

The latter reproached him for having reserved nothing for them. « Any other support but Providence, replied the pious founder, is unsuitable for Christian schools ; as that support is immovable they themselves shall remain immovable so long as they have no other foundation. »

Nevertheless this scion of a noble race felt an exceeding repugnance to eating the bread of charity. In order to conquer himself once for all he condemned himself to total abstinence until he felt a ravenous hunger. This method was successful. One day the cook served by mistake a portion of wormwood. The Brothers thought they were poisoned and put aside the portion they had begun to eat. The founder, who had eaten all his share without noticing anything, was greatly surprised at hearing them speak of poison. The food was examined and found to be only wormwood. The mistake caused great amusement in the little community, but the good Father in order to teach his children to mortify themselves, caused the rejected portion to be again served to them and they had to eat it all.

It is characteristic of great, of divine works to be marked with the seal of the cross. Now crosses were not to fail the work of Jean-Baptiste de la Salle. Persecutions, jests, law-suits, treachery, calumny, a whole calvary of disgraces and trials assailed the holy initiative of this benefactor of childhood. But La Salle's was a valiant soul. Secure in the thought that he was doing God's work, nothing stopped or discouraged him. In spite of contradictions and trials he continued his task meekly and stoically.

He held his first chapter ; he drew up his first rules ; he exhibited the uniform of his Institute to the eyes of the world. The community grew ; the novitiate was founded at first in Rheims, then in Paris, then in St Yon, near Rouen. Many young men came to learn from the holy priest the art of teaching the children of the people. The Blessed La Salle spared no effort to promote their vocation : he welcomed them ; he trained them to piety and discipline ; he encouraged them ; he animated them with his spirit and he was soon in a position to give to parishes teachers truly deserving of public confidence.

Nevertheless the storm raised against the nascent institute gradually calmed down ; persecution ceased, people began to