

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION IN ART.

(By M. F. Nixon-Roulet, in Catholic World.)

The surplice of the morn,
As pure as the vale's stainless lily,
For Mary the sinlessly born.

To artists the idea of the Immaculate Conception has always been peculiarly attractive. Sevillian art students of the seventeenth century always met each other with the salutation "Praised be the most holy Sacrament and the pure Conception of our Lady." Spanish art is rich in paintings of the Conception, and perhaps the most famous portrayal of this glory of our Lady was Murillo, often called "El Pintor del Concepcion." The Sevillian artist, himself pure, noble, and deeply religious, was fitted to portray the sanctity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He never began a picture without fasting and prayer, and the spirituality of his conception of artistic themes is the exponent of his own beautiful nature.

There were accepted rules as to the portraying of our Lady laid down by the Congregation of the Immaculate in Spain, but in some degree Murillo departed from its canons and gave his bruen freedom, painting the Mother of God sometimes as fair-haired, sometimes as dark, yet ever showing his own personal devotion to her perfections.

One of the sweetest of his Virgins is that in "The Conception surrounded by Cherubs," a painting in the famous museum of the Prado in Madrid. Our Lady is represented as very young, very sweet, and distinctly Spanish in type. Like a soft cloud her dark hair floats back from an oval face, parting above a broad and perfect brow. The arched eyebrows and long black lashes frame eyes of liquid brown, large and beautiful, raised heavenward with deep thanksgiving in their expression, as of one who realized her high destiny. In the sweet-lipped but resolute mouth there is the courage of one of high race whose will is to meet all valiantly and well.

Resignation there is also in this virginal face, but it is not the resignation of a chastened soul, saddened by the trials of life; rather is it an acceptance of God's will, with the courageous purpose to carry it out though the cost is unknown.

The crescent moon so often seen about the figure of our Lady in representations of the Immaculate Conception comes from the vision of St. John in the Apocalypse, when he saw "a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." It is more frequently used in Spanish art, because it symbolizes the triumph of the Christians over the Moors of the peninsula.

The misty little cherubs which surround the figure of our Lady are some of the ninos Murillo dearly loved to paint—and they are charming creatures, only equalled by those of the Immaculate Conception in the Louvre. These are graceful beyond description, chubby little darlings, in every attitude imaginable. Their expressions as they gaze toward the Blessed Mother are in every shade of infantile emotions of tenderness.

Painted by the same artist, this picture has not a great deal in common with the former, save that the general subject is the same. The style and handling are quite different, and the Blessed Virgin seems more of a maiden than the wistful little Madonna of the Prado. Here her graceful figure is given full length, her soft-hued draperies float about her, covering even her sandaled feet, her cloudy brown hair is soft and waving, her hands are clasped upon her breast. The expression of her face is most gentle, yet awed by the greatness of her destiny and saddened by its weight. She is that one of whom the poet sung as

Woman! above all women glorified,
Our faint nature's solitary boast,
Pure than eastern skies at day-break strewn
With fancied roses, than the unblemished moon,
Before the wane begins on heaven's blue coast,
Thy image falls to earth.

nut, with warm lights of the sun through it. Her eyes are large and dark, her features beautiful, the mouth in perfect curves, the expression pitifully sad in its intensity. Studying these three Conceptions it seems as though each Madonna looked with a different feeling upon her life and destiny. One, the youngest, merely goes forth with childlike faith and youthful courage to meet whatsoever comes to her, knowing it comes from the hand of God. The second, loftier, borrows up on the wings of the supernatural, is resigned to the adorable will of God. The third, more of a woman, with wider knowledge of the world's sufferings and the meaning of life, bows to the will of the Almighty; yet upon her is the sadness of greater suffering to come. "Pierced with many sorrows" is this flawless queen, yet meek, sweet, submissive.

Chaste and exquisite are all these portrayals of our Lady in the still whiteness of her Immaculate Conception. Ribera's famous picture is one of the fairest representations of the "Lily of Purity." In the foreground are the fragrant white lilies which symbolize her spotlessness, and which the French call "la fleur de Marie."

The "Rose of Sharon," the "Lily of the Valley," these and kindred titles have been applied to the Blessed Virgin, and an English poet has sung to her,

What shall I liken unto thee?
A lily bright,
Whose virgin purity and grace
Fulfills thy soul, as doth thy face,
With all delight.

Crowned with the twelve stars to symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel, standing upon the crescent, crushing under foot the prince of darkness, surrounded by bewitching cherubs, second only to those of Murillo, our Blessed Lady stands in an attitude of lovely grace, her hands clasped, her eyes raised to heaven, her dark hair floating behind in splendid waves. It seems as if Alfred Austin must have had this painting in mind when he wrote his exquisite lines:

The Virgin Mother stood,
Down from her flowing hair to sandal-shoon
The mystic type of maiden-motherhood;
Below her feet there curled a crescent moon,
And all the golden planets were her hood,
In comely folds her queenly garb was moulded,
And over her pure breast her hands were folded.

The face of our Lady in this painting of Ribera is less beautiful than many pictures of the Immaculate Conception. It is Castilian in type, the eyes very dark and fine, the lashes long, the brows arched, the forehead broad, the features excellent; but the face is too long for perfection of contour, and not sufficiently expressive of the story which it portrays. The tout ensemble of the picture is superb; in grouping, handling and coloring the execution is masterly, and, though a trifle heavier than Murillo's Conceptions, it is exceedingly devotional.

Of the modern painters of the Immaculate Conception, Carl Muller has left two pictures, both of great merit. Muller is a German artist of the Dusseldorf school, a school much influenced by Wilhelm von Schadow, of Berlin. Von Schadow was one of the pre-Raphaelites who did so much for art in the early part of this century. The characteristics of this school—a careful study of nature, delicate, harmonious coloring, and marked refinement of sentiment—are clearly displayed in Muller's work, which shows besides a deep religious feeling.

In one of his Immaculate Conceptions, the Blessed Virgin is represented as very young, standing simply with clasped hands, beautifully attired in graceful, modest robes and veil, the twelve stars about her head. Her hands are particularly beautiful, long, slender, and shapely, and the poise of her head upon the column-like throat is full of the gentle dignity of innocence. The girlish face is sweet, the features classic in outline, the eyes clear as limpid pools, the expression one of wistful sadness. There is a great simplicity about the picture, and the same element appears in Muller's other Immaculate Conception, now in the Dresden gallery. Many critics consider this the finest modern painting of this

subject, and it certainly has claims to consideration. Taught up in the clouds, the earth beneath her feet, the sun as a background bathing her blue and white robes with refracted light, crowned with stars, our Lady seems to float aloft; one foot rests upon and presses down the dragon, emblem of Satan, in whose claws is an apple, the emblem of sin.

The contrasts of this picture is one of its strongest points. The chiaroscuro is excellently well managed, all the light falling radiantly upon the figure of our Lady, and the darkness of earth as opposed to the light of the upper ether is significant of the brightness of heaven contrasted with this weary world. The fierce figure of the dragon, from whose mouth flame issues, is in marked contrast to the graceful figure of the Blessed Virgin, with her meek attitude of adoration, her gentle, girlish face, so pure and innocent of all the evil which the cruel beast typifies.

Very striking is the picture, very beautiful, very chaste, is our Lady. Of all portrayals of the Immaculate Conception, that of Grass-Buesel is to many the most satisfying. Enthroned in cloud she stands, half-circled by her crescent moon, a figure of pure grace and dignity. From milk-white throat to kirtle's hem she is wrapped in modest garments falling in soft lines, her long blue mantle sweeping behind her as if to accentuate the embracing sweep of her arms, which seem to take the sad world to her heart. The figure is simplicity itself. She wears no crown; there is no jewelled border to her mantle; no glorious panoply for heaven's queen. The star of chastity is on her brow, hers are the jewels of sweet thoughts, the glorious garb of truest womanhood.

There dwells sweet love and constant chastity,
Unspotted faith and comely womanhood,
Regard of honour and myld modesty,
There virtue raynes as queene on royal throne.

There are more beautiful faces than this one of our Lady, but there is no picture of the Immaculate Conception which seems so thoroughly satisfying. The Virgin's face is calm, sweet, modest; it is not the radiant face of the glorified queen, with eyes in ecstatic vision, but that of spotless woman, untouched by any hint of evil, filled with high thoughts, with ripest charity, with tenderest pity for all erring ones, with truest womanhood, with motherhood.

There is so much of the highest beauty in the type, beauty of mind and soul, that we feel it was painted by one who loved both his art and his ideal. Within this painter's breast must have dwelt great faith in womanhood, great reverence for motherhood, great love for the one sweet pattern and example of all true women, whom the chivalric old knights vowed to defend, "that most sweet Lady, Mary the Immaculate."

Parties and Picnics Forbidden.

Announcement was made in the daily press that at the archdiocesan synod last week, Archbishop Farley, of New York, positively forbade euchre parties and picnics under church auspices and also discouraged fairs and bazars. This was not exactly an accurate statement. The new regulation is to the effect that none of these amusements shall, after this, be conducted by any church or by a society associated in church work without obtaining in each instance the express permission of the Archbishop. In his talk to the pastors on the subject, the Archbishop urged that they shall not resort to these means of getting funds unless there are exceptional reasons for doing so. He made it plain that he viewed with special disfavor euchre parties and picnics.

In some parts of the country, where parish amusements are more restricted, there may be surprise that a New York church should hold either a card party or a picnic, but the people of that cosmopolitan centre love pleasure and society, so in many cases pastors find that the readiest and most effective way of getting funds for church work is to appeal to the lighter side of man's nature, thus indirectly leading him to perform works of benefit to the cause of religion. Fairs were perhaps never more numerous than they are this season, and some of the largest congregations as well as the smaller parishes adopt this form of amusement in order to collect money that is needed. Some prominent entertainments of this character are to take place in the immediate future.

Newfoundland Correspondence.

The collection taken up on Sunday, November 27th, in the Cathedral and St. Patrick's Church for the benefit of the Christian Brothers was indeed a large one. The Herald, speaking of the work of the Brothers, says: "The good Brothers, who have been working in the city for about 26 years, are well known to be the best of teachers. They have devoted their lives to the imparting of knowledge to the young, and that their labors have borne ample fruit the Catholic people of the country can well testify. Amongst the poorer and middle class people their advent marked what might be well styled an educational renaissance, because previous to that time only the well-to-do could afford to secure for their sons an education which would fit them to acquire positions that must ensure worldly success, not that we mean to detract from the merit of those school teachers who preceded the Brothers and of whose excellence many of their pupils alive to-day and holding positions of trust can vouch for. But we reiterate that the coming of the Christian Brothers wrought an educational revival in Newfoundland to all denominations; it infused a spirit of emulation and gave education generally an impetus which has been of the greatest benefit to the whole people of the island. A friendly rivalry exists in matters educational which has been of the greatest value and has had the most gratifying outcome. The Brothers are ever extending their sphere of usefulness. St. Patrick's, Holy Cross and Mount Cashel are standing monuments to their zeal and charity and their intentions to bestow greater attention on the night school in operation here is a work in itself well worthy of praise.

On Sunday, Nov. 27th, the Benevolent Irish Society held a largely attended meeting. Sixteen new members joined the previous Sunday. In the music and amusement rooms extensive alterations have been made. A new billiard table has been imported. The B. I. S. is the oldest in North America. It was founded in 1812.

His Grace Archbishop Howley left a few days ago for the Eternal City, to be present at the next consistory, and will receive the pallium. The Liberal victory was celebrated with great enthusiasm. Nothing equal to it has been seen in Newfoundland since 1869. A monster torchlight procession, accompanied by Bennett's famous band, playing the ode, "We love thee, Newfoundland," and other patriotic airs, paraded the streets amidst the roar of musketry, the bright glow of Roman fire and candles, skyrockets and pyrotechnics generally. Mottoes were carried bearing the inscriptions "Our Native Premier," "Our Popular Tribune," "Hail to the People's choice." After the parade a meeting was held at the British Hall, where Sir Robert Bond, the hero of the hour, made a magnificent speech, in which the monster of bigotry received its death blow. Sir Robert said that with the flashing of guns, gleam of torches, waving of banners, rush of rockets, glare of bonfires and illumination of houses even of the very poor, it was a monument of the fidelity of the people of this colony to the principles and policy of the great Liberal party. He thanked the electors for their warm and generous greeting, the people as members of that great Liberal party and himself and colleagues as servants, for the people alone were his masters, and it was with heartfelt gratitude he received these manifestations of approval from their hands, showing that the policy of the past was approved and there was perfect confidence in the future. The victory was won by the true patriotism of the people, a triumph of truth over falsehood, of principle over trickery. Truth is eternal, an attribute of the God we worship, and as sure as He reigns truth will stand ever triumphant. He reviewed the fight in Twillingate and the sectarian cry that he was compelled to deal with. He felt the terrible consequences that might result, bloodshed and crime have followed where creed has been stirred against creed, class against class, but the Protestant north has seen fit to say that the man who attempted such a dastardly action is not fit to rule this oldest colony, and have hurled the insult back in his teeth by their ballots and turned from him in disgust. Reference was made to the French Shore settlement and the efforts before election to compare it to a bubble, but now it is practically settled and the pledge of our Sovereign Lord the King fulfilled.

The fund for a monument to the memory of the late Rev. Dr. O'Regan, the young priest who lost his life lately while visiting his parish in a small schooner, being overtaken by a storm and drowned, is moving with good success. Rev. Father Brown says that the list of contributions will close in a few weeks.

Nothing is more unpractical than the neglect of the spiritual. When you find one sharp as a needle he is all eyes and no head.

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Society Directory.

ST. PATRICK'S SOCIETY—Established March 6th, 1866. Incorporated 1865, revised 1887. Meets in St. Patrick's Hall, 92 St. Alexander street, first Monday of each month. Committee meets last Wednesday. Officers: Rev. Director, Rev. M. Callaghan, P.P.; President, Hon. Mr. Justice C. J. Doherty; 1st Vice, F. E. Davis, M.P.; 2nd Vice, F. J. Curran, B.C.L.; Treasurer, Frank J. Green; Corresponding Secretary, J. Kahala; Recording Secretary, T. P. Tansy.

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BARONE'S TALK

(By George T. Bates)

Turning up the smoky lantern in a vain endeavor to make it fulfill the office of the ten-by-twelve room, Jim proceeded to examine the removal of the inner of white tissue paper discarding elaborately bound leather, covered with a coat of gold.

The fly leaf bore the "From Ethel to Jim." Smiling at the coincidence Barone turned the pages idly, mirroring the illuminated order design, which changed with changing months. Then turning to the beginning, he noticed had before escaped him, a resolution, and at the top, in the same girlish hand, was a scribble, "I will not touch you," and after it an inter-point in lead pencil.

Barone laughed cynically. "So!" he said. "A string tail. Evidently some young fellow on the reform of his. Not a ranter, however, or so not be satisfied with anything but a life sentence. She class, too, in taking wing symbol. Poor, unsophisticated, to start a raid again and leave the door open to 'brandy and gin!'"

Jim Barone, sitting with in his hand, tried to reproduce his imagination the sender of and its to-have-been recipient. Had it been lost by some eyed maiden on her way to service at the church whose windows twinkled invitingly as he fought his way home the sand storm that raged on improbable! There was too appreciation for the gliding shown in the purchase. Doubt was one of the world's people up town to dance the out and the new year in good old-time fashion.

Time was when he, too, had drank punch from cut glass pany with star-eyed debutans perhaps his present dingy strings could be traced to the same punchbowl. But at heart Jim Barone gentleman still, and an honor for it was his boast that if sipped it was not at the expense of his landlady or his washer; to the credit of his ancestor had provided him with an tying up the principal so it could not be squandered. Drawing a letter pad toward Barone wrote:

"If Ethel will send her address package she lost on New York will be returned to her. Ad B., Times Office."

"Too late for to-morrow's Barone thought: 'but I will over the first thing in the morning. Pulling a handful of small from his pocket he looked a fully. A whole week before hope for a remittance, and were running low. Even cents counted these days—still must have her book.

But nothing came of the ment, and the diary remained keep Jim company. Often he out, and as he turned the page unconsciously formed an Ethel, endowed her with the tutes he most admired in woman gradually she became an inf 'his life.

One morning, awakened on heavy sleep by the shrill cry, newshy, Barone sprang to bed and called loudly to bring him a copy. He the columns with feverish he till he came to an account of en brawl. This he read and then dropped back on h with a sigh of relief. The not dead, then—those implic unknown—by a merciful chad escaped being a murderer. For a long time he lay st the ceiling, then, rising, he from his hiding place the d wrote beneath Ethel's line, 'other liquor, so help me God signed it "Jim."

But to determine is much than to do, and Jim soon that if he would keep his re he must have some occupation what? A stranger in a str with a none too savory parl look long for employment. Jim bought himself a whe when the thirst was upon h rode, choosing the most thoroughfares, where every must be on the alert to av