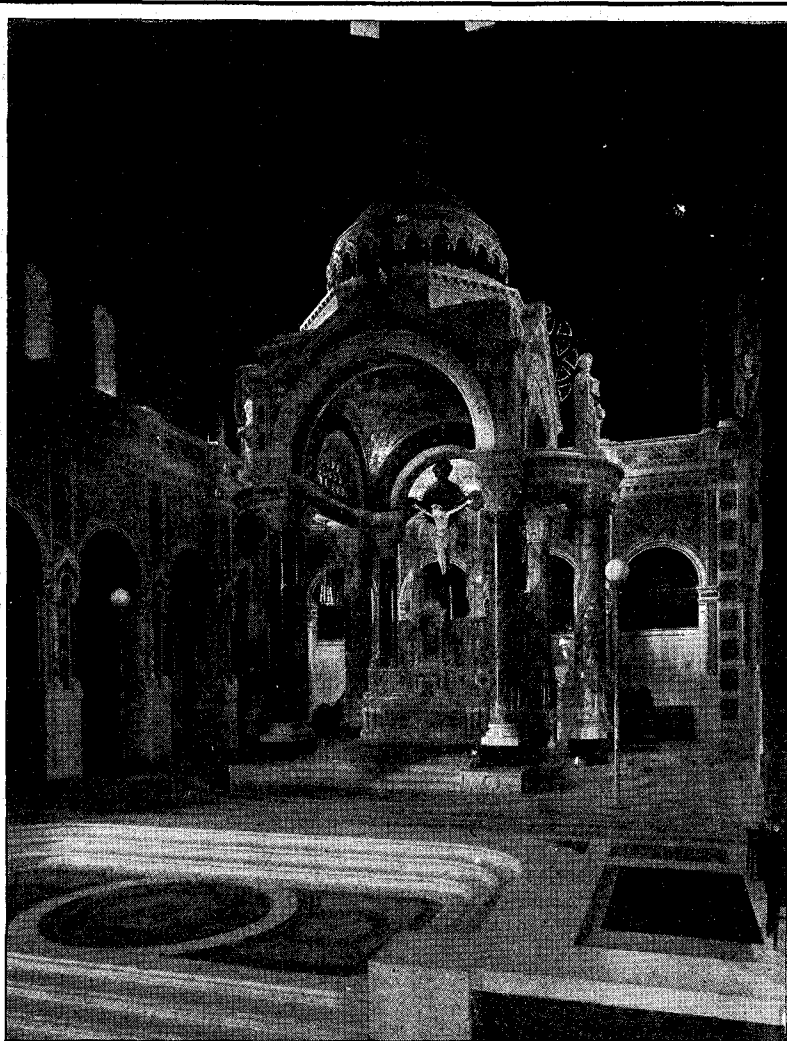


RELIGION-AND-SOCIAL-SERVICE

A BYZANTINE GEM IN ST. LOUIS

ST. LOUIS'S NEW CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL is embellished by an altar that adds another beauty to the general richness of the interior. The designer, Mr. George Barnett, defined his conception as "an Emperor's tribute to God." *The Art World* (New York), in comment, especially on the baldachin



"AN EMPEROR'S TRIBUTE TO GOD."

In this phrase the architect describes his aim in designing the baldachin and altar, here shown, for the new cathedral of St. Louis.

over the altar, declares that "in distribution of color, refinement of proportions, and general massing it can well be said to rival the great works on the European continent." It congratulates the church authorities for "having given their city a perpetual and inspiring feast for the eyes, such as will command the veneration of the faithful and the admiration of all others who see it." The altar and baldachin are thus described:

"This noble structure is built of some four hundred tons of the richest marbles and mosaics. The floor upon which the altar stands is the finest of its kind in the world. It is circular in form, thirty-six feet in diameter, and entirely of marble inlay. A very adaptable design is carried out by a judicious use of varicolored stones.

"In the center of this floor stands the altar, of light Sienna marble, richly carved and inlaid with colored stones and mosaics; these reach a climax of intensity and richness round the tabernacle door, which is of burnished gold inlaid with mother-of-pearl

and lapis lazuli and encrusted with amethysts, topazes, crystals, and other precious and semiprecious stones. At each side of the altar, a kneeling angel in white marble on a pedestal conveys the idea of perpetual adoration. In the front of the *retable* four panels contain decorative portraits of the four Latin fathers, Saints Ambrose, Gregory, Jerome, and Augustine, executed in mosaic.

"The baldachin, or canopy over the altar, like those erected in some of the great medieval cathedrals of Europe, favored by the immensity of its proportions, is here carried out with equal grandeur. It towers sixty feet and is supported by fourteen monolithic columns. These are of Sienna, Verona, breccia, violetta, and Alps-green marbles, quarried in that part of the earth where their respective varieties can be found and shipped to St. Louis in one piece. They are symbolically arranged. In fact, each part of this structure has been designed with a scrupulous regard for the symbolism of its function and a more detailed scrutiny reveals an intricate and profuse exploitation of Christian iconography. For instance, the columns supporting the main structure have been fixed to ten in number, which is considered by most authorities as the number of perfection. The four remaining columns under the side wings, directly beneath the large statues of the four evangelists, are symbolic of the four Gospels. In the capitals of these are carved the respective emblems of the four evangelists. The superstructure, which changes in form or plan as it rises upward, being first square, then octagonal, and finally round to receive the surmounting dome, is of Trani marble, the warm cream-gray tone of which blends beautifully with the marble and mosaic inserts, and the outer dome, which is entirely carried out in Venetian gold and colored mosaics.

"Under the rood-arch and back of the altar, forming a fitting background for it, looms a large ornamental bronze cross, upon which hangs a life-size figure of the Savior in white marble. The Blessed Virgin Mary and St. John complete this Calvary group, which is supported by a Sienna marble pedestal, decorated with mosaic ornament. The whole work has been most happily adapted to its position. It is of the Byzantine style of architecture, as also is the cathedral itself, and upon closer observation may be found to echo many of the beautiful proportions of this edifice. The workmanship of both the mosaic and carving is of true Byzantine character, but avoids such crudities in drawing and workmanship as were incident to the limited abilities of the early Byzantine workmen."

Mr. Barnett, the designer, is a member of the architectural firm who furnished the plans for the cathedral also. The altar is the work of a leading firm of silversmiths.

THE FIRST RED CROSS—The Red Cross is at least 320 years old, for it was that long ago that a soldier first wore the emblem to mark him as one who ministered to the sick and wounded. The history of the sign is communicated in a letter to the *New York Evening Post* by Mr. Stephen H. Horgan, who names the first bearer of it:

"This was Camillus de Lillis, to whom Pope Sixtus V. granted permission to use a red cross as the distinguishing mark of the society he was forming and which Pope Gregory XIV. confirmed by founding the order in 1541.

"The real origin of the badge of the Red Cross came from a dream which Camilla Compelia de Lillis, mother of Camillus, had just before he was born. In this dream she saw a child with a

red cross on his breast followed by other children with similar emblems.

"Camillus de Lillis by his work as a nurse and the reforms he brought about in caring for the sick, both in hospitals and on the battle-field, was eventually canonized a saint, and Pope Leo XIII., on June 22, 1886, announced that St. Camillus de Lillis would be the patron of nurses, whether they wore a Red-Cross badge or not.

"When the late Mayor Gaynor was shot and taken to St. Francis's Hospital in Hoboken, in what was thought to be a dying condition, 'Big Bill' Edwards ordered that only the best nurses in the United States should attend the distinguished patient. The Mayor overheard the order and, in the weak voice left to him, whispered: 'I want these sisters to take care of me.' And so, day and night, a little Sister of St. Francis, with a red cross of St. Camillus on her breast, nursed the Mayor back to health."

POOR QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS ART IN ENGLAND

THE WAR DETACHES certain sections of a nation so that its religious life may be studied in something like integrity. The Church may discover, if it is ready to face the facts, says Mr. Edward Shillito in *The Challenge* (London), how far the youth of England has understood and responded to the teaching of the Faith. Under the same stimulus of great events the art-world presents itself for appraisal in the measure of the "impression left by the Church and its gospel upon the minds most sensitive to beauty." The writer takes up the display made in the Royal Academy of this year—whose merits are viewed from another angle in the preceding department—and declares that "whatever be the reason, there is in the Royal Academy of this year little evidence that there is a response among the greater number of our artists to the Christian faith." Why is it, he asks, that there are so few pictures upon directly sacred themes, and goes on:

"Let it be granted that religious art can not be limited to such themes; none the less it is significant that out of the 1,600 members so very few choose from the wide range of Holy Scripture. The reason lies probably in timidity and hesitation rather than in unbelief: many are waiting for a surer word; some are too reverent; they fear to handle such great matters. In all this there are curious parallels between the mind of the artist revealed here and the mind of the soldier as he reveals himself to such *padres* as Mr. Neville Talbot. But, whatever be the reason, the thing that is wanting is the Lord Christ as a mighty and all-pervasive power in whom the soul that loves beauty can glory as in a secure and inalienable prize."

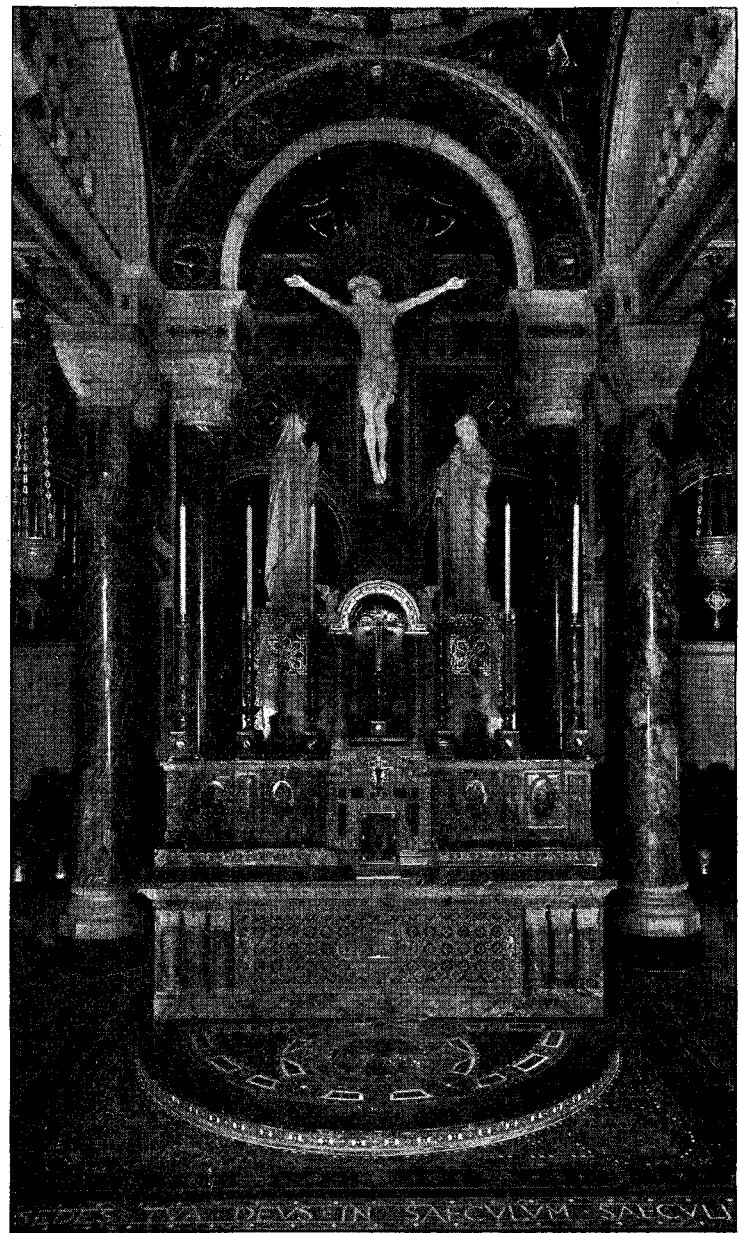
Another writer, in *The Church Times*, declares that "the Academy leaves one with a feeling of despondency as regards the immediate outcome for modern religious art." The significant thing is perhaps that the subject is discust at all; it likely points to the awakened religious consciousness due to the war. We read:

"There are a few religious pictures certainly, but they are not inspiring. They follow popular taste instead of leading it. There is scarcely anything fresh or original, or even first rate along traditional lines. The forms of traditionalism which constituted the mainstay of religious art for centuries and inspired some of the best of it are gone. We do not altogether complain. We do not wish our religious art to become stereotyped in the manner of certain Oriental schools which have never changed since the tenth and eleventh centuries. But the old traditionalism which had a real breadth and variety has not yielded to a true modernism in art, but to a manner of treatment which is not art at all.

"The Victorian age produced a mechanical output of what is commonly miscalled artistic work that is merely a commercial product. Go into almost any church and you will see it. Go

into the average church-furnisher's, either here or abroad, and you will see still more of it. The brass eagle lectern, the lacquered memorial tables, the cheap vestment without 'embroidery' at so much, and with a little at double the price, are not the work of artists.

"But as regards paintings the Academy tells us only too plainly that where religious pictures are concerned we are still under the bondage of Victorian commercialism. If a religious picture is painted at all, even tho its execution be good, in its conception it is almost down to the level of the ecclesiastical furnisher. The public demands what is sloppy and sentimental. The artist provides it. He can not lead because he so often



THE ALTAR AT ST. LOUIS.

Of light Sienna marble, richly carved and inlaid in mosaics of mother-of-pearl, lapis lazuli, amethysts, topazes, and other precious and semiprecious stones.

does not know. The Church by her wilful patronage of commercialism all through the later decades of the nineteenth century drove the artist away. He is sick of brass flower-vases with sacred symbols embossed upon them for a few shillings extra. He has no respect for the parson who has perhaps shown contempt for ancient forms that are beautiful just because they are not the fashion somewhere on the Continent. Tired of the cult of the cheap and ugly and of the worship of red brick and pitch pine and lacquered brass, he interprets religion in terms of that which makes a personal appeal to himself. Beyond that he is out to please his clients and to satisfy the popular taste. And so we find that almost the only religious pictures are such subjects as our Lord appearing on the field of battle, or among wounded soldiers resting in a church, or a soldier