

The Services of the Church.

In the services of the Church in rural communities only the Gregorian music is sung by male voices, unless upon exceptional occasions. The singers, gowned in white surplices, sit within the sanctuary and sing the alternate parts. Their work is not that of the modern shrieking soprano, whose disedifying and trilling efforts seem much better suited to divert the mind and attention of the hearers than to inspire devotion and praise, not that of the paid tenor who is content with nothing less than modern operatic airs, but it is from the heart — sturdy, unaffected, devotional.

During the month of May, fête days, and on special occasions females may be admitted to the organ loft in the gallery and allowed to take part in the singing. In the churches of the cities regular choirs of mixed voices now sing, and figured music of the less florid type is not infrequently performed.

The bell, called the "tongue of the Church," sounds out the *Angelus* morning, noon, and night, at the elevation, at all Masses, baptisms and weddings; at a death it tolls the age of the deceased, and as soon as the funeral cortege comes within sight of the church its solemn knell adds another to the mournful solemnities of the occasion. When the *Angelus* bell sounds the faithful who are working in the fields turn toward the church, uncover their heads, and recite the prescribed prayers. This is well illustrated by the celebrated painting by Millais.

The *Agape*, a custom introduced in Apostolic times, is still observed. A basket and napkins, provided by the *Fabrique*, or parish, are taken home by some member who returns them the following Sunday morning with a sufficient number of loaves of bread which, when cut into small cubes or pieces, will be sufficient for all members of the congregation to receive one. These loaves are placed upon a small table in the sanctuary before the altar where the priest blesses them before Mass. The loaves are then removed to the sacristy by the sacristan, sexton, or beadle, where they are cut into small pieces and distributed to the congregation during Mass — to the Syndics first and then to the rest of the congregation. Every person receiv-