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Don Bosco's Apostolate, and Other Sketches.

COMPILED

BY A

SALESIAN FATHER.

TWELFTH THOUSAND



Ufficio Centrale Stampa Salesiana
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THE ASSOCIATION OF SALESIAN CO-OPERATORS

is a canonically-erected Society founded by Don Bosco to help in maintaining and furthering the Salesian Institutes and Missions, which depend for their support upon the alms of the charitable.

It is copiously enriched with spiritual favours and Indulgences, including all the graces and privileges granted by the Holy See to the Franciscan Tertiaries. Members, moreover, participate: (1) In the merits of the Missionaries in all their good works, labours, and sufferings; (2) In the fruits of the Masses offered for Co-operators; (3) In prayers for Benefactors—living and dead—which are daily recited by hundreds of thousands of children in all the Houses of the Salesian Congregation—for “The lips of many shall bless him that is liberal of his bread” (*Ecdl.* xxxi, 28).

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Persons desiring to become Members of this Association are respectfully solicited to send their name and address to the SUPERIOR-GENERAL, Salesian Oratory, Turin, Italy, who will attend to their request with great pleasure.

Ask for

THE SALESIAN BULLETIN

Printed and Published at the Salesian Oratory, Turin, Italy.

This publication, which is the organ of the Salesian Congregation and the Association of Salesian Co-operators, is a monthly illustrated magazine sent *gratis* to members of the Association, and to Catholics who manifest a desire to become members and concur in helping the Salesian Congregation in any way whatsoever.

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DON BOSCO'S APOSTOLATE, AND OTHER SKETCHES.

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DON BOSCO.

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*PERMISSU SUPERIORUM*  
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PROTEST.

In obedience to a Decree of Pope Urban VIII., the compiler of the present work protests that he claims no other belief for the miraculous deeds contained herein, than that which is ordinarily given to history, resting on mere human authority, excepting, of course, that which has been already approved of by the Holy Catholic Church.

ADVERTISEMENT.

This little pamphlet is issued in order to meet the wishes expressed by a large number of Salesian Co-operators who are anxious to make Don Bosco and his many works more widely known. And no charge is made for the present volume. Some persons may deem it strange that the Salesians should undertake the expense of publishing this work *gratis*. Although it is not denied that the expense is great, it may be well to point out that the Salesians manufacture their own paper; cast their own type; set it in English just as easily as in any other European language; and, finally, print and bind their own books. Hence, every sheet of this pamphlet represents the handicraft of upwards of sixty poor children, in passing through its various stages from the paper-mill to the application of the Postage Stamp.

It is fondly hoped, moreover, that all those into whose hands this publication may fall, will bring it to the notice of their friends and acquaintances, and induce them to interest themselves, according to their ability and means, in forwarding the great work in which the Salesians are engaged, namely, the rescue and education of poor and destitute children, and the evangelization of pagan peoples.

Don Bosco's Early Apostolate.



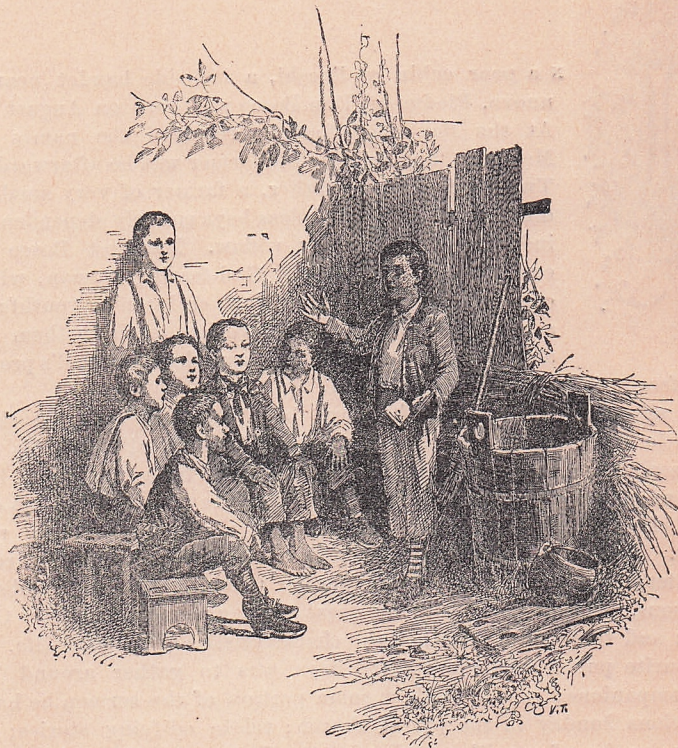
IN a poor cabin at Becchi, a hill-side hamlet near Castelnovo, Piedmont, Don Bosco was born on August 16, 1815. At the Baptismal font he received the names of John Melchior, but only by the former was he afterwards called. Two years later his father, a farmer of very small means, died, leaving three helpless boys entirely dependent on the industry of his young widow. Margaret Bosco was an excellent, self-sacrificing, God-fearing woman, whose first care was to instil into her children's youthful minds sentiments of charity and devotion, teaching them by word and example an unbounded confidence in God's providence, and perfect resignation to His holy will.

Like so many before him who have been called to do great things for God, little John began life as a shepherd lad. But although his boyhood was passed in rustic simplicity, it was saved from monotony by many curious and even extraordinary incidents, which revealed in him no ordinary talents. He had, too, a ready graceful wit and a marvellously retentive memory. Nature also endowed him with a resolute will and an ardent and most enterprising spirit, whilst his mother's saintly training rendered him conspicuous, even in childhood, by great piety and most exquisite Christian charity; and these gifts remained the characteristics of his after-life. One of his favourite pursuits in those early days was to gather around him his young companions; repeat to them some portion of the sermon he had heard the previous Sunday in the parish church; relate edifying stories; or sing hymns in praise of our Blessed Lord, our Lady, and the Saints. Though passionately fond of study, the poverty of his family often obliged him to give up school and turn to field labour. But not even then was his longing for learning abated, for his leisure hours were spent in reading over and over again the few books he possessed.

A second Joseph, chosen by heaven for the guidance of a people of holier aspirations than were the ancient Egyptians, the child Bosco, when only ten years old, had a singular dream which seemed to foreshadow his great mission. Relating it afterwards to the family circle and neighbours, he expressed himself more or less in the following terms:—

"I thought I found myself in the meadow near home, in the midst of a great multitude of children at recreation. As I continued to watch them, I observed that a great many of them were doing mischief and uttering blas-

phemous language. I became indignant, and losing all patience, I doubled up my fists and began to thrash the offenders. At that moment, a white-robed personage, whose face shone with a dazzling brightness, appeared amongst us and turning towards me, said: *'Not with blows, but with charity and gentleness you must draw these friends of your's to the path of virtue.'* And she desired me to preach a sermon on the depravity of vice and the beauty of virtue. I tried to excuse myself, saying that I did not know how, and then I could not help bursting into tears; but she encouraged me, and



One of his favourite pursuits was to gather around him his companions.

told me that I had only to begin and she would help me. As I was about to obey there appeared a lady of majestic deportment; and at the same time, in place of the crowd of children, I saw a multitude of beasts of every kind. At the sight of this change I was lost in astonishment; then the lady said to me: *'Behold your field of action: here is where you must work. Be humble and be strong, and what you now see being done to these animals do you likewise for my children.'* Then the scene again changed. In a moment the animals were all transformed into lambs, and bleating and skipping, they playfully chased one another around the white-robed personage and the majestic lady.

I felt almost beside myself with joy at seeing this, and in my excitement, I awoke."

Whether this was a dream or a vision, is not for us to decide; the fact remains, however, that from that day the young shepherd felt himself drawn to a higher service; and, young as he was, desired even then to become a priest



The Child Bosco's Dream.

one day, the better to dedicate his life to the salvation of youth. But it was not until several years later that he was able to quit the sheepfold for the Seminary of Chieri to pursue his studies, and so to prepare to feed the flock of Christ. There his more than ordinary abilities, assisted by his earnestness and intense application, soon helped him to acquire an amount of learning which

is usually attainable only after many years. Science, literature, and artistic ideas were acquired with surprising facility; but history, oratory, the Sacred Scriptures, and theology were his favourite studies. He never lost sight of the aim he had in view. His was not the satisfaction of vain curiosity, nor did he seek worldly renown. His only object was to be practically useful to his neighbour, and to win souls to God. On the eve of Trinity Sunday, in the year 1841, John Bosco, having completed the usual course of theological studies, was ordained by His Grace Monsignor Franzoni, the Archbishop of Turin.

Almost immediately his peculiar vocation within the priesthood declared itself; but, before embarking on the stream of his work, let us glance at an incident in his boyhood, when already his play was useful even as his work was always gay—an incident which displays the resourceful versatility, at once commanding and gentle, with which the Divine charity endowed his whole life. At Murialdo church, where the folk of Bosco's home and the surrounding villages assembled for mass, a tumbler came Sunday after Sunday to show his skill, at the very hour of service, in the little square before the church. Neither authority nor force could do anything, it seems, in such a case; nor had young Bosco authority at command. But he had the genius of goodness, and a strong young frame. In secret he practised to imitate the tumbler, and presently routed him from his commanding station by a superior exhibition of his own art. Was not this a delightful victory? and was it not charming of Bosco to replace the lamented distraction by regularly giving his neighbours their favourite spectacle in the yard of his mother's cottage, on the slight and profitable condition that they should listen to his repetition of the parish priest's sermon before they exulted in his destruction of the tumbler's record? for the new tumbling had more variety than the old, nor, is it likely, did the sermon lose anything on the lips of so young a reciter.

On quitting the Seminary soon after his ordination, the young priest went to Turin where he entered on the obligations of his sacred ministry with all the ardour of an apostle. One of the duties that fell to his lot was to accompany his friend and Director, Don Cafasso, on his visits to the prisons of the town. At the sight of a large number of boys among the prisoners, paying the penalty of their crimes amidst all the sickening details of jail-life, Don Bosco was greatly shocked and distressed. These poor children, for the most part abandoned by their parents and brought up among the worst influences, only became still more corrupted by imprisonment with criminals older and more hardened than themselves. Many of them had no home but the prison. They left it only to return after a few days, and sometimes they eventually terminated a life of misdeeds on the scaffold.

This terrible vision haunted Don Bosco night and day, and it became his chief desire to find some remedy for this awful state of things. He was pondering how to set about the work when Providence opened the way. Nothing could be simpler than the first emergence of the good priest's resolution into action. On the 8th of December, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, of that same year, he was vesting for Mass in the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, when a ragged urchin, after having wandered about the Church gazing at the pictures and statues, strayed into the sacristy. There

he was confronted by the sacristan who, being in want of a server, asked him to serve the priest's Mass. On the lad refusing, the other—a fellow devoid of ceremony—roughly ordered him to take himself off, and, to add force to the intimation, applied a hand-broom to the back and shoulders



He was confronted by the Sacristan who asked him to serve Mass.

of the intruder. Awakening to a sense of what was going on behind his back, Don Bosco hastened to interfere. "What are you about, sir?" he demanded. "Why do you beat the child? Go, call him back instantly." The poor boy was led back crying, and, although reassured by Don Bosco's kindly face, he trembled as he approached. "Have you already heard Mass?" asked the good priest in soothing tones.—"No," was the brief reply.—"Then, come and hear mine; afterwards I wish to speak to you about something that will please you."—Don Bosco's intention was simply to mitigate the affliction of the little vagrant, and try, if possible, to efface the painful im-

pression produced by the sacristan's rude treatment. But much loftier was the design of an all-loving God, who chose on that day to lay the foundation of a vast edifice for the rescue of abandoned youth. Having finished his thanksgiving after Mass, Don Bosco made his new acquaintance sit down beside him, and finding to his astonishment that he was ignorant of the very elements of religion, he there and then began the Christian education of Bartholomew Garelli. There also he began the work of his life.

When, at the termination of that first meeting, Don Bosco dismissed his young friend, he made him promise to return later. Garelli, to whom kindness had been previously unknown, did not fail to keep the appointment; he also brought with him some of his comrades,—lads who, for the most part, had flocked to Turin from the country to earn a livelihood as masons' apprentices. As the number of his pupils increased, Don Bosco varied his programme, and instead of half-an-hour's "Christian Doctrine", he soon found the means of passing the Sundays and holidays almost entirely in the boys' company. He soon obtained a regular attendance by means of small presents and frequent walks through country scenery to some famous or favourite spot in the environs of Turin. On these occasions a luncheon, even if a frugal meal, was always forthcoming. Nor was this all. Well aware of the attractive influence of music on the untamed spirits of his disciples, he resolved to form a band. With Don Bosco, to resolve was to act. Accordingly some old brass instruments were procured, and a very primitive band was formed, of which the young priest was conductor.

In a few months the young disciples of the "Oratory" (Don Bosco called these reunions by this name, after the example, no doubt, of St. Philip, and because their existence depended on prayer) had become quite a regiment; hundreds and hundreds of poor children crowded to the appointed place of meeting, all ready to go wherever their young master proposed to lead them. They grew obedient to his orders, happy in his presence. Their habitual rudeness was soon thrown aside; they became attached to their Benefactor, and began to vie with one another to win a word of praise, a look of encouragement, or a smile of approbation. The great secret of Don Bosco's success with these unruly urchins must be sought for in his extraordinary paternal benevolence, his ever-watchful and almost motherly solicitude in providing for the wants of each and all, his never wearying patience, his never changing sweetness, and, above all, that entire sacrifice of self for the love of his fellow creatures, which only the teachings of our loving Saviour can inspire.

Sunday over Don Bosco's solicitude was not at an end. During the week a great part of his time was given to the service of his poor boys. If any of them were out of work, or under a disreputable master, he was indefatigable in his researches till honest employment and a Christian employer were found. Almost every day he visited them in their workshops; and then a word of encouragement to one, a simple inquiry interesting another, a sign of benevolence or a little gift, was sunshine to their hearts; and he left them beaming with joy, and looking forward with pleasure to his return on the morrow. The employers also were well pleased with the frequent visits of this charming priest, and were always ready to receive boys so paternally

assisted and, through the influence of religion, rendered day by day more faithful and assiduous in their duties. A touching, if somewhat ludicrous, illustration of these friendly relations will be found in the following anecdote.

One of Don Bosco's *protégés* was employed at a tailor's shop in Via Garibaldi. As the good priest was one day passing by the glass door of this shop, the boy saw him, and yielding to the first impulse of his heart, rushed into the street to speak to him, forgetting in his impetuosity the presence of the transparent panel. At the crackling noise of a quantity of shattered glass, Don Bosco turned round, and the passers-by formed a circling crowd of curious spectators. Soon the proprietor appeared on the scene of disaster, giving free vent to his feelings in loud and indignant exclamations, and the poor boy, crimson with shame and mortification, stood close by Don Bosco.—"What have you done, my child?" asked the latter. "Seeing you pass," was the simple reply, "I wanted to wish you 'good day,' and I forgot all about the door." "Oh, if that is all, I'll pay for it."—"No, no," then put in the proprietor, "it never shall be said that I caused this boy to suffer for his goodheartedness, nor Don Bosco for his charity. Let us hope that another time Charlie will not have the pretension to pass through a shut door like a fairy." Don Bosco thanked the merchant for his generous sentiments, said something appropriate to his young friend, and the incident thus terminated.

In the Autumn of 1844, Don Bosco was appointed assistant Chaplain to the *Rifugio* or Refuge, a Home for Penitents, and future Rector of the Little Hospital of St. Philomena, which was then building. Both these institutions were in the Valdocco quarter of the town. The Spiritual Director of the Refuge was Don Borel, a priest worthy of the highest admiration for his many virtues and vast culture. Don Bosco often said that he regarded as a signal grace of God the privilege of intercourse with such a man. He entered cordially into Don Bosco's plans for the reclamation of abandoned youths, and the two priests soon became intimate friends.

Having established his residence at the Refuge, Don Bosco's anxiety for his poor boys was painfully augmented by the fact that he could get no site whereon to continue the Oratory. Determined, however, as he was, not to abandon his children, he resolved to receive them in his own room, till Providence should open to him a more suitable *locale*. Accordingly, on the second Sunday of October 1844, he announced to them, as they assembled for the last time in St. Francis of Assisi's, that henceforth the Oratory would be held at the Refuge in Valdocco.

Here the good work flourished exceedingly. Crowds of the neighbouring boys joined the youngsters from St. Francis of Assisi's, and asked to be admitted to the Oratory. Don Bosco's cordial welcome was extended to all, till his room, the passage, and even the staircase were crowded with children. This for the recreation might serve after a fashion, but for the religious functions the difficulty was not so easily overcome. Don Bosco then laid the needs of his humble work before Monsignor Franzoni, the Archbishop of Turin, who was not slow to comprehend its social and moral importance. Through this good Prelate, he obtained permission from the Marchioness di Barolo, to convert two large rooms adjoining the Refuge into a temporary Chapel. This was the site chosen by Divine Providence for the first

Chapel of the Oratory bearing the title of St. Francis of Sales, under whose patronage Don Bosco placed the Society founded by him, in order to keep constantly before his disciples that in all their relations with poor, wayward boys they should be ever prompted and guided by the gentleness and sweetness for which this great Saint was distinguished.

The inauguration of the new Chapel took place on the 8th of December, 1844, Feast of the Immaculate Mother of God, to whose special protection Don Bosco committed himself, his poor children, and all his undertakings. The boys who assisted at the modest function are now old men, but how



St. Francis of Sales.

vividly they remember every circumstance connected with that memorable date! The streets of the city were overlaid with a thick coat of snow, which continued to fall in great flakes. Many of the ill-clad little fellows, who came from a considerable distance through the storm, arrived half-frozen; but their eyes sparkled with pleasure and gratitude as they entered the new chapel and saw in the midst of it a large brasier of burning coals, placed there by Don Bosco's ever careful solicitude for the comfort of all. When the established hour arrived, Don Bosco proceeded to bless the Chapel, after which he offered the Holy Sacrifice and distributed Communion to the majority of the boys. With mingled feelings of awe and surprise, the poor children gazed on him as he performed these sacred functions. They had always seen him cheerful and happy, and now, when they all felt so proud of their new church, Don Bosco's tears were flowing abundantly! Children have no pent-up feelings: they laugh when they are happy, but they do not weep for joy. Hence, for them, the good priest's tears were a mystery, for they flowed from the gladness of his heart. He saw that the basis of the

Oratory was thus becoming more stable day by day, and with increasing hope he looked forward to the Christian education of myriads of poor children rescued from the ever-encroaching waves of immorality and ungodliness.

It was about this time, in 1845, that Don Bosco commenced his Night Schools, which on account of their great utility were shortly afterwards imitated in other towns, and are to-day zealously cultivated and extend all over the world. The factories being closed and the day's toiling over, many of the poor boys used to crowd, evening after evening, to the priest's habitation in Valdocco, and Don Bosco and Don Borel, transforming their rooms for the time being into temporary schools, initiated these young people in the mysteries of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic.

In this even routine, seven months passed by. The number of boys frequenting the Oratory had meanwhile increased considerably. They had grown attached to their surroundings and hoped to enjoy them for some time to come. But they were deluded in their hopes. In fact, from this period may be dated the trials, annoyances, and petty persecutions moved against Don Bosco,—another proof that the Oratory was the work of God, for all foundations blessed by Him bear the seal of trial. The Marchioness di Barolo, though admiring Don Bosco's wonderful work, became alarmed at the thought of the disturbance it might occasion to her own institution, the Little Hospital (the opening-day of which was drawing near), and suddenly withdrew the loan of the two rooms. The limit fixed for the removal of the Oratory was the 10th of August, 1845. It was useless to point out that the *locale* used by Don Bosco's boys had nothing to do with the interior of the new Institute; that everything should be carried on in the quietest manner;—the noble lady was mistress of the situation, and had to be obeyed.

This turn of affairs sorely perplexed Don Bosco, but full of confidence in Divine Providence, he petitioned the Municipality of Turin and, being supported by Archbishop Franzoni, obtained, under certain restrictions, the use of St. Martin's Church. To St. Martin's, then, the Oratory was transplanted. It must be confessed, however, that the new site remained far from popular among many of the young urchins. In that church—for a certain reason for which the parish clergy were responsible—they were debarred from hearing Mass; approaching the Sacraments; or performing any religious functions whatsoever; so that on Sunday and holiday mornings they were obliged to go to one or other of the city churches, where they performed their religious duties with greater trouble and sacrifice, but less profit, than heretofore. The recreation grounds, moreover, were inadequate and miserable beyond all expression. They consisted of the little square before the church, on one side of which lay the public street, so that the games of the children were being continually interrupted by passengers, vehicles, animals of every description; in a word, by the come-and-go traffic of a public thoroughfare. But even such a place was better than none at all, so they tried to make the most of it.

St. Martin's was in the vicinity of the City Mills. Now the good people of this aristocratic establishment—the millers, porters, scavengers, and so forth—considering it a nuisance to have some hundreds of ragged boys playing, singing and enjoying themselves in *their* neighbourhood, put their heads together and resolved “to do away with it.” Accordingly, a petition was drawn

up by these wiseacres and presented to the Municipality, representing the Oratory in colours of the blackest hue. It was observed that the boys obeyed Don Bosco's every beck and nod, and were therefore dangerous instruments in the hands of a priest, by whom disturbances, or even a revolution, might be organized at a moment's notice. It was further alleged that the children were continually hacking and ruining the walls of the church, and that if they were allowed to carry on their evening meetings there, they would ultimately bring about the destruction of the whole neighbourhood (!) It was therefore urged as an imperious necessity that the agreement conferring the use of the church be reversed, and the meetings of such children—under whatever name—be henceforth prohibited.

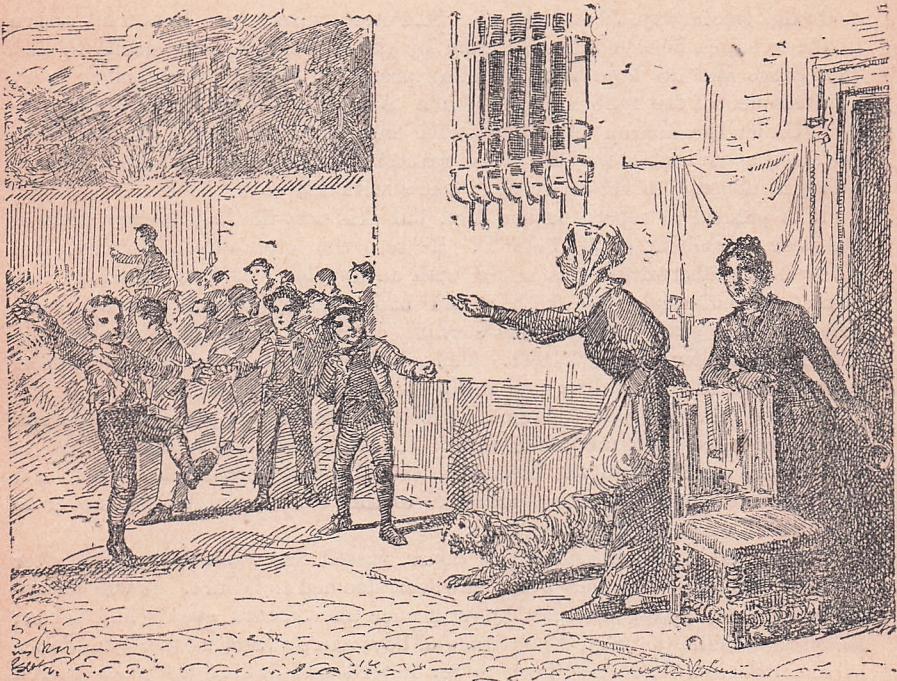
The municipality sent a policeman to examine into the damages; but contrary to what had been alleged, church, walls, pavement, everything, were found precisely in the condition in which they were before Don Bosco's urchins had made their appearance upon the scene. A single scratch on one of the walls, evidently the work of a youngster with a nail, was all that the eagle eye of the Law could detect! Yet this miserable flaw had afforded Don Bosco's detractors the assiduously-sought-for pretext to raise the hue and cry, and invoke the interference of the municipal authorities—as if the earth was about to open and swallow up the city and all its belongings! Seeing that the petition did not produce the desired effect, since the authorities declined to interfere further in the matter, a clerk at the mills addressed, on his own responsibility, a letter to the city Mayor, wherein he gave echo to all the former complaints, distorting them by perverse ingenuity into full-blown and intolerable outrages, and declaring that the families engaged at the mills were disturbed alike in their duties and their domestic tranquillity. He had also the effrontery to assert that the Oratory was a cove of immorality! The Mayor, though aware of foul play, had the weakness to inhibit the meetings at St. Martin's, obliging Don Bosco to discontinue immediately all connection with the premises.

Here we may note *en passant* that this cowardly letter was the last ever written by the unfortunate clerk. No sooner had he penned that document than his right hand was seized with such a violent tremor that he was obliged to give up his office and, three years afterwards, he ceased to live. His orphan son, destitute and abandoned, was received by Don Bosco in the Home he had by this time founded in Valdocco.

In those early stages of his work, many circumstances tended to prove that Don Bosco's efforts in behalf of destitute children were not only acceptable to God, but also blessed by Him in a special manner. Nay more; even a cursory examination of facts would go far to show that the solemn words addressed to Abraham were re-echoed in favour of the Oratory: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee." Numerous indeed, are the families in Turin, and elsewhere, that, on their own testimony, date their prosperity from some act of charity or kindness towards the struggling Oratory; while, on the other hand, those who through malice or ill-will became its aggressors were often made the objects of most dire visitations as we shall see further on.

Being compelled to abandon St. Martin's, Don Bosco solicited the Muni-

cipality once more to permit him to gather his young flock in the courtyard and Church of the Holy Cross, commonly called St. Peter's Churchyard. Archbishop Franzoni cordially seconded his petition. And as the Mayor and most of the Aldermen were convinced of the slanderous nature of the complaints moved against Don Bosco by the people at the town-mills, the petition was granted. Accordingly, the Oratory was removed to the large and commodious grounds of St. Peter's Churchyard. The extensive cloisters, the spacious courtyard, the fine Church so well adapted for the sacred functions, were all objects of the children's most enthusiastic admiration, and rendered them almost beside themselves with joy.



A Formidable Adversary on the site of the Necropolis.

But, alas! this nectared cup was scarcely tasted, when it was changed into gall and bitterness by the appearance of a new and formidable adversary on the site of the necropolis. This was no ghostly visitant of the long past dead awakened from its deep repose; but a real, living shrew in flesh and blood—the Curate's ancient housekeeper. No sooner did she hear the children's gladsome voices; the songs and noisy pastimes; than she rushed upon the scene—her headgear awry, her arms akimbo—and began to regale the multitude with a flow of invectives. Whenever she paused for breath, a girl beside her took up the note in screaming hysterics; the house-dog joined in; the alarmed poultry began to cackle; and one would have said that we were on the eve of, at least, an European war.

Don Bosco approached the good woman, and tried to pacify her. He remarked that his boys had no evil intentions; that they were simply enjoying themselves without doing the slightest harm to anybody. But it was wasting "sweetness on the desert air!" Far from succeeding in his laudable attempt at pacification, he received a volley of vituperation for his trouble. Seeing that the lady's passionate eloquence gave no sign of abating but only seemed to increase, he ordered the children to enter the Church. A little catechism was taught and the rosary recited, after which they dispersed, hoping to meet there again under more favourable circumstances on the following Sunday. But they were mistaken; for that was the first and last time they were allowed to assemble at St. Peter's.

On that fateful day, the incumbent of St. Peter's was absent. But on his return in the evening, he was taken in hand by the old servant, who, declaring that Don Bosco and his boys were so many profaners of holy places and the very quintessence of the rabble, induced him to make a report to the Municipality. Under the dictation of the spiteful woman he wrote his charges with such acrimony that a warrant was granted for Don Bosco's arrest, should he again attempt to return to St. Peter's with his boys.

It is painful to record such a fact, but this was the last literary effort of the poor incumbent of St. Peter's! He sent the letter off on Monday, and a few hours afterwards, was seized with an apoplectic fit from which he died almost immediately. The fresh mould had scarcely closed over his tomb when another grave yawned: his servant, cut down in the same manner, followed her master two days later. Thus, before half the week was over, these two enemies of the Oratory had disappeared from this world.

It were more easy to imagine than describe the impression those two deaths produced upon the public mind. It was difficult not to see the hand of God in the matter; and the boys were so intimately persuaded of this, that they became more and more attached to the Oratory, promising never to abandon it whatever might happen.

Don Bosco, again turned out of doors, passed the week in hunting after another site. His exertions were, however, doomed to failure. It was impossible to let his young disciples know at once the sad turn events had taken; so, on the ensuing Sunday, a multitude of boys came swarming to his residence at the Refuge, after having been to St. Peter's and finding the place barred and bolted on every side. His modest apartments were not capable of affording even standing room for his 300 young friends; nevertheless he managed to pass the evening in their company, as he was keenly alive to the danger of allowing them to disperse under such circumstances. Some of the children—now old men, who were present on that occasion—still remember with enthusiasm the enjoyment of that memorable Sunday afternoon, when Don Bosco, hiding his grief deep in his poor, bleeding heart, awakened, rather than damped, their hopes and expectations, by glowing descriptions of the forthcoming Oratory, which then existed only in his fervid imagination, and the hidden decrees of Divine Providence.

There was absolutely no available room at the Refuge to hive the homeless Oratory; the Little Hospital, too, was interdicted; so, for some two months the meetings became nomadic,—a circumstance which, no doubt, goes a long

way to show that Don Bosco and his boys partly deserved the name given them by their detractors, "an assemblage of vagabonds."

In the early morning of Sundays and holidays, for the next two months, the boys crowded to Don Bosco's door, each bringing with him food for the day. When the appointed hour arrived, the good priest placed himself at their head, and conducted them to some village, or sanctuary, in the environs of Turin.

"At the end of each meeting," relates one of those fortunate boys, "the good Father announced the excursion for next Sunday, the route, programme, and hour for starting; gave us advice as to our conduct during the week, and always exhorted us to make up a strong contingent next time,—'If you have any comrades, invite them in my name: the more the merrier.' The walk for the next Sunday was the standing topic of the week in our workshops and at home. It called forth more attention, obedience, and punctuality in the fulfilment of our duty, so as not to incur the penalty of being kept at home. The excursions varied according to circumstances; of course the weather had to be considered, for one thing. Our favourite places were: The Monte dei Cappuccini; Madonna di Campagna; Soperga; Pozzo di Strada; and Our Lady's Sanctuary at Avigliana.—Those happy days are engraven on our memories: piety and joy reigned among us, and influenced our future lives. On our arrival at some village, we directed our steps to one or other of the churches in its precincts. Don Bosco asked leave to celebrate Mass, and at a signal given to enter the church, the noisy band became composed and attentive, with a celerity and unanimity quite amazing to the bystanders. Mass was followed by a short explanation of the Gospel; then breakfast, the sward or the rocks supplying the place of tables; knives and forks were superfluous luxuries, and as for wine—well, the springs and rivulets afforded what was needful without our ever thinking of anything stronger. Those who had too much, shared with less fortunate boys; and Don Bosco provided for those who had nothing. Bread failed, it is true, now and then; but good humour and a good appetite, never. After as much play, and rest, as was deemed good for us, we again resumed our march and continued our walk, stopping at some other Church to chant Vespers. A lesson in Catechism followed, and the recital of the Rosary. Then turning our steps homewards, as the sun went down behind the Alps we marched again into Turin,—tired, it is true, but with light consciences and contented hearts."

The children, with the improvidence proper to their age, thought that their pleasure trips around Turin would last for ever. But when the month of November arrived, even the most thoughtless became aware that excursions in the country were no longer possible. After much searching, Don Bosco, in concert with Theologian Borel, rented three rooms from a certain Moretta, in Via Cottolengo, where at present stands the Convent Chapel of the Sisters of Mary Help of Christians. Here four months were passed, and though the accommodation was limited, the boys learned to be content with it, as it afforded room for night schools, and religious instruction, and the enjoyment of Don Bosco's charming society. For Mass, they were obliged to go to some of the public churches, for there was no room adapted for a chapel in Moretta's shanty.

Nor were these material difficulties the only disquieting elements that pressed upon the Founder of the Salesian Society, in that winter of 1845. Rumours were maliciously set afloat that Don Bosco was a revolutionary, a lunatic, nay, even a heretic! The clergy of Turin themselves complained that the young priest's imprudent zeal attracted the children away from the Parish Church. Don Bosco should, therefore, cease his Oratory, and send the children to their respective parishes. But Don Bosco replied to the deputation that waited on him with this intimation, that almost all the children in whom he was interested were strangers in the town; that most of them had no home but the streets, and consequently belonged to no particular parish; that, if the Oratory were closed, the class of boys frequenting it, instead of attending service in the town churches, would more probably fall back at once into the slough from which he had rescued them. Was it any great harm, then, to seek to make orderly subjects, and good Christians, of poor godless vagrants? The parish priests met in conference to examine the matter in all its bearings, and, after a long discussion, a resolution favourable to the work of the Oratory was formulated and presented to Don Bosco. Archbishop Franzoni's affection toward the good priest and his ragged children was constant and well-known, and his Grace's favour doubtless swayed his priests in their change of views about the "overzealous innovator."

But Don Bosco's troubles were not at an end. Whilst his ecclesiastical brethren encouraged him, Moretta, the landlord of his three rooms, gave him notice to quit; and thus the Father and his children were all adrift again. Dismissed from Moretta's, Don Bosco did not become disheartened, but energetically set about seeking for another house. And not succeeding in finding one (since the world in general complained of the noisiness of his assemblies), he rented a field from two brothers named Defilippi, not far from his late quarters. Therefore, to this field, surrounded by a broken hedge, the Oratory was transferred in the spring of March, 1846. Only separated from the public by this primitive fence, with nothing but the broad vault of heaven above them, the boys of the shifting Oratory by their joyous notes; their varied games; and merry singing, drew the attention of other boys, and their number soon rose to 400. Thus while the malice of man kept hunting Don Bosco from place to place, God continued to multiply his followers, thereby increasing his means to do good.

A field does very well for recreation, it is true, but what about the practice of Religion? The duties our holy Religion imposes were not neglected,—nay, they were carried out almost romantically, or more correctly speaking, after the manner of the Apostles and the early Christians.

On Sundays and holidays, Don Bosco might be seen at break of day in the field of his labours, sitting on an old chair beside a grassy hillock, hearing the Confessions of his boys. Some who were preparing themselves, stood, or knelt, motionless in recollection and prayer, at one side of the hillock; others, making their thanksgiving, at the other side. In another part of the field their comrades played quietly at their usual games, or grouping together, listened to some edifying episode, read, or related, by one of their companions. At a fixed hour, Don Bosco rose from his primitive confessional. Then a cracked trumpet hoarsely ordered silence, and the good Father,

addressing a few words to his children, would indicate the church where they were going to hear Mass and receive Holy Communion. Thereupon the boys quietly fell into line, and marched to the church with an humble deportment that testified their progress in virtue as well as in discipline. After Mass, they breakfasted, and then returned to the Valdocco field to continue their games and amusements, and listen to the teachings of Don Bosco and Theologian Borel. When the appointed time arrived, the trumpet again gave the signal, the children formed in classes, and, sitting on the green sward, attended to their



Don Bosco might be seen in the field of his labours...
hearing the Confessions of his boys.

Catechism and the other pious practices in use. As Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament could not be given, the functions invariably terminated with the singing of a hymn to the Immaculate Virgin, imploring from heaven her protection and her Divine Son's blessing. Recreation was then resumed and continued until nightfall. When all had left the field, Don Bosco returned to the Refuge, and sometimes so extreme was the poor man's exhaustion that he would sink on the way, and have to be carried to his room.

It was not long, however, before he found himself turned out of even this poor field,—the complaint of the owners being that the trampling of the children's feet injured the roots of the grass! Considering the apparent hopelessness of his affairs, his friends advised him to give up his undertaking. "Keep about twenty of the smallest boys," they said, "and send away the rest. You cannot do what is impossible. Divine Providence seems to show plainly that It does not wish for your work."

"Divine Providence!" exclaimed Don Bosco; "Divine Providence has sent me these poor children, and, be assured, never will I abandon one of them! Since nobody will let me hire a place where they can assemble, I will build one, with God's help! There we shall have workshops, where they will learn trades; large playgrounds; and schools; and we shall also have a beautiful Church with many priests!"

As he uttered these words, his hearers looked at one another and gravely shook their heads. The poor priest had either lost his reason, or was on the way to losing it; otherwise how could he speak in such a manner? And, one by one, his friends began to desert him. The fear and persuasion of Don Bosco's madness also took possession of the Marchioness di Barolo, who made him resign his post as Rector of the "Little Hospital," thus depriving him of the remuneration attached to that office which formed almost his only means of subsistence.

In connection with Don Bosco's supposed madness, an amusing incident took place about this time, which is worth relating here. Some worthy and charitable ecclesiastics of Turin, convinced that the poor priest was not "all there," took it into their heads that he stood in need of a little rest and seclusion; so they made arrangements with the doctor in charge of the Lunatic Asylum, and a room was engaged for Don Bosco. The one little difficulty, however, was, how to get the patient there. Still, a couple of wise men could surely manage a crazy man; there need be no uneasiness on that head. Accordingly, two eminent priests, of whom one was the late Father Ponzati, parish priest of St. Augustine's, and the other Don P****, still living, arrived one day, in a closed carriage, at Don Bosco's abode, alighted, and paid him a visit in his little room. They presently introduced the subject of the Oratory. Don Bosco, with even more enthusiasm than usual, described his intended plans, and spoke of them as though their carrying out was a matter of course. The two visitors exchanged glances, which, however, did not escape Don Bosco's notice.

"Well, we must be going," said Father Ponzati at length. "Come with us for a drive. It will do you good. We have a carriage at the door."

Don Bosco was not in the least inclined to accept the invitation; but as they pressed him, he ended by seeming to yield.

"Get in Don Bosco."

"No, Rev. Sirs, after you."

"No, no! We beg you to get in first."

"By no means! I know too well the respect due to you."

Impatient at so much ceremony, the two personages got in. Instead of following their example, Don Bosco quickly shut the door, and shouted to the coachman: "Ready! No matter what they say do not stop until you arrive at the establishment."

The man had been told that he must start at the first signal. A vigorous lash set the horses off at full speed in the direction of the asylum. Violent remonstrances proceeded from within the vehicle, but of these the coachman took not the slightest notice. The asylum was soon reached, and the two priests got out of the carriage, very warm with shouting, and angry beyond expression.

"Come, come; calm yourselves," said the head of the establishment, who was waiting with a few warders in the court. "I thought only one patient was coming; but we have plenty of room."

"What unheard-of insolence! Whom do you take us for? We are men of position, who will make you answerable to the law!"

"I see, both these men are worse than I was led to expect," calmly observed the other. And he bade the assistants take them to their quarters, suggestively adding: "It may be necessary to try the *douche* and a strait waistcoat."

The unfortunate clerics were thunder-struck. Luckily for them, they knew the house-chaplain, and entreated to see him. The request being granted, he was able to testify to their sanity, and get them set at liberty; but they had had a narrow escape, and vowed, as they hastened from the premises, that for nothing in the world would they find themselves there again. This adventure, moreover, while it brought a great deal of ridicule on the two ecclesiastics, also proved that if Don Bosco had indeed the grand "folly of the Cross," he was not unprovided with a touch of that "mother wit," which, on more than one occasion, helped him to avoid the snares laid to entrap him.

Although Don Bosco's supposed madness estranged from him even his most intimate friends, the Archbishop of Turin, Don Borel, and Don Cafasso still remained faithful to him during that period of severe trial. It was most fortunate that such a Prelate as Archbishop Franzoni ruled the Archdiocese of Turin in those days, otherwise, without a miracle, Don Bosco's work could not have weathered the storm.

Meanwhile time moved onward, and the sad day came when Don Bosco and his boys met for the last time in the field where they had spent so many happy hours together. In spite of the most careful search, no other place was yet found. The good priest was unusually sad. The joyous shouting of the boys at their games, which had always been music to his ears, to-day seemed to oppress him heavily. As evening advanced his sadness increased. He had, then, toiled in vain; he must say good-bye to his children for ever; he should see them drift back again to the streets, and stand by helpless to save them from disgrace and ruin. As these thoughts passed through his mind, his agony became intense. The springs of grief welled forth, and the poor priest wept bitterly. His children saw him fall prostrate on the ground and heard him pray: "My God! my God! wilt Thou, then, forsake these, Thy children? Make known to me Thy holy will."

He had scarcely uttered these words when a man, Pancrazio Savio by name, entered the field and approached Don Bosco: "I hear you seek a laboratory, Reverend Father," were his first words.

"Not exactly; it is a place for an Oratory I want."

"Oratory or laboratory, Father, is the same to my friend Pinardi, provided he is paid. He has a large shed to let; just the thing you want. Will you come and see for yourself?"

Don Bosco needed no second invitation; he followed the new-comer at once. The shed was rough in the extreme, and so low on one side that he said it would not suit, though his children were not tall, nor was he, himself, a giant.

"Is that all?" said Pinardi who had joined them, "then I will dig out the soil as much as you like; lay a good boarded floor; and you will have a place fit for a prince! If you intend to turn the shed into a chapel, I will give you a beautiful lamp I have at home, and I will rent two seats for my wife and myself."

So much good-will touched Don Bosco, and the bargain was concluded. For the use of the shed, and of an adjoining piece of ground to serve for the boys' recreation, he was to pay 320 francs a year, and the place was to be ready for the following Sunday. Don Bosco returned smiling to his children, who were beside themselves for joy when they heard the good news. Then the Father and the children knelt down on the green sward and, in the light of the golden sunset, recited the Rosary in thanksgiving to God and His Blessed Mother.

Pinardi kept his word. The shed was dug deeper by two feet, floored, fitted, and ready for the Sunday after, when it was occupied by Don Bosco and the boys; so they had now not only a playground, but a chapel and a friendly neighbourhood. This memorable change occurred on Easter Sunday, 1846.

It was now a year since the event just related, and Don Bosco had removed to lodgings close by the chapel-shed. His amiable and pious mother was with him. She had quitted her peaceful home to share the labours of her son, and be a mother to his adopted family. And a tender, loving mother the boys found her! Meantime, the Sunday gatherings and evening classes flourished exceedingly. No less than 700 boys now regularly attended the Oratory. As yet, however, all these were externs, and daily experience made it plain to Don Bosco that, to give lasting help to some boys, the schools and festive reunions were not enough. So he decided to found a Home.

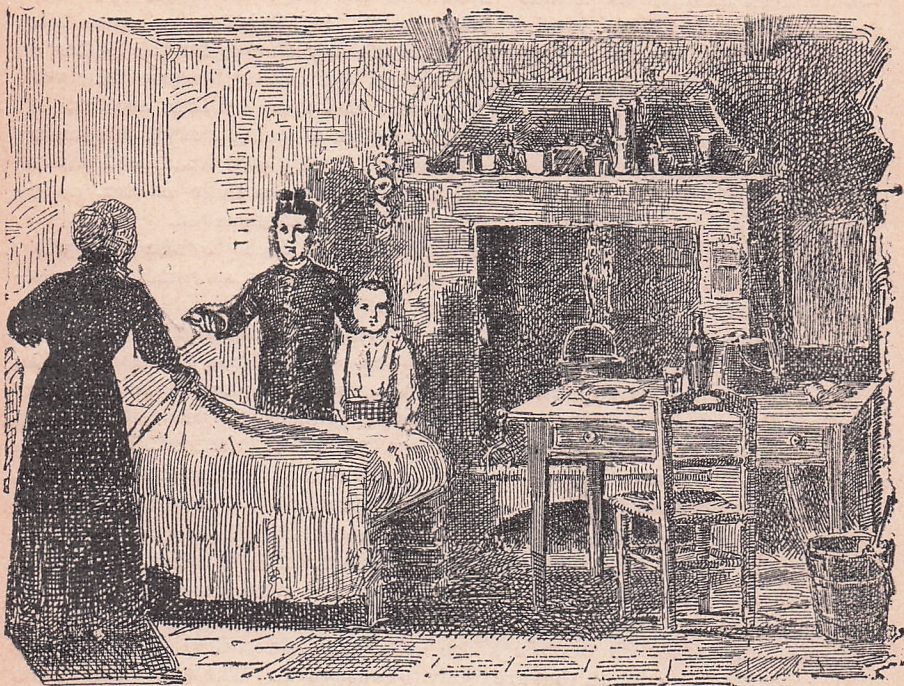
The beginning was as simple as the meeting with Garelli. Late one rainy evening in May, as he and his mother sat at supper, a knock was heard; and, on opening the door, they saw standing outside a lad of about fifteen years of age. He was wet to the skin, his scanty rags being no protection against the rain which fell in torrents. The poor child, who was an orphan and homeless, sought bread and shelter. Margaret kindly took him in; seated him by the fire; and gave him what remained of the frugal supper. Mother and son afterwards arranged a mattress in the middle of the kitchen where the poor boy passed the night. He was the first boarder of the Salesian Oratory which now holds about a thousand boys.

Shortly afterwards Don Bosco began to collect funds for the enlarging of the house, and the founding of technical schools and workshops. And here, we have a touching proof of the bounty of God towards those who confidently abandon themselves and their undertakings to His holy will. Workshop after workshop was rapidly built and furnished, with the expenditure of immense sums, and without encountering any serious pecuniary difficulties.

Now, at least, we might suppose that the indefatigable "utopist of abandoned youth"—as poor Don Bosco was commonly called for many years—had finally achieved his grand scheme for saving lost children, and might at last rest on his oars, contenting himself with attending to the direction of his workshops,

and the instruction of his young artisans. The sequel shows how different was the event.

From his earliest intercourse with poor boys, Don Bosco could not fail to observe that under the rags and dirt and uncouthness of many of his young friends, the bright spark of talent—though by cruel circumstances, latent and dimmed—was not entirely extinguished, and required, in many cases, only a little pains and skill to draw it forth in all its force and brilliancy.—To abandon such boys to the lot of the artisan—though in itself



The First Boarder of the Salesian Oratory.

a happy one—would be to place the candle of the Gospel under the bushel: and Don Bosco was not the man to do such a thing. Indeed, he never seemed to know what half-measures meant. School-rooms were accordingly constructed; books, etc. provided; and, in goodly numbers, the most promising and brightest of the little artisans exchanged the implements of their handicraft for the pen and the grammar.—In this manner without the least bustle or difficulty, a new caste sprung up in the Oratory; but, if we overlook the categorical distinction of *students* and *artisans*, Don Bosco's family remained united and loving as ever. On this occasion indeed, as on many others, the good father's prudence and foresight enabled him to remove all grounds of jealousy. For, contenting himself with merely giving his advice when requested, he left ample faculty to all to continue

artisans, or become students, just as they chose. And strange as it may appear, the majority in every workshop stuck to their trades, thus freely renouncing, for love of their art, the possibility of becoming scholars.

It would be long and even tedious to follow Don Bosco in his new capacity of school-master; or, without dwelling on his unheard-of toiling and moiling, to simply enumerate the annoyances and persecutions that had to be undergone because of sectarian spite and official intolerance. Suffice it to say that years were passed in manfully struggling against, and boldly opposing, every fresh obstacle as it was thrown in his way. At length, his open enemies as well as his lurking foes thought it advisable to cease from hostilities; not, we are sorry to say, through any change for the better in their feelings towards their would-be victim, but rather because their very opposition seemed to urge him on to greater and more brilliant success. At last Don Bosco had the unspeakable consolation of seeing himself surrounded by a staff of Teachers and Assistants formed by his own hand, and willing to spend their lives, for love of God and gratitude to their master, in imparting to others those benefits they themselves had received.

Little by little, the mustard-seed planted in Valdocco by the holy priest stretched forth its branches far and wide, and many and many a homeless wanderer came and nestled in its friendly shade.

Numerous indeed, and beyond the most sanguine hopes of his early supporters, are the establishments and homes for poor children founded by Don Bosco. In all, the same method prevails; the same rules; and the most perfect uniformity in their application. In matters disciplinary, the preventive system is universally adopted—the only system Don Bosco ever practised. This system he assiduously inculcated as the surest ground-work of Christian education, and his disciples scrupulously adhere to its practice. A very characteristic feature of this method, as followed out in the Salesian homes and colleges, is the total absence of every sort of punishment. The observance of rules is obtained by carefully instilling into the youthful mind a true sense of duty, and by highly appreciating every little effort towards virtue; while breach of rules and other shortcomings are effectually forestalled by assiduously removing those occasions that are likely to cause them. The whole Institution is bound together in one common object: the rescue from misery and corruption, and the Christian education, of destitute children.

There would still remain much to be said of Don Bosco's subsequent career,—of his unremitting labours in the vast field of rescue work; of his zealous promotion of ecclesiastical vocations and foreign missions; and of the service he rendered to Catholic literature and journalism;—but this is outside the scope of the present article; for it is not intended to give here a life of Don Bosco, but simply a short sketch of the beginning of his apostolate.

Before we close, let us give one other incident. When Don Bosco was regarded as a visionary because he *dreamed* about building institutes, and of undertaking foreign missions, Don Caffasso his saintly confessor, used to say smilingly: "Let him go on." One day Father Caffasso remarked: "Do you really know who Don Bosco is? For my part, the more I study him the less I understand him. I see him simple and extraordinary; humble

and great; poor and filled with great thoughts; with projects apparently un-realisable; and, with all that, constantly crossed in his designs, and, as it were, incapable of carrying out his great enterprises. To me, Don Bosco is a mystery. If I was not certain that he is working for the glory of God; that God alone is leading him; that God alone is the end of all his efforts; I should account him a dangerous man; more from what he leaves to be guessed than what he says. Don Bosco is a mystery. Let him go on." Later on, when Don Bosco—abandoned, ridiculed, persecuted,—seemed to justify the prophets of evil, Don Caffasso still repeated: "Let him go on." Now we may say: He is no longer a mystery. He and his work are known and appreciated. His dream has been realised. Even before his death, which took place on January 31, 1888, his name and fame had made the circuit of the globe. At a time when the unbelieving world has lost the sense of the supernatural; when pious Catholics are sneered at as dreamers who are neglectful of this world of actuality and think only of the world to come; Don Bosco has proved that it is possible and profitable to the individual and to humanity to live for both without neglect of the *unum necessarium*, or of any of our social or civic obligations. Marvellous as has been its expansion, his work is not done. His sons, confiding in Divine Providence and the charity of their Co-operators, will continue it faithfully. And though they sorely miss the presence of their beloved Father, his spirit has not abandoned them, for his saintly example, and the sacrifice of his whole life for the social and moral amelioration of homeless children, are treasured in their hearts.

God continues to bless their efforts; the rate of progress is as high as ever; and year by year, hundreds of thousands of destitute children, who, perhaps, had never heard of Don Bosco when alive, learn to call him by the name that is dearest to the orphan's heart, and bless and venerate his memory.

Don Rua, Don Bosco's Successor.*

MICHAEL Rua was born at Turin in 1837, in that quarter of Valdocco which the Institutions of the Ven. Cottolengo and the Marchioness di Barolo had rendered famous before Don Bosco's gigantic enterprises rose to join to the memory of the Turinese martyrs (Valdocco means "the Valley of the Slain") the marvellous deeds of our Lady Help of Christians.

His parents were simple labourers, rich in three things: an unsullied name; contentment with their lot; and an inexhaustible mine of deep Christian piety. At the municipal school, little Michael soon revealed his intelligence and practical piety even when a mere child.

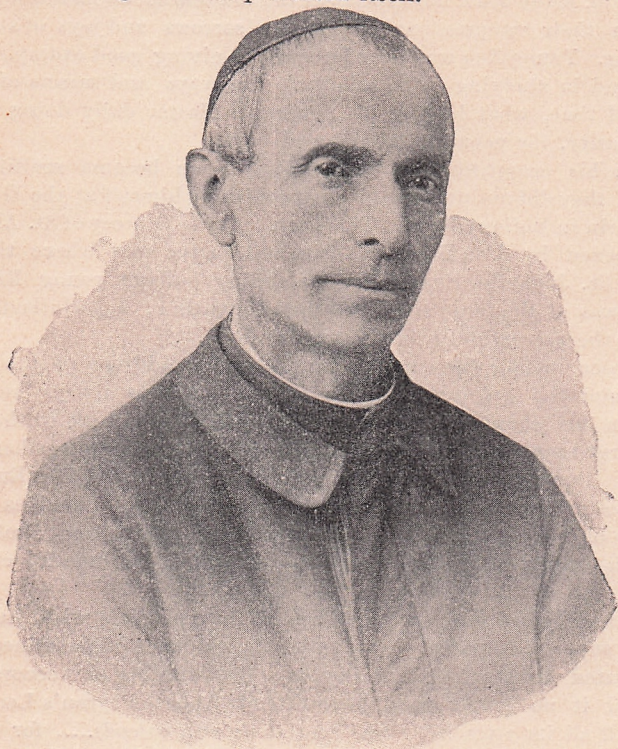
The school he frequented, St. Barbara, was then directed—as, indeed, were all the schools of the town at that time—by the Christian Brothers, who here, as elsewhere, with enlightened zeal, were lavishing the treasures of their charity on the children of the people. It was here that Divine Providence threw him into Don Bosco's way, who, then quite a young priest, was commencing his apostolic epopee for the social regeneration of youth, which now claims the whole world for the scene of its action.

For, if Don Bosco penetrated the dungeons to rehabilitate before man and God the unfortunate votaries and precocious victims of vice, his ardent charity did not neglect the all-important work of preservation. He visited the schools of the city, and, to his unspeakable joy, he had ample opportunity for exercising his mission, by instilling into the budding intelligence of the little children he found there, the love and practice of the Christian virtues. His catechising and his little sermons; the charming traits with which they were studded; and the candour and simplicity of Don Bosco's address,—in a word, all his little battery of heavenly arts, had a marvellous effect on the children's innocent hearts. Amongst the foremost of the little ones that took their stand under the banner of charity unfurled by this charming priest, was Michael Rua, then a pupil in the 2nd class. He no sooner saw Don Bosco than he chose him for his confessor and revered him as a father.

In 1841, Don Bosco began to assemble the little urchins of the town on Sundays and holidays,—a crowd of as turbulent and undisciplined little fellows as might be found in any corner of the earth. The wonderful exertions of the young priest were sufficient to occupy and keep in good order some hundreds of his restless and instinctively mischievous darlings. But for the religious exercises and instruction of his band, lieutenants and assistants were not to be dispensed with. Our little Michael was not yet

* This is an abridgment of a sketch which appeared in the *Gazette de Liège*.

twelve years old when Don Bosco raised him to the exalted dignity of directing a Catechism class—a dignity which, considering the circumstances, was not assuredly a sinecure. But young Rua, it seems, like little Tobias, enjoyed the rare privilege of passing his childhood without paying tribute to any of those little foibles or shortcomings, whose best excuse lies in the tender age of the offender. Prudence, amiability, piety, and industry were the characteristics of his boyhood; and he never failed to practise these virtues when a fitting occasion presented itself.



Don Rua, Superior-General of the Salesian Society.

Don Bosco was not slow in discerning qualities so precious and so rare in a child; and between the master and the disciple, it is needless to say, there sprang up such a sacred link of reciprocal affection, that death itself could not dissolve it. Nor did the good Christian Brothers fail to observe the child's singular aptitude, and animated, tender piety; and taking them as a token of a Divine vocation, they urged him to correspond to it by consecrating himself to God in the Institute of the Venerable de la Salle. As if this invitation were but a touchstone in the designs of Divine Providence, Don Bosco precisely at the same time, (by one of those singular "chances" that have a better name in Christian language,) asked the boy if he did not feel a desire to become a priest. Such a proposal coming to him from the

lips of his Spiritual Director, removed all doubts and difficulties from his mind: his choice was already made; and, in the summer of 1850, he began his classical studies. In three years he passed through the five courses of humanities, maintaining his place in the foremost ranks on every subject. In 1852, he received the ecclesiastical habit. From that day forth Don Bosco's house became his home; and his constant study was to execute his patron's slightest wish and anticipate his desires.

With him, many other boys received the *soutane* at the hands of Don Bosco, and began their "apprenticeship" in the sorrows and joys of an apostle's hard calling. Young Rua was ever foremost in giving good example; in perseverance; and in studying with solicitude the ways and means of doing, in God's good time, what he saw his venerable Master daily doing with such patient charity, for poor and abandoned boys.

Though his occupations at the Oratory soon became multifarious and absorbing, they did not prevent his distinguishing himself at the Grand Seminary of Turin in Philosophy and Theology. At the Oratory of St. Aloysius (the second opened by Don Bosco in Turin, and on the spot where the Salesian Church of St. John the Evangelist is standing to-day,) young Rua, not yet ordained, was at the same time catechist, preacher, superintendent of the games in the recreation grounds, and so forth.

Don Bosco, seeing the capacity and singular address of his pupil, not only left him the greatest liberty of action, but was always heaping new burdens on his shoulders. The rapid growth of the work of the Oratories and the large number of rescued children rendered a resident teacher absolutely necessary. Don Bosco's choice was soon made: he dubbed Don Rua *Professor* and the post of resident teacher was accordingly filled. Besides continuing his course of Theology at the Grand Seminary, the young Professor must now teach Italian, Christian Doctrine, History, Arithmetic, etc., at the Oratory.

Some time before this, in obedience to his patron's wish, he had commenced a superior course of Greek under the guidance of an eminent Helenist, the celebrated Abbate Amedeus Peyron. But with his new occupations, Don Rua found it no longer possible to attend Abbate Peyron's Lectures; and Greek with all its attractions was sent to its own calends..... for a time, at least, despite the loud protestations of the illustrious professor. This sacrifice, however, was destined to have its reward.

For the day came when Don Bosco was called upon to pay his tribute to the common misfortune of those who charitably dedicate themselves (in Italy) to the education of children. Some gentlemen from the Royal University, being sent to explore this "promised land" of Valdocco, reported with virtuous indignation and a sort of panic, that Don Bosco's children were permitted to know as much as, and more than, the children educated in the public schools; and this, moreover, by means of Professors without degrees. Fortunately, however, the law is armed against such abuses in these times of generous liberty; so Don Rua was promptly called upon to have his science moulded in the mint of the University workshop, in other words, to become "patented."

It was, therefore, necessary for the young professor to renew acquaintance with his favourite Greek in the few spare moments that his numerous

occupations allowed him. In less than two months, the candidate presented himself; and at an academic examination where almost all the wranglers fell, the young priest of Valdocco triumphed.

Three years after the University examination, Don Rua (in 1863) was appointed Superior of the first Salesian House outside Turin, in Mirabello-Monferrat. Two years after, he returned to the Oratory of Turin, where he filled for some time the office of Prefect, and afterwards that of Rector of the Institute. Later on, he was elected Prefect of the Congregation and chosen to act as Don Bosco's substitute, or Vicar General of the whole Society. Then, on the death of the venerable founder, he became Superior-General of the Salesian Congregation by the unanimous acclamation of his *confrères*, and in obedience to a decree of the Holy See, confirming a document by which Don Bosco himself had nominated him to become his successor. Dr. D'Espiney, in his charming book on Don Bosco, relates an incident purporting to show that the founder of the Salesian Institution looked upon Don Rua as one destined by Heaven to continue his great work. There is a spice of prophecy in the little episode.

"In 1868, (he writes), Don Rua fell sick and was soon in danger of death. He made his confession, and begged those present to administer the last rites of the Church, and not let him die *without the Sacraments*. But all around was consternation and uncertainty, for Don Bosco was not at the Oratory. Being called to return in all haste, he soon arrived... 'Don Rua is dying, and wants to see you.' Without showing the least sign of emotion, Don Bosco proceeded to the refectory and had supper. Then he retired to his own chamber, simply remarking to those who were anxiously awaiting to go with him to the infirmary: 'I shall not fail to visit Don Rua—to-morrow.' Seeing that some were scandalised at his words, he added: 'I know Don Rua well; he is not the man to "depart" without asking leave.' To the doctor who resolutely declared that the case was past all hopes, Don Bosco subjoined: 'Quietly, quietly, my dear Doctor, you do not know what Don Rua has yet to accomplish.'"

The prophecy is realised. If Don Bosco has moulded a work destined to out-live all time, Don Rua is called upon to organize and consolidate the marvellous Institute.

As regards his personal appearance, Don Rua is tall, and (being naturally inclined to leanness) his body bespeaks a life of ineffable austerity. His ambition is to know—and he actually knows—all the members of the Salesian Congregation. He can tell you exactly the residence of any of the brethren; their occupation; and the particular merit and ability of each. In order to cope with the growing requirements of the Society, he has made extensive linguistic studies. He can write, and speak, French and Spanish, with ease and fluency; he also understands English and German, and can speak both languages fairly.

Possessing the mind and the spirit of Don Bosco, Don Rua will continue the salutary and truly beneficent work of the venerable Founder; and his name, henceforth coupled with that of the humble priest of Valdocco, will be mentioned with blessings among the nations of the earth.

Mamma Margaret.*

MARGARET BOSCO, née Occhiena, Don Bosco's mother, or as the children of the Oratory delighted to call her, Mamma Margaret, was the daughter of simple peasants, Melchior Occhiena and his wife Domenica. She was born on April 1, 1788, at Capriglio d'Asti in Piedmont. Brought up entirely at home, in the simplicity of rural life, and under the fostering care of her loving and pious parents, Margaret became a very model of virtue and innocence.

The years of her youth glided by pleasantly and tranquilly and she had reached mature womanhood, when she became the wife of Francis Bosco, a young man of unblemished character, who had been won by her gentle and amiable manners. God blessed that union and filled both Francis and Margaret with joy by the birth of two children; the eldest, Joseph, and the youngest, John.

Content with their lot in life, the hardworking Francis and Margaret industriously employed themselves in their daily duties, the former by cultivating his small property, the latter by alternately attending to her domestic affairs and assisting her husband. They were poor, it is true, but with poverty there reigned in that little household the fear of God. Five years thus passed by. Margaret was indeed happy, for she had found a husband after her own heart. But her happiness was short-lived. When her son John was only two years old, Francis died. His death was a great blow for Margaret,—the more so, since this was the first real affliction that crossed her path in life. He had been a kind and affectionate husband, and up to his death, his sturdy arm had provided for his wife and children. Margaret in a moment found herself alone, with three helpless children (one being a step-child, the offspring of Francis Bosco's first marriage), and Francis's aged mother to support. The future seemed dark, indeed; for even the little that had been put by for a rainy day had been almost entirely spent during her husband's illness. The helpless condition, however, of her children and of Francis's aged mother, instead of causing this heroic woman to lose heart, stimulated her to exertion, and called forth all the energies of her sex. We can well imagine the almost insurmountable difficulties to be overcome,—enough to have discouraged the most resolute. But Margaret bravely struggled on and wonderfully fulfilled her arduous task.

It must not be supposed that her many duties caused her to lose sight of or neglect the Christian education of her children. The mother is the soul

* The materials for this sketch have been derived from *Scene Morali di Famiglia esposte nella Vita di Margherita Bosco*, an interesting little work in Italian by the Rev. Father LEMOYNE of the Salesian Society.

of the family; it is she, especially, who moulds the child's heart and forms his character; on her depends the well-being not only of the family, but also of society at large. Mamma Margaret knew all this,—for she was a true mother. She lived only for her children, whom she regarded as a sacred charge entrusted to her by heaven. Hence she devoted herself with indefatigable attention and care to their Christian education. Never was an opportunity lost by her to impress upon their tender minds the bounty of God and the love of virtue; in fact, nothing escaped her attention, and she drew a moral from almost every incident.



Mamma Margaret.

The writer hardly knows whether it would be worth while giving two instances. The house was guarded by a large dog, much prized by the children, which Margaret brought from her old home. But hearing her parents express a wish for the dog, she gave him back; however, he reappeared at the house, entering with head and tail lowered, as if doubtful of his welcome, and not receiving the accustomed caress, slunk to a corner. A few days later, Margaret's parents came to fetch the dog, who quietly submitted to be led away; but, when liberated, again found the way back. One of the boys ran towards him with a raised stick. Instead of retreating, the brute crouched, throwing himself down, paws in the air—an attitude expressive of accepting chastisement, provided he might stay! This mute, eloquent appeal touched the boys to the heart. "What patience, submission, and affection towards his masters, to whom he is merely indebted

for some morsels of bread!" Margaret said. "Ah! that we were even half so faithfully attached to God, to Whom we owe everything;—not only this world's goods, but a soul created to His image, to live for ever in His kingdom. Let us then learn from this poor dog, gratitude towards our Creator,"

Another time her son Joseph caught a young owl, and devoted himself to rearing it. One day, he brought a basket of tempting cherries from the garden, and offered one to his pet, who greedily eat it,—the stone, as well—then, opened its beak and extended its neck with a cry for a second; it was given, but the bird was insatiable. Joseph impatiently held out the basket with: "Here, take as many as you like. Let us try which will tire sooner." The owl voraciously swallowed so many cherries that it was choked! The child carried his dead pet to Margaret, who exclaimed: "The end of gourmands! Nothing hastens death more than gluttony and intemperance."

But, if Margaret was ever ready to impress upon her children's minds the love of virtue, she was not less careful to protect them from evil influence. In the winter evenings, neighbours assembled in her barn to chat and exchange news, as is the custom in mountainous districts. Women knitted; men occupied themselves quietly; and young people amused one another. One evening, two youths made some questionable remarks. Margaret asked if they had nothing better to say. One insolently answered, "Surely we may amuse ourselves?" "Certainly, but not at the expense of propriety." "Bah! Mother Bosco, you are scrupulous. Others speak as we do." "Well, if others commit suicide, will you do likewise? If you go to hell, will you find any comfort in being in a crowd?" The young libertines laughed at the mention of "hell," and began a bad song, in a loud, affected voice. Margaret rose; "Go; leave my house. Go away with you!" As they did not instantly obey, she sent one of her sons for some members of the youths' families. The mother of one and brother of the other soon arrived. At first there was a commotion, but finally they had to go. Margaret never allowed them to spend another evening at her house.

One Sunday morning, whilst on her way to Mass, accompanied by her two children, she met with a miserable wretch who was cursing and swearing. Drawing the two boys closer to her, she exclaimed: "My dear children, you well know the great love I bear you, yet I would rather see you dead at my feet than that you should imitate that unhappy man's example."

One of Margaret's favourite virtues was charity. This is worthy of remark when we note her own poverty; yet, never were her means too limited, when it was a question of relieving the distressed; and, often, she even deprived herself of the very necessities of life to come to their relief.

What wonder then that Don Bosco, under the judicious training of this noble woman, and with her virtuous example before his eyes, should imbibe that faith, piety, and charity that so distinguished him in after life!

As the years passed by, and Mamma Margaret became conscious of her son John's vocation for the Sanctuary, she was anxious that he should begin his studies; and, notwithstanding her poverty, she was able, by making many sacrifices, to help him in his calling. What a source of sincere and pardonable gratification it must have been for her, after several years of toil and privations, to see him ascend God's altar to offer up his first Holy Mass!

It was on that memorable day that she said to Don Bosco: "Now you are a priest, my beloved son; but remember that the apostolic life is one of suffering; however, I do not ask rest for you, but only courage and perseverance. In future do not give a thought to me; think only of the salvation of souls."

Don Bosco soon after went to Turin, and without delay began his work of regenerating the poor and abandoned youth of that city; whilst Margaret continued to peacefully pass her days at Becchi, with her son Joseph and his family. She was far from suspecting that, in a short time, she would be leaving for ever her dear but humble home. Yet such was the case. God had destined her to be the generous helper of Don Bosco in the foundation of the Salesian Oratory.

In fact, Don Bosco on recovering from a severe illness in 1846, was ordered by the doctor to go to pass a few weeks at Becchi in order to recruit his health. Whilst there in the semi-solitude of his native home, he had time to reflect on serious difficulties, which he had not yet been able to solve. Obligated to leave the Baroli Refuge, which he had served as chaplain for some five years, he had rented the field and two rooms of a certain Pinardi, where the Oratory had been transferred. Now, who would take care of his small home? He bethought himself of his mother; and without delay he made known to her his anxieties—the retirement of Pinardi's enclosure; the bad repute of Valdocco, the quarter of the city where the Oratory was situated; and, despite these disadvantages, the necessity of having someone to manage the house.

Margaret, the first exclamation of surprise over, did not hesitate, but calmly and resolutely declared it her intention to leave her beloved home, where she had spent so many happy days, and its dear inmates, and follow Don Bosco, in order to fulfil the will of God.

A few days later she took leave of Becchi, and in company with Don Bosco set out for Turin on foot, a distance of some thirty miles. They arrived towards evening at their new home, which consisted of two small bedrooms, one of which did service as a kitchen, without any other furniture except two chairs, a table, and a very limited number of cooking utensils.

This state of things instead of disheartening Margaret and her son, only served to cheer them, and caused that devoted woman to say with a smile: "At home, I had ceaseless work;—cleaning, superintending, ordering; here, instead, a few moments will suffice to do all."

During the ten years Margaret passed at the Oratory, ten years of ceaseless labour and prayer, she never gave a sign of weariness. The poor children who frequented the Oratory soon learned to love this amiable and indefatigable woman, and look upon her as a mother. It was here that she earned the sweet title of Mamma, that has ever since been inseparable from her name. How little these forlorn and destitute children had known of the comforts of a cheerful fireside, what strangers many had been to the love of a father or mother! Hence, how sweetly the loving care and affection of Margaret broke in upon their rude and untamed minds, throwing a charm around, and making them sensible that they were no longer forgotten and abandoned!

Mamma Margaret was the soul of the Salesian Society in its first years. Don Bosco was frequently absent, visiting hospitals or prisons, or begging subscriptions. Nevertheless, order and regularity reigned in the Oratory owing to Mamma Margaret's presence, her activity, goodness, and the rectitude of her judgment,—for she saw to everything. Her influence upon the young lads was remarkable, whilst her tenderness won the wayward and undisciplined. It was a custom with her never to leave a reprimanded child alone to brood; and she hastened to apply balm to the culprit's wound.

Many simple but beautiful episodes of Mamma Margaret's sweet and gentle mode of education could be narrated, but it would not be possible to do justice to the subject within the limits prescribed to the present article. It would, however, be unjust to terminate this sketch without speaking of her spirit of poverty, and detachment from the things of this world. She often repeated: "I was born in poverty, and I desire to live and die in poverty." And next to her love and benevolence, her spirit of poverty always appeared to us her most remarkable trait. When she arrived with her son at the Oratory, their position was indeed gloomy. Besides the debts that had been already contracted, the daily expenses were large. Food and clothing had to be given to the unfortunate children who were wholly without help, save what they received at the Oratory. Money was necessary; and Mamma Margaret cheerfully concurred in this noble work by selling all she possessed at her home. She at once sent for, and sold, her wedding presents, still carefully preserved through all these years; her fine house linen, and even her *corona*—the pearl ornaments which had been her wedding heirloom, the ornaments so precious to Italian women that they will suffer starvation rather than part with them!

She only possessed one cloak, of which it was impossible to distinguish the original colour. Don Bosco begged her for his sake to buy another.

"But my dear John," she protested, "this will do well enough. Look, there is not a spot on it."

"No, mother, it will not do! Poor people in the streets have even better."

"But why should you wish me to buy another while we want so many necessaries?"

"I decidedly wish you to have a new cloak. How much will it cost?"

"Twenty francs."

"Here they are."

Margaret went to her work. A week passed, then another; but the cloak did not appear.

"Mother, the cloak?"

"Yes, John, but I cannot buy it without money."

"But the twenty francs?"

"Gone; I could not spend them on a cloak, as there was a small debt due at the grocer's; then, one boy wanted a tie, another a pair of shoes, so the cloak was out of the question. Oh! those shoes and boots do impoverish the mother of a large family!"

"Mother, I will not allow you to turn the conversation!—You require a cloak for my credit's sake"

"In that case I must buy one."

"Do, Mother; here is another twenty-franc piece."

"Thank you." But this, too, was expended in clothing the orphans.

She never shared in the additional fare given to the boys on festival days. Her diet was *polenta* and *peperone*, or an onion with bread. "We are poor", was her refrain.

At her death no vestige was found of any of life's comforts. The women who laid her out asked Don Bosco's permission to keep her clothes and linen as souvenirs, but she had none. Her only gown was on her in the coffin!

Towards the winter of 1856, by the side of the old house, a new boarding-school sprang up as if by magic. Don Bosco's heart overflowed with gratitude;—now he would be able to shelter at least a hundred and fifty boys. Nothing would have marred his happiness except that the failing health of his beloved, saintly mother threw a veil of anxious sadness over the household.

"Ah!" Margaret was heard to say, when helping to light the chafing dishes to dry the new walls, "these grand corridors are not for me." And, in fact, instead of changing to the new house, she was confined to bed in her old room. She called her two sons, and made her last wishes known. She advised Joseph to educate his children in their own sphere of life, unless they gave indications of studious tastes. "Poverty has its temptations," she said, "but the temptations of riches are greater. I wish my grandchildren's lot to be like mine: comfortable, but active and fully occupied; above all, a life in peace and harmony with one another. This union will be thoroughly preserved if they abide in concord with the love of God."

Don Bosco thought he knew his mother well, but the keen and penetrating mind she now displayed amazed him. "My dear John, I wish to speak to you as in confession. Have confidence in your fellow-labourers in the Lord's vineyard, but see that their aim be the glory of God. Despise splendour in your works; have effective and real poverty as your object. Many love poverty in theory, but not in practice. As your institution increases it should increase likewise in humility; and God will abundantly bless it." She then entered into minute, confidential details, and added: "It is a great consolation to receive the last Sacraments of the Church from one of my sons, and to see many young scholars wearing the *soutane*, some even priests—*your* children, my dear John, and a few *mine*. I commend myself to your prayers, and to theirs; and, if God in His mercy receives me, I shall not forget any of you in Heaven."

The last Sacraments were administered to her by Don Bosco. Afterwards she said: "Good-bye, my dear children; remember that sorrow and suffering are the portion here below." A few moments later, she breathed her last. It was the 25th of November, 1856.

Those who have known Mamma Margaret can never forget her. Her sweet image is indelibly impressed on their memory, and they recall with tender love the bright days of pure happiness they spent under her maternal care.



The Nuns of Mary, Help of Christians.

WHEN Don Bosco gathered homeless boys about him, his large heart would fain have had their poor little sisters also welcomed to a sheltering home. His good Mother, who seconded Don Bosco so nobly in his charitable undertakings, often met lonely girl-children rambling about the streets of Turin, and it cut her to the heart not to be able to offer them the hospitality of her already over-full dwelling. She used to pray earnestly that some way might be found for helping these destitute beings; and, in course of time, the prayer,—to which she had never been able to give a definite form,—was answered in the most practical manner. As with much of Don Bosco's earliest work, this second "Foundation" seemed rather to grow of itself than to be laboriously erected. The Parish Priest of Mornese urged Don Bosco to affiliate the Mornese Branch of the Congregation of Mary Immaculate to the Community of St. Francis of Sales. A truly "valiant woman," Maria Mazzarello, would have been (notwithstanding her youth), elected Head of the Congregation, by her Parish Priest's express desire; but, some of her companions, objecting to follow the guidance of a girl of sixteen, another was selected, to whom Maria was the first to submit. Maria followed the prescribed rules of the pious Congregation, and, in addition, gathered about her the very little girls of the village, to give them religious instruction, and also to teach them sewing. (She was a very good needlewoman, herself.) She hired two small rooms near the parish church, in which some of the village girls could join her in pious reading. They also accompanied her in her visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Prayer and meditation, she called "spiritual rest;" and, if she borrowed hours of the day-time for religious exercises, she conscientiously paid them back, by working all the longer at night.

Maria was a sturdy labourer on her father's farm. The good man used to tell her that she must not work so hard or he should never be able to hire a man, as the farm-servant would be ashamed to do less than a girl! It was said that Maria did the work of two men in the fields; and when her out-door tasks were over for the day, she sat down with her busy needle. Her spiritual interest in the girls around her prompted her to work somewhat on the lines of Don Bosco's early Sunday gathering of boys; and, when she taught them to be sempstresses, she was unconsciously imitating his (later-established) schools, where boys learn a trade. Instead of merely affiliating the Sodality at Mornese, Don Bosco preferred to found a school for girls there, and Maria was entrusted with its management. Don Pectorino, the Parish Priest, himself became a Salesian, and the new Society in his former parish was placed on a par with the Salesian Institute.—Pope Pius IX.

heartily approving and blessing the Foundation of the Sisters of Mary, Help of Christians.

On the Feast of our Lady of Snow, in 1872, Maria and her companions received the religious habit, at the hands of the Bishop of Acqui,—pronouncing a threefold vow of obedience, poverty and chastity; and Maria was installed as “Lady Superior.” She was as zealous a labourer for her spiritual Father, Don Bosco, as she had been for her earthly father in the days when she lent her capable hand to the farm-work; and her courage was indomitable. She and her Sisters were very poor; and sometimes meal time came round when they had nothing to make a fire! Then, the Lady Superior (with a neighbouring proprietor’s permission), would go to the forest for wood,



Mother Maria Mazzarello.

returning with a load on her shoulders, which soon served as fuel for the *polenta*-pot. Her neighbours gave her Indian corn, and vegetables, sometimes. The repasts of the community were graced by cordiality and good appetite; — but dishes and plates were unknown adjuncts. Nevertheless, nobody grumbled; and anxiety preyed upon none of their minds. The Sisters rehearsed over again the humble beginnings of Valdocco: and when Don Bosco knew of the privations heroically borne at Mornese, instead of grieving, he thanked God for the Divine Goodness. His thought is said to have been: “Ah, if only my mother were alive, how pleased she would be with this intrepid poverty, and with this realisation of one of her dearest wishes!”

While the nuns’ house was being built, Maria felt the vigour of her youth return. She carted sand, and carried stones, to help the masons. Her ardour spread to all the Sisters. She took better care of them than of

herself, and would first see that they had changed their clothes after their hard work, and had taken a hot drink, before attending to her own wants. Her forethought was rewarded,—for there was not even a case of slight indisposition among the Sisters during this laborious period of hardship. The Convent was definitely organised on the 15th of June, 1874; and, speaking to Don Bosco of the community, Pope Pius IX. said: “The Good Master has chosen you once again as His instrument I am convinced that the Sisters of Mary Help of Christians will perform for girls all that the Salesians have performed for the education of boys.” His Holiness pronounced the new Institute “clearly for the greater glory of God and the benefit of souls.”

The Sisters seem to be, everywhere, heroically making arduous beginnings! In May, 1899, Don Evasio Rabagliati wrote (from the Columbian Republic) to the *Orociata*, of Turin, a description of the Salesians' work in the Leper Settlements of Agua de Dios and Contratacion. He describes the poor dwelling of the Fathers, and goes on: “The Sisters are rather worse off. They have three rooms instead of five; and, as one of their's must be arranged as a chapel, they have in reality but two” for five nuns. “Their refectory is the corridor, which is also the place of their short recreations. The kitchen is a hole open to the rain and all the winds that blow. Its furniture consists of sundry stones, set here and there. With great waste of time, strength, and health, the Sisters stay therein, daily, preparing food for the Missionaries and themselves. The house has the great drawback of standing on the steep side of a hill, three hundred yards, or more, from the populous part of the town. The road is excessively bad (*una strada che non ha nulla a vedere colla vostra Dora Grossa*), and the Sisters must pass up and down, many times, morning and evening; when they wish to go to the public Church; to one or other of the hospitals; to the schools; or to private houses where there may be some of the sick who are uncared-for, or who cannot be taken into any hospital.”

Ten years after the first House for Girls was opened, there were over thirty Houses in Italy, France and America. The first Superioress had but thirteen nuns at Mornese, but, at her death, nine years after the Congregation was founded, the Sisters numbered two hundred and fifty. Some said, that Don Bosco's second Institute out-ran his first! There are now nearly two hundred Institutes in the lands already named, besides others in Belgium, Palestine, Africa, and Mexico. Wherever the Fathers of the Order have begun their labours, there, also, has been found a field for the labours of the Sisters. The sudden rise of the Congregation has seemed almost miraculous. It surpasses all other examples of rapid development. Above all, are these holy women invaluable in the Salesians' foreign Missions. Their abnegation in dealing with “the half brutalised daughters of the forest” is hardly to be described. They are wholly admirable as catechists; and the example that they give of ardent zeal, and self-sacrifice, endears Christianity to the savages. In Patagonia, and in Terra del Fuego, no less than in Columbia, their work is blessed, and thousands of the heathen have, by their means, been educated in morality and Christianity.

His Holiness, Leo XIII., expressed himself particularly gratified with the

accounts of the Congregation that had reached him, saying, (by Cardinal Rampolla), that its works "redounded to the greater honour and glory of that Apostle of charity and servant of God, Don Bosco," and granting special favours to the Sisters and their pupils, on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the foundation of the Congregation of Mary, Help of Christians.

When the first Superioress lay at death's door, her Assistant begged a word of counsel for the Sisters. "Dear Daughters, I leave you," she answered. "Love one another. Never be overjoyful when pleasant things happen; and never despond in adversity, but rejoice ever in the Lord . . . To you all, in this House, I give three words of advice, and I entreat you never to forget them:—*Charity, humility, obedience!* Let those who take charge of the postulants and the pupils instil into their hearts a perfect frankness, and, above all, sincerity in confession. If you will follow in this way, life, and death, will bring happiness."

The Mother Superior was still young, when, in 1884, she breathed her last, leaving behind her the reputation of great sanctity, and "a religious society so appreciated that a founder,—less accustomed than Don Bosco to think the supernatural, natural,—would have been surprised and alarmed."

To-day, thousands and thousands of good women (and good children) are blessing the Sisters, to whom, under God, they owe a Christian education, in so-called Christian countries,—where they had begun life under absolutely non-moral, and de-civilised, conditions!

The Mother-House of the Salesian Society.*

I must confess that I was not free from certain prejudices as I crossed the threshold of the principal Salesian establishment in Turin. I had imagined, I scarcely know why,—perhaps because I had often heard that Don Bosco was very saintly,—that I should see a calm religious monastery; a kind of Christian oasis in which the happy inmates, carefully guarded from the scorching winds of the outer-world, would be badly prepared for after struggles in life.

I was very courteously received; and, presently, I found a guide in the person of a young French priest, who did “the honours of the institute” in a very interesting and pleasant manner.

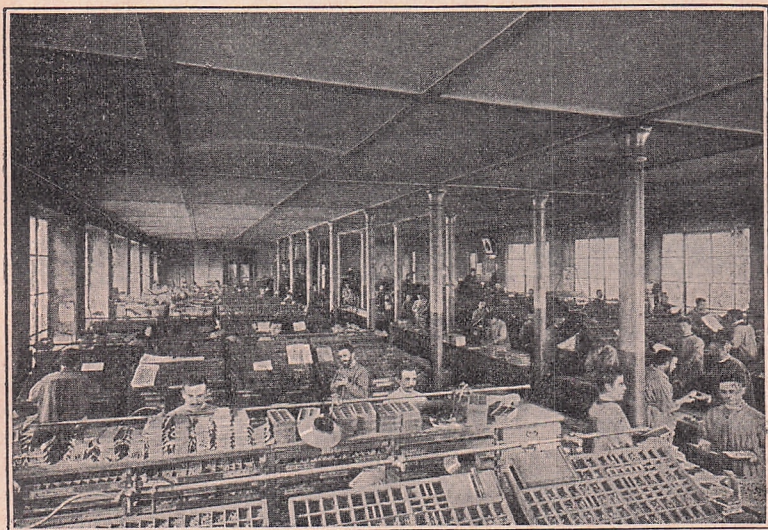
From my first entrance into the workshops, I discovered that my preconceptions were entirely unfounded, for I found myself, in fact, in a practically and intelligently-organised industrial school. Certainly, there was nothing here to remind one of those *enchanted models*, which are so often but model incantations on the public purse. The indispensable monumental façade was no where to be seen. No uniform; no brass buttons; not even gold-banded caps;—nothing that recalls the idea of a barracks. Observing more closely I saw some trousers were too large, others too short, to be originally cut for their present owners. But every garment was perfectly decent.

As for the workshops, it was easy to see that the money of the contributors had not been lavishly spent on brick and mortar; but the whole concern had the stamp of well-administered manufactories, which had gradually developed and where business was flourishing. There you find shoemakers, tailors, joiners, sculptors, book-binders, blacksmiths, barbers, bakers, and, finally, printing in all its branches, comprising type-casting, setting, stereotyping, and fancy ornamental work. The Institute also owns a large paper-mill, at Mathi, which produces sufficient paper to supply several typographical establishments. Three gas engines, of ten horse-power each, drive the printing presses and the several machines. All is perfectly fitted up. Gas chafing-dishes are placed wherever fire is needed; the bakery has a mechanical kneading trough, and the heat emanating from the vast oven is received into hot-air pipes, and, in winter, utilised to warm the church. I greatly regret that the short time at my disposal did not allow of my examining all in detail. While visiting these large and numerous workshops, I could not refrain from manifesting to my courteous *cicerone* my surprise at finding myself in a real manufactory instead of a merely pious refuge. He laughed

* This article affords a very good description of the Salesian Institute in its present state. It was published in the *Gazette de Liège*, a few years ago, but the translator has taken the liberty to correct some of the figures so as to bring down to date in all its details.

heartily, and replied: "The ambition of our institute is not to form devotees, but simply good, steadfast Christians, and artisans well skilled in their trade and contented with their lot. We seek, certainly, above all, the salvation of the souls of these young people, but at the same time we pursue a social aim."

I begged him, and also one of his compatriots who had joined us, to give me some details of the means employed to attain the marvellous results I witnessed. I learned from these gentlemen that the principal basis of Don Bosco's work was absence of restraint. For instance, the rules counsel monthly frequentation of the Sacraments, but the pupils are free to follow this advice or not. Nothing is easier than to "escape" from the institute if

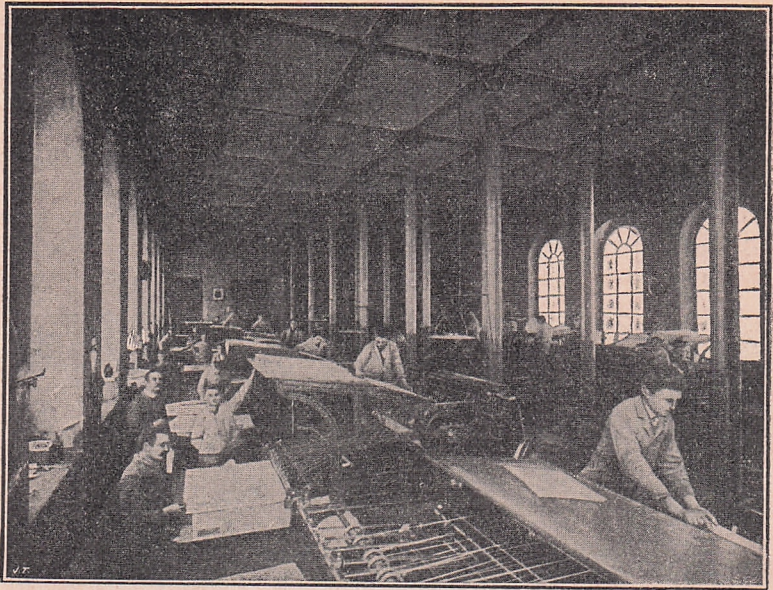


In the Mother House of the Salesian Congregation:
The Composing-Room.

one does not wish to remain, yet desertions are of very rare occurrence. Discipline, which to me seemed almost impossible in the midst of abounding elements of insubordination, is admirably maintained without any means of punishment, and solely by religious influence and moral authority.

The working boys number about four hundred and fifty. They are admitted at the age of eleven years and a-half, and have usually mastered their trade at seventeen. They, then, quit the institute well-equipped to embark in life on their own account, continuing, as a general rule, on the best terms with their old masters. A certain number stay until the period of conscription, or till they think of getting married. Others, still, become members of the Society, and remain all their lives.

There is a pension (for boarders who can pay it) set down at fifteen francs a month, and reduced in proportion as the work furnished becomes productive. Nevertheless, not even a fourth part of the boys pay this nominal quota; the others are orphans, abandoned by their relations, or received at



The Printing Department.

their request. To my question: Do young boys, who have spent some time in a reformatory, receive admittance here? I obtained a negative reply—for this would be contrary to the principle of freedom which governs the Institute.

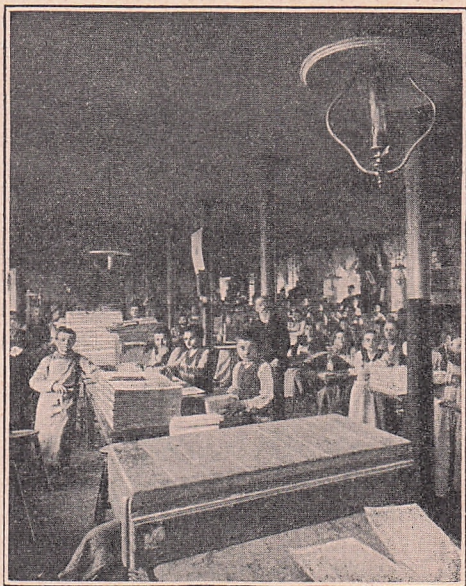
Each youth receives four *soldi* on Sundays; but on leaving the establishment a third of his salary is given him as savings. Thus, under the most practical form, the cherished dream of our modern economists is realised,—the participation by the labourer in the profits.

The maximum duration of work is nine hours a day. Besides their technical instruction, the artisans receive daily lessons in Christian doctrine, drawing, commerce, French, and a good preparatory course of Italian. Technical instruction is generally given by former pupils, called *Capi d'Arte* (Foremen). Each workshop is superintended by a clerical student; but he takes no part in the technical instruction.

I was almost forgetting to mention that in the same institute, attached to the industrial-school, there is also a boarding-school of about five hundred pupils, where a complete course of classical studies is pursued. It is a sort of preparatory divinity school,—as about a fourth of these boys enter the Salesian Congregation, or are received in the seminaries.* The pension is the same as for the artisans, and like them too, three-fourths of the “boarders” pay nothing. The whole institute comprises upwards of a thousand persons.

* It seems to us that our distinguished visitor of the *Gazette de Liège* has taken too narrow a view of the curriculum of our College. The Government programme is accepted and taught in all its details, so that our pupils are prepared for the University as well as for the Seminary.

That such a large establishment necessitates a vast expenditure goes without saying, but the question involuntarily presents itself, How does it manage to defray its expenses? No doubt charity provides its share; and, besides, the organisation is so intelligent, and the management so careful, that it is to some extent self-supporting. The workshops have, generally speaking, a large supply of business on hand, the typographical department especially I was informed, is regularly provided with orders for fifteen months in advance.



The Book-binding Department.

I have visited industrial establishments of several kinds in almost every country, and I declare I never met artisans who impressed me more favourably than these. They work with the eagerness of their age and race, coupled with a graceful sedateness and considerable skill. You see at a glance that their hearts are in their work. I particularly noticed in the blacksmith's shop a youth who wielded the sledge-hammer with such graceful play that I regretted not being an artist,—I should not have wished for a better model of a youthful Vulcan. I took a special interest in the printing department. Heaven forefend that I should try to pick a quarrel with the printers of certain journals, but I could not help thinking that on certain points their juvenile contemporaries in Turin could give them some lessons.

Their tasks over, what soul-stirring recreation this multitude of youths enjoy! What lively matches at ball, what animated contests in racing! The good Fathers, tucking up their *soutanes*, join in the sports as if they were elder brothers. All goes on with the greatest freedom, and contentions are conspicuous by their absence. These children of the people would not

be out of place in any college. From time to time one or another steals away from the noisy play to say a short prayer in the church, (which opens on the courtyard), and it is truly touching to see the fervour of this act of spontaneous piety.


It is impossible not to be struck with the good manners the Salesian Fathers have contrived to impart to these children, who, for the most part, belong to the humbler classes. They have also succeeded in eradicating the inborn Italian propensity of asking for gratuities. Here is a characteristic detail to the point. Having made some purchases at the library, managed with quite an amusing seriousness and zeal by three lads of about fifteen years of age, I had much trouble to make them accept a few pence, which they wished positively to return to me.

I can give no idea of the respectful, cordial, and confident relations that exist between the boys and their masters;—it is something truly paternal. They appear, however, very proud of their excellent Fathers. Having asked the little boy who admitted me (for I found no solemn usher there), if the Superior spoke French, he replied with the slightest touch of vanity: “I should think so—*parla tutte le lingue* (he speaks every language)! ”

On seeing these young people so happy and so well prepared to become useful members of the great human family, I asked myself how many among them, without this admirable institution, would have become a prey to vice and crime, and augmented the already crowded ranks of revolutionaries, who *find fault with their share of fortune's gifts, and clamour for a new distribution!*

The stupid and surfeited world feels nothing but contempt for, and indifference towards, the humble Religious who devote body and soul to this sublime work of regeneration; while its gold and applause are showered on authors who corrupt the intellect and heart by probing into the mire of human passions and by cynically parading the turpitudes of the people in vile pamphlets. My thoughts go back to the monks who, thirteencen turies ago, preserved mankind, at a time when all trace of culture seemed overwhelmed in the waves of barbarian invasions. The abbeys of Gaul and Germany civilised our forefathers by prayer and work, as Don Bosco has civilised the unreclaimed of our large modern cities. Yes! *Ora et Labora* has ever been the motto of Christian faith and charity; the poor outcasts of society will always find a fond and provident mother in the Catholic Church, and a home in her inspired Institutions.

The Church of Mary Help of Christians.

MIDST the workshops of the Salesian Oratory, in the Valdocco quarter of Turin, there rises the beautiful Church dedicated to Mary Help of Christians. When, in 1865, His Holiness, Pius IX. of holy memory, was informed of the wish of our beloved Father, Don Bosco, to build a church in honour of our Lady under this title, he declared that this dedication would assuredly draw down many graces from the Queen of Heaven. At the same time, His Holiness sent his special blessing and a handsome donation. The Holy Father's words have been repeatedly verified, for every stone of that sacred edifice is a grace of our Lady, and testifies to her powerful influence with her Divine Son.

In 1866, then, Don Bosco, to meet the needs of the increasing population of the Valdocco quarter of Turin, resolved to build and consecrate a spacious Church. Accordingly, the plan of the structure was drawn up in the form of a Latin cross, covering an area of 1,500 square yards. The municipality and several private persons promised donations, but under one pretext or another, these engagements were broken off; so that when Don Bosco had purchased the site of the future Church with the 500 francs sent by the Holy Father, and other donations, he had no money whatever to spend on the building. It was at this period that our Blessed Lady began to give evident signs of her intervention. The good priest did not hesitate for one moment, but set the men to dig the foundations. At the end of a fortnight he owed them 1,000 francs; and these poor men could not be kept waiting for their money. An event then took place which opened the way to active charity, a charity that did not abate during the erection of the Church.

A few days previously, Don Bosco had had occasion, in the exercise of his ministry, to visit a lady, who for three months had been kept to her bed and who was reduced to extreme weakness by fever and incessant coughing.

"O Father," she said, "how thankful I should be, if only I had strength enough to take even a few steps in my room!"

"Have confidence, Madam, in our Lady Help of Christians. Make a novena in her honour."

And then he advised her to say for nine days, three *Pater Nosters*, *Aves*, and *Glorias* to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and three *Salve Reginas* in honour of our Lady Help of Christians. The lady assured him that she would do as he suggested. She promised, moreover, in the event of relief from suffering, to make an offering to the Church of Mary Help of Christians, then in course of erection.

On the eighth day of the novena, and the very same day the working-men engaged in the excavations were to be paid, he went to inquire after the sick lady's progress. The servant who opened the door, told him joy-

fully that her mistress was cured, and had been twice to Church to return thanks for her recovery.

While she was speaking, the lady arrived, and confirmed the good news: "Yes, Father, I am perfectly cured. I have already been twice to Church to thank our Blessed Lady for the grace she has obtained for me. Here



The Church of Our Lady Help of Christians.

is the little offering for the Church you are building. It is my first, but it shall not be my last, gift." And, so saying, she placed a small, but weighty parcel in his hands. When, at home, he opened it, he found that it contained fifty gold napoleons,—the one thousand francs he needed.

Don Bosco kept silence on this matter, but not so the lady. The news spread rapidly, and produced an extraordinary thrill of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, under the title of Help of Christians. Multitudes of persons made novenas to our Lady, promising, if their petitions were granted, to make offerings to her Church. Speaking on this point, Don Bosco, says: "Were I to relate the many favours people received through the intercession of our Lady

Help of Christians, I should have to write several large volumes. In Turin, Genoa, Bologna, Naples, but more especially in Milan, Florence, and Rome, multitudes experienced the efficacy of the intercession of our Lady invoked under the title of Help of Christians, and showed their gratitude by sending donations for her Church. Even in such far-distant places as Palermo, Vienna, Paris, London, and Berlin, people had recourse to the Blessed Virgin with the customary prayers and promise. And I do not know of anyone whose prayer was made in vain. A spiritual or temporal favour of more or less importance was always the answer to those who invoked our Lady."

A peculiar fact in connection with the building of the Church is that the sums required for its erection nearly always came in unexpectedly, and, almost invariably, at the moment when they were urgently needed. Besides the instance given above, here is another.

It was the 16th of November, 1866, and Don Bosco required that evening four thousand francs, of which he had not a farthing, to pay the workmen engaged in building the Church. From early morning Don Rua, Assistant-Superior of the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales, and some other brethren had been out in the town collecting, and returned with the result—one thousand francs—at eleven o'clock; and also with the firm conviction that any further begging would be useless waste of time. As they finished the account of their proceedings they looked at Don Bosco with an expression of dismay; his face wore a smile, and gave evident signs of his faith and trust in God. He spoke a few words of encouragement to them, telling them to have confidence in Divine Providence. At one o'clock he took his hat, and went out in search of the other three thousand francs without any idea of where he should find such a large sum. After walking for some time, and just as he was close by the Porta Nuova Station in the centre of the town, a man, with a look of sadness on his countenance, approached him and asked him if he was Don Bosco.

"Yes," replied the good priest, "I am Don Bosco. Can I be of any service to you?"

"O, this meeting is indeed providential!" exclaimed the other; "God has certainly directed me this way, Would you kindly accompany me to the residence of my master who stands in great need of your help."

"With pleasure; let us go in the name of Providence."—And as they went along the servant informed Don Bosco of the state of his master. "He is a very benevolent gentleman," he added; "and he is in a position to help not a little in the building of your Church."—"This is most fortunate," replied the good priest.

A few minutes later he entered a handsome dwelling, and was immediately ushered into the sick chamber, where a middle-aged man lay showing signs of great suffering.

"Ah! Father," he exclaimed on catching sight of Don Bosco, "I stand in great need of your prayers."

"Have you been in this state very long?" Don Bosco asked.

"It is now three long years since I took to my bed, and the physicians give me no hope whatever of recovery. Oh, if I could only obtain some relief

from the cruel sufferings with which I am tormented, I would do anything for you most willingly!"

"Really? that will suit me admirably. I am in urgent need of three thousand francs this evening."

"Very well, Father, obtain some relief for me, and towards the end of the year I will endeavour to satisfy you."

"But I want the money this evening."

"This evening! But I have no money in the house. I shall have to send to the bank: there are formalities to be gone through!"

"Give glory then to God and to Mary Help of Christians, and go yourself."

"Go out? Surely you are jesting, for this is impossible. Did I not tell you that I have been lying here these three years?"

"Impossible with us, I admit; but not with Almighty God."

Don Bosco had all the household, numbering twenty, called into the room, and recited some prayers to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and to our Lady Help of Christians, in which they joined. Then he ordered the sick gentleman's clothes to be brought, and requested him to dress and go to the bank himself. At this point the doctor entered, and seeing how matters stood, asked if the invalid had lost his senses, and conjured him not to stir. But the latter declaring that he would do as he liked, took no heed of the doctor's advice, and began to follow Don Bosco's suggestion. Some of the servants were about to approach the bed in order to help the patient to dress, but the good priest told them to remain where they were. In a few minutes the gentleman had dressed himself and was walking in his room, to the inexpressible astonishment of the doctor and all present. He ordered the carriage, and while waiting, partook of some refreshment, at his own suggestion; which was another surprise, since he had hardly been able to take any nourishment for a long time. Revived, he descended to the carriage unassisted, and drove to the bank. He returned shortly with the three thousand francs, which he joyfully handed over to Don Bosco, thanking him again and again, and assuring him that he had quite recovered. Don Bosco, after having tendered the gentleman the expression of his gratitude, recommended him to thank Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and our Lady Help of Christians, to whom his extraordinary recovery was due. When Don Bosco arrived at the Oratory, he found there the party already waiting for the money, and, to the great astonishment of Don Rua and the other Superiors of the Oratory, it was promptly handed over.

The total cost of the sacred edifice amounted to over a million francs. Of this sum a sixth part was made up of donations from pious persons; the remainder (850,000 francs) consisted of the thank-offerings of those who had received special favours; and thus each stone of that beautiful Church is, as it were, proof that it is most pleasing to our Divine Lord to grant the petitions He receives through the hands of His Blessed Mother. The Church was consecrated on the 9th of June, 1868. Ever since, the Sanctuary of our Lady Help of Christians has become an object of pilgrimage and devotion similar to other hallowed places where the Queen of Heaven is pleased to dispense her favours.

The Association of Salesian Co-operators.

THE Church has at all times availed herself of Associations in order to fulfil her mission of love here on earth. Bishops and priests, imbued with this spirit, have founded and encouraged in their respective dioceses and parishes, Guilds and pious Associations, under various titles, having in view to further among the members and the faithful at large, religious practices and the exercise of Christian charity. Following the example of Holy Church, founders of Religious Orders have done likewise. We find this is the case with the Franciscans and Dominicans, who availed themselves of the co-operation of persons, living in the world, forming what is called a Third Order. Thus the members of this Third Order, or Tertiaries, were, even in the bosom of their family, and without neglecting their usual occupations, enabled to do, and are still doing, an incalculable amount of good in the world. Don Bosco, observing the rapid extension of his Works, in imitation of Holy Church and the saintly founders of Religious Societies, instituted the *Association or Pious Union of Salesian Co-operators*. Its principal object is the active exercise of charity towards our neighbour, and more especially towards the young, who are peculiarly exposed to the dangers of the world and its corrupting ways.

This Association is contemporaneous with the humble beginnings of the "Festive" Oratories, which date as far back as 1841. At that time, Don Bosco, then a young priest, came to reside in the large and populous city of Turin with the heroic resolve of consecrating himself to bettering the condition of poor and outcast children. At first, he gathered around him, as has been said already, the waifs and strays of the city on Sundays, entertaining them with various games and amusements, and instructing them in the truths of our holy religion.

As long as the number of lads surrounding him was small, he was able by himself to provide for their wants and attend to their instruction. But Sunday after Sunday brought fresh crowds to swell the ranks, and in a very short time he found it impossible to give his attention to all the children. In this emergency he looked around for help, and it was then that a goodly number of zealous priests and kind people generously came to his aid. Even the refined and fastidious did not disdain becoming servants and teachers of the little waifs and strays of the Oratory. With the assistance of these fellow-workers, or co-operators, who have ever been the mainstay and support of the charitable works which it has pleased Divine Providence to confide to our care, Don Bosco was able to multiply the Catechism classes and establish night schools. These kind friends entered heart and soul into this new and fertile field of action. In the church, they taught the young lads their prayers, and their catechism, and prepared them to receive the sacraments;

in the school, they expounded the rudiments of grammar and arithmetic; whilst, in the playground, they joined with the boys in their games as though they were elder brothers, keeping at the same time a watchful eye on them so that no disturbance should take place. But their charity did not end here. Many poor lads coming from different provinces, found themselves without shelter or bread, on their arrival in Turin; unable to obtain employment; and without a friend or acquaintance. In such cases, the fellow-workers of Don Bosco, provided lodgings, clothing, and employment for these outcast boys; regularly visited them; and encouraged them to continue to attend the Oratory where so much was done for their spiritual welfare.

Some of the first Co-operators, during the winter months, betook themselves, even at the cost of great sacrifices, to the Oratory in Valdocco, every evening, traversing bad and ill-made roads in order to help Don Bosco to impart the different branches of learning to his ever-increasing flock. During Lent, many of them came every day of the week, about mid-day, to hold the Christian Doctrine class for poor lads who stood most in need of it and who were unable to come at a more convenient hour. In a word, ecclesiastics and laymen,—the former by preaching, and the latter by catechising and assisting the boys—gave a great portion of their time, their efforts, and their substance for the teeming multitude that surrounded Don Bosco.

And not only men, but women also, took part in this noble work, and, were able to render, and still render, good service to the poor boys. Many of the lads were so ragged and dirty, that when applying for employment in the city, they excited disgust, and were turned away from the people's doors. To remedy this state of things some pious ladies took a charitable interest in the welfare of the young fellows providing them with a decent outfit, and a quantity of underclothing; and when these articles were soiled, or torn, they took care to have them washed and mended.

These generous helpers endeavoured to conform to the discipline in use and the general rules laid down for the guidance of all. But there was generally felt the need of a more comprehensive and definite code that should serve both as a basis of action and bond of union, whereby uniformity of spirit might be always preserved among the members. This code was drawn up by Don Bosco in 1858, and it enables Catholics in the world, while still following their respective avocations, to unite with the Salesian Religious in their manifold apostolate, and participate in their good works. This rule was definitely submitted to the Pope in 1874. The Association received the most flattering reception from the great-souled Pio Nono, who not only approved it by a special Brief, dated May 9th, 1876, but deigned to become one of its members, and abundantly enriched it with a long list of privileges and spiritual favours—including, among many others, *all the Indulgences, plenary and partial*, granted to the Third Order of St. Francis of Assisi. We give here an extract of the Brief:

“A Pious Association of the Faithful being (as we are informed) canonically instituted under the name of the ASSOCIATION OR UNION OF SALESIAN CO-OPERATORS. We, desiring that this same Association may progress from day to day, and confiding in the mercy of God Almighty and the authority of His blessed Apostles, SS. Peter and Paul, grant to all and each of the faithful

of both sexes who have joined, or will, in future, join this Association, a PLENARY INDULGENCE at the hour of death

"A PLENARY INDULGENCE and General Absolution to all Members, once a month, on whatsoever day they may choose, on condition that being truly penitent they go to Confession and receive Holy Communion in some Church or public Oratory, and then devoutly visiting this same Church or Oratory, shall therein pray to God for concord amongst Christian princes; the extirpation of heresies; the conversion of sinners; and the exaltation of our Holy Mother the Church. This Indulgence may also be applied, by way of suffrage, to the souls of the Faithful who have departed this life in peace with God.

"Wishing, moreover, to give the Associates aforesaid, a token of our special benevolence, We hereby grant to them all INDULGENCES, both PLENARY and PARTIAL, that can be gained by the THIRD ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI; and by our Apostolic Authority, We furthermore decree, that all INDULGENCES which are conceded to these same Franciscan Tertiaries on the Feast, and in the Churches, of St. Francis of Assisi, may be lawfully and freely obtained by the members of the ASSOCIATION OF SALESIAN CO-OPERATORS, on the Feast of St. Francis of Sales, and in the Churches belonging to the Priests of the Salesian Congregation, provided always that they faithfully fulfil in the Lord the pious practices enjoined for the gaining of these Indulgences."

Such are some of the Favours which Don Bosco obtained from Pius IX., as a token of his grateful appreciation of the labours of those who have thrown themselves heart and soul into this work of regeneration. Nor did the benevolence of the Sovereign Pontiff cease with the death of Pius IX.; it was renewed in his worthy successor. When our Holy Father Leo XIII. was called to the government of the Church, in 1878, in a private audience granted to Don Bosco, he took occasion to say: "Pius IX. has been your friend, I wish to be so, too; he was inscribed among the number of your Co-operators, I claim the honour of being the first on the list. When ever you address the Salesian Co-operators, tell them that I bless them with all my heart. Remind them that the object of the Association is to rescue youth from the dangers of the world and its corrupting influences. May they be always of one heart and soul, so as to assist you to bring about this, the mission of the Salesian Society."

But it may occur to some that it is not really necessary to be incorporated in an Association in order to do good. We are of the same opinion. Any person so disposed can perform works of charity by himself; but it cannot be denied that the fruit of his labour must needs be very limited, and (generally speaking) of short duration. On the other hand, united with others, he must feel himself assisted, encouraged, guided, and stimulated so that, with very little exertion, he often finds himself an instrument of Divine Providence's most lofty designs, and a sharer in immense spiritual treasures. Let us remember the familiar adage: "Many hands make light work," or,—in more scriptural parlance—"Union is strength."

The Apostolic field it has pleased Divine Providence to assign to our humble Congregation, and which Don Bosco has left to our care and cultivation, is wide enough to enlist many a generous heart, and many a

helping hand. While, therefore, we exhort the Salesian Co-operators to induce their friends and relations to swell the ranks of our fellow-labourers, we extend our appeal to all lovers of suffering humanity and of Christian civilisation, inviting them to join the Association of Salesian Co-operators.

We have said that this Association is simply a union of benefactors of suffering humanity ready to employ, not words, but deeds, in order to help their fellow creatures. We do not pretend, however, that ours is the only Association with this purpose in view; or that we have found the only way of benefiting society. On the contrary, there are thousands of public and private institutions and associations, which tend to the amelioration of humanity, and the furthering of civilisation; and all these we highly prize, and warmly recommend. May God bless them all with plentiful means, and crown their efforts with brilliant success.

To rescue from the brink of perdition numberless souls for whom the Precious Blood was shed, is, then, the work proposed to our Co-operators. And what a noble work! Oh! if our exertions and our sacrifices but render us worthy to become instrumental in saving one single drop of that Precious Blood from being shed in vain, our life-time will be well employed, and our reward the kingdom of Heaven! "Come," Jesus Christ will say to us at the Last Judgment, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in."

Don Bosco's Course of Education.*

DON BOSCO's plan of education was founded on Christian charity. The short, admirable instructions on the preventive system which head the rules of his various institutions bear testimony to his tenderness of heart and perfect knowledge of children. He used two systems: the repressive and preventive. The repressive consists in teaching the law to those who should observe it, then exercising superintendence over and punishing transgressors. In this system the representative authority should be strict and rarely visible. This is the easier and less painful method, and is adopted in military service and usually in the management of adults. The preventive system is different, almost the reverse. It, too, begins by teaching the law, but afterwards watches so judiciously and kindly that it is impossible to break it; even should power remain, the wish no longer exists. This system is entirely grounded on reason, religion and affection, is noble and just, but entails complete self-denial upon the masters. It practically suits the young, who are naturally unsteady and forgetful of law and punishment, and who claim indulgence, being more amenable to love than fear.

The teacher, in Don Bosco's opinion, should be father, adviser, friend, more than master, and should aim to gain the child's assistance in united efforts to achieve the same end—his improvement. Thus baffling evil makes it unsuccessful; natural inclinations are directed and fixed in the strict path of virtue, which, if neglected, might follow the broad path of vice; faults and consequent punishment are prevented. Infinite gentleness, unalterable patience, vigilant attention, and ceaseless watching, are essential in the masters. Carrying out the preventive system exacts a course of action in accordance with St. Paul's saying: "Charity is patient, is kind, suffers all things, hopes all things, and endures all things." The master should completely belong to his pupils, devote his time to precede, assist, and follow them everywhere, or depute others equally reliable to do so, never leaving them alone nor allowing idleness. With this method it is difficult for bad companions to find occasion to corrupt innocence.

Don Bosco concealed this surveillance from the knowledge of its objects, and called the masters who, with him, presided at recreations, in workshops, or classrooms, assistants—not superintendents. They mixed among the groups of boys during recreation; nothing escaped notice. Don Bosco was not the originator of this system, which existed prior to the Salesians among the Jesuits, Christian Brothers' schools, and generally in ecclesiastical institutions. Vestiges of it are traced in the lyceums, gymnasiums, and State colleges,

* This article is taken from Lady Martin's admirable translation of Villefranche's *Don Bosco*, published by Burns and Oates, London.

where many well-intentioned masters strive to correct vice by systematically sacrificing everything to instruction.

Don Bosco was the first to define and thoroughly act on the preventive method. His express instructions regarding punishments are: "As far as possible avoid punishing; when absolutely necessary, try to gain love before inspiring fear; the suppression of a token of kindness is disapproval, but a disapproval which incites emulation, revives courage, and never degrades. To children, punishment is what is meant as punishment; with some pupils a cold glance is more effective than a blow. Praise when merited, blame when deserved, are recompense and punishment. Except in rare instances, correction should be privately given with patience and prudence; so that, with the aid of reason and religion, the culprit may fully understand his fault. Some pupils do not feel spite, nor nurse revenge for punishment; but the masters who observe them closely, know what bitter resentment is felt, above all, for punishment wounding self-love; they forget chastisement from their parents, but never that inflicted by the professors; and many instances are known of brutal revenge in old age for some justifiable chastisement incurred in school. On the contrary, the master who discreetly and kindly admonishes, awakens gratitude; is no longer a master, but a friend wishing to improve and preserve his pupil from punishment and dishonour. To strike, to place in a painful position, pull the ears, etc., should be absolutely forbidden, both because disapproved by law, and that it irritates and lowers the children's characters. The masters should clearly teach the rules, as well as rewards and penalties instituted as safeguards, so that a boy cannot excuse himself under the plea of 'I did not know.' During the forty years in which I endeavoured to practise this system (Don Bosco wrote in 1877), I do not remember to have used formal punishment; and with God's grace I have always obtained, and from apparently hopeless children, not alone what duty exacted, but what my wish simply expressed. I have seen some so convinced of their faults and the justice of punishment that they met it cheerfully."

But gentleness and patience alone are not enough to achieve the difficult task of education. If these virtues sufficed, most mothers would have saintly children. Games, the well-directed awakening of childish curiosity, are equally useful, even necessary, and Don Bosco places them in the first range of his recommendations. The pupils should have full liberty to run, jump, shout, and amuse themselves. Gymnastics, music, declamation, acting, walking, all preserve health of mind and body; but care must be taken as to the nature of these recreations, that conversation and companions may not prove dangerous. I echo the words of St. Philip Neri, the great friend of youth: "Do as you wish, I do not care so long as you do not sin."

Don Bosco, in one of his books, has studied the causes of the general weakness of characters. He describes them with thrilling clearness. "If children are badly reared, it is partly from ignorance, but also from selfishness and ill-directed tenderness. Instead of being self-sacrificing and devoted to their children, parents often use them for their own pleasure; true, through sincere, but mistaken affection. A parade is made of precocious talents in the little prodigy; his praises are even sounded in his presence

without noticing the rapid progress of growing vanity, which will soon become presumption, conceit, and pride. Parents delight and trust in natural affectionate demonstrations and contemplate the simple graces of their child, receive and provoke cajoleries as if from a puppy, and as if he were a dog chastise him angrily when he refuses to obey. They wish him to be loving, well-dressed, learned—that is all. What imprudence, and what a mistake! A precocious development of intellect is the fortunate privilege of children in whom grown persons interest themselves; but nature and mutual dependence of faculties should not be lost sight of for a moment. The child is unfortunate in whom only the faculties of knowledge and feeling are developed, which through a common and deplorable confusion are mistaken for love, and in whom the chief faculty is completely neglected—the will—the only source of true, pure love, of which sensibility is a deceitful representation. Sometimes foolish parents occupy themselves about this, but do not guide and strengthen it by repeated little acts of virtue, asked for through the child's affections, easily obtained from his good heart; but, on the contrary, endeavour, under pretext of conquering rebellious nature, to subdue forcibly, and end by destroying instead of correcting the will. By this fatal error, harmony which should exist in the parallel development of the powers of the soul is injured, and the most delicate instruments are put out of time. Intellect and sensibility, over-excited by this ultra-cultivation, absorb all the powers of mind and life, and soon acquire dangerous strength. The child understands quickly; his imagination becomes eager, his memory exact, and retraces with scrupulous precision the least details; his sensitiveness enraptures all who meet him. But, deplorable want of balance, these brilliant qualities scarcely conceal disgraceful insufficiency, inconceivable weakness. The child—later, alas! the youth—carried away by the quickness of his understanding, cannot think or act consecutively; he is absolutely deficient in common-sense, in tact, in prudence—in a word in a practical mind. Do not expect to find him methodical and orderly. He confuses everything, both in reason and conduct. He disconcerts by brusque and impetuous sallies of wit, by strange inconsistency. Yesterday he asserted a so-called virtue; to-morrow, with similar irresistible conviction, he upholds the contrary. His reason, obscured by a weak will, is devoid of serious thought. He receives from others, or from outward circumstances, the judgment which he adopts, either because his imagination is misled or his sensibility flattered; the same levity causes him to give that up to follow other more brilliant theories which fascinate his weak intellect. Too disturbed to read his own mind clearly, he only knows the surface—that is, passing emotions. He resolutely wishes all of which he approves; incapable of resisting, he acts with haste. To do otherwise appears to him a want of candour; he wishes to appear outwardly as he is inwardly; if he subdues his passions he imagines it hypocrisy. So, supposing himself to wish that which he does not wish, he imagines he does not wish that which he wishes. Virtue attracts him, but is repugnant to the laxity of his nature; he mistakes this interior resistance for contrary will; a dupe of folly, he despairs of believing or wishing what he really believes and wishes. If he hesitates about an important act, instead of studying it

in itself, examining the motives, circumstances and object, he interrogates the oracle, his stupid sensitiveness. Self-willed in his impressions, he asks himself, 'What is my opinion?' According to his fancy he decides. That is his idea of reflection. If wrong, beware of reproaching him, as he thinks he has done right. 'I have been guided by conscience,' he asserts. Later, if in difficult circumstances, do not expect anything from him; though capable of generous impulse, his character is subject to strange weakness. Violence and obstinacy are the sole manifestations of a feeble will, and always used wrongly. Can qualities of the heart compensate for these faults, or cultivated sensitiveness make young hearts tender and affectionate? Alas! a similar vacuum and similar vacillation to those in the intellect exist. The youth is easily attracted, and quickly forgetful. His heart is, like his conscience, a surging sea agitated by contrary currents. Without being actually bad, he is led by caprice. He cannot preserve friends, as he never suppresses an unkind allusion at their expense, a scornful expression, a hurtful pun, an injurious, groundless suspicion, or an insolent whim? Is it strange that slighted friends withdraw? Poor, incomplete being! he complains of not being appreciated. Impulse and fickleness are the groundwork of his character. Parents who so educate their child, only succeed in producing an affectionate, perfected, intelligent animal."

The quotation is long; still among the writings of the most celebrated moralists no analysis of the human mind is as refined and complete as Don Bosco's. Much of it should be inscribed over every child's bed and in every young mother's room. The chief object is to form the will, and to temper the character.

Each one of Don Bosco's pupils was guided, according to his aptitude, to literary or superior studies, science, culture of art, a mercantile career or a trade. In all the pupils Don Bosco tried to cultivate music, as a refining, varied study; useful, too, and interesting, as an addition to Church ceremonies and public meetings.

When he was asked: "Is that your method, can instruction be limited?" "No," he would say, "instruction is but an accessory, like a game; knowledge never makes a man, because it does not directly touch the heart. It gives more power in the exercise of good or evil; but alone it is an indifferent weapon, wanting guidance. As the sword requires what the hand holding it requires, knowledge does not create the taste for and the practice of virtue."

But what is Don Bosco's secret? He has written it in his rules: "Frequent Confession, frequent Communion, daily Mass: these are the pillars which should sustain the whole edifice of education." In all Salesian institutions there are daily communicants, and during the community Mass some of the Fathers are at the command of penitents.

Don Bosco was indefatigable as a confessor, and devoted days and hours to the confessional. It was charming to see him, when he assembled at his annual retreats children, priests, and laymen from afar. His confessional was an ordinary chair placed at the end of a corridor, with a little stool beside him for the penitent.

An eloquent orator, commenting on his simple, clear aphorism, "Frequent Confession, frequent Communion, daily Mass," said: "Oh, mothers, is it

not true that, notwithstanding your look of forbearance, you have more than once trembled, seeing incipient, formidable propensities in your children, strong enough to overcome good inclinations? Have you not read into their minds and thought, 'Man is inclined from youth towards evil?' This inclination allures during life; you know it, we all know it. "Unhappy I," said St. Paul, 'I know and wish to do good; and instead, I do evil, which I do not wish.' Every soul abandoned to natural propensities echoes the Apostle's lamentation, unless pride suggests justification of failings by raising them to laws. The heart is an invalid that cannot cure itself; in Jesus alone the healing balm is found. Don Bosco, by assiduous piety, asked and obtained power to correct and prevent natural inherent frailty among his pupils, and to educate upright citizens, faithful friends, devoted heads of families, heirs to Heaven. His unremitting prayer for strength was answered by grace, his source of wise power, and of useful, permanent, indispensable deeds. You are witnesses of the eager, sincere spontaneity of the Salesian pupils in following pious practices. They pray devoutly, and anxiously ease their consciences at the confessor's feet. The naturally Christian mind of youth thus opens to grace and truth like a plant to sunshine and dew. Have you ever observed the reciprocal attraction between religious and children? Look at them together, in class or in the garden. Despite the contrast between the garb of the world and the cloister, despite the white head of one and the youthful head of the other, there is nothing similar in the two existences except that they are vowed to daily labour, subjected to the same rule—one from choice, the other from necessity—both without liberty, fortune, or self-will, each with only one possession, his heart, but mutually sympathetic through imparting and receiving instruction. The authority of example in the religious adds to this sympathy. Should rebellion, weariness arise; 'What, at your age, my friend, already to find work, submission, gentleness irksome.' That suffices; the example of the master who has lovingly devoted himself to duty for years, makes its beauty and value felt; discussion ceases—or rather, there is none in this Christian home where an atmosphere of regularity, peace, and happiness prevails. Blessed home. The youth leaving it is well armed for the battle of life, tempered by a kind of slow infiltration from the only metal which forms character: fidelity to duty at the expense of sacrifice; bitter as life may be, he will be sustained to its end by this aroma of Calvary."

Don Bosco's pupil, Don Giordani, relates the following:—

"Not long ago, an English Cabinet Minister visited a Turin institution, and was brought into a large hall in which five hundred boys were at study. He was astonished at the perfect silence and laborious attention without constraint. His surprise increased on hearing a year had passed without discipline having been infringed, or punishment inflicted.

"Is it possible? How do you manage?" he asked, and turned to charge his secretary to note the answer.

"My lord," said the superior, "we possess a means unknown to you."

"What?"

"A secret revealed only to Catholics."

"You jest, Reverend Father; nevertheless, my question was serious."

"So is my answer, my lord; this is our secret prescribed in our rule: 'Frequent Confession, frequent Communion, daily Mass, to be practised regularly and frequently by us and our children.'"

"You are right, these are not in our province. But can they be substituted?"

"Yes, my lord; in some instances with cudgel and prison, or with a development, always to be regretted, of pride and self-interest; but most frequently, at least with children such as are here, with expulsion."

"Strange, strange," the English statesman exclaimed, 'Mass, or cudgel; I shall tell that in London.'"

Don Bosco particularly studied the aptitudes and vocations among the children, for which his peculiar perspicacity—more to be admired than imitated—seemed to approach the supernatural. Don Ronchail enjoyed telling about his own vocation, in Don Bosco's presence, when the good Father used to smile. Joseph Ronchail finished his studies at Pignerol College, and obtained an engagement in a Lyons house (at his own request through an influential relation) as commercial traveller. The young collegian was to leave Italy in the autumn for France; but during vacation one of his friends proposed an excursion to Turin. On a lovely sunny morning the two students arrived in the capital of Piedmont, a festival day at the Oratory of St. Francis of Sales.

"Shall we go?" What one proposed, the other acquiesced in, and at Valdocco they were charmed. "Would it be possible to go away without seeing the celebrated Don Bosco?" They asked for him; he received them, remarking to one of his priests present:—

"One of these we must capture into our cage."

He signified young Joseph Ronchail, and immediately addressed him:—

"What are you, my friend?"

"A student from Pignerol College."


"Have you finished the course?"

"Rhetoric—yes; I am going to business in Lyons."

"Business?—No, no; I say we shall cage the bird, which means you will be a good Salesian—a good Salesian priest. Do you understand, my friend?"

The youth went away perplexed. This prediction fixed itself in his mind. He did not go to Lyons, but some weeks later he came to Valdocco and entered the sacred cage where he was expected. He was founder and director for fourteen years of St. Peter's Patronage Institution in Nice. In 1887, Don Bosco recalled him to Turin where he was required for the Pious Salesian Society.

The Salesian Missions.

MONG the pages of history there are few so brilliant and touching as those relating to the Catholic Missionary. We are filled with wonder and admiration on reading of those devoted servants of God, who have given up the comforts and refinements of civilised life, and gone forth to inhospitable shores to toil and suffer and die amongst savage and degraded peoples in their endeavour to lead them to God. Truly there is something so sublime and so pure in the life of sacrifice these noble souls lead, that we cannot mistake the motive that prompted it, for it far surpasses the most vaunted heights of human heroism,—it comes from God.

Many and many a century has gone by since our Divine Lord bade his Apostles and their successors go forth and preach the Gospel to every creature, and, during all this time, missionary activity, the outcome of that injunction, has ever been a striking characteristic of the Catholic Church. Open where we will the pages of the history of the civilisation of nations during the last nineteen centuries, and we will have abundant evidences of this. In the first century we find that the Apostles, those glorious athletes of Christianity whose best boast was to suffer injuries for their Master's sake, scattered themselves over the face of the earth, messengers of the New Law of peace and love; and in each succeeding age, their successors felt the sacred flame, and, emulating their zeal, have pushed farther and farther the conquests of the Cross, and have carried the light of faith into heathen lands.

And no one who takes an interest in the foreign missions can fail to recognize that in our own days the holy spirit, which prompted the first messengers of peace to undertake the evangelization of mankind, is as ardent and flourishing as ever. If we stoop to closer observation we shall find that all, or nearly all, religious Orders and Congregations— even those instituted for purposes not strictly missionary, in the ordinary sense of the word,— have felt the sacred fire, and, emulating the zeal of the Apostles, have gone forth to awaken benighted nations to the light and knowledge of Redemption, or gain a martyr's crown in the attempt.

Don Bosco, too, had this high and noble object in view, and claimed for his sons a place among the intrepid pioneers of the Catholic Faith, as all who are acquainted with the Salesian Society and have watched its wonderful growth and expansion, will have observed. In the midst of his incessant cares and toiling, he finds a moment of respite from his self-imposed task of relieving the poor, homeless waifs swarming around him, to reflect on the still deeper misery and degradation of far-away savage life, and of the numberless children who are born and live and die under circumstances scarcely to be envied by the brute beasts of their native plains and forests. He yearned to do something for those poor souls, for whom the Precious Blood of our Divine Saviour was also shed. At length he was able to send ou

the first band of Salesian Missionaries—composed of three priests and seven lay-brothers—to South America. God was with the young Apostles, and success attended their arduous undertakings. In a few years we find Don Bosco's disciples among the wild Patagonians of the Pampas, and the brutalised savages of Tierra del Fuego; in Ecuador among the fierce Jivaros; and among the still more fierce Coroados of Brazil. They have also established several residences on the Llanos of Columbia for the benefit of the Indians there, and they are now endeavouring to win the sympathies of the savages of Paraguay, as the good Jesuits succeeded so well in doing in years gone by. In a word, the Salesian Society has spread itself over the vast continent of South America, where it is extending the sweet sway of the Cross, and zealously labouring for the moral and social improvement of both the white and dusky inhabitants of the several republics.

In 1874, Pope Pius IX. solemnly approved the Salesian Congregation, and definitely sanctioned its rules and constitutions. As soon as this happy event became public, numerous petitions from every quarter of the globe were forwarded to the Superior General of the new Society, begging him to send his priests to found Salesian houses and propagate his work of regeneration outside of Italy.

Amongst others, Commendatore Gassolo, in the name of the Argentine Government, sought the aid of the Salesians. He went in person to Turin in order to better press his suit, and there he remained till all difficulties were removed, and Don Bosco had formally accepted his proposal.

The good priest organized his first Missionary expedition in 1875. It comprised ten priests and lay-brothers, under the direction of one of his first disciples, Father Cagliero, destined later to become a Bishop and Vicar-Apostolic of Patagonia. The present Apostolic-Prefect of Tierra del Fuego, Father Fagnano, was also a member of that little band. Before leaving Italy they all repaired to Rome to solicit Pio Nono's blessing on the enterprise.

Now Pius IX. when a young Priest, had accompanied as Secretary the Nuncio Apostolic sent by Gregory XVI. to Chili. And well knowing the abundant harvest of souls that might be reaped in South America, he was profuse in his praise of the proposed Mission, blessed it, and (without dissimulating the difficulties to be encountered and the perils to be passed through), with paternal affection, encouraged the Salesians to the accomplishment of their generous undertaking, assuring them that God would be their guide and remove every obstacle from their path. Among other things, His Holiness said: "The Argentine Republic to which are going, is a fine country. But you will go farther . . . perhaps evangelize the Patagonian savages, who in by-gone days devoured their missionaries. Courage and confidence, my sons. You are vessels full of good seed. Sow it with self-sacrifice and energy; the harvest will be plentiful and console the last years of my stormy Pontificate."

The little band of Salesians set foot in Buenos Ayres on December 14, 1875. A few of the members, with Father Fagnano as Superior, proceeded at once to San Nicholas, where they founded a College; whilst the others remained in the capital of the Argentine Republic with the Archbishop of that



An Indian of the Thuelches Race.

city, a venerable and saintly Pastor, who had been sorely tried through dearth of clergy and by many other difficulties; but whose zeal for the welfare of his flock and Holy Church, had never flagged under the most harrowing circumstances. It was he who, shortly afterwards, proposed to Don Bosco the opening of homes and Missions in the midst of the savages of the Pampas and of Patagonia. This vast region has since become the apostolic field of the Salesian Congregation.

Before proceeding further with our narrative, it may be well to give the reader some idea of the Patagonian wilds; and for this purpose, we avail ourselves of the "data" afforded us by the Salesian Missionaries in their frequent correspondence, much of which has already appeared in the columns of the *Salesian Bulletin*.

The Vicariate-Apostolic of Patagonia.

Patagonia is the name of that extensive tract of land forming the southern promontory of the South American continent. It is part of the Argentine Republic, and lies to the south of the Rio Negro. It is divided into northern, central, and southern. The former is located between 36° and 42° south latitude, and comprises the Rio Negro and Rio Neuquen territories. From latitude 42° to 46° south, extends Central Patagonia made up of the Chubut territory. And Southern Patagonia reaches from the Rio Deseado to Magellan Strait, between 46° and 53°, being known as Santa Cruz territory. The country is bounded on the west by the Cordilleras of the Andes, an extension of the Rocky Mountains, which ranges from north to south, from one end of America to the other; and on the east by the Atlantic Ocean. The country presents a very varied aspect to the observer. On the one hand, rugged, mountainous regions, with steep, almost impassible, paths, and gigantic peaks covered with perpetual snow; sombre woods and forests. On the other hand, vast flat plains called pampas, which are almost arid and sterile, the soil consisting chiefly of marine gravelly deposits, covered with a coarse, wiry grass. It cannot be denied that the land is fruitful along the rivers (there are several, which rise in the Cordilleras, and flowing from west to east, discharge themselves into the Atlantic); and near the Cordilleras there are numerous verdant and fertile valleys; in fact, there are many luxuriant spots,—very oases, so to speak, on which the eye of the traveller rests with pleasure. But the country of Central and Southern Patagonia presents, for the most part, a melancholy and barren appearance. It has a harsh and cold climate, and is continually blasted by strong winds. The west wind, which is the most prevalent, having been robbed of its moisture in passing the Andes, comes over the eastern slope as a blight; the east wind, which is the only wind that brings any moisture over the sterile plains, seldom blows, so that the land is almost entirely deprived of the blessing of rain to fertilise it. Sometimes the south wind, which comes from the icy zone, is so bitterly cold that in a moment summer is changed into winter.

As the traveller penetrates farther south, the country assumes a more dreary and more desolate appearance, awakening in him a feeling of sadness and melancholy. This culminates when the ice-bound Tierra del Fuego is reached. With the exception of a few scanty settlements on the coast or river shores, Patagonia contains very few towns, or permanent habitations. The natives are scattered about in groups of two hundred, three, four, five hundred, and even more. They, for the most part, lead a nomadic life, shifting their tents of skins with the requirements of their circumstances.

Until the advent of the Salesians, every advance of Christianity had been checked by the Patagonians,—savages of more than ordinary size, jealous and distrustful of all foreigners, and cruel and ferocious. The Jesuit Missionaries who ventured among them during the last century, were nearly all cruelly done to death, and, in many instances, eaten.

It seemed, therefore, an impossible undertaking that Don Bosco entrusted to his disciples when he acceded to the proposal of the Archbishop of Buenos Ayres that they should convert the savage Patagonians. But in order to render their work of evangelization possible and easy, the Salesian missionaries resorted to tactics, never employed in any of the previous attempts to convert that land. Their plan consisted in establishing Colleges and Homes, on the borders of the territory inhabited by the Indians, for the reception of native children. There, these would be cared for, instructed, and provided for; and, when practicable, the parents would be induced to let them remain in the Homes altogether. In this way, whilst the missionaries attended to the education of the young Patagonians, they had a splendid opportunity of studying the language, and of acquainting themselves with the character and customs, of that people.

Having mastered the language, two of the missionaries, Father Costamagna (now a Bishop and Vicar-Apostolic of Mendez, in Ecuador) and Father Rabagliati set out in 1878 to penetrate into the wilds of Patagonia. They travelled by sea, part of the way; but they met with such a terrible tempest that the expedition had to be abandoned for that year. The ship became a mere floating raft, and only at the end of a fortnight, during which time they had been almost continually at the mercy of wind and rain, did they effect a landing at the very port from which they had started. But although the first attempt failed, the Fathers had no intention of giving over their project. They would await a more favourable opportunity. And they had not long to wait.

In the Spring of the following year, (1879), our two missionaries, in the company of Monsignor Espinoza, Vicar General of Buenos Ayres, (to-day Archbishop of that same Diocese), set out again,—this time by land. The second expedition was crowned with the most flattering results. The good Fathers made the first long break in the journey at a large Indian encampment at Carhue, where they had the happiness of catechising and baptising a goodly number of Mansos Indians, and held a conference with Manuel Grande and Eripayla, two Caciques of the tribe. Leaving behind them Carhue, our friends crossed the River Colorado, and, after a fortnight of weary marching, reached Choele-Choel, a native colony, situated on the banks of the River Negro. This river constitutes the line of demarcation between the Pampas and Patagonia. A circumstance to be noticed is that it was the 24th of May, feast of our Lady Help of Christians, and Patroness of the Salesians, when they set foot on Patagonian soil. For several days they remained in Choele-Choel preaching the word of God, and their efforts were rewarded by the Baptism of 83 adults and 22 children. Thence they proceeded along the River Negro, as far as Patagones, the terminus of the expedition. On the 12th, they began their return journey to Buenos Ayres, taking another route, and touching at General Mitre and Conesa, where they administered Baptism to fifty persons. In January, 1880,

a Salesian Mission was founded at Patagones, the first in Patagonia. From there, the Fathers soon spread over the vast country, in all directions, visiting the Indians; and establishing Missions, and building Churches and Colleges in the centres of population.

Some idea of life on the Patagonian Missions may be gathered from the following letter written by Father Milanese in February, 1893. The good missionary, who has been labouring for the last twenty years to spread the light of the true faith among the numerous tribes in Patagonia, is known to them as the "Indian Father," from his fluency in speaking their language.

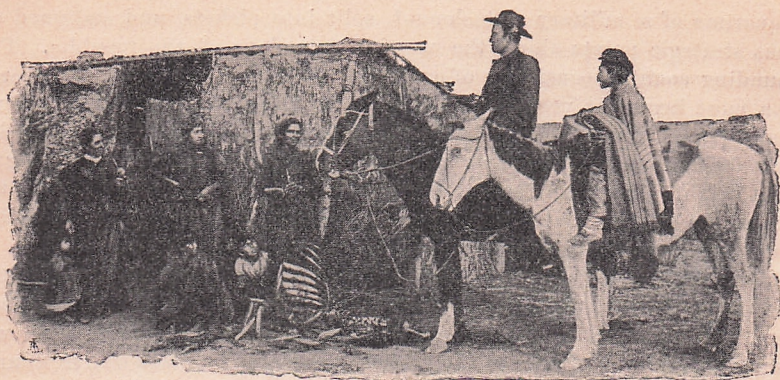
"In the beginning of last year, (he writes) I determined to pay a missionary visit to the Indians dwelling along the river Limay, in the extensive regions of the Argentine Confederation stretching to the west of the Rio Negro, between this river and the Cordilleras of the Andes. From our Missionary Station of Villa Roca, I was accompanied by Don Roggerone and Brother Emanuele Mendez.

"The immense journey before us necessitated our taking three saddle-horses, and an additional horse on which we placed the portable altar, our scanty supply of linen, and what provisions the good nuns of our Lady Help of Christians at Roca had prepared for us. With this slight equipment we left Villa Roca on the 13th of January, 1892.

"The banks of the Limay had been already explored by two of our missionaries, Fathers Fagnano and Beauvoir, who accompanied the Argentine army through this region in the capacity of chaplains during the troubles of 1881 and 1883. This time it was only the ministers of the Living God that were approaching the encampments of the Indians; and with the sole and untrammelled purpose of preaching to them the Cross of our Redemption and the Gospel of Peace.

"It happened that the year we chose was a very unfavourable one; for locusts were swarming over the immense prairie, destroying every sort of vegetation. By night they often attacked us, reducing our clothes to shreds, and bidding fair to devour us also, though we fought hard to persuade them that we were not mere senseless vegetables!

"Our Mission on the banks of the Limay lasted a month. In this time we visited almost all the huts of the Indians, and some families of white settlers, of whom we baptised a good number. In one family, where I had the happiness of administering Baptism to ten persons, the grand-mother, now in her eighties, had been baptised when a child. Her florid complexion and fair locks clearly showed that she belonged not to the Indian race. In fact, she still remembers that, when a little girl, she was snatched from her parents' loving care, and borne away by the Indians to a far distant region; but she has no idea of the name of her native place nor of her family. Only a faint glimmer, like the hazy mist of a dream, recalls alike her parents and her godmother. She had forgotten—poor creature!—the language and religion of her fathers, but on hearing us speak about God Almighty and His Divine Son, about Heaven and our immortal soul, she desired to make her first Confession and Communion—a desire in which she was joined by her two



The Missionary visiting an Indian family of the Pampas.

sons and daughters-in-law, all preparing themselves with a religious fervour worthy of admiration.

“After a journey of some 400 kilometres across the valley that lies between Roca and the Cordilleras, on the left side of the Limay, we arrived at Junin de los Andes.



At an Indian Encampment, in Patagonia.

“Junin is a hamlet at the foot of the mountains and counts at present only some fifty houses. It was founded by the Argentine army, when, in 1879, it advanced its forces across the pampas to this place to liberate the frontier from the continual incursions of the hostile Indians. At present it is the

headquarters of a military detachment, split into pickets, and stationed on various strategic points along the western boundary of the republic. The surrounding country, consisting of extensive woods and meadows, is covered with a most luxuriant vegetation which affords an excellent pasturage. Here, in many places, during the spring months, patches of land grow red under the clustering bunches of wild strawberries. Bare-stemmed trees, growing to a great height, abound in the valley and the mountain gorges; while on the banks of the streams and rivulets, are extensive orchards from which the Indians extract a highly-fermentable cider, commonly called *chicha*.

"In this district we passed another month without being able to visit the entire population, as they are scattered here and there in the mountain defiles, over an area of 12,000 square miles. Here, also, our mission was abundantly blessed by God. In the various groups, we baptised ONE HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY PERSONS, of whom about a third were adult Indians, and the remainder white and Indian children.

"Quitting Junin we proceeded to Sanco-Vado, where we instructed in the Faith an encampment of some fifty Indians. They allowed us to baptise their children; but all our exertions failed to persuade some of the squaws as to the happiness to be derived from Holy Baptism. Up to the last moment they refused the Sacrament; but on the day of our departure, touched by remorse and the good example of their companions, they presented themselves of their own accord, and asked to be baptised. We thanked the Lord for this new victory, and that day the Recording Angel, let us hope, inscribed ten new names in the Book of Life.

"On our return to Junin we learned with mingled feelings of admiration and regret, that an old Indian and his family had come ninety miles on foot, prompted by the desire of receiving Holy Baptism. But finding no trace of us in the surrounding country, they retraced their steps to their native place, after two days' vain delay at Junin, deploring the *contretemps* that prevented them from carrying out their holy purpose. I hope, however, that by this time the Lord has satisfied their pious desire, for Fathers Roggerone and Gavotto have given Missions in those regions subsequently to our visit.

From Junin to Norquin, a distance of upwards of 3000 miles, our journey lay along the slopes of the Andes. On this route are many hamlets of white settlers and of Indians famishing for the Word of God. It would be necessary to visit them and, at least, baptise their children. But the immensurable extension of this country rendered it impossible for us to realize such a programme in its entirety. We had to content ourselves with visiting only a portion of the inhabitants, leaving the rest for our return journey.

"At a short distance from a place called Cura-Chara-Milla (the 'Golden Ostrich Rock') we came upon a funereal pile, where the mortal remains of some thirty persons were confusedly huddled together. What had caused such a hecatomb? Some years ago, the microscopic fortress of Codihue was occupied by a cruel and inhuman captain at the head of a handful of savage soldiery. One day, these miscreants took by surprise a caravan composed of whites and Indians coming from Chili in pursuit of their business. They were declared prisoners and obliged to surrender. The soldiers then placed

them in a line, binding them with strong cords one to another; and, at a signal from the Captain, they drew their swords, and fell upon their helpless victims like ferocious beasts, cutting them to pieces! Oh, what food for reflection in that grim pile of dry bones, which record to the passer-by the fiendish ferocity of the human heart when it disregards the precepts of our Holy Religion!

"The precepts of Religion! As a fair exemplification of the gross ignorance in religious matters that prevails in those regions, I venture to recount here a little incident that befell me on this journey, which, were it not highly deplorable, would be ludicrous in the extreme.—Our guide, a soldier of the Republic, seeing my crucifix drop from my soutane, picked it up, and presenting it to me, expressed himself as follows: 'Look here, Father, you have lost this.—What is it? Perhaps it's St. Anthony?'—'No! my son,' I replied; and the occasion favourably presented itself for a little instruction on the mystery of the Incarnation, of which the poor fellow was as ignorant as a Turk!

"But to return to our journey. From Cura-Chara-Milla I may date a long series of misadventures which, for love of brevity, I shall simply catalogue in the fewest words possible.—We lost our horses, to begin with; and eight days' hunting for them proved useless sport. Impelled by hunger, they had broken loose one night and strayed away, probably to some far-off district in search of pasturage. Hence we were obliged to seek the loan of other horses, and also to employ additional guides to lead us through a thousand surrounding perils. We were obliged to ford, or swim across, large rivers; climb over high mountain ridges; and sleep in the open air on the bare ground. Day after day our only food was flesh-meat, which we roasted when we succeeded in having a fire. We also had the misfortune to stray from our path and wander about in bewilderment for days together. On one side of us, an unbroken chain of mountains; on the other, an immense plain inhabited only by large quantities of ostriches, foxes and guanacos. After fifteen days we emerged from this wilderness and found ourselves in a country already known to us, and among a people not unfamiliar with our mission.

"At the Settlements called Cadi-Hue, Vurin-Chenque, Norquin and Nireco there are no Indians, the population consisting chiefly of Christians from Chili, with a few European and Argentine families. At each of those places we passed a week, preaching the Word of God; and our efforts were not fruitless in preparing a goodly number for the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion.

"On the banks of the Rio Lileo, we accidentally encountered Father Gavotto and his Catechist. We had not seen one another for over three years. On perceiving and recognizing us from the opposite bank, Father Gavotto gave rein to his horse and plunged into the river with such unthinking impetuosity that I feared both horse and rider would be overpowered by the current and hurried to destruction. It is difficult for language to picture the ineffable sensation one experiences in meeting a dear brother in those desert and most remote places. We embraced one another in silence—our joy was so intense that our feelings could find no expression in words! In order

to enjoy a little of each other's company, we directed our course to the house of our old friend, Señor Lucca, who welcomed us, and treated us with his usual benevolence, and prepared comfortable lodgings for us to pass the night.

"The following morning we resumed our different journeys, for it was part of our plan to arrive at some of our Houses in time to be of assistance to our *confrères* during Holy Week. Father Roggerone went with Father Gavotto and his Catechist to the Salesian House at Chos-Malal; while Brother Mendez and I turned our steps westward across the Andes towards Chili. On Wednesday before Easter we arrived at S. Carlos Nuble, whence we proceeded to Talca. Needless to say that we received a warm welcome from the Rector, Don Garbari, and all the brethren.

"By invitation of the Rector, I celebrated the functions of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday in the church of the *Sœurs du Sacré Cœur* in Talca; and these good Sisters, in return, presented me with various articles of missionary use, and a supply of altar-bread sufficient for the whole period I intended sojourning among the Cordilleras.

"On Easter Sunday I went to say Mass at Panghilemo, a hamlet situated about six miles from Talca. On arriving there, I announced my intention of remaining with them as long as the fulfilling of their Easter duty might render my presence necessary, begging them also to inform their neighbours in the surrounding country. They took me at my word: the news spread in all directions, bringing such a crowd to Panghilemo, that I was obliged to remain there eight days. I preached two sermons daily; gave instruction in Christian Doctrine in the afternoon; and had the Rosary recited in public every evening. In the latter services I received valuable assistance from my host, Señor Riccardo Baldivieso, and his pious wife. During this mission, I had the consolation of seeing some five hundred persons approach the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion.

"Quitting Talca on the 1st of May, we spent twelve days in returning across the Cordilleras. As the perils of the journey were increased by the advanced season* we thought it prudent to avoid the higher summits and follow a safer, though a very round-about, track. The cold, nevertheless, was intense; and our courage and strength were sorely taxed by the cruel, piercing and impetuous blast. During three nights especially, which we were obliged to pass in the loftier mountain regions, sleep was entirely out of the question; for if one was so fortunate as to doze, the wind was sure to find him out and tear away the oil-cloth which, for us, does duty as sheets and blanket.

"In the district of the Rio Barranco, as had been preconcerted, we rejoined Fathers Gavotto and Roggerone, and continued our missionary visit from encampment to encampment all the way back to Chos-Malal. In this journey we passed near the once famous volcano Tromen. It is now completely extinct, but in by-gone days it vomited forth lava in such enormous quantities as to form several mountains around its base even to the distance of twenty miles. Its gigantic crater is covered with perpetual

* May is one of the winter months in the southern hemisphere.



Church of the Salesian Mission at Sta. Rosa de Toay on the Pampas.

snow, and not unfrequently shrouded in dense clouds, which give rise, it seems, to furious hurricanes and awe-inspiring thunder-storms. Hence the commonly-accepted superstition amongst the natives of the neighbourhood, that a mysterious force prevents any living creature from approaching its summit.

“Our last station was at Chos-Malal, parish of our dear ‘Anchorite,’ Don Panaro. By this time we had completed a journey of some 3,050 kilometres, in a territory about as large as Italy, costing us five months of severe hardships and fatigues. The Lord, we may venture to say, has been pleased

to accept our good-will and blessed our poor efforts. From the banks of the Limay to the Andes, upwards of three hundred Baptisms were administered by us, and at least one thousand five-hundred persons, old and young, were prepared for, and received, holy Communion. *Laus Deo.*"

Here is an extract from another letter by Father Milanese, written later, on the manners and moods, and religious notions, of the Patagonian Indians:—

"Before the annexation of the Patagonian territory, a Cacique had absolute authority over his tribe; now this chief has a voice in the minor details of public welfare only; the laws of the Argentine Republic, though followed with reluctance, are paramount. The Cacique has to content himself with being allowed to make the general hunting appointments, and to fix the time for religious ceremonies and for changing camps. The dwellings consist of guanaco-skins stretched on poles tied together at the top, and are cone-shaped. The folding of the tents, when moving, and the setting them up again at the end of the march, is an occupation which falls to the women; they do both with wonderful rapidity. During the fortnight I passed under the hospitable roof (?) of the Cacique Giovanni Cual, I had to share the wandering life of my host, and we pitched our tent in three different places. They all sleep higgledy-piggledy, so to say, in these tents, which takes us back to the very primitive ages of humanity. As the dogs are always much more numerous than the people themselves, two or three of them expect to share their master's bed as a matter of course; on one occasion I counted no less than thirty-five of these creatures in our tent. But, you will say, Why keep so many? Because the Patagonians require them for hunting; and it cannot be denied that they are of immense use to them; still they *could* do with fewer, certainly, and keep them better. The religious notions of these savages are extremely simple. They acknowledge two principles, viz.: the Good, the Creator and Lord of the universe; the other, the Evil, the cause of all the ills flesh is heir to. The Araucanians call God *Gue-che*, whilst the natives of the Pampas invoke Him under the name, *Atuqutual*; they call the demon, or Spirit of Evil, *Hualicho* or *Gualicio*. They all have some hazy idea concerning the immortality of the soul, and reward or punishment after death. A proof of their belief in the life of the soul apart from that of the body, is shown in their customs of depositing on the graves of the dead, portions of meat to sustain it during its flight to eternity. To the Spirit of Good they offer propitiatory or expiatory sacrifices, imploring His aid in time of war or drought, or when any epidemic prevails. All ills, death not excepted, are ascribed to the Spirit of Evil. Being very superstitious, they always fancy they have been the victims of some evil spell when they fall ill; so deeply is this belief rooted in their minds that special and most severe laws have been made against sorcerers and wizards; all implicated in the crime of witchcraft are to be burnt alive. The relatives of any man thus brutally done to death are not slow in avenging him, generally, by a wholesale murdering of his accusers; and this unreasonable shedding of blood often leads to terrible vendettas. Oh! what need they have to learn to know Jesus and His laws of love and gentleness!

"Having completed our Apostolic round among the different groups of Indians who inhabit the regions of Balcheta, Cumeco, Tapileuche, etc., in extent about five hundred miles, we went to the camp of Cual, the Cacique, nearly 125 miles farther away. This was one of the most trying journeys, as we had five days of it on foot. We had to cross a tableland at a great elevation, where it was excessively cold, and the ground covered with deep snow. Every evening we made a great heap of branches and dead leaves, to keep out the damp, and upon these we spread our skins and the few blankets we had. The kind reader will pity us when he reads all the details; but let him cheer up, we were happier on our miserable beds than many a rich man on a bed of down in his palace. We had plenty of fuel near us, and not much trouble in preparing our dinner; we simply had to



Preparations for an Indian Feast, in Patagonia.

put our bit of meat at the end of a stick, and it was done to a turn in a trice; whilst masses of snow were at hand wherewith to quench our thirst. We had scarcely set foot in Chorog-Ruca, when someone came to beg me to go to a poor old woman writhing in her last agony. She was stretched on a heap of guanaco-skins, surrounded by relations bemoaning her state. As I could not make her understand me, belonging as she did to the Tehuelches tribe, I had to have recourse to an interpreter. I told her many things concerning the mystery of the Christian faith; gave her the crucifix to kiss; and baptised her. Those around her evidently expected me to work some great miracle, and to see her recover speedily. I had nothing about me except a little bit of tamarind, of which I made her take some, chiefly for the sake of acceding to the wishes of those with her, and to show them that I took an interest in the poor old creature. She died that same night. At sunrise the next morning, her relatives made a bonfire of everything that had belonged to her. The corpse they wrapped in the skin of some beast, and buried it a little way off. Unfortunately, I was not told in time, or I should have given her Christian burial. The tent in which she had died was taken down, and set up again farther away. I imagined that that was the last of the ceremonies imposed upon these children of the solitude on the death of one of their people. I was

mistaken, for the same day the chief of the tribe gave orders to all the families to make ready for their departure; next day they were all to leave a place haunted by the Spirit of Evil, who had caused the death of the poor old woman, and go to another place which the chief named to them. I endeavoured to make him alter his decision, as this sudden flitting greatly upset all my missionary plans. 'In a matter of such grave importance,' said he, 'we may not deviate from the customs and traditions of our forefathers.' He allowed one portion of the tribe, however, to remain one day longer, that I might finish my instructions, and baptise and confirm, at least, some of the children. It was asking a very great deal that they should stay in the place they believed infested with evil spirits; and they thought it imperative to take all manner of precautions to guard themselves against their wiles. The most anxious held a council, in which it was agreed that a regular warfare must be undertaken against the Demon. When it grew dark, the cleverest riders among them bestrode their horses, and, armed with rifles sent them by the Argentines, placed themselves in battle array. Then starting all at once into a fierce gallop, as though pursuing a deadly enemy, they discharged their rifles again and again. My companions and myself, gathered round the fire at some distance quietly consuming our modest evening repast, were at a loss what to make of this warlike display. Was it a sanguinary affray amongst themselves, or had we anything to fear on our account? For a moment I did believe myself in danger, as it occurred to me that they might attribute the old woman's death to my ministrations. This petty battle lasted but a short time. When they thought that the demon had been sufficiently impressed and intimidated, and that they had compelled him to fly, these brave horsemen dismounted and retired to their well-earned repose. This is only one instance of the deplorable superstition and ridiculous practises rife among these poor denizens of the wilds, upon whom the Divine Sun of the Gospel has not yet risen. And there are impious scoffers in Europe, who look upon the good work of the Catholic priest as useless and absurd, when he tries to show these benighted heathen the true light, and to win them from the errors of their ways, sometimes at the risk of his life, and always with hardships and fatigue." Here ends the quotation from Father Milanese's letter.

Patagonia has been a fertile field ever since the Salesian Fathers undertook its evangelisation. In 1883, the Holy See created North and Central Patagonia a Vicariate-Apostolic. Father Cagliero, who led the first Salesian missionary expedition to South America, was consecrated Bishop, and appointed Vicar of the new ecclesiastical province. We conclude this sketch with a few extracts from his Lordship Bishop Cagliero's latest report on the state of the Vicariate:—

"Our Missionary Fathers, in their zealous endeavour to spread the light of faith among the benighted Indian tribes, have traversed Patagonia in all directions, seeking out the Indians who live secluded from society and far from the influence of Christian civilisation.

"I can truly say that all classes have the convenience of seeing and hearing the Catholic priest, and of receiving the benefit of our holy religion,

both the Christian who already possesses the treasure of faith, and the pagan savage whose reclamation from a state of barbarity and superstition can only be achieved by means of the Catholic Religion

"The religious services are well attended all over the Vicariate, and the Sacraments frequented; the Divine Word is preached every Sunday, at the various centres of population, both in the morning and evening, and also on other days of devotion. Catechism is taught daily in all the schools of the Mission.

"I have found that the Associations of the Children of Mary, of the Sacred Heart, of St. Joseph, of St. Aloysius, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which have been established in Patagonia, are a powerful means of furthering the interests of our holy religion; because they combine prayer with active work.

"It is calculated that the number of those who approach the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist annually in this portion of the Lord's Vineyard exceeds 40,000.

"Our priests also bestow a great deal of care and attention on the inmates of the prisons whom they visit frequently. In the jail at Viedma, the prisoners, thanks to the courtesy of Señor Tello, Governor of the Province, have the opportunity of hearing Mass every Sunday, and of assisting at religious instruction

"In nearly every town, colony, and hamlet of this Vicariate, there stands a modest church, and in its shadow a school. In the early ages of Christendom the church and the school were to be found together, and they should be so in all times.

"The Institutes, schools and Sunday Oratories of the Mission are attended by thousands of boys and girls, who are taken care of by the Salesian Fathers and Brothers, and the Nuns of our Lady Help of Christians. And the examinations bear evident witness to their proficiency in knowledge.

"At the termination of their elementary instruction, the pupils go through a more advanced course; and afterwards, many enter on the higher or classical studies, or else join a drawing class, study languages, or go in for the fine arts,—for our Congregation offers every facility to the young to follow their particular bent of mind, and gives them a complete education.

"In our colleges and schools we follow out the official programme, but we also give instruction in Christian Doctrine and Sacred History, besides; since without this, the pupils, with all the knowledge they might attain, would lack that which is of most consequence in their daily lives.

"The Infant Schools, Elementary Classes, and the Convent Schools, under the direction of the Nuns of our Lady Help of Christians, in the capital of the Vicariate and in the town of Patagones, are attended by three hundred and more pupils, partly boarders and partly day-scholars.

"The Institutes at Viedma, Chubut and Roca contain about five hundred boys and children, who, being mostly orphans and natives, are entirely dependent on our Fathers for their maintenance and education.

"The nuns have also opened for fallen women Magdalen Asylums, which are giving good practical results. The unfortunate inmates appreciate the heroic zeal and self-denial of the good Sisters, and, won by their kindness,

they strive to lead virtuous and industrious lives, and they are thus on the way to becoming useful members of society once more.

"The Institute of Arts and Trades at Viedma can boast of six large workshops for carpenters, tailors, carvers, smiths, shoemakers and tinsmiths; and the fifty boys there, under the direction of the Salesian lay-brothers who teach them the different trades, have already given proof of their proficiency not only in the execution of ordinary work, but also in that of a superior kind. This large and spacious Institute (which is the central House of the Vicariate), and the variety and superior workmanship of the manufactures that issue from the several workshops, form the admiration of visitors to these far-off regions. . . .

"Just outside Viedma, the flourishing condition of some fifteen acres of land, where the vine, and a variety of fruit-trees and vegetables are cultivated by the inmates of our Institute, attracts considerable attention. The cultivation of that land is particularly advantageous to the advance of industry in these regions, and likewise a source of income to our central Mission which has to support more than two hundred children.

"Our Meteorological Observatory in the Rio Negro Territory, the local position of which has gained for it attention and the favour of distinguished scientists, has lately been enriched with ten new instruments from the Argentine Meteorological Observatory, and it gives promise of excellent practical results in the cause of science and agriculture.

"In the five most populated centres of this territory there have been established branch associations of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul for ladies. They hold their meetings and Conferences in the Convents of the Nuns of our Lady Help of Christians, whom they assist in their works of charity.

"Our Dispensary at Viedma and the branch ones at Pringles and Roca, distribute medicine etc., *gratis*, to the sick poor, who are nearly all attended to at their homes by the Nuns and by the Faculty of our humble Society, assisted by other doctors who are always ready to lend their kind services when occasion requires. The register shows that on an average eight to ten sick people are cared for every day; this signifies that several thousand are attended to in the course of a year.

"The hospital, which is maintained at the expense of the Mission, contains a large number of spacious rooms and gardens for the convalescent. Patients are admitted gratuitously, without distinction of creed or nationality, and they are attended to by the good Nuns of Mary Help of Christians, who by their gentle kindness render the lot of the sufferers less hard to bear, and who comfort and prepare the dying for their last journey. The solicitude and loving kindness that animate the Sisters have been the means of bringing about many and wonderful conversions; for it is difficult for even most hardened people to remain long insensible to such charity; and great is their admiration for, and gratitude towards, the noble heroines of the Cross who have saved them in body and soul . . ."

The Vicariate of Patagonia now numbers 13 parishes and 66 missionary residences; 23 Churches and Chapels; 24 Colleges and Convents; 2 Hospitals

and 15 Infant Schools,—all under the direction of the Salesian Fathers, or the Nuns of Mary Help of Christians. Besides, regular missionary service has been established all along the Patagonian Andes; along the Rivers Negro, Colorado, Chubut and Santa Cruz; and along the coast. Whilst upwards of 20,000 heathen have been instructed in the truths of our holy Religion, and regenerated in the saving waters of Baptism. And, to-day, there are 35 Salesian priests, 41 lay-brothers, and 78 Sisters of Mary Help of Christians assisting his Lordship in his arduous work.

The Prefecture-Apostolic of Tierra del Fuego.

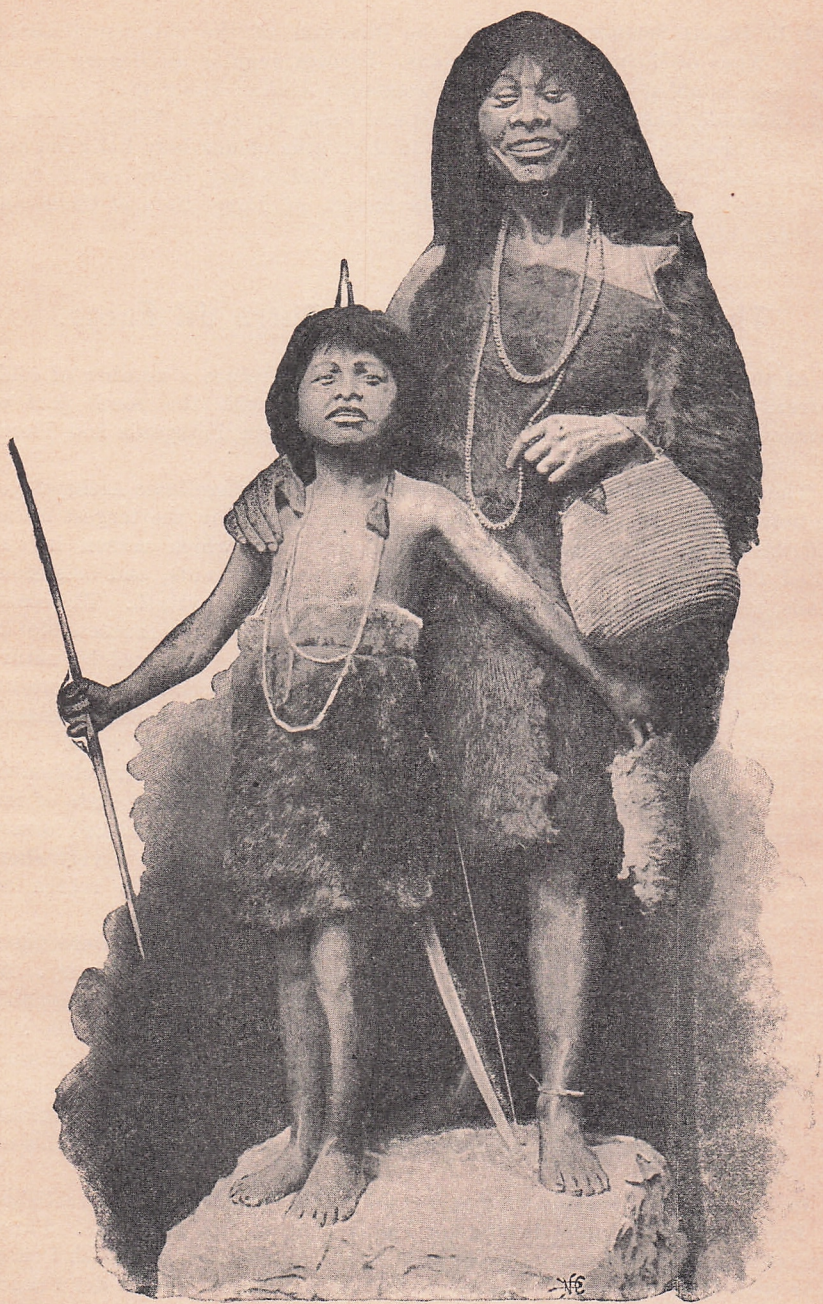
At the extremity of the American Continent there are a number of cold, barren, and mountainous islands, which, together with the south part of Patagonia, forms the Prefecture-Apostolic of Southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego.

The numerous islands of Tierra del Fuego, or the Magellanic Archipelago, lie between 52° 20' and 52° 12' south latitude. It was on the largest island that the sailors under Magellan observed fires, for which reason it was called Tierra del Fuego. Narrow channels, strong currents, and boisterous winds, render it dangerous to enter into this desolate labyrinth. The coast, which is composed of granite, lava and basaltic rocks, is inaccessible in many places. The northern and eastern coasts are more favoured by nature than the southern and western; towards the Atlantic Ocean, the mountains are not so steep, a rich verdure decks the valleys, and some useful animals are found in the woods and pastures, whilst the climate is less rigid.

The inhabitants of these regions are among the most irreclaimable savages. Darwin spoke of them as exhibiting "man in a lower state of improvement than in any other part of the world." Mr. Mathews, who had formed the project of trying to civilize them, after stopping on shore a very short time, was so terrified by their savageness that he was glad to return on board the *Beagle*.

It was in the latter part of the year 1886, that the first steps were taken by the Salesian Fathers for the conversion of this barbarous country. At that period, Monsignor Fagnano, the Prefect Apostolic, landed at St. Sebastian's Bay, on the large island of Tierra del Fuego, and travelled along the sea-shore as far as Cape S. Vicente, a very southerly point. He met with some thrilling experiences during the journey, and had to endure many hardships; but he had the consolation of instructing and baptising several Fuegians, and of being the first priest to celebrate the holy Sacrifice of the Mass on the island.

In the August of the following year (1887), a Mission House was established at Punta Arenas, where Monsignor Fagnano fixed his residence. Punta Arenas is situated on the neck of land which connects the Brunswick Peninsular with the continent. It faces the north-west coast of Tierra del Fuego, being separated from it by the Straits of Magellan, and is the most important port of that zone. It is likewise the *rendez-vous* of the Indians of Southern Patagonia, who find there a ready market for guanaco and puma



Fuegian Types: Mother and Child of the Ona Race.

skins, and other articles. This circumstance, and the comparative facility the place affords for intercourse with the remotest parts of the Prefecture, (since it lies in the very centre thereof), induced Monsignor Fagnano to make it the basis of his missionary operations. And from there the Salesian Fathers began to radiate in all directions of Southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, to bring the Gospel within reach of the numerous tribes of Indians.

The missionaries becoming aware of the state of complete abandonment in which the natives of Tierra del Fuego were living, and of the slow but sure extermination, in consequence of the inhuman methods adopted by so-called civilized white men against the poor, defenceless creatures, soon decided on an efficient plan for their amelioration. They would build villages and populate them with the natives who were wandering aimlessly about the land. An application was accordingly made to the Chilian Government, to whom the greater part of the Magellan Archipelago belongs, for a grant of land; and the result of this was the cession to the Salesians for twenty years of Dawson Island, which lies to the south east of Brunswick Peninsula and is separated from Tierra del Fuego by Gabriel Channel. This was in 1889. Four years later, namely, in August, 1893, Monsignor Fagnano writes to the Superior-General of the Salesian Society:—

“On the 14th of this month I was at St. Raphael’s Mission on Dawson Island for the purpose of erecting the Way of the Cross in the church there. You will be glad to hear that this Missionary Settlement is making remarkable progress.

“There is, to begin with, a fine new pier, a hundred feet in length, whereby one can now effect a landing without wading through the water. From the quay, a broad straight road leads to the church of the Settlement—an elegant little building, capable of accommodating several hundred persons. It is furnished with an orchestra, and can now also boast of a Way of the Cross. In the midst of the large square before the church, a great cross, rising high in the air, stretches forth its gigantic arms as if to embrace the whole Village. The Village itself is advancing day by day with the vigorous growth of youth. The Church, the Missioners’ dwelling, and the Convent of the Sisters are surrounded by fine buildings, which are used as schools for the children, as workshops and dormitories, and also as residences for the widows. Besides, what may be considered as public buildings—an hospital, a concert-hall, a bakery and a slaughter-house—there are several blocks of houses,—symetrically erected so as to form fine straight streets,—which are occupied by the Indian families of the Settlement. Beyond the river, at a considerable distance from the dwellings, is situated the cemetery.

“The Indians at the Reduction are becoming more and more numerous, [there are now over five hundred], and it is a pleasure to see what advancement they are making towards complete civilisation. On my arrival, many of them came forward to bid me welcome; and you should see them pulling off their caps and shaking hands with me, asking me about my health, and also inquiring after the other Missionaries at Punta Arenas. Indeed, I was charmed with these poor people, who, in the comparatively short time they are under the care of our Fathers, have mastered many of the difficulties of the

Spanish tongue, and, notwithstanding a certain uncouthness of exterior, show that they are capable of the loftiest and most refined sentiments. It is easy to see that God is with this Mission, and blesses with remarkable increase the labours of our poor *confrères*.

"When returning to Punta Arenas, I took with me the Fuegian boys of the college band, who were to take part in the civil festivities that were celebrated here on the 17th, 18th, and 19th inst. Although the band has been definitely formed only a short time, its progress is remarkable; and certainly the little Indians show no lack of musical talent. They played several religious pieces in church during the sacred functions; at the Distribution of Prizes to our *alumni*, they rendered recitative and academical pieces; and each day they gave a grand concert in the principal square of the town, always evoking the heartiest applause and exciting the admiration of all. Who that had seen these little fellows three years ago, would have predicted that, after the lapse of a few years, they would become expert *artistes*? It would then have seemed an insane dream. And yet, the dream has become a reality, and so palpable and incontrovertible, that, while it fills the heart of the Missionary with ineffable consolation, it strikes mute with astonishment those pseudo-anthropologists who were once loud in denying the possibility of civilising the Fuegian savages.

"Those dear little Indians of Dawson Island greatly edified us by their devotion during the few days they spent at Punta Arenas. It were impossible to note, unmoved, their modesty and fervour when they approached the Most Blessed Sacrament, or served at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The fervent prayers of these good children will ascend like sweet incense before the Throne of God, and draw down upon their native land,—upon their benighted race,—the redeeming grace of our Divine Lord with the light of His holy Gospel...."

Here is another account (from the same pen), written four years later, namely in October, 1897, describing the Patronal Feast of the Settlement as kept by the Fuegian inhabitants:—

"The little village of St. Raphael, built on the slope of a hill facing Port Harris, on the east side of Dawson Island, presents a pleasing and flourishing appearance with its more than sixty houses for the Indians, its schools, workshops, hospital, church, grand square, and its two piers which stretch several hundred feet out into the sea. Before the arrival of the missionary, this spot, which is now all life and bustle and of considerable commercial importance in Tierra del Fuego, was a weary waste.

"On the 23rd of October, eve of St. Raphael the Archangel, Patron of the Village, I paid another visit there, and was received with every demonstration of pleasure and delight by the Superiors and the Fuegian inhabitants. During the whole of the evening I was employed in hearing confessions.

"At the early Mass, on the following morning, it was a source of great pleasure for me to see that, besides the hundred Indians who approached the altar-rails to receive holy Communion, twenty-nine others—all adults—received the Bread of Angels for the first time.

"I celebrated the Solemn High Mass, assisted by little Fuegian altar-



Group of Fuegians of St. Raphael's Missionary Settlement.

boys, whose innocent faces reflected the holy joy they inwardly felt at being chosen to act as the body-guard of our Divine Lord. The band, composed likewise of Fuegian children, played some devotional pieces before and after Mass; whilst during the holy Sacrifice, the choir of youthful voices, under the direction of the Nuns, executed some charming music with admirable skill.

"At noon, the men sat down to dinner in our house, the large recreation hall being converted into a refectory for the occasion. The women were



Indians of Tierra del Fuego.

entertained in like manner at the Convent by the Nuns. In this way all the inhabitants of the village were united in a brotherly reunion, a reunion not unlike those which took place in the primitive ages of the Church. The Indians were overjoyed, and deported themselves very well at table; they were a little perplexed, it is true, as to the use of the knife and fork, but that did not spoil their appetite. When dinner was over, and grace had been recited, the Fuegians unable to curb the external expression of their feelings any longer, gave vent to them by loud *evvivas* for St. Raphael, Don Bosco, Don Rua, the Superiors of the Mission, etc., which echoed and re-echoed through the village until the bell rang for the afternoon service.

"At once they entered the Church, where I administered holy Baptism to twenty-four adult Indians, and Confirmation to seventy others. Then came the panegyric of St. Raphael, followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament which brought the sacred functions to a close.

"The service over, the Indians flocked into the square outside the Church to listen to the College band, which gave a grand concert,—a veritable musical display—evoking hearty applause. Afterwards, we were invited to assist at a dramatical representation given by the boys of the College. It was a most decided success. I was obliged to admire the histrionic powers of our little Fuegians: they are almost consummate *artistes*; they certainly need not fear being outshone by their little white brethren. I do not exaggerate when I assert that I have not assisted at private theatricals more brilliantly performed even at our mother house in Turin.

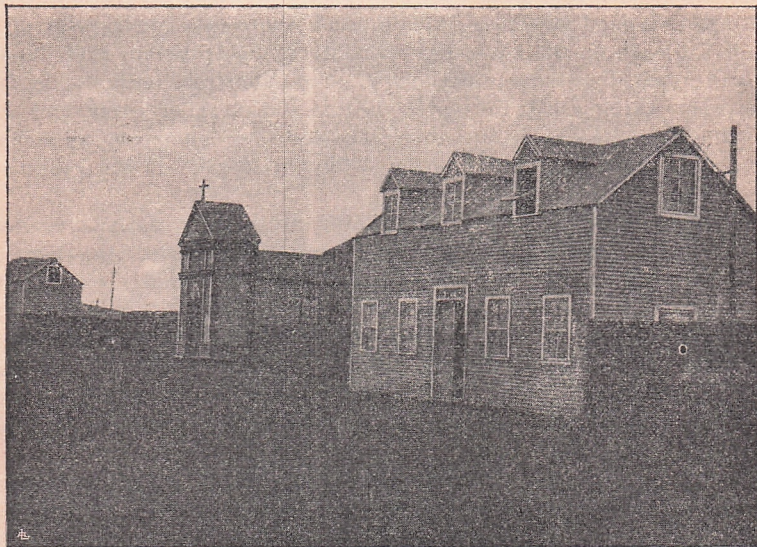
"Whilst this is a proof to us that the poor Ona Indians are susceptible of the most refined culture, the piety, industry and signs of comfort which reign in the whole Settlement show the immense strides, both in our holy religion and civilisation, that these poor creatures have taken in the course of a few years. Oh! the sight fills the missionary with ineffable consolation and makes him forget all that he has had to suffer in these icy regions.

"We could hardly believe our own eyes, as the change that has been effected surpasses all expectation. And then we wandered in spirit to Turin, and we seemed to hear once more the prophetic words of our beloved Founder, Don Bosco, about Tierra del Fuego."

The success which crowned this first step in solving the native problem, encouraged the Salesian Missionaries to make another venture in 1893, this time on the large island of Tierra del Fuego. A small band of priests and lay-brothers,—twelve persons in all,—with Father Beauvoir as Superior, left Punta Arenas in June of 1894, for this purpose. Their voyage was attended by almost incredible hardships and dangers, and only after seven months battling against wind and wave did they succeed in gaining the site for which they had started,—a place situated on the Rio Grande to the south of Cape Peña, which had been visited and chosen by Don Fagnano a year before. No sooner were our missionaries observed by the savages than great fires began to blaze up on every side, kindled by the latter probably with the hope of frightening away their unwelcome visitors; or, perhaps, to apprise distant tribes of the unlooked-for presence of strangers. None of the Fuegians, however, ventured near the Salesians, who, seeing that they were not

molested, immediately set to work to erect some dwellings for themselves and their future neophytes.

A few months later, several huts had arisen and over a hundred Fuegians had been induced to settle down at the Mission of *La Candelaria*. Things were progressing most favourably—a Church was built; then a College; then a Convent for a party of Sisters of our Lady Help of Christians, who came later on to take charge of the Fuegian women and girl-children,—when a disastrous fire broke out on the 12th of December, 1896, reducing



Church and Missionary Residence of La Candelaria Settlement.

the Settlement to a heap of ashes. This was a serious blow for the poor missionaries. In the wilderness, (hundreds of miles distant from any centre of civilisation), without a roof, and surrounded by a crowd of hungry Indians, their situation was certainly distressing. But they never thought of abandoning their post. Their difficulties only served to spur them on to renewed exertion. And to-day, a much larger Village has arisen near the spot where the former Settlement stood.

Lately, another "Reduction" on the same plan has been established at Cape Valentyn, the most northerly point of Dawson Island, and about twenty miles from St. Raphael's Mission. This foundation is giving consoling results, and bids fair to out-rival the flourishing Settlements of St. Raphael and La Candelaria.

In the Prefecture-Apostolic of Southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, there are, besides the above three Settlements, 31 Missionary Residences; 11 Churches and Chapels; 3 Colleges for Boys, and 4 for Girls. And in carrying on the good work, Monsignor Fagnano is assisted by 15 Salesian priests; 41 lay-brothers, and 37 Nuns of Mary Help of Christians.

The Vicariate-Apostolic of Mendez and Gualaquiza.

The Republic of Ecuador is divided from north to south by the lofty Cordilleras of the Andes, which rise in the midst of this vast region like a gigantic wall or insurmountable barrier. On the western side one admires the beneficent influence of culture and civilisation, as the eye ranges along the noble table-lands, and across the fertile valleys, and down the gently sloping plains that from the foot of the mountains descend to the Pacific. Here lie the federal provinces with their proud capitals: Esmeraldas, Guayaquil, Cuenca, Loja, Riobamba, Ambato, and Quito—the metropolis of all. Towards the east, on the contrary, barbarity reigns supreme over immense wilds and forests that seem interminable. Here numerous hordes of degraded and ferocious savages still lie buried in the darkness of error and gross superstition, despite the heroic sacrifices made by numerous missionaries to draw them from the “valley of the shadow of death” to the gentle sway of the Cross.

With the laudable object of reclaiming from their native savageness the many tribes ranging through the forests that cover the boundless basin of the Amazon, the Government of Ecuador strenuously exerted itself to obtain for them the services of the zealous disciples of St. Ignatius, of St. Dominic, and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. As a result of this wise policy, the flourishing Missions of the Napo, of Canelos, and of Macas have been established, where, thanks to the constant missionary work of the Fathers and the Infant-schools of the good Sisters, Christian civilisation is making headway.

In order, however, to contribute more efficaciously to the speedy and universal propagation of the Gospel in those distant wilds, the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, meeting in Congress on the 11th of August, 1888, decided to petition the Holy See that four Apostolic Vicariates be erected in the eastern territory of the Republic: one comprising the Napo country; another, the districts of Macas and Canelos; a third, Mendez and Gualaquiza; and a fourth, the region of Zamora. They likewise petitioned that the first and second of these Vicariates should continue in charge, respectively, of the Society of Jesus and the Dominicans; that the third be confided to the Priests of the Salesian Society; and the fourth to the Franciscan Missionaries.

This Legislative Decree was then forwarded to the Holy Father. The Sovereign Pontiff, always desirous of extending the Kingdom of Christ upon earth, and placing within the reach of all peoples the beneficent influence of our Holy Religion,—commended in terms of special encomium, the faith, piety, and wisdom of the Ecuadorian Government. And, when sending his congratulations to them for having thus zealously *entered on the way that leads to true and lasting glory*, he assured President Flores that the memorial presented on the part of the Ecuadorian Government, was the object of His Holiness's most careful solicitude; and that he had already charged some prudent and competent persons to examine the project, and study the best means to bring it, with facility and according to established forms, to a happy issue.

A few years afterwards—all preliminaries being arranged—a Decree creating the new Vicariate-Apostolic of Mendez and Gualaquiza was duly formulated (on the 8th of February, 1893), and forwarded to the Superior-General of the Salesian Society on the happy occasion of the opening of the Episcopal Jubilee of LEO XIII.

According to this Decree, the new Vicariate confided to the Salesians is bounded on the north by the river Apatenoma, a tributary of the Morona; on the south by the Zamora, the Santiago, and the Marañon; on the east by the Morona; and on the west by the Dioceses of Cuenca and of Loja. We have reason to believe, however, that a new division and new lines of demarcation are being studied for the four Vicariates.

An important step in the right direction was taken by our missionaries when they established a House at Cuenca. This residence, being on the very threshold of the new Vicariate, afforded, and still affords, great advantages for the special preparation of those valiant apostles who are destined to carry the word of God and spread the light of the Gospel across the lofty mountain ranges; through the dense forests; and along the swampy water-courses of the new field of labour to which the Master has called them.

Father Angelo Savio, for several years inured to the fatigues of missionary life in South America, was appointed superior of the first Salesian expedition to Gualaquiza. But it pleased God to call him to his reward while on his way to this new field of missionary enterprise. A successor was chosen in the person of Father Spinelli, an intrepid young priest, who without delay transferred his abode from Quito to Cuenca. Here his time was passed in studying the manners and customs of the Jivaro Indians, and in preparing himself for his difficult mission. Towards the latter part of the year 1893, Father Spinelli undertook a journey into the very heart of the Vicariate, being accompanied by Brother Giacinto Pancheri, a zealous Catechist. The good Brother describes their experiences to the Superior General of the Salesian Congregation, in a letter, from which the following extracts concerning the new Vicariate and its dusky inhabitants are taken:—

“What a splendid panorama the valley of Gualaquiza presents to the observer as seen from an eminence called the Three Crosses! An immense plain, undulated rather than broken by the gentle swelling of diminutive hills, and flanked, in the far-off haze of distance, by the heaven-piercing summits of the Andes; the whole covered with a most luxuriant and truly gigantic vegetation. Through the midst of the valley wind the pure crystal waters of the Rio Gualaquiza,—now seen in broad, majestic flow; now half-hidden among the sugar-canes, the coffee plantations, or the groves of the palms, oranges, and lemons, belonging to the few Christian settlers of the territory. The light-green of those cultivated patches (from the midst of which arises the dwelling of the husbandman), forms a pleasing contrast to the dark-emerald of the dense forest which covers the greater part of the valley and the hills adjoining. The huts of the Jivaros, being completely hidden in the thick woodlands of the hills, neither add too, nor subtract from, the picturesqueness of the scene.

“In contemplating the luxuriant richness of this marvellous landscape,

the footsore and weary traveller forgets his troubles, and revels in the natural beauty and grandeur of the scene. But, alas! before he enters this Promised Land—this delicious Eden—he must plod across an intervening tract of considerable length, made up of rotting branches, and fallen trunks, and whitening roots, and treacherous marshes, over which his horse bounds and stumbles and flounders by turns; and out of which both man and beast emerge fatigued, besmeared with mud, and bruised and torn in every limb. About half-past two in the afternoon of the 14th of October, with feelings of relief and thankfulness to Heaven for perils overcome, we arrived at Yumaza, the first hamlet of the Gualaquiza territory. Here we were received by some twenty Christians of Spanish extraction, who, being informed of our arrival, had gathered to bid us welcome. But at that moment our attention was attracted to a group of Jivaros. Drawn up as on parade, dressed in their native costume and armed with their neverfailing lances, they stood in an attitude of what I may call “respectful dignity.” As soon as we dismounted they came forward, and shaking hands with us, courteously asked in Spanish: *‘How are you doing?’*

“We were already aware that the Indians of Gualaquiza, through long intercourse with the white settlers, had picked up enough of Spanish to make themselves understood in this language—always using the verb, however, in the form of a present participle. Hence, in order to facilitate our relations with them, we immediately adopted their style of speech, using only short, disjointed clauses and the favourite verbal form. Our conversation soon became a veritable literary curiosity. We talked to them of the object of our mission, and our coming so far to place ourselves at their disposal. We told them that we would teach them, among other things, how to work metals, and make lances and other weapons for the chase. Nor did we forget to mention the gifts that we had brought for them, which (we hoped) they would find very beautiful and highly appreciate. Their faces lit up with joy as they listened; a rapid interchange of glances expressed their satisfaction; and when we returned to the saddle, they shot off at full speed to participate the good news to their companions. These were awaiting our arrival at a clearing on a neighbouring hill, where once stood the Church and Missionary Station, constructed upwards of twenty years ago by the well-known Jesuit Missioner, Father Pozzi.

“This hill rises about 100 feet from the plain, in the form of a truncated cone, with a very slight inclination. It is a charming site for a church, for it stands in full view of the valley on every side. When Father Pozzi, our worthy predecessor, was obliged to leave this place, the fine large church and hospice erected by his zeal were abandoned, and have since fallen to ruins. Out of their remains, and on the same site, the few Christians of Gualaquiza have erected a temporary little chapel, and two small rooms for the missionaries whose arrival had already been announced to them. To this place, therefore, we directed our steps, passing under triumphal arches formed of green boughs, and ornamented with flowers and desiccated birds of the most variegated plumage. We soon found ourselves surrounded by the rest of the Christians, and a crowd of Jivaros—men, women and children,—who being apprised of our arrival, had flocked to welcome

us and offer their gifts, consisting of yucca, plane-tree nuts, and embalmed birds.

"After presenting us with various things of this kind, they asked with savage simplicity: '*And you, what are you going to be presenting?*' We explained that our boxes had not yet arrived; that they should come again to see us in a day or two; and that we would then have the gifts for them. Satisfied with our promise, they returned to their homes.

"For some days following our arrival, the Jivaros came in crowds to visit us and receive the promised presents. These consisted of a variety of toys, needles, pins, thread, penknives, scissors, handkerchiefs, and under-garments,—all of which they received with open demonstrations of joy and gratefulness.

"These Indians are as curious as they are arrogant; they must see and examine everything, and ask a thousand questions about knickknacks and 'trifles light as air.' But to their honour be it said, they touched not a thing without asking permission. Nay, we have been told that the Jivaros (when not corrupted by the influence of certain white-faced black sheep) hold liars and rogues in abhorrence.

"Our trifling gifts sufficed to make us great favourites among the savages, whose good opinion of us was summed up in the often repeated phrase: '*The Fathers being [are] very good.*' And the news spread from hut to hut, so that we had the pleasure of receiving all the inhabitants of Gualaquiza, and even some from Mendez and the plains of the Zamora.

"Seeing the ground so well prepared, we shook off our suspicions about these savages, and began—to their great delight—to return their visits, passing from house to house....

"The character sketch of the Jivaros seems to be summed up in three words: suspicious, diffident, and treacherous. Only a few years ago, they committed such unspeakable atrocities, as may well justify the dread and horror wherewith they are regarded by the whites. It is my opinion, nevertheless, that for the Missionary they have a certain respect, knowing that he can better their condition, and is, moreover, willing to do so. But even *he* must carry about him a certain resolute bearing, as if quite capable of defending himself in case of need. And, in fact, I always went among them with my carbine slung upon my shoulder; and was by no means loath, whenever requested by the savages, to show them the terrible force and precision of such a weapon. But more than to the force of our arms, we entrusted ourselves to the protection of Heaven whilst in their midst. We crossed the river many times in their canoes; and several nights we slept in their close vicinity,—sometimes in the open forest; sometimes in tambos erected for us; and more than once, even in the dwellings of the savages themselves.

"The Jivaros are of medium stature, or rather below it, but of a very strong and muscular build. Their colour fluctuates between a bright bronze and a dusky brown, with a slight tint of yellow. The head is shapely; the nose somewhat flattened and wide; the facial angle and profile look purely Caucasian, with cheek-bones slightly prominent; little or no beard; and hair black and abundant. They all dress their hair elaborately: the frontal

hair is cut and 'fringed' on the forehead; the long locks are braided around the head in the form of a crown, and fastened with ribands; while the portion falling on the back is plaited into a long pigtail, interwoven, on festivals, with brilliant feathers and desiccated birds. They also perforate their ears, and afterwards continue to enlarge the wound until one's fingers may be inserted in the hole thus formed. These holes then become their favourite receptacles for holding wooden pin-cases which are generally about ten inches in length.

"The men's dress consists of a single garment—an *itipi*. It is a piece of reddish stuff, streaked with black and yellow stripes, which is wound round the body, and extends from the waist to the knee.—The breast, the broad shoulders, and the brawny arms are always bare, as are also the legs and short, thick feet. They are fond of painting red stripes upon their face; and certain hieroglyphics in black on their neck and breast and arms. They also wear a number of necklaces, made of black little beads, or of monkeys' teeth artificially strung together; and to these singular ornaments (which sometimes cover the greater part of the breast and shoulders) they likewise hang desiccated little birds. Some, moreover, wear crowns interwoven with feathers of the most varied colours; and if by some fortunate chance their wardrobe boast of a shirt or a jerkin—especially if the article be red—they are sure to saunter in its glory whenever a festival is brewing.

"The women dress more modestly than the men,—a long loose gown covers them from neck to heels, a girdle around their waist, and their toilette is done. The female children are dressed in an exactly similar gown from the day of their birth; while the little boys, on the contrary, are allowed to go naked until they are seven or eight years of age.

"Among the Jivaros the art of war is practised exclusively by the men. Their favourite weapon is the lance, though some of them possess, and have learned the use of, fire-arms. They also bear the burden of the chase; build the *tambo* (dwelling); spin the little cotton they make use of; and cut down and burn the trees immediately surrounding their dwelling, thus making the necessary 'clearing' for a patch of cultivated ground. The women generally keep to their own portion of the *tambo*, where they attend to the nursery, the kitchen, the making of *chicha*, and other domestic duties. They also cultivate the garden, and weave the yarn spun by their husbands.

"These Indians are a most vindictive people, and their passion for revenge has always been the chief drawback to their social amelioration. The high palisade that surrounds their dwellings clearly betokens their belligerent and ravaging propensities; in fact, among the more peaceful Indian tribes the palisade is nowhere to be found. But even among the Jivaros there exist different degrees of ferocity: those of Gualaquiza, it would seem, being less savage and less blood-thirsty than the tribes on the banks of the Marañon. These latter, whenever they kill an enemy, have the barbarous custom of cutting off his head and extracting piecemeal the bones and flesh thereof, so that the skin of the face and scalp remain whole and unbroken. The skin is then placed in boiling water mixed with certain herbs and drugs, and when sufficiently 'toughened,' it is drawn over a small, round stone, heated to the highest possible degree. The heat gradually contracts the



A Jivaro Warrior.

tissue of the skin till it tightens around the stone, conserving the hair and even some resemblance to the features of the individual to whom it once belonged. This ghastly trophy is called a *shanza*.

"There are unscrupulous collectors who are not ashamed to set a market value upon this appalling product of savage man's ferocity; and taking advantage of the greed as well as the cruelty of these tribes, drive a regular trade in shanzas with them, exchanging fire-arms for those grim relics of human victims! In the Gualaquiza territory, however, this barbarity is no longer prevalent, thanks to the heavy penalties inflicted by the law upon all persons convicted of carrying on this abominable traffic.

"In our brief sojourn at Gualaquiza we saw enough to convince us that the successful establishment of this Mission will cost great sacrifices, and require much assistance, both spiritual and temporal, for the difficulties to be overcome are enormous and the dangers extreme.

"In the first place, a good number of zealous missionaries will be required. For, it seems,—at least, according to the opinion of those who know most about these tribes—the only means of bringing the benefits of Christianity and civilisation to the Jivaros, is to found, in the populous centres, institutes with workshops and schools, so that the young, who appear to have a fair share of intelligence, may be instructed and trained to habits of industry and thrift. Of course they would not easily submit to regular discipline; for they are all jealously fond of their personal liberty, and spend the greater part of their time in splashing through the rivers, or capering through the forests of their native wilds. But we are not so foolish as to cage them up in colleges and oblige them to become artisans all at once. Let them scamper at will over field and flood; and when they are tired of their gambols, they will the more eagerly listen to us and imbibe the principles of our Christian education and doctrine.

"The first House to be founded in this vast region should certainly be at Gualaquiza, where there are many Christians just as much in need of the missionary as the Jivaros themselves; then one at Mendez; a third on the Rio Pongo; and, perhaps, a fourth near the mouth of the Paute.

"Besides the expense of building, each new House must have its Chapel decently provided with the necessary vestments and articles for Divine Worship. The workshops, likewise, will require to be furnished with, at least, blacksmiths' and carpenters' tools. Each House, moreover, should be able to dispose of a considerable quantity of clothing and various objects for distribution among the natives. For these savages are very selfish; and nothing is capable of winning their confidence except the hope of material gain. Their favourite colours are crimson and scarlet; and they have an inordinate craving after red shirts, gowns, handkerchiefs, or any rag of a reddish colour. Any gowns or shirts that may be sent to us for them, should be made of a strong texture, but as light as possible, and sufficiently long to cover the whole person from the neck to the feet. Smaller sizes, with very short sleeves—or no sleeves at all—might be sent for the little boys. They also revel in the possession of little fowling-pieces, axes, hatchets, knives, scissors, needles, pins, looking-glasses, and toys of every description. By making presents of such objects to the parents, we could induce them to

let their children frequent our instruction,—nay, perhaps, to come themselves, and listen to, and follow, our teachings.

“*A propos* of the selfish instincts of this people. Father Magalli tells us of a Dominican Missionary who tried to convert a tribe of Jivaros. The good Father succeeded in winning them by gifts, so they flocked to his instructions with apparent pleasure. One day, however, when the last of his presents were gone, with importunate perseverance they asked him:—‘Father, have you nothing more to give us?’—‘No, my children,’ he replied with a sigh, ‘I have already given you everything I possessed.’—‘If that be so, you are poor, indeed,’ rejoined the savages; ‘and we do not want a poor Father, so you had better take your departure immediately.’—And forthwith they all abandoned him, and with him the saving Word of eternal life!

“The Jivaros of to-day are all they were when presented to us by Father Magalli; hence the necessity of going amongst them provided with many things that might be considered superfluous for missionary work under more favourable circumstances. By degrees the children will be instructed; and growing up, will not fail to repay our labours and sacrifices....”

A few months later the establishment of a Missionary Station at Gualaquiza was an accomplished fact. And although several Salesian Fathers were exiled from Ecuador,—for they had Institutes and Colleges in other parts of that Republic,—the Salesians attached to the Gualaquiza Mission were left unmolested. They have had to suffer, it is true, in the course of the last three or four years owing to the unsettled state of the country. But notwithstanding this fact, they have enlarged the Mission by adding a College for native children; erected a new Church in honour of our Lady Help of Christians; and founded another Mission at St. José, about four days’ ride from Gualaquiza. They have also penetrated far into the interior of the Vicariate in the endeavour to reach the various tribes of Jivaros, among whom they have given several successful missions, and have been the means of reconciling some of the hostile tribes.

A short time ago, Father Costamagna, late Provincial of the Salesian Houses in the Argentine Republic, was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Mendez and Gualaquiza, and raised to the Episcopal dignity. He has, however, been prevented from entering the new missionary field by the faction so hostile to religion which still dominates in Ecuador.

The Matto Grosso Missions in Brazil.

In the evening of Easter Sunday, 1893, there took place in the Salesian Church of our Lady Help of Christians, in Turin, a solemn and impressive “Departure” ceremony. On that occasion, thirty-five missionary priests and lay-brothers, with his Lordship Bishop Lasagna at their head, were gathered around the altar of our Blessed Lady to bid adieu to their brother religious, to kindred and country, before setting out on their noble mission of regeneration and love. A portion of this little band was destined for the Salesian Missions about to be undertaken in Matto Grosso, Brazil. The founder of these Missions was Bishop Lasagna, one of Don Bosco’s disciples.

When a young priest, he set out for America in 1876, with the ardour of an Apostle and landed in Montevideo, where he immediately founded a Catholic College,—the first in the Republic of Uruguay,—which was not slow in giving very satisfactory results, for it already counts among its graduates the most conspicuous scholars of Uruguay, in Law and Medicine, and the various Arts and Sciences.

Another important enterprise in which he took an active part was the starting of a Catholic newspaper—*El Bien*—of which he was a zealous collaborator for years. A series of controversial and doctrinal articles from his pen, against the positivistic and materialistic theories widely circulated in those parts, appeared in that paper. They have since been collected and published in a separate volume by his admiring disciples.

At Montevideo he likewise formulated the rules for the Catholic Guilds and Associations, of which as many as fifteen sprung into existence in a few years. "Festive" Oratories for the young were also duly established, and rapidly multiplied, by the energy and perseverance of the young missionary. And it is worthy of note that his Lordship the Bishop of Montevideo was so charmed with this feature of the apostolate of the disciples of Don Bosco, that he issued a pastoral to his clergy, warmly recommending the system practised by the Salesians, and the opening of "Festive" Oratories wherever practicable in the Diocese.

Imbued with Don Bosco's spirit, and that child-like confidence in Divine Providence which our good Father has left as a birthright to his sons, Father Lasagna founded the College of Las Piedras for boys; the Institutes of *María Auxiliadora* at Villa Colon and Las Piedras for the education of girls; and numerous free schools for both sexes in different parts of the Republic, notably in Paysandú, where he likewise assumed the rectorship of the parish church at an epoch when such a charge was fraught with danger of life to any one who had the courage of exercising it.

His great activity seemed to multiply his time, and while he provided missionaries to attend to the European immigrants in the Republic, and administer to their religious wants, he did not lose sight of the wandering Indians of the immense Paraguayan wilderness. Their encampments were regularly visited by himself or by his *confrères*; religious instruction was imparted "in season and out of season"; and by patience and perseverance many a savage freebooter has been induced to abandon the preying instincts of the wolf and peacefully enter the fold of the Good Shepherd.

Seeing the marvellous fruits with which the Lord was pleased to bless Father Lasagna's labours, Don Bosco placed under his charge, in 1881, the Mission to Brazil. He immediately set out and traversed the whole country as far as the Amazon, visiting the principal towns and provinces on the eastern coast for a distance of over 2,500 miles. The chief result of this journey was the foundation of Salesian Houses at St. Paul, Nictheroy, Lorena, Guaratingueta, Pindamonhangaba, and Pernambuco.

Whilst carrying into effect these noble works, he was planning special missions for the conversion and civilisation of the savage tribes inhabiting Matto Grosso, Paraguay, and the State of San Paulo.

He came to Italy at the end of the year 1892, in order to obtain help,

and the blessing of the Holy Father on his great and daring plans. His Holiness Leo XIII. then raised him to the episcopal dignity. The consecration took place on March 12, 1893, and within a month after, he set out again for South America with a band of Salesian Missionaries. He suc-



Superior and Indians of the Teresa Christina Colony.

ceeded in founding a House at Cuyaba, which, being on the very threshold of the new Mission, became the base of operations. Later on he introduced his *confrères* among the savage Coroado Indians of Matto Grosso, (against whom a war of extermination had been decreed), by establishing a permanent Station at Teresa Christina in the very heart of the Brazilian forests.

He was preparing other similar important undertakings for the savages of Paraguay, when he was called to his reward. The good Bishop, together with his Secretary (a Salesian Father), and four of Don Bosco's Nuns, was killed in a railway accident near Juiz de Fora, in Brazil, whilst on his way to establish two new Convents in his vast Mission.

Matto Grosso, which means large forest, is one of the largest States in the new Republic of the United States of Brazil; its area, about 505,620 square miles, is consequently equal to that of France, Spain and Italy put together. It has a population, more or less civilised, of about 80,000 souls; its capital, Cuyaba, seat of the Governor and the Bishop, numbers nearly 8000 inhabitants. This immense State contains the sources of the principal rivers which flow into the Parana on the one side, and into the Amazon on the other. It is entirely inland, and only communicates with the sea indirectly; it begins in 23° South latitude, and stretches North as far as the prairies of Parecis. At present, the journey from Rio de Janeiro to Cuyaba is rather long. The means of transport by land have still to be invented. It is necessary to sail to Monte Video first, which requires four or five days, and then to ascend the Rio de la Plata, the Uruguay or Parana, and lastly the Paraguay. The climate, in the greater part of the country, is intensely hot and very unhealthy. Game, fish and fruit are found in abundance, and vegetation is luxuriant. But the immense forests, the plains and the banks of the rivers are populated by numerous tribes of savages. Nearly all of them have preserved their primitive aversion and hatred for civilisation. Many of these tribes are essentially nomadic and wander about through the forests.

In former years, the Coroado race, among whom the Salesians have made their abode, was the terror of the surrounding country, and many were the victims who fell under their arrows. The soldiers were sent out against them, and in the encounters that took place, a great number of the savages were slain. But afterwards milder counsels prevailed. Efforts were made to form those poor benighted creatures into groups, with varying success. Isabel Colony was thus founded, followed soon afterwards by that of Teresa Christina. The former has since been destroyed, but the latter has been more successful. The actual number of Indians there is about six hundred.

The Government of Matto Grosso, tired of the bad administration of the Colony, had decided upon withdrawing the soldiers stationed there, and taking measures to destroy the poor savages; but owing to the good sense and humanity of the President, and to the repeated entreaties of Monsignor Lasagna, other measures were adopted. By Act of Government, Father Balzola was named Governor of the Colony, and Father Solari Assistant-Governor; full powers being given them over the whole extent of territory—an area of about one thousand, three hundred square miles—reserved for the savages. This step was necessary to enable them to keep traders at a distance, for, as a rule, these only succeed in fomenting vice among the savages, and hindering the development of the Missions. The Government allows provisions for two hundred savages; it would do more if the state

of the exchequer permitted it. It thus falls to lot [of the missionaries to provide for the others.

The following letter which was addressed to Monsignor Lasagna by Father Solari, a few months before his Lordship's death, will give the reader some idea of the work the Salesian missionaries are engaged in among the Corado savages of Matto Grosso :—

“After many difficulties we arrived at the Teresa Christina Colony on June 5th [1895]. A military flourish hailed our arrival. Awaiting us were the savage inhabitants dressed in their different costumes. Some of them were only clothed with a gown, and wore a kind of round tube on their heads. On the following day we distributed among them the clothing that we had brought with us. There were three hundred or so who already wore some kind of attire, but many could boast of no clothing at all. A great quantity of blankets were in demand, as the night-time here is now becoming chilly; we gave what we had, but were unable to provide all, as our supply was limited . . .

“The second day after our arrival we found a poor Indian woman in a cabin over whom the *Bacururù** had been sung on the previous night, as she was near death. The poor woman was lying on the bare ground in the midst of all kinds of filth, with a piece of wood covered with monkey-skin for a pillow. She was a mere skeleton, for she had eaten nothing for several days. Her face was painted with *Urucù*,† with many streaks of black, and her head, shoulders, and body down to the waist, were smeared all over with resin, *urucù*, and covered with feathers of the *Arara*, a kind of parrot.

Her legs were also in a horrible and disgusting state from this black resin with which they were covered. Such are the preparations for death amongst these unhappy creatures. She seemed to be unconscious,—her eyes were wide open, but there was no spark of life in them. Her heavy breathing, too, showed that she was near death. At once, I took a little water and baptized her *sub conditione*. Señor Roche made her swallow some medicine, which he had with him, and we then went away. Two hours later we looked in again and found her much better. Señor Roche gave her another dose of his medicine, and went to arrange with the Sisters about her removal to a more comfortable place, where she would be cared for and defended from the wicked artifices of the *Baire*, or medicine-man. But we were not in time, for a short time afterwards, just as everything had been arranged for the removal, we were informed by a Cacique that she was dead. It seems that we had hardly left the hut, when the *baire* entered and at once set about his nefarious work. Covering the face of the poor woman with a piece of matting, he began to chant the *Bacururu*, the by-standers who had followed him, joining in; then placing his knee on his victim's bosom, he passed his hand under the veil and strangled her. The merciless wretch was afraid that our efforts would have saved the unfortunate woman, and thus belie his predictions, since he had already announced that she would

* A dirge chanted over the dying and dead by the Indians.

† A disgusting ointment of Indian manufacture.

not survive. When we arrived we were almost deafened by the shrieks and the howls of the mourners. The husband of the deceased smashed all his bows and arrows and placed the pieces on the corpse. Then, seizing the glass from which the poor victim had taken her medicine, he broke it and began hacking his legs most barbarously with the pieces. The body of the murdered woman meanwhile, enveloped in matting, was borne by four sturdy young Indians outside the cabin, where several *baires* were beating their tom-toms and singing the *Bacururu*. The husband and relatives of the deceased surrounded the bier and continued to hack their bodies, until the ground and the corpse were covered with blood. Horrified and sickened at that frightful scene we were obliged to retire; not, however, before Father Balzola had tried his best to put a stop to the barbarity without success....

"To give you some idea of the religious belief of these Indians is not at all an easy matter, for the *Baires* maintain the strictest silence, and the others do not exactly know what they do believe. But we have been able to gather that they believe in two genii: *Mareiba*, the good genius, and *Boupé*, the bad one. Their prayers are always addressed to *Boupé*, so that he may not injure them. For this very same reason every article of food is exorcised. The *Baires* fulminate their excommunications against all wicked people who dare to eat what has not been exorcised by them. It is to their interest to do this, for when the words of exorcism have been duly pronounced, they test the flavour of the eatables and set aside the tit-bits for their own particular and private consumption. If an unbelieving sinner should eat anything that has not passed through the hands of the *Baire*, he is sure to be overtaken by some misfortune; it may be a thorn that enters his foot, or a bite from a venomous reptile; but whatever it is, even if it occurs after many years, it is most certainly the result of eating that unexorcised morsel.

"We are now studying the language of these Indians which is not a very difficult matter. We have already managed to master some two hundred and fifty words, and I think that when we know as many more we shall be in full possession of their entire vocabulary. Next month I shall no doubt be sending your Lordship a copy of the dictionary we are compiling. The savages of the deserted Isabel Colony speak the same dialect, so that we shall already have gained an advantage when it is a question of undertaking that Mission. Our first lessons on the necessity of, and beneficial results to be derived from, labour have not been fruitless, for the Indians of the Colony are now working a little. They are not so fierce as we were told, on the other hand they are rather mean and despicable. We visit them every day in their huts, but find them very exacting; they always want something and are never satisfied.

"This Mission presents many difficulties, and of a much more serious character than we had expected. The work, also, is so great that we cannot attend to everything. Besides our missionary duties, we are the Governors, Vestry Officers, Justice of the Peace, etc., etc. We have to attend to all the demands and entreaties of the Indians;... teach them how to handle their tools; till the soil; fell the trees; build more comfortable cabins; and so on.

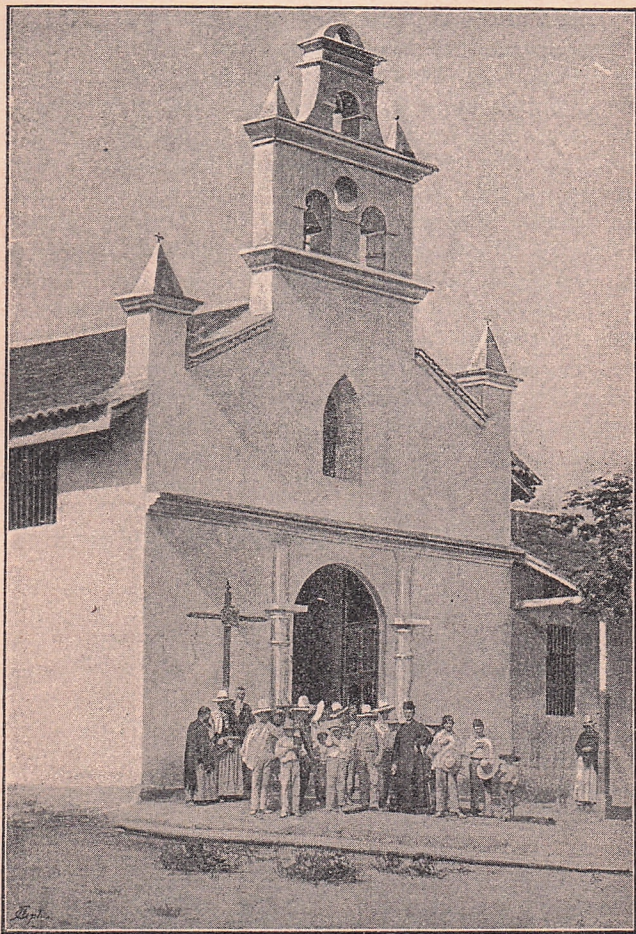
"With regard to their conversion there are many difficulties in the way, but we confide in the intercession of our Blessed Lady, our especial Patroness, to overcome them all. One of these difficulties consists in the vicious lives of the soldiers. This difficulty, however, does not exist for the thousands of savages scattered through the forest outside the Colony. Another and much more serious drawback is to be found in the *Baires*, who, being the priests, soothsayers, and doctors of these poor people, are, as a matter of course, interested in placing obstacles in the way of our holy Religion. The ignorant savages look upon them as superior beings, and regard their every word as an article of faith. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that their threats of *Boupé's* anger against all who dare to listen to us, are taken seriously. Lately their influence has been slightly impaired, for we have managed to bring to our dwellings the sick, (whose death had been foretold by these unscrupulous men), and been able to restore them to their former health and strength, thus showing the poor savages how false are the predictions of those prophets of evil. Our principal attention is, at present, directed towards the children, who are less vicious and more easy to mould; by this means we hope to form, in a short time, an upright and Christian generation."

Since the establishment of this Station, missionary work has been actively maintained by the Salesian Fathers in those regions. Visits are regularly made by them to the Indian tribes in the interior, with the result that many of the pagan inhabitants have received the true faith. In 1899, a new Mission, with Primary and Secondary Schools for the education of both white and Indian children, was opened at Corumba, an important centre of population in Matto Grosso. Negotiations for other Missions are now being carried on.

Work among the Lepers in Columbia.

Work of another, and heroic, kind in which the sons of Don Bosco have been now engaged for some years in Columbia, is that of assisting the poor, suffering lepers, who, it appears from trustworthy statistics, number thirty thousand in that Republic alone! The first step in this direction was taken by the late Father Unia, who has with reason been called the "apostle of the lepers of Columbia." Since his death, the work has been taken up by Father Evasius Rabagliati, Provincial of the Salesians in Columbia. He has visited almost every district of the country in order to place himself in touch with the spiritual and temporal needs of the lepers, and held conferences and meetings for the purpose of awakening a charitable interest in their behalf. In the face of almost insurmountable difficulties, he is pursuing his course with an earnestness and constancy of purpose that cannot but be admired. And the outcome of his efforts is a veritable crusade in favour of the most wretched beings on earth. His lofty design, which springs from the charity of Jesus Christ, is to provide them with the comforts of our holy Religion, so as to help them to bear their misfortune with patience and fortitude; to better their temporal condition with the assistance Government and the people afford him; and to take the necessary precautions to prevent further propagation of the dread malady.

There are three Leper Villages or Lazarettos in Columbia,—Agua de Dios, Contratacion and Caño del Loro,—the first, containing one thousand and seventy inmates; the second over a thousand; the last, sixty. The rest of those suffering from the disease are dispersed throughout the Republic. The Lazarettos of Agua de Dios and Contratacion are under the direction of the Salesian Fathers. The noble Sisters of Charity are assisting the Fathers in the former place; whilst the courageous Nuns of our Lady Help of Christians are lending them their aid in the other.



Father Unia and group of Lepers outside the Church at Agua de Dios.

Agua de Dios was Father Unia's Leper Station. His letters are seven or eight years old, but they are good reading to-day. His pity for suffering and his big-hearted disregard for his own comfort, make an odd contrast --and a pleasant one-- in his pages. The more wretched the lot of the

lepers, the more was the Salesian's heart set upon sharing it. The thought of the Lazaretto, before he had settled there, robbed him of rest "and, indeed, my Rector enjoyed very little peace either; for, day by day," he writes, "I managed to have the lepers ringing in his ears." When he was, what he calls, "canonically elected Leper Chaplain," he recounts that "all well-wishers kindly took the trouble of calling to inform me that I was mad." Ten days after arrival at the Lazaretto, he reports himself "quite happy," although, whoever goes to Agua de Dios, "becomes an object of public terror." The authorities "won't lightly let him out, now that he is once fairly in." "Add to this," he says, "the fancy morsel of three days on mule-back, crossing rocks, and skirting precipices, with a burning sun overhead; and after all that, forty quarantines before I can enter the town gates again; and then, if you still think I want to do it often, you must be persuaded that I'm very fond of 'a constitutional.'" Besides, he was so "happy," he had no wish to be gadding about! His home was a shed, roofed with palm leaves, "that let in the rain beautifully;" but, with a temperature of from 86 deg. to 95 deg. Fahr., "a little water does us no harm." The drinking-water "comes from two miles away, and is carried on the back of a donkey; therefore it arrives, in hot weather, in a state that makes it a really nice beverage." So they go on—these boyish, merry-hearted letters. All Father Unia's personal discomforts are turned into jokes. But his "dear lepers" are his "mission" and "a consolation which his Superior cannot find the heart to rob him of"—for there was a question of his being sent on other duty far from Agua de Dios.

A Piedmontese layman sent home some account of the chaplain's devotion to his lepers, and the letter was published in a Turin paper. Touching the question of infection, the writer says:—"I took the liberty of remarking to Father Unia that it was his duty to use all possible precautions. . . . He replied: 'Leprosy, you must know, renders the poor sufferers extremely sensitive. Were I to show repugnance in my intercourse with them, they would hate instead of loving me. Two days ago, a poor creature clung to me, and died in my arms. Supposing I had tried to shake him off, he might have cursed me—and I should then live in perpetual remorse for being the cause of his un-Christian death. If we want to help the lepers we must love, not loathe, them.'"

When there was fear that Father Unia was about to be removed, hundreds of the sad dwellers in the leper settlement petitioned the Salesian Superior in Turin, in the most moving terms, that their cheery chaplain might be left to them, and that they might not be condemned to die without "the benefit of clergy." So Father Unia remained at Agua de Dios until he was struck down by a complication of disorders. Then, the doctor of the settlement ordered him away to recruit his health. As soon as he could, he returned to his post, where he stayed until he became alarmingly ill again; when he was sent to die under his father's roof, near Cuneo, in Piedmont, not of leprosy, but of a number of complaints brought on by the general unwholesomeness of the leper colony. It was, however, in the mother-house of his Congregation, at Turin, that the heroic priest breathed his last.

It was of Father Unia that the lepers of Agua de Dios thus wrote to the

Superior-General of the Salesian Congregation. "From the thrice blessed day of his arrival at our village, it seems as if a salutary metamorphosis had taken place, from which we have received new life. This priest, whose heart is replenished with sublime virtues, has the secret of consoling and encouraging the wretched with almost motherly tenderness. His great angelic soul bids him seek where suffering may be found in its most awful manifestations, for only there he seems to find room enough for the exercise of his charity and evangelic love, by bringing consolation and balm to the afflicted. The name of Father Unia has become to us the symbol of love and charity, and with pride and veneration he is spoken of even in the humblest cabin of our village. . . ."

But the noble example of Father Unia was not thrown away on his *confrères*. At his death other Salesians gladly volunteered to fill the vacant post, with all its dangers and difficulties. At present there are four Salesians, —Fathers Grippa, Rizzardi and Variara, and Brother Piantoni—living in the Leper Village, and employed in their work of self-devotion. In the Church and in the Hospital, in the dwellings of the lepers, in the School and in the "Festive" Oratory, they are to be continually found in the exercise of the duties they have voluntarily imposed upon themselves.

Some idea of the life of the Salesians and the Nuns of Mary Help of Christians in the Leper Colony of Contratacion, may be gathered from the following passages from a letter by Father Evasius Rabagliati: "I arrived in this Lazaretto on the 12th of May, [1897], after 38 days on mule-back, up-hill and down-dale, in search of suitable sites for lazarettos in the Santander province, in order that such lepers as we may not be able to receive here in Contratacion may be segregated elsewhere. Ours is the sole leper settlement in the whole of this immense territory of Santander—now so terribly scourged by the dread disease. I cannot be mistaken in estimating the victims of leprosy, in this department alone, at 25,000. There are thousands of others in other parts of Columbia. It is truly terrific to see how the scourge spreads in this region. . . . Lepers are to be found everywhere—in cities, towns and villages. They are met in the public squares, and on the highways; the sight of them surprises no one. No wonder then that here, where the disease is free to spread, it has, within a short time, killed such enormous numbers. . . ."

"For about two years there have been three Salesians here—two priests, and a clerical student who manages the infant school. There are five Sisters of our Lady Help of Christians (Don Bosco's nuns). The Sisters take care of the lepers in the hospitals, and also in their own homes when necessary. One of them is specially told off for the work of the girls' school. The Lazaretto of Contratacion began in 1867 with 27 lepers, who were brought here by force. There now are 950, and there would be many more if only room could be found for them, and if there were food and clothing. The other day a man of 84 arrived after a two months' journey. He had only come 50 leagues, to be sure; but at 84, on foot, to a leper, whose flesh hung in rags, and on roads like ours, only slow walking is possible. He was ordered here by the authorities, and arrived more dead than alive. There was not a place to put him in. Still, we could not let him die by

the roadside . . . and some of the sick in a hospital closed up their ranks out of compassion for the old man, and thus made a corner for him, where a "shake-down" was prepared. The same day the Sisters began to give him religious instruction: most of the sick who come here are (almost blamelessly) ignorant in matters spiritual. In this way he is being prepared for death. . . . I am convinced that all, or nearly all, the lepers who die in the lazarettos save their souls, because they receive the last Sacraments and are well prepared. And such is not the case when lepers die elsewhere. . . . In this fact lay the chief reason why the son of Don Bosco who writes to you, travelled, worked and planned for some years past, to gather the unhappy lepers into asylums. Moreover, these efforts have for their secondary object the saving of this dear land of Columbia from the poison in its blood; to preserve the healthy moiety, which play with the danger. . . .

"The Salesians' house here is the property of the Lazaretto. It belonged formerly to a leper family. A 'coat of white' (not even limewash) was given it, and the transformation was complete. The three sons of Don Bosco fearlessly entered it, and will remain in it—who can tell how long? There are five little rooms, in two of which there is nothing but a bed; there are besides two holes, also called rooms. One is meant for a kitchen, and the other for a store room, but there are never any goods to store—unless, indeed, a collection of tears and sufferings could be placed there!—and the kitchen range consists of just three stones; three hammocks serve for beds. There is a chair a-piece for the religious. The chairs are carried from place to place, as needed. There is a table for meals, but no earthenware; a few books in a corner of one of the bed-rooms, in another, two leather cases of linen—not enough for three. Such is the inventory of this Salesian house.

"The Sisters are no better off. They have three instead of five rooms, or rather two, for one of the three is to be turned into a chapel. A corridor is their refectory, and serves for their brief recreations. The kitchen is a den, open to the rain and to all the winds of heaven. Here at the cost of health, time, and weariness, they daily prepare the food for the missionaries and for themselves. Another great fault in their house is its position on a steep hill, approached by a bad road, and at some distance from school, church and hospitals. . . .

"In 1892, when our Don Unia first went to the Lazaretto of Agua de Dios, a few leagues from Bogota (the capital), he found house and cots even worse than what we have here now. But before long all was changed. The house was made larger and better; a little garden was added, a small bath-room, and, adjoining the house, a beautiful *oratorio festivo* (play-room, class-room, and chapel combined) for the children. The chapel, which to begin with was a veritable stable of Bethlehem, was transformed into a little paradise, with ornaments, sacred vessels of every description for divine worship, a fine altar, and statues of various saints sent from Turin and from Barcelona. The hospital, at first a miserable shed, with space for but few beds, became what a hospital should be. About a hundred beds were put into four spacious wards—the bedsteads being good; many of iron. For

each sick person a numbered metal seat was provided. The courtyard is amply large. There are gardens and baths for the use of the sick; a grove in which they can move about in the hot part of the day; and a chapel in the midst of the wards—so that the inmates can profit by it even without leaving their beds. There are rooms suited to the needs of the Sisters in attendance; and there is a noble supply of linen, &c., besides a most convenient iron kitchen-range, a gift from Turin. . . .

"Father Unia, vowed to poverty, had nothing of his own. The Salesians of Bogota can hardly make ends meet, and provide for the two hundred orphans under their care. . . . Columbians taxed themselves one centesimo per head, for 'Father Unia's collecting card,' and with the sum thus obtained, the hospital (costing several thousand Columbian *scudi*) was built. The lepers themselves gave of their poverty, enough to buy church ornaments, and to begin the 'school-play-prayer-room.' The Lazar Society of Bogota sent some money; but all the rest came from Europe. Don Rua, Don Bosco's successor, sent out 1,000 lire from a young lady. Turin sent cooking-stoves, beds, chairs, chandeliers, pictures, and many other welcome gifts. Barcelona provided statues, and Milan and Lecco sent harmoniums for the church, and instruments for a band. A rich German Protestant sent 18 cases containing all the earthenware and linen necessary for the hospital, as well as a piece of silk 'for a cool soutane for Don Unia.' Later, this gentleman sent three thousand *scudi* for the lepers."

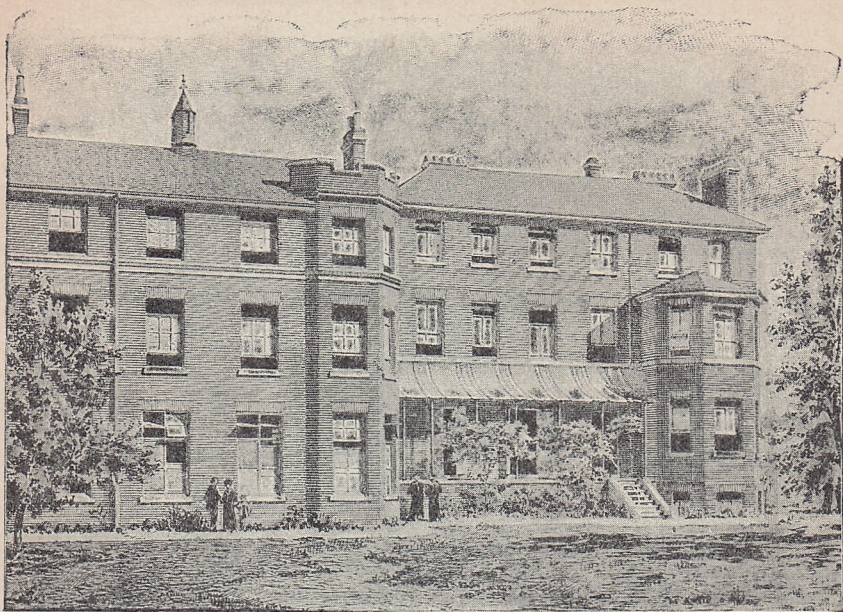
The good Father goes on to enumerate other gifts; and then he asks if there are no charitable people to do for the 950 lepers of Contratacion what others have done for Agua de Dios. . . . "It seems as if henceforward the lepers belong to us, and are our exclusive property," writes Father Raba-gliati, quoting the biography of Don Unia; and he wants to make welcome the Salesians' inheritance "in this most choice, and yet most unhappy, portion of the flock of Christ." But to do so he must appeal to the charity of those beyond the frontiers of Columbia. If misery have a claim on charity, surely there was never a stronger claim than that of the lepers.

In Columbia, the Salesians have also undertaken the evangelization of the savages inhabiting the extensive llanos or plains of St. Martin. Two Missionary Stations have already been established in those regions,—one at St. Martin, the other at Villavicencio, both of which are giving excellent results.

Add to this, good reader, over a hundred Parishes, Colleges, and Institutes of Arts and Trades for the white population in the various republics of South America, Central America and the United States, and you will have some idea of what the sons of Don Bosco have been doing in the New World during the last twenty-five years.

THE END.





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