

central point of that Liturgy, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. But no art is in such close connection with the liturgy as song. One may say that song was our Redeemer's "cradle-gift" to His Church. Whilst the first Divine Service was being celebrated in the humble stable of Bethlehem, Heaven sent forth choirs of angels to glorify that holy night with their songs (Luke ii. 13). With song the Sacrifice of the new and eternal Covenant was inaugurated in the *cenaculum* at Jerusalem (Matt. xxvi. 30); and amidst songs of praise the first Christian congregation was founded (Acts ii. 47). Song has the prerogative of being the eldest of the arts as the servant of God and of the Church.

But it also has the privilege of rendering the most direct service. Wherever there are altars upon which the Holy Sacrifice is solemnly offered there sacred song accompanies it. That which the Church has to say solemnly, that which she has to pray, the expression of her sorrow or joy, the Church intrusts to song, and wherever there are souls following our Blessed Lord, whether it be in innocence or in penance, they are following Him with their hymns and songs.

The Church is not in absolute need of the art. At the Council of Trent it was partly decided to banish music from the Church if it should be found impossible to convert it from the errors into which it had fallen, but Providence provided the means of bringing back the "Prodigal Son" to his father's house, and of clothing him with new raiments. Unfortunately a time came, and we still remember it, when it was forgotten that Church music is solely the servant of the altar, not mistress of the Sanctuary; that it is there for God's honor not for self-glorification; that it should reflect the bright rays beaming from the Holy Sacrifice, and not obscure them; that it should have within it the spirit of God, not the spirit of the world; that it should listen to angels' hymns, not to those of the world. Happily within the last ten years new life has been infused in the Church. The proofs of this are everywhere, and on all sides a strong inclination to bring the principles of the Church into operation has manifested itself. In the domain of ecclesiastical music also a turning-point came, and Germany saw the Cecilian Society spring up, whose object it is to banish from the Sanctuary that which is unworthy of it, and to establish new schools of music for the larger churches, to aid in restoring the liturgical music even in the smallest churches. That this society is an ecclesiastical one is guaranteed by the recognition it has received from the Holy See; that it will be successful is guaranteed by the blessing which has been bestowed upon it by the Holy Father.

But success depends upon the co-operation of the clergy, particularly the parochial clergy, who, as regards Church music, also are the guardians of the Sanctuary. It is a good beginning when each priest takes care that in his church the ecclesiastical laws are strictly observed; it is a step further when he procures good Church music for the choir, when he stirs up the zeal of the choirmaster, when he notices his labors, encourages his efforts, expresses approval of what he has done, and encourages him to make further progress. The path of perfection is trodden when our clergy take an interest in the district Cecilian Societies (as many already do); when they cause them to be established, and assist them in giving musical productions, thereby helping to diffuse sound knowledge and refined taste.—'Tablet.'

METEORS CONSIDERED.

THE origin of meteors was long without receiving a satisfactory explanation, that most generally accepted being that they were caused by the existence of inflammatory gases in the atmosphere. The *ignis fatuus*, no doubt, is produced in this way, for it has been found to change its motion by the slight current of air preceeding a person walking toward it. But the intense velocity of the meteors that appear in August and November, which is about equal to twice that of the earth in its orbit, or thirty-six miles in a second, and the great elevation at which they become visible, the average being sixty miles, indicate clearly that they are not of terrestrial but cosmical origin—that is, they originate from the interplanetary regions, innumerable fragments of heavenly bodies that have been shattered to pieces traversing space, and, being brought within the sphere of the earth's attraction, precipitate themselves upon its surface. Moving with the great velocity mentioned through the higher regions of the air they become so intensely heated by friction that they ignite, or are at least rendered visible, and are either converted into vapor, or, when very large, explode and descend to the earth's surface as meteoric stones or aerolites. Professor Thomson, of the British Association, says that they are "small bodies which come into the earth's atmosphere, and the instant they touch it their surfaces are heated beyond the point of fusion or even of volatilization, and the consequence is that they are speedily and completely burned down and reduced to impalpable oxides." The brilliancy and color of meteors are variable; some are as bright as Venus or Jupiter. About two-thirds are white, the remainder yellow, orange or green. The problem of their origin must be regarded as the same with that of the asteroids, revolving around the sun between the orbs of Mars and Jupiter, and of the planets themselves. Some astronomers consider their origin precisely the same as that of the comets, which may be regarded as only meteors of vast size.

The singular regularity and periodicity in the recurrence of the great manifestations of meteors in the months of August and November, which has been noted for many years, and with few exceptions their rushing from particular points of the heavens show still further that they are extraneous bodies encountered by the earth in the course of her revolution around the sun. In order to explain the occurrence of meteoric showers on the same days in August and November each year it is necessary to suppose that the number of these bodies is inconceivably great, and that they are revolving round the sun in orbits which intersect or meet our own

in the regions of the ecliptic through which we pass on those days. In addition, the fact, before stated, of their diverging from certain fixed points among the stars, and their great velocity strongly favor the idea of their foreign origin. The elements of their orbits correspond almost with the comets of 1862 and 1866—the November meteors with the latter, and the August with the former, showing that the comets and these meteors belong to the same rings in which they move. It is probable that Biela's comet, in 1845, and others have been divided and sub-divided, so as finally to be separated into small fragments, moving in the orbit of the original comet, and thus constructing a meteoric stream.—'N. Y. Herald.'

LONDON GOSSIP.

[From the Lady Correspondent of the 'Evening Telegraph.']

London, September 11.

THE poor Earl of Beaconsfield has at last been baited, badgered, and bullied out of his silence and solitude at Hughenden Manor. Forced to speak at last, he has endeavored to explain the meaning of words about which a quibble had been raised by the 'Times.' This he has done to the satisfaction of all etymologists, but scarcely to that of the feverish portion of the public already in hot pursuit of the barbarous Turk and resolved to chase him from all his strongholds of Europe. By cool observers, however, it is not supposed that the horror manifested against the Turks for their as yet unproved horrors committed against the Bulgarians is totally devoid of prejudice and self-interest. Mr. Spurgeon himself, who so devoutly prays aloud to God to drive the Turks from Europe, and to send them defeat and shame in revenge for the atrocities committed by them during the war, and who attributes to "Romish enmity towards the Eastern Church" the dignity and moderation evinced by the Catholic clergy of England in their treatment of the subject and their objection to calling down from the pulpit the vengeance of Heaven against any portion of the human race, deeming such violence unchristian and unseemly, is now reproached in his turn with having once uttered a hope that "every capital in Europe would ere long be in possession of a Baptist chapel, and that the great desire of his soul would be fulfilled could he but live to see a Baptist chapel founded on the spot where stands the great mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople." The Earl of Beaconsfield is therefore subjected to the persecution carried on to his very hearthstone at Hughenden on account of the silence which is regarded as that of indifference in the cause, and has to pause in his musings on the pomps and vanities of this wicked world to defend himself from the attacks he cannot but despise. It is to Hughenden that for many years he was wont to retire to write the 'Oriental portions' of his romances, for it is there that his collection of Eastern souvenirs has always been kept undisturbed. It was to Hughenden Manor he hurried straight without a moment's pause on landing from the steamboat which bore him back to England after his Eastern tour. Among the reminiscences of his life it is still the souvenir of those days that the Earl of Beaconsfield loves best to recall. Seated outside the hall door of the Manor House upon the green sward, with the sheep feeding beneath the very windows of the mansion, he would recount the wonders of his journey to the family group gathered round him. The elder Disraeli would listen with doubt, which always provoked a merry war between father and son and the mother and aunt, the latter a remarkable woman, who always, to the day of her death, persisted in declaring that her Ben would become the first man in England, for that even falsehood from him was of far more value than truth from other people. Sometimes the group of listeners would be embellished by the presence of Miss Pardo, who had taken the little cottage at Bradenham, close by, in order to be near the spirit-moving influence of the brilliant heir of Hughenden, and who, fired by his bright descriptions of his travels in the East, went and did likewise—her two volumes of the City of the Sultan being the result of the inspiration. Many people still remember the terror produced one day among the harvestmen in the fields round Hughenden on beholding "young Disraeli" rushing through the corn in full Turkish costume, brandishing a glittering scimitar high above his head, and cutting fiercely at the wheat ears as he went, uttering all the while the most furious oaths in the Turkish vocabulary—until he arrived at Miss Pardo's door with a whole group of barking dogs at his heels, and the women and children of the village flying in every direction. The object of this mad frolic beneath the burning sun was to convince the ladies of Bradenham Cottage of the thoroughly Oriental aspect of young Mr. Disraeli in Oriental costume.

A letter to 'Les Missions Catholiques,' from Jerusalem, dated August 3, after informing us that "the telegraph brings news daily of fresh victories gained over the Servians and Montenegrins," drily continues, "And yet the Government does not cease levying fresh troops. These levies, as one may suppose, are not made without difficulty, for the sentiments of patriotism, exiled from our Europe, would not seem to have found a refuge in the Ottoman Empire." In mixed countries, such as Palestine, the difficulty reveals itself still more forcibly. The Christians pay the blood tax, and are thus exempt from military service. This is not a privilege which the Government intended to confer upon them. In peace time they complain bitterly of the weight of this impost, but at present they may congratulate themselves. It must not, however, be supposed that they are free from all apprehensions. Imagine, for example, the bitter jealousy of the Mussulmans, obliged to set out in a mass to fight the Christians of Europe, whilst they leave behind them their Christian fellow-countrymen seated at their own hearths. The old hatred, renewed and doubled by jealousy, exhibits itself in maledictions and threats. Such is the present state of Jerusalem. We lately saw a few hundreds of soldiers of the reserve, newly enrolled, enter Jerusalem, amidst shouts of "Death to Christians!" uttered by the relations and friends of the recruits.