

ECCLESIASTICAL ART.

The Display Made at the World's Fair.

In wandering through the Manufacturers Building one lesson powerfully forces itself on the mind. Side by side the nations of the earth are gathered. They are standing on neutral ground and each has endeavored to show its best. Each knows that all the others are regarding it. Each is aware that its display is a silent utterance of the status and vagaries of its civilization. Each is anxious to make the best impression possible. Each has its own standard of taste, of merit and of mental worth. Yet, each knows that the works it has sent and which have been judged by its own standards will cause it to rise or fall in the eyes of the civilized world. Now, then, with these facts in mind, let the student come and examine the various displays. As a result he will be convinced in the most forcible manner of Christianity's power. In the graduated scale of merit which he will be pleased to make, he will find that he will have placed in the highest rank those nations that have always been under the influences of Christianity. In the second grouping he will find the nations that for a time were Christian, but that, by some fatality or another, were wrested from its influence. In the third place his list will show those people who never accepted Christianity, yet by reason of geographical proximity or political power, were brought in contact with a Christian people. And last will come those who never accepted Christianity and never know its influence. It would be out of place here to examine the first class and show that all the nations composing it made most strides in civilization when under the influence of Catholicity. It could be shown that the continuance of such civilization and the degrees to which it afterward attained were not because of the separation from Rome, but because of the impetus Catholic faith gave to its art and sciences. Indeed it can be shown that whatever such nations have today is, as it were, the scent of the rose still clinging to the vase. Be it remembered that the products of the nations which evidence the highest mental attainment and come nearest to the ideal beautiful, are taken as the evidences of its civilization. Why not apply the same test to a religion or sect's dynamic power as a civilizer. It would certainly be just. Then that religion or sect which gives the broadest field for highest mental play and proposes the highest and truest ideals to its followers, must certainly be the most potent civilizer. Let the Fair be seen in that light, and no matter how prejudiced the man may have been, the conviction of Roman Catholicism's superiority will be forever stamped on the heart. To elucidate this truth, I am going to enter into a detailed account of the most beautiful thing in the World's Columbian Exposition. That which I am about to describe is Roman Catholic—Roman Catholic in its totality, Roman Catholic in its every detail. What I am about to describe gives evidence of the possibilities which Roman Catholicism opens to the art tastes of her children. I repeat, it is the most beautiful thing at the Fair. As it is an American product it assumes a new value to my mind. I do not hesitate to assert that there is no longer any necessity for missions, convents, monasteries, boarding schools, etc., sending to foreign ports for the articles needed in Divine worship. Art in America is most artistic when employed in the production of the objects needed in Divine worship. While the visitor to the Fine Art Palace will, to a very great extent, be disappointed in the display there made, he will certainly find his expectations realized in the home products of native artists when

their genius has been brought to play on devotional themes. Two New York firms occupy the corner that lies north of the French section and east of the German section in the Liberal Arts Building. One of these firms, Tiffany & Co., is, especially in recent years, devoting a great deal of attention to the artistic manufacture of church vestments, vessels, lamps, altars, ecclesiastical glass work and mural decorations. A Catholic gentleman is in charge of this branch of the business of this house. Perfectly conversant with the history of devotional art, his pen occasionally furnishes an article on such subjects to a noted Catholic magazine. Familiar with every edict and requirement issued by the Congregation of Rites, he is thoroughly competent to design and oversee the manufacture of everything from a chalice veil to an altar. In order to best display their work, the firm of Tiffany & Co. have erected in connection with their display of ordinary jewelers' products, a beautiful chapel. This chapel is situated at the northeast corner of their pavilion. As an expression of Roman Catholic devotional art from the hands of American talent it deserves the closest scrutiny. From the floor to the ridge pole of the angled roof there is a rise of about 35 feet. The walls are about 28 or 30 feet high; the floor measuring something like 50 x 30 feet. Within this little room there is value in the aggregate to about \$25,000 or \$30,000. Let us enter. A calm soft light pervades the room. Pale tints float through the stained glass windows, a rich green sinks downward from above and for the moment, having just come from without, the objects within almost blend with shadows. A sense of quiet and hush falls on you as you enter. It is just as though you had stepped into a beautiful church at twilight's hour. Lights and shadows are mingling and your spirit, like those of the crowd within, fall under the spell. The shuffling of feet as they slowly move along and the whispered word "beautiful!" This is all you hear. Then gradually the altar comes out clearly and the cross on the tabernacle and its every gem trembling like an aspen leaf, twinkling and laughing in the play of the light reflected on it from some unseen source. Then the arches that crown the altar brighten and the stained glass window behind it assumes shape and form. There are stained glass windows to the right and the left, and back and above you, and just overhead a monster sanctuary lamp studded with mellowed lights of soft hues and bright tints, seems suspended in the air. But you will form no idea of the work in this way. I must take it part by part. Four steps lead from the body of the chapel to the sanctuary. These steps and the entire sanctuary are of carrara marble, while the risers are in mosaic work of pot-metal glass. The altar platform is reached by three steps whose risers bear in a bed of glass mosaic work, the opening words of the liturgy. These steps, and the altar to are, like the sanctuary, of carrara marble. The altar itself is a classically chaste and elegant interpretation of the dictates of the Congregation of Rites. It has no raised ornamentation, except on the tabernacle door. It is a simple, round-cornered door with two retables. The mensa, or table, is of beautiful carrara marble of the vein of variety, purposely selected to contrast with the snowy white front. The front is of white mosaics. Each piece of glass is about 1/2 of an inch square and some 150,000 of them compose the front. In this bed of mosaic are five beautiful mosaical ornaments. The center one is the largest and, like the other four, is circular. It is the Greek monogram of the name of Jesus, whose center is in sapphires, whose outer circling lines are made of mother of pearl rosary

beads, the whole relieved by a disposition of beautiful soft and light yellow topazes. To the right and to the left of this monogram are to be seen the emblems of the four evangelists. The eagle of St. John and the man of St. Matthew are at the right; the lion of St. Mark and the ox of St. Luke to the left. These emblems are in deep blue iridescent mother of pearl from the Sandwich Islands and in the softer tint of the same material so common in Japanese goods. Like the center ornament they are encircled and surrounded by an inlay of mother of pearl rosary beads. The tabernacle door is of gold filigree work inlaid with semi-precious stones. The center pearls are from Terra Del Fuego. On the risers of the retables, which are in gold mosaics, are the first words from the 6th chapter of St. John, written in white mosaic letters—"Ego sum panis vivus, qui de coelo descendit," "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." Six globular vases of gold filigree work are on the first retable and six candlesticks of a Romanesque pattern of similar gold work and incrustated with quartz pebbles surmount the second retable. The Judas candle is covered with gold until it gradually fades away so that the transition from the candlestick to the candle is even and pleasing. The tabernacle is surmounted by a magnificent cross so arranged that it may be used as an ostensorium or a reliquary. It is of gold filigree work glistening with white and yellow amethysts held on spirals so that they are over trembling. The architectural ciborium consists of three concentric and receding arches, supported on twelve mosaic pillars in different designs. These pillars are composed of 200,000 pieces in softened tones of brown and white, an odd but happy effect being the result. The two outer arches are of gold relief work, the first bearing the words of the "Sanctus, Sanctus" of the four-and-twenty ancients. The inner one is in glass mosaics and bears for ornamentation six circular settings of very ancient forms of Our Lord's cross. These range from the so-called "hidden cross" of the primitive Christians to the "Labarum" of Constantine the Great. The reredos or altar back is a 5th century design. The motive was found in the church of St. Appollinaris, near Ravenna. It is in glass of deep dyes and represents two peacocks facing each other and almost lost in a tangle of vines. The symbolism is beautiful. In the early ages it was a tradition that the peacock's flesh never knew corruption's taint; consequently it was accepted as a type of immortality. The grapevine is of course typical of the sweet sacrament of the altar. The combination of the peacock and the vine at once suggests the idea the designer desired to convey—"He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life." A baptistery is at the right hand side of the sanctuary. The entrance columns are mosaic on basis of black marble. The capitals are a Romanesque pattern; the entablature they support being in gold. The front is a huge globe of carrara marble inlaid with mosaic and metal. It stands on seven pillars. These are typical of the old dispensation, the globular form of the front proper signifying the new. A pulpit stands at the left of the sanctuary, its design and execution being in keeping with the altar and baptistery. Back of the baptismal font is a stained glass window. It is wrought in opalescent mosaics and represents the "Angel of the Resurrection" standing in a massed bed of lilies that rise to his knees and nod before the gracious folds of his vesture. The face of the angel is set heavenward. His arms are partially bare and extended from the side. The expression is beautiful and you stand waiting to hear him say "He is Risen." It was designed by a Miss

Elizabeth Cummins, of Boston. In this, as in all the other windows of the chapel, no paints, no stains are used except for the hands, feet and face where the shades of flesh color must be worked in. The range of colors in these windows is something wonderful. Pervading the entire piece of glass the coloring matter tints the light that streams through them without dulling a single ray. I doubt if any medieval artist had a palette as rich in hues and tints for his work as was at the command of those who wrought these beautiful windows. And be it remembered all of these windows are of the latest American workmanship. In the west wall of the chapel, and filling in the gable end, is a rose window in which is one of the sweetest pictures of the Blessed Virgin and the Infant Jesus I have ever seen. It is a copy from Botticelli, a Florentine of the 15th century, whose work belongs to that school of soft sweet faces of which Fra Angelico was the leader. Over the entrance to the chapel is a cruciform picture containing five scenes from Our Lord's life. The cross is encircled with a crown of thorns. The window is remarkable in that it is the first glass window whose cartoons, color sketches and glass were drawn, tinted, selected and cut by ladies. At the left side of the door as you enter is another beautiful picture. It was designed by Joseph Lauber, of New York. It is one of the Angels of the Passion holding his symbol, the scourge, at rest in his right hand. Beneath is the good shepherd, designed after Pleckhorst. To the left is still another window. It is the "Education of the Blessed Virgin" from a design by Carl Muller. The face of St. Anne is very powerful. Beneath this is a pair of windows, one Our Lord, the other St. John, by E. P. Sperry, of New York. The largest window is in the south wall and portrays the three principal events in Our Lord's life: The Nativity, the Baptism and the Resurrection. Immediately beside this window and in the west wall is the "Burial of Our Lord," designed by Mr. L. C. Tiffany and constructed under his supervision. In the midst of all these windows hangs a wonderfully beautiful sanctuary lamp. From whatever point viewed, it is a cross whose arms are capped above and supported below by large hollow bands. These bands as well as the arms and length piece of the cross are of glass and may be illuminated. Above the upper band a row of lamps, lily shaped, with calyces of gold fittingly encircle the head piece of the cross. From the lower band are pendant ornaments, green and pear shaped. This cross is about 14 feet high and 8 feet in the arms. From its foot is suspended a large ball of open gold work, intended to hold the red oil-lamp proper to the Blessed Sacrament. As you leave the chapel a large heart-shaped water font of old silver invites you to make the sign of the cross. I have taken some pains to study this beautiful chapel and by describing it give some idea of the possibilities of Catholic Devotional Art. From an artistic as well as from a Catholic standpoint it deserves the study I have given it. The intimate knowledge of church ornamentation and church history which it displays will be appreciated only by the student. Catholic Devotional Art has inspired and directed the production of the most beautiful artistic work at the World's Fair! And that in this later day! Who now shall dare question her power as the world's civilizer? Her Art and her Education are at Jackson Park defying reproach, surpassing all else the world can show. Catholics, hold up your heads and be proud of your faith!—*Indianapolis Catholic Record.*

It is not enough to see that God wishes the good we aim at, but that He wishes it through our instrumentality, in our manner and in our time; and we come to discern all this by true obedience.