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GREGORIAN AND ANGLICAN CHANTS.

The relative merit of these two forms of chants has been, and still is, the subject of much discussion; a discussion which it is safe to say is productive of no solution of the vexed question. It seems to us that they both have their merits, and it would be better instead of bandying such terms of reproach as "old Anglican," and "hideous Gregorian," to concede to each what to each belongs. Pope Gregory lived in the sixth century. The science of music was then in its earliest infancy. The laws of modern harmony were unknown. If the combining of notes was resorted to at all, not more than fourths-fifths and octaves were employed; chromatic passages never. The chants and other sacred compositions frequently finished on the fifth of the key (probably accompanied by the first). The progressions and modulations were wholly diatonic and confined to the nearly related major keys and their relative minors. Doubtless they were compiled and arranged in accordance with the *then known* laws of musical science. In this respect Pope Gregory was wiser than those who reject the best works of modern composers, and hold fast to the style of music in use twelve hundred years ago, for it is evident that had Pope Gregory followed the same policy we should have had no Gregorian.

The Gregorian music, as originally used, was sung in unison, and thus it may lay claim to a bold and massive grandeur, while its quaintness invests it with a sort of reverential mystery, and, for that reason, perhaps, it is well adapted to the service of the church; but why draw the line at music? Let us have consistency. Give us also the three or four primitive colors which the old masters employed in the decorations of the churches, the quaint and singular habiliments of the clergy. The processional of monks, and all the other accessories of the service. Give us also the rude and imperfect instrument of that age, the ancient prototype of the grand modern organ, with its keys so heavy that nothing short of a blow from the clenched fist would act upon the levers. That there is a grandeur and simplicity about the Gregorian chants, no one, we think, will deny; but on the other hand they lack the correct form and perfect harmonies of the modern chant, as composed by Arne, Percell, Goss, Smart, Boyce and other able writers of church music, still more recent, and it should be remembered that these Gregorians have all been harmonized by, and owe much of their beauty to the very men who composed the so-called Anglicans. Tastes will always differ, and although the foregoing facts may prove of interest to those who have given the matter little thought. With music, perhaps, more than anything else, will be associated our earliest and most lasting religious impressions, and we shall love that best with which we are most familiar.

Nothing is so pitiable as a bad singer; and the greater the power and capacity of the voice, the more need is there of an ideal perfection in execution.—*Bassini.*

SINGING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

That our country does not produce a superabundance of good voices is a fact that no one will deny. That cold climates produce, with rare exceptions, only basses and baritones, contraltos and mezzo sopranos, is also an established fact. It is not a matter of wonder, in view of these facts, that high tenors and sopranos should be in demand. The natural cause of their scarcity we must submit to, but there is one other cause that most effectually disposes of the few that nature and our climate give to us. We refer to the singing in public and Sunday schools. Now, there is a time in the lives of both boys and girls when the voice is said to change or break; the time at which this break, or change occurs, is generally between the ages of thirteen and fifteen, and will extend over a period of a year or even more. During this time singing should be abstained from, or if it should be indulged in at all, should be practiced with the greatest moderation, great care being taken not to sing too loud, or to force the voice in the direction of its upper compass. Yet what do we find just at this, for the voice, critical period? These young girls—and boys, also—are forced to sing in the so-called vocal instructions of the public schools, or exert themselves in practice for Sunday School conventions and other musical performances. To the ordinary readers this objection may appear purile, but there really lies under it more than appears. The singing in the public or Sunday Schools, as I said, if practised with discrimination and moderation, would not be objectionable; but we find the reverse. The classes are generally in charge of well-meaning, but, in respect to the training of the voice, ignorant persons, and if, as it sometimes happens, that one good, clear voice is found in the class, it is immediately seized upon as the leader, in other words made to sing *against* the entire class of twenty or thirty. The preference which her superior voice secures for her naturally makes her a little vain, and the singer, either from this or the better motive, a really generous desire to assist her teacher and her class, is, on all occasions, most lavish of her voice, which, like the willing horse, is soon worked to death. These remarks though applying to boys, are most significant to girls. And although we cannot expect to reform these errors, we would be understood to say that if your daughter has a promising voice, which, like a thing of beauty is a joy forever, and which you would preserve for her, give careful consideration to the foregoing remarks while there is yet time, and remember a voice cannot be replaced like a fiddle or piano, but once destroyed it is lost forever.

We have received some correspondence which we are obliged to decline, on account of its being written in the form of an editorial. We shall be happy to give place to any matter in reference to Music, Art, or Literature, provided the writer will conform to the conditions published in our notice "To Correspondents."