

Some Thoughts on Easter Music.

(By An Occasional Contributor.)

In God's grand plan for man's redemption, there are two stupendous mysteries—striking in their very oppositeness—the humility of our Saviour's Birth and the magnificent triumph of His glorious Resurrection. And the Church has set apart their festal days as occasions when everything that is grand and joyous in music is lavished upon her holy services; when human notes waft gently up to heaven like incense percolating to the foot of the Throne; when children's voices, clear and sweet, vie in very gladness with the hymn of praise of the morning lark, whose "profuse strains of unpremeditated art" greet the rising sun and melt away in a trill of thanksgiving to the Creator.

Of the two great occasions, perhaps Easter is the more striking, because it re-echoes triumph, it means the redemption of the world accomplished; and in harmony with the season of the year the Church's services are garlanded with the choicest musical blooms, culled from the greatest of the masters. Who so rich in music and great musicians as the Church? Her gifted sons have laid at her feet and dedicated to God the best fruits of their labors. Even non-Catholics, overwhelmed by the grandeur of symbolism and the simplicity of truth, by the devoutness of worship, and the tenacity of faith, by the God-given magnetism that attracts all humanity to her embrace,—these men have felt impelled to lay their offerings at the door of the Church's great harmonic treasure house. Remarkable instances might be cited, such as Beethoven's Mass in D, with its strange and effective setting of the "Dona Nobis Pacem," or Bach's Mass in B minor, a work, according to Grove, of such gigantic proportions and of so exceptional a character, that it is impossible to class it with any other, or to trace its pedigree through any of the schools.

Very nature at Easter, is typical of the Resurrection. "But if the grain of wheat die, it bringeth forth much fruit," and the grain was dead, but is now back to life; the acorn breaks from its cerements and shoots up a daring head into the atmosphere of spring; the winter sepulture is over, and mysterious music voices the change.

"Nor music, thro' thy breathing sphere,
Lives there a sound more grateful to the ear
Of Him who made all harmony
Than the blest sound of fetters breaking."

The very air murmurs music; the birds interpret it as they alone can, for they are Heaven taught; the brooks babble and and dance and shimmer to it; the wind and the trees combine to echo it; and the buds just trembling into life nod approval almost metronomically. For all the world is glad, and bells chime cheerfully but do not toll.

And with the heart of man thankful for the fruits of the earth, then comes the transcendent victory of Our Saviour over death and the grave—a victory that meant the ultimate achievement of man's redemption. What a cause for rejoicing! Why should not the ebullient enthusiasm and soul-springing outpouring of gratitude find vent in music, the only language adapted to the interpretation or praise of mystery. "Mystery's memory lives in music's breath."

It would be impossible to treat of Easter music without reference to the mournful strains of Holy Week. True, the ashes are gone from our foreheads and the mourning garments are cast aside; but the stern sorrow of the Tenebrae and the Agony may not so soon be forgotten. The contrast is too great.

At the beginning of the Christian era the Plain Chant reverberated through the catacombs, and was transmitted orally and by tradition. It is the foundation of the Gregorian which is used at the present day. Towards the close of the fourth century St. Ambrose of Milan succeeded in making a set of rules which enabled his clergy to sing with much precision and purity. He also introduced antiphonal, in contradistinction to Responsorial singing. Two centuries later St. Gregory the Great undertook the collection and revision of the many melodies introduced since the Ambrosian era, adding several melodies of his own, the collection eventually being sufficient for all the Church's needs. This collection was written in the celebrated "Antiphonarium."

The singing of the Lamentations is usually done in Plain Chant, but early in the sixteenth century, it was displaced to make room for polyphonic singing in the Pontifical Chapel. The settings were made by Carpentras, and were in vogue until practically the end of the century, when Pope Sixtus V. ordered that the first lesson only should be polyphonic, the other two plain chant melody sung by a single soprano. Here the mighty hand of Palestrina is found. He composed music for nine Lamentations, three for each day. Carpentras's, Palestrina's and Allegri's are the only "Lamentations" ever used in the Pontifical Chapel.

The "Miserere," if not the greatest musical composition in the world, is certainly the most celebrated. Two manuscript volumes in the Pontifical Chapel archives, contain the "Miserere" by twelve composers, of which the only one now in use is that of Gregorio Allegri. These manuscripts were very jealously guarded. We all know the story of how young Mozart on Maunday Thursday, 1770, listened to the "Miserere" in the Sistine Chapel, wrote it down after hearing it sung once only, and returned on Good Friday and corrected his MS.

Besides Allegri's beautiful composition, two other settings are used, that of Tommaso Bai (1714) and Giuseppe Baini (1821). "There is reason to believe," says Grove, that the idea of adapting the "Miserere" to music of a more solemn character than that generally used for the Psalms, and thus making it the culminating point of interest in the service of Tenebrae, originated with Pope Leo X., whose master of ceremonies, Paride Grassi, tells us that it was first sung to a Faux-bourdon in 1514.

Passing from the stern mournfulness of Tenebrae we emerge into the joyous light of Easter. After a long silence we are again animated by the stirring strains of the "Gloria," and the joyous notes of "Regina Coeli." During the last two centuries Church music, its modes, its styles, has changed greatly, until the modern composer recognizes few given laws, and gives vent to his own devotional individuality. The later school of sacred music, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, the beginning of the modern school, dates from the opening of the eighteenth century, with Francesco Durante, of Naples. He composed exclusively for the Church and left behind him thirteen Masses, sixteen Psalms, Hymns, etc., to the number of twenty-eight. His style left a distinct stamp on sacred music, and his pupil, Jomelli, followed faithfully in his footsteps. Then came the great masters of the Mass, Mozart and Haydn, with all their beauty and grace; and Cherubini, with grand imaginative power. Then we run through a whole century prolific in sacred music, but the style has changed. There is no scruple at borrowing the methods of the profane when they are beautiful; floridity is cultivated, new forms are introduced, and the richness of orchestration becomes almost voluptuous. Rossini, Gounod and many other writers have permitted the dramatic spirit to interfere with the ideality of the text; notwithstanding this, there is always the underlying motive of devotion; and the little flowery passages may be taken and metaphorically laid on the altar like a branch of sweet blooms that speak for the exuberance of joy in the human heart. For is it not Easter?

Some Calumnies of Dr. Burt.

The Rev. William Burt, D.D., is a Methodist missionary resident in Rome. Writing to the "Christian Advocate" of New York, he says:—"The 'Freeman's Journal' (Roman Catholic), referring to our article, 'Why Do We Send Missionaries to Roman Catholic Countries?' published in the Christian Advocate, Nov. 13, 1902, speaks of us personally in very uncomplimentary terms, instead of replying to our facts and arguments. We are accustomed, however, to such methods of attack on the part of papists. Special exception was taken to what we said in reference to the adoration of Mary."

The "Freeman's Journal" simply followed its usual custom of branding a calumny when it sees it going about. The Rev. Burt's misrepresentation of Catholic worship constituted a calumny, and our remarks in reference to the calumniator were very rationally and correctly considered by him as personally uncomplimentary. We do not see how they could be otherwise and be true.

Rev. Burt: "We are fully aware that it is always very difficult to discuss any question fairly with Roman Catholics, because of their Jesuitical sophistries."

You are not the only preacher who is fully aware that it is always very difficult to discuss question fairly with Roman Catholics. But if you cannot discuss them fairly would it not be as well not to discuss them at all? The cause of your difficulty is not Jesuitical sophistries, but the exposure of your misrepresentations and calumnies. When these are exposed there is usually very little left to talk about.

Rev. Burt: "They (Catholics) have two distinct systems: the theoretical or theological, and the practical. In most instances the one has no relation whatever to the other. If, for example, you should attack them or reply to them because of what they do or do not, they will answer by telling what they do or do not believe."

We do not know any better way of refuting false statements about Catholic doctrine than to quote the doctrine correctly. If Methodists were accused of some crime—idolatry for instance—we do not know how they could better refute the charges than by quoting the doctrines of their denomination condemning idolatry, and stating that they do not, and do not intend to disregard that condemnation. That certainly should acquit their denomination of the charge of teaching or tolerating idolatry, and show that they individually are not guilty of that sin. Just so with Catholics. When Rev. Burt accuses them of idolatry they point to the teaching of the Church condemning idolatry and assure their accuser that they do not, and do not intend to, disregard that condemnation. This is a valid answer to the accusation, for when a man tells you the principles which he accepts you of his intention to adhere in practice to those principles, you must respect his assurances, unless you believe him, to be a liar or a hypocrite.

But, says Rev. Burt, if you attack them for something they do, they answer by telling you what they believe. If what they do is right and in consonance with their doctrine, they would very naturally refer to the doctrine to prove their consistency. But when criticised for what they do contrary to their principles we cannot see why they should refer to their principles when such reference only emphasizes their inconsistency and convicts them of wrong doing. It would not occur to a man caught in the act of murder to quote the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," as a defence or exculpation.

Rev. Burt—"It is simply absurd for Roman Catholic priests or editors to say to those who have lived in Roman Catholic countries that Romanists do not adore or worship Mary. We know they do."

It is absolutely and criminally false to say that Catholics in Italy or anywhere else worship or adore Mary, in the sense you attribute to the words "worship" or "adore."

These words have a wide range of meaning, and the meaning in any given case depends on the intention of him who uses the words or does the acts designated by them.

The Standard Dictionary under the word adoration says: "The act of adoring as being or pertaining to the Deity; worship of God or special reverence given to some inferior person, or object related to God." Of

the verb adore it says: (1) "To render divine honors to; exhibit or express homage, veneration or reverence to; worship; as to adore the Holy Trinity." (2) To feel or exhibit profound regard or affection for; love or honor with intense devotion; as, the child adores the mother."

Under the word "worship" the same dictionary says: (1) "The feeling or act of religious homage to a deity, especially the supreme God." (2) The act or feeling of deference, respect, or honor toward worthiness or toward a position deemed worthy or high; as worship of the good; worship paid to the rich. (3) Excessive or ardent love or admiration; as the worship of the beautiful, the worship of a lover."

English literature affords examples of the use of the words worship and adore in all these different meanings. Macaulay, quoted by Webster, says: "The great mass of the population abhorred popery and adored Monmouth." No one thinks for a moment that Macaulay here accuses the English population of idolatry, of adoring Monmouth in the same sense and intention that they adored God. He simply used the generic term "adore" in its specific and limited sense. Again, in the Office of the Church of England for the solemnization of marriage, are found the words, "With my body I thee adore." No one but an addlehead would think for a moment that supreme and divine honor is given to the contracting party to whom these words are addressed. But should a Catholic, bowing down, say to the Blessed Virgin, "With my body I thee adore," some one of the Burt species would cry out, "idolatry, paganism, giving divine honor to a creature! I have been in Rome and I know." It would not occur to minds of his caliber that such words as adoration and worship and all other words having several meanings, mean only what they are meant to imply by him who uses them; they are to be interpreted by the intention and not the intention by them.

An Oxford professor once used the following words in a lecture on Shakespeare: "May England never be ashamed to show to the world that she can love, that she can adore, that she can worship the greatest of her poets." This in the mouth of an Oxford professor would not shock the Rev. Burt. But should a Catholic use the same words and say, "May the Catholic never be ashamed to show to the world that he can love, that he can adore, that he can worship the greatest of God's saints, the Virgin Mother of the Redeemer," the Rev. Burt's tender conscience and sectarian zeal would be ablaze at the idolatry of giving to Mary the honor due to God alone. It is hard to know how to take such queer people.

The Mason may without censure address an official of the lodge as "your worship or worshipful," but should the Catholic use the same address to the greatest of saints, to that mysterious and sacred link which unites the divinity of humanity in the Incarnation, he must expect to be accused of idolatry by the Burtian school of divinity. If Rev. Burt will look in his Bible at I. Chronicles, chapter 29, verse 20, he will find the following: "And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the Lord your God. And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads and worshipped the Lord and the king." And, as the text shows, this worship was pleasing to God.

Now, if that congregation could with divine sanction worship God and the King what valid objection can a believer in the incarnation of the Eternal Son of God raise against worshipping that incarnate Son and His Mother, a more august person, a more greatly beloved and endowed of God than David or Solomon?

Of course the worship given to God and the King and to the divine Redeemer and His Mother is specifically different. In the first case it is supreme, absolute worship, in the second case it is limited and relative. That given to the Supreme Being is beyond the dignity of any creature; that given to the King or to the Mother is not adequate to the Majesty of the Supreme Being. The congregation in Chronicles understood this essential difference in the objects of their worship, and their intention in worshipping God and the King corresponded to that difference. In precisely the same way Catholics understand the difference between the objects of their worship.—the Supreme Being and Creator, and one of His most favored creatures—and their intention in worshipping corresponds to that difference.

This very simple truth and evident distinction does not seem ever to have acquired a lodging in the head of the Rev. Burt, Methodist agent in Rome. We have dwelt at some length on

the various meanings of the words adoration and worship for the purpose of bringing out more clearly the nature of Rev. Burt's sin of calumny against the millions of Catholics in Italy, whose mental attitude he claims by implication to know better than they themselves. They know that they have not the most remote intention to give to any creature the absolute adoration and worship that is due to God alone, and that the reverence, honor, or worship they give to creatures in this or the next world is relative and because of their relation to God; because God has made them worshipful. That is what the Catholics, Italian or otherwise, know about his own meaning and intention when he honors and asks the help of any creature beloved and honored of God.

Now, the Rev. Burt's vanity consists in his thinking that he knows the Catholic's meaning or intention when he prays better than the Catholic knows it himself. When the Catholic assures him that the honor, reverence, or worship he gives to God's saints is not the same he gives to God who made them saints, but is relative and in reference to God the source of all holiness, Rev. Burt, relying on his superior psychological knowledge, replies that he knows better; that the worship given to the saints, particularly to the Blessed Virgin, is the same given to God, that it "relegates God to places among the mythological deities of paganism." Of course, the proper rebuke for such silly or malicious talk cannot in its truthfulness be flattering to Rev. Burt. And the Catholic in rebuking such unmitigated rot and its perpetrator is not disposed to put on lavender kids.

Rev. Burt's inquiry consists in putting a false meaning, an idolatrous intent, into Catholic worship, and then reporting his miserable counterfeit as the real Catholic worship. What imp of the perverse inspires such men? What good can they expect from such impious conduct?

We must express our surprise that so honorable and scholarly a gentleman as Dr. Buckley should permit such a mass of ignorant, malicious drivel to appear in his paper. It is possible that the Doctor can believe or hold himself responsible for this calumny of Burt: "Millions of these poor, benighted (Italian) people worship no other God than Mary, or the patron saint of their own town, village, or trade."

What epithet does the Doctor think would be a proper one for the author of such a statement? Those people are taught from their infancy to say the "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name," in their morning and evening prayers, and they probably say it more frequently than Mr. Burt, who says they have no other God but some saint. Does the Methodist Missionary Board pay this calumniator for such work? If they do they need a missionary to teach them the first principles of morality.

Here is another example of Rev. Burt's ignorance and method: "In the Church of St. Agostino there is an image of the Madonna, though it looks more like the statue of a Roman matron, and some insistently assert that it is that of Agrippina, the mother of Nero."

Note the malice of the insinuation by which he strives to associate the Mother of Christ with the mother of Nero, and the child in the arms of the Virgin with the matricide son of poisoner Agrippina. Who are those who "insistently assert" that the statue is that of Agrippina? If there be any—which we doubt—they are as ignorant as Burt himself; for had he taken the trouble to inform himself he would have learned that the statue in the Church of St. Agostino is the work of the sculptor Jacopo Sansovino in 1512.

Rev. Burt makes several quotations from prayers to the Mother of our Redeemer, to prove his thesis that Catholics worship her with that worship which is due to God alone. In all these prayers Mary is appealed to as "Mother of God," and this, her intimate relation to God in the Incarnation, is the ground of every appeal for her intercession with God in behalf of the petitioner. It is a solid ground; and to say that asking Mary to intercede for us with her Divine Son, is to put her in the place of God, is to say a false, foolish and absurd thing, which, of course, is not beyond the ability of Rev. Burt.—The New York Freeman's Journal.

Sorrow is not given to us alone that we may mourn. It is given to us that, having felt, suffered, wept, we may be able to understand, love, bless.

No single great deed is comparable for a moment to the multitude of little gentlenesses performed by those who scatter happiness on every side and strew all life with hope and good cheer.