

CATHOLIC PICTORIAL REVIEW OF 1932



(1) His Holiness Pope Pius XI... (2) the new Vatican Picture Gallery... (3) the first railroad into Vatican City... (4) the first Catholic College for Colored in the Mohawks... (5) preliminary steps in the process of beatification of Father Damien... (6) President Hoover, escorted by Ambassador Claudel of France... (7) Knights of Columbus... (8) Xavier University... (9) the 31st International Eucharistic Congress... (10) Miss Mary G. Hawkes... (11) Rev. Richard Blackburn... (12) Rev. George Washington... (13) Rev. Francis Grozio... (14) Rev. Andrew Cardinal Frühwirth... (15) Rev. Jean Cardinal Verdier... (16) Rev. Archbishop of Paris... (17) Rev. Clarence E. Martin...

This American author believes, the Calabrian minstrel, "adopting Lady Morgan's terminology, the Pifferari: "Their dress is wild and striking," he writes, "consisting of a loose sheep-skin coat, decked with the wool left on it, and a high peaked cap, decked with gray ribbons and sprigs of heather, while the huge zamponna of goat-skin is formed like the bagpipes of Scotland, and resembles them too in its shrill music. These interesting characters arrive during the last days of Advent, and consider themselves the representatives of the shepherds of Judea, who were the first to announce the news of the Nativity. Their usual gathering-place is on the steps of the Piazza di Spagna, where they lounge and sleep in the warm sun. Every little while a party sets out on a tour through the city, blowing away with the most desperate energy. At the next corner is one of the shrines of the Madonna, and this is their first stopping-place, to salute the Mother and Child. Lady Morgan says, "It is done under the traditional notion of charming (1) her labor-pains on the approaching Christmas." They turn down the Via Frattina, and a short distance further come to a carpenter's shop, which must also be favored with a tune,—"par politeness at least," Giuseppe says,—"out of compliment to St. Joseph. The owner hands them out a bajocco, and they continue their march until the circuit is completed." The word "charming" is, of course, very much out of place; William Home evidently thought so, because quoting Lady Morgan indirectly he speaks of her as having observed the custom of "saluting in every street the shrines of the Virgin Mother with their wild music, under the traditional notion of soothing her until the birth-time of her infant at the approaching Christmas." The noted German theologian, Monsignor Hettinger, who was frequently in Rome over a stretch of time, did not, moreover, consider the music wild nor so shrill as to do the English and American observers. Nor does he stress the presence of the zamponna, the bagpipe; he speaks of two other instruments used by the shepherds: the fute and the shawm, adding: "Even now I seem to hear their melodies, as simple as the contents of the songs themselves, which, devout and pious as the prayer of children, echoed through the streets." He went even so far, in his book on "The World and the Church," to publish the Pifferari's chant and tune, having had the notes and score written out by a German composer. The rich heritage of popular Christian custom is everywhere gradually being displaced; the new customs taking the place of those of former days, imbued with a Christian spirit, do not, unfortunately, offer us so many of those of a traditional nature, a satisfying response to the yearnings of the human soul.—C. V. Service.

Liturgical Music Sung Christmas Eve At St. Mary's Bath Bath—Special music for the midnight Mass, Christmas was sung in St. Mary's Church here. The Mass was celebrated by the Rev. Edward M. Lynch, pastor. The program rendered was as follows: Organ Prelude—"Christmas Pastoral"—Giuseppe—Dixiel; Processional—"Silent Night"—Gruber; Introit—"Domine Dixit"—Gregorian (revised); Kyrie—Montali; Gloria—M. Haller; Gradual—"Gloria"—Principale—Gieseler—Gieseler—M. Haller; Offertory—"Litanies of the Virgin"—Supplementary Offertory—"Adeste Fideles"; Sanctus—Montali; Benedictus—Montali; Agnus Dei—C. Doble; Communion—In Splendore—Gregorian; Recessional—"Holy God"—Traditional; Hosanna—St. Louis Plein; St. Joseph—St. Louis Plein. The choir consisted of Mrs. James Cuffney, Mrs. John Burke, Mrs. F. T. Nollet, the Misses Louise and Sylvia Lapina and Margaret Alvert; Demitri Gabrieli, Nolan Watson, Paul and William Gunderman, Mrs. F. T. Nollet directed the choir and Mrs. L. M. Thompson was organist.

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The Roman Pifferari Advent and Christmas Minstrels Of Our Lady and the Infant in Rome

Among the many attractive Advent and Christmas customs of Catholic Italy no other has perhaps attracted quite so much attention as the one practised by shepherds who for centuries past have annually repaired to Rome to do honor to the Christ Child and his Blessed Mother. The custom is as it were, a dramatic representation of the event recorded in the Gospel, the visit of the shepherds who were attracted by the star to the lowly abode sheltering the God-Man at Bethlehem. Reminiscent of his sojourn in Rome about the year 1840, a German traveler writes: "I am deeply moved whenever I recall the Pifferari in Rome, remembering how they came, clad in fish-red mantles, reaching to the knee, their feet shod with sandals, having covered great distances from their homes in the Calabrian mountains, singing and playing their shawms, futes and bagpipes. Often they are an aged grandfather, with snow-white hair, making this devotional journey for the last time, and his grandson, just blossoming into life and possibly setting foot in the Holy City for the first time. At each image or shrine of the Mother of God, out in the silent solitude of the open plain and in the city, mid the loud tumult of the marketplace at evening and during the dark of night they stop before the images and play and sing the old chants, transmitted from father to son, small round caps on their heads, they hold their peaked hats under an arm in token of reverence. They have come during Advent to greet the newborn Savior, lying as a little child in the manger. Appeals to Travelers The custom has appealed no less also to travelers from other countries, even though they were Protestants. William Home, the first volume of whose "Everyday Book" was published in 1824, in spite of prejudices prevalent in England at the time, printed a wood-cut showing "Calabrian shepherds playing in Rome at Christmas," and explains the picture in a sympathetic manner: "In Mr. Burford's excellent panorama of the ruins of Pompeii, exhibited in the Strand, groups of these peasantry are celebrating the festival of the patron saint of the master of a vineyard. The printed description of the panorama says these mountaineers are called Pifferari, and 'play a pipe very similar in form and sound to the bagpipes of the Highlands.' It is added, as Lady Morgan observed, that 'just before Christmas they descend from the mountains to Naples and Rome, in order to play before the pictures of the Virgin and Child, which are placed in various parts of every Italian town.' "In a picture of the Nativity by Raffael, Home concludes his information, "he has introduced a shepherd at the door playing on the bagpipes." In a book first published in 1845, but reprinted as late as 1887, an Episcopalian divine, William Ingraham Kip, ultimately Bishop of California, tells of the impression this custom made on him during his protracted visit to Rome ninety years ago. In fact, in a volume, bearing the title "The Christmas Holydays in Rome," an account of the Pifferari could hardly be overlooked. Having stated that, when these holy days are at hand, the varied population of the city receives a new accession from the people of the surrounding country, Rev. Mr. Kip goes on to tell: "The peasants who live in the deserted tombs on the Campagna; the natives of the Alban mountains, fierce, bandit-looking fellows, who gather their flocks about them with a scowling air which would not be at all pleasant to encounter among their own hills; and the Trasteverini, in their picturesque costumes, boasting themselves to be the only true descendants of the ancient Romans, and as proud and haughty in their bearing as if they had inherited the heroic virtues of their ancestors,—these are to be met roaming about every street, and in the churches, gazing in wonder at their magnificence." The most singular, however, were,

Raise your eyes and contemplate Jesus Christ on the Cross and you will see how trifling are all your sufferings.

Catholic Courier and Journal 237 Andrews Street Rochester, N. Y. June 21, 1932 To Our Readers: May I urge upon you the importance of retaining the advertisers in the Catholic Courier and Journal? These business men, who have faith in the active good will of our subscribers, make possible the publication of our Official Diocesan Newspaper. The money they spend with us enables us to develop and improve this publication, making it a genuine asset to the Catholic life of the Rochester Diocese. On the basis of reciprocity, we should do everything possible to aid those who have so consistently aided us. In making any purchase, whether for a large or small item, whether for the home or for business, I would ask you to look in the columns of the Catholic Courier and Journal and give consideration to the merchants represented there. Very truly yours, Leo C. Mooney, Managing Editor, CATHOLIC COURIER and JOURNAL

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