

V. C. J. S.

V.C.M.I.

MEMOIRS OF MARINUS FOUQUET SS.CC.

CONGREGATION OF THE SACRED HEARTS (PICPUS)

Presented by Ildefonse Alazard ss.cc.

Bureau des *Annales des Sacres Cœurs*, Braine-le-Compte 1913

Translation: Congregation of the Sacred Hearts (US Province)

Abridged text

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Brief Biography	3
PART I <i>Memoirs</i>	7
CHAPTER I <i>Early Years</i>	7
CHAPTER II <i>Vocation</i>	9
CHAPTER III <i>Troubled Times in France</i>	12
PART II <i>During the Siege of Paris and the Commune</i>	16
CHAPTER I <i>The Siege</i>	16
CHAPTER II <i>Stretcher bearer on the Battlefield</i>	19
CHAPTER III <i>The Commune: Seizure of the Motherhouse</i>	22
CHAPTER IV <i>House Arrest</i>	24
CHAPTER V <i>Escape from Picpus</i>	26
CHAPTER VI <i>From Paris to Versailles</i>	29
CHAPTER VII <i>Trials Continue at Picpus</i>	31
CHAPTER VIII <i>Last Days of the Commune</i>	35
CHAPTER IX <i>Return to the Motherhouse</i>	38
CHAPTER X <i>Four Victims of Picpus</i>	41
CHAPTER XI <i>Undoing the Destruction</i>	44
FINAL NOTES	46

(Note: for the purposes of putting this work on the web, the translation of *Biographie et Memoires du Frere Marin Fouquet Souvenirs du Siege et de la Commune de Paris (1870-71)* (Braine-le-Comte, Belgium: Bureau des Annales des Sacres Coeurs 1913) first made in the 1950's at the request of Father William Condon ss.cc. Provincial was revised, thanks to Mary Leahy and David Reid ss.cc.)

Brief Biography

As his spiritual brothers recited the comforting prayers for the dying in the early hours of February 6, 1912, the Angel of Death came into a humble monastic cell for the beautiful soul of Brother Fouquet. Throughout his life he had suffered from painful rheumatism which affected his stomach, shoulders, and limbs. A doctor at Picpus once told him: *"This will not kill you, but you will suffer a great deal from it."* In spite of many years of great suffering, the good brother reached the age of ninety. Shortly after the election of Father Flavian Prat, he felt more oppressed than usual. At first it was thought that it was but a severe attack of rheumatism, but it was worse, it was influenza. The doctor soon confirmed that the end was at hand. The good and faithful servant was ready; when urged to sacrifice his life he answered: *"I have sacrificed it every day for many years."* He showed the greatest and most filial resignation to the will of God, patiently waiting for the hour of death. It came five days later February 6th. He passed away as serenely as he had lived at half past four in the morning having received a last absolution from his beloved confessor. No doubt, the Queen of Peace, whom he had so tenderly loved during his life, came to his assistance at his final hour. Thus the venerable senior, the dean of all our lay-brothers, the vice-dean of all the members of the Institute passed peacefully in the Lord at Braine-le-Comte, Belgium.

Brother Marinus was born of parents of modest means at Bange, Maine-et Loíre, on February 15th, 1822. He was a novice at Issy on December 8, 1845 and made his profession at Picpus on July 23rd, 1847. His duties in the Congregation were as varied as our Institute's needs... He was gardener, baker, weaver, painter, driver, and above all a man of prayer. His reward indeed must be very great, for while living sixty-five years in the humble status as a lay-brother, he rendered the most valuable services to the Society. During the difficult time of the Siege of Paris and indeed during the infant days of the Institute, this modest religious played a providential part in the history of our Congregation. His unusual common sense, his prudence, his respect for authority, and the priesthood, his spirit of faith and his piety made him loved by all who knew him. *"I thank you very sincerely,"* wrote Father Bousquet to him in 1904, *"for the profound attachment you have shown to your Superior General whom you have always served with a devotion which knew no limits. We have worked together and you have shared in my trials and sufferings with a spirit I shall remember as one of the sweetest memories of my whole life ...I send you my paternal blessing and ask you not to forget me at the foot of the tabernacle where you are spending so many hours."* Our reader will understand Father Bousquet's profound sentiment by reading the short memoirs which follow and include: Brother Marinus' infancy, his youth, his vocation, his occupations at Picpus, and the tragic events of the Prussian War and the Paris Commune. Being true to his deepest self, Brother Marinus composed this short autobiography was written only after many requests by the fathers. By a very scant reading we can see the humility, the spirit of reparation and of sacrifice which animated this privileged soul.

Born of parents of modest means, he never forgot the maxim he often heard from his pious mother, *"have confidence in God; what he keeps is well kept. He can make grain fruitful in the barn as well as multiply the seeds in our fields."* He will often remember these words during his sacrificial and trial-filled life. He will abandon himself to Divine Providence under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and, a few days before his death, he will be able to declare that his confidence was never in vain.

In his memoirs he mentions only three of the many accidents he had on the streets of Paris. Without Divine intervention, any one of these accidents should have cost him his life, but, time and time again, he escaped without any serious consequences *"One day,"* he said, *"I was caught between two carriages. They were passing so close to each other that I thought that I would be surely lost. I hurriedly made an act of contrition. But suddenly, as if by a miracle I found*

myself on the other side of the street, none the worse for my adventure save my torn clothes, my rosary broken in my pocket, and my medal of the Immaculate Conception bent in half. "

If extraordinarily he often escaped from his accidents in the streets, he escaped in a no less providential way from the murderous attempts of the Commune. Details of some of these attempts will be found in his memoirs on the Prussian War and the Paris Commune. We will see that the welfare of Picpus depended, to a great extent, on the fortune of this good brother. For a long time he was in charge of the purchases, dispatches, and daily proceedings at Picpus. He was as a "vice procurator" well informed with all the material transactions of the community. He was the intelligent and devoted helper of all our Procurators, the man of confidence in the house.

During the initial days of the Commune, in 1871, he had prudently hidden in places known only to himself and our martyrs, the registers and titles which were among the most precious valuables we possessed. If he himself, like the four martyrs, had been victim of the Commune, it is quite probable that these documents would not have been found for many years, thus causing untold harm and embarrassment to the Institute. But "what God keeps is well kept," and Brother Marinus escaped execution by Communards. On the day following the fall of the Commune, he found these documents intact and could not help but cry out in admiration and gratitude for God's protection.

Very Reverend Father Bousquet offered to buy him a revolver so that he might be able to defend himself in those dangerous days after the revolution. *"Very Reverend"* replied the good brother, *"allow me to confide myself to God. Even if I had two guns, these weapons would be of little use to me without God's protection. If God watches over me, nobody will be able to harm me, for 'what protects is well protected.'"* He never did leave the house without being armed with his rosary. This was his one and only weapon, and it never failed him. The Rosary was one of his dearest devotions. His small worn beads scarcely ever left his hands. At Picpus and again at Braine-le-Comte, one never saw him not murmuring his Aves. *"This will save me from the trials and temptations of the world,"* he said one day showing the rosary he was praying while doing his duty as porter. Two or three days before his death his greatest sorrow was being unable to say his rosary on account of the difficulty he had breathing.

Brother Marinus participated in all the trials of the Mother House since his profession in 1847 until our expulsion in 1903. Because of his close association with the principle members of the Institute and because of his great love for the Congregation, he felt more acutely than his religious brothers all the injustices of which we were the victims. The memoirs, left incomplete for the last years of his life, do not give any details of his last farewell to his beloved house of Picpus in 1903 when he was compelled to leave where he had worked and suffered so much. It is fitting a few words about it here to show the great sacrifice then imposed.

We had the remains of our four martyrs, of Bishop Bonamie and of the Very Reverend Father Euthyme Rouchouze, in our chapel at Picpus. When we were ordered to leave Picpus, we realized that we would have to leave all our belongings in the hands of the liquidator. At first it seemed unavoidable that the precious remains of our fathers would be desecrated. However, on the eve of our departure Very Reverend-Father Bousquet decided to transfer them to the cemetery at Issy. These remains had been laid to rest by Brother Marinus in 1872 and 1874, but, now, the legislation of Pierre Waldeck-Rousseau disturbed them even in their graves. When Brother Marinus came to kneel by the coffins which were taken from their graves, he broke out into tears. It was touching to see this venerable octogenarian weeping and unable to force himself to leave the remains of those whom he had served and loved for so many years. All through his life he had been brave under the blows of his trials. But this time the sword of sorrow had penetrated too deeply into his very soul. Nevertheless, his weeping and tears did not stop him from making fully and generously the sacrifice now demanded of him. He went into exile without making, the slightest complaint and without showing the least uneasiness. *"What God keeps is well kept. And God can make the grain fruitful in our barns as well as in our fields,"* he had always said. Arriving at Braine-le-Comte, it did not take him long to realize that his trial had been changed into a blessing, he who had always aspired and longed for a life of prayer and recollection at home, was now granted his wish beyond all his expectations in exile

His first occupation in the Institute had been to cultivate the garden at the Novitiate. He was then appointed baker at the Mother House. This work did not agree with his health so he was charged with the work of carrier in Paris. This duty demanded shuttling back and forth the streets from morning until night; visit market places and stores; dealing with shopkeepers; and, sometimes, even with the police, all of which was just the opposite to his tastes. In 1850, he went to

Bishop Bonamie to ask his Superior General to relieve him of this work. He would prefer by far to stay at home and say his rosary than to run about the streets of Paris. He wanted a life of prayer and recollection, not the life of a business man. *"Go, you will gain far greater merit running around the streets of Paris in obedience to your superior than staying at home saying your rosary and doing acts of mortification following your own will,"* he was told by the good Bishop. He obeyed, as he wished to please God alone. For more than fifty years he spent the most active life one can imagine, not only by commuting throughout the streets of Paris but also where he helped to embark the missionary fathers who were going to America and the other foreign Missions. It was he who, in 1863, made all the necessary preparations for Father Damien and his party when they were departing for the Sandwich Islands.

But Brother Marinus did not forget the great work of his own sanctification in the midst of all these occupations. He always longed for a quiet and more interior life. Now, the persecution gave him what his superiors had never been able to give him. His seven years in exile were years of recollection and prayer but not entirely inactive. From the time he arrived at Braine-le-Comte until his death, he oversaw the linen room. Not satisfied with merely collecting, sorting and distributing the laundry, we surmise that on more than one occasion he repaired clothing. During these years, he also assisted Father Bursar with accounts, and also wrote notes which would be very useful to anyone who wishes to study the history of the Congregation.

Nevertheless, his greatest occupation during his final years was reading and meditating. He was endowed with a more than ordinary intelligence, sure judgment, and a good memory, and, so, he could quite easily read some of the great works of the Church scholars, as for example, *"The History of the Church"* by René François Rorhbacher as well as books on Christian doctrine, asceticism, and the lives of the Saints. But the works which gave him greatest enjoyment were our own Annals that he received with sincere joy each month. They were a real treat to him especially when they announced the professions and ordinations in our different houses of formation. He thanked God for them and said the most fervent prayers for their perseverance and sanctification.

These last years of his life, these years of exile, were a time of prayer and recollection. Prayer succeeded reading; every day he made at least two half hours of adoration and very often four. He never missed the Stations of the Cross and recited the fifteen decades of the Rosary at least once a day. Because he was slightly deaf and could not hear himself, we could often listen to him to our greater edification, pouring out his soul before God and His Blessed Mother. It was the simplicity of a child addressing his father; the humility of the publican asking God for forgiveness.

He was moved by the sad condition of sinners and interceded for them before the throne of the Almighty. *"This is the most beautiful and most useful of prayers,"* the Cure of Ars used to say, *"the just are on the road to heaven; the souls in purgatory are sure to enter everlasting happiness, but the poor sinners are in suspense. One 'Our Father and one Mary' may suffice to turn the scale."* If this is true, then Brother Marinus has turned the scale for many poor sinners, for after the example of St. Francis of Assisi, he loved to pray to God, *"Lord have mercy on the sinner."* This was one of his most fervent supplications during his last hours. On the eve of his death when we encouraged him to accept his sufferings and to offer them to God for his most cherished intentions, he simply answered, *"I offer everything for the conversion of sinners."*

We must mention at least one of his other practices of piety; one which he loved and repeated many times, this is his devotions at the statues and shrines of the house. He never passed by a statue of the Sacred Heart or of the Immaculate Heart without pausing, looking affectionately at the face of the statue and praying two or three ejaculatory prayers. Then he made a profound bow and continued on his way as many as fifty times a day as often as he passed a statue of the Saints. One may think that these are extraneous details in the life of one who has worked so much but their greatest importance manifest one of the more beautiful sides of this thoroughly pious soul. Moreover, they are for us a continual call to our own charism. These simple greetings of Brother Marinus enclose the whole theory of devotion to the Saints, honor, love, study, imitation, and invocation. They assisted the aging man to live in a spirit as if were already in their company and to dispose himself more and more for the day when he would actually join them in heaven. In this he was doing nothing more than imitating his Venerable Superior General, the Very Reverend Father Bousquet, who was often seen kneeling in prayer before these same statues.

If Brother Marinus had a great devotion to the Saints, it was paralleled by his devotion to members of the Congregation. This veneration could be seen in the great respect he held for them whether he spoke to them or of them

or if he should chance to meet any of them, he never called any of the priests "*Father*" but always "*Reverend Father*." He never addressed one of them with his head covered, however cold the weather might be. It is not without emotion that I remember the visit I paid him in his room four days before his death. As soon as I stepped inside his door he instinctively uncovered his head until I again left his presence. This was a token of respect, all the more remarkable when we remember that for many years he undertook the more important posts in the Congregation. All the important work he accomplished could very well have tempted him to prefer himself to any priest in the Congregation. With his sane judgement and his profound humility, he knew how to work within the communal structure which divine providence had assigned to him. He never allowed himself to be carried away by the knowledge of his talents or of the great services he rendered. Faithful in small things as in great things he deserved to be promised: *Vir fidelis multum laudabitur*

Before finishing this short biographical sketch, we wish to give one more detail in the life of this true child of the Sacred Hearts. For many years he was the Dean of the Brothers at the Mother House. In this capacity he considered it an honor to speak on behalf of confreres at all the feasts and celebrations of our family life. He took up his pen on the feast of the Superior General and on all the anniversaries, and, in touching and sometimes poetic words, he would express the sentiments, the wishes, and the prayers of all his confreres. He would then read his concise discourse with an ease and simplicity which edified every one present. As an example, we give here the address he gave on the occasion of the installation of the new Superior General, January 17, 1912. It credits greatly a self- taught-ninety-year-old man. Here he compares the Congregation to a small ship.

Very Reverend Father Superior General, allow me, as dean of the lay-brothers, to place at your feet the respectful and sincere homage of our entire and complete submission. You are now charged with the command of this little boat, which at times we thought would be submerged by the furious tempests by which it was beset but ruled by an able hand and directed by a pilot with a sure eye, it has once again arrived at a safe harbor where it can repair the damages it has received during such a long and difficult voyage. Today, it is put afloat again. Very Reverend Father you may put your hand to the helm with all confidence. You may meet new tempests, but with your eyes constantly upon the Star of the Sea, she will guide you so you will avoid all perils, and the little bark will continue on its voyage carrying your name to the most distant countries.

The election of the new Superior General was the last great joy of this worthy religious. He had wept much over the death of Very Reverend Father Bousquet, but, now, he was happy to be able to salute his successor and with the holy man Simeon he could say to God, *Nunc dimittis Domine, servum tuum in pace*. Lord it is time to call me to You. The Lord would soon hear his prayer.

PART I

Memoirs

CHAPTER I

Early Years

Sixty years ago, I left my home to serve God in the religious life and to consecrate myself to the service of the Sacred Hearts in the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. It is You, Lord, Who called me, Who made me walk these holy paths. It is You Who led me into the solitude of exile, to recollect myself in the silence of retreat and to remember there the graces and blessings with which you have overwhelmed me. In gratitude for these countless favors and blessings, I, Brother Marinus Augustine Fouquet, write these short memoirs. I beg you to accept this humble effort in reparation not only for my own countless sins and imperfections, but also in atonement for the sins of the world.

My father, Marinus Fouquet, a manufacturer of linen, conducted a little business at Bauge, in the diocese of Angers, France. His parents and all his family enjoyed a great respect in the community. He was twenty years old when the revolution broke out in 1789. He now married so that he could remain in the country and be of service to the Church. For this purpose he also enrolled in the Civic Guard and there won the greater trust and confidence of his fellowmen. Once he had removed himself in this way from the Government's list of suspects, he was able to help the priests by bringing messages from one to the other and, thus, keep them in contact with each other. He was also able to conduct priests, in secret, to those who were in great need of the Sacraments. My mother, Marie George, was a country girl and much younger than my father. She could neither read nor write but inherited a solid faith and a sane judgment. While still very young she witnessed the closing and the looting of the churches in her native land. There is a little story told of her which helps to show her home training and the wonderful influence it had on her in later years. One day, after spending some time in church, she brought one of the kneeling stools home with her. "*Where did you get that, Marie?*" her mother inquired when the little girl arrived home. "*In the Church,*" was the reply. "*You stole the property of God. Aren't you afraid that He will paralyze both of your arms?*" Marie ran back immediately to the Church and replaced the stool. Never again did she as much as think of stealing "God's property" even though many around her were guilty of this sacrilegious crime.

Her father, a faithful observer of the laws of the Church, never worked on Sundays. Even though during the revolution all our ancient customs and practices were abolished. The very division of the year itself was radically altered. The months no longer had four weeks of seven days, but only three decades, each of which consisted of ten days. The day of rest instead of being a Sunday, was fixed for the tenth day of the decade. On that day everyone was obliged to abstain from work, while on Sunday all were compelled to perform their regular duties. Should one try to sanctify the Sunday, he would immediately become a "suspect", subject to close observation by the "security forces." Nevertheless, despite many threats and abuses my grandfather always kept holy the Sabbath day. On many occasions this caused him untold grief and misery, but he suffered gladly to atone for the sins of his persecutors.

As soon as she was old enough to work, my mother was put in the humble position of maidservant. Lowly though her employment was, she preferred it to one where her faith would be endangered. She later came to work for a pious lady in Bauge, and it was here that my father, who was then a widower with three children, became acquainted with her. Shortly after their marriage, my mother started to learn how to read. "The Gospel", the "Imitation of Christ" and "The Lives of the Saints" were the only three books she ever had. If by chance she recognized any bad books in the stores she bought them and immediately had them destroyed, for she had a great horror of immoral literature, or treatises

against our holy religion. God, indeed, blessed me by giving me such a mother; no doubt, it is due to her prayers and sacrifices that I, in a great part, owe my vocation.

"What God protects is well protected," was a motto of my mother and she often repeated it to her children. Indeed, as far as I am concerned, its truth was often proved. Before I was even born God showed me His wonderful protection. A few days before my birth my mother had a dangerous fall and suffered from severe shock. Were it not for Divine intervention, I am sure that it would have had the most serious consequences for the unborn child. But God in His goodness, saved His least one from harm. Again, when I was but four years old, I was stricken with a very severe illness, and all hope of my recovery was abandoned, but again through the prayers and sacrifices of my mother and family, God had mercy on his unworthy servant.

Our family suffered a very severe trial in the year 1831. My mother and two sisters fell ill with cerebral fever. My younger sister soon was taken to her eternal reward, and I, in turn, became a victim of this awful disease. For many months my life hung in the balance, but *"what God protects is well protected"* and my health was gradually restored.

* * * * *

At the beginning of the reign of Louis-Philippe, Catholicism was outlawed in France. Priests, religious and the laity were being persecuted and often were put to death for their faith. Churches and monasteries were confiscated and the parochial schools became the property of the State, where, of course, there was no religious instruction of any kind. The priests, in an effort to reach the people, disguised themselves as farmers and laborers and in this way tried to undo much of the great harm which was being caused by the Government. However, they had great difficulty in instructing the people, especially in preparing the children for Holy Communion because of this First Holy Communion went uncelebrated. But every Sunday the pastor gave the Blessed Eucharist to a small group of children, whom he thought were ready with their catechism. When I was ten-years-old, in 1832, I made my First Communion. Four years later I was confirmed by Bishop Montault of the diocese of Angers. That same year my parents sent me as an apprentice to one of my brothers-in-law, who was a stone mason. Within a relatively short time I became quite skilled at the trade, and I was employed by a man from the country. My place of employment was not too distant from Bauge so that I was able to spend the weekends with my parents. Gradually, because of the bad environment, I lost my religious fervor. Now I attended Mass on Sundays only because of self-respect, as I had not even courage enough to show my real convictions. Had I not returned home each weekend, I would probably have become a real fallen away Catholic, as the stone-yards and workshops of France were no credit to the Church in those evil days.

Such feelings and sentiments cannot remain long hidden from one's mother. She soon noticed the change in me and suffered greatly on account of it. She made every effort to bring me back to the straight and narrow path. She often related the story of St. Monica to us during the long winter nights as the family sat around the kitchen fire. She repeated the name of St. Monica so often that one day I asked her who this Monica was and what she had done. She then told me the story of St. Augustine. I was moved by this story of a man's struggle with himself and his passions and of his final triumph over his lower self. If God had given such graces to Augustine, why should he not give the same to me when I would reach maturity. *"I'll do as St. Augustine did. I'll convert myself when I am thirty years old,"* I told my mother. *"I hope that you will not wait that long, my child,"* she answered. God answered her prayers to a greater degree than she could ever have hoped for, by calling me to a more perfect life

CHAPTER II

Vocation

By the time I had reached my eighteenth birthday, I decided, with the lightheartedness and carelessness of youth, that it was time that I saw and experienced some of the joys and pleasures of this wonderful world of ours. I had spent all of my life in or near the remote village of Bauge. Now, I longed to see beyond the confines of this "un-walled prison." How wonderful, I thought, it would be to traverse the broad plains, the tree-covered valleys and the majestic mountains of my native land; to see all these wonderful sights and historic places of which I heard so many stories. By doing this I would fulfill two things at once. I would perfect my trade of masonry while at the same time I would see and enjoy life in new and better surroundings. What adventures awaited the happy wanderer in Paris, Bordeaux or Marseilles! What had the villages, towns and cities in store for me? What joys awaited me in my newfound freedom.

I was about to take leave of my family to realize my dream, when my father suddenly fell seriously ill. His condition gradually grew worse, and, after much pain and suffering, he breathed his last on the morning of July 2, 1840. He had three daughters by his first wife, all of whom were already married. In his second marriage, he was blessed with two daughters, one of whom had died, and two sons, Louis, the future Father Bruno, and myself. Now there was but my mother, my sister and myself at home. I realized that the women could never manage the linen business alone, so to maintain the family tradition, and, at the same time to lighten the great burden that had fallen on my mother's shoulders, I decided to stay at home and help them. I was contented with abandoning my wonderful plans and practice of my own trade as a mason. It was a big sacrifice but one which I never regretted making, because from it came the greatest blessing of my whole life.

Later the same year, three Jesuit fathers preached a mission in our little parish church. Having been appointed to collect the seat-money, I was obliged to be present at all the sermons and spiritual exercises. The retreat lasted for three whole weeks, and it gave me ample opportunity to meditate on my true purpose in life and upon the great truths of my faith. It was during this time of recollection and prayer that the first seeds of my vocation were sown in the far from fertile soil of my soul. Reflecting upon the years that had passed and upon the wonderful examples I had before my eyes every day, I finally realized that I had many ideas about life that were wrong. Often I gave too much importance to mistaken ideals and faulty goals. *"There is nothing for nothing in this life,"* I told myself, *"and the same is true as regards the next."* If I am to be saved, I must be converted. I must turn my back on many of the joys and pleasures of my life, learn how to make sacrifices in atonement for my past and thus earn my eternal reward. Having fulfilled my obligations therefore, I resolved that I would become a Religious. I zealously kept this promise hidden in my heart and earnestly prayed that God might give me the tremendous graces I so badly needed to carry it out.

I had reached the age for military service and my mother wished to get a substitute for me. I knew that she could not afford the large sum of money that this required though she would be more than happy to make every sacrifice to provide for it. Furthermore, if I accepted such assistance it would place me under a greater obligation to my mother. My freedom would be somewhat impaired, and, maybe, I would not be able to carry out my great desire. One day, after listening to further pleadings along these lines from my mother, I finally told her the real reason for hesitating to accept such assistance: I wanted to become a Religious. At once, my mother became more and more grieved. *"Where are the beautiful promises you made me at the death of your father?"* she asked, *"at that time you promised never to abandon me."* I tried to console her by telling her the great change that had come over me and the greater service I could render her as a Religious than as a linen-merchant.

Approved for military service, I received my papers in November, 1843. I was assigned to the Fourth Regiment stationed at Vannes. As I was about to leave home, my mother threw herself on the threshold and cried to me: *"You will*

not leave this house until you promise me that you will ask for a substitute as soon as you arrive at the garrison." Right up to this moment I had remained strong in my resolution not to accept a substitute; to spend my seven years in the army and thus save my freedom as much as possible. But now my strength failed, I could not resist her pleadings any longer. *"I promise"* I replied as the tears rolled down my cheeks. *"Your cousin Pege will forward the money"* mother added, and I left for Angers and from there for Vannes, with some other recruits. Having arrived at the barracks, the recruits were divided into different companies. I was assigned the battalion stationed at Belle-Ile-en-Mer. I should therefore have left for that garrison, but when I asked for a substitute, it was decided that I should stay at Vannes until a suitable man could be found. Two long months dragged by before my replacement appeared. He was a veteran, a tailor by trade, and I was a happy man when he was accepted. Though I was but two months in the army, I had ample opportunity to learn the great trials Catholics had to suffer there. The old hardened soldiers were especially cruel on the young recruits. They gave me a very hard time at the beginning, making fun of my rosaries and scapulars and trying to take them from me. Many of my more timid companions allowed these men to have their way, but I never let the hard-hearted veterans get away with anything. The result was that they had a greater respect for me and my religion, and, pretty soon, I had little trouble from them. All this time I had to defend my faith against these people. This again showed me my dependence on my Creator and nourished the seed of the vocation which He had sown within me.

If the joy of my mother was great over my return home, mine was rather moderate as I felt that my freedom had been curtailed by the promise I had given to her. Nevertheless, the longer I was at home the more my thoughts on the religious life were strengthened. By obtaining a substitute, my mother was hoping that I would stay at home with her more easily. *"You must at least stay with me for the time you would have spent in the army, so as to help me pay for the substitute,"* she often repeated to me. To this I had only one answer ever, *"you forced me to accept the substitute, it was not my idea but yours."* I know I often hurt her by saying this, but I was always trying to show her my great desire of becoming a religious. I returned to my work. I was left in peace, and we lived cordially together. My mother was happy to see her son Augustine practice his religious duties, and I was all the while pondering over the possibility of ever attaining my great goal. Providence again came to my assistance.

My brother Louis, the future Father Bruno, also had aspirations for the cloister. He had passed from the Seminary to the Trappist Novitiate, but his health was not strong enough for the austerities of that life of penance and mortification. He then hoped to enter the Congregation of the Brothers of St. John of God, at Dinan. This institute did not accept candidates for the priesthood, but, nevertheless, they would make an exception in his case. During his stay at Dinan, my brother met and became the friend of Monsieur Pouzot who intended to go to Rome to establish a congregation of Franciscan Minors. He invited Louis to go with him, saying that he would pay all the expenses. My brother gladly accepted. The two pilgrims set out together for Paris. Before going any further, Monsieur Pouzot wished to visit the principal congregations of the capital, in particular Bishop Bonamie, Superior General of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts.

My brother was not in favor of this plan, as he thought the new institute should have its own charism but, however, he agreed to go along. The two men were invited by Bishop Bonamie to go to the Novitiate of Picpus at Vaugirard and there gather any information which might be of any use to them. At Vaugirard they were welcomed by Father Alexander Sorieul. It was decided that the newly arrived should stay there for a while to study their vocation. When Father Alexander introduced them to the Novices, my brother was greatly surprised to find among them one of his former classmates of the Seminary of Combree. This meeting was perhaps the means Divine Providence was using to make my brother enter the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts. After two months, Monsieur Pouzot was leaving for Rome, Louis refused to leave with him. *"It is useless for me to go,"* he said, *"I have found my true vocation here."* Pouzot then left for Rome alone, where I think, he succeeded in founding a new community. Louis received the habit under the name of Brother Bruno on November 1, 1842. He made his profession on June 21, 1844, and was ordained by Bishop Bonamie in 1847. His first appointment was that of Director of Novices at the Novitiate of Issy. He was later professor in the Major Seminaries of Versailles and Rouen and died in this latter city on January 25, 1852.

In June, 1845, my brother visited us at home. During his stay she told him of my plans and asked him to urge me to stay at home with her, at least until such a time as she would have paid off the debt incurred by my release from the army. Zealously, Louis, would prefer to draw the whole family into religious life rather than contradict my vocation. I told him that I had definitely decided to leave the world, and, if they continued to delay me any longer, I would run away from home. My intention was to join the Trappists. Here my brother disagreed with me. He said that he had already

tried this life and that he had failed. I would do no better there than he did, he thought. Then he spoke to me about Picpus and about the wonderful life of reparation and immolation they were leading there. This appealed greatly to me. We then talked with mother, who by now understood that nothing would stop me, and she finally gave her consent. It was decided that I should not leave until the feast of All Saints, so that I could help my good mother in disposing of her small clothing business and arrange other affairs. All this time she secretly tried to persuade me not to leave her. *"You promised me that you would never leave me,"* she often repeated. *"When God calls us, dear mother, we cannot draw back; we must go ahead."* I would reply. *"You wish to enter the Monastery; there are more difficulties than you imagine."* *"To know this, dear mother, it is best to go and find out for oneself."*

Finally on November 13, 1845, I set out for Picpus. After travelling two days and nights, I arrived in Paris where my brother was waiting for me. After a short visit to the chapel, he presented me to Bishop Bonamie, who graciously welcomed me to the Institute. We dined together, and, after a short while, I was sent to Issy where the Novitiate had been transferred from Vaugirard. There, I made my Promises on December 8th, under the name of Brother Marinus, in memory of my departed father. I was happy; but the remembrance of my mother followed me everywhere, and I still suffered a lot in my heart on account of her. In my moments of greatest trial, I would go to the Chapel and there pray for my poor mother. This always consoled me. During working hours I was at first employed in the garden, however, after a few months, I was called to Picpus to work in the bakery. There we made the bread for the two houses of Picpus and for the Novitiate. We had a lot of work to do and had very little spare time. Whatever free time we had, I loved to spend it in the Chapel. Slowly and gradually a great peace came over me, and the time passed by very quickly.

Before finally admitting me to the number of religious, Our Lord gave me another severe trial. It was a few days before my profession. I had written to my mother for a certificate some time previously, but the days passed by and no answer came. I attributed this silence either to dissatisfaction or to illness. I imagined my mother alone and unattended in her distress. Besides missing my assistance in the work, she was obliged to work longer and harder in order to pay for my release from the army. Under this strain and difficulty, I went to see Father Frumence Jaussen, who had charge of the lay-brothers. I explained my position to him, and all the suffering it had cost my mother that I might become a religious. *"Am I allowed to let her suffer so much for me?"* I asked him. *"Even though you have cost your mother so much, Our Lord had paid an even greater price for you. Is not your first obligation towards Him, therefore,"* he replied. After a short pause, he continued: *"Be calm, if your mother really needs help we will find some means to assist her, and, at the same time, allow you to consecrate your life to God."* This last statement from him consoled me a great deal. On his advice I wrote a second letter to my mother, telling her that I was still free and that if she really needed me I would run to her and assist her in every way possible. I would even postpone my religious profession for a few years. This letter drew the dearest and most heart-rending reply from my mother. *"Stay where you are"* she said, *"we did not suffer. If the debt was large we did not feel it, as your sister had work all winter long. I know that God can make grain fruitful in the barns as well as in the fields. God had called you. Make your profession and be happy."* What shall I render to God for having given me such a mother? What shall I render Him in return for having so well rewarded the faith and charity of which she has given us so many examples?

I pronounced my Vows on June 23, 1847. Now my mother sold the small part of the business she had kept for me in case I should return. She then went to Angers to straighten out her accounts with a good lady with whom she had done business for many years. Here she opened up her heart and gave full expression to her tenderness as a mother and to her Christian generosity. *"I had two boys,"* she said, *"both of whom abandoned me to enter the religious life. Now there remains with me but one daughter, who also wishes to consecrate herself to God. This is a great sacrifice and is very painful. But I have confidence that the God, who has called them will not abandon me."* *"No,"* replied the lady, *"He will not abandon you and neither will I. I promise to help you, if you will please pray for me."* Shortly after this visit the lady became seriously ill. She had such a high regard for the piety of my mother that she wished to see her for a last time to ask for my mother's prayers. My mother was sent for and came without delay. She stayed by the good lady's side for a number of days. The end was approaching and the Last Sacraments were administered. Then the good woman made her last will and testament in which she left a large sum of money to my mother. Thus, God, repaid a hundred-fold the sacrifices my mother had made in offering her children to His service. She died a saintly death at the age of eighty-eight. I had the consolation to embrace her in her last moments and to receive her last words and blessing.

CHAPTER III

Troubled Times in France

The latter half of the 19th Century was a time of strife and revolution in Europe. France had given the impetus for the 1830 revolutions through her own July Revolution. The outcome of this uprising was the termination of the rule of the Charles X, and recognition of Louis Philippe as France's new soon to become known as the Citizen King. He had little sympathy for Catholics, many of whom were compelled to flee the country in order to seek religious freedom. Louis Blanc, with the publication of his "Labor Organization" paved the way for the socialist revolution of 1848 and the presidency of Louis Napoléon.

During the riots of 1830 and 1831 our fathers at Picpus suffered much at the hands of the rebels. Our house and Chapel were, on numerous occasions, plundered and ransacked. Once, sometime in 1831, after the revolutionaries had raided the house they took the consecrated hosts from the tabernacle. It was not without endangering their lives that Fathers Garet and Abraham finally succeeded in snatching them from their sacrilegious hands. To save further profanation, Father Abraham consumed them while he was being detained under guard by the soldiers. The pretext for all these raids on our house was to search for arms.

Again in 1848, when the revolution broke out, Picpus became one of the main targets. When news of Louis Philippe's overthrow spread and it was known that he was obliged to flee the country, Father Procurator gave each brother and father ten francs with the permission to leave the house should any danger arise. However, this revolution proved to be unbloody and non-sectarian. When the Tuileries was plundered, a crucifix was taken from the royal Chapel and carried in procession to the Church of Saint Roch. The slogan which was used on this occasion was, "*Long live our Religion.*" A very respectful and orderly crowd followed the procession to the Church. However, revolutionaries are always more or less men of plunder and disorder. Therefore, when a band of the rebels were seen to approach our house, most of the fathers and brothers fled lest there should be any trouble. Fathers Philippe Fezandier and Fermin Renant generally stayed in the house with a few of the lay-brothers. The bakers, including myself, always remained behind as otherwise both the fathers and the sisters would be without bread. As in 1830 and 1831, the revolutionaries came looking for arms. They were led to our house by students of the Polytechnical school. These were brave and honest young men who were not hostile to us and who were actually in sympathy with our cause. Among their leaders was a relative of Bishop Bonamie. This young man interceded for us so that the visit would not prove too embarrassing for us. At his command, sentries were placed at each staircase lest the soldiers should go to our dormitories. The Chapel was respectfully visited, and the remainder of the house quietly searched. As no arms were to be found, the visitors quietly took their leave and the Fathers and Brothers who had fled for safety returned home thanking God for having spared them so graciously.

On another occasion a group of rebels were convinced that they could capture the fortification of Vincennes. The garrison, however, was warned in time and the attack was repelled with a hail of cannon and artillery. Now to compensate themselves for this failure the assailants decided to attack Picpus. Here there was neither artillery nor cannon, so the rebels could show themselves to be very courageous. At our house we suffered the most fearful dread for a short while, as we felt sure that they would attack us in their rage. What would be our fate if such an attack took place? Neither our lives nor our property would be of any value after such an onslaught! However, very fortunately for us, those who were leading the column turned them away from our house and made them enter the Asylum of d'Enghien, where they could not do much damage.

The city of Paris seemed to be very calm and peaceful until the month of June. There was little strife or unrest and business went on more or less as usual. In actual fact, however, during this period the seeds of bloodshed and disorder were being sown, of which the government itself was unawares. A short time before, national workshops had been opened

to which all kinds of people were admitted indiscriminately. Now, these same schools were being used by the underground branch of the rebels to excite the people against their rulers. From seats of trade and commerce they were converted into schools of anarchy. The government soon learned of what was happening and immediately ordered that these workshops be closed. As might have been expected, this was the spark which set alight the great conflagration of death and destruction. From June 23rd to June 26th, France experienced one of the bloodiest rebellions that ever occurred in the history of mankind.

On June 23rd, the Friday after the feast of Corpus Christi, we were preparing the repositories for the procession of the Blessed Sacrament on the grounds of the sisters, when suddenly the silence was rent by the roar of cannons. Minute by minute it grew louder and louder as it seemed to draw ever nearer. After a short time, fearing that we were in imminent danger, we stopped work on the repositories and each of us took the precautions which he deemed most prudent. Nobody, however, left the house, probably because all thought it was already too late to flee to safety. We saw the regular army head directly towards the suburb of Saint-Antoine where the Bastille was situated. It was clear to see that the army wished to root out the rebels from this stronghold. All the streets leading to this center were barricaded up to the first floor windows. The army was using cannons in an effort to break through these obstacles. The rebels resisted strongly and fiercely and did not abandon their positions although several houses were already on fire. Both sides fought a bitter battle for some days, each one refusing to yield an inch. It is easy to imagine the agony we were suffering as our house was situated on the extreme end of the famous suburb of Saint Antoine, which was now in the very center of the mighty combat.

The inhabitants of this part of Picpus banded to defend their property against the rebels. Two outposts were established, one on the side of the suburb and the other in the defense of Picpus. Barricades and fortifications were erected, and the people prepared to fight until death, if necessary, in defense of their possessions. The captains of these auxiliary troops petitioned Bishop Bonamie for assistance as they needed all the men they could muster. The good Bishop sent five lay-brothers, three to the post nearest the suburb of Saint Antoine and two to the fortifications of Picpus. It was my honor to occupy the latter post with Brother Edmund Cosme. On Sunday, while I was on duty at the post, I saw a group of men approach. A blood smeared shirt and pants is all that they had and it was very evident from their looks that they were not on a mission of good will. I begged Our Blessed Mother not to forget her poor son at this terrible moment. I then ordered those approaching in such an unorderly fashion, to halt for identification. They were rebels who were trying to enlist new recruits into the ranks of the revolutionaries. As we at the post were interested only in protecting our property, we ordered these men to leave or else we would have to take measures against them. This command they obeyed with definite reluctance, and as they passed our house, they wrote above the door, "*This house is to be plundered and burned.*" I have no hesitation in saying that this resolution would have been carried out had the revolution been successful.

It was on this same evening that the troops from Vincennes began to surround Paris. The attack was carried out from our side of the city. The artillery took up its position on the boulevard of Picpus. At our post we were now caught between the two lines of fire, occupying the "no man's land" of the battlefield. Our position became impossible, but what were we to do? Many plans were proposed and then rejected. Some wished to construct a scaffolding right through the garden and thus protect ourselves from the line of fire. This plan, too, after much discussion, was rejected. It was finally decided that we should abandon the post altogether and go to give whatever aid we could at the Suburb of Saint-Antoine. As there was only one rifle for every three men at the post, it was suggested that those who were unarmed should leave for the present. Brother Edmund and I then left for our house at Picpus, where we spent another sleepless night.

Little did we realize that at the very moment we entered Picpus, our Venerable Archbishop Affre lay mortally wounded at the Palace de Bastille. He had become victim of his heroic self-sacrifice. As a true pastor of his flock he had intervened that he might in some way bring this terrible civil warfare to an end. He went before the stronghold of the rebels, and, there, assured them that all he desired was peace. He promised that they would be forgiven if they brought this fratricide to an end. The fighting had already caused too much blood to flow, he told them. As he thus advanced, preceded by a member of the National Guard carrying an olive branch, he was struck by a cannon ball and was mortally wounded. As he lay dying on the ground, he was heard to repeat over and over again, "*may this be the last blood to be shed.*" He was rushed to the rectory of Saint-Antoine, and, on the following day, he was transferred to his own episcopal palace, where he died on June 27th. During his last moments his only prayer was that his might be the last blood to be shed. Such a beautiful petition could not go unheard. On the morning of June 26th, the artillery of Vincennes finally succeeded in entering the city. Seeing the advancing forces, the rebels retreated on all sides. Many of them fled through

Charonne Street, which remained in rebel hands for a few hours more. It was only after a fierce battle of hand- to-hand fighting that the rebels were finally defeated.

Though the main body of rebels had surrendered, the fighting was by no means over. The soldiers who entered the city were almost continuously under fire from snipers who had taken up positions on roof tops, behind closed doors and barricades. Infuriated by this shooting, the soldiers decided to enter and search every house for arms. Wherever an armed man was found, he was immediately put to death. Many innocent people were shot because arms were found on their property. It was a horrible day; the bloodiest, I think that I ever witnessed. In some places the women offered the soldiers poisoned drinks in revenge. Those who drank it suffered immediately from severe stomach pains. As soon as they realized what had happened, they would fall on their poisoners and butcher them.

At Picpus we also experienced some difficulty with the military. When they searched our house for arms they found a gun from the national guard. Brother Gervais had brought it with him from the post of Saint-Antoine. Fortunately, the good brother was absent when the party called at Picpus. If he had been present he would have been put to death, as even his bearded face alone would have made him a suspect. Through the intervention of a certain Monsieur Duez, a pension supervisor, the matter was soon settled and the army was satisfied with taking the gun without pressing any charges against Brother Gervais. Gradually order and discipline again returned to the city; the people went back to their work and all hoped that they had seen the last of revolutions and bloodshed.

These scenes of war and destruction were not, however, the last ones of such a kind to be seen. They were again repeated, in an even more terrible degree, in the war and the Commune of 1870-71. Before I discuss this war, I would like to say a few words about the events of my private life in the meantime. During 1849, I suffered a severe attack of stomach ulcers and I had to give up my work at the bakery. When I recovered, I was appointed assistant to Brother Gervais Durand, who was then procurator for both communities at Picpus. There was little doubt in my mind that, in a few years, I too would be traipsing the streets of Paris searching for food and supplies. The thought of such an appointment did not at all appeal to me. Therefore, in 1852, when I was transferred to Rouen to work in the bakery of the Sisters I left Picpus, if not without sadness, at least without regret. But God wanted me at Picpus and on January 12th, 1854, I was recalled there by the Reverend Father Euthyme Rouchouze who had been elected Superior General of our Institute on December 19th, 1853.

I was now appointed assistant to Father Bonaventure Majorel, who was procurator of Our Mother House. It was our duty to make all the purchases for the house and for our establishments in America and our other missions. I worked for some time under the direction of Father Bonaventure and gradually became acquainted with the difficulties involved in this position. In 1859, he took me with him to Le Havre where thirteen fathers and brothers were leaving for the mission fields of Chile and the Sandwich Islands. During this trip I learned the great amount of work required to send forth a group of missionaries. I had little difficulty as long as Father Bonaventure was with me, but soon he fell seriously ill and was obliged to go to the South of France to recuperate. Since I was now the sole procurator left, I carried the burden doing my humble best in a work which demanded an experienced man. I did not particularly like the appointment as it brought me outside the monastery walls too often. I would have preferred to go to the missions. In fact this is where Bishop d'Axieri wished to have me, but it was not God's will for His unworthy servant. I always tried to remember the words Bishop Bonamie had spoken to me once when I asked for a transfer. It happened that the work I was engaged in demanded much contact with the business world. *"You will gain far greater merit,"* he said to me on that occasion in *"running the streets of Paris in obedience to the will of your superiors, than by spending whole hours in Chapel doing your own will."* In the capacity of procurator, I tried to help our young institute as much as possible, for the love of God.

The first embarkation I had to organize on my own was in 1861, when Bishop d'Axieri sailed for the missions. He was accompanied by Father Richard Lemoing, student-brother Andre Burgermann, lay brother Martin Combette and four children, aged ten to fifteen years, all of whom were nephews of Fathers Anicet and Marin who were stationed at Valparaiso. They sailed from Le Havre on the *Phillipe-Auguste* on July 21, 1863. The second departure which I oversaw proved to be much more difficult to arrange. It departed from Bremen, Germany, in the same year. As I myself did not know any German, there was much difficulty in the discussions with the shipping authorities. Had I not brought Brother Marie-Francois Rethman along as interpreter, the problem would have proved insurmountable. The ship owners were all Protestants, and so I had to insist on certain conditions being fulfilled on the voyage. After many hours of discussions they finally agreed to these conditions. It will forever stand to the credit of these men that they fulfilled to the last detail,

all the promises they made. Neither the Captain nor the sailors made any complaints to the fathers and brothers during the one hundred and twenty-nine-day voyage to the Sandwich Islands. This group of missionaries included Rev. Father Damien de Veuster, the future Apostle of the lepers of Molokai, three other Fathers, two lay brothers and ten Sisters of the Sacred Hearts. I was engaged in this type of work for thirty years at one of the most difficult periods of French history. My duties often took me to such distanced ports as Bordeaux, Brest, Le Havre and Dieppe. This task became especially difficult during the Franco-German War, when all travel was greatly restricted. During this period it became almost impossible to arrange the voyages of our foreign Missionaries. Even the trips of our fathers and brothers within the country itself presented me with many great problems. To all this, many personal anxieties were added. But, alas, these troubles were but a prelude to the terrible trials all of us were to suffer a short while later.

PART II

Paris and the Commune

Picpus - During the Siege of Paris and the Commune

CHAPTER I

The Siege

The Franco-Prussian War was declared officially on July 19, 1870. With this news, Parisians were enthusiastically convinced of victory. Soldiers boarded trains at Paris's East Station to the sound of the crowd's chanting: "*To Berlin! To Berlin!*" I wasn't so sure of victory. One day while riding in a public coach, we passed a regiment marching to the front. Some of my fellow-travelers remarked, "*within a fortnight they will be in Berlin.*" "*Alas!*" I said, "*the poor soldiers will soon return.*" For this I was called "Prussian" and was forced to get out. "*I am more of a Frenchman than any of you,*" I shouted at them, "*and I tell you the truth. We have been betrayed.*" Unfortunately for France, events proved me right. One defeat followed another. Sedan fell on September 2nd and Napoleon III was captured. In Paris, public feeling led to revolution which broke out on September 4th. The government fell and the Empire was overthrown. A republic was proclaimed with General Trochu, Governor of Paris, in control.

I remember it was on a Sunday. After dinner, about one o'clock I said to Father General, "*if you wish, I will take a walk through the city to see what is happening.*" He agreed. Leaving Picpus, I followed the broad boulevards to the Place Vendome. There, I could see a mob coming down from the Madeleine, and I could hear them crying: "*To arms! To arms!*" I did not like the looks of it, but being more curious than before, I walked farther towards the Madeleine itself. From that point I could see the Place de la Concorde, and the buildings of the legislative assembly in the very act of being invaded by an immense crowd. I walked towards them and finding it impossible to move farther because of the crowd, I waited to see what would happen. The palace steps were thronged with people and in their midst, the surrounded deputies. Someone shouted: "*Long live the Republic!*" The crowd shouted back, "*long live the Republic!*" Here and there were city guards and others who refused to acclaim the change. I saw them thrown bodily down the steps. The people collared one of them and dragged him along in our direction. He made a sudden gesture with his arm which alarmed the crowd and caused them to disperse. People began to push and shove and I was caught up in the excited throng. I was really carried along by the crowd for my shoes did not touch the ground for several feet. When the momentary fears of the crowd had been allayed, people heard the new deputies announced and saw them make their way to the Tuileries to proclaim the overthrow of the Empire and the establishment of the Republic. Workers in the Naval Administration facing the square looked out at the drama unfolding before their eyes, and when they were told to acclaim the Republic, they did so willingly and loudly. I had seen and heard enough. Returning to Picpus, I told the community that France was now a republic. However, I did not believe the new government would last very long. I remembered the fall of Louis Philippe in February of 1848, the terrible days of June, and then the coup d'état of December 2, 1851. I told myself the Republic would not last, but I was wrong.

With the Republic proclaimed, the next task was the defense of Paris. It was obvious that the Prussians would waste no time in surrounding the city. People outside were urged to withdraw behind the city's fortifications and to bring with them all the food they could carry. The long lines of people, the carts loaded with provisions, the animals, all moving into the city made a sad spectacle.

The regular army could not have had more than 50,000 men at this time. To reinforce the army, battalions of national guardsmen were hastily organized and drawn up to the city. Picpus was ordered to give shelter to one that numbered 800 men. I learned later that most of them came from the towns of Vincennes and Saint Maude. They had arrived unexpectedly while I was on my way back from the novitiate at Issy with a wagonload of vegetables. At the novitiate, Father Jean Lecornu, and Brothers Eudoxe Mariheau, Philippe Boulerai, Theophile Forgeot, Pierre Rouille and Marcel Fayolle had remained to protect the house from looting. The novices had gone and the novice-master, Father Bourgos had left for Sarlat. Arriving at the carriage gate of Picpus, I came face to face with the men of the National Guard. They would not allow me to enter, so I drove to Saint Mande and entered the property through the garden gate.

The next few days the guardsmen settled themselves in Picpus. Wagonloads of straw for bedding arrived, and so, we had them sleeping everywhere, in our corridors, in our community rooms, in the chapter room, in the room above the chapel, everywhere. The community retired to what was left. One thing I must say, they respected the chapel. Father General, the Very Reverend Marcellin Bousquet, expressed a certain anxiety about the strangers in the corridors and even in the parlors next to his apartments. To quiet his fears, I volunteered to spend the nights sleeping in his apartments on the floor by the door. Truly, the door was well-guarded, for on the outside there was a guardsman and, on the inside, there was I. After three nights, I was told by Father General to take my mattress away for he was certain the soldiers meant him no harm.

They did not harm us, it is true, but they did have eyes for our grapes that, with a full row gone, I feared for our vegetables as well, and I ordered that the garden gates be locked. On September 26th, Father General informed me that he had been insulted by a guardsman who told him to move out or they would force him to go. I suggested that he write a letter of protest to General Trochu, the Military Governor of Paris. However, when the incident was reported to the officer in charge, and the means we proposed to take, he quickly apologized. To give all his men a good lesson, he ordered that the offending officer be demoted publicly and to be sent elsewhere. The first weeks passed peacefully enough. The national guardsmen amused themselves at cards. Each week fresh straw was brought in and the beds were renewed. This did not last. Soon the soldiers contented themselves with merely shaking out the straw to remove the dust. Supplies were dwindling, and, by September 18th the circle of cannon-fire being drawn by the enemy was so close, it was impossible to bring in provisions from the outside. The scarcity of food was being felt and bread and meat were being rationed for all. The officer in charge managed to obtain some horsemeat, but fortunate was the one who had the wood or coal to cook it. There were hardly any vegetables to be found. Our garden had produced an abundance of vegetables, but our guests had forced us to take measures and precautions. One night we pulled out all the vegetables and buried them. We were just in time, for the next morning some of the guardsmen began climbing over the wall to see what was left of the garden. There were still a few cabbage leaves left which from afar looked like a row of cabbages. The men began to menace Brother Elias Bousquet when I arrived. "*There are no vegetables,*" I said to the guardsmen. "*What are those?*" "*They are only a few leaves which, are not worth eating,*" I said. "*Never mind,*" he said, "*give them to us.*" "*Gladly,*" I answered, "*wait here and I'll go and bring back whatever I find.*" I brought them the leaves for which they wished to pay but I refused for they were worth nothing. The next morning the guardsmen were back again. "*Look well,*" I said, "*there is nothing left.*" They looked, were disappointed and left.

The vegetables we had stored away, out of reach of the plunderers, allowed us to make useful exchange with different tradesmen. One day I was at the house of our baker in the city (for we were no longer able to use our own bakery) and the baker's wife showed me two carrots she had bought in the city at a great expense. So, I told the baker that if he would give us bread, I would provide him with vegetables in return. This was agreed upon but the exchanging had to be done very discreetly so as not to arouse the suspicion of the national guard. I brought him the vegetables at night when it was dark; there was a guard in his store, but the baker brought the bread to me in the alley where I in turn gave him the vegetables. I returned home through the gate on Saint Mande Avenue; the guard never discovered a thing. What a sad time that was when one had to hide to obtain a little bread. I traded with our butcher the same way. For a few onions, he brought us some horse-meat, then some calf, then again some preserves. So thanks to our vegetables, we had nearly all we needed, and, at times, we were even able to send some bread to our Sisters who had been obliged to replace bread with boiled wheat given to them by some refugee.

Although we had almost enough as far as food was concerned, it was not so with the heating; for the provisions of coal and wood were soon exhausted. We were obliged to burn picture frames and the beautiful oak wood purchased to repair the house. One day I received a load of 1000 kilos of boards of fine oak; the thought alone that this wood was going

to be burned sickened me. I was trying to devise some means to save it when Captain Valette, a watchmaker from Vincennes who was living with us, came up to me and said: "*Brother Marinus, you have chickens in that yard, would you give me one; I'll pay you well for it.*" "*Gladly,*" I said to him, "*but under one condition; you must provide me with some firewood; there must be a lot of it at Vincennes.*" He agreed, and we went together in our carriage to Vincennes. The first wood yard was empty, but the second one still had some provisions. The captain went out to look for the proprietor, and, a few moments later, we left with our carriage well filled. We had firewood until the end of the siege, and, thus, the beautiful oak was saved, which we used later to make the necessary repairs on our house when we re-entered it after its occupation during the Commune.

Besides Picpus, I also looked after the novitiate at Issy, which, as I have already mentioned, was half abandoned. I had promised the father and two brothers living there that I would come and see them once a week and bring along as much as I was able, whatever they needed daily. Despite their presence in the house, the plunderers still broke into the garden to take the vegetables away. However, it was not only the gardens that the thieves were after; by means of an opening in the wall of the novitiate, they entered through a neighboring house into the novitiate cellar. Noticing that the wine was disappearing, Brother Marcel Fayolle hid himself in a corner of the cellar to surprise the thief. As it turned out there were two of them, who seemed to be well acquainted with the layout of the place; they were planning to cut an opening through another wall to increase their spoils when Brother Marcel suddenly shouted: "*Get the thief, get the thief.*" Immediately, the two men ran to the opening to escape; the first one jumped over to the other side, but the second had not taken two steps when the brother took him by his legs and pulled him back. The first thief, trying to help his companion, pulled him from his side by the arms telling him: "*Push yourself a little,*" but the unhappy companion replied, "*I can't, they are pulling me by my legs.*" This lasted for a few minutes. Finally, Brother Marcel let the thief go, but not without a good beating long to be remembered by the poor victim. When I heard of this incident, I reported it to our Very Reverend Father, and, with his consent, I sold the wine still in the barrels and brought what was already bottled to Picpus, where we buried them in the garden.

I was at the novitiate on September 19th, when the first battle was raging on the plateau of Chatillon. The Zouaves of Montrouge took refuge in the grove of our novitiate after the first attack by the enemy. This was only the beginning of our trials, for very soon a long and terrible duel broke loose between the Prussian batteries and the cannons of the fortifications of Issy. The shells of the Prussians passed over the fortifications and reached our property, and even further down. Some fell upon the house, others upon the Chapel. One day while walking with the young-brother student Jean-Baptist Demonthois, a shell exploded just besides us; we barely had time to jump into the trench next to where we were standing. Another time a shell penetrated the Chapel and exploded on the steps of the altar, where it started a fire. One evening Brother Theophile Forgeot, with candle in hand, was ready to leave the community room when suddenly a shell exploded at the foot of the crucifix. The explosion was so powerful that it threw the brother on the floor, but luckily he did not sustain any serious injuries.

The fortifications of Issy were severely damaged by the Prussian batteries, and the soldiers had to repair the gaps constantly to carry on the fighting. These repairs were made with branches from trees cemented together with mud. Our garden and grove provided much material for this kind of defense. One day while the soldiers were helping themselves in plundering our garden, I arrived with Father General, who wished to inspect the state of things personally. As we were walking together on the terrace, someone shouted: "*Take cover!*" Just then a shell passed about two meters over our heads and buried itself somewhere in the garden. A little later I was curious enough to go and dig up the shell to keep it as a souvenir, but I only found half of it. I took it to Picpus and later gave it to my mother, when I paid her a visit after the Commune.

When returning to Picpus, we were advised not to use Vaugirard Street where many shells had fallen. Nevertheless, upon arriving at the barrier at the entrance of Paris, Father General consented to taking Vaugirard Street because the houses there were higher than in the neighboring streets, and this seemed to offer better protection. Just near the Church in our neighborhood, a shell came in our direction; but, instead of exploding on our street, it fell on Blomet Street which we had been advised to take.

The community at the novitiate of Issy deserved a great deal of credit for remaining in their house in the midst of the shelling that went on day and night. One day when I was with them, officers from the national guard came and

asked to stay there. However, Father Jean Lecornu seem embarrassed to respond to them, so I asked them where they were from. They said that where their former lodging was, the shells fell in such great number that it was no longer safe there. I replied that they would not be any better off here. Then I took them to the front of the house and showed them the openings in the walls and the cells which were no longer inhabitable. They went off looking for another place. Despite these conditions Father Jean Lecornu and the brothers remained at Issy, living in the basement and even in caves. If the house had been abandoned everything would have been looted.

CHAPTER II

Stretcher bearer on the Battlefield

On November 9th, the army of La Loire gained a great victory over the Prussians in the vicinity of Coulmiers. The news of this victory reached Paris only on the 13th. Immediately, General Trochu attempted to breach the surrounding troops and contact the supporting army which was reported on its way to Paris. The principal operation, from the very beginning, consisted in conquering Champigny. Before throwing his troops into this tremendous undertaking, the General organized a service of stretcher-bearers for which volunteers were plentiful. Priests and religious presented themselves wholeheartedly to go to the battlefields, or to help wherever there was any need in alleviating the suffering of the wounded and the dying. Our section had its own ambulance or rather ambulances, for several establishments made themselves ready for this work of mercy and patriotism. Our two Motherhouses were among the number. While the Sisters transformed their large parlor into a hospital, the greater number of our Fathers presented themselves as stretcher bearers or chaplains of ambulances. Three of them were designated to follow the troops in their operations outside the city; they were the Reverend Fathers Ignace Oursel, Saintin Carchon, and Sosthene Duval. I also had to go there myself with Brother Stanislas Beunat, for our house and carriage had been requisitioned. I was under the command of the Abbe David, chaplain of the Sacred Heart of Mary, who was director of the ambulance in the Picpus quarter.

The advance of the troops began on November 29th, and we had to move out the following day. We assembled at Petit-Bry leaving Paris on November 30th for Petit-Bry, passing through Montreuil and Rosny on roads behind the fortifications of Rosny and Nogent, whose cannons were aimed at the Prussian batteries installed at Petit-Bry. This was the first day of the battle, and since Petit-Bry was inaccessible at the time, we were obliged to wait quite far from the battlefield. However, the Prussians were forced to retreat; by nightfall the village was in the hands of the French army. During the night though, the Prussians regained ground and at daybreak, December 1st, firing began with renewed force; the battle lasted until noon. During this time, our ambulance had returned to Nogent to set up camp in the open country. The area around us was very dangerous, for as we were approaching the village, the Prussian shells dropped in great numbers and we had to take refuge under the arcade of the railroad. When the fire had lessened somewhat, a signal was given and we went looking for the wounded; however, the shells of the enemy continued to sweep the battlefield and a stretcher bearer near me was wounded. Fathers Ignatius and Saintin went to the assistance of an officer who had been hit in the stomach and whose liver was hanging outside of his body. They bandaged his wounds and placed him in a carriage which transported him to Saint-Antoine hospital where he recovered. After his recovery, he came to thank the Fathers who had saved his life. For my part, I helped place the wounded in the carriage, and, as soon as it was filled, I went to Saint-Antoine hospital. Among the wounded was a Colonel whose right leg had been shattered by the explosion of a shell; he was suffering a great deal. Near me was a soldier who had a bullet in his shoulder and two in his head. He also was suffering tremendously; his whole body was trembling from a high fever. Seeing this, I stopped for a moment to put my blanket over him. "Hurry up, will you," the Colonel complained, "I'm anxious to get to the hospital and have my leg amputated; it is causing me too much pain." I pointed out that the poor soldier was shivering. "You are a charitable man," replied the Colonel, "you take good care of your wounded." Along the way the Colonel began to talk about the war. "I have participated in the wars in Africa, Crimea, Mexico, and Italy," he told me, "but I have never seen a war like this

one. It will be a disgrace to any officer if he returns from this war without wounds. There were three other Colonels besides myself on the battlefield; now there is just one left."

This was indeed true, for on the battlefield I had seen a Colonel among the dead; his stomach was cut in two and his bowels were hanging from both openings. On the ferry which crossed the Marne, I had seen an officer whose head had been completely crushed by a shell. The battle had been so furious and so violent that the Prussians unharnessed their horses and left their cannons behind in order to withdraw without any hindrance. The next day, December 2nd, there was a truce, and we returned to take away the wounded. As we were riding to Noisy-le-Grand, we found a seriously wounded Prussian soldier suffering from great pain in a small castle, so we picked him up and placed him on a litter. I noticed that he was keeping one hand on a bag as if he had something very precious hidden there. I then took the bag and prudently placed it under his head. Immediately he gratefully took my hand saying, "*thank you, thank you.*" With all possible precautions we brought him to the surgeon and then left again to continue our work.

The battlefield was a sad spectacle to behold. There were places completely covered with corpses. Most of the wounded who still were able to walk had retired to the houses, stables, and barns for the night. That day I had made two trips carrying the wounded to Paris. We returned the next day to examine the village and the neighborhood of Petit-Bry. Since it was too disorganized to sustain a battle, the army was ordered to fight while retreating and to assemble on the other side of the Marne. The battles of Champigny on November 30th, and December 2nd, although glorious for our armies, were without practical results; I heard several soldiers cry out: "*Peace, give us peace.*"

Two weeks later I was asked to go to the Plateau d'Avron and transport the soldiers there to Saint-Antoine hospital. Father Saintin came along with me. On our way we met an officer who asked us to take along a soldier at Montreuil who was sick. We stopped for him on the way back. Upon entering his room, I picked up an odor which almost suffocated me; I immediately opened the window but seeing that the soldier began to shiver I closed it again. I wrapped him carefully in a blanket and took him to my carriage. Arriving at the hospital they told me to take him to the small-pox ward; there, they did not want to receive him because he had not been admitted in the regular way. I then took him to the office for registration and the poor soldier was then readily admitted. I nearly suffocated in this ward filled with suffering soldiers, and when I finally arrived home at Picpus, I was exhausted. "*I feel very ill,*" I said to Brother Crepin, "*I think I am going to have the small-pox.*" Brother gave me a strong purgative for three days. When the doctor arrived, he told me that indeed I had all the symptoms of small-pox; however, after two weeks in the infirmary the sickness completely disappeared.

The siege dragged on; the bombardment of the fortification started on December 29th, and, in Paris itself, on January 5th. It was decided to make a new exit to Versailles; this was January 19th. They asked me if I could march and I replied that I could. On the 19th, I was at the Place de L'Hotel de Ville with my carriage. The army encamped in the Champs-Elysees. Never before had I seen an army arrayed in battle formation. The ambulances advanced amid the troops, who were surrounding them on both sides. At seven o'clock we arrived near the Mont-Valerien; the vanguard had already opened fire on the enemy at Montrout and Rueil. On the front lines, the national guards were counting on a victory. They had little success at Fouillerie Farm where at first they drove away the Prussians, but, unfortunately, the artillery they were waiting for from Saint Dennis did not arrive until eleven o'clock. This loss of time compromised the result of an action which had been quite brilliant in the beginning. The enemy cannons and machine guns inflicted heavy casualties on the national guard units, and they were forced to retreat. During the battle our ambulance had been kept at Rueil on the road to Saint Germain; but because the shells were coming at us from all sides, we entered the village taking refuge behind the church. We had hardly arrived there when a shell hit one of the carriages; now, we no longer knew where to go. From the moment the fire faintly relented we went looking for the wounded; soon my carriage was filled and I left for Paris, but I could not find any place to leave them. The hospitals were all crowded, however, I was able to find some private ones which accepted a few. The next morning, I went back to the battlefield to continue the same sad task. Alas, while we were taking up the wounded, we saw plunderers running all over the field undressing the dead and wounded. It was so disgusting, that at several instances the Prussians themselves interfered to drive those men away. Finally after a siege of 136 days and a bombardment which had lasted for a whole month, after the ration of horsemeat to 30 grams, the city of Paris finally decided to surrender. On January 28, 1871, an armistice was signed with general relief; for if the siege had lasted a few days longer, there would have been a frightful famine. The capital had done its duty, and more than its duty; since God refused to deliver it from the surrounding iron and fire, the only thing for the city to do was to bow its head in defeat.

As soon as the doors were opened again, our Very Reverend Father made a visitation to the houses of the Province. This was a well-timed visitation, for we were going to face another war more cruel than the one we had just experienced—a civil war. Rumors of the Commune circulated throughout Paris and resounded even into our own house among the national guardsmen we still had within our walls. Most of those who were honest and peaceful had gone home, but those who harbored revolutionary ideas had remained. Reverend Father Ladislas Radigue, who was charged with the affairs of the house in the absence of Father General, sought to have these men removed. At the beginning of March, he presented his case to the Military Governor who ordered the battalion to evacuate within the shortest time possible.

The men seemed to be in no hurry; they gathered their belongings slowly and when everything seemed to be ready and they told us that they were going to leave, Brother Stanislaus Beunat discovered a box with bullets and ammunition in one of the parlors on the first floor. Were those provisions left there on purpose or by forgetfulness? One is tempted to think that it was done on purpose so as to prepare us for a pre-requisition and to be able to accuse us of keeping arms without proper permission. This opinion was even strengthened when Brother Stanislaus went to see the Sergeant about it. The Brother was obliged several times to request to have the ammunition removed. Before taking it away the man said: *"You want a little '93'? You shall have it."* This little '93' was also mentioned by other guards who were our friends. A few days before this incident Captain Valette of Vincennes, the one to whom I had given the chicken, told me before leaving the house: *"Brother Marinus, I want to give you a present; I am going to give you two revolvers, for I think you will soon need them."* I thanked him saying: *"I have a revolver far superior to those you want to give me."* *"Show it to me,"* he said. I showed him my rosary saying: *"Look here, look at this folded medal. It saved my life when all your revolvers would not have saved me at that moment."* And I told him how one day I was in the suburb Saint-Antoine and I was caught between two carriages; the wheels were squeezing me, my clothing was torn, the cross of my rosary was broken, and this medal of the Blessed Virgin was bent in two. All I suffered was a little bruise. When I arrived at home, the Fathers knew very well that something extraordinary had occurred. They gave me some medicine and soon afterwards I returned to my work. *"Your revolvers, however powerful they may be, are nothing compared to mine,"* I said to the captain. *"Let it be that way,"* he answered, *"but I will give you another gift—a golden medal in memory of me and of what you have just told me."* *"Oh no,"* I replied, *"I never wear a gold medal on my rosary."* *"If you don't want a gold medal, then at least accept a silver one."* I accepted it, and this same medal is still on my rosary. The captain was a courageous and good man.

The remarks of Captain Valette and the affair of the case of bullets made me wonder. I said to Father Ladislas: *"You have sent the national guards away, for no doubt they embarrassed us greatly; but frankly looking at the turn of events, I ask myself if it would not be advantageous to have soldiers living here, I don't mean revolutionaries like the ones who have just left, but some honest national guardsmen who could protect us."* I spoke about it with Father Polycarp Tuffier, our procurator, who was disturbed by the word Commune, a presentiment of what was coming. This good Father went with me to see the Commandant of the National Guard of Saint Mande to ask him for some protection for our house. The Commandant told us that he could do nothing about it, and we returned to Picpus feeling quite uneasy. On March 18, 1871, the Commune was proclaimed, and the regular army retired to Versailles. It was evident that the situation would take a turn for the worse; nevertheless, I was not discouraged. I had seen Paris in 1848, when our house had been invaded by more than 400 rebels, but I had not left Picpus. I was hoping that the Commune would pass by without doing us too much harm; alas, this was not to be the case.

CHAPTER III

The Commune: Seizure of the Motherhouse

It was customary at Picpus for the Brothers to make their annual retreat during Holy Week and close it on Easter Sunday. This year, 1871, the retreat was being preached by the Reverend Father Ignace Oursel. Neither the eloquence of the preacher nor the good will of the retreatants could stop us from thinking about happenings outside. The most alarming news reached us, and we were anxiously asking ourselves if we would be able to close our exercises in peace.

On Holy Thursday we all made our Easter Communion and assisted at the solemn offices of the holy liturgy. On Good Friday, April 7th, Reverend Father Marcel Rouchouze, Secretary, informed me that the Communards had arrested the Jesuits. The Fathers had been put in prison and the Brothers, robbed of their money, had been sent away. I said: "*Our turn will come soon. Give me all your registers so that I may hide them with the sacred vessels.*" The more precious ornaments had already been stored away. I had received a sum of money for Miss Duchene for the Apostolic work which I had been unable to send her; thus I also put it in the same place. Reverend Father Ladislas Radigue was being visited by his brother, who was employed in the Registry. I asked Mr. Radigue if he would be able to help his brother who was very much burdened in the present circumstances. He told me that he was unable to do anything for him. After he had left, I told Father Ladislas that some urgent measures should be taken for the danger was growing worse day by day. Father tried to reassure me: "*But with what can they reproach us? We do not have any weapons hidden here, and we take no part in politics.*" I replied: "*We are priests and religious, Reverend Father, and that suffices to put us in prison. After that, I don't know what will follow.*"

On Friday evening after supper, Father Ladislas called the community together and told the decisions of the council. The Fathers who had any ministry to fulfill were urged to stay at their post and faithfully perform their duties; the Brothers were free to leave but were asked to indicate the place they intended to go so that the Very Reverend Father General could be informed of their whereabouts. Since most of them did not know where to take refuge, everyone resolved to stay at Picpus. Reverend Father Ignace Oursel, the scholastic Jean-Baptist Démonthois, and lay-brother Tharcise asked me what they should do. I told them: "*The sooner you leave the better.*" They left Saturday morning. At the same time Father Severin Kaiser, Brother Lambert Clashaus and Brother Telesphore Goerz left for Saint-Mande to stay with the Langlois family. After dinner on Easter Sunday I went to Saint-Mande to tell them that soon I would take them to Saint-Dennis whence they could embark for Louvain. However, they had been imprudent enough to leave Saint-Mande and return to Picpus where I found them an hour later. It was all very nice urging them to leave, but they would not listen. The next morning, April 10th, Reverend Father Philibert Taulvel arrived from the novitiate dressed as a civilian. He had come to Picpus on his way to Versailles, where he was to teach dogmatic theology in the major seminary; however, all hope of safety was not yet lost. The following morning I told him to leave Paris with Father Saintin and go to the woods of Vincennes where I would rejoin them with my carriage and take them to the railroad station of the Co. de Lyon. I went there but waited in vain for the two Fathers. Dressed in cassocks, they were not allowed to pass any of the barriers and thus were obliged to return to Picpus. The following day, remembering that the Jesuit Brothers had been obliged to surrender all their money, I took the cincture I was wearing and in which I was carrying a sum in gold and hid it under the bakery's roof tiles.

The time had come. That very evening the Communards were masters of the house. They arrived at one o'clock and first went to the Sisters. I was coming back from their convent when on opening the gate which gives out onto Picpus Street No. 35, I came face to face with the soldiers of the Federal army who were on the point of entering. Looking at me the leader of the band shouted: "*We are at the wrong address,*" and they turned their steps to the door entering the kitchen of the Sisters' house. While the leader knocked at the door, I ran over to the portress to warn the Sisters. Then I returned to our house to inform the Fathers of what was awaiting us. Fathers Ladislas and Tuffier were in the courtyard. "*Marinus, Marinus,*" called out Father Tuffier, "*go and watch the gate and don't let anyone enter.*" "*Alas, Reverend Father, how am I going to stop forty men armed with rifles?*" "*Marinus,*" he continued, "*at least don't abandon us.*" "*Oh no, Reverend*

Father, I will never abandon you; if need be I will go to prison with you. "Nevertheless," I added immediately, "it may happen that if I find a means to escape those Communards without doing any harm to you, I will take advantage of the occasion." Then I went back to the gate with Brother Joseph Huscenot. Around four o'clock the Communards arrived led by Commissioner Clavier, Mayor Philippe of the XII, the arrondissement, two adjutants, and Captain Lenotre. I asked them what they wanted. *"The superior,"* said Clavier. *"He is not at home,"* I replied, *"he is in the province."* *"Then the one who replaces him."* I took them into the parlor while the guards remained in the small courtyard. Then I went to inform Father Ladislas Radigue who was in his room with Father Tuffier and who, as Prior, replaced the Father General, that they wanted to see him. They immediately went to the parlor and interviewed him briefly. When I saw them leave the room accompanied by the leaders of the Communards, I joined them. As I entered the corridor, I heard Captain Lenotre say to his men: *"One at each door, and don't let anyone go out of here."* In the meantime, we went to the room of the Prior. Clavier sat down at the desk and began to examine the drawers one by one. Father Prior and Tuffier followed him with their eyes. When he was finished examining the desk, Clavier turned around to search a small cabinet behind me. *"What are you doing here"* he said, *"we have no need of you, get out of here."* *"Excuse me,"* I said, *"but I do think that I am needed here."* *"No, no, get out of here."* I was obliged to leave, but I stayed on the landing of the staircase to see what was going to happen.

After a few moments the Fathers came out with their persecutors who had told them to gather the whole community in the parlor. Passing me, Father Tuffier asked me to assemble everyone. I did so slowly for I urged all the younger brothers to leave the house by the garden gate, which was not yet under guard. Several of them took advantage of this occasion, among whom were Brothers Telesphore Goers, Elias Bousquie, Antonin Boudet, Paul Andebert and Benoit Pansier. Because the members of the community did not arrive fast enough to satisfy the Communards, they began to get impatient and Father Tuffier came to help me. When he met me, he reproached me for not executing the order promptly enough. *"Alas, Reverend Father,"* I said, *"there is no hurry."*

When nearly the whole community was present, two guards were placed at each parlor door and two remained inside the room with strict orders to prohibit any talking. *"If anyone has the misfortune of opening his mouth,"* said Captain Lenotre talking to his guards, *"just push your bayonet through his stomach."* After this the officers left the room and began searching the house. Father Tuffier noticed that Brother Antoine Tufal was missing. Thinking that the sight of the poor sick man would excite the compassion of our persecutors, he asked me to get him. Also if he remained alone, he would be exposed to soldiers' ridicule. After a while the brother arrived upset, thinking that this was going to be his last agony. Upon entering the parlor he cried out: *"I can't stand it any longer. I no longer care for my life; you may cut my throat."* This scene was both sad and amusing; most of the witnesses, guards included, could not help laughing. A little later Captain Lenotre arrived holding a watch. Putting it on the table, he said: *"The one who recognizes the watch may take it,"* and he went off. One of the sentries remarked: *"The no-good fellow, he would like to make us pass for thieves."* The watch belonged to Father Saintin. We were all in the deepest silence when all at once the doors flew open and two ecclesiastics were pushed in. They were the Abbe Guebels, curate at our parish, Saint-Eloi, and Abbe de Saint-Aromand, his fellow priest who was ill and lived across the street from our house. The Abbe Guebels had gone to visit his confrere and the Communards had followed him and doubled their hit by arresting two priests in one blow.

The Abbe Guebels was not a man to allow himself to be taken like a lamb; he cried murder and tyranny. With this, Captain Lenotre came running in and grabbing the rifle of one of the guards said: *"Did I not tell you to run a bayonet through the stomach of the first one who dared to open his mouth!"* And making a gesture he said: *"If you don't do it, I'll try it on you first."* After an interrogation Abbe de Saint-Aromand was sent back to his house, and although Abbe Guebels was retained for a few hours and then also released, this did not prevent him later from being sent to prison with our fathers.

Around seven o'clock our sentries were changed. The newcomers came in with their hands full of bread and meat; they had taken our supper. Good Brother Conrad, thinking that we would be allowed to come to the refectory, had conscientiously prepared our supper not knowing that he was working for our persecutors. While these sentries were eating, we kept silence saying our prayers and making our meditation, patiently waiting for the decision to come in our regard. The hours passed by slowly and darkness set in; it was already past ten when the officers finally returned. Clavier seated himself at the table in the middle of the room and began making some kind of a report. He interrogated every one of us beginning with Reverend Father Prior, the members of the council, and then the others in order of profession. We had to give our name, first name, employment, etc. Twelve priests, one choir-brother, and twenty-two lay-brothers. When

the interrogation was finished, he reread the notes, showed them to the Mayor, and said to us: *"We have been at Noumea, now it is your turn to go there. You are prisoners of the Commune. The brothers may retire; let each of them take up his employment."*

So the brothers left and went to bed without any supper after which I said to Clavier: *"The fathers cannot go away like this; they have not eaten since noon, and it is now already ten o'clock. They need a little food."* He answered: *"I forbid you to bring them anything; they don't need anything."* *"Your interdiction means nothing to me,"* I replied, *"you have no sense of shame. You took our supper, and now you would send these priests away without anything to eat."* *"All right then,"* he said, *"but nothing but bread and water."* I went to the kitchen and met Brother Stanislaus. *"The fathers are going to be taken to prison,"* I told him, *"prepare them something to eat before they have to leave."* We brought them some bread, wine, meat and cheese, but they were no longer hungry; they hardly touched anything. The guards kept us at a distance from them not allowing us to approach them. While the fathers were trying to eat, Brother Stanislaus and I went through their rooms for a little linen to take along. It was already around eleven o'clock; the carriages were waiting at the front door. They left before I had the consolation of saying good-bye. I returned to my room with a heavy heart but not discouraged.

CHAPTER IV

House Arrest

After the fathers had left for the prison of la Conciergerie, I went looking for Clavier who had established himself in the refectory with the other officers. Seated at a table, he had placed all the keys of the house between two revolvers in front of him. *"Monsieur Clavier,"* I said, *"at the very moment that you entered our house one of our brothers died in the infirmary, Brother Protais Duval. I think you should allow me to go out and bury him."* *"Do not worry about him,"* he said, *"we will not let him rot on his straw mattress. You just go now and prepare seven beds for us; all seven must be in the same room."* *"We have no rooms for seven beds,"* I replied, *"we only have dormitories."* *"Put us where you like; just,"* he remarked, *"don't give us any mattresses of pastors, they stink."* *"Before making the beds I need a little food. I haven't taken anything since noon, and I feel that I don't have much strength left."* *"Take the key to the cellar and get the best wine."* A guard who was present said: *"I'll follow him."* *"No,"* ordered Clavier, *"let him go alone."*

Arriving at the kitchen I found Brothers Conrad and Amator who told me there was still a little wine in the jug. This was all I needed so I returned to Clavier to tell him there was enough wine in the kitchen and that I did not have to go to the cellar. *"Very well,"* he said, *"now get us some citrons to warm white wine."* *"I have no citrons and there are none in the house,"* I replied. As he insisted I shouted at him: *"You are a very strange man. You are the master here; you have all the keys for the house and you want us to give you what we don't have?"* One of the guards then said: *"Why torment this man for something he does not have, let him go."* *"Go and take your supper,"* Clavier answered. I went back to the kitchen to get a little food. The guard who had spoken in my favor followed me in the corridor which separates the kitchen from the refectory and whispered into my ear: *"I feel sorry for you; I know this house very well; my two sisters have been educated by Sister Mederic in the free school of your religious; and I, unhappy one, I am here for thirty cents in order to get a little bread."*

In the kitchen I tried to encourage poor Brothers Amator and Conrad, who were certainly in need of it. Brother Amator who was responsible for the refectory retired for the night, and I remained alone with Brother Conrad, the cook.

Suddenly, Clavier stepped in: *"For our breakfast tomorrow morning you will prepare seven chickens; we are seven men, a chicken for each one of us."* "You are not the superior to command us in this way," replied Brother Conrad. Clavier lifted his arm to hit him but I interfered just in time saying: *"Calm down Monsieur, you will be served as you wish."* He returned to the refectory. I then told Brother Conrad to be careful with these men for they were capable of anything, and we were unable to resist them. *"Imagine,"* he said, *"I have already served them seven liters of coffee and just as many liters of white wine."* However, we could do nothing else but prepare the seven chickens for their breakfast.

I went back to the refectory and to my surprise saw poor Brother Lievin Jacobs, the porter, being subjected to interrogation. *"Search him,"* Clavier said to the four guards who were present. They threw him on the floor, searched him in a most unbecoming manner, took away his scapular, rosary, and one hundred francs which he had on him. Clavier placed these things on the table in front of him between two revolvers, and then ordered the brother to be locked up in a dark closet above the infirmary. I was standing behind Clavier next to Captain Lenotre. Turning towards me he said: *"Keep an eye on this fellow, he is everything here; the others are nothing."* The Captain charged one of the guards not to let me out of his sight. The guard, the most hideous figure among the Communards, answered: *"Don't worry, he will never escape."* I thought to myself: *"You'll have to be very smart to keep me."* "Well," I said to Clavier, *"it is time to make your beds."* "Go," he said, *"and hurry."*

I left the refectory, and I met Brother Stanislaus Beunat in the courtyard. I told him what had happened and that I thought we were going to suffer a great deal. *"I think if I have a chance to get out of here, I will take advantage of it,"* I told him. *"I am going to try to escape through the garden."* "And I too," the brother replied, *"I'll accompany you."* We left for the garden around midnight. I went first and Brother Stanislaus followed me at a distance. When I arrived at the entrance of the courtyard, suddenly two sentries jumped at me pointing their bayonets right upon my chest yelling: *"Stop, you are trying to escape."* "Me, escape?" I replied, *"come on now, that is a good one."* And turning to Brother Stanislaus, who was a short distance behind me, I called out: *"I need you to make the beds for the officers."* "There is another one who is trying to escape with you," the sentries shouted. *"Come with us to Clavier."* They led us to the refectory, but I took care to have the first word: *"Monsieur Clavier,"* I said, *"did you not order us to prepare several beds?"* "Yes, and what about it?" "The trouble is that your guards are stopping us from going to the linen room to get bed sheets." The sentries didn't utter a single word. *"Go and take your place at the guardhouse,"* Clavier told them, *"and let these two men go freely through the house."* The soldiers returned to the garden and we followed them.

"That time we were lucky," I said to Brother Stanislaus, *"I don't know how it will turn out next time. We'd better go to the dormitory and prepare the beds."* When they were ready, Brother Stanislaus retired and found his room in complete disorder. The plunderers had been there and had taken everything they thought they could use. I went to the refectory to report that the beds were ready. "Good," said Clavier, *"it is about time."* Indeed, for it was already one in the morning. I went first, and the officers followed me. I brought them to the small staircase passing by the cobbler shop and leading to the dormitory. If these men were not courageous, they were at least very prudent. As we passed each door, they stopped, and I had to explain to them what was behind it. We went up to the small dormitory on the third floor above the physics room. When we entered, a very bad odor met us. "Oh, what a dirty odor," Clavier exclaimed. I then noticed that a soldier had been vomiting next to his bed. "No wonder," I answered, *"look what one of your men has done."* "All right," he said, *"that fellow will have to lick it up with his tongue."* "Lucky me," I thought to myself, *"he could have made me do it at that very moment."*

Brother Didier Pahel was sleeping at the other end of the dormitory. Awakening suddenly, he jumped up and came towards us like a phantom. All the officers felt back frightened. "What is that?" Clavier asked. *"Don't be afraid; it's only the gardener who woke up because of the noise we were making, and who probably thought you had come to take him to prison."* "But where are our beds?" "At the other side of another dormitory," I replied. Arriving there, Clavier examined the beds. *"These beds are badly made,"* he said, *"these are not even woolen mattresses."* "You told me that mattresses of pastors stink, so I did not give you any. Moreover, our fathers sleep on straw mattresses. If your beds are not well made, the fault lies with your guards: who did not give us the time to do a better job." "All right, we will arrange that tomorrow. Go to bed now."

Before leaving the dormitory, I wanted to see how they were going to retire. They glued a candle at the foot of their beds, placed their revolvers at the head of their beds and their sabers at their feet; everything within reach ready to grab at the first sign of danger. I descended by another staircase, followed by a sentry. It was two o'clock in the morning.

I said a short prayer and threw myself upon my bed. Every quarter of an hour I noticed a light through the keyhole; it was the sentry making his inspection tour. Since I could not sleep, I had time to reflect upon the words of Clavier: *"You have to watch that one. We will interrogate him tomorrow. He is everything here, the others are nothing."* I had tried to escape once and had not succeeded. At this moment it was too late, they were watching from all sides. So there was nothing else but prison. If that was all it would not have been too bad, but before taking me there the Communards wanted me to show them the different hiding places and make me confess or else they would torture me. Telling them that I did not know those places would be lying, but I would never reveal them. I would rather die, but would I have the courage? Fathers Radigue, Tuffier, Rouchouze, the procurator, and the secretary were the only ones who knew where the registers and titles were hidden; however, these fathers were now in prison. If they did not survive and I followed them the same way, what difficulties the Institute would suffer. While I was turning these thoughts over in my mind, I remembered what my mother had always told us: *"My children, always have confidence in God. What God keeps is well kept."* Remembering this gave me peace and hope, and I made the following prayer: *"My God, I place myself entirely in your hands. Do with me what you please. If I have to go to prison, I accept it. If I have to face death, I offer you the sacrifice of my life. If you wish to save me, I ask you to give me the means for I myself cannot see any opportunity."* After this prayer I rested peacefully without thinking anymore of the future.

CHAPTER V

Escape from Picpus

Early the next morning, I went down to the courtyard. I was scarcely down when a young fellow, not more than fourteen or fifteen and holding a rifle in his hand, grabbed me by the neck. He said: *"Citizen, right now you are going to give us the Good God (he meant the ostensorium) and all the gold and silver in the house."* *"I have neither gold nor silver,"* I said, *"everything is written down on paper,"* He replied, *"see to it that nothing is missing."* *"Then you had better call the men together and start looking because I can't give you anything"*. While we were talking six armed men arrived and formed a circle around us. A discussion got underway, I was able to go to the garden where I saw the brothers already occupied with their work. *"You have courage,"* I said, *"to start working this early."* *"What are we going to do"* answered Brother Yves, *"it is better to be occupied with something than to do nothing under the present circumstances."* *"You are right,"* I replied.

Leaving them I went to the kitchen, followed by two guards. I didn't have the slightest idea of escape, but while walking through the kitchen I noticed the key to gate which opens out on the street. This discovery suddenly awakened in me the thought of getting out. I was standing with the brothers who were washing the dishes. With a few words I made them see the usefulness and even the necessity for me and for them that I should try to escape. *"These men will starve you to death,"* I told them, *"but when I am out of here, I will try to send you bread and meat regularly. As far as wine is concerned, don't count on it."* I then told Brother Conrad to take a pile of dishes to the cabinet where the key was, and without being noticed to glide it into his apron and to bring it to me. He left; the two guards who had been watching me were making an inspection tour of the kitchen. *"That is strange,"* I heard them say, *"where did he go to? We saw him enter here."* Not able to find me they left the kitchen, closing the door behind them. Brother Conrad didn't lose a minute. With the key in his apron he came back to us; everyone understood what he had to do. Several Communards were seated

in the refectory, therefore, someone had to see to it that they would not hear the grinding of the old gate. Brothers Stanislaus and Maurice took a heavy iron kettle, filled it with covers of pots and pans and threw the kettle all over the floor; meanwhile Brother Maurice started an ear-deafening noise, piling dishes on top of each other. During all this racket Brother Conrad opened the gate, and, in no time, I was on the street.

Unfortunately, a guard was standing in front of the carriage stable about thirty meters away from me. He quickly ran to the post, called four men, and began chasing me. At first I thought of surrendering myself, but my guardian angel inspired me just to keep on running. There would be time enough to stop if I got wounded. I ran as fast as I could on Picpus Street toward the fortifications. Arriving at Reuilly, I turned right into a street leading to the Place Daumesnil, and from there I went to the woods of Vincennes. But noticing the guards, I hid myself behind one of the barricades along the avenue and waited until they passed me. When they were about a hundred meters away, I left my hiding place and retraced my steps as far as the convent of the Sisters of Saint-Clotilde, where the gardener received me with open arms. Happy to see me safe and sound, he asked me to stay for dinner. During this time the guards were running all over the neighborhood feverishly trying to find me. After two hours they finally returned to Picpus sheepishly to tell Clavier that I had escaped. Clavier flew into a rage. *"It is you,"* he said to Brother Stanislaus, *"who helped him to escape. You must know where he is; go and get him, and if he does not come back all of you will be shot."* While saying this he held his revolver right on the chin of Brother Boniface, who turned white as a corpse. Clavier was even angrier because another prisoner, Brother Lambert, the tailor, had been able to escape. Here is Brother Stanislaus's description of events at Picpus on the evening of April 13th.

"In the evening Clavier called me and ordered me, with all kinds of threats, to find the two brothers within ten minutes. I left and returned a few minutes later to report that I could not find either of them and that I did not know where they were. Putting his pistol to my throat he repeated his order for me to find them, adding that he would kill all the brothers if I did not bring the other two back. Monsieur Girault, being more insolent ordered me to hurry; if not, the threat would be carried out immediately. I left for a second time and told my difficulties to the sentry, who replied that he had not seen anyone leave the property and if the commissioner had need of them, then he should look for them himself. I returned to the commissioner to tell him to shoot me, for I had found neither of the brothers in question. A few guards and members of the commissariat took up my defense saying that I had been working with them all day and that I could in no way be responsible for the escapees. Clavier then told me to call the other members of the community. Although most of them were already in bed and not knowing where to find some of them, I finally succeeded in gathering them into the chapter-room. The commissioner joined us with a few more members of the Commune. He grabbed his pistol and commanded us to tell him the truth or else he would blast the brains out of our heads. He smashed the holy water font to pieces in the middle of the room and told us that we were not domestics, but that we belonged to the house and that we had taken vows. We said that he was right. He asked everyone his trade and then demanded to know where the two were who had disappeared; all answered that they did not know. He then locked the gardener and the tailor in the coach-house, where they were to remain prisoners until they told him where the other two were hiding."

During all this time I was looking for a place to hide in the neighborhood. After leaving the convent of Sainte Clotilde, I went by way of Montgallet Street to a friend who at one time had a son at our novitiate. Only his wife and oldest daughter were at home. From here I went to Monsieur Madauzier, the Brother of our infirmarian, whom I knew very well and who was living near Saint-Merry Church. He provided me with a small room with a bed and a chair, enough for the time being. In the afternoon I went to the office of the *Univers* and told them what had happened at our house: the arrest of the fathers, the persecution, etc. The next morning an article in the paper wherein the Communards were exposed with a masterful hand. Clavier read the article and one can imagine his rage. In the evening I went to see our baker and asked him to take some bread to our brothers every day, at least enough for twelve persons. His wife told me that that very morning she had taken some to the house, but the Communards had seized it and the brothers had to do without any bread for the day. Nevertheless, I told her to go every morning in the future. She went the next morning and demanded that the Communards pay for the bread they had taken, but in vain. I asked her also to see our butcher and, with my compliments, to ask him to continue sending meat for our brothers. The meat went the same way as the bread. Although Madame Petit, the butcher's wife, personally brought the meat to the house and handed it to the brothers themselves, there were still days when the brothers saw no meat whatsoever on the table. The reason I did not go to the butcher was that I did not trust his son, who was imbued with the spirit of the Commune. One evening while returning from the Avenue du

Bel-Air where I had been visiting two brothers who were in hiding I passed through the Rue de Reuilly. Standing on the steps of a bus, the butcher's son recognized me and started shouting: "*There is one who is scared; that is the one who is trying to escape.*" I was afraid he would try to have me arrested; hastily I returned to my apartment at Saint-Merry.

On Friday, April 14th, I went to Rue Sainte-Marguerite and visited Doctor Renaud to find out if he was still taking care of our sick. While we were talking, we heard noises out in the street. His servant went out to see what the commotion was. Several people arrived seemingly very satisfied and happy, holding bottles of wine. The servant recognized in the crowd some of his acquaintances and asked them where they had come from: "*from the Picpus Convent,*" they answered, "*it is much better there than in our attic rooms.*" The Communards had found a young pig in our courtyard; it was certainly not meant for them. Afraid that they would not be there when it would be ready for slaughter, they resolved to kill it right then and there. But nobody was willing to take charge of the actual killing. Therefore, four guards, rifle on their shoulders, were sent out to get a butcher somewhere in the neighborhood. When the poor man arrived, he himself was more dead than alive. In all his nervousness he did such a poor job that the Communards were afraid they were going to be poisoned. Before tasting any of the meat, they obliged the butcher to eat a piece of it in their presence. To burn the hair of the animal, they made a fire with the books of Father Laurent Besquet's library. Doctor Renaud advised me not to walk around very much in the neighborhood, for he was sure that they were still looking for me; and, if I fell into the hands of the enemy again, there would certainly be no hope of escaping a second time.

On Wednesday of that week, Brother Protais died. Clavier did not want to have anything to do with the matter nor would he allow the brothers to take care of it. But by Saturday the corpse had begun to decay and Brother Crepin, the infirmarian, insisted so forcefully that something be done that they sent for a hearse decorated with red flags. They placed the body of the poor religious in it, and the carriage went off to an unknown destination. That night I returned once more to Reuilly Street to visit the good gardener at the Sisters of Saint Clotilde Convent with the hope of obtaining some news about our community. Upon my arrival there, I was not in the least surprised to find a guard standing at the door. I said to the gardener: "*This is a bad sign; I suspect that the convent of Saint Clotilde will be invaded in a short time.*" We had just started supper when a Sister ran in saying: "*They are here, they are here.*" I scarcely had time to get away; a couple of seconds later the Communards would have taken me. They arrested Monsieur Lecoœur and held him prisoner in his own house. I went back as fast as I could to my apartment at Saint-Merry, thanking God that once more He had saved me from the hands of my persecutors.

The next morning, Sunday, I went to Saint-Merry Church which had not been closed. A Mass was being celebrated there with very few people present. The priest seemed to be very nervous. Leaving the Church, I noticed on a placard that men above forty could leave the city without any passport. This was something for me, and I tried to figure out a way to escape from the capital. Nevertheless, before leaving I wanted to be sure that our brothers were having all they needed. After dinner I went to see Brothers Elias and Benedict, who also had succeeded in escaping from the Communards and who had taken refuge in the Rue des Bernardins. I asked them if they had any money. Thanks to the boldness of Brother Benedict, they had enough money for the time being. Before the Commune, Brother Elias had hidden some in the garden. To get it, Brother Benedict went one day disguised as a workman who used to work daily at our house. After a few questions the sentry let him enter. The brother made a tour of the garden and dug up the hidden money; then, he went to his room, gathered a few of his belongings and left again, saying to the guard that because of the changes in the house he would look for work elsewhere.

Satisfied with the situation here, I went to Picpus. I suffered seeing the house again without knowing what was going on inside. Our good friend Monsieur Mazaudier had twice visited Picpus to get news. As brother of our infirmarian, Brother Crepin, he had been permitted to enter the house and to go through it; nevertheless, on his second visit his presence aroused the suspicion of the Communards and they nearly held him prisoner. On Monday, April 17th, I wanted him to go once more before my departure, but this would have been imprudent. But to do all he could to satisfy me, he went to a milkman, Monsieur Beranger, who was living across from our convent. The guards who were living in our house often went there for a glass of milk. Two of them were there when Monsieur Mazaudier arrived; they were talking about me. "*Ah,*" they said with menacing gestures, "*if we ever catch him we will make him pay for his escape.*" After they had left, Monsieur Beranger said to my protector: "*If you know where Brother Marinus is, let him know that it is urgent for him to leave Paris. They have seen him in this quarter, and the Communards are so set against him that if they catch him, this time they will cut him to pieces. Each one wants to have a piece of his skin.*"

Monsieur Mazaudier returned pleading with me not to prolong my stay in the capital. *"I have tried to get out of the city,"* I said, *"but on three different occasions I have failed; they never allow me to pass through the gates. I am going to try the Eastern Railroad Station tomorrow. This railroad is still operating, and perhaps I will be more fortunate there."* The next morning, after having thanked Monsieur Mazaudier for all his help and kindness, I left for the station. In one hand I had a piece of bread, in the other a piece of cheese which I ate while walking as if I were taking my breakfast.

CHAPTER VI

From Paris to Versailles

At the East-Station I was arranging for a ticket for Noisy-le-Sec when a national guardsman patted me on the shoulder saying: *"Citizen, are you forty years old?" "Even beyond that, look at my beard."* There were already a few gray hairs in it. The guard left. With my ticket in hand, I went to the waiting room. A second guard stopped me with the same question. To answer I showed him my beard. A little later I took my place in one of the coaches which a third guard inspected. He looked at me and went on further. Now I was waiting for the train to move! Finally it left, and we soon arrived at the first station. Alas, here my worries began all over again; guards appeared at our doors with question marks in their eyes. When is this going to end, I thought to myself. I could breathe freely only at the second station. There, noticing Prussian uniforms, I knew that we were out of reach of the Commune. I thought myself safe and descended at the following station which was Noisy-le-Sec. I knew a friend there. When I arrived at his home, the family was having its breakfast: After his initial surprise, he made me sit down with his family. While eating I told him the whole story of Picpus. *"And what are your plans?"* he asked. *"I would like to go to Versailles."* *"Well,"* he replied, *"I'll accompany you for a while on the road."* Indeed, he walked with me for about an hour, and then wished me good luck and returned home. But I did not follow the road I had in mind very long. My heart always turned to Picpus; a secret force pushed me back in spite of myself. I took the direction of Saint-Mande, which is at the gates of Paris and near the Picpus quarter. After going through the village of Montreuil I arrived at Vincennes. I saw I was losing my direction. The railroad station was in the hands of the Communards. Among those who were on guard, I noticed several scrutinizing me with special attention and giving each other signals as if they had recognized me. In fact some of them could well have known me because they had lived with us during the siege. To escape their attention, I entered a cafe and ordered a glass of wine. I had just emptied my glass when the bell at the station sounded. *"What does that mean,"* I asked. *"That is the train arriving from Paris and going to Champigny."* While the guards were checking the coaches, I took a ticket for Champigny and jumped into a car at the end of the train already checked. The train left almost immediately.

At Champigny I went to a farmer who during the siege had taken refuge at our Sisters' convent in Paris. When leaving our Sisters he had said: *"Perhaps someday I will be able to return your hospitality."* The good man did not know that it would be so soon and under such circumstances. Arriving at his house, I found Brother Regis Charvet there who left the following morning for Chateaudun. The next day Brother Antoninus Boudet came, dressed as a Communard and so the police came to investigate. One of the gendarmes was determined to arrest him and put him in prison. Fortunately Monsieur Dexteme answered for both of us and explained the reasons we were there.

I then asked Brother Antoninus how he had been able to escape from Paris. He told me: *"I was at the barrier of Charenton at a very favorable moment. I saw a gardener with his carriage approaching the barrier. "Excuse me," I said, "I am unknown around here and you could render me a great service if you would help me to cross the barrier." "Gladly," he said, "take the horse by the bridle and go ahead; I'll follow behind you as if I were your employer." I took the bridle, but either by inexperience or nervousness, I managed the carriage so badly that one of the wheels struck the barrier with*

such a terrific noise that a guard came running out of the house. He insulted me in a most brutal way, and the gardener joined in the insult with language I never heard before. He took the bridle from my hands and pulled the wagon outside the barrier. When we had reached safety, he said: 'Excuse me if I have offended you, but it was the only way to save you'. Arriving at Charenton he showed me the way to Champigny".

What Brother Antoninus had done, several of our Brothers also did with the same success. We remained in Champigny for three days. I wrote to Father Artheme Montiton, Superior of the major seminary at Versailles, asking him to let our Very Reverend Father General know where I was and to find out what he wished me to do. Father Montiton wrote me to come to Versailles, where Father General was then living. He advised me to pass through L'Hay, assuring me that the Holy Ghost Fathers who had a house there would gladly give me a carriage to come to Versailles. Brother Antoninus was given orders to go to Poitiers. As soon as we received the letter, we prepared to leave on the very next day, Sunday. The following morning after Mass and breakfast, we thanked Monsieur Dexteme for his cordial hospitality and left for Champigny. Most of the railways had been cut out and several bridges had been destroyed, so it was difficult to get Brother Antoninus on his way to Poitiers. Finally, we had to give up this project, and together we left for Choisy-le-Roi.

Not knowing which way to take at Choisy-le-Roi, for the Communards had been fighting there in the morning, we entered a bakery to buy a little bread and to ask for information. The woman who was taking care of the bakery told us that they had tried to rob and plunder it. She was still so badly upset that she was hardly able to talk. From there we went to a wine merchant and explained our embarrassing situation. *"We would like to go to Versailles,"* we said, *"what road should we take?"* His wife told us that the Communards had been fighting with the regular army, and it was difficult to reach Versailles by any road. If we took the road to the right through L'Hay, we would run into the hands of the Communards; if we went to the left, we would meet the regular army and no one was allowed to pass through their lines. Whichever road we took, we were sure to be arrested. I said to Brother Antoninus; *"It is better to fall into the hands of the regular army than into those of the Communards. Let us put ourselves in God's hands and go to Versailles."*

We had been on our way for about half an hour when silhouettes of soldiers were outlined across the fields, very soon a cavalry soldier came riding up to us. He arrested us and ordered us to follow him to the post, where he placed us in the hands of an officer. The officer asked us for our papers. I told him who we were and gave him the letter from Father Montiton, inviting me to go to the seminary at Versailles. He told me that we needed a permit, which he was not allowed to issue but was a privilege reserved to the Colonel. At his orders we were taken to a second post and then successively to a third, a fourth, and finally to a fifth post. There we were very badly received by the officer in charge, who was replacing the colonel. He got angry and dismissed the soldiers who had brought us. Evidently he took us for Communards, and we were sent to the gendarmes.

Again we were on the road; this time up to our ankles in mud for it had been raining all morning. We met reinforcements of soldiers along the way. Knowing that we were being taken to the gendarmerie, they shouted at our guard not to let us go that far; they were ready to shoot us on the spot. Also, they overwhelmed us with a veritable torrent of curses. They probably took us for rebels of the worst kind. At each post the same insults were repeated. Finally, I said to the soldiers who were conducting us: *"Carry out the orders you have received. Don't lead us to any of those camps any longer, but go directly to the gendarmerie."* After walking eight hours we arrived at Plessis-Piquet where gendarmeries were stationed. We waited in a magnificent castle that had been completely devastated by the plunderers for the return of the captain who was to interrogate us. A corporal came to find out who we were. When I told him we were from Picpus, he said: *"I know your house very well; my wife went there often to get vegetables. I am sorry that the captain is not here and that you are obliged to remain in such conditions."* These words encouraged us a little and made up for all the insults we had received thus far. I told him that we were very hungry for we had taken nothing since our breakfast and had been walking for eight hours. *"Alas,"* he answered, *"we have nothing here for supper, but perhaps the gardener's wife has something left."* *"Go please and see, we will pay for it."* He went and after a short while he told us that there was only one egg left, a little bread and some wine. For two hungry men that was not much, nevertheless we were happy to divide it between us and slightly satisfied our hunger.

At half past eight the captain arrived. Already informed in our favor, he was extremely kind. *"I cannot give you a permit tonight,"* he said, *"one cannot enter Versailles after a certain hour. You would be arrested and obliged to return. I'll sign a permit for you tomorrow morning, and then you may leave at any time you wish. It is better for you to pass the*

night here. If I had beds, I would give them to you; however, choose yourselves a room and do the best you can to be comfortable." I did not know how to thank this kind and considerate captain. Respectfully we said good night to him and went to our room. The brigadier was waiting for us at the door, and led us to a large dismantled and dirty room. "It is the same all over the place," he said, "you will be just as well here as in any other room" Then he added: "My wife and I are returning to Versailles tomorrow. If you want, we will go together." "I could not ask for anything better," I said, "in your company we will be safe, so until tomorrow morning at five o'clock; in the meantime, good night."

Brother Antoninus and I said our prayers and settled down on the dirty floor. Our habits were not much cleaner; they were covered with mud. In a corner I noticed a mattress. *"That is exactly what we need,"* I said, *"it is big enough for both of us."* But the springs were broken and very soon my legs were tilting in the air *"You stay here alone,"* I said, *"I'll sleep on the floor."* Our rest was not very long nor very deep. At three o'clock we were up, and having joined the corporal and his wife at five, we left together. There was a three hour walk ahead of us. Overwhelmed with fatigue and without food since breakfast the day before, we had a tough journey before us. But Divine Providence took pity on us and we met a carriage on the way. A conductor graciously offered us a ride, and we arrived sooner and with less fatigue. We passed through the barriers without any difficulty, and then said our goodbyes. But before leaving, I bought a glass of wine for each of our friends, thanking particularly the corporal. I invited him to visit us at Picpus, which he did later on. Brother Antoninus and I went to the major seminary immediately. We met Very Reverend Father General at the entrance, and taking us in his arms and with tears in his eyes, he said: *"What did we do, my dear children, to deserve such treatment."* *"Very Reverend Father,"* I said; *"we are children of the Sacred Hearts and we must partake of their sufferings."* *"Alas,"* he replied, *"we will find nothing back at Picpus. Let us hope we will find at least our house. If the Communards have completely plundered it, we will buy a little straw to sleep on until we can get some beds. Gradually we will install ourselves again."* Father General was very distressed, and there was good reason for it.

CHAPTER VII

Trials Continue at Picpus

The next morning, April 25th, Brother Antonius took the train for Poitiers. Having no occupation at the Seminary, I could not stay there any longer. The thought of our Fathers in prison and our Brothers detained at Picpus, never left me while I was there. By going into the city, wandering around, and finally coming back again, I did everything possible to turn my thoughts elsewhere. But all my efforts were useless; the same thoughts still continued to haunt me. Finally, I decided it was too much.

On the third day there, Brother Stanislaus Beunat arrived. He had been able to leave Paris and gave us the following details of life at Picpus after April 13th, when I had escaped from Clavier and his soldiers. This is what he told us.

The following day, Clavier took possession of your room, Very Reverend Father, and he ordered me to prepare his bed there. After that he made me change the main parlor into a dining room, and from that time on he gave

dinners there in honor of the dignitaries of the Commune who came to visit that I was forced to prepare and serve. What abominations I have seen and heard there! One day, Philippe, Mayor of the 12th arrondissement, was among the invited guests. The commissary told him that he should have himself nominated as minister of the Executive Power. 'Ah,' said Philippe, if I were in power, I assure you things would run more smoothly. 'If that is true,' replied Lenotre, Captain of the 20th regiment, 'why all this dragging on of things. It is almost time to do away with all those prisoners. These here—pointing at me—why leave them here any longer.' 'If I were in power,' said the mayor again, 'I would order the Archbishop to serve us at table, and that in his pontifical robes—and you, Stanislaus another one shouted, 'you would have to carry his train.'

A few days later, two women appeared in the house, and Clavier talked with them for a while. Then he called me and told me to prepare the table for ten guests. While I was preparing the table, these women, along with the two men who were accompanying them, had the impudence to come and bore me. One of these individuals took the mantle of Bishop Dordillon, danced around in it and then sat down at the table. After the dinner, the question of religion came into the conversation, and during this they questioned me on confession and other subjects. Finally, one of the women gave another dance exhibition, and Clavier ordered me to prepare a bed for one of the women. On another occasion, while I was serving supper, the Commissary suddenly turned around and pushing a pistol against my throat said 'Swear that there is no God.' Immediately, putting my hand on my heart, I replied, 'I swear that there is a God and I love and adore Him.' Addressing his companions, he then said, 'Should I kill him? With the exception of just one, they all shouted, 'Kill him, kill him.' But then the Commissary answered: 'he would rather let himself be killed than renounce his superstitions; it would be an honor for him to pass for a martyr.' Then turning to me again, he asked, 'And the Blessed Virgin, do you adore her?' 'No,' I replied, 'but I love and honor her as the Mother of Our Lord, at the same time true God and true man.'

I still heard some talk about the replacement of the 204th regiment by another division. Thinking the moment opportune, I asked the commissary for a permit to leave Paris. He told me that if I were ready to disclose the hiding places, and tell him where the Superior General was at that moment, he would give me, not only that for which I was asking, but also the money I would need to make my trip. I answered him that under those conditions I would not accept either of the propositions, and I told him that my superior was in Provence. I think it was on April 17th that I went to the little oratory situated on the first floor, where it is easy to see the large chapel and the tabernacle. I wished to find out for myself what had been done there. How great was my consternation when I saw the tabernacle broken open and the consecrated hosts thrown all over the altar steps. I trembled at the thought of the horrible sacrilege, of which Our Divine Lord was the victim, and I hurried off to relate this event to Abbe Denis, the pastor of Saint Elois, who was hiding in our infirmary. I would have liked very much if he had consented to gather the consecrated hosts himself, but he had little difficulty in making me realize that this was the most dangerous thing he could do. The Communards were still ignorant of his presence in our house, and this act would certainly have exposed him, therefore, he advised me to try to carry out this work myself.

I left the pastor and waited for an opportune moment to enter the chapel. Some minutes later I met a guard, holding a host in his hands, and he asked me: 'What is this?' 'Where did you find it?' I asked, 'In the Chapel,' he replied. He gave it to me, and without showing any surprise, I took the sacred host and brought it to the Abbe. It was now most necessary that I gather up the other species as quickly as possible. So, without wasting a moment, I hurried down, determined to do, seemingly, the impossible. When I got down Girault, the bitter sectarian, was on guard near the chapel. I approached him with determination and asked him to open the chapel door for me. 'What are you going to do there?' he asked. 'I am going to save the sacred species from the profanation of your men,' I answered. 'You are mad with all your superstitions' he replied.

Nevertheless I insisted so perseveringly that in the end he opened the door and allowed me to enter, but he and another soldier fully armed came along with me. When I arrived at the railing, I noticed small pieces thrown all over the floor. I went up to the altar and found the sacred hosts spread out over it. Girault advanced and reached out his hand. 'Stop' I shouted, 'don't touch them; you have no right to do so. "As much right as you have,' he replied. 'I am not sure of that,' I said, 'I know what I am doing, you do not know.' Without losing any time I examined the tabernacle. Then I gathered the sacred hosts in a white cloth and took them to my room, until I had

an opportunity of taking them to Abbe Denis without being noticed. When I brought them to the priest he received them with the greatest respect. He placed them upon a small repository, which had been prepared by Brother Crepinus, and then we began the adoration which continued all through the night. While the Communards were sleeping, our Brothers watched at the feet of Our Lord making reparation for all the sacrileges committed against His Sacred Person since the beginning of the Commune. The Brothers prepared to receive Holy Communion which Abbe Denis gave them at an early hour the following morning. The Brothers who had the happiness of receiving Holy Communion on that occasion were Brothers Palemon, Alain, Theodore, Crepinus, Agapitus, Michael, Boniface, Lievinus, Yves, Stephen, and Amator. Brothers Conrad, Demaihe, and Maurice were prevented because they were retained in the service of their persecutors and were occupied in the kitchen at that time. I was the last to receive Holy Communion from Abbe Denis, who immediately afterwards consumed all the Sacred Hosts that remained. This was done just in time for that same day the priest was discovered and was led off to prison."

These touching details recounted by Brother Stanislaus interested our Very Reverend Father General very much, as one can easily understand. Being so pious and so devoted to Our Divine Lord, he was profoundly moved at the report of the sacrileges that had been committed in our house in such a short time; but, at the same time, he was very much consoled by the edifying behavior of his children. Meanwhile, Brother Stanislaus continued his report:

The 204th battalion was finally replaced by the 73rd. Four new National Guards entered my room, and noticing my bundle of keys, they made me take them all through the house. After the rounds they brought me back to my own room, where they searched every corner. There they had little difficulty in finding statues and other pious objects which I had collected in order to save them from any profanations. This discovery irritated the soldiers. 'You are a thief,' they said, 'and we now arrest you.' From my room they led me to another one where there were some letters written in Latin. Roughly, they commanded me to translate them. But as I confessed my ignorance of the language, they put their bayonets against my chest to force me to tell them what those letters contained, for, they told me, 'you are a priest and you know Latin.' But my persistent denials of any knowledge of the language finally convinced them. Then they asked me my name, how long I was at Picpus, and if I had been in other houses. After this, I was brought to the committee of the XIIIth arrondissement, where I was introduced as a Jesuit. 'We don't want any Jesuits here,' the president shouted. My guards had accused me of stealing, and an order of arrest was made out against me. Then, the guards took me to the prison Mazas. On the way to this prison, insults were thrown at me not only by the guards, but also by the populace.

At Mazas my papers were probably not altogether in order, because one of the chiefs refused to accept me, and instead ordered me to be brought over to the post where I was locked up. I was still there at 10 o'clock when the guards came to fetch me to undergo an interrogation. When this was over, I was about to be sent back to that miserable lodging, when suddenly the famous Philippe, the mayor of the 12th arrondissement, to whom I had so often served dinner, arrived. I succeeded in explaining my case to him, and he was convinced that I was not a thief. So he did not allow the guards to put me back in the dungeon, but ordered them simply to put me at the post until further examination of my case. I passed the night there, and the next day, thanks to the intervention of a corporal, who went to the commissary for me, I learned that the committee had decided to set me free. Indeed, a written order was given to me to this effect. The moment the secretary had signed everything for me, I took the road to Picpus. This was, clearly, very imprudent, but I did not stop to think, and allowed myself to be carried away by my heart which prompted me to join my brothers again at the Motherhouse.

Fortunately, as I crossed the Place du Trone, I met Doctor Renaud. 'What are you going to do at the convent?' he asked me, after I had told him my story. 'You will just heedlessly increase the number of victims. You will not save your brothers, and you will not escape a second time yourself. Leave Paris!' he advised. I then retraced my steps following the doctor's advice, and went to one of my friend's house, Monsieur Nisten, who lived on the Boulevard Mazas. I asked him to help me get out of the capital. After a bit of discussion with him we decided that I would leave Paris via the barrier at Charenton. Madame Nisten would help by accompanying me, and we would go arm in arm. This was done quickly. Thanks to this strategy, I crossed the barrier without arousing the suspicion of the guards. As soon as I got outside the fortifications, I went straight to Saint-Mande, where I was received by Madame Langlois, who had given refuge to several of our brothers and priests. From there, Very Reverend Father, that I hurried to Versailles to bring you news of your imprisoned children."

Our Very Reverend Father sincerely thanked the good and courageous Brother Stanislaus, to whom the Congregation owed so much under these sad circumstances. He blessed him and sent him back to Saint-Mande with assistance for the brothers, fathers, and sisters still under the domination of the enemy.

But now let us leave Brother Stanislaus and return to learn what was going on at Picpus. Clavier, perhaps on account of his own excesses or because of some Jacobite rivalry, was replaced by other men of the Commune. At first these men were less rigorous more generous about letting us leave the house. Brother Amator took advantage of this freedom to attend Mass at Saint-Eloi. Brother Yves, who was on good terms with the sentry, succeeded not only in leaving the house, but also in taking some letters out. Brother Aubin, also used his freedom, to visit our Very Reverend Father at Versailles, and he told us that the rules had also been relaxed to a certain extent. At that time, I asked him to bring me some linen, and, knowing that our confreres at the novitiate in Issy needed money, I gave him a letter to get 200 francs from our butcher, and to have it sent to them.

On May 5th, Brother Agapitus came to Versailles, and besides my linen, he also brought with him a gilded silver paten and a little box with a silver cover, which I had been unable to hide due to lack of time, and which fortunately had remained in my room ever since. Brother Maurice had saved everything just before the Communards arrived to take it away. When Brother Agapitus brought me these objects, he had come on a very delicate mission to Our Very Reverend Father. The Communards wanted to discover the hiding places at any price. In their efforts to do so they never stopped interrogating the brothers, adding to the questions both insults and cruelties; in several instances, depriving them of food they had locked them up in humid lodgings. To take revenge for the brothers' persistence they cooled their hatred on sacred objects, breaking crucifixes and statues, and tearing and burning paintings and books of piety.

In their simplicity some of the brothers thought they might calm the madness of these men by giving in a little to their desires. They thought that if they revealed one small hiding place, the loss would not be very great, and they would, perhaps enjoy a few days of peace and rest. Nevertheless, as good religious they did not want to dispose of anything without the permission of the Very Reverend Father Superior General. As a result, Brother Agapitus had been sent to seek from Our Very Reverend Father permission to reveal the hiding place he deemed best. One could not be more naive. When I learned why Brother Agapitus was with Father General I insisted to Very Reverend Father that he absolutely refuse any permission. *"When the Brothers have designated one hiding place,"* I said, *"the Communards will feel that they have been fooled, as they will not find what they want. They think that we have hidden treasures. The little they discover will infuriate them and the brothers will be subjected to even greater torments."* Then producing the objects which Brother Agapitus had brought to me, I said; *"Look at this little box and paten which had remained on my table in full view of everyone. Did not God blind their eyes so as to protect these objects against their sacrilegious attempts? This is a proof to me that God is protecting us, and it redoubles my confidence in the protection of Divine Providence."*

As was to be expected, Our Very Reverend Father refused to grant permission to reveal any of the hiding places, because this would arouse even greater suspicion. He wrote a note of encouragement to the brothers, and Brother Agapitus took it back with him. Just as Brother was on the point of leaving for Picpus, I could not help but tell him that he was running right into the mouth of the wolf, and that, no doubt, he and the other brothers would soon be in prison. Little did I realize that this prediction would be verified that same day.

Returning to the house at Picpus, Brother Agapitus didn't even have the time to see his confreres before the Communards seized him and took him all over the house hoping that by some work or gesture he would betray the hiding places, the treasures, the subterranean corridors, etc. all of these being places or things which existed only in their imagination. When all their efforts failed, they locked him up in a dungeon where he was soon joined by another prisoner, Brother Matthew. After two hours in the darkness, there were new interrogations, new menaces, and another walk through the house and the property looking for a vault for which the soldiers not only had the key but that they had already passed a hundred times without even noticing it. This vault was a small section of the cellar where the brothers had hidden wine in case of any plundering. Now, however, seeing that their efforts to locate this vault were in vain and finally realizing that nothing could break that resistance of the Brothers, the leaders of the Communards decided to send them off to prison. Also, this time they intended to take the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts and imprison them all in Saint-Lazare.

So, on May 5th, First Friday of the month, around nine or ten o'clock in the evening, most of the brothers were taken to the large parlor of the sisters. There they were asked more questions—their first and last names and a few other details of a similar nature. After this they were left for an hour in the room. In the courtyard they heard the rolling of heavy wheels. Anxiously they asked if the carriages were for them, they were told that they would soon find out. At eleven o'clock they were led into the courtyard, and now they understood what was happening. Two large carriages were waiting there. The sisters were ordered to get into those wagons which left immediately for the prison Saint Lazare, where eighty-four of them (including their Superior General) were held captive for the cause of Christ. The brothers were arranged in two lines between a double row of bayonets and led off on foot for the prison Mazas where the fathers had already been since April 17th.

CHAPTER VIII

Last Days of the Commune

While our fathers, brothers, and sisters of Paris were suffering in prison for the cause of Our Lord, I fell ill at Versailles. I had endured so much fatigue and privation, and above all so much sorrow, that I was struck down with a severe emotional ailment. This caused deep anxiety at first, but with the help of God, I recovered gradually, and as soon as I was able to travel, Our Very Reverend Father asked me to leave Versailles and make a trip for the sake of distracting my mind from my condition. I would have liked very much to visit my good mother, but he would not allow me to do this. He told me rather to make a short visit to our establishment in Normandy, to bring the news we had gathered about our communities in Paris. I visited our houses of Rouen, Yvetot, and Havre. I had just returned to Yvetot when it was announced that the regular troops had entered Paris. When I heard this, I wanted to leave there immediately and put myself under the orders of our Very Reverend Father, and then try to reach Picpus. But the chaplain of our Sisters of Yvetot, good Father Martin did not allow me to leave. *"Tomorrow is the feast of the Ascension,"* he said, *"and this is First Communion day in the boarding school; wait another twenty-four hours."* I resigned myself to this, although it cost me much. Nevertheless, the following day, May 19th, I was back again at Versailles, very happy to see our Very Reverend Father again. However, the hour had not yet come to enter Paris. Even though we saw hundreds of Communards, who were taken prisoners by the regular army pass by the Major Seminary where we were living, there were still thousands of them sowing destruction and death in different sections of the capital. Moreover, no one was allowed to enter the city without special permission, and, then, only to render service.

Tired from waiting for an opportune moment, I left Versailles and went to see our confreres at the novitiate of Issy. This was on May 27th, eve of Pentecost, and I made the trip on foot under a heavy rain. At the novitiate I found no priests, but only Brothers Eudoxus, Marcel, Peter, and Philippe, who told me that they had been retained in prison until May 18th, Feast of the Ascension. I asked them if they had been able to provide food for themselves in the Novitiate. *"Yes,"* they said, *"thanks to the 200 francs you had sent us, we were able to buy the necessary food. And it was the Blessed Mother who saved those 200 francs for us, for humanly speaking, they should have been lost. Before our arrest we had put them in the common room under the statue of the Blessed Mother that She might keep them for us. After being released we went immediately and found the 200 francs still there. You can imagine how we thanked the Blessed Mother after that."* My heart was filled with admiration and gratitude, and I now became anxious to learn more about the experiences of our brothers. During dinner and recreation my curiosity was satisfied.

The brothers told me that on May 7th, the Communards had put them under arrest and had them locked up in a cell with Reverend Father John. There they remained until the following morning. Just as at Picpus, so here also, the federated soldiers wanted to discover at any price the secret hiding places and vaults. Next morning, Monday, the 8th, a delegate of the Commune arrived and armed with a revolver he took the five religious and marched them to a military camp called "Prevote." All along the way they were insulted and menaced, shouts of *"Long live the Commune, shoot them down,"* resounded all around them. Reverend Father John was locked up in a small pavilion at the entrance to the village along with Communard officers who had betrayed the cause. The Brothers filed into a cellar, where more Communards who had revolted were held as prisoners. This company was hardly decent for religious. Nevertheless, without paying any attention to their blasphemies and talk, Brother Eudoxus continued to recite his rosary as if he had been in his own cell at the monastery. This serenity so touched one of the guards who distributed the food that when the provisions arrived, he would serve the Brother first until the very end.

On the Feast of the Ascension, the troops took possession of the village and the fortifications of Issy. The Communards, being obliged to retreat to Paris, hastily opened the doors of the prison, shouting, *"get up, every one of you."* There was a moment of surprise, and no one stirred. Then, one of the more courageous ones went out to see what was going on, and he saw that the Communards were fleeing towards the barrier of Vaugirard. With this news, all the prisoners abandoned their dungeon and ran in all directions, some of them wanting to follow their guards in order to get back their money and watches. Brother Philippe mounted the barricades which closed the entrance to the village and noticing the red pants in the main street of Issy, he concluded that the regular army protected that section. So, with the other brothers, he went to the novitiate and got there without any resistance. When they arrived the novitiate had just been evacuated by the rebels.

But Reverend Father John Lecornu had much more trouble getting free. At the moment the troops of Versailles took possession of the village, the Colonel Lisbonne, a member of the Commune, made the priest come out of his prison and ordered him to follow his battalion on the way to Paris. At the barrier of Vaugirard, a lively-quarrel arose among the soldiers and their chief. The soldiers wanted to lay hands on Father John and shoot him right there on the spot, because as a prisoner of the Commune, they claimed he belonged to them. Colonel Lisbonne, on the contrary, claimed that he had arrested him and, therefore, had the right to dispose of him. While listening to these disputes, Father John said to those around him: *"I have been among the savages of the Marquise Islands for twenty-five years; once they cut a piece of my flesh to see if I was good enough to be eaten, but never did they cause me suffering like these people do."* When the arguments finally subsided the colonel immediately ordered his men into their ranks, and, after he had formally told them not to quit their places, he shouted: *"March on to Paris."* While the battalion marched on, he said to the priest: *"Follow me and keep close to my horse,"* making it obvious that he intended to save Father John. As the troops approached Rue de Vaugirard he leaned over to Father and asked him if he knew any house there in which he could take refuge. *"I know no other house but that of the Jesuits,"* Father John answered. *"Better forget about it,"* the colonel replied, and they continued on their way. When they arrived at Rue Saint-Lambert, the colonel stopped his horse and once more leaned over to the priest. *"Help yourself,"* he said, *"it is time."* To help Father escape, he ordered all the troops to march in front of him, making sure that nobody was straggling behind. When the whole battalion had passed, Father John entered Rue Saint-Lambert shortly past three o'clock in the morning.

Across from Rue Blomet two cleaners, a man and his wife, were working and Father approached the man and asked him where he might find the pastor of Vaugirard. *"Am I a churchgoer"* the man said, *"who would know the answer to that question?"* Turning to his wife, he continued, *"eh you, your sister is quite pious; go and call her and ask her to tell this fellow where the pastor lives."* Without much comment the women offered to take Father to the pastor.

When he got to the pastor's residence he rang the door-bell several times, but nobody appeared. Finally, a window opened cautiously. *"Who is there,"* a hesitant voice asked. *"A poor priest asking for hospitality,"* Father John replied. *"Sorry,"* came the answer, *"the pastor is ill and can't receive anybody."* *"Just tell him who I am and ask him where I can go to present myself in his name,"* requested Father. The maid went away, and in a few minutes returned and said: *"Go to the church and ask for the janitor; he will open the door for you."* Father went to the church and rang the bell at the janitor's lodging who appeared but said that he was ordered the previous evening not to open the church under any pretext. So, Father John returned to the pastor's residence, and after talking back and forth to the maid, he finally received the address of the Brothers of Saint John of God, on Rue Lecourbe.

He went there and rang the door-bell. After a few moments, the porter opened a little window and asked: "*Who is there?*" "*This is a poor priest who escaped from the hands of the Communards and is asking for your hospitality,*" Father John answered. "*Wait, and tell the director,*" came the reply. When the director heard what was happening, he cried out: "*What, you wretched one, a priest asks us for protection and you leave him in the street? Quick, make him come in, and tell him that I will be there to receive him.*" So, the porter came back and let Father in. Indeed, Father had just entered when he met the director, all confused and offering him his apologies for not receiving him more promptly. "*But in these sad days,*" he said, "*we are obliged to be very prudent, for fear of opening the door to an enemy.*" This no doubt was also the reason for his failed attempt at the pastor's house, and at the residence of the faithful guardian of the Church.

The Brothers of Saint John of God would gladly have kept Father John with them, but he wished to rejoin the community at Saint-Mande. Hence, he wrote to them asking how he could best reach their place. At Saint-Mande the community obtained, from the mayor, a permit for a gardener, who could thus pass through Paris and cross the barrier of Charenton. The one difficulty, however, was to get this paper to Father John, for there was fighting going on in Paris, with barricades on all sides. A good woman offered to take the permit to the Rue Lecourbe. When she had arrived at Rue de Vaugirard, heavy shooting forced her to retrace her steps. Thus, she reentered Saint-Mande, unable to deliver her message. A person with a hunched back, then took the paper and succeeded in reaching the Brothers of Saint John of God with Father John's permit granted for a gardener. So, the priest removed his cassock, put on a shirt, a blue pair of pants, and a cap, and accompanied by the man who got the permit traveled to Paris without any difficulty and arrived at the house of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of Charenton where Brother Stanislaus Beunat had taken-refuge. When his arrival was announced, the whole community immediately assembled in the parlor, and knelt down to receive the blessing of him who for the cause of Jesus Christ had suffered imprisonment, injuries, and all kinds of agony and humiliation. Father remained there for a few days, and then when communications had been gradually restored, he quickly returned to the Novitiate at Issy.

When the Brothers had finished their account of all the trials they had undergone, I told them that I was anxious to continue to learn what had become of our house at Picpus. We did not yet know about the massacres at the Roquette and the Rue Haxo, which had taken place on May 24th and 26th. I started out and went as far as the barrier at Vaugirard, but there I found it was impossible to go any further. So I went back to the Novitiate.

The following day, May 28th, Feast of Pentecost, we heard Mass in the chapel of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, where a priest had come to celebrate the Eucharist. The chapel resounded with the noise of the passing armies, and the rain came in from all sides; nevertheless, the chapel was filled with people. After Mass, I returned to the Novitiate, and, while waiting for dinner, I went through the house, examining every inch to find out what harm and devastation they had suffered there. Much had been destroyed, but the one thing that consoled me was that not a single hiding-place had been discovered and only the things placed in humid places had suffered somewhat. Assured of this, I then thought of Picpus, and wondered if the hiding-places there had also escaped vandalism. When the time came, I went to the dinner table (Brother Marcel had been able to get us some horsemeat). After the meal, I said my good-byes telling them that if I did not return that would be a sign that I had been able to enter Paris.

Just as on the evening before, I finally presented myself at the gate of Vaugirard. One was not yet allowed to pass, the sentry told me. "*But it is absolutely necessary that I enter the city,*" I said. "*If you enter,*" the guard told me, "*you cannot leave again.*" "*I accept,*" I replied, and there I was at last walking along Rue de Vaugirard, on which there was nothing but emptiness and desolation with not a single living person to be seen. All along the walls were lined rifles, sabers, and other military effects, just as the federated soldiers had left them when they were obliged to surrender and flee. While passing through the Rue de Sevres, I entered the house of people I knew to ask for some news. "*Alas,*" they told me, "*the hostages have been murdered.*" "*That is impossible,*" I cried, "*the Communards have killed our fathers, the Jesuits, and the Archbishop.*" "*Yes, they were shot to death at the Roquette and on Rue Haxo*" they told me.

Utterly upset, I went out and hurried to Picpus. I crossed the Seine, took the Rue Saint-Antoine, and came out on the Place de la Bastille. There I saw decapitated corpses with the brains flowing in the gutter. I then went toward the prison Mazas. On my way, I had to pass near the granary stored with provisions, that was on fire but which passersby's helped to extinguish. While I rushed to get there, I talked to one of the officers of the service and asked him to let me go immediately to the prison Mazas, where I explained to him that many of our fathers were being detained and that I was anxious to know how they were managing. Fortunately, I was allowed to go on. When I reached the prison, I found it was

almost empty. I learned that all the hostages had left, some to be murdered, others to be freed. Then becoming more and more disturbed, I made my way through the rifles, sabers, and corpses covering the Boulevard Mazas, and soon covered the distance, which separated me from our beloved Motherhouse. Finally, at four o'clock in the evening, trembling with emotion, I was happy to find it still standing, but I was afraid I would not find my loved ones there.

CHAPTER IX

Return to the Motherhouse

A sentry was guarding the gate of our house, No. 33, when I arrived there. I approached him and soon learned from him that General Ninoy chased away the Communards and took possession of the building. General Ninoy had also liberated the last hostages of La Roquette. *"I belong to the house here,"* I told the sentry. *"I have just arrived from Versailles."* *"Come in,"* he said. I entered, and the first person I met was the Reverend Father Laurent Besqueut. We embraced and tears filled our eyes. *"Has everybody returned?"* I asked. *"Alas,"* he replied, *"several of them will never return."* In a few words he told me that at about four o'clock on the evening of the 26th, the Reverend Fathers Radigue, Tuffier, Rouchouze, and Tardieu, the four counselors of the Very Reverend Father General, were taken from the Roquette along with many other clergymen, civilians, and soldiers, and brought to some unknown destination. *"They tell us,"* he said, *"that they were brought to Belleville and that they were murdered there that evening, but nothing is certain or confirmed."*

This was certainly not the time for long conversations; however, Father went on to tell me that he had arrived there that same morning around eight o'clock. He had left La Roquette the evening before, while the gates of the prison were open in a moment of indescribable panic; he had left along with Fathers Simeon, Dumonteil, and Sosthenus Duval. Dressed as prisoners in gray pants and gray coats, they rambled around, feeling their way along the walls, finding refuge in a house where they passed the night. At four o'clock in the morning they noticed a detachment of cavalry passing under their window. And recognizing the uniform of the regular army, they went down into the street toward our house. But one could not walk around the streets dressed as they were; soon they were arrested by some of the soldiers and were brought back to the Roquette to be identified and protected.

When they arrived at the prison, the good officers were arguing with the hostages who had barricaded themselves within a corridor of the prison and who refused to listen to the repeated appeals of their liberators. These prisoners were afraid of being fooled, thinking that these men were Communards disguised as loyal soldiers. But the arrival of our fathers ended this painful incident. Reverend Father Laurent walked up to the prisoners and spoke to them in Latin, telling them whatever was needed to assure them of their safety. Immediately, the gates were opened, and the hostages ran out into the arms of their liberators, shouting, *"long live France."* Father Philibert Tauvel was among those hostages. They all passed before the registry to receive their permits, and there they saw a list of those to be executed on which their own names were written. If the troops of Versailles had hesitated a few hours in capturing the prison, they would have found nothing there but corpses. When the hostages had received their permits, they were placed among a detachment of infantry, which then set out toward the Etat-Major or towards the Palais Bourbon, and went toward Place du Throne (presently known as the Place de la Nation). There our fathers left the detachment and returned home. Father Philibert was the only one among them who had a cassock on, and, so, he was asked to celebrate Mass in our sisters' chapel. This he did, with great fervor and devotion, as one can readily understand.

All this information left me only partially satisfied, as there was still much more I wanted to know. So I started to search the house, looking for the other fathers and brothers. I first met good Brother Stanislaus Beunat, then Brothers Conrad and Maurice, and other brothers who were busy organizing belongings that had remained. General Vinoy and his staff had reserved for themselves the room and parlors of the first floor of the main building, while the refectory, the chapel, and all the large rooms were given over to the troops. The cavaliers had tied their horses to the trees, which damaged all the peach trees along the walls. While touring the house, I noticed with immense satisfaction that our hiding places had not been touched. But upon entering the chapel, I saw a rupture just above the main altar, where a shell had passed. This left me somewhat dismayed for that was where I had hidden the registers and the sacred vases. The chapel was filled with gendarmes, and, therefore, it was impossible for me at that time to ascertain the real extent of the damage caused by the shell. One can understand how great my anxiety was! The following morning the whole troop left to go to the cemetery of Pere Lachaise. While they were away I made a thorough inspection of the whole house during which I had the satisfaction of finding that all the objects were in perfect condition. In the chapel, the shell had passed just underneath the sacred vases and registers, without causing them any damage. *"My God,"* I exclaimed, *"another proof of Your protection."* In my inspection I found that the Communards in their search for their fantastic subterranean corridors, had demolished a wall in the cellar under the infirmary. They had been digging so near to the hiding place that the debris they left had covered the opening to the hiding place.

In the wood-yard there had been a pile of straw that the Communards ordered the brothers to move to intensify their search. They did so but relocated the straw to conceal the hidden cavity. *"Are you satisfied?"* Brother Yves then asked the Communards: *"We have removed everything and you see there is nothing to be found under the straw."* *"I feel like burning your brains."* replied the chief

In the garden the same countermeasures were repeated. The guards had ordered the soil to be turned up, but they had forgotten two rows of carrots, and it was there we had hidden the wine. In regards to the famous vault which has caused so much talk and which our persecutors were most anxious to discover, we see once more the wonderful divine protection, for if the good Lord had not blinded the Communards, they should have discovered it a hundred times. It was a little nook of the cellar, in which we had kept a small reserve of wine since the beginning of the war. It was separated from the cellar by a wall, which was constructed in a great hurry, and which even a child would have no trouble in distinguishing from the surrounding more ancient walls. In front of it, we had placed empty barrels so as to cover up the freshness of the masonry. It is almost impossible to explain, except for divine intervention, how these men who had removed so many things, and had even broken down some old walls, thereby endangering the solidity of the building, had never thought of removing these few old barrels. The fact is, however, that they did think of removing them but it was too late. Brother Maurice relates:

One Saturday evening two men descended the large staircase to the cellar, and when they got down, I heard them say, 'tomorrow we are going to remove those empty barrels and see what is behind them.' This time, I thought, they have guessed it; the hiding place is theirs. But no, it was not; for the next day all the men were called to arms and brought away to the defenses. After they had left, other soldiers came to take their place. These soldiers made a short tour of the cellar, and then left saying to each other. 'It is useless to search here for anything. Those who were here before us have discovered everything and there is nothing left for us.' Thus they left it and never thought of it again.

From then on, one surprise followed upon another. When I had left my room back on the 15th of April at 5 o'clock in the morning, without any intention of escaping, I went out with the brothers to see if we could recover some of our belongings before the guards began their daily routine. As we set off each one had a different object in view. I found my cincture stocked with gold pieces under the roof of the bakery in the exact spot where I had left it. When I arrived back at the house some hours later I found all the others back again with linen, habits, new shoes, and two packages of tobacco placed in the drawers. Our linen was all obtained at the sisters' house, where it was neatly packed and ready to be taken away.

When General Vinoy arrived at Picpus, the Communards were having their dinner in the attic, where they had gone to keep a lookout and to remain until the latest moment possible. In spite of their precautions, however, they were surprised, and did not even have time to finish their meal, as we discovered their plates of meat hardly touched and their cups still filled with the soup. How they were taken or what treatment they received, I don't know. However, I do know

what happened to three of them who were later arrested in the garden. They were hiding in the cellar under the fruit shed of the small home of the gardener. One day, Brother Stephen, who had his bedroom there, suddenly saw a man who seemed to be in a hurry, coming up toward him. The man asked him for a shirt and started changing his outfit. There was a military post located about two meters away. The commanding officer there hearing the voices in the house, rushed in and asked what was going on. *"Nothing special,"* said the Brother, *"but this man has to go out and he needs a shirt."* *"Do you know him?"* the officer asked Brother Stephen. *"No,"* replied the Brother. The officer then turned to the man and said, *"follow me and I will give you a shirt."* He brought the man away to the post and left him there. Then he returned to the house and questioned Brother Stephen. *"Tell me,"* he said, *"how did that man find you?"* *"I don't know,"* answered the Brother, *"he suddenly came up to me as if he had come from the cellar."* The officer then called in two soldiers and went down with them into the cellar. There he found two other federated soldiers who, no doubt, were waiting to see if their comrade succeeded. The officer took these two men also to the post where they were interrogated and condemned, it seems, with their comrade, a short while later all three were shot. Alas, how many victims this cruel Commune has left on both sides!

On Pentecost Monday, May 29th, Reverend Father Lawrence celebrated Mass in the sisters' chapel since our own was still occupied by the troops. All of the sisters had not been sent to Saint-Lazare, thirteen remained in the house, of whom ten were ill while the other three were left to take care of them. On the previous evening, one of these three Sisters, Sister Norbertine, accompanied by Brother Aubin, had gone to Saint-Lazare for information concerning the imprisoned sisters, and to bring them news from Picpus. The prison at Saint-Lazare had fallen into the hands of our soldiers at four o'clock on the evening of the 24th, but the sisters had been unable to leave because the battle was still raging in Paris. When she arrived there Sister Norbertine asked Mother General to give her three or four Sisters to help her in preparing the meals for the Etat-Major of General Ladmirault who had established himself in the convent. The Reverend Mother gave her the sisters, but they had to walk because the barricades made it impossible to steer a carriage through the city.

When I learned this the next morning, I made up my mind to bring back all the other sisters who were still at Saint-Lazare. So a short while later, provided with a permit from General Vinoy, I left with our horse and carriage that had returned to Picpus, like ourselves, safe and sound. I also took along the coach a driver given to us by the Dames de Sainte-Clotilde, our neighbors in the Rue de Reuilly. The way was long and difficult, as we had to pass through many barricades. On our way we saw some very sad reminders of the civil war like the scene in front of the major's office where there were still pieces of corpses mingled with rifles and other armaments. I was obliged to show my permit while passing through this section. However, we finally arrived at Saint-Lazare. As soon as the officer of the post learned the purpose of my visit, he told me to follow him, and he brought me to the hall where our sisters were gathered at the breakfast table. The sisters in the kitchen recognized me on sight, but the Very Reverend Mother General, Mother Benjamin, was momentarily frightened. I must admit that I had not shaved for days, and, by this time, half of my beard was gray which certainly did not improve my appearance. Moreover, the Very Reverend Mother had suffered so much that one should not be surprised by her initial mistrust. However, this did not last very long as the joyous sisters soon reassured her, telling her, *"it is Brother Marinus."* How happy they all were then when I told them that I had come to take them to Picpus, where they would be within an hour. They could scarcely believe it.

Nevertheless, the Very Reverend Mother had some difficulty in deciding to leave or to allow anyone to return, as she was still afraid of the shooting and feared that the Communards would return to Picpus. But I reassured her, telling her that General Vinoy was occupying Picpus, and that he had given me a permit to find and bring them back. Otherwise, I just could not return to Picpus. *"The first Sisters I take along,"* I said, *"will prepare the house to receive the rest of you."* Finally, the Very Reverend Mother gave in, and, soon, I was setting off with the first group. Fortunately, I met with no difficulties on the way, and soon arrived safely at Picpus. Encouraged by the success of my first venture, I hastened back to Saint-Lazare to collect the others. On my arrival there I noticed there were vehicles waiting in front of the prison gates. The officer of the service, I learned, had proposed to the Very Reverend Mother to take the sisters to Picpus himself, and so had ordered the vehicles. The news of their departure soon spread around, and, at the moment they left the prison, there was a large assembly of people at the gates applauding and congratulating them on their safe release, many cheering were former students of their school at Picpus.

CHAPTER X

Four Victims of Picpus

The next morning, Tuesday, May 30th, we learned with certainty that the four councilors of the Very Reverend Father General had been put to death on Friday evening in the Rue Haxo. When we received this information, Reverend Father Lawrence told me, *"you must go and look for them."* So immediately, I left for Belleville and the Rue Haxo, of which I had never even heard of before. After some time I found the street near the fortification next to the gate of Romainville. I ventured into this very strange section, asking everywhere for information regarding the place of the massacre. I finally arrived at No. 85 of the Rue Haxo, where I found an iron gate closing the entrance to what was known during the siege as "sector No. 2." This was formerly called *Citè Vincennes*, but from now on was to be known only as the "Villa of the Hostages." So I had now arrived at the place where our fathers had been executed. To make sure of this, I asked the caretaker who was guarding the gate, and being assured by him that this was the place, I then told him I had come to look for the bodies of our four victims. He told me that the bodies had been taken away the evening before and that most of them were at the cemetery about three or four hundred meters away.

Before going to the cemetery, I asked if I could visit where the massacre took place. The caretaker led me along a short alley which turned to the left, and soon I found myself in some kind of small courtyard which still showed signs of the trampling of a disorderly crowd. To the right, it was closed off by a wall about 20 twenty meters long and four to five meters high. Facing this wall at a distance of five meters was another wall about fifty to seventy centimeters high. It was within these two walls that most of the victims, about fifty in all, had died. I also saw there the ditch into which the bodies were thrown on the morning after the massacre. One can easily imagine with what emotion I looked upon this ground sprinkled with the blood of our priests and upon the wall still showing the marks of the bullets which were aimed at them, and, finally, the trench into which the victims had been thrown. While inspecting the scene, I noticed remnants of clothing on the ground, and, going over, I picked up two pieces of our fathers' cinctures now precious relics I held them with the greatest respect. From the scene of the massacre, I went to the cemetery of Belleville. On arriving there I found the gate was locked. I saw five or six men who had been working on the transfer of the bodies, and I asked them if there was any possibility of entering the cemetery. They told me there was none right then, but that I would have to wait for the return of Abbe Raymond, the vicar in Belleville, who was then away looking for coffins. Several victims had already been buried, but there was still a large number to be found all over the property.

After a few moments there I saw a rider approaching on horseback. *"There he is,"* the man told me. Scarcely had he put foot on the ground when I went up to him and asked if I might be allowed to accompany him among the bodies. With a defiant look, he answered me, saying that he did not know me. *"That is true, monsieur l'abbe,"* I said, *"I am not from this section. I am a Picpus Brother, and I have been ordered by our fathers to come and try to identify the bodies of our priests who were massacred in the Rue Haxo."* As he still seemed hesitant, I opened my coat and showed him the scapular of the Sacred Hearts. *"Ah,"* he said, *"now I recognize you. I made my studies at your college in Mende, and there I have seen the brothers wearing the same scapular as you are now wearing. I would like very much to please you and show you the bodies of your fathers,"* he added, *"but that is not possible now. I had but five coffins and those I used immediately to bury the priests. So by now your fathers have been buried. However, let us go in together and from the corpses that still remain to be buried you will see how those poor victims are disfigured."* Together we approached the corpses. Putrefaction had already started and the bodies were covered with big black flies. Several of the corpses were so badly disfigured that it was only with difficulty one could distinguish even a human form. *"This is what your fathers look like,"* the priest said. Then pointing out the place where he had buried them, he continued, *"they have been placed right there. If you want it to be done, I will ask the men to dig them up again, but really I would rather you do not insist on this. With the terrific heat we are having these days, this kind of work is very unpleasant and dangerous. The men I am employing have had enough of it, and I find it extremely difficult to keep them at it."* I sincerely thanked the worthy vicar of Belleville for all he had done for our five martyrs. Since our Very Reverend Father had not yet returned to Picpus, I

did not think myself authorized to push the investigations any further. So, as the martyrs had been buried, and, the opening of the graves would present such great inconvenience, I could do nothing else at the time but mark the place with a small cross, and I left the cemetery.

The following day, May 31st, Our Very Reverend Father finally arrived at Picpus. He had come from Versailles, and, like myself, he had passed through the Novitiate at Issy. He had taken Brother Marcel along as a companion. As soon as he had heard my account, he wanted to go to Belleville. I took him first to the Rue Haxo, the place of the massacre, where I picked up yet another piece of the cord of one of our fathers. After a short stay there we went on to pray at the tombs in the cemetery at Belleville. *"Here they are now resting,"* said the Very Reverend Father. *"Leave them there for a few days, until we have decided on a proper place for their burial."* *"Before the war,"* I told Very Reverend Father, *"Reverend Father Ladislas had started negotiations with the mayor of Issy to obtain a concession (plot) in the common cemetery. This concession would serve both the communities at Picpus and at Issy. Now, while waiting for a definite settlement of the affair, we could ask for a ten-year concession and then transport the bodies of our martyrs and the Very Reverend Father Euthyme whose body has been placed in a temporary vault."*

Our Very Reverend Father agreed and charged me to take the necessary steps immediately. I did not lose one minute in getting to work on the concession. Fortunately, the mayor of Issy graciously gave us all the permissions we requested, while the military and civil authorities put no obstacle whatsoever in the way of the transfer of our dead. The undertaker, at my request, prepared four large oak coffins in which we could place the coffins in which they had already been buried. Our Very Reverend Father settled June 8th, Feast of Corpus Christi, as the day for this dismal task. Early that morning Very Reverend Father left Picpus with Reverend Father Gabriel Germain, two other fathers, Brother Stanislaus, and myself. We had asked Abbe Raymond to join us at the cemetery and show us where our martyrs had been initially buried. He was there when we arrived, and he pointed out the graves which he had shown to me on my first visit. *"There is the place,"* he said. Immediately we started digging, but, when we got the coffin and opened it, we found the remains of a layman. Abbe Raymond had thought that this man was also one of our fathers, because those who took his body from the ditch in which all the corpses were thrown, had put him with our priests. There was, however, some grounds for this thinking, because many priests, in order to escape the Communards had replaced their religious habit with ordinary clothing, but this did not always prevent the Communards from recognizing and murdering them. But now, fortunately, we had only four martyrs and this man was not one of them. We replaced the coffin and covered over the grave, and then started recovering the next four. Finally we came upon the coffins and opened them, the figures seemed to be unrecognizable at first sight as their clothes were covered with mud, but the presence of soutanes told us that these were bodies of ecclesiastics. I carefully examined the face before me; there was no doubt in my mind that this was the body of Father Tuffier. *"Yes,"* I said, *"this is Father Tuffier for I recognize him by his nose."* Father Tuffier's head was much better preserved than the others. Nevertheless, for greater certainty, I examined his stockings, but unfortunately they were new and had not been marked. I opened his soutane, and, inside, I found a marker bearing the name: Reverend Father Polycarp Tuffier. After I identified Father Tuffier, I then passed on to the other three bodies. I examined the marks on their stockings, and successively, I identified Fathers Ladislaus Radigue, Marcellin Rouchouze, and Frezal Tardieu. All were without shoes except Father Frezal who was still wearing his. Father Marcellin, it seemed, had been maltreated much worse than any of the others, for the collar of his soutane showed three or four gashes caused by thrusts of bayonets. Our Very Reverend Father opened the cassock and looked at the wounds of his beloved Prior, the Reverend Father Ladislaus Radigue, who had taken the place of Very Reverend Father during the massacre and, no doubt, had received the wounds intended for him. One could not prolong the examination without being imprudent because the odor was almost unbearable. As a precaution, I had taken some vinegar along with me, and, from time to time, I pressed it against my mouth and nose. Thanks to this I was able to complete the work. When identifications had been satisfactorily completed, we enclosed the coffins in the new oak coffins which we had brought with us from the undertaker's and placed them on the carriages. The procession started for the cemetery of Issy. Our Very Reverend Father accompanied the body of Father Ladislaus Radigue, and each of the other Fathers accompanied one of the victims. After traveling the full length of Paris we arrived at the cemetery of Issy, where the mayor had given us a temporary plot which was surrounded by a wooden enclosure. We buried our four martyrs and placed a cross with an inscription on each grave. Here the bodies of the martyrs remained until the day we were allowed to transfer them to our chapel in Picpus.

From the start our Very Reverend Father wished to have his murdered councilors near him. So, as the damage to the Sacred Heart chapel from the shells of the Federated troops was being repaired, he had a vault constructed there

which was destined to receive the precious remains of the four martyrs and the Very Reverend Father Euthyme. When everything was ready, he selected September 6, 1872, as the day for the transfer the same day on which a solemn service was offered at Notre Dame in Paris for the hostages murdered during the reign of the Paris Commune. That morning we left Picpus at four o'clock and arrived at the cemetery of Issy an hour later. Our Very Reverend Father presided over the removal of Very Reverend Father Euthyme's coffin which was taken without any difficulty from the vault in which it had been placed three years ago. As the body was enclosed in a double coffin of oak and lead, everything was in good condition; and so the coffin was not opened. Around half past six the undertaker transported the body to Picpus on his carriage, accompanied by our Very Reverend Father and Reverend Father Marien Ruard, a relative of the venerable deceased.

The transfer of the four martyrs required more time and work. After having them removed from the graves, we proceeded to reexamine each one individually. After this they were taken from their old coffins and placed in a new one of oak and lead. As a precaution against odors, I had taken a bottle of phenol along to pour over the corpses if it were needed. But there was no need for it, for when the four coffins were opened, no disagreeable odor was noticeable. The bodies were completely dehydrated, the skin and skeletons intact, with nothing appearing repulsive so much so that our Very Reverend Father did not hesitate to kiss Father Tuffier's hand. I took advantage of the circumstances to cut some hair of each of the martyrs and also pieces of their soutanes and other clothing, preferably those parts close to the wounds. Shortly afterwards the coffins were sealed with lead and placed in the oak coffins. These were then placed on four carriages which left immediately for Picpus. Each carriage was escorted by two of our fathers.

At Picpus, the remains of Very Reverend Father Euthyme already occupied the center of the sanctuary in the chapel of the Sacred Heart. When the remains of the martyrs arrived, they were placed at both sides of the Very Reverend Father's, two to his left and two to his right. At ten o'clock a solemn service was celebrated during-which the vaults were blessed by the pastor of Saint-Eloi who had been a companion of the martyrs during their trials. After the service the bodies were immediately lowered into the vaults. The ceremony was kept private, and only a few friends were invited. But the service made a great impression upon all those present; every one wanted to have some pious object touch the martyrs' coffins. A mother who wanted her children to kiss the coffins entered the sanctuary to do so. Many of our fathers from different houses were present. Our Very Reverend Father closed the ceremony Chanting of the "*Te Deum*."

CHAPTER XI

Undoing the Destruction

Around the 15th of June, General Vinoy left Picpus with his troops. Then we were able to examine more thoroughly the damage to our house and verify the extent of the ravages caused during the seven or eight weeks of revolution. What struck one first was the hatred of the enemies for anything sacred. After they had profaned the consecrated hosts taken them out of the tabernacle, and thrown them all over the altar and floor, they had attacked the statues of the saints in the chapel. The statue of the Sacred Heart had been broken in pieces; that of Saint Joseph had been shot at; that of Saint Peter had a bullet in the neck and an extinguisher had been placed in his hand, raised up to heaven. The statue of Our Lady of Navigators had the nose cut off, all the ex-votos had disappeared; the cross of the Legion of Honor, the cross of Saint Louis, hearts in silver and gold, medallions decorated with diamonds all were stolen. The crucifix in the hand of the statue of Saint Francis Xavier, like all the other crucifixes in the house, had been thrown to the floor and broken to pieces. From the sacristy the holy oils, relics of the true Cross enclosed in a silver reliquary, a precious stone about the size of an almond and many other objects of similar nature were stolen. Yet, those who had appointed themselves protectors of the building, had written in large letters on different walls: *"Death to the thieves."* All the reliquaries had been broken open and the relics profaned, some having been burned along with some pious books. I have already mentioned that the library of Father Lawrence had been used to make a fire to roast a young pig; the numerous books of the great community library shared the same fate. The Communards who had written on a copy of the Gospels, *"book to stupefy the crowds,"* had tried to destroy all the books we had. But they had been warned. *"Even when you have burned all these books,"* someone had told them, *"you will not have destroyed religion; enough books will remain to combat you, and when no books remain new ones will be written. It is, therefore, in vain to destroy a library from which you think you can profit in some measure."* This reflection stopped the vandals. But the breviaries were damaged and some pages were torn out making them usable. The statues in the garden were also in pieces. In short, any statue, picture of a saint, scapular, or rosary became the vandals' prey.

As regards the chapel, it is known that they used every possible means to burn it down, and in my own estimation, the fact that the chapel escaped their destructive rage can be attributed only to God's special protection. Three wagons successively brought powder to burn it down; indeed the smallest flame could have caused it to explode. Most of the inhabitants of the neighborhood had left their houses in fear of certain destruction, and those who could not find any other safe place had taken refuge in their cellars to escape as much as possible from this menace. Everybody was convinced that rather than give up the building to the troops of Versailles, the Federated troops would set fire to the powder and leave only ruins behind them. But, as I have pointed out before, they were taken by surprise and did not have time to execute their plans of a long siege in our building. But the suddenness of the attack paralyzed them. Many of them perished on the spot, but others saved themselves by hiding in the cemetery of Pere Lachaise whence they directed their canons towards our chapel in the hope of exploding the powder and destroying the building. If General Vinoy had not taken possession of our house and had not been expedient in taking away those barrels of powder, no one can say what destruction would have been wrought.

As it was, shells flew over our house, and it is almost a miracle that they did not fall on our property. When we inspected our grounds after the battle, we found several shells which had not exploded. Above the chapel and in the dormitories of the school I found several which had rolled across the floors leaving a line of powder behind them. Others had landed in the closets and had come to rest on the shelves; one even landed without exploding on the bed of Father Gervais. The statue of the Blessed Mother placed in the arch of the Church was not hit, but this can be explained by the fact that it was more or less protected against the bullets of the firing rifles. But what was most surprising was that the small statue on top of the school completely exposed to the shells came out of the battle without a scratch. People who saw the shells passing over the building have told me that, with no hesitation, they attribute the escape of the house and the chapel to a special protection of Our Blessed Mother. It is because of this that we placed two shells at the foot of the statue of Our Blessed Mother which is still to be seen today in the frontispiece of our chapel.

When we got a clearer idea of the condition of our house, our Very Reverend Father called the whole community together and stated that the building must be purified to cleanse it from the profanation of the last two months. Therefore, accompanied by all the Fathers and Brothers he proceeded to bless the house. He sprinkled the rooms and buildings both inside out, while reciting the proper liturgical prayers. When the blessing was finished there seemed to flow a new life through this sanctuary of prayer and work which had been for a time profaned by the forces of hell. We then put ourselves to work. The damage was repaired, the chapel was enlarged and beautified, and soon only the thought of those horrible days remained.

If the Commune had been conquered, its spirit, however, was not yet dead. A number of the Federated soldiers who had invaded our house and imprisoned our Fathers, Brothers, and Sisters had fallen into the hands of the troops at Versailles. We were questioned by the judges who were to make a pronouncement on their culpability. As one may well understand, we would have committed a great crime by heedlessly accusing these unfortunate people, among whom many were more to be pitied than punished. Some have condemned our compassion and reserve. But we were there as representatives of a God of mercy and love; and so was it not our duty to do the greatest good possible to those who had done evil to us? Nevertheless, we could not refuse to answer justice itself, nor refuse to help it distinguishing the guilty from the innocent. I had to intervene in a special way for the discovery of the famous Philippe, Mayor of the twelfth arrondissement who, in his cleverness, had taken to domiciles in Paris. From one of these he went out as a civilian, from the other as an officer, with the result that there was a certain confusion. But a Mayor does not pass unnoticed even when disguised, and so Philippe was identified by a great number of witnesses, not only among ourselves, but also by many others. Because very serious accusations were brought against him, he was condemned to death and executed at Satory. His accomplices were also condemned to death, but their punishment was later changed to hard labor for life. The partisans of the Commune, far from appreciating our moderation in these circumstances, made us feel, on the contrary, the rage that animated them. In consequence of the sentence pronounced against Philippe and his companions, they came one evening demonstrating in front of our house and throwing stones at the windows. Consequently, the police came and for three days they kept guard in front of the building. Our Very Reverend Father seeing this said to me a few days later: *"Brother Marinus, you often go into the city. You are well known in the suburbs, and, therefore, you are exposed. The Communards could play a dirty trick on you. I think it would be prudent for you to carry a pistol."* *"Very Reverend Father,"* I said, *"what God protects is well protected. Even if I had two pistols with me, without God's protection they would be worth nothing. Those men are too cowardly; they would attack me from the rear and I would not be able to defend myself, but if God guards me, who will be able to do anything against me?"*

I continued to do my work and fulfill my duties in the city, taking care always to have the rosary with me and thus being full of confidence in our Blessed Mother. I have encountered many dangers, but I have never been attacked. Once or twice I was mistaken for a Jesuit and insulted. Once I said to those insulting me, *"you give me too much honor; I am not a Jesuit."* Another time I answered, *"you may be thankful that there are Jesuits to protect you against the anger of God who could crush you."* Two years later, Captain Lenotre died on the scaffold. Before his death he revealed some of his accomplices in Picpus. They were arrested and condemned to punishment, ranging from two to five years in prison.

In conclusion, I repeat what I have said so often: *"What God guards is well guarded."* I hold this saying from my mother, who had an unlimited confidence in divine providence. In time of need she used to say, *"have confidence my children, God can make the grain fruitful in our barns as well as in our fields."* These impressions of my childhood have never left me, and I have often recalled them to encourage myself in the trials I had to go through. And truly, I have had plenty of these in my forty-nine years of religious life in the Congregation.

Always ready for God,
Picpus, July 15, 1894
Brother Marinus Fouquet of the Sacred Hearts

FINAL NOTES

As we have mentioned previously, Brother Marinus did not have the time to finish his "Memoirs." On the last part of his life, from 1871 until 1912, he leaves us only a few remarks jotted down on pieces of paper, envelopes, pages of prospectus, unprinted review papers, etc, all of which is touching testimony to the spirit of poverty of this good and venerable Religious. From notes we have we will take only two facts.

The first is a beautiful gesture or, if you wish, a noble word of the Very Reverend Father Bousquet. Our houses at Issy and Picpus had suffered enormously from the war and the Commune, and afterwards called for extensive and costly repairs. Unfortunately, the money was scarce at the Motherhouse and the needs of the Institute were great. The Superior General was advised by his Council to turn to the government for help on the ground of indemnity. The step was justified for more than one reason, but it did not correspond with the noble sentiments of the Very Reverend Father. And he flatly refused. No, at this hour when France was bleeding to death to pay its war debts of four million francs, he would not dare to ask for a centime for either himself or his Institute. His Congregation, already so painfully tried, would content itself in great sacrifices and thereby repair and make up for the loss of money and personnel. But the government did not take into account the nobility of these sentiments. Twenty years later it mobilized its police force to expel from his house this worthy Superior General, a good patriot as well as a saintly religious. This was done to please the men of the Commune, who were regaining their power and beginning again their diabolical work against the Jesuits and other unidentified Congregations.

On November 5, 1880, the decree of expulsion, issued on March 29, 1880, was executed. It was cruel and dishonorable to see the Motherhouse, only just renewed, again besieged. However, this time not by plunderers but by those same French soldiers who in 1871 had delivered the building from the hands of the Communards and had saved the lives of the greater number of its religious whom they now came to expel. Our venerable Brother writes only a few notes on the events which we will now relate.

At six o'clock in the morning two hundred policemen surrounded the house. The firemen had brought two pumps and now began to pour water all over the building as if it were on fire. Two commissaries were present to proceed with the execution of the decree. The religious in the house with the help of some friends had barricaded gate No. 33 at Picpus Street thinking that the attack would from this side. But this was not what happened. Instead, the whole strength of the invading force was directed towards the main entrance, No. 33 *bis*. This gate was not barricaded but was solid as it was firmly set in its frame of stone with strong iron hooks holding it both at the top and at the bottom.

Three firemen armed with crowbars tried to lift the gate and then slip off the hooks. But Brother Marinus had foreseen this stratagem, and so was prepared. He obtained the assistance of a soldier, formerly a cuirassier, and both of them armed with iron hammers drove back the crowbar every time it appeared underneath the gate. Each time the violence of the hammer forced the firemen to pull back. After some time, seeing that they could not succeed in taking down the gate, the men outside tried to destroy a panel in the gate with an axe. But this effort was not progressing fast enough for the commissaries. Tired by all this waiting, they went to the Avenue Sainte Mande and there made some of the firemen climb over the wall along the garden. Two firemen jumped into our garden, and with an axe, broke down the door giving access to the avenue. The two commissaries then entered. Brother Marinus and his companion were still defending the main gate when they discovered what was happening. They left immediately and went to the attic to escape being involved personally in the expulsion. From there they watched the breaking of the gates and doors. When everything was finished, Brother Marinus went down and with the use of some planks roughly adjusted, he closed again the opening of the main gate. He was assisted by Brothers Peter and Anastasius, who, having left the house at the last minute, were the first to return.

For many weeks the opening remained thus, a testimony of the violence exercised against the persons and things consecrated to God. The wood of the panel was preserved and used to make small crosses as remembrances of this odious persecution. Brother Marinus kept one of these crosses with great reverence until the end of his life. After the expulsion, Brother Marinus had another painful duty to perform. In anticipation of the execution of the decree, the novitiate of Issy had been transferred to Miranda-de-Ebro in Spain. The cost of the transfer and the allowable tax return had been sent on to this young community. The rest of the furniture, the greater part of it, was sold or sent elsewhere. To help in the establishment of a new house is difficult, but this work is done with joy because it is a sign of growth and development, of life and prosperity. But to take one's furniture out and expose it to the eyes of the public only because one is driven out of his house is a rough work, painful for the heart as well as tiresome for the body and the mind. Humanly speaking, it is without consolation, and one must make an appeal to sentiments of faith not to complain nor yield to discouragement. But the Gospel offers us words most apt to console and to encourage souls who have fallen victims to persecution. We read there in the Gospel these enlightening words fallen from the lips of our Savior: *"Rejoice when they will persecute you for My Name's sake."*

Brother Marinus knew the Gospel. He knew how to draw from it the strength and the courage he needed to carry on through the trials of 1880. Later in 1903, when a new persecution broke out, more organized, more perfidious and more lasting than the others, he found in his faith the most convincing and strengthening hopes. He told himself that his sufferings united with those of other religious persecuted like himself, and united especially with those of Our Lord Himself, were part of divine justice working to repair the crimes of sinners and to obtain for France new graces of conversion, which would soon lead the eldest daughter of the Church back to her destiny. Such are also the thoughts of faith and hope, which sustain and console his brothers who like him help by their silence in suffering make reparation for Catholic France too much loved by Jesus and Mary to be forever rejected by these divine Hearts.

Father Idelfonse Alazard, ss.cc.