

THE CARILLONS OF BELGIUM

Many Destroyed During the War—
Suitable as Memorials

To the Editor of *The Republican*:—

Your recent article referring to the carillons of Belgium and their noble music, leads me to believe that accurate information about carillon conditions will be welcome to many of your readers. The appropriateness of the carillon as a peace memorial appeals strongly to some of these, and in the minds of others is the hope of travel in Belgium this year.

The finest carillon in the world is at Mechlin, in St Rombold's tower. This carillon was substantially unharmed in the war and is now in perfect order. Even last summer, the great carillonneur, Josef Denyn, gave several carillon recitals there. Bruges, Antwerp and Ghent have fine carillons and all were uninjured.

The carillon in the tower of the Cloth hall, at Ypres, and that in the spire of St Peter's, at Louvain, both of which were fine, are broken and buried under fallen walls. There remains, however, a good carillon in St Gertrudo's church, at Louvain. Namur's bells and those of Alost, Dinant, Dixmude and Termonde, and those of Arras in French Flanders, are also destroyed.

This summer, as before the war, Josef Denyn will give at Mechlin, on Monday evenings, from 8 to 9 o'clock, during June, August and September, his unsurpassed recitals, when thousands listen in the twilight, sitting in the great square. I urge everyone who is interested in carillon music surely to hear one of these recitals. Mechlin is but 40 minutes by train from Antwerp or Brussels, and trains are frequent. Havelock Ellis, in "Impressions and Comments," writes of "the unforgettable evening when Denyn played on the carillon at Mechlin, and from the canal side I looked up at the little red casement high in the huge cathedral tower where the great player seemed to be breathing out his soul, in solitude, among the stars."

During July, Denyn always plays at Catterick and elsewhere in England. Holland's carillons, of course, did not suffer from the war, but are in finer playing condition than ever before.

Washington, New York, Albany and other cities in the United States are definitely considering carillon peace memorial projects. Some English cities have already taken action in this direction. The London Times of January 30, 1920, says:—

The town of Loughboro, in Leicestershire, has decided, by a plebiscite vote, to erect as a war memorial a campanile to contain a carillon (with clavier) of 40 bells. The tower, of Gothic design, will be over 120 feet high, and the largest bell will weigh three tons, the cost of the tower and bells being between £10,000 and £12,000.

The London Post also editorially commends this decision.

Incidentally, it is to be noted that St Colman's cathedral at Queenstown recently installed a most perfectly attained carillon of 42 bells, though not as a war memorial. The largest of these bells weighs 6700 pounds and the smallest 13 pounds. The inaugural recital at Queenstown was given by Antolno Nauwelaerts, city carillonneur of Bruges.

Frequent inaccuracies have crept into print about carillon matters, but your readers may feel that the information I have given above is trustworthy. It comes to me from Josef Denyn himself and from correspondents whom I came to know well during my systematic study—the first extended study ever made—of this fascinating music, in the several summers, just before the great war.

WILLIAM GORHAM RICE.

Albany, N. Y., March 2, 1920.