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## THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY IN ROME, 8TH DEC., 1854.

[A Supplement to the *Giornale di Roma* of the 9th December, beautifully printed at the press of the Apostolic Chamber, contains the subjoined most interesting account of the solemn definition by the Holy Father of Our Blessed Lady's Immaculate Conception.]

"A great event, which all future ages will bless, was accomplished on the morning of the 8th of December, 1854, in the basilica of the Vatican. The Sovereign Pontiff of the Catholic Church, Pius IX., has at length defined as a dogma of faith in pursuance of the ardent desire of the Bishops and of the Faithful confided to their care, that which has been for ages past the pious and universal belief relative to the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Mary. The dawn of that day, although on the previous evening rain fell in abundance, broke pure and serene as a beautiful morning in spring. And Rome, which, in consequence of her unbounded devotion to Mary, awaited with more of anxiety than any other city the oracle of the Vatican, was in motion from the first streaks of day, and manifested so early her joyfulness. The citizens of all classes, joined by an immense concourse of strangers who had hastened to Rome from all parts, proceeded towards the Vatican. All wished to be present at the solemn ceremony, and to hear what they must firmly believe upon the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, whom the Fathers of the Church call a prodigy of innocence, of purity, of perfectitude, full of grace and glory; and whom the pious Faithful invoke, employing for that purpose the proper prayers of the Church, as full of grace, Queen of Angels and of Men, Dispensatrix of heavenly blessings, the Hope and the Help of all in the midst of the tempests and the agitations of life.

"Towards half-past eight o'clock all the Cardinals, the Archbishops, and the Bishops, arrayed in their Pontificals, assembled, with the several colleges of the Prelacy; at the Sixtine Chapel. And we saw in that assembly not only the Cardinals and Prelates, whose habitual residence is in Rome, but also the Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops from all parts of the world, from the several states of Italy, from the Austrian states, from France, Belgium, England, Spain, and Portugal; the Archbishops and Bishops of Holland, Greece, Bavaria, of Prussia, and other Germanic countries, and of others also who have crossed the ocean, who come from China, from America, and even from the most remote parts of Oceania, all hastening to the centre of Catholic unity, to bear the voice of the successor of Peter.

"When the Sovereign Pontiff, having entered the chapel, had been invested with his Pontifical robes, the procession set out to descend by the royal staircase into the basilica of the Vatican. In the first rank walked the Apostolic Preacher and the Confessor of the Pontifical household, followed by the Purveyors-General of the Religious Orders, by the Papal Messengers, the Chaplains in Ordinary, the Pontifical Couriers and Assistant Chamberlains.—Next came the Private Clerks, and the Honorary Private Chaplains, the Consistorial Advocates, the State Chamberlains, and the Pontifical Precentors. After them the Abbreviators of the Briefs, the Vo-tants of the Signature, the Clerks of the Chamber, the Auditors of Rota, and the Master of the Holy Hospital. Then followed the cross, borne by an Auditor of Rota, in the midst of seven Prelates, bearing candlesticks with lighted wax tapers; following the cross walked the Latin Sub-Deacon, the Greek Deacon and Sub-Deacon, the Penitentiaries of St. Peter's, the Bishops, the Archbishops, and the Cardinals. Lastly, under the canopy came the Sovereign Pontiff, immediately following whom, before the Roman magistracy, came the *Vice-Camerlengo* of the Holy Church, the two Assistant Cardinal Deacons, and the Cardinal Deacon, whose duty it is to assist the Pontiff in the celebration of the Solemn Mass; then followed the Dean of the Rota, the Auditor of the Chamber, the Major Domo, the Master of the Chamber, the Regent of the Chancellery, and the Apostolic Purveyors.

"During the procession the Litany of the Saints was chanted, which was concluded at the moment when the Pontiff entered into the basilica. After the recital of the prescribed prayers, the Holy Father went to adore the Most Holy Sacrament; from thence he proceeded, still accompanied by the procession, to the Papal altar, and from his throne, placed at the Epistle side, he received the homage of the Cardinals, the Archbishops, the Bishops, and the Penitentiaries. All the Archbishops present at the ceremony, and who were not yet assistants at the throne, were declared such by the express will of the Sovereign Pontiff, and from that time the twelve Senior Archbishops placed themselves around

the throne during all the time that the ceremony lasted. After the Office of Tierce had been intoned and finished, the Holy Father was arrayed in his vestments for the Pontifical Mass, having for Assistant-Bishop his Eminence Cardinal Mattei, Sub-Dean of the Sacred College, for Deacon, serving at the Mass, his Eminence Cardinal Antonelli, and for Sub-Deacon, Mgr. Serafini, Auditor of Rota.

"After the Gospel, chanted successively in Latin and in Greek, his Eminence the Cardinal Macchi, in his capacity of Dean of the Sacred College, accompanied by the Deans, the Archbishops, and the Bishops present at the august ceremony, and also by the Archbishop of the Greek rite and the Archbishop of the Armenian rite, presented himself at the foot of the throne and addressed in Latin those words to the Sovereign Pontiff:—

"That which the Catholic Church, Most Holy Father, ardently desires and calls for with all her heart for a long time past is, that your supreme and infallible judgment should pronounce on the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin, Mother of God, a decision which may be for her an increase of praise, of glory, and veneration. In the name of the Sacred College of the Cardinals, of the Bishops of the Catholic world, and of all the Faithful, we demand humbly and urgently that the universal wishes of the Church may be accomplished in this solemnity of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin.

"At the time, then, when the August Sacrifice of the Altar will be offered in this temple consecrated to the Prince of the Apostles, and in the midst of this solemn assembly of the Sacred College, the Bishops and the people, deign, Most Holy Father, to raise your Apostolical voice, and to pronounce that dogmatic decree of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, which will be a subject of joy for Heaven and of the most lively gladness for the earth."

"The Pontiff replied to these words that he received willingly the prayer of the Sacred College, of the Episcopacy, and of the Faithful, but that in order to grant it, it was necessary to invoke first the assistance of the Holy Ghost. Immediately the *Veni Creator* was intoned, and the improvised chant of that hymn was executed not only by the singers of the Papal Chapel, but by all the people assembled. Animated with the most ardent faith and love towards her whom all the nations call Blessed, each invoked the light of Heaven upon the Sovereign Pontiff, who was ready to give from the height of the Chair of Peter a decision which would cause immediately to bend with respect the forehead of every faithful Catholic, spread abroad throughout the whole earth, and notwithstanding all diversities of language, of legislation, of manners, and of climates.

"After the singing of the hymn, his Holiness, in the midst of a profound silence, read the decree in a loud voice, and with such deep emotion that frequently the reading of it was suspended for some instants.—Every one of those who assisted at this great act shared the emotion of the Pontiff.

"In this Decree the Sovereign Pontiff has solemnly defined:—

"That it is a dogma of faith that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, from the first instant of her conception by a singular privilege and grace of God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the human race, was preserved perfectly free from all stain of original sin."

"Such is the solemn dogmatical definition for which the Holy Apostolic See has received so many prayers, and consulted the entire Catholic Episcopate, the solemn definition which so many Bishops hastened to bear with joy, and will announce to their Faithful on returning to their respective dioceses.

"After the reading of the Decree, the Cardinal Dean returned to the foot of the throne, returned thanks to the Holy Father for having, by his Apostolical authority, defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, praying him to be pleased to publish the Bull relative to that dogmatic definition. The Apostolical Prothonotaries then presented themselves, and the Promoter of the Faith, Mgr. Frattini, in his capacity of Consistorial advocate, made entreaty that they should proceed to the drawing up of the deeds of the process verbal of that solemn act. His Holiness gave his consent, and the Dean of the Apostolical Prothonotaries said that thus it should be done.

"Meanwhile the cannon of the Castle of Saint Angelo announced to the whole city the promulgation of the Decree, and its multiplied salvos seemed to wish to make the tidings of this great event reach even the most distant countries. All the bells of the towers and steeples of Rome rung a full peal, and the inhabitants, to manifest their joy, adorned their windows and their balconies with tapestry and hangings.

"After the Pontifical Mass, at which her Royal

Highness the Princess of Saxe, the diplomatic body, and the officers of the French army of occupation, were present in the reserved seats; then, in the place which had been marked out for them the Secretary and the Special Councillors of the Extraordinary Congregation of the Immaculate Conception, and, in short, such a multitude as for many lustres past people have never seen in the vastest temple of the world, sung the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving.—The Sovereign Pontiff, who accompanied the voices of the Cardinals, the Archbishops, and Bishops, chanted a verse, to which the people replied by the following verse. The emotion was universal.

"The Holy Father, carried upon the *sedes gestatoria*, then proceeded processionally to the Chapel of Sixtus IV., commonly called the Chapel of the Choir of the Most Reverend Chapter of the Vatican, and caused to be solemnly crowned there the image of the Virgin representative of the Conception; the crown was of gold enriched with precious stones. Then his Holiness passed into the chapel called *Della Pietà* to unrobe himself of his Pontifical vestments there, and the Holy Father received there the thanksgiving of the Very Rev. Father General of the Order of Friars Minors of the Observance and of the Friars Minors Reformed, for having defined, in reference to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, that which the Franciscan Fathers have always taught. His Holiness afterwards re-entered his apartments.

"On the evening of that glorious solemnity Rome presented a magnificent spectacle. All the houses, from the palace of the great nobleman down to the garret of the poor man, were resplendent with lights. The municipality had caused to be illuminated the dome of St. Peter's and the Palace of the Capitol, where two orchestras performed until a very advanced hour of the night some choice pieces of music, which were applauded by the crowd. The magistrates took care to prepare in their hall, in honor of the Immaculate Conception, an *academic reunion*, at which his Eminence Cardinal Wiseman pronounced an eloquent discourse in presence of a numerous concourse of Cardinals, Bishops, Prelates, and other personages.

"Rome, upon this day so solemn, has manifested in the most striking manner what is her devotion for the Most Holy Virgin; and the Bishops, on returning to their dioceses, and in announcing to their people what they have heard from the oracle of the Vatican, can also tell them what honors people render to the Virgin in the capital of the Catholic world, and if Rome on this occasion was beneath Ephesus. The history of the Church will mark amongst the most memorable this day of the 8th December, 1854, on which the august Mother of the Saviour of the world has received from the Chair of Truth a new triumph."

## HOW THE WAR GOES.

**BESIEGERS BESIEGED.**—Camp before Sebastopol, Nov. 25.—Although it may be dangerous to communicate facts likely to be of service to the Russians, it is certainly hazardous to conceal the truth from the English people. They must know, sooner or later, that the siege has been for many days practically suspended, that our batteries are used up and silent, and that our army are much exhausted by the effects of excessive labor and watching and by the wet and storm to which they have been so incessantly exposed. The Russians will know this soon enough. They are aware of it long ere this, for a silent battery—to hazard a bull—speaks for itself. The relaxation of our fire is self-evident, but our army, though weakened by sickness, is still equal to hold its position and to inflict the most signal chastisement on any assailants who may venture to attack them. In fact, I believe nothing would so animate our men, deprived as they are of the cheering words and of the cheering personal presence and exhortations of their generals, and destitute of all stimulating influences beyond those of their undaunted spirit and glorious courage, as meeting the Russians outside their intrenchments, and deciding the campaign by the bayonet. It is now pouring rain—the skies are black as ink—the wind is howling over the staggering tents—the trenches are turned into dykes—in the tents the water is sometimes a foot deep—our men have not either warm or waterproof clothing—they are for 12 hours at a time in the trenches—they are plunged into the inevitable miseries of a winter campaign—and not a soul seems to care for their comfort, or even for their lives. These are hard truths, but the people of England must hear them. They must know that the wretched beggar who wanders about the streets of London in the rain leads the life of a prince compared with the British soldiers who are fighting out here for their country, and who, we are complacently assured by the home authorities, are the best appointed army in Europe.

They are well fed, indeed, but they have no shelter, no rest, and no defence against the weather. The tents, so long exposed to the blaze of a Bulgarian sun, and now continually drenched by torrents of rain, let the wet through "like sieves," and are perfectly useless as protections against the weather. A hundred military "Ofell," will send home word of this to England, and it is now impossible for any English general to control the correspondence of officers and men under his command, though in despotic countries the censorship of the press may succeed in restricting to the terrified hearths and homes of families the depressing and anxious influence of letters from the seat of war. No one despairs of success and victory, but the country ought to know how dearly they are earned, and to whom they are due.

**THE "EXHAUSTED" RUSSIANS.**—Last night there was a brisk affair between the French Chasseurs de Vincennes and the Russian riflemen in front of the Flagstaff Battery earthworks, and the Russians dispelled all absurd myths about their want of powder and ball by a most tremendous cannonade. Assaults and counter assaults continued amid a furious fire, which lighted up the skies with sheets of flame from 9 o'clock at night till 4 in the morning. The French at one time actually penetrated behind the outer entrenchments, and established themselves for a time within the enceinte, but, as there was no preparation made for a general assault, they withdrew eventually. Volleys of musketry and salvos of cannon roared through the camp the whole night, but very few lost their rest in consequence, for these affairs are now of nightly occurrence. The French lost two officers and several privates last night.

**ARTILLERY IN THE MUD.**—Nov. 26.—The preparations for the renewal of the bombardment of Sebastopol are proceeding with a certain degree of energy and activity from day to day. The great obstacle to the conveyance of guns and ammunition up to the batteries is the state of the roads, or rather of the tracks across the hills. In a few days, however, it is hoped that we shall have at least forty new guns mounted, and ready to open. These guns will be furnished from the fleet, and are of excellent construction, but as yet our artillerymen have had no experiences of their practice, and I suppose they will be principally worked by the naval brigade.

The Stromboli has arrived in Balaklava harbor from the fleet, carrying 16 thirty-two pounders from the armament of the *Britannia*, and the *Firebrand* came in this afternoon with 24 guns of the same description, and about 60 tons weight of shot and shell. There are also some new guns landed from the *Queen of the South* direct from England, and large stores of ammunition are lying on the beach in readiness for transport, but the huge guns press the carriage wheels of the trucks deeply into the soft earth, and our horse power is just now inadequate to move them up the hillside. Indeed, our cavalry is at present employed in feeding itself. It is all they have to do. The men are sent down with their horses from the camp to the waterside every day, and carry back their fodder and rations. It is perfectly disgraceful to the authorities, whoever they may be, to see on this, the twelfth day after the gale, trusses of compressed hay floating about and rotting in every direction in the harbor, while our horses are dying of sheer inanition. Scandalous neglect and indifference to the interests of the public service are chargeable somewhere or another in this matter. The compressed hay would have kept sweet for many days had it been fished out even within the week after it floated out of the wrecks, and the slight impregnation of the outer portion by salt water would not have rendered it at all distasteful to the horses. But, no; we are all "Jolly miller wights" out here, and care for nobody or nothing, and so the fodder floated and bobbed about, stranded on the fringe of unutterable abominations and corruptions by the beach, floated off again, and rotted and sank, and sinks and rots, while the animals are half-starving. In the same way the immense amount of timber which washed about the harbor and on the coast outside, and which would have answered for butting all the army and for fuel, was permitted to drift out again the other day when the freshest set in to the head of the harbor after the rains, and when the wind blew off the shore, and very little of it was saved, though woe betide, the luckless wretch who may be found by the Provost-Marshal walking off with a piece of wood for his hut without an order.

The struggle between French and Russian riflemen, aided by artillery, was renewed last night as usual. The great bone of contention, in addition to the Orens, is the mud fort at the Quarantine Battery, of which the French have got possession, though, truth to tell, it does not benefit their position very materially. The Liège rifles used by the Russians are very efficient weapons, but there is not much execution done, as the combatants fire entirely at the flashes of their opponents' weapons. We have alter-