

THE CHURCH AND COMMERCE, INDUSTRY, SCIENCES, AND ARTS.

(By the Very Rev. T. LE MENANT DES CHESNAIS, S.M.)

IX.—PAINTING, SCULPTURE, AND ARCHITECTURE.

The origin of Christian art may be traced to the Catacombs of Rome. There it is that the first Christians painted on the walls those extraordinary sketches so much valued as an expression of the faith and manners of the early days of Christianity. How simple yet how true and grandiose, their Biblical allegories: the dove, with its olive branch, returning to the ark, an emblem of the faithful soul admitted into the Church, and thence into heaven; the phoenix rising again from its ashes, a symbol of the immortality of the soul; the Good Shepherd in search of the strayed sheep, or bringing it back on His shoulders to the fold, so vividly representing the love of Jesus for sinners; the history of the Patriarch of Idumea (Job), so well calculated to animate Christians to bear persecutions with resignation; Daniel in the den of lions, signifying the providence of God over the just, and the ultimate triumph of piety and innocence; the passage of the Red Sea and the drowning of the army of King Pharaoh, showing how, sooner or later, the wicked are punished by a just and all-seeing God. In reading the inscriptions in the Catacombs, one is perfectly astonished not to find one single word of complaint against the persecutors who so cruelly afflicted them, nor a word of praise on account of the heroic fortitude of the martyrs. The works of Bosio and Bottari are manifest proofs of what I here assert. After the conversion of Constantine, Christian art progressed wonderfully. Superb basilicas were raised in Rome, Constantinople, and the principal towns of Europe and Asia. Mosaic decorations, invented under the Emperor Claudius, were adopted for Christian churches, and, by their durability, they immortalised the works of Christian artists. The image of Christ was placed majestically over the sanctuary, and engraved on gold and silver coins, with the words of the promise made to Constantine: *In hoc signo vinces* ("By this sign thou shalt conquer"). The four evangelists; the images of Sts. Peter and Paul—these two great pillars of the nascent Church; Christ in the midst of His twelve apostles; the four-and-twenty elders prostrate before the Throne of the Lamb—a lively expression of the triumph of Christ over Paganism—became the favourite themes of Christian artists. In order to understand what we have now to say, one should be well acquainted with the rules of

CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY.

In Christian iconography everything has a symbolical meaning. Thus: The nimbus, which encircles the head alone or the entire figure, denotes a holy person. The nimbus on the head is always vertical, to distinguish it from the crown, which is placed horizontally. When the nimbus encircles not only the head, but the entire body, it is called an aureola. The aureola is restricted to the Divine persons, to the Virgin Mary, or canonised saints. The general idea of the nimbus and aureola is that of apotheosis or glorification. When a nimbus is given to a living person having a great reputation for sanctity, it is invariably square. When both the nimbus and aureola are united together, it is called a glory. In Pagan iconography the nimbus is given to the gods, to kings and emperors, to artists, and to the personification of the constellations. The name of Jehovah, inscribed within a radiating triangle, is an emblem of the Holy Trinity; a hand extended from the clouds, either in the act of blessing or grasping a crown, is an emblem of God the Father; the lamb, with a cross, is symbolical of Jesus crucified; the sheep are symbols of the apostles and of faithful souls; the cross upon a rock, or eminence, represents Christ crucified; the Good Shepherd is symbolical of the love of Jesus for sinners; a fish, with the word *ichthys*, represents the Holy Eucharist, or Jesus as the food of the Christian soul; the dove is emblematic of the Holy Ghost, and also of the just; a golden dove, with six wings, represents the Church; a black bird signifies an evil spirit; the dragon represents the demon; a dragon at the feet of a saint means a victory over sin and the world; the hind, or stag, is an emblem of solitude and prayer; the crucifix, held in the hand, signifies a preacher; the lily is an emblem of purity and chastity; the crown of thorns is an emblem of sufferings for Christ's sake; the globe is an emblem of sovereignty; the serpent is an image of sin and Satan—it also signifies the fall of man; the pomegranate is an ancient emblem of hope; ears of wheat, in the hand of the infant Jesus, figure the Eucharistic bread, and grapes the Eucharistic Wine or the Blood of Christ, both truly, really, and substantially contained in the Blessed Sacrament; the olive is a sign of peace; the palm is the emblem of martyrs; the rose is an emblem of love and beauty; the cedar, because of its height, expresses greatness; the mitre and pastoral staff signify a bishop or an abbot; a book in the hand represents a missionary, or the

founder of a religious order; the whole head shaved represents a monk—a short circle shaved represents a cleric or priest. The following are the colours of the various religious orders:—Black is the colour of the Augustinians, and, later on, of the Servites, the Oratorians, the Jesuits, and the Marists; white is the colour of the Cistercians, the Camaldulense, the Trinitarians, and the Trappists; white over black signifies a Carmelite, or Premonstratensian; black over white represents a Dominican. Of course, modern Orders were not represented by ancient artists; but as it is useful to know the colours of their habits, I thought it were better to give them here. Next time we shall continue this interesting study.

Diocesan News.

DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND.

(From our own correspondent.)

The fine hall of St. Benedict's was opened on Easter Tuesday. There were present the Most Rev. Dr. Lenihan, Mgr. Paul, Dr. Egan, and Fathers Dawson, Purton, McMillan, O'Gallagher, and Brodie, and a crowded audience of the general public. The opening address was delivered by the Most Rev. Dr. Lenihan. In complimenting Dr. Egan and the Catholics of Newton, as well as of St. Patrick's, Ponsonby, and Parnell, his Lordship referred to the building of the hall as, under the circumstances, a great undertaking. The new hall would be for the moral and religious welfare of the Catholic body, but more especially for the young men and the confraternities, added to which it would help materially to lessen present liabilities. His Lordship thanked all who had assisted in making the evening what he anticipated would be a most enjoyable one. He then declared the hall open.

The opening concert was then proceeded with. Some splendid choruses and part songs were rendered by the united choirs, the Waiaata quartet, and a chorus of male voices. Madame Chambers, Miss Hargrave, Mr George Reid, Mr Wilfrid Manning, and Miss Iye contributed highly-appreciated vocal numbers. Instrumental selections were finely rendered by a skilled orchestra, by Herr Zimmermann, and by a trio of banjo, mandolin, and guitar. A recitation was given by Mr Montagu. The concert was a most gratifying success, and Mr Drum, the honorary secretary, scored heavily by the completeness of his arrangements.

The new building is a commodious and lofty one, and it is particularly well ventilated. It covers an area of 62ft. by 142ft., and is 88ft. 6in. long by 40ft. wide in the clear, and is 26ft. 6in. high. The stage extends an additional length of 22ft. 6in. by 40ft. wide. On the left side of the hall are a schoolroom 20ft. by 40ft., a class-room 20ft. by 24ft., a gentleman's dressing-room 20ft. by 10ft. 6in. and a ladies' room 20ft. by 14ft. The main entrance is by means of a porch 13ft. 6in. by 9ft. fronting East street, with double doors at each side and swing doors from the porch to the hall. There is also a second entrance from the side with doors 5ft. wide. The drop-scene is a view of St. Peter's, Rome. It was artistically executed by Captain Blackmore. Several beautiful stage scenes are also placed in position, while the appliances were constructed and erected by Mr. J. J. O'Callaghan.

A new altar society has been formed at St. Benedict's, Mrs. Richard Dignan, president, Mrs. F. Peacocke, treasurer, and Miss Dennihy, lately of Timaru, hon. sec. Ample evidence of the society's existence is already shown around the altars.

His Lordship Dr. Lenihan preached two excellent discourses on Holy Thursday night, and on Easter Sunday morning at the Cathedral. The Bishop is always singularly happy in his illustrations and deductions, and it is ever apparent that he speaks from the heart. Father Daweon has likewise established himself at St. Patrick's as a preacher. It is estimated that 1500 persons listened to his discourse on Easter Sunday night. The sermon showed diligence in research, added to high scholarly attainments.

Rev. Father Battle, assistant priest to the Very Rev. Dean Slattery, Newtown, Sydney, has been on a visit to Auckland during the last fortnight, during course of which he has visited the wonderland of the Lake region. The Rev. Father possesses literary talent of no ordinary degree, and contributes regularly to Australian magazines. It will be of interest to read of the impressions formed of the Northern capital by such an astute observer as this young Irish priest. While in the city he was the guest of the Rev. Father Croke at St. Patrick's.

Rev. Father Croke has gathered around him an indefatigable and constant band of workers in all that pertains to the good work of the Cathedral parish. Speaking from the altar at 7.30 a.m. Mass, Father Croke referred in terms of the highest praise to the incessant toil of these young ladies and gentlemen, many of whom remained decorating the altars and sanctuary until the hours of the morning after working all night. The Rev. Father said he cared not where one might travel, no more devoted body could be found than that which worked for the honour and glory of God in our Catholic Church.

The lasting thanks of the Catholics of the colony are certainly due to the editor of the TABLET for having called public attention to the very questionable conduct of Lord Ranfurly in thumping the Orange drum in Dunedin. However palatable these nonsensical and meaningless harangues are to the "ditch-liners" in Sandy Row and Shankhill Road, we want none of them at this end of the globe. Queensland quite recently succeeded in sending to the right-about an "Irish Removable" whom the Colonial Office

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