

## CHAPTER 15

## THE BATTLE FOR THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

1840-1841

THE RELIGIOUS IDEAL — ANNOUNCEMENT OF VOWS AND A NOVITIATE FOR THE AUXILIARY PRIESTS — REPORT OF BISHOP BOUVIER TO GREGORY XVI — OPPOSITION — THE FIRST PROFESSION AT SAINTE-CROIX — THE SOLITUDE OF THE SAVIOUR — DEFENSE OF A VOCATION TO THE GOOD SHEPHERD — INQUIRY OF THE BISHOP OF LE MANS — TESTIMONY OF M. MOLLEVAVT

IT IS recorded in the life of William Chaminade, founder of the Marianists, that, in order to explain his thought to his most devoted follower as he prepared to lay the foundations of the Society of Mary, he said: "The religious life is to Christianity what Christianity is to mankind in general. It is as undying in the Church as the Church is undying in the world. Without religious, the Gospel would never be fully applied in human society. Hence, in vain would anyone attempt to re-establish Christianity without those institutions which allow men to put into practice the evangelical counsels."<sup>1</sup>

This profound thought of an apostle who left his mark on the religious restoration in France during the nineteenth century is in full accord with the ideas of M. Moreau. His aim was to build on this same foundation. M. Mollevaut had warned him repeatedly that his efforts would result in nothing of lasting value, unless he founded the Auxiliary Priests on "the spirit of faith, abnegation, obedience, and especially humility."<sup>2</sup> The surest means of arriving at this goal was undoubtedly the religious vows. The fact that these priests were obliged to devote themselves to preaching and to the exterior ministry was no objection

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. ROUSSEAU, *op. cit.*, p. 225, and the preface by MGR. BAUDRILLART, p. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> January 31, 1837, in *Rec. doc.*, v. 1, pp. 159-160.

to the introduction of the religious life. On the contrary, as M. Mollevaut wrote, if it was true that missions were undoubtedly "the urgent need of the times," there still remained another task which was, as he said, a thousand times more difficult, and this was "to train missionaries who will be men of continual prayer, deep humility, and unchanging charity. . . ."<sup>3</sup> The perspectives of the missionary ideal, which was really an ideal of sanctity, led M. Moreau on to the perspectives of the religious life. They were to lead him, also, into new difficulties.

We should not forget that, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the concept of the religious life had not yet been formulated with the precision it has acquired in our own times. The old Orders disappeared from France with the Revolution. They were gradually being re-organized but were encountering difficulties of all kinds — difficulties arising, first of all, from lack of funds, but also, and more particularly, from what we might call the absence of the spirit necessary for success in such an undertaking. It is sufficient to recall the incident which took place at the very gates of Le Mans when, in 1836, Dom Guéranger was put out by his monks.<sup>4</sup> The Concordat made no provision for religious institutes. Although not all the bishops at the time were Gallicans, they were, nevertheless, imbued with a kind of practical Gallicanism, which made them accept too readily the requirements of existing legislation.<sup>5</sup> Nothing prepared them for the exemption of which they felt that religious too often availed themselves. Bishop Bouvier's

<sup>3</sup> January 26, 1838, *ibid.*, p. 161. The reader should not lose sight of the note already quoted from M. Mollevaut, which must have made a deep impression on M. Moreau: "For a band of missionaries, success will be impossible without solid rules, perfect obedience, and a life of mortification. The Missionaries of France are now taking vows, and have practically the same constitutions as the Jesuits; *they felt the need of this step*" (italics ours). Letter of June 28, 1836. Cf. R. P. DELAPORTE, *op. cit.*, p. 325. Beginning with 1830, the missionaries of Father de Rauzan made the three vows of stability, obedience, and chastity, with "a promise to observe the rules of evangelical poverty."

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Dom Guéranger, Abbé de Solesmes*, v. 1, pp. 156-164. Notwithstanding its clarification of certain interesting points, the openly antagonistic volume of AMBROISE LEDRU, *Dom Guéranger, Abbé des Solesmes et Mgr. Bouvier, évêque du Mans* (Paris: 1911), does not succeed in shedding any new light on the sequence of events nor on the mutual tendencies manifested by each of these two ecclesiastical personages, who were in many ways so dissimilar. The passage quoted by the author, pp. 53-54, from the *Institutiones theologicae* of Bishop Bouvier, on the exemption of religious, is in itself quite significant. *L'Ami du Clergé*, May 18, 1911, p. 460, clarifies this point.

<sup>5</sup> We shall refer later to an interesting incident of this kind in connection with Bishop Bouvier.

difficulties with Solesmes are an eloquent proof of this mentality.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, new foundations began to appear, and the bishops gave them official recognition in the measure in which their zeal found in these new organizations means of meeting the religious needs of their dioceses. There were, first of all, congregations of women and congregations of Brothers, who remained entirely dependent on their respective bishops. But difficulties began to crop up as soon as the expansion of these institutes provided more growing space for the grain of mustard seed which had been planted, and extended their activity into localities beyond the reach of the jurisdiction of the original Ordinaries. The case in point provided by the project of St. Euphrasia Pelletier was undoubtedly instrumental in making many bishops hostile to the foundation of religious communities, and especially to their expansion beyond the dioceses where they were founded.

Many priests, even though they devoted themselves to zealous activity and were living under the spell of an apostolic ideal, were not, even in these difficult hours, at the stage of spiritual development which M. Moreau and others like him<sup>7</sup> had attained in the realization of his desires, under the guidance of the practical good sense of the Superior of the Solitude. We must recall that in 1832, and even in 1840, anyone who spoke of monastic life or the apostolic life, whether in connection with the restoration of the Order of St. Benedict or with the foundation of a society of missionary priests, was really a voice crying in the wilderness.

On January 1, 1840, in a circular letter which had the authority of an official proclamation, M. Moreau announced to the Brothers of St. Joseph his twofold intention to organize a novitiate for the Auxiliary Priests and to pronounce himself the vows of religion.<sup>8</sup> The thought which had long been germinating in his mind had reached maturity and was about to bear fruit. The two religious families over which he was placed seemed to him, their Founder, to be sufficiently well organized to enable them to be united together into one congregation. The simple assembly of religious at Sainte-Croix three years before had developed in the course of time into a working organization functioning according to all expectations. Thus, M. Moreau could write:

<sup>6</sup> LEDRU, *op. cit.*, Chap. 7, *The quarrel over the "pontificalia,"* pp. 215-255.

<sup>7</sup> The tribulations of Father Moreau were also those which befell Father Chaminade, Father Colin, and St. Michael Garicoïts. Many other similar examples could be cited.

<sup>8</sup> *Circular Letters*, No. 9, v. 1, p. 21.

... In order to co-operate with such signal graces and with the generous designs of Divine Mercy, and at the same time to strengthen the work which has begun . . . I have definitely laid the groundwork for the government of the Society of Auxiliary Priests by linking this work to yours . . . I have also resolved to open a novitiate for the training of the companions whom it may please God to send me.

Similarly, to acquit myself of my personal debt of gratitude to our Lord for His inestimable favors, and while awaiting the day of my complete offering through the solemn pronouncing of the vows of religion, as several of your number have so generously done, I have vowed to live and die in Holy Cross, unless obedience calls me elsewhere. This happy moment of profession is not far distant, my dear sons in Jesus Christ. If it pleases God, and if you help me with your prayers, I shall enjoy this happiness at our next retreat together at Sainte-Croix, for I no longer wish to lag behind those whom I have been charged to lead to religious perfection.

Although following closely upon the incidents connected with the opening of the college, this solemn announcement did not prevent the Bishop of Le Mans from bringing personally to the attention of the Sovereign Pontiff, Gregory XVI, the happy results of M. Moreau's zeal. In a report dated May 4, 1840, Bishop Bouvier summed up the progress made by the Brothers of St. Joseph. "They are now eighty-six persons distributed in thirty-nine individual houses, and they have forty-five novices." The Bishop mentioned, also, the departure of several Brothers for Algeria where, under the direction of an Auxiliary Priest, they were to open a house. Several others were scheduled to leave soon for America. At the same time Bishop Bouvier made known to the Pope the foundation of Auxiliary Priests and the fact that they were living at Sainte-Croix in conjunction with the novitiate of the Brothers and the boarding school. Part of the report reads as follows:

Basil Anthony Moreau, honorary canon, former professor of theology and Sacred Scripture in the diocesan seminary has, in mutual agreement with the present Bishop, built a house near the city of Le Mans and has there gathered together a group of priests who are on fire with zeal for souls and inspired by the love of poverty and obedience. They live community life under his direction and are always ready to announce the way of God, to hear confessions, to preach retreats to communities, and so forth. Hence, they have taken the name of Auxiliary Priests and are already fifteen in number. They live on the offerings made to them and on the profits which accrue from providing board and education for about a hundred students.<sup>9</sup>

As we read this report we cannot fail to see in it a description of the

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the *Archives de l'évêché du Mans*, quoted by ABBÉ CHARLES MOREAU, *op. cit.*, v. 1, pp. 162-163.

ideals which brought Sainte-Croix into being. These lines portray the plans which, with ever increasing precision, were taking shape in the mind of the Founder as he united the apostolate of preaching with zeal for the education of youth. This plan was already showing the visible results of the blessing of God.

The answer sent in the name of the Pope by Cardinal Polidori confirms this assurance:

There are special reasons for blessing the God of all consolation for the fact that through the very salutary initiative of a man of great piety, a group of priests has gathered together with the intention of making themselves all things to all men, and of assisting pastors most in need of their help in the exercise of the ministry, particularly in the administration of the Sacraments. Certainly, you may regard this institution as a special gift of Divine Providence.<sup>10</sup>

The proposal to pronounce religious vows had not met with unanimous approval among the Auxiliary Priests. Even more so than among the Brothers, it even gave rise to real opposition. These priests were all excellent men. They were individuals of deep piety and burned with a zeal which stood out eloquently in the mere choice of a type of life consecrated principally to the evangelization of the people. No one could question the unselfishness of their motives. A malicious attempt made in this direction some time before had succeeded only in embarrassing those responsible for it. These complaints, which went back to the preceding year, had reached even the Bishop's house, and had brought forward a pastor who took it upon himself to defend the missionaries who had come to help him in his parish and who had been unjustly accused. His letter reads:

I have learned with great regret of the base rumors which you tell me are making the rounds on all sides. . . . Is it possible that after you and your holy priests have showed yourselves so generous toward me and have given evidence of a disinterestedness which is so admirable, you should now be attacked by calumnies of this kind which some individuals have even dared to attribute to me? . . . I am happy to have the opportunity to make this declaration. . . . Yes, it is the truth and I admit it to my shame, not only that I have never given you anything to show my gratitude for the holy services which you rendered me . . . in the service . . . of my dear parishioners, without any concern for fatigue and without any concern for your own rest, but even more, I still owe you your traveling expenses which the Superior so generously gave back to me with a liberality which fills me with admiration. . . .<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157. The letter is dated May 22, 1839.

The chancery office, through a single word from the vicar-general,<sup>12</sup> made short work of these calumnies.

Just the same, it is perhaps easier to have an unselfish spirit than to sacrifice one's independence. Without any reflection on the individual merits of M. Moreau's collaborators, it will be noticed that the initiative for this absolute spirit of detachment comes directly from himself. On the other hand, whatever may be one's idea of the religious life — and this idea cannot possibly be at variance with that of the Church — it is evident that its chief requirement involves subjection to a Rule and a superior. "Not all can accept this teaching,"<sup>13</sup> at least not in a way which will enable them to apply it to themselves personally by introducing it into their own lives. Still more, with their desire to restore the dignity of the priesthood to its rightful place, seminary founders in France in the seventeenth century and, consequently, the spiritual masters of the French clergy, insisted rightly on the perfection required of the priesthood by its very nature. The first companions of M. Moreau were not prepared for anything beyond this. This community had evolved little by little in order to meet needs which were keenly felt by all, but it had not been possible to give to the organization from the beginning any well-determined form or impose any requirements closely affecting the individual members.

The majority of the Auxiliary Priests were inspired more by their desire for the apostolate than by any attraction toward the religious life. The prestige of M. Moreau and his success as a missionary had attracted them to him. His hope was to lead them gradually to the religious life by practicing the observances of this life and by his own personal example, somewhat along the lines of M. Mollevaut's efforts at Issy, to bring his disciples to a deep interior life. But on the question of formal acceptance of a Rule and its strict observance, the personal ideas of certain individuals did not yield so easily. They disagreed with their Superior's insistence that their society would never be definitely organized on a solid basis unless its members were bound by the three vows of religion.

<sup>12</sup> The vicar-general in question was M. Lambron: "I did not need the letter of the pastor of Lavare to convince me these accusations were false. . . . I have learned as well as anyone else to appreciate your zeal, and I have never for a moment doubted that in all your activities you had in view only the glory of God and the sanctification of souls." — *Ibid.* M. Lambron, born in 1794 and ordained priest in 1817, had been vicar-general since 1834. Cf. SIFFLET, *Le Chapitre du Mans*, p. 54.

<sup>13</sup> Mt. 19:11.

As for so many other religious congregations, the common bond uniting all these priests was zeal for the salvation of souls. It was this which had brought them to Sainte-Croix.<sup>14</sup> But this common bond was not sufficient to make a reality of the great ideal which stood out before Father Moreau, the essential conditions of which he was practically the only one to understand. "*Perfectio paucorum est*," M. Moullevaut had written to him on one occasion: "Men hesitate before taking this step which really should be the first step of all, for without it there can be nothing but mediocrity throughout the whole of one's life."<sup>15</sup> On another occasion the man of God carried his insistence so far as to say: "The needs are countless and call for priests who are fervent, detached from all things, ready for everything, and filled with the apostolic spirit. This is the advantage of religious communities, where the members pay special attention to obedience and abnegation, virtues which are so rare among priests."<sup>16</sup>

As this letter is dated December 8, 1839, it might not be too rash a presumption to see in it the final inspiration for the decision announced in the circular of January 1, 1840.<sup>17</sup> M. Mollevaut apparently supported this idea in still another letter, dated January 14:

I beg our good Master to shower upon you, your works, and those collaborating with you all the blessings of His love. You are seeking only His most holy will and this is the way to obtain everything and not to be disturbed, no matter what may happen, especially since contradictions and opposition always accompany works blessed by God.<sup>18</sup>

When speaking of the virtues which he says are "so rare among priests" M. Mollevaut added: "It is not too much to set up a novitiate to arrive at the realization of this ideal, and at humility, which is the work of an entire lifetime."<sup>19</sup> On June 3, 1840, M. Moreau asked Bishop Bouvier for authorization to open a novitiate in October. The petition was very precise, and was presented "with all the confidence of a son toward his father":

<sup>14</sup> The Church indicates this truth, for example in the Collect for the feast of St. Alphonsus Liguori, founder of the Redemptorists: "Deus, qui beatum Alfonso Mariam confesso rem tuum atque pontificem, *animarum zelo succensum, Ecclesiam tuam nova prole foecundasti*. . ." *Missale Romanum*, August 2.

<sup>15</sup> January 31, 1837; *Rec. doc.*, v. 1, pp. 159-160.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>17</sup> It will be noticed that the expressions used by M. Mollevaut do not refer in any strictly formal way to the religious life as such. He only lays down general principles, in keeping with his usual characteristic discretion.

<sup>18</sup> *Rec. doc.*, p. 168.

<sup>19</sup> Letter of December 8; *ibid.*

I have decided to make the vows of poverty and obedience on the coming feast of the Assumption, as much to edify the Auxiliary Priests as to give an example to the Brothers, of whom twenty-four have made their profession and whose superior I could not continue to be if I did not walk at the head of their community. . . .

Jean-Marie de Lamennais and Gabriel Deshayes had not understood in this complete sense their associations with the societies they founded. It is a significant detail that M. Moreau declares that his decision "goes back well over two years." He asked His Lordship to determine a time on the feast of the Assumption when he could come to receive his vows.

The Constitutions could not at that time be definitively drawn up. They were to be compiled later on. In the meantime, there was an outline of Constitutions bearing this notation: "*To be submitted for the approval of the Bishop of Le Mans*." The novitiate was to open in October, either at La Charbonnière or in the Barré house, after being inaugurated by His Lordship on September 14. Professors were to be provided for the classes and their names would be submitted to the head of the diocese, with the assurance that no one would be disturbed in the discharge of his duties except with the approval of the Bishop and, what is more, the latter would be kept continually informed of the progress of the students. The petition closed with the following words:

Be so kind, Your Lordship, as to honor me with a word of reply . . . and rest assured that all my sentiments tend to win for you the respect and attachment of those who are taking part in the work of God, as also to train really pious and devoted priests. I cannot tell you what blessings I expect on our community after we have made our vows, especially since there are only two or three still among us who are opposed to profession. . . .<sup>20</sup>

Bishop Bouvier's reply was "Yes" to all the requests. This "Yes" was written in the margin of the letter, without a single word of encouragement.<sup>21</sup> This will be less surprising if we take note of a query sent by Bishop Bouvier to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars on December 5, 1834. In this letter the Bishop of Le Mans wrote: "Your Eminence is aware that certain serious doubts have been raised as to the validity of religious vows, inasmuch as Frenchmen, according to existing laws, are not allowed to renounce their capacity to receive inheritances or to perform the civil acts permitted to those not bound by vows. Theologians are of the opinion that profession is

<sup>20</sup> *Archives de Sainte-Croix*.

<sup>21</sup> "I beg M. Moreau to rest assured of my sincere co-operation. His, very affectionately, J. B., Bishop of Le Mans."

thereby deprived of a condition essential for the validity of the vows."<sup>22</sup> Bishop Bouvier, to be sure, did not formally accept this opinion, which is at the very least surprising, although in 1836, when M. Moreau encountered opposition among the Brothers of St. Joseph to the introduction of vows into their society, the Bishop sided with the opposition and sent his vicar-general to inform Sainte-Croix accordingly.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, he accepted the invitation thus extended to him, seemingly forgetting his former threat never again to set foot inside the house. Still, it would have been more reassuring to receive a more encouraging guarantee that the heart of the Bishop was in his acceptance, and especially that his principles had changed. But another and more enthusiastic approval came from a different kind of authority, and it was not entirely unexpected by M. Moreau. On July 10, M. Mollevaut wrote: "I am happy that you are making vows. The older I get, the more convinced I am that the youth of today cannot acquire stability by any other means."<sup>24</sup> Such a statement, especially from a Sulpician, is of capital importance.

M. Moreau would have liked nothing better than to have a kind of preliminary novitiate at the Issy Solitude in order to prepare those of his subjects on whom he placed his greatest hopes. In fact, this had been his ardent desire. On two different occasions, once in 1839 and again in 1840, he had repeated his request, and he would have been satisfied with at least a temporary stay during the summer vacation. The difficulty, however, came from the fact that the priests of Holy Cross were not to consecrate themselves exclusively to seminary teaching, which is the proper work of Saint-Sulpice.<sup>25</sup> Hence, for his own personal preparation, Basil Moreau went to the Abbey of the Grande Trappe of Mortagne for the eight days preceding his profession. On the day chosen for this solemn act, the beautiful feast of August 15, Mgr. Bouvier, accompanied by his two vicars-general, M. Lambron and M. Dubois, came to celebrate Mass at Sainte-Croix. The community included all the Brothers assembled for the annual retreat, as

<sup>22</sup> CANON PICHON, *Mélanges*, 6 bis, pp. 313-315. Quoted by VANIER, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

<sup>23</sup> As narrated in Father Moreau's memoranda in reply to the objections of Bishop Bouvier, October 25, 1853. Cf. the archives of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, S.R.C., vol. 981, fol. 331 ff. Cf. also the letter of Father Chappé to Bishop Bouvier, December 24, 1847, in the *Archives des Morets*.

<sup>24</sup> *Rec. doc.*, pp. 169-170.

<sup>25</sup> Letters from M. Mollevaut, July 20, 1839, and May 24, 1840, in the *Rec. doc.*, v. 1, pp. 166, 168.

well as the Auxiliary Priests. After Mass the prelate "received the vows of him who offered himself as the first stone of the building which the Lord was to erect to His own glory."<sup>26</sup> M. Moreau had prepared a ceremonial which was intended to serve as a model for the future; it included the adopting of a new name added to one's baptismal name. The first professed members of Notre Dame de Sainte-Croix could take no other name than that of the Blessed Virgin, and the Superior henceforth signed all his official documents under the name of Basil Anthony Mary Moreau.

On the evening of the same day, after Vespers, four of the Auxiliary Priests also pronounced their vows before Bishop Bouvier, who was assisted by the newly professed Superior.<sup>27</sup> The following day, after expressing his thanks to the Bishop, Father Moreau received in reply these few laconic words, which were nonetheless favorable: "The sentiments which you express to me . . . are those of a good religious and they are a great consolation to me."<sup>28</sup>

Once more M. Mollevaut gave the confirmation which Father Moreau desired from the very depths of his soul for the step he had taken. A new visit from his former director had been announced as early as July. The visit on this occasion — it is almost hard to believe — was to be a period of recreation pure and simple and it was Sainte-Croix which had been chosen to provide this pleasure for the aged Sulpician. "This idea," wrote M. Mollevaut, "pleases me immensely. I was so welcome in your house before, and I shall be more than pleased to see you again, along with your confreres and your houses."<sup>29</sup>

This visit, however, did not take place until the end of September. It gave the holy director an opportunity to see at close range the foundations at Sainte-Croix. In a letter dated January 5, 1841, he returned to the subject of his visit and of it left the following testimony:

I have most pleasant memories of my stay at Sainte-Croix and I shall always thank the Lord for the graces He has showered on your works. . . . You cannot give me any more acceptable news than what you write concerning the progress of all of your houses, and if Providence sends across my path any suitable candidates, I shall notify you at once. This question of vocations is the most difficult of all. Community men are rare, because there is nothing so rare as humility, obedience, and self-denial, which are the indispensable conditions for doing good and persevering to the end.

<sup>26</sup> ABBÉ CHARLES MOREAU, *op. cit.*, v. 1, p. 169.

<sup>27</sup> *Annales de Sainte-Croix*, p. 90.

<sup>28</sup> *Archives de Sainte-Croix*, letter of August 16, 1840.

<sup>29</sup> July 10, 1840; *Rec. doc.*, v. 1, p. 169.

Be happy that your *solitaries* are as children and like to laugh; that is a good sign. Community spirit demands that we do everything cheerfully, especially the difficult things. . . . It is particularly your kindly and mild character which attracts your subjects to you, so have no fear of exaggerating in this regard. . . .<sup>30</sup>

The mention of "solitaries" and the good spirit animating them referred to the novitiate which, according to the plan of Father Moreau and the permission of the Bishop, had been opened, not on September 14, but on October 18. Neither was it installed at La Charbonnière nor in the Barré house as had been intended, but rather on a small property which Father Moreau had purchased, in order to have a house which would be completely isolated and a perfect copy of the Solitude at Issy, which had always remained dear to him. This house was situated just a few minutes from Notre Dame de Sainte-Croix toward the east, on the little hill of Gazonniers. The property of Chateauneuf realized all his desires, lending itself to the spirit of recollection by its isolation, its natural enclosure, and a little wood with pleasant walks. Bishop Bouvier came on October 18 to bless the chapel, accompanied by his vicars-general, Canons Piolin and Dubignon. It was the feast of St. Luke the Evangelist to whom the Blessed Virgin confided those things which "she kept in her heart." He whom we shall henceforth call Father Founder, or Father Moreau, for his spiritual paternity is now established forever on a solid basis, took possession of the cell assigned to the master of novices and opened his novitiate with five priests, to whom was added a sixth who arrived some days later. "*O blessed solitude!*" he could still exclaim, as he had already done at Issy, where he had felt so powerful an attraction for the interior life. These words were inscribed on the walls of the vestibule of the novitiate: *O beata solitudo! O sola beatitudo! Intrate toti, manete soli, exite alii.* A statue of our Lady at the entrance of the garden recalled even more religiously the holy delights of the Sulpician Solitude.<sup>31</sup>

Six young priests were gathered in the October of 1840 at the house called Chateauneuf. It had been given the name of "Solitude of the Saviour," whence came the name "Salvatorists," which was then adopted by the religious Priests of Holy Cross, because they were consecrated to the "Heart of Jesus, Shepherd of souls."<sup>32</sup> Father Moreau began with ardor to train his novices.

<sup>30</sup> January 5, 1841; *ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>31</sup> ABBÉ CHARLES MOREAU, *op. cit.*, v. 1, p. 172.

<sup>32</sup> Circular of September 1, 1841; *Circular Letters*, v. 1, p. 44.

Even in the depths of this solitude, Father Moreau was pursued by assaults launched against his growing foundation. The first of these incidents had no connection with the community, but nevertheless had an indirect bearing on it, since it involved a defense of the rights of the religious life. It drew down on the Founder of Holy Cross, this time in a very serious degree, the displeasure of Bishop Bouvier. As we study this incident we find Father Moreau to be as we have already known him: imperturbable in the face of duty, surer than ever of himself from the moment he is better able to understand his obligations.

The incident in question took place in the winter of 1841. It revolved around a girl named Philbert, who had entered the Good Shepherd house of Le Mans as a postulant and was being severely pressed by her family to return home. For more than six years, her parents had tried to persuade her to enter another community, for which she felt no attraction whatever. Mademoiselle Philbert, who was then twenty-three years old, went to the Superioress of the Good Shepherd house, with whom she had an interview unknown to her parents, and then went to seek counsel from Father Moreau. The latter imposed upon her two months of waiting and reflection. When this time of trial had passed, he allowed her to enter the monastery. When the parents of the candidate refused their permission, the young lady went ahead without this authorization and was received as a postulant by the community. Her parents then took the matter to the Bishop of Le Mans.

Bishop Bouvier asked of Father Moreau nothing less than to use his authority as ecclesiastical superior of the Good Shepherd Monastery and oblige the young girl to leave. Father Moreau's only possible line of action in the circumstances was to examine the dispositions of the postulant, put her on her guard against any hasty step, and insist on the respect due to one's parents. This is what he did. To go further would have meant interfering with the conscience of this young woman. She persevered in her resolution, and remained in the monastery, since the Superioress had no reason whatsoever for sending her away. Father Moreau could do nothing more than advise the Bishop of the circumstances, while asking him to accept, if he thought it within his power, full responsibility for any such dismissal. Confronted with such a request, Mgr. Bouvier was as powerless as the ecclesiastical Superior himself to oppose any effective resistance. Nevertheless, one of the vicars-general took it upon himself to carry the insistence still further. Father Moreau answered that, as the superior of the monastery, he

could not without cowardice and so to speak, "without sin," "break" a vocation which gave such assurances of solidity. He added that he was well aware that his stand on this matter would encounter opposition from the opinion of the world, but he continued: "It was this opinion which condemned Jesus Christ and the saints, just as it now condemns their maxims and their example in the case at hand." He added that it was this opinion which had never ceased to criticize him bitterly, and even to calumniate him, in connection with the foundation of the Good Shepherd and the associations attached to it, the society of the Brothers, the boarding school, and all the other activities he had undertaken for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. He expressed his regrets at being in apparent contradiction with diocesan authority, but he trusted that men would one day recognize the openness and the uprightness of the line of conduct he had followed.<sup>33</sup> This stand, which was unassailable, put an end to the controversy.

This incident was, however, very displeasing to Mgr. Bouvier. It left him, unfortunately, with a tendency to lend an all too willing ear to other complaints, this time against the Society of the Salvatorists, which was then in its very early years. Those of the Auxiliary Priests who had been unwilling to embrace the religious life continued with the community, availing themselves of the opportunity which Father Moreau had made available to them in his charity.<sup>34</sup> The existence of this two-fold family within the same house was by its very nature a source of many difficulties. One of the priests who had remained secular complained to the Bishop that the house had become "a religious community, where the members could preserve their own personal rights only by taking upon themselves the obligations of the vows."<sup>35</sup>

The turn which events had taken was, as we must recognize, only natural in the circumstances. The best solution would assuredly have been to separate the two groups and then to continue as good friends. Mgr. Bouvier thought it best to approach the problem from another angle. This consisted in launching an inquiry. It is true that he first notified Father Moreau of the investigation he was about to make, and informed him that he intended to ask for letters from each member of

<sup>33</sup> Letters of Father Moreau to M. Dubois, vicar-general of Le Mans, February 15 and 16, 1841, in the *Archives de Sainte-Croix*.

<sup>34</sup> Letter of June 3, 1840, to Mgr. Bouvier. This letter foresaw explicitly the possibility of just such an arrangement.

<sup>35</sup> Letter of February 27, 1841, from Abbé Moriceau. Cf. the *Archives de l'évêché*.

the community. This was normal procedure, but it was done in terms which manifested a marked spirit of distrust.<sup>36</sup>

Father Moreau felt this decision keenly. Once more, the Bishop of Le Mans, who had showed him esteem and confidence over so long a period, who had entrusted him with the most delicate and sometimes the most thankless missions, appeared to be turning against him. The trial of distrust is one of the heaviest which can be placed on the shoulders of those who are honest and straightforward. Under this new mortification, the Superior of Sainte-Croix spoke of it to his novices, laying it, as one of them later said, "at the foot of the Cross." Speaking of the trial was perhaps an expression of weakness. Nevertheless, it is through this manifestation of his sorrow that we are provided with four valuable pieces of evidence on the conduct of the Superior of the Salvatorists. They came from four priests who, conformably to the instructions of their Bishop, wrote to him directly making known to him their viewpoint on the matter.

As for what Father Moreau thought it well to tell his community, we have the following version from one of them, the only malcontent, who expressed himself to the Bishop in the following terms:

Monseigneur,

Your Lordship wants us to make known to you our feelings as regards our Constitutions, and wishes us also to do so with full liberty. Nevertheless, all the suggestions we might be able to submit to your wisdom, would be entirely to no point. . . .<sup>37</sup>

Then comes the following explanation of this ill-humored introduction:

M. Moreau has declared formally and solemnly, that, whatever may be your advice, you will not get him to make a single change contrary to his convictions, and that, consequently, we would get along without your approbation, that it is not in any way necessary to us, and that as a matter of fact we do not want it.

In other words Father Moreau would have taken a stand directly opposed to the promise made on June 3, 1840, regarding the preparation of the Constitutions. This promise bound him to submit these Constitutions to his Ordinary and, as a matter of fact, he later fulfilled this obligation in the fullest possible measure.

". . . Besides," continued this letter, "it would seem that in ordering

<sup>36</sup> Mgr. Bouvier to Father Moreau, February 24, 1841; *Archives de Sainte-Croix*.

<sup>37</sup> Letter from Abbé Moriceau, March 25, 1841, to Mgr. Bouvier, in the *Annales de Sainte-Croix*, p. 76.

this investigation the Bishop of Le Mans has put his finger on a very sore spot" — this is not at all difficult to believe — "for the spirit of discontent has been very much alive in this community and complaints have been bitter." The sorrow to which the letter gives expression takes on, at times, a very lively tone, and it may well be that the letter really exaggerated when it states: "He told us that you are doing him the grossest of injuries," namely the injury of lack of confidence.

Then follows an allusion to several complaints which subsequent letters will take up in detail, and which were intermingled with certain flattering expressions:

Let monks who are locked up in their house take care of themselves as best they may; this is of little importance to me.

Mgr. Bouvier was at that moment in the very thick of his battle with Solesmes!<sup>38</sup>

But we are your priests and, I make bold to say it, we are devoted to you more than our fellow priests engaged in the ministry. Like them, we have a share in your ministry, but we are more ready than anyone else to go wherever your Lordship may desire.

There was a concluding allusion to Mademoiselle Philbert at the Good Shepherd house, who had nothing to do with the question at issue, and last, the writer expressed a very determined resolution not to pronounce the vows of religion. Here was the very core of the difficulty. The tone of this letter, the bitterness with which it is saturated, its insistence on all those elements which might undo the reputation of the Founder in the mind of the Bishop, all this demonstrates that there was a very deep-rooted antagonism between the writer of the letter and the Superior of Sainte-Croix. The Superior wanted to found a religious community, while certain of his collaborators wanted nothing more than a secular society.<sup>39</sup>

As for the statements attributed to Father Moreau, not everything in the denunciation written against him is false. In the words "no change contrary to his convictions" we find a genuine expression of his character. They manifest a conviction based on duty. Perhaps also, feeling himself already unduly strong, he was envisioning at a distance the approval from Rome at which he was aiming from the depths of

<sup>38</sup> He had just returned from Rome, where he had gone to lodge his complaints against Dom Guéranger. Cf. DOM DELATTE, *op. cit.*, v. 1, p. 253.

<sup>39</sup> "As for binding of myself by vows, the idea, far from having any attraction for me, only repels me."

his ultramontane heart and which would be stronger than his Bishop. The statement regarding His Lordship and "his administration," namely, that Father Moreau had always found them "opposed to all the phases of his activity," could very well have been a truth which it was imprudent to put into so many words and which was doubtless unjust, if formulated in sweeping generalities. But for this statement the past had provided more than one justification and the future was to verify it still more. In any case, later on, when the question of approving the Constitutions of Holy Cross came up, Bishop Bouvier certainly did not forget this letter. The young priest who addressed the bill of complaints to the Bishop of Le Mans was one who, some years previously, had written the following lines to M. Moreau after an incident in which certain harsh words had been spoken:

Reverend Superior:

Your last letter . . . provided me with much food for thought in the solitude of Chambery, as I sat at the foot of the mighty oaks of the forest. My first thought was to bring my answer to you personally at Le Mans as soon as I could get away from here. My answer would have been to throw myself into your arms, thanking you for the very generous interest which you take in my poor person, without any reasonable grounds or hope of success, and then to put myself into your hands as a poor wretch who is blind both in heart and in mind, who is constantly getting into trouble, notwithstanding his good intentions, and who is ruining himself. At least, may these long and painful miseries bring me a great sense of self-distrust and an ardent love for obedience, as they have been for you, my reverend superior, a source of great merit! It seems to me, in a way, that I am walking the long path, back to the first fervor which caused me to consecrate my entire life to your society. I make no promises, for you will always have trouble in making me amount to anything, and yet I do not want to be your cross and your burden forever. . . .<sup>40</sup>

This text alone would make any commentary unnecessary.<sup>41</sup>

The three other novices, Fathers Vérité, Champeau, and Chappé, who later became prominent religious in the Congregation, also took up the defense of their Superior. Their letters are interesting because they afford an insight into the nature of the criticisms leveled with increasing insistence against Father Moreau. They all apparently

<sup>40</sup> Letter of Abbé Moriceau to M. Moreau, September 24, 1837, in the *Archives de Sainte-Croix*.

<sup>41</sup> More serious difficulties seem to have risen for M. Moriceau in 1839, as a sequel to excessively close and secret association with M. Cottereau, who also later left the community. Cf. letter of May 29, 1839, to M. Moreau; *ibid.*



stemmed from the simple fact that he exercised his authority as a superior should. Those at Sainte-Croix who were acting against obedience excused themselves by accusing their Superior of excessive authority. Those who undertook to defend him did not hesitate to set forth their own viewpoints, and it is this which gives their testimony great historical value, in that it brings into relief certain traits of character which may have given rise to criticism. They add that the kindness of their father shed a new light on his harshness and attracted all of them to the living of a perfect life.

Father Vérité wrote in a moderate tone and the incidents to which he refers in the beginning of his letter give evidence of his courage:<sup>42</sup>

Before entering Holy Cross I had often heard of the difficulties encountered by Father Moreau and of the opposition frequently raised against him by ecclesiastical authority itself. My answer was that often . . . two parties with the very best of intentions find themselves on opposite sides, since God permits this in order to try His servants.<sup>43</sup>

Nevertheless, I was quite surprised to hear a priest declare on various occasions that Your Lordship had assured him one day that you were forced to put up with M. Moreau because you had no one else to take his place. . . .

I did not know what to think when, Wednesday evening, while reading to us a phrase from a letter which he had just received, Father Moreau informed us that Your Lordship had, on still another occasion, shown the greatest lack of confidence in him, and that this was the third time within a short period that this had been made known.

The suffering of the father is likewise the suffering of his children, and how could we not be deeply saddened at such reports when we know his zeal, the purity of his intentions, and especially the details of his life and his conduct in our regard. While, after his example, I lay these trials at the foot of the Cross, I cannot resist the impulse to place before Your Lordship the assurance of my deep conviction that the accusations formulated so often against him are false.

One of the accusations was that the Superior allowed in the house no other confessor than himself. Father Vérité affirms, on the contrary, that there were three other confessors. As for the complaint about the Superior's imperious temperament, the writer expressed himself as follows:

<sup>42</sup> Letter of March 26, 1841, in the *Archives de l'évêché*.

<sup>43</sup> Father Vérité added these words, which might well serve as a commentary on the life of the superior: ". . . It is sufficient to have only a passing acquaintance with the lives of the saints, to see that this has even been God's usual manner of dealing with those to whom He has entrusted a special mission."

On numerous occasions when he was overwhelmed with difficult problems of the greatest importance I have always admired his self-control, notwithstanding his naturally quick temper. I do not mean that our father does not have his moments of weakness; we all have them.<sup>44</sup>

It is said that he is seeking only to dominate, but, *in a novitiate, is it not necessary that there should be subjection to a rule?*<sup>45</sup> Are not the novices there to sanctify themselves before undertaking to sanctify others?

Then followed a criticism which rested on very weak foundations, namely, the counsel given to the novices to restrict their correspondence. There is no novitiate in which the novice master has not given the same advice to his subjects. In this list of complaints there is only one which would appear to be worth mentioning, for it explains perhaps the root of certain other difficulties which were serious in another way. This had to do with the excessive confidence which Father Moreau manifested in dealing with his subjects:

Our father . . . has shown for us the greatest possible confidence in speaking to us in all simplicity of all matters he was obliged to treat. He has even been too open, for in so doing he has doubtless been guilty of regrettable indiscretions.<sup>46</sup>

Father Champeau, in turn, wrote to Bishop Bouvier on March 27.<sup>47</sup> The passages to be quoted are long but, on the threshold of the history of Holy Cross, they are of capital importance. Besides, it is impossible to find anywhere else a proper description of the life led at Sainte-Croix, and of the moral atmosphere in which its members lived:

. . . I cannot speak of anything else besides the Solitude, since that is where I have resided habitually. But I can assure Your Lordship that between the Superior and all his priests there reigns the most kindly and most agreeable spirit of abandonment. . . . Nevertheless, when I say *all* his priests,

<sup>44</sup> Father Vérité later made a delicate reference to Father Moreau's spirit of humility. "He has chosen for himself *three monitors* . . ." (italics ours). Then he adds the wise question: "Would it not have been possible to advise him through these monitors of the points on which they found fault?"

<sup>45</sup> Italics ours. In its open simplicity, this observation appears to sum up the entire question.

<sup>46</sup> The letter closes with this same tone of charity: "Notwithstanding their good intentions, those who lodged these complaints have been mistaken. I have no reason to suspect anyone, and I ask God to maintain among us that admirable charity which has reigned until now. . . . Your Lordship will understand how thoroughly false are the reports which have been so often turned in against M. Moreau, and will be better disposed to favor the work of Holy Cross, as you have done so often in the past, for the glory of God.

<sup>47</sup> Copy in the *Annales de Sainte-Croix*, p. 49.

I am speaking in general terms, and I do not mean to indicate that they are all equally well disposed toward him. In a community it is impossible for all characters to be alike and, consequently, for all tastes to be the same. Some will be easygoing and will describe as harshness any act smacking of energy, while others will be hard to manage and will regard as weakness any act marked with wise kindness.<sup>48</sup>

This psychological observation is based on simple good sense.

. . . Those who have painted Father Moreau for you in the light of one who is seeking to exercise on us a harmful influence, have deceived you. In whatever does not fall within the realm of obedience, M. Moreau exercises over us no other influence than that of his virtues and his counsels. I have never had occasion to remark in him anything like those imperious commands which would be rather the orders of a master than the kindly suggestions of a friend. In a word, I do not feel that it is possible to have any greater degree of liberty; liberty of conscience, in this sense — that all the priests have faculties for confessions and that all are free to go to confession to any fellow priest of their choice; liberty of direction, consisting in this, that there is perfect freedom to choose one's director, although there is the obligation imposed by rule to render periodic accounts of one's dispositions to the Superior. This, however, strikes me as being only just and gives rise to no embarrassment. . . .<sup>49</sup>

The next question was that of correspondence.<sup>50</sup> The remainder of Father Champeau's letter was a close-up view of Father Moreau and at the same time suggested for his actions an interpretation which was marked with wisdom:

Whatever suspicions of harshness and difficult temper may be caused in the minds of those who know him only from afar are manifestly only a

<sup>48</sup> The writer took care to note that he was sending his letter without Father Moreau's knowledge, but that this did not mean that he distrusted his Superior: "What I have just said to you, I would say to his face with just as much freedom." He mentioned that he wrote secretly, only in order that the Bishop might have no grounds for thinking he had been unduly influenced. He insisted on the prejudiced viewpoint which perhaps existed in the mind of the Bishop: "It is taken for granted among us that you have a bad impression of the relations existing between our Superior and ourselves." For this reason, he declared his intention to tell the Bishop all he knew and to speak his mind.

<sup>49</sup> Canon law had as yet laid down no regulations on this point.

<sup>50</sup> On the point of freedom of correspondence he remarks: "All the members, with the exception of the novices, are free to write to whom they please and when they please, without their letters being censored by anyone. The novices, it is true, are obliged to show their superior all incoming and outgoing letters, but, it seems to me, such a regulation is altogether normal. But on this point M. Moreau has carried his delicacy to the point of not reading incoming letters — I do not think one single example can be cited — and I feel that the same could be said of outgoing correspondence, although I cannot be absolutely sure."

prejudice and an illusion. In the general administration of the house, in his outside contacts and perhaps even in his dealing with you, Your Lordship,<sup>51</sup> he may have shown himself firm and unyielding on more than one occasion. Has he always been in the right? That is not my business. I feel however that without this energetic trait of character he would never have accomplished all he has done. But this I say and this I affirm, that with his priests, in community life, he acts as a father. I have on many occasions admired the calmness and the moderation with which a man of this temperament, overwhelmed with work, bothered on all sides, and carrying on only by force of sheer energy, has put up with contradictions which were well calculated to give rise to irritation. Hence, I do not hesitate to declare, Your Lordship, that you have been deceived and led into error regarding this man who is so evidently directed by God. . . .

The faithful novice then adds that it would be "very regrettable" for such an illusion to remain in the mind of the Bishop regarding a house "where everyone is filled with generosity toward God and with devotion to you, my Lord, who are its first superior." Lastly, Father Chappé wrote in similar terms. Taking up the question of the new Constitutions, he expressed himself as follows:

Before my profession and since I have made my vows, these Constitutions have always struck me as being very wise and well suited to put our Society on a firm basis, develop it, and enable it to attain the end which was aimed at in its foundation. I am convinced, Your Lordship, that the exact observance of these Constitutions will have no other effect but to assure peace and happiness for those who are called to this Society and who enter it with a right intention.

The letter of the complainant had made allusion to the "councils" the Father Founder had organized for the priests and for the Brothers, and in which he was accused of including only young religious completely dominated by himself. Father Chappé's detailed remarks on this point afford an opportunity to see how the administration of Sainte-Croix was carried on:

As I have learned that Your Lordship has been told that our Superior has admitted into his administrative council only the younger members of the Society of Priests and that of the Brothers, I feel it my duty to make known to you the truth on this subject. As for the priests' society, M. Cottereau was appointed to this council, but withdrew because he experienced for this type of activity nothing but repugnance and boredom. M. de Marseul was on the council with me until the beginning of this month, when he withdrew of his own accord. As regards the Society of

<sup>51</sup> This is probably an allusion to the incidents of the Latin school and Mademoiselle Philbert.

the Brothers I have seen among the councilors Brothers André and Vincent, who are both older religious, along with Brother Leopold, the treasurer. At the last retreat the general council of the Brothers named Brothers Patrick and Hilary to replace Brothers André and Vincent, who had been appointed to other houses. As you see, my Lord, it is not only young priests and young Brothers who have until now been on the administrative council of Notre-Dame de Sainte-Croix. . . .<sup>52</sup>

To these declarations we may add one written by a priest who was, it is true, of a very changeable temperament, and who, after pronouncing his vows, regretted his step and then went so far as to complain against the authority of the Superior. The expressions used three months later enable us to have a deeper insight into the intimate life of Sainte-Croix and to have a better knowledge of him who was facing the storm:

For several days now, I have felt the urge to write to Your Lordship, and the kindness with which you are pleased to give heed to your children presses me not to delay my letter any longer. I have been very imprudent, Your Lordship, and very frequently I have not weighed sufficiently the meaning of my words since the moment of my profession. If in my difficulties, troubles, and temptations I had been satisfied with opening my soul to M. Moreau alone, in whom I assuredly have great confidence, I assure you, my Lord, that I would have succeeded in maintaining peace of mind. I know from my own experience that every time I have had enough simplicity to make my troubles known to my Superior, I have always felt the better for it, and I am happy to say that I have never made known to him a single reasonable desire which he did not satisfy immediately, and which he even often anticipated. Hence, I have been very unjust in regard to him, for since the time I entered the seminary and since the time I went to Sainte-Croix, he has always showed for me fatherly affection, and if I have the happiness to strengthen myself in my vocation, to accomplish some good, and to save my soul, it is to his careful attention that I shall owe all this. . . .<sup>53</sup>

The whole question at issue, it would seem, can be reduced quite easily to the following summary. Father Moreau conceived for his foundation an ideal which only gradually took shape and form in his mind. This ideal was accepted enthusiastically by one group of his followers, who were able to pay tribute to his kindness at the same time that they bore witness to the energy of his character, without which the foundation would never have succeeded. Certain others did not understand him. Out of a spirit of charity, Father Moreau kept them

<sup>52</sup> Letter of March 31, 1841, copied in the *Annales de Sainte-Croix*, pp. 56, 79.

<sup>53</sup> Abbé Céliér to Bishop Bouvier, June 8, 1841; *ibid.*

in his house; he could not have done otherwise. In any case, his actions aimed at reconciling what was really irreconcilable. The conflicts involved in living the common life from day to day began to multiply, and the interpretation placed on his conduct in the circumstances could not fail to turn against him in the tense atmosphere pervading a house which harbored two factions.

And there was the Bishop himself. It seems very clear that the straightforward honesty of the Founder of Sainte-Croix gave rise to certain divergences of opinion between him and his Bishop, and were the reason why he lost in Bishop Bouvier's eyes that spontaneous confidence which is accorded only to friends. The antagonism engendered by certain ideas, and of which there had been a presentiment at St. Vincent's Seminary not so long before, burst into flame again later on. Without any desire to close his eyes to the good which had been accomplished and in which he himself had co-operated, though without great enthusiasm, the Bishop's thoughts turned quite readily toward grievances which apparently sprang from a state of mind in which ideas were not clearly delineated. That is the way all of us are made.

At last the storm subsided. On March 4 Father Moreau wrote: "Everything is going along marvelously at the Solitude."<sup>54</sup> Those who were unwilling to take the religious vows withdrew one by one. One of their number, M. Cottureau, one of the pioneers at Sainte-Croix whom we have seen having recourse to the Founder as to a father whose kindness was indispensable,<sup>55</sup> became a founder himself, in 1847. After his departure from Holy Cross he spent some years as an assistant pastor and then, with two of his former colleagues among the Auxiliary Priests, M. Gauthier and M. Launay, he founded a society of diocesan missionaries who continued as secular priests and chose

<sup>54</sup> Letter of May 2, 1841, to Bishop Bouvier. He invited the Bishop to come whenever he wished to make the canonical visitation of the community. Perhaps the following remark may have been somewhat ill-timed: "No one here at the Solitude regrets the departure of M. Moriceau. Things are going better without him. . . . He will do better work elsewhere. He is a very good priest, but it is a far cry from that to a religious of Holy Cross."

<sup>55</sup> His letter has been quoted earlier. On this entire question the archives contain no documents from Abbé Cottureau. A letter from Father Vérité to Father Sorin dated October 19, 1841, is enough to show how Abbé Cottureau's attitude was one of greater delicacy and considerateness. Up until the eve of August 15 of that same year, he was almost on the verge of making vows. He and Father Moreau discussed the matter for an hour, and during their conference "both of them shed copious tears." — The letter is in the archives at Notre Dame, Ind.

as their headquarters the sanctuary of Notre-Dame du Chêne. The diocesan authorities were altogether favorable to this foundation.<sup>56</sup>

Of Bishop Bouvier, at least it can be said to his credit that, for the time being, he allowed Father Moreau a free hand to carry on his great work. On several occasions he even undertook to defend the Founder when calumny was unleashed against him. It was impossible for the filial testimony given in favor of their father by the three novices of the Solitude not to have some effect on him. M. Mollevaut wrote in his usual quiet style on May 15:

. . . I also thank God, and even more fervently, for the expansion He is granting to your foundations. Work like this is accomplished at the price of many crosses, contradictions, criticism, and much fault finding. It was in this way that the Church, that great community, was also founded, even though there was a Divine Hand to organize it and Apostles who worked miracles on all sides. When we think of this, there is no room for surprise over the trials through which the good Lord wishes to make us pass. . . .<sup>57</sup>

Father Moreau had the great consolation of seeing religious profession give further solidarity to that union of his sons, priests and Brothers, which was his dream. On the occasion of the second religious profession among the Auxiliary Priests, on August 15, 1841, there was

<sup>56</sup> Cf. P. GALBIN, *Notice sur le bon Père Cottureau, Supérieur des missionnaires de Notre-Dame du Chêne* (Le Mans: 1878). This "good Father" accomplished much good, thanks to his zeal and his eloquence which was reminiscent of apostolic times. The brochure referred to (16 pages) contains one or two rather interesting remarks. The author, first of all, feels justified in stating that Father Moreau needed "the moderating influence which could have been brought to bear on his holy impetuosity by the spiritual-minded, judicious, and retiring Abbé Cottureau." It would also have been desirable, says the author, for M. Moreau to resign as superior in favor of M. Cottureau (page 3). Lastly, we find this remark which stands out as being very significant: "It may occur to many to ask if M. Cottureau ever thought of becoming a religious. I know that the idea had come to him . . . and that he gave it very serious consideration; nevertheless, several of his counselors, foreseeing all the good he could accomplish in the world, had convinced him that by trying to standardize his very special preaching method, he would hamper and even paralyze it. They added that a good secular priest could do much even for his fellow priests if he succeeded in winning their esteem and their affection, and, lastly, that a secular priest also belongs to a religious order, which is really first among them all, with our Lord Jesus Christ as its Founder. Hence, he was satisfied with being a humble tertiary of St. Francis . . ." (*op. cit.*, p. 10, note 2). These remarks would appear to be the echo of private discussions in the rooms of the priests at Sainte-Croix, as is indicated in the letter of M. Moriceau, to which reference had already been made. The two priests were in agreement that, aside from the preaching apostolate, life at Sainte-Croix had no interest for them.

<sup>57</sup> *Rec. doc.*, p. 172.

great rejoicing in the community, and the newly professed undertook to celebrate this great day, not by receiving honor for themselves, but rather by contributing to the festivities with exquisite grace. They were five in number, Fathers Vérité, Champeau, Hiron, Davy, and Philbert. After the profession ceremonies at High Mass, a family meal was served to the entire Community assembled for the occasion. The newly professed priests donned waiters' aprons and served the Brothers at table. Shortly afterward, they edified these Brothers by preaching their annual retreat. Father Vérité, who recounts this incident, remarks: "These are the fruits of the Solitude."<sup>58</sup>

From 1839 to 1843, the community at Le Mans numbered from twenty to twenty-five members. Not all had as yet pronounced vows, and in fact some of their number never went on to religious profession. The community lists of the period carry the names of several who became Religious of Holy Cross and who, before long, will have a part in our story. We have already mentioned the names of Fathers Chappé, Vérité, and Champeau, who undertook to defend their father against unjust attacks. There was also Father Hupier, one of the very first "Auxiliary Priests," even as far back as the time of "good Father" Dujarié; he was very kindly, meek, supernatural-minded, and even-tempered, and became an indefatigable missionary. Besides, we find Fathers Saunier, Drouelle, Sorin, Rézé, Gauthier, Haudebourg, and Granger. Lastly, there was Father Le Boucher, formerly a monk of Solesmes. In fact, he was the first subprior under Dom Guéranger, and had the distinction of being the first priest ordained at Solesmes, in 1834, by Bishop Bouvier himself. He left the monastery two months later,<sup>59</sup> and on two occasions the Bishop of Le Mans hastened to recommend him to Father Moreau<sup>60</sup> as being particularly suited for the apostolate of the Auxiliary Priests.<sup>61</sup> There were some few others, who hardly appear in the history of the Congregation or who eventually disappeared from its ranks.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Letter of October 18, 1841.

<sup>59</sup> DOM DELATTE, *op. cit.*, v. 1, pp. 133-136.

<sup>60</sup> Letter of Bishop Bouvier to Father Moreau, January 25, 1835.

<sup>61</sup> Letter of Bishop Bouvier to M. Moreau, September 23, 1839. On this occasion the Bishop wrote: "I would be glad to see him with you, because he is pious and has good presence. But in case he should not remain with you, I do not wish to be responsible for providing him with any place in my diocese."

<sup>62</sup> The lists are given in the diocesan *Ordos* of Le Mans.