Move the pen!'' ``Reach for the ink!'' ``Get ready!'' ``Write!'' Similarly, at dismissal time, when the children were getting ready to go home in orderly groups under the guidance of their leaders: ``Officers of neighborhood N take your places!'' Pupils from neighborhood N line up behind your officers!'' ``NeighborhoodN march in silence!''

For purposes of instruction the school was divided and subdivided so as to obtain homogeneous groupings that might make progress without stragglers and without pupils who ran ahead of the pack. There were seven reading `classes', beginning with the children who were starting with the alphabet and extending to ``those who read documents''. And, as in the system of St.Pierre Fourier, each class was made up of several ``sets'', depending upon the level of instruction.

``With these arrangements'', the different ``sets'' were called upon to read; all were attentive, while only one was active. The teacher, with the same book in hand as the pupils, stood behind them. He sounded a bell or touched a pupil, generally the

leader of the ``set'', with the tip of his rod. At the second stroke of the bell, the second pupil began to read. These procedures could be interrupted ``to surprise those who might be daydreaming''. If a child made a mistake, the teacher was to give him time to redeem himself. If he continued silent, another pupil was indicated to respond and so on, until a satisfactory reply was forthcoming. The ``set leader'' (who was appointed leader because he was never unequal to his task) sounded a small bell when ``someone made a mistake''. However, should his resources prove defective, the teacher, as a last resort, would intervene and ``make the children repeat several times what they found difficult to read''.

In the fifth class, which was the class of the first cursive readers in French, an entire ``set'' would be given the task of reading a sentence in rapid fire fashion, each pupil pronouncing a word.

In the sixth, the class ``most adept at reading'' printed material, the pupils would make ``comments''. Take as an example, the sentence: *Can the Teacher take advantage* The young commentator would say that the `C' of `Can' is a capital letter, because it is at the beginning of the sentence. The `T' of ``Teachers'' is also capitalized because the word ``Teachers'' is ``important''...In the word ``Can'', `a' is a vowel, while `c' and `n' are consonants. The diphthong `ea' in ``Teachers'' is pronounced like the double `ee' in the word ``teeth''.

Minds had to be alert, and attention was constantly demanded. The lesson went on at a rapid rate, without hesitation, waste of time, useless words and without leaving anybody behind.

Catechetical interrogation had the same look: two pupils, the ``chaplains'', stood on a bench and posed questions to one another. The replies, learned previously at home by heart, were pronounced in loud, staccato sounds which the entire class repeated. The ``chaplains'' directed their attention to some of the weaker, lazier and less attentive of their classmates to test their knowledge.

As regards spelling, Demia lacked the restraint of the author of *The Parish School*. He wished ruthlessly to simplify and to suppress letters that were not pronounced (thus, `g' and `h' in ``flight''), double letters (he wrote `oficer', `aproach', and `atract'), letters he considered useless (thus, in words of Greek origin, the `ph' did not find favor with him; so one had to be resigned to read `frases' and to study `geografe'). He also wanted to substitute `i' for `y' (thus, `roial' for`royal' and `emploied' for `employed'). Usage has failed to respect his reforms, which sacrificed too much etymology.[15]

The means of emulation in the Lyons' schools were numerous and varied. In the first place, we meet once again with the ``officers'' of the Parisian schools, to which were added ``prefects of modesty, to serve as examples during prayer'', the Master or Masters of Novices for training newcomers, the ``Recruiters'' who were charged with bringing vagrants and orphans into the school; and the ``Twentiers'' and ``Tenners'' who lined up their classmates according to neighborhoods and conducted them back to their homes.

But Demia's favorite device for the advancement of his gifted pupils was the ``Dispute'', the famous *Disputatio* so dear to the Scholastics, adapted to the minds and capacities of children, for whom it was no longer to be a debate, but a game. With his modest knowledge, each pupil participated by dint of successive explanations and dialogue. These exercises took place every day, ``at the end of school'': On Mondays

15 . Translators note: examples on this page have been adapted to English usage.

they ``disputed'' arithmetic; on Tuesdays, it was reading and writing, ``with comments''; Wednesdays, politeness; Thursdays, the manner of serving Mass; Fridays, there was ``a review of good and bad points''; Saturday mornings' disputes were on spelling; and on Saturday afternoons there was ``the great tourney'': the teacher appointed ``a number of pupils'' who wrangled over the entire week's program.

Every year a much more solemn version of the ``Dispute'' pitted the children from the various schools against one another. It occupied the carnival time - the constant object of concern among ancient educators. Demia, through handbills bearing announcements like the following, invited the public to the ``Dispute'':

Theses of the Schools for the Poor

> There are a number of pupils in the schools for the poor in Lyons who will sustain theses taken from the entire catechism; they will also dispute about spelling and politeness and the method of praying, etc. in the main school of St.Charles in Cameau, during the last three days of the carnival, beginning at three o'clock in the afternoon and lasting until evening. Coats, cloaks and other prizes will be distributed to those who are most successful

The founding of a sort of ``knighthood'' among the pupils, called ``The Order of the Holy Gospel'' tended to select and advance the most virtuous. The ``knights'' and their ``General'' had as their insignia a ribbon on which was depicted the Gospel of St. John and it was rolled into a small scroll. They were obliged to say evening prayer with their families, and at certain times to sing hymns. Demia empowered them to save their classmates from certain kinds of punishments: a ``knight'' might save a boy from three lashes; while the power of the ``General'' extended so far as to snatch a guilty party from the punishment of the ``parchment whip'', another of the school's indispensable pieces of furniture.

It is quite correct to conclude that the supreme end of education in these schools was the cultivation of piety. At the beginning of Advent, pupils ``who had made or will make their First Communion'' had a sort of brief retreat under the direction of the teacher. They would then come to school at seven o`clock in the morning, were helped in ``the examination of conscience'', assisted at Mass, ``breakfasted'' under the supervision of a tutor, and recited the Rosary or the Vespers of the Blessed Virgin. The chapter on parochial retreats in the second part of The Clerical Treasury was used as the *Vade mecum* for these ``short exercises for which the teacher will convey (to his pupils) his highest regard''.

The greater part of Sunday was spent in Church or at school. In the morning before Mass there was a reading from the lives of the saints or from Christian Instruction. After Vespers the children would listen to ``a story'' - relaxing, no doubt, but inevitably edifying.

In 1682 Father Morange, Vicar-general, started a confraternity dedicated to the Holy Child Jesus for these ``charity schools'' which were in fact the beginnings of the Catholic schools. Their methods and practices proclaimed and, in many ways, anticipated and prefigured, the great work of the future.

CHAPTER SIX

Père Barré

More than anyone else, J.B. Blain, the official biographer of St. John Baptist de La Salle, has contributed to the bracketing of the name of the Founder of the Brothers with the name of Père Nicolas Barré, the Founder of the Sisters of Providence and of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus.[1] At the beginning of Blain's book, ``the Dedicatory Letter'' testifies to the relationship of the religious families, the teaching Sisters and the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Both were placed under the protection of the Divine Child.

As a Canon in Rouen, Blain had intimate knowledge of the schools directed by the spiritual daughters of Père Barré. In Normandy, where he had found enthusiastic disciples, Barré's reputation was enormous. At St.Yon, in the neighborhood of Rouen called St. Sever, toward the end of his life, De La Salle related to a circle of his disciples how events in Rouen had influenced events in Rheims, and how he himself had sought out and followed Père Barré's counsels when he was committing himself totally to his own way of life. Along with Blain, the Brothers evidently loved to associate their Congregation with the history of Rouen.

They were pleased, then, when their historian wrote:

> The Rev.Père Barré and De La Salle were the first to think of founding Institutes uniquely dedicated to charitable instruction and to the Christian education of poor and abandoned children. The former succeeded in favor of girls, and the latter in favor of boys.[2]

The Canon's oratorical style slips easily into these somewhat arbitrary over simplifications. In this passage the two men are placed on the same level. Prior to them, Blain detected only ``gropings'' in the founding of the Ursulines, the Daughters of Notre Dame, and the Grey Sisters of ``Père Vincent'' and Mlle.Le Gras [3]

But when, at the heart of his discussion, he comes to study the relations between Père Barré and De La Salle, Blain concedes the former much more than a priority in time, and much more than a decisive influence upon the latter. In a sense, Barré becomes the real creator of the Brothers' Schools. St.John Baptist de La Salle appeared as the docile instrument of an inspired and inspiring genius.

In a beautifully lyrical and mystical passage, Blain writes:

> After all, if the holy Minim Father Barré does not before men have the honor of this foundation, doubtless he possesses the merit of it before God. For, in the end, it was he who had first conceived the plan for it and first raised a hand to realize it. It is not enough to say that he inspired De La Salle to begin his Institute; he directed the latter in this enterprise; he inspired him with the spirit and the principles by which he guided himself; he sustained him in the difficulties and frustrations he initially encountered; he inspired him with the heroic counsel to resign his canonry, strip himself of his patrimony and distribute it to the poor, and rely exclusively upon evangelical poverty. In a word, it was Père Barré who cast upon the

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1 . The Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus are today generally called the Madames of St.Maur. We shall explain below the origin of this name

2 . Blain, Vol. I, pg. 69

> soul of the Holy Founder the seed of that sublime perfection that we so admire. Thus, in the eyes of God, the Holy Minim was the primary author of the double foundation of the Christian Schools of both sexes.[4]

This is a conclusion that would not have disturbed the boundless humility of St. John Baptist de La Salle. Neither would his followers have protested; in any case, they would have allowed the Canon's statements to go unchallenged. Doubtless, they would have thought that these opinions were not, in principle, unjustified. Blain's rhetoric knew no moderation; and while he never stooped to flagrant untruths, he could, unfortunately, propagate tendentious interpretations.

How would it be possible for Nicolas Barré's biographers to avoid outdistancing Blain? Blain had weaved the laurel wreath for the head they wished to crown. Would it have been possible for Père Henry de Grézes not to find ``a perfect conformity'' in the general spirit and in the many details of the two accomplishments? So completely, indeed, was this the case that the disciple would inherit from the master not only a ``sublime and absolute confidence in God'', but also borrow from him ideas, procedures and methods.[5]

A more recent eulogist, Padre Gennaro Moretti, has summarized that debt which, according to him, the modern elementary school has contracted toward the ``holy pedagogue, the Founder of the Charity Schools of the Holy Child Jesus''. Following is the nearly complete list: opening of the first normal schools for primary education, initiation of the first entirely popular primary schools, substitution of individual instruction in favor of the simultaneous method, substitution of Latin in favor of the mother tongue, division of the school into three classes, total separation of boys and girls, hierarchical organization to guarantee regular and enduring progress, creation of a lay faculty, i.e., composed exclusively of non-ordained men and devoted exclusively to the education of the common people. ``And we do not mention'', he adds, ``workers schools, adult schools, Sunday schools etc.” [6]

Our earlier analyses enable us to suggest these claims are somewhat misleading. In the present chapter, we shall attempt a rectification in which we shall strive neither to attenuate the great merit, nor depreciate the great stature, of the man who preceded De La Salle and who was his mentor.

The basic biographical material relating to Nicolas Barré consists of two ``Lives'' written by contemporary confreres, two modern works, one by Père Henry de Grézes, O.F. M. Cap., and the other by Père G. Moretti, Minim, and, finally, the writings of Barré himself.

The oldest ``life'' is an account included in Père René *Thuillier's Diarium Patrum, Fratrum et Sororum Ordinis Minimorum Provinciae Franciae* . This ``diary'', a sort of encomium of Père Barré, although written *tempore mortis ejus*, and therefore after 1686, was not published until 1700. In 1687, P.François Giry, the Provincial of the Minims, provided testimony, corroborating Thuillier's, concerning the monk of whom he was the disciple and later the superior, collaborator and finally the successor. And while it is only a brief account, it is still a substantial one. Re-editing it in 1697 as an introduction to Barré's Spiritual Letters, Père Raffron wrote that he

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4 . Ibid., loc. cit ., pg. 283.

5 . H. De Grézes, Vie du Père Barré , pg. 295.

6 . Gennaro Moretti, dei Minimi: Un padagogista santo. Il P. Barré, dei Minimi, fondatore delle scuole di carit `a dei S. Bambino Gesu. Ed. Marietti, Turin and Rome, 1929, pp. 108--109.

> dare not say more lest he find himself at odds with the feelings (of the spiritual heirs of the master). They had always thought that the life of this holy man was so exalted and so mysterious that they always believed that we had to be content with his letters and conferences (and with the impression that he made on) all those who knew him well.

But Barré's own writings are, actually, not very revealing. True, the editor has suppressed the names of the people to whom the letters were sent, as well as every detail that would enable us to identify them. But the distinctive and overmastering personality of their author emerges in spite of the mutilation of the texts.

It is to Père Servien Montigny that we owe the collection of *Spiritual Maxims*, dedicated to Madame Maintenon and published in Paris by Urban Coutelier in 1694:

> 235 maxims for all sorts of persons; 54 for the direction of souls; 40 special maxims for schoolmistresses; 13 fundamental maxims for the Institute of charitable schools.

Three years later the Letters appeared in Rouen, published by J.B. Besongue and William Le Boucher. Stripped of relevant facts and circumstances of time and place, they are, as their title proclaims, a ``work quite useful to directors and to interior souls", and a treatise ``in which one finds the different stages of difficulties" of the spirit and of conscience, ``and excellent means and practices". A modern edition (Toulouse, by Douladoure, 1876) adds two unpublished letters to the original 59; it includes Giry's biographical note, and adds the collection of the ``Maxims".

In order to make his schools better known and to provide a service to his faithful and devoted auxiliaries, Père Barré, during his lifetime, circulated a small ``instructional memorandum", setting forth the principles of his Institute, the ``means" the Sisters use to educate children and the very modest resources required to make a new foundation. At the same time there was printed. and published in Paris by François Le Cointe (1685), ``*Statutes and Rules of the Christian and Charitable Schools of the Holy Child Jesus* , established in cities, market-towns and villages, to be observed, at the good pleasure and on the authority of Our Lords the Archbishops, Bishops, and Pastors, by the schoolmasters and schoolmistresses in the parishes where they are employed, under the guidance of Père Barré, Minim".

Comparing these texts and commenting upon them, drawing upon public archives as well as the archives of the Madames of St. Maur, Père de Grézes has surmounted Père Raffron's unfashionable scruples and become an energetic, zealous historian conversant with the subject of Père Barré[7] in 1892 and of the Institute of the Charitable Schools of the Holy Child Jesus in 1894. In 1929 Gennaro Morreti published a propagandizing pamphlet, the biases of which are not inconsistent with a serious knowledge of his subject, nor do they compromise an attractive and lively style.

On the 21st of October 1621 at Amiens was born Nicolas, the son of Louis Barré and Antoinette Pelle, both of good, middle class, Picardy stock. Nicolas was educated by the Jesuits at their college in Amiens a few years after Charles du Cange, and, like him, Nicolas was a credit to his teachers. Possessed of a clear and powerful mind, a lively imagination, and sound judgment, he was a good classical scholar, and a good philosopher, and, over all, remarkably well endowed for the mechanical arts. By his poise and strength of character, he gave notice that he would become a person of the highest attainments.

He took courses in theology from the Jesuits, but he brought his talents and his promise of high sanctity to the Minims. The exceptional austerity of these disciples

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7 . Vie du R.P.Barré , Minime, Founder of the Institute of Charity Schools of the Holy Child Jesus (``of St.Maur"). The origin and progress of this Institute, 1662-1700, by Père Henri de Grèzes of the Friars Minor, Capuchins, Bar-le-Duc, 1892

of St.Francis of Paula, that taste for humility which was evident even in their name, seduced his heroic soul. In the family of the Poor Man of Assisi, they sought to be the least, the last of the last - as being less than ``Friars Minor''. They made a special vow of strict and perpetual abstinence. From the time that Louis XI had invited their founder to Plessis-lez-Tour, they had made rapid strides in France and built up a vast reputation. Penitential and contemplative, but also preachers and men of learning, the Minims played their role along with other religious orders in the religious renewal of 17th century France.

Their monastery in Amiens had been opened in 1498. Nicolas had come knocking at their door, only to be sent immediately to the Parisian monastery of Chaillot where the novices for the French province were trained. He received the habit in January, 1641 and pronounced his vows the following year. Between the years 1643 and 1657 he resided at the celebrated house adjacent to the Place Royale, in the monastery which has given its name to the ``Rue des Minimes''. There was built the superb church in which Bossuet preached the Lenten sermons of 1660. And there Père Mersenne, mathematician and friend of Descartes, taught. It was there, too, that monks and men of letters worked in a library that housed fifteen thousand volumes. (At the time of the French Revolution there would be twenty-six thousand.)

It was a center of science and doctrine, where luminaries were allowed to shine in all their splendor. And it was here that Père Barré taught theology and where, on the 6th of November, 1653, he was commissioned, additionally, along with Père Hilary de Coste, to assume the direction of the library. These labors, coupled with harsh mortification, exhausted him, and, at the age of 36, he was obliged to return to Amiens and the relative quiet of the Minime monastery of his birthplace. Mended, we find him in 1659 at the monastery in Rouen, founded by Cardinal-Archbishop Charles Bourbon.

He was on the threshold of his educational work. Early on, in his meditations and under the inspiration of the Gospel, he had pity upon the ignorant masses, and his thought turned to ``the little ones'' who had no one to break the bread of ``the Word'' for them. He was among the first to enlist in Père Bourdoise's Association of Prayer. As long as he lived at the monastery on the Place Royale, his duties with the young monks and his responsibilities as librarian had left him neither time nor opportunity to organize even the most modest educational project. At Rouen his many contacts with the outside world would quickly set his zeal in motion and lead him into action.

He gave conferences to the Tertiaries of his Order. His teaching was appreciated and his direction was sought out, as the public rushed to listen to him. From the church of the Minims, Barré was invited to a variety of places, to satisfy the demands of religious communities and of the faithful in general. He swept people off their feet. He won over the upper classes, among whom he discovered the resources and the dedication necessary to serve the working classes. And, then, among the obscure, he discerned elite souls and the inspired vocations that would assure the perpetuity of his work.

Christian men and women whose consciences he directed with such energy looked upon him as a saint and obeyed him with enthusiasm. Among this very close-knit band of friends there were several members of the Parlement of Normandy: Counsellors Claude Grainville and Pierre Fauvel, and the secretary to the King, Michael l'Epinay. There were clerics who belonged to the same social class: Antoine La Haye, pastor of St. Amand in Rouen, and Ennemond Servien Montigny. Père Servien, son of the national treasurer for the Rouen region, and grandson of the first president, Groulart de la Cour, was ordained in 1655. Nearly the same age as Père

Barré (he was born on the 20th of September, 1620), he would become his right-hand man, his executor, his stand-in and finally his successor in the Congregation of the Holy Child Jesus. ``Providence raised me up primarily to second his zeal'', Servien wrote to the Sisters in a circular letter dated the 24th of April, 1693.

Claude Grainville's mother gave the schools her house in Rue Noble, near the Minime's monastery. But among the women, Nicolas Barré's most illustrious auxiliary, whose name would never be neglected in the history of the Christian Brothers' Schools, was a lady from Rheims, but through marriage transplanted to Rouen---Jeanne Dubois, Madame Maillefer.

One of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Marie Anne, had provided some details that were both curious and edifying concerning this great lady whom she knew personally right up to her last days. When Canon Blain came from Noyon to Rouen at the call of Bishop Aubigne, he collected these stories (as well as others) that had been preserved quite vividly in the memories of the people in Rouen. He included a very frank account of them in his biography of De La Salle. And so it is that this figure from the past comes to life in a most astonishing perspective. At the age of 32 (the year was 1655) the wife of the Keeper of Accounts, Pons Maillefer, was a worldly woman, celebrated for her beauty and her wildly expensive habits. She doesn't seem to have had any amorous liaisons, but, apathetic, she was the sort of total egotist, who without children, affection or warmth of soul, was wholly dedicated to the cult of her own splendid person - the luxuriousness of her clothing, the magnificence of her furnishings and the exquisiteness of her cuisine. The candid Canon Blain, with scandalized pen, reports that she had a statue (perhaps a mannequin) made, bearing her own measurements and likeness, which enabled her to judge of the effect of her gowns. And, naturally, this infidel was something less than the soul of charity.

During that same year of 1655 a sickly beggar asked a night's lodging on the Maillefer estate. The servants consulted their mistress, who ordered them to send the man away. However, the coachman, mercifully, opened the stable to the man and spread out a bundle of hay. But during the night the man died, and in the morning the coachman found the corpse among the horses. He was obliged to confess his courageous act of disobedience. Madame Maillefer was very angry, but, still, she flung the servant a sheet in which to bury the stranger. After the burial, she was surprised to find the sheet, clean and neatly folded and returned to her own room. She made inquiries. But the staff insisted that the dead man had indeed been wrapped in the shroud she had hurled at the coachman. This woman, once so indifferent, became terrified: the poor beggar whom she had wanted to send away, was telling her in a gesture from beyond the grave that an alms performed without love for one's neighbor is rejected by God and leaves the soul in its sin.

This strange, macabre incident turned out to be a stroke of mercy. Jeanne Maillefer resolved to humble herself in a most cruel way. The following Sunday, at the late Mass that was assisted at by high society, she appeared outfitted in a house apron worn over one of her customary elegant gowns. People thought she had lost her mind. However, judging by the way in which she henceforth used her fortune, with as much discernment as generosity for the support of the poor and for religious causes, Madame Maillefer displayed a mind that was quite unimpaired. Pons Maillefer asked only that she refrain from eccentricity in the public witness of her conversion. As long as he lived, Madame Maillefer dressed simply, ate frugally; and, as compassionate as she had once been contemptuous, she made her way toward that personal poverty which she had decided was going to be total. She spared herself

neither fatigue, nor vigils, nor secret mortifications. It was at this period that, energetic and docile, she began to collaborate with Père Barré.

Widowed in 1678, she felt free to give the entire city the example of her penance. She gave up her mansion for miserable lodgings, and she allowed herself to become like a filthy beggar. She was happy to be laughed at or to excite that kind of pity that is mixed with disgust. But, at the same time, she was more farsighted, more ``practical'', more enterprising than ever in her labors of charity and in the distribution of her wealth. She lavished her zeal on the Sisters' schools. She was to become the providential instrument in St. John Baptist de La Salle's vocation. In 1693 she died of a disease contracted at the bedside of the sick whom she cared for in the Hospital of the Madeleine.

In the gallery of De La Salle's precursors Madame Maillefer has every right to a place of distinction. In profile, she appeared singular, imperious and somewhat virile; in her firmness, like something out of Corneille. But in her case a miracle of grace softened the willfulness, lightened the haughty nature and humanized the fierce excesses of penance. It would appear that Madame Maillefer is suitably situated alongside her austere spiritual director, Nicolas Barré: they are, of course, unequal magnitudes - after all, Barré was the master - but of the same order.

There were also some young working class women, with no less lofty souls, without whom Barré's plans could not have succeeded. There was Frances Duval, Marguerite Lestocq, and Anne le Coeur; and, later on, the young lady from the middle class, the daughter of a physician in Bernay, Marie Hayer, who was so intelligent, open, solid, ever ready to obey and yet so naturally born to rule.

In 1662 Frances Duval of Honfleur was picked to make the first attempt at a tuition-free school in Sotteville. Soon thereafter, thanks to Madame Maillefer's generosity, a school was opened in Darnétal. Madame Maillefer went from house to house exhorting the people of this market-town to send their daughters to the new schoolmistresses. A third foundation was made in the suburbs. And at this point Barré expanded his work of popular education with four institutions in Rouen: in Madame Grainville's residence, (near the ``Penitents''), Rue Maitresse Rue des Bons Enfants and Rue du Prison.

Before this expansion, he had already united the teachers into small religious communities. This happened in 1666.

> We were four or five Sisters living separately (wrote Marguerite Lestocq in a report dated the 22nd of November, l681). Père Barré came from time to time to Madame Grainville's to speak to us and to give us a rule of life. Spiritual exercises were decided upon. We taught in the primary schools from 8 o'clock in the morning until 11:00. Then, we brought the children (as many as 130 or more) to Holy Mass. From noon until 2:00 p.m, we taught the older girls. We had them read and recite the catechism, and after that (we taught) the younger girls until 5:00 p.m. We taught catechism on Sundays and Feast Days. The pastors made some difficulty about our Sunday catechism classes, saying that we were doing their work...We answered them with such circumspection that they permitted our instruction, by giving us full freedom to teach.

Catechetical and educational methods, the schedule for school days, and religious regulations were all, or nearly all, set up from the beginning. It remained to plan for the future by bringing people together and getting them to decide:

> Père Barré asked us: `Do you wish to live in a (religious) community, knowing that you will never be guaranteed anything? You will have only the necessities, and those in very small quantities; and if you are ill, you will be sent to the hospital in town. You must be resolved to die in obscurity, forgotten by everybody . Consider (said his Reverence) your reply'. We responded with all our heart: Yes, we want that, and we abandon ourselves to Divine Providence with complete disinterestedness. No sooner said than done. We were a community.

The Congregation's first superior was Frances Duval. Later on, when in response to a request from his friend, Nicolas Roland, Père Barré had to sacrifice Sisters Frances and Anne Le Coeur to teach poor children in Rheims, Sister Marguerite Lestocq accepted the direction of the Mistresses of the Charity Schools.

For this small group of women there was as yet neither a well defined official name nor any legal existence. Their schools were called ``of the Holy Child Jesus", or ``of the humiliated Jesus", or ``of Providence". In Normandy, it was the last name that prevailed, although the Institute, whose founding in Paris we shall recount, would, by the explicit wish of the founder himself, be something especially dedicated to ``the Holy Child Jesus".

The Church's approval and the State's recognition required patience. The founding of monastic Orders began to meet with hostility. The ancient orders, reformed and renewed, the new Society of Jesus, from its beginnings multifaceted and powerful, seemed to satisfy all aspirations and supply all the needs of a Catholic society. The secular clergy thought that there were too many monks trying to avoid the bishops' jurisdiction, that there were too many chapels competing with parish churches, and that too many religious communities were competing with the parishes themselves. From another point of view, the number of monasteries was a worry to the municipal governments; the vast enclosures preempted by the monasteries stood in the way of expanding cities; and the productivity of the monasteries and their consumption of produce grown by themselves disrupted the prosperity of local commerce; and the assets subject to *mortmain* restricted the sale and transmission of real estate. If an Order happened to be mendicant or was simply a poor Congregation, it was in danger of becoming a burden to the civil authorities. If it was a congregation of nuns dedicated to teaching, the objection arose that there was no lack of primary schools, and, besides, it was the pastors' business to provide schools. In 1691 Père Fleury, in the eighteenth preliminary discourse to his Church History, assembled these arguments, which Blain, in the introduction to his biography of De La Salle, thought it was important to refute. And, indeed, we shall have to describe how it was this mentality, reinforced by the chicanery of the teachers in the pay schools and the writing masters, that was at the source of nearly every difficulty encountered by the Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

Père Barré's enterprises were temporarily protectected against these eventualities. Totally convinced of the Franciscan ideal, and regarding the rashness and the ``folly" of the Gospel as ultimate wisdom, Barré did not mean ``to found" schools: in other words, not only did he want them to be poor, he wanted them devoid of all capital and all secured income, so that they had to survive from day to day on the gifts of a few benefactors. In such a circumstance he did not contemplate their legal existence: ``Letters Patent" were normally granted only after a minute inquiry which gave evidence of sufficient and stable resources. But Barré maintained that it was only in the absence of funding that an institution preserved its freedom. If in a given location, it ceased to be effective or encountered invincible prejudice or demands contrary to its rules, it quietly vanished and transported itself and the dedication of its people elsewhere. When an institution is funded, it is, in spite of itself, rooted and contractually bound to a place. On this point Père Barré's experience was summarized in the maxim: ``It is better to fall into God's hands free of human organization than to fall into man's hands through human organization".

And ever mistrustful of the secret calculations of egoism, he added that the spirit of his Institute would draw its strength from disinterestedness, love of poverty, and the exclusive desire to serve the salvation of one's neighbor with complete

abandonment to Divine Providence The moment there exists some sort of institution, with guarantees for the future, we shall see young ladies without fortune applying to enter the Institute in order to obtain the means of leading an honorable life.

This was the permanent heroism that St. Francis of Assisi demanded of his first followers. However, it had to be tempered for the schools in Normandy. In Rouen the Sisters of Providence were associated with the General Hospital which received capital funds and landed property given to the schools by Père Servien Montigny, and by Grainville and Fauvel, and it supervised the arrangements that controlled the gifts.

Barré was not resigned to these accommodations; and he used to say that Rouen was little more than ``a place outside the walls", ``a place external to the `holy city'". But the outpost survived, and many good candidates for the education of girls were trained there. The Congregation's novitiate was ``a seminary for school-mistresses".

Blain maintains that Barré also opened ``a seminary for schoolmasters". When? In what way? For how long? The Canon's description is rather lacking in details. There are grounds to conclude from his language that when Barré was living in Normandy, he had planned to train both men and women who wished ``to undertake the tuition-free and Christian education of poor children"; but that the institution for schoolmasters was an ephemeral and ill-starred endeavor; and that the young men ``either never grasped the spirit of their vocation or they wasted no time losing it". It was a great, but abortive, idea: Barré had ``the distinction of having been the first to outline a plan and to provide the first model". [8]

It seems certain that at the moment Demia was issuing his ``manifesto", Père Barré was accelerating his own educational activity and establishing schools for boys,``at least four", according to Henri de Grèzes. They remained ``isolated and precarious undertakings". It is probable that Barré's austerity and intransigence frightened worldly people away. His ``Seminary" assumed, indeed demanded, a ``religious" vocation and its total detachment. It was the beginning of a congregation of Brothers which, in spite of its initial failure, Barré would attempt to set up in Paris.

In 1675 his superiors recalled him to the monastery on the Place Royale, ``to be regent of studies in philosophy and theology". But they did not remove him from his educational work, the success of which, over thirteen years, had been, to say the least, undeniable.

At that time there were several noble ladies residing in Paris who exercised their zeal by opening parochial schools for girls. Each of them, routinely, had her own personal project and her own schoolmistresses, who formed an independent community, each with its own name chosen by its ``foundress". At St. Nicolas de Chardonnet, Mlle. Blosset had the Daughters of St. Geneviève; Madame Miramion had the Daughters of the Holy Family at St. Paul's; while at St. Eustasius' the Marquise Moussy had the Daughters of St.Agnes. In Bonne Nouvelle parish there were the Daughters of Christian Union, whose founder was Père Le Vachet.

Princesse Marie Lorraine, daughter of Charles, the fourth Duke of Guise, also longed to enter into this crusade for popular education. In the Marais quarter, she resided at the Guise mansion, which had once been called `Maison Clisson'. There she invited the celebrated Père Barré, who recognized that he was dealing with a serious person of great goodwill. He agreed to work with her. The princess'

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8 . Blain, Vol. I, pg. 146.

assistance financed the opening of the first school of the Congregation of the Child Jesus in the parish of St.Jean dans la Grève in 1676.

The experiment proved successful and, in 1677 the princess determined to provide schools in her own city of Guise, as well as in several market-towns within her domains. Père Barré handed over the organization of these schools to Marie Hayer who, the preceding year, had entered the community in Rouen. There, Soeur Hayer had shown the depths of her understanding and virtue; and, in consequence, in 1678, she was placed at the head of the St.Jean dans la Grève school where, henceforth, would live some thirty Sisters who, each day, would set out to teach in the parish schools and in various dependent institutions. At the same time a house was rented for a novitiate on Rue St.Maur, on the Left Bank, not far from the Sèvres Gate. The Institute of the Holy Child Jesus had finally set up its headquarters in Paris, with Soeur Marie Hayer as its Superior-general. Nicolas Barré's prayers had been answered: he had his *muru* , his fortress exclusively ``founded upon Providence''. The house on Rue St. Maur, which was to become the Motherhouse, and whose name would, by custom, refer to the teaching Sisters, the daughters of Père Barré, had only been a ``rented house''. But the Madames of St. Maur have occupied it ever since.[9]

Today they are spread throughout Christendom. They are missionaries in the Far East. In France, under the *Ancien Régime*, they had made steady progress. Before Père Barré's death they operated the schools of St. Eustacius, St. Roch, St.Louis-in-the-Island, St. Laurence and St. Gervais - all in Paris, while in the parish of St. Sulpice alone they operated eight schools. They opened ``trade schools'', which provided religious and moral instruction for young girls, along with an apprenticeship in a trade. Madame Maintenon asked them to train future directresses of her institution, called St.Cyr. Louis XIV was so struck by their example that he chose them as the instruments of his policy in Languedoc. Schools of the Holy Child Jesus were opened in Montpellier, Uzès, Alès, Castres, and Montauban, for the children of ``new converts''. In the first half of the 18th century, when these schools were prospering, and when, in Paris, nearly all the parishes had entrusted their tuition-free schools to the Sisters of St.Maur, this Congregation, thoroughly adapted to its ends, exclusively dedicated (without the burden of cloister) to popular education, and providing its members with a solid educational preparation, seemed to be the model for Institutes of teaching Sisters.

Père Barré had indeed intended to found a parallel institute for schoolmasters. On this subject the *Statutes and Regulations* leaves no doubt. And it appears that the ``Brothers of the Holy Child Jesus'' was not just an idea, a society-on-paper, but that it had a real, temporal existence under the supervision of its founder. Barré had assembled a group of upright men in a house on Rue Mortellerie, near the church of St.Gervais. He had certainly sketched out for them a way of life and called them ``Brothers''. Did they wear a habit? Did they spread outside of Paris, as Père de Grèzes claims, ``into Normandy, Picardy, Champagne, Bourgogne, Auvergne, Lorraine, Berry and Bourbonnais''? It is quite improbable. It would be surprising that such widespread growth should leave no sensible trace. Barré's ``Brothers'' vanished into thin air. But their name did not die with them. It was passed on to the disciples of De La Salle. We shall see how De La Salle had been called upon to resume the construction of an unfinished work. What he had inherited was a schema. He came to Paris with his fellow workers, his detailed ideas and his years of experience. He had already founded the schools for boys and had placed upon them the mark of his own genius. Meanwhile, the public, recalling Père Barré and witnessing all about them the schools for girls in operation, fell into the habit (especially in the parish of St.

Sulpice) of calling the new male teacher by the same name as the Sisters'. Neither De La Salle nor the Brothers were likely to protest. They venerated the memory of Père Barré, and they were happy to walk in his footsteps. They themselves had been placed under the protection of the Child Jesus. As a consequence, they were, in their turn, the ``Brothers of the Holy Child Jesus''. A confusion in some minds between these soon-to-be-popular Brothers and their rather shadowy predecessors was not long in taking place. It was thought that the habit worn by the Brothers of the Christian Schools had been worn by Nicolas Barré's Brothers. The spread of De La Salle's Institute throughout France was backdated to the days of the handful of male disciples of the Founder of the Madames of St.Maur.

Beginning in 1683 Barré placed all his hopes for the success of a congregation of men on St.John Baptist de La Salle. He was impatient to see him leave Rheims to take up the direction of the schools in St.Sulpice, and to transfer the center of his activities to Paris. He could utter his *Nunc dimittis* , if this spiritual heir might quickly keep the promise made to Père La Barmondière, pastor of the famous Parisian parish. But God called the old man, His servant, before De La Salle's time had dawned.

On the 31st of May 1686, exhausted by labors and penance and his soul ready for eternal joy, Nicolas Barré died. While his remains were on view in the church of the Minim Fathers, a young painter, Joseph Vivien, came to look upon the face, frightfully emaciated, yet so majestic, so calm, on whose features there was no longer the trace of anything carnal, but only what a very heroic life had so clearly sculpted. A detailed and reverend portrait has preserved that vision, made particularly attractive by a lighted candle placed in the dead man's right hand:---a nearly supernatural light, like a halo, shines from the face framed by the ``cappa''. Simonneau engraved the posthumous portrait on copper; and under it he inscribed a dedication to the Princess of Lorraine and published a great number of prints. Père de Grézes has included a copy as the frontispiece to his book. In a parlor of the Motherhouse of the Madames of St.Maur a visitor may view this face with its marks of eternal peace as it refuses to quit its meditation and fastens itself on the memory.

This saintly man sought out souls - pure souls, like De La Salle, but also sinners and stray sheep. Père Giry has excellently described how Nicolas Barré would lay hold of his interlocutor, irrevocably bind himself to him, and conquer him with word and look before he knew it:

> People found such disinterestedness and purity of intention in all his projects, such ardor in his speech, such a noble loftiness in his maxims, something so divine and so consoling in his counsels and such uniformly habitual piety, so constant, and so like the behavior of the saints who were given the greatest graces, like those having to do with the conversion of sinners, that it was difficult, once one had known him well, not to give way before his gentle but powerful persuasion It was this domination over irreligious minds that gave rise to the saying (frequently repeated with respect to those from whom further correction was not expected): ``Send him to Père Barré".

He was possessed of such a penetrating insight, such a profound knowledge of human nature, that a stranger, surprised at being so thoroughly understood, scarcely offered any resistance. Beyond the gift of understanding, doubtless, he had, like the Curé of Ars, received a quite special grace of discernment: ``Those who talked to him could not forget the fire in his eyes, the firmness and the piercing quality of his look when he decided to deal with a person who sought his direction."

And, then, this imposing man would complete his conquest by revealing a most engaging personality. ``He was always agreeable; and he was subtle and forceful both in thought and word " He was easy to approach: ``his easy and informal manner sprung from that holy liberty and innocent joy that ordinarily is the unique gift of the Spirit of God." There were those, it is true, who were at first disconcerted by his lively

and impetuous language, full of unexpected similes and rather strange turns of phrase. But with time ``people were charmed by these very singularities and with the beautiful symbolism'' of his `parables'.

Since he himself suffered much, he consoled and pacified. He had gone through great interior difficulties, spiritual nights and deserts. The paths of his holiness had been frightening, as he himself confessed, so thickly were they strewn with almost diabolical trials. But he knew the secret of overcoming temptation, of never becoming discouraged, of being stronger than pain, and of the persevering smile. He loved God and his brothers intensely. Of his penitents he demanded the harshest sacrifices, but his helping hand was ever present to them, and he had pity on the weak. If he seemed to neglect one of them, to shove a shivering soul out of doors in the winter, he returned to him suddenly to warm him with the most enveloping sympathies:

> I am full of confusion (he wrote) upon recalling that I made a poor man leave his birthplace and his friends and deprived him of all human gentleness and affection ...after having thus adroitly and holily deceived and seduced him, telling him that he would be completely supported and sustained, nevertheless, I abandoned him, as it were, and left him in the hands of One Who is, in truth, all powerful, but Who was not yet well enough known to this poor forsaken creature for every visible and human support to be useless to him. Such is the confusion that I bear in my heart with regard to you, and I am in difficulty because I am not able to remedy the matter as I would very much like to do. [10]

With the view of knowing the man, it would be well to hear his living voice and to retain in the ear, as it were, the intonations and accents of that voice. A few of Père Barré's maxims will bring him closer to us and give us a presentiment of what we shall recognize as Barré's own in the precepts of St.John Baptist de La Salle.

We shall arrange the first series of quotations under the following headings: The Spirit of Faith, Abandonment to Divine Providence, Patience and Humility, and Catholic mentality - all of them, later on, familiar themes in De La Salle's spirituality:

> To progress securely in one's vocation it is necessary in all principal concerns to consult the spirit of faith. (Max.LXIII)

> God must be served for Himself and not for ourselves. Most people are too much absorbed in their own spiritual concerns. They want to know where they are going and what is going to become of them. They want to know if they are making progress. The subject both fascinates and torments them. This is the spirit of self-love---restless, merciless and violent. Through it we slip backward instead of moving forward. The remedy: total and universal abandonment of self to God, to His Holy Will and to His eternal plan.(LXXV)

> The perfect Christian is like the weathercock on the church steeple, which turns with every wind without escaping from under the cross (LXI).

> With regard to insults we must deal with them as we would with a very heavy downpour of rain. We seek shelter, we stop under a tree, and we let the storm pass without saying a word. After it's over, we continue on our way or with our work, as though nothing had happened. (LXXIX).

> What is man? Nothing, if he thinks he is something; something, if he thinks he is nothing (CVIII).

> Many people, even virtuous and pious ones, allow schism to enter into their hearts and divide the love of Jesus, which is one and indivisible. There are those who think very highly of the clergy but despise monks and nuns. There are others who honor monks and nuns but are quite

10 . Letter XLIII, Douladoure ed., pg. 212.

indifferent toward the clergy. All of this is vanity. We must be Catholic, that is, universally bound to Jesus along with all who belong to Him. (CXLIV).

Following are some suggestions and rules concerning the practice of prayer.

And, first of all, a beautiful reflection, which is general in scope, but which, in mental prayer, acutely inclines the soul to place itself in the presence of its Creator:

By thinking often of God, the soul feels that God is thinking of it. It perceives thereby that God loves it and it is obliged to love Him. This reciprocity of love causes it joy and extreme pleasure; it also discloses that it is God Who, by His infinite goodness has initiated this relationship: *Ipse prior dilexit nos*, and that from all eternity He has loved us: *Caritate perpetua dilexi te* . (CI).

And then there are the indispensable conditions of union with God: Renunciation, Self-denial, and Victory over the flesh:

A soul directing itself according to its own mind, no matter how long it prays, cannot receive the influence of God's spirit.(XLII)

Prayer and mortification go together. Both of them work toward the destruction of the self and toward the opening of the heart to one's neighbor. That is where the spirit of Jesus tends. Anyone who fails to go in that direction is the victim of illusion.(XLIV)

Finally, there are the counsels on the methods to be followed in prayer: Avoid presumption; Do not believe that you are dispensed from the ordinary ways; Always be ready to return to them; Commit yourself to a serious, solid preparation, where intellectual support is not wanting:

A swallow that has gotten into a church flies upward toward the light and tries to get out by hurling itself against a window, and it injures itself without finding an exit. A man still living on the earth, rather than settling down to the lowly ways of Jesus, presumes to aspire to more lofty ways, in hopes of coming to God. But he encounters the solid bodies of the Heavens which repulse him and throw him back to earth, because he is earthly and material and cannot break through.(CLV)

To approach prayer without preparing a subject, standing in a vacuum waiting for God to fill it, is a perilous predicament. Along that road few people succeed, although many try, thinking that it is the most perfect and excellent way. The most certain way is to follow the counsel of the Wiseman: *Ante orationem praepara animam tuam: et noli esse quasi qui tentat Deum* . (CLXXII)

In prayer it is always necessary to have something to occupy us. If God wishes to deal with us otherwise, He knows very well how to attract the soul powerfully and authoritatively. He will cleanse it and raise it up and fill it according to His good pleasure. He will occupy its understanding and its heart. When this happens, the soul must follow this powerful attraction and obey God. But when this condition is lacking, the soul takes up once again the first way and returns to its ordinary method. (CLXIII)

When one walks at night with a small lantern and someone else comes along with a huge torch, one takes advantage of the occasion while it lasts, without, however, extinguishing one's small light; because we know that presently, when the big light has turned down another street, we shall have to light our own way. If God gives some extraordinary grace in prayer, be careful lest you say: I shall no longer have to meditate or read; because, at the crossing, it will be necessary to have recourse to these means.(CXVI[12]

12 . Maximes de Conduite chrétienne by Père Barré, ch. 1, Maximes spirituelles pour toutes sorte de personnes , Douladoure ed.

The same supernatural spirit, and, under its guidance, the same human wisdom, the same lofty good sense, the same direct and clear attention to reality are found in his rules and regulations for the Christian Schools and in his ``maxims'' for the special use of the Sisters.

The ``Statutes'', which, in principle, were intended for school teachers of both sexes, assume the existence of two congregations, which, like twins, were, of course, distinct but associated. While it was stipulated that ``it will never be permitted to the Brothers to admit girls of whatever age into their schools, nor to Sisters to admit boys, no matter how young'', educational prescription, as well as the spiritual direction, was applied, with the necessary adaptations, to both groups.

What we are dealing with here are two `secular institutes', which formed communities ``under the leadership of a Superior or a Superioress'', but without either vows or cloister. They were satisfied with ``promises'' of obedience and stability.[13]. The Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, like the Daughters of Charity of St.Vincent de Paul, went out daily from the houses in which they resided to fulfill the duties of their vocation.

The Superior and the Superioress were both heads of the communities and principals of the schools. They had assistants to aid them in counsel and action. They supervised the religious and the intellectual formation of the teachers, and saw to the observation of the rules in the schools of the Congregation. At fixed times they visited the schools dependent upon the Community. The hierarchical organization and the autonomy of the teaching Society,along with the stability of its personnel, made a notable and definitive advance over Demia's system.

From the outset the character proper to the Institute was clear-cut. Regarding the orthodoxy of Nicolas Barré's disciples there was no possibility of equivocation. The door had been closed to Jansenist scheming:

> While all faithful and true Catholics must have an entire submission and perfect obedience to the orders of the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church, nevertheless, the Brothers and Sisters of the Tuition-free Schools, because of their profession, which especially regards Christian education, shall make a more particular declaration.

They shall place themselves ``under the protection of the Child Jesus and the Blessed Virgin, His worthy mother''. They shall have ``a great devotion to St.Joseph and take him as their model''. The *Veni creator* shall be recited at the beginning of the morning meditation''. They shall work ``efficaciously and ceaselessly'' for their sanctification.

These qualities of a religious teacher instilled by Barré were never to be obscured. When we meet with them again among the Christian Brothers, there will be no doubt of their provenance.

While personal sanctification is the end of the individual, it is at the same time a means for the educator. As Christians in the full sense of the term, teaching Brothers and Sisters, in view of their end (which is the salvation of their souls), will be equally ``Christian'' in relation to their ``most important occupation'', which is ``teaching in schools for poor and indigent children''. They follow in the way of the evangelical counsels, because they want to be at the height of their mission. Furthermore, nothing that they do for their personal sanctification should stand in the way of the duties of their profession. Thus, Barré, believing that the life of his Sisters was ``painful to nature'', did not prescribe corporal mortification for them and forbade

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13 . Since the Madames of St.Maur are now a Congregation approved by the Church, its members pronounce perpetual vows

them, without permission from their Father confessor, to impose extraordinary penances upon themselves. ``The confessor will be asked to require none, nor permit any''. A long period of time was given to rest and recreation---``lively, agreeable and simple'', during which ``all work of mind and body must be brought to a halt''.

Service to the schools demands total obedience: ``The Brothers and Sisters will be disposed always to teach where and whom the Superiors will judge proper''. It would be necessary to leave every other employment, whatever be the need or the charity that arises, in order to be punctual at the hour of class and scrupulous to fulfill the daily program in its totality. For this is `a public service whose concern must always be preferred to the individual''. A Sister who would be unfaithful in this article would be ``dismissed without any hope of reinstatement''.

Finally, schoolmasters and schoolmistresses will practice absolute disinterestedness, recalling the words of Our Lord: ``You have freely received, give freely''. This was a strict rule; and anything given by the children or their parents by way of compensation or gift (had to be refused), however simply, gently and gratefully. And this point was to be exactly and universally observed, with respect to the rich and the poor alike, in cities and in the countryside.

As far as Barré's educational methods can be judged from the ``Statutes'', they were more modern than those proposed in the *Parish School* , while at the same time they more closely resembled the methods of St. Pierre Fourier and Demia. It appears that the ``Statutes'' also advocated simultaneous instruction, since, in the schools operated by the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, each teacher was personally responsible for ``seventy or eighty children''.

The ``Statutes'' introduced no innovations regarding corporal punishment except to recommend great caution and restraint and to require that strokes of the rod be rare, administered ``in private'', and not exceed three or four for each offense.

The ``Statutes'' perpetuated the reading of Latin, which was to be done ``by syllables, words and verses''. There is no doubt but what this reading had as its primary purpose to familiarize the children with the Church's liturgy, which was practically the only results looked for in the schools of antiquity. Prayers before and after lessons were, no doubt, recited for the most part in French; but this practice was not totally unknown either to the *Parish Scho*ol nor to Charles Demia's regulations. Thus, we are not dealing here with a radical reform. Nevertheless, it remains to Barré's credit that he better understood the role of the mother tongue in education and that he broadened its use.

In her Memoir, Marguerite Lestocq has not concealed the fact that the Sisters, from their beginnings in Rouen, had the reputation of being excellent catechists. They were obliged to study carefully procedures of exposition and interrogation. They were not ``to make long discourses, since that was quite contrary to the progress of both children and of adults as well''. Their questions were ``formulated and repeated in several ways''. ``Brief little stories'' provided comment on the subject of the lesson. In a few clear and rapid questions (to which two or three of the better pupils replied), they reviewed the previous lesson - in the time it takes to say ``two Misereres''.

On this note, the ``Statutes'' concludes with an unpublished treatise (preserved in the Motherhouse archives of the Sisters of Providence), the first part of which is entitled *Counsel for Teaching Catechism Profitably* . It reads (in part):

> In this activity it is necessary to avoid all affectation; to set aside nice and lofty language; to speak in a simple way, courteous and ordinary, in order to be understood as far as possible by the youngest and most ignorant The mistress will be careful not to advance any proposition of

which she herself is not fully aware of the meaning and that she does not know completely how to explain. [14]

Personally and directly, Père Barré provided for the formation of the schoolmistresses by way of ascetical and educational conferences. The third and fourth parts of the Maxims preserve the substance of these conferences. There emerges from this text such a purity, such a clarity of doctrine, such definitive counsels for the vocation and the conduct of teaching Religious that, before going further, it is fitting in a few quotations to sample their piquancy and breathe their indomitable spirit.

On the subject of the excellence of the vocation of the Christian teacher:

It is a temptation which will unsettle some of the mistresses to wish to retire from their profession and from their charitable work for their neighbor under the pretext of working for their personal sanctification. It will even enter their minds that they should love God perfectly before making Him loved. This is a great illusion, and a gross error. Note carefully the following argument and maxim.

Divine Love wishes to choose as His beloved those who please Him. He will not, nor can He, admit of our constraining Him always to accept those who are offered to Him, nor that we pretend to rise as high as we would like. It is self-love that is operating in these two ways of offering ourselves. No, no, this is not the way things happen. All we have to do is to offer ourselves to Him and want to be His. After that we must think of ourselves as unworthy to be His favorites, His beloved, and strive to serve, to fashion and cultivate those whom this Sovereign Love has chosen and wishes to possess as His own children. It is an exceedingly great honor for us to be used by Him in this great and holy task.(Max. IV, V)

There are special graces for salvation in the profession and the life of the Religious teacher:

The Sisters of the Institute assure their salvation through their employment; and, persevering in it, it may be said that they cannot be lost nor damned, for four reasons:1)the living knowledge of the holy truths; 2) he regular life in the practice of their observances; 3) the continuous exercise of charity in regard to one's neighbor; and 4) the detachment of their heart and the abandonment of their will to obedience, possessing nothing on earth and being always ready to go where they are sent.(Max.IX)

The purpose of the Christian school:

In education the task is not just one of conveying knowledge; but the most important point is to inspire piety, devotion, the fear and the love of the Lord, and to give a genuine Christian and divine education to children.

Since little children are accessible to heavenly truths, it is important to fill them early with such truths and not to allow their minds to be preoccupied with the nonsense and rubbish of a corrupt world. Oh, how advantageous are the tuition-free schools for all of this! And how holy and sanctifying is their work! (Max. XVII and XVIII)

Relations between female teachers (and, we might add, *mutatis mutandis* , male teachers) and the clergy:

They must especially ask of God His Spirit, His protection and His grace to deal wisely with pastors and clerics with whom they will have to maintain relations in the performance of their mission.

1) They must display a complete dependence upon, and undertake nothing except in concert with, their pastors.

2) They must accommodate themselves to their humor and to their mind as far as this can be done reasonably, in order to involve them in support of God's work.

3) They must be quite mistrustful of themselves and always fear the abuses which so frequently intrude in this connection. On the one hand, one must humor these gentlemen, and, on the other, one must look out for oneself. They must know how to win them over and catch

14 . According to Moretti .

them without being caught; and, without being theirs, to possess them for oneself for the glory of God.

4) In order to avoid scandal and abuse one must never form any relationship or attachment. To this end all unnecessary frequentation and visitation must be severed, as well as repeated conversations and communictions whether with religious or clerics or any other person whatsoever.(Max. XXIV) [15]

Such (on the level of Christian charity and in an atmosphere of supernatural thinking) was Barré's precise knowledge, careful analysis, vigorous direction, and peremptory encouragement and consolation of souls. And, to attain the heights, the final thrust is contained in the following:

We must live in complete abandonment to God's will and be spiritually prepared to witness the collapse of our work when that is pleasing to God and to Jesus. Nevertheless, we must pray to Him and firmly hope in Him.*In spem contra spem*, and when everything seems *contra spem* , it is all the more necessary to proceed *in spem* and say*: Etiam si occidit me, sperabo in eum* . [16]

15 . Maximes spirituelles, ch. iii, art. 1, Douladoure ed.

16 . Ibid., chap. iv, Maxim xiii.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Nicolas Roland

In the church of St. Maurice in Rheims, two small artifacts which endured unscathed through World War I, stand against the interior of the facade, on either side of the entrance; they are unpretentious works, in clay, and represent two priests surrounded by their followers. On the ``Gospel side'' there is Nicolas Roland, with a nun and some little girls; and on the ``Epistle side'' is St. John Baptist de La Salle, with a Brother and some small boys. The pastor of St. Maurice, who commissioned these statues in 1881, sought to celebrate two of the glories of his parish and his city. By their symmetry, he was attempting to recall what brought these two men together: - life, virtue, friendship, concerns and achievement. Indeed, the two men were inseparable. The elder of the two, Nicolas Roland, had provided young Canon De la Salle, his colleague, with example and counsel. Nicolas' work, consolidated by John Baptist, was the preliminary, the proclamation and the occasion of resolves and initiatives whence arose the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian School.

Roland remained ever a man of Rheims. His bones repose in the house of the Sisters he founded on Rue Barbâtre. Modern buildings have replaced the 17th century structures; the sacristy preserves a priestly vestment that once belonged to the founder - a beautiful chasuble embroidered with silver thread mixed with green and red. And in the crypt people kneel before a simple tombstone on which is inscribed the name of the most humble and very zealous servant of God.

His story was told in 1886 by Père Hannesse, secretary to the Archbishop of Rheims.[1] The author had at his disposal (and he diligently employed), besides municipal and ecclesiastical documents, the archives of the Congregation of the Holy Child in Rheims, and especially *Memoirs* of the highest importance, written from contemporary notes and *testimonia* of the immediate disciples of Canon Roland, fifteen years after his death in 1693.[2] This document contains the essentials of a biography, followed by ten chapters in which are enumerated in great detail the virtues of Père Roland, along with an abundance of other edifying qualities; and finally, a still more precious source of knowledge of the man and his work---a collection of counsels, maxims and letters.

We shall borrow passages directly from this document, an authenticated copy of which has been entrusted to us.

At the time he came into the world (in Rheims, on the 2nd of December, 1642, and less than nine years before his future colleague), Nicolas Roland had a common family background with John Baptist de La Salle. They both came of wealthy middle class stock, occupying important places in the city, playing preponderant roles in local affairs and about to witness one of their own, Colbert, raised to the highest levels of government. The Rolands' wealth, however, was of rather recent date: on one occasion the Canon remarked to his mother that ``the initial circumstances'' of their forbears ``was not to be robed in silk'', and ``that it was only the fortunes of his grandfathers'' which had changed his own lot. Their religion, like their morals, was genuine. They ``feared God'', they ``assisted meticulously at divine services as well as at sermons'', and ``in times of high prices'', they distributed ``bread, clothes and blankets'' to the poor and ``they taught them skills wherewith to earn their livelihood''.

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1 . At Rheims, Cooperative Printers, 24 Pluche Street.

2 . This date is specifically given in Chapter 5 of the biography

The father, Jean-Baptist Roland, was supply officer at a time when that military commission was lucrative indeed. He married Nicole Beuvelet, who came from Marle, in Picardy. The Beuvelets belonged to the highest Christian nobility. The grandfather, whose Christian name Nicolas bore, died at the moment of his grandson's birth, while giving beautiful witness to his charity, piety and abandonment to Providence. In his place, his son, Matthew, held the newborn baby at the baptismal font. Matthew Beuvelet, a lawyer in the Parlement of Paris, soon thereafter entered Holy Orders and became a priest in the Community of St. Nicolas of Chardonnet. As an educator of the clergy and the founder of a school in Marle, he traced out a complete plan of life for his nephew. Further, he seemed to foresee this child's future: one day, placing his hand on Nicolas' head, he said: ``This one will be a great servant of God and of the Church''. In 1656, in the prime of life and with the reputation for sanctity he died before his prophesy could be fulfilled.

But he could not have been unaware of a sign which, in its imperious spontaneity, revealed the depths of a soul. In 1653, at a time during which Rheims was without an Archbishop, a visiting prelate was officiating at an ordination and giving the tonsure to young clerics in the church of St.Peter. Suddenly Nicolas Roland decided to ask for the tonsure. It was little more than a temporary promise to embrace the Church, and we know that in ancient times very young boys were permitted to make this sort of commitment. Young Roland, eleven years of age at the time, ran in search of a soutane and a surplus, bought a candle and returned to the church. But the ceremony had already been concluded and the Bishop was preparing to depart, when he saw the candidate ``elbowing his way through the crowd'' and erupting into the sanctuary. This ardor so pleased the bishop the he resumed his pontifical vestments and bestowed the tonsure on Nicolas.

He was ever the valiant, generous individual for whom nothing was impossible. His nature was open, proud and impetuous. He made up his mind quickly, had a horror of half measures, and moved immediately into action. This son of imperturbable middle class Champagne, like the son of Pietro Bernardone, was a knight, the ``Roland'' of the French epic. He was seduced by heroism, and, having read the *Lives of the Saints*, although he did not aspire to martyrdom (where, indeed, would he find `Teresa's Moors'?), he wished to become a great penitent. He slept on the floor, in a space between his bed and the wall. On a winter's night one of his aunts found him hiding under the table concealed by the tablecloth, which he had carefully lowered. Asked what he was doing there, he replied:

---``I am going to sleep.''

---``Here? On such a cold night as this? Do you want to catch your death?''

---``St. Francis did not die of it'', he replied. Careless of his fervor, his aunt chased him off to his own bed.

These impulses, both enthusiastic and tenacious, were not easily thwarted. And they were difficult to resist when they were accompanied by an affectionate heart, a lofty mind, delicate manners and a noble, distinguished and charming appearance. ``In his person'', Roland was ``handsome and well built''; he had a good memory, a lively sensibility, pleasant conversation, and in spite of fits of rage which surprised him from time to time, he won over both ``companions and servants'' by his gentleness.

Like Demia and Barré, this future educator was taught by the Jesuits. He was a brilliant student and well thought of by his teachers. They cast him in a tragedy which was performed before the Court in celebration of the coronation of Louis XIV. He achieved worldly success, and the young man would come to know others, as,

from his sixteenth to his twentieth year, he passed through a period not so much riotous as frivolous. Later on, he would refer to this phase as ``lost time", while admitting that, although he had run risks, he had never seriously sinned.

His father wanted him to travel. Setting out to sea, ``toward some distant land", Nicolas was shocked by the language of the ship's captain, a coarse sailor. Finding a vessel that would return him home, Nicolas made up his mind to join the Society of Jesus.

However, the project came to nothing. Nevertheless, there was an enduring effect. ``Converted", in the 17th century sense of the term, Nicolas never looked back. He donned the soutane, to the surprise and keen disappointment of a young lady in Rheims ``who loved him with the expectation of marriage", but who eventually followed him ``by giving herself to God".

We find him next in Paris, first of all as a student in Philosophy, and then as a ``Fellow" in a small community on St.Dominic of Rue Enfer, where clerics and laymen lived side by side in study and prayer. Here he had been preceded by Francis Pallu, one of the founders of the Society of the Foreign Missions, and Father Boudon, ``the saintly archdeacon of Evreux", and Montigny-Laval, the first bishop of Canada. We can imagine the horizons that opened up before the neophyte. An anonymous biographer asserts that Roland ``entertained the desire to accompany the first missionaries to Siam". Missionary, apostle, and saintly in an heroic sense, he would become on his own native soil the same sort of man that many of his famous colleagues became in the wider world.

In 1665, after a three year residence on Rue St.Dominique, and having obtained the degree of doctor of theology, he was admitted to the illustrious Chapter of the Cathedral of Rheims: he had become a Canon at the age of 22. Family influence was, of course, not wholly absent from such an appointment. But obviously it was the young cleric's knowledge and eloquence that earned him the post of ``Theologian", which involved the obligation of preaching each Sunday in the metropolitan church.

Not yet a priest, Nicolas Roland prepared for ordination with a thirty day retreat. After saying his first Mass, he realized that what he needed was a seminary education. He visited St.Nicolas de Chardonnet, and St. Lazarus, and he stayed for a period at St.Sulpice to draw from all of these sources ``the purest principles of priestly life". But for him this was not enough. He had heard talk of a pastor in Rouen who was a teacher and a model of priestly virtue. This man was Antony La Haye, pastor of St. Amand, and a friend of Père Barré. Roland went to visit La Haye.

Whether by diffidence or design, Le Haye received him badly:

---``I have no room for you, Sir, unless you wish to occupy my own."

---``Well, Sir, any place will do me, except your own room."

---``There is some space under the stairway. Do you want that?

---``I took him at his word", adds Roland, who himself recounted the episode. Like another Alexis, he took up quarters under the stairs, where he remained for six months - an excessive length of time considering the state of his health, which was never robust. He should never have had to undergo the inconveniences and the cold that he endured at the hands of his host.

But he had so profited from the pastor's harsh lessons that he cared very little about being treated ``like a doormat". He returned to Rheims with a treasury of ``wisdom": -`Never complain, for whoever complains sins". ``When accused never make excuses." ``Root out all self-love." ``Hold the words `mine', `thine', `favor' and

`merit' in contempt." ``Love to be badly treated." Besides this, he caught a glimpse of the work of Père Barré.

But, at that time, he had not intended to educate children. Like Charles Demia before him, he had begun to think about the education and reform of the clergy. He set up a sort of seminary in his home, whose residents lived in community, and to whom he taught Holy Scripture, asceticism and theology. Members of Roland's community made meditation, observed silence, and practiced the exercises of ``accusations" and ``the advertisement of defects", and received directions about preaching and teaching catechism. ``The spirit of St. Charles" was spreading in the diocese of Rheims.

Without sparing his strength, Nicolas Roland organized ``missions" in market-towns and villages and preached everywhere and at all hours. Worn out, his chest on fire, his lips dry, and sometimes voiceless, he thought he could go on without stopping. He had retained the impetuosity of his youth. On one occasion he put in an appearance, ``on the fly", at the residence of the pastor of Fisme, who was one of his followers. He wanted this parish to adopt a mission that the Oratorians were giving up. The pastor objected that he had only just assumed his duties and that he was ``being harassed, with a knife to his throat".

---``I'm very much afraid", replied Roland, ``that you have already fallen from grace." By this time he was already at the door of the presbytery, his horse's reins still in his hand.

---``Do me the honor", declared the pastor, ``to enter and refresh yourself".

---``I will never enter your home; I will neither eat here nor drink, until you consent to accept the mission. I shall leave as quickly as I came, shaking the dust from my feet against your house."

Needless to say, the pastor capitulated.

When the time did come for Nicolas to open a school and found a teaching congregation, he acted in a characteristic manner - rapidly, decisively and vigorously, by taking counsel, fixing his end, calling upon the capacities and good will of others and by giving of himself to the last breath.

In a pilgrimage he made to Beaune, to the tomb of Sister Marguerite of the Blessed Sacrament, there was a sort of prologue to his involvement in educational work. This nun, who died at the age of twenty-nine, in the Carmelite monastery in that city, had been a promoter of the devotion to the Holy Infancy. Roland had ``a great veneration for her", and he came to her convent ``with the view of dedicating himself quite particularly to the Infancy of the Savior". And he joyfully accepted from the Mother Prioress ``an image of the Child Jesus that the venerable Sister Marguerite had used in her devotions".

Doubtless, it was about the same time, or shortly thereafter, that Roland read Père Demia's *Remonstrances* and fell under its influence to the point of desiring to endow schools in favor of the poor. In our chapter on Charles Demia we have quoted the direct testimony of Père Feret in this connection. It goes without saying that, before any undertaking, Roland consulted his friends in Rouen, P.Le Haye and P.Barré, who were in a position to offer him the support of their experience.

They invited him to preach the Lenten sermons of 1670 in Rouen. This latest visit to Normandy was naturally the occasion of many conversations with Barré, Antoine La Haye and Madame Maillefer. They agreed upon a plan of campaign. Nicolas Roland assumed the responsibility for an orphanage in Rheims that had been founded by a Lady Varlet. There was a possibility that he might add a school to this institution, and, at the proper time, Père Barré would introduce his teaching Sisters.

The orphanage had been a sort of ``spontaneous'' growth. The city of Rheims, which had assumed responsibility for it, paid scarcely any attention to it; the poor children ``were naked, hungry, and living in contagion and filth''. Not without difficulty, the Canon succeeded in becoming confessor to the children, and took advantage of his free access to supply them from his own resources with food, clothing and bedding. Once he had restored flesh and blood to these ``skeletons'', he was in a position to care for their souls. Using his own funds, he purchased a house for them on Rue Barbâtre, and, finally master of the situation, he called upon Père Barré for help. On the 27th of December, 1670 Sisters Frances Duval and Anne Le Coeur arrived in Rheims from Rouen.

While the Sisters functioned as mothers and teachers to the orphans, Roland conducted an inquiry into the best educational methods, and studied in a special way the methods of his neighbors on Rue Barbâtre, the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, the followers of St.Pierre Fourier, who had been established in Rheims since 1636. In order to familiarize himself with the educational experiments and developments realized in the various cities in France, Roland travelled; and he gladly paid ``monitors'' who provided technical assistance to his schoolmistresses.

In the same connection, he founded a ``Seminary'' for school-mistresses in Rheims. To the question, `Was it a normal school'? the answer is `Yes', provided we stretch the meaning of the term. The Canon had gathered several young girls and pious women about Frances Duval and Anne Le Coeur. He wanted them ``to teach, tuition-free''; and from among them, and those who would later enter ``this Seminary'', he planned to select a certain number for the schools in the countryside, where they would be under the direction of ``good pastors''. They would all wear ``secular dress'' and would be ``lay women''. Does this mean that today we should not call them ``Religious''? They pronounced no vows, and they had no cloister, but in Rheims, at any rate, they lived in community. All of them observed not only ties of gratitude but bonds of obedience as well with the Superiors of what would become the Congregation of the Holy Child Jesus.[3] In Champagne, as in Normandy, the Seminary for schoolmistresses was a novitiate.

On his own time, with his own funds and with much mortification and prayer, Nicolas Roland patiently created a new religious family that bore a name dear to Nicolas Barré, although its autonomy was carefully safeguarded. ``His every concern was for his `daughters', to whom he granted complete freedom to take anything he had that was necessary for them or for the orphans.'' Nor did he stint his spiritual assistance: he proposed ``a perfection that corresponded with the holiness of their profession''.

By 1675 he thought he had in hand a sufficiently sound and supple instrument to effect his purpose. He wrote a memorandum to Archbishop Le Tellier, announcing the founding of four schools. He was referring, of course, to schools for girls, since Roland trained schoolmistresses only. He had not given up the hope of one day bringing together schoolmasters for the education of boys. But, he said, it was better to begin with the education of women: ``Since mothers, elder sisters and women servants'', rather than fathers, have the responsibility for raising children.

The Supervisor of Schools, Francois Joseph Martigny, authorized the opening of the schools of the Holy Child Jesus. The city was thunderstruck. What was the Supervisor thinking of? Do the poor really need an education? And, now, they have

3 . `` the unique purpose of this Institute is to remain, in secular dress and uncloistered, so as to be ready to go and teach in all neighborhoods of the city and in the countryside, where they may be sent by their Superiors.'' (Memoires , pg. 34).

gone and added another religious community to those which were already recognized! Roland had his adversaries among his colleagues in the Chapter, who lined up a majority of the city against him. The Archbishop, however, appeared favorable. He gave evidence of his goodwill toward the Sisters by delegating his Vicar-general, Robert Senancourt, to dedicate their chapel. The four schools admitted ``all little girls, as well as some big girls, who applied in order to learn to read and be instructed in the truths of salvation''.

The congregation was without legal recognition, which was a worry to Nicolas Roland who had already experienced severe physical wear and tear and anxiety as to whether his work would survive him. The hostility of civil magistrates, the cabals mounted in Rheims, and the calumnies (some of which were truly dreadful) spread against the founder raised questions about the future. The defeat of the opposition, however, would be assured if the very powerful Archbishop would lend a hand, since the King refused nothing to Maurice Le Tellier, who was son and brother to ministers in the King's regime. As a petitioner, Roland parted for Paris, where Le Tellier resided for several months during the year. From December 1677 to the end of March 1678 the Canon was in Paris, where he alternated prayers in the Convent of the Carmelites with long waits in the prelate's antechambers. Systematically, the Archbishop refused him audience. Later on, Le Tellier declared that he thought it would be a good idea to rein in the zeal of his ``Theologian''.

Ill and oppressed by the winter, eating little and multiplying his already excessive penances, Nicolas Roland was only the shadow of himself. A friend who knew that the saintly man would not be disturbed by the most brutal candor told him that in a short while he would be dead. But Roland was ready for the great adventure. Three times his Carmelite confessor, Père César, was obliged to listen to his `general confession'. ``I am an obstacle'', Nicolas said humbly and sincerely, ``I am an obstacle to God's work''.

Indeed, he was one of those people who possess the whole of the future in their minds and have such strength of imagination that their ideas appear immediately in concrete, realizable and living form. They have already reached their goal while all those around them are looking for theirs'. They are saddened by the failure of others to understand and follow them. And the sense of their own fragility, of the brevity of their own existence, exacerbates their impatience. Others, coming after them, set out, following the route they have traced, and picking up their footprints, the late arrivals taking advantage of the sign posts their predecessors have strewn along the way, attain their goal and surpass it.

As a ``precursor'', Nicholas Roland had the privilege of knowing and guiding the great man who would begin to loom larger the very day on which Roland himself would disappear. His colleague in the Chapter since 1667 was ``Messire'' John Baptist de La Salle. At that time Roland had very likely shown only a decorous and benevolent attention to this pious youth, distinguished, intelligent and with a quiet disposition, in whose favor Canon Dozet, Archdeacon of Champagne, and Chancellor of the University, had resigned his prebend.

But, in 1672, when John Baptist, at the age of 21, had returned from the Seminary of St.Sulpice, as the young head of a household, to direct his orphaned brothers and sisters, Roland looked more closely and discerned an exceptional human being. He also undertook to succeed the celebrated Sulpician, Père Tronson, as De La Salle's spiritual director. Immediately, he persuaded his penitent to receive the Sub-diaconate.

During the six years of life that remained to Roland, the friendship between the two Canons was constant and total. De La Salle was the confidant of the joys and sufferings that Roland experienced in his work with the Congregation of the Holy Child Jesus. The founder was training his heir. He perceived quite clearly what a great prize for his Sisters and his schools would be both the Christian wisdom and the social influence of the son of a great family. And although he encouraged the young man (after the latter had received the Diaconate in 1676) to resign his prebend and accept a pastorate, the concern for the schools was perhaps not altogether foreign to such a proposal. He must have reflected that at the head of a parish, John Baptist de La Salle would have, rather than in his choir stall, an active and efficacious role in the final establishment of the congregation of teaching Sisters. Not unreasonably, the Archbishop vetoed this very noble, very courageous, but (given the age, the family responsibilities and the clerical status of the deacon) to say the least, very precipitous plan.

While Nicolas Roland was returning to Rheims, having apparently failed in his mission, heavy hearted, with death marked on his features, but still serene of mind, his friend was preparing himself in retreat for his rapidly approaching priestly ordination. De La Salle celebrated his first Mass on Easter Sunday, the 10th of April, 1678 in a chapel of the Cathedral. His spiritual director was, of course, among the small number of persons in attendance.

Nine days later, on Tuesday of ``Quasimodo Week", Roland took to his bed, from which he never arose. On several occasions, dangerously overtaken by purpuric fever, he made several heroic efforts to visit and console the Daughters of the Child Jesus. He was certain that his end was near. He asked for Extreme Unction, and dictated his final wishes: ``Not believing to be able to do anything more useful for the glory of God, the salvation of souls, the comfort of the poor or the good of the city which gave (him) birth", he bequeathed the house on Rue Barbâtre and a sum of fourteen thousand livres to the tuition-free schools for poor girls. He designated De La Salle as the executor of his will, charged him with obtaining approval from the city fathers for the community of Sisters and left them in his care.

Then, fleetingly, the hope of a cure passed over the dying man: he saw himself ``living more perfectly for God in the hermitage in Caen, where Père Bernières died". His memory was reverting back to his ``twenties". On Rue St.Dominique he must at one time have learned of that center of sanctity, where laymen and priests gathered around a fervent confrere of the Society of the Blessed Sacrament, where Montigny-Laval, in silence before God, prepared to become a bishop. At Roland's bedside, where John Baptist de La Salle kept vigil, there vibrated the life of the whole of 17th century Catholic France. [4]

But Nicolas Roland once again quickly turned his attention toward eternity. His gaze was steady, although not wholly free of fear: ``I shall know there my awful obligations and my infidelities", he said to his confreres of the Chapter who had accompanied the Holy Viaticum to his room. ``Pray that the Lord will have mercy upon me". For this great soul, the last five days of his life were ``a time of test and combat". Dominating his anguish, he repeated: ``Lord, my God, give me the grace to be among the number of Your elect." He asked that the Psalms ``on the desire of

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4 . Concerning Père Bernières see Maurice Souriau's book, *Deux mystiques normands au dix-septième siecle* (Paris, Perrin,1909), reissued by the same publisher in 1923 under the title, *le Mysticisme en Normandie au dix-septième siecle* . Bernières died in 1659, but his nephew, Père Gavrus, continued to gather people at the hermitage, who wished to live in retirement.

seeing God and loving His portion" be chanted close to his bed, and he also attempted to join in the singing.

Finally at peace, he died on the 27th of April, 1678.

A few months proved sufficient for De La Salle to assure the Congregation of the Holy Child Jesus the stability it had been seeking. He pacified the members of the City Council. On the 9th of May he had warrants authorizing the King's lieutenant to convoke a meeting of the aldermen, pastors, and superiors of religious communities, who were to give their advice concerning the establishment in Rheims of a ``community of secular ladies to maintain schools for the instruction of poor young girls".

At the meeting, which was held on the 11th of August, De La Salle declared that the Sisters ``would not be able to employ or appoint anybody who was not a member of their community". On the following day he was given a unanimously favorable vote.

The Archbishop, thoroughly informed concerning the success of the affair, took it upon himself to press for ``Letters Patent". In February 1679 the matter was concluded. On the 17th of that month, the Parlement of Paris registered the ``Letters" at the expense of Maurice Le Tellier. It was settled that

> certain widow women and pious young ladies would unite and live in the same house under the name of the Child Jesus, in order thereby to be able to instruct young persons of their own sex They shall not be confined by, nor received nor admitted into, any cloister or monastic rule, nor form any regular community, as being things contrary to their institute.

From that time on, tuition-free schools for little girls in Rheims prospered and were widely accepted. The Congregation founded by Canon Roland (and securely ``founded" with necessary funds which the Archbishop further augmented) corresponded, with some adaptations to local needs, to the work of the Sisters of Providence in Rouen and of the Madames of St. Maur in Paris.

Having completed his solemn mission, De La Salle was looking forward to succeeding his friend as the clerical superior of the community. The Archbishop, however, gave the post to Guillaume Rogier, who had also been among the intimate friends of Nicholas Roland.

Each day, however, the young priest came to say Mass in the chapel of the Sisters of the Child Jesus. He continued to act totally under the influence of his late confessor. In the advice the Sisters sought from him, as well as in his own personal conduct, he was inspired by the principles of the late founder. He studied the collection of notes in which the teachings and spiritual direction of the ``Theologian" were summarized.

The entire apostolate of Nicolas Roland had been compressed into thirteen years. He left his retreat on Rue St.Dominique in 1665, and he died in 1678, at the age of thirty-five. He had been frequently ill. He spent himself in preaching, traveling, hearing confessions, in concern for the physical and moral comfort of his clerical disciples, his orphans, his penitents, his school children and his Sisters, and in countless undertakings to organize and to render his Congregation of the Holy Child Jesus both viable and durable. He wrote only hasty letters, a few brief lines in reply to cases of conscience and in response to the requests of his Sisters, and always under the constraints of immediate necessity. He lacked the leisure to explain his educational ideas, which, besides, were probably not very original. Having been taught by the Jesuits, read Demia, and taken note of the customs and practices pursued in the schools of Rouen and Paris and in the school of the Daughters of Notre Dame in Rheims, he put his recollections, observations and borrowings to work with all the ardor of his soul and with his scrupulosity for perfection. His sole end, as he

himself said, was to form Christian souls. But since the school was the indispensable ordinary means, he wished that nothing be left undone in the education of schoolmistresses. We have seen that he sought out the best instruction for them. As for himself, his mission to them seemed to him to have belonged above all to the supernatural order; he helped them to become cultivated and holy; he led them to obedience, humility, renunciation and a continuous and joyful charity, so that, living in a condition quite contrary to nature, they might respond to grace.

What we can gather from his papers and what forms the substance of the notes, along with the Memoirs concerning his life, are precepts of conduct which reveal a personal secret of sanctity, and which present this secret to select souls as the corollary of their vocation.

In the first place, we come across ``Counsels Given by the late Father Roland, Theologian in Rheims, for the Conduct of People Living a Regular Life". Then comes another ``Counsels that Father Roland Gave Orally to the Daughters of the Holy Child Jesus", and the ``Conference" that he ``gave to the Community on the words, `Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect'". There follows ``Maxims Given Orally by Father Roland", and the ``Little Treatise on the Virtues Most Necessary for the Sisters". This treatise ``was found in Father Roland's own hand". Finally, there is a collection of fifty letters addressed by the confessor to various penitents.

A few lines of Preface inform us exactly concerning the conditions under which these r*eliquae* were transmitted. The anonymous editor worked for ``the Daughters of the Community of the Holy Child Jesus, established in Rheims".

He wrote:

> Accept, my very dear Sisters, this small collection which, I am sure, will be as useful to you as it will be pleasing, and all the more so because it contains a summary of the views of the late Father Roland, Theologian, your father and founder. I have arranged them in a way so as to conform to your needs and regulations, and so as to be profitable to you And if you find here some words in addition to those in which he was accustomed to address you, I beg you not to reject them, the more so, since I can assure you that I learned them from him, when I had the happiness of associating with him during his life, when his heart and mine dwelt eagerly on everything with which God inspired us concerning your community and the conduct that he desired you to observe. That is what has led me to prepare this brief treatise for your consolation, so that you might recall the first principles and the primitive spirit of your Institute, moved as I am to exhort that nothing be changed to preserve in you that apostolic spirit that he inspired in you with his counsels Because of the reverence I have conceived for them I have taken this liberty as well as that of pleading with you to believe me in the most affectionate love of the Holy Child Jesus for the true good of your Community

Was this man who was so close to the heart of Nicolas Roland, and who had read, classified, corrected and completed the writings of his friend and colleague, St. John Baptist de La Salle? If so, we would be able to explain the striking similarities between certain passages of Roland's book and the *Collection of Different Short Treatises* published by the Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1711. Such similarities, however, do not permit the deduction that De La Salle passed off his thoughts as the thoughts of his mentor, as Plato put his views in the mouth of Socrates. Such an interpretation would be tantamount to denying the truthfulness of the statements made by the disciple and successor, who had done nothing more than to preserve in his memory the voice of the late Canon. The teaching he formulated in the "Counsels", which he edited and the faithful echo of which will be heard again in his personal writings , is not different from what we find in the "Conferences" on "Be ye perfect…", the "Short treatise on the Virtues", and the Letters – pages that are

absolutely authentic. Roland's authorship remains in contestable. And what we are acknowledging here are the influences of the older man upon the mind of the younger.

The first 'counsel' concerns rising, which must be "the first exercise of the day":

> Rise promptly and fervently, precisely at the time ordained by your rules; without consulting your pillow for a single instant. Imagine that God is saying to you what is said in Scripture:' Arise my spouse, my beloved, my dove,.' Conform yourself to these words and say from the bottom of your soul: I shall arise and seek him whom my soul loves.

Then, like Barré, Nicholas Roland insisted on mental prayer: "It is the foundation of all the virtues, the fountain whence you can draw the graces and insights that you need…" With the same wisdom as Barré, the author requires his religious can draw the graces and insights that you need…" With the same wisdom as Barré, the author requires his Religious

> ...through a humble opinion of themselves, to preserve the ordinary ways and methods, as long as God will allow them. If His goodness gives them a taste for His Presence or an insight into some mystery, then, let them be led by His Spirit. (What is essential is) to preserve the presence of God during the entire time of the meditation rather than bother one's head with considerations that might slow one down … Distractions must be faithfully dispelled: but quietly, without anxiety . . . To bring forth acts of love and make resolutions

is what should occupy the soul, longer than preliminary considerations. Furthermore, whatever may be the "dryness, the aridity the temptations and the difficulties", perseverance is prescribed: "Remember that you have always been more than happy that God does not destroy you in your sins", and that He deigns to suffer you in His presence. "A single act of abandonment in the greatest aridity is more pleasing to God than all of your efforts."

> Mental prayer is a sacrifice in which the victim must be completely immolated and we shall never satisfy God otherwise than by destruction of ourselves and of our own views: We must not imagine that to make mental prayer we must e perfect, but, that in order to succeed in it it is absolutely necessary to tend toward perfection and to refuse God nothing. Otherwise, all our meditations are nothing but pure amusement and a mockery of God Himself.

A soul that is detached from self and from created things will be "faithful to correspond to interior movements" which come to it from the Holy Spirit. It will not reject consolations which after "painful periods", are given to it, "in order to refresh it and to encourage it in the service" of its Master; it will e enough for "it to curb what is oversensitive … or some vain estimate" it has of itself.

Besides these observations and counsels of a general nature, we find some interesting details in a letter to a penitent:

> My very dear young lady, take a subject that is related to your needs, which, I believe to be, in the first place, the four last ends of man...Recall then, at least in the beginning, the subject you wish to meditate upon, without however upsetting yourself, nor wishing, by dint of thinking about it, to retain the remembrance of what you have read; but make acts of love, according to your particular needs;But the disorders in your life, what dominates you, and look again at that for which your life you are now blameworthy before God's majesty. Always conclude with the acknowledgement before God of some particular goods; always make some positive resolutions respecting your failures; also foresee before closing, the struggles you are going to have this day with your enemies–I mean against the world, the flesh and the devil; look forward also to your tasks in order to ask God for the grace to sanctify you in the practice of your vocation; resolve to remain in the presence of God throughout the test of the day as far as your affairs and human weakness will permit.

Assistance at Mass and (as often as possible) the reception of Holy Communion completed the requirements of the Christian day. They should apply themselves to the meaning of the words and the mystery of the Liturgy. They were to associate themselves with the Sacrifice by prayers of adoration, thanksgiving, oblation and petition. Roland was careful to encourage frequent Communion: "I think that it is

good", he wrote a Sister of the Congregation of Notre Dame, "that you communicate every day, if your superiors allow it". And, to another: "If you can obtain permission to receive communion three times a week, not counting Sunday, rather than two times, do so, regardless of the little taste you may have for it." While he threatened a third person with depriving her "of a certain number of communions", it was in order to restore her to a greater confidence and simplicity. He was "in no mood to feed the scruples" of a penitent who had overwhelmed him with endless and subtle letters:

> Be sensible ...You will never commit a sacrilege as long as you obey; but you displease Our Lord a great deal when you prefer your own tortuous judgment to that of those who direct you.Then came the moment for 'work', for professional tasks.
>
> Look upon it with the eye of faith, in great confusion, as you consider its excellence and your own incompetence; never regard it as a mercenary activity ...Empty yourself of all self-interest …; a true schoolmistress must seek only the pure glory of God.

Let her teach as much by example as by word. Let her teaching be simple and substantial. Wholly at the "service of poor children", the teaching Sister's models will be Jesus, the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph at work in Nazareth.

There is a series of maxims that have to do especially with these professional occupations:

> Be careful not to exhaust yourself pointlessly, since you must work all your life. -- In such a holy profession, expect everything from God and nothing from your own industry.--Among the orphans, as in the schools, always prefer the most repugnant, ill-favored, unpromising and least leasing child.--Never strike with the hand in such a way that what is acting in you is nature. In your reproofs and corrections of the child, check the movements of anger.--Do not make exceptions for persons, since the souls of the poor and the souls of the rich have cost Christ equally. If you must prefer individuals in your schools, let them be the poor, because they are His members.

After this external activity which more or less disperse the soul's energies and clouded the conscience, a turning back upon the self in a purifying meditation was in order. To this end, M. Roland asked that the Sisters be faithful to "Particular Examen". In God's presence and in His light "apply yourself to the faults that you resolved to struggle against ...concentrating on one of them which you believe places the greatest obstacle to your perfection." Think of the virtue that you are lacking -- the one "for which God gives you the greatest taste and which is more consistent with your vocation". Note how you behave and make practical resolutions precisely on the point of your "Examen". "Remember these words: Whoever totally loves God neglects nothing in His service. …Whoever neglects little faults infallibly falls into greater ones."

A good author helps us to know ourselves better, renews and strengthens our spirit and puts it in the presence of truths which vivify. But for reading to have its effect, it must be devoid of curiosity, vanity and precipitation:

> Disavow the unregulated desire to learn in order to be esteemed. If your reading is study, declare before God that you wish to be absorbed by it only for His glory and for the salvation of your neighbor. If your books are for spiritual reading, let them only unite you to Him ...Ponder what you read, and think often that it is Jesus Christ Himself who teaches you through these letters sent from Heaven; respect them down to the last syllable; from time to time break off in order to reflect a moment on the reading you are doing.

Don't be in a hurry to finish your book. In several places in his correspondence, Roland repeats these judicious counsels:

> Always read the same chapter twice in a row and when you have finished the book, begin it over again, in order to check your avidity and curiosity, which is always demanding something new; pause as you read in order to appreciate and reflect on what you have read.

A Sister of the Order of St. Augustine, who had declared to Canon Roland, her confessor, that a certain book had not attracted her, was ordered to read it "seven

times", attentively and with frequent pauses, in order that she might learn" not to be fastidious regarding the means" she should use for her spiritual advancement.

The body, too, needs its nourishment. It must be supplied food of such a kind that it remains a useful servant without being tempted to become master once again. During meals, the Sister will think of herself "as a poor beggar" who is accepting an alms and who, in such a condition, finds "nothing to say" about the most ill prepared dishes. Furthermore, she will not forget "to mortify herself in something – in secret, however, so as not to appear singular". She will listen as best she can to the reading at table "in order to distract her mind … from the food", recalling that "eating is a necessity which places us on the same level as the beasts".

In a similar spirit she will perform the indispensable exercise of recreation– "that relaxation which is ordered exclusively to the restoration of the spiritual forces". She makes it an exercise of fraternal charity; by "avoiding in conversation excessive effusiveness, immoderate laughter and whispered and scoffing comments"; not speaking especially to one rather than another of the Sisters; "affable with all, with an open heart, innocently and joyously. Her conversations, from which "the affairs of worldly people" and profane news are banished, will bear always on God, "whether directly or indirectly".

In monasteries the conviction expressed in Psalm 132 is often heard: *Ecce quam bonum, et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum.* But it is nonetheless true that the common life puts patience to a severe test. A founder, then should not neglect to dwell on the duty of "charity towards one's neighbor", that virtue which (according to Saint Paul's words, adopted by Canon Roland) "supports all things, always believes in the good, is not ambitious, nor disdainful, is gentle and active". It is also forever necessary in whatever circumstance. "All views that are contrary to it" must be "shunned as promptly as impure thoughts". "Except to say good things", the Sisters will not speak about a neighbor. They will avoid disagreeable and imperious tones of voice. they will avoid "suspicious, temerarious judgments and condemnations". When it is impossible to excuse an action, they will excuse the intention, "or at least leave the judgment to God".

This deference, this indulgence, will not prevent the Sisters from giving notice to each other of their defects, "in a humble and discreet way", while being careful to be "both themselves and their interlocutors) "free from all emotion",

> If the particular advice was proposed without effect ...they shall inform the Superior of the fault that was supposed to have been committed ...with a sincere desire for the amendment of the one who was supposed to have committed it.

Such charity "will not be founded on kinship, friendship, sympathy, physical or spiritual qualities or on benefits received or expected …" It "will not permit petty friendships, alliances or particular and secret liaisons … to ruin a Christian community". It is here that M. Roland reveals in a rather candid manner the vexations and difficulties that the prejudices and inclination of the heart (especially those of the feminine heart) pose for a founder and spiritual director.

The great safeguard of religious virtue, of external order as well as of peace and progress of souls, is silence. "A talkative person cannot be spiritual". "Grace and divine communication are like a liqueur that is poured out and lost through too many words":

> The time of the 'Great Silence' begins with the end of recreation and continues to the end of morning prayer. Silence will always be observed in the refectory, in the Sisters' rooms, in the dormitories, and, as far as possible, on the stairways… There will be freedom to speak only during recreation; they will speak only as necessity will oblige and without raising the voice. If it should happen that one of your Sisters should fall into frivolity and forget herself in this

> matter, you must, in a spirit of charity, respectfully and civilly inform her, by placing a finger on your lips.

In this way we shall be honoring Our Lord's earthly silence.

It would have been surprising had not Roland (himself a very austere and penitential man) treated *ex professo* concerning the pursuit and acceptance of suffering as a means to expiation and sanctification. In fact, he writes that there is no other "road to heaven". "As sinners and as Christians, you must,my Sisters, bear the mortification of Jesus in your bodies and spirits". Favorable circumstances arise every day: God sends them and we must profit from them. Besides, we ourselves can evoke them. "It is a deception to think that exterior mortification is not necessary." The error here would be for one to be attached to mortification imprudently and outside the confines of obedience.

We should conform courageously to the will of Providence, and to the wishes of the Superiors; in a spirit of penance, we should accept correction and admonition. Let us, then, accept "illness and its consequences, as well as spiritual suffering". but while preserving the desire for suffering, the Sisters will not reject "the small comforts that obedience prescribes":

> I do indeed wish (wrote Roland) that each one take care of her health and I forbid the commission of any indiscretion that might affect it adversely. but I also wish that we remember that the body is the greatest enemy we have and that we must not bestow comfort or nourishment upon it except to earn its cooperation.

Daughters of the Congregation in Rheims would obviously find matter for heroism in the practice of the three virtues which have always been the source of the Religious life within the Catholic Church (whether pronounced simply or solemnly) – Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. On the subject of chastity Nicolas Roland's prescriptions are minute:

> Since the Sisters are not cloistered and the charity of their Institute exposes them to many occasions, they have a special obligation to love and honor this virtue,to preserve it with such exactitude, prudence and circumspection … that nobody would be able to notice anything in their words, looks, actions or in their external appearance which does not inspire and spread a good repute both within and outside the house.

But once he has proposed a whole collection of admonitions that would preserve the Sisters from any misadventure, he hastens to build up their confidence, and to assure them against the assaults and snares of scruples.

> We must never be anxious about the attacks that our household enemy makes upon us … After a decision wholly to give ourselves to God by vow, it is unbelievable that one would want to violate that vow or would consent to any suggestion along these lines; our business is simply to avoid giving the devil an occasion for propelling us toward evil.

Poverty, which this wealthy man embraced and espoused with the generosity of a St. Francis of Assisi, inspired him with words of genuine tenderness:

> Recall that it was for the love and the imitation of Jesus Christ that you have become poor and that you have renounced the good things of earth. Cherish holy poverty as the virtue beloved of the Divine Savior who, all His life, embraced it for the love of you… Ask him to deprive you of abundance in this life, in order to make you pleasing in His eyes; strip yourself as much as you can, even of the things that are useful and necessary, out of respect for this virtue. Cherish it as Jesus Christ cherished it, and as a means which leads you to perfection. Do not be satisfied merely to bear the name of "poor" and to make a vow of it, but practice it on all occasions; be happy if, without your willing it, you lack something, and when you are in a position to choose, always take the least. Believe that, in order to be genuinely poor and perfectly to fulfill your vow, you must possess nothing superfluous, even with permission; do not allow anything, not even a picture, in your cell without necessity and counsel; place yourself in the greatest destitution that is possible for you, and, in order to commit yourself thereto more and more, think of the reward that God grants to those who practice the virtue of poverty, and, on the contrary, think of the condemnation he will visit upon those who have their ease and convenience in this life. I cannot allow that you have anything whatsoever as

> your own; “mine” and “thine” are inconsistent with the poverty of the Child Jesus.

These statements of principle were accompanied by detailed descriptions: The Sisters were to buy nothing for their personal use; they were to ask for nothing from their relatives; they should

> represent to their Superior in humility and simplicity any need they might have, but depend upon her to judge the matter … In this spirit of poverty, they shall economize and conserve carefully what is given to them for their use or is entrusted to them.

In his “Short Treatise” M. Roland has provided a definition of obedience that is so precise, complete and substantial that it could not fail to become classical:

> This virtue is a perpetual sacrifice of our judgment and a perfect denial and submission of our will to the will of our Superiors and to God’s will, and a prompt execution of the things that we are ordered to do, without vexation, repugnance, murmuring, reply or argument. Genuine obedience is simple, sincere and universal. Simple, because it examines neither the thing commanded nor the qualities of the person in command. Sincere, because it submits in heart and with affection. Universal, because it obeys in every place, all Superiors and in all things, except sin.

The Sisters gathered the praises of this fundamental virtue from the lips of their founder and wrote them down in the following terms:

> Whoever could understand what is the value of an action done in obedience would never undertake anything without it. An obedient soul is a true copy of Jesus Christ. Through obedience all our actions, even in the most indifferent matters, become pleasing to God; and without obedience the most brilliant and the most saintly accomplishments are dangerous, because of the vain glory which slips in ...People who live a community life ...are like those who sleep aboard ship at sea and who are awakened at their destination without so much as thinking about it; not following their own will, they are always certain of doing God’s; by abandoning their will to the will of their Superiors they return, in a way, to the state of innocence. (*Oral Counsels*)

In his writings on humility, simplicity, gentleness and self-denial, Nicolas Roland returns to the main features of this portrait and highlights them. Without “the precious virtue of humility”, there can be no solid piety, and “the best of undertakings become matter for sin”. The Daughters of the Congregation must be all the more humble in that they're obliged to communicate a great deal with the outside”: the approval and praise they receive exposes them “to lose the merit of their work”. In order to reestablish equilibrium and return to the truth, each one “will strive earnestly to know herself”, to persuade herself “that she is the most imperfect of all the Sisters’ and the most useless. She will love the fact “that her faults are known and her Superiors have been informed about them”. Accused and reproved, she will not make excuses “unless charity or obedience obliges her”, and even then “she should be innocent of the faults imputed to her”. Neither by word nor by gesture will she give evidence of any dissatisfaction. She will endure “contradictions, contempt, harsh and bitter words, raillery and derision from whatever quarter; thinking of herself as all happier” because she suffers with greater innocence.

> The Sisters’ humility should not end with loving and practicing personal or individual humiliation. They must also be disposed to love and practice it as a community, by willingly enduring that other communities be preferred to their own (and that theirs) sometimes despised (and) taken for vile and abject in the eyes of men.

This “collective humility”, something rarer than personal humility, Roland stressed and demanded with the vigor of a saint and the skill of a man who knew human nature profoundly.

In accordance with the taste of his century, he was also a careful analyst in what he wrote about “simplicity”. In the world, he wrote, people don’t know “what it means to be simple: that is why a person who, through God’s mercy and goodness, withdraws from the world to enter holy Religion, must do all he can to acquire simplicity in its fullest”. What, then, is simplicity?

(It is) a divine virtue, an emanation of the spirit of the Son of God; Who, throughout His entire life, had only a single end in view: His Father's glory… (It is) the mistress and the guardian of the other virtues, since the soul that possesses it is humble, gentle, obedient, patient, charitable and punctual; it doesn't know what it means to be selfish or to harbor any self-regarding qualities, and it is incapable of wrongfully judging another, thus bringing all things to good; all curiosity, artifice and second thoughts are foreign to it; and it is incapable of seeking after things that merely glitter; it is untroubled by events, because, having only God in view, no event can be troublesome; in its eyes the meanest jobs are always welcome; its conversation and its undertakings are sincere and all duplicity is foreign to it. It has the advantage that God is pleased with it and takes pleasure in communicating His secrets to it; as He Himself said, it becomes exempt from all error; since God is the protector of the simple and of those who have an upright heart.

Gentleness "is a result of humility and simplicity". The Sisters' model is Jesus Christ, "gentle and humble of heart". And since by their vocation they are committed to winning their neighbor to the service of God, they must be gentle and give gracious welcome in order to attract souls. They will reflect, besides that there is no virtue more necessary to provide for peace, union, concord and to render supportable the mutual imperfections found in community life.

Surely all of this is epitomized in "self-abnegation". This is the ineluctable condition of, and the "shortest rout to becoming perfect":

Whoever would be faithful to efface himself before God, in himself and in relation to creatures, would sanctify himself in a short time. Thus, weigh well the words of the Savior: 'Renounce yourself, carry your cross and follow me'

Were our task one of delving more deeply into the soul of Nicolas Roland, there would be much more to understand in his "Letters". We would see there his devotion to the Child Jesus, to "this God of love who came to solicit our hearts by the humility of the crib, the tenderness of His infancy, and by His tears and cries". We would once again be listening to the aspirations of a St. Francis of Assisi:

When shall we love love itself … Our entire perfection consists in loving God, and if you ask me who is the greatest saint, I would reply that it is he who has the greatest love of God. Love him then with all your strength until you have emptied yourself because of love. He is so lovable, so little loved, so little known, so persecuted, so despised by the behavior and the beliefs of worldly people! Love Him then for all those who do not love Him.

In this intense charity we should find the secret of a wonderful delicacy and of a many faceted and tireless kindness for his penitents. As pastor, "he knew his flock" individually, down to the least one *in intimo cordo.* He dealt with each of them according to her vocation, her temperament and her abilities. This impetuous man mellowed, but his fire never extinguished. One Sister said that "one would have had to have a heart made of diamond not to be touched and embraced" by such a fire. In M. Roland we stand in the presence of the direct heir of the founder of the Congregation of the Visitation, as well as of the stigmatist of Alverna, of a most dedicated disciple of St. Ignatius Loyola as well as of M. Olier and of St. John Eudes. From a letter "to a cleric" whose "situation troubled him" we quote only this single splendid sentence: "Turn toward love! Throw yourself upon the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and hide yourself in His loving wounds!"

The "Little Treatise on the Most Necessary Virtues" concludes with an enumeration of the "twelve supports of the Institute of the Sisters of the Community of the Holy Child Jesus". The Sisters "must always have" this summary of their duties "in mind so that they can meditate upon it, and in their hearts so as to practice it". It does not seem superfluous to quote it here so that at an opportune moment we may compare it with the commandments of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

1. The Spirit of this Institute consists primarily in a genuine love of God.

2. In a cordial affection for all the Sisters;
3. In a perfect relation and union with the Superiors;
4. In a regulated and constant zeal for the education of youth;
5. In a prompt, simple, respectful and universal obedience;
6. in exact punctuality in the observance of all rules;
7. In a great desire for suffering and humiliations;
8. In a sincere and quite profound humility, in conformity with Jesus Christ;
9. In a courageous love of work and holy abjection;
10. In an extreme horror for the least appearance of vice;
11. In an exact submission and fidelity to do what the customs and regulations require;
12. Finally, in a union of all Christians and religious virtues.

May the peace and mercy of God be with those who keep this rule (St. Paul, Col. iv).

And now, in the clear and noble countenance of M. Roland there is, perhaps, a sufficiency of light with which to illumine, with the radiance of the dawn, the horizon whereon will appear St. John Baptist de La Salle.

PART TWO

THE BEGINNINGS

History of the Institute

Of the Brothers of the Christian Schools

From its Origins to 1719

CHAPTER ONE

St. John Baptist de La Salle, Adrien Nyel and Their First Schools

In Rouen toward the middle of the 17th century there was a simple man who, very active although in a subordinate capacity, played his role in the great movement of popular education. He was born in Laon in 1624, in the parish of St.Cyr. A memorandum dating from 1728, in manuscript and preserved in the Archives of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, calls him ``Adrien Niay''; and this patronymic is still found today among the people living in Laon. But he signed himself ``Nyel'', and we shall call him by the name he adopted and that tradition has retained.

Why and how did he migrate to Normandy? We don't know, but what we learn both of his zeal and of his temper enable us easily to recognize that he was incapable of isolating himself in the region of his birthplace. Beyond that, he was neither a drifter nor an adventurer. But one fine day, when at last he finally decided to return to the mountains of his native Laon, his fellow countrymen gave him a warm welcome.

In Rouen he won the esteem and the friendship of a man known for his good works and who, in order to conduct his many charitable enterprises, possessed influence, talent and resources. This was Laurent Cornu, Lord of Bimorel and treasurer of France.[13] As administrator of the Bureau for the Poor, Bimoral had been faced with the problem of the schools. Nyel was an educator. And doubtless in the exercise of his profession of teacher, he had given proof of his competence. He knew how to hold a class and teach methodically, and, as a fervent Christian and well instructed in his religion, he would leave behind him the reputation for being an incomparable catechist.

In 1657 Bimorel had Nyel appointed teacher for the children in the General Hospital, provided him with a wage of 100 livres, and lodged him in that institution, of which he was given the additional responsibility of being its bursar. But this was not enough for a man of Nyel's energy and dedication. He took care of the children who had been placed for apprenticeship or for training as domestic servants. Then he decided to reopen the former charity schools which, begun during the preceding century, had, one by one, disappeared. Encouraged and subsidized by Laurent Bimorel and the Bureau for the Poor, between 1661 and 1669, Nyel opened schools in St.Maclou, St. Vivien, Beauvoisine and St. Elias.

It was the period during which Père Barré was organizing his Congregation of the Sisters of Providence. The same concerns brought Adrien Nyel together with him and the apostolic group of which Madame Maillefer was a member. There does not seem to have been any permanent collaboration. The young teachers appointed by Nyel for the instruction of poor boys did, indeed, bear the name of ``Brothers'', as did, at a later date, the ephemeral disciples of Barré. And Adrien himself was known among these teachers as ``Brother Gabriel''. But he did not intend to found a religious community. Fed, lodged and paid by the administrators of the Bureau for the Poor, these young men, who, before and after school hours functioned as infirmarians, were wage earners who were free to cancel their contracts.

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13 . Concerning ``Gifts and foundations in favor of the Able-Bodied Poor'' made by the Le Cournu family, see Histoire de la Ville de Rouen by a monk (named Dom Farin), Vol. II, Part Two, pp.37--38, Rouen, 1731.

Nyel assumed the responsibility for their training, and then entrusted them with the task of teaching the children. He was especially concerned to broaden the field of his own activity. Opening new schools was his principal interest. He had a remarkable talent for public relations, for getting things started, and for quickly obtaining early results, which won him both applause and a following. Thus it was that in 1670 he successfully brought to term the foundation of a school in Darnétal. Francis Bimorel, Laurent's brother, provided the house in which lived the teacher who presided over the boys of two parishes in this market-town, St. Peter Carville's and St. Owen Longpaon. ``Nyel, regent for children in the Bureau of the able-bodied'' poor was empowered by the pastors and the treasurers of these parishes to accept the donation in the presence of a notary. Nyel named one of his aides, John Houdoul, as principle of the school.[14]

The Bimorels continued to support the sympathetic, competent and enterprising Nyel. Laurent sought to guarantee his future, and, in his will, in which he left his charity schools to the Bureau, he stipulated that Adrien Nyel should be made their permanent principal. After twenty years the ``Preceptor'' became an authority in Rouen, who was no longer restricted by severely narrow obligations. Thus, when Madame Maillefer invited him to cooperate in the realization of a rather bold project, he was available.

This lady had maintained a lively attachment to her native city of Rheims. She was not unaware of the alliance between Barré and Roland, nor was Sister Frances Duval's mission, nor, consequently, the school of the Holy Child Jesus on Rue Barbâtre, unknown to her. She wanted the boys in Rheims to be as well cared for as the girls; and she knew that this was also Nicolas Roland's desire. Feminine education had been the first stage; for so it had been decided by Pierre Fourier, Barré and Roland; and throughout France congregations of religious teaching women had buoyantly supplied the labor and achieved the goal. Male recruits, levied for the same cause, faltered, scattered or altered courses. Was failure inevitable? Jeanne Maillefer did not think so. Of course, she thought only to remedy current needs according to her ability and by means of her fortune; but this woman's initiative was to produce astounding results. Her gesture was to open up the future.

In order to realize her purpose it seems that she waited until the community of the Holy Child Jesus had been thoroughly stabilized. The death of its founder must have grieved her, and, perhaps, momentarily disconcerted her. But her connections in Rheims were sufficiently reliable for her to know about De La Salle's successful negotiations, which were concluded with the issuing of the ``Letters patent''. There is every reason to assume that if she had not known the young Canon personally, she had been informed about his moral and intellectual qualities. She knew that he had been the disciple and confidant of the late Canon Roland. Admiration and affection for this holy man had reinforced the bonds of class and kinship which existed between the De La Salles, the Dubois' and the Maillefers. However, it was on her own initiative and without any prior arrangements with other citizens of Rheims that she moved into action. And in her manner we see the kind of woman she was---quick, dominating, and, at the same time, reconciled to Divine Providence. She proposed that Nyel depart for Champagne; there he was to go directly to the Convent of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, where Sister Frances Duval would have no difficulty recognizing him. He was to tell her that he came at Madame Maillefer's behest in order to open a tuition-free school for the poor. He was to produce a letter in which

14 . Lucard, *Annales* , Vol. I, pg. 170, note 1.

his benefactress promised to pay him an annual salary of 100 écus, as well as the letters of recommendation that she had given him for people who would be in a position to be useful to him. He would then seek hospitality with Monsieur Dubois, Madame Maillefer's brother, and take counsel with Canon De La Salle.

However venturesome the expedition might appear, it was not the sort of thing that Adrien Nyel would find daunting. There would be the voyage, the new faces, much negotiating, interesting conversations, and good grain sewn in new soil, And, then, there was the prospect of returning to within fifteen leagues of his birthplace, of seeing once again the Cathedral of Laon and all the venerable sanctuaries. Indeed, he would prepare for his task by a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Liesse.

The question of his return to Rouen he left unanswered. Basically, he did not like to tie himself down by fixed promises and long-termed commitments. The charity schools were staffed with teachers; and, besides, he was little more than their distant, heedless and intermittent director. Furthermore, he left his aides with full freedom of action, and he figured that they could easily accommodate themselves to his absence. Before his departure, he thought he was paying a proper respect to the past and taking exemplary precautions for the future by granting the Bureau the sum of 1300 livres, on condition that he (the donor) receive a life annuity of 100 livres and that after his death he should have prayers for the repose of his soul.

He travelled modestly, dressed like a country cleric, alert, although he was well into his sixties, and in the company of a youth of fourteen years, who was his teaching assistant. It was the month of March, in the year 1679. The season was beautiful- the beginning of spring. The kingdom, in all its splendor had been rejoicing, for a few years, in complete peace. The Treaty of Nijmegen had just been signed, and Louis XIV was really ``Louis the Great'', the ``Sun King''. John Baptist Colbert, a native of Rheims, was coming to the end of a successful career. The strong arm of Louvois, the brother of Archbishop Maurice Le Tellier, had reformed the French army. Versailles, Les Invalides, the colonnade of the Louvre, and the entire spectacle of the reign of Louis XIV filled the horizon; nearly all the masterpieces of classical French literature had been published. The most recent (dating from 1678) was the second volume of La Fontaine's Fables . Racine had only recently fled the theatre in search of Christian perfection. Bourdaloue brought the court and the city together around the pulpit, to persuade minds and rouse consciences. Jacques Benignus Bossuet, who had just finished tutoring the Dolphin, would henceforth make his magnificent voice heard, and (as historian, theologian, controversialist and orator) become visible among the leading bishops.

No matter how difficult the task it was good to work in those times. Of course, there was no dearth of suffering. In fact, the glittering facades showed cracks and, here and there revealed dilapidation. Men continued to weave lives of sin and sorrow and to heap up suffering through error and vice versa. Gallicanism had begun to stir about, and Jansenism was making fresh noises in pursuit of its cunning work of disintegration. Protestantism, which had been yielding to the patient efforts of apologists, stiffened in response to the brutal assaults of the politicians and to the threats arising from the most recent violence. Military victory and territorial annexation did not prevent people from being prey to famine after a bad harvest or to epidemics in unhealthy cities. There were too many people miserable in soul or in body in both. And everywhere there were children in need of food, care, consolation and guidance.

The good-natured Nyel and his young companion were hurrying to meet one of those persons who had pity on the people. They met him at the entrance to the

convent founded by Canon Roland. De La Salle had entered the convent as the two strangers arrived. Greetings were exchanged in silence. Neither the priest nor the schoolmaster recognized one another. The moment slipped by unperceived, and yet, there it was, fixed in history.

John Baptist de La Salle did not have a sudden revelation or intuition concerning his mission. Unlike Demia, he did not shoot off a ``manifesto'' demonstrating the need to teach poor children. It had not come to him clearly and decisively, as it had come to Barré and Roland, to dedicate a large portion of his priestly activity to the creation of schools. As a student in the Seminary of St. Sulpice, he had, of course, been enrolled, as had his fellow seminarians, in the Association of Prayer to obtain Christian teachers, founded twenty-one years earlier by Père Bourdoise. Doubtless, too, he taught catechism to school children, since seminary regulations required him to do so. But at no time (as we shall soon hear himself say) did he acknowledge his vocation as an educator, and still less his vocation as the founder of a religious institute destined for teaching. Nicolas Roland was able to interest him in the Congregation of the Holy Child Jesus and to leave to his sense of friendship and obedience the responsibility for pleading the Sisters' and their pupils' cause before the city magistrates and the Archbishop. De La Salle had accomplished this mission with exactitude, and in a spirit of faith, to please God, with that calm and courteous energy and with that nearly infallible good sense that was so characteristic of him. Unobtrusively, he had been faithful to those who had been confided to him, as their spiritual counsellor, not as their director of studies.

The social circles in which he moved would have hardly put him in contact with the common people. One need only recall the aristocratic setting of his childhood years, “Hotel de la Cloche” where he was born on the 30th of April, 1651, its entrance with statuettes in niches, delicate friezes, slender columns, and the turret enclosing the spiral staircase, in order to imagine the opulence and the rank of the De La Salles whom commerce had enriched over many generations, and, who, as landowners and lawyers, had entered into relations with the great families of Rheims, the Coqueberts, the Lespagnols, and the Moëts, and were numbered among the gentlemen, although they did not all belong unquestionably to the nobility.

John Baptist de La Salle, sheltered in the paternal home, a student at the *Collège des Bons Enfants* in the city of his birth, tonsured at the age of eleven years and admitted to the illustrious Chapter of Notre Dame at the age of sixteen, seemed destined for the most placid sort of existence. He had achieved a remarkable academic success; for he loved the work of the mind, and he wrote with precision and clarity in a French style that was still completely under the influence of Latin syntax. He was thoroughly trained in the eloquence demanded by homilies and sermons and in the style and method of theology. He was pious and regular, possessed of a delicate and severe conscience, deep and ardent convictions, and as far removed as possible from the frivolity and curiosity of the *dilettante*. As a child, he was delighted by Church services and chants. His horizons would have been circumscribed by the plains and the hills of his native Champagne, with its many steeples, its manorial gateways, its monastic walls, the narrow and bustling streets of ancient Rheims, the merchant city, the royal city, the holy city, with its Cathedral where France's kings were crowned, this shrine, this jewel, as its spiritual center.

The eighteen months spent by the young cleric at St.Sulpice (October 18th, 1670 to April 19th, 1672) only accentuated his tendency to interior retirement, asceticism and a thrust toward Christian perfection. The Seminary supplied him with a discipline of soul and a daily rule of life from which he would never swerve. From the moment he

arrived at the Seminary, ``he was exact in community exercises", wrote Père Leschassier, the Superior-general of the Sulpicians, in a sort of ``testimonial" sent to the Brothers in 1720. And, weighing each of his words, he added that (De La Salle) appeared quite rapidly thereafter to become more detached from the world than he had upon entering. His conversation was always gentle and polite. He never seemed to have displeased anybody, nor to have attracted any criticism.[15]

The most obvious quality in this description is the ``gentleness", which dwelt at the very foundation of his nature. ``He had a delicate and persuasive charity", writes the Benedictine, Elie Maillefer, nephew and biographer of the Founder of the Brothers. The Rouen artist, Pierre Léger, in a painting which has survived in an engraving by Scotin,[16] has beautifully caught what remained of the smiling cordiality, the altogether openhearted goodness, straightforward and forever young, beneath the fatigue of age and after forty years of countless trials.

But it was not without the support of an exceptionally strong will that these features, after such a life, retained such a radiant serenity. The moment De La Salle, in a tranquil, lucid glance saw what he had to do, or where he had to go, inflexibly, unswervingly, he called upon his courage. ``He was firm, he had a burning zeal", writes Dom Maillefer. And he was all the more firm and zealous because he had taken counsel, pondered his decision at length, and prayed for hours or weeks; and he wanted only what he knew to be, in spite of personal repugnance, the will of God.

Until that day in March of 1679 when, as usual, he was making his way along Rue Barbâtre to say Mass in the Sister's chapel, God had only wanted him to be assiduous at Chapter and to prepare for his theology examinations.[17] To fulfill his priestly ministry through preaching and the confessional, to administer his patrimony, the possession and care of which was his through the premature death of his parents, and finally, to live with his brothers and to see to the education of the youngest of them. Faithful to this program, John Baptist de La Salle was on the road to sanctity.

The Sister Superior of the Congregation of the Holy Child Jesus invited him to come to the parlor, where she introduced him to Adrien Nyel, Madame Maillefer's emissary. Informed of the project of a school, the Canon was too kind, too charitable to rest content with vague language. Neither prejudiced nor impassioned, he weighed the issues. Naturally, he appreciated his compatriot's heroic gesture. However, difficulties, both ecclesiastical and civil, had to be anticipated. The opening of a new educational institution might prove unacceptable to the `Superintendent of schools' or to the corporation of schoolmasters; and there was nothing that would allow one to predict that the support of the Archbishop and of the City Council was guaranteed. It seemed prudent not to publicize the project immediately. However, that is precisely what would happen if Nyel were to accept the Dubois' hospitality.

At this point Blain ascribes to De La Salle some wise and perceptive suggestions about provincial rumors:

> Your taking up residence in that house will give rise to suspicions concerning your visit here. Differing from your host, as you do, in condition of life, in state and in profession, what could possibly attract you to his home? That's what people will be wondering about; that's what they will be wanting to know and that's what will become the topic of talk and inquiry on the

15 . Quoted by Guibert, pg. 31, according to the original text preserved in the St.Sulpice Archives.
16 . reproduced as the frontispiece to the original volume in French
17 . St. John Baptist de La Salle took his degree of Doctor in the Faculty of Theology at Rheims. Research has been made into the documents held in the Municipal Library of that city in an effort to find, if not the text, at least the title of his thesis. Thus far these efforts have proved fruitless.

> part of the idle and the curious. They will scrutinize your every movement, they will follow your every step, and once they know where you're going, they will cut off your every retreat.

Where then to lodge the travelers, who were both poor and easy to please? The openhanded Canon offered his own house:

> Come and stay with me; It's a place to which country pastors come frequently, as well as my clerical friends; judging by the way you dress, which is that of a country priest, people will think you are one of them At my place, quiet and unrecognized, without anybody getting anxious about you, you can spend a week. That much time will be enough to draw up your plans, as well as to contrive useful means for their realization. After that, you can leave for Our Lady of Liesse, and then upon your return, if there is nothing standing in your way, you can open your school. [18]

This was the first cautious, although by no means timid, step for the future organizer of elementary education. And the second was not slow to follow. As usual, De La Salle consulted prudent people: Dom Claude Bretagne, Prior of St.Remy's Abbey, in whom Canon Roland confided; and Jacques Callou, Superior of the Seminary, his new spiritual director. With their support, he called a meeting of several other priests in the city and presented the problem to them, but it was he himself who found the solution. In fact, if not in theory, the pastors in the parishes had established tuition-free schools without consulting the ``Superintendent of Schools''.[19] If Père Dorigny, the pastor of St.Maurice, who was a man of good sense, wanted to lend his name to Madame Maillefer's school, and accept Nyel as the instructor of his young parishioners, without pay, it would of course avoid the severest difficulties.

It so happened that at that very moment Père Dorigny was looking for a schoolteacher; and he was delighted with De La Salle's suggestion. It enabled him to fulfill an obligation and, without spending a penny, hire a teacher of proven worth. With the benefactress's 100 écus, he could lodge and feed Adrien Nyel and his assistant in the priest's house. The school at St.Maurice opened on the 15th of April, 1679. [20]

In this instance, as in the one (which appeared much more important) involving the Congregation of the Child Jesus, J.B. de La Salle showed what could be expected of his skill, farsightedness and dedication. But, here again, while retaining the kindest regards for people depending upon him and always ready to assist liberally with his counsel, he thought of the matter as just one more case to be filed away. Nyel, however, did not fail to take full advantage. Willingly or no, with or without ulterior motives, or in any case acting like an effective and persistent secondary cause in a providential plan, Nyel involved the young Canon in a series of undertakings which would end (inevitably) by placing the direction of the schools and the teachers in the Canon's hands.

In a memorandum which Blain used, but which has been unfortunately lost, the Founder recounted the beginnings of his work. We still possess the important passage in which St.John Baptist de La Salle confesses that God led him farther than he intended to go:

> It was through meeting with Monsieur Nyel and through a proposal made to me by Madame Croyère that I began to take charge of the schools for boys. I had never thought about it. Not that the plan had never been put to me. Several of Father Roland's friends had attempted to suggest it to me; but it couldn't have entered my head, and I never had a thought of

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18 . Blain, Vol. I, pg. 162.

19 . See above, Part One, chap.iii, pp. 38--40.

20 . This is the commonly accepted date and one which appears plausible.

> doing any such thing. If I had so much as thought that the help (out of pure charity) extended to the school teachers would have ever placed upon me the obligation of living with them, I would have given it up. For, since naturally, and especially in the beginning, I placed those men I employed in the schools beneath my valet, the mere thought that I would have to live with them would have been insupportable to me. Indeed, at first I experienced a great affliction when I brought them into my home; and this lasted for two years. It was apparently for this reason that God, Who leads all things wisely and gently and Who does not as a rule do violence to mens' inclinations, wishing to involve me totally in the direction of the schools, did so in an imperceptible way, over a long time, so that one commitment led to another, without my having foreseen it at the beginning.[21]

The first steps along this road, which was both painful and providential, were meticulously described. We have witnessed the ``meeting with Nyel''. After we have examined ``the proposal made to (him) by Madame Croyrère, we shall survey the rest of the journey.

Catherine Leclerc, widow of Antony Lévêque Croyère, was a parishioner in St. James in Rheims. It was a wealthier parish than St.Maurice, and the elegant silhouette of its church arose in mid-town near La Place Couture. But there the poor, both at Mass and at Vespers, rubbed elbows with the rich in Christian fraternity; and even their dwellings neighbored one another. Madame Croyère had witnessed at sufficiently close quarters both the misery and the idleness of street urchins to deplore the lack of schools. She had heard of Adrian Nyel and the remarkable changes his influence had effected in the neighborhood of St.Maurice. She invited him to her home, and, knowing that she was gravely ill, she wished before she died to dispose of a part of her wealth in favor of the poor.

Her guest was not one to miss an opportunity. He spoke of his career and of his success in Rouen; and he promised her that he would gladly show the same zeal in Rheims. In order, further, to show off his credentials, he revealed the role played by the very distinguished and edifying Canon de La Salle in the founding of St.Maurice.

Madame Croyère appealed immediately to the Canon who, although it seemed to him that Nyel was in too great a hurry, could not refuse an interview with the dying woman. Moved by her condition and her ardent desire to leave behind her a work that was pleasing to God, De La Salle explained what should be the provisions of her foundation. Having guaranteed in her will an annual income of 500 livres to the school that was about to open, Madame Croyère died six weeks later.

Nyel recruited three young men as his assistants. One of these he appointed to St.Maurice, and the other two had to make do as teachers at St.Jacques, where, in September of 1679, classes began for the poor children of the parish. The veteran educator reserved the overall direction for himself, and, along with his four aides, continued to live in Père Dorigny's presbytery.

In the space of six months two schools had been opened, employing untrained and inexperienced teachers who lived in a makeshift residence, in the home of a pastor who had begun to find the house overcrowded and the burden so heavy that he asked that the 800 livres of rent for room and board be increased. The entire situation was calculated to offend an orderly and provident person. Adrian Nyel was perfectly content quickly to throw up structures of wood, cardboard and cloth, instant optical illusions. De La Salle, concerned for the work and for the workmen, could not overcome his feelings of distress and discomfort. It was a productive dissatisfaction that could be appeased only when he himself became the architect and the builder and reinforced the structure's foundations so as to make of it an enduring monument.

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21 . Blain, Vol. I, p.169

First, he attacked what was most urgent. Père Dorigny was asking for 1,000 livres: the Canon made up the difference. For the young teachers he proposed a daily regulation and provided them with some suggestions as to how to handle their classes. Ever compliant, optimistic and without a trace of jealousy, Nyel approved.

But the situation at St.Maurice could not continue. Of course, the tuition-free school in the parish would be kept open; but a house for the teachers had to be found elsewhere. De La Salle must have started to look for one shortly after the opening of the St.Jacques school, because at Christmas time, in 1679, Adrien and his band moved into new quarters: it was a piece of property contiguous with the home in which, for fifteen years after they had left the ``Hotel de la Cloche '', John Baptist and his family had been dwelling on Rue St.Marguerite. The house had belonged to Matthew Ruynart (the father of the Benedictine priest who had worked with Mabillon) and had an entrance on Rue De La Grue. Like that of the De La Salles', there no longer remains a trace of the Ruynart house. The neighborhood itself, which stretched behind the apse of the Cathedral, was completely destroyed between 1914 and 1918 and was rebuilt without restoring anything of its ancient appearance.

The Canon had taken five teachers under his wing. He had assumed complete responsibility for their lodging, but (in view of the Maillefer and Croyère endowments) only partial responsibility for their food and maintenance. As for school sites, it is probable that the pastors of the respective parishes paid for these, as well as for school furnishings and supplies. But rapidly, Nyel, employing two more assistants, opened a third school in the residence in Rue Grue for the children in St. Symphorian's parish. On this occasion, the person supplying the funds was the property owner, J.B. de La Salle.

In this limited sense, he was a ``founder'', but he was not yet the director and leader. Adrien Nyel's recruits were not a Community, but rather, quite simply, young men out to earn their livelihood. Of course, they were unselfish: after all, they were satisfied with a piece of bread and a place to sleep, although there were some of them who thought that salaries would not have been such a bad idea. Their director, more in name than in fact, did not seem to be concerned with their future. His motto might well have been: ``What will be, will be''. And, in the secret of his heart, he may well have added: ``Well, De La Salle is a rich man; he likes us and wishes us well, as he does the children we teach; he will be our `providence'".

By this time De La Salle had quite made up his mind ``to provide for the subsistence of the teachers''. Further, he meant ``to see that they acquitted themselves of their tasks with piety and care''. And so, he passed through still another door. But he ``fancied'' that ``this direction of the schools and the teachers'' would not invade his own life, and would continue to be ``external'' to him. [22]

Indeed, he reserved a good part of his time for the canonical Office, spiritual direction, the education of his brothers, and for personal affairs. He completed the stages in the study of theology, and, probably in the course of 1680, received his doctor's degree.

But, still, he continued to reflect upon the problem that Nyel, both by his aggressiveness and his inadequacies, had thrust upon him. He felt that the solution at which he had arrived was incomplete and provisional. And perhaps it was at this time, i.e., in the spring of 1680, that he took his first step to meet with Père Barré. The choice of this well-known founder of schools as his adviser clearly revealed the direction the young priest was taking and that he did not wish to resist grace. Barré

22 . According to his *Memoir*

was acquainted with Nyel, and he was also aware that De La Salle had been the disciple of Nicolas Roland. On the other hand, he knew that he himself had failed in the difficult task of setting up a Community of male schoolteachers. In this sense, Barré was in touch with all the psychological and human aspects of the problem. John Baptist de La Salle must have foreseen that what he would learn from Barré would not be overlaid with worldly objections, and that it would be inspired solely by the best interests of the Church and of souls. Barré, restricted by monastic life, was unable to provide young men with close supervision or give them the day-to-day example of the virtues of the religious life. As a secular priest, De La Salle was in a position to live in community with his men. And that, in brief, was Barré's advice to De La Salle: ``Bring them to live with you''.

Through him God spoke. A vocation was being defined, and John Baptist had to obey. And so, he set forth. It would take him two years - the two years of ``great affliction''. In June, 1680 he welcomed the teachers to his table. From Wednesday in the Octave of Easter, 1681, he received them ``from seven o'clock in the morning until after evening prayer'' for a spiritual retreat. On the following June 24th, in a crucial decision, he had them move out of the Ruynart house and he put them up in his home on Rue St.Marguerite; and he did so in spite of his family's objections and of his own vexation at having to be separated from his brothers, Rémy and Peter, who had packed their bags before the invasion had begun. Finally, on the 24th of June, 1682, he abandoned the family home and moved with his disciples to a more modest but ample dwelling, composed of several apartments, yards and gardens, with one entrance on the Rue Neuve (opposite the Convent of St.Clare), and another (by way of the Leu Court) on Rue de Contrai, not far from the *Collège des Bons Enfants*. He obtained the use of this piece of property through a variety of contracts. Later on, when he wanted to purchase it, he set up a sort of corporation that included his brother, Louis, Canon Claude Pepin and a priest, Pierre Laval. The deeds of sale were filed on the 11th of August, 1700 and the 16th of June, 1701.[23] We shall have occasion to relate how the De La Salle family, through one of its members or its associates, retained proprietary rights to the Brothers' houses in Rheims. It was a noteworthy and quite attractive relationship - the Saint's relatives and his disciples gathered around what was to be the cradle of the new Congregation. And while there were no ``Brothers'' properly so-called in 1682, from that time on there was a community united by affection and obedience, under the care of a priest who had assumed pastoral responsibility. And while, as we shall have reason to point out, Adrien Nyel continued to play a major role, De La Salle no longer hesitated to appear on stage and to speak and act as a leader.

It was in that capacity that, during the first months of 1682, he conducted talks with the pastor and the aldermen in Rethel. This small town in the Archdiocese of Rheims, was situated some ten leagues from the city and, at that time, bore the name of ``Rethel-Mazarin'', the capitol of the Duchy that had been carved out for the heir of Cardinal Mazarin, Armand Charles de La Porte de la Meilleraye who, in 1661, had married Hortense Mancini and had inherited the obligation of assuming the name and the coat-of-arms of his uncle, the Minister. The Duke was a cultivated man, sensitive, a sincere and fervent Christian and inspired by the loftiest ideals. Unfortunately, good judgment was not his strong suit, and he sometimes allowed his mind to ramble and, he blundered into extravagances. His quarrels with his wife, the Duchess, made him the laughing-stock of his contemporaries. But he deserved better than Hortense. In

23 . See below, Part Two, chap. x, pp. 427--428

his hands the vast wealth he had inherited from the Cardinal would not be put to bad use. As he himself declared unambiguously in notarized documents, ``his uncle and benefactor'' had ``in the presence of the King made him his heir in order to make up for his own failures'', in other words, to spend in good works the fortune that had been acquired unscrupulously. Armand Charles was a rich man who thought of himself as one of Providence's stewards, the depository and administrator of revenues of which the public, the Church and the poor must be the beneficiaries.

Rethel strove not to be unworthy of its Duke. After all, the town, the ancient fortress that protected the crossing of the River Aisne and raised aloft the silhouette of its castle and its beautiful church of St.Nicholas, had its traditions, its honor and its prestige, and it was not without its comfortable middle class. Its pastor,[1224] Père Vincent Cercelet, made aware of the three new schools in Rheims, mentioned to Canon de La Salle that he would like to have one just like them. Between the two priests an agreement in principle was reached, and then the City Council was called upon by the Dean to consider the matter. For the date of February 18th, 1682, the minutes for the Council's deliberations includes the following item:

> J.B.de La Salle offers to supply the necessary funds to be employed in the purchase of a house which will be used to lodge schoolmasters, to teach the poor children of the town tuition-free provided that (his funds) are matched by another sum for the food and maintenance of the masters; for which reason he asks the Council to be pleased, for the public good and for the education of the children, to consent to assist so that the foundation may be made.

On the 26th of February, the Council asked the Dean to thank De La Salle for the affection that he had for the city and for his liberality, and that the Council was of a mind to accept; and for the accomplishment of the aforementioned, the gentlemen councilors would supply to schoolmasters the sum of 150 livres each year, so much and for as long as the Council shall believe that the city is in a position to supply it, but not otherwise. [25]

The citizens of Rethel had committed themselves cautiously and parsimoniously. But Nyel, the Canon's agent, as always impatient for results, had formally obtained promises of assistance and in particular a grant from the Duke of Mazarin. Henceforth, leaving the schools in Rheims, he became, from March to July 1682, the director of the new school in Rethel.

It is well to note that St.John Baptist de La Salle participated personally in both cities in funding the real estate for the schools. As documents preserved in the Motherhouse Archives attest, he intervened personally in several purchases, and, in others he saw to it that the deeds which would guarantee the teachers the use of property were issued. The most important deed is the one dated the 2nd of April, 1683 in which Père Remi Favart, Doctor in Theology and Canon of the Church of Notre Dame in Rheims, acknowledged that he had no property rights respecting a house, situated in the said Rethel, on the main street, and adjudicated by the Lieutenant-general in Rethel, for the sum of 2,500 livres: which was given to him in the hand by a pious person, who does not wish to be named, in order to purchase the said house, on condition that it be used by the venerable and judicious John Baptist de La Salle to maintain therein tuition-free schools for boys and to lodge teachers a

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24 Guibert calls him Cervelet, but the name Cercelet is the one given in local documents supplied by the learned native of Rethel, M.Lefrancq

25 . Text quoted by Bro. Lucard, *Annales*, Vol. I, pp. 15--16.

thing which has been stipulated and accepted by De La Salle, who has asked for the present deed so as to use it in its time and place.[26]

The reference is certainly to the house ``with the sixty-six foot garden'' finally occupied by the teachers after a year of temporary residence in Rethel. And if with this text of 1683 we compare "the offer" made by De La Salle in February 1682 to ``supply funds for the purchase'' of the necessary dwelling, there remains little doubt as to the source of the 2,500 livres. It was Rheims and the immediate circle of the Founder's friends that supplied the sum, if not his own patrimony. In 1693, 1704 and 1717 J.B.de La Salle would acquire directly four small pieces of property with buildings on Rue Grande, Rue Dames Religieuses and Rue Monboyelle [27] In 1687 and in 1692 two more pieces of property on Rue Monboyelle were given to him, the first by a M. Bajot and the second by a Mme.Bonvarlet. As much to extend the primitive buildings as through the collection of rents, to assure his Brothers a permanent endowment for their support, the Founder had frequently turned his attention to Rethel.[28]. An arrangement in his will would deal with the question of real estate in this town, and his legal heirs would have to deal with it, as well as with the property in Rheims.

The school at Rethel was hardly opened when Canon de La Salle was corresponding with the city of Chateau-Porcien regarding a similar establishment. These negotiations are known to us only through a letter De La Salle addressed on the 20th of June 1682 to ``the mayor and the aldermen of Chateau-Porcien'', which was discovered in 1843 by Archbishop Gousset of Rheims. The original of this very important document was preserved in the Archbishop's office; a certified copy was sent to the Brother Superior-general of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Its contents follow:

> Sirs: Even if I should take only a small interest in what concern's God's glory, I would have to be quite insensitive not to be moved by the urgent petition of your Dean and the obliging way you do me the honor of writing me today. I should be greatly mistaken, Sirs, should I fail to send you schoolmasters from our community, seeing the eagerness and the ardor that you tell me you have for the Christian education and instruction of your children. Be, then, I pray you, persuaded that nothing will be closer to my heart in this matter than to second your good intentions, and, on Saturday next, I shall send you two teachers, with whom, I hope, you will be satisfied, to begin school the day after the Feast of St.Peter, and I am extremely obliged to you for all your kindnesses and I beg you to believe me, with courtesy in Our Lord, Sirs, your very humble and very obedient servant, DE LA SALLE, priest, Canon of Rheims.

The procedure followed at Chateau-Porcien was the same as that in the nearby town of Rethel: the pastor/dean decided to build a school for the poor. His confrere's example led him to De La Salle. The small community in Rue St.Marguerite, on the eve of its transfer to the Rue Neuve, seems to have increased in numbers and would be in position to expand. Its Superior nominated two serious and intelligent young teachers for the new schools. And once the civil magistrates gave proof of their

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26 . Motherhouse Archives ``abbreviated table of titles, contracts, yearly incomes of the Brothers' Community in Rethel-Mazarin''. Five contracts of sale or gift are preserved.

27 .) Rue Monboyelle or Montboyel had for a long time during the 19th century borne the name of ``Rue La Salle''. (Information supplied by M. Lefrancq.)

28 . In a letter addressed to Brother Gabriel Drolin, which seems to be dated 1703 (A.M.G., BO 800: 9-18; BP 801B,3), De La Salle announces that ``M. Brodard of Rethel had left (him) more than two thousand livres in annual income''.---``I do not have it yet, since this cannot take place until after the death of his sister who is 85 or 86 years of age. Apparently there won’t be long to wait.'' Doubtless, the capital of this legacy was used to buy real estate

approval and guaranteed the minimal funds for two teachers, classes began on the 30th of June.

This time Nyel did not intrude, but he would certainly exercise control over Chateau-Porcien as he had over the other schools in the region around Rheims. Did he have personal difficulties with the Dean? Were the teachers later on withdrawn by an order of St.John Baptist de La Salle? Abruptly, silence descended upon this school. And the merest allusion in one of De La Salle's authentic writings (*The Memoir on the Habit*), which we shall presently examine, *toto in toto*, suggests the hypothesis that a disagreement arose when the pastor wished the Brothers to fill the positions of sacristan and cantor. The Founder believed these services were irreconcilable with the task of educator, which demanded the full efforts of his followers. And he proceeds to cite the case of ``Chateau-P".

Thiérache and Laon were to benefit by more enduring establishments. And that in these regions Adrian Nyel had acted independently and rather contrary to the inclinations of his superior in Rheims is something that is readily understandable. At Guise and Laon, between the Oise and the Aisne, the vagrant pedagogue for several different reasons felt very much at home.

Père Barré's activities have already led us to the small town of Guise on the banks of the Oise - with its back up against the once formidable and always imposing citadel - which owed its ancient celebrity to the Princes of Lorraine who were its lords. We have seen how Mary of Lorraine, heir to the Dukes of Guise, had called upon the Congregation founded by Barré to open charity schools in the cities and towns of her domains. Because of the Duchess' concern, Guise remained a center of Christian life and charitable works. Close to the valley, at the foot of the delightful church that belonged to the mastersof the castle, stretched the monastery of the disciples of St. Francis of Paula and the hospital endowed by the Duchess Mary. Soeur Hayer and the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus who followed her had successfully taught the young girls of the region. They had found a favorable environment. People in Guise were concerned about the education of their children: in 1650, 1657 and 1667 we find their civil magistrates officially welcoming the Writing masters, among whom was a Francis Richer, a native of Crecy-sur-Serre, and a Claude Prévost who, at San Quentin, had taught reading, writing, arithmetic and geometry.[29] Nyel's return to the East must have been rather quickly discovered in Thiérache. And because in Rouen and again in Darnétal he had pursued an apostolate parallel to the Sisters of the Child Jesus and had been a man who was close to the Bimorels and Madame Maillefer, the city of Guise wanted him to start a tuition-free school for boys. And it had informed him to that effect at the end of March 1681. Nyel set out immediately for Guise, although De La Salle attempted to delay him. It was at this time, that the Canon, not wishing to leave the young teachers alone in Rheims, invited them into his family home during the Easter vacation. Nyel's absence was not a lengthy one. He had failed to consider De La Salle's objections; and, as the latter had foreseen and insisted, the prospect in Guise was unpromising. Indeed, the city's treasury was empty. Rather sheepishly, Nyel returned, determined to be more docile to the counsels of higher wisdom.

After the opening of the school in Rethel, which was cautiously conducted by De La Salle, the situation at Guise could be resumed on a more solid footing. There would be the leisure in which to involve Mary Lorraine and beyond that, to obtain the

29 . Histoire de la ville et des environs de Guise, by August Matton. Laon, 1897, Vol. II, pg. 364.

cooperation of the Duke of Mazarin, who had promised to furnish a house; and the Duchess committed herself to supply an annual grant of 400 livres.

Adrien Nyel had both the responsibility and the credit for the school, which is why in July of 1682 he left Rethel, where he was replaced by one of De La Salle's disciples, Nicholas Vuyart, [30] an active, energetic and highly gifted teacher. The beginnings at Guise were not as successful as Nyel had boasted. He had brought with him two young men who were very short on experience, and with whom he had spent only the weeks prior to the September vacation.

Other concerns called him elsewhere, and the school faltered. Canon De La Salle averted disaster by replacing the incompetent teachers with people he himself had trained. The move met with satisfaction in Guise. During the last six years of her life, the Duchess of Guise gave evidence of a solicitude for the Christian Brothers that was similar, if not equal, to her affection for the Sisters of the Child Jesus. In her will she bequeathed 150 livres annually for each Sister in her Duchy, plus a sum for the maintenance of the buildings. Each of the Brothers, who at the time were four in number,were to receive 200 livres annually.

However, the succession of the last descendant of the Guises was particularly entangled, and a final resolution did not come until 1714. With the death of their benefactress (March 3rd, 1688) the Brothers found themselves in desperate straits. They explained their situation to the Commissioner-general in Soissons, Antoine Bossuet, who, in 1590, had included in the budget for the city of Guise an annual allocation of 50 livres for the teachers in the tuition-free school. The sum was used to pay the rent, which suggests that Armand Charles Mazarin's gift had been revoked or was found to have been illegal. Finally, the city itself lodged the Brothers in houses belonging to the hospital.[31]

Adrien Nyel left Guise in a great hurry in order to go to Laon, and in the circumstance, his haste was excusable, since he was going there to serve the people of his native city. A manuscript account, which, however, dates from the 19th century, assures us that:

> Nyel (sic) .... after having opened tuition-free schools in Rheims in 1679, and in Rethel and Guise in 1682, came on his own initiative to Laon at about the end of the same year, to open a school in the parish of ``Vieux St. Pierre" [32]

Indeed it was probable that the initiative was not St. John Baptist de La Salle's. After only two months, he would not have done anything to destabilize the school in Guise. However, taking his chances that he would be able to offset the inevitable inconveniences, he must not have placed any obstacles in Nyel's way. His hectic associate would, of course, calm down once he returned to his birthplace. And, then, Père Guiart, the pastor of ``Vieux St.Piere", with whom the matter had to be arranged and who at one time formed part of a group of clerics who had studied under Père Roland, was friendly and inspired confidence. He would prove to be an excellent counsellor for the teachers.

In Laon there does not appear to have been a prior and precise agreement between the Director of the school and the city, through the mediation of the pastor. The responsibility for this negligence, so contrary to De La Salle's policy (and not without its painful consequences) may very well be laid at the door of Adrien Nyel,

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30 .) ``Vuyart" or "Wyart", the second downstroke of the `W' being, as one pleases a `V' or a `U'. The name has continued on in the region in the form of ``Wyart".

31 . Matton, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 364--5.

32 . Motherhouse Archives, Laon file.

who, at year's end, found himself hampered in his work for want of funds. For lodging and classroom space the city had lent him a house that adjoined a College. The Norbertine Fathers of the neighboring abbey of St.Martin each day supplied him and his assistant with food for the principal meal, and, besides, each week, they sent him a large loaf of bread from their bakery. So much, under these precarious conditions, for room and board. But liquid funds for maintenance were in short supply.

At this juncture the City Council, on the 19th of November, 1683, was called upon to consider a request, which it disposed of in the following terms:

Concerning the proposal made by governors that the said Niay, having, for about a year, operated a public school in the city to teach boys, children of the poor, tuition-free, has produced considerable fruit, but that, unable to live, he conceived the idea of abandoning the city in order to transport the school elsewhere, where he has been invited by persons who intend to contribute to his livelihood, for which reason he believed it an obligation to give notice to the corporation, so that it might decide whether to grant him a sum each year, in order that he might continue the public school it has been resolved that Nyel will be given the sum of 150 livres a year, payable each quarter, beginning with the last October 1, on condition of continuing the school and of teaching reading tuition-free to the children of the poor only.[33]

Nyel had only pretended to leave Laon, a city which appreciated his talents and his work and which had taken steps to keep him. He remained on, then, in his house near the College, and in the shadow of St.Pierre and St.Martin. The question was whether he would grow old there, teaching his contemporaries' grandchildren, occasionally strolling with their grandfathers around the ramparts, walking the narrow streets and going on pilgrimage to Liesse, on the plain dominated by the powerful thrust of the Cathedral that rose up like a prayer. The year 1684 was running its course. For De La Salle's community it was a decisive year. Adrien Nyel seemed to have bound himself by commitments of which we shall speak and which created the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Would the former ``Brother Gabriel'' of the days in Rouen remain in the religious life? He continued to live alone, free to come and go, and as always, he remained the Principal of the schools in Laon, Guise and Rethel. His vow of obedience, if he had one, was one of a kind. De La Salle's extreme discretion with regard to the old teacher lightened the burden.

Nyel, however, did not wish to continue his commitment beyond the period of one year. Providence had given him a special, temporary mission of association with St. John Baptist de La Salle, and the latter had pronounced his approval. The work would, of course, survive. But henceforth the humble envoy felt useless. Regarding his position as rather strained, considering that he had reached his `sixties' and that he belonged to a different generation from the young people who presently surrounded De La Salle, Adrien Nyel no longer wished to cooperate with the ``new Brothers''. As a consequence, he decided to leave the ``Eastern'' region. After an absence of more than six years, old Adrien Nyel returned to Rouen, for which he had felt a sudden nostalgia, where he had planned his retirement, and where he would rejoin so many friends.

He asked De La Salle himself to take in hand the schools outside of Rheims. For De La Salle that the ``worker of the first hour'' should depart was a genuinely sorrowful moment. For him, every separation was painful, but he liked Nyel for his beautiful qualities - his sincerity, enthusiasm, boldness, dedication, piety and above

33 . Ibid., loc. cit.

all, perhaps, for the suffering that came with him, and for the sacrifices that began with the 1679 meeting in the Convent of the Congregation of the Child Jesus. ``Don't leave'', he pleaded. And the reason he gave was the difficulties that the departure of a unanimously esteemed teacher and his replacement by a stranger would undoubtedly occasion in each of the cities in which schools had been opened.

But Nyel did not bend. On the 26th of October, 1685 he returned to the General Hospital in Rouen. The Bureau gave him the title of ``Superintendent of the schools for the poor''. He had a huge task to undertake in reviving institutions that were in a state of collapse and in reinvigorating lost morale. But, like a ghost returning to scenes of real life triumphs, Nyel was a spent force. In any case, his reappearance, after apostolic journeys and efforts in the company of De La Salle, was a portent. He had served as a bridge between Normandy and Champagne; he had carried Rouen's message to Rheims. The day would come when Rouen would receive a most magnificent reply - 100% Rheims' abundant gratitude. The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, straitened in its birthplace and persecuted in Paris, would seek exile in Rouen; there it would multiply its efforts, and there it would set up the center of its activities, and there it would display, as a model, the virtues of its Holy Founder, and for nearly two centuries, it would entrust to the people of Rouen, like a palladium, the relics of this man of God.

Adrien Nyel died on the 31st of May 1687. De La Salle celebrated a solemn service for the repose of his soul. The chapel of the Sisters of the Child Jesus was in full mourning. In their Communities the Brothers received the order to recite the Office of the Dead. But eighteen years would go by before they would flock to the tomb of this, their elder statesman. A budding plant when Nyel left, and still quite a fragile growth as the grizzled old pedagogue prepared, after all his restlessness, to surrender his tired body to the earth, the Institute in 1705 would already have been deeply rooted, would have bent without breaking, and would have multiplied its forces in the assaults of the most furious storms.

CHAPTER TWO

The Organization of the Brothers'``Community" and the ``Seminary for Country Schoolteachers"

Although, unfortunately, for exact information about the beginnings of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, we no longer possess the memorandum that was said to have been written by St.John Baptist de La Salle in 1693 and discovered (according to Brother Bernard) among the Founder's secret papers, we still have a document of the first importance, consisting of four sheets, filled on both sides, with clear and crowded handwriting; and in spite of words written over one another, difficult references and numerous erasures, it is a rough draft that, with the exception of a few words, is quite readable. And while it lacks a signature, it is, by all internal and external criteria, in De La Salle's handwriting. It is simply entitled: ``Whether it is opportune to change or to keep the habit that the Brothers of the Christian Schools now wear".[1]While replying with the most scrupulous precision to the question posed in the title, the document informs us, further, briefly but substantively, of the thoughts, desires and achievements of the Founder between 1684 and 1690.

The date of composition is determined by a passage in the text:

> It is now almost two years since the Brothers of the Christian Schools have been teaching in this habit in Paris, and no one, during that time, has spoken of it in derogatory terms, except, quite recently, the pastor of St.Sulpice, who has been quite outspoken against it.

The accepted date for the arrival of De La Salle and two of his Brothers in Paris is February of 1688. Père Baudrand, the pastor of St.Sulpice, and the author of the vehement criticism of the habit, had succeeded Père La Barmondière on the 7th of January, 1689. The ``Memoir on the Habit" (the convenient designation for the document) as a consequence belongs to the end of 1689 or to the first weeks of the following year.

In his History of St. John Baptist de La Salle, Guibert, supplies a copy of the ``Memoir". And in that book the author introduces it in its chronological position, i.e, after the departure from Rheims and the move to Paris, in the chapter that has to do with the schools of St.Sulpice. But, dealt with in that way, this fundamental text becomes nothing more than a piece of supplementary and supportive documentation.[2] By situating it, rather, as a light at the entrance to the roadway, it seems that we are all the better illuminating the entire course of events.

Indeed, from the outset, the Brothers' Superior tells us ``what this community is.[3] But a careful reading of the Memoir shows, that there in general it means ``Congregation". and who compose it". After initial hesitations, after the first cautious steps and the decisive experiments that made possible the Brothers' move to a conventual residence on the Rue Neuve, and after the heroic sacrifices proposed to De La Salle by Père Barré to build the work in Christ, the ``Brothers' Community" appeared in 1689 to be identical to what it had been five years earlier.

> This Community is customarily called the community of the Christian schools, and it is

1 . A.M.G. BP. 802, 1--7.

2 . Frère Lucard also supplies it in the first volume of his Annales, but he ``edits" it.

3 . It is obvious that the term ``community", depending upon the context, sometimes means ``religious house", sometimes ``religious family or group" and sometimes ``Congregation".

> presently established and founded only on Providence, where, people live under rule, in dependence for everything, without any property, and in complete uniformity.

Thus, the name and the nature of the new religious association were defined. Its ends were explained at greater length, and, especially its secondary end, which the writer believed he needed to emphasize, because there is no doubt that he did not view his work as an innovation to be flaunted, but as an undertaking having important consequences and as an updating of his predecessors' search and solutions.

> In this Community members conduct tuition-free schools in cities only, and teach catechism on Sundays and Feast days.
>
> They also try to train schoolteachers for the countryside, in a house separate from the Community, called a ``Seminary''. Those who are trained there remain only a few years, until they are thoroughly formed both in piety and in whatever else pertains to their profession. They wear no other garb than the one that people ordinarily wear in the world, except that it is black, or at least dark brown, and they are not distinguished from other laymen, except that they wear a *raba*t and their hair is shorter. They are thoroughly instructed in chant, reading and penmanship; board, lodging and laundry are supplied without charge; and then they are placed in some market-town or village to teach school. And when they are situated, they have no further relations with the Community, except those of civility; although they are invited back to make their retreats.
>
> In this Community young boys who have the spirit of, and a disposition for, piety are educated, until they are thought to be ready and they of themselves are committed to enter the Community.
>
> They are admitted from the age of fourteen years upward. They are taught mental prayer and other exercises of piety. They are also instructed in all points of the catechism and are taught reading and penmanship.

These are quite clear indications of the existence of a ``Seminary for teachers'' and a “Junior novitiate''. We are not told when they began, and it would perhaps be difficult to suggest a date. What is certain is that they were in full operation when the ``Memoir'' was written. They were autonomous in relation to the Brothers' Community, into which only the Junior novices entered, once they had attained a sufficient age and education; to these latter would be added those young men who, at this period, we could not call ``novices'', but who, before teaching school were hastily licked into intellectual and religious shape.

The following paragraphs supply the details:

> These (three)[4.] groups that are trained and educated in this Community have separated houses, oratories, exercises, refectories and recreation,[5.] and their exercises are different and adapted to their mentalities, and to what they are to do in the future.

The postulants whom De La Salle admitted had, as a rule, only a rudimentary education. They did not know Latin and did not have to know it. They were, and they were to remain, laymen; and their education was, and was to remain, elementary. If there were any among them who had received ``Minor Orders'' or had studied for the Church, they had to renounce all ambition and all higher education in favor of the duties and demands of their new vocation.

These ideas are expressed in a language that appears harsh, but which becomes understandable only if we take the words in their 17th century meaning, and if we recall that, apart from the humanities, there was at the time no other learning properly so-called.

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4 . This word is crossed out in the original text. We restore it (but in parentheses), because it throws light on the context

5 . This statement suggests rather clearly that the three groups co-existed in the same city

In an opening sentence which he later crossed out, De La Salle observes that ``those who make up this Community are all unschooled laymen". ``Providence", he continues, “willed that some who have applied, having either the tonsure or having studied, have not remained. However, we do not refuse people who have studied; rather, they are admitted on condition that they never again study: 1) because studies are no longer necessary for them; 2) because studies will be, in the course of time, an occasion for them to leave their vocation; and 3) because community exercises and schoolwork demand everything from a man”.[6]

Having stated what his Brothers were, the Founder gets to the heart of the subject which, from his perspective, was the defense of the habit: ``What is the style of habit worn in this Community?" He replies to this question with a minute description of the subject of controversy and by explaining why, particularly, the famous ``mantle" with the fluttering sleeves had become the characteristic garment of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The passage is a delightful text and possesses a charm that could not possibly be caught by a paraphrase:

> The habit of this Community is a sort of short cassock which reaches down as far as mid-calf. It is without buttons, but attached on the inside by small black hooks from the neck to the waist, and from there it is completely sewed. The sleeves reach to the wrists and are fastened at the end by hidden hooks and eyes.
>
> The habit is called a `robe' so as not to give it the name of a clerical garb to which it bears but little resemblance.
>
> That which serves as a mantle is a cloak or long coat, which is without collar or buttons and is fastened at the neck with a large hook on the inside. This cloak is somewhat long, because it has to cover the short cassock and it is about an inch longer than that.
>
> The cloaks or long coats that Brothers of the Christian Schools once wore were given to them to protect them from the cold when, as yet, they did not have these distinctive short cassocks that they have at the present time, but wore very simple jerkins which were without pockets.
>
> The long coats were then in use and it was thought that they were becoming, useful and serviceable for school teachers, especially for those who were going to schools outside the house and to distant neighborhoods for the convenience of the children; for, using this long coat as a mantle in the streets, these teachers used it during the winter in the schools and in the house as a jacket.
>
> We were quite hesitant at the time as to whether we would give them mantles rather than these great coats that people thought must be regarded subsequently as a special habit, but four considerations prevented us from doing so: the first was that the mantles would be of no use against the cold in the schools, and would greatly impede their movements; the second was that with the short mantles they would look like priests,[7] and we feared that they might take on their airs; thirdly, they would look like clerics, dressed fashionably, but in violation of the Church's regulations, even though they are not clergymen; fourthly, at the first temptation, they would wear the mantle as well as the jerkin, and, dressed like lords, they would take off---they who up to now had worn nothing but peasants' or poor workmen's garments.

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6 . We repeat what has been said by Father Guibert: the studies that were not ``necessary", which were forbidden, were those which went beyond ``school usage". The Holy Founder had always prepared his Brothers in a quite adequate way for teaching at the primary level or at any higher level to which he wished to call them.

7 . Here a crossed out word is illegible; it is replaced by another, which is also undecipherable; but the meaning seems to be ``worldly priests" or ``frivolous priests".

> As the result of these inconveniences, it was thought that it would be far better if they have a habit that is neither clerical nor secular.

The silhouette of the early Brothers is sketched in a few quick, clear strokes. In the beginning, they were squeezed into ``a simple jerkin'' which a few deserters (it was inevitable that there should have been black sheep) found to their taste and that they did not give back. And then they were enveloped in the huge greatcoat that originated in Champagne and that enabled the teachers to avoid shivering in the rain and the snow or in their unheated classrooms. After that there was the mantle which would become peculiar to them outside its region of origin, much less elegant than the clerical mantle with its collar (which, by the way, covered only the shoulders and the back); it was a peasant's cloak, the external protection of a vocation, and like the short cassock, which replaced the jerkin, succeeded in giving these laymen an appearance that was *sui generis*, that distinguished them from clerics and separated them from ``the world''. In contrast, De La Salle, who had that ability to grasp his perceptions and characterize them with the precise word, presents us with the priest ``dressed fashionably, but in violation of the Church's regulations''.

He then assembles in a tightly bound cluster the arguments that militate against ``change in general'', and in this way reveals his method, in a slow, progressive and thoughtful unfolding of a religious rule.

> There are few changes that are not prejudicial to a Community, especially in things which might appear to be of little consequence.
>
> Changes are always an indication of inconstancy and give evidence of instability; nevertheless, stability in the practices and points of the Rule appears to be one of the chief supports of a Community.
>
> One change in a Community is a wedge for others and ordinarily leaves a bad impression on all in the Community or at least on some of them.
>
> Most of the disorders and irregularities in Communities come from a marked tendency to introduce changes.
>
> Hence, this is a principle accepted by all people who have had experience with Communities that, before introducing anything new in a Community, it is necessary to reflect maturely and examine carefully the good and bad consequences it may have. And after having once established something, we should be very careful not to destroy it except for something very much like an indispensable necessity.
>
> It was apparently for these reasons that the Jesuits, who had discovered difficulties in their constitutions after the death of St.Ignatius, and who had deliberated the question during their first general chapter, whether they should introduce a change, resolved unanimously to change nothing, but, in order to clarify the points that created the difficulties, they would add footnotes by way of explanation.

After this paragraph the author exploits the reference:

> The change of habit seems to be important in a Community; thus, many precautions have been taken in most religious Communities in order to obviate any occasion for such changes, and in many of them the habit is decided upon not only with regard to shape and quality and color of material, but also with regard to width and length, and all dimensions are exactly indicated and described, so that they can always preserve the same habit in the same Institute; and ``clerics regular'', who have adopted the customary habit of other clergymen have striven to

preserve their primitive habit, so as to avoid changes, and have thereby made their garb singular. [8]

Once these remarks have been made and these principles have been advanced, De La Salle returns to them in the special case of his own Congregation. The last three articles of his *Memoir* continue to supply us with a great deal of information concerning the origins of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. They are entitled ``Special disadvantages of the habit'', ``Reasons which dictated the adoption of a special habit, and which might induce one to retain it'', and ``The disadvantages of the clerical habit''.

First of all, as we said above, there is a useful detail concerning dates, and in addition there is a statistic that reflects the growth of the young society of teachers prior to 1690.

> This habit has been worn now for five years and in five different cities in the dioceses of Rheims and Laon. There, it was a habit that was looked upon as simple and suitable for maintaining the teachers in the regularity and modesty befitting their vocation and their profession and to command the respect of their pupils and the goodwill of other people, far more than the jerkin they wore previously.
>
> Outsiders have now become used to this habit and a change would give rise to talk, to condemnation for novelty and frivolity, and suggest to the authorities. [9]

At this point occurs the sentence with which this chapter began; and it concludes as follows:

> It seems that if this habit has to be improved upon, that should have happened when the Christian Brothers came to Paris and before they began to teach there. They should have been told that they would not be allowed to teach in that peculiar habit and that they would have to adopt a more customary one. Then they might have taken steps.

The second to last article, in which a father talks about his sons with a harshness that is calculated to test their humility, is a psychological study the scope of which continues to be both current and universal. Embellished by a reference (which is worth mentioning) to the authority of Saint Vincent de Paul, it deals, basically, with the influence of the ``habit'' on the ``monk'', or, more precisely, on the whole human being.

> In Communities in which the members have nothing of their own and they are equal in everything, such as are the Christian Brothers, the habit is distinctive either from the beginning or it becomes so with time.
>
> It seems that for the good of the Community it is better that the habit be distinctive from the inception of the Congregation rather than to become so in the process of time, because it is not so easily changed subsequently and the habit that has always been distinctive removes every opportunity to adopt the modes and manners of dress of people in the world.
>
> Since the members of this Community as a rule behave only on the strength of impressions,[10,] they need something that impresses upon them that they belong to the Community, both in order to get them to enter it as well as to keep them there and get them to observe the rule.

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8 . We repeat, following Guibert, that in the Memoir the word ``singular'' means, as does the Latin *singularis*, ``what has to do with one alone'', what is unique, particular, distinctive.

9 . I.e., Bishops and pastors the idea of having them adopt secular dress.

10 . It is true that the Founder is speaking here with great severity. For the most part, his first followers were rather uncouth, and we know how he suffered from their lack of education. But, from the very beginning in the Rheims Community there were exceptional men. And in a very short time, under the Founder's influence and with an influx of new vocations the Brothers reached the heights of the spiritual and moral life.

> And nothing has this effect in a more practical way than a distinctive habit which is seen as special to the Community, in which it is and can be customarily worn.
>
> Monsieur Vincent thought that a distinctive habit was in some sense necessary to keep the members of his Community. How much more so is the case in (this) Community
>
> This singular habit enables most of those who enter the Community not to worry whether it is stable or ``founded'' or not.
>
> This distinctive habit enables laymen to look upon the members of this Community as persons who are separated and removed from the world, and it seems quite fitting that they have such a notion of them, in order that they do not easily frequent, nor too casually communicate with the people of the world and that they be more reserved with respect to them.
>
> Prior to the adoption of this distinctive garb, when there was question of the observance of the rule, many of them said that they had no more obligation to observe it than people in the world, since they were in no way distinguished from them.
>
> Since this distinctive habit was adopted, it appears that there is no difficulty on this score, since they all look upon themselves as members of the Community.
>
> Before this singular habit, people entered this Community as they would the house of a man who lodged schoolteachers, pretty much as he might house domestic servants, without any idea of entering a Community. Many came to be trained, and then took off; others asked for wages, and several others believed that the Community was beholden to them for being satisfied with clothing and room and board.
>
> But since the introduction of the distinctive habit, members have no other idea when they seek admission but to enter a Community so as to live there for the rest of their lives. It is unthinkable for any to ask for wages; they deem themselves fortunate to obtain admittance; it is the habit alone that has produced these effects.
>
> Prior to this habit, most of the members took off with the habit they were given. At the present time, this habit serves as a protection for the Brothers in their temptations. Some of them even say that on several occasions when they had a notion to leave, they might have done so if it were not for the habit

This account is doubtless a summary of a quite recent past, and the story of the uncertainties and disappointments of a man who had welcomed schoolteachers into his home, and who fed and educated them only to see them leave. It is also the story of the Community's remarkable progress and of the time when De La Salle had begun to attract young men with generous spirits and unambiguous vocations.

But it was still important that nothing emerge to distract them. While the Father so vigorously refused to clothe them in a clerical garb, the reason was that in accordance the Rule (as yet, of course, unwritten, but already formulated in the Founder's mind and each day subjected to the test of experience), he insisted that the Brothers should be men dedicated exclusively to Christian education. Always remembering that *the habit does not make the monk,* it helps to do so, and M. De La Salle judged correctly that an external similarity between the Brothers and the clergy would have even more unfortunate consequences in giving them a certain nostalgia that could burden their daily enthusiasm.

> It appears incongruous (he wrote) to give a completely clerical habit to laymen who have not studied, nor ever will study, and who do not even perform any function in the church, nor can they - not even wear a surplice, as is the case with the members of the community of Christian Brothers.
>
> It is beyond belief that their Excellencies, the Bishops who have, or shall have, them in their dioceses would permit or tolerate persons of this sort to wear a clerical habit.

It does not seem that the director of this community will have a reasonable reply when he is asked why, on his own authority, he gives a clerical habit to, and has it worn by, people who are not clerics.

How, indeed, would he justify himself?

There as those who have suggested that they be given the tonsure; but many persons, including Père Baudrand, are not of this mind. It is likewise difficult to believe that their Excellences, the Bishops, would want to give the tonsure to persons who have not, nor can have, begun their studies, nor perform any function in church, and yet this is what is being suggested for the members of this Community.

2. It seems important that member of this Community should be distinguished from clerics by their habit. [11]

They are daily in the parishes, and their schools are usually near the church; they bring their pupils to assist at Holy Mass and the Divine Office.

Pastors will not allow them to wear the long mantle, but will oblige them to wear a surplice and use them in church functions, at least when they need them.

The need will often arise, because there are few clerics in the city parishes; often there is only a pastor, and at the most, an assistant along with him.

The teachers would be proud to wear the surplice in church and to be present there with the clergy to perform clerical functions.

In this way they would easily abandon the care of their pupils in church, which however, is the only reason they go there, and which of itself is something repugnant to nature.

Everything in this article is a matter of experience: St. Jacques, Laon, and Chateau-P.
3. If the Brothers of this community have a clerical habit, they would be easily tempted to study, to be tonsured, to advance in Orders and to seek clerical offices in the parishes.

They would easily associate with one another and communicate with pastors and other clerics, meeting with them every day, the too free frequentation of whom might be the occasion of many temptations against their vocation and of professional relaxation.

The fourth and final paragraph presents (or returns to) arguments of a practical nature, and the ``Memoir'' ends without a formal conclusion:

The long clerical mantle (the one which drags on the ground, with sleeves that must be turned up) would be most inconvenient in the exercise of their school duties. In this habit they could not move about easily among their pupils nor maintain order easily among them in ranks when they conduct them to church or while they are attending Divine Service.

It has also been remarked that dressed in this clerical garb, one almost cannot help overturning children in attempting to get them into orderly ranks.

In most cities, schools are taught in various neighborhoods and the teachers are obliged to spend daily three-and-a-half hours in the morning and as many hours in the afternoon in these schools.

11 . There is no 1. in the text.

> Now, in these schools during the winter the teachers will need other clothes besides their ordinary ones to keep them from getting cold. The long clerical mantle is useless for this purpose, while their distinctive mantle can serve them most effectively.

The ``Memoir'' was both a rebuttal and a synthesis. Like a lawyer pleading in these pages *pro domo,* the Founder exhibited sound logic, skill in marshalling his proofs and disposing them in order of battle and, one after the other, supporting them tactically. He was also, and especially, a great person, upright, humble and sincere, who, in order to convince, had only to tell the story of his life or to invite people to his home. And this is why, having followed him wherever he wished to lead us, at this time when the foundations of his work had already been laid, when the general plan was being worked out, when the essential pieces were in place and were being used for fixed ends, we have attempted to take in at a glance this work that had been in existence for only six years. We must now resume the chronological account of this structure.

At Rheims, in the residence on the Rue Neuve between 1682 and 1684, there were profound changes both of minds and of personnel. And it is well to look for the cause of these changes in that crucial and divinely inspired transformation that John Baptist de La Salle effected in his own life

He had decided to become the Superior (over and above being the spiritual director) of the small group of schoolteachers. He directed, or, in any case, supported the young men recruited by Nyel and those who freely joined themselves to the initial nucleus. He wanted them to be virtuous, disciplined, hard working and prayerful men--like religious in everything except the habit and the vows. Most of the teachers in the earliest group (after having been enthusiastic with respect to these austere goals) confessed to their weariness and, like the friends of St. Pierre Fourier before them, forsook the arena.

The members who replaced them did not have the same material preoccupations. They were determined to pursue the ideal proposed to them. The Founder, who had to overcome so much physical and moral aversion in order to become acclimated to his new social environment, was beginning to be encouraged. Nevertheless, he sensed that in order to break (both in himself and in his followers) with the last worldly ties, some heroic gesture was needed, one final ``Fling-for-God'', after which all human hope would have to be abandoned.

It was then that, for the second time, he consulted Père Barré. He had been wondering whether in order to give his followers the example of trust in God, and to live a life personally poor among the poor, he should devote his patrimony to the funding of schools and use the revenue from his prebend for the support of his teachers. Canon Roland had done this, and Roland was no mean model.

But Barré asked much more of De La Salle. The substance of his response, in which we seize the whole of his spirit and style, is preserved by Dom Elie Maillefer:

> The foxes have their holes and the birds of the air have their nests and shelters, but the Son of Man has not whereon to rest his head. The foxes are the children of this world who are attracted to earthly goods. The birds of the air are the religious who have their cells as places of refuge. but those who, like yourself, are destined to teach and catechize the poor must have no other portion on the earth than the one chosen by the son of Man. And so, not only must you strip yourself of your wealth, but of your benefice as well, and live in total surrender of all that might divide your attention from procuring God's glory.

The ``folly'' of holiness always ends up by compelling our scanty wisdom's assent. Barré's bold counsel, which from the outset moved De La Salle and scandalized Rheims, was actually quite reasonable - the only advice which could have guaranteed the future of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools by

liberating the Founder from all domestic ties as well as from regional and diocesan bonds. As a Canon of Notre Dame and a property owner, St. John Baptist de La Salle would have been able to have set up a small congregation which would have passed away with him. But to create the first religious society which consented to devote itself exclusively to the education of the youth of the working class, to spread the roots of this society throughout the realm, to develop an educational theory, and to train teachers worthy of the name demanded an initial step of the most energetic sort.

In surrendering his Canonry, De La Salle practiced as much zeal and ingenuity, as much courteous, sincere but tenacious diplomacy as he had in obtaining ``Letters Patent'' for the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. His spiritual director, Père Callou, his Archbishop, Maurice Le Tellier and his confreres in the Chapter had to withdraw their opposition. His successor, Père Faubert, whom he himself had nominated, took possession of his stall on the 16th of August, 1683.

The `liquidation' of his personal fortune occurred in the course of the years 1684 and 1685 in the simplest and most evangelical way and in circumstances that vindicated the gesture, even in the eyes of those to whom it was least welcome. In France, these years (the second ended with the Edict of Nantes) were a time of economic crisis and famine. Food was very expensive, unemployment was rampant and merely modest incomes proved inadequate, while unsalaried workers were reduced to begging. De La Salle undertook to do battle with the extreme misery that existed in the region of Rheims. Over the months he distributed bread to schoolchildren; and daily he handed out generous alms among the poor whom he assembled at the Rue Neuve; finally, he came to the aid of a large number of families with whose agonizing financial situation he had become familiar. By 1685 all his property had been sold off; the money from its sale had been judiciously distributed, and, according to Brother Bernard, there remained to the former wealthy man nothing but an annual income of 200 livres, which Callou had required him to keep, and which reduced St.John Baptist de La Salle's income to that of the stipend of a teacher in one of the tuition-free schools.

This was, indeed, what was meant by ``building his Community on Providence''. Nicolas Barré could be content. However, De La Salle had not committed himself to refuse ``to fund'' his schools. (In this connection it is well to recall the term ``presently'' as introduced into the opening lines of the *Memoir on the Habit*.) In sacrificing his patrimony, the Holy Founder intended to secure the vocations of future religious who would be his followers. At the foundation of his work he posited an immense act of faith. But when, later on, benefactors would approach him with a modest capital necessary for the purchase of property, he agreed to guarantee to his Institute this minimum of financial security. Collective as well as personal poverty were safeguarded; but it was a poverty that did not insist upon that destitution which expects nothing but a daily alms from fickle human nature and which seems hardly compatible with the good order and farsighted caution demanded by educational institutions.

On the eve of the great ``divestiture'', in a most beautiful burst of courage, the Community was born. On the 9th of May, 1684 De La Salle assembled his twelve principal disciples from the schools in Rheims, Rethel, Guise and Laon. He wanted them to become fully aware of their vocation. A retreat that lasted eight days placed them in the presence of God and of one another. They were no longer ``of the world'', but they had not yet entered ``into religion''. Perhaps the time had come to give (through formal adherence) the moral value of a Rule to the customs they had been following and to the daily regulation of their lives. As they surrounded their Superior,

these men were looking for a genuine cohesiveness and the actual transformation of their society into an association properly so called. Surely, the time for writing such a Rule was far off, as was the confirmation of this Association by ecclesiastical authority and the civil power. But their society would be given birth and would live through their fraternal agreement and through their wills resolved upon obedience. Before being fixed into a written text, their Rule was to be worked out in their own lives.

The retreatants were of one mind with the Superior. With him they examined the daily schedule, and especially they worked out the details of dietary guidelines and discussed the religious habit, without deciding anything on this latter point. Finally, they declared that they were ready to bind themselves by vow.

Prudently, De La Salle permitted only annual vows, which the Brothers would be able to renew three times prior to any more serious commitment. There was only one vow, obedience. De La Salle himself was the first to pronounce it, and his twelve chosen disciples successively repeated his formula. As we have already noted, Adrien Nyel seems to have been among them, along with Henri L'Heureux, Nicolas Vuyart, Jean-François and Jean Paris. The others remain unidentified.

The date of this event of major importance was the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity. And this is why the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools always celebrates this feast with special solemnity.

The following day, after a long nocturnal walk, thirteen pilgrims arrived at the sanctuary of Liesse on a visit of petition and thanksgiving. For two and a half centuries the sons of De La Salle have observed a special devotion to the Mother of God under whose protection their religious family has been placed. Henceforth they would be incapable of looking upon the graceful lines of that church, so dear to French piety, or of entering under its prayer-filled arches, into the choir made so intimate by the Renaissance screen, or genuflect before the altar whose *reredos* was an *ex voto* offering of Maria Medici, without evoking the memory of their Founder and the pioneer members of their Congregation. The chapel on the lower left side, dedicated to the Founder, was decorated by their efforts. And there, in a monstrance are contained some of the relics of St. John Baptist de La Salle, and one of the chapel windows depicts the pilgrimage of 1684.

To refuse to fix this moment as the birthday of De La Salle's Institute would be to exaggerate the critical spirit and to deny a proper place to tradition. Nevertheless, it should be noted that both the name and the habit of the new Congregation appeared only some months later. The Founder was thoroughly of the same mettle as Monsieur Vincent: he disliked ``forcing Providence''. He moved with measured steps, refusing to advance except upon solid ground. A patient man and an opportunist, he waited upon the word and the circumstance that indicated the will of God. During the winter of 1684--1685 the advice of the Mayor of Rheims helped him to make up his mind to provide the schoolteachers with a black serge twill mantle. Then, quite logically, he saw that the robe would harmonize with the mantle better than with the jerkin. Along with this uniform he preserved the *rabat*, which had been adopted earlier. It remained only to select the headgear and the footwear. According to one of Blain's expressions, ``what was needed was a harmony of taste and absolute poverty''. De La Salle created what he wanted:

> At that time (says Blain) people wore very large hats; the one that he had designed outdid the ordinary ones by the width of their rim For its footwear to go with the hat, its shoes were made of two huge soles, strong and thick, like the ones ploughmen wear.[12]

12 . Blain, Vol. I, pg. 241.

The citizens of Rheims made fun of the rustic figure cut by the young men on the Rue Neuve. When De La Salle thought that he himself was obliged to adopt the habit he had imposed upon his disciples (He was a man who had been known to have been exceptionally exact regarding a sort of clerical elegance), his relatives and friends were indignant. He held out against the criticism and does not seem to have returned to the priestly soutane and long mantle, at least as his customary dress, until after the move to Paris.

``The distinctive habit'' attested to the fact that the school teachers were ``separated, removed from the world''. Henceforth, they were called ``Brothers'', a name whose use had been quite traditional in religious communities, indeed in Christianity itself, and preserved the flavor of charity and humility. Did they also give up their family names and bury themselves in the anonymity of their religious names? Among themselves they must have used their baptismal names, preceded by the title of ``Brother'', frequently followed by what the 17th century continued to call a ``sir name'', the commoner's patronymic. Thus they referred to ``Brother Henri L'Heureux'', ``Brother Nicolas Vuyart'', ``Brother Gabriel Drolin'', and ``Brother Nicolas Bourlette''. But the real name, the only Christian name, the one that mattered in the Church and in any society founded upon the doctrine of the Redemption was the baptismal name. Very early, patronymics disappeared and they spoke only of ``Brother Jean'', ``Brother Maurice'' or ``Brother Jean-Francois''. But since the same Christian name was shared by many, another name had to be added to those who did not have the exclusive possession of a name: ``Jean Jacquot'' would remain ``Brother Jean'', but ``Jean Partois'' became ``Brother Antoine'' and ``Jean Paris'' became ``Brother Joseph''. Finally, this practice would become the rule. And except in extraordinary cases, in taking the habit the Brothers received a new name which disassociated them from their past, symbolized the renunciation of the `I' and its entombment in the silence of prayer and in the obscurity of the task.

Their Community was quite naturally and quite simply called the ``Brothers of the Christian Schools”.

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In the *Memoir on the Habit* we read that there was a ``seminary'' for rural schoolteachers. The author specifies in the clearest way that it was ``a separate house'' where future teachers, in laymen's dress, were educated ``over several years'' before being ``placed in some hamlet or village'', where they performed the ``function of clerics'' - i.e. choir masters and sacristans - and, of course, teachers, outside the time they spent in church. Once settled, they retained no connection with the Brothers, ``except that of civility''. However, periodical retreats enabled them to renew their spirit in the institution in which they had been trained.

This, obviously, was an institution which had the same name as the earlier undertakings of Charles Demia, Nicolas Barré and Nicolas Roland, but it also presented an important difference. And we can understand how De La Salle in a single, cautious but significant stroke, emphasized that difference in his *Memoir*. It is impossible not to see in his arrangements a system which anticipates the modern normal school. From this point of view the Founder of the Brothers has a very serious claim to priority. But Frère Lucard, and Guibert who followed him, were very much in error when they dated the normal school founded by Des Roches at Brussels in 1687. They were mistaken by no less than a full century.

And this is why, doubtless, they are so resolutely eager to date the opening of the ``educational seminary'' in Rheims at 1684. They thought that in so doing they were promoting the primacy of St. John Baptist de La Salle. Frère Bernard and Dom

Maillefer, generally both well informed, more exact than Canon Blain, and careful of sources (the former checked by Louis de La Salle and the latter a member of the De La Salle family) prompt us to prefer the year 1687.

In itself it is a more probable date. The year 1684 was taken up with the organization of the Brothers' Community. Furthermore, Père Faubert, De La Salle's successor in the Chapter of Notre Dame, at the time occupied fully half of the property on the Rue Neuve with clerical students whose education he aspired to direct; and it was only during the following year, after experiencing a growth in the numbers of his own disciples and believing that the results obtained by Faubert were comparatively insignificant, that De La Salle persuaded the latter to surrender his quarters.[13] Finally, until as late as September 1685, Adrien Nyel maintained control of the schools outside Rheims, and, if there was a thought to supply teachers for rural parishes, it was preferably in his branch of the apostolate that the question of a seminary for teachers would be raised.

But what do the scanty surviving documents have to say?

The statement dated the 2nd of April, 1683, and agreed to by Canon Favart concerning the house on Rue Grande in Rethel ``for the use of Père De La Salle'' stipulates that the house in question was planned not only ``to house classrooms and lodge the teachers'', but also ``to establish, if possible, a seminary for rural schoolteachers in the diocese of Rheims''. This, for the first time in our knowledge, was the formula for a project which had not as yet been precisely defined in the mind of Canon De La Salle; there is no evidence for the assumption that, at this time, he intended to restrict his own followers to urban centers where alone they would be permitted to form Communities. The seminary he had in mind did not differ, perhaps, from the thoroughly religious model that had been developing on the Rue Neuve.

The second document is dated the 20th of August, 1685. In the presence of Jean Pauffin and Ponce Dubus, notaries in Rethel-Mazarin, the Duke of Mazarin paid out 3,300 livres annually to found an institution in that city for schoolteachers who would dispense instruction in rural areas.

> The Duke declared that for several years he had been of a mind to found a house or a Community of young men, as a sort of nursery, from which to select the number of schoolteachers necessary to propagate sound doctrine, Christian morality and the first principles of civic life in the lands, parishes, hamlets and villages of his Duchy of Mazarin and all the other lands belonging to him; and the same Lord Duke, judging that the house in which for several years tuition-free schools have been maintained under the direction of the venerable and wise Père J. B. de La Salle, Doctor in Theology and priest of the diocese of Rheims, to whom it was given for this purpose, is quite suited for such an establishment, as well by its situation as by the ease with which other buildings may be added, communicated his intention to Père de La Salle.

The latter was to select seventeen ``good candidates'', the beneficiaries of grants funded by the Duke Armand Charles, to be ``lodged in this house, instructed and trained in the true principles of Christian education, as well as in reading, penmanship and singing''. Nomination to teaching posts would be made by the Duke, or his successor, ``with the concurrence of the ecclesiastical authorities''. The professors at the seminary ``would be drawn from the Community that was being formed in Rheims''. In case of the death of De La Salle, this Community would continue his work and take charge of the student-teachers at Rethel. And if that Community should happen to disappear, the Superior-general of the Vincentian

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13 . Jean Faubert retained or later resumed the lease on one of the houses on the Rue Neuve, as a consequence of the deed of the 11th of August 1700, referred to in the previous chapter (pg. 148) and which also mentions the lease to the Canon on the 12th of May 1698. (A.M.G. BI 501-2, Dos12, No2

Fathers in Paris and his assistants would be asked to assure the future of the foundation.

The first installment, amounting to a quarter of the annuity, fell due on the 1st of October, 1686. But, before that, a prior gift of 3,300 *livres* in capital funds was to be used to construct and furnish the buildings.[14]

On this occasion we are dealing with a thoroughly detailed and rational plan, in which is easily discernible the hand of St. John Baptist de La Salle, who accepted the generous offer of Duke's and wished to organize the seminary on a sound and broad base, and, as far as possible, to anticipate all eventualities. By this time his Community in Rheims was established and receiving candidates; from among whom he would find the two teachers who were immediately needed to direct the young men in Rethel. And because from this time on he intended not to disperse the Brothers into villages where, isolated, they would be unable to follow their Rule and would run the risk of losing their vocation, he decided to complete his religious and educational work and allow it to bear its full fruit by training lay teachers for rural areas on the model and image of his own disciples.

The opening of the institution was subject to the approval of the Archbishop of Rheims. We are not too familiar with the reason why the Duke of Mazarin and De La Salle met with a refusal. The character of the undertaking was so bold and novel that, perhaps, timid minds succeeded in communicating their prejudices to Maurice Le Tellier. And here we may have an additional proof in favor of the absolute priority of the Rethel seminary over the one in Rheims. And, then, Mazarin's role was not of a nature to dispel the Archbishop's suspicions, since he perceived the Duke as a capricious bungler. ``You are two fools!" With this harsh outburst he dismissed the great lord and the saint. The reaction was quite in character with the temperament of the fiesty prelate, whose carriage was once described so neatly by Madame de Sévigné as darting full tilt through a crowd and just missing a peasant on the road. De La Salle's humility would lay claim to the foolishness as his alone. In reality, the Archbishop knew what he was doing, and by so bluntly brushing the petitioners aside he was, without any apologies, taking aim at the Duke of Mazarin.

Mazarin did not give up on his idea for the foundation; and St. John Baptist de La Salle, while resolved not to ignore the Archbishop's veto, was ready for another effort, within the limits, of course, of complete obedience. What was forbidden, at least provisionally, in the diocese of Rheims might be permissible in the diocese of Laon, where Armand Charles also had lands. And the Bishop/Duke of Laon, César Estrees, was on record as approving Adrien Nyel's undertakings.

On the 22nd of September, 1685, one month after the contract drawn up at Rethel, which for all practical purposes had been annulled, a new instrument was signed before John Chopplet, the royal notary at Renwez, near Mézières. The Duke had no intention of locating his project in this region, and the choice of the notary in Renwez was, of course, explained by Mazarin's temporary presence in the vicinity of the Meuse.

The seminary was to be opened ``in the region near La Feré or in another place". What was being planned was an institution much more modest than the one planned for Rethel, since the benefactor had reduced his gift to 600 livres annually for the support of three young men. Apart from the yearly grant, he supplied ``the house

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14 . Copy in the Motherhouse Archives of the contract (N.B. No A.M.G. number in A Doz), the original of which is in the Bibliotheque Nationale, French Mss., no. 20752. Lucard, Annales , Vol. I, pg. 38 writes ``20th of April" and Guibert, on pg. 139 repeats the error.

with a clean and suitable chapel, with cells, furnishings and other things necessary for lodging at least six persons". The house would be dependent upon the Community in Rheims (by means of which) De La Salle assumed the responsibility that in case he was able to obtain Letters Patent from his Majesty for the Community established in Rheims, he would also succeed in guaranteeing the future of the institution under discussion.[15]

Whether it was because the Duke of Mazarin's ardor cooled, or because the villages to be supplied with teachers proved fewer than expected or because simple caution was permitted to prevail, De La Salle became satisfied with a scaled-down version of the institution. However, its proportions reduced, it retained the same structure and elements as the full-blown enterprise. It sought to realize, if only as a quite modest beginning, what he had more and more come to believe was an integral and essential part of his apostolate. Viewing the future, and hypothetically situating himself at a moment still far down the road, when his Institute would seek and obtain legal recognition, the Founder was committed to uniting the seminary's fate with that of the Brothers' Community.

Had the Renwez contract ever been put into effect? And if the house``near La Fère" had ever been opened, how long did the student-teachers and their professors occupy it? St.John Baptist de La Salle, writing in his *Memoir on the Habit*, of ``five different cities both in the diocese of Rheims and in the diocese of Laon", where ``for five years this habit was worn" allows us to hazard the hypothesis that the fifth city was the one in which the Duke of Mazarin founded the seminary: the other four, Rheims, Rethel, Guise and Loon, are beyond question. It would seem that Chateau-Porcien, prior to 1689, would have to be stricken from the list.

Given the inadequacy of our information, it must be admitted that we are in no position to be precise about the existence, much less the duration, of Mazarin's seminary. The great importance of the texts we do possess is to follow the beginnings of the Holy Founder's thinking about the seminary for rural teachers from 1683 through the end of 1685.

And so, we come to the only one of these institutions of the early period of which the Founder makes a perfectly explicit mention and that the historians of the Institute have regarded as the most ancient model of the French normal school. It was the establishment on the Rue Neuve. Everything said in the *Memoir* requires that the site be Rheims. It was attached to the Community, and at the same time it operated as a separate organism. It was also neighbor to, and independent of, the Junior Novitiate and the ``postulancy" of which we shall speak later on: ``House, chapel, refectory, recreation and exercise" were all separate. At the date to which we can certainly attribute the document, neither at Rethel, nor ``near La Fère", nor at Paris do we find a school that unites all these features. It follows that the seminary in Rheims was still existing in 1689.

It has no authenticated date of origin because, created by John Baptist de La Salle alone and supported by him with funds from family and friends, it gave rise to no contract in good and true form. Young men housed by a priest in his own home did not constitute a foundation in the legal sense. The intervention of religious or civil authorities would be practiced only if there were abuses or complaints. The Archbishop's permission was not required, and his simple good will was presumed; indeed, it had been given, since this was a work in which the Duke of Mazarin had no

15 A.M.G. BI 502, Dos 8, copy of the contract in the Rethel File.

part, while on the other hand, it acutely involved, as we shall see, the priests of the diocese.

On the whole, for a knowledge of the origin of this institution, otherwise than through St. John Baptist de La Salle's own sober statement, we have no better reference and no more direct witness than Dom Elie Maillefer's text:

> Most of the country's pastors (writes the Founder's nephew) continually pleaded with De La Salle to send them a school Brother to teach the children in their parishes. He replied that he could not satisfy them, because he had made it a rule always to send two together, and that he would in no way relax this rule. The pastors found a compromise. They would select the schoolteachers for their parishes and send them to him for their education. He could not refuse this good work. In this way he accepted as many as twenty-five candidates, whom he housed in a separate apartment, prescribed to them exercises suited to their profession, provided them with a Brother able to teach them Plain Chant, penmanship, arithmetic and the method they should employ to teach the children entrusted to them. Thus, De La Salle, without having been able to foresee it, found himself responsible for the conduct of three Communities at the same time.

In this version, which Blain roughly follows, the rural pastors took the initiative, which would be surprising only if De La Salle's plans and efforts at Rethel-Mazarin and in the diocese of Laon had not stirred up certain rumors. What more simple than to organize in Rheims, under the control of the Superior, what the Duke (thwarted and snubbed by the Archbishop) had dreamed of possessing on his own domains? The thought of it came effortlessly to the mind when the founder of the Brothers, having adopted a line on the requirements affecting the operation of his schools, refused to send his Brothers individually into rural areas. And then, in 1687, one could be sure of finding ``a capable Brother'' among the experienced and select personnel at the Rue Nueve. Since it was the pastors themselves who selected the candidates, and they did not have to pay anything for the education and the maintenance of the future teachers, and since they could count, once their studies were completed, on the return of the beneficiaries of their choice, the advantages of these arrangements were all on the side of the pastors.

True, several of the young men, won over by the religious ideal, moved from the seminary to the Community. These were the tithe legitimately and honestly levied by the Institute on the parishes. The rest returned ``to those who sent them''. But, Blain adds: they forgot neither the house where they received the first breath of grace, nor him who instructed them with such kindness. They looked on him as their Father and ever preserved in his regard the heart of a child.[16]

However, De La Salle must not have directed them himself for much more than a year i.e. until he departed for Paris. Then, and without ever losing sight of them (his *Memoir* is proof of it), he turned them over to the care of the Brothers who had succeeded him in Rheims. The first of these was Henri L'Heureux, who maintained the seminary as a thriving institution. The second, Jean Henri, let it go to ruin: he was no less devoted than his predecessor, but, because he was too young, he lacked flexibility and prudence. After the rural parishes had recovered the candidates who had completed their training, recruitment came to a halt.

Indeed, whatever may have been Jean Henri's blunders, we have reason to believe that, in the eyes of the rural pastors, the work had only a passing interest. Once their schools were staffed, they no longer thought it useful to recruit new students for the seminary. And they were all the less involved in that De La Salle was no longer in Rheims.

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16 . Blain, Vol. I, pg. 279.

The Founder's mind was rather more filled with the future. We shall see that throughout his career he was preoccupied with the desire of reviving the seminary for rural teachers.

While he considered this institution as a necessary and logical extension of the Brothers' Community, the Founder attempted to lay the groundwork for the perpetuation of his religious family by means of ``a third community''[17]. Quite distinct from the student-teachers (and here the clear good sense of De La Salle shows through), a group of adolescents, aged fourteen to seventeen, worked and prayed in order worthily to reply to God's call when it came. ``Their way of life'', according to Blain, ``was a preparation for, and an attempt at, the life of the Brothers''.[18] The biographer reports the start of the Junior Novitiate as simultaneous with the beginnings of the seminary. We should fix the date then at about 1687, the year during which the Institute became a viable organism. It had completed the first stage of its evolution: and in its outward aspects, as in its membership, it appeared, *mutatis mutandis*, as it would be in its prime, after its full development.

At this time the Founder thought, quite prematurely as it turned out, that he could deal with the Institute as something fully matured. He convinced the Brothers to replace him by electing one of their own number as Superior. He nominated Brother Henri L'Heureux. In spite of the appearance of dullness, the candidate was a remarkable man. Blain, who, perhaps, was thinking of St.Thomas Aquinas or Bossuet - *bos suetus aratro* - vouches for the story that L'Heureux's confreres dubbed him ``the fat ox''. ``A dreamer and pensive'' under questioning, ``his first word was uttered with difficulty''. But, the Canon hastens to add in his Biblically flavored style, one had quickly ``to view as an eagle the man who was called an ox''. [19]

Endowed with a robust intelligence, Brother Henri was also possessed of a strong will and the virtues in which De La Salle saw the mark of a true vocation. The Holy Founder, in elevating his disciple, was also obviously gratifying his own humility. But his real purpose, we can be sure, was of a more general order. L'Heureux's election embodied an idea that would inspire the Founder's action again in 1694, in 1712 and in 1717: gradually to accustom the Brothers to forego his tutelage, to provide them with one of their own as their leader so as to protect the autonomy of the Institute, and to prevent the ingestion of a foreign organism which might change the nature and disrupt the components of the Institute.

Not even after two or three years would the new Community advance alone without faltering Henri L'Heureux felt that he was in a false position. In the eyes of the Archbishop he could not be the Superior of a society that lacked canonical status and that without De La Salle was nothing. Quite willingly he would have returned to De La Salle the effective direction of the Congregation; but the Holy Founder had no intention of becoming ``the power behind the throne''. On the contrary, with a sort of avidity, he sought every occasion for obedience and humiliation. It was this situation which revealed to the public his innocent, heroic, but somewhat exasperating ``stratagem''. Informed of the arrangement, the diocesan authorities would not tolerate that a priest submit to the commands of a young layman. Maurice Le Tellier ordered De La Salle to resume his rank and privilege in the Brothers' house.

The incident nearly had serious consequences for the future government of the Congregation. The Founder continued to regard Brother Henri as his heir apparent.

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17 . Ibid., loc. cit
18 . Ibid., pg. 280.
19 . Ibid., Vol. I, pg. 310.

Believing that he would not be permitted to resign precedence in his own lifetime to any but a cleric, he resolved to prepare the Brother for ordination. He set him to follow courses in philosophy and theology in the schools operated by the Canons Regular of St. Denis in Rheims. In a short time, he thought, he himself could step down without difficulty and without opposition in favor of a man who, equipped with degrees and clothed with the priesthood and having given proof of his ability to command, would fulfill all the required conditions. But with a sudden and rude blow to the tiller, Providence brought the vessel around to its initial heading.

CHAPTER THREE

St. John Baptist de La Salle
And His Brothers
At St. Sulpice and Vaugirard

In 1683, when St.John Baptist de La Salle was about to resign his canonry, Claude de La Barmondière, pastor of St.Sulpice, had offered him the direction of the only charity school existing at that time within the jurisdiction of that vast Parisian parish. De La Salle had come to Paris in an attempt to gain an audience with Archbishop Le Tellier, who refused to see him. But at St.Sulpice and at the monastery of the Minim Fathers the traveller found welcome and encouragement. Père Barré thought that La Barmondière's offer should be considered. He spoke with authority, having (according to Blain) special insights into an enterprise which he himself had been contemplating. Paris was ``the only place" in which the budding Institute might grow and become ``universal".[1] Nicolas Barré's influence over the people with whom he talked was well-known. De La Salle who, after only a simple exchange of letters, had bowed with remarkable docility to the Minim monk, now allowed himself to be persuaded that he must, without delay, be bound by promises to the pastor of St. Sulpice.

But upon returning home and having succeeded in getting his resignation approved, De La Salle encountered the most determined opposition from Père Callou, his spiritual director to his plan for immediate transplantation to Paris . ``Your work", Callou told him, ``has only just been conceived; there is the danger of miscarriage if it is moved to Paris to be born". The Rheims Community was still too young to dispense with the presence of its founder, too feeble for it to divide itself between the provinces and Paris. Indeed, it was already over-extending itself in sending Brothers to Rethel, Guise and Laon.[2]

These arguments proved conclusive. The Holy Founder had to apologize to Père de La Barmondière, and the Sulpician in charge of the charity school, Père Lespagnol, complained bitterly about the postponement. Père Barré ``lost hope" of ever seeing De La Salle in Paris and was ``disconsolate" over it.[3.] Indeed, as will be recalled, Barré died too soon to witness the great work of the man whom he had rescued from the burden of temporal cares, pressured along his way by word and example, and upon whom he might have bestowed his mantle.

It was more than twenty months after Barré's death that the move from Rheims to Paris took place. Negotiations between the pastor of St.Sulpice and the Founder of the Brothers were resumed in July of 1687, initially through the mediation of Louis de La Salle, who was at the time a seminarian, and Compagnon, the priest who had succeeded Père Lepagnol. The pastor was no longer insisting that only one Brother be sent. De La Salle had explained his policy in this matter. Louis de La Salle, aware of his older brother's intentions, declared that the Founder was prepared to come personally in the company of two schoolteachers.

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1 . Blain, Vol. I, pg. 214

2 . According to Blain, Vol. I, pg. 212.

3 . Blain, Vol. I, pg. 214

Indeed, what was under discussion was the fulfillment of the promise made in 1683. In spite of the thinness of his troops (the result of several premature deaths), the Founder was in a position to move ahead with an energetic, enthusiastic and cohesive group of men. Those who succumbed to overwork and the penitential life left to their survivors the marvelous example of courage and the hope of a glorious end.

Since 1680 successive departures, new recruits, the spiritual teachings of De La Salle and the powerful attraction of his holiness had resulted in a firm mixture of virtue and character. While the Brothers hardly ever recruited from among young men who were liberally educated, they were not as ``uncouth'' and uncultured as the excessive humility of their Founder compelled him to pretend. The Jean François, the Maurices and the Nicolas Bourlettes (victims of beginners' zeal and dedication) who, after premature deaths, continued to be venerated in the Community, came from good families in Rheims. Bourlette arrived at the Rue Neuve without his parents' consent and persevered in spite of them.

To the contagious energy of these excellent young men was added De La Salle's influence for educating disciples to a level over and above their natural mediocrity and beyond the calculations of their own self-estimates. Some, like Nicolas Vuyart, in the absence of grace would have sunk down of their own weight. Less brilliant men, a Gabriel Drolin for instance, attentive to the advice and the criticism of their Superior, would carry on to the end of a painful but productive life. Jean Partois (Brother Antoine), born in St.Loup, in the diocese of Rheims, on the 20th of October,1666; Jean Jacquot (Brother Jean), born in Chateau- Porcien, on the 18th of October, 1672 both entered the Society in 1686 (the latter was only 14 years of age), and would become, for the generations of the 18th century, living witnesses of heroic times, and at St. Yon they would emerge as pioneers, the former until his death on the 1st of April, 1743, and the latter until he died on the 10th of March, 1759.

After sacrificing families, property and freedom, these young men were now being asked by De La Salle to give up their birthplace. Champagne and its environs offered only a very restricted arena for the progress of the Institute. Rheims placed limitations on the Founder's activity and independence by too many social constraints, by the many obligations arising out of his career as Canon and as a minister of the Church and even by the very generous goodwill his Archbishop had been determined to show him. Le Tellier, who was blunt and domineering, was also a good judge of men. In order to retain the services of the former Canon and his Brothers, he declared that he was prepared to assume the responsibility for funding their tuition-free schools in the cities of his diocese. The offer was excessively lavish, and the Institute had to fear the loss of its freedom. A choice had to be made between a rapid, easy growth, but closely curbed and shortlived, over against a painful but permanent development throughout the world. Deep down De La Salle had long since made up his mind: he had remained faithful to Père Barré's advice. Closer to home, a friend in Rheims, Père Philbert, professor of theology at the seminary, had given him his very candid opinion and one that was thoroughly consistent with Barré's. In 1687 Père Callou continued to insist upon a delay, but he would soon explicitly abandon all opposition.

In order to leave Rheims by the front door and in the good graces of the authorities, De La Salle was awaiting an official letter from the pastor of St.Sulpice. Père de La Barmondière asked Père Baudrand, the director of the Sulpician Seminary, to write the letter in his name. That would be enough to remove the final obstacle raised by the Archbishop's office.

Henri L'Heureux, quite logically on this occasion, became the director of the three groups on the Rue Neuve. Two Brothers, both of whom were excellent teachers, were designated to accompany the Founder to Paris. Having bowed in the direction of Notre Dame, St.Nicolas, St.Remy, St.Pierre, St.Symphorien, St.Maurice, St.Jacques and St.Hilaire, and not without hope of returning, the three travellers set out on foot for the capital.

They arrived in Paris on the 24th of February, 1688.

Père de La Barmondière put them up in the school. It was a huge, lofty building situated on Rue Princesse, in a block of property bounded by Rues Guisarde, Canettes, and Du Four. These were some of the gloomier streets in old Paris, north of the Church of St.Sulpice which, itself, was still half medieval. Only the choir and the side chapels gave promise of the grandiose and theatrical edifice with which we are familiar.[4] But the neighborhood has preserved much of its former appearance. The third house on the left on Rue Princesse as one comes from Rue Guisarde, had a carriage gate, a three-story facade, with two stories under the eaves. Its present address is No.16. It is only a part of what was once the Brothers' school; since to it had been joined No.14, where there were rather huge rooms that served as classrooms and which made up a single apartment with No.12. There was no garden in the rear, but only a courtyard exposed to the neighbors' view. The poor teachers, exiled from their native province, lacked air, space and quiet.[5]

These quarters would be theirs for the next nineteen years. It was a period that was both decisive for De La Salle's Institute and an historical turning point for France. In appearance the year 1688 was still a time of prestige and power. But it was also the year of the English Revolution, which, for Louis XIV, marked the approaching decline, for the enemies of the realm would find a formidable champion in William of Orange. Victory had not yet proved fickle, but it was showing signs of faltering and fainting. Soon, there would be the Battle of the Boyne and La Hogue. The great men upon whom the reputation of the reign had rested were dead or declining into old age. Only Bossuet, who was completing his *History of the Varieties of Protestantism*, remained at the ready and filled the horizon with his imposing stature. He was beginning to experience the poignant feelings of the isolated man. The new generation lacked his own intrepid and simple conviction, his authoritative tone, and his way of defining and resolving the great problems. It listened to him distractedly, and it heard him, but it aspired to go beyond him. Around him there arose a whirlwind of ideas and doctrines. The heirs of the 16th century, the ``freethinkers'' who had never been completely reduced to silence, but whose grumblings had been drowned out in the great ``Credo'' of Catholic triumphs, had regained their voices. Bayle was their principal spokesman. In 1682 he had published his *Thoughts on the Comet* and he was working on his *Historical and Critical Dictionary* . Skepticism no longer went about in disguise but gaily lent its voice to lewdness. Moral dissolution sought excuse and justification in dissoluteness of mind.

We are, of course, far removed from the licence of the following century. The efforts of saints and heroes were not exhausted. Their example was still influential, but by way of an increasingly feeble reaction. The king, whose adulteries were a scandalous defiance of the morality and religion restored in his father's time, wanted,

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4 . The new choir was blessed in 1673. The work on the new church was interrupted in 1678, not to be resumed until 1719, during the pastorate of Father Languet Gergy.

5 . Essai historique sur la Maison-Mère de lnstitut, by Brother Paul Joseph, 1905, pp. 23--4.

along with Madame Maintenon, to restore order to conscience and impose virtue and faith as the fundamental law of the land. But he misread the difficulties, the blind alleys and the error of his undertaking.

Then, when he was posing as the defender of the faith, or, as the terror of the Huguenots, or proclaiming his determination to reestablish the unity of the faith among his subjects, he was engaged in a struggle with the Pope. At the outset it was a matter of ``royal rights'' on the strength of which he appropriated the revenues of vacant bishoprics and made nominations to benefices in vacant sees. In 1682 the Assembly of the Clergy followed Louis XIV by defining the doctrine of the ``Gallican Church'' in the famous ``Articles'' intended to point out to the Sovereign Pontiff the limits of his powers. From 1682 to 1689 (the year in which Pope Innocent XI died) the conflict between France and Rome festered. The Pope refused ``Bulls of foundation'' to bishops nominated by the king, while the king strove to have the Declaration of the Four Articles taught by theologians. To this struggle was added the quarrel concerning ``immunities'' in connection with the right of sanctuary which the French ambassador to the Holy See pushed to the point of abuse. Excommunication was hurled at the ambassador, and, by 1687, the king himself was affected. It was not until 1693 that, during the Papacy of Innocent XII and through concessions made by Louis XIV, tranquility in this matter was restored.

But with the emergence of *Quietism* fresh storms arose. In 1695 at Issy, Bossuet, Noailles and Tronson investigated Madame Guyon's teaching on *Pure Love*. Fénelon sought to defend Madame Guyon in his *Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints*, a book which the king submitted to the Pope's judgment and in 1699 Innocent XII concluded by censuring it.

Finally, Jansenism, whose virus had ever been at work, suddenly at the beginning of the 18th century, provoked violent emotions. The entire kingdom was shaken by it; and the French Church was sundered. Neither the contemporaries of Louis XIV's old age, nor the following generation saw the end of this crisis.

This was the climate in which St.John Baptist de La Salle lived. He experienced its ups and downs in his external activities, in his relations with the world, and in his human sensitivity, but not in his will, which remained ever united to God. His early formation, his family circle, his studies, the influence of Père Tronson at St.Sulpice, of Barré and Nicolas Roland, and the cluster of ideas and friendships forged during his years in Rheims bound him closer to Bossuet, who was his senior by twenty four years, than to Fénelon, born, like himself, in 1651. Reading and listening to De La Salle, one would take him for a man who had reached maturity in the time of Louis XIII and of St.Vincent de Paul, or for a confrere of the *Society of the Blessed Sacrament*, or for one of the leaders of that great and vigorous group which included founders of seminaries and apostles to the missions. How different, if not in heart, at least in expression of thought from the complex author of the *Dialogues of the Dead* and of *Telemachus* ! Both were educators, both had preserved the influences of St.Sulpice; both were priests to the bottom of their souls, but at levels that would never meet. If there existed a restlessness in St.John Baptist de La Salle, it resided only in his persistent quest for perfection. In him there was hardly any resemblance to that other contemporary, John La Bruyère, the stylist of the concise sentence, the incisive point, and the rather melancholy moralist. And his Biblical exegesis was worlds away from the daring of Richard Simon.

To his disciples and the little ones in his catechism classes he brought the strictest orthodoxy: he was neither Gallican, Quietist nor Jansenist. He was possessed of a severe morality and an unambiguous mysticism, sound, clear and powerful,

which both pleased and pacified the faith of the simple as well as of the learned. We shall return to this matter later on at our leisure. We shall be satisfied for the moment to glimpse the man of God in his peaceable, courageous and confident stance, in his faultless armor, free of false glitter, as, in 1688, he entered Paris, in advance of the battles he would have to sustain.

* * * *

At St.Sulpice he found himself in a world he loved, where he was known, and where his work seemed certain of a favorable reception. Since his youth he had been in touch with the successors of Jean-Jacques Olier: Père Bretonvilliers, Superior-general of the Sulpician Community when John Baptist de La Salle arrived in 1670 to reside at the seminary and there to begin his preparation for the priesthood, while following courses in theology at the Sorbonne; Louis Tronson, whom the young cleric had selected to be his spiritual director and who, become superior after Bretonvilliers, until his death in 1700, would continue to be one of the influential guides of the Founder of the Brothers. Another Sulpician, Jacques Bauhin, was an intimate friend of De La Salle. A convert from Calvinism, he entered the seminary in 1663, and it was 1672 before he was ordained priest. The Community and Père Tronson himself admired his humility, which the most unexpected and mortifying provocations failed to surprise. ``A true saint'', declared Tronson, speaking of Bauhin to Bossuet. His was a holiness that was ever in harmony with that of John Baptist de La Salle. The Duke of St.Simon might well have said of them that ``they were united by what was best in them''.

De La Salle had remained faithful to the spirit and to the rule of St.Sulpice. He relished the gravity, the reserve, the profound piety and calm, the sturdy and prudent science of these ``gentlemen''. His own habits of regularity and punctuality were reinforced by theirs. ``In the seminary one's duty became a point of conscience and honor'', and ``there was nothing extraordinary in the rules except the exactitude with which they were observed''. These words of Baudrand [6] emphasize some of the affinities between De La Salle and his teachers. Like Tronson, he, too, would become ``a living Rule''. He would form the Brothers to his own image, and, up to a point and indirectly, to the image of St.Sulpice.

Claude Bottu de La Barmondière who had become pastor of the parish in 1678 and who had received De La Salle in his presbytery in 1683, was no stranger to the principles and plans of the man he had invited to Paris in that month of February in 1688. However, the invitation was extended not to initiate but to continue a work. His great predecessor, Père Olier, in order to assist the poor in a more orderly way, had divided the parish into seven sections and established seven charity schools, for which he wrote a set of regulations in 1652. [7] A ``Charitable Assembly'', composed of persons of good will, performed the duties of a School Bureau: it decided on the admission of children, who had to reside in the parish, be at least seven years old and belong to conspicuously poor families. In each section a member of the Bureau performed the functions of inspector: he made unannounced visits to check on the punctuality and the assiduity of the pupils and on their good behavior in class. When a child was ill, he visited the child at home, and if the household was too impoverished for the tot to be cared for there, the inspector obtained a transfer to the hospital. Once the time of instruction was completed (limited to two years) the

6 . Quoted by Guibert, pg. 30

7 . Olier was pastor of St.Sulpice from 1642 to 1652; after him Bretonvilliers (from 1652--1658), and then Pousse (from 1658--1678) directed the parish.

person who represented the parish did not lose sight of the children he directed: together with the pastor of the parish he strove to find them honorable employment.

Because there was a dearth of teachers for these tuition-free schools, after thirty years there existed no more than a remnant of this organization: only the school on Rue Princesse, where Compagnon, a priest belonging to the Sulpician Community, was in difficulty to control two hundred noisy, brawling and inattentive schoolchildren, with the help of a fifteen year old assistant and a stocking maker, named Rafrond, who taught knitting to this mob.

Père Compagnon played an active role in the negotiations of 1687. But he imagined that De La Salle and his Brothers would be nothing more than aides, lightening his load and helping him to come to terms with chaos. De La Barmondière viewed the situation both more broadly and more realistically: all he was asking of his new allies was to save his school. He was loath to enter into details, to face changes, and especially to have to listen to recriminations and complaints.

It was not difficult to judge the situation: here De La Salle could not build from the ground up, so to speak. He had taken over a decayed and confused system. Humble, prudent, and patient, he studied the ``ins and outs'' and handled people with a sort of heavenly diplomacy. But he would be unable to accomplish a definitively useful work except through reformation. He introduced his own teaching methods, set up a program of studies and established discipline. De La Barmondière was induced to allow Compagnon only nominal authority. Bruised egoism, slighted traditions and threatened interests combined against the newcomers. Compagnon and Rafrond found, especially among the ``charitable'' ladies, both willing ears and agile tongues. De La Salle was accused of worsening the ailment he was attempting to cure: for instance, because he reduced the time given to manual labor, it was concluded that he was turning out lazy pupils who would be unable to make a living.

For a moment the pastor of St.Sulpice seemed like a chemist who regrets having introduced into his experiment a foreign element, which may well be of the rarest quality but which by its presence and influence threatens to blow everything up. About September, 1688 he informed De La Salle that he had decided to dispense with his services.

But, then, on second thought, and after an interview with the Founder, he revised his decision. Nevertheless, probably at the beginning of the following winter, he felt obliged to commission one of the ``Gentlemen'' of his Community, Jacques Forbin-Janson (the future Bishop of Arles), to conduct an inquiry. The investigator was scrupulously fair. He cleared the Brothers and their Superior and unveiled the underhand dealing of Compagnon.

The obviously appropriate action was to remove the former director from the school. But De La Barmondière took no action, because he was preparing to resign his pastorate: he was overwhelmed by the debts he had incurred in the reconstruction of the church. Furthermore, he believed himself to be stricken with an incurable malady. He resigned at the beginning of 1689. However he lived on for six years more and, as Superior of a Community of poor clerics associated with the Sulpician seminary, he kindly admitted Louis Grignion, the future Père de Monfort, in 1693.

During the rather brief period of time in which De La Salle worked under Père La Barmondière, no question of principle, no conflict of authority arose. The charity school was dependent upon the pastor, and it was to him as pastor that the Brothers as teachers were accountable. Positions were clear and relations were normal. But had these teachers, associated in a lay Community with De La Salle, another immediate Superior besides De La Salle? And should De La Salle, in the organization and

interior government of his society take and follow the orders of the pastor of St.Sulpice? Would the Institute, spread now into several dioceses, find its unity, and as a consequence, its future threatened by the eminent right of the Church hierarchy - a right which, beyond a legitimate control, extended to the alteration of its rules? These were problems which were soon to make an appearance and prove both difficult and complex.

It seems that they might well have been postponed under Père La Barmondière's immediate successor. The Brothers were aware that they had the complete confidence of the new pastor; since Henri Baudrand de La Combe, a Sulpician since 1664 and Director of the Seminary had been the spiritual director of John Baptist de La Salle, whom the new pastor loved and whose cause he had pleaded with La Barmondière during the difficult days in September, 1688. ``Don't worry", he told the Founder, as he assured him that there would no longer be any question of removing him from the supervision of the school.

Père Baudrand assumed the pastorate of St.Sulpice on January 7th, 1689. He silenced Compagnon and, in order completely to remove him from the school in Rue Princesse, he appointed him director of the choirboys. In January, 1690, he opened a second charity school at the north end of Rue Du Bac, not far from the Pont Royal. For the new school De La Salle was invited to supply teachers, whom he probably called from Rheims, and who, united in a single Community with the Brothers of the original school, travelled twice daily to their classes. It was doubtless at this time that Brother Henri L'Heureux was reunited with his Superior in Paris.

The pastor of St.Sulpice had definitively adopted the Rheims Institute. The Brothers, who very quickly were teaching five hundred pupils, proved the excellence of their educational methods. Where, indeed, would one find better auxiliaries in the parochial apostolate for children? It had to be admitted that during the seven years of Père Baudrand's tenure, he fully intended to preserve the quality of his schools by retaining these teachers.

Baudrand felt that he was personally the target when, on a petition on behalf of the teachers in the elementary pay-schools, the Grand Cantor, Claude Joly, denounced De La Salle by declaring that the admission of some children from non-needy families had removed the educational institutions of St.Sulpice from the category of ``charitable schools". The Cantor's outburst, which was aimed quite simply at the suppression of the schools on Rues Princesse and Du Bac, was an episode in the long struggle between Claude Joly and the Parisian pastors. And by refusing explicitly to involve Père Baudrand, the plaintiffs thought that an indirect assault would have a better chance than a frontal attack. Joly, content to assert his rights as superintendent of schools, would deliver the teachers in pay-schools from their still feeble (although already troublesome) competitors without risking a conflict with one of their most powerful adversaries. Furthermore, the battle-ground had been skillfully selected: charity schools would be tolerated only if their gratuity was exercised in favor of the poor. In Lyons, under the influence of Demia, and quite recently in Rethel and in Laon during the negotiations between De La Salle or Nyel and the municipalities, clauses in the contracts founding schools protected the privileges of the teachers in primary pay-schools and the writing masters and guaranteed them a livelihood by forbidding the ``rich" from attending tuition-free schools.

Actually, it was not for the Brothers to demand a certificate of indigence from their pupils. In this matter, a sufficient presumption was created when parents - workers, artisans, and even small shop owners - unhesitatingly permitted their sons to

sit on the same benches as the children of the publicly assisted poor. In this way, the Brothers avoided excluding the reluctant poor, families living in genteel penury that bordered on wretchedness; and, with rare exceptions, there was little danger that people who were well-off would accept this kind of humiliation for themselves and for their ``heirs'' - a proximity that was repulsive to the mentality of the period. For pupil population to increase in charity schools it would be necessary for them either to change their name or for their reputation for education to become more widely known. These conditions would be realized subsequently after De La Salle's success. New ideas would later emerge, which would finally triumph over the traditional rights of the paid teachers. ``Charity schools'' would, in a return to the spirit of the Middle Ages and in a candid application of the Gospel, become popular schools, the Christian schools. The name the Founder gave his nascent Community in 1685 was prophetic for the future.

That the Parisian teachers, supported by the Cantor, had, in 1690, a clear vision of these changes is hardly probable. But a poisonous jealousy gave them a premonition of distant portents. The two schools at St.Sulpice, with their many pupils, their exact schedule, their rational programs of study, their quasi-novel methods and their astonishing discipline attracted public attention. For the defenders of the *status quo*, these schools were a new and troubling reality before they had become victorious competitors. Their destruction was, perhaps, less a means of saving money than a way of saving pride.

In order to thwart the assailants, Baudrand used De La Salle as a front. The details of the case are known to us only through Maillefer and Blain. After Claude Joly's judgment, which went by default, (since it was not necessary to submit to the jurisdiction of the Grand Cantor), the pastor of St.Sulpice not only advised, but ordered the Superior of the Brothers to appeal the case to the *Parlement*. There is no doubt that the pastor assumed that the judges would come up with a decision that confirmed his own judgment. As to the Founder, he showed that he was both a man of prayer and of action. He led the Brothers on a pilgrimage to the chapel of *Notre-Dame des Vertus* in the church at Aubervilliers. Bérulle, Vincent de Paul and Olier had, like many of their contemporaries (beginning with King Louis XIII) entrusted the outcome of their enterprises to the Blessed Virgin. De La Salle returned to the place many times. A monument raised to his memory there in 1892 recalls his sojourn in this sanctuary of ancient France, which still survives, so stirring and also so satisfying, surrounded as it now is by earthly clamor and ugliness. Joining his own human efforts to the powers of the supernatural, he appeared in courtas the logician and jurist that his education and background had made of him. We can only guess at what was his defense. "Charity schools are in practice removed from the authority of the superintendent of schools." This would have been the major proposition of his argument, as it had once been at Rheims in a church council, where the founding of the school of St.Maurice had been decided.The minor proposition would have been self-evident: "The schools under my direction at St.Sulpice are charity schools, established before my arrival in Paris by the pastors of the parish, and continue completely under their control and responsibility." Therefore, the Grand Cantor's judgment was inapplicable. It appears that both the premises and the conclusion of the Founder's position were the subject of a written report. They were presented "with so much force and exactitude", Dom Elie is pleased to tell us, "that the matter was quickly disposed of in favor of the appellants". ParIement, however, must not have

decided the question of the principle involved, since the final agreement between the Cantor and the pastors did not occur until 1699.[8]

We know that the law of the period pertaining to primary education would have been enough to have bound the Brothers by a narrow subjection to Père Baudrand. It must be added that the entire financial responsibility for the undertaking, the maintenance of the Community as well as the expenses for furnishings and buildings fell to the pastor. But the Sulpician was generous enough, so that De La Salle had no thought of moving the headquarters of his Institute back to Champagne. On the contrary, if we are to believe Blain, the Junior Novitiate in Rheims was *moved* to Paris. If, as everything suggests, this third community was still at the Rue Neuve at the end of 1689, its transfer may have been effected in the course of the following year.[9] It did not prosper with the change: for in its new location, vocations fell off and recruitment faltered.

Blain attributes this setback in part to Baudrand's demand that the youngsters serve the daily Masses. In his view, they lost their spirit of regularity and obedience by spending too much time away from the influence of their teachers.[10]

Whatever may be the case regarding this claim, it is obvious that De La Salle had to respect the policies and the wishes of his host and benefactor, who was also his spiritual director. This does not mean that he conspired against the success of his own work. As a rule, he never stepped outside the limits traced out for him by Baudrand. But he insisted on thinking that he had the right to transgress them. The pastor of St.Sulpice might very well have considered the Brothers as a team of parish workers subject to his orders, and, so to speak, in his pay. But the Superior relinquished neither his title nor his duties in relation to the Brothers; he had founded a religious society that would adapt to parochial structures without cracking or crumbling under any of them. St.Sulpice may have been, whether temporarily or ultimately, the *substratum* upon which the Institute of the Brothers would come to rest; but it would not be a straightjacket to curb or repress a growing organism.

This is why when Baudrand presumed to separate the Brothers from their habit and replace it with the clerical soutane and mantle, De La Salle threw up a resistance that was both energetic and respectful. The memorandum that we have examined is certainly not the work of an arrogant mind that refuses to enter into necessary explanations. It is a presentation, at once abundant and clear, of the principles that have inspired a founder of a congregation. The Brothers' "Community" is an organization that is distinct from a parish. Its origins, its rules, and its ends demand total autonomy. If its cooperation was required, it must be accepted as is:

If the habit was to be improved, it should have happened when the Brothers of the Christian Schools came to Paris, and before they were employed in the schools there. They should have been toldthen that they would not be permitted to teach in their distinctive garb and that they must adopt a more common one. Then they could have taken appropriate measures.

Père Baudrand was adamant. But not willing to come round to De La Salle's way of thinking, nor to forego his assistance, he lapsed into a sort of peevishness. The misunderstanding, without destroying their mutual respect and without compromising

8 . See above, Part One, Chapter iii, pg 40

9 . There was at least one Junior Novice in Rue Princesse in 1688, Pierre Narra, baptized in Charenton 6th October 1677, who “lived in the house in Paris from the age of ten years.” He took the habit on 8th December 1695 with the name of Frère Paul. Perpetual vows were pronounced 8th December 1699and he died at St. Yon in 1751. (cf. AMG, Admissions Regiater and Vow book).

fundamentally their cooperation, was never completely resolved; between the two men a constrained silence insinuated itself.

In brief, circumstances and environment failed to contribute completely to the Founder's plans. He had to call upon all his strength of soul and grace to overcome obstacles that might have discouraged a less saintly man.

* * *

Between 1690 and 1691 it seemed undeniable that the future of the Institute was gravely imperiled. The first schools were no longer under the Founder's continuous influence. After the departure of Henri L'Heureux for Paris, Rheims nearly collapsed under the too hasty innovations of young Jean-Henri. The seminary for rural schoolteachers as well as the Junior Novitiate had disappeared. In Paris in Rue Princesse no postulants applied. And then, the still fragile society was stricken to the quick as John Baptist de La Salle himself nearly died of a desperate illness. He was no sooner restored to health (through the daring medical treatments of theDutch physician, Helvetius) than he was saddened by the loss of his most distinguished disciple. In the flower of youth and with every appearance of robust good health, Brother Henri I'Heureux died while his Superior had been on a business visit to Rheims. De La Salle returned to Paris too late to see the man that he was grooming to direct the Institute. For him, it was something like the sacrifice of Isaac, and a death that moved him deeply.

This was the moment for the great leap forward which was to snatch the man who was determined not to fail his providential mission "from the depths of the abyss". A single act would assure the rescue: In September of 1691 St.John Baptist de La Salle chose the enclosure at Vaugirard to collect his own energies and rally his troops.

Here there was a large garden with middling-sized, decaying buildings (bad roofs, with windows and doors falling apart); it was a piece of property that had been practically abandoned; anybody who wanted it could have had it for very little. And since the Founder was poor, he furnished the place in the sketchiest possible way: tables, chairs and mattresses scattered throughout various rooms. The physical poverty matched the way he saw things going.

But living there, he discovered three other advantages: "fresh air", solitude and relative remoteness from Paris. Fields, gardens, quarries and windmills separated the village from the last houses in the Faubourg St.Germain. Gaudreau, in his *History of Vaugirard*, published in 1843, situates the "Brothers' house" on the corner of Rues Grande and Copreaux. He states that the tradition of the Brothers staying at this place had been one of long standing, although it had subsequently become "a rather well-known inn". Roussel's map of 1711 shows, at the site which corresponds to the intersection of the existing streets an enclosure which one might very well suppose was that of the Founder. [11]

The entrance to Vaugirard was something less than two miles from Rue Princesse. The Junior Seminary of St.Sulpice had its summer house at about a quarter of an hour's walk away, near the old village church, on land on which Olier had settled his first Community in 1641. De La Salle enjoyed going there to visit his friend, Père Bauhin, the Superior of the Community. It was in this way that he preserved his ties with the Sulpicians. But, at the time, he had his own "home", which was also the Brothers' "home", the spiritual center toward which the attention, thoughts and steps of the Brothers, both in Paris and in the provinces, were directed.

Indeed, the Founder invited them all there during the vacation of 1691; and he kept them there until the Feast of St.Luke, in a retreat designed to revitalize their weary spirits. And when the time came for reopening classes, he detained the Brothers whose religious training had been curtailed, temporarily supplying for them in their schools with rural schoolteachers, the fine men who thus repaid a little of the debt they owed their "Teacher".

This experience was, for some of the Brothers, something like the beginning of the "Second Novitiate" which the Christian Brothers restored at the end of the 19th century and comparable to the Jesuit "Tertianship". But the "canonical" novitiate did not yet exist. De La Salle could no longer delay in making it the principal object of his concerns.

While awaiting the favorable moment for that project, he determined to assure the survival and the unity of his Congregation in the event of his death. In a particularly solemn way and by the closest sort of ties, he entered into a partnership with the two Brothers who were with him from the beginning: - Nicolas Vuyart, Adrien Nyel's replacement at Rethel in 1682 and one of the "twelve" on the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity in 1684; and Gabriel Drolin, a native of Rheims, in the parish of St.Jacques, born on the 22nd of July, 1664, who had entered the Brothers on the Rue Neuve at the age of twenty and became a schoolteacher in Laon with Nicolas Bourlette in 1685. Neither Vuyart nor Drolin were made of the stuff of Henri L'Heureux, and, by selecting both, the Founder was showing rather clearly that this time he was wavering in his choice of an heir apparent. Lacking a peerless candidate, he entrusted the future to the eldest depositaries of the tradition.

"On the 21st of November, the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, 1691", there was pronounced, doubtlessly in the chapel in the neighborhood of the enclosure at Vaugirard,the following vow, the text of which has been preserved by Canon Blain:

> Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, prostrate with the most profound respect before Your infinite and adorable majesty, we consecrate ourselves wholly to You, to procure with all our power and with all our attention the foundation of the society of the Christian Schools, in the way in which appears to us to be most pleasing to You and most advantageous to the said society; and to this end, I, John Baptist de La Salle, Priest, and I, Nicolas Vuyart, and I, Gabriel Drolin, we, from now on and always, down to the last one of us, or until the final completion of the foundation of the said society, make vow of association and of union on to bring about and to maintain the said society, without leaving it, even if there should remain in the said society only the three of us, and we would be obliged to beg alms and to live on bread alone. In this intention, we promise to do, unanimously and with common consent, all that we believe in conscience and without any human consideration to be for the greatest good of the said society.

Both in matter and in form this text bears the mark of St. John Baptist de La Salle – his ardent piety, abandonment to God, precise understanding, exact definition of the end to be sought, and, in order to attain that end, the firm will and the serenely heroic courage. In spite of hell and the world, in spite of well-or ill-intentioned men, he must "found the society of the Christian schools". De La Salle,Vuyart and Drolin bound themselves together through a special vow; they pledged their property and the bread won through alms in order to realize their idea. And if they should fail, at least it would not be due to negligence or faintheartedness. The three, "down to the last one alive", would hand on, one to the other, both the ideal and the task.

In fact, of the three there was only one of them who was a hero and a leader. Fortunately for the future of the Institute, the opening of the novitiate would provide recruits from among whom genuine successors would arise**.**

Money was necessary in order support the novices. Where to find it, if not at Père Baudrand's door? Besides, it was foreign to De La Salle's tactfulness to undertake an important and long term project outside the parish of St.Sulpice without the approval of the pastor whose benefactions he had accepted. Accordingly, he revealed his plan to the man who had continued to be his spiritual director. The reaction was immediate: Baudrand would listen to no talk about a novitiate. His idea of the new institute was still opposed to the Founder's: he wished to keep the Brothers uniquely in the service of his own parish and had very little interest in an extensive recruiting program that might increase his costs well beyond the advantages his schools might realize. Logic was powerless to breach this resistance, which, humanly speaking, was understandable. The Founder confided that conquest to God's care. He exerted himself in prayer, fasting and harsh penances. Informed of this strategy, Baudrand suggested it was useless and contrary to God's will.

Nevertheless, in September of 1692 the opening of a novitiate was decided upon; and, on the 1st of the following November, six novices received the habit. An accidental occurrence convinced the pastor of St.Sulpice that in this matter God was not on his side. It was here for the first time in the history of the Brothers that we notice the appearance of Paul Godet Marets.[12] This friend of Bossuet, and spiritual director of Madame Maintenon and of the royal house of St.Cyr, knew De La Salle in the seminary. An austere priest, committed to his priestly duties, a theologian of the strictest orthodoxy (very early a fierce adversary of Quietism, in spite of his affection for Fénelon), bore many similarities to De La Salle. In 1690 he was named Bishop of Chartres. He hesitated to accept episcopal responsibilities and did so only at the insistence of Père Tronson. Because the Bulls of consecration were held up as the result of Louis XIV's difficulties with Rome, the consecration did not take place until the 31st of August 1692 at St.Cyr. François Harlay Champvallon, Archbishop of Paris, was the consecrating prelate, assisted by Pierre Coislin, Bishop of Orleans and by Bossuet. In the emotion of that day, Paul Godet did not forget John Baptist de La Salle. He spoke to Harlay Champvallon about the Holy Founder's apostolate and about the obstacles he was encountering. Harlay, in whom there was nothing of the saint, wished to please the new bishop. He spoke in favor of the novitiate and admitted the society of the Brothers to the rank of a religious community. These were, of course, only kind words, unsupported by any formal act coming from the chancery. But they were enough for Baudrand to lend a hand to the project. His help would become particularly commendable during the great famine of 1693-1694; and it is understandable that, called upon to relieve extreme distress with a reduced income in his own parish, he had difficulty in ensuring the Brothers' daily needs. During that terrible winter, De La Salle brought the novices from Vaugirard to the house on Rue Princesse. The harshness of the times only intensified their permanent poverty and added to the rigors of their self-imposed mortification.

Better times would allow them to return to the enclosure. Every Thursday and every Sunday afternoon the Brothers in Paris would take the road to the "Motherhouse". And from the 30th of May to the 6th of June, 1694 an assembly was held there which the Institute regards as being in some sense its first General Chapter.

A small black book preserved in the Congregation's archives describes the important actions taken during those days. On the cover, in an 18th century handwriting, the book bears the words: "Book wherein are written the first thirteen

12 . The spelling of “Merets” rather than “Marais” is adopted by Canon Vaudon, in accordance with the original documentsx with which he worked in writing his *Histoire générale de la Communauté des Filles de Saint Paul de Chartres* (paris, Tequi, 1922-1931, 4 vols.)

Brothers of the Institute (to pronounce) perpetual vows, done in the company of M. De La Salle, on the Feast of the Most Blessed Trinity in 1694". And elsewhere: "In this manuscript is contained a very important declaration after the thirteenth (member pronounced his) vow(s),which is signed by the twelve Brothers assembled in 1694".

The transcriptions of the formula are all in the hand of Brother Michel Barthélemy Jacquinot, as an examination of the handwriting gives evidence. Each of the signatories personally added the last lines, beginning with the phrase "all my life". The text of St.John Baptist de La Salle's vow formula follows: [13]

> Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, prostrate with themost profound respect before your infinite and adorable majesty, I consecrate myself entirely to you, to procure your glory as far as I am able and as you will require of me. And to this end, I, John Baptist de La Salle, Priest, promise and make vow of uniting myself and living in society with Brothers Nicholas Vuyart, Gabriel Drolin, Jean Partois, Gabriel Charles Rasigade, Jean Henri, Jacques Compain, Jean Jacquot, Jean-Louis Marcheville, Michel Barthélemy Jacquinot, Edme Leguillon, Giles Pierre and Claude Roussel, to maintain together and by association, tuition-free schools, in any place whatsoever, even if, in order to do this, I should be obliged to beg alms and to live on bread alone, or to do in the said society that at which I might be employed whether by the body of the society or by the superiors who shall have the direction of it. Therefore, I promise and vow obedience as well to the body of this society as to the superiors, which vows of association as well as of stability in the said society and obedience, I promise to keep inviolably all my life; in witness whereof I have signed; done at Vaugirard this sixth day of June, the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity in the year one-thousand-six-hundred-and ninety-four.

From the formula of 1691 the Founder retained the preliminary invocation and the pledge, especially dear to him, to keep his vows "even if he were obliged to beg alms and to live on bread alone". The rest of the text has to do with a different situation: it's no longer a matter of three men who propose to pursue the successful "foundation" of a religious society that has a very uncertain future. In the new situation we are dealing with a Community which, through the determination of its leadership, is definitively founded.

This leadership, however, seems to have been rather rapidly depleted. "Of the twelve who bound themselves together by vow, writes Canon Blain, "...only six persevered, of whom three are still alive". [14] The names of these three, whose old age was held in honor in the Institute when the biographer was working on the "notes" with which the Brothers had supplied him, are found at the head of a register, in folio and bound in parchment, entitled "Register of entrances and receptions of the habit by novices", and which, in general, is more accurately described (as its subtitle suggests) as the "catalogue of the Brothers of the Christian Schools from the beginnings of the Institute". It is an incomplete catalogue as regards the earliest disciples of St.John Baptist de La Salle, and, at least in its first thirty six pages, obviously put together once for all and at a later date with the help of a variety of sources of information and recollection. It is written in the same hand as far as the date of entrance of Brother Godfroy (December 8th, 1731). The name of "Brother Timothy" is accompanied by the words, "was Superior-general in 1720" in the text itself; and it is quite probable that the keeping of this book goes back not farther than the generalate of Brother Claude (Pierre Nivet), who entered the Institute in 1726, was Superior in 1751, and whose name is written in capital letters. The Brothers' "employments" are given starting in 1750.

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13 . AMG contains a completely original copy of the same text in a file of De La Salle's Letters, Series "E", No.37 *ter*.

14 . Blain, Vol.II, Supplément, pg.343

The three survivors of 1694, living and persevering in Blain's time, were: Gabriel Drolin, who would die in 1733, when De La Salle's biography was published; Jean Partois, (Brother Antoine), and Jean Jacquot. None of the other signatories of the vows pronounced at Vaugirard are named in the register, not even Jean-Henri, whose devout death, on the 1st of July, 1699, was announced (as Blain tells us) in one of the Founder's letters to his Brothers.[15]It is true that the document indicates that only six Brothers died before St.John Baptist de La Salle and that the first of these, Brother Adrien (Étienne Le Narré) had been in the Congregation only since 1705. Another of De La Salle's letters (preserved in the Motherhouse Archives) informs Gabriel Drolin, on the 28th of August, 1705, that "Brother Michel and Brother Jacques died at Chartres, one after the other, of the fever". It seems beyond doubt that the letter was referring to Michel Barthélemy Jacquinot and Jacques Compain, both of them known personally to Drolin. Presently we shall learn how Nicolas Vuyart abandoned teaching. The other five dropouts, then, would be Rasigade, Marcheville, Leguillon, Giles Pierre and Claude Roussel.

Individuals would come and go, but from here on in, the Institute gave promise of enduring. The "Black Book" (after "the important declaration", with which we shall deal presently) contains the perpetual vows pronounced by twenty-three successors of "the twelve". The first formula is dated the 29th of May, 1695 and it is signed by Pierre Raimbault, "called Brother Paul". It is similar to the formula of the previous year: proper names are replaced by the words, "With those Brothers who are associated together". In a note written over the original text, we are told that Brother Paul "died at Rethel on the 29th of October, Sunday, in the year one-thousand-six-hundred-and-ninety-five"-a newly professed Brother who died very quickly indeed. The last of the signatories are Joseph Truffet (Brother Barthélemy), the immediate successor of De La Salle (whose formula is entirely in his own hand), Theodore Gaspard Lambert (Brother Isidore) and Michael Sevuin (Brother Jean Baptist): all three of them pronounced their vows on the 7th of June, 1705. In the interval, we note the names of Brother Ponce (Poncelet Thiseux), Brother Ambrose (Francis Blein), Brother Thomas, (Charles Frappet), Brother Jean-Francois (Jean Boucqueton), Brother Denis (Jean-Louis Guynand), Brother Gérard (Gérard Drolin), Brother Joseph (Jean Le Roux), and Brother Timothée (Guillaume Samson Bazin). There is not one of these who has not left some trace in the history of the Institute; and several of them have played an important role. These twenty three Brothers represent the second generation of the sons of the saint, the second shift entering onto the building site after the foundations had been consolidated, the generation destined to raise the walls and put on the roof, after most of the workers of the morning shift had left the workplace and after the master craftsman had departed.

Several of these young men (Blein, Frappet, Boucqueton among others) had been with La Salle since as early as 1694. At about that time the novitiate at Vaugirard numbered thirty-five candidates. "Of this number", says Blain, "there were only two who were poor. The others were rather well-off and might have lived comfortably in the world."[16] At the origin of these vocations there was a sacrifice, lucidly and generously performed. Of such men, doubtlessly, it would have been impossible for De La Salle to have declared that "they acted only on impressions". They were capable of understanding the Founder's ideal and of making heroic efforts that would enable them to approach it. Among them, or among the best of those who would come to join them, it was possible to discover the future leader. Since the death

171715 . Ibid, pg 76

of Henri L'Heureux, the Founder felt drawn to an earlier idea: the Superior of the Institute should be a Brother elected by his Brothers.

> The priesthood sets up a real distinction between the Brothers and their Superior and *it* weakens the spirit of union; members who are improperly united to the one who rules them make up a body which, since its head and members are badly joined, remain unhealthy and lifeless**.** [17]

The Founder did not wish any longer to postpone the election. To the Brothers he recalled how, three years earlier, he was on the point of death. The difficulties he had met with at Rheims and, even more so, at St.Sulpice, obliged him easily to imagine what would happen should he disappear before the transmission of power had been accomplished. We should see "as many Superiors as schools. Such a diversity of shepherds would infallibly divide the flock ... Separate groups would change positions, teachings, customs and habit ... " Brothers "separated" from one another would no longer find as successors anybody except people "with different talents, practices and plans". "Mercenary" school teachers would reappear: and this would be the end of the tuition-free Christian Schools. [18]

And De La Salle concluded that they must immediately accept his resignation and name his replacement. Thus, he would not, as a priest, create a precedent that might be invoked against the Rule; and the Brother who was elected would be the first in the line of Superiors-general.

On June 7th, 1694 "the twelve" voted. In spite of his protestations, John Baptist de La Salle was unanimously elected. The Brothers had no desire to repeat the mistake of 1686. They knew very well that neither Vuyart nor Drolin, nor anybody else among them, was able to sustain the fragile and beleaguered Community. They not only needed counsel, they also needed the direct rule and the lofty precepts of a saint. In the face of a suspicious and hostile world, 'how powerless they would have been without the personal and public authority of the man and the priest! They trusted that Providence would spare them their leader, who at the time was only forty three years of age and whose physical constitution, in spite of illnesses, rheumatic attacks and excessive austerities became more vigorous with age. However, like him, they believed that it was indispensable to make formal arrangements, solemn and exact pledges for the future, no matter how remote. Such was the purpose of the following declaration:

> We, the undersigned, Brothers Nicholas Vuyart, Gabriel Drolin *{the other ten Brothers' names follow}* after associating ourselves with John Baptist de La Salle, priest, to maintain together and by association, tuition-free schools according to the vows that we made yesterday, acknowledging that in consequence of our vows and of the association we have contracted through them, we have chosen John Baptist de La Salle for Superior, to whom we promise entire obedience and submission as also to those who will be given us by him as superiors. We also declare that. we do not intend that the present election shall be taken as a precedent for the future, it being our intention that. after J.B. de La Salle, there shall never be among us, nor shall there be chosen for a Superior, any priest. or any person who has received Sacred Ordersi that we will have and will admit no superior who will not be associated with us, and who will not have made vows such as we have pronounced, and as will be made by those who will be associated with us hereafter. Done at Vaugirard, June 7th, 1694.

Such are the terms of the second document published in the "Black Book", and its essential importance was emphasized by the prefatory note. Vuyart, Drolin, Giles Pierre and Jacquot took the trouble to sign themselves with the title "Frère", which indicated their definitive status as members of a religious Community. With a Superior named for life, twelve Brothers committed by perpetual vows, conditions to

17 , ibid, loc.cit., pg.344
18 . ibid

be fulfilled by future Superiors clearly defined, the lay state of all the members clearly asserted, and a Motherhouse distinct from educational institutions, including a novitiate- nothing was wanting to De La Salle's Institute in order for it to have a normal existence and to assert its individuality and its autonomy.[19]

A decision by Louis Antoine Noailles, Archbishop of Paris after August 1685, confirmed the factual recognition granted the Institute verbally by his predecessor, Harlay Champvallon. The new head of the diocese had forbidden private chapels, attendance at which had done considerable damage to parish churches. The oratory adjoining the Brothers' house, where De La Salle said Mass for the novices, was closed. But having the novices go every day to St. Lambert in Vaugirard involved serious inconveniences. Their Superior obtained the privilege of reopening the chapel at the enclosure. Following is a translation of the official Latin document issued on the 27th of March, 1697 by the Chancellor of the diocese:

> Louis Antoine, by the mercy of God and the favor of the Holy Apostolic See, Archbishop of Paris, Duke of St..Cloud, Peer of France, to our beloved John Baptist de La Salle, priest of the diocese of Rheims, salvation and benediction. By these presents we give you permission to celebrate, or to have celebrated by priests approved by you, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in a low voice, on a portable altar, in your house, situated within the confines of the parish of Vaugirard, near Paris, in which you carefully strive, under our authority, to instruct and educate teachers for primary schools, provided this occurs in a clean and decent place, which has been visited by our authority and found appropriate for dlivine worship, without, however, being able to bless bread and water, or to administer all of the other Sacraments, except Penance and the Eucharist (barring Easter Communion), or to celebrate any other divine office there, which permission will be viable only during the entire time you occupy the said house along with the said schoolteachers.[20]

There were futile protests from the pastor of Vaugirard. Chapel privileges, in the circumstances and under the terms in which they were granted, gave the society of teachers the form of a regular community.

19 . We shall study the problems of the composition and date of the Rule in Part Three.
20 . Tkane from Guibert, pp.279-280

CHAPTER FOUR

Père Joachim Trotti de la Chétardye

Stricken with paralysis before his sixtieth year, Henri Baudrand was forced to resign his parochial ministry in 1695. He handed over his pastorate to Père de La Chétardye who, in exchange, gave over the Priory of St.Cosmos in Touraine to Baudrand, who died four years later on the 10th of October, 1699.

The new pastor of St.Sulpice assumed his duties on the 13th of February,1696. Joachim Trotti de la Chétardye was born in Exideuil, in Limousin, on the 23rd of November, 1636. Associated with the Sulpician Fathers in 1663, he was a teacher in the seminary at Le Puy; later he was the director of the seminary at Bourges. For more than thirty years he lived outside of Paris, and he did not know De La Salle.

He came preceded by a very well merited reputation for knowledge, wisdom and selflessness. A robust sexagenarian, he was equal to the task of guiding his vast parish vigorously and for a long period of time along lines mapped out by his five predecessors. To that task he dedicated himself totally until his death. When, in 1702 Louis XIV, who held him in the highest esteem, offered him the See of Poitiers, Père La Chétardye, declining the honor and the responsibility, declared that he had ``sixty-six reasons (he was sixty-six years of age) and that at such an age he mustn't dream of doing anything except to sanctify the many people whose pastor he was".

Indeed, he was to become one of those great Parisian pastors whose sway over their flock was quasi-episcopal. Spiritually, he was devoid of egoism and pride. In the work of his parish he was enterprising, generous and tireless. In his relations with his parishioners, and especially with the humblest of them, he was possessed of an accessible and affable goodness that only the terrible misery of the year 1709 would completely reveal.

He entertained the loftiest notion of his ministry. He strove to be a leader confident of his people's allegiance, and, believing that a parish such as his own was a sufficiently broad arena for Christian action, he disliked anything that outstripped, anything that seemed to escape, however partially, his personal influence. When this ``gentleman" from Limousin, after an austere, unruffled, relatively solitary and quite provincial existence, succeeded Baudrand, he did not lose the sharp edges of his character, nor the blunt and resolute opinions of the pedant protected from the world, nor a certain narrowness of vision, a spirit of domination and a sort of intensity which prefers to go out to meet and struggle with obstacles.

In brief, he was a handsome and powerful figure of a man. His last will and testament, which Père Simon Doncourt included in the third volume of his *Historical Notes on the Church and Parish of St.Sulpice,*[34] emphasizes his faith, his dedication to his parish, his noble idea of the duties of a pastor, his thoroughgoing evangelical poverty and, at the same time, that touch of the indomitable, the resolute, the irrevocable that passes from the spirit into the style:

> I desire that I be recommended to the prayers of the holy clergy and of the ladies and gentlemen of the parish, begging them to remember me before the Lord, and entreating them to pardon me if I have failed in any of my duties toward them or have not given them the good example, which I was bound to, or of not having been as useful to them as I should have been before God and man I declare that I hold neither gold nor silver that is mine, since I have abandoned the annuity that would have personally come to me in order to provide for our Community, which without this

34. The three volumes published in Paris, by Crapart, in 1773 can be found in the Novitiate of St.Sulpice. The Bibliothèque Nationale has an abridgment only, in-12, published in the same year

assistance would have collapsed, and out of this entire pastorate or benefice, I have kept only what was exactly necessary for my own maintenance As to my furniture, it is of small value Such are my final arrangements as I leave this world, which I do without regret, excepting the Church of Jesus Christ, founded on the merits and infinite mercies of God. I do not fear death And so, I go, but I shall return; I sleep, but I shall awaken; I die, but I shall rise; I bear this gentle hope in my bosom, and I enter the tomb awaiting the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. [35]

With his quick, sure glance, and from his own special point of view, La Chétardye understood the importance of the work of the Brothers. He wanted to make their schools increasingly prosperous, and to that end he spared neither effort nor money. At St.Sulpice the Brothers occupied a lofty position: with many of them the pastor was directly concerned, and he followed their daily lives, heard their requests and shared their confidences. And because they were his personal pride, one of the jewels in his crown, he supported their endeavors and he interested people who were generous to the parish in the lot of the Brothers, the distinguished persons with whom he associated, the Cardinal-archbishop, Madame Maintenon, and the King himself. He declared himself to be their ``defender'', their personal ``promoter'', and their ``father''. [36]

But in this vehement and smothering adoption, what became of the ``real father''? It is not difficult to guess. And the entire drama is contained in a line by Blain: ``La Chétardye seemed to envy J.B. De La Salle the distinction of having given to the Church such an indispensable Institute.'' [37]

The envy was not something born of the first contacts between the two men. In the beginning the new pastor saw the Brothers' Superior as a marvelous auxiliary. He was aware of him as a former student and a faithful friend of the Sulpicians, in constant contact with Père Tronson and Père Bauhin, whose death during the year 1696 would create a huge void in the heart of J.B. De La Salle. La Chétardye had only learned by hearsay of the beginnings of the small society in the diocese of Rheims, of the good work that was going on and that the Founder had continued to encourage in several cities in the Northeast. On the other hand, he saw the main body of the group living in Paris and in Vaugirard, which, for the organization of the charity schools, for catechism classes, for its functions and its subsidies was almost in total moral and material dependence upon St.Sulpice. Did he suspect that the Institute wished to conclude a sort of alliance, a family pact, with the Society of St. Sulpice? Such an assertion was actually suggested on the strength of a letter from Père Leschassier. However, that letter, dated the 17th of November, 1706, is, in our opinion, a rather tendentious and unkind interpretation of facts that we shall presently report.[38]

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35 . Quoted by Guibert, pp. 543--4.

36 . Blain, Vol. I, pg. 356.

37 . Ibid., pg. 355.

38 . The lines of the Superior general of St.Sulpice, the successor ofTronson, taken from a letter to Père Gourrchau, and included in the correspondence of Tronson and Leschassier, Vol. VII, pg. 537, in the Archives of St. Sulpice, are as follows: It is true, Sir, that M. de La Salle, the patriarch of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, has done everything he could to hitch his community to St. Sulpice, but he has never been able to succeed. And we shall not get involved in their business. I think that they are good people, but I don't know any of them and wouldn't counsel any of our Gentlemen to get involved with them.

Note the word ``patriarch'' where one would expect the title ``Superior''. And the word ``hitch'' smacks of irony and impatience. Leschassier seems to be saying that De La Salle wanted to make St.

It remains true, however, that even in the Brothers' Community, Père La Chétardye naturally tended to upstage the Founder, who had too much humility, too much discretion and too lively a sense of gratitude to assume a defensive role. But it was impossible for De La Salle not to be the leader. He guided his disciples according to his own principles, which were not always identical with those of the pastor of St.Sulpice. Since his recruits were numerous, soon, he would be planning to increase the number of his schools; and he would be responding to appeals from other parishes and other dioceses.

It was no use for him to remain in the background, since he was the one who directed, the one who was listened to, the one who before all others was loved. His role, his very presence, was an affliction to anyone who sought to have an exclusively upper hand over the minds, the behavior, the assignments and the devotion of the Brothers. A secret impatience turned into antipathy and hostility. It is a good assumption that La Chétardye did not fathom the depths of his own subconscious. He entertained no shameful thoughts, no blind rages, no hateful intentions. When Blain, without naming him, points him out in a rather explicit way as "the enemy of the servant of God", we imagine a frightful, almost apocalyptic, shadow. And by so much mystery, Blain was injuring the reputation of a good and venerable priest under the pretext of respecting him.

It is better to come immediately to the point: when the pastor decided to remove De La Salle, he thought he had nothing in mind but the good of his parish and the interests, certainly not of the Institute as a whole, but of the Brothers in charge of the St.Sulpice schools. He was in entire agreement with his predecessors, La Barmondière and Baudrand. He was pruning and clipping, as in a formal garden, a tree that had gotten ``out of hand'' and had overgrown the wall.

Separated from the Founder, the Christian Brothers at St.Sulpice would have become a parochial Community. A cleric chosen by the Archbishop on the pastor's nomination would be their Superior. An appropriate rule, less severe than the rules observed at Rheims and at Vaugirard, would enable them to be dedicated to the duties of their state without excessive fatigue and premature illnesses. Recruited locally, and provided for by contributions from the presbytery or by the gifts and legacies of parishioners, they would never leave the schools except, either in old age or in infirmity, with assistance from those who had benefited from their services. With the religious schoolteachers from other parishes, they would have nothing in common except the vocation and most of their teaching methods, and with whom they would retain good fraternal relations.

It was to this notion, diametrically opposed to De La Salle's, that Father La Chétardye would come after five years of thought, experience and conflict - at first imperceptibly, and then in a veiled way, and finally openly.

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He began with a lofty gesture which would unleash a series of events. Visiting the ``enclosure'' at Vaugirard, he was moved by the extreme poverty of the Brothers. The buildings, dilapidated in 1691, were practically uninhabitable in 1696. Besides, the space was too small for a growing community. Why not move to Paris? De La Salle was aware that a beautiful piece of property lay unused at the edge of the

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Sulpice the base of operations for his foundation, which was true enough, but it annoyed the Society. What emerges from the entire context, however, is that the Founder meant at the same time to safeguard his own independence and that is why Lesschassier wished that St.Sulpice not ``get involved'' with the ``business'' of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

Faubourg St.Germain, near the Luxembourg Gardens and the Monastery of the Discalsed Carmelites. It included a 576 ft. frontage on Vaugirard Street, with an average depth of 640 ft., [39] or approximately 175 m. 40 + 195 m. and bordered on the Rue Neuve Notre Dame des Champs. Blain describes it as ``set back and isolated, big, spacious, closed off on all sides by huge gates and a fine, circular wall and ornamented by courts and huge gardens''.[40] To the south lay Mont Parnasse and the open countryside. The Sisters of the Annunciation of St.Nicholas of Lorraine had once occupied the property and gave it the name of ``Our Lady of the Ten Virtues''. It was also called the ``La Grande Maison''. After the Sisters of the Annunciation, several groups of women seem to have shared it or to have followed one another in the place: the Sisters of Death, Sisters of the Holy Spirit, and the Sisters of St.Sulpice. [41] (The place was empty and the owner was asking only 1600 livres a year for it. But that sum was still too much for a man of De La Salle's poverty. La Chétardye, however, promised to increase the annual subsidy for the Brothers in his schools by 600 livres and to obtain the regular payment of 400 livres more from a wealthy person. The Founder succumbed to the pastor's solicitations. He drew up a lease, and, on the 18th of April, 1698, the novitiate was moved to the ``Grande Maison''.

Madame Voisin, who joined her benefactions to those of La Chétardye, gave seven thousand livres for the purchase of the property. Other gifts enabled De La Salle immediately to increase the size of the former nuns' chapel. The Bishop of Chartres came to bless it, as well as the house, on the 16th of June, 1698. St. Cassian, a schoolteacher whose martyrdom was celebrated in one of Prudentius' hymns, became the patron of the chapel, and, by extension, of the ``Motherhouse'' generally.

The Institute's entire personnel could have easily been housed in the new quarters. At that time, the directors of the schools and their aides made up a total of some fifty Brothers, to which would have to be added the Founder's immediate circle, including the Director of the Motherhouse community, the Master of Novices, the Director of Studies, the Procurator, the Secretary, an Infirmarian, and, no doubt, a few Brothers in ``brown robes''. [42]

In 1698 the Master of Novices was Brother Jean-Henri who, after an exemplary life, died the following year, and was succeeded by the stern Brother Michel. As Director of studies, De La Salle chose Jean Jacquot, who was twenty six years of age, already twelve years in religious life and nearly as many in teaching.

For the management of temporal affairs, the Founder discovered a co-worker no less precious of his kind, a man of good sense, conscientious, methodical, diligent and dedicated, Brother Thomas (Charles Frappet). He was about twenty-eight years old when he was given the responsibilities of ``Procurator''. According to the Register, he was born on the 18th of December, 1670, and he was a member of the Institute since the 5th of August, 1690. He made perpetual vows, but the date on which he made that commitment is not recorded. He had won De La Salle's complete confidence. And beyond that, he had succeeded in winning the admiration and respect of La Chétardye, no mean accomplishment. To Brother Thomas, the pastor of

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39 .approximately 175.40 m + 195m.

40 .Blain, Vol. I, pg. 360.

41 . Essai historique sur la Maison-Mère, pg. 35-36.

42 . It would seem, according to Blain, Vol. I, pg. 325, that there were Servant Brothers at Vaugirard in 1692. They were distinguished from the rest by their brown habit until 1810. See below, Part Three, chap. iii, pg. 538.

St.Sulpice was ever gracious. In fact, if we correctly understand some of Blain's charges, he was planning to subordinate the Procurator/Bursar to himself and to make him the superior of the Brothers at St.Sulpice, and through him to administer and control the Community. However, Brother Thomas remained faithful to the Founder. Nevertheless, since Brother Thomas did have La Chétardye's ``ear'', De La Salle might have been found, in difficult moments, practicing a guileless diplomacy by sending the Procurator to the presbytery, where, in search of the necessary subsidies, he never met with a refusal. The Procurator's name is met with in important negotiations which, between 1718 and 1725, would guarantee the future of the Christian Brothers.

Surrounded by veneration and full of years, the good and faithful servant died on the 24th of February 1742 in Paris, ``in the house of the Holy Spirit'', on the Rue Neuve Notre Dame des Champs, near the very place where a little less than a half-century earlier he had set out on his humble but sensitive functions.

Brother Antony (Jean Partois) became the Superior's secretary. The Brother Infirmarian was named Brother Jean Chrysostom: in 1705 De La Salle sent him to Chartres to care for the teachers stricken by the plague. However, the infirmarian himself fell victim to his own zeal. In 1707 his name was given to the postulant, Pierre Blin, a native of the Faubourg St.Sever in Rouen; but the Register does not mention the first Jean Chrysostom.

No disciple of St.John Baptist de La Salle between the years 1698 and 1703 failed to visit St. Cassian's. The Brothers in Paris came there on their days off, as they had to Vaugirard; the others were called there for group-retreats. The novices made up the bulk of the permanent residents. Their number at the time the place was taken over seems to have maintained the level of the preceding years; and we have seen that during those years the number was thirty-five. Simon Doncourt notes that as of the 1st of December,[43]

> " thirty-five or forty young men who were being educated exclusively to become good schoolteachers and to instruct poor children in a Christian manner and without any charge, in Paris as well as in other provinces of the kingdom."

It is difficult to understand why Père Guibert [44]assumes that, besides the novices, there were also rural schoolteachers. The thirty five at St. Cassian's seem to have been a homogeneous group, similar to the group of thirty-five at Vaugirard. ``To educate (them) exclusively for school'' does not mean to prepare them for the priesthood. And, according to the Brothers' Rule, they were intended to teach, not village children, but the poor in Paris and in the provinces, and in ``Christian and tuition-free'' schools. To consider Simon Doncourt's testimony as proof of the founding of a second ``normal school'' is thoughtlessly misleading.

According to the information gathered by the Sulpician chronicler,[45] on the 1st of December, 1698 De La Salle's Brothers were teaching 1,000 pupils in four schools: on Rues Princesse, Du Bac, St.Placide and Vaugirard . The school on Rue St.Placide was opened a year earlier by La Chétardye for the children in the neighborhood called ``Incurables'', from the name of the hospital which is today called ``Laennec''. Like the initial foundation in Rue Princesse, it was subdivided into five classes. The school on Rue Du Bac, where the population was less dense, needed only three classes. The fourth school on Rue Vaugirard, which De La Salle had

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43 . (Remarques historiques, Vol. III, pg. 169.

44 . Guibert, pg. 299

45 . Remarques historiques, Vol. III, pg. 167

started on his own initiative, was located in the ``Grande Maison'' itself. It had only a single class, since dwellings in the immediate vicinity were few. At the same time that the Founder was bestowing a charitable service on the neighborhood in which he lived, he was also providing the young Brothers at St.Cassian's with a practical opportunity for exercising educational methods before leaving the novitiate.

In 1699 the pastor of St.Sulpice found money for a fifth educational foundation---this one on Rue Fosses-Monsieur-le-Prince, not far from Porte-Saint Michel. Thus the system of Christian schools spread over this huge parish on the Left Bank; and in this way the Brothers, seekers after souls like the priests, would save successive generations for the Church and would contribute to that region of Paris that was St.Sulpice and St.Germain-des-Près a look that it would preserve for more than two centuries and traces of which have still not been obliterated.

Joachim La Chétardye never recoiled from a good work, whatever its cost or effort, the moment he understood it to be a labor and a planting in the field in which he was the master and the head of the household. According to Simon Doncourt, it was still in the year 1698 that, shortly after the ``Grande Maison'' had been furnished, James II, the former king of England, seeking someone to assume the education of fifty Irish boys, the sons of men who had been persecuted and exiled because they were loyal to his cause, the pastor of St.Sulpice, acting with Louis XIV and the Archbishop, prevailed upon De La Salle to accept these young men. The author of Historical Notes writes:

> They have lodged with the Brothers of the charity schools a rather large number of poor Irish boys driven from their country for the Faith and who must be generally provided for in everything, and to whom hospitality must be extended to the full and toward whom the very letter of Our Lord's word must be practiced: Hospes eram, et collegistis me.[46]

The parish Charity Office assumed the material costs for these boarders at St.Cassian's. De La Salle, with the cooperation of the Brothers, added the responsibility of the boys' intellectual and religious education to the duties of their other undertakings. James II, who was living wholly on the bounty of the King of France, paid his debt to the Institute and to St.Sulpice as a poor man who was also affectionate: he came personally to St. Cassian's to visit and to thank the teachers.

For the Founder it was only an interlude, or, more precisely, additional work, however temporary. Once the fifty Irish youths were educated, jobs were found for them by the royal government, and they had no successors. But the value of this fleeting experience was something more than anecdotal: it unveiled De La Salle's genuinely universal vocation as an educator and acted as a remote prelude to his initiatives at St.Yon.

La Chétardye's hand figured in an effort of a different nature whose duration was somewhat longer, but which was particularly rich in its boundless future. Blain, who elsewhere makes the pastor the target of veiled accusations, in the present incident pays him honest and sincere tribute. He writes:

> Ingenious concerning everything that could contribute to the education of the poor,(Chétardye) conceived the idea of establishing a Sunday school for those young people whom the obligation of earning a living occupied during the rest of the week and left only Sundays free for their instruction. Nobody except De La Salle was prepared to put a plan of this nature into effect. And so, by necessity as well as by inclination, Father La Chétardye commissioned him to do so.[47]

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46 . Ibid., loc. cit., pg. 170.
47 . Blain, Vol. I, pg. 389.

The term ``Sunday school'' was, as we have observed,[48] already in use. In this connection Blain cites the Flemish canonist, Van Espen, who stated that this kind of school was established to teach catechism, but added that in terms of the prescriptions of the Council of Malines, it was appropriate to teach the children who frequented them how to read and write.[49]

What was original about St.Sulpice's ``Sunday School'' was its plan and the scope of its program. Of course, it did not reject illiterate children, poor youngsters who made their living without having had the time to attend the charity schools. It goes without saying that catechism was the essential subject matter and an obligatory one; and it was accompanied by ``spiritual exhortation''. But the new school, which deserved its name of ``Christian Academy'', appealed principally to older boys, provided they were not ``over twenty years of age''.[50] These adolescents wished to finish the elementary instruction they had been receiving before they had entered prematurely into the workplace. What De La Salle offered them at St.Cassian's was genuine technical instruction, adapted to their professional needs and capable of improving their condition: courses in geometry, drawing, and architecture were provided by Brothers seriously prepared for these special tasks. [51]

* * * *

The ``Christian Academy'' at St. Sulpice opened in 1699. Simon Doncourt assures us that it did a great deal of good and effected a profound change ill the behavior of young people. But it was the occasion of many worries for De La Salle: the teachers who directed it abandoned the Institute in about 1702; and it was very difficult to replace them, since the Brothers whom the Superior had sounded out for this purpose, imagined that by becoming more learned, they, like their predecessors, would succumb to the temptations of pride. They went so far as to write a full report on the subject which, submitted by their leader to the judgment of Père La Chetardye, displeased the pastor exceedingly. He accused the Founder of having himself written the report; but meeting nothing but Dc La Salle's denials, he was so carried away as to call the Founder a liar. The target of this abuse could only utter: "And so, Sir, with such a lie on my conscience, I go to say Holy Mass." Finally put back on its feet, the "Sunday School" had its imitators. The Superior of the Brothers, in his exodus from St.Sulpice, took the idea with him; but it disappeared during the legal action that the Writingmasters brought against the Founder. There seems to have been a totally abortive effort to reestablish it in 1709. Nevertheless, La Chetardye's idea, so boldly realized by St.John[I3] Baptist de La Salle, would not perish. Surviving in the memory of the Brothers, it would inspire them (in more recent times) with the creation of a post-scholastic apostolate among the young.

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He did me too much good for me to speak ill of him;
He did me too much evil for me to speak well of him.

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48 . See above, Part One, chap. ii, pg. 24.
49 . Blain, Vol. I, pg. 390.

16. Blain, Vol. I, pg. 390.

50 . Ibid., pg. 389.
51 . Ibid., pg. 435 et seq.

If Dc La Salle had not pardoned offenses to the point of heroism, he might have adopted toward La Chétardye these sentiments of Corneille toward Richelieu. He never ceased to cooperate in the most intelligent and disinterested way in the parochial apostolate. As Director of the charity schools, preceptor to the Irish pupils, and organizer of the Christian Academy, he was one of the most tireless workers for the conversion of minds and the renewal of morals. His remarkable character influenced laity and clergy alike. And while he was not a member of the society founded by Father Olier, he was, through his residence, activities, and lines of spiritual affiliation one of the pure glories of St..Sulpice. Supporting rather than stifling him, recognizing his legitimate independence, and contributing to the rapid rise of the Institute throughout the realm, Joachim La Chetardye might have multiplied his own merits; since his value as a man, his authority, his power, his rank in the Church and in the State enabled him to playa great role in the history of popular education. A gesture on his part might have definitively established the "Motherhouse" of the Brothers of the Christian Schools at the "Grande Maison" on Rue Vaugirard at the Rue Neuve-Notre-Dame-des-Champs, with its wheels of temporal and spiritual government, with its recruitment of novices and junior novices, with its scholasticate and its training school. The Founder might have lived in such a Motherhouse, not (God help us!) as a rival of the pastor of St.Sulpice, nor as a rebel (nor as a vassal, either), but as a friend and collaborator in an alliance between equals for a common good. In such a way might have developed the parallel destinies of the "Society" and the "Institute".

Human will disposed otherwise. And because God's will was not compelling, it allowed events to unfold, while De La Salle experienced the sufferings and supported the trials of Job. And, then, ever heeded by the Saint, Providence transposed the life and the work of the Founder on to a new plane.

In the relations between La Chétardye and De La Salle there arose the critical, the catastrophic, moment. To situate ourselves in that moment we have the testimony of a contemporary witness: the very long letter written at the beginning of 1703 by Père Charles de La Grange, pastor of Villiers-Ie-Bel-en-Parisis, to Père Guiart, pastor of St.Peter’s in Laon. These two priests were friends of De La Salle. In 1682, Adrien Nyel had been received in Laon by Guiart. Between De La Grange and the Founder there existed a bond of common affection and similar interests in an excellent family in the former's parish, *The Selliers*. which in a very few years had supplied the Institute with five vocations, four brothers: Jean (Brother Dominic) probably in 1697, Simon (Brother Theodore) in 1700, André (Brother Pacomius) and Louis (Brother Gervais) in 1705; and finally their father, a simple farmer known for his piety, who, alone at home, resolved to join his sons and was employed at St. Yon as a cook and known as Brother Hilarion. Informed by the Brothers in Laon of the humiliations inflicted on their Founder, Guiart asked Charles de La Grange to go to Paris and investigate the situation and gather the details. The results of this personal inquiry make up the contents of this important letter. [20]

Père de La Grange accomplished his mission scrupulously and with undisguised emotion. A reading of his letter transports us back into the climate of the times and enables us to enter into the minds of the adversaries and of the disciples of a just man being persecuted, and indeed into his own mind, much more profoundly and much more candidly than the accounts of any of his biographers. After this testimony, which is corroborated by both Maillefer and Blain, the case is closed: one of the most

painful chapters in the early years of the Institute stands revealed. De La Grange writes:

> I was no less touched and surprised than yourself, my dear sir, by the news concerning Father De La Salle. Since I respect and esteem him no less than yourself, I have shared, and continue to share, all that one can of his suffering. I presumed to pay him a visit: it is impossiblc to be more edified by his demeanor, his firmness, his pcrfcct resignation and his complete abandonment t Providence. In speaking to you of his exceptional virtue, I tell you nothing new: your knowledge of his extraordinary merit is not just of yesterday.

What was there for people to criticize in such a man, serious, moderate, pleasant, conciliatory, humble and so manifestly supernatural? Could his beliefs or his conduct be suspect? Did his enemies think that he had access to circles dominated by Fenelon and still tinged with Quietism? There was nothing of the sort. La Chétardye's responsibility, his central role in the affair, the motives which set him in opposition to the Superior of the Christian Brothers, are thoroughly well-founded.[52]

> I saw My Lord, the Cardinal[21] and Père Paulet, amI I hope that with time, the Cardinal will revise the negative impression that people have given him of De La Salle. Quietism has nothing to do with it. He is accused simply of being too austere with his Brothers, of practicing, and of being excessively attached to, over-rigorous penances. His adversaries want the Cardinal to entertain the idea that the man is incapable of leadershjp, and, especially, that he is extraordinarily stubborn, and lives, and directs his Brothers exclusively by his own notions.
>
> As far as I am able to discover, his great crime is his failure to govern according to the mind of the pastor of St.Sulpicc, who would like to insert himself into the governance and the spiritual direction of the Brothcrs, and this is what De La Salle has, up to now, refused him.. . . If he were in agreement with the pastor, things would be better at the Archbishop's.

And the incident which precipitated the crisis- the pretext to set aside a troublesome Founder, to modify the government of the Institute and to subject the teachers in the Sulpician schools and their confreres in the "Grande Maison" to the control of the parochial clergy—and the immediate reaction of the Brothers, who were faithful to their Rule and loyal to their Founder, arc described in the following terms:

> Two or three novices left De La Salle's congregation and complained of the bad treatment they had received. The pastor of St.Sulpice exaggerated their charges, made fresh investigations, prepared a report and presented it to his Eminence. On the strength of this report, the Cardinal deputized Father Pirot, one of his Vicars-general, to make a visit to De La Salle's place and question the Brothers.
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> On a second visit, (the Brothers) were introduced, in the name of his Eminence, to Father Bricot as their Superior for temporal affairs. At the word 'superior' [53] the Brothers declared that they recognized no other superiors apart from His Eminence and De La Salle. TheVicar told them that they must obey His Eminence and, showing them the document signed by the Cardinal, that if they refused to obey, they would be punished as rebels. The Brothers replied that they greatly respected His Eminence, but that they could not resolve to accept any other superior besides De La Salle, that they would prefer to die rather than to have a superior other than him, and they were prepared to go to jail or into exile – to wherever it would please His Eminence to banish them – or to death itself.

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20. We do not have the original document, but it was completely transcribed during the apostolic proceedings initiated in the Archdiocese of Paris for the beatification of John Baptist de La Salle, and the archives of the Brothers of the Christian Schools possesses a very ancient copy. Father Guibert quoted from it extensively on page 338 (el sq.) of his biography of Dc La SalIe

53 Lagrange wrote 'temporal' but all the rest of his letter and the entire context shows very clearly that the Archbishop's Office left De La Salle with no authority except that of confessor.

The vehement and spontaneous objections were a sufficient revelation to Père Pirot that, in his all too hasty inquiry, his good faith had been betrayed, that the complaints lodged by the "two or three novices" found no echo among the other members of the Community, and that the only persons who could be challenged and found wanting were certain inferiors, specifically, Brother Michel, Director of novices and Brother Ponce, Director of the school on Rue Princesse (the latter professed at Vaugirard on the 26th of September, 1696).[54] Both were young and impetuous men who had mistreated the complainants during one of De La Salle's absences

Without retreating, the Vicar slackened his offensive and thought to obtain a victory by persuasion. His good-natured approach only encouraged the Brothers to reveal the love and admiration that bound them to the Founder

> The Vicar-general attempted to appease them and induce them to alter their resolve by representing the good qualities, both moral and physical, of the new superior; but the Brothers replied that De La Salle not only had all of these qualities hut many more excellent ones besides. And they began to make a list or them and to say, among other things, that he was gentle and benign to others, but harsh. and scvere on himsclf; that he neither commanded nor ordered thcm to do anything that he had not done or would not do himsclf, and that no one could give them anyone who could equal him, as well in his behavior as superior as in all his excellent virtues and qualities.

We can imagine what must have been the embarrassment of the Founder through all of this. His humility was put to a harsh test. His soul was torn between contrary feelings: he was distressed and anxious at the resistance put up by the Brothers to the Archbishop's decision; but with satisfaction he became aware that the Brothers' *non possumus* corresponded to their commitments:

> There would be no one either received among us nor selected as superior who is a priest . .. and we shall not have nor shall we admit any superior who is not associated with us and who has not made the same vows as we have.

By recalling the statement of the 7th of June, 1694, the Brothers saved the work of the Founder in spite of himself.

> While the Brothers gave these replies, De La. Salle was present, urgently beseeching them on his knees, with tears in his eyes and hands joined together, to submit to My Lord's orders, which were being conveyed to them by the Vicar-gcneral but they replied that in all other things they would obey him, but on this point they could not and would not obey him. The Vicar-general. seeing that he could not prevail over their thinking and that he could not make them obey the orders of the Cardinal, whether by his own arguments or by the emphasis given them by De La Salle, but that, on the contrary, he only irritated them further and strengthened their resolution, left with Father Bricot, the would-be new superior, covered with shame and confusion, not only from the meeting with the Brothers but from their house as well. Dc La Salle accompanied them to the door with tears in his eyes at witnessing the disobedience and the stubbornness of his Brothers (if one might so describe their zeal and their affection for De La Salle, and their firmness and constancy in preserving him in his position as Superior). For he wanted to be relieved of leadership - something that would be for him an extraordinary pleasure and satisfaction..

Doubtless, the episcopal order gratified the Founder's persistent wish "to step down" and gave him the joy of being brought low and humbled. And this kind of personal "satisfaction" probably made him more vehement in arguing against the Brothers and against himself in the presence of Père Pirot. Naturally, any posture of rebellion horrified him; and he foresaw what deplorable consequences it could involve. While admiring the Brothers' filial affection, the Vicar-general must report their formal disobedience to the Archbishop: Cardinal Noailles could not allow his authority to be slighted or defied.

> The Vicar-general was no sooner back at the Archbishop's office than he made public, and praised, the zeal and arrection that the Brothers had shown for De La Salle, telling the

54 Written on this date in the “Vow Book”

> Cardinal: 'If all persons living in Community, monks and nuns, were as united to, and loving toward, their superiors as are the Brothers to Père De La Salle, there wouldn't he so many disorders in Paris.

And then he recounted what happened, that the I3rothers wouldn't listen to any arguments regarding the order to receive a new supenor:

> Which angered him so much that, presently, he scnt to the palace to find out what remedy could be applied to this affair, and to punishthe Brothers for their want of submission to his orders.

> Some time later the Vicar-general came to tell De La Salle that, if he did not make the Brothers obey the Cardinal's orders, he had My Lord's permission to send him into exile. De La Salle replied that the Vicar was quite well aware of the entreaties he had made and that they did no good. As for his exile, he was quite prepared to go where it would please His Eminence to send him; that what consoled him was that he found God everywhere and that it would be a pleasure for him to suffer, and, that, as regards food and clothing, he couldn't have less than what he had.

In appearance, the situation was extremely dangerous. Would the Institute collapse? The threat, however, held no terror for a man who had sacrificed everything. And, then, since the Brothers, were determined not to distinguish their lot from that of their Founder, it was surely the pastor of St.Sulpice who, on the point of seeing the departure of his schoolteachers, was in danger of becoming the victim.

> Thc Vicar-Gcneral, marvelling at his selflessness and detachment left . .. without having executed his threat. Learning these things, the Brothers were dctermined to pass both day and night in prayer, without eating or drinking, imploring Heaven's aid in their anxieties and afflictions. On the following day, they dccidcd to leave the schools and abandon their mission. in Paris. As they were working toward the implementation of their resolve, the news was brought to the pastor of St.Sulpice, who immediately sought out De La Salle and pleaded with him do dissuade the Brothers and prevent them from leaving. At the same time, the Cardinal sent to Parlement to order not to pronounce sentence of banishment, but to leavc matters as they were.

And so, there was a truce. In fact, the Brothers were the victors. But it was important to find a peaceful arrangement thatwould save face and allow the Archhishop's office to have the last word.

> …There was a rather considerable space of time during which De La Salle and his Brothers were left alone. However during the interval, there were several opinions and interviews between De La Salle and some of his leading Brothers at the Vicar-general's, and several priests were sent as envoys of the Vicar-general or of the pastor of St.Sulpice La De La Salle's residence, who spoke and conferred with the Brothers individually,

We know from Blain that Father La Chétardye's representative was a priest of his own Community, Père Madot, who later became the Bishop of Chalon-sur-Saone. It was Father Madot who thought up the compromise, a mongrel solution, referred to at the end of Père de La Grange's letter, and preserved in the single document of the ecclesiastical inquiry:

> Some eight or ten days after, which was the ninth of that month,[55] the Vicar-general and Père Bricot came to De La Salle's residence, called the Brothers together and made endless promises-among others, that there would be no innovations, that they would always retain their rules, that De La Salle would not be taken away from them; but that they must obey and accept the said Father as their superior, and that the said Father would not visit them except once a month. They should receive him on these conditions, or at least not resist him as they did the first time; and if the proverb is true that silence is consent, then they have indeed consented to the election of the said Father, since not one of the Brothers said a word.

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55 Guibert thinks that the exact date is 9th January 1703, because, according to Blain, Bricot was introduced into the "Grande Maison" on the First Sunday of Advent, 1702. There is no objection to fixing the date that way.

Charles de La Grange grasped what was anomalous and annoying about this compromise. Père Bricot would retain his title, while De La Salle would not recover his. The nominal superior would continue without authority, while the effective leader would remain under the cloud of dismissal.

> That is where things are at present (writes De La Grange). Nobody thinks that they will last, but people hope that there will be no repercussions. A first step has been taken, and the wish is that it endure for a while. All that can be done is to take advantage of favorable opportunities to disabuse His Eminence and to display De La Salle's qualities to advantage. This is what I've been working at and what I shall pursue on the occasion that Providence will help me to bring about. I owe him this good turn, and the part that you have played commits me still further to behave myself with greater zeal.

* * * *

Unfortunately, "it had repercussions". Not because of Bricot, who showed up in the Community only once and who had the good sense quickly to take another post, less "honorific", but better suited to his zeal. The man who refused to lay down his arms was La Chétardye who had a successor to Bricot appointed. Maillefer and Blain are silent as to the identity of this priest, but they have told the story of his intrigues. By breaking away from De La Salle and submitting to their "true" superior the Brothers would please the pastor of St.Sulpice and guarantee their future. Such was the substance of the conversation pursued in the corridors by the "true" superior.

In order to clarify the situation the Founder sought to resign his office of confessor. Thus stripped, who would suspect him of retaining any part in the government of the Brothers? Cardinal Noailles refused to countenance such a sacrifice, which indicated that he disapproved of La Chétardye's designs. But his impressionable and indecisive nature preferred to sustain the status quo. It was impossible for the Community not to suffer as the result of this discord. A wicked spirit was abroad, and there were betrayals and defections. And new vocations were scarce. However, one candidate came to the "Grande Maison" at that time, like a Providential message: the young man who introduced himself to John Baptist de La Salle on the 10th of February, 1703 would, as Brother Barthélemy, become the Founder's successor.

In order to set up the headquarters of his Institute in the place, the Founder had been wanting to purchase the "Grande Maison" , which he had been leasing for the past five years. At one point, he had been counting on a legacy that would have put the necessary capital in his hands. The biographers speak of "secret manoeuvres" that diverted the money from its destination. Everything was conspiring to force De La Salle to abandon the parish of St. Sulpice. A new landlord was understood to have the free disposal of the building. However, he kept the Brothers on for another six years, until they could find another place to live.

On the 20th of August,1703 De La Salle moved to the Faubourg St Antoine, along with his novices and administrative personnel. Nothing was changed regarding the fate of the schools in St.Sulpice and the house on Rue Princesse. La Chétardye maintained them totally at his own expense. The bonds between the Brothers and the parish and the Founder were not broken; he returned there on several occasions and for more or less lengthy periods of time to be among the Brothers. But the mind of the pastor remained hostile. Receptions were cold and thoughts were veiled. And it would happen that as generosity chilled and distrust grew, the schools and the teachers would feel the effects of the Founder's disfavor.

CHAPTER FIVE

De La Salle's Lawsuits and A Setback for Country Schoolteachers

We enter now upon the most active, as well as the most productive period in the life of the Founder and the period of growth in the number of schools. Paris had been a testing ground. Discarded, if not exiled, from St.Sulpice, De La Salle took refuge in Rue Charonne, which was at that time in the parish of St.Roch, where he was openly exposed to attacks by the Writing masters and by the minions of the Grand Cantor. Two successive betrayals on two different occasions undermined the very useful and imaginative ``Seminary for rural schoolteachers''. But at the same time, the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, envied, attacked and violently shaken to its foundations, and condemned in the courts, became known throughout the kingdom. While in Paris its future was in question, it took root in the provinces. Bishops, pastors and devout lay people pleaded with the Founder for teachers in favor of the poor and of the common people, and eventually (in Normandy) even of a middle class clientele. Annual gifts and legacies endowed these schools. The civil power had not remained indifferent to the progress of Christian education: local officials lent their support to founders, and the king himself did not refuse his largess. In vain did obstacles from special and traditional interest groups grow from year to year, backed by Jansenist prejudice and rancor: the current that favored the Brothers was stronger and prevailed. And, with the new century, it accelerated, sweeping along apostolic persons who had pity on the masses and it induced the noblest thoughts of a generation in which Christians were still numerous, in which ``lovers of mankind'' sprung up and where people sought to be ``human''. It harmonized with the policies of the royal family and with the proselytism of an aging Louis XIV. The new Institute found its place in the order of things, in a Church which was waiting for it, which was not surprised by its special form, in a State whose dynamic and laws were Catholic, and in a society on the road to change.

That in this great backwash St.John Baptist de La Salle should have been harshly, fearfully, shaken is both explained by history and justified by the plans and purposes of Providence. He was the more persecuted in that he was the more genuinely unimpeded, more open to the future, and more victorious. Like all the saints, he would die as much a conqueror as a victim.

What first attracts our attention are his anxieties, his apparent defeats. It is impossible, without courting confusion, to view the various faces of events at a single glance. And in order to avoid false judgments, it is necessary to pay attention to temporal concurrences. The teachers' union's offensive against De La Salle, following the skirmish of 1690, to which we have already alluded, and the running gun-battle of 1699, unfolded almost uninterruptedly from February, 1704 until October, 1706. The second seminary for rural schoolteachers (assuming that the first one was in Rheims) was opened in the Faubourg St.Marcel in 1699 and collapsed in 1705; the third seminary opened in St.Denis-in-France at the beginning of 1709 and disappeared in 1712. These were the shadows and the storms, the dark skies, especially in the years following the departure from St.Sulpice. From 1702 to 1712 in Paris De La Salle's situation continued painful and precarious. The veil of mourning which the War of the Spanish Succession caste over the French nation seemed to weigh heavily upon the man who wished to experience the people and their wretchedness at close

quarters. St.John Baptist de La Salle, too, had his Ramillies, Oudenardes and his Malplaquets.

But, before Denain, he had his hopeful, limpid days. In 1699 the schools in Chartres were founded, followed in 1700 by the school in Calais, and in 1701, the school in Troyes. In 1703 the opening of the first school in Avignon preceded the move from the St. Cassian's. The year 1705, which had seen the Founder, wandering between Rues Charonne, Princesse and St. Honoré, distressed by Vuyart's betrayal, and beset by the Writing masters was the same year in which he set the Brothers up in Normandy and in Bourgogne, when the foundation in Avignon began to jell, and it was the glorious year in which the novitiate was transferred and a boarding school was established on the St. Yon estate in Rouen. Gabriel Drolin was already in Rome and proclaiming by his presence in the City his superior's fidelity to the Holy See and preparing for his mission by a modest attempt at a tuition-free school.

While, in 1706, the Writing masters pursued their bitter quarrel against a rival who had been tracked down, encircled and in all probability at bay, while the Parlement in Paris struck a final blow against the accused by upholding the Grand Cantor's harsh judgment, and while the schools at St.Sulpice had been deserted for several months, Marseilles was welcoming the Brothers.

In 1707 there were foundations in Mendes, Valréas, Alès and Grenoble. The southern provinces, and especially the regions where public officials and bishops were struggling with Protestantism, presented De La Salle's cohorts with a vast field for action and personal sacrifice. Soon the Superior, who had selected St.Yon for his headquarters, would have to share the immediate control of the various groups with two ``Visitors''. In the negotiations he conducted with the Bureau for the Poor in Rouen he unhesitatingly assumed the nearly total responsibility for four charity schools.

The frightful year of 1709, during which France was prey at once to military defeat, invasion and famine, might have presented difficulties to the man of God. Lacking funds in Normandy, he was obliged to recall his novices to Paris and to beg alms for them from a variety of benefactors. At certain moments he was in extreme distress; he was also afraid that a number of his Brothers might die of scurvy; and in the Community he detected murmurings and cabals, a revival of the ``separatist'' intrigues, the inspiration and encouragement for which were traceable to the presbytery of St.Sulpice. But he never lost courage. In spite of delicate circumstances, the business at St.Denis was successfully concluded.

The pattern formed an ever ascending curve: in 1710 the Brothers were in St.Louis' parish in Versailles, in full view of the king, in Boulogne-sur-Mer and in Moulins. In 1711 the Founder visited the southern schools, Avignon and Marseilles, and he opened a school in the market-town of Vans. But with the year 1712 we come to the melancholy ``Clement'' lawsuit, the long sojourn in Provence, Languedoc and Dauphiné and the second to last phase of an existence so crisscrossed with trials that, on a day in May, 1716, De La Salle, strolling the pathways at St.Yon spoke as follows to two friends (who repeated the story to Blain):

> I tell you, sirs, that if God, showing me the good that this Institute would accomplish, had also unveiled the sufferings and the crosses which would accompany it, I would have lost courage, and, far from assuming responsibility for it, I would not have dared to touch it with the tip of my finger. Exposed to frustration, I experienced persecution at the hands of several prelates, even from those from whom I expected help. My own children, even those whom I begot in Jesus Christ, whom I cherished with the greatest tenderness, whom I cultivated with the greatest care and from whom I expected the greatest service arose up against me and to the

> crosses which come from without added those which come from within, which are the most painful. In a word, if the hand of God had not been extended to support this edifice in a visible way, it would have been buried in its own ruins a long time ago. City magistrates combined with our enemies by supporting with their authority the efforts of the latter to destroy us. Since our work offended the schoolmasters, in each one of them we met an open and irreconcilable adversary, and, united together in a single body, frequently they armed the powers of the world to destroy us. Nevertheless, in spite of all their efforts the edifice has survived, although so often slipping toward its ruin; this is what causes me to hope that it will endure and that, finally victorious over persecution, it will contribute a service to the Church that it has a right to expect from it.[56]

It hardly needs to be noted that this rather redundant eloquence bears the trademark of the good Canon who had an appetite for practicing the historian's art in the style of Livy. But Blain has drunk at the spring reflections which have preserved their flavor of simplicity, modesty and candor. ``Prelates",``spiritual sons", ``magistrates", and ``school masters" - they all name so many things we have seen, and that we shall meet with again, along the most painful roads travelled by the Founder.

The house that John Baptist de La Salle came to occupy on the 20th of August, 1703 (``rather uncomfortable", according to his biographer)[57] had the advantage in these difficult days of situating him in a solitary place, far from the hostility and inquisition that had been directed at him. It was located on Rue Charonne, ``near the convent of the Nuns of the Cross". The city stopped at the St.Antoine Gate: beyond was the suburb with a life of its own, its popular and rural appearance, and abbeys and monasteries that spread vast zones of silence among the private family dwellings. St.Marguerite's chapel[58]supplied ``support" (according to a note in Jouvin Rochefort's map) to the parish church of St.Paul that was separated from suburbs by the Bastille and a circular fortification.

De La Salle got off on the right foot with his new pastor by seeking and obtaining permission for his community (reduced to a few Brothers) and his novitiate (very small) to huddle together in the shadow of the monasteries. It was to be a temporary haven. The Founder was uncertain about the future: he had not entered into a lease and he did not seek to build a chapel. There remains hardly a trace of his stay in this neighborhood: in 1848 the house he occupied belonged to a certain Ledru-Rollin. During the Second Empire the Christian Brothers taught classes here to the children in the parish of St.Marguerite.

The Dominican Sisters of the Cross became the benefactresses of their poor neighbor. Having learned of his poverty, they sent him help in kind and in money. Even after he had left Rue Charonne, they did not interrupt their good offices; once again, in 1709, De La Salle, in extreme destitution, sent to the Sisters ``of the Cross" to ask for food. As a rule, he said Mass in their Convent. But in gratitude, he also agreed (against his practice) to hear the nuns' confessions.

Those of the Brothers who accompanied him to Rue Charonne taught the small boys in the neighborhood, and once again started up Sunday school lessons for the older boys. In this way the pastor's welcome and the parishioners' hospitality were compensated; and what had been a swarm once again became a hive.

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56 . Blain, Vol. I, pg. 358

57 . *Ibid*. loc. cit., pg. 5

3 Built in 1625 by Antony Fayet, pastor of St.Paul's and enlarged in 1669, the chapel was developed as a parochial church in 1712. Jean-Baptist Goy was its first pastor and strove to adorn and transform St Margurete's

Over a period of nearly four years another of Paris' suburbs benefited, along with the schools in St.Sulpice, from the great educator's initiatives. Michel Lebreton, pastor of St.Hypolytus, had initially obtained two Brothers from De La Salle ``to teach catechism, reading and writing to poor boys''. [59] And then, inspired by purposes still more selfless and generous, and supported financially by a number of his clerical friends (among them Père Lemoyne), he decided to found in the Faubourg St.Marcel a seminary for schoolteachers on the model of the one in Rheims. It was the realization of one of the dearest wishes of the St.John Baptist de La Salle. A house was rented on Rue Ourcine, and young men came to be trained under the direction of Brother Nicolas Vuyart. ``They were fed, housed and educated without charge'', as in days gone by the students recruited by the country pastors, and ``nothing was asked of them except good will''.[60] The daily schedule and the program of studies seem to have been the same as the school the Founder had set up on the Rue Neuve, an idea of which he gives in his memorandum of 1689. Père Lebreton's tuition-free primary school was combined with the seminary; one of the classes was taught by the Brother who assisted the Director and the other by each of the student-teachers in turn.

Here the recruiters for the ``normal school'' were doubtlessly priests in the Parisian suburbs or even some of the pastors in the capitol who wished to endow their birthplaces with a school. The teachers trained at the institution on Rue Ourcine were of course intended to practice their profession outside of Paris, in the rural communes, or in any case, in the provinces. It appears as though some of them entertained the thought (or the inclination) to remain together, in imitation of their professors, by some sort of religious bond. Such an hypothesis might be deduced from a letter (quoted by Canon Blain) written in 1719 by the pastor of St.Nicolas of Chardonnet, after De La Salle's death.

> I and the place of my birth are eternally obligated to him. He had the charity to train for me, in the Faubourg St.Marcel, four young men for the schools, who left his institution so well formed and so zealous that if they had found among the priests of the region, men capable of cultivating the excellent dispositions he had initiated in them, they would have established one of the most useful communities in the province.[61]

These schoolteachers whose talent and dedication merited such praise were the students of Nicholas Vuyart. Indeed, the Director of the Seminary had not disappointed De La Salle's expectations. In his new position he had remained the competent teacher and the irreproachable religious in whom for twenty years the Founder had placed his trust. When Blain declares that De La Salle ``was several times mistaken in his choice'' of leaders and compares him to St. Francis of Assisi who made the mistake of handing over the future of the Franciscan Order to Brother Elias, he is indulging in one of his usual exaggerations.[62]. True, Jean Henri was unable to maintain the seminary in Rheims, and by their inconsiderate action, Brothers Ponce and Michel precipitated the crisis of 1702. But, in their misadventures, allowances must be made for circumstances: their youth betrayed them, which is a self-correcting shortcoming; after all, at the outset of his work, the Founder was not dealing with a senate of wise old men.

Brother Nicolas' case, however, is more complex. Here we have a man at the height of his powers who, in 1684, 1691 and in 1694 participated in the most serious decisions and in the most secret consultations, and who had weighed his

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59 . 5 Madame Richer's memorandum, (National Archives, L 655), cited by Guibert, pg. 3
60 . Blain, Vol. I, pg. 365
61 . *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pg. 179
62 . *Ibid*., Vol. I, pp. 356-7

responsibilities and made irrevocable commitments. Doubtless, his was not a very lofty soul. De La Salle might have included him in that earliest generation of his followers who, like the Israelites of the Old Testament, remained too much involved with the physical world and too sensitive to earthly appearances. But Vuyart's was a sound mind and a heart untouched by evil. He was not ``pure gold", but neither was he ``base metal".

The pastor of St.Hyppolytus, who over several years had observed Nicolas at close quarters, held him in high esteem. Sensing the approach of his own end, and concerned with the future of his foundation, he settled on Nicolas Vuyart as his executor for the endowment he had made to ``the seminary". Actually was only a portion of the total sum required to operate the institution. The difference had been made up principally by a grant of 800 livres contributed by another benefactor.

Why had De La Salle not been named in the will? It seems that his name did enter into the lease drawn up on April 22, 1701 for the house on Rue Ourcine, after a period of occupancy under precarious circumstances.[63]. The explanation given was that, since the Institute, in the absence of ``Letters Patent", was not legally recognized, its Superior as such could not accept legacies. But he could do so as a private person, while remaining free, of course, to distribute the income to his schools. Thus, he was the owner of houses in Rheims and in Rethel; and thus, also, he received various legacies (the Bishop of Mende's, Père du Roure's, and Rogier's, etc.). Actually, it was only for contracts relative to foundations created, or to be created, in the Archdiocese of Paris (and even then, only after 1702) that De La Salle sought ``substitutes". The reason for this situation is clear: Cardinal Noailles' decision was never repealed. Officially and legally the Archbishop's notorious pronouncement notifying the Founder, ``Sir, you are no longer superior, I have provided your community with another…." was still in force. A testator who would make De La Salle the heir of funds that were obviously destined for the Parisian community could anticipate numerous lawsuits arising from natural heirs or on appeal by the nominal superior.

Lebreton's choice of Nicolas Vuyart was amply justified. He was giving to the Superior through his principal disciple. And it was in this way that the Superior understood the matter. De La Salle was dumfounded, then, when, after Lebreton's death (i.e, in the first months after 1705), discussing the use of the income with Brother Nicolas, the legal heir declared that he was not accountable to De La Salle and that without his aid he was quite capable of executing the will of the deceased. There are those who cry ``Avarice!", and think that the desire for money made Vuyart forget his most sacred oaths. That interpretation is misleading. The legacy was not turned aside from its intended purpose. There was no ``appropriation" on the part of the heir with a view to his own personal uses. Brother Nicolas, advised, perhaps, by De La Salle's enemies or, quite simply, by a lawyer, decided that the Director of the Seminary was a fit person to lay claim to and administer the funds destined for his institution.

Morally, he was certainly culpable; he seriously misunderstood the intentions of the donor and he betrayed the Superior whom he had sworn to obey. His fault, which under specious pretexts he at first hid even from himself, was not long in coming to light and becoming heavy with consequences.

The Seminary's second benefactor, who refused to cooperate with Vuyart, withdrew his pledge. Thus deprived of 800 livres a year, the institution could not long remain solvent. Further, as assistance was withheld, so was sympathy. People

63 . According to Ravelet, 1888 ed. The source of the information is not indicated

refused to entrust new student-teachers to a man under suspicion, who had broken with his past. Vuyart became bogged down in his own revolt, like a man who suddenly perceives the extent of his error and the reality of his crime, and who, stripped of illusions, refuses to change his mind but rather clasps his pride to his bosom, as though to a lifeline, meanwhile insisting that he does not have to seek forgiveness. Nicolas Vuyart abandoned his religious habit and was dispensed from his vows by diocesan authority. As a layman he continued to direct the school of St.Hippolytus, now opened to the children of the parish; his remarkable talents as a teacher continued to be appreciated; and it was here that Lebreton's legacy was to find its definitive use.

A few years later, time having done its work (abated pride and promoted repentance) Vuyart, according to De La Salle's biographers, sought readmission to the Institute. The Founder would have gladly accepted him. But the Brothers who had remained faithful were said to have thought that forgiveness for such a great sinner could not go so far as to explain his presence in the father's house without danger and without scandal to young vocations. The former Brother Nicolas survived the Founder, whose great hope and great affliction he had been. His last illness began the day after De La Salle's death, and, after five months of extreme suffering, he died at the end of September in 1719.

Vuyart's downfall, involving disaster for the second seminary for rural schoolteachers, occurred at the moment that the converging efforts of Writing masters and the elementary schoolteachers threatened in a very serious way the Parisian schools of the Christian Brothers.

From 1690 to 1699 the masters, chilled by their failure in the courts, had allowed the charity schools of St. Sulpice to grow and multiply. However, when they saw Chétardye cheerfully entering the fray, making the apostolate of the school one of the leading ideas of his incumbency, and, in the space of two years, opening new schools in the neighborhood of *Les Invalides* and of St.Michel's Gate, they were terrified and they decided to test the adversary's strength. The negotiations between the Cantor and the pastors which had been reaching a climax left the Writing masters fearful of the triumph of the charity schools. It was at the very least necessary to avert disaster and to strike a bold blow which would call attention to the existence and the rights of the corporation. In the Spring of 1699 several masters, certainly with the authority and, perhaps, with the cooperation of their attorneys invaded the quarters on Rue St.Placide and threw the classroom furniture into the street. An inquiry followed this summary action and claimed to have uncovered its motive: the Brothers were supposed to have received fees from some of their pupils; the charity school was therefore in reality a pay-school and thereby lost its special and privileged character, its reason for existing.

The pastor of St.Sulpice was in no mood to tolerate the effrontery of the Parisian pedagogues respecting his appointees, his buildings or his school children. The matter went all the way to the courts, and, at Chétardye's request, Madame Maintenon herself interceded with President Harlay:

> Since you are the protector of works of charity (she wrote him on July 3,1699) as well as the head of Parlement, I have no fear this day of making a recommendation to you in favor of the charity schools of St.Sulpice. There has never been anything more useful or more selfless. Nevertheless, the schoolmasters and schoolmistresses sometimes give them trouble, and while up to now they have lost every lawsuit they have brought, they frequently revive their attacks. I beseech you, sir, to obtain some measure of peace for the parish.[64]

64 *Correspondance administrative* de Louis XIV, Vol. IV, pg. 180,in ital *Documents inédits sur*

With this kind of support, De La Salle's case (which was an excellent one) was assured of success. He had only to invite the plaintiffs to supply proof of their accusation, which they could not do. As a consequence, they were forced to default and pay court costs. After a closure that had lasted three months, classes were resumed on Rue St.Placide.

Five years later when the struggle was reopened, the conditions were totally different. The Founder of the Brothers had left St.Sulpice and could no longer count personally on the protection of Chétardye. In a remote corner of the Faubourg St.Antoine he was like a castaway scavenging the debris of his own shipwreck. Without official title or fixed position, forsaken if not disowned, he had become something of an easy prey for anyone who wished to attack him - rather like an opportunity that was not to be missed. The Institute was still breathing. Its methods, the quality of its instruction, the growing popularity of its membership continued to conceal a formidable peril for its competitors. Its Sulpician schools were flourishing. And appeals from the provinces also testified to a tenacious, and nearly incredible vitality. To put the Institute out of commission it would have been necessary to take aim at its weakest point; and that would have been the most recent primary school, on Rue Charonne, founded by De La Salle himself, with the consent, but far from the watchful eye and the effective cooperation, of the pastor of St.Paul's. There was an effort to prove that this was not a genuine school for the poor and that it would have to be closed. Once that position was won, the manoeuvre might have a chance for success against all the Brothers' schools, not excluding ``the fortress St.Sulpice'', which was less jealously guarded and less certain of being effectively relieved.

What bouyed up the aggressors' hopes was the recent alliance concluded between the schoolmasters and the Writing masters. The two corporations had agreed upon a plan of campaign: each one acted on its own behalf, but on a common theme and in consort. The writers were accustomed to a war of trickery, which they had the leisure to learn in their eternal quarrels with other teachers and with the University itself. They had always presented a united front and skillfully employed the briars and thickets of the law and the legal procedures.

The overall accusation had to do with the clientele of tuition-free Christian schools. The claim was no longer being made, as it had been in 1699, that the Brothers demanded a fee for schooling. Resuming, rather, the arguments of 1690, but with stronger proofs, an effort was being made to compel the Brothers to confine their attention to only those poor who were inscribed on the lists of the Charity Bureau. Interminable investigations, conducted under the pretext of necessary supervision, harassed the Brothers in the exercise of their professional duties, spread disorder among the pupils, and wore out the patience of families. Under the burden of this sort of tyranny and an avalanche of successive condemnations, the work which had been inspiring fear in the competition might well have collapsed. And that was the ultimate objective that controlled and coordinated this series of attempts.

On the 4th of February, 1704, the Writing masters launched into action with a petition presented to the Lieutenant of police. Acting on the orders of this magistrate, two commissioners appeared at the school on Rue Charonne on the 7th to seize pens, notebooks, inkwells and handwriting models. They also left a guard over the two Brothers who, two days later, were summoned to appear in court. On the 22nd of February, an uncontested order declared the seized objects confiscated, condemned De La Salle and his associates to a fine of 50 livres and concluded that:

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l'histoire de France, cited by Guibert, pg. 298.

> he must not accept into the charity schools any but the children of fathers who were genuinely poor and that they should be taught only those things that were proportioned to the profession of their fathers.[65]

At the same time the elementary schoolmasters appealed to the Cantor, and, on the 14th of February they obtained what their allies had been seeking from the Lieutenant of police - a fine imposed upon the offender, the seizure of school supplies and, most importantly, the closure of the Brothers' schools.

It seems, however, that what was expected from this latter judgment was its moral rather than its legal consequence. It led up to the decision of the 22nd of February, and steps for its execution had to come from the Lieutenant of police.

Quite legitimately, De La Salle had recourse to the delaying tactics which were available to litigants. Through his spokesman, the lawyer Guellier, he asked for an amendment to the uncontested order, only to be found guilty once more, on the 30th of May. But in this way he gained three months.

Louis Lambert, who represented the writers, was exasperated by this sort of resistance and called for a vigorous prosecution and an increase in the fine. This was the purpose of a long report on the 7th of June, 1704, in which the case was set forth in its entirety:[11]

> M. de La Salle and several individuals of whom he is termed the superior have continued out of contempt for the decision of the 22nd of February and by an assault upon justice …..to accept in more than twenty schools maintained by them in different parts of the city and districts of Paris, all those who come, whatever their condition, means or parish.[66]

Louis Lambert thought that he had already abundantly proved the charge in a ``report'' filed with the Lieutenant of police, which contained:

> the names, conditions, and residences of a very large number of individuals who send their children to the said schools even though they are far removed from being in a condition of having recourse to charity.

Among the parents so pleased with the Brothers' teaching that they accepted the alms of a charity education for their sons, the representative listed:

> M. de la Roche, living on his income; Chevillot, Surgeon; Piquet, master wheelwright; Dorian, master locksmith and the owner of two houses in Paris; Arnault, wine-merchant; Levasseur, merchant grocer; Lequin, merchant goldsmith; Roger and Leveque, restaurateurs; Laronde, master surgeon – all very well-to-do people.

It is clear that De La Salle had acquired a solid reputation among the lower middle class, the artisans and the Parisian tradesmen, and that he had rather seriously breached the monopoly of the teaching corporations. "His duties" (as he expressed it) "offended the schoolmasters."" But what could he have done about it? The future is built upon the ruins of the past.

The writers' representative had the right to appeal to custom and to the claims of prior possession. These arguments might prevail for a time. But the day would come when individual interests would have to give way to public utility. Lambert was so acutely aware of this that, in order the better to defend the privileges of his clients, he brought the public treasury into play: "without their pupils", the masters would not be able to pay "their poll tax", they would find themselves "impotent to respond, as good and faithful subjects of the king, to their zeal for contributing to the needs of the state".

The Brothers won all the more sympathy for continuing to be primarily teachers of the poor, for making no distinctions among their pupils and for remaining

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65 . The text of the decree is quoted by Guibert, pg. 373, following the original in the National Archives, Y, 9413.

66. We obviously must read "twenty classes" scattered among the schools of St. Sulpice, Rue Charonne and the St. Marcel District.

wholly selfless with respect to all of them. In the eyes of the public the vows which they practiced with fidelity were their chief strength. Despairing of finding them individually at fault, their adversaries contrived, by the accusation of the 7th of June, to confuse them with other teachers whose consciences were less clear. It was a global accusation that demanded a collective condemnation, and a tactic that had always been useful.

> This enterprise (i.e.De La Salle's) is not the only one(Lambert declared) that has destroyed the plaintiffs' corporations. All those who-whether under the authority of the said Cantor of the church of Paris or otherwise maintain charity schools or foundations in parishes do them no less damage; they not only receive the poor of the parishes where they are established, but also the children of the solid middle class, merchants and artisans; the latter they single out by seating them in separate places and locations.

He cited only a single example of this "peculation"- that of "the said Desgoy and Dinval", who, in the parish of the Holy innocents, had an institution founded to admit the children of "poor ribbon-weavers" and apparently did not confine themselves to that clientele. The Writers insinuated (aiming, beyond the Desgoys and the Dinvals, at the Brothers, who were blameless) that such "peculations did not occur without self-interest, it being *probably* true that one never increases one's trouble" without expecting to be rewarded. "Thus", they concluded like the good sophists that they were, that "the poor for whom these schools were instituted are not those upon whom the teachers' attentions are poured out, but rather these other children.".

Against De La Salle and his associates (eighteen Brothers were named in the petition, among whom were Brothers Ponce, Nicholas, Ambrose, Antoine, Joseph and Jean) the lawyer sought a judgment for considerable damages plus interest "in favor of the corporation of Writingmasters": 500 livres "from each of the offenders", if they persist in teaching" any other than children whose fathers are genuinely poor", and 2,000 livres, over and above and "immediately" from De La Salle, for being guilty of failing to comply with the judgment of the 22nd of February, 1704.67

The Lieutenant of police, Voyer Argenson, immediately sent a new summons to the residence of the defendant, who had failed to appear at the Chatelet courtroom. On the llth of July the Writers received damages plus interest, reduced however to a tenth for each of the Brothers and to a twentieth for De La Salle's supplementary fine. The decision declared that there were grounds for suing middle-class and wealthy persons who send their children to the charity schools.

The pastors of St.Hippolytus and St. Martin of St. Marcel's Cloister, anxious to protect the Seminary for teachers that was still flourishing at this time, along with primary school annexed to it, thought that they should intervene. The case went to court once again. But the judge of the Chatelet modified the judgment only by making it more severe. The court now sought to prohibit

> the Brothers in the charity schools from living together or performing any corporate or commercial activity until they had obtained "Letters Patent." from the king and have them registered .

The prohibition was to remain a dead letter, since it coutradicted decisions taken by church authorities. The Community had been approved by the Archbishop, and its Parisian houses were placed under the protection of the pastors. The most that the Writing Masters could do was to require a strict application of the law relative to charity schools.

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67 **The authcnlicated copy exists in the Molherhouse Archives partially quoted by Lucard, *A nnales,* Vol.1, pp. 160-4 and by Guibert, pp. 371-6.**

And that is exactly what they did. The most recent decision was the one on the 29th of August. A month later the summer vacation began. Without waiting for it to come to an end, Lambert, with the eager cooperation of the primary school teachers, assembled his file of complaints. A writ, prepared on the 30th of September before the notary at the Chatelet, Gaillardin, sought to gather testimony from Charles Dinetthe former lawyer for the schoolteachers, who lived on Rue Vieux-Colombier, Vincent Cail1ot,(Rue Seine) Michel Le Page,(Rue St.Denoit) Guillaume Prevel (same street), Louis Manchard (Rue Canettcs), Nicolas Lebas (Rue Du Four),Jacques Drouot, (Rue Vieux-Colombier) Jacques Royer(Rue Jacob), and all of them elementary schoolteachers in the city of Paris; who certified that John Baptist de La Salle, "the self-styled superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools" , and his "so-called Brothers" continued to admit children of the middle class in spite of the decisions of the 22nd of February, the 11th of July and the 29th of August, handed down in favor of the Writers and mathematicians. "This intercourse and practice" were seriously prejudicial to the witnesses "who find themselves stripped of their best pupils, children of good families". They were prepared to present evidence for their statements. [68]

The double interest offered by this document lies, first, in the fact that it supplies authenticated proof that a coalition of two previously mutually hostile groups had become reconciled in order to conduct a campaign against the Brothers; and, secondly, that it discloses a manoeuvre that was now taking shape:- the teachers whose names appear here were all residents of St.Sulpice's parish; and Chetardye's schools which, until now had goneunscathed, were clearly being threatened.

But, according to the tactics adopted, Lambert wished first of all to put an end to the school on Rue Charonne. Arguing from the noncompliance with judicial decisions, he demanded that the public authority be brought to bear to close that institution. People from the police piled benches, tables, notebooks and textbooks into carts and ripped down the school's signboard bearing simply the words: *Brothers of the Christian Schools.*

This action must have occurred during the last months of 1704. The Sunday school disappeared along with the primary school; and De La Salle himself lost no time in leaving the neighborhood. At the beginning of 1705, he sought an uncertain refuge with the Brothers on Rue Princesse. Community interests dictated that he remain as briefly as possible in the parish of St.Sulpice. Since the pastor of St.Roch's had asked him for two teachers, he left quietly for Rue St.Honoré in the company of the two Brothers who were to teach the children. During the years 1705-1708 his legal address in Paris was a house situated near the Convent of the Jacobins. It was here that he received his mail, and it was here, too, that he stayed when, after having moved to Normandy, some business called him from St.Yon to Paris.

In short, his Parisian adversaries may have thought that they had no longer to reckon with him. But in 1705 their conquest over the Brothers was still not complete. Henceforth, at peace in the Faubourg St. Antoine and, as the result of Vuyart's dealings, free of concern in the suburb of St. Marcel, they were able to mass their guns in St.Sulpice. Frequently, in the course of the school year they erupted into the classrooms to check on the presence of sons of the middle class. And then, on the 4th of August, with the consent of the police, they plundered the classrooms on Rue Princesse.

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68 Copy in the AGM, cited by Lucard Annales, Vol.1, pp.165-6 and Guibert pg.379

Chétardye did not make up his mind to place a complaint until the 10th of November. It was only then that he declares that the Christian Brothers, his representatives in the education of his people, shared his authority.

In a petition dated the 19th of March,1706 [69] the new lawyer for the Writers, Larcher by name, contested the legitimacy of the pastor's intervention. According to Larcher, litigation could take place only between his corporation and the Brothers, since the liberties taken by De La Salle and his followers with respect to the regulations and laws removed the immunity due to charity schools from their institutions. As for the pastor of St.Sulpice, it was his duty personally to take the necessary steps to place in the hands of the Lieutenant of police "the report concerning poor children", which information should be given to the lawyer.

On the same day a decision of Parlement was delivered to De La Salle on Rue St.Honoré. This judgment, dated the 5th of the preceding February, found in favor of the elementary schoolteachers in the case they had initiated two years earlier. It declared without merit an appeal lodged by De La Salle against a judgment rendered by the Cantor on the 14th of February, 1704.

> **(**It) prohibited the said De La Salle and all others from conducting **any primary school for the instruction of youth throughout the extent of the city, districts and suburbs of Paris without having obtained permission from the Cantor of the Church of Paris along** with a designation of location

.Since the character of parochial charity school was denied to each of the Brothers' institutions, and since as a new type of teacher they were removed from the Cantor's jurisdiction, there was no longer any place for the I3rothers within the limits of the legislat.ionthen in force. The court went so far as to prohibit them from creating "any community under the name of seminary for teachers in primary education."[70]

The encirclement seemed complete. And since Chetardye's persistent ill will toward De La Salle left no hope on that score- no softening of the hostile countenance- the Brothers in St.Sulpice, at the end of their strength and patience, pleaded with the Founder to disperse them throughout the houses in the provinces. In July 1706 the schools on Rue Princesse and Rue St. Placide and Rue Du Bac were closed, The school on Rue Fosses Monsieur-le-Prince had been suppressed earlier by the pastor.

The transfer of the novitiate to Normandy had saved the future. But of all the Brothers' work in Paris nothing remained except the school in the parish of St.Roch, a quite secondary foundation, which, besides, had no future, since certain disagreements with the clergy concerning the supervision of catechism classes led John Baptist de La Salle to withdraw the Brothers from there, probably in the course of the year 1708,

It was the parents of the pupils who provoked the revival of the schools in St.Sulpice. They saw their children neglected, since the pastor refused to approve of the lackluster substitutes who, from July to vacation time, applied to teach classes. The parents demanded the return of the Brothers,

De La Salle was in Rouen; and while he was there, he received a letter in which Chetardye besought him to respond to the wishes of his parishioners, The Founder was expected to forgive and forget. lIe made only one condition: that the Brothers be guaranteed against further attacks.

It was then up to the pastor of St.Sulpice to lay the foundation for an agreement with the Writingmasters and the primary schoolteachers, He summoned to his house the leaders of the most independent and boldest of the corporations, It had

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69 Copy in the AGM

70 National Archives, L, 515; quoled by Guibert, pg. 414.

seemed to him that the best solution was to define the limits of their respective rights in a notarized contract that would restore the terms of the transaction concluded in 1699 with the Grand Cantor. He had laid claim to complete authority over the charity schools and insisted that the Brothers' schools should be nothing more than that. To pacify the writers completely, it was agreed that a Sulpician Father, selected as director of the schools, would keep a register of pupils, including their names, ages and family circumstances. Father John Baptist Joseph Languet Gergy, at the time the vicar of the parish, was named to assume this task. The Brothers were to admit no pupil without a note signed by him.

And thus in October, 1706, was concluded an irritating confrontation which would not have been so shrill if from the beginning Chetardye had spoken out loud and clear. The Founder certainly had no voice in the matter, and the new arrangements seemed to have totally excluded him from the Sulpieian schools. At the moment it was enough for him that his Brothers were in a position to fulfill their educational mission, which, when passions would have subsided and when new generations would have arisen, would be able (with the help of God) to expand and be free of obstacles.

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It is undeniable that the ostracism that affected John Baptist de La Salle in Paris disrupted the normal development of his Institute. We have seen how its expansion, having met with opposition at the center, not only lost none of its vigor, but spread out to the four points of the compass. In this sense there was compensation, indemnification. However, the center shifted to the west. The disadvantages that the Founder had hoped to avoid by leaving Rheims could not fail, sooner or later, to reemerge in Rouen, -i.e., a too strong influence from local authorities, the danger to the Society of being reduced to a diocesan congregation, the unequal distances between most of schools and the headquarters, and, when it finally became a question of legal recognition, greater difficulties in negotiating with the government of a provincial Parlement. These difficulties would surface in the course of the 18th century.

De La Salle surely had a presentiment of them. And we can believe that when, in 1706 and 1707, he ordered Brother Thomas to find a sufficiently large building in Paris to house the Brothers -exclusive of those at St. Sulpice-for their annual retreats, he did so because he had not despaired of regaining a foothold in Paris. The Procurator's choice settled on a piece of property, 50 mm. by 30 mm. (3,000 mm.sq.), including two sets of buildings and situated on Rue La Barouillère, and between that street and Rue St.Romain, near the Sèvres dam. He was able to get Chétardye to agree to an immediate lease at a cost of 400 livres, with the view of housing the teachers who in 1707 were to abandon the inconvenient and unhealthy building on Rue Princesse.

It was there that John Baptist de La Salle came to live, along with his novices and the clerics whom he had invited as his guests during the famine of 1709. Circumstances would extend the novices' stay there until 1715; but the circumstances were of such a nature that their stay was neither a peaceful possession nor genuinely stable.

The crude conspiracy of a few Brothers to set up an independent parochial community at St. Sulpice was new proof of an implacable hostility. The Founder saw quite clearly that in Paris he had not achieved a genuine welcome and that in that city and even in that archdiocese he would be recklessly exposed to criticism.

We can understand the prudence that De La Salle practiced and the precautions with which he surrounded himself (however ineffectually) in the establishment of a seminary for teachers at St.Denis.

He did not take the initiative in this enterprise and he hesitated for a long time before concluding it. In the spring of 1797, when he was immobilized in the house on Rue St. Honore following an operation on his knee, he received a visit from a young cleric, John Baptist Clément, the son of a very well known surgeon, a native of Provence. This enthusiastic visitor told him that having observed the Brothers in their classrooms on Rue Princesse, he dreamed, with their cooperation, of undertaking some good work. And he spoke of opening a school for apprentices.

The Founder admired the man's zeal, but was satisfied to hand Clément a brief memorandum -a sort of 'prospectus'- that set forth "the ends of the Institute", as they were already to be found in manuscript pages in 1689. A few days later the cleric returned to say that he was greatly interested in establishing a Seminary for rural schoolteachers.

De La Salle did not take these fine words for ready cash. No matter how desirous he was to revive a foundation that had so often importuned his energies, he could not forget the earlier failures and the formal interdiction contained in the order of the 5th of February, 1706. He postponed his decision.

Clément did not consider himself defeated. In view of his situation and his father's fortune, he was something of a personage. His family was preparing to secure him some benefice or other that had huge revenues. The Archbishop's office was informed of the project; and Pere Vivant officially intervened with the Founder to assure him that Cardinal Noailles would grant his approval, provided that the Seminary was not situated in Paris itself under the inquisitorial eye of the Writingmasters. The ever friendly pastor of Villiers-le-Bcl offered the hospitality of his parish. But that village was not good enough for John Baptist Clément. Finally, they agreed upon St.Denis, where De La Salle had met with many kindnesses.We come now to the autumn of 1708: at the request of, and with the funds supplied by a Mlle.Poignant, a resident of Paris, on Rue Petit Lion, the Brothers were to open a popular school nearby the famous abbey. The Prior himself became the mediator in winning the Abbot's consent. It seemed that a Seminary could not take root in a more favorable atmosphere.

The building required for the school was bought for 13,000 livres from the sister of the woman who was founding the school. The contract was signed on the 23rd of October, 1708. But since Clément had not yet attained his majority and Dc La Salle had once again thought it wiser to remain in the background, it became necessary to use a proxy. The purchaser was a man named M.Rogier.

Actually, the immediate down payment on the purchase price (5,200 livres including incidental expenses) came out of Dc La Salle's own pocket. It was a reserve fund that he had set aside precisely with the view of reviving his Seminary. Clément hastened to sign and to give his I.O.U. to Rogier, while insisting that he intended to remain the exclusive founder and to effect a final settlement when he would have obtained his benefice.

Three years passed. The Seminary lived up to its expectations. Opened in 1709 with three student-teachers, and temporarily closed during the famine, it developed to such an extent that Cardinal Noailles gave it his blessing and Madame Maintenon obtained from the king an exemption for the institution at St. Denis from having to lodge and feed soldiers in transit.

However, young Clément, provided with the rich abbey of St. Calais certainly by 1710,[71] had no thought of reimbursing De La Salle nor of repaying Mlle.Poignant. He must have told his fathcr of the commitments he had made. And the surgeon, more attached to his own interests and quite indifferent to the work and the fate of the Christian Brothcrs, treated his son as though he were a retarded child and advised him that, since he had acted thoughtlessly and without discretion, he had now only to remind people that he was a minor when he signed the agreement, and so annul his signature.

In 1711 the Cléments received, at the hands of Louis XIV, a title of nobility, which excited their pride. Julien, the father of the family, thought that he would show off his power by crushing the unfortunate man who took the liberty, in his view, of entrapping the young priest. lIe prevailed upon his offspring to disown his debts and to claim that in this whole affair at St.Denis he had bcen both dupe and victim.

Hastily returned from the South, De La Salle vainly attempted to reestablish the truth. But, in the person of the surgeon, the Founder was running up against a wall of prejudice and bad faith. Pushing the spirit of conciliation to the limit, De La Salle declared himself willing to relinquish what was owed to him personally. But the whole matter was like doing favors for people who were determined to dishonor themselves.

In fact, they brought a shameful action against De La Salle bcfore the civil dcputy in the court of the Chatelet. On the 23rd of January, 1712, De La Salle received a summons to appear. The petition of the plaintiff aimed at nothing less than the accusation of the subornation of a minor and the extortion of money. On the 17th of February the chancery delivered letters of annulment to Clément, rescinding the pricst's commitments. Three days latcr Clément sought the ratification of these lcttcrs from the Chatclct, which not only authorized him to consider himself discharged of the 5,200 livres advanced to him for the purchase of the Poignant property, but beyond that, to demand restitution for the sums that hc had borrowed on his student-priest scholarship for the support of student-teachers.

The file assembled by the attorney for the defence included thirteen of Clément's letters, his note acknowledging his debt and a memorandum in which De La Salle explained the history of his foundation at St.Denis. The latter is a document (now lost) that Blain had examined for his 'own account of these events.[72] It contained all the moral proofs required to defend the Founder. Unfortunately, in the opinion of a biased judge, they were unable to prevail over the brute fact of Clement's minority. Besides, a man with influence had claimed that his son had allowed himself to be swept away by incautious generosity. And far from objecting, the son supported the father's allegations with his own assertions. De La Salle had neither associations nor references to fall back upon in order to parry this blow. There was nothing to hope from St.Sulpice; nothing, indeed, from Cardinal Noailles, who had been compromised in the Jansenist affair, and tolerated poorly opposition coming from people faithful to Rome. The ecclesiastical situation of the Founder in the archdiocese continued to be ill defined. And in the legal world he was regarded as an innovator who, in spite of all decrees, had been persistent in the defense of his work and who had reopened at St.Denis the Seminary that had been forbidden throughout the entire extent of the Parlement's jurisdiction.

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71 After the See of Chartres had been taken over by Charles Francis Moustiers Merinvillc, the previous titulary of Calais

72 Cf. Blain Vol.II,pg.72

Once again, the accused decided not to appear in court. Toward the middle of March, 1712, he left Paris for an absence that was likely to be lengthy. Would he have helped his cause by appearing in court? Perhaps not, given the prejudices and the hostility of the environment. Butt his agents and lawyers seemed negligent and timid. Everything happened as though the suit was lost before it began.

A flagrant proof of this attitude was provided by Rogier, who had been the purchaser-of-record of the house. Thinking that at the height of the debacle it was permissible to salvage the debris, he determined to lay claim to the total and ultimate ownership of the property. Was he thinking that in better times he would return it to De La Salle? There is a clause in his will (that we shall presently examine) that bears witness to the fact that in conscience he never believed that he was the real owner. But he was wrong to have postponed making restitution, which did not occur until after his death, and in money.

At the time of the trial his strategy had no chance of success unless he appeared as jointly responsible with the defendant. And it is thus, without unfairly belaboring his memory, we can explain the petition of the 14th of March, 1712, in which, appearing as plaintiff, this friend, once so obliging and only the day before so eager (in the words of Canon Blain) to hand over to De La Salle the "acknowledgement" signed by Clément,[73] now laid claim to the quit-title to the Poingant property. Once entered upon this tortuous path, he was to lose his reputation as an honest man.

On the 31st of May a judgment of the Chatelet condemned John Baptist de La Salle to return the priest's note for the 5,200 livres and, in addition, the money that Clément had given for the seminary, which came to 2,300 livres. "We forbid the said De La Salle to require such a document and monies of, and to use such ways with, minor children, and we order him to pay costs".[74] This statement which underscored the infamy of the accused, provided an insight into human justice and satiated the vengeance of Julien Clément.

On the 11th of June the letters of annulment were ratified and, as a consequence, all obligations contracted by the young man were completely rescinded.

On the 15th another order was handed down, this one in favor of Rogier:

> We order that the house situated in St.Denis, which he (Rogier) acquired on contract on the 24th of October, 1708 from Mlle. Poignant, belongs to him in full ownership, the wluch we have allowed him to dispose of as it seems good to him. In so doing, we order that the Said M.de La Snlle, or the school Brothers who reside there, arc bound to leave the place by St.John's term, failing which the furniture shall be piled on the street. We order the said M. de La Salle to pay the plaintiff the rent on the said house until the moment he leaves the premises. II the defendant prefers to pay off the plaintiff with the sum of 8,000 livres and the interest on the said sum that is owed the said Mlle. Poignant, to whom he is indebted; as well as delivcr over to her the sum of 525 livres, involved in his promjse of the 27th of June.1710, in three days beginning with the day the present order takes effect, failing which, our present decree takes effect out of hand. We also order the dcfendant to pay the plaintiffs the sums and claims or J.I.Clément and his son. which he was ordered to pay by the decision of the 11th or last June. which ratified the letters of annulment which they had obtained. [75]

In summary, Rogier retained as his responsibility the settlemcnt of the purchase price, all the interest paid prior to June 1710 and those accumulated since that period, and finally the reimbursements to be made to the Cléments, which might

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73 *Ibid. loc.cit*.pg.75
74 National Archives, V.5556; cited by Guibert, pg.478
75 *Ibid*., pg.478-9

have had to do with the remodelling of the property. (This latter point was a corollary to the letters of annulment.) This would be Rogier's cost for the house to be legally his. But in conscience he should have added the 5,200 livres advanced by De La Salle and which Rogier promised himself, perhaps, that he would return to his friend personally. His negligence in this respect was clearly a grave breach of strict honesty. lIe would make tardy restitution by a legacy of 260 livres annually, the capital of which -corresponding to the total debt repudiated by - was recovered by the Founder through an agreement with the heirs of the deceased.

It must be observed that the judgment left De La Salle with the option of immediately taking off or of purchasing the property with a payment in full. But the Founder's poverty effectively closed off the latter alternative, and Rogier knew it.

The defendant was given three days to make up his mind, and eight days to vacate the premises. The judgment was relentless - especially when we consider that such an order was passed in the man's absence. lIere again is revealed the malicious spirit that continued to inspire the magistrates throughout the trial. In their decisions, they continued to refuse to "M. de La Salle" (if only by not alluding to it) his position as Superior-general of his Institute. "Priest and self-styled superior-general of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the city of Rheims", was the way the order of the 31st of May refers to him. And the order of the 15th of June calls him simply "priest of the diocese of Rheims".

It is possible that Rogier proved himself less brutal than the judge and that he allowed the Brothers of St.Denis a reasonable time in which to leave the Poignant house. But the result was the same. De La Salle's final effort to provide the countryside with good teachers failed.

CHAPTER SIX

Foundations in the Provinces and Schools in Chartres, Calais and Troyes

From now on an expanding horizon opens to our view. We leave the walls and the heavy atmosphere of old Paris for travel throughout the whole of France and beyond the mountains as far as Rome. The clergy, nobility, the middle class and residents of the better cities, the rich and the poor alike, called upon John Baptist de La Salle and his Brothers. Beginning in 1699 the Founder responded to these increasingly pressing solicitations as far as the recruitment of teachers, their educational talents, and their religious perseverance would permit.

He did not cut corners and he did not venture into risky experiments. To these precautions there was only a single (but a wonderful and completely justifiable) exception - the sending of two of his humble disciples to the capitol of the Christian world, in order to profess his ``Roman'' faith, and to prepare the long road to the canonical recognition of his Institute.

Respecting such explicit undertakings by the man who abided wholly by God's will, there is no other example involving the founding of schools. Whether it was a question of sacrificing himself to his work by giving up the family residence, or his personal position, or his wealth, or his social status or his native city, he only awaited the command of Providence, the silent word in the depths of his soul. Obedience to the advice of a spiritual director merely confirmed decisions arrived at in prayer. When he gathered his Brothers together in the house on the Rue Neuve or in the austere solitude, the near-Trappist conditions, of Vaugirard, and when, later on at St.Yon, he paused to provide them with a novitiate training, his will, thoroughly illumined by the grace of state, had no need of external mediation and was accustomed to overcome obstacles. He carefully prepared the tools of his spiritual conquests; and thereafter it was up to men to decide how they were to be used, within God's purviews.

It is, of course, not possible to consider as genuine personal foundations the two elementary schools he opened, the one at the ``Grande Maison'' and the other on Rue Charonne, which were little more than annexes to his community. And we have not forgotten Nyel's role in the creation of the schools in the East.

As for the ``seminaries'' for rural schoolteachers the question is more complex. De La Salle believed that this was work no less necessary than the realization of his initial design. He had no intention of favoring the cities more than the villages. He dreamed of teaching and saving all poor people. As a consequence, he suggested to those who sought to help him (the Duke of Mazarin, the pastor of St.Hippolytus', the young Clément, etc.) that they contribute their gifts to the lodging and support of lay student-teachers trained for the countryside. Over a period of nearly thirty years he never once abandoned this part of his mission. In Rheims the steps taken by the pastors in the Archdiocese answered to his wishes. After the failure of the seminary directed by Nicholas Vuyart, we saw De La Salle, although he was anything but a miracle-worker, put together a small capital in order one day to revive that project. The idea continued to consume him. He awaited the right moment to move into action, and he welcomed whatever goodwill came along and indeed bent it in the direction of his own objectives.

It was one of the features of his genius that he knew how to rely upon what is actual, how to introduce his work at the opportune moment into the warp and woof of

events and how to adapt to circumstances and to people, while protecting his efforts with a detailed and intrepid vigilance against distortion and effacement.

The founding of a Brothers' school resulted from local initiative: any pastor might want to provide good teachers and good catechists for the children of his poor parishioners; or a bishop might have a similar ambition for the poor of his diocese. Or, perhaps, it was a committee (a ``Bureau'' for schools or hospitals) that decided to organize popular and charitable education and, to effect an enduring work, secured the cooperation of the Brothers whose reputation was growing daily. Or, again, an individual, a person of means, anxious to be useful to his community, might have been edified by the account of De La Salle's activity and the evidence of it before his eyes; and decided to provide through gift or legacy the money necessary for opening a school and for supporting a residence for two or three Brothers.

Negotiations would then be undertaken with the Superior. An intermediary was selected from among mutual friends, and perhaps they exchanged memories that dated from the seminary days together at St.Sulpice. There were times when De La Salle would have to apologize for not being able to fulfill requests or make a petitioner wait many long months, because there were no teachers available; or perhaps, too, there were reasons for being cautious. But as regards food and lodging for his Brothers, he was not over demanding; although he did not want to see them shoved into any old corner, at the risk of body or soul; nor did he wish to see them die of hunger. He knew those scholarly types who haunt the sacristies but have the most unrealistic notions of the cost of food and clothing; and he was also aware of that more or less conscious egoism that holds other peoples' needs cheaply and is prepared to undertake heroic tasks on the backs of other peoples' sacrifices, provided that their own interests do not suffer. If, however, it happened that he appeared to have been misled or cheated, it would have been deliberate, in view of special circumstances and in the hope of a better future.

In no case would he allow people who founded schools to do as they pleased with his Institute's Rule or with its customs or its methods of teaching. The vexations of his predecessors, the disasters which were the inevitable consequences of exceptions and deviations in this matter strengthened and justified his intransigence. He might very well have uttered the famous line of the Jesuit Superior-general: *Aut Sint ut sunt, aut non sint*. The Brothers had to be taken as they were, or else not taken at all. De La Salle resisted with an inflexible, yet gentle, firmness the assaults of Pères Baudrand and Chétardye; he was willing to be thought `obstinate'' or as ``a man extraordinarily attached to his own opinion''; he preferred to close the schools at Chateau-Porcien and at St.Roch rather than allow his Brothers to become parish cantors or beadles. We shall have the opportunity to see him facing the Bishop of Chartres in a successful defense of his educational views and then opposing the transfer of the community to a residence that he believed was unhealthy.

Once he was in agreement with the Church hierarchy, he had (in some places) to reckon with city governments. In Guise, Rethel, Laon, Calais, Dijon and Vans the Brothers' schools were, or would be, more or less dependent upon local magistrates: they were public schools publicly subsidized. The magistrates in Rethel as well as those in Guise ordinarily showed a great deal of good-will. In 1699, when Gabriel Drolin was the Director, a decision on the part of city hall gave the ``young teachers'' in the schools in Rethel ``a measure of wheat'' in addition to their allowance.[76.] The people of Laon were less generous: five years earlier, on the 23rd of November, 1694,

76. Resolution of the 2nd of October 1699, quoted by Lucard, *Annales*, Vol. I, pg. 109

Mayor Martigny had the subsidy reduced from 150 of 100 livres on the pretext that the rent on the house occupied up to then without cost to the Brothers should figure for 50 livres of the total amount allotted.[77]

De La Salle's humble institutions would end up by winning government favor. The king had already heard tell of him on the occasion of the visit of James II to the young Irishmen at St. Sulpice - probably, also, during the legal battle in 1699, when Madame Maintenon interceded with President Harlay. The king would be directly involved in the foundations in Calais and Alès when his financial aid was obtained for these schools; of course, the school in Versailles benefited from his generosity through the mediation of the pastor of St.Louis.

Finally, the day would come when the Pope himself would consent to sponsor the Institute's beginnings in Rome by entrusting a school to Gabriel Drolin.

It was quite exceptional for De La Salle, after concluding a contract, to be personally present for the opening of a school. His duties as superior kept him at the Motherhouse. Apart from the Parisian schools, he himself was able to open only the schools in Rouen, the boarding school at St.Yon and the novitiate in Marseille. As a rule, in his place he delegated a Brother especially qualified for this type of work, able to arrange the material details, to impress children and to provide a strong push in favor of studies - a Brother Ponce or a Brother Albert, for instance, men endowed with the qualities that distinguished Adrien Nyel.

But he knew that there was no substitute for the eye of the superior. He always regarded his visitations of the communities as one of the obligations of his position. He would be absent from Rheims, and later on from Paris, for tours of inspection in the northwest. At the cost of wearisome travel, mostly on foot but occasionally on horseback, he hurried to the side of an ill or a dying disciple. Not content with gathering the Brothers together for annual retreats at Vaugirard or at the ``Grande Maison'', he visited them in their schools, monitored their teaching, directed their religious life, and, by the very powerful and pacifying personal influence which, by all accounts, he possessed, he was able to rekindle enthusiasm. In the interval between visits, he strove to maintain a regular correspondence with each one of the Brothers, a practice he continued up to the last days of his life: These personal contacts of the humblest Brother with the Superior-general by means of an exchange of letters at prescribed times, has remained one of the most attractive features of the Institute, which preserves in its archives the treasure of a rather large number of the Founder's letters. We have already alluded to these important documents, and we shall quote from them and analyze them as the need arises.

In 1705 when De La Salle began a four year period of residence at St.Yon, he revived the custom of a common retreat: all the Brothers who were able to brave the ordeal of the long journey and the uncomfortable inns came together during vacations for a week of recollection; in these circumstances many of them reckoned neither with infirmities nor with distances. And the feeblest among them had no relief except, perhaps, the leisure hours aboard a river boat.

At other times the Brothers in Rouen and Darnétal had the consolation of De La Salle's words and example. Nor was the same consolation wanting to the Brothers in St.Sulpice, since the Founder had to make frequent visits to Paris. And between 1709 and 1711 the Parisians enjoyed his continuous presence in the house on Rue La Barouillère.

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77 . Motherhouse Archives, ``Historique des écoles de Laon''.

But the Institute stretched from Rethel to Rouen and from Calais to Marseille. It was no longer possible for the Superior alone to assume the responsibility for the regular visitation of all of the houses. He divided the territory into three sectors. Brother Joseph received ``an Obedience'' for the supervision of what henceforth would be called `the district of Rheims', which, besides that city, included the schools in Rethel, Guise and Laon. Brother Ponce was made responsible for the missions in the southern provinces.[78] The Superior reserved Paris, Chartres, Troyes, Dijon, Darnétal and Calais for himself. Brother Joseph's appointment was dated Paris, the 15th of July, 1708. The ``Obedience'' preserved in the Motherhouse archives79 reads as follows:

> We, the undersigned, priest, doctor of theology, Superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, send our Brother Joseph to visit the houses in Rethel, Guise, Laon and Rheims; and therefore we enjoin the Directors of the said houses to receive the said Brother in the said function and to inform him of what is happening in their houses.

The following year, on the 30th of July,1709 a second letter, also dated from Paris, signed ``De La Salle'' and bearing a seal representing the Child Jesus being lead by St.Joseph,[80] transfered the community in Troyes to the four entrusted to Brother Joseph.

Finally, on the 16th of November,1711, at a time when the Founder, hardly returned from one journey, was about to leave for another in Provence, the Dauphine' and Languedoc, the Visitor's ``Obedience'' was enlarged to include all the houses in France which, for the sake of convenience, we describe as belonging to ``langue d'oil'': ``Moulins, Dijon, Troyes, Rheims, Rethel, Laon, Guise, Calais, Boulogne, Rouen, St.Yon, Darnétal, Chartres, Versailles and St.Denis.[81] The only exception was Paris, where De La Salle had an auxiliary in the person of Brother Barthélemy, his successor.

It might be expected that, in studying the history of the foundations in the provinces, we develop our plan by relying upon the three documents mentioned above. The earliest schools in Champagne, Picardy and in the region of Laon were the themes of the first two chapters of Part Two of the present volume. Except incidentally, we shall not have to return to these communities, nor to the Parisian communities, with which we have dealt at length in the preceding pages. We are now in a position to group under the same heading, if not within the same chapter, the other schools placed under Brother Joseph's control in 1711: the schools in Chartres, opened in 1699, are the oldest of the third series of De La Salle's foundations, after the beginnings in Rheims and at St.Sulpice.

Brother Gabriel's departure (in company with his companion, Brother Gerard) for Rome, his activities and difficulties, left there all to himself, would seem at first glance to be on the margin of our story. However, we shall find hidden here the prologue to the foundations made in the South of France. The papal city of Avignon was to learn from Brother Gerard what the Brothers were like. And from Avignon the Brothers would spread out into the region of the Rhone and the Cevennes, establishing there, through the activities of the same men and for the same purposes, a unity that was both novel and homogeneous. La Salle constantly sought to weave and to bind his French undertakings to his as yet embryonic transalpine efforts through the intermediary of the southeastern provinces. It might be said that he was drawn as

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78 . Brother Ponce, in an authentic document dated 1711, was described as ``Visitor of the Brothers''. See below, chap. ix, pg. 369.

79 . (DE 323-1) Series C, Letter 30)

80 . Series E, Letter 86(BP 800, Cadre 22)

81 . Series C (BP 800, Cadre 23.), Letter 1.

though by a magnet to Marseille and the Mediterranean. Humanly speaking his career was characterized almost as importantly by a ``southern'' phase as by ``Rouen'', ``Parisian'' and ``Norman'' phases. First of all, to the personal inspection of the foundations in Provence and Languedoc he dedicated eight months, from February to September, 1711; and again from March, 1712, to August, 1714 there were almost two years entirely devoted in intense concern, suffering and, indeed, anxiety, to the South of France. By the time this period would have been completed he would be an old man; and the Founder would return North having, by continual sacrifice and a slow daily martyrdom, assured the future of his Institute throughout France. There would remain for him nothing further to do but to seal the unity of his religious family and to name and train a successor before meeting his God.

This general survey does indeed assume that, especially as concerns the schools founded between 1699 and 1710 in the ancient region of ``langue d'oil'',[82] we must follow a rather odd itinerary. We shall be following the Brothers wherever they shall be successively called - Beauce, Calais, Champagne, Normandy, Bourgogne, Boulogne, Bourbon. We shall speak of the sponsors, the circumstances of the foundations and the (certain and significant) events that occurred during the first years, i.e, during the lifetime of De La Salle.

Paul Godet Marets was, as might be expected, the first to obtain teachers from his friend, John Baptist, for the children of his people in Chartres. We saw him on the day of his episcopal consecration in 1692 intervening with the Archbishop of Paris to get the latter to agree to the opening of a Brothers' novitiate in Vaugirard. In 1698 he came to bless the chapel and St. Cassian's house. In his own diocese he was deeply interested in the education of the poor: he encouraged the beginnings of a small community of ``tutors'' that one of his priests, Père Louis Chauvet, founded in the parish of Levesville-la-Chenard, and that the Bishop settled in Chartres in 1708 and placed under the protection of his personal patron, St.Paul.[83] He did not believe that they would be duplicating the work of the Sisters of Christian Instruction, of which he approved in 1696, nor of the Sisters of the Union who taught school to the young daughters of artisans, nor of the Sisters of Providence who were dedicated to the education of orphan girls. A whole generation of Christians were educated under the direction of the man whom Bossuet called ``the vigilant Bishop of Chartres''.[84.] The young boys of ``the city of Our Lady'' were not to be neglected.

It appears as though Paul Marets put the question to the Superior of the Brothers as early as 1694. At that time he perhaps received only an evasive reply, since De La Salle did not have enough experienced teachers even for the schools that were then in operation. After five years of waiting, conditions were more favorable. The Bishop insisted. He had been handed a petition by the pastors in Chartres: ``Having learned that in Paris there is a very pious priest'' who supplied competent religious teachers to regions that were in a position to assure a livelihood and support to young men, the petitioners asked ``His Highness to use his good offices and indeed his alms'' in this essential work ``for the reformation of the lives of his people''[85]

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82 . Once again, we are using this term (``langue d'oil'') in order to simplify classification, without attaching any particular historical or geographic importance to it

83 . Cf. *Histoire générale de la Communauté des Filles de Saint-Paul de Chartres*, by Canon John Vaudon, Vol. I, Paris, Téqui, 1922.

84 . Vaudon, *op. cit*., pg. 45, note 1

85 .According to Blain, Vol. I, pg. 370.

``The late Bishop Marets of Chartres, recently dead", declares a memorandum on file in the Motherhouse archives, ``invited six teachers, whom in Paris people call `school Brothers' ".In a statement dated the 4th of October, 1699, which Blain has preserved, the Bishop announced the opening of the tuition-free school for Monday, the 12th:

> We have recognized with a great deal of consolation that God has begun to bestow his abundant blessings on the charity schools we have established for girls…. That has strengthened us in our desire to extend this advantage and to obtain the like for boys.

The Bishop alluded to the Edicts of April, 1695 and December, 1698 in which Louis XIV asserted the direction of his educational policy:

> The king, always magnificent in what he undertakes, but never so magnificent as in what concerns religion, has directed his attention to the establishment and the multiplication of schools and, through his piety, has wished to stir up the zeal and vigilance of pastors.[86]

The Brothers were confident in the presence of this fine prelate, who was a simple and affable man, and, in the words of Saint-Simon, possessed of ``a thoroughly Sulpician" spirituality, and who lived like a seminarian. He was neither one to affect the grand manner, nor was he one to put his undeniable talents on display. His modesty, his detachment from earthly goods, and his supernatural concerns made him very much like John Baptist de La Salle. When he came unannounced to visit the new teachers, his long face, with its rather unprepossessing features, lightened up with kindliness.

He lodged them first on Rue Muret, in a house that had once been occupied by the Sisters of Providence. The number of Brothers permitted the opening of two schools: one, in the residence itself, for St.Hilaire's parish,[87] and the other on Rue Lin for St.Michel's parish.[88]

Receiving the Founder at Chartres toward the end of 1702, the Bishop, in a very friendly way, directed some remarks to De La Salle: he thought that the rules of the Institute were too difficult for men burdened by the labors of teaching; on the other hand, he hoped that on Sundays the Brothers would be spread out over all the parish churches, so that there would be no one who would not have the benefit of their good example. And in a particular way he asked for a serious change in De La Salle's educational methods by the restoration of the ancient practice of reading Latin.

But he did himself credit by surrendering graciously to the arguments of his friend, who, in a memorandum consisting of nine points, explained the advantages of the mother tongue in elementary education. We will get some idea of this document when we review De La Salle's writings.[89.] The two other remarks raised no controversy: the teachers had, of course, to remain with their pupils during the services in the parishes of St.Hilaire and St. Michel. Concerning the severity of the rules, the Founder's views were quite well known, and all that his Excellency Godet Marets could wring from him was the promise to forbid the excess of optional mortifications among the Brothers.

The Bishop's goodwill, then, guaranteed that the beginnings of the schools in Chartres were full of promise. And yet in this city, with its so very peaceful appearance, in the very shadow of the cathedral dedicated to Mary, the Brothers were to know tragic days, followed by a long series of difficult years. In 1705 four of the

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86. *Ibid., loc. cit.*, pp. 371--2.

87 . Later to become St.Peter's parish

88 . Lucard, *Annales,* Vol. I, pp. 115 & 117, following the Departmental Archives of the Eure-and-Loir and the ``Historique" preserved in the Motherhouse Archives (A.M.G.).

89 . See below, Part Three, chap. v, pp. 586--587

Brothers - Germain, Lazarus, Jacques and Michel - died of the plague. We recall that the latter two were part of the ``twelve'' of 1694. Brother Michel, as Director of novices had been the object of criticism, as well as the occasion of machinations on the part of Chétardye against De La Salle, after which Michel fled to La Trappe. The Abbot, Jacques de La Cour, the successor to De Rancé, sent him back to De La Salle, who forgave Michel Jacquinot, ``the whimsical penitent'', as Blain[90] calls him; he was a harsh and troublesome man, but with a soul smitten with the desire for perfection and capable of dedication. The Brothers in Chartres continued on in their classes until the plague struck them. The fifth victim was the Brother Infirmarian, Jean Chrysostom who, under the orders of his Superior, had come from the Motherhouse to care for the sick.

It was understandable that, thereafter, in the community in Chartres, his Brothers' health particularly preoccupied De La Salle, and that in a letter of the 20th of July, 1709 he expressed his anxiety concerning a project the Bishop was contemplating of lodging the Brothers in ``St Vincent's house'', where ``there was neither yard nor garden''. He urged his correspondent ``to pray God and have (your) pupils pray with the intention that the Bishop's plan not be put into effect''.[91]

Paul Godet Merets, stricken with an ulcerous lung and never one to spare himself, died on the 26th of the following September, at the age of 62. Justly lamented, nevertheless he left the Brothers in cruel straits. Canon Blain writes that:

> …He would have done all that he could have done in favor of the tuition-free schools, if he had left behind him at his death an endowment sufficient to continue the schools in Chartres But for the want of such a reliable assistance, he left in penury those whom he had accustomed to abundance while he lived. The Christian schools, without any funds, had often been unsettled in a city where they had for enemies the very people who everywhere else were their defenders It was only natural for their Superior to withdraw them from a city that thought it was doing them a favor by tolerating them and not chasing them out. But the holy man listened neither to natural resentment nor to worldly arguments of dissatisfaction The great devotion to the Mother of God that distinguished the City of Chartres and made it famous throughout the kingdom was one of the motives that kept the Brothers there.[92]

These words summarize, with that relative precision we've come to expect from the Canon, the painful life of the community which lived (as a memorandum written in the 18th century puts it) only ``on the alms of the late Bishop Merets''. Charles Francis Moustier Merinville, who succeeded his uncle as Bishop of Chartres, had been his coadjutor for six months, and had helped the Brothers, whose services he appreciated. He continued to lodge them in the Junior Seminary, to which they had been finally transferred.[93] He supplied them with wheat and wine, according to information furnished by Blain.[94] They had another benefactor in the person of Charles Truchis, Canon of the Cathedral and Archdeacon of Vendôme, who, for nearly a half-century, would be the ecclesiastical superior of the Sisters of St.Paul.[95]

However, the people were not very generous and the civil authorities were malicious. The people in Chartres resented having to receive new congregations that they might have to feed. Once they were won over, the people of the *Beauce* [i.e.

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90. Blain, Vol. I, pg. 434.
91 . Series C Letter 2 (A.M.G.).
92. Blain,*op. cit., loc. cit.*, pp. 376--7.
93. Lucard, *Annales*, Vol. I, pg. 115, note 1, according to the Departmental Archives of the Eure-and-Loir
94. Blain, Vol. I, pg. 377.
95. *Ibid., loc. cit.*, pg. 377. Cf. Vaudon, op. cit.

'breadbasket', because of its food production.**Editor**] were solidly loyal, but it took the patience of a saint to overcome their distrust and their native hostility. And if money were at stake, even saints had to learn how to wait at the door for a very long time. From 1713 to 1740 the Sisters of St.Paul of Chartres, the City's pride, had the most difficult times with the corporations, the courts and the councilors, involving failed lawsuits and opposition to Letters Patent. [96]

It would have been surprising if the Christian Brothers had not experienced similar misfortunes. The Sisters were opposed by makers of lace and hosiery, because the Sisters had undertaken to fashion woolen stockings in order to support themselves. The Brothers, of course, ran up against the Writing masters.

On the 19th of February, 1718 the following decision was handed down by the ``jurisdiction and court of the police of Chartres'':

> We have forbidden the School Brothers from admitting into their schools children other than those recognized as poor, whose fathers' and mothers' names are not included on the alms-roll of the Bureau for the Poor.
>
> We enjoin upon the said School Brothers to supply every month the king's Procurer of police and the agent of the Writingmasters of this city with a list of pupils that they actually have and will have in their schools in order to be informed of the circumstances of the said pupils.
>
> We forbid the said School Brothers to demand (of their pupils) any salary or remuneration, to establish any community, or to increase the number of the four Brothers that now exist, or to make any collection, under whatever pretext, or to hang the cross on their door.

All parties are to pay their own expenses.

> And the present decision, in case of appeal, will be executed provisionally and read and published in the sermons at the parish Masses of this city, in the Faubourgs and suburbs, and posted on the demand of the Writers.

According to the memorandum that we have been quoting (and which, doubtless, was contained in the file of a case on appeal) these `Writers' were four in number,

> the best of whom had more pupils in their classes or in the city than they could possibly teach; they even admitted girls; and the others were such that almost no one would be willing to entrust the education of their children to them.

The Brothers quite properly protested against the terms of a peculiarly partial decision: In Chartres there was no school teacher who formed a community; it was open to anybody to teach primary school (which) depend solely upon the Bishop and, under him, upon the pastors The Writers' corporation had only a licence for penmanship and arithmetic.

There was abuse of power, then, in forbidding access to the Christian schools to all but the indigent. And this arbitrariness was all the more glaring in that those who paid the assessment or ``poor-tax'' were ranked in the class of people who were well-off. It should be pointed out that since this tax came only to 8 sols and 8 deniers a year, many artisans of quite modest means did not dare avoid paying it; and *ipso facto* they found themselves forced to send their children to pay schools. Why did the city not adhere to the general rule which required only the pastor's certification for admission to charity schools? It was claimed that the pastors were too much inclined to pass out the certificates too liberally. But they were very much aware of the real wretchedness of their flocks. Even assuming that they were at times over-pliable regarding petitioners, there were perhaps only ``a dozen children'' who took advantage of this indulgence. By enforcing the court's decision, the city ``turned away two or

96. Vaudon, *op. cit.*

three hundred children from the charity schools, who would remain without an education".

To oblige the Brothers every month to supply a list of their pupils to the Writers' lawyer was to grant the corporation a sort of authority over the schools, which had no other external superior except the church hierarchy.

The prohibitions listed in the third paragraph of the decision vividly proclaimed a determination to strangle an enterprise whose eventual growth alarmed Chartres' middle class: no community, no collections and no cross that would indicate the existence of a new religious institution, and never more than four Brothers!

The decision served to draw attention to the fact that De La Salle's schools were absolutely tuition-free. The Founder was surprised by the judge's odd pretension to limit the number of teachers, even though there were nearly four-hundred children to be taught, and the number of schools had to be increased in order to respond to the needs of the city and the nearby villages. Such "precautions" inspired the view that in the magistrates' eyes the charity schools were "an evil to be tolerated, whose growth one should be concerned to stifle". On the other points, the author of the draft, wisely, pleaded not guilty: the Brothers did not ``beg alms". (Although at times of great distress they seemed resigned to the practice;[97] but certainly never with any appetite.) They did not form a genuine ``community", and they did not ``hang the cross" (since the Institute still lacked *Letters Patent*, it still feared local prejudices and animosities): ``they lived together only because they had only a single miserable room and each one his wretched bed."

Perhaps more so than any of the others, the final clause provoked amazement - ``The judgment will be read at parish sermons". And this decision - directed at schools protected by the Bishop - was drawn up without consulting with, indeed without the knowledge of, Bishop Merinville! It was also ``contrary to the Edict of 1695 and to the declaration of 1698, which
forbade the inclusion in sermons of what had nothing to do with the spiritual".

The formal opinion of the lawyer Nouet (``delivered on the 13th of March, 1718, in Paris") was attached to the report. It claimed that the judgment of the 19th of January was ``contrary to the public good and to public justice". But it warned that an appeal ``no matter how well founded cannot be made in the name of the Brothers, because, since they do not form a community, they are not qualified to act in their own name". It would be necessary to appeal and obtain a decree of prohibition “in the name of the Bishop of Chartres or in the name of the pastors of the city *nomine singulari,* since they do not constitute a corporation.” Action by the Bishop was preferable, since it was to him “that it belonged to specify concern for the poor in his diocese and to claim jurisdiction over the said schools.”

Charles Francois Merinville petitioned the courts and, as the consulting lawyer predicted, the court’s decree, dated 31st January 1719, reversed the judgment of the local jurisdiction "on the matter which forbade the admission into the charity schools of children other than those whose fathers and mothers were listed on the rolls of the alms bureau".

School masters' disputes continued concerning the certificates distributed by the pastors, as another manuscript report testifies.[98] In short, the Brothers defended their right to recruit pupils from among the sons of artisans, "tailors, shoemakers,

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97. Cf. Lucard, *Annales,* Vol. I, pg. 291

98 Motherhouse Archives, Decree of prohibition for the Brothers of the Charity Schools of Chartres, 31st of January 1719.

porters, journeymen tanners, and vinedressers" , leaving it "to the discretion" (and the broadmindedness) "of the pastors themselves to explain the needs of their parishioners". For "Christian instruction" , for Sunday catechism classes, they welcomed even those children who, for the rest of the week, attended other schools in the city.[99]

* * * *

Friendship with a Bishop had decided the foundation of the schools in Chartres. Paul Godet Marets, and after him his nephew, were benefactors and pledges for the Brothers in a region that was hardly prepared for them. While the new Institute had taken root in the *Beauce* in spite of contrary winds and a soil which fed it reluctantly, it had succeeded by a sort of heroic adaptation.

The origin of the schools in Calais was quite different. In the beginning there was a chance meeting and a young man's enthusiasm. M.Ponthon, a student in theology at the seminary of *Bons Enfants*, admired the order and the piety of the pupils of the Christian Brothers' schools as they assisted at Mass at St.Sulpice. He described these scenes in a letter to his elderly uncle, pastor and Dean in Calais, whose designated successor the young cleric was. He did not disguise the point that it would be a fine and useful work and one pleasing to God to open a school in his parish, conducted by these remarkable educators.

The uncle agreed wholeheartedly with his nephew. The position of parochial schoolmaster was vacant. De La Salle must be consulted and a firm promise must be obtained from him to send Brothers to Calais. The Superior, who at the time was residing at the "Grande Maison", did not discourage the seminarian, who felt that some "outside assistance" would not be superfluous.

Alerted, the Dean visited the city counsellors and pleaded with them to make common cause with him and to win over to their side the governor of the city, M. Bethune. The Duke, who was in Paris at the time, invited De La Salle to discuss the matter. One day the Founder left

> ... early in the morning to go and see this Lord in his mansion. About 6 o'clock he entered a church in the neighborhood to say a prayer while awaiting a suitable hour to appear for his audience. Hardly had he entered the church when his eyes fell on the Duke who at that moment was receiving Communion. (De La Salle did not know him) but he was struck by the blue ribbon that marked the distinguished communicant . .. His surprise was very great indeed when at the Bethune mansion he met the very same man whom he had seen at church receiving Communion with such devotion. The Servant of God was so delighted with this example of piety that, against all custom, he decided to edify his community by recounting this pious adventure.[100]

After this beginning the rest proceeded effortlessly. On the 19th of July, 1700, two Brothers, armed with a letter from "My Lord Duke Bethune, Peer of France", appeared before vice-Mayor Le Mahieu of Calais and Counsellors Deledicque and Evrard. From the written report of this meeting we learn that the two Brothers were "Gabriel Roly and Claude Fouquet."[101] We believe that the former could only have been Gabriel Drolin, who had left the Directorship of the schools in Laon in 1698 and made only a brief stay in Rethel in 1699. He was therefore available before he was given another confidential assignment, this time in Italy.

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99 Motherhouse Archives, *memoire* (dateless) to Father Bemonville
100 Blain Vol.1. pg. 382
101 From AMG, Calais file

The school was inaugurated under the best of auspices. There was complete agreement between the church and the civil power. Peter de Langle, Bishop of Boulogne, sent the Brothers his blessing. The inhabitants gave evidence of the most favorable dispositions: Blain never stops praising them:

> Calais, (he writes) where frankness, good faith, generosity, and liberality thrive,(Calais,where we meet with) a great depth of religion, piety, attachment to the Roman Church, and to her ancient teachings ... attracted the affections of the Servant of God. [102]

In Calais De La Salle and his Brothers would have a friend who was more ardent than all the others and singularly suited to understand them, to lavish upon them the assistance of his influence and to console them by his faith: he was M.Gense, a solid, middle class citizen of Calais, faithful, intrepid and selfless. He thought of himself as unworthy of the priesthood, but he lived in the world as a religious. He had corresponded with Abbot de Rancé. Taking the position of a rigorous adversary of Protestantism, his zeal remained ever orthodox. He enjoyed visiting the Brothers to share in their religious exercises and reflect on the greatness of their vocation. The Founder consented (an exceptional gesture) to dine with Gense on one of his stays in Calais in 1716. A few weeks earlier he had received him at St.Yon and had not hesitated to honor him with his confidences.

Gense had already done much on behalf of the popular schools: to him Calais was indebted for a community of Sisters of Providence, who were living in his former home, fitted out at his expense with a chapel and endowments funded by him to support six teaching Sisters.[103] Of course, he no longer had the fortune to do as much for the Brothers; but he did do all in his power to contribute to the strengthening of their position in the city.

The pastor/*Dean* had obtained lodgings at the college and a small salary from the city for the new teachers. He himself does not seem to have taken the necessary steps genuinely to fund the school. Seeing that he was near death, he left to his nephew the responsibility for using his inheritance. The nephew, however, was to die prematurely without having settled anything.

Fortunately, before he died the uncle was inspired to appeal to Phelypeaux, Marquis of La Vrillière, who was a member of the Privy Council; through such mediation perhaps the king would condescend to grant a subsidy: since the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, one of the instruments of Louis XIV's religious policy consisted in handing over the wealth confiscated from the Huguenots to institutions of Catholic propaganda.

Hence, on the 12th of June, 170I, La Vrillière wrote to Father Ponthon that

> He would report this request to His Majesty at the first meeting of the Council in which the matter of ‘new converts’ would be discussed.

In fact, the Brothers in Calais received

> In less than two years more than 450 livres of Huguenot money. The same good fortune befell them in 1702, this time at the solicitation of the Duke of Bethune.

On 4th February 1703, Arguesseau “handed over to them a considerable sum” from the same source.[104]Maillefer speaks of an annual subsidy of 300 livres.

The people in Calais thought that nothing should be done to interrupt this process:

> Père Le Prince, Chaplain in the port section of the city . .. desiring for the children of sailors the education enjoyed by the children in (the rest of) the city, was determined to find them the same sort of help. He spoke about this to Mayor Thossc, who approved of the plan and

102 Blain Vol.1, pg 380
103 *Ibid.loc.cit.* pp.386-7
104 *Annales,* Vol.1, pg.132, according to the Municipal Archives of Calais

> supported it ... and discussed it with the city fathers... As one, they wrote to M. Pontchartrain in a letter addressed by their pastor in order to obtain the site of a former guardhouse in the Court-Gain.[105]

To this letter, dated the 4th of April, 1703, the Count Pontchartrain replied on the 4th of May, that

> he had explained to M. Bignon, the supervisor for Picardy and Artois, his Majesty's intentions regarding the Brothers of the Christian Schools respecting the education of sailors' children in the Court-Gain. [106]

The site sought after was granted; and taxes were levied on the residents of the quarter for the construction of a school building. The teachers were to receive of 150 livres from the royal treasury "in consideration of the responsibilities and burdens they assume in the instruction of sailors serving on the king's vessels" [107] The language allows us to presume that the school in the Court-Gain at certain times admitted youths and perhaps adults (between sea voyages) anxious to learn how to read.

Thus, the two schools in Calais were the first two to take on a quasi-official character, which earned the Brothers, well before the Letters Patent, a sort of legal recognition. But this situation did not shield them from difficulties. While they did not have to suffer in Calais from jealous competition and biased judges, they found themselves, and quite in spite of themselves, exposed to the Jansenist tempest, after Clement XI, in the Bull *Unigenitus*, had condemned the 101 propositions culled from Quesnel's *Moral Reflections* (8th September, 1713).

Peter de Langle was one of the four Bishops who "appealed" the Pope's judgment to a future council. His position troubled the consciences of the people in his diocese. There were the "pros" and the "cons": mistrust, accusations, slander1 character assassination and dirty tricks:-on both sides there was the full gamut of the animosity that religious quarrels so intensely incite. The Dean of Calais inclined in the same direction as the Bishop of Boulogne. On the Feast of the Assumption, 1716 the Dean gave a sermon without saying a word concerning the meaning of the feast. And De La Salle, whom on this 15th of August the Dean had invited to officiate in his church, did not trouble to disguise his pained surprise. Two years later a list of "Appellants" circulated in the diocese under the protection of the Bishop's office: the name of "De La Salle" was found among them. It was true, that to the great sorrow of John Baptist, his younger brother Canon Louis De La Salle was deeply committed to the Jansenist party. But the Dean wanted to give the Brothers the impression that it was their Founder who was involved.

He himself however would not tolerate such a dangerous ambiguity, such an insidious imputation. On the 28th of January, 1719 he wrote to the Brother Director in Calais:

> I do not believe that I have given grounds to the Dean of Calais to say that. I am among the "Appellants" to a future council; I have too much respect for the Holy Father the Pope and too much submission to the decisions of the Holy See not to acquiesce here. In this matter I wish to follow the example of St.Jerome. Neither the Dean nor anybody else ought to be surprised if, imitating this great saint, I am satisfied with the one who, today, seated on the Chair of Peter, speaks through a Bull accepted. by nearly all the bishops of the world and condemns the 101 propositions drawn from Father Quesnel's book, and if, after such an authoritative decision of the Church, I say with St.Augustine that the case is closed. That is my thought and my sentiments in this matter: it has never been otherwise, and I shall never change. [108]

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105. Blain *loc.cit.*

106 Lucard, *Annales*,pg.133, following the Archives of the city of Calais

107 Blain, op.cit., loc.cit., pg 384

108 According to Blain, Vol.II, pg.224

Such a courageous profession of faith was not calculated to please the people on the other side. The effects of their displeasure were brought to bear upon the Brothers in Calais. A local historian, Pere Lefebvre, says that

> M. J.B. Ponthon, President of the Board of Trade, in 1719 cut off the 300 livres that he had earlier allotted to the Brothers. Père Caron did the same thing for the 100 livres he had granted them. And another pastor cutoff his subsidy of 50 livres. Père Desprez reduced the 30 livres he had promised to 15.[109]

But neither the populace nor the government thought that De La Salle's disciples were to be blamed. The royal gratuity granted the Court-Gain school became an annuity; suspended for several months after the death of Louis XIV, it was restored retroactively by an ordinance of the 19th of July, 1716.[110] Artisans and sailors continued to send their sons to the two schools. In order to assure the teachers' support and the smooth operation of their work, the city decided to levy a sum of 900 livres annually on the tax receipts.

* * * *

A contract dated the 13th of August,1703, a copy of which is preserved in the Motherhouse archives, informs us with abundant detail of the founding of the first school in Troyes, as well as the circumstances and motives which brought about its realization. Since it gives us the opportunity of viewing the financial and legal "mechanism" , so to speak, of the founding of a Christian Brothers'school, it seems important that we present this document in all its detail.

In the presence of Meunier and Lemercie, notaries in Paris, "appeared Francis Le Bé, priest and pastor of the parish of St, Nizier, in the City of Troyes, and superior of the Junior Seminary in the same city", dwelling, during his sojourn in Paris on the street and in the parish of St. Hyppolitus,

> .. . and John Baptist de La Salle, priest, doctor of theology, and Superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, dwelling on Rue Vaugirard, in the St.Germain-des-Pres quarter, in the parish of St.Sulpice.

The contracting parties explained that

> ... for the service of God and for the education of the children in the parish of St.Nizier, the late Mme. Magdeleine Galmet, widow of Giles Daunay, and Guillaume Bouillerot and Mlle. Jeanne Bouillerot (who were brother and sister) established a fund of 200 livres annually for the support of a schoolteacher and Cor the addition of a third schoolmistress for orphaned girls.

The annuity was to be divided as follows:

> . . 80 livres to the said schoolmaster, 95 to the said schoolmistress and 25 livres to say a prayer in the parish church of St.Nizier every Sunday and Feast day at the end of Vespers.

This first contract of donation "was drawn up before Lange and associates, notaries in Paris, on the 19th of November,1700". Mme.Launay contributed 2,000 livres of capital; this sum was invested with the city at 5% and yielded an annual income of 100 livres. M. and Mlle. Bouillerot "guaranteed 100 livres annually through the income on a house in Paris", on which the foundation possessed an option.

> Meanwhile, De La Salle (sent) one of his Christian Brothers to Troyes at the request. of the pastor of Sl.Nizier to teach tuitionfree in the parish,in pursuance of the foundation .

We pause momentarily over this prologue. Père Le Bé, contributing 80 livres for a charity school, thought that for that amount of money he would be supporting one of the teachers that had already become famous throughout Champagne, one of the Brothers of the Society founded by the former Canon of Rheims. He contacted the Founder, probably through the good offices of the pastor of St.Hyppolitus, who was his host when he traveled to Paris. At the time, the Seminary for rural schoolteachers

109 AGM. Historical ms. of the school in Calais.

was in full operation in the Faubourg St.Marcel. De La Salle was still living in the "Grande Maison" and directing a rather large number of Brothers (and he would continue to live there until shortly after the signing of the contract we are discussing). Undisputed superior in 1701, he would continue to be that in the eyes of informed persons who, in 1703, after the crisis at St.Sulpice, hoped to call upon the Brothers for their cooperation.

He countered Père Le Bé's request, as he always did, with the rule of the Institute, which refused to accept a school when the revenues were insufficient to support a community of at least two Brothers. Perhaps he offered Le Bé one of the lay teachers in St.Hyppolitus'. But Troyes was seeking a Brother: the language of the official document is too explicit for there to have been any doubt on this matter.

But, temporarily, a single Brother was to go to Troyes with the view of organizing the classes. The foundation, however, could not be finalized until further funds could be found that would permit the addition of another Brother. And since an income of 80 livres was actually too little, even for a single teacher, Le Bé volunteered to lodge the Brother at his own expense. Meanwhile, he set out on a campaign of persuasion to influence his parishioners to increase their generosity. If he had to, he was prepared to call upon the Bishop's charity. What follows in the contract of 1703 bears traces of all these hopes and efforts and is actually the product of them. The ingenious calculations and rather complicated arrangements had for their purpose to satisfy the justifiable, and otherwise extremely modest, demands of John Baptist de La Salle.

> It having been recognized that one Brother alone could not suffice to leach in the school, former Bishop Chavigny of Troyes110and M. and Mlle. Bouillerot, desiring to contribute by the increase of one more teach.ing Brother, offered to provide 1200 livrcs in order to modify the contract to 200 livres of income, at a rate of 6 1/4%, a thing which was done and the contract establishing the annuity of 200 livres on a capital of 3,200 livres has this day been notarized by the undersigned.

This capital was obtained by adding to the late Magdeleine Launay's 2000 livres the 1,200 livres given in equal parts by the former Bishop and the Bouillerots. (The first gift of the brother and sister continued, as we shall see later on, to be earmarked forthe support of a schoolmistress.) The change from 5% to 6.5% interest through better investments resulted in guaranteeing an income of 200 livres, intended "to be used by and distributed for the Brothers"[111]

> And the pastor of SI..Nizier, wishing to secure in perpetuity the foundation of the Christian Schools and to facilitate the subsistence of the Brother who will teach in the schools, agreed and contracted with Dc La Salle as follows: that, namely, De La Salle has promised and is obligated in the quality of Superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and his successors in the future. to provide in perpetuity in the parish of St. Nizier, two Brothers to teach, and, to this end, to send a second one immediately …

And Père Le Bé and his parishioners were to make payments in the following way: first of all, the pastor would give over to the Brothers the 25 livres annually which the contract of 1700 granted him for prayers after Vespers and which, up to the amount of

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110 The reference here is to Derus Francis, the first Bouthilljer Chavigny, Bishop of Troyess from 1669 to 1697, who, in the latter year resigned his bishopric in favor of his nephew, Denis Francis II, who presided over the Church in Troyes until 1716, when he was transferred to the See of Sens. *(Galliachristiana,* XII, co. 523-4.)

111 The income was based upon taxes and excises, as can be seen in a docu· ment dated the 29th of November 1714, in which Bishop Chavigny recognized having received from M.Nointel, Keeper of the Royal Treasury, a capital of3,200 livres, after interest had been lowered from 6.25% to 5.0%. (Copy dated the 18th of November 1761 I Motherhouse Archives.)

20 livres of which were now absorbed into the new use of the Launay capital. The language of this passage has a flavor all its own:

> My Lord the Bishop having approved that the prayer which is said each Sunday by the pastor or his vicar in the parish church of St.Nizier for the intentions of the founders, at which practically nobody assists, will no longer be said in that church, and has, at the same time, obliged the Brothers of the schools of St. Nizier to say it every day in their classes at the end of school, as they have been doing . .. Therefore, the pastor . .. gives up the funds to the foundation both for himself and for his successors . ..

In the second place, Père Le Bé continued to place a house at the disposal of the Brothers. Residing himself at the Junior Seminary, of which he was the superior, he transformed the presbytery into both school and Brothers' residence:

> Awaiting the moment that it pleases the Bishop of Troyes to designate and furnish a residence for the Brothers in which to live and teach school, Père Le Bé has agreed that the Brothers dwell in and completely occupy his presbytery at Sl.Nizier, as of now handing over to them all dwellings, gardens, appurtenances and dependencies of the presbytery, the pastor releasing them, however, from major and minor repairs, of windows and locks, and pronounces them quit with respect to and over against all of them…

Then came a special stipulation regarding the 5 livres which represented the Bouillerot family's portion of the stipend for the prayer. This money would henceforth be added to the the 95 livres of annual income granted to "the schoolmistress of young orphanedgirls" and would round out her meager salary to 100 livres. A supplementary stipend due to the schools for boys was to be supplied by the pastor.

In this way we come to a somewhat more substantial income: an annual income of 60 livres, on the principal of 1400 livres that had already been committed by the churchwardens to the account of the previous schoolteacher, could be used by the Brothers. Le Bé and De La Salle

> Agreed that for the future the principal cannot be transferred, refunded or discharged except in function, and on explicit condition, of reinvestment for the support in perpetuity of the three schools.
>
> **T**he payments both of the annuity of 200 livres from the city as well as the annuity of 60 livres owed by the churchwardens, will always be drawn upon and received by De La Salle and, afler him, by thesenior member of the Brothers . .. the usc, i.e., of the annuities of 60 livres and of 5 livres, to be begun on the day of the arrival in Troyes of the first of the school Brothers, and the annuity of 200 livres, on the date that use is granted in the contract . .. De La Salle ... pledges . . ,that there occurring a reduction in the annuity of one percentage point, will always continue the school without being able under such a pretext to reduce its activities. And furthermore, the Brothers will be bound to maintain the benches and other things customary and necessary to teach in the schools.

This contract of the 13th of August,1703 was ratified on the 24th day of the same month by Denis Francis Bouthillier Chavigny [111], in his episcopal palace in Troyes before "the royal apostolic notaries", Fleuriot and Chastel.[112]

In the seven years following no noteworthy event, no serious incident, marked the history of the school in Troyes. Only after the death of Le Bé in 1710 did a difficulty arise, as the result of his successor's desire to repossess the presbytery. It is perhaps to this year that we must date one of De La Salle's letters, marked simply the "23rd of December" .

> Sunday I leave for Troyes. Do not leave: wait for me there; I shall be there on Monday and we shall take counsel together regarding everything that has to do with that city ... 1 shall so act that everything will turn out well and that everybody will be satisfied. I am, in Our Lord, my very dear Brother, sincerely yours.

112 Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, Troyes File.

A postscript follows: "Let nothing be done concerning these schools until my arrival .." [113]

"Everything will turn out well", because De La Salle could rely on the 1703 contract which, in these circumstances called for the intervention of the Bishop. Chavigny found a residence for the Brothers, a provisional dwelling which was given up on August 25,1719 (after De LaSalle's death), when a lease was concluded between J.B.Rosières, wood merchant, and Charles Frappet (Brother Thomas) for the letting of a house, called "The Petit Lariveau", which consisted of three downstairs rooms and three rooms upstairs, with an adjoining public chapel, 'a garret above and a cellar below, front porches overlooking a garden with vines enclosed by a wall running along the Seine. For all of this the rent was only 60 livres.[114]

The St. Nizier school was the only establishment of the Institute in Troyes during the lifetime of John Baptist de La Salle. The St.Jean and St. Madeleine schools, of which Canon Blain speaks on the occasion of the Oratorian Chantreau's active propaganda in favor of the Christian schools, were not opened until 1720, in spite of what Lucard and Guibert appear to think.[115]

The proof of this fact is to be found in the ruling of James Benignus Bossuet, Bishop of Troyes (and nephew of the "Great Bossuet", the Bishop of Meaux) and, in 1716, the successor to Bouhillier Chavigny. Bishop Bossuet dated this document from "his palace in Paris", the 24th of July, 1720.

> On the information (he writcs) which has been given us by our Vicars general that in the general assembly which was held in the City of Troyes on the 1st of July of the prescnt year, it has been resolved, with our good pleasure and the public good, to open two new schools for the children of the city of Troyes, which will be maintained by the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who are already responsible for the maintenance of one in the parish of St.Nizier in that city,i.e., one in the parish of St.Jean and another in the parish of St.Madeleine and that,to this end, the two Brothers of the Christian Schools will be obliged to send for four other Brothers belonging to their Community for the new schools, with another Brother to take care of temporal affairs; so that there will be seven (Brothers) living in the same community; we desire with all our heart to authorize a good and useful work for the education of youth; we approve these establishments and we permit the Brothers to conduct the schools.[116]

The determination of this historical point justifies, we believe, this rapid incursion into an area beyond the limits we had mapped out for ourselves.

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113 Autograph letters, Series C, 8. .The name of (the person to whom this letter was sent) is unknown" It was added at the end of the 18th century or the beginning of the 19th, by Brother Vivien in whose possession this document was and who followed the above note with his signature.

114 AMG, historical ms. of the school in Troyes

115 Blain, Vol.1, pp.391-2; Lucard Annales, Vol.1, pg.136; Guibert pp.348-9

116 AGM. Historical ms. of the house in Troyes

Chapter Seven

The Schools in Provence and the Schools in Rouen. Dijon, Mâcon, Versailles, Boulogne-sur-Mer and Moulins

Rarely did an effort to obtain Brothers as schoolteachers have such immediate success as the visit, on the 16th of September, 1704, to De La Salle on Rue Charonne, by Père Chardon Lagny, a Sulpician who was acting for Père Des Hayes, a priest in the diocese of Rouen and a former seminary classmate of the Founder.

On that very day the following letter was addressed to ``The very Reverend Père Des Hayes, Rue Ancrière, Rouen'':

> I learned this morning from Father Chardon that you wrote him in order to have some of ourBrothers for Rouen and that you are seeking two of them and would like to know what would be necessary (to have them). I am very much disposed to supply two. As to the cost, you know that we are not too difficult to please and that we cannot send one Brother alone. If you would kindly let me know for what neighborhood of the city the Brothers are being sought and what is being planned to give them, I would be much obliged. I believe that we will easily come to an agreement, and that you will be satisfied with the ones I send you.[116]

It was more than twenty-five years since Adrien Nyel had come from Normandy to Rheims on Madame Maillefer's mission. And now Normandy was calling the Founder, the native of Rheims whose joy and eagerness to respond to the circumstances were understandable. He was about to repay a debt. He had been thinking about looking for another home base, a sort of `Promised Land', for his Institute at a time when, in Paris, great hostility had made his personal position extremely precarious and threw obstacles in the way of his work's future.

Père Des Hayes told him that the Brothers were being sought not, this time, for Rouen, but for Darnétal. This large market-town, situated about three miles northwest of Rouen, already had a school for girls founded by Madame Maillefer and operated by the Sisters of Providence. Francois Cornu Bimorel had introduced a schoolmaster into the town ``to teach the young boys of the region''; and then, in order that his charity ``might be always and in perpetuity continue to the honor of God and for the utility of the said market-town'', on the 24th of May,1670, in the presence of Maubert and Lannon, notaries in Rouen, he endowed the two parishes in Darnétal together with the gift of ``a small house and garden'' situated between Rue Grande and the Robecq River, in the Parish of St.Owen of Longpaon.[1] We have already described how Adrien Nyel acted as the go-between in that transaction and then appointed John Houdoul as the principal of the tuition-free school.[2]

In September, 1704, John Houdoul, who, since Bimorel's death, had been in the pay of a society of men engaged in charitable works, called the `Congregation of the Jesuit College', (so-named because it held its meetings and religious services at the Jesuits´ place), died. Père Des Hayes belonged to this congregation, and, knowing De La Salle, he suggested to his colleagues that they appeal to him to find a replacement for the late teacher.

He had asked for ``two Brothers'', because he wanted to abide by the rule of the Institute. Besides, the Founder in his letter of the 26th of September was quick to remind him: ``…we cannot send one Brother alone''. But two salaries were scarcely to be expected! De La Salle did not want money to be a stumbling block. Without

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1 Letter supplied by Guibert page 382, but which we have compared with the original in AGM, Autograph Letters, Series C, 3.

needing to be prompted he wrote: ``you know that we are not too difficult to please". The salary for a single teacher for a year was fifty écus. Blain reports that ``the Gentlemen of the Congregation" gave nothing more than that to the Brothers of the Christian Schools.[3]

The Superior did not object. He made a quick visit to Darnétal to make sure that his Brothers would not be isolated in the middle of the countryside. He saw that they would be living among a large population, served by two churches, one of which (St. Owen's), a spacious and beautiful monument dating from the 16th century, had close ties with the Abbey of the same name in Rouen. He needed some further information, which he asked Des Hayes to supply:

> Allow me (he wrote on the 18th of November) to ask you for the clarification of a point that you have not explained, which is, whether a schoolteacher must sing and assist the pastor in his duties: since you know, of course, that the Brothers do neither. Do me the kindness also of sending me word as to approximately how many communions there are in both parishes of the town, and whether each parish has its own schoolteacher. I have been to Darnétal, I thought it was farther from Rouen.[4]

This concern to preserve community life and the integral observance of the rule is seen again and again in the Founder's negotiations. But the on-site visit for a visual inspection and the interrogation concerning the religious priorities of the parishes suggest a particularly keen concern, a desire to retrace the footprints of Nyel, his former associate, and a hope, perhaps, of discovering very quickly a place hospitable for the transplanting of a novitiate.

The Director selected to organize the school in Darnétal along traditional lines was Brother Ponce. This was new proof of the respect De La Salle had for this teacher in spite of the unpleasant events that had occurred on Rue Princesse in 1702. Poncelet Thiseaux was gruff and probably rather domineering; these defects (the reverse side of the coin) were those of a man of quick mind, strong will and a capacity for creating order. Before sending him off, his Superior introduced him, along with his associate, to the Archbishop of Rouen, Jacques Nicolas Colbert, who was in Paris at the time.

This son of the great Colbert was a clear minded, liberal spirit, doctor of the Sorbonne, who, at the age of twenty-four was a member of the French Academy and one of the Founders of the Academy of Inscriptions and Literature. His origins in Rheims disposed him to be attracted to John Baptist de La Salle. Everything he had learned about the Founder of the Brothers, his holy life and the excellence of his teaching, persuaded him to take a liking to the Institute. Soon, he would show it the most public sort of support. The charity schools in Rouen were in jeopardy. Adrien Nyel's successors were hardly anything more than bureaucrats hired for the material needs of the general hospital, wholly at a loss and quite unsuited to provide children with a serious education. From the first months of 1705 the results obtained by Brother Ponce and his associate emphasized the striking contrast between the Brothers' methods and the routine of the sorry teachers in Rouen. The moment had come for the Archbishop to follow the path of one of his predecessors, the second Cardinal Amboise who, in 1520, promulgated rules for the primary schools, awarded ``the function and responsibility of teaching" to ``people who had no other task", prescribed regular hours for classes, for catechism and school dismissals, and indicated his concern for ``poor orphans and others in need" whom he ordered educated ``for the love of God". In 1640 Francis Harlay restored vitality to these

3 See above, Part Two, chap.1 page 137.
4 Blain Vol.II, pg. 15

rules.5 The effort of the great man of good works, Lawrence Bimorel, was not slow to respond to the primate of Normandy. But at the beginning of the 18th century everything had to be done over again.

Within Archbishop Colbert's circle of friends there was a `new Bimorel'---the First President of Parlement, Nicolas Pierre Camus, Lord Pontcarré. Aguesseau held him in the highest regard; and the bitter critic, Saint-Simon, was pleased to consider him his friend. Legal knowledge united to an exalted awareness of his public responsibilities and to a fervent religious mentality, a benevolent spirit, a calm and courageous wisdom in both counsel and action made Pontcarré an extraordinary model for public servants. He was one of the ``Gentlemen of the Congregation of the College" and was, therefore, for many years interested in popular education. Once he learned of the Brothers he became their mainstay. And having become acquainted with De La Salle, he was the faithful friend of the Founder's old age.

The Archbishop and the ``First President" combined to convince the ``Bureau of the Able-bodied Poor" to entrust the charity schools to the new society of teachers. The clerics, magistrates and citizens of Rouen who composed the Bureau showed something less than enthusiasm for the proposal. They were anxious about the expense; and they did not care to entrust their affairs to a Congregation which one day might very well elude their stingy control. They confined their consent to a limited, parsimonious experiment which would allow them to burden the newcomers with responsibility for the hospital.

That was the direction of the decision taken at ``the end of March, 1705": the Bureau

> …informed that the public schools which were founded in the four quarters of the city for the instruction of the children of the poor were not operated and conducted with all possible care, (ordered) that two Brothers of the charity schools in Paris, who are people of consummate skillin the education of youth, be immediately invited to be placed in two of the schools. (These Brothers) will have their board and room in the hospital, (and) each one the sum of 36 livres a year for their support.[7]

Urged by James Nicholas Colbert to accept these conditions (evidently their temporary character had been pointed out), De La Salle came to Rouen with two of his Brothers. For the 19th of May, 1705, the Bureau's Register contains several most valuable entries concerning the arrival of the Brothers and their immediate activities. On that day both Brothers were introduced to the members of the Bureau. Shortly thereafter they were lodged in the hospital, and officially appointed as teachers. ``One of them taught at St.Maclou and the other at St.Godard's; and outside of class time", they

> worked with the other teachers in serving the poor, as was the custom in the hospital, both at mealtime and during regular instruction, and they will be lodged and fed in the ordinary way; and the regular teacher in the big school of St. Maclou will continue on.[8]

It was an experimental arrangement. No special attention was to be paid to the two Brothers, who were in no way distinguished from any of ``the other teachers", and who would also belong to the hospitals' domestic personnel and keep their Rule as best they could.

One of them was an assistant at St.Maclou, the oldest of the four charity schools, attached to a marvellous church that was built in the shape of a reliquary. In 1661 Nyel had obtained permission from the Archbishop's Vicars-general to set up classes in the St. Maclou ``Atrium", the famous cemetery with the Renaissance

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5 AGM, Letters, Series #, 90; cited by Guibert pp.383-384

8 Guibert pg.390 & Lucard Annales, vol.1 pg.175

arcades. And the parochial treasurers had designated the arcade between chapels of the Dead and St.Michel for that purpose.[9]

The other Brother seems to have taught alone at St. Godard's, in the Beauvoisine school which had been opened in 1668, in the ``Gobelin Tower'' of Philip Auguste's former palace. Adrien Nyel had been here at one time also, to get the counsellors to cede the ``Tower'' to the Bureau for the Poor.[10] The church of St.Godard, with its splendid stained glass windows, was not too far away.

And so, here were two humble school teachers, in their broad brimmed hats and their thick-soled shoes, in the rich and elegant and somewhat aloof capital of Normandy. Sometimes people made fun of them, pointed at them, and sometimes even hurled an insult or a taunt their way. In Rouen, as at one time in Rheims, the Brothers' habit shocked people before they learned to respect it. Public evidence of sympathy would come as compensation for the laughter and the hounding. One day a priest said to them:

> You are overwhelmed with abuse, my dear Brothers, but if contempt is pleasing to you, you are not to be pitied. Your portion is most precious and most glorious, as St.Peter says.[11]

The Gentlemen of the Bureau did not take long to recognize the value of the new teachers. Their Register attests that before the end of 1705 they had on two occasions asked for and obtained more ample cooperation from De La Salle:

> On Thursday, the 11th of August, 1705: Brother Guillaume, from ``Charity in Paris'', admitted at the hospital, to be employed in the education of the children of the poor … Thirty-six livres a year for his support, starting from his entrance day …
>
> On Thursday, the 24th of November 1705, Brother Joachim, from ``Charity in Paris'', accepted into the Bureau to be employed in the education of the poor of the city at St.Eloi's school … at the same wages.[12]

St. Eloi's school, where Brother Joachim went to teach, was the school of a church which today belongs to Protestants in the Cauchoise quarter of the city. Actually, it was the remodeled ground floor of a house that was situated near the ``Old Palace Gate''. Lawrence and Francis Bimorel had given 3,400 livres toward the initial expenses of the installation.[13]

Brother Guillaume (as emerges from the language of the agreement) was responsible, not for a school in town, but for the children who were being cared for by the hospital. These were children confined to a building situated on the west end of the hospital, which was called the ``Maresquerie''. It seems that it was here (and not, as tradition has it, in another main building, called the ``Rampart House'') that the small community of teachers lived, after a fashion, for the two years during which the initial arrangements with the Bureau were in effect.[14]

One of De La Salle's letters to Gabriel Drolin, dated the 4th of September, 1705 [15] informs us that at this time Brother Ponce was in the schools in Rouen. Obviously, the Superior would have entrusted the opening of classes and the direction of the other Brothers to him, while providing as his replacement at Darnétal one of the Brothers the Founder brought from Paris in the course of the inauguration of St.Yon.

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9 AGM,Rouen files.
10 ibid
11 Blain Vol.II, pg.28
12 Motherhouse Archives. Cited from the Register of the Able-bodied poor
13 ibid
14 *Bulletin de La Commission des Antiquités*, Rouen, Vol XII, 1900-1902
15 AGM, Letters Series C, No.14

It is possible that Brother Ponce himself took charge of ``the big school'' of St.Maclou which the Bureau, returning to its decision of the 19th of May, hastened to entrust to the disciples of John Baptist de La Salle.[16] Assuming that this primary school continued to be the responsibility of one of the Brothers who came in May, we would then be able to explain the figure of ``five'' Brothers mentioned by Blain,[17] although the Register makes explicit mention of only four. Ponce, would not have been counted, since as Director-general, with four assistants, he had charge of four schools: St.Maclou, St.Godard, St.Eloi and the Hospital. The fifth charity school, St.Vivien's (handed over to the Bureau by Lawrence Bimorel in November, 1666) still had its old teacher whose situation would be decided in 1707 when De La Salle assumed the complete control of the schools in Rouen.

The arrangements of 1705 had, of course, no chance of enduring. The double duty demanded of the Brothers (for the poor in the hospital and for the pupils) became overwhelming for men who wished to perform it conscientiously. The pupils were numerous, even after the Bureau, at the request of the Writing masters had, on the 24th of November 1705, forbidden ``well-to-do children'' admission to the charity schools. Each of the teachers supervised about one hundred young boys. In between hours of class a teacher returned to the hospital at meal time to dispense food to the poor and hastily feed himself. In the evening the same tasks had to be repeated, after which the Brothers had to teach catechism to the old men and preside at their night prayer.

With such a schedule, we might well wonder how the poor men did not collapse. De La Salle was able to reduce the dangers by frequent rotation of personnel. But that did not alter the fact that the Brothers who were present at the beginning of 1707 said that they were both physically and morally exhausted.

The members of the Bureau, however, turned a deaf ear. To get them to listen De La Salle raised no vehement objections nor did he threaten to withdraw the Brothers. He had decided on more generous sacrifices in favor of Rouen, which henceforth became the headquarters of his Institute.

We have already made several references to the important event, the leasing of the St.Yon estate in July, 1705. It is impossible to speak of it in passing, in relation to and alongside of the opening of schools. After the description of the expansion of the Institute throughout the realm, we shall devote a special chapter to what might be called ``the institution of St.Yon'' (the novitiate, boarding school, rehabilitation center, house of correction and Motherhouse), and we shall try to give an overall view, as well as the story of a single occupant, from its beginnings to the moment when John Baptist de La Salle completed his earthly pilgrimage in the residence which he loved.

But it is important to recall here that the growth of the schools in Rouen was closely related to the creation and progress of various establishments which were opened in a suburb of the capital of Normandy. In spite of the support of Archbishop Colbert and President Pontcarré, it is certain that if De La Salle had been unable to stabilize his Institute at St.Yon, assuring it of a base sufficiently broad for the required growth, popular schools would never have continued to exist in Rouen under conditions with which he and the Bureau for the Poor would have found mutually acceptable.

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16 According to Beaurepaire, *Recherches sur l'instruction publique dans le diocèse de Rouen* Vol.II pg.338

17 Blain Vol.II, pg.23

The entire agreement is found in a decision of the 2nd of August, 1707. The Bureau recognized that it was ``impossible for four people to teach the vast number of the poor'' who attended the schools in the four sections of the city. Implicitly, it asserted that the work schedule imposed upon the Brothers was beyond human strength, and at the same time that it was an impediment to the ``practice of the rules of the congregation''. ``We would be able to remedy'' this situation ``by increasing the number (of Brothers) and by allowing them to move into a private house in a suitable neighborhood of the city''.

Then De La Salle's proposal was set forth:

> With the approval of the Gentlemen administrators, he will furnish annually ten Brothers for the operation of the four schools, two in each quarter and two more for the instruction of the poor boys confined in the hospital, while paying them a set amount that will be thought suitable for their food and maintenance in a private residence.

The heart of the proposal, then, was the creation of an autonomous community which, in return for services rendered, asked only for a cash stipend and left the determination of the fixed figure to the fairness of the administrators. The Gentlemen of the Bureau adopted the proposal while carefully extracting all the advantages it had for them.

> Henceforth, the Brothers would be at St. Godard, St. Eloi, St. Maclou and St. Vivien:…at which schools they would be able to admit only the poor children of the city and the suburbs in virtue of the orders of the Gentlemen of the Administration. (They) shall assemble…their pupils on Sundays and Feast Days in each of their schools in order to conduct them to High Mass and Vespers at the proper time in each of the parishes

It was clearly stipulated that the Bureau would control the four schools; that the administrators would visit the classes when it seemed good to them. It went without saying that the maintenance of the buildings and the furnishings would remain the responsibility of the hospital.

A special paragraph dealt with ``the two Brothers who every day would come to this hospital'': they were to teach ``reading and penmanship to the poor boys confined there'', and instruct them in the principles of religion. The time they were to devote to these activities was exactly measured: from ``eight to nine o'clock in the morning and from two to five o'clock in the afternoon, without the hospital being bound to supply them with food''. Furthermore, ``every Sunday on which there (was) no Benediction'', they were to teach catechism ``to the poor old men and to the older boys''.

> Once the teachers' duties had been strictly and minutely described, it was for the Bureau to declare what was coming to the Brothers. Actually, it was very little: The said Brothers may move to a private house in the city, which they believe fitting for dining, lodging and living together … in such a way that they plan carefully, since the said hospital will pay them only 600 livres a year, beginning with the day they start work.[18]

Sixty livres per Brother was only about a third of the minimum required at the time for the personal support of a schoolteacher. And the responsibility for paying the rent for the residence was additionally placed squarely on De La Salle's shoulders. Imperturbably, the Administrators invited the Superior of the Institute and his Brothers to rise above their difficulties, and ``plan carefully''. It seemed that they were determined, remarks Canon Blain, ``to force (De La Salle and the Brothers) to pay for the pleasant privilege of serving the poor''.[19]

The Founder did not think that he was paying too high a price. He had delivered the Brothers in Rouen from an intolerable yoke. Indeed, he lost no time in removing from the hospital the two Brothers who, after August 2, 1707, were still

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18 Cited Lucard *Annales,* Vol.1, pp.297-298 and Guibert pp.394-395
19 Blain Vol.II, pg.26

going there. As early as the 20th of the following September the Register indicates a return to the situation of April, 1705, with the restoration of the former teachers in their educational and hospital functions.

As regards the four public schools De La Salle had no regrets concerning his decision. The first profits he realized from the boarding school at St.Yon, along with some odd money resulting from some sort of alms, enabled him to help the Brothers in Rouen to obtain the necessities of life.

No sooner had the Bureau made its decision than the Founder moved a community into a house situated in St.Nicholas' parish and, according to Dom Maillefer, leased it ``at an annual rent of 300 livres''. The pastor raised difficulties: the Brothers, according to him, must attend parochial services and ``offer blest bread''. But on Sundays they could not leave their pupils at St.Maclou, St.Godard, St. Eloi and St.Vivien. As to the offering of bread, their poverty would have to dispense them.

The Archbishop, before whom the matter of the ``blest bread'' was brought, rendered a judgment worthy of Solomon: the parish would have bread from the Brothers, but the pastor would have to pay the baker. The other bone of contention, and the most serious of the two, went without an immediate solution.

To put an end to this nuisance, De La Salle sought another residence in a neighborhood with a less demanding pastor. On the 24th of December, 1711 he authorized Brother Thomas to sign a lease on ``two main parts of buildings, with a large garden and a stable, situated on the corner of Rues Minimes and Caron, in St. Nicaise's parish''. The papers were signed on the 14th of July, 1712. The landlords, Claude Sevrey , a lawyer in the Court of Accounts, and Nicholas Sevrey, agreed to a two-year lease, starting with the Feast of St.Michael. The following year they granted a four-year extension. The rent was only 170 livres.[20] The Brothers in Rouen were still occupying the house at the time of the death of the Founder.

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De La Salle's letters to Gabriel Drolin keep us informed about the period during which the schools in Dijon, Mâcon, Versailles and Boulogne were being founded.

On the 4th of September,1705 he wrote [21]

> "At about Christmas we shall have Brothers in Dijon. We have Brothers in Mâcon, since your last letter, I think…

"Pray God to bless our Institute", he pleaded on the 14th of February, 1710.[22] ``We have just opened schools in Versailles and Boulogne…. Pray God that He will extend them more and more'', he announced from Marseille, on the 24th of August, 1711.23. These are brief victory notices that reveal a father who is extremely attentive to associate a son in exile with the life of the family.

They are a little imprecise as to the dates of actual openings. And there is no parallel documentation to fill the gap. For the schools just mentioned there is nothing of the abundant and highly suggestive documentation that Rouen supplied and that presently Moulins will contribute. That they should be mentioned at all in De La Salle's letters is in itself a piece of singular good luck. For the rest, after what we have said concerning Chartres, Calais and Troyes, the origins and early history of the schools in Bourguignon, Versailles and Boulogne cannot long detain us.

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20 AGM concerning the Brothers' residence in Rouen
21 AGM, Letters, Autograph letters, Sries C, No.14
22 Ibid. no.25
23 Ibid., no. 15

We have a sort of monographic outline for the school in Dijon in the form of a resolution of the Chamber of the Counsel of that city for the 10th of June, 1729. At that time the Brothers were seeking to open a new school. The petition they presented to the Chamber recounted how ``the piety of Claude Rigoley, squire, secretary-counsellor to the king… dots and the Estates of the Duchy of Bourgogne" had ``on the 16th of May, 1705" called two Brothers of the Christian Schools to instruct poor children. The foundation was realized ``in cooperation with the (city) magistrates". And ``Heaven's blessing" appeared ``so visibly on the work" of these teachers ``for the education of the children of St.Peter's parish … that" people sent them pupils ``from all the other parishes". They admitted the newcomers ``with charity, according to the customs of their Institute". But soon they were ``overcrowded". It was then that ``another virtuous person" founded ``a second school in St.Philibert's parish". A ``third and similar (school)" was on the way to opening in 1729 and a plan had been submitted to the Chamber of the Counsel for the distribution (among these three schools) of the pupils coming from St.Philibert's, St.Jean's, St. Nicolas', Notre Dame, St.Michel's, St.Medard's and St.Pierre's parishes.[24]

Claude Riogley was the brother-in-law of Père Languet Gery, who succeeded Père La Chétardye as pastor of St.Sulpice. We know that in October of 1706, after the agreement between the pastor and the Writing masters, Père Gery, at the time Vicar, was ``director" of the schools and responsible for watching over the admission of children to the Brothers' school in the Parisian parish. There is every reason to believe that he had, during the preceding year, acted as proxy for Counsellor Riogley in relation to De La Salle.

The initial funds necessary for the school in Dijon came from the Gery family. Thereafter, there was an appeal to the local generosity, in the quaint, but not altogether unprecedented, form of a letter ``from the poor". A similar letter from ``the poor of Poitiers" was addressed in 1704 to Père Leschassier to obtain the return of Louis Marie Grignion to the general hospital of that city. The style of these missives indicated with sufficient clarity that they were written by clerics. The one in Dijon was a printed circular, at least one copy of which has survived. It is marked by eloquence, emotion and a genuine feeling of Christian fraternity. The poor plead with the rich ``to back the plans of Providence" by increasing school funds.

> We expect this liberality (they wrote them) from your solid religion and your ardent charity. Our hope is all the better founded in that we have the distinction of being united to you by the same faith, of being your fellow-citizens, your neighbors and of seeing our poor dwellings along side your own … We all share in the same parochial bread, in the same word of God, in the same Easter, and we hope to see us all reunited in the inheritance of our common Heavenly Father…

All were children of the Catholic Church, citizens of the same spiritual city and the same earthly city. The poor insisted upon this solidarity in which both spiritual and material interests were involved; they described themselves as the ``guards and sentinels" of Dijon's lordly palaces, ``prepared to sacrifice their lives in the defense of these beautiful dwellings…They alluded to the peace that would reign in the streets, the churches and the homes after ``the Brothers whose lives were so regular and so useful" drove out ``ignorance, idleness and so many other youthful vices". Wisdom and charity are in agreement that the rich should control ``the

24 Taken from the Register of the Chamber of the Council and of the police of the Commune and City of Dijon,
in the Motherhouse Archives, Dijon File

instruction and the good education" of children whose fathers have so much difficulty to pay their taxes and to meet household needs.[25]

The school in Mâcon opened after the one in Dijon and doubtlessly because of the reputation that the Brothers earned in the latter city. De La Salle's letter allows us to assume that classes started there, at the latest, during the final trimester of 1710. But the foundation proved shortlived. It had already disappeared by the end of 1716 and the beginning of 1717 when Brother Barthélemy visited all the houses of the Institute in France. ``The late Bishop of Mâcon did not like the Brothers and was extremely bitter about them", writes Canon Blain, in the account he devotes to Brother Barthélemy at the end of his Life of M. de La Salle. A modern critic of this account thinks that the school was closed in 1714, because Bishop Tilladet sided with the ``Appellants" as soon as the Bull *Unigenitus* was published, and because he immediately regarded as suspect anybody who did not adopt a position that conformed to his own. The future Superior of the Brothers, the temporary head of the communities in the North and Center of France during the Founder's stay in the South, Brother Barthélemy, may have himself taken the initiative in closing the school without having given the principal reason, alleging only financial constraints and the obstacles raised by the Writing masters. Actually, Brother Barthélemy continued his personal relations with the Bishop of Mâcon: Blain, who had been informed by a confrere in Mâcon (Canon George), testifies that the Brother, before and after his election to the generalate sought to dissipate the bias of Michel Tilladet concerning the followers of De La Salle:

> I just received (said the Bishop one day) a letter from their Superior, who is winning me over. I saw him when he passed this way: he does not have a handsome face, but his letter is so beautiful that it should be published.[26]

Concerning the school in Versailles, we can only summarize the account given by the Holy Founder's biographers, while attempting merely to draw hypotheses from letters written to Brother Gabriel. De La Salle announced the recent opening of this school to his disciple on the 24th of August, 1711. But he had been away from Paris since February, and in the month of August he was in Marseille. Certainly, he had arranged the project before his departure. There is every probability that the Brothers came to Versailles after the vacation of 1710.

They were called to the royal city by the Vincentian Fathers, the disciples of St.Vincent de Paul, the priests both in the palace and the parish. De La Salle was acquainted with these `Priests of the Mission", ``the Gentlemen of St.Lazarus". Since February of 1706 it was to their Procurator-general in Rome, Père Divers, to whom he had addressed his letters intended for Gabriel Drolin. As a consequence, he had obligations in their regard, and he must have replied with some eagerness to the request of Père Huchon, the pastor of St.Louis in Versailles, to send two Brothers to open and operate a charity school in Deer Park. The small community quickly grew to three members: two to replace the late teacher in the St.Louis school and one to fulfill the duties of bursar. Huchon lodged the Brothers in a house he had bought expressly for them. The friendship with the Vincentians was not exactly serene. In Rome they gave Brother Gabriel advice that did not meet with De La Salle's approval. On the 26th of November, 1706 he wrote to Drolin: ``I wouldn't seek out the Gentlemen of St.Lazarus". In a letter dated the 24th of August, 1711, which reached

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25 Text provided by Ravelet, 1888 ed.pp. 328--9, and Guibert, pg. 424.}}

26 *Vie du Frère Barthélemy*,according to an account published by Blain pp.210-211

the recipient through Count Miaczinski, son of the High Treasurer of Poland he was more explicit:

> I beseech you not to leave aside the Brothers' habit; don't pay any attention to what the Gentlemen of St.Lazarus tell you.

And he adds the following line which allows us to guess at some serious discord:

> Those in Paris would very much like to act in such a way as to destroy our community… I am quite comfortable in being able to write to you in this safe way.

Of course, there was never a rupture, and De La Salle's patience and charity reestablished harmony. The only incident concerning which we are informed had to do with a Brother whom, Blain tells us, [27] Huchon kept at Versailles against De La Salle's orders, and who, in violation of his vow of obedience, and abandoned to his own judgment and to the intoxication of pride, lost his vocation and fled the community, leaving the pastor of St.Louis in embarrassed deception and in remorse for having placed an obstacle to the authority of the Superior of the Institute.

Thereafter, the schools in Versailles had a peaceful existence. In 1715, Père Huchon moved the Brothers into the former Junior Seminary, close by to the parish church. His successor, Père Le Bailli showed them the same goodwill.

A Vincentian Father was also present at the beginnings of the school in Boulogne. Père Bernard, Director of the Seminary in that city (at the same time as Huchon in Versailles) considered the Brothers for the education of the children of the poor. As adviser to Jacques Abot La Cocherie, he inspired the latter to found a school.

La Cocherie, Lord of Bazinghen, Deputy-delegate to the Commission for Amiens, was to Boulogne what M. Gense had been to Calais. Like the latter, he lived a monastic life in the world. And he, too, used his fortune in the service of the Church and of the poor. John Baptist de La Salle was not slow to include both men in his friendly esteem.

Jacques La Cocherie's income, like that of Gense, had become by this time too reduced to be able to provide all the money necessary to found a school. But, as a diligent promoter, he secured a number of contributors: the hospital administrators were committed to supply 150 livres annually; Marguerite Quesnel, widow of Anselm Hache, a notary in Boulogne, contributed 100 livres annually. The Bishop of Boulogne provided the capital sum of 13,200 livres. This rather substantial endowment was completed by La Cocherie's annuity of 300 livres.

For seven years Bishop Pierre de Langle had been familiar with the good work of the Brothers in his diocese. The school in Calais continued to have his blessing, and he gave a very warm welcome to the four Brothers who arrived in Boulogne about the month of October, 1719. He housed them in his seminary until their own residence was ready.

The community settled into "lower town", in the center of commercial and maritime activity. But before long the Bishop sent for two more Brothers, who each day went to teach in the "upper town", ancient "Bononia", whose ramparts guarded the cathedral, the campanile, the "Bailiff's Court", the seigniorial and middle class residences, and, among them, that of Jacques La Cocherie.

About 1712, in a place called "Les Places", between Rues Siblequin and Petits Carreaux, in "lower town",the builders began work on a beautiful house designed to

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27 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 64-66

be both a school and a community residence for six Brothers. The land was a gift from the king; and M. La Cocherie found underwriters for the construction of the building. The Marquis of Colembert, governor of the city, drew up the plans himself, supervised the enterprise and got the inhabitants to organize a system of free transport.[117]

In 1716, De La Salle, as the guest of his friend Jacques La Cocherie, was an eyewitness to the diligence with which the volunteer workers completed the furnishing of the school. And he himself was the object of such admiration as to trouble his humility.

But even at that time the horizon was darkening. While the people of Boulogne, like the people of Calais, remained faithful to the Brothers and grateful to them, their Bishop, adopting an antagonistic stance with respect to Rome, withheld his favor and then stirred up rivals to a community which, tactfully but unmistakably, eluded his domineering pressure. In 1717 he published a mandate that set forth his "appeal to the Council". The storm was to pass without breaking on the Brothers in Boulogne. And a time would come when, as a reward for the Catholic and Roman fidelity of the Lasallian Institute, the Brothers of another generation would find Nicholas Le Clercq among their pupils in Boulogne, the future martyr, the future "Blessed Brother Solomon".

There is no need to say anything further about the popular school of St.Denis-in-France, concerning which we referenced in connection with the last seminary for rural teachers. Founded somewhat prior to that institution, i.e., about the end of 1708,118 it survived the disaster of 1712 and was still in operation at the time of Brother Barthélemy's election.

We shall now turn our attention to the school in Moulins. We are here dealing with a special work, which was conceived and developed without De La Salle's influence and which, by a fortunate concurrence of its initiator and the Founder of the Brothers, became, in 1710, and remained so until the Revolution, one of the "affiliates" of the Institute. We shall also be taking up a charming and curious chapter of local history, in which a priest, inspired by the spirit of the Gospel, walked, as well as he could, in the footsteps of Charles Demia, and in which a modest rival of De La Salle (a contemporary who retained the look of a precursor) called upon "the great teacher" and his disciples to help him as soon as he had learned of their existence.

Through this priest, Père Louis Aubery, the tiny capital of the Bourbonnais enlarged the space it occupied in the 17th century religious and charitable life of France - a position that is still attested to by its beautiful general hospital, its former Jesuit College (now the Hall of Justice) and its former Convent of the Visitation (where Madame Chantal died).

Two learned natives of Moulins have thrown light on the life and work of their countryman.119 Born in 1650 in Lenax, Louis Aubery was the son of a"merchant

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117 Lucard, {\ital Annales,} Vol. I, pp. 246--8. Bishop Hyacinthe Chassagnon, *le Bienheureux Salomon*, Paris, 1926, pp. 29 \& 30.

118 above, Part Two, chap. v, pg. 249.

119 The first was Father J.J. Moret who in 1893 published *Louis Aubery*, fondateur des écoles charitables de Moulins, and the other was the late, regretted Brother Gustave de Marie, F.S.C., (died in 1936) who, in an important monograph, published (like the foregoing work) in Moulins, and dated 1914, *Louis Aubery*, vicaire de Saint-Pierre de M'enestraux de Moulins, fondateur des écoles

farmer" of the region. He was ordained a priest in1676 and five years later became Vicar to Gaspard Savignac, pastor of Yzeure and the associated churches situated in Moulins, St.Pierre and the Madeleine.

"Parochial Vicar" - this humble title and its modest functions were to remain Aubery's portion throughout his life. But his apostolate would overflow the limits of this ministry and his personality was to occupy a prominent place in the life of his city. A memorandum preserved in the Departmental Archives of Allier[120] reads as follows:

> Moved by the ignorance and immorality of the common people, and after having acknowledged that these arose from a defective education and instruction in their childhood, Père Aubery himself began to teach school. He gathered about him a number of children who were too young to work but passed their time in immorality and contracted bad habits which they often carried with them to the grave. They were… taught to read and write; they were instructed in the principles of our religion and they were prepared to receive First Communion. And then they were sent back to their families to be put to the jobs that best suited them, and by their moderation, modesty and instruction,and through the reading of good books, they were the source of edification to their families.

It is to be noted that while Aubery, in agreement with all of his contemporaries, rightly regarded elementary instruction as a means to religious education, he also attached to it an intrinsic value, a social importance. He refused to accept the idea that the children of the poor should be, all their lives, frustrated by illiteracy, unable "to keep an account of the work they did", subject to being cheated byclients and suppliers and obliged to have recourse to notaries in order to prepare the simplest contracts, "which reduced the profits of their industry".[121]

Evaluating the success of his earliest undertakings and vowing himself definitively to his work, Père Aubery, on the5th of May, 1685, bought a house which would be both his residence and his school. It was located not far from the church of Saint Pierre between Rue Courarie (now Denain) and the court laid out on the site of the ancient moats (now Court Choisy). On the 5th of October, 1686 he donated the building to the pastor of St. Pierre's "to maintain primary schools there, as has been done in the past". He continued to live in the house.

Along with his personal and direct mission to young boys, he organized the "seminary of charitable schools of Providence" for the education of young girls. But here he met with disappointment, and, on the 1st of January, 1697, he decided to divest himself of all financial interest in this foundation in favor of the Sisters of the Cross.

Thus, retaining nothing of his personal fortune for himself and going so far as to give away his own furniture, Louis Aubrey lived a life similar to that of "another poor priest", John Baptist de La Salle. Both men had been influenced by the great masters of the French clergy. Aubery's motto, which appeared at the head of his letters -"L(ive) J(esus) in Mary"---showed clearly enough that St.Sulpice was not foreign to him. The Vicar of Moulins and the Canon of Rheims belonged to the same

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charitables de cette ville, corrected and completed Father Moret's positions. The substance of our sketch is borrowed from them.

120 D, 145. Mémoire pour Messire Louis Aubery. Cited by Brother Gustave de Marie, pg. 7.
121 Departmental Archives of Allier, D, no. 101. Mémoire pour les écoles de la Ville de Moulins,} cited by Moret, pg. xv

spiritual tradition: they had the same hopes, the same concerns and they labored in the same causes. But Aubery's work---personal, local and having a future subscribed within the lifetime of its creator---was, in comparison with De La Salle's, rather limited. No matter how feeble a seed the Institute was, it contained the promise of endurance and growth. While De La Salle possessed to the highest degree the vocation of "Founder", Père Aubery lacked that quality, even to the extent of a Demia or of a Nicolas Roland.

For nearly fifteen years, alone or nearly alone, Aubery taught class. Then, in about 1696, he began to employ young clerics as teachers. Released from the daily grind, he was able in 1698 to remain in Paris for a rather long period of time. It is believed that he chose the Seminary of St. Sulpice as his residence. But there is no proof that he ever met De La Salle during that period. It appears that he returned to Moulins without having experienced the future.

However, his assistants left him. For a few months during the winter of 1698 he had to suspend classes; and he took advantage of this enforced leisure to remodel and enlarge the house on Rue Courairie, which meant that he intended to persevere in spite of difficulties. He made do with makeshift assistants, transitional figures who disappointed him or who may have been suspect---such as the "cleric", of whom Blain writes, who had arrogated the priesthood to himself and who, later on, was converted by John Baptist de La Salle. In spite of everything, the project survived: a variety of gifts brought him an income of 300 livres annually. On the 8th of May, 1708 Bertrand Senault, Bishop of Autun (Moulins' diocese) conferred the title of "Director of Charity Schools" on Louis Aubery. This was important encouragement, which had for counterpart the failure of an application with the civil powers to obtain "Letters Patent".

Finally, it was necessary to deal with the problem of the recruitment of teachers. Since the Vicar's trip to Paris, the Brothers' Institute had become known throughout the kingdom. It was public knowledge that De La Salle had placed a certain number of his Brothers at the disposition of bishops, pastors, Bureaus and municipalities in the provinces. The curious thing was that Louis Aubery became informed about them through the School Bureau in Marseille, from which he had received reports of meetings in which resolutions had been passed to invite the Brothers into St.Laurence's parish. Appended to a report he found "the daily regulation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, along with the way in which they shall conduct themselves in school". These documents are still preserved in the Alliers Archives along with a note by Aubery.[122]

De La Salle's letter to Brother Gabriel on the 24th of August, 1711, points to the conclusion of negotiations. Moulinswas added to Versailles and Boulogne in the list of schools recently opened. Actually, it was not a matter of opening a new educational institution but, in fact, the creation of a newcommunity.

As the Brothers were arriving at Moulins, Pierre Perrin, the dean of the counsellors of the presidium, made a gift of 100 livres annually to Aubery's school (November 10, 1710). On the 27th of May, 1711 Aubery bought an old salt warehouse in the neighborhood of his property on Rue Courairie. The previousowner,

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122 The ``Daily Regulation", a copy of which can be found on pages 6--10 of Moret's book, is takeN from the Brothers'
Rule of 1705

Pierre Poncet, later mayor of the city, let him have the property for next to nothing, while he reserved the right…

> each year for as long as he lived to name two children, poor in the way required by the regulations, to be admitted, educated and enlightened just like other poor children….
>
> On this property Louis Aubery built
> a very comfortable house in which to hold classes, lodge the teachers, and, after his own death, even a tenant, since he had planned a place for himself in the structure.

He assumed all the costs by converting a capital of 8,000 livres that he had invested in the Commonwealth of Bourgogne. Subsequently, Mark La Morélie, pastor of Yzeure and of Moulins and successor to Gaspard Savignac, received the gift of the land and the buildings from his Vicar for the work of education.[34]

> The school's first Principal was doubtless Brother Philip(John Police) born on the 16th of September, 1677 in the parish of St. Waast in Soissons and entered the Institute on the 2nd of September, 1692. He welcomed Brother Barthélemy in Dcember of 1716, during the future Superior's round of visits. He was once again at the head of the community in 1734, and in that year attended the General Chapter. (His substitute was Brother Roch- Armand Robert- from Luzoir in Thiérache - whose arrival in the society was quite recent, dating only from the 16th of September, 1709

People grew quickly to appreciate the educational methods of the Brothers. There was a priest named Languet Gery, brother to the Père Gery at St. Sulpice, who was Vicar-general to the Bishop of Autun for the city of Moulins: his family background predisposed him to wonder about the disciples of the priest of whom he had heard speak both in Paris and in Dijon. Pleased with a classroom observation, he invited the Brother Director to give several catechism lessons to the younger clerics in St.Pierre's church.

Nevertheless, Father Aubery had no intention purely and simply of adopting the practices and customs of the Brothers'schools. It was a whole year after entrusting his pupils to two Brothers that he submitted to Father Languet's inspection a *Rule* which, in seventy articles, shaped the makeup and operation of the Bureau's charity schools, the duties of teachers, and the schedules and organization of instruction. We do not know whether he consulted De La Salle. It is possible that the Founder, on his return from his first trip to the South of France, in September 1711, stopped off in Moulins and conferred with his competitor who, in a sense, had become his collaborator. But we have no evidence for such a hypothetical meeting.

On the other hand it is probable that Aubery had read *The Conduct of Schools*. True, this important work was not in print until 1720; but the Brothers, who depended upon it for all of their pedagogy, possessed manuscript copies of it many years before it was in print. In the third part of the present volume we shall attempt to supply some helpful suggestions on this point. Suffice it to say here that, certainly, the oldest existing copy of the book is prior by at least four years to the arrival of the Brothers in Moulins.[35]

In this way the many similarities between the Rule and *The Conduct of Schools* are, therefore, rather easily explained. There remain the differences which are no less obvious. The author of the Rule is still totally under the influence of the ideas and the traditions of the *Parish School* He did not easily abandon practices that were by this time thirty years old. How, then, practically, is a reconciliation effected?

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34 Departmental Archives of Allier, D, 145, according to Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 22.
35 Compare, below, Part Three, chap. v.}}

We must assume goodwill and charity on both sides. Obviously De La Salle could not authorize his followers to give way concerning articles that were essential to their educational program or their religious Rule. He was not opposed to the preservation of certain local customs that were quite compatible with a rational system of education. Besides, since the Brothers had so completely won over the city of Moulins, and Aubery's successors had left them with the direction of the schools, only the administrative part of the Rule must have preserved its full authority. And, from an educational point of view, the schools in Bourbon were guided by the same principles as other schools in the Institute. For greater precision we shall move on from these general considerations to a somewhat more detailed analysis of the educational guidelines issued by Louis Aubery and approved on the 12th November 1711 by John Joseph Languet, … priest, doctor of the Sorbonne…Vicar-general to the Most Illustrious and Reverend Bishop Charles Francis d'Allencourt Dromesnil, of Autun".36

> The first series of articles has to do with the Bureau which, in Moulins as in Lyons, enjoyed the greatest autonomy, and in fact, controlled the charity schools utterly. It was composed of five "Directors" who were " … the pastors of St.Pierre's and St.Jean's ,,,, the Rector of the schools, a cleric named by the Bishop (from 1708 to 1730 this was PèreAu bery), and two"distinguished" laymen, "residents of the City of Moulins".(Art.1) These gentlemen ordinarily met on the first Thursday of each month in the schoolhouse.(Arts. 7 and 8).

The Rector had the heaviest responsibility. He inspected classes "at least every two weeks"; he had to know the teachers and the pupils personally; and decide upon the promotion of children from one grade to the next---"a thing the teachers maynot do without his consent".(Art.9) Besides that, he was the treasurer of the Bureau who must account to his colleagues for income and expenditures, and trimestrally pay the teachers' stipends, which were 200 livres annually each.(Arts. 10 and 12)

The following articles (14 to 17) fixed the times for holidays---the 7th of September, the Eve of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, and October 8th, the Feast of St.Luke; the weekly day off, traditionally, Thursday; the daily schedule: 8:00 o'clock to 10:00 o'clock (followed by Mass), 1:30 to 4:00 o'clock;the common program of studies, and the conditions for admission:

> To be admitted to the schools the children must be free of communicable diseases such as the plague, scrofula, malignant itch, epilepsy, etc. And since the purpose for establishing the schools is especially to relieve the poor, we shall admit into these schools only the children of those who do not have the means of paying tutors …

Thus, the rich and the infectious were formally excluded. The Bureau enforced the rules; or, at any rate, it exercised an active control over the teachers. It summoned them "in order to receive necessary information concerning their conduct and what they should do for the good and for the benefit of the schools". As a corollary to this subordination, Aubery and his colleagues assumed the right to dismiss teachers who gave offense and to retain those who were cooperative:

> Where the Bureau judge it appropriate to remove them, it is free to do so and ask the Community of the Brothers of the Christian Schools for replacements; but if, on the contrary, the said Community wishes to withdraw a subject with whom the Bureau is thoroughly satisfied and who performes his task well, it is for the gentlemen of the

36 The entire text of the 1711*Règlement* is provided by Father Moret in his book on Aubery. The original is in the Departmental Archives of Allier, Series D, no. 145.}}

> Bureau to take care to ask that (the Community) be good enough to leave him be….(A.18).

We should, however, take note of the following minor qualifier: "…without, however, being obstinate". It might well have been added at De La Salle's behest.

> The teachers will present their record books brought up to date when the Bureau shall require it, in order to know the quality of children and their number, which shall be at least 100 in the big school and 150 in the small one…(A.20).

Here we must understand "class" for "school", since in 1711 multiple educational centers in dependence upon the Bureau in Moulins did not exist. The same interpretation obtains for Article 22, which offers us the interesting prospect of Aubery apparently opposed to the method called "mutual instruction":

> Teachers will not fail to teach their schools (i.e., classes) themselves, for which reason they will not rely…upon any of the more advanced pupils …

Conformably to the Brothers' rule it was forbidden to teachers (by Art.23) to receive anything from the children or their families. The "Brothers of the Christian Schools founded by the virtuous priest, M.de La Salle" are also the object of Article 24, which stipulates that "we shall accept teachers from their Community". And only for the want of them would recourse be had to priests; and "if we are obliged to accept laymen", we shall employ only "unmarried persons, who haven't been married, and who flee the company of women and have nothing to do with them".

The Regulation prescribed (Arts. 25 and 26) that the teacher visit families:

> The purpose of these visits will be to become informed concerning the conduct of pupils, whether they practice what they are taught in school, e.g., whether they are obedient, industrious, moderate, faithful to saying their morning and evening prayers, and to saying the *Benedicite* before meals and "Grace" after meals; whether they teach their brothers and sisters the catechism and how to pray to God; whether they are examples of respect for their fathers and mothers and other persons, the teachers profiting from these visits to inspire families to live holy lives.

The *Conduct of Schools* would be more tactful.

Père Aubery agreed with De La Salle in forbidding the teachers to perform the functions of cleric or cantor in the parish church or "any other role there may be".(Art.28) He fixed their rising at 5:00 o'clock, to be followed by meditation and vocal prayer until 6:15 o'clock; but he was quick to acknowledge that "if they are Brothers, they follow their own rule".(Art.29) This qualifier left the door open to a host of interpretations that would happily resolve potential conflicts.

According to Article 30 the Rector was to list the equipment at the personal disposal of the teacher. We would not dwell on this inventory if it were not for the fact that it includes a list of books which made up the library of a Christian teacher at the beginning of the 18th century: we notice, besides the New Testament translated into French by Père Amelotte, *the Imitation of Christ*, Royaumont's *Bible*, the *Teacher of Christian Families*, Père Bonnefons' *Lives of the Saints*,} the *Crown*, *The Guide for Sinners*. The New Testament was to be read in the refectory before meals and the *Imitation of Christ*} after 'Grace'.(Art.31)

The final counsels to the teachers sound like they were borrowed from John Baptist de La Salle, or to have come from common sources which were, for the teachers of the period, the *Parish School* and the writings of Demia and Barré:

> When the teachers are admitted to the practice of the holy work of the charity schools, before beginning it they will make a spiritual retreat of eight or ten days in order to discover the spirit of their vocation, which must represent the holy poverty of Our Lord Jesus Christ and share His zeal for the salvation of souls; they will make this retreat under the guidance of a zealous

> director and especially one who loves poverty and the poor, and they shall take care to make such a retreat every year during vacation.(Art.32)_

> The teacher must in all things conceive and always preserve a great zeal for the salvation and the progress of their pupils, have an equal charity for all, suffer their imperfections with gentleness and patience, avoid all repugnance and particular friendship, saying nothing that is insulting and never speaking to them in anger, morosely or contemptuously, and when talking to them avoiding all familiar forms of address, and always seeing Our Lord Jesus Christ in the persons of these poor children.(Art.33)

The explanation of educational procedures and methods are developed from Article 34 to 67. Immediately the necessity of the simultaneous method is suggested:

> At St.Luke's the teachers will be careful to divide their pupils into groups and arrange them according to the capacity of the children, so that in each group all are studying the same lesson.(Art.34)

Aubery was unfamiliar with the "signal", the small, wooden instrument which economized on the teacher's physical efforts; and he was satisfied to recommend "the clapping of the hands" when the teacher wanted to control the movements of a group.(Art.35) In order to take "roll", he prescribed calling out names in a loud voice. He used a "Reading board" equipped with letters, syllables and numbers, which could be moved about by means of a long pointer.(Arts. 39 to 41)

The important Article 42 reveals that the school in Moulins, at least until the Brothers' arrival, continued to use Latin for beginners:

> One child says 'd', 'o', 'do'; another, 'm', 'i', 'mi'; another,'n', 'u', 's','nus', and then pronounces the entire word *Dominus*. Then, we have each of them enunciate a word, and then, each one a line, putting it together out loud; then, we get them accustomed to assembling lines silently but pronouncing them out loud; and, finally, when they are ready to read two lines consecutively from elementary books, they are given the small Psalter.

The article concludes as follows: "Once the children know how to read easily and correctly (nothing less), they then begin to learn to read in French". It is as explicit as it is categorical. And yet there are people who fancy, however improbably, that De La Salle might have compromised on this point. He considered the idea of reading first in French as the foundation of his educational system and as essential to the sure and rapid progress of pupils. Would he have permitted Aubery to do what he refused to the Bishop of Chartres? Were the arguments he used with Godet Marets in 1702 still valid in 1711? Lacking decisive documentation, we are inclined to believe that Louis Aubery, who allowed the Brothers to "follow their own rule", must have in practice ignored his own Article 42.

In that case he must also have given up on Article 43, which, as regards reading in French, marks a regrettable step backwards toward individual instruction, complicated by "mutual instruction", all of which smacks of improvisation:

> In order to learn how to read French the beginner is placed with one who knows how to read, and the latter is made to tutor the novice; in this way they teach one another, without the teacher having too much to do …

The short prayer to be said when the clock strikes the hour (Art.46), the silence to be observed in class (Arts. 49 and 50),daily attendance at Mass and the discipline associated with this religious service (Arts. 51 to 55), and the children's orderly and noiseless return to their homes (Arts.56 to 58), present little more than analogies with the corresponding prescriptions in the *Conduct*.

Then, five long and detailed articles make up the indispensable, but always troublesome chapter on "correction". While Aubery rejects the rod, he is partial to the whip - a special sort of whip, however, made of "parchment" and called "the roll". To be a serviceable instrument of punishment the "Roll" had to have only seven or eight cords. If there are more than that, "it bruises, but it doesn't sting, and so, the children have less fear of it".(Art.60) The author, like his predecessors, was concerned to see that punishment had a moral value by winning from the offender his rational and courageous assent:

> In order for the children to profit from their chastisement, an interval of time must be placed between lashes… about the space of an *Ave Maria*; meanwhile, the teacher speaks some words to them which inspire them with some holy thought in connection with which they accept, patiently and humbly, the suffering they are experiencing.

All of this was, perhaps, asking for heroic virtue from a recalcitrant youngster, at the very moment the "roll" was "stinging" his legs. And the author concludes candidly: "What is essential is that the teacher must apply the whiplashes with vigor… while administering fewer of them.(Art.61)

The offenses deserving punishment are enumerated in a list of thirteen items in Article 63: tardiness, slovenliness, talking, laziness, quarrelling, "playing with their sisters", swimming without supervision, idling in front of the "jugglers", lying ,stealing, "rude songs", disrespect and unexplained absences. Punishment is increased if the child hesitates to submit to it or if he cries under the whip.

> This article (64) has a quite considerable importance, and if one violates it, scandals will occur, as it did in the early days of the schools, when the children were pleased, and strove, to cry out in the hope that this would deliver them from punishment; which is the reason why those living in the neighborhoods of schools, or passersby, raise outcrys and believe that we inflict great harm on those we correct …

The comment is a valuable one in that it implies the confession that even in the l8th century a brutal system of repression had numerous adversaries.

With Article 65, which deals with the catechism class, we finally emerge from this penal code. Religious instruction was given in class for an hour on Wednesdays and Saturdays and for a half-hour on other days. Teachers "must explain in a way that the children can understand both literally and spiritually what they are taught." They were to formulate propositions which they would subsequently analyze and comment upon in a series of questions and answers which the teachers themselves would provide.

Later on, they would talk to the pupils, questioning

> three or four of the brighter ones first...From these the teacher would move on to the average pupils and then onto the backward ones. One has to be careful not to question …
> children one after the other, serially. Rather, "the brighter pupils are placed on the perimeters of the classroom", and from there the teacher questions toward the center, and from the center back to the periphery.

These are judicious observations of a man who has had experience. The challenge to reason and understanding should be noted. Aubery maintains that truths that have merely been memorized are quickly forgotten. Concerning points of secondary importance, relative to Arithmetic, Reading and Penmanship, Articles 66 and 67 also offer some helpful counsels.

The author does not even neglect the structure and maintenance of classroom furniture in Article 68 which, besides administrative details contains some good suggestions regarding educational methods. Images---the Crucifix, the Blessed Virgin, the Holy Family, the Guardian Angels, "a print of the four last things, and "a print of 'the followers of Jesus' and the 'followers of Satan'- make sensible and ever present the beliefs which dominate Christian life. In a large class, there are benches

for a hundred pupils: but "benches suitable for writing", with their "square writing desks and nailed down" are installed for only half the number of pupils. For it is to be expected that the teachers will "correct all written work", both "morning and evening", which would be impossible if all the children were writing at once. A chart bearing the pupils' names, "opposite each of which there were six holes in which to insert wooden pegs to mark absences for the six days of the week."

The Bureau for charity schools assumed the initial costs for the furniture. But it left to the teachers the responsibility for repairs and replacements in order to encourage stricter supervision. The janitorial maintenance of the school building also devolved upon the teachers;(Art.69) so that their annual subsidy was put under a rather severe strain.

Taking leave of these preoccupations, the *Rule* (Art. 70) concludes with the prayers that must be said in school. We shall quote two of them, one from the morning prayer and the other from the evening prayer. We might describe them as genuinely "Lasallian".

> My God, I praise You and thank You for all the good things and graces You have bestowed upon me; for having created me; for having redeemed me at the price of the blood of Your own Son; for having made me a Christian; for having pardoned me my sins so often; and for having preserved me during the past night…
>
> My God, You can do all things, grant that I might be entirely Yours, that I live and die in obedience to Your holy commandments, that I never offend You; and of all the graces I ask of You, grant me especially to die the death of the saints. Jesus, be Jesus for me, be my Savior, save me by the merits of Your passion and death. Most Blessed Virgin, I place myself under your holy protection, obtain for me the grace of salvation.

The humble Vicar's school in Moulins was, thus, a work carefully conceived, well constructed and securely situated. It had administrators, laws and funds; and Aubery was confirmed in his role as Rector by the Bishop's orders. Thcollaboration with the Brothers of the Christian Schools was its assurance for the future.

In 1717 he thought that the time was right, finally, to obtain "Letters Patent". The Bishop of Autun transmitted his request on the 30th of March and gave it his support. In June the royal government authorized - but in dependence upon the Cityof Moulins - "the secular community of the Holy Infant Jesus" to accept gifts up to the limit of 3,000 livres.

But an extremely violent and tenacious opposition succeeded in holding up the registration of the Letters for nearly ten years. Louis Aubery suddenly discovered bias and selfishness leagued against him. The Directors of the hospital feared "sharing alms". When an inquiry *de commodo* was opened, they incited unfavorable testimony, the purport of which revealed a peculiar state of mind: "Brisson (priest)" declared "the school detrimental to the hospital"; Bezas (priest and Canon), said that "the school could only have evil consequences, by producing freethinkers"; "Beraud, a former Director", was certain that in a general way, the opening of the schools was "prejudicial to the State and the city, was "the ruin of the arts and the trades, and the cradle of forgers, pickpockets and rogues"; "Soccard (Treasurer of France) Nicholas Tridon (Counsellor to the king and elected official in Moulins) agreed in condemning "reading and writing" as "detrimental to artisans" who "had no need of instruction other than that from their pastors".[38]

These defenders of illiteracy manoeuvered unscrupulously. On the 26th of June, 1719 they manipulated the City's Assembly (the day itself was carefully chosen

38 Taken from the inquiry file, according to Moret, pg. x—xi.}}

through a skillful play of summonses) into a decision in opposition to the Letters Patent.

In 1721 the mayor and the supervisors, yielding to pressure from Père Aubery's adversaries, declared quit, as far as the city was concerned, the right that the royal decision conferred upon them, "since the schools were more prejudicial than profitable".

The pastor of Yzeure also entered the lists against his Vicar. In 1719 Père La Morélie, in a petition to the courts, expressed his displeasure with the powers granted the Bureau of schools. In 1724 his successor Claude L'Herondet repeated this complaint, claiming to assume absolute authority over the educational establishment and single-handedly to dispose of the foundation's revenues.

It was only on the 29th of January, 1727 that the Parlement issued its decision. It found in favor of Aubery, condemned the mayor, the supervisor and the pastor for court costs and showed no less severity with the hospital, whose costs,in view of the charitable character of that institution, were covered by the other parties on the losing side. Legal recognition was finally achieved by the "Charity and Tuition-free Schools of the Holy Child Jesus of the City of Moulins".

"God, in his bounty for the city",[39] the old priest wrote from Paris to the municipal magistrates, "has brought it about that after ten years of procedures, the establishment of these schools has been confirmed…"

The patience of the venerable founder triumphed. For three years more he peacefully piloted his bark. He had guided it through the height of the storm: the school had never been closed; and the Brothers had never been personally disturbed.

Louis Aubery died in his eighties on the 15th of May,1730. The following day he was buried in the church of St. Pierre. At his funeral there were present the children of his school "marching two by two, hands joined, clasping a rosary, behind the parish cross and the small charity bell, along with two teaching Brothers and the current directors".[40]

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39 Letter preserved in the Municipal Archives of Moulins, no. 103; quoted

40.Moret,pg. xxi. St.Peter des Ménestraux church no longer exists. The city library in Moulins is located not far from where the church stood. There is still a St.Peter's church in Moulins: it is the former Carmelite church, constructed in the 15th century.}}

CHAPTER EIGHT

Brother Gabriel Drolin

To aim at Rome and ricochet off into the South of France - such (with all its consequences) was the trajectory traced out by John Baptist de La Salle at the dawning of the 18th century. Blain explains and abundantly comments upon the event. The Founder had in view, he writes:

> to plant the tree of his society, and have it take root at the center of unity, under the eyes, and with the patronage of the Holy See; to found it upon the solid rock, on that rock against which the gates of Hell cannot prevail and to associate it with that Church which can neither perish nor falter; to pave a way for going to the feet of the Vicar of Christ, to ask for the approval of his rules and constitutions, and the grace, for his Brothers, of pronouncing the three vows of religion.[123]

There can be no doubt but what this exactly expressed the mind of the Founder. He belonged to that group of men who wanted to have nothing to do with either ecclesiastical or political Gallicanism. There is a story, which is attested to by Blain,[124] that at times he would add to his name the epithet ``Roman priest''; but there is no concrete proof for this assertion. However, there are authentic documents which testify to De La Salle's total and courageous fidelity to the Holy See. We have already quoted the letter in which he was aroused by the insinuations of the Jansenist pastor in Calais.[125]The present chapter is filled with the most significant texts. In contrast to the Noailles, the Soanens and the Peter de Langles, and in contrast to the Pontchartrains and the d'Aguesseaus and all that the clergy, the monasteries, the Sorbonne, the King's Councils and the Parlements would cling to by way of anti-Roman bias and mistrust, there was taking shape in France a movement of obedience and filial affection for the Sovereign Pontiff. The Duke of Beauvillier would say that ``we must not get caught up in Gallican licence - that decrepit extravagance that is designed to rouse son against father''.[126] Bishops, like Stephen Champflour in La Rochelle, Francis Lescure in Lucon, Henry Belsunce in Marseille took a position diametrically opposed to some of their colleagues who had been accused or convicted of throwing road-blocks in the way of the Pope. Fenelon, in his See in Cambrai, was to work out a thoroughly prepared plan of campaign, after Bossuet's death, to place himself at the head of the French church so as to lead it out of the byways of Gallicanism and far removed from schism. He would adhere ``in substance'' to the doctrine of papal infallibility. He would write: ``When the Pope's authority shall be nothing but pleasant and bountiful, we shall all desire that it be unlimited''.[127]

In this remark itself there is an obvious mental reservation. After all, it happened to conclude a hostile inquiry into the behavior of the Roman Curia. In the

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123 Blain, Vol. I, pg. 392
124 *Ibid*., pg. 344
125See above Part Two chap. vi, pg. 272.

126 Quoted by G.Goyau, Histoire religieuse de la nation francaise, pg. 457.
127 *Goyau*, op. cit.,pg. 456.

17th and18th centuries it was not possible to talk about ``devotion to the Pope''. But it was toward such a devotion (and with the same enthusiasm that drove them to the Eternal city and the tombs of Sts. Peter and Paul) that such precursors as Blessed Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort in 1706 and St.Benedict Joseph Labre between1770 and 1783 were being propelled.

A time would come when John Baptist de La Salle would think about going personally and on his knees, as Canon Blain puts it ``to the feet of the Vicar of Christ''. But first, he thought to delegate two of his Brothers. He certainly planned to bring his work to the attention of the reigning Pope, Innocent XII. The Brothers had for a long time desired that their small society be admitted to the ranks of religious Congregations. But their Founder knew that in these matters nothing must be done hastily. It seems, however, that in 1698 or 1699 King James II had been asked to intercede with the Pope in favor of the new Institute.128 It was a simple probing action; and the dethroned monarch did not have go beyond ``putting in a good word''.

Months went by, and De La Salle named Brothers Gabriel and Gerard to set out for Rome. Gabriel Drolin we know - his name was indissolubly linked with that of the Founder and is constantly turning up in the course of the present history. He is the man who must now take his place (in spite of himself, of course, and under obedience) stage center and forward. Indeed, he will occupy that spot alone, while the main drama is being played out at the rear of the stage without his direct and active participation. Was his role, then, a monologue, something played out during an intermission? Nothing could be farther from the truth. The most surprising thing is that we understand his role only by its reflection, so to speak. For the better part of a quarter-of-a-century he remained outside of France, he suffered, acted and wrote. But we do not possess a line of his own. By reading the letters of his Superior who wrote to him, we observe his actions and his difficulties as in a mirror. De La Salle saved nothing of Drolin's correspondence.

Nineteen autograph letters (in the regular, elegant, flowing and generally clear handwriting of the Founder) exist in the Archives of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, written by De La Salle to Gabriel Drolin. Fifteen are fully dated, while two bear the day and an indication of the month; and two bear no date at all. They belong to ``Series C'' of the letters a series whose classification does not correspond to chronology. To ``Series B'' must be added the copy of a letter dated the 13th of August, 1704, the original of which has been lost; and, outside the series, an autograph letter of Brother Barthélemy, obviously inspired if not dictated by De La Salle and dated the 18th of February, 1718.

These are the twenty-one incalculably valuable documents which enable us to study (not, unfortunately, without lacunae) the obscure beginnings of the Institute in Rome. The Founder was as anxious concerning the spiritual and moral life of Gabriel Drolin as he was for his means of livelihood. He assisted him, encouraged him, guided the steps of a man cast upon an unchartered shore, and urged him to fulfill the mission of herald and messenger which had been entrusted to him. Besides, he kept him abreast of what concerned the Brothers throughout the Institute, and exposed him as much as he could to the atmosphere of piety, penance and heroism to which Drolin had become accustomed when he was living in Rheims, Laon or Rethel. And it has been in this way that the biographers have drawn precious information from this correspondence concerning De La Salle's purposes and practices. The Roman initiative, so distant, special and tenuous, remained in a certain way at the center of

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128 According to Maillefer.}

the Founder preoccupations. Presently, he associatedit with everything he was doing to advance the Christian schools. For the future he saw it as the crown of his work.

Between the lines we glimpse the character of Brother Gabriel: the portrait is not a flattering one, for the criticisms are at times harsh. The author of the letters is not always in possession of the facts nor could he weight the facts as they required. There are prolonged silences, which may be due to a sort of epistolary indolence on Drolin's part, but which are more certainly traceable to the hazards of postal transmission – mail interrupted or lost. Actually, the Brother evinced an extraordinary understanding and ``know-how'', but especially perseverance and devotion. That he had moments of hesitation, laziness and negligence,[129] that he committed blunders and that at times he was depressed and, indeed, discouraged, all of this is quite understandable. We can imagine the situation of this humble Frenchman in a foreign land, a schoolteacher who had to learn everything - language, customs, social practices and the psychology of an entire people - before beginning to teach.

But what of Brother Gerard? When De La Salle wrote the first of his ``Roman'' letters that have survived, Brother Gerard had already left Brother Gabriel. It seems, however, that their fraternity was not only a religious one but that they were of the same natural family: for we read in the ``Vow book'' that a Gerard Drolin, called ``Brother Gerard'', made vows on the 9th of December, 1697. And in a letter of 1706 (to which we shall return presently) the Founder writes to Gabriel about his brother in terms which seem easily applicable to the weak and fickle ``Gerard'' of the journey to Italy.

Such, in brief, are our actors and the theme of our story. But a problem arises when we enter into the heart of the account: What was the date of the departure for Rome? Blain speaks of 1702; but Brother Lucard and Père Guibert hold out for 1700. We assume that they base their principal argument on ``a report concerning the Brothers of the Laon Community'' that is preserved in the Motherhouse Archives. This document asserts that Père Guiart, pastor of St.Pierre's, in that city, and De La Salle gave the departing Brothers letters of recommendation for Cardinal Caesar Estrées, who, at the time, was France's *chargé d'affaires* at the Vatican, and that the Cardinal had obtained an audience for the two Brothers with Pope Innocent XII. But since Innocent XII died on the 7th of September, 1700, it was necessary to settle on a somewhat earlier date for Gabriel's and Gerard's appearance in Rome, if one were going to retain as beyond dispute the episode about the audience. Since the oldest archives of the Community in Rome go back no further than 1728, it is impossible to call upon any contemporary witness in support of the tradition.

It remains to examine attentively De La Salle's letters in order to infer, at least, certain probabilities. In this connection, two of the letters must occupy us: one, dated the 23rd of December, 1702; and the other, which, unfortunately, is not dated, but it is important to subject its text to a careful analysis.

An initial piece of evidence thrusts itself upon us: both letters were written when Brother Gabriel had already been in Rome for a rather long period of time, and we have no other letter that goes back to the first days of his arrival. ``I thought'', writes the Founder in the letter of the 23rd of December,1702,130``that, after six

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129 He had at least one, however trifling (and, what is more, rare) lapse---but one which De La Salle, a stickler for details, underscored whenever he had the occasion: Gabriel Drolin did not always date his letters

130 Series C, letter \#33. Cf. W. J. Battersby: *De La Salle, Letters and Documents,*} Longmans, Green Co., London/New York; 1951

months or at most a year, something I counted on a great deal, you would no longer be living at our expense". At this date, then, it was over a year since the Brother had bid good-by to his Superior, who found that he must still subsidize him.

Is the other letter[131] prior or posterior to the one from which we have just quoted? The latter bears the address: ``My very dear Brother Gabriel, of the Society of the Christian Schools, in Rome". The undated letter is addressed to ``M.Gabrieli (sic) Drolini, in Rome". This artless italianization suggests the assumption that, in his correspondence, Brother Gabriel had alerted De La Salle to the suspicions that might arise in Roman circles over the lengthy residence of a foreigner who was without work or visible means of support. Perhaps mail to ``Drolini" ran less danger of being intercepted than mail to ``Dear Brother Gabriel".

Further, there is, on the Superior's part, a redoubled emphasis with regard to his disciple's ``establishment":

> I beseech you, therefore, let it be done at once, for the longer you delay the older you will get, and at the end of it all there will be nothing to show. What progress will there be after you have spent a year or two in the sort of place you are in now? You must make up your mind either to return or to get something started.

But there are some details: De La Salle had received a letter from Drolin on the ``16th of September, through the pastor of St. Hyppolytus'". And then there follows the admission: ` We are extremely poor, because the pastor of St.Sulpice no longer gives us anything but the minimum..." Thus, we have every reason to claim that these lines could only have been written after the events at the end of 1702 and the beginning of 1703: Father Chétardye had become hostile to De La Salle, who, quite likely, had already left the ``Grande Maison " and had taken refuge in Rue Charonne.

We date the letter, then, at 1703; indeed, we would go so far as to situate it in the autumn of that year. Gabriel Drolin's most recent letter was dated the 16th of September. By October it was in the hands of De La Salle, who replied immediately:

> You will no doubt receive this letter a few days before the Feast of the Dedication of the Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul. Make a novena (for the success of the project) from the vigil of the feast until the end of the octave.

Since the Feast of the Dedication of SS.Peter and Paul was the 18th of November, there can be no doubt that the text we are examining belongs to the second or third week of October, 1703, about ten months later than the letter of December 23rd, 1702.

It remains only to quote the essential statement: ``You have now been in Rome nearly two years. ``You must accomplish something and live according to your vocation". We conclude: Brothers Gabriel and Gerard arrived in Italy at the very earliest toward the end of 1701, after the death of Innocent XII,132 and after the election of Clement XI.

If additional confirmation were needed for this opinion, we find it in the fact that Gabriel Drolin was almost certainly present for the opening of the school in Calais in July, 1700. As the delegate of the Superior, in a group that included the Vice-mayor and the Supervisors of that city, he could have left France only after having set up that northern school.

Cardinal Estrées was away from Rome during the early months of 1701 on a diplomatic mission to the Italian principalities. He was unable to intervene personally

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131 *Ibid*., letter \#13. Battersby, pp. 20-21

132 So says Dom Maillefer. But on this question there are such contradictions in the Benedictine's account that we cannot refer to his authority with any confidence

with the Vatican to ease the way for the first Brothers in Rome. This circumstance explains the distress into which the two Drolins were plunged.

According to Maillefer, 100 livres were provided for their journey. Like pilgrims, they must have met with generous hosts along the way and perhaps accepted alms. It would have been impossible for two people to have lived very long on what was left over after the journey. Gerard left Gabriel[133] and took it upon himself to return to France by way of Avignon[134] He had already returned to Paris, met with De La Salle and, in a crisis of despondency, revealed to his Superior his intention of withdrawing from the Institute, when Gabriel read in the letter of the 23rd of December,1702:

> I do not think you should meddle with the question of Gerard's dispensation from vows. He is one of the most inconstant persons I know. He is not suited for the world but would have been suited for La Trappe. I very much regret that I did not leave him there. He is forever wondering what he ought to do.

* * *

Where was Brother Gabriel living at this time? De La Salle's correspondence does not bear an address, and it is possible to assume that it arrived at its destination by way of the French embassy. For a year Drolin had been receiving some money from his father who was extremely poor, but who made sacrifices so that his son would not starve to death. Gabriel lived from day to day, wondering what tomorrow would bring. Thus, on the 23rd of that December John Baptist de La Salle wrote surprised and with warmth:

> In answer to your last letter, my very dear Brother, I must say that I do not know why, after all my letters, you still hesitate so much. As far as I am concerned, I cannot urge you further. It is for you to urge me. If you have no great enthusiasm for this work, as it appears, you will never succeed … You have already told me the expenses you will incur. Undertake the thing when you please; I shall assist you as far as I am able, but for the project to succeed, I think it should come from you and not from me. I must do no more than second you. You know that I have already spent four-hundred francs on you, from which I see no return. Please see that this state of affairs does not continue … Pray hard and ponder what you should do.

Fortunately, in his moral and material distress, which would, perhaps, worsen, Gabriel had the help of a good Samaritan, who is named for the first time in the latter we have just dated October,1703: ``I have received your three letters, my very dear Brother, one through M.La Bussière, the one dated September 9th, through the mails…"

It is thought, correctly, that Cardinal d'Estrées had a great deal to do with the kindness shown to Brother Gabriel Drolin by Claude La Bussière, a Frenchman living in Rome, apparently as a commercial agent or consul. The Cardinal, who was predisposed in favor of the Brothers by Père Guiart and who was unable to welcome them himself, quite naturally thought of turning the letters recommending the Brothers over to La Bussière. It appears that this excellent gentleman, on a journey to Paris in 1703, had met the Founder. Had he already admitted Drolin into his household? There is no proof of it in the correspondence prior to 1704. And all that we can suggest is that La Bussière's interest had been won over by Brother Gabriel from the earliest moments of his stay in Rome.

In 1703 the Superior had entrusted a certain Theodon or Theodore to deliver fifty livres to ``Gabrieli Drolini", so that the latter might ``set himself up and provide for the needs of his institution". De La Salle wrote further to Drolin: ``I guarantee the money for the place you rent, until such time as Providence provides for it." The

133 After a few months, Maillefer notes

134 Blain, Vol. I, pg. 396, indicates that this visit to Avignon took place about 1702

exile had written some sort of a petition to the Papal Court or the Roman clergy which the Founder thought untimely and tactless: ``Be careful, I beseech you, with these memoranda you have been asked for, lest they prove harmful to us. It is very risky". In any case, we become aware of the fact that Brother Gabriel was not wanting in initiative. He had rapidly learned Italian and had thereby become an instant catechist.

> If you could have a school where you now teach catechism, it would be by far the best thing. The sooner you get away from where you are and find employment as your state demands, the better. For the love of God, I beseech you to do something about this.[135]

For the year 1704 we have nothing except a copy of a letter dated August 13th.136 This copy had been given to ``Père La Baume on the 7th of December, 1783 by the V.H. Brother Agathon, Superior-general of the Brothers of the Christian Schools". It is evidence of the losses which have irretrievably impoverished the Archives of the Institute during the period of the Revolution. In spite of the disappearance of the original, there is no reason to suspect the authenticity of the letter in its present form: it displays the Founder's style and spirit. His disciple's activities disquieted him:

> It is only eight days since I received your letter of February 19th. I was quite unable to understand, on reading it, how you could have possibly placed yourself in the position in which you say you were at the time, teaching reading and writing to young girls, and taking on worldly airs. It is no use trying to save money by doing things which are contrary to our Institute …

However, since the month of February of that year a change must have taken place in Brother Gabriel's situation---a change that he had announced as both certain and near at hand. It involved a decision that had met with De La Salle's approval:

> …stay where you are and do what you proposed in your letter to me. It looks to me as if it is better for you to be in this part of the city where there are poor to teach and who need instruction than to be in a house, even were it to teach the poor who are able to find someone else to give them their schooling …Pray earnestly that God may do with you whatever He pleases. You should be entirely resigned to His holy will. Be especially careful not to do anything without advice…

Finally, the Founder had some satisfactory assurance concerning the situation of his far-off disciple. And he hoped that the latter was about to carry the Gospel to the poor. It may be assumed that from this time forward Brother Gabriel had become a steady guest at La Bussière's. In exchange, with his twenty years of teaching experience, he tutored his benefactor`s children. But presently he stopped talking about opening a school.

There then began a series of letters addressed (all but one of them) to ``M. Santenot, in care of M. Claude La Bussière". `Santenot" was Gabriel Drolin. The choice of this pseudonym (which the Brother retained until 1711) is full of mystery. With its French look, it was incapable of throwing foreigners off the scent. And it failed to put an end to De La Salle's exhortations to his correspondent to take steps for the more secure progress of the post.

There are lines in the letter of February, 1705,[137] that show that the Founder was rather disconcerted and, indeed, saddened by what he thought to be his disciple's lack of faith and courage:

> I do not know whether you will ever do anything where you are. The Spirit of God and a burning zeal ought to actuate you, but I fancy I do not see sufficient of either the one or the other in you for such an undertaking. God be blessed, and may His will be done.

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135 Series C, Letter \#13. Battersby, pp. 20--21.
136 Series, B, letter \#2;Battersby, pp. 188--9
137 Series C, letter \#18. Battersby, pg. 28.

The expression, ``God be blessed'', an ejaculatory prayer of the Founder in important circumstances was the voice of despondency in search of solace.

And, then, calmly, he turns his attention to practical details: ``From now on, do not write to me except by way of Avignon, so that all your letters may be safe and secret''.

This letter includes an important postscript. In it De La Salle manifests a lively interest in St.Joseph Calasanctius' (*Scolopii).* Is this the legitimate professional curiosity of an educator or the preoccupation of the founder of a religious congregation? Perhaps, also, there was a desire to know if there was for the Brothers' Institute first of all, and, as a consequence, for Gabriel Drolin, a role to play in the Roman educational scene:

> I should like you to send me precise information regarding the Institute of the Fathers of the Pious Schools, their rules, their way of life and manner of government; whether they are very widespread; whether they have a Superior-general, and if so, what his powers are; whether they are all priests; whether they accept money. Find out all you can and let me know everything in as great detail as possible

* * *

Two months after having written so much that was critical, the Founder received joyful news: ``On Easter Sunday'' (while De La Salle was ``in the country'', i.e., probably in Rouen) one of Gabriel Drolin's letters arrived in Paris. The Founder read it on ``the following Saturday'': ``It was for him an occasion of great joy''. On the 17th of April, 1705 he hastened to reply and at great length.[138]

Brother Gabriel was ``at last performing the functions of his state''. At his own risk and peril he had opened a primary school. He seemed full of enthusiasm. He wanted to be as little as possible a burden to M.La Bussière. He was already thinking that he might be able to be appointed to a ``Papal school'', i.e., a primary school subsidized by the Holy See: he was looking forward to replacing one of the teachers and had discussed this project with Père Divers, the Procurator-general of the Vincentians. He deserved congratulations. But now it was necessary to restrain a zeal which, in this forty year old man, remained juvenile and, all of a sudden, heedless of cost.

> It is no use examining what chances you have missed, since you were unaware of them. You did well to continue to take your meals at M.La Bussière's. Give him my kind regards. You did well not to reside there …With regard to what you mention concerning the Papal school teacher, follow Père Divers' advice. The best thing is to pray hard and wait for a favorable occasion to present itself. We are far from blaming you. All I was impatiently awaiting was to see you be what you are.

The entire letter breathes an unfailingly virile kindness which matches counsel with praise. It is also the witness of an affection which was not annoyed by complaints but which did not hesitate gently to defend itself. To be sure, after the foregoing letter Drolin must have given vent to some bitter, indeed harsh, utterances:

> I am astonished that you should say you have never had much satisfaction from us, since there is nothing that I have not tried to do, or that I am not still prepared to do to please you. I know that you are far from doing what Brother Nicolas (Vuyart, the other participant in the oath of 1691, who had just consummated his betrayal) did, and that is why I have placed my confidence in you so completely

Why had the wound not healed? Then Brother Gabriel might very well have permitted himself to say: ``You don't have to hurry so much in Rome; you have done enough by making a beginning''.

Besides, the future seemed brighter:

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138 Series C, letter \#9. Battersby, pp. 32--3.}}

> The Archbishop of Avignon, who is Nuncio Extraordinary to France, and who, since our founding in Avignon knows me, has been named Archbishop of Genoa and is leaving immediately for Rome to receive the Cardinal's hat. He has told me he will support the Institute, and do all he can to help us …

And, more effectively than men, God will be the strong right arm of those who love and serve Him before all else:

> Try and rid yourself of that worldly spirit to which you are somewhat inclined, by applying yourself to mental prayer and interior exercises, and by frequenting the world very little. By endeavoring as hard as you can to acquire the spirit of your Institute, you will draw down God's graces in abundance

On the 28th of August[139] De La Salle announced the deaths in Chartres of Brothers Michel and Jacques, colleagues of Gabriel at Vaugirard in 1694. He informed Drolin that he approved that he was no longer the tutor to rich children: which, in fact, is the only possible meaning of the sentence, ``I am glad you are no longer tied down...at M. La Bussière's'', since the Superior still believed (and presently he will say as much himself) that Gabriel was still being fed by his hospitable fellow countryman. Nevertheless, he wondered ``what did'' this teacher who no longer gave lessons for payment ``live on and how''?

He didn't insist, assuming that the Brother, no matter how poor, at least had enough to eat. And he went on to matters involving the direction of the Roman primary school and its program of studies:

> I do not at all consent to your studying Latin [140] You know that it is not done in our Institute, and that we should always keep to what is permitted, otherwise we lose all, and God refuses His blessing. I do not like these ``Saturday gifts'', because money of this sort, received from pupils, even though we do not profit from it, is unbecoming in our schools.
>
> You must let me know how religious instruction is done in Rome …With regard to catechism, I think it is necessary and important that you should do it in your school. Is it forbidden for a teacher to give his catechism lesson to his pupils in his school? I do not like our Brothers to teach catechism in church; nevertheless, if it is forbidden to teach it in school, it is better to do it in church than not at all.

These reminders concluded with a broad and beautiful declaration of principle, into which John Baptist de La Salle put his whole soul:

> As for myself, I do not like to put myself forward in any way, and I shall not do so at Rome more than anywhere else. Providence must take the first step, and I am content when it appears that I act according to its dictates. Then I have nothing to reproach myself with; whereas when I undertake anything, it is just myself, and I do not expect any very good results, neither does God give His special blessing.

Hardly had these lines been sent by way of the Vincentians than a fresh letter arrived from Drolin that was heavy with concern for De La Salle. This time the Brother reported in the most explicit terms that he had become entirely independent of M.La Bussière and that he was no longer either rooming or boarding at his residence. The Superior immediately took up his pen and replied with a sharp rebuke.

> I had no idea that you had left M.La Bussière's (he wrote from Paris on the 4th of September, 1705)[141] and I should never have thought that you would have left without first writing me. If you rely entirely on me just now, you will place me in an awkward position, for I am less able to help you than I have ever been; much less, in fact, being very short of money.

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139 Series C, letter \#24. Battersby, pp. 38--9.

140 i.e., ``with your pupils''. Gabriel Drolin knew the language, since he had begun his theology in Rheims before entering the Community on the Rue Neuve.

141Series C, letter \#4, addressed directly to ``M. Santenot''.

He explained why, at this moment, he was particularly squeezed: he had just established his novitiate ``in a fine house formerly occupied by nuns, in a suburb of Rouen".

> I warned you that all you could expect from me was support for six months, at most, a year. Ever since I have undertaken this affair in Rouen, I have been out of cash.

However, he continued to observe (doubtlessly) a paternal kindness. As he wrote the exile in his letter of October, 1703, ``I shall not allow you to die of starvation". M.Chateau-Blanc, a benefactor of the Brothers in Avignon, asked him to send along ``fifty francs" to Gabriel Drolin.

> I beg you not to contract any further debts without consulting me; I shall be most displeased. I do not want any (debts) and I have never wanted any, nor have I tolerated them in our establishments, for there is nothing I hold more in horror… I know it is better to live independently, even though it is more difficult, and I am glad that you are of this disposition. But in that case, one must either abandon oneself to Providence, or, if one has not enough virtue to do so or insufficient faith, one must take the necessary precautions beforehand; otherwise it is neither wise nor Christian to act thus

And, at the end of the letter he adds the following sentence, which expresses his Roman faith: ``Often go to St. Peter's to obtain perfect submission to the Church".

Actually, he did not reject Brother Gabriel's gesture of abandoning a quiet and comfortable shelter in order to give himself wholly to his mission as teacher to the poor. He recognized the parentage of that impulse. But in this instance, he believed that there was more thoughtlessness than heroism involved and that Drolin, casting about at random, had been relying too much on help coming from his Superior.

It was this theme that the letter of October 28th, 1705 repeated in the most categorical language:[142]

> I have to see what I'm doing. God placed you with Mr. La Bussière. You should have stayed there until you were employed or you were in a position to live independently \dots I know it is a good thing to leave the world, but one must have something to live on, and before leaving the world one must foresee where one can find it …

* * *

Come what may, Gabriel Drolin found private lodgings. Recent research undertaken by the Italian Brothers in Rome has uncovered their precursor's name and residence as of 1705 in the *Liber animarum (Stato delle anime)*} in the parochial archives of *St.Lorenzo in Lucina*. On the 24th of November, 1705 ``Gabriele de Rolini dwelt ``all otto cantoni", ``opposite the grocery store". The address remains the same for 1706, 1707 and 1708, and it is accompanied by the note: ``Cleric, schoolteacher", also ``sub-deacon schoolteacher", and, finally, quite simply, ``schoolteacher" [143]

Six letters from De La Salle, preserved in the file, arrived in Rome between February of 1706 and April of 1707; they are addressed to ``Père Divers, Procurator-general of the Fathers of the Mission, for M.Santenot, in Rome". Brother Gabriel, therefore, regularly frequented the Vincentian house in Monte Citorio. And as a good religious he made his retreats there.[144]

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142 Series C, letter #14, addressed directly to``M. Santenot". Battersby, pg. 46.

143 MotherhouseArchives, notes originating in the District of Rome, and a letter (dated the 20th of March 1935) from the Brother Procurator-general.}}

144 Salvan, *Vie du Vénérable J.-B. de La Salle*, pg. 182 and letter of the 12th of May 1710.}}

At the beginning of this period he was terribly poor and in distress. The Founder's accusations disturbed and surprised him. In fact, was it not De La Salle himself who had encouraged him not to settle down in a middle class residence? In leaving La Bussière he thought he was acting under obedience.

But on the 11th of February, 1706 there came from Paris the anticipated explanation and consolation.[145]

> I could see very well, my very dear Brother, that you were not quite yourself when you wrote the letter before this which I am now answering, but I tried not to give you further annoyance. I am glad to see from your last that you have gotten over it. I think you will be completely reassured when you receive my last.
>
> With regard to what you point out in my letters, I should like to remind you that what I wrote was written at different times: (a) when you had nothing else to do but to look after M.La Bussière's children; (b) when you were trying to set up a school, but were still living in his house. In the first instance I urged you not to continue in that position, as I looked upon it as unbecoming in your vocation. In the second, I pointed out that I could not help you for more than six months or a year, at the most. Having gone that far, I looked upon it as Providential that Mr. La Bussière should have invited you to take your meals at his house, because I was in no position to assist you, and I am still less so now. You should never have disturbed this providential arrangement without knowing whether I agreed and whether I was able to afford your upkeep and for how long, and without our having first agreed together on a definite scheme. At present, I am far from having any money, for I owe one hundred livres.
>
> Nevertheless, I'm sorry to hear that you live as poorly as you say you do. Let me know what I can do to remedy the situation. You see how I'm placed, but the state in which you are appears to me to be extremely difficult, and I feel it very much. I unite myself with you in Our Lord, and I remain in His holy love, my very dear Brother

We note the precision and the patience with which De La Salle puts things back in place. We experience his charity. He was moved by Gabriel's distress and deprivation; and he wrote to him in terms of affection. Assailed by money worries, and, in spite of his ``horror'' of debts, and with his treasury more embarrassed than ever following his lawsuits and the leasing and furnishing of St.Yon, he was once again to subsidize Gabriel Drolin rather than recalling him to France and abandoning such a difficult task, such a slow and disappointing enterprise at the center of Catholicism.

He encouraged Gabriel by pointing out to him the success of the Brothers' schools in the South of France. On the 16th of April, 1706,[146] he wrote:

> We have Brothers in Marseilles, and they have recently started teaching. They have nearly two hundred pupils in one school alone. There are schools in the four quarters of the city. They will eventually have them all.

As he saw it, it would seem that the Brothers in the southern provinces were a small relief squad designed to instill hope once more in the man who was under siege in Rome, and that the peaceful invasion of Provence served as a prelude to a descent upon the Italian peninsula.

> It is to be hoped that as our Brothers approach nearer and nearer to you, God will at last bless your school and grant it increase… Pray hard for us who need it badly; we also shall pray for you, and we shall try to help you and relieve you as far as we can. Have patience a little longer.

The beleaguered Brother, however, grew weary scanning the horizon. He thought it was more practical to seek out help and support locally. He wrote a

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145 Series C, letter #20. Battersby, pp.54--5

146 Series C, letter \#16Battersby, pg. 59

handsome petition to the Pope, meanwhile neglecting to send information regarding the legal situation of his school to his Superior in Paris.

De La Salle lectured him even as he notified him that he had just drawn up a bill of exchange in Avignon in favor of M.La Bussière who, ever obliging, assumed the responsibility of transmitting 100 livres to Drolin:

> I am annoyed at your having presented a petition to the Papal Almoner. It was not the right thing to do. You may take it as certain, as I told you, that I have not abandoned you. If you have not been granted anything, let me know at once; in which case you have only to ask Brother Albert in Avignon to send you ten écus. 147 P.S. You have not sent me the date of your licences; you have merely written *Datum*. I should like you to send me a full transcript and the signatures.[148]

During this period De La Salle increased the number of letters. In his letter of the 21st of June,[149] he indicates that Brother Gabriel must have received two others ``after the letter of the 16th of April". These must have been two notes returning to matters previously discussed: the bill of exchange and the petition. These two questions, accompanied by some prudent counsel, were still at the forefront of his attention in June 1706:

> Proceed with your school quietly, without putting yourself forward …See what little good all your petitions were. Do not address His Holiness; you shall spoil everything. Different ways must be adopted. God will provide the means. Do not let slip any occasion, but do not be over eager

The Founder seemed to have relied upon the good offices of Cardinal Fieschi, who had been Archbishop of Avignon, or upon the good offices of the Vice-legate, who was about to become governor of Rome; but then feeling a sort of remorse for these worldly calculations, he took flight and soared above them: ``But I do not like these human views, and they are not those that the saints held".

He certainly wished that Gabriel's actions were rooted in the supernatural order. Should he give credence to certain ``rumors" which tended to suggest that his disciple's sincerity was suspect?

> I did not think your life was as hard as you make out. Père Leroy, who is in this region, told me that he ate with you, and added that you had wine in your cellar, and that you had some of good quality. A Breton priest, who has obtained a pastorate and who has gone back to his birthplace, who says that he spent several years at St.Sulpice, and who lived with you, has spread the news in his birth place that, when he left, you were a deacon. I do not know what he means

Nor do we, and we have the same reasons as John Baptist de La Salle to distrust both ``Leroy" and ``the Breton priest". A gift from La Bussière may have temporarily stocked the winecellar of the impoverished schoolteacher, shamelessly betrayed by the wretched tongue to which he had extended his hospitality. As for the diaconate, there is nothing to support the belief that Gabriel Drolin either sought the diaconate or received it. In taking such a step he would have sinned against religious obedience; and, had he definitively entered orders, it would have become impossible for him, on his return to France in 1728, to pronounce in the Institute vows that conformed to the Rule as approved by the Bull of 1725.[150] But Brother Gabriel's handwritten vow formula was found in the Motherhouse Archives in 1934.

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147 Trans'.Note: The ``ecu" was worth three livres.}} But do not do so if you have obtained something, for he will be hard put to find money…The post leaves every week; why do you not write to me?

148 Letter of the 12th of May, 1706.Series C, letter #11. Battersby, pp. 62--3

149 *Ibid.* letter # 26. Battersby, pp. 73--75

150 *Septimo* of the Bull*: Quod nullus e Fratribus sacerdotium ambiat, aut ad ordines Ecclesiasticos aspiret.*

What is probable is that Drolin, who had done his theological studies prior to 1684, thought it prudent to adopt the rank of cleric so as not to be disturbed in his teaching. This is why De La Salle, in his letter of the 12th of May, 1710,[151] asked Drolin whether it was true that he had sought the tonsure. We have seen that the *Stato delle anime* of St.Lorenzo referred to him as a clerical schoolteacher and also as a sub-deacon. In Rome a community like De La Salle's was unprecedented. It was hardly possible for Drolin, a foreigner and isolated, clearly to define his religious status. He performed functions analogous to those of the Fathers of the Pious Schools, who were Clerics Regular. Among the ranks of the Roman Clergy, Brother Gabriel was easily mistaken, and doubtless for a long time he allowed himself to be mistaken.

In any case, he ceased eluding the Founder's injunctions and, on the 26th of November, 1706,[152] he won praise for having ``desisted'' from his somewhat rash solicitations and for having been entirely devoted to his mission as a teacher. It was a consolation for De La Salle to know that Brother Gabriel continued ``to have a large number of pupils''.

> But (he asks}) does no Italian ever ask you questions about your school being tuition-free? Does not this make you known? Does no one ever make inquiries as to what you live on,153 or who makes it possible for you to conduct your school without charging fees?

The Founder correctly thought that the Institute, represented by Drolin, would, by its rules and methods strictly observed, force itself upon the attention of the people and the Roman authorities. However, he did not wholly discourage Gabriel from applying to certain individuals of goodwill:

> I know His Eminence Cardinal La Tremouille. He is a blunt, good-natured man. Here (in Paris) I have seen the former Vice-legate of Avignon who left last August. I think he has gone back to Rome. He is a priest who had a great esteem for our schools in Avignon

Brother Gabriel ``made known'' to his Superior ``in detail the use of his time''. This was an evident witness to the unity that existed between the French communities and the courageous pioneer in a foreign outpost. Once more, De La Salle wanted to associate him with his own personal concerns and aspirations. It was at this time that he had Brother Thomas seek out the large piece of property in which the Brothers on Rue Princesse were able freely to attend their exercises and to accord hospitality to the Brothers teaching in the provinces:

> Pray for us, especially as soon as you receive this letter, and from Christmas Day to Sunday, the day after New Year's Day. Make a novena to St.Peter for a special pressing need of importance to our community.

The Founder at the time ``was usually at the house on Rue St.Honoré", with the Brothers who taught ``in St. Roch's school''.This indication of the address, which confirms information supplied by various official documents, accounts for an interesting allusion to Gabriel Drolin's brother. The house was ``near (your brother's) residence'': De La Salle ``had him made sacristan (there), because he was not doing very well in the world, but he is now quite steady and well behaved and comes to confession'' to the ever merciful Superior.

The Founder in Paris and his disciple in Rome then went through a period of trials. We are informed about it in the letter of the 1st of April,1707.[154] ``I was very sorry to learn about your illness, and I am glad that God has given you back your health. I, also, have been unwell for six weeks, being unable to walk.'' He was

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151 Series C, letter \#10, see {\ital infra.} Battersby, pp. 125--7

152 SeriesC, letter #34. Battersby, pp. 78--80

153 Guibert's reading, ``*Doesn't anybody ask to pay*?'' does not correspond to the original text

33. lSeries C etter #23. Battersby, pp. 85--6

referring to the tumor on the knee which forced De La Salle to entrust himself to the dread hands of the surgeons of his time. As to Brother Gabriel's malady, it was thought to have been the consequence of his privations and exertions. He genuinely had to have a lofty courage and the grace of state to surmount this crisis and not, immediately thereafter, lapse into self-pity.

His superior was aware of the harshness of his exile. He had never given up the idea of establishing a regular community in Rome by providing a replacement for the inconstant Gerard. In a letter of April, 1705, De La Salle wrote that (in 1702) he had thought of sending Gabriel the Brother who had since become the principal of the first school in Avignon.

Drolin, however, ``wouldn't have it''. But wasn't Drolin right at the time to have refused a companion in misery and painful uncertainty? In 1707 the situation had changed; and, after six years of isolation and two years of teaching in a popular school, he would certainly welcome enthusiastically the colleague that De La Salle, (``greatly desiring to give you more rest and a greater opportunity of applying yourself to prayer'') had promised for ``the end of the summer''.

The letter concluded with a new bulletin on the Institute's progress: Brother Albert ``had made another foundation'', this one in Valrèas in the diocese of Vaison: ``His Lordship the Bishop (of Vaison)'', whom Brother Gabriel knew, had shown his kindness by housing the Brothers in a building belonging to him. Brother Ponce had recently opened a school in Mende, ``a French episcopal city on the borders of Languedoc''. In these words there is an *imperitoria brevitas*} and, indeed, the sound of triumph.

* * * *

But for Gabriel there was no ``angel'' arriving from France. And as we look at the record from April, 1707 to February, 1710 we find that there are no further messages sent to Rome.

Surely, there couldn't have been a complete interruption in the correspondence for a period of three years, at least on De La Salle's side. The only plausible explanation is that a group of letters has been lost. Somewhat tentatively we must try to restore the thread of events, and the letters of 1710 will help us to do so.

The first of these is the letter of February 14th,[155].which informs us of the sending of two earlier messages, one ``in August and the other at the end of November'', 1709. Even during that terrible year, then, De La Salle sought to be united in thought and affection with the exile. But because he had to struggle with misery, famine and illness, there could be no question of sending another Brother over the Alps.

France itself had been conquered and reduced to ruin. How could the beleaguered Superior set about getting money to his disciple in Italy? There is every reason to believe that throughout the entire year of 1709 Drolin did not receive a penny. Fortunately, La Bussière was still there, and his door was never closed to the schoolteacher. It opened wide once again when the Brother, broke, returned like a prodigal to the hospitable home of his Roman host. On this point also the letter of the 14th of February supplies us with some indisputable details.

But by the time it was written Gabriel's sacrifices had already borne fruit; and the future was taking shape. After a silence which, judging by the last sentence of the

155 A.M.G. Series C, letter \#25, addressed directly to ``M. Santenot''. Battersby, pp. 121--3

document, had been extraordinarily long, the Brother in Rome sent up a shout of triumph, to which the Founder's response can only be described as the prolongation.

On that February 14th a letter from Drolin, dated the 7th of November, had only just arrive at Rue La Barouillère in Paris.

``I am joyful", wrote De La Salle. And how justified was that joy! Brother Gabriel ``now had a Papal school". Up to that time he had only a simple authorization to teach. Henceforth, he would be numbered among the teachers that the Holy See sanctioned to head its official schools, called ``regional", because they were spread throughout the different neighborhoods or ``regions of the city". He owed this signal favor to the intervention of a bishop in Comtat-Venaissin, Bishop Joseph Guyons Crochans of Cavaillon, who had made up his mind about the Brothers' work from what he had seen of it in Avignon.

This had been the goal to which the Founder had been ``aspiring":

> I have asked Brother Ponce (he wrote) to go and pay his respects to the Bishop of Cavaillon on my behalf, and to express my gratitude for his services to you. We shall have to try and give you another Brother in the near future. I am pleased you have left La Bussière's, and I'm writing to thank him for his kindness to you and for the favor he did you. I shall tell him also that I shall not forget him, that I shall pray for him and have prayers said for him and his family. I am glad you have made a retreat to try and regain the spirit of your state more abundantly and the spirit of prayer. I shall pray that God may give them to you…
>
> I know there is a lot of work to do where you are, and I am glad you have a large number of pupils. I am aware also that there is great corruption, and that it is necessary to exercise special attention and vigilance over oneself to avoid it. Thank God He has preserved you from it by His grace so far.

``Glad", ``thanks", ``pleased", ``blessing" - the repetition of these terms express the joy of a saintly soul: indeed, in the full thrust of their original meaning, they light up De La Salle's sober, cautious style.

They cushion and relax the reproach that perhaps steals into the closing lines of the letter: ``Our Brothers have made foundations in Grenoble, Alès, Mende, and Mâcon since I last heard from you, I think. Pray that God may bless our Institute." Had the Founder no ``reply" from Gabriel since the Brothers had gone to Alès and Grenoble - i.e., since October or November of 1707? And he also mentions Mende; in which case, we would have to believe that the letter of the 1st of April, 1707, quoted above, in which the work of Brother Ponce is announced, had gone unanswered. The qualifier, ``I think" allows us to assume thatthe Founder, in these conditions, was placing no great confidence in his memory. But what he was keenly aware of and what remains very difficult for us to explain, even when the hazards of the mails and wartime conditions are taken into consideration, is the fact that Gabriel Drolin let months go by without giving any sign of life.

We must remember, of course, that at the time communication with Drolin was intermittent and uncertain. If proof were needed on this score, we have it in the opening lines of the letter of 12th of May, 1710,[156]addressed to ``Mr.Gabrieli Santenot, Roma":

> My very dear Brother, It was with great consolation that I received your last. You say you received no letter from me except the one of February 14th. I can tell you, however, that since August or September, that was the third I had written, being very much in want of news of you. I am sorry that the lack of letters from me should have diminished your piety. It would have been a pity if you had given up your school, since it was clear that up to then God had

156 Series C, letter #10. It bears the date, ``this 12th day of May"; and there is no doubt but what the year is 1710. Battersby, pp. 125--7

wished it. Of course, you should teach catechism every day to your pupils. I do not know why you say it is very difficult for you being alone, to take the pupils to holy Mass. The best reason you give me for having a second Brother is that you are no longer young, and that it is time to train another to the language and the customs of the country. I see very well your reasons against it, and it is difficult to find a solution, first because at present, the rate of exchange is so high in France that one loses heavily, and the times are so bad that it would be very difficult to supply the necessary funds from this end. Twelve ``pistoles'' would be more than twice the amount here. But as you say it would only be for one year, we need not hesitate too much

I do not know what you mean by saying that up to now you have appeared only half-regular. Have you made some change in your habit, or in your appearance? Let me know exactly what. Doubtless, if you are two, you will both have to appear the same. You would do well to talk it over with the Secretary to the Cardinal-vicar

I do not know why you say you have been granted a ``pistole'' a month only as a private individual and not as a schoolmaster. I thought you told your brother that the Papal arms were over the door of your school, and that it is a Papal school. That is how I understood things since then, and I thought that the reason for your living near the Capuchins was because your school is in that quarter. It seems fitting that you should have such a school and the licences.

I shall endeavor to send you a Brother during the next vacation. Take the necessary measures for that purpose. I shall send you two school prayer books. There are some in Avignon. Brother Ponce could send them to you. I am quite in agreement with your writing to him sometimes….

I have not yet thought of going to Rome. It would be very difficult for me at present. I do not omit to pray for you and for the success of your work. I am annoyed that you should have had to communicate so much with the world. It's easy to understand how your piety must have suffered. Take up mental prayer again in earnest, I beseech you

You did well not to enter the place they want to put you in. That would have meant the end of all, and you would have had reason to say that the work of eight years had been lost …

So what the Pope gives you is only a sort of alms? Explain. I have been told that you wanted to receive the tonsure. Let me know all about it. You know very well that it is contrary to the custom of our Institute. It is not true that I do not speak my mind to you. I tell you things straightforwardly, and as I see them.

You must try to increase the number of your pupils. I am glad you go from time to time to make a retreat with the Vincentian Fathers. You told me in your last that you had at least sixty pupils. I am very glad you have freed yourself from your Ordinandi. Try to cut away from the rest as soon as possible. I beseech God to grant you His spirit. I remain, my very dear Brother, yours in O.L.

The importance of this letter is inescapable. From both the spiritual and the educational points of view, it was a vigorous nudge coming from a Superior who sensed a certain relaxation, a certain deviation in the performance of one of his men. Gabriel acknowledged his faults in what must surely have been frank, quite candid and filial letters to De La Salle; he didn't even hide the changes of mood occasioned by criticism he thought unmerited and by allusions he found wanting in clarity. He spoke of his progress and his failures, his opposition to advice that would have diverted him from his essential mission, and decisions he had taken to ``disengage'' himself from too comfortable circumstances and too little consistent with his religious vows. He spoke also of his accommodations with the spirit of the world, his ``partial'' regularity, the cooling of his zeal, his distaste for his job and, lacking news from France, for the silence into which he had been recently plunged.

He complained about the inadequacy of his stipend. And this is why De La Salle feared that the Pope was offering Drolin nothing more than an ``alms''. But there is no reason to doubt that the school ``close to the Capuchins'' was an institution recognized and subsidized by the Holy See. While in the beginning the situation of the French educator had perhaps been inferior to that of his Roman colleagues, it quickly became clear that he was on the same footing. Returning for a moment to the *Stato delle anime*, there is an interruption in the information supplied by the registers starting in 1709 (which confirms, at least for that year, Brother Gabriel's return to La Bussière's). Then, the name of ``Don Gabriele Drolini, French schoolteacher'', reappears in 1712, this time on the register for the parish of Santa Susanna, with the address ``alley opposite the Capuchins''. The 1717 entry is as follows: ``Ferrea Street, below the Filippis' house, D. Gabriele Drolini, French, teacher in a Papal school''. The residence remained unchanged until the end of Drolin's sojourn in Rome.

The moment the Brother announced to his friends that he was in possession of a Pontifical school and that the coat-of-arms of Clement XI hung over the door of his establishment, he was obviously settled into the neighborhood of the Capuchins. One might say that Drolin ``had arrived''. Henceforth, De La Salle wrote him without a go-between. And, on two of the 1712 letters he added (finally, better informed) the title ``teacher in one of the Papal schools'' to the name Gabrieli Drolini''.

It is understandable that henceforth the Superior would be even more preoccupied with ``giving him another Brother'', in spite of the harshness of the times and in spite of the unfavorable rate of exchange. At the end of a year the assistant would no longer be a financial burden, since he would be receiving a regular salary from the Holy See. It would be well immediately to initiate steps with the Cardinal-vicar in order to assure the smooth operation of a new house in the Institute. And perhaps the time would come when the Founder might have the immense delight of being introduced to the Holy Father surrounded by his Brothers.

* * * *

In 1711, at the end of his first journey into Provence, John Baptist de La Salle had recourse to the kindness of Count Miaczinski in order to send his counsels and reflections to Brother Gabriel. The letter entrusted to the Polish nobleman is dated from Marseille ``the 24th of August''.[157] It was obviously scribbled in haste. Transmitting his letter in a ``sure'' way, De La Salle did not hesitate to speak his mind freely:

> Let me know exactly how your affairs are prospering. As the Pope has six schools in Rome, it would be very desirable that they should all be in the hands of our Brothers.

A noble ambition! After mentioning the opening of new schools in Versailles, Boulogne and Moulins and ordering Drolin not to change the habit worn by the Brothers, whatever the Vincentians might say, he then added the following postscript:

> I am returning to the north of France. Let me know how you are received by Cardinal La Tremouille. I dined with the Bishop of Cavaillon and I thanked him for his kindness to you.

The following year two letters were sent, once again, from Marseille. They show the Founder under full apostolic activity and at the same time with his eyes turned toward Rome from which only a very short voyage separated him. In the great Mediterranean port city, he was like Moses at the entrance to the Promised Land. He dreamed of soon crowning his work with a pilgrimage to the Eternal City.

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157 Series C, letter \#15. Battersby, pp. 133--4

The first of the two letters is not dated, but this lacuna is easily supplied. All indications point to August, 1712 as the period of its composition.[158]

> I had hoped to be able to go and see you, and I was on the point of leaving in company with a certain Ricordeau, a Canon of the Chapter of Troyes, who left for Rome a month ago, when something occurred here which delayed me from going, a matter of some urgency, which, however, came to nothing eventually. It will be difficult for me to send you another Brother before I have opened a novitiate in this region, which, in fact, I intend to do immediately, for they require subjects from this part of the country owing to the dialect which differs from the rest of France …Let me know whether I can bring any books when I go to see you, and at what price, for I do not wish to have to wait for payment. As soon as the novitiate is established I shall go and see you and talk things over with you.

The postscript puts Brother Gabriel on his guard against Father Ricordeau, who was nearly the Founder's travelling companion. The Founder had learned that the Canon from Troyes was under interdict. ``If he is still in Rome, do nothing for him but with reserve."

In the letter of the 16th of December, 1712,[159]written after Ricordeau's return to Marseille, De La Salle writes severely of this priest:

> He is not a man whom one can trust much...I did not want to interest myself in him, and he was angry because I did not give him letters of introduction. But I was careful not to do so since he did not wish to tell me the reason for his journey to Rome and because I knew he had been suspended by his Bishop, whom I esteem and honor greatly

These observations suggest that only a qualified reliance could be placed upon some of the reports that Canon Ricordeau brought back concerning Brother Gabriel. Obviously, if, in the same letter in which he declared the man suspect, De La Salle repeats the Canon's allegations, he does so with reservations: if any refutation were needed, he leaves that task to Gabriel.

> Is it true that you wear a long soutane and a long mantle as I was told by Canon Ricordeau who came back in the Pope's galleys? If that is so, what do you expect the other Brother to do; you know that you will both have to be clothed alike and wear the habit of the Institute. I am told that you have a very small hat. The Vincentian Fathers do not change their hat in Italy. I should be glad if a companion could keep
> you from frequent contacts with the world, and if the Papal grant could go to him. I look upon what has been begun in Rome, in fact, as something important. But we shall have to wait until the novitiate, which I opened here four months ago, is well established before I can go and see you, and before I can send someone who will be from this region…
>
> Canon Ricordeau told me that one of the masters of the Papal schools is very old, whose school a Brother could easily obtain and that there were only three Papal schools in Rome. Is that the case? He informed me also that you had only thirty pupils, and that you were not very assiduous in the performance of your school duties.
>
> It is a good thing that you went to teach catechism to the poor Frenchmen in the two hospitals, as you mentioned, and it would be right to continue this practice.

John Baptist de La Salle was to die without seeing Rome, and without ever again seeing Gabriel Drolin. The correspondence would languish, and, what with the vicissitudes of the Founder's life in 1713 and 1714, his infirmities and old age, it would cease. Brother Gabriel, too, would be discouraged from writing. What was the use -the mails were too uncertain or unscrupulous persons to whom letters were entrusted destroyed them after having read them. And, besides, the unfortunate

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158 *Ibid.*, letter \#7. The letter of the 16th of December 1712 determines the date of the present one: in December the novitiate in Marseille had begun, according to De La Salle, ``four months previously". It ``was going to be started" when the first letter was written.
159 Series, C, letter \#21. Battersby, pp. 141--3

Drolin was left alone, always alone: the promised assistant never materialized under Rome's dusty sunshine.

Nevertheless, with a heroism that seemed to increase with age, the solitary figure held out. He was rooted by his devotion and fidelity. In his conduct, his prayer and in his teaching methods he remained a Brother of the Christian Schools. He was a marvelous soldier who, for a quarter of a century, awaited his relief and who repeated the pass-words to himself in order to hand them on faultlessly to those who would finally come.

His Superior was not unaware of his virtues. All sorts of physical barriers stood between him and his disciple; but, in God's presence, he was united to the pure and upright soul of Gabriel Drolin. And there can be no doubt but what the Founder's prayers obtained immense graces for the Brother. On the spiritual plane the exile remained within the scope of De La Salle's influence. But then the bonds forged between them in 1691 and in 1694 were never broken.

It would be distressing, strange and almost revolting that before the final meeting in eternity a Father's crowning testimonial should fail to console the son and do him the justice that was so rightly his. Fortunately, we have the letter of the 5thof December, 1716.160. It is of a quality to appease posterity as it did Brother Gabriel Drolin._

The gentlest and most confiding language bursts from the heart of the holy old man. The letter accounts for the silences; and recalls, without emphasis, the sufferings that filled De La Salle's years since 1712. It alludes to the melancholy Jansenist quarrel that so profoundly disrupted the French church and in which Cardinal Noailles played a somewhat less than honorable role. And, finally, but especially, his words proved to an eldest son in a foreign land that he still kept his place, with all its rights, in the great family, most of whose members now knew him only by reputation.

> It has been very much against my wishes that I have not written to you for so long. I wrote several times without receiving an answer from you. I believe it is because my letters were intercepted, as I have learnt that some of yours to me have been. I have had a number of disappointments since then, and I am now residing in the suburbs of Rouen, at a house called St.Yon where the novitiate is.
>
> I assure you that I have much tenderness and affection for you …
>
> For practically ten months past I have been ill in this house where I have been living for a year. The affair of His Grace the Archbishop of Paris is causing a good deal of trouble among the bishops. I do not know what is thought of it in Rome.
>
> I was greatly consoled by your last, and by the continuance of your affection and kindheartedness, which gave me much pleasure. I beseech you to let us know how your affairs are prospering. I was hoping to send you these holidays a Brother who has been in Rome and who knows a little Italian, who is steady and a good teacher, but he has been appointed elsewhere in the belief that his services there will be of great importance.
>
> The Brothers are preparing for a general assembly to take place from Ascension Day to Pentecost, for the purpose of settling a number of questions relating to the Rules and the general conduct of the Institute. I pray you to give your consent to everything that will be decided at this assembly by the principal Brothers of the Society….

This was the last autograph letter, whose firm and tidy writing indicates the persistence of a magnificent energy in the evening of a life that had been sorely

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160 Series C, letter \#19.Battersby, pp. 149--50

afflicted. It was written on the very day on which Brother Barthélemy left St.Yon to visit all the communities of the Institute in France in order to gather votes in support of the convocation, its agenda and its powers. Brother Bartholomew mailed the letter in Avignon during the first days of 1717.

Gabriel's reply never reached its destination. We know this through a letter full of details that was sent to Rome in February, 1718.

De La Salle was staying at the time in Paris, in the priests' community of St.Nicolas Chardonnet. Since May of 1717 he had ceased to be Superior. Brother Barthèlemy, his successor, had met him in the capital in order to conclude some important business.

Brother Joseph, the former Visitor who had become one of the two Assistants to the Superior-general, explained that he had received a letter from Gabriel Drolin in which he expressed his surprise and distress at having been left without news: only once in the past year had he a letter from De La Salle (the letter of the 5th of December, 1716 which, after leaving Avignon, must havereached its destination toward the end of January 1717.)

Such a lengthy silence would not have surprised Drolin, if he himself had not sent his prior consent to the acts of the Chapter. Brother Barthélemy, in cooperation with De La Salle, wrote from Paris on the 18th of February 1718,161 that his letter had not been received. He informed Brother Gabriel of what had taken place over the past several months: his own election, the election of the Assistants, John and Joseph, the purchase of the St.Yon property which had been previously decided upon, and the plan for a foundation in Canada. These are important events in the history of the Christian Brothers. We owe it to Gabriel Drolin to have the account of them from a most authoritative source.

Regarding the Roman exile, the thoughts and purposes of the superiors had not varied: De La Salle, wrote Brother Barthélemy,

> … has asked me to send you his affectionate greetings, and wishes me to ask whether you want us to send you, during the coming vacation, a Brother to assist you. We shall endeavor to choose a good one who will be able to help you and continue the work after you.

The young Superior wrote with a cordiality colored by the deference owed to a Brother who was forty years his senior and had entered the Institute nineteen years before him. ``It is with great pleasure that (he) writes this letter." He ``asks (him) kindly to visit the church and the tombs of SS.Peter and Paul, to go to Holy Communion there, and to recommend to these two great Apostles the affairs" of their Society. He affirms his esteem and affection for him ``in Jesus and Mary".

``I do not forget you in my little daily prayers, please reciprocate", he pleaded in a postscript. And, in order that Gabriel Drolin might catch a glimpse in this letter of a familiar face (since Brother Bartholomew's was unknown to this ``senior Brother") he adds that ``our dear Brother Jean Jacot", Assistant to the Superior-general and Director of the house in Paris, ``humbly greets" (by means of this, his Superior's, letter) one who had been his companion in the vow ceremony of 1694.

In his solitude in Rome Brother Gabriel learned of the death of the Brother Superior in 1720, only a year after the death of John Baptist de La Salle. At this time he was still residing at ``Filippis' house" on Ferrea Street. The *Stato delle anime*} mentions him as being present every year from 1721 to 1725.

Finally, in 1727 came the moment awaited with a sort of tireless hope, the moment of the "*Ecce quam bonum…s habitare fratres in unum*":

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161 The original letter is in the Motherhouse Archives. Guibert published this text on pp. 585--87 of *his Histoire de saint J.-B. de La Salle*, Battersby, pp. 267--8.}}

No.506 Ferrea Street, the Filippi house (reads the Register) D. Gabriele Drolini, French; Fiacre, French; Thomas, French religious.

Jacques Nonnez, Brother Fiacre,[162] was the ``able" teacher who had been chosen, at least temporarily, ``to continue the work" after Brother Gabriel. As for Brother Thomas, Charles Frappet, the Procurator, it is quite obvious that he came on a temporary mission only. Once things were in order he returned to France.

In 1728 ``Gabriele Drolini and Fiacre" both stayed on and the name of Thomas was stricken from the *Stato*.

Drolin himself, however, departed during this year, leaving his successor well informed concerning everything having to do with the Papal school and, for the time being, solitary. Gabriel arrived in Avignon probably before the winter, where he was welcomed by the Superior-general, Brother Timothy, in whose presence he made his profession in conformity with the Bull of Benedict XIII.[163]

At the age of sixty-four, his health was now delicate. The Community in Auxonne gave him asylum. It was pleased to watch over the last days of the pioneer, who spoke to the young Brothers about ``our dear father, De La Salle".

On one occasion Brother Timothy appointed him to receive the vows of those who had been admitted to profession.

On the 11th of January, 1733 Brother Gabriel died quietly and piously, having ``fought the good fight" and ``kept the faith".[164]. He was buried the following day in the Auxonne churchyard.[165]

At the back of the chapel in the former Motherhouse in Lembecq,[166] under the choir loft there is a painting that represents St.John Baptist de La Salle blessing Brother Gabriel Drolin and his companion prior to their departure for Rome. The episode thus recalled cannot be something of secondary importance in the annals of the Institute: the painting gives the event a symbolic value. Drolin's Roman vocation prefigures the vocation of all the Brothers and places in relief the essential Catholic and universal character of the work of the Founder.

Besides, to the mission of this select disciple we owe the treasure of an extremely significant correspondence, most important for the history of the Brothers at the beginning of the 18th century and most valuable for a quasi-intimate knowledge of the great mind and heart of De La Salle. This correspondence was used only fragmentarily by the biographers. It is- as it had to be- the substance of the present, lengthy but indispensable chapter.

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162 Born inVerrières, diocese of Châlons-sur-Marne, on the 26th of November 1783; entered the Institute on the 11th of June 1705;died at Lun\'eville on the 15th of December 1756. (MotherhouseArchives, Register of Entrants.

163 Blain, Vol. I, pg. 394.

164 St. Paul, II *Epistle to Timothy,*} IV, 7

165 Motherhouse Archives.}}

166 The Motherhouse has been in Rome since 1936. From 1905 to 1936 it was in Lembecq-les-Hal, in Belgium.

CHAPTER NINE

The Foundations in the South of France

Covered with the dust of Provence, Brother Gerard, who was retracing his steps from Rome to Paris, reached the ramparts of Avignon. Under the palace of the Cliff of Doms he would once again be within the shadow of the Holy See. ``The city of the bells'', with its priests and genial monks, would comfort the vagrant religious. Which church he entered, on what hospitable door he knocked we do not know. What Maillefer tells us is that someone introduced Gerard to John Peter Madon, the Lord of Chateau-Blanc and the ``treasurer of our Holy Father the Pope'' in Comtat-Venaissin.

Among clerical circles in Avignon people were familiar with one of this aristocrat's project. In her will, his late wife, Mary Anne Sifredy had entrusted him with the responsibility of endowing two schoolteachers---or ``some other'' benevolent use he might think suitable---with 6,000 livres, of which 4,000 came from a dowry bestowed on his wife, when they were married, by John Peter Madon himself.[167.] He was seeking teachers who would be worthy of this kind of liberality. A friend of his in Lyons had spoken to him about De La Salle and his Brothers. And Chateau-Blanc had just written to the Founder dots when, lo and behold, here on the spot, during this very summer or autumn of 1702, appeared a real Brother, still dressed in his habit who, was, of course, equipped with references and certificates of competence.

Brother Gerard was conducted to the treasurer's residence---one of the most beautiful mansions in a city one of whose charms are those quiet, majestic facades in a labyrinth of streets filled with silence and slopes where one's footsteps make crunching sounds on the pebbles. There are wooden doors carved with copper hammers, embossed stonework, gargoyles, carved piers, cornices and classical pediments. Above the tiled roofs, lofty and slightly overhanging, we glimpse the quadrangular towers and crenelated walls of the Palace of the Popes.

The Chateau-Blanc mansion, which is now the Palun mansion, stretches the regular and modest lines of its friezes, columns and ornamented windows along Rue Banasterie. During the period of Louis XV its interior court had been adorned with a fountain where lovers met. The setting into which the master of the house had introduced Gerard had a thoroughly austere nobility. Jean Pierre Madon was serious, outgoing and generous. His orthodoxy was always exact and strict. Like the magistrates in Rouen, of whom we have spoken, he maintained a close contact with the Society of Jesus. In his will he would stipulate that, in order to resist the introduction of ``any evil teaching'', the Reverend Jesuit Fathers whom he had ``funded'' at the College, for the organization and propagation ``of charitable works'', would have rights of ``inspection and authority'' over the popular schools, and would be able ``to dismiss Brothers and ask the Superior-general for others''; and he would ask them ``to direct and assist'' the teachers ``in their spiritual needs''.

He was fortunate now to have before him one of the disciples of the De La Salle of whom so many good things had been said. He questioned the visitor on the sort of life the Brothers lead and on the schools already in operation. In brief, in

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167 1 Details supplied in Chateau-Blanc's will, filed with the Notary, Gollier on the 10th of July 1719, a copy of which exists in the Motherhouse Archives

Lyons, whence he had received his first information, and which had been Demia's fiefdom, the Brothers were only known by reputation and it was known that their Founder was an admirer of the Lyons' educator, the author of the famous ``Remonstrances''. Brother Gerard, of course, spoke of his ``dear Father'' with veneration. Since he had pronounced his vows in 1697, he had viewed the Founder up close over several years at Vaugirard and at the ``Grande Maison'' before leaving for Italy. And it was only out weariness and an appetite for novelty that he was contemplating leaving the Institute. He never stopped loving the one to whom he was, after all, returning. But concealing his plans and his impulses, he sketched a portrait of the Founder that one might imagine to be quite similar to that accurate eulogy that rose to the lips of Gerard's Parisian confreres in the presence of the Vicar-general, Father Pirot.[168]

Moved and persuaded, Chateau-Blanc resolved to urge the Founder to send teachers with whose cooperation he would realize the final wishes of Mary Ann Sifredy. Brother Gerard took leave of his host but not before he had promised to lay the matter before his Superior, and not before he was provided with a quantity of travelling money.

Thus, between the Tiber and the Seine, the Rhone would once again serve as a highway. Was it possible that De La Salle would refuse to use it? Two Brothers [168 3] were to go down from the north to Avignon---a stopping-off place, a transitional shelter, the ``promised land'' but, over and above, the ideal center for future progress in the South of France.

What a piece of good fortune, what a blessing, to be under the temporal power of the Pope, to attract the attention of the Papal legates to the work that at that very moment Drolin had been commissioned to carry to Rome, and to spirit away at least one school from the legal and clerical vexations of Louis XIV's France and from Jansenist suspicions! Laurence Fieschi, Archbishop of Avignon, was, at the time, Clement XI's Extraordinary Nuncio to the king. De La Salle sought an audience with him in Paris and introduced the Brothers who were preparing to move into his diocese. Archbishop Fieschi's welcome was perfectly kind and gracious. As he parted company with his Brothers the Founder's heart was full of hope.

The Brothers were at first lodged by Chateau-Blanc in a house very near his mansion and only a short distance as well from St.Symphorian's church (of which only a turret has survived into our time). This house on Rue Gal was no more than a temporary lodging.

The benefactor in Avignon wanted to establish his projected school generously and once for all. From a M.Chaumettef [169] he purchased a building that was well situated, sturdily built and well laid out, located in St.Peter's parish, near the Cadenian Wells. It survives to this day.

Just before the complete remodelling of the building was to begin Chateau-Blanc [170.] wrote to De La Salle to notify him of initial successes and to plead for more Brothers. The school's Principal was Brother Albert, whom, in 1702, the Superior had thought of teaming up with Gabriel Drolin and who might have been described as a ``specialist'' in this sort of operation. Of him the Founder wrote:

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168 See above, Part Two, chap. iv, pg. 223, letter from the pastor of Villiers-le-Bel.

3. The foundation provided for two teachers, as the will of 1719 specifies. A Register in ms., bearing the date of 1767 and preserved in the Motherhouse Archives mentions the sending of two Brothers in 1703.

169 According to the will just cited

170 According to the 1776 ms., Motherhouse Archives

``During the first six months he did wonders".[171] The pupils were numerous. The Vice-legate, Antoine Banquieri, showed his appreciation for the teachers: ``He enrolled his page in their school".[172] Chateau-Blanc wrote that the city was completely edified by the conduct of the good Brothers. After such a bracing experience, which lasted two years, it was important to increase the teaching personnel. The petitioner ``undertook to provide for the subsistence" of those who would come ``until Divine Providence would Itself provide in another way".[173]

The house in Avignon which, according to De La Salle, could lodge twenty Brothers, had five as the result of Chateau-Blanc's initiatives.[174] Two were ``endowed", while the others lived on subsidies provided by the nobleman and contributions from various persons, until Clement XI took steps to provide them with regular stipends.[175]

The Archbishops' and Vice-legates' support were guarantees for the future. Francois Maurice Gonteriis, who had succeeded Laurence Fieschi, and Reynier Deley, who had succeeded Antoine Banquieri, were no less well disposed than their predecessors; while the latter, who had been recalled to Italy, were able to be of valuable assistance with the Holy See. Archbishop Gonteriis, who arrived in Avignon in May of 1706, immediately took a lively interest in the Brothers and their pupils. He inspected classes and presided over catechism examinations. He made his diocese a secure oasis for the Institute. Later on, his enthusiastic intervention with Benedict XIII was not without its effect for the more rapid procurement of the Bull of Approbation. Still later, he persuaded Clement XII to become the ``founder" of a second school.[176]

Chateau-Blanc was to bequeath to ``the tuition-free schools" the house that was located in St.Peter's parish and 2,000 livres over and above the 6,000 of Mary Anne Sifredy. As he stipulated:

> My heir will pay (the Brothers) each quarter the interest at 4%, while retaining the capital; the which stipend will be paid in the king's coin. By this means, the Brothers will maintain two schools (i.e., two classes) in my house---an upper (class) in which reading, writing and calculating will be taught, and a lower (class) for the younger children to learn to read, and in both, catechism will be taught; each day they will conduct the children to holy Mass, and on Sundays and Feasts they will bring them to the parish church to assist at High Mass and Vespers, and after dinner in the schools teach them catechism, as they have been doing up to now, in order to educate children to piety.
>
> If the Institute ceases to furnish ``fit teachers" or``it should fail", the heir ``will have the house and will be released from the stipend" until suitable teachers have been found, ``while always preferring the Brothers". The support of ``such a good work" would remain a matter of conscience for the Reverend Jesuit Fathers. If direction and control should ever be denied them, the legacy in favor of the schools would become null and void: ``the house with its estate" and the ``income on 8,000 livres" would go to support the Asylum for Girls in the city of Carpentras until the Fathers' authority was reestablished.

Such, in all his zeal for the Church, his vigilance and his concern for detail was the man who played the major role in the Brothers' foundation in Avignon. From the moment he had made De La Salle's personal acquaintance he had called upon all his ardor. As we noted in connection with Gabriel Drolin, Chateau-Blanc was the Founder's ever available mediator and, to the end, would remain his friend.

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171 Letter of the 4th of September 1795 to Gabriel Drolin; Battersby, pp. 46--7.
172 Letter of the 27th of April 1705, to Gabriel Drolin; Battersby, pg. 32.
173 Ms. of 1767
174 Letter of the 4th of September 1705 to Gabriel Drolin; Battersby, pp. 46--7
175 Ms. of 1776
176 Guibert, pg. 353, following the Departmental Archives of the Vaucluse, Series H. nos. 7 and 15.

In the genealogy of the Brothers' schools it might be said that *Avenio genuit Massiliam*. Kinship between the two cities was based upon physical proximity, language and the sun - but not upon spiritual climate. What a difference between the aristocratic, clerical city of the Popes and that huge ``Gateway to the East'' which was engulfed by sea breezes and the tumult of Mediterranean races! In Marseille there was clamor and prayer, play and violence, boldness for good and for evil, zest for life, diversity and conflict of peoples under the glaring sun and the call of the glistening sea to high adventure, and the frenzied power that Peter Puget revealed in his athletes.

Here, perhaps, more than anywhere else great masses of people were in need of discipline, religious education and purification. What might not be expected from its controlled enthusiasm and its dedication to its ``Holy Mother'', Our Lady of Perpetual Help? Good people thought that for her and with her one could do good things. Some people were especially concerned for the population of the ``Old Port''. Between St. Laurence and Notre Dame Accoules, in the network of alleys, where mixed and musty odors drifted, where ropes suspended between houses bore laundry like banners and pennants under a patch of blue sky, there was a stirring of idle, vagrant children who mischievously awaited the age when they might go to sea. The best thing they knew was to run the beaches and follow with impassioned gaze the arrival and departure of the ships.

On the 13th of March, 1704 many of the leading citizens of Marseille met and deliberated on ``the establishment of public schools in St.Laurence's parish''.[177] The pages in which they subsequently set forth their ``plan'' are saturated with a flavor and a local color that vibrate with life.

> There are few people who do not agree that public schools for poor boys are a great boon for them, considerably useful to the State, and a great edification[178] in a City as famous as ours, as we shall show. Indeed, a poor boy who has nothing to rely upon except his diligence finds many opportunities if he knows how to read and write ...

Up to this point, what we have are general considerations such as might have been stated by Demia and resumed later on by Aubery. But we come now to the more concrete suggestions:

> In St.Laurence's parish, reading and writing can contribute more especially to the fortune of such a boy. How many more good sailors would make excellent subaltern officers if they knew how to read and write! We see only too often the sad effects of the ignorance of masters and mates of many ships, who navigate purely mechanically and who, for the want of theory, make important errors in their calculations[179] ... How many others, for want of assistance, have missed making a fortune among our neighbors or in foreign lands dots But even if these things never happened, would people be the more unhappy for knowing how to read and write?

In this region religious ignorance had consequences unimaginable elsewhere:

> The poor of this parish are not instructed, although the pastor of St.Laurence's has nothing with which to reproach himself on this score dots We know, through the Vicars' excellent homilies that he has given his full attention to the selection of good assistants. Through his orders catechism is taught every Sunday and Feast days before Vespers. All of this does little good: laziness and carelessness are obstacles to the men's attendance, and dissoluteness prevents the children.

Ignorance was perpetuated within families: ``And how many poor Christians, bondsmen and free, of this same parish have apostatized to the

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177 The entire file relative to the school founded in St.Laurence parish in Marseille is, for reasons we have already stated in chap. vii of this Second Part, pg. 299, preserved in the Departmental Archives of the Alliers (Series D). Copies exist in the Motherhouse Archives.

178 Or, ``education''; the reading of this word is difficult; the one adopted here seems to be the clearest

179 In the navigational sense of ``calculations''.

Mohammedans because they did not have a reasonable knowledge of our holy religion". Thus it was in this way that, for the good people of Marseille, Barbary's felucca disappeared beyond their horizon.

``Through the schools", children will become ``like missionaries in the home". This was already being realized ``in parishes like St.Martin's, Notre Dame Accoules and `the Major'".

Against the opening of a school in St.Laurence's, it was objected that parents employ their children in fishing. But ``from the age of four to eight or nine years", these boys are hardly able to work at the fisherman's trade; and ``the nearly countless number of them that we see every day along the wharves and beaches" proved clearly that they were idle.

> The little pranks they practice every day in the city and the danger they run at every moment of being drowned are a great worry to their parents.

Indeed, parents ``would be delighted during theses five or six years to provide them with such a useful occupation as is that of reading and writing".

The matter, then, was settled - a school would be opened. True, funds were lacking. But while the group was locating ``capital funds the interest on which would support" a school, ``several sponsors were to be sought out who would have the charity to contribute 10 livres each every year".

At the time of this meeting, the Brothers were not even under discussion. They had only just arrived in Avignon, where their work was too recent for anyone to be able to know about it. But inherited notions die hard: the ``tutor will at least be tonsured and wear a long soutane, and, if possible, be a priest". The program which, in its broad outlines was sketched for the teacher, dealt especially with the religious life of the pupils: daily catechism, daily Mass, along with the Rosary, Sunday Mass in the parish, and the frequentation of the Sacraments.

Each month some of ``the sponsors" would be "on duty" to take care of business matters, and, especially, to inspect classes. Another one of them would perform the functions of treasurer. Having thus organized a Bureau, analogous to those in Lyons and Moulins, the leading citizens, in assembly, declared that they ``agreed to act as sponsors of the schools in the parish of St.Laurence under the conditions stated above, provided that everything is approved by the Bishop of Marseille and the Supervisors". And they asked ``John Baptist Berardy and Joseph Feuillard, wardens of the parish, to look for a tutor and an appropriate location for the school, promising to approve what they would do".

By the time of the next meeting, on the 10th of May, everything seemed to be going well. Bishop Vintimille du Luc granted his approval of the rules and would add an annual gift of 30 livres to the payment contributed by the thirty-four ``sponsors". The Supervisors, too, found these Gentlemen's initiative praiseworthy; but they did not go beyond making a vague promise of a subsidy. The teacher had already been selected - a Deacon, named M. Baron, who was to receive a salary of 180 livres.

On the 14th April the Bureau granted him a raise of 40 livres, which seems to suggest that Baron's talents were up to expectations. But a few months later people were thinking rather seriously of firing him.

The reason was that the Deacon taught according to ancient methods and attracted only a small number of pupils to his classes. At this point the success of the school in Avignon could no longer be ignored. ``M. Morelet and M. Jourdan, rich merchants in Marseille and of exemplary piety",[180] had investigated the school, and they communicated their enthusiasm to one of their freinds, a priest, PèreTruillard,

180 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 12.

who would eventually become Vicar-general in Arles. M. Jourdan was, besides, the blood brother of the pastor of St. Laurence's. At the same time, a celebrated Jesuit, Père Croizet, came to Marseille to preach, and, meeting with the men engaged in charities, told them how well he thought of the little society founded by De La Salle. The sponsors of the St. Laurence school asked him to write to Bishop Vintimille who, at the time in Paris, would no doubt consent to get together with the Brothers' Superior. De la Salle's letter of September 4th, 1705 to Gabriel Drolin marked the beginnings of the negotiations; it speaks of a school in Marseille as something achieved, and of Brother Albert as being in charge of it.

Nevertheless, the new school year began with M.Baron. It wasn't until the 21st of January that decisions were made in a general assembly of the sponsors, of whom twelve were present. (And), ``after the invocation of the Holy Spirit'', (Père Truillard) read from a copy of a letter that the Bishop of Marseille wrote from Paris to Rev.Père Croizet,S.J., dated December last, in which the Bishop indicated to the Reverend Father that he approved the Gentlemen Sponsors of the schools for poor boys introducing into these schools the Brothers of the Christian Schools, founded by Père De La Salle of Paris. They might (the letter added) ``send to contract with those of them who are actually in Avignon to begin teaching the poor children according to their customary methods, of which the said Lord Bishop was thoroughly familiar because he had seen and conferred with De La Salle, the Superior-general of these Brothers''.

The assembly, ``respectfully agreeing with my Lord the Bishop'', unanimously decided ... to write immediately to Avignon in order to have one or two of the Brothers, until the house that M.Porry gave for this charitable work would be ready… Then they would be able to have as many as three of these Brothers to teach reading, writing and arithmetic to the poor children, and above all, catechism (according to diocesan custom) and the fear of God. Père Truillard was invited ``to send immediately'' for the Brother who would start the school. Deacon Baron was discharged, with his wages paid up to the 20th of April.

The two Brothers detached from Avignon must have arrived in Marseille toward the end of January, 1706.[181] They taught their first class on the 6th of March ``with much piety and prudence and to the great satisfaction of the parishioners'', declares the report of the assembly of the 6th of April. M.Jourdan supplied them with some furniture. It was decided that they would be reimbursed for the expense of their journey. Their salary was fixed at 150 livres each. The expenses contracted to support the school would be paid by the treasurer ``on the simple report the Brothers would submit, with the total indicated at the bottom''.

The two sponsors on duty were to be good enough to find out whether the children who applied for admission ... were really poor, and if they weren't, they could send them away. A wave of pupils had very quickly overrun the schoolhouse the day after the school opened. There were ``nearly two hundred'' of them, as De La Salle, in his letter of April 16th, had reported to Gabriel Drolin. It would become necessary to provide new class arrangements, but necessary also to staunch the rising tide.

``Brother Albert of the Child Jesus'' was called to the assembly on that 6th of April to receive expressions of appreciation. He was asked to devote himself principally to educating children in the fear of God and to instruct them in the duties

181 De La Salle's letter to Gabriel Drolin of the 11th of February 1706. The Founder says that the Brothers had been in Marseille for two weeks

of a Christian; which the Brother with a great deal of modesty promised to do, with the help of God.

However, he must have been only briefly absent from Avignon, since De La Salle, writing to Brother Gabriel in May, let him know that should the occasion arise, Brother Albert would be able to send him a small subsidy from that city. Further, in September of the same year, we notice that a Brother Joachim had appeared before the sponsors to settle accounts.

In any case the work went forward successfully. At a meeting on June 3rd, the leading citizens of Marseille, after once again pronouncing in favor of the exclusion of children from well-to-do families, invited M. Sebastian Sauvaire, ``as parish commissioner for the poor who were ashamed to beg'', to intervene with ``the first officer for these poor'' with the view of withdrawing all assistance to paupers who, having boys between the ages of five and ten years of age, cannot produce a certificate from the Brothers attesting that their youngsters attend school; since many of them were shunning it ``out of dissoluteness''.

This was the same Sebastian Sauvaire who, as one of the sponsors, on the 2nd of September, had forwarded a request from ``the Brothers tutors in the school'', concerning a reimbursement of expenses; Brother Joachim had set the sum for the entire year at 400 livres. A balanced budget demanded that henceforth each sponsor's subscription be raised from 10 to 12 livres annually.

De La Salle entertained great hopes for the future of the school in Marseille. He went so far as to predict, in his letter of the 16th of April, that ``later on'' his disciples "would have the schools in all four quarters of the city".

* * * *

Occupying the central positions in the *Comtat* and the Mediterranean, he was in possession, so to speak, of the key to the entire Southeast of France. The Bishops of the southern dioceses, viewing the Brothers at work, became aware that the reputation of the new Institute had been genuine, that the sons were not unworthy of the father, and that the educational methods introduced into Champagne and Paris were universally valid. The Brothers' religious obedience, combined with their technical training, guaranteed a regularity and consistency in the application of method that was up to that time unknown in French elementary education. And the remarkable personnel that the Superior selected for new foundations - and especially for schools which, by reason of their great distances, were removed from his continuous supervision-showed enough tact, zeal and psychology to match rigor of principle with flexibility of means, in order to adapt itself to the temperament of frequently very different populations than those it had previously taught.

It is understandable that in certain cities where, twenty years after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Protestantism remained rooted in the depths of peoples' consciousness, or reappeared as vigorous growth, ecclesiastical and civil authorities, executors of the royal decrees and devotees of the apostolate, thought of using the Brothers in an effort of Catholic propaganda and reconquest. The Edict of 1698 ordered the opening of schools everywhere, which all children were to attend and which the clergy would control,[182] but if the search for competent and orthodox teachers were a hopeless task, the law would become a dead letter. De La Salle's

182 See above, Part One, chap. iii, pp. 42--43.

Institute came along in the nick of time to back the Bishops' action and to answer to the appeal of the bureaucracy.

Later on we shall have occasion to study the relation between teachers in the Brothers' schools, diocesan leaders and government representatives throughout the 18th century. The year 1707 seems to be indicated as the starting point of this new development, with the opening of schools in Valréas, Mende, and Alès, to which might be added, chronologically, the school in Grenoble.

As De La Salle reported to Drolin on the 28th of August, the Bishop of Vaison had asked for Brothers in 1705. In the same letter we learn that a school was being planned, prior to the spring of 1707 by Brother Albert, not in the old episcopal city with its Roman ruins, but in Valréas, in a house belonging to Francois Joseph Gualteri, the Bishop referred to in the letter. This foundation, the second on French papal territory, had only a brief existence. It disappeared before 1717, without a trace of its dates or the motives for its suppression. There is reason to believe that, contrary to the Rule of the Institute, the Bishop wanted to impose the teaching of Latin. It was, perhaps, a case of the fidelity of a diocese to a very ancient tradition- perhaps an aggressive return to a local custom - to which the Brothers opposed their own inflexible principle. And so, their Superior commanded them to withdraw from the influences and regulations of Vaison-la-Romaine.

``Mende, the episcopal city of France at the gateway to Languedoc",[183] at the beginning of 1707 still had as its Bishop Francis Placid Baudry Piencourt, native of Évreux, consecrated on the 16th of January, 1678 at St.Germain dès Prés. He was an excellent man and a wonderful prelate who, in the harsh Gévaudan, for nearly thirty years carried on a struggle of prayer and good works in favor of the Catholic faith. About his beautiful cathedral, with its lofty spires, and his majestic and sturdy palace clustered pious foundations, convents, seminaries and a hospital. For the good of souls and bodies he had distributed his fortune to the poor and the sick. He knew his flock, gathered it together and cared for it. Mende, with its shale roofs, in its craggy cirque on the banks of the headwaters of the Lot seemed like an outpost, where heresy had thrust its claws, but where Catholicism refused to yield: consciences grew in strength and the faith was affirmed more vigorously under conditions of constant alert.

Bishop Piencourt exhorted his priests, assembled in synod, ``to obtain good schoolteachers for their parishioners".[184] This concern which he showed as early as 1686, would, at the end of his episcopacy, move him to offer to the City Council the necessary funds to support two charity schools in Mende, one for boys and the other for girls. In June 1706 the civil magistrates, acknowledging this generosity, promised to house the teachers. The teachers whom the Bishop proposed were members of those religious societies that had the direction of similar institutions in Paris.[185] The Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus were thereupon selected to teach the young girls in Mende.

The choice of the teachers for boys was also rather obvious: La Salle's disciples would share the work and the distinction of training generations of Christians with the daughters of Father Barré. The vast ``government house" built in the heart of the city, afforded room for the fitting out (with the necessary separations) of lodgings and class rooms for both communities.

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183 Letter dated the 1st of April 1707, quoted above, chap. viii, pg. 330.
184 Quoted by Guibert, pg. 430, following the Departmental Archives of Lozère, Series G, 728.
185 Guibert, pg. 430, according to the Communal Archives of Mende, Series BB, no.9, Fol. 59; Lucard, Annales, Vol. I, pg. 222, note no. 1

To Bishop Piencourt's request the Brothers' Superior responded by sending one of the most highly regarded of his men, Brother Ponce, who had organized the schools in Rouen. Mende, as Blain puts it[186] had ``won De La Salle's affections'', and this admission is all the more valuable in that Blain has a lot of nasty things to well as of some of his successors in the school in Mende. We might add that the Canon saw ``divine blessings shed'' upon this foundation, as on the best in the Institute, and ``thorns transformed into flowers'' in the Gévaudan, as in Chartres, Calais, Provence and Normandy.[187]

On the 8th of April, 1707 Bishop Piencourt wrote to De La Salle:

> .. One could not be more satisfied than I am with the Brother you have sent me, who is beginning to teach our youth while awaiting another to come to his aid. I would be very much obliged to you to add a good man who would be competent in writing as well as in arithmetic dots For my part I will give them all the support they can expect, so that they will have complete satisfaction in their work in this city.[188]

``Brother Ponce has fallen ill in Mende'', wrote De La Salle on the 1st of April, 1707. It was important to spare the strength of this enterprising Director. A second, and then a third, Brother were quickly sent to join him. One of these is known to us through authentic documentation: he was Brother Matthias, to whom the Founder wrote a whole series of letters. Matthias had the good sense and the humility to leave to posterity ten of De La Salle's letters to him,[189] as searing to his self-love as they are edifying to us for the picture they paint of the Founder's patience. We intend to return to them and do not mean to suggest here anything more than their witness value concerning this Brother's stay in the Gévaudan.

In November 1707, after only a few months under Ponce's orders,[190] Brother Matthias was already complaining of his Director's severity. On the 30th of December De La Salle suggested that he confide with complete candor in the man who was his immediate superior and who was ``in charge of all that concerns the interests of the Brothers in that region''.[191]

Brother Matthias, born on the 8th of December, 1680 in the diocese of Arras, was, at this time, twenty-seven years old. His family name was Laurence Douai. The Register lists his entrance ``into the Society'' as the 1st of July, 1710, but either the numbers are reversed (1710 for 1701) or the date given is that of his admission to vows, since the first letter he received from the Founder is dated the 3rd of December, 1706, and at that time he belonged to the community in Rheims. Nervous, irascible, chaffing at the bit and quick to take offense, he nevertheless remained faithful until his death.

He was certainly a good schoolteacher. In a decision of the 10th of October, 1707, the City Council, thanking Bishop Baudry Piencourt, declared that

> ... the three Brothers of Father De La Salle's Institute… have already opened their classes (in Mende) with marvelous results.[192]

The Bishop, sensing that he was close to death, hastened ``to found'' the school in a permanent way by a last will and testament dated the 19th of October of

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186 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 306.
187 Ibid.
188 Ibid., pg. 46
189 Motherhouse Archives, Series D, letters 2--7, 9--11, along with the letter discovered in 1925 and included under no. 92 of the general file
190 Letter #2, Series D, 18th of November 1707
191 Letter #3, Series D, Battersby, pg. 93.
192 Quoted by Guibert, pg. 432, according to the Communal Archives of Mende, Series BB, #9, fol. 79.

the same year. He thought ``that he could not give his dear city of Mende a greater mark of affection''. For subsidies for the three teachers he set up ``an annuity of 450 livres, over and above the 60 livres that the diocese was accustomed to give them''. By means of this subsidy they would make themselves available ``for their duties precisely and religiously, within the Rules of their Institute''.

The Bishop added:

> And because De La Salle's Brothers are the most famous in the realm, and those with whom young people make the greatest progress in virtue, I wish that the executors of my foundation select the personnel of that Institute in preference to any other...

In some qualifying clauses, he stipulated the teachers would continue to be housed in the town hall, or else, in case they were evicted, they would obtain equivalent accommodations. His successors, the bishops, along with a member of the Chapter and a local citizen would supervise these conditions of the will.[193]

Francois Placide Baudry Piencourt died three weeks later - on the 10th of November,1707 - having, as his eulogist said at his anniversary service, arranged ``honestly the temporal affairs of his Church''.[194] Of all the bishops who applied to De La Salle to open schools, or who supported the Brothers, he was the only one whose foresight extended to guaranteeing completely the future of the Institute in his diocese.

* * * *

With the school in Alès[195] we enter into the heart of the struggle with Protestantism. For a century this region had been a Huguenot stronghold. Neither war nor persecution had discouraged heresy on the slopes of the Cévennes or on the banks of the Gardon. After the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and cavalry sweeps through Huguenot territory, the spirit of the religious wars was rekindled. Calvinist sermons were preached in the ``Desert'', in ravines and in caves. Vivent, a former schoolmaster, scoured the mountainsides, terrorizing Catholics and killing in the name of the Gospel. Claude Brousson, a former lawyer in N^imes, proclaimed himself a Pastor and restored courage and hope with his eloquent and poignant *Petition to God for the Faithful Persecuted and Massacred in France in God's Service*.[196]

The same year that Brousson issued his appeal, 1694, the king obtained from Pope Innocent XII the creation of a bishopric in Alès, by dividing the diocese of Nîmes. He wanted a Church leader situated in the very center of a hostile population in order to rally the Catholic flock and in order to impose upon the Protestants an authority which the civil arm would undertake to enforce in its own way, if need be. The Bishop was Francis Maurice Chevalier de Saulx who, as Vicar-general of Nîmes, and as superior of the ``royal missions'', had given proof of his energy and zeal. Unfortunately, his apostolate was embarrassed and compromised by the very assistance offered to him by the commissioner for Languedoc, Lamoignon Basville. Force resulted in nothing more than apparent conversions. As the Jesuits in the neighboring region of Die wrote to their General, very few former Calvinists sincerely professed the Catholic faith ``to which they adhere with their lips, but not with their hearts''.[197]

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193 Guibert, pp. 432--3 and Lucard, *Annales*, Vol. I, pp. 217--9 and 221--2, according to a copy of the will preserved in the Motherhouse Archives

194 Quoted by Guibert, pg. 433

195 We are adopting the current spelling of the name of this city, which is a restoration of its ancient style

196 G. Goyau, *Histoire religieuse de la Nation francaise*, pg. 463

197 Quoted by G.Goyau, pg. 465

In 1698 Basville had Brousson put to death in a public square in Montpellier. But a whole new generation rose up proclaiming its Huguenot faith more firmly than their fathers. Jean Cavalier, the principal leader of the Camisards, had received the Sacrament of Confirmation at the hands of Bishop de Saulx. Flinging off the mask, he unleashed a rebellion against Louis XIV that neither Broglie nor Montrevel were able to quell. In July 1702 Père Chayla, inspector of the missions for the Gévaudan, was assassinated. It was the signal for revolution. After two years of setbacks, the king was forced to send his best general into this canton, where France was bleeding to death. Here Villars was rather a mediator than a soldier. He dealt cautiously with consciences and he offered enticements to interested parties. Cavalier capitulated for the price of a pension and a colonel's commission. Thereafter, and up until 1713, the fire smoldered under the ashes and occasionally a ``hot-spot'' flared up.

Shortly after this relative pacification, on the 2nd of June, 1707, Père Meretz, Vicar-general of Alès, wrote De La Salle the following letter:

> I do not know, Sir, whether my name is still known to you or whether you preserve some memory of me; but I have never forgotten you, and I remember you very well, whom I saw at the Seminary of St.Sulpice; you were at the time a Canon in Rheims; the year was 1671. I have learned that, upon leaving your canonry, you have devoted yourself to all sorts of good works, and among others, the founding of a community of schoolteachers, who do a great deal of good wherever they go. We need some of them in this region, where we are at a loss to find Catholics to whom we can entrust the education of youth. At the moment, we need two for Alès. The problem is to destroy heresy in this region and to establish the Catholic religion in its place.
>
> The work is a great one, and requires good workmen. They will be paid by the community (of citizens). Thus, your teachers will not have to seek payment from the parents of the pupils. Subsidies for teachers have already been set by His Majesty, and so, will create no new problems. But these Huguenots must be gotten hold of where their interests lie and made to see that these new teachers produce good writers. I turn to you, Sir, in order to have some of your disciples. Père Beauchamp, Jesuit, in my presence, praised very highly those whom he saw in Avignon and in Marseille, which are two very Catholic cities. The diocese of Alès is nearly entirely Huguenot; and so, we have a great need of good workers who are able to reestablish religion through the education of children dots Having the zeal that you have, you must, please, cast your eyes upon this region, which is the canton of this kingdom where religion has the greatest need of help; and I can tell you again that we have greater need of schoolteachers than for all other workers; for we have preachers, but we lack catechists dots…[198]

This document, which Blain has transmitted, seems to present in its full light the case for a foundation in Alès, where the school was considered, quite correctly, as the best instrument of propaganda. It held a key place in the king's religious policy. The financial support of the teachers was determined by legislation and was supported by a real tax. And while the teachers were chosen from among the Brothers, this was not only because the Vicar-general had at one time known De La Salle personally, but also, and especially, because the Fathers of the Society of Jesus had been moved to vouch for the orthodoxy of the tiny society to which was owed the success of the schools in Avignon and Marseille.

Once the school in Alès was in operation (perhaps about October, 1707) the Bishop decided to grant it a monopoly on primary education. Assuming the principle of the unity of faith, such an outcome was to be expected. The moment freedom, indeed existence, was denied to a dissident cult, a choice of teachers was forbidden to parents. Only the ``royal school'' would continue to exist, all others being suspect,

198 According to Blain, Vol. II, pg. 51.

even if they proclaimed themselves to be ``Catholic''. Imprisonment was the punishment for the violation of this law.[199]

One of Francis Maurice de Saulx's letters to the Superior of the Institute (dated the 28th of January, 1708) is a commentary on these draconian measures and an explanation of the program which would extend them outside the episcopal city to the entire region contaminated by heresy:

> We have here, Sir, your Brother schoolteachers with whom we are quite satisfied, which makes me hope for many more to spread into our cities in the Cévennes and in all our larger places. Even if I had thirty of them, I would be able to use them fully. I am pleased to thank you for the ones we have and of asking you for others. I am doing, and shall do, for them all that is possible for me to do. They are doing limitless good. I shall take care, in order to keep them in the spirit you have given them, to watch over them and to give them my advice honestly, when that shall be necessary, and, besides, to keep you informed. We have need here of a Brother for a second higher class, because we must relieve the one who has been appointed, as a result of numbers, and for the convenience of the citizens. I hope that if we are able to expand the help of your good and dear Brothers, this will be an infallible means of making a great deal of progress among the families of our poor Catholics. I inform you, Sir, of my views in order that you might consent that we act together in this devastated region, which is deserving of your charitable zeal…[200]

In fact, as Blain notes, ``cities, market-towns and villages'' in the Cévennes received, in the course of the first thirty years of the 18th century, ``schoolteachers who were given a salary of 150 livres'' paid to them by the government.[201.] But even for the boys' schools it was necessary to look for teachers elsewhere than among the Christian Brothers; since De La Salle was not a man to adapt the rules and recruiting policies of his Institute to the demands of a political program.

It was impossible to doubt his ardent faith, his concern for souls, and his zeal to be of service to the State. He had only a few teachers available; but without a second thought he sent the third Brother that was asked of him. In a delicate situation, the three Brothers proved worthy of the Bishop's trust and affection. They had to instruct Catholics at the same time as many children of Protestant families. Every Sunday and Feast day they were responsible for teaching catechism to all young people in Alès without distinction, including those whose ages or the level of whose fathers' income exempted from attending tuition-free schools. We can imagine the prejudices they encountered and the rebellion that could rage among pupils ever ready to answer coercion with unruliness. Firmness, patience, Christian charity and good educational methods triumphed over ill will. In Languedoc the Christian Brothers inaugurated an art, in which they excelled, of bringing together in the same schools, and uniting in a true fellowship, in a fruitful emulation, with respect and gratitude for the teachers, children from diverse backgrounds who had been fostered in different faiths. By practicing and teaching Catholic dogma and moral in an integral way, without offending any sincere conviction, the Brothers were the first instance of those ``missionary'' educators that the 20th century acknowledges and admires.

The question of Protestantism was also raised in the Dauphiné which formerly, under the inhuman Baron Adrets, had been the theater of so many conflicts and massacres, and which preserved so deeply rooted the memory of Constable Lesdiguières, its governor and ``uncrowned king'', in the days of Henry III, Henry IV and Louis XIII. True, Adrets and Lesdiguières in the end had recanted; and Grenoble became once again a Catholic city. And while, after the Revocation of the

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199 Ibid., loc. cit., pp. 53--54
200 According to Blain, loc. cit.
201 Ibid., loc. cit., pg. 53

Edict of Nantes, the school system in the Huguenot regions of the Dauphiné operated according to the same rules as in Languedoc, the Brothers did not immediately share in it. The first call they received from that part of France did not come, as it did in the case of Alès, from the diocesan authority seconded by the civil power. At the beginnings of the St.Laurence school in Grenoble we meet with the same principles and arrangements as controlled the foundations in Moulins and Marseille. The work was not the result of the king's edict. It was inspired by charity and, as we might put it today, ``the social spirit''. Here, once again, people were under the influence of Lyons and associated with, distant but authentic, disciples of Charles Demia.

A ``Notice concerning the Christian Schools'', printed in Grenoble toward the middle of the 17th century,[202] has preserved ``the names of the Gentlemen who founded the Schools in this City in 1707''. They were the most distinguished names among the magistrature and the clergy in the Dauphiné: M.Bazemont, President of the provincial Parlement; M. Quinsonnas and M. Aloys, Presidents of the Chamber of Accounts; Père Saléon, Canon of St.Andrew's and future Bishop of Agen and future Archbishop of Vienne; Père Disdier, Canon of St.Paul's, in St.Laurence; Canel, Counsellor-clerk to Parlement and Theological Canon at St.André's; and many others also serving in the Cathedral Chapter, or in the Palace of Justice, which was the pride of Grenoble,

These solid citizens were to constitute a ``Bureau of Schools'', which functioned until the Revolution. We know its statutes, submitted to the government in 1730, when Letters Patent were sought and obtained recognizing the establishment and enabling it to possess capital funds.[203] The members of the Bureau were ``persons, ecclesiastical or lay, commendable for their authority and piety''. The ``Officers'', elected for two years and eligible for reelection, were the ``First Director or Superior'', the ``Spiritual Director for the Schools'', two ``Counsellors'', an Attorney and a Secretary. On the first Sunday of each month a general Assembly was held, in which all the members had a deliberative voice. Any expenditure above four livres had to be authorized by the Assembly. Contracts were signed by the Attorney and one of the members.

Pupils were admitted to the schools on presentation by one of the members; it was forbidden to any of the teachers to accept a pupil without a certificate from the Secretary of the Bureau. In Grenoble, as elsewhere, exclusion of ``rich'' children was expressly provided for. (There was a concern not to show prejudice against pay-schools; and actually compromises were possible.) For the poor who neglected to send their sons to school, Grenoble, like Marseille, employed ``a salutary compulsion'' by ``withholding financial assistance, including workhouse rations''.

The members of the bureau were, in turn, and on the Secretary's invitation, inspectors of schools. After their visits they had to write their reports and transmit them to the Assembly.

After death, as a recompense for their dedication, they had the right to a *Requiem Mass* assisted at by their confreres and the school children.

This system existed at least in outline at the time that Père Canel opened negotiations with De La Salle. The Counsellor-clerk in the Parlement of Grenoble wrote to the Superior on the 30th of August, 1707:

> About fifteen months ago, while in Paris, I had the honor of speaking with you, Sir, in order to know whether you would be able to provide two Brothers of your community to teach a charity school in Grenoble, and you had the goodness to allow me to hope that you would

202 Archives of the General Hospital in Grenoble, Series B, #155; copy in the Motherhouse Archives
203 Letters patent of the 17th of August 1730, Departmental Archives of Isere, Series G, 206.

> grant them to us; I believe that His Excellency the Bishop of Gap, who remained on in Paris after me, also spoke to you about this matter. Since that time, we have arranged everything, whether for their housing or their maintenance. Thus, I am asking you to allow us to have two of them as soon as you can do so, and to let us know approximately what we will have to supply them for their journey as well as for their support in Grenoble. We shall obtain the capital of what will be necessary for them from the alms destined for works of charity, and we regard this work as one of the best that we could do. If you would take the trouble to write as to what is required for their journey, I shall send it to you immediately in Paris. [204]

It seems that after such an urgent letter that testified to a thoughtfulness both sensitive and meticulous the Brothers would not delay getting to Grenoble. And the printed notice quoted above does indeed give the year of ``the establishment of the schools'' as 1707. But a much more ancient document leads us to believe that while, in that year, agreement was reached between De La Salle and the Bureau, and while it remains the earliest date in the story of the Brothers in the Dauphiné, some event forced the postponement of the opening of classes.

The document in question[205] is a register of receipts and expenses involving the teachers in St.Laurence's school which mentions no activity prior to 1708. And, what is more, we note the following passage:

> For the Brothers' food, from September (id when) they arrived to October when they began school, (id and somewhat further on) … For the first journey of the Brothers (who) arrived in September 1708.

We can't wish for a clearer indication. As to the explanation for the delay, there is a plausible hypothesis: Étienne La Camus, Bishop of Grenoble, died on the 12th of September, 1707. The Bureau of Schools wanted to be sure that his successor agreed with its plans; but he was Ennemond Alleman Montmartin, and was not consecrated until May 6th, 1708.[206] He turned out to be quite favorable to the Brothers, who had, henceforth, nothing to do but take their posts after the vacation at the Feast of St.Luke. And we understand why neither Blain nor Maillefer mention Bishop Le Camus on the occasion of the establishment in the Dauphiné, but, on the other hand, attribute a share in the success of the project to Bishop Montmartin.[207]

The school placed in the hands of the Brothers was located on the outskirts of the beautiful, manorial city of Grenoble, in a neighborhood on the left bank of the Isère. At the bottom of a cliff to which clings the buildings and chapel of a Visitation convent founded by St.Jeanne de Chantal, there runs a long narrow passage lined by very modest dwellings. A stone stairway (the ``steps''), interrupted by broad landings, joins the passage to the hillside. A spring of water bursts from St.John's Fountain. A modest church, dedicated to St. Laurence, gives its name to the neighborhood. At its base rests a very ancient chapel, a rectangle flanked by four small apses, whose weatherworn decorations, and small columns sculpted at the top, repeat the themes of primitive Christianity - palms, roses, vines, sheep, doves, and a crucifix.

A huge impoverished population huddle together in these old buildings; and hundreds of children play in the street and on the ``steps''. It is a picturesque corner, a world apart, and isolated, upon emerging from which one suddenly and with a sense of relief rediscovers the light reflected from the Alps, the swift currents of the Isère and the spires of St.André rising above the roofs and the foliage. Such, today, is the

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204 According to Blain, Vol. II, pg. 54

205 Departmental Archives of Isère, D, 58. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives.

206 *Gallia christiana*, XVI, col. 257

207 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 55.

appearance of the Faubourg St.Laurence, and such it must have been two centuries ago.

At number 40 on the long, narrow street there is posted the following commemorative inscription:

> In this house St.John Baptist de La Salle, Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and organizer of elementary education in France, taught school in 1713.

Indeed, it is perhaps possible that the residence fixed up for the Brothers in 1707, in which their Founder lived six years later, is the same one that the Bureau bought in 1732.

According to a property inventory of 1707,[208] the building belonged at the time to a M.Jean Baptist Reynard, notary in Batie-Meylan. In this document it is described as follows:

> A house situated on St.Laurence Street, composed of a shop in the front, with two floors and a garret dots Another building in the rear, over a vaulted cellar, comprised of three floors and a garret; a small courtyard between the two (buildings) … with a wine press, galleries, and small rooms on two floors.

There was an adjoining garden and vineyard.

At the address indicated there are galleries, the three floors and the garret, and the interior courtyard. The house, viewed from the courtyard, has a certain character, with its wooden railings and it spiral staircase in stone; but the whole is very somber; fortunately, the rear building enjoys a small garden, above which rises the hill which was once planted with vines.

In 1710 the rent for the Brothers' house, according to the register of expenses, was paid to a Mlle. Bozon, in the amounts of 90 livres, which fell due at Christmas and of 50 livres which fell due at Easter.

The St.Laurence school was the only one maintained by the Christian Brothers up to 1715. At that date, a second school was opened in St.Hugh's parish, in the quarter that surrounded the Cathedral, to which the church of St.Hugh was attached.

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After the gigantic efforts undertaken in 1707--1708 to extend the Institute's field of action into the South of France, De La Salle gave his communities in Provence, Languedoc and the Dauphiné time to consolidate, as he restored these schools to the supervision of Brother Ponce and promised himself that he would go there one day to complete the work himself. His immediate attention had been drawn to the schools between Paris and the Cévennes: it was the period during which St.Denis' school was opened, and after that, the schools in Versailles and Boulogne; it was the time when the Founder had sent Brothers to Père Aubery. He promised only what he could do. As he thought of a novitiate for his Brothers, their common life and their role as educators, he refused to spread them into every region, no matter how strong may have been the current favoring their schools. He spurned easy conquests.

As he wrote to Gabriel Drolin in 1712, the development of his educational institutions in the southern provinces required the recruitment of local vocations. As long as he had to draw Brothers from Paris and Rouen to supply teachers to a region that differed so profoundly from northern France, had to be satisfied with very cautious efforts and protect his earlier successes.

We shall see that the two journeys the Founder makes into the South of France, and especially the second, would have for purpose to determine the results

208 Departmental Archives of Isere, D, no. 56; copy in the Motherhouse Archives.

already achieved and to prepare for the future. Frustrations and conflicts would sink the seed into the soil so that it germinated less rapidly but more vigorously.

Finally only a single market-town, added to the cities we have thus far been talking about, would still welcome the Brothers in the lifetime of the Founder. This was Vans, in the diocese of Uzès.

The story of this foundation is also bound up with the struggle against Protestantism. But here we meet with a private initiative, a work of charity funded by a last will and testament. There was a priest who wanted his very modest fortune to serve after his death in the victory of Catholicism, and in the spiritual welfare of his neighbors. The purpose seemed to him so excellent that every obstacle had been surmounted to make it a reality.

On July 29th, 1708, in Avignon, in the chambers of M.André there was drawn up the following last will and testament:

> I, Vincent Saint John d'Else du Roure, testator in each of my possessions, furnishings and properties, make and institute, with my own tongue, and with my own hand, and select as my sole residuary heirs, and for everything, namely the Brothers of the tuition-free schools for boys, presently led by Père de La Sale (id sic), priest, and their Superior-general, residing in Paris; wishing that, in virtue of this my inheritance they be obliged to maintain at least two of the Brothers, or another larger number proportioned to the income which will come to them from this my inheritance, and all with the approval of the Bishop,the Count of Uzès, or his successors in the See, commissioning the said Brothers thus founded with the task of instructing the youth of the said city in order to form them to piety and to give them the principles of the Catholic religion, persuaded as I am that most of the young children of the said city, for the want of education, fall into dissoluteness of morals and, being born in the bosom of heresy, have no sentiment for, nor knowledge of, the Catholic religion, the fatal cause of all dissoluteness and disorder. And it is in order to prevent this evil that I found in perpetuity the school of the said Brothers, it being their task and their successors' in perpetuity to educate the youth of the City of Vans in good morals and in the principles of the Catholic religion …

The testator declared that his entire property consisted of a capital sum of 7,000 livres, invested in the commonwealth of Languedoc, which produced an income of 350 livres. As his testamentary executors he named Antony de La Tour, lawyer in the court of appeals in Nîmes, and the Rev.Père André de La Tour, O.P., professor of theology and brother of the lawyer.[209.]

Vincent du Roure belonged to an old Languedoc family. The patrimonial castle of Elze was located in the parish of Malons in the diocese of Uzès. Vincent was born in Brahic, in the diocese of Viviers. He had entered Orders, refused the benefices that were offered him and lived in poverty, humility and penance. As Clerical Commissioner in 1690, he presided over the installation of Peter Meynier, the former Prior of Brahic, as Prior of St. Victor Gravières. [210.] On the 16th of May,1709 he figured in a notarized document along with the same pastor, and he is there called Father Saint John, Priest of Vans.

Vans, situated thirty miles southwest of Privas, beyond the valley of the Chassezac, is an outpost of the Cévennes. In the 16th century it had been won over to Calvinism by its pastor, Claude du Roure. Heresy having gained the upper hand, Catholic worship ceased to be celebrated there. Then, under Louis XIV, the du Roures and with them a considerable part of the population returned to the bosom of the Roman Church. At the beginning of the 18th century an Antony du Roure was

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209 Motherhouse Archives. ``Unpublished documents concerning the Brothers of the Christian Schools established in the city of Vans, former diocese of Uzès …assembled at the request of Brother Irlide, Superior-general of the Brothers of the Christian Schools dots by Père M. Canaud, pastor of Gravières, 1881." Lucard and Guibert have previously, but only partially, used this source.

210 Document received by Mourgues, notary, on the 14th of February 1690. Canaud documents

pastor in Vans; and Louis du Roure, a former infantry officer, was mayor of the small town.

They both heartily endorsed the decision taken by their relation regarding the Brothers' school. Père Saint John du Roure had died on the 19th of September, 1710. And De La Salle, informed by the executors of the will, accepted the inheritance and took steps to take possession.

> The year 1711, the third day of January, through Nicholas Lange, common bailiff of the Court of Accounts, taxes and finance of Montpellier dots at the request of the Brothers of the tuition-free schools for boys dots presided over by Father de La Salle, priest, their Superior-general, residing in Paris, whose school was to be opened in the City of Vans, diocese of Uzès, in consequence of the will of the late Father Vincent Saint John d'Elze du Roure, priest attached thereto was duly intimated and notified to the Attorneys-general of the province of Languedoc, in order that they be not unaware so that they might place under the name of the said Brothers of the tuition-free schools of said City of Vans the sum of 7,000 livres due from the province to the said Father du Roure by the contract of the 4th of December 1707, received by Mr.Castaing, notary, so that the letter announcing the said sum be sent and paid for the future to the Brothers in the Schools of Vans. [211]

On the 28th of the same month, the City Council, assembled ``in the home of Lord Louis du Roure, Knight of Elze, Lord of Brahic, Counsellor to the king and Mayor'' of Vans, heard the latter set forth the last wishes of Père Saint John du Roure. Since the school they had planned had been approved by the Bishop of Uzès,

> Brother Ponce Thiseux,[212] Visitor of the said Brothers, has expressly come to this city (of Vans), proposing to put them to work, and asking the company to decide upon their residence and their school.

``The company'' empowered ``the members of the Council to pay the terms of the priest's… will''. For ``the current year, it voted a tax of 130 livres: 100 livres were to make up the Brothers' salaries and also allow them to have ``a service'' celebrated ``in the city church for the salvation of the soul'' of their benefactor; 30 livres were budgeted for the rental of a residence for the Brothers. It was only with respect to this rent that the Council committed itself in a definite way. The existence of an old schoolhouse indicated that a school had previously been in operation in Vans. While awaiting the arrival of the Brothers, the children continued to be served by a teacher named Ginhoux. This situation dragged on until the vacation of 1711, when Brother René arrived, who was probably the Director selected by Brother Visitor Ponce. The members of the Council went with him to the site of the schoolhouse, but acknowledging its wretched condition and the lack of supplies, they decided to have five tables built, along with two large chairs with footrests, made of fir (the chairs for the two Brothers), ``thirty benches for the children in school and in church'', a frame painted black, four small chairs, ``the woodwork for a small clock'', and, finally, ``the rehabilitation of the old tables and benches''. The 100 livres voted as salary for the teachers in 1711 was divided evenly between Ginhoux and the Brothers. [213]. A contract for the carpentry work was put out to bid. Francis Anglebert got the job for the contracted price of 75 livres.[214]

Brother René and his colleague taught and were lodged in a rather beautiful looking house, situated on the church square adjoining the ``Bar Mill''. This residence had preserved its old portal gate, its spiral staircase and its broad facade. While Vans was the most unassuming town in which the disciples of De La Salle would settle

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211 Motherhouse documents

212 We restore the spelling of Brother Ponce's family name following the Registrar of Entrants. In the Vans document we read "Rhéteur", which seems an error in transcription

213 Canaud documents, deliberations of the Council of Vans, 20th of September 1711

214 *Ibid.*, deliberations for the 11th of October 1711

during the lifetime of the Founder, the Brothers had, if not the apartments and furniture they needed, at least they had a house of their own. They were, per force, hemmed in and excessively exposed to the gaze of a southern population accustomed to a house-to-house familiarity and to open-air conversation. That they found themselves the target of the hostility of some Huguenots, and, indeed, of ``recent converts'' secretly attached to Protestantism, is entirely possible. To believe Maillefer, there was commotion, clamor, barricades, and assaults upon the house: Captain du Roure had to break up riots. The Superintendent himself was forced to come to the site to investigate and punish. But no document of the time attests to such events. It seems that if they were serious, the Register of the Council's deliberations would have preserved some mention of them, since disorders never happened without hurting someone.

The Brothers' salary seems to have been regularly complemented by the city. In this connection we possess several receipts signed by the beneficiaries: Brothers Henry and Maximian in 1713, and Brothers Maximian and Ildefonse in 1714. The income from the foundation continued to be invested with the province of Languedoc: in 1720, following a reduction of annuities, M. Barnage, the Superintendent, at the expense of the townspeople, paid a sum equal to the loss borne annually by the Brothers in Vans.

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In order to preserve the spirit of the Institute in the communities in the South of France, to maintain to the full the unity of the work, to assure its proper development within the mission that devolved upon the Brothers, it was necessary that De La Salle visit his distant houses, become personally acquainted with the Bishops and the various benefactors of schools, that he himself teach his disciples and place before them the example of his manner of life, and that, finally, he inspire vocations in the new regions that had called upon his zeal. These were the principal reasons for his long visits to the southeastern provinces. In addition there was the desire to prepare the way for his eventual successor, by acting with him as a father who leaves to his elder son, come to manhood, certain broad initiatives, even at the cost of some risks and miscalculations. Several times in the course of the Founder's life we have seen this deep conviction rise to the surface, inspired as much by wisdom as by humility. As a resolve it appeared all the firmer as certain men and circumstances persisted in their opposition to De La Salle's course of action. Lycurgus handed over the execution of his laws to the Spartans. The man gives way so that his work does not depend upon himself, so that it might realize ends that transcend a personality and a single human life.

When Blain detects a sort of flight in the Founder's departure on the eve of some very serious judicial decisions[215] he is dramatizing, he is exaggerating and oversimplifying history after the manner of the hagiographers in the ``Lives of the Saints''. And his entire account of the incidents which mark the Founder's ``Southern years'' is dominated by this bias: its colors are strong and devoid of shading, its characters are frozen in conventional postures, its facts are distorted to generate sympathy or censure.

Dom Maillefer is ever on his guard. True, he sins rather by omission. But at least, if sin there be, he is more straightforward: he alerts us to the fact that he is silent about such unpleasant details as might call into question people with whom he was

215 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 81

friendly and whom he respected. In his family and within his circle of friends, there were Jansenist connections: he had no wish to make difficulties - even the ``slightest'' - for the ``Petitioners''. And he eluded the little quarrels that might have divided several of his uncle's disciples.

Between the exaggerations of one of the biographers and the reticence of the other we drift uncertainly. And unfortunately, there is very little evidence that would help us to make a choice between them. From De La Salle's correspondence and from a few other authentic documents we pick up details, especially regarding dates. The commentaries, the points of view are rare, except in the writings of the Canon. What we can deduce from it all is that in Provence and Languedoc, as in Paris, the Founder had his enemies; that, even among his own Brothers, he had to run up against ill humor, heated language, and the spirit of independence, which explains when it does not excuse, the relative isolation, frequent contacts with the outside world, and support of local authorities, and that, finally, one of them and he not the least, Brother Ponce, experienced the rejection and perhaps the rebellion which preceded his own defection.

After all, what is of interest to us in Blain and Maillefer and their various commentators are the facts having to do with the general history of the Institute. From our point of view De La Salle's efforts between 1711 and 1714 simply serve to put the finishing touches on the foundations in the South of France.

The journey in 1711 was nothing more than an attempt to get in touch with regions and peoples rather different from the geographical environment in which the Founder had spent his life up to that time. Here were brighter horizons, more grandiose natural scenery, a lighter and more vibrant climate, and more direct, if not more decisive, emotions. There are few landmarks left of the itinerary. A note in a register in Avignon points to the presence of the Superior in that city on July, 27th. Three days earlier a petition on the part of the local Writing masters had been submitted to the City Council: it renewed complaints that had been earlier expressed by their Parisian confreres against tuition-free schools and requested that the city magistrates forbid access to such schools to the children of well-to-do families. The Council refused to legislate without hearing from Chateau-Blanc and the Brothers.[216] De La Salle's visit and the investigation were, therefore, coincidental. However, the Founder's reputation and the respect he inspired were, perhaps, not irrelevant to the favorable outcome of the investigation: in Avignon the recruitment of pupils was to continue unhampered.

By way of a letter addressed to Brother Gabriel on the 24th of August, 1711, we know that De La Salle was in Marseille at this time and that he was about ``to return to France''. It was probably on this particular return journey that he stayed over in Grenoble. The expense account of the St.Laurence school supplies proof of the Founder's first passage through the Dauphiné; since it mentions, for the year 1711, an ``expense of 50 livres for the arrival of De La Salle and the journey of two Brothers''.

The Clément affair called the Superior back to Paris sooner than he had wished. Visibly, his preoccupations continued to be turned southward. Once the winter of 1711-1712 was over and the brief was placed in the hands of the lawyers, he thought of nothing else but to resume the road to the Rhone, the Cévennes, the Mediterranean and the Alps.

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216 Lucard, *Annale*s,} Vol. I, pp. 261--4, following the Municipal Archives of Avignon, 37th volume of Council deliberations, fol. 67 *et sq*

Toward the end of Lent he was again in Avignon. For a month he dedicated himself wholly to the Brothers and the school, directing the religious exercises of the Brothers and in a lower class replacing one of the teachers who was ill. In the church of the Augustinians, rather close by to the Cadenian Wells, hesaid Mass. Through contacts with Chateau-Blanc, with the clergy and the leading citizens of the Pontifical city, and venerated by the population, he left something of himself in the Avignon, which was to become the principal southern center of his Institute.

In Alès he was warmly welcomed by Bishop de Saulx, who was immensely pleased with the progress of Catholicism in his episcopal city, and, quite correctly, attributed the credit for it to the catechetical and educational apostolate; besides, he had just obtained from the municipality suitable lodgings for the Brothers.[217]

In order to traverse Camisard country, where a priest ran the risk of attack, the Founder dressed as a layman. So outfitted he arrived in Gravières, at the home of the pastor, Pierre Meynier, who had been a great friend of Père Saint Jean du Roure and widely reputed in that region for his wisdom. He was the spiritual director of the Brothers in Vans. He received their Founder with great tokens of respect and deemed it an honor to serve his Mass. This humble village in the Cévennes preserved in its church, with its stone belltower, a precious relic: a framed painting (0.60m + 0.50), representing the still young face of a man, with brown hair, dressed in a coat with wide lapels, along with a broad white neckpiece. One would scarcely guess, except perhaps for a certain expression of grave and quiet gentleness, who the subject was.[218] But, in 1882, when the picture was found in a loft in Vans and cleaned by Père Canaud, pastor of Gravières, an inscription was uncovered and the following words were deciphered:

> The portrait of M. John Baptist de La Salle, priest, doctor in theology, former Canon of Notre Dame of Rheims, founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

According to a constant tradition, the Founder, after a short stay in Gravières, was the guest in Vans of a distinguished citizen of the town named Jauffret. In the same house there was a retired military man who knew how to paint, although he was by no means a distinguished portrait artist. He it was who attempted to put on canvas the features of the famous priest. It is probable that he made only a furtive sketch of his model and that he completed the work from memory. Jauffret preserved the painting which for him evoked a moment of benediction. Over the next 170 years the relic did not leave Vans. Père Canaud received it from the hands of a sacristan with whom it (along with a few other canvasses originating in the Jauffret household) had been deposited and who had some vague knowledge of its history.

Over rough, sun drenched mountain roads, rife with the sounds of cicadas, we follow the traveller who prayed as he rode along. Presently, he is in the Gévaudan where the solitude was severe and unnerving. One might well fear an unpleasant encounter at the crossroads, a highwayman springing from a cleft in the rocks or from a grove of fir trees. Dom Maillefer insists
that his uncle ``on several occasions ran the risk of losing his life'' on this adventuresome trip and that he ``avoided danger only by a miracle''.

Finally, he saw the spires of Mende, arrived at the ``Council Hall'', and awakened the joyous surprise of his disciples. Since 1710 Brother Timothy (William

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217 Guibert, pg. 485, following the Municipal Archives of Alès, Register of Deliberations, 13th ofMarch 1712, fol. 725.

218 In the paintings which have been inspired by this picture, the subject's head has been altered in accordance with the work of the Rouen painter, Leger. There is no way of judging, therefore, through these modified copies, the degree of resemblance with the original

Samson-Bazin), one of the leading Brothers in the Institute, was Director of the school. He had succeeded Brother Antoine, who had been one of``the twelve'' of 1694. The youngsters in Mende, well prepared by Brother Ponce, had always been in good hands. Parents and Bishop Baglion La Salle expressed their gratitude to the Superior.

With the Founder we must turn from the Gévaudan back to Provence. After stopping at Uzès to visit with Bishop Michel Poncet La Rivière, he reached Marseille. By consulting the Drolin correspondence we can fix the date of this visit at July 1712 at the very latest, and it must have extended over several months. Almost immediately De La Salle became concerned with ``beginning a novitiate''. That was the important matter, which is sufficient to explain his choice of Marseille as his ``home-away-from-home''.

The novitiate was undertaken enthusiastically as early as the end of August. Much help was offered. The excellent Bishop Henri Francois Xavier Belsunce, in possession of his See since 1709, was fully conversant with the plans of the Founder who, in practically no time at all, had a house with a garden, the necessary funds and a few postulants. He entrusted these recruits to Brother Timothy, who had been hastily called to do duty as Director of novices, and who had been replaced in Mende by Brother Medard. There was already talk of putting the Brothers in charge of all of the charity schools - a step which would have crowned De La Salle's hopes. A Jesuit had come to preach in favor of introducing the Brothers into St.Martin's parish; and the Director had been chosen - the diligent and faithful Brother Bernardine.

Suddenly, there was a complete reversal: the pastor no longer wanted the Brothers. He persuaded the underwriters of the project to choose clerics; and, then, with a grieved look, as though his hands were tied, he attempted to apologize to the Superior.

A plot had been mounted against De La Salle. As in Paris, he was accused of harshness, intransigence and stubbornness. His novices were induced to think poorly of their vocation; his Brothers were subverted; his supports were cut off; and he was lampooned.

Maillefer declares that as earlier admirers learned in greater detail of the Founder's ``sentiments and maxims'', they disapproved of ``most of the practices he had introduced'' into his community. But perhaps it was a dispute similar to those raised earlier by Baudrand and La Chétardye; and De La Salle was perhaps once again running up against a sort of clerical despotism. There was indeed something of this; and in the case of Père Francois Aubert, pastor of St.Martin's, there was perhaps nothing but this.

Unequivocally, Blain raises the specter of Jansenism. The spirit of that sect had spread to Marseille, as it had throughout France, among theologians and the upper middle class, who had also been models of piety and zeal. It was to reveal itself and turn to revolt and rebellion toward the end of 1713, after the publication of the Bull *Unigenitus*. Arnaud, pastor of Notre Dame Accoules chose to resign rather than to submit to Rome's orders. Bishop Belsunce, whose orthodoxy was total and effective fought tirelessly during his long episcopacy against suspected members in his own diocese.

From the beginning of the century passions had been excited. The pamphlet entitled ``Case of Conscience'' in 1701 had broken ``the peace of the Church''. Once again, as in the days of Saint Cyran and Antoine Arnauld, people were discussing the problems of `efficacious grace' and `irresistible pleasure'. They were wrangling about the distinction between `law' and `fact', about the five heretical ``propositions'' taken

from Jansenius and condemned by Innocent X in 1653. Père Quesnel's *Moral Reflections* presented dangerous theses to the faithful, discreetly, cleverly and in a language that was filled with unction. In 1703 the royal government confiscated Quesnel's papers. In 1705 the Bull *Vineam Domine* condemned the ``respectful silence'' and ``conscientious reservations'' regarding the attribution of ``the five propositions'' to the author of *Augustinus.*} In 1711, on the order of Louis XIV, the destruction of the monastery of Port-Royal-in-the-Fields, Jansenism's citadel and holy city, was completed.

De La Salle had fallen into a world of turmoil. He was too wise and too charitable to become involved in controversy. But he was also too sincere not to say what he meant when, in spite of himself, people implicated him with hotheaded dissenters. We know that he condemned the excesses of theological dispute. We know that he accepted, without protest or reservation, the final decisions that were drawn up in Rome.

Thus, the goodwill that had at first supported him now deserted him. Marseille rejected him with the same ardor that it had at one time acclaimed him. He was henceforth nothing but a foreign and unassimilated element. In vain did he attempt to defend himself in a ``Memoir'' that his official biographer seems to have known and which, according to Blain, contained the
following serious warning against Jansenism:

> Through my own personal experience (I learned) what the Church must fear from a party which daily grows stronger, and I foresee with sadness the sufferings to which the Spouse of Christ is subject at its hands.[219]

Bishop Belsunce's kindness did not fail the Founder. But it did not translate into effective support. Maillefer and Blain write that the Bishop delayed the Founder, who was getting ready to go to Rome. He showed him the church of Notre Dame, meanwhile exhorting him to be ready to open a school there. De La Salle gave up his journey, but he was debarred from opening a school in Notre Dame.

In the spring of 1713 his work in Marseille was seriously compromised. Brother Timothy was directing only a handful of novices. The two Brothers at St.Laurence had been shaken by the assault conducted against their Founder, who, it seems, momentarily thought of withdrawing the Brothers from the school.[220] The advice of his confessor, Canon Baumer, persuaded him to retain this keystone in a structure that persisted in God's plans.

However, De La Salle thought that his presence could only serve to irritate his enemies. Later on, Marseille would pay tribute to the man that it had misunderstood. In the old church of St.Laurence, on shores that had been so inhospitable, an altar rises today in honor of the man who came down from the north to evangelize the children of Provence.

One of the higher spots of the region also preserves a reminder of De La Salle. Twenty-four miles from Marseille, by a route through Aubagne and Gemenos, sits Sainte Baume: it is an immense, peak shaped rock, rising out of the foliage of a cool strip of forest. Around about on the stony soil there is very little grass, but there is broome, furze and some pinewood. The flowers give off the scent of lavender and the full light of Provence illumines the austere landscape. According to legend, Mary Magdalen dwelt in the grotto that is hollowed out at the summit and the ``Holy Head'' that dominates the site was thought to have been the pedestal to which angels lifted

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219 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 92. The style is quite clearly Blain's, and not the Founder's
220 Guibert, pg. 503, following a ``Report'' dated 1776, preserved in the Departmental Archives of Vaucluse, Series H, File 7

the child of God so that she might listen to celestial music. It was a retreat that was dear to the followers of Father Lacordaire. From early times it had been a place of pilgrimage for Christians. John Baptist de La Salle, with a soul heavy with anxiety and bearing the cross of a Founder who had been insulted, disgraced and effectively exiled, went there on foot, over roads that zigzagged up the mountainside. He then withdrew to the monastery of St.Maximin for forty days, ``each day assisting at the Office".

Brother Bernardine reports these things and then adds that the Founder returned to Mende.[221] It is reasonable to accept his testimony, since he was in Marseille in 1713 and was sent to Mende as Director in about May of that year. A painful occurrence had taken place in Mende: Brother Medard, an unsteady religious, who had once before fled the Institute but who, through De La Salle's forbearance had been readmitted, deserted his post once again; he travelled to Avignon with the idea of defending his actions, when he died at the Brothers' residence in Alès from complications of pleurisy. Obviously the school in Mende went through a crisis: perhaps a temporary appointee was sent there without an ``Obedience". In any case, a visit from the Superior became necessary. It must have occurred as early as June of 1713. Doubtless, it was at this time also that Brother Timothy met with his Superior, to whom he had to report the total collapse of the novitiate in Marseille. This piece of bad news could not have come as a surprise; but it added to the Founder's burden of disappointments. De La Salle is reported to have said to Timothy:

> What makes you think to come to me? Do you not see my inability to lead anybody? Are you unaware that many Brothers seem to wish to have nothing more to do with me and that those words of the Gospel seem to have been said for my benefit: *Nolumus hunc regnare super nos,*} we do not want him any more as Superior? And they are right, because I am incapable of being their superior.[222]

Blain must have gathered these doleful words, or at least something very much like them, from the lips of Brother Timothy (Superior-general starting in 1720), which he then rapidly ``edited". It is impossible to deny that some discord existed in the communities in the South of France: Brother Timothy went to Avignon to replace Brother Ponce as Visitor.[223] At Mende the situation was not very clear when Brother Bernardine arrived; he himself was personally beyond suspicion; but he found a house that was in disarray, and the restoration of order did not take place without a rather rude bit of surgery; the malcontents were not immediately pacified even in the presence of the Founder with whose patience they were quite familiar.

The Founder demonstrated that he loved them and also that he had a special affection for Mende by remaining in that city for about two months. Since his Brothers were living in closequarters, he took a cell with the Capuchins. And then he accepted the hospitality of Mlle.Lescure Saint-Denis, who had founded the Congregation of the Sisters of Christian Union for the education of poor young girls, especially ``new converts". Mlle.Lescure was happy to be counselled. She even obtained a Rule from De La Salle, which the Sisters still follow in their beautiful convent that was constructed in 1734.

The pastoral tour of 1713 was to come to an end in Grenoble. In the first days of August De La Salle was already in the Dauphiné. We know this on the strength of

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221 Brother Bernardine's deposition, dated the 6th of May 1742. Guibert, pg.505.

222 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 98.

223 Lucard, *Annales,*} Vol. I, pg. 299 says that Brother Ponce ``was ordered to go to Rouen to Brother Dositheus' Community". One thing is certain: Ponce was not a member of the Institute in 1717 when Brother Bartholomew made his visit to all the houses. Cf. below, chap. x, pg. 407--409.

unquestionable sources, documents that M.Edmond Maignier, Conservator of the library in Grenoble, published in 1907.[224]

The scholar discovered a copy, written in the Founder's hand, of the royal licence (dated the 19th of December, 171) authorizing the printing of the *Devoir d'un chrétien envers Dieu* (Duties of a Christian to God). The copy is accompanied by the following declaration:

> I place the present with M.Molard in order to have this book printed, with the enclosed licence, by Matthew Petit, printer in Grenoble, which I agree to have printed by him, once only after which he will no longer be able to use this licence. Done at Grenoble, this 9th day of August, 1713. (Signed) DE LA SALLE, conformably to the agreements that I have this day made with M. Molard, and not otherwise

There follow the agreements exchanged between Molard, stationer, Petit, printer, and Canon Disdier in the name of the Bureau of Christian Schools,for the printing of a book entitled *The Duties of A Christian Toward God and the Means of Being Able to Perform them*, divided into two parts, previously published in Paris, Antony Chrétien, in 1703.[225]

We shall return to this very important text in our study of the Founder's writings. We refer to it here only with respect to De La Salle's visits to his communities in the South of France.

The stay in Grenoble was longer than anyone might have expected. The peaceful St.Laurence school, dutifully directed by Brother Jacques, under the supervision and at the expense of a very well disposed Bureau, did not seem to require reform or reorganization. The father had come to provide his sons with the comfort of his presence and to take for himself the physical and moral rest of which he had special need after the terrible afflictions of the last two years. He did not, it goes without saying, look for such rest except in the spiritual direction of his Brothers and in the labors of his correspondence, his books and especially in prayer.

In order to place himself, without human obstacles, in the presence of God, shortly after his arrival, it seems, the Founder went up from Grenoble to the *Grande Chartreuse*. Without revealing his identity, he received generous hospitality from the disciples of his distant predecessor in the Chapter of Rheims, St.Bruno. After the fire of 1676, Dom Le Masson, prior and architect, had rebuilt on the marvelous site that dominates the Grand Som the hostel buildings, the monks' houses about the cloister, the library, the refectories, and the collapsed portions of the chapels. In this new Chartreuse, which today is still visible, the Founder enjoyed three days of the felicity of silence and solitude.

Returned to St.Laurence, and although he had planned the weeks of the school vacation for the spiritual direction of the Brothers, he was laid up with illness. An acute rheumatism, from which he had suffered so much in the past at Vaugirard, tormented and crippled him. His cure required him once again to submit to the torture of fire as he stretched himself over a grill under which burned aromatic herbs.

His convalescence was long and ended on a hillside in Parménie. About twenty-one miles northwest of Grenoble, in a region of meadows and copsewood, Parménie is like an immense altar raised above the fertile and populous valleys which are encircled by mountains. It is the very type of ``the highplaces'' and ``the prophetic

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224 Petite Revue des Bibliophiles dauphinois, no. 5, July 1907

225 These agreements are dated the 5th of March 1713. It is difficult to see how they can be prior to the Molard-De La Salle agreement of August 9th. There seems to be a printing error involving the month or the year. In any case, the essential date enabling us to fix the time of the Founder's arrival in Grenoble remains the one on the declaration
that is signed in his own hand

hills". It appears as though people have always come here to get closer to God. At the end of the 17th century, a simple country girl, named Sister Louise, built an old fashioned chapel here. And with meager funds and in the midst of frustrations, she brought the work to a successful issue. Her reputation for holiness and her remarkable knowledge of souls were indisputably verified. To the people of the neighborhood who, each year without fail at the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, went up to Parménie there were added crowds of visiting pilgrims. Sister Louise had two hostels built for the faithful who wished to pass some time in prayer and recollection. It was to this spot that De La Salle was led by the director of pilgrimages and retreats, his friend, Canon Saléon. He talked with Sister Louise and entrusted himself to the wisdom of this remarkable woman.

In his condition of fatigue, and already on the threshold of old age, De La Salle could not dream of leaving Grenoble in the middle of winter. To the community in Paris he sent Brother Jacques in whose prudence he confided, to observe, judge and report. Brother Jacques also knew Brother Barthélemy personally, since the latter had been his Director of novices.[226] Meanwhile, De La Salle took over the absent Brother's classes. At the Motherhouse there is preserved a straight-backed armchair, set on a raised platform, which was the chair from which the Founder taught at St.Laurence.

De La Salle had not lost interest in the general administration of the Institute. In proof, we have a letter sent to the Visitor of Rheims, Brother Joseph. The letter, the original of which is in the Motherhouse Archives,[227] is dated simply``this 16th of February". But because of the Brothers it
Mentions - one, Fabian, who did not enter the Institute until September of 1713 and another, Placid, who died in December of 1714 - we can only assign it to the Grenoble period.[228] De La Salle writes:

> I received your three letters together yesterday. I am answering the most pressing one. It would seem desirable that Brother Placid should go to Guise. I am sending Brother Fabian to accompany the young Brother from Mende who will replace Brother Placid. In two or three years he will be better able to profit from the novitiate than he is now, and he will do well in school. He will be in Rheims on Tuesday evening. Brother Dositheus would not have written to you if you had not written first, neither would the Brothers in Guise. I do not know why you write like this to the Brothers as you please. It is not wise. Such correspondence between one house and another is undesirable and unbecoming. If you wish to prevent it do not do it yourself

The instructions are unequivocal. The Superior is outlining to his representative the limits within which he leaves him freedom of action. The Visitor's commission did not carry with it the freedom to write to any Brother whatsoever. By continuing to give orders, De La Salle showed quite clearly that, after two years' absence, he remained the leader to whom the others must look. He did not hesitate to enter into details. At the end of the letter he asks that a postulant named Bourgeois learn ``to sew and to cook properly"; that another, a stonemason, be ``put off until after Easter". He prescribed that wool be given to Brother Remy ``to make stockings….and a shirt". These humble things reveal a very attentive father, and not the silent figure in voluntary exile desiring only to be forgotten that Blain conjures up.

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226 *Vie du Frère Barthélemy*,1933 ed., pg. 82

227 Series C, letter \#12

228 Lucard, *Annales*,} Vol. I, pg. 312, note \#1. Brother Placid, Thomas Guyot, from Sissonne, in the diocese of Laon, born on the 25th of July 1691, entered the Institute on the 29th of April 1710, died at Rethel in December 1714. (Register of Entrants). It was another Brother Placid, who, in 1717, was a member of the Community in Rheims.

Nevertheless, it did require a very solemn gesture on the part of the Brothers to get him to return to Paris. We shall presently describe the circumstances and the manner in which the communities of St.Sulpice, St.Denis and Versailles intervened.

On the 17th of July Brother Bartholomew, writing to Père Martinot, pastor of Mende, declared that he had ``learned that De La Salle had left Grenoble a few weeks earlier''. That would mean, then, that the stay in the Dauphiné came to an end scarcely before the end of June. Besides, we know that he went up to Parmenie for some final conversations with Sister Louise and that at that time he recruited Claude Francis du Lac Montisambert who, as Brother Irenée, was destined to become one of the genuine glories of his Congregation.[229]

Brother Barthélemy's letter, which Brother Lucard found in the Departmental Archives of Lozère,[230] appears to support Canon Blain's accusations against the Brothers in Mende. In fact the letter asked Père Martinot to investigate the conduct of the Director, Brother Henri, who was supposed to be ``mistreating the Brothers, (and) thinking of getting married'', constantly violating the Rule, spreading false rumors regarding the situation of the Institute in Paris, inspiring the mother of a young Brother (a native of Mende, but presently assigned to Paris) ``to write her son everything that was most calculated to disgust him with his Vocation…

Finally, we have learned'', adds the head of the Parisian community,``that he has treated M.de La Salle, our Founder, shamefully, and that he has forced him to leave the Brothers' residence in Mende.''

Seizing upon this last sentence and figuring, further, that Brother Henri, still Director in Vans on the 21st of August, 1713,[231] had not arrived in the Gévaudan until after the departure of the Founder for the Dauphiné, Guibert assumes that the unpleasant incidents recounted by Blain (and, no doubt, greatly magnified by him) occurred in 1714, after De La Salle's return to Mende from Grenoble.

After a fresh inquiry into the affair, it seems to us that Guibert's hypothesis is very difficult to reconcile with Brother Barthélemy's evidence. If De La Salle had returned to Mende in 1714, that would have been only a very few days before the date on which Brother Barthélemy wrote to Père Martinot. But the Brother makes no allusions to a recent visit the Superior made to that city. On the contrary, he informs his correspondent about the departure from Grenoble, only a ``few weeks'' back, and he adds that De La Salle ``went to visit the houses in Provence''.

True, we do not know which of the houses he visited before he returned to Paris. But if he left Grenoble in June and if (as all the biographers agree) he was in the house on Rue Barouillière for ``the Feast of St.Laurence'' (August 10, 1714), he could not have made at this time the extended stay in the Céevennes, of which Blain speaks.

The sum-total of the charges brought against Brother Henri relate (of course) to events in the year 1714. But the particular expression regarding ``shameless treatment'' that the holy Founder of the Brothers was supposed to have received can only be the recollection of a still more distant incident.

What, then, is the conclusion? Brother Henri may very well have been in Mende when De La Salle was staying there between June and July of 1713 - not, of course as Director, since Brother Bernardine succeeded Brother Medard in these functions, but as a subordinate. And we have already spoken concerning the confusion which followed upon Medard's defection. Henri, whose family name was

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229 See below, Part Two,chap. X pg 421

230 Lucard, *Annales,*} Vol. I, pp. 313--14. A copy exists in the Motherhouse Archives

231 On this date he signed a receipt forhis salary in Vans (Canaud documents)

Joachim Pelard and who was born in 1683 in Saint Pierre in Guise[232],was probably that ``son of a poor Picardy cobbler, received " into the Congregation ``out of charity"[233] and who had used insolent language with the Founder. We would be inclined to believe that he came from Marseille, where he would have been known by his Christian name of ``Joachim". When De La Salle was forced to seek asylum with the Capuchins in Mende, rumor accused the Brothers, and more especially Henri, of having compelled this apparent withdrawal from the Brothers' residence. It was this story which, by way of Brother Isidore, was carried from Mende to Paris and so to the ears of Brother Barthélemy.

Actually, nothing nearly so serious took place. The Superior quickly restored order in the house. And he was so little displeased with Brother Henri that he named him to take in hand the school in Vans, and, then, toward the end of the same year (1713) had him return to Mende, this time with an ``Obedience" as Director.[234]

Regarding the accusations (or insinuations) of misbehavior on the part of Brother Henri in 1714, we do not know how much truth they contain. In any case, the series of events as we find them in Blain's book- ten years of ``scandalous" life, and a total break with the Superiors[235]- is a legend contradicted by the documents: on this point we agree completely with Guibert and with Lucard.

On the 5th of October, 1714, Père De Brou, the ecclesiastical superior of the Brothers at St.Sulpice, wrote the pastor of Mende:

> I have reported what you were so kind to write me to M.de La Salle. He seemed to me to be rather in difficulties to supply good Brothers for your city in place of those who left you. However, he has a great desire to maintain that school and means to staff it immediately…[236]

In brief, it was a question of sending assistants to Brother Henri in place of Brother Isidore and of that ``young Brother from Mende" mentioned in De La Salle's letter to Brother Joseph, Visitor.

On the 27th of December 1716 Brother Barthélemy found Brother Henri and Brother Nicolas at work in ``the Council Hall".Henri, as Director, wrote the ``act of consent" for the forthcoming General Chapter. The reservation that he had - namely that ``a few of the Brothers in this region… shall have a role in the election of the Superiors, and then discuss and decide upon the regulations" - was nothing if not legitimate and reveals only a man who refused to be dealt with carelessly. Brother Nicolas signed the act as annotated.[237]

The two Brothers died in Mende in 1721 of the plague which extended from Marseille to the Gévaudan. On the 21st of September Brother Henri, along with a priest, had been commissioned by the City Council to distribute aid to the people who were ill of the plague.[238] On the 14th of October he died ``in the sick wards for the plague ridden, to whose service he was dedicated".[239]Brother Nicolas died two weeks before his Director.

These heroic deaths might well have served Blain as the subject for a eulogistic funeral oration.

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232 Motherhouse Archives, Register of Entrants
233 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 48
234 On the 22nd of January 1714 the receipt of salary was signed in Vans, not by Brother Henry, but by Brothers Maximian and Ildefonse. (Canaud documents)
235 Blain, Vol.II, pg. 49
236 A copy exists in the Motherhouse Archives
237 Report of the visit of the houses by Brother Barthélemy Cf. Vie du Frère Barthélemy,} 1933 ed., pp. 109--10.}}
238 Guibert, pg.542, according to a quotation from the Council's deliberations
239 ital Ibid.,} according to the Municipal Archives of Mende, GG no. 42

CHAPTER TEN

The Final Organization of the Institute. Brother Barthélemy. And the Founding of St. Yon

When the Brothers in Paris finally saw the Founder again, in August of 1714, their confidence in the future was restored. The period that was coming to a close seemed heavy with danger for the Institute. The outcome of the Clément suit was a victory for De La Salle's enemies, and his long absence seemed to have left them a clear field. Wrongly, but not improbably, they thought that the man against whom the courts had found had lost his courage, that his voluntary eclipse was an abdication, that his group, deprived of his leadership, could no longer hold together and that the debris of his work would become fair game. Actually, for John Baptist de La Salle there was neither capitulation nor disaster. Rather, there was only a moment's reflection, a change of attitude and of objectives, under particularly difficult circumstances. Of course, humanly speaking he was playing a dangerous game - he was toying with defeat. But he acted with the wonderful abandon of the saints. Of his own followers he asked only that they work fearlessly. During this time he consolidated his positions on more favorable ground and accumulated a reserve of energy, prayer and meritorious suffering. In brief and clear messages, he attracted the attention of Brothers who no longer enjoyed the consolation of his presence. But, having heard the distress call, he returned; and once returned, all was saved. It remained for him only to consummate his own personal sacrifice, so that upon his joyously humble life, upon his body and upon his tomb should rise - as he had wanted it - the material and moral edifice of his Institute.

The Brother who had (for two-and-a-half years) taken his place, and whom he had selected as his successor, was an intelligent and dedicated man, who was possessed of a pure and genuinely courageous soul, but also of a sickly physical appearance, who also happened to have been singularly unhandsome. He was one of those fragile apostles who surprise people when they do not perish forthwith under the burdens they bear, even when we know that their weakness rests upon God's power.

Joseph Truffet (Brother Barthélemy) was not among the earliest of De La Salle's disciples. Born on the 11th of February, 1678, on the outskirts of Douai, in Sin, where his father was a schoolteacher, he was a good student at the Jesuit college in Douai; he had thought at first of the priesthood, but then, eager for silence and penance, he entered the monastery of Grande Trappe. Abbot de Rancé, who at the time was nearing the end of his life, met the postulant and thought his physical constitution was too sickly to support the Cistercian way of life. After a brief stay in the Priory of the Canons Regular, Truffet heard about the Brothers of the Christian Schools. At the beginning of 1703 he came to Paris during the period De La Salle was still living at the ``Grande Maison'' on Rue Vaugirard. He followed the Founder to Rue Charonne , and then was sent into community in Chartres. His studies in the humanities and theology had done very little to prepare him to teach spelling. His body also told against him. He had periods of depression and aversion. But in temptation, as in illness, he showed astonishing strength of soul. Canon Blain writes:

> His zeal for the salvation of his neighbor was all the more praiseworthy in that he was devoid of personal talent to give the task attractiveness; without envying others, nor disheartened to see himself so ill endowed for success in such a demanding work, he was mindful only to take advantage of the qualities he possessed in order to teach and sanctify children… People were edified to observe him … vigilant, hardworking, doing everything he could so as to accomplish by Grace what he could not do by nature.[1]

His vocation was not that of an ordinary educator. What had attracted him to the Institute was the spectacle of humble, mortified and despised men under the leadership of a saintly man. There was always something of the Trappist in him. De La Salle had a way of making use of his Brothers in accordance with their talents. Learning that Brother Barthélemy's health would no longer permit him to teach class, the Founder recalled him from Chartres to Paris. At only twenty-seven years of age, he had already been matured by interior struggles and physical sure judgment and a refined charity. He had a solid knowledge of the things of God. He possessed, as a consequence, the ability to counsel and govern souls. The Superior made him Director of novices, in the exercise of which office in 1705 he resided in Rue Princesse. At that time he had hardly more than six or seven young men to direct. But the transfer of the novitiate to St.Yon in August of that year coincided with an increase of vocations, and during that period there were at least eleven new postulants.

Was Brother Barthélemy professed at this time? We would hesitate to think so were it not for the fact that, among the ``twenty-three formulas of perpetual vows made …either at Vaugirard or in Paris, from 1695 to 1705",[240] we find Brother Bartholomew's vows written out in his own hand in the ``Vow Book" and dated the 7th of June, 1705. True, it is surprising to learn that such a commitment took place only twoyears after his entrance into the Congregation. For other Brothers we observe longer waiting periods: four, five, seven and eight years. However, the time had been reduced to three years for Brother Joseph (Jean Le Roux) and for Brother Theodore (Simon Sellier), and even to two years for Brother Ambrose (Francois Blein).[241] However, since the Society was still not approved by the Holy See, the vows pronounced by the Brothers were not ``vows of religion" properly so-called. For legitimate motives persons might be released from these vows by an ecclesiastical authority without any special procedures.

Brother Barthélemy's special merit and his position as Director of novices justified in De La Salle's eyes what might be called ``special treatment". Nevertheless, in 1710 a council of senior Brothers were on the point of obtaining the dismissal of their confrere. At the time, the novitiate was operating on Rue La Barouillère, where the Founder had located it in 1709. An epidemic of scurvy, following the privations and misery of ``the terrible year" had tested the entire community. Brother Barthélemy, who had spent himself at the bedsides of his novices, was stricken with scrofula, and those with whom he lived feared contagion. De La Salle was asked to send the man home. At the same time, Brother Barthélemy's father, the old schoolteacher in Sin, had died. The town's supervisors, surely unaware of the Brother's state of health, were prepared to confer upon the son the teaching position of his late father.

After a night passed in prayer, De La Salle decided to keep Brother Barthélemy. The decision was completely in agreement with the wishes of the

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240 See above, Part Two, chap. iii, pg. 205

241 Brother Ambrose entered on the 21st of May 1693 and pronounced his perpetual vows on the 29th of May. Compare the Register of Entrants with the`Vow Book".

Brother. But, according to Blain, it was only at this time that he ``pronounced irrevocable vows of obedience and stability", while adding the vow ``of perpetual chastity".[242] And in support of this assertion the biographer cites a letter from Brother Barthélemy to his mother, dated the 30th of April 1710. In the letter the circumstances under which he nearly left the Institute are described. ``Shortly thereafter", he adds, ``our Father even allowed me to bind myself to the Institute forever".

Admitting the authenticity of this letter, and its date being apparently certain,[243] we must assume that Brother Barthélemy was, at the time, confirming previous commitments, and by the vow of chastity, which the Brothers had not explicitly pronounced at this time, he meant to strengthen them. But there no longer exists a trace of the documentation used by Blain.

It is clear that John Baptist de La Salle acknowledged Joseph Truffet as his right hand man. Henri l'Heureux had died early; Nicholas Vuyart had defected, and Gabriel Drolin, handpicked for a special assignment, lacked what it took to lead a congregation. Of the other disciples of 1694 who survived and remained faithful, none, in spite of important qualities, entered so deeply into the desires and the spiritual doctrine of the Founder. Among the men of the second generation, there were excellent administrators and religious of distinguished virtue. Brother Ponce was among the first generation: but even before his final ingratitude, his defects of heart and character were obstacles to reliance upon him. Among the second generation, we might single out Brother Louis (Jean Robin) from Viserny, near Dijon, whose edifying life Blain recounts. And among those who, as true heirs of the Lasallian spirit, would continue authentically and successfully the educational apostolate and work of their Founder, there were Brother Ambrose, Brother Dositheus, Brother Joseph, Brother Francois and Brother Timothy, for whom a primary role was being reserved. But each of them, during the period to which we allude, had his limited field of action. The Director of novices, on the other hand, situated at the center, through whose hands the young Brothers passed, better than anyone else could apply his zeal, tact and knowledge to the general government of the Institute. The only worrisome factor continued to be his health. But it was sufficiently restored for the administrative tasks and the instructions in the interior life which were demanded of him.

It was to him, then, that, in March of 1712, De La Salle gave practical directions ``for maintaining order and regularity"[244] He had tested this man who had been so much made to his own image. And he would ``try" his mind and his will, from which he expected so much for the future of the Brothers.

To tell the truth, between 1712 and 1714, Brother Barthélemy was in such a difficult situation that to emerge from it he was obliged to display a marvelous patience and flexibility. He had the official title of ``simple substitute"[245]to the Superior. He was unable to deal with the Brothers on the strength of personal authority; and around about him there were ``egos" at work. Nevertheless, in this connection there was little to be feared from disunity. The young Brothers loved their former Director, and the senior Brothers were strong in their support of him. De La

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242 Blain, Vol. II, Vie du Frère Barthélemy,} pg. 13

243 Because of the letter's context, it is obviously impossible to date it beyond 1705

244 Blain, Vol. II Vie du Frère Barthélemy,.

6. Blain, Vol. II Vie du Frère Barthélemy, pg. 16.

245 *Ibid* .pg. 17.

Salle's charity inspired nearly everyone; while Brother Barthélemy's gentleness dispelled prejudice.[246]

External difficulties were more serious. Père La Chétardye had not given up the idea of seizing control of the Brothers in St.Sulpice. In De La Salle's absence, when the court's decisions in the Clément suit had damaged the Founder's reputation and had uncovered the conspiracy of his enemies and the indifference or the betrayal of his friends, the moment seemed propitious for the pastor to put his longstanding project fully into operation:---to transform the Brothers responsible for ``his'' schools into a parochial community. He acted under the protection of a priest who was one of Père Bricot's successors as ``ecclesiastical superior'' to the Brothers in St.Sulpice. He was Père de Brou, a distinguished man, kind, good and impetuously zealous. He was not a member of Olier's congregation, but a diocesan clergyman who was totally under La Chétardye's power.

We should recall that since 1703, people strove to avoid clarifying an ambiguity: the ``ecclesiastical superior'' of the Brothers was a nominal superior only; without having officially regained his title as ``Superior'', De La Salle in fact exercised complete authority over the Brothers both in Paris and in the provinces. Père de Brou insisted that it was time for the restoration of logic: ``You call me your `Superior'", he told the Brothers, ``you're going to have to show the signs that I am''. He had a document drawn up, which acknowledged his so-called rights and had it copied into the `community register', over the signatures of the Brothers. Brother Barthélemy, who was incapable of rebellion, regarded Père de Brou as the Archbishop's representative.

All things being equal, a ``local superior'' could be a valuable security in relation to the hierarchy. The Institute had neither Rome's nor the king's approval. While awaiting the approval of its Rules and legal recognition, it would, perhaps, be useful to have a protector, advocate and spokesman in each diocese. Did not such a solution intrude itself upon the Northern houses which, until one heard to the contrary, would have no visits from the Founder? Such arguments were not without authority, and Père de Brou must have taken full advantage of them. In the postscript to his letter to the pastor of Mende, Brother Barthélemy tells us of the widespread adoption of the practice:

> I neglected to indicate to you that our houses in the province of Paris are headed by local ecclesiastical superiors named by the Archbishops

It is easy to see the danger the Institute was running. The priests responsible for the ``guidance'' of the Brothers might be tempted to misconstrue De La Salle's preeminent rights, alter the organization of the communities placed under their control, and decide to tolerate no modification of personnel that they regarded as belonging to themselves exclusively. In the short term that would mean fragmentation and ruin.

Actually, the application of the system demonstrated the strength and the wisdom of the Brothers' regulations. Full of respect for the work and the spirit of the great Educator, the ``local superiors'' wished only to support his disciples, take their interests in hand, and facilitate relations with the diocesan authority on the one hand and with Brother Barthélemy on the other. Such indeed was the case in Rouen with Canon Blain who, in this way, became John Baptist de La Salle's indirect collaborator before becoming his biographer.[247]

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246 Blain, however, points out that the senior Brothers assembled in counsel in order to expel two or three dissidents

247 Blain, Vol. II, pp. 115--6.

There was (as might have been expected) a single exception. Père de Brou's every manoeuvre led to the ends defined by Père La Chétardye. In this case it was indeed the removal of De La Salle that was the issue. The ``Parisian superior" presented the Cardinal Archbishop with the new rules that conformed to the ideas of the pastor of St.Sulpice. Archbishop Noailles commissioned one of his Vicars-general, Père Vivant, to examine them.

There was no secret about the matter, and alarm spread through the house on Rue La Barouillère. It seemed like a return to the days of December, 1702. Once again the Brothers had to rally round their Founder, to save his work, and to defend him against his own lack of concern. Like a healthy and vigorous organism, they reacted to the attacks of a foreign body.

Out of this climate there arose the famous, but curious, letter of the 1st of April, 1714 in which the Parisian Brothers at St.Denis and Versailles actually called upon De La Salle not to fail in such critical circumstances:

> Our Very Dear Father, We, the principal Brothers of the Christian Schools, aiming at the greater glory of God and the greater good of the Church and of our Society, recognizing that it is of extreme importance that you resume the care and the guidance of God's holy work, which is also yours, since it has pleased the Lord to use you to establish and guide it for such a very long time. Everybody is convinced that God has given you and continues to give you the grace and the talents necessary properly to govern this new Society, which is of such great use to the Church; and we witness correctly that you have always guided it with a great deal of success and edification. This is why, Sir, we humbly beseech you, and in the name of and on the authority of the body of the Society to which you promised obedience, immediately to take charge of the general government of our Society.
>
> In testimony whereof we have signed: done in Paris, this 1st day of April, 1714; we are with the most profound respect, Dear Father, your very humble and obedient inferiors.[248]

It is impossible to imagine anything more moving, bolder or more forthright. In their feelings and attitudes toward their Founder the Brothers were, in 1714, as Père La Grange, the pastor of Villiers-le-Bel described them in 1703 in his letter to Père Guiart,249 fearlessly loyal, with a faith in which affection and admiration joined, proud of being followers of the saint, and deeply respectful, without hesitating to use plain language. They had a sense of the need that the Institute filled, and they made De La Salle face up to the peril which he seemed to ignore or to which he seemed resigned. They entreated him to help them and to help himself. And knowing by heart their vow formula, they reminded him that in 1694 he had signed exactly the same one: ``I promise and vow obedience to the Superiors as well as to *the body of this Society* …"

They must not have remained inactive with respect to Père Vivant, who had been one of their well-wishers. The Vicar-general had adopted a line that is often the shrewdest in difficult cases: for eight months he ignored the problem. He may even have told some of the people involved that De La Salle's return would settle a whole lot of things. However, at the same time that the Brothers were writing to the Founder, Vivant was addressing polite, flattering notes to de Brou, which however were nothing more than indications that the latter's claims were inadmissible:

> His Eminence thinks that it is important that nothing be done or signed in his name, whether regarding the Rules or the changes that are being sought in the Rules. He is relying on your

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248 The original text of this letter has been, unfortunately, lost. However, there is no reason to doubt its authenticity. Blain (Vol. II, pg. 118) and Maillefer both quote it. Maillefer commits a material error in ascribing it to 1715 instead of 1714. The Founder was certainly back in Paris before the 5th of October 1714, the date on which Father de Brou wrote the letter to Father Martinot from which we have quoted above (pg. 548) and of which we shall speak later on.

249 See above, Part Two, chap. iv, pg. 222 *et sq.*

> wisdom for the good management of the schools whose care you have, and indeed he considers that under such wise guidance piety and peace will flourish. [250]

This letter was dated the 4th of April, 1714. It provided the Brothers with a respite of which they doubtless informed De La Salle and which he used in order to make a rather leisurely return to Paris. In the course of this journey he learned of the death of La Chétardye.

In his letter of the 17th of July, 1714, Brother Barthélemy informed the pastor of Mende of the occurrence:

> I take the liberty, Sir, to tell you that the pastor of St.Sulpice died on the Feast of St. Peter last, in the odor of sanctity, and that Father Gergy, who was his Vicar, is now his successor in the pastoral duties.

It was appropriate to acknowledge ``the virtues and the charitable works'' of this eminent clergyman. Pope Clement XI himself had done so in the language of a Pontifical ``Brief'' sent to the dying man.[251] Neither De La Salle nor the Brothers forgot eighteen years of benefits and tireless zeal in the service of the people. But there is no reason to disguise the fact that Providence had withdrawn the greatest obstacle to the free development of the Institute. The Founder could return to Paris without apprehension.

Père Languet Gergy entertained no opposing views. And left to his own devices, de Brou was no longer a force with which to contend. In his letter to Martinot, he was quite discreet:

> I reported to M.de La Salle what you did me the honor of writing to me … Since he is back in Paris, I believe I must return to him the government of his Society, of which I have had only the care during his absence …

If we are to believe Blain,[252] however, he had a certain appetite to resist, and he put some insidious questions to the Brothers and their Leader concerning the future government of the Institute. But he rather quickly understood that for him, henceforth, his silence would be golden and, adopting the view of the majority, he thought of nothing more than of imitating the other ``local superiors'' by contributing to the peace of the community and the prosperity of the schools.

* * * *

It was a relief for Brother Barthélemy to be released from undertakings and responsibilities that were particularly sensitive. To prove to De La Salle that the Brothers were unanimous in demanding his return to the government of the Institute, he sent a copy of the letter, dated the 1st of April, 1714, to the Brothers in the South of France, inviting them to sign it. It was a sort of plebiscite that had all the success that had been anticipated for it.

But it was the Founder's intention to make sure of a transmission of power within his own lifetime. He retained complete confidence in Brother Barthélemy, thereby proving that, more evenhanded than some of his biographers, he did not refuse forgiveness for concessions granted, by constraint or by deference, to Père de Brou. The Director of novices was the Assistant Superior upon whom devolved current transactions and day to day decisions. De La Salle obviously refused him access to no counsel and in the last resort always consulted him. Gently, he accustomed the Brothers to look to Brother Barthélemy. He no longer presided at community exercises. He wished henceforth only to fulfill the functions of chaplain-

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250 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 149.

251 *Vie du Frère Barthélemy,} 1933 ed. pg. 89, note.*

252 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 122.

celebrating Mass, preaching, hearing confessions, the essential activities of his priesthood which, finally, allowed him to concentrate upon the heart of his work.

Withdrawn to his own room, it was still his Institute with which he was wholly occupied. He prayed for the Brothers and worked to revise his books on spirituality and education. It was in this way that he spent his last years, especially after he had decided to return to St. Yon.

Shortly after Louis XIV's death the Rouen estate had once again become, and remained for fifty-six years, the Motherhouse of the Institute. Daily life in Paris had become too difficult. The boarding school at St.Yon, on the contrary, earned the necessary income to finance the general services and the congregation's novitiate. In October, 1715, Brother Barthélemy and the young men whose Director he was took the road to Normandy, to be followed in December by John Baptist de La Salle.

And with him we shall now cross the threshold of that residence where he would end his time of exile and trial, and where, later on, his earthly remains would lie in rest. In the Eleventh Volume of *Gallia Christiana*, we read: Sanctus Ionius, caput ordinis[253] St.Yon, headquarters of the Congregation, occupies an important place in the history of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. In the 18th century the name of the Motherhouse became the name given to the Brothers themselves: *unde nomen nacti sunt Fratrum Sancti Ionii*.[254] In the history of education, the importance and the originality of the work accomplished in this place cannot be ignored. For these reasons it is appropriate to study such an important undertaking not, as it were, ``on the fly'', and between accounts of other educational institutions. In order to situate and describe such an institution we must await the moment of its full development, the moment in which, with the election of Brother Barthélemy and the death of De La Salle, a new order of things was about to open.

This overall view then will embrace a rather long period of time. We shall have to backtrack to 1703 in order to pick up the train of events. July 11th of that year, the Founder leased from the Marquise of Louvois the property in which he planned to house his novitiate. After the stormy events of 1703 and 1704, he had found the haven of his dreams. Opposite Rouen, on the other side of the Seine, there stood a peaceful stretch of land - seventeen-and-a-half acres of garden, meadows, huge trees and vast buildings, surrounded by the silence of other religious communities and the steeple of the old church of St.Sever.[255] Noises from the docks and river were muffled before they ever reached this enclosure, while the roofs and the towers of the great city rose in the distance.

The estate was once known as ``Hauteville Manor''. It had been occupied by the poet, Philip Desportes, the pastor of Tiron. He had been succeeded by Eustace Saint Yon, Master of the Chamber of Accounts for Normandy and treasurer of St.Nicholas' parish. Having acquired the estate in 1604, M.Saint Yon built a small chapel on the site, dedicated to the martyr whose name he bore- the ``Ionius'' who, according to the Bollandists, was a disciple of St.Denis and who is still venerated in the diocese of Paris. Hauteville Manor became ``St.Yon Manor''. And the name was preserved by the various owners through whose hands the property passed beginning in 1615. In August, 1670 Marguerite Barentin, widow of the Marquise Bois-Dauphin disposed of it in favor of the Benedictine Nuns of the Abbey of St.Amand. These

253 *Gallia christiana*,} XI, pg. 345. This account concerning St. Yon, which also summarizes De La Salle's work in a few lines, was written during the generalate of Brother Claude, the third Superior-general, *praeter fundatorem.*

254 *Ibid*., loc. cit

255 Replaced during the Second Empire by a vast edifice with a Renaissance-like style

Nuns, who enjoyed a rather relaxed rule of cloister, used St.Yon both as a country house and as a convalescent home. They owned it until 1705 under the name of one of their members, Madame Barentin, the niece of their benefactress. But after the death of this Benedictine Nun, St.Yon was inherited by a daughter of Madame Bois-Dauphin, the Marquise Louvois, widow of the minister. Archbishop Jacques Nicholas Colbert, aware of De La Salle's plans, saw in the location of the estate a means both for the Founder of the Brothers to set the Institute up in Rouen and at the same time to return the Sisters to their cloister. Madame Louvois was the sister-in-law of Colbert's colleague, Maurice Le Tellier, Archbishop of Rheims. She knew of the life and virtue of John Baptist de La Salle. With the Le Telliers and the Colberts, Rheims once again intervened in the destiny of the Brothers of the Christian Schools by joining them to Rouen. The Marquise agreed with De La Salle to a six-year lease at the low rent of 400 livres.[256]Archbishop Colbert and President Pontcarré paid the initial expenses of the move.[257] Graciously the Benedictine Nuns made a gift of the chapel tapestries and paintings. On August 31, 1705 Brother Barthélemy and his novices took possession of the estate.

It was a small beginning. During what might be called the vagrant years on Rue Charonne and St.Roch, the novitiate had been greatly reduced. In the Register of Entrants, whose *lacunae* should not be forgotten, only two Brothers entered in 1703 and six in 1704. We have noted the immediately buoyant results of moving to Normandy. At this period some highly esteemed candidates arrived quite unexpectedly: a few weeks before the departure from Rue Princesse, there was Jacques Nonnez from the diocese of Châlons-sur-Marne, Brother Fiacre; then two of the Selliers, Brothers Pacomius and Gervais; and Charles Bouilly, whom we met at Grenoble under the name of Brother Jacques. In 1706 came a wealthy landowner from Beaujolais, years of age, named Claude Longière, who would become Brother Dositheus. The same year there was Pascal Moncrif, Brother Didacius, from the diocese of Meaux. In all, the Director of novices was to welcome at least thirty-two postulants in four years, during the first Rouen period, which the new exodus of 1709 to Rue La Barouillère would bring to a close. During vacations the house at St.Yon was open to the Brothers stationed in Paris and the provinces, in order to rebuild physical and moral energy in fervent retreats under the direction of the Founder.

De La Salle had become a distinguished person in the Faubourg St.Sever, and he was anxious to acknowledge Norman hospitality by restoring the tuition-free school that had been founded in 1687 by Alphonse Chalon, a Canon of the Cathedral. Soon, young Brothers were teaching in the school. Besides this school for practice teaching, they also had a sort of scholasticate, called ``the academy", which helped to prepare them for their educational mission. Here they questioned one another and in a fraternal spirit criticized each other's replies and explanations; it was an effort to adapt to their own purposes the ancient method of ``disputed questions", dear to the universities of ``earlier days". At St. Yon this intellectual competition was given the name of "attack."[258]

We see how the humble idea of the schoolteacher, initially commissioned to teach children their ABCs was being broadened. Doubtless, elementary instruction

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256 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 30 *et sq*.} Guibert, pp. 397--8. *Essai historique sur la Maison-Mère* pp. 43, 45. See also the book by Canon Farcy (Pastor of St.Sever), *Le Manoir de Saint-Yon, au faubourg Saint-Sever de Rouen,*Rouen, 1936.

257 According to Maillefer.

258 Lucard, *Annales* Vol. I, pg. 332.

continued to be the primary purpose of De La Salle's program. But the man to whom young minds were entrusted, the man who, through the catechism class, daily exhortation, and total moral guidance, collaborated with the priest in the formation of souls, had to know more things than he was required to teach. Before all else he had to be equipped with sound religious knowledge. The mere ``letter'' of the catechism was not enough; without being a professional theologian, he went more deeply into Biblical commentary, dogma and liturgy than the ordinary Christian. That was his principal subject matter. Besides, he thought it was not too much to have studied the mind and character of children, the ways in which their egos and sensibilities reacted; and for the effectiveness of his teaching and the good order of his class, he became an acute student of human nature. And finally he had to practice and watch over his language; because both hesitancy and eloquence were forbidden: all that was asked of him was clarity, sobriety and precision of terms.

The books written by John Baptist de La Salle contributed to the adequate instruction of the teacher, the Christian educator. This should be accepted as an unquestioned principle even before undertaking their analysis. The professional training the Brothers received, in virtue of the clearest intentions of their Founder and according to a plan gradually developed, enabled them to become, within quite varied circumstances, marvelous ``instruments'' of his initiatives: teachers in seminaries for country Sunday school teachers, instructors for the Irish youth, as well as Directors of primary schools.

At St.Yon the Brothers were to become the organizers of a new education. The well-to-do families of Rouen, especially those who belonged to the leading merchant class, envied, if we can use the word, the poor who were taught by teachers whose methods proved so successful. They wished that their children enjoyed that combination of practical knowledge and solid religious instruction which distinguished the Brothers' pupils and enabled them to live in the world both as men of faith and of business. Hardly had De La Salle housed his novices in the Faubourg St.Sever than he was asked to accept some of Rouen's youngsters as resident pupils. With liberal mind and always attentive to the good to be done, he accepted. Besides, he needed the money: a residence school would finance his novices; and, for the future, a residence school would support the exceedingly poor Brothers in the tuition-free schools of Rouen.

An agreement reached on the 22nd of March, 1706 with Père Jacques Hecquet, pastor of St.Sever, shows that the residence school was in existence at that time. The problem for the pastor was to maintain strict pastoral authority over the newcomers. The chapel must not compete with the parish. That is why De La Salle signed the following stipulations:

1. The Brothers will not allow any outsiders to assist at their services.
2. They, as well as their resident pupils, will celebrate Easter in the parish church;
3. On Sundays they will take their residents to High Mass at St.Sever;
4. Their chaplain is to be approved by the pastor;
5. Resident pupils whom the pastor would think worthy of being admitted to the Eucharist will make their first communion in the parish;
6. The chaplain will not bless ashes, candles, palms or bless bread;
7. The Brothers will provide blessed bread to the church;
8. In their illness they will receive the Sacraments from the pastor; _
9. In the procession of the Blessed Sacrament the chaplain will be ``obliged to go ahead with the censor'', take the Blessed Sacrament which is reposing in the chapel and bring it to the door;

10. On Easter Sunday no Mass would be celebrated at St.Yon, so that nobody would miss the parochial services. [259]

Since life in a residence school cannot always follow the rhythm of parochial life, there existed in this agreement the seed of future difficulties, to which we shall return. But the institution does not seem to have been fully formed from the beginning. The number of pupils grew progressively until, as Maillefer says, they came ``from everywhere''.

The principles and methods of instruction remained the same as those whose wisdom and efficacy had been established over twenty-five years of experience. As to programs, St.Yon's were basically identical with those of the elementary schools. While subsequently they were broadened, they did not change direction. They aimed at forming minds capable of professional tasks, and quick responses to meet life's material necessities and its moral obligations. They borrowed their basic tools from the Sunday schools and, probably, also from the ephemeral residence school for the exiled Irish youngsters, and they were always prepared to enrich this initial capital as time and circumstance might require. And because they excluded the study of Latin, they adhered to a line resolutely outside of the classical humanities.

Apart from recitations and explanations of the catechism and Bible history, they came to include courses in profane history and geography, literature and rhetoric, the keeping of accounts and bookkeeping, geometry, architecture and natural history. For certain pupils they also added instruction in hydrography, mechanics, cosmography, differential and integral calculus, music and the ``living languages''. In his *Dictionary of Education*, Ferdinand Buisson has written (article on J.B. de La Salle) that this collection of studies curiously approximated the plan that the *Realschulen* would adopt in Germany, and a partial realization of which had been attempted by Francke in his *Paedagogium* in Halle. Beyond that it would be rash to assume that the Founder of the Brothers had been the prime initiator of it in France. Here again we meet with his altogether practical genius: he intended to respond to the wishes of certain families. According to the Rule of St.Yon, the parents were consulted concerning the special studies that they thought useful for their sons. A secondary education of a new type was thus elaborated - quite varied and supple, capable of being modified according to individual aptitudes and regional needs. In the course of the 18th century the Brothers, not only at St.Yon but also in their other residence schools that they opened on its model, continued to contribute to this form of instruction. The documents of the period, and especially those of the Rule of St.Yon which survive, will enable us, at the proper time, to study this great work more thoroughly.

From 1705 until De La Salle's death the residence school seemed to develop normally within the walls of the manor. President Pontcarré was interested in it. He remained the best and soundest support of the Brothers after the death on the 10th of December, 1707 of Archbishop Colbert, whose successor, Claude-Maur Aubigné, showed them very little consideration, even though he had been Vicar-general to Godet Marets in Chartres before becoming the Bishop of Noyon. In 1708, when the superintendent of the Rouen region had received complaints involving St.Yon (the pupils, according to the critics, were badly fed and the Brothers were incompetent teachers) Pontcarré was the only one to defend the Brothers. In his company the superintendent made a visit to the institution. De La Salle, who was at the time

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259 Agreement signed (by) Hecquet, (and) De La Salle, in the Departmental Archives of Lower Seine, D, no. 537. Guibert, pp. 409--10.}}

visiting the novitiate, himself explained to the two dignitaries the organization of his community, the educational training of his disciples, and the differences in regimen between pupils who did not all pay the same tuition. The superintendent verified *de visu* that the resident pupils who paid ``fifty ecus'' and those who paid ``four-hundred livres'' were all doing surprisingly well.[260]

The return of the novitiate to Paris in 1709 and, then, the long absence of the Superior, from 1711 to the end of 1715, for the time being removed from St.Yon its character of the Institute's Motherhouse. But in no way was it a period of relaxation for the residence school. Under the direction of Brother Francois, new buildings were erected. From the earliest years (there is no exact date) De La Salle had undertaken to care for youngsters on the estate whose defects and behavior made them refractory to familial education. Fathers, using their authority, sent them to St.Yon as to a sort of reformatory. These difficult, sometimes vicious, youngsters (``libertines'', as they were called), lived apart, under the constant supervision of a Brother. Their studies were pretty nearly the same as the other resident pupils, and they assisted at religious services and at general catechism lessons, and they had their own table in the refectory. Depending upon their improvement, discipline (which at first was severe) was relaxed; and they were able to join the ``free'' resident pupils.

The success obtained by the Brothers with so-called incorrigible youngsters inspired the First President of the Parlement of Normandy with the idea of establishing a ``prison" at St.Yon. The proposal consisted of entrusting to De La Salle and the Brothers individuals who had been stripped of their freedom by judicial decision or, more frequently, by an order of the king, through a *lettre de cachet*. These were not rebellious adolescents, but young men who had been involved in some scandal or had compromised their own or their family's name, along with grown men for whom there was a desire (because of their social situation or in order not to taint the reputation of a name) to avoid the shame of condemnation and imprisonment. It was a dubious and variegated lot, in which it was possible to find members of the nobility, the clergy, religious orders and the upper and lower middle classes. Alongside criminals there were the feeble-minded and some who were certifiably insane.

Residents such as these made new demands upon St.Yon. They had to be completely separated from other residents in the institution, live in cells, and were not allowed to communicate among themselves as long as their physical and moral health required a pretty nearly absolute isolation. The Director, the Brothers attached to their service and physicians visited them. They were permitted to raise birds in cages and to cultivate flowers on their windowsills. Later on, if they proved docile, they might be brought together for meals and recreation and admitted to courses in geometry, drawing, architecture or to devote themselves to manual labor: the gardens of St.Yon and the vast workshops built on the edge of the meadow were open to them. Within the institution the secrets of their origins were the property of the superiors. When their profession was listed in the *ad hoc* `Register', a pseudonym was added (selected from the calendar and always preceded by the word ``Saint''! by which they would be called throughout their internment.

Blain seems to group under the name ``older residents'' both the men in the prison and the pupils in the reformatory.23 Guibert believes he is explaining Blain when he assures us that the ``libertine department'' was closed at the time preparations

23 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 164

were made to admit prisoners.[260] A map prepared in the light of authentic documentation[261] suggests that the ``prison'' was built northwest of the chapel (constructed between 1728 and 1734); the cemetery, the farmyard and the tip of the meadow encircled and isolated it; at the rear it abutted upon the Brothers' infirmary.

The reformatory was to the east, forming one of the sides of a closed quadrangle, with the other three sides occupied by buildings for the ``free'' resident pupils. The term ``main residence'' arose from the more severe boarding school regimen imposed upon the more difficult youths and the higher costs paid by their families. Their yard covered fifteen hundred square meters enclosed by four walls, while the recreation area for the ``young residents'' included more than two-and-a-half acres of land between the front facade of these buildings, the workshops for professional instruction and Rue Walls St.Yon and the botanical garden.

Thus, while the term ``big residents'' was extended to all categories other than the ``free'' pupils, there is reason to distinguish quite clearly between individuals of various ages committed by the public authority from those adolescents who were confined for correction by fathers of families.[262] The latter were pupils subjected to a special discipline, but whose work and whose days frequently blended with those of the ``free'' residents. Whereas, on the contrary, the separation between the prison and the residence school was absolute.

After this clarification, it becomes easier to investigate the date on which President Pontcarré chose St.Yon discreetly to shelter the people whom he sought, without rumor or scandal, to banish from society. He needed time to observe the work of the Brothers; and he had personally to negotiate this delicate affair with De La Salle. Offhand, such a project seems scarcely possible in the early days of St.Yon. Between 1709 and 1714, during the Founder's absence, it seems even less so. But the year 1715, which marks the end of a crisis for the Institute and the beginning of an era of stability and prosperity, seems much more probable. And there is, besides, a decisive argument: it is based upon the quarrels De La Salle was having with the pastors of St.Sever.

The agreement in 1706 involving parochial services had certainly been put into effect regardless of the disruption it occasioned for the good order of the school. But it became inoperable when the prison was opened: it was impossible to agree that prisoners (and how else name those affected by *lettres de cachets* might every Sunday be exposed to the public and take advantage of a High Mass to escape. De La Salle had to organize all religious exercises, including Easter services, in his own chapel. Père Hecquet protested against this breach of the agreement.[263] He complained to the Archbishop - a complaint which was repeated by Père Louis Dujarrier-Bresnard, who, following Hecquet's death on the 4th of June, 1716, in August of the same year became the pastor of St.Sever, through an exchange with Père Claude Le Long, in whose favor Bresnard resigned his pastorate at St.John Vernneuil. It is not credible that an interval of several years passed between identical protests made by two different pastors. We believe then that the step taken by Père Hecquet occurred shortly after the opening of the prison - no later than April, 1716.

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260 Guibert, pg. 406.

261 Essai sur la Maison-Mère, pg. 55

262 Blain is quite explicit on the subject:``There are'', he writes on page thirty-three of his second volume, ``three sorts of residents'': the `free and voluntary' pupils, the `libertine or indocile' youths, and, finally, the `imprisoned'

263 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 168

The controversy was to endure until De La Salle's death, and (according to Blain, who was very well situated in this matter to supply us with the incontrovertible assertion) to his dying day it cost him the humiliation of being stripped of the power of hearing confessions.264

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In his letter of December 5th, 1716, De La Salle, writing from St.Yon, informed Brother Gabriel: ``For practically ten months past I have been ill in this house, where I have been living for a year".[265] A relatively premature old age had overtaken this man of 65 years, who had never spared his energies. It is indeed surprising that a body so abused had put up such a long resistance. After so many mortifications, hardships and sufferings of both body and soul, the good servant wanted to prepare himself far removed from the noises of the world and the turmoil of temporal affairs, in order to enter into the rest and the joy of the Lord. This time it was urgent to plan for the future, and no longer to postpone the election of a Superior-general in whose person the legitimate autonomy of the Institute was to be asserted. On the eve of the day on which De La Salle wrote the above lines to Drolin, procedures preliminary to the election had been agreed upon in a council held by the principal Brothers among the Founder's advisers.

For these events we possess, thank God and the caution of John Baptist de La Salle and his Brothers, a continuous series of authentic documents; the first of which tells us how this file, so important for this history of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, was drawn up and preserved.

> Today there appeared before the king's counselors, hereditary notaries, trustees and apostolic royal notaries of the province, city and county of Rouen, the undersigned, Brother Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy, Superior-general of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, founded in several cities and locations in the kingdom of France, named by a capitular decision, undertaken in their house of St.Yon, Rouen, Faubourg St.Sever, the 23rd of May last, and also Superior of the house of St. Yon, residing there, who has brought and deposited with the Notary of Rouen: a formal document of resolutions made by the said School Brothers, assembled at St. Yon on the 4th of December last; a small register bound in cardboard and parchment, in 12mo., containing a record of the visits made by the said Brother Barthélemy to twenty-two of their institutions; and, a resolution accordingly taken in the said house, on the said day, the 23rd of May last; … the whole… included in the collection of the minutes by Sanadon, the said undersigned notary …this was done, brought, deposed and examined in the said Rouen, in the chambers of the said Sanadon, notary, Thursday afternoon the thirtieth and last day of June in the year, 1717.[266]

On the 4th of December, 1716 Brothers Francois, Director of the ``free" resident school, Dositheus, Director of schools in Rouen, Ambrose, Director of the Prison, Charles and Étienne, teachers at St.Yon, signed ``the formal statement of the resolution", the text of which follows:

> We, the undersigned, Brothers of the Christian Schools, assembled in the house of St.Yon in order to make provisions for what is most urgent concerning our Institute, seeing that for nearly a year, M.de La Salle, our Founder, has been in no condition to devote himself thereto, having been always ill during this time, having judged it opportune and even believed it necessary that Brother Barthélemy, who has been appointed to guide our Institute for the last

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264 See Guibert, pg. 605-06: he ranges solid arguments against the contrary opinion held by Brother Lucard (in *Annales}* Vol. I, pg. 379)

265 Nevertheless, in July and August he was able to get to Boulogne, Calais and St. Omer

266 *Vie du Frère Barthélemy*, 1933 edition.Supporting document \#1. Copies of documents included in the Sanadon study are in the Motherhouse Archives. They are placed at the beginning of the Register of General Chapters

several years, go presently to visit all dependent institutions, in order to know what is there going on, and the way people live therein, in order that we may thereafter see, along with the principal Brothers of our Society, the manner of establishing, conserving and maintaining unity and uniformity in our Institute, to decide upon and determine the rules and at the same time to facilitate the general government of our Institute, in an assembly that he will recommend to be held in the house in St.Yon, from the Feast of the Ascension until Pentecost.

After the counsellors' signatures, De La Salle added: ``I believe that what the Brothers have resolved above is advisable'', and Canon Blain, acting as the local superior ``appointed by the Archbishop'' gave his permission to Brother Barthélemy ``to be absent for a few months in order to accomplish what De La Salle and the Brothers had believed necessary, believing it necessary as well as they''.

Chartres was the first house at which the Visitor stopped. And the deed of consent of the Brothers in Chartres---Hubert, Director, Sebastian, Cyprian and Pierre---bears the date, December 9th, 1716 in the ``small register'':

> We, the undersigned, acknowledging that our dear Brother Barthélemy, for several years the representative of the government of our Institute, has come from St.Yon, a neighborhood of Rouen, where he lives, and has reached our house on the 7th of December, 1716, to visit it following the custom of our Institute, and that we have given him an account of the way our house is run and of its expenses, and that we are quite in agreement that he call an Assembly of the principal Brothers of our Institute at St.Yon, during the time suggested by the said Brother, in order to settle and finalize our rules and, at the same time, in order to empower thereto the government of our Institute, and, finally, that we are prepared to do and to follow what shall be decided at that Assembly

At Moulins on the 16th of December, Brothers Philip and Roch signed an identical formula. At Mende, where Brother Barthélemy arrived not without difficulty or danger after days astride a horse in winter, he was received---as we have said [267]- by Brother Henri, who had regained the Superior's favor, and by Brother Nicolas. At Vans, the account of the visit was signed by Brothers Maximin and Matthew. Traversing the Cévennes insnow that covered the trails nearly proved fatal to the traveller, who remained until the day after the Epiphany of 1717 at Alès where he received the ``assents'' of Brothers Bernardine,the Director, Zosimus, Martinian and Alexander. He stayed only from the 8th to the 10th of January in Avignon, with Brother Timothy, his successor, and Brothers Victor, Hugh and Serapian. Brothers Lazarus and Saturninus, of Marseille, gave him their signatures on the 15th of January.

It took him a week to make the journey from Marseille to Grenoble. He found Brother Jacques at the St. Laurence school with his associates, Stanislaus,[268] Bernard and Alexis: all four of whom signed the formula on the 26th of January. On the 8th of February it was the turn of Brothers Antony and Barnabas in Dijon; the 15th, Brothers Romain and Casimir in Troyes. Five days were required to make the ride from Troyes to Rethel. Brother Barthélemy thought he might lose his life, or at least his money, in an encounter with some rough looking characters; but he got out of it with a good scare and reached the house in Rethel where he was cheered by the saintly Director, Brother Louis and by Brothers Maur, Damian and Alphonsus. Having bid them goodby on the 13th of February, he arrived at the cradle of the Institute, the house on the Rue Neuve in Rheims: Brothers Paul, Clement, Simon, Gervais, Gregory, Placid, Medard and Sulpicius formed the community under the

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267 See above, Part Two, chap. ix, pg. 384

268 This Brother Stanislaus (Peter Jean) of the parish of Vigneaux in the diocese of Embrun, died on the 17th of the following August (Register of Entrants). He must not be confused with Albin Bouché, the Brother Stanislaus whose brief, pious life has beentold by Canon Blain and who, admitted on the 14th of September 1717, died in Marseille on 4th November 1731

leadership of Brother Joseph. He spent three days with them, received their ``act of assent'' and left for Laon, where Brother André directed the school, assisted by Brothers Ireneus, Benedict, René and Eustace. It was the 4th of March: Brother Barthélemy wanted to be back at St.Yon before Easter, which fell that year on the 28th of March. He seems however to have stayed overlong in Guise; where he met Brother Charles, who had been sent there from Normandy, with an ``Obedience'' to be Director and to take under his command Brothers Christopher and Albert. At Calais from the 16th to the 18th of March, he met with the community of Brothers Norbert, Thomas, Nicascius, Hilarion, Luke and Fabian; at Boulogne, from the 18th to the 21st he saw the community of Brothers Fiacre, Anastasius, Mark, Romuald, Felix and Rigobert.

He then chose the shortest route from Boulogne to Rouen by way of the coast and the region of Bray. Easter time was taken up in making the regular visit and gathering the signatures of the Brothers appointed to the schools in Rouen and Darnétal - reports dated, respectively, March 27th and April 2nd. The community on Rue Minimes was composed of ten Brothers: Brother Dositheus, Director, and Brothers Vincent, John Baptist, Basil, Augustine, Antoninus, Honorius, Dorotheus, Didacius and Remy. At Darnétal Brothers Bruno and Robert operated the school.

On the 14th of April the Visitor set out for Versailles, Paris and St.Denis. For these three houses the dates of the documents and the lists of the signatories are as follows:

Versailles, 16th of April, Brothers Cosmos (Director), Paulian, Macarius, and Hyacinth; St.Denis, the 18th of April, Brothers John Francis and Dominic; Paris, the 25th of April, Brothers John (Director), Michael, John Chrysostom, Jerome, Symphorian, Victorinus, Edmund, Maurice, Zachary, Leonard and Germain.

Finally, the register concludes, on the 7th of May, with the writing and signing of the last report, that of the members of the Community of St.Yon: Brothers Francis, Ambrose, Stephen, Theodore, Onesimus, Martin, Leo, Hilary and Matthias.[269]

If to the ninety-nine signatures we have mentioned we add the names of De La Salle, Brother Gabriel Drolin and Brother Barthélemy, we reach a total of 102 members composing the Society in 1717. It would remain to determine the number of postulants and novices; in the Register we count thirteen ``entrants'' admitted in 1716 and five the following year. We may consider that most of these young men were in the novitiate when Brother Barthélemy returned from his journey to St.Yon and his election to the generalate.[270]

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269 Cf. *Vie du Frère Barthelemy*,} 1933 edition, pp. 106--16

270 It is interesting to look into the Register for other statistical information, without entertaining any illusions concerning its accuracy. Counting 136 names from 1684 to the end of 1718 (i.e., postulants entering during the lifetime of the Founder) we note twenty-five who originated in the diocese of Rheims, twenty-two in the diocese of Laon, fifteen in the diocese of Paris, thirteen in the diocese of Rouen, seven in the diocese of Chartres, four in the diocese of Cambrai, four in the diocese of Soissons, three each in dioceses of Amiens, Grenoble and Embrun; while the others were spread out among Arras, Autun, Auxerre, Beauvais, Besancon, Blois, Boulogne, Bourges, Châlons-sur-Marne, Dijon, Évreux, Fribourg in Switzerland, Lausanne, Liege, Lyons, Meaux, Mende, Noyon, Orleans, Orange, Seez, Senlis and Sens. One Brother is referred to as coming ``from Lorraine'', another ``from Savoy''. Only one of them lacks mention of a region of origin. Of the 136 entrants, thirty-six, or more than a quarter of them, did not die in the Society.

Sixteen Brothers took part in this election. Their decision, included in Sanadon's minutes, dated the 23rd of May,1717, ``the Feast of the Blessed Trinity", has preserved for us, along with the names of the Brothers, an expression of the thoughts which inspired them and something of the character of the assembly.

> In consequence of the visitation made by our dear Brother Barthélemy, as assistant in the direction of our Institute and the agreements signed by all the Brothers of our Society, we the undersigned, Directors of most of the houses of the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, spread out in a large number of the provinces of the kingdom, namely: Jean Jacot,271 called Brother Jean, Director of the house in Paris; Jean Boucqueton, called Brother Jean Francois, Director of the house in St.Denis; Jean Leroux, called Brother Joseph, Director of the house in Rheims; André de Bouves, called Brother Norbert, Director of the house in Calais; Michel Crest, called Brother Charles, Director of the house in Guise; Giles Gerard, called Brother Hubert, Director of the house in Chartres; Guillaume Samson-Bazin, called Brother Timothy, Director of the house in Avignon; Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy, Director of the house in St.Yon; Pierre Martin Ronsin, called Brother Bernardine, Director of the house in Alais; Jacques Nonnez, called Brother Fiacre, Director of the house in Boulogne; Barthélemy Joseph Purorge, called Brother Bruno, Director of the house in Darnétal; Charles Bouilly, called Brother Jacques, Director of the house in Grenoble; Claude Longière, called Brother Dositheus, Director of the house in Rouen; John Robin, called Brother Louis, Director of the house in Rethel; Loup Bonneau, called Brother André, Director of the house in Laon; Jean Vautier, called Brother Cosmos, Director of the house in Versailles,272 we, assembled in the house in St.Yon, Faubourg St.Sever, in the city of Rouen, in the name of the Blessed Trinity and under the protection of St.Joseph, patron of our Society, with the written consent of all the Brothers of the Institute, in order to deliberate concerning the ways to preserve our primitive spirit, acknowledging that to maintain ourselves in a constant and persevering unity and in complete uniformity, in the midst of the ordinary as well as the extraordinary events to which we are exposed in this life, and in order for us to procure, as far as will be possible for us, the support and strength of our Institute, have judged it opportune, for the greater glory of God, to begin by nominating one among us to take upon himself the general and universal direction of which everything concerning our Institute totally depends, having thought and said numerous prayers and performed works of piety for this intention; we have used the usual formalities of ballots and votes, the largest number of which have favored our very dear Brother Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy, whom we have elected and do elect of our free will, without respect of persons, nor species of constraint, for our permanent Superior-general, promising to have a complete submission and obedience in his regard through union with Our Lord obeying until death on the Cross, and renouncing everything that might be contrary to this, whether now or in the future.

The report of the election was followed by the new Superior's words of acceptance:

> And I, Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy, in compliance with the obedience which I profess, with humble submission accept my election that our very dear Brothers have effected, and I promise to have nothing in view in any of my actions except the glory of God and the good of our Society. But since I cannot alone suffice to deal with all the matters that concern our Society, I have besought all our dear Brothers here assembled to be good enough to select two Brothers to assist me in the guidance of the Institute.

The Brothers, ``attentive to the request of Brother Barthélemy, their Superior", proceeded ``according to the same formalities as above to the election of two Brothers who would be called ``Assistants" to the Brother Superior…. The greatest number of votes" were ``cast in favor of Brother Jean Jacot, Director of the house in Paris, and

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271 So the spelling in this document: the vows of June 6th, 1694 are signed ``Jean Jacquot"

272 The following were unable to attend the Chapter: Brother Philip (Jean Police), Director of the school in Moulins; Brother Henri (Joachim Pelard), Director of Mende; Brother Maximin, director of Vans, Brother Lazarus, Director of Marseille, Brother Barnabus (Jean Jannin), Director of Dijon, and Brother Romain (Nicolas Lubez), Director of Troyes. The Communities in the South of France were represented by three Directors---those from Avignon, Alès and Grenoble

Jean Leroux, Director of the house in Rheims", who ``would assist the said Brother Barthélemy with their advice".

Brother Jean, a survivor of Vaugirard, and Brother Joseph - Jean Leroux, born in Liesse, the 18th of February, 1678,[273] entered the Institute in 1697---``accepting humbly and respectfully what the Brothers asked"--- promised ``to give their advice" to the Superior ``without being attentive to their own interests and without any respect whether to persons outside the Society or their Brothers or their particular houses", and to have ``in view only the greatest good of the Society". They would continue to reside the one in Paris and the other in Rheims.[274]

The central government of the Institute---the ``Régime", according to the expression in use among the Christian Brothers - was organized according to the intentions and directions of John Baptist de La Salle. ``One of his sons" would have ``the universal command" of the new Society, preserve it ``in its primitive spirit", and maintain it ``in complete uniformity", with the cooperation of two men chosen from among the eldest depositaries of the tradition. Nothing must detach ``individual" communities from the Motherhouse. No ``person outside the Institute" would be able to meddle with the administration of the Communities, or with the relations between the subordinates and their leaders, since the rights of spiritual authorities in each diocese were also protected. At the moment there was neither Bishop nor pastor who imitated the example of Père Chétardye. Canon Blain, representing the Archbishop of Rouen, embraced De La Salle's ideas: his every care was directed toward protecting the freedom of the Brothers. Sixteen years later, he wrote:

> It was ridiculous for them not to have a Brother for their Superior, for them to lose from the outset a right of which all Common Bodies, whether regular or secular, were possessed, which might be called a natural right or a ``right of peoples".[275]

In compliance with one of De La Salle's quite settled positions, the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools placed Brother Barthélemy first on the list of its Superiors-generals. John Baptist de La Salle was the ``Founder", in the 17th century sense of the term, one who established a new order of things, who ``founds" and ``grounds". And, to be sure, in this sort of exclusiveness, demanded, doubtlessly, by De La Salle himself, there is evidence of his total humility. But by turning to the declaration of the 7th of June 1694, we see once again the proof of his unfailing wisdom: never must the Institute admit other members or other leaders, except simple laymen; the existence of a single priest at its head must be an exception (and De La Salle would have put it more bluntly: an anomaly) that no official document, no text issuing from De La Salle's religious family may obscure.

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After electing a Superior-general and two Assistants, the Assembly of 1717 completed its commission by proceeding to an examination and, as the report of the 23rd of May states, ``to a rectification of the Rules and practices". Later on we shall see what action it took in these respects.

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273 According to the Register of entrances. ---Blain says that he came from Lerzy, near Marle, in Picardy.

274 These three elections took place during the week of Pentecost. And the date of the 18th of May is generally admitted. But all the acts of the Chapter were ratified and recognized as definitive by the final act of the 23rd of May 1717

275 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 131

The Brothers, whether or not represented by their Directors, had, in anticipation, given their consent to what would be decided upon at St. Yon. However, Brother Barthélemy, in visits to the institutions in the Paris region and the East, inserted into the ``visitation report'' a declaration regarding himself.

The declaration as signed by the Brothers in Paris as it exists in manuscript in the Motherhouse Archives is as follows:

> We, the undersigned, the Brothers of the Society of the Christian Schools, operating tuition-free and Christian schools in the parish of St.Sulpice and the serving Brothers, intended to provide for the temporal needs of the said Brothers, agree and approve the election of Brother Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy, as the permanent Superior-general of our said Society during May last by the Brothers Director of the greater part of the houses of our said Society; we declare that the said Brother Bartholomew, as our Superior-general came from the house of St.Yon, Faubourg of Rouen, where he resides, in order to visit our house. This is why we gave him an account of our conduct and that of our house, both spiritual and temporal, and we received with respect and submission the counsel he has had the kindness to give us, and we are disposed to put it into practice; that also the said Brother Bartholomew, our Superior-general, has sent from the said house in St.Yon to this one two Brothers not long since in order to begin a new school near Les Invalides, which was opened last Monday, and he has given us Brother John Jacot, called Brother John, as our Director, in order, under him, to guide our house. Done in our house in Paris, Faubourg St.Germain, November 11, 1717.

This document bears fourteen signatures: those of Brothers Jean, Jean Chrysostom, Jerome, Victorinus, Maurice, Leonard and Germain already figured in the report of the 25th of April, 1717. Brothers Anastasius, Alexis,[276] Severin, Ignatius, Denis, and Pascal had recently arrived at St.Sulpice, the first ones in order to replace Brother Michel (who had been made Director in Rouen), Brother Symphorian, Edmund and Zachary; the others (Denis and Pascal, probably) to begin the school in *Les Invalides*. Brother Fiacre, who had previously been Director in Boulogne, was in Paris to fulfill the functions of Visitor, with which the Superior-general had just entrusted to him.

The letter sent on the 18th of February, 1718 to Brother Gabriel attests to the fact that, at this time, Brother Barthélemy was once again in Paris. Quite simply, he wrote to his Roman correspondent that the ``dear Brothers assembled during the month of May last'' had ``thought it quite fitting to entrust(him) with the general government''. And he adds that :

> … we have also selected by vote our dear Brothers Jean and Joseph as Assistants, our dear Father having thought it opportune to resign since he believed that it was necessary for the good of our Institute that our Brothers undertake the general government in his lifetime and that he serve them as an aide through his wise advice and counsel

A single sentence testifies to a candid optimism: ``The affairs of our Institute are going well''. In fact, the Superior announced: ``We have bought a house in Rouen for 15,000 livres that will be used for a novitiate''.

What he was referring to was nothing less than the purchase of St.Yon. The contract had not yet been signed, but, obviously, the parties had already reached an understanding. Negotiations seem to have been easy and rapid. In 1711 the lease on the property had been renewed for nine years at the same annual rent of 400 livres.[277] The Marquise Louvois had died and her heirs indicated that they were prepared to part with the estate, while agreeing with the Brothers for a price that was conspicuously advantageous to the Brothers.

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276 BrotherAnastacius was previously in Boulogne and Brother Alexis in Grenoble. The other four had just completed the novitiate. Brother Denis (Louis Ledoux) was there in 1716

277 Deed of purchase of the 8thof March 1717. See below

On the 17th of January, 1718 De La Salle wrote to Brother Barthélemy ``from the Seminary of St.Nicholas of Chardonnet'' where he had been living from the 4th of October, 1717 until the 7th of March, 1718:[278]

> With regard to the question of purchasing St.Yon and the ways and means of doing so, on which you asked my advice, I would ask you to pay no attention to what Brother Thomas may say or do for me or on my behalf. Only go by what I set down here and that is that I am unable to give you advice on the subject, and that you should consult more enlightened persons, for it is a matter of importance. Think the thing over carefully, since it is not yet settled. I should not advise you to borrow money for the purchase. On the other hand, I do not say outright that you should not do so; you may consult others on this point. I think that whatever you decide in the matter will be right. It is not becoming that I should have any part in these deliberations, for I am nothing, whereas you, as Superior, are the master. With regard to my going to see the persons you mention, I shall do so, if you wish, in which case kindly write to me stating that, as my Superior and that of the Brothers, you order me to go. I shall go at once, or on the first half-holiday, and I shall tell them that you ordered me to wait on them. I send you my best wishes for a good and happy New Year and the same to the Brothers, with my kindest regards. With much respect, my very dear Brother, I remain, your most humble and obedient servant.[279]

It is clear in these lines that the Founder refused to give orders; that, resolved to leave all authority and initiative to his successors, he dreaded even the appearance of stepping over the line. Thomas, the Brother-Procurator (whom Brother Barthélemy had recalled from Calais to Rouen the previous year) had certainly quoted some relevant remarks of the Founder - perhaps those that Maillefer has preserved: ``God would never abandon the Brothers, and it is necessary to think about buying the house''. De La Salle protested that attention must not be paid to what Brother Thomas says. He did not wish to be taken for a prophet, speaking in the name of the Most High. Rather he had adopted the posture of the useless old man, the inferior who must do nothing but obey.

But basically he was quite favorable to the purchase of St.Yon. If a loan were necessary to finance the purchase, he did not go so far as to advise against it. He was ready to take any step that might bring the matter to a successful issue; except that he would do so only on orders from the Superior.

The deed of sale was processed before the Parisian notaries, Baptist and Lefevre, on the 8th of March, 1718.[280] All ``the high and mighty Lords and Ladies'' were mixed up in it, the heirs of Anne Souvré, Marquise of Louvois and of Courtanvau: Michel Francis Le Tellier Louvois, residing in his Parisian mansion on Rue Richelieu; Louis Nicolas Le Tellier, Marquis of Souvré, Lieutenant-general to the king in Béarn; the daughters of the late Marquis of Barbézieux, Secretary of State; Francois, Duke La Rochefoucauld, Peer of France, Prince of Marsillac, and Madeleine Charlotte Le Tellier, his wife; Louis Nicolas Neufville, Duke of Villeroy and of Baupreau, Peer of France, husband of the late Marguerite Le Tellier; and Camille Le Tellier Louvois, honorary Abbot of the Abbeys of Bourgueil and Vauluisant, Librarian to the king, Supervisor to the Ministry of medals to his Majesty. It was in the mansion of Père Louvois, on Rue Vivienne, in the parish of St.Eustace, that the signatures were exchanged.

Since the Society of the Brothers did not have ``Letters Patent'', the purchasers were ``Joseph Truffet and Charles Frappet,[281] as private individuals and ``as agents'' –

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278 According to a letter from the Superior of St. Nicholas, published by Blain, Vol. II, pp. 155--6.

279 Motherhouse Archives. Autograph letters, Series C, \#27; Battersby, pp. 154--5

280 Motherhouse Archives, (very old) copy of thedeed of purchase of St. Yon, 8th of March, 1718

281 We note that the spelling offamily names was rather uncertain and varied according todocuments.

> ...both residing ordinarily in the St.Yon house, Faubourg of Rouen, presently dwelling in Paris, on Ruelle St.Michel, Faubourg St.Germain, in the parish of St.Sulpice.

The description of the property included the place, manor and estate called St.Yon, in the parish of St.Sever, Faubourg of the City of Rouen, with arable lands in the countryside, in two fields adjacent to St.Yon.

The price was, as Brother Barthélemy indicated to Gabriel Drolin, 15,000 livres, with 9,000 payable immediately and 6,000 in three installments on the 1st of January, 1719, 1720, and 1721, at 5% interest on amounts remaining to be paid.

In order legally to justify the relative insignificance of the price, which might have given the act of purchase the appearance of a disguised gift, the Lords and Ladies declared``that they made the sale for the good of the estate" of the Marquise Louvois:

> …since the house in St.Yon and related properties returned only 400 livres a year, a part of which rent had been long since consumed in necessary and continuing repairs of the house and that, besides, it was presently agreed to make important repairs which would come to a considerable sum.

De La Salle had returned to Normandy on the eve itself of the signing of the contract. It could not have been his intention to be at Louvois' on that 8th March; although it was he who had supplied the greatest part of the funds. On November the 2nd, 1713, during his stay in Grenoble, he made an investment in the City of Rouen, doubtlessly through the Brothers in St.Yon and by means of savings realized in the operation of the residence school. Conversion of this capital in 1718 produced 6,000 livres.282 Rogier's legacy would, at a certain point, supply other available funds to the amount of 5,200 livres.[283] Finally, according to the deed of sale itself and a document with which we shall deal presently, 2,340 livres came from the ``savings" of several of the communities. All Brother Thomas had to do to meet the payments was to move the money at the right time and, by drawing on the receipts of St.Yon, to add to it a sum equal to about four years of the rent they had been paying.

Since the purchase had been made by Brothers Barthélemy and Thomas (under their civilian names of Truffet and Frappet) there was need to guarantee the ownership of the estate to the Institute, as far as this was possible, while awaiting ``Letters Patent". This was what was intended by the ``declaration" of the 3rd of June, 1718.[284]

``In consequence of" (and as a complement to) the contract of the 8th of March, Brother Barthélemy declared that ``the fourteen Brothers residing in the house at St.Yon when thecontract was drawn up" were:

Brother George Bertin, called Brother Francis, teacher of the young residents, Brother Claude Longière, called Brother Dositheus, teacher of the older residents.[285] Brother Claude Francis du Lac, called Brother Ireneus, Director of novices, Brother Peter Bernard, called Brother Martin, shoemaker, Brother Charles Haulterive, called Brother Zachary, director of the refectory and infirmarian, Brother Jean Duyege, called Brother Onesimus, bursar and linen-draper, BrotherJacques Dubois, called Brother Fabian, cook, Brother Louis Cellier, called Brother Gervais, and Brother Alexander Boucher, called Brother Claude, both gardeners, Edme Thomas Rivois, called Brother Hilary, porter and tailor,

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282 Lucard, Vie du venerable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle,Vol. II, pg. 106 and {\ital *Annales*, Vol. I, pg. 371, according to the Municipal Archives of Rouen, Series, F, St. Yon, and Sanadon's notes.

283 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 158. The biographer contradicts himself (Vol. II, pg. 80) with regard to the exact amount of the inherited annuity. But there can be no doubt about the capital sum, which corresponded to the amount of the loan agreed upon by De La Salle and Father Clement

284 Sanadon's notes. copy in the Motherhouse Archives, published in the Vie du Frère Barthélemy,} 1933 edition, pp. 282--84.

285 Previously Director of the schools in Rouen, Brother Dositheus had succeeded Brother Ambrose in charge of the prison after the election of Brother Bartholomew

Brother Laurence Douai, called Brother Matthias, sacristan, Brother Jacques Canappe, called Brother Quentin, Brother Pascal La Truitte, called Brother Sixtus, and Brother Albin Bouche, called Brother Stanislaus, all of whom had a share in the purchase of the house.

Again, the Superior-general stipulated clearly that the property would be jointly owned by ``the above named", Brother Thomas and himself. He explained how this joint ownership was initially justified by the purpose of the purchase, since the house was to be used as a novitiate, ``in order to form in piety and in the spirit of (the) Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools… all new candidates who might be admitted", and would then supply ``as many Brothers as might be needed both for this institution and for the twenty-one others",which we know and which he enumerated. (For the rest, the list was not a *numerus clausus*, and it was understood that St.Yon would send ``Brothers into other cities where they might be required".

In the second place, the source of the funds showed, if it were necessary, that we are here dealing with a common good. Brother Barthélemy continued:

> I declare also that of the sum of 2,340 livres mentioned in the above deed of the 18th of March last came from the savings effected by the Brothers of the Christian Schools living in the Society, dwelling in the house at St.Yon, I received a part of it from the Brothers …of several houses who form a Society with us … and that the principal houses which contributed to the purchase … to be used for the same end as declared above, are those in Paris, Rheims, Boulogne, Calais, Guise and Versailles.

The fourteen Brothers testified that these declarations of the Superior were ``entirely conformed to their intentions and dispositions". And, ``in case it were necessary in the future to draw up some other deed … or to undertake some other thing having to do with the house at St.Yon for the good of the Society", eleven among them gave full power to the Superior-general, Brother Joseph Truffet, and to three others, namely, George Bertin, Claude Longière and Claude Francis du Lac. Finally, associated with this consortium: Brothers Jean Jacot, called Brother Jean, Director of the house in Paris, First Assistant, Jean Leroux, Director of the house in Rheims, Second Assistant, Vincent Floquet, called Brother Michel, Director of the school in Rouen, and Brother Jaccques Nonnez, called Brother Fiacre, `nominated to make the visitations of the houses of the Society".

The next day, the 4th of June, Brothers Michel and Fiacre were at St.Yon ``to accept the commission which their Brothers had entrusted to them".

* * * * *

Most of the activities of Brother Barthélemy's brief generalate belong to the second volume of this history of the Institute. At the moment we mean only to indicate in a general way how John Baptist de La Salle's influence was exercised on his disciples in the time that immediately preceded his death.

We shall have to return to the Founder's personal work on the final edition of the Rules, as the Brother Superior sent them to the communities in October of 1718. It was understood that De La Salle remained until the end the legislator of the religious Society his genius created.

He had resolved never to interfere in the government and administration of his successor. It appears clear that he did not depart from this rule except in a way that was at once revealing and quite discreet, in the Canadian affair.

Brother Barthélemy's letter to Brother Gabriel on the 18th of February, 1718 contains the following paragraph:

> It seems quite likely that we shall soon have an establishment in Canada, and we hope it will be with a commission from the Prince who has already been so kind as to grant an annual income of 3,000 livres for the support of the teachers and for the new ones we intend to send,

> whom we are asking to be able to train both in France and in Canada, which would greatly assist our firm foundation in France, if the matter succeeds.

In the abstract, nothing was more normal than that the Institute should expand overseas, to ``New France'', which the Franciscans and the Jesuits had been evangelizing, and where the Sulpicians were educating a clergy that would be equal to its harsh apostolate, and French peasants from Perche, Angevin, Normandy, and Santonge were populating through a slow and, at length, legendary emigration and through a high birthrate. A pious inhabitant of Québec, named Charron, wanted to open some elementary schools. He had entered into an association with some good people and had already started a Community, called ``the Charron Brothers''. On a visit to France, the Canadian learned about De La Salle's work. In Paris he met with Brother Barthélemy and Brother Joseph, and, under the most favorable auspices, negotiations were begun. One senses a great hope lying behind the words of the young Superior-general. To take one's place among the religious orders engaged in such a wonderful undertaking on the banks of the St.Laurence was to be open to a broader future in the service of the Church and the king. The success of the Brothers in Canada would guarantee the government's favor in France. Although, personally, he had hardly concerned himself with De La Salle and his humble communities of schoolteachers, the Regent gave his assistance rather generously to an enterprise that complied with the national interests.

Four Brothers were selected for an early departure; and everything was in readiness for embarkation. About to return to Rheims, Brother Joseph went to bid goodbye to the Founder, when the latter uttered these unexpected words:

> My God! what are you doing? You are about to undertake something that will put you in all sorts of difficulties and will have serious consequences.

At that moment Brother Barthélemy entered. De La Salle's sudden opposition surprised him and he protested that ``there was no way of delaying, and that everything had been concluded and decided upon''. The Founder merely repeated: ``What are you doing?'' This anguished question was, for the Brothers, the equivalent of a command. Perhaps it bespoke some miraculous foreknowledge. Once the contract was terminated, it was learned that the Brothers in Canada would have been separated from each other, and isolated in priests' houses in the countryside; which was tantamount to saying that they would have ceased to be Christian Brothers. The Society would have been deprived of four valuable members, and powerless really to take root in ``New France'', or to gain anything from the royal authority.[286] Thus was postponed the first project of the ``missionary Institute''.

Apart from this incident, it was especially by his example of absolute detachment from earthly things, his spiritual conversation, and the increasingly intense influence of his holiness that the Founder continued to guide and enlighten his followers during the last months of his life. Those whom he left as leaders were genuinely his spiritual heirs.

There was one Brother in particular, one who was destined to survive him by twenty-eight years and to offer to the younger generations during the first half of the 18th century the faithful image of the Founder and the mirror of his teachings. An aristocrat, he had both in language and manner the distinction, the courtesy and the graciousness of De La Salle himself. Brought to the Institute by the Founder and formed to the religious life almost exclusively by him, he endeavored always to walk in his master's footsteps. In the course of our account we shall not be able to elude

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286 Blain, Vol. II, pp. 153--4.

Brother Irenée. But it is appropriate to make his acquaintance at the moment he became Director of novices at St.Yon.

We caught only a glimpse of him at Parménie in 1714. Claude Francois du Lac Montisambert was twenty-three years old at thetime, and, as a decommissioned officer, he was looking for the straight and narrow way, the penitential road to God.287

He was born on the 30th of October, 1691 at Tigy ``in the duchy of Sully, the diocese of Orleans.288 His father, Claude Lancelot du Lac Montisambert, belonged to an old family of the region; his mother, Susanne Ergnoust Beauvillier, was a relative of the Duke Paul Beauvillier, friend of Fénelon, the tutor of the Duke of Bourgogne. The child's godmother was his young aunt, Frances, whom soon Orleans would venerate. In Holy Cross cemetery *Campo santo,* Mlle.Montisambert's epitaph, (copied by Père La Tour) manifests in the saintly young lady a heart and vocation similar to those of her nephew and godson; and to quote it here is not so much to digress as to anticipate events:

> Here lies Frances du Lac[289] Montisambert, born of an old and very noble race, remarkable for her beauty, but by a great deal more excellent for her gifts of soul and for her singularly virtuous life. In the flower of her age, she was totally dedicated to teaching school to poor young girls and, tirelessly, over nine years she fulfilled this so very holy task. She died in the 30th year of her age, in the year of Our Lord 1704, and wished to be buried among the poor whom she loved so much.

Doubtless, these lines remained for a long time a doubly closed text to Claude. His father had decided that none of his sons would learn Latin: he wished them to be neither men of the Church nor men of the law: but only warriors in the service of the king. In 1705, at fourteen years of age, ``the Knight of Montisambert'' was a lieutenant in the Saint Menehould regiment. He entertained only earthly thoughts, ambitions and passions. In between battles he became a young man of easy life, if not debauched. In fact, he became a dedicated gambler; and his parents, tired of paying his debts, called him home to the castle of Monitisambert. But, then, seeing him idle, they allowed him to take up arms once more with a lieutenancy in the Royal Champagne. The gambling craze seized hold of him once again. But, on the 11th of September, 1709 Claude was seriously wounded at Malplaquet. During a slow convalescence he read the *Lives of the Saints* and meditated upon eternity, which led him to a courageous and final conversion.

It was during the most critical moments of the European wars. The Lieutenant in the Royal Champagne returned to combat until France was saved by Villars at Denain. After Marchiennes' surrender, Montisambert thought he could resign his

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287 *Vie du Frère Irénée, des Ecoles chrétiennes*} was published in 1774 in Avignon at Joseph Domergue's. It is a brief biography, which is followed by an *Eloge historique* de M. de Champflour, éveque de Mirepoix,} and Abrégé de la vie de M. Bourdoise.} The bound copy owned by the Municipal Library in Orleans bears the following words handwritten on the flyleaf: ``The author is Père La Tour, of Montauban''. In his *France littéraire,*} Quérard has accepted this ascription. Bertrand de La Tour was a doctor of the Sorbonne and pastor of St. James in Montauban. In 1930 the Institute of the Brothers published Vie du Frère Irénée which, through documents reserved at the Motherhouse and information preserved in the family tradition supplied by Mgr. Allaines, Vicar-general of Orleans, completes and rectifiesLa Tour' brochure on some points

288 Motherhouse Archives, Register of Entrants. The baptismal certificate of Claude Francis Du Lac appears in oneof the parochial registers of Tigy preserved among the archives of his Commune in the Department of the Loiret. (Register of the 1st of February 1691 to the 18th of February 1692). We have this information through the kindness of Père Vallée, pastorof Tigy and from the secretary in the Mayor's office

289 La Tour published the Latin text on pg. 8 of his book.

commission without forfeiting his honor. For him it was a matter of renouncing pride. He sold his horse and his gear; but he kept his braided uniform, which he planned to swap later on; and, without informing his family, he set out to look for a monastery that would be willing to accept him.

Père La Tour writes:

> Through him we learned the details of his efforts and his journeys, through the report that his Superior required him to compose shortly before his death, which he did with the simplicity and humility which was part of his nature.[290]

Briefly we might add that he was admitted neither to the Capuchins nor to the Grande Chartreuse, nor to La Trappe; that he wandered over the routes of the great pilgrimages, and went to pray at Fourvière, Rome, and Loretto and helped the sick in hospitals. He had become a wandering Benedict Joseph Labre and as heroically mortified; less odd, however, was the fact that he as not called upon to touch the bottom of physical misery. It sems that the mystery with which this young man with the military bearing and the aristocratic look surrounded himself, his hesitancy when called upon to identify himself or renew family ties, his rather scanty education and ignorance of Latin(which prevented him from aspiring to Holy Orders), motivated the suspicion and rejection of the religious superiors whose transient guest he was. And then God called him elsewhere.

In 1714 Claude was in Grenoble, where he introduced himself to Jean d'Yse Saléon, who had been kind and sympathetic to the knight-errant. Saléon happened to speak to De La Salle about Montisambert. It was during this period that the Founder had returned to the hermitage at Parménie; for he had received a letter from the Brothers in Paris who besought him to resume the general direction of the Institute; and he wanted to speak with Sister Louise once again, and prepare himself in solitude for the final effort, the ``act of obedience'' that the Brothers were asking. Saléon led Claude up the hill. At the outset John Baptist de La Salle was reserved. He questioned the young man, and sent him away to reflect and pray in the silence of his cell. But in the end he concluded that, in spite of appearances, the former officer would make a good Christian Brother.

Claude Francis du Lac received the religious habit in Grenoble along with the name, Brother Irénée. ``Entered into the Society on the 6th of June, 1714'' is the comment written into the Register. Most probably, De La Salle parted company with his new postulant at that time. He placed him in the hands of Brother Timothy, Director of the community in Avignon and an excellent religious educator. Besides, the Founder himself, who ever lost contact with any of his sons, would, in his letters, strengthen a vocation that was from all points of view exceptional. And difficulties were not wanting. But, practically speaking, they all arose from the fact that Brother Irénée, even more so than Brother Barthélemy, was a wretched teacher. Of course, he had never dreamed that one day he would be teaching reading. He found that he was painfully devoid of wisdom in the presence of youngsters who looked to him for that commodity. Obscure and hesitant, he quickly got out of his depth in a classroom. Authority eluded him, and he was unable to maintain discipline. He failed in Avignon, as he failed in Paris and in Laon.

However, docile to De La Salle's direction,and brushing aside discouragement, intelligent and devoted to prayer, he did not cease to make spiritual progress. The Founder could very well be satisfied with him: in Joseph Truffet and Claude Francois du Lac, two men so different in appearance and background, but still kindred spirits whose vocations were not without analogy, De La Salle possessed the central pillars

290 *Ibid*., pg. 12.

of his entire religious edifice. After the election of 1717, Brother Irénée succeeded the new Superior-general as Director of novices. And the Founder, during the months he still had to live among the Brothers, remained the guiding light of the man who, while forming young Brothers, would be perpetuating his work.[291]

* * * *

``He loved his own until the end", and wished, before God called him, to give them every mark of his affection. In the temporal as in the spiritual, as a man who had always united complete disinterestedness and total detachment to a sense of order and clearsightedness in the affairs of this world, De La Salle adopted the most precise arrangements in favor of the Brothers.

First of all, he intended to assure that the Brothers would inherit his personal library. On the 11th of August, 1718 he signed and had the Brother Superior sign, the following affidavit:

> I, the undersigned, declare that it is several years ago since I gave over to Brother Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy, responsible for the general government of the teachers, called the Brothers of the Christian Schools, all the books that belonged to me, and which are in a library of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the parish of St.Sulpice, in Paris, to do with these books as it pleases Brother Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy, and, in fact, he has disposed of them since that time as he has willed, and has always had the key to the place where these books are, as a sign that he is and was their proprietor, a thing which I, and Brother Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy, acknowledge to be true. Done in duplicate in Rouen, at the house of St.Yon, this eleventh day of August, in the year one-thousand-seven-hundred-and-eighteen.[292]

Daily, his strength declined. His close relatives, notified by the Brothers in Rheims, thought that, in the interest of the institutions he had founded, it was important to proceed to a variety of settlements. Such was the main objective of a letter written by Louis de La Salle to his older brother on the 3rd of January, 1719.[293]

The radically Jansenist position adopted in the Chapter of Rheims by this beloved younger Brother had grievously affected the Founder. The Maillefers, Jean and Francois Elias, brother-in-law and nephew respectively of De La Salle,[294] were leaning in the same direction as Louis. The Founder of the Brothers, so faithful to Rome, had indicated his disapproval by a series of long silences. It was thus that the sect unsettled the French church and divided hitherto wonderfully united families belonging to the upper middle class, to church and to legal circles. Louis' letter is full of allusions to these sad events, and it enables us to get a glimpse of the Canon's

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291 There is a tradition that Brother Irénée, starting in 1715, was associated with Brother Barthélemy, having the title and the duties of Sub-director of Novices. But it is well to observe that on February 28, 1717, at the time of the visitation by the future Superior-general to the Community in Laon, Brother Irénée was in that Community, under the direction of Brother André, and that his name is not included in the official documents at St. Yon until March of 1718

292 Motherhouse Archives. Document inserted into the letters of St. John Baptist de La Salle, Series E, no. 87 *bis*. The Founder's last will and testament that we shall quote below also makes mention of the gift of furniture on the date of the 14th of November 1718. We do not know the stipulations of this second document

293 The original of this letteris preserved in the Motherhouse Archives

294 The motherhouse Archives possesses a quite curious and quite beautiful eulogy of Madame Jean Maillefer (Marie de La Salle) by her husband, who enumerates his wife's religious and domestic virtues and expresses the widower'sdisconsolate sadness

stubbornness. But no matter how serious the dissension, the La Salles and the Maillefers of Rheims remained quite devoted to the work of the Christian Brothers.[295]

> My very dear brother, although it seems that you have decided upon a complete neglect of this region and that for a year or more you have wished to break off all relations with us, and that I have been able only with the greatest difficulty to obtain replies from you concerning the most important matters, I do not believe that I am dispensed from my duty, and once again I presume to write you, not only to pay my respects at the beginning of the New Year and wish that you would be genuinely happy, as far as that may be in this world, but principally to recall to you once again certain matters important to your community, concerning which I have had on several occasions the honor of speaking and writing to you.

In the first place, there was a question of adding a member to the corporation set up in 1700, which was known under its legal name of ``The Proprietors and Managers the properties intended for the Maintenance of the Brothers and for the Support of the Tuition-free Schools for boys in Rheims".[296] Louis de La Salle did not want to appoint Père Fremyn, a local superior of a community on the Rue Neuve. Rather, he had ``several times proposed Maillefer",[297] his nephew, and could not propose one more devoted to the good of, and on whom one could depend more for, the preservation of this work". ``I do not know [*actually he knew very well*!] why you hesitate to appoint him, given the very small number of good priests we have today …. Apart from him, there was also ``Père Le Grand, Canon of St.Balsam, Père Lorquette, pastor of St.André's", unless the Founder had a preference for someone ``outside the city---for example, Père Guyard of Laon".

> But what is essential is this: I must remind you of the fact that you have several houses in Rethel [298] and some effects [299] in Rheims acquired in your name, of which it is important to dispose by will, with good advice, in such a way that after you our brother's children, being minors, in the infirmity of their father, or of those who will them, may make no claims, and that there will be no doubt as to whom they shall belong.[300.]
>
> In Rethel, the statement notarized by Favart and Bajot for the Quentelot house and the Cudet house, mentions that after you, they would belong to those who may have the management of the schools in Rheims. That could be open to some misunderstanding, and it is not clear whether the Superior of the Brothers is meant or a cleric, a superior named by the Archbishop. It is to be hoped that this might be rectified.

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295 In some of the corrections introduced in Brother Bernard's Ms. (See the *Preface*} to the present volume) Canon Louis reveals his mind. Brother Bernard wrote ``the great St. Ignatius", and Louis struck out the words ``the great" and replaced them with ``in these latter times". Bernard wrote of ``the persecutions that were raised" (against J. B. de La Salle). Louis weakened this by expanding it to read: ``The opposition he met with in his undertakings". Bernard held that it belonged to the Holy See ``to decide infallibly concerning a person's holiness", the Canon struck out the word ``infallibly".

296 Lucard, *Annales*,Vol. I, pg. 224., according to the Motherhouse Archives.

297 Doubtless, a brother of the Benedictine, Dom Elias.

298 For these properties in Rethel, See above, Part Two, chap.pp. 150--151

299 i..e., ``real estate"

300 The brother mentioned here is Jean Remy, born on the 21st of December 1652, Counsellor to the king for the Exchange. The troublesome sentence is obscure. Louis seems to write that the precariousness of Jean Remy's health would lead to the presumption that he will leave minor children behind him. But Jean Remy de La Salle would not die until 1732. (In 1718 Dubois had served him with a writ of exile for having criticized Law's system. We should better understand Louis' allusion if it were possible to interpret the text in the following way: A civil disqualification affected Jean Remy). Jean Remy had two sons: Adam, who in 1747, became ``General" of the Dominicans; and Nicholas Louis, whose five sons died without issue. (Motherhouse Archives, genealogy of the La Salle family

And Louis de La Salle here suggests that M.Favart be asked for a new statement the purpose of which would be to have the Quentelot house credited ``to the owners of the house in Rheims''.

He then announced the deaths of their brother-in-law Maillefer, of Père Godart, the Penitentiary, and of Père Gobart, his confrere in the Chapter:

> Thus, Our Lord little by little is removing good people and we are seeing them replaced by very different people. May the Lord look upon us in mercy!

A postscript returns to more mundane matters:

> You still have at Rheims property acquired under your name:the cottage adjoining the Brothers' house, a farm at Acy and house on Rue Deux Anges, willed by Père Pasté

Three months after receiving this letter, John Baptist de La Salle made his will. His primary preoccupation was to leave his spiritual descendants the watchword that they would have to transmit through the ages. In a few, simple, strong lines the entire magnificent soul spoke so as to remain forever present, forever speaking at the heart of the Institute. Soaring above the world's sad quarrels, he proclaimed the principles of a pure and eternal Catholicism, which would ever inspire the Brothers in their personal piety and in their Society's activities.

> In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. I, the undersigned, John Baptist de La Salle, priest, ill in a room close to the chapel in the house of St.Yon, Faubourg St.Sever, in the city of Rouen, wishing to write a will which closes out all business matters that may remain to me, I recommend my soul, first of all to God, and then to all the Brothers of the Society of the Christian Schools to which He has united me. And I recommend to them that in all things they always have a complete submission to the Church and especially in these troubled times and, in order to provide proof of it, never to dissociate themselves in anything from the Church of Rome, recalling that I sent two Brothers to Rome in order to beseech God for the gift that their Society would always remain completely submissive to that Church
>
> I also recommend that they have a great devotion to Our Lord, to have a great love for Holy Communion and the exercise of mental prayer, and to have a special devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin and St.Joseph, the patron of their Society, and to fulfill their tasks with zeal and great disinterestedness, and preserve among themselves a close union and a blind obedience with respect to their superiors, which is the foundation and support of all perfection in a community.

There then follow stipulations involving the man whom De La Salle in his own lifetime raised up as head of the Institute and the standard bearer of the tradition:

> Furthermore, I confirm and ratify two deeds of transfer or donation in favor of Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy, responsible for the general government of the Brothers, one dated the 11th of August in the year 1718, bearing the transfer and surrender to Joseph Truffet of all books belonging to me in the house of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the parish of St.Sulpice in Paris, the other dated the 14th of November in the year 1718, bearing transfer and surrender of all furniture in the house of St.Yon, under the conditions agreed upon. I approve also of all the other certificates signed in his favor.

Finally, in conformity with the wise suggestions of Canon Louis de La Salle, the transference of the properties in Champagne was included:

> Furthermore, I declare that the two small houses in Rheims which are rented, the one alongside the big one where the Brothers live, and the other at the far end of the Leu courtyard will belong to those who shall have the ownership of the big house in which the Brothers live, to be used for the same purposes. And, as regards the houses acquired in Rethel-Mazarin, M.Quentelot's and his wife's, the Etienne house and the Ponce Cudet house, in order that, of these three houses, there be only a single house to lodge the Brothers of the Christian Schools, to teach their classes, and for other ends proposed there, as stated in the deeds and contracts of the said houses, one by adjudication and the other two by contracts examined before Dogny, royal notary in Rethel, or Miroy, his successor, since these houses were given to me for the ends above set forth and freedom was granted me whether by these contracts or by a deed examined before Capillon, notary in Rheims, to name a person in my place to dispose of the

matter in case the Community begun in Rheims no longer existed, since there do not yet exist Letters Patent, I name Père de La Salle, my brother, doctor of the Sorbonne and Canon in the Church of Rheims and those to whom, with him and after him, will belong the said houses in Rheims, to be employed according to the use designated by deeds and contracts.

With respect to the other two houses acquired in Rethel, on the corner of Rue des Religieuses where other classes are taught by the Brothers, and the other one acquired from a (person) named Charlet on the same street, the rents from which serve for the support of the Brothers in Rethel-Mazarin, I surrender them to the said Père de La Salle, my brother, and to those who will be the owners of the houses in Rheims with him and after him, as stated above.

And in case the minor children of my brother, who is king's attorney at the Exchange, or their guardians wish to change any of the above arrangements, I declare that I take away from them the annuity of 2,000 livres of principal invested in the Rheims clergy, the house with the three wells and the income from the locksmith's, and that the said Father De La Salle, to whom I give them in their stead,301 will dispose of them for some other purpose that he will think deserving..
Done at St.Yon, this third day of April, in the year 1719.302

This deed was signed on Monday of Holy Week. De La Salle died on Good Friday, the 7thApril ``at four o`clock in the morning". On Easter Thursday, Brother Barthélemy announced the sad news to Brother Gabriel:

> My very dear Brother, the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with us always! It is with a grave reason for sadness that I write you this second (letter), to give you notice of the death of our dear Father …

He mentioned the day and the hour, after an illness that had endured ``throughout Lent", the Last Sacraments, the marvelously edifying end, the sorrow of the city which had looked upon this priest ``as a saint", and whose inhabitants, in throngs, came to ``visit" him on his death bed ``on Friday and Saturday until he was buried".

At the end of his letter, the Superior quoted ``the first article of the will…as the final instruction and the last command" the Father left his children. And he added the following words, which Gabriel Drolin would repeat in his own time and place: ``Our very dear Father wrote several letters in support of the Constitution of Our Holy Father the Pope, Clement XI, which were very well done."[303]

On orders from the pastor a grave had been dug in the church of St.Sever in front of the altar of the chapel of St.Susanna: there the body was placed after the funeral on Holy Saturday, under a stone slab which bore the following inscription:

> D.O.M. Hic expectat resurrectionem vitae venerabilis Joannes Baptista de La Salle, rhemus presbyter, doctor theologicus,ex canonicus ecclesiae metropolitanae Rhemensis, institutor Fratrum scholae christianae, natalibus clarus, virtutibus clarior; obiit feria sexta parasceves, die septima aprilis anno MDCCXIX in aedibus Fratrum sancti Yonis hujusce parochiae, annum agens LXVIII.---Dei illi Dominus invenire requiem in illa die!---Hoc pietatis et grati animi monumentum apposuit tam piissimo parochiano Ludovicus du Jarrier Bresnard, ecclesiae rector.

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301 These properties, doubtless, came from the estate of Perrette Lespagnol, widow of John Moet and maternal grandmother of J.B. de La Salle. On the 11th of February 1708 the Founder, in Paris, on Rue St.Honoré, had given his brother,Louis, the rights of general attorney for all decisions respecting the estate of their ancestor, who died in 1691. (Motherhouse Archives

302 We possess only a very old copy of the last will and testament of J. B. de La Salle, preserved in the Motherhouse Archives.

303 Copy of aletter in Motherhouse Archives, Guibert, pp. 617--18

> To God, omnipotent and good. Here awaits the resurrection a man of venerable life,John Baptist de La Salle, priest of Rheims, doctor in theology, former Canon of the metropolitan church of Rheims, Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, illustrious by origin, more illustrious by his virtue; he died on Good Friday, the seventh of April,1719, in the Brothers' house in St.Yon, in this parish, in his sixty-eighth year.---May God grant that he find rest this day!---This monument of piety and gratitude Louis du Jarrier-Bresnard, pastor of the church, had erected in the name of his most devout parishioners.

For fifteen years the parish and the pastor of St.Sever guarded the precious remains of the Founder of the Institute.[304.]

304 After the exhumation of 1734, of which we shall speak in connection with the generalate of BrotherTimothy, the inscription quoted above was removed to the vault,henceforth a cenotaph. When the old church was demolished, the tombstone was picked up and fitted into the wall of the new edifice. Père Cochet restored the inscription which the footsteps of the faithful had gradually obliterated. The chapel which contains this epigraphic souvenir is now dedicated to St. John Baptist de La Salle. We shall speak later on of what was, and what has become of, a second epitaph (in French) that the Brothers had engraved

PART THREE

The Writings

The Spiritual and Educational Writings

of

Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Chapter One

The Letters of St. John Baptist de La Salle}

While John Baptist de La Salle was masterful both in education and in spirituality, he was not now the one and then the other. His knowledge of God and his understanding of souls nourished his educational work. He must be described in a formula the terms of which are indivisible - a saintly educator. We would be mutilating his story and running the risk of misunderstanding his work if we were to choose him as an object of exclusively edifying hagiography of the type dear to those who situate Christian heroes outside their time and place, who do not seem to consider the special mission of their subjects, the immediate goal of their efforts, or the path the Spirit assigns them to lead them to the knowledge of the Truth and to divine union. And similarly there is the probability of being not only incomplete but misleading, of misinterpreting the texts, the events and the psychology of the Brothers, if we described the opening of schools, analyzed teaching methods and the intellectual and moral formation employed by De La Salle and his disciples more or less briefly, without returning to principles, without acknowledging and explaining the cause of so much zeal and of so much success.

We cannot, then, pursue this history of the Institute without first pausing, for as long as will be necessary, at the Founder's teaching, the documents and the books in which it is expressed and which remain for his followers both the law and the spring of living water. Up until now no overall study along these lines has been done. The biographers have been satisfied with summary suggestions.[305]Historians of education have too often neglected the religious and mystical aspects of the Lasallian achievement. However, a way has been opened for us by Professor Casotti, who has clearly shown (in his 1934 - 35 lectures delivered at the Catholic University of Milan) how, with respect to St.John Baptist de La Salle, it is possible to resolve ``a threefold series of problems in relation to the school, the history of Christian asceticism and the development of Catholic education". Furthermore, we are indebted for preliminary and indispensable ``research" to several Christian Brothers, French, Belgian, Italian, and in particular to the editors of the *Rivista lasalliana* of Turin, as well as to the editors of the *Revue Belge de Pédagogie*,[306] and to the author of an excellent article on *Spiritualité lasallienne*, published in 1929 in *Cahier thomistes*.[307] Some uncertainties concerning the authenticity of the writings attributed to De La Salle discomfited, if not his contemporaries, Blain and Maillefer, at least the biographers of the last century. Père Salvan wrote in 1852:

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305 It is certainly fitting to recall that Brother Lucard has supplied interesting points of view in his Prefaces and supplements to his biography of the Founder and the *Annals* of the Institute:*Des Ecoles chrétiennes et gratuites et de l'influence que le Vénérable J.-B. de La Salle a exercée sur elles et sur l'enseignement primaire en général, Rouen, 1871*, and *Fondateur de l'Institute des Frère*s *des Ecoles chrétiennes, sa vie, ses principes pédagogiques, sa méthode d'enseignement, ses écoles,* Paris, 1884. But these efforts need to be examined more thoroughly and revised

306 See also J. Herment,Idées pédagogiques de saint J.-B. de La Salle,} Paris, Lethielleux, 1931; F. Isidore de Maria,*Un Precursore*, Milan, 1928

307 Cahiers thomiste,for the 25th of May 1929, Desclée, de Brouwer ed

> We no longer possess the manuscripts; we no longer have the original editions; the only ones are posthumous, with the exception of the *Collection.*.. It is impossible … to assert that passages have not been added or deleted.[308]

Two years earlier Cardinal Lambruschini, ``advocate'' of the cause of beatification, entrusted Cardinal Gousset, Archbishop of Rheims, with the task of inquiring whether ``all or several of the writings must be regarded as apocryphal''. On the 27th of July, 1851 the Archbishop disclosed that none of the books bearing the name of the Founder as author could be attributed to him, with the exception of the ``Letters''. On the 17th of January, 1852 the Sacred Congregation adopted this position. [309]

The question should be raised whether, from the historical point of view and after a fresh inquiry, some distinctions are not in order. We shall, to begin with, confine ourselves to the ``Letters'', preserved in the Motherhouse Archives, the authenticity of which has been admitted as indisputable. It is correct to add the *Memoir on the Habit*, an autographic document, and the ``Last Will and Testament'', a literary piece which provides sufficient guarantees: we have already quoted extensively from these texts.[310]

The Founder's letters are rather arbitrarily classified, without concern for chronology, into five ``Series''.

``Series A'' is composed of copies exclusively, 36 in number, of which none mentions the recipient, and three-quarters of them bear neither date nor indication of point of origin. They are rather extracts, collected after De La Salle's death, for the edification of the Brothers or in preparation of a biography (less historical, indeed, than inspirational), with a view, perhaps, to canonization. The letters belonging to ``Series A'' are contained in a small, yellow notebook which seems to antedate the Revolution. They have been twice transcribed, once in 1868 and again in 1896, into notebooks which, toward the end, supply copies of the other ``Series''.

In ``Series B'' there are only three letters, of which the originals have been lost: the first is dated the 2nd of October, 1710, and was sent to the Brother Director of Chartres; the second, from which we have already quoted, is dated the 13th of August, 1704 and is addressed to Brother Gabriel; and the third, dated the 26th of June, 1706 was addressed to Brother Clement.

``Series C'' is the most important. It includes 35 documents of the highest value, completely written out and signed by John Baptist de La Salle on small stationery, covered with a crowded script. Nineteen of these letters were destined for Gabriel Drolin: this is the source from which we have drawn the account of this Brother's stay in Italy. Four are addressed to Brother Robert; two to Brother Denis; eight were sent, one each, to the Director of Chartres, the Director of Guise, the Director of Troyes, and to Brothers Joseph, Anastasius, Hubert, Barthélemy and to Père des Hayes of Rouen; finally, two are Visitor's ``obediences'' received by Brother Joseph in 1708 and 1711. This entire file was examined in Rome in 1850 (with the exception of the letter to Guise, which, rediscovered in 1867, could only be added after this date to the documents presented to the scrutiny of the Sacred Congregation).

Eleven letters, the originals of which were deposited by Brother Firmilian at the Motherhouse in 1864, make up ``Series D''. Among them, doubtless, there are the ``five or six'' which, between 1850 and 1856, were discovered in a barn at Pernes (Vaucluse) in a portfolio which had ``belonged to an old Brother before the

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308 Salvan, Vie du Vénérable J.-B. de La Salle,} pg. 500

309 Salvan, *op. cit.*, pp. 491--2

310 Part Two, chap. ii, pp. 158--169, and chap. x, pp. 428--430

Revolution".[311] Nine were written to Brother Matthias, one to Brother Severinus and one to Brother Paulian.

``Series E" includes five letters: two of them are addressed to Brother Hubert, one to Brother Denis, and one to Père des Hayes. The letter listed as number 87 in the notebook is a copy of an original which had been sent to the mayor and the supervisors of Chateau-Porcien,[312] but which was kept by Archbishop Gousset. The three remaining documents are, in numerical order: Brother Visitor Joseph's ``Obedience", the deed of gift to Brother Barthélemy, dated the 11th of August,1718, and the vow formula of 1694, written and signed by John Baptist de La Salle.

Finally, there are two autograph texts, rediscovered after 1896, which remain outside the system of classification: one of them had been sent to Brother Matthias, and the other to Brother Robert. Normally, they should have been put together with whatis left of the Founder's correspondence with these two Brothers.

In all, the Christian Brothers possess fifty-five authentic documents classified in the file of De La Salle's letters, and a fifty-sixth is preserved in the Archbishop's residence in Rheims. Fifty are letters properly so-called, five are various documents---vow formulas, ``Obediences", and bequests, which are of no less interest or value. To these we must added 39 copies, which, without fear of serious error, might be considered as conscientious reproductions of lost originals.

We shall not have to return to the twenty letters addressed to Brother Gabriel, nor to the twelve texts quoted in connection with the vows of 1694, the foundations at Chateau-Porcien, Chartres, Troyes, and Rouen, and the general business of the Society (between 1708 and 1714) i.e., the purchase of the St.Yon estate and the Founder's library. While this remnant is minuscule in comparison with what must have been the vast and wonderful monument of De La Salle's religious and administrative correspondence, we shall attempt, through quotation and analysis, to define the quality of his spiritual direction.

The paucity of dates in ``Series A" and the anonymity to which the addressees have been reduced leave this file of very little use to the biographer and historian.[313] And yet these letters do project the luminous soul of the Saint and reveal the souls of some of his disciples.

What we first perceive is the affectionate goodness of a father:

> I do not and shall not omit to pray for you that God grant you constancy in your vocation. You do, indeed, need that He sustain you. I should be very pleased if you would kindly pray for me. The affection with which you write to me touches me very much… I am much obliged to you for the care you have had of my health. May God preserve yours in full measure, and may He make you holy. [314]

There is a goodness and a forbearance that is ever ready to pardon:

> The annoyance which you think you have caused me is nothing whatever. The only thing that affected me was the fact that you do not know what is good for you… Do not let the troubles you have prevent you from making the retreat. Make it because I ask you. [315]

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311 According to ``Historique du district d'Avignon" in the MotherhouseArchives.

312 See above, Part Two, chap.1, pg.151

313 Guibert is satisfied to provide a few random quotations in pp. 230--31 of his *Histoire de saint J.-B. de La Sa*lle

314 Series A, \#30. For the English translation of the letters, {\ital De La Salle: Letters and Documents,} translated and edited by W.J. Battersby, Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1952, has been used. In what follows this collection will be referred to as ``Battersby". For the present reference, see Battersby, pg. 231

315 *Ibid.*, No.2, Battersby, pp. 211--2

To dispel bitterness and bias, the Founder agrees to give an account of his own actions:

> You see that you should not worry so much about changes. You realize now that the position you are in suits you much better than your former one. I am very much embarrassed at having to make changes … I am very sorry … that I left without saying good-bye. I sent for you several times, but as you did not come, I thought you were out… Try to get the school to function well. I shall do my best to assist you.[316]

He was very far indeed from neglecting the Brothers' health:

> I thank God that you also have less trouble with your eyes than before. I shall see that this matter is attended to….

But their moral imperfections, their errors of behavior, are obviously at the forefront of his preoccupation:

> It was, indeed, a considerable fault to have had food and drink outside. I thank God that He has given you light to see your mistake and the firm purpose not to fall again. You know that all that is scandalous and comes from gluttony or from weak compliance … Watch over yourself in order to correct your impulsiveness, and try not to be so exteriorized.[317]

The object of many of the letters is ascetical, and first of all, that the Brothers make a constant and relentless drive against their faults:

> Rest assured that the shame you feel at this avowal, together with the penance you will be given, will greatly help to correct you of your defects… Be persuaded that the happiness of a Christian consists in overcoming himself in order to suffer all the trials which God sends.[318]

But there is no need for interior strife, restlessness nor discouragement:

> The anxiety you feel with regard to your defects can lead to nothing good. You must consider before God what remedies can be applied. You worry too much. Take care not to let others see that you are troubled [319] …For the love of God do not fall into despondency; it would show that you were still very weak. Take care, therefore, not to allow anything to affect you. It is neither wise nor reasonable to torment oneself over trifles.[320]

The exercises customary in the community must contribute powerfully to this purification of conscience:

> Accept in good part all that is told you in the advertisement of defects, for this exercise will be most useful to you if you know how to take it. If Brother Director is so strict in imposing penances on you although he does not act so towards others, it is because he esteems that you are well disposed and has a greater desire for your advancement in virtue… Instead of taking offense at the reprimands and penances you receive, try, on the contrary, to rejoice at it [321]… You know very well that in our Society we ought never to show our inclinations or passions… You realize that to act through passion is to follow the manner of beasts rather than that of man. Among us the practice of mortification is morein honor, hence you should look upon it as an inseparable companion. We ought to be disposed to accept humiliations in a spirit of simplicity. They occur frequently, and they should not, therefore, seem strange. We should endeavor to accustom ourselves to them. They are always good for us … Faithfully accuse yourself every day of your defects in the refectory. God attaches many graces to the accomplishment of this duty. I beseech Him to fill you therewith during this holy season.[322]

Defects will give way to the extent that the virtues directly opposed to them take over. ``Humility, submission and patience", these are the essential driving forces without which one falls back or merely marks time.

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316 *Ibid.*, \#28, Battersby, pg. 230.

317 Series A, \#29, Battersby, pp. 230--1

318 No. 1, Battersby, pg. 211

319 No. 15, Battersby, pg. 220

320 No. 27, Battersby, pg. 229

321 Series A, \#12, Battersby,pg. 218--9

322 No. 9; dated 1702

> Study to acquire these three virtues. There is nothing I will not do to ease your troubles. But, my dear Brother, believe me, the best cure is to strive after the virtues I have mentioned.[323]

They all come together in obedience:

> I am very glad that you have recovered from the miserable state in which you have been for so long, and that you acknowledge the change which God has wrought in you… I am very pleased that you abandon yourself to be sent anywhere. But since you are disposed to obey, never say `I will'. I am not surprised that you feel disinclination to obey. It suffices that you overcome this feeling. Remember that what sanctifies the actions of a religious is obedience.[324]

To obedience the religious adds a lively love of poverty along with scrupulous regularity:

> We ought to cherish poverty, my very dear Brother. Our Lord was extremely poor though he could have been rich. It seems that you are never pleased unless nothing is lacking. You have not entered Religion in order to have everything you like. I know that you are poor. How happy you are. I might apply to you what a certain great Pope said to some Jesuits who told him that they, the Jesuits, were very poor. `So much the better, Reverend Fathers', he answered, `The poorer you are the more you will resemble Jesus Christ'. [325]

This love of poverty is based upon a total abandonment to the divine will. The Founder gave the Brothers a remarkable example of this abandonment in the lines that must have been written in 1709, during a period of severe want:

> You see very well that Providence helps you. Rest assured that it will not fail you as long as you serve God well…

And it was in this connection that he described the precarious situation of his Institute and of the entire country in this year of tremendous distress:

> Here we eat brown bread; it is put on the table. At Rheims they give half a pound at each meal and four ounces at breakfast.[326] They write from Avignon that all the inhabitants are reduced to a pound of bread, which weighs only fourteen ounces. The Brothers are given four ounces at breakfast and five at lunch. I am unable to send you any pictures for I have not enough money to buy bread for the forty we are here.[327]

Concerning regularity, he writes as follows:

> You know that one of the most important things in a community is to ring the bell exactly on time, especially for the morning rising. Be careful to leave everything at the first sign, at the first sound, of the bell. You know it is a thing of some consequence in a community… God will bless what you do only in the measure you are faithful to it… Everything must be done on the principle of regularity.[328]

In school the Brother will have full opportunity to practice the virtues acquired in community life. Direction of pupils, and contact with the outside world demand watchfulness over one's character and the practice of self-mastery:

> Mind you always speak to people outside with much humility… Never rebuff them; that is most disedifying. Speak in a becoming manner according to the godly spirit. Take heed also not to talk too freely with your pupils, for this diminishes the respect they have for you. You must carefully avoid acting lightheadedly in school, for this is most harmful…[329]

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323 No. 7, Battersby, pp. 216--7

324 No. 3. ``This letter is from Mazarin''. (dated from Rethel-Mazarin.

325 Series A., \#26, dated from Rouen, 1705, quoted in part by Guibert, pg. 122. Battersby, pp. 228--9

326 Or 122 g. 36, since an ``ounce'' was the equivalent of 30 gr. 59

327 Series A, \#6, Battersby, pp. 214--5

328 No. 31, Battersby, pg. 232

329 No. 16, dated 1706; Battersby, pp. 221--2.

The tongue, then, must be controlled with great prudence; and even greater prudence is required in regard to corporal punishment, which must be rare, and must never turn to cruelty:

> Take care, my very dear Brother, not to give way to impatience in class … It is a defect one is often inclined to fall into, hence one must watch closely over oneself to avoid it. For the love of God do not strike the pupils with your hand. It is not by blows that one leads them either to do what is right or to God. Do not use a pointer either. As for the cane, use it only when necessary and return it to its place again afterwards so that you will not be tempted to seize it in moments of impatience 330… Do not allow the boys to shout, and do not give them or women cause to complain. You must take the proper means for this purpose, for if you send boys away for shouting, the others will shout in order to be sent away too. You know what happened before and the bad results it had.[331]

Another letter follows which, after some excellent advice of an educational and psychological nature, reaffirms the hierarchy of values among the subjects taught by the Brothers:

> You would do well to apply yourself to teach your lessons. In order to succeed, one has to begin courageously giving them badly, for one can do nothing properly the first time `round …
>
> It is a pity you are not as anxious about teaching your boys their catechism, which is the purpose of your state, as you are about writing, which is only a means to an end. You know how much the Brothers need to study their religion, and that it is often one of the things most neglected. Writing is necessary, but religious knowledge is certainly much more so in your profession, for it is the first of your occupations since your chief care ought to be to instill a Christian spirit in your pupils. Do not bother so much about penmanship and arithmetic; the four rules are enough, and they do not require so long to learn.[332]

It is surely right to locate the basic inspiration for this advice, this recall to fundamentals, in the letters dealing with the interior life and especially with that primary exercise that determines all moral and spiritual activity - mental prayer. The collection of hasty but weighty ``notes'' received by the senior Brothers from their Founder and devoutly assembled by them have yielded a number of significant passages on this subject:

> It is a great consolation to me to see your good will. I pray God may increase it still further. If you have trials you should not be surprised; the devil sees that you are not left in peace. Your best course is to turn to God in mental prayer and to open your heart in all simplicity to your Director and myself. … I pray that God may bless you so that you do not give way to inconstancy, wanting one thing one day, another the next. When we have given ourselves to God, we must be more steady and seek only Him. Inconstancy is a sign that we heed our own ideas a great deal and too often. [333]
>
> You are doubtless too exteriorized, my very dear Brother, since your rarely think of the presence of God, even during the holiest exercises. Endeavor, I beseech you, to do every thing with a view to God and through motives of faith, since this is the spirit of your Institute. Idle thoughts crowd in on you only because you do not content yourself with performing your exercises, but busy yourself with useless things.[334]
>
> Be careful not to make your spiritual reading through mere curiosity, for this is a very considerable fault. I am very glad that your reading gives you encouragement. Make it with

330 Series A, \# 32; Battersby, pp. 232--3
331 *Ibid*., \# 33; Battersby, pg. 233.
332 No. 34; Battersby, pg. 234.
333 Series A, \#36; Battersby, pp. 235-6

334 *Ibid.*, \#22; Battersby, pp. 226--7.

as much application as you can. It will help you greatly in mental prayer, in which you must endeavor to occupy your mind.[335]

To a Brother who grieved excessively at having to spend so much time in prayer, De La Salle sent the following lines in which reproof is combined with precious wisdom:

I do not know what makes you say, my very dear Brother, that you have five quarters of an hour mental prayer rather than an hour. I think mental prayer is made everywhere in the same way and ends at the same time. If you are annoyed because it is too long, it shows you have little liking for it. Ah, my very dear Brother, mental prayer is the mainstay of the soul; would you neglect it? If you find it difficult to apply yourself to one act, try another and make short considerations. In periods of dryness humble yourself before God at the sight of your weakness. The difficulty you find in mental prayer comes from the dissipation you have been in, hence be careful to correct yourself of this, and endeavor very specially to learn the method and to follow it. As you do not follow it, I am not surprised you find it hard to apply yourself. Now you have the chance of thinking of God and of entering into yourself.[336]

And we find the same thought taken up once again and commented upon:

We are happy in this world only in so far as we think of God and love Him. In periods of dryness… tell (God) that you are just as pleased as if you had consolation, and that you desire Him, not consolation. When you feel crushed by trouble, turn to God telling him that since He is your refuge, He must therefore be your solace….Moderation is necessary to enable one to keep in the presence of God. [337]

We have heard De La Salle exhort one of the Brothers ``to go eagerly to the Sacraments". He informs another:

You must look upon it as a great happiness to communicate often. You must watch over yourself in order to correct your faults, but if you do not communicate, it would be still worse

We shall find the doctrine which emerges from these offhand remarks explained and developed extensively in his books.

* * * *

Two letters in ``Series A" have to do especially with the duties of Brothers Director of communities. We shall combine them with some letters from ``Series B and C" on the same theme addressed to the houses in Chartres and Guise. According to Canon Blain, De La Salle

often said that the Institute was in the hands of the Brothers Director; that it was they who worked to build or to destroy it; that its regularity was connected with theirs and that fervor would not be preserved except by their fidelity to the Rule and to their duties. 338

We can imagine then the care he heaped upon maintaining them in, or restoring them to, the right path and the vigilance with which he followed their administrative decisions.

He wrote to one of them on the 14th of September,1709:

You know very well that we have to love one another, and for that reason to show forbearance one towards another … You must overcome your feelings in order to reprimand with mildness and cordiality …The Brothers have to overcome themselves in order to correct their defects. You should do the same to amend yours, and give good example. You will

335 *Ibid.*, \#20, dated from ``Rheims", 15th of September, 1709; Battersby, pg. 225
336 *Ibid*., \#21
337 *Ibid*.# 23; Battersby, pg. 226
338 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 145

> correct the Brothers more effectively in that way than by all the severe reprimands you could give… Rebuke… always in few words, that is important.339

If someone has indicated to him the signs of a bad spirit or insubordinate conduct, he does not hesitate to recommend strong sanctions. In a letter dated the 23rd of August (the year is unknown) he writes:

> I am most displeased at the annoyance these two Brothers have caused you. They must have very little submission. I see that as long as the Brothers are not submissive there will be no order in your house. When they refuse to eat one day they must not be allowed to eat the next. The first day it will be through fancy, the second through penance for their whimsicalness… One must never resort to force in a community. It is most unwise. When everything else fails you can stop the food

Then, he forbids the Brothers to read ``books which are not good ones''. And he concludes:

> Watch over yourself in order not to give way to weakness, for God gives few graces to the cowardly, and these achieve but little success in what they undertake.340

Authority is compromised, and regularity is lost through a lack of discretion and reserve. John Baptist de La Salle insisted on this point in a letter that he sent to Chartres on the 20th of July,1709.

> Do not talk to the Brothers so much. If you are not careful, you will miss the exercises through talking to them, and this should not happen. I know it is necessary to allow the Brothers to open their minds and to try to solve their difficulties. But this should not lead to lengthy conversations in which, very often all sorts of things, and even harmful topics, are discussed without our noticing it. Be careful about this. I shall take note of it also, for this is a matter of greater consequence than you imagine

At Chartres they sought to be less inconvenienced than the difficulty of the times and the austerity of the Rule warranted. On this point the Founder warned the Brothers:

> It appears that you seek bodily comfort. Be careful about that. Do not make any decisions in external matters before having laid them before me first. This is important. And do not listen too easily to the Brothers. Your are too easygoing on that score.341

The following year, on October 2nd, the most judicious and precise injunctions were sent out to the Director of the same house to the effect that he not allow himself to be swallowed up in details of a temporal nature:

> I am well aware, my very dear Brother,342 of the inconvenience there is in allowing serving Brothers to have the management of temporal affairs but there is even more in the Director having it. We have only too much experience of the past. If a Director becomes exteriorized, the whole house is ruined, whereas if this happens to a serving Brother the harm is limited to himself. It is said, for instance, that you have not made a single half-hour's spiritual reading since you went to Chartres. What can the Brothers be doing during that time? A Director should never leave the exercises. You have no business in the kitchen. Here where the house is large,343 no one sets his foot there except the one who looks after the sick. How much more then should a Director of a community of only four refrain from doing so. Your exercises and your school should be your only care.

De La Salle believed, however, that the head of a house should closely supervise the handling of money. And he adds the following observation in which,

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339 Series A, \#14; Battersby, pg. 220

340 *Ibid.*,} \#35; Battersby, pp 234--5

341 Series C, \#2; Battersby, pp. 116--7

342 Most of the time St.John Baptist de La Salle abbreviates this salutation, mon t. c. f.-.e., my very. dear. Brother

343343 Doubtless, the Parisian Community on Rue Barouillère

once again, he reveals himself as prudent and thrifty concerning those who have been for a long time habituated to domestic management:

> It is not reasonable for the Procurator to take all the money he pleases without asking; he should not even say `I require so much'. He should ask how much he may take'.344.

We may without danger of error date this letter to 1710 and suggest that its recipient was Giles Gerard, Brother Hubert.345

A letter sent to Guise, dated only ``the 18th of April" is paternal but energetically denunciatory. The Director is first of all reprimanded for having written to his family without permission:

> The fault is considerable and a very bad example. You must endeavor to die to the world, which ought to be dead to you

However, the culprit had ``told" his Superior of this fault with simplicity; for which De La Salle had ``thanked God".

Then, point by point, he takes up the report that, according to Rule, the Brother had made of his personal conduct and of his administration:

> Tell me then in what, and in what way, you have never been so irregular as you have been at Guise.
>
> Pay great attention, for the love of God, to the sound of the bell. It is a matter of importance.
>
> It seems to me that the Brothers should not go to the parish catechism classes on working days
>
> Be careful, I pray you, about silence in the house. I cannot understand why you are so irregular at recreation time. You should take great care to correct yourself for you know that it is important to spend this time properly, and that it is regularity which draws down the blessing of God on a house… you must be careful to tell the Brothers their faults. Do not tolerate that they should argue or answer back when they are ordered to do something. You should even exercise them in obedience … Let me know in detail the reason why you have not a quiet conscience.[41]

* * * *

We shall complete this study with an analysis of the letters whose recipients have been identified personally. Actually, for four of them, to whom the Founder's correspondence amounts to nothing more than a single letter, the name does not add a great deal of interest to the text. These were obscure disciples who would have been completely forgotten without the letters they received from their Founder and the good sense they had to preserve them for posterity. But the missives are too brief to permit us to reconstruct the portraits of De La Salle's correspondents. It will not be quite the same thing for Brothers whose personalities emerged over several letters of spiritual direction.

In particular, we shall look for the Founder in what he wrote to Brothers Clement, Severinus,Anastasius and Paulian. He is full of concern for Brother Clement's health.346 On the 26th of June,1706 he wrote:

> It is a great consolation to me to know that your rheumatism is cured; take care, I beseech you, to be prudent and to conform to the will of God in everything.
>
> And he recommend that he follow a diet:

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344 Series B, \#1; Battersby, pg. 201

345 See below, pg. 451 Series C, last letter of the series; Battersby, pp. 183--4.

346 Jacques Castelet, entered the Institute in 1700,died in Meaux in 1753

> Do as best you can regarding your conscience. In the meantime do not follow the ordinary diet of the Brothers unless you feel quite recovered.

On the other hand, he invites him ``to read the Rule frequently in order to become quite faithful in keeping it". 347

On the 13th of July of the same year, 1706, he restored peace of mind to Brother Severinus of St.Yon: the poor Brother was accused of calumny and worried how he might repair the damage done to the reputation of a neighbor. His Superior told him to write to the pastor of the parish in which the incident occurred; and the pastor would take care discreetly to reestablish the truth. ``In view of this", adds De La Salle, ``I hereby discharge you of everything before God. Hence, do not worry yourself any further about it."

On the 28th of January 1711 he recalled the essential principles of the mystical life to Brother Anastasius:348

> Apply yourself above all to have motives of faith in order to perform your actions well. I am very pleased that your view and intention is to accomplish the will of God … Try to do all your actions in a prayerful spirit… Often enter into yourself in order to renew and increase the remembrance of the presence of God. The more you try to procure it, the easier it will be for you to perform your actions well and accomplish your duty…349

Brother Paulian, ``on this 25th day of October" 350 received advice of which his youthfulness and experience seemed to have a great need:

> Why, my very dear Brother, do you worry about your parents? I do not think that they bother about you, so why be so anxious about them? Let them do their work, and you do yours. Apply to yourself what Our Lord said regarding the one who looked behind---he was not worthy of Him. I am very glad that you are now resigned to the will of God with regard to your school. God will bless you there on account of your submission of mind in spite of your former repugnance. I have no objection, my dear Brother, to your making vows for three years. Prepare yourself for the event until I come to Rouen. You must expect to find difficulties throughout life, no matter where you are, hence dispose yourself to accept quietly all those which God will send you in the state in which He has placed you. Take care, I beseech you, to keep silence… Be especially careful with regard to Brother Martinian,351 for he is a great talker. Do not remain alone with him … You ask to be with Brother Barnabas352because you know him. How can you make such a request? Do you not see that it comes merely from nature?353 Pray that God's will may be done in your regard. This request will be much more profitable to you.

We become aware (and this awareness will grow as we look at more letters) that John Baptist de La Salle did not mince words with the Brothers. ``Who loves chastens", for we do not bring out the best in people through flattery. One would have to be quite naive or prudish to be scandalized by the failings with which the spiritual director has to deal. Placed under the scrutiny of an examiner who, by his calling, must exercise severity, and also viewed narrowly by readers who have a tendency to bring judgment according to the only evidence at hand, without weighing the ``imponderables", these minuscule human errors run the risk of taking on

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347 Series B,\#3; Battersby, pp. 194--5.

348 Brother Anastasius, Antoine Paradis, entered Paris. (See chap. x of Part Two, pp. 413). He died in
Maréville in 1774.

349 Series C, \#28; Battersby, pp. 131--2

350 Series D, \#8; Battersby, pp. 179—80. The letter was written between 1706 and 1717. In 1717 we find Brother Paulian at Versailles. (See Part Two, chap. x, pp.408).

351 There was a Brother Martinian in Alès in 1717

352 There was a Brother Thomas in Dijon in 1717

353 I.e., too conformed to the inclination of nature

proportions that they did not have in the context of the living realities in which they occurred. After all, these Brothers, docile to the exhortations and attentive to the criticisms of the Founder, men who had devotedly preserved his letters that mentioned their names, were good religious, temporarily immobilized for us in the humble posture of penitents.

* * * *

Then, there was Brother Hubert, whose file includes three excellent and informative letters addressed to him by De La Salle on the 5th of May, 1702, the 1st of June, 1706, and the 30th of January,1708.[354] Gilles Gerard, born in Romagne, diocese of Rheims, and, on 7th of December, 1683, in the course of his 17th year, entered the Institute on the 20th of April,1700, was incapable of mediocrity. In 1708, at the age of twenty-five, he was Director of the school in Guise. In December, 1716, he signed the report of Brother Barthélemy's visit to Chartres, since he had become Director of the community in that city. And in that position he participated in the election of the Superior-general in May of 1717. In him the Lasallian congregation possessed one of its patriarchs, since he would not die until the seventy-fifth year of his age, after having given fifty-nine years to the Christian Brothers. His death occurred on the 29th of June, 1759 at Maréville.[355]

The Founder was affectionately and confidently devoted to this faithful follower. His letter of 1702 testifies that he recognized in the young Brother a great loftiness and maturity of spirit:

> One of your first cares should be to apply yourself to mental prayer and to your school duties, for these are your two chief occupations and those for which you will render the most exact account to God. My very dear Brother, you must allow yourself to be led like a child of obedience who has no other wish but to obey and, in so doing to accomplish the will of God. Take great care never to use such terms as `I will', or `I will not', or `it must'. These expressions and ways of talking are unbecoming and must needs withhold the grace of God, who grants it only to those who have no other will but His, for, as St.Bernard says, it is only self-will which leads to hell.
>
> When you have worries speak to your Director about them, and you will find that God will bless you and will grant you the grace either to bear them for His love or to be freed from them. Be careful never to act through caprice, for God holds such actions in horror...Often abandon yourself in mental prayer to the good pleasure of God, and frequently repeat that you desire only the accomplishment of His holy will. In His holy love, I remain, my very dear Brother, yours. [356]

In 1706 De La Salle spoke in still kindlier language: Gilles Gerard had responded to his expectations. His religious vocation raised no questions for the Founder who, quite clearly, urged the young man to overcome certain scruples:

> I am delighted to learn from your last letter that you are in the disposition of entire abandonment. I do not know why you should be in a state of incertitude regarding your vocation. As far as vows are concerned, it is not my business to settle the question for you. The determination to make them must come from you. As you ask my opinion, I will say that I see nothing that need be an obstacle on your part.

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354 He also seems to have beenthe recipient of the letter sent to Guise, quoted above, pg.448. (The original of this letter was found in Chartres prior to 1867:Brother Hubert had been Director in Chartres, after having beenin Guise. It is quite possible, then, then the two letters ``toChartres'' in 1709 and 1710 had been also addressed to him

355 Motherhouse Archives, ``Register of Entrants''

356 Series E, \#8 (in the overall enumeration, \#91); Battersby, pg. 11.

> Rest assured that I have the good of your soul very much at heart, but as for a general confession, the reasons you give me are insufficient to make it necessary. You cannot do better than abandon yourself into the hands of your Superiors.[357]

Of another tenor is the advice which Brother Hubert received at Guise. What he needed in this difficult position was to feel the spur so as not to falter:

> … You see you are worrying too much. It is true there is not much pleasure in being in a house where there is no regularity, but you must try to put some in it until such a time as I am able to change the Brothers. You know that regularity depends to a large extent on the one at the head. It is true that Brother Alphonsus [358] is difficult occasionally, but you must try to make him more docile. Let me know exactly what his failings are, and I shall bring him back to his duty …
>
> I am amazed that after having told me in your first letter that you were prepared to stay where you are as long as it pleased me, and that you were entirely in my hands to do what I liked with you, which is indeed the best disposition you could be in, you write to me five days later exactly in the opposite strain. You must have a very changeable mind. As this is a temptation, you should try to acknowledge it, and humble yourself for having such a weakness, while the knowledge which you now have should lead you to make a resolution never to follow your whims…
>
> I shall have to work with you, but you will have to try and live differently from heretofore, and especially to make mental prayer better and to be assiduous in the performance of your exercises. That is what you should most earnestly try to attain, and that is what you place or other, send a Brother and remain at the exercise. Let me know how many times you have absented yourself and for what reason, and do not omit to do so in the monthly letter, for the primary duty of the one at the head is to be the first in everything. You go to the kitchen and talk to Brother Alphonsus, with the result that it engenders familiarity and that he has no respect for you. You do not tell me things in sufficient detail. If it is necessary for someone to go to the kitchen, send another Brother and remain at the exercise …

For Brother Hubert, this inconstancy, agitation and talkativeness were the consequences of too early burdening a young man with the responsibilities of leadership. His Superior did not condemn him: he wanted him to develop and he ``worked with him" to that end.

As Brother Hubert was propelled by a fiery temper to the point of roughing up pupils and striking them, De La Salle forbade these outbursts:

> This is a serious fault, as also laughing during meals. When you have been guilty of such faults, do you accuse yourself? You know that, according to the Rule, you should not omit to do

Brother Hubert must observe the gravity that belongs to his position:

> If Brother Antoninus[359] has no confidence in you, it is because you do not attract by your reserve, your seriousness, and your regularity. You are not judicious enough and not regular enough, and this brings on you the disdain of others. Pray hard for the regularity of your house and for your Brothers when they fail in their duty, or when they are in trouble….[360]

The three other Brothers into whose privacy the Founder's correspondence introduces us were certainly not of the same spiritual or intellectual calibre as the young Director of Guise and Chartres. But St.John Baptist de La Salle's charity was no less hospitable with regard to them. He spoke to them in a language they could

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357 Series C, \#4, dated from Paris, the last day of June, 1706. There is written on this document the phrase ``given to Brother Corentine by Brother Hubert on the 10th of November 1748, at Rheims"

358 There was a Brother Alphonsus at Rethel in 1717

359 In 1717 Brother Antoninus was teaching in Rouen

360 Series E, \#6 (\# 89 in the overall enumeration); Battersby, pp. 99--101. The letter is dated from ``Paris, the 30th of January 1708 and bears the subscription: ``My very dear Brother Hubert, The Christian Schools at Guise". The list of copies bears witness that this letter was not in the Motherhouse Archives prior to the 19th century.

understand. With them he stooped to humble details, and he guided them with an unwavering patience. In short, he raised their thought to the highest ideals.

Two of them taught together in the schools in Normandy. We shall see that, at times, their mutual relations left something to be desired. Concerning the first of them, Brother Robert, we are best informed. His family name was Denis Maubert, born on the 2nd of January, 1673 in Compantrelle, in the diocese of Rouen. He entered the Institute on the 15th of May, 1700, and he made perpetual vows. The Founder's letters lead us to believe that Brother Robert was, at one period, the Director of a small community. But the files relative to the Election of the Superior-general show that this same man was a subordinate at Darnétal. He died in the community in Meaux in 1734.[361]

None of the letters addressed to Brother Robert bear an indication of the year in which they were sent. We shall quote from the first four in the numeric order of ``Series C'' in whichthey are included. The fifth letter, which is an autograph outside the ``Series'', will be dealt with later.

On some ``April the 26th'', having received complaints about food from Brother Robert, De La Salle dispatches matters quite briskly:

> Brother Thomas[362] must supply your needs without so much arguing …It is not customary among us to weigh the bread the Brothers have to eat. They may eat as much as they need. You must be given the salt you require.[363]

Man does not live by bread alone… nor by salt, either. Indeed, Brother Robert had too many vulgar preoccupations. On the 21st of May his Superior exhorted him to shake himself loose from terrestrial concerns:

> The dryness you experience in mental prayer and holy Communion, come from the fact that you do not apply yourself and that you do not think of spiritual things outside of prayer time. Do not abstain from Communion; it is very necessary to you… I do not know what makes you say that if you became ill, you would be shown the door. We should, of course, look after you.

Brother Robert was anxious about the wrong things. And Brother Robert did not know how to keep a secret. De La Salle adds in a postscript to the foregoing letter:

> I am amazed that you should have had such little discretion as to tell Brother Denis that I gave you instructions to report to me on his conduct. That is very bad. Do not speak in such a way again, I beseech you. You see very well that it can only cause trouble in his mind, and between the two of you, and turn him against me. This is of greater consequence than you think.[364]

Brother Robert, who was a native of Normandy and who had entered Religion late in life, had doubtlessly retained a certain rusticity and had never learned to master his natural spontaneity. The Founder wrote to him:[365]

> Take care not to let yourself go to impatience or outbursts of passion. Between yourselves there should be union; towards outsiders decency; and toward your pupils much forbearance… It is preferable to miss an exercise than to take off schooltime for something that is necessary, for we should never absent ourselves for one moment from our class. Be careful to speak in a low tone in the house when you have to speak, and let it be only through real necessity. You should never speak from a distance or from a window. Do not entertain thoughts about your class during mental prayer. Everything in its proper time. Take care not to diminish the number of your pupils by your rebuffs…. You will have to buy the books, provided they are good and that I know what they are …

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361 Motherhouse Archives, ``Register of Entrants''.

362 The Procurator, Charles Frappet

363 Series C, \#5; Battersy, pp. 177--8.

364 *Ibid.*, \#6; Battersby, pg. 173

365 *Ibid.*, \#22, ``this 7th of December

It was thus that De La Salle taught his less cultivated sons the rules of politeness at the same time that he instructed them in the duties of a good teacher. But with Denis Maubert he had to return to the practice of the most elementary virtues:

> You see that your having spoken angrily, my very dear Brother, may have greatly scandalized this neighbor. You must always be very reserved in your manner of talking, particularly when you are with outsiders. Act charitably to your Brothers. When there is something to complain about, apply to Brother Joseph so that he can put things in order. You would do well to send away the persons who come to speak to the Brother during spiritual reading or mental prayer. Be careful not to eat outside of mealtime; it is not to be tolerated. The hunger which you think you feel at such times is a temptation ….Be careful never to lie. That is a considerable fault. Do not give way, either, to curiosity; it is very harmful. Perhaps this is the reason why you find it difficult to apply yourself to mental prayer and other exercises. You must give your attention during Holy Mass with the pupils to the supervision of your pupils. Do not strike them; it is a considerable fault. You cannot be too careful about this. You do well to try and make your pupils improve in order to have a greater number, and also in order to accomplish your duty. [366]

The letter written on the 1st of May[367] summarizes in terms that are particularly brief and clear most of the advice intended for Brother Robert and all those in a condition similar to his:

> Be faithful, my very dear Brother, to leave all at the first sound of the bell, and be exact in ringing the bell, to the last stroke.[368] It is unbecoming to shout at a woman, and to run after children. You must behave with more propriety. See that silence is observed in your house. Be particularly careful to refrain from talking to the pupils through curiosity. Do not bother about what is said in the streets; remain recollected. It is your duty to edify people. The reason why you are so dry and have so many distractions during mental prayer is because you are too exteriorized and talk too much. Do not read through mere curiosity. Spiritual reading is not intended for that. It is meant to prepare you for mental prayer. There is nothing to be gained from giving way to discouragement. Try to make your pupils attend regularly. That is important. It is shameful to strike them. Beware of being impatient. I know the parish priest well, and I know he is not able to give anything but good advice. I beseech you to behave properly toward your Brothers, and see that your house is well regulated. I remain, my very dear Brother, yours in Our Lord

Brother Denis, Brother Robert's colleague, had scarcely less need of alert and energetic guidance. Jean-Louis Guynand had preceded his Norman confrere into the Institute. His vow formula was written into the Perpetual Vow Book on the 9th of December,1697, ``the day on which the Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin is solemnized". Guynand had lived through the heroic days at Vaugirard. He was quick to learn the Lasallian ideal, if not always disposed to make the effort that would bring him closer to it. This is what the letter of the 30th of May, 1701 (which seems to be the first of the three sent to him) leaves us to understand:

> Make it a habit … to think often of the holy presence of God, for this is the chief fruit of mental prayer. It would be of little use to you, however, if you did not strive to mortify yourself, or if you sought after your own comfort. It is not enough to have the wish to go to God in the most perfect manner possible; you must actually do so, and this is accomplished only in so far as we do ourselves violence. I am not surprised you find considerable difficulty in the practice of the Rule. It is your habit of observing it only imperfectly that makes you find it hard. If you keep it exactly you will experience greater facility and satisfaction. It is for the same reason that you feel distaste for Holy Communion. I beseech you never to omit recreation. It is no doubt a

366 Series C., \#29, ``the 26th of February"; Battersby, pp. 175--6.

367 Motherhouse Archives, ``autograph of which there was no copy in the 1896 register

368 I.e., the final stroke of the clock

> serious matter that you should spend your recreation with Brother Claude and leave the two young Brothers together. That is very bad…[369]

Violenti coelum rapiunt: the same theme re-emerges, mixed with protestations of paternal solicitude and some special recommendations in the following lines, dated the ``8th of July'':

> I am far from abandoning you, my very dear Brother. If I did not answer your last at the same time as the Brothers of Rouen, it is because I did not have time …
>
> You must pay great attention not to be sluggish during the exercises. It is not the way to obtain God's blessing. There is no virtue without effort, and we must not aim at a mere veneer. Yours must be solid virtue …
>
> Be especially careful to recite the prayers slowly, and let them be said in like manner in school, for it is the attention we have during vocal prayer which makes them agreeable to God …
>
> Be careful to correct the pupils; the ignorant even more than the others. It is shameful to call them abusive names
>
> When you are pointed out your defects, you should consider the good it confers on you rather than the motive which inspired your accuser … [370]

Finally, from the ``Faubourg St.Sever'', on the 1st of August, De La Salle suggested to Brother Denis the arena wherein the religious might continually struggle against himself:

> You must try to follow inspirations when these lead you to overcome yourself, for then it is a sign that they come from God. Since you have occasion to humble yourself when you are in town with Brother Robert, let it appear that you like humiliation, and never listen to what nature suggests to avoid it.
>
> Let there also be regularity with regard to silence. You need to enter frequently into yourself …Be exact in having recreation. Do not suffer any boys about you during that time. In order to keep silence, it is necessary to have recreation at the proper time.[371]

* * * *

We already sketched the profile of Laurence Douai (Brother Matthias) on the margin of the history of the foundations in the South of France.[372] We shall now take the time to look at the man through the letters of St.John Baptist de La Salle. Except for the first, all ten letters have to do with Brother Matthias' stay in the Gévaudan. Only three are completely dated. The others may be situated at a period somewhat later. The Brother was no longer visible in the affairs of the school in Mende when De La Salle passed through that city. In 1717 we find him at St.Yon. The ``Register of Entrants'' notes his death at Guise, without further details. It is silent on the subject of his pronouncement of vows.

This Brother, capricious and quick to take offense, the Founder knew to the core. He supported the whims, complaints and petulance of Laurence Douai with a forbearance that would be baffling if we did not readily grasp the reason for such indulgence: Brother Matthias was of a weak but upright nature that a rough hand might break, whereas a delicate but firm one could strengthen.

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369 Series E, \#5, \# 88 in the overall enumeration; Battersby, pp. 95--6. ``The original was found in August 1871 among the papers of Brother Desiré, who had died at this time."

370 Series C, \#3; Battersby, pp. 159--60

371 *Ibid.*,} \#32; Battersby, pp. 163--4.

372 See above, Part Two, chap. ix, pg. 356

In 1706 he was a member of the community in Rheims. On the 3rd of December De La Salle wrote him the following affectionate lines:

> You are the first I write to this month, my very dear Brother. There is nothing I desire more than to be able to help you in your difficulties, but you see very well that I cannot help you if I do not know what they are. I do not see what your trouble is; you simply say you are not well. I do not know whether this is the only reason why you ask me to go to Paris …
>
> Let me know your troubles. If they come from my not writing to you, I shall write to you in the future every time I write to the Brothers. But henceforth mind the writing and the spelling in your letters: I can hardly read them.
>
> …You give as your only reason for a change that you do not get on at Rheims. You know very well that in our Institute we should be able to fit in anywhere we may be sent by the Superiors, obedience being the chief rule and the main satisfaction of our Brothers
>
> I do not know what you mean by saying that you are disgusted at the way you have been treated. Explain to me, and I shall try to remedy your trouble. Rest assured, my very dear Brother, that I wish only your good and your peace of soul.[373]

The Superior was, nevertheless, determined not to introduce this restless person into the house on the Rue Neuve. He sent him for a time to Paris, and then to Mende to assist Brother Ponce who had been overworked. Ponce was excessively severe and Matthias was hypersensitive, and once again he complained. From Paris on the 18th of November, 1707, the Founder comforted Matthias in exactly the way he needed:

> Whoever told you that God did not require you to be doing what you are? You are well placed, satisfied and at rest so long as you are supported. I know very well that you need support, and by this means you will sustain yourself. I know how you were in Paris, and I believe that your are more sick in mind than in body. As long as you are submissive, God will uphold you. I am sorry that you should be annoyed. I shall do all I possibly can to take away your annoyance. You ask me to come to Paris, but you see very well that winter is not the proper time for it. It is a good suggestion of yours to make a novena to ask God to help you to do His holy will
>
> I do not know in what or from whom you have received inhuman treatment. I cannot see that what Brother Ponce did to you was so vexatious as you make out. You torment yourself too much, and this does you a lot of harm. Rest assured that I shall do all I can for you. I remain, my very dear Brother, yours in Our Lord. [374]

But Matthias, like a child, continued to talk nonsense. He denounced the Founder for having exiled him and demanded to be recalled. De La Salle wrote to him on the 30th of December,
1707:

> I do not know why you write to me in such an ungracious manner and so contrary to the truth. I have given you no cause for it up to now, having done nothing but what was for your good, and having sent you where you are only after much insistence on your part for a very long time. Instead of telling your troubles to outsiders speak to Brother Ponce about them, write to him if he is not in Mende. I have placed him in charge of all that concerns the interests of our Brothers in that region. You should not have insisted so much on my sending you so far if you wanted to come back so soon. As you see, it is not possible to bring Brothers back such a distance before Easter, nor to send any there, and we should not undertake journeys to obtain a dispensation from fasting during Lent. Rest assured, my very dear Brother, that I shall do everything which is required for you according to the advice that Brother Ponce will send.

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373 Series D, \#9; Battersby, pg. 83.
374 Series D, \#2; Battersby, pg. 91

> Hence, let him know all your troubles and your thoughts, and you will see that, in this way, God will bless you.[375]

However, Brother Ponce, who had become Visitor for the Communities in the South of France, was replaced at Mende by the exceptional Brother Antoine. Matthias found still more to complain about. He thought his lot was unworthy of his good looks! On this occasion the Founder rebuked him with a severity that was mixed with a subtle irony:

> I am quite certain that the Brother who is with you is not difficult, and that you are pleased with him. Are you not ashamed to say: `fancy such a good looking young man as I am in a job like this'. You are fortunate indeed to be in the state you are in, for it is a holy and sanctifying state, which does you honor both in this life and for your salvation. `A marvelously fine young man!' How can you possibly talk like that? Is that how a religious should speak?
>
> If I am not pleased with the letters you write, it is because they are sometimes in very bad taste. Take care to write more thoughtfully and more becomingly. You see it is very bad to get annoyed and to bear a grudge, and you see also that it is bad to get angry and follow one's impulses---that is acting more like an animal than a wise man. Be careful not to be impatient in class, for that is not the way to obtain order or silence. Answering back is very prejudicial to the submission you ought to have. It is very bad to act upon every idea that comes into your head, for many are quite wrong. [376]

Gradually, De La Salle took this impulsive young man in hand, straightened him out and pacified him. Like many another conspicuous neurotic, this one had a rage for writing letters endlessly. ``We shall never be able to cover the postage'', his Superior objected; and he urged him to combine his correspondence with that of the Director of the school, without whose permission Brother Matthias was to mail nothing.[377]

Some letters continued to include harsh accusations:

> It seems….that you perform your exercises with very little application and very little liking … I shall see that you are led towards God with gentleness and not harshness… but, on your part, you must act more graciously and not by impulse or anger. Do you make mental prayer? Do you go to Holy Communion? It must be very difficult, ill-disposed as you are … You must go to God, my very dear Brother, and work out your salvation. Do not abuse the means which God gives you …[378]
>
> I am very sorry that my letters annoy you. I have written nothing, however, calculated to do so. I write to you with the greatest possible cordiality, and I say nothing but what is for your good. Hence I think you should take it in good part. I am glad that you acquit yourself of your duty as you say. I was not aware of it, although you say I knew
>
> I was very careful to allow you to write to your parents since, before I answered your letter, your two brothers came here to tell me that you had written twice to your mother, who is dead, and that your letter had been sent to them. As you see, that is writing before asking leave to do so, which is very bad
>
> I am extremely sorry that you have been unwell. Be careful, however, lest your illness be partly imaginary, for you seemed much better in health in Paris than you said you were … Do not worry yourself, I pray you, over trifles …

But the conclusion of this letter manifests a Matthias who is more calm:

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375 Series D, \#3; Battersby, pg. 93.

376 *Ibid.*,#5, dated ``the 23rd of Ma…"(March or May?); Battersby, pp. 88--9

377 *Ibid.*,#10, dateless; Battersby, pg. 108

378 Series D, \#11, dated ``the 13th of January"; Battersby, pp. 95--6.

> I thought I told you that your brothers asked me to tell you to stay where you are… I am glad you are in the same disposition and that you are content to remain where you are. Do not, henceforth, entertain these notions, I beseech you, and do not give in to the impulse of the moment. I shall so arrange that you will be happy with those with whom you are. I shall also make arrangements to send you away from Mende after Easter, since such is your wish.[379]

But the change was delayed; and Brother Matthias had time to calm down and submit.

On the 4th of April St.John Baptist de La Salle wrote him as follows:

> I am greatly delighted at the good disposition you are in at the present to remain in your vocation, which is a very sacrificing one for you, and to accomplish your duty in it … I think you have reason to be pleased with the Brother who thus directs you. I believe that God requires that you should remain quiet and stay with him…
>
> You are right in apologizing for your letters for they have occasionally been not only indiscreet, but very abusive, and I cannot understand how you can write in such a way. I have tried, however, not to take offense, and, as far as I am concerned, to bear no grudge. You ask me to place you with good Brothers, and you are so already. What do you have to complain about? Try and acquire, I beseech you, a level, steady and submissive spirit, for otherwise God would not bless you.[380]

The same theme is raised in a letter dated ``the 13th ofApril'':

> I am very glad of the good disposition in which you are to stay willingly in the community, and I shall try and help you as much as I can to bear the difficulties

Here again, nevertheless, there is a promise of a change and it seems that the Founder is not completely satisfied with Brother Matthias' circle of friends:

> I shall see that you do not stay much longer where you are, but you must have patience. You will not be troubled, I shall see to that, but you must keep to the Rule, and the same Rule as elsewhere …It is not said that it is very easygoing in your house. Perhaps you have been allowed too much liberty. You should return to the state of regularity you were in Paris … Schoolwork without the exercises will not do. When you have accomplished your exercises with regularity for a short time, you will not find any further difficulties.[381]

We shall conclude with the following letter, dated the 16thof May, which, in fact, appears to close out a period in the life of Brother Matthias:

> In answer to your two letters, I have to say that I have written to Brother Ponce asking him to go to Mende and to put everything in order. I think he will be able to change you and place you with himself. I am glad to see you in the disposition to go wherever I want to send you. I am not inclined at the moment to bring you nearer to Paris or to place you there. I am pleased you like the region where you are and that you wish in the future to give me as much pleasure as you have caused me annoyance. I shall see to it, as you ask, that you have a large number of pupils, and that you should be disposed to accomplish your duty. But, I beseech you, let it be with regard to your exercises as well as your class.[382]

At this point counsel gives way to praise. Laurence Douai was, after all, a generous soul. He possessed the sacred flame for guiding and teaching children. It remained forever for him to feed that flame on obedience to the Rule and on prayer.

* * * *

These have been letters which up until the present have remained for the most part unpublished. We cannot look to them as models of the letter writer's art. De La

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379 Letter out of series, added under no. 92 in the overall classification. It is dated merely ``the 8th of February''; Battersby, pg. 103

380 Series D, \#6; Battersby, pp. 104--5

381 *Ibid.,*} \#7; Battersby, pp. 106--7

382 Series D, \#4; Battersby, pg. 111.

Salle wrote with the ease and the clarity of an educated man. He wrote hastily, omitting transitions, and repeating the same word several times inthe same sentence, and using stereotyped expressions: `that is important', `that is very bad', `I do not know why', `you know very well', etc. He clung to the essentials; but he also returned to them as often as necessary in order to persuade. He was writing for simple people. In order to make himself understood, as well as out of a disdain for vainglory, he wrote with complete simplicity.

Furthermore, there was nothing in him of the imaginative or the lyrical. His unshakable confidence in God, his hardy andfearless sanctity soared above the courts of reason. Again, his entire work was founded upon a commonsense that might very well be termed ``genius''. Good, loving, totally neglectful of self, he was without effusiveness or outcry. The words `wisdom', `reason', `punctuality', `honesty', `attention', `stability' sprang naturally from his pen. He found it unacceptable that people acted out of `feeling', `caprice', or `like animals'. With equanimity he required of his disciples the most difficult virtues and he insisted especially on the control of the senses, on obedience, patience, silence and the love of humiliation. With a firm gesture, he turned eyes and souls toward supernatural realities, towards what he called `views' and `motives of faith'.

His letters show clearly that where his Brothers were concerned he never separated the teacher from the religious. The terms `exercises and school', `prayer and school', `activity and the spirit of prayer' are for him twin expressions, so to speak. The duty of prayer is primordial; but the duty of one's vocation prevails over every exercise. Nothing justifies sacrificing school time; but there is no such thing as a good class without religious preparation, and there are no genuine educators among those who neglect the spiritual life. Every ordered, harmonious movement in school and in community depends upon the same cardinal virtues. And once justice and prudence, courage and `temperance' have been established, there remains the coping stone to maintain and balance the whole---the observation of the Rule, ``regularity''.

We may well deplore the fact that the magnificent file of ``letters'' is in such a fragmentary state and that (apart from the correspondence with Gabriel Drolin) the names of the oldest disciples and the most qualified heirs to the Founder's thought hardly appear. With the exception of the letter to the magistrates of Chateau-Porcien, none of the extant letters bear a date prior to 1701. It was to be expected that De La Salle's mail would become abundant only after the spread of the schools to theprovinces. Between 1688 and 1702 his visits to the schools in the East, his sojourns with his disciples at Vaugirard, and then at the ``Grande Maison'', in part replaced the exchange of letters. Besides, there is reason to believe that the first Brothers did not attach to the preservation of personal notes from their Superior the same importance that the new generation gave them - not because the latter were more respectful but because they were in a better position to grasp the greatness of the man and his work.

In the 18th, and again in the 19th, centuries too many of those who possessed precious documents did not think of, nor did they resolve upon, returning them to the Superiors-general. In this way there occurred irreparable losses. Further, the Motherhouse Archives were scattered in 1792. What had been there brought together of the Founder's autographs were either mislaid, or collected by dedicated treasure hunters, and returned in a very incomplete way to the headquarters of the reestablished Congregation after the Revolution.

The edifice of history is almost always built of scattered documents. But in the search for, and the use of, these fragments, the historian must fear negligence, even when it is only minimal.

CHAPTER TWO

The Spiritual Writings of St. John Baptist de La Salle

Firmly and gently the Founder led his disciples to holiness by way of the school. His letters have prepared us to understand his other spiritual writings. The quite clear, although rather scanty, outline of his ideas and dominant concerns with which the letters supply us is extensively resumed and reemphasized in a small book that he himself placed at the disposal of the Brothers and in three other books which are known to us only in posthumous publications, but the entire substance of which had already been confided to those of his Brothers whom he had personally instructed and directed.

Nowhere does De La Salle seek for complete originality, which, had he achieved it, would have been through a rare gift for synthesis, an ever alert faculty for assimilation and through that practical sense, that instinct for adaptation, which he carried to ascetical and mystical heights. In these regions, he found his place among the masters, to none of whom was he any longer a permanent disciple. For his new religious family, sharply distinguished from its more ancient counterparts, he created a spirituality with a special emphasis and with characteristic forms and formulas.

He always remained, of course, the Sulpician. He had been brought up on the *Christian Day*, the *Christian Catechism of the Interior Life*, the *Introduction to Christian Life and Virtues* and the *Seminarian's Handbook*. And under the influence of Fathers Olier, Lantages, Tronson, and, indeed, of Père La Chétardye, the author of the *Abridged Christian Doctrine* for the use of the diocese of Bourges, he belonged indisputably to the great ``French School''. Although he spent only eighteen months in the Seminary of St.Sulpice, nevertheless, he carried on an extended and trusting relationship with Père Tronson. His disagreements with Father La Chétardye never spilled over into points of doctrine. Deliberately, he preserved and strengthened the influence of the period of his priestly studies.

He was probably familiar with a book by Père Champion La Mahère, published in 1694, entitled *The Spiritual Teaching of Père Lallemant.* [383] However, he refused to be satisfied with Jesuits who professed a more or less ``Berullian'' coloration. Having remained throughout his youth outside the ``Ignatian'' influence, it was in his mature years that he made contact with the Society of Jesus. He had read the *Exercises* and had, of course, appreciated their precise psychology and practical quality, and he had retained something of their method that is so well adapted to the needs of all souls, and especially, of those beginners who were the first Brothers of the Christian Schools. As his schools were making contact with the sons of St.Ignatius Loyola in the South of France and in Rouen, from the outset he found himself in agreement with them. His concerns as an educator and especially his fidelity to the Holy See, his insistence upon total orthodoxy, and his mistrust of, and then his opposition to, the Jansenists situated him squarely within the Jesuit orbit. As the Founder of a highly centralized and highly disciplined Congregation, with a ``social'' mission to children and youth, a ``catholic'' vocation to the entire world, he saw quite

383 See Henri Bremond, {\ital Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France}, Vol. III, ``The Mystical Conquest, The French School'', and Vol. V, ``The School of Father Lallemant and Mystical Tradition of the Society of Jesus''

clearly that the Jesuit Rule offered him a model of organization and government, from which he took his inspiration.

We should not forget, either, that his friend and spiritual director, Nicolas Roland, had received his early education at the hands of the Jesuits; and that it was doubtless through his enlightened mediation that De La Salle gained access to St.Ignatius Loyola. Demia and Barré had been students at Jesuitcolleges, at Bourge-en-Bress and at Amiens respectively. The spirit, methods and system of their teachers were not without their influence upon the educational and religiousideas of De La Salle's ``precursors''. The societies they had founded for the education of the poor, the rules they had developed so as to unite action to prayer and ``school management'' to a sort of monastic life, corresponded, within limits and with narrower goals and on a more modest plan, to the type introduced into the Church by St.Ignatius Loyola.

What the texts clearly reveal is that De La Salle, in the[384] spiritual direction of his Brothers, shared with Canon Roland not merely a few ideas, a few doctrinal themes, but entire sentences and paragraphs are taken over word for word or only slightly modified. Between these two men there could be no question of``mine and thine''. They pooled their treasures. And when Nicolas died, De La Salle reaped the inheritance. In complete fidelity to his friend and in total humility (he didn't think he could put things better!) and without idle scruples, he drew upon that inheritance for the benefit of souls - the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. Perhaps nothing more perfectly witnesses to the close connection between these two Rheimian families, between the two Congregations, one of which had its headquarters, the other its origins, in the same house on Rue Barbâtre.

And now we come to the first of the small works, published in the lifetime of the Founder, to be used as a spiritual guide by his disciples. Other books, published by De La Salle, preceded this one, but they were intended for school children as well as for a Christian public at large. But because of their particularly pedagogical quality, we shall examine them at the same time that we deal with that basic book of Lasalllian education, *the Conduct of Schools*. The finishing touches on the *Conduct* occurred only after the work on the ``Rule''. And the ``Rule'' was preceded by writings of which we shall speak later. After all, the religious formation of the Brother was, both logically and chronologically, prior to his professional training, although the one (we repeat) was inconceivable without the other. In the hierarchy of values, souls outrank minds.

The *Collection of Various Short Treatises for the use of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*} appeared in Avignon in 1711, ``published by Joseph Charles Chastanier, printer and bookseller, near the College of the Jesuit Fathers''. It bore the *Imprimatur* of the Vicar-general Pertuys, and of the Inquisitor-general, Pierre La Crampe.

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384 Whether through Nicholas Roland who knew theHermitage in Caen, (See above, Part I, chap. vii, pp. 117) or byway of the Seminary of St.Sulpice, De la Salle was introduced to Jean Bernières' book, *le Chrestien intérieur*}, which was reedited a number of times during the 17th century, after 1661 (the 13th edition appeared in 1662). ``Fervent seminarians were tireless in the reading'' of this work, declared Père Nercam in the preliminary inquiry for the beatification of Bishop Laval. (Cf. Maurice Souriau, *le Mysticisme en Normandie*}, 1923 ed., pg. 385). The Founder borrowed from *le Chrétien intérieur* the `Litany to Jesus Suffering and Dying'', a litany that the Brothers still recite every day. Jean Bernières' litany includes twenty invocations, while De La Salle's retains nineteen of them along with the prayer that follows

Some copies, which below the title bear the date MDCCXI, contain a reference to the Bull of Approbation of the Institute.[385] Since the Bull was not granted until 1725, there was reason to fear that, in the absence of an original edition, the date indicated above was fictional. And this explains (at least as regards the *Collection*) Cardinal Gousset's judgment in 1851.[386] But the Motherhouse Archives now possesses two copies of the work, which present slight variations and which, with respect to the vows, explain the obligations which the Brothers contracted after 1694, but before the Society was a genuine Congregation. There also exists an abridgement of the *Collection* that bears the same marks of an early date. We may conclude that the author himself published several editions of his book. The ones that we have personally examined do indeed date from 1711 and must not have differed from the manuscript submitted to the scrutiny of the Inquisitor, La Crampe, who retired from those functions in 1709.[387]

St. De La Salle did not put his name on any of these books. But we do have proof in his own handwriting of his authorship of the *Collection*. It is a small sheet of paper, without margins, but filled with about thirty lines of the regular, clear hand-writing with which we are familiar from the Founder's correspondence. Some corrections and insertions between the lines display a concern for appearances that is explained by the intention of publishing this text. We are obviously dealing with a preface, or a ``Notice to the Reader''. In short, this stray page remained among the author's papers. In the 19th century, a ``former Brother'' returned the document to Brother Calixte, Assistant to Brother Philippe.[388] Having examining it, we believe that we should quote it in full:

> What should be of the greatest importance in a Community is that the Superiors apply themselves constantly and with all possible care and vigilance to have those things observed with exactness which are the most essential and suitable means of maintaining a true spirit of Community and of preventing relaxation. With this purpose in view, we have collected in a small volume, the principal rules and practices common to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, so that having them constantly at their disposal, the Brothers may endeavor to be faithful to these prac*tices, and that reading them often, they may acquire a love for them and never depart therefrom.*
>
> They should look upon the articles contained in this little book as the brief of essentials they must practice to sustain piety and regularity, and to animate their whole religious life. Furthermore, these practices are the most efficacious means which they would ordinarily use to render themselves perfect in Community observances. Hence, must they have this *Collection* at their disposal, and make it the object of their study so as to live conformably to all that is prescribed therein and thus acquire the spirit of their holy state in greater abundance.[389]

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385 This is true of Father Salvan's copy, of which he writes in his Vie du Vénérable J.-B. de La Salle}, pg. 495--6

386 See above,

387 Lucard, *Annales*}, Vol. I pg. 265, note \#1 according to the Avignon Archives. However, two ``appendices'' placed after the Table of Contents and the *errata*} (the first of which is ``The Directory According to Which Each Brother Must Account for His Conduct to the {\ital *Brother Superior of the Institute*'', and ``*The Directory that the Brothers Must Observe when Travelling*'') must have been printed later and then bound with the copy at a time as yet undetermined.

388 Lucard, *Annales*}, Vol. I, pg. 266, Note \#1.}} Lucard includes it in his Annals.{\f \footnote{$^{7} Op. cit. }, pp. 265--6.

389 Trans. Note}: English translation of the {\ital Collection}, published by the ``La Salle Bureau'', New York, 1932; (hereinafter referred to as the ``Amer. ed., 1932''). The translator of the present volume has adopted the arrangement of paragraphs as they are found in the English version.

Thus, the *Collection* is at once an epitome, a commentary and a development of the Rule. Copies of the latter, as we shall see, circulated in the Communities. Each house, as it opened, was provided with a text, which it copied for its use. The exactness of the copies remains doubtful. Furthermore, the Brothers did not have the time to multiply manuscript copies so that all the Brothers could have one for their personal use. The small volume, with its some two hundred pages, sent to them in 1711, would supply daily nourishment for souls and constantly renew the spirit of their vocation, and bind them further to a strict control over their actions.

As its title suggest, the *Collection* is composed of pieces placed alongside one another. The opening pages comprise something of a reminder: they offer, in succession, ``the nine fruits of the Religious Life, according to St.Bernard", the ``four obligations" of the Brothers' vows (maintain schools, stability in the Society, to live on bread alone if necessary, and obedience), the ``ten commandments (in verse) which the Brothers of the Christian Schools should ever bear in mind, meditate upon and practice", the ``four interior supports" and the ``four exterior supports of the Society" founded by De La Salle, the ``twelve virtues of a good teacher", and the ``ten conditions that correction should have so that it may be to the purpose".

Then, in the next twenty pages is develops a ``method of mental prayer" which later on will be the subject of an entire book. Following, there is a treatise entitled ``Directory for giving an account of one's conduct"; and, in twenty-two articles,it enumerates the subjects ``on which one must examine oneself" before going to the superior for a ``rendering of accounts".[390.] Two of the topics are devoted especially to the way one ``teaches school".

There follows the ``nine conditions of obedience"; the ``collection of subjects on which the Brothers shall converse in recreation"; the chapter, and ``the explanation of the chapter" on ``The Spirit of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools which is the spirit of faith": to which must be added ``passages taken from Holy Scripture which may help the Brothers to perform their actions through the spirit of faith"; there are texts for every moment of the day, for bodily as well as for spiritual actions:

> For rising…When putting on one's robe… when washing … at vocal prayer… at mental prayer…. at meals …. when one is inclined to laugh… When correcting someone …when writing or teaching writing… when inclined to make excuses … when receiving a penance… when inclined to impatience….for thanksgiving …

The *Collection* teaches the ``means …to become interior": mortification, fidelity to the Rule, application to the presence of God, and suggests ``reflections" appropriate for this purpose. ``Nature" is here frightfully belabored: ``human conversations", ``spiritual consolations", ``one's own judgment", including ``sensible consolations in spiritual exercises" - there is hardly a creature comfort, a tendency or a relaxation against which the rigorous teachings of the 17th century, ever preoccupied with human ``corruption", does not warn the religious.

Equal vigilance is, of course, demanded in all actions: rising, mental prayer, the office, attendance at Holy Mass, spiritual reading, Particular Examen, meals and recreation. As far as possible, silence must envelope the whole of life, protect spiritual freedom and clear the ground for steady progress toward holiness.

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390 In the 1711 edition of the {\ital Collection} the term used was ``rendition", but ``reddition" was substituted in later editions

Within the realm of conscience the ``principal virtues'' develop at the expense of these profound struggles and excisions - faith, obedience, regularity, mortification of the spirit, and of the senses, humility, modesty, poverty, patience and temperance.

Finally, this entire program of heroic living assumes the form of ``considerations'', brief and incisive like proverbs concerning ``vocation'', ``work'', ``the use of time'', ``the daily exercises'', ``Confession'' and ``Communion''.

From one end of the *Collection* to the other, and especially in the closing pages, where the sentences are taut and the questions are explosive, St.La Salle writes with a pen that is strong, austere, exact and imperative. He chooses none but the simple, the precise term. He leaves nothing to the imagination; and he refuses to flatter the ear. He addresses only the mind, the will, the memory, all lined up in the service of the faith. He pronounces exclusively upon precepts that a disciple must understand, retain and observe.

> Consider what your state is and why you embraced it; whether the order and the will of God were your only motives.
>
> If any other motives actuated you, disown them; if your intention was defective, correct it now; and, as if you were just entering, protest that your only object in persevering is because you believe such to be the holy will of God.[391]
>
> Do not discriminate between the particular duties of your state and those which refer to your salvation and perfection. Be convinced that you will never effect your salvation more assuredly, or acquire greater perfection than by fulfilling well the duties of your state, provided you do so with the view of doing the will of God. [392]
>
> Do you not believe that it is enough to do each thing at its proper time without troubling to do it perfectly? Are you convinced that a part of an action's perfection is to perform it at the right time?[393]
>
> It is far better to foresee in the morning the faults that you may commit, in order to prevent them, than to deplore them at night.[394]
>
> Consider that God has promised to hear prayer well said: there is no doubt of obtaining all that is contained in the Lord's Prayer, if we place no obstacle in the way, since it is the noblest, most excellent, most efficacious of all prayers. What obstacles do you place in the way? [395]
>
> Do you rely more on the help of God for the accomplishment of His will than upon your intelligence, cleverness or personal efforts? 396
>
> Do you observe the golden mean, even in the practice of virtue? Do you perform your actions without being uneasy or too eager? Are you not, for instance, too hasty to finish what you have begun; and are you not troubled when asked to do what is disagreeable?[397]
>
> Never give way to unholy sadness, which arises from immortification.[398]

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391 Amer. ed., 1932, pg. 147.
392 *Ibid*. pg. 148
393 *ital Ibid*
394 Ibid., pg. 156
395 *Ibid.*, pg. 161
396 *Ibid*, pg. 161
397 *Ibid.*, pg. 164
398 *Ibid*., loc. cit

> Neither readings nor discourses of themselves touch the heart. It is God Himself who employs these means, hence we must beseech Him to enable us to draw therefrom the fruit which He desires. Have you done so? [399]

Both in the single copy of the Rule, called ``the 1705 edition", and in the finished Rule of 1718, we find important fragments of the *Collection*. The ``things concerning which the Brothers should talk during recreation" (which are not included in the text of the 1718 Rule) are the same in 1705 and in 1711. The *Collection*} alters hardly anything except the form of no. xxii, regarding conversations concerning ``the edifying and pious traits in the lives of our deceased Brothers; the regularity and other virtues for which they were distinguished".

The ten commandments in verse were incorporated into the Rule of 1718 and are recited every morning at vocal prayer, before the examination of foresight. The chapter, ``Of theSpirit of the Institute" is nearly word for word identical in the three documents. The pages devoted to modesty became chapter xxi of the Rule of 1718.

Finally, we shall take a look at the generous borrowings which seem to have been made from Nicolas Roland, who, in his ``Short Treatise on the Most Necessary Virtues for the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus", held that obedience should be ``simple, sincere and universal". John Baptist de La Salle develops the outline and enumerates and defines nine qualities or ``conditions" of this essential virtue. According to him, it must be ``Christian and religious, universal, indifferent, exact and entire, prompt, blind, simple, humble and respectful, cordial and affectionate".

Roland wrote[:400]

> Persevere constantly in mental prayer, whatever your dryness, aridity, temptation or difficulties; remember that you are ever fortunate because God does not destroy you for your sins, and that it is a great deal for Him that He allows you into His presence…

De La Salle repeats this sentiment, while introducing a variant which has its own psychological and doctrinal interest:

> Persevere continuously in mental prayer … Make it *with more affection* when you feel dry and are tempted, whatever the suffering or difficulty you may experience; believe that you are more than fortunate that God does not destroy you for your sins and that He allows you into His holy presence.

In his counsel on spiritual reading, Canon Roland prescribes:

> Do not begin your reading until you have placed yourself in the presence of God. Pay attention to what you read and often think that it is Jesus Christ Himself who is teaching you by means of these letters from paradise. Pause from time to time to reflect for a moment on what your are reading. Do not allow curiosity to dominate you, nor haste in order to finish the book

And in the Collection occur the same sentences in pretty nearly the same order:

> Before reading, place yourself in the presence of God;… never read through curiosity, and do not read hurriedly; …stop occasionally to relish your reading; … read your spiritual book as you would a letter sent by Our Divine Lord to make known his holy will.

In the paragraphs concerning meals the reproduction is textually rigorous. Only the word ``damned" replaces (because more exact than) the word ``demon":

> Consider yourself as a poor beggar to whom food is given in alms … Remember also that food, however insipid, can never compare with that of the damned in hell… Always mortify yourself in something, but do it unperceived, so as not to appear singular… be attentive to the reading, in order to occupy your mind and withdraw attention from what is served.

When De La Salle writes about silence, (that)

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399 *Ibid*., pg. 166

400 Counsels given by the late Père Roland for the guidance of women living according toRule. See above, Part One, chap. vii, pp. 171--2

> it is the guardian of all the virtues and an obstacle to all the vices, since it prevents detraction, uncharitable, untruthful and unbecoming language;

when he states that,

> to acquire (humility) we must strive to understand: 1) What we have been in the past as to body and soul; 2) What we are now; 3) What we shall be in the future; 4) The nothingness whence we have sprung, the sins we have committed, God's anger that we have deserved…

and when he speaks of poverty which must be

> Cherished as Jesus loved it, and as the surest means of advancing in perfection

and elsewhere also with regard to the four ``ordinary ends of Holy Mass", concerning weekly ``renovation" of the soul which watches over itself and tries never to perform ``one of God's works neglectfully" - in all these instances the Founder is sending the Brothers to school to Nicolas Roland.

``He kept the faith and kept it free of profane novelties of speech".[401] Should we use this Pauline language in relation to the Founder's writings, he would not be at all displeased; since, as we shall see, he was filled with the words and the doctrine of ``the Apostle". He would gladly be called Canon Roland's ``Timothy". But that would be to misunderstand him and unduly to restrict the scope of the *Collection* of 1711 and look upon it as little more than a schoolboy's copybook. There is, of course, nothing in it of frivolous originality; but there is the personal meditation of a saint upon the evangelical precepts and counsels and the successful labor of an artist who fashions and determines the features of his masterpiece (his ``Institute") without rejecting the images that his memory has preserved, nor the suggestions that he received from elsewhere but also without losing sight of his own personal ideal, the goal which Providence assigned him.

* * * *

Mental prayer has such a lofty place, such a profound and preponderate influence on the religious life, that it was not enough for De La Salle to give an outline of it at the beginning of the *Collection*. Certainly, the Brothers who had listened to their holy Founder discovered in these pages the essential synthesis in which mental prayer was exactly defined as ``an interior occupation and application of the soul to God". Like his teachers at St.Sulpice, De La Salle divided it into three parts, which Père Olier had called ``adoration, Spiritual communion and cooperation". He said that the method consisted in ``looking at Jesus", ``uniting oneself to Jesus" and ``acting in Jesus". Père Lantages, the first Superior of the Seminary in Le Puy, had preferred the terms: ``preparation" (through an act of faith in God's presence, and acts of humility, contrition, union with Our Lord, and of invocation of the Holy Spirit), ``the body of mental prayer: (the ``consideration" of the subject in relation to God and in relation to ourselves, and``resolutions" in accordance with these reflections and our own needs), ``conclusion" (through thanksgiving, petitions, ``spiritual bouquets" and a final act of confidence in the Blessed Virgin). Tronson, summarizing and completing in his *Seminarians' Manual*} the work of his predecessors had bequeathed to the French clergy the vast and solid tryptich of the Sulpician method: firstly, the acknowledgement of ``our unworthiness before God"; renunciation of self so as to give ourselves to Jesus; the invocation of the Holy Spirit ``in order to make mental prayer under His direction and by His guidance"; so that ``we do not praise God through the creature" but that ``God praises Himself in us". In the second place: attentiveness to Our Lord whom we shall adore in His mysteries, in His virtues, in the virtues of the saints, in the Christian virtues; acts of wonder, of

401 St. Paul, *Tim.* I, chap. vi, v. 20

praise, of love, of joy or of compassion, and of gratitude; ``the infusion" of the soul which is plunged, so to speak, in its Savior, ``dyed" with His blood and transformed in Jesus Christ: “I no longer live myself, butChrist lives in me” *Iam non ego vivo; vivit in me Christus}* (St.Paul, Gal.}, II, 20). In the third place: resolutions:

> We must be careful that they are particular, present and efficacious. Particular: since if we are satisfied with general resolutions, we shall not draw much fruit therefrom … Present, i.e., such that, if possible, we can put them in practice that very day, since to make fine resolutions for occasions that will arise only in the distant future, we shall no longer be thinking about them when the time comes. Efficacious: so that they have effect…. [402]

We can be sure that St.De La Salle did not consider any of these teachings or their descriptions as insignificant. In order to adapt them to the use of the Brothers, he arranged them within a framework that might seem rigid, but which is only apparently so. He was careful, as we shall see, not to interrupt the soul's flight. The levels of his spiritual mansion are minutely constructed, but each of them remains open to the infinite.

They call the will to the heights, and they leave the heart run free. For the discursive intelligence they facilitate the frequently necessary roles of discovery and supervision. De La Salle's terminology is most simple and most practical. The first point is ``recollection": the second is ``application to the subject of mental prayer", and we finish up with ``thanksgiving".

``We must place ourselves in the presence of God by an act of faith", wrote Lantages, ``firmly believing that God is everywhere, that he is in the place where we are and in our heart."[403] ``The first thing that we must do in mental prayer," writes John Baptist de La Salle in his *Collection* is to become interiorly penetrated with the presence of God, through a sentiment of faith; and, with this view, we may consider God as being present in three different ways: first, in the place in which we are; secondly, in ourselves; and thirdly, in the church, going thither in spirit, if we are not bodily present...We may consider God present in ourselves in two ways: first, God is in us to preserve our being, as St.Paul says in the *Acts of the Apostles*}, (chap. xvii): ``He is not far from any of us, for in Him we live, and move, and are"; second, God is in us by His grace and His Spirit; this Our Lord teaches by these words: ``The kingdom of God is within You(St.Luke, xvii, 21); and St.Paul expresses this same thing when he says: ``The temple of God is holy; which your are. Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you?"[404]

Thus exhorted and armed at the threshold of mental prayer, the soul is guided through the ``nine acts" of the first part: three of which ``refer to God", and another three refer ``to ourselves" and ``the last three to Our Lord". In the second part ``we apply ourselves to the subject of some mystery, some virtue or some maxim of the Holy Gospel".

Père Tronson writes:

> We must be convinced, and for that reason we must consider the motives and reason which lead, move and oblige us to acquire a given virtue. Now, we may make these considerations in three ways: either by a simple view of faith and by representing

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402 *La Méthode d'Oraison mentale du Séminaire Saint-Sulpice*, rédactions et explications primitives, documents divers}, edited by G. Letourneau, Pastor of St.Sulpice, Paris, Lecoffre, 1903, *passim* and especially, pp. 7--11, 14--18; 73; and 123--141.

403 Letourneau, *op. cit.*, pg. 14

404 St.Paul, *Cor.* II, iii, 16-17

> these motives to the mind in a general way; or by a sort of inquiry, running through them calmly one after the other; or by reasoning.[405]

In the same way St. La Salle counsels his readers to converse with God in mental prayer either by a series of reflections or to contemplate the dogmatic or moral truth which must fill the soul with ``a simple view of faith".

He takes us through the series of ``nine acts" of the second part: acts (respecting Our Lord) of faith, adoration and thanksgiving: acts of confusion, contrition and application; acts of union, petition and invocation of the saints. He writes:

> It is when making the act of application that we form resolutions, and this is what is meant by taking suitable and definite means to practice the virtue on which we make mental prayer. These resolutions ought to be present, particular and efficacious.

And, like the Sulpician master, he gives a definition of each of these epithets.

> The third part consists of three acts. The first is a review of what has been done in mental prayer. The second, an act of thanksgiving; the third, an act of offering. (And) we finish the mental prayer by placing all that we have done, conceived and resolved upon, under the protection of the Most Blessed Virgin, that she may offer it to her Son, and that, by this means, we may obtain from Him the graces necessary …

Such, in brief, is the method explained in the 1711 edition of the *Collection.* We shall now pursue its development in another book in which the Founder's thought unfolds in some marvelous explanations.

According to Canon Blain,

> the wise Superior took pleasure in explaining the parts and the details of the method of mental prayer to the novices; and he believed that he would be doing them a much needed service by writing a small book on the subject and having it printed for their use.[406]

According to this testimony, *The Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer* was not only written but published by the Founder himself.

Unfortunately, apart from this reference in Blain, there is nothing but obscurity concerning the origin of this book. The earliest edition[407] with which we are familiar bears the date 1739. It is entitled "*Explaination of the Method of Mental Prayer*, by J.B. de La Salle, founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools". Printed under the title is the ``old seal" of the Institute, representing the Child Jesus being lead by St. Joseph. There is no publisher's name, no mention of a royal license, and no notice to the reader. It is obviously a book intended exclusively for the Brothers' Communities and not for commercial use. If ``this little book" was in print during the lifetime of the Founder, it was (as Blain says) only for the use of the novices, and consequently only a few copies existed. It is not surprising that this ``first edition" has completely disappeared.

In its absence we are unable to verify whether any changes were, intentionally or inadvertently, made in the original text. But in 1739, twenty years after De La Salle's death, the Superiors of the Congregation were the immediate disciples of the Founder; neither Brother Timothy nor Brother Irénée would have allowed themselves the privilege of imposing a gloss on the founder's text, were it only to clarify his thought. And, in order to correct omissions and errors, they still had in front of them (if not the manuscript) at least the first printed edition, which we no longer possess. Besides, in the fact that not a trace has been left of the original edition, there is a

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405 *Explication de la Méthode*}, Conference VII, quoted by Letourneau, pg. 137

406 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 287

407 The copy preserved in the Motherhouse Archives belonged, in 1742, to the Christian Brothers' Community in Laon, as the inscription at the head of the title page bears witness

presumption in favor of the complete exactitude of the 1739 edition. How would it be possible for a group of Brothers (especially those among the survivors of the early days, such as Brother Antoine, Brother Jean, Brother Ambrose or Brother Hilaire) to fail to preserve and then bequeath to the Institute (as was done in the case of the Letters and the *Collection*}) one of the holy Founder's writings, if the most recent edition had not been a faithful rendition of the authentic version?

Finally, there are the internal criteria. The *Explanation of the Method* …is totally Sulpician and Lasallian. It corresponds completely to the plan set forth in the *Collection.* It bears the marks of the Founder's style and mind---a judgment we think we can prove by dint of abundant quotations.

The first chapter repeats the definition of mental prayer given in 1711. It calls this exercise an ``interior'' occupation, because it ``is not only an exercise of the intellect but …of all the powers of the soul''. If mental prayer were … confined to the intellect or… consisted in sensible affections, the soul would easily yield to human and sensible distractions which would impede its effect; and since such an intellectual exercise would not penetrate the soul, it would only be fleeting, and as a consequence the soul would then be abandoned to dryness and be destitute of God.[408]

The pages devoted to the ``means of placing oneself in the presence of God'' are those of a theologian brought up on St.Paul:

> In fact, we exist, move and think, because God is present in us; so much so that if God were to cease for a moment to be in us and to give us Being, on the spot we should fall into nothingness. What an extraordinary grace then, has God bestowed on us, to raise us to what we are by His indwelling in us! This thought moved St.Paul to say that we are God's offspring and St. Leo says: we were made sharers of the Divinity.(Chap. ii, 2)

Grace is a still more intimate and vivifying Presence:

> Having thus established His reign within us, we become according to St.Paul 409.temples of God: ``For you are the temple of the living God, as God saith: I will dwell in them, and walk among them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people''. Even our body, animated by the soul, becomes, according to St.Paul's expression (*Cor*, chap. vii, 17) the temple of the Holy Spirit: ``Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you and whom you have from God; and you are not your own?'' This is so, since the entire man, body and soul, is God's, since, according to St.Paul in the same Epistle (chap. iii, 16) it is the temple of God and of the Holy Spirit dwelling in it … We should be very careful not to profane this temple, much less destroy it, by driving God and His Holy Spirit from our hearts. (*Cor*., chap. iii, 17).

It is important that from the beginning of this exercise our powers be concentrated. De La Salle does not fail to say so with the clarity that we have come to expect of him and with all the vigor of his commonsense:

> When we apply ourselves to the presence of God…. it is important that our line of thought should be confined to the particular method chosen, and everything tend to the same end; for besides the fact that this system helps to train our mind and develop our judgment, it tends also to preserve our soul in a state of recollection, and enables us to spend a longer time in a more interior manner in the presence of God. While on the other hand, if we allow the mind to wander from one method to another, it loses itself in a multiplicity of reflections which are in no way related to one another, and thus remains in a kind of dissipation. (Chap. iii.)

But immediately thereafter he recalls that while reason has its place in mental prayer, we would be deluding ourselves concerning the principles and the effects of

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408 Trans.note: *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer*}}, by St.John Baptist de La Salle, pg. 2. Translated from the French edition of 1739; La Salle Bureau, 330 Riverside Drive, New York, 25, N.Y., 1960. The translator's name is not given. (In the quotations from this English translation of the ``Method'', the present translator has introduced alterations where he thought they were needed; he has done so Without giving notice of individual changes

409 *Cor*., II, chap. vi, 17. References to Epistles are those found in the 1739 edition

the spiritual life, if we failed to transcend the stage of interior discourse and remained at the level of unaided intellect, devoid of supernatural knowledge and love.

> These … ways of placing ourselves in the presence of God have for object to assist the soul, during meditation, to maintain itself for some time in the divine presence. These methods …give us a casual and superficial conception of the presence of God, depending as they do, on the work of arguments and a quantity of reflections which, with respect to a truth of faith, obscure the mind rather than enlightening it and close it rather than opening it … unless such arguments and reflections are founded upon and rooted in sentiments of faith. (Chap. iii.)

Ordinarily, a soul that is still attached to earthly things and seduced by appearances in the search for God will need these arguments and intellectual considerations as directives, guides and provisional or periodic structures. But the ultimate goal that one who loves the Sovereign Good exclusively may attain from the outset is God Himself grasped, so to speak, in a look, ``by simple attention''. Toward such a perception of the divine presence (and it must be clearly understood that we are not here talking about a sensible ``vision'') the efforts of the mystics tend, regardless of the ``school'' which, according to the historians, they head or champion.

St. De La Salle writes:

> When a soul has reached that degree of purity and detachment from the least sins, which enables it to enter at once into this disposition of simple attention to the presence of God, it makes for a shorter route and free from many obstacles \dots To attain this facility without delay, the soul must exercise a continual vigilance over itself, so as to detach itself from all natural ties; for God vouchsafes this grace to those souls alone who are exceedingly pure, or whom He wishes to purify Himself, by this means, as a special favor.(Chap. iii)

A comparison with a ``painting'' helps us understand that there is a sort of double synthesis in mystical ``attention'': a synthesis of the powers of the soul, and a synthesis of what the human being may, here below, glimpse of the divine splendors:

> A person… who has never technically studied painting, finds himself in the presence of one of the great masterpieces. He fails to perceive its excellence and perfection, as he knows neither what it consists in nor what constitutes its chief attraction in the eyes of the trained student. Consequently, he is obliged, if he wishes to acquire a knowledge of the beauties of this picture, to place himself in the hands of a clever painter, who will teach him by reasoning how to value the admirable traits of a masterpiece. As he teaches him, he makes him reflect on the points of his instruction bearing on the qualities of this picture. While, on the other hand the trained student, who has mastered the art of painting, finding himself in the presence of a beautiful picture, has no need to analyze or make frequent reflections to perceive its beauties, which are apparent to him from the first moment of his seeing it, with the result that, remaining in an attitude of simple attention, he perceives its beauty, and keeps a very long time considering its perfection without growing wearied, nor even thinking that he has been a long time looking at it; because the beauty of the painting grips his attention and procures a great deal of pleasure in contemplating it; so that the more he looks upon it, the more he finds it beautiful and pleasing to look upon and the more he discerns in it what is excellent and wonderful to human sensibilities. (Chap. iv)

These are the leading ideas of the book's prologue. St. La Salle then explains and comments upon each of the points of his method, multiplying definitions and analyses, and supplying examples relative to the various themes proposed to the man of mental prayer for his contemplation and his colloquy with God: meditations on the mysteries, maxims and virtues. Unable to enter into the details, we shall simply attempt to show how the Founder, while remaining within the limits set by Bérulle and Olier, interpreted the thought of his masters and introduced it into the spiritual legacy of the Brothers.

We know that the Bérullian (i.e.``the French'') School founded its mystical and ascetical teaching on the devotion to the Incarnate Word. Jesus, the Only Son of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Word made flesh, is the perfect ``Religious'',

the supreme worshipper, religion itself and humanity's living prayer. In Him and through Him, our world, of which He is the head, renders a worship to God that only a God-man can offer.[410]

To Jesus, then, we must

unite ourselves as to Him Who is, by His divinity, the foundation of our being, and, by His humanity, the bond of our being with God; the spirit of our spirit, the life of our life, the fullness of our capacity. We must be at first aware of our own deficient and imperfect condition; and our first movement must be to Jesus as to our fulfillment. In this quest for Jesus, in this adherence to Jesus, in this profound and continual dependence upon Jesus, is our life, our peace, our strength and our entire ability to operate; and never must we act except in union with Him, and drawing inspiration from Him, to think to serve and to act.[411]

Jean Jacques Olier, the marvelous and inimitable depositary of the teachings of Pierre Bérrulle and Charles Condren, transmitted their soul and their genius in the following prayer:

O My God! Let these praises, these songs, psalms and hymns that we shall sing in Thine honor be nothing but the expression of the mind of Jesus Christ; and let my tongue speak nothing concerning Thee but what the soul of my Savior says of Thee! Clinging then to Thy Spirit, O My Lord Jesus, Who art the life of our religion, I wish to offer to thy Father the respect and duty which are due Him, which Thou alone understand and Thou alone offer Him in Thy sanctuary. Annihilated, My God, within myself, who am a miserable and ignominious sinner, I adore Thy Son, the one and perfect Worshipper of Thy name, and with the purest part of my soul I unite myself to Thy Spirit in order to glorify Thee in Him.[412]

It would not be possible to find this exalted lyricism in De La Salle's writings. However, his thought reaches the same heights. His adoration and love are no less intense, his ``self-effacement'' no less complete. But the holy Founder prayed for his Brothers at the same time that he prayed for himself, and it seems to proceed at a measured pace, because it is also an explanation.

It is suitable … that we then make an act of union with our Lord, uniting ourselves to His interior dispositions, when He made mental prayer, begging Him to make mental prayer in us, and to offer our needs to the Father, considering us as belonging to Him, and as His own members, who neither have, nor can have a spiritual life, movement or action except in Him ….

This act of union may be made as follows: O most sweet Jesus...present my prayers and wants to Your Eternal Father. Grant that I may think of Him only in You so that I may obtain in You and by You what of myself I cannot procure, and that nothing may be refused me of what You shall be so good as to ask in me, since I know that, as You Yourself have said, You are always heard by the Eternal Father. Enter into me, I beseech You, as something that belongs to You, and animate me as one of Your members; grant that I may live in You and that You live in me, since I can do good only in so far as I shall be in You and You shall be in me, as You are the Author of all good. Finally, grant that my spiritual life may be supported and preserved by Your life in me, since as a branch wants sap unless it is united to the vine, so, O my lovable Jesus, my soul cannot have life, motion or action except in so far as it is united to You and shall be wholly one with you and in You. [413]

We see how closely De La Salle followed the inspired text of St. John's Gospel and St Paul's discourses in the Acts of the Apostles. He borrowed personally from the sacred sources in places where his guides had already preceded him.

But we are not unaware of what he owed them. And while his conversations with Roland and Barré could contribute to his growth in devotion to the Holy Child Jesus, it was Cardinal Bérulle, kneeling before the Crib, who, as a theologian, had earlier sounded the depths of the mystery. The

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410 Bremond, *op. cit.}*, Vol.III, pp. 61--3.

411 *Oeuvres de Bérulle*}, pg. 1181, in Bremond, *op. cit*, Vol. III, pg. 465

412Olier, *Journée chrétienne*}, Vol. I, pp. 65--9, in Bremond, *op. cit.*}, Vol. III, pg. 465

413 According to Bremond, Vol. III, pg. 517.

divine Word, unable to find anything “apart from death itself,” [414] more humbling, more “”base” or more “abject”, had chosen infancy. In doing so , the Word stooped to such a point “”that no sort of abasement seemed equal to it.”[415] These are austere reflections, indeed, but at the same time the charm of the Infant-God had its effectand not only were the hearts of the Carmelite, Catherine of Jesus, and her younger sister in the Congregation, Marguerite Beaune[416] as, in the distant past, the heart of St. Francis of Assisi) moved to tears, but the tougher constitutions of the great reformers of the 17th century. As Bremond writes: ``They found a child (*Invenerunt infantem*) and in his tiny hands they professed a devout humanism."[417] They bowed before Him like the Magi, and they saw Him as ``the Son of Man", the first born brother (in the plan of Creation), and the model of our race.

> ``Our Lord's infancy", Bremond writes in his Life of Père Renty, “teaches us self-effacement, docility toward God, silence and innocence without any concern for ourselves nor any claim on our part, but rather with the abandonment of a happy child” ..[418]

Compare these views with St.La Salle's in ``Other reflections on the act of faith in Our Lord by considering Him as Child of Man so that we might become Children of God":

> I believe, O My God, with all my heart, Eternal Word, true and only Son of God the Father, that Thou didst become a Child of Man, to merit for me the grace of becoming a child of God, Thy Father. It is the infinite greatness of love, Lord, which brought Thee to this excess of abasement and humility.``*Thou camest unto Thine own"* says Thine Evangelist, St.John (Chap. i), that is, into this world which is Thine, ``*but Thine own received Thee not"*. The Jews who were thy people and Thy servants failed to recognize Thee: they rejected Thee and refused to welcome Thee. But ``*Thou has give to all those who have received Thee the power of becoming children of God"*. The Jews did not receive Thee because of the poor and lowly condition in which Thou didst will to appear in this world. They were scandalized by Thine abject appearance. They were unable to understand that Thy wisdom and Thy love for us led Thee to assume our miseries so as to enrich us with the incalculable treasures of thy grace in this world, and of glory in the next. O the excessive goodness of my God: Thou hast humbled Thyself in this world, to lift me to Heaven; Thou hast made Thyself contemptible on earth to make me happy in Heaven. O the infinite love of the Eternal Son of God! Thou becamest my brother by becoming the Son of Man; so that Thou wert not ashamed (says Thine Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. i) to call us Thy brothers, saying to Thy Father: *I will declare Thy name to my brethern; in the midst of the church will I praise Thee: here am I, me and my children whom God has given me*. And, adds St.Paul, since these children have partaken of flesh and blood, he, also, in like manner hath been partaker of the same. Wherefore, it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest before God, in order to expiate the sins of His people; since having experienced temptation, He can help those who are tempted.
>
> How great is this happiness! How wonderful! How excellent my rank, and how elevated above any of those of this earth! Indeed, I can be eternally the Son of God and the Brother of God! What a dignity, what a privilege, what a blessing! Can we imagine it, O my soul? I owe all of this to Thee, O good and only Eternal son of God [419]

Thus, quoting the sacred texts, the author experiences at first a muffled emotion in his soul; and then, as it grows and finally bursts forth, the sentences

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414 Bremond *ibid*
415 *ibid*
416 See above, Part One, chap. vii, pg. 112
417 Bremond, Vol. III, pg. 523
418 According to Bremond, Vol. III, pg. 527
419 Explication de La seconde partie de la Méthode}, chap. i, pp. 701.

become shorter, lighter and the meditation ends effusively ``in a song of wonder and praise".[420.] John Baptist de La Salle overtakes his masters and sweeps his disciples up into the heights.

There he means to lead the souls of those who listen to him and to leave them there. Such was his clearly stated intention. He had warned us against mere verbalism. Go beyond the words which hinder us, or, which is worse, masquerade as enthusiasm! He specifies that

> the acts which have been given us as models were put together specially for the use of beginners in mental prayer who cannot produce them by themselves. They may select from them what they think suitable or what they believe they are able to use, or, if they cannot use any of them they will make others, on the model of those of which an idea has here been given, such as their mind and heart will be able to suggest to them. For it is not meant that they make a practice of using those that are here set forth, for if they did, their prayer would no longer be simple prayer of the heart, but would degenerate into vocal prayer, which would not have the same use as when it is produced in them by the Holy Spirit (Who must animate them to make mental prayer) out of the depths of the heart.[421]

Lantages recalled that it was ``not necessary to make a lot of reflections in the same mental prayer, nor all the acts suggested in the Method";

> that if one were usefully occupied in making some reflections or in producing some holy aspirations, it was not necessary to give them up on the pretext of passing on to others.[422]

This admonition was repeated in De La Salle's book; he ``suggests"

> condensing into a single act the interior sentiment of all the others, implicitly, that is, not through any distinct, actualized and formal acts, placing ourselves in the presence of God in a spirit of interior adoration, by a simple view of faith in His holy Presence, in His supreme greatness and infinite goodness …

He advises:

> not undertaking to make all the acts of the second part in the same meditation...but being concerned to form good resolutions or to renew those we have already …

But the essential recommendation is the following:

> When in the course of the exercise, we feel piously inclined to dwell on some sentiment or train of thought which we had not decided on beforehand, such as the love of God, a desire to express our confidence in Him for a particular favor, or if we feel drawn to linger on some word or passage from the Holy Scripture, we should follow this inclination … as far as it may please God to maintain our interest in the subject, this being a token of his approval, which is observed when we leave mental prayer with a renewed affection for doing our duty for the love of God and in order to please Him. [423]

Is this what is meant by ``affective" mental prayer? Of course, provided, however, the word is properly defined and not confused with ``sensible" or ``passive". As one of the modern commentators on St.Ignatius Loyola, Père Alexander Brou,[424] says, the Latin noun *affectus* and the Spanish verb *affectar* are quite imperfectly translated by the current expression ``affective prayer". *Affectus* refers to

> movements born in the will following the operations of the intellect. They occur when the soul tends toward an object perceived as its good. Such are the voluntary acts of the virtues of faith, hope, charity, adoration, wonder, praise, thanksgiving, self-oblation, confidence, confession, contrition, and compassion ...If the mental prayer is totally pervaded by them, to such an extent that the acts of the intellect give way nearly everywhere to these movements of the will, we are entering into affective mental prayer.[425]

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420 Bremond, Vol. III, pg. 125

421 Explication de la première partie de l'Oraison} chap. iii, pp. 61--2

422 According to Letourneau, *op. cit.*}, pg. 19.

423 *Explication de la première partie de l'Oraison*,pp. 140--1.

424 *Saint Ignace, maîitre d'Oraison*, by Alexander Brou, Paris, 1925.

425 *Ibid*. pg. 142.

These spiritual ``acts", this thrust, this ``cleaving" of the soul which wills what God wills, this immediate and courageous disposition for action (the necessary term of a well made mental prayer) have certainly the largest share in the Lasallian exercise, which does not come to a halt with imaginative constructions, and which reduces rational reflection to the briefest period of time. But what it requires of the will itself is not so much repeated efforts, numerous and learned activities to accomplish a series of objectives, as a decisive, unique step to adopt God's point of view, to actualize in oneself what Berullian asceticism calls a ``condition" - ``the condition of the Child Jesus, the condition of Jesus the Worshipper, the condition of Jesus the Priest and Victim.”[426]

It is appropriate, we believe, to interpret in this sense the passage in which St. La Salle explains how ``we may apply ourselves to a virtue, by simple attention". He asks us to remain

> in the presence of Our Lord, representing Him as teaching us the virtue by word and example, practicing it Himself, and in a sentiment of adoration before Him, without discourse or reasoning, but with a simple, respectful, affectionate, and the liveliest attention possible, remaining in this interior disposition, for a greater or less period of time, depending upon whether we are so disposed and attracted.

In a word (which is Père Tronson's) we become imbued with Jesus. And De La Salle concludes:

> The fruit and effect of this kind of mental prayer, when we undertake it in God's company, is that it attracts the soul gently and sweetly to the practice of the virtue; and that it leaves an imprint and a supernatural bent toward it, which empowers us to tend toward it ardently, to surmount courageously the difficulties and aversions that nature may find in it; and to embrace with affection the occasions which are offered to practice it … and in which we take pleasure with a great spiritual satisfaction.[427]

De La Salle would heartily agree with Bourdaloue that ``the great method of mental prayer...is to love God".[428] And he would add (in agreement with the Society of Jesus as well as with the Oratory and St. Sulpice) that this love of God must be inseparable from devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin. St. Ignatius had introduced into his *Exercises*} ``colloquies with Our Lady". The masters of St.Sulpice ended every mental prayer with an act of confidence in Mary. The corollary to devotion to the Incarnate Word in the ``French school" was devotion to the Mother of the Man-God. ``In speaking of you, Mary, we speak of Jesus", said Bérulle. ``We must see Jesus in Mary, as in the fulfillment of His love and complacence", wrote Olier. And ``numberless priests who, for three centuries, had received a Sulpician education" recited the prayer, *O Jesu, vivens in Maria, veni et vive in famulo tuo, in spiritu sanctitatis tuae* .[429]

Blessed Louis Marie Grignion Montfort, also a student of the Sulpicians, through whom he was placed in direct contact with Bérulle, elaborated the doctrine of the universal mediation of the Virgin Mother. His contemporary, John Baptist de La Salle, had similar ideas. But since he did not, like Grignion, have a special mission to spread them, he was restrained in his expression of them. In connection with ``the act of invocation of the saints", De La Salle writes that

> the Most Blessed Virgin must always be given precedence, even though she may not have been present at the mystery on which we are making our mental prayer, for she is our Mother,

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426 *Ibid.*}, pg. 170; Bremond, Vol. III, pp. 72--3

427 Continuation de l'Explication de la Méthode, pp. 99--100.

428 Quoted by Brou, *op. cit.*, pp. 149--50

429 Bremond,*op. cit.}*, Vol. III, pg. 98.}}

> our Advocate and our Mediatrix with her divine Son. Besides, we know that she loves us, has great power with God and is more desirous of our spiritual good than any and all the Saints.[430]

It is in the final gesture of mental prayer that we must glimpse the profound faith of the mystical theologian. After the acts ``of review, thanksgiving, and offering" of the third part, he prescribes the invocation to the Blessed Virgin: ``all that we have done, conceived and resolved" must be placed under the protection of Mary, ``that she may offer them to her dear Son, and that by this means we may obtain the necessary graces from Him." Then, either the *Sub tuum praesidium* or the quite beautiful and moving prayer, the *O Domina mea*,[431] so well known to the Jesuits, is recited:

> *vitam et finem vitae meae tibi committo; ut, per tuam sanctissimam intercessionem secundum tuam tuique Filii voluntatem. Amen*!} (Through the intercession and merits of Our Lady, may our life, our death and our actions be exactly as planned and directed by the will of the Mother and the Son. Amen

* * * *

It remains for us to speak of the two books of Meditations which have been in use among the Brothers of the Christian Schools since the Founder's time: *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* and *Meditations for the Sundays of the Year*. Read at the end of the day, they supply the themes and points of departure for the next day's personal meditation.

The support for their authenticity is the same as that for the *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer*. The earliest copies of these books date from the period following De La Salle's death.

The complete title of the first work as found in the Motherhouse Archives is as follows:

> *Meditations for the Time of Retreat for the use of all Persons Employed in the Education of Youth; and Especially for the Retreats made during Vacations by the Brothers of the Christian Schools*}, by John Baptist de La Salle, Doctor in Theology, Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools; at Rouen, Antoine Le Prévost, printer-bookseller, Rue St.Vivien. In a rectangular scroll are pictured the Child Jesus and St. Joseph with the words:``The Brothers of the Christian Schools" at the bottom.

On the reverse side of the first page there is the handwritten inscription:``To the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Chartres, 1735". The other side contains an engraving of a portrait of De La Salle, ``done after his death" [432] and encircled by a Gospel text: *Sinite parvulos venire ad me. Talium est enim regnum coelorum* (Matt. chap. xix.)

The publication is certainly prior to 1735, and perhaps to 1731. For we shall see that the publication of the *Meditations for Sundays* is more recent. But a copy of this second volume belonged to the Community in Nogent-le-Rotrou in 1731. There is reason to believe that the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* was printed, at the request of the Superior-general, Brother Timothy, shortly after the Bull of Approbation in 1725.

The Foreword states:

> Out of respect for the author, it was thought proper to leave the meditations just as they were, although they have been written more in the style of instructions, exhortations and regulations, than meditations; since they are without aspirations, affections or resolutions. But this will not be surprising when we recall that the pious author had done this intentionally, as well in the

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430 Explication de la seconde partie de la Méthode, pg. 88.

431 *Ibid.*, pg. 146

432 Du Phly, an artist in Rouen, painted this portrait, which represents the Founder vested in a chasuble and standing, with eyes closed and hands folded, before a crucifix. The engraving is by Crêpy

> meditations he wrote for Sundays and Feasts of the year; since, in writing them to instruct and exhort the Brothers, he had more in mind than to teach them how to form aspirations, affections, and colloquies, as these latter were supplied them elsewhere when he published a Method of the way in which they should make mental prayer; which taught them quite clearly to form aspirations, affections and resolutions by themselves, easily and effectively; for this holy man practiced the principle that the above acts, made from the abundance of the heart, are incomparably more valuable than when they are produced by means, and with the help, of those aspirations and affections which are found sometimes in the meditations of others, although he was far from condemning them

Logically, and, of course, factually, all of De La Salle's meditations follow the *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer*. The first volume that we have to examine, a rather brief work of 92 pages, in-octavo, seems to have been written, or at least begun, during the general retreat that followed the move to St.Yon in September of 1705. Brother Lucard suggests this hypothesis in his *Annals* 433 and there is nothing to contradict it: the moment was well chosen to recall to the Brothers the supernatural foundations of their educational vocation. The Institute at the moment had outdistanced its Parisian persecutors, become stable and had strengthened its recruitment. A little later, in a fresh upheaval, the Founder would be repudiated. It is true that in 1713 in Grenoble he had the leisure to revise several of his writings. But we do not think that the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* was one of them. Compared to the outline that Father Giry had adopted for a similar work for the use of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus,[434] De La Salle's ``Meditations'' are quite sketchy. Their style was looser than that of the writing that De La Salle was prepared to publish. There are frequent repetitions of words, interminable sentences and uncertain constructions. We are obviously dealing with notes that the Founder kept in a copybook and that he was expecting to develop into conferences.

Their moral and theological content is rich and thoroughly pervaded by the teaching of St.Paul. The sixteen meditations are paired, under eight headings, with the key idea of the odd numbered meditations resumed and more thoroughly examined in the even numbered meditations.

First of all, the author shows that the Christian Schools were established by Providence and that they are intended to procure the sanctification of souls. Then, we have, in order, the following series of analyses:

``Those who teach the young are cooperators with Jesus Christ'' in the salvation of children; in their work, they fulfill ``the functions of Guardian Angels''; their ministry is one ``of the most necessary in the Church''; they must display great zeal; they have ``the obligation to reprove and correct the faults committed by those whom they teach'', and for whom they are ``responsible''; they must ``give an account to God'' of the way they fulfill their task; a great reward awaits them.

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433 Vol. I, pp. 179--80.

434 ``Meditations for the Teaching Sisters of the Charity Schools of the Holy Child Jesus of the Institute of the late Père Barré, Minime, principally for the time of their retreats and spiritual exercises, concerning the principal duties of their state'', by the Rev. P..Giry, ex-provincial of the Minimes and Director of that Institute, was published in 1687 in Paris, at Peter Launay's, in a small, in-12, volume of 96 pages, of which 18 were filled with school prayers. There are ten meditations. They deal with the ``end'' of the teaching profession, the work of the school-mistresses and its ``excellence'', the principal functions of teachers, of the good example they must give, of their ``modesty and gravity'', of the purity of intention which should direct their teaching, and finally, of the ``reward in store'' for those who accomplish their duties. De La Salle was inspired by this plan and he borrowed some of Father Giry's general ideas and some of his quotations from Scripture. However, he clearly distinguishes himself from his model, and, by the vigor and clarity of his thought, he is quitesuperior to him.

St.La Salle offers to his followers' reflection the familiar theme of Christian education: the eminent dignity of the school teacher's profession, to which is delegated a large part of paternal authority, and (by way of instruction in the Gospel and the catechism) something also of the mission of the Apostles, bishops and priests. The Christian teacher speaks in the name of God; he is the ``ambassador'' and the ``minister'' of Jesus Christ; he is the ``visible angel'', who releases ``the child's spirit'' from matter, who accompanies this feeble creature, incapable by itself of finding its way, over earthly paths, and who preserves it from ``serious falls''. He really collaborates with the Redemption, in the sense which St.Paul suggests:

> Although Jesus Christ has died for everyone, the benefit of his death is not realized by everyone because all do not make the effort to accept it. Each of us must realize redemption personally by a union of our will with the will of God. For while the death of Jesus Christ was more than sufficient to wipe out all of our sins and be complete reparation, for God has reconciled us to Himself in Jesus Christ; still since the grace that He merited for us does not bring about our salvation unless our will is brought into union with His; it is up to each of us to realize and complete the work of our own redemption.[435]

Could a collaborator with Christ be a coarse man, with a troubled conscience and a mind limited to earthly horizons? Rather, he needs an intense spiritual life and a knowledge of heavenly things. De La Salle likens him to the Angels whom Jacob, in the dream, saw ascending and descending the mysterious ladder.

> It is your duty to go up to God every day by mental prayer to learn from Him all that you must teach your children, and then come down to them by accommodating yourself to their level in order to teach them what God has communicated to you for them… [436]

In mental prayer and in his reading the teacher will learn ``at their source the truths and the holy maxims'' he wishes to teach.[437] He will open his hands abundantly, but deliberately, without fear of losing anything. Young people are given nothing but simple food, discreetly shared and easily assimilable. Teachers must be careful not to mix the word of God with human vanity, which would deprive it of all savor and efficacy. We should avoid ``using clever words, lest the cross of Christ, source of our sanctification, become void of meaning'', and that what we say ``produce (no) fruit'' in minds and hearts.[438]

The school must breathe abundantly of ``the Christian spirit''. The teacher would be creating obstacles if he did not teach ``the practical truths of faith and the maxims of the Gospel with at least as much care as the truths of pure speculation'', or if he failed to make his conduct conform to his teaching.

In order for his words to be ``spirit and life'' to his pupils, they must be ``produced by the Spirit of God living in (him)''.[439] An ardent zeal is indispensable:

> God so loved the world that he gave His only Son that whoever believes in him may not die, but have eternal life. See what God and Jesus Christ have done to restore souls to grace … What must you not do for them in your ministry.[440.]

But what is the value of this zeal without example?

> St. Paul, speaking to the Philippians, after teaching them different maxims, adds, ``Act according to these maxims and be imitators of me, taking as your guide those who follow the example I have given; live according to what I have taught you, what you have heard me say, what you have seen me do ….

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435 *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*}, Third Meditation, 1st pt. Translated by Brother Augustine Loes, F.S.C., St.Mary's College Press, Winona, Minn., 1975.
436 *Op. cit*. Sixth Med., 1st pt., *Ed.* cit.}, pg. 62.
437 *Ibid.*}, Eighth Med., 1st pt., *Ed. cit*. pg. 71
438 *Ibid.* First Med., 3rd pt.,*Ed. cit.*, pg. 49.
439 *Ibid.*, Fourth Med., 3rd pt., *Ed. cit.*}, pg. 58
440 *Ibid*. Ninth Med., 3rd pt.,*Ed. cit.}*, pg. 76

> This is also the way Our Lord acted, of whom it is said that He began to do and then to teach...Example makes a much greater impression on the mind and heart than words. This is especially true of children, since they do not yet have sufficient capacity for reflection, and ordinarily model themselves on the example of their teachers.[441]

It is not enough to enlighten minds through the revealed truth and the divine will; besides this, it is important ``to provide them with the means to do good", going to the extent of giving your very life". Let the Brothers be very careful to put their pupils ``in the same disposition which St. Paul tried to realize with the Ephesians": ``restraining evil inclinations", they will prevent them from ``saddening the Holy Spirit"; they will teach them to be ``kind" and ``to have compassion for one another, and be ``mutually forgiving"; they will turn them away from lying.[442]

> See to it that they always speak the truth and that when they want to affirm something they limit themselves to saying that it is so or it is not so. Help them understand that they will be believed more readily when they use few words than when they swear great oaths, because people will consider that it is in a Christian spirit that they do not use more words.

Of course, they will also be inspired with ``a great disgust for impurity…. Stealing…. disobedience, (and) lack of respect for their parents".[443] Teachers will pay ``very special attention that (their pupils) receive the Sacraments"; they will watch ``that they go to confession often, after learning to do this properly"; they will dispose them ``to receive their First Communion thereafter in order to preserve the grace they received the first time they performed this action.[444]

One cannot, without assuming a heavy and terrifying responsibility, refuse to punish pupils. But the ``manner of reproving and correcting" is one of the principal points in the art of education:

> Man, including children, is endowed with reason and must not be corrected like a beast, but like reasonable persons …Also, since they are Christians, they must be disposed to accept the reproof or correction in a way that is pleasing to God, as remedy for their fault

When a correction is administered with passion and without having God in view, it serves only to turn the pupil against his teacher and to arouse in him feelings of revenge and ill will, which sometimes last for a long time; because effects are generally related and conformed to the causes which produce them.[445]

A teacher's examination of conscience will, then, bear especially on the duties of his profession.

> You must be convinced of this: that God will begin by making you give an account of (your pupils') souls before asking you to give an account of your own.

Even spiritual exercises ``that are organized for your own sanctification", you will ``perform for the intention of the souls entrusted to you,

> and in doing this you will draw on your pupils the graces needed … for their salvation, and assuring you that if you act in this way, God Himself will take responsibility for yours.[446]

It is for you to bring your spiritual children ``to the maturity of perfect human beings and to the fullness of Jesus Christ".[447]

``To reward so great a good work and a service which he regards so highly, God" will give you ``an abundance of grace, a greater facility for accomplishing the

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441 *Ibid*. Tenth Med., 3rd pt.,*Ed. c*it., pg. 80
442 *Ibid.* Sixth Med., 2nd\& 3rd pts.,*Ed cit.*} pp.63--4
443*Ibid.*, Tenth Med., 1st \& 2nd pts., *Ed. cit*. pp. 78--9.
444 *Ibid*.Eighth Med.,2nd pt.*Ed. cit*., pp. 71--2.
445 *Ibid.* Twelfth Med., 1st\& 3rd pts., *Ed. cit*. pp. 85--6; 87--8
446 *Ibid.* Thirteenth Med., 2nd pt.*Ed. cit*.pp. 90--1.
447 *Loc. cit.*}, 3rd pt., *Ed. cit*., pg. 91

conversion of hearts", and ``the consolation" of seeing ``religion and piety increased among the faithful, especially among the working class and the poor".

> It is in this spirit that St. Paul writes to the Corinthians … that he has begotten them in Christ Jesus … Oh, what glory is yours to have such a likeness to this vessel of election! Say, then, …as he does, that the greatest cause of your consolation in this life is to announce the Gospel free of charge, without having it cost anything to those who hear it[448.]

And, ``on the dayof judgment" your pupils' happiness will increase your own. ``As the Angel foretold it to the Prophet Daniel, those who instruct many in Christian justice will shine like stars for all eternity".

> O, what a thrill of joy you will get when you hear the voices of those whom you have led almost by the hand into heaven, who will be pupils saying to you the same thing said by the girl delivered of a devil by St.Paul: ``These men are servants of the Most High!"

The heavens will ring with these blessed children's songs of thanksgiving.

This, in summary, is the book in which has been identified with certainty many passages that echo the teachings found in the *Parochial School*, Charles Demia's *Remonstrances*, Nicolas Roland's *Advice* and Père Barré's *Maxims*, but amplified by the profound and powerful overtones of the teaching of the Apostle Paul and accompanied by the harmonics of the saintly man who was deeply moved as he wrote.

But the Institute possesses a much larger work, also written with its members in mind, but more comprehensive and much broader in scope. This is the *Meditations for Sundays with the Gospels for Sundays*, followed by *Meditations on the Principal Feasts*. (The latter is not referred to in the title of the book.)

Brother Timothy had this volume published in Rouen, at Jean Baptist Machuel's, a shop not far from the Cathedral, on Rue Damiette, where, in 1733, Blain's biography of the Founder would be published. The date of the meditations is nowhere to be found in Machuel's edition. But one of the very oldest copies existing in the Motherhouse Archives includes within the lines of the title the following handwritten message: ``To the Brothers of Nogent-le-Rotrou, 1731". The Foreword reveals in a relatively precise way the book's composition and the temporal priority of the Le Prévost edition of the Meditations analyzed above.

> The warm welcome accorded the *Meditations for Retreat*, written by the late M. de La Salle, when tthey were sent to the various houses of the Institute; the holy eagerness with which all the Brothers listened to them in the following retreat, that they might be spiritually nourished; as well as the urgent request of several of our Brothers, has led us to work more zealously in the matter of publishing the Meditations that the holy priest composed for Sundays and Feasts throughout the year, and which will be found in the two parts of this volume, in order that they may the more easily be spread among the houses of the Society, and produce the happy fruit which the holy man proposed when he realized this work in the last years of his life, and to which he gave a large part of his time….

The title mentions the author's name; and, as in the preceding *Meditations*, the volume includes an engraving of Du Phly's portrait. In a space, below a scroll on which is written a list of the Founder's accomplishments---doctor in theology, former Canon, etc.---there is a brief biography of ``Messire Jean-Baptiste de La Salle":

> Who excelled in the practice of the religious and Christian virtues, especially in charity and zeal for the instruction of youth, particularly the poor; lived in total abandonment to Providence for the forty years he lived with the Brothers of his Institute: in his sufferings and afflictions, it was his custom to say: ``God be blessed". He died in Rouen, on Good Friday of 1719, aged sixty-eight years.

Thus, the evidence for the book's authenticity are clustered at the beginning of the work.

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448 *Op. cit.*, Fifteenth Med., 1st, 2nd \& 3rd pts., *Ed. cit.*, pp. 97—100

68. ibid., sixteenth meditation., 2nd & 3rd points., Ed.cit., pp.102-4

There are seventy-seven meditations ``for Sundays''. To thefifty-three Sundays of the year, De La Salle added Ash Wednesday,the six days of Holy Week, Easter Monday and Tuesday, and Monday and Tuesday of Rogation Days, the Vigil and the Feast of theAscension, the Vigil of, and the Monday and Tuesday after Pentecost, the Feast of Corpus Christi and its Octave, along with the following Friday.449 The great feasts that recur on fixed dates, especially Christmas and All Saints, and the feasts of the Blessed Virgin, are joined to the feasts of the principal saints venerated in France in the one hundred and fourteen meditations in the second part of this volume. It was thus that the entire cycle was complete, and the Brothers, who did not have the satisfaction of the solemn recitation of the divine office, nevertheless fed their daily religious devotion with the indispensable and irreplaceable food that the Church offers the faithful.

But we must realize that the Gospels for the fifty-three Sundays are the only liturgical texts introduced extensively into the work; and that, further, the commentary supplied by the author does not attempt to explore all the meanings of the sacred texts and extract their essence. The meditations devoted to the feasts which are not, or are only coincidentally, Sundays do not have a strict relation to the Office of the day. Here, again, De La Salle essentially wanted to do nothing more than to educate the Brothers on their duties as religious and as school teachers. He turned to the Gospel for a theme that he could freely paraphrase, for a point of departure whence would emerge a development appropriate to the special obligations and ordinary preoccupations of the Brothers.

Thus, Christ's eulogy of John the Baptist, on the second Sunday in Advent, is the occasion for the following exhortation:

> You must prepare your hearts and the hearts of those you have been commissioned to instruct to accept Our Lord and His holy maxims.

John the Baptist's reply to the people sent by the Jews, in the gospel for the Third Sunday in Advent, draws an ``educational'' comment:

> Those who teach others are only the voice which prepares hearts and it belongs to God Himself to dispose those hearts to receive His grace

For the six Sundays ``After the Epiphany'', and for Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima Sundays, texts selected from St. Luke, St. John and St. Matthew speak to us of the boyhood of Jesus, the marriage feast at Cana, the cure of the lepers, the cure of the Centurion's servant, the calming of the storm, the blind man in Jericho, and they contain parables about the good grain and the tares, the mustard seed, the leaven, the workers in the vineyard and the sower; but the corresponding nine meditations go to compose a genuine treatise ``On Obedience'', the faith which must be evident in obedience, the fidelity which must present in it in spite of temptations, the excellence and merit of obedience, the effects which this virtue produces, ``the necessity that persons consecrated to God have to be trained in its practice'', the three kinds of disobedience, and ``the three sorts of persons who obey without having the merit of blind obedience''.

By way of example, we shall quote the commentary on the Gospel account of ``Jesus found in the Temple'' (First Sunday after the Epiphany). it is entirely based upon St.Luke's words: *et erat subditus illis* (and he was subject to them)

> I. ….It was by submission and obedience that Jesus prepared Himself for the great work of man's redemption, and salvation of souls; because he knew that no means were more useful or certain for achieving this purpose than a long preparation by the practice of a humble and

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449 There are no meditations on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which feast was celebrated in the Communities of St.John Eudes after 1672, and among the Visitandines after 1689; See H. Bremond, *op. cit*., Vol. III, pp. 586--7 and pp. 639--40, along with the note

> submissive life. It was for this reason that in the early Church, and especially in the East, it was ordinarily those who had lived long under the yoke of obedience who were chosen to be bishops.
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> II…. On entering this religious house, our first aim should have been to obey those who direct it, for, as St.Bonaventure remarks, obedience is the very foundation of a community, and without it, it will fall into ruin. St.Theresa, also, very appropriately says that a community cannot continue without obedience, and does not even deserve the name of community if this virtue is not observed, even were all the other virtues most excellently practiced, as among the cenobites of old, who, according to Cassian, were judged by the Fathers of the Desert to form a kind of monstrosity rather than a community, since they did not live under obedience …
>
> Reason itself teaches us the necessity of obedience in a religious society, for it is this virtue which establishes order, and maintains union, peace and tranquility among the members….
>
> III. ….St.Thomas teaches that each state has a grace which is peculiar to it, and therefore necessary for the sanctification and salvation of those who are in it. This grace, for each of you, is the grace of obedience, for obedience should be the distinctive characteristic of persons living in community, distinguishing them from people in the world who enjoy their full liberty. … And in order to make it clear that it is precisely this renunciation which sanctifies us, St.Bernard points out that this is what Our Lord Himself, in the Gospel, proposes as the first means to perfection, namely, to renounce yourself.
>
> …Hence you should apply to yourself these words of Pope St. Gregory, in his *Dialogues* that the first and principal virtue we make profession of is obedience, for this is the source of all the others, and the means of your sanctification.

In these lines we find the dialectical style of the other writings, the tightly woven context, the precise but unspectacular vocabulary and the quietly rigorous conclusions of the logical thinker. The large number of references may have been remarked: there are as many as six in the last two points of the meditation just quoted. This practice of our ancestors seems pedantic and to have burdened their style in a singular way, as well as to slow the pace of their thought. With them (and with De La Salle the practice was conscious and completely sincere) it represented an attitude of humility and docility: only the heretic promotes a personal opinion; the orthodox believer means only to be a disciple of the Doctors of the Church, the instrument of Tradition.

The language becomes somewhat lighter, but without any additional color, as the subject of the meditation lends itself to psychological observations or to extremely concrete recommendations. In the crystal clarity of a discussion on the Good Shepherd (Second Sunday after Easter) the Founder's personal feelings stand revealed. The Good Shepherd knows each of his sheep ``individually'':

> This is also one of the essential qualities of those who (are) employed in the instruction of children … Some require mildness, while others need to be directed with firmness. Some require patience; others need to be goaded on. It is necessary to punish and reprimand some, in order to correct their defects; others need to be continually watched lest they be lost….
>
> In their turn, the sheep will know the shepherd, if he is very virtuous, so as to be an example, and manifests great gentleness for souls … so that anything which might be capable of injuring or wounding them will call for his attention.

Thus, the sheep will love their shepherd and be delighted in his company, since they will find therein ``their rest and comfort''.

They will hear his voice, if he gives them ``instructions suited to their capacity'', clear explanations in a simple language.

> You must …candidly point out their defects, suggest the means whereby they may correct themselves, reveal the virtues befitting them, enable them to see the advantage of such virtues, and inspire them with a great horror for sin, and with an aversion for bad company

No matter how austere, De La Salle's teaching was entirely inspired by the love of Christ. And his stalwart orthodoxy set him apart from the religious casualties of his era, protected him from a sort of decadence and has made him accessible to, and valuable for, the piety of our own times. This observation is particularly applicable to the eight meditations for the Octave of the Feast of Corpus Christi, which justify the authoritative judgment of Père Tesnière, when he speaks of the ``Eucharistic mission of St. John Baptist de La Salle".[450]

In his commentary on the Gospel account of the Presentation in the Temple (for the Sunday within the Octave of Christmas), the Founder states his mind about Jansenism without beating around the bush. Adopting as his text the prophesy of Simeon,`This child will be a sign of contradiction", he observes:

> There were many, in fact, who contradicted Him during His life, but there are still many among Christians who contradict His teachings and His maxims every day. There are some, in fact, who have very little respect for the decisions of the Church, who pretend to be able to argue about Predestination and Grace, subjects regarding which, those who are not learned, should never say a word because they are above their comprehension. Should anyone question them regarding such topics, they should only answer in a general way, that they believe what the Church believes

Having fixed this position for his followers concerning Grace, De La Salle goes on the offensive against the most serious danger that he believed threatened Catholic consciences – the obstacles raised by the Jansenists concerning Holy Communion. Under Jansenist influence, many priests discouraged the faithful from, and many Christians did not themselves dare approach, the Eucharist, which had become the exclusive ``recompense" of the better Christians, not to mention the perfect and the obviously``predestined". We are aware of how this narrow, ``elitist" concept, whose origin was so suspect, had for two centuriesburdened the souls of the French people and of the role it played in diluting the faith of the French nation. It is a pity that passages contained in the Founder's writing on this topic were too little known to produce the desired reaction.

For the Friday within the Octave of Corpus Christi he writes:

> Jesus Christ in the Eucharist is Bread for our nourishment. How happy is man to be able to partake of such a food, and that as often as he wishes! So powerful is this sustenance that he finds therein all the spiritual strength of which he stands in need ….Is it possible that after these assurances on the part of Our Lord Himself that we shall have eternal life, if we eat this Bread, you should be unwilling to do so, or that you should wish to do so only rarely? ….

The position is defended in its entirety in the meditation for the Feast of the Octave of Corpus Christi. It is entitled, significantly enough,``Concerning Frequent Communion", the same title that Antoine Arnauld had once chosen to explain the Jansenist position on this subject.

> 1. The first Christians were wont to receive Holy Communion daily, and this practice was long maintained in the Church. Those who assisted at holy Mass, especially, never neglected to receive. Several Fathers of the Church have shown that this practice is in keeping with the intention of Jesus Christ in instituting the Holy Eucharist. They quote the words of the Lord's Prayer, ``Our daily bread", and say that they apply to the Body of Jesus Christ which we receive in Holy Communion, and which should be regarded as the bread with which we are daily to nourish our soul. Indeed, our soul stands in need of nourishment as much as our body, for failing this, it cannot maintain itself in piety

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450 *Un antagoniste du Jansénisme ou la Mission eucharistique de saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*}, eulogy delivered by Father Tesnière, Superior-general of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament and published on the 15th May 1906 as one of the ``Circulars" of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (no. 142) by the Most Honored Brother Gabriel-Marie.

> II. Holy Communion produces such admirable effects and procures such benefits to the soul that you should feel greatly encouraged to receive it frequently. This divine sacrament, says St.Bernard ….diminishes the affection we might entertain for lesser faults and prevents our consenting when we are tempted to commit graver sins.
>
> III. St. John Chrysostom attributes to Holy Communion yet another effect, which is beyond all that we can conceive, and which confers on man the highest dignity. By this sacrament we become one body with Him; the body of Jesus Christ Himself. As many grains of wheat become one and the same bread, he says, so that no difference can be seen between them, food in like manner has this effect, that it produces so intimate a union that it becomes substantially identical with the body which consumes it. Even so Jesus Christ unites Himself to you in Holy Communion in order to transform you into Himself, so that you thus form but one heart and soul with Him...How fortunate you should esteem yourself to be in the religious state, wherein Holy Communion is frequently received, and wherein you can thus remain united to Jesus Christ so as to make but one with Him, possess His spirit, and do all your actions through Him!

The eighth meditation of this great Eucharistic week---the one for ``Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi" – combats the ``arguments that are used as pretexts by many for not receiving Communion often":

> I….Some say that they fear to commit a sacrilege. They do well so to fear. But to do so they must receive Communion in mortal sin. Is it possible that you should be in such a state? Others say that they are not worthy to communicate so often. They must not expect that they will ever be worthy. All who approach the Holy Table, no matter who they are, declare themselves unworthy before receiving. Others allege that they are so full of defects that they do not dare to go to Holy Communion often. If you wait till your are free from defects before going to Holy Communion, you will never go in your whole life. The fruit of frequent Communion is precisely to prevent you from falling into graver faults than those you already commit, and this is what should induce you to persist in this salutary practice.
>
> II. … But, you may say with others, this sacrament, which contains the essence of holiness exacts great sanctity of those who receive it frequently. To reason in this way is to mistake the end and purpose of this sacrament for what is merely the preparation. We communicate, not because we are already holy, but because we wish to become so.
>
> III. … Is it not to be feared that frequent Communion will lead to mere habit? Even if it did, is the habit bad, do you think? Should we not also apply the same argument to hearing Mass daily, since this, too, might become a habit? … And even were you to be troubled on account of your sins, provided these are not mortal, you may be sure that if you receive Communion through submission, and beseech God to take away the defects which are in you, your Communion will be agreeable to God, by reason of your obedience, and will draw down on you many graces.

There are few of De La Salle's meditations in which the dialectic is as sharp and insistent. There are still other passages that deserve to be cited, such as in Part One, the paragraphs concerning ``spiritual consolations", in relation to the Gospel account of the Transfiguration (Second Sunday in Lent), on the ``Kingship of Christ"(Palm Sunday), on Prayer (Fifth Sunday after Easter, Rogation Days and the Vigil of the Ascension), and, in Part Two, De la Salle's profession of faith in the Immaculate Conception (``Since God destined the Most Blessed Virgin from all eternity to be the Mother of His Son, He so formed her both in soul and body that she might be worthy of containing Him in her womb \dots"), and those sensitive and penetrating ascetical ``lives of the saints", such as for example, the analyses of the virtues of St. Genevieve, St. Francis de Sales, St. Bruno, and St. Peter of Alcantara, etc.

A volume published in 1922 under the supervision of the Superior-general, Brother Imier of Jesus,[451] combines the *Meditations for Sundays and Feasts* with the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, in which corrections of substance and form have been accomplished with great skill and a great deal of respect. This work can help those who seek to become familiar with the thought of the Founder and to nourish their devotion. But it is obviously not a critical edition. And we have written nothing without reference to the earliest copies in the Archives.

CHAPTER THREE

The Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools

It is quite easy to imagine that the *Collectio*n, the *Method of Mental Prayer* and the *Meditations* might not have been written if the Founder of the Christian Brothers had not from the first formulated the principles and established (at least as guidelines) the laws under which his followers were to live. This body of law or ``Rule'' was the foundation of his entire work. But it wasn't the outcome of a day's work. Rather, it was elaborated and reenforced over the forty years during which De La Salle had to complete his mission. It was the product of his experience and it inspired his activities. Everywhere, then, we have had intimations of it, encountered it, and pointed it out. And now we must focus upon it and try to understand it.

The biographers have written that the Rule was a topic of discussion from the very beginning of the Institute, in conversations between the Founder and the young men who formed part of the Community in Rheims. Both Blain and Maillefer date the first draft from the days at Vaugirard, and the months which followed the taking of perpetual vows by the Founder and ``the Twelve''[452]The schedule and the exercises that the young Canon at first imposed upon himself, and made the `house rules', were no longer a novelty to anybody. They had survived the test of daily life. To commit them to writing would mean nothing more than to put the finishing touches on them, facilitate their observance, and start the endless process of their final harmonization. It was a procedure that John Baptist de La Salle's orderliness and practical wisdom - a Rule soundly fitted to its foundations - perhaps provisional in some of its details, leaving room for additions and adaptations, but which totally captivated the allegiance of those who had been freely introduced to it. Assembled at Vaugirard for the District retreat, the Brothers did not have to draw up the rules themselves; the text was presented to them by the Superior, who, according to Maillefer, had previously consulted with the heads of three religious communities of women. Blain states that the Brothers ``received the Rule with respect and submission, and unanimously approved all of its articles''.[453]

There is nothing in the traditional account that cannot be squared with our documents. We have to deal with four documents of the highest quality. The one that seems to be the earliest is preserved in the City Library of Avignon (Calvet Museum) and is listed in that institution's catalogue as number 747. It is a notebook of 83 pages bound in parchment. It is called *Common Rules of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*}; and on the first and last pages, in the same ink as the text proper, it bears the date, ``1705'', preceded by the number ``23'' and the letter ``S'' (September?).[454]

Then, there is a notebook of sixteen pages in the Motherhouse Archives, *The Daily Practice of the Regulations*}. On the last page, at the beginning of a flourish of the pen, appears the following exact date: ``This 9th (day) of March 1713''. The paper, the writing and the penmanship belong to the beginning of the 18th century.

The third document, which, like the preceding, is the property of the Motherhouse, and which, kept under glass, is the object of religious veneration, is the only known copy of the Rule revised before the Founder's death. The bottom of each

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452 See Guibert, pp. 266--8

453 Blain, Vol. I, pg. 340.

454 The Motherhouse Archives has a copy written word for word and page by page by Brother Saturninus of Avignon in 1898. It includes two photographed pages of the original manuscript

page bears the initials ``J.T.F.B." (Joseph Truffet, Brother Barthélemy, the mark of its integral authenticity. It concludes with the following statement:

> We, the undersigned, Superior of the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, send to our dear Brothers in the City of Troyes the rules transcribed above, containing thirty-two chapters, for the renovation of vows, initialed by us, according as they have been determined and decided, whether by ourselves or by the Brothers Director of our Society in our assembly held in our house at St.Yon, Faubourg of Rouen, in the month of May, in the year one-thousand-seven-hundred-and-seventeen, to be practiced and observed by our Brothers; in consequence whereof we declare null all other rules which may be found in our houses; in faith whereof we have signed. Done in our house at St.Yon, this thirty-first day of October, one-thousand-seven-hundred-and-eighteen. *Signed* Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy.[455]

Finally, as a sort of appendix to this important document, there is a thin notebook of ten pages (seven of which are filled on both sides and bear the initials ``J.T.F.B.") which contain the *Rule of the Brother Director of a House of the Institute,* accompanied by the following declaration:

> We, the undersigned, Superior of the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, send to our very dear Brother Jean-Francois, Director of the house of our Brothers of the Christian Schools of St.Denis, the rule of the Director of the Brothers of our Society, transcribed above, in two chapters, one concerning the habits and the other concerning the food of the Brothers of our Society, the whole contained in seven pages, each initialled by us; the rule and the chapters according as they were determined and decided upon whether by ourselves or by the Brothers Director of our Society in our assembly held in our house at St. Yon, Faubourg of Rouen, in the month of May in the year 1717, to be practiced and observed by our Brother and his successors in the position of Director. In faith whereof we have signed. Done at our house at St.Yon, this third day of October, 1718. *Signed*} Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy

None of these documents bear the signature of the Founder; which is obvious in the case of the latter two, which are as Brother Barthélemy states, only ``copies". From an examination of the other two, we conclude immediately that they, too, are copies, but done rather carefully, and intended for the use of some one of the communities. No doubt the lost originals came from the pen of the Founder. However, that position would have to be advanced rather cautiously as regards the Rule of 1718. The reason is that if everything the documents that we now have to study is authentically of the Founder, we would not know how to attribute to the author, not just the copyists' oversights, but certain turns of phrase, expressions, and mistakes. Of course, while the Rule contains some beautiful passages, overall it is not a literary work. In fact, its form contributes very little to such a goal. As to its substance, it very clearly reveals a strong, lucid, and outstanding personality, although not a dominating one. On the one hand, it seeks to define a collective body of thought, and to realize the deepest desire of an association of men; but, on the other hand, it bows and gives way before the Spirit of God.

* * * *

The Rule, which, for the sake of convenience, we shall call ``the Rule of 1705", gives us the initial conditions of the legislation in force in the Brothers' communities. We are inclined to regard it as, on the whole, a copy of an original regulation that was in use at Vaugirard.[456] By 1689 (as the *Memoir on the Habit* suggests) the purpose and the essential characteristics of the Institute were clearly

455 At the request of (the M.H.) Brother Irlide 150 lithographed copies of the Common Rule of 1718 were printed by Brother Alarin of Mary under the direction of the Institute Archivist, Brother Asclepiades.

456 However, it is quite possible that the paragraphs regarding the ``exercises" were revised between 1695 and 1705

defined. The Founder had little more to do than to develop the premises, and draw the consequences from the principles that had been laid down. This seems to be what he had been doing about the year 1695. At that time, the instructions he had given his followers could only have been, essentially, something that squared with the views he had conveyed to Père Baudrand, the pastor of St.Sulpice. As new houses were opened in the provinces, i.e., starting in 1699, Directors of communities and schools included with their modest personal possesions (along with the Rosary and the New Testament) a copy of these fundamental regulations, just as they carried with them the many notes and outlines of the methods of teaching school. Or, perhaps, through a confrere who was better supplied, they had a copy sent to them, which they scrupulously transcribed. The Avignon document can only be such a version, copied on site, after the school had been established.[457] It is divided into some twenty unnumbered chapters; it contains no table of contents; and it wasn't paginated (in red ink) until the 19th century.

It was more than a regulation. It was primarily a declaration which, in the same sense as the *Memoir on the Habit*, defined the end of the new society. It was also a handbook of spirituality, a treatise on the religious and professional obligations of Christian Brothers. To these matters were added measures of a practical nature and decisions concerning schedules.

The prefatory topic is entitled: ``The end and the necessity of this Institute'':

> The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is a Society in which profession is made of keeping tuition-free schools.
>
> Those who belong to this Institute shall be called Brothers and they shall never permit themselves to be called otherwise.
>
> They cannot be priests nor aspire to the ecclesiastical state, nor even sing or wear the surplice or exercise any function, in church.
>
> The end of this Institute is to give a Christian education to children and it is for this purpose that the Brothers keep schools, that having the children under their care from morning until evening, they may teach them to lead good lives, by instructing them in the mysteries of our holy religion and by inspiring them with Christian maxims, and thus give them a suitable education.
>
> The necessity of this Institute is very great because the working class and the poor being usually little instructed, and being occupied all day in gaining a livelihood for themselves and their families, cannot give their children the needed instruction, or a suitable Christian education. There must then be people who substitute for fathers and mothers in order to instruct children, to the extent that they need it, in the mysteries of Religion and the principles of Christian life.
>
> It was to procure this advantage for the children of the working class and the poor, that the Christian Schools were established.
>
> All the disorders, especially among the working class and the poor, usually arise from their having been, in childhood, left to themselves and badly brought up. It is almost impossible to repair this evil at a more advanced age, because the bad habits they have acquired are overcome with great difficulty, and scarcely ever entirely, no matter what care may be taken to destroy them, whether by frequent instructions or the use of the Sacraments.
>
> As the principal fruit to be expected from the institution of the Christian Schools is to forestall these disorders and prevent their evil consequences, it is easy to conceive the importance of such schools and their necessity

457 This is exactly what had happened in Avignon in 1705.

This, in a way, is the definition of the work viewed from the outside. To know it in depth we must enter into its spirit. Its inner face, the soul of its life, the Founder reveals in what follows:

> The spirit of this Institute is first, a spirit of faith, which should induce those who compose it not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith, not to do anything but in view of God, and to attribute all to God, always entering into these sentiments of Job: “The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; as it has pleased the Lord, so is it done,' and into other similar sentiments so often expressed in Holy Scripture and uttered by the Patriarchs of old.
>
> In order to live in this spirit, the Brothers of this Society shall have a most profound respect for the Holy Scriptures; and, in proof thereof, they shall always carry the New Testament about them and pass no day without reading some of it through a sentiment of faith, respect and veneration for the divine words contained therein.
>
> Secondly, the Brothers of this Society shall animate all their actions with sentiments of faith; and, in performing them, they shall always have in view the orders and will of God, which they shall adore in all things, and by which they shall be careful to regulate their conduct.
>
> For this purpose they shall apply themselves to have great control over their senses and to use them through necessity, not wishing to use them but according to the order and the will of God.
>
> They shall make it their study to exercise continual watchfulness over themselves, so as not to perform, if possible, a single action from natural impulse, through custom or any human motive; but they shall act so as to perform them all by the guidance of God, through the movement of His spirit, and with the intention of pleasing Him
>
> They shall pay as much attention as they can to the holy presence of God, and take care to renew it from time to time; being well convinced that they should think only of Him and of what He ordains, that is, of what concerns their duty and employment.
>
> They shall banish from their minds all vain ideas and thoughts that might withdraw them from these practices, which are very important for them, and without which they can neither acquire nor preserve the spirit of their Institute.
>
> Secondly, the spirit of their Institute consists in an ardent zeal for the instruction of children, and for bringing them up in the fear of God, inducing them to preserve their innocence if they have not lost it, and inspiring them with a great aversion and horror for sin and whatever might cause them to lose purity
>
> In order to enter into this spirit, the Brothers of the Society shall strive by prayer, instruction, and by their vigilance and good conduct in school, to procure the salvation of the children confided to their care, bringing them up in piety and in a truly Christian spirit, that is, according to the rules and maxims of the Gospel.

These important paragraphs on the spirit of faith and zeal, flowing white-hot, in a single burst, from the heart of the man immediately took on their final form. They would pass on without modification into the *Collection* in 1711, and, from there, with minor additions, into the Rule of 1718. They continue to be regarded as quasi-sacred texts and a priceless treasure.

The chapter on ``the spirit of community'' emphasized one ofthe most rigorous aspects, one of the most unyielding stipulations of De La Salle's Rule: the obligation of the Brothers to live uninterruptedly in common, and not merely for religious exercises, meals and recreation, but for work and sleep. The primitive Rule required the Brothers to sleep in dormitories. ``The Superior of the Institute…only will have an

office for writing." All other Brothers were to prepare their lessons, their catechism classes, to study and to meditate in a common room.

Mental prayer, holy Communion, Confession,(usually, weekly) and the daily Rosary were the essential ``exercises of piety". Concerning the number of Communions, the 1705 text entered into such minute detail that subsequent editions could not keep up with it: the only ones that would survive were the Communions ``of Rule", on Sundays and Thursdays. Besides, ``the Brother Director may permit more frequent Communion for those who ask, and if he thinks it appropriate". The Brothers shall ``not belong to any Confraternity or Sodality… but shall conform all their devotions to those that are common and ordinary in the Institute".

``There shall be no corporal mortification of rule", began the chapter on ``the exercises of humiliation and mortification that are to be practiced in this Institute". In spite of the pitiless severity with which he treated his own body, the Founder believed, with Père Barré, that it would be dangerous physically to overtax schoolteachers, whose profession involves continuous stress. As a consequence, he left corporal penance (apart from ``abstinence from meat on Saturdays from Christmas to the Feast of the Purification") [458] to individual heroism, as tempered by the discretion of the Brothers' confessors. On the other hand, egoism was subjected to all sorts of hurdles: daily accusation of external faults, advertisements of defects every Friday, weekly reddition ``of conscience and conduct" and every year on Holy Thursday, the ``exercise of pardon":

> the Brother Director shall begin, and beg pardon of each of the Brothers individually, kiss his feet, and then embrace him; all the Brothers shall then do the same.

There follows the chapter on ``the manner in which the Brothers are to behave during recreation", a subject to which De La Salle attached the greatest importance. Recreation was an 'exercise' in the same sense as the recitation of the Rosary: ``no outsiders" were to be admitted to recreation. Fearing lest relaxation might lead to dissipation, the Founder enacted a code of conversation and behavior that smacks of his own personal austerity and of the severity of his epoch, but which has its first and indispensable principle in his own highly refined charity. Besides, minor and perfectly justifiable relaxations of some prohibitions were introduced in 1717 -1718. We shall point them out in the course of our analysis.

> The Brothers shall not speak at recreation of what has happened in any of the houses of the Institute, or of the affairs of the house in which they are, or of the administration of the Institute.
>
> They shall not speak of any of the Brothers, or of those who have been in the Society, or of any other living persons. They shall not speak of themselves, or of their relatives, or of their native place, or what they have done, or even of what they have seen or heard, as having seen or heard it, or of drinking or eating, or other bodily wants or of anything that relates to them.
>
> They shall not speak of the lack of regularity of any Religious Order or of other Communities. Neither shall they speak of what happened in the world or in the schools,459 nor of what they have heard there unless they have learned some edifying things which might contribute to the love of God and the practice of virtue.

458 ``As well as on Monday and Tuesday before Lent, except when ``travelling", adds the Rule of 1718, which also prescribes that the Brothersfast every Friday. (Chap. v).}}

459 The words ``or in the schools" were suppressed in 1718

> No Brother shall inquire about anything and no one shall speak his mind or express his feelings concerning anything that shall have been proposed unless the Brother Director ask him to do so.[460]
>
> None of the Brothers shall ever indulge in mimicry or raillery with regard to anyone. None of the Brothers shall contradict or disapprove of what the others say; the Brother Director alone may and should reprehend the guilty one if anything out of place is said.
>
> During recreation the Brothers shall very carefully avoid being disagreeable or troublesome to the others by indifference or by a gloomy and unsociable exterior or by not speaking at all or by insisting on speaking before one who is speaking has finished,[461] ".
>
> The Brothers shall, however, guard against levity, playfulness and unbecoming gestures, and touching any of their Brothers,462nor shall they speak too loud, or break out in noisy laughter.
>
> They shall also be careful to observe the Rules of modesty in every respect, especially in the use of their eyes, not lightly looking from side to side, nor looking at their Brothers fixedly face to face, [463] or making signs to them, or, in walking, to walk too fast, or to tread too heavily.[464]

In such an avalanche of negative commands, the question arises, which also arose for the Brothers: What, as a matter of fact, did one do at recreation? De La Salle's reply was a list (thirty-two articles long) of ``edifying subjects'' of which the Brothers might speak. The list, as we have seen, found its way into the *Collection*.[465] As anyone might there consult the list at any time, it was thought superfluous to introduce it into the revised text of the Rule.

Generally, it might be said that the reading at meals, spiritual reading, the prescriptions of the Rule, obituaries and observations of a moral, apostolic and educational character, would supply the materials for daily conversation. Besides, there could be no question of idle talk or trivialities:

> The Brothers will be careful… that the things concerning which they converse during this time be not purely speculative, but that they always tend to the practice, and that they always produce in them the love, of the good and of the virtues proper to them.

Since the Brothers must never lose sight of the ``end'' of their Society, it is to be expected that their duties as teachers be situated within the framework of their conventual life. TheRule of 1705 has a number of paragraphs devoted to ``the manner in which the Brothers are to behave in school…'' We find formal references to such concerns in the *Conduct*, to which the last chapter of the present volume will be devoted. The text we are presently examining contains the principles whose application we shall investigate later on.

> The Brothers will teach their pupils according to the methods prescribed and universally followed in the Institute; and they shall not change anything therein, nor introduce anything new.

After a summary of programs of study, there follows the fundamental statement concerning gratuity, expressed in the most uncompromising language:

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460 In 1718 this paragraph was simplified and ``humanized'' as follows:``None of the Brothers shall inquire about anything curious or useless.''

461 In the document of 1718, the sentence concludes with the words ``not speaking at all

462 The phrase ``touching any of their Brothers'' disappeared in 1718.

463 Nor looking at their Brothers purposefully or fixedly face to face'' was omitted in 1718.

464 In 1718 the sentence was terminated with the words ``not walking too fast''.

465 Reduced, however, to thirty articles by combining articles twenty-two and twenty-three, twenty-eight and twenty-nine

> The Brothers shall everywhere keep tuition-free schools; this is essential to their Institute. They shall not receive, either from the pupils or from their parents, any money or presents, however small, not even a pin, on any day or occasion whatever.

And their duty to their pupils is the following:

> They shall love all their pupils tenderly; they shall not, however, be familiar with any, nor give them anything by way of friendship, but only as a reward.
>
> They shall manifest equal affection for all their pupils, more even for the poor than for the rich, because they are entrusted by their Institute much more with the former than with the latter.
>
> The Brothers shall very carefully watch over themselves, so as not to do anything in school but what is proper and becoming, and especially not to let anything appear savoring of levity or passion.
>
> They shall strive to give their pupils, through their external conduct, a continuous example of the modesty and of all the other virtues which they must teach, and in which they must train their pupils.

Other articles bear witness to a concern for curtailing as far as possible the teachers' contacts with ``outsiders'', to safeguard the good order and discipline of the school by allowing as few persons as possible to enter it. (Women were excluded, except for ladies ``accompanied by the pastor'', who were visiting the poor.)

Along with the rule of gratuity, it was the rule of silence (no matter how paradoxical it may appear) that controlled the Lasallian school. We shall have to dwell upon this point somewhat. But for the moment it will be enough to quote the prescription of the primitive Rule:

> The Brothers shall not speak in class except when it is absolutely necessary and when they are unable to express themselves with signs. This is why they shall always use the signal and the signs which are described in the *Conduct of Schools*.
>
> They shall not speak to their pupils privately, except very seldom and through necessity and in a few words; and when obliged to speak to them, they shall always do so standing.
>
> They shall not ask the pupils for any news, nor shall they allow them to tell any, however good or useful it may be.

Politeness, gentleness toward the pupils, and respect for the child are also points of Rule. The Brothers must be totally dedicated to their professional task, and ``not read while at school any but textbooks''; and the physical conditions (the arrangements of desks and tables visible from one classroom to another and communicating doors always open) were to be a protection and guarantee against whatever weakness.

Moreover, ``there shall be an Inspector to supervise all the schools'', the behavior of the teachers and the progress of the pupils.”

A very considerable authority was granted the Brother Director over the Brothers assigned to his community, who were ``always to speak to the Brother Director with profound respect, in a low voice and in terms which show the veneration they have for him, as holding the place of God, whom they recognize and honor in the person of their Director''. They will receive his reprimands ``standing and uncovered'', if they were seated; ``on their knees'', if they were standing, and they shall kiss the floor''.

> It shall be sufficient that a thing is commanded them that they find it neither difficult nor impossible,[466] and they shall so act as to put themselves in this disposition through a simple view of faith, because nothing is difficult or impossible to God, and because He cannot fail to give the necessary grace and help….

The Brothers ``shall have a cordial affection'' for one another, but without any signs of preference. They shall take ``a singular pleasure'' in rendering mutual service. They shall speak to one another ``in a respectful manner, although without affectation or idle civilities… and with a Christian and religious simplicity''. They shall never speak anything but good of one another.

> On all occasions, and especially when obliged to speak to outsiders, they shall show by every exterior mark the respect, the esteem and the sincere, true and interior union they have with their Brothers; and they shall never let it appear, either by gesture or word, that they are displeased with any of them.

> ``There shall be no distinction of places among the Brothers in the usual exercises''(except for the Director and the Sub-Director); ``they shall take places without distinction, or such as are assigned to them by the Brother Director.''

In all external relations the greatest reserve is prescribed - little conversation (none without necessity), no personal friendships, no private chats, and total discretion on the subject of the Institute. When accosted the Brother was to reply politely and in a few words. He was not to get mixed up in any temporal concern, nor undertake ``any that is spiritual unless it be conformable to the spirit and the end'' of the Society.

``Certain special virtues'' have the right to be considered before all others as virtues of Rule: first, there is silence and the triad which, whether or not the object of monastic vows, characterize the life of the Religious - poverty, chastity and obedience. The *Collection* of 1711 not only comments upon these virtues but commands them. And the 1705 manuscript of the Rule deals with them in an even more imperative manner.

> The Brothers shall be silent regarding the Institute, other Brothers and about themselves``not wishing to be known but to God, and, as far as necessary, to (one's) Superiors''.

They shall keep ``silence most rigorously from the time of retiring at night until after mental prayer next morning''.

Everything in the Society is in common, even the habits. The Brothers will possess only a *New Testament*, an *Imitation of Christ*, a Rosary, a crucifix, which ``will be given to them by the one who is responsible for providing for the needs of the community''. Except when travelling they shall not possess any money. They shall dispose of nothing without permission; they will not give anything to anybody, ``not even a holy card or a pin''.

> They shall take very great care to behave in a manner quite prudent and reserved when correcting their pupils, and they shall watch over themselves carefully both before and at these times

``The affability with which they are obliged to speak to the mothers of the pupils, in order not to repel them'' will not prevent them from being prudent.[467]

> They shall be very exact to leave everything at the first sound of the bell and at the first sign of the Brother Director, with the view that it is God Himself Who calls and commands them.

> They shall not do anything without permission, however small or insignificant it appears, in order to be sure of doing the will of God in all things.

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466 ``Unless it be contrary to the Commandments of God'' was added by the Rule of 1718

467``And they shall be careful to finish with them in a few words'' was added by the Rule of 1718.

Before setting up a schedule for daily and Sunday exercises, which we shall be studying presently, the Founder grouped various prescriptions regarding the ``sick", ``travel", ``letters" and``the Latin language" under the rubric of ``Rules Relating to the Good Order and Good Government of the Institute".

> Application for aid in any illness shall never be made to relatives of the Brothers, and none of them shall ever be permitted to have recourse to his own, for remedies or anything else he needs, in any illness or infirmity whatsoever, but each Brother shall receive all that is necessary.
>
> Ordinarily the Brothers shall travel on foot and shall lodge in inns and not in monasteries nor with private persons, except with the permission of the Brother Director, who will give them, in writing, the route they must follow and they will never lodge with relatives of any of the Brothers of the Institute.
>
> The Brothers will undertake no journey except to go from one house of the Institute to another, or for the needs of the Institute, and they shall not go to any house in the city or the country for recreation, even because of some infirmity, unless it depends on the Institute.
>
> No Brother shall be sent alone to journey on foot, unless it cannot be otherwise, and that he be at least five years in the Institute, and that one is quite confident of his conduct.
>
> Every Brother will write the Superior of the Institute at the beginning of each month; they may also write to him whenever they think it necessary, either for the good of their soul or for any other reason; and, when they write to him out of the usual and appointed time, they shall not be obliged to give any reason therefor to the Brother Director. However, they shall ask him for permission, which he shall not refuse.

With regard to communities far removed from the center of the Institute, the Superior was to delegate a Director to receive this monthly correspondence. However, the Brothers in these houses had to write to the Superior himself every six months.

Finally, the severest and most detailed precautions were taken against the temptations to ``Latinity", which might divert the Brothers from their humble task and inspire them with a sort of nostalgia for the priesthood.

> Brothers who shall have learned the Latin language shall, from the time they enter the Society, make no use of it, and they shall so behave as though they did not know it. It shall not even be permitted to any of them to read a book written in Latin or to pronounce a single Latin word without absolute and indispensable necessity and with permission from the Brother Director.
>
> There shall not be any books in the houses of the Institute that are exclusively in Latin, except the books of the divine Office. There shall not even be any book which might be used to learn the Latin language and if there are any translations from Latin into the vulgar tongue, wherein the Latin is on one side and the vulgar tongue on the other, it shall not be permitted for anyone to read them, except those who have attained the age of thirty years and in whom no affinity for Latin has been remarked (except for a public reading) and that they read only the vulgar tongue.[468.]

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468 The study and teaching of Latin continued to be prohibited in the Institute until 1923. At that time Pope Pius XI announced that ``in consideration of the profound changes that time had introduced into educational programs and laws, as well as the larger participation of all classes of society in all kinds of studies", he thought that the Institute should henceforth extend its teaching to classical studies, without changing anything of its own nature. ``A lay (Congregation) by the wish of its Founder", it must remain that and ``be composed exclusively of laymen". (Secretary of State Cardinal Gasparri's letter to the M.H. Brother Imier of
Jesus, Superior-general, April 17, 1923

In the life of a community, just as in the existence of individual human beings, the organization of time is at once the application of principles and the bridge to action. Every religious Rule involves a schedule and the entire Rule may be contained in the schedule which is, often enough, the initial transcription of a Founder's thought; and, strictly speaking, it may be the only one. Our desires do not become effective acts of will, our resolutions are not productive, any more than our most brilliant ideas are realized until we slip them into the rhythm of the hours of our day. Our entire physical and spiritual development here below is a function of duration. Doubtless, the ideal transcends time, but it subsists in, and is transmitted by, the Law of Time, without which the ideal would be nothing but an empty form.

De La Salle's cast of mind and his education disposed him to leave nothing in the use of time to chance or whim. And when he decided to invite the young schoolteachers into his home, and then have them dwell under his own roof, it was because he had reason to deplore Adrien Nyel's negligence, carelessness and changes of mood, and the wasted efforts and days that resulted therefrom.

He was not just thinking of a framework within which his disciples' activities would be organized and supported. Rather he proposed the setting according to which his own life, harmonious and holy, had been woven for nearly ten years and which he had borrowed from the *General Regulations of the Seminary of St. Sulpice.*.

When we examine this document (as it exists in the National Library), which was contemporary with the Founder of the Brothers,[469] we become immediately aware that both in letter and in spirit it is in a special way comparable to the daily regulation of the Institute.

The Seminarian at St.Sulpice arose at 5 o'clock in the morning and dressed as he mentally reviewed the subject for meditation. Completely dressed, he appeared in the corridor at the doorway to his room. At 5:30 a.m. common prayer was recited, followed by mental prayer, which was made in part on one's knees and in part standing, and according to the method taught in the seminary.

At 11 a.m. a chapter of the *New Testament*} was read, kneeling, with head uncovered; and that was followed by ``Particular Examen''. Each one had a *New Testament*; and it was good for one to carry it with one at all times. The President read aloud a subject for examen on some virtue, vice or imperfection.

In the Refectory silence was observed, while, during meals, the seminarians listened attentively to the reading. When absolutely necessary, one might speak in a low voice and in a few words.

On leaving the dining room, they went, two by two, to the chapel to visit the Blessed Sacrament.

Recreation had to be made in groups, with never less than three to a group, and without attempting always to be with the same people, or with one's own countrymen.

At 1:00 p.m. those who were obliged to say the breviary met at a designated place for the common recitation of Vespers and Compline. The rest went to the chapel to say the Rosary or a prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in honor of Our Lady.

Every week, an afternoon (in the winter) or an entire day (in the summer) was spent at a house in the country, and no one was allowed to absent himself without permission.

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469 *Bibliotheque Nationale*}, French Mss., no. 11760

At 5:45 or 6:00 o'clock in the evening those obligated by the breviary recited Matins and Lauds in common; and after the breviary, all made spiritual reading. Supper was taken at 7:00 p.m., after which the seminarians recreated until evening prayer. At 8:30 p.m. there was prayer in common and examination of conscience. The subject for mental prayer would be read, which ordinarily was done every two days, on which occasions the time for prayer would be advanced by a quarter of an hour.

Those who missed some part of the schedule during the day and had not been excused by the Superior, or the person taking his place, were obliged to do so before leaving the room.

There followed a visit to the Blessed Sacrament; after which the seminarians went to their rooms in silence… At 8:45 p.m. the bell rang for retirement and bed. All were to be in bed by 9:00 p.m. at the latest.

Such a schedule might be adapted to the lives of schoolteachers. The principal modification had to do with the hour for rising which, in order to prolong the morning mixture of prayer and work, but especially out of a spirit of mortification, De La Salle set at 4:30 a.m.

The manuscript of 1705 concludes with prescriptions concerning the ``exercises", ``daily exercises", ``special exercises for Sundays and Feasts", ``special exercises for holidays", for school communities, on the one hand, and for novitiates on the other; ``daily regulations for vacation time", and a ``rule for district retreats during vacation time".

Another manuscript deals with the same matters, without however, anywhere covering exactly the same ground as the ``Common Rule": this text is called the ``Practice of the Daily Regulation". Leaving aside what has to do with Novitiates, vacations and retreats, it shows new schedules for a long series of special days: ``The first school day after vacation", theVigil and Feast of All Saints (31st of October and 1st of November), Feast of All Souls, Feast of St.Nicholas, the patron of school children (December 6th), Christmas Eve, the Feast of the Circumcision, Ember Days, Vigils, and Lent, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday before Lent (days on which meat was permitted at meals), Ash Wednesday, the Feast of the Great St.Joseph, the Vigil and the Feast of Easter, Pentecost, Feast of St.Mark, Rogation Days, Vigil and Feast of the Blessed Trinity, Feast and Octave of Corpus Christi, Feasts of the local or the parish patrons, Feasts of the patrons of the trades, and ``the last day of school before vacation". In conclusion, there is a chapter devoted to ``prayers that must be said for Brothers who have died".

As a daily and Sunday schedule of exercises and directions regarding school holidays, the ``Practice", barring a few unessential variants, agrees with the Rule of 1705. It enters into greater detail, especially with regard to Sunday afternoons and the afternoons of feasts, and, beyond that, supplies the schedule for the exercises of four workday feasts, the Presentation and the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin, the Transfiguration of Our Lord and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

It is our belief that this daily Regulation formed part of the primitive Rule - the part in which was developed everything having to do with the application of general principles to daily life, for the use of each teaching community. The differences noted in it in comparison to the Avignon manuscript seem to us to reveal that, in its last pages, the Rule of 1705 represents an intermediate stage of Lasallian legislation. Actually, when it comes to choosing between two parallel texts, the revision of 1717--1718 more often than not prefers the 1705 version. But prior to this definitive revision, the ``Practice" continued to be effective law, because it included articles not

found anywhere else. The date of the extant copy, the 9th of March 1713, proves it. And four years later, after Brother Barthélemy's election, both the *Common Rule* and the *Practice of the Daily Regulation*} were to serve as the bases for a new edition. The pages in the 1705 manuscript that refer to the ``novitiate'' have no parallel in the 1718 manuscript. On the other hand, the latter text incorporates most of the 1713 document (unknown to the Rule of 1705) which provides such a curious liturgical calendar for the France of past ages.

The Christian Brother's ``day'' is the central point of the ``Practice'', and it is this ``day'' that we shall now follow with the help of that most important document.

> The Brothers rise throughout the year at 4:30 a.m. The Brother who rings the rising bell must rise at least a quarter-of-an-hour before. He rings the bell at the final tone of the clock, exactly at 4:30.a.m. He will then knock on the dormitory doors and say as he knocks, ``Live Jesus in our hearts'', to which those in the dormitories will reply: ``Forever''. This is the ``signal'' in the community… [470]
>
> There is a quarter of an hour to dress and to make the bed. At 4:45 a.m. thirty strokes of the bell are rung and all assemble in the Exercise Room where (they) will comb their hair, brush their clothes and polish their shoes. Then each one privately will read his ``Imitation'' in preparation for mental prayer.[471]
>
> At 5:00 a.m. the bell will ring for prayer, and, each one on his knees, the Brother Director shall say, `Live Jesus in our hearts', and they shall reply, ``Forever".
>
> Then everybody goes to the oratory for prayer. First of all, vocal prayer is said;472 and then the subject for mental prayer is read. Mental prayer is made until 6:00 a.m. At the end of mental prayer the *O Domina mea*}, the *Angelus*}, the *Benedictus*} etc. are said; and from then to 7:15 a.m. the Brothers shall write and assist at holy Mass, which is the first one that can be heard after 6:00 a.m ….
>
> At 7:15 a.m. thirty strokes of the bell are sounded for breakfast; all breakfast together in the Refectory, during which time there will be reading in the ``Rules for School''.[473] After `Grace', and, on the way to the oratory, they shall recite alternately the Psalm, *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes*}, and, once they are all in the oratory, the Superior will say the *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*}, and they shall recite the Litany of the Child Jesus, to dispose themselves for going to school and to ask Our Infant Lord His spirit, in order to be able to communicate it to the children confided to their care.
>
> After the Litany of the Holy Child Jesus the Brothers begin the Rosary with the recitation of the *Dignare*} and then the *Credo*}, followed by only three decades before school in the morning, after which they shall recite the *O Domina*. And once the *Credo in Deum* is finished, the Brothers who teach in schools outside, shall leave the oratory and the house without stopping anywhere, all the while saying the Rosary both going in the morning and returning in the afternoon. The Brothers who teach in the house will continue on in the oratory.

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470 According to the Rule of 1705: ``At the first sound of the bell the Brother Director or one whom he has delegated will say in a loud voice that can be heard by all: `Live Jesus in our hearts', and the rest of the Brothers shall reply: `Forever'." The Rule of 1718 repeats the sentence of the Rule of 1705 and adds, as did the document of 1713, ``This is the signal of the community".

471 The documents of 1705 and 1718 have: ``The Brothers shall come to the (Common) Room where they shall not appear without being completely dressed"

472 The Rule of 1705 has: ``a brief quarter of an hour of vocal prayer"; while the document of 1718 has ``a quarter of an hour of vocal prayer"

473 In the documents of 1705 and 1718 we read as follows: `The Rule for the school or an instructive book. Reading shall begin with the ``Rule for the school" on the first day after vacation, and the day after the Feast of Easter and each time they shall read the two parts from end to end, and the rest of the year they shall read an instructive book."

At the end of classes in the morning, if any time remains, they shall study the catechism.474 At 11:30 a.m. particular examen shall be made; the subject shall be read from a book for that purpose.

After, they say the prayer before meals, ``My God", and then the *De profundis*} for deceased Brothers and benefactors, and then the *Angelus*.

Then they wash their hands, 475say the blessing, after which the Brothers, being on their knees in the middle of the refectory, accuse themselves of their faults to the Superior,476which must be done by all the Brothers before dinner and supper.

During dinner reading is made in the following books: 1) the *New Testament*}; the Gospels and the *Acts*}; 2) an abridged life of a saint; 3) some book of piety; and this reading is not to be done by a single Brother, but by all the Brothers, who shall read in turn, standing with head uncovered, for as long as and according as, they are notified by the Brother Director, who shall read first, when there are at least six Brothers in the community; at the end of the meal, all having finished eating and the Brother Director having rung the bell, some lines from the first three books of the *Imitation of Christ* will be read. When they have gone through the ``Imitation" … they shall start over again from the beginning. During the reading of the Imitation, the Brothers shall gather together the scraps from the table;[477] after ``Grace", they shall go to the oratory reciting alternately the Psalm, *Ecce quam bonum*… Once in the oratory, they shall recite the Litany of Our Lord's Passion in order to dispose themselves for recreation by meditating on the sufferings of Our Lord and in order to spend this time with the greatest wisdom and modesty. After the litany the Brother Director shall read a maxim which might animate the Brothers to converse with one another in a holy manner, and thereafter recreate together until one o'clock.[478]

At one o`clock the Brothers shall go to the oratory and recite the *Veni Sancte* and then the Litany of St.Joseph, patron and protector of the Community, to ask thereby his spirit and his aid in the Christian education of children. After that, they shall begin the Rosary, starting with the *Dignare me* The Brothers who teach in the house will continue on in the oratory and say three decades of the Rosary, as in the morning. Those who teach class outside the house shall say the Rosary as they go to school and upon returning in the evening.

After school they shall study catechism during the time that remains until spiritual reading and the warning bell at 5:30 p.m.[479]…" The bell for spiritual reading will ring and the *Veni Sancte*} will be said and then everybody in the Exercise Room, on their knees, shall read individually about a half-page of the *New Testament*}, at the end of which the Brother Director will say aloud: ``Live Jesus in our hearts", and the others will reply, ``Forever". And then all, seated, shall read individually from a pious book in order to prepare themselves for mental prayer.

At the approach of 6:00 p.m. the bell will ring for mental prayer so that after the *Veni Sancte*} and the reading of the subject of mental prayer, the Brothers shall begin no later than precisely

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474 Omitted in 1705, restored in 1718. Both Rules add at this point the schedule for morning classes.
475 Omitted in 1705 and 1718
476 Omitted in 1705 and 1718. In these Rules the accusation of faults was made after particular examen
477 Omitted in 1705 and 1718.
478 The Rules of 1705 and 1718 say merely: ``After dinner all shall take recreation together until 1:00 p.m. (Today the Litany of the Passion is said after Particular Examen
479 The Rules of 1705 and 1718 say merely: Schools will begin at 1:30 in the afternoon and end at 4:00 p.m. At 4:00 p.m. the Brothers will teach catechism to the pupils. At 4:30 p.m. they will have the pupils recite evening prayer slowly and distinctly, after which they shall sing at the most six verses of a hymn and send the pupils home. Once the Brothers have returned from school they shall go to the oratory where they shall make a brief examination of the faults they might have committed and of their entire conduct during the day. The Rule of 1705 does not mention the study of catechism by the Brothers before spiritual reading. At this point the Rule of 1718 agrees with the text of the ``Practice".

6:00 p.m. Mental prayer shall be made from 6:00 to 6:30 p.m., and at the end they shall recite the *Sub tuum*, ``My God, I adore'', the *De Profundis* and the *Angelus*; and after that the Blessing before meals, after which the Brothers shall kneel in the middle of the Refectory and accuse themselves of their faults as they did in the morning;[480] after accusations, there is supper, during which there is reading 1)in the *New Testament.*.. the *Epistles* and the *Apocalypse*; 2) a chapter of Bible History; 3) the *Imitationof Christ*, in the same way as after dinner.

At 8:00 p.m. the Brothers shall study catechism, and they shall strive to learn how they should pose questions and sub-questions, and the answers in the catechism, and in what way they will make them understood.

At 8:30 p.m. the Brothers shall recite evening prayer, at the end of which they shall remain for some moments in the oratory in recollection and then the Brother Director shall say, ``Live Jesus in our hearts''; to which the Brothers shall reply: ``Forever'', and then they shall retire to the dormitory, and at 9:00 p.m.thirty strokes of the bell shall be rung to let everyone know that he is to retire to the dormitories in order to be in bed before 9:15 p.m. And from then on speaking is no longer permitted, not even to the Superior, until the next day after the morning mental prayer.[481]

It would probably be tedious to continue to quote from the ``Practice of the Daily Regulation''. A bird's-eye view, along with the passages already cited, will enable us, we believe, to emphasize its importance, to situate this text in the collection of Rules, to compare it with the Sulpician Regulation, and to observe to what an exacting and austere discipline John Baptist de La Salle had, from the outset, subjected the religious schoolteachers for the service of God and youth.

* * * *

``The written resolution'', dated the 4th of December, 1716 stipulated that ``in an assembly of the principal Brothers consideration would be given to ``the ways in which regulations were drawn up and decided upon''.[482] As a result, sixteen Directors, assembled at St.Yon in May 1717, examined the texts that had been in force for a very long time, offered theirsuggestions, and concluded in favor of certain revisions.

This is what evidently emerges from their report of the 23rd of May:

Regarding the correction of the Rules and practices customary in the communities of our Society, we affirm that we have complied with the formalities that were required of us, whether as regards prayer and good works, or as to the total renunciation of our own interpretation, and have included nothing herein except after much reflection and numerous discussions and deliberations, along with much voting, and all of this for the greatest possible good of our Society. [483]

But it is also certain that, in the brief time at their disposal, the members of this Assembly could have done no more than outline a reformulation. The work had proceeded between the 23rd of May 1717 and the moment that the revised Rule was sent by Brother Barthélemy to the communities whose leader he had become -

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480 In the texts of 1705 and 1718 the Accusation of Faults occurs after mental prayers

481 According to the texts of 1705 and 1718: After supper all will make recreation together until 8:00 p.m. At 8:00 p.m. the Brothers will assemble in the Common Room where they will study catechism. At 8:30 p.m. evening prayer will be recited in the oratory, after which the subject of next morning's mental prayer will be read. At 9:00 the retiring bell will be rung and all shall go to the dormitories and be in bed by 9:15 p.m.

482 See above, Part Two, chap. x, pp. 406.

483 Motherhouse Archives, copy of the deeds deposited in the Sanadon study, cf. Guibert, pg. 569

i.e.(assuming that the copies sent to Troyes and St.Denis were not the first ones that were ready) during the second semester of 1718. Of course, the Superior-general declared in his cover letter that these were the ones which had been ``drawn up and decided upon'' both by himself and by the Brothers Director in the Assembly at St.Yon. And this declaration inclines us to acknowledge that the document of 1718 conformed with the deliberations of 1717. The Brothers' participation in the finished product has been established beyond a doubt. But - with their consent and perhaps with the cooperation of some of them - there was more than just clerical attention to the text between the years 1717 - 1718: indeed, there were corrections, additions and elaborations. Following Blain and Maillefer, it is important to emphasize that the real author of the Rule of the Institute is John Baptist de La Salle.[484] He took into consideration the Brothers' contributions. At their request, he submitted the section of the Rule that concerns recreation to the arbitration of Père Baudin, the Jesuit Master of novices in Rouen.[485] But the entire work preserves the seal of the Founder's spirit and holiness.

The first twenty-seven chapters are very closely related both to the manuscript of 1705 and to the *Collection* of 1711. The last five chapters use passages both from the old common rules that dealt with daily and Sunday exercises and from ``The Practice of the Daily Regulation''. We have already pointed out, regarding ``Communion'', ``recreation'' and ``the Brother's `day'''
that some changes had already been introduced into the earlier texts.486. The revision of 1718 enlarges still further the place given to prescriptions of a pedagogical nature, the equivalents of which we shall meet with in the *Conduct of Schools*. The duties of teachers toward their pupils (Chapters VII and VIII of the *Common Rule* in this way take on a fully religious character. In Chapter IX (``Of the manner in which the Brothers must behave in school, regarding themselves, their Brothers and outsiders'') it is, once again, the professional educator who is being addressed. Chapter X determines ``the days and the time'' the Brothers will teach class or ``give a holiday'', and Chapter XI repeats the 1705 text concerning the ``Inspector''.

With Chapters XII, XIII, XIV and XV, we return to the duties of Brothers living in community (relations between Brothers and the Brother Director, ``the union that should exist between the Brothers, the attitude to be maintained with persons outside the Institute, and the special obligations of serving Brothers; this last chapter is entirely new, practical and as precise as one would want:

> …. They shall be careful to be attentive that they have the use of money only in dependence upon the Brother Director, and not as though they have the control of it….They shall…. take special care to apply themselves to their spiritual life…. and they shall guard against dissipation…. in their temporal employment…. They shall…. take care to fulfill their external duties with great charity, having in view that the service they give their Brothers is to Our Lord Himself

To the fundamental virtues that the Rule of 1705 described and prescribed (silence, poverty, chastity and obedience), De La Salle added regularity and modesty. Thus, in the space of six chapters (from XVI to XXI) we have a ``short treatise'' which amounts to another edition of the *Collection*, or a completion of it.

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484 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 136

485 *Ibid.*, pp. 143--4

486 The first six chapters follow the primitive text word for word: I. ``Of the end and the necessity of this Institute''. II. ``Of the spirit of this Institute''. III. ``Of the spirit of community of this Institute and the Exercises that are therein to be performed in common''. IV. ``Of the Exercises of Piety practiced in this Institute''. V. ``The Exercises of humility and mortification''. VI ``The manner in which the Brothers are to behave during recreation

First of all, the Founder throws light on the real purpose of ``Regularity''. Quoting St.Augustine, he writes:

> Those who live in Community should, before all else love God and next their neighbor, since these are the principal commandments given us by God, and because any regularity whatever, if separated from observance of these two Commandments, is quite useless for salvation…. It is established…. only to give (Religious) facility to observe the Commandments of God, with exactness, and for this cause most of the Rules are practices pertaining thereto….

Beyond that, regularity is ``the principal support of Communities'', and it makes them ``impregnable'': thus the Brothers shall prefer ``the Rules and practices of their Institute to all others…. however holy in themselves…." They shall be scrupulous to avoid violating the least of them. They ``shall leave everything at the first sound of the bell…. They shall be very careful to close the doors of the house without noise''.

> (They) shall look upon the following observances as the most essential of their Institute: The four interior supports of their Institute: 1) Mental Prayer, 2) The Presence of God, 3) The Spirit of Faith, 4) Interior Recollection; the four exterior supports: 1) Reddition of Conduct, 2) The Accusation, 3) The Advertisements of defects, 4) The Manner of Spending Recreation.

Finally, they should ``always have in their minds to meditate upon and in their hearts to practice…. (the) ….ten commandments'' which are ``proper'' to the Brothers:

1. Due honor to Superiors pay
And in their persons God obey.

2. In love with all your Brothers
And God to you true rest will give.

3. With ardent zeal your strength employ
In teaching gratis, youth, with joy.

4. Let Faith alone your actions guide
And leave all other views aside.

5. Let all the time of Mental Prayer
Be well employed with love and care.

6. God ever present you'll adore
And oft His grace and aid implore.

7. Your mind and senses always curb,
And let them not your peace disturb.

8. The rule of silence strictly keep,
And thus in heaven treasures heap.

9. By recollection keep so chaste,
That of heavenly bliss you may foretaste.

l0. From earthly goods your heart retain,
And heaven itself will be your gain.

A new paragraph on ``Poverty'' in Chapter XVII declares:

> The Brothers shall possess nothing and if they have some property, they will give over the income from it to their relatives or to the Society, without their being able to have any use of it.

(Such a prescription paved the way for the ``simple vow'' that the Brothers would make once they had won Rome's approbation.)

The Chapter on Silence (XX) includes some significant additions:

> When the Brothers go together through the city, they shall not speak to one another, unless it is absolutely necessary; but they shall say the Rosary, each by himself, and, on their return, they shall give an account of what they said and did while out.

The importance of this prescription is to protect ``interior recollection'', and, in addition, not to be caught up in temptations to slander and vanity. On this latter point, however, perplexity might arise from excessive scrupulosity. In order to ease consciences, the Founder did not hesitate to be minutely specific. Recalling that a Brother must not speak ``of himself, his relatives or his native place'', he adds, ``except for persons for whom he should have a very special respect, as for instance a Bishop who might question him on these subjects."

The Chapter ``on Modesty'' in the *Collection* was transported integrally into the Rule of 1718, as Chapter XXI. There we can recognize the author of the *Rules of Christian Politeness and Civility*} which had such a brilliant success throughout the 18th century. In both texts the same supernatural principles inspire prescriptions which are not always in total agreement with our own contemporary indifference, but which strove to preserve human dignity, Christian charity, and, in the present instance, religious humility as well.

> (The Brothers) shall always hold their head erect, inclined slightly forward;[487] they shall not turn it around, or, from side-to-side; and if necessity obliges them to do so, they shall at the same time turn the whole body sedately and with gravity.
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> They shall manifest cheerfulness upon their countenance rather than sadness, or any other ill-regulated passion.
>
> They shall avoid wrinkling the brow, and much less the nose, so that an external wisdom will be noted in them, which is the sign of an interior wisdom…. When speaking, especially to persons in authority and of distinction, and much more especially to persons of the other sex, they shall not look them steadily in the face, but be very reserved in their regard.
>
> They shall not keep their lips too closely pressed together or too wide apart.
>
> When they have to speak, they shall be mindful of the modesty which becomes them and the edification they should give their neighbor, both by their words and their manner of speaking; hence, they shall take care not to speak too much, too loud, or too fast, and not to make any sign or exaggerated gesture either with the head or hands.
>
> They shall hold their hands in repose, and avoid having them hang unbecomingly or put them into their pockets.
>
> They shall keep their feet nearly together[488] when at rest, without crossing them; they shall not keep their legs wide apart[489] or stretch them out, or cross them, when seated.
>
> They shall walk sedately and in silence, with great reserve in their looks and in their whole exterior,[490] without unduly swinging their arms and without overhaste, unless some necessity should require it.

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487 The 1711 Collection adds at this point: “so as not to stoop their shoulders”
36.The 1711 *Collection*} adds at this point: "so as not to stoop their shoulders”
488 The 1711 document has ``the feet together''
489 *Ibid*., ``You do not spread your legs''
490 From ``and in silence'' to ``exterior'' is an addition of the 1718 document .

> When going from one exercise to another, they shall walk one after another in order to avoid confusion. Finally, they shall always keep their clothes neat and clean, and wear them with the propriety and modesty becoming persons of their profession.

A paragraph ``concerning the sick'' in the Rule of 1718 became Chapter XXII, ``Concerning the Sick'', which abundantly manifests concerns of paternal affection: sick Brothers shall have ``a very charitable infirmarian'' who will minister ``with affection and tenderness to all their wants''. They shall obey him ``as their Director, as being given to them by God to direct them during their illness''. ``The needs of the sick shall always be attended preferably to the needs of those in good health.'' But the holy Founder, as well, does not miss the opportunity to exhort the Brothers to make good use of their sufferings, ``often calling to mind the patience of Our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Holy Martyrs''.

The sick will be provided for in soul with as much, and even more, zeal than in the care of the body. All, in the houses of the Institute, shall share in ``procuring (for the dying) the blessings of a happy death''. The Sacrament of Extreme Unction shall be administered opportunely, so as to produce ``a greater abundance of grace''.

The prayers which surrounded the dying Brother would accompany him into the next world. In the closing pages of the``Practice of the Daily Regulation'' were listed the number of Masses, Communions, and Offices to which the dead were entitled. Under a similar heading, ``The Prayers to be Said for Deceased Brothers'', Chapter XXIII of the Rule takes up in their totality the pious traditions established by the ``Practice''.

The text of 1705 is reaffirmed, but sensibly supplemented or modified in Chapters XXIV (Travel), XXV (Letters), [491] XXVI (The Latin language). De La Salle's obvious concern was to make his Rule the ultimate compendium of his teachings - those having to do with the daily currents of life as well as those which open out into spiritual and religious vistas. Thus, Chapter XXV, for example, explains how the Brothers are ``to address, begin and conclude'' their letters to the Superior-general.

All the more reason, then, that this concern for precision dictate the last chapters in which, hour-by-hour, the ``daily exercises'' are prescribed (Chapter XXVII), as well as the special exercises for Sundays and Feasts (Chapter XXVIII), special exercises for holidays (Chapter XXIX), special exercises for feasts already listed in the 1713 text (Chapter XXX), the regulation for vacation (Chapter XXXI) and the rule for the district retreat made during vacation (Chapter XXXIII). Prior documents were harmonized or blended in, but nothing really remarkable was added.

* * * *

According to Canon Blain:

> In about 1700, De La Salle wrote a Rule for the Brothers Director which he sent in manuscript form to all the communities of the Institute, with the request that the Brother Director have it read in the Refectory during dinner on the first Thursday of each month, and that he make it his spiritual reading every Sunday and Thursday. [492]

According to the biographer, the ``egos'' of these heads of community were so ``offended'' at so often having to listen to their duties made public, ``and thereby their

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491 Henceforth the Brothers were to write to theBrother Superior ``every other month''; the Brothers Director would write every month

492 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 146

failings", that their special Rule had fallen into neglect and was not submitted to a reexamination in 1717.[493]

This curious assertion, repeated without further verification by Guibert,[494] is contradicted by a document that was sent on the 3rd of October by the Brother Superior-general to the community of St.Denis. The ``rule of the Brother Director of a community of the Institute" was ``drawn up and decided upon" at the same time as the Common Rule. It was the centerpiece of the ``Rule of Government", which, while not having been edited in its final form during the lifetime of the Founder, had nevertheless been elaborated by him with the aid (as Blain himself insinuates) ``of the Constitution and Rules of St.Ignatius",[495] and it was that document that presided over the election of the Superior-general and his Assistants in May of 1717.

The first ten pages of the manuscript of the 3rd of October 1718 supplies us with a single block of instructions that is all of one piece; it is a sort of memorandum for the use of those concerned and the fragment of an unfinished work. It also correlates harmoniously with the other three documents examined above.

The document begins with a clear and rigorous determination of the powers of the Director:

> Each of the Brothers who shall be entrusted with the direction of the individual houses of the Institute shall not be called ``Superior". But he shall be given the name of ``Director" of such a house and he shall not allow himself to be called otherwise; and the one who takes his place in his absence shall be called ``Sub-director". The title of Director has been given to the Brother Director of each house of the Institute in order to make it known to him that his every care must be to direct, under the guidance and authority of the Brother Superior of the Institute, everything that concerns his house and the schools which are dependent upon it, and direct the Brothers spiritually, who are under his guidance, and to enable them to advance in virtue and to guide them into the perfection of their state and of their Institute by the direction of their conscience; and in order to make it known to him that he has only been appointed to direct under the guidance and authority of the Brother Superior of the Institute, and not to guide and govern as the leader, since he neither has, nor should he assume any but a relative and dependent authority.

He had, then, no more than a delegated power, limited, revocable, and subject to constant supervision. Centralization was no less pronounced in De La Salle's Institute than it was in the Society of Jesus.

> With regard to what he may do which is not in writing, (the Director) will present his plans to the Brother Superior …. and will do nothing respecting them without his written order or permission, except the matter be absolutely necessary and cannot be postponed. If what is to be done is not in writing and it is necessary and cannot be postponed, he will examine on his knees before God for a quarter-of-an-hour whether it is indeed of such a nature; and if it appears to him to be such, he will consult the Brother or Brothers who shall have been given him by the Brother Superior to counsel him and he will do what he shall have believed before God to be the most appropriate; of which he shall thereafter inform the Brother Superior of the Institute, along with the counsel given him by the Brother or Brothers he consulted.

He shall be a model of regularity, ``never dispensing himself from any of the exercises…. without a well recognized necessity". In this case, ``he shall excuse himself from mental prayer rather than recreation, and select another time during the day to make his mental prayer, without failing to do so". He shall observe and enforce the rule of silence. He shall preserve total discretion regarding other communities of the Society, and regarding the Brothers who are not under his

493 *Ibid*., pg. 146.
494 Guibert,pg. 573.
495 Blain, Col. II, pg. 134

guidance. When he shall need to know the backgrounds of those confided to his direction, he shall seek information from the Brother Superior-general exclusively.

He shall not leave the house except when accompanied and for serious reasons. ``At the end of each month he shall make an accounting to the Brother Superior of the Institute of all his visits during the month and what occasioned them." In order for him temporarily to leave the city in which he resides, he shall require ``a formal written order" from the Superior, and he shall be required to show this order to the Brother Sub-director.

He shall establish his guidance upon kindness no less than upon justice: manifesting ``a very special affection and tenderness for all the Brothers under his direction", and being careful ``not to be sad, and never show it in the presence of any of them", ``fair" to all, preserving ``such a union that he shall never tolerate the least conflict nor the least appearance of conflict one against the other". In all things his first concern is the maintenance of the Rule: he shall make the spirit of faith and the spirit of obedience prevail. ``A single moment's delay in performing what has been commanded, the least disobedience, the least thing done without permission shall be regarded by him as faults to which he must bring a swift remedy…. He shall assign each Brother a day each week in which to give an account of his conscience…. He shall prefer this duty to all others…[496]

There follow details concerning reports and accounts that must be punctually delivered: the monthly accounts of receipts, expenditures; every other month he must report on his own behavior, ``both interior and exterior", on his activities as Director, on his schools and the conduct of each one of the Brothers. He will see to the regular mailing of the letters which the Brothers are obliged to write to the Superior-general, and he was committed to surround the reception of the replies with sufficient formality to assure full privacy to those receiving the letters.

His educational authority, like his religious authority, operated within strict limits. ``Before the beginning of the scholastic year", he would offer for the approval of the Superior a list of his associates' assignments. ``He shall not change a Brother from his class during the year, apart from pressing necessity, except by order or permission" from above. During vacation he was to send notes concerning the teachers, written in a style that conformed to a model which he shall have received.

His obligations in the temporal order were similarly restricted: for all the needs of his community, he was to apply ``to the Brother who supplies the habits", who acted for the Brother Superior of the Institute. ``He will arrange the times for meals in writing with the Brother who shall have charge of the kitchen", and will require from him a weekly account of expenditures.

Precautions were taken against negligence, tendencies to waste and secret accounts.

> In each house there shall be a safe, secured by a pair of locks. The Brother Director shall have the key to one of the locks and a Brother assigned for the purpose by the Brother Superior of the Institute shall have the key to the other, and this Brother shall have, along with the Brother Director, complete knowledge of all the monthly receipts and expenditures, so that both of them can make a report at the beginning of the following month to the Brother Superior of the Institute.

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496 We should recall here that our study deals with the primitive Rule of the Christian Brothers and not with the contemporary Rule, which differs on many points. Thus, in the current discipline of the Church, the Brother Director may not himself question his inferiors on what belongs to the ``interior forum".

> He shall not lend or borrow anything and shall contract no debt, nor shall he permit anybody to contract any, without the formal, written order of the Brother Superior of the Institute. He shall not even lend or borrow a book ….

In the community, the Director is the father of the family: it is up to him ``to see that the house is kept clean", to inspect it or have it inspected every Sunday after Mass ``to see that nothing is amiss \dots whether there be any cobwebs, broken windows or damaged furniture". It is up to him each evening to see that the ``candles are extinguished before 9:15" and that the doors are locked, ``especially those that open onto the street".

It is for the Director to see to the Brothers' clothing and food. And hence the Rule of the Brother Director is followed by ``two chapters" dealing especially with these subjects.

``The Brothers of this Institute shall be poorly and simply dressed"; nevertheless, their habits shall be ``clean, decent and modest". They shall be made, like the stockings, of ``black serge twill" - a very common cloth at the time.

The Brothers' external appearance was to remain what it had been since 1685:

> Robe and mantle …. shall reach to about 6 inches from the ground… The robes will be closed in front with hooks that extend as far as the waist; … the rest will be sewn…. The mantles shall not have pleats at the top, and their sleeves shall extend downward about 24 inches from the ground.

The robes and stockings of the serving Brothers shall be ``of a brown color, the color of the Capuchins' habit …" The hats shall be a little over six inches long and a something more than four-and-a-half inches high. The rabats shall be made of `Troyes cloth", a little more than four inches long and a little over three-and-a-half inches wide. The shoes, ``in ordinary cowhide" shall have ``double soles"; they must be simple, modest and heavy, and tied with laces, on very low heels.

Against the cold in schools and communities, in which there was a stove only in the Common Room,[497] the Brothers wore a ``skull cap lined with wool which could cover the ears", black gloves made of common wool (to be worn ``only in school" and to be left there ``with their signal") and ``a muff made of black serge".

As for food, it was to be ``ordinary and always the same". There was to be no poultry except for the sick, and no eggs during Lent. There was to be fish, ``when it was cheaper than eggs". For breakfast, there was to be ``a piece of bread and two pints of wine". ``On the days when bread may be eaten",there was to be six ounces[498] per person, per meal, at dinner and at supper. ``At dinner there was to be a soup, a portion of boiled beef and a dessert or a salad. At supper there was to be meat, fricasseed, *a la mode* or boiled." The Brothers ``shall not eat roast or pastry, unless they are given to them out of charity. At each of the two principal meals they may drink a ``half-measure of wine".

On the days when there is abstinence from meat, at dinner the Brothers shall be given a soup, a portion of three cooked eggs, or the equivalent of three eggs in the form of fish and vegetables, a dessert or a salad; and at supper they shall receive a portion of vegetables.

Thus, from the heights of the spiritual to the humble temporal order, to which we all must return, the entire life of the Christian Brother was arranged by the faith and charity of a saint and by the good sense of a man who could plan, organize and administer, while taking into account physical, intellectual and moral possibilities as well as temporal necessities.

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497 The Rule of 1718, chap. iii.
498 An ounce $=$ 30gr. 59

CHAPTER FOUR

The Educational Writings of St. John Baptist de La Salle

As one might expect from a man who was both a disciple of the ``French School" (by way of Olier and Tronson) and from a friend and admirer of the Society of Jesus, many of the aspects of Lasallian spirituality and organization, in the writings and in the Rule of the Founder, have retained the marks of their Sulpician and Ignatian origins. Ultimately, the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools remained in the Sulpician tradition primarily through its method of mental prayer and the daily schedule of its communities; and it was related to the Ignatian tradition through its form of government and through the direction given to its members. But the way in which these elements were fitted together produced a novel, coherent and indivisible whole.

The same thing might be said of educational structures. In the Conduct there is no difficulty in pointing to De La Salle's borrowings from ``precursors" whose ideas and achievements we have already discussed. The Jesuits, the Oratorians, the Gentlemen of Port Royal, the Ursulines, and the Sisters of Notre Dame were all founded before the Christian Brothers. Demia, Barré, Roland and others, more obscure, but no less devoted to elementary schools and the poor, such as Colas Portmorant, the Tranchots, Francis Jogues and Louis Aubery had (prior to, or simultaneously with John Baptist de La Salle) planned and administered schools which testify not only to their good will but to important educational competence built upon a foundation of Religion and Gratuity.

However, their efforts, like the names of most of them, would have perished, or the results they obtained would have lacked coherence and decisive influence in the area of elementary education, had not St.John Baptist de La Salle discovered his synthesis.

In many ways he is a successor. It might be asserted that his predecessors bequeathed to him, and his contemporaries supplied him with, the treasure of their experience. It was in this way that he completed the work of Nicolas Roland in Rheims, and, in Paris and in Rouen, he resumed the work of Barré, while in Moulins he continued the work of Aubery. The Parish School certainly made his first efforts easier and supplied the indispensable support for his own undertakings as organizer and reformer of children's education.

Only God creates from nothing. Human creators find their materials, their circumstances and their plans more or less ready-made. A new arrangement produces unexpected, sometimes marvelous, results. Pascal was right: ``When people play tennis, both players play with the same ball, but one of them hits it better than the other."[499]

A particular way of looking at things, its invocation and application at a crucial juncture, may radically alter a previous situation. De La Salle appeared to have arrived late on the scene in an age in which everything had already been tried. Elementary schools had been growing in number all over France; he was merely

499 Pascal, Pensées, Section I, 22, Brunchvicg ed.

adding some of his own. And yet, his became the model for the others. With his schools modern popular education began.

The Founder of the Brothers was less concerned to invent than to build well. By constantly thinking about improvements that needed to be made, he broke with routine and pushed to their perfection methods that had been used by people before him. This conscientiousness, this free flowering of virtue, which is the heart of holiness, is what best explains his educational genius.

So that there might be nothing makeshift, unsuitable, conjectural or incomplete in the education given by the Brothers, he patiently put together a huge handbook on pedagogy and elementary education by altering the outline and the many rules of the Parish School, and called it the *Conduct of the Christian Schools*. Besides, he wrote an entire ``library'' sufficient, in combination with diocesan catechisms, for the total religious and moral instruction of primary school children. De La Salle's writings are in no way a product of circumstances, sudden inspirations or passing fancies. From one end to the other, they parallel his career and his activities as Founder. They are, from the educational as well as from the religious point of view, a single, unbroken body of legislation and doctrine. The *Conduct* corresponds to the Rule; and just as the *Collection,* the *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer* and the *Meditations* prepared the way for and reinforced the Rule, so the minor educational writings and essays we shall be presently discussing are inseparable from the *Conduct.*

* * * *

All of the Founder's other writings were published prior to the *Conduct*. But that does not mean that editions of them generally appeared before the oldest texts of the *Conduct*. Rules and directives having to do with schoolteachers, the instruction they must provide, and how classes must be maintained were, as we shall see, in the hands of Brothers at the end of the 17th century. However, there was no question of putting them into print. The Brothers circulated copies among themselves and absorbed sections relative to their particular areas. They were perfectly free to make suggestions to De La Salle. And the author understood that the *Conduct*, like the Rule, could be improved upon, and that, ultimately, it was the outcome of many individual experiences and of friendly, open collaboration.

We shall, then, postpone the study of the *Conduct* while we take a brief glance backward. In the perspective thus gained we shall be able to introduce preparatory and parallel writings, approaches and landmarks. A catalogue of these works is provided us through the royal license granted on the 13th of April, 1705 to Antoine Chrétien, the first licensed printer-bookseller for the University of Paris. This document appears in the third volume of *The Duties of a Christian*, of which more later on. It authorizes Chrétien to print or have printed,

the

> *Instructions and Exercises of Piety for the use of the Christian Schools:* .e., a French Speller, a *Brief Exercise of Piety, Instructions and Prayers for Mass*, the *Catechism of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* with questions and answers, the long and the short abridgment of that catechism, the *Duties of a Christian to God* in continuous discourse, *Instructions and prayers for Confession and Communion*, the *Rules of Decorum and Christian Civility*, the *Christian Life or the Means of living Christianly*, Religious hymns and the Office of the Virgin with David's Psalter.

The *Christian Life* is known to us only through this list. However, for all the other titles, texts or traces of them survive. But since there are some differences regarding titles, we shall have to make some identifications.

The oldest publication must be the *Brief Exercise of Piety*. A copy exists in the Motherhouse Archives under the title: ``Exercises of piety which are practiced during the day in the Christian Schools". It is in poor condition and has no publication date. On a tattered page there appears the name of the publisher: Dumesnil, Rouen. It was only after 1730 that the Brothers had the Institute books done by this publisher; (and he remained pretty nearly constantly their publisher until the period of the Revolution) The copy in question, then, cannot be a part of the first edition. But it bears indications that enable us to fix the time precisely in which the manuscript was written and first submitted to the censor; and then approved a second time-doubtlessly on the occasion of a second printing:

> Representing the Chancellor, I have read the manuscript entitled: Exercises of Piety for the Use of the Christian Schools. At the Sorbonne, the 7th of August, 1679. Signed: C.de Percelles.
>
> At the Request of the Chancellor, I have read this book, which is entitled id Exercises of Piety for the Use of the Christian Schools, and found nothing but what is orthodox and edifying, on the 22nd of November, 1702. Signed: Elies du Pin.

This is clearly the little work which De La Salle himself mentions in his letter to Gabriel Drolin on the 17th of April, 1705

> If you need any school books such as the School Prayer book, which I am not sure whether you have or not...we have recently had them reprinted...[500].

``We could easily send them from Avignon",[501] the Founder adds. He had, then, circulated his other writings. This fact is expressly confirmed by the following references in his letters: on the 28th of August, 1705, he wrote: ``Should you need a prayer book, we had them reprinted, with the required rubrics, last year."[502] And, on the 4th of September of the same year, he wrote again to Drolin: ``Brother Albert informed me on the 29th of August that the Father Inquisitor had returned all our books with his approval."

These Avignon editions, contemporary with the license granted to Antoine Chrétien, did not include the *Collection*, which Chastanier was to publish in 1711.[503] Rather, in fact, they were texts to be used in the Christian Schools - ``school books", as De La Salle called them on the 28th of October, ``for teachers and pupils".[504]

So much for the evidence of authorship. And there are grounds for believing that it applies to all the works mentioned in the list at the end of *Duties of a Christian* published on the 13th of April, 1705. They constitute a single group, and if one of the books, in spite of its anonymity, can be unquestionably attributed to the Founder, the presumption is in favor of the authenticity of all the others.

But, it is precisely with respect to the *Duties* that we possess a solid set of arguments.[505] Opening the oldest copy of this treatise (in the National Library) which, in the two-hundred years since it was written, has been reedited at least two-hundred-and-fifty-seven times, we find that it consists of three volumes, in-8, each marked with the seal of the *Bibliotheca Regia*, bearing the date MDCCIII and

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500 Series C, letter #9
501 Ibid., loc. cit
502 Ibid., letter #24
503 See above, Part Three, chap. ii, pp. 469 et sq
504 Series C, letter #17
505 Here (and throughout this chapter) we rely upon the learned and well researched article in the December 1935 issue of the *Rivista lasalliana*, pp. 233-256: I ``*Devoirs d'un chrétien" di S. J. B De La Salle.)*

issued from the presses of Antony Chrétien. The first volume has 494 pages, plus about 12 unnumbered pages and is entitled: *The Duties of A Christian Toward God and the Means of Fulfilling them,* divided into two parts. It is a theology for the use of people in the world (albeit it is a ``world'' that is still a Christian society); it is an explanation (``in continuous discourse'') of Catholic doctrine: dogmas, moral, Sacraments, and prayer. The divisions and subdivisions are numerous and clear. The first part deals with ``the Faith which enables us to know God, and Charity which enables us to love Him''; the second part, after an orthodox clarification of the doctrine of Grace, defines the seven Sacraments, analyses their properties and the conditions of their efficacious use, and then concludes with a treatise on Prayer, considered in its essence, its ends and in its different forms.

The second volume is of 305 pages, plus seven unnumbered pages, and it has the same title as the first volume. It takes up once again the entire contents of the first volume, but in a catechetical format, with questions and answers. Its sentences are necessarily more pithy and succinct; nevertheless many of its answers are drawn from the first volume.

The third volume, in 301 pages, is, on the whole, a separate work, with the title: *The External and Public Worship that Christians must Pay to God and the Means of Fulfilling it. The Third Part of the Duties of a Christian Toward God.* This is a treatise on the liturgy, which gives abundant development to some remarks made about prayer. The author describes the ``public practices of the Christian religion'' (parish Mass, Divine Office, processions, Confraternities, pilgrimages), ceremonies associated with'' these practices (the blessing of churches, water, bread, candles, ashes, incense, homily, kiss of peace, adoration of the Cross, etc.), and finally it deals with the principal seasons and Feasts of the Christian Year.

It was impossible for this vast work to have been anything but the product of a thoroughly informed and trustworthy knowledge. As Père Carion says in his preface to the 1892 edition [506]``we feel on every page the presence of the eminent doctor'', who, in exact and illuminating language, offers souls the essentials, while cutting away the details which would needlessly delay and weary them.

Even though we lack the most formal sort of proof (the authentic documents) still, regarding the authorship of the Duties, we can produce unassailable contemporary evidence. Canon Blain declares that during his stay at Vaugirard and after writing the Rule (therefore, between 1695 and 1698) De La Salle wrote several books that proved quite useful to the Brothers and their pupils: in particular, ``catechisms'' - short catechism for children, and, for the Brothers, more serious ones, more fundamental and more learned, a mixture of moral teaching and pious practices.[507] Of course, he does not make explicit mention of the Duties. But if we refer back to Antoine Chrétien's list, we notice ``the catechism of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, in question and answer'', which is none other than volume two of the 1703 publication. The parts especially composed for children are discussed in the *Conduct* under the name of Abridgment:[508] it is ``the long and the short abridgment'' included on the list. These texts are found in their entirety in the Machuel edition, Rouen, 1727, after the Duties in catechetical form; ``the long abridgment'' filled 118 pages (pp.304-421) of the volume and the ``short abridgment'' 47 pages (pp.442-468).

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506 We are indebted for this edition of volume one to the efforts of Carion. His text, while modernized, is nevertheless, on the whole, rather close to the original.

507 Blain, Vol. I, pg. 341

508 Conduct, 1720 ed., Vol. I, chap. ix, pp. 2 & 5.

Dom Maillefer removes any uncertainty: he writes that, in 1705, De La Salle, immobilized in Paris with a knee operation, took advantage of his enforced leisure to revise several treatises he had written at Vaugirard for the use of the novices.

> The first, entitled: *The Duties of a Christian Toward God and the Means of Being Able to Fulfill them*, was written in the form of a dialogue…. The second part contains the rules of external Christian worship and the means of profitably fulfilling them.

De La Salle's nephew concludes:

> We easily perceive the spirit that inspired these books...They were written in simple, flowing style, but at the same time so affective that it is impossible to read them without being touched.

It is immaterial that this witness is silent about the ``continuous discourse''. The authorship of volumes two and three implies the authorship of volume one. We come now to the most important documents.

For the edition of 1703 a personal privilege was granted to the author which he ceded to the publisher before the latter had obtained a license of his own.

> Mister ... [509] having indicated to us that he desired to have printed *Christian Instructions or the Duties of a Christian toward God and the Means of being able to fulfill them well*, for the use of the Christian Schools...we have permitted and granted him, and by these presents we permit and grant to have printed the Instructions by any printer he may select, in any form, margin, quality, and as many as shall seem good to him, during a period of five consecutive years, counting from the date of these presents and to have them sold and retailed throughout our kingdom, on condition that the printing be done in our kingdom, and not elsewhere, on good paper and fine type, according to our regulations concerning the production of books; that before placing the book on sale a copy shall be placed with the Secretariat of books in the Chateau of the Louvre, two more in our public library, and one in the library of our very dear and loyal knight, Chancellor of France, Phelippeaux, Count Pontchartrain. Done at Versailles, the twenty-eighth day of January, in the year of Grace, one-thousand-seven-hundred-and-three, and the sixtieth year of our reign...
>
> Registered in the book of the Society of Printers and Publishers, the 6th of February,1703. Signed: P.Trabouillet, Syndic.

The royal decree is repeated for each of the three volumes, which were, furthermore, given the approbation of L. Elies du Pin, and dated the 5th of January,1703. And we know the Ellies du Pin had been previously responsible, as had C.de Percelles, for the examination of the *Exercises of Piety for Use in the Christian Schools.*

The veil of anonymity had become transparent, and presently it would be completely stripped away. Canon Blain assures us that when De La Salle had extended his stay in Grenoble (1713--1714) he was correcting the manuscript of his *Duties*.[510] Maillefer adds that the revision ``did not please the publisher'' and that the book was reprinted in its original version.

The texts brought to light in 1907 by the conservator of the Library in Grenoble explain the basis in truth of the preceding account. They have already assisted us in specifying the date on which the Founder established residence in the Dauphiné [511] They are no less persuasive regarding the authorship of the book in question.

First of all, there exists, in De La Salle's handwriting, the copy of a new royal license:

> Our dear Sir...having appealed to grant him letters of permission to print instructions that he has written for use in the Christian Schools, namely The *Duties of a Christian Toward God* in continuous discourse, and others, We have permitted him and by these presents permit to have printed the said book in one or more volumes. Done at Versailles, the 19th day of the

509 The break indicated here by the...is found in the quoted text.
510 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 102
511 See above, Part Two, chap. x, pg.370

month of December, in the year of Grace 1711, and in the sixty-ninth year of our reign. Signed: by the king: Saint Hilaire.

This license seems to have been the third granted to the author himself since 1703. And the Grenoble edition, as both Blain and Maillefer testify, was the third after two others. The manuscript was entrusted to the printer Matthew Petit, according to agreements exchanged, on the one hand, between De La Salle and the stationer Molard, and, on the other hand, between Petit, Molard and Canon Disdier; these agreements, dated the 5th of March and the 9th of August, 1713, respectively, amounted to parts of the contract for the publication of the book. However, we have no copies of the Grenoble edition. The oldest extant volumes, after those of 1703, belong either to the Machuel edition (1727) or to the Dumesnil edition (1734), of which there exists only a copy of the third volume ((Concerning External and Public Worship).

We are unable to supply such a persuasive proof for the other writings. Nevertheless, there are numerous indications of their authenticity. Entire passages of the *Duties* are to found in the Instructions and *Prayers for Holy Mass, Confession and Communion*, the most ancient edition of which is Machuel's, 1734. As to the Religious Hymns, there are two different versions: the first, belonging to 1705, is introduced at the end of the third volume of the *Duties*; the other is added to the *Exercises of Piety for use in the Christian Schools*, in the copy that is in very poor condition which we described above.

The celebrated *The Rules of Decorum and Christian Civility* has been reedited nearly a hundred times, as the catalogue in the National Library attests. The author of the article ``La Salle'' in Ferdinand Buisson's Educational Dictionary asserts that he had in hand a copy of the 1729 edition, printed in Rouen by Francois Oursel. It may have been the first edition to bear the name of John Baptist de La Salle and the sixth since 1703, the period during which (according to the Foreword) the book first appeared.

This reference is included in a copy, in-12, issued by the presses of Francis Louis Carlier, in St.Omer and preserved in the Motherhouse Archives.
Everything leads to the assumption that the printer Antoine Chrétien published the *Civility* at the same time as the *Duties*, and nothing refutes the view that, according to Blain, the first writing goes back to the years at Vaugirard.[512]

It should be noted, however, that we perhaps no longer possess the primitive text in all its rigorous integrity. The St.Omer editor, while declaring that ``we must not deprive De La Salle of the fruit of his labor and the renown that is rightly his due'', does not disguise the fact that ``this seventh edition'' (i.e., his) ``has been carefully reexamined and corrected.

In summary (as, temporarily, we put to one side the *Conduct of Schools*, which requires special treatment) all the religious and educational writings published under the name of De La Salle in the 18th century can be attributed to him without the shadow of a doubt. Of course, the only original editions and revisions by the author that we still possess are the *Duties of a Christian* (1703) and the *Collection of Various Short Treatises* (1711). We believe that, for the publications closely attendant upon the Founder's death and supervised by his immediate disciples, the chances that the texts were changed are extremely small. The ``corrections'' they mention must have

14. See the article: ``Les Règles de la bienséance de saint J.-B.de La Salle'' in the Rivista lasalliana, for June 1935, pp. 218--239. We personally possess a copy that was published by P. Seyer and Behourt in Rouen; it includes the Foreword from the 6th edition, but an approbation dated the 21st of October 1741, signed by De Marcilly

been, on the whole, typographical. They left the style and the thought unaffected. The same thing cannot be said for more recent editions. But we shall not have to deal with any of these in connection with the books we shall be examining.

* * * *

It remains to say something about the specifically educational quality and value of De La Salle's writings. We believe that we shall be situating these works in their proper perspective if we examine them in four distinct groupings: School prayers, Hymns, and the treatises on Duties and on Politeness.

For the Christian Brothers' Schools there is a daily regulation that takes off from the same principles and moves in the same direction as the regulation for the Community. It conducts the child into the presence of suprasensible realities, opens his eyes to the ``view of faith'', and confers upon his intentions and actions a strength and sovereign dignity by translating them from the commonplace, ``everyday'' realm to the supernatural level.

At 8 o'clock, as class began, the Sign of the Cross was made, and the exhortation, frequently sounded in the Brothers' school, was pronounced: ``Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God''. And then the *Veni Sancte Spiritus* was recited. The children then declared that they came ``to school to know, love and serve'' Jesus the Savior.

``Each particular lesson began with the following prayer...`My God, I shall recite my lesson for the love of You; please bestow Your blessing upon it.'" And at the end the pupils said: ``May God be blessed forever!''

At 9 o'clock and again at 10 o'clock there was a short pause during which the children left off their simple tasks, as, for a passing moment they slipped into eternity:

> Blessed be the day and the hour of the birth, death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. My God, I give You my heart; grant me the Grace to spend this hour and the rest of the day in Your holy love and free from sin.

The *Ave Maria* was recited. There followed an act of faith, the object of which varied according to the day of the week. Thus, for example, Tuesday's act of faith:

> *My God, I firmly believe that You have given man an immortal soul in order to know, love and serve You in this world and to enjoy You eternally in Heaven: and in this faith, I adore You, and I love You with all my heart.*

Each day, also, the teacher explained a ``point'' in the examination of conscience, in such a way that in four weeks all the Commandments would have been reviewed and presented for the pupils' reflection.

Morning and afternoon classed concluded with a series of prayers: Thanksgiving to God for the instruction received, for life preserved, for sanctifying Grace and actual Graces; adoration of the Blessed Trinity; invocation of the Holy Spirit and homage to Jesus Christ. Afterwards there was the teacher's reflection on the good use of time, the offering of resolutions, *Pater, Ave, Credo, Confiteor*, prayers to the Guardian Angels, to the Patron Saints, and prayers for the souls in Purgatory.

> Finally, while, two by two, the pupils left school, one of them who had duty as ``the prayer monitor'' remained in his place and unaccompanied, in a loud, clear voice announced: Let us pray to God for our Teachers, our Parents and for our living Benefactors, so that God may preserve them in the faith of the Roman, Apostolic and Catholic Church and in His holy love...Let us pray for our teachers, relatives and our Benefactors who are dead and let us say the De profundis for the repose of their souls.

Before the school emptied there still remained time to add a *Miserere* for the forgiveness of faults committed at school.

It must be confessed that so many prayers seem burdensome and excessively austere. Children were likely to lighten the load by escaping into distractions and routine. But fortunately, the gravity of our ancestors permitted the introduction into education of elements of relaxation that were intended to awaken the spirit and to recall the vagrant imagination. Song, the psychological and moral value of which is thoroughly acknowledged today, was not excluded from the program of the Brothers' schools. In his *Civility* De La Salle calls it ``not only a permissible, but a thoroughly respectable diversion", and extremely useful.[513] This is why he added ``religious hymns" to the school prayers. [514]

The Founder had no aptitude for music (as Canon Blain tells us), and his language was not that of a poet. But, then his hymnals are not collections of personal compositions. He borrowed from common sources, which Grignion de Montfort did not disdain, even though he was in his own right musically gifted: *Religious Hymns on the Principal Mysteries of our Religion...for missions and catechism classes*, published in 1699 in Paris, by J. Nully. De La Salle was especially indebted to the prolific Abbé Pellegrin, that curious clerical figure with the very independent manner, who moved easily from the sacred to the profane, and who, at times a devout versifier while at others ``the father of the Opera", alternated both in his life and in his work between dashing couplets and edifying rhymes. Known throughout France, Pellegrin's religious hymns appeared in book form in Paris, beginning in 1701, published by Nicholas Le Clerc. De Montfort made use of a number of them. But De La Salle outstripped him by borrowing from Pellegrin *Come, Divine Messiah*; *O Supreme King*; *O My Good Jesus*, (the origin of which goes back to St.John Eudes), *Secretly the Lord Calls me*; *After the Happy Courts;* etc. The Founder's hymns to the Holy Spirit in preparation for catechism are textually in Pellegrin's ``revised and corrected" edition (published by Le Clerc, 1721).

Overall, some sixty hymns were put to use in his schools by the Founder of the Institute. They make up three groups in the collection that is appended to the *Duties*:

> Hymns for catechism, religious hymns in which Christians are taught what they must believe in order to be saved, and religious hymns for the principal feasts and solemnities of the year. Twenty are reprinted in the *Exercises of Piety*.

They have, of course, no literary pretensions. In France, at least, the hymn has been, perhaps, an altogether too convenient and facile way of remembering the truths of faith and of expressing group prayer. And we have hardly given any thought to joining to the vigor of belief that beauty of word and rhythm which is, in its own way, although to a lesser degree, a tribute to God.

As for the music, what was sought was something extremely simple for a people who, more logical than artistic, were only indifferently attentive to the harmonious constructions of sound. In this matter our ancestors had something less than a developed taste. They were completely unaffected by strategies that appear strange to us: indecorous ditties and drinking songs lent their coarse melodies to words inspired by the purest and most sincere Christian spirit. Thus the music for *O Supreme King* is borrowed from *The Burghers of Chartres*; and ``the joy" of a great feast is expressed to the tune of *Let us take Glass in Hand*; and the *Heavenly Powers* are celebrated in the same musical modes as ``Pleasant Gabrielle" or ``Pleasant Iris". This practice reflected a sort of *naiveté*, a candor and amiability that sought effortlessly to clean up muddied waters; and went so far as to think ``to dissipate

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15. Rules of Decorum and Christian Civility, Part Two, chap. v, art. 4.

514 16 Cf. *Rivista lasallliana*, September 1935, *Il canto nelle scuole primarie De La Salle*

every kind of temptation of the evil spirit".[515.] by forcing the devil to praise God and His saints.

We may, of course, smile; but it is insensitive and disrespectful to find this a joking matter. For the rest, we need insist no further on hymns. They are of interest to us because they testify to De La Salle's quite comprehensive educational theory. The educator who tries to establish better methods will outstrip his own personal limitations; in an area where he has no competence and in which, nevertheless, he may not without prejudice interdict his pupils, he selects a guide. He refuses to innovate; he uses precedents and customs; and he introduces them into his system, not only without damage to the plan, but as anticipated supplements and indispensable corollaries.

With the *Duties of a Christian*, John Baptist de La Salle returned to his own turf.[516] One might well ask, however, whether, in this particular case, it is a textbook. In his preface the author addresses fully mature minds.

> To make profession of a religion and not to know what it is, to be unaware of the meaning of the name one bears, to what it binds, and the essential duties it imposes seem totally contrary to good sense and right reason; but this is what is usually the case with most Christians; they are Christians without knowing what it is to be one, and precious few take the trouble to become informed as to what must be done in order to live consistently within such a profession.

From one end of the book to the other, the doctrine is powerful, indeed austere, and, while preserving a balance, a sure-handedness and a perfect lucidity, it transcends middle ground, as it soars toward the heights of the evangelical counsels and the distant reaches of the ``school'' of Jean-Jacques Olier and Cardinal Bérulle. The style is careful, accurate, limpid, but moving in long sentences, without images to ease the spirit and without colors to rejoice it. There are marvelous passages on the vocation of the Apostles, on Our Lord's life of poverty (Part One, Treatise I, chap.iv.), on the government of the Church and the authority of the Popes (chap.v), on God, ``our center and our true end'', Who seeks ``to find in us a propensity or inclination toward Him and freely gives us His holy love'', so that we might be able to love Him (Part One, Treatise II, chap.i). On the commandment concerning alms, there are some very useful details, following St.Thomas Aquinas (ch.iii); and on ``sin against the Holy Spirit'' a quite complete definition (chap.vii) and striking commentaries on the Beatitudes (chap.ix). In the Second Part there is a parallel between the seven Sacraments and ``seven the things that are necessary for man to live, to preserve his bodily life'' and to survive among human beings (First Treatise, chap.i); detailed instructions on the Sacrament of Baptism are provided (Chap.ii), on the Eucharistic Doctrine of the Fathers of the Church (chap.iv), and the distinction to be made between the Eucharist as sacrifice and the Eucharist as Sacrament (Chap.v). Explanations of Penance (chaps.vi & vii) are no less researched, well planned and exhaustive. Concerning the attitudes one should bring to the reception of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, John Baptist de La Salle's counsel applies quite directly to priests devoid of a vocation, of which his epoch was not wanting in instances (chap.ix). Precisely described sacramental rites for Marriage provide an occasion for recalling the guidelines for the Christian family.(chap.x). Finally, on Prayer, which is essentially ``a raising of our heart to God'', an offering of the will and of one's entire

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515. A collection of ``Religious Hymns'' published by a Father de Naves declares in its title that such is the purpose of the editor

516 De La Salle's book can in no way be confused with the catechism of Claude Joly, Bishop of Agen, published at least thirty years earlier (the 5th edition appeared in 1674), entitled *The Duties of a Christian*. See Guibert, pg. 422.

being, without hesitation, reservation or calculation, St. Cyprian, St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom supply him with magnificent texts.(Part Two, Treatise II, chaps. i--v).

But, in the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, these are not ``the rudiments of the words of God'', nor are they milk for children. This is ``solid food for the mature, for those who by practice have their faculties trained to discern good and evil''.[517] To whom, then, was the *Duties* really addressed?

Dom Maillefer who, although he speaks only for the second and third volumes, says that they were written for the novices. In fact, the *Duties* in catechetical form (i.e., volume two) would be marvelously suited to young men preparing to become aides to the clergy, whose principal mission would be to teach religion in schools. Since their own education was rather rudimentary and their vocation a special one, what they needed in theology, morals and liturgy was a textbook devoid of learned terminology, casuistical subtilties, or exegetical and historical digressions; but it would have to cover all of Revelation, accompanied by the most authoritative explanations which exhibited the constant influence of Doctrine upon the life of the individual and the Church, and substantially nourish their minds and their faith, and enable them to select and dispense the bread and milk that is suited to children.

As teachers, they would continue to read and study this ``Brothers' catechism'' to which Blain alludes, as the Rule prescribes. Questioned by their superiors, they would have to furnish the answers included in the second volume of the *Duties.*

As regards the ``continuous discourse'' of volume one, there is no doubt but that it found a place in the libraries of novitiates and communities. It was a family treasure, where it was not placed under lock and key. How otherwise explain its extraordinary diffusion and the frequent reprinting of this first volume by itself, if it had not achieved the status of a classic? It may be that it is to this volume that the following passage from the *Conduct of Schools* is alluding:

> The second book to be used in the Christian Brothers' schools will be the book of Christian Instruction.[518]

Obviously children were not asked to comprehend it fully. They studied religion in diocesan catechisms and in the two Abridgments that De La Salle had offprinted for them from the 500 pages of this volume. The book itself was for them nothing more than a text in which they learned to read. Neither was it entirely jargon, since the young readers recognized the words and thoughts that religious instruction and daily prayers had made familiar to them. However, at this stage of their studies all that was demanded of them was ``to spell out'' each syllable ``perfectly''. The aspect of the doctrine that escaped them would be engraved upon their memory. And later on they would grasp the meaning that lay hidden under imperfectly comprehended signs. There was nothing in the way of their returning to the precious book before they left school. Indeed, they would have to read fluently, ``in sentences'', from a ``third book'', which the *Conduct* left to the choice of the Brothers Director ``in each place'', provided the approval of the Brother Superior of the Institute had been obtained.[519] It seems normal, and probable, that the *Duties* must have been frequently selected. In 1832 De La Salle's book continued to appear in the ``general catalogue of French and foreign books intended for young people'', an official list sanctioned by the Minister of Public Instruction. And fifty years later a circular letter issued by Brother Joseph once again recommended it as a ``Reader'' in the schools.

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517 *Epistle to the Hebrews*, V, 12--14

518 *Conduct*, 1720 ed., Part One, chap. iii, art. 5: ``of the second book''.

519 Op. cit., First Part, chap. iii, art 6; ``of the third book''

In brief, the *Duties of a Christian toward God*, the most important classic of Lasallian literature, a masterpiece of its kind and one of the biggest ``best sellers'' of times gone by, is not marginal to the Founder's philosophy of education; but while associated with it, the book *in toto* does not belong to it.

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On the other hand, the 250 pages of the book, *Rules of Decorum and Christian Civility* is, before all else, intended as a book for teachers.

> When the pupils know how to read in French perfectly and shall be in the third Latin `form', they shall be taught to write, and they shall be taught to read in the book of id *Christian Civility*. This book contains the duties of children in relation to God as well as in relation to their parents, and the rules of civil and Christian politeness. It is printed in Gothic letters more difficult to read than French letters.[520]

We notice the double educational purpose of the *Civility*: one, extrinsic, to perfect the pupil in the art of reading, while enabling him to learn a special typography (similar to that of manuscripts), at the same time he is receiving his first instruction in penmanship. The other purpose, which is intrinsic and essential, is to attempt to teach the pupil how to live. Such instruction did not replace moral and religious education; rather it had for object that formal ``decency'' in which all peoples, whatever their ``customs'', see the evidence or the reflection (however, at times misleading) of natural probity, that ``politeness'' in which the conscience is more or less involved, because, really or apparently, there is at work a social virtue, and, in fact, if we adopt the Christian point of view, the beginning of the supernatural virtue of charity.

In this connection, De La Salle was continuing a venerable tradition that was more than a century old. The text just quoted from the *Conduct* is obviously similar to one found in the *Parish School*. The anonymous author wrote in 1654 as follows:

> When the pupils know how to read French well, they must be given some *Civility*, which contains the duties of children both toward God and their parents, as well as politeness and good habits, both Christian and civil.

In this passage the choice of textbook was left to the teacher. There was, of course, a whole literature of ``Civilities''. It had its distant origins in the *Distica de moribus ad filium*, which the Middle Ages attributed to Cato the Elder and which, in the 16th century, was translated into French by Francis Habert with the title: Cato's Four Books on the Education of Youth. And Guy du Four de Pibrac, the poet of the *Moral Quatrains* and the friend of Chancellor L'Hospital, became for his contemporaries the lawgiver in matters of courtesy and good manners.

But earlier, Erasmus had published (at Bâle, in 1530) his *De Civilitate morum puerilium*, the source and model of the almost countless ``Civilities'' which followed. His book was translated into French in 1537. In 1559 an edition in cursive characters was published by presses in Antwerp.

Mathurin Cordier, in his Civil Decency for Children, was influenced by Erasmus. The work had a great success: it inaugurated the special typography that publishers in Lyons, John de Tournes and Granjon, were thought to have invented about 1557 and which would remain in use for ``Civilities'' for two hundred years.

In the 17th and 18th centuries imitations, rearrangements and plaigerisms of Erasmus and Cordier grew apace. They were generally printed in Toul, Troyes, Orleans or Chatellerault, and always with the same title: *Treatise on Civility, Decent Civility, Christian and Decent Civility.* The Methodical Instruction for the *Parish*

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520 *Conduct*, 1720 ed., Part One, chap. iii, art. 9: Concerning Christian Politeness.

School, published in 1685, includes as its fourth part ``the most customary practices of politeness that can be taught in schools''.

In the matter of behavior and good manners, we can be sure that the colleges were not behindhand in relation to the primary schools; and Père Jouvency's *Ratio discendi et docendi* (Paris, 1711) witnesses to the importance that the Jesuits attached to this aspect of education.

We already know, especially through a chapter in his Rule, that throughout his life De La Salle loved and practiced an exquisite gentility. He surely did not meet with his ideal in the more or less ``Erasmian'' handbooks that were current, and it is easy to understand how he quickly resolved to write a ``Civility'' that would not only be ``at a child's level and simple'', but which, while scrupulously and methodically assembling a code of customs, would (better than any of its predecessors) clarify the Christian foundations of ``courtesy''.

Hygiene, fashion and convenience have made obsolete many of the prescriptions that our ancestors observed in the simplicity of their hearts. And we cannot always successfully resist a smile at some of the details. But in reading this sort of thing, we must seek something more than an occasion for thoughtless mirth. If we go to the heart of the matter, we find that *The Rules of Decorum*, the work of a gentleman and a saint, continues to be one of the models of our civilization.

Its style and spirit belong to the age of Louis XIV, to a strenuous people that was open and its own master. The author selects the exact word and adopts just the right tone. In himself and in his book he recapitulates the humanism of many generations - a humanism that issues from the Gospel:

Not to take the first place; be like children so as to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; be master only to serve; as master or king, wash the feet of the poor; love your enemy as yourself. These are the divine precepts which control the relations among Christians, just as they determine the organization of the City of God. Decorum, deference, politeness, sociability are all earthly, natural virtues; but the love of God and of neighbor gives them a new direction, a worth that knows no devaluation.

And thus transformed (or rather restored to their pristine purity), De La Salle offers them to his disciples and his readers:

> Christian courtesy is...a well behaved and well ordered conduct that one shows in speech and in external actions through a sense of modesty, respect, union and charity in relation to one's neighbor, while paying attention to time, place and the persons with whom one is conversing. (Preface)

That modesty ``must appear in the bearing and the attitude of the different parts of the body'' is the guiding idea of the fourteen chapters in which there is discussion of the face, the gait, pronunciation, care of the body, as well as of certain improprieties. The Christian must ``exhibit'' a nobility and a goodness marked by gravity ``in his entire conduct'', because he is ``high-born''. Belonging to Jesus Christ, and a child of the Sovereign Being, he will have ``a certain loftiness and dignity'' in direct, although obviously distant, relationship to ``the power and majesty of the God Whom he serves''. It is a simple, unaffected dignity, since it owes nothing to pride or ridiculous ``self-esteem''. As to ourselves, we respect only God residing within us. His presence, both external and internal, forces us to discipline the beast within us and place our entire body at the service of the soul.

In the language of the book's Preface, the announced subject of the Second Part concerns

> external signs of respect or special affection that must be shown, in the various acts of life, to all persons with whom we must perform them or with whom we must have relations.

This theme must be understood quite broadly, since the ten chapters constituting the volume's largest single section (200 of the 250 pages) deals in turn with rising and retiring, how to dress and undress oneself, clothes, food, recreation, visiting, discussions and conversations, how to give and receive gifts, how to behave on meeting someone, how to warm oneself, how to behave when walking on the streets, while travelling in carriages or on horseback, and letters.

The most important of these chapters are subdivided into articles and sections. In these many, minute ``rules'' there is the order, the precision and the surprising logic, as well as the perspicacity and the moderation of an eminently reasonable man. What De La Salle has to say about `fashion', for instance, is worthy of comparison with some of the best of La Bruyère:

> Fashion is the way people design their clothes at the present time; we are expected to conform as much as regards hat and linen, as in the more important parts of our attire...But we need not from the outset submit to all of these fashions; some of them are unreasonable and absurd...which, ordinarily, are followed only by a small number of people and do not last. The surest and most reasonable rule regarding fashion is not to start it, not to be the first to follow it, and not to wait to be the last to give it up. (II, chap. ii, art.1)

The virtue of cleanliness, which is a respect for oneself and charity for one's neighbor, occupies a prominent place in the author's recommendations. He speaks of it in relation to the body and returns to it when he writes about clothing; he condemns the negligent who allow their clothes to become dusty and dirty, torn or spotted, or whose linen is suspect. All of this is ``a sign of an inferior education and poor management''(II, chap.ii, art.2) Similarly, most of the counsels regarding how to act at table have as their object to teach children (and how many others!) how to avoid being repulsive diners.

Whether it be a question of food, of outings or of play, the central rule is never to overturn the hierarchy of values, to subordinate the flesh to the spirit, pleasure to the moral law, and, by way of moderation, to observe self-mastery in everything. ``To show attachment to food is, in the words of St .Paul, to glory in our shame.''(II, chap.v)

> The Wise man says there is a time for laughter, and it is appropriately the time that follows meals...(But) politeness prescribes...rules regarding the way we laugh. And it never allows us to laugh raucously, nor, even less so, does it permit us to laugh in such a profligate and indiscreet way as to become breathless...(II chap.v, art.1)...There are especially two passions against which we must be on our guard when at play: the first is meanness, and it is this which is usually the source of the second, which is impatience and outbursts of anger.(Art. 3)

The famous chapter seven on ``discussions and conversations'' is a forty-page treatise on the proper use of the tongue.

> If, as the holy Apostle James says, we can be sure that man is perfect if he commits no sin while speaking, we must also be convinced that one who commits no fault against politeness when he speaks knows perfectly well how to live in the world.

In requiring ``truth and sincerity'', in cautioning against oaths, blasphemies, slander, mockery, rudeness, dullness, silly displays of vanity, obstinacy, and disputes, De La Salle wrote with all his authority as priest and director of souls.

A Christian, sensitive to these teachings, attentive lest he injure anyone, lest he inflate his own ``ego'' to the point that it becomes everywhere an issue in everything he does, and careful to prefer the convenience of others to his own, would be very close indeed to realizing the type of ``integral human being'', not only in the modern sense, but also in the ancient meaning of the expression. True, perhaps, he might be unaware of some of the tactics of the worldly-wise; however, he would scarcely commit a social blunder, while coarseness and impertinence would be absolutely foreign to him. Our peasants and crafts-people of another day possessed tact; and

their politeness (frequently formal), their greetings, their gestures of hospitality, were proof of a nobility of spirit and of genuine civilization.

During the entire 18th century the sons of the French working people learned to behave as educated and Christian men from the book by ``John Baptist de La Salle, priest, doctor of theology, and Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools".

CHAPTER FIVE

The ``Conduct of the Christian Schools"

Preserved in manuscript form throughout the lifetime of the Founder, the *Conduct of the Christian Schools*, pretty nearly from the origin of the Institute, had been the fundamental book of the Brother as teacher, ``the charter"[521] which prescribed his duties, stood as a barrier to his personal caprices, risky experiments and his slightest arbitrary impulses in the matter of education and teaching.

It is quite evident that this book was not written once for all for the use of De La Salle's disciples. It can be assumed that Nyel and his associates used the *Parish School* as their guide. When De La Salle took over not only the spiritual but the professional direction of the teachers, he regulated the times and the order of lessons, just as he regulated daily community exercises. Changes suggested by common sense, personal experience as well as the example of other schools must have become immediately the topic for a number of written memoranda, copies of which may have been attached to the pages of old textbooks that circulated through the communities in Rheims, Rethel, Laon and Guise.

When he arrived in Paris in 1688 De La Salle seems to have been fully in possession of his method. This is what enabled him, in spite of Compagnon and Rafrond, radically to transform the tumultuous school on Rue Princesse. It did not take long for the first two parts of the *Conduct* (those dealing with school practices and how to establish and maintain order) to become systematized. Their finished version, no doubt, belongs to the author's period of great literary activity, 1694 - 1698. It is possible to attempt to be even more precise. Indeed, there is a text by Brother Agathon, Superior-general at the time of the French Revolution[522] which affirms that the text of the *Conduct of the Director of Young Teachers* was dated 1696. But the *Conduct of Directors*….as we shall see, was included in the Third Part of the *Conduct of Schools*. It is not, then, over-bold to suggest that the book as a whole was in existence well before the exodus from Vaugirard to the ``Grande Maison".

Like the primitive Rule, the *Conduct* (as the Founder had planned) in a state of continuous revision. In the beginning a highly developed outline, it provided each teacher with a model to follow. Although always law, it was a provisional law placed in the hands of the Directors. However, the copies they had made did not always include the entire text. In this way are explained the lacunae, of which we shall speak later on.

A 300 page manuscript in the National Library (Ms.fr.11, 759), in folio, bearing the title: ``*Conduct of the Christian Schools* Divided into Three Parts", serves as our fundamental document[523]. Its date is thought to be 1706, since this year shows up in several places on the pages of this book, in connection with records that the Brothers were obliged to keep. The model provided for the ``record of admissions of pupils" is entitled ``Record of pupils received and admitted for the schools of the house in Rheims in the year 1706". Another is the ``record of pupils in the fourth grade on Rue St.Placide in 1706, with reference to their good and bad qualities". Still

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521 Cf. ``*La Conduite des Ecoles chrétiennes*" Carta della scuola primaria lasalliana, in the *Rivista lasall*iana, issue for December 1934, pp. 634--661

522 Motherhouse Archives (A.M.G.), File no. 45

523. The first page bears the words ``volume of 303 pages". Pages 191 and 202 are missing and there is a pg.87 bis

another is the record of the order of lessons ``in the third grade at Rue Princesse, for January, 1706". Finally, in relation to an admittance made to ``the school on Rue Tillois" (Rheims), there is mention of ``the 19th of October, 1706". Does this mean that this manuscript of the *Conduct* was written, or perhaps copied, in that year? In the first edition of the book (the 1720 edition) the model of the list of lesson schedules is supposed to refer to ``Rue St. Vivien" (a school in Rouen) ``for the month of March, 1722"; which seems to suggest that the selected dates are purely conventional, and, in the manuscript under consideration, they may well be, as they are in the printed edition, arbitrary future dates. We might assume, then, that the copy (and, *a fortiori*, the original, which we no longer possess) was written some years prior to the date adopted in the ``models". The houses in Rheims and Paris that are mentioned in the ``models" existed in 1697. Without going back that far, it is possible to assign the document in the National Library a date which would situate it at about 1704 or 1705.[524] Thus, it is quite probable that we are here dealing with a text very close in time to the initial composition. And it is absolutely certain that the copy on which the first edition was established bears marks of a more recent time. As we shall point out, it includes corrections and variants which leave no room for doubt in this regard.

Furthermore, the manuscript in the National Library refers to ``the duties of the Inspector of Schools". The Preface of the 1720 edition of the *Conduct* alluded to this supplement, but it was not printed until the end of the 18th century.

The first two parts of the *Conduct* of *the Christian Schools* was the whole of the book that was published ``in Avignon, by Joseph Chastanier, printer and bookseller, near the College of the Jesuit Fathers, MDCCXX, with permission of the Superiors", and bearing as a motto a verse from the St.Paul's First Epistle to Timothy (chap.iv,16):

> Take heed to thyself and to thy teaching, be earnest in them. For in so doing thou wilt save both thyself and those who hear thee.

Finally,[525] as in the *Collection*, ``the twelve virtues of a good teacher" are simply listed. The *Imprimatur*, which follows immediately, was general Pierre La Crampe. Hence, we granted by the Vicar-general Pertuys and the Inquisitor-must conclude that the manuscript of the *Conduct* was submitted for approval in the Papal Territory at the same time as other school books of which De La Salle speaks in his letters of 1705,[526] or, at least, along with the *Collection*, i.e., between 1705 and 1709 as the extreme limit.[527] The approval continued to be valid for the actual printing.

We come now to the final text, mentioned in the prefaces of both of the manuscripts in the National Library and of the Chastanier edition, but which thereafter disappears from both documents. We refer to the fragment of the

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524. It will be recalled that from July to October 1706, after painful wrangling, the Brothers were withdrawn from the St.Sulpice schools. Such was not the moment for introducing the names of these schools into model records. The 1705 version of the Common Rule refers quite explicitly to the method and to the ``School Rules" (cf. above, pp. 516, 517). And we shall have occasion to reflect later on that the Manuscript of the *Conduct* attracted the attention of the church authorities in Avignon probably in 1705.)

525 At pg. 118 (*sic*) rather than pg. 228.
526 See above, pg. 543
527 *Ibid*., pg. 469

``Third Part'' of the *Conduct* to which also belongs the section dealing with the duties of the Inspector. This Preface states:

> The Third (Part) treats, firstly, of the duties of the Inspector of Schools; secondly, of the care and diligence to be observed by the Director of new teachers; thirdly, of the qualities which the teachers should have or should acquire, of the conduct which they should maintain in order to acquit themselves well of their duties in the schools; and, fourthly, of those things to be observed by the pupils.

In the Paris manuscript we have nothing but the ``first'' point. However, a copy of the rest of the passage (the original of which, now lost, had been examined by Brother Agathon) has been found in the Departmental Archives of Vaucluse (Series H,1,2,& 3). We are referring to a notebook, coverless, in large foolscap format, and comprising 24 pages. It is entitled as follows: *Rule of the Director of new Teachers*, and, on the last page we read: *Training new Teachers or the third part of the Conduct of Schools.* It seems clear that this title lumps together the entire final section of the great educational treatise composed by John Baptist de La Salle (including what concerns the pupils in a brief chapter entitled ``the spirituality that must be sought for the children''). It even adds a ``Rule for the Master of Resident Pupils'' and a short note on the ``different kinds of schools in this Institute''. The document has no date. All that can be said is that it was written in the 18th century.

The combination of the three documents (Parisian, Avignon and the 1720 edition) gives us the *Conduct of Schools* as, or pretty nearly as, De La Salle planned and executed it. But we shall attempt to show what a closer analysis will help us to conclude concerning the book's evolution.

The discrepancies between what has been called the ``1706 manuscript'' and the first edition are relatively few (apart from the fragment on the *Duties of the Inspector*), and they do not involve anything essential.[528] This general similarity testifies in favor of authenticity: from the very beginning of both documents there is evidence of the thought of the master.

And it is certain that from the outset these pages were in the Founder's own handwriting, which makes their loss all the more regrettable. That these pages demanded a slow and difficult elaboration and that they were several times rewritten after consultation with the most competent disciples, along with experimental verification and tests, are clearly witnessed by the preface.

> This Conduct has been prepared and written in the form of a rule only after a great number of conferences with the oldest and most able teachers among the Brothers of the Institute, and after several years of experience. Nothing has been added that has not been thoroughly deliberated upon and well tested, and of which the advantages have not been weighed and, in so far as possible, the blunders and bad consequences have not been foreseen.

The printed book includes this prefatory statement, while adding the name of the author (``this conduct has been prepared and put in order by the late John Baptist de La Salle….''); it strikes out the word ``*blunder*'', and the end of the sentence becomes, ``in so far as possible, the good and bad consequences have been foreseen''.

The Manuscript continues:

> Although this management is not written in the style of a rule, since there are many practices in it that are only for the better teachers and which would not perhaps be easily observed by those who have only small talent for school teaching; but since many of them are accompanied and supported by explanations in order to provide understanding and information how one must behave when using them, the Brothers shall nevertheless apply themselves with very great care to be faithful in the observance of all of them.

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528 We would like to note that the detailed collation done by the late, lamented Brother Martial Andrew of Louvain on the two texts has greatly facilitated our task.

This paragraph, which ingenuously (if one might hazard the expression) discloses certain anxieties and scruples, was not retained in the printed version.

On the other hand, a letter from Brother Timothy, which did duty as an introduction addressed ``to the Brothers of the Christian Schools", succeeded in describing the genesis of the book:

> ...You are witnesses, and God knows it, with what attention and charity he (our venerable Father), together with the principal and most experienced Brothers of the Institute, sought suitable means of maintaining among you a holy uniformity in our manner of educating youth. He drew up in writing all that he believed to be expedient for that purpose, and prepared a Management of Schools, which he exhorted you to read again and again, in order to learn from it what would be most useful to you...
>
> This *Conduct*, my dear Brothers, was soon introduced into all the Houses of the Institute, where everyone gloried in conforming to it. However, as there were several things in it that could not be put into practice, the Brothers of the Assembly which was held for the purpose of electing the first Brother Superior represented to De La Salle that it would be expedient to make some corrections. He approved their proposition, and thus it was put into better order than it had been before.
>
> You indicated clearly, my dear Brothers, by the eagerness with which you requested that the work thus corrected should be sent to your Houses, the extent of your approval of what the Brothers of this Assembly had done ...

But, the letter writer adds, copyists were too few; and, on the other hand, their transcriptions were not always faithful. This is why ``some of the most zealous Brothers...had entreated the Most Honored Brother Superior (Brother Barthélemy) to allow the (C*onduct*)...to be printed". ``He re-read it with great attention and had it carefully examined in order to eliminate all that might be useless."

The evidence seems to be beyond challenge. There can be no doubt that the 1720 text resulted from the collaboration of De La Salle and the Brothers in the Assembly of 1717, followed by changes (actually, quite limited) introduced by Brother Barthélemy. Also, it is to be assumed that the Founder, during the last months of his life, did not personally reedit the text: he was physically weakened and his last efforts must have been directed toward the final version of the Rule. He offered suggestions and notes attached to the copy he had for his own use. Brother Barthélemy and others of the Brothers attached to St.Yon must have assumed the most burdensome part of the task. This is what the statement in the introduction to the 1720 edition, with its intentionally impersonal subject pronoun (``*On l'a mis dans un meilleur état* ...it has been put into better shape") seems to be saying.

In having the *Conduct* printed the Superiors of the Institute were only providing for its usefulness to the Brothers and not some bibliographical interest or an explicit wish to make a contribution to the art of Pedagogy. As a consequence, they left out the ``third part" which (as the Prefaces state) was for the exclusive use ``of the Brothers Director and those who trained young teachers". That decision nearly cost us these chapters, which have a value all their own.

The question arises as to whether what the Avignon version preserved of the rule of the Brother who trained young teachers was composed by John Baptist de La Salle. Actually, the writing does not seem to be that of the author of the *Conduct*. There is something about its style that is more agile, more precocious, more youthful, and more contemporary. And then there are certain passages, for example the paragraphs devoted to children's ``spirituality", that look like notes dashed off on the fly. However, the spirit that inspires its pages is clearly ``Lasallian". The final remarks concerning ``the different kinds of Houses" refer to conditions that no longer existed after the death of the Founder: for they deal not only with novitiates and

school communities, but also with ``houses that are seminaries in which the Brothers strove during several years to educate schoolteachers for parishes in small towns, market-towns and country villages". They demanded the presence of ``at least five Brothers" in a community, except in a ``very small number" of houses where it was possible to do with two teachers, provided that ``they were close to some city", where there would be ``a fully staffed house...of this Institute". In any case, we can observe here the persistence of ancient rules and a program of the educational apostolate which refused to suppress any prescription, even though a hundred years old. Avignon, the center of recruitment and the headquarters of the Congregation of the Brothers for the provinces in the South of France, meant to abandon nothing of the inheritance received from the Founder. The Directors of novices handed on the documents belonging to the earliest period, the Common Rule of 1705 and the third part of the *Conduct of Schools*. And one of them, perhaps, preserved for his personal use and that of his novices, the plan and the essential principles of the Rule for the Director of teacher training.

* * * *

The teachings and the details of the *Conduct of the Christian Schools* have been the subject of careful study and of dissertations by specialists in the field of education, particularly in Belgium, Holland, Germany, Italy and the United States. A detailed analysis, along with an adequate commentary, would require an entire volume. We cannot presume to take the reader of a ``general history" so far afield. However, it is important to get an exact idea of the book before launching into an account of the development of the Institute, first in France and then throughout the world, over the past two hundred years. Had the Brothers not been both faithful to their religious Rule and to their traditions as educators, they would have been less coherent and less durable. And just as the Management distilled from educational practice and theory what was suited to the sound and rapid instruction, and the elementary intellectual formation, of working class children, similarly the Brothers of John Baptist de La Salle distilled from the *Conduct* the most productive psychological and supernatural values.

In a very simple analysis, we shall sketch the plan of the book; and, then, setting aside the scaffolding, the table of contents, we shall collect under a handful of headings the principles, methods and procedures, the continuous and coherent application of which reformed primary education at the end of the 17th century. The 1720 edition will be our guide, but, when parallel texts raise interesting points, we shall have recourse to the Parisian manuscript. Finally, we shall point out pages both in this latter document and in the Avignon manuscript which normally would have been assembled to form the third part of the book.

``School exercises and the manner of conducting them", is the complete title of the first part, which, for seven of its chapters, corresponds, on the whole, to the third part of the Parish School: - ``Concerning what must be taught in school, which is knowledge"; and for its three remaining chapters, it corresponds to the second part of the same book: -``Concerning piety".[529] The first chapter deals with ``entering and beginning school". It is subdivided into two articles: the entrance of the pupils and

529 See above, First Part, chap. iv.

the entrance of the teachers, since the latter entered only after the children were assembled and arranged by responsible ``officers''; prayers were recited immediately after the teacher took his place, at 8:00 a.m. and at 1:30 p.m.

Breakfast as well as a ``light refreshment'' in the afternoon were taken in the classroom. Breakfast followed immediately upon prayer and was concluded at 8:30 a.m. Thus, it is the topic of the second chapter. Article One: ``Things to which the teacher must attend during Breakfast and `lunch'''. Article Two: ``What is done during breakfast and `lunch'''. The Parisian manuscript adds a third article which the 1720 edition incorporates into the first article: ``Collection for the poor and the manner of distributing it''. Children coming from less needy homes were invited to sacrifice a portion of their food, which was then distributed to their indigent classmates.

We come next to ``studies'' and the very important chapter three, with its six articles: ``The course of studies'' (article one, which is composed of three sections: ``General observations on the course of studies''; ``the posture which the teacher and pupils should maintain and the manner in which they should deport themselves during lessons''; and ``How the teachers should prepare the pupils for promotion'');``Charts'' (the title of article two in the Manuscript, as the first edition specifies the contents of this article only in three sections, where the word `charts' is replaced by `tables':`` The two tables of the alphabet and syllables, and what they should contain, and the manner of arranging the pupils who are reading them''; ``Method of reading the alphabet''; ``Method of reading the table of syllables''.) Article three: ``The Primer''; Article four: ``The first book''; Article five: ``The second book'' (book of ``Christian instruction'' for the reading of syllables); Article six: ``The third book'' (for cursive reading); Article seven: ``Tables of vowels and consonants, of punctuation and accents, and of numerals''; Article eight: ``Reading Latin''; Article nine: ``On Christian civility''; Article ten: Records (i.e., to be sure, the reading of ``handwritten papers or parchments'', court writs, orders, business receipts, notarized contracts, with which the child---during his final months in school---practiced the deciphering of a variety of samples of handwriting, translating abbreviations and memorizing stylistic phrases and formulas).

The twenty-five pages of the third chapter (pp.16 - 42 of the 1720 edition) contain a statement of two important rules of Lasallian pedagogy; ``simultaneity'' (the word is nowhere found in the *Conduct*, but it expresses the idea) and the priority of the mother tongue.

Moving more quickly through chapter four, ``Writing'', where nine articles the second is subdivided into six sections) enters into many details concerning paper, pens, how to sharpen them with a knife, ink, models (called `examples'), ``transparencies and blotting paper'', ``handwriting for bookkeeping and for finance, ``small hand'', ``round hand'', ``Italian script'' (The Parisian manuscript speaks of a slanting round hand, about which the 1720 edition is silent.),``How to teach the proper positioning of the body, the pen and the paper'', ``Inspection of writers and correction of writing''. The Conduct is much more diffuse, more precise and more practical on all these points than the *Parish School*, and we can well understand how it did not take the writing masters long to recognize the Brothers for the formidable competitors that they turned out to be.

Chapter five is devoted to arithmetic, and chapter six to spelling. The seventh chapter is on ``Prayers'': ``Daily prayers that are said in school''; ``reflections at morning prayer; and ``the examination of conscience at evening prayer'';`` Prayers

said in school on special occasions"; ``posture of the teacher and pupils during prayers"; ``manner of saying them"; ``the order that should be maintained".

The position of prominence given to Religion in the school has, so to speak, its external reflection in the number of pages and chapters that the holy Founder reserves for it in his book and which crown the first part of it. ``Holy Mass" is dealt with in chapter eight, and ``Catechism" in chapter nine. Further the Manuscript suggests that there was a chapter ten that would have discussed ``Hymns"; but it is probable that the writing of it was postponed and then abandoned. Where this topic was to be handled in the ``1706 copy" there is a blank page, and by 1720 there is no longer so much as a trace of the projected chapter. Prescriptions regarding Mass, Catechism and Prayers are, in both texts, developed over some thirty minutely arranged pages.

Having followed the pupil step by step throughout the hours of study and devotion, it time now to talk about his ``dismissal". The subject was discussed in the eleventh chapter of the Parisian Manuscript, but it became the tenth, and continued to be the last, chapter of the first part in the printed edition. It determined the ``manner in which the pupils should leave school", suggested or proposed ``the prayers that the pupils say during the time they are being dismissed from class"; to which is added, as article three, an explanation of the ``duties of the teachers while the pupils are leaving school and when they have left it".

On page 115, under the motto, ``The just man lives by faith", the second part of the *Conduct of the Christian Schools* begins: ``Means of establishing and maintaining order in the schools".

> There are nine principal things that contribute to establishing and maintaining order in the schools: 1. The vigilance of the teachers. 2. The signals. 3. The records. 4. The assiduity of the pupils and their exactitude in arriving on time. 5. The regulation of holidays. 6. The rewards. 7. The punishments. 8. The appointment of several ``officers" and their faithfulness in fulfilling their duties. 9. The structure, quality, and uniformity of school buildings and appropriate furniture.

With some slight change of order, this is the list of the nine chapters of the second part. (There are only eight chapters in the Manuscript, which discusses school furnishings only incidentally, in relations to studies, and then only in an incomplete way.) In these some one hundred pages we shall recognize the influence of the questions treated by the author of the first part of the Parochial School under the titles: ``Qualities of the teacher" (especially ``Justice");``the arrangement and the furnishing of the school"; ``the admission of children to the school"; ``the various `officers' of the school"; while paragraphs concerning tardiness and holidays were still, in the older work as in the *Conduct*, placed toward the end of the volume.

The teacher's ``vigilance" (Chapter one) is exorcised principally in three respects: correction of reading errors, strict use of the simultaneous method and enforcing silence.

The ``signs in use in the Christian Schools" are described (and the description reveals rather well the system's originality) in the seven articles of chapter two: signs during meals, signs ``concerning lessons", signs ``concerning writing", signs during catechism and prayer, signs for punishments, signs ``on special occasions". \

At the time of the writing of the Manuscript there were ``six kinds" of records. The printed edition, in chapter three, alludes only to the records ``of promotion to grades" (in modern language, passage from one class or ``course", to a higher one), the record of ``sections of subjects" (i.e., the record of ``beginners", ``average" and ``excellent" in each subject) and the ``pocket" records, the teacher's record-book.

The prizes, which consisted in edifying books, images, ``plaster statuettes", and Rosaries went to the most pious, the most able, and the most hardworking.(chap. iv)

The code of ``corrections " (chap. v) requires no less than thirty pages: the author himself emphasizes that the ``correction of pupils is one of the most important things to be done in schools" and that there are many conditions to be observed ``in regard to the use of punishment". Thus, the chapter underwent numerous modifications between 1706 and 1720. In its second edition it opens with a long foreword in which the most weighty arguments support the most sensible recommendations, and it is subdivided into eight articles:

F I R S T A R T I C L E: Different kinds of corrections. Section 1:``Reprimands"; Section 2:``correction with the ferule: when it may and should be used; the manner of using it"; Section 3:``Correction with the rod" (the `cat-o-nine-tails' -a stick equipped with knotted cords -was in use in 1706, but not in 1720); Section 4:``The expulsion of pupils from school".

S E C O N D A R T I C L E: ``Frequent correction and how to avoid it.

T H I R D A R T I C L E: ``Conditions under which correction should be administered (in order to be just and efficacious);

F O U R T H A R T I C L E: ``Faults which must be avoided in correction".

F I F T H A R T I C L E: ``Children who must or must not be corrected". Section 1:``Ill-bred and wayward children"; Section 2:``The stubborn"; Section 3:``Children who have been gently reared"; (and the Manuscript adds ``...and lastly, the so-called `spoiled child'") ``and those of a timid disposition, backward and sickly children, young children and newcomers"; Section 4:``Accusers and accused"(denunciators and the denounced).

S I X T H A R T I C L E: ``Necessary procedures in all corrections" (way of applying the ferule and the rod, attitude of the culprit during and after the chastisement).

S E V E N T H A R T I C L E: ``The place for administering correction. When it should and when it should not be administered."

E I G H T H A R T I C L E: ``Penances: Their use, their qualities and the manner of imposing them" accompanied by a ``list of penances" that might be fittingly prescribed (one that is `most pertinent' and most useful is ``to give the pupils something to learn by heart".

It is clear that such detail, far from tending to overwhelm the child under an intolerable yoke, had as its purpose the elimination of arbitrariness, and, indeed, as far as the customs of the age permitted, the softening of the harshness and the diminishing of the frequency of the ``occasions".

``Absences" were a cause of disorder in student life, which the author of the *Conduct*, in Chapter Six of the second part, is at pains to reduce. First of all, he discusses ``regular absences and absences with permission"; then, ``irregular" absences (i.e., exceptional and unexpected) and ``those that may or may not be permitted". In the third place, he reviews the reasons and the excuses for absences in

order to ``provide a remedy''. A special article explains the task that is incumbent upon the teacher appointed ``to monitor and excuse the absent''.

Chapter Seven regulates ordinary holidays, extraordinary holidays, as well as vacation time, which ``will be given everywhere during the month of September''.

Chapter Eight deals with the question of order, along with the selection and responsibilities of the ``school officers'', who are the teachers' assistants. The 1720 edition provided for ``Prayer monitors'', someone who took care of the holy water, the keeper of the Rosaries and his assistants (responsible for distributing Rosaries in school and church), a ``bell-ringer'', ``Inspectors'' who supervised their classmates in the absence of the teacher, and the ``Supervisors'' who assured the fidelity of the Inspectors, the ``Collectors and Distributors of papers'' (in the writing classes), the Sweepers, a Doorkeeper (who opened and closed the door during school a ``Keeper of the key'', to whom the schoolhouse key was entrusted. The Manuscript is still more abundant in dispensing ``offices'': it mentions ``a Minister of holy Mass'' (a pupil who fulfilled the role of priest when the pupils were learning the motions and responses of a server at Mass); an ``Almoner'' who gathered food for the poor; the ``Heads-of-rows'' responsible for noting the absences of classmates in their row; ``Visitors of the absent'', those who went to homes to find out why absentees had missed school and obtain information in case of illness.

The final chapter, entitled: ``Construction and uniformity of schools and school furniture'', states that schools and school furnishings should be arranged in such a way that both the teachers and the pupils can easily fulfill their duties.

Here a most shrewd concern for hygiene rubs shoulders with a determination to guarantee supervision and facilitate work. Classrooms must have separate entrances, with the possibility of seeing from one into the other; air and light should be abundant. Dimensions for the height and width of the benches are fixed. But people should be prepared to adopt progressive innovations:

> If...some Brother should later on find another manner of constructing these writing tables, which would easier and sounder, he will propose it to the Brother Superior...

Throughout the *Conduct* we must be aware of the determination to avoid routine: it is a book that embodies collective experience. De La Salle and the first Brothers showed by their personal example that, provided that the principles were sound, a continuous adaptation is always necessary.

* * * *

If we wish to pass an unbiased judgment on the fundamental rules of the early Christian Brothers' school, we shall have to have the facts. In the 17th century as well as in the 18th the children of working class families, neglected, too often wandered the streets. Prior to 1696, at the very earliest, no law even theoretically obliged parents to send their children to school. And nowhere was the length of time determined that such instruction should last. When bishops, pastors, cities and humanitarians opened schools, they tried, for reasons of charity or out of a concern for the public good, to bring together the largest possible number of pupils. The school population soared; but it continued to be changeable, unstable and ephemeral. Teachers were few, and quarters were hastily improvised and in many instances badly adapted to their purposes. In order rapidly and usefully to dispense an elementary knowledge, educational procedures had to be devised that were extremely simple, uniform and, inevitably, inflexible. Absences were frequent; many of which were justified and would have to be regarded as ``normal'', as De La Salle put it. The poor would need the help of their children at home; there were pressing demands, and

minding the very young was entrusted to the older children. The *Conduct* goes so far as to anticipate that a pupil might be kept at home because his clothes needed mending.[530] For many youngsters, school was over and done with at the age of ten or eleven. They would then become apprenticed, put out to service, or become a cabin boy, or a day laborer. While they were at their benches in the classroom, there was no time to waste; there was the slender stock of knowledge that they needed for the rest of their lives. They had to know how to read, write and calculate! At the worst, they could put syllables together in order painfully to decipher a printed text - their missal or their catechism. But the principal point was that they not lapse into the savage condition that is devoid of clear beliefs and a moral law.

The program was brief and appeared quite unpretentious. But to fulfill it under such conditions demanded great effort and great love. And the means that were adopted sometimes seem crude, monotonous and mechanical. We must reflect, however, on the spiritual impulse, the disinterestedness and the self-effacement that fashioned this system and put it to use, on the soul in search of souls, across that arid plain and along those rigid paths. We, today, desire and have greater freedom and greater spontaneity. But we would have never achieved this condition if these distant pioneers had not painfully traced out the route. And it would be illusory and ungrateful to accuse them, as does Gabriel Compayré,[531] of having been ``afraid of life" and of being ``enclosed within narrow horizons".

As we have already noted, silence occupied a central place in the pedagogy of the Christian Brothers. It was silence which, so to speak, cleared the ground and made orderly progress possible. The moment the children gathered in front of the schoolhouse to await the opening of the doors, ``noise" was prohibited. When they entered the classroom, ``they will all maintain such complete silence that not the least noise will be heard - not even the feet". The teachers will not excuse ``offenses against silence or good order committed during this time".[532] Quiet was a force which the teachers would know how to use and of which they themselves would provide the example. They must ``always be seated, or standing in front of their chair, throughout the lessons". This high-backed chair, situated on a sort of platform, had no desk in front of it, and it was positioned in such a way as to enable the teacher to see, in profile, the faces and movements of their pupils all the way to ``their shoes or sabots".[533] The children, head and shoulders erect, on their benches, arms folded as they read the alphabet or the syllables from the charts, or, holding the book in both hands, inclined the head slightly ``in the direction of the teacher".

Everything was done with ``gravity". Not that the teacher must adopt ``a stern demeanor" or ``look angry". But he will observe ``a great restraint in his gestures, actions and words".[534] ``During prayers, as well as on all other occasions, the teacher will act as he wishes the pupils to act", and their attitude will be modeled on his.[535.] When they enter church, he will prevent them from making any noise (``either with tongue or feet"), raising their eyes, or breaking ranks. He will accustom them to ranks in impeccably straight lines, ``two by two, one pair behind another".[536]

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530 *Conduct*, Part Two, chap. vi, sec. 2.
531 Campayré, *Histoire de la pédagogie*, Paris, 1885, pp. 216 and 222.
532 *Conduct*, Part One, chap. i, art. 1. (Translation by F. De La Fontainerie, The Conduct of the Schools of Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, McGraw-Hill Education Classics, 1935; pg. 52. [Referred to henceforth as ``F. de La F.")
533. *Ibid*., Part Two, chap. I, art. iii, F. de La F., pg. 149.
.534 *Ibid*., Part One, chap. I, art. iii, sec. 2. (This text seems to be lacking in F. de La F.)
535. *Ibid*., chap. VII, art. iv; F. de La F., pg. 115
536 *Ibid*., chap. VIII, art. ii

Upon leaving church and school, the children's return to their homes was to be effected no less systematically. The way the children shall leave the classroom is described as follows:

> The pupils of the lower classes will leave the school before those of the higher ones...When there are three or more classes in a neighborhood school, the pupils of the lowest class will leave while the hymns are being sung...
>
> ...When the teacher makes a sign to the first pupil on a bench to rise, this pupil will leave his place, his hat off and his arms folded, with the one who has been assigned to him as a companion. They will both stand in the middle of the classroom, side by side, and, after having made an inclination before the crucifix, they will turn toward the teacher to salute him;...after this they will go decorously, keeping their arms folded and their hats off until they are outside the classroom.
>
> When the first two pupils reach the middle of the room, the next in order on the same bench as the first who has been notified will rise with the one following him; they will likewise go to the middle of the room and will then make their inclination like the two others.
>
> All the pupils of every class will go out in the same order and in the same manner. The teachers will see that they walk two by two, at least a rod[537] behind each other, until they reach their homes.[538]

(The Parisian Manuscript recommended that the return home be made ``in silence''. The prescription, evidently thought too severe, was omitted in the 1720 edition.)

But what we have been looking at is only the sculptor's model. The statue itself, the finger to the lips, stands at the threshold of Part Two of the *Conduc*t where it takes on a religious solemnity. The pupils were to observe silence, not because the teacher was present, ``but because God sees them and it is His holy will.'' The classroom is a sanctuary: the presiding celebrant, who is the teacher, ``may speak...in a very low tone, unless it be necessary for all the pupils to hear''. He will never say anything but what is ``necessary'', and in a few words. There will be just ``three occasions'' on which his voice should be raised: to correct pupils in their lessons, when none of their classmates is able to do so; to explain the catechism; and for the religious exercises of ``reflection'' and ``examination of conscience''.[539]

If words are outlawed, how indeed does one teach and control a class? That would be done with the ``signal''. The signal was ``an iron instrument [540]'', by means of which the teacher, cherishing silence (and economizing on his voice and lungs) employed ``a great many signs'' having to do with the ``exercises'' and with the ``actions which most ordinarily occur'' in the classroom.[541]

Examples are:

> To make a sign to a pupil who is reading to repeat... (the teacher will strike the signal twice in rapid succession.[542] ...To learn whether a pupil is attentive during recitations, he will strike the signal once to stop the one who is speaking and will then point to the other pupil with the point of the signal..[543] To make a sign to speak louder, the teacher will point upward with the

537 . i.e. O m, 70cm
538 . Conduct Part one, Ch.X. art.1
539 . *Ibid*., Part Two, chap. I, art. iii; F. de La F, pp. 147--8
540 . Later on it became a wooden instrument used in the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools
541 . footnote 21 Management, Part Two, chap. II; F. de La F., pp. 149--150
542 . *Ibid*., loc. cit., chap. 1, art. I; F. de La F., pg. 151
543 . *Ibid*., chap.2, art. I

end of the signal; and to make a sign to speak lower, he will point the end of the signal toward the ground.[544]

The penmanship class began by striking the signal three separate times: at the first one, the pupils ``will take out their writing cases and place them in view''; at the second, they will open them up and take out pens and penknives, and place them in view as well; at the third, they will dip their pens in the ink and go to work.

In the matter of punishment, once again, words must be used as little as possible. Not that simple reprimands were forbidden; but, if they are too frequent, they exhaust the teacher needlessly and compromise his authority. What was wanted was the occasional brief but firm reminder in order to ``intimidate'' the pupils.[545] On other occasions the teacher will proceed as follows:

On the wall were ``hung'' the five ``rules'':

1 A pupil must never be absent from school or come late without permission; 2 A pupil must apply himself in school to studying his lessons;
3 A pupil must always write without losing time;
4 A pupil must be attentive during Catechism;
5 A pupil must pray to God with piety in church and in school.

When a teacher wishes to correct a pupil, he will make a sign to him in order to oblige him to look at him and then with the signal he will point to the rule the pupil has broken, at the same time making him a sign to approach the chair. If the punishment is to be given with the ferule, the teacher will make the pupil a sign to extend his hand. But if he is to give punishment (with the rod), he will show him with the signal the place where it is to be administered.[546]

* * * *

The insistence upon making order reign supreme and using time to the full convinced De La Salle to generalize and systematize the practice of the ``simultaneous method'' in education.

It is undeniable that ``individual instruction'' had, along with its practical benefits, a sound theoretical justification. It placed every mind in direct contact with the mind of the teacher; it prevented ``the individual'' from being sacrificed to the collectivity, the weak and the timid and the backward to the prompt and the powerful of mind. It was the way advocated by Rabelais, Montaigne and Jean-Jacques Rousseau for the education that conformed to their principles; it was the education practiced by the ``governors'' and the tutors in the princely families and among the wealthy. It continues to be at the base and at the heart of all instruction and of all education, since we must never abandon the child to its own devises.

But it is a method that needs to be more or less relaxed, since it removes or impairs emulation. Especially, when we have to instruct several children in the same place and time, the teacher's efforts are scattered, the pupil's attention is constantly slackened, and confusion, boredom and laziness set in. Each pupil in turn facing a teacher over three classroom hours, twenty children, taken singly, would receive only nine minutes each of instruction. And for two hours and fifty-one minutes their hands, eyes and brains would be occupied pretty much as they pleased under a supervision that would be, inevitably, intermittent and distracted. [547]

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544 . *Ibid*., loc. cit., art. I; F. de La F., pg. 151
545 . *Ibid*., chap. v, art. 1, sec. 1
546 . *Ibid*., Chap. II, art. v; F. de La F., pp. 154—5
547 . Cf. introduction to Salvan's *Vie du Vénérable J. B. de La Salle*, pp. xxiii--xiv citing a report of a university professor, Mr.Frossard, in 1819, on tutorial instruction.)

It is, as a consequence, quite natural to think about teaching pupils simultaneously. The ``simultaneous method'' was not invented; it is as old as the world; and the first orator addressing a crowd was preceded by the father of a family giving orders and advice to his children. University and college lectures have had to adopt a mass approach. But the alphabet was learned by the infant ``at its mother's knee''; and this is why, doubtless, in the ``primary schools'' (the extension of the initial ``maternal school'') individualized instruction prevailed.

In an even slightly crowded classroom the disadvantages of the arrangement were all too obvious. Amos Comenius, in his *Didacta magna*, had prescribed that children be taught *semel et omnes simul* - all together and at the same time.[548] There is no doubt that St. Pierre Fourier, Barré and Demia used the simultaneous method more or less totally in their schools.[549] The ``Rules for the Religious of St. Ursula of the Paris Congregation'' (published in 1652 in Paris, by Giles Blaizot) describes a class in reading as follows:

> Everybody having the same book, each one separately, and seated in order, the teacher makes the sign of the cross and the resident pupils as well, then she spells out five or six lines, and thereafter reads a page or two, pronouncing carefully and making the stresses and accents; but all look at their books and follow word for word, in a low voice, what the teacher reads. The lesson over, the teacher selects someone to repeat it aloud, in whole or in part, and after that another; and in this way, the entire class, while the teacher corrects them when they err.

For the spelling lesson each of the ``resident pupils'' received ``a piece of paper''. The teacher dictated ``two or three lines''. Then she distributed to the pupils copies of the book from which the text was selected. The little girls then corrected their own errors, writing the word in its corrected form over their misspelling. Finally, the books closed and the first copies collected, they wrote the dictation a second time.[550]

These are interesting and significant efforts. Traces of the ``tutorial method'' continue to appear, but a new system was in the making. And it had already been worked out in ``Counsels Concerning Primary Schools'', a 17th century pamphlet that seems to have been published prior to 1660:

> The school must be arranged in such a way that the same book, the same teacher, the same lesson and the same correction serves all.[551]

The *Conduct of the Christian Schools* brought together scattered ideas, coordinated them and drew the appropriate conclusions. Beyond that, it took the necessary steps to see that the system was not frustrated in practice.

Just as the schools of St. Pierre Fourier and Charles Demiawere divided into ``classes'', which in turn were subdivided into ``sections'', in a Christian Brothers' school there were ``nine different grades of instruction.''

> (and) all the pupils in all grades except those reading the alphabet and syllables (were) divided into sections; first, the beginners, second, the intermediates, and the third, the advanced and those who are perfect in the work of the grade.[552]

It was in this way that individual differences were taken into account: age, intelligence, acquired knowledge and academic success were some of the factors that played a role in the segregation of the pupils. There was none of the ``ranking'', which is a barrier to progress at the head of the line and drags on endlessly without

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548 . Quoted by Brother Maximin, Director of the Normal School in Carlsbourg (Belgium), in his book *Les Ecoles normales de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle* (1922), which includes an appendix entitled ``The origin of the Simultaneous Method'', (pp. 177—183)

549 . See above, Part One of the present volume, chaps. ii, v and vi

550 . Quoted by Brother Maximin, op. cit., pp. 180--181

551 . *Ibid*., op. cit., pp. 178--179

552 . *Conduct* Part One, Chap. III, art. i; F. de La F., pp. 62-- 63

doing anybody any good. All possible care was taken to put together homogeneous groups.

On the other hand, when a pupil had shown satisfactory results, he could be promoted a grade or a section without awaiting the end of the year. Every month an inquiry concerning promotions was conducted. At that time teachers presented their records, or special marks indicating the children's competence, their diligence and seniority; agreement was reached on ``those who might be promoted''.[553] As for the older pupils who had ``only a little time left to learn how to write'', arrangements were rather generous; they would ``of necessity be advanced'', without, however, ceasing to teach them what they ``still did not know very well''.[554]

It was a wise and successful arrangement, which remedied the disadvantages of mass education.[555] It remained only to allow the finely tuned machine, with its inbuilt checks and balances, to perform.

> All pupils of the same grade (regardless of their section) will, however, follow the lessons together without distinction...(They will have) the same book dots and the least advanced will always be made to read first, beginning with the simplest lesson and ending with the most difficult one...While one of the pupils is reading, all the others who are having the same lesson will follow in their books, which they should always have in their hands. The teacher will take great care to see that all read to themselves what the reader is reading aloud, and from time to time he will make some of them read a few words in passing so as to surprise them and find out if they are following effectively.[556]

The charts hung from the wall facilitated the application of the system of studying the alphabet and syllables, punctuation and numerals, ```French' as well as Roman''.[557]

> To teach arithmetic, the teacher will remain seated in his chair or will stand before it, and a student of each operation will stand before him and do the example which he has for his lesson, indicating with the pointer the figures, one after another, adding, subtracting, multiplying or dividing them aloud...The teacher will ask him several questions concerning the rule, in order to make him understand it better and retain it.

He will also question the others. If a pupil makes a mistake, the teacher will make a sign to another to correct the former. Assignments are corrected twice a week and provide an opportunity for extended explanation, so that the pupils will have a ``rational'' knowledge of this science of arithmetic and have ``a complete understanding'' of it.[558]

The teaching of spelling will involve dictation:

> All will write and a single pupil, while writing, will spell. The one giving dictation will say where the periods and commas go.[559]

Of course, John Baptist de La Salle's educational philosophy reached its point of culmination in religious instruction. The Brothers were marvelous catechists: their Rule, by requiring daily study, demanded that they be so. And the *Conduct* reserves at least a half-hour every school day for catechism, not counting Sunday instruction.[560] With its simultaneous method, its pupil groupings and its appeal to the understanding, the system took on scope and achieved goals which deeply impressed the clergy and the people of ancient France. In particular, we recall the eagerness

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553 . *Ibid*., Part Two, chap. III, sec. iii
554 . *Ibid.*, Part One, Chap. IV, art. v; F. de La F., pg. 92
555 . On this subject see the article ``Concetto delle simultaneita lasalliana'' in *Il Messagero delle Scuole cristiana*, Turin, June--July--August, 1932
556 . *Conduct*, Part One, chap. III, art. i; F. de La F., pg. 143; and Part Two, chap. I, art. ii.
557 . *Ibid.*, Part One, Chap. III, arts. ii & vii; F. de La F., pp. 69 & 79.
558 . *Ibid*., Chap. V; F. de La F., pg. 105
559 . *Ibid.*, ch. vi; this paragraph does not exist in the Parisian Ms
560 . 40 *Ibid*., Chap. IX

with which the Vicar-general Languet Gergy was attentive to the Brothers in Moulins and suggested them as models for young clerics.

There is a passage in Canon Blain which echoes this admiration and indicates quite clearly what were some of the reasons for it:

> The children are grouped according to the extent of their knowledge or their ignorance; that is, all those who as yet know nothing are put in the first grade of Christian Doctrine; those who know something of it are brought together; which is not done in the ordinary catechism classes, where all children are thrown together; and hence there is a great deal of loss of time for all concerned, little silence and even less attentiveness. Indeed, it is hardly possible for children who do not know the first thing about their catechism not to be distracted, not to play and chatter while the more advanced pupils are being questioned about more difficult things. Similarly, while the latter are listening to the more ignorant receive instruction, which they already know, they are being frivolous, fidgeting and making noise. It is not so in the Christian Brothers' Schools: there it is easy to maintain order, silence and attention, because the children are pretty nearly of the same age and at the same level of knowledge, or rather, of ignorance, since they were thus gathered together and segregated from the others, and they hear only what is suited to them and take their turns answering the same questions. Furthermore, they hear the same questions and answers as often as there are children in their class; which instills into their minds what they have to remember and gives them a great advantage in learning. [561]

Chapter nine of the First Part of the *Conduct* (and especially the Parisian Manuscript as regards the division into grades ``for Catechism") of course, enters into greater detail. It stresses the number and the order of the questions. It insists that they be simple and precise, as short as possible, divided into ``sub-questions", accessible to the pupil who must reply. Sunday catechism class, which lasts ``three times as long as" the ones on weekdays, should be enhanced by a ``story" that will be pleasing and suited to the audience.

Thus, the Brothers ``will not leave a single (child) in ignorance, at least of the things that a Christian is obliged to know, whether as regards doctrine or practice dots" To ``aid" young minds to assimilate this religious knowledge which is not naturally easy for them and is ordinarily of very short duration...they will be careful not to rebuff or confuse them; they will help them with answers and ``they will offer them rewards".

There may, perhaps be a suggestion in these methods of some of the features of what the 19th century would come to call ``mutual instruction"? Indeed, the use of ``monitors" was not unknown to pedagogy in antiquity: among the Jesuits it was performed by the ``decurions", who heard the recitation of lessons,[562] and among the Ursulines, by a resident pupil who was ``most suited" to teach reading;[563] *the Parish School* provided for ``an Emperor", [564] and in Demia's school the same function was performed by ``the master of novices".[565]

In the Brothers' system there were no such ``officers". Only once in the *Conduct* is there an appeal to the children's cooperation in order to prepare things for school work. At the beginning of class, as the pupils are awaiting the teacher, one of them ``will be charged...to point out on the two charts (the alphabetic and the syllabic) first one letter or syllable and then another in different places", so that his classmates might study their lesson. Each one, in order, will read aloud what is shown on the chart. But we cannot really call this pupil who points to the charts a ``monitor" or a

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561 . Blain, Vol. I, pg. 75.

562 . *Ratio Studiorum*, pg. 128, quoted by Compayré, *Histoire critique des doctrine de l'éducation en France*, Paris, 1904, Vol. I, pg. 177

563 . *Règlements* of 1652, quoted by Brother Maximin, pg. 181

564 . *Parish School*, First Part, chap.III, art. v

565 . Règlements, First Part, chap. III, para. 10

``tutor", because he was under orders to perform his task ``without correcting and without saying a word".[566]

What quite simply demanded the use of the simultaneous method in the Brothers' schools was the fact that certain pupils ``paced" the others (``to stimulate the others and serve them as models", as Chapter III of Part One of the *Conduct.*..has it). For this purpose it was possible to postpone slightly the promotion of some children to a higher ``level". The common good could require such a temporary sacrifice of the most legitimate gratification of self-esteem. And it was done in such a way as to ``satisfy" the ``pacer...by means of some prize, or by assigning him some office", or by telling him ``that it is better to be first, or among the first, in a lower grade than the last in a more advanced one".[567]

* * * *

Of De La Salle's innovations which appeared to his contemporaries to be the boldest, the clearest and the most radical was the substitution of French for Latin in beginning reading in the primary school.

The *Conduct* [568] specifies that

> ...the first book which the pupils of the Christian Schools will learn to read will be composed of all sorts of French syllables. And in the second and the third books the reading of the mother tongue continues. It was only after that the pupils are to read Latin in the *Psalter*. (Catholics must be able to unite in both word and heart in the prayer of the Roman Church.) ``Only those who know how to read French perfectly will be taught this subject."[569]

Apart from these brief but decisive references there is nothing more in the book on this subject. But since the Founder had to sustain the attack of his friend, Godet des Marets, Bishop of Chartres, on this question, he defended his point of view and quite explicitly set forth his position in a memorandum that Canon Blain seems to have preserved rather faithfully.[570] Its style, order and reasoning associate it with the *Memoir on the Habit*, which is authentic.

> 1. To be able to read French is of greater and more widespread utility than the reading of Latin.
> 2. Since French is more natural, it is incomparably easier to teach French than Latin to children who understand the one and not the other.
> 3. Consequently it takes far less time to learn to read French than to learn to read Latin.
> 4. The reading of French prepares for the reading of Latin; on the contrary, the reading of Latin does not prepare for the reading of French, as experience proves. The reason is that in reading Latin well it suffices to stress all syllables and properly pronounce all the words, which is easy to do when a child knows how to spell and read French. Hence, it follows that people who know how to read French will easily learn how to read Latin; whereas, on the contrary, after having spent a great deal of time learning to read Latin, a child still needs a lot of time to learn to read French.
> 5. Why is a great deal of time required to learn to read Latin? As it has been said, its vocabulary is strange to one who does not know the meaning of the words, and it is difficult for them to remember the syllables and correctly to spell the words whose meaning is unknown.

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566 . *Conduct*, Part One, chap.I, art. 1

567 . *Ibid*., Chap. III, art. i, sec. 3. Thus also the “companion” who was “paired” with the child beginning to read his “primer” was just such a pacer.

568 . *Conduct*, Part One, chap. III, art. i, sec. 3.

569 . *Ibid.*, art. iii.

570 . Blain, Vol. I, pg. 375. The text can be found in Guibert, pp.314--317

> 6. And of what use can the reading of Latin be to those who will have no use for it in their life? And to what use can the boys and girls who frequent the tuition-free, Christian Schools put the Latin language?
> 7. Experience teaches that boys and girls who attend the Christian Schools do not continue their studies for long and do not stay for a sufficiently long period to learn to read both Latin and French well. First of all, as soon as they are of an age to work, they are withdrawn from school or they no longer come because of the need to make a living. That being the case, if they begin by learning to read Latin, the following disadvantages ensue; they withdraw before having learned to read French or to read it well; when they withdraw, they only know how to read Latin imperfectly, and, in a short time, they forget what they knew; thus, it happens that they never know how to read either in Latin or in French; and, finally, the most pernicious of all disadvantages - they hardly ever learn Christian Doctrine.
> 8. But when teachers begin to teach the young to learn to read in French, when they withdraw from school, they at least know how to read it well; and knowing how to read French well, they can instruct themselves in Christian Doctrine.
> 9. Finally, experience shows that nearly all boys and girls who do not understand Latin...are unable ever to read it correctly and become an object of pity when they read it to those who can...[571]

These arguments appear self-evident to us. However, such is the power of prejudice that, to combat it, this massive assault, this rehearsal of truisms was not excessive. Comenius had already said it: ``To study Latin before the maternal language was to wish to ride horseback before knowing how to walk."[572] But a universal admiration for Latin in secondary education burdened the foundations of the philosophy of education. Measures taken at Port Royal and in the Oratorian schools succeeded in clearing only a narrow area that was reserved for only a few children. In primary education De la Salle was indeed the author of a revolution. After him blocks of resistance remained, but the breach he had opened up prepared the way for the final capitulation.

For the rest, we know that, in virtue of the same principles, circumstances led him to demolish an entire panel in the mural of the fortress of classical education. He was surely too respectful of tradition, too convinced of the importance and the irreplaceable value of Greco-roman civilization to entertain the least thought of destroying it. But he figured that on the edges and outskirts of the Medieval and Renaissance city there was room for a wholly new creation. A stranger, as it seems, to the notorious ``quarrel" of his age, he simply believed that there were certain aspirations, certain needs, of a numerous social class that were not being met by the disciples of the ``Ancients". Without any preliminary manifesto for the implementation of his Residence School at St.Yon, but with the ingredients which he organized and by means that were peculiarly his own, he was prepared to realize a broad educational and instructional blueprint that was open to extensive development. At its base was the teaching of French and the sciences; technical training and the study of living languages would be added.

It had been nearly two hundred years since one of the best known representatives of Christian humanism, the Spanish philosopher, Vives, had insisted in his *De tradendis disciplinis* that the teacher be ``the chief dispenser, as it were, of the treasure" of the mother tongue.[573] Teachers in the ``new school" would have to strive toward a deepened knowledge of this language, its history, its grammar and its

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571 . Translation adapted from E. A. Fitzpatrick, *La Salle Patron of All Teachers*, Milwaukie, 1951, pp. 306--307.)

572 . Quoted by Compayré, *Histoire critique des doctrines de l'éducation en France*, Vol. I, pg. 246
573 . Quoted by G. Goyau, *Orientations catholique*, 1925, pg. 26

possibilities. Many minds would discover a great deal of nourishment was supplied by replacing the antique fare.

In 1686 Claude Fleury (the author of Church History) in his *Treatise on Studies, Selection and Method*, worked out the theory of the system that De la Salle finally realized. He had maintained that ``soldiers, financiers, merchants and most women could do without Latin", that a scanty classical endowment is a fictitious good whose currency ``burdens the commonwealth with a lot of idle people".[574.] In 1921 Dartigues published a book on Claude Fleury's *Traité des Etudes*.) In this evaluation there appears something of an anticipatory proclamation of the evils that Taine, in a well-known passage, ascribed to the `classical mentality" that begot Jacobinism. The residence schools begun by John Baptist de La Salle strove to form citizens of solid judgment, dependable knowledge and upright conscience.

* * * *

In his Educational Dictionary, Ferdinand Buisson, in chapters on Bishop Dupanloup on childhood, states that ``there are views so right and so profound that only the long experience of a priest can discover them".[575] Priest and saint that he was, De La Salle also possessed the competence of a psychologist and the grace of state to form souls. And he bequeathed to the Brothers, his disciples, practices and counsels which, tactfully employed, filially pondered, and conveyed as needed according to country, locality and time, have enabled them to be excellent educators in their turn.

When the Brothers had developed their resident schools, they borrowed from the Jesuits the idea of Marian Sodalities, which had procured such a lively and enduring adolescent piety at the collegiate level where emulation entered in and religious culture matured. But there was nothing in the *Conduct* similar to the ``Order of the Holy Gospel", the chivalric order for children that Charles Demia established in Lyons.

What the Christian Brothers' schools (like the Jesuit colleges) immediately contributed to the spiritual life of their students was a framework of exercises and practices: prayers, daily Mass, examination of conscience, and the frequentation of the Sacraments. It was not a framework that, like an after-thought, artificially draped a day of purely intellectual work. Rather, the supernatural, the sense of the presence of God dominated every effort and presided over every act and thought, including meals and games.[576.] However, actual time in school was relatively brief, so that children, once they got home, could enjoy the necessary leisure. The interweaving of prayer, lessons, assignments and catechism was such that the least undertakings of mind or will terminated in a religious gesture, and the essential rhythm remained ever ruled by religion.

Charged with the task of teaching children the fundamentals of Christian doctrine word for word, the Brothers could not stop there; beyond that was their mission to spread the spirit of the Gospel. Of course, they spoke only as members of the ``Church taught"; and neither theologians, nor directors of conscience, they did not discourse on dogma, nor did they decide cases of conscience. The ninth chapter of the *Conduct* prescribes that the teacher ``will say nothing during the Catechism

574 . Quoted by Compayré, *Histoire critique des doctrines de l'éducation en France,* Vol. I, pp. 379 & 382

575 . Quoted by G Goyau, op. cit., pg. 35

576 . Nevertheless, it should be recalled (regarding times for relaxation) that there was no ``recreation" in the schools. And often enough schools had neither yard nor garden

lesson that he has not read in some well approved book…." and ``he will never decide whether a sin is venial or mortal". His area was practical morality, adapted to the age and tendencies of preadolescent boys. He was to instruct ``as thoroughly as was possible for him in matters which concern morals and conduct dots" And he was to inspire his pupils ``with a great horror" of every offense against God. [577] On this point his personal influence would be a especially exercised on two occasions during the school day: in the morning, during the ``reflection", and, in the evening, during the ``examination of conscience". True, the *Conduct* clearly circumscribes the scope of these miniature meditations, lest, doubtless, the teacher trespass upon the confessor's domain.

> There are five meditations in the morning prayers for the five school days of the week…. The pupil who is reciting the prayers, after having read all of these meditations, will repeat that one of them to which special attention is to be given that day. Then a pause of the duration of a *Miserere* will be made, during which the teacher will make a little exhortation, suited to the capacity of his pupils, on the subject of this meditation.

Similarly, during evening prayer, the examination "which contains those sins which children most ordinarily commit ", is

> divided into four articles and each article into five points. Only one of these articles will be read each day, and this same article will be read every day during the week. Thus the four articles will be read in four weeks.

The teacher will explain each point in turn.[578] Knowing and loving his auditors and obedient to his vocation as educator and apostle, the Brother will be able, in these informal talks, to appeal directly to the hearts of the children, enlighten their faith and sustain their resolution without overstepping the bounds of prudence.

An educational philosophy, like a body of law, is empty if it pretends to govern and reform man through *a priori* principles, through an ideal that does not stay in contact with reality. We need constantly to be reminded that we master nature only by winning its cooperation. Upon this ancient Baconian axiom is constructed the system of rewards and punishments. In their *Ratio* the Jesuits wrote that, in order to increase zeal for work, a noble emulation must be roused.[579] To refuse all praise out of a fear of flattery is a clumsy psychological error: do we think we are dealing with angels? Pascal confessed that ``the children at Port Royal who are roused neither by envy nor fame become listless".[580] In the Brothers' schools the distribution of books, pictures, Rosary beads and statues encouraged goodwill and drew attention to success, while they suggested to the recipients that a reward is valueless which does not provoke a fresh flight of piety. The appointment of ``officers" also had a double purpose: they were marks of honor which became immediately demands for a more dedicated service.

And because the child is ``neither angel nor brute beast", but with it reason is still strongly bound up with the animal, the body must be chastised in deference to the soul; physical correction must never be debased to the level of brutal repression and must always be abandoned in situations in which it would directly do damage to the spiritual progress of the culprit, or of the one inflicting the punishment. De La Salle would wholly subscribe to the remarks of the Oratorian, Père Lamy:

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577 . *Conduct*, Part One, Chap. IX, art. iii.
578 . *Ibid.*, Chap. VII, art. ii
579 . *Ratio*, pg. 126, quoted by Compayré, Histoire ..., Vol. I, pg. 178
580 . *Pensées*, Brunschvicg ed. sec. II, no. 151

> There are many other ways besides the lash, and, to return children to their duties, a smile, a threat, the hope of a reward or the fear of a humiliation have more effect than the rod...There are moments of stubbornness when a child would rather be killed than bend.[581]

We suspect that the Founder was completely preoccupied by this sensitive and important subject. In the first draft of the *Common Rule* pretty nearly textually translates a passage from the Oratorians' *Ratio Studiorum*.f (footnote 62582.) Cardinal Bérulle's disciples wrote:

> *Professores verborum contumelis scholasticos ne laedant; nunquam pedibus, manu, aut libris caedant; sed legitimis poenarum generibus utantur*.

For his Brothers De La Salle wrote as follows:

> They shall take very great care to call their pupils by no abusive names...They shall take very special care never to touch or strike any pupil with the hand or the foot, nor to repulse or shove them rudely.

The eighth chapter of the Rule of 1718 repeats integrally the preceding lines and introduces them with the most sweeping command:

> The Brothers shall exercise all possible attention and vigilance over themselves so as to punish their pupils very rarely, being convinced, as they should be, that this is one of the chief means of managing their school properly, and of establishing very good order.
>
> When it is necessary for the Brothers to punish any of the pupils, they shall be extremely careful to, and with the conditions prescribed in the *Conduct of the Christian Schools* ...

This final regulation, regarding the lash and the rod, entered into details about which the schema of 1705 was silent. Thus, it agrees with the fifth chapter in the Second Part of the *Conduct* where it was altogether necessary to deal formally with the use of corporal punishment.[583] On the other hand, changes introduced by the first edition of the *Conduct* into the text of the Parisian Manuscript prove that the thought of the author in regard to this question was constantly being revised. He continued to conclude to the necessity of the traditional punishments: but their disadvantages and their dangers seemed to him to be such that, increasingly, his principal goal consisted in withdrawing argument in support of them, and of finding a way for not using them at all, except quite deliberately.

Thus, in 1720, after the opening lines of the chapter, the following fresh considerations were introduced:

> ...To perfect those who are committed to our care, we must act toward them in a manner at the same time both gentle and firm. Many, however, are obliged to admit, or at least they show by the manner in which they behave toward those in their care, that they do not easily see how these two things can be joined together in practice. If complete authority and too much power, for example, are assumed in dealing with children, it appears difficult that this manner of controlling

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581 . P. Lamy, *Entretiens sur les sciences*, first published in 1683, quoted by Compayré, op. cit., pg. 222

582 . Published in 1634

583 In the first volume of his *Annales*, pg. 413, Brother Lucard assures us that ``from the point of view of repressive discipline the Management, published in 1720, adopts a severity that was opposed to the wise and prudent principles of the Founder''. And, in an offprint from the *Revue belge de Pédagogie* (the article is entitled ``A propos de férule'', Paliseul, 1931), Brother Martial Andrew asserts that after having suppressed all corporal punishment in 1705, the Saint was obliged to reestablish the use of the lash and the rod at the insistence of the teaching Brothers. We ourselves see no basic opposition between the texts of the Avignon Ms. of the Rule, the Parisian Ms. of the Management, the Ms. of the Rule preserved in the Motherhouse and the 1720 edition of the Management. The later editions are more simple, all of them, and more precise, and they comment more extensively upon principles in order to avoid errors of application

> them (although it may proceed from great zeal, but not according to wisdom, as St. Paul says, since human weakness is so easily forgotten) should not become too harsh and unbearable.
>
> On the other hand, if too much consideration is had for human weakness, and, under pretext of having compassion for them, children are allowed to do as they will, the result will be wayward, idle and unruly pupils.
>
> What, then, must be done in order that firmness may not degenerate into harshness, and gentleness into languor and weakness?

To inquire as to what makes a teacher ``unbearable'' to his pupils is already a response to the question: penances that are too rigorous due to lack of ``discretion and judgment''; an impatient and angry tone; too insistent demands, which fail to provide the child ``the leisure or the time to reflect''; identical demands in ``little things'' as in ``big ones''; systematic refusal to listen to ``reasons and excuses''; narrowness and rigidity of mind and harshness of spirit which does not know how ``to sympathize with weakness'', ``exaggeration of faults'' and appearing as though ``one were dealing with an insensible instrument rather than with a creature capable of reason.''

Conversely, we make ``the conduct of children negligent and lax'' by being careless of details, by failing to adhere to ``school practices'', by showing ``too much tenderness'' or an unequally shared affection (the mother of privilege), by refusing to add either authority or warmth to words of reprimand and by adopting familiar and undignified language - attitudes that are unworthy of a serious human being.

Whence it follows that a genuine educator must be ``firm in attaining the end and gentle in the means of attaining it''; full of charity, and full of zeal; patient and persevering ``without permitting the children to hope for impunity''; grave, without anger and without cruelty either of heart or demeanor. When he corrects his pupils, they will have no doubt that he does so solely by ``a sort of necessity'' and for ``the common good''. [584]

The two fragments which, taken together, make up the Third Part of the *Conduct of Schools* (``The Duties of the Inspector'' and ``The Education of Young Teachers'') correspond in a parallel way to the two main divisions of the 1720 edition and add commentaries and interesting details.

There is a preamble which recalls the functions of the ``Inspector'' in the schools of the Institute. He has ``supervision over all the schools dependent upon the same Community''. The Director of the Community is at the same time the Inspector of schools. But if ``three or four schools'' depend upon his Communit, he may be given an assistant Inspector.

He supervises the property, the plant, the instruction and the activities of the teachers, and the work and the discipline of the pupils. This overall ``vigilance'' is the object of the first chapter.

Two other chapters more particularly regulate the prerogatives of this dean of studies as regards, in the first place, ``the reception of pupils'' and their admission into a Christian Brothers' school, and, in the second place, their segregation into classes, their ``promotions'' and their ``orders''.

The Director-Inspector had special days when he ``received''. He examined the children who were presented by their parents or by ``the person with whom the child dwells''. This examination had to do with the religious situation of the child, the

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584 . *Conduct*, Part Two, Chap. V, Introductory, F. de La F., pp. 164--5.) In Article two we read: ``If...a teacher should happen to think of some particular means which he believes would be adapted to keeping the pupils at their duties and forestall punishments, he will propose it to the Brother Director, and he will not make use of it until he has received the permission of the latter.

schools previously frequented, acquired knowledge, and on the character, ``morals'' and health of the child: there had to be ``a great deal of attention'' to this last point, so as to be informed regarding the contagious or repulsive illnesses which the candidate may have contracted. [585] (Art. 4, of chap. II.)) If the examiner found that there were no obstacles, he would draw up a letter of admission for one of the schools under his jurisdiction, or, without further formality, admit the candidate to the school that he himself directed. If it was a question of an ``older boy'', he would also question the parents regarding the eventual profession of their son.[586] (Art. 4 of chap. II))

He would then make recommendations: that the prospective pupil bring the necessary schoolbooks and a rosary; [587] that the pupil be prompt; that he not indulge in gossip concerning the school, but that if the father and mother have any complaints, they come and see the teacher. Physical and moral cleanliness were demanded. It was also required that the child come to school ``combed and free of vermin''; and that he not come ``bare legged or in shirtsleeves''. There must be no questionable relationships nor indecent games.

Having determined ``what'' the pupil admitted ``was suited for'', the Inspector ``would assign him a class, a lesson and the place he must occupy''. It follows from the language of the third chapter that ``the class'' was nothing more than an arbitrary and handy division designed to apportion pupils numerically among the teachers:

In all classes there will be places assigned for all the pupils of all grades, in such a way that all those of the same grade will be situated in the same place and always invariable...The number of pupils in each class will be about fifty or sixty. The ``grade'' as a consequence, was a genuine scholastic unit, and the group was set up in a rational way, with a view to simultaneous instruction. We know that it was subdivided into three ``levels'', according to the degree of advancement of the pupils who were learning to read. There were special ``levels'' for penmanship and arithmetic. The amount of time allotted to each ``level'' was determined by the number of pupils.

> It is a matter of great importance never to place a pupil at a level at which he will be incompetent, because in that case he is in a condition of never being able to learn anything and in danger of remaining all his life in ignorance...
>
> With regard to the very young who are quite bright and have a good memory, they need not always be promoted when they might be, because otherwise they will not remain in school for a sufficiently long time.

But neither is it necessary to ``displease the parents'' and ``arouse the aversion'' of the children by repeated and undeserved postponements.

Examinations for promotion took place in the presence of the Inspector. Neither he nor the teacher should interrupt the candidate to point out the latter's mistakes in reading.

> When a pupil, of whatever grade or whatever level of grade it may be, shall have been examined three times in order to be promoted, and he shall have failed for want of competence, he shall be

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585 . ``If it happens that a pupil attending the school falls into one of these illnesses, he shall be visited by the house physican, and if the sickness is of such a nature, he shall be sent away until cured, provided that it is a curable case.''

586 . The minimum age was ``six years completed, unless intelligence and size supplies for the age deficiency.''

587 . ``It shall not be permitted that pupils whose parents are rich come beyond the first day without the required schoolbooks.'' (Ibid.) The same article contains instructions regarding pupils who come from other schools, or, having previously left the Brothers' school, whether voluntarily or as the result of being dismissed. Of course admission or readmission of these pupils was subject to severe inquiry

> placed in a special bench situated in an obvious spot in the classroom, which will be called the ``Ignorants' Bench"...

To enforce the prescriptions of the *Conduct*, it was important to train teachers who knew how to teach with clarity and method, to govern justly and prudently. To prepare ``young teachers" there must be ``seminaries" or scholasticates. As long as these were wanting, many Brothers upon leaving the novitiate, learned their trade by actual classroom teaching. *Fabricando fit faber*. They had no other training school than the neighborhood schoolhouse; and their guide was the Director of the community, to whom was addressed this brief handbook published in Avignon. Its guidelines would be no less useful to a Director of a normal school. As to the Directors of novices, they were free to pass its rules on to their novices until the time came when these young men would move on to actual classroom teaching.[588.]

The Manuscript declared:

> (It is necessary) to take from new teachers what they have and should not have, (and) give them what they do not have but what is essential they should have.

This metamorphosis was to bear upon fifteen points:

> Talking, activity (in the sense of restlessness), thoughtlessness, over-eagerness, rigor and harshness, impatience, rejection of individuals and favoritism, indolence, dullness, slackness, a mentality easily dispirited, familiarity, tenderness and particular friendships, an inconstant and changeable nature, an uncertain and inattentive exterior or one that is arrested and frozen in place.

In the development we meet with ideas with which we are familiar on the subject of silence, and the relations between the Brothers and their pupils. The Brother responsible for training will gradually habituate the young teachers to govern their speech, since to oblige them to do so immediately and repeatedly ``would weary them and possibly terrify them". He will forbid them to laugh in class or to fidget. He will train them ``always to develop an unconstrained air, a serene countenance and an appearance which characterizes a sound nature, full of goodness". In order to avoid occasions of continually bullying children, ``they will leave nothing around them which they might be able" to use as a weapon - ``whether lash or rod".

If he sees them inclined to take a dislike to certain pupils, he will make them ``take more care of them than of the others", and ``never to speak to them except with affability and gentleness,...and to give them some reward even when they have not entirely deserved one".

Should they be easily discouraged, he will not ``point out numerous faults or difficulties all at one time, but only one or two at the most"; he will provide them with ``the means of surmounting them...by encouraging them from time to time".

Candidates should be on their guard against familiarity, ``which begets contempt": when a teacher is despised by his pupils, ``whatever he can do or say fails to touch them…. Pupils become insolent and they treat their teacher like a dishrag". Besides, ``it is possible to speak to pupils informally without their becoming familiar and losing their respect".

Charity must be extended equally to all. Of course, ``the poor" must be ``preferred"; and good pupils must be loved with a special affection. But ordinarily, ``in front of an entire group, the Brothers must never give any external sign of friendship for one rather than for the others".

> Let (young teachers) have no ``teacher's pets"...pleasing, well-built, clever, good looking ….The Brother in charge of teacher formation will make them understand that this sort of

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588 . It happened that practice-teaching preceded the end of the novitiate. This was certainly the case at the ``Grande Maison" and at St.Yon. And Avignon must have followed the same example. A passage of the Ms., which we shall quote presently, leaves no doubt in this matter

> particular friendship is the cause of many and serious inconveniences both for those who are so loved and indulged as well as for the others who are not.

The entire class must be present to the teacher's mind, as well as to his eyes. The teacher's gaze cannot be lost in a void. He sees all his pupils and each one of them, so that if he were asked ``what is so-and-so doing?",he would have an immediate answer.

Thus, it is easy to identify and analyze the ten qualities or virtues that young teachers cannot be without:

> courage, authority, firmness, a reserved or grave exterior, wisdom and modesty, vigilance, attention to one's self, deportment, prudence, an engaging and winning air, zeal, ease in speaking with clarity and order, while staying within the reach of the children they teach.

> Beginning in the novitiate (teachers) must often be drilled in teaching school, showing them how to manage each thing therein... They must be made to enter the (classroom) with a deliberate and serious demeanor, head high and looking at the pupils in a bold manner, as though they had thirty years experience... Let them not fall first upon the smallest; but if it is necessary to punish somebody, let them choose the most wayward and those in whom punishment may inspire fear...

> Let them not exhibit kindness and tenderness in public, let them speak little, and let them speak only with number, weight and measure, in a sober, peremptory manner, accomplishing what they say; and let them not speak thoughtlessly and on every occasion, confusedly, swallowing half their words...And let them punish only at their chair.

> That when they wish to punish an older pupil who means to resist, let them not choose a time at the end of the school day, but a time in which they can accomplish what they have to do and still have time left over.

> Firmness consists in accomplishing what one wishes on the spot and without delay.

The Brother in charge of formation ``will allow the prospective teachers to assume full authority as regards their function and will make them understand that they must behave in every situation as though he were not present".

Soul and mind provided with this nourishment, the Brother of the Christian Schools would, until the French Revolution, and in the midst of turmoil, pursue, and then, throughout the vicissitudes of the 19th century and of our own epoch, resume faithfully, boldly and generously, the religious and educational work of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

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