BISHOP BRUTÉ OF VINCENNES, 1779-1839*

I

A superbly constructed bridge of granite spanning the Wabash with majestic stride; an imposing circular-shaped pile, also of granite, lifting its height proudly into the air; a graceful church tower rising placidly above the tree-tops. These are arresting objects in the foreground as one motors across the storied waterway leaving Illinois behind and entering Indiana at historic Vincennes. The new structure over the Wabash is the George Rogers Clark Memorial Bridge; the granite pile is the George Rogers Clark Memorial; the church is the Old Cathedral of St. Francis Xavier.

Appealing historical associations both secular and religious conspire to lend to the locality an inescapable charm. Here on the banks of the Wabash in the seventeen-thirties François Bissot, Sieur de Vincennes, built a fortified post, around which grew by degrees a settlement that took his name. In 1736 gallant Vincennes passed from the scene in a tragic encounter with the Chickasaw of the South. "His name," wrote George Bancroft in his stirring recital of the episode, "will be perpetuated as long as the Wabash flows by the dwellings of civilized man." All the glamor and color that gather about the settlements planted by the French in the New World belong to Vincennes. Here, as invariably in the French town-making process, the cross promptly followed, if it did not actually precede, the flag. The first priest known to have ministered on the spot arrived in 1734. Fifteen years later were opened the registers of the local Jesuit church of St. Francis Xavier, these being the earliest extant ecclesiastical records in the State of Indiana. Here, besides the missionaries, were voyageurs, coureurs-de-bois, habitant farmers, petty traders, soldiers, adventurers and whatever other social types entered into the picturesque pattern of

* The material for this sketch has been furnished largely by Sister Salesia's biography of Bishop Bruté (*Simon Bruté de Rémur, First Bishop of Vincennes.* By Sister Mary Salesia Godecker, O. S. B., Ph. D., Convent Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand, Indiana. With a preface by His Excellency, the Right Reverend Joseph Chartrand, D. D., Bishop of Indianapolis. Published by St. Meinrad, Indiana, 1931, $5.00). Everyone interested in the career of Vincennes's first bishop should read this carefully documented and authoritative work.

life woven here and there by Gallic hands in the American wilderness.

Politically, the place has been anything but inconspicuous; rather it has been the scene of dramatic major events. From the French it passed to the British at the close of the French-Indian war, and from the British it was wrested February 23, 1779, by the Virginian, George Rogers Clark. For all time will live in the memory of the American people the picture of Clark and his handful of Virginia riflemen and Creole volunteers from the Mississippi villages making their way against desperate odds through the winter floods of the Wabash valley. The difficulties of the march overcome, they grappled with his Majesty's trained troops and set the American colors flying above one of the most important British positions in the West. In our own day George Rogers Clark has become what the neglect of the young republic would not suffer him to become in the long years through which he survived his achievements at Kaskaskia and Vincennes, a symbol of American enterprise and pluck and a national hero of the first rank.

The significance of Clark's achievement at Vincennes lies in the circumstance that it led, directly or indirectly, to the acquisition by the United States of the Northwest Territory. An event that gave or helped to give us the five great states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin (and Minnesota in part) and thereby opened the way for territorial advance to the Pacific deserves to be kept fresh in popular memory by a national memorial as magnificent as the one which federal, state and local cooperation is now engaged in setting up. It is interesting to recall that in the particular event commemorated, which was the passing of Vincennes from British to American hands February 23, 1779, the old Jesuit mission church of St. Francis Xavier came to figure in an unexpected way. Major Hamilton, the British Commandant, wished to negotiate the terms of the surrender at the fort, but Clark, as he tells us in his Memoir, insisted that the affair take place "at the Church," which arrangement was carried out. Here, then, under the shadow of the old log church, if not actually within its enclosure, was enacted a scene of which nobody then foresaw the implications, but the tremendous import of which may now be realized as one looks back through the perspective of the years. On the pages that tell the dramatic story of our

national birth and growth St. Francis Xavier's on the Wabash has come to be "writ large."

II

If the romantic secular past of Vincennes gathers chiefly around the dashing figure of George Rogers Clark, the lure of its religious past speaks with particular eloquence in the pious memory of the Right Reverend Simon William Gabriel Bruté de Rémur. The first Bishop of Vincennes, he lived and died in the Catholic rectory alongside the Old Cathedral and in the crypt of the same edifice rest his mortal remains. While neighboring buildings are to be razed to create the Clark Memorial Plaza, both rectory and church will be officially preserved as integral units of the general commemorative design. The church occupies ground only a few yards removed from the site of its predecessor, the log-church that witnessed the surrender of Vincennes to Clark. With that circumstance among others linking it with the historic event of 1779 the Old Cathedral has its title to a place in the picture. So it comes about that patriotic pilgrims of the future, arriving at the great national shrine which is now taking shape on the banks of the Wabash, may also, if they be so minded, pay their devout respects at the tomb of a great western prelate, whose career is one of extraordinary interest and charm.

Bruté's greatness is the greatness, chiefly, of a remarkable holiness of life. For the part he had in the making of Indiana he deserves, no doubt, a niche in such Temple of Fame as the State has built or will continue to build in written records; for the sheer human appeal of his heroic ministry amid the distressing conditions of a frontier environment, he stands out a figure of interest to people of whatever class or creed; but it is the personal virtue of the man, the product of the silent workings in his soul of divine grace, which especially gives him a place apart. At all times and never more so than today the world needs the moral support and inspiration of lives that rise distinctly above the common level in personal integrity, in devotion to duty, in heroic self-forgetfulness and abounding love of God and man. It was with a view to bring home to the reader, however inadequately, the high inspirational value of the earthly career of the first Bishop of Vincennes that the present sketch has been penned.

III

No less a romantic quarter of the globe than ancient Brittany in Northern France saw the birth of Simon Bruté. A journal of his has this item: "Born at Rennes, Little Brittany, on the twentieth of March, 1779, of a rich family but half ruined since the French Revolution." Bruté's father, a native of Paris, married twice, his second wife being the widow of François Vattar, printer to the King and to the Parlement at Rennes. By her he had two sons, Simon and Augustine. The family residence was in the ancient palace of the Parlement at Rennes where Madame Bruté's forebears had for several generations occupied living quarters in one of the wings. The elder Bruté, whose business honesty had been taken advantage of by less conscientious friends, died suddenly in 1786, leaving behind him embarrassing debts and other financial obligations. Madame Bruté, resourceful and high-minded woman that she was, set to work to clear her husband's estate of its incumbrances. To this end, as also to find support for her family, she opened a printing shop. Her two boys were given the best education available, both elementary and higher. Simon was to write later in his journal: "Educated at the College of Rennes with all collegiate honors." His boyhood innocence suggests what is recorded of some of the canonized saints. When he made his general confession before First Communion, he could reproach himself with no graver fault than having appropriated an apple from a poor old fruit vendor.

Simon was a boy of ten when the great cataclysm of the Revolution burst upon France. Paris was its dynamic center, but every province of the land rocked under its awful surge. In Rennes revolutionary tribunals worked with an unholy zeal at their programme of persecution and bloodshed. Simon saw the victims dragged through the streets to the improvised courts, attended the trials, made his way into the prisons to carry food to the condemned. Often, too, he played the role of a Tarcisius, carrying to the prisoners the Blessed Sacrament concealed on his person. Only one chapter of the current horrors he would not permit himself to know. He never attended the actual executions. Priests were the particular objects of the Revolutionary rage. One day Simon heard a voice in the street chanting the *Libera me Domine,* part of the Catholic funeral rite. Rushing to the window, he saw a man, whom he

recognized as a priest, hurried along to execution by a group of soldiers and performing the while his own funeral service. Early in the Terror two priests found refuge in the Bruté lodgings at the Parlement House, where they celebrated Mass in a hiding place, the secret of which was well preserved. Later, as the spies drew their nets more closely, prudence required the priests to find other quarters, and the Bruté household was thus deprived of the consolation of hearing Mass. The case of Father Raoul-Bodin and the three Le Gracier sisters who had harbored him, all haled before a revolutionary court for trial, left a particularly vivid impression. Twenty-seven years after the incident had happened, Bruté hit off the trial scene in a clever pen-and-ink sketch which Sister Salesia has reproduced in her excellent biography. At last the madness ran its course. The 7th of Thermidor came, Robespierre fell, and the Terror, at least as the public and official policy of the revolutionary régime, was halted. Simon Bruté, sensitive and impressionable, had registered its harrowing scenes forever in his memory.

Now that France began to fall back into more normal ways, Simon set to work to complete his studies, the course of which had been sadly interrupted by the Revolution. With a view to entering the Paris Polytechnic, he specialized for two years in mathematics. Then, altering his plans, he made up his mind for medicine as his life-work. For three years he studied informally under a Doctor Duval, an eminent surgeon of Rennes, after which he entered the medical school at Paris, being then twenty. His mother, always a woman of pronounced personality and strength of mind, placed in her son's hands at his departure a set of instructions of her own composition for his guidance during the perilous years before him. They are replete with wisdom, natural and supernatural, and stamp Madame Bruté as an adept in the theory and practice of education in the best sense of the term. The instructions conclude with the words: "Be your own master. Write to me weekly. Practice charity. Reflect upon all you have to do." One sees clearly the solid basis of fact behind Simon Bruté's oft-repeated words: "I owe everything to my mother."

In Paris Bruté's interests were not confined to medicine. Already proficient in mathematics, he took courses in philosophy, drawing, music. In later life people used to marvel at his versatility, his diversity of interests, his range of learning.

His mind apparently refused to run in one track and even in his student days in the French capital he was approaching life from this angle and that. Meantime, amid the seductions and dissipations in which he lived, he kept faith intact and virtue unsullied, while his fearless, undaunted character won him a host of friends. A one-time Jesuit priest, M. Bourdier-Delpuits, was Simon's spiritual director, Madame Bruté having requested her son to seek out and follow the guidance of some competent physician of the soul.

The young Breton's success in his medical studies was all that could be wished. He won the Corvisant Prize, which distinction gave him first rank among the eleven hundred students of the school. The public was impressed and Dr. Bruté's name reached the ears of Napoleon, First Consul of France, who immediately bespoke his services. April 21, 1803, he was officially appointed physician to the First Dispensary of Paris, which appointment at once assured him high rank in his profession. But the post was not accepted; its refusal marked the decisive turning-point in Simon Bruté's career. Two days before the appointment came the young physician, in an interview with the Bishop of Rennes, had disclosed his intention of becoming a priest. The Bishop approved and Bruté's decision became fixed. Years later he wrote to a correspondent: "After I have studied pretty far (some especially) all the human sciences and perceived enough of their bearings, I—oh perpetual thanks!—surrendered my whole soul to the invisible and eternal things as says St. Paul (2 Cor. 4:18.)" Only the highest sense of duty could have induced Dr. Bruté to turn aside at the very threshold of a brilliant medical career and dedicate his life to the care of souls. Attempts were made by relatives and friends to prevail upon him not to abandon his profession, but to no avail.

Bruté, his face now set towards the priesthood, entered the famous Seminary of Saint Sulpice in Paris. As at the medical school, so now in the seminary, honors seemed to follow him. At the Tuileries Cardinal Fesch said Mass in the presence of his nephew, Napoleon, now become Emperor, and the Breton seminarian was told off as server at the function. On one occasion while the emperor was withdrawing from the chapel, Bruté threw at his feet a petition for clemency on behalf of a former fellow-student of his at the medical school in Paris who had

been unjustly imprisoned on a charge of complicity in a plot against the Emperor's life. Napoleon in his hurry failed to notice the paper, but Bruté, whose action was observed by the gendarmes, found himself for a while in a highly embarrassing position. Another experience, ever afterwards cherished by him as one of the most precious recollections of his career, befell Bruté in his seminary days. This was the private audience granted him December 18, 1804, by Pope Pius VII, who had come as a prisoner to Paris to crown Napoleon. Bruté begged the Pontiff's blessing that he might become a worthy priest, the ambition now uppermost in his mind. Meantime immense stores of ecclesiastical lore were being laid up by the one-time physician during his seminary career. Finally came ordination to the priesthood in the parish church of St. Sulpice, June 10, 1808, and first Mass the following day. Shortly after he sought and obtained admission into the Society of St. Sulpice.

The two years following his ordination were spent by Father Bruté in teaching theology in the diocesan seminary at Rennes. Meantime thoughts of the foreign missions as the most promising field of his future work in the priesthood were beginning to occupy his mind. They took definite shape with the arrival in France of the Sulpician, Father Benedict Joseph Flaget, Bishop-elect of Bardstown in Kentucky. When Flaget returned to America in June, 1810, he had Father Bruté in his company. It was not without a struggle that Madame Bruté parted with her beloved son, but she recognized God's hand in Simon's call to the great country overseas and would put no obstacle in the way. Besides, she was not to be left unattended in her old age. Her second son, Augustine, following in Simon's footsteps, had made successful medical studies in Paris, received his degree, and returned to Rennes, where he settled down in his profession and married. Father Bruté before leaving for America had the happiness of blessing the union of his brother with Mademoiselle Camille Bourgeois.

IV

And now began the American phase of Bruté's life, which was to fill out twenty-nine fruitful years. Archbishop John Carroll, "Father of the Catholic Church in the United States," welcomed him on his arrival in Baltimore where he was at once

given employment as professor of philosophy in the Sulpician Seminary. Two years later his superiors transferred him to Mount St. Mary's near Emmitsburg, Maryland, where they had opened a college which subsequently developed into a seminary. For three years, 1815-1818, he was president of St. Mary's College, Baltimore, which post he filled to the satisfaction of faculty and student body alike. His presidential duties, it appears, were largely academic, the administration of the College being in the hands of Sulpician associates more adept than himself in business affairs and in closer touch with the American environment. In 1818 he resigned the presidency of the Baltimore institution to lend his efforts to the upbuilding of the struggling Emmitsburg seminary, familiarly known as "The Mountain." Previous to the arrival of the young Breton priest at "The Mountain" in 1818 that institution had been a preparatory seminary only. Now that it could command the services of a highly competent professor of theology, courses in that subject were at once begun, the new department of divinity being placed under Bruté's immediate direction.

Of all duties that could have been assigned to the zealous Sulpician none appealed to him more than the one which now was his, the duty of preparing young men for the priesthood. To Bruté the hope of the Church in America lay, above everything else, in the training of a virtuous and enterprising clergy. The death of every good priest was a personal blow to him; when Father Clorivière died at Georgetown College, the Sulpician called upon a community of Carmelite nuns to pray unceasingly for a supply of good priests to the Catholic Church in the United States. Nothing could be more disinterested or far-reaching than his apostolic zeal. His concern seemed to be with the future of every parish, every diocese, every community of religious men and women in the country. National, racial, political, partialities or prejudices he abhorred, and often in letters warned his clerical friends against them. The spread of the Faith in every part of the land and among all classes of persons was the consideration that reigned supreme in all his plans and hopes. It lent to his zeal singleness of aim and dominated his apostolic efforts to an extent probably not realized in any other ecclesiastic of his day. The young priests who passed under his inspiring influence at "The Mountain" carried the message of his apostolic zeal and the memory of his personal

example far and wide. Bruté never achieved more salutary results than during the quiet years spent by him at "The Mountain" in training efficient recruits for the Catholic ministry in the United States.

The pious priest's eager zeal for souls found other outlets besides the class-room of an ecclesiastical seminary. He was chaplain to Mother Seton's community of nuns at Emmitsburg, lending them precious spiritual direction and helping them tide over the initial difficulties of their foundation. He was pastor at Emmitsburg carrying his ministry in this connection over a wide range of territory. Thus, leaving "The Mountain" one St. Ignatius day, July 31, at a quarter to five in the morning he returned home at half-past five in the evening, having in the interim travelled thirty miles and held conversation with sixty-two persons on matters affecting their individual religious welfare. He was especially alive to the power of the press and good books in supporting the Catholic cause. His range of learning was immense and he wielded a ready pen. His contributions, whether in the field of apologetics or history, to the *Catholic Miscellany* of Charleston, the *Catholic Telegraph* of Cincinnati, or the *Shepherd of the Valley* of St. Louis were numerous and well received. Archbishop Marechal got him to revise Dr. Pise's *History of the Catholic Church* for publication, Bishop Kenrick, about to bring out a new edition of his manual of theology, sought his cooperation, while Father Hughes, the future Archbishop, appealed to him for help when engaged in his controversy with Breckenridge. Wherever he saw an opportunity to do good he seized it, and requests such as the above were never refused.

V

Always the hidden spring of his exuberantly apostolic spirit was an interior piety that never waned. The secret of the saints was his; prayer, recollection, detachment, self-denial, bodily austerities, with such fuel were fed the fires of divine faith and love that burned so brightly within. His supernatural faith had all the genuineness and simplicity of a child's; it was serene, untroubled, vivid, enveloping him steadily in an atmosphere of "other-worldliness," for no one ever loved less "the things that are in the world" than Simon Bruté. In a delightful memorandum which he labelled "One Day of a Priest" he thus expressed

his faith in the Eucharistic Presence: "1½ o'c. Was called to see Glacken above Emmitsburg; went to the church at Emmitsburg to get the Blessed Sacrament; this is the fifth time today that I have touched my Sovereign Lord, the 'King of Glory' as Mr. Duhamel has it embroidered on the inside door of the Tabernacle; carried it to the sick; administered the Sacrament of Extreme Unction; made a little address to those present—several Protestants."

Bruté's devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was one of the most striking things about him. Often when he awoke at night, no matter at what hour, he went to the chapel or church and there, sometimes prostrate on the ground and bathed in tears, spent hours in silent converse with the Prisoner of the Tabernacle. Next to his affection to his Eucharistic Lord was his affection to Mary. "Auspice Maria" ("under Mary's auspices") was the loving motto that stood at the beginning or end of practically every letter he wrote. Generally coupled with this motto was the word "eternity." All through life this word seemed to be ever ringing in his ears. No one could have realized more keenly the vanities and futilities of time and the awful implication of eternity. His soul, it has been surmised, took this set from his boyish experiences during the Reign of Terror when human life was cheap and scenes of death were his daily portion.

One who loved God so intensely could not fail in love of God's image in human beings. When President of St. Mary's College he would remain up all night by the bedside of sick or dying students. When his friend and fellow-Breton, Father Clorivière, was stricken with fatal paralysis at Georgetown College, Bruté often walked all the way from Emmitsburg to the College, some sixty miles, to help him prepare for death, sometimes having nothing to eat on these long tramps but a few apples obtained on the way. At Clorivière's bedside, as the end drew nearer, Bruté kept on repeating in the language so dear to both, *mon ami, mon ami! de la croix au ciel.*

But one did not have to be an intimate of Bruté's to share his surpassing charity. One day a workman fell from a tree sustaining serious injuries. A doctor not being within call, Bruté hurried to the poor man, and finding a dislocation and three fractured bones, adjusted them with the greatest skill so that all the country-side was in admiration at his medical expertness.

Such, then, was Father Bruté, a lover of God, if there ever was one, and by that fact necessarily also a lover of men. This was the impression which even casual acquaintances of his carried away with them. The saintly Vincentian Father De Andreis, the cause of whose beatification has been introduced at Rome, having met Bruté at "The Mountain" in July, 1816, wrote of him that he was "the most holy, learned, lovable and affable man" he had ever known.

VI

With his widespread reputation for holiness of life and learning Father Bruté was naturally often thought of by his fellow-ecclesiastics as a likely choice for a new or vacant episcopal see. At least four times his name was more or less formally mentioned in connection with the mitre, the sees being St. Louis, Boston, Cincinnati, and that of a projected diocese of Alabama and Florida. On all of these occasions, as far as news of them reached his ears, Bruté, with a diffidence and humility that were genuine to the core, begged to be spared the threatened dignity. But in the end he found himself invested with episcopal rank. The fathers of the Second Council of Baltimore having recommended both measures, the diocese of Vincennes with territory to include Indiana and Eastern Illinois, was erected May 6, 1834, and Father Bruté was appointed incumbent of the new see. His reaction to the appointment was characteristic. Already in 1832 when it was intimated to him that he would be proposed for Vincennes, he had written a remarkable letter to Bishop Rosati of St. Louis, always his ideal of a bishop. It detailed with unsparing frankness and precision the grounds on which he considered himself unfit for an episcopal charge. As a piece of keen, penetrating, pitiless self-analysis, the letter is probably not inferior to any other composition of a similar tenor in the whole range of secular literature. When the bull of appointment was actually received, he at once sent off letters to the five prelates in the West, Bishops Rosati, Purcell, Flaget, David and Chabrat, asking them whether he should accept and giving them to understand that he would abide by their decision. The answers were in the affirmative and Bruté accordingly prepared for consecration. This took place in St. Louis, October 28, 1834, at the hands of Bishop Flaget, assisted by Bishops Rosati and Purcell. The ceremony was held in the St. Louis Cathedral

opened for divine service only two days before with a solemn service of consecration. The edifice still stands, being the most venerable and historic structure that the Missouri metropolis can boast. Bishop Flaget, who had accompanied Bruté from Bardstown to St. Louis for the consecration ceremony, recorded the impression made upon him by Vincennes's first bishop:

"For the five days I have been in the company of this successor of the Apostles, I have done nothing but admire and bless the providence which compasses mightily its designs by means inexplicible, and such as would be reputed folly in the eyes of worldlings. The figure, rather odd, of this excellent prelate, the ceaseless motion of his hands, head and whole body when he speaks, his language, English pronounced exactly like French and coming from a mouth that is almost toothless, all of this would seem perforce to render him useless for the post assigned him, not to say laughable and ridiculous. But *mon Dieu* when he speaks of our Divine Lord, of His love for men, of His continual spirit of sacrifice, etc., my heart dilates and is aglow like those of the disciples of Emmaus. I am beside myself; I hope then against all hope, and look forward to wonder upon wonder to be wrought by this venerable Apostle."

Bishop Bruté journeyed by stage with a party of priests from St. Louis to Vincennes where he was installed in the present Old Cathedral November 5. The journey had taken two days; one may motor now between the two points in approximately four hours. Surely there was nothing in the way of worldly emolument or distinction about the See of Vincennes if such things could conceivably have meant anything to its humble first incumbent. Before him were only the rough tasks of a missionary bishop. At St. Louis he had with him only some seventy dollars with which to begin financing the administration of the diocese. His priests at first numbered not more than three and the services of one of them, St. Cyr, he enjoyed only provisionally through the courtesy of Bishop Rosati. But a visit to Europe secured him a number of clerical recruits and he was able as time went on to provide more adequately for the scattered parishes of the diocese. His activities during the five years he spent in Indiana were amazing, particularly in view of the feeble state of health in which he had to do it all. Among the reasons urged by him for being spared the physically trying duties of a frontier bishop was the difficulty he experi-

enced in traveling, especially on horseback. Still, once he had in a spirit of sheer submission to the divine will accepted the post of missionary bishop, he would suffer no physical handicap of whatever sort to stand in the way of his obligations to the diocese. Visitation and confirmation trips of the most discomforting kind were performed by him with an energy and zeal possible only in a man of his high spiritual purpose and self-effacing devotion to duty.

The diocese of Vincennes until the erection of that of Chicago in 1843 embraced not only Indiana but also Eastern Illinois, including Chicago. It gives one an idea of how primitive were conditions in Indiana at the time of Bruté's arrival in the West to recall that large groups of Indians then residing in the State were among the members of his flock. Perhaps the most dramatic chapter in the Indian history of Indiana is that which tells of the expulsion of the Catholic Potawatomi from the State in 1838. Bruté protested the measure as uncalled for and boldly took up the cause of the Potawatomi with the Indian Office in Washington. He permitted one of his priests, Father Benjamin Petit, to accompany the Indians on their forced march to what is now Southeastern Kansas, a march fatal to many of the deported aborigines.

What was to become the great metropolis of the West lay within Bruté's jurisdiction. He was in Chicago twice on canonical visits, in May, 1835, and again in August, 1838. With its seven or eight thousand inhabitants it was the most populous town in his diocese and the busy scenes he witnessed on its streets led him to make shrewd forecasts of the immense development in store for it. "Of this place the growth has been surprising even in the West. A wonder amidst its wonders, from a few scattered houses near the fort it has become in two or three years a place of great promise. Its settlers sanguinely hope to see it rank as the Cincinnati of the West."

At Vincennes Bishop Bruté opened a boys' school and one for girls. He also established an institution of higher education, St. Gabriel's College, which had a brief career. He interested himself in the early history of Vincennes, wrote to Quebec soliciting pertinent data and on the basis of the information received compiled interesting articles which he published in the Cincinnati *Catholic Telegraph*. He also wrote for the same weekly absorbing narratives of his canonical visitations in In-

diana and Illinois. Meantime, as long as he was in Vincennes, he personally took upon himself a large part of the ministerial work in the parish and surrounding country. No inclemency of the weather or wretched condition of the roads kept him from answering sick calls or promptly carrying relief at any signal of distress. Numerous remarkable instances in this connection surviving in local tradition witness to his unfailing charity to the sick, the poor, orphans, widows, and the afflicted of whatever sort.

VII

Having had to ride on the outside of a stage coach while traveling through Ohio on his way to the Third Provincial Council of Baltimore, 1837, Bishop Bruté contracted a cold which developed into consumption and within two years brought him to the grave. His last days, passed in his apartment in the rear of the first floor of the present rectory, were in perfect accord with the tender piety and religious zeal that marked him all through life. To a priest who attended him he remarked the day before he died: "My dear child, I have a whole day to stay with you, tomorrow with God." Six hours before the end he wrote with great pain and difficulty a letter to certain persons whom he longed to recall to a better life. He gave the most minute directions for his funeral, answered the prayers of the dying with fervor and, with characteristic regard for others, dismissed a priest watching by his bedside, bidding him not to remain up longer owing to the lateness of the hour. And so, at half past five on the morning of June 26, 1839, Simon Gabriel Bruté, Vincennes's first bishop, passed away, having died the death of the just. Mourned by all the townsfolk, Catholic and Protestant alike, he was buried on the 28th under the main altar of the Cathedral. How non-Catholics regarded him one may gather from the eloquent tribute to him penned by one of their number in *The Western Sun and General Advertiser* of Vincennes, June 29, 1839. The tribute is reproduced in Sister Salesia's biography.

The remains of Bishop Bruté rest today in the crypt of the Cathedral church in which he had so often officiated with the devotion and rubrical exactness that characterized his performance of all the sacred rites of the Church. Here the pious pil-

grim may visit the earthly relics of this great ecclesiastic, the memory of whose holiness loses nothing of freshness with the advancing years. Cardinal Gibbons *en route* through Vincennes in December, 1891, said in a brief address: "Worthy citizens of Vincennes, you need not go on pilgrimages to visit the tombs of saints. There is one reposing here in your midst, viz.: the saintly founder of this diocese, Right Reverend Simon Bruté." It is in this spirit that Catholics not only of Vincennes but of all parts of the United States may well repair to this hallowed spot to recall the workings of grace made manifest in the life of Simon Bruté, and be inspired to the practice of the virtues of which he was so illustrious an example.

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