

# Salesian Bulletin

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Vol. X.

*Beatus qui intelligit super egenum et pauperem:  
in die mala liberabit eum Dominus - [Ps. XL.]*

*Sanctus*

DA MIHI

ANIMAS CAETERA TOLLE



SCRIPTURA SACRA

BECHIS MIC., Sacerdos

## REPERTORIUM BIBLICUM

seu totius Sacrae Scripturae concordantiae iuxta vulgatae editionis exemplar Sixti V P. M. iussu recognitum et Clementis VIII auctoritate editum, praeter alphabeticum ordinem in grammaticalem redactae. — 2 volumina pp. 1150-1156 . . . . . Libellae 12 —

A missionis pretio solutum » 14 —

Volumina contacta semipelle, fortiter et eleganter, sectione rubra . . . » 18 —

A missionis pretio solutum » 21 —

## NOVUM TESTAMENTUM

Editio post criticas novissima una cum concordantia evangelica elaboratissima. Vol. pp. 414

Volumina contacta linteo . . . . . Libellae 2 —

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# The Salesian Bulletin

Organ of the Association of Salesian Co-operators

Via Cottolengo 32, Turin, Italy.

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## AUXILIUM CHRISTIANORUM.

**O**UR special celebration of the Month of May is but an extension and a more careful practice of the traditional Catholic custom. Perhaps, however, it is to assume too much, if it be readily taken for granted that our Readers, whether regular or casual, whether long-standing or new, are familiar with the grounds which have made the month of May with us a period of devoted service and special honour to Our Lady Help of Christians.

To some extent it is a matter of association, and of tradition inherited from the followers of Don Bosco, belonging to the generations immediately preceding us; they in their turn have learnt it from the Ven. Servant of God himself. Dealing with the devotion under this title, now become so familiar and so frequently invoked, writers are fond of bringing forward the ancient

history of the title, and they do well; for to some minds the mere fact that a devotion is modern or recently developed is enough to discredit it in their estimation. But these historical proofs of the use of the title, while placing beyond doubt the fact of its ancient origin, seem to throw into clearer light the part played by Don Bosco in making this devotion a means of spiritual consolation and strength to thousands and hundreds of thousands of souls.

His life, almost from the dawn of reason to its close, shows him to have been the recipient of remarkable graces, dispensed to him with lavish hand by the *Mater divinae gratiae*; it shows, too, that if ever a vocation was clearly revealed to any man, his was so revealed. When the actual realisation of his vocation was begun, what should we expect him to do, in the light of his constant experience, if not to lead his



boys and followers, and hearers to her, who had been ever his own benefactress? And looking round upon their great spiritual needs, as well as their temporal necessities, how could he better describe her to them, than by a title which appealed directly to their immediate and actual state of mind, and to the needs of their souls. *Maria, Auxilium Christianorum* was the title which placed the wants of the people before the ready and powerful advocate, and if proofs of its efficacy were needed they come pouring in from all quarters. The graces and favours obtained by invoking her under this title were so remarkable and striking, that nothing less than a great wave of enthusiasm rolled over towns, provinces and countries. An *Ave Maria* often sufficed for the Servant of God to obtain the most astonishing graces and temporal favours for those in need or distress. Records of some few of the most striking have been given in our pages, but it is more by the association of a hundred influences and suggestions arising from these wonders, that the devotion has taken such a hold on those, who have become at all intimate with Don Bosco's life and work.

As with other devotions, or the larger number of them, certain places and times are more closely linked with its practice. The Church of Our Lady Help of Christians at Turin is such a centre. It was built by Don Bosco chiefly as an act of homage and gratitude to his heavenly patroness, but he also knew that it would be a powerful factor in the development of his work among the young, and among the people at large. To mention the erection of this church is to tread, as it were, on miraculous ground, and to point to what Don Bosco himself described as miracles in stone. He once declared that every brick, and every stone or marble pillar represented an

answer to prayer, obtained by the intercession of the Help of Christians. The High Altar has above it the famous picture, painted according to his own intimate realisation of what the title should mean to Christendom. Such numbers of favours have been obtained by clients there, that the figures of Our Lady and the Divine Child in this picture have been crowned by command of the Sovereign Pontiff, His Holiness Leo XIII, while his successor raised the status of the Church to that of a *Basilica* by which title it is now officially known. It had always been styled previously the *Sanctuary* of Our Lady Help of Christians, and by that name it is still called, and probably will long be called, by those who have become familiar with its glories and associations.

Such are a few of the ideas to which we referred in the beginning of this article, as being the groundwork of that special love and devotion to Mary Help of Christians, which is so spontaneously rendered by those who are connected with Don Bosco and his work. And they are indeed but a few of the ideas; for the history of that work, throughout its fifty or sixty years of development, it so closely bound up with this devotion, that the one is almost the result of the other or vice versa. One incident is typical.

The Missionaries whom Don Bosco despatched to Patagonia, on the arduous task of converting the natives of those parts, were already long experienced in the practice of the devotion to Our Lady Help of Christians. In fact they had learnt it at its fountain-head, had been eye-witnesses of some of its marvellous effects, and had undertaken their difficult, but glorious enterprise under its banner and protection. In a thousand ways they now found it to be their shield and refuge.

In order to begin their work among the Alacaluff Indians, living among the

channels and islands of the Straits of Magellan, the Salesian Missionaries had chosen Dawson Island as most central and best adapted for their purpose. The place was inhabited solely by these Indians, and although it contained woodlands and pasture it was regarded with terror by the Europeans and by the natives of South America on the mainland; and with good reason, for some who had ventured to enter the forests of the island had never returned, for they were betrayed and slaughtered by the savages. These latter had frequently attacked the crews of the small vessels which sometimes stopped on their shores, and had murdered the men and seized all that the vessels contained.

The island belonged politically to Chile, so that the Missionaries would have to apply to the authorities of that Republic for whatever concessions they wanted. They did this through the Governor of the southern districts, and this gentleman seconded the request by a hearty recommendation written at the foot of the Missionaries' letter. They asked the Chilean Government to concede to them gratuitously for twenty years the use of the whole of Dawson Island, so that they might civilise the Indians they found there. They undertook to build a school, hospital and Church, besides their own residence and the settlements for the Indians. They particularly desired the whole island, not because it was necessary for their success, but in order to prevent the settling of importers of intoxicating drinks, who would undoubtedly ruin the work of the missionaries; but when the Government showed some hesitation in granting the whole, they put in a request for a half, and this the Northern half of the island.

Now the minister above-mentioned, who had seconded the application, and

who had long professed himself a close friend of the Missionaries, was apparently playing a double game; for in spite of his recommendation, he wrote privately to the Government, expressing sentiments that were the direct contrary. He said that it did not appear desirable that a concession should be made to the Salesians for twenty years, and that if the Government wished to be particularly generous, they should concede the southern half, which was very marshy and unsuitable to our projects. Mgr. Fagnano, the leader of the missionaries, saw the letter afterwards on the table, in the study of the President of the Republic.

The Missionaries were in great anxiety as to the delay and difficulty with regard to this important matter, so they had recourse at once to Our Lady Help of Christians, placing the cause of the Indians in her hands and under her patronage. What was the result? While things had previously looked so dark, all anxiety was now swept away, for the Chilean Government sent a reply by which they granted everything, just as it was asked for, namely the gratuitous use of the whole island for twenty years.

This is typical of the experiences of the missionaries in regard to their work; but it would be endorsed and re-echoed wherever the devotion has been practised. It is therefore an expression of his inmost convictions, and almost the outcome of a second nature, when our Superior General recommends the Co-operators to cherish the devotion to the Help of Christians. Its results do not appear to grow less efficacious or even less striking, and in the midst of so many afflictions he urges them to have earnest and confident recourse to her, who has proved her might in ages past.





## An account of Salesian Missionary Work by Father Grisar (of the Society of Jesus).

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From time to time we have been pleased to set before our Readers accounts of our missionary work from an outsider's point of view. Fr. Grisar, of the Society of Jesus, has long been an acute observer of our Institute and of its development, and is especially in touch with its missionary side.

He looks first at the inception of the work, and finds that such vitality and zeal on the part of the Founder would find an outlet in missionary work, as well as in the Institutions at home. « In a few years, » he says, « the Institute of Don Bosco became a considerable factor in the great work of the Catholic Missions. The force, the vigour, which gave to this grain of mustard seed so speedy a development and such abundant fruit, were due to the evident assistance of God, to the ardent zeal and Faith of the Founder, and to the prudence displayed by him and his fellow-workers.

The Ven. Don Bosco was an organiser of genius who made use of every means at hand to attain his lofty purpose. He and his followers have given to the work of the Missions an impulse worthy of the highest appreciation. Their activity in Missionary countries in education and improving the teaching of Arts and Trades is worthy of all praise. In their own country they were successful in arousing interest in the Missions and promoting vocations for them. Many institutions, now flourishing, were due to their experience; the means used by other Societies were adopted and perfected and became much more productive in their hands. Their whole work bears the stamp of an alert diligence which tends to constant progress.

Don Bosco at once grasped the fundamental condition for success in missionary enterprise—numerous and capable workers. Although his was a youthful society and had continuous and ever growing work in Europe, he could provide numerous bands of Missionaries for far-off places. The activities of the Salesians among the young gave them exceptional opportunities for arousing ecclesiastical and religious vocations, for they were already engaged in schools and colleges as well as in Sunday and Evening Oratories. Even in the countries beyond the sea, the followers of Don Bosco made a strong point of this youthful ardour, and flourishing Novitiates were soon founded in South America which had hitherto been slow in developing ecclesiastical vocations.

But Missions could not be supported without material means, and in this direction Don Bosco had an organisation which would help him to solve his difficulties. The *Co-operators* worked in connection with his Order, and as a large number of them, perhaps the majority, were not in a position to render any personal aid, they made up for it by giving their alms towards the work which others had in hand. Thus they often came forward when the needs of the Missions were pressing, and particularly when the new expeditions were being launched, for these were always very costly affairs.

The Jesuit Father then goes on to give an outline of the Association of Co-operators, their constitution as a Third Order, their work and privileges and simple obligations—points, with which our Readers are familiar. To show the strength and wide-spread character of their Association he mentions the great Congresses which have been held at Bologna, at Buenos Ayres, at Turin, at Milan, at Lima, at Santiago in Chile. Don Bosco's practical foresight is also evidenced in his founding a monthly periodical, which keeps the whole of this vast organisation in touch with its centre, and is a constant reminder of the many good works which depend on the Association for their support.

Perhaps we have not taken enough notice, of or attached sufficient importance to the reports of the Missionaries, which did not deal with the exciting events that happen in their experience. But others have been more appreciative of their researches in geographical and ethnological matters, and the publications of the Missionary Father Malan (now raised to the episcopate) on the Indians of Matto Grosso were awarded the gold medal of the Geographical Society of Paris. In the estimation of Father Grisar S. J., the *Bulletin* is equally effective in promoting missionary interest among Europeans, and in supplying to many a source of religious reading and knowledge, which they would otherwise never obtain.

The author then goes on to discuss the purely educational work. « Keeping faithfully to the spirit of Don Bosco, » he says, « his followers rightly endeavour to interest in their work, both the ecclesiastical and civil authorities. Although in some of the States and cities of South America Freemasonry is dominant, the Salesians have succeeded everywhere in spite of it. Culti-

vating patriotism among their boys, doing honour to the established powers in musical and theatrical celebrations, they have gained the sympathy and friendship of authorities, both in Church and State. The Bishops and the Presidents of the States are visitors to the Schools and work-shops, and are delighted to preside at the various exhibitions of work, distributions of prizes and scholastic contests.

The people of South America are inclined to favour novelties and display, and accordingly this educational advertisement answers a demand; but the actual, tangible results of the school-work are solid testimony behind any appearance of show, and it is these results that count with the farseeing rulers of the people.

The Sons of Don Bosco have carried to the States of South America that of which they were most in need—the means for developing arts, commerce and agriculture; their professional schools are conducted upon methods which have been perfected by experience; following well-considered programmes of instruction, prepared by Don Bosco with his recognised genius for such things, and developed in keeping the progress of each department. The pupils are trained both in theory and practice, and half-yearly examinations test and demonstrate their acquirements; the interesting exhibitions of the work done show to the numerous visitors the eminent success attained.

Throughout South America the Salesians have founded Schools for all classes, and all alike have flourished phenomenally. One may be taken as an example. The fine boarding school and college at Nitheroy, near Rio Janeiro, enjoys a great reputation throughout Brazil, and is regularly visited by the President of the State. The Sons of Don Bosco, by means of their various schools, educate for the commonwealths of South America a vigorous, industrious generation, and give to the Church and country what was largely lacking until now, practical believers amongst the middle classes.

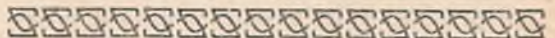
To maintain zeal for religion amongst the young men, Associations of Former Pupils have been founded. In 1911 there were 2000 members in Buenos Aires alone. They regularly visit their former schools, make general Communions, join in the national pilgrimages, have their clubs and societies and all the network of a complex and flourishing organisation. The Societies attached to each school and thus to each state have recently been united into a Federation, whose gathering are attended by hundreds of members, and are held in turn in the large cities. Thus there is always established a powerful support for future generations as they leave school

and begin to take their appointed place in the walks of life.

But the poor and friendless are by no means neglected. In fact, as an important part of their programme, they have from the very beginning devoted their first care to this class of boys. The Sunday Oratories have nowhere been more successful in dealing with the problem of Religious Instruction and training, and have developed all their branches of music and theatricals. In connection with them, classes for secular instruction have always been encouraged, and are carried on in the evenings of the week. The small numbers of the Clergy would have otherwise made it impossible to give religious instruction to such numbers, or to prepare them for the Sacraments.

Ten years ago there were already large numbers on the registers of the Sunday Oratories. In Argentina there were 6000; in Brazil 2700; in Uruguay and Paraguay 2000; and other States brought the numbers up to 16,000. The boys seemed to flock to these assemblies which in the games and amusements provided something corresponding to their love of noise and movement. Throughout the whole of the organisation Don Bosco's system of education is strictly adhered to.

The same means that are employed by the Salesians to gain the goodwill of the Civil and Ecclesiastical Authorities are adapted to attract the people as a whole. Where many are inclined to be indifferent to Religion, these means are not to be despised. In connexion with the Schools there are frequent exhibitions and academies, in which the band of youthful performers is always a strong attraction; public displays of drill and athletics are particularly favoured, and all of these occasions bring the people in contact with the Schools, and hence with the churches which are nearly always attached to them. The ecclesiastical functions are conducted in accordance with the national taste, and are the occasions of much public display. Many of the Salesian Churches are easily in the first rank of the whole continent for size and architectural pre-eminence. The Association of Co-operators is flourishing in all the towns that have a Salesian Institute.



*During the period of the war, our periodical can only make its appearance every two months: but in normal times it will be published every month as heretofore.*





# News from the Missions.

## TANJORE INDIA.

*The following account has been in our hands for some time, and would have been published much earlier had affairs been in their normal state. This circumstance, however, does not detract from its interest.*

The Salesian Fathers in India have had much up-hill labour to perform and many difficulties to contend with. Their first work-shops, for the sixty orphans entrusted to them, were of the simplest construction, consisting merely of two poor sheds covered with palm leaves; a structure so flimsy in character, that the hurricanes more than once easily demolished it. Moreover this improvised building, if that name of dignity may be bestowed upon it, had to do duty for many purposes; it was by turn workshop, classroom and dormitory; the boys had indeed another room for sleeping, but an invasion of insects had made it temporarily untenable, and they contented themselves with sleeping-mats upon the ground.

Nor was this the only inconvenience. The Assistant recently had to retire to rest with a loaded rifle beside him; this had nothing to do with the discipline of the boys, but was a precaution against the nocturnal visitations of thieves, who with their consummate skill and heartless effrontery, had managed to enter the weaving-sheds in spite of careful watch, and had carried off from the looms all the cloth woven during the week. In spite however of these drawbacks good work has certainly been done and the Government has shown its appreciation by approving of the School as suitable for manual instruction, and will give a grant to those departments which are directed by a certified instructor. The Carpenter's shop has been provided with modern tools and motor power is being installed. The Minister of labour has provided special tools for fine, delicate work. With a more complete staff much progress could be easily made and the Government grant would be raised. The necessity of this last point will be realised when it is remembered that the countries from which most help was received are engaged in the great conflict, and find that

their more immediate needs make an almost exclusive demand upon their resources.

At the time of writing the little weavers were busy preparing for an exhibition which must have long since taken place. In the government examinations they gained several honours and distinctions and were bent on winning the medal. They will probably succeed; for the Indian boy is intelligent enough, and his mental powers develop sooner than those of the European boy; his imitative faculty is exceptionally strong; he is gentle in disposition and easily trained, and if he can gain the habit of perseverance he will do well.

Particularly here in Southern India, where European usages have made less progress, the native customs approach those of the savage type. The dwellings are wretched mud huts thatched with leaves, containing neither chair nor table. Personal clothing is of the scantiest and table utensils are unnecessary, since their food consists almost entirely of rice; a large leaf does duty for a plate. They take their food while sitting on the ground with their legs crossed; this is their favourite position whether for work or recreation. A mat is sufficient for their bed and beyond these simple tastes they seem to have no higher aspirations or ambitions; they do not keep a penny for the morrow, and leave no other inheritance to their children than the riches of their proverbial debts and the sacred customs of caste which they have preserved intact for so many centuries.

To instil into these boys the love of labour, the habit of forethought, and the spirit of Christian charity which would overstep the fast-bound limits of other castes, these are some of the difficulties; and our system of education is already bearing fruit, particularly, among those who have left the school after completing their training. Moreover there is more than one native lad going through courses of study which will make them useful assistants to us in instructing the little Indians, and will perhaps lead them on to the higher courses which lead to the ministry of the Church. His Lordship Mgr. De Castro is ever indefatigable in his support of our work and is in fact proposing that our sphere



of action should be extended from the school to the parish of Tanjore. These few items are sufficient to show that there is great scope, but more labourers will be absolutely necessary if these greater results are to be obtained.

FRANCIS CARPENI, (*Missionary*).

## FROM INDANZA (Ecuador).

A missionary's account says: Amid this forest of Indanza in distant Ecuador we have at last established a new Missionary residence; it is poor and of the simplest construction, but of good size and as solid as can be made with the material at our disposal. Our work must have had the approval of the powers of evil, for experience has shown that is always given in one way. Whatever obstacles the forest might be suspected of containing were put forth to hinder the coming of the missionary; he was weak and unskilful as far as forest-life was concerned, without suitable food, with no shelter; under these untoward circumstances the hurricanes and torrential rains made their appearance, and did their best during two months to literally damp his ardour. Had not Heaven given some special assistance he would certainly have succumbed beneath so many sufferings in the dark and tortuous labyrinth of these inhospitable woods.

But at last we reached the locality previously determined upon by Mgr. Costamagna, and set to work to make a clearing. It was a laborious undertaking, and was just showing signs of progress when the savages in the neighbourhood seemed to take offence at it, for they began a series of violent acts, which were far more serious to cope with, than the inclement weather and the hard work of making a clearing.

Braving the affair out appeared to be of little use, so we decided that it was more prudent to abandon the position and choose another some distance away. In this we were successful, but the heavy trials that followed were the more difficult to bear as they were the more surprising. The priest who had accompanied me fell ill, and there was nothing for it but carry him back in a litter to the nearest settlement, fifty miles away, where some medical treatment could be obtained; that was not all, for shortly afterwards the two lay-brothers fell ill as well, and I found myself alone in the forest, my own health threatening to give way under the privation, and with the gloomiest of prospects. But it proved the necessary sowing of the seed, and the difficulties were eventually overcome.

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The region of Indanza is practically unknown, even to those who dwell near its borders. It is a valley lying along a bend of the river Indanza, and as such is an important position for it gives access to the numerous Indian tribes, and also to the navigable river, the Santiago. Its soil is of luxuriant fertility and produces both native and imported crops in abundance; its climate is pleasant and healthy. It is however very hilly, being made up, in fact, of a series of heights, whose flanks are covered with the verdant mantle of the tropical forest. This formation has the advantage of preventing the development of swamps, for the streams are carried away down the slopes, and thus the region is free from the unhealthy exhalations which prevail over some regions of the tropics.

The fauna are particularly interesting. They include the gazelle, the tapir, the wild boar; birds are of every variety and of splendid plumage, but some of its productions must be ranked with its enemies, for it is troubled with the vampire and several species of similar insects and by serpents of considerable size. But it may be questioned if the Jivaro has a worse enemy to his peace and happiness than he is himself.

Just round about our dwelling there are about a hundred of this native tribe and many more are to be found further inland. Their language has many similarities with those of tribes already known to us and partly civilised, but they will have no treaty with these tribes and are in fact seldom at peace amongst themselves. They have no recognised society or history, no laws or even well-established traditions. They live for the present and make whatever arrangements the actual circumstances of the present demand. The Jivaro is shrewd, but brutalised by the most degrading cruelty. He is ingenious enough in regard to the construction of his house, the fashioning of his wearing apparel, and the manufacture of his weapons of war; but beyond that he has not progressed an inch, and, left to himself, probably never would. The Cordilleras which separate him from the civilised world and the almost impenetrable forest which is his abode have contributed to make the Jivaros self-sufficing; the great fertility of the soil makes him independent and arrogant; he has no need of anyone and does not wish to be disturbed in his depraved habits, and, as a matter of fact, resents any intrusion upon his forest retreat.

As soon as we began some instruction on religious subjects we became aware of their superior intellectual capacities. Many of the young chil-

dren and some of the older ones already know by heart the catechism compiled for them in their dialect by Mgr. Costamagna. But this will not do much, if we cannot discover a method of withdrawing them from the influence of their savage and corrupt instincts, against which various religious bodies have previously striven in vain. A beginning has been made, but between that and the completion of the edifice, there may be many years of difficult labour and heart rending disappointments, yet it is through similar stages that our previous victories have been won.

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Experience has proved that the settlement of savages is most likely to succeed, when it is not too far away from the colonies which are being established and developed by the whites. Hence our clearing and building in the forest were situated about fifty miles from a township and with some settlers not too far away. On our arrival we perceived that these settlers or colonists lived in complete isolation, owing either to the distance between their land or from the absence of roads. But scarcely had we opened our chapel for Mass and instruction when the whole aspect changed. The colonists made pathways through the forest, each coming from his own direction towards the mission-house, for they all knew instinctively that Religion was a friend to those that labour and suffer hardships. On Festivals they spend several hours at our residence, and while I write there are here a number of these forest and farm-labourers, who have come to make a three days' preparation for their Easter Communion. The Mission in fact has brought an increase of population, and the authorities of Ecuador are desirous of promoting it in every way. Mgr. Costamagna has himself been out here to the forest to visit us. He stopped at all the villages on the road to give his pastoral blessing and some fatherly encouragement, and though in his seventieth year he hurried on to Indanza, through extensive forests, bristling with dangers—an unknown district without roads or pathways. At the top of the ridge of the Andes, whence an extensive view is presented to the gaze on either side, we stopped to look at the landscape. Down in the forest land below were the tribes, to which our latest missionary venture was directed, and His Lordship was pensive, wondering when success would attend so many labours and endeavours. Further on a few huts told us that some settlers must be about, and in a short time a gathering of poor abourers was assembled, and the Bishop made them a brief address. His words inspired them

with new hope and confidence in God, and the scene presented by the bishop preaching to his scattered flock in the midst of the forest was profoundly moving in its apostolic zeal and simplicity.

Yet one must always be prepared for sudden dangers in these parts. We were proceeding on our way amid glorious sunshine, which threw the hills around into a wonderful variety of colour and shade, when suddenly the horse on which the bishop rode stumbled in some roots. It fell over a rock, and His Lordship was thrown towards a dangerous incline. I shouted for help, but some bushes, growing out of the bank, had already caught him in their entanglements, and stopped his fall. If it had not been for them he must have fallen to certain death. That danger past, we perceived that our troubles were not yet over, for the horse had fallen into a deep ditch, and though it struggled to get out, it ran the risk, in doing so, of tumbling down a precipice. We had been forced to leave our guide behind on account of a previous accident, so that we felt ourselves to be in a hopeless muddle. We therefore recommended our tottering fortunes to God and set about rescuing the animal as best we could; it was assuredly only the assistance of Providence that brought success to our efforts, for in spite of our little experience in managing horses, we got this one out of his ditch without much difficulty. Once more we resumed our journey.

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Was it a co-incidence, or merely chance, that made it fall out on the Feast of the Epiphany—the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles—that Mgr. Costamagna offered the Holy Sacrifice for the first time in these untouched forests? It looked very much like laying the foundations of the work of the redemption of these parts, which he there and then dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As outward symbols of our intentions, and also with a view to enlisting powerful Patrons on our side, we that day set up two statues which we had brought with us. They were of Our Lord and Our Blessed Lady, and they seemed to take natural possession of their realm as they surveyed the forest, which contains lurking away so much savagery to be tamed.

But some little time has already passed since these initiations. We have heard already young Indian voices singing hymns, the words being a translation into their own tongue of our hymn to the Blessed Virgin. Numerous Baptisms and Confirmations have been administered, and there has also been a Christian marriage between



two Jivaros, a spectacle witnessed by large numbers of natives, and made as solemn as possible for the general instruction and edification.

The first-fruits have been consoling, and give every promise of a rich harvest, but the above account provides a slight indication of what labours fall upon the shoulders of the Missionaries. Not only are much larger numbers essential to permanent work, but those actually on

the staff must be periodically relieved for rest, and for recovery from the effects of their labours and self-sacrifice. To provide these we confidently appeal to our brethren and to our Co-operators whose combined assistance will enable us to win over the Jivaros definitely to Christianity and civilisation.

A. DEL CURTO, *Salesian Missionary.*

## To the Co-operators of the United States.

THE many works which the Salesians in the United States are carrying on with great zeal and energy are now to have an important addition. It is a sign that the activity, characteristic of the country, is not devoted only to the usual forms of prosperity, but that the interests of religion and the higher welfare of the people are equally to the fore.

This enterprise is the erection of a NEW CHURCH, DEDICATED TO OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, in East 12th Street, New York City. In treating of the work of the Salesians in America, we have frequently mentioned the endeavours and achievements of the priests engaged in this part of the city, but so far they have had to rest content with carrying on their religious work in the crypt of the Church which was completed and opened for use in September 1911. But now His Eminence Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York, has decided that it is time to bring the work to a completion, by building the superstructure or Church itself. Anyone in touch with the parochial needs of the neighbourhood will agree that it is high time to provide this accommodation for the Sunday services, and thus to enable the work to develop on the larger lines which the future seems to promise.

But that is not the only reason. The Devotion to Our Lady Help of Christians is spreading more and more, and it is only fitting that the Church dedicated to her in New York should no longer remain as it is. The building to be raised will be a Sanctuary worthy of its name, and in keeping with the great churches which

the sons of Don Bosco, following in his footsteps, have raised by means of their Co-operators in many parts of the world. We could not attempt to produce anything which would be behind these famous churches, or which would not be a worthy monument to Our Lady Help of Christians in modern times.

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Hence in spite of the varied conditions which the war imposes upon everyone, the building is to be put in hand without delay, for its necessity is becoming more and more apparent. The cost will be considerable. The structure itself, without any consideration of decoration or altars and other requisites will need an outlay of many thousand dollars.

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A periodical which deals with the affairs of the Salesians in the U. S. A. gives an interesting notice of the Provincial's visit to the Holy See. Father Coppo had returned to Europe in connection with the ever growing work of his province, and whilst in Rome he was received in private audience by the Holy Father, who discussed the work of the Salesians in America, and also the progress of religious activity in general. He expressed particular appreciation of the endeavours of His Eminence Cardinal Farley to deal with the religious problems, arising from the great numbers of emigrants in his Archdiocese.

The Holy Father granted to Father Coppo the privilege of imparting the Apostolic Blessing

in all the churches and institutes established by the Salesians in the United States, and a special blessing besides to their benefactors and Co-operators wherever they may be. During his conversation, Father Coppo mentioned the zeal and good work of Mr. John McGrane, who has been a distinguished benefactor to the Salesians. His Holiness thereupon wrote in English a special blessing for this worthy Co-operator.

It was worded thus:

«To our beloved son, John J. McGrane and to his family, we impart with the greatest pleasure the Apostolic blessing.

BENEDICTUS P. P. XV ».

Rome, October 16th 1916.

Mr. McGrane is the first American to receive an autograph letter written in English by any Pope. This same Co-operator and prominent Catholic gentleman was honoured by His Holiness Pope Pius X who conferred on him the decoration «*Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*», and also made him a Knight of St. Gregory and a Knight Commander.

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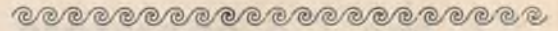
From many parts, reports of various activities are received, whether they concern the clubs and parochial organisations, or the work of the Schools and Sunday Oratories. In all of these Fr. Coppo has given an account of his visit to Europe, and his interview with the Holy Father has been the cause of much congratulation and encouragement. These events were very appropriately connected with the celebration of the Feast of our Patron Saint, which was everywhere kept in befitting state.

A great commemorative gathering was held in the «Salesian Hall» attached to the Church of SS. Peter and Paul in San Francisco. There was a special lecture dealing with the Salesian work, and the President of the «Don Bosco Council» also gave an eloquent address. The altar boys performed a musical play written by the Rt. Rev. Mgr. Costamagna, and this item was largely instrumental in the success of the meeting.

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During Lent special services were held in the Salesian Churches in New York, and a mission

was preached beginning on Passion Sunday. The children of the Festive Oratory at Mott St. have been preparing for their First Communion and Confirmation, which were to take place on the 6th of May. Some six hundred children were being prepared for this occasion, which makes one of the memorable days of the year for them and their parents. Particulars of this will be forthcoming in our next issue.



## INDULGENCES

which may be gained by the Co-operators.

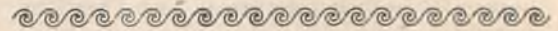
The Association of Salesian Co-operators is endowed with many spiritual privileges, and plenary indulgences have been granted on many days throughout the year.

Approaching dates are:

The Ascension, May 17th.

Whit Sunday, May 27th.

SS. Peter and Paul, June 29th.



*Those who wish to be enrolled in the Association of Salesian Cooperators, to receive the Salesian Bulletin, to have explanations of, or to assist any of the various works of Don Bosco, should apply to the Superiors of Salesian houses, or directly to the Superior General, Salesian Oratory, Via Cottolengo, 32 Turin, Italy.*



*The Salesian Bulletin is published every month, with illustrations, and is sent regularly to the Co-operators and to all friends and admirers of the Works of Don Bosco, leaving to each one's charity to contribute by a free offering, which may be annual, on behalf of the Salesian works. All offerings should be sent to the Superior General, Salesian Oratory, Via Cottolengo, 32 Turin, Italy.*





# Salesian Notes and News.

MAY AND JUNE

This issue does duty for two very important months in the Calendar of our Society, and therefore in that of the Co-operators, for the whole of our work tends towards, and aims at, the union of heart and mind with those very interests, which these two months bring before us. All religious work, in the Church has for its object, either directly or indirectly, the drawing of man nearer to God by the fervour of his life and the cultivation of virtue. This is the direct aim of Don Bosco's work. He was deeply and intimately persuaded (or was it a special inspiration?) of the gradual falling away of the interests of men in general from their centre in God; he perceived that this backward movement had been at work, actively and openly, for some time, and that there had been a lamentable falling away in true Christian practice, even among nations and provinces which adhered to the true faith.

Hence his never ceasing endeavours and activities to win the hearts of men back to their Divine Lord and Master; and as the evil had attacked in its ravages those most susceptible to influence — the young generations — his natural endowments and his vocation led to his vast undertakings on their behalf. To win them to their true life, which should develop in the sunshine of grace to the maturity of a high Catholic standard, which should be proof as far as possible against assaults from every quarter, which should be a preparation for their eternal life, which should secure peace of heart and therefore happiness while on earth and everlasting happiness in heaven — all this was included in his activities.

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Such was his aim. There were many means towards its attainment, but piety or religious practice was fundamental. The souls for which Our Lord had died must be brought to His

Sacred Heart through a loving devotion. The Divine Son was with his Mother, and He presented her (according to John's youthful visions) as the mother and protectress of the young, whom she desired to restore to Him, for He had said: "Suffer the little ones to come to me"...

Thus devotion to Our Lady was not a thing apart from the main object, or separate from a union with Our Lord. She would draw souls to herself only that they might come more eagerly to their Divine Saviour; She would teach them to be pure of heart that they might approach closer to the source of sanctity. And indeed Don Bosco never moved by a hair's breadth from the true ideal. He taught his followers, his people, his boys to look to the Help of Christians as to a Mother, Patroness and Queen; but only as a step towards that altar where Our Lord Himself awaited them. He built his famous Sanctuary or temple, as a crowning arch to his work, and dedicated it to the Help of Christians; but it was only that Our Lord might take up his abode as in His kingdom, and that souls might be drawn to him under the auspices of Our Lady. Moreover this Sanctuary may be regarded, to some extent, as a milestone on the road; for it was subsequently followed by the erection of another magnificent Sanctuary — dedicated this time to the Most Sacred Heart — and built in the capital of the Church's kingdom, Rome itself. Thus the work at Turin seemed to lead to Rome, the Sanctuary of Our Lady to that of Our Lord, devotion to the Help of Christians to the centre of all virtue and Holiness, the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

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Our Readers and Co-operators are well aware that the first step in their programme is the attainment of a high standard of virtue for themselves, before they can satisfactorily cooperate in the work of sanctifying others. The

two devotions touched upon above, as Don Bosco's great means of attaining the Christian ideal, should be also their two chief devotions; and as the celebrations, which cover practically the whole of these two months, are carried out on a vast scale, so as to make them not unworthy of the occasion, so the members of the Association should participate in their own manner and place. They are familiar with the practices which these two devotions have long suggested to their clients, and the variety leaves a wide margin of choice to suit all characters and needs. But whatever else they adopt, they should endeavour to make the two novenas in common with the whole Association, namely, the novenas before the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians, and the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Thus they will render their fervour practical, and there will be less danger of the piety remaining a sentiment and an aspiration rather than a practical attainment.

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**FROM A CO-OPERATOR** The Rector of an important mission in Scotland, whose Church is dedicated to Our Lady Help of Christians, sends us the following verses. They are his translation of the hymn, which is sung at Lauds in the Office for the feast, and as a hymn it has been approved by His Grace the Archbishop of Glasgow. It has also been set to music and is sung as the parochial hymn in the church above referred to. The verses are:

1. *Hail to thee, most beauteous maid,  
Mother of Our Lord and King!  
'Claimed of old «the Christians' aid»;  
Deign to bless us while we sing:*

○ ○ ○

2. *Sing, great Queen! thy wondrous might,  
Dread as armies' fierce array,  
Scott'ring Satan's hordes in flight,  
Guarding safe the heavenward way.*

○ ○ ○

3. *Hearts like thine, unspotted, pure,  
Vanquish man's relentless foe.  
Breathing thy sweet name, secure,  
Through his sullen ranks they go.*

○ ○ ○

4. *Mother! be thou upon our side,  
Cruel war will sudden cease;  
Conquerors stricken in their pride,  
At thy feet will sob for peace.*

○ ○ ○

5. *And as King David's tower of old  
Arose impregnable in Sion,  
Begirt by thousand warriors bold,  
Strong-armed to fight for Judah's lion:*

○ ○ ○

6. *So thou, the Help of Christ's own race,  
Shalt rule the world, His Cross thy rod,  
Thy «Tower of Strength» His plenteous Grace  
Thy shield the breast where nestled God.*

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In some of last year's *Bulletins* we printed verses by two Australian writers, which had been suggested to them by the general idea of Our Lady as the Help of Christians, by her miraculous aid often rendered in the past to Christianity, and by the more appealing fact that the whole of Australia has been dedicated by her Primates to Our Lady Help of Christians. Therefore we welcome the hymn sent us from quite another direction, and one cannot fail to see from this cumulative evidence that devotion to Our Lady Help of Christians is gaining ground in the countries that speak our tongue, and that it must already have proved, beyond the necessity even of stating the fact, that it has accomplished much good in a quiet way. Those who are placed in a somewhat central position in regard to this evidence have long perceived this spread of the devotion, and though an infinite number of influences may be at work, one can scarcely resist the transition of thought to the Sanctuary of Our Lady Help of Christians at Turin, where the Ven. Don Bosco, when his work was yet in his infancy, had had inscribed around her altar: *Inde gloria mea — Hence shall my glory radiate.*

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With regard to the centre of our work in London, the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians has always been one of the most prominent of the year. It is precluded by devotions all during the month, and by a Novena of special preparations. The people in connection with the



parochial Church of the Sacred Heart have always regarded it as a day of general Communion, and have associated it with special functions and great celebrations. The evening discourse has for its subject the glories of Our Lady Help of Christians, or the connection between that devotion and the many good works which are carried on under her patronage. This discourse accordingly assumes the nature of a conference to the congregation, which includes many who are members of the Association of Co-operators, and who have rendered great service by faithful assistance in all parochial work.

The festival has its own celebration in the Salesian School where the Chapel for the Boys and Community is dedicated to the Help of Christians. The Novena and the day itself are kept with particular devotion and celebrations, in union with a thousand such festivals, which are being honoured in a similar fashion in countries near and far. That day brings hundred of thousands of pupils in Salesian Schools and Colleges all over the world into one accord, through the offering of united homage and devotion to their Patroness and Queen. The celebration is perhaps one of the important factors in the formation of practical religious habits, which will have a permanent effect on those who take part in the festivity.

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As far as scholastic matters are concerned the present months bring the Schools within hailing distance of the close of the year. It has brought the number of pupils higher than it ever was, and if any of our Readers are in touch with parents who are proposing to make applications, they should be reminded to do so without delay, as vacancies are rapidly filled. They may also obtain on request a copy of the *School Magazine* which gives a general view of the actual working of the School, as well as a hundred other matters connected with it. The Very Rev. C. B. Macey should be written to for all information.

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**THE LOSS OF A REVERED SUPERIOR** Since he was one who has been intimately associated with the development of our Society from its very beginning, the death of the Rev. Francis Cerruti should find a prominent place in our annals.

In the presence of a highly organised and widely distributed work, one is inclined to forget that it is still in its first youth, and that those who were its co-founders, or the associates of the Founder, have not all yet followed him to their reward. Father Cerruti was one of these. As a cleric he was in the group which was the first to take the vows in the new Society, May 14th 1862. Four years later he was ordained and sent to the College of Mirabello, to direct the Studies in which he had himself achieved great success, by a career which may well be regarded as brilliant.

In 1865, while engaged in important scholastic work, he was suddenly taken ill. The doctor in attendance gave him every remedy that medical science could suggest, but to no purpose. Don Rua, then a young priest, and Director of the College, was in grave anxiety and hurriedly informed Don Bosco of the doctor's opinion. A reply came that he was not to be anxious about it, *it was not time for the young professor to die.* Don Bosco came to the college a few days later, and told Don Cerruti that he had yet a great task before him before he could win the reward of Paradise. This prediction was verified. Don Cerruti regained his health sufficiently to resume his general duties, but never became robust; yet he lived to be seventy-three, and fulfilled a mission that would have been an immense burden for even the strongest shoulders. His is a striking example of courage, indefatigable labour and self-sacrifice.

When the College of Alassio was opened in 1870, Don Cerruti was sent there as its Director. Needless to say his labours were rewarded by success in a high degree. The educational system of Don Bosco was only in its infancy, as far as its experience in Schools and Colleges was concerned, but under a Director with such gifts and a never-tiring endeavour, it proved its inherent worth beyond all expectations. The school became a centre for the production of talented teachers, who were soon directing other schools in all parts of Italy and abroad. Though obtaining brilliant scholastic results, his first care was the formation of that Christian piety which should underlie all other attainments.

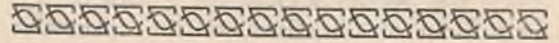
After fifteen years at Alassio and other Colleges, Don Cerruti was called to Turin and placed by Don Bosco at the head of the Scholastic matters of the whole Society, a wide field in which his constant activity and distinguished

talents accomplished great and lasting results, and in which he laboured till the end, a period of thirty years. Much of his work was concerned with the studies of the clerics and priests, but all other departments were carefully supervised by him, and he succeeded in great part in carrying out Don Bosco's idea of having texts specially prepared for the young, some of which have been also adopted by the public schools and by Colleges of the first rank. The letters and telegrams received at the Mother House when his death became known, show that he had been a leading authority in the scholastic world, and had had a wide influence far beyond the borders of our Society and its schools.

His character as a priest and religious was of a very high order. It is interesting to note that for about thirty successive years he had written for the Italian *Bulletin* the leading article on Devotion to the Sacred Heart in the June number, some of which articles have been reproduced in our columns. This one fact suffices to show that his character was thoroughly imbued with those principles which, as a close follower of Don Bosco, he had long striven to implant in the hearts of others. For the same reason he was prominent in spreading devotion to Our Lady Help of Christians, and was one of the principal exponents of the views and spirit of Don Bosco. The latter, seeing what influence his position at the head of the studies would have, and that the educational work of the Society (that is, its fundamental work) would be largely shaped by him, gave him many directions as to his procedure, and made him the confidant of his hopes and fears on this head.

But his long years of service drew to an end at last. Recently he had often said that it must be surely time to go to rejoin Don Bosco, and when his strength began to fail, he wished to be taken to Alassio, his first and favourite College. Possibly he felt he would never leave it, but that he would be laid to rest beside his mother in the cemetery there, which had always been the goal of his walks whenever he went to Alassio. He awaited the coming of death just as a tired worker welcomes his rest. The Last Sacraments were administered, and having joined in all the responses and prayers, he breathed his last in the utmost tranquillity and happiness. His death was a source of edification and envy to those who assisted him.

His funeral was a regular triumph, and we must return to the subject in another issue for the details of this public testimony of affection and esteem.

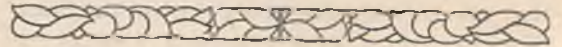


### Thanksgiving to Dominic Savio. (1)

One of the priests of a Salesian College at Genzano near Rome was recently taken ill with influenza, and the ordinary remedies were applied. But somehow the illness did not pass away, and in fact, complications soon manifested themselves, so much so, that the medical men, including one of the doctors of the highest repute in Rome gave up all hope of a cure. The patient received the last rites of the Church and the papal blessing, and the prayers for the dying were recited. While we were all in consternation at this unexpected illness, we remembered that at our College at Macerata, they always had recourse to Dominic Savio, whenever any such circumstances arose, and we therefore decided to beseech his intercession in our necessity. The whole School joined in the prayers, and Dominic Savio came to our aid at once. The change could by no means be attributed to natural powers, for the dying man suddenly took a turn for the better, and after a few days was up and able to say Mass. The specialist from Rome, mentioned above agreed with us that the recovery was extraordinary, as also did the Very Rev. Don Francesco who came twice to visit the sick priest. We hope to have Dominic Savio henceforth as a protector and benefactor of our House.

Rev. G. S.

(1) In the above account no claim is made to any authority, beyond that given to authentic human testimony.



### IMPORTANT NOTICE

TO CO-OPERATORS AND READERS.

We beg all our Co-operators and Readers not to forget that the postage for a letter to Italy is 2½ d., 5 cents; almost every day we have to pay surcharges on letters.





## DEVOTION TO OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

We are persuaded that no aid but that of Heaven can avail us in the sorrowful vicissitudes of our day, and this will be obtained especially through the intercession of Her who in every age has proved Herself the Help of Christians. PIOUS P.P. X.

May the Blessed Virgin deign to help us... and may she take under her maternal protection the Church and all the Souls redeemed by the Precious Blood of her divine Son. BENEDICT P.P. XV.

The Co-operators may not receive their number of this *Bulletin* before the month of May is well advanced, for the depletion of the ranks of labour at our Mother House still goes on, in view of the critical stages of the war. But they will scarcely have needed to await the arrival of their overdue visitor, to remind themselves that the Novena to Our Lady Help of Christians is fixed to conclude on the 24th of the Month, and that this is a general Novena made by their Associates the wide world over. Numbers have already experienced the efficacy of this devotion, both on their own behalf, and on that of others, and although Our Lady's honour and that of her Divine Son are its primary objects, it has been so consistently rewarded by the powerful intercession of the Help of Christians, that these benefits are inclined to come uppermost when it is considered.

Yet to *Jesus through Mary* was never more abundantly fulfilled than in the case of devotion to Our Lady Help of Christians. It has been instrumental in achieving the most wonderful conversions, and even its simplest novenas are means of bringing its clients to the feet of Our Divine Lord. Our Readers of this column may have noticed accounts of the Novena for the 24th of May, as conducted in the Basilica at Turin, which is the recognised home of the devotion. Not only the nine days of the Novena, but the whole month of May is like a fervent mission and the number of Holy Communions approaches the hundred thousand. Thus does the practice of devotion to Our Lady bring thousands to intimate converse with her Divine Son, and their lives are henceforth infinitely more Christian and more fervent. The life of the Ven. Don Bosco is, in one sense, a continued narrative of the effects of this devotion. Speaking from his personal experience and knowledge, he declared it to be a fact, that numerous and surprising as were the wonders wrought by Our Lady Help of Christians in favour of temporal necessities and concerns, they were easily surpassed by the spiritual favours she had obtained,

and which were seldom published owing to their more private nature. He made this statement when referring to the practice of publishing favours, a practice which he generally recommended. It had a two-fold object: first as an act of gratitude to Our Lady since they are published in her honour, and secondly as an encouragement and consolation to others. As a matter of fact, a large proportion of those who have been drawn to this devotion, have been inspired to do so by reading or hearing about the good fortune of other clients. Times and places have their effects, for certain times are established by authority or tradition as times of particular prayer or acts of religion; places too have a value of their own, from their association with the events which have hallowed them. But the favours obtained by Our Lady Help of Christians have shown such variety in times and places, that one may confidently turn to her under all circumstances.

In the year 1889 two of our missionaries were working among the islands off the extreme coast of South America. The native Indians had had some little contact with the whites, and had not shown themselves ill-disposed towards the missionaries, who had, in fact, made good progress in establishing some sort of settlement for them. However, perceiving that the priest and his assistant were alone, and unarmed, the Indians appear to have got up a scheme to murder them, and take possession of the few things in the settlement. They retired to the woods to discuss their project and six of the most stalwart came to the mission-house on the following day. Their attitude was not reassuring, and after a few questions, they drew out their knives from under their rough skin covering and attacked the missionaries. The latter were at their mercy, but they invoked Our Lady Help of Christians and prepared to defend themselves. The Indians set upon them, but when a struggle had begun and some wounds had been inflicted, they took to flight, for no apparent reason, and betook themselves to the woods.



The two missionaries spent a sleepless night, both an account of their expectation of another attack, and because their wounds were painful. Moreover no vessel was expected to pass near the Island for a fortnight or three weeks, and there was evidently plenty of time for the Indians to renew their murderous attacks. They had no idea of any assistance except that of Our Lady Help of Christians, to whom they recommended their desperate condition. Quite unexpectedly they soon after perceived a small British vessel named the *Dora* approaching their island, with a crew of three sailors. They were out of their course and sailing anywhere, striving to get round to Punta Arenas. Their provisions had given out, and having descried our few huts from the distance they made for the island. Providence was evidently at work here, for the missionaries were in great need of a ship to send a message for help and the three sailors were in need of food which the island was able to supply. It was arranged that one sailor should remain on the island with the missionaries, while the vessel went round to Punta Arenas to report the matter to the Missionaries there. Thus help was soon forthcoming, and the natives were brought to a sense of shame and sorrow for their cowardly act.

## Favours and Graces. <sup>(1)</sup>

KILKENNY (IRELAND). — A novena made to Our Lady Help of Christians was most miraculously answered, and I now enclose a thank-offering for a Mass in her honour. In fulfilment of my promise I would ask you to publish the favour.

March 1917.

M. H.

CHICAGO (U. S. A.). — I made a novena to Our Lady Help of Christians to obtain an improvement in my health, promising to publish the favour if granted. I am glad to be able to send a thank-offering and to ask you to publish the grace I have obtained.

Jan. 1917.

M. G.

BIELLA (ITALY). — Two years ago my brother was attacked by a most dangerous illness, which gradually wore out his constitution and reduced him to a physical wreck. Various doctors of great repute were consulted, but they gave the case up as incurable. This news threw the whole

family into consternation, and all joined in a Novena to Our Lady Help of Christians, promising an offering to her Sanctuary. Before the Novena was concluded my brother was completely cured, and the change was equally surprising and inexplicable to the doctors as to ourselves.

However in 1915 he was taken ill again, and as his lungs were affected, along with other complications; the young man was again in grave danger. His fever was very high, he wandered continually in his mind, the doctors were again at the end of their resources. Once more we promised an offering to the Sanctuary, the publication of the favour, and a visit to the Sanctuary by way of pilgrimage. A novena was begun, but as it went on, the illness increased and meningitis threatened. When the first novena was completed without any signs of improvement, another was immediately commenced and towards its close the illness departed and the young man was soon convalescent. All who knew of the case were struck with wonder. The young man afterwards made a pilgrimage to the Sanctuary to fulfil the promise made.

Sept. 1916.

Sister G. C.

LIMERICK (IRELAND). — I enclose an offering for a Mass in thanksgiving. It is in return for a great favour received through the intercession of Our Lady Help of Christians, and I desire to have the thanksgiving published in the *Salesian Bulletin*, in fulfilment of my promise. I shall also endeavour to promote devotion to the Help of Christians, in order to make some return for the favours received.

Feb. 1917.

P. McL., P. P.

The Novena suggested by the Ven. Don Bosco is as follows:

(1) To recite for nine days the *Our Father*, *Hail Mary* and *Glory be to the Father* three times in honour of the Most Blessed Sacrament, adding each time *Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us, or Blessed and praised every moment be the Most Holy and Most Divine Sacrament*; and also three times the *Hail Holy Queen*, with the invocation, *Mary Help of Christians, pray for us*.

(2) To approach the Sacraments at least once during the Novena.

(3) To make a promise of a thank-offering, if one is in a position to do so. It is suggested that this may take the form of an offering for a Mass in thanksgiving. In accordance with the recommendation of the Ven. Don Bosco, a promise to publish the favour in Our Lady's honour should also be made

(1) In these accounts no claim is made to any authority, beyond that given to authentic human testimony.



# The Life of the Venerable Don Bosco

By G. B. LEMOYNE, of the Salesian Society.

## CHAPTER VIII (Continued).

During this second year, John was still visited by the boys from the School in the town. He was in great demand on the free days. The boys regarded him as knowing everything, as a source of consolation, as an unfailing guide. He always took them to the Chapel to pray for a short time, and never closed his afternoon's gathering, without relating some incident or story which would be to their religious welfare.

Some of the clerics who were in the same year as John have given accounts of the impression he made upon them. One was impressed by his careful use of every moment of time, another by his genial and winning manners, another by his humility in spite of his exceptional ability, another by his mortification and exactness. His wonderful memory must have been a source of envy to others. It was recognised by the masters that John had no need to give any further attention to his treatises when the class was over. The reading and discussion in class were sufficient for him to know the text by heart, and he always remembered the explanations given. Therefore his study-time was utilised by extra subjects. He read widely in Italian Literature, learnt Greek, French and some Hebrew, and devoted much time to the study of Church History. We shall see later that he was something of an expert in this latter subject. Jewish History, and Studies of Scripture were favourite matters for reading and discussion, and it was in connection with them that he began the study of Hebrew and made marked progress in it. It was a source of surprise and even of wonder, when as late as 1884, while staying in Rome, he discussed certain questions of Hebrew grammar with a professor of that language, and certain explanations of passages from the books of the Prophets.

During the vacation of that year he had further revelations concerning his vocation. A friend with whom he was staying said to him about that time: "Now you are doing your studies, and in a few years you will be a priest; what will you do then?" John answered:

"I do not feel any inclination for the ordinary work of a parish-priest; I would like to gather all the poor children about me to instruct and educate them."

On another day he confided to the same person that he had had another dream, from which he gathered that in due course he would be in a certain suitable place, surrounded by hundreds of boys, whom he would instruct in the truths of salvation. From subsequent explanations it appeared that he saw the valley, over which he had been looking at the time, changed suddenly into a great city, whose streets were full of boys at play, and some of them using unseemly language. This latter was particularly distasteful to him, so that he hurried into the midst of the boys, and threatened them with severe measures if they did not cease. They would not listen, but turned upon him in large number. As he turned to run away, an unknown personage met him, and told him to persevere in his efforts to improve the boys. John used the futility of his first attempt, and then the unknown person presented him to a majestic lady who appeared before him. "This is my mother," he said, "tell her your difficulties." The lady looked at me with great tenderness and said: "If you wish to do good to these boys, you must not use violence, but kindness and persuasion." And then as in his first dream the boys were transformed first into wild animals, then into sheep and lambs, which, at the command of the lady, he led to pasture. Perhaps it was at this time that he saw his Oratory with all its departments ready to receive the boys he had gathered together. A certain priest, who was at the seminary with John went to the Oratory for the first time in 1890, two years after Don Bosco's death. Standing in the middle of the courtyard, he looked round and said to some of the Superiors of the Society:

"Of all this that I see around me, nothing seems to be new. Don Bosco had described all of it to me when we were in the seminary, just as though he had it all before him and just as I see it to exist now in all its details."

At this point it would be well to notice the order and progression of these marvellous dreams. At nine years of age the Venerable Servant of God learnt of the special mission which was to be his; at sixteen he learns that the necessary means will be forthcoming; at nineteen he has a clear command that he is not free to refuse the apostolate appointed to him;



at twenty-one he is shown what class of boys is to be his special care; at twenty-two he sees the a great city, Turin, where he will begin his apostolic labours and his institutions. The mysterious indications do not cease at this point, but as the sequel will show, continued till his work was complete.

Near the end of the vacation another event occurred in the development of his career. Although only a cleric he was invited to preach in a neighbouring church on the feast of the Holy Rosary. He accepted the invitation at the suggestion of his parish-priest, who also assisted him in the preparation. Thus he entered the pulpit for the first time, and considered it to be a happy augury that his first sermon should be in praise of her, who had already shown herself a mother and a powerful advocate in his regard.

## CHAPTER IX.

### The death of his friend, Aloysius Comollo — The completion of his Seminary Course — His Ordination.

The year 1837-38 was the first year of John Bosco's theological course. To the customary lectures to be attended, and treatises to be studied, he added a wide reading of Ecclesiastical History, for that subject always had a special attraction for him. Doubtless it was his particular loyalty to the Sovereign Pontiffs and his devotion to them as the Vicars of Jesus Christ, that led him to explore with such interest the byways of Church History, and to examine in the light of subsequent events the lasting and world-wide results of the various pontificates. While always maintaining a foremost position among his fellow-students of theology, he continued to preside over the meetings of the literary society, which carried on its discussions and researches in addition to the general seminary course.

Thus the Scholastic year soon passed away amid assiduous study and the performance of religious exercises, in which John was ever most zealous. During the Summer vacation, his friend Aloysius Comollo, though as yet only an ecclesiastical student, was asked to preach at the neighbouring village of Cinzano, and he consulted John as to the composition of his sermon. It was for the Feast of the Assumption; the two students discussed what had been written, but as John had also been invited to preach at Alfiano, he could not go to hear the result of their joint preparations. On the following day, Aug.

16th, he went to Cinzano to make enquiries, little knowing what was in store. He arrived at the Church, and after discussing Comollo's sermon, he found that it had made a very favourable impression. Several priests happened to be there for the feast of St. Roch, but the one who had been invited to preach the discourse for the occasion could not come. John relates the sequel: "I was moved with sympathy for the parish priest, who was thus placed in an awkward position, so I went from one to another of the clergy who were present. I urged and even insisted that one of them should preach to the expectant congregation already assembled. Not one was willing to do so. 'What!' I exclaimed, 'Will you let so many people go away without even a short address?' My importunity at last annoyed them, and one said: 'You are inexperienced in these matters; to preach on St. Roch at a moment's notice is not so simple as it appears; instead of going round bothering others, attempt the task yourself.' There was general agreement with these sentiments, which mortified my pride exceedingly. However, I answered: 'I should not dream of offering myself for such an important task, but since you all refuse, I will undertake it.'

A hymn was sung in order to give me a few moments for reflection, during which I recalled to mind the chief facts of the life of St. Roch, which I had read some time previously; then I ascended the pulpit and delivered a discourse. The merits of which, it is said, were so marked, that I have never since equalled it. A friend of John's, who at this time accompanied him to several churches where he preached, affirms that the sermon on St. Roch gave the impression that it had been the result of careful preparation on the part of an experienced preacher, and that it caused great surprise among the clergy who listened to it.

Much the same thing happened shortly afterwards and the young cleric became the subject of much admiration. He tells us however that one opinion was sufficient to prevent any undue elation, for when he had been preaching on the Nativity of Our Lady at Capriglio a friend told him he thought the sermon was on Purgatory. A more experienced priest gave him the valuable advice that his method and language were both beyond the grasp of the average person, and this remark had a good deal to do with his adopting that simplicity and directness which made his preaching subsequently so effective.

During this vacation he frequently met Comollo. They were once out walking, and one of them remarked the scarcity of the crops that the fields around the produced. John expressed the hope that it would be made up for next year,



to which Comollo have an answer that seemed to imply that he would not be there to witness the results of another harvest. At present however he was in the best of health and both were preparing to return for the approaching scholastic year at the Seminary.

Another slight but significant occurrence provided a more direct reference to Comollo's approaching death. The young cleric was accompanied on his way from home to the Seminary by his father. At one place Comollo stopped, and looking back he took a long farewell-glance at his native village. His father turned and enquired the meaning of it, and the son replied: "I am looking back at Cinzano, for it is the last time I shall see it." The father related this to John, who thus became confirmed in his fears that his friend had not long to live, and would not reach his ordination. But as yet there was no sign. Studies and spiritual exercises were renewed with greater ardour: Comollo was even more careful to avoid the slightest faults, and confided to John that this one fear now was that he might not be worthy to hear the words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!"

It was now the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25th 1839. John was acting as Sacristan, and Comollo waited for him to come from the church to announce to him that he was sure his end was approaching. He said he was feeling ill, and that he was oppressed by the thought of the account he would soon have to render to God. The two went in to the Church, and assisted at Mass; at the end of it a fainting fit came over Comollo so that he had to be assisted to his room and put to bed. After two days he was able to get up, but on the Wednesday in Holy Week he again had to go to bed and never left it. He had a complete conviction that his end was approaching, and the dread he had of dying seems to have been a special trial to his delicate soul, so susceptible of any shadow of sin. On Holy Saturday John was spending the night at his friend's bed-side. He noticed that at one time he was extremely agitated, so much so that he seemed to be in convulsions, and this lasted for about three hours; the agitation was followed by a sweet tranquillity and repose. John could not help being struck by these mysterious happenings and Comollo confided the secret of them to him. He related that he seemed to have been transported to the depths of a great valley, through which the winds of a tempest raged. A furnace of vast size was in the middle of it, and souls appeared to be precipitated into its flames. Fleeing thence he was confronted by herds of wild beasts, whose attacks threatened to drive him back to the furnace, but at the sign of the Cross, which he made,

they turned and went away, only to be met by a multitude of armed men, who fell on them and slew many. Still endeavouring to escape he came to a high mountain which was climbed by steps already prepared, but on a nearer approach they were found to be occupied by hideous serpents, which made all passage impossible.

But here a heavenly lady, whom he took to be the Mother of God, intervened. She took him by the hand and said: "Come, you have done much for my honour and have often invoked my name. It is right, therefore, that you should be protected." The serpents fled at her approach and she conducted him to a garden of delights and assured him that he would be among her children in Heaven.

With this termination to his strange experience Comollo received entire peace of soul and hoped that death would soon come. On Easter Sunday he received the Last Sacraments with great piety. When the Rector of the Seminary brought in the Sacred Host, the young man fell into transports of joy and desired to kneel down to receive Holy Communion. John held him back in the bed and shed silent tears of wonder. After he had received Communion he was wholly rapt in prayer, and during that Easter Sunday he looked forward with joy to his entrance into eternity. He sank towards evening, and at seven o'clock next morning the Sacrament of Extreme Unction was administered. John's narrative continues:

"I perceived that the moment of death was very near, and suggested some suitable ejaculations which he tried to repeat. Soon after, he called me by name and said: 'If you desire anything that I could obtain in eternity'..., then he broke off, and a little later added: 'I am going; good-bye; Jesus and Mary into your hands I commend my sou.' These were his last words. The prayers for the dying were then read, and at their conclusion Comollo smiled and passed away. It was at two o'clock in the morning on April 2nd 1839."

In one of the dormitories a student awoke in the night and exclaimed: "There is Comollo!" His excitement wakened the others and the prefect requested him to be silent; but the cleric protested that Comollo had come into the dormitory and said: "I am dead," and then disappeared. Just afterwards, those who had assisted at the death-bed came in, and were asked how Comollo was. "He is dead," they replied. "When did he die?" "About ten minutes ago." All were astonished and greatly perturbed; the cleric had been under no delusion.

All the Seminarists were grieved for the loss of Comollo, but the manner of his saintly death consoled them. The circumstances moved the

Rector to approach the Civil and Ecclesiastical Authorities, in order to get permission to inter the body in the Church of St. Philip instead of in the cemetery. This was granted and the remains still lie under the Sanctuary of that Church. Very soon after the burial, Comollo again appeared, this time to all those in one of the dormitories. Don Bosco thus narrates this extraordinary occurrence: "In the intimate conversation customary among friends, we had often discussed the topic of death, for we recognised that it might happen to either of us at any time. One day we were passing comments on what we had read in books on this point, and between jest and seriousness we agreed that it would be consoling if the one who died first would let the other know how he fared. This subject frequently recurred in our conversations, and we both prayed that the one who was left might be somehow assured of the salvation of the other. I did not then know the importance that might be attached to such a compact, for we made it unthinkingly, and I would advise no one to do the like. However between us two there was the intention of keeping the promise, and it had been renewed during Comollo's last illness; the condition was always placed that it should be according to the will of God. The last words of my friend and his farewell look assured me that the promise was not an idle one. In fact some of our companions knew of it, and wondered if it would be kept. Personally I desired it very much, for I thought it would bring me great consolation.

Comollo had died on the morning of April 2nd. On the night between the 3rd and 4th, I had retired to the dormitory with about twenty other theological students. I went to bed, but sleep would not come, for I was thinking of this promise; a great dread seemed to presage some extraordinary occurrence. Just about midnight a low noise was heard at the end of the corridor, a noise which became quickly more audible, more oppressive though more piercing as it approached. I can only compare it to the rumbling of a cumbrous waggon drawn by horses, or the heavy rolling of a train, or even to a cannonade. It cannot be described, but sounded like a complication of loud noises, so vibrating and violent, as to inspire the most fearful dread, and to render one speechless. As it approached the dormitory door, the walls and ceiling of the corridor left behind resounded and re-echoed, as though they were heavy iron sheets being struck with great force; yet its approach could not be accurately observed.

Those in the dormitory were awake, but none spoke. I myself was motionless with fright. The noise seemed to come nearer for it increased in violence, and soon appeared to be in the dormitory, for the door opened of itself with a swift movement; the uproar and clangour continued, but nothing was seen except a faint light of changing colours which appeared to influence or regulate the sound. The suddenly all was quiet; the light became more distinct and Comollo's voice was clearly heard, but it was weaker than this natural utterance. It called John by name three times, and said: I "am saved!"

At that moment the dormitory was lit up more brightly, the noise recommenced more vehemently than before, and thunder seemed to resound through the house. Suddenly it ceased and the light disappeared. My companions jumped out of bed, running from one to the other; some gathered together in a corner, encouraging one another; others stood around the prefect of the dormitory discussing the event, and longing for the comfort of the dawn of day. Some had heard the voice without grasping the meaning of the words; these I tried to pacify, assuring them that I had distinctly heard the voice say: "I am saved!" Others had heard the message quite as clearly as myself, and for a long time it was talked of in the seminary.

So great was my dread during that experience that I would have preferred death. It was the first time that I can remember being afraid. I was so ill in consequence of it that I was brought to death's door, and did not altogether recover for some years.

*(To be continued).*



*The prayers of the Associates are asked for the Right Rev. Mgr. Provost Poole of Torquay, who was a devoted Co-operator and who has recently died. R. I. P.; and also for John Winter of Dublin, R. I. P.*



## Philosophia et jus ecclesiasticum.

MUNERATI DANTIS Sacerdos. — <b>Elementa juris ecclesiastici, publici et privati</b> . . . . .	Libellae	3 —
A missionis pretio solutum . . . . .	»	3 50
PISCETTA ALOYSIUS Sacerdos. — <b>De Christo religiosae societatis disputatio</b> . . . . .	»	0 30
A missionis pretio solutum . . . . .	»	0 40
VERMEERSCH ARTURUS Sacerdos. — <b>De religionis institutis et personis</b> . — Tractatus canonico-moralis ad recentissimas leges exactus.		
Tomus prior ad usum scholarum . . . . .	»	5 —
A missionis pretio solutum . . . . .	»	5 50
Tomus alter. — Supplementa et monumenta . . . . .	»	16 —
A missionis pretio solutum . . . . .	»	18 —

## Musica.

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 A missionis pretio solutum . . . . . » 5 —

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