

Blessing The Bells

The Weekly Fredonian, week following June 29, 1870

On Wednesday, the 29th of June, within the walls of the noble church of St. Peter's of this city, a solemn and imposing ceremony took place, which will long be remembered by those who were so fortunate as to witness it, the blessing of a chime of bells, creditable alike to the congregation and the city. Owing to the mildly persuasive powers of our dearly beloved pastor, Father Rogers, and to the energy and zeal of his indefatigable and highly valuable assistant, Rev. M.C. Duggan, who so earnestly pleaded the cause he had engaged in, that all responded with their usual generosity. Not only Catholics, but Protestants, nobly donated large sums to the bell fund. The bells, nine in number, were placed on a raised platform in front of the sanctuary. The Very Rev. Dean of the Diocese, in the absence of our Bishop, officiated on this occasion, and the sweet strains that floated heavenward from the choir, filling the spacious temple with rich music, and the heart with rapture so thrilling that for the moment it was carried away from earth to where praises are ever sung by angels round the throne of the Most High. For this great pleasure we were indebted to Miss Latham, Mrs. A. Rogers, and Mr. Robert Burnett, of Brooklyn, who kindly volunteered their services. The solos by Mrs. A. Rogers were sweetly, beautifully rendered, and Miss Latham's rich alto was magnificent. Too much praise cannot be accorded these ladies, and we all unite in thanking them for their kindness.

The sermon by the Rev. Dean was such as might be expected from one of his rare abilities. In eloquent language, he clearly proved that the blessings of bells was no idle ceremony nor the remnant of some folly of days that are past, but a ceremony full of instruction to the thinking mind, as are all the ceremonies of the Catholic Church, and he adduced several instances of holy writ in support of the practice of blessing inanimate objects before dedicating them to the service of Almighty

God. After Mass the grand ceremony took place; the bells, which had been previously most tastefully arrayed in white satin, gold lace, flowers, etc., were now uncovered. The sponsors took their places and names were given to each bell. The largest was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin under the title of Mary the Immaculate. Sponsors, the "Children of Mary." The sodality was represented by four of its youngest members and one of the young ladies. These beautiful children, as they stood on the altar steps around their bell and dressed in pure white, relieved only by their sashes and flowers, were a sight lovely to behold, and when Father Rogers stood in their midst they formed an affecting tableau that will long be impressed on the memory – He, the loved, gently descending into the vale of years, crowned with honor and wisdom; they just ascending the mountain of life, their bright young heads enwreathed with the blossoms of hope, he too blessed them and dedicated them to heaven, the dew of innocence is still fresh upon their brows, and thus far he has led their youthful steps in paths of truth. Will not those bells in a manner watch over each little maiden? They will daily remind her to honor one whom the angels honor, and that in honoring her they will best serve him who so loved her. They will peal out joyously when as a Christian bride she blushing approaches the sacred rite of matrimony, and perhaps later on their tone will mournfully accord with the grief which has dimmed her bright hopes, and the form of some dearly loved one is laid in the bosom of mother earth. Still, to her Catholic heart, that knell will bid her pray that the departed may soon be pure enough to enter where all are sinless, and in still being able to assist the departed she finds her consolation. The names of the youthful sponsors are Lizzie Collins, Julia Tenneson, Mary Burnett, Kate Hurley and Miss Mary Gallagher, and when the collection was taken up they threw in the basket tiny white envelopes tied with blue ribbon, containing financial proof that their pa- *(here the article as we have it breaks off, and we have been unable to find any trace of the remainder!)*