

The Origin of the Anglican Chant

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as a fugue, after a much more elaborate fashion than we find in the Mass No. 1. Its character, however, apart from the contrapuntal skill shown, is affected by a large use of chromatic progressions, and the general result strikes us as more scholastic than pleasing. The "Credo" gives a foretaste of its novelty by the two-bar roll of drums which preludes the entrance of the voices. Beethoven had shown how the tympani should be used, and Schubert here almost betters his instructions, so impressive is the effect. The drum passage more than once reappears, and is an important feature in a movement full of interest. In the "Et incarnatus," our composer resorts to his much-loved canonic form, with a success rarely, if ever, surpassed. The Canon, written for one soprano and two tenor voices, has a melody of extreme beauty; the parts flow with smoothness, and the accompaniment enriches without encumbering. This is undoubtedly the gem of the "Credo," though many subsequent passages call for hearty admiration, both on æsthetic and scientific grounds. The "Sanctus," peculiarly enterprising in its progressions, cannot compete with the "Et incarnatus" for charm, but the "Benedictus" for quartett and chorus, might run that lovely movement very hard for first place. Mere verbal description avails nothing to convey an idea of its character; we may, however, arouse curiosity by speaking of it in the strongest terms as a model of religious music. The solemn "Agnus" and marvellously beautiful "Dona nobis" are worthy of all that has gone before, and, in closing the volume in obedience to the exigencies of space, we can only express a hope that very soon this grand Mass will have the place in public esteem it fairly deserves.

A word must suffice to recognise the general accuracy and completeness of the edition before us, and to state that all the Masses have been ably adapted to the Communion Service of the English Church by the Rev. J. Troutbeck, M.A., and are published in a separate form.

THE ORIGIN OF THE ANGLICAN CHANT.

By J. POWELL METCALFE.

A few months ago appeared in the *Musical Times* a paper on "The Musical Remains of the Ancient Church of England." It was there shown that the people's custom of response in uninflected speech—still to be traced in the services of churches in Yorkshire and Lancashire, where the ancient use has not been displaced by more modern fashion—could have had origin nowhere but in the primitive British Church. To the same source, it was shown, alone could be traced those quaint, old common measure tunes, called, apparently as soon as (if not much sooner than) they were gathered out of the people's memories, to aid in the great work of the Reformation, "the Church tunes." As it is proposed in this paper to point out the mode in which this old form was adapted for our Church service, though the unaltered form could never say more for itself than "allowed to be sung in churches," it may be as well, briefly, to recapitulate our reasons for assigning such venerable antiquity to the "Church tune."

About the same time, in France, Germany, and England, were earnest workers in the Reformation movement, busy in setting the Psalms of David in the people's verse. Clement Marôt, Court Poet to Francis the First, assisted by Beza, the Parisian Professor of Hebrew, was the author of the French rhymed version. The earlier of Marôt's versifica-

tions were written in the metre of the loose love ditties of the Court, with the intention that they should be sung to the same tunes, in the hope of weaning the singers to purer and higher thoughts through the strains of a favourite melody. This union of sacred and profane seeming to Calvin unbecoming, he put forth the great choralist, Goudimel, to compose tunes to other of Marôt's rhymed translations, a work—this composing of his fine tunes—that brought on Goudimel's head the fury of the Papists on Black Bartholomew's day; they murdered him, and cast his poor body into the Seine. Luther himself took charge of the tunes of the German metrical sacred music—writing some, adapting others from the Latin service, and fitting the national tunes to the use of the new movement. No such clear history can be given of our own old tunes. It was in 1562 that "the whole Book of Psalms," our old version, first made its appearance. It contained, with the words, "apt notes to sing them withal." Forthwith we find these old tunes called specially "The Church Tunes," a title craving passing notice. Though, singularly enough, we find it claimed for them on title pages, "allowed to be sung in churches," the claim goes no farther than "allowed." And in our Prayer Book itself, with the exception of the translations of the "Veni Creator," all metrical hymns and metrical psalms are utterly ignored. The word "Church," moreover, has certainly nothing to do with the exotic Church of Rome, for nothing at all equivalent to the "common measure" appears in the Latin hymn metres. The old tunes could not possibly have been used to Latin hymns: all this leading to the one conclusion, that the Church of the "Church tunes" was no other than the primal Church of England, that still lived in the memories of the people—if in no other way, at least in the venerable tunes which once had been the vehicle of a primitive metrical translation of the Psalter.

And such time-hallowed origin can alone account for the respect the "Church tunes" met with at the hands of the great composers of the day. The very year after the old version made its appearance with its "apt notes," came out these tunes, with harmonies by seven of the leading musicians of the time, one of these harmonists, let us note, being Thomas Tallis. And every few years appeared a fresh setting of these old tunes, with the addition of other tunes from known and unknown sources—yet still evermore with harmonies by the first pens of the day—all showing in what high esteem these melodies were held, for reasons that certainly their intrinsic musical worth will not always account for.

But does it not seem strange that, after all, the venerable "Church tune" should not have been formally and heartily enthroned within our Church walls; that it—the ancient chant form of the primal British Church—kept alive in the people's hearts and memories through the long centuries of the foreign spiritual occupation of our land—should, after all, be only able to plead for itself, "allowed to be sung in churches,"—squeezing in, at the Church doors most probably, under shelter of its duly accredited sister the Anthem? Now, the grand foundation of our Reformed Church is an open Bible, and it would be quite contrary to her whole spirit and principle to put man's writing in the place of God's word, or to adopt a less accurate translation of the Scriptures in the place of the more accurate.

So it is, that while not one word of permission appears in the whole Prayer Book for metrical hymns, there stands the inexorable injunction, "in

choirs and places where they sing (wherever they sing at all) here followeth the anthem"—the anthem being the exposition and quickening by music of the selected text, as the sermon is such exposition and quickening by the sister Art of Oratory. And so it is that, while the metrical psalm does never say for itself more than "allowed to be sung in churches," the Prayer Book's title page evermore bears witness to the will of the Church, that the Psalms shall be "sung in church," if musical ability be lacking for this singing, then at least "said" in the people's monotone.

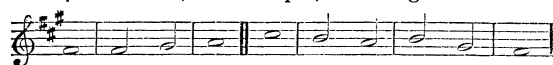
Now, the two great names that stand forth in all Church matters musical, in those Reformation days, are those of Tallis and Archbishop Parker—Tallis, one of the first seven harmonists of the "Church tunes"—Parker, who, to wile away the weary hours of exile during the Marian persecution, set the whole of the Psalms into what he calls "the people's vulgar verse;" and to this version of Parker's, Tallis set his Eight great tunes, so that we know that these two leading minds were thus, at any rate, brought together over the subject. And dear to the hearts of these two friends—the Church musician and the Archbishop—we may be sure, was the old Church tune, not willingly would they have left it wholly outside the walls of the sanctuary. And we can well imagine the question would rise up before them, "Is there any form into which we can throw the venerable chant form of the 'Church tune,' so that, while we adhere to the closest translation of God's Word—necessarily the prose translation—we may still employ, to some extent, the ancient formula." Let us see how they returned answer to themselves.

Now, the old "Common Measure" was not as we have it now in its looser form, merely 8, 6; 8, 6, with rhyming sixes, but it was really 4, 4, 6; 4, 4, 6—the pairs of four rhyming—and the tune originally exactly corresponded in its phrasing to this division. Let us take an example—a verse from Parker's version of the 23rd Psalm, set to the "Cheshire tune" of Este's Psalter—



The Lord so good: Who giv'th me food,
My Shep - hearde is and guide.
How can I want: or suf - fer scant,
When He de - fend'th my side.

Now, to a 4 that we can begin with of this tune (prolonging the fourth note to two beats) let us add a 6 that we can end with, and let us consider the initial note of each line elastic. Let us take the first 4 and last 6, for example, and we get this—



or the very form that Tallis, doubtless with Parker's full agreement, inaugurated as the Chant of the Reformed Church of England. We cannot for one moment suppose that Tallis stumbled across the 4, 6 form by mere accident. So deeply imbued as he was with the true "Church Tune" form—witness his own tunes—he could not but have recognised the relation between the two, if presented to him by

other hand than his own. Moreover this was an entirely new form. Two other chant-forms are used in our service, the 3, 2, Athanasian Creed Chant, and the 2, 4 Litany Chant. Either of these would have made a useful psalm chant form; indeed, a strong effort, as we know, was made a few years ago to introduce the former under the title of the Free Chant. There was also the Italian recitative-chant, now called the Gregorian. Tallis probably would not have had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with Palestrina's clever arrangements of interchangeable heads and tails, now called "The tones and endings;" but enough of the floating scraps, out of which the great Italian concocted his system, must have been well known to our Tallis, to have enabled him to accept or reject what would now be called "The Gregorian System." No—knowing all these chant-forms, and probably others too, he advisedly inaugurated one more consisting of two lines of the old "church tune." And here, too, we have doubtless the origin of the Anglican double-chant. There is a silly story told, how a pupil of Hine's of Gloucester, through inattention played two single chants of the same key to two consecutive verses of the psalms—how the careless mistake was admired, and was forthwith imitated into a system. The story at once falls through before the recollection, that double chants can be produced of date long anterior to Mr. Hine and his pupil—that they can, in fact, be traced back nearly to the days of Tallis himself. The compactness of the single chant, and its consequent greater similarity to the earlier chant-forms, would doubtless recommend the shorter form to a man of Tallis's stamp of mind. But it could not have escaped his eye, and the eyes of succeeding church-musicians, that what we call the double chant lay hid, so to speak, in the Common Measure church-tune, as well as the shorter single chant.

Taking 4, 6; 4, 6 of the C. M. tune, with elastic initial bars and complete final bars to the 4's when needed, we get the double chant. Applying this to our example tune, for instance, we have—



And so the reverse operation may be performed; repeat the 4's of a double chant, and the result is 8, 6; 8, 6, taking the bar as non-elastic, and adjusting it with the final bars, where needed, we have a C. M. tune.

And thus we see that our little chant-form is English to the very marrow. It is no "barred Gregorian," as the phrase runs; it has no more to do with Gregorians than the old Common Measure "Church-tunes" have to do with the mediæval hymn-tunes. The Gregorian is foreign in all its aspects—foreign in interval, foreign in feeling, founded on the foreign sense of recitative. Most true, indeed, is the constant assertion of the upholders of the Gregorian Chant, that "the People of England have to be educated to it"—as surely educated to it, as to the Latin Psalter, to whose rhythm the foreign chant seems specially cast. On the contrary, all the salient points of the national musical taste seem to be met in the Anglican Chant—first and foremost, that strong sense of melodic rhythm and precise measure. Could but the people of England divest their minds of a lurking suspicion against all chanting, arising from the wholly erroneous idea that there is but one source

from which came all chants—the same source whence came the Gregorian Chant—would they but bear in mind the hallowed sanction conveyed in the words, “And when they had sung a hymn, they went out”—words that tell us the Saviour chanted with His disciples a Pascal psalm, on that ever-memorable night—could they but feel how commended to us, by its history, comes our little English chant—surely, most heartfelt and earnest would become the singing of the only hymnal of the Church of England, *The Prose Psalter*.

Little “educating” would the people find they would want, to recite in a clear bold unison the mother-tongue strains—voices not trained enough to hold the notes of a hymn-tune with the needful firmness, would find no difficulty in clearly speaking out the sacred words in the short little chant formula.

There would be little of the present listless *waiting till the choir have done chanting*—to the hopeless dispersion of concentrated thought—the holy words would be stamped on the minds and memories of the singers, to be an unfailing cruise of comfort in life’s wear and tear, and that truest of worship would be offered to the Almighty—the worship as of one heart and one voice.

THE re-appearance of Mr. Sims Reeves, after his severe and protracted indisposition, is an event upon which not only do we heartily congratulate *him*, but the many who believe with us that even the temporary absence of so true an artist from our concert-rooms is a national loss. We have no apprehension that a style so perfectly matured as that of Mr. Reeves can be in the slightest degree deteriorated even by an illness of long duration; but his singing at the recent Handel Festival, and also at his own concert, has proved to us that he returns with a voice not only unimpaired, but strengthened in tone by the cessation for a time from any active exertion. His performance at the Crystal Palace in Opera is a sign that he does not intend to remain unemployed now that his health is restored; and we sincerely hope that the public will feel convinced that nothing short of positive incapacity, from indisposition, to fulfil an engagement has ever prevented his appearing before those numerous admirers of his talent whose sympathy with his absence has not always been so obviously demonstrated as their pleasure at his presence.

MR. JOHN HULLAH’s Report of the Examination in Music of Training Schools in Great Britain for 1873 is too voluminous for insertion in our columns; but we may say that we read with much interest his remarks concerning the want of musical training exhibited by the average student; and quite agree with him that so long as pupils are sent into the Colleges with scarcely any preparation, either of voice or ear, there is but small hope of reform. He passes somewhat tenderly over the subject of the “moveable Do” theory; but his remarks are much to the purpose, and scarcely antagonistic enough, we think, to provoke hostility in the camp of the “Tonic Solfa-ists.” Speaking of the difficulties inherent to combined musical instruction, he says “The business of the teacher in a Training College is not (save incidentally) to form a pleasing choir, but a body of vocal musicians, every individual member of which shall be able to teach vocal music.” This is quite true; but we much doubt whether the truth is universally acted upon.

OUR petted Queens of Song do so little for real art that any exception to the rule deserves to be recorded. Madame Adelina Patti having heard during her visit to Vienna that Musical Entertainments were to be given in several of the principal cities of Europe in aid of the funds of the “Mozart Institution” at Salzburg (the birth-place of the composer), immediately proffered her services in organising and assisting at a Festival in London; and Mr. Gye, the Lessee of the Royal Italian Opera, with the principal artists of his establishment, having also lent their valuable aid in the good cause, a concert was given at Covent Garden Theatre on the 16th ult., the programme of which was entirely devoted to the compositions of Mozart. That the performance was a great success, and that a large sum was realised on the occasion may be inferred, considering the excellence of the music and the talent of the vocalists; and should the example of Madame Patti be followed by artists of equally commanding position, other Institutions which we could mention of a similar character, might be largely benefited by their exertions.

THERE can be no doubt that the “London Gregorian Choral Association” is thoroughly in earnest. The recent Festival of the Society at St. Paul’s has been reported in our columns, and we have now received a pamphlet containing papers read at the Annual Meeting of the Association, held in the Hall of Sion College, London Wall, on Thursday, November 27th, 1873. Amongst these Essays that on the Construction of the Gregorian Tones, by C. Warwick Jordan, Mus. Bac., Oxon., will we imagine be the most interesting to the general public, for there is unquestionably much popular misapprehension on the subject. The pamphlet is accompanied with a paper headed “Reasons for becoming a member of the London Gregorian Choral Association,” by E. H. B., and one of the reasons is that the music performed by the Society is “Congregational.” As an important work given at the late Festival was an eight-part Anthem by Jacobus Händl, we presume that even at Gregorian gatherings the “Congregation” must be content occasionally to become listeners.

OUR readers will, we are sure, be glad to find that at the recent banquet given by the Lord Mayor to the representatives of literature and art, so many persons of the highest eminence in music were present. It can scarcely perhaps be expected that the great civic host should know much of the subject upon which he was talking when proposing “music” as one of the toasts of the evening; and therefore we may excuse him for believing that the art is represented by the two lyrical establishments of the metropolis; but it is a matter of much regret that, with Madlle. Titiens and Madame Christine Nilsson sitting at the table, he should have selected Madame Adelina Patti to receive the title of the “Queen of Song,” and to respond (through her husband) for an honour which she should have shared with her gifted sisters in art. No doubt the Marquis de Caux might have smoothed the difficulty by refusing to accept so exclusive a compliment; but the Lord Mayor was himself responsible for the wording of the toast; and if he could not trust himself to put it in the right form, he should have been content to be instructed by those competent to “coach” him up for the occasion.