

Salesian Bulletin

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Vol. IX.

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

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DA MIHI



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The Salesian Bulletin

Organ of the Association of Salesian Co-operators

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AN OPPORTUNITY

OUR bimonthly issue has already turned the half-year. We explained in the January number that it had been decided to resume regular communication with the Co-operators in those countries, where the dislocation of affairs was only partial, as well as in those whose good fortune left them untouched by the ravages of war. It must be remembered that the Association of Co-operators is a union of Catholics for specified religious purposes, a Third Order, established with all the rights and regulations of such institutes. It is therefore so constituted that it has members and centres in practically all countries, for its work is concerned with all those places where the objects of its foundation are to be attained.

Thus it was that before the war all the belligerent states of Europe had

large numbers of Co-operators, promoting and supporting the good works of the Salesian Society, and realising the Ven. Don Bosco's ideals ever more extensively. They were in regular communication with the Mother House at Turin, and were making rapid strides in developing many good works on behalf of the young, and also of other sections of Society. Don Bosco regarded communication with him as with his representatives as essential to Co-operation — hence among other means the *Bulletin* — his monthly letter to his devoted co-workers and assistants, — containing his reports, proposals and suggestions, revealing the enthusiasm with which he undertook new adventures and schemes, and vaguely hinting at the future developments which Providence had in view for the Salesian work, and as a consequence for the

organisation of Co-operators, which became an integral part of his foundation.

The war therefore appeared to have hit this organisation in a vital part. Communication between the various countries was disorganised, and whole sections of the Co-operators were placed beyond the reach of the Association. Even though communication had been maintained, it was impossible even to think of continuing the ordinary means of co-operation, for the war devoured the resources of the nations concerned, and robbed large numbers of regular Co-operators of the means which were necessary for their own welfare.

But by degrees things began to take shape; communications were gradually resumed and some of the countries, particularly the neutral ones, found that the misfortunes of some, made the fortunes of others. This was reflected on a small scale in regard to our Co-operators. In Italy where there was no immediate outbreak of hostilities the *Bulletin* was published as in normal times, and all forms of co-operation were maintained. The Spanish edition likewise preserved its regularity, and went as usual to the very large numbers of Associates in Spain, and in the Spanish-speaking territories of South and Central America. The Portuguese edition was likewise in this happy position, and as a matter of fact, there were greater efforts in these countries, in order to counteract to some extent the losses sustained elsewhere.

The reverse of this fortunate view must not escape notice. The Catholics in France, Belgium, Austria-Hungary and Poland, contained a very large number of Co-operators, and they had been among the readiest of contributors to

the Salesian undertakings, both within and without their borders. All of these found themselves suddenly embroiled in the fierce conflict. In most cases it was impossible, and in nearly all it was useless to think of the usual means of communication and co-operation. The *Bulletins* to those countries naturally ceased to appear after July 1914. Whatever Salesian Houses and works were in being partook of the common fortunes, and adapted themselves, or were compelled to adapt themselves to the conditions of war. It will probably be some time before the *Bulletins* of those countries can announce that the works of the Salesian Society have recovered from the state of ruin or stagnation, and are again undertaking the programme of their Founder.

There will undoubtedly be much to be done when that time comes. It is foreshadowed to some extent in the work that is being promoted in Italy by our Superior General, Don Albera, who is co-operating in all the public schemes of charity where the boys of distressed families are concerned, and has opened a large boarding-school for those who are not of age to be employed in some useful trade or work connected with the war. With the aid of committees, and with the assistance of Co-operators this work is already on a settled basis. The large numbers of our Houses in Italy and the far-reaching organisation of their Co-operators help to render such schemes successful. Such a work is entirely in keeping with the traditions of Don Albera's office. The Ven. Don Bosco was ever eager to render assistance in the times of public need; the archives at Turin contain the letters of thanks sent to him by municipal bodies, in recognition of these public

services. His Successor, Don Rua, emulated his example in this regard. The disaster at Messina was a catastrophe which appealed to the noble sentiments of the whole world; and though many of our own Houses and subjects were involved, Don Rua offered to find places in his Schools for many of the homeless boys. His Holiness Pius X. co-operated with him in this work of public charity at the time of such distress. It will be seen, then, that Don Albera is in good company, and following high examples; in fact, he would feel obliged, when his country is in greater need than even earthquakes or diseases cause, to come forward with all his available resources, and supply assistance wherever possible,

But what of our own share? At the beginning of the war we were in the category of those nations, whose affairs had to be re-adjusted to circumstances. No one could foresee how things would shape themselves. Communication with the continent became irregular and unreliable, and, adopting of necessity the policy known as *wait and see*, the English edition of the *Bulletin* was suspended. Months passed and the war had soon been with us a whole year. Affairs had adapted themselves to certain grooves, and it became apparent that the English-speaking countries (including America) were in much the same position from our point of view, as they were before the hostilities began. It was therefore suggested that the English edition should again make its appearance, not monthly as heretofore, but every two months, on account of the delay in postage, the shortage of paper, and the scarcity of labour in the printing world. Thus it is hoped to resume relations where they may have

fallen off, to satisfy the inquiries of the many who have missed their monthly visitor, and to stimulate co-operation and generosity at a time when they are most urgently needed, and when so many sources of assistance are cut off. Our edition reaches all the English-speaking countries, and to all of these an appeal is made to supply the places of those Co-operators whose previous efforts have been so constant and praiseworthy: but who now find themselves in unforeseen difficulties and even in very straitened circumstances.

An interesting booklet on the social and educational work of the Salesians has recently been published, and may have already found its way into the hands of many Co-operators. It is an authoritative presentation, in an abridged and easily readable form, of the main items in the apostolate of the Ven. Don Bosco, showing the wide and comprehensive programme which has evolved itself in the natural development of his earlier plans. It does not omit a passing reference to the wonderful manifestation, principally made to him by Our Lady Help of Christians, of his vocation and its fulfilment; but of these phases in his life, which are evidently of a supernatural character, due reserve must always be maintained by writers, since these facts are still under the consideration of the Sacred Congregation, and their character is still *sub judice*.

The booklet is mentioned here because it gives an idea of what co-operation means from our point of view, and because it presents a varied list of works, all of an apostolic character, and all factors in one combined programme, one or more of which may appeal to the practical minds of our

readers, and may therefore secure their co-operation. This periodical is primarily intended to be a report to the members of the Association of Co-operators, as to what is being done in various parts of the world, towards the realisation of this varied programme. Whatever it says about schools or missions or church-work, or devotional exercises, or the devotion to Our Lady Help of Christians, or Festive Oratories or books etc., are all connected with the religious, social and educational activities which constitute the vocation of the Ven. Don Bosco, and which is realised by the Salesians and their Co-operators.

There is, as a rule, no lack of the disposition to engage in good works, or to assist those causes which have the true interests and the lasting good of humanity as their object. Opportunity is more often wanting. But it is exactly that suitable opportunity which is now pointed out — an opportunity arising from calamities which fall heavily upon the majority, but which have left many in such a position, that they could perhaps more easily assist now than in normal times. In the many places to which this message goes it must reach generous hearts and evoke a ready response.

The conquest of Patagonia to Christianity to the Faith and to civilization.

“Through the courtesy of His Eminence Cardinal Cagliero, we are keeping the promise already made to our readers to reproduce in substance the conference, full of interesting reminiscences and incidents, given by His Eminence to the Roman clergy of the Association of St. Paul. The words of the Cardinal, as we took them down from his own lips, come to us, in these moments of hatred and fratricidal struggle, like a distant echo from another world where the hearts of men receive willingly the invitation to peace, gentleness and love, contained in the Gospel message for all men of good will. In reproducing them in these columns, we express the fervent hope that in the sanguinary conflicts of our own continent where the same message is constantly repeated by the Vicar of Christ himself, it may find docile hearers, to our universal consolation, as a guarantee of lasting peace and true welfare.”

Thus speaks the *Corriere d'Italia*. The address of His Eminence the Cardinal is as follows:

Cholera was raging at Turin in the month of

August 1854 and I was sick in the infirmary of the Oratory. I was then 16 years of age and the doctors affirmed that I had not long to live. In the house it was said that I was suffering from my *imprudence* in accompanying Don Bosco in his visit to the lazaretto. The doctors begged Don Bosco to visit me and give me the Last Sacraments. He came to my bedside and I remember it now as if I saw him here: — “Which would be best for you,” he asked, “to recover or to go to Paradise? — “It would be better to go to Paradise,” I replied. — “Very good” he said, “but this time Our Lady wishes you to live; you will recover and put on the clerical habit, you will be a priest and taking your breviary you will go far away from here.”

The Ven. Don Bosco then beheld a wondrous vision. Drawing near to my bed — so he told me thirty-five years later — he saw it surrounded by savages of lofty stature and fierce aspect, of a copper-coloured skin and with thick black hair, fastened by a band round the forehead. He did not know then to what race these people, so wonderfully shown to him,

belonged, and only later on had he examined a manual of geography, and had found that they corresponded to the type of Patagonians and Fuegians. To the mind of Don Bosco, then was displayed the stupendous vision of that immense region which he announced would one day be found rich in minerals, a centre of trade, with great buildings and railways, blessed with the precious gift of the Catholic faith, by the labours and the blood of his own spiritual family. In reality I was cured at that moment; the fever subsided at once and I did not receive the Sacraments, as it seemed better for me after my sudden cure, to receive them in the church. However I must add that the above mentioned particulars were only made known by Don Bosco after I had begun the evangelization of Patagonia, when I was already Vicar Apostolic; for he, fearing always to be guided by personal impressions, would never take the initiative regarding my career and my functions, but left all to Divine Providence, which directed every thing exactly in accordance with his vision of the future.

The first Salesian Missionaries landed at Buenos Ayres on the 14th of December 1875. The Archbishop had asked for them, desiring to have a religious congregation to take special care of the Italian emigrants, already so numerous in the new Republic. There were only ten; and I had brought them, not to remain in the mission, but to settle them in the new residences and then return to Italy. On the quay two hundred of our fellow-countrymen, the chief personages of the colony, awaited us, and gave us a cordial welcome.

At the invitation of the Archbishop, I began immediately to visit the places fixed upon for the establishments and I perceived at once, what abundant harvest God was preparing for us. In fact, we received not only the lowly Church of St. Nicolas de los Arroyos which, before our coming, had been prepared for us, but in Buenos Ayres itself there was entrusted to us at the same time the magnificent edifice of the *Mater Misericordiae*, frequented by the Italian Colony of that immense Capital. In the short sojourn of my return to Italy from one period of three months to another, I remained two years in Argentina, of which I visited the chief places and beheld what a great work of faith and christian civilization the sons of Don Bosco could and would accomplish there.

Not the sword, but the cross.

Just as we were landing on the Argentine territory, that Government was preparing a scientific expedition for unexplored Patagonia.

We asked, at once, to take part in it., but we were refused, because it was considered too soon, and that later on when ways had been prepared for the civilization of these barbarous and fierce tribes, we could begin our own work. In fact, it was only in 1878 that the first four Salesian Missionaries set off for Patagonia, but their attempt was unsuccessful, for the boat which carried them was wrecked near the waters of the Rio Negro, the great river, which is the principal means of communication with Patagonia and which will accommodate the largest warships. The missionaries barely escaped with their lives.

The following year finding the continual attacks of the Patagonian savages on the civilized regions intolerable the Government prepared an armed expedition of 2000 men under the Minister of War, General Roca, who later on became President of the Republic. The Salesians asked leave to accompany the expedition, desiring to achieve by the Cross, that conquest which the Argentine troops were preparing to make by the sword. They were placed on the staff, and like the troops, made the long march to the confines of the unexplored and dangerous region. The First encounters between the white soldiers and the vanguard of the Patagonian tribes were now menacing. There was some shooting with arrows, some discharge of fire-arms. General Roca, losing hope of approaching the savages to enter into negotiations, was already preparing a strong attack, when the missionaries begged his permission to make another pacific effort. By means of signs, in fact — since they had not the least idea of the Patagonian language — they succeeded in making them understand their peaceful intentions. Then, having thus exchanged a few ideas, they persuaded the savages that it was useless to oppose the Argentine expedition by force, because if they had lances and arrows, the whites had guns which killed before weapons of steel could be used. Thus it was that the principal chiefs, the *Caciques* Sayuhueque and Yancuche, surrendered and recognized the Argentine authority, accepting the conditions imposed by them; the *cacique* Namuncurà retired

with 400 lances to a distant corner of the territory, near the snowy Cordilleras. The terms proposed by the Argentine Government were very favourable; a supply of food was guaranteed for three years, so that the tribes might learn agriculture, and extensive lands to cultivate for supplying their wants. Thus at Carmen de Patagones, on the banks of the Rio Negro arose the first religious and civilizing Salesian foundation, in an immense region which at the close of the 19th Century was still unknown and a land of mysteries.

The missionaries at once began to give simple instruction in the Christian Faith, but at the same time they taught the savages how to till the ground, for they had not the least notion of agriculture, and it is pleasant to recall the astonishment with which they watched the planting of pumpkin seed. The enormous gourds issuing from the slender shoots filled them with wonder and this curiosity was an element of success in these first attempts; in a short time they were all competing with each other in the raising of pumpkins.

This pacific conquest of Patagonia had its counterpart in that of Tierra del Fuego. There also the Prefect Apostolic, Mgr. Fagnano, caused the white troops to cease shooting, after they had already used their guns against the Fuegian tribes, who with their arrows had made their first victims amongst the soldiers. There also a word, a simple sign from the priest, stopped the slaughter and subdued without violence an entire people to civilization and Religion, gaining a prosperous region for commerce and industry.

With labour and with blood.

In 1883 I was made Pro-Vicar of Patagonia and in 1885 Vicar Apostolic with the plenitude of the Episcopal character. The memories of those first years of apostolic labour can never be forgotten. They were years of incredible privation and toil, but at the same time of unexpected consolation and spiritual fruit. "You will conquer Patagonia by labour and by blood" Don Bosco said to me, and already in 1875 in bidding farewell to the first band, he had given me this advice: "Do all that you can; the Lord will do the rest. Propagate devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to Mary Help of Christians, and you will see what miracles are like."

Toil and blood, in truth, were expended and we did see what miracles were like.

In the first two months of my mission we baptized 1700 natives in the immense valley of Chichinal, where the tribes of the Saguhuegue and Yancuché were encamped. Every day we gave three hours of catechetical instruction in the morning and three in the afternoon. The Bishop's palace was a hut made of trunks of trees and mud with a roof of branches which protected me from the sun and the rain. No sign of a bed; we slept on skins kindly given us by the natives. These latter were easily susceptible of enthusiasm and we were sometimes touched by their ingenuous interpretation, always in the strictest sense, of the Church's prescriptions.

On one occasion twelve little girls had been prepared for their First Communion. It was the first time amongst the savages of this region that this happy and memorable function had been celebrated. We had insisted on the observance of the fast ordered from midnight until after approaching the Holy Table. But somehow, a misunderstanding had arisen, and these children fasted all day Sunday, and only broke their fast on the Monday.

It was thus they had understood and kept the Eucharistic fast!

Such were the consolations of this fresh, spontaneous, virginal religious life, not yet sullied by the bitter flavour of sin which too often pervades European civilization. This was the sole and constant alleviation in the dangers and extraordinary labours met with in the evangelization of this immense and impenetrable region. There were no roads only paths barely perceptible on the rocky slopes of the Cordilleras, or across immense plains covered with dense vegetation. I remember on one occasion riding through a field of wild strawberries for a distance of fifteen miles: the thirsty horse bent down and quenched his thirst with the red and juicy fruit. And on the outskirts of the forests I have gathered delicious apples!

Two of my companions in Tierra del Fuego were wounded with arrows by the natives; one of these returning to Punta Arenas, the centre of that Mission, to be cured of serious wounds, was upset in his frail bark in the Straits of Magellan and was drowned. Thus was verified the saying of Don Bosco: "With toil and blood you will conquer those nations!"

I myself, in 1887, had a bad fall from my horse and was seriously injured. I was crossing the Cordilleras 7500 feet in height and had to climb another three thousand. The path clung to the rocky sides of granite overhanging the abyss.

Suddenly my horse began to rear and leap like a mad thing. Invoking Mary Help of Christians, I jumped off like an acrobat so as to land on my back. I succeeded, but a rocky projection in the ground pierced my flesh breaking two ribs and penetrating the lungs. I lay like one dead, I could not speak and was scarcely able to breathe. My companions surrounded me and I, being able to stammer a few words, made fun of the accident, so as not to frighten them, saying that as we have twenty four ribs, one could afford to sacrifice two of them. We had to curve back and cross two rivers and two ranges of hills to reach the first place where I could rest and obtain medical aid. But what a doctor! There was only a quack curing maladies on the most primitive system. As soon as I saw him I asked if there was a blacksmith who could mend my broken ribs, hoping thus to cheer my companion whose sorrow was greater than mine.

I was there a month and with God's help I recovered; when convalescent, I resumed my journey and in four days with my missionaries I again crossed the Cordilleras, a height of nearly 12,000 feet and descended to the pleasant Chilean plain on the shores of the Pacific. There we laid the foundations of the new Houses of Concepción, Talca, Santiago and Valparaiso.

During that year, I and my five companions crossed America from the Atlantic to the Pacific. We went on horseback, and put up for the night in a dry water-course or under some trees.

Another time, there were only two of us together, and after crossing the desert we reached at eleven o'clock at night a military station. It had been established by the Argentine Government on the beaten track for the protection of infrequent travellers. There were seven soldiers there.

We had not eaten anything during the day or swallowed a drop of water. I asked for something to eat, they had not even a crust of bread; something to drink, there was not a drop of liquid. To get water from the nearest stream, one would have to go two leagues. One

of the soldiers said; It rained a week ago, there may be still a little water in the ditch, I will fetch some."

He came back with a bottle full. I looked at it and shuddered; it was more like mud than water. I turned my back to the light — which was a cotton wick in the midst of melted fat — and closing my eyes I put the bottle to my lips. I drank and felt solid and sticky substances go down with the liquid. When I had taken half I gave the rest to my companion saying:

— "Shut your eyes and drink."

And then.

— "Blessed be Divine Providence which this evening has caused us to find food and drink at the same time! If there was a moment in which the Gospel promise made by Christ to His Apostles, *si mortiferum quid liberint non eis nocerit* (1), should have been verified, it was surely then.

The Last Mission.

Always do I recall with great emotion my last Mission in 1902. The aged *cacique* Mamuncurá had sent for me, lying ill in distant exile near the Cordilleras he realized the approach of death. To reach him I had to ride more than 930 miles, stopping at all the missions on my way. A most enchanting journey! In that part of the Cordilleras were to be seen eight lakes, in which, surrounded by rocky heights, the blue sky and mountains were reflected as in a mirror; one of these lakes was navigable. The venerable Patagonian chief was then 70 years of age and he welcomed us as sent from heaven. He desired to be baptized with his whole family and his tribe; he was confirmed and made his First Communion with the humility and simplicity of a child. Full of joy he repeated:

— "Now I shall die happy, now I shall die a good Christian."

I was on the point of leaving, when he thought of one thing I myself had forgotten he expressed the wish to be buried as a Christian.

Then we chose a corner of the green tranquil plain, surrounded by overhanging rocks, and there I blessed the Christian cemetery, where the old Chief and his people may one day repose under the shadow of the Cross. On leaving, I embraced and saluted him as a brother. He died a year later.

(1) If they shall drink any poisonous thing it shall not harm them.

After 30 years of apostolate.

Such are the recollections of distant Patagonia which at this moment crowd upon my memory. And my thought rest on that distant region today, after 30 years of Christian apostolate.

Patagonia now possesses fifty churches and chapels, with 164 Salesian Missionaries and 130 Sisters of Mary Help of Christians.

Patagones and Viedma, the residence of the Vicariate, at the mouth of the Rio Negro, 200 leagues from Buenos Ayres, have a seminary with many students in theology and philosophy and many aspirants, all natives. In the territory there are many Agricultural Colonies schools of agriculture, schools of Arts and crafts, hospitals, colleges, printing offices, and meteorological observatories. A good number of villages are to be seen with fine houses of European architecture. The future of these regions will be one of extraordinary wealth. Patagonia has an extent of about 750,000 square miles, traversed in various directions by nine railways. It can support easily at least fifty million inhabitants, and possesses already at least three million heads of cattle, whilst Tierra del Fuego has three million sheep which supply Europe with the finest wool. The missionaries and the Sisters have taught the natives how to weave, and when in 1898 I was at Buenos Ayres, I took to the President of the Republic a box of woven material which had been made by the Patagonians and Fuegians. The President and the Ministers could scarcely believe that the savage tribes had done such good work. Thus every time I passed through Buenos Ayres the President and friendly Ministers assembled in the palace of the Government, and on the Map I pointed out the places explored, the routes thither and described the characteristics of the various localities. To give an idea of the riches of Patagonia it suffices to state that in the territory ten deposits, of gold have already been discovered, and now in Chubut (Central Patagonia), petroleum wells have been sunk, and proved very productive.

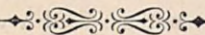
The same may be said of Tierra del Fuego, where the Prefect Apostolic, Mgr. Fagnano, has laboured for 30 years. In 1887 the capital,

Punta Arenas, had barely 500 inhabitants, now it has 20,000, chiefly Argentines and Europeans, who have settled there for trading purposes. The natives are gathered together in the settlements of the Onas and the Alacalufes. I visited them in 1897 and I found there excellent schools, in no way inferior to those in Europe. Thus ten specimens of work written by Fuegian children and shown at the Colombian Exhibition of Genova in 1892, were much admired and found equal to the best specimens from European and Italian schools. And it was in the same Exhibition that a sheet worked in white embroidery by a Patagonian girl, sister of the cacique Yancuche, gained the first prize.

To sum up the Salesian work in the Argentine Republic and in general of the American Missions, I have the consolation of saying that those ten missionaries, who landed in 1875 at Buenos Ayres, have now become 1400. That city alone possesses 12 establishments of the Salesians and of the other family of Don Bosco, the Sisters of Mary Help of Christians, with 5000 pupils, boys and girls. In the rest of the Republic there are 68 houses with 10,000 boarders and 15,000 extern pupils. In the other States of Latin-America — Chili, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Central America — there are in addition 137 Salesian Institutes and from a calculation I have made, I may state that from our houses scattered through the Mission every ten years half a million boys and girls pass out trained in the practice of the Faith and of Christian civilization.

I have spoken of the Salesian Work, as being the one of which I have personal knowledge and experience; but the efficacy of the Mission of Catholicism is equally wonderful wherever a religious Institute undertakes the preaching of the Gospel message to the nations hitherto seated in darkness and in the shadow of death.

This pacific conquest, which bears good fruit even in ordinary life and in the development of industry and commerce, is the more worthy to be recalled at this time, when it would seem that civilized nations have forgotten the cause of peace and entrusted their future to the jury of sanguinary battles.





News from the Missions.

BRAZIL.

A Voyage of Discovery in the Prefecture Apostolic of Rio Negro.

(Don John Balzola's account).

I.

The preparation.

Before speaking of my arrival on the banks of the Rio Negro, which fertilises and divides the territories of Colombia and Venezuela, and these flows majestically through Brazil and falls into the Amazon after a course of 625 miles, I must recall with pleasure the memory of the *Native Colony of S. Joseph at Sangradouro* in Matto Grosso, from which I started, so that we may clearly see how Divine Providence vouchsafed to assist us in the commencement of this work.

I had become much attached to the missions of Matto Grosso where I had spent twenty years labouring in that uncivilised land in company with the zealous and indefatigable Don Antony Malan, lately raised to the Episcopal dignity by the Holy Father. I had expected to spend the rest of my life in the midst of those Bororós who, in return for so many sacrifices, had already begun to gladden our hearts with salutary fruit. But this was not to be. A telegram from Mgr Malan summoned me to Cuyabà; there was no further information, and I experienced some sorrow in parting from my good confrères and my neophytes without any prospect of return.

It was the 26th of November 1914. Accompanied by two Indians I set off for *Cuyabà*, riding 187 miles, and arrived at the College of S. Gonzalo on the 3rd of December. There no one knew the object of my journey. But on the 7th of December; the vigil of the Immaculate Conception letters arrived with the news that I was charged to make a reconnoitring journey in the Prefecture Apostolic of Rio Negro, confided to the Salesian Society by the lamented Pontiff Pius X.

I waited at *Cuyabà* for the arrival of the new Bishop, for whom a solemn reception was being

prepared. He came on the 20th of December and had a triumphal welcome.

On the 1st of January 1915 I assisted at the Episcopal Consecration of our confrère Mgr. Francis d'Aquino Correa, which was most imposing.

It had been arranged that I should start on the 7th of January, travelling as far as *Corumbà* with the Bishop of that Diocese, who is a devoted friend of the Salesians, but there was one great difficulty... There was no money for the journey. The times were critical for everybody and Mgr. Malan with the best will in the world could barely put together a small sum scarcely sufficient for a portion of the expenses of the journey, while clothes and other articles were also needed.

But the straits to which I was reduced, only served to make me more determined, because the new Mission, beginning in absolute poverty had a pledge and a promise of the blessing of God upon it.

Another thing which encouraged me still more to undertake this long journey was the knowledge that in all parts of the world our confrères and co-operators were praying as they had been asked to do; and indeed, God graciously accepted the prayers and will abundantly rewarded those who made them.

To conclude my preface; with a special blessing of the Archbishop of Cuyabà, Mgr. d'Amour, and of Mgr. Malan and Mgr. d'Aquino, on the 7th of January 1915 I set off, accompanied to the harbour by our two Bishops, and some of the Community.

In four days, having travelled 375 miles I reached *Corumbà*.

I spent several days in the company of the Community there and on the 17th of January I embarked, arriving at *Porto Esperanza*, after travelling another 62 miles.

I might also have had to descend the Paraguay River, the *Paraná* and the *Plata* to *Buenos Ayres* and from there go on to *Montevideo* and *Rio Janeiro* as we did in times past, but fortunately, two months ago the railways was opened, which, starting from *Porto Esperanza* on the banks of the *Paraguay* River, passes through the State of Matto Grosso, and that of San Paolo,

and in six days brought us to *Rio Janeiro* a distance of 1750 miles.

However, this journey by rail was not without its perils. Through some trouble at a station, I arrived four hours late at *Ponta-Porão*, and, as it was nearly midnight, and as there was no room in the inn, I was allowed to sleep on two benches in the railway carriage. But, as I was passing from one carriage to the other in the dark, with a heavy portmanteau in my hand, I stumbled on a rail and fell flat to the ground on a rail striking my chest against another rail. Thanks to God, I experienced no serious injury, and rising I sought the portmanteau which had fallen some distance away and then went to lie down. The following day a sharp pain troubled me, and it was only on reaching our College of *Campinas* that I could be treated for it.

The railway carried me through lands still inhabited by half civilized Indians, *Quatos*, *Terrenas*, etc.

After three days we crossed the superb River *Paraná*, and then began a virgin forest of 250 miles and more, peopled by the ferocious *Coroados* Indians of the State of S. Paolo.

During this stage of the journey I had also something to suffer, for at the inn where we should have dined there was not enough for all and I was one of those who had to remain hungry. I expected to find something at the following stations, but being in the midst of the forest, there was nothing to be got.

Thank God I arrived that evening at a new settlement, where I was able to get some food.

After two days I was glad to reach our School at *Campinas*, and after a brief stay I resumed my journey.

But the greatest consolation awaited me in our Academy of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in *San Paolo*. The Sanctuary is magnificent and an immense amount of good is done there. It suffices to state that in 1914 the number of Communions made in the Church were 212,000. It is attended by 1200 boys of the Oratory and by more than 400 boarders.

The apostolate is vast, but the results are most consoling.

At *Campinas* and *San Paolo* two entertainments were given for the benefit of the new Mission which furnished me with means sufficient to continue my journey. May God bless the good souls who flocked there for the support of my undertaking.

At *Lorena*, where our confrères were assembled for the Spiritual Exercises, I found our Provincial Don Rota, who, in addition to some pecuniary help, gave me also a Brother to ac-

company me, but unfortunately, owing to poor health he had to leave me at *Pernambuco*.

At the Federal Capital — Towards the Amazon — Blessings and prayers.

At *Rio Janeiro* I remained several days to obtain from the Government a free passage as far as *Manaos*; and, thanks to the efforts of our representative in that capital, my wishes were fulfilled. I visited also His Eminence Cardinal Arcoverde, the Auxiliary Bishop and the Bishop of *Nittheroy*, as I had also paid my respects to those of *Campinas* and *San Paolo*. I visited also the Nuncio Apostolic Mgr. Joseph Aversa, a great friend and protector of the Salesians.

Leaving *Rio* on March 30th, by the steamer *Brazil*, on the 1st of April we were at *Bahia*. I visited our Confrères of *Sergipe* where I saw Don Giordano, with whom I conversed at length, on the Mission of Rio Negro, little thinking that he would be elected its first Superior. With him and the good Bishop, I spent the Sunday.

Returning to *Bahia*, I took the steamer *Ceará* for *Pernambuco*, where I remained ten days, enjoying the charitable hospitality of our confrères.

From *Pernambuco*, in the company of Don Joseph Solari and Brother Joseph Canuto I began to ascend the *Amazon* in the steamer *Pará*, and at length reached *Manaos* in the new Prefecture.

I had started with a great deficiency of pecuniary means and along the way the abundance of God's blessings never failed, — a pledge of His help and protection in all our wants.

II.

In the new Prefecture.

Arrival at *Manaos* — Visits to the authorities and cordial support — S. Gabriel, centre of the Prefecture — The Centenary of Mary Help of Christians.

On our arrival at *Manaos* we were lodged in the Bishop's House. It was necessary for me to present, the various letters of recommendation and to prepare for the work of the Mission which we were now approaching. I experienced great courtesy on the part of all those who had to give me various sanctions, and authorisations, and received substantial assistance from several generous catholics.

At last we went on board the steamer *Inca* and set off hopefully for S. *Gabriel*, which is the centre of our Prefecture Apostolic.

San Gabriel is the most important town of

these remote regions, the seat of Government and consequently of all the principal authorities. We arrived happily on the 21st of May, just before the feast of Mary Help of Christians, whilst all the people of the neighbourhood were preparing for the Feast of Pentecost, celebrated here with the greatest possible solemnity.

With the exception of a few Portuguese and Brazilians, merchants and collectors of rubber, all the others are Indians, either civilized or semi-civilized; and yet I cannot describe the gladness depicted on their countenance at our coming.

With eagerness we shared in their joy and for us the coincidence was providential, as thus we were able to celebrate the Centenary Feast of Mary Help of Christians with the solemnity the circumstances permitted.

On the day of the Feast, solemn Mass was sung: I myself was the celebrant, while Don Solari took upon himself the work of the choir, all alone. He also preached the discourse on Our Lady Help of Christians.

Lastly we recited the Act of Consecration of the new Prefecture Apostolic to Mary Help of Christians, and to all we distributed pictures and medals. Thus the date of the Centenary of Mary Help of Christians, will be inseparable from the history of the new Mission.

The church where this feast was celebrated could not have been poorer or more lowly; it was made of planks and mud, only twenty-six feet long and thirteen feet wide. With an earthen floor, not even levelled, without doors and without windows, it is often a shelter at night for some animal; much like the cave of Bethlehem, I thought. Our venerable Don Bosco from heaven must have watched us in those days, and who knows what he may have said to Our Lady, seeing her feast kept in such a lowly spot.

Consoling thoughts filled my mind, for humility is the foundation of all works, and this place seems destined to be the central residence of the Mission.

Having celebrated the feast of Mary Help of Christians, Don Solari, profiting of the return of the steamer, went back, because his health did not allow him to proceed; and I, on the following morning resumed my journey, intending to reach the furthest limit of Brazil, which is also the boundary of our Prefecture.

Towards the boundaries of Brazil and of our Prefecture — Arrival at Cucuhy.

I set off therefore on the 25th of May with the brightest hopes. The Authorities had provided for all. I was given a small steamer with

an oil motor which towed a canoe in which I placed my baggage including the altar requisites. Colonel Joachim de Aguiar and all the local Authorities accompanied me on board, and at five o'clock in the afternoon I left *S. Gabriel*. I was accompanied by one official and by my Indian assistants.

The river passed along beside several plantations at one of which we stopped for the night. Here I gave a brief instruction, and as I said Mass on the following day, I was able to give the people the opportunity of going to the Sacraments. We then set off and travelled all day. Towards evening we reached the mouth of the largest affluent of the Rio Negro, the River *Uaupés*. The night was passed at the house belonging to one of the most prominent settlers of those parts.

On the morning of the 27th many Indians assisted at Holy Mass: regaining our canoe we reached in the afternoon the large establishment called San Filippo. It is owned by a settler who has had many years experience of life on the estancias and has large numbers of Indians working for him. These will all need to be instructed, when our Prefecture is in working order.

On the morning of the 28th I said Mass very early and set off before day break, calling at several places, at one of which a small chapel has been built where the neighbours gathered on festivals.

Finally on the 30th, at two o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived at the fortress of *Cucuhy*, the furthest limit of Brazil and of the Prefecture, where a military detachment guards the frontiers of Venezuela and Colombia. It is an enchanting spot. The commandant and soldiers gave us a hearty welcome. I went with them in the steamer round an Island in the river, from which the territories of both Venezuela and Colombia can be seen. All were eager to participate in the establishment of the new mission.

I should like to have proceeded another day's journey up the *Rio Negro* (which from there flows between Venezuela and Colombia) reaching as far as *Casiquiara*, the great natural canal which places it in communication with the *Orenoco*; but the want of petroleum for the steamer's motor prevented this. Later on, please God, we shall have an opportunity of exploring that river also, and we shall do so willingly, because for the Missionary arriving at the confines of the Prefecture it will be easy, in agreement with the ecclesiastical authorities of Colombia and of Venezuela, to visit those people, who are also without priests. They are some of the most isolated spots in the civilized world.

On the 31st of May, the date to which our Calendar assigned the translated Feast of Mary Help of Christians, I celebrated Holy Mass at the frontier. The Sergeant had the guard-room prepared, and all the people of the neighbourhood assisted at the Mass, at the end of which I preached a short sermon suitable to the occasion.

It was the last day of May and we were about to begin the month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I spoke therefore of the new Mission, consecrated to Mary Help of Christians and recommended to the goodness of the Sacred Heart. From the altar, where I stood, I saw before me the majestic *Rio Negro* here more than 200 yards wide and the forests of Venezuela and Colombia. I sent a greeting to the Salesians and to the Sisters of Mary Help of Christians in those two Republics, thinking of the day, still far off, in which shall be realized the hope of Mgr. Lasagna, who had learnt it from the lips of Don Bosco, of seeing the Salesians of Matto Grosso, of Colombia and of Ecuador meeting each other in their daring and apostolic expeditions in the heart of America and, while offering their thanksgiving to Mary Help of Christians, would join in a fraternal greeting.

Already on this occasion, though not with Salesians, I was pleased to shake hands with former pupils of the Salesians of Bogotá, who joyfully recalled to me the names of Don Rabiati and Don Unia.

At the end of the ceremony I distributed to all present pictures and medals of Mary Help of Christians and of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; and at two o'clock in the afternoon I bid farewell to this enchanting spot and to those good people and promising to return soon to visit them, we entered our canoe for the return journey.

From Cucuhy to the mouth of Rio Uaupés — The sad condition of a Colombian — At S. Gioachino.

The return journey is always more easy as it is favoured by the current. Thus at five o'clock in the evening we were at *Marabitana*, where many people were awaiting us.

And there also the following day, June the 1st, having said Mass I spoke of the transition from the month of Mary to the month of the Sacred Heart, I administered Baptism and Confirmation to fifteen persons, recommended to all that they should put to rights the chapel and erect a small dwelling for the Missionary, because in future they will be able to reckon on the presence of the Missionary for all the more solemn Feasts. These poor people excite our compassion. The greater number are *Barés*

and *Banivas* Indians, half civilized, without any education. How much they need zealous missionaries!

After midday we were once more sailing down stream. The night was spent in the dwelling of *Madiwá*, where I administered 4 Baptisms, and then went on to *S. Marcellino*. Here at one time there was a small chapel, and several families lived near; and now it is deserted with the exception of one family, in whose house I celebrated Mass. There I was asked, to visit a Colombian who was dangerously ill. He showed evident signs of having suffered a great deal and was still suffering. When I enquired as to the nature of his illness he replied that he had been wounded by the *Banivas Indians* of *Rio Xié*, and that he had been preserved only by a miracle.

On the 13th of April he was some distance up this river with another Colombian, employed like others in collecting rubber. Having been obliged to go to a distance for some hours, whilst returning in his canoe, the savages discharged their rifles at him. These barbarians had already killed his companion, and were determined to secure a second victim. One bullet, indeed, had struck his arm near the wrist; five others wounded him in the stomach and thighs, and a seventh lodged in his backbone whilst many shots riddled his face, so that he fell in the canoe, bathed in his blood. After this villanous attack, the savages drew near to see if he was dead, but fortunately he was able to stand up, and by firing off his gun he put them to flight. His case, however, seemed quite desperate. Half dead as he was, he could not direct his canoe in descending the river, and so abandoned himself to Divine Providence, leaving the little bark to the guidance of the stream. It was four o'clock in the afternoon, and at eleven he passed near a hut and succeeded in making himself heard. Hastening to his assistance they found him nearly unconscious. Having no remedies at hand, they took up the oars and in haste rowed him to *S. Marcellino* where they arrived about midday.

He was placed on a couch and attended to as far as circumstances permitted.

Two months had already elapsed and the poor patient was still lying in the same position. He told me that as soon as he felt a little stronger he would have himself taken to *Manaos* to have the bullet, which gave him much pain, extracted; I recommended him to place himself in the hands of Mary Help of Christians, I gave him a medal, and some nourishing food I had with me and left him with regret.

A month later he reached *Manaos* in my company, still lying on his bed of suffering.

Of those assassins three were taken and conducted to *S. Gabriel* for execution. It is said that the crime was committed out of revenge.

It is not surprising that the Indians should possess fire-arms. All the Indians of *Rio-Negro* have them, as they are considered civilized and employed in collecting rubber, the chief source of wealth in those parts. This is not the case with other tribes who dwell in the interior towards the sources of the larger tributaries and who live in quite a savage state. The population of *Rio Negro* is one *sui generis*, in which are to be found all gradations from the most savage types to the cultivated settler.

We left *S. Marcellino* and passing several dwellings arrived towards evening at a small native settlement, where I visited the lowly chapel which is fairly suitable.

On the 4th of June, I celebrated some marriages and Baptisms and set off for *S. Filippo*, where I had the consolation of baptising about fifteen native children.

On the 6th we took our leave to visit the neighbouring chapel of *S. Anna*, where, meeting several Indians collected there, I administered some Baptisms and then went on to the settlement of *S. Gioachino*, at the mouth of the *Uaupés*.

S. Gioachino formerly had a large population with many houses, a church, a cemetery, etc. and now it is almost deserted. However I found the little church still well kept, with a kind of bell tower, and a large cemetery full of old crosses, and several houses inhabited by about seventy Indians.

They came at once to tell me of their troubles in their dealings with the civilized population, and I encouraged them, saying that as we were about to establish ourselves at this Mission we would help them to the best of our ability.

I think, indeed, that once the mission is established, the former population, now dispersed will gather again round their small churches, as I urged them to do and as they promised.

Some of the more civilized manifested also a desire for education, so as to bring to an end a life of such degradation and servitude.

They complained of the malarial fever from which they suffered, as much of the rubber-collecting takes them into places which are not healthy.

In the Lower *Rio Negro* fever is more prevalent than in the Upper, but remedies and precautions may be suggested; and I, at once, distributed to all a little quinine which I had procured from the Government at *Rio Janeiro*. They joined with me in the *Rosary* and *Litany*, and next day assisted at *Mass*, after which I administered several Baptisms.

The River *Uaupés* — Former Missionaries — The prowess of the Indians — An international dinner.

On the 7th of June, we changed our route, entering the majestic River *Uaupés*, which is the largest tributary of the Upper *Rio Negro*.

This river is the most important of the tributaries within the limits of the Prefecture Apostolic of *Rio Negro*. It was explored by some early Carmelite Missionaries, of whom there remain no records. In 1784 Colonel d'Almador traversed it as far as the *Rio Tiquie* and discovered its communication with the *Rio Japuíá*. Later on it was visited by other explorers, of whom the last was Doctor Theodore Koch (between 1903 and 1905) who lived at *S. Filippo*, and made several excursions.

The Carmelite Missions having perished, we have no records of any other priests visiting these parts until 1832, in which we find the name of the Brazilian Missionary, Father Joseph.

Between 1851 and 1854 a Capuchin Missionary, also went there. This zealous priest succeeded in re-establishing centres of catechetical instruction, but later he had to retire and these were abandoned until the year 1880, when the Franciscans returned. After eight years these also withdrew and the Missions were once more left desolate. This explains how in many places are to be found small churches in ruins, and the inhabitants dispersed, whilst there still remains amongst the poor Indians some religious spirit.

Having started, as I said, on the morning of June 7th, we arrived towards night at the fine house of the brothers Albuquerque, the chief family in *Uaupés*, at the spot called *Belvedere*, where we received a hearty welcome, the news of our coming having preceded us. The head of the family is also the administrator of the Indians of the district. He has two brothers assisting him, but the fourth and youngest, was the victim of a horrible tragedy. He was in his hut near the mouth of the river *Ira-paraná*, when two Indians drew near and discharged a revolver at his head; he fell dead on the spot, bathed in blood. A nephew who was a little way off, hearing the shot, ran to the hut and saw other Indians who with the assassins, armed with hatchets, were cutting his uncle in pieces.

Terrified at this sight he uttered a cry of horror and vengeance against these villains, but instead of desisting, they attacked this unfortunate man who tried to escape in a canoe, but a bullet caused him to fall in a dying state. The savages then cut off his arms and legs and threw him into the river. Having finished the

massacre they ran to the hut, stole what they found there and set it on fire.

At the same time they killed a youth of sixteen and threw him into the river.

Such are the people with whom the Missionary will have to deal. And yet, trusting in the protection of Mary Help of Christians we shall not be deterred by any difficulty, in order to gain these our brethren to the faith and to civilization.

But to resume our narrative.

The evening of our arrival we had some short devotions, and in a few words I explained the object of our mission.

The following day, June 8th, I said Holy Mass in the presence of many people gathered together for this rare event, then I blessed two marriages and administered 14 Baptisms.

The dinner was remarkable from the various nationalities assembled there. Thus there were Brazilians from different states or provinces, such as *Parà*, *Bahia*, *Cearà*, *Maragnon*, etc. and Portuguese, Italians, Colombians, Venezuelans, Peruvians and an Arab. After dinner, they all separated to go to their various districts. Towards evening, I also, having made the necessary preparations, embarked and continued my journey on the majestic *Uaupés* to visit the Indians of the *Ipanorè* and of *Urubucuará*. I went on until 11,30 and then spent the night in a hut.

On the 10th I set off at 5,30 and at 10 o'clock I halted to visit the old *Tuixaná* (or cacique) *Henry*. Further down the river we met three canoes with Indians absolutely in the garb of Adam.....

On the 11th at 5 p. m. I was at the mouth of the famous *Tiquié*, where a relative of the Albuquerque is living. I visited that family and continued my journey, promising to stay there on my return.

At two o'clock the next morning we arrived at *Ipanorè*. We did not, however, enter the *aldeia*, because the Indians would have been alarmed and would have fled.

At daybreak we approached the Indians. visited the hut which was being built and found it most interesting, as I had never imagined there could be houses so large and so well constructed amongst the Indians.

Unlike the Bororós of Matto Grosso, who have a large hut in the middle of the *aldeia*, which is used for their feasts and for the men's meetings these have their own huts which are of large proportions and accommodate many families.

These houses have no doors or windows at the sides, but only an entrance at each end. Along the sides the various families are located, who sometimes number as many as forty or

fifty in a single *maloca*. In the middle is a large open space which they use for their dances and their feasts and for the preparation of Manioc flour and of the famous *cachiry*, their favourite drink.

Here also I found two fine bells, left by the former Missionaries, who once had here a flourishing colony.

At Urubucuará — Preparations for a baptism — On the River Tiquié — Ignorance! A new travelling companion.

During the day I proposed visiting other Indians living at some distance. Here begin the grand and dangerous cataracts of the *Uaupés*, where travelling is made on land, drawing the canoes with long ropes. We left our boats, because this was the limit I had been assigned, and proceeded on foot. Arriving at the place where the *maloca* of these Indians was situated, the children who saw us fled into the woods. The older ones stopped, and on receiving some small present, they lost their fear and surrounded us. A cacique, as soon as he saw me, ran to put on his garments, and offered me some fruit to eat; then he took me to visit the different huts and the large *maloca*. I visit-



Map

Boundaries: North: Colombia and Venezuela

related this episode to show the conditions of these poor people. In the evening with our small steamer we explored the *Tiquié*, which is also an imposing river. In order to reach the place inhabited by the Indians would have taken three days' navigation, so we put off the expedition till another occasion. I have been assured that in the *Tiquié* region alone there are about a thousand Indians and that many others are to be found along its tributaries.

On the 13th of June after Holy Mass and the administration of several Baptisms, we set off. At various places I found the Indians waiting for me to baptize six children. After the baptisms they gave me fried fish, bananas, manioc flour, etc.

In the evening we were once more at *Belvedere* where I was expected for the feast of S. Antony. The Rosary was said, the Litany was sung and I gave a little sermon.

On the 14th, feast of S. Bonaventure, I administered Holy Baptism and Confirmation to several persons both young and old. Then three girls arrived, begging to be confirmed. I prepared them, and heard their Confessions, only to discover that they had not been baptised. So the instruction had to begin again. Such a mixture of ignorance and faith I had never hitherto encountered; and who knows what labour we must go through to remedy it! Such is the result of the desolation into which this mission has fallen.

I asked Signor Albuquerque if he had an Indian boy who knew the native language and Portuguese, so that I could practise their language during my journey. He offered me the little Indian, Siro, who was fairly intelligent, having already learnt to read and write: and this good boy became at once my companion. Signor Albuquerque gave me also several native objects, thus completing the collection received at *S. Filippo*.

Once more at S. Gabriel — Negotiations for the future residence — On the way back — A marriage and... delusive hopes — At S. Isabel.

On the 15th of June, together with little Siro, I bid farewell to these good people and entering our canoe, set off, arriving at *S. Gabriel* on the evening of the 16th.

I cannot describe the cordiality with which I was received and the joy manifested as I had given them hopes that the first house of our Mission would be opened at *S. Gabriel*; on this account, during the month I had spent in Upper Rio Negro, they had already, begun the construction of new houses.

From the Municipality I asked for a plot of land as the centre of the Mission, so as to start it on a solid foundation. In this ground was included the poor chapel about 25 feet long by 16 in width already mentioned; the good people promised to repair it and have it ready for our return. Beside the little Church there are two small houses thatched with straw and palm leaves.

I visited the Mount S. Gabriel, which would be on the border of the proposed mission land, and it seemed to me a suitable spot for planting a Cross, dominating these desolate regions.

The land applied for is suitable for agriculture and very fertile, but, like all that of Rio Negro it is infested with ants which destroy all vegetation; and yet it is from the land the Missionaries must derive the greater part of their maintenance, as is the case with the native Colonies of Matto Grosso.

That day a company of fifteen soldiers passed through *S. Gabriel* on their way to replace those on the frontier of *Cucuihy*.

Having spent three days in negotiations relative to the central residence of the Mission, and in the administration of the Sacraments I bid farewell to all the local authorities, thanking them for the great kindness they had shown me, with mutual good wishes for a prosperous future. I then took leave of the whole population, setting off amidst the waving of handkerchiefs whilst we remained in sight.

In less than two hours, accompanied by little Siro, we arrived at *Camanaos*, an old native settlement.

The following day, having said Mass and administered several Baptisms, Signor Ferreira arrived with his steamer and took me to his beautiful house, named *Jucaby*. The three days I spent with that family gave me the greatest satisfaction; I was able to preach, to hear Confessions, bless Marriages, give Confirmation and baptize many.

Naturally, in the midst of the satisfaction for good done, there are always inconveniences, and the regret for the good one cannot do. Here as in all the other places there were many Indians assembled and well disposed but they needed much religious instruction and I, knowing but little of their language, could not make myself understood. Later on we hope, with God's help, to be able to do the good which is now an impossibility.

I have said that there is great need for religious instruction. Two came to be married and I asked them to go to Confession. They were quite willing. I sat down and called the husband. He approached; I made a sign to him to kneel down, and he sat on his heels. I

told him again and took his arm to help him to kneel down; he sat on the ground. I got up and kneeling down myself, made him kneel beside me, because he did not know how; but when I arose to sit down, he also arose and sat beside me.

I told him to make the sign of the Cross, but he knew nothing about it. I arranged things as well as I could, being satisfied with as little as possible. Then the wife came and more or less the same happened..... I asked her questions and she replied in a jargon I could not understand in a loud voice so that her husband who was at the door of the chapel heard what she was saying and corrected her from a distance, saying I know not what.. I was obliged to make her stop, being satisfied with their good will, and I joined them in Holy Matrimony. I did not wish to disappoint them. They are Christians and it was better in spite of their ignorance, to bless their union.

Nevertheless, as I said, I left this place well pleased and satisfied, not only with the good done, but also on account of the kindly entertainment received. At several other places I had opportunities of doing much good, and these settlements will probably be one day centres of Catholicity. There were many families who were exceptionally kind, especially at San Giuseppe. Here an amusing incident happened which I must relate. It is usual to profit of the Missionary's visit to arrange marriages. A youth, wishing to do this, asked the young cook of the house to marry him, but was refused... Quite undisturbed, he asked another, but she also refused him; then he asked a girl, eleven years old, whom I had just baptized, and this one consented. He went to his master, Signor Lopez, that he might speak to the Missionary for him... but the master replied the Missionary did not allow marriages of girls of eleven years old. The poor youth besought his master to help him to marry, promising to treat the girl for several years as a sister, an arrangement to which both parties agreed... He came also to me. and at last I calmed him by promising to return in time to bless his marriage.

On the Feast of S. Peter we took our leave and visited several other habitations.

By the 4th of July I left these good people and went down to *S. Isabel*. Here once a month there is an assembly of people from various parts, waiting the arrival of the river steamer which goes as far as this place. After spending two days in this pleasant company the steamer *Inca* arrived with the month's news; all were anxious for tidings of the European war. I was considering whether I ought to go down with this steamer, or stop another month

in order to visit other places where I was expected.

I went on to *Villa Pecil*, a two hours' journey. heartily welcomed by Signor Pecil, a Catholic Turk, an excellent man of business, who has the best property on Rio Negro, in which one sees real agricultural progress.

I should willingly have remained there a couple of days, but fresh circumstances made me resolve to profit of the steamer *Inca* to go down as far as *Manaos*.

I went on board. Wherever I passed, people were waiting for me and wished me to land, and I was obliged to ask them all to have patience, and on our return, the Mission being finally established, we would arrange that the Missionary should visit all at least once a year. This promise gave them great satisfaction.

For this reason I have but little to say of Lower Rio Negro, not having halted at any place, and having passed many of the settlements in the night, which happened, both in going and returning, in passing the mouth of the *Rio Branco* and at *Moura* which mark the boundaries of the Mission. I much regretted being unable to explore the Lower Rio Negro as I had explored the Upper; but thanks be to God I was able to get a general idea of the whole and I am most anxious for the moment when I can return there.

III.

The Return.

At *Manaos* — Results of the journey of exploration — At *Belen do Pará* — Visit to General Pinto.

On the 10th of July we landed safely at *Manaos*, welcomed by the local clergy and the friends we had left there.

During my rapid excursion I was able, with God's help, to administer 204 Baptisms and 50 Confirmations, to bless 13 marriages, hear besides the Confessions and Holy Communions.

It is not much, but it is something considering I knew but little of the native language. In 1908, when the Bishop of *Manaos* went there, as I have said, there were 1500 Baptisms, 350 marriages and many Confirmations. In 1914 there was a zealous Capuchin missionary and he also administered more than 600 Baptisms and blessed 50 marriages, which is a clear proof that our field of labour is vast and important.

I remained ten days at *Manaos* to make arrangements for the Mission. I found still there the Commendatore Joachim S. de Araujo, who was on the point of returning to Portugal:

and he and other high officials gave me facilities for the Mission, so that it may be established with as much speed as possible.

Finally on the 21st July we embarked on the steamer *Parà*. In three days we reached *Belen* Capital of the State of *Parà*, where we were the guests of the Archbishop, Mgr. Santino Da Silva. Providentially, in addition to the two Jesuit Fathers, Professors at the Seminary, I found there also their Superior, who was returning to *Bahia* and whose company I was very pleased to have.

I paid a visit to General Pinto. As soon as he saw me he arose and embraced me like a brother, notwithstanding the presence of the Major, of a Captain and several officers. He enquired about my Mission specially about his soldiers, presented me to the officers as an old Missionary of the savages of Matto Grosso and now of the Rio Negro; and spoke of the necessity of good relations between the Church and the army.

Grave peril in the port of S. Luigi — At Rio Janeiro — Baptism of Siro at S. Paolo on the Centenary of Don Bosco — The Missionary's desire.

In the evening of the 24th we left *Parà* and on the 26th we arrived at *St. Louis*, Capital of the State of *Maragnon*. With the Jesuit Father, I proposed to visit the Bishop, but he was not in the city, and we were, instead, the guests of Mgr. Vincent Galvan, the Vicar General.

At two o'clock we returned to the harbour, where a boat was in readiness, we both managed to get into it, but a storm was impending, a terrible wind had arisen and our boat, which was not more than about fifty yards from the harbour, began to toss about; the Father cried out to the boatmen, and they said there was nothing to fear, but the water came in and the boat capsized. My venerable companion succeeded in saving himself on the overturned boat, but I went under water. In the harbour all eyes were turned towards us. With my mouth full of salt water I succeeded in getting my head above the waves and ejecting the water, struggling violently to find something to catch hold of..... and finally I got hold of the Jesuit's leg. Meanwhile there were cries for help..... and quickly steam-launches and boats surrounded us and placed us in safety. I only lost my umbrella and my hat which were afterwards recovered. It was an involuntary bath, but without any worse consequences.

On landing, we were heartily congratulated on our escape from death, for to be devoured

by sharks which are numerous at high tide would have been decidedly unpleasant!

On the 28th of July, arriving at *Fortaleza*, Capital of *Ceará*, the steamer had scarcely stopped when four sharks actually made their appearance. All the passengers were looking on. The sailors got ready the fish-hook and bait, and in a short time one swallowed it and the sailors drew it on board. It was about six feet long, being only young; the monsters being sometimes as much as 16 feet in length. Still this one had a throat about 18 inches wide, big enough to eat us.

The head engineer had the head cut off and the jaws cleaned to preserve them. I told him I should like to present them to our museum at Turin, and he kindly consented.

There are many perils for the poor Missionary but the help of Divine Providence never fails!

Having visited once more our Confrères of *Pernambuco* and of *Bahia*, on the 5th of August, safe and sound I arrived at *Rio Janeiro*. I visited again His Eminence, Cardinal Arcoverde, who was pleased at the results and interested in the new Mission.

I visited also the Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Joseph Berzerra, and he gave us the brightest hopes; and many other official personages promised their support. During my return journey, I was most anxious to arrive at *S. Paolo* for the Centenary Feasts of our Venerable Father Don Bosco, and to baptize in the Sanctuary of the Sacred Heart the first Indian brought from Rio Negro on the day of the Centenary.

Thank God, I arrived in time and Dr. Francis Rodriguez, the worthy President of the State, formerly President of the Federation, accepted the office of Godfather and his daughter that of Godmother.

Therefore at 10 a. m. on the 16th of August 1915, the Very Reverend Vicar General of the Archdiocese Mgr. Benedict Alves de Souza solemnly administered Holy Baptism to our young Indian of the Barés tribe, giving him the names of *John Siro Bosco Alves de Albuquerque*.

May God be praised and blessed for this! and eternal thanksgivings also to Mary Help of Christians, that in the Centenary year of her Feast, and of the birth of Don Bosco, the new missionary field has been opened to his sons in *Rio Negro*.

May the grace of God assist us and the charity of the Co-operators kindly support us, so that by our unstinted labours it may become a pleasant garden, adorned with the beautiful flowers of religion and civilization.

JONH BALZOLA,
Salesian Missionary.



Salesian Notes and News.

LONDON.

The principal events calling for mention since our last issue are connected with two festivals of the Church. Our number for May and June was written long before the 24th of May, and could therefore give no record of that festival which was kept in the Sacred Heart Church on the Sunday following. A Novena in preparation had led up to the solemnity; there was all the careful decoration of the Church, and wealth of ceremonial which are rightly associated with our keeping of special festivities; and finally the large congregations at the morning and evening services formed an indispensable complement to these elaborate proceedings.

Speaking to his parishioners at the last Mass, Fr. Kelly dwelt on the occasion of the Feast of our Patroness, as a great rallying day for their devotion, as a crowning point in their celebration of the month of May, and as a fitting opportunity for redoubling their zeal in those works of practical religious endeavour, which are a necessary part of the vigorous life of every parish.

The evening's discourse, given by Fr. McCarthy, dealt more particularly with the Festival in its historical and devotional setting, and on its significance for those who are in any way connected with the work of the Salesian Congregation, which is intimately associated with the title, the practice of devotion to Our Lady Help of Christians. A procession in honour of Our Lady was made before the Benediction.

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As an aside to this brief résumé, it may be mentioned that on the 24th of May, His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster assisted at the Mass in the Church of Our Lady at Kensington, which was also celebrating its patronal feast. Preaching to the large concourse of the faithful, the Cardinal applied the meaning of the festival to the needs of our own day, when, even more than in times of old, they desired the powerful assistance of Our Lady Help of Christians, both in the general and particular needs.

* *

Another important day of recent celebration was the feast of the Sacred Heart, to which the Church of West Battersea is dedicated. The patronal feast always draws large numbers of the faithful, and is made distinctive by special services both morning and evening. After the Vespers the Rev. Fr. Williams, S. C. gave an eloquent discourse on the feast-day, and on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Solemn Procession and Benediction closed the days celebrations.

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SCHOLASTIC MATTERS.

The Scholastic Year at the Salesian School ends in July, and re-opens in September.

The last term was again marked by an influx of new boys, bringing the total to well over two-hundred, and easily maintaining the numbers of the years before the war. The final term has run a steady course, with but few interruptions in its placid way. These few were associated with the feasts mentioned above, which are important events for the Salesian Schools as well as for the Sacred Heart Church, and among other items in their celebration, is the time-honoured one of a brief cessation of studies. The report of the Religious Examination, received from the Diocesan Examiner, The Rev. Dr. Whereat, and countersigned by His Lordship the Bishop, is every bit as satisfactory as we anticipated. He says: "*An exceedingly well-taught School. The boys take very great interest in their work. I was as usual much pleased.*" Such a report needs no comment.

At the end of June the College of Preceptors Examinations were held, and following upon them by a few weeks the Oxford Locals. The School is a centre for both these examining bodies. As to the results, speculation can do little to anticipate them, for scholastic authorities are usually surprised that certain boys have done so well, while others, apparently more brilliant, have not come up to their expectations. It is a subject on which endless theories might be suggested.

It is necessary to remind those, who may be considering an application for admission on behalf of their charges, that the School re-opens in September and that accommodation is not unlimited. Application should be made to the Very Rev. C. B. Macey, Salesian School, Batterssea, S. W.

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FARNBOROUGH. We are able to chronicle yet further progress at the Salesian School Farnborough whose advance has been rapid during recent years. Apart from scholastic matters, which are always to the fore, the Church of Our Lady Help of Christians has been enriched by the acquisition of a fine organ, which has already proved its worth as a sustaining and embellishing force to a choir, which has always been of high standing. A short time before the installation of the new organ, a solemn Requiem Mass was sung in the church for the repose of the soul of Captain Harter. A notice of this event well deserves to be inserted in our columns, for the bereaved mother has been a great benefactress to the Salesian Work at Farnborough. The report says:

"Not long ago Captain J. G. Harter was severely wounded and died shortly afterwards. The letter from the General Officer commanding, in which he announces the death is a touching tribute to the gallant captain and will be a source of great consolation to his parents. It is as follows: "The G. O. C. announces with the very deepest regret the death of Captain J. G. Harter, Brigade Major, who was severely wounded by shell fire yesterday evening, and died this morning. The Brigade is poorer by the loss of a fine soldier, and a very gallant gentleman. When severely wounded and in very great pain, his first thoughts were for others. He died as he had lived, brave and unselfish, and an example of single-minded devotion to duty. His fine soldierly character will ever be an example for us all."

The doctor who attended him says: "He was fully conscious and perfectly calm, as he asked me if I thought he was going to die.' I said I hoped he would pull through. He then said: 'If I am going to die, I should like it to be soon, for I am quite ready. Give my mother my love and say that I am thinking of her, and that I am not afraid. His bravery and calm endurance were marvellous. I had known him for many months. He died the death of a Christian hero, and we all mourn his loss."

Captain Harter was born in 1888 and was educated at Lady Cross, Beaumont and Wimbledon. At the outbreak of hostilities his first appoint-

ment was that of A. D. C. to General St. John Keir, but on his own initiative he relinquished that comparatively safe post to take up the duties of Adjutant, becoming subsequently Brigade Major.

A solemn Requiem Mass was sung at the Church of Our Lady Help of Christians, Farnborough, Hants. Fr. Sutherland S. C. was the celebrant, attended by other Salesian Fathers. Many friends were present to show their sympathy for the loss of a devoted son and gallant officer.

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**GENERAL
MATTERS.**

The Holy Father never wearies in promoting the devotional fervour of the faithful, in spite of his over-burdening share in the anxieties of the war. During the month of June he gave urgent recommendations that the devotion to the Sacred Heart should be instilled by the preachers and cultivated alike both by pastors and flocks. He received in audience the Archconfraternity a short time previously; and to one of the Lenten preachers from the Gregorian University he gave a special charge that he should recommend families to consecrate themselves to the Sacred Heart. In a little publication bearing on this subject, the Holy Father wrote: "We are desirous that Catholic families should consecrate themselves to the Sacred Heart, and we give a special blessing to those households, who shall thus co-operate towards the general recognition of the sovereignty of Jesus Christ over Christian families."

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Our Superior General, Don Albera, has also been corresponding with the Holy Father. Just before the festival of Our Lady Help of Christians, which promised to be more than ever a great rallying day, on account of the numerous favours required by those stricken by the war, he desired to obtain that the Plenary Indulgence usually attached to that feast might be gained *toties quoties*, or for every visit made to the Basilica at Turin on the day of the feast. He wrote as follows:

Most Holy Father,

Prostrate before you, the Superior General of the Salesian Society humbly begs your Holiness to consider:

that in view of the constant growth of the devotion to Our Lady Help of Christians, now spread into every part of the globe;

that on the feast-day, May 24th, an immense multitude of the faithful from all parts of Italy and from other countries comes to visit the

basilica made famous by the Ven. Don Bosco, so that its approaches and surroundings are packed to overflowing;

that in the view of many, the Plenary Indulgence, *toties quoties*, would greatly augment

The Holy Father replied in his own writing: In order to show the great confidence we have in the intercession of Our Lady Help of Christians, we are most pleased to accede to the request of the Superior General of the Salesian Congre-

Ad esprimere la viva fiducia che abbiamo nella intercessione di Maria Ausiliatrice, siamo ben lieti di accogliere la istanza del Rettore Maggiore della Congregazione Salesiana di Don Bosco, e concediamo che tutti i fedeli i quali visitino la Basilica di Valdocco in Torino il giorno 24 di Maggio possano lucrare toties quoties la indulgenza plenaria nella forma consueta, e che la indulgenza stessa sia applicabile a defunti. Contrarius quibus erunque in nomine obstantibus
Da Vaticano 13 Maggio 1916
Benedictus P. XV

Autograph of His Holiness Pope Benedict XV.

the fervour and reward the devotion of the faithful:

the undersigned accordingly beseeches Your Holiness to grant this favour to the Basilica of Our Lady Help of Christians, promising that special remembrance shall be made of the intentions of the Holy Father.

Paul Albera.

gation; and we grant that all those who visit the Basilica in Turin on the feast-day may gain a Plenary Indulgence (which shall also be applicable to the Holy Souls in Purgatory) every time they make the visit.

The Vatican

May 13th 1916.

BENEDICTUS PP. XV

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Mgr. Brugnoli writes to the *Bulletin* on the need and suitability of Don Bosco's Oratories at the present time. All countries have noticed with alarm that parental authority has been seriously lessened by the absence of so many fathers of families. The evening departments of the Oratories are proving themselves just as indispensable as those of the Sunday, and the Prelate urges the necessity of voluntary assistants in this vital work on behalf of the young, as there has been so many works of public beneficence which the war conditions have called into being. He refers moreover, to what will evidently be a new development in regard to Don Bosco's Oratories, namely a special training for those who will devote themselves to this Oratory work. It has been found by experience that there is no lack of voluntary assistants, but when they come to set about the actual task of dealing with the young, they find difficulties arising at every turn, and disappointment is often the result. This proposal, therefore, which has already received the approval and encouragement of the Holy Father, bids fair to solve one of the problems which have always been connected with the work of the Oratories and as the guiding personnel is the *sine qua non*, if this can be secured a great advancement will have been made in putting to its most productive uses this favourite institution of Don Bosco.

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There have been many noteworthy incidents in connection with the festivities in honour of our first Cardinal. We have dealt with the enthusiastic demonstrations in the many places where his zealous apostle has made his name renowned and with the important gatherings at Rome at the time of the Concistory, and subsequent to it.

On his journey from Rome to Turin, His Eminence stopped at Massa Carrara, to be entertained by His Lordship Mgr. Marengo, also of our society, and Bishop of that diocese. This meeting is one of much significance. One day in 1855 the Ven. Don Bosco was talking to a number of his clerics, among whom was Cardinal Cagliero, when he suddenly said: "One of you will be a bishop; others of my sons will be bishops also, but they are not here present." The *one* was, of course, the Cardinal himself, and among the *others*, thus vaguely referred to was Mgr. Marengo, our fourth bishop, appointed to the See which he still governs, by His Holiness Pius X. Thus the two prelates were, each in his own way, a realisation of Don Bosco's prophecy, and this was emphasised by the fact of the new Cardinal's recent election.

While staying there, His Eminence said Mass in the convent of the Sisters of Charity, now used as a hospital for the wounded, and after a short exhortation he visited the wards and spoke to the men. The officials were much encouraged by the Cardinal's sympathetic words and especially by his sitting down with them for breakfast. He afterwards went over the seminary, now commandeered by the Red Cross. At other places *en route*, particularly where there were Salesian Institutes, the Cardinal was the object of affectionate regard and welcome on the part of the public.

At the station of *Asti* he was received by Mgr. Spandre, the Bishop, and Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, and a large gathering of ecclesiastics. The train reached Turin to the minute at 7.55 p. m. The platform was crowded with the most distinguished ecclesiastics and the highest citizens, not only of Turin, but of all the places in that neighbourhood. The *Momento* had much to say in its description of the arrival of the Cardinal; how the fine figure of the Apostle of Patagonia was enhanced by the stateliness of the purple, how the ascetic figure of our Superior General made a fitting contrast, and what applause arose as these two sons of the Ven. Don Bosco embraced with more than fraternal warmth. Important personages were then introduced, and the picture was complete in all details, not forgetting the presentation of a fine bouquet by the diminutive maiden Margherita Canova.

In the motor-car His Eminence drove to our House of St. John the Evangelist, where he robed, and then continued his triumphal way to the Church of Our Lady Help of Christians. Needless to say the piazza and Basilica were filled to overflowing. The Cardinal, however, was too much occupied with his own thoughts, to notice even the distinguished escort. He had left that church many years before, the First Salesian Missionary; he ascended its steps now surrounded by all the manifestations of triumph, and a cardinal of the Church. His looks were not turned upon the crowd, nor towards his religious brethren, but towards the figure of Our Lady Help of Christians, who had undoubtedly had a great share in the works accomplished during his long career, and it must have been impossible for him to disassociate that evening's events from the wonderful forecast made by the Ven. Don Bosco concerning his career.

After a brief pause he addressed the vast audience from the steps of the Sanctuary. His words betrayed his emotion as he spoke of Our Lady Help of Christians, of Don Bosco and of the Sovereign Pontiff. The *Te Deum* that

followed was sung to a setting made by himself many years before.

In the Oratory courtyard there was a memorable scene. Of the many great demonstrations which that place has witnessed, it would be difficult to decide which was the most imposing, and most worthy of record. Congresses and gatherings and receptions of many kinds have brought distinguished persons and great crowds to that courtyard, whose chief claim to honour is that it is overlooked by the rooms once used by Don Bosco, and by the balcony from which he used to watch his crowds of boys at play. But this was a night of special festivity and unique rejoicing. Illuminations were everywhere, music resounded and the boys saluted His Eminence with a triumphal hymn composed by the cardinal himself in 1869.

But the reader will notice that there has been as yet no formal reception or act of homage. That was reserved for the following day, Sunday, May 21st. The *Momento* again does justice to the occasion: "There was the admiration of a people at the exaltation of one of its sons, the enthusiasm of pupils who beheld their one-time master, back from his apostolic journeys through uncivilised parts, now happily illumined by the Faith he had carried thither; there was the affection of old companions and brethren, all manifesting the happy results of the high ideals of Don Bosco's teaching; and there was the Cardinal, returned to the home of his boyhood and early priesthood, to which he had come back after many labours, bearing the full honours that are the rewards of the soldiers of Christ."

It was a great gathering that assembled in the theatre of the Oratory. The distinguished members of the Turinese society were there in large numbers, and every Association or Institute in the city had its representative. The proceedings were very naturally opened with a chorus. The words were written by the famous biographer of Don Bosco, Don Lemoyne; the music was composed by the Cavaliere Dogliani who has taught and directed the music at the Oratory from its earliest years. Don Cerruti, of the Superior Chapter, then briefly told the glory of the Salesian work in America, under the guidance of Cardinal Cagliero, and Mgr. Castrale spoke for His Eminence Cardinal Richelmy whose illness prevented him from coming.

There were so many who desired their sentiments to be expressed, that several had to combine to have them delivered by one speaker. The Cavaliere Bettazzi spoke for the Co-operators, and there was no doubt concerning his qualifications for so doing. He very skilfully pointed out that he represented a vast body of

persons, from the highest ranks to the humblest, from those in the spheres of intellectual prominence to the sturdy tiller of the soil. And his expression of loyal devotion to the Ven. Don Bosco and to his successor was a fine tribute to that unbounded and constant generosity which has been so characteristic of the Co-operators, and has constituted their admirable response to Don Bosco's last appeal to them.

After showing that the honour bestowed upon this distinguished follower of the Ven. Servant of God was one in which the whole body of his followers shared, the speaker remarked: "But, in truth, Your Eminence, although it is agreed that the purple brings you great honour and dignity, is it not also true, on the other hand, that you are an honour to the purple? Certainly you would never consider it in that light, for your modesty prevents it; but I do not think your eminent colleagues among the princes of the Church will take offence, if I express the opinion that they should be proud to see their mantle on the shoulders of one, who has spent so many years in service of his neighbour for God's sake, and has realised his venerated Founder's motto with so much zeal...."

There were many other fine passages in this speech, and it was fitting that the Co-operators should have had what might be considered the place of honour in this noble rivalry, for in every work that the Cardinal had undertaken, whether in the mission field or the diplomatic service, he had trusted to their support and had never found them wanting.

* * *

The Cardinal's reply was equal to the demands made by the great occasion. It was at once signified and paternal, eloquent yet simple, and he dwelt particularly upon the point that it was an honour bestowed by His Holiness Benedict XV, by which he intended to honour the great family of Don Bosco, the far-spreading Salesian Work, and particularly the work of the Missioinaries, who, spread over the whole of South America, had evangelised and civilised the native tribes wherever they existed, besides undertaking with such signal success the care of the religious welfare of the faithful.

Subsequent to this reception, the Cardinal received visits from great numbers of friends and Co-operators. The whole round of events connected with the appointment and reception of the new Cardinal was beyond dispute most successful and gratifying, and coming amid the losses and sorrows of the war, these manifestations were at once a consolation and an incentive to zealous effort.



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 though the intercession of Her who in every age has proved Herself the Help of Christians. Pius 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.

For many years now, there has been but one topic in these column, in the issue after the month of May; and it was a topic which regularly demanded adequate attention from us. The Devotion to Our Lady, under the title Help of Christians, is, to a greater extent than other devotions, bound up with the celebrations connected with her Feast; the festivity was originally instituted on account of events which occurred on May 24th, and that circumstance has been largely effective in closely associating the Festivity with the devotion.

But in recent years there had been few instances elsewhere in the world to equal the celebrations at Turin for this festival. The only solemnities comparable with them have been the principal gatherings during the Eucharistic Congresses, in various large capitals; with this difference, that at the Basilica of Our Lady Help of Christians, it is an annual and not an occasional or unique event.

In 1903 Pope Leo XIII ordered the solemn coronation of the figure of Our Lady over the High Altar of our Church at Turin. This Church was then known as *the Sanctuary*, and has since been raised to the dignity of a *Basilica* by the late Sovereign Pontiff Pius X. On the occasion referred to, there were celebrations which easily eclipsed anything that had previously been held in Turin, and it seemed as though no future festival could equal that display of religious fervour. But the war has done away with many theories and records, and it has been responsible for creating a new one even in this regard. One who has assisted at these celebrations for a long series of years declares that this year has surpassed all others in regard to the numbers and devotion of the faithful. If the Church had been ten times its size could not have admitted the multitude that flocked to it.

There were extra services and devotions during all the month of May. A Salesian Father discoursed in the morning and another every evening. There were a number of processions and pilgrimages to the Basilica in

order to pray for their country and for the intentions of the Holy Father. *The Quarant'Ore* was held, and the public prayers were offered for similar intentions, namely: *For the needs of our Fatherland, and for the peace of Nations*. This exposition was held from the 22nd to the 24th and the doors of the Church were not closed during those days; the Church was filled to overflowing during most of the time particularly during some of the services. The Prefect General of our Society performed the closing ceremony of the Exposition at dawn on the 24th, and the Masses then went on without interruption till noon. During the month of May more than fifty-four thousand Communion were distributed. At a quarter past six our Superior General celebrated at the High Altar, the Mass being offered for all our Co-operators. At half past seven His Eminence Cardinal Cagliari said Mass, and at half-past ten the Solemn Pontifical Mass was offered by His Lordship Mgr. Marengo, of our Society. Cardinal Cagliari gave the discourse for the occasion. His Eminence seemed to be again in his vigorous youth, and none could refer with such authority as he, to the wonders foretold by the Ven. Don Bosco in regard to the triumphs of Our Lady Help of Christians, of which he is himself the most authoritative witness. At four o'clock Don Ricaldone, of the Superior Chapter, addressed the Co-operators; at half past six there were Pontifical Vespers and the discourse was given by Father Gallo. Cardinal Cagliari gave the triple Benediction. Even this did not seem to close the festivities, for on Sunday, May 28th, there were about six thousand Communion, and the functions were as solemn as during the Novena.

His Eminence Cardinal Cagliari remained at the Oratory some time, and assisted at the devotions in the Sanctuary on the 24th of June. The practice of this dedication of the 24th of each month seems now definitely established, and during war is a regular rallying day for all those who have special needs to pray for.

Graces and Favours. (1)

During the Novena above described many great favours were obtained through the intercession of the Help of Christians. A certain lady had long been hindered from practising her faith, and her two boys had been brought up in Protestantism. She was making the novena, and on the eve of the Feast she had the happiness of seeing her boys baptised, receiving their First Communion from Our Superior General, and also confirmed. She herself was enabled to put aside all the hindrances to the practice of her Faith.

A captain just arrived from the front said: "I have asked and obtained a short leave solely to be able to come to Turin for the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians. I have brought a thank-offering in my own name, and of my companions. Our preservation has been one long favour from Our Lady Help of Christians.

* * *

A young officer came to the Basilica in order to make his Easter Duties at the Altar of Our Lady Help of Christians. He said he had been in the fighting at the Isonzo, and was struck down as if dead three times by some invisible hand — which he ascribed to Our Lady warning him to make his peace with God.

* * *

The members of the Club attached to the Oratory of St. Joseph at Turin saw twenty-seven of their number depart for the front. Their companions promised to make a visit to the Sanctuary of Our Lady Help of Christians if she protected them. After a year of fighting, not one of the twenty-seven has been either killed, nor wounded, nor made prisoner. On the 28th of May their companions made their pilgrimage and went to the Sacraments in thanksgiving.

A priest from a village near the borders says that all the houses have the picture of Our Lady Help of Christians in them, and although more than five hundred bombs have fallen in the district, not one of the houses has been destroyed. Similar reports have come in from many quarters.

* * *

Thanksgiving have also been received from A. J. (Hartlepool), from S. M. (Dublin) and M. McC. (Donaghadee), all of whom desire to

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

publish the favour in the *Bulletin*, according to promises made.

* * *

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 each, in honour of the Most Holy Sacrament, adding each time, *Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Have mercy on us*; 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 according to one's means.

* * *

The offering here referred to may take the form of a Mass in thanksgiving, or may be a direct offering to any of the good works under Our Lady's patronage. The Ven. Servant of God also recommended the publication of the favour, both as a mark of gratitude, and as an encouragement and consolation to others.

A new picture of Our Lady Help of Christians has been issued. On one side instructions are given concerning this Novena. They may be had on application to our Houses.

* * *

In view of the increasing interest in the life of Domenic Savio, the saintly pupil of Don Bosco, whose Cause has been already introduced, we would remind Readers that an English Edition of the Life of this youthful servant of God is published by the Salesian Press, Batterssea, London. Price One shilling and sixpence.

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The Catholic Truth Society of Ireland has recently issued the following:

1. The Divinity of Jesus Christ, by G. R. Roche, S. J. A brief comprehensive statement of the Historical proofs on which Our Lord's Divinity rests, with some pages on the Character of Christ.

2. The Founder of the Oblates, by R. F. O'Conner.

3. A Memoir of the Abbé Edgeworth de Firmont, by J. M. Flood B. A. B. L.

4. The Retreat of Donal O'Sullivan Beare.

5. The Story of Stéphanie, by Mrs. Eamonn O'Neill.

6. The wooing of Etain, and other stories by M. J. Mullane M. A. (24 Upper O'Connell St. Dublin).

The Life of the Venerable Don Bosco

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

CHAPTER V.

Trials and their compensations.

The death of John's revered benefactor and instructor had occurred on Nov. 21st, and after a brief interval his mother's thoughts and his own were concerned about another means for obtaining instruction. The only alternative was to go to one of the neighbouring schools, but the winter terms had already begun, and it appears to have been unusual for any boys to be admitted except at the beginning of the terms. Some negotiation was therefore required, and through the mediation of friends, John was allowed to join the classes already begun at Castelnuovo, and this he did during December 1830. The story has frequently been told of his daily tramp to and fro, making about a dozen miles every day, and of how he often used to take off his shoes, so as not to wear them out. But after some months a good family at Castelnuovo, who knew the boy's mother, offered to give him a lodging in their home — an arrangement which greatly facilitated John's progress with his lessons.

There was now a period of regular scholastic work. Anyone would have guessed that the boy's progress would be rapid, for although it was true that he had begun several years later than boys usually do, yet he had acquired a good deal of knowledge, that would stand him in good stead, once it was developed by regular tuition. Thus he was always high up in the class, and usually at the top, and as his conduct was on the same high level as his lessons, his reputation soon gained him esteem and admiration. Before John had established his position, some of his class-mates had tried to cajole him into participating in various misdemeanours, but his good sense and his mother's previous training made him proof against such suggestions. He who had already been the counsellor of others was not likely to be led away by the ordinary type of school-boy.

This refusal sometimes made him the object of youthful revenge, just as it had done previously at Becchi; John had, however, made his selection among the boys, and was easily able to judge which were worth cultivating,

and which should be given a wider berth. He kept up all his previous religious exercises, and never hesitated to stint himself in the matter of sleep, if he found that the time for his spiritual duties would interfere with his school-work.

The master of the house in which he resided — a Signor Roberto — was a tailor by trade, and in addition to his manual occupations he took a prominent part in promoting the music at the church services. When John went to reside there Signor Roberto was the choir-master, and this position enabled him to train John's voice, to instruct him in Gregorian chant, and to give him opportunities of learning to play the church organ. His protégé was an apt pupil, for his musical gifts were of no ordinary kind, and these accomplishments turned out to be among his chief assets when in after years his Sunday Oratories were being begun. But we must not anticipate. Not only did John learn music from Signor Roberto, but also the secrets of the art of tailoring, and when the master noticed John's rapid mastery of the various stages, he declared that he was plainly meant to adopt that trade as his life's work. John was ever ready to assist his host, but he steadily set his face against any proposition which would turn him from his main purpose. At a neighbouring work-shop he afterwards learnt much of the iron-worker's trade, and all this he did when he was attending school during the day, and doing lessons in the evening. It is impossible not to recognise a providential guidance in his acquiring such varieties of knowledge and skill, for they were apparently a direct preparation for his future mission, and parts of an extensive and lengthy apprenticeship.

During this period he was not without his trials and consolations. Upon the resignation of one of the reverend professors, a priest was appointed who had formerly known John, and had assisted him in his studies. By some inexplicable change in his point of view, he now adopted an attitude of hostility towards him. This was shown in many ways; for a master finds a variety of weapons to use when he has, consciously or unconsciously taken up such a position towards any pupil. Ridicule was the principal instrument of torture in this case; John's age and his tardy entrance into the scho-

lastic world were a ready subject for scorn and the attitude of the master was summed up in his remark to the class, that it was sufficient for young Bosco to have come from such a place as Becchi, to know that his mental gifts would not be of a high order. However a crisis arose on one occasion, when John, who felt that he was being kept back, requested to be allowed to attempt the exercise set for the next higher class. This request, which would have been welcome and praiseworthy in anyone else, was met with ridicule, but John again requested that, in spite of the low opinion the priest had of him, he should be allowed to attempt the exercise, and criticism be left till he had presented his work.

During the vacation John was staying for a time with Signor Turco, to whom he had been introduced by Joseph Turco who was a school companion. In the course of these holidays John had another of those dreams — which must be henceforth regarded as an integral part of his life — They earned for him the name of *the dreamer*, and as the author of the *Memoirs* remarks: "We do not intend to give any judgment in regard to these dreams, nor to attempt to explain them. A tradition, which it is impossible to ignore, perpetuated them in the Oratory, and when Don Bosco was questioned about them, he did not deny their occurrence but, as his life will show, he himself related them, and sometimes gave circumstances which showed



The Town of Castelnovo d'Asti.

This was granted; the translation was done and given up for examination. The master scarcely glanced at it, and turned to the others saying: "Did I not tell you that the folk from Becchi were unfit for intellectual work?"

The boys asked that Bosco's exercise might be read, as they would like to hear what his version was. The priest then took the trouble to read it through, and found that it was done without a single mistake. But he was not going to withdraw. He insisted that John had covered his ignorance by copying; the boys next to him denied this absolutely, and in spite of the attitude of the master, John had won a signal victory, not only by his knowledge, but also by his humility and courage under a period of injustice.

them to be on a magnificent scale. To omit them in the life of the Venerable Servant of God would be similar to omitting the victories in a life of Napoleon."

This particular dream was to give John a much needed assurance that the path of his studies would be made smoother, for his treatment by the master, and the insecurity of his pecuniary resources, had combined to darken the outlook. He was brought to reveal it by a question one morning from Signor Turco as to the cause of his particularly good spirits. He explained that he had a dream, in which he learnt that he would be able to continue his studies, that he would become a priest and have charge of a great number of boys. The details were given next day to the mistress of

the house, who had questioned him about the dream. John said that he had seen a majestic lady coming towards him with a great flock of sheep; when she approached near enough, she called to him and said: "John, I entrust this flock to your care." He pleaded his incapacity, to which the lady replied. "Fear not, I will help you," and the scene vanished. This is all very modest and very briefly summed up in Don Bosco's own memoirs by the words: "*When I was sixteen I had another dream.*"

It seemed to be in confirmation of this that his mother decided to change his school. The town of Chieri was further removed from Becchi than was Castelnuovo, but it had the advantage of possessing a school with something of a reputation, corresponding more or less to our Grammar Schools. A good deal of planning and arrangement was required, and it was only with the help of some charitable neighbours, and through the influence of the parish-priest, that fees and lodging were finally secured.

John's first visit was to the parish-priest, who received him with all kindness and arranged that he might come and serve his Mass. The priest also accompanied him to the College and introduced him to the prefect of studies, a Dominican Father, who took charge of the new student. As the reader has seen, John's studies had been of an irregular nature, so that it is no surprise to hear that he was not placed very far up the school. But after two periods of two months each he was promoted to higher classes, and in each of them he was soon at the top of the class. It was in this third class that John first gave a striking proof of his extraordinary memory. One day his Latin author had been mislaid, so that while the master was discoursing upon points in that text John had only his grammar upon before him. This caused his companions to laugh, and the master dropped on John to translate and explain the passage. Not disconcerted he stood up and repeated the passage that he had just heard from the master, translated and explained it quite correctly, and yet had his grammar before him instead of the author. This achievement made the boys give vent to their applause, which surprised and irritated the master exceedingly. He demanded an explanation, and a companion said: "Bosco had his grammar in front of him, yet he recited the author as though he had the text in front of him." The master then joined in the admiration, and told John to make good use of the fine memory which he evidently possessed.

Dreams again came to him. One night he dreamt that the master had given out a certain translation to be done, and as soon as he awoke he set about preparing it. He had it corrected before school by a friend, and when the Latin classes began the master set this very piece to be done. John very soon prepared his version of it, so quickly in fact that the master questioned him about it. John told him of his dream and its results, and the master and companions were amazed.

Another day John handed up his work in so short a time that the master could scarcely believe it possible to do it so quickly. He looked through it and found it quite correct. He then asked for his rough copy, and there he found that John had prepared the whole passage of which he had only dictated a half to the boys, though he had at first intended to dictate the whole. John had there the exact passage! not a syllable more or less. What was the explanation? John gave it very briefly: "I had a dream."

Another evening he dreamt that his step-brother Anthony had fallen ill. He related it in the morning, and his companions said: "You may rest assured that it is quite correct." During the day his brother Joseph came to inform him of Anthony's illness. It was exactly as John had dreamt, down to the details of the work in which he was engaged when he fell ill.

At Chieri John was very careful over his choice of companions. He tells us the rule he had fixed upon for his guidance: the bad were to be avoided as soon as they were discovered; the indifferent received the ordinary interchanges of greeting demanded by good manners; to the good he showed his best gifts and among those boys he chose his intimate companions, continuing in their midst the apostolic work which we have seen in action elsewhere. He and a few others founded a little society of their own. They styled it the *Società dell'Allegria* since it was to promote the happiness of each. But in reality its influence extended to morality, diligence religious exercises and the like, and it accomplished a great deal of good in an unassuming way. On holidays they made excursions together, venturing even as far as Turin, where John saw and explored the city which was afterwards to be identified with his vocation. His first year at Chieri had rapidly run its course, and during the holidays he spent as much time as possible at his books so that the next and final year at School might be turned to the utmost advantage.

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