

celebrated in the catacombs in the days of persecution, and Christian voices have rung out their pœans of praise in the days of the Church's triumph. The most beautiful musical compositions that exist are of a religious origin, are more ancient than any profane music, and have never been equalled by anything in the finest operas. There is nothing in profane music comparable to that of the Lamentations of Jeremias, the *Exultet* of Easter Saturday, the Preface or the *Pater Noster* of the Mass. To keep Church music free from profane adulteration was the aim of Dr. Witt, your founder, and is the purpose of your powerful, praiseworthy and beneficent organization, the American leader of which has been specially honored by the Pope. Dr. Witt's labors were opportune, his task difficult. Who shall say that the music of our Church's choirs is always what it ought to be? Everyone knows that there has been deterioration from ancient simplicity; that the theatre has intruded itself into the Church choir in Europe as well as here. False taste had forced itself in many places into the Church's song even before the Council of Trent. To please a few, who are neither the most edifying nor the most generous in our parishes, music has been