CHAPwER 11

ANGELs IN THE VALLEY

During the difficult years of her family’s personal necessities, Mother Seton’s community and her own immeasurable contribution to its work went rapidly forward. This work was for several years primarily concerned with the education of young women and girls. There was no real break in continuity between the school on Paca Street in Baltimore and the school at St. Joseph’s in Emmitsburg. When the second group of women arrived from Baltimore in 1809, they had with them two pupils, Julia LeBreton and Isabella Editha O’Conway, a younger sister of Cecilia O’Conway. That very summer Sister Cecilia was appointed “Secretary and School Sister,” and took charge of her pupils, the three Seton girls and the two from Paca Street. When the farmhouse became so crowded that fall, John David advised Mother Seton to send the children during the day to the new house being built, to make possible an expansion of the school. It was not until the sisters themselves moved to St. Joseph’s house in February, however, that any new pupils were received. The initial plan was to provide free education to children of families living in poverty. The three day scholars (externs) who came in February were augmented by five tuition-paying boarders from Frederick in May, and by the middle of June Mother Seton could tell Archbishop Carroll, “Our school is very respectable and has increased to forty, including Boarders.”

Although the exterior of the community was buffeted by the summer storms over superiors and sites, the inner life went serenely on from the very first. Mother Seton described her community to Dué as “united only with the views of schooling children, nursing the sick, and manufacturing for ourselves and the poor, which to my disposition you know is the sum of all earthly happiness.” The surrounding farm lands supplied eggs, milk, butter, and fresh vegetables. Meat and coffee were common items in the accounts.

a [Although there may have been some continuity of instruction for the Seton girls and the two other pupils, the school on Paca Street in Baltimore was a tuition-based dame school for Catholic boarders. Mrs. Seton intended to teach “poor country children” at Emmitsburg but soon circumstances necessitated the admission of day scholars and boarders, Catholic or Protestant. 7:87, Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, 1 June 1817, CW, 2:479. Ed.]

b [Mother Seton began Saint Joseph’s Free School in Saint Joseph’s House, now the White House, 22 February 1810, with day pupils from the immediate area. This was the first free Catholic school for girls staffed by religious women in the country. Two months later the first tuition-paying boarders arrived 14 May for the Academy. Governed, funded, and administered by the Sisters of Charity of Saint Joseph’s, Saint Joseph’s Academy and Free School was rooted in methods to foster faith-based education and character formation to educate girls to lead devout lives as Catholic women and mothers. Ed.]
for the sisterhood kept at Mount St. Mary’s which sent them provisions during the early years, as was the flour used to make the bread. Mother Seton cheerfully denied any burden upon herself, saying, “I never do the least work of any kind [except] to walk around with knitting in hand and give the look of encouragement or reproof thro’ the house...[the] school is my chief business.” The contentment she found in her work was a real and lasting joy throughout her life. With welling heart she wrote Dué:

The solitude of our mountains...skipping children over the woods which in the spring are covered with wild flowers they would gather for you at every step—the regularity of our house which is very spacious and in an end wing contains our dear, dear chapel so neat and quiet, where dwells (as we believe) night and day you know Who. This is no dream of fancy and only a small part of the reality of our blessing. You must be a witness to believe that from Monday to Saturday all is quiet, no violation of each other’s tranquillity, each helping the other with a look of good will which must indeed be seen to be believed—all the world would not have persuaded me if I had not proved it so...

She complained to Eliza Sadler of “her lazy sleepy soul” so at peace among her fifty children. The days passed in quiet and order, and the energetic little head-mistress went about with her “manner of looking upon twenty people in a room with a look of affection and interest, showing an interest for all and a concern in all their concerns.”

You know I am as a Mother encompassed by many children of different dispositions—not equally amiable or congenial, but bound to love, instruct and provide for the happiness of all, to give the example of cheerfulness, peace, resignation and consider the individual [rather] as proceeding from the same origin and tending to the same end than in the different shades of merit or demerit. I assure you the little woman [Elizabeth Seton] is quite a somebody—and perhaps you are the only one of all who ever knew her who could justly appreciate her means of happiness.

The house was very quickly filled and John Dubois reported to Carroll in 1813 that the sisters could not take any more at that time. Three children in the neighborhood were waiting for the first vacancy, but Dubois feared to

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The chapel was located in a one-story annex which was attached to the western side of St. Joseph’s House, today known as the White House.
increase the number, even for orphans. “Mrs. Seton,” he explained ruefully, “would take the whole county if she could.”

Fifty children and eighteen sisters in the summer and scarcely less in the winter, filled the White House to overflowing. The report Simon Bruté prepared for Ambrose Maréchal in 1813 indicated that this large household was financed by thirty-two paying boarders and the fees paid by “externals” who varied in number from twenty in the summer to three or fewer in winter. At first the boarders paid $100 a year, “a half in advance every six months.”

When Bruté prepared his report the amount had already been increased by ten dollars; by the end of the war the charge was $125.00 with extra charges for music and French lessons.

St. Joseph’s favored the custom of the day of payment in advance but the girls from well-to-do families ran up bills for stationery, medicines, candy, and clothes, and sometimes these accounts dragged on long after Mother Seton’s death. Some girls who were in school in 1813 were still on the books in 1829. It is astonishing, therefore, to find that the community flourished financially. Writing to Tessier in 1816, John Dubois admitted that one of his reasons for wishing to have sisters at the Mountain was their “admirable economy.” They had so managed affairs at St. Joseph’s that they were “up to the point of even liquidating all their debts, and even having an advance when their creditors are paid...a promise of what I may hope for,” Dubois explained “while they are here.”

The community did not achieve this solvency without some severe trials. The first winter in Emmitsburg, before boarders had begun to become such an asset, was a period of hardship for everyone at St. Joseph’s. Although Louis Dubourg was no longer their superior, he was very anxious about the brave women enduring the discomforts of the crowded farmhouse and he wrote to Mother Seton:

The thought has struck me that you should write letters...
to various ladies exposing with candor the object of your institution, and asking assistance which you want in the beginning to complete it. Mrs. Caton, Mrs. Harper, Mrs. Patterson, Mrs. Montgomery, then thro’ Louisa and Emilia the old gentleman [Charles Carroll] and also Mrs. Bonaparte,
who being now an imperial princess might perhaps think it suitable to her new dignity to pay for the honor of protecting [sic, supporting] the Sisters of Charity. There is another lady in New York called Mme. de Neuville...who would, I believe, be gratified at the idea of being one of your foundresses, as she had been in France a great benefactress of your society...It may be the means by which He [God] intends to supply you, as indeed it is the one by which St. Vincent of Paul has made all his great foundations.  

There, is little evidence that the community ever wrote many such letters, but some of these women did contribute to the foundation at Emmitsburg.  

Another friend, Mrs. Joanna Barry, left $500.00 to Mrs. Seton in her will, and her grand piano and music to one of the Seton girls. The community meanwhile was often on the verge of failure while war clouds threatened. During the fall and winter that Anna Maria Seton lived out her last months, conditions became so desperate that Mrs. Seton considered going on a “begging tour” to raise some support for her community and school. When Jean Cheverus heard of her proposal he tried to discourage it. He was deeply grieved to hear of her troubles, especially since he could offer no substantial hope that they would abate. He said:

To leave your house and travel and make collections, etc., does not appear to me an eligible plan, although it would procure me the happiness of seeing you in Boston. In the present situation of affairs very little, I am afraid, would be collected. An application by a circular letter would hardly produce anything...The words of our respected friend Mr. Filicchi are so positive that it seems to me you cannot draw upon him except for your personal wants and those of your dear children...Did I possess the means how happy I would be to come to your help.

The sisters tried to augment their meager resources by sewing for the men and boys at Mount Saint Mary’s. Coats and greatcoats, vests, pantaloons, roundabouts, and underwear were cut and sewn in a variety of sizes. But,
before the invention of the sewing machine this work was slow and tedious. It became clear that the school for girls would perforce become the principal source of revenue for the Sisters of Charity at Emmitsburg. So it was that St. Joseph’s became a school for girls representing many of the better families of the day. It was with something akin to relief that the community learned in 1812 that the wife of the English consul at Alexandria, Virginia, was anxious to have her daughter admitted to St. Joseph’s “college.”

John Grassi, the Jesuit, wrote Bruté that if Mary Patton were accepted there were five other Patton girls who would in time probably follow her to Emmitsburg. Robert Goodloe Harper sent his daughters to St. Joseph’s, as did Maximilian Godefroy, the architect and artist of Baltimore. It was Godefroy who made one of the earliest “views” of the sisterhood of St. Joseph’s, which he sent them in 1813. But this picture seems to have disappeared with the years. Young members of the Carroll family attended St. Joseph’s School. Nancy Carroll was on the account books early in the institution’s history, and the archbishop himself wrote from Rock Creek in 1813 asking Mother Seton to accept one of his numerous great-nieces, Jane Brent of Washington.

Dr. Pierre Chatard of Baltimore sent his children to Emmitsburg, the boys going to the Mountain, and Emily to the Valley. Mother Seton confessed to Antonio Filicchi that her hope of establishing “a nursery only, for our Saviour’s poor country children” had been of necessity changed so that by 1817 she was “forming city girls to faith and piety as wives and mothers.” The school was never without some orphans and poor girls, but it was in large measure an institution where families of substance and reputation liked to send their daughters. That there was a great need for such a school is attested by its rapid growth. Toward the end of 1816, Elizabeth told Dué:

> Every moment I may say of life someone is looking to me to say or do Something—60 or more children boarders besides the country children, treble the Sisters we had when you were here...You must give me up as I do myself into His hands who has done so much for us both.

The school deserved to grow, founded as it was on solid principles of religious values, piety and culture. John David, at the beginning of his career as superior of St. Joseph’s, warned Mrs. Seton “to establish very strict regulations” to define education in her school. “The principal part,” he said, “is to form the tender minds of the pupils to piety and sound morals.” Mother Seton quite agreed, but she may have wondered why Father David found it necessary to assume complete supervision over her pupils, whom

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1 Mrs. James Patton was a Catholic; her husband was not.
2 St. Joseph’s Academy was a boarding school for what is now elementary, middle, and secondary education.
she had been quite capable of handling at Baltimore. David’s pronouncement carried an irritating connotation and for a brief period it seemed as if the tension between Father David and Mrs. Seton might be reflected in the affairs of the school, but distance diminished the acerbity. John Dubois was near St. Joseph’s, while John David was not. Dubois had experience with organizing a school, as had Mrs. Seton. The two respective heads of these Emmitsburg schools very naturally came to be the real regulators of the girls’ school in the Valley, and some of the school rules preserved at St. Joseph’s are in the handwriting of Dubois. It was he who applied and interpreted them for the women across the valley, after David went to Kentucky. Other regulations, however, are in the handwriting of Mrs. Seton, including *The Regulations for the School of St. Joseph’s.*

One of the earliest schedules of the distribution of work at St. Joseph’s, in Mother Seton’s handwriting, shows how well-organized the school was from the very start. Mother Seton was at the head; Sister Kitty Mullen was in charge of discipline. The school mistresses were Sisters Cecilia O’Conway, Fanny Jordan, Margaret George, and Elizabeth Boyle. The sister in charge of discipline preserved “good order” during both class and recreation periods, and was responsible for decorum when the girls went “abroad in a body.” Mother Seton was informed by weekly written reports of any “capital fault” in behavior, and she prescribed the suitable remedial measures. The prayers and other exercises of the school were, of course, her province, unless her absence made necessary the substitution of the assistant, Rose White or Sister Kitty Mullan. Mother Seton also “consented to take upon herself the Historical Class and the religious instruction.” This religious instruction was very simple and was limited chiefly to a study of the catechism in the early days of the school. When Mother Seton begged George Weis for some pictures of the stations of the cross in 1811, she said, “I have preached the catechism and rosary so long I now want another subject.” The expense accounts for the school’s first year, show that catechisms, spellers, and grammars were the three chief texts purchased.

As the school grew, the organization became more intricate and the curriculum expanded. The principal subjects were reading, spelling, grammar, geography, arithmetic as a basis, and music, needlework, and languages as electives. Cecilia O’Conway was able to give instruction in French, Spanish, and Italian, having been reared in the household of a Spanish teacher. When Madame Madeleine Guérin came from Martinique

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1 The medallions of the *Stations of Cross*, which now hang in the chapel of the White House are of the style which was very popular in the nineteenth century. Made from meerschaum, these may be the ones George Weis obtained for Mrs. Seton.
she, too, was employed as a French teacher, and Mother Seton herself was quite proficient in the language. The latter may have taught music on occasion, as well, since music had always been a favorite pursuit in the old days, and her daughters were equally devoted to the piano. Catherine Josephine Seton taught music to the “scholars” in later years and earned “her full $200 a year.” Music was regularly taught by a widowed French woman, a Madame Séguin, who had two orphan children to support, and who was given very liberal terms at St. Joseph’s School. The widow must have been accomplished in her field, for Mother Seton told Dué, “She gives us an advantage very precious to our house.” However, when Sister Augustine Decount (1786–1870) took over the music teaching after 1817, Madame Séguin’s services were no longer required.

The routine of the school day varied very little from summer to winter, and because the pupils were for the most part boarders the schedule governed their entire day. They rose at a quarter to six, were allowed a half hour to dress, and were at prayers by 6:15 a.m. Breakfast was at 7:30 and the time before eating was divided between Mass and study. Travel conditions were so uncertain that full allowance was made for the priest’s tardy arrival, and thus the study time might precede or follow the celebration of the Mass. Classes began at 8:00 a.m. and continued until 11:30 a.m., when “beads take place.” From dinner time until mid-afternoon a recreation period was provided. At 3:00 p.m. classes were resumed after a brief period of “adoration in the school room.” In two hours time a second recreation period followed and the girls could then study until the supper hour at 7:15 P.M. After supper one of the older girls read some spiritual selection which might be explained by Mother Seton or one of the other sisters. The younger children were often sent to bed immediately after supper, if Mother Seton felt they needed the longer rest. So the days went by with the semi-weekly variations for special catechism study on Wednesdays, and confessions and Benediction on Sundays. In the pleasant weather the girls who liked to go to the mountain chapel could attend a second Mass and catch a fleeting glimpse of the male population of Mount St. Mary’s College. On these favored Sundays the visitors from the Valley often carried cold ham and cream pies to eat in the scenic grotto above the chapel where they went to say “the Divine office.”

The discipline was just as efficiently planned. Teachers at St. Joseph’s were expected to keep daily notes on the degrees of achievement of their pupils. “Bad points” had to be remedied by “two good points” by the end of each month. Mother Seton tried to visit each class at least once a month to
inspect the mode of teaching employed, to witness improvement or neglect, and to make suggestions. Medals and certificates were used as rewards for application, and the six girls who excelled received extra bonuses in the form of books. No talents were to be “esteemed without behavior,” but the means of insuring good behavior did not exclude humiliation, for the educational theory of John Dubois held that “as there are tempers incapable of emulation and which cannot be drawn to virtue and study by any other motive than fear,” a list of miscreants was made up every Tuesday to be read publicly in the refectory. “In no case will the child be suffered to have his own way,” was Dubois’ admonition to the teachers.\textsuperscript{35}

The social life at St. Joseph’s School in the second decade of the nineteenth century was a far cry from the frenzied activity of a twentieth-century progressive school. The sisters in charge of pupils in that day were called “Angels” and were guardians in a very literal sense. One role, for example, stated:

The children shall be divided by Mother into several bands or societies which will be particularly recommended to the care of one of the School Sisters or Angels, who will pay a particular attention to their behaviour during recreation, keep their company when they can, and endeavor to be their guides and counsellors.\textsuperscript{36}

Only the most prudent and discreet girls were allowed to congregate or “form parties” without such supervision. No girls were allowed to go to town except on recreation days or with Mother Seton’s permission in the case of “some unavoidable or unforeseen necessity.” Whenever the girls went out walking, they were attended by two “Angels,” one walking ahead to prevent too fast a pace, the other following behind to round up the stragglers. Girls were expected to go on these expeditions unless excused. The only occasions which permitted a girl’s going without her group were those when her parents or guardians came to take her to dine.\textsuperscript{37}

The rigidity of the rules attracted parents with willful daughters to try the beneficial discipline of the school. But many a girl chose to return to St. Joseph’s of her own volition because of the peace and happiness she experienced there. The contrast between the serenity of the Valley and the clamor of the worldly city was expressed by one former pupil in these words, which in spite of their nineteenth-century flavor, still carry a deep sincerity.
St. Joseph’s the blest abode of innocence and virtue how I Long to see it. How vividly does it differ from this corrupt world...Bad example is so prevalent in the world that it discourages my endeavor to be pious and fervent. The truth of all, my dearest Mother [Seton], told me I learn by experience. How easy it is to be good where we have good examples before us and where every one is inciting us to piety.38

The warm encouragement followed the girls from St. Joseph’s out beyond the White House walls. Mother Seton wrote innumerable letters to her former pupils, helping them adjust to the worldly scene. When one girl returned to Baltimore, Mother Seton wrote:

Try to keep all your intentions to our Lord. When you go to your dearest companions go in His Name and send up the little sign to beg Him to stay with you, even most in your liveliest moments. Dearest Ellen, it will soon become so easy and so sweet, and when death comes, O then the blessed practice will be your great consolation.39

Mother Seton tried to make the girls feel that because they were young and pleasures so dear to them the Lord delighted especially in them, and their sacrifices were particularly pleasing.40 Her own ardent love was a shining example, and the devotion to the sacraments which girls learned at her side often recalled them in later years or in distant places. One girl wrote back to Mother Seton, “What ought I not to do after such an example but I am so weak and so easily diverted from my good resolutions. I have made a great many today, pray for me my own ever dear Mother that I may keep them.”41 Girls who had learned to love the seasons of the liturgical year felt grateful to their zealous instructor. One such girl, Juliana White, wrote on 22 December 1815:

Your Julian often, very often, has thoughts of you during this time of Advent, but more particularly now as it draws near the happy period of Christmas, which brings back to my mind many sweet remembrances. Could I but spend this happy time with you again it would be a happiness that your Julian has not experienced since I last spent it at St. Joseph’s.42
Elizabeth Seton, with her “passion for babies” and her great love for the Blessed Virgin must have made Christmas a very special time for all who ever knew her.\textsuperscript{43} She loved to contemplate Mary, the Mother of God.

How happy the Earth to possess her so long—a secret blessing to the rising Church—the Blessed Trinity could not part so soon with the perfect praise arising from the Earth as long as she remained. How darkened in the sight of angels when she was removed from it!\textsuperscript{44}

How sensitive and poignant was her cry, “Jesus on the Breast of Mary feeding on her milk—how long she must have delayed the weaning of such a Child!!!!”\textsuperscript{45} Herself a mother five times over, Mother Seton possessed so vivid a sense of the humanity of the Holy Family that the girls under her care felt very close to the scenes Mother Seton described.

Mother Seton’s maternal tenderness radiated beyond the meadows of the valley and encompassed the mountain regions as well. For many a homesick boy she filled the place of his absent mother. While her own sons were at Mount St. Mary’s, it was natural for Elizabeth Seton to visit the school, as well as to make the Sunday trips to St. Mary’s Church on the Mountain. Relatives of boys in the school came to consult Mother Seton in several cases. The Chatards of Baltimore recommended their sons to her attention, and Charles, Henry, and William Chatard became as much a part of her concern as were the girls at St. Joseph’s. John Dubois and Simon Bruté wrote detailed reports to the parents, but women like Mme. Chatard preferred a woman’s point of view and wrote frequently for advice about proper clothing and matters of health.\textsuperscript{m} Mme. Chatard was very grateful for Mother Seton’s “bontés pour nos enfants.”\textsuperscript{46}

Another child at Mount St. Mary’s in whom Mother Seton was interested was Charles Grim. This boy’s widowed mother was another New York convert and Elizabeth helped to get the child, who was about thirteen years old, established in the school at Mount St. Mary’s on 19 April 1811. She contributed fifty dollars a year toward his expenses and clothed him; the school furnished his books.\textsuperscript{47} Mother Seton eked the money out of the allowance Antonio Filicchi made for her own sons, and she told him, “Good Mrs. Grim with a whole sweep of children...all have shared his [God’s] bounty from YOUR hands and your blessed Filippo’s.”\textsuperscript{48} Many a boy on the Mountain had reason to write back in later years, “Give my respects to Mother Seton when you see her again; tell her to pray for her son as she kindly used to call me.”\textsuperscript{49} One of these was young Jerome Bonaparte whose

\textsuperscript{m} Mrs. Seton performed similar services for Ellen Wiseman, whose brother Joseph was at the Mountain.

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mother was far away in Paris, and whose father had put both mother and son aside. The lonely little boy and the tender-hearted mother of many became fast friends and just prior to a vacation period Jerome penned this note:

My dear Mother, I am very anxious to get an Agnus Dei before I go home to preserve me in the vacations from the dangers that will surround me. I will keep it as a memorial of kindness and love for your little child who always thinks of you with respect and love and who will think of you with gratitude also, especially if I shall have an Agnus Dei from you as a present.50

Mother Seton replied on the reverse of the request:

Dear Jerome—It is a great pleasure to me to send you the Agnus Dei—I wish I had one handsomely covered—but you will mind only the virtue of the prayers our holy Father has said over it. I earnestly beg Our Lord to preserve in you the graces he has so tenderly bestowed on you. Take care yourself not to lose them. Pray for me and I will for you. Your true friend EAS51

The more tragic events at the boys’ school interested the sisters as well. When John Delaney, a seminarian who died 27 October 1812, and was “the first of the Clergy who died at this place,” was buried, the women went in solemn procession to the funeral. Simon Bruté composed a poem on the occasion of this death.52 When young Picot de Cloriviére [sic, Picot de Boisfeillet] was buried the next May, the challenging words of Bruté at the grave stirred Elizabeth Seton so deeply that she copied the exhortation in her notebook along with other “Dear Remembrances.”53 When Theophilus Cauffman fell on his knife in March 1814 and was mortally wounded, Mother Seton was as horror-stricken as Father Bruté who tended the dying boy. When death came 5 April, Mother Seton wrote a long letter to the bereaved parents, describing the fatherly care of Bruté, the ardor of the boy’s faith, and his dying moments.54 The mother who had suffered so keenly the loss of her own child knew well the words to bring solace to others.

*Agnus Dei* literally means “Lamb of God.” Its usage here refers to a small piece of pure wax, bearing the impress of a lamb supporting the standard of the cross, which was worn devoutly about the neck or suspended in a glass frame from the wall. Ed.

*This is a case of mistaken identity. Rev. Mr. Joseph-Pierre Picot de Limoëlan de Cloriviére (1768-1826) escorted the sisters back to Saint Joseph’s from Baltimore when Cecilia Seton died in 1810. Melville based her conclusion on Bruté and Elizabeth Seton who erroneously had written Picot de Cloriviére when referring to Joseph Picot de Boisfeillet, who was buried 23 May 1813 at Mount St. Mary’s. Perhaps both men went by the name “Picot.” Ed.*
Mother Seton also followed the spiritual events at Mount St. Mary’s with eager appreciation. Young Michael de Burgo Egan\(^p\) wrote to his uncle, the Bishop of Philadelphia, in 1813 that he was preparing to make his first communion. “The day appointed is the second of February,” he explained.\(^{55}\) The thoughts which that day inspired in Mother Seton are recorded in her notebook under the notation, “the 1st communion at St. Mary’s Mount, 2 Feb. 1813.”

Piety must be habitual, not by fits. It must be persevering because temptations continue all our life...and perseverance alone obtains the crown...Its means are the presence of God, good reading, prayer, the Sacraments...good resolutions often renewed, [and] the remembrance of our last ends. Its advantages [are] habits which secure our predestination, making our life equal, peaceable and consoling, leading to the heavenly crown where our perseverance will be eternal!!\(^{56}\)

The young lad making his first communion and the older woman renewing her intentions that February morning became close friends in the days that followed. When Elizabeth Seton lay desperately ill in the days before her death, Michael de Burgo Egan was in her thoughts.\(^{57}\) After her death, Egan wrote to her own son, “I often imagine I see...our Dearest Mother looking down on us here below and afflicted when we do wrong— rejoicing when we do well and praying hard for us to obtain a seat (in heaven).”\(^{58}\) Five years after Elizabeth Seton was buried in the “little wood,” Egan, as a young priest, was still dwelling thoughtfully on the inspiration she had furnished. Reminiscing with Catherine Josephine Seton, he said:

I remember Dearest Mother’s repeated expressions of Faith and Love. How well she possessed them. Faith enlightened her, love inflamed her and the more I reflect on it, the more I perceive how justly she insisted on those two great virtues... I cannot help thinking it is harder for a priest to get to heaven than anyone else—though indeed surrounded and loaded with graces—yet beset with dangers and overwhelmed with difficulties also...Would to our Lord I had some small share of that holy love which inflamed the heart of our Dear Mother—Love would sweeten everything. Love would triumph over everything.\(^{59}\)

\(^p\) His sister was Sister Mary Teresa Egan, who entered the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s 27 November 1816, always had delicate health and died the next year on 20 June.
The respect and love Elizabeth Seton felt for the priestly vocation were so pronounced that she often yearned to be a man, to serve her God the better. The failure of her two sons to find vocations in the priesthood was one of the great sorrows of her life. But many vocations were fostered by her burning love, and bishops valued her intercession above their own. One of her finest letters was addressed to a young man who was uncertain about his future. Its message is still clear.

My dear Smith

My Heart has gone home with you as a parent follows the child she loves when she sees it treading in uncertain steps, doubtful whether it will find the right way—To be engaged in the Service of our Adored Creator, to be set apart to that service, and thereby separated from all the contentions the doubts and temptations that surround the man whose lot is cast in the busy scene of the world, is in itself a sufficient plea on the side which I wish you to engage—but to be placed as a representative of God Himself—to plead for Him, to be allowed the exalted privilege of serving Him continually, to be His instrument in calling Home the wandering soul and sustaining, comforting, and blessing your fellow creatures are considerations which bear no comparison with any other and should lead you to consider the very possibility of your realizing the hope they present as the most precious and valued gift life can afford...

—A man may be a very good man in the pursuit of any other profession—but certainly that of a clergyman is the easiest, surest road to God, and the first, the highest, and the most blessed that can adorn a human being

The Peace of God is the full, the sure, and certain compensation for any discouragements or obstacles the world may throw in the way—and His Guidance and favor till death. In death and after death the reward and crown of Him who faithfully serves him.60

Being a mother of many children, both of the flesh and of the spirit, was not, however, all pleasure and satisfaction. The girls who attended St. Joseph’s Free School and Academy were sometimes ungrateful, sometimes
immune to the salutary spirit of the institution. Mother Seton once reported to Archbishop Carroll of two girls’ whom he had placed there:

A[nn] finds school rules, on the minutia of which general order must depend, extremely hard since her return, and poor Lotte went away very much troubled about her situation with us, wishing openly [that neither] she nor Ann had never entered the house—so much in this world for the sad trials we have had from them—but such foolish words will not prevent our continual care to fulfill the Providence of God to them.61

On other occasions girls were sent home when they failed to comply with the spirit of the school. Mother Seton wrote to Ambrose Maréchal in 1817 that Mary Kelly, a child whom he had sent on trial, “being found after the expiration of three months candidateship not suited to the object of our institution,” would be sent home to Baltimore.62 In the case of Mary Diana Harper the school was more patient and tried for several years to “check the little proud heart which becomes really insupportable to her teachers.” Mother Seton wrote to the father, Robert Goodloe Harper, that she was obliged to complain of Mary Diana’s bad example and the necessity of excluding her if she did not mend her ways.63 Mary Diana stayed on at St. Joseph’s until the following year when her parents took her abroad where the twelve-year old girl died at France in 1818.

If the girl who failed to respond to the efforts the teachers put forth was a relative of a friend, Mother Seton felt doubly sorrowful. Eleanor (Ellen) Hickey, the younger sister of Rev. John Francis Hickey,1 seemed to be one of those “who will not turn to God but through severe chastisement,” and Mother Seton wrote the priest, “We must look up—His ways are all beautiful, he will hear our prayers by and by and in the meantime I trust she will get the good and purifying whippings which alone will awaken her.”64 When it became obvious that Eleanor was not suited to the life in the valley, Elizabeth confessed to Hickey that after writing the “hard word” to William Hickey, the girl’s guardian in Washington, her heart could not send the letter. She begged

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61 Ann and Charlotte (Lotte) “Nelson,” protégées of John Carroll, were in reality Ann and Charlotte Smith who had been sent by Bishop Egan of Philadelphia to Baltimore to compensate for unfortunate family circumstances. 
62 Mary Diana Harper was still at St. Joseph’s on 16 February 1815. Her brother told John Dubois “She died as ought one that had been brought up at St. Joseph’s.”
63 Eleanor Hickey (1801–1858) and her younger sister Johanna (?–1872) joined the Sisters of Charity at Emmitsburg in 1830 (Sister William Anna) and 1831 (Sister Mary) respectively. In 1846 both became founding members of the Sisters of Charity of New York.
64 Rev. John Francis Hickey, (1789–1869) was the first seminarian ordained to the Catholic priesthood at Mount St. Mary’s and the first American member of the Sulpicians of Baltimore. He became the fifth superior general (1830–1841), Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s in Emmitsburg.
the priest to tell his brother that Eleanor was on her way home. “I never had a heavier heart for a child that left us than for Ellen,” she said sadly, “but who knows how it may turn to the GREATER GLORY of our only beloved.”

Again, it was occasionally a parent or guardian who brought grief to Mother Seton. Sometimes a cruel letter charging her with “the wages of iniquity” caused Mother Seton’s heart to sicken. It was not unusual at one time for non-Catholic girls to be placed in St. Joseph’s school. Mother Seton wrote Simon Bruté, in May 1815, “We have eleven Protestant girls entered since you are gone—one today from a heart-broken father who begged she might receive the strongest religious impressions.” But the difference in religious opinion sometimes led to criticism from the child’s family. One older sister wrote Mother Seton of her distress that a younger girl attending St. Joseph’s wished to become a Catholic. “I am fully aware,” she wrote, “that any objection I may make to Caroline’s becoming a Catholic will naturally be attributed to usual illiberality and prejudice of Protestants but would it not be strange...with a person professing and venerating the creed of their own church to advise or even permit a child while under their influence to embrace any other.” Mother Seton understood the scruples of this sincere woman. She had asked permission for the younger girl’s baptism, and she now felt impelled to answer with care. She began by pointing out that they were agreed in the beginning that religion was “our best hope for the reformation” of the young girl’s character. Then she proceeded to explain what becoming a Catholic had meant in her own life, the loss of friends, the bitterness of separation, the financial insecurity for her children. “You will forgive me the tedious explanation,” she pleaded. But the details were necessary to her defense of her position in regard to the Catholic religion, that she “could never teach or advise any other to one committed to my charge.” Eventually the difficulties caused by such cases led Dubois to advise Mother Seton:

I think it is time for Dear Mother and her Council to determine upon the propriety of admitting Protestant children to St. Joseph’s. Experience, I think, proves that their admission becomes very injurious to piety in general amongst the girls without providing any advantage to the Protestant.

The Society of St. Sulpice in Baltimore had recently forbidden Dubois to admit Protestants to his school at Mount Saint Mary’s, and Dubois felt the council of the community in the valley should take similar action.

* There is no evidence to show whether Caroline was baptized or not.
But the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s did not bar non-Catholics,\textsuperscript{71} then or later.\textsuperscript{71} Mother Seton became quite accustomed to parental discontent in one form or another. She explained philosophically to Father Bruté, when he took over his duties as president of St. Mary’s College in Baltimore:

I will tell you what I know American parents to be most difficult—In hearing the faults of their children—in twenty instances, when you see the faults are not to be immediately corrected by the parents but rather by good advice and education, it is best not to speak of them to Papa and Mamma, who feel as if you reflected on their very self and while to you it will be, “Yes Sir I know, I perceive”—in the heart they think it is not so much, and they will soften and excuse the child they condemn to us and our efforts afterwards avail very little—so that [is] a big point.\textsuperscript{72}

Nothing altered her deep contentment in her work, and Mother Seton wrote happily to Antonio Filicchi in 1818, “All I know is about my little world in St. Joseph’s House, of about 100 precious souls, which we cherish and prepare in silence and under a rather common look of no pretension, to go over our cities like a good leaven.”\textsuperscript{73} The reality confirmed Bishop Jean Cheverus’s forecast to Mrs. Seton that “such an establishment would be a public benefit for Religion, and...a real advantage to yourself & amiable family.”\textsuperscript{74} Likewise true to Pierre Babade’s prophecy, Elizabeth Seton had become, indeed, “the mother of many daughters.”\textsuperscript{75}

But before leaving the subject of Mother Seton’s educational work, some cognizance must be taken of the claims of previous writers that Elizabeth Seton was the “foundress of the parochial school system”\textsuperscript{76} in the United States.\textsuperscript{76} It is not the writer’s purpose to renew any controversy over definitions of the parochial system, or the extent to which schools in a period after Mother Seton’s death reproduced her educational establishment. It is worthwhile, nevertheless, to have as clear a picture as archival research can depict of the exact nature of the so called “free school” of Mother

\textsuperscript{71} Protestants could be admitted as boarders, if they conformed to all the duties of the institution except frequentation of the sacraments. The number was not limited to any specific figure, but the council reserved the right to see their admission did not become detrimental to the institution.

\textsuperscript{72} [Parochial schools got their start later in the century, circa 1852, through John Neumann (1811–1860), fourth bishop of Philadelphia, who was a strong advocate of parochial schools. Neumann participated in the deliberations of the First Plenary Council of Baltimore (1852) and served on the Committee for the Education of Catholic Youth. The First Plenary Council of Baltimore urged the establishment of parish free schools and pledged to finance them with Church revenue. Bishop Neumann of Philadelphia served on the Committee for the Education of Catholic Youth during the Council. Building on the educational foundations in existence, the bishops adopted an expanded vision of Catholic education and decreed the creation of the parochial school system in the United States. Ed.]
Seton’s own time. Although the sources are very scanty, certain facts can be established. It is with these facts alone that the biographer is concerned.

At the very outset there can be no question that a day school [for girls from poor families] was part of Mother Seton’s intention very early in her stay at Emmitsburg. Even before the community left the stone farmhouse, Mrs. Seton had broached the subject to her superiors in Baltimore, for Louis Dubourg, in his letter of 28 December 1809, said plainly, “Far from objecting to your plan of opening a day school at St. Joseph’s, Mr. David and myself beg it should be done without loss of time, if as we hear from Mr. Caff the house is dry enough.”77 The community records of the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s simply verify a sentence in Mother Rose’s journal stating that on 22 February 1810, three pupils were received. If these children were from the surrounding country, then this was the official beginning of the day school. Since the five children from Frederick who came in May were designated as “boarders,” it seems reasonable to assume that the first three were not. Mother Seton herself usually referred to her pupils in round numbers “including boarders,” so that it is virtually impossible to determine how many day students there were at a given time.78 It is clear, however, that country children, as Mother Seton called them, or externs, as Father Bruté termed them, were part of the establishment from 1810 until Elizabeth Seton died.79

The pupils were apparently all accorded the same treatment in the very beginning, but soon some distinction seems to have been deemed necessary, for Rev. Charles Ignatius White states that “when the orphans educated there were formed into a class separate from the boarders they were at first pained by the humiliation which this distinction seemed to imply.”80 This class is referred to in the council book of the community as “St. Joseph’s class” as distinct from the boarders. For example, when the question arose as to which group should receive pupils who paid “limited sums,” the boarders or St. Joseph’s class, the council decided that students who paid less than full tuition should not be included among the boarders.81 It is quite clear that “St. Joseph’s class” was never entirely free to all comers. The Bruté report of 1813 shows that externs paid eleven dollars each. The council book which covers the years from 1813 to 1821 gives substantial proof that although orphans were received and were charged nothing, other girls making partial payments were also part of St. Joseph’s class.82 In one case a girl was refused admittance to St. Joseph’s class because her relatives were quite able to pay for her.83 No child admitted at the community’s expense could be younger than ten years.84 The students in St. Joseph’s class...
class, after 1816, were never to be allowed to enter the classes held for the boarders; but if they were talented, they were given opportunities for private instruction. After they reached the age of sixteen, if desirable, the poor children could be hired by the school and work for wages under the direction of the sisters. The policy of the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s at this time seems to emerge rather clearly as one based on a sliding scale or the ability-to-pay theory. Wealthier girls went among the boarders and were entitled to an education suited to their social and economic status. Those girls who could pay less went into St. Joseph’s class to be taught simultaneously with the free students. Even the poorest were encouraged to be economically independent by the promise of work when they were able to engage in it. When times were bad and funds were low, non-paying pupils were refused.85 When times were more prosperous the number “at our expense” increased.

By the summer of 1819, the number of the day students had grown so large that the council considered erecting a new building, but economic conditions argued against it.86 The following spring, however, found the council agreed to build “two rooms below and one above for the convenience of day students and workmen.”87 That May contracts for the building were discussed, and 30 June 1820, the contract was given to Edward Yates for a one-story brick building without a cellar, and consisting of rooms twenty feet square. Later the contract was modified to include a second story. This building proved faulty and on 29 December 1820, it was agreed not to pay any more to the builder until these defects should be remedied. Since Mother Seton died within a week’s time, it is quite probable that in her lifetime the day-school remained in the White House in which she lived.88

There is no question that both the boarders and St. Joseph’s pupils received their education in a religious atmosphere and under teachers who were primarily sisters, or priests from Mount Saint Mary’s. The matter of religious auspices or the parochial nature of the school is not quite so easy to dispose of if arbitrary definitions are to be accepted. There is no doubt that John Dubois, the superior from 1811 to 1826, was a supervisory head of the school in Mother Seton’s time, but the exact degree of responsibility for the school of Dubois to the bishop and to the parish scarcely parallel the modern situation. Dubois was a member of the Society of St. Sulpice during this period, and as such was directly responsible to his superior in Baltimore.

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85 A few lay professors taught extra subjects, and several [alumnæ] eventually became sisters in the community. [Louisa Daddisman (1797–1889), of Frederick County, Maryland, attended St. Joseph’s Academy in 1810 and entered the Sisters of Charity two years later. At the time of her death she was the last surviving companion of Mother Seton. Ed.]
for his office as superior of the women at St. Joseph’s. Archbishop Carroll, it may be recalled, had told Mrs. Seton quite plainly in November 1809:

You know, ever honoured and most esteemed Madame, that after the choice made by yourselves, your chief benefactors, of living under the protection of the priests of St. Sulpice, I surrendered, as much as a Bishop can surrender, your government into their hands.89

While Carroll lived, he maintained a policy of general non-intervention in the relations between the Sulpicians and the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s. Archbishop Neale’s reign was too brief to indicate any noticeable change from this policy. When Ambrose Maréchal, S.S., became third Archbishop of Baltimore in 1817, the bonds between Sulpicians in Baltimore and Dubois in Emmitsburg were strengthened, but the choice of superior for the women still remained in the hands of the society and not the episcopacy.

To further complicate this subject of the relation of bishop-to-pastor-to-school, the situation in Emmitsburg during these years was scarcely analogous to that of modern parish administration. The priests in that area in reality administered two parishes, a seminary and college, and the sisterhood simultaneously. The work was for the most part done by Sulpicians and most of the time there were two or three regular priests to handle the three congregations: “the Mountain Congregation,” St. Joseph’s Church in the village, and the sisters and students at St. Joseph’s house. During Mother Seton’s life these priests included John Dubois, Simon Bruté, Charles Duhamel, John Hickey, and Samuel Cooper.90 The exact limitations of physical boundaries and spiritual responsibility were never clearly delineated in Mother Seton’s time; and the difficulties of clarifying these boundaries formed the subject of many a letter from Dubois to his successive bishops.9

Writing to Ambrose Maréchal in the summer of 1817, Dubois explained that under Carroll the two parishes of the Mountain and Emmitsburg were not divided because Carroll had feared the “inconveniences.” Archbishop Leonard Neale, S.J., (1746–1817), successor to Carroll, had told Dubois he wished to continue things as Carroll had left them. Now Dubois wanted from Maréchal some hint of what to expect.91 Maréchal, after due consideration, seems to have favored a separation of the two parishes with the sisters to be served by the priest of the Emmitsburg parish. Dubois, when replying to a letter from his archbishop in February the following year, pointed out that

9 The premier See of Baltimore was led by the following ordinaries during the lifetime of Elizabeth Bayley Seton: John Carroll (bishop, 1789-1808; archbishop, 1808-1815); Leonard Neale (1815-1817); Ambrose Maréchal (1817-1828).
the sisters’ confessors were usually appointed by the superior and that this priest should be one of the directors of Mount Saint Mary’s. The alternative of having a separate priest for the sisters living on community property was not to be thought of. The sisters had no place to lodge him. Even if they found a willing one, he would be too old to undergo the strenuous life of the Emmitsburg mission. And finally, Dubois stated:

Mrs. Seton knows so well the impossibility and the inconvenience, perhaps even scandals, which would result, from the admission of a priest there, that she has declared that she will never consent to such an arrangement, at least in the present situation of the community.92

Meanwhile the whole issue of suppressing the seminary of Mount St. Mary’s rose to complicate the subject of jurisdiction. The priests on the Mountain became directly responsible to St. Sulpice in Paris in 1818, while remaining parish priests under the general superintendence of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.93 John Hickey was recalled to Baltimore and the burden of the parishes fell upon Dubois and Bruté, who made the choice of remaining with the Mountain seminary.9 In spite of their admiration for each other, the two priests found the joint responsibility onerous enough to produce mild bickering over their respective duties. Each wrote to Archbishop Maréchal in plaintive tones, discussing, the difficulties involved in reaching a just distribution of work and responsibility.94 It would be very difficult to pronounce finally as to which parish or priest was directly responsible to the archbishop for Mother Seton’s day school.

One last characteristic of the day school is worthy of note. In regard to the pupils there is no evidence anywhere to suggest that boys were ever members of St. Joseph’s class or of the boarding school. Furthermore, the charter of incorporation stated clearly that the purposes of the sisters included “Education of young females.”95 None of the characteristics of Mother Seton’s day school, however, are incompatible with the concept of a parochial school as it later emerged from the nineteenth-century conciliar legislation.96 [In the post-Vatican II and post-millennium era sponsorship, governance, financial support, and Catholic Identity have emerged as significant issues. Ed.] Certainly the Emmitsburg school of today, Mother

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9 John Dubois protested the action taken by St. Sulpice in Baltimore and the recall of Father John Hickey. Bruté decided to stay on with Dubois. In 1826 Mount St. Mary’s ceased to have any connection with the Sulpicians, either in America or France.
Seton School, is the direct descendant of “St. Joseph’s class” through a line of continuous existence. Only the location of the building has changed.

In the last analysis, it is quite unimportant what slogans or appellations are associated with Mother Seton’s name. All can agree that she made an invaluable contribution to nineteenth-century education, a contribution which was in accordance with American traditions of the highest rank. Her work was begun under unusual circumstances of disorganization, economic duress, and geographic handicaps. It was located in an area which represented the westward progress of seaboard culture to northwest Central Maryland. It faced the hazards of wartime economy and endured. It linked those “indispensable supports,” religion and morality, to a respect for the inherent love for independence and self-sufficiency that characterized American life everywhere. It was Christian charity in the broadest sense applied to the American scene. Whatever she may have founded, Elizabeth Seton in her lifetime represented the peculiar American genius for adaptation within the bounds of dignity and discipline, but transcending distinctions of class and discrimination. In her modest, unassuming way this little gentlewoman who was born two years before the Republic, who had been nurtured in one of its early capitals, the cosmopolitan port of New York, had followed the seat of government southward, this Elizabeth Bayley Seton, American woman nineteenth-century style, personified the trend of her day. Not every pioneer woman was the muscular, sun-bonneted amazon that some later-day artists like to re-create. There were these others, some in widow’s caps, clasping a catechism instead of a rifle, giving soft instruction in the Romance languages of the old world, counting out the delicate minuets at the piano, cherishing and preparing “under a common look of no pretension” these fine young American girls who would go out “over our cities like a good leaven.”

Quietly living out her days in her valley in the Catoctin spur of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Elizabeth Seton described her days for her older friend, Eliza Sadler, in these words:

Your matron step and quiet look and independent intention are now precisely the rule of my life...Able to fulfill so many more duties in the little service of our little world contained in St. Joseph’s, everything seems to wear a new color, and life has a charm for me which I often wondered [what] you found in it. So far from the world, surrounded by all the

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Mother Seton School is sponsored by the Daughters of Charity and traces its roots to the foundation of St. Joseph’s Free School and Academy (1810–1890) through St. Joseph College High School (1890–1945), St. Joseph High School (1945–1982), St. Euphemia’s School (1878–1956), and St. Anthony’s School (1903–1956). The latter two schools merged to form Mother Seton School in 1956.
sweets of the country and retirement, an old woman to whom the nearly 100 souls in our house look for their daily solace of a Mother’s smile, incapacitated by my want of capacity to manage and bustle from taking any other part, but to try and keep off the evil spirits which always would steal in such a multitude, and turn everything to the account of peace and order—writing and translating, my ever darling pastime now as ever, with the knitting always on the same table with the pen, to show the visitors they are not unwelcome.97

Peace, order, and industry, how these ideals tempered life at St. Joseph’s. Peace which comes with patience, that “salt of the prophet Elezius [sic, Elisha],bb which purifies the polluted waters of our passions, and sweetens all the bitterness of life.” Order, “the thread of Ariadne which guides our actions in the great labyrinth of time.”98 Industry, the lesson of Mother Seton herself whom Simon Bruté liked to call “little woman of the fields,” whose hands indoors and out were never idle. This was the educational formula of Mother Seton’s school.

bb Cf. 2Kings 2:19-22.
CHAPTER 11. ANGELS IN THE VALLEY

Notes

1A-6.3a, Mother Rose White’s Journal, CW, 2:718.
3 John David to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 28 December 1809, AMSV, I, 23.
4 A-6.3a, Mother Rose White’s Journal, CW, 2:726. The sisters moved on 20 February, and the new pupils were received 22 February 1810.
5 6.47, Elizabeth Seton to John Carroll, 15 June 1810, CW, 2:142.
6 6.45, Elizabeth Seton to Catherine Dupleix, 4 June 1810, CW, 2:136.
7 Ibid., 138.
8 6.70, Elizabeth Seton to Catherine Dupleix, 4 February 1811, CW, 2:172-173.
9 6.54, Elizabeth Seton to Eliza Sadler, 3 August [?1810], CW, 2:154.
10 John Dubois to Carroll, Emmitsburg, 11 January 1813, AAB, AASMSU, 3-F-13.
11 6.46, Elizabeth Seton to Matthias O’Conway, 5 June [1811], CW, 2:140.
12 Simon Bruté Report for Ambrose Maréchal, Section XXIV, “Sisterhood,” AMSMU. See Bills of Mary Godefroy, Cecilia Thompson, etc., 20 October 1812. Record of Joanna Fennell, November 1814-1816, ASJPH RB #70, Records of the Pupils of Saint Joseph’s Academy and College, 1809-1936.
13 Ledger, 1813, ASJPH 3-3-7:1, 55. One of these pupils was Eliza Boarman.
14 John Dubois to John M. Tessier, Emmitsburg, 18 January 1816, ASMS.
15 Louis Dubourg to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 30 December 1809, AMSV, I, 11.
16 John Carroll to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 12 July 1815, AMSV. See a letter asking for contributions to St. Joseph’s, 6.93, Elizabeth Seton to Robert Goodloe Harper, 28 December 1811, CW, 2:206.
17 Jean Cheverus to Elizabeth Seton, Boston, 20 January 1812, AMSV, I, 3.
18 John Grassi to Simon Bruté, Georgetown, 27 October 1812, UNDA II-3-n.
20 Maximilian Godefroy to John Dubois, Baltimore, 8 August 1813, AMSMUU. Godefroy was one of the great multitude impressed by Mother Seton’s humility and he added a postscript to this letter

21 John Carroll to Elizabeth Seton, Rock Creek, 5 September 1813, UNDA.
22 7.29, Elizabeth Seton to Marie-Françoise Chatard, n.d., *CW*, 2:400; 7.149, *CW*, 2:538. There is correspondence between Mrs. Chatard and Mother Seton preserved at ASJPH.
23 7.87, Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, 1 June 1817, *CW*, 2:479.
25 John David to Elizabeth Seton, 28 December 1809, ASJPH 1-3-3-2, (S-1). Copy; the original is in AMSV.
26 12.8, Regulations for the School of St. Joseph’s, *CW*, 3b:124.
27 12.9, “Distribution of the external employment at St. Joseph’s,” *CW*, 3b:127. This schedule is in the handwriting of John Dubois, with corrections added by Elizabeth Seton.
29 12.19, List of Expenses, 1810, *CW*, 3b:162. The account shows the purchase of six “practical reflections” and six *Following of Christ*, which were probably for community use, since the other books were purchased in amounts varying between two and three dozen. [See Appendix B-2, Book Chart, Catholic Period, 1805-1821), 616. *A Brief Method of Meditation* (Practical Reflections) appears on page 632. Ed.]
34 6.41, Elizabeth Seton to Eliza Sadler, 27 May 1810, *CW*, 2:131-132. See also John Dubois to Sisters of Charity, “Regulations for the School at St. Joseph’s,” c.1811, ASJPH 1-3-3-5:10; “Rules for the School in the Winter,” c.1811, ASJPH 1-3-3-5:11; “Sundays & Holydays [School],” c.1811, ASJPH 1-3-3-5:12.
35 John Dubois to Sisters of Charity, “Schools at St. Joseph’s,” c.1811, ASJPH 1-3-3-5:9; “Sundays & Holydays [School],” c.1811, ASJPH 1-3-3-5:12; “School,” c.1811, ASJPH 1-3-3-5:13. These items are rules given by John Dubois to the sisterhood.
36 John Dubois to Sisters of Charity, “Schools,” c.1811, ASJPH 1-3-3-5:13.
37 John Dubois to Sisters of Charity, “Sundays & Holydays [School],” c.1811, ASJPH 1-3-3-5:12.
38 “Cos” to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 25 July 1814, ASJPH 1-3-3-2:88. It was not possible for the present writer [Melville] to identify this pupil, except to state that she came from Baltimore. See A-12.18, St. Joseph’s Academy and Free School Roster (1809-1821), CW, 3b:565. Catherine and Eliza Coskery (Cosskery) are listed on page 567 but it is not known if their home was in Baltimore. Ed.
39 Ellen Wiseman to Elizabeth Seton, 14 October 1815, ASJPH 1-3-3-12: B5.
40 Ellen Wiseman to Elizabeth Seton, 12 August 1813, ASJPH 1-3-3-12: B4.
41 Charlotte Smith to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 23 March 1812, ASJPH 1-3-3-3:73.
42 Juliana White to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 22 December 1815, ASJPH 1-3-3-3:77.
43 7.84, Elizabeth Seton to Julia Scott, 10 April 1817, CW, 2:476. This letter uses the phrase “passion for babies.”
45 Ibid.
46 Mme. Chatard [Marie-Francoise-A. Buisson] to Elizabeth Seton, ASJPH 1-3-3-4:76-85. These letters range from March 1811, through December 1816. Ellen Wiseman to Elizabeth Seton, 6 April 1817, ASJPH 1-3-3-12:9.
47 John Dubois to person unknown, Emmitsburg, 23 November 1812, ASMSU. Mount St. Mary’s record of entrance of students.
48 6.167, Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, 1 July 1814, CW, 2:277.
49 William Gillespie to John Hickey, Brownsville, 21 July 1817, ASMS.
50 Jerome N. Bonaparte to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, 21 June [no year], ASJPH 1-3-3-4:100.
51 7.30, Elizabeth Seton to Jerome Bonaparte, [June 1816], CW, 2:401.
52 Scrapbook, AMSMU. A printed account of the funeral of John Delaney taken from a letter written from Emmitsburg, 12 November 1812. See Bruté Papers, at AMSMU.
53 11.9, “Departed St. Teresa’s day,” CW, 3b:13. A copy of the sermon in Bruté’s hand is at AMSMU, Bruté Papers, 23 May 1813. See also 10.4 “Dear Remembrances,” CW, 3a:510-23. [These documents confuse Joseph Picot de Boisfeillet, who was buried 23 May 1813, with Rev. Mr. Joseph Joseph-Pierre Picot de Limoëlan de Cloriviére. Ed]
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54 Bruté Papers, including an undated letter of Mrs. Seton to Mr. Cauffman, AMSMU.
55 Michael de Burgo Egan to Michael Egan, Emmitsburg, 25 January 1813, UNDA.
56 11.9, “Departed St. Teresa’s Day,” CW, 3b:12.
57 Michael de Burgo Egan to Catherine Josephine Seton, Emmitsburg, 3 January 1824, Robert Seton Collection, UNDA. Egan wrote, “Oh how much I feel myself bound to pray for her who told me that when she thought she was giving the last sigh, she had me on her heart. I cannot forget those words.”
58 Michael de Burgo Egan to William Seton, Emmitsburg, 19 June 1822, Robert Seton Collection, UNDA.
59 Michael de Burgo Egan to Catherine Josephine Seton, Emmitsburg, 6 January 1826, Robert Seton Collection, UNDA.
60 7.304, Draft of Elizabeth Seton to Mr. (?) Smith, n.d., CW, 2:695.
62 7.115, Elizabeth Seton to Ambrose Maréchal, September 1817, CW, 2:505.
64 7.204, Elizabeth Seton to John Hickey, 19 February 1819, CW, 2:603. The original is in AASUS, AASMSU, RG 1, Box 14. This was a postscript added by Mrs. Seton to a letter from Eleanor Hickey to John Hickey.
65 7.215, Elizabeth Seton to John Hickey, [June 1819], CW, 615.
66 6.209, Elizabeth Seton to John Carroll, 9 October 1815, CW, 2:348.
68 Ann C. Tilghman to Elizabeth Seton, St. Michael’s, Talbot County, MD, 1 January 1820, ASJPH 1-3-3-7:84.
70 John Dubois to Elizabeth Seton, n.d., AMSV, I, 25.
71 Council Minutes, Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s, May 1816, ASJPH 3-3-5, 14.
73 7.175, Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, 8 August 1818, CW, 2:573. For other details of Mother Seton’s educational work and influence, see AASMSU William J. Fletcher, “Mother Elizabeth Seton, Educator and Foundress of the American Catholic Parochial School,” an unpublished dissertation, Baltimore, St. Mary’s Seminary, 1940; C.

74 Jean Cheverus to Elizabeth Ann Seton, Boston, 12 May 1808, ASJPH 1-3-3-1:9.

75 5.10, Elizabeth Seton to Cecilia Seton, Baltimore, 6 October 1808, *CW*, 2:34.


77 Louis Dubourg to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 28 December 1809, AMSV, I, 10.


79 Since the Bruté report of December 1813, and Mother Seton’s letter to Antonio Filicchi in 1817 are central points within the period (1809-1821) of Mother Seton’s life in Emmitsburg, it seems valid to accept them as strong proof that the “poor country children” were a minority group. [See Council Minutes, Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s, (1812-1829), February 1816, ASJPH 3-2-5, 9. See A-12.18, St. Joseph’s Academy and Free School Roster (1809-1821), *CW*, 3b:565, n.1. See also Simon Bruté Report for Ambrose Maréchal, AMSMUU, and 7.87 Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, 1 June 1817, *CW*, 2:479.]

80 White, 376. White gives no archival references to support this statement but he is a reliable biographer in most other instances.

81 Council Minutes, Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s, 18 February 1816, ASJPH 3-3-5.

82 Ibid., 14 August 1814; 24 April 1814; June 1818; 20 October 1819; 24 April 1820.

83 Ibid., 24 April 1820.

84 Ibid., 18 February 1816.

Ibid., 1 June 1819.

Ibid., 17 May 1820.

Rev. John Dubois to Elizabeth Seton, 26 May 1820, ASJPH 1-3-3-5:33; Rev. John Dubois and Edward Yates, builder, articles of agreement for erection of the Free School building at St. Joseph’s, 30 June 1820, ASJPH 1-3-3-5:34; Jacob Marshall and Sebastian Adelsperger, stop payment to Edward Yates for Free School building at St. Joseph’s, 29 December 1820, ASJPH 1-3-3-5:35; Edward Yates, receipt in full, 7 November 1821, for work on Free School building at St. Joseph’s ASJPH 1-3-3-5:36.

John Carroll to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 9 November 1809, AMSV, I, 15.

Although Cooper was not a Sulpician, he had received some of his priestly formation at their seminary in Baltimore.

John Dubois to Ambrose Maréchal, Emmitsburg, 8 July 1817, AAB, AASMSU, 15-T-21.


Charter of Incorporation, 18 January 1817, ASJPH 3-1-3. See A-7.73a, Act of Incorporation of the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s in Maryland, CW, 2:758.


7.72, Elizabeth Seton to Eliza Sadler, n.d., CW, 2:463.

CHAPTER 12

THE ANGEL OF THE MOUNTAIN

In February 1818, Simon Gabriel Bruté returned to Mount St. Mary’s to assist John Dubois and to fill the place made vacant by the death of Charles Duhamel. Bruté’s return to Emmitsburg brought Mother Seton the spiritual direction which was to guide her over her last years, and which in earlier days had so noticeably increased her fervor. Probably no other man knew the secret of her inner forces so well. Simon Bruté first saw Elizabeth Seton in the summer of 1811. She was one of the people who tried to help the young French émigré priest learn to pronounce English. Another woman, Mrs. Charlotte Melmoth, a also helped Simon Bruté with English pronunciation at Emmitsburg in 1811. It was at this time that they first shared an enjoyment of *The Following of Christ*, “especially the Chapter Twenty-first, Third Book.” Although Bruté’s stay in Emmitsburg was very brief, that summer marked the beginning of a lasting friendship.

Simon Gabriel Bruté de Rémur was born in France, at Rennes in Brittany, 20 March 1779, four and a half years after Elizabeth Ann Bayley was born in New York. He graduated from the Sorbonne as a physician prior to studying for the priesthood. He sailed from France in June 1810, as part of the group which brought the *Common Rules of the Daughters of Charity* crafted by St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac to Mother Seton’s community, and Bruté later referred to them, the modification for America, as “the constitutions to which I had my original humble enough part,” although there is no evidence that Bruté came to Emmitsburg in August of that year when the *Common Rules* of the Daughters of Charity were brought to St. Joseph’s by Flaget. The young priest was kept very busy

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1 Mrs. Melmoth was an actress from New York City. Matthew O’Brien mentioned her in a letter to Bishop Carroll as a convert, an actress from England and Ireland, who wanted to adopt a penitential life. Mrs. Melmoth was in Baltimore at the same time as Mrs. Seton, and impressed Pierre Babade and Matthias O’Conway as “noblehearted” and of laudable intentions. Mrs. Melmoth followed Mrs. Seton to Emmitsburg and made the first retreat with the sisters in August 1809. John Dubois in November of that year wrote her, “How much do I rejoice to see you persevering in the idea you had of settling amongst us.” Mrs. Melmoth did settle in the village of Emmitsburg for awhile, for Mrs. Seton mentioned her in October 1810, as “an old lady in the village near us.” Simon Bruté said “I saw her in his sanctuary in the Sisterhood and in Emmitsburg,” in August 1811. Not long after this Mrs. Melmoth decided to return to New York, and was hurt in a stage coach accident en route. She was first reported dead, but later found to be only injured. She returned to the New York stage, where her last engagement began on 12 August 1812. Her age compelled her to retire and she conducted a “seminary” on Washington Street in New York until her death in September 1823.

2 [Community records state that a young French cleric destined in the designs to be the future expounder of those Rules, Rev. Simon Gabriel Bruté, accompanied Flaget to the United States in 1810. Chronological Table (1766–1891), entry of 10 August 1810, ASJPH 7-13, Ed.]
in Baltimore that fall, especially after Louis Dubourg left for Martinique, and Father Bruté was called upon to assume his parochial work. The first positive proof of Bruté’s presence in northwestern Maryland is an entry in Tessier’s journal for 18 July 1811, which says simply, “Bruté left for Emmitsburg,” and Mother Seton’s letter to Archbishop Carroll mentioning Mr. Bruté’s zeal and “purity of heart.”

The brief sojourn near St. Joseph’s community that first summer produced a lively friendship between the priest who spoke such broken English and the mother of the community who used rather fluent French; Father Bruté said to Mother Seton gratefully:

You whom I like to call a mother here, as I call one in France... you have so well helped me better to know, yes better still, a priest of His as I was, to know my happiness and desire, but alas, [I] so vainly desire to impart the same to others to know and love and say Jesus...

His advice to her from the very beginning was, “Make all happy, open-hearted supernaturally minded about you.” These two desires were the keynotes of their friendship: Bruté’s desire to become a better priest, and Mother Seton’s striving to share her ardor more fully with those about her. Each tried to temper the excesses of the other; each tried to bring new impetus to the other’s zeal. Bruté supplied the exuberant mysticism that Elizabeth Seton and her children had loved in Pierre Babade in Baltimore. Mother Seton furnished the practical common sense which Simon Bruté was to emulate and to apply to his problems in later life as a college president and as the first Bishop of Vincennes, Indiana. (His diocese became the archdiocese of Indianapolis.)

From the moment of their meeting their dependence upon each other grew rapidly. Whether Simon Bruté was at the Mountain, in Baltimore, or in far-away France, Mother Seton could rely upon his interest in her concerns, feel comfort in his almost instantaneous grasp of her difficulties, and find fresh inspiration in his words, whether spoken or written. In spite of the busy life in Baltimore his first winter after meeting Elizabeth Seton, Bruté found time to keep informed of her sorrow as Anna Maria Seton lay dying. He was pleased to learn of the young woman’s reception into the community. He managed to be present the last day Anna Maria lived.

He told her he would say Mass for her [and] suggested many things for the moment to which she replied with all her soul, tho’ a little before he came she had appeared to
wander a little...when Mr. Bruté left her for the altar she called after him, earnestly repeated [that] she prays for all, all her dear Sisters, [the Mount] Seminary, and all as he had suggested.10

In the barren months that followed the death of Mother Seton’s first-born child, Bruté exercised all his ingenuity to bring her out of this terrible trial possessed of complete resignation, but without any impairment of her joyous service. He skillfully used her yearning to dwell on Anna Maria’s virtues, on her last moments, to lead the mother to a greater concept of eternity, while maintaining a strong emphasis on her duty to her living children. He asked for a copy of Anna’s rules for her “decury children,” her letter to her first communion class, and an account of Anna Maria’s last words written after extreme unction.11 He wrote for Mother Seton the answer to her morbid thoughts over the snake on Anna Maria’s grave, creating an imaginary soliloquy by “Anna to her mother praying at her grave.”12 He drew delicate sketches showing Anna’s angelic form hovering near the altar to share her mother’s communion joys.13 Writing on the anniversary of Anna’s death he elaborated:

This very Anniversary day I came to our dear dearest dying and heard her be blessed! I read ...an interpretation of St. Paul’s that the women must veil their head in the holy temple for Angel’s sake...It was the opinion of the first Christians as well as ours, that the angels of heaven fill the holy temple when we are there at prayer, but most particularly during the holy sacrifice.14

Bruté went on to quote St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory, and other writers on the subject, concluding, “O mother that for our tears! What would be this earth if faith [were] everywhere in its splendor and charity in its fervour? What? Anticipated heaven. Thou truly blessed, Annina, Annina, thou, thou!!!! Eternity.”15

Under Bruté’s direction Mother Seton came to feel about her daughter as she had felt before about her other lost friends and relatives. She had been able to say of Harriet and Cecilia Seton, “I do not miss them half as much as you would think as according to my mad notions it seems as if they are always around me.”16 Now Bruté taught her again to see the graveyard as a “lovely little wood, happy little corner of earth.”17 He made her feel again the continuity of the present with eternity. He wrote:

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1 A decury was a small group of ten pupils at Saint Joseph’s Academy, based on the Ursuline model of education.
Eternity—Eternity
Annina is there—what thinks she of this little nothing of our Earth? She remembers only the little valley, her mother, her sisters, her decury children, and cries with a voice to be everywhere understood in the room, the choir, the little wood.

Eternity, Eternity
To love and serve Him only
To be loved and eternally served and praised in heaven.

O mother, how much good [there is] to do in your blessed family; what a celestial commission entrusted to you, mother of Daughters of Charity to whom also so much is [given] to do for God and souls through this short life.\(^{18}\)

Elizabeth Seton, whom Dubois had found it difficult to assist, exclaimed to Bruté:

Blessed G\(^d\)— I am so in love now with rules that I see the bit of the bridle all gold, or the reins all of silk—you know my sincerity, since with the little attraction to your Brother’s [Dubois] government, I ever eagerly seek the grace [to bear the] little cords He entangles me with.\(^{19}\)

During this first summer after Anna Maria Seton died Simon Bruté was engaged in missionary work on the eastern shore of Maryland. He told Benedict Flaget:

I am trying to learn practically my English. I have said Mass and preached, bad preaching as it may be, in six different places. This must force this dreadful English into my backward head or I must renounce forever to know it ...On Monday I will be making English and blunders on my Eastern Shore.\(^{20}\)

When Bruté wrote to a friend in August he explained, “I am occasionally in this congregation, St. Joseph, Talbot County, Maryland, at M. Monnelly.”\(^{21}\) He also served at Queenstown in Queen Ann County on the eastern shore during his two months of missionary activity.\(^{22}\) He felt discouraged at the lack of success he believed his efforts produced and wrote in French to Mother Seton:

\(^{4}\) Elizabeth Seton frequently referred to Simon Bruté as simply “G” for Gabriel.
I spoke again to a congregation so rough, so sad, so boisterous that you would have suffered, Mother of charity, to have heard me. I no longer know in these too fleeting visits how to take a tone simple, sweet, tranquil, and instructive, which alone, I feel, will produce solid fruits.23

Simon Bruté was soon to receive cheering news. On 28 August 1812, Louis Dubourg wrote him from Conewago, Pennsylvania:

I have written to Mr. Tessier that after new reflections I agree that they send you to the Mountain ...You see now if I love you, assuredly nothing could afford you greater pleasure. I would advise you to come back as soon as possible and I am convinced that the thing in question would pass in the Council without much opposition.24

In September Bruté said happily, “My prospect is, as soon as returned to Baltimore, to go and live with Mr. Dubois at Mount St. Mary’s. I have already received my mission for that purpose.” On 28 September 1812, Father Bruté went to Emmitsburg.25 One of his numerous chronological notes says, “I was sent to assist Mr. Dubois. Said Mass for the Sisters Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.”26 He arrived in time to witness the last meeting between Archbishop Carroll and Mother Seton on the occasion of the confirmation at the sisterhood.27 It was Bruté who gave the funeral sermon when Sister Maria Murphy Burke died on 15 October 1812. Linking her name with Anna Maria’s he urged, “Let us rather from this amiable view of death, of Eternity, of thoughts of heaven; turn towards this life in which we are detained.” Elizabeth Seton was deeply moved by his exhortation:

Let us be courageous and accept with love and Zeal the Will and order of Providence. Let us not refuse to live. The longest life is nothing to Eternity. The most generous Saints desired to remain.28

When Sister Ellen Thompson died the next month, Bruté exclaimed to Mother Seton:

O happy mother, already three of your dear daughters in heaven, not counting the two first, the tender sisters3 whom your example has already led there. Give, oh give, thanks and redouble your zeal to follow these heavenly souls!29

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3 The three “daughters” were Anna Maria Seton, Maria Murphy Burke, Ellen Thompson; the two “sisters” were Harriet and Cecilia Seton.
In the days that followed, Father Bruté applied again and again to Mother Seton for assistance in developing his lectures for his classes and his sermons in English. In the beginning he sent to the Valley the barest outlines of ideas, leaving spaces in between, asking his friend to “blot out and write down better, principally when this poor French-English will be quite unamendable.” He enlisted her aid for translations of the works of Jean-Jacques Olier, the founder of the Society of St. Sulpice. Again when some passage of a letter from a friend seemed to him particularly effective he would ask for several copies:

I wish sent it to my dear Bishop Flaget who knows him well and Mr. David who can do so much good with it to his young men. One to Mr. Dubourg would surely be most acceptable.

Mother Seton became one of his closest of collaborators. One retreat sermon of Bruté’s, on the subject of the last judgment, shows how much the secretary contributed to the author. Bruté wrote the scattered phrases; Mother Seton wrote the completed meditation. The close union and understanding between the two, priest and mother, is vividly emphasized when this sermon is studied. With what facility did Mother Seton take the cryptic half-sentences and develop a powerful, dramatic sermon. The thoughts of Bruté in the words of Mother Seton emerged in phrases like these:

Cover yourself in prayers and communions with His Precious Blood, as the little birds when they see the rising storm and coming rain they dip into the ocean ...and as the saint who said strike, strike indeed, but where can you find a place, my Jesus, not covered with Your own blood.

Mother Seton’s help was soon in evidence. A young student at Mount St. Mary’s College wrote to his friend in Baltimore, “Mr. Bruté preaches nearly every Sunday and likewise explains catechism at the time of vespers. I prefer his preaching to Mr. Dubois but not his catechism, he speaks English plainly in preaching.”

Elizabeth Seton not only served as a temporary amanuensis, but she was for the young priest a kind of depository for his troubles and woes. Bruté had mercurial emotions and a sensitive disposition. His fervor was often followed by severe discouragement, and like many young priests, he was sometimes impatient and irritated by his older, more deliberate confreres. Mother Seton once commented to Father Bruté:
All is a true mystery to me in your disposition—much greater mystery than any of Faith. A man of your particular principle on paper, who has evidently the most dear and special graces, not given drop by drop as to other souls, but poured over your head in a daily torrent—Yet, I seldom see you but in such wild enthusiasms of your own particular impression of the moment that you can see nothing, hear nothing, but that one object, or else quite reserved hurt and anxious because you have not been consulted in things which spoke for themselves.35

John Dubois, who really loved Simon Bruté and preferred him to any other assistant, was often driven to the limit of his patience. He once wrote dolefully to his bishop:

You know Mr. Bruté; his zeal knows no bounds. If he no longer has Emmitsburg [parish] he will pass all his Sundays at the Sisters, instead of coming to my aid the days I am overburdened...During the week he wants to help me—but in foolish ways—he will go ten times to visit my sick without necessity. He even goes to visit those who are not sick, with the best of intentions, but without doing any good by it—interrupting my simple but regular program, fatiguing the horses unnecessarily, mixing everything up.36

His sudden changes of mood Dubois labeled “coup de tête.” Mother Seton was called upon to equalize the differences in these two temperaments, sometimes a delicate affair. On his morning visits to St. Joseph’s, Bruté might burst out in a rapid recitation of his difficulties. Later, when he was back at the college he would regret his outpourings, and on one such occasion he implored:

My mother, what shall I do? If I pour [out] all that comes to my heart in regret of so often adding pains to your pains, afflictions to tribulations, I will appear to you in the other excess. Alas! How bad the bad excesses of this morning—the good ones would pour now I say—but all excess must displease a pious heart and soul of sense [such] as yours. Forgive, then, only and if this is tedious being so often requested, remember our Lord tells you to forgive by the seventy times over.37
Simon Bruté more than atoned for any burdens he added to Mother Seton’s already heavy load. He became a real friend and brother to her children. He shared the happy preparations for Rebecca’s first communion, “her happy Christmas.” To her mother he exclaimed:

Oh, for her, for innocent children bread of Angels! For us under the heat and weight of the day the food of travellers “cibus viatorum.” But a moment I will, you will, receive it ...Glad expectation, morning bliss, hasten happy hour.38

Later, when Bruté was on the high seas, journeying to France, Rebecca Seton said longingly to her mother, “If he was but my real brother as well as my spiritual one!” And her mother, in relating the remark to the priest, added:

Poor darling, she does not know that is the only real...Oh yes, the only real—our spiritual world how real and unchangeable its dear dependencies—no dividing oceans, variations of time and the painful etceteras.39

Bruté felt deeply his responsibility toward Mother Seton’s spiritual progress. Calling her his “child of heaven, of Eternity” he said:

Charged with your soul, at least, with all the Lord disposes in his Providence for it, in my quality of spiritual father, my mother, my dear mother, what am I doing to help you sanctify yourself with a purity, and fervor always increasing? But what can I do? What better than [recommend] simplicity, peace, abandon, daily fidelity, upright intentions, all and entirely each one of them directed to God alone.40

To Mother Seton he sent countless effusions from his “lonely corner” on the Mountain. His love for the woody valleys, the gardens, the river gave him a text: “None wd. please if enjoyed against that ever blessed Will” of God.41 When the beauty of the scriptures seemed overpowering, he wrote to Mother Seton his reflections, apologizing for “these rhapsodies,” yet wanting her to share his love for the “admirable old Latin.”

Sometimes I could almost weep all of a sudden with what only one of the most harmonious, tender, sorrowful words does to me—this Latin version, my old friend, these twenty years past. Oh flumina Babylonis. O Sion. O Eternity! Annina!42
While he was at Mount St. Mary’s these first two years, Bruté was in charge of the library. His constant contact with books enabled him to recommend to Elizabeth reading which would extend her spiritual horizon. Once, recommending opuscula of St. Francis of Assisi, he said, “I would it were rather in English for you—it is the very suavity andunction of St. Francis de Sales, with something of a higher heaven.” He pointed out particular letters of St. Teresa of Avila which applied to problems Mother Seton faced. Another time, after reading Father Berthier, Bruté sent the book to her saying, “Some lines in his reflections have so moved my heart that I desire you read over, and find the same places.” The gratitude Elizabeth Seton felt for Bruté’s thoughtfulness was boundless, and after he had sailed for France she wrote:

I read again the hundred direction papers of the two years past with yet greater delight than the first reading and gather new courage and stronger Faith as when they were first applied—the grace as present as when they came fresh from the hot press of the burning heart—now cold perhaps—and surely far and far away—.

Early in November 1814, Simon Bruté sought permission from his superiors to go abroad. His reasons were varied, including a desire to see his mother, a wish to get his own library, and the intention “to produce good results for the Church in America.” When it was decided that William Seton should accompany Father Bruté, Elizabeth Seton wrote a letter to Antonio Filicchi introducing the priest as:

a most distinguished Soul as you will know in a moment...

There is no possible recommendation I could give him which would not be ratified by our Revd. Abp. [Carroll] and the Blessed [Jean] Cheverus by whom he is most highly loved and esteemed, our Archbishop indeed values him as an inestimable treasure in the church and you will find if you have the happiness to know him yourself that his

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1 Opuscula are minor or short works of literature. Bruté may be referring to the opuscule by St. Francis of Assisi, “Letter to All the Faithful,” which contains this sentence: “Those who will not taste how sweet the Lord is and who love darkness rather than the light, not wishing to fulfill the commandments of God are cursed: of them it is said by the prophet: ‘They are cursed who decline from Thy commandments.’” See “Letter to All the Faithful,” The Writings of St. Francis of Assisi, tr. By Paschal Robinson, [1905], at sacred-texts.com

2 Guillaume François Berthier, the Jesuit author, wrote five volumes of “Réflexions Spirituelles” during his exile from France.

3 Many of these “direction papers” could be read only with the proper scriptural passage at hand. Bruté often made only the chapter and verse reference with brief comments.

4 Bruté may have wished to explain the challenges and opportunities at Mount St. Mary’s to the Sulpician superiors in Paris and attempt to persuade them to reconsider their decision about withdrawal of Sulpician sponsorship.
uncommon PIETY, learning and excellent qualifications (and even his family since you Europeans take that in account), entitle him to the distinguished friendship and regard of M. Filippo [Filicchi] and yourself. He has adopted the great interests of my William so generously, that with yourselves, I consider him our truest friend in God—what more can your little Sister say to interest you—judge for yourself—

While Simon Bruté was absent in 1815, Mother Seton kept a journal-letter of the life that went on without him around Emmitsburg; she referred once to her eye having fallen “on an old black stump in the corner, and a big inward sigh to the live coal far away which used to give it the blaze in a moment,” the tone of these entries is joyous and humorous as often as it is serious. She described for him the difficulties young Father Hickey experienced in trying to fill Bruté’s place; she referred glowingly to the communion of “our thirty white caps;” she spoke of her grief that her sons were not priests; she wrote with elation of Mr. Tessier’s pride in Bruté, adding, “Tu es sacerdos in Eternum—there the soul’s grand triumph, all else but smoke.”

Rev. John Francis Hickey, who had been ordained in September 1814, was sent by Tessier to take “the various parts which were performed by Mr. Bruté.” His superior had admonished the young priest to pattern himself after John Dubois. “You cannot have a better model for piety, assiduity, constant application, zeal, vigilance, charity, patience, and all the virtues,” said Tessier. “I hope one day to see all these virtues shine in you.”

But young Hickey had difficulty both in emulating Dubois and in replacing Bruté. He was embarrassed on his trips to the sisterhood, and when Mother Seton waited on him, standing by his table on the mornings after he offered Mass for the community, he acted as if it were “the plague of his life.” Mother Seton tried to relieve his awkwardness, “to show him what he is in the eyes of my Faith,” as she expressed it, and give him “all the little cares we could.”

When Hickey gave a careless sermon one Sunday to a crowded church containing many strangers, Mother Seton did not hesitate to take him to task. When he explained that he had not taken much trouble with it, Mother Seton exclaimed, “O Sir, that awakens my anger! Do you remember a priest holds the honor of God on his lips. Do you not trouble you[rself] to spread his fire he wishes so much enkindled. If you will not study and prepare when young, what when you are old? There is a Mother’s lesson!”
But Hickey did not improve immediately. Not long after this occasion Mother Seton wrote to Simon Bruté:

No one would believe anyone so drole in hesitations and unconnected—trying to say how the *flesh* was our *enemy* he would detail the senses—O and coming to the smell, after hems and haws and stops, folding his arms—*the smell my brethren distracts us*!! I pray for him more than for your crazy English and scold him with all the authority of an *Ancient*.

John Hickey was, indeed, a poor substitute, and although Dubois admitted him to be “pure as an angel” he found him without judgment or intelligence. He said sadly to Mother Seton, “Not one soul, Mother, on whom I can rely to see a class well kept much less to give a *spiritual* instruction.” Father Duhamel, the other priest who served the area, was in very poor health that year, and it made Elizabeth Seton’s heart ache to see Dubois’ predicament. Often the over-worked priest could not eat his meals because his head ached so from lack of sleep. Once he said laughingly to her, “You see my hair cut? I met a barber in the woods and I sat down on a stone and let him do it there as there is no time at home.” Mother Seton told Father Bruté that remonstrating with Dubois was as futile as speaking to the moon. His affairs seemed all “comprised in his *cautious, equal, daily grace* almost, miraculous.”

The simple fact was that Simon Bruté in his zeal had done more than one man could have been expected to do. Father Duhamel, in his droll way of speaking, told Mother Seton:

Poor [John] Hickey got a great compliment this morning—an Irishman told him the three priests at the Mountain all put together is not worth one Bruté...They tell me to my face, now [that] Bruté’s gone, all is gone. Some say they will not go to confession till he comes again—poor, dear good Bruté, did you see his letter, ma’m, *to everybody, to save souls*? ...He could tend six congregations at least. He can do what would kill ten men, if you only give him bread, and 2 or 3 horses to ride to death, one after the other.

Simon Bruté left a void which only his return could fill.

Although Elizabeth Seton began expecting Father Bruté’s return in August, a letter from Tessier dated 6 August 1815, told Dubois and Hickey that Bruté could not hope to leave for Lyons and Bordeaux for several
weeks. Tessier added that there was very little hope that Bruté would find any priests to bring to America, even though he was doing all he could “to bring succour for the church of the United States.” By the middle of October Bruté was ready to leave France, and by 28 November 1815 he had arrived in Baltimore bringing one young Irish student to enter the Baltimore seminary. When Mother Seton learned of his return she wrote:

You would never believe, dear G., the good Your return does to this soul of your little Mother—to see you again tearing yourself from all that is dearest—giving up again the full liberty you lawfully and justly possessed—exchanging for a truly heavy chain, and the endless labyrinth of discussions and wearisome details to give the softest expressions—in proportion as my PRIDE in you increases, my own littleness and empty sacrifice to our Beloved is more evident, and I am ambitious (indeed G. often with many tears) to get up with you a little by a generous will, and more faithful service in the little I can do—and really take it as my most serious affair to pray well for you, and get prayers from All ...Yes, our dear President, you will, you shall have prayers...Look up confidently. He will not leave you who have left all for him.

Before his installation as president of St. Mary’s in Baltimore, Simon Bruté went to Emmitsburg and “received excellent advice from mother to do good there.” Mother Seton laughingly told her “monsieur le President” that she saw him plunged deep in the labyrinths of science, growing “fat as a Doctor.” Then she added seriously:

Well, at least he will have abundant sacrifice of dearest, choicest consolations. He will act in full opposition to his own choice. His daily bread will be dry and hard. He will be a bond of union and peace to his confreres, a spirit of purest ardent piety to worldlings and an example of cheerful and tender forbearances to his pupils—poor dear G. After a little while of subjection and patience to his wild heart, it shall be set free from the yoke, improved and experienced, to return with new ardor to its more simple and heavenly delights.

But while she offered this sound advice to the young college president, Mother Seton did not try to conceal how heavily the pain of parting from him so soon again bore down upon her heart. She confessed sadly:
A volume would not have been enough to say [about] half the heart that fastens to yours more and more if possible—but with such freedom of the local circumstances or position of the moment, that I shall see you go again, to fulfill your big Presidentship (O bad omen, G, I did not know that tear [in the paper] was there)—Well, I will see you go to do His Will of the present moment with no other signs or desires but for its most full and complete accomplishment.

Your silly little woman in the fields (most happy name and place for her G.) Your little woman, silly of our dear sillyness [and] of prayers and tears, will now hold closer and closer to Him who will do all in you, as He does in my poor little daily part and try always to bring you the...support [of] a Mother’s prayers, her cry to him for your full fidelity.63

So Simon Gabriel Bruté was installed “in the office left vacant by Father Jean-Baptiste Paquiet” on 18 December 1815.64 For a second time he had left his beloved France and his loving mother. For a second time, too, he had left Emmitsburg and the missionary work he preferred. For two years he was to be separated from Mother Seton, but the bond never weakened. Bruté in Baltimore was as devoted to Elizabeth Seton’s interests as he had ever been. He interceded for young Richard Seton so that he might secure “a good situation in Baltimore,”65 and he continued his correspondence with William Seton in Leghorn.66 He tried to draw Mary Bayley Post into the Catholic Church, and wrote with the same intention to Eliza Craig Sadler.67 Although Mother Seton’s concern for Father Bruté’s welfare could take a less demonstrable course, her intercession for his success in spiritual affairs never ceased. When Bruté welcomed a band of thirteen missionaries of the Congregation of the Mission,68 led by Felix de Andreis, C.M., during the summer of 1816, Mother Seton’s joy rivaled that of Bruté and she directed her community to offer their communions and thanksgivings for “the blessed missionaries sent to enlighten our savage land.”68

Earlier that same summer Simon Bruté came to Emmitsburg for a few days.69 He was on one of his typical walking trips and went on into Pennsylvania, writing Mother Seton from Hanover. Mother and the sisters

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1 This group of missionaries bound for the Missouri Territory was the nucleus of the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians) which furnished the priests who served as directors for the Daughters of Charity at Emmitsburg after the Sulpicians concluded arrangements for the union with France of the Sisters of Charity based at Emmitsburg in 1850. [The Sulpicians of Baltimore served as ecclesiastical superiors for the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s from the foundation in 1809 until 1849. For a number of years the Sulpicians had been negotiating with the Congregation of the Mission to assume this responsibility. The Emmitsburg-based community of the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s officially united with the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, based in Paris, on 25 March 1850. Ed.]
“laughed gladly at the thought that like some Ignatius of Loyola or Anthony of Padua” Bruté, too, made “walking journeys with an anticipated agility to be perfected in the high eternal regions.” 70 But the visit from Father Bruté made Elizabeth Seton realize how much he was missed at St. Joseph’s and she wrote wistfully:

If you should...travel back [here] leaving the President’s chair and suite of Apartments it would be most beautiful... that childish—You did not leave All the whole delight of your France and family but to do His only Will...My son—be most careful to find the will, not by the dear coaxing your Mother charged you with, but by a prayer of full confidence such as Your Silly Sinner dares to use.... From the last look out of the gate, I hastened to the dear bench in the choir (where the clay of the so “beautiful feet”k—yet remained and left their full blessing of Peace) to begin this FULL PRAYER...to take Him by storm G.—I will be faithful to it, you know how many times a day and the nights so near him until we know the FINAL word.

...But you know the only Security and heavenly Peace in that point so dear rests all on this essential abandon—so at least you taught me —so understand and honor his grace in your little woman of the fields—but you do so fully— 71

It was while Bruté was president of St. Mary’s College in Baltimore that Elizabeth received the sad news of Philip Filicchi’s death. 1 William Seton had written in August that the elder Filicchi brother was in his death agony, that “the hundreds of poor fed at his hands, the orphans depending on his support, the prisoners relieved by his charity” were already mourning their lost benefactor. 72 When Bruté forwarded this news to Mother Seton in October she replied:

So it must be—Filicchi gone. You will not forget him. If you knew how much I had counted on his life you would laugh at me—But God alone—I am too happy to be forced to have no other refuge. 73

None of the events of 1816 could compare in tragic quality, however, with the rapid decline in young Bec Seton’s hold on life. Four years earlier, when her sister Annina was dying, Rebecca Seton, while

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1 The footprint of Bruté on the floor of the chapel.
1 Philip Filicchi died 22 August 1816.
playing, had slipped and fallen on some ice. In order not to distress others while Anna Maria Seton required so much attention, the child had tried to keep to herself the pain that did not leave her after the mishap. When a definite limp made concealment of the girl’s injury impossible, Mother Seton was relieved to be able to consult her brother-in-law, Dr. Wright Post, who with Mary Bayley Post, was visiting Elizabeth that spring. But Post could give her no encouragement at all, saying that he knew of no remedy for Bec’s condition. It seemed incredible to Elizabeth that Bec could not be aided, and so, when the Catons and Harpers offered to take the little girl to Baltimore that summer, the frantic mother sent the child to Dr. Chatard’s home for observation and consultation. Mrs. Chatard wrote immediately upon the completion of the doctor’s examination that nothing seemed to be broken and that warm baths and “friction” might prove beneficial. So Bec came back to St. Joseph’s to try the baths and rubbing under the direction of “an eminent Physician” at the mountain seminary.

Not long after this Rebecca Seton began to prepare for her first communion. When she could not be with her, her mother sent Bec little notes of love and encouragement such as the following:

With the little pen I answer my dear, every day, dearer little darling. How much I desire she should go and unite still closer to our only Beloved...Make your careful preparation of the purest heart you can bring Him that it may appear to Him like a bright little star at the bottom of a fountain. O My Rebecca! Child of Eternity! Let Peace and love stay with you in your pains and they will lighten and sweeten them all—Be blessed forever, my darling.

On Christmas day, at 6 o’clock in the morning, the child received her first communion. The added grace of the sacrament was sorely needed, for Elizabeth Seton told Julia Scott a month later that “lovely gay little Beck” was entirely lame and never left her mother’s room even with crutches.

All this we take in the course of things from the hand of our dear compassionate Master who no doubt intends to take more care of this darling and bless her more than the rest...she is often in great pain, but goes on at her perpetual delight, the piano, or says very gaily, “Oh this leg will carry me to heaven.”

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76 This may have been Dr. Daniel Moore, who attended St. Joseph’s community until 1820, when his brother Robert succeeded him.
Although Mary Post urged Bec’s coming to New York, neither the child nor her mother wished to be separated. “Death is nothing to this kind of separation,” Mother Seton told Julia. The best way to bear suffering was to share it, and Bec had many friends who were eager to share hers. Mrs. Chatard in Baltimore loved Rebecca Seton as one of her own children and sent letters of encouragement and cheer. Father Babade wrote admiringly that Bec was truly “a child of the Cross.” He corresponded regularly with Bec and talked to her as if she were a mature martyr. He told her to thank God for her fear of death and judgment. “The more we fear here, the less we have to fear there,” he told her. Julia Scott’s financial support was always at hand and she wrote chidingly to Elizabeth, “Hesitate not my friend to receive what God enables me to send you...It is also a debt strictly your due for when I was in distress, were you not my friend and the friend of my little ones?”

The year 1814 passed and Bec showed no improvement. In the warm weather she was sometimes taken to Mount St. Mary’s in a little cart pulled by a faithful Negro, Joe. The year Simon Bruté was abroad it was decided that Bec should go to Philadelphia to consult Dr. Philip Syng Physick. Julia Scott came herself to Emmitsburg to get her, but Mother Seton had planned to have her daughter stay with the Sisters of Charity in Philadelphia and Julia arrived just too late. It was the first and last hour these two old friends would spend together in all the years Mother Seton had lived away from New York; the joy it gave can only be imagined. When Julia got back to Philadelphia, Bec was comfortably settled at the orphan asylum on Spruce and Sixth Streets where Sister Rose White would do “all a nurse can do.” Elizabeth wrote Eliza Sadler that if an operation proved necessary she would go herself to Philadelphia. Meanwhile the mother advised her daughter to “be affectionate and grateful to Aunt [Julia] Scott, but try to go as little as possible.” All Bec’s affairs were to be referred to Sister Rose. But in spite of Mother Seton’s desire not to impose on Julia’s generosity more than was necessary, that warm-hearted woman came to take Rebecca riding to see the museum, the Bank of Pennsylvania, the water works, and

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8 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, n.d., ASJPH 1-3-3-13:20, 19, When Joe died, Simon Bruté wrote of him, “Simple, honest, faithful, zealous, humble, affectionate friend of God and Man...May my death be as holy, my judgment as easy.” Joe was the man who also dug the graves at St. Joseph’s and Mount Saint Mary’s. Bruté, who loved to commemorate the dead, asked Mother Seton to “write some notes for Joe—a few little anecdotes of his waggoning, carrying Bec, his Christmas, Epiphanies, little books, so great affection and respect to the Sisterhood, digging graves, etc.”

9 Philip Syng Physick (1768–1837) had studied with Edward Jenner at William Hunter’s school in London. He specialized in new methods of treating hip-joint diseases, being the first to prefer manipulation to traction. Rebecca Seton could not have been sent to a better qualified specialist. Physick may be considered the father of American surgery. He later became interested in Roman Catholicism but there is no evidence to show that he ever converted.

10 Julia Scott also paid the medical bills for Rebecca Seton.

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other institutions of which Philadelphia was so proud. Bec met Julia’s son, John, who was running for the state assembly, and the young Seton girl was delighted when John Scott was elected. Yet, being her mother’s daughter, it was the trip to the poorhouse with Sister Rose that she liked best.88

In spite of the care and attention she received on all sides, Bec’s hopes for relief from her pain were doomed to disappointment.89 The doctors who consulted with Dr. Physick could offer no solution and Bec told her mother, “My tumor is getting very soft and my hip is nearly even with my other.”90 By the beginning of November 1815 the girl was home again and Elizabeth wrote to Julia:

Little wild crazy darling, it would take me a month to hear half her perpetual conversation—imagine our meeting after all dangers past as she says, for the overset of the stage [coach] between New Castle and Frenchtown had given such a shake to her nerves that she thought everything dangerous afterwards, though she was so happy to meet with a most easy private carriage from Baltimore home and had every possible attention—her fatigue from the journey makes it impossible to judge of the effect of what has been done for her by Doctor Physick.91

Rebecca was in reality much weaker after the Philadelphia trip, and it was in the midst of her own discouragement that Mother Seton learned of Archbishop Carroll’s last illness. She confessed to Ellen Wiseman that “Our blessed Archbishop’s situation, tho! we must give and resign him, presses hard on me as well as on thousands—harder on me than you would imagine.”92 John Carroll’s death on 3 December 1815, deprived Elizabeth Seton of a friend who had been a constant if unobtrusive support during the hardest decade of her life, and she was very grateful to a former pupil who wrote:

I suppose you have heard all about it by Mr. Bruté who could tell you more about him than I could...I [had] seen him [Carroll] a few days before he died and received his last Benediction. He spoke for about five minutes to me. What I understood was beautiful. He was laid out in the church for two days...We had prayers every evening for the space of nine days. It was the most solemn scene I ever witnessed. The church is still in mourning and looks lost without him and for two weeks it was distressing to go near the church.93
And so it was that Mother Seton and Bec faced 1816 with Father Bruté gone from Emmitsburg and Archbishop Carroll gone from the world. Some small relief came when Bec’s tumor broke in March, but it was only a temporary respite. Jean Cheverus told Bruté that his thoughts were constantly with “the venerable Mother and her dear little martyr.” Father Moranvillé consoled Mother Seton with the words, “The glory above must be proportioned to our sufferings here.” On Pentecost Sunday, Mother Seton and Rebecca received communion together, and the mother wrote in her prayerbook a supplication for them both:

O my Lord Jesus Christ who was born for me in a stable, lived for me a life of pain and sorrow, and died for me upon a cross, say for me in the hour of my death, “Father, Forgive,” and to Thy Mother, “behold thy Child.” Say to me thyself “this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.” O my Saviour, leave me not, forsake me not. I thirst for Thee and long for the Fountain of Living Water—my days pass quickly along, Soon all will be CONSUMMATED for me. “Into thy hands I commend my spirit now and forever.” Amen.

Mother Seton sent her other daughter, Catherine Josephine (Kit), off to Baltimore to visit, promising to send word if Bec grew worse. “Do not take the example of my weakness,” she admonished. “Keep your dear heart quiet and trust all to our Lord.” Bec was now able to get relief only by sitting up all night in a chair and even this became unbearable before long. Mother Seton held the girl in her arms, or across her knees for long hours, and she confessed to Kit in Baltimore, “We wet each other pretty often with tears.” When she wrote to William Seton in September that Bec was much worse, she said, “There are moments of life when resignation and courage are scarcely to be thought an exertion and this is one with us.” It seemed quite obvious that Mother Seton was “going to send another saint to heaven,” as Cheverus put it.

Simon Bruté never decreased his love and spiritual solace to both mother and daughter during this ordeal. He wrote consoling letters to the suffering Bec, comparing her sleepless nights to the “standing or sitting watch as the knights of old on the eve they were to be knighted.”

Let the storms roar round the walls and grates of this transitory, hard lazaretto of life; let suffering cruel and unrelenting bid you stand and watch when the smallest bird enjoys his rest; let, let let! The soul still knows how to cheer up, seeing and

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8 Catherine Josephine Seton visited at the home of Luke Tiernan whose daughter Ann was her school friend. 328
feeling her God, her Father, and Almighty Lover in all. Ah

Yes! If I know your faith, and your love, my Bec, they will
be as unrelenting and pressing as the sufferings can be, and
more.101

He asked her to pray for his retreat, feeling the exquisite efficacy
of her sighs, her tears.102 All her suffering was his because Mother Seton
kept him constantly informed of Bec’s decline, writing from their “sea of
sorrows.” To Father Bruté the mother reported humbly:

Poor darling...she told me as I knelt by her “ah, dearest
Mother, I now hardly dare tell God I love Him, I prove it
so badly—sometimes not even that I desire to love Him for
you know very well that what I desire very much, I can soon
enough show it and it seems like a bold falsehood to say, and
not do anything to prove it. Indeed I think Our Lord sent me
this sickness for my neglect of my little practices of piety
since the retreat”...dear, simple heart these her exact words
with such pure looks of sincere meaning—Oh My God how
piercing to my cold, dead heart so truly without proof or
effect.103

Bec’s love for Father Bruté was equal to his and she insisted on
having his picture “no where but opposite my eyes at the foot of my bed.”104
Her joy in seeing him in October, when he brought Dr. Chatard from
Baltimore, was not even slightly dimmed by the doctor’s pronouncement
which confirmed Elizabeth’s fear that “sweet Bec must go.”105 Simon Bruté
was scarcely back in Baltimore when he received the fated letter from John
Dubois and the message, “Our angel died this morning a little before four o’clock.” Dubois said Rebecca had preserved a very lively faith in her last
moments, and when he asked Bruté to have the Sulpicians offer Mass for
the dear child of Elizabeth Seton, he wrote:

The Mother is a miracle of divine favor. Night and day by
the child, her health has not appeared to suffer. She held the
child in her arms without dropping a tear all the time of her
agony and even eight minutes after she had died. Mulierem
fortem.106

Mother Seton had learned the bitter-sweet act of resignation well.
Breaking the news to her son William, she said:
It would be too selfish in us to have wished her inexpressible sufferings prolonged, and her secure bliss deferred for our longer possession...though in her I have lost the little friend of my heart who read every pain or joy of it.\textsuperscript{107}

This time when “the rattling earth fell” on her darling, “laid so low aside Annina almost touching her coffin which could plainly be seen,” Elizabeth Seton “could think of nothing but Te Deum...her heart high above—a hymn to the holy Spirit returning.”\textsuperscript{108} This time she remained willingly behind in the “snug little nest with a window looking direct on the little woods where my darlings sleep,” telling Julia “it keeps up my heart to look over twenty times a day, first thing in the morning and last at night and think no more pain now—and up, up, up the beautiful joyous Souls.”\textsuperscript{109} Bec was in her heart as much as Annina had ever been. As before, Mother Seton had kept a lengthy journal of Bec’s last days; as before she shared these thoughts with her close friends.\textsuperscript{110} But this time Elizabeth was sharing in pleasure, not in pain. She wrote in her prayerbook:

\begin{quote}
My God and my all—my Soul, oh if you can make the purchase of so infinite a good so immense an inheritance for the smallest trifle—and what but a trifle is your best services to God—our Saviour calls them merits—that is he covers them with his own merits—you think them Sacrifices—look at the Sacrifice of Calvary and compare yours with it—you think life long and tedious—look at the Eternity of bliss to repay it. Your sufferings press hard—but look at your sins. My God and my all—Save—Save, that I may return you an eternity of gratitude and praise...Afflictions are the steps to heaven.\textsuperscript{111}
\end{quote}

Without loss of time, and in spite of her lameness contracted during the nine weeks of supporting Bec,\textsuperscript{1} Mother Seton plunged into the work of the school and community.\textsuperscript{112} To Father Bruté she said gratefully:

Well, at least my blessed Father you are acquitted, and all that the kindest best invention of the most compassionate heart could do has been done by you to carry me thro’ this hard moment which is past and gone as easily as if our High Comforter had spread his soft wings over every fiber—I have not done as much community work of hearing, seeing,

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\textsuperscript{1} Mother Seton often ate her meals with one hand behind Bec’s pillow or supporting her on her knees. She seems to have developed a “contraction of the sinew” or inflamed tendons. This lameness persisted into the summer of 1817.
and speaking, in the last 6 months as this day with a heart “still as a calm at sea.”

Elizabeth Seton’s letter to Boston announcing the death of her youngest daughter just missed Bishop Cheverus, who had started southward to confer the pallium on Archbishop Neale at Georgetown. Jean Cheverus arrived in Baltimore from Philadelphia on 13 November 1816 and he made a retreat there before proceeding to Georgetown, where on Sunday, the Feast of John of the Cross, he invested the archbishop with the insignia of his office. It was not until he returned to Baltimore that Cheverus learned of Rebecca Seton’s death. By this time he was busy conferring major and minor orders at St. Mary’s Seminary, and making plans to officiate at the solemn anniversary service for the “lamented and venerable” John Carroll. Busy as he was, the Bishop of Boston wrote Mother Seton his congratulations that “angelical Rebecca has fled into the bosom of her heavenly parent.” He recalled with pleasure his visit of six years ago, and said he hoped, in spite of his full schedule, to get to Emmitsburg on this trip. He confided to Mother Seton Archbishop Neale’s suggestion that he accept the position as his coadjutor for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. “Pray to our Lord,” he begged her, “to look down on this Diocese and to preserve it and myself from what is intended. The very idea is more than I can bear.”

Bruté wrote to Mother Seton describing his impressions of the sermon Bishop Cheverus had given that 2 December in Baltimore in these words:

All hearts still moved by the good de Cheverus. Nothing, my Mother, could express to you what he said. You have had the pleasure of hearing him, you know his manner, so mild, so sensible, and the subject! The worthy archbishop would have been charmed himself, and I could see him stretched out at the bottom of his tomb, listening with pleasure and smiling at his second successor; for it appears that it shall be so. He will surely be coadjutor and surely one cannot hear it without desiring it.

Although Father Bruté was disappointed in his desire to see Jean Cheverus come to Baltimore permanently, Mother Seton was gratified to have Cheverus visit once more in the Valley. Father Moranvillé wrote

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1 Father Matignon relayed the news to Cheverus at Baltimore. His own letter to Mother Seton contained the interesting news that Mrs. John Curzon Seton, the second wife of Elizabeth Seton’s brother-in-law, had been baptized and confirmed on All Saints’ Day in Boston. John Curzon was married twice. See Appendix A. Bayley-Seton Genealogy.

2 Archbishop Neale urged the appointment of Cheverus as assistant to himself but Cheverus refused and remained in Boston until he returned to France in 1823.
her as Cheverus left Baltimore, “The amiable and universally beloved Bishop of Boston goes to visit you and your family.... an angel in your holy retirement.” Bruté notified Mother Seton and John Dubois simultaneously of the prospective visit:

Bishop Cheverus is going Friday afternoon [in order] to be Saturday afternoon at the Mountain and Valley—Sunday to give confirmation at the Sisterhood....Spare his fatigues for he has almost as bad a cold as our venerable archbishop, when he was there. Sunday evening he comes back to Uniontown [Pennsylvania], being obliged to leave Baltimore Tuesday, every moment being strictly calculated, Philadelphia, New York, till Boston before Christmas.

And so Jean Cheverus came in Advent to see again his valiant friend. He found her thin and haggard, “an old worn out thing whose first quality and strength could scarcely be believed,” as Mother Seton liked to express it; but the courage the bishop saw shining in her still beautiful, dark eyes was immeasurably greater than ever before. It was the last time he ever saw her, but he came away with a renewed admiration for the “excellent Sisters, their happy and edifying pupils, the Mother with her children in heaven and on earth.” He told Mother Seton that the seventh and eighth of December would always be “treasured up in the memory and affections” of his heart. He remarked to Bruté later how much he had wished he could have Mother Seton and her Sisters of Charity for Boston. The thought of Elizabeth was never absent in the years that followed. Cheverus told Bruté, “I can never think of the Mountain nor the Valley without a thrilling heart.” And the last letter Mother Seton ever received from her old friend contained the warm words, “You are every day with me before the Lord and you know how much I love you in the bowels of Jesus Christ.”

Not long after the Bishop of Boston left Emmitsburg Mother Seton lost one of her most patient and humble sisters. Mme. Guérin, called Sister Madeleine, died on 20 December 1816, “a death as sweet as that of Rebecca.” John Dubois, who described the scene for Bruté, said that when the crucifix was presented to her,

She appeared to savor it as if her mouth was filled with an exquisite food—such is the comparison of the Mother who was there. Then she turned toward Mother “O, my Good Mother, my dear friend!” and she cast her dying arms around her neck. Then she turned and kissed again the crucifix...
The Mother lives amongst the angels...she has heard her name intermingled with that of our Jesus.\textsuperscript{124}

The death of Rebecca had brought its blessing in this increased humility to Elizabeth Seton. Now she felt abased in the presence of death and hesitate[d] to distract her departing sisters by her presence, overwhelmed at hearing her name whispered in the same breath that called upon her Lord. Father Bruté in Baltimore fostered this new gentleness, writing:

Yes, infinite, immense, eternal delights and thanksgivings at such graces as have been granted; and return now more fervor, and holiness of misery than ever to so good a God. You understand, my Mother, only with such an increase of peace and amiability to all around you—trying so gently to gain every heart to so good a God—[can you succeed]. But, indeed, if I preach [to] you it is to preach [to] me the [one who is] most distant from that happy point of duty, “to render piety amiable and desirable.”\textsuperscript{125}

Mother Seton’s humility extended to her teaching duties as well and the day after Christmas she wrote to Father Bruté of her scruples when the matter of religious instruction was involved. “How dangerous for me,” she said, “should I only darken [their minds] by the heterogenous mixture of words and feelings you so well know in your poor Mother,” Dubois would not admit her inability, she complained, but Bruté understood her anxiety. “Alas,” she added, “You would say more to her in two hours than I in years.” Her only consolation was to rely on Divine inspiration, turning to “the Father most tender, Father of \textit{all}, my immense God, I \textit{his} alone.”\textsuperscript{126}

This feeling of being lost in the immensity of God was increasingly part of Mother Seton’s love. When New York asked for sisters the following year she complied joyfully, obeying His will, “the only will for his atoms who builds upon nothing.”\textsuperscript{127} On Trinity Sunday, 1817, she exclaimed, “Magnificent day for the soul—mine swells, the poor Atom.”\textsuperscript{128} When she was near death in 1818 she wrote, “Not even little acts for obtaining fear and anxiety about this \textit{Death} can move that strong hold of peace, thanksgiving and abandon of every atom of life and its belonging to him—even William I can see but in the great Whole.”\textsuperscript{129} Again she cried out, “\textit{INFINITE LOVE, INFINITE GOODNESS}, multiplied and applied by \textit{OMNIPOTENCE} is enough \textit{FOR} his little worm to make it smile and rejoice even on his calvary where it nailed him to show such wonders!”\textsuperscript{130} As time passed the wonder grew, of how great was the grace that had brought her this far. She said to Father Bruté:
Oh if all goes well with me, what will I not do for you—you will see—But alas—Yet, if I am not one of His Elect, it is I only to be blamed and when going down I must still lift the hands to the very last look in praise and gratitude for what He has done to save me. What more could He have done?—That thought stops all.131

Ardor grew with humility and Mother Seton wrote gratefully to Bruté:

My Father, blessed, as you find it hard to put words for your heart, so I, an impossibility to own enough what mine enjoys ever by your words. What then when the seeing and praise shall be added to the love—Now I think for every spark of desire I have ever had to love our God and to show I love, I have a towering flame—but—proof you say poor little soul. Well, blessed, I will try for that too, and I do beg you in the name of OUR ETERNITY to tell me everything I may do to prove it better. Conscience reproaches aloud, how little charity and delicacy of love I practice—in that vile habit of speaking of the faults of others, of the short, cold, repulsive conduct to my betters; as all certainly are, and for much of my behavior to you my VISIBLE SAVIOUR. . .I would put them and it out with my blood.132

Bruté replied:

Pray always for the worthy father of your first years. Pray for all the others to whom the Lord has confided—your soul successively, that is, pray for your proper grace. You have the consolation of observing now, in your most holy vocation all that you first offered Him who wish one day be the only Spouse of that soul. Be faithful, humble, fervent, peaceful, patient. A time of trial; a moment and eternity follows. What heart would not feel drawn and encouraged by this word of love.133

As 1817 was ushered in and Elizabeth was wishing Bruté a “happy Eternity to you, blessed President of St. Mary’s. May she take good care of you this 1817 coming,” physical changes were approaching to affect the community.134 Through the kind offices of Robert Goodloe Harper, the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s had received a charter of incorporation from the State of Maryland.135 After being named Bishop of Louisiana and
the Two Floridas, Louis Dubourg relinquished his claim to the property on 25 March 1815, when he deeded it to Samuel Cooper and John Dubois. Samuel Sutherland Cooper, who had furnished the money for the original farm, had come to Emmitsburg the November Rebecca Seton died, to discuss the matter of incorporation with John Dubois and Mother Seton.\textsuperscript{136} 

The terms of the charter stated the purposes of the community to be: the care of the sick, service of aged, infirm and meritorious persons, and the education of young girls. The size of the establishment was limited to 800 acres of land and a capitalization of $50,000. The name of the corporation was “The Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s,” and the list of members names twenty-two sisters.\textsuperscript{u} The women were now ready to assume full control of their business negotiations.

With the temporal affairs of the community so well determined, it would need only the return of Father Bruté to Emmitsburg to fill Mother Seton’s cup to overflowing. Father Duhamel was never in very good health, and toward the end of 1817 he became much weaker. Early in November John Dubois wrote to Tessier asking that something be done immediately about an assistant. From the contents of this letter it is plain Dubois had wanted another assistant for some time. He told Tessier he did not want “Mr. Babade,” and he complained that John Hickey, who was “a good child and a good priest,” was inadequate and “has no method of conducting a class.”\textsuperscript{137} By January it was clear that Duhamel was dying and Simon Bruté went, temporarily, to assist Dubois over the busy season.\textsuperscript{138} Tessier noted in his journal:

Father Bruté was sent to Emmitsburg to help Father Dubois who was fatigued because Father Duhamel was dying and he had nursed him for several nights. After Father Duhamel died, Father Bruté remained there.\textsuperscript{139}

When Charles Duhamel died on 6 February 1818, Dubois hastened to plead with Archbishop Maréchal that Bruté be allowed to remain, citing “his piety, his pure virtue, his capable zeal, his purely spiritual direction,” as reasons why he should be left at a mission which involved the direction of the sisters. Tessier had offered him others, but Bruté was “le seul qui veuille bien venir partager mon esclavage.”\textsuperscript{140} And so it came about that Simon Gabriel Bruté was once more at his beloved Mountain. Tessier confided to his “Epoques:”

\textsuperscript{u} Sister Madeleine (Magdalene) Guérin’s name appears on the list, although had died 20 December 1816, ASJPH 3-1-3.
On the 3rd of June, Father Damphoux was installed president of the College [St. Mary’s in Baltimore] to replace Father Bruté who had for a long time been asking to be relieved of this office not because he was not quite capable of fulfilling the functions of president, but because he did not like it, he discharged this duty very imperfectly. He was sighing for the Mountain, where as a matter of fact I appointed him to help Father Dubois, who had absolute need of help.¹⁴¹

Simon Bruté wrote to Mother Seton:

In this new beginning it seems as [if] we all together [should] want to renew our best confidence in Our Lord Himself, for how can I hope to be his blessed instrument but through His adorable will, and most tender mercies to souls so entirely offered to Him in the ways of His most prefect service on earth. Indeed, let all be confidence, all pure faith and love and we may be sure his grace will be confirmed in every heart, even by the most unworthy and unfit instrument. Humility, Simplicity, and Charity. How well these blessed names of the three virtues marked out by St. Vincent [and St. Louise de Marillac] will carry us through. Indeed, it is but my most sacred duty to try to assist your dear family and yourself Mother. My heart and my eyes, I might say at this very moment fill at the thought of it.¹⁴²
CHAPTER 12. THE ANGEL OF THE MOUNTAIN

Notes

1 John Dubois to Ambrose Maréchal, Emmitsburg, 9 February 1818, AAB, AASMSU, 15-7-17.

2 Simon Bruté wrote, “I first saw Mother [Seton] in 1811. She read with me the Following of Christ to form my English pronunciation.” Simon Bruté to Melmoth, 1 August 1812, ASJPH 7-3-1-3, #B273. Regarding Charlotte Melmoth, see Matthew O’Brien to John Carroll, 6 May 1802, AAB, AASMSU, 11-A-5. See also Researches, XXVIII (1912), 425; John Dubois to Charlotte Melmoth, 28 November 1809, ASJPH 1-3-3-5:3; 6.62, Elizabeth Seton to Julia Scott, 23 October 1810, CW, 2:160; Bruté to Melmoth, 1 August 1812, ASJPH 7-3-1-3, #B273; Historical Records and Studies, II (1901), 434.

3 [Sister Loyola Law, D.C., ed.], Mother Seton, Notes by Rev. Simon Gabriel Bruté (Emmitsburg, Maryland: Daughters of Charity, 1884), 52. Hereafter cited as Mother Seton Notes.

4 Simon Bruté to James Whitfield, Emmitsburg, 5 March 1830, UNDA.

5 Louis Dubourg to Simon Bruté, Martinique, 5 December 1810, UNDA.


7 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-3, #B164. The majority of the Simon Bruté notes bear no addresses or dates, but the degree to which he uses French and bad English gives some indication, however slight, of the chronological progress of his friendship with Mrs. Seton. Simon Bruté’s style, always difficult, under the stress of deep emotion became at times incoherent.

8 Ibid.


10 Ibid., CW, 2:757.

11 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, 25 June 1812, ASJPH 7-3-1-2, #A 12. French.

12 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, n.p., n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-2, #B61.

13 Simon Bruté sketch, ASJPH 1-3-3-13:150.


15 Ibid.

16 6.45, Elizabeth Seton to Catherine Dupleix, 4 June 1810, CW, 2:138.

17 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, n.p., n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-2, #B59. French.

18 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, n.p., n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-2, #B61.


21 Simon Bruté to Charlotte Melmoth, St. Joseph’s, Talbot County, [Maryland], 1 August 1812, ASJPH 7-3-1-3, #B273.

22 Simon Bruté to Charlotte Melmoth, Queenstown, [Maryland], 15 September 1812, ASJPH 7-3-1-3, #B208.
24 Louis Dubourg to Simon Bruté, Conewago, 28 August 1812, UNDA.
25 Simon Bruté to Charlotte Melmoth, Queenstown, [Maryland], 15 September 1812, ASJPH 7-3-1-3, #B208.
26 Simon Bruté, 28 September 1812, ASJPH 1-3-3-12:107. A list of presidents and vice-presidents of Mount St. Mary’s College gives Simon Bruté’s term as vice-president as extending from 12 July 1812 to December 1815, but this would seem to be belied by Simon Bruté’s own correspondence.
27 Ibid.
28 Simon Bruté’s eulogy on Sister Maria Murphy Burke, ASJPH 7-3-1-3, #193. See 11.8, “Well now our dearest...,” CW, 3b:7. See 11.7, “dearest Maria...,” CW, 3b:6; 11.9, “departed St. Teresa’s day,” CW, 3b:8; ASJPH 7-3-1-2, #B59. French.
29 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-2, #B59. French.
30 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, 20 November [1812], ASJPH 1-3-3-13:10.
31 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-3, #B186.
33 Ibid.
34 William Byrne to John Hickey, Emmitsburg, 22 and 24 June 1813, ASMSU.
36 John Dubois to Ambrose Maréchal, Emmitsburg, 21 March 1820, AAB, AASMSU, 15-U-20.
37 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-2, #B52.
38 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, n.d., ASJPH 1-3-3-13:1B.
40 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, n.d., excerpt 10 November, ASJPH 7-3-1-2, A47.
41 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-2, #A44.
42 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-2, #B62. In this quotation the original contained so many inversions that editing was used for purposes of clarity. The original read, “I would weep almost sometimes on a sudden with one only of the most harmonious, tender, sorrowful words that does to me this my old friend Latin version these twenty years past. Oh flumina Babylonis. O Sion. O Eternity! Annina!”
43 Journal for 1811-1812, inserted list of library rules, AMSMU.
44 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-2, #B52.
45 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-2, #A51. French. This particular note recommends the “Thirty-Sixth letter of St. Teresa [of Avila]” which Simon Bruté used in discussing Anna Maria Seton’s death.
48 Godecker, 69-70. Theodore Maynard, in his life of Simon Bruté, says “he was
commissioned to explain conditions at Mount St. Mary’s to the Sulpician superiors in France. They perhaps could be persuaded to back the college against the seminary in Baltimore.” See Theodore Maynard, The Reed and the Rock (New York, 1942), 106. This seems difficult to reconcile with Simon Bruté’s own words: “In 1814 I was appointed president of St. Mary’s College of Baltimore and for it early in 1815 I went to France.” Simon Bruté chronology, Archives of Georgetown University, 92:6.

61.85, Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, n.d., CW, 2:300.
61.195, Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, 25 May 1815, CW, 2:316.
61. Ibid., 327.
63. 61.195, Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, St. Michael [May 8], CW, 2:323.
64. Ibid., 331.
65. Ibid., 330.
66. Ibid., 320.
67. John M. Tessier to John Hickey, Baltimore, 8 October 1815, ASMSU.
68. Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Bordeaux, 17 October 1815, UNDA.
69. John M. Tessier’s Journal, entry for 28 November 1815, ASMSU.
70. 7.1, Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, n.d., CW, 2:365-6.
71. Simon Bruté, December 1815, ASJPH 1-3-3-12:107.
72. 7.3, Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, n.d., CW, 2:368.
73. 7.31, Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, n.d., CW, 2:401.
74. John M. Tessier’s Journal, 18 December 1815, ASMSU.
75. 7.7, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 23 February 1816, CW, 2:374.
76. Simon Bruté to William Seton, Baltimore, 17 October 1816, UNDA.
77. Simon Bruté to Mary Bayley Post, Baltimore, 6 August 1816, ASJPH 7-3-1-3, B#173; Eliza Sadler to Rev. Simon Bruté, New York, 30 November 1816, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:B19. Neither woman ever became a Catholic.
79. 7.43, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 22 July 1816, CW, 2:416.
80. 7.47, Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, n.d., CW, 2:419.
81. Ibid., 420.
82. William Seton to Simon Bruté, Leghorn, 22 August 1816, ASJPH 7-3-1-3, B#204.
83. Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 23 October 1816, ASJPH 1-3-3-12:81; 7.60, Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, n.d., CW, 2:445.
84. 6.121, Elizabeth Seton to Julia Scott, 29 October 1812, CW, 2:232.
85. Ibid.
86. Mme. B. [Marie-Francoise-A. Buisson] Chatard to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 27 June 1812, ASJPH 1-3-3-4:77. Rebecca Seton arrived in Baltimore on 26 June 1812.
87. 6.121, Elizabeth Seton to Julia Scott, 29 October 1812, CW, 2.232.
88. 6.109, Elizabeth Seton to Rebecca Seton, n.d., CW, 2:221.
Many former St. Joseph’s girls visited Bee in Philadelphia and brought her books, paints, etc. One even managed to have a piano brought for the daughter of Mother Seton.

Robert Seton’s Scrapbook, Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, n.d., ASJPH 3-3-9, #8. This scrapbook, consisting of mementoes, Simon Bruté’s notes and drawings, etc., was presented “to the Sisters of St. Joseph’s” on 28 August 1872. [When Melville was doing research for this biography, she noted that the scrapbook was kept in the Museum of St. Joseph’s Central House, rather than in the archives. It is now in ASJPH. Ed.]

Simon Bruté to Rebecca Seton, Baltimore, n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-2, #A7.

Among these friends were Mary Post, Mme. Chatard and Louis Sibourd. Sibourd
found the last thoughts of Bec very edifying and kept the journal until February 1817 at Philadelphia where he was awaiting an operation. Louis Sibourd to Elizabeth Seton, 3 February 1817, ASJPH 1-3-3-2:56; Mme. B. [Marie-Francoise-A. Buisson] Chatard to Elizabeth Seton, 2 December 1816, ASJPH 1-3-3-4:84; Mary Bayley Post to Elizabeth Seton, 16 January 1817, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:20.

111 11.51, Elizabeth Seton’s Prayerbook, CW, 3b:76.
112 7.84, Elizabeth Seton to Julia Scott, CW, 2:476.
114 Francis Matignon to Elizabeth Seton, Boston, 10 November 1816, ASJPH 1-3-3-1:36. Robert Seton, Old Family (New York, 1899), p. 26, states that Mrs. Seton later married a Mr. Gorham of Boston. This is not correct. Bishop Cheverus states clearly that Mrs. Seton had three children “by a former marriage with a Mr. Gorham.” See Rev. Jean Cheverus to Elizabeth Seton, 22 August 1820, ASJPH 1-3-3-1:17. Monsignor Seton apparently did not know that John Curzon had two wives. The first, Miss Mary Wise of Alexandria, Virginia, was killed in an accident in 1809. AMSV, I, 15. The second wife was this widow, Mrs. Charlotte Gorham of Boston.

115 John M. Tessier’s Journal, entries from 13 November, and 3 December 1816, ASMSUU.
116 Jean Cheverus to Elizabeth Seton, 28 November 1816, ASJPH 1-3-3-1:16.
117 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, n.d., ASJPH 1-3-3-13:146.
118 John F. Moranvillé to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, 4 December 1816, ASJPH 1-3-3-2:37.
119 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 3 December 1816, ASJPH 7-3-1-2, #B28. See ASJPH 1-3-3-12:107; Tessier’s journal, 11 December 1816. Cheverus was back in Baltimore on Wednesday, 11 December 1816.
120 Jean Cheverus to Elizabeth Seton, Boston, 30 December 1816, AMSV, I, 5.
121 Jean Cheverus to Simon Bruté, Boston, 5 January 1820, UNDA. When referring to his establishment for the Ursulines, Bishop Cheverus said, “Just between us, I would have preferred your Sisters, and above all the Mother, but the testament was positive.”
122 Jean Cheverus to Simon Bruté, Boston, 17 December 1820, UNDA.
123 Jean Cheverus to Elizabeth Seton, Boston, 17 December 1820, ASJPH 1-3-3-1:18.
124 John Dubois to Simon Bruté, Emmitsburg, 20 December 1816, ASJPH 1-3-3-5:26.
125 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-3, B#276.
126 7.66, Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, 26 December 1816, CW, 2:453.
127 7.103, Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, 1 August 1817, CW, 2:494.
128 7.88, Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, 4 June 1817, CW, 2:480.
129 7.156, Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, April 1818, CW, 2:549.
133 Robert Seton’s Scrapbook, Simon Bruté to Seton, Emmitsburg, n.d., ASJPH 3-3-9:8. Simon Bruté may have referred to Father Dubourg in the first sentence since Dubourg was the first superior of the community. The expression “father of your first years” is too general to allow any conclusion.
134 7.66, Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, 31 December 1816, CW, 2:454.
136 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 7 November 1816, ASJPH 7-3-1-3, #276. See Land Records of Frederick County, Liber J.S. No. 5-82. Cooper and Dubois deeded the property in turn to the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s on 11 June 1819. See also Land Records, Liber J.S. 9-98.
137 John Dubois to John M. Tessier, Emmitsburg, 4 November 1817, ASMSU.
138 John Dubois to Elizabeth Seton, 7 January 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-5:28. Simon Bruté was in Emmitsburg as early as 7 January 1818, according this letter.
139 John M. Tessier’s Journal, 10 February 1818, ASMSU.
140 John Dubois to Ambrose Maréchal, Emmitsburg, 9 February 1818, AAB, ASMSU, 15-T-I7.
141 John M. Tessier’s Journal, 3 June 1818, ASMSU.
142 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-3, #B191.
CHAPTER 13

THE CHILDREN

After Father Bruté’s return to Emmitsburg in 1818 Mother Seton worked with ever-increasing intensity to put her affairs in order. Although she was never again in good health her courage did not falter, and when Archbishop Maréchal and Rev. James Whitfield, (1770-1834) made their visit in September of that year they found “a very precious institution.”¹ After visiting Mount St. Mary’s and administering communion to ninety-four persons in a service at which the sisters “sang and very well—all decent and truly edifying,” the archbishop and his assistant went to the Valley the following day. After the celebration of the Mass at St. Joseph’s the prelates “graced dinner, visited the houses, garden, and graveyard.” Maréchal noted the ravages consumption had made in Mother Seton and was impressed that she was “still animated with pious cheerfulness.”² Coming back from the little wood he commented to Bruté on “how bewitching her conversation” always was. “Elle a une manière unique,” he said, “de peindre et d’exprimer ce qu’elle veut dire.”³

In the afternoon after Benediction, Archbishop Maréchal granted a holiday to “the Academy” in the traditional gesture of generosity on the part of visiting dignitaries. There were fifty-seven boarders to share the fruits of Maréchal’s beneficence, not to mention the sixteen sisters and two postulants, as well as the orphans who swelled the White House’s inhabitants to over eighty. Elizabeth reported happily to Antonio Filicchi:

All goes pretty well my, dear Antonio, for religion—the Archbishop says he could never have believed the increase of the true Faith [to] be half what it is if he had not verified it on his tour—and I assure you if I had another house as large as the one we are in we could fill it with Sisters and children. We are obliged to refuse continually for want of room.⁴

The Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s in 1818 were already in three other places besides the mother house at St. Joseph’s. After the Philadelphia establishment in 1814 the next mission was made at Mount St.

¹ Ambrose Maréchal was consecrated Archbishop of Baltimore on 14 December 1817, by Jean Cheverus of Boston, assisted by John Connolly of New York, and Louis de Barth, the administrator of Philadelphia. Anthony Kohlmann, the Jesuit superior, and Michael Hurley, O.S.A., of Philadelphia were also there, and Hurley preached the sermon. Cheverus had hoped Mother Seton could attend the ceremonies which involved so many of her close friends, but she was content to write her congratulations to Maréchal. The new archbishop was consoled by her letter.

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Mary’s College. John Dubois had been having difficulty with the domestic assistants for some time prior to 1815. He reported to the superior general of the Society of St. Sulpice in France, “I discovered some abuses which arose from the circumstances and customs of a country where everyone wants to be master and no one wants to obey.” Dubois needed either women of a more cooperative spirit or someone capable of governing the women already at the Mountain. When Elizabeth saw the predicament of her loyal friend and superior she offered him three sisters, “one in charge of linen and clothing, the other of expenses, and the third who would be superior at the head of the entire economy, particularly put in charge of the infirmary.” Dubois received the proposition with gratitude, the sisters’ council adopted the plan, and on 12 August 1815, Sisters Ann Gruber, Bridget Farrell and a novice, Anastasia Nabbs, went to Dubois’ assistance. In December Sister Angela Brady joined the others at the mountain college as sister servant [local superior] for the little group. Although Dubois’ superior in Baltimore, Tessier, did not approve of this arrangement, the Mountain establishment was most grateful to the women. Tessier told Dubois, “We must avoid calumnies and preserve intact the reputation of our holy company, and the admission of secular servants, being the universal among the ecclesiastics of this country does not present the same opportunity for accusation. The only reason you might have for asking to keep the Sisters with you is the impossibility of finding other domestiques to replace them. As long as the impossibility lasts, it is necessary that you keep them, but it is my intention that you do all in your power to replace them.”

Dubois commented, “In general, order, piety, and contentment reign throughout the house. I am indebted for all these consolations to the zeal, to the virtue of the good Sisters of Charity whose order, cleanliness, economy and especially whose piety, supervision of the domestic help and good example are above all praise.”

Mother Seton had no fears of her spiritual daughters’ ability to cope with new problems once they left the mother house. She explained to Julia Scott that “6 years experience of our daily duties and way of life has made many of our good Sisters as much old women as I am, tho’ only two of them are as old in years.” She added:

Among the lay assistants to Dubois was a widow, Margaret Carey Murphy Burke, whose sons attended Mount St. Mary’s and daughters St. Joseph’s Academy. Mrs. Burke was the sister of the famous Philadelphia publisher, Matthew Carey. Her daughter, Anna Maria Murphy Burke (c.1787–1812) was one of the earliest companions of Mrs. Seton. See Rev. Daniel C. Nusbaum, “This Venerable House,” Analecta Selected Studies in the History of Mount St. Mary’s College and Seminary 1, #3(2003), 8.

Anastasia Nabbs was the domestic servant who had worked for Mother Seton in Baltimore and later joined the community at Emmitsburg in 1813.

Dubois found it very difficult to employ and retain lay staff in service roles.
Perhaps you have no idea of the order and quiet which takes place in a regular way of life—everything meets its place and time in such a manner that a thing once done, is understood by the simplest person as well as by the most intelligent.9

This admirable training which the women received at Mother Seton’s side made them quite sufficient to the “new tasks to be undertaken. John Dubois found the sisters “a precious treasure” and Simon Bruté never ceased to marvel at the neatness and efficiency of the Mountain sisters. Once, when he viewed their handiwork in arranging Father Duhamel’s effects, he was moved to tears, “seeing with what perfect order all the ornaments, the linens, the folds, all arranged,” and he said to Mother Seton:

You know I do not always appear sufficiently sensible of this work of love. I recognize it, nevertheless, thanks to God, and I bless Him, seeing Him thus loved, adored, revered in the smallest things...O my Mother, let us bless, love, serve in the little things with great joy and expansion of heart.10

On another occasion the “order, cleanliness, and decency” of a dormitory so impressed Bruté that he made a pen and ink sketch of sisters at work, making beds, and sweeping the floor. Then he wrote a meditation in which he included the words:

Let us bless here our Sisters who do the same in other places for poor little ones to whom orphan infancy and youth, Himself the Divine Father gives them through His Providence for their true Mothers. O bless them, bless their happy work, O sweet Saviour! As we remember them amidst our own.11

The work of the Sisters of Charity in Philadelphia meanwhile was progressing rapidly and in 1816 the orphanage already contained twenty-two orphans.12 Bishop John Connolly of New York began to consider the possibility of securing sisters for his diocese to undertake a similar work. In
a letter to Mother Seton of 14 July 1817, he asked for three sisters to occupy a house which Francis Cooper and Robert Fox would vouch for as suitable to receive them. He said that two gentlemen would come to Emmitsburg to accompany the women to New York if his invitation were accepted. Mother Seton already knew Fox as the father of some of her St. Joseph’s pupils and she told him she would be very happy if the plan should materialize. His daughters would be delighted if he should come for the sisters. Although New York had voiced a preference for Sister Margaret George, the first beginnings seemed to Mother Seton to demand the best experience, and she preferred Sister Rose White, who had already done so well at Philadelphia. Elizabeth told Father Bruté of her preference for Rose, saying:

I write her earnestly about New York—the desire of my heart and soul for her going to New York has been long pressing for so much must depend, as says the good gentlemen who write about it, on who is sent to my “native city” they say, not knowing that I am a citizen of the world—the bishop [John Connolly] also writes about it, asking 3 Sisters for such an orphan asylum as in Philadelphia to begin on a small plan—excellent—the little mustard seed—Oh if my Rose [White] can go I shall be proud. She will keep so well the dignity of rules and pure intentions.

Meanwhile, John Dubois replied for the community to Bishop Connolly’s request. Writing as the superior of the sisters, Dubois enumerated the terms upon which they would be pleased to come: that the management of the money be left in the hands of the trustees of the asylum, that an association of ladies be formed “with whom the Sisters will keep a freer intercourse than with the gentlemen,” that the trustees allow thirty-six dollars a year for each sister’s clothes and other expenses, that traveling expenses to New York be paid, and that the head sister should be consulted when orphans were removed or admitted. Referring to the request for Sister Margaret, Dubois said:

As she has not the honour to be personally known to your reverence or to your trustees, it is evident that it proceeds from the recommendation of some children who have been educated here or of their parents who are not sufficiently acquainted with her, to know whether she is a suitable person for the office. Was your institution a high-styled grammar school, Sister Margaret would suit better than any, and great
as the loss of her would be to this house, we would freely part with her but for such an asylum as that of Philadelphia, the main object is to have a zealous, prudent, economical Mother to govern it...We contemplate to send, at least for a time, the excellent Sister Rose who is now in Philadelphia—having acquired experience in Philadelphia, she will be better calculated to guide the beginners of New York.16

It was Sister Rose therefore who on 13 August 1817, set out with Cecilia O’Conway, and Felicita Brady for New York City to begin the first establishment of Mother Seton’s daughters in their foundress’s birthplace. Only after the institution was well under way was Sister Margaret George made its sister servant.17 Robert Fox, one of the men who came to escort the ladies, wrote to Mother Seton of their safe arrival on 20 August 1817, and in spite of Sister Cecilia’s indisposition on the journey, the institution soon got under way.18 Elizabeth Seton wrote at once to Eliza Sadler so that Sad and Dué might know that the sisters were in New York, and call on the newcomers.19

Both orphanages, in Philadelphia and in New York, were soon to take on additional work. St. Joseph’s in Philadelphia was asked to take over the free school for German Catholics, and on 10 October 1818, Sister Fanny Jordan was named to augment the group of sisters already stationed in that city.20 Soon the New York asylum expanded in a similar manner. Sister Margaret wrote, in January 1820, that the trustees of the asylum would like additional sisters to operate a “pay school” to accommodate children who could not afford to go to Emmitsburg. John Dubois was authorized to negotiate with the trustees if it was understood that “a plain English education” would be offered.21 This school was eventually opened on the property of Cornelius Heeny, who had furnished the orphanage building.22 In May, the sisters received another request, this time from Bishop Connolly, asking that they keep a free school. This third New York project is least easy to define. It seems to have been termed “the Lancastrian school” and Dubois first appeared to believe another sister servant should be appointed for this school but no action was taken by the community.

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16 Sometimes the name Sister Felicitas appears as Felicita or Felicity.
17 This school was managed by the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s until 7 August 1825. The request for a school sister came from the vicar-general, Louis de Barth.
18 Joseph Lancaster, (1778–1838), an English educator and the founder of the “Lancastrian method” of instruction, came to New York in 1818. By 1820, he had instituted a school in Baltimore applying his principles. It is quite possible that the New York school referred to here was also a result of his visit to the United States. [Lancaster taught in a free school of a thousand boys and organized corps of elder boys as monitors and peer instructors of those in lower classes. The Lancastrian system of education was adopted widely by Nonconformists in competition with Andrew Bell’s system supported by the Church of England. Ed.]
council. In August, Mother Seton wrote to Madame Chatard in Baltimore that Dubois had given up the idea of the Lancastrian school in New York, “so uncertain as to the purposed good, and so great a distance in so distracted a place, while we see so good a prospect of schools among our best friends and much nearer to us.” The first positive proof of connection between the sisters and a New York free school came in April 1822, when Sisters Fanny Jordan and Agnes O’Connor were named by the council, “to take charge of the free school.” But this was after Mother Seton’s death.

In 1820, Mother Seton and John Dubois were much more interested in proposals relating to an establishment in Baltimore. After his episcopal visit to St. Joseph’s in 1818, Archbishop Maréchal had reported to Lorenzo Cardinal Litta, the Prefect of Propaganda:

This pious institute has produced most abundant fruits of religion. If at some future time, with God’s favor, I may be able to collect a large enough sum of money, I intend to erect another house, besides that at Emmitsburg and this house for girls I intend to erect at Baltimore.

In June, Dubois wrote a detailed plan to Archbishop Maréchal discussing the terms under which sisters would work in schools in Baltimore. The plan envisaged both a free school and a “pay school” operated separately. Financial arrangements similar to those reached in Philadelphia and New York were proposed. Mother Seton told Antonio Filicchi in October, “Our archbishop is going to take a company of us to Baltimore in the house where our Bishop Carroll of happy memory lived.” But Elizabeth Seton did not live to see the event. The first Sisters of Charity missioned in Baltimore, Sisters Benedicta Parsons and Mary Benedicta Doyle, left St. Joseph’s for Baltimore on 4 July 1821, six months after Mother Seton died.

Elizabeth Seton’s physical resources were heavily taxed during the last three years of her life. Her health had declined very rapidly after Bec’s death in 1816, and Elizabeth’s thoughts turned with deeper yearning toward her heavenly home. When Sister Ellen Brady died in April 1818, Mother Seton commented:

The customary $36 for clothes and shoes, $100 for board, traveling expenses, etc., were stipulated. If the pay school made a profit, the sisters were to receive some of it to buy clothes for poor pupils, furnish prizes, etc. The business acumen which Dubois displayed in his negotiations for the sisters would belie the reputation he has been given for mismanagement of the affairs of Mount Saint Mary’s. Melville indicated that a definitive biography of John Dubois remains to be written but Richard Shaw has since authored John Dubois: Founding Father (Yonkers, New York: US Catholic Historical Society, 1983).

The Baltimore school was sponsored by “The Lady Managers of St. Mary’s Poor School.” On 5 October 1820, the school was merged into an “Asylum and School.” The officers of the group were Ann Tiernan, Sarah White, and Elizabeth Gross. It is interesting to note that they, too, requested Sister Margaret George. Establishments, ASJPH 11-0-1. See Letter to John Dubois, 8 May 1821, ASMSU.
What a life indeed! A greyheaded carpenter whistling over the plank he measures for Ellen’s coffin—just beyond the ground plowing to plant *potatoes*, just beyond again good *Joe* (I believe) making the pit to plant Ellen for her glorious Resurrection—beautiful life, the whole delight *in God*, Oh what relish in *that word*.

And to Julia she wrote, “Here I jog on [to] the grave, patting my own back, and hushing up poor pride and sorrow, till both will go off with me bye and bye.” In June it seemed as if she were to take her pride and sorrow off without delay. Early that month the abscess in her breast produced such inflammation that she was bled in both arms. Catherine Josephine Seton informed Julia Scott that her mother was very sick, and young Leo Post, Elizabeth’s nephew, reported to Mary Bayley Post, on his return from a visit to St. Joseph’s, that Elizabeth’s condition was alarming. Pierre Babade wrote her in July and suggested that her life story should be written and published, but Mother Seton begged him to promise that she be allowed to die in obscurity. Babade gave his word, approving fully her desire, although he felt that such a biography would be “for the edification of a great many.” He added that he hoped she might be relieved of some of her cares as superior, commenting:

Ten years are passed; your work is consolidated. I desire nothing more for you but a holy death...I would like very much to see you before you die but I foresee that the superior will not allow me to go to Emmitsburg in the present state of things...Nevertheless, you know I will never cease praying for you, to have you prayed for and blessed as the priests of Bethulia blessed Judith. As soon as I hear of your death I will say Mass for the repose of your dear soul, as I have prayed during your sickness that you may have a happy death. If you find mercy as I hope you will, do not forget above this one who has thought so much of you here below.

Jean Cheverus wrote from Boston:

I do not pity you...I envy your situation, running now to the embraces of Him Who is love...I beg a few lines when your situation permits it. They will be received and preserved as a treasure to the heart of him who in Our Dear Lord is truly devoted to you...You are most fervently remembered

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1 [L’Abbé J. Babade, a nephew of Rev. Pierre Babade, published *Vie de Madame E.A.Seton* (Paris and Baltimore, 1857), which was a French translation of the prototype Seton biography by Charles I. White (New York, 1853). Ed.]

2 [Cf. Judith 15:8.]
at the Altar and will be as long as I shall celebrate the Holy Mysteries. Pray for me here and in heaven.\textsuperscript{33}

Elizabeth Seton, herself, would have welcomed death that summer. She exclaimed, “Sisters of Charity, Visible angels by the bed of Death—the angels of departing souls rejoice at their approach—for us we will live in habitual preparation for Death...instead of avoiding Death to look continually for its approach, rather be ready to go forward and meet him—as our door of entrance in[to] eternity. We stand always by this door, it may open in a moment.”\textsuperscript{34} To Bruté and Antonio Filicchi she wrote, “Death grins broader in the pot every morning and I grin at him.”\textsuperscript{35}

But death was not to be lured by an ingratiating smile and Bruté admonished her:

From that first summit of desires you thought you were to plunge in the blessed abyss. No, another station still receives you — resign — offer — watch — prepare — do good — be thankful for all—bless his Will—humble yourself as not prepared—though indeed never to trust his tender and infinite \emph{mercies—happily!} Thanks be to God! O life O Eternity.\textsuperscript{36}

When Elizabeth expressed her disappointment and sorrow at being delayed in her glad rush to her “Adored,” Bruté consoled her gently, telling her death was afraid to come.

She wants to surprise as a robber—oh watch then first you not then be surprised, second she will be long postponing, waiting how to catch you and meanwhile leaving you \textit{with us}. No harm to you. You will serve a little more Whom you love and gather a little more of the flowerets of our low valleys for your crown.\textsuperscript{37}

So Mother Seton became reconciled to her stay and wrote to Ellen Wiseman, “Our God knows, and we will and do delight that it is all in \textit{his dear hands}. ”\textsuperscript{38} To Bruté she said with sweet humility, “I see nothing in this world but the blue sky and \textit{our} altars, all the rest is so plainly not to be looked at, but all left to him, with tears only for Sin.”\textsuperscript{39} The “hoarseness in the breast” did not leave her that fall, and she acquiesced to the admonition that she give up receiving the visitors who came to St. Joseph’s. Elizabeth Seton had once said humorously to Father Bruté. “I might not love my Vocation had I tried it—I don’t know, but for this part of \textit{sitting at the pen, smiling at people}, young and old—it is too dangerously pleasing—his dear will is \textit{All} though.”\textsuperscript{40} But now she found it a loss she was quite willing to
bear. She refused the importunings of Julia Scott and Mary Post that she come to Philadelphia or New York.\textsuperscript{41} She joked about “such an old ruined carcass...bundled up in old shawls and flannels,” and went steadfastly about her work as her strength returned.\textsuperscript{42} Elizabeth Seton survived the year that saw the deaths\textsuperscript{1} of Rev. Francis A. Matignon in Boston, William Augustus Bayley, her half-brother, John Wilkes, her loyal New York friend, and even old Tillary whom her father had loved.\textsuperscript{43} But it was only a reprieve, and everyone but her children seemed to know it.

If anything made Elizabeth Seton wish to live on in 1818, it was the thought that she might still serve her children’s interests. Although each of the three remaining Setons seemed established in a state of life suited to his tastes and talents: William in the U.S. Navy, Richard with the Filicchi firm, Kit spoken for by the Harpers; Mother Seton never ceased to worry over their spiritual affairs. None of the last three showed signs of a religious vocation, and Elizabeth was particularly fearful of the boys’ devotion to their faith. Catherine Josephine gave her less cause for anxiety.\textsuperscript{m}

Catherine Josephine Seton\textsuperscript{n}, called “Kit,” “Kate,” or “Jos,” at different times, was Elizabeth’s second daughter, the child she had offered as a sacrifice in exchange for Dr. Bayley’s well-being in 1801. Elizabeth referred to the girl in 1819 as “my only dear companion left of all [God] once gave with bounteous hand—the little relic of all my worldly bliss.”\textsuperscript{44} Kit was the only one of the children present at Mother Seton’s death. Elizabeth never tried to force her daughters toward the religious life, however ardently she desired it; and when she saw Kit’s interest in a more worldly life, the wise mother arranged for experience and travels as best she could. Kit was allowed to go to Baltimore in Madame Chatard’s carriage to visit her friend, Ann Tiernan, whom Mother Seton knew as a student at St. Joseph’s. While Elizabeth in her valley put little white violets in a tumbler on her work table, or fed the cat with many thoughts of her absent child, Kit was getting a taste of town life and learning something of her mother’s own girlhood. It was in Baltimore that Catherine Josephine Seton first saw, in 1817, the published version of her mother’s Leghorn journal. This journal had been published in Elizabeth, New Jersey, that year as The Memoirs of Mrs. S...There was no indication given in the book of how the publisher, Isaac Kollock, had obtained the journal, but Simon Bruté was always convinced that Bishop

\textsuperscript{1}Francis A. Matignon died 19 September 1818; Dr. James Tillary died 25 May 1818; William Augustus Bayley died in Batavia in 1817; the date of John Wilkes’ death is also uncertain.

\textsuperscript{m} Catherine Josephine Seton died in her ninety-first year in New York City, at St. Catherine’s Convent of Mercy, 3 April 1891. She was one of the first received into the Sisters of Mercy established in New York by Archbishop John Hughes. See Robert Seton, An Old Family, 325-6.

\textsuperscript{n} Baptized Catherine Charlton Seton, she seems to have taken the name Josephine sometime after 1809, perhaps at confirmation or in honor of St. Joseph to whom her mother had great devotion.
Hobart had “treacherously” had the papers printed.⁴⁵ Whether John Henry Hobart was guilty of such an unwarranted liberty or not, Mother Seton was very distressed at the baring of convictions she had held while still a non-Catholic.⁴⁶ Catherine Seton wrote reassuringly from Baltimore that there was probably only one copy in the whole city and there was no reason to be ashamed of the journal, since there was “not one single protestant expression in it.” She said, “Dearest, I believe any other woman but you would be proud of it. Don’t be uneasy. I don’t think it will ever be printed here in Baltimore.”⁴⁷

Kit’s travels seemed destined to reopen many doors to Elizabeth’s past. When she returned from visits to New York and Philadelphia, the old ties of love and friendship between Mother Seton and the friends of her youth were renewed. In January 1818, she asked Julia Scott if Kit might visit her in Philadelphia that spring.

The reason of Kit’s breaking her resolution not to go out of my reach is that every month of April and May the poor darling has been sick since the critical moment of life, and we think it may be owing to her want of exercise here, as the roads of a country place like this are almost impassable in the spring, you know. She will have no brother in Baltimore to draw her there, and so we concluded that she would go to you if it is perfectly convenient for you to receive her, and if not, to our amiable Cauffmans⁴⁸ who have been always begging for her since we knew them.

In February, Kit set out for Philadelphia, with fifty dollars Julia had sent to Elizabeth. But far more valuable was the little red book Kit took with her, a book which she treasured all the rest of her life.⁴⁹ For her daughter, at her “first set out,” Elizabeth Seton had written in it advice covering the full range of worldly problems as she knew them. She warned Kit against gossip saying, “You can never be bound, my love, to speak on any occasion, or on any subject, unless you are sure of doing good by speaking.” She told Kit to avoid all conversations about marriage. “Remember, darling, the uncertainty of life and how much you, in the motives I have told you before, should guard the purity of your heart.”⁵⁰ She pleaded:

Oh, do try to be quite independent in Virtue—take its true dignity, and never let impious custom, or the shame of being laughed at, or even the contempt of unreasonable minds,

* The Cauffman girls had been in school at St. Joseph’s and had been kind to Rebecca Seton when she visited Philadelphia in 1815.
tempt you to treat anyone with the least slight. I beg you so, earnestly because I know how difficult it is to behave to some persons (who in certain circumstances of life or by coarseness of manners would take our proper reserve for pride and insult) with that sweet dignity of charity which acts to everyone as their temper requires, and yet keeps itself free from the least familiarity.\footnote{51}

In regard to her dress, Mother Seton told her to avoid extremes of fashion. “Be sure that simplicity should be your only rule. It makes a lovely woman more lovely, and even an ugly one pleasing.”\footnote{52} And then Elizabeth Seton spoke of amusements:

The best and wisest men who ever lived have thought the theatre a place of danger for young and old. Why should you or I put our conduct and opinion in opposition to theirs. Not \textit{I} indeed, who turn with abhorrence only at a remembrance of the effect the frequentation of the theatre had on my passions, and the extravagant ideas I imbibed in it. . .Poor, poor Betsy B.\footnote{p} had no mother, nor even principles to keep her from folly. How different will your Judgment be.\footnote{53}

On the subject of dancing, Elizabeth was less severe, saying:

I don’t know much of the style of the present day...but cannot remember the least of indecency or pride in dress, or the smallest familiarity or impropriety in dancing, which in truth, if you consider it as a good exercise and if you must be in company preferable to private chit chat...Look at St. Francis de Sales chapter about it.\footnote{54}

Mother Seton had no fears for Kit’s behavior. The mother and daughter were too closely associated in their habits and beliefs for these ventures of Kit’s into society to cause any serious estrangements. Kit valued her mother’s judgment too highly to violate her instructions. Once, in Baltimore, she had written home that she could wait to go to confession until she came home because she wanted to examine her conscience with her mother’s help. “You don’t know what a difference,” she wrote, “no mother to consult, and I have things I ought to talk first to you about. Oh how I love you, my Mother!”\footnote{55} While she was in Philadelphia and New York, Catherine Josephine wrote freely of all her actions and problems to her mother. Elizabeth, in return, gave the young woman full confidence, allowing her to make important decisions, saying, “You know how unwilling

\footnote{Referring to herself as Betsy Bayley. Dr. Bayley called his daughter Betty.}
I am to judge of things when not on the spot (even at home) and how much more at such a distance where you and I cannot pro and con it over.” Kit never abused that confidence, and wrote her mother of the military ball whose temptation she resisted, because it was Lent, and she promised, “I shall lay a penance on myself to read no novels except one which [Aunt Scott] says has so many good morals in it.”

From Philadelphia, Catherine Josephine went on to New York, and there she visited all her mother’s relatives and friends. Aunt Mary Post wanted her to stay the whole summer and Aunt Helen Bayley Craig, Sam Craig, Mrs. Sadler, and Dué could scarcely express their delight at seeing her. She saw Mrs. John Wilkes, the former Mary Seton, a cousin to William Magee Seton, in deep mourning for her husband, and received a call from the young John. She met Bishop Hobart, who seemed very glad to see her, and she went to the wedding of Ann Hoffman to Anthony Livingston. She saw old Mrs. Sarah Startin, Elizabeth’s godmother, and the Maitland cousins the old lady had adopted. Catherine even called on old “Aunt Charlton,” and spent several days with Mary Hoffman, her Seton aunt. Everyone seemed to find Catherine Josephine very much like her mother, and they welcomed the young woman cordially. Sad wrote to Elizabeth that she would like Kate to stay with her awhile. Dué took her to visit the Sisters of Charity at the orphanage, and even though Kit was surprised at the wickedness of the world, she was greatly excited to be such a center of attraction, and to find she had so many relatives and connections. It was with something of reluctance that she complied with her mother’s wish that she should not overstay her welcome.

Mother Seton had planned to have her daughter come home in June with Sister Rose White or Robert Fox, who would be coming for his children, but Kit’s cousin Lionel (Leo) Post, decided to accompany her to Baltimore and Emmitsburg the last part of May. Leo, as his aunt liked to call him, was forced to extend his visit longer than he had planned. On his arrival the community horse, Old Sultan, had jumped at the stranger from the city and Father Bruté had to be summoned from Mount Saint Mary’s, to come and get the injured young man. In spite of his mishap, Lionel Post was pleased to see his aunt and the “good Mr. Bruté” who had called on his mother in New York in 1815. He was “soon cured” and enjoyed his stay so

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a Mother Seton believed that Catherine Josephine would be more welcome after her mother died if she did not overstay her welcome now.

Lionel Post was one of several New York visitors to St. Joseph’s. Edward Augustus Seton had come in 1810, Dr. Wright Post and Mary Post after Anna Maria’s death in 1812; Mrs. Catherine Dupleix in 1813. Wright and Mary Post visited St. Joseph’s again the spring following Bec’s death, and brought Mary Fitch Bayley, Elizabeth’s half sister, with them, as well as the Post’s daughter, Catherine. Soon afterwards Mary Fitch Bayley married, Robert Henry Bunch, an Englishman and went to live in the Bahamas at Nassau.
much he planned to return to the valley again soon. But the condition of Elizabeth Seton, that summer of 1818 was enough to alarm both Kit and her cousin. Kit wrote Aunt Julia Scott that she was glad she had arrived home when she did.

Elizabeth was more than glad to see her daughter at home and hear the ecstatic reports of Aunt Scott’s kindness, the delights of New York, and the fascination of the Setons. But more than her pleasure in Kit’s return was the great peace of mind that came when she considered the girl’s future. For even should the kindness in New York diminish, Catherine Josephine would be provided for. When John Dubois was in Baltimore that May, he had had a conversation with Robert Goodloe Harper about Mother Seton’s affairs. Harper, a friend of many years, had proposed that in the event of Mrs. Seton’s death the girl should come to the Harpers to fill the place left by the death of their daughter Mary Diana. Although the Harpers had gone to Europe that same month, Elizabeth Seton’s heart was at ease, knowing that if death came the Harpers would protect her child. She told William, her son, “I wish her much to be with them as they propose.”

After the Harpers returned from Europe, Catherine Josephine visited them and their relatives. Early in May 1820, she went to Baltimore and after a visit with the Tiernans, Kit went on to Carroll Manor with Mrs. Harper. Meanwhile, at Annapolis, she had seen “old Mr. Carroll,” the younger Charles Carroll, Emily McTavish, and Mrs. Caton. Most of July and August were spent with the Harpers at “the Manor.” The family was more than satisfied with Miss Seton’s demeanor and Mr. Harper wrote again assuring Elizabeth Seton that while the Harpers lived, Catherine would be protected. This explains why Catherine Josephine, the sole beneficiary of her mother’s last will and testament, refused the kind invitations of Julia Scott, Mary Post, Mme. Chatard, and the rest went to live with the Harpers of Baltimore.

In 1818 Mother Seton was also at ease about her son, William, although his career had taken a turn she had once hoped could be avoided. William had never been satisfied with his situation in Leghorn. He had written his mother early in 1817 that he felt quite useless to the Filicchi business and that he did not have the requisite qualifications for a merchant. Elizabeth Seton wrote at once to Antonio for his opinion of William and his future. She felt distressed that her son had not been able to take some of the

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4 Catherine Josephine Seton, after visiting Julia Scott and Mary Post, briefly went to the Harpers in April after her mother died. Elizabeth Seton’s will, made 14 November 1820, and probated 16 June 1821, left all that she had, or that was due her, to Catherine Josephine Seton. She undoubtedly had in mind the legacy due from her maternal uncle John Charlton’s estate which she believed to be $1000. A lawyer, Fred Schley, wrote Dubois that the daughter was entitled to a legacy of $1000 and some articles of personal property.
burden off Filicchi’s shoulders, now that Antonio was without Philip. She confessed to William’s patron that she dreaded the attraction the Navy still seemed to hold for her son. Then she wrote to William. She told him she was consulting Antonio Filicchi in his regard, and said:

I have gained my main object in parting with you, my beloved son, which was not so much to fix you with affluent friends, or in a tide of fortune, as to give you time to know yourself a little, to know the world a little, and to overcome your first ardent propensity for the Navy; which I know is even now the passion of your heart.

And then, in the complete generosity of her maternal love, Elizabeth Seton promised:

All I can say is that you will never want every nerve of my heart to exert itself for you in whatever path you enter—what more can your own Mother say. I would write, or even go to anyone on earth I could reach, if I might help you, my William. If a Mother’s love could be a fortune to you, you would be rich indeed, alas it is poor coin in this world.

Antonio Filicchi wrote a letter to Mother Seton on 4 June 1817, which William Seton carried back to America with him. In it Filicchi broke a silence of two years, saying he hated to write to her since he knew his report on William would grieve her. He said that after watching her son closely he could only conclude William had “a moral indifference, if not aversion, to trade in general.” The young man had a mild disposition but his “great reservedness” made it impossible for Antonio to really know him. William preferred associating with his own countrymen [Americans] in Italy to adjusting to Italian life, and Antonio feared he did not “much improve his Catholicism though in a Catholic country.” On the practical side, Filicchi stated that William was not suited to commercial work because of his poor handwriting.1

William Seton did not arrive with this letter until two months later, and Antonio Filicchi waited anxiously to hear Elizabeth’s reaction to William’s return. On 14 July 1817, he forwarded four letters for William and asked her to write, telling her he cherished her letters as “holy relics from my heavenly American sister.” He concluded, in the vein of the old charming Tonino, with an apology for his own poor letters, “I often play the indifferent and rough, for fear of making myself too lovely.” Antonio

1 It was typical of Elizabeth Seton that she blamed herself for William’s failure to become a good writer. She told Eliza Sadler his fingers were weak because she had allowed him to suck them as a baby.
Filicchi was still quite willing to aid his “American sister” and offered to take Richard Seton in William’s place. All he required was “a good handwriting and a good will,” he said.75

When William Seton arrived home in August that year his mother began at once to negotiate for a place in the Navy for him,u Robert Fox of New York was asked to help, and he wrote early in September that he had already spoken for William to Captain Stewart’s brother-in-law.7 Mr. McCawly had advised a letter from the vice-president of the United States, Daniel D. Tompkins, to the Navy department, and Fox said he would try to see him at Staten Island as soon as the vice-president had recovered from his indisposition. Fox included a letter from Francis Cooper to Captain Charles Stewart on William’s behalf, and he said, “I am also in hope that if Mr. [John Q.] Adams returns here I shall be able to procure one from him. On my part nothing will be omitted.”76 William meanwhile, without waiting for Fox to act, had gone directly to Washington where Daniel Brent had presented him to the acting Secretary of the Navy who received Seton “with much politeness.”77 When Mother Seton wrote of William to Antonio in September she said hopefully, “The President of the Navy department has promised him an appointment before Christmas.”78 But while uncertainty over the appointment existed, William went back to Mount St. Mary’s to study mathematics and navigation, and Elizabeth had the happiness of knowing her son was near.79

The letter of Francis Cooper to Captain Stewart, which Seton delivered in person in Philadelphia, together with one from the vice-president to Benjamin Crowninshield had its effect, and by 4 November 1817, William Seton had his appointment.80 The appointment was followed by several months of waiting before Seton received a designation and Julia wrote inquiringly on 20 January 1818, saying she had been looking for William to pass through Philadelphia for some time.81 Finally in February the orders came for William to report to Commander William Bainbridge in Boston.82 Simon Bruté, who had seen the young man off on his first venture in 1815, wrote him a beautiful letter of exhortation, pleading with William to love God above all things and to serve Him and obey His laws.83 His mother wrote her parting words:

My soul’s darling—You go—so adieu once more—with how much more courage I say it now than in 1815. You must

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*a At this time Benjamin W. Crowninshield was Secretary of the Navy; Daniel D. Tompkins of New York was vice-president; John Quincy Adams was Secretary of State.
*b For his heroic services during the War of 1812, as commander of the Constitution and other ships, Charles Stewart had received a sword of honor from the Pennsylvania legislature and a gold medal from Congress. From 1817 to 1820 he was in command of a Mediterranean squadron.
fill a station and take a part in our life of trial and all your own Mother can beg is that you keep well with your good pilot, and as says old Burns, this correspondence fixed with heaven will be your noble anchor. Go when you can to the sacraments as a child to his Father will be a main point for that and the next best is to look to your Mother’s old rule of intentions the comfort of my life...O my William—You know all I would say. Dearest, dearest child of my Soul. Mind we must be one day where we will part no more.  

William Seton was thus the escort of his sister, Catherine when she went to visit Julia Scott that spring of 1818. He carried a package for Sister Rose of the New York asylum, and his mother promised Robert Fox that even if William had only one hour in New York he should call upon Fox and Francis Cooper. William had more than an hour in New York, and Sister Rose reported to Mother Seton what she knew would give her the greatest joy that William had come to Mass with Dué on Sunday. Young Seton soon reached Boston and went aboard the Independence in the harbor on 24 February to begin a career which was to last for several years.

His mother started writing to him immediately. Scarcely a week after he had started off with Kit for Philadelphia Elizabeth began, “Your little Ship left behind has had cloudy weather and dragged scarcely three knots an hour.” As March progressed and the pain in her chest became greater, Mother Seton found she could not sleep. After Sister Anastasia, her “night company,” was safely asleep, Elizabeth would draw up a basket of chips, make a little blaze to warm her stiff hands, and pour out her heart to this son. Sometimes it seemed her heart must break before his return. As she wrote on one occasion, “Reasoning is in vain or even religion. I look up a hundred times at the dear Crucifix and resign but too often with such Agony of heart that nothing stops it.” His night watch was on her mind and she often lay awake invoking blessings on him. It was her custom to keep a map of Boston harbor on her little table where she wrote so that she could feel closer to him.

William Seton, meanwhile, seeing no prospect of getting to sea except in one of the frigates was corresponding with Washington to ask for a transfer to another ship. Elizabeth Seton was disturbed by this news asking, “Will it not be a disadvantage if you quit Commodore Bainbridge since he expressed himself as particularly interested for you?” Bainbridge had been a friend of William’s father, and Robert Harper told Mother Seton

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*a* [Mrs. Seton is alluding to the poem “Epistle to a Young Friend” (1786) by Robert Burns (1759–1796), who many considered the national poet of Scotland, the ancestral country of the Setons. Ed.]
he felt William was unwise to leave his command. But young Seton, who could not leave Leghorn fast enough the summer before, was now eager to transfer, with Charles Wilkes, to the La Guerrière which was scheduled to make a Mediterranean cruise. As if this were not enough to cause uneasiness to his mother, William wrote the first of May to say he had narrowly escaped death in an accident in which he lost all his money. He asked his mother to send some at once. Elizabeth replied immediately, ill as she was:

I hasten to ease your dear heart, mine is far from troubled at the loss of our pennies, but so grateful to our God for your escape of instant and (alas perhaps) unprovided death. Oh, my love, not a word must I say on that point—that only point to my Soul. I write Mr. [Robert] Barry pressingly to send you speedily as possible the $100...I pray and trust he will advance it, there is not now as high as a $5 bill in the house, and Mr. Grover is pressing for the debt it owes him for spring goods, so I have no resource for the moment in either, but cannot think Mr. Barry will hesitate, if he does, I will surely get it somewhere. Mr. Dubois is sick in Baltimore and they are over run with demands so I cannot apply there.

Although Mother Seton tried to secure the money for her son as fast as she could, he gave her no indication of receiving any and his letter of 3 June 1818, instead of putting her mind at rest in this regard, made a further request that she get Mr. Brent to write a letter to speed his transfer to either the La Guerrière or Macedonian. When she wrote back, Elizabeth apologized for mentioning the money so often, but said

You are tired of hearing about it but that cannot be helped until you can tell me the welcome news that you have it. We must not mind these things, dear one, but well I remember when I was young how I hated them—Your letter of 3rd June was immediately attended to—I had been bled in both arms for a slight inflammatory attack of the breast and I got Mr. Dubois to write the very hour I received your letter...

Sweet Kit came just in good time to save us both a deal of anxiety, but I am much recovered now eating green peas, strawberries, and cherries in great abundance with the regular tears in the eyes at the thought of my sailor who gets neither, nor smells our sweet roses, nor roves our green fields.

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* It is not clear what the accident was, but it seems to implicate young Seton since his mother hesitated to ask Bishop Cheverus to come to William’s rescue.

* George Grover was the local grocer who supplied St. Joseph’s House.
Mother Seton could never see the selfishness of her eldest son, who was now in his twenty-second year. The only real reproof she could bring herself to utter was in connection with his religious practices. When she failed to hear from him that July she wrote:

Dearest dear dear dear William—

I could fill all my paper with that so unavailing repetition—good and dear son, and child of my heart, be comforted. You never gave pain to that heart but the pain of parting and separation. Now indeed some fears that you are giving up all too human views, etc. Yet all I judge from is the entire silence of Bishop Cheverus who has never written me once since you are at Boston, and I have had so many full proofs of the kindness of his heart that I am sure if he could have said a word of your approach to our God he would have taken time from sleep to tell me.96

William Seton did not write for a month because he had been busy transferring to the Macedonian, and the letter Mother Seton received on 1 August 1818, announced that he was to make a two-year cruise on that vessel in southern and Pacific waters. He would need clothes and some money before starting off, but since they might not leave before October or November William had written:

The ship will go round Cape Horn into the Pacific as high up as Columbia River, and higher if the captain chooses, but so far she is ordered. She will cruise in the Pacific two years, visiting all the important cities on the western coast of North and South America...It will be, in fact, one of the most interesting voyages ever made from this country...I long to hear that you have perfectly recovered from your late illness, if not do, dearest mother, let me know it and I will use every endeavor to come to you. It would be a great satisfaction indeed to pass a little time with you before so long a voyage.97

William’s suggestion that he might come home for a visit was a bittersweet temptation; but, Elizabeth Seton, thinking only of her son, and knowing how sick she really was, wrote to Bishop Cheverus asking him to help her conceal her condition from William. Cheverus agreed, and promised her, “I shall carefully conceal from William your real situation. You justly remark it would only add to his anxieties and hardships.” Cheverus had
had the young man to dinner and exacted from him a promise to fulfill his religious duties before he sailed. He said to the mother:

Dear child! He is then to see you no more in this world. But I have confidence that he will one day be with you in heaven.

“The child of so many tears and prayers cannot perish.”

To her son, Elizabeth wrote that he must not think of coming home. “One only thing I cannot stand in this world,” she said, “That is taking leave of you.” She told him that he must not be uneasy about her health; inflammation of the lungs always left a long weakness. She might live to welcome his joyful return from many a cruise. As for his clothes and money, perhaps Mrs. John Seton in Boston could help him with his clothes, “as none but a woman can do it.” She would see that he received fifty dollars, although she could cry to think that was all he would have for his voyage.

But Providence decreed that Elizabeth Seton should see her son once more before her death. William had proudly described the *Macedonian* as “a most beautiful frigate, pierced for fifty (carrying forty-eight) guns, more completely and handsomely fitted out than any other ship that ever sailed.” She was commanded by Captain John Downs, and manned by thirty midshipmen and eight lieutenants. On 18 September 1818, before a stiff breeze, the *Macedonian* left Boston for the south, destination Valparaiso, Chile. But off the coast of Virginia she ran into storms. Midshipman Seton was dreaming of his mother. She stood by him, asking sorrowfully the oft-repeated question, “Are you prepared?” When he sprang from his hammock the water reached his knees. The damage to the frigate was so serious that she put into Norfolk, Virginia, for repairs, and William hastened to Emmitsburg to see his mother. Elizabeth Seton had her “happy moment with my soul’s William” after all. His visit was well worth the pain of another parting. The peace of soul Mother Seton retained is reflected in the cheerful little “holy Book of the Shady Retreat” which she kept of the days following his departure. The contentment of October was in sharp contrast to the words of anguish she had penned in September. When Elizabeth believed that her son was starting off without her seeing him again she had, written:

Oh, my William, now indeed is my true courage called for to see things as they are...Yet I protest to you that I could give you up to duty with a free heart, if the way was but clear for our dear futurity, but oh, who but our God can know

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*Charlotte Gorham Seton, wife of John Curzon Seton, was not well, and Jean Cheverus offered to give William money enough to care for his linen.*
my anguish at the thought of resigning you there also...My soul’s William! How strange to be a man and God but a secondary consideration, or no thought at all; to be a few years beating through this world after shadows, then enter an eternity of existence quite unprepared, though to prepare for it is the only end of our being here below. You know, beloved, I seldom say much of these things; but it would be concealing the sharp arrow in your mother’s own soul from yours, into which I would pour every thought of my heart...

Everything else in this world has its place in my affections in measure but my love for you has no bound or measure, and can never be satisfied but in our eternity. Oh! Hear, then the cry of a mother’s soul, my beloved, and take care of what is dearer to her a thousand thousand times than herself.105

After William left, Elizabeth wrote happily to Julia Scott thanking her for the hundred dollars which had just arrived and telling her of William’s eight-day visit. If ever the Seton boys were a credit to their country,aa Mother Seton said, Julia Scott would be responsible. As for herself, Elizabeth remarked:

Do not think of me dearest but—under the line of my beautiful Providence which has done so well for us so many years.
You keep me out of debt and that is the greatest trouble I could ever have and as to comforts, pity knows, I have them abundantly.106

Nothing mattered now that she had seen her son, heard his promises of fidelity to his faith, and made sure his physical needs were attended. She stored up every memory of his visit against the long months of his absence. A year after his departure she wrote him, “Let no one say that deep affliction can kill since I grow strong in my absence from you for it is like a daily Death to me in which every minute carries the pain of separation.”107

The third Seton requiring his mother’s intercession and causing her deep concern was Richard, the younger son. Bruté’s estimate of Richard Bayley Seton had described him as “very like his brother” though with many characteristics distinctively his own. He had “a good heart yet turned to pride and selfishness.”108 The expense accounts of Mount St. Mary’s show him to have been less thrifty than his brother.109

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aa William Seton served in the United States Navy from February 1818 to July 1834. His commission as a midshipman was issued 4 July 1817; he became a lieutenant in February 1826, and he resigned on 5 July 1834.
and extravagance. Once when Richard sent John Hickey some crosses and medals from Baltimore he stipulated that they were “for your people, I mean blacks, for they are too ugly for any white man.” With all his faults, his quickness of temper, Richard Seton was a lovable boy, possessing much of the charm of his uncle, Sam Seton. His mistakes stemmed more from impulsiveness than from bad intentions. He knew how much his mother wished her sons to be priests and he regretted his own lack of a vocation. He once told Father Hickey:

I have not such a calling, and very unhappily, too. Many a time do I wish I had tried and (you may almost say) forced myself to it. I would not have experienced so many unhappy hours as I have been prey to; and what is more, am daily experiencing. I can tell you this, such a favour was never destined from above.  

After William Seton went off to Leghorn in 1815, Richard became restless and took less and less interest in his studies at the Mount. His mother remarked, “Richard, like all young people, drags his chain. He wants to be busy and getting on,” and she begged William to write to his brother about the importance of using his time at school to advantage. Although this was the year that Bec was so much worse, Elizabeth Seton never slighted the concerns of any of her children, and she racked her brain to find some solution for her second son’s problem.  

Mary Post had suggested the year before that one of the Seton boys might come to live with the Posts, and, like their son Leo, go into Abraham Ogden’s counting house. Abraham Ogden was an old friend of the Setons, but only bitter memories were roused by the recollection of the younger Ogdens. The thought of applying to them for Richard was quite abhorrent. Mother Seton explained to William, “I doubt much their receiving a child of mine. You know it was they who wrote the threatening letter that the house would be burned over my head, calling me Siren, etc, etc.” She much preferred to interest Baltimore people in Richard’s case. She first approached Luke Tiernan but when he gave her little hope for any immediate opportunity for her son, she turned “to attach [to] poor Mr. Barry’s continued kindness.” When she wrote to Julia in March she told her she was saving the latest Scott remittance for “Richard’s setting out,” adding:

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**Notes:**

110 Richard Seton was seventeen years old the summer of 1815 and it was not long after this that Simon Bruté began his efforts to secure the younger Seton a position in Baltimore.

111 At the time Seton & Maitland Company failed in New York, Abraham Ogden had been William Magee Seton’s dearest friend.

112 Charlotte Seton Ogden and Gouverneur Ogden, her husband, had been particularly bitter over Cecilia Seton’s conversion in 1806.
He is bent on a counting house in order to meet his brother’s plans. I have written Mr. [Robert] Barry to try and procure him a place. He is an enormous young man, very well disposed, but like his brother before he left us, shows no remarkable talents...¹¹⁷

As spring wore on affairs assumed a darker aspect. Baltimore was suffering from commercial doldrums in 1816. For nearly twenty-five years before the Congress of Vienna, Europe had been at war, and the eastern coastal cities of the United States had all but monopolized the carrying trade. But now, not only were European ships resuming their competition, but the American steamboat was rapidly directing the coastwise shipping, which Baltimore had formerly enjoyed, to the Mississippi River and New Orleans. Crews hung idle about the water fronts. The tobacco trade was declining because of changing European tastes; planters were abandoning its cultivation.¹¹⁸ The flour trade, which had been “the backbone of the port’s commerce” was slowing because the British were once more carrying to the West Indies. The experimental cotton mills were threatened by annihilation by British “dumping” in the post-war markets.¹¹⁹ Richard Seton wrote to his brother in May 1816, “The merchants are all idle it seems—many ships are lying in port and none of them know what to do.”¹²⁰

In April, Richard turned in desperation to the chance offered him by a wholesale grocer to work for him. Mother Seton was determined to prevent it if she could.¹²¹ She had heard the Tiernan firm in Baltimore was doing “a great deal of business” and she applied once more, this time offering to meet whatever financial terms he might propose. John Dubois told her that St. Joseph’s house would “come forward if necessary.”¹²²

May came in with cold and frosts. A “black spot in the sun” gave rise to many gloomy conjectures. And then a forest fire broke out on the mountain and the young men of the college, Richard Seton among them, all ran out to “give their mighty aid” as Kit laughingly described it.¹²³ In the middle of these signs and portents came the summons to Baltimore; Luke Tiernan would accept Richard at last. Mother Seton told the glad news to Mme. Chatard with the joyous words, “Our God is too, too good.”¹²⁴ On 14 May 1816, Richard Seton started for Baltimore where he would live in the Tiernan household, which made Elizabeth Seton feel secure about the religious influences surrounding her son.

Richard was at first a very satisfactory correspondent. His mother boasted that in one day they had received six letters from him.¹²⁵ When Kit went to Baltimore on her birthday in June she reported that Dick was very
happy, that he took her calling upon the Cursons\textsuperscript{ee} who were very kind.\textsuperscript{126} When the news of Bec grew worse, Dick escorted his sister back to St. Joseph’s in the public stage, and Mother Seton could see her “giant” for herself.\textsuperscript{127}

But the rumors that came up from Baltimore during the winter months caused uneasiness to Mother Seton, at a time when Bec’s death was most keenly felt. Not only was there uncertainty as to whether Tiernan would remain in business,\textsuperscript{128} but Richard Seton was not showing signs of responsibility. When he first arrived in Baltimore, Richard went almost every evening to the Cursons’ or Chatards’ homes. But as June progressed the families who had country seats left town, and Seton complained to his mother, “there is nothing doing now; times are remarkably dull.”\textsuperscript{129} For a while it seemed that the restless Dick would settle down, and his mother drew comfort from his report that he went every Sunday to the seminary where he sang at Vespers. “You know how I always liked to sing,” he reminded her.\textsuperscript{130} In July Kit wrote from Baltimore that Dick was very busy in the store all day, and was very happy.\textsuperscript{131}

But when Richard appeared in Emmitsburg in August, Elizabeth was worried to see him in an indifferent mood. His belated apology after his return to Baltimore did little to ease the pain of his cold leave-taking.\textsuperscript{132} Nevertheless, his repeated requests for winter stockings set Elizabeth knitting busily for her tall son after Bec’s death.\textsuperscript{133} Although Richard took little interest in young women,\textsuperscript{134} his mother told William:

You could not guess half the trials we have had with him in Baltimore through his childish, thoughtless disposition...Mr. Williamson, Mr. Tiernan’s son-in-law who lives in the house with him, says “he is a fine young man but will be lost for want of employment, and by company.” Not that he keeps any out of the house that I ever heard, but there is so much in it...Mr. Tiernan (has) that easy way [so] that everyone does as they please.\textsuperscript{135}

In February it became clear that Richard Seton’s days in Baltimore were numbered. Elizabeth told Antonio Filicchi that he probably would not be with Tiernan after May or June, since Tiernan’s son was returning from Europe and Tiernan was forming a partnership which would use this son. She begged Filicchi to ask some Italian merchant to take Richard.\textsuperscript{136} Although Dick was still in Baltimore in April his prospects looked even gloomier.\textsuperscript{137} It was under this strain that Elizabeth received the news that

\textsuperscript{ee} The Cursons were the family into which the Seton children’s paternal grandfather had married twice. The name is also spelled Curzon.
William was dissatisfied at Leghorn and wanted to return.\textsuperscript{138} The same June, when Richard was writing to his friends at the Mount that he was through in Baltimore, William Seton embarked at Leghorn for his return to the United States. Dick wrote Hickey that he hoped he would not find him “the wild rattle brained fellow I was,”\textsuperscript{139} and to Father Dubois he confessed that Baltimore was not all he had expected. He deplored the wickedness of the city, but he concluded cheerfully, “Farewell, may I return to you as I went, I fear not such a good fellow, but one who will know how to act and do better in the future.”\textsuperscript{140} Mother Seton wrote William of Richard’s return, saying, “His mind is bent on a country life,\textsuperscript{ff} but I believe it is only to preserve himself from the distraction of bad company and the dangers he has past in Baltimore.”\textsuperscript{141}

Richard went to Mount St. Mary’s on his return from Baltimore and spent the summer hunting and fishing with the seminarians Hickey, Mullen, Doyle, and Elder.\textsuperscript{142} He wanted to learn of William’s plans before taking any further step.\textsuperscript{143} When his brother arrived in August with Antonio Filicchi’s offer to take Richard, Elizabeth Seton lost no time in getting Richard off for Italy. Again Robert Barry was importuned to secure money, this time for Dick’s passage. Barry drew on Robert Fox of New York, and Richard Seton sailed in September “on the Brig Strong, Captain Gerry.”\textsuperscript{144} He left his mother with “a thorn in the heart,” as she explained to Julia:

Poor fellow, which now, no doubt he feels more than ever though his tears and sobs in his acknowledgments to me were enough to move a stronger mother than I am. For we find when too late that the good and most respectable Mr. [Luke] Tiernan with whose family he made his home, took no account of his expenses, and poor Dick not having fortitude or good sense to keep himself in the character of \textit{Son of a poor widow}; spent not only the $200 M. Filicchi allowed for his regular wants, but all that poor Kit had saved by her piano lessons and your constant remittances—indeed her loving heart wanted it only for her brothers but we are hurt and mortified enough that he should have been playing the fool in that way—yet on tracing it we find he has been imposed on just like the poor countryman in the fable, for a more innocent simple young man can scarcely be met with and we must hope he will do well in the event with a little more experience and Judgment.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{ff} Just before leaving Baltimore Richard Bayley Seton had received an offer from a Quaker, Mr. Cook, to run a country store and farm about thirty miles from Gettysburg.
To Antonio she wrote, “Here is Richard” and introduced her second son as quite different from William. His quick temper and want of experience, she said, were his chief faults. Although her great love could never let her condemn her sons for their selfishness, it must have been a deep sorrow to Mother Seton that she could not present more responsible young men to her generous patron after his years of kindness to her sons. Antonio Filicchi more than proved his devotion to Mother Seton by continuing his support. The house of John Murray & Son in New York, in which the Filicchis had much of their American funds, went bankrupt in 1817 and cost Antonio $30,000. In addition, the death of Philip Filicchi had removed the $200 he furnished toward the Seton boys. Antonio’s share was more than absorbed by the expenses of Richard and William Seton, yet he ordered Cheriot, Wilkes, and Company of New York to pay money to Elizabeth Seton whenever she needed it.

Richard Seton arrived in Leghorn on 4 December 1817, “all good resolves to succeed and be good,” and for more than two and a half years stayed in the Filicchi counting house. While he was in Leghorn, Dick sent home urns for the churches at St. Joseph’s, Mount Saint Mary’s, and the village. He relayed gossip of duels, weddings, and visits to Pisa. He remarked on the political flavor of Sunday sermons in Leghorn, his efforts to teach the little Filicchi girls to speak English, his meeting with Samuel Cooper, and the rumors of war between Spain and the United States. His frequent letters the first year always contained “the same expression of his most happy condition,” yet Elizabeth wrote to Mme. Chatard of the true hardship of separation.

What a business, my dearest friend...to live thousands and thousands of miles from a part of one’s own self, I have to reason and reason, and conclude at last— well, if we are to be together in this [life], and if we are to be together in the next world, it is little matter to be separated in this [world]— unless we could help their salvation, but boys give a mother so little share in that comfort after early years are past.

The second year of Richard’s absence brought a sharp decrease in the number of letters from Leghorn. His mother, in a letter dated 8 May 1820, told him they had been six or eight months without a line from him. The next letters she received were full of schemes about settling on the Black River. Elizabeth said sorrowfully to Ellen Wiseman, “Black indeed will it be to him if he carries it through. He says commerce is dead loss of time at present. Poor fellow I fear his Faith is dead by the whole tenor of his letters, yet he puts change aside till another year. So we will see.”
Although his mother feared he would procrastinate, Richard Seton did not wait even a year to change his plans. On 8 August 1820, the month before Mother Seton entered upon her last illness, Antonio Filicchi wrote from Italy, “Your son sailed a fortnight ago on board the American frigate La Guerrière having been furnished by me of the requisite money for his intended passage home.” He said Richard had proved neither willing nor able to assist in the counting house, and his moral conduct had not given full satisfaction either. Antonio thought that perhaps Richard, too, would profit by entering “your growing Navy’s service.” His own loyalty to Mother Seton was as strong as it had always been, and he concluded with the comforting assurance, “Consider me, beloved Sister, firm at all times as a Rock in my brotherly sentiments for you.”

Before this letter could inform Elizabeth Seton of the return of her son, she had already been stunned by receiving from Alexandria, Virginia, a letter from Richard himself, dated 1 October 1820. “He wrote he was in Norfolk, [Virginia] in some difficulty with a protested bill.” The frantic mother, not knowing whether he might be arrested or not, wrote to General Robert Goodloe Harper, “Who can I venture to address but you at this moment of real distress?” She asked him to see what could be done for her son. The letter must have wrenched the good man’s heart, for Elizabeth Seton was dying. As a matter of fact, two weeks earlier she had received the last sacraments. Yet the frightful worry over Richard helped to keep her alive until he was safe once more. The handwriting of her October letters to Harper and Filicchi is pitiful in its weakness, yet magnificent in the fierce maternal protectiveness it attests. These letters are in terrible contrast to the one Richard Seton wrote to Robert Harper a month and a half later. Seton explained that he had arrived in October from Gibraltar on “the Ship America Captn. Barrett.”

To pretend, Sir, to give an account of my reasons for leaving Leghorn, to you would be useless—suffice it to say, that religious matters were the principal causes of it: that I have been in the wrong and acted imprudently I candidly confess—and to pretend glazing my faults with excuses, would be but to destroy the merit of confessing them.

Mr. Filicchi gave me $180 when I left: but having ½ a year’s expenses to pay, I had a surplus of $80—a mess bill of 3 Doubloons to Gibraltar left me $30. With $30 I got stores to come to America—and on arrival I went to a miserable place to live, where my expenses have been $22 for two months.
I am now trying to get on board some vessel. I have not written Mama for money as I know her situation. I would live half my life to see her—but fear I never shall again. For 3 weeks I was very sick or I should have walked there.\footnote{157}

It was for this wretched young man’s return that Mother Seton maintained her feeble hold on life. Whether Harper furnished money, or how it was managed, no one can say, but Richard Seton did see his mother once more. He was in Emmitsburg in December 1820 but he did not stay. Two weeks after “her poor heart had keenly felt the pain of last separation,” Richard Seton’s mother died.\footnote{158} But if her prayers counted for him, Richard was not long away. He, himself, died on 26 June 1823, on board the brig \textit{Oswego}, on its passage from Cape Mesurado to St. Jago.\footnote{gg} The Boston paper which published his obituary described him as “Richard B. Seton, Esq. of Baltimore, late U. S. assistant agent at Monrovia.”\footnote{159}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{SetonChildren.jpg}
\caption{Seton Children, Rev. Salvator Burgio, C.M., (c.1950).
(Top Left): William M. Seton; (Top Middle): Anna Maria Seton; (Top Right): Richard Bayley Seton
(Bottom Left): Catherine Charlton Seton; (Bottom Right): Rebecca Mary Seton.}
\end{figure}

\footnote{gg} Richard Seton was never a commissioned officer, but did serve with the Navy as civil servant in the role of captain’s clerk on the U.S.S. \textit{Cyane}, June 1822 to April 1823. This ship was on duty off the African coast, and it was in this way that Seton made his connection with the capital of Liberia. The director of the colony there, recommended that Richard Seton be appointed assistant agent at Cape Mesurado. He contracted a fatal fever from the U.S. minister, Jehudi Ashmun, whom he had nursed back to health and was buried at sea off the coast of Liberia.
CHAPTER 13. THE CHILDREN

Notes

1 Account book of episcopal visits of Archbishop Ambrose Maréchal and Archbishop James Whitfield, 23 September 1818, UNDA. Maréchal told her, “Since my consecration I have received many hundred letters. Very few, perhaps none, have given me so much consolation as yours.” AMSV, Letters, Ambrose Maréchal to Elizabeth Seton, 18 December 1818; Jean Cheverus to Ambrose Maréchal, 18 November 1817, ABA, AASMSU, 14-1-17; John M. Tessier’s Journal, 14 December 1817, AASMSU.

2 Ibid. Mother Seton wrote to Antonio Filicchi, 27 September 1818, “Your friend Mr. Whitefield [sic] has just been here with our blessed Archbishop whom he accompanies on his rounds.” 7.181, Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, CW, 2:580.

3 Simon Bruté, 19 May 1821, ASJPH 1-3-3-12:13.

4 7.181, Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, 27 September 1818, CW, 2:580.

5 John Dubois to Antoine de Pouget Duclaux, Emmitsburg, n.d., AASMSU. Copies of Paris Archives. These copies of letters of John Dubois in the archives of the Society of St. Sulpice in Paris were made by the Archivist of Mount St. Mary’s College, Hugh J. Phillips, from the originals while they were in Baltimore during the war of 1939-1945.

6 ASJPH 7-2-1, 3. See also Rev. Daniel C. Nusbaum, “This Venerable House,” Analecta Selected Studies in the History of Mount St. Mary’s College and Seminary 1, #3(2003), ASJPH 25-4-6.

7 John M. Tessier to John Dubois, 27 January 1816, ASMSU. Dubois, for his part, found that lay servants were most difficult to secure. Americans, he said, did not like to lower themselves; “they prefer to eat bread and water and even beg to putting themselves in service.”

8 John Dubois to Antoine Garnier, Emmitsburg, 14 April 1820, ASMSU. Copies of Paris Archives. Garnier became superior general of the Society of St. Sulpice after Antoine Duclaux.

9 7.9, Elizabeth Seton to Julia Sitgreaves Scott, 23 March 1816, CW, 2:378.

10 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-2, #A14.


13 John Connolly to Elizabeth Seton, New York, 14 July 1817, ASJPH 1-3-3-4:61.

14 7.102, Elizabeth Seton to Robert Fox, 25 July 1817, CW, 2:493.

15 7.103, Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, 1 August 1817, CW, 2:494.
16 John Dubois to John Connolly, Mount St. Mary’s Seminary, 24 July 1817, ASJPH 7-10-2, #6.

17 Missions—Establishments Founded Prior to Union with France, 13 August 1817, ASJPH 11-0-1. Margaret George became sister-servant on 26 May 1819, and Rose White returned to Philadelphia. Mother Seton wrote to John Hickey, “Good Sister Margaret is gone to take care of the dear Orphans in New York to let Sister Rose return to Philadelphia in place of Sister Fanny [Jordan] who has been at death’s door & perhaps so still.” See 7.214, Elizabeth Seton to John Hickey, n.d., CW, 2:613.

18 Robert Fox to Elizabeth Seton, New York, 7 September 1817, ASJPH 1-3-3-4:72.

19 7.112, Elizabeth Seton to Eliza Sadler, 24 August 1817, CW, 2:503.

20 Missions 1809-1850, ASJPH 11-0-5. See Council Minutes, Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s, 1813-1829, 4 September 1818, ASJPH 3-3-5:24, 23.

21 Council Minutes, Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s, 1813-1829, 26 January 1820, ASJPH 3-3-5:31.

22 John Dubois to Cornelius Heeny, 20 October 1821, and 21 November 1821, ASJPH 7-10-2, #1; articles of agreement between Dubois and Heeny. The pay school was suppressed on 7 August 1825.


24 7.259, Elizabeth Seton to Marie-Françoise Chatard, 24 August 1820, CW, 2:665. Mrs. Seton may have had in mind Baltimore and neighboring Conewago, Pennsylvania, where, as she told Antonio Filicchi, “they now prepare us an extensive establishment.” See 7.265, Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, 19 October 1820, CW, 2:670. The Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s did not settle in Conewago, however, until 19 June 1834.

25 Missions 1809–1850, 4 April 1822, ASJPH 11-0-1:10.

26 The American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives. The Catholic University of America, copy of Report to Propaganda, Ambrose Maréchal to Cardinal Litta, Baltimore, 16 October 1818. Hereinafter cited as ACUA.

27 John Dubois to Ambrose Maréchal, 10 June 1820, ABA, AASMSU, 15-U-21.

28 7.265, Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, 19 October 1820, CW, 2:670.

29 7.156, Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, 21 April 1818, CW, 2:549.

30 7.159, Elizabeth Seton to Julia Scott, 5 May 1818, CW, 2:552.
31 Catherine Josephine Seton to Julia Scott, 12 July 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-11: B54; Mary Bayley Post to Elizabeth Seton, New York, 4 August 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:27.

32 Pierre Babade to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 12 July 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-1:71. It is possible Babade got to Emmitsburg after all, for a letter to Dubois written by a Mount St. Mary’s student in August sent regards to both Bruté and Babade. See Dionire to John Dubois, 27 August 1818, ASMSU.

33 Jean Cheverus to Elizabeth Seton, Boston, 11 August 1818, AMSV.


36 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-3, #B171.

37 Simon Bruté to Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, n.d., ASJPH 7-3-1-2, #B27.


42 7.201, Elizabeth Seton to Juliana Sitgreaves Scott, 12 January 1819, CW, 2:599.

43 Jean Cheverus to Ambrose Maréchal, Boston, 7 October 1818, AAB, AASMSU, 14-J-25; Mary Bayley Post to Elizabeth Seton, New York, 25 May 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:26; Catherine Josephine Seton to Elizabeth Seton, Philadelphia, 6 March 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-9:54; Mrs. Eliza Sadler to Elizabeth Seton, New York, 16 April 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:B20. Cheverus said of Matignon, “He died as he lived, a saint.” See 7.150, in a letter to William Seton, 24 March 1818, CW, 2:539. Mother Seton relays the news of William Bayley’s death which she just received from Mary Post. Mary Bayley Post to Elizabeth Seton, New York, 12 February 1816, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:13.

44 7.219, Elizabeth Seton to Catherine Josephine Seton, [28 June 1819], CW, 2:619.

45 Bruté notation, n.d., ASJPH 1-3-3-20B. The journal was published by Isaac Kallock of Elizabeth, New Jersey, in 1817 under the title, Memoirs of Mrs. S—. Bruté stated, “I am sure it is Bishop Hobart
who printed the journal of Mother Seton. She had trusted it to him. He took a copy and he probably makes a private use of it for his devotees.”

Mary Bayley Post to Elizabeth Seton, New York, 5 April 1817, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:14. It is interesting to note that Hobart, who had become diocesan bishop and rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in 1816, had a renewed interest in Mrs. Seton in 1817. “In a late visit from your old friends Bishop and Mrs. Hobart, after many inquiries after you, I showed them your last letter to me. I felt the conviction that the sensible, candid, and amiable exposition of your feelings and motives in regard to religious impressions particularly must gratify every good heart—therefore, particularly one that I believed knew how to appreciate them. I was not mistaken. The high encomium he bestowed on you convinced me you have his former friendship with increased approbation, admiration I think more appropriate.” When Hobart returned Mrs. Seton’s letter to Mrs. Post, he wrote, “Dr. Hobart feels himself very much indebted to Mrs. Post for the opportunity of perusing a letter so interesting as a picture of the most amiable, frank, and affectionate heart of the writer...No person has seen the letter but Mrs. Hobart.” Cf. About Dr. Hobart, 31 March 1817, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:B71. From the tone of these two letters of March and April 1817, it seems difficult to believe a book already in circulation in Baltimore in May 1817, could have been sponsored by the bishop. Melville believes, in the face of so little conclusive proof, that a reasonable doubt may be entertained regarding Bruté’s conviction that Hobart was responsible for the Memoirs of Mrs. S...

Catherine Josephine Seton to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 26 May 1817, ASJPH 1-3-3-9:52.

7.130, Elizabeth Seton to Julia Scott, 19 January 1818, CW, 2:520.

10.3, Catherine Josephine Seton’s Little Red Book, CW, 3a:489. This little book is in the archives of the Daughters of Charity at Emmitsburg. At her death the little volume became the property of her niece who in 1896 presented it to the Daughters of Charity at Emmitsburg. All of the advice in the ensuing paragraphs is taken from this book of “advices.”

Ibid., 490.

Ibid.

Ibid., 491.

Ibid.

Ibid., 492.
Catherine Josephine Seton to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 26 May 1817, ASJPH 1-3-3-9:52.

7.151, Elizabeth Seton to Julia Scott and Catherine Josephine Seton, 4 April 1818, CW, 2:543.

Catherine Josephine Seton to Elizabeth Seton, Philadelphia, 24 February 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-9:53.

Ibid., 55.

Ibid., 56.

7.160, Elizabeth Seton to Seton, 5 May 1818, CW, 2:553.

Ibid. See Mary Bayley Post to Elizabeth Seton, New York, 25 May 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:26. 7.100, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 24 July 1817, CW, 2:490. See Mary Bayley Post to Elizabeth Seton, New York, 25 May 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:26. In 1818 Mary Post wrote that Mr. Bunch had seen in an English paper the death of a Mr. Savage dying without heirs. The title of Lord Rivers and a large income would probably revert to his majesty. Mr. Bunch considered himself a distant branch of the family and was going to England to try for the title. Mary Post concluded, “Should Mary become Lady Rivers and a resident of England I think she will be apt to change her democratic opinions.” Mary Bayley Post to Elizabeth Seton, New York, 4 August 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:27. Mary Bunch, her husband and his mother went to England in August 1818. On 17 November 1818, Helen Bayley Craig wrote, concerning the rumor of the Earldom of Rivers, “as we have heard nothing of it from Mary we conclude it one of those idle stories. . . . His (Bunch’s) letters to Brother are entirely those of a man of business. His last is full of a commercial establishment at Havana.” Helen Bayley Craig to Elizabeth Seton, New York, 17 November 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:B41. In March 1819, Mary Post wrote that it was expected that Mary Fitch Bayley Bunch would leave Liverpool in April to spend the summer in New York where “Mr. Bunch” would meet her. Mary Bayley Post to Elizabeth Seton, New York, 12 March 1819, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:24. Since none of the later references to the Bunches indicate that Bunch succeeded in substantiating his claim to the title and legacy, one wonders if Robert Seton was quite correct in referring to Bunch as “Sir Robert Henry.” See Seton, “Record of the Bayley Family in America,” UNDA. See also Appendix A. Bayley-Seton Genealogy.

7.166, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 7 June 1818, CW, 2:561-562.

Catherine Josephine Seton to Julia Scott, Emmitsburg, 12 July 1818,
John Dubois to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 5 May 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-5:29. Robert Harper had written to Mother Seton, 15 April 1818, announcing the death of his daughter. Robert Goodloe Harper to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 15 April 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-2:42.

Robert Goodloe Harper to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 5 May 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-2:44.

Robert Goodloe Harper to John Dubois, Baltimore, 30 September 1820, ASJPH 1-3-3-2:43. Carroll Manor on the Monocacy River in Frederick County was the nucleus of St. Joseph’s Parish, below Frederick, near Buckeystown. Old Charles Carroll, the Pattersons, Catons, Harpers, McTavishes, and many others contributed to the parish. The Manor was a favorite vacation spot for members of the Carroll family. For a full description of the Harper-Seton friendship, see 7.238, Elizabeth Seton to Julia Scott, CW, 2:641-2.

Catherine Josephine Seton to Julia Scott, Emmitsburg, 15 January 1821, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:B59; Robert Goodloe Harper to John Dubois, Baltimore, 1 April 1821, ASMSU. Schley to John Dubois, 22 January 1821, ASMSU. Mrs. Seton once said, “My mother’s own brother who loved me more than anything in the world made his will of an immense fortune and left me (the lawful heir) only $1000 I believe for I have never heard of it since.” 6.180, Elizabeth Seton to Simon Bruté, CW, 2:293. After Catherine Josephine Seton’s visit to New York in 1818, the hope of receiving the legacy from Dr. Charlton’s widow, Mary de Peyster Charlton, seems to have revived, for Mrs. Seton wrote her son, “Kit says now if Aunt Charlton pays us our little fortune how gladly will I give up my share to Will.” Arthur Burns’ investigation of the Seton-Jevons collection shows that Dr. John Charlton’s will actually provided that both Mary Bayley Post and Elizabeth Bayley Seton should receive $2,500 each. See Arthur Burns, “New Light on Mother Seton,” Historical Records and Studies, XXII (1932), 86.

Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, 1 April 1817, CW, 2:471. In a letter of 18 May 1817, William Seton referred to many previous letters voicing his dissatisfaction. See William Seton to Elizabeth Seton, Leghorn,
18 May 1817, ASJPH 26-0-2, (6). Copy. The original is in ASCSE.

71. 7.82, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, n.d., CW, 2:472.
72. Ibid., 473.
73. 7.105, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, CW, 2:496. Mother Seton was still writing to William on 9 August 1817.
74. Antonio Filicchi to Elizabeth Seton, Leghorn, 14 July 1817, ASJPH 1-3-3-10:47.
75. Ibid., 46.
77. William Seton to Elizabeth Seton, The Manor, 9 September 1817, ASJPH 26-0-2, (12). Copy. The original is in ASCSE.
78. 7.117, Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, 16 September 1817, CW, 2:508.
79. 7.120, Elizabeth Seton to Robert Fox, 10 October 1817, CW, 2:511.
80. 7.124, Elizabeth Seton to Robert Fox, 4 November 1817, and 28 October 1817, CW, 2:514; 7.118, Ibid., CW, 2:509. The University of Notre Dame Archives preserve a fragment of William Seton’s acceptance of a midshipman’s warrant from the Navy Department dated 4 November 1817. Mother Seton had written Julia Scott, 5 October 1817, “William was not twenty-four hours in your city where his good angel had delayed Captain Steward to the very moment, or he would have missed him.” 7.119, Elizabeth Seton to Julia Scott, CW, 2:510.
82. 7.142, Elizabeth Seton to Ellen Wiseman, 20 February 1818, CW, 2:530.
83. Simon Bruté to William Seton, Emmitsburg, 15 February 1818, ASJPH 7-3-1-3:A65.
84. 7.137, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 6 February 1818, CW, 2:524.
86. 7.146, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 10 March 1818, CW, 2:535.
87. William Seton to Elizabeth Seton, 27 February 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-18:58.
89. 7.150, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 24 March 1818, CW, 2:539.
90. 7.160 Elizabeth Seton to Catherine Josephine Seton, Boston, 5 May 1818,
CW, 2:553.

91 7.153, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 6 April 1818, CW, 2:546.


93 7.163, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 10 May 1818, CW, 2:557. She said, “You know I cannot write him (Cheverus) myself about it without letting out the accident which might pain you.” See 7.164, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, Ibid., 558.

94 William Seton to Elizabeth Seton, 3 June 1818, ASJPH 26-0-1, (2). Copy. The original is in AMSJ.


96 7.173, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 21 July 1818, CW, 2:569. In fairness to young Seton it must be added that he wrote to his mother in June, but the letter was delayed. The letter would scarcely have consoled her on the point of religious practice, however, devoted as it was to financial matters and Seton’s anxiety to transfer to the Macedonian. See William Seton to Elizabeth Seton, Boston, 19 June 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-18:57. Bishop Cheverus had written Simon Bruté in April, “William Seton is in good health but has very rarely the liberty to come on land, and his duties prevented him from assisting at our solemnities which have been consoling and were beautiful.” See Jean Cheverus to Simon Bruté, Boston, 9 April 1818, UNDA.

97 Ibid.

98 Jean Cheverus to William or Elizabeth Seton, 11 August 1818, AMSV115Bx1 #17.

99 7.174, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 1 August 1818, CW, 2:571. See Jean Cheverus to Seton, 11 August 1818, AMSV.

100 William Seton to Elizabeth Seton, Boston, 29 August 1818, ASJPH 1-3-3-18:59.


102 7.188, Elizabeth Seton to Ellen Wiseman, [October 1818], CW, 2:587.

103 Catherine Josephine Seton to William Seton, 20 October 1818, ASJPH 26-0-1, (20). Copy. The original is in AMSV. See 7.185, Elizabeth Seton and Catherine Josephine Seton to William Seton, 21 October 1818, CW, 2:583. William Seton made this last visit to his mother just prior to this date.

104 7.185, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 21 October 1818, CW, 2:584.
95 A-7.179, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 8 September 1818, CW, 2:761.
97 7.226, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 7 November 1819, CW, 2:627.
98 Simon Brute’s notebook on character, Richard Seton, ASMSU.
99 Ledger 1813-1816, Richard Seton, ASMSU.
100 Richard Seton to John Hickey, 12 September 1816, AASMSU.
101 Richard Seton to John Hickey, 11 June 1817, AASMSU.
102 6.199, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 4 August 1815, 18 March 1816, CW, 2:337; 7.8, Elizabeth Seton to Seton, CW, 2:375.
103 Mary Bayley Post to Elizabeth Seton, New York, 7 March 1815, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:19. Mrs. Post had been thinking of William Seton when she made the suggestion.
104 7.37, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 2 July 1816, CW, 2:409.
105 7.11, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 3 April 1816, CW, 2:382.
106 7.8, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 18 March 1816, CW, 2:375.
107 7.9, Elizabeth Seton to Julia Scott, 23 March 1816, CW, 2:379.
109 Hamilton Owens, Baltimore on the Chesapeake (Garden City, 1941), 203-205.
110 Richard Seton to William Seton, 9 May 1816, UNDA.
111 7.11, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 3 April 1816, CW, 2:381.
115 7.37, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 2 July 1816, CW, 2:410.
116 Catherine Josephine to Elizabeth Seton, 16 July 1816, ASJPH 1-3-3-9:50.
117 Catherine Josephine Seton to Julia Scott, 14 September 1816, ASJPH 1-3-3-11:B51.
118 7.48, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 4 September 1816, CW, 2:423.
119 Richard Bayley Seton to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 9 June 1816, ASJPH 26-0-2, (13). Copy. The original is in AMSV.
120 Richard Seton to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 14 June 1816, ASJPH 1-3-3-18:51.
121 Catherine Josephine Seton to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 16 July 1816, ASJPH 1-3-3-9:50.
122 William Seton to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 3 September 1816, ASJPH 26-0-1, (2). Copy. The original is in AMSJ.

378
Richard Bayley Seton to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 12 October, and 13 December 1816, ASJPH 26-0-2, (12). Copy. The original in ASCSE.

Ibid., 12 October 1816.

7.78, Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, 24 February 1817, CW, 2:468.
7.84, Elizabeth Seton to Julia Scott, 10 April 1817, CW, 2:476.

Richard Seton to John Hickey, Baltimore, 11 June 1817, ASMSU.

Richard Seton to John Dubois, Baltimore, 20 June 1817, ASMSU.

7.100, Elizabeth Seton to William Seton, 24 July 1817, CW, 2:490. Richard wrote to his mother, Elizabeth Seton, “I have no contract or bargain but I leave it all to you and dear Mr. Dubois. If you two like it, Amen.” See Richard Bayley Seton to Elizabeth Seton, 19 June 1817, ASJPH 26-0-2, (12). There is no evidence as to what answer either Mother Seton or John Dubois made, but the offer was not accepted. Copy. The original is in ASCSE.

Ibid., 9 August 1817, CW, 2:496.

7.101, Elizabeth Seton to Julia Scott, 24 July 1817, CW, 2:491.
7.118, Elizabeth Seton to Robert Fox, 28 September 1817, CW, 2:509; William Seton to Elizabeth Seton, Baltimore, 19 September 1817, ASJPH 1-3-3-18:52.

7.119, Elizabeth Seton to Julia Scott, 5 October 1817, CW, 2:510.

7.117, Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, 16 September 1817, CW, 2:507.

Antonio Filicchi to Elizabeth Seton, Leghorn, 5 January 1818, ASJPH 26-0-2, (10). Copy. Original is in AMSJ.

7.250 Elizabeth Seton to Ellen Wiseman, [29 June 1820], CW, 2:657.

Richard Bayley Seton to Elizabeth Seton, Leghorn, 27 January, 30 April, 1 May, 10 June, 1 July; ASJPH 26-0-2, (6). Copy; original in ASCSH; 21 August 1818, ASJPH 26-0-1, (2). Copy; original in AMSJ.

7.228, Elizabeth Seton to Marie-Françoise Chatard, 11 November 1819, CW, 2:629.

7.246, Elizabeth Seton to Richard Seton, 8 May 1820, CW, 2:650.

7.250, Elizabeth Seton to Ellen Wiseman, n.d., CW, 2:657. Internal evidence indicates this letter was written on 1 May 1820.

Antonio Filicchi to Elizabeth Seton, Leghorn, 8 August 1820, ASJPH 26-0-2, (10). Copy. Original is in AMSJ.

Ibid.

7.265, Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, 19 October 1820, CW, 2:670.


Cecilia O’Conway to Simon Bruté, account of Mother Seton’s last days, ASJPH 1-3-3-12:6. See A-7.268, Account by Rev. Simon Bruté of Mother Seton’s Last Days, CW, 2:764-70.

For an inquiry into the public careers of both Richard Seton and William Seton, see Mother Seton Guild Bulletin, IV (September 1942), 1-2. A copy of Richard’s obituary is found in Seton, Memoir and Letters, II, 304.