

An Entrance to the Soul

(By CHARLES F. BURKHARDT in America.)

That music "wakes the soul and lifts it high and wings it with sublime desires," as observed by Addison, is a matter that has long been understood by the Church. There is a music of the ear, and also of the eye, and under the latter can be classed such flowerings of the human imagination that take their places among the deathless masterpieces of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Deathless, I repeat in the broadest sense of the word, for though the Reformation, the World War, and time itself have destroyed some of Catholicism's majestic temples, their likenesses have been indelibly impressed upon the memory of men.

It was in the Middle Ages when the Church's policy of using the arts and sciences in its service had reached its zenith that the development of her wonderful Gothic architecture took place. The wisdom promised by the Holy Spirit displayed itself in this intelligent use of these means of influencing the heart and the senses. The present-day trend of Protestant Churches is back toward this once rejected scheme. This is evidenced by their introduction of more elaborate forms of service, thereby repudiating the theories of their founders in their misinterpretation of the command to worship God "in spirit and truth." This is an admission that the idea of exiling beauty from the sanctuary after a period of four hundred years has been found to be erroneous. The words of Judas, "this might have been sold for much and given to the poor," will of course always be used against the Church, but when they are, it will generally be found that those making such objections are actuated by motives similar to those of the betrayer.

On the other hand, monks used to feel that:

"There could be no nobler task for a rational being than providing with the most punctilious exactness for the due celebration of the Creator's worship; and no worthier dedication of the offerings of nature and the devices of art, all alike His gift, than in the adorning of His earthly dwelling place."

Architectural beauty can well be used as an outward expression of religious sentiments, all the while giving buildings as much loveliness as the primary purposes of the structure will allow, pleasing the eye as well as the sense of the fitness of things, subordinating all the while the means to the end.

In those glorious days when this cultural inspiration of the Church came into full bloom, men consulted poetic taste, and worked for posterity. Devout persons sometimes experience a charm of sensible pleasure in these temples, for as the body partakes of the soul's sorrows it may also share its joys. This is in harmony with the conclusion that "man must have pleasure," and that if he does not find it in the service of God, he will look for it in the false delights of the world. This must have been what a famous medievalist had in mind when he spoke of each stone being regarded as a "symbol of saintly wisdom." The civilising influence of the Catholic Church is the only possible explanation

of the rise of these noblest expressions of the builders' art so shortly after the abatement of the social disturbances attendant upon the barbaric invasion of the Roman Empire.

No expense was spared in beautification. The Church of St. Martin of Tours, built before the tenth century, was inlaid with red, green, and white marble, and even the exterior was embellished with gold and precious stones. It is said that when the sun shone upon it, it resembled a mountain of gold. Many churches boasted of life-sized statues of solid silver. Chronicles inform us that the Abbey of St. Denis was covered on the outside with this metal. St. Bernard speaks of candelabras shining with jewels no less than with lights. It is asserted that Italy's greatest charms, after all has been said in praise of its climate and natural scenery, are the works of genius inspired by the Catholic Faith.

The entire absence of any monotony in her tabernacles and her institutions is no less wonderful than is her unity. The same Creative Spirit that called into being all the diversified beauties of nature similarly discloses Himself in the Church presided over by the Holy Ghost. To behold this variety, we need but to picture an average city in a Catholic country. Here rises a noble cathedral in the centre, a parent seemingly of all the lesser structures. On one side is a vast monastery with its extensive libraries for the learned; on the other side, an immense college. Here you see a magnificent hospital, and there a hospice for footsore travellers, while nearby stands the charitable school, given over to the instruction of the children of the poor. In the distance you may find a Carthusian or Cistercian monastery for those who crave retirement from the distracting noise of Mammon's rumbling chariots, and

before the inspiring panorama of Christian love and service has been completely unrolled you will very likely discern Capuchin and Franciscan convents dedicated to the ministration of the poor, cloisters of holy virgins, and perhaps on an elevation, a temple for devout pilgrims. What an endless array, but withal, what harmonious concord!

A well-known evangelist in an endeavor to account for Protestantism's large number of sects, recently stated that the Almighty loved variety, and so He does, provided this diversity does not imply discord and contradiction. Within the Catholic Church there is all the multifariousness that the heart of man could desire, but without any strife and contention. When the big figures of the modern world will have passed into oblivion, the men who erected these sacred fanes for the love of Christ and His Church will continue to receive the wondering admiration of future generations for their sublime conceptions, and their self-sacrificing labors in carrying them into being. With our present-day wealth, what could not this kind of spirit accomplish!

In the sixteenth century this zeal in developing a Christian architecture came to a sudden stop. Prescott, a Protestant, in his history of Philip the Second, says: "The earliest efforts of the Reformers were directed against those monuments of genius erected by Catholicism." Another Protestant historian, Motley, writes: "The Netherlands possessed an extraordinary number of churches and monasteries. Their exquisite grandeur was destroyed by the fanatical Calvinistic mob."

No one knows the mind of God, but we can reasonably feel that it was His plan that the culmination of the work of these master builders was to take place previous to the Reformation, so that when certitude began in some sections to be replaced by doubt, there would still remain some of these memorials to testify to the faith of what future less fortunate generations are accustomed to call the Dark Ages.

Town and Country News

NORTH AUCKLAND NOTES

(From our own Correspondent.)

Dargaville, January 7.

The convent was the only school to receive 100 per cent. passes at the Dargaville district proficiency examination. All the candidates at three of the local schools failed to gain a proficiency, while the Main School received only 66 per cent. proficiency passes. The Sisters are to be congratulated on their outstanding success.

Mr. J. A. Murphy, well known in local insurance circles, has been promoted to manager for North Auckland of the Southern Cross Assurance Co., Ltd. Mr. Murphy's headquarters will be at Whangarei and he with his family will be leaving for their new home early next year. Mr. Murphy has been a tower of strength in all matters appertaining to athletic sports in this district and as consul for the Northern Athletic Union did real good service. He was also an enthusiastic worker as a member of the

H.A.C.B. Society in friendly society matters and a good worker in Catholic Church affairs. While congratulating him on his well-earned promotion, Mr. Murphy's many friends will be sorry that he is leaving the town.

Following is the prize list in connection with scholastic year of the Dargaville Convent, conducted by Sisters of St. Joseph; the prizes being distributed prior to "break-up" for the Christmas vacation:—

Gold medal, 1st in religious knowledge, Rose Stanaway.

Std. 6—Aggregate marks, William Downs; essay, Mary Dell; arithmetic, Ruby Bradley.

Std. 5—Essay, Dennis Martin; English, T. Lunny; arithmetic, R. Franich; spelling, M. Yankovich; writing, M. O'Shea.

Std. 4—Religious knowledge, V. Whelan; religious knowledge, O. Franich; English, M. Hilliam; arithmetic, C. Williams; spelling, K. Condon.

Std. 3—Religious knowledge, M. Smith; essay, O. Nola; arithmetic, M. Barbarich.

Alf. Driscoll

HAIRDRESSER AND TOBACCONIST

DEPOT—Sports materials for all summer games.

Gifts: Pipes, Pouches, Cigar and Cigarette Holders and Cases, etc., etc.

Nice assortment of Birthday

Invercargill

FEDERAL BUILDINGS, 82 DEE STREET