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Art. IV.—MUSIC IN WORSHIP.

MUSIC is a science first, then an art. It was, therefore, first a discovery, then an invention. It is founded upon principles as purely mathematical as geometry or the calculus. This being so, it has to be accepted as part of that world of nature which has been created by God. And as all that is best in this world is to be conceived as transferable to the heavenly sphere, we feel no surprise on learning that the science and art of music will find its appointed place in the home of the saints.

Earthly worship is a preparation for the heavenly, and may well include whatever appears proper to the latter.

There are, moreover, certain strange hints in Scripture of the relation between musical sounds and spiritual conditions and gifts. On leaving Ramah Saul meets a company of prophets coming down from the high place at Shiloh, with psaltery and tabret, and pipe and harp before them, and under the influence of these instruments, added possibly to the chanting they accompanied, Saul catches the inspiration and prophesies with the prophets.[1] In the war with Moab, Elisha calls for a minstrel; and it was as the minstrel played before him that the hand of the Lord came upon him, and he was empowered to give his prophetic counsels in regard to the stratagem to be employed against the enemy.[2] Of those who were "separated to the service" by David, we read of sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun who "prophesied with harps."[3] Along this avenue of thought we cannot see far before us. And speculation, however tempting, is hardly productive. We may, nevertheless, reflect that inspiration was probably not wholly intellectual; that it was also largely emotional; and that music appeals very greatly to the emotions.

These considerations, thus briefly touched, may assist us to justify the use of music, vocal and instrumental, in public worship.

The effect of the music upon the worshipper provoked the awakened spirit of St. Augustine to self-probing in a well-known passage of his "Confessions"[4]: "The delights of the ear had more firmly entangled and subdued me; but Thou didst loosen and free me. Now, in those melodies which Thy words breathe soul into when sung with a sweet and attuned voice, I do a little repose; yet not so as to be held thereby, but that I can disengage myself when I will. But with the

[1] 1 Sam. x. 5. [2] 2 Kings iii. 15. [3] 1 Chron. xxv. 1-3.
[4] Book x., chap. xxxiii.

words which are their life, and whereby they find admission into me, themselves seek in my affection a place of some estimation,[1] and I can scarcely assign them one suitable. For at one time I seem to myself to give them more honour than is seemly, feeling . . . that the several affections of our spirit by a sweet variety have their own proper measures in the voice and singing by some hidden correspondence wherewith they are stirred up. But this contentment of the flesh doth often beguile me, the sense, not so waiting upon reason as patiently to follow her; but having been admitted merely for her sake, it strives even to run before her and leave her.

"At other times I err in too great strictness, wishing even the whole melody of sweet music, used to David's Psalter, banished from my ears. Yet again, when I remember the tears I shed at the psalmody of Thy Church in the beginning of my recovered faith, and how at the present time I am moved, not with the singing, but with the things sung when they are sung with a clear voice and modulation most suitable,[2] I acknowledge the great use of this institution. Thus I fluctuate between peril of pleasure and approved wholesomeness; inclined the rather (though not as pronouncing an irrevocable opinion) to approve of the usage of singing in the Church, that so by the delight of the ears the weaker minds may rise to the feeling of devotion."

Perhaps the great Bishop was needlessly introspective, gratuitously self-exacting. Perhaps he was also a trifle inconsequent in his reasoning when, after commending the custom of Athanasius, who required the Psalms to be rendered with so slight an inflection of voice as to be nearer speaking than singing, he decides in favour of the usage of singing in the Church on the above-mentioned ground, that the weaker souls may be assisted by it. It is certain that a musical worshipper cannot divest himself of his musical pleasure without doing an unnatural violence to a part of himself; and it is no part of the province of religion to suppress and crush any true constituent of our natural being.

A curious modern instance of the struggle between the æsthetic and the ascetic principles in the musical sphere is supplied by the respective attitudes of the two Wesleys towards concerts. For some years Charles opened his house for subscription concerts, conducted by his talented sons, Charles and Samuel, the latter the father of Samuel Sebastian.

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[1] "Quærunt in corde meo nonnullius dignitatis locum, et vix eis præbeo congruentem."

[2] "Cum liquida voce, et convenientissima modulatione."

"I am clear," the master of the house writes to his brother, "without a doubt, that my sons' concert is after the will and order of Providence." Printing this after his brother's death, John Wesley sets down in his footnote: "And I am clear of another mind."

The battle has now long been fought out, and the issue is the triumph of the æsthetic principle.

One singular survival, however, of the conflict remains, and apparently means to die hard. It is the popular notion that spirituality and musical excellence in public worship are but cool allies, and that some subtle, devotional perils lurk in the training of the voice of a worshipper for his sacred task.

Conceding that slipshod work of any kind is dishonouring to the God whom we worship, we will strive after excellence here as elsewhere in His service. The question, How shall we secure it here? is a somewhat complex one. The present paper is but an attempt to keep the question open rather than to offer any sufficient answer to it.

And first a word on congregational singing. How far is this secured? and where it is not, what is the reason? We are bound to say that with few exceptions this is not secured at all. We have often asked ourselves, How many years does it take a congregation of *educated* people to learn a new hymn-tune? We emphasize the adjective, because an uncultured assembly will, at any rate in Yorkshire and Lancashire, speedily catch one with an infectious melody. But culture seems to be a positive bar to musical receptivity. Tunes that have been before the public for ten or fifteen years awake no body of voice in a suburban church to be compared with "Rockingham" or "Austria." This is largely due, we fear, to apathy. People go to church with no feeling that they themselves have anything to contribute to the service in which they are about to engage. The choir rise a moment before commencing to sing, ready, therefore, to sing the opening notes clearly and with comfort. The people decline to rise until the first note or two has been rendered, thus acknowledging that the proper rendering of the music, however familiar, is no concern of theirs. A maimed and mutilated offering is all they deem it necessary to offer. Congregational practices for the Sunday services have been tried in many places, but oftener than not they die a natural death. In an ordinary congregation of the better classes the large majority of persons who can read music provide themselves with non-musical copies of the hymn-book. In many places a person would feel uncomfortable to hold up a book with the tunes, as wearing the appearance of fussiness and conscious superiority to others around. No Church in Christendom gives a larger audible

share to her children than the Church of England. Why should this heritage be practically despised?

If the people are at fault, it must not be forgotten that their leaders have scarcely done all that might be done to correct this supineness. To turn to the vexed subject of the *pointing* of Canticles and Psalter: is there any valid obstacle in the way of arrival at a musical consensus here? The musical world is credited with a somewhat crotchety constitution. But surely it is not altogether chimerical to conceive the feasibility of the recognised guides of our present-day Church music putting their heads together and giving us a system of pointing worthy of being universally adopted. This being once agreed upon by them, our Prayer-Books might then be pointed; a separate Psalter being thus dispensed with. Until this is done the singing of the Psalms *must* be confined to the choir. The general public has no chance in the conflict of competing systems, of becoming sufficiently familiar with any one of them, to acquire the habit of singing them correctly, and only a very few will take the trouble to purchase a Psalter and use it.

Another mild indictment against our leaders is the character of the *hymn-tune harmonies*. Let it be remembered that harmony and melody are distinct elements; and if we desired to state in a single sentence the most signal tendency of living composers, we should say that harmony rather than melody is studied. By this is not meant that many modern tunes are not eminently melodious. But more solicitude seems to be discovered in very many tunes to introduce intricate and original harmonies than the broad effects of popular melodies. The air often appears to take form for the sake of the chords, instead of the chords waiting upon, and loyally supporting, the air. Semitones not seldom multiplied into chromatics perplex and discourage the untrained ears and voices of the crowd. Nor is this the only deterrent feature of modern renderings. The harmonies of some of the best-known of the old hymn-tunes are tampered with; and discords most unwisely interpolated with a view to supplying the purely artistic pleasure afforded by the sequent resolution.

An objection is not hereby raised against such structural beauties as these in Church musical composition; but exception is taken to their unrestrained introduction into that part of the music which is the special property of the congregation, viz., the hymn-tune. This suggests the insistence on a distinction which is hardly as yet generally recognised, and which in some quarters would be indignantly disallowed. The distinction we refer to is found in the Prayers, and must

eventually be granted as equally legitimate in the praises of the Church. It separates meditative and vocal worship.

If by a thoroughly congregational service we mean that in the whole of it the congregation audibly join, the phrase, as applied to the public worship of our Church, is without meaning. For in the bulk of the prayers the congregation are forbidden audibly to join. When, *e.g.*, anthems are condemned on the ground that they are the monopoly of the choir, the objector may be reminded that for a like reason he should consistently condemn every collect in the Prayer-Book: for it is the voiced monopoly of the reader.

If, therefore, true worship does not demand invariable uttered expression on the part of the people, is the distinction an undevotional one when drawn between one portion of the musical contributions in the service and another? On this we would accordingly lay the utmost stress. Let it be frankly conceded: and then let *all* harmonic intricacies and subtleties be rigidly banished from the vocal portions and confined to, and have the freest scope in, the meditative portions, during which not so much of that amount of self-consciousness as is inevitable when exercising any natural gift disturbs absolute absorption and spiritual receptiveness on the part of the listening worshipper. Keble sees no impropriety in including the worship of the *ear* among the means of grace.

> We the while of meaner birth,
> Who in that divinest spell
> Dare not hope to join on earth,
> Gives us grace to listen well.

The plan sometimes adopted of giving the congregation certain verses of a hymn to sing without the choir is perhaps one of the simplest and most effectual methods of gently enforcing participation upon it. In a large church, and at mission times, when spoken directions are not out of place, the whole assembly may readily be divided by the middle aisle into decanis and cantoris.

A few words are called for on the subject of accompanying. They shall be measured ones, though we feel keenly. The tyranny of the organ, but for the long sufferance of the British character, might long ago have provoked an insurrection. In our cathedrals there is, perhaps, without an exception, nothing of this. The instrument during the chanting is *felt* rather than heard. There is nothing to diminish the delicious effect of the pure liquid flow of vocal sound. Would that nine-tenths of our parish organists put themselves to school here, with perfectly dissatisfied, receptive minds; for the word "accompaniment," in the majority of cases, is an

absolute misnomer. The instrument, instead of bearing the voices amicable company, appears bent on their annihilation. A conflict rages throughout the service between the choir and its formidable rival, in which the pipes and the vocal chords fiercely contend for the mastery. The subtlest powers that lie in the human voice are found in the softened undertones. Piano-singing is strangely arrestive, and is far more penetrative than is generally supposed. The truer the music of a note, the more carrying power it possesses. But all this delicate influence of song is hopelessly stifled by the murderous giant behind that poses as a companion.

Organs are not the only instruments of this onslaught. The writer was present at the magnificent meeting held some years back in the Albert Hall to protest against the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. Beforehand he had high expectations of the singing of those ten thousand voices of cultured people. The first hymn dashed them. To reinforce the ranks of the foe, shrill cornets flanked the vast organ. No trebles had a chance. The thrill of the multitudinous voices, blent undistracted, was not there; there was but the irritable consciousness that a great opportunity had been stupidly lost.

A still more noticeable case in point is recalled. When the Queen visited Sheffield last year, 40,000 children were gathered in Norfolk Park to sing a hymn which had been written for the occasion. I was present on the previous evening at the rehearsal of 15,000 of them. Six brass bands were dispersed over the ground. Said I to a friend at my side: "Why are the bands playing over the tune so often? When are the children going to begin?" "They have sung two verses," was the reply. I am not deaf; but not a single voice had reached my ear.

The defence is well-worn. The voices must be kept in tune. The reply is that they would be kept in tune by a fifth of the instrumental support; and that they are often strained out of tune by the strenuous endeavour to assert themselves against such odds. Moreover, as the treble voices are far the most penetrating of the parts, the air may often be dispensed with on the instrument, as indeed is constantly the case in secular music.

A list of faults of detail is subjoined; we wish we could think it exhaustive:

1. *Fortissimo* on the great festivals deemed indispensable throughout the service.

2. The entire absence of any real *crescendos* and *diminuendos:* sudden transitions being the rule—the catastrophe theory applied to musical evolution.

3. Lugubrious *rallentandos* closing all the canticles.

4. The practice of singing slower when singing *piano*, soft and slow being regarded as indisseverable.

5. The lack of voice-balance in forming a choir: twenty shrill trebles supported by four basses and as many tenors, and possibly one alto.

6. No distinction between *fortes* and *fortissimos*, there being no reserve of voice left for the latter. When positives become superlatives, superlatives are nowhere.

7. Little care to secure perfect relationship between the voices. The baton not used at the practices.

8. Reading music not perfectly taught *before* a boy is allowed to sing in the service.

9. Short words and minor syllables slurred over both in reciting and in singing.

10. The inferior voices allowed to depend unworthily upon the leaders. The leaders should frequently be silent during the practices, that the others may gain confidence in themselves.

11. Lack of care in studying the sentiment of a psalm before selecting its chant, "De profundis" and "Laudate Dominum" being impartially served by the same jubilant majors.

The above are a few of the commoner faults which a little attention to the most ordinary canons of musical taste and devotional sympathy would correct.

The capabilities of our English parish choirs are very considerable. Enthusiasm, honest pride in their sacred work, a strong, healthy *esprit de corps*, often characterize them. But one thing is often urgently needed: that our excellent organists should resist the besetting temptation to show off the instrument. What prima donna would stoop to sing in order to show off the instruments behind her back? Every true accompanist starts with *two* moral axioms—self-restraint, self-effacement.

A closing paragraph on another subject. There is one service of the Church—the highest—which, on account of the abandonment of holy gratitude which marks it, gained in the earliest times and has ever since retained the name of the Eucharist, *the* Thanksgiving. Reflecting on this, we may well ask, Why in thousands of our churches should all voices of sacred song be here hushed? Is the objection—a most valid one—to the presence of unconfirmed choristers a sufficient reason? We think not. In some churches choirs of communicants are formed. Might not this be more extensively done? Choral Communions, to many found hardly helpful, are surely not the necessary sequel to the establishment of such aids to the realizing of the eucharistic idea.

How supremely helpful is the soft singing of hymns during the administration at the Annual Communion of the Church Army in Henry VII.'s Chapel at Westminster! At York Minster, on a recent occasion, when a large number communicated, nothing could have exceeded the beauty and devotion of the undertone singing of "The King of Love" as the communicants passed and repassed, equally soft interludes separating the verses. The "Gloria in excelsis"—the grandest form of praise in liturgical composition—is directed to be said *or sung*. That a certain section of our Church elaborates the Communion music to an extent that practically debars congregational participation, appears a poor reason for refusing to admit even a hymn. When the Lord instituted His Supper He deferred (we may reverently believe with deliberation) the singing of the second half of the Hallel until the close of His better Passover. He thus severed its original connection and linked it with the institution. "When they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives."

ALFRED PEARSON.

ART. V.—RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

IT has often been pointed out that education and knowledge are not the same thing. It is true that the two are often confused, either through carelessness or of set purpose, but the essential difference becomes perfectly plain when it is examined. Knowledge by itself remains dumb and paralyzed; on the other hand, it is impossible to educate the mind unless there are facts which can be built into the eventual structure. It is therefore correct to say that education contains knowledge. The mind and the character grow on what they assimilate.[1]

Moreover, one often hears it said that "knowledge is power." Our readers may perhaps remember that this forms the theme of Lytton's powerful story, "My Novel," but that he introduces it only to abandon it. There is an attractive ring about the old proverb, and a half-truth, that as the minds of most are bent upon some measure of power, unconsciously incline us towards its acceptance, but it is none the less a fallacy. Power lies in being able to perform, and a knowledge of a fact or truth is, as regards the individual, stagnant, unless he is able to put it into execution. A man's influence in life consists of his knowledge and ideas, multiplied by and pro-

[1] *Cf.* Sully, "Outlines of Psychology," pp. 70, 71.