SAINT PETER FOURIER

BY

L. PINGAUD

TRANSLATED BY

C. W. W.

LONDON

DUCKWORTH & CO., 3, HENRIETTA STREET, W.C.

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI & CHICAGO:
BENZIGER BROS.

DUBLIN:
M. H. GILL & SON

1905

CONTENTS

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

SAINT PETER FOURIER

CHAPTER I

FOURIER AND HIS BIOGRAPHERS—YOUTH

SCARCELY three centuries separate us from the saintly man to whom, in 1898, the Holy See awarded the supreme honour of canonisation. What Bourdaloue said of St Francis of Sales, may be applied with even greater justice to Peter Fourier. Here is a saint of our own day, whose ever-living example has still a marvellous power to inspire and touch us. And yet, as portrayed by his first biographers, he is in no sense modern. If viewed from a purely mental standpoint, he is in certain respects far behind the seventeenth century in the perspective of history.

Many traits in his life remind us of St Bernard and St Francis of Assisi, of the founders and reformers of the religious orders which rendered the Middle Ages illustrious. And it was this that his disciples desired, for they sought for him rather the glory of the saint than the consideration of the world.

Among them, Père Bedel gave the tone to a whole

family of biographers. His book, dedicated to "*la Royne mère de Jésus,*" was printed in 1645, five years after the death of his spiritual master. In the first part he relates, from personal recollection and from accounts given by eye-witnesses, the principal episodes in Fourier's life; in the second part, naming each chapter after some virtue, he strives to show that Fourier was the model of all.

He is an historian crowning his sovereign, a monk extolling the founder of his congregation with a naïve partiality, composed of tenderness and admiration; he becomes a child again when thinking of him. He was certainly sincere, and his information on certain points is derived at first hand; he shows besides intuitive ease in handling the naïve and racy tongue of the first half of the seventeenth century, the charm of which is quite indefinable.

On the other hand, he omitted or wilfully attenuated certain facts, and did not dare to say all he knew on account of his book being printed in Paris; for the humble writer always felt suspended over him the hand of those French censors, who were afterwards so prompt in suppressing in the writings of Hugo the Premonstratensian and Calmet the Benedictine, everything which seemed favourable to the independence of Lorraine and to the "*droits du roy.*"

Finally, he had recourse only incidentally, and as if by chance, to any authentic and essential documents, I mean to the correspondence and different writings of Fourier himself.

Among the traits which he has collected at hap-

hazard, the greater part are extraordinary. Some are touching, and others eccentric and puerile.

He even strove to bring into prominence those which he did not consider of a nature to be imitated by everyone, and which in our days astonish rather than edify the worldly reader.

Instead of looking towards the social and political world, his glance always turned towards the cloister, to that enclosed garden in which he had seen the monastic virtues of his model flourish.

His book is a memoir written with a view to the inquiry concerning Fourier's canonisation rather than a complete historical study.

One might say the same of his colleagues and emulators, Père Piart,[1] Père Friant, and Père d'Hangest, who laboured for the Roman congregations rather than for the public, and have lovingly drawn a devout picture rather than an authentic portrait.

Still they have partly prepared the way for the work of criticism and Benedictine patience accomplished in our own days by Père Rogie.

This Religious, who is, like them, one of Fourier's spiritual sons, undertook a double task.

He first of all collected in ten large volumes, a few of them being autograph, all the Saint's writings,

[1] The work of Piart is still in *MS.* (Bibliothèque de Nancy). A part of Hangest's has been published under the title of *The Spirit of B. P. Fourier*, 1757, 2 vols. (the second volume contains a collection of the Saint's letters). Friant has only edited Bedel's works, with slight alterations; other lives had been written from the same source by the Benedictine Bouette de Blémur (1678), the Canon Gallet (de Besançon) (1730).

his letters, which form the chief source of his biography, his Constitutions and religious rules, his occasional treatises, sermons, meditations, and spiritual exercises. He has afterwards published from these documents, and the depositions contained in the *Acta beatificationis*, a chronological table of Fourier's life in three volumes, in which he rectifies, as he goes along, a considerable number of the errors, as to facts and dates, committed by his predecessors.

Before him Edouard de Bazelaire (1846), the Abbé Chapia (1850), M. de Besancenet (1864), M. de Lambel (1868), the Vicomtesse de Flavigny (1873) in a collection of studies, and the Abbé Deblaye in his solid essays on special points, had already pointed out the important place which Peter Fourier, by the mere ascendancy of his virtue, occupied in his country and his age.

To-day the Curé of Mattaincourt is shown, not only, as in the illustrated frontispiece of Bedel's volume, kneeling on the clouds with a dove hovering over him, and presenting to God the Father, to Jesus Christ, and to the Blessed Virgin, the two kneeling groups of his religious, the nuns of Notre Dame and the Canons of Notre Sauveur; he appears to us also in his human and social relations in the midst of those Christians of every station in life, who benefited by his apostolic zeal, his consummate experience, and his inexhaustible generosity.

Certain aspects of his public life will always remain obscure, for his correspondence, such of it as we possess, is only concerned with the second

part of his career, and deals almost exclusively with his religious foundations. Nevertheless, judging from the scanty details given in his letters, or from those handed down to us by contemporaries, it appears that he was a faithful subject and citizen in the service of Lorraine, and its dukes, even as Joan of Domremy had been in the service of France. Assuredly when sanctity assumes a human form, every sincere man who comes into contact with it will own its sway.

But does it then follow that we must subscribe to the narrow and somewhat Jansenist definition of sanctity, which was held by our fathers, in which the saints were above all considered as strange beings, their virtue consisting in their non-resemblance to other men.?[1] To regard them thus, as always suspended between the world in which ordinary mortals live and move, and that other which awaits us all, is not really to know them.

Fourier himself better defines their real character in describing them as travellers through this world, but adding, "it is well to notice them as they pass by, and to see how through, and in spite of, human weakness they have attained that glory which is imperishable."

This was to affirm that a saint has no reason to exist, from a purely human point of view, except for the sake of the example that he leaves behind; for from a Christian point of view what matters such a title on the lips of men to him who enjoys celestial glory and eternal felicity?

[1] Massillon, *Sermon sur le petit nombre des élus.*

Peter Fourier possesses the incontestable merit of having gained his empire over his contemporaries, three centuries ago, by those qualities and virtues that our age might well learn from him; such as the spirit of sacrifice and disinterested devotion to youth, and of generous loyalty to his country. Even if he had no place in the official calendar of the Roman Church, he would still appear to us with his triple aureole, as the emulator of those primitive saints acclaimed by the popular voice, who by their lives, their works, and their influence, are models for all time.

In the midst of the political and religious struggles of the sixteenth century, the Catholic Church proposed, to her priests and the faithful, a double object, towards which their action should be directed: resistance to the enemies of that Christian social order which the Middle Ages had constituted, and the reform of morals and of ecclesiastical discipline according to the spirit and decrees of the Council of Trent.

She had lost all the north of Europe, and the centre was hotly contested by the Lutherans and the Huguenots.

In the south, she was firmly established; both in Italy, the seat of the Roman Pontiff, and in Spain, where the principal successor of Charles V. lived; she also found solid support in the smaller but still independent nations which were scattered along the Alps, the Jura, and the Vosges, and by those tributary rivers of the North Sea which separated Germany from the Kingdom of France.

On this line of defence Lorraine united the Spanish

Netherlands to the Franche Comté, to the Swiss Catholic Cantons, and to the domains of the House of Savoy.

Between the Meuse and the Vosges there was then living a people inheriting the traditions of Austrasia and Lorraine, and very proud of their independence, which had been won gradually from the German Emperors, and consecrated by the defeat and death under the walls of Nancy of the last "Grand Duke of the West."

They showed themselves not less firm in confronting the Saxon or German innovators of the faith which had been preached to their fathers by St Mansay, St Epvre, St Sigisbert, and St Arnulf, and was solidly rooted and established in their dioceses of Metz, Toul, and Verdun; in their Augustinian, Benedictine, and Premonstratensian Abbeys; in their popular sanctuaries of St Nicolas de Port, Notre Dame de Bon Secours, and Notre Dame de Sion.

In all Europe this land was, as the Calvinists avowed, "that in which God had least bestowed His spiritual graces," and at an opportune moment it became a double bulwark against the German Lutherans, and against the Huguenots, and the French political intriguers.

Godfrey of Bouillon had borne the title of Duke of Lorraine, and the same spirit which had animated this first and most illustrious of the Crusaders was to inspire in the seventeenth century two of his compatriots, Mercœur and Duke Charles V., the last heroes of Christendom on the Danube.

In the preceding century this same spirit had

armed the prince and his subjects against the partisans of the "*pure Gospel*." Duke Antony turned back and crushed the Rustauds of Alsace at the foot of the Vosges, and later on the younger branch of the Guises became in France the guardians of the last Valois and the heroes of the Holy League.

There was a Lorraine claimant as there had been a Spanish and a Piedmontese claimant to the throne of St Louis.

When the era of the so-called religious wars was ended, Lorraine also took an important part in the work of the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

All the works of Christian charity there found their special development in the new orders of women, such as the Filles de Notre Dame, vowed to teaching; the Filles de St Charles, emulators of the French Sisters of Charity; the nuns of the Refuge under Elisabeth of Ranfaing; the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament founded by Catherine de Bar.

But no one more completely personified the special genius and traditional faith of this little country during the first forty years of the seventeenth century than did the "good Father" of Mattaincourt, as his compatriots called him.

The title which was bestowed, one hundred years later, on the great Benedictine Dom Calmet, *Patria Lotharus, religione Christianus*, exactly describes his spirit and his life.

Peter Fourier was born November 30th, 1565, in the diocese of Toul at Mirecourt, the chief town of the Canton of the Vosges. His grandfather was a rich peasant of the neighbourhood. His father

leaving the property to an elder brother, went to settle in the town, devoted himself to commerce, and became an important personage.

Peter was the first of four children. As kings are royal from the cradle, so he, says the old historian, was good and holy even in his childish sports. He was destined to the Church, and he corresponded to the wishes of his parents by his unreserved and precocious piety. In his home he used to play at being a priest or a preacher, just as other children play at soldiers, and his vocation, which was assiduously fostered, was confirmed when at thirteen years of age, in October 1579, he went to finish his studies at Pont-à-Mousson.

This little town of the Barrois, near Nancy, the political capital of the country, was twenty leagues distant from Mirecourt, and divided between the dioceses of Metz and Toul. It was to become the centre of the religious and intellectual life of the whole region.

Duke Charles III. and his uncle, the Cardinal of Lorraine and Legate of the Holy See in the Three Bishoprics, had just founded, in 1572, a University for the defence of Catholic tradition against Protestantism, and here it was that, more favoured than in France, the Company of Jesus had the instruction and the awarding of degrees entirely in their hands.

This establishment, flanked by a college placed under the same direction, was at first very prosperous. It contained nearly one hundred professors and two thousand pupils. The Scotch Barclay and the Toulousian Gregory used to teach law there;

others, either Lorrainers or foreigners, taught medicine, the Jesuits reserving to themselves theology and the arts, such as rhetoric, philosophy, etc.

The princes of the ducal House of Lorraine went there to be educated, by the side of youths who came from the most distant countries in Christendom. This motley crowd did not offer to the Catholic world only examples of virtue and peace. Between Jesuits and Jurists there arose at times futile conflicts, bearing witness to the antagonism which is not unlikely to arise between the ecclesiastical and the lay mind; and these kept up a perpetual agitation in the teaching body.

As to the morals of the young students, Père Abram, in his *History of the University*, has left us details which are anything but edifying: still the unity of the faith soaring above these individual weaknesses covered or caused such shortcomings to be forgotten. Such was the atmosphere in which Fourier was educated, and in which at two different periods he spent thirteen years.

From 1579 to 1585 he lodged with one of the townsmen and studied according to the Jesuit programmes, first the classics and afterwards philosophy. Père Sirmond, one of the future masters of religious and French erudition in the seventeenth century, was one of his professors. Thus the young Lorrainer lived, as regards his intellectual work, under the laws of this second Renaissance which, according to the spirit of the Catholic counter-Reformation, claimed to correct the first, refus-

ing to adore the Ancients, though continuing to love them.

Cicero became so familiar to him, that he one day invoked him as well as the Goddess Ceres, in order, by an unexpected quotation from the Verrine-orations, to justify the strict enclosure of his nuns. Here and there in his letters and spiritual writings one finds, along with passages borrowed from the Fathers, quotations or reminiscences from the prose authors and poets of heathen antiquity. He was so well versed in Greek, that he spoke it like his native tongue. He even acquired a taste for the quibbles and puerilities of the new Scholasticism, and penetrated into the secrets of the Metric System of the Ancients.

It is true that we have not the *belles epigrammes* found in his papers after his death, or, in other words, those ingenious compliments written in verse in honour of some prelate, whose favour he hoped to gain for his various enterprises.

But there still remains to us a Latin enigma, written by him in Iambics, which Père Sirmond caused to be placed in the class-rooms, and which was celebrated among the rhetoricians of the time; for it reproduced the same words whether spelt from right to left or left to right, or from the central letter to each of the two outside ones.

He himself later on treated this *jeu d'esprit* with disdain not unmixed with a certain satisfaction for this youthful souvenir, for he liked such *tours de force*, and one attributes to him the ingenious anagram on his name: *Petrus Fourier—Pro Jesu fertur.*

In philosophy he was a docile disciple of the

traditional master, Aristotle: so much so, that forty years later he was able to explain lucidly, and without having seen them since, his principles of logic, his physics and metaphysics.

Everything which appealed to his juvenile curiosity tended to enhance the evanescent glory of the Lorraine nation, the daughter and servant of the Catholic Church.

If he heard France spoken of, it was not the France which was waiting for *Henri Quatre*, but that which had received, as a gift from heaven, the Guises in the present and Joan of Arc in the past. No doubt, in 1580, he must have seen represented a certain Latin tragedy, the work of Père Fronton au Duc, in which his compatriot from the borders of the Meuse was exalted in her divine mission as protectress of the most Christian kingdom.

This precocious mind was allied to an ascetic frame. Young Fourier, as Bedel tells us, was tall and powerfully built, his nose was slightly aquiline, his eyes well-formed, and he had a complexion of roses and lilies.

Thus he was as beautiful as St Bernard had been, or as was his fellow-student of Padua, Francis of Sales. Like them, and firmer than was Joseph, he avoided the seductions of lurking vice, without leaving her even a vestige of his garments. And, moreover, he introduced into his college life the habits of the monastery, making use of the scourge and the hair-shirt to conquer his fiery temperament; and he imposed such privations of sleep and food on himself, that his father, informed by the Jesuits of his

macerations, undertook a journey to Pont-à-Mousson to remonstrate with him, but in vain.

His passion for corporal penance did but increase with his years, especially under the burden of the trials inflicted on him by a mysterious yet loving Providence.

His spiritual children felt themselves obliged to give him a curator, who was ordered to mitigate the fervour of his excessive mortifications.

One judicious writer of our own times has even observed that, "viewed under some aspects, for example, his austerity and humility, he will never willingly be accepted as a model by our century which is not saintly."[1] And this is true. For there are certain mortifications of his old age which are most repugnant, and justly so, to our delicacy, and even while admitting the authenticity of the facts recorded, we must forget the details and merely see in the whole the expression of that unique and all-powerful feeling which animated him, the desire to all but annihilate himself, so that nothing should remain except what was necessary for the service of God and man.

In those days the militant defenders of Catholicism showed the same ardour in chastising their bodies and in renewing the practices so dear to preceding ages, as the Protestants did in discussing texts and preaching faith without works. All directors of conscience at that time, even those considered as the most indulgent, recommended

[1] L'Abbé Deblaye, *Examen, . . . de l'Histoire du B. P. Fourier par Barthélemy de Beauregard.*

penance in its violent and sanguinary form not only to persons dedicated to God but also to those living in the world.

We have seen since then one such Religious in the nineteenth century, Lacordaire for instance, the reformer of his order, and, like Fourier, an instructor of youth, who in the secret of the cloister, divulged by one of his disciples (Père Chocarne), carried even to the "folly of the cross" those voluntary austerities, which astonish his most fervent admirers.

In our own days even non-Christians have proclaimed the religion of human suffering, but its votaries only know of one side, that which is represented by compassion for the physical misfortunes of others. But Christians formerly practised it in its entirety, for they were convinced of the secret solidarity which united the sufferings of a divine Saviour to those of the sinful creature, and in the burden of suffering which oppresses humanity, they generously and spontaneously took their part so that they might lessen that of their brothers.

Pitiless as regards himself, Fourier was always moderate, indulgent, and courteous to others. While not forgetting what was due to principles, he yet knew how to take circumstances into account.

Such was the policy of the times, at least the triumphant policy of our Henry IV. Such also was religion as represented by its apostles like Francis de Sales, who recommended a method of action which should be "*petit à petit, lentement comme font les anges*," and like Fourier, who would

repeat, "*Gently, gently, gently*," and who took for his motto the saying of St Ambrose, "Harm no one, but be useful to all."

To this charity was joined, as in the case of St Francis of Assisi, an overflowing and naïve tenderness for the lower creation. He had so much pity "for little captive birds that, if they were taken from their nests, or fell by accident into the hands of a Religious or Servant, he had them set at liberty at once; and when in winter the earth, like a cruel stepmother, threatened them with famine, by covering with snow all their little store of food, he came to their aid and had grain thrown to them every day, watching from his window to see that it was not neglected." Even when ill he would not let them chase the flies from his room. On his servant presenting him with a hare which he had captured with one of the forest dogs, he drove him from the room, quite indignant at such cruelty. And seeing a mouse between the paws of a cat, his kind heart was so touched, that he ran to save its life.[1]

Had he wished it, the scholar of Pont-à-Mousson might easily have found the means of advancing in the world. His family, owing to a series of unexpected circumstances, held a certain position at the Court of Nancy.

His father became a widower in 1582, and was soon after remarried to Michelle Guérin, a former nurse of one of the daughters of Duke Charles III. When this princess became Grand-Duchess of Tuscany, she

[1] *Bedel.* This passage relates to a later period, but the trait noticed in it must have always been more or less marked.

confided the administration of her estates to the former merchant of Mirecourt, and in 1591 conferred on him a patent of nobility.

Both then and afterwards Peter Fourier never made any claim to a title which was legally his, nor to any favours accorded to his family. Nevertheless, this elevation, joined to the prestige of his own virtues, was able later on to facilitate his enterprises and extend his influence in Lorraine.

From his childhood he had felt drawn to the ecclesiastical life, and as a young man his desire was to be a Religious.

The Reform movement then in full activity in the Catholic Church, succeeding to the Renaissance movement which had tended to æsthetic perfection, exalted among those nations which had remained faithful to the Holy See the sentiment of evangelical perfection as it had been practised during the Middle Ages. Hence the Revival of the Congregations and the frequency of monastic vocations.

The pupil of the Jesuits, whose precocious fervour readily impelled him in this direction, found a guide in Père Jean Fourier, his relation, and now one of his masters.

This Religious, his first cousin, was one of the lights of the University. He had lived in France and Italy, and the literary as well as the religious world is indebted to him, as it was he who persuaded St Francis of Sales to publish his *Introduction to the Devout Life*.

We cannot affirm it for a fact, but everything leads us to believe that Peter was pressingly

solicited, as were their best pupils, to enter the noviciate of the Society. He has never explained the matter, but one day he was heard to wonder, in the tone of a man who had passed through a similar experience, how two of his favourite pupils had succeeded in escaping from the hands of his ancient masters.[1]

He would have been all the more valuable a recruit, as from the time when he had begun his philosophical studies he had revealed a second vocation, which was to remain all through his life linked inseparably to the former, that of an educator of youth.

In the house which he inhabited in company with other young men, he became the tutor and guide of many of his fellow-students belonging to the noble families of Lorraine.

His precocious wisdom doubtless attracted the attention of the parents, and he governed the children with an authority far beyond his years; and while abasing their self-love by reminding them that virtue was of more worth than nobility, he would raise them by adding that falsehood was far worse than low birth.

It appears that his pupils more than once endeavoured to find some failing in him whom they already considered a saint; one of them has testified that they never succeeded in doing so.

Thus, instead of entering that which is the teaching order *par excellence*, Fourier, at the age of twenty,

[1] Letter dated May 11th, 1625, mentioned by the Abbé Martin in his monograph on the *University of Pont-à-Mousson*.

chose as his place of retreat the Abbey of Chamouzey then inhabited by the Canons Regular of St Augustine.

This congregation traced its origin back to the earliest times of Christianity, its members claiming direct descent from those clerics who were grouped around the successors of the Apostles, living in common under the same roof while still exercising their pastoral functions.

Their Rule, borrowed in many passages from the works of St Augustine, placed them under the patronage of this Father of the Church.

In the middle of the Middle Ages, the distinction between the secular and regular clergy being distinctly defined, the Canons Regular without being excluded from parochial ministry, became members of the great monastic family. The most celebrated of their groups were the Premonstratensians, founded by St Norbert in the Rhine district, and those of Paris, placed under the patronage of St Victor.

In Lorraine, eight abbeys of Canons Regular were founded at the end of the eleventh and at the beginning of the twelfth century. These were absolutely independent of one another, and simply united by the bond of a common rule. Four years afterwards their members were regular only in name.

The Canons of Chamouzey, who had no parochial duties, lived in their monastery, as if in an hotel, in which each of them was provided for by a fixed portion of the revenues of the convent.

Their exercises of piety were limited to the more or less mechanical recital of the Divine Office while

the rest of their time was devoted to the futile distractions of the indolent, such as hunting and gambling. True they received novices, but they regarded them not as successors to be instructed and trained, but rather as servants who by their docility in performing menial offices were paying in advance for the privilege of one day becoming the masters.

The entrance of the pious pupil of the Jesuits in this community was not owing to his distaste for a Society for which he always entertained the greatest respect and deference, neither did it imply, as some have thought, that he then had in view the possible reform of the congregation which was effected by him.

It is remembered that he had as fellow-students at Pont-à-Mousson, Didier de la Cour and Servais de Lairuels, who afterwards became reformers in Lorraine, the one of the Benedictines, the other of the Premonstratensians. It is also thought that their conversations first inspired him with the idea of labouring himself towards the revival of the monastic life around them, and that as he knew beforehand of their mission, he chose his own by entering the Order of the Canons Regular. But that is attributing to him a long conceived plan which is quite foreign to his character.

It has also been said that he wished by his life, in the midst of his unworthy brethren, to render his exercises of penance more painful and meritorious.

Is it not also probable that in retiring to Chamouzey, that is to say to his *bailliage*, four leagues from

Mirecourt, under the direction of his compatriot, Father François Paticier, he was simply satisfying his desire of serving God in the country in which He had been pleased to place him?

The zealous ambition which ignores frontiers and which filled the souls of St Ignatius's soldiers, was in no degree his. Although circumstances afterwards compelled him to change his abode and his occupations, it is nevertheless remarkable that it is almost necessary to-day to take a map of the ancient duchy of Lorraine, and not to lose sight of it, if you really wish to follow Fourier in the different stages of his sacerdotal and monastic life, and to note the successive traces of his action on his contemporaries.

The first sojourn of the young Religious at Chamouzey lasted nearly four years from 1585 to 1589. At the end of 1586 he pronounced his vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Four years afterwards he went to Treves, the See of Toul being then vacant, to receive the orders of sub-deacon and deacon, and on February 25th, 1589 he was there ordained priest. On the 24th of June, the Feast of St John the Baptist, he celebrated his first mass.

He then commenced a second period of studies at Pont-à-Mousson, and during these six years he made himself master of all the subtleties of civil and canon law and theology.

We are told that later on he avoided speaking of his university successes, and would only recall that he had passed fourth when in his college. It is not known if he took the degrees of Licentiate and Doctor. On the other hand, we know that the

public meetings in which, according to the custom of the time, he had to debate with his fellow-students were considered great events for studious youth, and were a cause of great triumph to himself as the attentive and admiring silence of his audience testified.

In the course of his life he showed himself as intimately acquainted with law as with the human heart: besides which he was a good ecclesiastic, well read in the Fathers, and quoting them with ease and pleasure. While still young he was reputed to know the *Summa* of St Thomas by heart. Like his illustrious contemporary, the Bishop of Geneva, he had early traced out a rule of life; this document which seems in some parts dated before, in others after, his ordination, contains a list of the sacred authors which he read daily. In it St Bernard and Ludolph the Carthusian represent the Middle Ages, and Clichtovens, Louis of Grenada and Canisius the generations which immediately preceded his own. During the latter period of his sojourn at the Lorraine University, from May till August 1595, he was, thanks to his cousin the Jesuit, attached as an auxiliary to the parish of St Martin-le-Vieux and there made his apprenticeship in parochial ministry.

We find him, during the two following years, at Chamouzey, having become in a sense which does him honour an object of scandal to the degenerate Religious who surrounded him. He lived according to the Rule, and that sufficed to render him the permanent and unwelcome censor of his brethren.

Outside, as we shall see later, projects of reform were discussed. Fourier was regarded, and not without cause, as one of the principal instigators, and ridicule and annoyances of every kind were heaped upon him. And—for to such a degree may passions rage even in a monastery—his brethren even attempted to rid themselves of him by means of poison.

This method had been employed by the adversaries of St Bruno, and, in the seventeenth century, we see it renewed with regard to Mariè de Beauvilliers, the Abbess of Montmartre and in Lorraine itself against Servais de Lairuels.

In any case, the prior, François Paticier, appreciated Fourier's worth and did him justice by investing him with two charges, that of steward of the monastery and administrator of the parish of Chamouzey.

Fourier was thus able to devote his talents and zeal to the service of his neighbour, and he could at the same time escape from the hostility of the brethren, by isolating himself in the adjacent parish.

From this time his public life really commenced. He was then thirty-two years of age.

CHAPTER II

THE CURÉ OF MATTAINCOURT

MATTAINCOURT, near Mirecourt, on the banks of the Madon, a village of about a thousand inhabitants, is to-day celebrated in ecclesiastical history.

Everything there recalls Peter Fourier: the elegant Gothic church with its slender spire, in the nave of which is his tomb; the lofty chamber which he once inhabited, with its alcove transformed into a sanctuary; the little island which guards his statue in bronze, erected on a mass of rock where every year the traditional *bure* is lit in his honour; the small chapel beyond, built upon a hill on the spot where he loved to repair, and, while praying, to contemplate the field of his daily labours; and above all, it is here that his memory and his relics are cherished and protected with the most ardent devotion.

Pilgrims still crowd in numbers to kiss the stone which marks the place of his former sepulture, while the walls of the chapel are covered with their ex-votos.

It is just three hundred years since Fourier went to Mattaincourt, which was already a thriving little town as regards its industry and commerce. Its inhabitants, like those of the present day, in certain

villages of the Hautes Vosges, were engaged in the sedentary occupations of cloth and lace-making as well as in the cultivation of their fields.

They had business relations with France, the Netherlands, Geneva and Italy.

Mattaincourt was not what, in those days of ardent faith, the Lorraine Catholics termed a hot-bed of Calvinism; its chief families had not openly yielded to the secret propaganda of their heretical correspondents; still, dominated as they were by the constant anxiety of their material interests, they had become very negligent with respect to their religious duties, and their church, except on great feast days, was very little frequented.

Thus this benefice, in the collation of the neighbouring college of Haussonville, was unimportant, and included besides the charge of the neighbouring parish of Hymont. At the same time, the incumbent had the right of administering justice in ordinary cases and was thus assured of exercising, in one way or another, a considerable influence over his flock, and in any case he might hope to lead a tranquil existence on condition of being content with a meagre revenue and of letting those around him live in their own fashion.

Besides this cure, two others, those of St Martin at Pont-à-Mousson and of Nomeny, were offered to the young Canon of Chamouzey. At St Martin, his field of apprenticeship to the parochial life, he would find himself surrounded by his former masters, his friends and his University associations; at Nomeny there was the prospect of a rich prebendary, and the

proximity of one part of his family. "Choose either of these," said his cousin the Jesuit, "if you desire honour and ease in this present life, but if you desire to labour and suffer for souls, you must go to Mattaincourt."

Even here, we may believe the thought of not quitting his abbey nor his native town may have had something to do with his choice. Besides which one of the chief citizens of Mattaincourt, serving as interpreter for a number of the inhabitants, expressed their desire, based upon his good reputation, of seeing him at the head of the parish. He decided then to pitch his tent in this neglected spot, with the firm resolution of not sleeping at his post, but of seeking to re-awaken Christian sentiments in the souls confided to his care.

On the 28th of May 1597 he received from the Canons of Haussonville the collation to his benefice, and he took possession of it on the 1st of June, three hundred years, almost to the very day, before his canonisation.

From the first festival (that of Corpus Christi) which followed his arrival he made a favourable impression by his recollected attitude, his countenance beaming with fervour at the altar and in the procession, and by the simple pathos of his sermons.

It was impossible to doubt the sincerity of his piety and his devotion to souls and after he had laboured among them, this stranger was soon known as the "*Saint père.*" At a much later period, when he had purposely reserved some of his time and thoughts for other occu-

pations, he writes, on January 31st, 1630: "If you only knew what it is to be a Curé, that is to say the pastor of a people, the father, mother, captain, guide, guard, sentinel, doctor, lawyer, judge, go-between, foster-father, example, mirror, all things to all. . . . You can never know," Bedel makes him say, "how much a curé loves his parishioners unless you are one yourself; all the comparisons such as that of a mother and child, of a hen and her chickens, are quite powerless to express it, and all the books which speak of it only tell the half." . . .

In his presbytery, sheltered from curious eyes, Peter Fourier continued to live as a Religious, without ceasing to be day and night at the service of all. "One cannot expect much," he used to say, "of a man who always expects his dinner to be ready at the same hour, and who must have a mattress and a blanket for his couch." He himself used to go without fire all the winter, and as a rule only ate after sunset. He slept upon a bench with an in-folio for his pillow, and his cloak for a blanket. His longest night was three hours, and sometimes he would simply fall asleep, overcome by fatigue, in his wicker chair.

To justify this struggle with repose, he gave an excuse which was more witty than serious—saying that sleep is a sort of death, and why then should we willingly seek it? And his nights were spent according to the precept of the Imitation, in writing, reading and prayer.

He prepared his sermons and worked at a treatise entitled *Pratique des Curés*,—a development of the

prescriptions of the Council of Trent—which he never found time to finish. He was also occupied with his correspondence, which increased every year. During the day his only recreation was to climb a little hill near the village, and there under a great tree which has survived him for two hundred years, he would meditate and pray, his eyes fixed on his spiritual domain.

The poor were the only visitors to whom he willingly devoted some of his time. Brown bread was distributed to them twice a week, and white bread on Sundays—to say nothing of the aid in money and kind given to outcasts and wanderers who never knocked at his door in vain. One of his parishioners was charged to divide and distribute to the most needy the revenues of his benefice. As to the extra fees, they only existed in the form of alms accepted from the rich, and at once bestowed on the poor.

This public renunciation joined to his secret austerities was the power which overcame all resistance and conciliated all hearts.

In the church he found it necessary first of all to attract his parishioners and then to instruct them in the practice of their duties.

Following a tradition just then revived by his teachers at Pont-à-Mousson, he endeavoured to render the place of worship attractive, to adorn the altars, and to increase the pomp of the ceremonies by the richness of the ornaments and the beauty of the music and singing.

Thus curiosity and the attraction of the spectacle

would by degrees bring back the indifferent and awaken in their hearts the desire of hearing the Word of God and of practising the truths they heard. He at that time officiated in a new building whose mean architecture and poor ornaments were in keeping with the piety of the worshippers.

The inventories taken afterwards prove that he enriched it with different objects some of which were quite works of art, such as the mace of the verger which is still preserved.

But he himself was the great attraction, whether at the altar, where by the mere expression of his face and voice he was a constant source of edification to others; or in the pulpit, when he would speak fluently and with simple and persuasive eloquence. He would often invite others to preach, especially some of the Jesuit Fathers, but with his people he was always the favourite, for, as they used to remark naïvely, he at least practised all he taught and more besides.

The Catechism with its accessories appeared to him the necessary complement of his pulpit teaching; and here again he borrowed the methods of the Jesuits, those great masters of Catholic devotion, as opposed to the Puritans of every shade. Thus religious instruction was imparted to young people and even to their parents by means of real plays. In these days we should he scandalised at this innovation of a theatre erected between the pulpit and the altar, but it then proved a great success.

Religious instruction was given in the form of dialogues which were declaimed from a platform by

youths, transformed before their parents' eyes into catechists and actors. In one such dialogue of Fourier's which has been preserved, he brings Penance on the scene represented by Contrition and her sister Confession.

It is the morality play of the Middle Ages in the form of a juvenile sermon, for the instruction of Christian people. After these dissertations in dialogues on some point of faith or morals their author, the curé, often intervened and in penetrating accents would enforce the meaning of the dénouement, which was a pressing appeal to all his listeners to shake off the vice of indifference and to observe the commandments of God.

Both before the chalice and the crucifix, he gave them an opportunity of exercising their charity to their brethren.

When a funeral took place, he had a large table placed in the sanctuary; each of the congregation brought some offering in kind, bread, wine or meat, which was distributed to the poor at the church door; he even set apart the altar of the Virgin for similar gifts, for the same destination, and by way of example he first of all placed there a large loaf of white bread. He also established the custom of dividing among the poor the remains of the marriage feasts. Once, on the feast of the patron saint, remembering that the inhabitants used to celebrate it in their own homes, he exhorted them not to forget Jesus Christ at their banquets, and when mass was finished he led them to the neighbouring churchyard where he had assembled all the poor, and pointing

to these, he said: "Here is Jesus Christ of whom I have been speaking, take Him to your feast and treat Him as He deserves," and thus every master of the house was obliged to entertain several at his table. At first his influence extended beyond the church and presbytery. He made a rule of never taking any part in the feasts which the nobles used to give among themselves, except where he was invited to pronounce the *Benedicite* after which he would retire, having paid his due by a few affectionate and edifying words.

On the other hand, he was always ready to hasten to those whom he could help and console in their personal or domestic misfortune. Bedel tells us that he had the bed from his own room carried to them, placed them on it and insisted on their keeping it until they were quite convalescent, and this he did so often that the blankets would be with one person, the sheets with another, and the bed with somebody who had none.

It was not enough for him to revive the zeal of the lukewarm, he used to go into the houses of those who obstinately refused to attend church regularly. Under one pretext or another he would assemble two or three households and while conversing about their temporal interests he would skilfully make some allusion to their spiritual wants. There were also the recalcitrant, the incorrigible gamblers, and those who frequented the drinking houses; if he noticed their absence from the offices, he would leave the church as soon as possible in order to follow and surprise them. At sight of him, say his

contemporaries, they would flee, leaving both cards and stakes behind. He would overturn the jugs and glasses, send his clerk to throw the cards into the river and distribute the money to his friends, the poor.

In his office as judge he used sometimes to fine the publicans and their clients, and these sums he devoted to the relief of the poor and the adornment of the churches.

His flock was for a time under the same discipline as was observed later on with the neophytes of the Jesuits in their settlements in Paraguay and Canada. He divided it into four groups, the "*parfaites*, the *profitants*, the *commençants*, and the *bande perdue*." The best among them were formed into Congregations or Guilds instituted under the patronage of the Rosary of Mary Immaculate and of St Sebastian.

In temporal as well as spiritual matters, the Curé enjoyed almost sovereign authority. Every year after the Feast of Corpus Christi, the inhabitants assembled before the church after mass, and chose the church warden, the schoolmaster, and the Curé's two assessors, who aided him in administering local justice. In reality, Fourier himself was the chief elector, who had to ratify the nominations made, but who had expressly indicated them beforehand to the members of the assembly. In a strictly legal manner the Curé of Mattaincourt exercised the functions of judge over his flock. Before his presbytery, and seated between his two assessors, he used to question the accused, listen to their pleadings, pronounce sentence, and inflict the penalty.

In this he showed himself a man of strict justice, except when he descended from his tribunal in order, by his charitable intervention, to mitigate the severity of the law. On being asked how he would treat a usurer who exacted seven per cent., the customary tax at that time, he answered: "At the tribunal of justice I should say nothing, but at the tribunal of penance I should ask him if the injunction 'Lend without usury' were addressed to Christians or Turks."

As the arbiter of public peace Fourier excelled in reconciling married persons, parents, or neighbours who were estranged. He was also obliged to consult the interests of his parish as well as those of his native town. The inhabitants of Mirecourt resolved on forbidding those of Mattaincourt to buy corn in the market before they had made their own provision and until they had lowered a certain flag which was hoisted in the middle of the market-place from early morning.

Fourier having exhausted every means of persuasion, appealed to the Duke of Lorraine, went to Nancy, and, after two years of laborious effort, he finally succeeded in getting the necessary authority for the arrangement he had at first vainly proposed, which was, that the prohibition to outside purchasers should be limited to half an hour.

Appeals from his decisions were carried to the chief town of the *bailliage*. To render them unnecessary and at the same time to avoid the cost and tediousness of litigation, Fourier would have liked to organise a jurisdiction of opinion like that of a certain

lawyer whom he had seen when a child in the market-place of Mirecourt despatching more business in one day than the ordinary courts did in a whole year. Thus he proposed a syndicate which should be composed of the chief persons of the district, and duly qualified jurists, who should be charged to settle on the spot all pending suits by mutual consent, and also to aid by grants of money, those who persisted in having recourse to the legal judges.

The public calamities prevented him from drawing up the statutes of this association and putting it into force. Still we see him in 1630, reconciling, with the assistance of the Marquis de Livron and the Baron de Romain, the peasants of two neighbouring hamlets who for some months and at great cost, had been disputing. Thus it was that dominated by sentiments of Christian charity he had the beneficent system of judicial assistance, and the power of arbitration in modern times.

In another direction he was truly a social reformer, in the same manner as the Catholic Socialists of our own days, for he wished not only to relieve those who were poor by condition but those who had become so through reverses of fortune; such as the manufacturers and tradespeople in his parish, who were often reduced to borrow at an exorbitant interest in order to pay off their most pressing debts by a certain time, or to buy in season.

"He was especially sorry," says Bedel, "for the merchants and cloth-sellers, who, owing either to the dulness of trade or the losses they had sustained through thieves, had fallen from riches into poverty."

And he contemplated helping them to regain their former position by means of a general purse, which he called the purse of St Epvre, and into which he put all the donations and pious bequests which were at his disposal, as well as fines and other items, and when anyone was behindhand with his payments and his failure was quite certain, a few hundred francs were advanced, to enable him to continue his business, on condition of his repaying them, should he again become prosperous, if not they were his to keep. This plan was so successful, that a fund was formed with the money, and the proceeds are still devoted to a similar object.

The Monts de Piété, but recently introduced into Italy, did not then exist either in France or Lorraine, and what we now call rural or mutual loan associations were not even dreamt of.

It is all the more curious to see such a fund organised by a provident Curé for the benefit of his parishioners, on which they might draw without giving security or paying any interest; an undertaking which was based entirely upon the authority of the director and the confidence which he had inspired in those around him.

Mattaincourt, governed by this model Curé, appears for a time to have been a model parish, a kind of open-air convent. Long offices and the regular frequentation of the sacraments had become the common rule and practice. But this general fervour was not as sustained as the zeal of him who had been the means of reviving it. In 1618, the Curé is grieved to notice "*les pauvretés*, *les fâcheries*, *les dangers*, *les misères*," which have sprung into life

again. The "bande perdue" recommenced a fresh agitation and these energumens were indeed refractory to the new order of things. In 1625, Fourier mentions them as being ninety-five in number and thus describes them: "Some of them grunt like pigs, others bark like dogs. . . . They are nearly all young girls with a few women; I only know of one man and one or two boys among them. . . . When they are in church during office time they make the strangest noises, so that it is quite impossible to hear either chant or sermon or any other voice but theirs."

At that time Lorraine was simply overrun by sorcerers, persons bewitched, and those, who according to the language of jurisprudence, were guilty of "secret crimes."

Against them both the ecclesiastical and the civil power took vigorous measures, the former multiplying its exorcisms and anathematising, with a view to destroying it, the occult power which oppressed these unfortunate beings; the latter suppressing at one blow by the penalty of death, both the evil and its victim.

Nine hundred persons accused of sorcery and of nocturnal meetings with the evil spirit perished in fifteen years, as Nicholas Remy, the Procureur-Général and the chief author of their death has declared, and among them, in the year 1630 alone, twelve at Mattaincourt.[1]

[1] See in the review *Les Annales de l'Est* (1891) the article, "An Epidemic of Sorcery in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," by Dr Fournier.

As regards magic Peter Fourier believed like every Catholic in the power of Demons, and we may see him assisting at a scene, which seems borrowed from some old chronicle of the Middle Ages, at the solemn exorcism of Elisabeth de Ranfaing, the future foundress of the Refuge: indeed it is he whom the possessed distinguished among her adversaries and whom she apostrophised in these strange words: "Oh what a fine saint you are! There you are seated in a tapestried chair, I am preparing you one of quite another kind, in hell." The saint replied in a low voice, in two words: "Truly, I have deserved that," and says Bedel, "the demon was at once silenced, and the possessed fell on the ground like one dead."

A little later the Curé of Mattaincourt was again present at the execution of André Desbordes, a courtier, a notorious victim of the malice of Duke Charles IV., put to death under pretext of sorcery.

In his own parish he was the grieved but powerless witness of like severities. We may remark that he personally abstained from practising the customary exorcisms, fearing to alienate the families of those who were considered to be a prey to the infernal powers. He used to send in his stead, priests who were strangers.

He was especially careful not to interfere in any way with the secular power or he would have been seriously compromised and to no avail. For instance, in 1632, one of his colleagues, suspected of having tried to save some sorcerers from the stake, was,

like them, punished with death. Fourier was absent when two contracts were discovered at a merchant's of Mattaincourt, which were signed by him on the same day and were dated one from Geneva and the other from Besançon.

The judges do not appear to have suspected that the calculation of time might differ between the two towns, the Bisontins having adopted the Gregorian reform while the Genevese had remained faithful to the ancient calendar, and thus the unhappy man was sentenced to death.

In spite of his extreme reserve, Fourier was inclined to believe more than one accusation groundless. "Scarcely anything has been sufficiently proved," he writes to one of his parishioners detained at Luneville, thus resuming in one word the argument which was to prove triumphant in the course of this century by the pen of the German Jesuit Spée, and Augustin Nicolas, the magistrate of Franche Comté. Fourier went about repeating "it is a pity, a great pity," and everywhere asking prayers against the mysterious scourge which was desolating his parish and his country.

The pious Curé's great reputation soon brought him disciples outside of his own flock. His colleagues followed more or less closely his methods. The people of rank in that region sought for his direction and counsel. Among others the Comtes de Fresnel and de Brionne, the engineer de Galéan, Removille and the brother of Bassompierre, then bailiff of the Vosges. One such whose private life was scandalous, bore re-

monstrances from him which he would have accepted from none other, and reformed his life. Another, a Huguenot, who had come to reside in the neighbourhood, after some conversations with him was converted to Catholicism.

And lastly, Christophe de la Valleè, the Bishop of Toul, sent him as a missionary to the mountainous villages, so that his words might revive the lukewarm and rouse the indifferent. "He travelled on foot," writes one of the companions of his apostolate, "dressed in a coarse robe, with a large breviary under his arm, and although poor, and without even the means of supporting an ordinary priest, he paid the expenses of his voyage which lasted two months. . . . He would receive nothing from the villagers; he slept on the floor or the ground, or on a bench as he used to do at home . . . and he endured all without complaining, his one satisfaction being to labour for souls."

Unlike St Francis of Sales, Fourier was rarely called upon to combat the Protestants face to face. In Lorraine there were very few dissidents except at Metz, in which town they had the rights of citizenship, according to the Edict of Nantes. All we know of Fourier's relations with them may be summed up in an anecdote which at least bears testimony to his intelligent forbearance in his dealings with them. During his stay in this town, a Huguenot blacksmith had made so much noise with his anvil just opposite the church in which Fourier was saying his mass, that he was accused of a malevolent intention. "What do you know about it," said the Father, "did

the man himself know that Mass was being celebrated ? "

However, in 1625, he succeeded better than anyone else in rendering efficacious the work of religious restoration attempted by the Church and the State in the Comté and principality of Salm.

These two little *enclaves* of Lorraine had three-quarters of a century before been moulded into Protestantism by their sovereigns. The innovators, as exclusive there as elsewhere, not contented with the temple which had been built for them, had invaded the church and put two of the Religious to death.

The Prince of Salm having returned to Catholicism and Francis de Vaudemont, a younger son of the house of Lorraine, having, by his marriage, become heir to the Comté, the situation changed. An edict forbade the practice of Calvinism, banished the pastors and the teachers, their auxiliaries, and enjoined all the inhabitants to be instructed in the religion of their fathers.

Some Jesuits were sent to labour for this transformation; but they would scarcely have succeeded had they not called Fourier to their aid. At two different periods the latter exercised his apostolate at Badonviller, the capital of the principality; he had declined the perilous post of Curé which had been offered to him, but had consented, out of regard for Francis de Vaudemont, one of his patrons, to fulfil from time to time the duties of a parish priest. He was there on two different visits, for about three months in all.

His was a very delicate task, somewhat like that

which was so well performed in similar circumstances by St Francis de Sales at Chablais and by Fénélon at Saintonge. He was to try to give a free and spontaneous character to the religious conversions ordered by the civil power, to instruct the ignorant people and to bring back the middle class, so attached to their new beliefs, to the faith of the preceding generation.

At first he was badly received, and even insulted, a band of women pursued him as far as the neighbouring forest. He escaped them by hiding behind a bush, and according to the local legend, he pressed his finger into the ground, and to quench his thirst made a stream of water burst forth, which has ever since borne his name.

The missionary was not disconcerted; skilfully avoiding the epithet of heretic, he accused his adversaries of being strangers, hostile to the national faith and to the public peace. He ended by getting the parents to listen to him, catechised their children, visited the sick and the poor, and by the end of the year the greater part of the population had returned to the ancient Faith.

Those who remained refractory went to Metz or Alsace, and Fourier left after dedicating their former temple to Notre Dame. "I should only want five priests like him," said the Bishop of Toul, "to change the aspect of my diocese, one at each corner and he himself in the middle."

From the first month which had followed his taking up his charge, Fourier had ceased to devote himself exclusively to the duties of his cure; he had

prepared the foundations of the teaching Order of Notre Dame. Later on he was appointed by his bishop to reform the Canons Regular of the district. Thus the last forty years of his life were occupied in reviving monastic life and in extending Christian instruction beyond the boundaries of Lorraine.

From 1598 to 1620, he was often travelling, and from that time he usually lived far from Mattaincourt; once, even in spite of his best intentions, he was recalled to office by the diocesan authorities.

Still up to the time of his exile in Franche Comté one saw him appear regularly in his presbytery several times a year at Easter, and Christmas for the patronal Feast, and at the moment when the officers of justice and police were elected.

Being claimed by both his flock and his congregations, he wrote to the nuns who were desirous for his coming: "I feel myself obliged to obey the good people of Mattaincourt as, being their Curé, I am responsible to them for my journeys, my watchings, my presence, even for my life itself."

And yet seeing him in his old age engrossed and dominated by other occupations, one might ask if he really held the title of Curé at his death. From a historical point of view, it is an idle question, for until his last breath he was heart and soul with his flock at Mattaincourt, as a real pastor should be, so much so that the name of this village is inseparably linked with his own.

Scarcely was he dead when he was reconquered by his parishioners, and in a sense restored by them

to the strict duty of residence, and in his tomb, now a shrine, he still reposes in the midst of their descendants.

His spiritual and temporal administration in this corner of the Vosges was certainly marked by many peculiar trials, which are unhappily lost to us, his historians and witnesses having seen in his sacerdotal life, nothing else than a preparation to his monastic one.

He himself, in his correspondence, is almost exclusively concerned about his brothers and sisters of St Augustine, and his parishioners remain to us simply an anonymous crowd, the recipients of his bounty and justly grateful to his memory.

But at least we know that he became the model type of a Curé throughout the whole of Lorraine, and all her really popular priests seem to have been trained in his school.

Such was, to quote but one, Gallard the Curé of the neighbouring village of Charmes, during the twenty years which preceded the Revolution. Like Fourier, he was severe on himself and lenient to others. He united the gift of conversation to a rare talent for business, and endowed with practical sense and generosity of soul, he loved charity in all its forms.

During the severe winter of 1770, he procured food for the poor in rooms heated at his own expense in which they might go and work the whole day. He established a workroom under the direction of three Sisters of Saint Charles, who devoted themselves as well to visiting the sick, to the preparation

of remedies, and to the instruction of little girls. Every year he presided over a Retreat given at his own house to a number of teachers, and he begged for the erection of an *École Normale* at Nancy.

Lastly, he was a patriot of 1789 whose name is found at the head of all the liberal manifestations of the time. He represented the clergy of the bailliage (baillie-wick) of Mirecourt as the States-General. Less noisy but more esteemed than his colleague Gregory, he died, like Fourier, a voluntary exile, only seeing Lorraine from afar, but at least faithful to his duties and to his oath as priest and citizen.[1]

[1] The figure of Abbé Galland has been brought into notice by Abbé Matthieu (since Archbishop of Toulouse and Cardinal) in his interesting book *L'Ancien Régime en Lorraine.* (See Appendix I. end of the volume) the biography of P. Gaudet, Curé and Canon Regular as Peter Fourier had been.

CHAPTER III

THE CONGREGATION OF NOTRE DAME

WE have seen that Fourier, even when a student of seventeen, had assisted in the education of his compatriots. From his retreat at Chamouzey, he had each year paid the expenses of some four scholars. When he became a Curé, he still took a special interest in the younger members of his flock.

His biographers represent him sometimes surrounded by children, while he is seated chanting sacred hymns, delighted to see them bending over him, reading from his book and mingling their voices with his; at others persuading those whom he meets to accompany him to church, where he is going to pray for some special grace, as if to enforce his supplications by the spectacle of their innocence.

But the best proof he could give them of his love was to instruct them, for, in gaining a hold over their minds, he was sure of their maintaining those habits of regularity and piety which he had established in his parish. Having appreciated the benefits of a Christian education at the college and the university he desired to see them extended to the schools of the poor, and he soon displayed the same zeal in instructing the peasants of the Vosges, as his masters

at Pont-à-Mousson had shown in order to attract the élite of the nobility and the wealthy *bourgeoisie* of Lorraine.

Before his time a school had existed at Mattaincourt but, as in most of the parishes at that period, it was one in which the teacher was chosen by the community and paid by the parents, and thus hampered by the fear of losing any of the pupils, he used to teach the little that he knew to children of both sexes. Fourier would have preferred schools in which the boys and girls would be taught separately and gratuitously those subjects which are useful to all.

There was thus at the very beginning of his pedagogical campaign a reaction against the mixed schools, that old-fashioned and rudimentary institution, which in this century has returned to us from America in the guise of a novelty, more ingenious and admired, than rational or successful.

Scarcely had Fourier entered on the duties of his office than he tried, though unsuccessfully, to inspire with a vocation for teaching certain young aspirants to the priesthood who were just then living under his roof in order to profit by his counsels and direction.

Shortly afterwards, an unexpected opportunity occurred which enabled him to renew this attempt under circumstances which were to transform the work from being one of purely parochial interest into one which should benefit the whole country.

It was a question this time of the education of girls, which had certainly been strangely neglected during the recent, but not yet terminated era of the civil wars.

We have only to consider the movement which took place spontaneously and simultaneously in different parts of the Catholic world, and which found expression in the numerous foundations which sprang up at the end of the sixteenth century in favour of young girls. Such were the Ursulines in Italy, founded by Angèla de Merici, soon followed in French-speaking countries by those of Françoise de Bermond at Avignon, of Mme. de Lestonnac at Bordeaux, of Anne de Xainctonge in Franche Comté, of Mme. de Ste Beuve in Paris.

A special interest was attached to these establishments as well as to the Jesuit Colleges; here and there efforts were made to reconstitute the Christian family, as troubled, at that time, as the Christian State, by the unbridled fury of religious and political passions.

Public morality had declined in Lorraine as elsewhere, and without referring to the sad picture contained in the homilies of Clichtovens, one of Fourier's favourite authors, it suffices to glance over certain statutes of Duke Charles III. dated 1583 and 1600, in order to realise to what an extent licentiousness had spread.

In striving to destroy it by directing special attention to the training of young girls, Fourier does not appear, at least at first, to be inspired by the many examples in other and distant parts

of the Church. It was enough for him, that he clearly perceived the evils which needed a remedy, his intelligence and his heart did the rest.

Two years previously a citizen of Remiremont named Leclerc had come in search of health, to settle with his family in the neighbouring hamlet of Hymont, which was his native place.

His daughter Alix, nineteen years of age, even then showed a marked aversion to marriage and an irresistible attraction towards the religious life.

She had beheld herself in a dream in a Church dedicated to Our Lady and clothed in a costume unlike any she had ever seen.[1] After having listened to some of Fourier's first sermons "it seemed to me," as she afterwards wrote, "that I heard as if in the air, the beating of a drum which ravished my senses, and the passing of a troop of young people who were gaily following . . . perceiving which, I resolved never again to be of this troop. . . . I discarded all my vain attire, put a white veil on my head and made a vow of chastity without having consulted anyone. This alarmed my parents and

[1] Alix Leclerc wrote down later on by order of her confessor the account of her visions and dreams under the title of *Relation*. This mystic autobiography was published in 1666, with the *Eclaircissements*, by the nuns of her Convent at Nancy. Her life already related in the eighteenth century by the Canon Petitmengin and by a Discalced Carmelite, has been again written in two volumes (1888) by a nun in the Community of Lunéville. Alix Leclerc was declared Venerable on the 21st of February 1899.

all those around me. . . . When I was praying," she writes again, "it was borne in upon me that one ought to found a new order of nuns in which one would do all the good possible."

Her desire becoming more vehement she confided it to Peter Fourier, under whose direction she had placed herself.

At the first moment, the pious curé does not seem to have seen any connection between this vocation and his own still vague ideas concerning the education of girls. He advised his penitent to follow the usual course and to seek admission to some monastery like that of the poor Clares, in which she could find all she desired; but soon his own plan began to take shape.

Alix Leclerc found that some of her companions desired to emulate her; among others, Marguerite or Gante André, the daughter of a merchant of Mattaincourt. Gifted with strong common sense, energetic and lively, more inclined to action, and self-devotion in every form, than to mystic contemplation, her relationship to Alix appears to us similiar to that between Martha and Mary in the Gospel.

Being now four in number, they begged for and obtained from Peter Fourier a Rule of Life, and then following out his wishes devoted themselves to the instruction of children too poor to attend the school of the Commune.

Finally, with his consent, they presented themselves on Christmas Eve 1597, at the midnight Mass, all of them clothed and veiled in black, and

there received the Eucharist as the seal of their union with each other, as well as with God and their new Director.

Nearly a month later, on the 20th of January, the Feast of St Sebastian, a very popular saint in Lorraine, Peter Fourier shut himself up in his lofty chamber in the presbytery, and there he spent long hours in prayer and meditation. When dawn came, his resolution was taken, his mind had conceived, and his heart had adopted the Congregation, which he put under Our Lady's patronage. He saw it constituted, as was the custom at that time, in a federation of convents, each of them dependent upon the authority of the bishop of the diocese, receiving and training novices, basing its union with the others on their Common Rule, and fostering this union by frequent correspondence.

As regards their conduct, the Filles de Notre Dame were to edify each other mutually behind the grating of their convent, and then leave it ajar so that they could instruct the young girls, their day-scholars, with God for their *salaire et payeur*.

From the very commencement the pious Founder speaks thus to his little flock: "Being nuns, you might be contented with thinking only of your own salvation, but you will please God more if you save others, and there is no way in which you can save more souls than in teaching young girls. If possible, a means must be found to make your engagement lasting. Finally, because it is more pleasing to God for one to teach without any remuneration, and simply

from love to Him, you must teach gratuitously both poor and rich alike."

Thirty years afterwards he thus formulated and accentuated his idea in a letter soliciting the sanction of Rome: "I always thought it necessary to say that they were schoolmistresses, and that for the sake of discipline they have asked for and regularly followed a Rule, rather than that one should think that they were nuns who had wanted to have schools."

In our own age, with its eager pursuit of knowledge, such an undertaking would appear anything but rash, but at the end of the period of the Renaissance it was unlooked-for, and even considered suspicious, in the heart of a monastic institution, both by the ecclesiastical authorities and by the mass of the faithful. They did not conceive of, nor even desire, any relation between the contemplative and active life. Those who lived in the world esteemed the mortifications and prayers of women, who were voluntary captives between the convent grating and the altar, more highly than the instruction of the young or the nursing of the sick.

A convent in the midst of a town was a centre from which a perpetual flame of sacrifice ascended straight to heaven without diffusing itself; it was only by degrees that they became accustomed to see it partly transformed into a refuge, a hospital, or a school. When St Francis of Sales wished to dedicate the first Filles[1] de Madame de Chantal to the "visitation" of the sick, he was obliged to yield

[1] Nuns.

to powerful pressure and to relegate his neophytes to a strict cloister.

Owing to this state of opinion, Fourier, whatever were his own ideas or wishes, was unable to found what is to-day termed the convent school, one in which the religious community, in the midst of its worldly and changing connection, is reduced to its simplest form of expression. The times of Jean Baptiste de la Salle and of St Vincent de Paul had not yet arrived.

At the most, Fourier could only hope to introduce the novelty, of which he was the responsible author, that is to say, the monastery strictly cloistered in close proximity to the school, which was open to all, the latter being the reason for the existence of the former.

In establishing on such a basis the congregation of Notre Dame, Fourier found that he was, in spite of himself, more or less in disaccord with everybody. The popes, the bishops, the Society of Jesus, his parishioners, and his spiritual daughters, each and all modified or thwarted his plans.

From his writings we can see the constant effort he made to preserve his even temper, and his spirit of charity and abnegation, in the face of never-ceasing obstacles and disappointments.

From 1598 to 1602, the new teaching Order came into active existence in the form of a community composed of five persons: Alix Leclerc and Gante André, and with them Claude Chauvenel, Isabelle and Jeanne de Louvroir. They first of all spent thirteen months (from May 1598 to June 1599)

at Poussey, a league's distance from Mattaincourt. There existed in this place a chapter of noble ladies, among whom, two of Fourier's penitents, Judith de Fresnel and Catherine d'Apremont, had offered, the one her dwelling, the other her services, for the shelter and training of the future nuns.

It was there that Alix Leclerc and her companions opened their first school. Their scholastic novitiate was passed at Mattaincourt itself in a house which Madame d'Apremont had bought for them, their Father and Founder being there to inspire and assure their daily progress.

The first approbation to be gained was that of the diocesan authority. Fourier presented himself, before his bishop, Christopher de la Vallée, and, at first, obtained nothing from him beyond a promise to examine the question from documents. He therefore drew up a *règlement provisionnel*, which he some months later laid before the prelate and his council, who were then at Liverdun, a small village near Toul.

Some of them scoffed at, while others treated the proposed foundation as Utopian. Only one of them said, like Paul III. to the founder of the Society of Jesus, "Truly the finger of God is here."

La Vallée promised not to interfere, but would not engage himself further.

The first years of the Congregation were both difficult and obscure. These Sisters who had not yet made any vows, who had only received an ordinary education and had no experience of the infant mind, were undergoing a double training,

teaching from a sense of duty, and doing penance by inclination. They rivalled each other in inventing new methods of self-torture; for their greatest wish was to be like nuns of the old observance, by humiliating themselves for the sake of the proud, and scourging themselves to expiate for the sensual. They were teachers by day and *zélatrices* of the Crucified during their nightly vigils. "It was necessary," says an old author, "that the martyrdom of Christian austerity should be the cradle of this new order as the martyrdom of torture and persecution was that of the Church."[1]

Such was their mode of life that two Jesuits, who had made them a passing visit, thought it necessary to warn Fourier of these constant and excessive austerities which they considered quite incompatible with the fatigue of daily teaching.

Now, to the pious Founder his schools were as important as their cells.

Bedel distinctly states that instruction was the chief aim in all his plans, but for which he would never have dreamt of establishing a *religion nouvelle*.

But still many were asking what was the use of this "new religion."

A certain Récollet of Verdun, the director of the poor Clares in that town, endeavoured to incorporate the schoolmistresses of Mattaincourt with his own community. "They ought," he said, "to prefer the certain to the uncertain, an assured shelter to a hazardous enterprise."

The bishop—a prince of the House of Lorraine—

[1] Hermant, *History of the Religious Orders*, iii. p. 316.

lent his authority to this proposal, and what was graver still, the Jesuits of Pont-à-Mousson openly supported it. An attempt was made to persuade the parents of these pious Sisters to recall their children; it was even whispered that Alix and Gante were fascinated by the Père de Mattaincourt, and that they were attracted to him rather through an attachment inspired by his personal prestige than by sentiments of real piety.

Fourier, troubled and aghast at all this opposition, was on the point of giving up altogether. He afterwards wisely decided that it was not his place to answer his detractors, and his Sisters, after due reflection, proclaimed their intention of allowing nothing to interfere with their undertaking. Alix Leclerc had had a fresh vision which had influenced this resolution. "It seemed," she said, "that the Virgin Mary, under the form of one of our sisters, put the infant Jesus into my arms, and I was told that I should persevere in my first vocation and fear nothing."

In spite of its being evidently to their interest to support the new institution, the inhabitants of Mattaincourt had equally manifested their opposition. Either from love of routine or the spirit of contradiction, they wished to keep their mixed school.

The Curé was obliged to exercise his authority as chief magistrate, in order to keep the children away from that school and bring them to his. The refractory ones took their revenge for this constraint. Mme. d'Apremont having proposed to the inhabitants to exchange the new school-house for the

presbytery, which was to give the children a much larger dwelling by allotting a smaller one to the Curé, this arrangement was declined.

The Canoness being very vexed, withdrew her support from the establishment at Mattaincourt, which in 1602 was closed for a time.

But she continued the work elsewhere at St Mihiel, a town of some importance, in a house surrounded by beautiful trees. In reality, it was there that the first *domicile assuré* of the congregation was established. After that of St Mihiel, others were opened at Nancy, the political capital; then at Pont-à-Mousson, the University city (1604), at St Nicolas-de-Port, the large commercial town (1605); and at Verdun, the episcopal see (1608). Since the 8th of December 1603, the Cardinal of Lorraine, in virtue of his powers as Legate of the Holy See, had authorised the Filles de Notre Dame to establish themselves in the Duchies of Lorraine and Bar, with the approbation of the bishops of Toul, Verdun, and Metz. Fourier had just drawn up a new Rule for them with twenty-seven clauses, which replaced and developed the temporary Rule of 1598. It is about this period that we have the commencement of his letters, which contain the history of the congregation down to its most trifling details. It is in parts a twofold history written by a vigilant father, who watches over the souls as well as the material interests of his children. Spiritual counsel and pious reflections are continually interspersed with practical advice and business matters.

The Curé of Mattaincourt was the living link uniting the members of his little monastic band, henceforth to be dispersed. Upon him was laid the responsibility of the various incidents which are inseparable from every foundation.

There were the patrons and benefactors to be studied, proposals to make, more or less serious opposition to overcome; then there were debts, imprudently contracted, which brought the bailiffs to the very door of the church; postulants accepted, without reflection and without due choice, worldly novices, whom Fourier describes as "*poppettes*" in their attire: all of these subjects filled his thoughts and furnished matter for his indefatigable pen. He seems to have felt the air always laden "with the mist of small afflictions," which menaced his congregation; and he heard from afar bitter remarks, murmurs, and complaints. As he said one day, of the house at Nancy, he everywhere saw misery and confusion, "no health, no union, no money, no corn, scarcely any scholars, and no gifts from outside sources. These anxieties and cares continued uninterruptedly till the last hour of his life.

The most critical period for his work was that which preceded the approbation of the Holy See. It was very difficult to gain this approbation for the work of an unknown village curé, and to extort a favourable opinion from the Roman Congregations for this singular novelty: instruction given to outsiders, by cloistered nuns.

Fourier took as his intermediary the personage

who at Nancy bore the title of Primate of Lorraine. This dignitary, recently instituted (1602), and invested with episcopal power without jurisdiction, was a sort of Grand Almoner to the ducal Court, exercising the office of Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, and controlling from a national point of view the acts of the bishops of Toul, Metz, and Verdun, the subjects of the King of France.

The Cardinal of Lorraine was the first to hold this office, and he died prematurely in 1607. His successor, Antoine de Lénoncourt, like himself, showed great, but not absolutely disinterested kindness, to the infant congregation of Notre Dame. It would have suited him to establish, contrary to the wishes of the Founder, the Mother house at Nancy, with a Superior General, who would have governed the new institution under his direction.

This plan was much favoured by the ducal family, and still more so by Père Guéret, the adviser in ordinary of the prelate and the interpreter of the wishes of his Society.

The Jesuits indeed flattered themselves that they would thus be able to get the education of the young girls of Lorraine into their own hands, as they had done at Pont-à-Mousson with respect to the boys.

The primate already saw himself honoured as the real Founder of the congregation; as to the Père Guéret, he aimed at the rôle of Director, and took upon himself the task of elaborating and revising the final Rule.

It may here be asked, up to what point would Alix Leclerc accept such a transformation? Just in the measure of respect for the Society with which her voices had inspired her. "I seemed to be," she wrote later on to Père Guéret, "in one of your houses—and our sisters were sitting in a corner by the door—and I, holding a rake, went about picking up all the little straws which were in this cloister for my own benefit. . . . None of these Fathers paid any attenion to me, except one—who had authority over all the others. I heard that it was Father Ignatius who had encouraged me to undertake the Institution for little girls, who were considered of no more account than little straws, but I also clearly heard a voice which said to me, 'I wish that these little souls, who like bastard children are forsaken by their mothers, should henceforth have one in thee.'"

A passing incident, if we may believe Bedel, almost robbed the pious curé of the direct control of his work.

Acting under the direction of a Religious of another Order, Alix Leclerc engaged herself by a vow of perpetual obedience. Fourier thought it necessary to repair to Nancy, and there he made a speech to the nuns, of which this is the sense: "As long as you were my parishioners, I was perhaps sufficient to instruct you, but now that you are more learned, you need another guide."

To this act of humility Alix Leclerc unexpectedly replied: "The business of your parish must fully occupy you, I will provide for myself as well as I can."

On which Gante André immediately rose to pro-

test, and grief and indignation so completely mastered her that she ended by falling down unconscious.

"Reassure yourself," said Fourier to her when she had recovered, "I shall never give up the part which God has confided to me in this affair."

It is perhaps the remembrance of this scene, and certainly of services afterwards rendered, which made him declare later on, that were it not for the Mère Gante there would have been no congregation of Notre Dame.

Grievously surprised by these contradictions and divisions, he was prepared for the sacrifices and alliances necessary in order to gain his ends. In accepting the patronage of the Order which had trained his youth, he thought to reconcile his interests and his affection; and with the same sincerity with which he invoked the blessed Ignatius and Xavier, he accepted the advice and aid of their disciples, the "*très saints et très devots Pères de la très Sainte Campagnie.*" When his compatriot, the Benedictine Calmet, writes two centuries later, "I live with the Jesuit Fathers on the most cordial terms. I see and consult them, and I avoid everything which might displease them," he follows with less eagerness in the same path; he buys liberty and peace on the same terms.

Under the auspices of the all-powerful Society, the Primate of Lorraine and the Curé of Mattaincourt were thus united in the final establishment of the congregation of Notre Dame. On the 28th of August 1614 the former came to celebrate the Feast of St Anthony in the Jesuit chapel at Nancy. The

latter said mass there after him and then went to the sacristy, where he threw himself at the feet of Antoine de Lénoncourt, and begged him solemnly to protect his nuns. The prelate answered diplomatically that he would be the Founder of the monastery at Nancy, and would get the approval of Rome for the Institute.

In thus acceding to the opinion of the ecclesiastical world on the question of the government of his Order, as he had previously acceded to popular opinion regarding its enclosure, Fourier followed the inspiration of his eminently practical sense.

He repelled the idea of the pre-eminence accorded to the monastery at Nancy; but at the same time he did not object to a transaction like that which was proposed by the Father Rector at Pont-à-Mousson, and he would have accepted a *Mère Intendante* elected temporarily and chosen in turn from the different communities.

As regards the question of the gratuitous instruction given to the day-scholars, he remained firmly and gently obdurate; for it was just this in which the whole originality of his conception consisted: this was the "dowry and chief function of his disciples." For this reason, he solicited the authorisation of a fourth vow, which should be added to the ordinary vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

However, the negotiations followed their usually slow course at Rome, in spite of entreaties from the ducal Court; in fact, they were all the slower because of the grave question at stake, the creation of a new religious family. They ended in the Bull of

the 1st of January, 1615. It was a success; but also a great disappointment. The Pope canonically instituted the monastery at Nancy, but none other. By his silence on the duty of teaching, he once more affirmed that cloistral and the scholastic life were absolutely incompatible with each other. All had to be begun again; and the primate himself, who saw his wishes surpassed, felt the necessity of granting to the new Order the legal right to pursue the object for which it had been formed. Solicitations being resumed at the pontifical Court, a second Bull was issued on the 6th of October 1616. This authorised —but did not bind—the nuns of Nancy to undertake the instruction of young girls, as boarders and (provisionally) as day-scholars.

Hemmed in by such restrictions, and limited to one establishment only, the canonical institution became the starting-point of endless difficulties. What was to become of the houses of St Mihiel, Pont-à-Mousson, and St Nicolas, which were already in existence? Was it necessary to add to their expenses by petitioning, for each one of them, the costly benefit of a Bull? The theologians (and amongst them Fourier had taken care to call in four Fathers from Pont-à-Mousson) declared the petition unnecessary. This apparent concession to Fourier's views left intact for the present, and made possible for the future, the supremacy of Nancy. As to Paris, the doctors of the Sorbonne, who were consulted, expressed a contrary opinion. From that time Fourier had a presentiment of the vicissitudes of his work, which, having no firm basis, was a victim

to regrettable dissensions from its very beginning. Nevertheless, he was assiduous, during the months and years which followed, in transforming his teaching-colonies into cloistered convents, causing them to proceed by the novitiate to the final taking of the veil. And he succeeded in inserting the following words into the formula of profession, "I promise never to consent that the instruction of young girls . . . be abandoned."

From 1618 to 1630 the congregation of Notre Dame gained a footing in all the Lorraine towns of any importance. As early as 1614 it had passed the French frontier, and appeared at Châlons-sur-Marne, under the protection of Bishop Côme Clausse. From that time the *Religieuses* of France and Lorraine made a sort of reciprocal advance each into the country of the other. Ursulines, Visitandines, and Sisters of Charity, were establishing themselves in Lorraine at the same time that Peter Fourier's nuns were doing the same thing in the Very Christian Kingdom. Still, the latter did not pass beyond a certain radius, nor develop in any direction outside their country. On one hand they took possession of certain towns in the Netherlands, and on the borders of the Rhine; on another (preceded by the Ursulines in the two Burgundies) they had scarcely any footing, except in Champagne and Normandy, provinces where the influence of Lorraine was supported by the territorial wealth of the House of Guise.[1]

Here, as elsewhere, the foundations of the con-

[1] See in Appendix II. the chronological list of the monasteries of the congregation of Notre Dame.

gregation scarcely differed, in the conditions of their origin, from the other monastic foundations of the epoch. The initiative was usually taken by some rich or benevolent ladies, who, in emulation of Mme. d'Apremont, guaranteed the necessary resources by the gift of land, or of a sum of money. Amongst these ladies were Mme. deWiltheim and her daughters in Luxemburg, Mme. de Gonnelien at Soissons, and Mlles. de la Mouillie et de Rosières at Longwy. Some of them, like Mme. du Jar at Bar-le-Duc, and Mmes. de la Ruelle at Dieuse, entered the novitiate, and wished to edify those whom they had protected. Amongst those outside the congregation cited as its friends, were some zealous ecclesiastics, the Curé Jennin at Châlons, and Laireuls, the reformer of the Premonstratensians at Pont-à-Mousson. Also amongst the Jesuits at Troyes, Père Richard offered himself as a guide to Fourier, when he arrived in that town. Père Fagot, at Mirecourt, induced the citizens to invite the Filles de Notre Dame into their midst. Père Lebrun (Director of the Community), at Verdun, drew up a special Rule for it, which, later on, they tried to oppose to that of the saintly Founder. Lastly, Père de Bilistein, at Nancy, in the favourite monastery of Père Guéret, brought a treatise on the *Love of God*, composed by one of his own colleagues, together with an appropriate dedication, and the celebrated Père Cotton also came to preach.

Until her premature death on the 9th of January, 1622, the energies of Marie-Thérèse de Jésus (Alix Leclerc) were unremittingly divided between the trials of the contemplative and penitent life, and the occupa-

tions of a singularly active one, in the service of the infant congregation. A prey to fierce temptations, which made her doubt her vocation, Providence, and even the existence of God himself, only after long years did she recover the spirit of submission, and the peace of her soul. "If our Lord permitted self-destruction," she said involuntarily one day, "I would gladly kill myself, so as not to feel in the state in which I am." On the other hand, she helped, under the direction of Peter Fourier, in founding the houses at Pont-à-Mousson, Verdun, and Châlons; and was in the end elected Superior of the house at Nancy. It was there she died, worn out by austerities, at the age of forty-six. Her body, covered with marks of penance, was interred with great pomp by the Court and town, each contending with the other even for the smallest trifles which had belonged to her, as for precious relics.

Fourier lost in her a soul he had much loved, and one that had caused him not a little grief. Even as he had had no wish to share with Père Fagot the task of solemnly installing his congregation in his native town, so now he formally abandoned to him and his colleagues, the care of illustrating "*lâ légende de la Mère Alix.*" "They consider her to be a great saint," he wrote the day after her death, "and wish to make her life known to the world."

After this, at least in his correspondence, he never again mentioned her name. Perhaps it was because he wished to bury in silence, which did not imply forgetfulness, the remembrance of the pain that she had unwittingly caused him.

All his life Peter Fourier laboured in his writings to present, in all its phases, to the Filles de Notre Dame, that which he one day called the "*Miroir raccourcy*" of the congregation. In this document he expressly declares the object and end of his activity to be the honour and glory of God, the salvation and perfection of his own soul, and the help to be given to his neighbour: This is what he understood by help to his neighbour. "Harm nobody in anything whatever; as much as it is possible do good to all; especially help every sister, in all seasons, and in every way. Help also prelates of the Church, sovereign princes and magistrates, founders of institutions, fathers and mothers of all near relatives, noted benefactors and friends, citizens, townsmen, and neighbours, discreetly and according to their necessities. Faithfully and gratuitously, instruct, or help to instruct, little girls how to read, write, work, and serve God with fidelity, doing all out of pure love for Our Saviour Jesus Christ."

All that Peter Fourier thought, hoped and prescribed for the benefit of the work nearest his heart, found expression first in the Rules, which he drew up in 1598 and 1603; and then in the two Codes entitled *Petites Constitutions* (1617) and *Grandes, ou Vraies Constitutions* (1640). The pages of this legislation followed, one after the other, in due course, even as the drawing succeeds the rough sketch, and the picture the drawing, every one of them corresponding to new needs arising from the growth of the Institution itself. Whilst working according to his own inspiration, the Curé of Mattaincourt laboured hard

to give satisfaction to the different helpers provided for him by circumstances. In particular he established a sort of moral and mystic solidarity between his congregation and the Society of Jesus, witness the order to his nuns to communicate on the Feast of St Ignatius, as well as on that of St Augustine. The latter had supplied him with the traditional foundation, that is to say, with the Rule known by his name, and the former, with a great number of counsels and regulations, inspired by the spirit and needs of the Church at that time.

A cursory mention of the analytical development of the *Miroir raccourcy* would suffice here, were it not for the fact, that a summary of the doctrines and methods of the author with regard to education is to be found in it, as well as in the *Grandes Constitutions*. Here and there he has stated, with that minute care in little things which characterised him, how he intended his *Filles* to educate the little French and Lorraine girls of that period. His views deserve to be studied by all who are now occupying themselves with the history of teaching; and should especially be compared with those of the subsequent theorists of the seventeenth century, Jacqueline Pascal, Mme. de Maintenon, and Fénelon. Peter Fourier certainly neither invented pedagogy, nor laid claim to the title of pedagogue, so little esteemed in any age. He devoted to the intellectual needs of his epoch, not only the inspirations of his faith-enlightened reason, but the results of his experience. He consulted tradition, his immediate predecessors, his contemporaries; and, in 1615 he

sent Alix Leclerc to Paris to spend two months with the Ursulines, in order to become acquainted with their system of scholastic discipline. Later on, the experience gained by practical teaching, adapted his work and legislation to everyday needs, and thus brought them to still greater perfection.

The first part of the Constitutions treats of three matters only, mistresses, scholars, and subjects of instruction. It is a complete code of education, such as existed nowhere before this.

In the exercise of his apostleship, Peter Fourier, wishing to reach every soul, admitted young girls to the monasteries of Notre Dame in two ways, as paying boarders, and as gratuitous day scholars. Nor were the nuns to be employed indiscriminately in directing the classes. The Superior was to choose those, who by their good disposition, tact, and evenness of temper, as well as by their knowledge, seemed to her most suited for the office. For this purpose she was to award them, when the moment had come, a sort of certificate of talent and capability. She was to be aided in this task by the *Mère intendante*, a permanent inspectress of the mistresses and scholars, who was to send her a report, at least once a week. In the Conferences the *Mères institutrices* were frequently to consult together about new methods to be employed for the improvement of the children. Lastly, the monastery was to be, what it never was in reality, a nursery for country schoolmistresses, for one could there train "many mistresses for day schools, who could afterwards open little schools in villages and smaller places," in fact,

a sort of Third Order, in which candidates for a religious life could be employed for a longer or shorter period.

The day school was not to form a part of the monastery, though it was thought best not to isolate it completely from the quarter occupied by the boarders. The house, expressly built for its youthful occupants, was to receive light from windows looking on a private court, and was to be provided either with a hall, or with a sort of covered entry to serve as a waiting-room. The schoolroom was to be adorned with a crucifix; but was not in the least to remind one of an oratory. All the fittings for scholastic purposes were enumerated; and one meets, here and there, with remarks in which solicitude concerning hygiene, a sentiment supposed to be quite modern, is plainly apparent.

After the mistresses came the pupils. The scholastic months being less numerous than now, and scarcely extending beyond the winter, they could attend school for many years. The age at which they could be received was fixed from four to sixteen; and, on their admittance, the subjects their parents wished them to be taught were to be inscribed upon the register as well as their names. Everything concerning the management of the school was likewise pre-arranged.

Its discipline, under the two-fold form of action, stimulant and punishment, was carefully regulated. Thus the little girls were to be called two by two to the reading lessons. "The faults of both will be pointed out, and if, after that, either child let her

companion repeat one of them without correcting it, it will be counted as a fault to her." Thus did Fourier appeal to the "holy emulation amongst pupils of equal force," recommended by St Ignatius. He introduced into his schools the method of *concertations* adopted in the colleges of the Jesuits. It is the fashion to-day to disparage this spirit, which urges the child to increase his knowlege, whilst establishing his superiority over his school-fellows. He is desired to say to himself not "I am raised above others," but "I am raised above myself." There is a tendency to suppress the weekly competitive papers, and the prizes at the end of the year. This is taking too little into account the human nature, already so strongly developed in the child. Fourier's conception of school was more true to life, when he made the pupils take their seats each day according to the merit of the answers they had given, placing the forms of penitence and triumph at opposite extremities of the school. Not only did he know how to give encouragement, but also how to resign himself to the use of efficacious medicines . . . suitable to purge sick little ones, and which, being taken by them, might serve as a preservative for the healthy." There were, besides the form of penitence, supplementary prayers, and the rod, given on the hands (six strokes at the most) in private, by a lay sister, having a veil over her face. How different from this were the "*geôles de jeunesse captives*" "*les cris d'enfants suppliciés et de maîtres enivrés dans leur colère*" seen or heard by Montaigne.

In his programme of studies, training and know-

ledge were always inseparable, and concurred simultaneously in instilling in the child's mind that relative perfection which is the best preparation for the true and eternal life. Thus the Christian doctrine with its beliefs, virtues, and the observances that it imposes, was to be the first and essential subject of tuition. Next came reading (with its three steps, the A. B. C, the printed book, and the manuscript) and writing, which implies orthography. For this models were to be chosen sometimes from edifying books, sometimes from commercial formularies; and this instruction was to be perfected by analysis, and reading with explanations. In his character of Lorrainer, Fourier much appreciated clearness and accuracy in the communication of thought. The faults of others in orthography and pronunciation shocked him. He even went so far as to recommend good ink "which gives lustre to writing." Like Lacordaire (that other great friar teacher, whose fine, legible handwriting is not without resemblance to Fourier's), he neglected no external detail in expressing his thoughts on paper; and even made a point of keeping the accessories of the writing table, on which he wrote his daily correspondence, in perfect order.

They were not satisfied with teaching orthography in the schools of Notre Dame. The best pupils were to be trained in composition and style by having to write essays "on some useful pious subject, as well as letters of condolence and thanks; or they might choose for themselves other practical subjects befitting young girls in the world."

Vocal music now forms part of the daily programme of elementary classes; and even then, in the seventeenth century, it enlivened them, by means of hymns sung in the Latin tongue. Fourier wished for something more than this. He wanted to see Catholics, young and old, at school or in their own homes singing the hymns of their poet bishop Desportes, after the example of the Calvinists, who took delight in the psalms of Marot. "For a long long time I have had this desire within me, to hear the women of Mattaincourt singing before their doors in summer, and near their warm stoves in winter, and in all seasons at their wash-tubs, whilst washing their clothes, instead of relating evil of each other, vile tittle-tattle, and stories full of absurdities."

Elementary arithmetic was to suffice, with the addition of a fair notion of book-keeping, "the way of writing item by item separately, taking the amount of each, and adding it with the others into one great total, observing withal every necessary detail."

Lastly, the manual labour was to consist in work useful alike to rich and poor. The young girl was to know how "to sew and *besogner en nuance*, linen, net-work, and lace (*point coupé*)." Fourier could not forget the lace and crochet-work, so noted and admired in his native land.

His letters sometimes completed and interpreted certain parts of the rules he had laid down. Thus he showed the utility of a course of lectures, which the pupil could attend till the age of twenty-five; and established the principle of adult instruction, since developed to an extreme. Other opinions bear

testimony, not only to the soundness of his views on matters of education, but to the breadth and generous toleration of his ideas.

Above all he dreaded the spirit of jealousy. When he heard that mistresses had established themselves at Verdun, and were posing as rivals to his *Filles*, he wrote, "Let them do so, say nothing in the world against them, live as if you were ignorant of all they say and do against you." It was just the same with those at St Nicholas. "Do not express astonishment at these new schools, let them expend a little of their first ardour. One must not be angry if our Saviour and the public are served in more than one place, and by divers people."

Although Lorraine was an essentially Catholic country, it might occur that Protestant children would present themselves at their schools. Fourier, with his delicacy of conscience, knew exactly how far the *compelle intrare* ought to go; and in one of his writings he imposes the laws of a charity which does not need to make parade of indifference to reserve liberty for all. It is best to quote the whole passage: "If any child of the so-called reformed religion should be found amongst the others in our schools, treat her kindly, do not permit the others to molest her by making any unpleasantness. Do not ask her openly to forsake her error, and do not speak to her against her religion. Above all, impress these things upon her mind, that children owe, to their parents great love and respect, and to God, love and obedience to His Commandments." There is nothing in this to hurt or estrange her

poor heart. If she learns well you could praise her diligence, and give her in reward (instead of a holy picture) a sheet of gilt paper, or a pretty pen, or something of the sort that she could not disdain."

In his zeal for popular education, Fourier was a man of his century, and, we may add, of his country. The dissemination of useful knowledge pleased the Lorrainers, a people of energetic progress, more devoted to action and struggle than attracted by solitary and abstract speculation. He, the first declared enemy of feminine ignorance amongst them, showed as much ardour in combating, as in praying for it. "The gladness, pleasure and unspeakable content I feel in speaking of these matters," he wrote one day, "transports me out of myself."[1]

Just as his compatriots are to-day in the vanguard of France, so was Fourier in his time in the vanguard of the whole Christian world. As to his being called, as some have styled him, a "precursor of our present pedagogues," he would only have accepted such a title under reserve. Certainly he understood, before the theologians of our own day, the importance of primary instruction, and in order to spread it he devised and practised methods which have not yet been surpassed; but he would never have considered that the daily study of written or printed paper was one of the chief ends of man. He strove

[1] A special bibliography might be formed of the works devoted to Fourier as an educator. See those inserted by M. Maggiolo and by Abbé Martin in the *Memoires de l'Académie de Stanislas* (1885 and 1896) and the study by the Abbé Pierrefitte entitled *L'Acte de naissance de l'Instruction primaire en Lorraine* (*Congrès pour l'Avancement des Sciences, à Blois* (1884).

to inculcate in the school as well as in the church, virtues which are more necessary than writing or arithmetic, the fear and love of God. To enlighten the mind, is to direct the conscience and to win the soul, and all this, he said, "is greater than to create a world."

CHAPTER IV

THE CANONS REGULAR OF NOTRE SAUVEUR

IN 1622, at the age of fifty-seven, Peter Fourier, already burdened with the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregation of Notre Dame, devoted himself to the reform and restoration of his own congregation. Two of his former fellow-students at the University had become models in this respect. Servais de Lairuels had reconstituted the Premonstratensians at the Abbey of St Marie Majeure at Pont-à-Mousson; and Didier de la Cour had had the approval of the Holy See for the studious congregation of St Vannes and St Hydulphe, from which sprang the renowned congregation of St Maur—sufficient glory in itself.

The number of the Canonical Houses founded in Lorraine was eight: St Léon de Toul, St Nicolas de Verdun, St Pierremont, St Rémy de Lunéville, St Sauveur de Domèvre, Belchamp, Autrey, Chamouzey. How Fourier was received in this last mentioned house, and what a difference there was in the lives of its Canons and his own has already been related. The same disorder of long standing existed in the other abbeys. Twice the young Cardinal of Lorraine in his character of Legate to the Holy See had tried to recall his degenerate

monks to the observance of their Rule. He had summoned the abbés, priors and distinguished men of the Order to Nancy in 1595, and to Lunéville in 1604. They had listened to his admonitions, but had taken no heed of them. In their retreats the Canons Regular lived a comfortable, but not too openly scandalous, life. They did not intend to change their habits, and their passive resistance left still less room for hope than open rebellion.

Peter Fourier was present at both of these assemblies; but his entreaties were as powerless as the exhortations of the Cardinal. At all events he received the idea, that he made use of later on, of appointing a visitor, a sort of permanent inspector of the congregation, who was to visit each community at regular intervals, to maintain or restore the authority of its constitutions, and supervise the conduct of its members. The visitors appointed by the Cardinal Legate failed in their task, and the reason is plain. What faith could be put in a dignitary who came in his carriage, surrounded with pomp and luxury and attended by a numerous retinue, to preach a return to humility and poverty? That which a prince of the Church had vainly attempted was accomplished by a humble country curé, who never spared himself. It cannot be said that he completely succeeded in his work, for his task was a thankless one. His energies for the exercise of his other good works were divided and exhausted by it; and less than two centuries sufficed to make it null and void.

Fourier began the enterprise in obedience to his superior, though not without hesitation.

The Bishop Jean des Porcelets de Maillane, successor to Christophe de la Vallée in the See of Toul, esteemed and venerated the Curé of Mattaincourt, whom he had seen at work in the midst of his parishioners, and the Filles de Notre Dame; and after getting him nominated Visitor General of the Lorraine Augustinians by a Pontifical Brief (July 1621) he conferred on him full powers for their reorganisation and amendment: saying, "The Order of the Canons Regular now hangs on nothing but the sleeve of your *simarre*, without you it is lost."

Having become a power where, for twenty years, his example had availed nothing, Fourier began his work.

Some months later one of his old professors, Père Bauny, wrote to him in the name of the Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, proposing that he should undertake a similar task in the Abbey of St Geneviève in Paris. The Lorrainer had no need to seek a pretext for not leaving his country, to which a new duty had just attached him. There was a question in fact of establishing a new congregation to be incorporated with the old. The method devised was this: to recruit the future Canons amongst those of the Religious, who would consent to make their novitiate over again, and renew their profession, adding to them the new adherents who came of their own accord. Then, when this chosen band was formed, its members were to be introduced into each House belonging to the Order, and the old inmates were to

be eliminated by means of persuasion. Didier de la Cour had done this with the Benedictines, removing the old monks, who persisted in their culpable routine, and attracting to himself young, ardent and competent spirits.

At first many months were spent in seeking recruits in all the Houses of the Order. With great difficulty six were mustered, and even then the Bishop of Toul did not succeed in getting them into St Pierremont, although he was its *abbé commendataire*. He was obliged to ask preliminary shelter for them with the Premonstratensians of Pont-à-Mousson. It was there that, on the 2nd of February of the following year, Fourier had them invested with the badge of the new reform, which was a narrow white band fastened to the neck by a cord, and descending like a scarf all down the left side of their black cassock. He, as it were, forced the gates of St Remy de Lunéville, and secured a refuge for the professed of the new, beside the Religious of the old observance. The day after the ceremony of the clothing, the little band, conducted by Fourier, left Pont-à-Mousson in the episcopal carriage. In thus receiving, no doubt very much against his will, those men, whose very presence was a rebuke to him, the Prior of Lunéville united, at least by one necessary tie, the congregation about to become extinct, to the one that was to replace and reform it.

Such was the thankless and difficult *début* of the Canons of Notre Sauveur, and scarcely any page in their history differed from the first one. In fact the

only pages meriting preservation are those filled with the writings, labours, and example of Peter Fourier. He was, from the beginning of his mission of reformation until his death, the guide, inspirer, and real and only head of the new Institution.

As clever with his pen in Latin as in French, he wrote a summary (*Summarium*) of the future *Constitutions*—a supplement to the Augustinian Rules in fifty-eight articles. It was veritably a selection of precepts from the writings of the Fathers of the Church, proposed by him for the obedience of his young disciples. He hoped later on to arrange this legislation like that of the Filles de Notre Dame, in a more complete text, of which, he could then only draw up certain fragments. For want of time he sent out his first ideas, as they were successively suggested to him by circumstances, in the form of treatises, having reference either to the cloistral life of the Canons, or to the outside labours he proposed to confide to them. In this part of his work are to be found, side by side with extracts from the commentators of St Augustine, and meditations, or spiritual devotions after the method of St Ignatius, treatises for the guidance of a priest as confessor, administrator of a parish, or instructor of youth. It was sweet to the author to engrave his teachings on docile minds, he called them "new tables, quite clean, smooth and polished, on which one can write what one wishes."

His words and example, more than his writings, ensured the first fruits of his new apostleship. The ingenious preacher, who had represented Contrition and Confession upon the stage for his parishioners,

thus described, under an allegorical form, to his novices, the faults he wished them to hate. "In the name of Holy Obedience," he said to them one day, "you are informed that about eight o'clock last night, some of our brethren here present, who are esteemed to be the most fervent, modest, and wary, caused two decrepit old women (step-sisters) accursed, of ill-fame, and banished from all well regulated monasteries, to be admitted into these sacred precincts. . . . These two miserable sisters are Curiosity and Prattling, out of hatred to whom it is decreed that those, who have let themselves be infatuated with the same, shall promptly fall at the feet of the brethren of this community, and humbly kiss them; and after that, they are to turn out the impertinent creatures—beating them soundly, in defiance of him who sent them, if by chance they should present themselves again."

Having followed his recruits to Lunéville, Fourier appeared but rarely at Mattaincourt, and then not to stay.

He escaped from St Remy on the Eve of Festivals, walked the five leagues that separated him from his parish, and as soon as he arrived fulfilled his duties in the pulpit and confessional, and at the bedside of the sick. Then he returned during the night, and celebrated the Office of the Feast in the midst of his new flock.

The premature death of the Bishop de Maillane seemed at one time to give him the opportunity of retiring; but those whose guardianship he had accepted, insisted so eagerly on keeping him that

he remained amongst them. "Notwithstanding that I am no use to the good Fathers," he wrote, "yet they will not walk, advance, retreat, admit, refuse, build, demolish, reply, or ask questions if I do not put a grain of my quite unnecessary salt into everything. There is no means of freeing myself, or of retiring a little without causing—according to them—some bit of their wall to totter."

On the 25th of March 1624, the novices pronounced their vows before the Prior of St Remy, and he, according to agreement, at once definitely gave up the place to them, and retired with his Religious, who were all, including himself, provided with a pension from the revenues of the abbey.

Other postulants presented themselves: Lemulier, from French Burgundy, Guinet, the nephew of a Professor of Jurisprudence at Pont-à-Mousson (also of Burgundian origin) who afterwards, like the two just mentioned, governed the congregation. Also Gauthier, who was destined to fill Peter Fourier's place at Mattaincourt, and Bedel, his future biographer. In proportion as the little flock increased, the pastor tried by mutual agreement to get the Houses of the Order in Lorraine opened to him, and to negotiate the voluntary departure of their hosts. The apostle then became a man of business to decide on, or rather to purchase, the retreat of the incorrigible Canons. In certain communities he only succeeded in liquidating the debts of the old administration by involving the new. Then, owing to irremediable abuse, it was necessary to effect a division in the revenues of the Abbey, that

is to say, one part had to be given to the *abbé commendataire*, and another to the Religious.

Surprises, and not agreeable ones, occurred every day. The old canons neglected no petty artifice in order to leave the place under the best conditions, and only quitted it in the last extremity. At Belchamp they were obliged to ensure them a pension of 6000 livres, the net profits of the whole year, and since this exhausted almost all the revenue, they were compelled to borrow at once, in order to provide for their successors. At St Pierremont, where they had accepted the reformed brothers amongst them, for some time they ostentatiously celebrated their offices after those of the new-comers, as if to show that they would not retire; and then one morning they were neither to be seen in the church nor found in their cells, for, their courage being quite exhausted in futile resistance, they had left during the night.

With regard to one of these negotiations Fourier writes: "Here all is full of debts, ruin, ennui, need, lassitude and tribulation. From a temporal point of view the bargain is not good, or will not be for some time; but from a spiritual, everyone maintains it to be good." However, in a very few years, nearly all the houses belonging to the Canons in Lorraine had adopted the reform; in 1625 St Pierremont and Domèvre, and then Belchamp, Verdun and Toul. A new Foundation under the name of the Priory, was opened at Viviers. Lastly, Fourier was able to begin, if not to complete, the formation of a permanent Mission House at Tholy, in the mountains of the

Vosges, where the parochial service was difficult and imperfect.

Its foundations thus strengthened, the reformer hoped that the congregation of the Lorraine Canons would, in the exercise of a varied ministry, be able to withstand temptations to intellectual and moral slumber. Its members had to avoid the evil to which their elders had succumbed, an existence contemplative in principle, idle in deed, though seasoned for some of them by the obligations of parochial service in a living with the charge of souls. They were to devote themselves in sundry ways to the amelioration of Christians; to preaching in the country, to the education of clerics and schoolmasters, and to the instruction of the young. These unfilled offices were destined for them. If one considers, especially in the complex mission that Père Fourier assigned to them, the part reserved for education, one sees that he was anxious to do for the boys what he had done for the girls, to diffuse amongst them, as much as possible, what we call free primary education. He wished to procure for poor and intelligent children knowledge of such a nature as would either help them to succeed in business, or get them into a university; in short, to cause the "regenerate sons of St Augustine" to devote their time and energies to the education of the flower of the youth of Lorraine.

In article No. 56 in his *Summarium*, he enumerated the subjects for the instruction of children and youths: the principles of faith, the elements of Latin Grammar, and the rudiments of French; that is to say everything necessary for the training of

good citizens, pleasing to God and man. In offering this task to the zeal of his novices he made many apt comments upon the subject: "Certain Religious," he said, "reap the ripe grain for heaven, and they do well; but they leave some ears of corn behind; and we must imitate the poor, who come to glean after the harvest is made, and gather up those ears of corn whilst applying ourselves to the instruction of infants, beginning at the A.B.C." He wrote also to one of his principal disciples, "We must use every means in our power, both heavenly and earthly, in the cultivation of our patch of ground, which, though small in appearance, will bring in much. For the little plants will become large trees, and bear fruit to the harvest either of good or evil. If we can therefore, in this depraved age, through God's grace and our own poor labours, bring it to pass that all these young people shall, on arriving at years of discretion, serve God their Creator faithfully, each one according to his ability and vocation, we can deservedly expect a great reward."

Unfortunately Nicolas François de Lorraine was only titular successor in the See of Toul to the late Bishop de Maillane, and the *de facto* bishop, de Gournay, under the title of Administrator, adopted the malevolent attitude towards Fourier as reformer of the Canons, that Christophe de la Vallée had assumed towards him as founder of Les Filles de Notre Dame. But the principal enemy henceforth to be feared was the University of Pont-à-Mousson. Not that Fourier had been wanting in respectful attentions towards the Reverend Fathers. He had

applied for one of them to preach the sermon at the clothing of the first novices; and had asked another to do duty for him during his absences from Lunéville. But in spite of this, rivalry between the all-powerful Society and the young Institution—both in the recruiting of novices, and in the training of youth—was inevitable. The Jesuits did not wish to share with another Order the ecclesiastical vocations they had inspired, nor the right of teaching, of which their University Charter seemed to grant them the monopoly in Lorraine. Guinet, the best of Fourier's disciples, would have become one of them had it not been for a defect in his elocution, which made them judge him incapable of being useful to them, either as a preacher or as a teacher. One day the reformer was subjected to the reproaches of a professor from Pont-à-Mousson, a dozen of whose pupils had left his class for the novitiate at Lunéville. Quite contrite, he immediately went on his knees before his apostrophiser, like a guilty man taken in the act. "Consider them as yours; they shall make amends for their fault. I will send them back to you." And the Jesuit, disarmed and ashamed of himself, could only reply, "Since you have got them keep them." As much to facilitate the recruiting of the congregation as to procure for its members the learning and education which they needed, Fourier resolved to establish a Seminary College near the University; but money was not plentiful, and its organisation was slow. The Jesuits, knowing that the new-comers would receive boarders, and would have *répétiteurs* or professors from outside for their

scholastics, were alarmed at this innovation. After having taken a brotherly interest in his convent reforms, they secretly presented a memorial to the Lorraine Government against the organisation of the proposed seminary. Until the last moment they boasted of having in their pockets a prohibitive decree, that they intended to produce in case of necessity. Then, seeing that this process of intimidation was not successful, they took part in the magnificent festival on the day of the solemn inauguration (8th Dec. 1627), by sending one of their number to preach upon the occasion. Fourier treated this as a proof of "true and sincere affection." He had moreover withstood their secret opposition with much prudence and discretion, pretending to ignore it, whilst pursuing his way with a confidence that gave him, even to the end, the advantage of not appearing to know that he had foes before him.

At first the Seminary of St Nicolas contained six students, each being supported by one of the existing houses; later on the number rose to twenty. Fourier, whilst assigning the nominal direction to one of his assistants, was in reality the life and soul of this Institution from the beginning. He was now the centre of his students, as formerly he had been the centre of his novices. He constituted himself their *répétiteur* or Professor in logic—a master in his knowledge, and a scholar in the freshness of his memory.[1]

Being thus charged, though not officially, with the government of two congregations, he was forced to think of uniting them, all the more because he

[1] Martin (abbé) *L'Université de Pont-à-Mousson*, pp. 246, 248.

proposed that they should both devote themselves to the same object. At the end of 1625, he wrote to the Sisters of Châlons, who desired his presence. "Be patient a little while, and let these good Fathers have time to get thoroughly settled down, for their progress is yours. If God give them grace beyond their pious expectations you will lose nothing by it. For if your congregation liked to gather fruit for its own monasteries from the labours of these men, by the grace of God it could."

This union was to be effected by the appointment of a Canon Regular, charged with the duty of superintending the strict execution of the Rules, and maintaining fraternal peace amongst the communities of Notre Dame.

This project roused serious opposition. "The continual intervention of a Religious armed with great powers is irreconcilable with the authority conferred upon us by the Rules of the congregation itself," said the bishops. The Jesuits, on their side, were afraid lest it should cause them, little by little, to become estranged from the direction and interests of the houses of Notre Dame. A campaign was begun against the Canons Regular. "People of little merit and fortune!" repeated, in low voices, the men who claimed to concentrate in Nancy, in the hands of the Primate of Lorraine, the government of the spiritual daughters of Fourier.

To use the words employed by the Père de Mattaincourt, when he wished to avoid mentioning names, "Before the *pointed cannons, the great bristling curs*," he acted with much circumspection and

even forbearance, except that he did not yield in anything he thought essential. Through the solicitation of his friend Virion, the Lorraine Minister in Rome, he received the first approval from the Vatican (Dec. 1625) in the form of a Brief. Pope Urban VIII. had openly shown his sentiments towards the humble Reformer, and had expressed his "joy that so great a saint had lived during his pontificate." However the act published under his signature only half corresponded with Fourier's desire. It simply legalised the past by approving the monasteries won over to the reform; and bestowed the canonical name of Canons Regular upon the Lorraine Augustinians. It was necessary to negotiate, as he had done for the nuns of Notre Dame, in order to obtain from the Roman Curia the concessions judged essential to the prosperity of the new monastic family.

In the summer of 1627 Fourier resolved to send Lemulier, the prior of Lunéville, and Guinet, the prior of St Pierremont to Rome. Their mission was twofold. For their own congregation they were to solicit the union of all its monasteries in one, and the authorisation to elect under the title of General one supreme head, if not for life, at least for a great number of years. For the congregation of Notre Dame they were to obtain a decision that would put an end to the controversy on the validity of other monasteries besides those of Nancy; and the appointment of a visitor charged with preserving the spirit of concord amongst them all without prejudicing the authority of the bishops. For both

orders they were to ask that the three usual vows might be supplemented by a fourth, concerning the education of youth.

Innovations always inspire mistrust at Rome in the guardians *par excellence* of tradition, so the negotiations lasted more than a year. Lemulier and Guinet had to reckon with the sordid, calculating dilatoriness of the congregations; and with the ill-will and venality of the subordinate agents of the Curia. The Lorraine minister was not sparing in his good offices for them with the Pope; but the French Ambassador worked secretly against them. Often short of money, hampered by clever expedients for delay, advancing only step by step through their legal difficulties, they took great pains in their petitions to reduce their demands, and multiply their arguments. Was it a question of canonically establishing all the monasteries of Notre Dame, with their necessary annex of a school, the Roman prelates, abiding by the Bull of 1615, loudly declared that that of Nancy was the only canonical one; that the vows pronounced elsewhere were null and void; and that in reality the new nuns could not teach by the mere fact of their profession and vow of celibacy. "Let them marry, it is their right," one of them forgot himself so far as to say. If it were a question of authorising a General for life amongst the Canons Regular, and they evoked the last precedents, all were adverse to it, entrenching themselves behind this argument. "That which was perhaps good formerly, is not so to-day." And if the deputies of the Canons insisted on knowing the reason of this

change, they gave no other answer than the Cæsarian axiom, *Sit pro ratione voluntas.* "Were this principle always the master in everything," groaned the pious Reformer from afar, "I do not know who would trouble himself to undertake any good work!"

He lived for long months in suspense, and tried to shorten the time by his prayers, and the prayers of those around him, as well as by his actions; for he had learnt in the school of St Ignatius that he must act as if everything depended upon us alone, and pray as if everything depended only upon prayer. Guinet enumerated the obstacles that he met with in beautiful Ciceronian prose; and Fourier, in replying, combated the enemies of his projects, in his turn, with good arguments and skilful expedients.

Thus the humanist awoke in him to flatter those compatriots of the Medicis, who guarded the avenues to the Holy See. "Since one of the principles of our policy," he wrote one day, "is to give liberally, in the proper time and place, to persons, who can aid and serve us, giving to each according to his desires, gold and silver to some, honours and compliments, wine and good cheer, etc., etc., to others, it seems to me that it would not be impertinent to make an epigram, or a piece of poetry, or something of the kind, short but polished, and well worked out, to be presented to the Holy Father at some festival, such as his patron saint's, or on any other rare and important occasion. One could introduce the children of Lorraine into it (both sons and daughters) in a favourable light; asking him to approve, embrace and bless them, as Christ—whose vicar he is on earth—with His own

Holy and Merciful Hands did bless the children of Jerusalem in days gone by . . . And because the word Lotharingia would be difficult to scan in elegiac verse, Austrasia could take its place. See how imprudent I am to instruct our Virgil!"

Another page of his correspondence, relative to the delays imposed by the Court of Rome, is here cited, as it reveals its author's comprehension of art according to the style of the Renaissance, and his essentially prudent method, opportunist, as it was called in 1870. "One must not complain of the time and pains spent on this point. It is nothing to take eight, nine, ten, or twelve months to model the head of a statue exactly as it ought to be. All the greatest experts in art, whether in engraving, in painting or in tapestry work maintain, without exception, that there is nothing more difficult to make in a beautiful picture than the head, however small it may be. More skill and art are often needed to mould the head of a tiny pigmy, which, measured by the ell, is no larger than the big toe on the foot of Hercules or Antalus, than to represent the monstrous head of one of those giants, or of a still greater one, in a laudable and dignified manner. We find on this point that your six or seven months have accomplished no mean result, more particularly in a place and age in which we have to work and fight at the same time, the chisel in one hand, the dagger in the other, necessarily experiencing in the labours of our craft, that which the most eloquent of the old inhabitants wrote about the works of Nature. 'There is absolutely not one creature

brought forth by Nature, which shoots up and is produced ready made, attaining its full growth at once.' . . . *Sat cito si sat bene.*"

At last, in the month of August 1628, Urban VIII. ratified eight Bulls, which, in some measure, satisfied Fourier's desires. He granted a General elected for life to the Canons Regular; but was silent on the "*bénéfice vacant de l'instruction de la jeunesse.*" It was a question of an ancient Order—having behind it a long tradition, which they wished to respect. In vain did Fourier appeal to his erudition and invoke examples borrowed from the Fathers of the Church, on this point he obtained nothing but tacit toleration for his disciples. The nuns of Notre Dame, on the contrary, were authorised to bind themselves by a solemn vow to the education of young girls; however with regard to them, one significant omission was made. They were permitted to call themselves Canonesses Regular of St Augustine; but silence was maintained about the Visitor, chosen from amongst the Canons, whom Fourier destined for them. So, in his government of each Order, the General of the Canons was, on two important points, obliged to act at his own risk and peril, without being backed by a formal authorisation from the Holy See.

In the beginning of 1629 the Canons of Notre Sauveur were definitely organised. The first General Chapter was held at Lunéville, and the first General was elected. Peter Fourier seemed specially fitted for the office, but he declined it under two pretexts; he was curé of a parish and he had not renewed his profession in the new observance. On this being

made known the youthful Guinet was unanimously elected. He appeared destined to a long government favourable to unity in direction, and consequently to the consolidation of the congregation. Like his master he was an ascetic; and, if occasion required, a humanist. Ardent in a secret conquest of self, he lived in the midst of a veritable arsenal of instruments of penance, and practised mortification of the body to a degree that was prejudicial to his intellectual work, and condemned him to repose. He had scarcely finished his novitiate when he was called to direct others.

Three years afterwards the plague desolated Pont-à-Mousson: but Guinet persisted in remaining there in the deserted seminary. Fourier wrote him a letter full of eloquence and common sense, which caused him to withdraw for a short time. But he returned the following year to die, at what he considered to be his post of duty, stricken by the plague whilst nursing one of its victims (12th of April 1632). He expired recognising his master as one of the great saints of the Church, and saying he had "continually watched his actions, without ever having discovered a reprehensible one. God is only taking me away to make room for the Père de Mattaincourt, who is much more fitted for my office than I."

On the 4th of May there was a meeting of the priors and deputies of the Order at Belchamp, to appoint a successor. Their choice was unanimous, and Fourier was elected General. It was in vain that he refused, supporting his refusal with the same objections as before. He obtained but one thing,

the annulling of the first election, whilst awaiting the removal of the obstacles to his elevation. In fact by means of exchange, they arranged that the living of Mattaincourt, the property of the canons of Haussonville, should be united to the seminary of Pont-à-Mousson, the usual seat of the General's residence. They forced the venerable man to renew his vows, and, on the 20th of August, in spite of his protestations he was elected once more. "You ought not to have sung a *Te Deum*," he wrote to the nuns of Soissons, "for that choice which you call holy. All these poor fathers were quite dazed, and I too, to have allowed them to drag me by force, and I know not what pious spell, to fill an office for which I am certainly not qualified, nor ever shall be, in any way whatever. Policy as much as modesty made him adroitly avoid the use of his new title, which might cause umbrage to certain bishops, as giving him authority over the congregation of Notre Dame; and which in fact later on, marked him out as one to take the oath of fidelity to the King of France.

In the work which he had essentially at heart, that of teaching, the new General of the Canons could scarcely obtain important results. He saw himself at the very outset exposed to violent opposition, both from the secular and regular clergy. He wrote in 1624, "It is not possible to open, we will not say our intended schools, but, even our mouth to say a single word about them that would be heard. *Omnia tempus habent* . . . We must go quietly about this, almost without our design being even perceived in the beginning, for fear of smothering it in its

cradle, by exposing it to the air earlier than necessary." Novices continued to be scarce, and the state of the country, day by day more and more menaced with war, scarcely favoured such projects. They could not even find a Religious to keep the school for boys that the Curé de Mattaincourt wanted in his parish. Negotiations to obtain the direction of the college of Ligny at Bar-le-Duc, fell through. A school was to be opened at Pont-à-Mousson, but the same influences, which had already almost caused the seminary to be closed, acted on the Lorraine government, and the latter, imposed on by the partizans of University monopoly, prevented the opening of the school. More successful at Lunéville, the Canons, in 1634, joined a little college to the schools in which they had taught for ten years. And at Toul the bishop entrusted them with the direction of his seminary.

The head of the Lorraine Augustinians continued to be the invisible but ever present Director of the Filles de Notre Dame, who from 1620 to 1630 established new colonies both in France and Lorraine. But the moral authority exercised over them by the Good Father did not entirely supply the place of one supreme authority. External dissensions arose ; each monastery was a little Republic, and what Republic does not incessantly breed civil war ?

The convent at Soissons was in open rebellion for three years. Amongst the nuns from Châlons, who had founded it in 1621, there was a certain Claude Prinet (Sœur Agnes des Stigmates), an individual endowed with great qualities, but as ambitious as

she was pious. This nun succeeded in creating a party for herself in the community, in getting the Superior in Office sent back to Châlons, and in being nominated in her stead by the younger nuns; every door being well-guarded against intervention from the legitimate authorities. They had recourse to Fourier. He wrote, and then came, accompanied by the Superior from Châlons. She was none other than Isabelle de Louvroir, one of the Foundresses of the congregation. Her voice was disregarded; and the director of the rebels dared to go so far as to say that, Isabelle de Louvroir merited public penance. Fourier, with his usual gentleness, merely ignored this wild assertion; and then, on his return to Châlons, he convoked the principal Mothers of the Order. The nuns of Soissons presented their defence before this feminine tribunal, and received a summons to submit within three months under penalty of exclusion. Sister Prinet got very angry, protested loudly, and threatened to appeal to the Parliament of Paris; but in the end she submitted, and went to do penance in due form at the monastery of Metz.

Later on trouble was caused by the nuns of Laon, whose resistance veiled a project of schism, viz., the establishment of an exclusively French congregation of Notre Dame. They nourished the hope of forming a Mother House at Laon, by opening schools in Paris and Rheims. Thus a breach was begun which, though it never became an open rupture, still sufficed to embitter the last years of Peter Fourier's life, making him daily expend all the natural sweetness

of his character, and all its acquired skill, in saving appearances before others, and in cherishing in himself illusions as to the final success of his work. To console himself he said, "Our enemies are excellent masters, they often teach us things our most intimate friends would rather not tell us."

The truth was, his nuns bore him a grudge for having devoted himself, more than was agreeable to them, to the reform of the Canons. It was in vain that he wrote to assure them that his heart was "large enough to contain a great number of all kinds of persons"; they could not accustom themselves to being no longer the only ones exclusively to monopolise his time and talents. They would at least have liked to receive the finally corrected proofs of their Constitutions, which he had promised them. But he was in no hurry, or rather, his thoughts being occupied with his new task, he considered his first duty was to harmonise existing discord, particularly in France.

Meanwhile, at stated intervals, he tried to introduce into their midst the intervention of the Canon-Visitor. Guinet had already, by presenting himself in the Lorraine convents, disquieted the Primate of Lénoncourt and the Bishop of Toul. The French prelates, solicitous to guard their authority, were roused in their turn; likewise the Jesuits, with the exception of Père Rousselot, whom the saint mentions with pleasure. We will not touch upon the history of this conflict, paltry enough, except where it is ennobled by Peter Fourier's Christlike virtues, and by his unvarying tact and prudence towards his

adversaries, whom he never ceased to regard as his Superiors and friends.

The Bishop de Gournay had ended by forbidding the Canons Regular access to the monasteries in his diocese. "I hope that difficulty may be smoothed over, by the grace of God," wrote the General in his humility. And so it was. He applied for and obtained the removal of the interdict, though he had to consent to one exception calculated to wound the feelings of his principal helper, the Père Terrel.

Little contrivances to please, as one has seen in his correspondence with Guinet, were not repugnant to him. Thus he recommended two of his disciples at the time of their ordination to offer to the consecrating prelate, who was a Franciscan, a fine pike or two fat carp for his dinner on the following Sunday. "One is better pleased to see people, and more inclined to listen to them," he avowed to them, "when one has something to offer."

His letters to the nuns of Châlons show what infinite precautions the Visitor had to take in French territory, and how necessary it was for him to weigh all his words and actions. One day he pointed out, without naming him, "a certain good personage . . . anointed of the Lord, who slanders you for lack of knowing you well, and whose mistrust you must dissipate by force of patience and resignation." Another day, when they were about to elect a Superior, he recommended them to get a Jesuit to preach at the ceremony, instead of the Visitor, as was the custom. When he heard that Père Jean Fagot, in the Advent sermons which he had been invited to

preach in the monastery of St Mihiel, had again reintroduced the idea of establishing the supremacy of Nancy over the entire congregation, he sent a letter to the nuns. Not wishing them to come to an open quarrel with that ecclesiastic, who had presented himself twice at the grating of their confessional, and had seen no one, he wrote: "He thinks that the nuns of your convent have little liberty touching their conscience, and the revealing of it to the Reverend Fathers." "It is of importance that this Father should like and speak well of you. He is seen everywhere, and is listened to, believed, and followed both by his brethren and the outside world." And at the end of the letter he recommended them to be silent as to the author of this advice.

The busy life Peter Fourier lived was not spent solely for the benefit of the ecclesiastical world. He would not have kept that popularity which in Lorraine never ceased to surround his name, had he not been constantly dragged out of the seclusion that he sought either in his bell-tower or in the chapels and parlours of his convents. This Curé, this Religious was, as we shall find, a man taking his part in the great events of his time, as an oracle, a public benefactor, and a living Providence, not only to his sovereigns and compatriots, but to all Christendom.

CHAPTER V

LORRAINE, ITS COURT AND PEOPLE

AS old age approached, to his great annoyance the Curé of Mattaincourt, Institutor of the Order of Les Filles de Notre Dame, and General of the Canons Regular, found himself to be a personage of great importance. The whole of Lorraine had become his parish, where he exercised a sort of moral and social supervision that the misfortunes of war and invasion were about to consecrate. Noblemen and great ladies came to this priest, whose fame had spread far and wide; and recognising the divine light on his brow and lips, besought of him counsel in life and solace in death.

A great part of his writings is addressed exclusively to people of the world.

In his *Journey of a Noble Lord* he traced out rules of life for the Marquis de Ville, when sent on a mission to the King of France.

His *Advice to a Person of Quality*, and his *Rules of Conduct for a Maid of Honour*, were both addressed to certain *Philothées*, quite unknown to Lorraine society. His pamphlets show consummate prudence and alert good sense, and the same scruples in the details of a holy life in the midst of courts and palaces as within the bars of a cloister.

With ardent charity he hastened to minister at the deathbeds of all who had aided him in his good works. Thus he consoled the Countess de Brionne, sister of the Bishop de Maillane, when she lost her two daughters, one after the other; and then assisted at her own deathbed.

He rendered similiar services to Mme. de Gournay, mother of the Bishop of Toul, and sister of the Canoness of Apremont; and to the Baron de Fresnel, the head of a family whose patronage he had acquired long before, and who bequeathed him an important legacy for the seminary of his Canons.

On his return to his secluded life he would remember his duties to his brothers in God rather than those to his own family. When, towards the end of his life, he met Father Jean Fourier of St Mihiel once more, he welcomed him less as his cousin than as a venerable Religious who had been his former master. At Mattaincourt he even caused one of his parishioners to take precedence of his brother Jacques at the altar, where he was about to bless their marriage. It was this same brother who, later on, exhorted him strictly to fulfil the obligations of a cloistral life. And the saint, taking him at his word, said:—

"Be it so, I shall talk with you and yours no more. If you pass before my dwelling, forget me. Persuade yourself that I am dead to the world; and do not knock at my door, it will not be opened to you." When he heard that his sister was dying, as he had recently seen her, and was not sorry to

teach renunciation to his *pauvre et faible régiment*, he said:—

"I will not leave my heavenly mission to serve my relatives; it would be a shame for me, and too great an infidelity. Assure my sister that I will pray to God for her."

Entreaties from the Fathers who surrounded him were necessary to make him go to the deathbed of his brother. A conscience delicate even to scruple was the inspirer of this surface insensibility; his soul remained tender, with a tenderness which awoke, all glowing and efficacious, in the midst of the trials of his latter years.

Notwithstanding their respective rank the heads of the Lorraine clergy paid him public homage. When the Bishop de Maillane was present he often compelled him, in spite of his protestations, to take the first place. Meeting him in Nancy in 1620, he asked him to hear his confession. The interview lasted two hours; and the bishop had, in order to receive absolution, to promise to visit his diocese regularly, to renounce his numerous benefices, and to be reconciled with a certain nobleman who was his enemy. When Nicholas Francis, brother of the Duke of Lorraine, was called to the See of Toul, the Curé of Mattaincourt mingled his respectful compliments with wise counsel, and hoped that this prelate, whose elevation was due to politics, would become an apostle to his diocesans, a second Charles Borromeo.

But it was chiefly among the people of Lorraine, in those towns and villages through which he con-

stantly passed, that his power and prestige grew and increased with time. It was about the year 1620, when, entirely against his will, he was transformed in the eyes of his compatriots into a thaumaturge, a prophet, a true messenger of God. At Mattaincourt a child is taken lifeless out of a well; the curé arrives, kneels down, and prays by him, and the child is soon brought back to life. From that time the rumour of his supernatural influence is spread abroad, increased, confirmed, and will never cease. A Jesuit, recovering from a serious illness, openly declares that he owes his recovery to him. "Take care not to speak of it," replies the holy man. "You will never be believed." At the bedside of a dying man he answers those who seem to expect from him a direct appeal to divine intervention, by recommending resignation and even gratitude to God in the ordeal. At one time a counsel issued from his lips, prompted by his great wisdom, at another a presentiment, escaped from him in an affirmative form, comes back, after the event, to the memory of his penitents and hearers, as emanating from prophetic inspiration.

His benediction, as well as his advice, was implored at every hour of the day; but his first impulse was always to refuse it to nuns, to the children of his schools, and to the crowd who pressed around him. Once, in a convent, they were obliged to take his arm to make him trace the sign of the cross upon the persons present. If he promised prayers, it was only by offering to unite them with those of others.

Peter Fourier often travelled over Lorraine in every direction, during the last years in which he was able to reside there. Till his death two of his Religious did duty for him at Mattaincourt, and thus gave him the right to believe himself faithful to the oath made to his parishioners never to desert them. Sometimes he was called into one of the communities to re-establish its internal peace, or to solve some pending difficulties in its administration; and sometimes he went to help a distinguished penitent. In 1632, he made a long journey across the mountains of the Vosges, seeking a favourite site for the projected establishment of a Mission House. But then he was no longer seen on foot, staff in hand, he was driven in a little wicker carriage covered with canvas, in which his favourite books, the Greek Fathers and St Bernard, kept him company.

During the latter part of his sojourn in Lorraine he was welcomed in the towns and villages through which he passed, as St Francis d'Assisi was wont to be in the Italian towns in the Middle Ages. At Gerbéviller, the inhabitants chance one day to surprise him kneeling before the tomb of Mme. de Brionne, and taking advantage of his absorption, they stealthily cut off bits of his mantle and cassock. At Verdun they stretch out their rosaries towards him as towards a walking shrine. "Poor people and petitioners," asserts Bedel, "throng round him, one after another, in the hope of receiving some alleviation through his prayers. He is constrained to escape in his wretched trap, from which, for want

of better relics, the devotees, who pursue him, have cut off little chips."

Beyond his own little country he was nobody. The very Christian Kingdom ignored him, or nearly so. However, in 1615, Alix Leclerc came to Paris; but could she speak of him otherwise than as of a pious country curé, who had undertaken, rashly enough perhaps, a work strange to the epoch, and one on which the Holy See still hesitated to pronounce an opinion? The Ursulines, yielding to the impression produced on them by the virtues of their companion of the moment, proposed to the Filles de Notre Dame to unite their two congregations. But the ultimate decision lay with their Director, Berulle, and he, more prudent than they, declared, after several days of reflection, that God did not demand the union, and they must abandon the idea. Some years later this reformer passed through Nancy; here he met with Fourier, and openly testified to what appeared great and holy to him in this humble priest. He said, "If one wishes to behold all the virtues at a single glance one must go to Lorraine, and one will find them united in the person of the Père de Mattaincourt."

Afterwards a journey on business in Lorraine, fortuitously brought the Foundress of the Visitation and the follower of St Francis de Sales face to face, at Pont-à-Mousson. It is not said that St Chantal made his acquaintance; one only knows that she met him, and that, in her turn, she said, "If I had not known his reputation, the sight of his face alone would have sufficed for me to recognise he was a saint."

Was this saint a statesman? Certainly not in the true sense of the word. His action in this respect has been exaggerated. One author, thinking of Father Joseph, and deceived by the desire of making an ingenious comparison, wished to see in him the *Éminence grise* of the Princes of Lorraine. He is not even to be compared with those Churchmen who held the office of Confessors to the Sovereign, and, at that time, imposed on absolute power, through the confessional, the only restraint it had. He was not even, as was later St Vincent de Paul to Anne of Austria, *l'inspirateur du Conseil de conscience*. At any rate he was called, on the spur of the moment, to decide both theological and political questions in circumstances where marriages made or broken could change the course of events. He thus took part in the affairs of State, but in an intermittent manner, and under protest. He was the inspired sage, who was consulted on the eve of solemn resolutions or on the morrow of great trials. Thus do bishops and priests, whom the modern spirit seeks to remove from public life, act in our own day, in France. Though usually relegated to the strict bounds of a cloister, nevertheless, at the hour of great national and social crises, they come forth from their retreat at the clarion voice of public opinion, and put into practice in the light of day, in the very heart of the struggle, that virtue of renunciation (of which they are the living models) which, in the sight of God, contributes to the redemption of empires. In like manner did Peter Fourier serve his country in troubled times, suffering

through her and for her. Whenever requisite, he upheld or reproved the princes, who defended her rights and personified her independence, with a judicious and authoritative voice.

Of that part of Fourier's life that may be called political, authentic documents are wanting. One divines the action of the personage without distinctly seeing it. Historians of the subsequent generation made little of it, and left it in the background. Subjects of Leopold, or of Stanislaus, they felt themselves at the mercy of Louis XV., and feared, in exalting the civic virtues of a faithful subject of Lorraine, to draw upon themselves—like good Dom Calmet—suspicious censure from the government at Versailles. They have been strongly suspected of having secretly destroyed certain letters of the Père de Mattaincourt, to which he made allusion, but which have never been found. We have proof that others were, at the recommendation of the author, burnt as soon as read.

By his family relationships alone Peter Fourier could have acquired influence at the court of Lorraine. His father, as has been mentioned, had received letters patent of nobility; and one of his cousins, Forget, held an appointment as doctor to the ducal family. The confidence he inspired did the rest. His devotion to the Princes of Lorraine was prompted by his faith, for these princes had shown themselves at all times the irreconcilable enemies of Protestantism. In 1617 Duke Henri II. had banished the Huguenots by statute from his States, and his brother François de Vaudémont was

the chief of the Catholic League on the banks of the Rhine. Such proofs of zeal ranged the Canons Regular, as well as the Jesuits, on the side of the cousins of the Guises, even against the very Christian Kingdom governed by a prince of the Roman Church.

Fourier had early been warned against the designs of the King of France, and he lamented the marriage of his sovereign with Henri IV.'s sister, Catherine de Bourbon (who had remained a Huguenot), as a present and future evil. Alix Leclerc, in one of the visions which haunted her, saw a cloud of winged serpents, symbol of heresy, alighting on her compatriots, and a princess cast into an abyss into which she wished to drag the rest. The *serpents* did not appear, but the new duchess died in a few years, without posterity. After her death Henri II., remarried to an Italian princess, Marguerite de Gonzague, befriended the foundations established by the Curé of Mattaincourt. Marguerite took an active interest in several of the convents of Notre Dame, and went with her daughters to attend Alix Leclerc during her last illness. Her brother-in-law Vaudémont proclaimed her to be a saint, and caused her life to be written.

A grave question, that of the succession to Lorraine, threatened to divide the patrons of Fourier and his disciples at a foreseen period. Duke Henri had no son, only two daughters, Nicole and Claude; and his brother, François de Vaudémont, had two sons, Charles and Nicolas-François. Should Nicole succeed her father, or, by the applica-

tion of the French Salic Law, should the crown pass to the Vaudémonts? Civil war was to be feared, and might, when once unchained, offer to the King of France a pretext for intervention. In 1621 a preventive settlement was arranged to reconcile the rival claims. Nicole was to marry her cousin Charles, who would acknowledge he owed the crown to his wife, and they would then govern together by one and the same right. If Nicole should die within ten years without children, Charles was to marry Claude, or if Nicole remained childless after this fixed time, Nicolas-François, then invested with the bishopric of Toul without having taken Holy Orders, was to be substituted for Charles, and, becoming son-in-law to Henri II., was to continue the dynasty. This transaction was concluded under the auspices of Father Dominique, a Carmelite friar, who had marched at the head of the Catholic army in Germany, and enjoyed great prestige at that time; but there is no doubt that the Curé of Mattaincourt was consulted. In his letters dated 28th of January, 6th of April, and 7th and 10th of May 1621, he solicited the prayers of his nuns for *Son Altesse*, and for *Madame* with regard to an affair *de très grande importance*, in fact of such importance that he repeats the words three times.

The marriage of Charles and Nicole was celebrated on the 22nd of May, not without secret designs on the side of the Vaudémonts, who had privately protested beforehand against the limits imposed on their claims.

Two years afterwards, the congregation of Notre

Sauveur was again unexpectedly invited *to do violence to Heaven* in favour of the reigning house. The son-in-law of Henri II., attacked by serious illness on his return from hunting, lay dying in a peasant's hut not far from Nancy. Courier after courier came to fetch Peter Fourier to Lunéville. He hastened thither full of anguish, full also of hope in the prayers he had addressed to Heaven, and solicited from those around him. As he entered the room the sick man—calling to mind the Gospel, which records how those who followed the Saviour, and touched the hem of His garment, returned home healed—stretched out his hand towards him. Fourier, weeping, celebrated mass at the foot of the bed; and soon the prince felt better, and was out of danger. No one doubted that the intercession of the holy Fourier had wrought this cure. "What are you saying!" he replied to those who complimented him; "I only do harm, and cause disturbance wherever I go."

This humility, so exaggerated in expression, was increased by marks of respect from his sovereign. One day when Duke Henri had been present at his mass, the duke followed him into the sacristy and asked to kiss the hand which he had held out to his nephew. He blushingly refused; and when the duke knelt and asked his benediction, he replied to him as to the pious people of Lorraine, both rich and poor, "As many masses as you like, but my benediction, never!" Whereas he was wont to say to others, "We can never pray enough for our good princes."

Nevertheless he appeared, a short time afterwards at the deathbed of Henri II., both as an intercessor appointed by Providence, and as the interpreter of the wishes of the people. On arriving at Nancy, where he had been summoned, he learnt that the Duchess Marguerite, reopening the question of the succession in an indirect manner, was contemplating a measure which would have secured Lorraine for her eldest daughter Nicole, and Barrois for her second daughter Claude. Not being able during their interview to dissuade her from this fatal project, he said, whilst putting the host upon her lips during the celebration of a mass for the recovery of the duke, "Madame, behold your God and our Judge," and the dismemberment of Lorraine was spoken of no more. After the ceremony he announced to the duchess, still kneeling before him, that Henri II. was near his end, and there was nothing more to be implored for him save resignation to the Divine Will. Six years after this he prepared François de Vaudémont, the head of the younger branch, for death (October 1622).

Under the new reign the Curé of Mattaincourt continued to be a living oracle, whom the sovereigns consulted on matters of conscience, without always taking the trouble to obey. Charles IV. and Nicole appeared to live and govern in harmony; but their co-sovereignty, like their marriage, rested on an arrangement entered into with mutual ill-will, and neither the one nor the other lasted. Charles soon considered himself to be duke, not by virtue

of his union, but by the fact of his own right. A comedy prepared in concert with his father made his dream a reality. François de Vaudémont suddenly declared he had found the hitherto undiscoverable will of René II., which was said to confirm the Salic Law in Lorraine. Armed with this apocryphal document, he summoned his son to give up his throne to him. Charles, who had been forewarned, hastened to put the crown on his father's head, and some days afterwards received it from him, this time according to the order of masculine substitution, appointed by the so-called will of René II.

Fourier had nothing to do with this intrigue (the authors of which were his friends), and it would have been very embarrassing for him to protest against it. Soon afterwards we find him giving the title of duke to François de Vaudémont. But Charles IV. was not content with excluding Nicole from power; to his political wrongs were joined others of a more private character. He had married his cousin solely from ambition, and she had accepted him from filial obedience, whilst cherishing a feeling of regret for her prior betrothal. Misunderstandings early arose between the husband and wife. Once sovereign in his own right, Charles IV. sought, by futile pretexts, to obtain the nullification of a marriage which was moreover childless. Here Fourier's authorisation would have served him better than the casuistry of the legal doctors on the question of the succession; but, do what he might, he could not obtain it. François de Vaudé-

mont went to Lunéville to see the General of the Canons, and had a conference of two hours with him. Some significant words, uttered with warmth, were overheard through the walls by the Religious in the next rooms. "Your Highness will not do that." "Yes, I shall do it. Why! who will prevent me?" "I, for it is not the will of God, and I forbid it." About this time, when some one was wishing for the duke the qualities necessary to ensure the happiness of his subjects, the courageous old man contented himself with adding, "As for me, I wish him inviolable fidelity to his dear wife."

He knew too well that Charles IV. was neither a power nor an example for a people whose independence and existence were menaced. Paladin of an Epic poem, character in a tragi-comedy, hero of a romance if you will, his conduct as a sovereign and as a man could only be called a series of caprices, of rash actions, and of regrettable palinodes. None bowed the head lower in churches and at pilgrims' shrines than he, and none carried it higher in battle; but his levity, his fantastic character, and his intrigues of gallantry brought him into discredit, in his own States or out of them, wherever his changing fortunes led him. He would come of his own accord to Fourier, and respectfully consult him, certain immediately afterwards to forget the advice he received or the promises he made. In spite of all, the people of Lorraine and the Curé of Mattaincourt never ceased to love him as the living personification of their country and its flag.

After the year 1624 it was possible to foretell the misfortunes that were about to befall the country. "The time is not far off," said Peter Fourier from his pulpit to his parishioners, "when war, pestilence, and famine will desolate the country." He advised drunkards to reserve their wine for the coming famine; and announced an impending depreciation in property to those who wished to buy houses. To his nuns he made similar menaces, telling them that God was preparing severe chastisements for those who did not amend.

First of all there came a series of epidemics that began the depopulation of the country. After 1623 there was scarcely a year in which the plague from the East, spread by the transport of armies in Germany, did not afflict some part of the territory. In 1629 and 1636 it desolated Pont-à-Mousson, and dispersed the seminary of the Canons Regular. During long months it menaced Mattaincourt, but only showed itself there in a manner relatively mild. Fourier, become once more a true pastor to the people, instigated and multiplied preservative and sanitary measures for them.

His letters also betray the anxiety which the threats of famine caused him during these painful years. The difficulty of procuring daily bread became greater every day. At Mattaincourt there was a time when two or three hundred persons were reduced to the last extremity. Besides providing food for his flock, the curé found means to send help to his neighbours at Mirecourt, esteeming that "little presents from the poor to the poor are not to be

despised." "I take pity on my parishioners," wrote this good Lorrainer to the nuns at Mirecourt, in the same strain he had formerly used in describing the great misery in the kingdom of France. "I take pity on those who love me, I take pity on widows, especially those who, in these grievous times, have children to feed; I take pity on those who weep, on the afflicted, on those whose goods are distrained by the *sergents de taille*, and on those who are in danger of being impoverished by the debts of others."

Lastly, war broke out in Lorraine, and what a war! The most atrocious perhaps that had been seen since the barbaric invasions. The scum of the Catholic and Protestant nations crossed the unhappy country. Croatians, Hungarians, Swedes, French, and Germans all vied with each other in making it a desert. It is said that in a short time six thousand inhabitants perished, a prey to the miseries which Callot has so strikingly depicted in his engravings. As a reason for not complying with the wish of the nuns, who desired his presence in France, Fourier alleged his duties as a pastor and the occupations which increased as the danger became more imminent. He would have liked to multiply the religious acts in his own life, and in the lives of his spiritual subordinates, destined before God to alleviate the sufferings of the people of Lorraine. He would have mobilised his army of penitents and suppliants in the retreats where they were dispersed; but his disciples, he owns, were sometimes refractory; and so, for the sake of patriotism as much as charity, he redoubled his own mortifications.

From 1631 there was between the Duke of Lorraine and the King of France an open and unequal struggle, scarcely interrupted by treaties, that were broken almost as soon as made. Louis XIII., or rather Cardinal Richelieu, coveted Lorraine; and Charles IV. incautiously courted a conflict. Not only did he openly side with the Catholics and the House of Austria in the war which desolated Germany for fifteen years, but, in permitting his sister Marguerite to clandestinely marry the brother of Louis XIII., head of the malcontents in the kingdom, he furnished a pretext for the invasion. During one of his sojourns in Nancy, Fourier spontaneously presented himself to the duke, pointed out to him the extremities to which his people were exposed, and ardently but vainly recommended a policy of neutrality and peace. Three months later the French army, with Louis XIII. and his minister in its midst, occupied Lorraine, and penetrated without resistance into the very walls of Nancy, hitherto reputed inviolable.

The General of the Canons then received a French captain at Lunéville, whose sister had belonged to the community of Notre Dame at Etampes, and he made use of this occasion to write a letter to the said community. In this letter the following words are to be found: "I said (before that visit) that the French soldiers, by their courage and valour alone, gave a lesson in modesty, frugality, and devotion to many others who are engaged in warfare. . . . And now, without departing from this my opinion, I add that there are good nobles who serve as a lesson to

many Religious, even to some who esteem themselves very reformed. . . . I think that a monarch bringing such distinguished men with him could never put himself in danger of doing harm to anybody."

Such interested praise of the discipline of the French did not imply adhesion to their sovereign's policy of invasion. This he showed him plainly some days afterwards, when Richelieu, wishing to know the priest who brought such great moral force to the cause of his adversaries, summoned him to St Nicolas. Perhaps the Cardinal hoped through him to inform himself of the sentiments of the Princes of Lorraine, and influence their decisions. Fourier had a strong repugnance to this interview. "His apprehension," says his old historian, "served even to change his colour and enfeeble his strength. It was, moreover, about a State affair of great importance. He nevertheless happily escaped it by silence, only opening his mouth to reply laconically, and almost in monosyllables, to the questions of this man, who had desired to see him as one of the marvels of his country, and who, not admiring such rhetoric, soon sent him away, thereby giving him the greatest pleasure he had had that day."

The interests of his religious "household" made this firm but passive and reserved attitude incumbent on Fourier. He did not wish that the Congregation of Notre Sauveur should expiate any imprudent speech or conduct of its head.—Personally he continued to be a prudent and faithful counsellor to his prince.

After the occupation of Nancy, Charles IV. and

his wife, and sister-in-law Claude, took refuge in Mirecourt, the chief town in the bailiwick of the Vosges. The following speech has been ascribed to him: "What does it matter if all the others forsake me if the Père de Mattaincourt is on my side! On the contrary, if he were not with me, I should despair of my cause."

Towards the end of 1633, the Baron de Saint-Germain came in the duke's name to Nancy, to seek the General of the Canons, and invite him to make the journey to Mirecourt. Fourier obeyed, saying to those around him, "May it please the Divine Majesty to take pity on us all, and inspire our good prince in all the resolutions that he takes, or ought to take!" These resolutions proved to be most important, and Peter Fourier appears to have been their principal instigator.

On the 6th of January 1634, he had a conference with the duke at Mirecourt, which lasted seven hours. It is impossible to know exactly what he said to him; but the events which followed make it easy to conjecture. On the 19th of the same month Charles IV. signed his abdication in favour of his brother Nicolas-François, Cardinal-Bishop of Toul, whom he believed more capable than himself of obtaining favourable conditions from France. The following day he set out for Alsace, possessing nothing but his sword, with which, like a true knight, he waged war for almost thirty years. But his successor was, like himself, without direct heirs; and his marriage with the Princess Claude, prearranged by the Convention of 1624, became a

necessity, and did in fact take place, under the most romantic circumstances, two weeks afterwards.

At the same time that Charles IV. left Lorraine, the new duke, and the princesses, threatened with being carried off from Mirecourt, took refuge in Lunéville. They hoped that Richelieu would not dare to occupy the town; however, scarcely had they entered it, when they received reliable information that the French troops would arrive that very evening. Evidently Richelieu wished to seize upon Nicole and Claude, and make them his tools and hostages. The marriage of the Cardinal with his cousin could not be put off, even for a few days. But diocesan and pontifical dispensations were necessary, on acount of impediment of relationship and non-publication of the banns, and how could they be obtained at such short notice? Fourier, whose opinion would have justified the momentous decisions imposed by circumstances, had remained at Mirecourt. In default of him Nicolas-François summoned Père Marets, Prior of the Canons of Lunéville, and exposed the situation to him. Marets, who had, without doubt, received necessary instructions from his Superior, affirmed that the Cardinal, considering the extreme emergency, could grant the dispensations to himself, which he did. That same night (8th of February) Marets blessed the marriage, in a private room in the palace.

However, Fourier, having a presentiment of what was about to take place, wrote on the 13th to one of his subordinates to recommend masses, fasts, and penances, which he regarded as profitable for the

preservation of the dynasty and nation, adding, "Next week, so they tell me, will be able to show if these special prayers have been of any avail." On the 19th he was just starting, when he was informed of the event.

Richelieu, on his side, received the news of the abdication and of the marriage with anger. He caused Marets to be pursued and arrested, and the ducal family to be conducted under a safe escort to Nancy. Nicolas-François and Claude, without consenting to the voluntary separation counselled by their gaolers, were waiting for the approval of Rome to sanction that of Fourier. This approval reached them on the 29th of March. The next day their union was again blessed; and, on the 1st of April, they escaped in disguise from Nancy, and reached the Spanish territory of Franche-Comté, after a thousand perils.

After the escape of his princes, Peter Fourier, their accomplice, lived in continual anxiety and alarm, like a man whose liberty, and perhaps life, were menaced. Knowing that he was, if not pursued, at least closely watched, he concealed himself in the Abbey of Belchamp, at some distance from Lunéville, half-way between the Novitiate and his parish. From this retreat he could correspond with his communities, and help Père Bedel in the direction of the seminary of Pont-à-Mousson, and Père Gauthier in the administration of Mattaincourt. Penitents of rank went there to seek him out, the Marquise de Ville, Mme. de Raigecourt, the Duchesse de Croy, and that warlike Canoness, Christine of Salm, who

afterwards fired upon the soldiers of Turenne at Remiremont. Through the medium of the Sœurs de Châlons, he succeeded in lightening the requisitions with which his parishioners were overwhelmed by the French soldiers in charge. He recommended prayer and economy to his Religious, both so necessary, in their different ways, in the midst of public misfortunes. Lastly, he caused it to be decided at the General Chapter of his Congregation, that the first monastery founded should be dedicated to Our Lady of Peace.

That year and the next, Fourier was still able to traverse the invaded country, making a kind of tour, which was to be a farewell visit, from one convent to another. At Metz, he presided at the profession of Mlle. de Gournay, the niece of his Bishop; and the nuns wept bitterly when he announced, like St Paul to the Christians at Ephesus, that they should see his face no more. At Verdun he had the rules of the school presented to him, and approved of them so much that he promised to circulate them wherever he went. "If we desired to converse with him, and give him extra pleasure," wrote the nuns of St Mihiel afterwards, "we had only to lead the conversation to our classes." During these trying moments St Mihiel was his favourite abode. He took refuge there several times in the monastery governed by the Mère Gante André. He occupied a cottage in the garden, which he called his "earthly Paradise," but the nuns called it "little Mattaincourt." His room was study and oratory in one. If he went down to the Sisters' parlour, he always had the shutters closed,

for fear of being seen from outside. He also charged people to omit the title of General of the Canons on the letters they addressed to him. "All that I find in my readings," he said with his hand on the Bible, "speaks to me only of war." In fact war, with its murderous surprises, was continually thundering at his door. The French Governor had a rather gentle character, and showed himself particularly favourable to Religious houses. Fourier counselled his nuns to treat him with tact, and to make presents to his wife; he himself ventured on the gift of a gilt-edged *Imitation*. A leader of the Lorraine troops suddenly making his appearance and taking the town, Fourier judged it prudent to escape. This he did two days before the French retaliated. The following year, during his last sojourn at St Mihiel, he arranged that two nuns should always, night and day, be kneeling in adoration before the Host. This idea of permanent expiation so prevalent at that time, and which had found, amongst others, fervent zealotresses in the famous Abbey of Port Royal, was about to be expressed and confirmed in Lorraine, by the institution of the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament, due to Catherine de Bar.

During the winter of 1634, which he passed at Belchamp, Fourier enjoyed comparative tranquillity and wrote much. He then composed treatises of devotion for his nuns, the *Journalier*, and *L'Esprit primitif;* and above all, surrounding himself with the results of his long experience, and carefully weighing every word, he drew up the *Grandes Constitutions*, which he destined for them.

The state of affairs, however, continued to grow worse. La Mothe, the last place remaining to Lorraine, succumbed after an heroic defence, deservedly celebrated. A Supreme Council installed at Nancy, substituted the name of Louis XIII. for that of Charles IV. in public prayers; and bound all the officials, and civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries, to an oath of fidelity. The Religious were expelled from their communities without trial, on the bare suspicion of being able to do harm. At the end of 1635, the whole country was inundated with foreigners, enemies or so-called friends, who pillaged and massacred at will. A prey, like the rest of the population, to famine, epidemics, and plunder, the nuns of Notre Dame and the Canons Regular were obliged to disperse or emigrate at the risk of perishing on the way; and their Director, in the midst of so many unseen events, dared not advise them one way or another. As for himself, fearing that he would not be able to escape from taking a political oath repugnant to his conscience, he determined to escape to a neutral country.[1]

Twice he tried to gain the Netherland frontier from Pont-à-Mousson and from St Mihiel, and found the route closed, so he turned back through the wintry snow to Mirecourt.

The nuns of that town having sent to inform him of their intention to seek a refuge in the paternal

[1] For the true motives of Fourier's departure, see the two authentic dissertations of the Abbé Deblaye: *Défense du vrai motif de la retraite de Pierre Fourrier en la ville de Gray*, and *Examen de l'histoire du B. P. Fourier*, par M. Barthélemy de Beauregard.

house of one of their number, in the fortified town of Gray, in the Franche-Comté, he replied (15th Jan. 1636): "I also should much like to be there; and it seems to me I should be happy and fortunate if I found some little post where I could act as churchwarden in a village church, or teach children to read, but not to write, for I do not write well enough to teach others; or I could even beg my bread from door to door, if I found any one willing to give it me."

On the 28th of February he set out to rejoin them, and remained some time hidden in their convent, his presence being unknown to all except the Superior. He thus avoided giving umbrage to the Bishop of Toul, always hostile to his interference in the direction of the Filles de Notre Dame, and escaped the reproaches of his parishioners, whom he had not seen for two years. But he rendered them one last service by saving their bells, requisitioned by the Governor of Lorraine at Mirecourt, to discharge some war tax.

On the 12th of April he started for the Franche-Comté, accompanied by Père Terrel, his little clerk Nicolas Demandre, and fourteen nuns. They were in three carriages, and the small caravan pushed forward with such speed that they reached Vauvillers, in Franche-Comté, the same evening. On the fourth day the fugitives entered Dampierre-sur-Saulon, having escaped a body of irregular troops which had been sent in pursuit of them. One of Fourier's nephews had gone on before, and they learnt that Gray, fearing contagion from the plague

raging in Lorraine, was rigorously closing its gates on strangers. They therefore remained in Dampierre, living their wonted life from day to day, the priest attracting the inhabitants by his simple, practical sermons, and the nuns instructing the children. On the announcement of a French invasion, they pushed forward as far as Pesmes, where the Castellan consented to give them refuge, and where they once more began their pious apostleship, in payment for the hospitality offered them.

However fresh applications were made to the magistrates of Gray, and were favourably received; a carriage was even sent to meet the fugitives. The nuns took their seats in it, and Fourier, on foot, entered the town where he was to die. Exiled for his country rather than for his faith, he could write later on with pride to the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, who was a Princess of Lorraine: "When we left the land which is yours, three years and a half ago, we brought with us into Burgundy our Lorraine hearts and souls, such as our Saviour Jesus Christ, and the place of our birth, and the good character of our fathers and mothers and their godly ancestry had made them, that is to say, quite full of the respectful and incomparable affection that all our countrymen as very humble, very obedient, and very faithful subjects bear at all times to their good princes, and also their good princesses; such is the heart of the Lorrainer!"

A hundred and fifty years later, similar misfortunes drove from this land, where the exiled Fourier had pitched his tent, one who, like himself,

was a model curé, and the founder of an Order. It was the Abbé Receveur, curate at Fontenelles, who, after having restored the knowledge and perfection of the Christian life amongst his flock, and supported the Voluntary Schools with his own money, formed, in 1789, and installed not far from his parish, a society called the *Retraite chrétienne*. This was a sort of orthodox Port Royal, where its recluses tried to revive the fervour of the primitive apostolic communities through the discipline of intellectual and manual work, and the practice of poverty, chastity, and penance. The Revolution, as formerly the war in Lorraine, scattered this elect group. Rather than take the constitutional oath, Receveur crossed the frontier, followed by his *Frères* and *Sœurs*, all of whom paid for the privilege of having escaped Jacobin tyranny, even as Fourier and his nuns before them, when exposed to the anger of Richelieu. When Receveur returned to France he became curé once more and used his powers in evangelising the uncivilised peasants of the Nivernais. We are assured that the beatification of the priest of the Franche-Comté will follow close upon the canonisation of the Lorraine priest; it will crown the same virtues, and in certain respects the same destiny.[1]

[1] See the recent work of Canon Suchet: *Vie du vénérable Antoine-Sylvestre Receveur* (Paris et Besançon, 1897), especially Chapter II., entitled, *Un curé de campagne au dix-huitième siècle.*

CHAPTER VI

FOURIER'S LAST DAYS

GRAY, now only a small town in the Haute-Saône, sunk into insignificance even in a commercial point of view, was, in 1636, one of the bulwarks of the Franche-Comté republic against the kingdom of France. Situated opposite the Burgundian plain, upon a hill washed by the indolent waters of the Saône, its sloping streets and houses, clustering around its church of Notre Dame, were encircled by walls and bastions that had remained impregnable for more than a century. Several Religious communities had recently taken root there: the Tiercelines in 1607, the Ursulines in 1622, the Annunciades in 1631; and, added to this, a miraculous Virgin, honoured by numerous pilgrimages, had just begun to be venerated at the Church of the Capuchins.

Such was the place of refuge in which the Lorraine exile passed the last four years of his life. He was separated from his parish and his spiritual children, at an age and under circumstances in which he could scarcely hope to see all that he loved again; and even in his *havre d'emprunt* he experienced, in some measure, the same trials he had endured in his native land. At least he exercised a fruitful

apostleship, and, in spite of his infirmities and daily sufferings, he found means, actively from afar, to attend to those great enterprises the burden of which he had so long taken upon himself.

Shortly after his arrival the Père de Mattaincourt settled in the upper town, in a house forming part of a mansion that had, in the days of Charles V., belonged to Gauthiot d'Ancier, a distinguished man of the province, whom his compatriots had surnamed the Little Emperor of Besançon. A tradition, now contested, makes him inhabit a tower enclosed in the convent of Notre Dame. His cell, of four mètres square, was adorned with a great sculptured chimney-piece on which the words —which offered lasting consolation to his soul— *Spes mea Deus* are still legible. On three sides of it there were little square windows, diamond paned in lead, overlooking the steeple of the church, the roofs of the houses ranged one above another on the hill, the surrounding ramparts, the river, and the dim horizon of the encircling hills. The stone staircase leading to his cell stopped on the second floor before a vast wooden cage, resembling a gigantic convent turret, and enclosing a second spiral staircase. Fourier had but to give one touch to this movable cage, to close the openings above and beneath, and thus keep away importunate visitors during the long hours that he devoted to pious exercises, study, and correspondence.

He scarcely went out except to visit the poor, or go to the neighbouring convent of the Annunciation, of which he had become the honorary chaplain.

"Those who see me," he wrote, "muffled up in my mantle, and clumsily hobbling down the street, staff in hand, followed by a little lad shuffling along, with feet swathed in knitted bandages, and slippers dangling at his heels, will say with justice, we are both in masquerade." However very soon his prestige and popularity were so great that he was everywhere greeted with unanimous signs of veneration. In vain did he try to escape, or wrap himself in his mantle: he was recognised, and the title of saint, the honour of which he had so often blushingly refused, rang once more in his ears. One day, a priest having fallen on his knees in the mud to receive his benediction, he knelt down beside him, and was the last to rise. These marks of homage only humiliated him. "If I had access or credit with God," he exclaimed, "should I not in the first place use it for myself?"

In Franche-Comté as in Lorraine, the three scourges, between which David had had to choose an expiation for Israel, were raging simultaneously. War was continually at the gates. Sometimes it was represented by the Germans and the Croatians, at others by Weimar and the Swedes, or Condé and the French; and the exile had to take his part in th alarms caused to the citizens by the frequent proximity of friendly or hostile troops. His trust in God imparted itself to all, and was justified. "Fear nothing," he would repeat, "this city is under the protection of the Mother of God, and will not be attacked." When the *mowers* of Villeroy, those savage adventurers charged to destroy the

growing crops and reduce the country by starvation, arrived, he restored courage once more by the words, afterwards proved prophetic, "The enemy will do no harm; the harvest will be good."

During the first winter Fourier spent at Gray, a violent epidemic broke out in the town. The lower quarters near the Saône were the first attacked. It was thought they could isolate the disease by cutting off communication with the upper town. The infection, however, reached the neighbourhood of the Town Hall and the Parish Church. In the general panic, with death ever in their midst, the Lorraine priest was a Providence to the people. His rôle at this time was—due proportions maintained—like that performed by Pope St Gregory the Great in Rome, or the good Bishop, St Charles Borromeo in Milan, under similar circumstances. He consoled the victims, and restored hope to those whom necessity or duty forced to brave the epidemic; and that hope, from his lips, became a miraculous promise of safety in the minds of those who had recourse to him. He drew up a memorial to the Town Council, in which he pointed out sundry precautions to be taken for health and public order. Then having, like every Lorrainer, great devotion to St Sebastian, who was formerly especially invoked in time of plague, he exhorted the people of Gray to have recourse to the intercession of that saint. On his feast-day a solemn procession left the church and made the tour of the ramparts. Fourier, invited by the magistrates and clergy, carried the Blessed Sacrament, and, at each bastion,

where a temporary altar had been prepared, he blessed the town to ward off the plague, and deliver the land from the enemy.

The Governor, Ferdinand d'Andelot, being seriously ill, sent for this servant of God, in whom he had devoted confidence. He did not beg to be cured, but asked Fourier to obtain a year's reprieve for him from Heaven. Their united prayers were granted. D'Andelot recovered his health, and only succumbed to the malady on its return, exactly a year afterwards. Several facts of this kind ended in establishing Fourier's reputation amongst the people of Gray as the master of life and death.

During the winter of 1639 the dearth became a famine. Some loads of corn introduced by stealth, and some successful marauding expeditions on the Burgundian frontier, scarcely lessened the destitution. "He is," writes Fourier, speaking of himself, "in a foreign land, where everything is extremely dear. A pound of brown bread is sold for five *gros* of your country, an egg for four *gros*, a small breast of mutton for three francs, and all other provisions in the same proportion, so that this poor miserable General, as you style him, is very worried. He thinks that he eats ten *gros* worth of bread each day; and every time he passes along the street on his way to say mass, he meets a number of poor sick people languishing with hunger, some lying on the pavement quite naked, others on a little straw. And he often sees bodies of men, who have died during the night without any assistance or consolation whatever—for they fear the plague here!

These daily sights of woe afflict him deeply; and looking into his own heart he is emboldened to resolve, prepare, and even condemn himself to pass some day through the same tribulations, believing that he has merited them a million times more than these poor people, . . . and that the high prices, and the present and increasing dearth of gold and silver to buy food, will soon reduce him to this deplorable state. He sees no other means of escaping it except by one day quitting the land in which he is. . . ."

He thought for a time of a second exile, which would at least have procured him a little tranquillity, to the peaceful republic of Valais, a remote nook in the Alps, where he would have found one of the most ancient and celebrated abbeys of the Canons Regular, that of St Maurice; but his health had become so feeble that he was obliged to renounce the project. As for returning to Lorraine in his character of political emigrant, exposed to French vengeance, he could not dream of doing so. His disciples, imperfectly acquainted with the real motive of his departure, recalled him to themselves with "affectionate reproaches"; and he excused himself on account of his health, and the difficulties and dangers of such a journey.

His correspondence shows that he was constantly with them in thought, doing his best to relieve their distress, which was so like his own that he based his exhortations to resignation and hope on the lessons he had himself learned.

From Mattaincourt he received nothing but bad

news. The village was quite disfigured *ès personnes, ès biens, ès bâtiments.* The church had suffered the presence of heretic preachers, and plunderers had sought for booty even in the coffins under the sanctuary. The unhappy inhabitants, at the end of their resources, would have liked to borrow at Toul, on the security of the Canons Regular of that town. But Fourier, considering himself henceforth more bound to his congregation than his parish, refused to authorise the transaction, though he made ample apologies to those to whom he had formerly administered. A short time afterwards he eagerly seized an opportunity of rendering them a service, by intervening in favour of the mayor, who had been falsely accused of failing in the discharge of his duties.

In spite of these events, the Congregation of Notre Dame continued to increase, and many new communities were established every year in France as well as in Lorraine. It is even worthy of note that they found their warmest welcome in the Franche-Comté, where none of their Houses of Retreat were to last. The little colony installed at Luxeuil existed there only a few years. The refugee nuns in Gray —most of them old—were badly lodged, and eked out a scanty subsistence by loans and alms; yet, when they were obliged to change their dwelling, they demanded as a cloistered order to be driven to their new abode. "On foot! on foot! in the name of God!" their Director hastened to write to them. "It is a mockery, a new kind of I know not what bigotry to pretend to be so conscientious about the

cloister as to go this little journey in a carriage, for fear of seeing and of being seen!"

Without overlooking such puerile details, Fourier anxiously followed the progress of that conflict in the very heart of the congregation, the beginning of which he had seen in Lorraine. The first companions of Alix Leclerc had all disappeared, except Gante André, who lived until 1645. Old or new, near or far from Gray, the communities tended more and more to separate themselves into two camps—those who continued to have confidence in their holy Founder, and those who, as time advanced, escaped more or less openly from his direction, either by closing their doors to the Canons Regular, or by repudiating the constitutions he designed for them, before they were even completed. The latter, about fifty in number, was the larger camp. Only a dozen at most were docile, and some amongst these lived under the jurisdiction of bishops hostile to Fourier's opinions. In the depths of the hearts of the refractory there was certainly, apart from the respect towards their Directors, or immediate Superiors, an unconscious leaven of jealousy with regard to those Religious who had robbed them of a part of the time and solicitude of the first Father of their souls.

With them Fourier showed himself reserved, answering their letters only in self-defence, not wishing to appear to approve of them, or fearing to be denounced to the Bishops. Writing to others, he treated them with severity. "Libertines," he said of the Sisters of Dieuze, "who have never

learnt humility, nor true conformity to their Order, nor taken any account of us, nor wished to listen to us when it was fine weather. . . . And now that it rains in their house . . . I received a few days ago a complimentary letter from them, but I know them well. We must keep our bread for our own."

His goodness triumphing he always ended by sharing it, if an opportunity occurred. Thus he did his best to uphold the canons, but hinted to them not to mention his name in certain monasteries. "Nothing that comes from us savours of good to those nuns or their Superiors, but everything you take from the reverend Fathers of the very holy Society of Jesus will always be approved of God."

Unbroken harmony existed amongst the Canons of Notre Sauveur, but their ruin seemed imminent. Of the hundred members or so who had composed the thriving congregation, quite half had disappeared, victims to the plague or dispersed abroad and amongst their relatives. The largest group at Lunéville did not exceed a dozen. They were over head and ears in debt, and loans were difficult to obtain.

Tidings of the death of Père Marets, the Vicar of the General in Lorraine, reached Gray at the same time as the news of the Swedes having set fire to the Abbey of Belchamp. From Gray, Fourier made unsuccessful attempts to introduce his monks (thus rendered houseless) at Montbenoît, in Franche-Comté, and at Oulx in Dauphiné. Some of them reached as far as the Valais, where the people did not seem disposed to receive the Sisters of Notre

Dame in their train. Two of the monks, however, were endowed with benefices by their brethren of the Abbey of St Maurice; and their founder sent them, under the form of a letter, an excellent treatise on parochial administration, in which he made a sketch of his own life, utilising the results of his long experience.

Perhaps the congregation would have surmounted the perils of the time had it accepted the propositions that came to it from Paris. The Canons of St Geneviève asked for an interview with Fourier, in which the union of the two Orders was to be negotiated. They offered to meet him more than half-way; but it would have been yielding to a nation at that time their enemy, and the spirit of the General, Lorraine to the core, made him decline both the project and the interview. He showed as much humility as skill in this refusal, saying "he did not wish to present to the eyes of his French brethren a *malotru décrepité*, a *piteux mal-allant*." Putting his patriotism on one side, he was obliged to go rather far in adroit diplomacy towards the invader of his country. He found it necessary to send one of his Religious, Père Roland de Villers, to the Court of France, to solicit the approbation of the king—who claimed to have the right of nomination to the Lorraine benefices—on behalf of the Prior of Domèvre. Father Villers was charged at the same time to excuse the retreat of his Superior into Comté, and to make it pass for a journey necessitated by a project for a monastic establishment in that country. Thanks to the Jesuits Bauny and Sirmond, who had

known Fourier at Pont-à-Mousson, he had an audience with the Queen, Anne of Austria.[1] This princess interrogated him with pious curiosity. "You are a disciple of the Père de Mattaincourt? They say everywhere that he is a saint. What does he do?" Then, as if she would have liked to estrange this faithful counsellor from Charles IV. just as negotiations for peace with Lorraine were broached, she added: "You would render good service to the king and to me, if you brought him to us." And before the cradle of her new-born babe, afterwards Louis XIV.: "If you cannot persuade him to come to France, you can, at least, commend the king and the Dauphin to his prayers."

It is not known if Fourier was informed of the sentiments and proposals of Anne of Austria; in any case he would have received them, as he received the idea of a return to Lorraine, with objections about the perils of such a journey. The august stranger no doubt touched him more, in relieving the miseries of his countrymen by the hands of St Vincent de Paul. The priest from the Landes, who held the same office in the very Christian kingdom as the curé of Mattaincourt in Lorraine, thus became his auxiliary without knowing it. He was some years younger, but their lives present many wonderful analogies, explained, however, by the

[1] Father Villers, one of the witnesses in the process of beatification, affirmed that he had this interview with the Queen-Mother, Marie de Medicis, who was at the time near death and in exile; and all Fourier's historians have repeated his assertion. His memory, however, evidently deceived him: it must have been with the Queen-Regent.

fact that they were both inspired with the same spirit of humility and charity. Both of them fulfilled the duties of parish priests, at the same time devoting themselves to the foundation of two congregations, one for men and the other for women; both revived religious life by making it expand outside the cloister in service to children and the poor; both practised humility by disowning the university titles they had acquired, and self-contempt to the degree of saying they had done "nothing but evil," or of speaking of "the abomination of their lives"; both died with the same words of trust upon their lips, and both were canonised almost at the same time. Vincent de Paul was in reality another Fourier when he gave alms and consolation in Lorraine through the medium of his priests.

Besides the essentially political apostles that Richelieu had sent to preach humble resignation to French dominion from the pulpit, Lazarists, who had come from Paris, travelled about the duchy in every direction, giving away considerable sums of money. They fed the poor, distributed clothes and tools, received the victims of the war into their houses, and founded a special charity in France in behalf of Lorraine gentlemen who had emigrated, or been driven from their country. They continued these good works for some years. As early as 1640 M. Vincent, holding in his hand a packet of letters, in which the priests belonging to his mission depicted the excesses of the conquerors, and the sufferings of the conquered, fell upon his knees before Richelieu, uttering the single word, "Peace! peace!" His

entreaties were vain; but whether they were made known to Fourier or not, they at least before God, in the name of charity and peace, reconciled France and Lorraine in two souls worthy of each other.

Fourier had only been at Gray a little while when Charles IV., transformed into a Spanish captain, passed through it on his way to relieve Dole, which was hemmed in by the French. He did not fail to kneel before the servant of God, to ask for his benediction and all-powerful prayers both for himself and his army. The old man, touched at seeing him on his knees before him, exclaimed, "Address yourself to God, and not to a humble sinner such as I." No one seemed to understand, and one of his Religious thought it best to exclaim aloud, "Father, obey His Highness." He did so, but without making the sign of the cross, and imploring the benediction of Heaven for himself as well as for those around him. Some weeks later, on his return from his successful campaign, Charles IV. again passed through Gray, receiving the congratulations of his faithful subject, and publicly acknowledging the share he had in the victory by calling to mind his patriotic prayers.

After his abdication the Lorraine prince was nothing but a soldier, displaying his military tastes and talents at will, but renouncing neither his antipathies nor his passions. His wife Nicole, from whom he had been parted for several years, was still a prisoner in France; and the duke thought of her no more except when trying to get her consent to a divorce. Having fallen in love at Besançon with a beautiful widow, Beatrix de Cusance, Princess

of Cantecroix, he conceived the idea of demanding of some complaisant casuists a legal opinion against the validity of his marriage with Nicole. His confessor, the Jesuit Cheminot, composed a memorial which was approved of by thirteen other theologians; but the authority *par excellence* to be obtained was that of Peter Fourier. The duke went to Gray to visit his future sister-in-law, a novice at the Visitation; but he dared not plead his own cause himself, he sent Cheminot and his colleague Abram, both Lorrainers, and friends of the Père de Mattaincourt. At first Fourier feigned to believe the question had been taken to high quarters. "Has the prince at least a dispensation from the Holy See?" "It is not necessary; besides, the present state of affairs does not allow of making such a delay." "Ah! unhappy prince!" said Fourier, sighing; and as his opponents, carrying the debate on to other ground, vaunted the virtues of Mme. de Cantecroix, he added, "In truth these are excellent perfections; it is a pity that His Highness has another wife." "But, at least, will you not recognise His Highness as a virtuous man? Will you not attest in writing that you hold him as such?" "I will attest that he ought to be nothing more." Having thus civilly refused these ambassadors, it was his turn to attempt a counter-negotiation. Terrel was sent by him to Besançon, to intreat Charles IV. to wait at least for a dispensation from Rome. Then he himself went, making the journey for the same purpose. He was received with the greatest deference; but it was too late. A com-

plaisant priest had secretly bestowed the marriage blessing upon the duke and Beatrix. Forget, the cousin of the aged saint, was one of the witnesses.[1]

In the month of November of the same year, Charles IV. fell ill at Belvoir, in a castle in the mountains of the Jura, belonging to Beatrix. The recluse of Gray went to see him; and, at the bedside of the prince, met Cheminot once more, who protested that they had no hope save in him. They had disdained his advice, but they continued to solicit his prayers. Fourier celebrated Mass before Charles IV., and gave him hopes that he would soon re-enter his capital through the breach made by his cannons. Health returned, and Fourier appeared a second time to the people of Lorraine as the saviour of a sovereign who had become, in spite of his faults and misfortunes, more popular than ever. But the old priest repudiated this. "It is a mere fable, invented by some one who is making sport of me," he said humbly again and again. At all events he had not obtained the dismissal of Mme. de Cantecroix, whose boldness urged her to go so far as to converse with him on sacred subjects, and even to steal his rosary. Fourier claimed the rosary from the duke in a few words that said more than long reproaches. "It was Madame (the Duchesse Nicole) who gave it me."

Charles, on his return to the country the following spring, visited his spiritual protector to thank him once again. He was accompanied by Beatrix, who

[1] L. Pingaud Beatrix de Cusance (*Mémoires de la Soc. d'Emulation du Doubs*, 1875).

also came to the Lorraine priest, in the steadfast hope of causing him to relent, and of being received by him as a legitimate wife and sovereign. He received her with as much coldness as respect, only replied to her eloquence by significant silence; and when she went away did not attend her farther than the door of his room. Charles IV. bore him no malice for this behaviour, and near or far, continued to give him proofs of affectionate veneration. He wrote one day that being in much distress, and in great need of the holy Father's prayers, he had caused some of his things to be sold, designing the money thus raised for him and his Religious, expecting their prayers in return. "Blessed is he who is separated from it (the world) and in a place where he has nothing to do but say his rosary. I hope that you will say yours for me, and that you will love me." Fourier did even more for his prince; in his reply he lavished praises on him, the evident exaggeration of which could only be justified by the circumstances, that were of a nature to exalt his devotion and patriotism. At heart he knew that he was bound to a forlorn cause, even before going into exile, and that all return to fortune depended on the will of the conqueror.

The memory of his home and country refreshed his imagination and coloured his style in many a page of his last letters. Thus, commenting on the tree mentioned in the Gospel, which ought to bear good fruit, he spoke of the vine, and enumerated the different wines that it produces. Those of Lorraine held the first rank; next, doubtless out of courtesy,

came the wines of Artois, and last of all were French and Spanish. In addition to this, of his own accord, he strengthened those family ties from which he had formerly tried to free himself, in order more rigorously to follow the call of the Divine Master. The nephew who had gone before him into Comté, continued to travel in behalf of his business, sometimes towards Geneva and sometimes towards Lorraine.

"Go without hurry, putting your trust in God," he wrote to him, "and next to the fear of the Lord, esteem nothing so much as health, preferable to all the wealth in the world." He sent to his brother Jacques' widow expressing his undying sorrow; and, whilst giving her practical advice about the education of her young family, almost apologised for his reserve in the past. "It is innate in us, and, as it were, hereditary in our family to love each other perfectly, as did our pious ancestors before us."

He continued to write almost till the end, and his doctor received some pages from him "on the holy education that fathers and mothers owe to their children," not many hours before his death. The ruling passion of his life dominated even to the last, and made him not only write but act. His exiled nuns once more became teachers by his side, and he told them with the same conviction as formerly that "there is nothing greater and more divine than to instruct gratuitously. . . . The nuns . . . perform in that the office of angels."[1]

[1] *Exercices du P. Terrel*, xxviii., *Méditation.*

Some months before his death he was able to resume his favourite task. There was at Gray a school called the college, which the misfortunes of the times had reduced to about a score of pupils, and, the Premonstratensians having just abandoned it, the Canons Regular, only too happy to get a monthly salary and free lodgings for teaching, were substituted in their place. Fourier and his three companions in exile devoted themselves to the work. He reserved the youngest scholars for himself, the *abécédaires ;* for, like our great Gerson, in his old age the Lorraine Apostle used his remaining strength in training up little children and in leading them to the feet of Christ.

At the same time he put the last touches to his favourite work, the *True Constitutions of the Filles de Notre Dame.* These *Constitutions,* at which he worked six years, sending portions of it in instalments to certain communities, are divided into six parts, forming one complete volume. The Preface, beginning with these words, " Harken, Daughter of Our Lady," is an exhortation in a rather diffuse, but naïve and graceful style, to that perfect nun who, in his imagination, was to ensure the life of the congregation. He knew that most of the monasteries judged this new legislation to be superfluous, so the excessive work he imposed on himself in writing it can only be explained by the thought that he hoped to live long enough to make it accepted by all.

During the spring and summer of 1638 he had severely suffered from the infirmities of old age. In the middle of October 1640 he was attacked by

fever; and, feeling that he would not recover, he spent the two months of life that remained to him, in putting all his affairs into perfect order. He made a fourth correction of the proofs of the *Great Constitutions*. Then he addressed a copy of it to Mirecourt, begging that this supreme expression of his thought and will, might be sent to the principal monasteries. On the morning of his death he was heard saying, "I do not consider as nuns those who do not receive and obey them."

It was thought at one time that he would die on the feast of St Nicolas, the Patron of Lorraine; but he lived forty-eight hours afterwards. Parts of the *Imitation*, and the Life and Death of St Augustine, were read aloud at intervals. The Superior of the Jesuits at Gray came to visit him; and three Canons, representing the Congregation of Notre Sauveur were near him all the time; one of them administered the viaticum. He recommended to each personally, fraternal union, humility, the spirit of prudence and prayer, and hatred of "*souplesses, duplicités et surprises*."

At his request those who surrounded him during his agony repeated, "We have a good Master, and a good Mistress." With these sentiments of confidence in the Saviour and Our Lady—the two patrons of his spiritual families—he entered into the "*demeurance royale et bien heureuse*" towards which he had been travelling and toiling for seventy-five years. It was the nineteenth of December, at half-past eleven at night.

Just at that moment the sentinels on guard on

the ramparts saw a globe of fire rise from the town, soar over it, and then retreat in the direction of the north. Everyone believed it to be the soul of the exile, going in a visible form to visit his beloved Lorraine once more, before quitting this world.

The next day the bells tolled to announce public mourning, as at the death of an archbishop or governor. A fervent desire to go and kneel at his coffin was unanimous. For three days, from the environs as well as from the town itself, there was one continual procession of pilgrims. It was necessary to place guards to prevent the mutilations or thefts inspired by enthusiastic piety. After the obsequies, and the funeral oration pronounced by Père Terrel, the body was placed provisionally in a vault in the parochial church.

In our century another great Religious, Lacordaire, exiled from the pulpit of Notre Dame de Paris, went to bury himself in a retreat where he sought in the service of young and unsophisticated souls to forget the sharp close conflicts of his life and the ingratitude of man. But when the hand of death touched him his merits and good deeds were brought once more to the full light of day. At his funeral, one of those who had been present during his last illness involuntarily uttered the naïve expression of public gratitude and Christian veneration, which, at Fourier's death in 1640, had been on the lips of everyone at Gray. "We had a king and we have lost him!"[1]

[1] This speech, uttered by an old woman of Sorèze, has been inserted by Montalembert, in the first page of his book on Lacordaire.

CHAPTER VII

POSTHUMOUS FAME. FOUNDATIONS

WE all know the proverb, Men pass, deeds remain. In order to find its application in this case we must reverse the terms. The foundations of Peter Fourier have sustained great vicissitudes after his death and have only partly survived him. The renown of the Founder on the other hand did till the day when he canonically received that title of saint, which his contemporaries, those of the scholar of Pont-à-Mousson, and those of the exile, vied in bestowing on him.

At the time of his death, the Congregation of Notre Dame was suffering not only from external events, but also from internal disputes. Most of the monasteries, ignoring or misunderstanding the spiritual testament of the *Saint Père* decided to adhere to the legislation of 1617. The refractory communities protested against two innovations, the observance of the two simple vows, which guaranteed the perfect observation of the cloister and of poverty, and the institution of a visitor chosen from the Canons Regular. According to the opponents, the first was the cause of a continual growth of expense, the second infringed on the jurisdiction of the Ordinaries for the benefit of the Congregation

of Notre Sauveur. We see that the so-called constitutional quarrels, so frequent in our modern states, were also in former times an evil to the Church. At Verdun the nuns desired to follow the special rule which the Jesuit Lebrun had established for them and which Fourier had approved by letter. Under cover of this approbation, several important points were modified. At Nancy and elsewhere the example of the Jansenists was followed in the discussing of texts. The Great Constitutions they said were not authentic, they were more the work of Père Terrel than of their supposed author. The nuns of Charonne threw the copies that they had received into the fire, a strange proceeding in a convent, where they prided themselves on having extinguished a fire by throwing a letter of the legislator of the congregation into the flames. A new fire broke out which destroyed the convent and was regarded as a punishment from Heaven.

The Canons Regular, however, anxious above all to bring back the Filles de Notre Dame to the spirit of union and obedience, endeavoured to obtain from the Holy See for the Great Constitutions a complete and efficacious consecration suppressing all private interpretation and making them obligatory. They did not succeed, and after one year's often discouraging negotiations, the deputies had to content themselves with a mere brief of approbation. Differences of opinion continued on the part of the bishops, as well as on that of the nuns. The communities of the diocese of Toul which said they rejected the statutes out of respect for the episcopal

authority eluded it the day their acceptance was imposed on them.

Certain French bishops, amongst others Noailles at Châlons and Coislin at Metz, out of mistrust to the Lorraine visitor, maintained the legislation of 1617 in the monasteries dependent on their jurisdiction.

Although the authority of the Great Constitutions was discussed in the beginning of our century, they finished by forcing the entrance of all the communities. Even at the time of the beatification of Fourier they were corrected and approved article by article in Rome. A brief was prepared to exhort the irreconcilable to submit to them. Why did they disappear, and why did the brief never reach its destination? This is a point that will never be explained.

A book appeared at that time called *La Conduite de la Providence dans l'établissement de la Congregation de Notre Dame*, its object was to persuade all communities to live according to the tenor and spirit of the Great Constitutions. In fact the institution of a Visitor-General did not succeed well. The spirit of Peter Fourier did not fully survive in any one of his brethren, but the unity of the order was maintained by the authority which had remained intact, by his writings and example, as well as by the unanimous respect professed for his memory.

Numerous institutions were created after his death, no less than eighteen during the fifteen years which followed his death, and almost as many in the

Netherlands and in the South of Germany from 1660-1789.

In the latter year, within and beyond the frontiers of France, the Congregation was said to number about ninety houses.

Here and there the "Congrégantines" showed themselves refractory, not only against certain articles of their rule, but also against the Bull *Unigenitus*, and the indomitable spirit of the "Augustines" of Port Royal was again revived in some of them. "The Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques," the organ of the Jansenist party, relates the disputes of certain convents with certain bishops, particularly at Troyes, Nemours, Etampes and Paris. They show orders to force the cloisters under cover of "lettre de cachet," nuns deprived of the sacraments are carried off by the "Maréchaussée," in one word, the divers incidents of this chronicle, which in the time of the deacon Paris excited the clergy and the parliamentary burghers and gave malicious pleasure to the new-born group of philosophers and free-thinkers.

The absence of a mother house and of central direction was the cause that Lorraine, when she was no longer an independent nation, ceased to be the principal home of the Congregation. This superiority, dependent on opinion, which the souvenirs of the primitive age seemed to attribute to the monasteries of Nancy and St Mihiel, was dying out, it is especially in Paris and at Versailles that we must follow those who, in the language of the eighteenth century, were called "les Filles de la Congrégation."

The monastery of Paris, of which the foundations had been laid in 1634, not far from the Hôtel de Guise, was transferred in the next century to the Montagne Sainte-Génévière, near the Canons Regular of the French reform.

The description is to be found in a book, where we least expect to find it in the "Mémoires de Madame Roland." The future Egeria of the Gironde, when she was but Manon Philipon, daughter of a city engraver, entered here as a boarder at the age of eleven, in 1765.

In a few lines, more exact than respectful, she traces the spirit and organization of this establishment. The house was respectable, the order not very austere, the nuns in consequence were said to have none of those excesses and mummeries which characterized them in general, their profession was to instruct the young. They had day-schools or schools for the people, whom they taught gratuitously in order to fulfil their vows; a special room was reserved for these, they had besides a boarding-school for young girls, whose education had been entrusted to them. We have two vivid portraits of two nuns, Mère Sainte-Sophie and Mère Sainte-Agathe. The former, who "had also a beautiful handwriting, made magnificent embroidery and gave lessons in spelling," was certainly a mistress after the heart of St Fourier. Madame Roland describes in the same graphic manner her first night in the dormitory, the reception of a novice, the arrival of the faithful friends of her youth, Mesdemoiselles Carmet, and on the eve of her

death, with no other vision beyond the scaffold but that of the dumb God of Jean Jacques, she adds: "I should have to retrace too many similar sights, if I wished to recall all those, that youthful piety has engraven in my heart."

The convent of Versailles has also an interesting origin. The daughter of Stanislas Leczinski had in Alsace learnt to know and esteem the nuns of Notre Dame, and when she became queen of France she loved to visit them at Compiègne, whenever she took up her abode in that royal residence. Later on she even wished them to move to Versailles; the materials of the Château de Clagny (the residence of Madame de Montespan) served for the building of the new monastery. After Marie Leczinska's death her daughters continued her good works. Louis XV. provided the funds for the chapel and granted the nuns of Peter Fourier an annual income of 40,000 livres. In December 1772 the community and the school were definitely established. The price of board was but 200 livres for the daughters of officers of the palace of the king or the princes, a shelter at a moderate price was also opened in this house for the daughters and wives attached to the royal service, and gratuitous teaching was secured for the girls of Versailles and neighbourhood. The architect of the buildings was Lorrain Mique. The Abbé Berger, the chaplain and the first religious apologist of his times, was also a Lorrainer, his birthplace being Darney.

The nuns of Notre Dame survived old France as they had survived Lorraine. Few renounced their

vows, but none perished on the scaffold. Those in Paris continued their educational work in the cloister. Even before the Concordat they had returned to their old home. In 1807 they bought the old Cistercian house of the Abbaye au Bois in the Rue de Sévres. Two other monasteries, that are still as flourishing, were founded, Les Oiseaux at the corner of the Rue de Sévres and the Boulevard des Invalides, the other La Roule on the right bank of the Seine in the Faubourg St Honore, now Avenue Hoche.[1] At "Les Oiseaux" the re-established Society of Jesus enjoys the same influence which it exercised over the first communities of the Congregation. During the Restoration the History of Mère Marie de Jésus, a penitent of Père Ronsin, is a reproduction of that of Marguerite M. Alacoque, the penitent of Père de la Colombière at the end of the seventeenth century. The idea of consecrating France to the Sacred Heart had originated at the visitation of Paray le Monial, and this idea which met with as little favour in the reign of Louis XVIII. as in that of Louis XIV. was realized in an unforeseen manner in the National Vow of 1870. The monastery of Les Oiseaux was one of the principal centres of the ever-increasing devotion to the Sacred Heart. Its church was the first in France placed under the invocation of the Sacred Heart, and the monthly exercise of this name had its origin there.

To the edifying souvenirs attached to the Abbaye

[1] *Translator's Note.*—Owing to the *Loi des Associations* of July 1904 all these Convent Schools are now closed.

aux Bois, circumstances have added a profaner one, that of Madame Récamier. During thirty years this old friend of Chateaubriand received, in one of the suites of apartments attached to the community, the élite of literary and political society.

These three houses, which are at the same time three teaching establishments, have continued to flourish until our days with pupils principally recruited from the higher classes. The institute has also taken root in the regions, where it formerly prospered, in Normandy and in Champagne. It is found in Lorraine at Mattaincourt, near the tomb of its founder (1836), at Verdun 1839, at Lunéville 1880, at Epinal 1857, lastly at Gray at the house where Peter Fourier is supposed to have lived; it also spread its branches in Alsace, the Netherlands and Catholic Germany. That which in France was called the Congregation is now often called by its Parisian name "Les Oiseaux," but as formerly the only bond which unites all these independent communities is no other than that of a charitable confraternity. Forgetting the petty quarrels of the past, they follow the Great Constitutions as closely as possible, except in the changes prescribed or accepted by the bishops, and which the age has necessitated, more especially in that which concerns the development of popular education. The Canons Regular of Notre Dame have been less fortunate and have not survived the French Revolution.

Hardly established, it had to endure trials of divers kinds: the ill-disguised hatred of certain bishops, the powerful rivalry of the Society of Jesus, the

calamity of the French invasion, and above all the death of the man, whose spirit had inspired and sustained it. Peter Fourier left but a mere sketch of the final constitutions, but his spirit survived forty years in the three generals who succeeded him, Lemulier, Terrel and Etienne, who had known him, and who were inspired by the examples and confidence which he had given them.

In Lorraine the congregation only occupied the two abbeys of Chaumouzey and Autrey, to which the reformer had been unable to obtain access, but no new house was founded, and even that of St Pierremont was to disappear in the middle of the following century. The General took up his residence successively at Lunéville and Pont-à-Mousson. Every year he summoned the Diet, and every three years the Chapter General of the Order.

In the somewhat limited sphere of their action, the *Forériens* were engaged, according to the intentions of their master, in teaching and in the exercise of sacerdotal duties. In 1646 we see them at the college of St Mihiel, where during forty years they had the control of the great seminary of Verdun. In the Vosges they built the house for missionaries of which Fourier had laid the foundations, at Nancy they constructed another "in the form of a hospital" under the protection of Duke Leopold, and in 1789 they were at the head of more than a hundred parishes.

The local character of their organization did harm to their external expansion.

From afar their General appeared to the ecclesi-

astical and civil authorities as a foreign power. The negotiations, which had been opened here and there, with the view of gaining certain monasteries over to the reform, failed everywhere, except in the famous Abbey of St Maurice in the Valais, and even here the union was but temporary. The only permanent colony was the one founded after the first invasion of Lorraine. At the foot of the Alps, at Aosta they governed for more than a century, 1643-1745, the College St Bening. More than two hundred Religious stayed there until the time that they became French subjects, when they were forced, on account of local jealousies and the threats from the Sardinian Government, to give up their place to the native clergy.

However their presence at Metz and Strasburg (in each town they had charge of a parish and a college) united them early to the Church of France and imbued them with the spirit which prevailed in it. That is to say, we find traces among them of Jansenist doctrine and Gallican ideas. In the library of a Canon, the Père George, Fourier's last secretary, the *Augustinus* of the Bishop of Ypres was discovered; and in the correspondence of another person, a letter addressed to *Messieurs* de Port Royal was also found. Others hazarded in their theological examinations propositions contaminated with Jansenism, and the directors of the seminary of Toul were evicted by the bishop under similar imputations. In vain did the General twice proclaim the orthodoxy of the congregation, confirmed besides by an earnest and solemn adherence to the bull *Unigenitus*.

Neither Jansenism nor Protestantism had a footing in Lorraine, even in monasteries under the protection of St Augustine. The Canons Regular, however, remained *suspects* by a portion of the clergy, solely because they had not unconditionally accepted the direction of the Society of Jesus. It was in vain that they kept on such correct and even cordial terms with the Jesuits even to the point of incurring the reproaches of Coislin, Bishop of Metz. The common people considered them, for the same reason as the Doctrinarians and the Oratorians as their secret rivals, and this opinion seemed justified when after the fall of the Jesuits, the Canons received a part of their heritage.

At this time Lorraine passed under the direct rule of Louis XIV. Gallicanism was at that time one of the articles of the traditional constitution of the French, and the Canons Regular in their turn accepted it with all its servitude, as one of the conditions of their existence. They allowed the Government to annul twice in succession the election of the General. In the preceding year they had commenced in the presence of a royal commissioner a revision of their constitutions. The *Summarium* of 1622 was consigned to the Archives, as containing obsolete and inapplicable prescriptions. In the new code, entered at the Parliament of Nancy and Metz, an important part, a whole chapter in twenty-four articles, concerns educational questions. The Canons, on the whole, adopt the educational methods of the Jesuits, which they correct by the results of their own experience.

Thus in their college at Metz they had established side by side with the so-called classical instruction, an instruction which we should now call modern or professional founded on science, modern languages, history and national geography.

They were first called to replace the Society of Jesus in missions founded by King Stanislas in the colleges of Bouquenom, Epinal and Nancy, and in 1776 the War Office entrusted to them the military school which had been established at Pont-à-Mousson in the buildings of the University transferred to Nancy. It was a college where the Government placed about fifty pupils, younger sons, bursars of the king and destined for the army. Amongst the young men who studied there on the eve of the Revolution we notice Duroc, the confidential friend of Napoleon I.; de Serre, minister of Louis XVIII.; Admiral de Rigny and General Fabvier, who, each in his way, was to contribute to the liberation of Greece.[1]

In devoting themselves chiefly to the education of the young, the Canons Regular seemed to regain their primitive spirit, the one that Peter Fourier had

[1] "Of all the military schools the best was undoubtedly that of Pont-à-Mousson. . . . The superior Ruell, a scholar and a man of tact, animated and stimulated his world. All the class-rooms, the refectories where the canons dined at the same table as the children, the recreation grounds, the dormitories, excited the admiration of the Inspector. The children were distinguished by their excellent behaviour and polite manners. The professors of mathematics received praise from the examiner Laplace." (A. Chuquet, *La jeunesse de Napoléon*, pp. 97, 98.) *Cf.* Favier, *Notice sur l'école royale militaire de Pont-à-Mousson*, 2e édition, Nancy, 1896

wished to leave them as their principal patrimony. The era of decadence however, and that of an irremediable decadence had arrived. The erudite works of the Benedictines had no attraction for them, the only traces of such are the works of the Pères Piart and d'Hangest dedicated to the memory of their holy Founder. Being forced to recruit in haste professors for their new institution, they received many novices of doubtful vocation. Those who had already frequented as chaplains the court of Stanislas were imbued with the philosophical spirit of the day. Their general Pillerel, who had died in 1769, had been to them a model of monastic virtues. His successor, de Saintignon, an ambitious, worldly old sceptic, was the wilful cause of the ruin of the congregation. In describing him the Abbé Chatrian, in his manuscript notes,[1] has well defined the moral situation of the *Forériens* on the eve of 1789. "We may judge," he says, "the character of the man by the following trait. In 176... he had paid a visit to the monasteries of his order engaged in education. In order to gain the good-will of all the young fops, or *bandérolistes*, he did not scruple to tell them that they were not monks, that they might call themselves Monsieur and even Monsieur l'Abbé, they were as much fitted for secular benefices as the secular clergy themselves, that they might make their profession with certain conditions or restric-

[1] These notes, which contain a complete history of the Lorraine clergy at the time of the Revolution, belong to the library of the great seminary of Nancy. I owe the communication of the following extracts to the kindness of M. l'Abbé Jérome, professor of history in this establishment.

tions, and lastly, he did not fail to tell them that the congregation had in perspective some hundred livings to offer them.

"This same gentleman, having become General in 1772, showed so little esteem for those of his brethren who had any special disposition for the holy ministry, or who had long worked with zeal and success, that he gave the livings of his congregation only to dandies who made impious speeches at Nancy, philosophical phrases and sermons crammed with mathematical terms. All the best posts were bestowed on prigs, who ought to have been sent back to the noviciate. If any young priest showed signs of zeal and piety he was sure to say, 'He is only fit for a country priest.'"

Under this direction, the majority of the Religious was composed of elegant and curled abbés, who frequented the drawing-rooms and paid insipid compliments to the ladies, or else of *missionnaires phraseurs* who had to be dragged to the confessional like culprits to the scaffold. The best amongst the young priests were but indifferent men, more bent on the formation of the mind than on the edification of souls. The Order had on the whole fallen lower than it was at the time when Fourier began his reform. At Belchamp, of which Boufflers the libertine song-writer was commendatory abbot, the whole community in 1788 forgot the abstinence of Lent, and on the register of expenses of the following year we find written down *pêle-mêle*: 100 livres for a billiard cloth, 31 livres 17 sous and 6 deniers for twelve bottles of

Kirsch, and 100 livres for the subscription to the *Journal des Débats*. A few old ones alone kept the disregarded traditions in silence and sorrow. "Père de Saintignon," Chatrian writes, "has gone to Belchamp on a visit to Père Petitjean, who, old and infirm, has gone there to die." The Father, having asked and obtained a favour of his General, expressed the wish to see the congregation in its former state, as it could not be recognised in its present condition. The Abbé Domèvre turned on his heel and arranged his curls, but made no answer.

On the eve of 1789 the Forériens, numbering about three hundred, were dispersed in the five Lorraine dioceses, and in those of Trèves, Strasburg, and Besançon, in the quality of Religious, professors, chaplains, curés, and parish priests. The most populous house, Pont-à-Mousson, only numbered twenty Canons. Such, however, was the popularity which the congregation had been able to keep on account of its origin, that the municipalities of Lunéville and Pont-à-Mousson protested against the decree which included their colleges in the ruin of the Religious Orders. The Canons, following the downward slope, according to the spirit of the times, swore fidelity to the civil constitution of the clergy. The sole *jureurs* of Nancy were the chief professors of the college; at Lunéville twelve out of fifteen seceded.

The last General, de Saintignon, died in 1796, having long since laid aside, together with his ecclesiastical garb, the sentiments and belief of his first estate. We might mention that in the depart-

ment of the Meurthe four Canons at the most, two of whom were Constitutional retractants, suffered for their faith deportation to the prison-ships or to Guiana.

The life of some was prolonged far into our century. A contemporary writer has described with emotion, from souvenirs of his childhood, one who may be called the last of the spiritual and intellectual sons of Peter Fourier. This Religious, whose name was Laillet, had taught with distinction mathematics at the military school and at the communal college of Pont-à-Mousson. When the hour struck for his retreat, says Charaux, the professor, true to his souvenirs, obtained permission to occupy, in the right wing of the college, a modest suite of rooms, to which had been joined a garden, detached from the vast courtyard. For a long time the tall and handsome old man was seen, almost at the same hours, walking slowly in the company of another Religious, Père Godefrin, a distinguished naturalist who had shared with him the lot of happy and evil days. Later, Père Laillet, as he was still called, took his walks alone, his friend having preceded him into a better world. At length, the burden of old age becoming heavier and heavier, he was seen, but only rarely, in a small carriage driven by a kind neighbour. During the last years of his life his thoughts seemed to be wholly centred on God and on the account which he would soon have to give of his long career. The thought of His judgments appalled this soul, so faithful, however, to his duty. At length he regained a profound peace,

the prelude of that perfect peace into which he entered on the 13th of May 1844, aged 87.[1] Towards 1850 a professor of the great seminary of Verdun, the Abbé Vauterot, with a few priests round him, conceived the project of re-establishing the Canons Regular. The Pope approved them (July 28th, 1857), but he only granted them the title of clerks. The Canons of St Maurice presided at their noviciate, and the Bishop of Verdun received their profession. Their number has hardly increased since. They have formed three communities: the House of retreat at Notre Dame de Benoîte-Vaux, the House of Sainte Claire at Verdun, and a more recent one at Epinal, besides having the management of two parishes. If amongst these the Père Rogie had not, historically speaking, taken in hand the cause of Peter Fourier, if he had not become his biographer and publisher, they would be ignored in the contemporary Church. The memory alone of the saint they have chosen as model and legislator lends to their institute a shadow of life.

Such is the development which the foundations of Fourier have had since the seventeenth century. Of the two branches which he grafted on the monastic tree, the first has withered and the second bears but rarely new branches. The thought which united and vivified them, the apostolate of teaching, has

[1] Ch. Charaux, *La Cité chrétienne*, Dialogues et récits, 2nd part, pp. 134, 135. M. Maggiolo writes in 1885: "As professor in 1830 at the College of Lunéville, I had as colleague a novice of the Canons Regular. He was as learned as he was pious. He often spoke to me of the college, of which he cherished the best remembrance." (*Mem. de l'Acad. de Stanislas, an* 1885, p. 451.)

spread in the Church, but by other initiatives. One has tried to see in Fourier a great precursor as regards primary instruction, and to place him, at least by priority of age, above the modern masters of rationalistic and democratic pedagogy. It is certain that he regarded the popular schools as a social power. "Nothing is better," he says, "not only according to Luther, but especially according to the Fathers of the Council of Trent, than to educate the young, for the young are the hope of the republic." He thought it his duty to confide that task to new-comers, neophytes, or *repentants* of the regular clergy; but having to contend, at the very beginning of his work, with the necessities of his time and the prevailing opinions of the ecclesiastical body, he was forced to modify his plans. The *filles congrégées*, whom, as curé, he had wished to instruct the village girls, subject to the traditional rules of the monastic life, have settled in towns and villages, where they are almost exclusively engaged in the education of the middle classes. Likewise the Canons, in whom, according to Fourier's naïve way of expressing himself, he wished to find *abécédaires*, and who, barely tolerated by religious authority, have been transformed during their comparatively short existence into college teachers.

It was only in the following century that the idea of Fourier bore all its fruit, and, to quote only what happened in Lorraine, it really inspired those obscure propagators of instruction in the country who are named successively: Vatelot, the Canon of Toul, founder of the Sœurs de la Doctrine chrétienne

(1700); Abbé Moye de Betting, founder of the Sœurs de la Providence or de Portieux (1760); the ex-Benedictine Fréchard, the founder of the so-called Frères de Vézelise (1822), rivals of the disciples of De La Salle. In our century the Congregation of Notre Dame has not regained its primitive force of expansion, and a part of its destined scholars have gone to younger institutions, subject to a more centralised authority.

But the primitive spirit of Fourier has at least awakened in various places the creation of Third Orders of teachers. The one of which Munich is the centre, dates from 1833, and has spread its schools, not only in Germany, but also in England and America. Another Third Order, not less flourishing, has been founded in Bohemia. From the convent at Moulins a third has sprung up, destined to the instruction of the people, and we may go back as far as Fourier to find its model. And indeed it was Marguerite Bourgeois, Superior of the monastery of Troyes, who founded, in 1650, the first colonial schools in La Nouvelle France.

CHAPTER VIII

POSTHUMOUS LIFE AND FAME

IN whatever place Peter Fourier had left any traces of his presence, the love and admiration he had inspired during his life was but increased after his death. Amongst his parishioners and compatriots he remained the object of a veneration which anticipated the honours officially conferred by the Church.

In France, however, with the exception of the houses founded by his spiritual daughters, he seems to have remained unknown, or rather wilfully forgotten. This village priest, who had silently resisted the Cardinal Duke, was, politically speaking, a defeated man, or at least a stranger; the Gallican Church pretended to ignore him, and not one of the orators or writers who have rendered it illustrious in the reign of Louis XIV. has mentioned his name. St Francis de Sales, a subject of the Dukes of Savoy, had at least studied and preached in Paris; he had made his appearance at the Court of Henri IV., and published books that were an honour to French genius. But Peter Fourier, whose fame had not spread beyond his own country, and who had only written for the edification of his penitents, was, so to say, despised and out of favour

with the courtiers, men of letters, and even with the ecclesiastics. Bossuet himself, who had been Canon of Metz since 1640, never found an opportunity of mentioning this priest, whose name he must have heard in his youth.

It was otherwise beyond the borders of the kingdom, in Franche-Comté and Lorraine. There his popularity not only survived him, but it increased after his death; it was manifested by a jealous emulation in outward tokens of respect, and gave rise to long and singular conflicts. We may say that this man of peace had, like his Divine Master, been "set for a sign of contradiction in Israel."

He was hardly dead, when, at Gray, those who had followed him into exile and those who had given him hospitality, began to contend for his remains, just as in the days when the people of Tours and Poitiers strove with each other in claiming the body of St Martin, and as when France stole the body of St Benedict from Italy. "It is ours," said the Graylois; "the tree must lie where it falls; it is a treasure which Providence has sent us; we will not part with it." "If he went to you," replied the Canons Regular, "it was through necessity: his corpse belongs to his children, not to his hosts." Father Terrel then invoked in their name the intervention of Charles IV. "I will do what lies in my power at the Court of the Infanta" (then Regent of the Netherlands and the Franche-Comté), replied the latter, "but the gentlemen of Burgundy are often very obstinate."

Negotiations became inevitable, and at the end of

five months the Graylois gave up their claims on condition that they might keep the heart and viscera of him, whom in their turn they had learnt to call "Saint Père"; and from that time they bore testimony in divers ways to their veneration for him. Local history relates the misdeed of a well-known person, who became a thief through devotion to the saint, and stole from the parish church a reliquary containing his heart; he concealed it in his house and refused to give it back till he was compelled to do so at the summons of the magistrates.

In the eighteenth century the Graylois placed their schools and their charity, called "the bouillon des pauvres," under the patronage of their late benefactor. Thus in the spring of 1641 the body of Peter Fourier was removed from its temporary tomb and carried back in triumph to Lorraine. It was to repose in the seminary of Pont-à-Mousson, the principal house of the Congregation of Our Saviour. Wherever the funeral train passed, the clergy and the faithful came out in procession to meet it, and each night an incessant pilgrimage was kept up to the church where it was stationed. Several sick persons presented themselves, and on returning declared they were healed.

Passing near Mirecourt, Father Terrel consented to make a circuit as far as that town, and to conduct thither the nuns who had come with him from the Franche-Comté. Mattaincourt lay on the way, and the body of Fourier re-entered his former parish church on the 1st of April in the evening. He

was borne on men's shoulders to the sanctuary, through the streets which he came to bless once more. There, as in other places, people remained through the night in prayer, the doors having been left open. They were closed the following morning, when the funeral journey was to be resumed. Men and women declared vociferously that their curé, having been given back to them, should remain in their midst in spite of all.

The Canons first invoked the support of Charles IV. against the Vosgian peasants, and the duke, whom the events of the war had brought to Epinal, issued two ordinances (on the 27th of April and the 26th of May 1641), ordering that the General should be restored to the Congregation of Our Saviour, and authorising the use of force in case of resistance. When this measure was about to be put into execution, they found themselves at Mattaincourt in the presence of a crowd of children and women standing sentry, the latter, to quote Bedel, sparing neither abuse, reproaches, nor anything that natural eloquence, animated by zeal and passion, can produce.

A third and a fourth ordinance remained a dead letter. The soldiers then marched forth. At their approach the alarm was given, and "at the sound of the tocsin," says Bedel, "four hundred people were seen pouring into the church, encircling the balustrades with iron chains to protect their treasure, at the same time calling down vengeance on their aggressors and imploring the clemency of the deceased." He who had commanded the attack, seeing that nothing could be gained without force,

wondered if he ought to charge such a population; but who would have allowed it? The relic, thus recovered, did not remain long before the high altar. That same year the frail peace concluded between France and Lorraine was broken, and the body of Fourier was hastily interred beneath the great crucifix which separated the choir from the nave, so as to hide it from the designs of the Canons and the profanations of the soldiers. When the danger was past, a monument with an inscription was raised on this improvised tomb, and the visits to the revered body, which have hardly ceased up to our days, and the extraordinary miracles recommenced. On the Feast of St Peter in 1682, the number of pilgrims was estimated at five thousand.

Amongst the devotees of this modern saint figures, in 1662, "La Femme de Campagne" of Charles IV. After having heard that her union with the Lorraine prince had been declared illegal by the Holy See, Mme. de Cantecroix, at the death of Nicole, once more regained hope, and hearing that the duke was at Mirecourt, assiduous in his courtship to a young Canoness of Poussey, Isabelle de Ludres, she hastened to Besançon in order to put an end to an intrigue which, it was believed, would finish by a marriage. She stopped at Mattaincourt, and wrote from there a beseeching letter to Charles IV., conjuring him to acknowledge their marriage and have it renewed, if the Church thought necessary, so as to make their children legitimate. At the same time she made a formal opposition before the ecclesiastical authorities to his announced union with the beautiful De Ludres.

Charles IV. not only invoked the censures formerly pronounced against them, to prevent their marriage, but was solemnly betrothed to the Canoness—though he forgot her soon after—and he also intimated to Mme. de Cantecroix an order to return to Franche-Comté. In her despair she went to pray at the tomb of the holy man who had once stopped her at the door of his cell. She hung a lamp before his shrine, hoping from afar to move Charles by the intercession of the saint. She learnt soon after that the mother of Isabelle de Ludres had recalled her daughter, and that the duke had abandoned every thought of his new marriage. When, a year later, on her deathbed at Besançon, she laid her hand for the nuptial benediction into that of Charles's proxy, and became for a few hours the legitimate Duchess of Lorraine, she might well believe that her prayers had been granted for the second time.

The Canons Regular, however, would not at first submit and give up the mortal remains of their Founder to the Vosgian peasants. And then began the long trial between them and the parish of Mattaincourt. It lasted nearly a century, and was, on account of the subtleties of procedure, carried on at Toul, Metz, Trèves, Rome, and Paris, before the official authorities, before the Dukes of Lorraine and the Kings of France. At Mattaincourt the Canons were at once offered the custody of the venerated body, but the congregation, laden with debts, delayed, on account of the expense it would entail, to accept this new decision. The municipality, on its side not less encumbered with debt, wished to exploit the pilgrim-

age to such an extent that they pawned the pilgrims' ex-voto. The conflict was prolonged till 1732. A contract was signed granting the Canons a purely formal satisfaction, that is a declaration of reversionary interest in their favour. The usufruct, the possession of the body, remained with their adversaries.

When this debate ended, Fourier, declared Venerable in 1679, had recently in Rome received the honours of beatification. The Canons thus had a satisfaction which they had prepared and followed up. The memory of the illustrious Religious was surrounded both in Germany and in the Austrian States with a certain popularity. There his *vray pourtraict* was everywhere to be seen, a reproduction of a sketch, more or less modified, taken unknown to him, through a window during the latter part of his life.[1] As to his letters and writings, they were kept in various places as relics. Lemullier collected them for the examination of the Holy See, and Terrel prepared the Introduction of the Cause. One knows how long inquiries of this kind last, and what considerable expense they entail. There were seventeen judicial informations by the Ordinary and the Holy See. The debates on Fourier, on the *héroïcité* of his virtues, the authenticity of his miracles, on the

[1] Non minus diversis in S. Augustini canoniis germanica resplenduit canonicorum praesulum erga B. Patrem religio. . . . Hinc quam plurimæ variæque Beati icones. . . ." *Imago Boni Parochi*, Nanc., 1731, pp. vi. vii. *Cf.* dans la *Revue nouvelle d'Alsace-Lorraine* (an. 1886-87) l'article intitulé les *Médailles du B. P. Fourier*, par A. Benoit, et *l'Iconographie du B. P. Fourier*, par l'Abbé Deblaye (Neufchâteau, 1877).

doctrine in his works, which had to be translated into Italian, were prolonged for more than half a century. More than four hundred witnesses were heard, more than two hundred supernatural facts were certified on oath, and nine retained and approved. To the steps taken by the nuns of Notre Dame were added the entreaties of the whole Lorraine clergy, secular and regular; of Cardinal de Retz, relegated to Commercy, of Duke Charles V., exiled in Vienna; and lastly those of Duke Leopold, who had been restored to his people in 1707.

The brief of beatification having been published on the 10th of January 1730, the usual ceremony was presided over a few days later in the Basilica of St Peter by Benedict XIII. The feast of the newly beatified Fourier was fixed for the 7th of July, and a chapel was consecrated to him in the national church of St Nicolas des Lorrains.

His glory was celebrated by gorgeous ceremonies, especially in the churches where he had passed; all the ecclesiastical luxury of the age was displayed, such as pictures, emblems, illuminations, choirs of music, and panegyrics. At Mattaincourt his bones were exhumed, recognised, and laid in the shrine which was enclosed by a grating with three keys, one for the General of the Canons and the two others for the curé and the mayor. The Duchess-Regent, Elizabeth, widow of Leopold and niece of Louis XIV., came with her children to venerate them. It was on the eve of those events that were to destroy the independence of the country. The young duke, Francis III., had already set out for the

Court of Austria, whence he was never to return. The enthusiasm with which his mother was welcomed at the tomb of Fourier had its source as much in patriotic as in religious feeling. Underlying the honours conferred on the new saint was a sentiment of love for a country that he had ardently cherished, and which was about to be forsaken by its national dynasty and vanish from history. The title awarded to Fourier was the last homage paid by the Church Universal to that Christian Lorraine which had played its part for many centuries in the religious history of the Gauls.

During the Revolution the body of Fourier was spared; the pilgrims knelt in the churchyard round the closed church before the tree and the fountain sacred to his memory. In Rome he seems to have been forgotten. At St Nicolas des Lorrains, where the clergy of St Louis des Français came to officiate on his feast-day, the picture which represented him disappeared.

From 1830, at the *début* of the Catholic Religious Renaissance, the memory of Fourier was again revived in devout souls, and the road to his tomb was trodden by crowds of pilgrims, miracles were proclaimed and ex-voto multiplied. This return of religious popularity dates from the centenary of his beatification, which was celebrated with great pomp at Mattaincourt. From that time the curé Hadol devoted all his energy and funds to rebuilding the church and erecting a monument worthy of his predecessor. The new Gothic edifice was not consecrated till 1854. On that occasion

the Père Lacordaire pronounced before an imposing audience the panegyric of the Blessed Fourier. Like his hero, he understood the grandeur and practised the austerities of the monastic life; in imitation of him he purposed to revive his religious family by the work of teaching; and it was in Lorraine that he had placed the first Convent of his Order newly re-established in France. Accordingly, he saluted in Fourier both the monk and the educator; but always haunted by classical recollections, he at the same time attributed to him the soul of a Roman Consul. With his superficial knowledge of history and preconceived notions on "the mission of the French nation," he pronounced, *à propos* of Richelieu, words which shocked the retrospective patriotism of one part of his audience, and the text in his works, printed under the name of Fourier, is but a retouched and amended copy of the original.

The new church, replacing the one where the saint had officiated and preached, has been constantly embellished up to our day. Elsewhere too and wherever he had passed, researches were made for traces of him, and his memory, hallowed by inscriptions, statues, and paintings, proofs of public gratitude, shone forth afresh after two centuries with greater lustre than ever.

To-day at Pont-à-Mousson, we are shown, in the Rue du Camp, the house where he dwelt as a student, and the cell which he occupied in the first convent of the Canons of the Reform. At Mirecourt the house with his father's workshop is to be

seen, and at Gray the upper chamber in which he is said to have lived during the latter part of his life. At Badonviller is the fountain of the Petit-Mont, which is supposed to have miraculously gushed out of the earth at his bidding. There and elsewhere he has been awarded the homage due to a saint, besides those temporal honours which our age lavishes on those whom it wishes to exalt. At Mirecourt, a memorial tablet has been put on the house where Fourier was born, and in the neighbouring square a marble statue was erected in 1892, on a fountain bearing the double-cross of Lorraine. At Gray there are likewise two, one over a fountain and the other in the court of the monastery of Notre Dame. At Badonviller, the painting over the high altar represents him in discussion with the Lutherans at Chamouzy, where the ruins of the Abbaye have now almost disappeared; he is seen on a bas-relief in the parish church, preaching to the people; here and there he is represented in stained glass windows, amongst which we may mention one in the chapel of the Congregation in the College of St Clement of Metz, as a remarkable production of native art.[1]

Homage of a different kind, and which would have given greater satisfaction to his humility, was the placing of works, similar to those that he had maintained, under his protection. One small parish, now situated at the extreme frontier, Cirey les Forges, chose the curé of Mattaincourt for its

[1] Chérot, S.J., De Pont-à-Mousson à Gray, par Mattaincourt (dans les études religieuses, 1897).

patron in the last century. In our days he has become the patron of an ecclesiastical college in Lunéville, and also of the societies of apprentices at Pont-à-Mousson.

A singular testimony of high esteem and filial veneration was awarded him by his compatriots. A great many families are to-day proud of their connection with him, whether through ancestors in common or through his brother Jean who alone left issue. Thus Peter Fourier has, in spite of himself, since his death, been a cause of pride to his relatives. He had condemned this beforehand one day when a certain connection of the family, congratulated himself on being so closely allied to a man universally considered a saint. "The Father," says Bedel, "took him by the shoulder, turned him out of the parlour, calling out the whole way, 'Flatterer, fie! the flatterer!' then hastily shut the door after him." It was all in vain; similar claims were frequently repeated and the list, printed by Père Rogie, of families related to the Curé de Mattaincourt, contains more than a hundred names and is not complete. Suffice it to mention the two eminent men, who in the last century bore his name and became famous. One of them, the son of a tailor at Auxerre, a mathematician, and eminent scientist, a Member of the French Academy and of the Academy of Science, and prefect of the Isère and the Rhone under Napoleon I., was proud of proclaiming his relationship to the Lorraine saint. The other, born at Besançon, was a political and religious Utopian; in his childhood his mother would hold up

Fourier, his ancestor, as an example to imitate. The inspirer of the "Fouriéristes" offers a complete contrast to the reformer of the "Forériens." The inventor of the theory of the four movements and of the phalanstery has constructed his system on the conception of the legitimate power of the human passions, and amongst the passions, he has especially cultivated, is the one that his pious namesake most hated, for he loudly promised (he has told us so in bad verse) to his ashes higher glory than to those of the most renowned warriors. He has nevertheless fixed his attention with that of a man wishing to reform society according to his own views, on the education of youth, and more than one detail in his most chimerical plans seems like a parody on the thoughts and methods of the great Christian Teacher.[1]

Thus prominent in the social history of his province, Peter Fourier has just missed being so in the literary history of France. In 1580 the Abbé Chapia published his life in two volumes, the first composed from original documents. With the help of skilfully chosen quotations, he shows us his hero in the light of a distinguished administrator, a blameless religious and a writer, who showed both subtlety of mind and delicacy of style. He believed that he had discovered in him an unknown rival of St Francis of Sales.

No doubt the brilliant pupil of Pont-à-Mousson, the scholar, who was well versed in the best writings of the sacred and profane authors, could have, had he so wished, taken his place among those ecclesiastics

[1] See in *La Vie apologétique de Charles Fourier*, published in 1871 by Dr Pellarin, the curious chapter entitled—*The Three Fouriers.*

who had contributed so much, under the first three Bourbons, to the glory of the French tongue.

In his numerous writings a certain number of pages have been discovered of a nature to make us regret his absence of literary ambition. His letters in general are addressed to nuns and are written for the sake of edification or else they treat of everyday business. He wished above all to express himself naïvely, simply and clearly. When writing to men of the world, to influential and powerful persons, he remembers that a certain art is necessary in order to make them understand the importance of his intention or of the cause he is defending. He is guarded in his expressions and takes more time in weighing than in choosing them; it is innocent diplomacy, and not the coquetry of a writer. He cares not for literary glory, and uses his pen, for the good of souls, between two meditations. He dreads "philautie" or amour propre, which, he says, is dangerous and subtle and easily adheres to the fingers of those who meddle with writing. When he perchance strews compliments on his path, he lets those that seem exaggerated pass under cover of higher authority than his own. For instance, when he thanks Charles IV. for I forget what present, he borrows words from a text of St Paul, and to testify the same sentiment to a benefactress of his congregation, Madame de Maillane, he shields himself under the name of his patron Saint Augustine: "Where I sometimes put these two words, Your Ladyship, he would have written these other two: Your Holiness."

He has, however, even in letters written with no pretention, a style peculiar to himself, an instinctive rhetoric. I am not alluding to words now obsolete; "*superbité*" which is more Ciceronian than pride, there is a slight difference between "*échéler*" and "*escalader*," and "*emflamber*" may sound quainter than "*emflammer*." He is fond of diminutives, and his use of synonyms is often exhaustive when he wishes to impress the meaning of a certain word, at other times he will not scruple to repeat the same expression, for instance, he writes in a certain political letter, as a means of insistence, *un million de fois* fifteen times. He likes to personify inanimate objects such as a musket-ball, a library, a sacristy. He holds a colloquy with his pen and when dying he told his doctor that he had been having a dialogue with his fever, "we talked," he said, "and discussed together."

He has, as we see, like the Bishop of Geneva, a lively imagination, but St Francis of Sales never forgets his offerings to his beloved rhetoric. Fourier less intent on eloquence, despises what is pretty and ornate, he prefers to express himself clearly to decking his thoughts with flowers, he lets fall as it comes a striking comparison or a picturesque trait. To some nuns, to whom he wishes to recommend silent obedience, he writes: "If you see a person with a toad on his head you would be terrified. Any murmur in the mouth of a religious is comparatively still more hideous and strange." He also writes to a benefactress, whose charity he does not wish to see diminished: "the oftener one draws

water from a good well, the better and healthier it becomes and the purer and fresher its water, but if it is left alone and undisturbed, it will get useless and putrid."

Elsewhere, in a moment of humility, he calls his own instructions mouldy crusts of barley or oat-meal bread, and if perchance he copies some pages out of the mystic writings of St Francis of Sales, he strips them of the flowers with which the author has adorned them, as superfluous ornaments. "He uses words," to quote Fénélon, "only to express his thought, and thought only for truth and virtue." The literary fragrance, which pervades and envelops this thought in him, exists for the disinterested reader who will read with pleasure after two centuries such or such a page, which was written only for a present need and afterwards destined to oblivion.

More than one hundred years had passed since the beatification of the Lothringian Curé, when the letters applying for canonization were handed over to the Congregation of Rites in 1845. It was owing to the initiative of a priest of Vosgian origin, the Abbé Lacroix, *clerc national* of France, in Rome. This prelate, when making researches in the archives of St Nicolas des Lorrains, had found papers testifying to the consecration of an altar to the Blessed Fourier, and he afterwards discovered, in a corner of the sacristy of the same church, his image, which had been dethroned forty years previously. When the picture had been restored to its first destination, Abbé Lacroix succeeded in interesting Cardinal

Matthieu, Archbishop of Besançon, the Metropolitan of ancient Lorraine, in the cause of canonization. Fresh transactions commenced, which like the first lasted more than fifty years.

During the long series of canonical informations, Mattaincourt became the most frequented sanctuary in the east of France.

At the jubilee in 1861 it was visited by no less than a hundred thousand pilgrims. Nevertheless the spirit which had of old excited a contest at the tomb of the "good Father," "between his parishioners and the Canons was again revived with the veneration of the faithful. Monseigneur de Briey, Bishop of St Dié, a former Vicar-general of Cardinal Pie, Bishop of Poitiers, had contrived to call to Mattaincourt to guard the relics of the beatified priest, not the clerks regular of Verdun, but the Italian Canons of St John of the Lateran, he had even renounced in their favour his right of nominating the parish priest. In November 1877, Father Mariani presented himself, first as chaplain to the convent of Notre Dame, and in the following year he was at the head of a canonically erected abbey. But, like the Bishop he had not foreseen the opposition of the majority of the inhabitants and of the intervention of the Ministère des Cultes." In the heat of the struggle the Mayor closed the doors of the church for several days.[1] A new bishop, Monseigneur Sonnois, thought that in compliance with the Government he

[1] See the debate which took place on this occasion at the Senate between M. Buffet and M. Constans, ministre de l'intérieur (Journal Officiel du 30 juin 1891).

ought to name a parish priest, although the foreign Canons had bound themselves beforehand to yield, in case of main force. Being exposed to the hostility of the diocesan clergy they thought it necessary to appeal to Rome, who decided in their favour, but she was unable to give back to them the actual possession of the parish and the church of Mattaincourt. Church and State, canon law and French administrative law, local patriotism and party spirit resisted each other even as formerly and yet retain their positions at the foot of a tomb revered by all.

As in the seventeenth century, so in our times the glory of Peter Fourier has continued to increase in the midst of these petty disputes. The miraculous facts, essential in every cause of canonization, were recognised in two monasteries of Notre Dame. At the Abbaye au Bois in 1868, and at Strasburg in 1897, Pope Leo XIII. certified their authenticity, and on Ascension Day, the 27th of May 1898, the supreme apotheosis took place within the Basilica of St Peter in Rome,[1] where his colossal statue in Carrara marble will soon be raised amongst those of the Founders and heads of religious orders. By these honours conferred on Peter Fourier, the church has exalted Christian charity towards our neighbour, that charity which has God for its source and end. "Those," says Leo XIII. after having invoked the authority of St John and St Thomas Aquinas, "who separate the

[1] The Pontifical Bull canonized at the same time as Peter Fourier, the Founder of another teaching congregation, Father Zaccaria, a Milanese.

love of our neighbour from that of the Supreme Good, and who substitute for charity, I know not what kind of philanthropy, deny the final object of mankind which is God. They strive to annihilate the merit of actions sprung from higher motives. A deplorable and fatal tendency has crept in concerning the means of procuring the happiness of our neighbour. Spiritual benefits are despised, or at least they are not preferred to those which concern body and mind, the so-called material interests. Christian doctrine is quite different; and this is shown even better than by texts in the examples of saints, and especially in his whom the Church celebrates to-day. . . ."

Thus portrayed before the eyes of the faithful, Peter Fourier remains, even to others who are indifferent to his religious and supernatural virtues, an educator and a patriot. He repeats with authority in the nineteenth century what he said to those of his own day. The formation of youth will or will not be Christian; and he spoke in this sense to the Lorrainers of that time in such a way that the France of to-day proclaims him to be an "esprit supérieur" whom none has preceded or surpassed in the work of popular education.[1]

He was besides a good citizen of his country and of the society in which he lived. The beatification of 1730 was addressed to the celebrated Lorraine patriot

[1] Lettre de M. Boulay de la Meurthe, quoted by le P. Rogie, L. III. p. 289 (note). M. Boulay de la Meurthe, vice-president of the second French Republic, was the son of the Conseiller d'Etat of the first empire, born at Chaumouzey in the Vosges.

at the time when Lorraine was soon to cease to be a nation; the canonization of 1898 honours the ancient Lorrainers, now incorporated in the great French family. In the past they struggled for their independence and showed loyalty to their sovereigns, the Curé de Mattaincourt setting them the example, but this courageous devotion to the old country has become in consequence of new misfortunes a virtue in their fatherland of to-day. Lorraine, conquered by France in the seventeenth century, has in the nineteenth paid the ransom of France after the German invasion, and in the present trials she will find fruitful lessons at the tomb of her new saint. From one end of the country to the other, monuments of public piety are raised to the great Vosgian of former times which protest, as in the heroic days of Catholic resistance to German Protestantism, against the insolent spire of the *Garnison-Kirche* in Metz. On both sides of the boundary-line, which in Lorraine now separates the conquerors from the conquered of 1870, the new saint from the altars, on which he has been raised, continues to speak to his compatriots of faith and hope.

APPENDIX I

A CANON CURÉ IN LORRAINE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE Abbé Chatrian, in his manuscripts, preserved in the great seminary of Nancy, has drawn an interesting portrait of a curé Canon Regular. On comparing this portrait with the traditional one of the Good Father of Mattaincourt we see that even when the Congregation of Notre Sauveur had fallen into a state of irremediable decay, the primitive spirit of Fourier, the zeal in closely following his example as curé, still existed in his Institute and country.

"The Reverend Father Gaudet, Canon Regular, now dead, having been regretted, esteemed, and venerated by all who knew him, we think it our duty to make particular mention of him in our pages.

"He was born at Lunéville of respectable tradespeople. His mother, who had early been left a widow with two sons and one daughter, spared no pains in giving them an excellent education. She sent her sons to the Royal College of Saint Simon at Metz, then in high repute for its teaching and the religious sentiments which it inculcated in its scholars. The superior and all its masters were men of merit, filled with a high sense of their mission.

"Scarcely had young Gaudet spent some time there than he gained the friendship of his masters by his gentleness, diligence, and progress in study as well as by his piety. The Prior and the Canons Regular of this house, having no doubt about his vocation for the ecclesiastical life, and considering him in all points a valuable subject, proposed to him to enter their order. Penetrated with gratitude to his masters, who bestowed on him every possible care, and edified him as much by example as instruction, he accepted the offer with joy and made his profession at Pont-à Mousson in the year 17 . . .

"As he had passed with distinction the first part of his studies, he had no sooner finished his course of philosophy and theology than, although a mere deacon, he was employed in the direction of the College of Toul, and he continued ever since to aid the congregation which had adopted and educated him.

"In 17 . . . he was appointed Curé of Raon-les-Leau. This parish had nothing that could incite cupidity ; the income consisted of a modest income and some accessories which, in all, amounted to 600 livres. The church, which resembled an old barn, hardly possessed the necessaries for saying mass. As to the presbytery, it was in a wretched condition, and afforded no shelter against wind and rain. The garden was spacious but uncultivated, and his predecessor had cut down the fruit-trees for fuel. What was to be done under such circumstances, and where was he to begin, especially in a country where three-fourths of the inhabitants were plunged in misery and were themselves in need of help? The sad state of this parish was a touching sight to his sensitive heart ; he hoped that Providence, who had placed him there, would provide what was needed. First of all he supplied his church with what was most urgent, but in spite of the great help that he received from his own family he was obliged to revert to loans for the numerous expenses and the rebuilding of the presbytery. He himself dug his garden and made this place, after but a few years, the most agreeable in the neighbourhood, as well as the most profitable, all his parishioners being allowed to take the vegetables they needed.

"The way in which the R. P. Gaudet ruled his parish is a picture of all the pastoral virtues. Full of love to his parishioners, he gave special proof thereof to the poor and sick, whom he frequently visited, and to whom he distributed according to their wants, relief, consolation, and instruction. Were there division in a family he would endeavour to prevent unhappy consequences and make peace. His charity extended to the poor of the adjoining parishes, whom want compelled to seek help elsewhere ; he refused nobody and gave bread or money according to choice. Being strictly economical towards himself, he was enabled to attend to everybody, and even sometimes show himself prodigal in his liberality. He was besides aided in his pious designs by charitable persons, and it was remarked that the more he gave the more Divine Providence enabled him to give.

"The inhabitants were on his arrival extremely ignorant, and had for the most part no notion of religion. Père Gaudet spared no effort in remedying so disastrous an evil. On every Sunday and Feast-day he had public prayer at 7 A.M. in his church. He afterwards read a short instruction for the day, to which he added some reflections of his own. He preached at the parish mass at nine. At one in the afternoon, catechism, which began and ended with hymns, then vespers, with an instruction in form of catechism to the children, whom he was preparing for their first communion. At 7 P.M. evening prayer, the life of a saint, followed by an exhortation. The days which were specially dedicated to our Lord were also kept solemn.

"His conduct in the confessional was full of kindness and gentleness, but he would suffer no infraction of the rules prescribed by the Church for the reconciliation of penitents. His exactitude in this respect made him esteemed and sought after by men who were seriously concerned about their salvation.

"Great numbers came from neighbouring parishes to seek his counsel. No human consideration could make him deviate from the lines traced by the holy Canons. Some froward parishioners, having leagued together to write to Toul and charge him with severity, our curé for his justification wrote to the Bishop with such moderation, firmness, and insight, that the prelate, satisfied with the Father curé's reasons, promised to act in concert with him so as to bring back the parishioners, who claimed admission to the sacraments without true amendment of life.

"He did much both for the temporal and spiritual welfare of his parish. He raised the income of his living to 1500 livres, which enabled him to establish gratuitous schools both for boys and girls. He also founded an institution for the sick, and procured them necessary help. He decorated his church and provided it with ornaments. He spent thirty-four years at Raon, continually occupied in good works, showing by his example how much influence the choice of a good curé may have upon the temporal happiness of a people.

"Seeing himself threatened with dropsy in 178 . . ., and having no more strength to fulfil his duties as heretofore, he simply and humbly sent in his resignation to his bishop, and withdrew to the Abbey of Domèvre, on which his parish was dependent. The inhabitants were intensely grieved on seeing him ascend the pulpit

for the last time; he announced to them with sorrow that his age and infirmities no longer permitted him to remain at their head. They were all moved to tears, even those who had been unfriendly towards him seemed to feel the loss they were sustaining.

"Having given a last proof of his love to the poor by distributing to them the remainder of his possessions, he retired to the monastery, where he ended his days in 178 . . ."

APPENDIX II

LIST OF THE MONASTERIES OF THE CONGREGATION OF NOTRE DAME[1]

Mattaincourt	1598-1836
Saint Mihiel	1602
Nancy	1603
Pont-à-Mousson	1604
Saint Nicolas-du-port	1605
Verdun	1608-1839
Châlons-sur-Marne	1613-1806
Bar-le-Duc	1618
Mirecourt	1619
Epinal	1620-1857
La Mothe	1621
Soissons	1621
Dieuze (transferred to Molsheim, 1830)	1621
Metz	1623
Vitry-le-François	1623
Châtel-sur-Moselle	1625
Laon	1626
Sainte-Menehould	1627
Blamont	1627
Luxembourg	1627-1838

[1] The names in italics are those of monasteries still existing. The first of the double dates is that of the foundation, the second of the re-establishment.

Nomeny	1628
Troyes	1628
Longwy	1628
Vézelise (transferred to Lunéville, 1850)	1629
Provins	1629
Lunéville	1629-1850
Étampes	1630-1861
Joigny	1630
Bouquenom	1631
Paris—Montmartre (now L'Abbaye-au-Bois, 1807)	1634
Paris—Charonne	1634?
Vic	1634
Reims	1634-1803
Carentan	1635-1816
Houdan	1636
Toul	1638
Marsal	1638
Château-Thierry	1638
Bernay (transferred to Orbec-en-Auge, 1805)	1638
Caudebec	1639-1826
Neufchâteau	1639
Rethel	1639
Ligny-en-Barrois	1669
Saint-Amand (transferred to Bourges, 1656)	1639
Montfort-l'Amaury	1639
Vernon	1639
Châtellerault	1640
Münster (North Germany)	1640
Châteauroux	1640
Trèves (transferred to Jupille, 1879)	1640
Nemours	1641
Aoste	1641
Marsal	1642
Bruxelles	1643
Saverne	1643
Châteaudun	1643
Corbeil (transferred to Verdun, 1839)	1643
Coulommiers	1644
Rouen	1645
Compiègne	1645

Pont-de-Beauvoisin	1648
Essen (North Germany)	1650
Honfleur	1651-1827 ?
Paderborn (North Germany)	1652
Nantua	1654
Donzy	1655
Gournay	1655
Bonn (North Germany)	1664
Valenciennes	1670
Gerbéviller	1672
Mayence	1679
Strasbourg	1679-1827
Douai	1699
Heidelberg	1700
Gondrecourt	1710
Eichstadt (South Germany)	1711
Mannheim (South Germany)	1720
Conflans-en-Bassigny	1727
Nymphembourg (South Germany)	1730
Stadt am Hof (South Germany)	1733
Presbourg (Hungary)	1747
Rastadt (transferred to Goldenstein, 1879)	1767
Versailles	1772-1826 ?
Ottenweier (transferred to Offenbourg, 1823)	1783
Orbec-en-Auge	1805
Paris (L'Abbaye-au-Bois)	1807
Paris (Les Oiseaux)	1807
Valognes	1809
Nesle (transferred to Mattaincourt, 1836)	1810
Paris (Le Roule)	1820
Moulins	1821
Cateau-Cambrésis	1822
Offenbourg	1823
Saint-Pierre Église	1826
Moisheim	1830
Cinq-Églises (Hungary)	1850
Condé-sur-Noireau	1856
Gray	1861
Steyl (Holland)	1876
Neuville (Belgium)	1877

Goldenstein (Austria)	1879
Jupille (Belgium)	1879
Ledde (Belgium)	1897
Rhenoburg (South Germany)	1897

APPENDIX III

BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE principal works treating of Saint Peter Fourier, his life and work, have been quoted in the course of this book. A new series of publications was produced at the time of his canonisation, and we think it our duty to mention the principal ones, classing them according to their kind and character:—

"Bulletin of the Canonisation of Saint Peter Fourier" (twenty numbers, from the 19th of February to the 13th of August 1897). It is continued from the 8th of December by the Bulletin of Saint Peter Fourier. "To Rome for the Canonisation of S. Peter Fourier. The Barrois Pilgrimage," by M. l'Abbé Pierfitte, curé of Portieux.

"Feasts of the Canonisation of Saint Peter Fourier," Solemn Triduum celebrated in the monastery of the Congregation of Notre Dame de Verdun on the 18th and 20th of July 1897.

Panegyrics of the Saint pronounced by Mgr. Turinaz, Bishop of Nancy, at Mattaincourt; by Mgr. Enard, Bishop of Cahors, at Rome; by Dom Laurent Janssens, rector of the International College of Saint Anselm at Rome, at Jupille (Belgium). Biographies: by Le P. Rogie (abridgment of his Life in three volumes); by Dom Vuillemin, canon of the Lateran (one volume in 4to, with artistic illustration); by Dom Fourier Bonnard, also canon of the Lateran; by Le P. Chérot (in "Les Études religieuses" of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus); by Abbé Held, secretary of the Bishopric of Luxemburg (in German).

The following ought also to be mentioned. Two new works of Saint Peter Fourier by Le P. Carret in "Les Études religieuses"; "The Nationality of Jeanne d'Arc and that of Saint Peter Fourier," by Abbé Misset; "Un ami du peuple," by P. Coubé; the two articles by Abbé Eugène Martin in "La Revue du Clergé français"

and in "Les Mémoires de l'Académie de Stanislas"; "La Vie et les grandes Œuvres de Saint Pierre Fourier à Pont-à-Mousson," by M. Henri Charaux; "Saint Pierre Fourier et les Médecins," by Dr Charles Liègeois (in Les Annales de la Société d'Émulation des Vosges); La Maison de Saint Pierre Fourier à Nancy, by M. Pfister (in the *Journal de la Société d'archéologie lorraine*).

M. Émile Longin has published at Besançon, at Remiremont, and Vesoul, from 1898 to 1900, the following studies: "Saint Pierre Fourier et la Franche-Comté," un document inédit sur Saint Pierre Fourier; "Remarques sur un Prodige observé à la Mort de Saint Pierre Fourier"; "Guérisons opérées à Gray par des Linges teints du Sang de Saint Pierre Fourier"; "Une Emeute à Gray au xvii. siècle"; "Contribution à l'histoire de Jonvelle."

TURNBULL AND SPEARS, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.