



The Great Friend:
Frederick Douglass

A. P. SCHIMBERG

To be termed a *great* friend by another friend is complimentary, to say the least; but to be judged as a great friend by society is credit with historical significance. Such a position in human annals is held by Frederick Ozanam. With deep admiration, A. P. Schimberg presents a pleasing portrayal of the Great Friend in his new book, FREDERICK OZANAM.

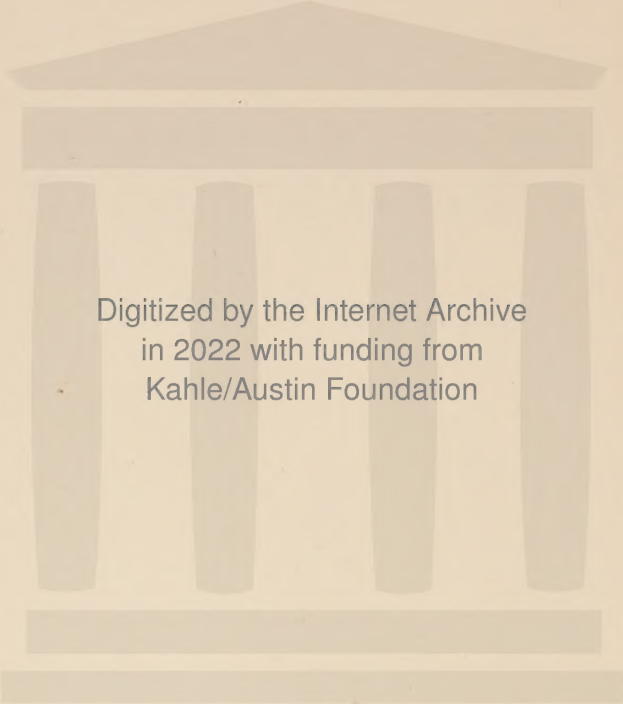
Though Ozanam lived in a period when the empire of Napoleon passed through the adventures of Louis Phillippe, through the Republic and through the disturbances of 1830 and 1848, he managed to stay within the bounds of his youthful aspirations, championing the truth. His life was not "thrilling" in the physical sense but it certainly was an intellectual and spiritual adventure which will capture the imagination of thinking men and women of today. Even more than any physical deed might, it exemplified courage and straightforwardness regardless of opposition.

Ozanam, the prime mover in the foundation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, has left the world a

(Continued on back flap)



THE GREAT FRIEND:
FREDERICK OZANAM



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Frederick
Ozanam

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DECLARATION

Conformably to the decree of Urban VIII we declare that if, in the course of this work, any terms of veneration have been employed, they are meant only in the sense authorized by the Church, to whose judgment we submit ourselves with the most filial affection.

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By A. P. Schimberg

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To
My Brothers
and Nephews

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A BOY IN LYONS

PLEASE, Papa! Please tell me once more how you saved Grandfather's life!"

Then, sprawled full length before the fire, little Frederick Ozanam listened wide eyed as his father, Dr. Jean-Antoine Ozanam told how he had rescued Benedict Ozanam, his own father and grandfather to Frederick, from the clutches of villains who had doomed him to death. This daredevil feat was no bold exploit of fictional musketeers of Louis XIV's time, but the true story of a hussar in the days of the French Revolution. And because the hero of the tale and the teller of it, both, was his father, the boy never tired of listening. Each time it was told he could see in the flames of the hearth fire the thrilling ride of the young soldier, his resolute demand upon the rogues for his father's liberation, and then the second wild ride back to safety.

Jean-Antoine Ozanam had enlisted in the French army, or had been conscripted, as some writers say, in 1793, when he was 20 years old. One day, during the Reign of Terror, he was riding with his regiment of Berchiny hussars from the garrison town of Bourg to Vienne in the Dauphiny and decided that even at the risk of severe punishment he would make a detour and visit his parents at near-by Chalamont. But when he and the two hussars riding with him reached his birthplace, he found his

mother alone and in tears. Benedict Ozanam had been denounced by agents of the Terror and dragged off to prison at Ambronay; and his wife, poor woman, feared that he might already have been taken to the scaffold.

Kissing his mother and embracing her heartily Jean-Antoine gave her what hurried assurance he could, then leaped into the saddle and with his comrades began a desperate race against time and death. They galloped to Bourg, where the Committee of Public Safety was known to be in session, and young Ozanam, armed to the teeth and breathing defiance, forced his way into the presence of the all-powerful and blood-thirsty group. From it he got the reluctant information that his father still awaited in prison the farce of such a trial as the Terrorists deigned to grant their victims. Pistol in hand and with a grim determination which no danger to himself could shake, he demanded the immediate release of Citizen Ozanam. The frightened committee members yielded and before they could recover from their cowed amazement, the three companions in arms were galloping out of reach of the gendarmes sent to pursue them. Having liberated Benedict Ozanam, they stopped at the home in Chalamont just long enough for Jean-Antoine to tell his mother the good news, then started off on another breakneck ride to rejoin their regiment as quickly as possible. They knew well that it would go badly indeed with them if their unauthorized absences were discovered. As for the young soldier's father, freed by his intrepid son and the Terror abating, he lived thereafter unmolested.¹

¹ Coates, Ainslee, *Letters of Frédéric Ozanam*; p. 4: ". . . the fall of Robespierre intervened, after the young soldier had, by a desperately bold stroke, risked his own life to save his father's."

Is it any wonder that hero worship was mixed with the love and regard of young Frederick Ozanam for his father? The boy's lively imagination enabled him to relish to the full all the true stories of the hussar's dash and daring, to see him in the brave Berchiny uniform and live again for himself the battles in which this father of his had shown such valor as to gain the approving notice of his commander and earn rapid promotion. At Millesimo, Mondovi, Pavia, Lodi, Castiglione, Arcole, Rivoli, in these engagements of the Italian campaign and on other battle-fields of the new Republic's wars he distinguished himself. He had a part in a successful diplomatic mission, too; brought to Genoa as his prisoner a Neapolitan general, the Prince Cattolica; and captured a standard of the Uhlans, which he presented to Napoleon. Now, however, the mighty leader of France's conquering armies was fallen, his path of glory having led him to exile at St. Helena. Captain Ozanam treasured many vivid memories of his wartime commander, the military genius on a white horse, the magnetic Corsican who could inspire such heroic devotion in his soldiers. But he much preferred Bonaparte the great captain to Bonaparte the First Consul and Emperor. Napoleon's grasp of power did not square with the gallant hussar's convictions in these matters.² It seems to have been this, more than his five battle wounds, which caused him to leave the army in 1798, at the age of 25, with the rank of captain.³

² O'Meara, Kathleen, *Frédéric Ozanam*, p. 3: ". . . he could not forgive Bonaparte for having made a steppingstone of the Republic to an Empire."

³ Auer, Heinrich, *Friedrich Ozanam, Ein Leben der Liebe*; p. 6, in contrast to other biographers says Jean-Antoine Ozanam left the army a lieutenant of hussars. Coates, *op. cit.*, p. 4: ". . . after six years' service, he obtained with some trouble his dismissal" (from the army).

This point impressed young Frederick Ozanam more and more forcefully as he grew in years: his father's unswerving loyalty to his convictions. If in the course of time the son's boyish admiration for the dauntless soldier hero grew less intense, its place was taken by a fervent appreciation of his father's splendid character and exceptional achievements in the better ways of peace.

With the laurels of his brilliant military career still fresh upon him, Captain Ozanam went to Lyons, the capital of his native province, and there paid court to Marie, the daughter of Monsieur and Madame Nantas. He was described as a handsome man, witty, amiable, of a merry disposition. She was a charming young woman with all the desirable qualities of heart and mind, and the young bridegroom rightly held himself to be one of the most fortunate of men when she married him, on April 22, 1800. She was 19, he 27 years of age and the year of their marriage was that of Marengo and Hohenlinden. They decided to go to Paris and set themselves up in the silk business, in which the bride's parents had been engaged. They prospered in the capital, children came to them and in the midst of the wars of the Consulate and of the early Empire they knew the serene joys of a home in which virtue and true love abide. But the silk merchant, capable and always careful to keep the business in a flourishing state, was imprudently generous in helping relatives or friends who appealed to him in their difficulties. He went surety for a large sum, the relative or friend concerned was forced into bankruptcy and Ozanam found himself stripped of all his earthly belongings. Even the furniture of their cherished home was taken away. Then it was that loyal friends in Paris

drew the attention of the Emperor to the erstwhile hussar, and there followed from Bonaparte himself a message to "the brilliant officer whose valor had made a lively impression on him,"⁴ with the flattering offer of a captaincy in his own Guards. One writer asserts that Ozanam was tendered but refused an ordnance officer's letter patent in 1805 and a captain's commission in a cavalry regiment.⁵

Milan was at this time a French city, one of the many spoils of Napoleon's victories, and during the Italian campaign Jean-Antoine Ozanam had made friends there (as he did wherever he went). To Milan he now decided to go, to make at the age of 36 a new start in life. Fortunately, he had received an excellent education, having been graduated with honors from the Oratorian College in Lyons, and so he was able to earn at least a meager livelihood from the first by tutoring young Milanese. However, he had also resolved to make his way in the world, support his growing family and serve his fellow men by becoming a physician. Therefore, in addition to earning his bread as a tutor, he studied medicine, poring over his books far into the night. Too poor to buy a seat in the stagecoach, he trudged the 19 miles from Milan to Pavia every three months, to take the required examinations there, then back to Milan. So mercilessly did he slave at his studies, so well had his training prepared him and so talented was he that at the end of

⁴ O'Meara, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁵ Svoboda, Robert, O.S.C., *Ozanam und der Vinzenzverein*, p. 5, infers that Jean-Antoine Ozanam's attitude was due to Napoleon's treatment of Pope Pius VII. "Er hatte sehen müssen wie der gefesselte Pabst als Gefangener dieses neuen Regimes durch die Gegend geschleppt worden war." (He was forced to see how the captive Pope was dragged through the region as the prisoner of this new regime.)

Baunard, Louis, *Frederick Ozanam in His Correspondence*, p. 2, says simply, "But as he was not a lover of the Empire he declined the offer."

two years he was licensed to practise the art of healing.

Madame Ozanam and the two living children of the four thus far born to her were with Jean-Antoine in Milan. The wife's devoted pride in him was enhanced when a medical treatise he wrote in the Italian language was hailed by such scientists of the day as Scarpa, Locatelli, Moscati. Soon Dr. Ozanam had a successful practice (no matter that some of his patients were too poor to pay him) and the blue sky of Italy smiled upon him and his family. Then, in 1813, an epidemic of typhus broke out in Milan. The physician who had been a soldier gave himself without reserve to the stricken men in the military hospital. He remained alone on this battlefield of skill and pity when his two colleagues died, victims of the plague. For this unselfish and danger-defying work he was decorated by Prince Eugène Beauharnais, the Emperor's stepson. According to a French biographer, the insignia of the Iron Crown of Lombardy were pinned on Dr. Ozanam's coat.⁶ An English biographer says it was "the bit of ribbon which Napoleon had promised but forgotten to give him in the days of his glory."⁷ Whichever it was, it is not probable that the heroic doctor attached any undue importance to the honor bestowed upon him by Napoleon's viceroy. Something immensely more important, to him and to the world, came to him in April of that year: his wife bore him their fifth child, a son whom they christened Antoine-Frédéric, but who is known and revered in the English-speaking lands as Frederick Ozanam. His family, friends, and acquaintances called him Frédéric, the Antoine it seems

⁶ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁷ Brodrick, J., S.J., *Frédéric Ozanam and His Society*, p. 4.

being dropped entirely. He generally signed himself A. F. Ozanam, and sometimes those writing of him transpose the two baptismal names, calling him Frédéric-Antoine.

Because the plague was still raging, the baby's baptism did not take place until May 13, on which day the water of regeneration was poured on his tiny head in one of the churches of Milan. Some say it was the church called Santa Maria dei Servi, others that it was the Church of St. Charles Borromeo, situated in what is now the Corso Vittorio Emanuele. Both are in the right: at the time of Frederick's baptism the church was still called St. Mary's of the Servites. It had been the monastery church of the Servite Fathers until 1799. In 1836, twenty-three years after Ozanam's christening, it was torn down, but rebuilt near by and in 1847 dedicated to St. Charles, Milan's great cardinal archbishop.⁸

Frederick Ozanam was born at midnight on April 23, 1813, at No. 16 in the street called San Pietro dell' Orto.⁹ A tablet on the present house marks the approximate place of his birth, and another tablet is on the font at which he was baptized. He spent the first three years of his life in Milan. When the Austrians took the city after Napoleon's defeat and abdication and the Hundred Days that ended at Waterloo, Dr. Ozanam left Italy with his family, in October, 1816. He would not live under foreign domination in a city lost to France. "Italy, however, refused to be left behind and went with them in the heart of little Frédéric-Antoine, which she had mysteriously sealed for her own. All his life Italy would be a

⁸ The Servites came into possession of it again in 1925.

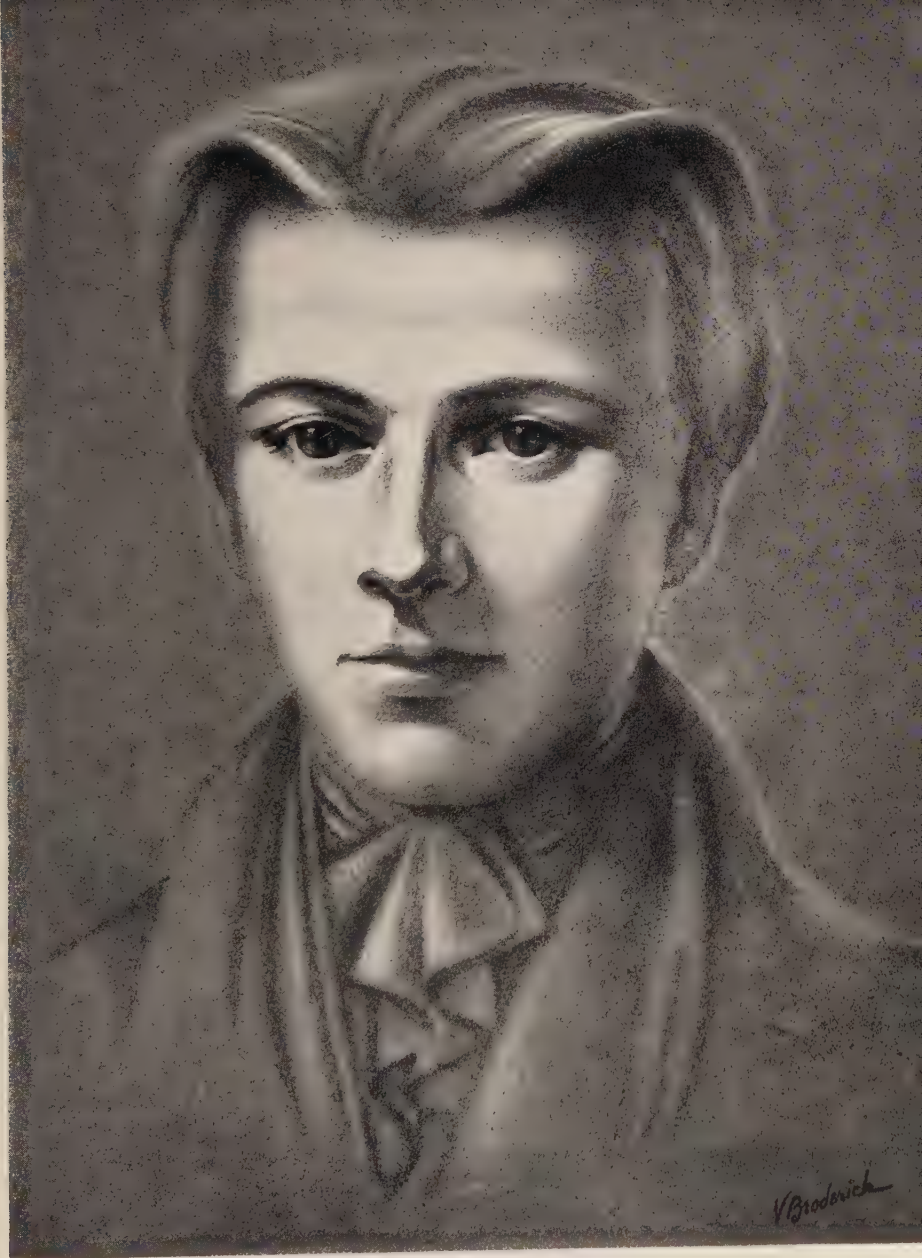
⁹ Some biographers give the date of birth as April 13. Official publications of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul say April 23.

second *patria* to him and her language which he spoke from infancy, a second mother-tongue."¹⁰

The Bourbons were back on the French throne in the person of Louis XVIII when the Ozanams settled in Lyons. There was a short period of some hardship, before Dr. Ozanam could establish himself in his profession. However, he had come with a splendid reputation, gained favorable notice through his writings in medical journals, and won first place in an election for the coveted, permanent post of physician at the municipal hospital. Now he had an adequate income. That he would never become rich bothered him not at all. The house in which his family lived at 14 Rue Pisay was no chateau of the nobility, and no mansion of the wealthy; neither was it a hovel of proletarian poverty. It was a comfortable dwelling in which the Doctor was able to maintain a household in modest circumstances, with some of the amenities of cultured living. With such a woman as Madame Ozanam reigning therein as queen, the home could not but be a place of daily happiness, of the joy which good people find in life's simple and tender things shared together. It was a place, too, of religion so believed and so practised as to shape and color the lives of all who dwelt there. The bourgeois spirit, strong in the cities of France at this time, found no welcome. No entrance was permitted its vulgar preoccupation with money and petty ambitions, its servile submission to and envious imitation of the aristocracy, its indifference to all interests of the soul and of the mind, its callousness toward social injustice and the sufferings of so many.

Frederick Ozanam's mother was a woman of no little

¹⁰ Brodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 4.



Ozanam, at about the age of twenty. After a sketch by his friend Janmot.



FREDERICK OZANAM

charm (her son was to include this requirement in his catalogue of what he wished his wife to be); a gracious personality, tenderhearted yet firm when duty was involved; tirelessly devoted to her wifely and maternal tasks, inclined to worry. There was a gentle melancholy about her, perhaps because of the tragedy which had overshadowed her girlhood and the hard blows life had dealt her. She did not allow this to becloud the happiness of her loved ones and in her children's memories there remained the impression of a serene and appealing wistfulness. She had a generous fund of intelligence and an appreciation, both native and cultivated, of literature and art and the beauties and wonders of nature, interests in which her husband and children shared. Called the best loved and most gladly obeyed mother in all Lyons, she made her home a place in which the bonds of family love were so strongly knit that they survived the deaths of the parents and bound the children to the ends of their lives.

Frederick listened as eagerly to his mother's as to his father's recollections of the Revolution. In hers were no martial glory, no glamorous adventure, but terror and sharp pain and patient suffering. Born on July 18, 1781, she retained deeply etched impressions of the siege of Lyons in 1793, when she and her sisters were forced to live in cellars while their father was busy as the captain in charge of a section of the city's ramparts. Her most poignant memory of those days was of her beloved elder brother, Jean-Baptiste, a lad of 18 or 19 when the city fell and he was put to death at Bouttreaux. Her parents were imprisoned, she was separated from them for some time and did not know if she would ever see them again.

They escaped the brutal death inflicted on so many at Lyons and elsewhere in France at this time, were reunited with their children and found a refuge at Echallons, in the Swiss canton of Vaud. There, in a poor little church used alike by Catholics and Protestants, Marie received her first Holy Communion, perhaps from the hands of her old uncle, the former prior of the Cistercians of Premol, who had accompanied the Nantas family in its flight. When peace came, Marie's father returned to Lyons but he was not able to recover his confiscated property, and this was felt the more because until the Revolution he and his dear ones had been accustomed to a rather comfortable standard of living. However, they bore the deprivations courageously. Accustomed thus to hardship, their daughter, Marie, met with admirable fortitude the days of poverty which came to her when she and her husband lost their property in Paris, and again but for a much briefer period and less harshly when the family removed from Milan to Lyons.

Of the fourteen children Madame Ozanam bore her husband, only four lived to maturity, three sons and one daughter. Alphonse, older than Frederick, became a priest and his brother's biographer. Charles followed his father in the medical calling. Elisa, the daughter, died at 19. Frederick was only seven years old at the time of her death, but the image of this dear sister never grew dim in his heart, remained an especially living and gracious memory in his life.

One other member of the household at 14 Rue Pisay must be mentioned: Marie Cruziat, the old servant whom the children with affection and respect called Guigui. She had come into the home of Frederick's grandfather when

little more than a child and had served three generations of the Ozanams with a touching devotion. Her thrift, sound judgment, and complete faithfulness helped them during the lean years, when she insisted even upon adding her earnings to the family's pathetically meager income.

There was music in the Ozanam home, evenings when the doctor was back from his work in the hospital and his visits to homes and hovels, and supper had been eaten. Jean-Antoine was fond of music and himself played a number of instruments. Perhaps he managed to provide one of the pianofortes then in use, and at this his wife, or Elisa while she lived, played the music of old songs. He liked no less to take down from the shelf his college texts of Homer, Horace, or Vergil and introduce his sons to the delights of the old poets, while Madame Ozanam sat by the fire knitting, something for one of her own or for a destitute patient of her husband's. Sometimes Dr. Ozanam would be called from the cozy hearth, when an excited knock sounded on the door and Guigui admitted a hard-breathing man. "Quick, Doctor, my wife is dying!" Or, "My little one, he is so sick!" Never did the man of medicine hesitate to answer the summons. Nor did Madame Ozanam hesitate to forego comfort or sleep when it was necessary to watch at a sickbed or keep a vigil of prayer at a deathbed in one of the miserable tenements in Lyons; in her own parish of St. Pierre or in any of the other slum districts. In all of them she and her husband were familiar and blessed figures.

In such a home and such a family Frederick Ozanam grew up, surviving a number of childhood diseases and as by a miracle a virulent attack of typhoid fever when he was six years old. For two weeks the parents watched

beside his bed, the father giving his skill, the mother her tender care, and both their prayers. The boy's recovery was attributed, under God, to St. Francis Regis, to whom there was at the time an ardent and widespread devotion in Lyons, where a chapel had been dedicated to him in the Church of St. Polycarpe.¹¹ It is interesting to know that Francis Regis, a French Jesuit who died in 1640, was a saint acutely aware of the social conditions in his time and given wholeheartedly to deeds of mercy. He may well have exerted himself in a special way to save the life of the little lad who would, he knew, one day be another apostle of charity.

The convalescent Frederick was soon at play again; and at his studies, which continued at home for three years more. Trained by a scholarly father, a talented and patient mother, and the sister whose memory was always green for him, he was ready at nine to become a day pupil in the fifth class at the Royal College of Lyons. According to the educational system of the day in France, this institution trained boys in the classics, in Latin and Greek and the other subjects of a liberal curriculum, and graduated them as bachelors of arts. The college was a gloomy building, somewhat like an academic Bastille, but this did not matter, says a writer, for the priests who lived and taught there radiated the light of virtue and learning and the warmth of kindly hearts.

In a frank and penetrating appraisal of himself in his boyhood when he was not many years out of it, Frederick Ozanam wrote in 1830, at the age of 17: "I was never

¹¹ Brodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 7: "She (Madame Ozanam) procured and hung around the dying boy's neck a relic of St. Francis Regis, that Jesuit 'slummer.' The effect of the relic on Frédéric was to induce a mighty thirst for beer, of all unsanctified things."

worse than I was at the age of eight. I had become headstrong, passionate and disobedient. If I were punished, I revolted; I wrote letters of complaint to my mother; I was frightfully lazy. Every imaginable trick came into my head, notwithstanding the fact that a good father, an excellent mother and a gentle sister were conducting my education." Of the time at which he entered the Royal College, he wrote, years later: "There, I gradually became better. The spirit of emulation conquered my laziness. I liked my masters and studied hard. My success led me on so that I began to get proud. But I had much improved since I entered. I then fell ill and had to go to the country for a month. In the fourth class I did not do so well, but pulled up again in the third."¹² This was the year of his first Holy Communion, the remembrance of which stayed with him always and which he saluted with these words: "O glad and blessed day, may my right hand wither and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if ever I forget thee!"¹³ The Abbé Alphonse Ozanam tells us that his younger brother was a quick-tempered child, headstrong, exceptionally sensitive and impressionable. But he says also that Frederick was pure, tender to little children, compassionate to every form of suffering. His tenderheartedness showed itself when he was no more than a baby, when the family lived in Italy. He heard the chimney-sweep's cry of "*Spazza camino! Spazza camino!*" . . . "Clean your chimney! Clean your chimney!" and when told that the little boy had to climb up chimneys that needed cleaning, he murmured in French, with accents as pitying as babyish: "*Pauvre petit!*" . . . "Poor little one!"

¹² Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹³ O'Meara, *op. cit.*, pp. 6, 7.

Frederick was fond of boys' games, lively and gay despite his physical frailness. At games he insisted upon fair play, but at times he was stubborn and selfish, exchanging blows with his playmates, unwilling to admit that he was defeated or in the wrong, "stamping his small feet and saying he would rather die than say it."¹⁴ Intellectually, he was precocious to a remarkable degree, because of his truly exceptional mental gifts and the alertness, scholarly interests and bookish atmosphere of the home in which he was prepared for college.

Among the influences which worked together to shape the many-sided character of this boy of Lyons, religion must, of course, be put first, the Catholic faith which was not only a tradition of his ancient family but a living force, with a daily bearing on his life. "His religion was essentially home-made."¹⁵ He had an exemplar of the highest order in his father, who was so good to the poor; who gathered his family about him for prayers in common and reading from the Bible or some other religious book; who marched candle in hand in Eucharistic processions as a member of the Confraternity of the Most Blessed Sacrament, and knelt at the foot of his patients' beds and prayed with them, after having sent for or himself fetched the priest with the Viaticum. And the example of his mother, first to teach his baby lips to frame the name of *le bon Dieu* and to salute our Blessed Lady. She took her children to church and taught them to understand and appreciate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, as much as possible.

The complex character of Frederick Ozanam reflected

¹⁴ O'Meara, *op cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁵ Delaney, Selden P., *Married Saints*, p. 269.

his father's energy, dogged perseverance, serenity, and even gaiety (but often won only after severe temptations) in the face of hardships and struggles; love of books and all intellectual pursuits, devotion to duty, eagerness to help and willingness to follow up sympathy with action. It reflected, too, his mother's gracious and gentle personality, her love of beauty in nature and in art, her conscientious attitude toward life, which was regarded as a rather serious matter. From her he inherited a heart full of tenderness and an inclination to diffidence and melancholy. He was not without temptations to stubborn willfulness and to pride. There were and would continue to be contradictions in his soul, tendencies in conflict one with the other. The sublime height of spiritual greatness to which he finally attained was won only by the most strenuous kind of climbing, begun early in life.

The times in which men live have a part in molding them. For Frederick, the French Revolution and its aftermath, the Napoleonic years, were both world events and parts of the intimate history of his family. His boyhood was spent under the restored Bourbon monarchy, in a Europe full of disturbances, political, social, religious. Intellectually alert as he was, with a precocious sense of history, he was aware of what was going on in France and in other countries, appreciated somewhat at least the implications of movements, saw how events foreshadowed things to come.

Every man is also in some degree the product of his environment, so there must be taken into account the ancient city, Lyons the Many-Bridged, to which Frederick came at three years and in which he would spend the impressionable periods of boyhood and youth. It can be

readily imagined with what enthusiasm he learned, from his parents and from books, the long history of this center of Christianity in Gaul, the scene of martyrdoms and Church Councils, a part of the stirring history of Europe in general and France in particular. The son of such parents, it is certain that he cherished the pilgrimage shrine of Our Lady of Fouvières, on a hill high above the city. It dated back to the second century of the Christian era and was said to have been built on the site of a pagan goddess' temple. To Notre Dame de Fouvières the people of Lyons had dedicated themselves in 1643, promising to hold a solemn procession in her honor on September 8, the feast of her nativity. This they did each year, excepting when meddling functionaries interfered or wars made the procession impossible. In Frederick there developed a sonlike devotion to the Blessed Mother, and her he was to choose to be the heavenly protectress of his life's greatest work.

Lyons, the city of many bridges, is at the confluence of the Rhône and Saône rivers; and the two streams have been said to reflect two of the traits in the general character of the Lyonnais. The Rhône is eager, irked by its banks, impatient to be on its way. The Saône flows serenely along, content with its shores, happily mirroring the blue sky and the white clouds in its dreamy surface. "All Lyons men are dreamers by choice, imaginative and mystics," said Emile Faguet.¹⁶ And if there was at times a turbulence of spirit in Frederick Ozanam, he was also a dreamer. He walked deep in thought, giving full sway to the phantasy which is the gift of poets. He dreamed of the storied past of Lyons and of France, and

¹⁶ Brodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

dreamed a boy's dreams of what was to be. These were tender, tentative imaginings, roseate yet tinged with sadness, as are all the dreams by means of which young life seeks to take hold on the future and shape it to the heart's desire, and rear its gleaming castles on daringly idealistic heights.

This boy of Lyons did not always walk alone by the rivers of the city, trudge alone the rugged paths on the outskirts, climb alone to the shrine of our Lady. Already, there were those, in addition to his parents and brothers, to whom he was drawn, who were drawn to him; whom he desired to keep close in his heart, the friendly heart which had room in it for so many.

DOUBT AND DEDICATION

SOMETIMES he bumped into people, the slender youth who walked in the streets of Lyons in the years 1830 and 1831. He walked with a book in hand more often than not; and as he read, his lips moved as though he were savoring a felicitous phrase, or the near-sighted eyes gazed into the distance as he mulled over the arresting word of sage or saint.

Nobody minded being bumped into by this young man. His apologies were always so quick and sincere, so gracious and disarming that it was almost a pleasure to have him collide with you. All knew that he was Frederick Ozanam, a brilliant alumnus of the city's Royal College, of a promise which in its fulfillment would most certainly shed additional luster on illustrious Lyons. Above all, people knew him as the son of Dr. and Madame Jean-Antoine Ozanam, than whom there were no better people in the whole city or, as many would have said, in all France.

However, neither Dr. Ozanam nor his wife could regard with complacency this habit of their bookish son. A former army officer, the father could not approve of such an unsoldierly way of walking. The mother worried lest in his absorption her son run into something less yielding than an understanding townsman. Because he was not robust, she was always concerned about his

health and safety. But Frederick kissed away her misgivings. "Everyone is kind to me," he would assure her. "All of them—the people I sometimes bump into are my friends. You need not worry in the least, *ma mère*." She probably worried less when he reminded her that the powerful prayers of the poor, poured out for her and her physician husband, included their sons, too.

The streets through which Frederick Ozanam dreamed or read led from his home to the law chambers of Monsieur Coulet where, in the distasteful role of a junior clerk, it was his galling task to copy dull legal documents, full of stilted phrases, circumlocutions, evasions, and technicalities. It was because he loved books so much that the youth read them even while walking to and from his disagreeable work. In the lyrical ecstasy of the poets, in the commanding thoughts of great minds he found refreshment to sustain him during the desert hours of the day. His early ripened mind reveled in a wide field and by no means superficially. He delighted in literature and science, history and philosophy and the arts; and quite naturally because of the ardent Catholicity of the family and the troubled times, he was interested in the position of the Church at home and abroad. The Chair of St. Peter had been occupied from 1829 to 1830 by Pope Pius VIII, who was succeeded by Gregory XVI. The former Pontiff, during his reign of only twenty months, hailed the achievement at long last of Catholic Emancipation in England, saw the July Revolution of 1830 in France and the spread of the movement to Belgium, which won its independence; to Poland, where the uprising was as bloody and heroic as it was hopeless; to Spain and Portugal, and to Rome, where the

secret society of the Carbonari, the charcoal burners, began its machinations.

Gregory XVI, when he came to the headship of the Church in 1830, found himself almost at once the victim of revolt in the papal territories, and disturbances continued to becloud his reign. In Prussia, under Friedrich Wilhelm III, there were serious encroachments on the rights of Catholics. In the Austrian realm, the Church was being harmed by the mischievous meddling legacy of the Imperial Sacristan, Joseph II. In Catholic Ireland, after centuries of persecution, the great Daniel O'Connell's election to Parliament was leading to further revocations of unjust laws, further though reluctant recognition of Irishmen's rights. Missionaries of the Faith were garnering in Asia and Africa and the new continent of Australia a harvest that compensated, at least in part, for the barren and cockle-infested fields of Europe. In the Americas, the young Republic of Washington and Jefferson was growing lustily, extending westward, giving to a constantly increasing flood of immigrants the liberties and opportunities the Old World had denied them. In 1829, the Church of the United States had held its First Provincial Council in Baltimore, the See which had the primacy of honor among the nine bishoprics of the land at that time. In the vast empire conquered by the Crusader spirit of Spain, newer republics sometimes persecuted the Church in vain attempts to wipe out the Catholic heritage of their peoples. Portuguese Brazil was an independent empire. And though the fleur-de-lis of France floated over them no longer, the French in Canada, insistent upon religious and racial rights, formed a virile enclave in British America.

Of all this the Ozanams were aware, in all this they took an eager interest, this family of two glorious traditions: sturdy Catholicism and wide, competent scholarship. It had been Catholic for more than 1200 years, since the early part of the seventh century, when St. Didier, Archbishop of Vienne, found refuge from the wrath of Queen Brunhaut in the home of a Jew named Samuel Hozannam. As a reward for sheltering the man of God, Samuel Hozannam and his whole family received the gift of faith and were baptized by St. Didier, or Desiré. There are old records showing that the Hozannams descended from an ancestor named Jeremiah, who founded a small Jewish colony north of Lyons in the days before Christ was born. He died in 43 B.C., the year of Julius Caesar's assassination. Benedict, the first to write the family name Ozanam, not Hosannam, was the grandfather of Frederick and the nephew of Jacques Hosannam, a noted mathematician and physicist of the seventeenth century, who was so famous that even the rabid leaders of the French Revolution deigned to overlook his loyalty to the faith they persecuted. They gave him a "feast" in their calendar, April 17, on which day were also commemorated such other worthies as Socrates and Plato and Pindar, Bacon, Cervantes and Shakespeare, Racine and St. Vincent de Paul. Jacques' great-grandnephew was to become familiar with the works of all these eminent men, and was to help especially to keep alive the blessed memory of St. Vincent de Paul.

Devotion and the Ozanam interest and skill in art were combined by Elizabeth Hosannam, an Ursuline nun of the fifteenth century who illustrated with delicate strong beauty the Gothic characters of a manuscript

Office of the Blessed Virgin. It is on the last pages of this precious relic, preserved among the family treasures, that the genealogy of the family's elder branch appears. A representative of each generation in succession wrote down the names and dates. Sister Elizabeth's Office of Our Lady showed that there was a Marian devotion in the family long before Frederick's day.

Jacques Hosannam as a professor at the University of Paris in a day of doubt and derision announced boldly that he wished his science to lead man to God. He was a very learned man, but he had the good fortune to have a poetic soul, the temperament of a mystic and best of all, a childlike, simple heart. He was wont to say that it was the business of the theologians of the Sorbonne to argue, of the Pope to pronounce on matters of faith and morals, and of mathematicians to go to heaven "on the perpendicular"—"*en ligne perpendiculaire.*"

When Dr. Ozanam's second son became a lawyer's clerk, it was because his father intended him for the legal profession but considered him at 17 too young and inexperienced, for all that the youth had been graduated from the Royal College in Lyons, to leave home for his studies in jurisprudence. The physician wrote in his family diary in 1829: "I desire to make Frederick a Barrister, or preferably, a member of the Magistracy or a Judge in the Royal Court of Justice. He has refined, pure and noble sentiments: he will make an upright and enlightened judge. I venture to hope that he will be our consolation in our old age. After college, where he is at the moment finishing his philosophy, he will study the practice of the law with a lawyer; thence he will go to read law at Paris or Dijon." Monsignor Baunard in his

book on Frederick Ozanam says that "this preconceived notion of a legal profession for his son, instead of a literary life which attracted Ozanam, was to be the source of eight years' suffering, which weighed heavily on the young man."¹ Frederick acquiesced in his father's plan and Dr. Ozanam for his part sought to make the law clerkship as tolerable as possible by engaging for his son a teacher of German and another of drawing. The latter's lessons were given at the suggestion of Madame Ozanam, who was herself something of an artist. Her son inherited her interest if not all of her skill, and now he applied himself sedulously to line and perspective and proportion. With what success he did this cannot be told, for so far as is known none of his drawings was preserved. But Frederick was not content with his drawing lessons and those in German: he studied English and Hebrew and dipped into Sanscrit deeply enough to serve his future scholarly work. In addition to his own French and the Italian which was as another mother tongue to him, and the Latin and Greek of his college course, he acquired command of the other principal tongues of Europe and also of the ancient language of his Jewish forebears. He read enormously, too, and thus carried forward the intensive mental activity which had been his during the golden years at the Royal College.

A streak of ominous gray, threatening to deepen into the black of dire misfortune, had appeared for a time against the golden background of Frederick's college days. As to studies, he had no difficulty at all and was graduated at the head of his class. The trouble was of a different and a far more serious kind. He tells us: "In the

¹ Baunard, Louis, *Frederick Ozanam in His Correspondence*, p. 13.

midst of an age of scepticism, God gave me the grace to be born in the Faith. As a child I listened at the feet of a Christian father and a saintly mother. I had as my earliest teacher an intelligent sister, as pious as the angels whom she has gone to join. Later, the muffled din of an unbelieving world reached me. I experienced all the horror of doubt, which by day gnaws at the soul without ceasing, and by night hovers over our pillows wet with vain tears. Uncertainty as to my eternal destiny left me no rest. In despair I grasped at sacred dogma, only to find it crumbling in my hands. Then it was that a priest who was also a philosopher came to my rescue. He dispelled the clouds and illumined the darkness of my thoughts. From then I believed with faith grounded on the rock. Touched by such a grace I promised God to consecrate my days to the service of truth. That restored peace to my soul.”² In a letter of January, 1830, to a fellow collegian named Materne, he wrote: “My dear friend, I must enter with some detail into a painful period of my life, which began in Rhetoric and ended last year. [This would mean that he was only 16 years old at the time of his ordeal.] After constantly listening to unbelievers and to expressions of unbelief, I commenced to ask myself why I believed. I began to entertain doubt, and yet I wished to believe. I rejected the promptings of doubt. I read books in which belief was established; yet none fully satisfied me. For a month or two I believed this or that piece of reasoning: some new difficulty presented itself and I began to doubt again. Oh, how I

² Ozanam, A. F., *Oeuvres Complètes*, tome premier, pp. 2, 3: “Au milieu d’un siècle de scepticisme, Dieu m’a fait la grâce de naître dans la foi. . . . Plus tard les bruits d’un monde ne croyait,” etc.

suffered! for I preferred faith without reason to doubt. All that tortured me. I took to philosophy. The theory of certitude quite upset me. I thought for a moment that I should doubt my very existence."³ But, true to his training and his glorious family tradition, and responsive to the grace which was given him, the tormented student flew to the Source of all help. A friend records of him that "In the darkest hour of trial, which had become for him actual physical pain," he "appealed to the mercy of God for light and peace. He threw himself on his knees before the Most Blessed Sacrament, and there in tears and in all humility he promised Our Lord that, if He would deign to make the lamp of truth shine in his sight, he would consecrate his life to its defense."⁴

In the providence of God the Abbé Noiret, one of Frederick's teachers at the Royal College, was the means by which the black clouds were banished. He was the priest philosopher, who chose Frederick as his companion on walks along the rugged and lonely paths about Lyons, and in peripatetic discourses cast the radiance of divine revelation over the world of men, proved how faith has nothing to fear from true science, nor true science from the true faith; and how right reason was the handmaiden of religion and the Catholic religion the protectress and preserver of reason. This priest knew how to show forth Christianity in the unsurpassable beauty and commanding majesty of eternal truth, drawing upon his deep learning, upon history, philosophy and science, most of all upon his keen knowledge of the Church and of human nature—especially of human nature in such a precocious, intro-

³ O'Meara, Kathleen, *Frédéric Ozanam*, p. 8.

⁴ Baunard, *op. cit.*, pp. 10, 11.

versive, and ardent youth as this companion of his. To the end of his life Frederick cherished reverently the memory of this spiritual and intellectual leader, among whose 150 pupils he was the youngest and the favorite. Victor Cousin called the Abbé Noiret the foremost professor of philosophy in France; and the Christian Socrates was the title given him by Jean-Jacques Ampère, the noted son of the greater André-Marie Ampère, in honor of whom Ozanam's Alma Mater in Lyons was later called the Lycée Ampère. The younger bearer of this illustrious name declared that "the influence of this able teacher decided the course of Ozanam's mind."⁵

It would not be easy to overestimate the importance of this crisis of doubt and dedication in the life of Frederick Ozanam. The horror of doubt, "which gnaws at the soul" and hovers over pillows "wet with vain tears," was to make him, the gentle, sensitive youth, even more tenderhearted than before, more responsive to the sufferings of others, quicker than ever to help those in pain or need. With most men, such an ordeal would have no more than a personal result, or a restricted one at most. In the case of Ozanam, because his life would touch so many other lives, it affected and blessed countless people.

Except for the shuddering experience of knowing himself suspended over the chasm of despair, Frederick's college days were an Arcadian period. Later, in a letter to his mother, he recalled that otherwise happy time: "Sometime there are memories. The amusing episode of college, and the first Communion, that touching scene whose minutest details are deeply graven on my heart. Then the initial delights of study, the uncertainties, the

⁵ O'Meara, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

explorations, the healthy and stimulating philosophy of the Abbé Noiret, and, in the midst of all that, many friendships begun on the benches at school which still endure. And all the games we played, from Noah's Ark and the tin soldiers to our sentimental rambles and our serious parties at chess. Afterward, as background to the picture, life at home, your caresses and spoilings, your gentle words while I worked at the table beside you, consulting you about my themes when in the sixth and reading you my French discourses as a rhetorician; the counsels and, sometimes, the good-natured growls of Papa, my long walks with him and his stories which used to give me so much pleasure . . ."⁶ This letter, and most of all the artless and revealing phrase, "the good-natured growls of Papa," equal many pages of observation and comment on the life at 14 Rue Pisay and those who lived there.

Regarding Frederick's college days, there is also the testimony of the Abbé Noiret, in a letter which the venerable and beloved teacher wrote of his favorite student: "He was cheerful, even gay. . . ." "He loved a joke dearly, and was sure to be in the midst of any fun going, for there was never a boy more popular with other boys." These sentences, written after Ozanam's death, were interspersed between ardent tributes to the student's exceptional talents and devotion to his books, "studying with enthusiasm far into the night."⁷

There took place, while Frederick was in Monsieur Coulet's law offices after leaving college, an episode which showed this young Frenchman's caliber. Among the clerks

⁶ Ozanam, Frédéric, *Lettres*; tome premier, pp. 104, 105.

⁷ O'Meara, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

were a number of dissolute, conceited young men who lived shameful lives and did not hesitate to boast of their debaucheries. Frederick was a more than usually shy youth, who would have much preferred to ignore the loud-mouthed roués and their obscene swaggering. He blushed at their talk, we are told, but after enduring it as long as he could, he turned on them boldly and gave them a piece of his vigorous mind. Master of language as he already was and thoroughly aroused, it must have been a scathing rebuke indeed that he, the youngest of the clerks, administered to the astonished braggarts. The Abbé Ozanam tells us that this brave defiance won for his brother the respect of the sorry youths, who had imagined him far too timid and bookish ever to assert himself.

At the studio of his drawing teacher, Frederick had another experience. Léonce Curnier, the author of an excellent account of Ozanam's youth, says that it was at the end of the year 1830. He and the youthful Ozanam sat beside each other, "surrounded by dissolute young men." It was painful to have to listen to them, but these two were overwhelmed by numbers and by their timidity, so they kept silence. "One day, however, matters came to such a pass that we both cried out in protest. Ozanam stood up. I seem now to see that countenance and hear that voice, of which I had hitherto only known the modesty and gentleness. He grew animated, became indignant, commanded and imposed silence. In a firm but restrained tone he proclaimed his Catholic faith, without, at the same time, uttering one word that could hurt the feelings of those misguided young men. They were silenced." He

adds that "In re-seating himself, the future professor of the Sorbonne grasped the hand of the simple industrial apprentice. That hand my young friend never withdrew."⁸

Henceforth, to the end of his life, Frederick Ozanam never ceased to defend the faith, by voice and pen. His first writings, if one does not count the compositions and the French and Latin verses of his school days, were contributions to *The Bee*, a little review founded in Lyons by Fathers Noiret and Legeay of the Royal College. Its purpose was to give alumni of the college a means of expression, and Frederick availed himself of the opportunity, commenting on current events, indulging in poetic flights, treating of historical and philosophical subjects.

Then Saint-Simonism invaded the many-bridged city at the meeting of the Rhône and the Saône. It came in the wake of the July Revolution of 1830, which ended the brief reign of Charles X as King of France and put Louis Philippe on the throne as King of the French. Frederick's friend, Materne, was enthusiastic about the revolt. Young Ozanam wrote to him: "For myself, I am trying to grow up. I watch, I wait, I observe. In ten years' time I will tell you to what extent the Revolution was legitimate or illegitimate, providential or merely human."⁹

But when Saint-Simonism came to his city in April, 1831, the tireless student and voracious reader sprang into action against Pierre Leroux and Jean Reynaud, the disseminators of this "new religion." They wore bizarre, blue-stoled costumes, these preachers of the doctrines which were the legacy of the Comte de Saint-Simon, who had

⁸ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁹ Brodrick, J., S.J., *Frédéric Ozanam and His Society*, pp. 12, 13.

died in 1825, after a life which included divorce, dissipation, service with the French in the American Revolution, and fantastic though well-intentioned socialistic schemes. What Leroux and Reynaud preached in Lyons and others like them in other parts of France was received as a sublime revelation by many, both among the workers holding a multitude of grievances against the economic order, and among the students, drawn by the promise of reform couched in attractively Liberal theories of equality, moral emancipation, humanitarian sympathy, and the ever alluring prospect of a new golden age. At once the chivalrous Ozanam proceeded to fight against this aberration, one of the many current in France after the Revolution. He was eager to break his first lance in defense of the truth to which he had promised to dedicate his life. Young as he was, he undertook to refute the doctrines which threatened to seduce and infatuate many of his compatriots. Such a newspaper as the *Globe* supported Saint-Simon's theories in Paris; in Lyons they were popularized by the *Précurseur* and the *Organisateur*. The Liberal *Précurseur* accepted from the young writer two articles, in the first of which he wrote, characteristically:

“Deeply imbued with the eternal truths which contain for me consolation and hope, I find myself forced to express what my soul feels. I know that my voice is feeble and that my spirit is weak. It is not from a young man of 18 years of age that a perfect work is to be expected. If, then, I have failed in part, if I have made slips, let them be imputed not to the cause I plead but to my youth and to my inexperience. If, on the other hand, I seem to have in any way worthily upheld the cause in this first skirmish, deduce from that what the

elders could accomplish for that same principle, on behalf of which their children fear not to enter the lists."¹⁰

The *Précurseur* had promised to answer Ozanam's contributions, but it failed to do so. Nor did the *Globe* after having commented on his work, attempt to refute the young bachelor of arts. His friends urged Frederick to develop the two articles and publish them as a brochure. He responded with a complete examination of Saint-Simonism, treating it from the historical and critical as well as from the dogmatic and organic standpoints. The first paragraph of the conclusion, which Monsieur Baudard calls "clear and decisive, from a singularly virile mind," declares that the doctrine of Saint-Simon "was represented to us as founded upon the principles of human perfection, as resting upon an actual historical system established in harmony with the needs of humanity. It was announced as true in dogma, remote and holy in its origin, fruitful and beneficent in its effects. But history proves it false, conscience condemns it, common sense rejects it. Its primitive revelation is a fable, its novelty an illusion, its application immoral. Self-contradictory, it would be disastrous as well as impossible in its final development, it would impede human nature on its journey to perfection and civilization."¹¹

Acclaimed by his many friends and admirers in Lyons, the hundred-page *Reflexions sur la Doctrine de Saint-Simon* brought its 18-year-old author to the attention of

¹⁰ Ozanam, *Oeuvres Complètes*, tom sept., p. 356: "Ainsi se développaient à mes yeux ces grandes vérités; des pensées plaines de consolations et d'espérances s'offraient à moi, et je me sentais pressé de dire ce que mon âme éprouvait," etc.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 551: "Elle se présentait à nos regards comme fondée sur le principe de la perfectibilité humaine, comme appuyée sur un système historique que les faits vérifient, comme appelée par les besoins de l'humanité," etc.

men who were to have a bearing on his future: Lamennais, Lamartine, Chateaubriand. From Mâcon, Lamartine wrote in August, 1831: "I have just received and read with pleasure your work, which you have done me the honour to send me. When I consider your age, I am astonished and filled with admiration for your genius. Please accept my best wishes. I am proud to think that a thought of mine, merely expressed, should have inspired you to write such a beautiful critique. Believe rather that the thought was not mine but yours; mine has been but the spark that fired your soul. Your first effort guarantees one more combatant in the crusade of moral and religious philosophy against gross and material reaction. I, too, look forward to victory." From Geneva, on August 2 of that year, Chateaubriand wrote to a friend: "I have glanced over the little work of Monsieur Ozanam. I had already read something of it in the *Précurseur*. The work is excellently conceived and the closing passage is arresting. I am sorry that the author should have squandered his time and his talents in refuting what was not worthy of his attention. . . . Please convey my best thanks to Monsieur Ozanam."¹² And Lamennais' paper, *l'Avenir*, *The Future*, gave the book a favorable review.

Among the many who hastened to overwhelm Frederick with praise was Materne, who had been with him at the Royal College. In a letter dated April 19, 1831, Ozanam confesses to this friend that he "is persecuted by a violent desire for publicity" and that "though he knows this glory to be an empty one, he is not therefore prevented from seeking it." This is the temptation to pride which the boy Ozanam had noticed in himself years before, and now

¹² Coates, A., *Letters of Frédéric Ozanam*, pp. 19, 30.

as then he was resolved to put it aside, foregoing all vainglory to labor for nothing less sublime than God and His truth.

Jean-Jacques Ampère saw in Frederick's first work "the germ of qualities which developed later in Ozanam: a keen, though still immature, taste for knowledge drawn from widely different sources; enthusiasm, loftiness of thought, great moderation in dealing with persons; above all, settled convictions and a sincere and courageous sense of duty, which drove this young David alone to combat." He saw also in the critique of Saint-Simonism the germ of what was to be, of work immense in quantity, high in quality. "It was the preface to the book at which he was to labor even to his last day."¹³

The author wrote to his cousin, Ernest Falconnet: "The reason why I like this little work is this, that in it I have planted the seeds of what is to occupy my life." He had promised, in humble but exultant gratitude for the gift of an unshakable faith after the terrifying experience of doubt, to dedicate himself to the defense of truth. Now he would set about the glorious task, with apostolic fervor, with a pure intention, and with the industry of an artist who is impatient to see his conception take form. He would write, in as many volumes as might be necessary, during as many years as might be granted him, a work which in his eager mind he had already christened: *La Démonstration de la Religion Catholique par l'antiquité et l'universalité des croissances et traditions du genre humain*, which meant he would demonstrate the truth of the Catholic faith by an appeal to and a proof of the antiquity and universal character

¹³ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

of humanity's unquenchable and constant need of and recourse to religion. It was a tremendous undertaking, but he approached it with something of his father's dogged determination, something of his mother's stern sense of duty, most of all with a young knight's high desire to keep his pledged word. "As for me, my part is taken, my task is traced for life," he wrote to Hippolyte Fortoul and another friend named Hippeau, a young Lyonnais who had gone to Paris to study law.

In this letter, dated January 15, 1831, some three months before the preachers of Saint-Simonism came to Lyons, Frederick spoke of the ambitious project so early in his mind: "I, who believe in Providence, and who do not despair of my country as [does] Charles Nodier, I believe in a sort of palingenesis. But what will be the form of it? What will be the law of the new society? I do not undertake to decide it." He states his belief that the first, deepest need of man and of human society is religion; that this is the cornerstone for which search must be made among the ruins of the old world in order to rear the new. In himself he feels an analogous need: "I must have something solid to which I may attach myself and take root to resist the torrent of doubt. And then, O my friends! my soul is filled with joy and consolation; for see, by the strength of its reason, it has found again precisely this Catholicism which was formerly taught me by the mouth of an excellent mother. . . . Shaken some time by doubt, I felt an invincible need to attach myself with all my strength to the column of the temple, even though it crush me in its fall. And now, behold today I find it again, resting upon knowledge, luminous with the rays of wisdom, glory and beauty. I

find it again, I embrace it with enthusiasm and love. Beside it will I stand and stretch out my arm to show it, a pharos of deliverance to those who are drifting on the sea of life. Happy I, if some friends will group themselves around me! Then would we join forces and create a work together. Others would unite with us, and perhaps one day Catholicism, full of youth and strength, would arise of a sudden on the world and put itself at the head of the new age to conduct it to civilization and happiness. O my friends, I feel moved in speaking to you and all glad in my soul, for the work is magnificent and I am young."¹⁴

Thus he dreamed, this lad of 18 years; dreamed his vast and splendid dream and shared it with his friends, as he had shared the earlier dreams of boyhood. However, he was the doer no less than the dreamer. He realized that he must acquire the mastery of a dozen languages, learn geology and astronomy, steep himself in universal history, especially in the history of man's religious beliefs since primitive times and their culmination and completion in the true and perfect religion of Christ. "Preliminary studies have already shown me the vastness of the perspective which I have opened out to you and over which my imagination hovers with delight," he said in this letter. "But it little avails to contemplate the road before me. I must put myself in the way for the hour has come, and if I wish to make a book at 35 I must begin at 18." He told Fortoul and Hippeau that they will no doubt "cry out and make merry over the temerity of this poor Ozanam, recalling La Fontaine's frog and the ridiculous mouse of Horace. Well, so you can! I myself have been

¹⁴ Ozanam, *Lettres*, Vol. I, pp. 7, 8.

astonished at my audacity, but what is one to do when an idea has one in its grip for two whole years, crowding the mind and impatient to be propagated? Is one master to hold it back? Or when a voice cries to you ceaselessly, Do this, for I will it, can you bid it be silent?"¹⁵ Is it any wonder that the biographers of Frederick Ozanam consider this letter among the most extraordinary ever penned by one who has not yet seen two decades of life? Father Brodrick draws our attention to the "accent of vocation" in it and says that never for a moment did Ozanam waver in his loyalty to this calling.

In a second letter, a month later, Frederick told Fortoul and Hippeau that "At this time the moments are centuries, the weeks are epochs. All these spectacles ought to stir young hearts and make them bubble over with the need of expansion in sweet and familiar intercourse. . . . As for myself, many things pass in my soul. When I turn my eyes on society the prodigious variety of happenings give rise to all sorts of feelings. My heart is alternately inundated with joy and steeped in bitterness. . . . I tell myself that the spectacle to which we are called is sublime, that it is splendid to assist at so solemn a turn of history, that the mission of a young man in society today is indeed grave and important. Far from me the thought of discouragement! I am delighted to be alive at a time when, perhaps, I shall have it in my power to do much good."¹⁶

He was soon to be where history was being made more immediately than in his provincial home town; where he would have it in his power "to do much good," but where his heart would also be "alternately inundated with joy

¹⁵ Ozanam, *Lettres*, Vol. I, pp. 8, 9.

¹⁶ Coates, *op. cit.*, pp. 21, 22, 23.

and steeped in bitterness." For Dr. Ozanam had decided that it was time for his son to begin his legal studies and that it should be in Paris, not in Dijon. Frederick had been 18 years old since April 23 of this year, 1831; a little taller now, but so slender as almost to seem not robust enough for his precocious, teeming brain. He was gentle as always, sensitive, full of enthusiasm, quick of perception, not without inclinations to quick-tempered, nervous outbursts, and to pride. And he was given to day-dreams as since childhood. They were eager dreams when he thought of Paris, the world's center of intellectual battles, the place where great events had their beginnings. Sad dreams when he thought of saying good-by to those he loved: the tender, patient mother of the wistful smile; the bighearted father of sage counsels and occasional good-natured growls; the elder brother Alphonse and the younger Charles, and good old Guigui, who was not too thrifty and never too busy to give him a tidbit between meals from her cupboard in the big kitchen, where the firelight played delightfully on the copper surfaces of kettles and pans.

As he lay in his bed these last nights at home in the autumn of 1831, Frederick Ozanam heard the indistinct murmur of the softly flowing Saône, the louder sound of the Rhône. The one made a faint accompaniment to his melancholy thoughts of farewell, the other an insistent obligato to his crowded wondering about what lay before him.

HOMESICK IN PARIS

THERE was sadness in the autumn air of Paris, in the gaunt trees, the lowering gray sky, the wind that seemed both tired and bitter.

There was sadness, too, in the young man who turned from the dreary street to mount the steps of a boarding house. He was pale, his eyes nearsighted and he looked more than ordinarily slender in the tight-fitting trousers and the coat which, close at the waist, flared out in wide skirts, the attire of men and youths in the reign of Louis Philippe. This was Frederick Ozanam, come to the capital late in October or early in November of 1831, to matriculate at the University of Paris. He enrolled for legal studies at the *École de Droit*, the school of law, for historical and philosophical courses at the *Collège de France* and at the Sorbonne. Dejectedly the young man climbed the stairs to his room on an upper floor.

Solicitous Madame Ozanam had written to a relative in Paris, asking him to find a suitable lodging place for her son, but there was a mistake on someone's part and Frederick found himself in a boarding house with an atmosphere as unsuited as it well could be. He the studious, shy one was thrown into the company of frivolous, vulgar men and women. He the conscientiously practising Catholic found himself among those who not only did not practise his religion but scoffed at it. He was the only one

in the house who kept the fast days of the Church, he wrote to his mother. The others poked fun at him, especially after he declined to join them at cards in the evening. He had other and better things to do, to keep himself busy and fight the homesickness which weighed heavily on his spirit. He gave himself obediently to the courses in law but did not therefore deny himself the keen delight of other, far more congenial interests. Soon he translated from the German Bergmann's little book on the religion of Thibet and one by Mone on the mythology of Lapland. He read enormously, resumed the study of Hebrew. But busy as he kept himself, he could not escape periods of loneliness, of depression, self-pity. Not so easily, not so soon would he recover from the wrench of being torn from those he loved. His gentle, sensitive heart felt Paris to be the "capital of egotism," as he called it. "My young acquaintances are too far from my lodgings to see them often," he complained in a letter to his mother. "To confide in I have but you, mother—and God. But these two are legion." Again he wrote her: "The pursuit of knowledge and Catholicity, they are my consolations, and they are indeed beautiful."

The troubled exile visited the churches of Paris. That of Ste. Geneviève had been recently disestablished by a royal decree and was now the Pantheon. "A pagan temple in a city of Christians!" said Ozanam, bitterly. In St. Étienne-du-Mont, his parish church, his soul was lifted up by the magnificence of the divine services and the pure exaltation of the chant and organ music. Then one day when he was more dispirited than usual, he sought refuge in St. Étienne's, and kneeling on the floor among poor old women no humbler than he and beside children whose

faith was no simpler and stronger than his, Frederick Ozanam saw André-Marie Ampère, the bearer of one of the greatest scientific names of the nineteenth century. "It was like an invigorating shock from one of Ampère's primitive batteries. Frédéric had seen him at work, and this was how he prayed. He had found his cue: prayer and work. These were the sovereign remedies for *la maladie romantique*, which made people so 'miserably dissatisfied with themselves only because they loved themselves too well.'"¹ Now more poignantly than before, the young student's clear, honest mind recognized and confessed as a weakness his occasional surrender to sentimentality, to languid self-pity, engendered in so many young men of his time by the Romantic movement then in its heyday, particularly among the students of Paris.

Frederick had seen Ampère at work because he had for some time been a member of the great Christian scientist's household. In a letter dated December 12, 1831, he told his father how he had made a call of courtesy on the eminent man, with what kindness he had been received and what good fortune followed. Ampère asked his visitor about his lodgings, his studies, his associates. With the boyish diffidence which was one of the appealing aspects of his many-sided personality, young Ozanam blushed and hesitated. But his timidity and then the candor with which he spoke won him the big, quickly generous heart of the older man. Without a word he led Frederick to a door and opened it, revealing an attractive room, with large windows opening upon the garden. "This is my son's room," explained Ampère, "but he is and will for some time be in Germany. Would it suit you?" Frederick was

¹ Brodrick, J., S.J., *Frédéric Ozanam and His Society*, p. 24.

too astonished and too shy to answer at once, so his host went on: "Come and take possession of it. I offer you board and lodging here on the same terms as you are now paying. Your tastes and sentiments are like my own, and I shall be very glad to have you to talk to. You will make the acquaintance of my son, who has read very deeply in German literature, and you can make use of his library. You observe the fasts, so do we. My sister, daughter, and son dine with me. We shall form a pleasant company. What do you say?"²

Not even all this kindness and his thankfulness at being rescued from the distasteful boarding house were able to cure Frederick's homesickness at once. "What student's life can be happier than mine?" he asked; but added in a letter at this time: "Yet I feel ill at ease in an immense solitude. When separated from those I love I feel something of a child who must needs live at home." And to his father: "You wish to know what I miss most—you, father and mother and brothers—that is what I miss and what I ardently desire to see." He told his mother how much he regretted not being at home for the family fetes on St. Nicholas' Day, Christmas, New Year's. Paris is Babylon, Lyons the Zion for which he yearns in exile. The tender memory of his dead sister was with him, too, in those days, as it would always be with him. Above all, his mother was constantly in his thought, causing a sense of acute loss because he was separated from her but at the same time a pervading sense of her prayerful watching over him from afar. She was a shield and buckler to him amid the manifold temptations and the disheartening circumstances of his environment. He knew he ought to be

² Baunard, *Ozanam in His Correspondence*, p. 28.

deeply grateful, and he was, for the pleasant home in which Ampère was as a father to him. "God is infinitely kind in sweetening my exile by granting me such society," wrote the thankful student. "He saw how I should suffer from homesickness. He saw that, in my weakness, I stood in need of much consolation to sustain me to the end. He has given it to me."³ The celebrated scientist allowed his lodger to watch him, even help him at his experiments and Frederick often recalled how Ampère would now and again exclaim: "*Que Dieu est grand, Ozanam! Que Dieu est grand!*" as he contemplated a new wonder which his untiringly patient genius had discovered. The young man was grateful, too, for the books put at his disposal in the younger Ampère's library, for the privileges of the Institute of Science and the Mazarin library, opened to him by his host. His heart needed something more than this, however; needed friends of his own age, eager hearts and minds to share his dream of serving the Church, of demonstrating the truth of Catholicism in the headquarters of skepticism and unbelief, blasphemy, and moral decay.

By this time the year 1831 had passed, and on New Year's Day of 1832 Frederick Ozanam walked from Ampère's home at 19 Rue des Fosses-St. Victor, between the Polytechnic Institute and the Jardin du Roi, to the residence of the man who had greeted his youthful work on Saint-Simonism with generous praise. Francois-René de Chateaubriand was the author of *Le Génie du Christianisme*, the publication of which in 1802 made him famous. Soldier, exile in America and England, diplomat, writer—here was a man whom a studious, bookish, romantically inclined young fellow of many ideas would be glad indeed

³ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

to know. Perhaps Frederick was drawn to Chateaubriand in a special way because, like himself, the author of *The Genius of Christianity* had known the agony of doubt. He had fallen into "lamentable moral infirmities," but hearkened to his dying mother's appeal and returned to the faith. Desiring intensely to defend the religion he had for a time abandoned, he made his famous book a brilliant apology. Its argument is not perfect, but it was exactly what was needed at the time. "The eighteenth century had sought to destroy Christian dogmas by holding them up to ridicule, and had thus deluded cultivated minds. Chateaubriand took up the challenge; he proved that this derided religion was the most beautiful of all, and likewise the most favourable to literature and the arts."⁴ This was the man who, just back from Mass, greeted the student from Lyons cordially, inquired as to his studies, his special interests, his plans. Then he asked Ozanam whether he went to the theater. Frederick, still timid, wishing to tell the truth but boyishly reluctant to appear provincial and juvenile, hesitated, finally answered, "No," his mother had asked him not to set foot in the playhouses. Chateaubriand took Ozanam's hand and shook it heartily, counseled him to do what his mother wished. "You will get nothing from the theatre, you may on the contrary lose much there." Despite the urgings of some of his associates, Madame Ozanam's son stuck to this resolve. Once, at the age of 27, he went to the theater, for the first time in his life. The play was Corneille's "Polyeucte," and he was disappointed. He learned far more, much more advantageously, from the theater of life.

In addition to Ampère and Chateaubriand, Frederick

⁴ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, p. 640.

now met others who took part in the drama of Parisian and French life at this time, or from behind the scenes influenced the tone of the performance and the evolution of the plot. One was a priest whose career became the antithesis of his first baptismal name: the Abbé Félicité-Robert de Lamennais. Like Ozanam, he was intellectually brilliant and like him slight of build and of indifferent health. Frederick shared Lamennais' disapproval of those who would make the Church an appanage of the throne, shared his acute awareness of social injustices and his ardent desire to serve the Catholic cause by means of the press. But unlike Ozanam, the abbé was not humble enough, nor by strict self-discipline well balanced enough to escape error and misery. He had established his journal called *l'Avenir* on October 16, 1830, not long before the young son of a Lyons' physician wrote against Saint-Simonism. Ozanam devoured the *l'Avenir* articles from the pen of Lamennais and other like-minded writers. He was attracted by the stirring appeal of the abbé and his collaborators for a program of religious democracy based on an alliance of Catholicism and liberty.

Among the others of whom Frederick had heard and whom he was now to meet in the capital were Lamartine the poet, Ballanche, the "gentle and obstinate dreamer," Montalembert; and above all, Henri Lacordaire.

Alphonse de Lamartine, a native of Mâcon, was Ozanam's senior by 23 years. Fame had come to him on publication of his *Les Méditations Poétiques* in 1820. His verse had a quality of softness which detracted from its excellence, but it was elevated in tone. He had been in politics for some time and a year hence, in 1833, would be elected to Parliament and be an opponent of Louis

Philippe's regime. Frederick felt drawn to Lamartine because of his poetry, but more because of his position in the Catholic ranks and his generosity to the poor. When the faith of this man' grew dim, the younger admirer mourned and sought to save him. Lamartine wrote of Ozanam: "I have never ceased to love this young man. His orthodoxy, which sat on himself to perfection, was rooted in a charity of mind perfect also for others. One might differ from him, but one could never be polemical with him, for he had no bitterness in his nature. His tolerance was not a concession; it was a form of respect."⁵

It will be recalled that in his letter of January 15, 1831, to his friends Fortoul and Hippeau, Frederick used the word "palingenesis," which means rebirth, regeneration. That he did not use the more usual words may be traced to his interest in the philosophy of a fellow Lyonnais, Pierre Ballanche, the author of a book entitled *Palingenesis Sociale*. He revered Monsieur Ballanche without agreeing completely with the good man's theories. Young as he was, he preserved an independent judgment and pointed out in Ballanche's work "*quelque erreurs dans la philosophie de l'histoire.*" Ainslee Coates, in his translation of Ozanam's letters, says that Frederick wrote from Paris on March 25, 1832, to his cousin Falconnet: "I read the works of Monsieur Ballanche with pleasure and, I hope, with fruit. They include great ideas with a certain number of errors on the philosophy of history."⁶

Charles-Forbes-René Comte de Montalembert was only three years older than Ozanam. At the College of Sainte-Barbe he became the friend of Léon Cornudet, another

⁵ Brodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁶ Coates, A., *Letters of Frédéric Ozanam*, p. 57.

Catholic youth among the 20 students—all of them about 17 years old—of whom scarcely one practised his religion. The letters of these two to each other have remained renowned. At an early age Montalembert wrote: "Would it not be a splendid thing to show that religion is the mother of liberty?" Some of the most important parts of his life's work inspired by this thought came after Ozanam had made his acquaintance in Paris.

It was at the salon maintained by the Comte de Montalembert that Frederick first met Henri Lacordaire, who was to be one of his heroes, to whom he was to be a hero, mourned in death, remembered in eloquent tributes. Montalembert's was one of the most notable among the salons so characteristic of French society in those days. Here the young student met the leaders in the French intellectual life of the first half of the nineteenth century: in addition to his cherished Lacordaire and Ballanche, Ampère the elder and his son, these included St. Beuve the critic, Alfred de Vigny the Romantic poet, Lherminier the naturalist, Victor Hugo, then the idol of the romantic students of the capital, Victor Considerant, collaborator and successor of Fourier in the dream of an ideal socialistic State. Besides these Frenchmen, he met such foreigners as Karl Friedrich von Savigny, who was to become a Prussian diplomat, a leader in the Center party of Germany and Windthorst's co-worker; Eckstein, Danish-born exponent of de Maistre's and Bonald's traditionalism; Mickiewicz, the Polish poet whose *Pèlerine Polonais* would be translated by Montalembert in 1833; and Felix de Mèrode, who had prospects for a time of being made the first King of the Belgians but had the far higher honor of descent from the great St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

All these and others the 18-year-old student met, listened to, followed with ardor or refused to follow, according as their views coincided with his strong, clear, and early achieved convictions regarding God and His Church, man and his eternal destiny. But this discrimination, exceptional in one of his years, never marred his friendliness, his gracious conduct; nor lessened the exquisite courtesy and charity with which Frederick Ozanam treated all with whom he came into contact. He was still boyishly diffident and never acquired the art of complete self-assurance in social intercourse. His humbleness, the modest demeanor which sat so appealingly upon this brilliant youth, won him many friends. It was a factor of the utmost importance in making him a leader who needed no self-assertive domination, who could be the center of movements without arrogance, without the least shadow of vanity or self-interest. "He was the kind of person, he said, who needs men greater than himself both around him and over him, but his humility and constant prayerfulness gave him a balance and instinct of orthodoxy which kept him from being dazzled by even the fairest-appearing reputations. He was shy of de Maistre and Bonald because they appeared 'to disregard the rights of the future,' and he drew away from Lamennais and Lamartine because 'they broke with the divine traditions of the past.'"⁷

If we keep these two phrases in mind, "the rights of the future" and "the divine traditions of the past," we shall have a key to Ozanam's thought and work, his position as a student and his later activity.

More decisive in Frederick's life than the influence of the men of science, and letters and public affairs whom

⁷ Brodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

he met at Montalembert's evening gatherings was the influence of the Abbé Marduel, also a Lyonnais, who became his spiritual director early in his Parisian period. Both his parents and his older brother, Alphonse, had recommended this priest to their son and brother when he left home for the capital. Alphonse had been under Père Marduel's direction for some time. Now the abbé lived in shabby quarters in the Rue Masillon, near Notre Dame, having come to Paris to assist his brother, the parish priest of St. Roch's. Here the former vicar of St. Nazier's in Lyons lived on the pittance allowed him by the parishioners of St. Roch, and even this little he shared with those who had less. His servant, loyal amid the extreme poverty of his master, scoured the city to acquire somehow the necessities of life for the abbé and himself. Failing sight prevented the aged priest from reading his Breviary, so he kept a rosary in his hands, praying constantly when not listening to the soul troubles of the many who came to him. They came from all strata of Parisian society, nobles and aristocrats, students and professional men, writers, laborers, poor people to whom he gave spiritual no less than bodily food. And now there was added to his long, varied list of penitents this student, who needed so much the guidance of a kindhearted, clear-headed older man, one of tranquil soul and deep understanding.

The Abbé Ozanam writes: "One need not be astonished at the progress made by the young student in this school of gentle piety. His well deserved confidence in and deference to the counsels of this wise intellect, the divine enlightenment which he received, the sacred fire which was there enkindled, enabled him with the grace of God

to triumph in the interior struggle for truth and virtue. Under his direction, this well-beloved brother notwithstanding his many occupations, found plenty of time each day for meditation and prayer.”⁸

Well might his brother speak of Frederick's many occupations. He applied himself to his legal studies for at least seven or eight hours every day, he wrote to his mother; then added a prodigious amount of reading, attended lectures in history, philosophy and literature. Indeed his trouble was that “he felt drawn in a hundred directions.” Lamartine said that all of the muses were his. There were also the Sunday evenings in the salon of Montalembert. And sometimes Ampère asked the young man who lived with him to be his laboratory assistant. The scientist is said to have declared that Frederick, had he given himself to that science, might have become an outstanding mathematician.⁹ Thus his student days were busy days indeed, perhaps so filled with exciting intellectual work and consoling and strengthening practices of religion that his homesickness was lessened though by no means entirely banished.

Ozanam disliked Paris almost as much as when first he came there in the previous autumn; and yet, he refused to leave it and return to Lyons when the opportunity arose. He had plunged into the stream of life which flowed at its highest in this city, where all the contemporary currents converged in a perilous but exhilarating whirlpool. He had taken the plunge, he would keep on breasting the stream. When the cholera broke out in Paris and bloody civil war in Lyons, he worried about the loved

⁸ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁹ Hardy, Edmund, *Friederich Ozanam, Ein Leben im Dienste der Wahrheit und Liebe*, p. 46.

ones at home, and they about him. His parents asked him to return to Lyons, he begged to be allowed to stay, pleading the urgency of keeping hard at his books because the examinations were to come so soon. And at this time, in 1832, Frederick Ozanam began to emulate his charitable parents. Like his physician father and his warm-hearted mother, he visited the sick, those stricken by the cholera. Characteristically, he wrote to his mother to assure her that he was in no danger and imploring her not to worry, then calmly confiding himself to God's care went about the work which foreshadowed one of the great things in his life and in the modern history of the Church.

Among those whom Ozanam visited were fellow students, for whom he wrote letters, to whom he read, and the Abbé Duchesne, then the parish priest of Notre Dame des Champs. This priest's tastes were literary, so in his convalescence he asked Frederick for some "suitable reading." With a literalness which may have sprung from a shyly grim humor, the next day the student brought him three books, accounts of three of the classical pestilences in literature, that of Athens described by Thucydides, the one described by Lucretius, and the great Italian Manzoni's in his masterpiece, *I Promessi Sposi*.

An insight into the character of Ozanam's fatherly friend and host, André-Marie Ampère, was given when the savant said to the student one day while the pestilence raged: "Ozanam, if the cholera seizes me during the night I shall rap on the floor. Don't come to my assistance, but run as quickly as possible for my confessor. Afterwards you may go and summon my physician." But Ampère and Ozanam escaped the scourge, which at one

stage of its prevalence caused as many as 1300 deaths in a single day. A number of Ozanam's biographers mention the fact that, while death ravaged one side of the Rue Fosses-St. Victor, it spared the other side, the one on which these two lived. Frederick, resorting to the Bible which he revered so highly, cited verses seven and nine of the Psalm 90, which the Church uses at Compline: "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh unto thee. Because thou, O Lord, art my hope; thou hast made the Most High thy refuge."

The abatement of the pestilence brought no lightening of Ozanam's daily program. The time no longer given to visiting the cholera victims, and more than that, was now given to other work, important in the development of his character and in the history of the Catholic Revival in which he was one of the leaders.

Even before he left Lyons, Frederick had longed to surround himself, once he was in Paris, with young associates after his own heart, fervently Catholic, studious, eager to serve the cause of truth, determined to do their utmost to stem the currents of evil. He told Ernest Falconnet he knew such men to be in Paris, "but they are scattered like golden ore in a rubbish-heap." Now the magnet of Ozanam's ardent and friendly soul was to draw the precious pieces together and fuse them into an apt instrument. In England at this time, Newman was beginning the famous Tracts of the Times, and his motto, "They shall know the difference now," might well have been the watchword of Ozanam and his followers, who entered upon a lay apostolate of which they did not know the scope and ultimate results.

It is correct to speak of Ozanam's followers, even disciples; for though he was too honestly humble to seek the first place in anything, he was indisputably the leader of this group. Confiding as he often did in his cousin Ernest, he wrote: "Because God and education have endowed me with some breadth of ideas, some largeness of tolerance, they would make me a sort of leader of the Catholic youth of these parts. A number of young people, full of merit, give me an esteem of which I feel very unworthy, and men of ripe age make advances to me. I must be at the head of every movement and, when there is anything difficult to do, I must bear the burden of it. Impossible that there should be a reunion, a conference of law or literature, unless I preside at it. Five or six magazines or journals ask me for articles. In a word, a crowd of circumstances, independent of my will, besiege me, pursue me, and draw me out of the line I traced for myself. I do not tell you this as a boast. On the contrary, I feel my weakness so much, I who am not twenty-one years old, that compliments and praises rather humiliate me, and I almost feel a desire to laugh at my own importance. But it is no laughing matter. Rather do I suffer incredible annoyance when I feel all these fumes rise to my head and intoxicate me. . . . Still, may not this conjunction of external circumstances be a sign of the will of God? I do not know, and in my uncertainty I run neither ahead nor behind. I let things come; I resist; if the attraction proves too strong I allow myself to follow. While waiting, I do what I can for my law. . . . Lallier and Chaurand are here, chattering so hard that I must stop. They send you a thousand regards, the one because he knows you,

and the other because he would like to know you. *Je t'embrasse de grand coeur.*"¹⁰

Lallier and Chaurand, first to be mentioned, were two among the goodly number, mostly Lyonnais and law students, whom Ozanam's genius for friendship and reluctant, self-astonished leadership was to bind to him with hoops of steel. One of the first undertakings of the closely knit band was to rise to the defense of Christian truth against the attacks made upon it by the materialistic, irreligious professors whose lectures they attended. At the Sorbonne, fallen far indeed from its first estate as a college of theology, Letronne declared that the papacy was no more than "a transitory institution, born under Charlemagne, dying today." Another professor, Théodore Jouffroy, maintained that Christianity was "quite, quite *passé*." He was an adherent of the Scottish philosophers Reid and Dugald Stewart, whose teaching had brought him to complete unbelief. In a powerful, soul-chilling passage he told of the night in which despairing doubt overwhelmed him. "That moment was terrible!" Peace was crushed out of him, he felt himself condemned to a life "alone with my fatal thoughts, which had carried me out there into exile, and which I felt I could curse."¹¹

Only four months after his arrival in Paris Ozanam wrote of the young men of noble dispositions who have given themselves up to this great work he said: "Every time that a professor raises his voice against Revelation, Catholic voices are raised in protest." On two occasions he had his share in the work, sending his objections in

¹⁰ Ozanam, *Lettres*, pp. 80, 81.

¹¹ Hughes, Henry Louis, *Frederick Ozanam*, p. 38.

writing to the offending faculty members, and he reports that the replies, read out in the lecture room, had the best possible effect, "both on the professor, who all but retracted, and on the class, who applauded." He added that the most striking results consisted in this, that the young students were shown how it is possible to be a Catholic and sensible, to love religion and liberty at the same time, and that it served to withdraw young men from religious indifferences and accustom them to the discussion of serious affairs.

The earlier skirmishes led to the major battle with Jouffroy, professor of philosophy. Ozanam sent a reply to one of the lecturer's attacks on Christianity, but Jouffroy deferred his answer for two weeks, "doubtless to get his weapons ready." Then he did not read the student's letter of protest, but summarized it to suit himself and answered the summary he had made. Ozanam, who does not mention his own name in describing the episode, found himself misrepresented and sent a second protest, to which Jouffroy paid no attention, continuing to assert that Catholicity was inconsistent with science and liberty. "Thereupon we came together, we drew up a joint protest proclaiming our sentiments; it had fifteen signatures hurriedly attached to it and was forwarded to Monsieur Jouffroy. This time there was no course open to him but to read it aloud. The large audience, over two hundred in number, listened to our profession of faith with respect. The philosopher labored in vain to reply. He fashioned excuses, assuring all that he had no desire to single out Christianity for attack; that he had the greatest possible respect for it, and that in the future he would see that no form of religious belief was offended." Monsignor Baunard says:

"Thus did the professors of the Sorbonne learn to know him who, ten years later, was to sit in their midst and to become their colleague. Meantime they became more moderate in their language. Perhaps he who profited most was Jouffroy, who said later, when dying: 'All these systems lead nowhere. A single act of Christian faith is worth many thousand such.'"¹²

Ozanam and the kindred spirits whose leader he was were gratified but by no means satisfied by the success of their efforts to make the professors behave themselves. They knew only too well that something more must be done, that the truth must be given an opportunity to speak for itself and to a far larger audience than that reached by their protests. They felt a sense of horror at the deadly havoc wrought among the mass of students in a great city like Paris by the unbelief and scoffing which seemed to be in the very air they breathed. So the young crusaders turned to the Abbé Gerbet, a priest 34 years of age who resided in the Sorbonne and whom Cousin called a "mystical angel." He lectured on Sacred Scripture in the theological faculty of Paris University, was a thorough scholar, a profound philosopher, and an able writer. At the request of Frederick and the others, he now began a series of lectures on the philosophy of history, speaking once each fortnight in a hall which could not seat more than three hundred persons. "One can say now that the light is piercing the darkness," reported Ozanam. This did not satisfy him and his colleagues. They told each other that much more good could be done if a larger crowd

¹² Baunard, *op. cit.*, pp. 45, 46. O'Meara, *op. cit.*, p. 59, says Jouffroy, dying reconciled to the Church, declared "all the systems put together are not worth one page of the Catechism."

could be accommodated. Why should not Notre Dame de Paris, the pride of all Frenchmen and the mecca of visitors from other lands, why should not this great church become a chair of effective apologetics, a sacred lecture hall for the preaching of truth? They deemed the time the more opportune and propitious because at this juncture St. Hyacinth's academy in the Church of the Madeleine was closed, owing to regrettable differences which brought to an end the brilliant apologetical discourses there of the Abbé Dupanloup, later Archbishop of Orleans. Saddened by this untoward occurrence, the more so because the lectures had been intended especially for young men, Ozanam and his followers determined to draw up a petition to Archbishop de Quélen of Paris. Their choice for the conferences which they asked him to inaugurate at Notre Dame was the Abbé Henri Lacordaire. But over him hung the shadow of *l'Avenir*, which had suspended publication on November 15, 1831, after it had been barred from some of the French seminaries and suspicion of unorthodoxy had been raised against it. Archbishop de Quélen did not grant the students' request.

Meanwhile, Ozanam and his companions had founded the Conference of History, a sort of debating club, on the ruins of *la Société des Bonnes Études*, which like the Congregation of the Blessed Virgin had been formed for active Catholic students but had been destroyed by the July Revolution in 1830. The new organization, sometimes called the Conference of Literature, flourished in the Quartier Latin and was presided over by "a great and good man, a professor of philosophy," Bailly de Surcy, who was generally called Monsieur Bailly. In his flat in the Place de l'Estrapade near the Sorbonne, Catholic

students could find books and magazines and newspapers explaining and defending their religion, and a meeting room. It was there that Ozanam and his friends foregathered. "Applications for membership are on the increase" wrote the leader on March 19, 1833. "We have got some young recruits of superior ability, among whom are to be found great travelers, art critics, experts in political economy. The majority read history, some philosophy. We have even some who are endowed with poetic genius, and who will one day be great poets, if death or the storms of life do not interrupt their development." Naturally, Lyonnais students rallied about the foremost among them. Ozanam mentions his cousin, Henri Pessa-neaux, who would walk of an evening from the Rue de Courcelles across Paris to the Montagne Ste. Geneviève to inquire as to Frederick's health; the painter Janmot, a friend since childhood and a member of the same First Communion class; another student named Velay who attended the Polytechnic Institute; Dufieux, and among others Paul Brac de la Perrière, concerning whom Ozanam said he regretted not having known him sooner, when both were yet in Lyons.

The Conference of History held open meetings under the capable and benign aegis of Monsieur Bailly, who endeared himself to Frederick and the others. Ozanam tells us that the lists were open to every form of thought, even to the doctrine of Saint-Simonism, and politics alone excepted, there was complete liberty of debate. What a variety of opinions must have been expressed! Paris was a Babel of movements, philosophies of life. Voltairianism flourished and the mischievous legacy of Rousseau; Fourierism, Socialistic schemes of several kinds, some fantas-

tic, some springing from sincere but muddled concepts; Romanticism, too, and the programs advocated and adhered to by the Catholics. "Young philosophers come to demand from Catholicity an account of its doctrines and of its works. Then, impelled by the inspiration of the moment, one of us faces the attack, develops the Christian point of view which has been misunderstood, unfolds the pages of history to show the glory of the works of the Church, and finding perhaps an unexpected fund of eloquence in the grandeur of the subject, establishes upon a solid basis the immortal union of true philosophy and faith."¹³ Frederick does not say that he was the one who oftenest faced the attack. Who better than he among these young men could unfold the pages of history, his constant study, the weapon he was preparing to use in defense of the Church? And we know that his was often an unexpected fund of eloquence when he dwelt upon a theme of grandeur.

But it happened, too, on occasion that the Catholic champions, taken unawares, found themselves unable to give a satisfactory answer to their antireligious opponents. One day one of the debating club members, Lallier, was condoling over the sad situation with Le Taillandier, an older member. The latter, a student from Rouen, declared that he should much prefer another kind of meeting, a gathering solely of young Christians, who "instead of controversy and debate, should devote themselves to the practice of good works." Still another member of the group, Lamache, has recorded the fact that one of the meetings in the early months of 1833 was more stormy than any hitherto held. Ozanam had to face unjust and

¹³ Ozanam, *Lettres*, *loc. cit.*, p. 67.

bitter attacks and was saddened by "the outrage offered to God and to the Church." However, he did not advise the abandonment of the conference gatherings. "Let us continue to stand in the breach and face the attack. But do you not feel, as I do, the need of some other little society, outside of this militant conference, which would be composed of religious friends who would work as well as talk, and who would thus by showing the vitality of their faith, affirm its truth?" Again: "After a year's working and struggling, has any good come of this conference, to which I have sacrificed my legal studies and by which I have earned for myself the just reproaches of my family? In return for such trials and sacrifices, have we made one single conquest for Jesus Christ?" Then, because he was humble and accustomed to look within himself, suspecting a lack of something there, the young student asked whether it was not perhaps the want of that which would bring the blessing of heaven down upon their work. "Yes, one thing is wanting . . . works of charity! The blessing of the poor is the blessing of God!"¹⁴

There was tension in the Place de la l'Estrapade and an excess of vehemence that wounded the sensitive, eagerly friendly Ozanam in those spring days of 1833. Once, when the leader of the Catholic students called upon the unbelievers to consider the benefits which Christianity had conferred upon mankind since its founding, one of the hotheaded young men suddenly interrupted him. He stood up as he cried out: "You are right, Ozanam, when you speak of the past! In past centuries Christianity did marvelous things. But what is it doing for mankind now? And you, who pride yourself on being a Catholic, what

¹⁴ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

are you doing for the poor? Where are those tangible results which alone will teach us the practical value of your faith? We await them, for it is through them that we shall be converted."

The challenge was like an arrow, swift, sharp, and sure. It lodged in the heart of Frederick Ozanam, in the hearts of Lallier, Lamache, Le Taillandier, and others. And out of the wounds it made was to come, under God, healing for many of His wounded children. This would be the most important, most beautiful and most enduring result of the student movement fathered by Frederick Ozanam. It was no small matter to have rallied his comrades to the defense of the faith so effectively that Professor Jouffroy said, hitherto all protests had come from materialists, but now the Catholic voice was heard. It was no small matter to have eventually brought about the Notre Dame conferences, in which Lacordaire "lifted the multitude out of itself with his fiery discourses, and imported into pulpit eloquence the burning lyricism of the Romantics." It was a greater thing which would now come to pass because Frederick, when he came to Paris in 1831, did not allow himself to be an idler, a self-centered boulevardier, nor a conceited, languishing Romantic. The work of the students under his leadership is called *Catholicism enu Quartier Latin* by Georges Goyau, the eminent historian and Academician. He says that the contemporaries of Ozanam would have been able to appraise the future more correctly if they had looked to the Latin Quarter, where a young student set in motion a "movement of intelligences, a movement of spirits." In the university atmosphere he kept the Catholic idea uppermost in his thought, and dissociated himself from the idea of the

Legitimists. Against him the anti-Catholic weapons were enfeebled. Coming from Lyons, where revolutionary uprisings "were less the effervescences of ideas than tumults of workers, and as a spectator of the success won there by the Saint-Simonists," Ozanam dreamed of a Christian charity concerned with the sufferings of the people. He wished to study the misery of the poor, relieve it, and then find a remedy for it in the teaching of Christ.¹⁵

¹⁵ Goyau, Georges, *Histoire Religieuse*, p. 573; tome sept., *Histoire de la Nation Française*.

A FLAME IS KINDLED

TWO young men climbed the rickety stairs of a Paris tenement. They carried a supply of wood and coal, all that was left of their winter's fuel. Though spring had come, there was a damp chill in the air where wretched folk had neither fire nor enough clothing or bedding. The two young men knelt at the cold and empty hearth, arranged the wood and struck a flame. Grateful warmth came to the shivering bodies and discouraged souls of the poor people in the room, and grateful warmth flooded the hearts of the firemakers.

When Frederick Ozanam and his friend, Auguste Le Taillandier, lighted that fire in a Parisian hovel in 1883, it was the first of countless fires that love of neighbor would light on the hearths of the poor in all parts of the world. At the same time they kindled another, a symbolic fire, an immaterial, spiritual flame, in their own hearts and in the hearts of their fellow students. This flame would spread from their tender breasts to those of many others in the French capital, first; then to the hearts of men everywhere, to burn brightly as long as men have a sense of brotherhood and the godlike quality of mercy.

Ozanam and Le Taillandier had carried the fuel to the tenement fireplace at once upon leaving the meeting at which the challenge had been flung: What is Christianity doing now, not what did it do in the past, for humanity? What are you doing for the poor? Where is the proof of your faith's vitality, and its truth? The Abbé

Ozanam says in his brother's biography: "On leaving there, Frederick found himself with Le Taillandier, who was no less deeply affected. 'Well, to be practical, what are we going to do to translate our faith into deeds?' they asked one another. The answer came from the same Christian heart: 'We must do what is most agreeable to God. Therefore, we must do what Our Lord Jesus Christ did when preaching the Gospel. Let us go to the poor!'"¹

Father Brodrick writes that at the meeting which had been so extraordinarily stormy, "a young writer of Voltairean propensities regaled the conference with a glorification of Byron and a blasphemous denunciation of Christianity. Ozanam, who had answered him, came away that evening very sad and thoughtful, accompanied by Lamache and Devaux. Suddenly he spoke, urging that without giving up their beloved discussions, they should start an additional 'reunion of charity,' which would strengthen the faith of the Catholics and show their unbelieving or indifferent comrades that Christianity had lost nothing of its beneficent vitality. Fifty-three years later Lamache, the last survivor of the group, remembered every detail of the scene. 'I can see the flame burning in Ozanam's eyes,' he wrote, 'I can hear his voice trembling a little with emotion as he explains to Devaux and myself his project of a charitable Catholic association.' In another letter, written fifty years after the event, the same witness said: 'He spoke of his plan to me in terms so warm and moving that only a man with no heart or faith in him could have failed to give it instant adherence.'²

The young men who admired, loved, and followed Fred-

¹ Baunard, L., *Ozanam in His Correspondence*, p. 65.

² Brodrick, J., S.J., *Frédéric Ozanam and His Society*, pp. 32, 33.

erick Ozanam had hearts indeed, and deep faith, so it was an easy matter for him to win their approval and glad co-operation. Monsieur Bailly, friend and counselor of the group, welcomed the suggestion that "a small private association, altogether devoted to charity" be organized by his protégés. Glad to set them to work at once, he suggested that they consult their parish priest, the pastor of St. Étienne-du-Mont. He, the Abbé Ollivier who later became the Bishop of Evreux, had no understanding whatever of the young men's desire and contented himself with advising Frederick and the others to teach Catechism to the children of poor families. But this was not the direction in which the young crusaders wished to go. Ozanam had said, "*Allons aux pauvres!*—Let us go to the poor!" They wished to seek out those in the direst need, the despised, neglected ones of the tenements, where children grew up in squalor and often in spiritual deprivation as sordid and absolute as their physical condition. There was appalling poverty in the workers' quarters of the city, such misery as Frederick had seen in the slums of Lyons. Monsieur Bailly, who knew what he was talking about, told the young men that if they acted prudently, the visiting of the poor in the places where they lived would have a double salutary effect—on the poor and on the visitors. Then, Ozanam having pointed out that two members of the Conference of History could be counted on in addition to Le Taillandier, Lallier, Lammache and himself, it was decided to hold a meeting, to launch the project. Père or Papa Bailly, as he was called by the students because of his fatherly interest in them, put the office of his newspaper, *La Tribune Catholique*, at their disposal. This was at 18 Rue de Petit Bourbon-

Saint-Sulpice. That is the verified place. The verified date is May, 1833, the time 8 o'clock in the evening, and it is said to have been on a Tuesday. But we do not know the day of the month. And there has been no little disputing as to the number present at this first, founding session, beyond all doubt one of the most noteworthy gatherings of Catholic laymen in the history of the Church.

Felix Clavé and Jules Devaux were the two who "could be counted on," in addition to the immortal four whom a strong and exquisite friendship had already bound together. That made six, and Papa Bailly was the seventh. In some early documents the number of the cofounders is given as eight, or as "seven or eight." The *Bulletin* of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, an official publication, is authority for the statement that "In the absence of written documents (for at that time they did not keep or preserve minutes or official statements) opinions have long differed as to the exact number of members present at the first two or three meetings. Ozanam, in particular, owing to his familiarity with the scholastic philosophers, protested modestly and playfully when later on members spoke before him of the seven founders of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. 'Oh! my good friend,' he said to Devaux, who on meeting Ozanam in Rome evoked very dear recollections, 'let us not stop at the number seven, because there are people who would see mystic significance in that too! Is not seven the number of the Sacraments?'"³

"Such little attention was paid to the details of the opening meeting that in the diary of a member of the first Conference, written daily from March, 1834, for several months, the date of the foundation of the Confer-

³ *Bulletin of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul*. Vol. 58, p. 121, April, 1913.

ence was placed in 'June or July, 1833' (instead of *May*), and the diarist stated that he 'believed there were eight or ten members at that time' (instead of *seven*).

"The Abbé Gellon, in a work, *Three Precursors of the Catholic Revival, Lacordaire, the Abbé Perreyve, Frederick Ozanam*, led astray by a statement, which was customary with Ozanam himself, believed and recorded that our first members were eight in number.

"Finally, Monsignor Baunard, the author of the *Magnum opus (Frederick Ozanam in His Correspondence)*, is not sure in his work of the exact number, and wavers between seven and eight.

"According to every account, if we include M. Bailly, the first members of the first Conference were seven in number. Their names were: Frederick Ozanam, Paul Lamache, Jules Devaux, François Lallier, Auguste Le Tailandier, Felix Clavé, and Monsieur Bailly. [de Lanzac de Laborie, Secretary-General of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.]

"It is hoped that this considered statement of M. de Lanzac de Laborie, who as Secretary-General of the Society has special opportunities of reference, and who took special pains to verify them will now definitely prevail, and that every member of the Society will know that the first founders of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul were seven in number, and that their names were as above stated."⁴

These, then, are the seven pioneers, the seven founders: Emmanuel Joseph Bailly, the owner of a printing shop and publisher of a newspaper. He lived at 11 Place l'Estrapade and was 40 years old when he helped to establish

⁴ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 426 (appendix).

the Vincentian society, was the first president of the first unit and later for eleven years first president general of the entire society.

Felix Clavé, born in Paris and a law student.

Jules Devaux, who came from Columbières, Calvados, 21 years of age and a second-year student of medicine.

François Lallier, 19 years old and in his second year of legal studies.

Paul Lamache, a second-year law student and 24 years old.

Auguste Le Taillandier, who came from Rouen. He was 22 years of age and in his second year at the law school.

Frederick Ozanam.

Monsieur Bailly counseled and encouraged the young apostles of charity, and having accepted the presidency, presided at the first meeting. At this time he told them that if they really wished to serve the poor and themselves, they ought to direct their charity to moral and spiritual rather than to material improvement alone. They would thus sanctify themselves in seeing Christ suffering in the persons of the poor. "Ozanam was sitting at M. Bailly's right hand, and one of those present recalls vividly the expression of his countenance as, with his black eyes alight, and his irregular, expressive features quivering with sympathy, he listened to the President's words, and then burst out into joyous assent."⁵ Bailly spoke of doing more than giving pittances of money or food, of making the visits a medium of moral assistance through the "alms of good advice" . . . *l'aumône de la direction*. This appealed to the pioneers, for they had little else to give.

⁵ O'Meara, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

The late *Société des Bonnes Études*, springing from a different soil, had asked its members to help each other toward success in the profession each might choose. This new organization paid no attention to its members' material ambitions, even embodied in its rule the provision that no one was to use it for any personal interest whatsoever. Humble and unselfish devotion to works of charity was the ideal of Papa Bailly and the six young men who placed their efforts under the patronage of St. Vincent de Paul, his intercession being invoked at the meetings even before he was formally chosen patron and the conference officially given his name. Perhaps it was Monsieur Bailly who suggested the patronage and the name, for devotion to St. Vincent was a tradition in his family. His father had cherished a large collection of manuscripts once belonging to the great Apostle of Charity, whom all the Baillys called their family saint. A brother of Monsieur Bailly joined the society of priests founded by St. Vincent de Paul, and he himself had long been active in charity work. In 1830 he had become the chief assistant to the Abbé Borderies in the Society of Good Works, and also to the Abbé Desgenettes, then parish priest at the Church of the Missions. Madame Bailly, like Madame Ozanam, "shared her husband's devotion to Our Lord Jesus Christ in the person of the poor," and had undertaken to call on poor folk in their homes. But the conditions were so discouraging that the good woman agreed with her husband: "It was not women's work. Men, and young men, were wanted for it." Now there were men eagerly willing to do this work, four of the seven no more than 20 years of age, two slightly older, and their more mature mentor.

St. Vincent de Paul being their patron and model, it was natural for Ozanam and his colleagues to turn to the Vincentian Sisters, the Daughters of Charity, who had this saint for their founder. One of these valiant women, Soeur Rosalie, had requested Madame Bailly to enter upon the willingly begun but unsuccessful visiting of the poor, and now Jules Devaux was chosen by his friends and associates to call upon Sister Rosalie, whose abounding love of the poor and amazingly extensive work for them were known throughout Paris.⁶ Born in 1786, she came to the Sisters of Charity mother house in Paris a peasant girl of 15. Four years before her death in 1856 she received the Legion of Honor ribbon. Dying, her last words were: "My God and my poor!" She who was deservedly called the Mother of the Poor of Paris welcomed young Monsieur Devaux, gave the beginners such advice as only she could give, drew up a list of families for them to visit, and supplied tickets in exchange for which the needy could get bread and meat. Later, the group had its own tickets, very probably printed on Monsieur Bailly's press.

Ozanam may well have been responsible, wholly or chiefly, for the choice of "conference" as the designation of the group. None of the six student members had previously belonged to any religious association; they did not wish this new one to be confused with any other. "So they baptized the child of love a conference."⁷ Possibly Frederick wished to emphasize the contrast between this new and the older Conference of History. There alert

⁶ *White Wings and Barricades*, by A Daughter of Charity, is a biography of Sister Rosalie (New York: Benziger, 1939).

⁷ Auer, H., *Friedrich Ozanam, Ein Leben der Liebe*, p. 59.

minds tilted on intellectual matters and there was much talk. Here, instead of often empty phrases there would be deeds, acts which would at once bless those doing them and those for whom they were done. "Conference" has a professorial, an academic ring to it, too, and Ozanam was a teacher in more ways than one before he ever occupied a professor's chair. Father Brodrick is eloquent on Frederick's leadership and the choice of this word for the little band: "His spirit informed it from the beginning, as, please God, it will do for ever, that spirit of meekness and Christian peace which led to the adoption of the title 'Conference' so as to avoid the least suggestion of politics or controversy, that spirit of practical goodness which gave the word 'Conference' a new meaning in defiance of its etymology, that spirit of humble simplicity which eschewed all the paraphernalia of banners and badges beloved of new associations, that spirit of Catholic devotion and obedience which put the Society under the protection of Our Lady and sought from the first day to have the blessing of ecclesiastical authority, finally, that spirit of comprehensive love which embraces all without distinction of race or creed and plans to succour not only the hunger of the body but the far more poignant need of men's souls."⁸

Once a week, then, after the first gathering that May evening in 1833, the six students met with Monsieur Bailly in his newspaper office. He led them in the opening prayers, which began with the invocation, "Come, Holy Ghost!" after which there was a brief spiritual reading. The first conference's first choice of reading was *The Imitation of Christ*, and later the Life of St. Vincent de Paul. These

⁸ Brodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

two, and the Manual of the society, are still favorite spiritual readings at Vincentian meetings held in thousands of places in the world today. Now, as in Paris in 1833, the members report on the condition of the families they have visited during the week, consult with one another as to what is best to do in each instance, and at the close join in prayers again. At each meeting, as Ozanam and his six associates did at the first one, the members contribute to a secret collection, each giving what his means allow and the needs of the poor demand. This collection meant self-denial on the part of the six students, none of them rich, and probably on the part of Papa Bailly, too. It has remained an act of practical charity, sometimes a considerable sacrifice on the part of Vincentians, as the members of the society have come to be known everywhere. One day, at a meeting soon after the founding, Frederick and the others were astounded to find several silver coins of considerable value in the collection. It was learned that the giver was Bailly, who as publisher of the *Tribune* took this means of acknowledging the literary contributions of several of the first Vincentians to his newspaper without remuneration. "It was, therefore, with the produce of their toil that they fed the poor."

One of the accounts of the beginning of the first conference says each member had a family to look after. If not from the very first, then soon afterward the rule was made that visits to the homes of the poor should be made never by one but always by two members. We are told that Ozanam's first assignment was to a family consisting of father, mother, and five children. The father spent for drink what was earned by the woman, "who

worked herself to the bone" for her children's sake. She told her Vincentian visitor that when the man came back from the drinking places he "beats us all up," but that this "did not happen every day." She was in the utmost distress and on the verge of despair. Frederick learned that there had been no regular, valid marriage between the man and woman, and much to her relief the mother was able to free herself from the man who had been cruel to her and the children, instead of trying to support them. Ozanam took up a collection, the woman was sent back to Brittany with the two youngest children, the others were given employment, two in Bailly's printing plant.

Though the genial and generous publisher of *La Tribune Catholique* presided as president of the conference, the meetings and the work were dominated by Frederick Ozanam. This was true despite the fact that like charity itself, he did not seek his own. He dominated, unconsciously, by virtue of his personality, this diffident young man who never pushed himself forward, but was so full of quick and warm friendliness that everyone felt at ease in his presence, felt that here was a man of good will, who would help you gladly if you were in trouble, but was also ready to be glad with you when things went well. He dominated, too, in part by his superior mental endowment and his exceptional knowledge for one of his years: also by the eloquence which followed upon a somewhat hesitant beginning, when he spoke of something close to his heart. No wonder the seven were willing to admit the eighth, and then a ninth and tenth and succeeding new members, after Ozanam had championed the opening of the doors! For he was, in Lacordaire's words, "the St. Peter of this humble cenacle."

Frederick Ozanam's primacy in the founding of the first Conference of Charity out of which grew the worldwide Society of St. Vincent de Paul is attested by his colleagues, by contemporary witnesses. Of course, Ozanam, "completely effacing himself," says it was Monsieur Bailly "who had in 1833 the inspiration to call together a few young men for a charitable purpose under the patronage of St. Vincent de Paul. . . . It was he who gave them a place of meeting, counsel, and example. . . . When our members increased and it became necessary to reduce into form our simple practices, it was M. Bailly who wrote the preliminary drafts, instinct with the maxims of our holy Patron, and which definitely fixed the spirit of the Society. In developing these first considerations in the course of several addresses, and throughout all the activities of a crowded eleven years' presidency, he maintained the unity of the Society during the growth of Conferences in Paris, in the provinces, and in foreign countries. Our gratitude and our regard are unlimited; if we do not give expressions to our sentiments here, we refrain from doing so because we desire to remain faithful to the tradition of humility which he established. Let us leave to his good works their obscurity, and to God the rewarding of a life which was all spent for the good of Christian young men and in the service of the poor of Jesus Christ."

Commenting on these words, Monsignor Baunard declares that "Thus Ozanam's excessive modesty, effacing himself, awards to M. Bailly here and elsewhere the title of founder. Those who were associated with Ozanam in the foundation were not mistaken. We shall see how very soon they protested unanimously and solemnly to restore

fully to him the honour of a distinction which was his." In the issue of the journal *Le Monde* of August 4, 1892, Lamache, then more than 80 years of age, declared that "To tell the truth, not one of us, not even Ozanam, who had certainly the greatest initiative and most ardent zeal, could be described as the founder of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. We were influenced solely by the desire of finding for ourselves, for we were so weak, mutual support in the practice of doing good. After having fought with pen and speech in the Conference of History for the defense of religion, we felt the need of the support, strength and consolation which are to be found in devoting ourselves to some little works for the sake of the love of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is then God and God alone Who has done all. That is exactly why we have every reason to hope that the Society of St. Vincent de Paul will live."

But true as Lamache's words certainly are, it is no less true that Frederick Ozanam held first place. "was the principal instrument whom the Almighty had chosen for this work." Lamache wrote, on July 1, 1888, to Frederick's brother, the Abbé Ozanam: "I solemnly declare on my word of honour that it was Ozanam who first spoke to me of that Conference: that he was its soul as he had been that of the Conference of Literature, and that without Ozanam the Conference of Charity would never have come into being."

Paul de la Perrière, a member of the original conference, that of St. Étienne-du-Mont, declared that "Our dear Ozanam, through his excessive humility, has contributed his share to mis-stating the history of our foundation. God will take full account of that unselfishness; but He

will certainly scold him for having spoken and written the very reverse of the truth." Finally, less than three years after Ozanam's death, fourteen surviving members of the first conference conferred upon him the title of founder *ad perpetuum rei memoriam*. A searching inquiry was made by two of Ozanam's oldest Lyons' friends, Chaurand and Brac de la Perrière, and they reported their findings in a joint declaration published in the Lyons' Gazette on March 25, 1856: "Unwilling that the absolute accuracy of facts should be obscured, of which we had special means of personal knowledge, and of which we had special opportunities of hearing from the lips of the founders themselves, we testify as follows: 'If it is true that the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has been jointly founded by many, it is none the less true that Frederick Ozanam had had a preponderating and decisive part in that foundation. It was he who shared with M. Le Tailandier the idea of an Association, whose members would join the practice of charitable works to faith; it was he who carried by his initiative the majority of the members to adopt that act of devotedness to the poor, none of the others having belonged to any of the previously existing charitable Associations!'"⁹

We are told that after the first meeting, Frederick went to his room and collected what fuel was left and carried it to the hearth of a poor old woman whom he had been visiting and helping as much as he could even before that momentous occasion. This wood and coal an orator has called the "symbolic fuel which would start throughout the world a huge conflagration of charity." Perhaps this wood and coal has been confused with the fuel which

⁹ Baunard, *op. cit.*, pp. 68, 69, 70, 71.

Frederick and Le Taillandier took to a cold hearth on the night of that stormy and decisive meeting of the debating club. No matter. What counts is that the fire was kindled, the spark of love set to the tinder of many hearts.

The eighth in whose breast the flame was kindled was Gustave de la Noue, who was a poet and won from Ozanam the eulogy of being "one of the chosen spirits to whom God has given wings." Lallier submitted de la Noue's name at a meeting of the founding seven. There was opposition, for it was felt that perhaps a new man would not fit completely into the little circle, would fail to catch its spirit soon enough or wholeheartedly enough. It would seem almost as if the six students were jealous of the treasure they had found, the heart-warming work which made them feel that they were doing something, however little, in imitation of their Lord and Saviour. But Ozanam spoke winningly in favor of admitting de la Noue and for a general policy of adding new members. He brought to the meetings his cousin, Henri Passonneaux, and another Lyonnais, Chaurand.

An early recruit of special importance was Leon Le Prévost. He was not a student, but a man in his forties, a former member of the Societies of Romantic Literature and deeply interested in letters. Having been told about the charity conference by Monsieur Bailly, he wrote on August 20, 1833, to his friend, Victor Pavie: "There is in existence here at the moment a great movement for charity and faith. But all that is veiled from the surrounding world by its own indifference. I am much mistaken if a light for the world does not stream forth from these modern catacombs." For him, the light shone brightly.

guided him to the formation of a religious community, called the Brothers of St. Vincent de Paul, devoted to the training of apprentices. He kept in touch with the group which had admitted him, held Ozanam particularly in high esteem, and shortly before his death, recalling the summer of 1833, declared with humble pride: "I was the eighth!" Again, it doesn't matter at all that he was really the eleventh or twelfth on the list of pioneers. Others who joined at about this time, before the university vacation at the end of August, included Gignaux, a student of medicine, Charles Hommais, who was proposed by his fellow student Lallier, and young Emanuel de Condé, a law student presented by Monsieur Bailly. There were fifteen in the circle before the summer was over. The meetings, Tuesday evening each week at 18 Rue de Petit Bourbon-Saint-Sulpice (the name has been shortened to Rue Saint-Sulpice) continued to be friendly and stimulating gatherings of men, earnest but youthfully exuberant, with a camaraderie which persists as a characteristic of the Vincentians wherever the primitive spirit is in force. Ozanam had been chosen vice-president, but we do not hear that an absence on the part of President Bailly ever placed Frederick in the chair. Devaux was the first treasurer and he, at the close of each meeting, went hat in hand from member to member, taking up the weekly collection. Chaurand was the secretary.

"The poor do not get any holidays" is the saying attributed to Frederick Ozanam to explain that, when the vacation of 1833 began a Vincentian practice began too: the visits to the poor and the Tuesday evening meetings were carried on, the members who remained in Paris making more visits, working harder to make up for the

absences of colleagues gone to their homes in the provinces. There was a new parish priest at St. Étienne-du-Mont now, Père Faudet, and at the suggestion of Bailly, always prudent in such matters, Clavé was sent to make a call of courtesy and tell him the Conference of Charity existed within his parish bounds. A bit doubtingly but with a good man's desire to be fair, the priest accepted the Vincentians' invitation to attend one of their meetings. He left the gathering a convinced, even ardent convert. He understood, as his predecessor had not, why the pioneers had adopted this resolution at one of their very first meetings: "We wish to visit the homes of the poor and bring them our modest help." He became the first of many thousands of parish priests, or curates delegated by parish priests, who have since 1833 attended the meetings of the conferences in their parishes and as spiritual directors of these units have taken a grateful part in the society's work.

Père Faudet gladly entrusted the care of a number of destitute families to Ozanam's associates and the people thus visited spoke in the highest appreciation of the young men's sincere interest in their needs, practical, kindly advice and concrete help as far as that was possible. Students' pockets have always been notorious for having but few coins in them, and even the generous honorariums which Publisher Bailly paid for literary contributions did not always swell the weekly collection enough to meet all demands. The Vincentians were keenly aware of this wide gap between what ought to be done and what they could do. Outsiders were aware of this, too. One of them, a friend of Frederick's named Chéruef who was at the time under the influence of Saint-Simonism,

said to him, pityingly, almost contemptuously: "What can you hope to accomplish? You are eight poor young men, and it is with such resources that you undertake to succour the misery of a city like Paris! Were you indeed many and many times more and greater, you could do but little. We, on the other hand, are busy in the development of ideas and systems which will reform the world and obliterate misery for ever. In one moment we shall accomplish for humanity all that you could possibly do in many generations." Frederick was too level-headed, and too familiar with history to be unduly cast down by this doctrinaire pronouncement. Twenty years later, when he was near to death, he recalled Chéruef's words and added his own: "Now, you well know, gentlemen, what the theories which dazzled my poor friend have come to. We, whom he pitied, instead of eight now number in Paris alone two thousand Brothers, who visit five thousand families—that is to say about twenty thousand persons—or one fourth of the poor whom this immense city holds. The conferences in France alone number five hundred; there are others in England, Spain, Belgium, America, and even in Jerusalem. Thus the humble beginnings have been exalted, even as Jesus Christ was exalted from the lowly crib to the glory of Mount Tabor. Thus God has made our society His own and has seen good to spread it universally and to bless it abundantly."¹⁰

Even while their numbers were small, and despite Le Prévost's statement that the world was completely blind and indifferent, the Vincentian movement attracted some attention. People with eyes to see could not escape the

¹⁰ Ozanam, *Oeuvres Complètes*; tome huitième, *Mélanges* II, pp. 41, 43.

fact that the work begun chiefly through Frederick Ozanam's bighearted sympathy, deep faith and unobtrusively effective leadership had become a factor in the lives of the Latin Quarter students. It was an influence of which Sainte-Beuve, the eminent contemporary literary critic, said: "It is indeed a memorable spectacle, to see amid so much unbelief and such general defection that a chosen band of those virtuous minds does not decrease, that it recruits and perpetuates itself, preserving the moral treasure in all its purity. Whatever may be the form under which the Christian religious spirit is to be reconstituted (as we hope it may be) in society, this progressive virtue of young hearts, this faith and modesty held in reserve and in seclusion, will push forward powerfully the time of its development."¹¹

And he to whom under God the "memorable spectacle" was principally due was a slender young man of 20—his birthday had occurred on April 23—who seems to have overcome the homesickness that weighed so heavily on his sensitive heart for so long. He was finding, as all men find who emulate him, that charity work more than anything else helps to save a sensitive, introspective nature from being too self-centered, from the *maladie romantique* and its self-pitying inertia. He was able gradually to conquer his nostalgia, his tendency to pride and irritable outbursts, his inclination to melancholy, only because he drew strength from a vigorous inner life, a spiritual strength that was tender and a spiritual tenderness that was strong. Under the priestly direction of the Abbé Marduel, and remembering the friend and counselor of his youth, the Abbé Noiret, sustained by the sacraments, edi-

¹¹ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

fied by his friends, and bearing in mind always his dedication to the sacred cause of truth, he had advanced markedly along the road of spiritual progress. His mood was a happier one now, he was more often the Ozanam of whom the Abbé Noiret had said that he dearly loved a joke, was merry, even gay, sure to be in on any fun, and immensely popular among his fellows. This is reflected in the letter he wrote to his mother on June 19, 1833, telling her how he and a number of comrades went to Nanterre, "a quiet village, the home of Ste. Geneviève," for the Feast of Corpus Christi, which the French call the *Fête Dieu*. "You know that in Paris, as at Lyons, religious processions are prohibited; but it does not follow that because a certain number of roughs choose to pen up Catholicism in its temples in the great cities, we young Catholics should be deprived of one of the most touching ceremonials of our religion." He describes the procession—the students mingling with the peasants, joining in the chorus, astonishing them by their numbers, edifying them by their piety. In the village the houses were decorated, paths were flower-strewn, temporary altars erected for Benediction. At the high Mass, the crowd of worshipers overflowed into the road in front of the church. From Nanterre, some of the pilgrims set out for St. Germain-en-Laye, walking through the woods, picking wild strawberries. At St. Germain they sang Vespers in the church, visited a chateau and enjoyed the panorama from its terrace. At an inn they eschewed a stronger in favor of a milder wine, twice "baptized," by the host and by the merry students, and none of the latter lay under the table, Ozanam assured his mother. Then, "We started homewards in the cool of the evening. The moon

rose presently, and lighted us through the forest. It was a delicious hour . . . two of my comrades walked with me to my own door. Monday had begun. Only my heart can tell how often I thought of you during this day, one of the most charming of my life."¹²

What did he look like, the 20-year-old Frederick Ozanam who wrote this letter, whom everybody knew to be the leader of the university students in defending the faith against attacks by the professors, in forming the Conference of History, and only a month ago, in founding the Conference of Charity? In that year, 1833, a fellow student and dear friend, Janmot, made a drawing of young Ozanam. This has, happily, been preserved and reproduced. It shows Frederick as of rather slender build, with an oval face, a nose slightly larger than the average, eyes set widely apart, and a forehead both high and broad. The mouth is sensitive, with a suggestion of wistfulness. His abundant hair is dark, combed back from his brow and stands out from his head on either side. Père Lacordaire said, writing in 1854: "I must go back over many years for my first meeting with Ozanam. . . . It was in the winter of 1833-1834. He appeared to be about 20 years of age, without the fresh beauty of youth. Pale, like the men of Lyons, of middle height, without grace, his eyes shot piercing glances while his face presented an appearance of gentleness. His brow which was not without a certain nobility, was adorned with a fringe of thick long black hair which gave him a certain air of wildness designated by the Latin word *incomptus*."¹³ In his letter to his mother about the pilgrimage to Nanterre, Frederick said

¹² Ozanam, *Lettres, op. cit.*, pp. 74-78.

¹³ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

that some of the students were "five feet six inches tall." Was that his height? He said the greater part of the young men "carried moustaches," as he phrased it. In Janmot's drawing his upper lip is bare. Later in life he will wear moustache and beard. He had been nearsighted since his school days in Lyons, but none of his pictures shows him with glasses.

THE FIRE SPREADS

THERE was something wrong with the stagecoach wheels; they turned so slowly! Was the driver dozing? Why didn't he urge the horses on? He was impatient to reach his destination, the young student en route from Paris to Lyons. He was eager to reach 14 Rue Pisay and clasp to his breast father and mother and brothers, and faithful old Guigui. There was anticipatory joy in his heart. Frederick Ozanam was coming home, for the first time since the fall of 1831, two years ago.

But Frederick was not to spend all of the vacation of 1833 in Lyons. Dr. Ozanam had decided to take his family with him on a journey to Italy. He wished to see once more the battlefields on which he had fought so valiantly under the great Corsican; and also that other battlefield, the military hospital in Milan, on which he had battled no less valorously with the weapons of medical skill and Christian pity. Madame Ozanam had a married sister in Florence, so the family would spend some time in the glorious city on the Arno. Alphonse, the eldest of the three sons and now a priest, was eager to visit the sanctuaries of Italy, of Rome most of all. Charles, the youngest son, who had decided to follow in Dr. Ozanam's professional footsteps, was especially interested in his father's Alma Mater, the famous medieval school of

medicine at Pavia. As for Frederick, he was thrilled at the prospect of seeing his birthplace, Milan; Florence, where the very air would breathe to him of the peerless Dante; and Rome, the center of Christendom, where dwelt the Sovereign Pontiff, whom he revered as the true Vicar of Christ on earth, to whom he felt a loyal attachment like that of a knight to his liege lord.

Louis IX, King of France, was wont to call himself Louis of Poissy, because that was where he was baptized. It would not have been astonishing if Ozanam had called himself Frederick of Milan, for he shared the saintly king's extraordinary appreciation of the sacrament of baptism. Alphonse wrote of the visit to the city where the family had lived from 1809 to 1816: "His (Frederick's) soul was full to overflowing with ardent enthusiasm. He saw the street, San Pietro dell' Orto, where he had been born; the church, Santa Maria dei Servi, where he had been baptized. Kneeling at the holy font, he renewed his baptismal vows and thanked God for having made him His child." At Loretto, Frederick served his brother's Mass and received Communion from his hands. Umbria, redolent of early Franciscanism's simple charm, was visited, briefly; and then came Rome. The Abbé Ozanam in later years recalled Frederick's prayer at the tomb of St. Peter. It was the petition of the Apostles to their divine Leader: "*Adauge nobis fidem!*" . . . "Lord, increase our faith!" The physician from Lyons and his three sons (Madame Ozanam had remained with her sister in Florence) were granted a private audience with Pope Gregory XVI. Cardinal Fesch received them with special attention. He retained the title of Archbishop of Lyons, was an uncle of Napoleon and had a marble bust

of the Emperor in the room in which he greeted these Lyonnais. Perhaps he knew that Dr. Ozanam had been a hussar at Pavia and on the bridge at Arcoli. When His Eminence learned that the physician was attached to the Lyons municipal hospital, he gave him a generous sum of money for the poor patients there.

Back to Florence then and soon the parents and sons were on their way northward, back to the many-bridged city. As autumn advanced, Frederick prepared for the return to Paris, and this time the wrench was less painful. He had lost no least part of his deep love for mother and father and brothers, but now he longed for Paris instead of dreading it, as he had two years ago. He was drawn to Paris now by the many strong friendships he had forged among his fellow students and among the leaders in the city's Catholic life; by an eagerness to get back into the battle between faith and unbelief, truth and error. Most of all, he was eager to be back in the Conference of Charity, among the poor whom it served. He wished, too, to be able to consult the Abbé Marduel as he had been accustomed to, for there was always need for the almost excessively conscientious, introspective, often self-deprecating Frederick Ozanam to have the calm support of a deeply seeing, tenderly understanding guide such as this old priest.

So Frederick boarded a stagecoach once more and started Parisward. He would begin his third year of legal studies, his father continuing to insist that he should become a barrister; later, he hoped, a judge. The son acquiesced again, but again he would seek to flavor the unpalatable legal lore with the salt of history, philosophy, above all, literature. His parents warned him against the

lure of letters, the father because he feared such an attachment would hinder his plans for the young man's future; the mother—may we not presume?—more out of a wifely desire to comply with her husband's wishes than out of a personal objection to her son's preference. In a letter to her, the student back in Paris that autumn gives her this assurance: "Do not think, dearest mother, that I shall ever refuse you the consolation of feeling that my legal studies shall not be interfered with. But if some recreation is to be allowed me, let me work in literary matters, which will adorn dry jurisprudence. Thus, in the evening with Vergil and Dante beside me, it pleases me to write occasionally my Italian impressions and to traverse again by myself the ground which I covered so delightfully with you. I shall not at all neglect my legal studies for that. . . . I am attending five courses of lectures. Our legal debating society has opened, and I argued a rather difficult point. Undoubtedly, it is folly for me, as I often say to myself, who am petty and dull, to wish to write on any subject but law, and to entertain any other notion than those of humdrum practice. But my nature revolts and tells me the reverse. Thanks be to God, I am not to be a solicitor, but a barrister, and so far a pleader. Therefore, I must cultivate literature, the mother of eloquence." In proof of his faithfulness to this promise, he tells his mother how two men came to him and offered a substantial sum of money for three or four hours' daily collaboration with them on their newspaper. "You can well believe that I refused. Law does not leave me three or four hours for other work. Even if I had them to spare, I should not employ them in pot-boiling journalism. However, I recognized with joy that if bad

times should ever come, I should be in a position to make good by my own work the sacrifices which you have made for my sake.”¹

One of the reasons why Ozanam had not four hours to spare was this, that in addition to his strenuous program of studies in jurisprudence, he gave time to his many friends, being always at their disposal, begrudging neither them nor even strangers the time it took to give counsel, encouragement, inspiration; contributed to Monsieur Bailly's *Tribune* and other journals upholding the Catholic cause, read widely in his favorite subjects, attended lectures outside of those demanded by the law course; and, most of all, attended the weekly meetings of the Conference of Charity and did his full share of visiting and helping the poor. Away from the birthplace of his beloved conference and its appealing work, he had felt that something splendid and vital was missing in his life. Now he returned to the Vincentian work with renewed ardor. With the coming of cold weather, there was need for many bundles of wood, many bags of coal for the empty hearths on which love was eager to build its fires.

The flame kindled by Ozanam, Le Taillandier, and the other pioneers had spread to other hearts by the end of 1833, so that the Vincentians meeting in Papa Bailly's newspaper office each Tuesday evening now numbered some twenty or twenty-five. They carried on humbly, quietly, and even while their number was small undertook additional work. Near the Sorbonne was a so-called house of correction, wherein society confined young men whom it called criminals, but who were not always entirely to

¹ Baunard, L., *Ozanam in His Correspondence*, pp. 79, 80

blame for their misdeeds, were, indeed, often less blameworthy than those who looked down on them and treated them harshly. Monsieur de Belleyme, the magistrate, gave the conference members permission to visit and help these young men and Ozanam, Le Taillandier, Le Prévost, and Lamache gave themselves wholeheartedly through two years to this apostolate, until the prisoners were transferred from the institution in the Rue des Grés to one at the other end of Paris. On February 1, 1834, the conference undertook to visit the poor in the twelfth ward of the city, at the request of Monsieur Vollot, one of the administrators of the poor law in that district. Three days later, at one of their weekly meetings, they added what has remained a part of the prayers at every Vincentian assembly, no matter where in the world, no matter what language is spoken: "St. Vincent de Paul, pray for us!" and established as the society's principal feast that of its great patron, on July 19. This may have been done at the suggestion of Ozanam. Monsignor Baudard states that it was Frederick who insisted that the conference be also "placed under the patronage of the Most Holy Virgin," and another biographer says he did this in conformity with a venerable tradition attached to the pilgrimage shrine of Notre Dame de Fouvières in Lyons. The Hail Mary was added to the meeting prayers and it was decided that the Feast of the Immaculate Conception would be celebrated in a special way. It is noteworthy that this step was taken twenty years before the dogma of our Lady's sinless conception was defined.

On April 12, 1834, the Vincentians made a little pilgrimage to the chapel of the Lazarists in the Rue de Sevres, to venerate there St. Vincent de Paul's relics,

returned to that place after having been safeguarded in the College of Roye in Picardy since the uprising of July, 1830. Also at about this time a number of the members, led by Frederick Ozanam, went to Clichy, a suburban parish of which St. Vincent had once been the pastor and where his burning charity had effected a marvelous change in the souls of the people. Frederick and his associates took the matter of St. Vincent de Paul's patronage and example seriously. Ozanam declared that they must mean more by far than St. Denis or St. Nicholas on the signboard of an inn. "A patron is an ideal whom we must place before us, a superior type whom we must seek to realize, a life which must be continued, a model on earth and a protector in heaven."² They took all conference matters seriously, but themselves not too seriously. Like wine, doing good cheers the hearts of men. Doing good helps, too, to ward off egocentric excesses, conduces to humility and to a buoyancy of spirit. So amid all their studies and work, these early Vincentians found time occasionally for relaxation, and in a sunny mood her son tells Madame Ozanam about the soirée in his lodgings in the Rue des Grés. He had moved from his room at Ampère's when the great man's son, Jean-Jacques, returned from his travels and studies abroad. The new quarters were on the sixth floor, "next to the stars," he announced, gleefully; but they were so humble that he had only three chairs and the young men whom he had invited came bringing their chairs with them.³ He describes in a gay good-humored way how the people stared

² Hughes, H. L., *Frederick Ozanam*, p. 84.

³ Auer, H., *Friedrich Ozanam, Ein Leben der Liebe*, p. 104, says Papa Bailly was one of the 24 present and that there were 11 chairs. "Ein Paar Leute mussten eben ihre Sitzgelegenheiten mitbringen."

when the little procession of chair-carrying students crossed the street, to the astonished amusement of all, particularly of the concierge, or janitor. "About eleven o'clock they came down again, holding their chairs aloft as before, and quite as steadily, for the hospitality of their host had been as simple as it was cordial, syrups and little cakes being the only excesses indulged in. 'But, oh! how we did enjoy ourselves,' exclaimed the narrator, 'we nearly died of laughter!'"⁴

One of the matters about which Frederick and his colleagues were especially in earnest was that of the conferences which they had asked the Archbishop of Paris to let Père Lacordaire give in Notre Dame cathedral. Their first appeal had been made after the Abbé Lamennais had suspended publication of *l'Avenir*; and as we have seen, nothing came of it. Now, early in the Lent of 1834, Ozanam and his friends presented a second petition, bearing two hundred signatures, twice as many as the first. Ozanam, Lamache, and Lallier presented it on February 15. It asked "conferences which, without losing time in refuting objections which are today outworn, would display Christianity in all its grandeur, and in harmony with the aspirations and necessities of man and society"; "an exposition of the philosophy of all truth and beauty; of the philosophy of life which would show its principles, its progress and its destiny. They desired that that instruction should come from the pulpit, because the grace which fortifies, the enlightenment which converts, flow from the lips of the priest. They desired that at the foot of that pulpit and in the same building there should be room for all, believers and unbelievers, all

⁴ O'Meara, *Frédéric Ozanam*, p. 81.

receiving in silence the seeds of conviction which would germinate in time.”⁵ They told His Grace that already they had seen many of their fellow students return to the light; young men who had strayed because they had not recognized the light. “Oh! if we could only see that example followed by all the young men of the schools. If they only knew the beauty of Christianity how they would love it!”

Archbishop de Quélen was deeply moved, and encouraged Ozanam as spokesman of the petitioners to speak freely, “so struck was he by the extraordinarily clear views of a youth of 20 years.” But he did not grant the students their hearts’ desire. The papal encyclical “*Mirari Vos*” had appeared on August 15, 1832. It had condemned some of the ideas of the Abbé Lamennais without mentioning his name, and so the shadow of the affair lay even darker than a year ago upon Lamennais and his collaborators, two of them the Abbés Lacordaire and Gerbet, even though the ill-starred priest’s *Paroles d’un Croyant* (*Words of a Believer*) was not to appear until May of this year. Instead of Lacordaire His Grace selected seven mediocre preachers from among the elite of the Parisian clergy. “It was the reply of the man of 1804 to the young men of 1834.”

The seven preachers began their sermons in Notre Dame on February 16, but the young men of the schools and many others remained away or went instead to St. Stanislaus College, where Lacordaire held forth. The chapel in which he gave the conferences there in succession to the Abbé Gerbet could hold only a small number of people. Ozanam could not be blamed if he felt sorely

⁵ Ozanam, *Lettres*, *op. cit.*, pp. 86, 87, 88.

disappointed. And then even this inadequate counterblast to the blatant Rationalism of the Paris professors was halted. Lacordaire was denounced to the government as a fanatical Republican who would mislead the young men crowding about his pulpit; and in other circles as a preacher of novel and dangerous doctrine. The open apostasy of Lamennais following the publication of the *Paroles* had made it difficult for some to distinguish between the brilliant, somewhat erratic and not humble enough priest, and his former associates, despite their quick and full submission and stanch loyalty. It was not until the next year, on March 8, 1835, that Lacordaire began in Notre Dame de Paris that great series of conferences which were to be continued down to our days by a succession of the ablest priestly orators of France and take their place in the modern history of the Church as one of the most significant and successful examples of intellectual power and oratorical talent devoted to the cause of truth.

When Lacordaire ceased his discourses at St. Stanislaus College because he could not accept the conditions imposed, Ozanam wrote to a friend, Monsieur Velay, that it was a great grief to be denied the bread of the Word, to be deprived of such excellent and accustomed nourishment and be deprived of it suddenly, without a substitute. It is a still greater sorrow, he wrote, "to see our brothers who were on the road to truth, return to their wandering ways, shaking their heads and shrugging their shoulders." The heart of Ozanam, solicitous for the souls of others, always remembering his solemn dedication to truth, is in these words; and no less in his observation that perhaps heaven demanded this silence, this abstention as a further sacrifice; that perhaps the Catholics had put too much

hope in the speech of one man, upon whose lips God had now placed His hand, to teach Ozanam and all the others to do without all things save only faith and virtue.

Having possessed his soul in difficult patience in the face of such disappointment and defeat, Frederick deserved the exultation which was his and his colleagues when Lacordaire at last stood in Notre Dame's pulpit the next Lent. He wrote to his father that the discourses were magnificent, were attended by throngs, including *littérateurs* and scientists. One complete aisle was reserved for men and it held from five to six thousand. He undertook to review the lectures for the *Univers*, a Catholic newspaper. He wrote that if his purse did not gain much from this work, the spirit would profit. "When the congregation, entranced by the accents of the young priest, knelt at the close of the sermon to receive the papal benediction, when the bells of Notre Dame pealed forth in the capital, we seemed to be assisting not at the resurrection of Catholicity, for it never dies, but at the religious resurrection of society." If the enthusiastic Ozanam exaggerated, if French society did not arise to a new and better life, Lacordaire's conferences still meant the soul resurrection in many of his listeners, especially among the students whom Frederick brought to hear him. So eager was he to have those attend whom he knew needed it most, that he would on occasion go to the church two full hours in advance and reserve seats until the young men arrived to take them. His was both an intense love of the Church and an amazingly broad interest in her welfare.

At about this time, Frederick's friend de La Noue wrote him that he had formed an Association of Artists. Ozanam would not accept the vice-presidency, as de La Noue

had hoped, but was glad, he said, to become an ordinary member, because he wished to help infuse the Christian spirit in the world of artists and poets, "with whom he desires to keep in touch." He wished his Holy Mother the Church to be seen and acknowledged as the Queen of the Arts no less than as Queen of Philosophy and Science, and of Charity. He wished Catholic truth, Catholic ideals to permeate all human work. And he was careful to ask de La Noue whether the Association of Artists would be religious "in the sense which is actively Christian and positively orthodox"; adding words of poignant significance in Ozanam's life and in the world of his day: "Let us be convinced, my dear friend, that orthodoxy is the nerve center, the vital essence of every Catholic society; it is from faith that it will derive life and strength."⁶ In another letter he laments "the pride of intellect which has already dethroned the Abbé Lamennais from the lofty elevation whereon his genius and his faith had placed him." There is an expression of concern regarding Lamartine, and an outburst of grief at the attacks on the Church by enemies from without and the defection "of some who but lately were our glory." He believes that the Catholics are punished for placing more reliance on the genius of their great men than on the power of God. "Grace must guide us in the place of genius, which has failed us!"⁷ His spiritual vision grew ever clearer as he struggled upward along the steep path in which God was asking him to walk.

Ozanam was 21 years of age now, his birthday having come on April 23 of the year 1834. To his mother he

⁶ Ozanam, *Lettres, op. cit.*, p. 180.

⁷ *Lettres, op. cit.*, pp. 150-151.

wrote that he was of an age to fast and that on the morrow he would fast with the Church. "Am I not also of an age to suffer something and to fight as she does?" He pictured the battlefield: "Charged with bigotry by free-thinking companions and with liberality of thought and rashness by elders, amid controversies and disputes where charity is not, and scandal abounds, surrounded by political parties who would willingly drag us in their mire as we have attained unto the vote, is a sad existence. But I do not grumble, for I do not forget that it is a trial which Providence will have me pass through, in order that I may afterwards serve better."⁸ He refers to the forthcoming end of his law course. "In the month of August I can, if I wish, be a barrister-at-law." He tells his mother also in this letter that he has kept the promise to give first place to his legal studies, excusing himself somewhat for an occasional deviation, as when he contributed to a new Catholic journal, the *Revue Européenne*. Before August 15 he returned to Lyons. There had been an outbreak of civil war in that city and even now soldiers were seen in the streets and guns frowned from the ramparts. Dufieux, a Lyonnais like him home from Paris, took Frederick to call on Lamartine, "then at the meridian of his genius, his eloquence and his glory." The young man admits the deep impression made upon him by the poet "What would you? The sight of that superior being fascinated me: notwithstanding the fact that before visiting him I had taken the precaution of reading a certain chapter in the *Imitation* which put me on my guard against human respect."

At home, the son of Dr. and Madame Ozanam, the

⁸ *Lettres, op. cit.*, p. 103.

brother of Alphonse and Charles basked in the warm glow of family love. He reveled, too, in the companionship of Dufliex, de la Perrière, Chaurand, and other friends and fellow Vincentians. Yet he longed for Paris. There dwelt Lallier and so many others of his friends. To Lallier he wrote: "You well know that of the young men whom I have known during my exile in the capital, you are the one I liked best. It is you who . . . so often inspired me with holy and salutary thoughts, who consoled me in my grief and encouraged me when in doubt." And the Conference of Charity! That was in his thought constantly. "Here I have no charitable work to look after. I am living like a good-for-nothing. How I need your prayers!" Actually, though, he was being a true Vincen-tian, for he was laying the base for a conference in Lyons and recruiting members for the one in Paris. "We shall bring back with us to Paris a band of good Lyons students. They will add to our meetings, although, truth to tell, I no longer look on the Conference of History but as a recruiting ground for the Conference of Charity."

Another reason why Frederick was dissatisfied in Lyons was the lack there of an intense intellectual life, lectures, scientific and literary and historical and philosophical discussions, the constant stimulus which came to his alert and exceptionally capacious mind through contact with older men to whom he looked up with youthful admiration; and with other young men whose thinking he influenced so much, without self-assertiveness or the shadow of fatuous condescension. On October 15, 1834, he wrote to Lallier again, jubilantly announcing that his father had consented to let him go to Paris for two years more. He would take his degree of doctor of law quietly and

study Oriental languages at the same time, he told his friend, but there were to be no more magazine articles, except perhaps an occasional contribution to the Conference of History (if there is one, he wrote), or to the *Revue Européenne* (if it still exists). "My future I leave in the hands of Providence. I shall accept willingly whatever place He will be pleased to assign me, however lowly it may be. It will always be noble, if it be filled worthily."

At the first meeting of the Vincentians after his return to Paris, Ozanam told his comrades about Léonce Curnier's desire to found a branch of the society in Nimes, his home town. "I had to read a great part of your letter to our colleagues, with the parish priest in the chair on that occasion," he reports to the friend of his youth, the one who witnessed how he stood up in the drawing class and rebuked the evil tongues of the students who never expected their timid fellow to assert himself. There was an unanimous approval of Curnier's work in Nimes, but no such agreement among the Vincentians in the matter of dividing their organization in Paris. As the year 1834 drew to its close, the membership reached more than one hundred. Père Bailly's office in the Rue Saint-Sulpice was no longer large enough, and even the new quarters in the Place l'Estrapade had become too small. So many men crowded together each Tuesday evening, young men almost all of them, exuberant, full of ardor for the cause and articulate, made it difficult to carry on the meetings, give the desired attention to the reports and to the decisions on how best to serve their poor. On December 16, Ozanam proposed that the conference divide itself into three sections, each distinct from the others but all united, as are three links in a chain. Claudius Lavergne, who had

become a member during the year, said that the proposal raised such a violent storm that Monsieur Bailly, instead of appearing to doze as he generally did, at once adjourned the discussion for a week and appointed a committee of six members, three from each side of the controversy, to examine the matter and make a report. Frederick's staunchest friends were divided: Lallier supported him, Le Taillandier and Paul de la Perrière were among his opponents. All acted sincerely, one group believing that a division was necessary and salutary, the other that the previous unity of the conference would be imperiled, perhaps utterly destroyed. Sagacious Papa Bailly maintained a strict neutrality, but is said to have been on Le Taillandier's rather than on Ozanam's side. "It was, therefore, not from him that the inspiration and the conception of a boundless Society of St. Vincent de Paul came," declares Monsignor Baurard.

Lavergne stated that "The Brother who hurled this brand of discord into their midst was nevertheless the meekest, most peaceful and most thoughtful among them. It is only necessary to mention the name of Le Prévost de Preville, one of the latest recruits it is true, but the one who after Ozanam got the best bearing. I formed part of the opposition, and when our orator, Paul de la Perrière, developed the arguments with which to rout Le Prévost, I did not find his address by any means unanswerable. The stormy meeting of the 23rd resulted in an adjournment." Then came Christmas Eve. The Vincentians gathered at the Carmelite church to offer up the Holy Sacrifice with the Abbé Combalot; and at the meal which followed, a brotherly sitting down together, an agape, this good priest "urged with eloquence and with insistence

the advantage and advisability of subdivision." Perhaps even more valuable to Ozanam's position was Sister Rosalie's expressed desire to see his opinion prevail. Arthaud, whose name we have hitherto not come upon, resumed the debate of Frederick's proposal at the meeting of December 30, and so important did the matter seem to the members, so urgent a settlement of the differences that it was agreed to take up the matter again at a meeting the next day.

"Every member was early in his seat in the hall in the Place l'Estrapade. The meeting was larger and more animated than ever. The discussion was very lively. Paul de la Perrière, opening the opposition, was more eloquent and more insistent than usual. Le Taillandier was seen to weep: the idea of separation, but still more that of dissension, rent his heart. Ozanam spoke and unfolded a vast perspective of good to be accomplished by general extension. It became then the thesis of the joy and benefit of Christian friendship at issue with the incommensurable ambition of charity. One could no longer make oneself heard, and minds were as excited as it was possible to be. They had come to the night of December 31, 1834. Night was advancing, midnight bells had just rung out ushering in a new day and a New Year. M. Bailly besought the young orators to end a discussion which had already lasted too long. But how? Ozanam arose and went over to de la Perrière. They embraced as Brothers with mutual good wishes for the New Year. All applauded, followed their example, and left the hall happy and united. They handed over to the Board of the Conference the difficult task of satisfying everyone."¹⁹

¹⁹ Baunard, *op. cit.*, pp. 94, 95.

The biographers of Frederick Ozanam make much of this matter, as revealing the character of their hero. Father Brodrick says: "All Frédéric's natural inclinations were against it [division], as it must necessarily end a unity cemented by so much sweet and precious friendship. But God's will seemed to be clear, and that settled the matter. He literally fought his companions on the issue, and had his victory at a famous and momentous session, held on New Year's Eve 1834, 'when Le Tailandier wept, La Perrière and myself argued fiercely, and we all ended embracing one another more affectionately than ever and wishing one another a Happy New Year!'"¹⁰

The division difficulty was not solved at once. For a while, two groups held separate meetings in two rooms in the old house of the *Bonnes Études*. One of these transferred to the parish of St. Sulpice, and had Monsieur Gossin for president. At about the same time, two new branches were established, those of St. Philip du Roule and of Notre Dame de Bonne-Nouvelle. The former was the work of Felix Clavé, one of the cofounders and an erstwhile Saint-Simonian, with the help of the parish vicar, the Abbé Maret, later the Bishop of Sûre. Care was taken to preserve the unity of the organization as a whole. Once a month, a general meeting was held, Monsieur Bailly presiding. The time was soon at hand, too, when the circle would be widened by conferences in other cities of France. "We shall link up our Associations of Charity," wrote the chief founder. His vision saw and embraced not only the branches now at work in the French capital; not only the one established by Curnier at Nimes; not only those already or soon to be founded

¹⁰ Brodrick, J., S.J., *Frédéric Ozanam and His Society*, p. 40.

by Janmot the artist and Claudius Lavergne in Rome and by himself in Lyons, but an immense number of units all over the world. Far better than anyone else, he realized how the fire would continue to spread which had been kindled in his own heart.

Happily past the crisis caused by the question of division, the vigorous conferences commissioned Monsieur Bailly and Lallier to prepare a rule for the whole, constantly expanding organization. The two worked "with piety and prudence" during the vacation of 1835 and Bailly submitted their draft of the rule at the first general meeting of all the units, on February 21, 1836. "The rule is based on what the conferences have learned," he told the assembled Brothers, "not on theory." He told them that the rule had been agreed upon in substance before the first subdivision of the original conference. It was, therefore, thoroughly, genuinely primitive, harking back to the pioneers, Ozanam and the six others. It has continued to direct the activities of thousands upon thousands of Vincentians in all parts of the world; and the true success of every conference is measured by its loyal attachment to the spirit of this idealistic but at the same time eminently practical charter. Bailly wrote the introduction, "instinct with the spirit of the humility, unity and charity that ought to reign among Brothers, as well as with a sense of duty to ecclesiastical authority. The law-giver of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is St. Vincent de Paul himself." The rule, which Lallier drew up, with Bailly and Frederick as collaborators, breathes the spirit of Ozanam. It begins: "Here, at last, is the commencement of the written constitution for which we have so long wished. It has had to wait for a long time, for

already some years have passed since our association came into being. But were we not bound to feel assured that God wished that it should continue to live, before laying down the form in which it should do so? Was it not necessary that it should be well laid—that it should know what Heaven required of it—that it should judge what it could do by what it had already done, before framing its Rules and prescribing its duties? Now we have only to form, as it were, into Rules the usages already followed and cherished—and this is a sure guarantee that our Rules will be well received by all, and never be forgotten.” It says that “Having become numerous and being obliged to divide into sections—moreover many of us desiring to meet together in other towns, where they were to reside henceforth, the name of Conference has continued to be applied to each of those sections, all of which are comprised under the common denomination of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.”¹¹

The Rules forbid giving to a conference the name of any particular member, no matter what his services to the society, or of the place where a conference meets, “for fear that we may accustom ourselves to look upon it as the work of man. Christian works belong to God alone, the sole author of all good.” An impulse of Christian charity called the society into being, therefore the members are to look nowhere but to the life of our Saviour, the instruction of the Church, the lives of the saints, for their inspiration and guidance. And then the Rule sets forth clearly the object of the first conference and of all branches which sprang from the parent stem: “Firstly, to maintain its members, by mutual example and advice,

¹¹ Rules of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, American edition, pp. 34, 35.

in the practice of a Christian life; secondly, to visit the poor at their dwellings, to bring them succour in kind, to afford them, also, religious consolation." Other objectives enumerated are, "the elementary and Christian instruction of poor children, whether free or imprisoned"; the distribution of edifying reading matter, and "fifthly, to apply ourselves to all other kinds of charitable works for which our resources may be adequate, but which will not interfere with the chief object of the Society, and for which it may demand our aid." The members are to try to attain and practice all virtues, but especially self-denial, Christian prudence, active love of our neighbor, zeal for the salvation of souls, meekness in heart and word, "and above all, the spirit of brotherly love." All contention with the poor must be avoided, the members are not to feel offended if those whom they visit and try to help do not follow their counsel—"we should not attempt to make them receive it as from authority and by command." Nor are the Vincentians ever to murmur at the labors, fatigues, nor even at the repulses to which the exercise of charity may subject them. They are never to regret "the pecuniary sacrifices that we make in our work, esteeming ourselves happy in offering something to Jesus Christ in the person of His suffering members." They are reminded, too, that their Divine Model and their patron saint were meek and humble of heart. "We should be kind and obliging to one another, and we should be equally so to the poor whom we visit. . . . Without meekness, zeal for the salvation of souls is a ship without sails."¹²

"It is a brotherly spirit which will make our Society

¹² Rules, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

of Charity become beneficial to its members and edifying to others," says the charter. "Faithful to the maxims of Our Divine Master and His beloved disciple, let us love one another. We should love one another now and for ever, far and near, from one Conference to another, from town to town, from nation to nation. This friendship will render us able to bear with each other's failings. We shall never give credence to an evil report of a brother but with regret, and when we cannot reject the evidence of facts. . . . In a word, the troubles and the joys of each one of us should be shared by all, in accordance with the advice of the Apostle, who tells us to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. The union existing among the members of the Conference of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul should be cited as a model of Christian friendship, of a friendship stronger than death, for we will often remember in our prayers to God the brethren whom we have lost."¹³

Here is Catholic idealism! Here a declaration, sentimental if you will, but not mawkish, of human brotherhood transcending national borders and racial differences! Ozanam's greatness, it will be seen, consisted in a large degree in his complete observance of the Vincentian rule, in letter and in spirit. He was peculiarly able to realize its ideal of brotherhood, because his big, friendly heart opened instinctively to include all with whom he came into contact, not his Brothers of the Vincentian society only; not only the poor who had a special place therein, but all who were associated with him in any way, even those whom he had never seen but with whom he exchanged letters.

¹³ Rules, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

And the four words, "from nation to nation," were a prophecy of what was to come. In 1845, the Vincentians numbered 9000. Only thirteen months after Ozanam's death in 1853, no less than 400 Brothers, representing many more branches than there were at the time the rule was adopted, went to Rome for the promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, under which title the founders had invoked our Lady's protection. In 1855, only two years after Ozanam's death, there were more than 2900 conferences. In France and her colonies there were 1360 units; in Austria 14 and in the German States and Free Cities, 208, 174 of them in Prussia. Little Luxembourg had four conferences, Belgium 374, Spain 229, Great Britain and Ireland 137, Italy 374, the Netherlands 105, Switzerland 31. Even Denmark, where Catholics were almost unknown, had a conference, and there was one each in Greece and Turkey. There were three in Asia outside of Turkey, 17 in Africa, and 72 in the Americas, including Mexico, Canada, and the United States. The first American conference was established at St. Louis, Missouri, in 1845, when Monsieur Gossin was the president-general of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, grown to be a world-wide organization while Frederick Ozanam still lived and was its moving spirit. Among the early American conferences was that of Milwaukee, organized in 1849.

The ideal of brotherhood spread, as a part of the Vincentian spirit, wherever the society took root. It has been realized to an astonishing degree, for there is among the Brothers everywhere a fraternal affection, a warm friendship unusual among men, even among those of the household of the faith. Not even wars have been able to sever

the bond which binds each Vincentian to all other Vincentians, binds them in life, and after death by the golden chain of prayer. And this brotherly spirit is, as it were, a flowing forth, an extension in all directions of the friendly, greathearted Catholic spirit of the first Vincentians; of Frederick Ozanam most of all.

TWO STRINGS; TWO GRAVES

UNDETERRED by the presence of his wife and children and believing that a foreign tongue would shield him, a German in the stagecoach permitted himself a coarse jest. He was taken aback when another passenger, a young Frenchman, rebuked him with a few sharp, pertinent words, in German. When the coach stopped at Mâcon, the young passenger spoke in his customary friendly way to a little boy who bumped into him, and knowing somehow that the lad was from Italy, he used the language of that country. The young Frenchman was Frederick Ozanam, en route to his home in Lyons for the summer holidays of 1835. He had left Paris on August 12, was eager to reach Lyons by August 15, the Feast of Our Lady's Assumption, which he called his mother's fête. He was even more than ordinarily anxious to see her again, for she had been ill.

At Mâcon the offending German, who had apologized profusely, asked the honor of having Ozanam as his guest at breakfast. Frederick politely declined the invitation and sought out the nearest church, for it was now August 15 and he wished to assist at Mass and go to Holy Communion on this feast. Then, finding that no coach was scheduled to leave for Lyons that day, he set out on foot; "there was no conveyance to be had but shank's mare." Fortunately, after some time the weary walker

was given a ride by the kindly driver of a "poor, tilted cart," and thus he managed to reach 14 Rue Pisay by 8 o'clock in the evening on Assumption Day.

The joy of reunion was shadowed by worry over the continued illness of his mother. "If you, my dear friend, have two places for me in your prayers, give one to my mother, and the other to me. If you have but one, let my mother have it. To pray for her is to pray for me."¹ Thus the son wrote to his bosom friend, François Lallier, in Paris. He told in this letter how the cholera epidemic had come up along the Rhône to within ten miles of Lyons; how a brutal horde prepared for riots and looting, while many others knelt on the bare earth to chant the Penitential Psalms and beg Our Lady of Fouvières to save their city. He said God heard the petitions sent up to Him through His Blessed Mother and the name of Notre Dame de Fouvières no longer brought a sneer to the lips of the impious, for all were convinced that they owed their lives to her intercession.

His mother's health improving, Frederick made a vacation journey into the Dauphiny with his elder brother, the priest. The climax of their tour was a stay of two days and one night at the famous Grand Chartreuse. Ozanam's sensitive soul was quick to grasp the significance of the landscape, his poetic pen to describe the "cloud-capt heights and fathomless abysses," in which he found a symbolism of vaster and more somber grandeur than even such an awe-inspiring spectacle: "A frightful disorder and tremendous upheaval to reach Heaven—efforts that are powerless but unceasing—is not that the image of life and of the human soul?" He was present

¹ Ozanam, *Lettres, op. cit.*, p. 155.

at Matins at 11 o'clock at night in the Carthusians' solitary chapel, and was deeply impressed.

Back in Lyons and at the side of his ailing mother, Frederick set himself to writing *Les Deux Chanceliers d'Angleterre*, the first of his works to be issued in book form since the brochure on Saint-Simonism, produced five years before, when he was only 17 years old. "The Two English Chancellors" was a critical historical essay on St. Thomas à Becket, the martyred Archbishop of Canterbury, and Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, chancellor in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. It pointed out "the contrast between these two great men, developing the theme that the former was a fine product of Christian philosophy, the latter a victim of rationalism."² Monsieur de Coux published the work after it had appeared serially in the *Revue Européenne*, of which he had once been editor. The publisher declared it a serious study, based on original research and containing "a spirit instinct with Catholic truth." He spoke of the young author as one who is "willing to devote himself to the grave and laborious career of defending the truth and engaging in the Catholic cause with his whole heart and all his talents."³

Ozanam would have been glad indeed to devote himself to literature, his first love and still first in his affections. How else was he to realize the young dream of writing in defense of the truth, of keeping the promise made after divine mercy had ended the ordeal of doubt in his college days? It was not out of vainglory that he preferred letters to the law, nor because he imagined that the life of a

² Hughes, H. L., *Frederick Ozanam*, p. 70.

³ Ozanam, A. F., *Oeuvres Complètes*, tome septième, Melangés I, p. 363: "Un jeune écrivain qui se devouer à la grave et laborieuse carrière, etc."

writer was an easy one. At 22 years of age he had come to realize the emptiness of human praise, the futility of anything done excepting for love of God and one's fellow men. If he was precocious in this as he had been precocious mentally in his boyhood and youth, it was due in part to his naturally serious temperament, like that of his mother, and in part to his experiences in Paris, especially the death of a student in a room a few steps from his own. A letter of his at this time said: "Above all, since I have seen young people die, I begin to feel that hitherto I had not given a sufficiently prominent place in my thoughts to the invisible world, the real world. I think that I have not paid sufficient attention to the two companions who are ever walking by our side, God and Death. . . . I seem to appreciate the misfortunes of life better and I shall be all the braver to meet them. I also seem to be less proud. What practical value would religious belief have, if it had not this? If religion teaches us how to live, it is to prepare us for death." Then he asked his correspondent not to misunderstand, not to imagine that he has become a saint or a hermit. "I regret to say that I am very far from the former and that I have not a vocation for the latter. Neither think that I spend my days in company with thoughts of death. Although I do think deeply, as I have just said, I am nevertheless a fairly good companion, asking nothing better than a laugh, even spending a great deal of time in my own way at that pastime."⁴

As to the life of letters being an easy one, Frederick knew better. It was difficult for him to write, however much he desired to do so and delighted in it. Writing

⁴ Baunard, *Ozanam in His Correspondence*, p. 82.

Les Deux Chanceliers he found the work full of difficulties, involving an immense amount of research, a constant checking of sources, a ceaseless struggle to be faithful to the exacting demands of historical truth, strict scholarship, and literary excellence. For one so stubbornly loyal to high ideals, so conscientious, authorship would indeed be "a grave and laborious career." And he was such a thorough Vincentian that he held his book on the English chancellors to be, despite the praise heaped upon it, far less important than what his friend and fellow Vincentian, Paul de la Perrière, had done: completed a church in one of the suburbs of Paris. Frederick envisions all the good de la Perrière's church will do, the numberless graces its builder will be granted. "How much better actions are than words, and ashamed I am of my role of scribbler, which I fill so badly! However, I hope that all my work will not be barren."

On November 23, 1835, Ozanam wrote to de la Noue that he would set out for Paris in about a week. "This year's stay will be my last and my time will be wholly occupied in hard preparation for the degrees of doctor of laws and doctor of literature. . . . But we shall not be strangers to one another. For this I rely upon the genius of friendship. Good-bye, my dear poet; remember me in your thoughts, in your flights of fancy, and in your prayers!" On November 16 he had written to Lallier, with whom he wished to share student lodgings. There were two reasons for this: one, his exceptional friendship with this student from Jovigny who was like himself the son of a physician. Lamache and de la Perrière, other members of the close-knit group, tell us that "Ozanam represented daring initiative, precocious knowledge, en-

gaging and winning frankness, the charm of beautiful thoughts and elevated sentiments. He was easily with us *primus inter pares*. Lallier came second.”⁵ The other reason was that, since Lallier was the secretary-general of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Frederick could the better work with him at the task of formulating the society’s rules, which were to be presented to the members in the following February. Ozanam bares his sentimental and often troubled heart in this letter to Lallier: “When I shall be in Paris, I must have my own furniture. You will be in the same necessity. Could we not rent a little apartment together? Wait for me for this, if it is possible to you. Solitude would be fatal to my repose: my imagination eats me up. Alone, it always seems to me that some demon may be at my side. With Christian friends I feel immediately the accomplishment of the promise of Him who has engaged Himself to be found wherever we gather together in His name. We should live as two brothers. I should pray you to mortify my indomitable self-love; we would seek together to become better; we would combine our labors of charity; we would ripen our projects of work; we would give each other courage in our moments of dejection; we would console each other in our times of sadness; but I see that I am again egotistic. *Adieu.*”⁶

In strict application to study, in Vincentian work and the constant apostolate of friendliness among his fellow students and all whom he met, Ozanam spent the remainder of 1835 and the first four months of the next year. Then, on April 13, 1836, he maintained with honor two theses which won him the doctor of laws degree.

⁵ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

⁶ *Lettres, op. cit.*, pp. 170, 171.

One thesis was, in Roman law, *De Interdictis*; the other, in French law, *De la Prescription à l'effet d'acquérir*. But he was not overjoyed at his success, as any other student might well have been. He seemed committed to the law now, he was ready to conform to his father's desire that he become a barrister. Yet he shrank from the legal profession. A letter of his at this time shows how troubled he was. He asks what he is to do in Lyons. To be confined "within the narrow limits of a court" will be very hard for him. He asks whether his love for higher studies is a vocation, an inspiration from on high or a temptation from below; and whether all he has thus far written and done has been reason or madness. "My dear friend, pray that God may deign to answer the questions which I ask of Him daily! I seem to be resigned to His holy will, no matter what humble part, what painful task He assigns to me. But only that it be known to me! That I may no longer be, as I have been for the last five years, divided against myself; that is to say, weak, powerless and useless." He accuses himself of not having been devoted as exclusively and as diligently as possible to his legal studies. He fears he will cause bitter disappointment to his parents, "and you know how well they deserve to be loved." Nor will he consider making letters a side issue, dabbling in literature as a pastime. "The passion kindled by Literature would have all my life, all my soul to itself alone. Thus I am face to face with the choice of abandoning one or the other career, as I cannot adopt both. But how can I make up my mind to bid farewell to Literature, that exacting muse who is making me pay so dearly for companionship?"

¹ *Lettres, op. cit.*, pp. 184, 185.

In this state of mind Frederick lingered in Paris after the doctorate had been conferred upon him. He lingered to study for his second doctorate, that in literature, and because he was loathe to forego the meetings of his Vincentian Brothers, their feasts and pilgrimages, such as the procession to Nanterre in June 11 of this year. At this time he was grieved by the death of André-Marie Ampère, the famous but humble scientist whom, one day when he needed such an example most, he had found before the tabernacle in St. Étienne-du-Mont; whom he called his second father. Ampère died at Marseilles on June 10. When the Sister of Charity tending him on his deathbed proposed to read to him from *The Imitation of Christ*, he smiled and said: "Thank you, Sister, but that will not be necessary. I know it by heart." Frederick was solaced in his sorrow by the thought that he had repaid his second father's kindness with filial devotion, had helped him with his pen to the last, and had received from him such words as these: "My excellent friend, how shall I adequately express my gratitude to you for your article, to which I attach inestimable value? My gratitude shall last as long as I live."

Finally, at the end of July, 1836, Ozanam was back in Lyons, where he would be for the next four years. The royal court would not begin sessions for four months, and Frederick spent a part of the intervening time in an excursion with his brother, Alphonse; but much more of it in founding his own city's first Conference of Charity. The brothers visited the ruins of Cluny, that remarkable abbey which was the center of a Benedictine reform profoundly affecting the whole Western Church; whose abbots, during 250 years following the founding in 910,

left their marks on European history. Returning from Cluny with a friend named de Maubout, they met Lamartine and accepted his invitation to dine at his estate at Monceaux. The poet scarcely spoke to Frederick, however. "They no longer spoke the same tongue," says Monsignor Baunard, telling the whole story in seven words. Lamartine's "Jocelyn" had been placed on the *Index of Forbidden Books*. Ozanam was saddened, but he wrote to Lallier in admiration of Rome's action. "She does not fear the opposition of genius, for she has on her side what is more than genius, the Holy Ghost, a constant source of inspiration. But it is irritating to see genius solemnly deserting and passing over to the camp of the enemy. A useless desertion, because by abjuring faith it abjures the source of its glory and strength, a two-fold source of grief for those who loved." The Abbé Ozanam tells us that Frederick kept on loving Lamartine and maintained that time and trials would bring the poet of the *Crucifix* back to his mother's faith. Lamartine died a Christian death March 1, 1869.

The Lyons branch of the Vincentian society held its first meeting on August 16, 1836. Soon there were twenty-two members, mostly young men who had been Vincentians while studying in Paris. Twenty families were adopted. "The visited as well as the visitors edify one another, living in the unity and under the mantle of St. Vincent de Paul." To the general quarterly meeting of the society in Paris on the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul in July, 1837, Ozanam reported that the membership of the Lyons conference had grown to forty and that seventy families were being helped. The Vicar-General of Lyons gave his favor to the young conference as did a number

of priests, including the *curé* of St. Pierre, the Ozanam family's parish. Even Archbishop Pins, administrator of the See in the absence of Cardinal Fesch, gave his approbation and blessing. Yet Frederick wrote to the headquarters in Paris: "There need not be any illusion: the Society has been distrusted on all sides." The trouble came chiefly from "good people who are timid." Some asserted that this group of young men, who had managed to impose Père Lacordaire on the Archbishop of Paris, now wished to impose themselves on Lyons. It was also asserted that some of the Vincentians were not even Christians and that they would bring discredit upon all other charity organizations by the "irregular" way in which they practised charity.

In a letter to Lallier, Frederick complains in a way unusual in him. He mentions the "big-wigs of orthodoxy of the laity, fathers of the council in dress-coats and strapped pantaloons, doctors who lay down the law between the morning's newspaper and their business accounts; persons to whom whatever is new is unwelcome, and by whom everything emanating from Paris is assumed to be wicked, whose personal opinion on politics is a thirteenth article of the creed to them." These people appropriate works of charity as their own exclusively and "declare modestly, putting themselves in the place of Our Lord, 'Whosoever is not with me is against me. . . .' You would hardly believe the tricks, the cavilling, the insults, the meannesses we have had to bear from these people, who are all in perfectly good faith."⁸ He and Chaurand (a member of the first little conference in Paris) are put constantly on the defensive, because he is the president and

⁸ *Lettres, op. cit.*, pp. 265, 266.

both the principal founders, and the struggle wearies them very much. Ozanam deplores the bitterness which is engendered but says it cannot be avoided and must be endured in the interests of the Vincentian work.

Despite the opposition and difficulties—or perhaps because of them—the Lyons' conference grew so that it was deemed expedient to divide into two units, one in St. Pierre parish for the northern, the other in St. François parish for the southern part of the city. A special work was the opening of a club for the many soldiers of the garrison, with a library of 500 volumes and classes in reading, writing, and arithmetic, Vincentians being the teachers. On Sundays there were meetings with an instruction by a priest and "night prayers in common." Monsieur Bailly, told of this, wrote to Frederick that he had informed the Archbishop of Paris, who was much affected. Ozanam in a subsequent letter recommended as one especially suited for the priest's part of the work for soldiers in Paris, the vicar of St. Valère, close to the Invalides, where Napoleon's remains were later to be entombed. He kept in constant touch with Bailly, the president-general, and with Lallier, the secretary-general of the society he had done so much to establish and spread; and the width and depth of his charity, of his friendly heart are revealed when he, in Lyons, asks to be remembered to two apprentices, two among the many lads he had helped in the slums of the capital.

Not even the opening of court sessions in November of 1836 brought the comfort of a decision to the heart of Ozanam. "I am suffering from an uncertainty of vocation," he wrote at this time. The bar held less and less attraction for him and he was still, after six years, un-

able to decide on which of two strings he would be allowed to play the music of his life, the hymn of worship and work he wished to offer to God. Would it be what he called "the strong G string" of the legal profession, or, in his words, "the brilliant and harmonious E string" of literature? For the present, eager not to disappoint his parents, he enrolled himself as a barrister at the royal court. Almost from the first, however, his antipathy was justified. He shrank from the methods of the lawyers and of the court, found that there was something wrong in nearly every case. His thoroughly honest nature rebelled at the insincerity and excesses of the claims made by those who hoped to profit from them. In a confidential letter he declared that he would "never get acclimatized to the atmosphere of chicanery." One of his first cases was that in which the judge appointed him defense attorney for a man too poor to engage counsel. The Abbé Ozanam tells us that Frederick put all of his talent and all the sincerity of his heart at the disposal of his moneyless client, but the Crown prosecutor had the bad taste to ridicule him, suggesting ironically that he gave himself far too seriously to something that was after all a mere formality. "Ozanam blushed, not for himself, but for his opponent," and stated calmly that he was amazed to find a responsible official making little of the dignity of the court. Was the defense of the poor no more than a comedy, the judge's position that of an actor, he demanded, in words that discomfited the supercilious lawyer considerably.

With such experiences, it is not to be wondered at that the young doctor of laws found his antipathy increasing, so much so that he was already planning how to

escape. It seemed probable that a chair of commercial law would be established at the University of Lyons and it was suggested to him that he be nominated for the professorship. The business dragged on, as such matters do, but meanwhile, Frederick studied commercial law, so that if he were appointed he could fill the chair with credit to himself and his city. He practised at the bar, too, and at the close of the court session of 1837 he reported to a friend that he had appeared some twelve times, three times on the civil side, and in each of these cases had been successful. Pleading was not without its attraction for him. His eloquence won wide approval, even when he lost his case. But "Fees come with difficulty," he reported, "and the relations with business people are so unpleasant, so humiliating, and so unjust, that I cannot bring myself to develop them. . . ." "This profession upsets me too much."

In the spring of 1837 Frederick went to Paris, plunged with ardor into precious documents, original and authoritative sources of study for the thesis on Dante for the doctor's degree in literature; and also regarding commercial law. It gave him an intense joy, too, to see his old friends again: Papa Bailly, the Abbé Marduel, all his fellow students still in the capital, and to be back among his Vincentian Brothers at the Tuesday evening meetings, take his place among the visitors to homes of the poor. Then, in May, came a letter from home: "Your father is dying!" No telegraph enabled the Ozanams to let Frederick know the sad news any sooner; no railroad between Paris and Lyons enabled the son to speed to his father's bedside, and so it was not until he reached Lyons after the stagecoach journey of three or four days that he

learned what had happened, from the tears of his brothers and the sobs of his stricken mother. On May 12 his father had stumbled on the rickety stair of a tenement and injured himself so badly that death came within a few hours.

There is an appealing story told by Ozanam in connection with the death of his father. It is beautiful and deserves to be reverently cherished. Wholly in agreement with the lives of those it involved, the story says that as they advanced in years Dr. and Madame Ozanam found that to climb many flights of stairs taxed their bodies too severely. The husband was concerned lest harm come to the wife; the wife lest he be injured. So they agreed not to climb beyond four flights of stairs. But charity proved stronger than prudence, pity more insistent than self-concern. One day they met, the man of medicine surprising the woman of mercy at the sickbed of a poor man in a wretched room on the highest story of a tenement hovel. It was just another such errand of mercy that brought about Dr. Ozanam's death.

A year before, Ozanam had wept with the younger over the death of the elder Ampère. Now he writes to Jean-Jacques: "It is on me that the hand of Providence is heavy today. When after a short absence I arrived in Lyons, in answer to a startling message, my father had passed away. I shall not see him again in this life. Those who have not had the experience cannot know the void which the loss of such a man creates. Such love, such respect and homage was offered him that in his own family circle he was the visible presence of the divinity. My father had not, it is true, gained any honors in the world of Science, his name was not renowned. But his labors and his virtues

won love and esteem from his colleagues and his fellow-citizens, in whose service he died. He was not known to you; but you know me, his son. If your kindness found something not unworthy in me, it was from him, from his counsel and from his example that it came." To Curnier, one of his earliest friends, Frederick wrote of the consolation it was to think that his father's piety, "enlightened in later days by a more frequent use of the Sacraments, his virtues, good works, trials and dangers have smoothed his passage into the heavenly Kingdom." The son does not tire of paying sad but fervent tribute to his father's memory. A month before his own death, Frederick broke forth into a grateful paeon to God for the blessings He had bestowed upon his father: "Thou didst preserve his faith amidst many evil times. Through revolutions, adversities, and in the soldiers' camp his nature remained noble; he maintained his sense of justice unimpaired, his charity to the poor unwearied. I bear this witness to my father: when I was compelled to the sad duty of looking into his accounts for the settlement of our inheritance, I found that one-third of his visits had been made without remuneration, to the poor. . . . He loved science, art, and labour, and he sought to inspire us with the love of the good and the beautiful. When he left the hussars he had read the Bible of Dom Calmet from one end to the other; he knew Latin as few of us professors know it nowadays."¹⁹

His father's death put upon Frederick's shoulders all the responsibilities of the home. His older brother, Alphonse the priest, was on the missions; the younger one, Charles, away at college and not old enough for such a burden. The estate was scanty, but the administration of

¹⁹ O'Meara, K., *Frédéric Ozanam*, p. 101.

it was full of troubles. Frederick disliked business of this kind, felt himself unsuited to it. He was forced, also, to the conclusion that without his father's income the financial condition of the family was none too good. But he was thankful for the presence of his mother, who encouraged him and blessed him. For her sake he must remain in Lyons; and since the distasteful law work did not bring him enough in fees, he undertook the almost equally uncongenial task of tutoring "three young men who are too grand to sit at the desks of a school." Did he remember that his father had been a tutor in Milan in other days of money scarcity? For the son, the trial was more severe than it had been for the father, less sensitive, less introspective, physically more robust and buoyed up by a more optimistic nature.

For Frederick in those days there was constant questioning, spiritual uneasiness, though never resentment or moroseness. His letter to one dear to him, Lallier, is like a mirror when he tells of the dark forebodings that haunt him, the meditations on his interior and exterior troubles that make him dejected; and how, seeing but one remedy, he had recourse to the doctor of souls, "who holds the secret of mortal infirmity, and who is the depository of divine balm and grace." This priest, after Frederick had unfolded all his sorrows to him, couched his counsel in the words of the Apostle: "*Gaudete in Domino semper*, Rejoice in the Lord always." Ozanam asks, is not that strange talk? Here is a poor fellow who has incurred the greatest misfortune in the moral order, that of offending God; and in the natural order, the death of his father. His mother is aged and ill, he is beset by daily business worries, isolated by distance or death from many friends. Within

himself he finds weakness and imperfections. Yet he is told not indeed to be resigned and consoled, but to rejoice always: *Gaudete semper!* "It needs all the audacity and the pious insolence of Christianity to speak in that strain," Ozanam declared, and added: "Yet Christianity is right!"

Summoning all his will power and invoking "all the audacity and the pious insolence" of which he wrote, Frederick labored to earn what fees he could as barrister and tutor, to support his mother and younger brother, and he found that as in the past charity work was a certain source of solace and help. Among the poor he was able to forget his own cares somewhat in trying to lessen their greater ones. Nor was his pen idle. He played on the E string of his preference, producing *Church Property*, a study subsequently enlarged into a scholarly brochure; and "*Origines du Droit francais*" – "Origins of French Law," a more ambitious undertaking in the shape of articles contributed to the *Univers* of Paris. It was a critique, vigorous and competent, of Michelet's contention that Roman law, purified and enthroned by the Stoics, had paved the way for Christianity. Ozanam, with an amount of research, display of authorities and knowledge of the subject amazing in a writer of 24, showed that Roman law was "as cruel as Stoicism," but that Christianity had "permeated the despotism of the one and the proud egotism of the other with the spirit of justice and the charity of the Gospel." As in the case of Lamartine, Ozanam grieved when Michelet ceased to be the man of the Sorbonne days when the student from Lyons had listened, his eyes misty, as the eminent man spoke of the heroic maid, Jeanne d'Arc. Frederick had a deep compassion for this as for all erring, unhappy men, and clung

to the hope that he would return to the Fold. But in this instance he hoped in vain.

At this time, too, the thoroughly Catholic heart of Ozanam responded to a request to use his pen in the service of the Church. While preparing for the doctor of literature examination, earning what he could and watching in anguish the decline of his mother's health, he wrote for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, founded in Lyons sixteen years before. He had been a member of this society since his youth and was a director of it while he lived in Lyons. His first article dealt with the beginnings of the organization, "the little chamber in Lyons in which holy inspired women prayed side by side with apostles," "the mighty rushing of wind of the Holy Ghost in this latter-day Pentecost, levelling every obstacle, kindling hearts, working miracles and making poor weak human creatures the instruments of His conquests." Ozanam held himself to be the poorest, weakest of God's creatures. Now God was using him to promote the spread of the true faith, to bring to vast numbers the supreme charity of the Word.

Late in 1839 Frederick went to Paris, to do the last work on his theses for the doctorate in literature. On January 7, 1839, he was called upon to sustain them, the one in Latin on the descent of heroes into the infernal regions, as depicted by the classical poets; and the one in French on the Divine Comedy and the Philosophy of Dante. The Latin thesis was dedicated to the memory of his father, whose mastery of that tongue his son had praised; the French thesis to the Abbé Noiret, Lamartine, Jean-Jacques Ampère. It was an impressive academic occasion. The entire faculty of the ancient Sorbonne was

present; no less than nine professors sat on the examining board. It was an ordeal for the modest candidate, younger than usual among those aspiring to such an honor. He entered the lists with confident courage, for he felt himself a champion of truth. In answer to objections raised by Monsieur de Lecretelle, Ozanam showed an extraordinary familiarity with French literature, its origin, its sources in the Greek, Latin, and Germanic idioms. He drew upon philosophy, philology, doctrine, and letters to buttress his contention that St. Francis de Sales deserved to be considered foremost among French writers of the sixteenth century. The examining professor halted his questioning abruptly, completely silenced by the solid scholarship and ardent eloquence of this young man from Lyons. Then an even more pronounced success came to Ozanam when he maintained his thesis on Dante. Ever since his visit to Florence in 1833, he had studied the greatest of Christian poets more than before, putting all of his exceptional talents into the work, and now he was ready with abundant knowledge and keen enthusiasm. "He evoked the spirit of the dead poet, and bid the living look upon him. As at the voice of a magician, the clouds rolled away and the luminous figure stood revealed against the background of the thirteenth century, crowned with its triple halo of exile, poet, and theologian. The audience, spellbound with admiration, listened in breathless silence." Ozanam spoke with "such elevation of thought and beauty of language that M. Cousin broke in on the argument and exclaimed: 'Ah! Monsieur Ozanam, that is the height of eloquence!' The audience answered with loud and prolonged applause." Lacordaire declared it not only a suc-

cess, but a revelation, and said further that the Sorbonne had never seen such a brilliant examination.

Ozanam made no fuss over the affair, did not mention it in his letters. He left Paris as soon as possible, hurrying back to his mother.

In Lyons, however, his triumph pleased many, especially those who said they had always known he would shed additional luster on their illustrious city. Now the matter of the commercial law professorship, initiated almost two years before, was brought to a favorable conclusion. The appointment by the municipal council of Lyons required confirmation by the Royal Minister of Education, and he was Victor Cousin, who had been so much impressed by young Dr. Ozanam's Sorbonne examination. Monsieur Cousin at once offered Frederick a choice of two posts, the long-delayed one in Lyons or that of professor of philosophy at the University of Orleans. The second offered advantages, philosophy was a more congenial subject than commercial law, but Ozanam chose to remain in Lyons near his mother.

In August, the devoted son went to Paris on business connected with the family's affairs. When he returned on August 14, 1839, one day less than three years after that earlier arrival so full of anxiety, he found his mother critically ill. She died on October 14, and as when his father died, so now Frederick poured out his heart to Lallier: "The length of the illness made me fear, lest in losing her mental faculties she might fail in the supreme sacrifice before its consummation. That trial was spared her. Her energies rallied in her last moments. Christ descending for the last time into the heart of this well-

beloved servant gave her the strength necessary for the supreme battle." He tells how the priest-son, Alphonse, recited the prayers for the dying, how his mother slipped serenely into sleep, "which left her, as it were, smiling; a gentle breathing which faded slowly. . . ." And then this sentence: "Happy the man to whom God has given a holy mother!"

When Madame Ozanam was buried beside her husband in consecrated earth at Lyons, how much of their son's heart was in those two graves; how much of hope that had centered in him; how much of reciprocal love! Frederick told Lallier that the memory of his mother would never leave him, and this proved true. As he had kept the memory of his little sister Elisa freshly green through the decades, so now in an intensified and wholly exceptional way he carried in his heart the image of her who had borne him. Consoling his cousin Falconnet when he in his turn lost his mother some three years later, Frederick said that in time he had come to feel that he was not alone. "Some feeling of infinite calm passed into my soul. It was an assurance that I had not been abandoned. It was a beneficent though invisible presence. It was as if a beloved soul had brushed me with her wings in passing. Sometimes I seemed to recognize the footsteps, the voice, the breath of my mother. Thus, when an ardent inspiration kindled my failing strength, I could not but believe that it was always she. Even to this day I have that feeling. . . . Sometimes when I pray I seem to hear her joining in my prayer, just as we used to pray together at night at the foot of the crucifix. Lastly—and this I would not confide to anyone but you—when I have the happiness to receive Holy Communion, when

Our Saviour comes to visit me, it seems to me that she follows Him into my poor heart, even as she so often followed Him in the Holy Viaticum into the homes of the poor. Then I firmly believe in the actual presence of my mother by my side."

The memorable letter to Falconnet closes with words which are not only for singularly gifted sons, for exemplary, high-souled men, but for all men born of woman: "Is there any other glory for mothers on this earth than their children, have they any other happiness than ours? What is Heaven itself for them if we are not there? I am, then, convinced that we still occupy their thoughts, that they continue to live for us, there as well as here, that they have not changed save in the direction of greater power and greater love."¹⁰

Monsieur Bailly's newspaper office in the Rue Saint-Sulpice in Paris has been called the cradle of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. It seems, however, that its genesis goes farther back, to the charity of the man and the woman now in the two graves at which Frederick Ozanam mourned. From his earliest years he who was to found the society knew his father to be full of pitying care for the poor. From childhood he walked with his mother when she brought material help and the benediction of her tenderness to the slums. Dr. and Madame Ozanam were the ancestor and ancestress of the Vincentian society.

¹⁰ Baunard, *op. cit.*, pp. 157, 158.

DECISIONS

WHEN young Dr. Ozanam began his lectures at the University of Lyons he did not give a series of mere dissertations on the skeleton of legal statutes. He embodied the law in the flesh of his wide knowledge, injected into it the blood of his fervent devotion to truth. So we hear him declare: "When therefore jurisprudence refers us to the Moral Law as supreme, we shall not be astonished. We shall consult that Law alone which, from the dawn of the world, has visited man in the secret recesses of his conscience, and which for 1800 years being promulgated anew with added solemnity, continues to direct unflinchingly every development of modern civilization." The notes of his forty-seven lectures, beginning with that of December 16, 1839, were published by Théophile Foissot, an advocate in the court of appeal at Dijon, and appear also in the eighth volume of Ozanam's complete works. Monsieur Foissot says that when the 26-year-old professor took the chair of commercial law, he was equipped at all points, "But fully alive to the true work of a professor, he did not lose himself in interminable discussions on debatable points. He preferred to enunciate principles rather than doubts, to instil rules of Law, to indicate the wisdom in Law rather than to initiate his audience into the double scandal—those are his own words—of the obscurity of Law and the inconsistency of legal

judgments. . . . The true Ozanam is to be found there, his scientific erudition, his penetrating mind, his true heart, his lofty conscience, even some flashes of his eloquence."¹

Frederick reported to a friend that the crowd at the first lecture was so large that doors and windows were damaged. "I allowed myself any historical and philosophical digression that the subject permitted, and I did not fail at the same time to raise a laugh wherever possible; as de Maistre says, one makes the other go." Later the self-deprecating and devout Ozanam reappears. The friendships of many, the respect of the Lyonnais for his father's name, "and above all and beyond all God, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," these spared him the humiliation of failure. At the end of the discourse which served as an "overture" to the series, this teacher disclosed the spirit which moved him, when he repeated the sublime thought of Demosthenes, that law is a conception of God.²

At Lyons, Dr. Frederick Ozanam showed the qualities which were to shine even more brightly when he became a professor at the Sorbonne. Monsieur Soulacroix, the rector of the University of Lyons, appreciating the worth of this new faculty member, wished to bind him more closely to the institution. He knew that Ozanam preferred letters to the law and that his remuneration for the legal course was small; therefore, the rector planned to offer him in addition the chair of foreign literature, thus giving

¹ Baunard, *Ozanam in His Correspondence*, pp. 167, 168.

² Ozanam, A. F., *Oeuvres Complètes*, tome huitième, Melanges II, p. 140: "Et la jurisprudence de tous les siècles, dans ses admirables définition ne ferda que répéter cette sublime pensée de Démosthènes: Le loi est une conception de Dieu, entrevue par les sages, réalisée ici-bas par l'assentiment de la société."

him both a more congenial field and an increased income. The candidate was pre-eminently fitted, knowing well the tongues of the English, the Italians, the Germans, the Spaniards, and having given years of enthusiastic study to their literatures. However, he lacked the political and religious views of the retiring professor, Edgar Quinet, and became aware that "they have canvassed strongly against me." Going to Paris, Dr. Ozanam called on the Minister of Education, Victor Cousin, who had not forgotten the triumphant thesis on Dante and was cordial and reassuring. He promised Frederick the chair Quinet was quitting, but only on condition that he would enter the competition for the newly established chair of foreign letters at the Sorbonne. There would be no more than four or five months in which to prepare, until September, 1840. Cousin was frank: "It is not that you can hope for success, but I am eager that the first competition be brilliant, that the flower of young men of genius should compete. Do me the favor. You will afterwards be appointed to Lyons, no matter what the results."

Ozanam reached Paris for the contest in a highly nervous condition. The months of intensive study—in three classical and four modern languages—had taken their toll. He had been obliged to forego his anticipated trips to Switzerland and Germany. And with all the added work, his commercial law lectures received the same careful attention as before. Yet he was full of courage, even though he did not hope to be successful. The other competitors were seven well-known professors in the College of France and they had had the advantage over him of easy access to original documents. There were grueling demands upon the candidates: two eight-hour

theses, one in Latin on the causes which arrested the development of tragedy in Roman literature, the other in French on the historical value of Bossuet's *Oraisons funèbres*. Then three days of examinations on Greek, Latin, and French texts, and one full day given to German, English, Italian, and Spanish works. Finally, the contestants drew lots for thesis subjects, and Frederick drew the worst possible one, the History of the Latin and Greek Scholiasts. When the young Lyonnais presented himself for the final phase of the ordeal, "He placed all his confidence in God, and he never acquitted himself better." For two hours he dealt with what in other hands might well have been a dismally dull or pedantically esoteric theme. He spoke so well, showed such a mastery of his material that he broke down even the prejudices which his fearlessly Christian attitude had aroused. When the results were announced, Frederick Ozanam's name stood first.

According to the usual course, the winner would return to Lyons and continue his lectures in law, adding now those in foreign literature, and only later would he be called to the Sorbonne chair for which he had competed with such remarkable and unexpected success. But now Monsieur Fauriel, professor of foreign literature at Frederick's Alma Mater, asked Ozanam to supply for him at the opening of the forthcoming term. That meant Paris almost at once, and leaving Lyons at this time meant another decision, the choice between personal advantage and the wishes of others on the one hand, service to his ideals and the strong urge of long-cherished hopes on the other. For Monsieur Soulacroix, the rector, had a daughter and she and Frederick had become engaged.

When in the dreary days after his mother's death he returned to 14 Rue Pisay from lecture or court, from Vincentian meeting or a visit to the poor, Frederick came to a house of loneliness, in which the silence spoke of vanished joys. There was none to greet him save Guigui, faithful as always but aged now and living wholly in the past, no fit companion for this solitary bachelor, the last member of the family in the home that had been a place of bright and lively happiness. His friends were eager to help him, and they were more in number and attached to him by a deeper affection than is given most men to evoke. But even with their kindly solicitude it was along no easy path nor quickly that Ozanam would decide his calling. What bothers other men not at all or but little, what they take as a matter of course, was full of complications for him. He must needs ponder every question, consider all angles, until like Hamlet's his resolution was sometimes sicklied o'er by the pale cast of thought. He always had to think much and pray much before coming to a decision. Now he faced the question of his vocation in the stricter sense of the word. Was he meant for the priesthood? For the religious life? For the married state?

There is some evidence in his letters that Ozanam had been considering celibacy, for he wrote to Lallier: "My dear friend, to unfold my whole thought to you, is virginity a virtue for women alone? Is it not, on the contrary, that which constitutes one of the chief glories of the humanity of Our Saviour? Is it not that which He cherished especially in His well-beloved disciple? Is it not the choicest bloom in the garden of the Church?" At another time: "It is not that I have to distrust the inclinations of my heart, but I feel that there is such a thing

as a male virginity, which is not without honor and charm." In this letter, dated October 5, 1837, he stated that the success or the failure of the commercial law lectures would determine "whether I am to live in the world, or whether I shall quit it as soon as the course of events has set me free," and then referred to the boldness of his dreams "and the sacred soil over which they are hovering. I do desire the lot of those who devote themselves altogether to God and humanity."³

Many who knew him, seeing his blameless life, zeal for souls and for every aspect of the Church's cause, and his exceptional intellect, believed Ozanam destined to be a priest. "The idea of the priesthood flashed for a moment before his mind," says Father Hughes. It seems to have been more than a momentary idea. There is no indication that he considered the diocesan clergy as the field for his apostolate. If he entered the religious life, in what order or community would it be? In the Dominicans, there seems to be no doubt, for Henri Lacordaire had gone to Rome, giving up all the prospects of his brilliant career, all the fame that clung to him by reason of the Notre Dame conferences, and had become a novice in the Order of Preachers, which he was to re-establish in France. Mental giants both, equally high souled, Ozanam was bound to Lacordaire and Lacordaire to Ozanam by ties extraordinarily strong, and the new Dominican would have asked nothing better than to have his friend and co-worker join him in donning the white robe and cowl. From the Eternal City he wrote to Frederick in Lyons, and in reply the harassed young man complains that the uncertainty of his vocation is becoming more disquieting

³ *Lettres, op. cit.*, p. 232.

than ever. "I commend to the charity of your prayers the interior suffering with which I am long troubled. If God should deign to call me to His service, I do not know of any army in which I should serve with greater pleasure than in yours." The novice in Rome in turn expresses his "ardent desire of one day addressing you as Brother and Father." In the spring of 1840, Lallier received a letter in which Ozanam said: "I prefer to wait. I do indeed owe a year's uninterrupted mourning to my mother's memory. That will give me an opportunity of seeing the Abbé Lacordaire on his return from Rome, and of making doubly sure if Providence designs to open the portals of the Dominican Order to me. During that period I desire, by more religious conduct and more austere habits, to win some right to guidance from on high, some control over my passions here below. I ask from my friends prayers in matters of such critical importance."⁴

At the end of the year, Ozanam decided that he was destined neither for the priesthood nor for the religious life. His decision was brought about by two factors: the assurance of the Abbé Noiret that he was not fitted for the cloister, and his own conviction that there was for him an imperative and unescapable work in the world. No other human voice could speak more authoritatively, more persuasively to Frederick than that of the wise and gentle old priest who had drawn him back from the brink of despair in his college days and had never ceased to give him the love of a fatherly heart and the counsel of a sage mind. Back in Lyons and being humble and inclined to doubt himself, the young barrister and pro-

⁴ *Lettres, op. cit.*, p. 338.

fessor was glad to have access once more to this source of help:

The other factor in Ozanam's decision was the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Every member of the society must be deeply impressed at the thought that he, its chief founder, gave it such a place in his heart that it was one of the two principal reasons for this momentous decision. "The most weighty of the many private and domestic reasons which held him back was that he was not morally free to enter religion, as he had contracted an indissoluble bond with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. It was to it that he was to devote himself, it was for it that he was to remain in the world, to organize and to extend it in the secular domain, in which he had brought it into being. A work of apostolate, but of lay apostolate, which was also sacred, and the abandonment of which would be treason; more particularly at the moment he, though distant from Paris, was still the guiding spirit and the driving force," says a biographer. "It was indeed the Society of St. Vincent de Paul that Ozanam put before Père Lacordaire, in answer to the invitation which the latter gave him to try the [Dominican] novitiate at la Quercia."⁵

So it was in the world that Ozanam was to live and work, for God and humanity. There remained, however, the question of celibacy or marriage. Abbé Noiret was positive that his protégé ought to get married; but the young doctor of law and literature held somewhat unusual views. In 1833, when he was 20 years of age, he commented, good-naturedly enough but not at all approvingly, on the inclination of an acquaintance to "light the candles

⁵ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

at the altar of hymen with hundred franc notes," and declared that to fortify himself against such a fate, and steep himself in the love of solitude and liberty, he had just made a pilgrimage with his priest-brother to the monks of the Grand Chartreuse. When Lallier, like himself bereft of mother and home, became engaged, Ozanam asked him point-blank: "Are not God and the pursuit of knowledge, charity and intellectual work enough to conquer your grief and occupy your youth? Is society so happy, religion so honored, Christian youth so numerous and so active, that you have the right to withdraw so soon the talent and the grace with which God has endowed you, like the wearied laborer who bore the heat and the burden of the day?" In another letter to this dearest of all his many friends, he says that the question of marriage suggested itself to his mind often, "but never vanishes without leaving there an incredible repugnance," in which, he admits, there may be some unjust contempt of women. "Nevertheless, the Holy Virgin and my mother and some others would make me pardon many things to these daughters of Eve. But I declare that in general I do not understand them. Their sensibility is sometimes admirable, but their understanding is desperately light and inconsequent. Have you ever seen conversation more capriciously interrupted, less followed out, than theirs? And then to engage one's self to a society without reserve, without end, with a human creature, mortal, infirm, miserable, however perfect she may be! It is, above all, this perpetuity of engagement which is for me a thing full of terror; and this is why I cannot hinder myself from shedding tears when I assist at a marriage, as when I find myself at an ordination, or a taking of the habit.

I do not understand the gaiety one is accustomed to meet at weddings.”⁶

The Abbé Noiret, we are told, did not urge the shy young Dr. Ozanam in the matter, but when Frederick consulted him the priest-philosopher’s invariable advice was, “*Mariez vous, mon cher, mariez vous! . . . Marry, my dear boy, marry!*” Ozanam continued to hesitate, but he seems to have undergone some change of heart at least. In the letter to Lallier in which he had frankly questioned the desirability of that young man’s marriage at his age (Lallier was one year younger than he), Ozanam had also written: “Not indeed that I claim to preach permanent celibacy. But that she, whom God destines for me, should come only when I have had time to make myself worthy of her.” He wished to have the union deferred “until the mind has attained its full development, the character its moulded form, that some sort of right to family joys had been acquired by work and solitude.”

In another letter of this period he declared that although “my age is the age of passions, I have scarcely felt their most distant tremors. My heart has, so far, known only the sentiments of comradeship and friendship. Yet I seem to begin to experience symptoms of another order of affection, and I begin to be afraid. I feel a void growing within me which neither friendship nor intellectual work fills. I do not know what will fill it. Will it be the Creator? Will it be a creature? If the latter, I am praying that she may come when I shall have made myself worthy of her. I am praying that she may be sufficiently charming not to cause any after regrets. I am praying especially that she may bring great virtues

⁶ *Lettres, op. cit.*, pp. 232, 233.

in a great soul, that she may be much more worthy than I, that she may elevate me, that she may be as brave as I am often fearful, as ardent as I am lukewarm in the things of God, sympathetic, so that I shall not have to blush before her for my unworthiness. Such are my wishes and my hopes, but as I have already said, there is nothing of which I am more ignorant than of my own future." As late as Christmas, 1839, he consulted Lallier, who was then married for about a year: "My perplexity is great. I am spoken to on all sides about marriage. I don't understand the question sufficiently well to be able to make up my mind. Advise me. You know the responsibilities and the consolations of that state. You know also the character and the history of the client. Give him, I beg of you, your opinion with that same frankness which he exercises towards you."⁷

In his somewhat stern letter to Lallier regarding that friend's impending marriage, Ozanam's attitude had been that family life must cause a neglect of Vincentian and other good works. Now he was seeing how Arthaud, Chaurand, and others who had married did not on that account neglect their helpful interest in the poor. Perhaps this was one of the elements contributing to Frederick's change of mind. Perhaps, too, he felt that he had earned some right to the joys of family life, that he was in some measure worthy of her for whom he was destined as husband. At any rate, the devotedly interested Abbé Noiret took it upon himself to follow up advice by action, and the story of the romance in Frederick Ozanam's life unfolds itself in the words of his biographers. One of the

⁷ *Lettres, op. cit.*, p. 322.

earliest ones in English, Kathleen O'Meara, tells us that the abbé remained unshaken in his conviction that Frederick had no vocation to the religious life, "that there was in him a need of tenderness and sympathy and encouragement, which made it desirable for him to marry; he had, moreover, settled in his own mind which one would best suit him as a wife out of all the young ladies of Lyons. But the old philosopher was far too cunning a judge of human nature, and of this particular specimen of it, to mention this, or even to make any attempt to bring about a meeting, shrewdly suspecting that the gentleman's perverse indifference and systematic habit of flying from decoy birds, whom he classed in a body as '*ces demoiselles*,' would frustrate the opportunity. Providence, who loves the pure of heart, and takes their destiny in hand, was gently leading Ozanam blindfold into his.

"He went one day to pay a visit to M. Soulacroix, the rector of the Academy.⁸ In passing through the drawing-room to his host's study, he stopped to present his respects to Madame Soulacroix, and while doing so noticed seated in a window a fair young girl, who was too busy attending to an invalid brother to pay any particular attention to the stranger whom her mother was speaking to. The stranger passed on, but while discoursing on philosophy and other lofty matters with the learned host, his eyes involuntarily wandered through the open door to the group in the window, where the bright, fair face was bending over the young brother, caressing and amusing him. 'How sweet it would be to have a sister like that

⁸ Some of the biographers speak of M. Soulacroix as rector of the Academy, others as rector of the University of Lyons.

to love me!’ sighed Ozanam, as he watched the two; and though he did not then suspect it, from that hour he was a lost man.”⁹

This was in 1840, before the decisive examination at the Sorbonne, and in blissful ignorance of that forthcoming ordeal, Ozanam yielded to the attraction at the Soulacroix home and visited there again and again. Ainslee Coates, in his volume of Ozanam’s letters, tells us that the Abbé Noiret spoke to Monsieur Soulacroix, suggesting a marriage between his daughter and the brilliant and exemplary young professor. The rector was so favorably disposed that Frederick’s priestly friend thereupon told him how matters stood. Ozanam “was altogether astonished at this overture, which he was far from expecting,” but, says his brother Alphonse, believing he saw a mark of the Will of God in this manifestation, which he had not provoked in any manner, he went from that time occasionally to see M. Soulacroix, under divers pretexts, in the hope of having at least a glimpse of her. . . .” It was agreed that the engagement should be postponed until after Ozanam returned from Paris and the professorial concursus which would win for him the chair of foreign literature at Lyons University, whether or not he came out a victor. Then his extraordinary success, followed by the exceptional offer of a supply professorship at the Sorbonne, upset all the plans of the young lovers. There was a formal betrothal, of course. “The elder brother, in place ‘of a father and mother whom we still mourned, and who would greatly have approved of this happy alliance,’ went solemnly to present the younger to his future father-in-law, and Frederick found himself warmly

⁹ O’Meara, *Frédéric Ozanam*, pp. 133, 134.

welcomed into a second family circle. The father took him into his wife and daughter, and after some conversation and mutual congratulations he took Frederick's hand and joined it with his daughter's in his own, thus consecrating "the knot which a little later would be tightened for ever.'"

At once, however, the question arose: Would Dr. Ozanam remain in Lyons, set up a home there, or go to Paris? The income from the two chairs, of commercial law and foreign letters, would mean about 15,000 francs annually and promised a permanent position of honor and influence in Lyons. The Sorbonne post meant a much smaller income and the possibility of being only temporary. It meant straightened circumstances for the young couple; perhaps even hardships. Naturally, Ozanam had recourse to prayer. "Heavy sacrifices have to be made, cruel partings to be endured, business and family complications to be solved, all that is more than enough to terrify one of ordinary courage. It is fortunate that the appreciation of my weakness makes me lift my eyes to Him who strengthens. Up to the present I asked for light to know His will; I ask now for courage to do it," he wrote at this time.¹⁰

When the troubled prospective son-in-law consulted Monsieur Soulacroix, he found that the rector was, of course, strongly in favor of Lyons. However, he had come to hold Frederick in deep affection and admiration and was so fair minded that he understood the professor's plea that Paris meant, far more than Lyons ever could, the realization of long-cherished dreams, a fitter field for the battles which he was so eager to fight for truth. He

¹⁰ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

understood "that heroism has also its rights in this world." Finally, Frederick asked his fiancée, Amélie, to make her choice. "There was a moment of pathos." He told her all that was involved, the greater financial security at home, the meager income at the Sorbonne, the claims of prudence and those of idealism. She placed her hand in his, saying: "I have full confidence in you!" So it was to be Paris, and the better to prepare for his opening lecture course, Ozanam made a rather hurried and short journey through the storied Rhine country.

On December 6, 1840, before leaving for the capital to fill the assistant professorship for Monsieur Fauriel, Ozanam wrote to Lallier: "I go away, leaving an alliance concluded which will be solemnized at my return. . . . May God preserve to me, during the exile of six months, her whom He seems to have chosen for me, and whose smile is the first ray of happiness which has shone in my life since the loss of my poor father! You will find me very tenderly enamored; but I do not try to hide it, although I cannot sometimes hinder myself from laughing at it. I had believed my heart more bronzed. . . . I feel truly that new affections will never dislodge any of those which were already in the heart, and that it will enlarge that it may lose nothing."¹¹

At Easter, Frederick was able to spend a fortnight in Lyons. "It was the sweet prelude to the happiness which was to be his in the summer vacation." He had kept in constant touch with Amélie by letter, as he did to the end of the first lecture course.

Then, on June 28, 1841, from the Chateau du Vernay near Lyons, Ozanam writes to Lallier: "The great things

¹¹ *Lettres, op. cit.*, pp. 382, 383.

in which your affection was interested are accomplished. Wednesday last, June 23, at ten o'clock in the morning, in the Church of St. Nizier, your friend was kneeling before the altar, on which his elder brother was celebrating Holy Mass, and at the foot of which his young brother gave the liturgical responses. At his side you would have seen a white-veiled young girl, pious as an angel, and now, I have to say, as tender and affectionate as a loving friend. She was happier than I in this, that her parents were present. Yet all the family relations that Heaven has spared me were there, too; and my former comrades, my brothers of St. Vincent de Paul, filled the choir and peopled the nave. I did not indeed know where I was. I could scarcely restrain sweet tears from falling, and I felt the divine blessing descend on me as the consecrated words were spoken." To Lallier and also to his cousin, Henri Passonneaux, he said, exultingly: "She is delighting everyone. . . . I am happy. I do not count days or hours. Time does not exist for me. What matters the future? Happiness in the present is eternity. I understand what heaven means. Help me to be good and grateful."¹² The bridegroom was 28, the bride 21 years of age.

A month was spent by the young couple at d'Alleverd Springs for the treatment of Frederick's laryngitis, and there was an almost complete cure. The honeymoon trip extended to Naples, Sicily, and Rome. On November 5, the happy "lost man" saluted the dome of St. Peter's. Pope Gregory XVI granted the couple an audience. "Be seated; you are my children, let us leave formalities aside and have a chat," said His Holiness. The Pontiff and the Sorbonne scholar spoke about Dante and Ozanam gave

¹² *Lettres*, pp. 402, 403.

His Holiness a copy of his thesis on the great poet. "We shall never forget the solemn moment when the Sovereign Pontiff, after having chatted familiarly with Amélie and me, stretched forth his venerable hands and blessed us and our families."

Florence was visited briefly, on November 28 Marseilles was reached, and after a day with Léonce Curnier in Nimes, the husband and wife arrived in Lyons, whence they departed in December for Paris, to set up a little home. There, as in the home of Frederick's parents in this city about forty years before, virtue and true love would have abiding places. The honeymoon had had to be a simple one: the income of Professor Ozanam was not large. The home in the capital had to be simple, too. At first, a small flat was taken in the street called Grenelle-Saint-Germain. The heat made this place intolerable when summer came, so the ever kindly Monsieur Bailly was glad that he could rent the young couple a better place in the Rue de Fleures, with windows looking out upon the pleasant space of the Luxembourg Gardens. In 1844 the two brothers, the Abbé Alphonse and Charles, a medical student, were to join Frederick in the new home. Monsieur Soulacroix and his family came to Paris, too, the rector receiving an appointment in the ministry of education. And for the invalid brother of his wife Frederick found a special place in his heart, the heart that was so big that it could always find room for a new affection without crowding out any older one.

Life was strenuous for Ozanam in those years. He employed his extraordinary intellect to the full and drew upon his rather limited physical strength to the utmost. In addition to his conscientious work as professor, he took

up again his position of leadership in the Catholic world of Paris, and, of course, hastened also to attend the weekly Vincentian meetings and as an active member of the society made his visits to the poor. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul had never been absent from his thought, not even during the trying days of his double mourning, the triumph of the thesis on Dante, the ecstasy of his courtship and marriage. Now he threw himself with all his ardor into the charity work of what he always called his "dear little society," even when it grew to number thousands and overflowed the borders of France and of Europe.

To his lectures as supply professor Ozanam brought all the devotion of one who loves truth and is vowed to maintain it. The first course, opening on the first Saturday in January, 1841, had dealt with the *Purgatorio* of Dante in the Italian, with the dawn of German literature in the Teutonic field. Diffident, nervous, he had begun to give the first lecture with some difficulty, felt himself being hopelessly dull. But there came the moment at which the erudite scholar gave way to the impassioned orator, the champion of truth. Indomitable courage triumphed over physical exhaustion. Colleagues, many friends, among them members of the Vincentian conferences, crowded about him at the conclusion of this first effort and assured him that he had done very well. He modestly attributed whatever success there was to the support of his friends. As on similar other occasions, he said there was nothing to make a fuss about, and he tried to prevent the press from extolling him. The *Nouveau Correspondant* wished to see his discourses reported and circulated; the *Univers* embarrassed him by its adulation.

His lectures on early German literature were reproduced in the *Gazette* of Augsburg. He remained unperturbed, desired that prayers being offered for him in Lyons at this time should be given credit for it all.

The significance of Ozanam's lectures lay in this, that he, a young man known to all for fidelity to the Church and for a life strictly conformable to Catholic teaching, was filling with such ability a chair of the Sorbonne, a part of the university in which enemies of the Church had been accustomed to hold forth, where in Frederick's student days he and others were compelled to call professors to account for bold misrepresentations of Christianity in general and Catholicity in particular. Here was a Catholic who would not hold his tongue when truth was at stake, who would not compromise; and despite the unfriendliness of some, his discourses continued to draw generous-sized audiences, for many listened gladly to this man of such firm convictions, solid scholarship, and winning eloquence. Ozanam was even more eloquent of tongue than of pen, once he overcame the first shy nervousness at the beginning of a lecture. His pen was busy, too; his mind was always teeming with projects, writings which he would use as lecture material and then have published. He never lost sight of his dream of serving the truth by demonstrating the divine origin and the beneficent course of Christianity since its founding. Year by year, as long as strength was given him, he would add to what he had already produced as part of this apostolate.

Ozanam's first lecture course had been given during the six months preceding his marriage; he prepared for the second course after he and his wife had returned from their honeymoon and settled in Paris. During the

academic year of 1842–1843 he dealt with the *Nibelungen Lied*, in the German literature course. He called it the *Iliad* of the German nations, and pointed out that the principal role is taken by a woman, *Kriemhild*: “. . . if the weaker sex is chosen in which to realize the heroic type, is not that something altogether new, is not that peculiar to a chivalrous age?” His conception of historical Christianity and his whole philosophy of life no less than his complete grasp of the subject shaped Ozanam’s evaluation of the *Lied*, and of the *Minnesingers* and later German poets. It was in opposition to an anti-Christian, pro-pagan school of thought in Germany at that time.

Any ordinary man would have been content with the work which the Sorbonne lectures entailed. Ozanam, however, undertook three classes in literature for senior students at Stanislaus College, and there he won the attachment of his students to the same degree as at the university. He was always at their disposal, none ever felt abashed in asking his help or counsel. This was a part of his stupendous apostolate of friendliness, a part of his giving of self to others, as in the work of the Vincencian society. What was always in his heart regarding the Vincencians is revealed in his letter to Charles, the younger brother who had belonged to the conference in Lyons and now wished to join one of the many parish branches that had sprung from the first little group. He tells Charles that charity work “has in store for you those pious and fraternal sources of joy which I have found so consoling and so numerous,” and speaks of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul as “this young and growing family which is perchance destined for the regeneration of France.”

On February 26, 1842, Ozanam attended a quarterly

meeting, one of the general gatherings at which members of all the conferences assemble to hear what has been done, and all that remains to be done. The general secretary's report showed two thousand members in Paris and the provinces, 1500 families helped in the capital, a home and a patronage established for apprentices, such as Ozanam remembered so long and so affectionately, and "Numerous instances of spiritual aid not so obvious but more beneficent." Frederick felt that the report did not "sufficiently emphasize the wonder of that community of faith and good works" which was to him such an appealing part of Vincentian life. All aspects of the society held his high allegiance; but, ideal Vincentian that he was, he felt most at home, was happiest when his heart, overflowing with friendliness, could speak to the hearts of the poor and pour balm into their wounds. He considered the society the best possible training place for young Catholics, those exposed to many temptations, in danger of selfish preoccupation with their own pleasures and worldly advancement or their petty troubles and no less for generous-hearted youths, eager to help others, glad to have the companionship of like-minded young men. Vincentians became leaders in many phases of Catholic life, and there was in Paris and in France at this time need for leaders on the Church's side, men who would support and follow Ozanam and his colleagues in the forefront of the struggle. Men who looked on the present with the trained eye of an historian such as Frederick, saw clearly the alarming shadows of what was to come.

Thus he lived in these years, strenuously, too strenuously for his health's sake. He was sustained supernaturally by the sacraments which he frequented, by his

own constant prayers and the prayers he never forgot to ask of others, and by his charity work. On the natural level, the days of hesitation, of painful decisions to be made, and of loneliness, had given way to tranquil hours of blessed peace and refreshing joy in the home of love and virtue, to which like his father before him he returned so gladly and gratefully at the end of day. The Abbé Noiret had indeed been right in choosing for his beloved Frederick the daughter of Monsieur and Madame Soulacroix, Amélie, "whose smile delights the world," as her husband said. Reared by parents of the same high character as Frederick's, in a home like theirs, she was as wife all that Marie Nantas had been to the senior Dr. Ozanam. She was completely devoted to the welfare of her husband, who worked too hard, whose health had to be watched so carefully. And he was completely devoted to his wife. As long as he lived he never failed to give his dear Amélie "a flower of his fancy" on the twenty-third of each month, to commemorate lovingly the day on which they were married. He poured out his poetic soul in these verses; indeed, gave to his domestic life "a simple poetical taste with which he embellished the most everyday occurrences." His home was another in which happiness was found in the simple and tender things of life shared together.

KNIGHT AND PILGRIM

FEW men were more self-reproachful than Frederick Ozanam. Few had less cause to be so. His letters are full of sentences in which he belittles himself. Because his ideals were so high, his sense of duty so stern, his conscience so tender, he was forever aware within himself of faults, which he was prone to exaggerate. But in the eyes of those who knew him best, he was another Bayard, a *chevalier sans reproche*, exemplary in all the phases of his life, as son and brother, student, husband and father, teacher and writer, friend and citizen, Catholic.

Few parents ever had a son who repaid their love and care with a more intense affection, with more complete obedience, even when this meant a heavy sacrifice; or with more heartfelt appreciation, as shown abundantly in his letters and for all the world to see in his writings. In obedience to his father's wishes he studied law and entered upon the legal profession. In lesser matters too, he was always mindful of his parents. Thus, in one of the many letters he never neglected to write to his mother when he was away from home, he was careful to include a message which he knew would be welcome: "Will you please tell father a very flattering piece of news? M. Andral delivered one of his recent lectures in the medical course altogether on Papa's work, A History of Epidemics, which he spoke of in the highest possible terms." For his

mother's sake, to be near her in her declining years and enfeebled health, he sacrificed the more alluring prospects at Orleans. Between him and his mother there was such a tie of intense love and of spirituality transcending even death, as reminds us of St. Augustine and St. Monica, without the long bitter years of grief he of Hippo caused his mother.

Their parents had knit the bonds of family love so tightly and so strongly that the Ozanam children were held by them as long as life lasted. Frederick and Alphonse and Charles were brothers in a way far above the usual. They were together as much as possible, fellow travelers when the opportunity came, confided in each other, helped each other. Neither when Alphonse became a priest, nor when Frederick married and moved to Paris and Charles went away to college, was the tie loosened. The Abbé Ozanam paid in a biography of his brother such a tribute as only an exceptional brotherly spirit could engender. Being a Christian, he transposed the *Ave atque Vale* of Catullus into *Vale atque Ave*—good-by at death but hail when the happy reunion comes in eternity! And was there ever a more tenderly beautiful brother-and-sister relationship than that of Frederick and Elisa? Though he had known her so short a time, he mentioned her in his letters and writings through the decades, kept her memory fragrantly alive with undiminished affection to the end.

The romance of Frederick and Amélie Soulacroix had none of the *grande passion* element of so many novels, but it was in harmony with what we know of his character and hers. Once convinced that marriage was his vocation, once having seen the fair head bent in sisterly tenderness

over the invalid brother, Frederick went to her home again and again, "under divers pretexts," to get a glimpse of her. His letters from Paris, during the six months' interval between betrothal and marriage, show him an ardent lover, and such he remained. His was a chivalrous Christian love, fashioned by his noble character, fed by his lofty conception of marriage and family life. His biographers give us heart-warming pictures of him in his home. His wife "was the perfect companion for him, with such gifts of love and beauty and music as fulfilled his dreams. When she played in the evening, the melancholy induced by his fragile health and incessant labours would vanish, and he would not want any longer to wander among ruins or to entertain old memories, 'those other ruins, sadder and more attaching than the ones which the moss and ivy cover.'"¹ He who was so tenderhearted toward others here found the tenderness he needed. He who gave himself so unstintingly to all good causes here found rest from his exertions and refreshment and renewed courage for tomorrow's struggle.

Then, when his wife bore him a child, the culmination of his domestic joys and the crowning of his marriage, his pen revealed what was in his thoroughly Catholic heart: "After a succession of favors which determined my vocation and re-united my family, yet another is added which is probably the greatest that we can have on earth: I am a father." Thus he wrote to Monsieur Froisset on August 7, 1845. The infant was a girl, whom they christened Marie. She would be Frederick's and Amélie's only child. Lallier was, of course, to be the godfather and to him Frederick wrote: "Ah! what a moment

¹ Brodrick, L., *Ozanam and His Society*, p. 55.

that was when I saw for the first time the tiny but immortal creature whom God had placed in my hands! . . . I cannot see that sweet little face, all innocence and purity, without seeing the image of the Creator more clearly mirrored in her than in us. I cannot think of the imperishable soul for which I shall have to render an account, without feeling my responsibilities more keenly. . . . The mother, who is better in health, has the pleasure of nursing her baby. It is a troublesome but a very real pleasure. We shall thus enjoy the first smiles of our little angel. . . . I awaited the day of Baptism with great impatience. We have given her the name of Marie, which was my mother's, after the glorious Virgin, whom we thank for the happy birth." In a later letter to Lallier he thanked the godfather for "your good wishes and prayers for our little angel. . . . Your name is one of the first which shall be formed on her lips as soon as she will begin to pray."²

To the painstaking discharge of every professional duty, Dr. Ozanam added as a teacher a personal influence at once broad in the number it reached and deep in its effects. He was on the faculties of the Sorbonne and of Stanislaus College in days of controversy, when such an example as his was particularly valuable. Sometimes, after a lecture, the Sorbonne students followed him, an admiring and affectionate escort, from the ancient building through the Luxembourg Gardens to his flat. The younger students at the Stanislaus came to revere him no less, though at first they seemed inclined to be jeeringly bold, even malicious. One of them, Elme-Marie Caro, later a professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne and a member of the French Academy, has left us a record of the time.

² Baunard, *Ozanam in His Correspondence*, pp. 231, 232.

“Ozanam was neither handsome, elegant, nor graceful. His appearance was commonplace, his manner awkward and embarrassed. Extreme near-sightedness and a tangled mass of hair completed a rather strange ensemble. . . . It was impossible to remain long insensible to an expression of kindness coming direct from the heart through a face which, if somewhat heavy, was yet not without distinction. Then, a smile of beautiful refinement, and at moments a flashing intelligence transformed the face, as if it had been suddenly illumined by a ray of light from the soul. He unbent willingly with a gaiety, with a laugh so boyish and so natural, a wit so charming and so well turned, that it was a delight to find him in one of those happy moments when he let himself go.” He had in full measure that most excellent of qualities in a teacher, the ability to get his students interested in their studies, and also in full measure the friendliness which encourages the dull, inspires the careless, treats all with a gracious consideration. This bound these young men to him in a peculiarly firm and lasting manner. “As years went on,” continues Caro, “Ozanam’s former school pupils, now University students, were his friends. I never knew a master so beloved. Young men were invariably attracted to him, and the sympathy was mutual and loyal. Once they had come to know him, they never left him.”³

What mattered most to Ozanam in all this was that his inspiring example and fearless speech and action as a Catholic drew young men to the faith, as he had in his student days brought more than one of his Sorbonne classmates to the Church. An instance of this apostolic work was made known to him by a student’s note, which

³ Baunard, *op. cit.*, pp. 204, 205.

said: "It is impossible that any one could speak with so much fervor and heart without believing what he affirms. If it be any satisfaction, I will even say happiness, for you to know it, enjoy it to the full, and learn that before hearing you I did not believe. What a great number of sermons failed to do for me, you have done: you have made me a Christian! . . . Accept this expression of my joy and gratitude."⁴

As a writer, Ozanam worked no less conscientiously than he did as a teacher. Nothing but the best, gained at no matter what painstaking, exhausting work on his part, was good enough for the sublime mission to which he had dedicated himself. One might not readily think of this slender, palefaced, nearsighted man as a warrior. Yet he was, his pen mightier than many swords, his mind a well-supplied arsenal, his heart never lacking courage. It took courage for the youth just out of college to enter the lists against Saint-Simonism; for the man to give full play to what Father Brodrick calls the irrepressible Catholic in him at the solemn professorial concursus in September, 1840; and for a member of the Sorbonne faculty to take the stand he took in the matter of the freedom of education. His fearlessness won for him the admiration of many, including some who did not agree with him in religious and sociopolitical matters. It gained for him also the enmity of powerful persons. Fauriel, the permanent occupant of the Sorbonne chair of foreign literature, died suddenly in July, 1844. Ozanam had acted for the ailing professor with brilliant success. Would he now gain the coveted post of permanent professor in succession to Fauriel? It meant much to him, because the temporary

⁴ O'Meara, K., *Frédéric Ozanam*, p. 155.

nature of the assistant professorship had been anything but pleasant or reassuring. "I shall sacrifice nothing," he wrote in regard to this matter, "neither my duty to the State through imprudence, nor my duty as a Christian through cowardice." He asked God to "take in His hands the management of this delicate business." Ozanam's splendid character and charming personality were assets, but his philosophy was a liability. To have such a capable, popular, outstanding Christian in a place of even more influence and honor than his present one "offended and irritated the followers of Voltaire."⁵ However, in the end the faculty, the academic council, and the royal council all presented his name unanimously. On November 22 he made the statutory declaration and the appointment became official the next day. Less than two years later, on May 4, 1846, at the age of 33, he was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

The name of Montalembert, whom young Ozanam met at the salon of Lamartine early in his Parisian exile, comes to the fore again in the fight for educational rights on the part of the French Catholics, who had to contend against the University's monopoly. Toward the end of the reign of Louis Philippe, the Comte de Montalembert inaugurated the campaign for the faithful in a manifesto entitled, *The Duty of Catholics in the Question of the Liberty of Teaching*. The count mentioned Ozanam as one of the exceptions among the professors, one of "the small number of upright men who have what is greater than talent, faith"; who "protest by the publicity of their Christianity and the solidity of their knowledge, against the scandals of their colleagues in their lectures." Danger lurked in

⁵ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

such open mention of Dr. Ozanam as being in opposition to the majority of his professorial colleagues in the university. Monsieur Foisset, who was to publish the notes on Ozanam's commercial law lectures and was already his staunch friend, hesitated to publish the manifesto in the *Correspondant* without Frederick's knowledge. When informed of the matter, however, Ozanam's fighting blood was aroused. "There is certainly both honor and danger in being named as an exception to an offensive rule. But it is an honor, and it would be an act of cowardice on my part to have the reference deleted," he told Foisset. Later he thanked this friend for having kept his name in the article. However, willing as he was to suffer whatever might come, the same fearless man felt it his duty also to make a correction in the manifesto, "not in my interest but in that of truth." He pointed out that professors at the Sorbonne must not be confused with those at the College of France, reduced the aggressive offenders to two, and added that he and those of his mind made no protest because there was no occasion for doing so. "We have openly professed our own faith, refuted opposing doctrines, sought to do our duty as Christian professors and to serve God by advancing true Science. But we have not sought to introduce into the Faculty of Paris a division which does not exist, to create two camps, to engage in battles. I think, moreover, that it is a matter of great importance to the young men that that should not be done. Our lectures must not be regarded by our colleagues as provocative steps calling for a retort. If there are many strangers to our faith, they are not to be made enemies."

Much of Ozanam is in these words: the scrupulously honest and fair-minded man, no swashbuckling bravo seek-

ing a quarrel anywhere, for the quarrel's sake, but a knight who would use his lance only in a good and grave cause; the kindhearted man who, because he had once come so perilously close to losing his faith, pitied all who did not believe, and stood firmly against anything which might unnecessarily antagonize those on the other side. So admirably correct as well as courageous was this attitude that his great friend, Père Lacordaire, did not fail to speak on this matter when he came to write Frederick Ozanam's funeral notice. The Sorbonne professor kept his chair, "his post in Truth's critical hour," said the great Dominican, but he remained firmly united to the Catholic cause. "He completely retained the affection of Catholics and the regard and respect of the body to which he belonged. Outside both camps he won the sympathy of that formless and Protean mass called the public, which sooner or later determines everything." Ozanam was quick to acclaim Montalembert's eloquent plea for religious instruction, in the Chamber of Peers on April 16, 1844: "I desire to express my great pleasure and my pride as a fellow Christian. I recognize the accents of St. Gregory VII, of St. Anselm, of St. Bernard in that defense of the liberties of the Church, at once the oldest and the youngest and the most imperishable of all liberties."

Another instance of Ozanam's courage came toward the close of 1845, when Charles Lenormant, lecturing for Guizot in the chair of history, became the victim of his anti-Christian colleagues of the faculty, rowdy students, the revolutionary press, and the government's weakness. And all because he had become a believer. After three years of inward struggle, he was convinced of the truth of Christ's religion and bravely proclaimed his belief.

Such men as Michelet and Quinet considered Lenormant's conversion an insult to themselves and excited all possible opposition. Ozanam wrote to Lallier: "As far as I am concerned, I shall do all I can to keep my position identified with that of M. Lenormant. As long as his lectures continue to be disturbed, I shall continue to be present. I shall use all my influence to recruit young men for the lectures. On Thursday the 8th of January the lectures are to be resumed." Then, on the critical January 8, 1846, when a storm of catcalls greeted the convert professor of history and a prolonged hissing prevented him from speaking, Frederick Ozanam jumped up in the lecture hall. Quietly he looked at the rioters, with a glance which held pity for their vulgar action and contempt for anything they might do or say. From some of the benches came applause in admiration of his bold stand. He quieted this applause, and then reminded the demonstrators that they, who professed to set so much store on liberty, ought to be ashamed of themselves for denying it to others. He suggested that they respect the consciences of others as they demanded respect for their own. Lenormant went on with his lecture without further trouble. There might have been an honorable solution of the difficulty, but the university administration in its weakness yielded to the enemies of Christianity, who opposed equal freedom for all. The government ordered the course of lectures closed and Lenormant resigned, to take charge of the Catholic journal, the *Correspondant*.

The breadth of Ozanam's interest in the Church's educational cause was shown while he was still a student at the Sorbonne. He drew up the protest, on April 15, 1834, in the name of the students of Paris against the lawless

behavior of State university students regarding the establishment of Louvain in Belgium as a Catholic and free institution of learning. Some of his phrases are characteristic: "We even protest in the name of those who, while not professing our belief, desire freedom for the development of all great conceptions, of all noble thoughts, of all useful knowledge." He was fully aware that he and his fellow students were attending a State university: "But," he insisted, "we are first and above all sons of the Church; without ingratitude to our own *alma mater*, we to-day envy our Belgian brothers the happiness of receiving from one and the same hand the bread of scientific knowledge and the bread of the Sacred Word; they have not to divide their instruction into two parts, one of error and one of truth." He expresses the hope that France will one day have her own Catholic universities. Besides drawing up the protest, he asked people to put their signatures to it and to subscribe "shares" to help the Louvain project.

Everything he did, Ozanam did with an exceptional degree of intensity, and this lavish expenditure of nervous energy impaired his health again and again. In addition to all his other work, he who might have felt himself exempted took his full share in still another field, the *Cercle Catholique*, founded in 1843 by Archbishop Affre of Paris and a number of distinguished laymen. Its purpose was to help Catholic young men coming to study in Paris, by providing a center with a library and with lectures on scientific and literary subjects. Ozanam accepted the presidency of the literary section and frequently gave the address. Other lecturers included Père Lacordaire, Montalembert, the Jesuit de Ravignan, and the Abbé

Bautain, noted for his magnificent conferences at Strasbourg. During the Circle's first year, Ozanam made a speech which threw light on his character and on the conditions of the times. Kathleen O'Meara declares that Archbishop Affre was present, knowing beforehand that Ozanam was to speak and on what subject, and that His Grace's presence on this day was intended as a public mark of adherence.

The subject was an important and delicate one, the literary duties of Christians, and inevitably the matter of polemics had to be handled. The rules of Christian controversy may not be violated with impunity, the speaker told his listeners. "In the heat of the fight there is a danger that we do not think of. It is easy to offend God. The violent instincts of human nature, restrained by Christianity, break loose and manifest themselves here. . . . Discussion has other dangers for those whom it is striving to convince. Assuredly, when Christians embark on the painful service of controversy, it is with the firm will to serve God and to gain the hearts of men. We must not, therefore, compromise the holiness of the cause by the violence of the means. Pascal understood this and says somewhere: 'The way of God, who does all things gently, is to put religion into the mind by reason and into the heart by grace. . . . Begin by pitying the unbeliever; he is already wretched enough.'" Then, after citing the examples of St. Basil and the sophist Libanus and St. Augustine and Licentius, he said: "We must never begin by despairing of those who deny. It is not a question of mortifying but of convincing them. . . . The number of those who doubt is greater still. There are noble minds who are led astray by the vice of early education, or by

the force of evil example. We owe them a compassion which need not exclude esteem. It would be politic, even if it were not just, not to thrust them back into the lessening crowd of impious unbelievers, to distinguish their cause, and not to confound strangers with enemies. . . . There are some who, after having waited a little while for those tardy ones, lose patience and grow irritated with their slowness. Let us not lose patience. God is patient because He is eternal; so likewise are Christians.”⁶

To serve God and gain the hearts of men for Him—this was the keynote of all of Ozanam’s work. And how tenderly his friendly heart beat for those who had lost the faith or were in peril of losing it, he showed when he said to his priest-brother: “I am sometimes charged with excessive gentleness towards unbelievers. When one has passed, as I have, through the crucible of doubt, it would indeed be cruelty and ingratitude to be harsh to those to whom God has not yet vouchsafed to give the priceless gift of faith.”⁷

Not all, however, shared his gentle solicitude, strict moderation, and carefulness of utterance. In one of the Catholic papers of Paris, the *Univers*, he was “stigmatized as a deserter from the Catholic cause,” in an article replying to his address on the day after its delivery. He wrote calmly about this attack, expressing the confident hope that “Earnest thought and serious discussion will end, thank God, by carrying the day against these polemics of abuse and fury, which are more suited to our enemies than to us.” In this letter he says also: “You must not suppose, however, that in the difficulties of our present

⁶ O’Meara, *op. cit.*, pp. 164, 165.

⁷ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

position we have hard words only for none but the imprudent champions of truth. I am doing my best, and this is but little, in concert with M. Lenormant, M. Coeur and a few others, to maintain a vigorous struggle against the doctrines of the Professors of the College of France. While Mm. Michelet and Quinet are attacking Christianity itself under the name of Jesuitism, I tried in three consecutive lectures to defend the Papacy, monks, and monastic obedience. I did this in the presence of a very large audience, who were stamping and hissing somewhere else the day before; and yet I met with no interruption or disturbance. In continuing the literary history of Italy—that is to say, of one of the most Christian countries that exist under the sun—I met at every step, and I shall take every opportunity of pointing out in the course of my lectures, the benefits and the prodigies of the Church. Help me with your prayers.”⁸

Professor Ozanam kept on doing his best, which only he in his real humility held to be little. He worked so strenuously that his health gave way and he was forced to seek rest and restoration by making journeys. These were pilgrimages for him, religious, historical, literary excursions quite as much as travels in search of physical improvement. He was a pilgrim of the pen. Others brought back from their travels various souvenirs, he brought back to Paris facts and impressions, stored in his teeming brain and sensitive heart, to be used thereafter in writing his lectures and books and journalistic articles. He made the pilgrimages with sturdy faith, extensive knowledge, an intense interest in a generous number of fields: they gave

⁸ O'Meara, *op. cit.*, pp. 165, 166.

him an increase of faith, additional knowledge, a rich supply of inspiration.

First of these pilgrimages, after the early one to Italy with his parents and brothers, the hurried one to the Rhineland and his honeymoon journey, was the one which took him to Italy in December, 1846. He had suffered a severe attack of fever in August, a period of rest in the woods of Meudon had failed to restore him. Nor was he helped much by a sojourn on the heights of Bellevue, near Paris, where he regretted that he could not come down into the city to make his visits to the poor as an active Vincentian. But he bought a supply of bread every day and gave loaves to those who called at his door, always asking each one to pray for him. Now it was decided that he must take a year's complete rest, and Monsieur de Salvandy, the Minister of Education, graciously commissioned him to do historical research in Italy, Frederick's other *patria*. His wife and daughter, would accompany him. He looked forward eagerly to the pilgrimage with them to a land he loved and at a time fraught with immense significance. On January 8, 1847, the Dante enthusiast was in Florence. In Pisa he saluted the cathedral, "so like a lance." On February 2 he saw Pope Pius IX at a pontifical function in the Quirinal chapel, at first in the distance, then at close range, and was moved to tears. On February 13 he and Madame Ozanam received Holy Communion from the hands of the Pope in the Seminary Church of St. Apollinaris. "The dowager Queen of Saxony, poor Italians, men and women of different nations were all there: and my Amélie by my side, as we have always been in our happiness, as we hope always to be to the end of this life and in the next." He told of the

audience he and his wife and child were granted by the Pontiff, who insisted that Madame Ozanam be seated. "My child, Marie, behaved like a little angel," said the happy father's letter. He spoke to the Holy Father of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. "The Pope answered that he knew about the Society and the good work which the young men were doing in their visits to the poor and to the sick."

There were reverent visits to the catacombs, the tombs of martyrs and saints, to Monte Cassino; demonstrations of the Pope's immense popularity, which was to fade so soon and so tragically; and after the sojourn in Rome, a journey into Umbria, Franciscan Umbria, with its special appeal to the Ozanam who would soon write a glorious chapter of Franciscan lore. Venice was visited, too, and then the return journey taken through Switzerland. In Geneva on June 15, a newspaper informed Ozanam of the death of Ballanche, the gentle philosopher with whom he did not entirely agree but whom he revered as a singularly unselfish soul, sincerely devoted to truth. This had been the second death message received during this pilgrimage. The first, coming to him in Rome, had announced the passing of his brother-in-law, the invalid over whose bed of suffering Amélie Soulacroix had been bending when Frederick saw her for the first time. While in Geneva, Ozanam remembered Echallons, the Swiss village to which Grandfather Nantas had fled from the Terror and where his mother had received Holy Communion for the first time. He visited the church, now as then used by Catholics and non-Catholics, and prayed for his mother. "Amélie gathered flowers on the height on which the church is perched. They are not the same flowers that

our dear mother trod as she went to Mass, but they are like them, and please God we, too, shall be like her."

The Ozanams returned to Paris after eight months, the three of them improved in health. And Frederick plunged once more into his work. He resumed the Sorbonne lectures on December 21, 1847, welcomed by an enthusiastic audience that overcrowded the hall. He wrote in defense of the government of Pope Pius IX and coined the phrase "Let us go over to the barbarians!" which caused him to be misunderstood, involved him in controversy. When Louis Philippe's regime ended in February, 1848, new experiences came to him who had hitherto been devoted entirely to the ways of peace, to learning and charity. He believed it his duty as a citizen to don the uniform of the National Guard when a revolt broke out, and he even allowed himself to become the candidate of Lyons for election to the Chamber of Deputies in the republican government which had been set up. But he had hesitated, answering those who urged him to enter Parliament: "I have never been so keenly conscious of my weakness and my ineffectiveness. I am less qualified than almost any other to deal with those questions which are agitating men's minds." At the eleventh hour the self-deprecating Ozanam allowed his name to be entered, but he had not time to address the voters in Lyons, to make anything like an adequate campaign. He received 16,000 votes, not enough to elect him. "It is fairly clear," he wrote to the Abbé Ozanam, "from the number of votes cast for me, that if I had been nominated sooner, and if I had been able to canvass personally, I should have succeeded. But God no doubt wished that I should be spared that dreadful responsibility. He preferred to send

me back to research work, for which I have a taste." The unsuccessful candidate worked for the elections of de Melnu, Thayer, with special fervor for that of Père Lacordaire. Then he went back to lecturing at the Sorbonne, and planned to take his part in political life, "from which no one can stand aloof," by writing for *l'Ère Nouvelle*, *The New Era*, which he and a number of like-minded leaders established to serve the Catholic cause in the turbulent time. Soon he was called upon to lay down the pen and take up the rifle once more. During the bloody days of June, 1848, he was stationed at a point of danger as a National Guard.

In the autumn of 1849, his doctors ordered Ozanam to go to the mountains, in the hope that the healthy air of the heights would benefit him. In Lyons he renewed many warm friendships. In Ferney with his wife's uncle he expressed regret that he must breathe the air "in the shade of Voltaire's trees," but to compensate for this he found that Geneva, once Calvin's city, had a Conference of Charity. He cut short his vacation to do a service for a friend, Monsieur Wallon, whom he helped to nominate as successor to Guizot in the Sorbonne chair of modern history. Back in Paris, he busied himself teaching, writing, visiting the poor as an active Vincentian. But he had not fully recovered from the damage to his health. Exhausting work, worry caused by false accusations and the sad state of affairs in his beloved France, these contributed to another physical crisis. He was sent to Brittany in the vacation period of 1850, and was a devout pilgrim in the devout land of the famous Pardons. His deeply religious and poetic soul was thrilled by the annual procession at Vannes in honor of St. Vincent Ferrer, who died there;

by the simple, strong faith of the Bretons, the land and seascapes, the customs of this ancient Celtic country. And in Brittany as in so many other places to which he traveled, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul claimed his attention. He was welcomed by a family at Morlaix and put up for three days by these people whom he had never known, the only bond between them being the Vincentian one.

Again and again, warned by recurring weakness and obeying the stern orders of his physicians, Ozanam left his work in Paris and sought rest and restoration, now in a country house at Sceaux, now at Dieppe for the sea air. At Dieppe he was joined by his friend, Jean-Jacques Ampère. He yielded to the persuasion of Ampère, who told him that as a professor of foreign letters he would be amiss in his obligations if he did not take this opportunity to visit the land of Shakespeare. So to England went the two Frenchmen and Madame Ozanam, and the difference in the viewpoints and chief interests of the two men is shown by this excerpt from a letter by the younger Ampère: "I made a little trip with him and Madame Ozanam to see the Exhibition in England. I was more enthusiastic than he over the wonders of industry. We did not on this occasion seem to be at one in admiration, as we had been when considering Dante and the Niebelungen. He was of opinion that I admired England too much and overlooked the Irish unduly. He left me to return alone to the Crystal Palace, in order to have time to visit the slum tenements of poor Irish Catholics. He returned in a state of great emotion; also I suspect somewhat poorer than he went."⁹ From this pilgrimage, for such were all

⁹ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

his journeys, the greatest Vincentian returned not at all pleased with the results of the Social Revolution in Britain, but full of pity for its victims, so many of them members of the ever faithful, long-persecuted Irish race; and full, too, of heartfelt appreciation of his English Vincentian Brothers, the noble men who, in his words, "overcoming the double prejudice of nation and class, are doing great good. I passed a very pleasant evening in their midst."

Other pilgrimages were to come, to the Bayonne region and across the Pyrenees into Spain, and finally the last, sad Italian journey. Everywhere he knelt devoutly at shrines, reveled in the natural beauties which stirred his poetic soul so much, and in the historical and literary associations which the various lands evoked. Everywhere, too, he was the constant Vincentian, infusing his ardor into the members of existing conferences, urging the foundation of units where these were lacking. Amid all his bodily suffering; the anxiety that gnawed at his heart because he feared he must soon leave wife and child; the bitter disappointment caused by the course of events in France and elsewhere, the weakness and disunity among the French Catholics, the suffering of the multitudes of poor people in Paris, and his inability to work as he wished at the grand literary project of his dreams since boyhood—despite all this, Frederick Ozanam faced the waning of his life with growing serenity. The vehement noise of the Rhône scarcely echoed now in his soul. He had managed to put aside all tendency to pride and willful selfishness. His spirit was tranquil, his life flowed along as quietly as the gentle Saône, content to suffer the confining banks of pain and disappointment, thankfully reflecting the sky to which it looked with hope and resignation.

Of course, being human, even Frederick Ozanam had not attained perfection. There were times when he was impatient, when he would say, "Stop, or I shall lose my temper!" and would forthwith proceed to lose his temper, we are told by his biographer, Monsignor Baunard. But at once he would master himself and beg pardon humbly, without trying in the least to justify his outburst. Such faults lose their seriousness when seen in perspective. The state of his health, his constant, painstaking work, his sensitive nature and many worries must have placed a terrific strain on his nervous system. How high he had climbed spiritually is shown by his mirroring letters. In one he said: "My state of health renders many duties and pleasures impossible; but I admire the dispensation of Providence, which will not permit us to acclimatize ourselves here below." Telling of his domestic happiness, he added: "God does not will that I should take root in that happiness. He leaves me the joys of the heart, he sends me the pains of the body; I bless Him for my lot." Again: "God wishes to save me, and grants me further time to become better. May He be praised and blessed! Whether His design for me is to give me back my health, or to make me do reparation for my sins by prolonged suffering, may He be equally praised and blessed! May my cross be that of the penitent thief!"¹⁰

¹⁰ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 364.

TRUTH, BEAUTY, GOODNESS

FREDERICK OZANAM wrote in a letter to his friend Dufieux on February 16, 1852, when the shadows of failing health had darkened about him: "One of my greatest griefs is that, having studied deeply, I believe I have some ideas, without the strength to reproduce them." Dedicated to truth, attuned to beauty, striving valiantly after goodness and quicker to see it in others than in himself, Ozanam was eager to make his pen no less than his lips an instrument of these three great desiderata of the good human life, these three great needs of man's spirit.

Ozanam was never able to realize completely his youthful dream of a vast literary undertaking, conceived as an apostolate, dedicated to the stupendous task of showing all men the divinity and truth and transcendent beauty of Christianity and all that it has done for man. He was only 17 or 18 years old when he gave a title to this grandly contemplated work: *La Démonstration de la Religion Catholique par l'antiquité et l'universalité des croissances et des traditions du genre humain*, a title containing as many words as his life had years at the time, more letters by far than his life would have years. Jean-Jacques Ampère said that Ozanam's first published work, the refutation of Saint-Simonism, "was the preface to the book at which he was to labor even to his last day." Though he would never make the dream come true, he did a tre-

mendous amount of work in that direction, served the Catholic cause bravely and unselfishly. What he wrote reached and influenced and helped many, and does so to this day, not only among his French readers but also among those reading in English, German, and the other languages into which his writings were translated; or at least their ideas and intentions made manifest by excerpts from or comments upon them. His complete works were published soon after his death, in homage to his memory through the efforts of his many friends and admirers. There were editions of eight and nine volumes, later one of eleven volumes, two of which were given to his letters. In addition to these, there have been single volumes, in French and in translations, containing one or more of his works.

As a schoolboy Ozanam wrote verses in Latin and in French. In this he emulated his mother, who was the family laureate, composing little verses for household feasts. At 15, Frederick gathered a number of his Latin poems into a little book which he dedicated to his parents. He addressed his father in Latin, his mother in French, asking them to accept this token of his love and esteem. Monsieur Legeay, one of his teachers at the Royal College of Lyons, published a small collection of his most brilliant student's *juvenalia*, placing it "as a wreath on his grave." The young wooer of the muses let his precocious fancy range over a wide field, including Marie Antoinette's death message to the Princess Elizabeth, a filial tribute to our Lady, the shortness of human life, the Ascension, a Latin version of the Italian Tasso's sonnet to his cats. He contributed to the *Bee*, the Royal College's alumni publication, and later wrote verses occasionally, as

at New Year's or when a friend of his married. His poetic talent runs like a golden thread through his work, enhancing the prose with glowing images, flights of soaring thought, impassioned utterances. But he was careful not to let fancy take the place of fact when he traced the course of history, upheld truth and refuted error, championed the poor and weak against the rich and the strong.

To tell the truth and persuade men to accept it, this was the purpose of Ozanam's treatise on Saint-Simonism at 18; of his *Two English Chancellors*, written in 1836, his treatises on the origin of French law, in opposition to Michelet and dating from 1837, and of all his other writings, including the lectures on commercial law in Lyons. It was no less the ruling force of his innumerable contributions to the press, a phase of his apostolate that is of no small interest and importance in any study of his part in the Catholic life of France in the nineteenth century.

In the *Correspondant* of December, 1847, and January, 1848, there appeared two chapters of what was to be one of Ozanam's major literary productions, *les poètes franciscains en Italie du XIII^e siècle* — *The Franciscan Poets in Italy in the Thirteenth Century*. With additional chapters and completed and crowned by a French version of the *Fioretti*, it was published as a book in 1852, attracted wide attention and has remained a cherished piece of Franciscana. It was the fruit, obviously, of the author's sojourn in Italy in the spring of 1847; no less certainly of his spirit, so like that of the Poverello, humble, loving poverty and the poor, simple, tender of heart. *Les poètes franciscains* told the men of Ozanam's time something they were inclined to forget, made them consider St. Francis of Assisi and his friars, their way of life, their

scale of values, so different from those of the arrogant and harshly complacent bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century.

The time which Ozanam could spend at Assisi, was, as he said, "all too short." He found the memory of Francis as fresh as if he had died yesterday, not centuries ago. In Assisi there took definite shape Ozanam's idea of a book on the Franciscan poets, the book which would be one of his most popular works, the one into which he poured so much of himself, his poetic and mystical soul. He saw the Saint of Assisi "as the Orpheus of the Middle Ages, taming the ferocity of the wild beasts and softening the hard-heartedness of men." The poems of the Little Poor Man and his early followers are canticles of the love of God. "Bonaventure appears in this work, breathing lyrics under the school uniform, Friar Pacificus, who was called the King of Verse, and Jacomino de Verona. All these, however, pale before a greater poet, Jacopone da Todi. To Jacopone, the insurgent, courageous, extraordinary friar, Ozanam pays the tribute of good though mistaken faith, a blind though holy passion which led him to make mistakes, and shows that love and grief made him a great poet. From cloister to prison, from prison to cloister his troubled feet traveled, until in old age he came to a Franciscan house in time to receive his last Holy Communion from the hands of his best-beloved friend, John of Alvernia; and then, radiant with joy, to sing his canticle, Jesus Our Hope, and die on Christmas just as the priest at midnight Mass intoned the *Gloria in excelsis*.

It has been said that the outpourings of the seraphic St. Teresa of Ávila and St. John of the Cross do not express more fiery love of God than da Todi's. His best-

known poem is the *Stabat Mater*. "Love for the Virgin Mary throbbing in that heart overflows in tears at the feet of the Mother of Dolours in that beautifully sad hymn." Ozanam declared that "The Catholic liturgy has nothing more touching than this sad plaint, whose regular stanzas fall like tears; so tender that it breathes a divine grief and an angelic consolation; so simple in its popular Latin that women and children can understand half of it by means of the words, the other half by the melody and the promptings of the heart."¹ The younger Ampère called *The Franciscan Poets* a masterpiece of refinement and grace, saying he insisted on the word "grace" because that remained a characteristic of Ozanam's imagination, which an austere life and laborious study had not blunted. As to the *Fioretti*, that incomparable collection of Franciscan medieval legends, Ozanam had found a copy of it in Florence and was, as might be expected, enamored of these little flowers of poesy. Always extremely careful in such matters, Ozanam pointed out that these legends are by no means matters of faith, nor authentic Franciscan history. But solid Christian truths underlie them, "they spring out of a virile doctrine, made for free men." The devotion of Ozanam to his wife, the ideal love which blessed and glorified their marriage, comes to light often in the husband's letters, but nowhere with a more wistful appeal than when the author of *The Franciscan Poets* said that a hand more delicate than his "has done into French one of the most pious, touching, and amiable tales of the *Fioretti*, in an attempt to grip more closely the simple

¹ Ozanam, A. F., *The Franciscan Poets in Italy in the Thirteenth Century*. Translated and annotated by A. E. Nellen and N. C. Craig, p. 240. This version of Ozanam's book does not include *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*.

and natural turn of the old chronicler." Jean-Jacques Ampère tells us how, one evening at Sceaux, where Ozanam was staying for his health, he was "initiated into the secret of that modest piece of translation. The hand which Ozanam described as being more delicate than his, was strong and steady enough to give him his last drink, and clasp his hand for the last time." We are not told which of the Little Flower legends was put into French by Madame Ozanam.

In her introduction to the English version of *The Franciscan Poets*, Amy E. Nellen declares that "all who have striven to bring to light the hidden truths of Franciscan literature—whether in Germany, France or Italy—have given unquestioning testimony to the pre-eminence of Frederick Ozanam as an authority on the subject. . . . No other book reproduces so sincerely and truly the spirit of the Franciscan movement, with all the glow of its religious ecstasy and all the charm of its innocent simplicity; no other book expounds so clearly the gradual evolution of that spirit, or testifies so convincingly to its influence on all aspects of human life and art. . . . To Ozanam we are indebted for the discovery of the importance of Jacopone, the Laureate of Folly."²

A German writer of our day points out that Ozanam's study, *Sources poetiques de Divine Comédie*, contained new material on the origin of the greatest Christian poem of the centuries. It traced the influence of Italian folk poetry and the strong impact of the Franciscan singers of Umbria on Dante's stupendous work.³ Heinrich Thode

² Ozanam, A. F., *The Franciscan Poets in Italy in the Thirteenth Century*, pp. xi, xii.

³ Rischke, Margarete, *Studien zu Frédéric Ozanam*, p. 61.

and F. X. Kraus are among the German scholars who mention the importance of Ozanam's work, which brought out of hidden places many of the poems of the Umbrian school. And though later research may have added to and modified some of his conclusions, his remains the merit of having made the Little Flowers available to so many and of introducing the *Stabat Mater* and its author to readers who until then had known neither. There was deep in the soul of Frederick Ozanam something which drew him to St. Francis, of whose Third Order he was a member. There was also in him a kinship with Dante Alighieri, whom he extolled in the thesis which the learned men of the Sorbonne received with so much amazed admiration.

A special importance in the history of literature attaches to Ozanam's works on Dante. As in the case of the Franciscan poets, he drew the greatest of Florentines out of an undeserved obscurity. Poor Dante had been claimed as a forerunner of the Protestant religious revolt of the sixteenth century, or as a member of a secret, antipapal sect. "Hatred of the Catholic Church was at the bottom of the flippant sarcasm flung by Voltaire at Dante," says Father Hughes⁴, and Voltaire's dictum in this as in other matters was accepted by all too many far into the nineteenth century. Then came Ozanam, solidly grounded in scholastic philosophy and Thomistic theology, and thoroughly orthodox, and thus ideally equipped to understand the *Divine Comedy*.

In one of his books, *Dante and Catholic Philosophy in the Thirteenth Century*, Ozanam said that Dante's was a most singular fate. "The masterpiece which cost him so

⁴ Hughes, H. L., *Frederick Ozanam*, p. 132.

much labor, on which he spent practically his whole life, which has earned for him eternal fame, has lost for us after six hundred years its philosophical value which is perhaps its chief merit. Many cultured people are acquainted only with the 'Inferno'—and of that know little more than the inscription written over the gate of Hell and the episode of the death of Count Ugolino. Whereas the poet who wrote of the calm self-controlled sufferings of the souls in Purgatory, seems to them a sinister spirit, a kind of bogey emerging out of the proverbial darkness of the benighted thirteenth century. Others like Voltaire, more learned but no more just, see in the *Divine Comedy* only a strange creation of a man of genius who in certain descriptive passages soars far above the depraved tastes of his era, notwithstanding the unfortunate choice of his subject." Some modern critics, he continues, see only a neurotic pseudo-religious sentiment, others no more than a political creed inspired by a deep-seated rancor. "For all these people the frequent allusions to Catholic dogma in every canto of the poem seems like the weeds of the intellectual thought of his time which crop up everywhere." But it was above all Dante's Catholicity that attracted Ozanam. In the *Divine Comedy*, he found that which was precious to him, in which he had steeped himself, the theology and philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, which Dante raised into a magnificent Gothic cathedral of aspiring verse, resting on the sure foundations of Catholic truth.

That Ozanam should have penned this glorification of Dante's philosophy, the medieval Scholastic philosophy of which St. Thomas Aquinas is the great exponent, is a most remarkable fact. The Abbé Noiret, his teacher and

counselor, "burned his candles" to Descartes; and Frederick in his Lyons college days "transmogrified Descartes and Kant into benign Doctors of the Church." That later he studied scholasticism so well that he could write this book, shows the vigorous independence of his mind and his indomitable will to learn the truth and spread it. The prestige of scholasticism was low in those days, among Ozanam's associates and quite generally; and the neo-Scholastic revival was yet to come. Pope Leo XIII's encyclical, *Aeterni Patris*, which was to give to neo-Scholasticism its definite character and quicken its development, did not appear until 1879, twenty-six years after Ozanam's death.

In his study on Dante and scholastic philosophy, Ozanam pointed out that while the Holy Roman Empire no longer exists, and "All those political and scientific interests in the poetry of Dante which gave pleasure to the men of his own time have gone," the *Divine Comedy* has "another interest which the passage of time can never destroy." The mystery of death which haunted the minds of men when Dante lived has not ceased to interest their descendents, and the moral principles, the truth underlying the *Comedy* are perennial and imperishable. "Catholicity, once having made known the relations existing between God and man, has revealed forever the nature of the moral universe . . . at most only offering a possibility of discovering minor truths, logically derived from those it has given to mankind."⁵

Standing entranced before Raphael's *Disputa del SS. Sacramento* in the Vatican in 1833, Ozanam began to

⁵ Ozanam, A. F., *Dante and Catholic Philosophy in the XIIIth Century*. Translated by Lucia D. Pychowska, pp. 51, 52.

plan his books on Dante; but it would be almost two decades later before his works on the laurel-crowned figure in the great painting reached the reader. Asking himself why Raphael had placed Dante in the midst of the Church Fathers and most eminent theologians, he entered upon a period of study and research which revealed to him the true significance of the *Divine Comedy*, the theological and philosophical content which made it the counterpart in poetry of Gothic cathedrals in stone and of the *Summa*. His works on Dante have a twofold worth: their thorough investigation of original sources, and the impetus they gave to the stress then being placed in France on the theology of the great Florentine's masterpiece and its final meaning. In his *Documents inédits* on the history of medieval Italian literature, he uncovered a goodly number of hitherto unknown sources bearing on Dante origins, among them Jacomino de Verona's poetic vision of the other world, held to have made him a direct precursor of Alighieri, and the poem *L'Intelligenza*, in which appears a womanly figure very much like Beatrice. In another study, on the schools and public instruction in Italy in the age of the barbarians, he offers valuable material toward an understanding of Dante's wide scientific knowledge. All these writings were produced patiently through the years, in the midst of many other labors and troubles and distractions. They increased the world's store of truth, beauty, and goodness. They gave their author the consolation of doing at least a part of the immense literary task to which he had set himself in his youth.

Considered by many his greatest work is Ozanam's *Civilisation au 5^{me} siècle — Civilization in the Fifth Century*, which appeared in print for the first time in 1855

and consists principally of the stenographic reports of the author's lectures in 1849. "It is as it were a proof and an illustration of his theories of progress in periods of cultural decline. Here for the first time in a larger work in France, there is set forth the importance of this age for the taking over, transformation and conservation of antiquity's culture by Christianity, and for the formation of all medieval culture."⁶ Ozanam pays special attention to St. Augustine and his importance as being the first to provide a basis for a Christian philosophy of history. He points out again and again Augustine's strong influence upon the Middle Ages and their great historical writer, Otto von Freising. Professor Lenormant, whom Frederick supported so courageously in his difficulties at the Sorbonne, declared that Ozanam was the first to evaluate the personality of St. Augustine correctly, after Jansenism had to some extent "spoiled one's taste for it." Besides that of the great Bishop of Hippo, a huge number of other figures appear, for it is an immense canvas on which Ozanam begins to paint a picture, but lives only long enough to produce a small part of the dreamed-of whole.

"I propose to write the literary history of the Middle Ages, from the fifth to the end of the thirteenth century, to the time of Dante, before whom I pause as the worthiest representative of that great epoch," wrote the author in the *Avant-Propos* which appears at the beginning of his *Civilization in the Fifth Century*, in his complete works. Here he outlined a much more ambitious plan than he was able to carry out. In the history of literature, he said, his principal study will be the civilization of which it is the flower, "and in that civilization I shall glance es-

⁶ Rischke, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

pecially at the handiwork of Christianity. The whole idea, therefore, of my book will be to show how Christianity availed to evoke from the ruins of Rome, and the hordes encamped thereupon, a new society which was capable of holding truth, doing good, and finding the true idea of beauty. . . . *Tout la pensée de mon livre est donc de montrer comment le christianisme sut tirer, des ruines romaines et des tribues campées sur ces ruines, une société nouvelle, capable de posséder le vrai, de faire le bien, et de trouver le beau.*" Then he said in this preface: "We know how Gibbon, the historian, visited Rome in his youth, and how one day, as, full of associations, he was wandering over the Capitol, he beheld a long procession of Franciscans issuing from the doors of the Ara Coeli Basilica, and brushing with their sandals the pavement which had been traversed by so many triumphs. It was then that, indignation giving him inspiration, he formed the plan of avenging the antiquity which had been outraged by Christian barbarism, and conceived the idea of a history of the decline of the Roman Empire. And I have also seen the monks of Ara Coeli crowding the old pavement of the Capitolian Jove. I rejoiced therein as in a victory of love over force, and resolved to describe the history of progress in that epoch wherein the English philosopher saw only decay, the history of Civilization in the period of barbarism, the history of thought as it escaped from the shipwreck of the empire of letters and traversed at length those stormy waters of invasion, as the Hebrews passed the Red Sea, and under a similar guidance, *forti tegente brachio*. I know of no fact which is more supernatural, or more plainly proves the divinity

of Christianity, than that of its having saved the human intellect."

Much more, too, is set forth in the *Avant-Propos* to show Ozanam's philosophy of history, the firm conviction of one who had searched deeply and widely for the truth. He distrusts the abrupt popularity of the Middle Ages in his days. "We may already perceive that many are beginning to stand aloof from those Christian ages whose genius they admire, but whose austerity they repudiate. In the depths of human nature there lies an imperishable instinct of paganism, which reveals itself in every age, and is not extinct in our own, which ever willingly returns to pagan philosophy, to pagan law, to pagan art, because it finds therein its dreams realized and its instincts satisfied. The thesis of Gibbon is still that of half Germany, as well as of those sensualistic schools which accuse Christianity of having stifled the legitimate development of humanity in suppressing the instinct of the flesh; in relegating to a future life pleasures which should be found here below; in destroying that world of enchantment in which Greece had set up strength, wealth and pleasure as divinities, to substitute for it a world of gloom, wherein humility, poverty and chastity are keeping watch at the foot of the cross." He pointed out that the very excess of admiration for the medieval period (though he does not name it, he probably meant especially the Romantic movement) has its perils, because "Christianity will appear responsible for all the disorders of an age in which it is represented as lord of every heart. We must learn to praise the majesty of cathedrals and the heroism of crusades, without condoning the horrors of an eternal

war, the harshness of feudal institutions, the scandal of a perpetual strife of kings with the Holy See for their divorces and their simonies. We must see the evil as it was, that is in formidable aspect, precisely that we may better recognize the services of the Church, whose glory it was throughout those scantily studied ages not to have reigned, but to have struggled.”

Ozanam went on to declare that he entered upon his subject with a horror of barbarism and with a respect for whatever was praiseworthy in the heritage of the old civilization. “I admire the wisdom of the Church in not repudiating that heritage, but in preserving it through labour, purifying it through holiness, fertilizing it through genius, and making it pass into our hands that it might increase the more. For if I recognize the decline of the old world under the law of sin, I believe in its progress through Christian times. I do not fear the falls and the gaps which may interrupt it, for the chilly nights which succeed the heat of its days do not prevent the summer from following its course and ripening its fruits.” He concludes with these sentences: “I write as those workmen of the primitive centuries used to work, who moulded vessels of clay or of glass for the daily wants of the Church, and who pictured thereon in coarse design the Good Shepherd or the Virgin and the Saints. These poor folk had no dreams of the future, yet some fragments of their vessels found in the cemeteries have appeared 1,500 years after them, to bear witness to and prove the antiquity of some contested doctrine.”¹

An English biographer says that Frederick Ozanam’s

¹ Ozanam, A. F., *Civilization in the Fifth Century*. Translated by Ashley C. Glyn, pp. xi-xv.

reputation as an historian rests on only "a few fragments of the great monument to the glory of God and of the Church which he had hoped some day to be able to build." He calls them "solid blocks of masonry which will resist the ravages of time, finished pieces of sculpture which charm the eye of the connoisseur," resembling a splendid pedestal to a monument which the architect has not yet been able to complete."⁸ One of these solid blocks of masonry, finished pieces of sculpture, was his history of civilization in the fifth century. Another was his *Études germaniques*, the *German Studies*. Part I, the Germans Before Christianity, appeared in February, 1847; Part II, Christianity Among the Franks, appeared in 1849, in which year the Gobert prize was awarded to this work by the French Academy. The German Studies form Vols. III and IV in the posthumous complete works of the author. In a letter to Foisset in January, 1848, Ozanam called the subject "an admirable one, because it would result in revealing to modern society the long and laborious course of education carried out by the Church." He wrote of the ancient Germans, their way of life, religion, family, the status of their women, and their contacts with the Graeco-Roman world. Then the impact of Christianity upon one of the Germanic tribes, the Franks, ancestors of the French people. Ozanam described the baptism of Clovis and three thousand of his followers on Christmas Day, 496, at Rheims. "When they came forth Christians, fourteen centuries of empire, of chivalry, of crusades, of scholasticism, that is to say of heroism, liberty and modern civilization came forth with them." He showed how Christianity benefited the new civilization that was arising on

⁸ Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

the ruins of the Roman Empire: by law, literature, theology, philosophy, the papacy, monasticism, Christian morality, eloquence, history, poetry, in all these ways refuting pagan errors and establishing truth, advancing knowledge and justice, promoting charity and its sublime conception of men as brothers, sons of God and immortal-souled beings redeemed by Christ.

Monsignor Baunard tells us that these three great works were for Frederick Ozanam "but the introduction to the great historical period which extended from Charlemagne to St. Louis and Innocent III." He wished to cover the Middle Ages down to Dante. At one end of the great plan were these volumes, at the other end the works on St. Francis of Assisi and on the *Divine Comedy*. Life did not last long enough for him to fill the gap of centuries. But what he succeeded in writing served well the cause of truth, influenced the current of thought in his day, has continued to bear witness to the extremely difficult and slow but tremendous and sublime effect of Christianity on Western man through critical, decisive periods of our history.

When it is remembered that in addition to his major works, Ozanam produced a large number of minor ones, enough to fill several volumes of the *Oeuvres Complètes*, one must marvel at the indefatigable will of this slender, nearsighted man, never robust and for long years in failing health. One marvels the more when one considers that his writings came not from the pen of a man with ample leisure, but from that of one who lectured, gave hours of every day to students who sought his counsel, who was an active Vincentian, who had a happy home in which he delighted to be with wife and child, and who was com-

pelled to travel again and again to recuperate his shattered strength.

Beginning when, a lad of 18, he contributed his "Reflections on Saint-Simonism" to the *Precurseur*, Frederick Ozanam wrote articles of varying lengths and varied contents for the periodical press of Lyons and, mostly, of Paris. He shared with Monsieur Bailly, Père Lacordaire, Montalembert, the Abbés Gerbet and Migne, Monsieur de Coux, and other leaders, the firm conviction that a strong, free, fearless Catholic press was essential for the success of the cause which they maintained. He wrote for the short-lived *Correspondant* which Papa Bailly began to issue in 1829; then for the same zealous man's *Revue Européenne*. They lacked capital, the excellent contents did not suffice to bring success, and this second venture, too, died an early death. In 1833 the Abbé Migne, noted for his publication of the Greek and Latin patrologies, furnished the funds and the initiative for the launching of a daily newspaper, the *Univers Religieux*, usually called only the *Univers*. Ozanam contributed to this publication, until under Louis Veuillot as editor the polemics waxed extremely sharp, less according to Frederick's unswerving policy of charity toward those who differed from him, of strict adherence to truth and unflinching defense of it without wounding the sensibilities of other men. "The great and good Louis Veuillot, whose penchant was for thunderbolts, became aggrieved at his courtesy," and so Monsieur Bailly's *Correspondant* was revived, in 1843. However, Ozanam became dissatisfied with the manner in which the resurrected journal dealt with certain important matters, so in 1848 he, Lacordaire, and the Abbé Maret founded *l'Ère Nouvelle*—*The New Era*. In a letter

to his priest brother Frederick declared that the new publication was necessary. Catholics needed an organ to help them achieve a position as influential and free as possible in the Second Republic, which had succeeded the monarchy of Louis Philippe; and there was needed a newspaper which would not, like the *Univers*, harm the cause by its excessively rigorous and constantly challenging intransigence. For *The New Era* he wrote articles which set forth his sociopolitical convictions, painted touching pictures of social conditions in a huge city like Paris, called upon his fellow Catholics to do their duty toward the poor, to wipe out glaring injustices. Veillot rather spitefully called this paper, *The New Error*, and though it managed to gain many readers and was singularly favored by Archbishop Affre, it failed to awaken a sufficient response on the part of those to whom it was addressed, and Veillot's sharp attacks and his prophecy that it would share the fate of *l'Avenir* were not without their effect.⁹ Lacordaire had withdrawn from his place among the directors when publication had to cease, in April, 1848. After that, Ozanam never consented to engage, in a leading position, in any journalistic venture. The failure of the *Revue Européenne* and of the *Correspondant*, the unpleasant controversies centered in the *Univers*, and now the untimely end of *The New Era* which had not met his expectations, these were among the griefs and disappointments of his life. He did not grow bitter, however. He never did. His deep interest in the Catholic press was wide enough, too, to make him follow with sym-

⁹ Rischke, *op. cit.*, p. 21: "Die scharfen Angriffe, die besonders von Louis Veillot ausgingen, der die 'Ere Nouvelle' boshaft 'L'Erreur Nouvelle' nannte und ihr das Schicksal des 'Avenir' prophezeite, blieben nich ohne Wirkung."

pathetic admiration the work of such contemporaneous publications as *The Catholic* of Madrid, *The Dublin Review*, the *Journal of Religious Knowledge* in Rome, the *Courier* of Franconia, and the *Catholic Miscellany* of Charleston, South Carolina, established in 1822 by the scholarly and redoubtable Bishop John England, and the first distinctly Catholic newspaper published in the United States. He welcomed the *Acta* of the Holy See, the papal allocutions against the tyranny of the Prussian and Russian governments, the Bull in favor of suppressing the slave trade, the reform in religious art, the appointment to bishoprics of such ecclesiastics as Affre, de Bonald, and Gousset. And always his heart gave a foremost place amid all his labors to the work of the Vincentian society.

The greatest member the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has had, or is likely ever to have, was also the humblest, the most free of any illusions due to secret pride or complacency. Reporting on conversions resulting from the Lyons conference's instruction classes for soldiers, he exclaimed: "Ah, who could measure results if our piety were more lively and we were less unworthy of our vocation! Ordinary Catholics are plentiful enough, everywhere; we need saints. How make saints without being ourselves holy? How preach to unhappy souls about virtues in which they are richer than we? We must indeed admit with St. Vincent de Paul that, in this, they are our superiors. 'The poor of Jesus Christ are our lords and our masters,' said the saint, 'and we are unworthy to render them our poor service.'" Ozanam was constantly in touch with the headquarters of the society, reminded Lallier, the secretary-general, of his responsibility as the right-hand man of the venerable president-general, Mon-

sieur Bailly. He insisted on the importance of the president-general's address, attached to the society's annual report, as a means of fostering unity, encouraging all branches, in Paris but especially in other places. By 1840, "the line of demarcation between the Particular Council, at the head of the Conferences in Paris, and the Council-General, looking after the common interests of the Society, had been clearly drawn. At this time, 1842-1843, eighty-two Conferences, in forty-eight cities and thirty-eight different dioceses, were in a flourishing condition," but Ozanam, while he rejoiced in the growth of the society, discerned clearly that mere bigness was not of itself desirable and might in fact prove dangerous. He was interested in quality rather than quantity. Again and again he stressed humility as the first requisite for genuine charity work.

While he was thus busy as professor, writer, Vincentian, the counselor of many, and enjoying the tranquil happiness of an ideal home when not compelled to travel for his health's sake, Frederick Ozanam also strove with heroic ardor to climb higher spiritually. He desired always to meet with scrupulous response every demand of justice and charity.

The Centurion in the Gospel draws us to himself because he, a man of authority, took such a tenderhearted interest in his afflicted servant; enough interest to ask Jesus of Nazareth to heal him. Frederick Ozanam always remembered the family's faithful old servant, Marie Cruziat, whom he and the other children of the family called Guigui. When he moved to Paris to become supply professor of foreign letters at the Sorbonne and set up his household in the capital, he had Guigui come to Paris, too. He told friends that to the new home he brought

many of the cherished possessions of the one in Lyons, furniture, family portraits, other things. Many people would have done the same, but not all would have taken care as he did of Guigui, now that the home in Lyons was broken up and she had no other place to go. She had been loyally devoted to three generations of his family. He would be loyal to her now. Ozanam did what his strict sense of justice dictated; what his all-embracing love of others suggested. Sometimes men will write learned treatises on social justice and grow eloquent on the subject in public addresses, the while in their private lives servants count but little. The Centurion and Frederick Ozanam practised social justice, no theoretical matter with them, but a thing of daily life, a part of their concept of charity, extended generously to all who are in need of help.

This tenderheartedness and social consciousness of Ozanam were shown constantly in his letters as integral parts of his life and character. They colored all his actions, bore importantly on his part in the French Catholic social movement of the first half of the nineteenth century.

IN THE WHIRLPOOL

FREDERICK OZANAM'S social, economic, and political convictions began to be shaped early in his life. Deep and lasting was the impression made upon the sensitive boy by his father's devoted ministrations to patients too poor to pay any fees, and by his excursions with his mother into the slums, when he helped her to carry the baskets of food and the bundles of clothing, and saw how tenderly she cared for those in need or in pain. Lyons at that time had a large industrial proletariat and had been the scene of social disturbances. Reynaud, one of the fervent preachers of Saint-Simonism who came to the city in 1831, asked: "Lyons, Lyons will you forever have nothing but infected hovels and foul streets for those whose sweat makes you so great and so opulent?"¹ For Frederick, who had thus early come into contact with the poor, there may have been a symbolism in the two hills of the city, the *montagne mystique* of Fourvières and the *montagne qui travaille* of the Croix-Rousse, where dwelt the workers. He would try to reconcile, everywhere in his country, the faith and pity of our Lady's shrine on the one hill with the poverty and just demands of the laborers on the other, for he understood the vital part played by religion in sociology, economics, and politics.

A further factor in the formation of young Ozanam's

¹ Goyau, Georges, *Ozanam*, p. 43.

mind in these matters was the teaching of the Abbè Noiret, at the Royal College of Lyons. The capable, kindly priest-philosopher was an emphatic opponent of the English Liberal economists, and in a special course of lectures explained the sharply contrasting Catholic social principles to his students. In other directions, too, he influenced young Ozanam, for the Abbè Noiret was a disciple of de Maistre, de Bonald, Chateaubriand. Another factor was *l'Avenir*, the journal founded by the Abbé Lamennais and a number of collaborators. Léonce Curnier, who became Ozanam's friend when the two were youths in Lyons, tells us how avidly Frederick read this publication as it came from Paris week by week, and how he thrilled to its summons: "Catholics of France, awake! Take your rightful place in meeting the social and religious problems of your time!" Curnier tells us also how Frederick hailed the Lamennais program of a religious democracy as the basis for an alliance of Catholicism and liberty. "*Democratie religieuse, basée sur l'alliance du catholicisme et de la liberté.*" A study of Ozanam published in 1927 declares that of the planks in Lamennais' platform Frederick took for his own three especially: the "*sens commun*"; the imminence of a world revolution and the "*régénération sociale*" which would follow it; and the conviction that society could be beneficially reformed only if the welfare of the masses, the "*peuple*," was given first place in all cultural and political endeavors.²

Lamennais, then still an ardent apologist for the Church which he was later to leave, believed that Cartesian rationalism was harming the faith and proposed to place in opposition to it a system firmly upholding the founda-

² Rischke, Margarete, *Studien zu Frédéric Ozanam*, p. 8.

tions of Christianity and society. He based his philosophical program on a new theory of certitude, in which the term "*sens commun*," common sense, meant the general reason, the universal consent of mankind. He held that certitude cannot be given by the individual reason, but only by the general reason, the "*sens commun*."³ Though he took up this thesis with considerable enthusiasm in his youth, Ozanam later accepted it only with modification; but it is said to have influenced his philosophy of history. In this as in other matters, he showed an astonishing ability to discriminate, this young man who in more mature years wrote a splendid book on Dante and Catholic philosophy in the thirteenth century.

Some of Ozanam's letters show his feeling that catastrophic events are impending; an almost apocalyptic foreboding, together with the conviction that social regeneration was inevitable. "I believe in a sort of palingenesis [world regeneration] . . . certainly we need it [courage] for the epoch in which we live, and yet more for that in which we are going to live."⁴

As to the necessity of giving first place to the true interests of the masses, the poor most of all, Frederick Ozanam bore testimony to this conviction by word and deed issuing from his thought. What he had seen in Lyons in his earlier years, what he continued to see in Paris gave an additional sharpness to the challenge of the student who, in that stormy meeting of the debating club, asked point-blank what Christianity was doing for humanity now. "Ozanam answered as best he could this frontal attack, but he could not fail to be conscious that in the France

³ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. VIII, p. 763, article Lamennais (I), where the system and serious objections to it are concisely stated.

⁴ Coates, A., *Letters of Frédéric Ozanam*, pp. 18, 25 ff.

of the 'thirties and especially in the Paris of that day, there was much to justify all that the anti-Catholic had alleged against the Church—.”⁵ The principles of many among his friends and exemplars contributed to Ozanam's unshakable belief that oppression of the weak by the strong must give way to justice and charity, and that truth must be applied to the socioeconomic relations of men no less than to all other human relationships. For him, it was a truth, as profound as obvious, that all men were the sons of God and brothers in Christ. This sublime and simple fact underlay all his thinking and doing in regard to the social question. It animated his leading part in the movement which has been variously called Social Catholicism, Catholic Democracy, Liberal Catholicism, Catholic Liberalism, the Catholic Revival.

An understanding of Ozanam's position in the movement centering in Paris in the 30's and 40's of the nineteenth century will be helped by considering briefly at least the conditions then prevailing in France. To do this, it is necessary to look at the past which molded what was the present for him: to the French Revolution, itself the slowly maturing effect of earlier causes. Knowing French history as thoroughly as he did, Frederick was able to evaluate the causes of the world-shaking conflict which broke out in 1789. Socially, there had been the pitiable condition of so many of the peasants, some of them still serfs, with barely enough to eat at any time and in danger of starvation when the crops failed; and of the workers in the cities, eking out a miserable existence in the “infested hovels and foul streets.” Economically, there had been the crushing burden of taxes, loaded callously

⁵ Williamson, Claude, “Antoine Frédéric Ozanam” in *Great Catholics*, pp. 335, 336. By permission of The Macmillan Co., publishers.

upon the poor, while the rich and powerful privileged classes managed exemption or evasion. Politically, the absolutism of the royal government, rule by venal and unfeeling bureaucrats. Religiously, the scandalous worldliness of prelates who rivaled the secular lords in vicious luxury of living; the Gallican restrictions which hampered the spiritual and social work of the Church; and in many souls the poisonous ferment of Voltaire's and Rousseau's errors.

Ozanam knew, too, of the rising middle class, called the bourgeoisie because it lived in *bourgs*, towns. This class was full of resentment before the Revolution because it believed itself looked down upon by the aristocrats, discriminated against and barred from its rightful share in public affairs. From the bourgeoisie came a majority of the leaders who schemed the great revolt, whose fanaticism whipped the downtrodden masses into a frenzy of hate and bloody excesses. And, of course, he knew how tremendously the Revolution had harmed religion, leaving the Church in France prostrate at the end of the century. Bishops and priests were killed or exiled, the property of the Church was confiscated, monks and nuns hounded to death or driven from the country. Some ecclesiastics escaped across the Channel and were received with kindly hospitality in old-fashioned Protestant England, where the good impression they made was a factor in the final granting of Catholic Emancipation. Others of these *émigrés* went to the United States.⁶

As to the political and socioeconomic results of the Revolution, these, too, were familiar to Ozanam. It had

⁶ Among these were the Abbé Marechal, who became Archbishop of Baltimore, and the Abbé Cheverus, Bishop of Boston.

put an end to the arrogantly asserted "divine" rights of kings. Bourbon absolutism was abolished and the basic rights of the people proclaimed. The intolerable, un-Christian oppression of the masses by a selfishly privileged minority ceased, and constitutional government was established, giving the people some voice in the election of their representatives and in the making of the laws under which they lived. Despite what despots did, some democratic gains remained; and there remained also the many peasants settled on their little farms which had been the big estates of the nobles. Some of the nobles had been just and kind, conscious of their social obligations as Catholics, but their number had been too small to forestall the rebellion. Now, however, in the place of the feudalism which had been wiped out, there arose the new feudalism of commerce and industry, under which the workers in the cities were little better than serfs, fared less well than the free peasants, each on his own piece of land. The laborers owned nothing, or at most hovels in the slums, and were economically as subject to their employers as the serfs had been to their lords. So Frederick Ozanam, acquainted with the misery of the tenements, realized that there were social problems, as well as religious ones, which had been changed in form but not solved by the Revolution.

Frederick's father was not among the vast number of Frenchmen who in his time idolized Napoleon Bonaparte the Emperor. What is known of Frederick inclines us to believe that he, had he been living then, would not have shared the tumultuous joy of the Parisians when the bells of Notre Dame boomed out on Easter Sunday in 1802. The bells rang, a solemn Mass was celebrated and the

Te Deum sung to mark the end of the Revolution and all its impious works. Napoleon, the new master of France, had concluded a concordat with the Holy See and restored the Catholic religion. The bells might not have boomed so joyously, however, if they could have known that Bonaparte had raised up the stricken Church of France largely to use it for his own selfish scheme. He treated Pope Pius VII shamefully and not content with winning for himself some of the Gallican "rights" held by the Bourbon rulers, he perpetrated the deceit of the Organic Articles, still further restricting the liberty of the Church. Yet, religious conditions were in general better than during the Revolution.

When Napoleon's star had sunk to failure, out of which was to come a potent legend, the Bourbons came back to the French throne, in 1824. Ozanam was then 11 years old. There was exultation on the part of those who believed that the altar and the throne stood or fell together and who hoped to have at least some of their privileges restored. There was deep resentment on the part of those who linked together and hated both the Church and the royal dynasty and feared the loss of all they hoped the Revolution had gained for them. Many mourned the downfall of the Emperor and began to plan for a Bonapartist restoration. There was a vortex of currents in public life, a whirlpool of parties conflicting with each other in one or more ways, when Louis XVIII ascended the ancient throne of his fathers.⁷ There were Legitimists, Monarch-

⁷ He was the son and successor of Louis XVI, killed by the Terrorists, but called himself Louis XVIII out of deference to his older brother, heir to the throne, whose fate has become a legend. There died at Hogansburg, N. Y., in 1858, Eleazer Williams, once an Episcopalian missionary among the Oneida Indians near Green Bay, Wis., who asserted that he was Louis XVII, the Lost Dauphin.

ists who upheld the royal house, Republicans who were jealous of any encroachment upon what the Revolution had achieved, Bonapartists, pro-Catholics and anti-Catholics, followers of Rousseau and Voltaire and the Encyclopedists, conservatives and extremists, advocates of various social reforms. Amid all the political oratory of tongue and pen and all the intrigues of power-hungry factions, what of the people's welfare? To Ozanam, whose heart was full of friendliness toward all and who was so keenly social minded, this question was of paramount interest and importance. He plunged into the whirlpool because charity urged him on.

It was a new page of some significance in French history that was turned in 1830, when Frederick was in his seventeenth year and in Lyons reading *l'Avenir*. A revolt put down one Bourbon, Charles X, the successor to Louis XVIII, and raised up another, Louis Philippe. Whereas the deposed monarch had like his predecessors been called King of France by the grace of God, the new ruler was called King of the French by the will of the people. A friend of young Ozanam's, Materne, had hailed the change as a final triumph over absolutism. Frederick, more wisely and more deeply read, more searchingly thoughtful, had reserved his judgment. He no less than Materne "was a great lover of liberty and had few regrets for the stuffy Bourbon autocracy which the men of July destroyed. But he wanted to know a little more about those heroes of *les trois jours* before joining in Materne's plaudits."⁸ Neither the Revolution, nor the Napoleonic regime, nor the restored Bourbons had solved questions in which Oza-

⁸ Brodrick, *Frédéric Ozanam and His Society*, p. 10.

nam was absorbingly interested. Would the bourgeoisie government of Louis Philippe?

One of the problems remaining after the Revolution was Gallicanism, and because he was so intensely Catholic this matter was close to the heart of Ozanam. Gallicanism was a tendency to exalt the power of the secular ruler and of the bishops of a country at the expense of the Holy See. Its proponents in France were pleased to say that it protected "the ancient liberties of the Gallican Church." It was national in contrast to the international universality of the Church, and appeared from time to time in other countries, under other names. The standpoint directly opposite to Gallicanism was called Ultramontanism, from "beyond the mountains," indicating in spiritual matters an uncompromising attachment to the Pope as the Vicar of Christ, to Rome as the center of unity, rather than an excessively nationalistic and secularistic viewpoint. Now, Lamennais and his *l'Avenir* were vehemently anti-Gallican, and it is one of the strangely ironic facts of history that this priest and his journal should for other reasons incur the displeasure of the Sovereign Pontiff, whose powers and prestige they defended against clerical and lay Frenchmen who agitated for a curtailment of papal supremacy.

Even more mischievous than Gallicanism was the identification of the Catholic religion with the Bourbon dynasty which had been discredited and overthrown; with all that was most hated and justly resented in the absolutist *ancien régime*. Ozanam and his associates were to find again and again that this was one of the most lasting of the wounds inflicted on the Church by the Revolution. All that the Church had done for France since the days

of Clovis and Charlemagne was forgotten or derided by her enemies. Remembered were the Church taxes and the behavior of the luxury-loving aristocratic Churchmen. The phrase "altar and throne" became a catchword and was used alike by Royalist and Revolutionist, by each for his own purpose. The former maintained that no Frenchman could be a loyal Catholic unless he was also loyal to the concept of kingship, hallowed by sacred traditions. The latter declared that no man could be a loyal Republican, a true son of the Revolution and a democrat unless he broke with the ancient faith, so closely linked to the detested autocracy now abolished; unless he left the Church whose higher ecclesiastics had often shared the unjust power and haughty privileges of the hated aristocrats. This was not the first nor would it by any means be the last time, nor France the only country, in which enemies have tried to mislead Catholics in this way and place them in a cruelly embarrassing position.

For such a one as Frederick Ozanam, the unjust, dishonestly contrived dilemma created by the "altar and throne" shibboleth was especially intolerable. His clear mind detected the sophistry of those who propagated it, and he understood also the emotionalism and confused thinking of the many who let themselves be swayed by the phrase. He saw the harm done by those who would link the Church too closely with the State, identify "the Catholic religion in the eyes of most Frenchmen with a political party, that of the believers in absolutism as opposed to the new liberties gained with so much bloodshed at the end of the eighteenth century. . . . Was the cause of religion in France to be forever identified with the Bourbon dynasty? No! This was the answer given by a

group of young Frenchmen, with some of whom Ozanam himself was later associated. . . . The duel between those Catholics who were ready to accept all that was best in the new state of society created by the great upheaval . . . and those who, having little or no sympathy with the French Revolution, considered that the safety of the Church could best be served by a close alliance with the throne, continued throughout the reign of Louis Philippe.”

However willing to accept all that was good in the new state of society, Ozanam and those with whom he stood refused to accept complacently the appalling poverty of so many of their compatriots. In 1819, when Frederick was a lad of six and beginning to be aware of the slums of Lyons, it was estimated that five million poor were registered in the parishes of France. The population of the country was then about 27,500,000. The *Journal de Paris* of December 12, 1831, estimated the poor at from four to five million, and the *Courrier de l'Europe* of the same date set the number at ten million. A contemporary of Ozanam's in the study of the social question and in trying to solve it, was the kindhearted, energetic, capable Vicomte de Villeneuve-Bargemont. He made a survey of pauperism in Europe in those days and found that Great Britain had the largest proportion of paupers, one to six; Russia the smallest, one to one hundred; Germany and France each one to twenty. “The portion of France afflicted with pauperism is that section where the economic and industrial conditions of England prevail. . . . The ratio of the farming classes to the industrial classes is three and one half to one. The proportion of the number

⁹ Hughes, Henry L., *Frederick Ozanam*, pp. 22, 23.

of the poor to the farming classes is one to sixteen; to the industrial class it is nearly five to one."¹⁰

Ozanam and those sharing his socioeconomic convictions did not like what the great Industrial Revolution had done in England and was doing to some extent in the France they loved. They saw that ". . . while industrial capitalists were accumulating great fortunes, the condition of the working classes seemed to be going from bad to worse. Starvation wages were paid; employment was uncertain; women and children were toiling twelve and fourteen hours a day in the new factories, under unhealthful and often immoral conditions; family life among the workers of mill and mine seemed to be doomed to destruction; drunkenness and disease were undermining the stamina of the race."¹¹ They felt all the horrible implications of what Villermé had said after an investigation, that in most factories "the employer did not permit the children to be beaten"; agreed with de Bonald that "notwithstanding the wealth of the nation, there is in England more individual poverty than anywhere else," and like him they preferred for their own country "fewer millionaires and fewer paupers." There were among the employers some who would have welcomed an opportunity to redress the more glaring abuses, especially those connected with child labor. But the apathy and in some instances the opposition of other employers stood in the way of considerable improvement in this regard.

What Abbé Noiret had begun when Frederick sat at his feet in the Royal College of Lyons was carried forward

¹⁰ Ring, Sister Mary Ignatius, S.N.D., *Villeneuve-Bargemont*, pp. 145, 146.

¹¹ Moon, Parker Thomas, *The Labor Problem and the Social Catholic Movement in France*, p. 1.

by the young man's reading, thinking, and observation. It was advanced further by the Abbé Gerbet and by a layman named de Coux, among others, when Ozanam came to Paris and took his place among those who were called the *catholiques libéraux*. The Abbé Gerbet gave a series of public lectures in which he dwelt on the immortal alliance of faith and science, charity and industry, economic well-being and liberty.¹² Charles de Coux, a convert from materialism, lectured on national economy, wished to establish a system of Christian economics and demonstrate how obedience to the moral law brought about the greatest possible practical benefits. He wrote the leading articles on economics for *l'Avenir*. Villeneuve-Bargemont, a pioneer in working for legislation against child labor and other abominations of Liberalistic economics, would have reckoned Gerbet and de Coux as belonging to what he was perhaps the first to call the Christian school of political economy. Referring to those who were "against making labor a mere merchandise, to be bought as cheaply as possible, and forbidding the State to protect the workingman," an American writer mentions the eloquent protests of Ozanam and Lacordaire.¹³

Ozanam and his associates did not agree with each other on all points regarding the social question, and politically there was a wide divergence. But they stood united in a complete and firm opposition to the ruthless Manchester school, which would let iron economic laws rule in all socioeconomic matters, however much misery resulted for the workers; would have governments protect the sacred right of property, otherwise, however, keep their hands

¹² "L'alliance immortelle de la foi et de la science, de la charité et de l'industrie, du pouvoir et de la liberté."

¹³ Moon, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

off. This was the *laissez-faire* attitude, willing to let the law of claw and fang prevail between workers and employers. Ozanam and those who thought as he did, believed that the workers had a right to unite for their protection and benefit, that the State had a duty to help the exploited, to shield the toilers, especially women and children, from the hardhearted employers, whose profits were their god. Above all, they held that charity must be invoked to reconcile those whom the pagan economic system placed in opposing camps. In twenty-five pages of *The New Era* of September, 1848, during the aftermath of suffering caused by the insurrection in June of that year, Ozanam addressed in turn the priests, the rich, and the public representatives regarding an enemy that had not been crushed but was more menacing than ever: destitution. "Ozanam describes its horrors and its suffering, but he also throws into relief its concealed virtues, its simple Christianity. He makes us weep and wonder." The misery of 267,000 unemployed in Paris weighed heavily on his friendly heart.

In *The New Era* articles Ozanam asked the priests not to be offended at the freedom with which he addressed them. "Mistrust yourselves, mistrust the habits and customs of a more peaceful period, and have less doubt of the power of your ministry and its popularity. It is true, and we recognize it proudly, that you love the poor of your parishes, that you welcome with charity the beggar who knocks at your door, and that you never keep him waiting when he calls you to his bedside. But the time is come for you to occupy yourselves with those other poor who do not beg, who live by their labor, and to whom the right of labor and the right of assistance will never be secured in such a manner as to guarantee them from the want

of help, of advice, of consolation. The time is come when you must go and seek those who do not send for you, who, hid away in the most disreputable neighborhoods, have perhaps never known the Church or the priests, or even the sweet name of Christ. Do not ask how they will receive you, or rather ask those who have visited them, who have ventured to speak to them of God, and who have found them no more insensible to a kind word and a kind action than the rest of mankind. . . . Do not be frightened when the wicked rich, irritated by your pleading, treat you as communists." He added that the priests of France in the eleventh and twelfth centuries saved Europe by the Crusades, and asked those of his day to save Europe once more by a crusade of charity, "and as it involves no bloodshed, be you its first soldiers."

He told the rich that they were justified during the first days of the revolution in making such provisions as "the chances of exile and spoliation rendered necessary," but that foresight has its limits and "He who taught us to pray for our daily bread nowhere advises us to secure to ourselves ten years of luxury." He exhorted them to spend, furnishing work as well as help; to clothe out of their coffers the thousands of poor who can neither buy clothes nor shoes for the next six months, and appeals especially for the asylums and schools and Houses of the Good Shepherd. To the representatives of the people he spoke with characteristic fearlessness. "We saw you on the barricades haranguing the insurgents, encouraging the defenders of order. . . . How comes it, then, that we do not see you at the post of peril now?" He urged them to put aside other matters and visit the "naked rooms and see with your own eyes what your brothers are suf-

fering," and to take up a national collection to help those in such extreme need.¹⁴

To his brother, who was a priest, Frederick confided the conviction that "If more Catholics, and above all more clergy, had concerned themselves with the working classes for the last ten years, we should feel more certain of the future. All our hope rests on the very little that has been done for them here in Paris." He recommends that the Abbé Ozanam "interest himself now more than ever in servants as well as in masters, in the working classes as well as in the employers."

Ozanam did not confine himself to appeals for help to meet the present emergency. He sought the causes of what had come to pass, and proposed a remedy. The chief underlying cause, he found, was a moral one, the weakening of religious belief and practice in so many. The cure will be found in "reform of morals through education"—Catholic education—"rather than through legislation." He proposed night schools for adults, schools for apprentices, academies of arts and trades, libraries, and (showing himself farsighted as well as thorough) co-operative societies, by means of which the laborers might help themselves, learn to work together and acquire the confidence which comes from association, and develop a sense of brotherhood. He wished to make all men of good will realize that the public authorities had not done their full duty by voting six million francs for the maintenance of unemployed workers. He pointed out what a shamefully small amount this was when divided among all who were in need, and declared also that the time had not come to forget public starvation—simply because winter and the

¹⁴ O'Meara, K., *Frédéric Ozanam*, pp. 237, 238.

cholera were no longer present. At this time he wrote on "Assistance which humiliates and assistance which honors," a plea straight from the heart of one who was the friend of all and knew how to help a brother without wounding that brother's sensibilities. Once he called the poor man an intercessor for the rich man and therefore the giver of more than he received. At another time he likened the poor man to a priest, because his hunger, sweat, blood constitute an expiatory sacrifice which redeems humanity. "The alms which our religion tenders to him in gratitude are offerings such as we beg the priest to accept for Masses, while kissing his hand in thanks."

It is not chiefly from books, nor from public platforms that "knowledge of social well-being and of reform is to be learned," declared Ozanam, "but in climbing the stairs to the poor man's garret, sitting by his bedside, feeling the same cold that pierces him, sharing the secret of his lonely heart and troubled mind. When the condition of the poor has been examined, in school, at work, in hospital, in the city, in the country, everywhere God has placed them, it is then and then only that we know the elements of that formidable problem, that we begin to grasp it and may hope to solve it." He had climbed the stairs to many men's garrets since the day in 1833 when he and Le Tailandier carried a bundle of wood to a cold tenement hearth and there lighted the fire which had spread so quickly to other hearts and other hearths. Now, in the tragic aftermath of the July revolt of 1848, some of the younger members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul seemed inclined to be fascinated by Utopian schemes. To teach them, he made a statement: "It will be said, and it is being said, 'How long will you continue to work in Catholic associa-

tions to practice the charity of the glass of water? What can you accomplish in company with men who know only how to comfort misery, but who do not know how to prevent it? Will you not prefer to have a part in those greater associations that strive to tear up the whole evil from its roots, to regenerate the world, to restore the disinherited to their succession?" He added this splendid apology for "direct action" charity, on however small a scale, in contrast to mere doctrinaire treatment of poverty, long-winded speeches and many books, all of which do not give the poor man even a glass of water: "That language is not new. The Saint-Simonians and others addressed it to us fifteen years ago when, a small band, we founded the Society of St. Vincent de Paul! Heaven forbid that we should praise our society and its work! But when we contrast what we should have accomplished in co-operation with those men, with the needs we have helped, the tears we have dried, the marriages regularised, the number of children we have safeguarded, of crimes perhaps prevented, and the anger which we have softened, we do not regret the choice which God inspired us to make. Gentlemen, make the same choice, and in fifteen years you will not regret it either."¹⁵

A succinct account of Ozanam's viewpoint and his place in the Social Catholic movement in France during the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century is given by Parker Thomas Moon, who speaks of his "remarkable attempt to translate Catholic principles into a practical program," and says that it rested on the general principle that neither liberty nor authority must be exaggerated, but each reconciled with the other. "Reject-

¹⁵ Baunard, L., *Ozanam in His Correspondence*, pp. 279, 280.

ing the extremes of absolute *laissez-faire* and dictatorial government intervention, Ozanam proposed as methods of ameliorating the condition of the masses: first, legislative intervention by the government under abnormal conditions; second, the formation of voluntary associations among workingmen. The workingman, he believed, was by nature entitled, as a minimum, to a wage sufficient to provide for the necessities of life, for the education of his children, and for the support of his old age. These ideas, obviously, were not in harmony with the doctrines of the Liberal economists. 'God does not make paupers,' said Ozanam. '. . . It is human liberty that makes paupers.' Again, denying the accepted economic thesis that labor is a commodity, he declared, 'the exploitation of man by man is slavery.'" If pronouncements of this tenor seem incongruous on the part of a man of letters and historian, "whose most vivid intellectual interest was in medieval culture, in the writings of Thomas Aquinas and Dante," this very incongruity will on closer scrutiny reveal a characteristic feature of Social Catholicism. Dr. Moon points out, "For the modern Social Catholics of France considered their propaganda essentially as an attempt to revive and apply the kindly medieval Christian doctrines enforcing the duty of charity, the sinfulness of avarice, the dignity of human labor, and the social responsibility of property, as substitutes for the individualistic counsels of the classical Liberal economists. If the Social Catholics were quick to discern the potential merits of the trade-union movement, it was because they admired the medieval guilds. Ozanam's most important practical achievement, the creation of the charitable society of Saint Vincent de Paul—which rapidly expanded into one of the world's

largest organizations for the relief of poverty,—had its thirteenth-century parallel in the work of the mendicant friars among the poor.”¹⁶

So Ozanam's political convictions, like his social and economic convictions, sprang from his character, his deep reading of history, his firsthand acquaintance with conditions around him. He had felt few regrets at the overthrow of the “stuffy Bourbon autocracy” in July, 1830. On one occasion he called the old monarchy an illustrious invalid whose wooden legs prevented him from keeping pace with the march of events. His father had resented Bonaparte's using the Revolution as a steppingstone to the imperial throne. At the early age of 21 Frederick voiced his political viewpoint in these words: “I do not repudiate any form of government; I regard them as different instruments to make men better and happier. I believe in authority as a means, in liberty as a means, in charity as an end. Two kinds of governments are based on two diametrically opposite principles. One is the exploitation of all for the advantage of one: that is the monarchy of Nero, which I detest. The other is the sacrifice of one for the benefit of all: that is the monarchy of St. Louis, which I revere and love. One is the exploitation of all for the benefit of a faction: that is the Republic of the Terror, which I utterly condemn. The other is the sacrifice of each for the advantage of all: that is the Christian republic of the primitive Church of Jerusalem. It is also perhaps that of the end of all time, the last and the highest state to which humanity can aspire.” Every form of government seems good in that it represents the divine principle of authority, he continued. “But

¹⁶ Moon, *op. cit.*, pp. 25, 26.

I do hold that with power there must also be room for the sacred principle of liberty. This must be upheld vigorously, and a courageous voice must be heard warning any power that would exploit, instead of serving it. Opposition is useful and desirable, not insurrection."¹⁷

A present-day student of Ozanam's life states that the *catholiques libéraux* movement, despite its shortcomings, was able to influence the entire cultural life of the 1830's and 1840's in France because its first leaders, Lamennais, Lacordaire, and Montalembert, sought to reconcile the revolutionary ideas of 1789 with the spiritual power, Catholicism, which had until then stood aloof. They did this in brilliant, stirring language, which is never without its effect upon Frenchmen. The favor with which the Romantic movement looked upon the Revolution had acted to prepare the way, especially among the young students.¹⁸

Some of the Catholic leaders accepted the Second Republic in France, proclaimed in 1848, although they had not the least republicanism in their souls. They accepted it as an accomplished fact, and hoped that it would right the wrongs done by the regime it had overthrown and would understand what the Church meant to France. Ozanam welcomed the Republic, "not as a concession, not as a state of transition, but with conviction, not as a matter of expediency but as a solution. He had not called for it, but he welcomed it as an act of Providence. The soundness of his reasons may be open to question, but not his religious conviction nor the nobility of his views," says a biographer. Why he thought as he did was explained by Ozanam himself: "My knowledge of history forces

¹⁷ Baunard, *op. cit.*, pp. 256, 257.

¹⁸ Rischke, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

me to the conclusion that democracy is the natural final stage of the development of political progress, and that God leads the world thither." History, as he read it, showed a long series of emancipations, uncivilized tribes converted by the benign influences of Christianity. And as the Church had civilized the barbarians of old and made them capable of the high achievements of medieval culture, so now once again she ought to devote herself to the people, the masses, in some ways more in need of her saving, elevating care than were their ancestors. In an article written for the *Correspondant* of February 10, 1848, he used the phrase "Let us go over to the barbarians! . . . *passons aux barbares!*" He recalled the fact that when Byzantium abandoned the defense of the Church, the Popes turned to the barbarians, "who as children of the Church, were to be her hope and her strength; . . . dear to the Church because they are the multitude, the multitude of souls who must be won and saved, because they represent poverty which God loves, and work which generates energy. . . . Conquer repugnance and dislike and turn to democracy, to the mass of the people to whom we are unknown. Appeal to them not merely by sermons but by benefits. Help them, not with alms which humiliate, but with social and ameliorative measures which will free and elevate them. Let us go over to the barbarians and follow Pius IX."¹⁹

Of course, Ozanam was misunderstood. To many, democracy was anathema, because in its name the Terror of the Revolution had perpetrated its bloody deeds, and because it abolished cherished, traditional things. To them, barbarians meant all the factions opposed to the Church,

¹⁹ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

to the stability of society, to all that they held dear. On the other hand, Père Lacordaire gave his approval, which must have pleased Frederick very much, and so did other zealous Catholics, among them the venerable Abbè Desgenettes. Ozanam explained that to leave Byzantium and go over to the barbarians "is to leave the camp of statesmen and kings, who are slaves to selfish and dynastic interests . . . for the camp of the people and the nation." To go over to the people is to follow the example of Pius IX, "to interest ourselves in the people who have needs but no rights, who justly claim a larger part in the management of public affairs, who demand work and food; . . . who do not give banquets to reformers, and who most certainly do not dine at them; who follow false guides, but for want of better." Foisset, a friend, had found fault with Ozanam's article, believing that it exaggerated the wrongs and mistakes of the conservative classes and minimized those of the revolutionaries. The letter in which Foisset expressed this opinion to the writer was dated February 22, 1848. The February Revolution broke out two days later, and in its violent sweep beyond the borders of France it besieged the Pope in his palace, forced him to flee to Gaëta, and shattered all the high hopes of Frederick Ozanam that this Pontiff might be the democratic ruler of the Papal States.

BARRICADES

THE barricades which the frenzied mobs flung up in Paris in 1848 were barriers to the peaceful change from the monarchy of Louis Philippe to the Second Republic. They dashed Ozanam's hope that there would be no bloodshed, that his country would achieve in an orderly way an honest, capable, democratic administration. They symbolized other barricades in his life.

Louis Philippe's regime had represented the dominance of the Liberal bourgeoisie over the old-fashioned Legitimists. Sections of the middle classes which had been so eager to end the privileges of the old aristocracy were pleased to have and hold new advantages of their own now, but the poorer Frenchmen, the workers, found themselves little if any better off than under Charles X, who had been overthrown in the name of democracy. A property qualification limited the vote to about 200,000 citizens. This and other grievances, fanned into flame by agitators among the embittered victims of social injustice, caused the poor to rise in revolt. The civil war broke out on February 24, and at once barricades appeared in the *faubourgs*. Ozanam took his place where his conscience bade him be, at the post of danger as a member of the National Guard.

When a mob sacked the royal palace of the Tuileries on the first day of the uprising, members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul hastened to the place, fearing that

the palace chapel would be profaned. One of the Vincentians asked National Guards to help carry the sacred vessels to safety and they agreed to this, but wished to have a cadet of the Polytechnic Institute associated with them. Two of the cadets came forward, and a little procession started through the court of the Tuileries toward the Church of St. Roch. Some in the rabble jeered, but when the Vincentian who carried the crucifix held it high and cried out, "Men and women, you wish to begin a new life, more free and more noble! Do not forget that your regeneration can come from none but Christ!" a number of men shouted agreement: "Yes, yes! You are right! He is the Master of us all!" More than one hat and cap was doffed as the words "Christ forever!" broke from the lips of men until then ready for any violence. The sacred vessels were delivered undamaged to the parish priest of St. Roch's, from whom the people asked a blessing. "We love God!" they exclaimed. "We wish for religion and wish to see it honored. Long live liberty! Long live the religion of Pius IX!" Then they knelt a second time for the priest's blessing and withdrew. Père Lacordaire spoke of this incident in the pulpit of Notre Dame cathedral on February 27. "Thanks be to Heaven," said the great preacher, "we believe in God! Were I to doubt of your faith, the doors of this ancient fane would swing wide open and one glance at the inhabitants would be enough to dumbfound me. Not long since the populace, conscious of their power, carried in their own hands associating Him in their victory, the image of God made Man."¹ How different these from the rioters of 1792! High were the hopes of Ozanam and his associates that

¹ Hughes, H. L., *Frederick Ozanam*, p. 89.

liberty would not give way to license, democracy to the horrible effects of ruthless demogogy.

But matters grew worse and there came the Bloody Days of June, 1848, when the Parisian mobs broke out in revolt against the provisional government. One cause was the closing of the so-called national workshops, in which 125,000 had been employed by the State, many of them not worthy laborers but idlers and agitators. For four days blood ran in the streets of the capital, the quarters in which the poor lived became battlefields. There Vincentians nursed the wounded. It was said that more than 16,000 Frenchmen were killed or wounded or driven to death in the Seine. Nearly 14,000 of the rebels were captured and thousands of these died of prison fever. The far from robust professor of foreign literature at the Sorbonne had donned the uniform of the National Guard once more. He was not called upon to fire, but the possibility of being forced to do so was a painful strain. Immediately after the terror of those days, June 23, 24, and 25, Frederick wrote to his priest brother: "My company was stationed nearly all the time at the corner of the Rue Garanière and the Rue Palatine; later at the corner of the Rue Madame and the Rue de Fleurus. There were excursions and alarms, and bad patrols on the boulevards. But thank God, we did not fire a cartridge. My conscience was easy and I should not have recoiled from any danger. However, I am free to admit that it is a terrible moment when a man bids what he believes to be his last farewell to his wife and child."²

On the last of the three bloody days, Ozanam and his friends, Papa Bailly and Monsieur Cornudet, were on

² Baunard, *Ozanam in His Correspondence*, p. 266.

duty in the Rue Madame and talking of persistent and sinister rumors that the conflict was not drawing to an early end but would be prolonged, with results which their hearts contemplated with intense revulsion. The writers do not agree as to whose idea it was, but are agreed that Ozanam and his friends sought an audience with the Archbishop of Paris. His Grace had for some days harbored the thought that his intervention might heal the breach between the warring factions, halt the shedding of blood and bring peace. He accepted the suggestion of Ozanam, Bailly, and Cornudet as almost an inspiration from on high, as a confirmation of the hope he had entertained. At once, steps were taken to secure a military passport and then, having gone to Confession, the dauntless prelate set forth with the three National Guards. As he walked along he was heard to say, again and again: "The good shepherd is willing to give his life for his sheep." At the Place de la Bastille, the appearance of His Grace created a profound impression. The Guards presented arms and asked for his blessing, officers implored him not to go to his death. He stopped to chat with the wounded and blessed them. At his request, the colonel in command gave the order to stop shooting, and then the insurgents also held their fire. The archbishop walked to the barricades. A recent biographer declares that Ozanam wrote afterward: "I stood very close to the place of tragedy and had to bear the flag of truce ahead of the martyr-bishop."³ Other biographers say that another Vin-

³ Auer, H., *Friedrich Ozanam, Ein Leben der Liebe*, p. 158. Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 268, mentions Bréchemin not Ozanam as carrying the flag of truce: so also does O'Meara, *ibid.*, p. 243. Both assert that Archbishop Affre would not let Ozanam, Bailly, and Cornudet go all the way, saying none should be put in peril for his sake and their uniforms would make the enterprise the more dangerous.

centian, a young man named Bréchemin, held up the stick on which a white handkerchief was flown to show the prelate's peaceful purpose. Slipping past the barrier by entering one door of a shop and emerging from another, Monseigneur Affre continued to approach the armed rebels. He wore the purple cassock and pectoral cross of his exalted office, carried in one hand the written promise of pardon obtained from General Cavaignac, who commanded all the military forces. "His countenance seemed illuminated," the dignity and kindness of his bearing impressed the fighters, and there was an expectant silence. A number of men came toward him, he had begun to parley with these conciliatory leaders when a single shot rang out, followed by a hail of bullets.⁴ The brave shepherd fell mortally wounded into the arms of a workingman and the insurgents carried him to the house of a priest near by. He died the next day, and his last words were: "At least let my blood be the last that you shed!"

And so it was. The heroic self-sacrifice of the head of the Church in Paris was followed by the sudden end of the rebellion. But Ozanam's heart had been grievously wounded. He had acted in perfectly good faith, firmly believing that what he had suggested was at once seemly for the spiritual leader to do and for the best of the whole city, the whole of France. He and the two who had gone with him to make the suggestion were solaced when they learned that Archbishop Affre had already had the same idea, and when they saw how his death had served to end

⁴ Moon, P., *The Labor Problem and the Social Catholic Movement in France*, p. 414, footnote, says: "Louis Blanc (*Histoire de la révolution de 1848*, Vol. ii, p. 179) cites an affidavit by one of Msgr. Affre's companions stating that, so far as could be judged in the confusion, the archbishop was not shot by the defenders of the barricades."

the brothers' bloody conflict and prevent many more deaths and an immense amount of further suffering. Ozanam had acted out of love for all his fellow Parisians, including the workers of the barricades. He believed in the people, in the masses, in whom some saw only lawless ruffians. Without condoning their excesses, Ozanam remembered what so many forgot or refused to admit: the bitter wrongs they had so long endured, the sordid surroundings in which they were compelled to live, how they had been neglected by those who ought to have gone to them, while agents of reckless extremes and evil counsels gained their ears. For these, his humblest and most needy brothers, he wrote the *Ère Nouvelle* article; for them he became a beggar of alms, throughout France and in other countries. His heart had been stirred by the misery of the Irish victims of famine and typhus the year before and his solicitous pity had raised 150 thousand francs, forwarded to the Vincentian council in Dublin. Now it was the turn of the Irish. Out of their small means they sent 50 thousand francs and Ozanam insisted that the gracious gift be accepted, though the givers were themselves far from opulent. He said: "It was a rare example of that fraternity of charity which knows no distinction of nationality in the sight of God."

For his poor, Frederick Ozanam pleaded at the quarterly general meeting of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in a hall attached to the Church of St. Sulpice, on August 2, 1848, while his beloved Paris was still in agony from the wounds of June. Adolphe Baudon had succeeded Gossin as president-general, the latter having taken the place of the excellent Papa Bailly. But President Baudon had suffered a shattered leg at a barricade, so Ozanam the vice-

president presided. He paid tribute to the Vincentians who had died at their posts of duty, then turned his attention to the living, to those for whom he kept a special place in his heart. He begged the distributors of State aid to be messengers of peace to the insurgents. (Grants voted by the National Assembly for the poverty stricken in the Department of the Seine were entrusted to the Vincentians for distribution, as also funds controlled by a number of mayors.) Their task as mediators was far more than to dole out relief, they were to strive to make charity a thing of grace in the eyes of the duped, embittered workmen, by showing them that it was prompt, compassionate, forgetful of the past. "Sons of St. Vincent de Paul, let us learn to forget ourselves, to devote ourselves to the service of God and the good of man. Let us learn of Him that holy preference which shows most love to those who suffer most!"⁵

Monsieur Baudon's injury was serious and during his long convalescence Ozanam was the effective acting-president. He impressed upon his fellow members their obligation to be thankful that their society survived the turmoil of the times. "Do we not owe something to Providence, my dear Brothers, who has preserved us when so many others have perished? Is it enough to continue to do the little which we have been accustomed to do? When the hardships of the times are inventing new forms of suffering, can we rest satisfied with old remedies?" On April 22, 1849, he called his colleagues of the council together and organized a band of forty picked men to carry material and also spiritual help to the victims of the cholera epidemic then raging in Paris. When the next quarterly

⁵ Baunard, *Ozanam in His Correspondence*, p. 273.

general meeting was held, July 19 of that year, the forty had increased to 112. He called it a small number to go to the rescue of such large numbers of sufferers, "with an administration thrown altogether out of gear, and science completely beaten. But those 112 picked men did not wait to contrast their insignificance with the greatness of the danger and of the need. Divided into nine sections among the most severely stricken quarters, they placed their services at the disposal of the Sisters of Charity and of the medical ambulances. Upwards of two thousand sick received their ministrations in this space of two months. Three-fourths of those recovered; the rest died a happy death fortified with the rites of the Church." He told of the horror of the epidemic, which depopulated entire streets in a few nights, then pointed out that pardon and grace had reaped a bountiful harvest and mentioned the "gratitude of families, the emotion of the crowd, who were astonished that young men should, for the glory of Jesus Christ, leave their homes to enter the stricken *faubourgs*, to nurse the sick and bury the dead."

At the meeting of July 19, Ozanam announced that Archbishop Sibour, the successor to the martyred Archbishop Affre, had officially undertaken the adoption of orphans and that the Vincentians would do their part in Paris as they had been doing in the provinces. He exulted because faith was returning in the footsteps of charity, religion knocking at doors long closed to the Gospel of Christ.

One of the barriers set up against Frederick Ozanam's noble plans was the label of Liberalism applied to the movement by means of which he and his associates sought complete freedom of the Church from Gallican restrictions,

a more Christian, just and merciful social and economic system, a generous degree of democratic government, and in general a necessary and desirable Catholic pre-eminence, spiritually and culturally, throughout the land. The movement was called by several names. It was called Catholic Liberalism by some, Liberal Catholicism by others. In the difference between these two pairs of words and the intention of those who used them, lay much of French Catholic history in the first half of the nineteenth century; much that affected the life story of Ozanam. As applied to men like Ozanam and in the prevailing circumstances, the term Catholic Liberalism meant that the adjective "Catholic" governed the noun "Liberalism," and indicated unquestioned doctrinal orthodoxy, submission to the teaching authority of the Church, and a correct, indeed ardent, attachment to the Sovereign Pontiff. The noun implied nothing in the least like the Liberalism of the English classical economists, or that Liberalism of the rationalistic politicians and publicists which was "liberal" indeed in its ethics and beliefs but narrow and unjust in its attitude toward the people, and toward Christianity, especially the Catholic Church. The Liberalism of Ozanam and his co-workers meant that they carried into the socioeconomic and political fields a commendable personal attribute, generosity, a fullness of good will toward all. On the part of some at least of the *catholiques libéraux* it meant a willingness to accept what was good or redeemable in the Revolution's results, to believe that the slogan "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" embodied truths basically and essentially Christian, however much godless excesses had distorted them from their sublime origin.

On the other hand, "Liberal Catholicism" implied that

the ominous adjective dominated the noun. It connoted a wavering orthodoxy, a watering down of Catholic principles and practices, a tendency to break entirely with the past and to welcome the new without scrutiny. It implied also, in many instances, a tendency to go to unpermitted extremes in one direction to overcome undoubted wrongs in another. Now, Ozanam, historian and Catholic that he was, revered the past. He did not believe, however, that the wrongs of the past ought to be perpetuated. Neither did he believe that everything new ought to be accepted, but only what could be approved after careful, honest study.

The trouble was largely due to the utter confusion regarding the exact meaning of the words "Liberal" and "Liberalism."⁶ They might mean utterly different, contradictory, things, depending upon whether they were used by friends or foes. Neither all who proudly proclaimed themselves Liberals nor all who vehemently condemned Liberalism knew exactly what they favored or opposed. For the thoughtless and poorly informed, Liberalism was either to be applauded, if it agreed with one's inclinations and interests, or to be shunned and opposed if it seemed

⁶ "Of all the words in the vocabulary of modern man, *liberal* is perhaps the trickiest. . . . Of course, basically the word has two quite contradictory meanings. It signifies all the psychological atmosphere which has arisen from the notion that human action is good in itself and should not be fettered by any reference to absolutes. A liberal in this sense is a person who believes in complete liberty. Obviously, in a given society, only those can enjoy a wide measure of liberty who have the power to do so, and inevitably their enjoyment of such liberty will involve loss of liberty to those who have not got the power. Hence the liberal society saw the institution of a more ruthless attitude toward the poor and the weak than has any society since the introduction of Christianity. The other sense in which *liberal* is commonly used is that of generosity, kindness, charity — all personal attributes which endear those who possess or achieve them." — *The Commonwealth*, Vol. xxxix, No. 23, March 24, 1944, in review of Emmet John Hughes's *The Church and the Liberal Society*, Princeton University Press, 1944.

to endanger one's position and possessions. The situation was made the more complicated because some Catholics, shuddering with apprehension, were on the side of the Liberal economists in favor of the *laissez-faire* system which was so profitable, but in all other matters were vigorously anti-Liberal. Other Catholics were with Ozanam in standing for a better socioeconomic order, but refused to second his democratic strivings. Liberalism was in general in ill-repute among Catholics of the upper and middle classes, in part because they were inclined to be reactionary, or at least very conservative, often clinging stubbornly to the past, blind to the need, the moral justification for change, trying desperately to preserve or recover cherished privileges. Ozanam and his associates had nothing in common with that evil thing, the integral Liberalism which the Church has condemned, which Newman fought, which is anti-Christian, anti-Catholic, anti-man, and "in its essence, as old as human pride and human sin."

However, the label "Liberalism" was put on Ozanam and those who stood with him, they were called *catholiques libéraux*, Liberal Catholics. The Abbé Lamennais had vigilant and unrelenting foes, resentful of his outspoken campaign against Gallicanism and his use of the phrase "God and liberty!" He had said as early as 1829: "You tremble before Liberalism. Catholicize it and society will be reborn!" Unfortunately, between the machinations of his opponents, some sincere, some spiteful,

¹In Spain, Sarda y Salvani wrote a book to which he gave the title, *Liberalismo es pecado, Liberalism is a Sin*. The title of the French version was the same, *Le Liberalisme c'est le Péché*. Conde Pallen, the American who adapted the Spanish work, gave his version a milder title, *What Is Liberalism?* but the verdict in English is the same as in Spanish and French.

and his going too far, he incurred the discipline of the Holy See. *L'Avenir* ceased to be published, and its founder left the Church. A shadow hung over the entire movement and Ozanam's gentle spirit was deeply wounded by the apostasy of the intellectually masterful priest whose journal he had greeted in his youth, whose democratic principles he had found consonant with his own convictions. The fate of *L'Avenir* and the defection of Lamennais brought discouragement to many. For a time it seemed that any Catholic attempt to champion democracy and economic justice was doomed to languish under an unremittingly alert suspicion and dense misunderstanding.

Nationalism, in its modern extremist manifestation, was a phenomenon of the nineteenth century. When the people of France, seeing all Europe unite to re-establish the tyranny they had thrown off, sprang to arms to defend *la Patrie* and give liberty to other victims of royal despotism, then the fierce spirit stirred abroad. It provoked uprisings by which suppressed nationalities sought independence from alien rule. In 1808 the indomitable valor of the Spaniards drove Napoleon's armies from their soil; Belgium threw off the Dutch yoke to which the Congress of Vienna had subjected it; a renaissance of intense nationalism pervaded Germany. Liberals in the true and best sense of the word could not withhold their sympathy from Irishmen or Poles or Hungarians or Greeks who rose against their foreign oppressors. Sometimes the revolts were stained by excesses as inexcusable as those of the tyrants, by the scheming of villains who had a distorted notion of liberty and were animated by hatred of religion and all lawful restrictions. So the flame of nationalism burned high, fed by both its admirable qualities and

its evil by-products. An example of this was Italy, to which Ozanam was drawn by birth, by affection and admiration for the greatest of Italians, St. Francis of Assisi and Dante, and by his devotion to the Pope as Christ's vicar on earth.

When the Ozanam family traveled to Italy in 1833, the boot-shaped peninsula was a "geographical expression" rather than a nation. He who sat in St. Peter's Chair governed the Patrimony of Peter, there were a number of rather small kingdoms and duchies, and Austria held the northern parts. Gregory XVI was the reigning Pontiff then and also when Ozanam and his wife went to Italy on their honeymoon in 1841. There had been uprisings in the Papal States, attempts to drive out foreign rulers, agitation for Italian unity during the pontificate of Gregory XVI. When the conclave of June, 1846, elected as his successor Cardinal Mastai-Ferretti, he took the name of Pius IX and is remembered in Church history as Pio Nono. It was said that all in the house of Mastai-Ferretti were Liberals down to the family cat, and the new Pope began his administration as a temporal ruler by granting a general amnesty to political exiles and prisoners. The people hailed this act of mercy, so in accord with the amiability and wide charity of the man they loved. Some, however, doubted the prudence of the act in the circumstances. Reactionaries went so far as to accuse His Holiness of being in league with the Freemasons and Carbonari, the secret society of Italian revolutionaries. Pio Nono made all possible concessions to the time's demand for democratic reforms, granted a constitution, but refused to declare war on Catholic Austria. Nothing he did was enough for the extremists. Some of those who had bene-

fited by his amnesty paid him back by agitating against him and the Church of which he was the head.

At the time of the Ozanams' visit to Italy in 1846, Pius IX was extremely popular, hailed as *il Papa liberale*, the Liberal Pope. Ozanam's letters were full of enthusiasm, he described the Holy Father as "well adapted to his glorious role of popularity," and said he "never saw so much nobleness, innocence, and sweetness combined" as in the face of this Vicar of Christ. He tells Monsieur Prosper Dugas, writing to him from Rome on Easter Sunday, 1847, how thrilling were the papal Mass and the benediction *Urbi et Orbi*; with what tumultuous joy and lively affection the throngs greeted every appearance of the Pope; and then gives an insight into the current situation: "You are aware what opposition the Pope meets with from a portion of the Sacred College, the prelacy, the Roman nobility, and the diplomat body; but don't fancy that he is as isolated as people would make out. He has rallied to his views some of the cardinals who are held in the highest veneration for their virtues and their capacity; little by little he is reforming the court, where he had so many adversaries." He expressed in one sentence all the hope aroused in him by the popularity of Pio Nono: "You will see that it will be the Bishop of Rome who will reconcile the world and the papacy."⁸

Kathleen O'Meara says Ozanam applauded the policy of Pius IX in seeking to meet the legitimate aspirations of his people because he fancied that he saw in it the realization of his own political creed. "He was a republican, not only because he held a republic to be the best form of government, but because he believed it was that to

⁸ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

which all nations were gradually, some unconsciously, others reluctantly, but all inevitably, tending." Democracy, it seemed to him, was a flood so powerful that no power on earth could stay it. It would come, peacefully or bloodily, and he saw that Rome and Italy were now facing the mighty waters. He lived to see the Liberal Pope's failure to keep them within peaceful and lawful channels; to see how the enemies of the Church, the radicals who knew no moderation broke the dikes and inundated the Papal States with riot and death. The mild Pontiff's prime minister, Rossi, was stabbed to death, he himself was besieged in the Quirinal palace and forced into exile. The Eternal City was at the mercy of traitors and adventurers, the agents of secret societies, the worst elements of all those who failed to understand Pio Nono. French troops restored order in the papal territory and on April 12, 1850, the banished Pontiff returned to Rome, "no longer a political liberalist."

Thus faded one of the cherished dreams of Frederick Ozanam's life. It was a bitter disappointment to his thoroughly Catholic heart and to his democratic idealism. He continued to believe, however, that Pius IX had done well "in holding out his hand to liberty, and embracing her as the natural and powerful helpmate of religion."

Ozanam, a patriotic Frenchman, was ready always to do all that his citizenship demanded. But he was too Catholic and catholic, both, to be narrowly nationalistic. Believing in the essential equality of all men, knowing no barriers to his charity and friendliness, he felt himself a brother to all. Neither as Catholic nor as cultured man of letters and historian, nor by reason of his innate breadth of vision could he be chauvinistic. The spread of the

Society of St. Vincent de Paul beyond the borders of France was a joy to him. In other matters, too, it was granted him to share in good works outside as well as within his own country. He helped the new Catholic university at Louvain in Belgium, the stricken Irish of the famine years. He influenced the movement in Germany contemporary with and in some respects parallel to the one in France of which he was among the moving spirits. In England a short time only in 1851, he was glad to get away from the fog and smoke and misery-filled slums of London to see Oxford, the serene old city "steeped in peace," the abiding place of learning, redolent still of its glorious Catholic past; the Oxford of Newman. We know his ardent interest in Italy and it may be that he was influenced somewhat by a book about the United States, de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*.

The twentieth century has been called the century of the bourgeoisie. Ozanam was not infected in the least by the bourgeois spirit so strong in France in his time. He belonged to what is commonly called the middle class, the people neither aristocrats nor laborers, neither abjectly poor nor excessively rich. This class embraced men in the professions, the owners of small businesses, public officials and State employees, skilled artisans, all the many who earned moderate incomes, dwelt in modest homes, lived useful lives for the most part. Middle class and bourgeois are often used as equivalents. However, to belong to the middle class by accident of birth was far different from thinking and acting according to the bourgeois mentality. Writers of our day castigate the social stratum which, coming into power through the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, soon arrogated privileges as

profitable as those enjoyed by the aristocrats of the *ancien régime*, and proceeded to lord it over the people of what they called the lower classes. These newly rich and newly powerful men were generally vulgar, utterly without concern for the common good or for anything that did not flatter their vanities or cater to their low tastes. They opposed anything that threatened, or might possibly threaten, their position and property, and so, of course, were bitterly against the Christian, democratic, genuinely Liberal program of Ozanam and his collaborators. The bourgeois spirit, which had no place in the home in Lyons, had no place in Frederick Ozanam's home in Paris; nor in his soul. For him, the things of the mind and of the heart, truth, beauty, and goodness, held first place. Like his father, he was not at all troubled because he would never be wealthy.

An insight into one of Ozanam's viewpoints regarding riches and poverty is afforded by what he wrote to Lallier on November 5, 1836: "I would like to thank God for having caused me to be born in one of those positions midway between embarrassment and comfort, which accustoms one to privation without leaving one absolutely ignorant of enjoyment; where one cannot slumber in the gratification of all desires but where, at the same time, one is not distracted by the continual pressure of want. God knows what dangers there would have been for me, owing to the natural weakness of my character, in the soft indulgence of riches or in the abjection of the poorest classes. I feel also that this humble post in which I find myself puts me in a better position to serve my fellows. For if the question which now disturbs the world around us is neither an individual one nor a matter of political form,

but a social question; if it is the struggle of those who have nothing with those who have too much; if it is the violent collision between opulence and indigence which makes the ground tremble under our feet, then our duty as Christians is to interpose between these irreconcilable enemies." He would "bring it about that the one party may despoil themselves as for the accomplishment of a duty and the other receive as a favor; that the one may cease to exact and the other to refuse; that equality may operate as much as is possible among men and charity accomplish that which justice alone knows not how to do. It is a happy thing, then, to be placed by Providence on neutral ground between the two belligerent parties and to have with both camps a channel of intercourse and means of communication without being compelled, in the rôle of mediator, either to mount too high or to descend too low."⁹ Ozanam, who knew and loved the Bible, may have had in mind Solomon's prayer: "Give me neither beggary nor riches, give me only the necessaries of life" (Prov. 30:8).

Not one of the seven cofounders of the Vincentian society was an aristocrat, not one was a wealthy bourgeois. "All belonged to that section of the middle classes which must earn its bread in the sweat of its brow and, incidentally, is the backbone of society."¹⁰

Cardinal Manning, in his preface to a biography of Ozanam, shows one of the difficulties encountered by this leader in the Catholic Revival in France. He calls it "the saddest feature of our time—the unnatural and fratricidal conflicts of those who have common interests and are

⁹ Ozanam, A. F., *Lettres, op. cit.*, pp. 191-192.

¹⁰ Brodrick, *Frédéric Ozanam and His Society*, pp. 37, 38.

combining for the same ends. It is as if Até had come between men," complains the eminent English Churchman; Até, the vengeful spirit leading men blindly to their ruin. Manning quotes de Tocqueville as complaining that "The religious are the enemies of liberty, and the friends of liberty attack religion; the high-minded and the noble advocate subjection, and the meanest and most servile preach independence; honest and enlightened citizens are opposed to all progress, whilst men without patriotism and without principles are the apostles of civilization and of intelligence."¹¹

Allowing for the generalization which exaggerates, this was to some extent the topsy-turvy, lamentable situation in which Ozanam and his co-workers found themselves. If they advocated democratic, forward-looking measures, the Catholics hopelessly mired in the morass of royal absolutism cried havoc! If they asked that the Church be freed from all Gallican bonds, old-fashioned ecclesiastics felt their position attacked. If they stood for social justice, reactionaries accused them of being Liberals, in a derogatory sense, or even Socialists. Passion too often took the place of reason, selfishness the place of any honest desire to serve the general good.

Not all the differences between Catholics came from unworthy motives or caused rifts which injured the common cause. De Maistre was at once a stanch defender of the papacy and of the monarchy. He flaunted papal infallibility in the face of a world "that had tried to ignore the Pope altogether," and that fifty years before its definition by the Vatican Council. To him, the Revolution was *satanique par essence*. He, however, believed firmly in the

¹¹ O'Meara, *Frédéric Ozanam*, p. xvi.

social value of the Gospel. His was the dictum that for three hundred years history had been a conspiracy against the truth. The Vicomte de Bonald was a Royalist, an *émigré* aristocrat who appealed to reason and to tradition. "His philosophical doctrine was later condemned, but his insistence on placing morals above money, and man above the machine was opportune in its wholesome effect, and showed the way to balance and a proper sense of values."¹² Chateaubriand, also a Royalist and *émigré*, abhorred the Revolution, refused to be deceived by economic Liberalism. In 1831 he prophesied that "a time will come when it will seem inconceivable that a social order ever existed in which one man enjoyed an income of a million, while another had not the wherewithal to pay for his dinner." He was prominent in politics and diplomacy under the Restoration, but broke with Charles X and went over to the Opposition. His fame rests on his book, *The Genius of Christianity*, somewhat emotional and uncritical, but full of the ardor of Romanticism and just what the times called for.

Though associated with Lacordaire and Lamennais from the launching of *l'Avenir* in 1830, and a leader in the campaign for the liberty of Catholic education and of association, Montalembert later quarreled with the more democratically inclined members of the movement. At the outbreak of the Revolution of 1848 he declared that the Catholics were "ready to descend into the arena, with all their fellow-citizens, to claim all the political and social liberties." Later in the year he attacked what he considered a tendency to "confuse socialism with democracy and democracy with Christianity," as in his opinion the *Ère*

¹² Corrigan, *The Church and the Nineteenth Century*, p. 124.

Nouvelle had been all too prone to do. This touched Ozanam closely, for he had been one of *The New Era's* founders; but we find no embittered allusion to the matter in his writings. Lacordaire called Montalembert's and his friends' attack even more odious than that employed against *l'Avenir*, and said: "So the separation is complete and irremediable."

Another with whom differences arose was Louis Veuillot, the aggressive, sometimes vitriolic, ultra-Ultramontane editor of the *Univers*, who was called "more Catholic than the Pope." Born in a cooper's humble cottage, he had from boyhood nourished a deep hatred of the Freethinking bourgeoisie, which he considered hostile to the Church as well as to the common people.¹³ It was not so much a disagreement as to principles and objectives as a contrast in personalities that caused Veuillot to assail Ozanam. The gentle, erudite historian and professor of literature wrote a review of de Francheville's poems in the literary supplement of the *Correspondant*. He congratulated the author on having chosen the poetry of love, not that of anger, and stated: "I cannot forget the saying of St. Francis de Sales that more flies are caught with a spoonful of honey than with a tun of vinegar." He preferred, he added, to belong to the school of writers which uses restraint, kindness, forbearance, rather than to the school which shows violence, chooses the most controversial questions, irritates and repels instead of attracting and reconciling. Carefully, he pointed out that "both schools desired to serve God by word and pen with equal sincerity." This did not prevent Veuillot from making a long and violent reply, in which he did not stop at defending himself, which

¹³ Cf. Moon, *op. cit.*, p. 17 ff.

he had every right to do, but descended to personalities, made insinuations and accusations. "They misrepresented his [Ozanam's] noble intentions and cruelly charged him with cowardly desertion, with weak compliance, with timid silence, with false flattery, with acts of compromise, of repudiation, and almost with complicity. Not a single instance was quoted in support of those charges."¹⁴

This was one of the deepest wounds suffered by Ozanam, in his crusade for God and man. The wound remained open for a long time, but it did not fester with angry resentment, hurt pride, or desire for revenge. He made a remonstrance, in which he "did not say a word that should not be said," and forgave.

Even between Ozanam and Lacordaire, friends peculiarly noble and firm in their attachment, there was not always complete agreement. The renowned preacher and restorer of the Dominican Order in France did not share Frederick's ardor for democracy. However, each respected the other's honest convictions and they never quarreled. In a crisis Lacordaire yielded to the request of Ozanam and others that he do something which he was adverse to doing but which seemed necessary in the interest of the great cause to which both were devoted. Ozanam had hailed the Second Republic "as the probable and only possible salvation of the country; Lacordaire, like the great bulk of the Catholics, accepted it as a plank in the shipwreck of constitutional monarchy. What else was there to turn to? The elder branch of the Bourbons was not forthcoming, and the younger had snapped in their fingers like a rotten reed." Shortly after February 23, 1848, he declared: "I did not agree with Ozanam's views.

¹⁴ Baunard, *op. cit.*, pp. 304, 305.

I did not wish to treat the question of democracy theoretically, but confined myself to accepting the *fait accompli*, and drawing from it as much advantage as possible for religion and society."¹⁵ He says in his *Memoirs* that while he was deliberating on this matter, the Abbé Marét and Frederick Ozanam called on him and told how the confusion and hesitancy of the Catholics might drive the new regime into hostility and cause the loss of the liberty which the previous government had persistently refused, but which seemed within reach now. The new Republic, they declared, was well disposed. "We cannot reproach it with any of the acts of irreligion and barbarity which signalized the Revolution of 1830." His visitors had loftier and more general views upon the democratic future of Europe than he, and this "created such a gap between us that co-operation under a common standard seemed impossible. But danger was imminent" and, yielding to the appeal of these friends, and "although it was repugnant to me to become a journalist, I declared openly on the side of those who offered me a flag—in which religion, Republic, and liberty were interwoven." This flag was *Ère Nouvelle*.

Ozanam rejoiced when his friend Père Lacordaire was elected to the legislature of the new government. There the Friar Preacher was conspicuous for his white-clad figure and for his eloquence. But the Republic failed to meet his expectations, and he resigned from the Chamber on May 11, 1848. Some months later he resigned from the management of *The New Era*, "in the interests of his order and of his preaching." On April 9, 1849, Ozanam's name headed a declaration of the management, saying the

¹⁵ O'Meara, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

paper would not appear again. It was a hard blow for all of the founders. In this effort they had placed large hopes of reconciling all parties under the Republic's flag, an aim which now seemed unattainable. It had not been a commercial undertaking, but an unselfish and idealistic attempt to apply Christian principles to the problems of modern society. The farewell statement bore no hint of disillusionment as to the cause itself. "We do not resign in consequence of the violence of the attacks, nor of that feeling of scepticism which has succeeded more than once in infecting the very defenders of liberty. We resign in consequence of material difficulties, in which God has perhaps hidden His design for the fructification of our doctrines, even as the very hoar-frosts which drive the sower home, fructify the wheat." In a letter dated May 8, 1849, Ozanam tells Prosper Dugas that there was no truth whatever in the rumor that *The New Era* management had retired "on the advice of the ecclesiastical authority." On the contrary, the Archbishop of Paris and his cousin, the Abbé Sibour, and Monseigneur Buquet, the vicar-general, "expressed to us their keen regret at seeing the demise of the paper, a paper which they regarded as necessary for the defense of religion." In this letter Ozanam said: "If I can err in politics, I have no fear of erring in religion, when we have on our side such men as the Abbé Marét, the Abbé Gerbet, Père Lacordaire."¹⁶

Finally, ill-health was a barrier in Frederick Ozanam's life. It blocked the full realization of his youthful dreams, the complete success of the noble enterprise to which he gave his years from early manhood. Immense as was the

¹⁶ Baunard, *op. cit.*, pp. 254, 263, 292, 350.

work he did, he could have done much more had he been a robust man. He would have been able to write a larger part of the grandly conceived demonstration of Christianity, by which he wished to serve the truth and keep the promise made when doubt's dead weight was mercifully lifted from his soul. But the physical frailty which made him a pilgrim facilitated the writing of his valuable books on the Franciscan poets and on Dante, enriched all his literary products, nourished his intense devotion to the Holy See and to Pius IX. Also, when he traveled he spread abroad the gospel of charity, through the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

The spirit of Ozanam could not be barricaded. It refused to be halted by failing health, soared above this and all other obstacles. Writing from St. Gildas de Ruiz in September, 1850, he said: "Praise be to God, Who gives me even a moment's respite, to recuperate my health and to prepare me to suffer like a Christian." He might well have applied to himself what he said to a friend in his hour of trial: "Do not forget that He Who afflicts you is also a Father. . . . May Our Lord crucified assist you. . . . He understands your afflicted cries, He is blessing you because you are good and because you are in sorrow. In virtue of those two titles, you are powerful with Him. Pray for me."

“I AM YOUR SERVANT!”

NOWHERE do the character and personality of Ozanam show in a nobler and more engaging light than in his Vincentian work. He took the matter of charity so seriously, loved the poor so genuinely that he regularly gave one tenth of his modest income to their cause. He lived simply, almost frugally in some ways, to be able to do this. His everyday attire was by no means expensive or elegant; only on Sundays or special occasions did he allow himself a somewhat better grade of clothing. For all his shyness, he never hesitated to ask others to help those in need, or to speak when he believed it well to do so. People who seemed callous to the misery of their fellow men irritated him; and when the horrible famine raged in Ireland he rebuked selfish men who spent for their daily cigars enough to save an Irish man, woman, or child from death by starvation. He himself had sacrificed a larger income in Lyons to do the work he felt called upon to do in Paris, and he never accumulated a fortune; but he would bequeath 200 francs for the poor of the St. Étienne-du-Mont conference and 100 francs to the council-general of the Vincentian society. “My Brothers know that I would gladly do more,” the testament was to say, and the words showed what was in his heart and mind.

In the life of St. Francis of Assisi there was the episode

of the beggar whom Francis repulsed, then ran after and gave a generous alms. In the life of Frederick Ozanam there was the episode of another beggar—an Italian in Paris—whom he had befriended again and again, only to see him fall back into his former sorry state after each effort to help him. Finally the patience of even the meek and tenderhearted Ozanam gave way to exasperation. He turned a deaf ear to the poor fellow's latest plea. Not for long, however. Being Ozanam, he immediately said to himself: “What, do you not hope that God will one day have pity on you, despite your repeated offenses against Him? How dare you, then, refuse to have pity on this man, refuse to help him once more?” Francislike, Ozanam ran after the man and helped him. And as in the case of the Poverello, contrition was mixed with the pity of the alms.

There was, too, the incident of the commode. Lacordaire recorded many instances of Ozanam's love of the poor and this was one of them. It was the morning of New Year's Day, 1852, and Ozanam was in a happy mood. The spirit of Christmas, which vanishes so quickly from the hearts of most men, was still full in his heart. Then he learned that a family which he had been visiting and helping was compelled to pawn much of its meager furniture. It was particularly painful for these people to part with a commode which they cherished and needed. Ozanam wished to go at once and redeem the bureau; his wife demurred and tried to divert his mind from the matter. He seemed to acquiesce, but Madame Ozanam noticed that his happy mood had vanished and that, in the evening, he paid scarcely any attention to the little gifts his daughter showed him, the bonbons she offered

him, and failed to take his usual delight in watching her play with her toys. His wife knew what the trouble was and advised him to do what he had wished to do since morning. He went out at once, bought back the commode for the poor people and returned home filled with the spirit of Christmas at its best.

Ozanam's charity made no distinction of persons. A Protestant minister once gave him a sum of money for the poor and when he brought the alms to his conference meeting that evening, he spoke with warm appreciation of the confidence which the preacher's donation implied. One of the members suggested that the money be used mostly for poor Catholic families, of whom there was a larger number, and the remainder for Protestant families in need. At once Ozanam stood up, and said: "Gentlemen, if this suggestion is followed, if we do not bear in mind that our society is to help the poor irrespective of belief, then I will at once take this money back to the donor and tell him that we are not worthy of his confidence."

It is related of Ozanam that sometimes, after a gathering of Vincentian groups at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, he would stop to buy pastry for families whose daily fare was always meager. Then he would walk happily home to his flat near the Luxembourg Gardens.

The charity of Frederick Ozanam, especially as realized in his deep and helpful love of the poor, was grounded in the religion which he practiced with such fervency and which shaped his character. His brother, the Abbé Ozanam, declared that Frederick loved the destitute and unfortunate with a genuinely fraternal affection. Those whom he visited became as it were members of his family. He had read and meditated to good purpose on the charity

of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Francis of Assisi: love of the poor, of all in distress of any kind, became in him as in them a ruling passion. The words, "Christ in the persons of His poor," were not an empty phrase for him; still less an ignoble oratorical flourish. He actually believed what he said: "You [the poor] shall be our masters and we, we shall be your servants! You are for us the consecrated images of God . . . we love Him in your persons." On their visits to his home the lowly, the troubled and despised were never kept waiting. He bade them enter his study and be seated, treating them just as he did the learned and the prominent folk who visited him. But for the former he had an extra measure of friendly courtesy. When he entered one of the hovels which the proletarians of Paris were forced to call their homes, he never neglected to take off his hat. When he left, his adieu was always a phrase which revealed his soul: "*Je suis votre serviteur!*" . . . "I am your servant!"

It was not easy for Ozanam to do all the Vincentian charity work he did. It meant additional time-taking and energy-sapping effort on the part of a man already heavily burdened and far from strong. Yet he persisted in attending the society's meetings regularly and in shouldering his full share of visits to the homes of the poor. This was a part of his work, he was wont to say, and he called himself a worker. Like his father, he had an exceptional capacity for tenacious application to a task, and like him, often worked sixteen hours a day. Having a high conception of the nobility and sacredness of work, no matter how humble or how niggardly paid, he delighted to find himself surrounded by laborers, as at the meetings of the Society of St. Francis Xavier and the Workmen's Club

in the crypt of St. Sulpice church. For them, he the brilliant historian and lecturer wrote a *Vie populaire de Saint-Eloi*, a popular Life of St. Eloi, patron of workers in metal. At the close of this "glorification of Christian work," the author told his readers: "If all cannot advise princes, redeem captives, evangelize infidels, as St. Eloi did, all can serve God by prayer and our country by work. All can do honor to the work-room by probity and sobriety, by the charity which respects masters, unites companions, protects apprentices. All can help the poor if not with money, at least with a good deed or a kind word. Lastly, if all cannot be great, all can become saints."

This respect for workers and their work, this affection for laborers was consistent with Ozanam's ideal of democracy. For him, democracy was no cold, abstract doctrinaire matter of political forms, but a firm conviction warm with friendliness, stemming alike from his reading of history and from the bigness of his heart. On the one hand, he knew how the humble, toiling masses had been exploited, were being exploited in his day, and this caused him to advocate more rights for them, a voice in their government, better economic conditions; in short, a living in harmony with their inviolable human rights and their sublime dignity as children of God. On the other hand, while he believed in and asked for social legislation, he held that charity, direct, personal, man-to-man charity, was both a duty and a privilege and he had no mind to let any governmental bureau rob him of it. To practice the works of mercy was a means of self-sanctification, of obtaining the mercy which all men need at the hands of God, of strengthening one's faith and making one stronger against temptation. But charity was social as well as per-

sonal, a way to serve society no less than the individual in need, particularly under the circumstances then prevailing in France and many other lands.

"The question which is agitating the world today is neither one of the form of government nor of persons; it is a social question," he wrote in 1836, when 23 years of age, in a letter to Lallier. "It is a struggle between those who have nothing and those who have too much; it is the violent clash of opulence and poverty, which is shaking the ground under our feet. Our duty as Christians is to throw ourselves between these two camps . . . in order to help accomplish through charity what justice alone cannot do."

In another letter, to his artist friend Janmot, also in November, 1836, he said: "The question which divides men in our days is not a question of political forms. It is a social question. It is a question as to which will triumph, the spirit of egotism or the spirit of sacrifice. Whether society is no more than a great exploitation for the profit of the strongest, or an altar of sacrifice to which each brings his offering for the common welfare, especially for the protection of the weak. There are many who have too much and desire to have even more. But there are even many more who have not enough or nothing at all and who have a mind to take what is not voluntarily given them. Between these two classes is preparing a battle which threatens to be terrible. On the one side the power of money, on the other despair. We must cast ourselves between these two enemies, if not to prevent the clash at least to lessen it. Our youth, our humble condition make easier for us the rôle of mediator to which our title of Christians binds us. This would be the supreme usefulness

of our Society of St. Vincent de Paul. . . . *Voilà l'utilité de notre Société de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul.*"

A third time he voices the same conviction, in a letter to Curnier dated at Lyons on March 9, 1837: "We see how the existing cleavage in society widens itself daily. Here people are not divided by political opinions but by interests. On the one side is the camp of the rich, on the other side that of the poor. In the one selfishness wishes to keep all for itself, in the other selfishness wishes to seize all for itself. Between the two there is an irreconcilable hatred which threatens to cause a war that will be a struggle to extermination. There remains only one possible salvation: that Christians will fling themselves between the two camps in the name of charity, so that the limitations and prejudices will be destroyed, the weapons of hate be dropped, and the two camps be brought together, not to fight but to be reconciled."

Believing as strongly as he did in the personal and social importance of charity; moved as he was by a constant compassion for the multitude which suffered and was being so often led astray, was it any wonder that Frederick Ozanam did not spare himself in Vincentian work? That, as much as one man could, he tried to "accomplish through charity what justice alone cannot do" and what justice was so cruelly slow in even trying to do? That in this as in the other phases of his apostolate he sacrificed himself to the point of martyrdom? For it was love of God and of man which prompted him to write as follows to Curnier in 1836: "The world has grown cold. It is for us Catholics to rekindle the vital fire which has been extinguished. It is for us to inaugurate the era

¹ Ozanam, *Lettres*; tome premier, pp. 192, 201, 202, 211, 212.

of the martyrs, for it is a martyrdom possible to every Christian. To give one's life for God and for one's brothers, to give one's life in sacrifice, is to be a martyr. It is indifferent whether the sacrifice be consummated at one moment, or whether slowly consuming it fills the altar night and day with sweet perfume. To be a martyr is to give back to heaven all that one has received, wealth, life, our whole soul. It is in our power to make this offering, this sacrifice. It is for us to select the altar at which we shall dedicate it; the divinity to whom we shall consecrate youth and life; the temple where we shall meet again: at the feet of the idol of egotism, or in the sanctuary of God and humanity.”²

Whatever history may say finally as to the success or failure of Ozanam's labors for social justice and democratic rights, it has already recorded the success of his greatest and most cherished achievement, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. This, more than his scholarly works, brought him a blessed fame, immense and international, beginning while he lived, increasing after his death. When he went to England in 1851 he found his society established in London and wrote admiringly of his Brothers there. The interest of Mr. Pagliano, a member of the Italian colony in Soho, London, had been aroused by a series of articles in *The Tablet*, an English Catholic journal. He invited a number of friends and acquaintances to meet in his hotel on January 29, 1844, and among those present were Frederick Lucas, the editor of *The Tablet*, and George Wigley, who had visited Ozanam in Paris, and had been introduced to Monsieur Bailly and thus knew Vincentianism at its source. On February 11, 1844, at a

² *Lettres, loc. cit.*, p. 130.

formal organization meeting, Mr. Pagliano was chosen president of the first English conference. This was in Leicester Square, near St. Patrick's, Soho. Not long afterward other branches were formed in Warwick Street, Spanish Place, and Lincoln's Fields Inn. When a central council was formed, Mr. Pagliano became its first president.

In the same year, the Vincentian society struck roots in the soil of Ireland, at Dublin. It was in December, but charity glowed warmly in the hearts of the founding Irishmen. And it must have warmed the cockles of Ozanam's heart, too, when he heard of their action for he had a glowing affection for the Irish, because of their extraordinary suffering and the heroic faith which sustained them. A special tie binds the Irish Vincentians to their Brothers in the United States, because the *Bulletin* which is issued from the headquarters in Dublin is to a large extent also the organ of the American Vincentians. Its translations from the *Bulletin* published in Paris and its report from the British Isles, America, Australia, and other lands keep members in all the English-speaking countries in touch with the society in many countries. The Vincentian spirit has flourished in Ireland steadily since 1844. In addition to a faithful performance of the principal and most important work, that of visiting the poor in their homes, the Irish Vincentians have contributed handsomely to the progress of the society through their *Bulletin* and through the literary work of their members. It was a Dublin Vincentian, Brother T. A. Murphy, who put into English Monsignor Baunard's book, *Ozanam in His Correspondence*. His work was cloaked in anonymity until after his death.³ Another Irish Vincentian has written a book

³ *Irish Bulletin*, Vol. LXXXVIII, No. 6, June, 1943, p. 143.

which would have pleased Frederick Ozanam and has placed in the author's debt all members of the society who read the English language.⁴

The year 1845—Ozanam was then 32 years old and the Society had been established twelve years—saw the beginnings of Vincentian work in Edinburgh, Scotland; in Germany; and in the United States. To the old Cathedral parish of St. Louis, Mo., belongs the distinction of being the cradle of the society in our country. It was November 14, 1845, on which there was inscribed on the first page of the first American conference's records: “We, the undersigned, desire to form ourselves into a Society of St. Vincent de Paul.” The cofounders of the first branch in Paris numbered seven. The St. Louis pioneers numbered twelve: Bryan Mullanphy, Martin E. Power, John Byrne, Jr., Denis Galvin, John Everhart, Moses L. Linton, Thomas Anderson, James Masterton, James E. Bury, Patrick F. Ryder, John J. Donegan, James Maguire, Jr. Bishop Peter Richard Kenrick of St. Louis gave his approbation and on December 15, 1845, a letter was sent to Paris, telling President-general Gossin what had been done and voicing the wish “to be aggregated to the society in Paris and thus secure the benefits of indulgences granted by Our Holy Father to the faithful members of the Society.” The letter said: “We have adopted your rules and regulations, also those of the Society in Dublin.”⁵

In his reply, Monsieur Gossin thanked “God that He permits the humble family of St. Vincent de Paul to plant its roots even in the New World, and that He has inspired

⁴ *The Spirit of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul*, by Charles K. Murray.

⁵ George J. Lavender, writer and compiler, *Frédéric Ozanam Accepted the Challenge of 1833*, pp. 61, 62.

you in St. Louis to establish a Conference in the United States. . . . At the same time, also, other blessings were added to the Society in Europe by the establishment of a Conference in Protestant Geneva, whilst the foundation was laid of our institution in the heart of Islamism at Constantinople."

Ozanam must have taken a special interest in the news from the United States and been pleased to know that the first American branch of his society had been set up in the parish and city named in honor of King Louis IX of France, whom he revered. Also, that in the true international spirit of Vincentianism, the infant conference had collected funds for the victims of famine in Ireland, of flood in the Loire district of France, of drought in Germany. It is even possible that he knew beforehand that the St. Louis branch was to come into being, for in 1843 or 1844 an American Lazarist from St. Louis, the Reverend John Timon, visited the mother house of his community in Paris and there became interested in the Vincentian society and its work. He visited the headquarters and also stopped in Dublin to watch the society in operation there. Back in St. Louis, he called on Bishop Kenrick and as a result the Reverend Ambrose J. Heim was commissioned to promote the founding of a conference thus becoming the first spiritual director of the first American unit. Father Heim's devotion to this work caused the words "Little Priest of the Poor" to be inscribed on his tombstone. Father Timon became the first Bishop of Buffalo in 1847 and soon units of the society sprang up in his diocese. In St. Louis, eleven more branches were established between 1858 and 1860, largely through the lectures of Dr. L. Silliman Ives, a convert to the Church from

Episcopalianism, in which he had been Bishop of North Carolina.⁶ The diary of the great missionary, Bishop Baraga, reported conferences at Marquette and Pointe St. Ignace in Michigan, in 1855.⁷

To the French Canadians, brothers of Frederick Ozanam in belief, language, and blood, belongs the honor of establishing his society in the Dominion. The first conference, that of Notre-Dame-de-Québec, was formed in 1846. They observed the fiftieth anniversary of the first Canadian conference, in 1896, by holding a congress and publishing a souvenir volume⁸ which recounted the beginnings and development of the society in their country, reproduced important documents relating to its history, and offered valuable biographical material on Dr. Joseph-Louis Painchaud, whom they revere as the founder of Canadian Vincentianism, and of the first presidents of the first conference, Jean Chabot, Augustin Gauthier, and George-Manly Muir.

Canada's first Conference of Charity was formed on November 12, 1846, at a meeting in the St. Louis chapel of Notre Dame cathedral in Quebec. A week later, officers were chosen for the infant conference and a considerable number of names added to the original list of about 15. The pioneers included Dr. Joseph Painchaud and his son, Joseph-Louis, P.-J.-O. Chauveau, minister of public instruction and prime minister of Quebec province, and Octave Crémazie, the noted poet. Soon other branches sprang into being, among English-speaking as well as among

⁶ O'Grady, John, *Levi Silliman Ives* (New York: Kenedy, 1933), pp. 76-79.

⁷ Rezek, Antoine Ivan, *History of the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie and Marquette*. Houghton, Mich., 1906. Chicago: Donohue Co.

⁸ *Les Noces d'Or de la Société de Saint-Vincent de Paul à Québec, 1846-1896*, Québec: Librairie Montmorency-Laval; Pruneau & Kirouac, 1897.

French-speaking Canadian Catholics, and particular councils were established. Then in due time a superior council was formed for the whole Dominion.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul flourished as it did in Canada because it adhered so faithfully to the society's primitive spirit, which the founder brought from the fountainhead, Paris, while Ozanam still lived. Dr. Painchaud returned to Quebec in 1846, when he had completed his medical studies in the French capital, where he had been a member of the Conference of Saint-Sévérin and attended its meetings assiduously. He desired above all else to establish the Vincentian society in his native city and worked so ardently toward this goal that by March of 1847 there were nine conferences in Quebec, and by 1849 there were twelve in Quebec and Montreal. Toronto's first conference was founded in 1850.

Dr. Joseph-Louis Painchaud died a gloriously beautiful Vincentian death: he lost his life in 1855, when he was only 36 years old, while ministering to the poor in faraway Mexico. He deserves to be called the Ozanam of Canada.

It was natural that Ozanam's apostolate of charity should be welcomed in such a thoroughly Catholic country as Poland. In 1850, three years before his death, the society was established in Posen, and five years later branches came into being in Gnesen and Lwow. Cracow, the ancient capital of Poland, saw its first Vincentian unit in 1868, and Warsaw, more recently the capital, its first in 1905. As early as 1855 the expenditures of the conferences in Posen, Gnesen, Mielzyn, and Schrimm were listed as 8294, 370, 523, and 874 francs, respectively.⁹ The manual of the society appeared in Polish in 1863, printed in

⁹ *Irish Bulletin*, Vol. 1, p. 386, 1856.

Paris with the approbation of Archbishop L. Przyluski of Gnesen-Posen on November 27, 1862.

In 1925 there were some thirty-five conferences in Lwow and about fifteen in the small cities surrounding Warsaw. As it recovered from the devastation of the first World War, so Vincentianism is sure to recover from the even greater devastation of the second World War in Poland, the land of such sturdy faith, so much suffering and heroic endurance.

The first Vincentian conference in Mexico City, the capital of the Republic, was aggregated in 1846, a year after its foundation. A glimpse into the fortunes of the society in that land is given by the report thirty years later: “Despite the many obstacles which our works encounter in this beautiful but agitated country, they have not declined but have, on the contrary, advanced; so much strength and life do they find in the large spirit of faith which characterizes the people of Mexico. Our conferences are numerous and count about 3,000 members. Their most flourishing work at the moment—one especially demanded by the circumstances of the times—is the work of Christian doctrine, of which more than 4,000 children avail themselves, whom it tends to protect against the aggressive attacks of Protestantism and materialism.”¹⁰

An historical-minded American Vincentian has unearthed the fact that there was a conference of Vincentians in Texas at the time of the war between that country and the United States, which began in 1846. It was a Mexican branch of the society, and a number of American soldiers taken prisoner by the Mexican forces were cared for by its members. The conference ceased to exist, it

¹⁰ *Irish Bulletin*, December, 1876, p. 26.

seems, after Texas became a part of the United States, but, of course, later American conferences arose in that as in many other states.¹¹

In Germany, the seed of Vincentianism was planted in the soil of the Munich School, a group of learned and fervent Catholics under the leadership of the great Johann Joseph Görres, the layman who through twenty years strove to "make Catholics proud of their heritage and incidentally curb the pride of Prussian bureaucrats."¹² The Munich movement paralleled in some ways that of Ozanam and his associates in France. Both fought for the freedom and the progress of the Church and a general Catholic revival. Léon Boré, a member of the Görres Gesellschaft with whom Ozanam corresponded, got in touch with the council-general of the society in Paris. Karl von Abel, Bavarian minister of the interior, was familiar with the rules of the organization as early as 1844 and succeeded in overcoming the reluctance of King Ludwig I to the introduction of this work of French origin. Among the university professors active in the Vincentian beginnings in Munich were George Phillips, Guido Görres, the son of Johann Joseph, and Karl Ernst von Moy de Sons, Boré's brother-in-law. The first, preparatory meeting was held on May 1, 1845, the founding date is set down as May 24. Professor von Moy presided, Dr. Ludwig Merz of the University of Munich became the first secretary. When, as a repercussion of the Lola Montez affair, von Moy left Munich, he was succeeded as president by Count Arco-Valley. In the beginning, the members were mostly of the university and Catholic nobility, with some burgh-

¹¹ The Vincentian Supplement, Vol. IV, No. 3, September, 1943, p. 2.

¹² Corrigan, *The Church and the Nineteenth Century*, p. 77.

ers. In contrast to Paris, young students did not flock to the banner of St. Vincent de Paul until later. From Munich, the society spread to the Catholic Rhineland, to Cologne, Coblenz, Bonn, Mainz, and to Breslau, Freiburg, Düsseldorf, and other German cities.

Spain was another land in which his society was established during Ozanam's lifetime. There, for some years starting in 1868, the work suffered from governmental interference. In 1875 there was an official annulment of the decree that had been directed against the conferences, which were now authorized to resume their labors under the same conditions as formerly. In France, trouble began when the Duke de Persigny, minister of the interior, in a letter dated October 16, 1861, accused the Vincentian organization of being "a sort of secret society," in the same class as the Free Masons. He declared himself against the direction of the society by a central council, and especially against the council-general being in charge of the society at large. He declared, too, that the council-general would have to subject itself to state supervision or be dissolved. And this minister of Napoleon III's government made the accusation that the council-general pursued political objectives and that its receipts remained undisclosed—this despite the fact that politics had been specifically barred from the society since its founding and the further fact that an annual report of all its receipts and disbursements had been issued regularly. Finally, the duke issued a categorical demand that the president-general of the Vincenians be appointed by an imperial decree.

It would have grieved Ozanam to have known of this bureaucratic meddling, but it would have delighted him to have seen how triumphantly the matter was settled.

Bishop Felix Dupanloup of Orleans sprang to the defense of Ozanam's work with a completely fearless statement based on thirty years' experience in charity work and almost as many years' observation of Vincentianism. Cardinal Ferdinand Donnet of Bourdeaux sent a letter directly to the minister of the interior. In the French senate, when the matter was broached there, the honor and freedom of the society had as champions the Cardinals Morlot and Mathieu. De Persigny had on April 5, 1862, issued a decree ordering the dissolution of the council-general. But the firm and wise attitude of President-General Adolphe Baudon succeeded in preventing the order from being carried out. Monsieur Baudon was helped by Cornudet, a member of the council-general, who was a government official. The president-general had suggested that in case of his death or of governmental insistence a tripartite council be established to consist of the heads of the central councils of Brussels, The Hague, and Cologne. In 1867, however, Pinard, the new minister of the interior, permitted the restoration of the council-general in France. Not until after 1870 could the old arrangement, according to the society's rules, be fully restored and carried on without government interference.

Suspicious and despotically inclined officials would not have been misled had they taken the trouble to learn how thoroughly the nonpolitical character of the Vincentian society was insisted upon and observed by Ozanam, whose spirit pervaded the whole organization. In his address at the general meeting in Paris on August 2, 1848, he mentioned the expansion of the society into other lands and lauded the sense of Christian brotherhood which knows no nationalistic differences in the sight of God. And

at the meeting on December 14 of the same, the revolutionary year, he declared: “When we enter our peaceful conference gatherings, we let our political passions outside the door. Let twenty newspapers arouse our anger every morning: let us forget about them at least once a week, let us speak of the poor!”

Harassed by sickness, saddened by the failure of cherished projects, the heart of Frederick Ozanam was comforted by the steady spread of his “dear little society,” by the constant increase in the number of those willing to say with him “I am your servant!” And no matter how the demands on the society increased, at home and abroad, means were somehow found to fill the needs to some extent at least. His own generous example stimulated the generosity of others. To the units in Paris, as in all other places, came donations, some of them eloquently small. A priest, a school director, gave twenty francs. A group of young people gathered for an evening of enjoyment contributed thirty silver coins. The students of a high school donated two hundred. Three years after the society was organized, the chief founder wrote in a letter to his parents: “I am now completely convinced that when one does a deed of charity one need not worry about where the money will come from: it will always come.” And this has continued to prove true, all over the world. It came in response to the appeal of Ozanam’s friendly heart while he lived; it has kept on coming wherever men know his story and see the continuation of what he set in motion more than 100 years ago.

FAITHFUL TO THE LAST

OZANAM resumed his lectures at the Sorbonne in the fall of 1848, after the bloodshed and turmoil which had put him in danger and shattered more than one of his most cherished hopes. He clung to his convictions, saying to his students, "the large and fraternal gatherings of young men" who held him in affection and esteem: "Last year, gentlemen, I opened this course in Italian literature under the happiest auspices. . . . Today the cause of independence is crushed by the big battalions." He made an appeal for Venice, which alone was holding out, the last forlorn hope of Italian freedom. The appeal was made "in the name of God and fraternity," but the response was disappointing. However, Ozanam was thanked by Daniel Murin, president of the short-lived Venetian Republic and an heroic figure in the struggle for liberty. For Pius IX, too, Ozanam appealed; for Pio Nono who, in exile and menaced by implacable foes, remained for him the august Vicar of Christ and head of the Church which is the Pillar and Ground of Truth. In the course of his lectures in 1849, he declared that "the complications of the present and of the future do not deprive Pius IX of the merit of having voluntarily surrendered absolute power, of having defended the principle of nationality" and taken the initiative in reforms which would have been

successful if His Holiness had not had so many relentless enemies.

Lecturing, writing, visiting the poor whose pitiable condition he had so movingly described, Ozanam lived quietly in the modest home looking out upon the Luxembourg Gardens. "Besides the place which you have in my daily prayers," he wrote to Duffieux, "I should wish to see you form one of our fireside group, as you led me to expect you would. You would find my domestic circle happier than ever, because all are in good health. I am the least well in the home, and yet I can, not without fatigue, almost deliver my lectures. I thank God for such favors and am resigned to the suffering which He sends with them. . . . My friend, may God grant you domestic happiness, which makes up for so many evils! Give me your hand that I may clasp it as an old friend."¹ He told Duffieux how the voice of his little daughter reached him from the garden where she was playing and how his wife Amélie cheered him "with her kindly face." After the deaths of his brother-in-law, Thèophile, and of his father-in-law, the erstwhile rector of Lyons university, Frederick took charge of the Soulacroix family affairs for his mother-in-law. Madame Soulacroix was an American, as her daughter, Frederick's wife, stated in a letter dated Oct. 29, 1883, to Thomas Ring of Boston, then president of the Boston particular council of Vincentians. "*Ma défunte Mère étant Américaine,*" wrote the widow of Ozanam. The letter was shown at the Vincentian society's convention in St. Louis in 1945. He continued his apostolate among the needy, among his students, among all whom he met. His religion became an even deeper quality of

¹ Baunard, *Ozanam in His Correspondence*, p. 340.

his soul, he went to Holy Communion oftener. Tranquilly but not without some emotion he saw the passing of the Second Republic by the *coup d'état* of December 2, 1851, and its result, the enthronement of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte as Napoleon III, head of the Second Empire.

Toward the end of the year 1851 his strong sense of duty forced Dr. Ozanam to return to Paris for the new term at the Sorbonne. He had been at Sceaux and Dieppe for his health and his brother the Abbé Ozanam remonstrated, urged him not to take up his work again so soon, before his health was more completely restored. Frederick insisted, telling his brother and the physicians that for him idleness would be worse than illness. "I am a worker and I must do my day's work!" He looked after himself, avoided fatigue as much as possible, he wrote to Ampère the younger, who had taken in his heart a place like that held by the older Ampère until his death. On February 12, 1852, he reported that his strength was slow in returning, but that he was getting on much better; indeed, felt so well that he considered undertaking the revision of one of his greatest works, *Christian Civilization in the Fifth Century*. He had been looking forward to a visit with Lallier at Sens during the Easter vacation.

Instead of having the longed-for reunion with this comrade of his heart at Sens, Ozanam had to take to his bed, with a fever accompanied by "sufferings that put his virile courage to the test." His next lecture had been written out. Now he did not believe he would be able to deliver it. However, when the notice of its postponement appeared on the bulletin board at the Sorbonne, some thoughtless young men expressed dissatisfaction, complained that the professors took matters easy, were prone to drop lectures,

for which they were well paid. When the ailing professor was allowed to learn this, he was so much upset that he disregarded the worried protests of his wife, physicians, and friends, got out of bed and had himself driven to the college. He appeared in the lecture hall, unexpected, pathetically thin, alarmingly weak. A more than usually demonstrative greeting was given him by the students, now full of remorse and sympathy. When there was silence, Ozanam spoke, in a deep, clear voice: "Gentlemen, our century is accused of being a self-seeking one. It is even asserted that we professors are suffering from the same malady. Instead of that, it is in these very halls that we wear out our strength and undermine our health. For my part I do not complain of this. Our lives belong to you. We are ready to give them to you even to our last breath. As far as I myself am concerned, if I die it shall be in your service."² He lectured then, with an eloquent power exceptional even for him, and the students listened with enthusiasm and emotion. "You were wonderful!" exclaimed one of his listeners, speaking for all of them. "Indeed," smiled the professor. "Now I must see about getting a night's rest."

He got no rest that night, nor on many nights that followed. Pleurisy brought him to death's door and would have carried him through it, he said, had it not been for his wife's care, the skill of his brother Charles, now a practising physician; and, being Ozanam, he added, "the prayers of his friends and the mercy of God." On July 16 he left Paris with his family, on the last of his pilgrimages. He did not deny that it was a hard thing to have his work and his career interrupted in this way, to be forced to

² Hughes, H. L., *Frederick Ozanam*, p. 93.

travel when he ought to be in Paris to canvass for membership in the Academy of Inscriptions. The spiritual stature to which he had attained was shown in one sentence of a letter written at this time: "We must learn to make sacrifices when God demands them, and to ask Him for the grace to do His will on earth as it is in heaven."

The family traveled to the southwestern part of France. At Eaux-Bennes they tarried for a month and Ozanam's chief interest was the founding there of a Vincentian conference. He planned, too, to have a hospital erected for the sick poor, wishing each Vincentian branch to meet the traveling expenses of those they sent to the place, while well-to-do people at the resort would meet the costs of caring for these patients in the hospital. He reported, in one of the innumerable letters by which he kept in touch with his many friends, that he was dutifully drinking at the sulphur springs but said he preferred cider. His poetic soul informed his pen in describing the "beauty of the light gilding the rocks, the delicate outline of the mountain ridge, and above all the streams bejewelling the mountain side, purling and limpid," and declared that the Alps themselves had nothing comparable to the Cirque of Gavarnie. He visited the shrine of the Virgin of the Golden Branch at Bétharam and wrote that he was clinging with all the might of his soul to "that Branch which we call the Comforter of the Afflicted and the Refuge of Sinners." He met briefly and for the last time two chosen souls, two of the many drawn to him by the magnet of his great and gentle personality, the Abbé Henri Perreyre and the Abbé Gaspard Mermillod. The former, a favorite disciple of Ozanam's as of Lacordaire's, was so sick that he knew death to be near, and to him Frederick spoke of

his own approaching death with a conviction which left no room for hope. With all the intimacy of a spiritual friendship, they spoke of the eternal things, and among the last words of the young priest were those with which he thanked God for such moments at the end of his life. The Abbé Gaspard Mermillod was then vicar of Notre Dame in Geneva. He lived until 1892, became a bishop and a cardinal; and what would have endeared him most to Ozanam, a sturdy fighter for social justice, having in Switzerland "much the same role as Bishop von Ketteler in Germany." Like von Ketteler, he considered the social question the chief problem of the age, one which demanded the earnest attention of all Christians.³ We have no record of what Ozanam said to Mermillod in those days at Eaux-Bennes, but it is not unreasonable to believe that Frederick, by his writings if not by word of mouth in those solemn moments, influenced this as he did other crusaders for the downtrodden.

A stay at Biarritz seemed to help the invalid, partly because Dr. Charles Ozanam came to him there and for three weeks did all that his love and skill could do for this elder brother. Ozanam was consoled by the presence of his wife and child and was thankful that they were well, but was filled with the most painful uneasiness as to their future. What would become of them after he was gone? "Faith does not suffice to save me from these gloomy forebodings. Not indeed that religion is powerless over my poor heart, it saved me from despair. But I cannot control myself altogether, I am not Christian enough." Perhaps he was helped by the reply of Dufieux, to whom as

³ Moon, *The Labor Problem and the Social Catholic Movement in France*, p. 132.

to Lallier he confided this trouble. "My wife and I sleep on the easy pillow of poverty. . . . I know that God's hand will only abandon me and mine when I shall first myself have loosed the grip. . . . I have never been unhappy except when I wavered in my trust in God." Duffieux, when he wrote thus to Ozanam, was sick, had seven children, all of tender years, had no fortune, no inheritance to expect.

The next place of health-seeking sojourn was Bayonne, where the greatest Vincentian found a conference of the society, a branch filled with the pristine spirit. But to be thus close to Spain—Bayonne is half-Spanish with many of the signs in purest Castilian—and not cross over into the land of so much faith, heroism, and romance, this was much more than could be asked of Frederick Ozanam the Catholic, the historian, the poet and pilgrim. He felt the ancestral and beautiful yearning to pray at the great St. James's shrine at Compostella. This would be impossible. However, his doctor gave him permission to go some distance into Spain. On November 16 he started out with his wife and daughter; two days later they saw the towers of Burgos cathedral against the horizon, and an hour after that he was on his knees there. He saluted the image of the Virgin Mother with the Marian devotion that had long been a part of his spiritual life: "O Our Lady of Burgos, thou art also Our Lady of Pisa and of Milan, Our Lady of Cologne and of Paris, of Amiens and Chartres! O Queen of all the great Catholic cities, thou art indeed gracious and fair—*pulchra es et decora*—and the very thought of thee gives grace and beauty to the works of man! . . . O Notre Dame de Burgos, how well God has recompensed the humility of His handmaiden! In return

for the poor house of Nazareth in which thou didst lodge His Son, behold He has given thee such dwelling-places as this!"⁴

Despite the abominable weather, the traveling professor felt quite well. There was far more to see in Burgos than could be seen in three days; but always the Vincentian, he managed to visit the conference of St. Vincent's society. "Proud Catholic Spain, rich in ancient works of Catholic charity, had been slow to admit one which was modern and foreign." At the time of Ozanam's visit in 1852 there were only two branches in the country, the one in Burgos, the other in Madrid. Short as it was, the sojourn in Spain inspired a praiseworthy little book, *Un Pèlerinage au pays du Cid, A Pilgrimage Into the Land of the Cid*, published posthumously. Drawing upon his considerable knowledge of Spanish history and literature, and on his observations during this pilgrimage, which included an earlier dash across the border to St. Sebastian, he caught much of the spirit of the country of the Cid, of Isabella and the Moorish Crusade, Columbus and the Conquistadores, St. Teresa of Ávila and Don Quixote. Back across the Pyrenees and in Bayonne again, he traveled next to the Gascony village of St. Vincent de Paul, the birthplace of him whose name it bears. He of all men could not have failed to do this. The place had been called Pouy when Vincent tended sheep and swine there and Ozanam found the old oak tree under which the shepherd and swineherd took refuge from storms. He found a flourishing branch and Madame Ozanam collected leaves, twigs, and acorns of the tree to share as precious souvenirs with the Vincentian Brothers in Paris.

⁴ Ozanam, *Oeuvres Complètes*, tome huitèmes, Melanges I, pp. 84, 85.

Little Marie was delighted with the sheep, "that must of course be the great-grand-children of those which the saint used to herd," wrote her father.

Two miles from the great patron's birthplace was the shrine of Our Lady of Buglosse, with a venerable image of the Blessed Virgin. Ozanam felt so well at this time that he believed himself cured and made the pilgrimage out of thankfulness rather than to ask a favor. However, when he went to Confession to the priest at the shrine, "that man of God spoke only of suffering to be endured patiently, of resignation and submission to the will of God, however hard it might be. . . . Such language astonished me very much, as I was feeling well. [The priest did not know, had never seen Ozanam.] At all events I felt somewhat unwell upon my return from Buglosse; and the feeling of illness was aggravated by the farewell visits which I had to make at Bayonne. I fell back into my former state of intense weakness." Writing thus to François Lallier, the pilgrim said he did not wish to attach any supernatural importance to anything concerning himself. He admitted that the incident made a very deep impression on him.⁵

Back at Bayonne on November 24, Ozanam entertained the idea of returning thence to Paris, to further his membership in the Academy. But he reflected that the august institution would be able to get along for a while without him; that he could easily console himself for the loss of this distinction if he did not fear that his light was about to be extinguished. There was also the matter of the com-

⁵ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 370, footnote. Msgr. Baunard is inclined to believe that this priest was the Abbé Cestac, to whom extraordinary powers in the direction of souls was attributed.

mission received from Hippolyte Fortoul, the Minister of Education in the government of the Second Empire. Fortoul, a friend of Frederick's since the Lyons college days, entrusted him with research work in Pisa on the origins of the Italian Republics, with "out-of-pocket" expenses. So it was decided that the winter should be spent in Italy.

Early in December the Ozanam family started for Toulouse by the mail coach. In Toulouse and again in Montpellier he visited the Vincentian conferences. "Our good little society is not idle anywhere," he wrote. At Marseilles they were joined by Madame Soulacroix for the intended journey to Rome, and Christmas was spent with relatives in the great French port city on the Mediterranean. Ozanam's patriotism was stirred by the naval strength of his country displayed at Toulon, but his condition grew worse at this time and he had to use digitalis for dilation about the heart. Despite this, he was cheerful and the poet in him broke forth in lyrical descriptions of Nice, Cannes, the Esterel mountains, Antibes, "a delightful route fringed with olive trees and orange trees, all laden with their golden fruit, and palm trees waving over a Roman ruin in the distance, at a chapel gate or by the side of a modern villa." Of all the products of Provence, he said cousins, both male and female, were the best. He recalled his mother and his father in letters at this time.

Then there came a rough crossing from Genoa to Leghorn, where the travelers arrived drenched to the skin. They reached Pisa January 10, 1853. Ozanam was suffering rheumatic pains and feeling very weak. At once he sought the cathedral, and reported in a letter: "I cannot describe your friend as a Hercules; he has had his share of suffering. But now that I am in port, I have hope and

I thank God. That is what we did in the admirable Cathedral of Pisa, which radiates faith, beauty and love." Three days later he went to Florence, about fifty miles away, and once more it was the Society of St. Vincent de Paul which caused him to exert himself at the expense of his health. He had sown the seed of Vincentianism in Tuscany on a previous tour in 1847, but the harvest had been disappointing. The Grand Duke of Tuscany refused to grant the society authorization, for he suspected it of being tainted with Liberalism, a thing even in its more innocent connotations anathema to his reactionary mind.

A few days after he reached Florence, Dante's Florence, Ozanam was told that the Dowager Grand Duchess wished to receive him that evening. He was feverish, his breathing was labored, his body swollen, and friends begged him not to go. He answered that though he felt "pretty bad," this would probably be the last service he would be able to do the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and he was resolved to do it. The society had done him far too much good for him not to try to do something in return, "if God gives me the strength to accomplish it." The Dowager Grand Duchess, an estimable lady, received with kindness and respect the noted French author of excellent works on Dante, and spoke frankly of the Grand Duke's strong prejudice against the Vincentian organization, particularly in Florence. He regarded it as some sort of political secret society and declared that he would not grant authorization at all unless some members of the struggling conference ceased to belong to it. Ozanam explained patiently the origin and purpose of the society, that far from being political in any way it specifically barred politics. As to the Florentines to whom the ruler

objected, he said that every good Catholic was eligible and justified these men's admission. He spoke with animation, somewhat feverishly because of his condition, and so persuasively that a few days later the grand duke granted the desired authorization in Florence and in other cities of his realm. A Vincentian meeting was called for January 30 to celebrate this achievement, no small one in what Ozanam called "this capital of Josephism," that meddling tendency which was the Hapsburg counterpart of the Bourbon Gallicanism. At this meeting the chief founder gave an address, which is included, in French but also in the Italian in which he spoke, in the complete edition of his works published after his death.

Beginning with graceful phrases in the melodious language that was as a second mother tongue to him, "*vostro bellissimo idioma,*" Ozanam told his Brothers how glad he was to be in their midst, that he was vice-president of the council-general merely by reason of seniority, not because of any merit of his, and then described the truly marvelous growth of the society. Instead of the handful of young men who started it, there were now some two thousand members in Paris alone, and these visited about 20,000 people. There were branches in other parts of Europe, in the Americas, too, and even in Jerusalem. He stressed the fact that helping the poor was a means to an end, to make the members steadfast in faith and bring it to others through love. The spirit of the society, a spirit which had not been lost or lessened by its unexpected expansion, is one of humility, charity, and peace, he said, and such a spirit is needed especially where the Church is afflicted. It was needed in France when God deigned to have the society established there. It is needed in Italy

now. "*O custodite, O Confratelli, e propagate questo spirito di fratellanza christiana!* . . . Oh, preserve, Brothers, and spread this spirit of Christian fraternity, the basis of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Keep always in sight the noble goal which it has, to fortify yourselves in the Faith and lead others to believe!"

Ozanam begged the Brothers not to fear lest the sublime virtue of charity be impaired when it is an instrument for preserving faith. On the contrary, charity is increased, because the Vincentians' work teaches them to love the poor. We discover, the sick man told these Florentines, that we gain more than they, for they help us to be better. He himself was often helped by the sight of poor men who shamed his discouragement at his own lesser troubles, and whom he could not but love more than before. He pointed out the difference between charity and philanthropy. The latter doles out money, but there is no heart of love in its deeds. "The love which mixes its tears with the tears of the unfortunate whom it cannot otherwise console; which caresses and cares for the naked, forsaken child, gives shy youth a friendly counsel, sits with benevolent sympathy beside the sickbed and listens without the slightest sign of weariness to the long, pitiful stories of the poor—this love, O my friends, can come only from God!" He closed with the promise to tell the Vincentian Brothers in Paris how the society had already put forth sturdy branches under the beautiful sky of Italy.⁶

The next day, the Catholic press of Florence printed complete reports of Ozanam's address. He was amazed, and displeased; because "It is altogether opposed to the

⁶ Ozanam, *Oeuvres Complètes*, tome huitième, Melanges II, pp. 36, 37.

practice as well as to the spirit of the society, which does good quietly." He would not have spoken, he declared, had he anticipated such publicity. When he was asked to speak again, he agreed to do so only on the explicit understanding that his address would not be made public. Appealed to once more, he withdrew this stipulation, yielding only after three days and then because his confessor told him to, saying it might help toward the founding of a conference at Loretto. Ozanam thereupon gave his permission for the printing of one hundred copies. Twelve hundred were printed and distributed, and he pardoned this only when he saw that it led to the establishment of three new units of his beloved society.

The exertion of calling on the Dowager Grand Duchess and of speaking at the Vincentian meetings, coupled with the persistently bad weather, sapped the slight remaining strength of the invalid. On February 4 he wrote from Pisa to Monsieur Foisset: "My health is almost altogether gone: that is why I pray and ask my friends to pray, that it may please Heaven to deliver me. So many prayers cannot remain unheard; but it seems also that my sins cannot remain unpunished. Since I left France, the fatigue of traveling has broken my strength, and I am here suffering, tottering, but without falling, almost like the leaning tower which I pass daily. That example should reassure and instruct me; for leaning as it is, it has not ceased during some seven hundred years to serve God in its own way."⁷ In a letter to Lallier on Easter Monday he coupled joy at the founding of new Italian Conferences of Charity with the heart-rending admission that he knows his sickness may never be cured. He was forcing himself

⁷ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 738.

to say, "I am afraid more with the mouth than with the heart," that he wills whatever God wills, when and in whatever way He wills it. His Vincentianism shines forth from another letter to this dear friend of his youth: "Tears of joy well to my eyes when I find our little Society at such far-flung points"—he mentioned London, Burgos, Florence—"our society, little indeed in the obscurity of its work, but mighty in the blessing of God. The languages may be different, but it is always the same hand-grip, the same fraternal welcome. We can recognize ourselves by the sign of the early Christians, 'See how they love one another!'" He repeated this testimony of Tertullian regarding the members of the primitive Church in his speech on May 1, 1853, before the Vincentians of Leghorn.

Speaking in Italian, as he did in Florence, Ozanam greeted the Leghorn members of the society as "*Confratelli carissimi di S. Vincenzo de' Paoli*," and told them that the state of his health forbade any, even the shortest, address, but that he could not forbear saying a few words, to congratulate them on the second anniversary of their conference and express the pleasure it gave him to be in their midst. He reminded them that, like the society itself, their branch was founded in May, the month dedicated to Mary, the special protectress of Vincentian work. Then he spoke as only such a man as he, in such circumstances, could speak: "When the bad days of life come to the Christian, when he finds himself a prey to great infirmity, that is the time for him to run back in his mind over the years that are past, to recall the good and the evil which he has done, the evil to repent of and do penance for, the good to find consolation and encouragement therein, in his present affliction. I have that experience

today, and my tongue is incapable of expressing the consolation which the memory of my early years brings to my soul, especially since I do not know if God will grant me much longer the joy of seeing the good which our dear Society of St. Vincent de Paul is doing." The Christian sociologist of the Catholic Revival in his day in France, the forerunner of the Catholic Social movement in that land, comes to the fore again in this part of the Leghorn address: "It is for you then, my dear Brothers, to intervene between rich and poor in the name of Jesus Christ, the God of the poor and of the rich, the greatest of the rich, since He is so by nature, the holiest of the poor, since He is poor by the free choice of love."⁸ That was his last public address. But his pen continued to be busy to the end.

Ozanam kept on writing, even when the "bad days of life" had come upon him, because he remembered the promise made in his youth; and also because he was so loyal a friend. Separated from the many whom he held close in his big heart, he sent letter after letter, unburdening himself, asking prayers, offering counsel and encouragement. Another instance of this apostolate of correspondence was the letter he wrote to a man named Jérusalem on May 5, 1853, a letter that has been called "the perfection of kindness." Monsieur Jérusalem, a convert from Judaism, had been recommended to the Vincentian society in Paris by the conferences in Rome and Constantinople. To this man, who had suffered bravely because he had dared to become a Catholic, Ozanam wrote: "Ah! my dear friend, when one has the happiness of being a Chris-

⁸ Ozanam, *Oeuvres Complètes*, tome huitième, Melanges II, p. 52 ff. The complete address is here.

tian, it is a great honor to be born a Jew and to feel oneself the lineal descendant of the patriarchs and the prophets, whose words are so beautiful that the Church finds nothing better to put into the mouths of her children. . . . I do not know if I have told you, but my brother Charles will tell you, that we also believe we are of Jewish descent, which is another bond of union between us. . . . I believe that Charles will have introduced you into a Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.”⁹

Courtesy and gratitude are reflected in the letters written by this sick man during the spring and summer of 1853—and no less by those of earlier years—when the shadow of death hovered near, when pain racked his body and he knew all the anguish of a husband about to be separated from his wife, of a father about to be separated from his child. No one wrote to him, no one expressed an interest in his condition, in his literary work, or in the Vincentian society without receiving an appreciative answer. It was an obligation of courtesy to acknowledge such messages, and Ozanam never failed to observe the *noblesse oblige* of a soul as sensitively noble as it was kind. He was particularly appreciative of his wife’s tender care for him in his enfeebled condition. “The lady of the house sends you her kind regards,” he told one correspondent. “The good little woman has had very many bad days. But she smiles again with the first rays of spring sunshine. Certainly, if I recover it is she who will be mainly responsible for it.” In another letter he referred as follows to his dear Amélie: “You know her whom God gave me for a visible guardian angel, you have seen her at work. But you would not credit her resourcefulness, not only in eas-

⁹ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 390.

ing but in consoling me since my illness became serious. What ingenious, patient, indefatigable tenderness surrounds me at all times, and anticipates my every desire!" Another letter of this period closes with these words: "What have I done to deserve from the hand of God such a loving family and such good friends?"

All of a father's love and all of the failing Ozanam's wistfully tender solicitude for his beloved and only child, Marie, was voiced in letters from Italy at this time. She is nearly 8 years old now and her education, begun years ago, must not be neglected. He devotes himself to her lessons, accommodating all the erudition of a doctor of laws and of letters, of an historian and man of letters to the needs of his little girl. When his condition and the weather permitted, she went with him and Amélie to one of the churches of Florence, or Pisa, or Leghorn, wherever the family might be and there she knelt, and asked *le bon Dieu* to make her Papa well again, if that was His will. He told her stories, from the Bible which he loved so much, from the classic lore of which he was a master, and also the imperishable fairy tales which are the heritage of children in all lands. Young as she was, she understood enough to rejoice with him when the Academy *de la Crusca* of Florence was opened to him because he had written the book on the Franciscan poets. Her father did not attach any undue importance to this honor, but it pleased him, of course, as it had pleased him to be admitted to the Tiberian Academy of Rome in 1841, to the Academy of the Arcades in 1844, the Royal Academy of Bavaria in 1848, and the Lyons Academy, also in 1848. However, far more than these literary and scholarly distinctions did this member of St. Francis' Third Order cherish his affiliation to the

Order of Friars Minor. It was delivered to him under the seal of the General who numbered him among the Order's benefactors, and gave him a share in the merits of all the prayers and good works of these sons of the Poverello. He gave up all idea concerning membership in the Academy of Inscriptions in Paris. To Jean-Jacques Ampère he wrote: "In such a solemn moment, when every question of my future is hanging on the great question of my health, when I am asking God to let me live for the sake of my wife and child, would there not be a certain inconsistency in seeking that superfluity to satisfy my literary self-love?"

But he did not give up hope for his ultimate recovery of health, nor interest in his work. The manuscript of the *Pilgrimage to the Land of the Cid* had to be finished. He wrote, slowly, laboriously, often at the table at which Marie was absorbed in her lessons. "As soon as a page was finished he read it to his wife, both experiencing a feeling of joy at seeing the attentive face of the child, who also did not forget." And even when his condition had grown much worse, he compelled his enfeebled hand to use the pen, once more in the service of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. He was at San Jacopo, about 12 miles below Pisa, a charming village among the rocks along the Mediterranean shore. Insisting upon being as active as possible, he made what he called "his pastoral visitation" to the Conferences of Charity in the neighborhood. To the society's headquarters in Paris he reported on the Vincentian branch at Pontedera, of which Brother B., a knife grinder, was the president, one of the most capable Ozanam had met. "On market days he sharpens scythes, reaping-hooks and pruning-hooks for the peasants. But in his leisure hours—and Italians have many such—Brother

B. has read a good deal; he studies his religion in the lives and works of the saints. As a result of that contact with the great minds of Christianity, he has acquired a sound knowledge, and in addition an extraordinary elevation of mind, and a charm of speech which is heightened by naturally amiable and refined manners. He came in the garb of a workman, but before five minutes had elapsed one recognised in him a superior man who was infinitely more interesting than the mob of distinguished people who crowd the salons. In a few words he brought, not merely to my knowledge but before my eyes, the little Conference of Pontedera, its works, difficulties and hopes, all with a simplicity, tact, and propriety of expression which charmed my mind, the while his exquisite Tuscan pronunciation delighted my ear."¹⁰

One thing troubled Ozanam amid the joy of knowing how many units of the society there were in Italy, how splendidly they exemplified the Vincentian spirit: there was no conference in Siena. He wished to go to the city, see to it that a conference was established. The journey would be a difficult one, his friends objected, he would strain himself dangerously. He answered: "Since God is restoring my strength, it is in His service that it must be spent," and went to Siena. There a priest, Padre Pendola, was his guest. Try as he would, Frederick could not bring about the founding of a conference. The Tuscan nobles, he was told, were not favorably inclined toward visiting the poor in their homes, the first and fundamental work of the society. Returning from the unsuccessful effort, he was heard to say, while tears welled up in his eyes: "God no longer blesses my efforts. He does not wish for any

¹⁰ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 393.

further service at my hand." However, he shook off this depressing thought, resolved to make one more assault on the noble heart of Padre Pendola. He had used his body, now he would use his pen in the great cause. The last lines of the letter he penned to this Italian priest at this time, one of the last of his many letters, are lines "all aflame with the charity of Jesus Christ, are not surpassed by anything which has come from that heart of fire!" exclaims Monsignor Baunard.

"Reverend Father and dear friend," he began, "I was very glad to see the good seed of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul germinate and fructify in your Tuscan soil. I have seen it do so much good, sustain very many young men in the practice of virtue, and enkindle wonderful zeal." He mentioned the conferences in Quebec and Mexico, references which show how early the society had crossed the Atlantic, and the one in Jerusalem. "We have certainly one in Heaven, for more than a thousand of our Brothers have, during the twenty years of our existence, gone to the better life. Why then should we not have a Conference in Siena, which is called the Ante-Chamber of Paradise? Why should we not see in the City of the Blessed Virgin a Society which has the Blessed Virgin for its principal Patron? Above all, why should we not succeed in the College of Tolomei, where our young branch, under your fostering hand, would not run the danger of precocious maturity?" The social-minded Ozanam pens the next paragraphs: "You have many rich children. O Father, what a salutary lesson for hearts degenerated by luxury, what a beneficent sight it would be to show them Our Lord Jesus Christ, not only in the pictures of great masters, not only on altars glittering with gold and light, but in the person

and the suffering of the poor! We have often discussed the weakness, the futility of men, even of Christian men, among the nobility of France and Italy. I am satisfied that they are so because one thing has been wanting to their education. . . . These young gentlemen must learn to know what are hunger, thirst, and the destitution of a garret. They must look at wretched fellow-creatures, sick and noisy children. They must look at them and love them. Such a sight will pull at their heart-strings or this generation were lost. But we must never believe in the death of a young Christian soul. It is not dead but sleepeth." He excuses himself for writing thus to a priest, using a French saying, "*Gros-Jean veut prêcher son curé* . . . the sexton preaches to his pastor," and adds that really it is not he who is preaching but Padre Pendola, "your example, your conversation, your charity, which are preaching to me, bidding me to trust in you and to leave that good work in your hands."¹¹ Ozanam's letter bore the date of July 18, 1853, and the next day was the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul.

On July 19 a telegram of three lines came to Ozanam at San Jacopo. It was from Padre Pendola and read: "My dear friend, I founded two Conferences of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul on the Feast Day itself, one in my college, the other in the city."¹²

¹¹ O'Meara, *Frédéric Ozanam*, pp. 335, 336.

¹² The Reverend Thomas Pendola (1800-1883) was an educator and the founder of two schools for the deaf.

“I COME, LORD!”

THE man lay on an invalid's couch on a terrace overlooking the sea. His body was pitifully thin now, thinner than ever, the bearded face pale and the cheeks sunken.

The hands lay in unaccustomed and undesired idleness in his lap, the hands that had been so busy with the pen, had so often gripped other hands in brotherly affection and understanding.

The eyes were tired that had strained over so many old manuscripts and books, over so much of the man's own work; the nearsighted eyes that had looked upon the beauty of God's world with so much poetic gratitude and upon the misery of his brothers with a misty sharing.

The lips were pale, and curved in the lines of pain bravely borne and of a wistful serenity. There was no bitterness, no fear on the lips that had spoken so often for truth, for pity, for the rights of little men. They shaped prayers now, whose burden was “Thy will be done!”

Ozanam's health seemed to have been helped by the sojourn at San Jacopo, where the sea air was beneficial. He clung to the hope of being cured. After two months' “intimate acquaintance with the sea,” he wrote toward the end of June: “I am enjoying the pleasure of resuming by degrees my way of living. I am able to take long walks without fatigue; I spend mornings on the rocks watching

the waves, every trick of which I know by this time. My strength is coming back though slowly; but that was to be expected after such a long and serious attack. Certainly, if I am treated well by July and August, which are reputed to be great doctors, I shall be cured this autumn.” On June 23, still at San Jacopo, he wrote a poem in honor of his wife and to commemorate their twelfth wedding anniversary, as he had on each June 23 since their marriage. He wrote in sight of the fishermen’s boats and used a simile suggested by the scene:

“Stranded on a distant rock our little barque awaits the saving tide to bring it into port. The Madonna, to whom the vessel is dedicated, seems deaf to our appeals and the Infant Jesus slumbers!

“It is twelve years to-day since we set out on our voyage full of hope; garlands decorated thy head. To bless the voyage a little fair-haired angel soon appeared at the stern.

“Since then the heavens have grown dark and the storms have blown our little skiff hither and thither by night and day. But neither the trials of the tempest nor the hardships of the climate could extinguish our love.

“Dearest companion of the exile whom God allotted to me, I have no further fear in your sweet care. Already the merciful eyes of the Virgin Mother are turning to us: the Infant Jesus will soon awaken.

“Drawn by His hand into a calm sea we shall reach at length the shore where our longing, loving friends are waiting to receive us.”¹

In July, the little family had gone to Antignano, an attractive village close to the seashore, and until the end

¹ Baunard, *Ozanam in His Correspondence*, p. 392, footnote.

of that month Ozanam was able to walk to Mass every morning in the near-by church and along the shore. Then his strength had begun to fail again, he could do no more than write an occasional letter, and lay for the most of each day on his couch at the end of the little garden. He had reached another Station along his way of suffering toward the Calvary of death but there was peace in him and all about him, for he had come to realize completely his great Dante's words, "In His will is our peace." Beside him as he lay on the couch was his Bible, which he had loved all his life, was able to read not only in the Greek text which he preferred but also in several other languages. From Holy Writ he had drawn consolation and encouragement. Back in Pisa he had selected, from the Psalms and Gospels, passages which would help other invalids as they had helped him. Too weak then as now to use the pen very much, his wife wrote down the chapters and verses he had marked, and there resulted another posthumous work, a little book called *Livre des Malades – Bible of the Sick*. It appeared, with a preface by Père Lacordaire, in the first edition in 1858 and in succeeding editions, the latest in 1913. Translations have increased the number of those whom it has helped, the many "who labor and are heavy-laden," to whom Ozanam dedicated it.

On April 23, 1853, also in Pisa, Frederick Ozanam had reached his fortieth birthday anniversary. Opening his Bible, he transcribed these lines from the Canticle of King Ezechias: "I said in the midst of my years: I shall go to the gates of death. I sought for the residue of my years: I said: I shall not see the Lord God in the land of the living. My life is swept from me and is rolled away as

a shepherd's tent. My life is cut off as by a weaver: whilst I was but beginning he cut me off: from morning even until night thou wilt make an end of me. My eyes are weakened with looking upwards. Lord, I suffer violence, answer thou for me. What shall I say, or what shall he answer where he himself hath done it? I will recount to thee all my years in the bitterness of my soul” (Isa. 38: 11-15).

Having made his own this Old Testament cry of a stricken soul, Ozanam wrote on the same sheet of paper:

“This is the beginning of the Canticum of Ezechias. I do not know if God will permit me to apply the end of it to myself. I know that I complete on this day my fortieth year, more than half of the way of life. I know that I have a young beloved wife, a charming daughter, excellent brothers, a second mother, activities brought to a point at which they could serve as a foundation for a work I have long dreamed. I know also that I am attacked by a deeply-seated and serious malady, which is all the more dangerous in that it means probably a complete collapse.

“Must I leave all these good things which Thou hast given me? Wilt Thou not be satisfied, Lord, with part? Which of my ill-regulated affections shall I sacrifice? Wilt Thou not accept the offering of my literary self-sufficiency, of my academic ambitions, of my plans for research, which are animated perhaps rather by pride than by zeal for truth? If I sell one half of my books and give the proceeds to the poor, if I confine my activities to the duties of my official position, and devote the rest of my life to visiting the poor, teaching apprentices and

soldiers, Lord, wilt Thou be satisfied, and would'st Thou leave me the happiness of growing old by the side of my wife, and finishing the education of my child?

"Perhaps, my God, Thou dost not will that. Thou wilt not accept offerings which are not disinterested. Thou refuseth my sacrifice. Thou wilt have myself. It is written at the commencement of the Book that I am to do Thy will! I said: I come, Lord!

"I come. If Thou callest, Lord, I have not the right to complain. Thou hast given me forty years of life. Let my family not be scandalized if Thou wilt not work a miracle to cure me. Hast Thou not led me a long way forward in five years, hast thou not granted me that respite to do penance for my sins, and to become better? Oh! All the prayers that were then offered to Thee on my behalf were heard: why will those that are now uttered in greater volume be lost?

"But it may be, Lord, that they will be heard in another way. Thou wilt give me the courage, the resignation, the calm of soul, the inexpressible consolations that accompany Thy Real Presence. Thou wilt give me the grace to make my sickness a source of merit and blessing: the blessing, Thou wilt shower on my wife, my child, on all belonging to me, to whom my works would be of less avail than my sufferings.

"If I recount to Thee all my years of bitterness, it is because of the sins with which I stained them. But when I consider the graces with which Thou hast enriched me, Lord, I recount to Thee all my years in the gratitude of my heart.

"If Thou wert to chain me to a bed of suffering for the rest of my days, it would not suffice to thank Thee

for the days which I have lived. Should these lines be the last which I shall write, let them be a canticle to Thy goodness.”²

To this sublime act of submission to God’s will, this faithful revealing of his great Catholic soul, Ozanam added thanks for having had so good a father and mother, for having been given such an excellent education, and closed with a plea to those who would pray for him to pray also for his parents. “The blessing of God,” he wrote, “is on those families in which parents are remembered.”

On the day in Pisa on which he had transcribed the verses from the Canticle of Ezechias and set down his own prayerful commentary on it, Ozanam had written his will. Careful as always to spare another all he could, he took advantage of his wife’s brief absence from the room to quickly sketch the testament, which begins as we would expect his will to begin, “In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost,” and declares that on this day, on which he completes his fortieth year, he is in great physical sickness but sound in mind, and expresses in a few words his last wishes, “intending to set them forth more fully when I shall have more strength.” The more important parts are as follows:

“I commit my soul to Jesus Christ my Saviour, frightened at my sins, but trusting in His infinite mercy. I die in the Holy, Apostolic and Roman Church. I have known the difficulties of belief in the present age, but my whole life has convinced me that there is neither rest for the mind nor peace for the heart save in the Church and in obedience to her authority. If I set any value on my research, it is that it gives me the right to entreat all whom I love

² Ozanam, A. F., *Bible of the Sick*, pp. 14, 15, 16.

to remain faithful to the religion in which I found light and peace. My supreme prayer for my family, my wife, my child, and grandchildren, is that they will persevere in the Faith, despite any humiliation, scandals, or desertions which may come to their knowledge.

“I bid a farewell, short as the things of earth, to my dear Amélie, who has been the joy and the charm of my life, and whose tender care has softened all my pain for more than a year. I thank her, I bless her, I await her in Heaven. There, and only there, can I give her such love as she deserves. I give to my child the benediction of the Patriarchs, In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. I am sad that I cannot labor longer at the dear task of her education, but I entrust her absolutely to her virtuous and well-beloved mother.

“To my brothers Alphonse and Charles I offer my sincere gratitude for their affection—to my brother Charles especially for the anxious care my health has caused him. . . . I embrace in one thought all those whom I cannot mention here by name. . . . I thank once more all those who have been kind to me. I ask pardon for my hastiness and bad example. I implore the prayers of my friends, of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Let not your zeal be slackened by those who will say, he is in heaven. Pray unceasingly for one who loved you all much, but who has sinned much. Sure of your supplication, dear, kind friends, I shall leave this world with less fear. I firmly hope that we shall not be separated and that I shall remain in the midst of you until you rejoin me. May the blessing of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost rest upon all of you. Amen.”

Again and again since leaving Pisa and San Jacopo for

Antignano, another seaside village, the sick man had felt that there was reason for hope, but again and again his weakness dashed all such hope. He managed to write only a little each day, attacking for the tenth time his manuscript of the *Pilgrimage to the Land of the Cid*, determined to finish it. At times he could write no more than three lines before becoming completely exhausted. Despite this, he was never morose, but rather cheerful, and the few letters he was able to write show both his deep love for his many friends and the indomitable soul that could be whimsically playful with the pen even in the face of death. “Caught at last!” he says to a friend about to be married. “The free heart has been taken captive and put in chains—silken and golden chains. I rejoice as at a good omen over the name of Amélie, by which you will call your wife. Is it after us also that you choose the 23rd for the day of your wedding? The 23rd brings luck!” He had asked Jean-Jacques Ampère for an “alms for his beggars,” the Franciscan friars of his book on da Todi and the other Umbrian poets, and when Ampère responded with a brilliant review of the book in the June number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, the author was pleased and was careful to tell his friend so.

This appreciation of any kindness was so strongly persistent that, on August 8, 1853, Ozanam opened his will to add a codicil, an acknowledgment of his deep thanks to “the Brothers Bevilacqua, Dr. Prato and the Reverend Père Massucco, who have overwhelmed me with kindness. God alone can reward them.” The Bevilacquas were members of the Leghorn Vincentian conference, Dr. Prato his attending physician, Padre Massucco the superior of the Lazarists in Leghorn and Frederick’s confessor. The two

Vincentians seem to have understood clearly, despite a brief acquaintance, what manner of man this was, this dying Frenchman for whom they trudged the dusty mid-summer road to Antignano from Leghorn daily, bringing fruit, keeping him supplied with ice, sleeping in a near-by hut to be instantly at Madame Ozanam's service if she lit a lamp to tell them they were needed. One morning at 3 o'clock the servant in the house where the Ozanams lived was aroused by the noise of sand flung at the window. The Bevilacqua brothers had brought a fresh supply of ice, could wait no longer to give it to Ozanam, to ease his fever heat. The peasants and the fishermen held the sojourner in reverence, considering him a saintly man, and brought gifts of the land and the sea.

Since the first of August, Ozanam had been unable to go to daily Mass. But when the fifteenth of the month came, he insisted upon going to the church, to assist at Holy Mass and receive Holy Communion on the day of our Lady's assumption, a feast to which his mother had been especially attached. Did he remember now August 15 in 1835, when he declined the apologetic German's breakfast invitation in Mâcon and instead went to Mass and Communion? Now he declined to use the carriage his wife had ordered, saying: "It may be my last walk in this world, and I wish to make it a visit to my God and His blessed mother." He set out, leaning on Amélie's arm. Peasants and fishermen stood in groups about the church, all the men uncovered their heads, the children raised their hands in their traditional salute. Frederick Ozanam was moved to tears. The parish priest of Antignano was dying in his house in the shadow of the sanctuary. When he learned that Ozanam wished to receive Holy Com-

munion before the Mass, the old priest bade them help him up and dress him. Ozanam, his wife giving him the constant support of her arm, walked to the Communion railing, and there the dying priest, supported by an acolyte, gave the dying layman the Bread of Life. That was the last time the Padre of Antignano did this for any man, and the Mass was the last at which Ozanam assisted.

Early in August Dr. Charles Ozanam had hurried from Paris to Antignano, because Frederick's condition had become alarmingly worse. The small reserve of strength was growing less and less, his legs were swelling. It was only with difficulty that he could be carried to the end of the little garden, to the terrace where he liked to lie within sight of the sea. No one in Paris felt any hope; neither did any of his newer friends in Leghorn. The Abbé Perreyre, himself awaiting death, wrote to one who was like him devoted to Ozanam: "The latest news of M. Ozanam is heart-breaking. Charles, his brother, received a telegram from Madame Ozanam four days ago, stating that the dear invalid is in a state of extreme weakness. I cannot express the profound grief which that news has caused all who knew and loved M. Ozanam. What a loss to every good cause, to religion, to truth! But above all, what a loss to me!"

The Abbé Alphonse Ozanam hurried to Antignano, too, and on the day of his arrival drove with Frederick as near as possible to the shore, helped him to a seat from which he could look out upon the blue Ligurian waters. That night the priest and physician brothers watched at the professor's bedside. One of them, seeing him in tears, asked: "Why do you worry yourself? Be easy in your mind. Soon we shall see France again." Frederick an-

swered: "Ah, my dear brother, it is not that. But when I think of my sins, for which God has suffered so much, how can I refrain from tears?" At another time, when sadness had taken hold of him and a gentle voice said, "Are you really such a great sinner?" his answer was emphatic: "Child, you do not understand what the holiness of God is!"

Ever since their wedding day, Ozanam had remembered the twenty-third of each month as the date of that happy occasion. Now, despite his extreme weakness and pain, he did not forget. He gave Amélie a branch of flowering myrtle. He had noticed it on the seashore the evening before and had asked someone to get it for him. He wrote a little poem for her, too, on this sad and final recurrence of the day. Placing the farewell in his will, he asked that after his death it be put at the foot of a picture, a copy of a painting by Fra Angelico, which he left his wife as a souvenir. The friar artist's painting showed angels welcoming into Paradise the souls of which they had been the guardians. "Those angels were awaiting at the moment of departure from this earth, the faithful who had been entrusted to their fostering care," began the poem. "You, my guardian angel, will remain on earth; your prayers will open Heaven to me. You will remain for yet a little while, to guide the footsteps of the darling child who was our joy. Teach her to think of me, endow her with your virtues. We shall meet again in the abode of love, and under the eyes of the good God Himself we shall love one another with a love that will know no end."

His Bible was never far from his hand as he lay these days on the couch. He seemed heedless of anything about him, excepting only the Book, his wife, and his child.

Passages from Holy Writ came into his mind, and one was particularly appropriate: “Lord, Thou hast lent me this body. No other sacrifice whatever could please Thee. Behold me, then, I come, as it was written at the beginning of Thy book. It is Thy will that I shall do, my God!” One evening Madame Ozanam was sitting beside him on the terrace, her tears carefully hidden from his sight. In answer to her question, as she saw how tranquil his features were, how serenely he was accepting his fate, he said that of all God’s gifts the greatest was peace of heart. Without it, nothing can make one happy; with it all trials, even death itself can be borne courageously. He did not speak much any more. But once he told Amélie: “If anything can console me for leaving this world with my work unfinished, it is this, I have never worked to win the approbation of men, but solely in the service of truth.”

Toward the end of August the disease from which he had suffered so long began to attack its victim with a final fierceness. Ozanam scarcely spoke, his weakness was so extreme that his brother the doctor and the others about him feared that he might die before he could return to France, and he had expressed an ardent desire to see his own country once more. It was decided to leave for Marseilles by the earliest possible ship and the day of departure was set as August 31. The man born in Italy forty years before was about to leave this second *patria* of his, the land of St. Francis and Dante. Waiting for the carriage that would take him to the dock, at his request his wife and brother led him—he was so weak that they had almost to carry him—for a last look from the terrace at the end of the garden. He gazed meditatively at the sea, then took off his hat, raised his hands in a gesture of

adoration, and said, loud enough for the others to hear: "My God, I give Thee thanks for the afflictions and sufferings which Thou hast sent me in this house; accept them in expiation of my sins." He turned to his wife: "I want you, too, to praise and bless God for our sufferings." He took her in his arms. "I bless Him for all the consolation which you have given me." Soon he was on board the vessel, but before anchor was weighed there came to pay him a farewell homage priests, religious, friends, members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Perhaps there was among these the young man who had some weeks before walked to Antignano to ask about founding a Vincentian conference on the island on which he lived. The invalid had courteously but firmly declined in the afternoon to receive a personage of princely rank, having the perfectly valid excuse that his condition would not allow even a brief conversation. But when this humble young man came in the evening and his visit concerned the society, Ozanam welcomed him, summoned the residue of his strength and kept his guest in an animated Vincentian talk for two hours.

So exhausted was Ozanam when he was brought on board the ship that the many adieus had to be cut short and he carried to his cabin. His brother Alphonse kept watch beside his bed throughout the night, and in the morning a pallet was set up on the deck and there Frederick lay, reluctant to "remove his eyes from the poetic shores of Italy, which were rapidly receding from sight." The ship had put in at Bastia, now the voyage was resumed. Ozanam thanked God when the shore of Provence, the shore of France, appeared on the horizon. There was a space of peaceful sleep and when he awoke the ship had

anchored in Marseilles harbor, with the gigantic image of Notre Dame de la Garde welcoming her client. His mother-in-law and other relatives greeted him, he seemed to feel much better and said, though it cost him a great effort: “Behold, one journey completed! I shall make another, but shall make it in tranquility. Now that I have placed Amélie in your arms, God will do with me what He wills.” He hoped to reach Paris, but his condition was so grave that he could not even entrain for the capital and had to be put to bed in a house prepared for him by his kinsfolk in Marseilles. The extremity of his condition is proved by the fact that he could not even receive the Vincentians who hastened to pay their respects. Later, one of his most cherished friends, one of the heroes of his youth who retained his niche to the end, Père Lacordaire, wrote of these moments: “When he had reached the land of his ancestors and of his works, he appeared to suffer no more. All traces of apprehension had disappeared; his figure exhibited a calm, which belonged neither to life nor to death; nothing could equal the serenity of his mind and of his features. He spoke little, but he had a pressure of the hand, a smile, a sign for those whom he loved.” Realizing that the end was at hand, he asked for the Last Sacraments. The priest attending him enjoined him to trust in God’s infinite mercy, to banish all fear. Frederick Ozanam spoke softly, but clearly: “Ah, why should I fear Him, I love Him so!”

In the morning of September 8, the dying man’s condition did not appear especially alarming. By evening however, at about 7:30 o’clock, his breathing aroused the utmost apprehension. It was painfully labored and irregular. He opened his eyes, raised up his arms in a gesture of

farewell to earth and of appeal to heaven, and cried out with a strong voice: "*Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, ayez pitié de moi!* . . . My God, my God, have pity on me!" He never spoke again, and the death agony began. In the next room Brothers of his in the Vincentian society knelt in prayer. At the bedside the Abbé Ozanam led the prayers for the dying and in the silence that came at the close of these supplications the room was filled with the stifled sobs of his dear ones. A deep sigh from the lips of Ozanam, then death came. It was ten minutes before 8 o'clock in the evening, on the Feast of Our Lady's Birthday, September 8, 1853.

A Mass was offered up in Marseilles for the repose of Frederick Ozanam's departed soul, and also in Lyons, where the Vincentians crowded the church. In Paris, a solemn requiem Mass was sung in the Church of St. Sulpice, in the presence of a throng eager to pray for him and do homage to his memory. Priests were there in large numbers, the pastors in whose parishes he had helped the poor, the teachers of religion whose work he had defended and supported. Professors and students came, from the Sorbonne and the other colleges of the University of Paris and from Stanislaus College. Many of the men present were members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. In many pews knelt those who remembered the dead man for his genial smile and heart-warming handclasp, who had brought help and cheer to empty garrets; women for whose children in the slums he had provided warm clothes, nourishing food; youths who, like Léonce Curnier, had been anchored securely in the faith through his example.

After the funeral Mass, with its poignant, hope-sustaining refrain of "*Requiem aeternam, dona ei, Domine,*" the

body of Ozanam was placed in the crypt of St. Sulpice church, until its transfer to another crypt, that of the historic Church of the Carmelites, where it has since reposed. Full of interest is the story of how the body of Frederick Ozanam was entombed under the Carmelite church. Earlier biographers do not mention the matter, but Heinrich Auer, whose biography was published in 1933, tells us that on September 12, four days after her husband's death, Madame Ozanam wrote from Marseilles to his friend, Léon Cornudet: "He died as peacefully, as calmly and quietly as his life on earth deserved. I could not make the sacrifice of surrendering his mortal remains: they are to be taken to Paris and shall rest in peace beside those of my father and brother." She informed Monsieur Cornudet that despite her physical tiredness she planned to leave for Lyons on Thursday, have a Mass offered up in the church there in which Frederick received his first Holy Communion, and see him and others of her husband's friends. She begs Cornudet to be the guardian of Frederick's and her daughter. The father wished this, she wrote, and a few weeks before his death had repeated the desire.

However, Ozanam's body was not buried beside those of Monsieur and Théophile Soulacroix. Notices found among Madame Ozanam's effects explain the course of events. "Toward Easter in the year 1852 Frederick was very ill. . . . He recovered very slowly, and when he got over the first attack he liked going out in the morning to hear Mass at the Carmes. . . . One morning when, notwithstanding the temperature which he still had, we went to the chapel, I knelt not beside him as usual, but behind him. Sorrow, the most dreadful presentiments assailed me;

I could no longer restrain my tears, and I did not wish him to remark them." In that moment she felt distinctly, she declared, that she would never again lead her husband to this chapel. They were to leave Paris in a few weeks, and she asked herself, where would death take him, and when? Where would she be compelled to leave him? The courage which God had given her deserted her now, she was filled with terror, seemed to see Frederick hanging as it were over an abyss. When the Mass came to an end wishing to leave the place in which anguish had assailed her, Madame Ozanam made an effort to raise herself up. She looked to the right, toward a little chapel then dedicated to the Guardian Angels, and there "I seemed to see—no, I saw, written on the left wall of the chapel: 'Here rests Anthony Frederick Ozanam.'" What she saw could scarcely increase the shock she was experiencing. He had told her that if he died in Italy, she was to leave him there.

After the requiem Mass in the Church of St. Pierre in Lyons immediately after his death, Frederick's friends there asked his wife to give them the remains, promising to place a monument over the grave in the Loyasse cemetery. Some months before, she and Frederick had read that the government of the Second Empire was considering the matter of permitting resumption of burials in churches. It had often occurred to her that it must be a great solace to be able to say that those we have lost by death are even on this earth so near to God. She told the Lyons friends that she did not wish to be separated from the grave of her husband, but if they could get permission to have his body entombed in the Church of Notre Dame de Fourvières or in that of St. Pierre, she would

consent and would have his cherished remains transferred to Lyons. Monsieur Prosper Dugas began negotiations for burial in the Fourvières church, but the old priests there declared that no layman could be buried in the chapel. The city council of Lyons seemed somewhat inclined to allow burial in St. Pierre's church, but finally failed to grant the unusual request.

Meanwhile Ozanam's body remained in the crypt of St. Sulpice church. Workmen, carrying out excavations, disliked being so close to the coffin, and complained. The parish priest told Madame Ozanam she must by all means see about the interment of her husband's remains, he could no longer assume charge of them. Madame Soula-croix and the brothers of Frederick advised the widow to have the body buried in the Southern cemetery of Paris, at Montparnasse, as they had wished to have done at once after the funeral. The wife clung to the silent hope that this would not come to pass. The relatives believed that she would never be able to realize her desire, a singular one, and said they had hitherto refrained from opposing it but now the time had come to make a decision. She, however, could not make up her mind, felt that she could not agree. In her distress she consulted Père Aussant, the prior of the Dominicans in the old Carmelite monastery. He knew her desire and considered it beyond realization, but loving Frederick as he did, he told her that, contrary to the position taken by the Carmelite church's pastor, the coffin ought to be placed in the crypt of that edifice. Fortunately, Père Lacordaire, then provincial of the Dominicans, was in Paris at the time and he agreed that the body of his great friend should be given a place under the Church of the Carmelites, the entrance to which is

at 700 Rue Vaugirard. "You must take him to the Carmes!" he told Madame Ozanam," and she declared, "That was what I wanted!" There were difficulties, then early one morning Dr. Charles Ozanam and Monsieur Fiot, who had placed themselves at the widow's service in the matter, caused the coffin to be removed from St. Sulpice to the Carmelites' church, where the Dominicans received it with honor. "At that time I felt that he would remain there," say Madame Ozanam's notes. She also records the fact that she could not see the arrangements going on for the new tomb, not having permission to enter within the enclosure of the convent. "But Père Aussant kept me *au courant*, and I spoke to the workmen beforehand. I was able, however, on hearing of the air-holes of the chapel to calculate the part of the church under which the little crypt was situated. What was my astonishment, my emotion and my gratitude to God, when it became clear that Frederick lay exactly under the chapel of the Holy Angels (now St. Joseph's chapel), where I had seen eight months before the inscription: 'Here lies Anthony Frederick Ozanam.'"³

When Madame Ozanam, her daughter Marie, and her mother went to Rome toward the end of 1855, in an audience with Pope Pius IX, "who recalled Frederick's death with complete sympathy," Madame Ozanam asked the Holy Father for and was at once granted permission to be exempted from the Dominican clausure in effect at the Carmelite church, so that she might visit her husband's tomb.

In the same year the widow caused the little underground burial place to be reconstructed in the style of

³ *Bulletin*, Vol. 71, April, 1926, pp. 105-108.

the catacombs, an exceptionally appropriate choice because of Ozanam's deep interest in the primitive Church and in the places of worship of the early Christians. Louis Perret, a Lyons architect known for his catacomb drawings, furnished the required sketches. A large marble slab on which a cross in red was carved, covered the grave. Near by a little altar was erected, its background showing the Lamb of God on the rock from which flow the waters of eternal life. To the right of the altar a stone bears a Latin inscription saying that here rests A. F. Ozanam, the unselfish herald of truth and love. He lived forty years, four months, sixteen days. (This inscription) was dedicated by Amélie to her husband with whom she lived twelve years and by Marie to her father. "Live in God and pray for our salvation." The right side wall of the mortuary chapel bears an inscription chosen by Lacordaire: "*Pourquoi cherchez vous parmi les morts celui qui est vivant? . . . Why do you seek the living one among the dead?*" (Luke 24:5.)

Finally, closing her account, Frederick Ozanam's widow stated that until 1867 she had not caused any inscription to be placed in the upper church. When the Dominicans were about to leave the old Carmelite church (the sacred scene of martyrdoms during the Revolution) she realized that she ought to do all she might wish to have done while the Friars Preacher were still there. Accordingly, the following words were inscribed exactly above the spot where the body lies in the crypt below:

A. F. OZANAM VERE CHRISTIANUS DOCTRINA
ET CARITATE ORATOR IDEM AC SCRIPTOR
EGREGIUS ·

ADSSERTOR VERISSIMUS · SODALITATIS
B. VINCENTII CONDENAE AUCTOR INTER
PAUCOS

PRIMUS · DICTORUM SCRIPTORUM ET VITAE
ELOQUENTIA ANIMOS JUVENTUTIS AD FIDEM
REVOCAVIT · DECESSIT IN PACE VIII. SEPT.
MDCCLIII,

A. F. OZANAM TRUE CHRISTIAN IN DOCTRINE
AND CHARITABLE ACTION EMINENT ALIKE
AS ORATOR AND WRITER · DAUNTLESS
PROCLAIMER OF THE TRUTH · IN THE
FOUNDING OF THE ST. VINCENT SOCIETY
THE FIRST AMONG A FEW · THROUGH
HIS WORDS, HIS WRITINGS AND THE
ELOQUENCE OF HIS LIFE HE RECALLED THE
SOULS OF YOUTH TO THE FAITH · DIED IN
PEACE ON SEPTEMBER 8, 1853.

Once more, on July 13, 1929, the mortal remains of Frederick Ozanam were removed, this time to the Ozanam crypt, an antechamber to the small, catacomb-like chapel in which they had lain since 1853. Over the new grave was erected a monument, the result of Vincentian contributions from all over the world. On the steps of the monument there is an inscription almost identical with that in the upper church, as given above. The place where the words were graven has begun to show signs of wear, a proof of the many Christian knees that have bent there, while in various languages people prayed for but also to Frederick Ozanam.

THE GREAT FRIEND'S LEGACY

MARC ANTONY in his funeral oration for Caesar said, according to Shakespeare:

“The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones.”

Of Frederick Ozanam all of his innumerable mourning friends might well have said: “This man did no evil. The immense amount of good he did was not buried with his bones but lives after him. It is his legacy to the world.”

Père Lacordaire could not have chosen more fitting words than these to inscribe over Ozanam's tomb: “Why seek you the living among the dead?” For Ozanam lives, in his character, in his work, in his personality. And even those who never knew him in the flesh, who must make his acquaintance at secondhand through his writings and the writings of others concerning him, even they feel the heart-warming friendliness of this good man, a lasting aura about his revered memory.

Ozanam's legacy is cultural and spiritual, at once widely social and intensely personal, French and universal, Catholic and catholic. It is like a great treasure which he began to gather early in life, and it has increased and multiplied itself since his death. It includes his example as son, brother, husband, father. A part of it is his fearless yet always courteous stand for the Catholic religion when

he was a student at the University of Paris. Who shall measure what part he had in saving or regaining the faith of many an endangered comrade; perhaps in Professor Jouffroy's return to the Church he had maligned? Who shall measure what was accomplished by the Notre Dame conferences? Resumed in a happier day for Ozanam's France, they will continue to unite deep, humble learning and religious devotion to superb oratory. Nor can Ozanam's work as a professor be overestimated; his influence upon the young men who sat at his feet, his bearding of the lions of falsehood and unbelief in their dens, no matter how exalted the lions or how fearsome their growls.

As student, professor, writer, lecturer, sociologist, Ozanam was a champion of truth, religious, historical, social, political, economic—truth in all its phases. His work as a Christian apologist was so important that Cardinal Vanutelli placed it beside his Vincentian leadership and activity in the panegyric which His Eminence gave at the centennial celebration in 1913. When his outspoken Catholicity displeased some and the announcement of his course in foreign literature was changed to read, "Course in Theology," Ozanam smiled, finished the lecture without mentioning the matter, and at its conclusion said with calm dignity: "Gentlemen, I have not the honor to be a theologian, but I have the happiness to be a Christian; the happiness to believe and the ambition to devote my mind, my heart, and all my strength to the service of truth."¹

As an historian, Ozanam did much to prove that the Middle Ages were not altogether the gloomy, superstitious, brutal period which prejudice and ignorance had made them appear to many. At the same time he did not

¹ Baunard, *Ozanam in His Correspondence*, p. 226.

let himself be carried away by the excessive and uncritical sentimentalism of the Romantics. He of the compassionate heart deplored "the harshness of feudal institutions," as he phrased it. Besides restoring Dante to a recognition full of homage, he gave millions their first acquaintance with the Little Flowers of St. Francis and with the Franciscan poets of Umbria. He was a pioneer in the modern revival of interest in Thomistic philosophy.

"You have a style which is strong and brilliant," wrote Lacordaire to Ozanam. "*Vous avez un style qui a du nerf, de l'eclat.*" If at first there were echoes of Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Ballanche, as he progressed in the writer's craft his style became more and more distinctly his own, a competent and charming means with which to express the great ideas of his mind, the noble sentiments of his heart. The contributions of Ozanam to the Catholic periodical press of France were, of course, ephemeral. However, through them he reached many whom he probably could not have reached through his scholarly volumes. The slur of inferiority could not be made against these articles, nor did he ever dip his pen in bitterness. But so much careful work could be done only at the cost of fatiguing hours for the high-strung writer, for the nearsighted eyes in the glow of midnight lamps. This was one of the ways in which he sacrificed himself as a worker for God, the Church and his fellow men, particularly the possessionless and despised, the lowly and neglected among them. This was one of the ways in which he was a martyr of truth and charity. He was ready to give more than his pen, more than his needed rest and physical well-being; ready to yield his life at once no less than piecemeal. He endangered his life in the hope of stopping the slaughter of brother by

brother in Paris in 1848, when he carried the emblem of reconciliation ahead of Archbishop Affre at the barricades.

Distasteful as it was to him, unsuited as he knew himself to be by reason of his temperament and physical weakness, the Sorbonne professor had served as a National Guard because he felt it was his duty as a citizen to do so. The same conscientious attitude made him stand for election to the legislature after the February uprising. He felt himself, in his humility and self-deprecation, to be anything but equal to the duties of a lawmaker and said so frankly. Yet, if politics was not so often, like patriotism, the last refuge of scoundrels, if it were really in practice as in theory the art and science of governing well, then Frederick Ozanam would have been ideally fitted to be a politician, and in his person would have redeemed the word from the sinister connotations put upon it by evil men. Kathleen O'Meara says: "He repeated constantly that he was no politician, that he was not, never could be '*un des hommes de la situation*,'" and in a sense this was correct. Nevertheless, he was a true politician, inasmuch as he judged politics like a Christian philosopher who held a solid grasp of the great moral principles on which government and politics should be conducted. In his opinion it was the social, not the political, question which should engage . . . the chief attention and the utmost effort of the politicians of France, and he often regretted that such men as M. de Montalembert, for instance, devoted themselves so much to politics instead of working more exclusively at the solution of the social problems which were, and still are, at the root of all the revolutions in the

² One who takes advantage of a situation, for personal or party reasons.

country.”³ Long before the Revolution in 1848, “Ozanam recognized that the greatest social problem of the day was not one of individual persons or of politics, but one of labor. His recognition of this fact does not give him credit for any special astuteness; any one who had his eyes open to the changes that industrialization was causing in the working conditions and in the social habits of the laboring classes could have made the same observation. But Ozanam was no scholarly economist. He did not offer his own pet scheme for fighting the evils of mechanization, but he did wish to point out to those who could do something about it that the real future problems in government would be those of labor. There would have to be a revolutionary change in the attitude of officials toward such questions as wages, industrial expansion, and economic concentration,” says a recent writer. “Ozanam pointed out the moral angle, and insisted also that the social debacle involved the personal and spiritual order of man and the entire financial, commercial, and industrial arrangement of the country. He was always for the middle of the road in the solution of these questions, just as the complete Catholic must always remain, and looked first of all to the preservation of the integrity of the family as the essential source of all communities.”⁴

There is little doubt that Ozanam's capable, splendidly trained mind would have qualified him for the role of statesman; and even less that his heart would have made him an ideal tribune of the people. He held that “democratic political liberty must be Christianized” and “the economic organization of society must be reformed in

³ O'Meara, *Frédéric Ozanam*, p. 225.

⁴ Fichter, Joseph H., S.J., *Roots of Change*, pp. 126, 127.

harmony with Christian ideals." He, says Dr. Moon, perceived perhaps more clearly than any other man of his generation "the opportunity for the Catholic Church to become the protectress of the common people in both economic and political life." As Ozanam in almost continual sickness receded from public life and prepared for death, it seemed that not many agreed with him or cared much about making his dream come true. But he was a forerunner. He had greeted the Second Republic, had refused to follow the antidemocratic "throne and altar" path trod by so many Catholics, then and later. On February 16, 1892, came Pope Leo XIII's famous "*raillément*" letter, urging French Catholics to support the Republic of their day. How different might Ozanam's life had been, how different the history of the Church in France, if such a letter had been issued in 1848, and heeded! It was not heeded now. Nor did many heed the great Leo's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, in 1891. Commenting on this encyclical's words on the ancient workmen's guilds, on greed and unrestrained competition, usury and the power of a small number of men to place a yoke little better than slavery upon the masses of the poor, an historian of the Social Catholic Movement in France says that Ozanam was one of those who "might have used the same words."⁵

In his *New Era* articles in 1848 and his letter to his priest brother in that troubled year, Ozanam had pleaded that the priests of the Church devote themselves especially to the poor, to the workers. Leo XIII, Pius X, and Pius XI, Shepherds of all Christendom, repeated that plea in their great social encyclicals. "What Ozanam attempted for

⁵ Moon, P. T.. *The Labor Problem and the Social Catholic Movement in France*, p. 160.

France, what Bishop von Ketteler sought to accomplish for the workingmen of Germany, that Leo XIII wished to do for all mankind," says a Jesuit writer on the social question. "No one, so far as I am aware, has ever better expressed the reason for such confidence [in the ultimate triumph of justice and truth] than that great historic scholar and Christian leader, Frederick Ozanam," who said that Christianity "contains all the truths preached by modern reformers and none of their illusions; which alone is capable of realizing the ideal of fraternity without sacrificing liberty, of seeking the greatest earthly good for man without robbing him of that sacred gift of resignation, the surest remedy of sorrow and the last word in a life which must end."⁶

In France after Ozanam's passing there were some who agitated as he had agitated for a Christian not a pagan social order. Augustin Cochin, a Vincentian, rebuked Catholic leaders who claimed to be promoting the interests of religion by favoring the reactionary tendencies of the Second Empire. A writer named Bourgeois declared that his fellow Catholics had made a "monumental blunder" in surrendering the earlier Catholic social teaching and rushing to the defense of economic Liberalism after 1848. "The duty of Catholics was to make themselves the sincere and serious champions of a social program which could correct the errors of both economic Liberalism and socialism." Jean-Baptiste Bordas-Demoulin pleaded with Catholics to support the democratic movement both in politics and economics.⁷ So Ozanam's spirit continued to exert its influence, and in any estimate of the Catholic

⁶ Husslein, Joseph, S.J., *The Christian Social Manifesto*, pp. xiii, 107, 108.

⁷ Moon, *op. cit.*, p. 521.

social movement in the last half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, his name must be included. He marches down the road of history beside the Pontiffs of the social encyclicals, beside Cardinal Manning of the London dockers' strike, Cardinal Gibbons of the Knights of Labor controversy, Cardinal Mermillod of Switzerland, with whom he had talked shortly before his death; with Bishop von Ketteler, with Vogelsang in Austria, and with his compatriot, de Mun, the Royalist who championed the workers' cause and heeded Leo XIII's admonition regarding the Republic.

Had he done nothing else, had he given himself in no other way to others, and left no other legacy, Ozanam would live and his memory be in benediction because he founded the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. When the shadows of failure darkened about him, when it seemed that his fight for human freedom and the divinely given rights of man was in vain, he had the heartening consolation of knowing that his apostolate of charity had the blessing of heaven. And though he had always refused to be the society's president-general, it bore his impress more deeply than that of any other man. It was he who breathed into it the spirit of humble helpfulness, who prevented it from being bound with the cords of deadening formalism, spared it the infantile trappings of regalia. He set its course with an eye to just one purpose: the self-sanctification of its members through deeds of mercy. So well he wrought that the Church has made the Vincentian society her cherished child, heaped her favors of indulgences upon it, has never ceased to desire its expansion.

If we knew no more about Ozanam than his Vincentian work tells us, we would know how noble his character,

how winning his personality. The poor, in his Franciscan eyes, were more like Christ, more to be loved for His sake, than other people; more like Him in their poverty and suffering, so often the victims of others' sins rather than their own. It was easy for him to be friendly with the tenement dwellers, because his heart was so tender and big. It was easy for him to be humble among the lowliest, for the tendency to pride which he had detected in himself so early, combated so bravely and conquered so completely, never had anything of social snobbishness in it. It was a matter of intellectual superiority, a very human inclination for a precocious lad, lauded for his literary talent before he has gained his majority, sought after as an orator, asked to lead so many crusades. Prudence went with Ozanam into the homes of the poor, but it was no calculating worldly carefulness, rather a genuine concern as to what was really best for those he wished to help. When it failed, it was on the side of liberality, indulgence even; never on the side of stinginess or harsh strictness. And his pity! It welled up in his heart at the sight of others' pain or need, physical or spiritual. It was not only akin to love, this pity of Frederick Ozanam, it was love itself. The love of God seeing Christ in the poor; it shared in the love which caused our Saviour to say that He had compassion on the multitude. And a multitude has known this Vincentian compassion, for they were true when spoken and have been increasingly true ever since, the words of Augustin Cochin, secretary-general, at the society's meeting on August 2, 1848: "There is scarce a day in the year, or an hour in the day, on which men are not gathered together at some spot in the Christian world, under the patronage of St. Vincent de Paul, to perform

works for the good of man and the glory of God, good works in which they have one prayer, one faith, one rule. No frontiers divide them, the horizon broadens daily, and each day sees new constellations of charity appear in the Vincentian firmament.”⁸

Even in the midst of war the spirit of Ozanam stirs in men. “Imagine with what joy, with what emotion the council-general approved of the aggregation of the Conference of St. Martin of the 107th Ammunition Train (American Expeditionary Forces),” wrote the president-general concerning this unique unit of the society. The spiritual director was Chaplain William P. O’Connor, now Bishop of Superior, Wis., the president was the late Major Martin D. Imhoff of Milwaukee.⁹

Another Vincentian conference of World War I was that named for St. Barbara, patroness of artillerymen. Writing from Hahn, Germany, on January 25, 1919, the Abbé X reported its dissolution, saying that the funds left over were given to conferences in the devastated areas. He ended his report on a truly Vincentian note, regret that the bonds of fraternal charity knit by the conference would now have to be severed.¹⁰ And in World War II, Vincentian branches in many countries have been devoting themselves especially to problems arising from the conflict, and to preparation for the problems of war’s aftermath. The society was chosen by Pope Pius XII to distribute the clothing collected in the United States for

⁸ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

⁹ Lavender, *Frederick Ozanam Accepted the Challenge of 1833*, p. 89. The other officers, all from Wisconsin, were Sergeant John Weber of Hartford, vice-president; First Sergeant Henry A. Jankowski of Menasha, treasurer; Sergeant Edward H. Kawandowski, also of Menasha, secretary.

¹⁰ *Bulletin*, Vol. 64, June, 1919, p. 99.

the poor of Italy. "This indicates the international character of our society: it demonstrates the necessity of such an international organization."¹¹

Ozanam was the friend of a countless number of people, people of all classes, all conditions, all walks of life. He was the friend in a special way of those who had been his fellow students in Lyons and Paris, comrades in the Vincentian beginnings and progress, associates in the political and socioeconomic battle; colleagues of the university faculty, in literary and historical work. He had a genius for friendship, which was for him a communion of spirits, a meeting of minds. He poured out his heart in letters to his friends, was happy when they were happy, shared their disappointments and griefs, let them share his joys and sorrows, gave them counsel and asked for theirs. Above all, his friendship was an apostolate. He prayed for his friends; in life and after death through his testament, he asked their prayers. To Jean-Jacques Ampère he wrote what deserves to be treasured as the expression of an exceptionally strong and tender comradeship. The younger Ampère lacked the glowing faith of his great father, and seemed unable to swim out of dangerous currents to the serene shore of certainty, as Ozanam had in his youth. To him Frederick wrote, when Ampère was about to start a journey to Canada and the United States:

"My dear friend, you suffer much fatigue which is not without danger to your health; please excuse my uneasiness. You are seeking out new interests to occupy your mind, and you are making a tour of the world for that purpose. Yet there exists one sovereign interest, one Good capable of attracting and of filling your great heart. I

¹¹ *Catholic Charities Review*, Sept., 1944, p. 195.

fear, my dear friend, I fear, perhaps unjustly, that you do not think enough of that. You are a Christian at heart, by the blood of your incomparable father; you discharge all the duties of Christianity to men; must they not also be discharged toward God? Must we not serve Him, must we not live in continuous communication with Him? Would you not find infinite consolation in such a service? Would you not find the security of eternity?" Then this solicitude: "Ah! my dear friend, if you should fall ill some day in an American city, without a friend at your bedside, remember that there is not a spot of any importance in the United States to which the love of Jesus Christ has not drawn the steps of a priest, to console the Catholic traveler. . . ."¹²

From England, before sailing to America, Ampère wrote to thank his friend and wrote throughout his journey of two thousand miles. But they never saw each other again. When the traveler returned to Paris, Ozanam was about to leave the city which he would not see again in life. Ampère reached the goal which he had sought honestly for many years and which Ozanam had desired so intensely for him, when on March 27, 1864, "he was brought suddenly face to face with sovereign truth and infinite mercy."

In life, Ozanam had a following, a host of disciples inside and beyond France who looked to him as their leader, exemplar, hero. And so it has been since his death. One of these who knew him in life was George Wigley, among the pioneers of Vincentianism in London. An architect by profession, Wigley turned to journalism in Paris. The Catholic Encyclopedia says he was "one of the band of laymen surrounding Frederick Ozanam and who founded

¹² Baunard, *op. cit.*, pp. 353, 354.

with him the Society of St. Vincent de Paul,"¹³ but he is not mentioned as a cofounder of the society in Paris, in the official Vincentian statement. However, it was through articles suggested by Ozanam and written by Wigley for *The Tablet* that twelve other men joined him in founding the first branch in the British Isles.

George Wigley was most gloriously a follower of Ozanam and exemplar of the Vincentian spirit in his death. In Rome, he nursed an English sailor, whom the Vincenians were helping; nursed the man with the utmost devotion and had the happiness of seeing him received into the Church before his death. Then Wigley fell ill of the disease that had struck down the sailor, went to the hospital of the Brothers of St. John and died there in January, 1866.

In Italy, a land of Ozanam's predilection, where the university atmosphere in their time was similar to that in which Ozanam had lived in Paris, eminent professors emulated the Sorbonne lecturer in foreign literature. One of these was Giuseppe Toniolo, who held the chair of political economy in the University of Pisa. Like Ozanam, he was the son of middle class parents and in obedience to his father's wishes had taken a degree in law, but became an assistant professor in a provincial university and was the sole support of his widowed mother and two brothers. His vocation, like Ozanam's, was to be a champion of Christian principles, his field economics and sociology. "He became the acknowledged master of Catholic social teaching in Italy in his generation and was, in fact, consulted on technical points by Leo XIII when that pontiff was engaged in drawing up the '*Rerum No-*

¹³ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XV, p. 620.

varum.'"¹⁴ He lectured brilliantly at Pisa as Ozanam had at the Sorbonne and like him he "drew the hearts of others close to his own" and inspired "feelings of veneration, affection, and trust."

Toniolo was an active member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and called charity the "synthesis of all the virtues." He saw God in the poor, "approached them with a peculiar tenderness and spoke to them not as a man of learning but with simple words that came straight from his heart." The true Franciscan spirit dwelt in him, he gave to the needy all he did not actually need for himself. Finding that he had two winter overcoats, he promptly gave one of them away. Then a man just out of a hospital came to his door and Toniolo saw how the poor fellow shivered with cold. He gave this man his other winter overcoat, wore a knitted woolen sweater under a thin waterproof coat to keep himself warm. His home life as a husband and father was like Ozanam's, and when he died in 1918, "from overwork, after exhausting his strength physically and intellectually in the service of God," his last days recall pathetically those of Ozanam near Pisa half a century earlier.¹⁵

It is a part of the glory of the humble Vincentian society that Don Bosco, that delightfully genial social saint, introduced it into Turin; Don Bosco and Silvio Pellico, the gentle Italian patriot who suffered cruel years in Austrian dungeons. Nearer to our day and bridging the gap between Ozanam in the nineteenth and us in the twentieth century was Pier Giorgio Frassati, who was like Ozanam, a Vincentian in his student days. He was strong, good

¹⁴ Hughes, H. L., *Frederick Ozanam*, p. 119.

¹⁵ Hughes, *op. cit.*, pp. 119, 124, 126.

looking, full of life, an ardent mountain climber. When Fascist hoodlums broke into his father's house he met them fearlessly, wrenched a weapon from one and gave him a couple of lusty blows. His father was an Italian senator, the publisher of a Liberal newspaper and at one time Italy's ambassador in Berlin. In an attack of policemen on Catholic university students in Rome in September, 1921, Pier Giorgio and a number of other young men were arrested. When the policeman asked his name and his father's occupation and thus learned that the arrested student was an ambassador's son, he offered to let him go free. Frassati however answered: "I will go when the others are set free."

In the Turin of Don Bosco and Silvio Pellico, Frassati joined the Vincentian society. "He scarcely ever missed a meeting. I believe in fact that in order to be punctual he often hurried away from his dinner," said the president of his conference. Like Ozanam, he always took off his hat when he entered the wretched homes of the poor. A man blinded in the World War of 1914-1918 was forced to leave his living quarters and had no money to pay for the removal of his scanty belongings to another place. So the son of Senator and Ambassador Frassati and another university student borrowed a handcart and hauled the poor man's stuff across the city. Pier Giorgio pushed with one hand, with the other tried to control the pitiful string of the blind father's five little children. An Italian priest, Father Cojazzi, told of a conversation he had with this Vincentian. "We spoke of Ozanam. I saw him deeply moved when I told him how at Easter, after receiving Holy Communion in Notre Dame, Ozanam before returning home wanted with exquisite delicacy of feeling to

return to Jesus the visit he had received. He went to comfort the most pitiful case of those he knew, and in so doing in a degree returned Christ's visit. Pier Giorgio gave a suppressed exclamation, as his eyes filled with tears of understanding."¹⁶

Like Wigley the Englishman and so many others of whom we do not know, Frassati the Italian was in death most gloriously a follower of Ozanam (but really of Christ, whom they served in His poor). On his deathbed, in July, 1925, at the age of 24, "whilst the paralysis relentlessly advanced," he wrote a note to be given to a Brother Vincentian: "Here are the injections for Converso. The ticket is Sappa's. I had forgotten it; renew it on my behalf." At the meeting of his conference, "being held with inexpressible agony in the hearts of its members," the note was shown. It was nearly illegible, so near to death had Frassati been when he summoned his fast-ebbing strength and defied his pain to make certain that the poor entrusted to him would be served.

"We spoke of Ozanam." The sound of Roland's horn sent knights singing into battle. The memory of Ozanam, the spirit which he bequeathed, has sent unknown thousands of men pityingly into the tenements. In Tong-kahou, near Shanghai, a Vincentian conference was for years led by Lou-Pa-hong, called the St. Vincent de Paul of China. In Russia, one of the foremost Vincentian workers was Canon Constantine Budkiewicz, whom the Bolsheviks murdered on May 31, 1923. In our own country there was Thomas M. Mulry, the first president of the superior council of the Vincentian society in the United States. At his funeral Mass he was called "an apostle of the laity

¹⁶ Hughes, H. L., *Pier Giorgio Frassati*, p. 26.

consecrated to the service of Christ in His poor and suffering members by a zeal and fidelity that might almost be deemed a vow . . . above all and through all and in all a faithful son and follower of St. Vincent de Paul and Frederick Ozanam."¹⁷

Men like the dearly beloved Lallier and the other comrades of the early days in Paris; Lacordaire and the two Ampères; Wigley the Briton and Pellico the Italian and a host of others were drawn to Ozanam while he lived. They were drawn to him by his personality, all the engaging qualities that made him what he was. But his personality was after all only like a lantern. The strong, clear, attractive light it shed came from within, from the soul of Ozanam. And this light has continued to shed its friendly glow since the lantern was shattered. It continues to draw men, Frassati in Italy, Mulry in America, men like them in all the lands on earth.

All that Frederick Ozanam gave and all he continues to give to men sprang from the Catholic religion which he held and cherished, and practised to such an exceptional degree of perfection. The Abbé Guibert, a priest of St. Sulpice, called him "the Catholic of his age." The younger Ampère wrote: "What Ozanam placed above everything on earth, what enabled him to undertake extraordinary research, to produce scholarly works, to speak with rare eloquence, to establish many associations of good works, what distinguished all his actions and words with an ineffaceable seal was his great Catholic faith, the dominating influence of his life." Ozanam himself declared that he clung to Catholic orthodoxy more than to life, "loving and serving with all my heart the Roman Catholic

¹⁷ *The Catholic Mind*, Vol. xiv, No. 11, June 8, 1916, p. 296.

Church.”¹⁸ The Abbé Ozanam stressed his brother’s constant and scrupulous concern that every word he wrote or spoke should conform to Catholic doctrine. To be sure, he was attacked by the *Univers*, because its belligerent and extremist editor misinterpreted what Ozanam said or lacked complete knowledge of all the facts. The results were a splendid apologia by the victim and his sublime act of Christian forgiveness.

There have been some who questioned Ozanam’s position regarding Liberalism. The Sulpician priest who called him “the great Catholic of his age,” stated also: “If he shared certain Liberal ideas of his time, it was through the very nobility of his heart and through the very love that he bore to religion and to his brethren, not through any deviation whatever from the teaching of the Church.”¹⁹ Ozanam’s true Liberalism sought to lift from his fellow’s shoulders the galling yoke placed there by human greed and cruelty. It did not, like false Liberalism, seek to throw off the restraints of divine law and legitimate government. The stigma of Liberalism was for Ozanam an honorable wound, suffered in the fight for Christian principles in the political and socioeconomic fields. “Because the Catholic Liberals battled so bravely; because, in fact, of their very mistakes, it is easier for Catholics of today, than it had been for Leo XIII, to adopt the proper attitude toward the modern world. They taught Catholics not to fear liberty and to fight for their rights in the political arena; they shook the Catholics of France loose from the enervating grip of the Old Regime; they deprived anti-clericals of every pretext for

¹⁸ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

¹⁹ Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. xx, footnote.

hating the Church as the enemy of the modern State. At the same time, the check put upon them by the popes vindicated the dominion and the rights of God, and effectually stopped a drift toward indifferentism and social atheism."²⁰

The appearance of a new biography of Ozanam by Georges Goyau led a German writer to say that here was a saint formed by the Church from out of the world, in the world, for the world. He achieved saintliness as a married man, as professor, writer, politician. "He took sides in the decisions of the world without compromising his sanctity."²¹

This was the secret of Frederick Ozanam's life, his crowning glory, the fairest, most enduring and most potent part of his legacy: his sanctity; the sublime spiritual height to which he attained through the grace of God and his wholehearted, humble, selfless, and enthusiastic cooperation with that grace. Because of this his tomb has become a place of pilgrimage, and he a candidate for beatification.

²⁰ Corrigan, *The Church and the Nineteenth Century*, p. 133.

²¹ Friedrich Fuchs, *Friedrich Ozanam*, Hochland, Vol. 24, Oct., 1926, p. 108. "Hier formt die Kirche einen Heiligen aus der Welt, in der Welt, für die Welt. In den Entscheidungen der Welt hat er Partei ergriffen, ohne seine Heiligkeit zu kompromittieren."

“FRIEND, GO UP HIGHER!”

WHEN the news of his death came, they prayed for Frederick Ozanam, at requiem Masses, at meetings of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, in tenement hovels, in students' lodgings. They did not slacken in their petitions for him, the innumerable ones to whom he had been far more than an associate or acquaintance. At the same time they said to themselves, and increasingly so as the days passed, that very probably they needed his prayers far more than he needed theirs. They inclined to this belief more and more as they heard what was said of him, in academic circles, in churches, in societies, in the slums; what was written about him in the press and in books. Standing by his body in the vault of St. Sulpice church, the dean of the faculty of letters at the Sorbonne had said: “Our consolation is that we believe we hear him repeating the words of the Italian poet: ‘Weep no more; death is the beginning of immortality.’ We could also say that he had been happy in this passing existence . . . but it was not here, it was on high that Frederick Ozanam placed all his hopes and will receive his reward.” This dean of letters “did not lean to the side of belief.”

The sentiments of many were given expression by Monsieur de la Villemarqué when the news of Ozanam's death reached Paris: “I could only hand the paper to my wife and cry bitterly; we wept together and could not utter a

single word. Our grandchildren who were present looked at us in amazed silence. . . . I loved him as a brother, I admired him as a master, I venerated him as a saint! . . . In calling him so soon to Himself, in remaining deaf to the prayers of hundreds of thousands of members of the charitable Society founded by our friend, God hastened to make his taste the joys of Heaven.” And Léonce Curnier, privileged to have known Ozanam since youth and been his friend to the end, declared: “As for me, I never think of Frederick without an inclination to invoke his assistance. The aureola of sanctity which surrounded him in my eyes while he lived has lost nothing of its splendour. I seem to see him in Heaven between St. Vincent de Paul and St. Francis de Sales, whose faithful disciple he was. I love to represent to myself the altar, at which I kneel, set off with his picture; and the devotion which I have felt for him for years can only increase with time.” The Abbé Perreyre told Madame Ozanam that he had prayed God “most earnestly to accept the useless days of my life, in exchange for a few days of such a precious existence. . . . Yes, I loved him dearly; death cannot touch that; it cannot break the links uniting an immortal soul with those whom it will love for ever. The impulse of our hearts follow him where he is living by the side of God. We shall consult him there; we shall learn from there the secret of a charity which was invincible and humble; let us go thither for inspiration from that Christian wisdom, which seeks and loves God even to martyrdom. May my prayers be heard! May I cultivate in my life as a priest some of the virtues of his apostolate!”

Another priest, Père Philip de Villefort of the Society of Jesus, wrote from Rome: “He was a just man, in the

meaning of the Holy Scriptures; he was of the number of those who spent themselves doing good, he had such a long and holy career in such a short time! His whole life, the secret of which he concealed from us, but which the eyes of the Just Judge divined, his precious death in the practice of Faith, Hope and Charity, all combine to give you the only possible consolation. I shall continue to pray for him, though I feel sure that he is in possession of eternal glory."

Also from Rome, from Pius IX, the Sovereign Pontiff to whom he had been so loyally attached, whom he had understood so well and defended so vigorously, came to the widow of Frederick Ozanam words such as these in a letter dated November 19, 1853: "We felt profound grief on hearing of the premature death of your distinguished husband, and your letter which reached Us on the 20th of October last re-opened Our grief. But all the zeal and devotion of your dear husband for Our holy religion, which you justly recall, gives Us a great confidence of his eternal salvation. We shall not cease, nevertheless, to aid him with Our prayers to the God of mercy."

A special poignancy attaches to the sentences from letters written by several who had been close to Ozanam for many years, his cousin Ernest Falconnet, the venerable Abbé Noiret, Chaurand, Paul de la Perrière, poor Duflieux. All of them are certain that he is in heaven. "He gave his life for Truth, for Faith, for Charity. . . ." "His years were so full that it can be said of him that he knew how to live two lives in the space of one. His crown should be bright." A distinguished Churchman told the widow that if his death was a mystery of frightful suffering, it was equally a mystery of inexpressible love; "if at the

command of such love you are separated, it is to give him to God, the oblation of a saint, who will be an ornament in Heaven.” Montalembert wrote to Madame Ozanam: “He leaves to us, as to you, Madame, the almost complete certainty of his immediate and eternal happiness. It is not for one like me to speak of God and heaven to a soul still flooded with the light which radiated from the deathbed of such a Christian as he. . . . When you pray for him, and with him, when you seek his soul in the serene regions in which it awaits yours, please, Madame, remember me at least once, offer him the pious grief of an old friend, of an old fellow-member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, of an old soldier in the same cause, who will forget neither his instruction nor his example.” In life, Ozanam had opposed, always with courtesy and kindness, the views of Guizot, professor in the College of France. But this Protestant savant stood respectfully before the memory of Ozanam at a special meeting of the French Academy, that illustrious assemblage of eminent men, and spoke of him as “The model of the Christian man of letters, the ardent lover of science, and the steady champion of faith, who was patient and meek in long and fatal suffering, who was snatched away from the purest joys of life, but who was already ripe for Heaven as well as for glory.”

They pronounced no eulogy of Ozanam at the general meeting of the Vincentian society following his death. President-General Adolphe Baudon said that a panegyric would be repugnant to the tradition and spirit of the society. Said he to the assembled members: “Ozanam is no longer with us, to remind us of our primitive spirit; he shortened his brief life to radiate that spirit from his

scene of suffering. Let not his memory and his example be effaced in our minds; that is the truest homage which we could pay him, being persuaded that from heaven he sets a higher value on such fidelity than in those rare qualities of genius which were his glory in the eyes of men. That fidelity constitutes his merit and ensures his happiness in the sight of God." At the general meeting on December 8, 1853, Cornudet referred to the death of his friend on a feast of the Blessed Virgin, "to whom he had been greatly devoted," and said the Vincentians "find consolation and hope in such a coincidence." The society loses in Ozanam its guide and its model, "one of the men of the age who have rendered the greatest service to the Catholic cause," continued Cornudet. "He has been snatched away in the flower of his years, in the fullness of his genius, of his virtues, of his influence on youth. But do not these very virtues, the loss of which we deplore, throw a light on the Divine Will, which would not have him wait longer for the supreme reward? He is no longer present among us, but his sanctified memory remains and with it the belief that the all-powerful prayers of that splendid friend of the Society, who knows its needs, will have a more beneficent influence than his voice and his example."¹

Nor did words such as these cease to be spoken and written soon after Frederick Ozanam fell asleep in the Lord, as is true of the vast majority of men, who are remembered so short a time, and at most only by those nearest to them. Ozanam continued to live in the minds and hearts of an immense number of people. When his Letters were published in 1866, thirteen years after his death,

¹ Baunard, *Ozanam in His Correspondence*, pp. 405-408.

Bishop Plantier of Nîmes called him “The angel of charity, the athlete of faith” and declared: “He was a saint.” The Cardinal Archbishop of Bordeaux spoke of the “pure glory of sanctity in which that star was lost to our mortal sight.” Thirty years after his death, Lamache, one of the memorable seven who founded the Vincentian society, gave voice to what had not faded from the hearts and minds of so many: “To follow out Ozanam’s testamentary wishes, I have not ceased to pray for the repose of his soul; but I am quite convinced that the prayers which were directed to Purgatory went straight to Paradise and descended on him who offered them.”

In 1910, on the second Sunday after Easter, a large number of Vincentian Brothers assisted at the Holy Sacrifice in the crypt chapel under the Carmelite church, where the body of their founder had been resting for 57 years. They heard a sermon by Père Guibert, superior of the Catholic Institute, now housed in the buildings of which Ozanam’s tomb was a part. They heard the preacher’s eloquent tribute to Ozanam, they heard him say: “You have the justified desire to honor and to pray to him, not only in private devotions in the intimacy of your own souls, but also through a public cult in the sight of the whole Church.” And thus was raised, publicly, a voice in favor of the beatification and, ultimately, the canonization of Frederick Ozanam. The idea had taken deep root, had grown from year to year and continues to grow. In December, 1912, Cardinal Amette, then Archbishop of Paris, gave ecclesiastical approval to the prayer which became universal among the Vincentians, being recited at the meetings of thousands of units week after week, in the languages of many lands:

“O God, Who didst fill the hearts of Frederic Ozanam and his companions with love of the poor and didst inspire them to found a society for the spiritual and corporal necessities of the destitute, deign to bless this work of apostolic charity, and if it be pleasing to Thee that Thy holy servant Frederic Ozanam be raised by the Church to the honors of the altar, vouchsafe we beseech Thee to manifest by heavenly favours how pleasing he was in Thy sight. Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.”

In 1912, the council-general in Paris in its Bulletin advised Vincentians everywhere to foster the saying of Cardinal Amette's prayer and to be sure to inform the international headquarters of the society of any favors granted as a result of Ozanam's intercession. Then, in 1913, came the centennial of Ozanam's birth and his cause received a new impetus. New editions of his works appeared and books about him, contributing their share to interest in him and his beatification. Pope Pius X appointed Vincent Cardinal Vannutelli, the society's cardinal protector, to be his legate at the celebration in Paris. On Friday, April 25, there was a reception at the Catholic Institute, hallowed ground now for all Vincentians, and the Paris correspondent of the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* said that as one watched the crowd one realized that “an invisible bond of friendship and love held all of them together, in homage to the man whose spirit animated them.” On Saturday, April 26, a pontifical Mass was offered up by Louis Henri Cardinal Luçon, Archbishop of Rheims in the presence of many bishops, including the Most Reverend Patrick J. Donahue, Bishop of Wheeling, W. Va. Members of the Ozanam family and Vincentians filled the nave of the old Carmelite church and received Holy

Communion. In his sermon, the Cardinal of Rheims extolled the founders of the society of St. Vincent de Paul as heroes of faith and Christian charity.

After this Mass, the monument which his society had caused to be erected over Ozanam's grave was blessed. The blessing was pronounced by Cardinal Vannutelli, who congratulated the architect, the sculptor, the composer of the inscriptions and the workmen, each for his part in producing the splendid memorial. On the frontal of the monument is inscribed, in Latin: “In God's peace rests here Frederick Ozanam. He enlisted young men in the warfare for Christ and as chief founder called the St. Vincent society into being.”

On the left are these words: “Through science and historical knowledge, eloquence, poetical gifts and deeds of charity he helped incessantly to renew all things in Christ. He spanned the globe as with an ample net.”

The words on the right are: “His name shall be loved from generation to generation. The nations shall speak of his wisdom, and his praise be sung by the congregation” (Sirach 39:13-14).

On Saturday, April 26, a general meeting of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was held, with members present from all parts of Paris and of France, from other European countries and from across the sea. Among those present were the Abbé Ozanam, a nephew of Frederick's, and his son-in-law and grandson, Messrs. Laporte *père et fils*. The distinguished guests included René Bazin, the Catholic novelist, and Georges Goyau of the French Academy, a biographer of Ozanam. The secretary-general read the Holy Father's letter to his legate, in which the Pope significantly extolled the merits of the Vincentian founder,

“proposing him as leader and chief of all who are charged with giving civil society a Christian discipline.” The cardinal thereupon spoke, in French, dwelling on Ozanam chiefly as a Christian apologist and principal founder of the Vincentian society. In his response, President-General Calon paid a tribute to the memory of Madame Marie Laporte, Frederick Ozanam’s daughter, who had died on June 26, 1912, while anticipating the centennial of her great father.

On Sunday, April 27, there were three events. The cardinal legate celebrated Mass in the monumental Sacred Heart church on Montmartre, and three thousand Vincentians received Holy Communion before three altars and sang a hymn to the Sacred Heart. In the afternoon, there was a ceremonial reception of the Holy Father’s legate in Notre Dame cathedral, with a sermon by Père Janvier, a Dominican. He eulogized Ozanam and the world-encircling charity work of his society. Finally, in the evening there was a festival banquet, at which one of the speakers was Mr. Edward J. Du Mée, acting president of the central council of the society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He spoke in French for all Vincentians from lands other than France.² Another speaker was Lawrence Laporte, Ozanam’s son-in-law, who died in 1922. Cardinal Vannutelli toasted the society, its council-general, its president-general.

One more event remained, the Holy Mass on Monday morning, April 28, in the Church of St. Étienne-du-Mont.

² Mr. Du Mée died in 1928. He left no known written record of his attendance at the Ozanam centennial in Paris, but his report on it upon returning to Philadelphia is remembered by Mr. John Donnelly, present secretary of the Philadelphia particular council. Mr. Donnelly says a relative of Ozanam was Mr. Du Mée’s guest in Philadelphia and attended a Vincentian meeting.

within the parish boundaries of which Ozanam and his companions had established the first Conference of Charity in May, 1833.

Not in Paris only, not in France only was the 100th anniversary of Ozanam's birth observed, but in many other lands, including Belgium, Denmark, England, Galicia, the Netherlands, Ireland, Norway, Austria, Portugal, Germany, Rumania, Switzerland, Spain, Turkey; in Asia eastward from Constantinople to Shanghai; in Africa from Cairo to the Cape of Good Hope; in Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Uruguay.

In the United States, the centennial of the founding of the Society was celebrated at a general meeting in New York City of Vincentian delegates from all parts of the country. The occasion was marked by the publication of a souvenir book in which the lives of St. Vincent de Paul and of Frederick Ozanam were set forth briefly, the history of the society recounted concisely, and the character of Ozanam eloquently described by an American Vincentian, Benedict Elder of Louisville, Ky.³ This observance served to create additional interest among the Vincentians in the United States in the project of Ozanam's beatification. Their hopes and the hopes of their colleagues everywhere were heightened by the letter which Cardinal Vannutelli wrote upon his return to Rome from the legatine visit in Paris, in which he declared that “the festival in honor of Ozanam . . . is without doubt in my opinion a sign of the will of God that His faithful servant be glorified.” In 1921, Archbishop Ceretti, at the time Apostolic Nuncio, presided at a meeting of Vincentian conferences in Paris and stated that when he prayed in

³ Lavender, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-104.

the crypt where Ozanam lies buried, he felt as though he were "before the shrine which contains his relics." The next year, the Superior General of the Lazarists, the society of priests organized by St. Vincent de Paul, broached the matter of beatification once again and urged the society's members to become active in its behalf. Also within this year, Cardinal Vannutelli referred to the introduction of the cause "of our dear and venerated Ozanam," and said he would not hesitate to declare that the project had always pleased him and would always please him. Still in 1922, the Comte d'Hendecourt, then president-general, issued a letter to all units of the society, explaining the status of Ozanam's cause at the time and cautioning all members to fortify themselves with patience. "Do not count on a prompt solution. Even admitting that everything goes well, we may have to wait for some years, perhaps for many years."

The Ozanam beatification cause was formally begun in 1925. In that year President-general de Verges quoted from a letter of his predecessor as head of the society to the effect that ". . . the intercession of Ozanam should only be solicited in private and never publicly," then stated that a decree had been made public ordering an examination of Ozanam's writings, one of the earlier and important steps in the exceedingly thorough investigation demanded by the Church in beatification processes. He stated also that the interrogation of witnesses in the case was to begin at once. In 1927 Monsieur de Verges voiced his happiness at the many favorable sentiments expressed by members of the hierarchy. "Their petitions in behalf of the cause are arriving in large numbers at Paris and also at Rome." The French Bulletin of the Society of St.

Vincent de Paul in 1929 printed a notice that, at the request of the postulator of his cause, the verification of Ozanam's remains took place on July 13, 1929, in compliance with another of the steps according to the formula of Rome. The ceremony took place in the seminary garden of the Catholic Institute. When the body had been encased in a new oaken casket, it was returned to the grave under the monument erected in 1913. There were present high ecclesiastics, including a representative of the postulator, descendants of Ozanam, the president general of the Vincentians, and three members of the society's council-general.

On July 14, 1929, the newspaper *Echo de Paris* printed a wholly erroneous report that the heart of Ozanam had been taken from his body at the time of the verification. An authoritative declaration followed, denying that the heart or any other part of the body had been removed. A few hairs of Ozanam's head, black-brown hair remarkably well preserved, were taken by the president-general of the Vincentian society. Placed in a sealed container and framed, they form a cherished though humble memento on the wall of the council-general's meeting room in Paris. In 1937 the postulator advised the society that miracles due to the intercession of Frederick Ozanam would have to be produced in support of the request for his elevation to the sublime position of a *beatus*.

For some years, usually on the third Sunday in September, Vincentians throughout the world have observed "Ozanam Sunday," as a means of increasing their own and awakening in others appreciation of Ozanam and interest in his beatification. On this day the members assist at Holy Mass and receive Holy Communion with

the intention of furthering their founder's cause, and often they meet later in the day to hear addresses on this theme. They have distributed, on "Ozanam Sunday" and at other times, cards or leaflets bearing Ozanam's picture and Cardinal Amette's prayer for his beatification. One of the pictures popular among Vincentians is the one reproduced from a pencil drawing by Janmot, in Paris on May 17, 1852. It shows the great Vincentian at the age of 39, fifteen months before his death. The original is in the possession of the descendants of Madame Marie Laporte, Ozanam's daughter. In addition to the difference between a full-face picture, as was Janmot's drawing of his friend at the age of 20, and a profile, the portrait of the mature man shows the effects of time, of worry and physical suffering. There is a furrow of care in the forehead above the eyes, and a deep earnestness is the general impression of the bearded face. In the left coat lapel is the inconspicuous ribbon of the Legion of Honor. This is the man who is conscientious almost to the point of being scrupulous; who knows that death is his constant companion; who has no egotism to make him easily self-complacent; whose sensitive, poetic soul is prone to wistfulness.

Yet we know that Frederick Ozanam, by temperament inclined to melancholy rather than to gaiety, was no long-faced misanthrope. We have his word for that, and the word of those who knew him well and loved him; who heard his hearty laughter, who saw his enjoyment of a good joke, his conquest of moods of depression. Most of all, they knew the genial smile breaking from the serious lips and lighting up the gentle eyes. They saw upon his noble countenance the unmistakable reflection of inner goodness. Léonce Curnier, his friend from boyhood to

the end, testified that no one came into contact with Ozanam without being the better for it.

This is the man whom the Vincentians of the world and many others are eager to see raised to the honors of the altar. Believing that his beatification would redound to the glory of God and would benefit His Church, they are continuing their efforts, through prayer principally, to have his cause carried forward to the desired and triumphant conclusion. The Vincentians and many others believe that this humble, loyal servant of God is now singing the praises of his Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier in eternal bliss. They believe that when the Church exalts Ozanam his beatification will be in effect a seconding on earth of the words with which he was greeted by his Divine Friend when he entered heaven: “Friend, go up higher!” (Luke 14:10.)

AUTHOR'S NOTE AND A LIST OF BOOKS

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A majority of the books listed here were consulted. The others are included in the hope that the longer list might the better help those in search of material on Ozanam, stimulate reading about him and his work, and perhaps cause Vincentians to acquire relevant volumes for their own or other, more general, libraries.

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AN OZANAM CHRONOLOGY

- 1773 — Jean-Antoine Ozanam, Frederick's father, born.
1781 — Marie Nantas, mother of Frederick, born.
1789 — Beginning of the French Revolution.
1800 — Jean-Antoine Ozanam and Marie Nantes married; Napoleon I, Emperor of France.
1813 — Frederick Ozanam born, April 23, in Milan.
1815 — Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon exiled to St. Helena; Bourbons restored to French throne.
1816 — Ozanam family removes to Lyons from Milan.
1820 — Death of Frederick's sister, Elisa.
1823 — Frederick Ozanam becomes day student at Royal College of Lyons.
1830 — Frederick Ozanam is graduated from college in Lyons; Louis Philippe becomes King of the French.
1831 — Frederick Ozanam begins apostolate as writer with refutation of Saint-Simonism; goes to Paris for studies at the University, becomes leader in Catholic student movement.
1833 — Founding of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.
1835 — Opening of Conferences of Notre Dame.
1836 — Frederick Ozanam wins degree of doctor of laws; practices in Lyons; writes *Two English Chancellors*.
1837 — Frederick's father, Dr. Jean-Antoine Ozanam, dies in Lyons; writes *Origin of French Law*.
1839 — Frederick wins degree of doctor of literature; death of his mother; *Dante and Catholic Philosophy in 13th Century*.
1840 — Frederick Ozanam is appointed supply professor at the Sorbonne.
1841 — Frederick Ozanam and Amèlie Soulacroix are married.
1844 — Frederick Ozanam succeeds to full professorship at the Sorbonne.
1845 — Birth of Ozanam's daughter, Marie; first conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul established in the United States, at St. Louis.

- 1846 — Election of Pope Pius IX, Pio Nono; Ozanam named Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.
- 1847 — Part I of *German Studies* published.
- 1848 — Abdication of Louis Philippe; Second Republic proclaimed; Ozanam at post as National Guard, with Archbishop Affre at barricades; candidate for National Assembly.
- 1849 — Part II of *German Studies* published.
- 1851 — Ozanam visits England.
- 1852 — Last lecture of Ozanam at the Sorbonne; goes to southwestern France, Spain, Italy.
- 1853 — Ozanam dies at Marseilles, Sept. 8; *The Franciscan Poets in Italy in the Thirteenth Century* published.
- 1855 — First edition of *Civilization in the Fifth Century*.
- 1913 — Observance of centenary of Ozanam's birth.
- 1925 — First formal steps toward beatification of Frederick Ozanam.
- 1933 — Centenary of founding of Society of St. Vincent de Paul observed in Paris and throughout the world.
- 1945 — Centenary of first conference in the United States of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at St. Louis, Mo.

FOUNDING DATES OF FIRST VINCENTIAN CONFERENCES IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

<i>Country</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Year</i>
France	Paris	1833
Italy	Rome	1836
Belgium	Brussels	1842
Turkey	Constantinople	1843
England	London	1844
Ireland	Dublin	1844
United States	St. Louis	1845
Germany	Munich	1845
Mexico	Mexico City	1845
Scotland	Edinburgh	1845
Canada	Quebec	1846
Algeria	Algiers	1846
Netherlands	The Hague	1846
Austria	Innsbruck	1849
Poland	Posen	1850
Palestine	Jerusalem	1852
Egypt	Cairo	1853
Luxembourg	Luxembourg City	1854
Denmark	Copenhagen	1855
Spain	Madrid	1859
Portugal	Lisbon	1859
Jugoslavia	Agram	1859
India	Bombay	1862
Hungary	Odenburg	1862
China	Hongkong	1863
Czechoslovakia	Prague	1876
Australia	Sydney	1881
Russia	St. Petersburg	1905

} About — exact
} year unknown

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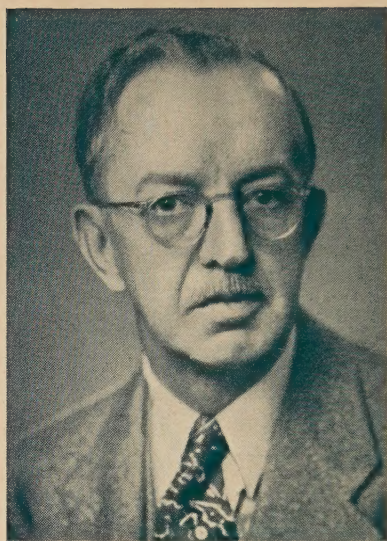
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legacy which is cultural and spiritual, at once widely social and intensely personal, French and Universal, Catholic and catholic. Precisely for that reason this biography presents all aspects of Ozanam — son, brother, husband, father, friend, student, professor, orator, historian, social critic, man of affairs, apologist, citizen, Vincentian, and Catholic.

Published commemoratively during the centennial of the foundation of the society of St. Vincent de Paul, the book will do much to give the reading world the knowledge of the benediction which Ozanam gave the world in founding the organization. When his fight for human freedom and the divinely given rights of man seemed in vain, Ozanam was able to take heartening consolation in knowing that the apostolate of charity had the blessing of God.

For the life of a man who has been mentioned as a candidate for beatification because of his exemplary life, the author sticks to the historical style to present the man, Ozanam. It is good biography for popular reading.



Mr. Schimberg

About . . .

*Albert
Schimberg
and
Frederick
Ozanam*

Long newspaper experience as a Catholic editor (Catholic Herald Citizen, Milwaukee) has helped Mr. Schimberg to portray Ozanam as factually yet appealingly as a human interest pen can, yet desisting from coloring the facts. Even though the author includes a wealth of detail, it is still essentially a life of the man with only enough background material injected to allow the reader to understand the deeds of Ozanam and his reasons for so acting.

The attention to detail shown throughout the book is demonstrative of the author's love for fact, and indicates a thoroughness of research on the man.

A Vincentian himself for more than 20 years, Mr. Schimberg portrays the life of this great man sympathetically and with complete candor. The book is full of the spirit which motivated Ozanam — his simplicity, courage and zeal and love for all. His biographer is master of an easy, appealing writing art. A journalist of good training, he writes for the people. His gifted pen knows how to tell a story so that it can be read.

Mr. Schimberg is also the author of that popular life of St. Francis of Assisi: **THE LARKS OF UMBRIA.**