

Morning Star and Catholic Messenger.

NEW ORLEANS SUNDAY OCTOBER 22 1876.

GREGORIAN CHANT.

In view of the fact that considerable discussion is now taking place in nearly every country of the Old and New World on the question of church music—whether the true religious idea does not demand the severe plain chant, or whether the modern musical composition sung at present during the celebration of Mass is not antagonistic to absorbing prayer—we publish the following clipping:

In the sixth century St. Gregory the Great undertook to improve the Ambrosian Chant, which had been in use in the Church for over two centuries, being introduced by St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan. St. Augustine, a disciple of St. Ambrose, speaking of the Ambrosian Chant, says: "As the voices flowed in my ears, truth was instilled into my heart, and the affections of piety overflowed into tears of joy. The Church of Milan had not long before begun to practice this method. It was here first ordered that hymns and psalms should be sung after the manner of Eastern nations, that the people might not languish and pine away with a tedious sorrow; and from that period it has been retained at Milan, and imitated by almost all the other congregations in the world." At present, the *Te Deum*, which is sung at Notre Dame frequently in the course of the year, is perhaps the only specimen of Ambrosian Chant familiar to our readers.

St. Gregory may well be considered the patron of those who teach vocal music, and it may be some consolation to this afflicted class to know that even in "that good old time" boys were boys, and the fact of having a Saint and Sovereign Pontiff for a teacher did not always prevent them from being restive. A century afterwards the whip was yet shown which had been used during the singing class, also the bed on which the indefatigable Pontiff reclined when, in the latter part of his life, his zeal still led him to visit his favorite school, to hear the scholars practice. In place of the whip, our teachers compel the violin bow to do a little extra duty in that way, now and then—sometimes to the utter ruin of that modern substitute, and the great delight of all but one of the assembly.

For thirteen centuries the Church has used the Gregorian Chant in her liturgy, and very probably will use it to the end of time. In the course of ages, harmonized music was introduced into that portion of the liturgy which could be sung by the laity; timidly at first, then growing bolder, until, gradually, worldly and profane compositions were sung, until the Council of Trent was on the point of banishing all but Gregorian music from the Church. Palestrina composed his famous *Mass Papae Marcellae*, based on the Gregorian mode, as a specimen of what figured church music should be, and the Council then agreed to tolerate figured music of that particular kind,—always, however, subordinate to the Plain Chant.

Since that time, figured music has again degenerated, and is perhaps more theatrical and worldly now in a majority of the churches than it was three centuries ago. But our modern enlightened congregations imagine Plain Chant to be dull, monotonous, suitable only for penitential times; "why not," they say, "have the improved music, which delights the heart and pleases the ear? Gregorian was good enough for the dark ages, but will not bear the glare of our progressive age." We have heard, over and over, these silly objections of people who would set up their own shallow opinions against the wisdom of the Church. Do you go to church to pray, or to listen to a concert? Do you wish to hear the same Italian love aria which was given at a fashionable soiree on Saturday evening, sung by the same prima donna on Sunday, set to the holy words of the *O Salutaris* or *Tantum ergo*? What do you care for the words, whether they be Italian or Latin: you came there to enjoy yourself. Is this what the Church expects from her children? No; she desires them to pray, and the Gregorian Chant, or something similar to it, is the only music which harmonizes with real prayer.

Pure Gregorian Chant is wanting in two of the elements which constitute modern music, harmony and rhythm. It is a melody, pure, simple, distinct melody, such as the child learns in its first scale. It is therefore suitable to all capacities, and, for this reason, best calculated for congregational singing, which the Church has never ceased to recommend; the custom of putting a few good singers in a loft in the rear of the church is an invention which must have been originated by pride, and has done more to foster that vice, and a variety of other evils, than any innovation we knew of.

Concentrated ears never find anything agreeable in music when they have a strongly-marked rhythm. To them a dance is the most enjoyable form of music; they can nod their head to the time, and go to sleep perhaps. Persons who have had more experience find this kind of music monotonous, and receive much more enjoyment by following the artistic combinations of harmony and melody in more classical compositions.

From what has been said, it is plain that neither of these classes will find in the Gregorian that purely musical enjoyment which they seek for outside of the Church, and hence the foolish prejudice against it from persons who forget that they go to church to pray. Only simple melody, which the most ignorant understand, and yet which can, in its untrammelled freedom, give scope to the most cultivated singers to express their feelings—always, however, in a playful manner.

As to these melodies that have come to us from the dark ages, what do great musicians say about them? Let us hear Mozart: "I would give all my fame if I could boast of being the author of a single one of the *Præfates* (in Gregorian Chant, as sung by the priest during Mass). Hector Berlioz, one of the ablest musical critics of our century, says: "Nothing in modern music is comparable to the effect produced by the *Dis Iræ*," a Gregorian Requiem. Another great composer says that "some of the Gregorian melodies are as diamonds to charcoal, when compared to our modern music." The learned P. Otentant writer Thibaut, says: "The Catholic Church did well in retaining the great old hymns; truly exalted, heavenly music, which were composed in her most flourishing periods, nurtured by her art and genius, and which produce a deeper im-

pression than most of our modern compositions." G. E. Stehle, a member of the great St. Cecilia Society, now actively engaged in the reform of church music here and elsewhere, says, speaking of Gregorian Chant: "Church committees, choir directors, people! how long will it be before you will understand what is to be had every where and always: the cheapest, most reasonable, and therefore most practicable and best? I do not believe or say that we can have good chanters at once, but if you do not commence study, and practice you will never attain the end."

Rev. Father Witt, President of the St. Cecilia Society of Germany, relates the following incident in one of his lectures: "In the monastery of Bouron (Sigmaringen), Gregorian Chant is the music used exclusively; year after year only Plain Chant. And what do the people say? I attended High Mass there, with five other gentlemen from different parts of the country. Being in a front pew, I looked around to see if we were the only ones present, and found to my surprise that the large church was almost filled; and yet by this profound silence the congregation behaved in a manner which might be called holy. My companions shared my astonishment. After High Mass, many remained until the chanting of *Ecce* was finished and the monks had left the choir in solemn procession. Again I say the behavior was holy, and this was affected by the *ecclesiæ*, ash gray (ice cold, ash gray) Plain Chant. It must be confessed, however, that the monks sang it more like angels than men."

A SCIENTIFIC VIEW OF CRIME.

(Cincinnati Telegraph.)

The prevalence of crime in the United States is startling when statistics are advanced. It has been the boast of New Englanders that their section of country was the most law-abiding in the Union. But Mr. Angell, of Boston, thinks differently. He read a paper before the Social Science Association, in Saratoga, in which he stated that the proportion of crime to population in Massachusetts, is now 33 per cent more than Ireland. This vitriol of social science is not very well posted in criminal statistics. A little research would have convinced him that any comparison between the old Bay State and Ireland would be very odious to the former. Such a comparison would almost justify the conviction that total depravity does not exist in the land of the Puritan. There are more murders committed in a single year in the city of Boston than have been committed in Ireland during the length of the last decade. Robbery is almost unknown. Its people have illustrated in real life what was said in poetry of the Acadian farmers—there are no locks to their doors (or rather there is little need of them) and "their houses are as open as the hearts of the owners."

Every judge in Ireland during the last year has been compelled, when he opened the docket, to express his wonder at the brevity of the docket, and the almost entire absence of great violations of law. No country is more obedient to human law, because no country is more Catholic. This is the secret of morality which Mr. Angell has failed to learn. Had he studied the close connection between the Catholic doctrine and the purity of public morals, he would not have been guilty of the following ridiculous assertion that, "the alarming increase of crime in this country was due to the adulteration of food and drink." According to this enlightened thinker, poor wheat and coffee that is half hickory fill the jails and crowd the penitentiaries. Unfortunately for his learned theory, some of the most pious nations of the world are the most virtuous, while those countries where the masses have all the comforts of life stands lowest in the scale of morality. These wise men of modern times, who cast religion aside, refuse to consider its beneficial influence on society, and fly to science to guide them, are the blindest fools, by their own showing, on the face of the earth. They are condemned out of their own mouth; they are the exponents of their own ignorance. Crime increases in this country, because all sense of religion, all belief in a Divine judgement and in eternal punishment of sin, is disappearing. Crime increases most rapidly in that part of the country where idolatry is now the popular religion, where Protestantism has reached its last conclusion. The flood, however, is rapidly spreading, and will soon cover the whole country.

Mr. Angell has found that Ireland is more free from crime than Massachusetts. He reads the fact, but if he searched for the cause of the difference, he would have found it, not in the adulteration of food, but in the adulteration of religious doctrine. He would have learned a truth, which Yankee school masters and Yankee school systems are trying to expel from the human mind, namely: that morals and religious dogma cannot be separated, and doctrinal errors lead to the total corruption of public and private life. A man of true science would have seen the comparison, which Angell made, that the Catholic confession was the only power that could prevent crime and save society.

A MONSTER BALLOON.

M. Giffard has devised the construction of a balloon for 1876 which will far surpass any effort hitherto made in this direction. This new balloon will be formed of a resisting material, solid, absolutely impermeable to hydrogen gas, manufactured of alternate sheets of linen and caoutchouc, protected externally by several layers of varnish, and coated with white paint to diminish the effects of the sun's rays. This balloon will have a capacity of nearly 710,000 cubic feet, and will form an immense sphere, the greatest ever constructed, the diameter of which will not be less than 112 feet. When moored to the ground the balloon will form a monumental dome 100 feet high exceeding by 15 feet the height of the Arc de Triomphe. The balloon itself will weigh 3,500 pounds, and to join the pieces together of which it is composed will take nearly four miles of sewing, with 25 miles of thread. The car of the balloon will form a gallery of 50 feet in circumference, and a circular space in the centre of 10 feet in diameter will be reserved; in the centre of this space the cable, a powerful rope of ten inches in circumference, will be joined to the upper circle by means of an apparatus which will constantly indicate the ascending power of the balloon. This aerial machine will be held to the earth by eight cables, attached to iron hinges fixed securely in masonry, and will be suspended above a vast conical basin. The car will be reached by two movable gangways, and from forty to fifty persons will be taken on board at each

ascend. The cable will descend to the bottom of the conical basin, and by means of a secure system of wheels will be carried along a tunnel to be worked by an engine of 200 horse power. This cable will be 1,750 feet in length. The captive balloon will be placed in the centre of a circular enclosure, 333 feet in diameter. It will tower above the beautiful gardens, and will form the most elevated dome in the Champ de Mars. With this balloon it will be possible to raise more than 200,000 visitors 1,000 feet above the earth during the continuance of the Exhibition. They may contemplate from that height, surpassing that of eleven Arcs de Triomphe, the fine tableau of the city of Paris and its surroundings. M. Giffard proposes to construct this enormous machine entirely at his own expense. It will cost several hundred thousand francs.

PLEASANT BEDROOMS.—There is nothing more indicative of refinement and general culture in a family than bright, cheerful and tastefully decorated bed-chambers. Tasteful decoration does not necessarily mean expensive, and it is possible to make a chamber look very pretty at a very small outlay. Indeed, in many cases no outlay at all will be required beyond what would be incurred under any circumstances. The women of a family, especially, are apt to pass a good portion of their time in their bed-chamber, and in some household the sleeping apartments are used alike for sewing, sitting, reading, and recreation. It is worth while to obtain all the innocent pleasure we can find in this life, and there can be no doubt that life is pleasant if most of its hours are passed in cheerful-looking apartments.—*Catholic Standard*

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Net Profit for the year.....\$13,101.76

Cash Dividends for the year.....TEN PER CENT
Interest (semi-annually).....TWENTY PER CENT
Premiums.....\$1,328,655.40
ASSETS, April 30, 1876.....\$1,328,655.40
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THOMAS F. BRAGG, Secretary.

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John I. Noble, T. L. Lyden,
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Richard Miliken, S. H. Boyd,
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A. A. J. Ryan, Wm. J. Ryan,
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Losses Paid.....74,741
Net Profit.....48,438

At an election held on Monday, the 1st inst., the following named gentlemen were chosen Directors of this Company to serve for the ensuing year:
P. Irwin, John Henderson,
Thomas King, John G. Ryan,
Thos. Gilmore, W. J. Castill,
John T. Gibbons, Jas. A. Grider,
William Earl, Emile Gaudin,
David Jackson, John H. Haden,
F. J. Gasquet.

And at a meeting of the Board, held May 8th, JOHN HENDERSON, President, P. IRWIN, Vice-President, and THOS. F. BRAGG, Secretary, were unanimously re-elected.
The Board declared out of the net profits of the Company for the past twelve months 10 per cent interest; also 4 per cent dividend on the paid up capital; and 25 per cent dividend on premiums paid by stock holders (making, with the rebate, 40 per cent on premiums). Said interest and dividends to be placed to the credit of the stock holders.

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THOS. F. BRAGG, Secretary.
New Orleans, May 12, 1876. my14 76 ly

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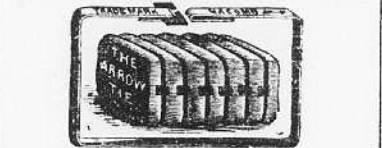
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