

Congregational Singing

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## THE "CHURCH OF ENGLAND HYMN-BOOK."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—In your notice of Mr. Thring's "Church of England Hymn-Book," you remark, not unnaturally, on the "frequent recurrence of the word 'altered.'" A brief explanation is needed, which you will perhaps kindly permit me to give. Of the editors of modern hymnals Mr. Thring will probably be found to have adhered to the original texts more closely than any one except Mr. Bickersteth; but he has marked all changes, however minute, while in other hymnals they are not indicated at all. Some of these are merely readings which have become thoroughly established by long usage. Again, many of the older hymns *must* be more or less modified to make them fit for use. I could fill your columns with examples.

A few slight alterations have been made by Mr. Thring in accordance with principles laid down in his preface, and some others to amend a faulty rhyme, correct a defect in grammar, or elucidate an obscurity of expression. Changes of this kind are usually slight, often of not more than a single word.

Of the residue, every alteration has been carefully considered, and made or adopted for reasons which, in Mr. Thring's judgment, rendered it absolutely necessary.

Everything for which Mr. Thring is personally responsible has been specially initialed, and he ought, I think, to be credited, *per contra*, with the restoration of the original text in many passages which have been commonly altered without sufficient reason. Such cases, of course, cannot possibly be marked, but they are tolerably numerous.

Yours faithfully,  
G. A. C.

## CONGREGATIONAL SINGING.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—No one can deny the importance of this subject, involving as it does the problem of how best to utilise the singing powers of the congregation. In the solution of this problem, owing to the rapid spread of musical knowledge and practice, we can reckon upon the fact that the congregation as a whole are both *able* and *willing* to sing. Your correspondent asks, Shall they sing in unison or harmony? and is of opinion that the harmony "would only prove of a very questionable kind, if not altogether distracting." To whom? This is a point not sufficiently considered. It is not the minister, for he has the burden of the service on his shoulders. It is neither the organist nor choir, for their duty is to lead and help the singing. Nor can it be either the pew-opener or the organ-blower. It is the congregation, and from their point of view must the question be answered. And I may say with confidence, as well as with experience, that so great is the pleasure and so complete the effect of singing in full harmony that those who *can* take their proper part *will* do so, in preference to being content with a unisonal rendering. But this latter is effective—and grandly so—as a change, and in nearly every hymn will be found verses which naturally suggest themselves for such treatment. These might be so noted in the hymn-books, as the marks of expression are given in the "Hymns Ancient and Modern."—Yours very faithfully,  
J. TAFFS.

## THE EISTEDDFOD CANTATA COMPETITION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—As a competitor in the above competition, I write to protest against the withholding of the prize by the umpires.

In the March number of THE MUSICAL TIMES it was advertised that "a prize of £50 was offered by the Committee for the *best* setting to music," &c., and when I applied for the libretto and stated my wish to become a candidate, no standard was mentioned or conditions imposed.

I am an experienced professional musician of many years' standing; my works have been favourably noticed in the London papers, THE MUSICAL TIMES having always been specially kind to me; and I now, for the first time, presume on that kindness by asking you to insert this com-

munication, to demand that, as there is a *best* setting (even allowing that there is not much merit in it), the prize be awarded. If it is withheld after this letter, I invite the co-operation of the other sixteen candidates in testing the legality of the proceeding.

I do not suppose for one moment that any competitor wrote his best, but (not knowing who the adjudicators were to be) wrote only up to the Eisteddfod standard, which previously has not been very high.

In conclusion, I would say, if prizes are to be withdrawn at will, this should be distinctly stated, even presuming that the number of competitors was thereby considerably reduced.—I am, yours truly,

DOTTED CROCHET.

22, Milner Square, London.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

\* \* Notices of concerts, and other information supplied by our friends in the country, must be forwarded as early as possible after the occurrence; otherwise they cannot be inserted. Our correspondents must specifically denote the date of each concert, for without such date no notice can be taken of the performance.

Our correspondents will oblige by writing all names as clearly as possible, as we cannot be responsible for any mistakes that may occur.

Correspondents are informed that their names and addresses must accompany all communications.

We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.

Notice is sent to all Subscribers whose payment (in advance) is exhausted. The paper will be discontinued where the Subscription is not renewed. We again remind those who are disappointed in obtaining back numbers that, although the music is always kept in stock, only a sufficient quantity of the rest of the paper is printed to supply the current sale.

## BRIEF SUMMARY OF COUNTRY NEWS.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for any opinions expressed in this Summary, as all the notices are either collated from the local papers or supplied to us by correspondents.

ABERFELDY.—Organ Recitals have been given by Mr. Jesse Timson, Organist and Choirmaster to Sir Robert Menzies, Bart., at the Episcopal Church of St. David's, Treem. The programmes have included Handel's Fourth Organ Concerto and "Hailstone" Chorus, Wely's Offertoire in G, Bach's "St. Ann's" Fugue, Smart's Minuet in C, and other pieces from Handel, with selections from the works of Mendelssohn, Wely, Calkin, and Wallis.

BRADFORD.—The organ erected in the Leeds Road Baptist Chapel was opened on Friday, July 27, by Mr. J. H. Rooks, who gave an excellent Recital, which was highly appreciated. A selection of vocal music was contributed by Miss Shaw, Mrs. Clarke, Mr. C. W. Smith, and Mr. Emsley.—The organ at Holy Trinity Church having been renovated by Messrs. Wordsworth and Maskell, of Leeds, was inaugurated on the 2nd ult. by Mr. J. H. Rooks, who, in a well-selected programme, displayed the qualities of the instrument to the utmost advantage. The ordinary choir of the church was reinforced by a number of friends, and several choruses were effectively rendered under the direction of Mr. Popplewell; the Choirmaster, Mr. B. N. Parkinson, also contributing some tenor solos.

BRISTOL.—Beethoven's Mass in C was performed at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church on Sunday, the 19th ult., for the first time in any Roman Catholic Church in Bristol, with full orchestra. The soloists were Misses L. Benham, Flemming, and Jackson, and Messrs. James Williams, George Williams, and Partridge. The leader of the band was Mr. Jacobs, the Conductor Mr. Richelieu Jones, and the Choirmaster, Mr. Augustus Simmons, presided at the organ. The performance was highly appreciated by the crowded congregation, and reflected credit on all concerned. At the evening service the orchestra again assisted, and amongst the items rendered were Sir M. Costa's "Date Sonitum," Emmerig's Magnificat, Tantum ergo (Lutz in C minor), &c., and as a concluding voluntary the band and organ played Sir M. Costa's March from *Naaman*.

CARDIFF.—The large Taff Vale Railway engine-sheds, the scene of recent Eisteddfoddic meetings, were again used on the 11th and 13th ult. for musical purposes, Concerts being given in aid of a fund for providing telephonic communication between the new Infirmary building and the residences of the medical staff. There was a large attendance on each occasion, the fame of the band of the 2nd Battalion Royal Highlanders, on whom the programme principally devolved, having doubtless contributed to that result. The sum of £170 was required to complete the projected work. The first Concert cleared the expenses of the band, &c., and on the second night the whole of the desired amount was obtained, two gentlemen personally offering to contribute a small balance necessary to make up the sum.

CARMARTHEN.—Miss Marian Ellis, R.A.M., gave an excellent Concert on the 2nd ult., at the Assembly Room, assisted by the following students of the Academy: Miss Marie Mackway, Miss Eleanor Rees (an excellent contralto), Mr. Musgrove Tufnail (Gold Medalist), Mr. E. H. Hann, and Miss A. T. Jones (harp). The singing of the *benéficiaire* was much admired, and Miss Jones's harp-playing elicited warm and well-deserved applause. Several local artists also lent valuable assistance.

COLOMBO, CEYLON.—A union of the Catholic choirs of this city was held on June 19 last, in a beautiful church recently built in one of its faubourgs, on the occasion of St. Anthony's Festival. The success