

The Salesian Bulletin

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= SALESIAN CO-OPERATORS =

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FRANCISCUS VARVELLO

Sacerdos Philosophiae Professor in Seminario Salesiano apud Taurinenses

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THE SALESIAN BULLETIN

:: Organ of the Association of Salesian Co-operators ::

Via Cottolengo 32, Turin, Italy.

The Golden Jubilee of the Foundation of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians

The year 1922 is one happy omen for the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. It is the jubilee year of the foundation of their Congregation, and far and wide, in almost every country, jubilant rejoicings are being held in honour of this auspicious event. And throughout the world to-day the sweet incense of prayer, praise and thanksgiving ascends to Mary's throne in Heaven from thousands of her grateful daughters, scattered in many climes and distant countries, but all united in heart and mind to pay their homage to their Heavenly Mother, and to swell the chorus of praise that rises, in divers tongues, from the lips of Mary's faithful clients on earth.

Fifty years ago, in the quiet little village of Mornese, on August 5th, a small band, fifteen in number, of chosen souls, were clothed in the habit of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, which they received from the hands of their Venerable and beloved Founder, Don Bosco. This second family of Salesians, like the first, was dedicated to the instruction of poor and abandoned youth, and is characterised by a truly sublime and apostolic zeal for the salvation of souls and good of society in general.

Just half a century ago, two Children of Mary were living together, under the direction of a zealous and holy priest, Don Domenico Pestarino, for their own spiritual advantage and that of their parish. They were unacquainted with the sciences of this world, but were well versed in the science of the Saints. One of these young girls was Mary Mazzarello, who was chosen by Don Bosco to be the first Superioress of that little band of the Spouses of Christ. The Ven-

erable Founder sent her a medal, with his blessing, and wrote to her as follows: "Pray and continue in the fervour of your devotions; but do yet more. Labour for the good of souls, especially for the young, and avoid even the smallest offence against God."

Mary Mazzarello took these words so much to heart that she made them henceforth the rule of her life. Fifty years have thus passed since that tiny grain of mustard seed was planted by the Ven. Don Bosco, and now that seed has become a gigantic tree, whose branches spread far and wide, and under whose shadow thousands of young girls have been and are still being sheltered from the temptations and seductions of the world and are sent forth fully equipped to take their stand in the great battle of life. God alone really knows how many souls have been assisted and guided along the right path in times of hardship and difficulty and also how widespread the good work has been and far-reaching in its results, in each of its many phases, whether it be in the school-room, the workshop, orphanage or festive Oratory for Sundays and Holydays of obligation.

Five decades have gone by since that first little band of fifteen began the noble work. They have been fifty years of a fruitful apostolate, marked by self-sacrifice and restless toil, and the results have been highly gratifying. Instead of being a mere handful of devoted labourers to-day, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians now number thousands, all animated by the same spirit of gentleness and Christian zeal that characterised the holy Bishop of Geneva, St. Francis of Sales, and their Vener-

able Founder, Don Bosco, for the salvation and guidance of girls and young women.

Mother Mary Mazzarello is no longer of this world, but her memory lives in the hearts of her spiritual children, who are to-day commemorating the wonderful progress of the work which she inaugurated. Though departed from their midst, she is surely with them in spirit to-day, to join in their act of solemn thanksgiving and to obtain for them, from Mary most Holy, all those blessings and favours that they stand in need of, in the accomplishment of their noble mission.



Mother
MARY MAZZARELLO

* * *

In the year 1902 the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians came to England, and set up their headquarters at Chertsey-on-Thames, in the County of Surrey, where they have a boarding-school for girls and, until recently, another School for little boys. Here they have been able to effect a great deal among the children confided to their care, and have been able to prove efficaciously the educational value of that system of gentleness and forbearance which Don Bosco copied from his holy Patron, Saint Francis of Sales. They have also established Convents at Battersea, London, and at Farnborough in Hampshire. The task that awaits them in England is extensive enough, but as yet the labourers are comparatively few in number in this country. It is to be hoped that the Lord of the Vineyard will, in His Goodness, send more labourers to promote this salutary work, and will increase the number of

vocations among the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in English-speaking countries.

In the year 1912 the "Salesian Sisters," as they are sometimes called, were established in the United States, where they now have four flourishing schools. The Sunday schools there, as is the case with many others elsewhere, are attended by hundreds of children, who, besides their Catechism and religious duties, are taught how to spend their free time in innocent and healthy recreation, in a happy and enjoyable way. The pleasant hours which they thus pass with the Nuns make a deep impression on these children, who, in their turn, draw numbers of others from the dangers of the street and the seductions of undesirable companions to the ark of safety where, under the direct influence of the Sisters, they are able to reap much benefit to themselves both morally and physically. Thus the good Daughters of Mary Help of Christians carry on the great work of rescue which was the moving principle of the Ven. Don Bosco, and which constituted his heaven-sent mission—the withdrawing of the young from sin and evil surroundings by means of good and wholesome amusements which serve to attract them and at the same time render it a comparatively easy matter to lead them to God and to instill into their hearts sentiments of true piety. The ardent desire of every Daughter of Mary Help of Christians is to make piety and uprightness of life so attractive that all may keep to the sure, though narrow path that leads to Heaven.

Just eighteen months ago, Ireland welcomed to her shores the Nuns of Don Bosco, and already two Houses have been opened under their direction in that Catholic country. It is a consoling thought to us all to reflect on the amount of good work that has already been effected by the Sisters in this new field of their labours, and we confidently hope that, as time goes on and vocations increase, a great future will await the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Catholic Ireland.

The rapid growth and development of this Congregation of Nuns has been very marked indeed, and has, in fact, been little short of miraculous. This is a cause for joy and happiness to all concerned, for it clearly proves how dear the work must be to God and His Holy Mother, under whose direct patronage and guidance the work has always been carried on. It proves, too, the fondness of Mary for her faithful children, for she has blessed the enterprise in a singular way, and has always watched over it with motherly care and solicitude.

The Jubilee year will be one song of praise and thanksgiving, rising from the lips and hearts

of thousands of boys and girls, from Past Pupils, now grown to manhood or womanhood, and still more, from those who have been called by God to carry on the salutary work itself. And, we may even venture to add in conclusion, that the spirit of rejoicing and of gratitude to Mary, our

Mother will not be confined to these alone, but all who know of the powerful protection which Mary affords to her faithful clients on earth, will unite with us in singing the praises of her, who has always proved herself to be, in the truest sense of the word, the powerful Help of Christians.

The First Apostolic Nuntio of the New State of Poland and the Sons of Don Bosco

(Letter of the Very Rev. Fr. Tirone, S. C., Provincial in Poland).

The news of the election of Cardinal Ratti to the Chair of St. Peter was received here with manifest enthusiasm and joy. The members of the various states and political parties and the newspapers have expressed their satisfaction in glowing terms. The chief subject of conversation for some days after the election was concerning the honour conferred on our beloved Nuntio in Poland.

We can understand these feelings because all remember the great good that Cardinal Ratti did for the Catholic Church in Poland. With his prudent and delicate tact he soon won the esteem and confidence of the Head of the State, the Government and the civil power. His negotiations with them had to be carried on with much adroitness of word and action, in order to be able to realise the designs and projects of the Holy See. Mgr. Ratti was on terms of the closest friendship with all the bishops of the country. The rich and noble, as well as men of learning, admired the discretion and refined taste with which he conducted diplomatic affairs. His deep knowledge and vast erudition made him much sought after, and scientists and students invited him to their meetings. When he had been in Poland but a short time he recommended and obtained the creation of two Cardinals and fourteen Bishops; restored three dioceses which the Russian Government had wantonly suppressed, viz. Fanov, Zytomierz and Kamienic Podolski. He gave a Pastor to each of the dioceses of Vilna and Lublino, and formed the new Diocese of Lodz. He gave to the Bishops of Russian Poland one or two Auxiliaries (according to their needs), and requested that the dioceses in that part of the country should be extended and that there should not be more than a million souls in any particular diocese.

He was most enthusiastic about the country, and his frequent addresses in public and in private he declared that the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XV, when he was about to send him to this field of labour, had said to him that every inch of ground in Poland was sacred, because it was saturated with the blood of heroes who had suffered for their religion and their attachment to the Holy See. He himself, he went on to say, had first-hand knowledge of the state and condition of the Church in that persecuted land, since he had in person visited every diocese throughout it.

And Poland, now risen from her former abjection and hardships, well knew the worth of her first Nuntio, and gave him her unstinted affection, and showed her deep appreciation of all that he was doing. As soon as she had gained her independence, she sent a delegation to the Sovereign Pontiff to petition him for an Apostolic Nuntio and Bishop. His episcopal consecration, performed in the Cathedral of Warsaw, was attended by all the Polish Bishops, the Civil Authorities, the members of the Diplomatic Corps, the clergy, both secular and regular, and by an immense concourse of the laity, and was in every sense a veritable triumph. The dignity conferred on him made him more popular than ever; people of all ranks and stations in life sought his company, and wherever he went, he was made welcome.

It was with unfeigned grief that the Polish people learnt last year that their beloved Nuntio was recalled to Rome and had been appointed Archbishop of Milan. All the authorities, both civil and ecclesiastic, went in a body, with very many friends and well-wishers, to the railway station on the 2nd of June last year to bid farewell and God-speed to the distinguished Prelate.

* * *

The joy of the Salesians in Poland was unbounded, when the news came through that Cardinal Ratti had been elected to the Chair of St. Peter. He it was who had given them so many proofs of his love and benevolence during his stay among them. When he was as yet Apostolic Visitor, he came to Cracow, and graciously received our Provincial in private audience, showing him marked kindness and attention in every way. He told him how greatly he esteemed the Ven. Don Bosco whom he had come to know and admire since the early days of his Priesthood. He said in confidence that he had learnt one thing from our Founder: a thing that he had never forgotten and had often put into practice, and that was how to meet the greatest difficulties in life with unruffled calm. "It happened one day," Mgr. Ratti continued "that I was present at the Oratory when there was a special meeting of the Superiors of the Salesian Houses. After dinner, they came, one by one, to tell Don Bosco of their difficulties and troubles. I watched your holy Founder attentively during these little interviews, and noticed that he did not once lose his habitual tranquillity or cheerfulness of manner. Having heard what all his sons had to say, this good Father consoled and comforted each one in turn. When he had finished this part of the programme, he was as gay and light-hearted, as if he had been, throughout, listening to the best of news, and joined in the conversation with all his usual wit and innocent humour."

Mgr. Ratti helped us in every way and on every occasion. In reality, it is due to his initiative, or at the least, to his guidance and influential assistance, that our Houses in Russian Poland have been re-opened. He urged us to accept the House at Rosentock; he suggested that we ought to open the House in Warsaw, and he removed every obstacle so that the Salesians might be able to develop their work at Kielce. He also prepared the way for us to begin a second and larger House in Warsaw; in fact, he did everything in his power to promote our work in Poland, and to dissipate the prejudices that had been aroused in certain quarters against us. His kindness knew no bounds, whenever he received any Salesians at his palace. I remember going to him one day, when I was burdened with a very serious debt. I explained my trouble to him, and he with fatherly charity gave me a gift which removed all my anxieties. Nor was this the only occasion that this good Prel-

ate came to our assistance in the hour of need, during those most troublous and anxious days.

On the 13th of August, 1920, the day before the vigil of the Assumption, when the Bolsheviks were at the gate of Warsaw, and had already begun to assault it, the Nuntio was very busy in communication with the Government and Diplomats. I ventured to call on him, and he received me most graciously, in spite of his pressing cares. I explained to him the position of our Houses, and asked him what I should do. He advised me most kindly, and gave me some wise counsels to follow with regard to the safe-guarding of our Institutes, in the event of the Bolsheviks gaining the day. I shall never forget how he interested himself in our welfare during the most anxious days he spent in Poland, and how he was ever ready to assist us to the utmost. I assured him that our boys would pray most earnestly for him that God would console and reward him for his charity. "Ah, yes," he said, with a smile on his worn countenance, "my work is fraught with difficulties. Tell your boys to pray to Mary Help of Christians for me."

Yes, Most Holy Father, we shall all pray to our Heavenly Mother for you, that she may bless and assist you in all your undertakings. And to-day, out of gratitude for the many benefits received from you, seeing that you have now been raised by Divine Providence to the highest throne on earth, and knowing that you will indeed need the assistance of Her who is justly styled the "Help of Christians," we, the sons of Don Bosco, will pray in a special way for you. And as the prayers of little children have a particular value before the great White Throne above, we shall urge our boys to redouble their prayers on your behalf. They, perhaps, have never seen you, but all the same, deep down in their little innocent hearts there is indelibly imprinted the image of Your Holiness, with your paternal smile and kindly interest in all the little ones confided to the care of the Sons of Don Bosco.

FR. TIRONE, S. C.

Salesian Provincial of Poland.



Missionary Co-operation

At the General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation, recently held at Turin, there were many important topics for discussion, all bearing on matters vital to the successful development of the Salesian Apostolate. One of the subjects dealt with proposal for securing able and devoted Missionaries for our ever-increasing Mission-Field. Our Ven. Founder, Don Bosco, sent out many Missionary hands to the first Salesian Missions, and the phenomenal success of their work is attributed to the high ability and intrepid devotion of those who led and laboured in the sacred cause of saving souls. But with the course of years, these able and valiant Missionaries have either passed to their reward, exceeding great, or have grown old in the service of Christ and must leave their tasks to younger hands. Their places have indeed been taken by splendid labourers for the Gospel, but earnest demands are constantly made for more.

The discussions and proposals on these heads will, undoubtedly, be many; but they will all eventually verge towards one essential point, to one insistent demand: "Give us more vocations." Hence the need of constant prayer to the Lord of the Vineyard, and of greater assistance from our Co-operators. The Catholic World is inclined to overlook one tremendous fact: viz, that although the Catholic Church numbers its adherents at three hundred and twenty millions, there are still over a thousand million Pagans. More than twelve million of these are confided to the Salesian Missionaries, for there are upwards of five millions in the Apostolic Vicariate of *Shin Chow*, in China, and more than seven millions in the Prefecture-Apostolic of Assam in British India. What can be done in order to hasten the day, when these and other Pagan peoples shall receive the Redemption of Christ?

Co-operation on behalf of the Missions.

Within the past year or two, in England and Ireland, a movement has been set on foot, by which it is hoped to assist the great Mission-

ary enterprises confided to the care of our Society by the Holy See. And in fact the whole work of the Missionary Apostolate has received new support and encouragement, from the zealous interest which the Catholic world is showing in Missionary enterprise. It is our desire and hope that the numbers and zeal of these earnest Catholics will be increased, and that they will become ardent promoters of the Missionary works now being undertaken by the Salesian Missionaries. The present is undoubtedly the propitious moment. Our Ven. Founder Don Bosco, declared that his Salesian Co-operators would be among the leaders and promoters of Catholic activity, and if that is to be the case, they should now strive to be amongst the foremost in the Missionary movement, in order to enable our Missionaries to do justice to the great fields entrusted to them by the confidence of the Supreme Pontiffs.

What is most needed.

His Holiness Benedict XV., in one of his latest encyclicals, drew the attention of the Catholic World to these very points. Among the necessary assistance for which he pleaded was, in the first place, *Prayer*. This has ever been the mainstay of the great works of the Church, and it is but to follow the counsel of Our Divine Lord himself, "Pray to the Lord of the harvest that He would send labourers into His Harvest. In the Salesian Houses a *Hail Holy Queen* is daily said for the Missionaries.

It is a little practice which the Co-operators might easily adopt. On the First Friday and on the 24th of the month, the day consecrated to Our Lady Help of Christians, special prayers are devoted to this purpose.

In the second place, and of great importance, is the securing of new Vocations and in this the Co-operators will find one of their principal objects. The first Successor of Don Bosco, the Very Rev. Don Rua, of happy memory, the most faithful interpreter of the ideals of our Founder, set a movement on foot by which every Province of the Congregation should have at least one House especially devoted to the

work of training vocations for the Priesthood and for the Mission Field. Nothing would be more encouraging and more consoling to the Salesians, than to be able to multiply these Houses of training; but in such undertakings they rely to a very great extent on the assistance of their Co-operators, both in the finding of suitable vocations and securing adequate means for their education.

This movement finds strong support from the constant recommendations of the Holy See. The present Holy Father, in a recent audience to a number of priests, referred to the excellent results that had followed the consistent efforts of some dioceses to increase the number of the young Candidates for the Priesthood, and said it was a work important above all others—the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Vocations.

Generous assistance required.

There are two separate needs to be dealt with. One concerns the training of the new vocations; the other deals with the provision of the many requirements entailed by the work of the Mission Field. For the partial satisfaction of these necessities, there are special alms collected or sent by the Co-operators at stated times during the year. On the Feast of our Patron, St. Francis of Sales, and at the Conference held in connection with the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians, there are also special offerings for these pious works. But the Co-operators are invited to take a personal interest in the promotion of that department which has its special aim in the cultivation and training of new Vocations.

Salesian Missionary House, Cowley, Oxford.

Following in the path traced out for them by their Founder, and in order to realize the long cherished desires of the Supreme Pontiffs, the Salesians of the English and Irish Province opened, during the course of last year, a House of Studies and Training at Cowley, Oxford, one of its chief aims being provision for this ever-increasing need for new Missionaries. This important step was carried out, notwithstanding the special difficulties which, in these times of stress, beset the path of those who are called upon to undertake new ventures of this nature.

The House already has about fifty clerical students, coming from both England and Ireland, who will, we hope, provide many of the future Missionaries for these great enterprises recently confided to our Society, particularly in the Vicariates of *Shin Chow* in China, of Assam in Northern India, and of the vast district of Kimberley in West Australia.

This House of Training is dedicated to St. Francis of Sales, as a tribute of the devotion of the English and Irish Province to our Patron, on the occasion of his Centenary; and also to obtain the Patronage of this great Saint, who was so conspicuous for his zeal for the salvation of souls, and particularly of those who had the misfortune to be outside the Catholic Church. The nearness of this House to the village of Littlemore, where, by the conversion of Cardinal Newman, there began that famous series of conversions to Catholicism, which the angelic youth Dominic Savio (one of the first pupils of Don Bosco) saw in vision, is a further assurance that God will bless in a singular manner this new work, one of the most important yet undertaken by the Salesians in England.

Within a short time of our opening the House, it became necessary to reconstruct a part of it, in order to increase the accommodation; and it is in the hope that our Co-operators will continue their support, that the Salesians have decided to make further extensions, in order to accommodate in the coming September, another thirty young Aspirants to the Salesian Apostolate. Shall we be able to carry the project through? We have set our hand to this undertaking, confident of your assistance, Dear Co-operators, and inspired by the example of our Ven. Founder and by the words of St. Vincent of Paul: "My Brothers, consider it in whatever way you will, you will find that you cannot contribute to anything grander than the formation of a good Priest."

Your charity, blessed by the grace of God, has dried up many a fountain of tears, and saved a great number of souls.

VEN. DON BOSCO.

SALESIAN NOTES AND NEWS.

Battersea. The Feast of Mary Help of Christians was kept with due solemnity at the Church of the Sacred Heart, Battersea. On the actual Feast-day itself, Thursday, May 24th, there was Solemn High Mass in the morning for the pupils of the Salesian School and for the advantage of those parishioners who were able to be present. In the evening there was a special service, a sermon on Mary Help of Christians and Solemn Benediction. But the external solemnity was really reserved for the following Sunday, May 28th, when the High Mass was sung by Fr. Rector, S. C., assisted by Fr. Rabagliati, S. C. and Fr. McCarthy, S. C. as deacon and sub-deacon respectively. The choir rendered Hummel's Mass in D, with Stanfield's "Tota pulcra" as Offertory piece.

But the great feature of the day was the outdoor procession in honour of Mary Help of Christians. This event has become an annual institution in the Salesian Parish of West Battersea, and this was the sixth occasion on which the parishioners of West Battersea, East Battersea, Wandsworth and Earlsfield had thus massed together in the immediate vicinity of the Church of the Sacred Heart to do honour to the Mother of God by a solemn procession through the streets. This year, again, fair weather and glorious sunshine prevailed throughout the morning and afternoon, and the route of the procession was literally thronged with spectators of all denominations. At three o'clock in the afternoon, those who were to take an active part in the procession had already begun to assemble in large numbers outside the Church of the Sacred Heart, and by half-past-three—the hour fixed for the procession—they numbered fully fifteen hundred. As the cortège passed out of Trott Street into High Street, it presented a moving scene of brilliant colours. Various banners borne aloft, children dressed in white, with their flowing veils, the Sodality of the Children of Mary from several parishes in blue hoods, the members of the guilds of the Blessed Sacrament with their red sashes—all this presented a charming spectacle in the sun-lit streets and was in itself a tribute of love and veneration towards the Mother of Christ. The vestments of the officiating clergy, too, so tastefully worked in colour and cloth

of gold, heightened the beauty of the scene. The statue of Mary, Help of Christians, borne on the shoulders of eight parishioners, occupied a central position, and was decorated with garlands of choice flowers. The Ransom Crucifix was at the head of the procession and was followed by Ransomers from the Salesian School. The banner of the Sacred Heart preceded the contingent from the boys' school attached to the parish Church. The Bow Common brass band, the East Battersea and St. Mary's pipers and fifes helped, throughout the procession, to sustain the voices of the singers. Prayers were said in English en route at intervals, and shrines of Our Blessed Lady were displayed in many Catholic homes.

Upon the return of the procession to the Church, the Rev. Michael McCarthy, S. C. mounted the pulpit, and addressed the vast assembly that filled the Church to overflowing. He spoke of the honour which they had just paid to Our Blessed Lady, and of the great impression which the solemnity and the devotion of the faithful must have made upon those who had witnessed it.

Solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament then followed and brought the service to a close.

On Wednesday, May 31st, the pupils of the Salesian School, Battersea, performed an operetta entitled "the little story-teller" before their parents who were invited for the occasion. The acting of the boys was certainly very good, and great credit is due to Brother Laurence, S. C., who was responsible for the production. All present expressed their satisfaction and the pleasure which the entertainment had given them. There was a full orchestral accompaniment, and this, too, helped to make the evening a most enjoyable one.

On Whit Sunday Mr. Henry Casolani, the Commissioner of Emigration in Malta, then staying in London, visited the Salesian School at Battersea and lunched with the Community. He is one of the oldest Salesian Co-operators

in Malta, and as such he had much of interest to tell us, and there was much conversation about old times with "auld acquaintances" and dear friends. Mr. Casolani, during his brief stay in London, has been afforded many opportunities of discussing migration questions with leading Dominion statesmen, and with very good results. In a recent interview with a representative of the Times, Mr. Casolani said about his country: "Malta has an area of 120 square miles and a population of 220,000. We have thus 1800 people to the square mile. The remedy for this overcrowding lies in emigration. For over a century, emigration from Malta and the sister Island of Gozo has been going on. The Maltese people are naturally of a migratory race. They go overseas not only from motives of necessity, but from a pure spirit of adventure. In the countries bordering on the neighbouring shores of the Mediterranean, there are over 33,000 Maltese permanently settled. There are large and important colonies of Maltese in Canada and in the United States. In Detroit alone there are over 6000—mostly expert mechanics who served in His Majesty's Dockyard during the war. As to Australia, there are small and scattered colonies in New South Wales, in Tasmania and in the sugar-fields of Queensland.

Wherever opportunities are afforded for brains and hard work, the Maltese is sure to be found. The men who are now leaving Malta, under strict government supervision, are acceptable in every country where they land. They are transparently loyal to the Mother Country, as well as to their employers. The fact that out of 14,000 Maltese, who have emigrated since the Armistice, hardly any were rejected clearly shows the quality of the material available."

Many of the youths who left Malta for "the land of the better chance" were, Mr. Casolani informed us, educated in St. Patrick's, at Malta, by Salesian Fathers, and they have been a credit to their Alma Mater and to the glorious work instituted by the Ven. Don Bosco.

* * *

Whit Monday was the day selected for the Re-union of Past Pupils of the Salesian School at Battersea. At 10 o'clock, High Mass was sung in the Parish Church, and in the afternoon at 4 o'clock all who were able to be present took part in a general meeting, which had for its main object the discussion of the proposed scheme of Regulations for the Old Boys' Association, which has been re-established at

Battersea. A printed copy of this scheme had previously been forwarded to each of the Old Boys whose names are on the Register, and at the general assembly on Whit Monday, their suggestions and recommendations were welcomed by all. The meeting was presided over by the Very Rev. Father Provincial and by the Very Rev. Fathers Buss and McCourt, Rectors of the Salesian Schools of Battersea and Farnborough respectively. A secretary and treasurer of the Association were also elected on this occasion, together with a managing Committee of eight Old Boys:

At the dinner which followed, the Very Rev. Father Macey—for more than 30 years Rector of the Salesian School at Battersea and at present Rector of the Salesian School at Chertsey—rose to address the Past Pupils there assembled. A hearty cheer rang out as he rose, for they had all learnt to love and esteem him as their Father and friend during their school-days, and they took this opportunity of showing how pleased they were to see him in their midst once more. In the name of Father Provincial and the other Superiors there present, Fr. Macey extended a word of welcome to all, and expressed his great pleasure at seeing so many familiar faces around him once more. He also showed his appreciation of the fact that they had foregone the attractions of the country-side on this day of general holiday and rejoicing, in order to carry out the call to duty, realising that the duty which they owed to their Alma Mater and to their former Superiors and Masters was one of importance. He reminded them, too, of the mutual help which they should afford one another in their journey through life, and illustrated his meaning by reference to the story of how the blind man and the lame man, though individually incapacitated, succeeded with united effort in covering a certain distance which they had to traverse.

The events of this memorable day were brought to a close in the large Hall, where the present pupils of the Salesian School gave them a very enjoyable entertainment, with full orchestral accompaniment.



Farnborough, The Church services at Eastertide **Hants.** were carried out with great devotion by the faithful of the parish of Farnborough. The attendance at the Holy Table was remarkably good and shows that the special Sermons and services of Lent were not without fruit.

Father Hawarden, the parish-priest of Farn-

borough, has reason to be very satisfied with the results of his work in the parish. A word of thanks is due to the indefatigable efforts of Mrs. Reddy in South Farnborough and of Mrs. Park in North Farnborough for the success of the Altar Society. Owing to their labours, the number of subscribers has increased and the amount of the subscriptions shows a ready response made by these ladies on behalf of the Church. Further, a new statue of St. Joseph has been purchased, and it was blessed on the Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph, Sunday May 7th. Special sermons, too, have been preached during the month of May, and there have been two out-door processions of Our Lady during the month, around the gardens of the Salesian School.

In scholastic matters, also, there has been much activity and real progress. The Salesian School commenced its final term of the year with a full complement of scholars. All set to work in real earnest to prepare for the examinations which are due in June and July. One hundred and twenty boys have been entered for the Oxford and the College of Preceptors' examinations, and from the lower forms of the School about forty will take the Secondary Schools examination. All look forward to success, for all have settled down to hard work in preparation for the impending test. The Annual Retreat for the boys was preached by the Rev. John Redman, S. J. during the week which followed Whit Sunday.

Some structural improvements have been carried out in the School. The windows of the older part of the building have been replaced by new ones, and this has greatly improved this part of the School.



Chertsey, Surrey. As pointed out in a previous issue, the School at Highfield, Chertsey, was already in existence for several years before the Salesian Fathers took it over. But the new buildings which were erected last summer have thrown a different aspect over the place, and those who knew the school only in its old form would scarcely recognise it now in its improved condition.

The scholastic year is now drawing to a close, and as we review it in its many phases, the first thing that strikes us is the fact that hard work and steady progress have been its main features. The College of Preceptors' examinations, too, which will shortly be held at the School, will afford the pupils every opportunity of showing the progress which they have made, and

there is every reason to hope that the results will be gratifying to Masters and parents alike.

In other respects, too, the School is progressing. Sports have been taken up with enthusiasm, and the School is the possessor of a fine football-cup which has been contested with much rivalry amongst the upper forms. A School Cinema has also been a welcome addition to the recreation hall, and the boys have enjoyed some pleasant evenings in this way. The Sodality of St. Aloysius, too, under the care of the Rev. Father Catechist, is progressing in every way and is productive of much good and piety among the boys.



Cowley, Oxford The Salesians at Cowley were recently honoured by a visit of His Grace the Archbishop of Birmingham to their House of Studies and to the parish confided to their care. It was the first time that the Archbishop of the Diocese had been able to pay a visit to the neighbourhood of Oxford since his elevation last year to the Archbishopric, and this added to the general desire to give him a most hearty welcome.

A brief reception in honour of the distinguished and revered guest was held in the large Study Hall, where after the "Ecce Sacerdos Magnus" had been sung and an address read to the illustrious visitor, His Grace expressed his pleasure and surprise at the number of young clerics already gathered within the walls of the Salesian House, in preparation for the carrying out of the great vocation which has been given them by Almighty God. It was a particular pleasure for him, he told them, to visit their House of Studies, as he himself had spent many years of his sacred ministry in the Seminaries, taking an active part in the training of ecclesiastical students. He hoped that the future would hold out a period of great prosperity for the Salesian work, and he hoped to be able to assist the Society in whatever way the circumstances of the future might demand.

Passing then to the Church, where a large number of "confirmandi" were in their places, His Grace addressed the children and the Congregation in general. The Sacrament of Confirmation was then administered, followed by Benediction, given by the Archbishop; and then he passed again into the Salesian House, where he stayed for a short time, discussing the growth of the parish and of Catholicity in general in the Oxford neighbourhood. The whole Community then assembled to pay their respects to His Grace as he left; they were

grateful for his paternal goodness and encouragement, and especially for his promise of making a more lengthy visit, when a suitable opportunity presented itself.



Pallaskenry, The Salesian College of Copsewood, Limerick Pallaskenry, in a pretty part of Limerick quite close to the river Shannon, is named after the great Protectress of the Salesian Congregation, Mary Help of Christians. Hence it was fitting that the Novena in preparation for her great Feast-day should be observed with due solemnity. And so it was. Special prayers were said every day at Benediction, and the Annual Retreat for the boys took place during the Novena itself, so that everything possible was done to prepare the boys for a worthy celebration of the Feast of Mary Help of Christians. The day itself was indeed a happy and a memorable one in the annals of the College. Quite apart from the religious aspect there is a charm about the beautiful grounds attached to the College, which can be best appreciated at this time of the year, when Nature is at its loveliest and unfolds her treasures with such prodigality. All seems to be in such beautiful harmony and reminds us so forcibly of Her who is, in the spiritual sense, the most lovely of flowers, the most spotless of lilies.

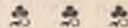
On Sunday, May 28th, the Feast of Mary Help of Christians was duly observed in the Church of Abbeysfeale, Limerick. Solemn High Mass was sung in the morning, and the Very Rev. A. Sutherland, S. C., Rector of the Salesian College at Copsewood, delivered a most interesting and eloquent sermon on "Mary Help of Christians." Choosing as his text the words "Son, behold thy Mother," the preacher passed in review many beautiful incidents and events in the life of Our Blessed Lady, and his sermon throughout showed deep and learned research. Father Sutherland also adverted to the fact that the Salesian Fathers are now continuing at Pallaskenry the work which Canon Cregan, P. P., had commenced in Limerick city when resident there.

In connection with the Feast of Mary Help of Christians at Abbeysfeale, a remarkable event took place last May. The Parish itself was generally known to be dedicated to the Mother of God, but under what particular title was more or less a mystery. The present highly-esteemed Parish-Priest, the Very Rev. Canon Cregan, P. P., V. F., at the request of His Lordship the Bishop of Limerick, looked up the old records and was joyfully surprised to find

that the parish and Church were dedicated to Our Lady Help of Christians. It is probable that it received its dedicatory title through a former Parish-priest of Abbeysfeale, the Rev. Father Casey, who most probably met the Ven. Don Bosco in Italy.

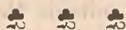
To celebrate the revival of the Feast, which had not been kept for forty years, the whole town was "en fete," and the good Canon most kindly invited the Superior of the Salesian Fathers at Pallaskenry to preach on the occasion.

It is interesting to remark here that Canon Cregan is well known in Limerick for his many enterprises in the Social life of the working classes of the City, and when resident there, he was looked upon as another Don Bosco. Among other notable achievements he started the Institute of St. Ita at Thomas Street, for the working girls, and it is remarkable that this work should now be taken over by the Nuns of Our Lady Help of Christians, the Daughters of the Ven. Don Bosco, for whom Canon Cregan has always had such a great admiration.



Valsalice, The Feast of our Patron, Saint **Turin.** Francis of Sales, was celebrated with the greatest pomp and ceremony possible in the Church attached to our Seminary at Valsalice, Turin. This Church is dedicated to St. Francis of Sales, and for this reason, and also on account of the very important part that this Seminary plays in the training and equipping of so many zealous Sons of Don Bosco, it was fitting indeed that the centenary celebrations should there be carried out with the greatest solemnity. The Church itself dates back to the year 1898, and was erected ten years after the death of our Venerable Founder through the munificence of many zealous Salesian Co-operators. The presence of some seventy or eighty clerics in this large Salesian Seminary enabled the Superiors to carry out the festivities on a grand scale, and all did their best to render the occasion a memorable one. The address on the Ven. Don Bosco was delivered by Prof. F. Marconcini. In stirring eloquence he drew the picture of our holy Founder in a manner that appealed to all. He gave a very vivid description of his many virtues and showed how he was in reality a benefactor to poor, suffering humanity, and how he was inflamed with a true spirit of charity and self-denial, which he has left as a legacy to his spiritual sons. The day was a great one

indeed, and was well calculated to leave a lasting impression on the minds of all present. The events of the day were concluded by the performance of an operetta, entitled "St. Francis of Sales" written by the Rev. Fr. Vincent Cimmatti, S. C. one of the professors of the Seminary.



New York At the Church of the Transfiguration in New York City, the centenary celebrations were carried out with due solemnity. On the Feast of St. Francis the faithful approached the Sacraments in very large numbers, and it is estimated that as many as two thousand persons received Holy Communion in the Church on that day. At the ten o'clock Mass a short panegyric was preached on St. Francis of Sales, and at the Solemn High Mass which was sung at 11 o'clock; the pulpit was occupied by the Rev. Fr. John Voghera, S. C., the Rector of the Church. In eloquent terms he recounted the life of our holy Patron, St. Francis of Sales, and dwelt on the many virtues which he displayed in an eminent degree. Above all, the preacher enlarged on the gentleness and amiability which were so characteristic of the saintly Bishop of Geneva, and showed how our holy Founder was led to choose St. Francis as the patron saint of the Congregation which he founded. Solemn Vespers in the evening were followed by another eloquent discourse by the Rev. Father Mazzella, and Solemn Benediction closed the religious celebrations of this memorable day.

An elaborate musical programme was then rendered by the young people of the parish in the large Hall adjoining the Church of the Transfiguration. Several hundred friends and parishioners of the Salesian Fathers were present on this occasion, and showed their appreciation of the programme which had been provided for the evening's entertainment. A noted feature of the performance was a splendid drill executed by the Madonna Boy Scouts, who had been kindly sent from St. Teresa's School to join us in celebrating the Feast of our Patron in a worthy manner.

In the larger parish confided to the care of our Fathers in this part of New York City the Sodality of the Holy Name is now very firmly established. It is divided into two Sections—the Senior's and the Juniores—and each section comprises more than a hundred active members. The Junior section is composed of boys between the years of fifteen and eighteen, and is an excellent institution for these lads at a very

critical period of their lives. The Senior section has been established more recently, but still it has been able to effect much good, and continues to make rapid progress in every way. The second Sunday of each month has been set aside for the day of General Communion for the members of this Society, and on the Thursday preceding, the Holy Hour of Adoration is held, with the kind permission of His Grace the Archbishop, in the Church from 8 to 9 o'clock in the evening. It is an edifying sight to see the men ranged on one side of the Church and the boys on the other, in solemn adoration of Our Blessed Lord in His Sacramental Presence on our Altar. A brief meditation is made in both English and Italian at this service, and we have every reason to trust that this solemn act of worship to Our Divine Saviour, in reparation for the insults and injuries which He receives from mankind, even in this the Sacrament of His Love, will bring down on the whole parish the blessing of the Almighty, and it is confidently hoped that the example of these devout clients of Our Divine Lord will be very efficacious in increasing the spirit of genuine piety throughout the whole of the large parish entrusted to our Fathers.

The Boy Scouts have been recently organised in this parish under the able leadership of Mr. P. Richard Cloke. The unit consists of about a hundred young men, selected from the members of the Junior Holy Name Society, and they drill twice a week under the direction of Mr. Cloke. Enthusiasm runs high throughout the organisation, and the boys vie with one another for promotion in the ranks.



Port Chester The Feast of St. Francis of Sales was also duly observed at Port Chester, where the Salesian Fathers direct the parish of the Holy Rosary. The attendance at Church was very gratifying to the clergy, and everything possible was done to make the day a memorable one. In the evening there was a large gathering, including a goodly number of Salesian Co-operators, to listen to the discourse of the Rev. Father Bergamo, S. C. He explained very clearly the nature of the work done by the Salesian Fathers for the benefit of the war orphans, both during the great War, and also since its termination. The orator very touchingly described the setting out of the Salesian Missionaries who have lately gone to the large field of labour entrusted to them in India. The late Holy Father, Pope Benedict XV, wished the Salesians to undertake this

vast enterprise, and as it is always our principle to comply immediately with the wishes of the Supreme Pontiff we had no hesitation in accepting this task, regardless of the arduous nature of the enterprise, and our little band of missionaries in bidding farewell to all their friends at home, displayed that ardour and missionary spirit which is befitting the disciples of the Venerable Don Bosco, whose loyalty and devotion to the Holy See were so well known to all who were acquainted with him.

It is a gratifying and consoling thing for us to know that the Pious Union of Salesian Co-operators is making steady progress in every respect at Port Chester.



Catania

The centenary celebrations in Catania were carried out on a large scale, and well deserve to be mentioned here. These celebration were organised by an able and active committee, and vast crowds took part in them. To ensure accomodation for the large number of the faithful who wished to be present at these solemn commemorations, the functions were performed in the large Church of the Minorites, in charge of the Jesuit Fathers, who willingly permitted us to use it. This beautiful Church had been very artistically decorated for the occasion. A magnificent painting of Saint Francis of Sales was placed in a prominent position above the main altar and surrounded by lights. Beautiful inscriptions placed over the main entrance and within the Church itself completed the splendid scene.

The feast-day was preceded by a Novena of sermons by the Right Rev. Mgr. Crocetti, whose eloquence attracted an immense congregation. During the first seven evenings of the Novena the ceremonies were conducted in turn by the Salesians, the Jesuits, the Capuchins, the Dominicans, the College of Parish-Priests, the Collegiate Chapter and the Cathedral Chapter respectively. The last three days of the Novena formed a Triduum, which was still more impressive in its solemnity. At 8 o'clock each morning Holy Mass was celebrated by some Bishop, and great crowds of the faithful of both sexes attended, and thousands received Holy Communion. Later on in the morning, at half past ten, Pontifical High Mass was celebrated on each of the three days, and a panegyric on Saint Francis of Sales was given by the prelate himself. In the evening another ceremony took place in the Church, and was concluded by Solemn Benediction.

On the Feast-day itself, more than 2000 young

men were present at the Mass and General Communion. It was an imposing sight to witness the loyalty and devotion of this vast array of young men, with their banners drawn up at either side of the altar rails, whither they approached to receive and welcome their Lord and King. When the religious function was over, a grand procession of these young men was rapidly formed outside the Church. With banners wafted on the breeze and with military step and dignified bearing, this vast array of noble youths wended its way through the principal streets of the town as far as the Salesian Oratory.

Pontifical High Mass was celebrated with all the splendor of the Sacred Liturgy by His Eminence Cardinal Francica Nava, assisted by the Metropolitan Chapter and by their Lordships Bishops Sturzo, Iacono and Ferraris. His Lordship Mgr. Sturzo, Bishop of Piazza Arnerina, delivered the panegyric. In the afternoon there were Solemn Vespers, a discourse by Mgr. Crocetti, and finally the "Te Deum" was intoned by His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop, who also gave the threefold Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament to the large congregation present.

In many other places, too, the centenary celebrations were carried out with great solemnity. It would be tedious to go into many details, but we cannot refrain from making, at least, a passing mention of the festivities at Faenza and Genoa. In the former city His Lordship Mgr. Bovelli, Bishop of Modigliana, pontificated at the Solemn High Mass in the morning, and gave an eloquent discourse to the assembled congregation. He also presided over the re-union of Salesian Co-operators and gave them an inspired and lucid explanation of the Salesian work. At Genoa, in the Church of St. Mary Magdalen, the conference was given by Don Trione, S. C. The new Archbishop of Genoa, His Grace Mgr. Giosue Signori kindly presided over the assembly and made a speech, exhorting his hearers to pray for the new Pope and to support generously the noble work which the Salesian Fathers are doing throughout Italy and elsewhere.



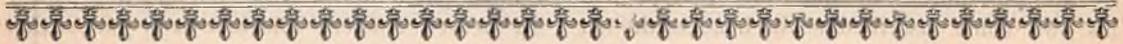
Bethlehem

At Bethlehem the Salesian Fathers were honoured by a visit from His Excellency Mgr. Barlassina, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who graciously spent the greater part of the Feast-day of Saint Francis of Sales in the Salesian Institute in that city of sacred memory. Mgr. Barlassina is a very old friend of the Salesians for he was

for many long years Rector of one of the most important Churches in the city of Turin, and was brought into constant touch with our chief Superiors at the Oratory there. His Excellency has always shown the greatest interest in the Salesian work, and even before his elevation to the episcopate he was always held in the highest esteem by our Fathers who recognised in him those fine qualities of zeal, piety and ardent charity which rendered him a model Priest in every respect. His sacerdotal work did not, however, escape the notice of the Sovereign Pontiff then reigning, His Holiness, Pope Pius X, for he was entrusted by that Pontiff with the care of one of the most important parishes in Rome, that of St. John Lateran. A few years later he was raised to the episcopate, and in 1918 he was appointed by the Holy Father to the very important post of Patriarch of Jerusalem. Mgr. Barlassina's interest in the Salesian work has been, by no means, confined to our Mother House at Turin, where he was a constant visitor for many years, but he has shown deep interest in our work in England,

and has several times visited our House at Battersea, London. His last visit to our House in London was on the occasion of a journey which he had to undertake in the interests of Catholic Schools in the Holy Land. It was indeed an honour for us to be able to welcome the illustrious Prelate to our School in London, and we very much appreciated the fact that, though His Excellency had so many pressing preoccupations, he still found time to honour us with this visit. Though many difficulties, stand in the way of Catholics in the Holy Land still we all feel that the interests of the Church are in very safe hands there, for Mgr. Barlassina will spare no pains and shrink from no sacrifice, whenever the cause of Holy Church is at stake.

On the occasion of his recent visit to our Institute at Bethlehem, Mgr. Barlassina preached a very fine and eloquent eulogium on St. Francis of Sales. After the service in the Church he visited the orphanage there, and spent some time among the little children, amusing them and entertaining them in a delightful way.



The Salesian Co-operators.

A comprehensive view.

It is always good to refresh the minds of our Readers and Co-operators as to their objects and aims and privileges. In spite of the publicity given to the work of the Venerable Don Bosco, we are convinced that it is not known as widely as it should be, and consequently is not appreciated nor supported as it deserves. The following description will give a fairly complete account of the Salesian Co-operators, to whom this periodical is principally addressed, and whose work it strives to propagate.

* * *

The work of the Oratories and Schools, founded by the Ven. Don Bosco, had scarcely begun in 1841, when laymen offered their help in cultivating the field which then promised so abundant a harvest among the young generations. These assistants, as *Co-operators*, as they are now officially called, have been at all times

the support of the good works, which Divine Providence confided to the Salesian Congregation founded by the Ven. Don Bosco. He received from the Co-operators pecuniary help, as well as protection for his Oratories, when they stood in need of moral support; and meanwhile he enkindled in their families and friends the spirit of zeal and charity, and an inclination to works of self-sacrifice and generosity. This interchange of fervour and alms-deeds, of prayer and of affection, produced the union of the Salesian Co-operators, which is to-day so wide-spread and fruitful a branch of that great tree of Christian charity—the Salesian Congregation.

Its programme is eminently suited to the needs of the present day. Work, work, was the supreme message of the Ven. Don Bosco from his death-bed, and his sons and Co-operators have since found their glory in its faithful observance. But the Servant of God did not

institute the Co-operators merely for the moral and material support of his work, but also to widen the field and multiply the fruits thereof.

The Association of the Salesian Co-operators, he used to say, is like one of the Third Orders, founded in olden times with this difference, that their main object was the attainment of Christian perfection by pious exercises, whilst in this Third Order, the chief end is the active life in the exercise of charity toward our neighbour, and especially to the young particularly those who may be in danger.

Thus the Union of Co-operators completes the Salesian Society; it carries the work into the very centre of life, when the Salesians cannot themselves descend into the midst of families, nor remain in contact with them to diffuse its spirit. For this reason it was approved, and enriched with special spiritual favours by the Sovereign Pontiff Pius IX, and also by his Successors.

In fact His Holiness Pius IX. was so struck by the possibilities of the work that he had his own name inscribed at the head of the list of Co-operators. He exhorted many Bishops to have their names enrolled and spoke these memorable words: "The Salesian Co-operators are destined to do great good in the Church and in society. Their work, because it has specially in view the care and relief of the young who may be in danger, will in course of time be so much appreciated, that I seem to see not only families, but whole villages and towns become Salesian Co-operators. This is why I have a predilection for them, and have granted them so many favours now and for ever."

His Holiness Leo XIII, declared to the Ven. Don Bosco: "I desire to be not only a Co-operator, but also the principal co-laborator." On another occasion he said to the Ven. Servant of God: "Whenever you speak to the Salesian Co-operators, tell them that I bless them with all my heart, that the object of the Association is to prevent the ruin of the young, and that they must have but one heart and one soul to help you in attaining the end which the Society of St. Francis of Sales has in view."

Pius X., of revered memory, in a precious autograph letter to Don Bosco's Successor, wrote: "Having regard to the present conditions, we consider that the education of the young is, above all else, most important; and

as we have always strongly urged it, so it is necessary to urge all the Faithful to assist it, to the best of their ability. Therefore, they will do something most excellent and efficacious, in giving their names to the Union of Co-operators: they increase the number of those enrolled in the Salesian Family, since this co-operation will be of great advantage to them and to the Association as a whole." He added: "From the depths of our heart, We desire that this Union of Co-operators, illustrious by its fruits, may go on daily increasing in numbers, and, by God's help, may it spread through towns and villages, where the spirit of, and affection for the Founder of the Salesians, is active. May its numbers be increased, especially through the zealous co-operation of the Bishops."

But the finest eulogy of the Salesian Co-operators is from the Ven. Don Bosco himself, in the letter he left them at his death:

"Before leaving you for ever on this earth, I must pay a debt I owe you, and thus satisfy my heart's desire. The debt to be paid is that of my gratitude for all you have done in helping me to educate as good Christians, and to send forth on the path of virtue and honest labour, so many boys, who have become the consolation of their families, useful members of society, and are on the path to eternal happiness. Without your charity, I could have done little or nothing; with it, you have indeed co-operated, by the grace of God, in diminishing much sorrow, and saving many souls.

With your charity we have founded numerous Schools and homes, where there have been, and are, maintained thousands of the young, withdrawn from the dangers of irreligion and sin, and who, by means of a good education, by study, or by learning a trade, have become good Christians and respected citizens. Through your charity, we have been enabled to found missions in many parts of the earth, and even in the farthest extremities of Patagonia, and we have sent forth hundreds of evangelical labourers, to extend and cultivate the vineyard of the Lord. Through your charity we have also erected many chapels and churches where, for centuries to come, the praises of God and of Our Blessed Lady will be sung, and through which many souls will be saved. Convinced that, after God, all this additional good has been done through the efficacious help of your

generous charity, before ending my days, I offer you my most profound gratitude, and thank you from the depths of my heart."

And then he added a heartfelt prayer and a consoling promise: "But, as you have helped me with such persevering generosity, I now beg of you to continue your help to my successor after my death. The works which, with your aid, I have begun, no longer have need of *me*, but they still have need of *you*, and of all, who, like you, love to do good here upon earth. To all those I confide and recommend my works. For your encouragement and consolation, I enjoin on my Successor the duty of seeing that in all prayers, both in common and in private, said in the Salesian Houses, our benefactors be included, and that these prayers should ever have the intention that God may grant them a hundredfold for their charity even this life, by health and concord in their families, prosperity in their undertakings, and preservation from all misfortune."

These holy sentiments of Ven. Don Bosco have been transmitted in all their fullness to his successors. The venerated Don Rua was, even on his death-bed, never weary of manifesting his gratitude to the Co-operators. "I desire," he humbly said, "to let them know that I am full of gratitude for the help they have given our works. If Don Bosco said that without them he could have done nothing, how much less could I have done who am only a weak creature. I am therefore obliged to remember them in a special manner. I will pray for them and for their families and friends that God may reward them in this life and in the next." The Very Rev. Don Albera, when the supreme direction of the Salesian works was entrusted to him, hastened to assure the Co-operators that though he recognized what he termed his littleness in comparison with Don Rua, yet he had the holy ambition of not being his inferior in affection and gratitude towards them.

The Salesian Co-operators enjoy the following privileges:

1) They participate in the merit of the works of charity which are performed by the Salesians throughout the world. 2) They share in a daily Mass celebrated for their intentions, and in special prayers said every day in the Basilica of Our Lady Help of Christians, to implore the blessing of God on the benefactors of Don Bosco's work. 3) They can gain many

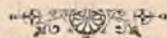
indulgences and enjoy other spiritual favours, granted to them especially. 4) After death, they will share in prayers offered in perpetuity in all the Salesian Houses.

The conditions for being enrolled in the Association of Co-operators are:

1) To be over sixteen years of age. 2) To be a good practical Catholic. 3) To be in a position to assist the Salesian Society, by prayer, work or a alms. The Association does not bind in conscience, therefore families and religious Institutes or colleges can be enrolled through their respective heads.

The *Salesian Bulletin* is the organ of the Co-operators and treats almost entirely of Don Bosco and his works. It is sent to the Co-operators and to others who are interested in the work, and it is left to them to send an offering according to their means: this offering may be an annual one. Application for admission may be made through the Superiors of Salesian Houses. It is necessary to have one's name inscribed and to receive a certificate of admission.

It should be borne in mind that the Pious Association of Co-operators is a work of religious and social regeneration, finding its scope in every country of the world. Thus it existed in the mind of its saintly founder, the Ven. Don Bosco, and thus it exists in the mind of his followers to-day. The immense advantages which this Association procures for the Church, and for the members which constitute it cannot be too strongly emphasised. The fact that the great Pontiffs, Pius IX, Leo XIII, and Pius X, enriched this third Order of Don Bosco with so many indulgences and privileges, shows in what high esteem they held it, and the fruits to be derived by all who co-operate. The Supreme Pontiffs agreed with the Ven. Don Bosco, that so widely distributed an organisation of zealous Catholics, working with the Salesians for the promotion of religious and social advancement, particularly through the young generations, would be an immense factor for happiness and good. Great things have been accomplished by it in the past: yet greater things remain to be accomplished.



DEVOTION TO OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS.

Devotion to Mary Help of Christians is undoubtedly a most potent factor in activity. The name of Mary Help of Christians is so linked up with the origin, growth and development of the work of our holy Founder that it is impossible to speak of the one subject without making some reference to the other. In fact, in Italy the title of Mary Help of Christians has been so closely associated with the name of the Ven. Don Bosco that people often refer to Our Blessed Lady under this title as the "Madonna of Don Bosco."

This popular appellation of the Queen of Heaven as the "Madonna of Don Bosco" is in itself, an indication of the extent to which Mary came to his aid and also of the nature of his filial confidence in his Heavenly Mother. And just as the Blessed Virgin Mary came to the assistance of her servant on earth, whenever he stood in need of her help and protection, so too did Don Bosco, in his turn do all within his power to further devotion to the Help of Christians. In every country today the invocation of Mary Help of Christians is familiar to all loyal Catholics, and the world-wide spread of this beautiful devotion is largely due to the efforts of the Venerable Don Bosco and of those who shared his labours for the welfare and eternal salvation of youth.

Graces and Favours. ⁽¹⁾

COWLEY, OXFORD. April 23rd. 1922. — I am writing this to ask you if you will kindly publish in the *Bulletin* my gratitude to Mary Help of Christians for a favour received after a Novena and promise of Mass and publication. The Mass of thanksgiving has already been celebrated.

F. D.

ALLEPPEY, INDIA. April 24th, 1922. — Kindly accept the "widow's mite," which I send as a thank-offering to Our Lady, Help of Christians, for success in obtaining a long-desired transfer, after prayers to Our Blessed Mother. Please publish the matter in the *Bulletin*.

(1) For these accounts no higher authority is claimed than that attached to authentic human testimony.

Recommending my manifold necessities to the Queen of Mercy and requesting your blessing and the prayers of your boys, especially on the 24th of May, I remain,

Very Rev. and dear Father,

Yours respectfully,

R. C. V.

URSULINE CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART, STANSTEAD, CANADA, April 4th, 1922. — I enclose an offering towards the works of the Venerable Don Bosco and for a Mass in honour of Our Lady Help of Christians, in fulfilment of a promise made some time ago. A great favour was solicited and obtained. This and many other graces which we owe to Our Lady's intercession we promised to have published to inspire others with confidence in prayer and devotion to Our Lady Help of Christians.

I have always taken great interest in the work founded by Don Bosco, and I humbly request the prayers of his sons and children for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Ursulines.

Sister Winifride, Superior.

HVTHE, KENT. May 4th 1922. — I should be much obliged if you would publish in the *Salesian Bulletin* my thanksgiving to Our Lady Help of Christians, for the recovery of my mother from a severe operation for appendicitis.

H. J. C.

BELFAST, IRELAND. May 15th 1922. — Please say a Mass of thanksgiving in honour of Our Lady Help of Christians for favour received. Publication promised.

K. McG.

ONGAR, ESSEX. June 8th 1922. — Last August my daughter was thrown out of work as her employers were unable to carry on their business any longer. Accordingly I commenced a Novena last January, and promised Our Lady Help of Christians a donation and publication in your annals, if She would intercede for my daughter and enable her to find a new situation. I continued my prayers to Our Blessed Lady, and now I am pleased to be able to say that my petition has been granted, and I hasten to fulfil my promises.

J. W. M. B.

NEWS FROM THE MISSIONS.

On the way to Assam.

An account of the voyage by the Rev. Paul Bonardi, one of the band of Salesian Missionaries who lately left Europe to undertake this important and arduous work in the vast district entrusted to the Salesian Fathers in Assam.

“We arrived at Marseilles at mid-day on the 22nd of December, and received a very cordial reception from the masters and pupils of the Salesian School there. On the morning of the 23rd, we said Mass in the Church of Notre Dame de la Garde, a splendid edifice rising up in the centre of the town and facing the sea. It is the sanctuary of the sailors, richly adorned with gold and marble, and with numerous ex-votos, skilfully and beautifully executed in the form of ship-models. During dinner, we had the pleasure of listening to some fine selections of music by the School-band. At 6 o'clock in the evening we went down to the harbour, and there embarked on a splendid English vessel of gigantic proportions. We occupied four cabins; the two larger accommodated four persons each, and the two smaller were amply large enough for the remaining four members of our little band of twelve. All the cabins were nicely furnished and fitted up with every convenience. Dinner was ready when we came on board, and we sat down and took our meal, and then retired to rest, for we were fatigued after the excitement of the day.

“On the following morning—Christmas eve—I said Mass in one of the cabins, and as I came near the Consecration, the steamer began to move out of port. It was a strange sensation for me, for I had never offered the Holy Sacrifice under such conditions before, and for a moment the rolling of the boat, especially at the moment of the Elevation, made me feel nervous, but I very soon got used to this sensation, and then had no further fear of any mishap.

“The 400 passengers on board were, for the most part, English. There were also some Frenchmen, but they were decidedly in the minority. Among our fellow-voyagers we noticed several Anglican ministers with their

wives. Two Mahomedans attracted the attention of all board. They were most reverent and regular in the observance of their religious rites, and could be seen every morning praying with their faces turned towards the East. There was also a Carmelite monk on board in ordinary clerical dress. He spoke both English and French fluently, and soon joined us and became one of our party.

“The vessel heaved and tossed incessantly, and amidst our rocking on the briny ocean our thoughts turned instinctively to our Salesian Houses at home. In an instant the fond associations and happy memories connected with Christmas eve in our Houses all flashed through our minds. We thought of the boys with their merry prattle, the festive decorations in the schoolrooms and refectories, the longing and waiting for the first sounds of the bells of Christmas, which would announce to us the approach of the hour for the Midnight Mass. All this came home to us, and while the liner ploughed her way through the water, we assembled in a corner of the deck and sang in a subdued voice the Vespers of Christmas.

“Christmas night! Could it really be that Christmas had already come, and we were to celebrate to the best of our power this festival of festivals, not in one of our Salesian Houses, but far away from land, on the bosom of the boundless ocean! And thanks to the kindness of the captain, who placed at our disposal the second-class dining-saloon, our Christmas night was in no sense uneventful, and we prepared for the worthy celebration of Midnight Mass. The saloon was decorated for the occasion, and with the aid of our luggage we made a small altar, and on a table at the side of it we placed a little statue of the Divine Infant which we had secured at the last moment before leaving Turin. This served as a miniature ‘crib.’ Round it we placed candles and flowers, and over it we placed a silk veil, which was to be removed as soon as the priest chanted the words “Gloria in excelsis Deo.”

“The Carmelite Father sang the Mass at midnight, and during it we sang the ‘Missa de Angelis,’ which was accompanied by the Very Rev. Father Mathias, S. C., the head of our little band of missionaries. Two English

ladies sang the 'Adeste Fideles,' and the whole ceremony was impressive. About twenty persons received Holy Communion on this occasion. When the Midnight Mass was over, the Carmelite Father proceeded to say his second and third Mass, and at the conclusion of these we witnessed a touching little ceremony. About a dozen negroes, who formed part of the ship's crew, came forward in single file towards the table whereon lay the figure of the Bambino. This they kissed with great reverence and each left a small offering by the side. Instinctively our minds drifted back to the scene in the little stable at Bethlehem, nearly twenty centuries ago, when other 'men from the East' came to adore Him whom that little figure of the Bambino represented. Every one present was moved by this little ceremony, so impressive in its very simplicity and so full of meaning to us who witnessed it."

Notes on Assam.

Assam is really made up of a series of fertile valleys, with the great river Brahmaputra flowing down its centre, and a very large number of tributaries and water-courses pouring into it from the mountains on either side. The Brahmaputra spreads out in a sheet of water several miles broad during the rainy season and, in its course through Assam, forms a number of islands in its bed. Rising in the Tibetan plateau, far to the north of the Himalayas, and skirting round their eastern passes, not far from the Yangtse-kiang, it enters Assam by a series of waterfalls and rapids, amid vast boulders and accumulation of rocks.

In the upper part of the valley, where the Brahmaputra enters, the country is picturesque and very varied in character; it is walled in on the north and east by the Himalayas and thickly wooded from the base to the snow-line. Gigantic reeds and grasses occupy the lowlands near the banks of the great river; expanses of fertile rice-land come next, and a little higher up, dotted with villages and encircled by groves of bamboo and fruit trees of great size and beauty, can be seen the famous dark forests, which entirely enclose the interior table-land and mountains.

The inhabitants of the entire province number about two and a half million, of whom nearly two million are Hindus, two hundred and fifty thousands are Mohammedans, about one thousand four hundred are Catholics, and the rest are of the hill tribes and profess one or other of the native forms of superstition. The native

population of this vast district is comparatively small, and the demand for labour on the tea plantations has given rise to the importation of coolies from Bengal.

The Assam peasant, living as he does in a half-populated province, and surrounded in so many places by surplus land, is indolent, good-natured, and on the whole prosperous. He raises sufficient food for his wants with very little labour, and with this he is content. Under the peaceful influence of British rule, he has completely lost his ancient warlike instincts, and has entirely forgotten his predatory habits. His person is, in general, short and robust, but devoid of the grace and flexibility of the Hindu. A flat face, with high cheek-bones, presents a cast of features not unlike that of the Chinese, and suggests no idea of beauty. The women form a striking contrast to the men, as they resemble the European somewhat in form and feature. The habits of life of the Assamese are, above all, domestic. Great respect is paid to old age; when parents are no longer capable of labour they are supported by their children, and scarcely anyone is allowed to become a burden to the public.

The hill and frontier tribes of Assam are, for the most part, to be found in or around the Lakhimpur district. The principal of these, in point of numbers, is undoubtedly the tribe of the Nagas, who inhabit the hills and forests along the eastern and south-eastern frontier of Assam. They generally live in small scattered communities of about 20 houses each. They cultivate rice, cotton, yams and Indian corn (maize), and prepare salt from the brine springs in their hills. The Government has no very definite relations with them, but they are generally obedient and recognise, though in a very vague way, British rule in Assam.

CHINA

A visit to the districts of the Vicariate of Shin-Chow. - A superstitious old woman. - Tediousness of life on a junk.

(An account written by the Right Rev. Mgr. Ver-siglia, S. C.).

"During our journey from Cheg-Lin to Lin Chow, there was nothing to record beyond the continuous lamentations of the aged proprietress of the junk or large barge on which we were travelling. This old lady, in order to curry favour with the missionaries, had solemnly promised

to renounce the worship of her idols—such promises are by no means rare; but now she found herself in a very awkward situation. Her renunciation of idolatry was in no way sincere, and yet she did not want to be seen adoring the idols which she had promised to renounce. Accordingly, she rose very early each morning, to go through her sacrificial rites, and at night, when she believed that everyone had retired, she went through her usual prostrations before her idols. But soon she was hard put to it, for we were just entering on dangerous and treacherous waters, and she came to us, telling us that we must pay great attention to what we are doing, and must on no account forget to propitiate the spirits, that they might bring us safely over the danger. Of course, we only laughed at her, but she was in real earnest, and could not conceal her superstitions from us any longer. She began to twist and turn and go into all manner of contortions, that the spirits may guide our bark safely through. To put a stop to her nonsense, Fr. Frigo set up an opposition performance by making such a hideous noise that it struck more fear into the old lady than her imaginary spirits in the air. This had the desired effect: she saw the stupidity of her superstition, and agreed there and then to throw all her idols into the fire.

But to tell the truth, little diversions of this kind are a godsend to us, for they help to break the awful monotony. Without some little distractions on board, life on a junk would soon become almost intolerable. In spite of every endeavour to find some form of occupation or hobby to while away the weary hours, little occupation seems at all possible, beyond a little reading, which is done under the greatest inconveniences imaginable. To begin with, we are continually cramped, and are forced to take up uncomfortable positions, unless we are prepared to remain squatting on the ground in the manner of Turks. The place is low and narrow, and in moving about we have to stoop continuously. And to add to all this, the sailors, who are frequently passing to and fro, think nothing of treading upon us as they pass by, and never dream of making anything approaching an apology for this discourteous behaviour; they simply take it for granted that all who happen to be in their way deserve to be downtrodden, in the most literal as well as the metaphorical sense of the word. And besides, their voices are far from being musical, and when they shout at one another, as they do incessantly, the effect is perhaps better imagined than described. A swarm of tiny gnats also add to the attractions of our surroundings and

in one sense, help to break the monotony, for they are very active little creatures and bite for all their worth, and cause in their victims a sensation of continual itching.

So much for our barge. Turning to something more pleasant, the scenery which surrounds us is simply enchanting. At times our junk passes beneath overhanging arches of water, formed by the precipitation of small rivers from rocky crags overhead. These delightful waterfalls give the impression of crystal vaults, beneath which our junk seems to be continually passing. Besides, as our eyes wander over the wild, yet elegant range of rocks before us, we see stalactites suspended from these rocks almost everywhere, and by their varied shapes and sizes they would almost make us believe that we were passing through fairy-land. Many of the waterfalls which bound from rock to rock are transformed into an immense cloud of water vapour, as they reach the earth. These and many other enchanting sights break the monotony of our journey, and afford us compensation for the inconveniences associated with our travelling.

For three days and three nights we had travelled in this way, and were just about to resign ourselves to the idea of spending another night on board when Father Frigo, with his usual resourcefulness, thought of a way of shortening the remainder of our journey. Turning to me he said: "Lin Chow is over there, behind that mountain. Why should we make a circuitous journey, when in three hours we can ascend the mountain, and in another two descend to the plain beyond? It is now three o'clock; by eight o'clock this evening, if we make haste, we should be able to reach our destination." This was welcome news, for we did not relish the thought of passing another night cramped up in this way, and so we had no hesitation in following out this advice, and so we left the servant on the junk, and set out on foot to cross the mountain. Several Christians, who had accompanied us so far, joined us in this ascent. The footpath, which led up the mountain side, was steeper than we had anticipated, and taxed us at first to the utmost, for, after being cramped up for so long, it took us some little time to regain the full use of our legs. However, in spite of this inconvenience at the beginning, we succeeded in reaching the summit of the mountain in a little more than three hours. And now a beautiful panorama unfolded itself to our gaze. There was the vast plain of Lin Chow beneath us, crossed by two important rivers, the Lin Shan and the Sceng T'zi, whose crystal waters reflected the glorious rays of the setting sun, and suggested the idea of two long

streaks of silver over a green carpet of a luxuriant vegetation.

Lin Chow lies at the confluence of these two rivers, like so many other Chinese towns, is strongly fortified. The inner city is surrounded by four immense walls, which form the sides of a huge rectangle. These walls are about fifteen feet high, and are so broad that three yoke of



The Rt. Rev. Mgr. Versiglia

oxen could pass along them, side by side. Somewhere near the centre of each of these four walls, there is a huge gate, which opens on to a quadrangle defended by turrets at each corner. Ample provision is thus made for the defence of the city; even if the outer gates are destroyed by an enemy, these turrets serve as a powerful defence to prevent the foe from reaching the inner gates, which are situated at the other side of the quadrangle above referred to. This is the usual system carried out in Chinese fortifications. The gates are named after the cardinal points on the compass, and are known as the North, South, East and West gates respectively.

The walled-in city, however, contains but

a very small part of the population. Immense suburbs exist outside the gates, and our residence is situated quite close to the Western gate. From the height of the mountain we could clearly discern, with the aid of our field glasses, the white banner which was floating at the top of the Catholic Church, in honour of our expected visit. We stood there for a few moments, contemplating the beauty of the scenery, and then commenced our descent, as quickly as was compatible with safety.

In Lin Chow great preparations had been made to give us a very hearty welcome on the following day, and we upset all their calculations and plans by turning up unexpectedly in this informal manner on that evening. I was sorry on noticing the disappointment which I had unintentionally caused them, but I think I satisfied them sufficiently by thanking them warmly for the grand reception which they had hoped to give us, and by begging them not to change their plans or to put themselves to any unnecessary trouble in our regard. They complied with this request, though with some regret, for they had been so anxious to show the extent of their loyalty and to prove that they knew how to welcome and honour their spiritual Father. However, they ventured to express the hope that, on some future occasion, they would be able to compensate themselves for this little disappointment.

I was agreeably surprised to see how the influence of the Fathers had increased since my last visit. This has been due mainly to two causes. In the first place, our good Fathers in this district have been working incessantly. Like true sons of our Ven. Founder, they have realised that they must never be idle. Though but little acquainted as yet with the language, they did not allow this difficulty to stand in their way, but immediately set about making friends with the little boys, whom it is much easier to understand than it is to understand older people. Amongst these children our Fathers have been able to effect much good, by gathering them together, playing with them, and showing them and their parents that the missionaries have the welfare of all at heart. And in the second place, our Confrères have gained considerably in the eyes of the people by their attitude of kindness during the troublous times through which the city has recently passed. In the Revolution of February, 1921, our Confrères found themselves between two fires: that of the besieging army on one side and that of the defenders on the other. The House of the Missionaries was rapidly transformed into a refuge for the poor people of the neighbour-

hood, who did not know where to find shelter and safety. Father Frigo wrote to me at that time as follows: "I was at Tong Pi at the time, when I received news that an army of 4000 men was preparing to attack the city of Lin Chow. I lost no time on receiving this intimation, and after a hurried journey of six hours on foot I arrived at our residence at Lin Chow, and found myself in the midst of several hundred of men, women and children, who had sought a refuge within our walls and had brought with them their principal house-hold goods, and all objects of greater value that they could get together in time. Thus it was that the Catholic Mission became a home for them and an ark of safety from the terrors of the civil conflict. The main hall of the house was transformed into a dormitory for the men, while the house for Chinese girls was filled to overflowing with women and children, who kept their eyes covered in terror. I placed in my room objects of real value, such as the safes of rich businessmen, manuscripts and legal documents, besides parcels of valuable clothes. Some also wished to leave their money with us, and Father Cucchiara, for obvious reasons, hid it beneath the tiles of the roof. Throughout the whole night there was a continuous stream of men and women passing to and fro, in an attempt to bring within our walls all that they could rescue from their homes before the actual bombardment commenced. Though exhausted by my fatiguing journey, I found it absolutely impossible even to close my eyes, on account of the turmoil and confusion within. Towards four o'clock in the morning the booming of the cannons in the distance made us realise that hostilities had already begun. Missiles were flying in every direction. Balls were hissing overhead and some even struck the iron door of the Church, while many exploded high up in the air. The full force of powerful machine-guns was brought to bear against the city-walls, while the defenders, in their turn, wrought havoc among the ranks of the besieging army. In the meantime, I barricaded the windows with everything I could lay hands on—with trunks, chests, portanteaux, blankets, and with every object that could prove a means of protection against any stray bullets that might come our way. I bolted all the doors of our enclosure, and absolutely forbade anyone to put a foot outside or to make any noise until the danger was over. The firing did not cease until ten days had elapsed, and even after that, there was a fair amount of skirmishing for three days more. At the end of this period, the assailants began to realise that their task was a fairly

hopeless one, and as they were running short of ammunition, they thought it best to withdraw. Our Confrères, at the head of a detachment of courageous natives, then ran out to succour the wounded, both those within the city-walls and those who were lying without. Thus were laid in China the foundations of an association for tending the wounded. This association has adopted the name, so familiar to us all, of the Red Cross Society.

The events narrated above, and the protection afforded to so many natives during this dangerous crisis have stood the Salesian Fathers in good stead at Lin Chow, and the Catholic Mission has already acquired a fame which we trust will be productive of much good in the near future.

**Devotion to Mary Help of Christians at Lin Chow. —
The feast of St. Aloysius.**

Devotion to Mary Help of Christians has spread in a consoling way at Lin Chow. Before leaving Turin, Father Garelli was presented with a beautiful statue of Mary Help of Christians by a number of generous lady-students of the University of Turin. This statue now holds a place of honour at Lin Chow, and the ceremony of its installation and dedication was carried out with due solemnity. Every day numbers of faithful Christians come to visit this Shrine of the Madonna, and even the pagans themselves show marked respect and deference to the name of Mary Help of Christians. The poor natives around us have many hardships, and are often down-trodden by the mighty ones of this world. Even those who have not the light of faith, find relief and satisfaction in thinking of the Madonna as a powerful and gentle Being, who in her maternal goodness has instituted herself the Patroness and Help of all who invoke her. Therefore they come with delight to see her image, and to contemplate the motherly kindness depicted thereon. Some have gone much further, and have been caught making their prostrations before this statue, as though they were before the statue of one of their idols. May the Blessed Virgin Mary, by her powerful intercession, obtain for these poor, misguided creatures the true light of faith, to enable them to know her Divine Son, and to become faithful adherents to the faith that Jesus Christ came on earth to establish.

I spent three days at the residence of Lin Chow, in order to console the Christians for the disappointment they had undergone at my untimely arrival. On the third day we kept the Feast of St. Aloysius, and it was indeed a consoling day for me. In the morning all ap-

proached the Holy Table, and I was told that many approached the Sacraments that day, who had never been seen there before. After Holy Mass, I left the Church, and was greeted by a noisy and prolonged discharge of rockets. In China, so it seems, no event of any importance whether it be a marriage, a funeral, the decision of a lawsuit or a business appointment, can be take place without a display of this kind. Even on occasions which seem to us insignificant, the customary discharge of rockets takes place without fail at a given signal. The opening of a school, the undertaking of a journey, any religious function whatever, or the visit of some distinguished person, any one of these reasons is a sufficient pretext for the bonzes or sooth-sayers to declare that, at a certain fixed hour, this noisy function must be gone through. It is easy to understand that a custom of this kind is often enough the cause of annoyance to Europeans, but it must be admitted that one great advantage attends the practice, it is this, that the smoke of the powder used for this purpose serves as a powerful disinfectant and an effectual antidote to the evils effects of the dirt and rubbish which abound in China and which make so many of the Chinese streets an object of loathing to the cultured European.

On this memorable morning, I, too, had to pass through the midst of the smoke and powder-dust which went forth from the petards, and I really believe that, even if I had on me that moment all the microbes of the plague of Milan, that blinding smoke and powder-dust would have been sufficient to dispel them all.

When I reached the Hall, one of the Christians, in the name of all, presented to me their united good wishes and warmest greetings; then all made the prostration which is customary in China, and afterwards withdrew. I had hoped that all the social functions were now over, but I was mistaken. In the evening the same Hall was again filled, this time for the social dinner. All the Christians took their meal in accordance with Chinese customs, while I and the two Salesian Fathers with me were permitted to retain our European customs, and were served with the elegance and propriety which one finds at home.

I must reserve for a future occasion the account of my subsequent journeys and experiences, as time does not permit me to go further into the matter now.

LOUIS VERSIGLIA,
Titular Bishop of Caristo,
Vic. Apost. of Shiu-Chow.



THE LIFE OF THE VENERABLE DON BOSCO

By G. B. LEMOYNE of the Salesian Society.

N. B. Owing to lack of space, we have been forced, in the last few issues of the Bulletin, to omit the usual Chapter from the Life of the Ven. Don Bosco. Now, however, we take up the thread of the narrative at the point we reached in the Bulletin of last August).

CHAPTER XXIV.

On the same memorable day (the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1854) all the inmates of the Oratory returned solemn thanks to God for their preservation from the cholera. In the morning the boys approached the Holy Table with great fervour, and Don Bosco himself exhorted them, with warmth and energy, to celebrate the day in a worthy manner. He spoke, first of all, of the wonderful mystery of our Holy Faith which was defined as a dogma on that day; he spoke of the goodness and power

of Mary, most Holy, who had interceded for her clients and had preserved them from the awful malady which had been raging around them, and he urged upon them the debt of gratitude which they all owed to their Heavenly Mother. The "Te Deum" was then sung with great fervour by the boys.

Thus it was that the promise made with such confidence by Don Bosco to his boys was literally fulfilled. The preservation was so remarkable that even the sceptical were forced to acknowledge that it had something of the supernatural about it. The inmates of the Oratory at this period numbered about 100 and although the district in which they lived was completely overrun by this loathsome disease, still no one belonging to the Oratory was stricken, and even those, who had the courage to offer their services to tend the sick and the dying in the neighbourhood, came through this dread-

ful period of four months untouched. And yet almost every family who lived in the immediate vicinity of the Oratory had to bewail the death of one or more of its members at this period. The disease, true enough, reached the very doors of the Oratory, and at one time it threatened to take possession of Don Bosco himself, but an invisible hand seemed to ward it off and force it to withdraw from that hallowed spot.

Don Bosco himself was the only case in the Oratory. It was the week when the disease began to take its first toll of victims, and the Servant of God, returning home after a day of great fatigue, got into bed and went to sleep. It was not long, however, before he was awakened by a feeling of giddiness and complete lassitude. His feet and limbs were quite cold and his stomach was racked by the pains of sickness—he had, in short, all the symptoms of the cholera. He sat up in bed and took hold of the bell to call for help, but he did not ring it for fear of alarming the boys. He recommended himself to Mary Help of Christians, committed his future into the hands of God, and then took those first aids that he had so often administered to others. After a quarter of an hour, he felt quite overcome by fatigue, all his body became bathed in perspiration; then he fell asleep. In the morning he awoke tranquilly and without the slightest feeling of illness.

To the many acts of charity and generosity for which the Oratory was responsible during that period, Don Bosco added yet more. The civil authorities found it necessary to establish a Home for a good number of children who were left stranded by the plague. For the care of their spiritual and intellectual interest they decided that Don Bosco's help should be obtained. It was one of those works which he regarded himself as bound to undertake, and when the formal demand was made to him he readily acceded to it. For some time much of his paternal solicitude was expended upon it, and when the establishment was closed he accepted a number of the children as inmates of the Oratory. The Committee of Public Assistance which had been formed under the presidency of the Mayor recorded these acts of generosity on the part of Don Bosco, by a public declaration of its gratitude.

The Servant of God was by no means exclusive in the exercise of his charity. About this time the Protestant sectaries had been active in various parts of Piedmont; but, as is the inevitable sequel where the sects are concerned, dissensions rapidly made their appearance. In Turin itself there had been some excitement

about the election of a Pastor for one of their churches, and partly as the result of the discussions involved in this election, a certain minister named De Sanctis found himself rejected by his co-religionists, and deprived of office by the governing body of the Waldensian Church. These circumstances caused him to enter into himself and consider the dangerous path he was following, for he was an apostate from the Catholic Priesthood. In his misfortune Don Bosco stretched out to him a helping hand; he wrote to him as follows:

“For some time past I have had the thought of addressing a letter to manifest my earnest desire of sympathizing with you, and of offering to you during your time of need whatever a friend may have at his disposition. One reason for this has arisen from your own books, in reading which it has struck me that you were disquieted in mind and ill at ease in the course you have undertaken.

“From recent notices in the papers it seems that you have broken with the Waldenses. I hereby give you an invitation to come and make use of my house whenever you will. And to what purpose should you come? Simply to be able to carry out the inspirations which God may give you. You will be at liberty to share my humble roof and poor table, and we could consult together on religious matters. It would of course entail no expense on your part. These are the sincere sentiments which my heart desires to manifest to you. If you could but realize the loyalty of my friendship, you would feel moved to accept my proposition, or to treat it with indulgence.”

These words touched the inmost depths of the unfortunate man; he replied in these terms:

“You cannot imagine the effect produced upon me by the exceeding thoughtfulness of your letter of yesterday. I should not have thought it possible to receive the expression of such noble and generous sentiments from one, with whom I was in open enmity.

“Let me be frank with you; we have been combatting each other's principles with equal constancy, but though you have opposed me you show that you have a sincere interest in my welfare, and in the hour of my affliction stretch out to me a hand of friendship. Yours is that practical charity about which so many are fond of theorizing.” He concluded his letter with expression of much esteem and gratitude.

Don Bosco replied that since friendly relations existed between them, he hoped to have an opportunity of proving his friendship and esteem. He assured him that many other ec-

clesiastics were equally sympathetic, and that it would be a pleasure if a meeting could be arranged. De Sanctis accepted this invitation, on condition that Don Bosco did not refer to him by name in his writings. He came to the Oratory, was received with all respect, visited the schools and workshops and had a long conference with the Servant of God. The incident, which had displayed in so remarkable degree Don Bosco's sympathetic generosity, secured for the Oratory the good esteem of the sectaries. Henceforth their plots and acts of violence ceased; they restricted themselves to controversy.

The Servant of God did not abandon his attempts to bring back the unfortunate man. He kept up a correspondence with him and even offered to make a suitable provision for the woman with whom he had gone through the form of marriage. The unhappy man had not the courage to break with the past, and a few years later he met with an accident and died suddenly. May Heaven have granted him in that moment a true desire for reconciliation.

On the same day, the Oratory rendered thanks to God for having so lovingly preserved it from the cholera. In the morning the boys all approached the Sacraments with the greatest devotion, and in the evening Don Bosco instructed them how to acquit themselves of their debt of gratitude. He spoke of the mystery that had been defined as a truth of faith that day, and then of the power and goodness of Mary towards those who were devoted to her service. He concluded his instruction by reminding them how they had been preserved from all the perils of the epidemic that had been raging, and that all of them were in duty bound to give thanks to God. Having said this, he intoned the "Te Deum" which the boys continued with signs of the liveliest gratitude and love.

The promise that Don Bosco had made with so great confidence was fulfilled. During the period of the cholera the Oratory had numbered about a hundred inmates, and when it is considered that they were in an area where the disease had raged so fiercely, and that on the left and on the right and all round there was not a single house which had not lost some one through the plague, it is at least very remarkable that at the end of four months not one of their number was missing—not even of those who had so courageously gone forth in the service of the sick. The disease had crept all round them and at last had advanced to the door of the Oratory penetrating

to the very room of Don Bosco; but it seemed as if an invisible hand drove it from the premises, for without injuring the health of anyone, it went away as quickly as it came.

CHAPTER XXV.

Warnings and Surprises.

The life of the Servant of God was cast in troublous times for the Church, and his intense devotion to her made him a champion in her defence. It had ever been a recognised principle, that the Catholic Church should have, in order to attain her end, churches for her worship, convents and monasteries for the practice of the evangelical counsels, and property for the maintenance of her ministers and of the innumerable houses of charity as well as, to enable her to fulfil those other obligations which her divine mission entail. Moreover, seeing that she is to last to the consummation of ages, this right is necessarily a permanent one.

But the deeply seated powers of sectarianism and irreligion had determined otherwise. They had recently contested her right to have any legislative, executive, or judiciary power; now they denied her right to possess. Certain extreme localities had voted for the seizure of ecclesiastical property, but in 1852 the Government forbade the sequestration. In spite of this, there was a rapidly increasing movement in the direction of confiscation, demands being made for the seizure of Church property, the reduction of episcopal houses, the suppression of convents, and the abolition of the exemption from military service, hitherto granted to clerics. It was reckoned that immense sums would thus be brought into the public treasury.

The Bishop issued decrees and instructions against the confiscation, which they described as an injustice and a sacrilege. The State had long recognised these rights of the Church and of the monasteries, and Statutes had guaranteed individual liberty, and the inviolability of homes and properties without exception. The adversaries of the Church would not listen to such reasoning; the monasteries which had been seized during the prevalence of the cholera were not restored, and many signs indicated approaching legislation to sanction the confiscation. It was no wonder that the Catholics of Piedmont were in a state of grave anxiety, and that Don Bosco felt urged to prevent this new attack against the Church by every legitimate means.

One night he spoke to the students at the

Oratory of the famous warnings, or rather maledictions, made by the early Counts of Savoy against any of their descendants who should dare to usurp the property bestowed by them upon the Abbey of Altacomba. A cleric, who listened to these dread warnings, conceived the bold idea of transcribing them and despatching them to the King, and, seeing that Don Bosco was not opposed to the idea, he did so.

King Victor Emmanuel was greatly annoyed. He showed the letter to one of his attendants who happened to be a Co-operator of Don Bosco. This gentleman, the Marquis Fassati, at once perceived its origin, and came to the Oratory to warn Don Bosco of the King's displeasure. The Servant of God listened for a time, and then told the Marquis that in certain cases the truth ought not to be suppressed, and pointed out that under existing circumstances, the cleric's action was a mark of loyalty and of devotion to the true interests of the Royal Family.

In fact Don Bosco was not only anxious to defend the rights of Religion, but also to fulfil a duty of gratitude. The Royal House of Savoy had ever shown itself particularly favourable to his work, and had helped it by a large-hearted generosity. Queen Maria Teresa, the mother of Victor Emmanuel had sent him many large offerings, and Don Bosco had gone to her for assistance when he found himself in special need.

Towards the end of November 1854, Don Bosco had one of his remarkable dreams. He seemed to be in the play-ground of the Oratory, surrounded by boys and clerics, when one of the pages of the Court dressed in his red uniform hurriedly approached and shouted: "Important news!"

—"What is it?" asked Don Bosco.

—"A great funeral at the Court! A great funeral at the Court!" At this statement, and the sudden apparition, Don Bosco seemed rooted to the ground, and the messenger again repeated:

—"A great funeral at Court!"

Don Bosco then desired some explanations, but the young man disappeared.

On awaking, the Servant of God was much distressed, but perceiving the meaning of the apparition, he wrote out a straight forward account of the dream and sent it to King Victor Emmanuel. That day, in the refectory, after dinner, he said to the clerics who were around him:

"This morning I have written to the three distinguished persons: to the Pope, to the King, and to the hangman.

The combination of persons caused some laughter, but there was no surprise on hearing that Don Bosco had written to the hangman, since his ministry made him a constant visitor of the prisons; nor to the Holy Father, whose interests he always sought to promote; but it was some surprise that the King had received a letter from him, and Don Bosco told them what he had written. No reply was sent from the Court to the Oratory.

After five days Don Bosco had a second dream. He seemed to be in his room, writing at his desk, when the sound of a horse's hoofs made him look up. Then his door opened and in came the same messenger as before, in his red livery. He stepped forward into the middle of the room and cried out: "Announce not one important funeral at Court, but important funerals."

Having repeated these words twice over he went rapidly out closing the door behind him. Eager for an explanation, Don Bosco got up, rushed to the balcony and saw the messenger mounting his horse. He called out to him to ask why he had brought such a message, but the other only replied: "Great funerals at the Court," and disappeared. In the morning, Don Bosco addressed another letter to the King, detailing his new dream, and begging His Majesty to take the only means of avoiding the realization of these threats, by preventing at any cost the passing of the new legislation. Don Bosco discussed this dream also with his eldest students and clerics, showing himself much concerned and repeating frequently:

"This law will bring great misfortunes upon the House of Savoy."

The reception of the letter at the Court again brought a visit from the Marquis Fassati, who was inclined to upraid Don Bosco for so disturbing the mind of the Sovereign, and in fact arousing him to fury.

"But what I wrote to him is the truth," replied Don Bosco.

"I am sorry to have distressed the King, but his own good and the welfare of the Church are both in question."

In spite of these warnings, the new law was introduced on the 28th. Nov. 1854, by the Keeper of the Privy Seal, Urban Rattazzi; and the powerful minister, Count Camillus Cavour, then Minister of Finance, had given his word to secure its passage through the House of Representatives at all costs. The news caused intense anxiety among the Catholic party and especially to Don Bosco. It is true that the Government requested the Archbishop of Genoa and the Bishops of Annecy and Moriana who were then in Rome, to begin negotiations with

the Holy See for the cession of Ecclesiastical property to the State, and the Sovereign Pontiff showed himself willing to come to the assistance of the financial troubles of Piedmont, laying down very reasonable conditions; in reply the Government sent to the Holy See a copy of the proposed law. From many quarters, petitions reached the Parliament asking for the rejection of the proposition, and the body of the Episcopate sent two well reasoned and dignified protests: but the Deputies began the discussion of the Bill on Jan. 9th. 1855. It was a simple abolition of all rights on the part of the Church to possess property and a declaration that religious Communities received their status solely from the Government under which they resided.

There were many speeches for and against these propositions, which the Catholics and their press described as nothing short of sacrilegious, and things were at this point when a sad event interrupted the discussion. On the 5th. of Jan. the Queen-Mother had fallen suddenly ill. During the night, although suffering from a burning thirst, she would not consent to take anything, as she desired to receive Holy Communion on the following day, the Feast of the Epiphany; but she was not able to get up. King Victor Emmanuel wrote to General La Marmora: "My mother and my wife keep on repeating that they are dying of grief on my account." On Jan. 12th. the Queen Mother died at the age of fifty-four years. The Chamber of Deputies suspended its sittings out of sympathy for the Sovereign and the whole of Piedmont was grief-stricken, for the deceased had been universally loved.

In the midst of the funeral preparations, another mysterious letter reached the Royal Palace; it said: "Some one illuminated from on high has said: "If the law passes, great misfortunes will happen to your family. The present sorrow is only the prelude of your evils. If you do not prevent this injury to religion, you will open beneath you an unfathomable abyss."

The King was amazed: there seemed to be nowhere any source of safety. The royal party had scarcely returned from Superga, where the funeral rites were performed, when the King was hastily told that his Queen, Maria Adelaide, was about to receive the Last Sacraments. The Queen-Mother and she had been much devoted to each other, and when the former lady died the young Queen had just given birth to an infant son. The shock of her mother-in-law's death was too much for her weak state, and she died on Jan. 20th. at the early age of thirty-three. Yet more was to come. That

same evening the Holy Viaticum was taken to His Royal Highness the Duke of Genoa, the King's only brother, who had been in uncertain health for some time.

Victor Emmanuel was plunged in the most distressing grief. The news was sent to the Chamber of Deputies, who suspended the sitting and went into mourning again, till after another sad journey to Superga had been made. The clerics from the Oratory accompanied the funeral cortège, thinking all the time of the wonderful fulfilment of the prophecy of Don Bosco, and they spoke to him of these strange happenings. He replied: "Yes, indeed, the ways of God are inscrutable; and we do not know whether these funerals will satisfy Divine Justice." Evidently he knew a great deal more than he thought fit to make known.

Nevertheless the House of Deputies went forward with its anti-religious legislation, but it was again interrupted. Cavour had joined England and France against Russia for the Crimea campaign, and he had now to submit his proposals to Parliament for ratification. They were approved on the 10th of February, and the House then took up at once Rattazzi's new Bill; but that same night, the King's brother, who had been lingering for some days, died at the age of thirty-three, and thus, for the third time, the House had to suspend its sitting until after the funeral, which was again attended by the clerics from the Oratory.

These sad events, following so closely on one another, ought to have convinced the King that the letters announced the Will of God. And in fact he was now much disturbed. It had never before happened, not even during the most devastating pestilences, that in less than a month three burials had taken place of persons so intimately related to the Sovereign. Not Catholics only, but numbers of the other parties declared that it was a clear warning from God. In spite of everything, the discussion was re-opened and, after eighteen sittings the bill was formally approved. It remained with the Senate now, to prevent the measure from becoming law, and this Assembly was presented with a very widely signed petition for the rejection of the Bill. In his monthly *Catholic Readings*, Don Bosco published a work by the Baron di Nilinse, entitled: "The Property of the Church: how it is stolen and with what consequences: with a brief appendix upon the position of Piedmont." On its cover there was printed a sentence of St. Ambrose: "How is it that, if on no account the house of a private citizen may be robbed, you have the audacity to land upon the House of the Lord?" The

little work caused much stir, and served to put a salutary fear in the hearts of many. The police were alarmed and there was talk of sequestration, and of punishing the author; nothing was done, however.

The Senate, therefore, took up the question. Opinions were much divided. The Bishop of Casale proposed that as the Government were putting this forward as a means of increasing their revenue, so as to relieve the country's debts, the Church in Piedmont should raise a levy and furnish the sum required. Thus the Ministers were somewhat non-plussed: for they had all long contended that the needs of the country were the chief reason for their action. Cavour therefore asked the Senate to suspend the Session, for he knew that the King welcomed the proposal of the Bishops, and the Ministry sent in its resignation. A crisis seemed imminent: the press clamoured for the return of the Ministry, which in fact came back to power, and two days later the previous discussion was reopened.

But on May 17th. the Royal House was again plunged into mourning. The infant child, left by the late Queen Adelaide, was taken suddenly ill and was soon carried to be placed beside its mother in the royal burying-place. The King had thus in four months lost his mother, his wife, his brother and son: Don Bosco's dream had been sadly verified. Five days later the Senate approved the new law with some slight modifications. During the discussions Don Bosco had made his boys and students redouble their prayers, and there was much disappointment when the Senate did not reject the measure. To a group of clerics who were talking together on the subject, the Venerable Servant of God said: "Nothing stands between the closing of many religious houses, except the King's signature. If I had the opportunity I should say to him: 'Your Majesty, do not sign the law, for it will entail great evils for your family.'" One of the clerics said: "Would it not be a good thing to send such a message to the king?" "Certainly it would," replied Don Bosco "and I will tell you what to write."

The cleric prepared to take down the words, and Don Bosco said: "Write as follows: 'Your Majesty, Yesterday I was listening to a conversation, and amongst those present was Don Bosco. They were talking about recent happenings and of the law brought in by Rattazzi. Don Bosco said: 'If I had the opportunity of seeing the king I should say to him: 'Your Majesty, do not put your signature to the law suppressing the religious houses, otherwise you will draw upon yourself many evils. I

warn you of this as a faithful, affectionate and obedient subject.'"

The letter was despatched, but Don Bosco was not satisfied: he seemed to be agitated by some extraordinary impatience, and he sent one last warning, no longer urging, but openly threatening, grave punishments if the King set his seal to the law. The letter was sent to the Palace to be delivered immediately to the Sovereign. Victor Emmanuel was on his way to Susa, and a messenger was therefore sent, as the letter was marked "most urgent." When it was presented to the King, he told the messenger to give it to one of his attendants, and that he would see to it later; but, on being told that it was marked "urgent," he asked who had sent it, and when he heard that it was from Don Bosco, he took it eagerly and rapidly glanced through its contents.

"Just what I thought," he exclaimed, "some further warning!" and after hesitating for a few moments, he ordered the journey to be continued.

Some few weeks later, the new measure came before him for his signature. He hesitated long about it. By the advice of the Ministry he consulted a small body of ecclesiastics, whom they recommended, and who were apparently prepared to advise the Sovereign to put his signature to the Bill. These four ecclesiastics declared that the letter from Don Bosco might be ignored, and that the State was quite within its rights in seizing the property of the Church, if it thought fit. They assured the King that he might sign the measure with a clear conscience, and in that assurance he did so. Thus was the responsibility partly removed from his shoulders. By that act, over three hundred religious Houses were suppressed and over five thousand members deprived of their homes. Don Bosco met one of the ecclesiastics who had given the fatal advice, and convinced him of the injury he had thereby done to the Church, and urged him to do what lay in his power to make reparation.

The King himself meant to have an interview with the author of the mysterious letters, but on the two occasions on which he came to the Oratory for that purpose, Don Bosco happened to be out. A general who was in close touch with the King sought to persuade the Servant of God to disavow what he had written, but as he refused to comply, and only made light of the threats which the general proceeded to hold out, they came to a compromise and Don Bosco agreed to write a note, assuring the King that he had no intention of going beyond the duty of a faithful subject, and that he might regard the warnings in whatever light he found

most compatible with his peace of mind. The King was always among the chief benefactors of the Oratory.

Just about this time the boys and clerics at the Oratory were in a state of excitement about another prophecy made by Don Bosco, and one much more nearly concerning themselves. On a certain feast-day in the month of March 1854, Don Bosco had described a dream of his to the assembled House. He seemed to be in the court-yard in the midst of his boys at play, when suddenly one of them appeared, wearing a strange sort of head-dress, on which the number *twenty-two* was clearly visible. Then the boys all went to the portico, as if the customary bell had been rung for them to go in: and as Don Bosco walked along the line, several appeared to be much frightened. He went forward to look at them, and as he approached the one who was still wearing the strange head-dress, there appeared an unknown person of grave aspect, who said:

"Wait a moment; the *twenty-two* signifies the number of months he has yet to live: see that is he well prepared." He wanted to ask some explanation, but the grave person had gone. The boy in question was well-known to him and was in the midst of those before him.

This announcement caused a widespread tear, especially as it was the first time that Don Bosco had prophesied openly the death of one of the students. He perceived that they were much perturbed and while assuring them that he recognised the boy that was referred to by the stranger, he added that after all it was only a dream, and that, as they knew, too much notice should not be taken of dreams. But in any case they should be prepared for every eventuality. "Strive," he added, "to keep in the grace of God, and I shall do my best to look after number *twenty-two*, so that he may be well prepared."

The twentieth month had now arrived, and Don Bosco secretly told one of the clerics to keep special watch upon a certain boy, who then seemed to be in the best of health. At the beginning of December there were still no signs of anyone being ill, yet Don Bosco announced one evening, that from amongst his listeners one would be called away before Christmas. On account of this prediction, and because the *twenty-two* months were now almost gone, there was atmosphere of expectant dread. About that time, the Servant of God again called the same cleric and recommended to

his special care the boy previously referred to, and indeed, about the middle of December this boy was taken ill suffering violent internal pains, and when the doctor arrived he counselled the immediate administration of the last Sacraments. The severe pains lasted for eight days and then there appeared to be an improvement; but on the night of the twenty-third, the pains suddenly returned and the boy died unexpectedly.

"That night," relates one of the eye-witnesses, when Don Bosco stood up to speak after the night prayers, he looked around for a moment as though searching for some one. Then he said: "It is the first boy that has died at the Oratory. He was well prepared and let us hope that he is already in Paradise. I recommended you to be always ready." Then he seemed to be overcome with emotion and could not go on. It was the first time that death had taken one of his boys from him.



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