

SALESIAN BULLETIN

ORGAN OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
SALESIAN CO-OPERATORS



MAY-JUNE 1932



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SUMMARY: Don Bosco and the Blessed Sacrament. — A Missionary Hero. — Co-operators and the Spirit of the Apostolate. — What We Hear. — Before Her Picture. — In the Belgian Congo. — Pioneers in Ecuador — Through the Salesian Missions in Brazil. — The Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

“Frequent Communion and Daily Mass are the two columns upon which to build up the education of a child.”

Blessed JOHN BOSCO.

Don Bosco and the Blessed Sacrament.

Those who have studied the life of Blessed John Bosco, and who have seen his System of Education in practice, have rightly divined the secret of its success when they have said that everything depends upon the use of the Sacraments. It is quite true. Take away the free and frequent use of Confession and Communion from a Salesian School, and the only thing that remains of Salesian Education is a certain characteristic kindness but nothing else. A mere husk without the grain.

* * *

Now that everyone's attention is focussed upon the International Eucharistic Congress to be held in Ireland, it is not out of place to speak of Don Bosco and the Blessed Sacrament, and to note that in the practice of frequent confession and communion he was a pioneer, breaking the bands of a narrow, cramping Jansenism and helping to open the way to the right Catholic devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, gloriously ratified and proposed to the whole Catholic world by Pope Pius X in 1910.

The Apostle of Frequent Communion.

The designs of God, so early manifest in the boyhood of John Bosco, pointed him out as an apostle of youth. The early

dream has now been fulfilled to the minutest detail. That is what we may call the spectacular part of the calling of the saint: the vision of a mere boy and its worldwide fulfillment is the sort of thing which demands attention; but his mission in the Church was not limited to just any sort of work among boys, it was to be work done in a very special way, and that way. We have reason to believe, was also revealed to him by God.

If you follow the growth of the spiritual life of John Bosco from those earliest days, you will find that side by side with his growing consciousness that his work was to be among poor boys, there was another deeper and interior conviction that the means he must use must be the *frequent use of the Sacraments*. It is true that in his biography you do not read explicitly that any such thoughts ran through his young mind, nevertheless you find incidents abounding which show clearly enough the ever increasing growth of the Sacramental life within him, and at a time when there was nothing to encourage him; on the contrary, it was the accepted teaching that the Sacraments should not be received frequently and certainly not by young boys.

Notwithstanding this, it was John Bosco, who as a church-student at Chieri, would

go without his breakfast that he might receive Holy Communion frequently. Daily Communion, in 1835, was an unheard-of-thing even for a seminarist; and the professors of theology, still suffering from the spiritual disease of Jansenism, looked askance at this young man, who insisted on stepping beyond the bounds long established by a rigid though unwritten law!

The part the frequent use of the Sacraments was to play in his future work, though hidden in the days of his training, burst into vivid life once he became a priest. For it was then that Don Bosco was able to put into practice what he felt was the only sure way of restoring the Catholic Faith and the interior spiritual life in boys who through a hundred causes were losing touch with religion altogether. To Don Bosco's mind the whole question was this: "How can I get these boys to the frequent use of the Sacraments?" Once *that* was achieved, the rest he looked upon as an almost accomplished fact! A radical change *must* come in the life of the lad, who from the loose life of the street, was gradually led to live the sacramental life of the Church—going to confession willingly and regularly and approaching the altar as often as his confessor advised him.

Difficulties.

Naturally the way was not all roses. They have a saying in Italian:

*Un prete se è cattivo lo castigano,
Se è buono lo sostengono,
Se è un santo lo osteggiano!*

(If a priest be bad they chastise him, if he be good they help him, but if he be a saint they hinder him!)

This is precisely what happened in the case of Don Bosco. Though the larger part of the clergy showed themselves favourable to his work—and for most the approbation of the Blessed Cafasso was sufficient—yet there were not wanting influential clergy, pious and learned after their own fashion, who opposed him. The opposition commenced as early as 1844 and continued more or less intense, until 1883. It was not unnatural; for anything that is really out of the ordinary will always produce a storm. The

very first accusation was that he admitted his boys too easily to Holy Communion.

As to the fact of frequent Communion it was quite true, for his was the first institute to have such a thing as daily Communion. Don Bosco continued on his way, his confessor was a saint of the school of St. Alphonsus, and he Don Bosco, had his spirit full of the teaching of the Council of Trent, the spirit of the Church. With his accusers he did not discuss the point, his method was practical rather than theoretical.

To one who argued that very frequent Communion was not to be encouraged because the great St. Francis of Sales neither praised nor reprobated the practice, Don Bosco simply answered: "Why then do you disapprove of it!"

These zealous souls overlooked the extraordinary care Don Bosco took in the preparation of his boys that they might make good Communions. Although mortal sin was the only real obstacle in the way; nevertheless he did not allow it to those who had affection for even venial sin. And to this end he laid it down that the weekly Confession well made was the best possible preparation, especially when they continued with the same confessor, who might come to know the state of their soul intimately. But he also insisted that rather than make a sacrilegious Communion they should change their confessor every time!

Once a certain priest, known better for his social standing than for his priestly virtues, came to the Oratory with the objection that this frequent Communion made the boys a lot of hypocrites and imposters, and that the thing could have no lasting results. But Don Bosco simply smiled and said that his little experience had shown just the opposite, and that until he saw otherwise to be the case he would continue in the same way.

We have already hinted at the careful preparation Don Bosco gave his boys. When a lad arrived at the Oratory the very first thing to be thought about was the state of his soul. With all the prudence in the world Don Bosco would get to know him, and little by little get him to make a really good confession. With that basis to start upon he would gradually lead him to the frequent use of the Sacraments; and



A recent painting of Don Bosco giving Communion to his boys. The idea of the artist was to show him the Apostle of Frequent Communion.

as grace worked in the heart of the boy, Don Bosco was able then to mould him according to his conception of proper education. It goes without saying that this Sacramental life among the young boys of the Oratory was the basis of all the good that was done, as it was the source of all discipline. The right idea of the reception of the Body our Lord and of the dispositions of soul necessary for a worthy Communion, led the boys, even the roughest, to detest really grievous sin, or downright defiance of the rules of the house, and reduced to a minimum those lesser transgressions all schoolboys commit.

For the love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament they would willingly do things no master could hope to *force* them to do. The reason of their obedience gradually became supernatural, and it does not need explanation to show the lasting effects this kind of school life must eventually produce. But it must not be imagined that all indiscriminately were allowed to go to Holy Communion every day. Not at all, that was the work of the Confessor: some were admitted daily, some once a week, some several times a week and some even monthly. It was then that the monthly retreat, which we popularly call the "Exercise for the Happy Death" produced its effects. Don Bosco wanted this to be a special time of grace when everyone should put himself right with God and go to Confession and Holy Communion as if it were to be for the very last time.

The Miracle of the Blessed Sacrament.

As it often happens in the lives of the saints God shows His special pleasure in the particular work they are doing for Him, by granting them extraordinary favours in the exercise of their special mission. You have the Curé d'Ars and his wonderful power in the confessional. So in the case of Don Bosco. His zeal for the promotion of frequent Communion among his boys merited for him a special miracle, namely that God should multiply the Sacred Hosts that those same boys might not go without Communion on a special day.

It happened this way.

In the early years of the life of Don Bosco, the precise day we do not know, though

it was probably that of the Nativity of Our Blessed Lady, about six hundred poor boys had been to confession and were ready to make their Holy Communion. Don Bosco commenced the Mass quite certain that the ciborium was full of Hosts. Instead it was almost empty. Buzzetti, the sacristan, had forgotten to bring the other ciborium to the altar and it only came to him after the consecration. Don Bosco commenced to give Holy Communion and was much disturbed to see so very few particles and so many boys already at the altar rails. Disconsolate at the thought of having to send so many away without Communion he just lifted his eyes to heaven and then continued as usual. Here was the marvel. Buzzetti was kneeling in a corner, utterly unhappy, trying to imagine what Don Bosco would say to him when he came into the Sacristy; but to his amazement Don Bosco did not stop, he continued to give a whole Host to each boy, yet the number never seemed to get less, and Buzzetti knew quite well that the number of Hosts in the Tabernacle could not have been sufficient for the smallest number of boys.

After the Mass Buzzetti was beside himself with joy and told his companions what had happened and because they would not believe him he took them to show them the ciborium still prepared in the sacristy.

Many times during his life did he relate the incident swearing on oath to the fewness of the Sacred Hosts in the Ciborium that day.

In the October of 1863 Don Bosco confirmed the fact. Some of his clerics having heard the story of Buzzetti, asked him point-blank about it. For a time he did not reply: "Yes," he said at length, "there were indeed very few particles in the ciborium and notwithstanding this I was able to give Communion to all who came, and they were not a few. Our Lord indeed wished to show by this miracle how much He was pleased with frequent Communion." When asked what he felt in the presence of this wonder he replied: "I was greatly moved, but very calm and the thought flashed through my mind, that the miracle of the Consecration is even greater than that of multiplication. May Our Dear Lord be ever blessed for everything He does!" Then he abruptly changed the subject.

(To be continued).

A MISSIONARY HERO

Fr. JOHN BALZOLA, S. C.

Some five or six years have slipped by since the death of Fr. John Balzola S. C. Perhaps some co-operators will remember the few details of his heroic life which were then published. Now the time has come to write his biography, in fact the book will very soon be published in Italian. The accompanying sketch gives some idea of the greatness of this son of Don Bosco who set out fearlessly where others dared not go, and who counted no price too dear, no sacrifice too great when it was question of the salvation of the immortal souls of those most forgotten of peoples—the Indians of the forests of Brazil.

Thirty years in the Forests of Brazil.

History is oftentimes more romantic than romance. There are men to-day in the wild places of the earth whose bread is buttered with danger; whose daily round is so constantly thrilling with hair-raising escapades that we wonder whether, after all, those adventure yarns we read at school were not quite true.

John Balzola was born and lived for twenty years in Monferrato, in Piedmont. The son of a peasant farmer, he worked the land with his brothers just as all the country folk around had done for generations. No prospect of change suggested itself, perhaps no thought of it ever crossed his mind.

The year 1884, however, found him a strong, wiry fellow of twenty, with his military service finished and a whole field of mere possibilities open to him, the most natural of which was to a return home. Still, in his heart he felt a call to something better, but how to achieve it was another matter. Here he was, too old for the ordinary seminary and far too poor to pay his own way to the priesthood.

At that time Don Bosco and his work among poor boys had become household words in Northern Italy and John Balzola snatched at what seemed to be a very faint hope. With his old parish priest he went to Turin, saw Don Bosco, and like a wild dream come true he started his studies at twenty, without a penny to his name. Twelve years later, in 1892, he was ordained and straightway volunteered for the Foreign Missions. It is from this time that the

figure of Father John leaves behind the drab clothes of the "average man" and puts on the bizarre garments of the "Wild West" hero.

Into the Unknown.

In 1893, as companion of Mgr. Lasagna, S. C., newly consecrated Bishop, with the mission to evangelise the Indians of Brazil, he set out for America. His very first "trip" was a 4,000 miles march through the uncharted country of three South American Republics until he came to rest just on the border of Brazil itself.

Brazil is little known in Europe—a place for nuts at Christmas time, perhaps, that's about all. In reality it is a vast forest of towering trees and decaying vegetation undisturbed for centuries, about 40 times the size of England, almost impregnable and as such the last stronghold of the native Indians who have withdrawn slowly before the face of "white" civilisation. The Indians, sometime masters of South America, now stood at bay with nothing but hatred for the intruder. Father John set his heart on these scattered tribes and for thirty years he laboured, suffered, fought and prayed for them.

The way into Brazil was opened by the Government, which gave the Salesians a huge tract of land country to "civilize." Father John Balzola set out with another priest, two lay-brothers, and three Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. By no stretch of the imagination could it be called a pleasure trip, for they were in the midst of the Bororo Indians, the most savage,



Fr. John Balzola among the Indians of the Bororo Tribe.

relentless and strongest of all that forest kingdom. For three years he worked at the Terese-Christine Settlement, but this comparatively quiet mission life did not suit the restless spirit of Father John, so, in 1900, with a little band of amateur missionary explorers, he pushed through the country towards the North, where the Caribis Indians camped. On this adventure he had his full share of danger, hardship and disappointment.

Having spent the best part of the month in the swaying saddle of a mule, hacking a path through undergrowth centuries old, he came to the bank of the Paranatinga River. Horses and mules were now alike useless so he bargained for some native craft: five shallow canoes in all, which he baptised, *The Help of Christians*, *St Joseph*, *The Saviour*, *Victory*, and *Hope*. Squatting in his canoe, *Hope*, laden with provisions of manioc, meal and the indispensable "medicine chest," Fr. Balzola might have been a chief of the tribe he was going to visit, so sun-burnt and weather-worn had he become.

Slipping down stream with the current, all went well until they reached some rapids,

where the waters boiled over the rocks, to sweep foam-laden down another cataract a mile ahead; four canoes shot ahead safely, but *Hope* ran foul of a boulder, turned turtle, and sank. Father John clung for dear life to floating logs and managed to drag himself ashore; but all provisions and medicine were gone!

Nothing daunted he still pushed on, and wherever he spied a native village, he tried to enter into a friendly chat with the Indians, but a menacing array of poisoned arrows was the invariable reception. Weeks passed by, and in vain did he distribute his little gifts; on one occasion he even danced the wild Bacururu war-dance, to no purpose. Just imagine a priest careering round a fire, shouting savage whoops, just to gain a little confidence. He could not find a single place to start a mission. One evening he returned ill and weary after a lone journey through the forest, with a poisoned arrow sticking through his hat! For days on end on his Paranatinga River exploit, he had to live on nothing but turtles' eggs picked up on the muddy banks.

Unwillingly, and with a heart heavy with disappointment, he returned to his station

at Cujabá, in Southern Brazil, but only to rest awhile before setting out again; this time with two priests, three laybrothers and three Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. Their aim was a little encampment 500 miles distant, on the Bariero River, in the centre of a Bororo colony.

The solemn stillness of the dense forest lent the land an air of mystery and, to some degree, enchantment; yet every step was a hazard where you carried your life in your two hands. Perhaps the poisoned arrow of some lurking savage, perhaps the swift, noiseless spring of a wild beast, would pick you out; and all the time the heavy vapour rose up from the decaying vegetation in the white mist that showed "malaria." Without loss the little mission band reached the camp on the Bariero River, but solitude, complete, uninviting, threatening met them and remained unbroken for six long months, during which time they did not as much as sight a savage. So they worked the hours away putting up huts and log cabins in the hope that somehow or other they might, at last, start their work in Brazil.

The wet season had passed and left behind swollen rivers and crushed undergrowth as witnesses to its fury. One evening, to the great excitement of all, two Indians were sighted, and that night the rhythmic monotone of the Bacuru war-dance was kept up until the moon had disappeared. The morning found the forest round the mission camp alive with hidden savages, while five naked giants, armed with spears, bows and arrows, and decorated with paint and tossing plumes, stood outside Father John's cabin and shouted: "Bororos Boa!! Bororos Boa!!!"

They stayed a little longer to no purpose. By evening it was clear that some trouble was afoot, and knowing something of their methods, it seemed probable that the little missionary camp would be massacred before dawn.

But, before night fell, more visitors arrived, headed by the Cacique chief, Joachim, and such was the impression made upon him by Father John, whose vivid personality, shining out of two blazing eyes, had attracted more than the attention of an ignorant savage, that the Cacique returned



A Salesian Bishop on his pastoral visitation.

to the forest with new thoughts chasing each other through his old head.

"These whites," he said to his tribe, "have a great Spirit guarding them which is friendly to us. An image have I seen also of a spirit called Mary, which is so shining and so good that I cannot get away from it!"

The next day Joachim and his family came to the mission camp. Thus was the work in Brazil started, after fifteen months of failure and disappointment.

A born pioneer, Father Balzola seemed to thrive on hardship; no sooner was one mission established than he was off to found another, going ever deeper into the heart of the primeval forest. In 1905, 1906, and 1909, found him successively further afield, on the Bariero River, at Araguaya, and on the Sangradouro River. The savages themselves, wild by nature, resenting restraint, strong passions running amok, often leading to bloodshed, filled with the wander-lust, and suspicious of even their best friends,

made the life of Father John one continual round of anxieties. It was almost a super-human task he had accomplished when he left his first mission with a forge and a tannery for the boys, and a cotton weaving plant for the girls.

The Explorer.

In 1910, the Brazilian Government wanted a census of the natives made—John Balzola was asked to go, and nothing could have suited his ends better. For four years he was both missionary and explorer, as such he penetrated where no white man had ever been before, collecting information, healing suffering bodies and baptising hundreds of souls. This expedition was crowded with adventures coloured by the vivid background of tropical jungle, hundreds of miles beyond civilisation. It was like a visit to another world.

On one occasion Father John, walking by the side of his horse which, for some reason, refused to be ridden, was met by a tiger that stood with bared fangs about ten yards away, simultaneously the horse

took fright and would have reared, had not the missionary, with an iron grip on the rein, kept it down. There they stood, facing each other, man and beast; a minute passed (it seemed an hour), neither moved, but at length the brute turned its eyes away and slunk into the undergrowth. Another time, the priest was riding back to the mission, when his attention was attracted by a loud hissing. There, before him, was the flat, swaying head of a huge snake, reared up to strike. It was a matter of seconds, but Father John got there first, and the snake lay writhing on the ground, with its spine broken by a well-aimed cut of a heavy stick. But Father John has been nearer to death than that. It happened, while working along the banks of the Panaratinga River, that the missionaries came across a tribe of savage Cajabís Indians. As was their custom they advanced towards them with hands raised as a sign of peace. The Indians faced them with bent bows, making no return until, like one man, they let their arrows fly; they hissed and whizzed by the heads of the little band like angry hornets, but, by a guardian Providence, though a hat or two were pierced, no one received any serious injury. Father John's first thought was for his rifle, but hardly had it come to him, than he realised that to use it would lead to the inevitable revenge and massacre. So he just stood his ground. The Cajabís were so surprised at this that they lowered their weapons and gathered round the party, while Father John got straight to "business" with the chief.

On the Rio Negro.

In 1914, the Apostolate of an Amazon State was given to the Salesians; although this new territory was 1,200 miles away and though he was now a man of fifty, Father Balzola undertook the work, and spent four weary months in native "dugouts" on the rivers, getting to his latest mission.

The forest of this region is tropical, and heavy rains on the rich soil had given rise to a vegetative growth that was practically speaking, impassable: hence the tedious journey by water. It is estimated that there are some 15,000 Indians living in



A Missionary lending a hand to put up a native hut.

tribes of Caraibes, Papoyos, and Toucans—but these are so spread about and in places so difficult of approach, that years pass by with nothing more than disappointment for the missionary. But persistent perseverance tells in the end; to-day the many missions of Brazil, Matto Grosso and Rio Negro are reaping what Father John sowed in the heroic privations and long suffering service twenty years ago.

A Missionary to the end.

In 1925, Father Balzola returned to Europe for a complete rest. But not even the attractions of his homeland could hold him back from his savages of the Black River (Rio Negro). This intrepid missionary died

in the forest which had been his only home for thirty-four years. The Mission of which he was the head had been badly hit by famine, and the rivers—the only means of transport—had been dried up by a severe drought. Both Indians and missionaries were reduced to a very low state, and for the worn-out body of Father John this last hardship proved too much.

The passing of such men leaves behind a blank in the Missionary Army that will not easily be filled; for few there are, even among men of the highest qualities, who have the physical strength, linked to the vivid, restless and ardent zeal for the souls of heathens that led Father John thousands of miles across a whole Continent, inspired only by those simple words of the Gospel: "Go ye then and teach all nations."

Co-operators and the Spirit of the Apostolate.

Salesian Co-operators you too are of the spirit of Don Bosco, who trod down the barriers of convention to go out fearlessly into the market-places and the slums of a busy city to save souls. Had Don Bosco lived to-day in England or America would not his Catholic spirit have burned within him at the sight of the immense task of converting a nation to the Catholic Faith?

Read the flaming words of Fr. Owen Dudley which follow, and see whether or no you fall short; whether there be nothing you can do in "this campaign for a nation's soul"

It is of the spirit of your Association that you, who can, step out into the open and respond as a lay-apostle of Catholic Action to a vital need of our times.

Fr. Dudley writes:

The Great Advance.

"To save the masses from the grip of modernism and materialism, we should have to raise an army of missionary priests and friars, lay-apostles and writers, to unmask the enemy and move forward with the Faith on a vast crusade of rescue.

"It all sounds magnificent on paper," says the critic. Precisely. And that is why I am writing—to show how the scheme may be

transferred from paper to practice, how we can begin the great advance now, and translate words into deeds.

"We must begin now. In fact we have begun. Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, Redemptorists and others, individual secular priests, the Catholic Evidence Guild and Guild of Ransom, certain of our well-known writers and public speakers have already enlisted for the great crusade—following the example of the Catholic Missionary Society. Already our big guns are replying to the enemy's fire. Even now we are marching forward. There is a slow but sure increase in the numbers of our converts. Those who are watching us know that we are on the move. We are attracting the attention, too, of the masses where we reach them. Put a priest, a parson and a Free Church minister on a place like Plymouth Quay, where you find the masses well represented, and it is the priest who will draw the crowd, and to whom the crowd will listen. There is every sign that, given the opportunity, the masses are prepared to listen to us.

Our Attitude to the Masses.

By the way, in regard to our *attitude* to the masses. It is the writer's firm conviction,

gained from experience, that the straighter we are with the Britisher the quicker we shall advance. There must be no fear of him, no cringing for his favour, no apologising for our Faith. We, and we alone, have the right to teach him. No wrapping up our designs. The Britisher will not trust us until we tell him what we are after. We are after *him*; we are out to convert him. We should say so at once and knock the bottom out of his suspicions. And no beating about the bush. Tell the "Atheist" (politely) that he is not an atheist, but a sulky schoolboy annoyed with the Almighty. Tell the man who says he has given up Christianity that he has never tried it, that the Christian religion is the Catholic religion. Hit hard and clean and straight, and the Britisher will give you his hand.

"We must have no fear of the people, but *for* them. We must be filled with an overwhelming pity for these sheep without a shepherd, at the mercy of the hirelings of this world. Our love for them must be a consuming fire urging us on to their rescue. If the small band, who have begun the great crusade, go forward now aflame for God and souls, their very love will draw of itself. The false leaders, of whom I have written, have no love wherewith to keep their hold. To them the masses are but "the uneducated" or "the herd."

Not so with us. We start with the enormous advantage of having nothing to get out of the people, but everything to give them. We must come to them with God's love for them burning in our eyes. And they are very lovable really, even in a third-class railway carriage. It is that love which will attract and to which they will respond, and with which they will compare the world's cold, calculating greed; and, comparing it, will spurn their hireling leaders and turn to the shepherds of their souls.

"And small band though we are, we must go forward—the vanguard of God's army, priests and friars, lay-apostles and penmen. In our churches, in public halls, in the open, wherever we are placed, there must our witness be borne. Our penmen must battle for bookshop and bookstall with the right kind of books and papers.

"And the small band of crusaders will grow, by force of attraction. The glow of their love for "the sheep that are not

of this fold" will attract others, who in their turn will attract others again, until the present small battalion has swelled into an army, into a vast force fired through and through with one mighty determination to rest neither day nor night until this nation is recaptured for the Faith.

Catholics of England. We Trust You.

And the laity?

I would that I had the tongue of an angel rather than this poor pen with which to appeal to the faithful for their work in the great advance. So far I have written mainly of the work of its leaders. With the whole body of two or three millions of the Catholic faithful of England solidly behind them, the leaders could do anything. Without them the crusade would be doomed to failure. Can we rely upon their honour as Catholics to enter wholeheartedly into this campaign for a nation's soul—English and Irish and all? I firmly believe we can. We trust the faithful completely to help us in the rescue of the masses, not because we ask it, but for their love of God and the Faith and the souls Christ died to save. We trust their fervent zeal to put such shame into bad Catholics and slack Catholics and "superior" Catholics that of very shame they too will be compelled to come forward and do their bit.

"Catholics of England, we place our entire confidence in you to see us through, to spur us on to battle for this nation's soul. We shall be strong in the knowledge that you are there behind your leaders—come what may. Your courage will encourage us. Remember, we are weak and human.

If you need us, we too need you—God knows!

Let us humble ourselves greatly; let us confess that, if God be not our shield and buckler, we shall forthwith be pierced and transfixed with every kind of sin. For this reason, let us hold close unto God by persevering in our exercises of piety.

S. F. DE S.

WHAT WE HEAR

The Triumphant Passage of Our Lady. Siam.

To commemorate the centenary of the Council of Ephesus, our missionaries in Rajaburi, Siam organised the first Congress of the Boys' Associations at Bank-Nok-

Malta.

News coming from Malta is encouraging. In January, special solemnity was given to the Feast of St. Francis of Sales. While in February, Fr. Ciantar S. C. was able to give a lecture on the life of Blessed John Bosco, using for the first time the Salesian



View of the Moklon River as the Procession in honour of Our Lady passed along.

Khuek. On the last day of the Feast 60 clerics and 800 boys sang the Holy Mass, which was served at the altar by 72 members of the Sodality of the Blessed Sacrament. The festivity ended with a novel procession on the Moklon River. Amidst the devotion of the Christians and the respectful astonishment of the Bluddists, the Statue of the Immaculate Mother of God passed in solemn state up the river, borne on a boat magnificently decorated for the occasion. They were able to muster three bands, to whose accompaniment hundreds of boys and the faithful sang the glories of Mary as they waved on high their burning torches.

Film 'The Glory of Don Bosco' in English. Unfortunately special difficulties forbade more than one lecture, but even so, there is reason to hope that much good work has been done, especially with regard to future missionary vocations for Shrigley.

A special word of praise is due to the Salesian Band of St. Patrick's, Sliema, which, under the direction of Bro. Benedict Lama S. C., has developed into one of the best on the island.

At the Mother House.

During the ecclesiastical year 1931, 26,700 Holy Masses were celebrated in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, Turin, and

442,000 Holy Communions were given. This means a daily average of 73 Masses and 1211 Holy Communions, a record to console the eucharistic heart of Blessed John Bosco.

Salesians take possession of new parish in Rome.

Fr. Rotolo, the Rector of the Pius XI Institute in Rome, took solemn possession of the new parish dedicated to Mary Help of Christians, which has been created to satisfy the needs of the growing suburb. This makes the third parish we have in the Holy City. The number of parishioners is approximately 5,000. Through Card. Paccelli, the Holy Father sent his special blessing saying, he hoped for a great harvest of good to be reaped by the Sons of Don Bosco.

Cuyo. Argentine.

Towards the end of last year the Salesian Old Boys and the Co-operators held their first regional Congress in the large hall of the 'Patricias Mendocinas' School, kindly lent them by the civil authorities.

The following resolutions were taken for the more intense development of the Salesian programme:

a) To multiply Festive Oratories and Catechism centres.

b) To establish schools for apologetics for young men and women, that they may study their religion under qualified teachers with the view to becoming efficient catechists.

c) To do all possible to foster religious and sacerdotal vocations.

d) To aim at the foundation of a School of Arts and Trades for the sons of working people and to do all they can to support it.

New Salesian Prefecture.

News has just been received that the Holy See has erected a New Prefecture Apostolic in Orinoco, Venezuela. It has been confided to the Salesians. *Further details will appear in the next issue of the Bulletin.*

Paysandú. Uruguay.

Through the generosity of many of the Salesian Co-operators a large playing-field has been acquired for the numerous Festive Oratories in the city. It has been dedicated to Blessed John Bosco.

Co-operation and the Shrigley Missionary College.

The Co-operators who are also members of the Apostolic Circles of Mary Help of Christians, recently formed at the Salesian Missionary College, will be gratified to learn that the Holy Father has granted them his special Benediction. The actual blessing bearing the Pope's signature will be preserved at the College, its form may be seen on page 77. May this be an additional incentive to propagate this splendid means of co-operation which is within the reach of all.

(See cover of Bulletin).

Hopeful news in these hard times comes from Ireland, where every effort is being made to help along the work of the Missionary College. As in the life time of Blessed John Bosco, who very rarely found a millionaire to wipe away all his debts and money troubles with the stroke of a pen, so with Shrigley, they have to live from hand to mouth on the splendid, apostolic charity of the many friends God and Mary Help of Christians has sent them.

Speaking of these zealous co-operators, we have just received news that in Belfast, a committee of friends, chiefly parents of our boys, came together to discuss ways and means. The result was a Grand Concert given in St. Paul's Parish Hall on April the 1st. with the kind permission and encouragement of the parish priest... the proceeds took a weight off the Rector's mind!

A special word thanks is due to Fr. Higgins, one of the priests attached to the parish, who is a kind of theatrical manager. He was kind enough to lend his own concert party to make the Entertainment the great success it was.

In a future issue we hope to be able to say much more of the practical missionary zeal of St. Paul's Parish, Belfast.

Cardinal Hlond S. C. at the Mother House.

On his return from Rome his Eminence paid a flying visit the Mother House where he was enthusiastically received by the whole community and the boys.

It is officially stated that the Cardinal will be present at the Eucharistic Congress in Ireland this year.



The Fathers of the Salesian Missionary College, Shrigley, Macclesfield, humbly beg Your Holiness to bless the Promoters and Members of the Apostolic Circles of Mary Help of Christians who help them in promoting missionary vocations. PIUS PP. XI.

BEFORE HER PICTURE

(Feast of Mary Help of Christians, May 24th).

For those who are parents; for those who are teachers; for those who work among boys or girls, there is a meaning in the devotion to Mary, Help of Christians which should increase a hundredfold the efficacy of your work among little ones. Don Bosco's life's work was for the salvation of youth, and in this Our Blessed Lady, Mary Help of Christians was ever his guide.



Look at the picture of Mary Help of Christians. See how it brings out her double relation: to the Blessed Trinity, and to mankind.

All the Apostles and Evangelists are there, each with his symbol, and all are gazing at or proclaiming — what? The Infant Christ? No. The Virgin Mary? No. Neither separately; but both together.

Don Bosco's intention in the disposition of the persons of his picture would seem to have been to emphasize as much as possible the fact that the whole action of God in the supernatural order is through Mary.

That is what St. Peter, with his keys of power; St. Paul, with his two-edged sword of the Word of God; St. John, with his chalice of love and sacrifice—what all the Apostles and Evangelists are proclaiming.

What the painter was to have done—according to Don Bosco's desire—was to include the whole of Christendom in his picture, arranged in symbolic groups, and all proclaiming the sovereignty of Mary. But this proved impossible. Instead, therefore, Christendom was symbolised by this central group of Apostles.

Now, it seems to us that there is meaning in this providential reduction to a group relatively so small.

It is this.

Mary is sovereign indeed throughout the whole of Christendom—over all mankind indeed; but her sovereignty is more complete, her help more efficacious, amongst those Christians who are Apostles. It has been very well said that devotion to Mary Help of Christians is *apostolic*: it is not passive, not so much contemplative, not self-regarding, not so much private, not little.

No, a true devotion to Mary Help of Christians implies, amongst other things, an attitude to the World such as was that of St. Paul; it implies the zeal of apostolic Christianity as well as its discipline. It means—literally—a *devotion* to the Successor of St. Peter, and all he stands for.

And all this not in a general, vague manner; but *actual*, detailed, concrete.

It means associating yourself with your Parish Priest, and through him with your Bishop. It means giving up your spare time to whatever will help on the work of Holy Church: fitting yourself to be an Evidence Guild lecturer, to be a visitor of St. Vincent de Paul, to be a catechist. It means forming up in solid mass behind your

God-appointed guides, and doing anything and everything, in support of your Parish Priest, for which you are physically, mentally or morally fit. For there are diversities of gifts, but one Spirit working in all:

Yet perhaps an even deeper and more dear meaning can be read into this Providential cutting of the picture.

It is that the focus of your apostolic activity will be the child. Notice that it is the Divine *Child*—in the arms of Mary Help of Christians—with which the picture has to do. No direct thought of the later phases through which the Sacred Humanity of Christ passed. And so, you who are *teachers* in any way; you who are *parents*; behold here the devotion to Our Lady which is *yours*.

It is your work to teach your kiddies—geography? But surely! No, you have one work which is supreme, the informing spirit of all the rest, and that is to ensure that those God is entrusting to your care grow up, are adolescent, in Christ. By this function, therefore, you are identified with Mary: since it is her principal function to further the growth of Christ in souls.

Honour her, therefore, in that which makes you like unto her; become more and more identified in your office of educator

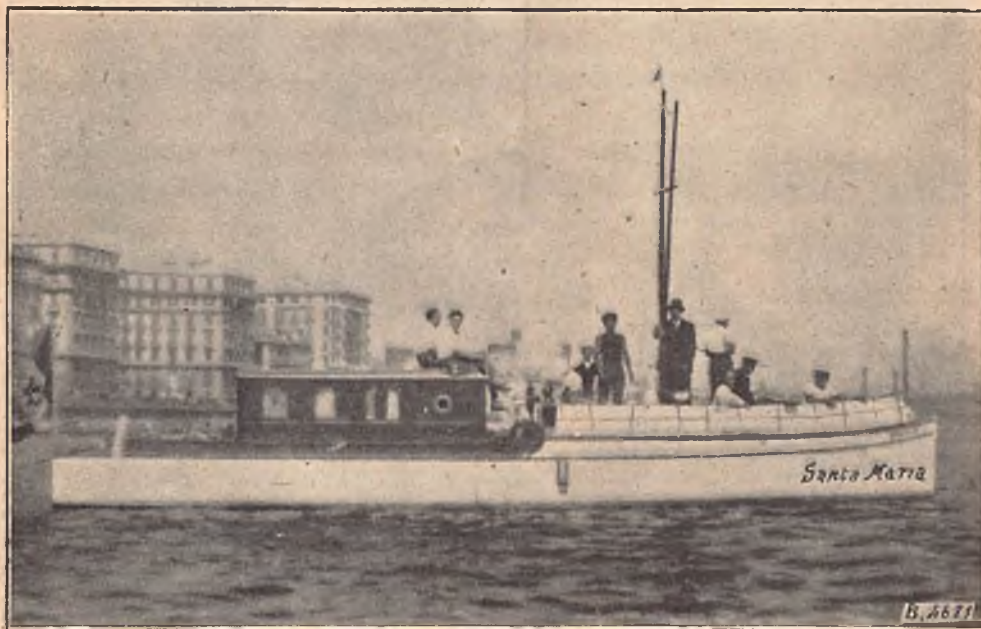
with Mary Help of Christians, and see (as the Blessed John Bosco promised) the miracles which such devotion will bring forth!



The Arrival of the "Santa Maria" The Mission Launch.

In the early part of this year, Fr. Farina S. C. left Italy for Paraguay, South America. He had been on leave of absence from his mission in order to do some propaganda in Europe. His search was very successful, for not only did he return with a large number of well-stocked trunks and cases, but also was the proud possessor of a commodious 60 H. P. motor-launch.

The arrival of the new mission-launch, christened "Santa Maria," caused quite a little stir at Buenos Aires, where the Civil Authorities came out to welcome the returning missionaries and to wish them God speed as they changed over from the Transatlantic liner to their own craft in which they were to make the 1,500 mile trip up the Paraná-Paraguay River into the Chacos Indian Territory.



The Mission Launch "Santa Maria".

IN THE BELGIAN CONGO

The Religion among religions.

Being an account of the native beliefs to be found throughout the Congo Region of Central Africa where the Salesians have one of their most flourishing Missions. Haute-Laupala.

From the point of view of belief in the supernatural, Africa may be roughly divided into two huge zones which meet at the Equator. In the North you find Mohamedanism which has held the people of the desert and beyond for full fourteen hundred years, while in the south you have fetish worship, though differing in externals among different peoples.

Although at first sight it may seem strange, in spite of the constant infiltration of the more definite and stronger religion from the north, either by the great caravan routes or by the torturous slave tracks, used within living memory, Islamism has never

succeeded in getting any lasting hold upon the negro mind, at least in the Congo.

You do come across isolated cases of the badly informed native who imagines that the religion of Mohamed is the first stepping stone to the Faith of Christ, but these cases are very rare. Speaking of Islamism in contrast with fetish-worship, we quote the words of that great missionary Mgr Le Roy, who holds it to be easier to convert 1,000 fetish-worshippers than one Mohamedan.

Therefore have we reason to thank God that fetish-worship is in the fashion in the Congo, indeed it has nothing of the impregnability of Islamism, and before the Catholic missionary it very slowly but surely gives way: nevertheless with its tradition going back into forgotten ages, with its dogma, its moral code and its religious cult it is a very real obstacle to the spreading of the Faith.



Young socerers at work in a village of the Belgian Congo.



To speak of anything like a dogma among the Congolese, to the superficial observer is foolishness, yet the dogma is there, obscure, yes, but nevertheless real.

In the Congo this dogma has three stages. You begin with a very firm faith in the shades of your ancestors, in contact with whom it is of the first importance to live, either through piety, interest or through fear, for there are souls which wander in the forest for the special torment of the living. From this initial or basic doctrine you rise to the belief in the world of Spirits, and the tutelary genii who are for the most part hostile and endowed with formidable powers, the originators of all public and private calamities, these it is necessary to appease or to drive away by the complicated rites which the socerers or the medicine man alone have the power to use. To most observers the negro stops there, but it is not true: beyond this spirit kingdom you rise to some Supreme Being, who rules the whole world. He is very far away, and has dwelt there beyond the memory of man. He is the creator, immense, unknowable and indifferent to the acts of men, therefore inaccessible alike by prayer, or adoration.

In all the villages of the Congo there is no shrine, fetish or statue for God as they understand Him, and in this sense true idolatry is a thing unknown among the tribes of Central Africa.

In their own way this people believe in the survival of the soul of man, and in a still vaguer way in its immortality, they hold another life distinct from this world where there will be punishment for crime and a reward for a good life.

To the right fulfillment of religious duties there are attached two practices which are as severe as they are respected. First there comes a species of religious interdict



called the *tabou*; and then a kind of universal brotherhood going by the name of *totemism*.

It is a forbidden sin among all races which have this practice of the *tabou* to touch, to use or to go near certain things in creation. For example, in the Upper Congo the dead body of a lion is *tabou*. If a negro should touch it then the execution of the interdict follows swiftly and he is a thing unclean.

But if he is placed in the absolute necessity touching the body, there is one way by which he can avoid punishment; that is he must at once bind his forehead, his wrists and his ankles with a rope made of the bark of a certain tree; he must then chew and swallow the leaf of another plant, after which there is an obligatory bath in the river, and only then may he remove the ropes and touch the thing *taboued*.

Over and above the *tabou* you have the *totem* and in the Congo it triumphs without a rival. A *totem* is not a fetish which is an animal or an object made divine, or at least endowed with praeternatural powers, it is instead a being which is as the soul of the race, its protection, its providence, the source of all its energies and the sign of its common parenthood.

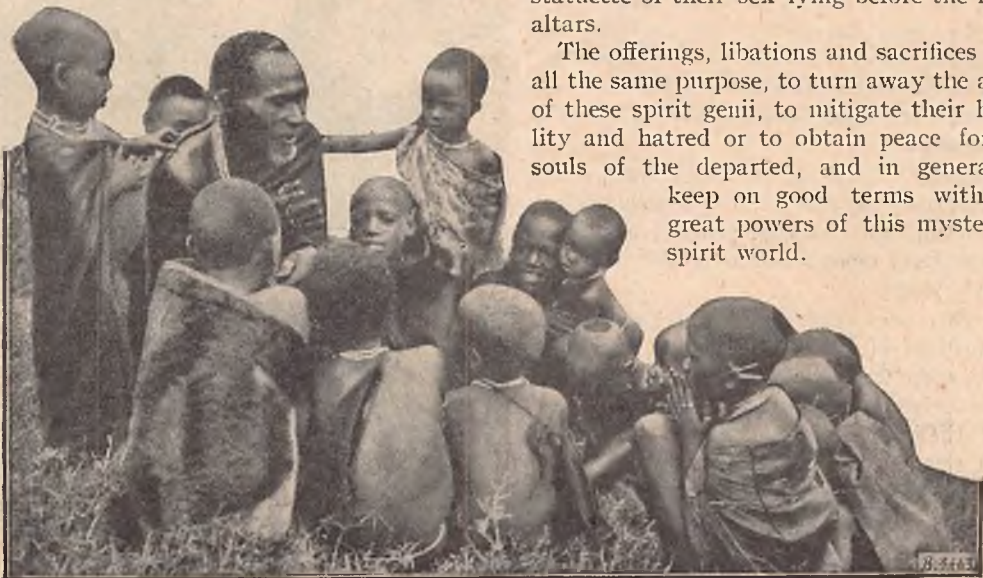
In the region of *Kiniama-Congo* the *totem* is the leopard. The people firmly believe that each and every member of the tribe in some form or other is a leopard and that every man has come from it and consequently they dwell all united by the most intimate

ties to this animal. On no account must it be hunted, killed or eaten otherwise it would be an offence beyond pardon against their common brotherhood.

Strange beliefs, you say, yet not unnatural when you go back to seek after the origins of these things. It is just their way of answering the question to be found in the minds of all men: the eternal query of the *Whence* and the *Whither*. The popular novel, based upon the garbled account of merchants and military explorers have done much to spread faulty notions of the religious beliefs of a people they did not begin to understand. The externals are indeed often times ridiculous but the underlying motive is oftentimes very near the truth.

After the *tabou* and the *totem* we come to the cult which deals with the world of spirits each represented by their ugly fetish, or of those other spirits which, freed from the body, wander through the forests, enter in the villages or burrow under the native huts for the torment of the living. Held captive by the occult power of the Socrers these genii, good and bad alike pass on their special power to images, figures, statues, charms which then take their name. It is at the feet of these things that the poor people come to offer their gifts or their sacrifices. The fetishes are thought to judge the souls of the departed and hence at the entrance of nearly every village you can find the dried skulls of the dead with a crude statuette of their sex lying before the fetish altars.

The offerings, libations and sacrifices have all the same purpose, to turn away the anger of these spirit genii, to mitigate their hostility and hatred or to obtain peace for the souls of the departed, and in general to keep on good terms with the great powers of this mysterious spirit world.





A Daughter of Mary Help of Christians among her girls in the Festive Oratory of Tanjore, India.

The first, the principal, and more often than not, the only beneficiary of this cult is the socerer, the High Priest of wandering demons, to whom the exercise of black magic is an hereditary gift. Among the Congolese the socerers are the masters of the spiritual life, the mediators between this world and the vague beyond. They are consecrated to a universal execration, they themselves and all their ilk of under-socerers; but at the same time this hatred and fear is mixed with an effective veneration which all those enjoy, who appear to hold in their exclusive keeping the forces which, if let loose, would bring calamity and ruin to both body and soul.

In the Kiniama district where the Salesians are working the genii of the place is the "Wanchi" a large grey, unformed stone, a fetish of the most stupid variety you can possibly imagine. This petrified image the home of a powerful and malignant spirit may be made to work for the good of the people under special conditions. He is something of an oracle and numbers come to consult him in the matters of the future. But to

obtain the services of the "Wanchi" it is of no use to come empty-handed. Three gifts are necessary, all to the greater profit of the socerer. The first is the skin of a serpent; the second a piece of pottery and lastly the feathers of the *mugumba*, a species of wild turkey-cock.

When it is a case of changing the village site the "Wanchi" leads the procession. If its guardian should tire or should deem they have gone far enough, he sets down the fetish and the rest must come to a halt. When they would continue their journey, the socerer approaches the fetish and whistles in its inattentive ear, nothing happens; no response, all of which is a very evident sign that the village must be built just where they are! With one accord all bow down to the will of the spirit revealed through the mouth of its guardian and up rises a new village.

One can judge the power of this sort of thing over the native mind, and the obstacle it is to the faith especially in the beginning of a mission where Christianity have not been heard of.



The Salesian Mission Station in the wilds of Ecuador - Mendez.

PIONEERS IN ECUADOR

Salesian Missionaries Road and Bridge Builders.

The Problem.

To the east of the towering Andes and stretching endlessly towards the valley of the Amazon River there lies 400,000 sq. mls. of forest land, inhabited, almost exclusively, by Indians, who are, for the most part, still savages. This huge expanse forms the Eastern Province of the Republic of Ecuador over which the Government of Peru has squabbled for years. As an outcome of this anxious question Ecuador has attempted to strengthen her position and safeguard her rights by the establishment of 'National Colonies' and to some small extent has given her protection to the Catholic Missions.

To the south-east of the region the Salesians have the Vicariate Apostolic of Mendez and Gualaquiza. And to-day the Mendez station can really begin to look forward with confidence to a civilised future. Every year the colonies are becoming more deve-

loped and numerous, thanks to the catholic zeal of the missionaries; priests, lay-brothers and nuns working there.

Looking Back.

All the merit of the discovery of this prolific land is due to the Salesian Bishop, Mgr. Costamagna, who from the mission station of Mendez went ever further afield in his search for souls to be saved.

In 1915 two Salesian priests, Fr. Albino del Curto and Fr. Torca were sent out to explore the area. From their post of Indanza it was a four days' journey on foot to Mendez, and in their case would have been many more, had they not been able to ford the river, swollen by torrential rains. In the whole of their journey the priests came upon a solitary military outpost, composed of five soldiers, and a little later upon some thirty or so gold-hunters, washing the sand along

the banks of the Namangosa River. They saw no one else. And only one of the tiny settlements was worthy of the name of 'Colony' and there they found a hut with a few fields nearby cultivated with bananas, yuca and other plants. This was the only permanent sign of civilisation in those hundred odd miles.

Scattered along the valley there were the Kivaro Indians and the two missionaries caught glimpses of a numerous tribe, counting some several hundreds of these fierce people, who spend their time equally between searching for food and carrying out their interminable tribe hatreds. In Ecuador they are a hard race, proud and pretentious, eyeing the white man with high disfavour and suspicion; in their private life they show themselves insensible to the needs of others, knowing nothing at all of what we call by the name of gratitude.

This was the lay of the land when the first missionaries settled there in 1916. They found the most complete isolation; the only sources of supplies were *Macas*, 60 miles away to the north, itself small and isolated; and *El Pau* to the west, at attain which you had to tackle what was known as the 'Bear Track'; to choose this path was considered generally as an act of heroism or of sheer foolishness according to circumstances.

The missionaries had to fend entirely for themselves. Every morning saw them axe in hand attacking the forest to clear a little space in order to put up their rough houses and grow the few things necessary for a bare living. From time to time the military out-post came along to give them a hand; while the savages, for the most part, kept well out of the way.

The First Road through the Wilds.

The life and the development of the mission demanded some sort of communication with the civilised world and it was still more necessary if they were to think of any effective attempt at permanent colonisation. Mgr. Costamagna, a man of faith and great ideas, gave Fr. Del Curto the task of studying the question and of tracing out the course of the future highway.

The missionary fell to at once and finally mapped out his conception of the Pau-



Fr. Del Curto who directed the building of the bridge.

Mendez Route. The road would have to cross the last peaks of the Andes at a height of 13,000 ft. above sea-level and thence take the direction of the Rio Negro and the Chupianza Rivers in order to arrive at Mendez.

At the orders of his Bishop Fr. Del Curto set to work and he himself put in the first quota, a miserable £5.0.0 for a work that was going to run away with thousands.

Then followed the hard task of attracting public opinion and interesting the Government. Fr. Del Curto was fully convinced of the necessity of his enterprise if the missionary work was going to bear any permanent fruit at all. After a long struggle the Government agreed and the road was raised to the dignity of a national property. At first they gave a monthly sum for the expenses, but a little later they signed an official contract with Fr. Charles Crespi S. C. for the building of the road.

The difficulty of the undertaking can be imagined: the missionaries with their men must push ahead into an almost impenetrable forest, absolutely pathless; they must over-



View of the new bridge from above the River.

come or circumnavigate huge rocks and small hills, avoid soft land and find a way across many torrents. The number of journeys Fr. Del Curto made into the uncharted forest cannot be counted; many times was he faced with death from starvation or from the savage nature of the country.

One day he was going into a particularly difficult stretch, when his companion suddenly cried out: "Ni el diablo cuando era joven hubiera pasado por acá" ("Why, not even the devil when he was young could have passed along here!"). Fr. Del Curto could not be discouraged and to-day he has almost reached the end of his task; he has but about two miles more to do and then Mendez will have been reached.

The Story of the Suspension Bridge.

They had barely reached half-way when they were faced with the great problem of the construction of a strong permanent

bridge across the high banks of the Paute or Namangosa River, which is the most important in the district and with the Upango and the Zamorra form the Santiago River. The task was entrusted to Fr. Panchieri S. C. who had to begin from the very beginning of a job which presented nothing more promising than the most appalling difficulties.

Before commencing at all, there was the question of the transport of the steel struts and stays. The Government did what it could and brought the material to Huigia, but from there to Mendez everything had to be carried or dragged by beasts of burden. When all went well it was a ten days' journey! But these lengths of steel proved a continual danger for the mules, which during the rainy season sank up their bellies in the mud, and not a few of them died as they struggled to free themselves. Then there came the difficulty of finding sufficient animals and at the same time of keeping down the expense.

The road itself was still some distance from the river so that the last part of the transport had to be done by porters, who more often than not would arrive at the camp exhausted, with deep marks on their shoulders where the iron bars had cut into their flesh.

Notwithstanding all this the bridge was built and officially opened in the September of last year. The missionaries named it after Guayaquil, a town which had given an offering of 12,000 sucra, about £ 700 to help the missionaries, nevertheless the poor Vicariate had to find another £ 700 to complete the work.

To-day the fine suspension bridge of nearly 100 yards long rests securely upon its rocky foundations and towers 138ft. above the river, always torrential and dangerous. The framework is suspended by six steel cables, three on either side, which in their turn are embedded in cement on the rocks above. These take the weight which is about 30 tons. The width of the bridge is about 8 ft. and is sustained by iron rails every six feet, upon which has been fixed the hard-wood planking. Looking at the finished article, you can only take your hat off to Fr. Panchieri who has achieved this real triumph without the aid of the means to be had in any civilised spot.

Hopes.

The road and the bridge have taken their toll of time. Fifteen long years have been used up. During this time the mission of Mendez has undergone great transformations. The Salesians have been joined by the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and now all round their houses you can see the acres and acres of cultivated land, bananas, yuca, coffee, sugar etc. There are the schools for the children of the colony and for the Ki-

varos; there is the hospital and the small church and not far away there is the colony of the white people which continues to grow and prosper. And so the missionaries look forward to the future which promises a great harvest among the Indians. They ask the prayers of the Co-operators that as the work of civilisation goes on apace, the truth of the Catholic Faith may sink deeply and permanently into the hearts of the these yet savage children of the Forests of Ecuador.

Through the Salesian Missions in Brazil.

Being a brief account of the official visitation made by The Very Rev. Fr. Tirone, Catechist General of the Salesians, to the missions among the Bororo Indians in Matto Grosso. The journey had to be broken by the sudden death of Fr. Rinaldi, which compelled the immediate return of Fr. Tirone for the General Chapter.

Mission-wards.

On the 6th. of July left we Cuyabá, Central Sth. America for the missions among the Bororos. Altogether we were fourteen in the band—missionaries, Sisters and Fr. Tirone with his suite—we had at our disposal a motor-lorry and the motor-chapel! Mgr. d'Aquino S. C. the Archbishop of Cuyabá came with us for the first lap of the journey and left us when at 11 o'clock we pulled up by the bank of a small stream.

From that point onwards the journey was any thing but a joy ride! The road was full of huge holes, or lumbered with branches of trees or so uneven that the two motors bumped about in an alarming fashion, drawing alternate groans and laughter from the travellers.

At Capada we drew up for a short halt, near a very ancient chapel built by the first Jesuit missionaries in the flourishing days of the early colonists. Thence we drove on to *Capim Branco* where we pitched camp for the night after having done about 150 miles. We were all sore and bruised, with every bone in our body aching, Fr. Tirone included, although he tried to hide his anguish with a forced laugh.

Early the following morning we were off again, with only another 150 miles to do to reach *Sangradouro*, but what miles they were! The road, (I have a private name for

it), was almost impossible; from time to time we had to get down and go on foot so that the motors having less load could climb over the bumps and small hillocks which at every turn threatened to roll them over! How many times did we say a silent prayer to Blessed John Bosco to see us through safely and as a matter of fact nothing untoward happened.

The Salesian Colony at Sangradouro.

We all arrived at the Colony unexpected. The message we had sent by telegraph had not turned up! There was not a soul to meet us. But if there was silence at our entrance there was a terrific shout of joy when the colonists learned that their Superior had really arrived. Even the Bororos, usually tranquil and calm enough, tore off to put on their best clothes to receive the visitors.

I had always put Matto Grosso down as a place equal to Purgatory, where one comes in for a continual roasting, but that night I had to put my ideas right on the matter and seek what warmth there was under the blankets!

Sangradouro is situated on a kind of plateau about 1,800 feet above sea-level. The soil is most fertile and we were all astounded to see the vast plantations of

sugar cane, coffee, mandioca, rice and meliga. These plantations are cultivated exclusively by the Bororo Indians and serve for the maintenance of the Colony; they have some machinery there but it is of the most ancient type, nevertheless with care it serves for the preparation of sugar, rice, flour and coffee, being driven by a water wheel, which during the night is connected with a dynamo and gives sufficient electric current to light the whole Colony.



Bororo Indians of the Salesian Mission — Brazil.

Fr. Tirone was amazed at the progress of these Bororoors, and still more so at their religious knowledge and their ability as actors in Christian Drama! True they have a very open and generous pronunciation, but they speak Portuguese well enough!! The evangelisation of this area has cost much honest sweat, labour and even blood, but to-day it is an accomplished fact.

It was a fine thing to see these well-built Indians, with their hair 'bobbed' like a girl's hanging round their large square faces, coming shyly forward to kiss the hands the Superior who gave them all a remembrance in the shape of pieces of cloth, coloured handkerchiefs, looking-glasses, matches, tobacco and other odds and ends which for them have an extraordinary value.

Twelve Indians out of the Forest.

On the morning of the 9th of July, twelve new Indians arrived at the Colony. They had come a month's march all the way from the *Rio das Mortes*, and were so done up that it was difficult to see whether they were human or not. Their bodies were torn and scarred, dirty, perspiring, and almost naked. Guided by the rumour that a better life was to be found among the white missionaries they had let nothing hinder their long journey to join their converted tribesmen. It was a matter of a few hours work to get them clean, but it was worth the trouble, for dressed in the new clothes, not exactly of Saville Row for there is no first-class tailoring done at Sangradouro, you could not have recognised them for the same people. To show their joy they jumped about here and there like the big children they were. The Rector of the Colony gave them a little speech in their own tongue, telling them how pleased he was to see them, and that the only thing he desired was their happiness and well-being. The Indians not to be out-done in eloquence replied suitably.

The following morning saw them all at work with the others, women included. While Fr. Tirone was there the Colony made their Annual Retreat which closed solemnly on the 11th of the month. On the 12th. there was a grand Academy in honour of the visitor, in the theatre of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians at which the whole colony was present. Among all the items rendered by the boys and girls of all ages and all sizes there was one rendered by a Chieftain in the classic language of the Bororo tribe. I did not understand a word but I was deeply moved at the thought that not so many years ago this same fine fellow was roaming the forest in search of food, with no other thoughts in his head than food, sleep, warfare, and that now, here he was thanking the missionaries in the name of his tribe for all the material and spiritual consolation they had brought to his people. There was another item that cannot go unmentioned, it was a joint-company affair performed by a tiny-tot of six years old baptised with the name of Peter, accompanied by his self-possessed little sister aged eight.

The applause they earned nearly brought the Sisters' theatre down!

On the 13th. of the month we were on the road again, this time for the Colony of the Sacred Heart, about 100 miles away. We arrived there at 4 o'clock in the after-noon after a splendid, journey, for the road is good: and were received with the blare of the band and the wild shouts of the Indians

Sacred Heart rises about 1,500 ft. above the sea-level and on that account enjoys a fine climate; in winter never getting too cold and in summer, the rainy season, not getting unbearably hot, though hot enough, from what they have to say about it.

On the following day we went to visit the site of the first mission established by the heroic, Fr. John Balzola S. C. which



The Very Rev. Fr. Tirone S. C.
visiting the farm buildings
of a Salesian Mission
while touring through
Brazil.

The Motor-chapel stuck fast in the mud, and the team of oxen which had to work all day to drag it across.



who were there waiting for us. For the official 'lunch' we went into a thatched hut, the roof of which I could touch with my head. And the places allotted us to sleep were not dissimilar, being little rectangular huts of bamboo, plastered together, with mud about three feet up from the ground and the rest was just a covering of boughs and straw through which the light of the moon came in freely and with no more difficulty the bats also!

The Colony of Meruri, dedicated to the

recently had to be abandoned on account of the complete exhaustion of the soil round about and for other difficulties which came along at the same time.

Let us go back to Meruri. It is a rectangle, at the end of which there rises up the church which looks north; to the right, is the low straw-thatched refectory, then a mud hut, roofed with tiles, and further on a house really well-built. To the left of the rectangle there is the dormitory of the little Bororos who sleep slung up in their leather beds

as sailors do in ships. In the distance there is the house of the Sisters and the babies-school all made of mud with the roofing of tiles. Then there is the splendid orchard, which extends round the back of the refectory, while beyond, there is the large barn, thatched with straw where they keep all the machinery for the refining of sugar and the milling of the mandioca and rice.

The houses of the 150 Bororos who make up the colony, are lined up round the open place in front of the mission buildings. They are to be sure poor enough, huts of mud and straw, but neat and clean none the less. The Bororos here have large families and on this account the settlement looks forward to a promising future.

At Registro di Araguaia.

On the 20th. of July we left for Registro di Araguaia; the Motor-chapel was given over to the sisters while we made do with the motor-lorry wherein we bundled all our luggage. We looked for all the world like so many travelling pedlars hunched up there on our wares.

When we had gone about 60 miles we hit upon the house of the telegraphist of the region and there we stayed for dinner. And from that moment our difficulties began. We came upon a river. We unloaded the lorry, we shut off the motor and, with everyone lending a hand, we pushed the motor-chapel down the bank. We did not get far the wheels sunk in the soft mud and we could neither go ahead nor go back. After much trouble we secured ten pairs of oxen, and with much struggling we managed to extricate the lorry, though the chapel had to remain the night in the river. We camped therefore on the bank, the prey to hundreds of thousands of mosquitoes. Fr. Tirone was a little more fortunate having found a mud hut in which he slept soundly, though in the morning he had the surprise of his life the find that his waterproof which he had thrown over the bed as a cover was completely eaten away by the voracious ants!

We said Mass and then turned again to the motor-chapel, but it was a day's work to get it free. And in consequence it meant another night under the same conditions.

The next day we managed to start, but we had not gone far when one of the tyres gave out, and we had to get down to work in the full glare of a scorching sun. Towards evening we came upon a solitary farm and there stopped for the night, only to find that we had stepped into the zone of the *carapados*, a vicious insect which follows the herds of cattle. It has the beastly habit of eating its way into the flesh and when you pull it out it leaves its head inside as a remembrance! Needless to say these foreign bodies cause constant infection until they are removed.

On the day following we came across another river, this we tried to rush without getting out of the cars, but it would not work. We all had to get down, carry the baggage over and haul the motors foot by foot. The question then was how about the Sisters, *we* were already well soaked through, but with *them* it was different. By great good luck we found a donkey, and one by one the Sisters started on the Journey Perilous, the little ass doing its level best to throw them into the river!

Off we went again, only to come upon a torrent, through which it was impossible to pass. The only way was to make a temporary bridge of trunks of trees and over these we managed to drive without incident.

On the 24th. we had another adventure, we took the wrong turning, near the *Prata River*, but by great good fortune we burst a tyre and while mending it, two little lads passed by and told us the way. Further on, at *Afogaca*, to be precise, we ran into a marsh, which turned out to be the breeding ground for monster ants. Thanks be to God we managed to get out soon, otherwise we should have been smothered with the little beasts whose hills rose to a yard high on either side of the path!

At *Oro Fino* we thought it better to take a guide, but he also lost the way and led us through places where the low branches and bushes stung and cut our faces as we forced our way along. But at long last we arrived at *Registro* where we straight-way forgot our woes in the enthusiasm of the welcome we received.

FR. PETER GHISLANDI S. C.

Salesian Missionary.

The Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

From time to time we receive inquiries from our co-operators asking information of this second foundation of Blessed John Bosco, hence the following outline of their Society which is doing for girls what the Salesians, do for boys, under a rule of life written by Don Bosco himself. Ed.

A kindred origin, a kindred spirit, a kindred work, and you have the three main points of contact between the Salesian Society and the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

The Foundation.

In 1892, in the little mountain village of Mornese, Don Bosco found a small company of peasant girls, banded together, somewhat after the manner of the Children of Mary. At that time no one would have guessed that they were destined to become the teachers and Guardian Angels of girls the world over. Yet, led by the spirit of God, Don Bosco told them his plans, set the work going and drew up a temporary Rule. It was thus they began. In the village, they

hired a room in which to instruct the little ones, later they opened a tiny school where they taught the elements to the neighbouring children. It was at this point that their Society took definite shape, and the continual demands made upon them forced them to look further afield for larger buildings for their children and for their own rapidly increasing numbers.

A Prophecy Fulfilled.

Don Bosco, the man of vision, prophesied: *If you observe your Holy Rule lovingly and faithfully, you will spread and increase to such an extent that your Houses will not be able to contain the number who shall seek admission.*" To-day, a little more than fifty years afterwards, you can already see the fulfillment, with the promise of even greater things to come.

Expansion.

Side by side with the Salesian Society, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians have taken up their work. According to



The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians on their way to their Mission-station in the Matto Grosso Province of Brazil.

the most recent statistics they have now 7,300 members working in over 660 Houses, including the 350 Sisters on the foreign missions.

Where they are at Work.

In Festive Oratories.

This characteristic work of Don Bosco has yet to be developed in England and Ireland. With the exception of Cowley, Oxford where the Sisters run a very successful

complete, especially with respect to the Catholic training of the child they have their Boarding Schools where girls are received on much the same terms as the Salesians receive boys.

Something New.

The other great sphere, where untold good is done, is the control of factory hostels; but here again, England and other non-catholic countries, are quite unacquainted with this Christian supervision in commercial affairs.



The Sisters 'under canvas' during a missionary journey through the forest of Central America.

Club for poor girls, one has to look to the Continent to see this part of their programme properly carried out. In Italy, the Festive Oratory has been highly developed, and the permanent results obtained have merited all the praise and help they have received from the Ecclesiastical and Civil Authorities.

In Schools.

Since the Sisters are essentially educators, the school-room is their proper field. They have therefore Orphanages, Professional schools of Arts and Trades; elementary and secondary schools wherever there is need, and that their work of education should be more

This work is easily explained. Manufacturers, employing large numbers of girls, invite the Sisters to take complete charge of them. They, the owners, build the necessary chapel, sleeping accommodation, dining hall and recreation rooms. When all is ready the sisters take charge, they go into the workshops during the day; they organise the recreation, with games, theatricals; they teach all the things the girls want know from singing to the details of domestic science. All the time the Sisters are with their charges, guarding them jealously from all that might hurt them, and yet giving them the fullest happiness a good Catholic girl can desire.

The Foreign Missions.

The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, inspired by the spirit of their founder, have followed the Salesian Missionaries, pretty well round the world. They have the Mission houses in Patagonia, Central America, Brazil, India, Africa, Siam, China, Japan and Palestine. There is also a small band of heroines in charge of the Leper Colony in Colombia.

The Spirit of the Society.

This, of course is something rather to be experienced than defined. The "Family spirit" is the standard of excellence in the Sisters' Community. Joyful, humble, gracious and self-sacrificing they are the children of Don Bosco, from whom they have learnt the spirit of work and prayer, which alone explains their ceaseless activity to do their part in the salvation of Girlhood throughout the world.

For further information regarding vocations etc. write to

The Rev. Mother Superior,
Convent of Mary Help of Christians,
Highfield
Chertsey — SURREY.

NOVENA

to Our Lady Help of Christians.

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

2). To receive the Sacraments at least once during the Novena.

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

GRACES RECEIVED

N. N., *Malta*. — Please accept small offering towards missionary work in thanksgiving for favour received through Bl. John Bosco.

Miss R. D., *Stretford*, (Manchester). — I enclose offering for favour received through the intercession of Bl. John Bosco

MARIANADA MUDALIAR, *Pondicherry*, (India). — I send offering according to my promise. Through the intercession of Bl. John Bosco I have recovered from a serious operation.

Offering in thanksgiving to Bl. John Bosco for ease of bad nerves after the great War. Ex-soldier. -His mother, Mrs. Dungarvan, Ireland. -Offering in thanksgiving to Bl. John Bosco for favours received. -Gt. Crosby, Liverpool. -Offering in thanksgiving to Bl. John Bosco for favours received. -Mrs. E. Hindley, Lancs. -In thanksgiving for many favours received from Our Lady, Help of Christians and Blessed John Bosco, My true helpers in trouble. -Miss H. Southport, Lancs. Blessed John Bosco has cured me of a weak back when the doctors thought that I should not be able to walk again. -Reader of the "Help of Christians". -Bridgeton, S. E. Glasgow. Scotland. -Offering in thanksgiving to Bl. John Bosco for a small favour received through prayer to him. -Miss Brittas, Co. Dublin. Ireland.

OBITUARY

Our Co-operators and Readers are asked to pray for the eternal repose of the souls of the following Salesian Brethren and Co-operators who have died recently.

Mrs. E. Power, *Dungarvan*, (Ireland). A zealous promotor of the Apostolic Circles of Mary Help of Christians.

Mrs. J. Cronin, *Macroon Co Cork*, (Ireland).
Mrs. Catherine Twomery, *Ballinbuttig Co Cork*, (Ireland).

OPERATION WITHIN THE MEANS OF ALL

The Charitable Association of the "Sacred Heart of Jesus"

founded at the Castro Pretorio in Rome to which is attached the celebration of
SIX MASSES DAILY IN PERPETUITY

offered for the intentions of those who make the single contribution of
one shilling (In America 25 cents).

ADVANTAGES.

1. Two of these daily Masses are celebrated at the Altar of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, two at that of Mary Help of Christians and two at St. Joseph's.
2. Besides the six daily Masses, *Members* both living and dead participate in the fruits attached to:

The daily Rosary and Benediction in the Church.
All Novenas, Feasts and other Solemnities.

The prayers and good works of the 9.415 Salesians and their pupils in their 672 Houses throughout the world.

3. Participation in the above-mentioned spiritual advantages commences from the moment of enrolment.

4. The Member is entitled to put his intentions in all the Six Masses and all the other pious works, for his own advantage or for that of his friends, living and dead, and to change the intention *in every circumstance* according to his particular wants and desires.

5. Enrolments may also be made in favour of the departed, of children, or of any other persons, even without their knowledge or consent.

6. Those desiring to participate more abundantly in these spiritual advantages may do so by repeating the alms of one shilling, and thereby multiplying the enrolments as often as they please.

7. All those who send us a list of at least twelve names together with the corresponding subscriptions acquire the right of participating in the fruits of the Masses etc. in the same manner as each of the contributors, which right is repeated for every additional twelve names and relative offering.

8. The Salesians are absolutely bound to fulfil each and every obligation of the Charitable Association as above described.

9. The name of the Members will be entered on the Registers of the Association and preserved in the Temple of the Sacred Heart in Rome for perpetual remembrance.

10. An official Certificate of Membership is sent upon receipt of the names and the contribution.

APPROBATION.

We approve the Charitable Association and we wish it the greatest concurrence of the faithful.
Given at Rome.

L. M. PARROCCI, *Card. Vic.*

PAPAL BLESSING.

The Holy Father has deigned to accord the blessing asked for the Charitable Association of the Sacred Heart.

Given at the Vatican, June 30th., 1888.

ANGELO RINALDI, *Sec. Chaplain.*

FOR THE SOULS OF THE DEPARTED.

Of all the acts of charity we can perform towards those we loved in life, the greatest is the charity of praying for the release of their souls from Purgatory. The Church puts at our disposal a hundred ways of helping those who cannot help themselves. We may have the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass offered specially for them; we may join the various Confraternities which have prayer for the Holy Souls as their special object; we can apply indulgences gained by us for their relief: among all these things there stands out the *Association of the Sacred Heart of Jesus* to which we can have enrolled the names of our dear ones, that they may enjoy the spiritual fruits of the Six Daily Masses as long as they shall need them. In this way they have a continual remembrance. There are some co-operators who make it their annual practice on the day of the Family Anniversaries to send the alms of one shilling together with the name that their departed parents, relatives and friends may be enrolled anew.

A HAPPY INSPIRATION.

A very good co-operator of Dublin has had an inspiration, which we offer to the zeal and charity of others. For some considerable time he has been working among his friends getting them to inscribe in the Association, the names of those of their dear ones who pass away and use the Certificate of Membership, which is sent immediately, as a card *In memoriam.*

Charitable Association of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

AT THE CASTRO PRETORIO IN ROME

Offering of one shilling or 25 cents.

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A certain number of burses are available for approved students, over 15 years of age, for which a qualifying entrance examination will be held, in order to satisfy the Managers that the candidates have attained a standard of proficiency that will enable them to follow the courses with advantage.

Prospectus with further details to be had on application to Very Rev. Rector.

THE APOSTOLIC CIRCLES

OF

MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

1. The Apostolic Circles of Mary Help of Christians are groups of Salesian Co-operators (each group consisting of twelve members representing the twelve Apostles) who band themselves together for the object of helping a boy to study for the Missionary Priesthood.

2. The Apostolic Circles are under the special protection of Mary Help of Christians who revealed to Blessed Don Bosco that there is no work so dear to Her maternal heart and so urgent in the Church to-day as that of saving priestly vocations.

3. Each Circle undertakes to raise the sum of £120 during the period of four years, each member collecting or subscribing yearly £2 10s. Whenever a new Circle is formed, a candidate is immediately accepted.

Spiritual Advantages.

1. The members of the Apostolic Circles are inscribed on the roll of the Salesian Co-operators, whose chief privileges are:

(a) The right of participation in the great spiritual merit accruing from the countless good works of the Salesian Fathers and Sisters all over the world.

(b) A Mass offered up every day in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, Turin, for their spiritual and temporal needs.

(c) The Indulgence of the *Sanctified Work*, an unique favour granted by Pius XI: "As often as the Salesian Co-operators raise up their mind to God during the day by means of any invocation whatsoever (no special form of words is required) they gain the Indulgence of 400 days: further, they may gain once a day a Plenary Indulgence, applicable to the Souls in Purgatory, the only condition for both Indulgences being that they are in a state of grace."

2. They are enrolled in the Association of the Sacred Heart (Rome), which entitles them to a share in six daily Masses in perpetuity.

3. They have a share in a Mass said every Tuesday at the Shrine of Blessed John Bosco, Shrigley, Macclesfield, and in a Mass said every 24th of the month at Shrigley, Cowley, and Pallaskenry, where special devotions are held in honour of Mary Help of Christians.

Petitions can be sent to the above mentioned Houses for the monthly Novena in honour of Mary Help of Christians commencing on the 16th, and to the Shrine of Blessed John Bosco at Shrigley, where special prayers are said for benefactors every Tuesday.

At present over 200 boys and young men are being trained by the Salesian Society in England and in Ireland for the home and foreign Missions.

The Training Centres are:

Salesian Missionary College, Shrigley, Macclesfield, Cheshire.

Salesian House, Cowley, Oxford.

Salesian College, Pallaskenry, Limerick.

To join a Circle communicate with The V. Rev. Fr. Provincial, Salesian College, Battersea Park, London, S. W. 11, or the Rector of one of the above mentioned Houses.