

and associations of so many centuries. As you move about amid the tombs in the gray, old chapels and the long, dim aisles which seem to converge in the distance, you are at one time in Saxon England, and again in the England of the Normans. You pass in a few steps from the tomb of King Sebert, who was buried here nearly a thousand years ago, to that of Tennyson, the last of that long line of poets whose ashes mingle with the dust of England's noblest dead. Men have come and gone, but the old Abbey stands as a connecting link between the England of to-day and the England of by-gone centuries; and thus it is that at Christmas when the mind naturally turns to the past, there is a peculiar fitness in wandering amid this wilderness of tombs.

The music in the Abbey on Christmas day is always one of the chief attractions of the British metropolis. Perhaps there is something in this stately and venerable building that gives a special charm to the services. The resonant echoes of the mighty organ as they reverberate among the tombs seem not of this world, but rather like those wandering melodies of heaven which the fervid fancy of saints has told us of in song and allegory. The full-voiced choir reminds one of a chorus of angels singing an anthem over the mournful remains of departed grandeur which appeal to the eye from the sculptured marble on all sides.

Christmas of last year was celebrated in Westminster Abbey by the usual choral services in the morning and the more elaborate cathedral services in the afternoon. All parts of the Abbey were open to the public during the day, and were thronged with visitors. Just before three o'clock the vergers in their long, black robes went flitting about from chapel to chapel to gather the visitors into the transepts of the Abbey for the evening service. At least two thousand people were soon brought together. Poets' Corner was crowded, and men and women were sitting

above the graves of the hundred poets from Chaucer down to Tennyson.

The sweet-toned bell of the Abbey struck *three*. Then the confused bustle which pervades a vast audience was hushed. A distant "Amen" arose from the chorister-rooms. It echoed amid the tombs and died away in the distant recesses and chapels of the nave. Then the organist struck the keys of that peerless instrument and played a soft voluntary—so soft that the distant foot-fall of the choir boys and men could be heard on the stone floor. The audience knelt in silence as the choristers, followed by the officiating clergy, marched up the aisle with a flutter of white surplices and flowing robes. They filed into the rows of stalls which run along both sides of the centre aisle of the nave. Then a few moments of that "eloquent silence" followed, as all were bowed in prayer. Soon the organ burst into a full, strong tone, and choir and audience arose. Then followed the complete choral service. In the singing of the psalms the two full choirs responding and chanting in turn kept the vast edifice filled with the sacred melody. After the third collect came the Christmas Anthem—this was the crowning glory of the service. It was one of Handel's masterpieces, "And there were Shepherds." In no European cathedral is music rendered more accurately than in Westminster Abbey—the perfect blending of the voices with the sweet tones of the organ, words and melody wafting away through the dim corridors and sculptured aisles. Now a sweet clear voice breaks upon the ear in the beautiful strains of "And the angel said unto them, fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy." Now high, now low, the voice follows the intricate windings of the sweet melody in perfect harmony till one is borne away to the wintry hills of Palestine. You forget time and space, and see only the shepherds wrapt in sacred

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