

post of obedience when God will summon them from this life to appear before His awful tribunal. Some of us may not see many another New Year; neither age nor vigor will avail; but a holy life will enable us to look steadfastly upon death as a deliverer from temptation and misery, holding out "the crown promised to those who shall have persevered to the end."

I am often asked already when I expect to return. May is the time I fixed upon when starting; I look forward to this cheering month with as much eagerness, to say the least, as any of you.

I have commenced the visit of our Houses in France. By the middle of January we intend, *D. v.*, to pass over into Africa, with one of our Rev. Fathers, to see the three establishments of the Congregation in that Province. My correspondence will be forwarded to me there, without any additional postal charge.

In order to obtain all the blessings I need to do some justice to the affairs of the Congregation, I beg of all the members of Holy Cross to commence on the Sunday following the receipt of these lines a novena of Communions, in honor of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; not, however, that any one be *obliged*, but directly exhorted, to make an effort, and try to live so guardedly and so religiously as to be permitted by his own conscience to approach the Holy Table every day during the novena. The prayers to be recited are: the Litany of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, if it can be had; otherwise, that of Loreto, with the *Memorare* and the three ordinary invocations of 1, 2, and 3 o'clock p. m. Let all seriously strive to make of these nine days a time of renewal of fervor in the whole Congregation.

E. SORIN.

No. II.

PARIS, January 15, 1869.

REV. FATHERS AND DEAR BROTHERS:

At all times economy is a virtue in a Religious Community. There are, however, circumstances which make it an imperative duty, not only upon all the members of a congregation, but especially on the administration of its finances,—on those who, by office or direct obedience, have this heavy responsibility added to those of a religious life. On the other hand, it would be a mistaken idea to hold the executors of the will of the administration, viz., the stewards, accountable for whatever may go wrong in the administration of an extensive community. Here we must have correct views of these officers' obligations. What is a steward's duty? Is it to buy or sell, or dictate as he pleases? If such were the case, the steward should have all the authority vested in himself alone. In reality, however, the steward is simply the agent to carry out

the orders emanating from the board of administrators, or, in accordance with the Constitutions and rules, the resolutions of the Council of administration which meets weekly in every Religious House.

It is high time to have this clearly understood by our stewards themselves and the members of our various establishments. The former will find in it a relief, and the true nature of their responsibilities; while the latter will see that the steward is not necessarily the only one deserving of praise or blame in a house. A steward sincerely honest and religious, with a clear head and a complete devotedness to his Congregation, will find in the regular Councils of his House all the security he may need to justify his transactions. He is personally responsible only for the execution of the orders of the administration in Council; and that is enough: for much depends on this part. The perfection of his charge is to execute exactly what the administrators have decreed: no more nor less; no sooner nor later than was meant; precisely as was meant, as to the time, the manner, the expenses, the quantity, the quality, etc. A steward who would allow himself any undue liberty of action in any of those circumstances would be an unfaithful officer,—would gratuitously take upon himself responsibilities which no religious will ever trifle with, and would deserve no blessing upon his office. A steward who wishes to secure God's approval and the peace of his own heart, will always take good care to avoid the least unnecessary disturbance of his conscience. He will be careful to leave the responsibility of his acts where it naturally lies—with the Council. There he will report everything he thinks should be done, or prevented. It is his duty to prepare all the matters on which a decision is sought; there he must present all he shall have to attend to the following week; there he must have everything as clearly set forth and as thoroughly examined as possible; and when he has done all in his power to enable the councillors to reach a wise decision, his next duty is to see that every measure there agreed upon be carried into execution. This is nothing new, but simply the spirit of Rule VII on the stewards' duties, which should be read over again, and followed up until our new set of Rules shall have been promulgated. The same must be said of every rule until duly replaced. The regulations by which men are governed in all human associations vary well-nigh every year; oftentimes bring on no improvement; but everywhere the last received obtain. In the same manner, let every member live up to his Rules until they are replaced by others.

Our new Directory is now being printed. Within a few weeks the book shall be placed in our hands, and then all others withdrawn. The Rules shall follow without any further delay. But none should wait until then in order to begin to live religiously.

Above all, let our Religious, to a man, strive to preserve in our Congregation a feature which has always been characteristic of the children of Holy Cross—I mean the spirit of devotedness. No religious should be found in our ranks with even the appearance of idleness. *Because you eat the fruit of your labors you are happy, and it is well with you.* (Psalm cxxvii, 2). *If any one is not willing to work, let him not eat.* Read the third chapter of the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, and you will find in it the proof of what is here said. It is most certain that idle men are a great burden to a community; they are like unfruitful trees planted in excellent soil. Far from contributing their generous share to the labors of their companions, they increase their burden; they feed and grow fat upon the sweat of others; yet they participate in every advantage, for which they offer nothing in return, and to which, in justice, they have no claim.

“The bees that work not,” says St. Francis, “are cast out of the hive.” He was wont to call an idle religious “Brother Asp.” One day, seeing such a brother roaming through the monastery, looking around and doing nothing, “Go your way, Brother Asp,” said he; “you would willingly live upon the sweat of your companions, while doing nothing yourself; you are but a wicked asp, who would eat the honey which you never made.” “Such are found,” admirably remarks the learned and saintly Father St. Jure, in his treatise on community life, “in all religious houses, while others are engaged in hard work; and who, when the supper-bell rings, come with the rest to the refectory, and begin, without a blush on their cheeks, to eat the bread earned by their devoted fellow-Brothers; and not unfrequently those living scandals will be foremost and loud in complaining of every little thing amiss in those who know no rest.”

Not content with doing nothing, those idle members will often prevent others from fulfilling their tasks. Their conversation is usually as dangerous as their example. Nothing is more contagious or more disgusting. *Idleness has taught much mischief* (Eccl. xxiii, 29). Is it not the mother of every vice? the tomb of every virtue? May God preserve us from idleness and deliver us from idlers! For it is a common axiom among the masters of a spiritual life that “he who does nothing unavoidably does evil.” Therefore, let all the true children of Holy Cross combine never to support idleness in their midst. Either amendment or expulsion. Pray, understand me—amendment or expulsion. I have my reasons to be thus positive; there is no virtue in idleness, and there is an immense danger to virtuous people. It is everywhere a fatal blow to economy; and without economy no religious order can stand, for the foundation is gone. I could hardly name a vice more detrimental to a community; gradually, insensibly, almost imperceptibly, it reaches and gnaws upon the very vitals of religious life.

That all may understand how earnest I feel on this point, I close by charging the consciences of Provincials and Superiors, to stir up, by every means in their power, those who would give room to such suspicions; and if no change can be effected, to report to the general administration without delay.

Our holy Habit should never be a cover to idleness anywhere. Experience has taught, and teaches everywhere, that idleness never goes alone: it is ever accompanied either by gluttony, or insolence, or disobedience, or censorious overbearing, or all that together. How different is true devotedness! Ever ready for the sacrifice; never sparing pains or fatigues. There is no looseness or indifference about a devoted religious; you see in his very countenance, in his bearing, in his every step that he is in earnest; that he means to be a doer and not a talker; that he feels an interest in the cause; that he feels happy in proportion as he devotes his energy to that cause. Give him a chance; no matter how laborious, how trying the task may prove, he is willing, nay, he rejoices. If such a one is humble and obedient to the hand that guides, he is a treasure; Heaven smiles upon him; blessings will follow him in all his movements. But will the slothful dare take his seat by the side of a religious at table? No: the fare is too common for him. This applies not alone to working religious; active devotedness is a virtue in every rank of every society. Imagine an indolent teacher in a class-room; he is the ruin of the class; but remove him and replace him by a man of energy; life returns again, and in a few days the same class seems transformed into a new class.

Whatever your obedience may be, do well what you do; do it in earnest as well as you can, do it quickly; never spend an hour where half an hour is sufficient; never do a thing negligently; it exposes one to a curse in a religious Congregation. By unceasing exertions you will ever increase your activity.

While I bless Divine Providence for the constant increase of our religious family in the New World, I cannot help pointing out how near the danger lies to the blessing. An extensive community of devoted, energetic, efficient members will undoubtedly gain in proportion to its own numerical force. For, although they labor much, such members are generally economical, saving, easily satisfied, not costly. But suppose for a moment that this holy spirit departs from the Community and is replaced by indolence, that vast gathering will break of its own weight; the larger it grows the nearer it comes to a ruin.

It is then it becomes absolutely necessary, urgent, of an immediate necessity, to see scrupulously, for the very life of the Community itself, that strict economy reigns everywhere; that no screw be left loose in the whole machinery; that attention be kept close

to common interests to avoid unnecessary expenses, and protect everywhere the property of the Congregation.

No expenditures should be consented to without the sanction of the Council of administration, however trifling it may appear. Nay, the Council should open its deliberations every week, not simply with the minutes of the previous meeting, but by seriously examining how the orders of said meeting have been executed. The steward must be prepared to show that he has faithfully carried out to the letter the orders he has received. For the present, let no one speak seriously of new expenses in which the Congregation is to take a share; the only improvement I recommend to each and to all is the reduction of the debt, its total extinction everywhere. I would rather go with a patched dress than a new suit unpaid for. Curtail your expenses and pay your creditors.

E. SORIN.

No. III.

NOTRE DAME, IND., August 23, 1869.

REVEREND FATHERS AND DEAR BROTHERS IN JESUS CHRIST:

Again it is my painful duty to announce to you the deaths of two of our dear Brothers in the United States: Brother Aloysius (Novice), who died on the 25th of July, at Holy Cross, Iowa, fortified with the Sacraments and perfectly resigned to the will of Heaven; and, secondly, Brother Pius (professed), who fell asleep in the Lord last night at Notre Dame, after having received all the assistance which Holy Church lavishes, as it were, on Religious who die faithful to their solemn engagements.

Both died of consumption, after a long illness accompanied with much suffering, from which they happily derived great profit for themselves, leaving at the same time most valuable lessons to their surviving Brothers. May God, so rich in mercy, vouchsafe to admit them, without delay, into the enjoyment of those delights which He has prepared for His elect!

I recommend to you these two dear souls, for whom, I have no doubt you will hasten in the ardor of charity to secure that consolation which, perhaps, they are awaiting at our hands, and which we shall, ere very long, claim from others for ourselves. Let us never forget that by praying for our beloved departed ones we establish for ourselves rights which eternal Justice will respect when "the hand of God shall have touched us also."

I am expecting from day to day the arrival of the Capitular Decrees, in order to publish them before I return to France. Had they reached me in time for the Annual Retreat, which was held here and in Canada in the beginning of August, I should have probably endeavored to have hastened my departure.

Eleven Postulants received the Habit at Notre Dame at the close of the Retreat, and nine Novices made their Profession on the day of the Assumption, to say nothing of an almost equal number on Saint Joseph's Day, and during the month of Mary.

Furthermore, two of our Fathers have been elevated to the Priesthood—one at Easter, the other on the 15th of this month. Three others, *D. v.*, will be ordained at the commencement and towards the middle of the year 1870.

At the present time there are in the two Provinces of the New World nearly three hundred Religious, two Novitiates full of promise, and two Colleges decidedly bidding fair to prosper. The number of students at Notre Dame this year exceeds that of any other Catholic college in the United States. The most consoling feature in these blessings from above is, that all our Religious are animated with an amount of confidence and energy which is in itself the pledge and guarantee of renewed success. In the actual state of things there is reason to hope for a greater development of our Congregation in this country during the next five years, than it has obtained for the last fifteen.

I received almost simultaneously in this beautiful month of the Blessed Virgin, three offers, the least of which is more considerable than the most important of those received during the last five and twenty years. But as these are still under consideration, I shall say nothing more about them until the negotiation is finally closed.

I transmit you these details, not from any motive of vanity, but to sustain the courage of the weak and to fill the hearts of the generous with fresh confidence. No, Providence has by no means deserted the Congregation; but, whether in trials or blessings, It shows that It has Its eyes fixed on us and wishes to see us all faithful and fervent;—in a word, Religious, not only in name and in outward attire, but in spirit and in heart.

When once I return to France, my great business will be, for a time at least, to arrange, satisfactorily and advantageously, the transfer of our Mother-House to Paris. For this highly important movement, from which we have every reason to expect such happy results, I request your prayers and filial devotedness.

Believe me always, Reverend Fathers and dear Brothers in Jesus Christ,

Yours devotedly, in J. M. J.,

E. SORIN.

No. IV.

NOTRE DAME, IND., September 10, 1869.

REV. FATHERS AND DEAR BROTHERS IN CHRIST:

I just learned by telegram from New York the sudden death of our General Procurator in Rome—our dear Rev. Father Bardeau.

God's holy will be done, and not ours! But however perfect our submission may be, nevertheless this is a severe blow;—not to him, I should think, for he was undoubtedly one of our most exemplary Religious; and although death has come for him suddenly, I feel confident he was not found unprepared. But the blow strikes heavily, indeed, upon the Congregation, which he represented so well before the Holy See. Such piety, such learning, such eloquence and such virtues are not easily found in one person; and such an important post should not be intrusted to any one not as well and fully qualified for its weighty responsibilities.

I cannot express how deeply I personally deplore the death of our saintly and dearly-beloved Procurator. To my own heart it is a poignant and bitter sorrow.

I realize that I have lost one of my best and most devoted friends, and the Congregation its first theologian and best preacher, and one of its most brilliant ornaments; thanks to Heaven that I may also add, one of its most saintly characters. Dear and venerable Father Bardeau, how deeply I deplore your death! I need all my faith to accept it with submission. For you, death has doubtless been a gain; but for us all, what a loss! May the holy will of God be done, and not ours!

But let us hasten to prove to him the sincerity of our sentiments, especially the high esteem we entertained of his great virtues, and the gratitude of our hearts for the eminent services he had rendered to the Congregation as its representative in Rome.

I must here somewhat deviate, in his behalf, from the usual prescriptions for our deceased members, and beg of all our Religious to offer to God, for the rest of his precious soul, a novena of Masses or Holy Communions—if not during the next nine days, at least with the shortest delay.

It will be a great consolation to my afflicted heart to learn that the novena has been commenced immediately, and performed without interruption by all the members of Holy Cross.

E. SORIN.

No. V.

NOTRE DAME DE STE. CROIX, MANS, Feb. 24, 1869.

REV. FATHERS AND DEAR BROTHERS IN JESUS CHRIST:

On my return, full of consolation from some recent visits to our establishments in the north of France, I received from the United States the following letter, which I hasten to place before your eyes:

"The good Bro. Stephen died after a long and painful illness; which he endured with a truly edifying patience, fortified by all the Sacraments of the Church. He consummated his 'sacrifice' on the beautiful day of the Purifi-

cation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and his soul, presented to God by the hands of Mary, did not delay, I hope, to enter into the temple of the celestial Jerusalem. The suffrages of his Brothers in religion hastened his happiness.

"A. GRANGER, *Provincial.*"

Dear Brother Stephen was during fifteen years my first assistant in the Post-Office at Notre Dame, in which employment he always acquitted himself with as much integrity as zeal and punctuality. He was one of the first professed in America, and one with whom I have had the most intimate relations. He was one of those men of *faith* and devotedness upon whom I have always felt I could rely. I recommend him in a special manner to the prayers of the Congregation.

I have just named one of those qualities which I have always preferred in a Religious, viz., devotedness. I am happy to see it, not only in the precious remembrance of one of my dear associates at the commencement of our work in America, but in each of the numerous letters which the Fathers and Brothers addressed me, on the immediate reception of my last "Circular"; the promptness and the tone of those protestations of fidelity deeply touched me. I see therein a pledge of success; for, if God blinds those that will be lost, He enlightens those whom He will save. He enlightens them, above all, that they may see and feel in their hearts that in union is strength.

Instructed, then, by the Divine precept, the examples of the saints, and also by personal experience, which the rational man never forgets, you affirm with an energy, which honors you as much as it rejoices me, that you will not listen to the suggestions of disobedience, but will live 'till death submissive to the Holy See, and to the authority he has rightfully established in the Congregation.

These are the thoughts, nearly the words, I find in all letters which reach me; I congratulate you. In presence of like testimony it seems to me I hear the voice of God, saying to us as formerly to His people: *Salvabo te, noli timere*—"I will save you, do not fear."

It is not enough to exhort you to prayer, I wish to go still further. I wish that in all the Houses of the Congregation, during this beautiful month of St. Joseph, the members form themselves into a pious league around St. Joseph's altar. I have noticed, during the past few months in my visits, so many little children whose candid faces revealed still their baptismal innocence, and I have no doubt that the Congregation, at the same time, possesses powerful means of intercession, which the world does not suspect, and which we ourselves, perhaps, do not appreciate always at their just value: I mean to say these graceful troops of little children, of whom we are reputed the guardian angels—and who are ours. Those

dear little angels, whose hands, eyes and hearts take twenty times a day the impressions which we wish to imprint, are they not infinitely precious resources, when their greatest happiness is to give us pleasure? And we know to us are addressed those words of Jesus Christ: "Suffer little children to come to Me," etc., "for it is to them, and to those that resemble them, belong the kingdom of heaven"—*Eorum est regnum Dei!*

I wish, then, more than ever during these thirty-one days of March, each of our classes should kneel before a little oratory, where all, teachers and pupils, without neglecting their ordinary duties, take to heart the extraordinary honor of our glorious Patron.

I wish that this year be an occasion of general renewal of zeal and devotion to St. Joseph. Let it suffice to say that I expect from him signal marks of his protection upon our work. And be not surprised at this confidence on my part; for when we sailed for America in 1841, we expected to see ourselves cast in the midst of "Savages and Protestants;" but, by a singular favor of Providence, we arrived without premeditation, and fixed our tents in the rich valley of St. Joseph, on the borders of the beautiful River of St. Joseph, in the County of St. Joseph. In the domain of Notre Dame du-Lac, the centre of our work, see to-day the beautiful Novitiate of St. Joseph upon the borders of the limpid waters of the Lake of St. Joseph! It would be impossible to find in the New World another site where devotion to St. Joseph is more wonderfully called for. It seems to spring from the soil; it is in each drop of water; the very air we breathe seems perfumed with the virtues of St. Joseph. Come, now, to the practices of the month, and we will try to insure everywhere the same observances and regularity.

1st. Consecrate in each class the last ten minutes of the afternoon class to the exercise of St. Joseph.

2d. Erect in each class-room a little altar and place upon it the statue or a picture of St. Joseph, with two candles and some vases of flowers.

3d. Open the exercise with a hymn, then read during five minutes some pious recital in honor of St. Joseph, and terminate by the Litany of St. Joseph.

4th. Be careful to make known to the children and remind them each time of the following intentions, for which they shall offer their most fervent prayers: 1st, for our Holy Father the Pope and for the Council; 2d, for the Congregation; 3d, for their respective families; finally, to pass the whole of this beautiful month in avoiding sin, that we may honor St. Joseph after the example of the Infant Jesus, by the practice of obedience; for it is written, "Jesus Himself was obedient to Mary and Joseph."

I cannot praise too much the admirable zeal of some of the

members of the Congregation in maintaining and propagating the Association of St. Joseph.

It will be understood that hereafter all money proceeding from the Association of St. Joseph be sent to Brother Gregory, who will employ it exclusively for the benefit of the Novitiate of St. Joseph—the primary object of these alms.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,
Superior-General.

No. VI.

ROME, STA. BRIGITTA, January 15, 1870.

MY DEARLY-BELOVED OF THE NEW WORLD:

I have just mailed my acknowledgments of Christmas and New Year's letters to the first-born of our Religious Family in France. But I find that it scarcely expresses what I feel for those who either went with me, or were born, as it were, in my arms, beyond the great waters; those whom a long association of labors and fatigues, and like convincing tests of fidelity, have rendered to me precious beyond all expression. Here I have received, within two weeks, from all the parts where the children of Holy Cross have fixed their tents, the most gratifying testimonies of regard, affection and devotedness, placing me under great obligations to all. It has been, indeed, no ordinary consolation to me to find myself in Rome at this particular time to remember our beloved Family of Holy Cross before God, and solicit for all its dear children the blessings they need for the new year, at a time when the attention of the whole world is fixed on the Eternal City; when God Himself, we might readily fancy, listens to, and mercifully hears, the solemn supplications and the secret whisperings of chosen souls, which ascend from these renowned sanctuaries by day and by night to His Eternal Throne. At such a moment is consoling, it is encouraging, it is wonderfully rejoicing, to breathe a prayer for a friend, for a child whose welfare is as dear as that of oneself.

Shall I say it? why not? In thus charging the angels who carry from the Seven-hilled City such clouds of incense, the prayers of the Saints, daily to heaven, with my own special requests, I always find my heart engaged in praying for one or the other of those beloved ones in America. There is not one among those I know there whom I do not specially commend here, in one sanctuary or another; in these commendations I remove, as it were, or suspend for awhile, the pains of absence or the aching of separation. How often, and with what delight, I have assembled here all our dear children of the New World around the glorious tomb of St. Peter! Do you know for which of them I prayed the most? Do you see those I placed in my ceremonial nearer him? Natu-