

CHAPTER XXXVI

ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE, BARDSTOWN

§ I THE COMING OF THE JESUITS

In 1848, two years after the withdrawal of the French Jesuits from Kentucky to New York, where at the invitation of Bishop Hughes they took over St John's College, Fordham, their brethren of the Vice-province of Missouri entered Kentucky to assume the direction of St Joseph's College in Bardstown, seat of Nelson County and forty miles southeast of Louisville

Bardstown lies on an elevated plain three quarters of a mile north of the Beech Fork of Salt River Inconspicuous enough today, this Kentucky town once lifted its head high among the centers of civilized life in the Middle West The legislature of Virginia chartered it in 1788, naming it Bairdstown (later changed to Bardstown) after David Baird, one of the original proprietors of the hundred acres on which the settlement was laid out To this forward-looking inland town came lawyers in great numbers, many of them, as Judge Rowan, Benjamin Hardin, Charles Wickliffe, John Pope and John Hays attaining such distinction in their profession that the Bardstown bar became the most brilliant west of the Alleghenies with the possible exception of that of Lexington It is told of Benjamin Hardin, whom John Randolph of Roanoke, called "Kitchen Knife" for his inelegant, but trenchant and incisive oratory, that when a young lawyer living in Elizabethtown he was engaged by a murderer to look after his case "until the big lawyers came down from Bardstown." The insinuation was not lost on Hardin, who said to his wife, "come, let us pack up and move at once to Bardstown or else I shall never be called a big lawyer" To Bardstown he accordingly went, realizing there in the course of time his youthful dream of forensic eminence ¹

¹ Lewis Collins, *History of Kentucky*, 2 644-647 "It [Bardstown] was early known as a mart of trade and as a social, educational, political and legal centre

Its members [Bardstown bar] were the leaders of the profession for many counties around No bar in the State was equal to it—none surpassed it west of the Alleghenies To associate and compete with such men was (as the phrase goes) a liberal education These legal Goliaths were the awe and terror of neighboring bars" Lucius P Little, *B Hardin, His Times and Contemporaries* (Louisville, 1887), pp 27, 170.

As in the early civil, so in the pioneer Catholic history of Kentucky, Bardstown was long a center of importance. More precisely, it was the actual cradle of Catholicism in that state. Among the first Catholic settlers, mostly all emigrants from Maryland, to arrive in Kentucky were George Hart and William Coomes, who entered the state as early as 1774 or 1775, settling first at Harrodstown and later in or near Bardstown, where numerous Catholic families had already made their home. In Bardstown itself, at the time of its incorporation, November 4, 1788, there was not, it is believed, a single Catholic resident. Two years later there were but two, Anthony Sanders and Nehemiah Webb, a convert from Quakerism, both of them young unmarried men. For the rapidly growing congregation in and around Bardstown was built in 1798 the first St. Joseph's Church, of logs, about a mile southwest of the town, in the middle of the graveyard where most of the early Catholic settlers of Bardstown and its vicinity lie buried. The line of pioneer priests, nearly all of them sent by Bishop Carroll of Baltimore, was led by Father C. Whelan, an Irish Capuchin, who reached the Pottinger Creek settlement near Bardstown in the early summer of 1787. He was followed three years later by Father William de Rohan, who built Holy Cross Church, the first erected in the state. Then in 1793 came Father Stephen Theodore Badin, followed in later years by other missionaries, of whom the most notable was Father Charles Nerinckx, a commanding figure at the threshold of Kentucky Catholicism and a pioneer and pathfinder deserving of record in any adequate list of the makers of the American West.²

Religious orders and congregations established themselves in the state in the first decades of the last century, all within a radius of some twenty or thirty miles of Bardstown. In 1805 came the Trappists and in 1806 the Dominicans, the first settling on Pottinger's Creek in Nelson County and the latter at St. Rose's near Springfield, in the present Washington County. In 1812 two congregations of nuns were founded in Kentucky, the Sisters of Loretto by Father Nerinckx and the Sisters of Charity by Father, subsequently Bishop, David. The Sisters of Loretto opened their first convent in 1812 at St. Charles, their mother-house being later established some eleven miles west of Lebanon in Marion County, while in the same year the Sisters of Charity opened a convent, likewise their first, at St. Thomas, Nelson County, their mother-house being at a later period fixed at Nazareth, two miles northwest of Bardstown. Nowhere in fact in the West in the opening years

² Webb, *Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky*, 24-27, 57-67, Sister Mary Ramona Mattingly, *The Catholic Church on the Kentucky Frontier 1785-1812* (Washington, 1936)

of the past century did Catholicism offer fairer prospects of future development than in the district of southwest Kentucky, of which Bardstown was the recognized centre. To it accordingly fell the distinction of being chosen as the see of the first diocese erected in the trans-Alleghany country, Bishop Benedict Flaget being installed as its incumbent in 1811. In 1817 he began the erection of a cathedral, consecrated two years later, which in its day was the most stately and capacious house of worship in the state. For thirty years Bishop Flaget resided at Bardstown, guiding from there the destinies of the Church in the Middle States as far west as the Mississippi and as far north as the Great Lakes. Then, in 1841, Bardstown having in the meantime lost to Louisville its one-time distinction of being the Catholic center of Kentucky, the see of the diocese was transferred to the latter city.

To Bishop Flaget, a man aflame with zeal for the house of God, no need of his diocese appealed more poignantly than the need of Christian education. St Joseph's College dated from 1819 when a small day-school was opened in the basement of the diocesan seminary in Bardstown. The south wing of the college building was erected in 1820, the north wing in 1823, and the middle section, which joined the wings, a little later. Boarders were admitted as early as 1820. In May, 1825, Father M. Martial arrived at Bardstown from Louisiana with fifty young men whom he entered as students in St Joseph's College. The institution they had been attending had suspended classes and Father Martial was authorized by their parents to bring them to Bardstown. This was the beginning of the steady and widespread patronage which the college thereafter enjoyed from Mississippi and Louisiana. Numerous distinguished citizens of Kentucky and other states were educated in this pioneer institution during the period of diocesan control, among them Governor Powell of Kentucky, Governors Roman and Wickliffe of Louisiana, James Speed, attorney-general in President Lincoln's administration, Otho R. Singleton and William R. Miles, members of Congress from Mississippi, Rt. Rev. John McGill, Bishop of Richmond and Theodore O'Hara, author of the classic elegy, the *Brouac of the Dead*³.

The management of the college by a staff of diocesan priests few

³ *Idem*, 276-282. "Col. Theodore O'Hara, poet, journalist and soldier, was the son of the distinguished teacher, Kean O'Hara, born at Danville, Kentucky, Feb. 11, 1820. He was the apple of his father's eye, educated by him with the greatest care, but received his collegiate finish and graduated at St. Joseph's College, Bardstown, Ky., with the first honors of his class. At that school, Lazarus W. Powell, afterwards governor of Kentucky, and several others, since distinguished, were his fellows." Collins, *History of Kentucky*, I, 410. For the charter of St. Joseph's College, cf. *Mid-America* (Chicago), April, 1931.

in number and greatly in demand for the ministerial needs of the diocese presented grave difficulties, which Bishop Flaget sought to solve by transferring the institution to the Society of Jesus. To the fathers of the province of France he made an offer of it as early as 1827 through the agency of Father Robert Abell of the Bardstown diocese, then travelling in France. Within a year or two the offer was provisionally accepted by the French Jesuits. In 1831 two of their number, Fathers Petit and Chazelle, reached Bardstown, where, however, a reorganization of St. Joseph's College with a staff of professors recruited from the diocesan clergy had been recently effected and with such prospects of success that the immediate transfer of the institution to the Jesuits was under the circumstances deemed inadvisable. No blame for the situation that had thus developed attached to Bishop Flaget as the definite acceptance of the college had not been signified to him by the Jesuit superiors before the arrival of the two fathers at Bardstown. To relieve the latter of the embarrassment in which they were placed, the pious Bishop, it is recorded, turned to prayer, proposing to join them in a novena to their founder, St. Ignatius. Before the end of the novena there came to the Bishop most unexpectedly a proposal from the Reverend William Byrne, founder of St. Mary's College near Lebanon, Marion County, to turn over this institution to the Jesuits. The proposal was accepted by the French fathers of the Society, who remained in charge of St. Mary's College until their withdrawal from Kentucky in 1846. Meantime, in 1842, another offer of St. Joseph's College, Bardstown, had been made tentatively to the French Jesuits, this time through the vicar-general of the Bardstown diocese, Reverend Ignatius Reynolds, the future Bishop of Charleston.⁴ The offer was repeated on several occasions in the course of the next few years, but always declined. Finally, after the departure of this Jesuit group from Kentucky, Bishop Flaget, still seeking to put the Society of Jesus in control of St. Joseph's College, addressed himself to the Missouri vice-provincial, Father Van de Velde, with a proposal to transfer to him not only the college and college property, but also the church, formerly the cathedral of the see of Bardstown.

On May 27, 1848, the vice-provincial laid the question of accepting St. Joseph's College before his consultors, Fathers Van Assche, O'Loghlen, Druyts and Gleizal, who, in view of the gravity of the matter to be discussed, were reenforced by Fathers Verhaegen and Elet. The consultors asked time for deliberation before expressing an opinion, but in the meantime Van de Velde was to inform Bishop Flaget at once

⁴ Reynolds to Chabrat, January 14, 1842. Archives of the Sisters of Charity, Nazareth, Ky.

that his offer would in all probability be accepted provided the four Missouri scholastics who had left Rome in March in consequence of the revolutionary outbreak in that city returned home in safety⁵ Less than a week after Father Van de Velde's conference with his advisers on the subject of St Joseph's College, he was succeeded in the office of vice-provincial by Father Elet. The new incumbent informed the General, Father Roothaan, June 7, 1848 "I am negotiating for the college of Bardstown. I shall write to your Paternity on the subject when everything is arranged. Meantime, your Paternity ought to know that the conditions appear to be so favorable that the consultors have declared unanimously for the acceptance of the offer. This will not prevent the scholastics who have finished their teaching-period (six years) from entering the scholasticate." Authorization to take over St Joseph's College was conveyed to Elet by the Father General in a letter dated as early as June 5, from which it is evident that such authorization had been solicited by Van de Velde before his retirement from office. The important business was handled with dispatch by Elet with the result that at the commencement exercises of July 20, 1848, announcement was made to the public of the definite transfer of the institution to the Society of Jesus, Father Peter Verhaegen being introduced on the occasion as the newly appointed Jesuit president⁶.

In a circular addressed to the patrons of the college the outgoing president, the Reverend Edward McMahan, dwelt on the circumstances that had brought about the change of management.

Moreover, the change now contemplated has been anticipated for several years and hence the present officers have always considered their position in College as nothing more than a temporary arrangement. It was, indeed, with this understanding that we consented to serve, that is—until our places could be filled by a more competent Faculty, which happily for you and for the Institution will be fully realized in the gentlemen who are to be our successors. Had we not succeeded in obtaining such men, we might have considered it a duty to remain still longer in our present onerous and responsible stations, in consequence of our having so much at heart your interests and that of our pupils. But fortunately, no such necessity exists in the present instance, for the gentlemen who are to replace us are alike distinguished for their talents and learning, whilst they are well known to the literary world for their

⁵ The four scholastics in question, Thomas O'Neil, Frederick Garesché, David Sheppard and Joseph Keller, had been making studies in philosophy at the Roman College. They reached the vice-province in the summer of 1848.

⁶ "The object nearest to the heart of our venerable Bishop, the one for which he has so long prayed, has been at length accomplished. Old St Joseph's is now settled upon a solid and permanent foundation and her future course must be onward and upward." *Catholic Advocate*, July 29, 1848.

great experience and success in the training of youth and the government of Colleges Who amongst the Patrons of Letters in our country is unacquainted with the Rev P J Verhaegen, so long and favorably known to the citizens of the West and South as the distinguished President of the University of St Louis? What friend, therefore, of St Joseph's will not rejoice to hear that he is to be my successor? With him, as its President, it is impossible that the institution should not flourish and merit the confidence of the public His name is also a sufficient guarantee to its Patrons, not only of the character of those who are to be associated with him, but likewise of the ability with which the college will be conducted A reference to the names of the Faculty given in the "Commencement Pamphlet" is a convincing proof of the first, and his great success whilst President of the University of St Louis is a satisfactory evidence of the second

Father Verhaegen, who thus brought to his new duties much ripe experience in education gained in positions as important as those of rector of St. Louis University, and provincial superior in Missouri and later in Maryland, was in Bardstown early in June to accept the college from its former proprietors and take its management in hand after the commencement exercises On July 5 he signed on behalf of the Jesuits an agreement with Bishop Flaget and his trustees covering the terms of the transfer. A debt of twenty-two thousand dollars was assumed by the Jesuits while the buildings and property were deeded to them for educational purposes, but in trust only and not in fee-simple, as the document clearly states

All which property, lands and estates herein described are to be held, owned, used and occupied by the party of the second part, their heirs and assigns, in trust however, forever, or so long as the same may be used for or devoted to educational purposes, but should the said college and its property hereafter, at any time, be diverted from the purposes of education, then it is fully understood and hereby provided for, that the same together with all the appurtenances now thereunto pertaining, shall fall to and be invested in the Right Rev Benedict Joseph Flaget, Bishop of Louisville, State of Ky and his successors in the Bishopric of said diocese

This clause in the contract, apparently not adverted to at the time by either of the contracting parties as opening the door to future possible complications, was to prove in the end a source of trouble and an important contributory cause to the dissolution of St Joseph's College as a Jesuit institution At any rate, what seemed an especially promising opportunity for Jesuit educational enterprise had been seized, and Father Verhaegen could write to the General, November 6, 1848 "Whatever is to be said about the extinction of our debt, the acceptance

of this college seems to me one of the best things ever done in the Vice-Province”⁷

Father Verhaegen was followed to Bardstown by a party of his confrères, who left St. Louis, July 24, on the steamer *Ocean Wave*, under the conduct of Walter Hill, a scholastic novice. Only late in the evening of the day before had Mr. Hill been informed by the master of novices that he was to leave in the morning for Bardstown College, which had recently come into Jesuit hands. He was accompanied to St. Louis by the scholastic, Ferdinand Garesché, who had but lately returned from Rome and was now destined for service in Cincinnati. Mr. Hill learned to his surprise that though still a novice he was to be conductor of the Jesuit party bound for Bardstown that very day, a responsibility placed on him no doubt in view of his presumed acquaintance as a native son of Kentucky with the details of the journey. Then, too, he was fairly advanced at the time in early manhood, being in his twenty-seventh year. Companions with him on the journey to Bardstown were Fathers Nicholas Congiato and Andrew Ehrensberger, the scholastics Peter Van den Hurck and Joseph Keller, and Brother Gaspar Wohleb. Leaving St. Louis at four p. m., the party travelled for three days without incident to Louisville, where they landed at the Portland wharf, going thence to a hotel on Main Street. As they were to remain over night in the city, they availed themselves of the opportunity to visit the venerable Bishop Flaget. What occurred on the occasion Walter Hill put on record in later years.

⁷ The deed was drawn up, as Bishop Spalding wrote to Father Beckx, August 18, 1862, on the model of the deed (one of trust only) by which the Jesuits held the property of St. Xavier College, Cincinnati. In view of Bishop Spalding's statement in the same letter that Fathers Elet and Verhaegen both "approved" of the new deed, it does not appear to be correct, as related by Father Hill in his *Reminiscences* that Verhaegen himself drew it up without the assistance of a lawyer. Moreover, the legal phraseology of the document and its minute technical description of the property make such supposition unlikely. The deed, more properly "indenture" or "document of agreement," was signed for the college by Bishop Flaget (moderator) and Rev. Edward McMahan, Rev. B. I. Spalding, Rev. John B. Hutchins, Edward B. Smith, Thomas H. Crozier and John F. Queen (trustees) and for the Society of Jesus by Fathers Elet, Verhaegen and Van de Velde. It conveyed to the latter "St. Joseph's College together with all the ground, buildings, improvements and appurtenances thereunto any wise pertaining together with the College furniture including the College Library, cabinet of Natural History and the Physical and Chemical Apparatus all of which are to be held and used by the party of the second part and said persons as they invest with the title or control thereof for educational purposes." The board of trustees, consisting of six members, was appointed by the Bishop of Louisville, the names having been previously submitted to him by the rector of the college. There is extant the record, under Flaget's signature, of the appointment, October 1, 1849, of the members of the board for the session 1849-50. Archives of the Sisters of Charity, Nazareth, Ky.

We were conducted to his private room, we found him seated in an arm-chair, he rose to receive us, but tottered on his feet. His niece, an elderly maiden, was in the room, when we announced ourselves as Jesuits on our way to St. Joseph's College, Bardstown, he made an exclamation of thanks to God, his voice grew tremulous and from feebleness and emotion rose to a falsetto or soprano tone. Now laughing, now weeping from great joy, he embraced each one of us, and on my turn coming, I said to him that I was his own child, being a native of his diocese, he repeated to me several times, "My Kentucky child, my child, welcome home, welcome to all the dear Jesuits. During the two last years, since the Fathers left St. Mary's, I have scarcely prayed for anything else than to see the beloved Jesuit Fathers return to my diocese before I depart from this world, my prayer is granted, I have lived to see that day, *nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine secundum verbum tuum in pace, quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum*" He then sank down into his chair quite overpowered by his feelings. My companions, who then saw this saintly old prelate for the first time, were much struck with his simple manners and his great sanctity no less than by his great affection to our Society. We knelt to receive his blessing, which he gave, scarcely able to utter the formula for his sobs from joy, and we departed, all deeply affected.⁸

Leaving Louisville at 5 A. M. on the day which followed their interview with Bishop Flaget, the Jesuit party arrived at Bardstown between one and two o'clock in the afternoon. As they were not looked for on that day, their unannounced arrival caused something of a sensation both in the town and at the college. The following morning the scholastics were installed as prefects to a group of students numbering about forty and chiefly from the southern states, who were spending the vacation period at the college.⁹ Father McMahan, the former president, left before the resumption of classes to attach himself to the diocese of Pittsburg, while Bishop Flaget's seminarians as also Father Benedict Spalding, in the capacity of pastor, remained at St. Joseph's a year longer. At the end of August, 1848, the personnel of the new college staff was reenforced by accessions from Cincinnati and Grand Coteau College, which last institution had just been relinquished by the Missouri Vice-province into the hands of French Jesuits of the province of Lyons. In September the new session opened with the following staff of officers and professors: Father Peter J. Verhaegen, rector, Father John B. Duerinck, minister and procurator, Father Francis di Maria, pastor of the church and professor of the seminarians, Father Nicholas Congiato, spiritual father, Mr. Joseph A. Fastré, Latin, Greek and French, Mr. Walter Hill, prefect of studies, English, mathematics and

⁸ Walter Hill, S. J., *Reminiscences* (Ms.) (A) Webb, *op. cit.*, 433

⁹ Hill, *Reminiscences* (Ms.)

catechism, Mr James Converse, first prefect, English and arithmetic, Mr Joseph Keller, second prefect, Latin, Greek, English and Spanish, Mr Paul Schuster, third prefect, French and German, Mr Peter Van den Hurck, algebra and penmanship. In addition to the foregoing, all Jesuits, the college staff counted five seminarians and one layman as assistant-teachers. The students' dining-room, kitchen, dormitories and infirmary were for a while in charge of six Sisters of Loretto, who continued to exercise their duties, assisted for heavy drudgery by Negro slaves, until the summer of 1851.

The session 1848-1849 opened with a fair number of students, most of the boarders coming from Louisiana and Mississippi. Southern patronage continued as before to be the main prop of the institution. At the outset some difficulties were experienced in effective control of the student-body, but these were gradually overcome largely through Father Verhaegen's kindness and tact. The students or some of them were not without certain prepossessions against Jesuits and Jesuit education, but the prepossessions wore off as they daily came into more intimate touch with their new professors. Efforts were made by the faculty, and not without success, to develop more of a religious spirit in the student-body. But here there was need of caution. An impression, a groundless one, became current that the Jesuits cared for little else than to promote religious piety among their students and were wont to annoy them with endless prayers and devotional practices. It was thought in this situation that suggestion would accomplish more than formal regulation. Results confirmed the wisdom of the policy. Whenever it was thought desirable to introduce a practice customary in other Jesuit colleges, the faculty had only to bring it in some informal way to the notice of the students and the latter were not slow to come forward with a request to have it introduced. Thus, when the students heard that the recitation of the rosary was in vogue in Jesuit boarding-schools, a committee of them waited upon the rector with a petition that this custom be also introduced at St Joseph's. The problem of the attendance of the students at daily Mass was solved in a similar way. At the opening of the session they were exhorted to attend Mass daily. On the morrow of the opening-day sixteen of their number were present in the chapel. The attendance went on increasing until, at the close of the session 1848-1849, the great majority of the students were hearing Mass daily of their own volition for they were not held to this practice by any strict rule of the institution.¹⁰

A favorite society in the Jesuit parishes and colleges of the Middle

¹⁰ *Litterae Annuae*, 1849 (A). The Bardstown practice on this point seems to have varied. Cf. *infra*, note 25.

West at this period was the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the Conversion of Sinners. This was now established among the Bardstown students. The members were required to say the Angelus daily together with a prayer to the Mother of God to procure the return of sinners to the path of duty as also the grace of Catholic faith in favor of those who had never known it. Scarcely were these practices taken up than a desire to look into Catholic teaching was felt by some of the non-Catholic students. One in particular, a youth of unusually good moral character, who had previously felt no curiosity in regard to the Church, began to read Catholic books and was in the end baptized. Four other Protestant boys soon followed his example. A fifth, Rufus Garland by name, of Washington, Arkansas, was also converted. To the Catholic students his conversion seemed nothing less than miraculous. He was preparing to take his bachelor's degree at the end of the session 1848-1849, being in his nineteenth year, and as an occasional relief from the grind of study dipped into Catholic books. In intelligence and capacity for study he easily led the other students. But he knew nothing of the Catholic Church except what he had derived from inherited prejudices. The students were accustomed to say that others of their non-Catholic associates might find their way into the Church but that Garland never would. The members of the Confraternity began to pray earnestly in his behalf. Soon Rufus Garland was seen to make an intimate of the individual who was the first member of the student-body to be converted. He read still further in the catechism and before graduation-day arrived was baptized a Catholic. Such were some of the results attributed to the presence among the students of Bardstown of the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the Conversion of Sinners. Prayer had been the only instrument employed.¹¹

To finance the college was a problem that steadily taxed the resourcefulness of its Jesuit managers. A debt of some twenty-two thousand dollars had been assumed when the college was taken over. Moreover, as the buildings were greatly out of repair, no little expense had to be incurred in putting them again in fit condition, to meet which a loan was obtained from E. Baker Smith, a Catholic resident of Bardstown. To Father Duerinck, as minister of the house, fell the duty of

¹¹ *Idem*. The names of the non-Catholic students who became Catholics in the session 1848-9 were Rufus Garland (Washington, Ark.), Samuel Reid (Nelson Co., Ky.), Nathaniel Johnson (Boston, Nelson Co., Ky.), James K. Montgomery (St. Joseph's, La.), L. Lee Philip (Shepherdsville, Ky.), Granville C. White (Pulaski, Tenn.), and John Grundy (Franklin, Tenn.). For the religious confraternity mentioned, cf. *supra*, Chap. XXXIV, § 2.

superintending the repairs which it was found necessary to make in the college buildings during the summer of 1848. He wrote to a friend:

We have an immense establishment, but it is sadly out of repair. We have gone through a great many parts of the house and yet I am frequently bothered when I have to decide what job we have to undertake first. We have no less than $\frac{1}{2}$ doz irons in the fire, but it would appear that the more improvements we make, the more we find the necessity of adding to the number. The College is doing well in my estimation. We have 73 boarders and some 50 odd day scholars. The best kind of spirit prevails among the students and, I believe, also amongst the members. Father Verhaegen is very active and goes through more labor and drudgery than I thought him capable [of]. The brothers are kept busy in their trades. Brother Barry whitewashes and builds stone walls. Brother Ryan paints and glazes. Brother Tom roots and digs. Brother Morris trims lamps and attends to our Refectory. Brother Gaspar, Hendricks' assistant clotheskeeper, is sacristan. Brother Joseph Tschenhans [Tschenhens] is cook for the present, we hope to get a Sister to superintend the kitchen. The black boys sweep the house and mind the boys' refectory. We have two horses, Succarella and Charlie. We have also eight milch cows and some 100 head of hogs.¹²

Efforts made by farmers living in the vicinity of Bardstown to find a market for their produce at the college added to the cares of Father Duerinck.

We live in a healthy and rocky place, surrounded by a set of customers, farmers and farmers' negroes that never cease to pester us about buying and trading. There is eternally somebody about the premises that wants to sell a doz eggs, a pound of butter, a bushel of cornmeal or some corn brooms. When you tell them "I guess I do not want any," they then offer to sell low for cash, or they will take coffee or sugar in payment. Think of me, minister and procurator, two classes to teach, an hour of studies to keep, and to be factotum about the wide extended premises and be bothered about these farmers that try to beset my room, talking, smoking, chewing, obtruding their market stuff on the agent. Think how we manage to get along. However, as I have frequently said in your own hearing, the day is long and with good health, activity and despatch, it is *toch wonderlyk*, as Brother Van der Borcht says, what a sight of cabbages one can hoe.¹³

Together with the college the Jesuits assumed charge of the parish-church of Bardstown, formerly the cathedral of the diocese. It stood almost immediately adjoining the college building on the south and its walls were hung with paintings of rare value, some of them gifts from Louis Philippe of France. The first Jesuit pastor was Father Francis di

¹² Duerinck to Druyts, Sept. 2, 1848 (A)

¹³ Same to same, June 11, 1849 (A)

Maria, who had come to St. Louis from his native Italy in 1841 to lend his services as a professor of theology. Later, he was engaged in the ministry, first in Marshall, Missouri, and now in Bardstown, where in addition to his pastoral duties, he taught moral theology to the Bishop's seminarians. The church was distinctly in need of repair when Father Di Maria arrived on the scene. By June, 1849, he had spent two thousand dollars in improvements and repairs, the money having been raised entirely by subscription. Three hundred dollars went for the furnaces, "built according to the new system of Mr. A. Lotne of Cincinnati in order to prevent people from being killed by the severest cold imaginable in this otherwise fine church." Moreover, the choir was enlarged to make room for a new organ, built at the cost of fifteen hundred dollars and put in place September 1, 1849, the builder being the same who had made the organ in the new cathedral of Cincinnati. "I like this part of Kentucky very well," De Maria confided to a correspondent, "though the weather this season, or rather since we moved to Kentucky has been very changeable. Storms, tornadoes, etc. have been the cause of a great many losses of property and sometimes of life, too. I think that the *aeræe potestates* have been at work a great deal on account of some Jesuitical scent somewhat disagreeable to their *fire-burnt* nostrils. Indeed, people here remark that before this year they had never [known] such change and commotion in the climate and atmosphere of this part of Kentucky." ¹⁴

On March 23, 1849, occurred the death of Father Charles Louis Elet, brother of the vice-provincial, John Elet, and the first Jesuit to die at Bardstown, where he was discharging the duties of minister in succession to Duerinck. The Sisters of Loretto nursed him in his last days, during which his remarkable patience under suffering elicited the admiration of the non-Catholic physician, Dr. Harris, who attended him. To his brother, the vice-provincial, Bishop Spalding, Coadjutor Bishop of Louisville, promptly sent a word of sympathy.

My dear Father Elet—Allow me to unite my voice to that of those numerous friends, who will offer you their sympathy on the occasion of the melancholy event, which this day's post will inform you. I mean the death of your very holy and amiable brother. Providence permitted me to be here at the moment. I had the happiness of visiting him twice. On these occasions I gave him with my whole heart the episcopal benediction. He devoutly kissed my pectoral cross, which contains a relic of the Holy Cross. I cannot tell you how much he edified me by his mild tranquility under the most painful agony. He showed every mark of an elect of God—and if God loved him more than you did, resign him cheerfully into His adorable hands.

¹⁴ De Maria to Druyts, 1849 (A)

Is it not better to have a brother in heaven than on earth? I hope to be able to attend his funeral and will offer the Holy Sacrifice for the repose of his soul. In the midst of the sorrow caused by this mournful and mysterious decree of Providence I congratulate myself that Kentucky possesses the mortal remains of your holy brother.¹⁵

Of the religious morale of the Bardstown student-body during the first year of Jesuit management a glimpse is got from a letter written to a St. Louis Jesuit by Father Jamison, a diocesan priest attached to the college staff.

I had the happiness the day before yesterday, Quasimodo Sunday, to baptize three of the large students of our college. They were all three Protestants. They are very fervent and are preparing to make their first Communion on the feast of the Ascension. They came to my room every evening for instruction and within the last few days they have been joined by two others of the large boys, one of them originally baptized a Catholic, the other not yet baptized. Pray for them all and ask Father Damen to recommend them to the Arch Confraternity. There is, generally speaking, a fine spirit prevailing amongst our 180 students. Nearly all the Protestants attended the retreat. All the Catholics in the house went to confession. The Sodality is quite flourishing. Communions are frequent, and I think fervent. So you see there is some little consolation for us poor sinners in this our land of exile. Will you not pay us a visit in the vacation? Come and see something of old Kentucky and its Religion and Religious establishments. The Dominicans, Trappists, Loretines, are all within 15 miles of us, and Nazareth within three miles, and then there is St. Thomas, 3 or 4 miles distant, where rest the relics of good, pious Father Elet. So you see we have Nazareth, Bethlehem, Holy Cross, Loretto etc. etc. all around us like so many Angel Wardens. "Come and See."¹⁶

Mr. Walter Hill, appointed prefect of studies of the college on its opening under Jesuit auspices, filled that position with one year's intermission during the seven years he was attached to the institution. He was still but a novice of the Society when he arrived at Bardstown, taking his first Jesuit vows only on March 9, 1849. He records of himself that at first he was too abrupt and severe in his dealings with the students. On occasion he resorted to ridicule, not without effect, as once in an attempt to wean away some soft-mannered southern youths from an extravagant use of perfumes and pomata. He addressed the student-body, informing them that certain of their number were under the necessity of using these things presumably as a remedy for some bodily distemper, but that their fellow-students were not to think any

¹⁵ De Smct, *Western Missions and Missionaries*, p. 488

¹⁶ Jamison to Druyts, April 24, 1849 (A)

worse of them on that account. The method of attack proved effective, the effeminate practices becoming forthwith ludicrous in the eyes of the students so that they were entirely discontinued¹⁷

Commencement exercises of the first session of St Joseph's College as a Jesuit institution were held July 18, 1849. Eight of the students received the degree of bachelor of arts, among them Augustus H. Garland, afterwards attorney-general in a Cleveland administration, while the premium of good conduct by a majority-vote of the students was awarded to Thomas H. Miles, a future president of Creighton University, Omaha, and St Ignatius College, Chicago.

§ 2 A DECADE OF GROWTH, 1849-1859

The session 1849-1850 passed without incident though the increasing number of non-Catholic students was adding to the difficulty of maintaining discipline at a proper level. The attendance at Nazareth Academy, the institution for young women conducted by the Sisters of Charity two miles from Bardstown, was recruited largely from the daughters of Protestant families in the South. The sons were at the same time sent to Bardstown to be within easy reach of their sisters, so that the proximity of Nazareth was perhaps the chief circumstance accounting for the large number of Protestant youths at Bardstown. Yet the Catholic students at St Joseph's always outnumbered the Protestants, in the session 1849-1850 in the proportion of two to one. Later the proportion became much greater, the Catholic boarders in the session 1855-56 numbering one hundred and thirteen out of a total registration of one hundred and forty-three. Nevertheless, though always in the minority in St Joseph's College, the non-Catholic students, in many cases superior in years and so in assertiveness to their Catholic comrades, appear to have exercised at times an ascendancy over the latter and in fact to have determined more or less the morale of the entire student-body. With a view to reduce the proportion of non-Catholic boys, whose age on matriculation was often above the average, Father Verhaegen announced at the commencement exercises July 17, 1850, that no applicants over sixteen years of age would thereafter be admitted. On the same occasion announcement was made that the use of tobacco would no longer be permitted and that no applicant would be admitted who was unwilling to abstain from its use. This regulation resulted in only a slight ripple of excitement among the students though some of the faculty had looked for a rather violent expression of disapproval at its announcement.¹⁸

¹⁷ Hill, *Reminiscences* (Ms) (A)

¹⁸ *Litterae Annuae*, 1849-50. It appears that this regulation began to be enforced



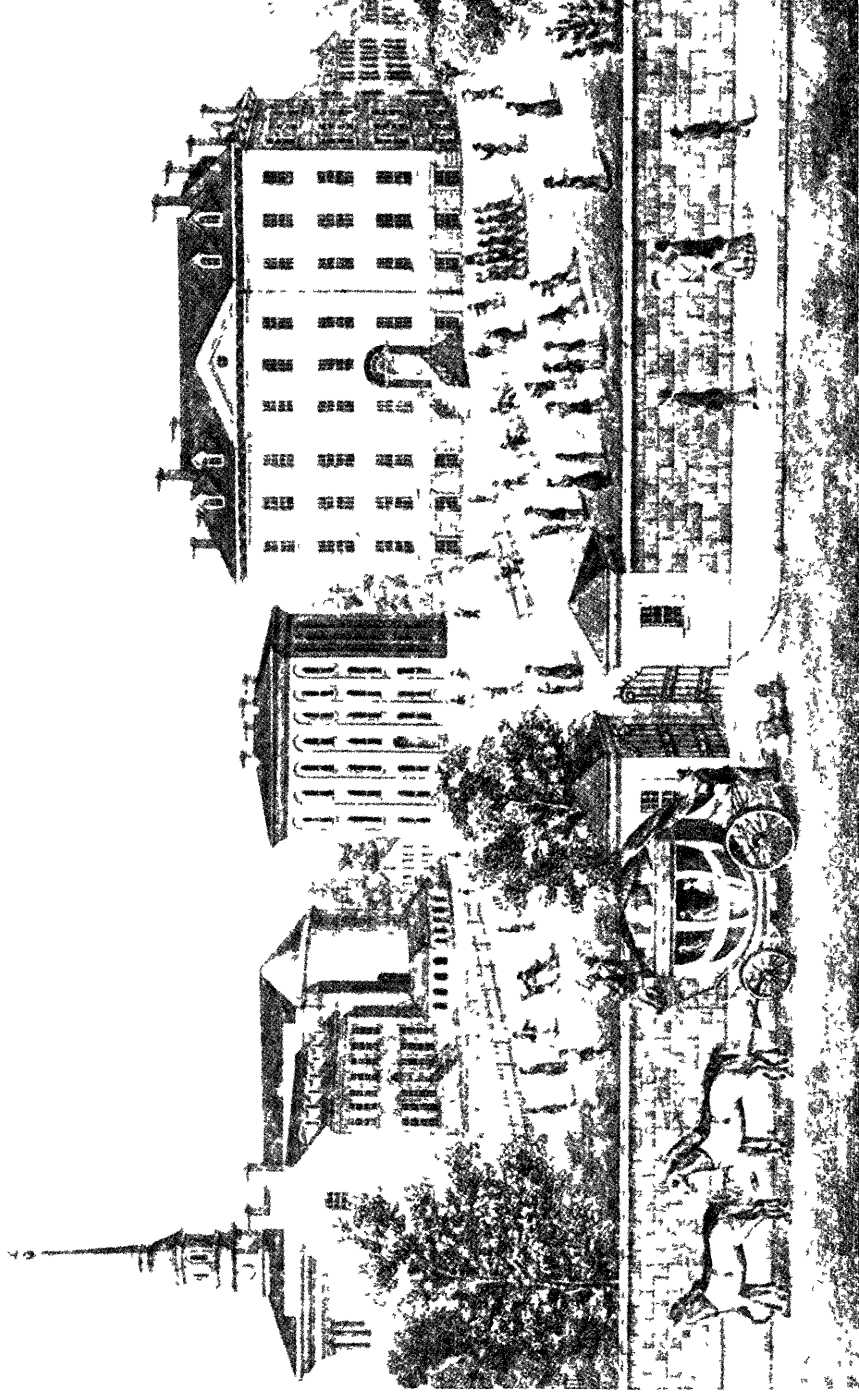
^{1 Bp. Spalding,}
Louisville - Feb 11 1851

Very Rev & Dear Friend

I address your Reverence on a matter of great importance to Religion, the promotion of which is the leading object of your Illustrious Society nothing more is needed to bestow your Reverence's attention & favorable consideration

For some time I have been thinking seriously of offering St Mary's College to your Society. The fervor of my secular clergy, the pressing wants of the mission, & the superior adaptation of your Order for the purposes of Christian education, are among the leading motives which induce me to make the offer in your hands that institution might be a support to St Joseph's, & it should be, as I have all along endeavored to make it, a strictly Catholic College situated in the center of the Catholic population, with fine buildings recently repaired, & about 300 acres of good land, it would, in your hands, be a means of doing immense good to our Holy Religion Having it, your

First page of a letter by Bishop Spalding of Louisville to John A. Elet, S.J., February 11, 1851, offering him St. Mary's College, Lebanon, Ky. General Archives of the Society of Jesus, Rome



St. Joseph's College, Bardstown, Ky, in the fifties. Left to right St. Joseph's Church (formerly cathedral of the diocese of Bardstown) with pastoral residence adjoining, infirmary and class-room building erected in 1852, original building. Contemporary print.

In the summer of 1851 a number of scholastics from the colleges of the vice-provinces with two young fathers, Isidore Boudreaux and Cornelius Smarius, journeyed from Bardstown to Mammoth Cave, Kentucky. The visit was arranged through Father Verhaegen, who encouraged excursions of this kind, often saying that in the study of Nature's wonders, "in order to learn you must see"¹⁹

An offer of St. Mary's College near Lebanon, Kentucky, made at this time to the St. Louis Jesuits was declined by them on the ground of lack of men. To an inquiry from Father Benedict Spalding, brother of the Bishop and vicar-general of the diocese of Louisville, as to whether any stipulations were made between the contracting parties with regard to St. Mary's when St. Joseph's College was transferred to the Jesuits, Verhaegen replied

As to your Reverence's queries contained in the postscript to your letter, I answer that I do not recollect that while the arrangements for the transfer of St. Joseph's College to our Society were pending, any mention was made of St. Mary's and the deed of said transfer plainly shows that no stipulations of any kind were entered into by the contracting parties. In my opinion, after your Rt. Rev. brother had explicitly stated to me that St. Mary's would not injure St. Joseph's, because it was a school for Catholic boys only, *un petit seminaire* for such as might have a mission to the ecclesiastical state, it was not necessary to allude to an institution which met with my cordial approbation, I must add that from the beginning of the transaction, I considered your Right Rev. Brother as the representative of Right Rev. Bishop Flaget²⁰

In 1851 Bishop Spalding's offer of St. Mary's was definitely declined, Father De Smet, as assistant vice-provincial, addressing him on the subject

Rev. Father Provincial [Elet] has been seriously indisposed for some time past and unable to answer your last favor. He requests me to write to your Lordship that with regard to St. Mary's College, he thinks Very Rev. Father General will not agree to the proposition because we are not at this moment prepared to accept of it for *want of members*. Father Provincial feels, however, very grateful for your kind affection towards the Society²¹

only with the session 1851-1852 when Emig became head of the college. Four Louisiana students left the college, July-Sept. 1851, "on account of the tobacco-law." The first announcement of the 'tobacco-law' in the college catalogue occurs in the issue for 1852-1853. The catalogue for 1857-1858 omits any mention of the regulation, which was probably repealed about this time.

¹⁹ Hill, *Reminiscences* (Ms.) (A)

²⁰ Verhaegen to Benedict Spalding, December 5, 1849 (A)

²¹ De Smet to Spalding, April 12, 1851 (A)

"In regard to St. Mary's," Bishop Spalding wrote in reply, "as you are not able to take charge of it 'for want of members,' I shall be compelled immediately to make other arrangements. The offer will show how great is the confidence I have in your illustrious Society." ²²

Father Elet's apprehension that the General would not countenance his taking over St. Mary's College was borne out by the event. Father Roothaan wrote to him:

I have seen the letter of the Rt. Rev. Bishop who offers you St. Mary's College which the French Fathers had to give up only a few years ago. 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 enterprises engaged in beyond all measure threaten nothing less than the utter ruin of the Province, as I warned you repeatedly before this. For those well-meaning Bishops who make demands on us, we have a ready excuse, *hominem non habeo*. ²³

The session 1850-1851 opened with the number of non-Catholic students notably below that of the previous session, only thirty-four being registered in October as boarders. Unfortunately the presence of even this comparatively small number became the occasion of an unpleasantness that for the moment stirred the usually placid waters of Bardstown student-life to their depths. A regulation dating from the first days of the institution required all students, non-Catholic included, to be present at chapel exercises and in a kneeling posture when the ritual required it. The non-Catholic students had previously made no difficulty about conforming to the regulation, which they regarded as imposing only a mere external observance in the interest of uniform order and discipline. But one day in October, 1850, nine of the Protestant boarders led by a stalwart youth of six feet-two, Jackson Smith, of Simpsonville, Kentucky, sat one morning all through Mass in open disregard of the rule. ²⁴ A concession made by Father Verhaegen to the non-Catholic students which required of them merely respectful attendance at Mass without kneeling did not placate the malcontents, who to the number of eighteen left the college on the same day, October 10, 1850. A note in explanation of the affair written by Father Jamison was inserted by the college authorities in the Louisville papers while Father Verhaegen addressed a circular letter to the parents and guardians of the students. ²⁵ The stand taken by the president appears to have been

²² Martin Spalding to De Smet, April 26, 1851 (A)

²³ Roothaan ad Elet, April 9, 1851 (A)

²⁴ Walter Hill, S. J., in *WL*, 26-96

²⁵ Father Verhaegen's circular, which is dated October 12, 1850, says in part "In the year 1826 the board of Trustees of St. Joseph's College enacted the By-

indorsed by public opinion when the real circumstances became known. No loss of prestige was felt by the college over the incident and during the interval that followed up to commencement day the names of sixty new students were entered on the roll

During the greater part of his administration at Bardstown Father Verhaegen was under the disadvantage of ill-health. At one time his condition became so critical that his life seemed to be in jeopardy to the great alarm of Father Elet, who felt what a harassing problem he should have on his hands were he required to find a new president for St. Joseph's College. A trip to Louisiana had beneficial results and Verhaegen returned to Kentucky in September, 1850, with health to all appearances quite restored. Then followed within a month or so the dramatic display of insubordination on the part of the non-Catholic students. The incident while not impairing the prestige of the institution before the public was to have unpleasant reverberations within its walls. Within a few weeks of its occurrence Father Verhaegen was disclosing to the General that even the Catholic students were beginning to give indications of a refractory frame of mind. The mental strain incident upon the numerous vexations he was beset with induced frequent headaches and in his distress he sought to be relieved of office. "After twenty-nine years spent in this country amid discomforts of every sort

Laws by which, *ever since*, the students have been governed, and when treating of Religion and Piety they express themselves in these words

As prayer is the ordinary means of obtaining from God the graces which are necessary to us, the scholars shall consider it as a conscientious obligation to perform it well, in the Morning and in the Evening, reflecting if it is important to advance in the sciences, it is still more so to acquire the virtue of a true Christian. To aid themselves in the proper discharge of this duty, they will pray on bended knees and in an erect position of the body, avoiding distracting looks from one side to the other, and every exterior indication contrary to a spirit of piety and recollection.

This rule, relating to morning and evening Prayer, was incorporated in the general duties to be performed by all the Boarders, and as such enforced by every President of the Institution, down to the time when the office was confided to me. I frequently read the Rule to the Boarders, and not infrequently called their attention to the necessity of its punctual observance for the sake of order and uniformity. No objection was ever made to the rule on the ground of its prescribing a mode of worship exclusively Catholic, nor did I anticipate that such would ever be the case.

Actuated by these sentiments, they [a large number of Catholic boarders] drew up a Petition and presented it to me with the request that its contents should be instantly perused and acted upon. The Petition entreated me to rescind the Rule, as far as Protestant Boarders were concerned. I immediately assembled the Board and laid the Petition before them. The result was, that, since the Rule was viewed by the objectors to it, as an enactment interfering with their Religious principles, the Protestant Boarders should not be compelled, during the present session, to observe it, and that nothing more should be required of them than a respectful attendance."

I have not the strength for teaching the higher classes or governing a boarding college" He suggested that the management of a smaller institution, for example, the Louisville day-college, would be more within the compass of his present powers, but he had no desire to be a judge in his own case.

That a change of administration at Bardstown was desirable in view of the decline of discipline and morale that seemed to be gaining ground among the students was a view likewise shared by the vice-provincial Father Verhaegen's position was admittedly a trying one He had taken over an institution with its own established traditions, among which was apparently not to be found one in favor of a firm and steady discipline. The custom among others obtained of allowing the students unaccompanied by a faculty-member to enter the town-limits of Bardstown to purchase books or other necessaries A similar practice prevails today in many Catholic boarding-schools without untoward results But at Bardstown a visit to town meant an opportunity to the student to purchase the popular Kentucky commodity of strong liquor and strong liquor, so Father Emig avowed, was the fountain-head of whatever evils in the student-body the managers of St Joseph's College were called upon to correct Moreover, studies had become disorganized Only a small percentage of the registrants were taking the classics, the students being apparently free to withdraw at their option from classes in which they were entered at the beginning of the term but for which they subsequently developed a dislike Conditions had thus arisen which for the moment needed to be dealt with firmly and even drastically, but ill-health, probably also his somewhat easy-going, indulgent temperament, rendered Father Verhaegen unequal to the task He himself realized it and asked for a successor

By a happy circumstance a successor qualified to meet the exigencies of the situation was on the ground in the person of Father John Emig, the minister of the college Before his arrival at Bardstown in January, 1851, he had won distinction in Louisville where with paltry resources of men and money to draw upon he had with admirable output of energy set an incipient college on its feet At Bardstown his position as minister brought him into intimate relations with the students, whose good-will and confidence he continued to win and over whom he soon exercised an obvious control His influence in this regard was recognized by no one more readily than by Father Verhaegen himself, who observed in a letter to the Father General that when the religious spirit had declined not a little among the students it was restored through the efforts of Father Emig The latter took over the management of St Joseph's College in the spring of 1851 Meantime, Father Verhaegen had been summoned to St. Louis where he was made assistant to the

vice-provincial and also lecturer on moral theology, which offices, however, he held for a brief spell only, being shortly appointed superior of the residence in St Charles, Missouri. This post he continued to hold with a year's intermission up to his death in 1868.

The session 1851-1852 opened with a registration on the first day of one hundred and six boarders and sixty-four day-scholars, the largest in the history of the college up to that date. Emig's success in restoring discipline had been complete. The Jesuit, Bishop Miége, after a visit to Bardstown in the summer of 1852 wrote to the Father General

All agree in saying that Father Emig has set the boarding school on its feet again and that they don't know any one else who could keep it going. He is a master-hand, this man, at making the children get along. In less than a year he had restored order and regularity where before his time one saw nothing but disorder and insubordination. What makes the good fortune of Father Emig with these children is to be recognized by them as severe, just, broad-minded and without rancor, he seems to me in fact to be a man precisely of the type of those boarding-school prefects that we have in Switzerland and Savoy. Individuals of this sort will get on everywhere with children whatever their disposition, but perhaps not always equally well with our own men, all of whom do not accommodate themselves to a certain peremptory tone and the somewhat brusque ways which one picks up in boarding-school life.

Father Emig himself in a communication to Father Roothaan pictures in detail the vigorous display of firmness with which he inaugurated his rectorship at Bardstown.

Four of the boarders having refused to obey the rules, I very readily and with great pleasure gave them as they requested certificates of dismissal from college. Thereupon I was charged by certain of Ours with rashness and imprudence. But their empty fears disappeared the next day when experience had taught a lesson. The same youths who today had turned their backs on the college would gladly have submitted tomorrow to any punishment if only they were allowed to come back. After a short interval eight others, for various reasons, drunkenness, immorality, blasphemy, followed in the footsteps of the first. It was an efficacious remedy. When all other means had failed, the only one left was to inject into the boys a salutary fear. The tree had to be completely pruned lest the branches perish and the trunk die. Some of our men on one day counting up twelve boys that had been expelled were seized with alarm and became convinced that the collapse of the college was right at hand. But their fears were not well grounded. The policy I followed was by no manner of means one of rashness. By inquiry I had come to know the good qualities and dispositions of many of the boys. Very frequently, also, they themselves while chatting with me in a confidential sort of way remarked that it would be a very good thing if such and such of the

boarders were to leave the house or be made to leave, the sooner the better. Moreover, nothing could have turned me aside from my determination to establish good order and discipline this year, not even the withdrawal of fifty boys. To begin with a small number and these few with virtue and sound morals was better, so I thought, than to go on with a school well-attended, but difficult to manage, bothersome, dissolute and inclined to all sorts of evil.

Scholastic conditions in the college were dealt with in a similar spirit of reform. In the session 1850-1851 scarcely thirty students were registered for Latin and Greek, in the following session the number rose to eighty and no one pursuing these studies was permitted to relinquish them before the expiration of the school-year. Requirements for graduation and other academic honors were vague and shifting, Father Emig urged that they be fixed. Moreover, while strengthening the curriculum on the side of the classics as befitted a Jesuit school, he made effort to place science and the mathematics on a proper basis.

More system has been put into the studies of Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics. We bought mathematical instruments to the value of three hundred dollars and spent a like sum of money on the museum [physical cabinet] while the Library was increased by almost 500 volumes. The school of Chemistry and Physics is attended this year by thirty boys, each of them paying ten dollars a year for the use of the museum. Moreover, every new pupil on the first day of his entrance into college pays ten dollars (matriculation-fee, as we call it), which money is applied exclusively to the use of the Library. This custom of paying ten dollars at the time of entrance obtains throughout all America, this circumstance, so I judged, gave me the right of exacting the same sum of money. At least fifty boys enter college every year and, with the blessing of God on our labors, in ten years the museum and Library will be in a very flourishing state.

Not all of Father Emig's ample fund of energy was expended on problems of discipline and studies. Material improvements received a due measure of attention. At some distance to the south of the main college building on ground lying between the latter and the church, he erected a spacious three-story structure sixty-four by forty-two feet, with rooms fourteen feet high. The estimated cost of the building was only two thousand dollars, in the event it cost several times that sum. De Smet was at Bardstown in December, 1852, when the infirmary building, as it was called, was about to be roofed. To Father Druyts in St. Louis he wrote: "The new building is ready to receive the roof. It is no picayune affair. Worth \$2500, it will certainly approach the round sum of eight thousand! perhaps a little more—O! those villains of architects have cheated the Rector! You, Rector, take heed before you

commence building and enlarging your University and don't suffer yourself to be fooled after the Kentucky fashion" ²⁶ The new building was to prove a notable help in meeting the growing needs of the institution. The department of physics occupied the first floor, a junior study-hall, the second, and the infirmary, the third.

It was during Father De Smet's stay on this occasion at Bardstown, whither he had accompanied the vice-provincial, Father Murphy, for a canonical visitation of the college, that he received news of the death at St. Charles, Missouri, of Mother Duchesne, the saintly nun who established the first house of the Religious of the Sacred Heart in the United States. To Father Druyts he wrote from Bardstown "I expected the news of Madame Duchesne's death for she announced it to me a few days before I left St. Louis. Yesterday and last Friday I said Mass for her according to agreement. I have assuredly the best of the bargain and I have full confidence that she will intercede for poor me in heaven, according to her written promise—that she is in heaven I have not the least doubt" ²⁷

Though at different periods in the past the middlewestern Jesuits had found it possible to maintain for one or more years a regularly organized seminary or scholasticate, with the young Jesuits in attendance relieved of other duties, the growing demand for professors in the colleges made it necessary in the early fifties for the scholastics engaged as instructors to pursue their divinity studies at the same time. ²⁸ In the session 1851-1852 a class in moral theology was conducted at St. Louis University and a class in philosophy at Bardstown. Attending the latter class, which was taught by Father Francis Nussbaum, were Cornelius O'Neil, Thomas O'Neil, James Hayes, Walter Hill, John F. Diels and John T. Kuhlman. In the session 1852-1853 besides the class in philosophy, which still continued to be taught by Father Nussbaum, there was a class in moral theology in charge of Father Peter Tschieder with two auditors only. To the latter Father De Smet addressed in September, 1852, a letter in which with characteristic versatility he suggests solutions for the difficulties that faced the teacher of divinity at Bardstown.

Father Provincial requests me to say to you that F[r] Emig proposes you should leave the Philosophy class of Ours to F[r] Nussbaum and take

²⁶ De Smet to Druyts, November 24, 1852 (A). The new building, considering its dimensions and solid construction, would appear to have been cheap even at eight thousand dollars. It is giving good service today for class-room purposes to the present proprietors of the college, the Xaverian Brothers.

²⁷ De Smet to Druyts, November 28, 1852 (A).

²⁸ The scholasticate or seminary of higher studies conducted at St. Louis University during the thirties and forties had been discontinued.

the moral Theology class F[r] Wipperf found by experience last year that it was hard to form a class, owing to the difficulty of having all the students at one particular hour, and 2ly, because they had studied different portions already, one one treatise and another another, hence he adopted the plan of assigning to each a number of pages to be accounted for to him once a week—this plan worked pretty well—you have so few, it will be easier for you. The study of Latin will be much promoted in regard to Converse and Hill, by requiring that they should learn by heart the definitions and pronounce each word properly. The catechetical form of questioning will by degrees accustom them to speak latin. F[r] Emig writes as follows to Revd F Prov. “From the distribution of officers, your Rev will see that all the scholastics have more time to study this year, than if they were in the scholasticate, where besides Philosophy or Theology, they have always to apply themselves to Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Literature and not infrequently other studies. After your Rev has inspected the accompanying list, I would be glad if you were to write a few lines to them (addressing them to P Minister) and encouraging them to apply to their studies of Philosophy and Theology, as now sufficient time had been granted them. Some of our young men are under the impression that in the scholasticate, Philosophy or Theology is the only branch to be studied, and this wrong notion caused an immense waste of time during last session.” This is to be understood *cum grano salis*, at all events it is plain that our young men must accommodate themselves to circumstances. I found several that study sufficiently under circumstances much more unfavourable. Others, because things are not regulated as they wish, neglect to do even what they can—say to them what Rev F P[rovincial] says sometimes to timid preachers,—“you may not succeed as well as you wish, but you will succeed much better than you think—so go ahead.”²⁹

Meantime the college continued to flourish under Father Emig’s management. From Bardstown De Smet wrote in November, 1852 “St Joseph’s college is truly beating the University [of St Louis] in numbers at least and has a fine and pious set of boys.”³⁰ On occasion, however, undesirable characters found admission into the school, giving serious trouble to the officers. The instance is recorded of four brothers who entered college together, having come from the Arkansas shore of the Mississippi where the rough environment of a wood-yard for river-steamers, their parental home, had left its impress on them in certain lawless, undisciplined ways. Father Emig, at risk of physical harm to himself, forcibly ejected one of the number from the college.

²⁹ De Smet to Tschieder, 1852 (A). Emig’s optimistic view that the Bardstown scholastics engaged in teaching had sufficient leisure for their divinity studies was very probably without warrant.

³⁰ De Smet to Wipperf, November 3, 1852 (A).

premises, the other brothers thereupon, probably under compulsion, returned to their Arkansas home³¹

Morale and discipline among the students were largely in the hands of the prefects, whose efficiency in this regard became a leading factor in the prosperity of the college. How valuable an asset to Bardstown were competent officers of this class is emphasized in lines addressed by De Smet to Father Nussbaum, who, though professor of philosophy to the scholastics, was at the same time employed as a prefect

Your letter of the 7th instant to Revd F[r] Provincial was received. You will soon receive a letter from his Rev which certainly will comfort and console you—it is what all of us need occasionally in the midst of our various occupations. As to Fathers being made prefects, of which you make mention in your letter, this matter was discussed some time ago and approved of—the same exists in other Provinces. F[r] Emig no doubt acted under the conviction that your Rev alone could best manage those young Kentucks. I think that were you now in Missouri your services might have been enlisted under the same title and capacity—few indeed, succeed in that line and Rectors will always try to preserve such treasures, for on them truly the success and welfare of a college often depends. We sincerely rejoice at the great success of St Joseph's college—you appear bound and determined to beat St Louis—go to it³²

Immediately after the commencement exercises of July 8, 1852, Father Nicholas Congiato and Mr Walter Hill left Bardstown to conduct the southern students to their homes. On reaching Louisville, they found the city heavily draped in mourning for Henry Clay, whose remains had just been carried through Louisville to be interred at his home in Ashland, Kentucky. Bishop Spalding was very kind to the party, seeing them well provided with prophylactics against the cholera, which seemed to be reaching the epidemic stage. The boat on which they took passage, the *General Tweed*, carried a full quota of passengers including several members of Congress and Governor Jones of Tennessee, wearing a mourning badge for Henry Clay. An excellent impression was made on all aboard by the Bardstown college group, who conducted themselves as well-bred gentlemen throughout the trip of fourteen hundred miles. The Louisville and New Orleans packets of the ante-bellum period were, after the fashion of the first-class ocean liners of today, great floating hotels handsomely appointed. Music of the best quality added a charm to the evenings as the stately vessels steamed down the broad and rushing Mississippi. At Vicksburg Mr Hill left the boat with the Mississippi students while Father Congiato remained

³¹ Hill, *Reminiscences* (Ms)

³² De Smet to Nussbaum, September 3, 1852 (A)

on board with the students returning to points lower down. A stay of three weeks in Mississippi enabled Mr Hill to secure a number of registrants for the next session of St Joseph's College. He rejoined Congiato in New Orleans, where the two spent a part of their vacation, going thence to Baton Rouge, where, as at New Orleans, they enjoyed the open hospitality of the fathers of the Jesuit mission in the South. Visits were likewise made to the homes of students living along the "coasts," as the shores of the Mississippi are locally styled. A stay at Spring Hill College was marked by the capture in Dog River near Mobile Bay of an alligator, which was taken alive to Bardstown to be mounted for its museum. Finally, after acquainting the students with the schedule of the return trip, Father Congiato and Mr Hill started with them up the river, arriving at Bardstown early in September. At about the same date as their departure from New Orleans Fathers Maurice Oakley and Florian Sautois left the same city with parties of students in their conduct, the first for St Louis University and the other for St. Xavier College, Cincinnati. Very few of the boarders of this period at St. Louis, Cincinnati and Bardstown were registered from the northern states, the great majority came from the South, where a large quota of Catholic families were well circumstanced in a financial way and able to meet the expense of a college education for their sons. The greater number of southern students were Creoles of French or Spanish stock. In 1856 a young Louisianian withdrew from Bardstown, alleging as reason that there were too many Creoles in the school, the real reason, an official record notes, was that the rules of the institution were too heavy a burden for him to carry. During the session 1851-1852, of the one hundred and fifty-one boarders, seventy were from Louisiana alone.³³

On the whole St Joseph's College in all that regarded the moral and academic aims of the institution, prospered under the administration of Father Emig. At the same time, as showing the abnormal situation from the standpoint of usual Jesuit practice that was obtaining at this period among the middlewestern Jesuits, it may be pointed out that Emig had already served twice in the capacity of rector, first at Louisville and now at Bardstown, before having had opportunity to pass through the tertianship or third year of probation. This year of retirement spent in exercises of piety and constituting a final trying-out process was meant in the mind of St Ignatius to follow shortly after the Jesuit's ordination to the priesthood and the completion of his theological studies. Though some twelve years had elapsed since Emig became a priest, the chronic shortage of men in the vice-province had made

³³ *WL*, 26 96

it impracticable for him to take this important step in the spiritual training of a Jesuit. The circumstance that he was thus in a sense still an unformed Jesuit had no doubt much to do with the determination taken by the vice-provincial, Father Murphy, to relieve him of the Bardstown rectorship. Immediately on the close of the scholastic year, 1852-1853, Murphy on his own responsibility, as there was no time to arrange the affair by letter to Rome, temporarily substituted Father Nicholas Congiato, a member of the Bardstown faculty, for Emig in the management of the college. The latter thereupon left immediately in the summer of 1853 to take up the exercises of the tertianship at Frederick in Maryland while in November of the same year Father Congiato was formally installed as rector. The vice-provincial in a letter to the General comments on the edification given to the Jesuit community at Bardstown by Father Emig as he stepped down to the ranks at the call of obedience, adding significantly "I flatter myself that the change will hurt only slightly the prosperity of the boarding-school."

Father Nicholas Congiato, Italian-born and now in his thirty-seventh year, had seen only five years of residence in America. But the process of adjustment to his new environment had been a rapid one, and when the five years had lapsed he found himself in a position to administer an American college with efficiency and success. In the January following his appointment as rector he wrote to the Father General "The spirit of the community is excellent on the whole. Charity, union and obedience reign among us. The Lord blesses us also in the affairs of the boarding-school. We have from 130 to 140 boarders and should have from 160 to 170 were it not that the yellow fever is raging so badly in the southern states, from which we receive every year a great number of boys. The spirit of the boarders, I should say, could scarcely be better. They study with remarkable earnestness and conduct themselves well. Some thirty of them are Protestants, all the rest Catholics."

On starting for the South with the students after the commencement of July, 1853, Mr. Hill was under instructions from Father Murphy that when their boat, the *Empress*, reached Paducah at the mouth of the Tennessee, he was to announce to the students that Father Congiato had succeeded Father Emig in the office of president of the college. This he did though without any marked effect on the students, who, while esteeming Emig highly were also very well affected towards Congiato. The *Empress* had just left the Ohio and was headed downstream on the Mississippi when an incident occurred in the ship's cabin which brought into relief one of the student's militant Christianity. He was seated with some of his companions and a group of passengers in the cabin when in the hearing of the whole company a non-Catholic clergyman began to speak irreverently of the Blessed Virgin. This

stirred to such a degree the indignation of a bright, alert lad of thirteen, Alexander T Bidault of New Orleans, that he stood up before all present and rebuked the clergyman with so much earnestness and set forth the Catholic position on the Virgin Mother with so much intelligence that the offender was glad to escape from his discomfiture by leaving the cabin. On the return trip to Bardstown the students had to face the perils of yellow-fever, the frequent recurrences of which added a serious hazard to travel in the South. Their boat left Baton Rouge late in August, Father Parret of the Jesuit house in that city bidding them God-speed and making a jest of their fears over the prevailing epidemic. When the boat reached Cairo, Mr Hill and the students read with amazement in the St. Louis newspapers which were brought on board the news of the death by yellow fever of Father Parret on the very day after they had left him in good health at Baton Rouge. There were several deaths from the same disease on the boat which carried the students before it reached the mouth of the Ohio. One of the victims was a Catholic, who begged piteously for a priest, but none happened to be on board.³⁴

Father Congiato's brief administration passed without untoward incident, the college pursuing a uniformly prosperous course while he managed its affairs. He was particularly at pains to advertise the college widely, sending Mr Hill, the scholastic, to Baywick, Kentucky, to engage his brother, Dr Robert Hill, to publish some articles in the Louisville papers. A piece of property was bought adjoining the college premises, the students were organized into junior and senior divisions, strict separation being maintained between the two, "Christian Doctrine" began to be taught in English and French every Sunday, and a new system of examinations was introduced. A group of professors were seated in the study-hall, each before a table, and the student going from one professor to another was examined by them severally for a period of ten minutes on the various subjects of his schedule. The system made for diligent preparation on the part of the students, in the quaint wording of a contemporary account: "There was no means to look in a book nor to be prompted. The student feared it like anything."

Student-entertainments and exercises for the Bardstown public occurred periodically and were marked by elaborate decorative detail. In this connection the linguistic resources of the faculty, strikingly ample, were sometimes called into requisition. At the Washington Birthday exercises of 1854 the walls of the entertainment-hall were hung with polyglot inscriptions in praise of the first American president, the languages in evidence being English, Hebrew, Greek, Latin,

³⁴ *Idem*, 26 101

French, Spanish, Italian, Flemish and Dutch As the Catholic educational center of Kentucky, Bardstown often attracted visitors of note Orestes Brownson lectured at the college in 1854 Only a few months before his visit elaborate preparations had been made to receive the Apostolic Delegate, Msgr Bedini, but in consequence of unfriendly demonstrations made against him in certain American cities the Delegate was constrained to change his itinerary and thereby forego the pleasure of a visit to Bardstown³⁵

Father Congiato had been president of St Joseph's College a little over a year when he received instructions from the General to proceed

³⁵ *Litterae Annuae*, 1853-54, Hill, *Reminiscences* Under the caption "Toasts and Sentiments Read at St Joseph's College on the late Anniversary of Washington's Birthday," the Bardstown *Family Gazette* of March 4, 1857, devotes a liberal allowance of space to the college exercises of February 22 As a once popular form of academic diversion, these "toasts and sentiments" deserve record in a history of the evolution of college life in the United States The phrasing, apart from an occasional lapse into the flamboyant, is on a high level of dignity and impressiveness The topics cover such subjects as George Washington, the companions of Washington, the signers of the Declaration of Independence, the constitution, the Union, civil and religious Liberty, the American flag, the press, education, etc., and, among living celebrities of church and state, Pius IX, Bishop Spalding, Father Coosemans, President Buchanan, Chief Justice Taney, ex-Gov Wickliffe of Kentucky, Hon John C Breckenridge, Gov McRae of Mississippi, Gov Willard of Indiana, *et al* Here are some specimen "toasts" "The Union—the seal and sanction of our social bond, whoever breaks the seal, annuls the bond and leaves but ink and parchment" "M Clarcken—St Joseph's College—The abode of virtue and learning, it needs no other praise than its Alumni, who have entered upon the busy walks of life Pointing to them, St Joseph's may say with the mother of the Gracchi, 'these are my jewels'" "James McGee—Louisiana—the most liberal patron of our institution, may her sons prove themselves worthy of their noble parent" "Dr E Miles Willet—The United States In their municipal [*sic*] sovereignty may they ever be as distinct as the rivers, yet one as the ocean in their Federal Union" Student organizations at Bardstown went by such high-sounding, pseudo-classic names as the Eurodelphian, Eucherophradic, Philharmonic and Sophopoian Societies Of these the Eurodelphian, which was for the senior students and had in view principally their improvement in public speaking, was the oldest, having been introduced in the pre-Jesuit period Mr Hill wrote regarding this association that it was "originally too independent" and "was oftentimes simply a nuisance instead of a benefit to the students or the college" In fact, "it was hardly ever reduced to proper subjection so as to be a means of good to the students" The Eurodelphian appears to have been supplanted towards the end of the fifties by the Sophopoian Association, the object of which was "eloquence and the promotion of useful knowledge" The Eucherophradic Society, for the cultivation of French literature, had a good working library of books in that language That it was thought worth while to present a French translation of the prospectus in some of the issues of the college catalogue (1851-1853) indicates that interest in this language at Bardstown was not merely academic The students' library was established by Mr Hill in the autumn of 1852 A voluntary military company known as the Union Cadets flourished during the Jesuit period "In lieu of the blue cloth-cap with spread-eagle,

to California and there take up the duties of superior of the Jesuit mission which had just been organized in that state as a dependency of the province of Turin. On receiving the summons he assembled his community, exhorted them to the practice of Jesuit obedience at whatever cost or sacrifice and then left Bardstown, which had become very dear to him, to begin a long journey around Cape Horn to the Pacific Coast.³⁶ During his stay at St. Joseph's he had won the affection of student-body and his confrères alike and all felt keenly his departure from their midst. He was a vigorous administrator and used his authority both over the students and faculty discreetly, effectively and without offence to anyone. His place in the management of St. Joseph's was filled October 2, 1854, by Father Ferdinand Coosemans, who discharged the duties of vice-rector during the three succeeding years.

During the summer of 1855 Mr. Hill was again in the South conducting parties of students to and from their homes. Yellow fever had broken out with greater violence than in past years and, what was said to be unusual, native-born inhabitants of the cities along the Mississippi were to be found among its victims. In Baton Rouge on August 15 and 16 eleven Jesuits were seized with the dread disease, Mr. Hill among them. Two of the number died, the others recovered, and Mr. Hill was able to conduct the students back to Bardstown though he arrived there only on September 24, by which time the session had begun.

Father Coosemans was only in his thirty-second year when he entered on his duties as president of St. Joseph's College. The uneasiness among Catholics caused by the Know-Nothing movement and a too keen consciousness of his inexperience and unpreparedness for the responsibility placed on his youthful shoulders tended to depress him in his first months of office. In February, 1855, Father Murphy sent him some encouraging lines:

Disturbances often occur after Christmas—but spring always restores a good feeling. The Know-nothing paper of Bardstown, if indeed it should be started, would infallibly sink money and then sink itself. Purely Know-nothing papers meet the same fate everywhere. As to the apprehensions expressed by Mr. N——, I think you of Bardstown are safer than others. It is not probable that there will be a universal attack upon the Catholics, but it is not unlikely that in some large cities violence will be employed.

The omission of the Pius IX toast is not advisable, nor is its admission likely to produce bad consequences. You must celebrate the 22nd as usual. The toasts may be few, which will be a great improvement, and if published,

they have a broad-brimmed black hat looped on the left side surmounted by a tall white plume, the captain and lieutenants wore two epaulets." *Catholic Advocate*, July 5, 1858.

³⁶ *Litterae Annuae*, 1854-55 (A)

should be examined beforehand. Last year there was an objectionable one. The circumstance of boys being kept away from college by protestant opposition is an habitual thing and for one case that comes to your knowledge (thousands) take place unknown to you. It is probable, if times continue as they are, that there will be a decrease of scholars, but also it is probable that next year will be an abundant one, and owing to the scarcity of money everything will be cheap.

As to your own feelings, misgivings, shortcomings, etc. 1st reflect little on them even in prayer. 2nd beware of communicating them. Your inferiors will probably detect your weakness, but if you keep silent and cool, a thousand deficiencies will escape their notice. You must act like Virgil's hero after the shipwreck: *Spem voltu simulat, premit alto corde dolorem*.³⁷

During the scholastic year 1855-1856 an improvement was made on the college premises consisting in a stone wall five feet in height, two in width and two hundred and twenty in length. A rather pretentious entrance in the middle with an iron gate was flanked by two neatly constructed cottages, which served as tailor-shop and porter's lodge.

The edifying death of Richard Semmes, a boarder, on February 10, 1856, is recorded in the college annals. His earthly span of life was brief, but in growth in virtue he had covered a much wider compass of time. Born in Washington, Wilkes County, Georgia, in 1840, he died at sixteen. A genial disposition and a frank unaffected piety made him an attractive figure among his associates. A loyal sodalist of the Blessed Virgin, he daily recited the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception in her honor. One day while playing on the campus he suddenly collapsed and fell to the ground. Thereafter a mysterious malady preyed upon him, paralysis of all the limbs and faculties set in, and after two months of acute suffering borne with a patience very beautiful to behold he found a merciful release in death.³⁸

At intervals during Father Coosemans's administration there were signs of disaffection among the students. During his first year the prefects managed them with difficulty. Mr. Walter Hill, prefect of studies, was inclined to put the blame for the unpleasant situation on the prefects, declaring that they were "too sharp, too watching, and too exacting." In the winter of 1855-1856 the boys appeared to be particularly out of sorts, partly as a result of the influence of a group of older students recently registered, who being unused to the restrictions of college-life fell into discontent and communicated it to others. Other contributing causes were the prolonged period of confinement in the play-room on account of prevailing wintry weather and the dismissal of some of the students for the use of liquor. But with the departure of

³⁷ Murphy to Coosemans, February 11, 1855 (A)

³⁸ *Litterae Annuae*, 1857-1858 (A)

the malcontents and the return of spring the students, as Father Murphy had predicted, were in better mood. The session 1856-1857 passed without incident. The succeeding one 1857-1858 opened under unfavorable circumstances. During the vacation certain students who had been requested not to return for the new session spread false reports against the college while a fatal accident which occurred on the grounds was unreasonably imputed by ill-informed or ill-affected persons as a matter of blame to the authorities of the institution. A group of youths who were spending the vacation-period at the college had obtained permission to recreate themselves in a lot to the rear of the college buildings. Contrary to a regulation which forbid the carrying and use of firearms of any kind, they had with them a pistol, with which they amused themselves by shooting at a target. Tiring of this sport, they were lying on the grass when one of their number, Aldige Joffrion, of Avoyelles, La., playfully attempted to wrest the pistol from a companion. In the scuffle which ensued, the weapon, a self-cocker, was discharged, Joffrion receiving the bullet in his right breast. He survived only till midday of the following day, but kept his senses all the time and prepared for the end with complete resignation to the divine will, meeting thus with the grace of a happy death that perhaps might not have been his under other circumstances. This and other occurrences reacted unfavorably on the registration for the new session. At evening of the first day only ninety-five students were enrolled and these seemed to have grievances against the president, Father Coosemans, whom they thought too rigorous a disciplinarian. A few additional boarders came in during the following days while the discontent tended to become general. The students were not refractory or rebellious, so the college chronicler observes, but they moped in a depressed sort of way around the premises with no heart for games or diversion of any kind. On October 2, 1857, came the announcement that Father Coosemans had been succeeded in the office of president by Father John De Blicq. The students promptly recovered their spirits at the news and the disaffection that had obtained speedily melted away.

To Father Druyts and his counselors in St. Louis no other course seemed to be open than thus to relieve Father Coosemans of the management of affairs at Bardstown, a measure that was taken without the concurrence of the Father General, as a crisis had developed and immediate action was necessary. The measure taken did not, it would seem, imply censure of the policy pursued by Father Coosemans as president. No one could have brought a greater fund of good will and prudence to the tasks of administration than this humble and spiritual-minded Jesuit, who was later to fill with visible success the post of first provincial of the Jesuits of the Middle West. But he dealt firmly,

possibly a bit too drastically with offenders against the more important of the college-regulations, and the resentment of these over the summary punishment meted out to them appears to have spread to the student-body generally with the result that his administration became entangled in misconceptions and prejudices which no amount of good will on his part could serve to dissipate ³⁹

Father De Bleck presided over St Joseph's College a little over a year and a half During this period two of the students received baptism, one of them conditionally This was a lower average for converts than had obtained during the years immediately preceding In the session 1853-1854 five of the students had entered the Church, in 1854-1855, six, and in 1855-1856, four The reception of the sacraments at frequent intervals continued to be urged by the faculty as a recognized practice of Jesuit student-life though the occasions on which the students communicated were rare compared to the frequency with which Catholic college-students do so today A few figures for the session 1855-1856 are extant The boarders this session numbered one hundred and forty-three, all of them Catholics except thirty. Students not belonging to the sodalities no doubt partook of the sacraments less frequently than those who did The sodality of the senior students counted fifty-eight members and twelve postulants, of whom about one-half received holy communion once a month, about one-third twice a month and the rest oftener. Of daily communion, not an uncommon practice among students of Catholic colleges since the great change inaugurated by Pius X, nothing at all is heard The Bardstown chronicler for 1854-1855 notes it as a sign of fervor among the sodalists that scarcely a Sunday or holy day of obligation passed without many or at least some of their number approaching the Holy Table ⁴⁰

On June 25, 1859, Christian Zealand, a promising scholastic of the Bardstown faculty, met death by accidental drowning, having ac-

³⁹ *Idem*, 1857-58 (A) In later years Coosemans was to object to the proposed removal of the Jesuit boarding-school of St Louis to Bardstown on the ground among others "of the almost inevitable opportunity which the students would have to learn to drink owing to the proximity of the village of Bardstown and the facility of obtaining whiskey, an intoxicating drink which is made in large quantities in Kentucky Drunkenness has always been one of the great miseries of that locality While I was Vice-Rector there, I was very severe in this matter and heedless of intercessors or parents, I inflicted without mercy the penalty provided for by the rule, so that, if I mistake not, in the course of a single year 10 or 12 pupils were sent away for having drunk to excess, though I had often warned the students that such would be the fate of all such as should be caught and had begged them not to expose themselves and their families to the disgrace that would result from this punishment" Coosemans ad Beckx, August 2, 1867 (A)

⁴⁰ *Litterae Annuae*, 1854-55-56 (A)

accompanied the students to bathe in a near-by river. The body was recovered within an hour and interred the following day in the little cemetery adjoining the college. The records of the college note Mr Zealand as a man of generous impulses and exemplary fidelity in the observance of the Jesuit rule.⁴¹

An official college register rarely takes on the character of a human document. Yet a Bardstown registrar contrived to enliven the deadly dullness of his records by marginal comments, which in many cases furnish interesting side-lights on the student-life of the day. The comments in most cases regard reasons for the withdrawal of students from the institution. "Left in November, cause—a desire of enjoying more freedom in Nelson County." "Left the day after his entrance. He preferred fox-hunting to study." Examinations were apparently no perfunctory affair at Bardstown, at least in the eyes of Charles La Place of Natchitoches, who "left in June, 1855, because he feared to fail in his *examen ad gradum*." A Protestant youth from distant Liberty, Missouri, leaves because the regulations were too strict, on the other hand, a youth of twenty from Nelson County, Kentucky, also a Protestant, who apparently had his own ideas on discipline, left because the regulations were not strict enough, on which the registrar is moved to exclaim "*O Superi!*" In the course of 1851 three students were dismissed "being proved to be of mixed blood." The color-line had to be drawn as an alternative to having the body of the students pack up and leave. Dismissals for intoxication were of frequent occurrence, the penalty being sometimes administered for a single lapse into the offence. In one year Father Coosemans dismissed ten students on this head. Non-Catholic boys found it difficult at times to adjust themselves to their environment. Dismissals are on record for "bigotry," "for cursing and persecuting Catholic boys," "for interfering with the President's duties and blaspheming." Extremes of disorderly conduct led at times to dismissal, as in certain recorded cases of "riotous conduct," "maliciously throwing at the windows in the infirmary," "threatening a prefect, knife in hand to stab him." Of a certain student the register records, "recalled, his progress not keeping pace with his expenses", and of another, "recalled by his Father for having been feruled." In 1859 a youth is sent home "for having sent a challenge to a student." Francis O'Brien, fifteen, of Bedford Co., Kentucky, left college in 1852 "because he was not allowed to study latin without greek." Finally, there is the case of Henry Lawler, the last but one student to be registered at Bardstown, who in September, 1861, "took his trunk and walked off, reported that the college had broken up on account of the War."⁴²

⁴¹ *Idem*, 1858-1859 (A)

⁴² Bardstown Register of Students, 1848-1861 (A) The first student regis-

§ 3 BARDSTOWN AND THE CIVIL WAR

On May 22, 1859, Father Thomas O'Neil became rector of St. Joseph's College in succession to Father De Blicke. A resolute, strong-minded personality, he was in later years as provincial to administer the affairs of the midwestern Jesuits with a vigorous hand. Entering at thirty-seven on his rectorship at Bardstown, he brought to his new duties no more helpful experience than that which he had acquired as a scholastic in the same institution which now he was called upon to direct. His theological studies he made at Fordham, New York, and the year immediately preceding his return to Bardstown he passed in lecturing on dogmatic theology in the scholasticate at the College Farm near St. Louis. His bent of mind was always scientific rather than literary, the scholastic theologians with their orderly and analytic exposition of Catholic doctrine being an attraction for him down to his latest years.

The administration of Father O'Neil at Bardstown was coincident with the outbreak of the Civil War and the closing of the college in consequence of that event. The commencement exercises of 1861 were set at an early date, June 21, as the southern students were eager to reach their homes before such tightening of the military lines as might intercept their return altogether. It was the last commencement in the history of St. Joseph's College as a Jesuit institution. One master's degree and seven bachelor's degrees in arts were conferred, among the recipients of the latter being Julius S. Walsh of St. Louis, later a leading financier of that city.

The opening of the Civil War found Kentucky in a position of the utmost difficulty. The majority of its people were probably Union sympathizers, but its Governor, Beriah Magoffin, leaned to the side of the secessionists and refused to answer President Lincoln's call for troops. The Governor bent every effort to maintain Kentucky at least for the moment in a position of neutrality, he declared that while he had no thought of taking the state out of the Union he would countenance no attempt on the part of the federal authorities to coerce the seceding states. Both Confederate and Union armies were accordingly warned to keep off Kentucky soil. This they first agreed to do, but the neutrality of the state was not respected long. In September, 1861, Columbus on the Ohio was seized by Confederate troops, as a countermeasure, Ulysses S. Grant, then in command of the district of Cairo, took military possession of Paducah in western Kentucky and the state

tered at St. Joseph's during the Jesuit régime was Hippolyte Templet of Napoleonville, Indiana, who entered July 10, 1848, the last was Thomas Howard of Louisville, Ky, who entered September 13, 1861. During this period the names of 1103 students were entered on the roll.

was thereupon given over to the horrors of invasion and civil conflict. In September, 1862, the Confederate General, Braxton Bragg, moved up into Kentucky from the South with a large army, having been preceded by an advance detachment of eight thousand under General E. Kirby Smith, who made his way as far north as Covington on the south side of the Ohio opposite Cincinnati. Falling back thence, Smith joined Bragg at Lexington, from which point the Confederates advanced to Frankfort, installing there a secessionist governor, and then moved towards Louisville, passing through Nelson County and Bardstown on the way. Louisville seemed to lay an easy prize before them and their pickets advanced within six miles of the city. But General Don Carlos Buell with a Union force of sixty thousand men drove back the Confederates, engaging them October 2, 1862, at Perryville, Boyle County, in the greatest battle ever fought on Kentucky soil. Bragg's men were so roughly handled that they fled in disorder into Tennessee and the last serious effort of the Confederacy to win Kentucky by force of arms was at an end.⁴³

Bardstown, only forty miles southeast of Louisville, was crossed and recrossed by both belligerents. Father O'Neil, rector of St. Joseph's College, was at Frederick, Maryland, going through the exercises of the third year of novitiate prescribed by the Jesuit rule, and his duties at Bardstown were being temporarily discharged by Father John Verdin, a former rector of St. Louis University. The college made bold to reopen on September 2, 1861, with the small registration of thirty-eight boarders and twenty-nine day-scholars. Only eight students, all boarders, were subsequently received. To conduct classes with any profit to the students was impossible under the circumstances. The martial sights and sounds that became familiar to them with the presence of Union troops in the vicinity, the news of military victories and defeats that came in as the war progressed, and the alarming reports of impending battles in the very neighborhood of the college kept the students on edge and drove all thoughts of study from their heads. Meantime, the institution was being run at a financial loss as there was no means of collecting the bills of the southern students. It soon became necessary to obtain a loan of three thousand dollars to meet running expenses. Under the circumstances it was therefore determined to suspend classes with the beginning of the Christmas holidays, the date of which was fixed for December 21. Seventeen of the boarders, penniless and unable to cross the military lines to their homes in the South or Mexico, remained at the college. The younger of them, mostly Mexicans, set out on December 30 under conduct of Father Verdin for St. Louis Uni-

⁴³ Lossing, *Cyclopedia of United States History*, I, 737

versity where they were registered for the remainder of the academic year. The other five, older boys, sought to earn their support in Bardstown but without success as no employment could be found for them. Three of the number then made their way to St. Louis where they continued their studies at the University. The two others with one Ashton, a young resident of Bardstown, determined, as a desperate measure, to work their way South through the military lines. They had proceeded a considerable distance and were in a fair way of effecting their escape when a too audible conversation over the impending success of the adventure led to their arrest by Union soldiers, who imprisoned them in Louisville. Their release was obtained, but only at considerable expense, and they returned to Bardstown. Later, one of the two attempted again to cross the lines southward and this time succeeded. Early in April, 1862, by which time all the students had departed, the establishment at Bardstown ceased to be a college and became what is technically known in Jesuit parlance as a residence. Thereupon the college buildings for about half the period of the war served the purposes of a military hospital.⁴⁴

The educational activities of the St. Louis Jesuits centered at Bardstown during the previous thirteen and a half years had thus been brought abruptly to an end. The college had been growing steadily in public favor and, enjoying the good will and confidence of parents and their sons, gave promise of a career of increasing usefulness in the field of Christian education. It is a circumstance worthy of record that the relations between teaching-staff and student-body were marked by a notable degree of cordiality which one-time members of the faculty found it pleasant in later years to recall. Disagreeable episodes occurred indeed at intervals, resulting, most of them, from the firmness of the college administration in enforcing some very necessary regulations, but they were of passing moment only and left the main currents of student-life at Bardstown undisturbed in their even and placid flow. The atmosphere of the college, it may be repeated, was at all times distinctly southern. In the last double session 1860-1861 one hundred and eighteen students registered from Kentucky, eighty-two from Louisiana, twenty-two from Mississippi and seventeen from Missouri. The southern states, together with the border states, Kentucky and Missouri, contributed practically all the students. In the session 1860-1861 registrants from the northern states numbered only fourteen out of a total registration of two hundred and eighty, being six from Ohio, six from Indiana and two from Illinois.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ *Litterae Annuae, 1861-1862 (A)*

⁴⁵ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of St. Joseph's College, Bardstown, 1860-1861*. "You should not send your sons and daughters to the abolition regions,

It remains to recount what befell the Jesuit occupants of the college during the period that followed the suspension of classes. About the middle of September, 1861, the 10th Indiana Infantry went into camp at Bardstown. As there was much sickness in the regiment, the officers in charge petitioned the college authorities toward the end of October to furnish fresh bread to the soldiers, flour for the purpose being offered out of the army stores. This service was promptly rendered. In the beginning of November, by which time the number of sick soldiers had reached seventy, petition was made to the college that it dispose of its mattresses by sale for the use of the patients, the army supply of these articles falling short of needs. Mattresses were accordingly furnished, no compensation being asked in return. About the middle of November the 10th Indiana Infantry shifted quarters from Bardstown while other regiments moved in, as many as eleven being encamped in the locality in December. As the winter wore on sickness increased greatly among the soldiers, whose only protection against the severity of the weather was the covering of their tents. On Christmas Eve petition was made by the military authorities to the rector to permit certain rooms in the college to be occupied by the sick soldiers, a monthly rent for the same to be paid by the government. The petition was favorably received and on Christmas day the first sick case was brought to the college. Before long one half of the available space of the college buildings had been given up to the sick and disabled soldiers, who with their nurses and attendants numbered between three and four hundred. Besides the army nurses, twelve women were in constant attendance on the soldiers. At evening they returned to their homes in town with the exception of three, who were provided lodging at the college. The name of one of these devoted women, a Mrs. Hays, has been preserved. The patients were for the most part backwoodsmen from the western states, grossly ignorant of all things Catholic and steeped in appalling prejudices against the Church. At Father Verdin's suggestion, Mrs. Hays gave these men what spiritual solace she could as opportunity afforded. Her presence soon became a delight to the occupants of the sickrooms. She was especially tactful in bringing before the dying the necessity of safeguarding their interests in eternity and many of them as a result of her zealous attentions sought admission into the Church and were baptized.⁴⁶

you should encourage Southern institutions of all kinds and particularly Southern schools, and if you have not such in Mississippi, remember that Kentucky has plenty. If you want your sons to get a good education send them to St. Joseph's or to St. Mary's." *Bardstown Family Gazette*, April 8, 1857.

⁴⁶ *Litterae Annuae*, 1861-1862. Thomas Miles, S.J., in *WL*, 26:105. According to Barton, *Angels of the Battlefields—A History of the Labours of the*

By the early months of 1862 the one-time St Joseph's College had thus taken on every aspect of a large-sized military hospital. All day long groups of convalescent soldiers and their friends strolled along the corridors of the buildings, while without was heard the rumble of army-trucks and other conveyances arriving with supplies or wounded men from the battlefields. In January, 1863, on request of the military, the college bakery was called into requisition for the baking of bread, not only for the sick, but for all the troops in the neighborhood. For the use of the buildings and bakery the government was paying at the rate of one hundred and ninety-one dollars a month.

On the departure of the students most of the priests and the two scholastics on the college staff had been assigned to other Jesuit houses in the Middle West. In the fall of 1862 the Jesuit community at Bardstown numbered four priests, Father Verdin, vice-rector, Father Thomas Miles, minister, Father Charles Truyens, prefect of the church, and Father Theodore De Leeuw, spiritual director. There were, besides, five coadjutor-brothers. This total of nine was a considerable reduction from the staff of thirty or thirty-five found necessary in past years to man the college. To the few priests who thus remained at Bardstown after the suspension of classes the presence of so many sick and wounded soldiers under their own roof and in the other military hospitals maintained in town offered endless opportunities for ministerial zeal. Of the soldiers, as many as one hundred and eighty were baptized, a large number of them dying from wounds or disease. On January 13, 1862, one of the Bardstown Jesuits went to Louisville to attend the patients in the four or five military hospitals of that city, in which ministry he remained employed for four months. On January 2, 1862, Father Charles Truyens left Bardstown for Columbia, Adair County, Kentucky, to take up his duties as chaplain of the 12th Kentucky Infantry. His stay with the troops was brief, the exposure and privations of camp-life having brought on an illness which made it necessary for him to return in the middle of March to the college.⁴⁷

Early in September, 1862, word reached Bardstown that the Confederates had invaded the state and were marching towards Louisville. The federal sick lodged at the college were thereupon moved to Louisville, the buildings being left without military occupants for two entire weeks. On September 21 General Bragg, the Confederate leader, appeared at Bardstown with the main column of his army, about forty thousand strong. On the 23rd he asked for the use of the college on

Catholic Sisterhoods in the late Civil War (Philadelphia, 1877), p. 147, the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth were employed for a time as nurses to the Confederate soldiers in St Joseph's College, Bardstown.

⁴⁷ *Litterae Annuae*, 1861-1862. See Chap. XXII, note 22.

the same terms as those accorded the federals, the rent being fixed at one hundred and seventy-five dollars a month. In the Confederate ranks were numerous former students of Bardstown, and these were now delighted to renew acquaintance with such of their old-time Jesuit teachers as still remained at the college. With the opportunities thus afforded for the exercise of some timely ministerial service on behalf of their former pupils, these visits were highly welcomed by the fathers. Father Verdín was particularly successful in inducing these Bardstown alumni of a past day to prepare their souls by confession for the dread uncertainties of war. It was obviously a token of divine mercy in their regard. Not many days after their visit to Bardstown a number of Verdín's penitents made the supreme sacrifice on the sanguinary field of Perryville, among them General Sterling A. Ward of Alabama.

The stay of the Confederates at Bardstown was a brief one, lasting only from September 24 to October 4, on the morning of which latter day they moved their sick, with the exception of some sixty extreme cases, to Danville while the troops moved off in the direction of Springfield. General Don Carlos Buell was now leading his northern army from Louisville in hot pursuit, his right wing on the Bardstown pike. An advance guard moving into Bardstown on October 4 was ambushed at the Fair Grounds and driven back by General Wharton's Confederate cavalry, which had been left behind by General Bragg as a rear-guard with instructions to hold the town until the evening of that day, when the federals moved in.⁴⁸ The college was at once commandeered for a hospital, the sick southern soldiers who had been left behind being placed under parole. The next day, October 5, saw Buell's army of sixty thousand pass through Bardstown in pursuit of Bragg, leaving two hundred of his sick at the college. On October 7 the 78th Indiana Regiment was surprised and disarmed in the neighborhood of Bardstown by Confederate troops and the men put on parole.⁴⁹ By October 12, fifty additional Union soldiers had been received at the college so that the number of men housed in it now numbered three hundred and ten, of whom sixty were Confederates. The days between October 5 and 17 were the most trying period experienced at any time during the war by the Jesuit group still resident at the college. There was much wrangling, at times even blows between the soldiers of North and South thus forced by the fortunes of war to live together under the same roof. To the unpleasantness arising from this situation was added the annoyance caused by the conduct of some Union men who, it was reported, had feigned sickness so as to be left behind at Bards-

⁴⁸ Collins, *op cit*, I 113

⁴⁹ *Idem*, I 113

town when their regiments passed through the town. They drank and quarrelled with one another, rode roughshod over all the hospital regulations, stole the college poultry and vegetables and made their way uninvited into the private apartments of the fathers, the officers, so it seemed, being powerless to control them. A sigh of relief was breathed by the Jesuit inmates when on October 17 some sixty or seventy of these undisciplined guests received their discharge from the hospital. In the interim the number of the Confederate sick had grown smaller, some of the group left behind by the retreating southerners having died and others having been sent for convalescence to their homes.

The closing days of 1862 witnessed still another shift in the military situation at Bardstown. A report having been received that the Confederates were in the neighborhood, the federals on December 28 evacuated the town and withdrew to Louisville, taking with them as many of their sick as could travel. The next day, towards evening, General Morgan, the Confederate cavalry leader, entered the town with a force of eight thousand men. The college was immediately occupied and the federal sick who had been left behind, about one hundred and fifty in number, were taken prisoners and put on parole. The Confederates remained only a few days in Bardstown. On January 15, 1863, a Union regiment of Tennessee cavalry appeared in the town and asked permission to use the church as a barracks. This was refused as other quarters, the college for instance, were available for the soldiers. Notwithstanding the protests of its pastors the church was seized by the military and occupied by them, but for two days only. On January 17 the Tennessee cavalry proceeded on their way leaving the church quite undamaged. In the meantime, the number of soldier-patients at the college kept steadily declining until towards the end of March only twenty-four remained and these were on the 26th and 27th of that month moved to Louisville on word being received that the Confederates were again invading the state. On May 2, 1863, the federal authorities delivered over to the Jesuit owners the section of the college buildings that had been requisitioned for a hospital. Everything had been made clean and put in the best of order and except for a few broken window-panes the buildings were perfectly intact. The stipulated rent was duly paid and the military and the Jesuits of Bardstown parted in a spirit of friendliness and mutual satisfaction over the experiences they had shared together during eighteen historic months. Thereafter the college buildings do not appear to have served at any time during the Civil War the uses of a military hospital.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ *Litterae Annuae*, 1861-1863 (A)

With the closing of what may be called the military chapter in the history of the Society of Jesus in Bardstown, the energies of the few fathers still resident there became restricted to the placid channels of the parochial ministry. For the Negroes of recent emancipation an attempt was made to provide more immediate spiritual attention than they had formerly received. Already in 1862 the discovery was made that mere catechetical instruction, unsupported by other appeal, made but a feeble impression on the Negro mind. It was only with difficulty that the small number of ten or twelve blacks could be got together for catechism classes, and these showed but slender interest in the proceedings. Then, in June, 1863, the singing of Catholic songs and hymns was introduced into the classes. The vitalizing element seemed to have been found. The Negroes began to frequent the classes of catechism in ever increasing numbers until as many as sixty or seventy were in attendance. "Singing," comments the Bardstown chronicler, "seems to encourage them and stirs them to pious rivalry." In 1866 steps were taken with the Bishop's approval towards providing the Negroes with a church and school. One of the pastors went up to Chicago where he collected fifteen hundred dollars, which sum was increased by an additional hundred dollars gathered from various sources. Within a year or so property was bought for sixteen hundred and fifty dollars, the church and school being, however, erected at a much later period.⁵¹

On August 16, 1865, Father John Schultz, an Alsatian, a one-time superior of St. Mary's Potawatomi Mission and rector of St. Xavier College, Cincinnati, during the Civil War, became vice-rector at Bardstown. He remained at this post until the retrocession in December, 1868, of St. Joseph's College to the diocese. Associated with him at this juncture, when the Jesuit province of Missouri ceased to count the venerable Kentucky town among its centres of apostolic endeavor, were Fathers John O'Neil and Theodore De Leeuw and the coadjutor-brothers Dohan, Lawless, Dougherty and O'Rourke.

§ 4. THE CONTROVERSY

On July 23, 1860, Father Felix Sopranis of the province of Naples, appointed by the General, Peter Beckx, to the post of Visitor of the Society of Jesus in the United States, arrived in St. Louis to discuss with the Missouri vice-provincial the question of a scholasticate in common for the American divisions of the Society.⁵² In the fall he had entered on the visitation of the vice-province, being at Bardstown in November. There he found the college prospering, but handicapped in

⁵¹ *Idem*, 1864-1866 (A)

⁵² *Liber Consultationum*, 1860. (A).

its educational work through lack of adequate quarters for students and faculty. New buildings were imperative, but these, according to the instructions issued by the General to the Visitor were not to be erected unless the Society secured from the Bishop a title in fee simple to the college property, which, according to the terms of the deed of transfer of 1848, it was holding in trust only. In November, 1860, Sopranis was received with marked hospitality by Bishop Spalding at the episcopal residence in Louisville, but owing to some or other circumstance was prevented from taking up with the prelate, as it was his intention to do, the question of a more favorable tenure of the college property. From Santa Clara College in California he wrote to the Bishop April 3, 1861, advising him that the existing inadequacy of the Bardstown buildings could not be allowed to continue. Otherwise "the Fathers of our Society could not answer before men, nay, I would say, before God, for the happy issue of their labors in behalf of the youth there confided to their care. A new building, therefore, capable of affording sufficient room for a students' dormitory, chapel, study and refectory, leaving the existing college exclusively as a domicile for the Fathers, is, in the judgment of all, an absolute necessity, while on the financial side there would be no difficulty at least in beginning the work and that immediately." Sopranis then proceeded to say that the only difficulty in the way was the circumstance that the building would have to be erected *in fundo alieno* ("on another's property"), seeing that the Jesuits held only a trust-deed to the college grounds, and against building under such circumstances the Father General had expressed his mind clearly and unequivocally.

And here it is, Right Reverend Bishop, that your cooperation is wholly necessary since to your Lordship belongs the absolute proprietorship of the land in question. If only it pleased your Lordship to convey to our Society in fee-simple, as they say in English, the entire ground on which the present College, together with the dependent buildings, is located, reserving to your Lordship that on which the parochial church is standing, every inconvenience would be at an end. . . . This, then, is what the Father General flatters himself he will obtain of your Lordship, wherefore he writes to me that he will give his consent to the construction of the building just as soon as he can approve articles of agreement safeguarding the interests of the Society and signed by the Right Reverend Bishop and the Rector of the College

Father Sopranis concluded his letter by expressing the hope that he might hear on his way through St. Louis at the end of June that every difficulty had disappeared and that he might even be himself the bearer to the Father General of the stipulated agreement. In the interval Father Thomas O'Neil, rector of Bardstown College, was authorized

to deal with the Bishop of Louisville concerning the affair, all necessary powers to that effect being placed in his hands⁵³

In the summer of 1861, with Bishop Spalding still unheard from in regard to the Bardstown affair, Father Sopranis returned to Europe to report to the Father General in Rome on the condition of Jesuit affairs in America. Though he considered the commission assigned to him as in a sense discharged, he foresaw the probability of his returning again to America with instructions to execute the important decrees which it was understood the Father General would issue on the basis of his report. And so it turned out to be. In 1862 Sopranis was back again in the United States in the continued capacity of Visitor to the houses of his order. The controversy over Bardstown now entered on a new phase. Father Beckx in a letter to the Visitor, after observing that the suppression of a college was a matter of the utmost gravity from the view-point of the Jesuit constitutions, authorized him to return St. Joseph's College to the Bishop of Louisville provided that no serious impediment stood in the way. But it was first to be verified that the Society of Jesus was under no legal or moral obligation arising from the contract made with the Bishop in 1848, when the college was accepted, to continue its educational work at Bardstown, and to this end the opinion of competent persons, including attorneys-at-law and the Jesuit fathers who negotiated the contract, was to be ascertained⁵⁴. With Sopranis it was now no longer a question of obtaining from the Bishop a title in fee-simple to the college-property, as the only step to be taken before erecting a new building and thereby insuring the continuance of St. Joseph's College under Jesuit control. New circumstances were to be reckoned with since he first broached the matter to Bishop Spalding in the spring of 1861. The Civil War had broken out and classes at St. Joseph's had been suspended and the buildings diverted to hospital use. Moreover, a more intimate acquaintance with conditions in the vice-province of Missouri had revealed to him a surprising inadequacy of personnel for the activities in which it was engaged. To start up anew at Bardstown after the war was over would require the withdrawal of men from posts where they were indispensably needed in default of substitutes and would thus entail hardship on the vice-province generally. As to the obligations incurred by the Society by the contract of 1848, Father Sopranis after a careful study of that document was led to conclude, a view in which he was sustained by Catholic lawyers to whom he submitted the document for examination, that no argument could be drawn from it prejudicing the

⁵³ Sopranis ad Spalding, April 3, 1861 (A)

⁵⁴ Beckx ad Sopranis, 1861 (A)

liberty of the Society under the circumstances to surrender the college if it saw fit ⁵⁵

From the first Bishop Spalding challenged the right of the Jesuits to surrender Bardstown To a communication from Father Soprani of July 25, 1862, he first replied August 1 following, by submitting a *prævia quaestio*, which he believed should be resolved before advancing any further in the controversy This question regarded the right of the Jesuits to give up the college in view of the 18th decree of the First Provincial Council of Cincinnati of 1855, according to which religious congregations or orders might not lawfully withdraw from a diocese without previous knowledge and consent of the Ordinary "The present difficulties are essentially temporary," the Bishop said in conclusion, "and cannot last long and to me it would seem unwise to base upon them a *permanent* arrangement involving such serious consequences to Religion and to your Society Perhaps in a year or two old St Joseph's will again emerge from the cloud as bright and prosperous as ever and then your Reverence might regret that you had abandoned it in the hour of its adversity, leaving its friends and its Bishop in trouble At least it would be wise to await the issue" ⁵⁶

Writing briefly to Father Coosemans August 10 the Visitor pointed out that the Cincinnati decree appealed to by Bishop Spalding regarded only the removal of pastors of churches in charge of religious Such

⁵⁵ Of course, even if free by civil law to surrender the college, the Jesuits did not consider themselves at liberty to do so unless canon law also placed no obstacle

⁵⁶ Spalding to Coosemans, August 1, 1862 (A) Most of the correspondence between Bishop and Visitor was carried on indirectly through Father Coosemans The 18th decree of the First Provincial Council of Cincinnati as cited by Spalding reads "Cum neminem lateat quanto cum studio fructuque animarum curam egerint collegiæque regenda susceperint viri Religiosi divisorum Ordinum in hac provincia et quanto cum scandalo et Religionis detrimento Missiones et Instituta ipsis commissa in suis seu in vitis Ordinarius locorum relinquerent et alias se transferrent haud inopportuno esse censuerunt Patres quæ bonæ sunt firmare, quæ autem mala avertere providentes, in mentem revocare decretum Summi Pontificis Bonifacii VIII (de Excessibus Praelatorum tit vi cap) et S C de prop fide 3 Junii 1822 a Summo Pont Pio VII die 21 Julii ejusdem anni approbatum, ex quibus constat Societates Religiosas a conventionibus cum Episcopis in his resiliere non posse, nec pastores et rectores Religiosos ab Ecclesiis et locis quibus propositi sunt a Superioribus suis removeri, nisi iis alii Societatum sodales cum consensu Ordinarii subrogentur His sapientissimis Summorum Pontificum decretis omnes morem gerere obsequiumque præstare in Domino monemus" A similar provision is now embodied in the new code of canon law introduced by Benedict XV (Canon 498), according to which religious orders and congregations once established in a diocese may not withdraw from it without permission of the Holy See Its embodiment in the new code is meant to obviate just such complications as the one here discussed

pastors might not be removed by their superiors without a substitute being appointed in their place and such substitute must obtain episcopal approbation before exercising his pastoral duties. This interpretation of the decree, so the Visitor declared, had recently been rendered by certain theologians in Rome. Moreover, it seemed borne out by the tenor of the papal documents cited in the decree. The Visitor further emphasized the fact that since the college ceased to be a place available for the education of youth, owing to military occupation, and after such occupation was over, would still cease to be so available owing to the inability of the Jesuits to provide teachers, the latter were bound in conscience, according to the terms of the contract of 1848, to deliver the institution back to the diocese. Bishop Spalding's answer to this communication from Father Sopranis is reproduced in substance, the original being in Latin.

I have received the letter of date New York, August 10, which you have forwarded to me and in which Very Rev. Father Sopranis, Visitor of the Society of Jesus in America, signifies to me the reasons on account of which he wishes to surrender the college and church of St. Joseph at Bardstown. I have thought it opportune to make the following observations upon this letter and I beg your Reverence kindly to transmit the same in my name to the aforesaid venerable Visitor of the Society.

1. As to the legal title by which the Society holds the property of the aforesaid college—

I observe 1° that this title was approved and accepted by the Superiors of the Society in the month of July, 1848, fourteen years ago, without any protest ever having been made against it almost up to the present, at least as far as my knowledge goes. I observe 2° that said title, which is in the form of a trust in perpetuity for the good of education, is precisely the same as that by which the Society holds the property of the college and church of Cincinnati and that the legal instrument by which it was delivered to the Society in perpetuity with the agreement and approval of Very Rev. Father Elet, Vice-Provincial of Missouri, and Rev. Father Verhaegen, who was sent hither by the former, was drawn up precisely according to the pattern of the Cincinnati instrument, concerning which, as far as I hear, no complaint has ever been entered by the Superiors of the Society. I observe 3° that the said trust is intrinsically and *per se* a bilateral *contractus onerosus*, from which neither party ought to retire without the consent of the other, and as the Bishop could not according to law, whether civil or canon, eject the Society from the aforesaid property without the consent of the Superiors of the same, so neither on the other hand ought the Superiors to recall their men from the same without the Bishop's consent. I observe 4° that when there was question of erecting a new college building I readily put my signature to a written instrument which had been drawn up by a competent lawyer and in which the difficulty over the title of the ground on which it

was to be built was satisfactorily met according to the mind even of the aforesaid Rector

2 As regards the second argument of the distinguished Visitor consisting in the circumstance that the aforesaid College, as having been occupied for some months back by troops as a hospital for their sick, is no longer a suitable place for education, which was the principal object of the said trust

I observe 1° that such occupation is by its very nature temporary and as it were, *per accidens*, and therefore cannot render invalid a contract which was perpetual and onerous on both sides

I observe 2° that said military occupation in no wise affects the church of St Joseph but only a part of the college itself

I observe 3° that for an occupation of this nature to affect a perpetual contract it would have to last for some years, a thing which, to say the least, is very improbable

I observe 4° that this temporary occupation has come about by reason of the times, not through any fault of mine

3 As the meaning of the 18th decree of the First Council of Cincinnati now approved by the Holy See,

I observe 1° that this decree is directed against the relinquishing not only of churches but of *colleges* and *institutes* in the hands of religious societies—*“in scus seu inuitus Ordinarius locorum cum scandalo et Religionis detrimento, et tam de Collegis quam de Ecclesiis idem decretum clare praevidere, Societates Religiosas a conventiombus cum Episcopis inuitis resoluere non posse etc”* [“without the knowledge or against the wishes of the local Ordinaries with resulting scandal and harm to Religion and that, as well in the case of Colleges as of churches, the same decree provides that Religious Societies cannot go back on agreements made with Bishops, etc”]

I observe 2° that so far I have heard nothing of a rescript having been issued in Rome interpreting the sense and scope of this decree according to the opinion of certain theologians, furthermore, nothing of this sort is found in the authentic acts of the above mentioned Council, which contain a formal Instruction of the Sacred Congregation de Prop Fide Besides, the theologians' opinion referred to does not touch the principal issue here in dispute, the right namely to withdraw over their protest from contracts of this nature made with the Ordinaries⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Spalding ad Coosmans, August 18, 1862 (A) In referring to a “rescript” the Bishop was under a misapprehension Sopranis in his letter of August 10 had merely written, “*rescriptum est Roma*,” i.e. “it was written from Rome” that the decree in question had met with a certain interpretation In regard to his letter of August 18 Spalding wrote to Archbishop Kenrick August 31, 1862 “The J [Jesuits] are an extraordinary body of holy men They have never assigned *to me* the reason which you allege—that they cannot support themselves at St Joseph’s The chief reason of the Venerable Visitor is the *title* to the property, which is a Trust Deed in perpetuum I have answered this document in a letter of eight pages in Latin to which I have as yet received no reply They will find it difficult to answer I think that the Bishops of our Province should insist on their compliance with their contract according to the *clear provisions* of our *first* Provincial

In a letter addressed to Father Coosemans, Father Sopranis commented on the foregoing communication from Bishop Spalding

It is clear to me beyond doubt that the Vice-Province of Missouri owing to lack of suitable personnel cannot, as the obligation assumed in the agreement of July 5, 1848, would demand of it, use its exertions for the success of St Joseph's College as a permanent institution of education. Moreover, it is expressly stipulated in the same agreement "but should the same College and its property hereafter at any time be diverted from the purposes of education, then it is fully understood that the same shall fall to and be invested in the Right Rev Bishop." From the foregoing I must, so I judge, reason as follows: the Vice-Province of Missouri is in such a condition that it is forced to divert St Joseph's College from the purpose for which it was delivered since it can no longer properly provide therein for the education of youth. But this is the case in which according to agreement the College and all its appurtenances ought to revert to ('fall to and be invested in') the Right Reverend Bishop. Therefore equity requires of the Vice-Province of Missouri that it withdraw from possession of the college and freely renounce it in favor of the Right Reverend Bishop.

The writer next appeals to the general principle of equity and natural ethics that an obligation assumed ceases to exist if means of fulfilling it are no longer at hand.

And from this I conclude as beyond all doubt that the Fathers of Cincinnati, whatever be the meaning of the 18th decree of the 1st Synod, had no mind to include this case any more than the Roman Pontiffs and Sacred Congregation de Prop Fide cited therein, were minded to do so. Nay, I would dare say they could not have had any such intention, for it would be a thing contrary to the natural law itself and to suspect even that anything of this sort could have proceeded from such authority were preposterous.

It has accordingly been clear to me that I can *validly* and *licitly* make renunciation of the College of Bardstown with its adjuncts into the hands of the Right Reverend Bishop of Louisville. But I should wish to do so *honorably*, to wit, with the honor of either party unimpaired and without offence to any one. A highly opportune occasion for doing so seems to present

Council of Cincinnati [Cincinnati] at which they were fully represented and did not protest. I will send you all the correspondence in a few days. I do not know whether I will insist on the appeal to the judgment of the Holy Congregation [Congregation] de Prop [aganda], which I have already proposed to the Visitor. I will be guided by my Metropolitan and brethren." (1) Spalding had written shortly before (August 18) to Archbishop Purcell "I mean to test the matter at Rome and have this day informed them [the Jesuits] of my intention to appeal. Will you support me as my metropolitan?" (1) As a matter of fact the question of the title to the Bardstown property did not particularly enter into the Jesuit contention at this stage, the Society now took its stand on the moral impossibility of continuing the college for lack of men.

itself in the present state of the country For while in consequence of the latter the Fathers of Missouri have ceased though it be only temporarily to educate youth in the aforesaid College, it would be without prejudice to their honor were they to cease educating youth in the same College even for a greater period, as long, namely, as the Missouri Vice-Province suffers from lack of men or even *in perpetuum*, nor would any serious harm be done to the diocese of Louisville, since the Right Reverend Bishop would be in a position to provide in some other and better way for the institution in question according to the title by which he himself holds the property

For influenced by a sincere zeal for souls, that is to say, not to deprive his flock of the men of the Society, he [Spalding] sets himself against this determination and refuses to consent to it in any way, wherein I cannot help commending the zeal of the Right Reverend Bishop and tendering him my thanks for the esteem in which, as he shows, he holds our least Society Now I think this inference must be drawn from the above if charity that is genuine can in no wise be at odds with charity, then in charity itself a way must be found for settling things amicably This way, so it seems, can be found if both sides make some concession Let the Right Reverend Bishop concede to the Fathers of Missouri that the affairs of St Joseph College remain in the same state in which they are at present as long as the national situation be unsettled and peace not restored, and the Fathers of Missouri will not cease (on their part) to render every service they are rendering now Then, when order shall have been reestablished in the country and peace restored, let the Vice-Province of Missouri canvas its resources and if it finds them equal to shouldering the burden, it will keep the college of Bardstown, but if it finds otherwise, which will undoubtedly be the case if the situation clears up in a very short time, the Right Reverend Bishop will release them from the obligation of keeping the College

For the rest, if the Right Reverend Bishop wishes to appeal to the Sacred Congregation de Prop [aganda] Fide, I am not a person who either can or ought or should wish to oppose the Rt Reverend Bishop, for there is a duty incumbent on me to follow and defer to him ⁵⁸

There was no disposition on the part of the Jesuits to press the controversy to a hasty issue, the more so as they were dealing with so sympathetic and high-minded a prelate as Bishop Spalding In a letter of this period addressed to Father Coosemans he witnesses to the esteem and affection which he had entertained from youth for the Society of Jesus "Certainly it is no inclination of mine, for I am averse to contentiousness of any kind, but my very esteem for the Society and my fear of losing its Fathers from the diocese committed to my care, together with the dictates of my conscience, that have led me, much against my feelings, to enter this controversy, which I certainly did not begin, but merely prolonged by replying to the arguments advanced by

⁵⁸ Sopranis ad Coosemans, August 27, 1862 (AA)

the distinguished Father Sopranis”⁵⁹ As previously stated, a compromise was now proposed to the Bishop by the Visitor, who still maintained that the Society could validly, licitly and honorably (*valide, licite, honeste*) withdraw from Bardstown. The fathers would keep church and college *in statu quo* while the war lasted and after the war would continue holding them should they be able to do so, but if unable, then they would surrender the same to the Bishop, the latter releasing them from whatever obligations they might be under to retain them. Bishop Spalding signified his acceptance of the compromise, with the proviso, however, that a third party be appointed to arbitrate the issue, suggesting for this function either Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati or Archbishop Kenrick of St. Louis. Moreover, “to demonstrate more clearly his esteem for the Society,” Spalding engaged to go as far as the civil law allowed in giving the Jesuits a more satisfactory title to the college property.

With the proposal made by the prelate that an arbiter be appointed to decide the issue at stake, including the question of the Jesuits’ ability to reopen the college at the end of the war, the Visitor was in full accord, but he suggested as a preferable choice for arbiter the Jesuit Father General as it was the latter alone who was in a position to reopen the college by furnishing the necessary personnel. To this last suggestion Bishop Spalding generously assented, stipulating, however, at the same time that no new houses were to be opened by the vice-province before the final decision was rendered. Father Sopranis hastened to express his satisfaction over the provisional settlement which had thus been reached. As to not undertaking new enterprises of moment pending the final settlement, that was a matter of course, sincerity and good faith requiring that such understanding exist between the parties to the controversy. As to the Bishop’s offer to give the Jesuits a satisfactory title to the college property, Sopranis had for the moment nothing to say, since he rested his case for the permanent closing of the college entirely on the inability of the Society of Jesus to provide it with the necessary staff of teachers.

Important events were to occur before Father Beckx was to pass judgment on the perplexing question. In 1864 Bishop Spalding was transferred from Louisville to the metropolitan see of Baltimore, in the April of 1865 the Civil War was over, and in the following September the Reverend Peter J. Lavialle was consecrated Bishop of Louisville. The newly consecrated prelate had no desire, any more than had his predecessor, to see the Jesuits detach themselves from Bardstown. “He has told a gentleman of Bardstown,” wrote Coosemans, September

⁵⁹ Spalding ad Coosemans, September 2, 1862 (A)

13, 1865, "that with the help of the Jesuits he will make St. Joseph's College one of the most flourishing in the United States. He does not know, the good Bishop, of the impossibility of our reopening this College for lack of professors" On October 2, 1865, Coosemans laid before his consultors the Bardstown affair in all its phases with a view to determine the line of action to be taken concerning it with the new Bishop of Louisville. He informed them of the number of men lost to the province as also of the number of accessions during the preceding four years. Thirty members had been lost, these including fathers and scholastics dead, dismissed or transferred to other provinces. The accessions during the same period numbered only seventeen, fifteen of these being scholastic novices while two were priests from the province of Galicia. When Father Sopranis discussed the surrender of the college with Bishop Spalding, the chief argument alleged to justify the step was a scarcity of men. If men were lacking at that period, much more was this the case now. Nor was there anything in the suggestion that the province could with a very limited staff carry on at least a *collegium mchoatum*, consisting of a few classes only. This would be possible in the case of a day-school, but not in the case of a boarding-school, where students, once they take up their studies, ought to find the opportunity to pursue them to graduation. The consultors, accordingly, one alone excepted, gave it as their opinion that the college ought to be restored to the Bishop, adding that the business could be conveniently transacted with him by letter. A few days later, however, Father Coosemans, accompanied by his assistant, Father Keller, was in Louisville to negotiate the affair personally with Bishop Lavialle. The interview with the prelate appears to have been unsatisfactory as regards any progress made towards a solution of the problem, but he engaged to write promptly to the Father General, presenting the case from the viewpoint of the diocese. An account of the conference was communicated to the General by Father Coosemans.

The Bishop, who is very much attached to the Society and very zealous for the good of his diocese, would not hear of our going away. While fully agreeing that it is difficult in view of the losses we have sustained to meet the situation properly, he kept on begging me to do something for St. Joseph College, were we only to begin with two classes. He appealed to me in the name of his saintly predecessor, Bishop Flaget, who had done everything to have the Jesuits in his diocese, and in the name of his people, who were so anxious to have the Jesuits and who would certainly be scandalized to see them withdraw again. Moreover, he was ready, so he said, to do everything in his power to satisfy the Society in regard to the property, it was his desire, too, that the Fathers have a church and residence in Louisville. I recalled to him our poverty, the small number of our subjects and consequently the

impossibility of our undertaking anything new I suggested several orders and congregations who might be able to take over Bardstown College, but all was useless ^{59a}

Shortly after his return to St. Louis Coosemans proposed to the Father General, as a likely avenue of escape from what was becoming a painful situation, the transfer of the Jesuit boarding-college in St. Louis to Bardstown, a day-college only to be maintained in the former city. In December Father Beckx was still pondering on the perplexing issue, unable and unwilling as yet, so he declared, to say the final word. Had the province the men, the college could be opened to advantage. As to the proposal to transfer the St. Louis boarding-school to Bardstown, there was much to recommend it. An exclusively Catholic boarding-school could be built up or at least one which counted few non-Catholics and a stricter discipline could be enforced than was possible in St. Louis. Moreover, there was the hope that candidates in considerable numbers might be secured from this quarter for the Society. At length, in February, 1866, Father Beckx, after waiting vainly for months for word from Bishop Lavialle, issued a decree discontinuing St. Joseph's College, Bardstown, as a Jesuit institution ⁶⁰

In view of the arrangement between Bishop Spalding and Father Sopranis constituting the Jesuit General sole judge in the controversy with power to render an authoritative decision, the long-standing dispute would seem at last to have been definitely brought to an end. Yet such was not to be the case.

^{59a} Coosemans ad Beckx, October 17, 1865 (AA)

⁶⁰ Beckx ad Coosemans, December, 1865, February 27, 1866 (A). Father Beckx's Latin letter of February 27, 1866, addressed to Father Coosemans, runs as follows in translation: "After the close of the Civil War, which ravaged your country for so long a period, the college at Bardstown has frequently been under discussion and inquiry has been made as to whether our Society can reestablish it in a becoming manner or whether it ought to give it up altogether. It is indeed a trying experience for us to relinquish houses in which it was once permitted us to promote the interests of Church and State and in which we enjoyed the confidence of numerous friends and especially that of the first pastor of the diocese. But considering the condition of your Province and the meagre number of properly trained men, considering, too, that there is little or no hope of increasing the number of properly trained members for some years to come, you easily see for yourself that your Province cannot take on itself the burden of reopening the college in question and that accordingly nothing else remains except to restore it definitely to the most Reverend Bishop. Your Reverence will therefore kindly inform his Lordship to this effect, making whatever explanations may be necessary and not failing to present to him the sentiments of my sincere respect.

Should we be in a position later on to render any service on behalf of his flock, it will be our greatest joy and consolation to do so."

On April 4, 1866, Fathers Coosemans and Keller were in Louisville to acquaint Bishop Lavalie with the General's decision. On hearing it the Bishop showed himself deeply moved, saying he had not expected the issue of the affair would be such. He declared again his intention of writing to the Father General, from whom he confidently expected a favorable response. He had sounded the sentiments of his clergy and people on the issue and wished to be in a position to assure them that he had petitioned the General to have the Jesuits retained in the diocese. Finally, he wished it understood that if the Jesuits left his diocese they would thereafter be debarred from it for any kind of ministerial work. "I have learned since that his desire to have us at Louisville is only conditional, that his determination to keep us at Bardstown is such that he would write directly to the Pope to realize it. . . . It appears also that he does not consider himself bound by the engagement of his predecessor or by the arrangement made in this matter between Bishop Spalding and Father Sopranis" (Coosemans ad Beckx, April 8, 1866.) So great was Bishop Lavalie's emotion on the occasion of this interview that Father Coosemans did not venture to communicate to him at once his purpose to put Father Beckx's decision into execution. This he did by letter from Bardstown two days later after Father Keller, the bearer of the letter, in another meeting with the prelate, at which the vicar-general, Father Benedict Spalding, was present, vainly endeavored to have the two accept the settlement decreed by Father Beckx. The Bishop, however, reiterated his willingness to have such change made in the title to the college property as would render it satisfactory from the Jesuit standpoint and he declared again his intention to take up the whole affair within a day or two with the Father General.

In November, 1866, at which time no communication from the Bishop of Louisville on the subject in hand had come into his hands, Father Beckx made known to Father Coosemans that he was still of the opinion that the college should not be reopened and that the decree of suppression should accordingly be put into execution. At the same time, however, were it possible to transfer the boarding college from St. Louis to Bardstown and were the Bishop to give the Society a title in fee-simple to the Bardstown property, he was ready to revoke the decree suppressing the College. But on no condition would he allow the Society to build on property which was not its own (*in fundo alieno*). Again, in March, 1867, Father Beckx, after noting that no communication had been received from the Bishop of Louisville and that it seemed in vain to expect any, again set the Bardstown affair before Father Coosemans, asking whether it would not be expedient to transfer the St. Louis boarding-school to Bardstown, in which contingency the Bishop could be advised of the willingness of the Jesuits

to reopen St Joseph's College, provided, however, that the difficulty regarding the title could be overcome⁶¹ But Coosemans, though the

⁶¹ Beckx ad Coosemans, November, 1866, March, 1867 (A) The stand taken by Father Beckx that there was to be no building at Bardstown at Jesuit expense unless title in fee-simple to the property be first obtained (*ne in fundo alieno aedificetur*) appears for the first time in contemporary correspondence about the middle fifties As far as can be ascertained, the question of revising the title was not raised at all in 1852 when Emig's building was erected The new structure, while bringing relief, did not by any means solve the housing problem and the sentiment began to be expressed that an additional structure ought to be raised or the college abandoned altogether As it was, both faculty and student-body were housed in the original building, the narrow dimensions of which made it equally difficult to enforce student-discipline and insure the Jesuit professors the means of living in harmony with their religious rule The vice-provincial was requested by the Father General, January 30, 1858, to make inquiry together with the consultors 1° as to whether any arrangement were possible by which "the Society could acquire full dominion over the college buildings and property or at least have the right if at any time it were forced to give up the college, of reclaiming expenses incurred for new buildings" 2° "If neither arrangement could be made, should the number of students and officials be reduced so that the quarters of the existing buildings now in good repair might answer to the needs of the College?" Finally, 3° "should the College be given up?" The question of a new building having been taken up afresh in view of Beckx's letter, the college authorities obtained from Spalding a legal instrument, signed by him March 28, 1858, according to which, in the contingency of the Jesuits leaving Bardstown, the Bishop was either to purchase the prospective building or allow the Jesuits to sell it to others on his being reimbursed for the value of the property For some unexplained reason, probably because it was looked upon as only a personal concession from the Bishop and therefore not necessarily binding on his successors, this settlement, though embodying a suggestion made in Beckx's own letter of January 30, 1858, did not prove decisive in the controversy Two years later, in 1860, the rector of Bardstown was petitioning the Bishop of Louisville for an absolute title to the property on which it was hoped to build, while Father Sopranis on his arrival in the country in the same year was under explicit instructions from the Father General to accept nothing short of a title in fee-simple Eventually the opinion seemed to prevail that the particular tenure under which the Jesuits held the Bardstown property could not be legally altered, as being in the intention of the founder of the college (Bishop Flaget) a perpetual trust for educational purposes An interesting sidelight on the dispute about the title is found in a letter addressed January 30, 1856, to the General by Father Converse, treasurer of Bardstown college He observed that the objection raised in connection with the title proved too much If the Jesuits could not make the improvements necessary to keep the college up to standard, they ought to abandon it or should never have accepted it The particular clause regarding the tenure of the property was incorporated by Bishop Flaget in the deed with a view, so he declared, to prevent the Jesuits from leaving the college, or if they left to require them to restore the property to the Bishop free of debt Though Bishops Spalding and Lavialle had both engaged to do what they could to have the title to the property amended so as to meet the wishes of the Jesuits, nothing was actually done on this head probably owing to legal obstacles "According to fresh informa-

first to propose to the Father General the transfer of the boarding-school from St Louis to Bardstown, was now firmly set against the measure as were also his consultors. Accordingly no action was taken on the General's suggestion that the question, which had now dragged its weary length through some seven years, be taken up again with Bishop Lavalie. Probably the illness from which that worthy prelate suffered during the greater part of his incumbency of the see of Louisville kept him from communicating to the Jesuit General the diocesan side of the question as he had several times engaged to do. At all events, he was soon to pass from the scene, death overtaking him May 11, 1867.

A few months before the end Bishop Lavalie had offered Bardstown College to the Fathers of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana, writing to the venerable Father Sorin

The Fathers of the Soc[iet]y of J[esus], having lost more members than they have received for the last 6 years and being urged in consequence by their General rather to restrict and narrow down for a while their sphere of labors in teaching for which they are not able to provide according to the rules and general custom, are anxious not to reopen St Joseph's College in Bardstown, which they closed at the opening of the war. They have had no difficulty whatever either with clergy or the people, and they say themselves that Bard is one of the very best places for a boarding-school. Could you take that institution and reopen it next September or sooner if you should choose? The buildings are very valuable and well adapted to college purposes and they are surrounded with beautiful grounds well enclosed. There is a very fine parochial church, the first cathedral of Bishop Flaget. The old name of the college, the salubrity of the site, and close proximity of the Nazareth Academy, the R Road connecting Bardstown with Louisville seem to warrant the certain expectation of a steady large patronage, and what we hear of the anxiety of many in the South in regard to this favorite college can but confirm the same. There is no doubt that your Society would have here a distinguished and splendid field for ever, with a good chance of recruiting itself.⁶²

And now a fresh turn was given to the controversy and from an unexpected quarter. The Reverend Francis Chambige, rector of the diocesan seminary of St Thomas near Bardstown, made representations

tion received from Bardstown, it seems that the Bishop hasn't any more the right to put us into full and entire possession of this college with its landed property, seeing that the intention of the donor of the land was that it should be employed for the education of youth." Coosemans à Beckx, May 18, 1867. Bishop McCloskey, though anxious to retain the Jesuits at Bardstown, appears to have been reticent throughout on the subject of the title.

⁶² Lavalie to Sorin, January 29, 1867 (I)

to Father Beckx to the effect that the Jesuits were under strict moral obligation to reopen St. Joseph's College in virtue of the original contract of 1848. Though from the Jesuit viewpoint this phase of the question would seem to have been long since satisfactorily disposed of, Father Beckx appears to have been impressed by Father Chambige's contention, and this to such a degree that he cabled to St. Louis directing Father Coosemans to come to Rome immediately, bearing with him all the documents pertinent to the case, or else to dispatch Father Keller, the assistant-provincial, in his place. Coosemans at once took the matter up with his consultors. It was first agreed that Keller should undertake the mission. Later, it was thought better under the circumstances for Coosemans himself to answer the summons. This he did, arriving in Rome in the summer of 1867. In November he was again in St. Louis reporting to his consultors that the Father General's mind was still for suppressing St. Joseph's College, but that no action was to be taken pending an expected decision from the Congregation of the Propaganda, to which the question had been submitted by the Louisville diocesan authorities. A decision favorable to the Society might be expected, so declared the General, with whom Cardinal Barnabo, Prefect of the Congregation, had communicated the preceding May, expressing the hope that the Jesuits would find it possible to remain at Bardstown and reopen the college. No decree touching the Bardstown affair was issued at any time by the Sacred Congregation.⁶³

While in Europe Father Coosemans drew up for the General a memorial on the Bardstown question, which had now become, in Father Keller's words, "a matter of life and death for the Province of Missouri."⁶⁴ The question was dealt with very thoroughly and from every angle, the contents of the document resolving themselves into four well-reasoned conclusions: 1. That the Jesuits were not obliged to remain in Bardstown in virtue of the contract made with Bishop Flaget in 1848. 2. That even though such obligation arose from the contract named, Bishop Spalding had released the Jesuits from the obligation alleged by accepting the compromise of Father Sopranis, which stipulated that the Jesuit General was to be the judge in last instance of the dispute. 3. That it was not possible, while continuing the boarding-school at St. Louis or some place in Missouri, to reopen the college of Bardstown without inflicting a grave injury on the province. As to securing a title in fee-simple to the college property, Father Coosemans still entertained doubts whether this could be done, though Father Benedict Spalding, administrator of the Louisville diocese after the death of

⁶³ *Liber Consultationum*, 1867. *De negotio Bardensi* (Ms) (A)

⁶⁴ Coosemans ad Beckx, August 2, 1867 (A)

le 2 Aout 1867 P. Coosemans

Monsieur le Père negotium Bardense

P. C.

Permettez-moi de soumettre à votre

Sabonité quelques points au sujet du Collège de Bardstown, qui serviroit, j'espère, à débrouiller un peu la question

1 En premier lieu pour ce qui regarde l'obligation de garder le collège pour l'éducation de la jeunesse en vertu du contrat fait en 1848 entre Mgr Flaget et des Trustees d'une part, et la Gouverneuse du Missouri de l'autre, je dis qu'un examen impartial de la lettre et de l'esprit de ce contrat suffira pour faire voir clairement qu'une telle obligation ne peut pas en être induite légitimement. Voici les mots mêmes du contrat: " All which property
"lands and Estates herein described are to be held,
"owned, occupied and used by the party of the second
"part, their heirs or assigns, in trust however, forever
"or so long as the same may be used for or devoted
"to educational purposes; but should the said
"college, and its property hereafter, at any time, be
"diverted from the purposes of Education, then it
"is fully understood and hereby provided for, that
"the same together with all the appurtenances now
"thereunto pertaining, shall fall to, and be invested
"in the Rt. Rev. Benedict Joseph Flaget, Bishop of
"Louisville, -State of Ky., and his successors in the
"Bishopric of said Diocese" ..

Il est évident que le mot for ever, (in perpetuum) ne peut pas être pris dans un sens absolu, de manière que la Compagnie serait obligée de maintenir le Collège de Bardstown pour l'éducation de la jeunesse.

Bishop Lavielle, had assured him that the diocese would make this concession if Rome entered no objection. Commenting on Coosemans's memorial, Sopranis, who was now residing in Italy and to whom the memorial had been submitted by the Father General for an opinion, declared his judgment in the matter to be that under no circumstances or conditions ought the Bardstown college be reopened. Nor did he think that the Father General should decide the question in any other way. Passing over the arguments advanced by Father Coosemans as in keeping with the facts and not to be minimized, Father Sopranis maintained that the one solid foundation of fact on which the General might and should take his stand for the closing of the college was the shortage of men in the Missouri Province and the impossibility of securing reinforcements from outside. As to the softening measure proposed by Coosemans, namely, the opening of a residence in Louisville with a view to turning it some day into a day-college, Father Sopranis heartily endorsed it. Among other advantages to be hoped from it was this, "that it would guarantee the good name of the Society in that state. For since the Society (the Fathers of New York) withdrew from Kentucky once before, were it to withdraw a second time it would look as though the Society had a dislike for that State." And Sopranis concluded in his facile Latin, "*Ludovicopolis igitur Nostris immorentur et fructificent, Bardipolis vero nullo modo*"⁶⁵

Meantime, the Rev. William George McCloskey, rector of the American College in Rome, had been named Bishop of Louisville. After his consecration in Rome, May 24, 1868, Father Beckx approached him on the Bardstown affair. He found him sympathetic and ready to appreciate the Jesuit side of the question, but unwilling to take a stand on it before reaching his diocese and taking counsel concerning it with his clergy. As regarded Beckx himself, the issue was definitely settled, as he informed Coosemans. On November 1, 1868, Bishop McCloskey was in St. Louis to confer with the Father Provincial, who two days later announced the outcome to Father Beckx.

He [Bishop McCloskey] came here expressly to treat about the Bardstown affair. He asked me quite simply whether there was any way of keeping us there. I recalled to him the decree of your Paternity and the reasons we have for not reopening the college, reasons which were known to him already. He did not insist, but asked to be given in writing some points in connection with the college. He remarked that our leaving would occasion a great storm against him, but that he did not wish to quarrel with the Jesuits. He told me that after having read in Rome the instrument of agreement between Bishop Flaget and our Fathers in 1848, and then the letter I left

⁶⁵ Sopranis ad Beckx, August 6, 1867 (A)

with your Paternity, he saw at once what course he should have to take, but prudence required him not to declare himself before reaching his diocese so as not to give umbrage to his diocesans. In order not to expose himself without means of defence to the blame of those who might claim that he let us withdraw in spite of Rome and the appeal made to the Propaganda, he wishes to write immediately to Cardinal Barnabo to cancel any appeal that may have been made and to be in a position in case of necessity to show the Cardinal's answer. So it will not be possible to abandon the college until about the middle of December. In the meantime he wishes that absolute silence be kept on the subject of our departure until the moment it is to take place. Bishop McCloskey is full of benevolence and good will in our regard. Still it is evident he has no intention of offering us a residence in Louisville. The present moment is not propitious and he would encounter too much opposition. Consequently in quitting Bardstown, we quit the diocese of Louisville.

No reference to the subject of the title to the Bardstown property was made by Bishop McCloskey on this occasion, but he had acquiesced in Father Coosemans' declared determination not to recede from his previously announced intention to give up the college. It only remained to settle what disposition was to be made of the property. After consultation with his advisers, Father Coosemans proposed to the Bishop certain terms which the latter found acceptable, declaring that on his return to Louisville, he would send the fathers their formal release from the college. The terms submitted by Coosemans were detailed by him in a letter addressed to Bishop McCloskey after the latter's return to Louisville.

St Louis University,
November 2, 1868

Right Rev. dear Bishop
P C

After having conferred with my consultors on the points your Lordship desired me to give you in writing regarding the St. Joseph's College property in the event of our leaving Bardstown, I beg leave to submit the following to your consideration:

1. No compensation is to be asked for any improvements which the Society made on the college premises.
2. All vestments etc. belonging to the parochial church, likewise all physical and chemical apparatus, all articles of furniture, all beds and bedding, as at present existing, and also the library, *as existing when we accepted the college*, (to go to the diocese) without compensation.
3. All the books which were bought by the Fathers, together with the paintings, vestments etc. of the *Domestic chapel*, likewise all debts due to the college, in so far as the same shall be collected, and the stocks, horses, cows etc. now on the premises are to be regarded as the property of the Society.
4. If the college be not in debt and the Very Rev. Father General does

not object, which I am confident he will not, then the several lots adjoining the property which were bought by our Fathers are to be donated in fee simple to your Lordship. But if the college be in debt, then it is proposed that the aforesaid lots be accepted by your Lordship for what they are worth in part payment of said debt and the balance of that debt to be assumed by the Society.

Before signing my name to this paper, allow me, Rt Rev dear Bishop, to transcribe here the last words of Father General's Decree of Suppression—words which are not without meaning, but truly express the disposition and feeling of our hearts: *Si postea eadem aliquod servitium pro salute gregis ejus praestare possumus, maximo nobis gaudio et solatio erit tale servitium praestare*

Begging your Lordship's blessing for me and mine, I remain, with sentiments of sincere esteem and devotedness,

Right Rev dear Bishop

Your humble servant in Xt

Ferd Coosemans, S J ⁶⁶

Bishop McCloskey in his answer to the foregoing communication signified his approval of the terms therein submitted as also his consent to the Jesuits leaving Bardstown any time after November 25. On the 24th of the same month Coosemans in consultation with his advisers designated December 15, 1868, as the day on which St. Joseph's College would be formally restored to the Bishop of Louisville. This arrangement was carried out, the negotiations being in the hands of Father John Schultz, the last Jesuit superior at Bardstown. The connection of the Society of Jesus with St. Joseph's College had lasted twenty years.

The surrender of the college to the diocese was now an accomplished fact. Yet during the years immediately following the departure of the Jesuits from Bardstown efforts were made at intervals to induce them to return. In 1869 such an effort was made within the Society itself. An appeal made in that year to Father Beckx by Father Damen, the missionary, in favor of reopening St. Joseph's College under Jesuit auspices so impressed the Father General that he referred it to St. Louis for an expression of opinion.⁶⁷ But Coosemans and his consultors stood firm in their judgment that the question should not be reopened. Only one boarding-college could possibly be maintained by the province, and that was to be in St. Louis or its vicinity. In December, 1870, Father Chambige and a number of Bardstown residents were urging Bishop McCloskey to make every effort to recall the Jesuits. But the answer from St. Louis was again negative, though one consultor favored the

⁶⁶ Coosemans to McCloskey, November 2, 1868 (A)

⁶⁷ *Liber Consultationum*, September 4, 1869 (A)

proposal, provided a satisfactory title to the college property could be obtained. Finally, in 1870, Bishop McCloskey himself held out inducements to the Jesuits to return to Bardstown, proposing among other things to allow them to establish a church and college in Louisville. They declined to return to Bardstown, but were ready to accept a suitable location for a church and college in the Kentucky metropolis. The Bishop thereupon proposed a site at Twenty-fifth Street and Broadway, towards the western limits of the city, the site was thought to be unsatisfactory for the purpose intended and was not accepted.⁶⁸ Attempts to reopen the Bardstown question were probably made even subsequently to this date, but as a practical issue it ceased from this period on to have any weight in the affairs of the Jesuits of the Middle West. New centers of educational and ministerial endeavor, as Milwaukee, Chicago, Omaha and Detroit, were to enlist the energies of their men as the exceedingly meagre personnel of the fifties and sixties began to grow with the influx of new members. No merely human considerations had led to the surrender of the Kentucky field of labor. The decision was taken only after mature deliberation and conscientious weighing of reasons *sub speculo aeternitatis*. Whether subsequent developments have justified the step is a matter only for idle speculation, the aspect of the long-drawn out controversy most pleasant to record being that the principals to it, however much at variance in their opinions as to the question at issue, were one in their honest endeavor to promote the best interests of the Church.

⁶⁸ *Idem*, Dec 28, 1870, March 7, 1871. Cf. *supra*, Chap. XXXV, § 5.