

CHAPTER XVI

JOHN ANTHONY ELET, VICE-PROVINCIAL, 1848-1851

§ I. FATHER ELET'S APPOINTMENT, 1848

On June 3, 1848, the government of the vice-province of Missouri passed from the hands of Father Van de Velde into those of Father John Anthony Elet. A native of St. Amand in Belgium, where he was born February 19, 1802, Elet had made his classical studies in the college of Mechlin and later entered the ecclesiastical seminary in the same city. At nineteen he left the seminary to accompany Nerinckx's party of 1821 to America, where he entered the Society of Jesus at White Marsh, Maryland, going thence to Missouri with Van Quickenborne's pioneer party of 1823. Ordained priest by Bishop Rosati at Florissant in 1827, he discharged various offices of trust in the Society and on Verhaegen's accession to the superiorship of the mission in 1836 succeeded him as president of St. Louis University. This office he held until 1840 when he was transferred to the presidency of St. Xavier College, Cincinnati, which had just been conveyed to the Jesuits by Bishop Purcell.

Father Elet's administration in Cincinnati covered the period 1840-1847. The institution which he headed became firmly entrenched in his affections, in a letter to Purcell he called it "the child of my predilection."¹ And yet, while giving himself whole-heartedly to the duties of his actual position, he was steadily looking West to the Indians as the particular field of service in which he sought above every other to be employed. Already in January, 1840, being then president of St. Louis University, he had petitioned the Father General to be assigned to the Indian mission-field, avowing that he had pledged himself, a pledge conditioned obviously by the approval of his superiors, to labor to his last breath for the conversion of the red men.² In 1842 he was petitioning Father Roothaan to be allowed to accompany De Smet to the Rocky Mountains. He had a tendency to consumption and always experienced more or less of difficulty amid the restraints of a sedentary life, moreover, an affection of the liver from which he suffered was due, so a physician declared, to lack of bodily exercise. But the sub-

¹ Elet to Purcell, July 8, 1844. Cincinnati Archdiocesan Archives.

² Elet ad Roothaan, January 22, 1840 (AA).

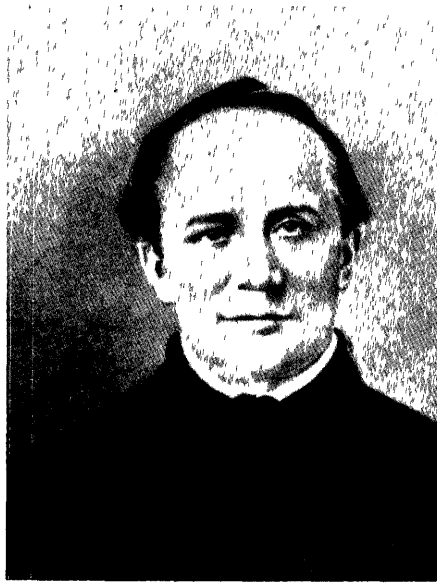
stantial motive behind his desire for the missions was wholly spiritual "To labor among the Indians was the one thing I had in view when I left for America, only for that I should have asked to be received into the Society in Europe where I should have a thousand advantages I can never find here"³ Again, in 1845, he was still pleading for the Oregon Missions, to which, so he wrote to Roothaan, God had never ceased to call him He hoped to be allowed to leave from Antwerp the following spring for Oregon in company with Archbishop Blanchet⁴ "For myself, I am ready for everything, but I prefer to work in the Oregon Mission under Father De Smet's direction rather than be his superior there."⁵ Elet was aware that efforts had been made by De Smet to secure him as his successor in the direction of the Oregon Missions Father Roothaan himself looked approvingly on the proposed appointment As a matter of fact he assured De Smet on the occasion of the latter's visit to Rome in 1843 that he would recommend strongly to Van de Velde, the vice-provincial, that he assign Elet to this charge, though he would not direct him positively to do so In the event Van de Velde declined with the approval of his consultors to send Elet to the Indians, among other reasons because there was no one to replace him as rector in Cincinnati.

In 1847 Father Elet, as has been told, represented the vice-province of Missouri at a congregation of procurators in Rome Here he met and dealt with Father Roothaan on the affairs of the vice-province, and here he appears to have renewed his petition, but without result, to be sent among the Indians Even before he left Rome, the General had very likely considered naming him vice-provincial. At all events the letter appointing him to this charge was forwarded to him while he was still in Europe, being addressed to him at Ghent But the letter reached him not at Ghent, but at St. Louis shortly after his return from abroad. He was installed in the office of vice-provincial in succession to Van de Velde at St. Louis University June 3, 1848, and four days later made acknowledgment to the Father General of the letter of appointment "Rev Father Van de Velde has put into my hands your billet-doux of March 15 which gives me a provincialate instead of a mission among the Indians. *Non recuso laborem*. I shall do everything that depends on me to put into effect the points you have so earnestly recommended. 1° liquidation of the debts in Belgium, 2° organization of the scholasticate, 3° a good understanding with the bishops and secular clergy, 4° religious charity which knows no distinction of country or nation but cherishes all alike as brothers in Jesus Christ." Father

³ Elet à Roothaan, December 27, 1842 (AA)

⁴ Elet ad Roothaan, October 8, 1845 (AA)

⁵ Elet à Roothaan, October 25, 1845 (AA)



Father John Anthony Elet (1802-1851), pioneer midwestern Jesuit

tout est au-jour bien fait. Monsieur. Freres de
 St Louis a été formalisé par suite mes impressions tout le long
 du Missour, a l'exception de quelques mois, restant sans mission.
 Mais je jurais qu'il est résolu de me plus respecter le contrat
 fait par le Père Ch^e Meale avec Monsieur Du Bourg que
 faire. J'envoie la copie d'une lettre de son Père Le Card^e
 l'ensemble à ce sujet. Dans l'attente d'un prospectus de
 la part de V^{tre} Paternité. J'ai le bonheur d'être avec
 la plus parfaite soumission. Votre indigne Serviteur
 J. A. Elet S. J.

Quelques bonnes grâces pour moi. Si vous
 s'agit de vous le père D. Sini dont nous n'avons
 pas encore appris depuis son départ pour le pays de France.

Un de nos ex devants élèves, le juge Muller, qui m'a remis pour
 400 francs - Je me suis contenté de l'acquiescer sans en parler de 7 à 8 jours
 l'attente en ordre. J'ai à cœur de vous répondre.

Closing lines of a letter of J. A. Elet, S. J., to the Father General, John Roothaan, October 24, 1848. General Archives of the Society of Jesus, Rome. See *supra*, p. 145.

A M D G

Puncta quaedam quae ea notis proprio submisit
Pater Elet S^{mo} V^o Dom. Petrus Gon. Le Pray S. J.

- 1 Il est bon pour ne pas dire nécessaire, que le Père De Saint attende mon retour pour s'embarquer pour l'Amérique, afin que les choses, telles que livres, tableaux, instrumens de Physique &c &c que le P^{re} m'a sur procurez, puissent entrer sans payer de droits, ce que le seul peut obtenir du Président, et faire un gain ou épargne de 5000 fr.
- 2 Il est impossible que la nouvelle mission parmi les Indiens, Corbiens, Iroquois &c soit contenue sans fonds Il est essentiel donc que le P^{re} De Saint profite de son séjour en Europe dans l'intérêt de sa mission, et qu'il obtienne l'autorisation de V^o ad hoc.
- 3 Lorsque le P^{re} V^o de la fut en Europe il y a 6 ans, j'acheta une 60^{me} de Chaulnes, de aubes, des missels &c &c, et le tout fut consommé par le feu qui prit au maison près de M^{lle} Orléans Il m'est duit que nous sommes dans le plus grand besoin de ces sortes de choses, et l'argent manque pour les acheter - une recommandation de V^o aux maisons de la Compagnie en Europe m'obtiendrait bien des choses Le Père Bourdieu de Genève m'a promis de m'envoyer pour moi deux de province - D'autres en feraient autant.
- 4 En Amérique on gace de fortes sommes pour les peintures, dorures &c et après tout c'est mal fait Il y a un frère coadjuteur au collège de l'Hamberg, un autre au collège de Bruxelles un 3^{ème} à Bruchem, le frère L'Escurier, qui s'entendent à ces sortes de choses - Peut être que V^o pourrait nous en procurer un.

Elet entered on his administration with optimistic outlook "Soon we shall have everything we need and more," he assured the General, "and the only thing lacking will be to have your Paternity in the midst of us." ⁶

§ 2 FATHER VAN DE VELDE BECOMES BISHOP OF CHICAGO

On April 10, 1848, the Rt Rev. William Quarter, first Bishop of Chicago, was suddenly stricken by death at the early age of forty-two after four years of distinguished service rendered to the infant diocese committed to his care Under date of December 14 of the same year his brother, Father Walter Quarter, who had been appointed administrator of the diocese on the Bishop's death, wrote in his diary "14th. Received a letter this morning from the most Rev. Archbishop of Baltimore stating that Very Rev J Van de Velde, of St Louis, is appointed Bishop of Chicago in place of my brother, the Right Rev. Dr. Quarter. Glory be to God! May his Episcopal reign be such as will give glory to God and peace to the church is all I have to say, I rejoice, however, that the Very Rev Mr Van de Velde is the person appointed" ⁷

In an autobiographical memoir Van de Velde recounts the circumstances under which this appointment became known to him and the course pursued by him on the occasion

In the beginning of November of the same year (1848) F [Father] Van de Velde went to New York to transact some business of importance for the V[ice] Province On his return he passed through Baltimore, where on the very day of his arrival the news had reached that the Holy Father had nominated him to the vacant See of Chicago This intelligence was communicated to him by the Very Rev L R Deluol, Superior of the Sulpicians, and was contained in a letter which the latter had just received from Right Rev Dr Chanche, Bishop of Natchez, who was then in Paris and had obtained official information of it from the Apostolic Nuncio, Monsignor F[T?]ornari Van de Velde left Baltimore the same day before the news of his nomination was known to any of his friends, and out-travelled it till he reached Cincinnati, where a telegraphic despatch announcing it had been received from the Archbishop of Baltimore on the morning of his arrival On his way to St Louis he visited Bardstown to consult the Rev F Verhaegen, then President of St Joseph's College, concerning the manner in which he should act under the circumstances in which he was placed It was agreed that he should decline the nomination unless compelled by an express command of his Holiness He reached St Louis in the

⁶ Elet à Roothaan, June 7, 1848 (AA)

⁷ McGovern, *History of the Catholic Church in Chicago* (Chicago, 1891), p 92

beginning of December There all was known and the Brief with a letter freeing him from allegiance to the Society of Jesus and appointing him to the vacant See of Chicago arrived but a few days later It bore the superscription of the Archbishop of Baltimore, who by letter urged him to accept Not long before we had been informed by the papers that Rome had fallen into the hands of the Socialist rebels, and that the Holy Father had fled in disguise from the holy city Hence F Van de Velde, who was anxious to return the package, knew not whither to send it, and kept it for several days unsealed as he had received it. In the meantime he wrote to the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda and to the General of the Society, who had also left Rome, endeavoring to be freed from the burden which it was intended to impose upon him In his perplexity he went to consult the Archbishop of St Louis, to know whither he should send the Brief of appointment, in case it should arrive, for no one yet knew that he had received it The Archbishop, before answering the question, insisted upon knowing whether the Brief had been received On being answered in the affirmative, and having the package presented to him, he immediately broke the seal and examined its contents He gave it as his opinion that the letter, if not the brief, contained a command to accept and used his influence to prevail upon F Van de Velde to do so and to be consecrated without delay The nominee asked for a delay of six weeks to reflect on the matter, hoping that in the meantime he would receive answers to the letters which he had written to Rome and to France Unwilling to accept the nomination and distrusting his own judgment, he referred the matter as a case of conscience to three theologians, requesting them to decide whether the words of the letter contained a positive command and whether in case they did, he was bound under sin to obey Their decision was in the affirmative and he submitted to bear the yoke He was consecrated on Sexagesima Sunday, 11th of February, 1849 in the Church of St Francis Xavier, attached to the University, by the Most Rev Peter R Kenrick, assisted by the Bishops of Dubuque [Loras] and Nashville [Miles], and the Right Rev Dr Spalding [of Louisville] delivered the consecrating sermon⁸

In a letter of December 17, 1848 which Father Van de Velde addressed to the General immediately on receiving the news of his appointment to the see of Chicago, he revealed his distress of soul at the prospect of having to sever his connection with the Society of Jesus. He deplored the fact that after thirty-one years spent in the Society he was now to be torn from the bosom of that excellent mother and doomed to pass his old age in bitterness of soul. But the memory of her would ever abide with him as a precious possession He would follow her always and everywhere with an affectionate love, which would also be poured out on such of her children as might reside in his jurisdiction "I cannot decide what I ought to do," he said in

⁸ Garraghan, *Catholic Church in Chicago* (Chicago, 1921), p 140

another letter written three days later "I hesitate between the obedience due to the Sovereign Pontiff and that due to the Society. I dare not trust my own judgment and there is danger in delay" ⁹

At Rome Father Roothaan made efforts to prevent the nomination, but, as he wrote to Father Elet, the efforts came too late. The nomination had already been duly ratified by the Holy Father. The General now left the question of acceptance or refusal entirely to Father Van de Velde's own decision, addressing himself, however, not to the Bishop-elect, but to Father Elet. The letter from the Sacred Congregation made use of the phrase, "*cum opportunis derogationibus*," the interpretation of which was open to doubt. Unless a precept was imposed, Father Van de Velde could not in conscience accept the appointment, being bound by his vow as a professed member of the Society of Jesus not to accept of ecclesiastical dignities unless "coerced by obedience." Father Roothaan went on to say

The whole question is whether the Holy Father really imposed a precept. Perhaps some one will gather this from the wording of the bull? Whether this should suffice for Father Van de Velde, it is not my business to say . . . Unless a precept be imposed, he still remains free to refuse or protest. If we look to the mind of the Holy Father, it is a likely conjecture that he wished also to command, but whether the conjecture suffices and prevails over the vow, I would not venture to decide. I leave the matter to the conscience of the father-elect. Perhaps if he protests, a precept will follow. For the rest, Father Van de Velde's sentiments of filial affection are a consolation to me. Though he be cut off in body from the Society, he will remain attached to it in spirit ¹⁰

Early in March, 1849, Father Roothaan, not yet aware of Van de Velde's consecration, personally laid his case before Pius IX, then an exile in Gaeta. His Holiness listened kindly to the objections the General urged against the appointment, but his answer was that the appointment was mandatory, the brief having contained a formal precept of obedience. "At once," so the General informed Msgr. Fioramenti, the secretary of the Propaganda, "I wrote to the father concerned in the sense of His Holiness, namely, that the *dispensation* mentioned in the brief means a *precept*. Perhaps, as I have already written you, the father has already interpreted the brief in this sense on advice from

⁹ Van de Velde ad Roothaan, December 17, 20, 1848 (AA)

¹⁰ Roothaan ad Elet, January 3, 1849 (AA). Father Roothaan was under the impression that Van de Velde, if he accepted the "titular" see of Chicago, would cease to be a Jesuit. As a matter of fact, Van de Velde as Bishop remained a member of the society. Cf. *infra*, Chap. XXI, § 4.

the Archbishop of St. Louis How it consoles me that the Holy Father listened to my reasons!"¹¹

Father Van de Velde's own account of the circumstances under which it was decided in St. Louis to proceed to his consecration has already been set before the reader. Father Elet reported them to the General as follows:

Since the receipt of your esteemed letter of December 22 last I wrote to you twice, as did also Very Rev. Father Van de Velde, who is pained at the silence you maintain in his regard. The good Father was consecrated Bishop of Chicago on February 11, having hoped up to the last hour before his consecration to receive some news from your Paternity which would have dispensed him from it. Archbishop Kenrick, his Vicar-General, Mr. Melcher, and Mr. Burlando, Superior of the Lazarists at St. Louis, after having read the letter of Cardinal Fransoni, decided unanimously that he was obliged to accept the appointment and his Grace even indulged in a little humor on the occasion. For my part, though I could not see any formal precept, I refused, merely through prudence, to express any opinion and left the whole thing to Providence. When the good Father five days before his consecration came to render me his account of conscience, he wept and sobbed, I consoled him as much as I possibly could. The Society has made a sacrifice in him, but the good father has made a much greater one, for his diocese, and he is not unaware of the fact, is in a very sad state. As his diocese lies in part along the other bank of the Mississippi, he makes trips over there and then returns to the University, where by his own wishes he enjoys almost no distinction, wearing the habit of the Society, following the daily order and performing the penances in the refectory like the rest of the community.¹²

Bishop Van de Velde was installed in his episcopal see of Chicago on Palm Sunday, April 1, 1849.

§ 3 THE AFFAIR WITH ARCHBISHOP KENRICK

On being appointed vice-provincial Father Elet had promptly signified to the Father General, as one of the cardinal points of the policy he proposed to follow, his intention to cultivate the best of relations with the members of the hierarchy. In Cincinnati circumstances, the nature of which is not clear, had brought about a temporary interruption in the cordial relations that had previously existed between himself and Bishop Purcell. When the two met at the Council of Baltimore in 1849 the trouble had already blown over. At the council Elet was honored with the chairmanship of two committees, one on ecclesiastical

¹¹ Roothaan à Fioramenti, March 7, 1849 (AA)

¹² Elet à Roothaan, March 4, 1849 (AA)

affairs in California and the other on the question whether Pius IX was to be petitioned to declare the Immaculate Conception an article of faith. After a visit to Georgetown College Elet left in company with Bishop Purcell and Archbishop Kenrick for the West. "The first [Purcell] made excuses to me for the misunderstanding of which I had been the victim, assuring me that I had his entire confidence, appointing me Vicar General for Ours etc *Post nebulas Thabor*. The Archbishop of St. Louis is changed for the better in our regard, and I can assure your Paternity that not one of the 25 bishops assembled at the Council let slip a single word against the Society all the time of the sessions." As evidence of this sympathetic attitude of the hierarchy towards his order Father Elet mentions the circumstances that, when the question of a Catholic university in the United States was broached in the council, the bishops suggested the Society of Jesus as the best prepared body under the circumstances to take it in hand¹³

Among the western Jesuits the belief was current for a while that Archbishop Kenrick of St. Louis was ill-affected towards the Society of Jesus and religious orders generally. The circumstance is a peculiar one in view of that prelate's well-known early admiration of the order founded by St. Ignatius and his attempt at one time, as was chronicled above, to be admitted among its members. Yet his sentiments, as indicated by Elet early in 1850, were now to the effect that while he had a high esteem for the Jesuits, seeing that they did an immense amount of good, he did not like them as a body nor the other regulars in general, and this for the reason that they formed a group apart and exercised too great an influence, which it was his intention to reduce to proper limits. The success attending the Gentlemen's Sodality established by the Jesuits at the College Church in St. Louis had led unfortunately to certain misunderstandings and criticisms, in the troubled atmosphere of which efforts were said to have been made to alienate the Archbishop from the Jesuits of his diocese. It is pertinent to relate here an episode occurring in Elet's administration, the final issue of which disclosed the fact that no real unfriendliness to the Society of Jesus had actuated the conduct of the Archbishop of St. Louis.

In 1849 the authorities of St. Louis University came to a decision to execute a plan conceived many years before for the transfer of the boarding-school to the University property known as the College Farm. This suburban property of some four hundred acres located on the northern outskirts of the city and occupying the major portion of the area lying between the river, Grand Avenue, the Fair Grounds and O'Fallon Park, was acquired in 1836, at which time the encroachments

¹³ Elet à Roothaan, June 13, 1849 (AA)

of business in the Washington Avenue district threatened to render the existing University site unsuited to its purpose. Bishop Rosati gave his approval for the transfer of the institution to the new site and excavations were made for a new structure on the suburban property. Then supervened the financial crisis of 1837 with the result that all preparations for the removal of St. Louis University outside of the city came at once to a standstill. Now, after a lapse of twelve years, the project was again to be taken up, the chief reason dictating the change of site being the interests of college discipline, which were thought to suffer by the association of the two classes of students, day-scholars and boarders, on the same premises. The day-school would continue to be maintained in the old quarters. In the mind of Father Druyts, president of the University, and his consultors the contemplated change involved "not the foundation of a new college, but only the separation of the boarders from the day-scholars (the fusion of these [departments] in St. Louis University being open to grave disadvantages), and the transfer of the former to a suburban site belonging to the same University."¹⁴ Taking, therefore, this view of the matter Father Elet concluded that the project in question could be lawfully carried through without referring it for approval to the diocesan authorities. But Archbishop Kenrick on coming to hear of the proposed change of location for the boarding-school at once interposed objection, contending that the canon law of the church and in particular a Constitution of Urban VIII required that no step of this nature be taken without approval of the Ordinary of the diocese. The Jesuits of St. Louis then appealed to certain privileges of long standing emanating from the Holy See which apparently authorized them to proceed in such matters independently of diocesan authority. Archbishop Kenrick, on his part, and by agreement with Father Elet, so it appears, carried the canonical issue at stake to the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda in Rome. At the request of the vice-provincial Bishop Van de Velde of Chicago acquainted the Archbishop of St. Louis, February 28, 1850, with certain past circumstances concerning the College Farm property, of which, as having been procurator for many years of the Missouri Vice-province, he had first-hand and intimate knowledge.

I received a letter from Rev. F[ather] Elet written when he was going to start for Cincinnati. He states in it what I already knew from others, that a difficulty had occurred between yr. Grace and himself concerning the building of a College for Boarders on the property formerly bought of Maj. L[ewis] M[eriwether] Clark,—that you refused to give your consent to build it, referring to a decree of the Council of Trent and that you had

¹⁴ Memorandum, August 16, 1850 (AA)

appealed to me or rather to the authority of the Bishop of Chicago to corroborate the principal grounds on which his Grace bases his refusal or rather prohibition of removing the *Convictus* to the place selected for that purpose many years since, 1^o the fact of our having converted the former chapel into a tavern 2dly, the fact of our having entirely given up the idea of separating the Boarders from the day-scholars,—3dly the fact of Bishop Rosati's having given his consent to the commencement of the *Convictus* [boarding-school] in the county, on the supposition that the College in the city would cease to exist

As to the former chapel on the College Farm having been converted into a tavern, Van de Velde explained that the so-called chapel was only "a private room, neither built nor blessed for the purpose of being *permanently* used as a chapel but only while the scholasticate existed there" The building, having been leased for five years to a Mr. Weishaupt, was, so it seems, used by him without a licence for tavern purposes and this against the protest of Van de Velde, who, however, was informed by the lawyers he consulted that no legal action could be taken against the tenant with any prospect of success, seeing that the lease made no restriction as to the use that might be made of the building As to the second point Bishop Van de Velde maintained that "it cannot be said that the idea of establishing a *Convictus* or College for Boarders on the farm (or in case the farm were sold, somewhere else in the neighborhood of the city,) was *ever abandoned*." In regard to the third point Van de Velde simply said "Rt Rev Bp Rosati, as far as my knowledge extends, *never* made any restrictions or conditions On the contrary, he was overjoyed when I informed him that we had obtained the means of paying for the farm without sacrificing the property in the city" The Bishop of Chicago then proceeded to say that when vice-provincial he had more than once observed that "yr Grace manifested a kind of distant coolness towards the F F [Fathers] of the Soc[*iety*] in Mo Yet I take God to witness that I endeavored to do all I could not to give yr Grace the least cause of dissatisfaction in any thing,—that I impressed this upon the minds of all those over whom I had authority and chiefly of those who had the care of souls Still this cold reserve on your part continued, and to all appearances, has since increased" ¹⁵

The event was to prove that the Archbishop of St Louis in appealing the controversy to the Roman tribunal intended merely a friendly suit for the settlement of a technical point of law. The reserved and unsympathetic attitude towards the Jesuits which Bishop Van de Velde deprecated in him was probably more apparent than real. At all events

¹⁵ Van de Velde to Kenrick, February 28, 1850 (A)

neither then nor at any other time did Archbishop Kenrick seem disposed to interfere with the Society of Jesus in the exercise of its canonical rights. But to Father Elet, unduly apprehensive over the situation, a crisis of the first magnitude seemed about to develop. To Father Roothaan he expressed himself with feeling: "Excuse me if I give expression to a thought that refuses to leave me and if I say that we did wrong to surrender the rights which Bishop Du Bourg had given us. The man who converted the desert into towns deserved to have his authority respected. If we always yield we shall end by yielding everything, even the A M D G. If the Holy See does not protect us, what shall we have that is permanent? A Kenrick will take away what a Du Bourg or a Rosati begged us to accept."¹⁶ Father Roothaan in his reply to Elet counseled patience and, above all, due respect to the ecclesiastical authorities. "It is plain," he wrote, "that the Bishop cannot prevent you from building on your property to rid yourself of such a grave inconvenience. I have spoken about the matter to Bishop Timon, who told me that perhaps the Archbishop fears you may fall again into new debts." This fear the General himself took to be a prudent one on the part of the Archbishop though his Grace might be informed that, thanks to the legacy of the recently deceased Chevalier De Boey, there was a considerably lighter burden of debt to carry. "What is most important is that you act, all of you and at all times, with respect and humility towards his Grace and his clergy. I am afraid something is lacking among you in this respect, and this, owing to impatience, which is the spirit neither of the Society nor of God."¹⁷

In June, 1850, the Father General was requested by Propaganda to furnish information touching the controversy in St. Louis. "The Archbishop requires that according to the tenor especially of the Constitution *Romanus Pontifex* of Urban VIII his consent, which he shows himself disposed to grant, be asked for, and yet it seems that the religious wish to proceed to the foundation of the college without such consent."¹⁸ In July the General communicated to the Propaganda the desired information. Writing about the same time to Elet, he expressed the opinion that the case, if decided according to the principle involved, would go against the Jesuits, seeing that Urban VIII had revoked all privileges of whatsoever kind authorizing religious orders to build monasteries or colleges without the Ordinary's consent. On the other hand, if the case were decided in the light of concrete circumstances, as, for instance, that the suburban property was already built on and that

¹⁶ Elet à Roothaan, January 15, 1850 (AA)

¹⁷ Roothaan ad Elet, April 16, 1850 (AA)

¹⁸ "Peraltro sembra che i Religiosi senza tali licenza vogliono procedere alla fundazione del Collegio." Propaganda a Roothaan, June 26, 1850 (AA)

Bishop Rosati had given his approval to the erection thereon of new University buildings, then it was possible that Propaganda would render a decision favorable to the Society. In any case it was difficult for Father Roothaan to believe that the Archbishop would refuse the desired permission if it were asked of him. Meantime, he awaited the decision of Propaganda. But as to the expediency of erecting new college buildings the General stood precisely where he had stood from the beginning "Where shall you find the men, you who are overburdened with engagements?"¹⁹

It is likely that Bishop Van de Velde's letter to the Archbishop of St. Louis setting forth the Jesuit side of the matter in dispute had made an impression upon the prelate. Already in June, 1850, Father Elet was finding him more cordial than before. Then followed, in July, a personal letter from the General to Kenrick. But already in mid-June, so it appears, the Archbishop had let it be known that, whatever the decision of Propaganda, he would gladly assent to the erection of the proposed new college. Moreover, he made acknowledgment of Father Roothaan's letter in a kindly reply written in French under date of August 28, 1850.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your obliging letter of July 30 and I beg you to believe that I appreciate its contents which are an added reason for esteeming you and the Society of which you are the head. Despite the differences that have arisen between Father Elet and myself in regard to the college which he is going to build, I am happy to be able to assure you that I have every reason to be satisfied with him and that he has always shown me respect. I make bold to commend myself to the prayers of your Paternity, whom I had the happiness of knowing in Rome eleven years ago and whom I have never ceased to venerate.²⁰

Father Elet had written to Father Roothaan some ten days before

As to the Archbishop, I mentioned in one of my preceding letters that he appears to have recovered entirely from his prejudices against us, and that he made me an *amende honorable* for the expressions he had made use of in regard to the regulars. I went to dine with him with Very Reverend Father Van de Velde, to whom he showed much gratitude for his frankness towards him in our defense, and to whom he gave a superb enameled chalice. As to me, he overwhelms me with his tokens of friendship. He sent me for examination the decrees of the Synod which will take place in the course of this month, he has asked me to preach at its opening, to act in the quality of Promoter, to appoint a Father to give a retreat to the secular clergy, as also to appoint other Fathers to give retreats in 8 religious com-

¹⁹ Roothaan ad Elet, July 19, 1850 (AA)

²⁰ Kenrick à Roothaan, August 28, 1850 (AA)

munities I refused nothing. He comes to see us quite often as a good friend. He dined at the University the day of St. Louis Gonzaga and came to Florissant expressly to celebrate St. Ignatius day with us.²¹

No decision in the matter under dispute between the Archbishop and Father Elet was rendered by the Propaganda, or if it was, it did not become public. On the other hand, the idea of moving the University to the College Farm property was abandoned, apparently for financial reasons, and the institution continued to occupy the original site on Washington Avenue until the erection of the Grand Avenue building in the late eighties. As a final commentary on the controversy now happily ended, Father Roothaan pointed out to Father Elet that the whole affair was to be a lesson for him, he should have gone to the Archbishop in the beginning and requested permission to proceed to build.²² Thereafter, relations between Archbishop Kenrick and the Jesuits were distinctly cordial. A St. Louis diocesan statute of 1850 commended earnestly to pastors the services of Jesuits for missions in the parishes. Father William Stack Murphy, Elet's successor in the office of vice-provincial, informed Father Roothaan in 1852: "Monseigneur Kenrick is full of kindness for us and one can say as much of all his clergy." Four years later, in 1856, Murphy wrote again: "The Louisville and St. Louis prelates continue to be favorable to us."²³ Father De Smet records in November, 1852, that Archbishop Kenrick has had the *Moral Theology* of Father Gury adopted in the diocesan seminary while in 1854 his Grace offers the western half of his diocese to the Jesuit, Bishop Miége, at the same time inviting him to fix his see at St. Joseph, Missouri, as a more likely center for his activities than the isolated Indian Mission of St. Mary's on the Kansas prairies.²⁴

§ 4. THE SWISS REFUGEES OF 1848

Scarcely had Father Elet entered on the duties of his office when he was called upon to tender hospitality to nearly two scores of Swiss and German Jesuits, fugitives from Europe in consequence of the revolutionary troubles of 1847-1848. Members of the province of Upper Germany, also called the Swiss Province from the circumstance that most if not all of its houses were situated in Switzerland, they had retired precipitately from that country as they saw their very lives in danger on the victorious advance in the fall of 1847 of the Protestant forces of the Sonderbund. The provincial, Father Anthony Minoux, see-

²¹ Elet à Roothaan, August 17, 1850 (AA)

²² Roothaan à Elet, 1850 (AA)

²³ Murphy ad Roothaan, August 23, 1856 (AA)

²⁴ Miége à Roothaan, February 8, 1854 (AA)

ing his flourishing scholasticate of Fribourg thus suddenly closed, attempted to get the scholastics together again and continue the process of their education, first at Chambéry in Savoy and later at Oleggio in Piedmont, but neither attempt proved successful. In his distress he next sought to domicile at least a part of his personnel in other provinces both in Europe and America. Father Elet, who was then in Europe, having just attended a congregation of procurators in Rome, and who had a commission from Father Van de Velde to pick up recruits wherever possible, petitioned the Swiss provincial for some fathers and scholastics, as also for coadjutor-brothers who were masters of a trade, declaring that all such would be found useful in Missouri. "If I have not answered sooner," Father Minoux replied, "it is because I was expecting certain and definite directions from Rome on the subject of America in general and my province in particular. Nothing having yet arrived, I have taken it upon myself to entrust to Rev. Father Jourdan [provincial of Lyons] a good number of fathers and coadjutor-brothers and 4 scholastics, praying him to arrange with you in regard to the distribution of these subjects between yourself and him and the dispatching of them to their destinations . . . I hope to be in a position in the fall to do more for you, at least I most sincerely desire to do so."²⁵ At Lyons in January, 1848, Elet met the party of exile Jesuits, shabbily clothed and bearing on their persons not a few tokens of the distressing experiences through which they had passed.²⁶ The names of those among them, if any, who were enlisted by Elet on this occasion have not been ascertained. At all events, a group from the province of Upper Germany, including Fathers Francis Xavier Wippern, Joseph Weber, Peter Tschieder, a scholastic, and the lay brothers Anthony Perroud, Joseph Huss, Anthony Toelle and Joseph Becker, landed at New York on April 18, 1848, whence they proceeded to the West. On March 20, 1848, Minoux had written to Elet at Antwerp: "Fathers Brunner, Hubner, Behrens, will go to join you sooner or later, Father Hubner has some thousands of francs for your voyage. Among the Brothers I have chosen the most suitable in view of the circumstances in which you are. Brothers Wohleb and Tschenhens I thought very suitable . . . A number of the scholastics desire to go to America. I wish them to finish this year in course, meantime, some of them are looking for money for the trip."²⁷ Fathers Hubner and Brunner arrived in St. Louis June 11, and Brothers Wohleb and Tschenhens about the same time, the two latter having probably accompanied Elet on his return from Europe.

²⁵ Minoux à Elet, January 22, 1848 (AA)

²⁶ Elet à Roothaan, January 10, 1848 (AA)

²⁷ Minoux à Elet, March 20, 1848 (AA)

Meantime Father Minoux, unable to find an asylum for his scholastic anywhere in Europe but determined at all costs to keep this most important of his communities together, conceived the design of despatching it *en masse* to the United States where he hoped with the support of the American superiors to provide it at least with a temporary home. The plan was put into execution before awaiting word from the other side as to its practicability with the result that it proved abortive. Father Roothaan, on the testimony of Minoux, "was fearful that the enterprise would not run smoothly in the American provinces though he did not oppose it." Anthony Anderledy, one of the scholastics in the party whose adventures are about to be recorded, and subsequently General of the Society of Jesus, testified in later years for the benefit of a Jesuit historian that "in the expedition to America they went a little hastily without ascertaining the means necessary to make it a success Very Rev. Father Roothaan accordingly complained about it in a letter which I have seen."²⁸ Again, Father Behrens, at the end of the voyage was to write to Father Minoux "If your Reverence had held to your original idea of sending a few fathers to investigate etc. and then after definite information of having the rest to follow, many things would perhaps have turned out differently But the good Lord has so permitted it, He wished to train us and He could not have chosen a better opportunity."²⁹ Still, an emergency had arisen and it was difficult to determine which way to turn. The step taken by Father Minoux seemed in his perplexity the only one that held out any promise of relief, as he explained in his own account of the episode

Our Fathers in France were themselves obliged to fly, to go into hiding, to betake themselves from one town to another Those whom I sent to Austria returned by Silesia to Prussia and demanded of me where they were to stay. In the general distress the lot of my scholastics was on my mind more than anything else How long was it to last? Rome in revolution, Italy upside-down, France aflame, Belgium threatened, Germany in a storm, princes and kings driven out, taking to flight, tottering on their thrones; the peoples of Germany constituting themselves at Frankfort into a national assembly and decreeing the exclusion of the Jesuits from all the German states (this decree was revoked a few days later in consequence of an interpellation from a Jew, a deputy to the Frankfort Parliament, who found it in contradiction to the era of liberty they came to establish), I could not see what was to be the issue of so many disasters America alone seemed to offer an assured asylum I had already sent a colony to New Granada, some Fathers to Rev. Father Brocard [Maryland provincial], others to

²⁸ *Response du R P Anderledy à quelques questions que lui avait adressés le P Esseiva* Archives of the Province of Lower Germany, S J

²⁹ Behrens an Minoux, August 9, 1848 Arch Prov Low Germ, S J

Rev Father Boulanger in New York Other Provinces had likewise dispatched thither a certain number of their Fathers The thought came to me to found a house of our province there and from the very beginning to fit out a scholasticate like St Sebastian in Spain for the Province of Lyons and of Brugelettes in Belgium for that of Paris. I prayed, I consulted, I wrote about the affair to Very Reverend Father General and to the Rev. Father Provincial of Belgium. No one could offer me anything better I saw no opening that promised permanency anywhere in Europe. The resolution was then taken to execute the plan and I put my hand to the work Rev Father Hessels found me an agent at Antwerp, the lowest rates for transportation were fixed on, New York was to be the landing-place Father Souquat [socius] was sent to Frankfort to draw out a considerable amount of our stocks which were in the care of Mr Bernon[?]. I wrote to the Fathers, scholastics and Brothers whom I had destined to make up this colony, instructing them to report in the course of the month of May at Antwerp, whither I forwarded everything I was able to withdraw from Switzerland in the way of books, linen, bedding, altar-equipment and sacred vessels

I had Fathers Hubnei and Brunner leave a few weeks ahead so as to come to an understanding with the American Provincials and prepare a house for the reception of the colony I notified them in time of the arrival of the boat, so that they might come to meet the travellers and conduct them to the place selected for their home

I went myself to Antwerp to direct the expedition God in His goodness favored me with encouraging prospects on the financial side and this through the medium of our Fathers and scholastics

I drew up the list of appointments for the new house It counted 45 persons, including Father Miége There was Rev. Father Superior, Father Minister, Father Procurator, the Spiritual Father, professors of rhetoric, philosophy and theology, a class-schedule, brothers for the house-work The Fathers of the 3rd year were to continue with their exercises

I gave the most detailed instructions in writing to Rev Father Superior to serve him as a line of conduct in America

Contrary winds delayed the departure Finally, on June 3, 1848, on Saturday, I led our Fathers, Scholastics and brothers to the boat, "the Providence," and the craft put out from port into the Scheldt To tell you how I felt at that moment is impossible It was heart-rending Four days before the embarkation Rev Father Provincial Franckville came to tell me that he would be able to keep the entire party If these overtures had been made to me fifteen days sooner, I might have been able to come to an understanding with the ship-owner and we should have remained in Europe But on the eve of departure this was not to be thought of³⁰

³⁰ *Hyst Prov [Germ Super] a 1847-1849, auctore P Minoux* Arch Prov Low Germ, S J Minoux's own passenger-list of the *Providence*, dated June 1, 1848, contains forty-four names (nine fathers, twenty-nine scholastics and six coadjutor-brothers) Fr Behrens, superior, Fr Aschwanden, minister, Fr Spicher, procurator, Fr Friedrich, prefect of studies, Fr Knackstedt, prefect of churches,

The most precise instructions in writing were given by Father Minoux both to Father Henry Behrens, who was to conduct the party across the Atlantic, and to Father Joseph Brunner who was to be its superior in America. A Latin memorandum for Father Brunner said

My chief objective is to place my young religious in a position of safety and to train them in every spiritual and scientific detail according to the spirit of our Society. But since it is altogether out of the question to organize them into a community in Europe, I have deemed it necessary to make the attempt in America and to dispatch the scholastics thither. Now, in order that they may be assembled there into one body and directed aright, a Superior must be set over them. I therefore, in virtue of the powers granted to me by our Very Rev. Father, so appoint you, Joseph Brunner, Superior General and Rector as well over those, whether fathers, scholastics or missionaries, who are now arriving, as over those who will arrive later on, excepting such as I have ceded to the other provincials.

Father Brunner was then instructed to endeavor to get possession of a college, but a college only and not a so-called primary school. At most a preparatory school might be accepted. If there were a shortage of men, a beginning might be made with an incipient college (*collegium inchoatum*), having only one or other class of lower grade. As to the scholastics, they were not to be distributed among the colleges of the American provinces unless this were unavoidable, in which case Brunner was to ascertain by personal inspection of the houses where the scholastics might be most satisfactorily placed.³¹

The instructions issued to Father Behrens, written in French and comprising sixteen points, covered every contingency that might befall the expedition up to the moment he was to meet Father Brunner, the permanent superior, when he was to deliver his charge into the latter's hands. All would be required to study English. Arriving at New York, if no one were at the dock to meet him, Behrens was to leave his party on board the boat and proceed with one or other companions to St.

Frs. Eck, Cattani, Bapst, Miége, Theology, 3rd year, Messrs. Anderledy (deacon) Depuey(?), Charmillot, 2nd year, Messrs. Villiger, Iten, Goeldlin, 1st year, Messrs. Fruzzini, Loretan, Kluber, Wiget Moral Theology. Messrs. Schultz (subdeacon), Meyer Philosophy 2nd year, Messrs. Haering, Lachat, 1st year, Messrs. Hafelyn, Nussbaum, Lagger, de Travers, Bauermeister, Bauer, Schuster Rhetoric 2nd year, Messrs. Wiesend, Rummele, Schmitt, Simeon, Gentinetta, Willi, Girsch, 1st year, Dionysius Coadjutor-brothers Lambrigger, Bruckmann, Menke, Evers, Lottrig, Schopps. Father John B. Miége, of the province of Turin, was the only one of the forty-four not of the province of Upper Germany.

³¹ *Instructio P. Minoux Proo. P. Brunner Superiori omnium in Americam proficiscentium Antuerpii 22 Maii, 1848.*

John's College, Fordham, and there make arrangements for the housing of the emigrants during the few days they expected to remain in the metropolis. If all had to disembark immediately on arriving, he was to find lodging for them in small groups in the hotels of the city. After paying his respects to Father Boulanger, superior of the French Jesuits then in charge of Fordham College, he was to get into touch either by letter or personal meeting with Fathers Brunner, Hubner and Ehrensberger and ascertain from them in what direction and to what point the immigrant party was to continue its journey. Finally, Father Behrens was instructed not to part with any of his companions, it mattered not in whose favor, excepting Fathers Knackstedt and Bapst, who were to remain at the disposition of Father Brocard, the Maryland provincial, himself a Swiss from the Jesuit province of Upper Germany³²

Minoux's final word to Elet before the party sailed from Antwerp was written from that city

Father [Andrew] Ehrensberger arrived to-day as advance-guard of a party of forty-two to forty-five of our men who are to leave here on the 26th of this month or thereabouts. Father Ehrensberger will rejoin Father [Frederick] Hubner without delay, in order to acquaint him with my plans and to take measures with him, as Father Hubner in turn will take measures with you, for the reception and further transportation of my colony. It is nearly my entire scholasticate with its professors and spiritual father. My plan is to reassemble them somewhere so as to preserve their religious spirit and enable them to pursue their studies in due form. It is a matter of supreme importance and I must realize my purpose at all costs. I count fully on help from on high. Heaven will come to my aid, as it came to my aid in furnishing means of transportation for so numerous a colony³³

The exiles, forty-one in number, left Antwerp June 3, 1848, on board a sailing-vessel, the *Providence*, which had been chartered for the voyage. It had been used for freight service only and, as a consequence, suitable accommodations for the travellers were lacking, the hold being hastily fitted out for their use. The captain, a Belgian, was found to be inexperienced and the crew was rough and unreliable, while at the outset a drunken pilot nearly ran the vessel on a rock as she put out from the Scheldt. The *Providence* was forty-six days in covering the distance between Antwerp and New York. That was a longer stay on the ocean than the captain had counted on, and, as a result, the food supply ran low. Down in the hatches the scholastics fell sick one after another until the place took on the appearance of a general hospital.

³² *Expulsio ex Helvetia* Arch. Prov. Low Germ., S. J.

³³ Minoux à Elet, May 16, 1848 (A)

Father Behrens outdid himself in unselfish, unwearied attention to the sick and suffering. He had laid in a stock of dried fruit on his own account before the vessel left Antwerp and was thus enabled out of his private store to relieve in some degree the distress caused by the meagre and unhealthy diet provided by the ship's cook in the last days at sea. To add to the wretched experience, there were violent storms in the ship's path, in one of which her main-mast was carried away. At length, at noon of July 19 the *Providence* docked in New York harbor. On reaching land most of the crew deserted, which made it necessary for four of the scholastics to stand guard on the wharf to watch the vessel and its contents. None of the party seems to have known any English and Father Behrens was hard put to it trying to get trunks and cases through the custom house.

On July 4 Father Brocard wrote to Father De Smet in St. Louis: "A numerous party from the Province of Upper Germany is on the water bound for America. They will be at New York before this letter reaches you, consequently it is useless to ask if you know their destination. It is said they intend to organize an independent colony, but no one seems to know where." Soon came an urgent call to Brocard from the rector of St. John's College, Fordham, to hasten to New York. Father Ehrensberger on his arrival in that city had announced the coming of the exiles. Fordham, however, was without housing facilities or pecuniary means to accommodate so numerous a party and it was hoped that the provincial of Maryland would be in a position to tender them hospitality. On landing in New York Father Behrens succeeded in getting in touch on the same day with Father Brocard, from whom he was expecting definite directions for the execution of the Swiss provincial's plan. In this he was disappointed. Both Brocard and Boulanger were of the opinion that it would be impracticable to set up a separate scholasticate independent of the American provinces. Moreover, no letters of instruction were on hand from Fathers Brunner and Hubner, who had already arrived in St. Louis to negotiate with the Missouri superior for the opening of a separate house of studies for the exiles. At St. Louis as at New York such a project was deemed premature and for the time being impracticable, with the result that Fathers Brunner and Hubner were both assigned to parochial duties. "We arrived in St. Louis June 11 at 4 in the morning," Hubner wrote the next day, the 12th, to the rector of Fordham. "As for myself I shall leave at once for St. Charles to assist our Fathers there in their ministry among the Germans and at the same time study English while waiting for an answer from Europe."

The only word from St. Louis awaiting Father Behrens in New York was from Father Elet, who had signified by letter his desire that

the refugees should come at once to Missouri, besides sending a telegram to the same effect, the first instance recorded of the use by the Missouri Jesuits of this newly introduced method of communication. Father Minoux's cherished plan of a separate scholasticate having thus apparently fallen through, no alternative was left Behrens but to accept for his men the hospitality tendered by the American provincials. At first he hesitated to take this step, as his explicit instructions were to keep the scholastics and their professors together, but later, on the unanimous advice of his four consultors, who pointed out that Father Minoux's instructions were predicated on the possibility, now seen to be illusory, of an independent German house in the West, he decided to divide his personnel between Maryland and Missouri. Father Brocard proposed at first to receive into his province the entire group and this offer Father Larkin, rector of the Jesuit college of St Francis Xavier in New York, urged Father Behrens to accept, but finding in the mail a few hours later a request from the Roman provincial that he give shelter to certain members of his own province of Rome, now also dispersed before the fierce onset of the revolutionary storm, Brocard withdrew his first offer and contented himself with accepting for Maryland eighteen of Behrens's party. A scholastic, Evers, was left at Fordham while the rest of the refugees, twenty-five in number, set off by the fast mail-train for Cincinnati, whence they later proceeded to St Louis. Arrangements for the journey were performed hastily under the circumstances and proved a costly affair. The money, commented Father Behrens, went quite as fast as the train. The four days that he spent in New York disposing of his men in various directions were days of mental strain, almost of bewilderment. Finally on July 22 he saw the last of his charges off from New York.³⁴

Thus relieved temporarily from a painful situation, Father Behrens remained some weeks in the metropolis, whence he wrote several times to Very Rev. Walter Quarter, administrator of the diocese of Chicago, inquiring under what conditions he would allow him to open a house in that city. "Next to Illinois," he informed Minoux, "lie Wisconsin, Michigan etc. It is said that everywhere there are many Germans but no priest, that would be the best location for us."³⁵ Then he proceeds to caution his provincial to be prepared, in case they settled there, to send some English-speaking fathers, for without English nothing was to be accomplished. The administrator of Chicago appears to have made an offer of some kind to Behrens, as Father Anderledy testified to

³⁴ This and the preceding paragraph are based on letters (German) addressed by Father Behrens to his provincial, July 23 (New York), and August 9 (Cincinnati), 1848. Arch. Prov. Low. Germ., S. J.

³⁵ Behrens an Minoux, August 9, 1848.

having seen the house in Chicago which the German exiles were invited to occupy, a very diminutive structure, he declared, that might house a small family but surely not a Jesuit scholasticate.³⁶ About the beginning of September Behrens went on to Cincinnati and later to St. Louis to negotiate with Elet about the ultimate disposition of his men. It was only on returning to Cincinnati that he actually met the vice-provincial, with whom he failed to come to an agreement regarding the execution of the plans entrusted to him by Father Minoux. Thereupon he determined to return at once to Europe and there lay the situation by word of mouth before his superior. This step he took, so he said, only after prayerful deliberation and after applying the well-known rules of St. Ignatius for coming to a prudent decision in important matters.³⁷ Meantime, in September, 1848, sixteen of the German scholastics, under the direction of three of their own professors, had taken up their studies in theology and philosophy at St. Louis University. From Issenheim in Germany, where a novitiate had been opened, Minoux wrote to Elet:

I must have caused you a good deal of trouble by the arrival of so large a party. This elaborate and extemporized expedition was brought about by circumstances which it was scarcely in my power to control. Your prudence and charity will devise means with which to clear up this chaos of things and persons. I thank you immensely for the offer made to Father Hubner to give us two of your scholastics to help us in case we settle down in Milwaukee and to admit some twelve of my scholastics into your seminary. As I cannot give up Europe, I always look to having a mother-house whence I can draw at need the necessary help. Has God other designs? I submit to them in all reverence. Mgr. Henni of Milwaukee has offered me his hospital as a residence and place of shelter for my children. Is this agreeable to you? I have seen Very Rev. Father General and our assistant, Father Villefort. It might be desirable to find a point of conjunction with the Rocky Mountains. Would that be possible from Wisconsin Territory? ³⁸

Another letter from Minoux to Elet followed September 5.

It is sad news indeed that I have about the arrival of my last contingent in New York. A very distressing voyage with suffering and every sort of privation and a landing more distressing still. However, *quod factum est infectum fieri nequit*. Special circumstances led me to send out this numerous party before receiving Father Hubner's letter. Father Ehrensberger gave him personal instructions as to their departure and the approximate time of their arrival. Meanwhile Father Brunner arrived. I was hoping that, once the party were on their way, at least some preparation would be made

³⁶ Cf. *supra*, note 28.

³⁷ Behrens an Minoux, September 26, 1848.

³⁸ Minoux à Elet, July 29, 1848 (A).

to receive them and direct them to some particular place, seeing that Father Brunner and also Father Hubner had judged my plan to be impracticable. Happily Father Brocard had compassion on my poor wayfarers and received a goodly number of them. Perhaps I came too late with my measures. Father Hubner must have laid my plan before you. I thought it a very modest one. I merely had in mind to establish a scholasticate under my charge, say in Chicago or Milwaukee, and thus be free to recall my scholastics to Europe as soon as the need should arise, then in the course of time would follow a small college and some missions. With Father General's authority and consent, I had made Father Brunner superior of this colonizing project and had provided the scholastics with good professors, spiritual fathers, etc. What has become of the project? God seems to will otherwise and my will is His.³⁹

Though Father Minoux's idea of an American Jesuit house of studies under his jurisdiction could not be realized for the moment, it was not entirely abandoned by him nor did Father Elet oppose its execution as soon as circumstances should justify it. In fact, as shall subsequently be seen, he lent his aid to make it a reality. "In the present position of affairs," so the General advised Father Minoux August 3, 1848, "the chief thing to be looked to is that our men in America have whereon to live and a place to live in, afterwards, inquiry must be made whether it is possible to open somewhere a house for the exclusive use of the newcomers."⁴⁰ Three weeks later the General wrote again to the Swiss provincial, who was greatly disappointed over the issue of his plans for America. "Let Father Minoux try to understand his true position before the superiors of the other provinces. In view of the plan adopted for the dispatch of the colonists (*coloni*) and the position of Fathers Elet and Brocard, the latter were within their rights in doing as they did. The necessary thing now is to provide for the welfare of our colonists quietly and with a perfect dependence on those who tender hospitality."⁴¹ In the sequel, the Swiss Jesuits were to attempt with Elet's cooperation to open a college in Milwaukee with funds for that purpose placed at their disposal by the Belgian philanthropist, M. de Boey. Meantime, efforts were being made by the Missouri superior to domicile his European guests in a house of their own. He wrote to Father Minoux

This is the 4th time I have had the honor of writing to your Paternity, without knowing, however, whether a single one of my letters has reached you. Fearing I may be mistaken in the address, I thought the wisest course was to send the letters to our Very Reverend Father [General] to be for-

³⁹ Minoux à Elet, September 5, 1848 (A)

⁴⁰ Roothaan ad Minoux, August 3, 1848 (AA)

⁴¹ Roothaan ad Minoux, August, 1848 (AA)

warded to you I hope you have received at least one of them by this way

If you are still anxious to have a foothold in the United States with Very Reverend Father General's permission I will turn over to you the college of Bardstown, where there are at present 80 boarders and 60 day-scholars, and the Louisville day-school, both in the state of Kentucky There you will have more work than enough for a beginning

As regards the subjects of the Swiss Province, the Institute will be observed in all things in their regard as far as possible and I shall always be ready to submit my conduct to the judgment of Fathers Brunner and Spiecher, in whom I recognize the spirit of St Ignatius I forgot to mention that my predecessor, Very Rev Father Van de Velde, has just been consecrated Bishop of Chicago in Illinois and will offer us his college, now conducted by secular priests, when we shall have professors to send That would be far preferable to Bishop Henni's offer All your children are in good health and the scholastics are pursuing their studies in regular order Father Anderledy has received his points for his *examen ad gradum* Father Schultz is finishing his third year of probation I shall consult Very Rev Father General about Father Anderledy's third year of probation with a view to modifying the exercises, seeing that the loss of Father Van de Velde has left us in great straits I have been forced to accept a new and very extensive mission among the Indians If I had delayed the government would have sent Presbyterians there, I need 2 Fathers at least for this mission and laborers are few ⁴²

The offer made by Father Elet to the Swiss provincial of the Bardstown and Louisville colleges was reported by him some days later to the Father General

I begin by assuring your Paternity that I shall do everything that depends on me to meet your wishes and assure to the dispersed Swiss Province a home in the United States I have already done more than was expected of me by offering Rev Father Minoux the Louisville day-school and the college of Bardstown, two establishments that prosper beyond all expectation and where they could put by money for the support of a novitiate and scholasticate As to professors of English, I would procure such for them and I would give the same attention (provided they wished it) to those establishments and take the same interest in them after the cession as I do at present . In the proposition I have just made relative to our establishments in Kentucky, I have two things in view 1° to aid the Swiss Province in generous fashion, 2° to put myself in a position to send some of our men to the scholasticate at the end of this year ⁴³

In a letter of April 28, 1849, Father Minoux conveyed his thanks to Father Elet for the offer of the two Kentucky houses and for the

⁴² Elet à Minoux, March 1, 1849

⁴³ Elet à Roothaan, March 10, 1849 (AA)

hopes held out by Bishop Van de Velde of Chicago, but before making a decision he referred the entire matter to Father Roothaan for an expression of opinion. Louisville, which according to Father Elet, had a German population of six or eight thousand, appeared to be a promising field for Minoux's men to cultivate as a venture, but the classical school begun there by the Missouri Jesuits was a doubtful experiment never positively sanctioned by the Father General, who now discounted the suggestion that the Swiss Jesuits take it in hand.⁴⁴ As to Bardstown, he did not oppose its acceptance by Minoux, but he pointed out to him that in taking over the college he should also have to assume its debts and other obligations. Moreover, it would have to be ascertained whether the transfer of the institution to a body of European Jesuits would meet with the approval of the Bishop and his clergy, while there remained the difficulty of providing the necessary staff of English-speaking teachers.⁴⁵ In the end Father Minoux, addressing the Missouri superior, declined the offer of Bardstown.

As I announced to you in my last letter, I communicated to Very Reverend Father General the generous offer you had the goodness to make to me of the college and boarding-school of Bardstown. After duly weighing all the observations which he made to me on the subject, I am in a position to declare that I feel myself absolutely incapable of an undertaking as considerable as this. But I must express to you, withal, my due appreciation of the generous offer you have made me, you have had the good will to be of service to me. What shall we do next? The Bishop of Chicago pictures in harrowing terms the pitiable condition of the Germans in his diocese, on the other hand he declares frankly that a college is out of the question, as he is absolutely without funds. He asks for at least twelve evangelical laborers, who, however, must travel at their own expense, but he hopes that the charity of the German Catholics of his diocese will not suffer them to die of hunger. The Bishop has written to this effect to Very Rev. Father General. The latter in turn appeals to my province. As for myself, I refer the matter to your prudent charity. To return to Chicago, I may find it possible to send one or more fathers, I am going to write to Rev. Father Pierling and through him to Rev. Father Bawarowski, they may perhaps have some one to send.⁴⁶

Nothing came of these attempts to employ the Swiss Jesuits in American fields of labor. Father Minoux's first duty was after all to his own province and instead of sending additional men to America he was soon recalling his expatriated subjects thence to answer the calls

⁴⁴ "L'offre du College de Bardstown qu'il a fait à la Province Suisse pourrait aller, mais non pas pour Louisville" Roothaan à Elet, April 28, 1849 (AA)

⁴⁵ Roothaan à Minoux, May 2, 1849 (AA)

⁴⁶ Minoux à Elet, May 26, 1849 (A)

for ministerial aid that were now coming in from every quarter in Germany.

Meantime, the precise status of the Swiss Jesuits domiciled in Missouri as regarded dependence on their superior in Europe presented a problem which gave rise to a momentary misunderstanding. Father Elet touched on the problem in a communication to the General

The expenses I have had to incur for lodging, clothing etc for our poor exiles of Switzerland have been considerable enough, but divine Providence has come to our assistance. If some alms could be sent us from Europe, we shall dispose of them without difficulty, but if there is nothing to hope for from that quarter, your Paternity need not worry, we shall not die of hunger. The only thing which bothers me and which must sooner or later give rise to difficulty, is to have in my province a number of persons who think they depend on a provincial in Europe. But this matter I leave to your wisdom.⁴⁷

To the Missouri vice-provincial Father Roothaan now explained that there could not be two provincials in the same province except in the sense that the provincial of the exiles remained their "proprietor (*proprietarius*) and true Father," although for the time being they were under the direction of another provincial.⁴⁸ Moreover, "the province whence each individual exile comes has a right to him," and, again, "the right to a scholastic belongs to the province that has incurred the greater part of the expenses of his education."⁴⁹ It was obvious then that Father Minoux had a claim to such of his men as were resident in Missouri and could recall them at his option, but he was not to do so without giving due notice to the Missouri superior. "Father Elet has been advised," the General wrote to the Maryland provincial, "that the incorporation of the exiles into his own province cannot take place."⁵⁰

The advent of the German exiles to the United States had indeed been welcomed by Father Elet as bringing with it, so it seemed to him, a providential solution of many of the difficulties under which the Missouri Vice-province had long been laboring. It was pitifully undermanned and the tasks it was attempting were out of all proportion to the size of the staff engaged. There was more than an offhand hyperbole in Elet's statement that every man of his jurisdiction was doing the work of four. To shortage of men were added pressing economic problems. Father Behrens on landing in New York had heard

⁴⁷ Elet à Roothaan, October 24, 1849 (AA)

⁴⁸ Roothaan ad Elet, April 7, 1849 (AA)

⁴⁹ Roothaan ad Elet, February 17, 1849 (AA)

⁵⁰ Roothaan ad Brocard, March 5, 1849 (AA)

that the Missouri Vice-province was on the way to bankruptcy and this circumstance, so he declared, had much to do with his decision not to quarter his entire party on the western Jesuits. However, though the arrival of the refugees in St. Louis added considerably to the problem of subsistence, the unexpected presence in the vice-province of so many men trained in the best traditions of the order and ripe for apostolic work was regarded in the light of a welcome stroke of good fortune. Almost at once Elet destined Father Spicher to be master of novices. Fathers Loretan and Fruzzini, who had just completed their divinity studies in St. Louis University, he would make professors of theology. Others of the fathers were installed as pastors, Brunner at St. Charles, Hubner at Dardenne, Ehrensberger in Osage County, Missouri, Wipern and Weber in Cincinnati, Gailland among the Indians. Additional helpers from Europe were also asked for. "Father Behrens would like to return!" Elet wrote to the Swiss provincial, July 15, 1849. "Let him do so and quickly. I shall receive him with open arms. . . . We have just lost another Father, the best mathematician in the vice-province [Maessele]. He died of the cholera, which at the moment is making terrible ravages in this country. In St. Louis 5000 have died of it in the last 2 [?] months. How many Catholics die without seeing a priest, as there is a shortage of priests everywhere! Think of us and send us some apostolic men."⁵¹

In still another communication dated a few months before the hard-pressed Father Elet portrayed for the Father General the difficulties that beset him.

I am awaiting the Spanish Fathers and some scholastics of the same nationality with the greatest impatience. Their coming depends on your Paternity and the glory of God is so much concerned in this affair! Send good Fathers Irissari and Parrondo, who speak English as well as Spanish, the last-named especially, who left America with such keen regret. The personnel of our Vice-Province discourages me. Father Van de Velde gone. Father Nota has left the Society. Father Cotting is in another province. Father Arnoudt is *hors de combat*. Fathers Druyts and O'Loghlen are in ruined health. Your Paternity told me that we cannot count too surely upon the Swiss fathers, who so far have been occupied principally with their scholastics. . . . I have almost no trained subjects and if I cannot count upon the Swiss for three or four years to replace some of our men I must renounce the idea of having any [trained subjects] in the future. And yet if my efforts were seconded, I should be able before the end of my provincialate to put everything on a good footing both as to material things and personnel.⁵²

⁵¹ Elet à Minoux, July 15, 1849 (AA)

⁵² Elet à Roothaan, March 16, 1849 (AA)

In his efforts to secure recruits Father Elet, as was seen, made overtures to his Swiss guests to affiliate themselves permanently with Missouri. From lines written at this time by Father Anderledy to his provincial in Europe it may be learned in what light he and his associates regarded their position in the vice-province.

The province possesses three colleges and, if possible, two more are to be built next year. The Americans, so it seems, wish to create employment in order to keep us newcomers occupied, so that returning to Europe, if this step should come to be considered, will be all the more difficult. They seem to wish us to pass over for good into their province. In my case the rumor is afloat that I have been already transferred. If the question is put up to me definitely, my answer shall be: I am ready to die wherever it shall please you, my Provincial, Father Minoux, but I shall never forget what my province has done for me and so shall not pass over into any other.⁵³

Another comment on the same situation is found in a memoir drawn up in French by Father Friedrich, who after a year's stay in St. Louis as professor of dogmatic theology returned to Europe.

The provincial, Father Elet, received us in St. Louis with great eagerness, and from the first moment of our arrival judged us destined by Providence to reinforce his feeble province. According to him, the Swiss Jesuits, that is to say, the Jesuits of Upper Germany, ought to forget entirely and at once their former Province, since a much vaster field of labor opens up before them in America, which is probably destined by God to become the asylum of liberty and of religion in place of Europe already grown old and decayed. Pius IX has manifested his desire that Ours, generally exiled and persecuted in Europe, should sail for America and devote themselves to the service of the Church in a land where, as Father Elet adds, you are received with open arms. Let no one think any more of returning to Europe, for it is threatened with impending dissolution. All the signs of the times announce for it a total overthrow of the existing order, the epoch of kings and princes is about to end and God avenges Himself on them for the injustices they have committed by the ruin of kingdoms, which He will replace by republics.⁵⁴

Little by little Father Minoux succeeded in reorganizing his scattered province. Before the dispersion its activities had been restricted to Switzerland. Now a vast new field of labor opened up before it in Germany itself, awakening to new and vigorous life after the revolution of 1848. All of Elet's hopes for retaining his European visitors permanently or at least for several years on his staff vanished as the provincial of Upper Germany began to summon his men back to Europe.

⁵³ *Stimmen aus Maria Laach*, 42-249.

⁵⁴ *Quelques notices sur l'Amérique*. Arch. Prov. Low Germ., S. J.

Our account of the episode may be brought to an end with some pertinent extracts from Father Minoux's letters to Father Elet

Brussels, July 24, 1849 Father Ehrensberger would be of great help to me, in fact would be almost indispensable in Westphalia, where a vast field for missionary work has just been opened up. If you could replace him, what an immense service you would do me!

Issenheim, August 28, 1849 I hoped to see Father Anderledy arrive with Father Friedrich, once more I urge upon you my request that you send back those who cannot become acclimatized.

Strasburg, November 30, 1849 Your beautiful map of the United States of America is hung up in the corridor of the Novitiate of Issenheim. I already wrote to you that we are working in Westphalia and that we are in lack of workers. Now we are called to the Grand Duchy of Baden. Already a mission has been given there and others are asked for. We are truly in straits and cannot meet so many demands.

Strasburg, January 29, 1850 In Germany we are gaining ground, but we shall need a greater force than we now possess. I miss Father Ehrensberger.

Strasburg, May 5, 1850 My hopes in America vanish more and more. Westphalia, the Grand Duchy of Baden, the principalities of Hechingen and Sigmaringen, the kingdom of Württemberg, claim all my forces, I dare say that with all my subjects together we should not be able to supply the needs that confront us in these parts. Moreover, my young people ought to apply themselves to German, I fear that in America they may forget it somewhat. This Germany of ours, so long at the mercy of Protestantism, may be compared to your own country. You have proof of what it is like in the emigrants who reach you from here. Do not think that you receive the refuse merely, not at all, and I make bold to say on this occasion, the little thieves get hung, the big ones, well, let no one dare to lay a finger on them. You are distressed for lack of subjects, we are going to be in like case. To meet the situation, I must take measures in time. Still, I should not like to be charged with parsimony or avarice. I shall be as generous as I can, due regard being had for the rule about sending subjects to the foreign missions. Here then are my arrangements:

- 1 I agree to leave in America such as believe themselves called thereto after mature consideration on their part of this calling in the Lord, as also those who, while still in Europe, asked of Very Rev. Father General to be sent to America.
- 2 So much conceded, I call back the Juniors and recently ordained priests, as Father Anderledy and others.
- 3 The theologians shall make their theology *en regle*, after theology they shall come to Europe to make their third year.
- 4 Fathers and Brothers alike shall have the opportunity of looking into their vocation for America, and those who find themselves without such [vocation], shall return in due season. This provision will comfort many hearts and confirm vocations.

5 I except in every case those who have gone to America at their own petition or have been assigned to it by our Very Rev Father General

For the rest, I rather believe that parting with these subjects will not prove so disagreeable to you, seeing that my men find it difficult to fall in with American ways

Munster, Westphalia, June 11, 1850 In recalling Father Anderledy, I take for granted you are able to find a substitute for him from among your own subjects. Father Ehrensberger will also have to come back, his letters lead me to the conclusion that he will be of the number of those who, unable *coram Domino* to decide for America, will return to Europe. I should be very much distressed were you to have taken in hand new enterprises in reliance on my men who are priests or will become such. I always said I wished the door left open for their recall.

Strasburg, October 24, 1850 I have just received your letter of September 3. It affords me very great pleasure with the news it contains that next year you will be in a position to get along without my subjects and that you will be good enough to send back to me all that have no vocation for the foreign missions and all who ask to return, Fathers, Scholastics and Brothers. I should be very ungrateful were I to forget the very great charity you showed in receiving my scholastics, I shall always be infinitely grateful for it.

Strasburg, January 7, 1851 (To Bishop Van de Velde of Chicago) I received in good time your letter of the 27th of November past. I thank you for it. The heart and soul of a Bishop speak therein unmistakably, the honor of the Church and the salvation of souls are your only concern. Would that I were able in every way to respond to your views and plans. But it seems that the words of our Lord Jesus Christ must be verified at all times and in every place, *messis quidem multa, operari autem pauci*. The sudden and unexpected changes that have occurred in Germany, which is my province, have modified my plans in America to a considerable degree. On all sides I meet with reproach for having sent away such a force of men, now they offer me money to bring them back, and even appeal directly to the Holy Father to obtain perforce what I was not ready to grant. All the parishes, the most important of the towns, which only two years back were the resort of the proletariat and the hot-bed of agitators, are now asking me for missionaries. The fight for liberty of education is on, if it ends happily, then indeed we do not know which way to turn. Where are we to find missionaries and professors? You see, then, my embarrassment (A)

Only a minority of Father Minoux's exiled subjects, whose final status he was thus endeavoring to arrange with the vice-provincial of Missouri, eventually remained in America. Of the thirty-eight resident in the West in 1848, fifteen were remaining in 1854 and this number decreased still further in the next few years. In the group that definitely cast in their fortunes with the middlewestern Jesuits were Fathers Wip-pern, Goeldlin, Schultz, Weber, Gailland, Tschieder, Nussbaum and

Haering They proved a valuable accession to the vice-province of Missouri and their ministry was lavished for years with splendid results on parishes and schools in various points of the Middle West

§ 5 RECURRING PROBLEMS

The finances of the vice-province, in a critical state at the time Father Van de Velde began to fill the post of vice-provincial, had been put by him on a sound basis before he was succeeded in office by Father Elet Writing to Archbishop Kenrick from Chicago, where he was now Bishop, Van de Velde expressed his objections on economic grounds to the proposed transfer of St. Louis University to the College Farm "Had he [Father Elet] thought proper to consult me on the subject, I certainly would have dissuaded him from doing so, for fear of seeing the province again involved in pecuniary difficulties God only knows how much I have had to work and how much I have suffered (mentally) to extricate it from its former difficulties and how much I would pity any one who should have to go through the same process"⁵⁵

A letter written by Elet to the General early in March, 1849, dwells on the economic status of the vice-province at that date

The novices passed a very dreary winter in the old novitiate house, the roof of which has rotted and no longer offers any protection against the rain With 1500 dollars or 8000 francs I can have the new house finished so as to make it habitable, but where shall I find them? St. Louis University, having paid the Madame de Ghyseghem debt and owning still the better part of the farm from which it is just now deriving an annual revenue of 3000 francs and having more than 150 boarders and 60 day-scholars, finds itself in abundance The church, which should belong to the University, belongs to the province, since the latter carries the debt of 40,000 dollars The free-school attached to the church is still a burden upon the province, and not upon the University and costs annually 800 dollars Next, there is the support of the scholasticate and the novitiate, and to meet all this I have

Tax on the University	1,000 dollars
Do on the College of Cincinnati	1,000 "
Revenue from the church, expenses deducted	1,500 "
Bardstown College	600 "
Interest on 6,000 dollars at 3 per 100	180 "
	<u>4,280</u> "
Support of the scholasticate	2,000 "
" " " novitiate	1,000 "
Interest on 40,000 dollars	2,000 "
Contingent expenses for travelling etc	700 "
Free school of St. Louis	800 "
	<u>6,500</u> "

⁵⁵ Van de Velde to Kenrick, March 4, 1849 (A).

Deficit to be supplied by alms, 2,200 dollars, almost 12,000 francs

So far your kindness has provided for the payment of the interest dues in Belgium, thus leaving a smaller deficit to be supplied here by alms, but your kindness is not all powerful. Could not the University take over the church or at least assume the expenses of the free-school by applying to it the tuition money of which it has no need, in view especially of the number of boarders? This is only a suggestion. Your Paternity will decide and can write on the matter to the rector of the University. With all that I shall still be without a penny to give to the missionaries, but I am hoping the [Association of the] Propagation [of the Faith] will resume its activities. If I knew that the rough outline I have set down would cause your Paternity any anxiety, I should be strongly tempted not to send it. It is evident that the University by selling the other half of the farm could have more than is necessary to pay the entire debt on the church, even independently of such sale, it could do the same by various economies.⁵⁶

Elet's apprehension that the idea he endeavored to convey to the Father General of the financial situation in the vice-province might inspire the latter with some unnecessary alarm was borne out by the event. A few months later he was expressing the fear that Elet, as Verhaegen before him, was involving the vice-province in pecuniary embarrassment. Father Elet hastened to explain to Father Roothaan that, as a matter of fact, debts were being liquidated and would be liquidated still further if only he were authorized to transfer the College Church in St. Louis from the vice-province to the University. The building of the church had been financed through loans obtained by the vice-province from the Belgian Jesuit province and M. De Boey, the expectation being that the surplus revenue of the church would go far towards the support of the novitiate and the scholasticate. It was now proposed by Elet that the University in taking over the church should assume its debts. If he was able to finish the new building at the novitiate, so he informed Father Roothaan, it was to him he owed it. The General had in fact paid the interest on the Belgian debts and had forwarded to Elet a thousand dollars which had been sent him as a gift by Bryan Mullanphy of St. Louis. With the above mentioned debts extinguished, the vice-province would be free of any financial incumbrance, besides possessing a capital of fifteen thousand dollars for the support of the scholastics.⁵⁷ The loan from M. De Boey was for twenty thousand dollars. At his death, which occurred early in January, 1850, title to this loan was transferred in his will to Father Roothaan, who in turn cancelled it in favor of the vice-province of Missouri. "I have the honor to inform you," Father Roothaan wrote to Elet April

⁵⁶ Elet à Roothaan, March 1, 1849 (AA)

⁵⁷ Elet à Roothaan, June 13, 1849. (AA)

18, 1850, "that M. De Boey having left *at my disposition* the claim which he had on the Province of Missouri, I remit it entirely in your favor, on condition that you spend the equivalent of the revenue of this sum for the benefit of the Indian missions immediately dependent on you, either by lending them effective [financial] aid or by training up recruits for them"⁵⁸

The transfer of the College Church to the University was effected in the course of 1850, the latter agreeing to pay to the vice-province annual interest on a sum equivalent to that which the latter had expended on the church. Even with this substantial aid the procurator of the vice-province, Father De Smet, found it a problem to carry on A financial statement from him for the year ending November 1, 1850, showed an endowment-fund of \$48,900, which at five per cent yielded an annual revenue of \$2,445 This sum scarcely sufficed for the support of the novitiate, especially in view of the buildings already erected or in process of erection These included a house for the nineteen novitiate Negroes, a barn, a stable, a bakery, and a butcher-shop, besides fences etc "Everything there was in a state of dilapidation." Firewood and lumber had been exhausted and so a fine strip of woods, one hundred and twenty arpents in extent, was purchased for two thousand dollars, one-half of its actual value "The number of novices is 33 Allowing only 50 dollars a year for food and clothing for each novice, (the farm supplying many things), the sum needed for their support has been 1650 [dollars] Then comes the scholasticate now in part at the University. As many of the scholastics have only an hour of class a day and as none of them teach more than two hours so that they may have leisure time to apply to their own studies, the vice-province undertakes to pay the University 50 dollars for each of them for his annual support"⁵⁹

In the decades of the nineteenth century that saw the great influx of Catholic immigration from Europe the Gospel maxim that the harvest is ripe but the laborers are few was being verified in appalling fashion Catholic schools and priestly workers were everywhere the need of the hour and these could not be supplied in anything like measure adequate to the demand. The result was that the Jesuits of the Middle West found themselves involved in a measure of ministerial and educational endeavor altogether out of proportion to the slender personnel at their command. The Maryland superior visiting his western subjects in 1827 reported to Rome that they seemed to be doing the work of twice their number, a quarter of a century later Father Gleizal declared that his associates were each carrying burdens

⁵⁸ Roothaan à Elet, April 18, 1850 (A) Cf also Chap XV, § 2

⁵⁹ De Smet à Roothaan, November 1, 1850 (AA)

which should ordinarily be shared between three. "Many of them, I admit," wrote Elet to the General, "have not the learning of the Europeans. It is not their fault nor the fault of their superiors. Stress of circumstances is the cause of it. After all they know enough to exercise with profit the functions of the sacred ministry. They are men ready to bear the heat and the burden of the day as the two Hoeckens, Schoenmackers, Bax, D'Hope, Driscoll, Damen, De Coen etc." ⁶⁰ The lot of the Jesuit scholastic teacher was not an easy one. More often than not he was engaged at the same time in getting up his philosophy and theology. What made Father Behrens in 1848 hesitate to domicile his men in American scholasticates was the fear, as he explained it, that they might be educated in American fashion, teaching and studying at the same time. It was indeed, and regrettably so, the American fashion at the moment, but circumstances had made it such. In 1850 with a staff of only some two hundred the vice-province was conducting three boarding-colleges, a day-college and nineteen residences. When the time came for the scholastics to be normally advanced to their studies in divinity they could not be withdrawn from the colleges for lack of substitutes ⁶¹. Hence the makeshift practice of requiring them to study while still employed in the absorbing duties of the class-room.

That a situation so abnormal should escape the notice of or pass without protest from the vigilant and far-seeing Jesuit who sat in the General's chair in Rome, John Roothaan, was not to be expected. The more work, the fewer the chances of literary and scientific development for the men, with the result in the long run of a gradually deteriorating personnel. Against this evil Father Roothaan inveighed unsparingly. "I am sometimes afraid," he wrote to Father Elet, "that the thing I have been combating for 20 years back in American Superiors, generally without success, may happen also to you, letting yourself, namely, be engaged entirely in external activities (through zeal, this of course I understand), while losing sight of the importance of giving proper training to the young men of the Society." ⁶² Again "I do not cease to regret the enfeeblement which this interesting vice-province is undergoing as a result of the inordinate output of energy imposed upon it right along by its new establishments. For the rest, I am not oblivious of the labors in the thick of which the vice-province was born and has grown up even till now." ⁶³ And again "The vice-province of Missouri despite the continued advice and protests of the Father General has gone on charging itself with new engagements. No new colleges, no

⁶⁰ Elet à Roothaan, August 17, 1849 (AA)

⁶¹ *Infra*, Chap. XVIII § 5, *passim*

⁶² Roothaan à Elet, July 15, 1849 (AA)

⁶³ Roothaan à Elet, November 14, 1850 (AA)

new missions”⁶⁴ To these protests from headquarters Father Elet made answer by disclaiming any present intention to extend the range of his activities “As to new undertakings, Your Paternity has nothing to fear on that score I should need a very explicit command to bring myself to any such step. The Bishops of Vincennes, Detroit and Chicago have made me magnificent offers I answered that we could not consider them before five years.”⁶⁵

Within a half year of the time these lines were written Bishop Spalding of Louisville communicated to Father Elet his earnest desire that the Jesuits assume charge of his college of St. Mary’s in Lebanon County, Kentucky It would appear that the vice-provincial, in referring the petition to the Father General, as he did, cherished no serious desire himself that it meet with a favorable response At all events, even before the General’s letter arrived from Rome, he had signified to the Bishop through Father De Smet his inability to accede to the request⁶⁶ But Father Roothaan was of the mind that the proposition should not have been entertained even for a moment and he expressed himself on the subject with feeling

I am astonished that you should even have given this matter serious consideration as though there were any possibility of your assuming new obligations when those you already carry are so overwhelming and when it threatens nothing less than the entire ruin of your Vice-Province, as I have warned you repeatedly before this I see in it all zeal indeed, but a blind zeal, which makes no provision for the future How can the Vice-Province subsist when time is not allowed for training its men, when the immature and such as lack the necessary knowledge are employed in the sacred ministry, with really serious and almost inevitable danger of going wrong in many things whether in the pulpit or confessional, to say nothing of your poorly equipped teachers with so many schools to teach Pressed by conscience, I absolutely forbid you, Father, to enter on negotiations for the acceptance of any new college or residences For well-meaning bishops who make demands on us there is a ready excuse *hominem non habeo* In vain will affairs of this kind be thrown back on me I cannot, I cannot, I cannot, as a matter of conscience, nor shall I probably be able to do anything, even though I am to carry this heavy burden of the generalate for ten years longer, unless things happen in Europe which certainly are not to be desired⁶⁷

But Father Roothaan deprecated any misunderstanding of his words, not wishing the impression to be left that he doubted even for

⁶⁴ Roothaan à Elet, July 30, 1850 (AA)

⁶⁵ Elet à Roothaan, August 17, 1850 (AA)

⁶⁶ De Smet to Spalding, April 12, 1851 (A)

⁶⁷ Roothaan ad Elet, April 9, 1851 (A)

a moment of the thorough good-will of the members of the vice-province and especially of its superiors or was unmindful of the many excellent things that he knew were being accomplished in their midst. It was only against the excesses of what he considered a mistaken zeal that his words of warning were directed.⁶⁸

§ 6 CLOSING DAYS

Father Elet's active tenure of the office of vice-provincial lasted scarcely three years, but brief as it was it saw important steps taken towards the expansion of the vice-province. In the very first months of his incumbency he was called upon to negotiate the transfer to Jesuit control of St. Joseph's College in Bardstown, Kentucky, a business handled in its initial stages by Father Van de Velde. To him also fell the task of setting on foot the new college of St. Aloysius in Louisville, Kentucky, which opened its doors in 1849. The transfer of the flourishing Potawatomi mission from Sugar Creek in the present Linn County, Kansas, to a site on the Kansas River later occupied by St. Mary's College was also carried out during his administration. The routine visitation of the scattered houses of the vice-province set at points as far apart as Cincinnati and the Osage and Potawatomi missions of eastern Kansas, involved a strain which would have taxed the physical forces of one many times more robust than Father Elet. Some casual lines of his to the Father General reveal the hardships he was called upon to undergo in this connection. "I have a good many things to communicate to you in regard to the Indian missions, but I am forced to put off doing so as my table is covered with letters and I feel tired and worn out after a journey which obliged me to spend 9 nights in the open on the hard ground and to live almost all the time on a little meat hastily cooked in the open air and on biscuit as hard as brick. Still, I am only fatigued, not ill."⁶⁹

Elet had all along been constitutionally delicate, an affection of the lungs having manifested itself while he was still young, though by discreet and careful living he had managed to preserve a measure of health sufficient to enable him to be of valuable service to his order in positions of trust ever since his ordination in 1827. In the autumn of 1850 his health took a decided turn for the worse, he undertook nevertheless a business trip to New Orleans, from which he returned to St. Louis in January, 1851, weakened to such a degree that it was necessary for him to take to bed. Though rallying for a while from this spell, he never afterwards regained the measure of health he had previously enjoyed.

⁶⁸ Roothaan à Elet, August 20, 1851 (AA)

⁶⁹ Elet à Roothaan, October 13, 1849 (AA)

but thenceforward suffered a gradual decline. On June 6 his socius, or assistant, Father De Smet, left St. Louis to attend the "Great Indian Council" near Fort Laramie, the government having requested that he endeavor to promote the interests of peace by his personal presence at that important gathering. Deprived thus of the services of his assistant at a time when declining health incapacitated him for the discharge of his official duties, Elet found it necessary to call to his aid the master of novices, Father Gleizal, to whom he entrusted the temporary management of the vice-province. In June 1851, Father Gleizal undertook an official visitation of the houses east of the Mississippi, in the course of which he had the painful duty of reporting to St. Louis the sudden death of one of the most capable members of the vice-province, Mr. Julius Johnston, who, though not yet a priest, had been filling the post of prefect of studies in St. Xavier College, Cincinnati.

Some important steps looking to normal Jesuit procedure in the vice-province were taken during Father Elet's administration. For the first time in years it was arranged to have a considerable number of the younger men begin their studies or resume them after previous interruption and delay. At the opening of the session, 1851-1852, a group of nine, six of them priests and three scholastics, were registered at Georgetown College as students of theology. It is significant of the extent to which members of the vice-province had to be employed at this period in important posts without previous normal preparation that two of the number, Fathers De Blicke and Oakley, had already been at the head of colleges in the capacity of rector. Besides thus beginning to solve the long perplexing problem of the education of the young men of the Society, Father Elet, through his substitute Father Gleizal, also managed to push forward various other matters of business which the Father General had been pressing upon his attention. At a meeting of the rectors of the vice-province held in St. Louis in August, 1851, a carefully drawn up body of regulations regarding college administration and studies as also disciplinary and religious life was promulgated. Elet's concern for the well-being of the Society he loved so well did not abate even while the sands of his earthly career were running out. "I am greatly distressed over the serious condition of your health," Father Roothaan wrote him a week before his death, "but I congratulate your Reverence all the more than even with bodily strength worn out you have had the will to take in hand and bring to a happy issue for God's greater glory the business which you have brought to my attention." On the whole, however, Father Elet's administration failed to meet with the approval of the Father General with the result that the latter proceeded to relieve him definitely of his charge. On August 25, 1851, Father William Stack Murphy of the province of France

arrived in St. Louis as Visitor and vice-provincial of Missouri. On the following day he proceeded to Florissant to confer with his predecessor, who had been removed thither from St. Louis University.

Father Elet was now struggling with the fatal malady that had already wrought havoc among the members of his family, his brother, Father Charles Louis Elet, of the Missouri Vice-province, and several sisters having died before him of consumption. On August 15 he was informed by the rector of the novitiate that his condition gave no hope of recovery. "Good news," he answered, "good news, better I could not receive." During his last illness his devout religious nature came constantly to the surface and all around him were deeply impressed by his edifying piety. On one occasion, when hardly able to walk, he dragged himself to the chapel and there remained some ten minutes in devout adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. On October 1 toward evening the Viaticum was administered to him. Though he was scarcely able to breathe, his lips frequently moved in prayer and he pronounced most affectionately the holy names of Jesus and Mary. To a prayer in honor of the Immaculate Conception, which was not at the time a defined dogma of the Church, he added the words, "*credo, credo, Domine Jesu*." One of the last requests he made was that no solemnity should accompany his funeral services though he expressed a wish that the students of the University be asked to offer one holy communion for the repose of his soul. He had been especially drawn to intercessory prayer to the Guardian Angels and when rector in St. Louis had enjoined the fathers of his community to offer Mass in their honor so as to obtain their special protection over the house. He now expressed an earnest desire to die on the morrow, the feast of the Holy Angels. The next day his strength steadily declined and toward midnight it was proposed to give him the last absolution. He assented, saying, "yes, it is time." Some minutes later a beautiful prayer of St. Charles Borromeo was read to him. At the passage where the saint acknowledges that he has sinned, but adds that "he had never denied the Father, Son and Holy Ghost," Elet exclaimed, "never, never." He then affectionately kissed the crucifix for the last time and two or three minutes before midnight, while the last absolution was again pronounced, he quietly expired.⁷⁰ It was the second day of October, 1851. Six days later the new vice-provincial, Father Murphy, announced the passing of his predecessor to the Father General.

Would to God that the telegraph reached to Rome as it does to Louisville and Cincinnati. Good Father Elet would have had the advantage of your prayers a few hours after his death, which took place at Florissant

⁷⁰ Contemporary account apparently by Father Gleizal (A)

Tuesday last at midnight. No agony, prayer on his lips up to the last sigh, and a smile, which even death did not take away . . . Three weeks before my arrival he had received the last sacraments, but improvement soon became so sensible that we hoped to save him. He was a pious man and full of faith. He rests by the side of his brother not far from Father De Theux and Father Meurin of the old Society, whose remains have been transferred to Florissant. Though it has pleased God to call him, I thank Him for having left the Father ample time to put me in touch with the affairs of the vice-province. I am counting much on his prayers.⁷¹

To Father Elet belongs the distinction of having introduced among the Missouri Jesuits the practice of public prayer and devotion in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He encouraged the pious custom of receiving holy communion on the first Friday of the month and also of attendance on that day at a special service consisting chiefly in an act of reparation recited by the priest during Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Those who were aware of his very great devotion to the Guardian Angels and to the Sacred Heart of the Redeemer could not but note the happy circumstance that his death took place on the festival of the Holy Angels as also on the eve of the first Friday of the month.

⁷¹ Murphy à Roothaan, October 8, 1851 (AA)

