

The Music of the Bells



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On a pedestal in one of the famous old churches of Europe is a statue of a nobleman with a string of bells about his waist. The church was erected centuries before America was discovered, and among the many legends woven into its history, one of the most interesting is the one of the nobleman's statue.

An orphaned brother and sister, the only surviving members of a noble and very wealthy family, owned an immense section of the country and ruled the lives of the peasants of that territory.

The sister was a beautiful character, amiable, charming, and loved by all. The brother was a veritable autocrat, domineering, and egotistical. Whenever anyone antagonized him, he would fly into a violent rage, and if any unfortunate serf dared to disobey him, or interfere with his pleasure, he would strike him down.

The sister, chagrined at her brother's conduct, sought to cure him of his annoying weaknesses. Without telling him of her purpose, she suggested that together they build a

great church. But each was to erect half of the church independent of the other.

The vanity of the undertaking appealed to the brother, and construction was started. In time the brother discovered that his sister was making faster progress. The sister told him that this was because he was always quarreling with his workmen.

The sister asked him to let her tie a string of bells about him. The bells, she said, would help to hasten the building, because, as he approached the men, they would hear jingling and hasten to work, thus saving much time otherwise lost.

The brother thought it was a novel idea. When he heard the jingle of the bells it was like sweet music in his ears, and it soothed his temper. And when he approached the men, he found everyone busily at work. This also pleased him.

Finding them diligent, he praised and encouraged them, and they did better work. Before many days he was actually popular with his men.

Spurred by a newborn spirit of pride in their work, the men began to vie with their fellows on the sister's side of the church, and finally finished their half first, to the joy of both brother and sister.

One day, long after the church was finished, the sister revealed to her brother the innocent deception she had played on him to cure him of his evil disposition.

The nobleman was so impressed with the lesson he had learned that he had a statue of himself with the bells made, to remind him, and other like him, of the power of goodwill, praise, and encouragement in dealing with others.

Lesson: Being kind heeds better results than being angry