

tem in the other countries, makes such an assumption altogether impossible. Even the slight differences that we find in the melodies are an additional proof of the continuity of the tradition. For they show us the difficulties the individual scribes had in fixing in a definite system of notation the melodies which before they conceived without any reference to such a system.

[*To be continued.*]

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#### THE VATICAN EDITION.<sup>1</sup>

THE action of Pope Pius X in the domain of Church music is almost unique in the history of the papacy. In its thoroughness, it is equalled only by the action of Pius V; in its severity and moderation, it is hardly surpassed even by that of Benedict XIV; in its method, it is closely analogous to that of Gregory the Great; in its timeliness, it is truly a master-stroke.

The preparation of this typical edition of liturgical books has been entrusted to a twofold commission, which has for its scope the revision on the one hand of the liturgical text, and on the other of the musical. We are concerned here only with the latter.

From the official documents in the case, it appears that Pius X is intensely in earnest about the restoration of the "so-called Gregorian Chant."<sup>2</sup>

In the now famous *Motu proprio* of St. Cecilia's Day, 1903, he calls for a general return to the traditional chant of the "ages of faith;" and in the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites which followed closely [Jan. 8, 1904] upon the first *Motu proprio*, he enjoins upon all the adoption, *quam primum*, of some good version of the ancient manuscripts, at the same time pointing out that the Soles-

<sup>1</sup>The Vatican Edition of Liturgical Books.

<sup>2</sup>*Il cosi detto canto gregoriano . . . Motu proprio*, Nov. 22, 1903.

mes edition, then already largely in vogue, was entirely conformable to his expressed wish. To give greater clearness to his commands, the Holy Father added that no church, not even the Lateran Basilica, was to be formally excused from compliance with this decree. The expression *quam primum* showed, however, the moderation wherewith he tempered his discipline; and, in point of fact, no one was compelled to go to any damaging expense in the matter.

The fact that the Solesmes edition was not strictly official, however, was the cause of much misunderstanding, especially in Germany, where the fall from official favor of the Ratisbon edition had aroused some feeling. At the same time the Solesmes edition was being attacked on many sides on account of its imperfections. The monks of Solesmes were well aware of the shortcomings of the early work, and had therefore been engaged for some years in the preparation of a revised text which should embody the results of the more careful and methodical research of recent times. They had spared no pains and expense to get together the most perfect collection of materials for this work. Several hundreds of the better manuscripts had been photographed, and these monuments they had carefully studied and tabulated as to their contents, according to nationality and in order of antiquity. Their method of work, as well as the means they had accumulated, were the admiration of all scholars, chief amongst whom we must place the Right Reverend Abbot of Saint Wandrille, Dom Joseph Pothier.

Moved now by the apparent ripeness of the times, quite as much as by the desire of giving forth a more perfect result of their labors than had hitherto been possible, the monks of Solesmes resolved to approach the Holy Father, with a view to procuring the official sanction for their proposed musical text. The Abbot of Solesmes, the Right Reverend Paul Delatte, honored as he had been in 1901 by the Brief of Leo XIII, *Nos quidem*, had no difficulty in persuading the Holy Father to publish from the Vatican Press a typical edition of the liturgical chant, and to entrust

the redaction of the text to the monks of that monastery. Accordingly, a second *Motu proprio* was published by the Holy Father, dated April 25, 1904, appointing the Commission for the Vatican edition of Liturgical Books, consisting, as to the musical part, of some twenty members and consultors, with Dom Pothier as president. Dom André Mocquereau and a few other monks of Solesmes were made redactors of the musical text, with the obligation of submitting their work to the Commission in Rome. The meetings of the Commission were to be secret. They were held chiefly in the spring of the current year.

The general impression was that the Commission, having perfect confidence in the redactors, would pass quickly upon the text submitted to them, and give the Gradual and Vespers for publication before the summer. The surprise of the public was therefore very great when, on the 27th of June, there appeared in the *Giornale di Roma* newspaper a letter, dated June 24th, purporting to have been sent by the Cardinal Secretary of State to Dom Pothier, directing the latter to undertake himself the delicate task of preparing the text of the forthcoming Vatican edition, and to base his work upon the Solesmes edition of 1895.<sup>1</sup> This action of the Holy See virtually took the redaction of the text out of the hands of the monks of Solesmes. Thereupon those gentlemen quietly retired, declining henceforth to work under the auspices of the Commission. These events brought on a crisis in the monastic Congregation of France, of which the Abbot of Saint Wandrille is a member. And so acute was this crisis that Dom Delatte, the Abbot President, thought it well to resign. This resignation was twice refused by the Holy Father; but upon its being presented for the third time his Holiness reluctantly accepted it.

Meanwhile Dom Pothier hurried forward his work, feel-

<sup>1</sup> Commenting on this letter, the *Rassegna Gregoriana* remarked that it had appeared by private communication in the columns of the *Giornale di Roma*, whereas by its nature it was intended only for the guidance of the members of the Commission.

ing that the subscribers had been too long kept waiting, and toward the end of September the first sheets of the *Ordinarium Missæ* were printed and delivered to the subscribers.

It may be well to say a few words here about the subscribers. With the sole view of covering the expenses to the Vatican Press, the various publishers who desired to bring out manuals founded on the Vatican text were asked to subscribe for at least one thousand copies of the Gradual and Vespéral. These copies they were to dispose of as they pleased. Certain regulations were issued at the same time limiting the rights of the publishers. These need not be drawn out in detail here; but it should be stated that to no publisher was any special privilege granted: the subscribers were to be taken and treated as equals.

The die is cast; and we have now, for better or for worse, a fixed, typical text of the liturgical chant. The Vatican edition will soon be in possession of the field. All other editions must forthwith cease to be published and will soon go out of print. Certain peculiar melodies may be granted for local use, here and there, as at Strasburg, Metz, and other cathedral towns: but the main bulk of the repertory, in every place where the Roman rite prevails, will have to be in strict conformity with the Vatican text.

To many American choirs this obligation to give up the use of corrupt texts of Gregorian chant and substitute therefor the official version, will seem practically meaningless, for the obvious reason that they have never sung Gregorian at all. But the wish of the Holy Father is that they should now take up the singing of the Proper of the Mass, a serious obligation which has, alas, been allowed to lapse into oblivion in many quarters. For the Proper of the Mass there is no complete repertory but the Gregorian; hence, it will become necessary to study the principles of the Church's liturgical chant and to take up the Vatican Gradual. In the same way the Vespéral must soon come into more general use than has heretofore been customary.

Among the other liturgical books whose musical text will be revised by the Commission at Rome will be the Processional, containing the Proper chants for processions, the Missal, the Pontifical, the Ritual, and the Antiphoner.

And now let us consider what the Church has gained by all these acts of the authorities at Rome, and the events of these times.

Unquestionably, the appearance of the Vatican edition will exercise an important influence on the liturgical and musical life of the Church. In the first place a much more perfect and integral celebration of the holy Mass will be most likely to be undertaken. People will learn to love the beautiful melodies of the Ages of Faith, and will be anxious to hear them sung in our sacred functions. The possibility of congregational singing which the Gregorian repertory affords in so high a degree will open the eyes of clergy and people to the active, devotional, nay, even dramatic, part which can and should be taken in church services by the multitude. Give the people a chance to sing and teach them how to do it, and you will find the present churches inadequate to contain the crowds that will flock to them. With the spirit of devotion so quickly engendered by the liturgical chant will come that of obedience, and the evils of the day will be easier of cure.

As for the lovers of the "Song of the Spouse," we can well understand their joy at finding the Solesmes edition taken as the basis of the Vatican. Looking backward at the struggles of the past half-century, it seems quite astonishing that such progress should have been made,—and made at a bound. It is within the memory of many how the members of the Congress of Arezzo, in 1881, fared when they proposed to petition the Holy See to adopt some such measures as have now become official. In those days the cultivators of the restored Gregorian Chant sang their melodies almost in secret, and were looked upon as disloyal to the Holy See. Speaking of the Arezzo incident, Dom Amelli, Prior of Monte Cassino, in a fine Latin

oration delivered before the Plainsong Congress of Strasbourg last August, wittily told how the Chant was, as it were, imprisoned: "Cantus servabatur in carcere: oratio autem fiebat . . .!"—an adaptation of the text of the Acts of the Apostles, which aroused much merriment. It was not till 1901 that anything like official recognition was given to the efforts of the Solesmes Fathers for the restoration of Gregorian Chant, by the terms of the Brief of May 17, *Nos quidem*. And now behold the Solesmes edition, once a stranger knocking at the gate, at last given the freedom of the Holy City.

The monks of Solesmes have shown themselves Christians as well as archæologists. They have given us a noble example of patience and humility. Few there are who could bear as they did the humiliating treatment which they have received. On the other hand, few understand exactly in what measure they have been made to suffer. The matter, however, is of too personal a nature to be discussed here, and they are themselves the last to wish publicity to be given to it. Let it only be said here that their standing as archæologists should in no way be affected by this turn of events. It is only a question of time and opportunity when they will be called upon to give to the Church the splendid results of their labors, and these will be none the worse for maturing. A future generation more imbued with the knowledge and love of Gregorian Chant will doubtless appreciate the integral restoration thereof much better than our own.

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#### THE PLACE OF THE GREGORIAN CHANT IN SACRED MUSIC.

THE restoration of the Gregorian Chant is an event of the profoundest significance. It does not mean simply that the Church, with wise tenacity of aim, is clinging to one of her most precious institutions and handing it over to posterity to exert a tremendous influence upon the relig-