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The Bells of St. Mary Major's.

The following stanza, under the title "Fulgura Frango," are quoted in one of Miss Linker's novels, though she does not distinctly claim the authorship of them. The bells of the Liberian Basilica at Rome are five in number, and the organ tone great bell is named Maria Assunta, Mary of the Assumption. It is probably the most majestic of all the bells of the Eternal City. The action of the poem is supposed to begin during a storm.

On Studying the Church Music of the old Masters.

The renewed approval by the Holy See of the "music of Palestrina and of his faithful imitators," in the Regole recently issued by the Bishops of Italy, will undoubtedly give a very considerable impetus to the study and cultivation of that ideal style; and it came most opportunely in the midst of the celebrations in honor of the tercentenary of Palestrina and Orlando di Lasso, referred to in the Tablet of the 22nd ult. A few observations on this kind of music will, therefore, scarcely be considered out of place just now, and it is proposed to lay before our readers, in English garb, the greater portion of three short articles by Monsignor F. Schmidt, President of the Caccinetti Verein, choir-master of Munster Cathedral, etc., who for many years past has taken an active part in the work connected with the restoration of the pure church style. They appeared shortly after the performance of Beethoven's celebrated Missa Solemnis at a concert in Munster. He writes as follows:

numerous followers of more or less ability would then, with him, have striven to imitate ecclesiastical models and types as regards treatment of the text, rhythm, etc., and the number of instrumental compositions which we are compelled to exclude from the Church would have been considerably less.

A musician who wishes to compose for the Church must, in the first place be quite certain that he knows what expression or effect the Church herself desires and prescribes for the sacred words of the liturgy. This is a requirement that speaks for itself. Had Beethoven complied with it in his Missa Solemnis it would, doubtless, not have become what it is now—a magnificent concert piece, calculated to delight a music-loving audience, or perhaps to afford them religious edification (?).

I therefore earnestly entreat our composers to ponder more seriously over the subject, remembering that an extremely important part is assigned to music in the Liturgy, especially to music for Mass. Moreover, they must study more diligently the models which comply with the Church's demands, with the requirements of genuine liturgical music.

The models, as every half-educated church musician knows, are works of the church composers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, especially Palestrina's Missa Papae Marcelli and other compositions written in the same style and imbued with the same spirit. In the works of Palestrina and composers of his school the words are musically expressed in a manner worthy of the House of God, and calculated to awaken the deepest feelings of devotion within the heart of man, as declared by the Church. It would lead me too far if I were to attempt to indicate even a small fraction of the passages in Palestrina's compositions wherein the sublime interpretation of the words of the Liturgy and the devout realization of the Holy Sacraments are manifested in such a remarkably striking way. To mention only one or two who does not feel a thrill of devotion when he hears the deep and solemn strains of the Benedictus in the Mass Iste Confessor, or even when he reads the score? As regards the marvelous Sanctus in the Missa Brevis, who does not imagine that he is listening to the heavenly harmonies of the angelic choirs? Who does not think, when he listens to the mighty Amen in the Oredo of the Missa Papae Marcelli, that he hears the noise of many waters, as the seer thought he did when the voice of the Lord resounded in the heavenly Jerusalem? In good truth, mean and insignificant must more than one of the numerous modern composers appear to a person when the exquisite beauty of the compositions of Palestrina and his contemporaries has gone up before his spiritual eye like a blinding sun. And when, as a further result of this state of mind, he acquires the virtue of humility, becoming cautious and diffident, it is indeed a blessing for himself and others, and at the same time the spirit of composing.

At the pure and undefiled sources of the great masters of the Middle Ages modern composers must fill their minds with grand and sublime ideas; they should again and again possess the notion of the greatness of the work they are to do, and they should acquire a real feeling for dignified, church-like effects, and may be able to form an opinion as to whether such are to be found in their own and other composer's works. This is what is required in every intelligent and earnest composer. If he cannot act thus, owing to denseness or technical incapacity, then one must necessarily have serious doubts about his vocation as a composer.

It fortunately happens now-a-days that the study of these masters is much facilitated by more convenient editions which can be procured without much trouble or expense. I call to mind Prosk's Collections (Pustet, Ratisbon), Luck's (P. Braun, Leipzig) Van Maldeghem's (O. Muquardt, Brussels), F. Commers (Muz. Ratisbon), and particularly the publications of Doctor Haber, who has smoothed the way more than any one else by means of the complete edition of Palestrina's Works (Breitkopf and Hartel) and numerous separate editions of Masses, etc., (Pustet).

Palestrina; he knew them better than most of his contemporaries and always urged others to study them. In this school he acquired the sublimity and depth of expression which we find in most of his compositions. Like Witt, other composers (M. Haller, for instance) studied the same school, and whenever I find that a composition for the Church is poor, trivial, undignified, etc., I always say to myself the composer has not studied the old masters.

But in what way is this study to be pursued? Must we give up our individuality, and own manner? Does it mean a slavish attachment to external forms and formulae? Most certainly not. The form is empty and dead, it is the spirit that quickens. As Palestrina has his own style, and Lessus another, and Mendel yet another, so all good composers of the present day, in spite of the old masters whom they have studied and upon whom they lean, have their own specific style of church music. The ideal borrowed from classical examples accompanies and fructifies the genius of the creative artist, and he, in turn, pursues his course freely and independently; and as the fruit of this union a work is originated which becomes really useful for liturgy and art.

This, in my opinion, the effect produced on a capable composer who has received his vocation from God. Moreover, talented composers can, in many respects, go beyond the old masters, and, in fact, excel them; their compositions may appear clearer, more intelligible, more pleasing, even when heard for the first time, because the composer, having allowed his genius liberty and independence, in spite of the borrowed ideal, thinks and writes under the influence of the music of the present day. On this point I entirely agree with my predecessor Witt, and it is a view that can scarcely be assailed.

Besides this direct return to the old masters there is another method of studying them, which may be described as the indirect one. I mean that composers should study the works of those modern musicians who have entirely adopted the spirit of the old masters, and formed their own style accordingly. I should even be satisfied if these plans alone were pursued, if it would enable composers to test their own abilities before venturing to compose on their own account. I am certain that the craze for composing would thus be kept within proper bounds, and many rubbishy concoctions would never see the light of day.

I trust that composers will be more and more convinced that the production of a composition for the liturgical offices, more especially a Mass, is no child's play, but a momentous affair for which they must diligently prepare and study, forming themselves on the taste and so on, if they desire to avoid an injury to liturgy and art.—London Tablet.

The Archbishop of Edinburgh on the Holy Family Devotion.

The first part of the Archbishop of Edinburgh's Pastoral deals with the recent Encyclical on the Rosary. In the second part his Grace speaking of the Devotion of the Holy Family says: In the year 1861 a pious association was founded in Lyons by a priest of the Society of Jesus, the Reverend R. P. Francoz, for the purpose of introducing into every Catholic household the practice of evening family prayers, and of setting before the faithful the Holy Family of Nazareth as their great model for imitation. The good work received the hearty approval of the then reigning Pontiff Pius IX., and subsequently of his present Holiness. The Catholic household the practice of evening family prayers, and of setting before the faithful the Holy Family of Nazareth as their great model for imitation. The good work received the hearty approval of the then reigning Pontiff Pius IX., and subsequently of his present Holiness.

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should look in vain for any sign of Christian faith, or hope, or love; where drunkenness and vice and profane and obscene language prevail, where God seems to be unrecognized, except to profane His Holy Name; whose inmates never open their Church door or approach the Sacraments; where the poor little ones, on whom our future hopes ought to rest, grow up familiar with sin, and if ever corrected at all, receive the correction in language which only teaches them better to blaspheme their Maker. In such houses is there any place for the Holy Family? Yes; here above all may we hope that the picture of that abode of peace and holiness will find entrance; and that our Blessed Lord, who designed to converse with sinners, who was sent to call not the just but sinners, to repentance, will make the influence of His presence and His grace felt, and gradually transform those haunts of sin into abodes of virtue. The Holy Father recommends this devotion especially to the working classes, to all who have any afflictions. They in particular are dear to the heart of our Saviour, who, when He had at His feet all that the earth could offer, chose a life of labor and of suffering in the house of a poor artisan. They will thus learn to value a state of life which His call to duty has consecrated, and to sanctify their labors and trials by cheerful resignation to His Holy Will. All, in a word, should make the Holy Family their models. In Mary and Joseph parents will find a perfect pattern of the virtues which belong to their state, and they should teach their children to imitate the Divine Child by the practice of reverence, meekness and obedience. And now a word as to the organization of the work.

The center of the associations is in Rome, the Cardinal of the Propaganda to establish it in his diocese at the time he may judge most suitable. Once established, it supercedes entirely the old Association of the same name; but the members of that older Association do not require to be enrolled anew. It is sufficient that they begin faithfully to keep the rules in their now approved form. It belongs to the head priest in each mission, and to him alone (or to his delegate) to enroll members of his flock. For convenience, a Diocesan Director also may be appointed, to act for and under the Bishop.

The Association works as will be seen, by families and not by individuals. The consecration is of the family as a whole; but the act of consecration is made by the head in the name of all the members, who each become thereby associates, and partakers of all the privileges which during the past year and by an unworthy member of a family cannot deprive those who are faithful of the blessings conferred by this devotion, a powerful means is placed in the hands of the virtuous to reclaim the erring.

The act of consecration may be made by families singly; or it may be made in a solemn manner by a number of families in Church, and in presence of the priest. This latter method is strongly to be recommended. A register will be kept in each mission, and in it the names of heads of families who enroll themselves will be entered, with the number of members in the family and the date of enrollment. Every year in the month of May, the clergy in charge will send to the Diocesan Director, the number of families enrolled by them during the past year; and he will send the total for the whole diocese to the Cardinal Protector.

With these preliminary explanations, for the honor of our divine Saviour and of His Blessed Mother and of their holy guardian Saint Joseph, and in obedience to the will of the Sovereign Pontiff, we now hereby establish in this diocese the Pius Association of Families Consecrated to the Holy Family of Nazareth, and we earnestly exhort all to throw themselves heartily and fervently into the practices which it enjoins. Indeed, we are confident that this will do so. The expression of a desire by our common Father is of itself enough to ensure the compliance of his children; and apart from this, the good work commends itself strongly to us by its own intrinsic excellence.

A. F. Marshall, the clever occasional English correspondent of the Pilot, has a letter in the current number of that paper on the effect which the anti-religious feeling in this country has had in retarding the growth of republican sentiments among the better classes in England. The letter will be of interest to many who have no special sympathy with the writer's republican tendencies. He takes as his text these words from the testament of the late Earl of Salisbury: "I have in England a great number of people who are not Christians, but who are becoming Christians." A nation which has lost the religious sentiment, wherein the passions are curbed by no moral restraint, where those who suffer do not feel a motive for resignation in the hope of a future life, is destined to be divided, to be torn, to become the prey of internal and external enemies." He believes that the suicidal warfare which the leaders of the Republic have waged against religion in the past has deterred many religious people in England from giving their support to the republican movement on their own side of the Channel which they otherwise would give. In explanation of the fact that Catholic France has long been ruled by infidels—a fact which is an utter puzzle to those who have not seen the French people in England from giving their support to the republican movement on their own side of the Channel which they otherwise would give. In explanation of the fact that Catholic France has long been ruled by infidels—a fact which is an utter puzzle to those who have not seen the French people in England from giving their support to the republican movement on their own side of the Channel which they otherwise would give.

Nothing, therefore, could be simpler or easier than for us to enter on the path on which we will prevent any one from adopting it. At the same time its power for good is no less remarkable than its simplicity. The pious families (and thank God they are many) that are already trying to lead fervent Christian lives, will find in it means of persevering and advancing in virtue. Homes in which the spirit of worldliness exerts too great an influence, will derive from it light to see the deceitfulness of the maxims by which they have guided their conduct, and strength to break with them, and to enter on the path on which alone the true disciples of Christ are found. There are, alas! homes also, in which we

before all things, want political rest and peace; and they will vote even for a candidate they disapprove, in preference to one they respect, if he promises to give them the latter. The Radical party is splendidly organized; the Catholic party is not organized at all; so that the multiplicity and efficiency of Radical agencies, plus their spirit of unity or co-operation, constitute a powerful army against a weak one. And, lastly, French Catholics of the Legitimist school have been divided in their loyalty to this claimant or that claimant to a degree which has been absorbingly distracting, so that even the best classes of Legitimists could find no room for Catholic action outside their petty theory of 'divine right.'—Casket.

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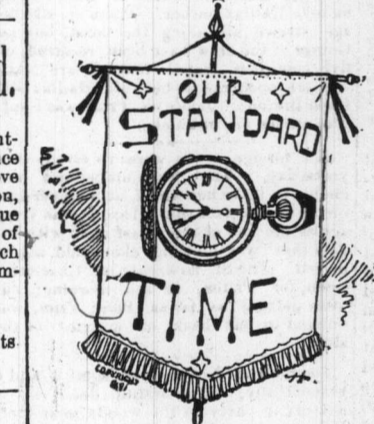
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Dr. Murray,

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