

after communion he remained in ecstasy ; his soul, ravished in God, found in Him contempt for the world and love for the gifts of heaven.

Once a priest, the Blessed de la Salle aspired but to win souls to God. His tenderness for sinners was immense, but he was especially inclined to children. The ignorance and abandoned condition of poor children made his apostle's heart bleed and suffer cruelly. Thus did Providence prepare him for the execution of the designs it had in store for him.

II. A virtuous canon of Rheims, Monsieur Roland, had founded a congregation of teaching Sisters called Sisters of the Infant Jesus, for teaching orphans and poor girls. When about to die, he commended his work to his colleague and friend La Salle and confided its direction to him. Not a year had elapsed when, through the zeal and efforts of the devoted director, this benevolent institution obtained letters patent from the king which assured its existence.

About the same time, a religious of the Order of the Minims had also established free schools for poor boys at Rheims. Canon de La Salle soon associated himself with this noble undertaking which so thoroughly met his wishes, and imperceptibly became engaged in the work. He began by assisting the instructors of these schools with his money and his advice and then gave them rules. Through a spirit of devotedness he lodged them in his own house which he soon left to go and occupy with them a larger house in the *faubourg St-Rémi*, which was destined to become the cradle of his Institute.

It was not without difficulty that he kept them to the task they had begun. These men, still attached to earth, were anxious about the future. When the devoted director encouraged them to have confidence in Providence, they would reply that it was easy for him to be confident with his benefice and rich patrimony. The virtuous canon humbly admitted that they were right and then he took the heroic resolution of getting rid of his patrimony so as to give his disciples an example of voluntary poverty and spirit of sacrifice. He began by resigning his canonicate ; then he sold all his property, giving the proceeds to the poor, and he was reduced to live on alms with his disciples.