

ble tune for musical reading, and best adapted to the use of the whole congregation.

From the beginning of the last to nearly the middle of the present century,—that is, for something over a hundred years—the Gregorian Tones had for the first time fallen into disuse. But it is a remarkable fact that during all that time the Anglican Chant was sinking, in a continual course of degeneracy, becoming more and more secular in character, until at length in its double and quadruple shape it was difficult in some cases to distinguish it from many more secular melodies. The metrical psalm tunes of the same period—many of them—show the same degeneracy, being for the most part the ephemeral “pretty tunes” which have done so much towards secularizing public worship.

It is related of one of the popular preachers of the last century that he was in the habit of adopting hymns to lively secular airs, on the plea that the devil had monopolized the good music long enough. History shows that it is to the monks we owe the introduction of metrical singing, and in the modern “Masses” the music is frequently so difficult as to be quite beyond the powers of any ordinary congregation, and can, therefore, only be sung by a carefully-trained choir. The natural effect of both these extremes is to rob the devout portion of the congregation of that share in the musical part of the public worship which is their inalienable right.

Another cause of the degeneracy of modern ecclesiastical music was the employment of professional singers in what were called quartette choirs. These singers introduced into the music of the churches in the large cities and centres of fashion in Europe and America a meretricious and theatrical style which soon spread to unthinking country choirs, and the general taste became vitiated.

All these and various other causes effected a great change for the worse in the music of God's house. But about forty years ago a wonderful revival of true religion began to be felt in our churches, and with it—as a natural consequence—came the revival of true devotional music in the congregation. The music of the casino and the theatre in the weekly exhibitions of quartette choirs began to give place to the hearty psalmody of the whole congregation which more than made up in devotion what it might lack in artistic finish. The strains of Babylon were exchanged for the songs of Zion. And from what source did our last reformers draw this true psalmody? From the Plain Song or Gregorian Tones which in the days of degeneracy and captivity had been laid aside. From all sides now we hear of the restoration of these ancient melodies.

Nothing worth having was ever obtained without difficulty, and so it has been and even now is with the introduction of the Gregorian Tones into some churches. The taste must first be cultivated, but it must be gradually—not suddenly—drawn from the theatrical and “pretty” to the ecclesiastical and devotional style. It is a mistake to force a too sudden transition from the one to the other. And the taste in this matter is largely founded on right devotional feeling,—that “little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump.”

One objection against the Georgian music is that it is too plain. So much the better for plain singers or persons with an imperfect musical ear, in the general congregation, and it is desirable for their own sakes that these as well as their more gifted brethren should “sing unto the Lord.” And when a member of a choir complains that he does not like this plain and general singing, he should be reminded that there are others who do like it, but who do not like the theatrical style, and multitudes of others again who are robbed by this latter of their share in the musical part of the services. The plainness and simplicity of the Georgians