

Let us speak not in a spirit of defiance, but in a spirit of love, let us eschew all needless expressions which may give offence; above all let us remember that the grand object which we have in view is the discovery of the wisest methods of work, the strengthening of peace, the firmer cohesion of the members of the Body. By this course our very differences will serve to bring out more clearly the unity of our faith, and our diversities of thought will be at once a safeguard and protection against any narrowing of the limits which define the membership of our branch of the Catholic Church.—  
BISHOP MACLAGAN.

# CHURCH THOUGHTS BY A LAYMAN.

No. 51.

## ARCHITECTS AND CHURCH ORGANS.

A VERY instructive and amusing essay might be written upon "Unnatural antagonisms." We know, of course, all about natural antipathies, such as cat and dog, terrier and rat in the lower animal kingdom; and in a little higher, of the dislike felt by the illiterate towards the well informed, and so forth. But why, for instance, a Churchmen should manifest antagonism to the doctrinal system, ritual, discipline and order of the Church is a mystery indeed. Another puzzling antagonism which has recently been developed is that existing between architects and organs, or, more exactly speaking, the antagonism of architects to the musical powers of organs. The natural relation of the architect of a Church to the organ is the same as to the other portions of the edifice, that is, the relation of sympathy and service; his designs should primarily recognize and lovingly forward the sacred object for which the building is to be devoted. An architect worthy the name, thinks first and thinks most earnestly how he can make any church he designs a place best adapted for the divine offices of public worship and public teaching; he consecrates his talents to God and dreams not of building a temple of the Supreme in a sacrilegious spirit of self-display or self-assertion. Why then the temper shown by architects against the music of the organ? For it is against the music, not against the instrument, that architects are set. For this is the state of affairs: at a vast cost a music making machine is put into a church, space for it is provided also at a great cost, and yet the architect studiously arranges that the music to be produced shall be only half heard, and the only object for which the organ is erected shall be largely frustrated and its functions stultified! That is to us one of the greatest mysteries in the realm of art. We are disposed to think that it is a survival of Puritan bitterness and bigotry, and that as the Church has come to its senses about music in the sanctuary, the last kick of the old demon who inspired hatred of music is given through those architects who fight against allowing fair play to organs.

Now we will see how this feeling is exhibited and why it is tolerated. The architect arranges his plan for a new church so as to admit of an organ being erected, he contrives a cunning corner into which it may be carefully stowed away. He calls this corner "organ chamber," and members of the building committee look solemnly at the drawing, rapturously admire the genius displayed in outlining a square chamber, and in imagination they revel in the coming musical thunders and sweetness long drawn out. As the plan begins to develop, lovers of the music which the organ is intended to send forth, amateurs and connoisseurs, experts who know all about musical effects and musical acoustics, see at a glance that the organ chamber is not adapted to display the musical powers of the organ, but is rather most ingenious-

ly arranged to kill those powers and render the music of the organ as ineffective as possible. They speak of this, they protest, but the architect soars aloft on his professional wings, regarding with sublime indifference such mere practical notions as the adapting his plans to the ends the building is erected to serve. "Build an organ chamber so as to give the organ within it full power of expression, to make its tones full, harmonious, true, to make its manipulation easy, what absurd notions!" So exclaims the architect; the building committee thereupon wilts and retires from the contest in disgrace at being detected in cherishing a practical idea. That is the history of a very large number of organs. They are treated as offenders, thrust into a corner, like a naughty boy, or into a brick cell like a condemned murderer, or a wild beast or infuriated lunatic, or like those heroes of romance, SILVIO PELLICO, or the Man in the iron mask, walled in dungeons from whence no sounds can issue! Yet the architect who thus so elaborately arranges to kill the music of an organ has taken infinite pains to find the organ itself a comfortable corner, evidently with some dim idea that he is providing it with an eternal tomb or place of silent rest. But seriously, for it is a very serious question: Why do Church committees allow architects to commit this outrage? Any intelligent man, even without a knowledge of music, has brains enough to know that a musical instrument is ruined by confinement in a place where its sound waves cannot flow out with breadth and freedom? Take an illustration. Ask a piano player to place his or her instrument at a concert, in a bricked up corner or closet; his or her remarks on your wits would be severe. Ask a violinist or the player upon any reed or brass instrument to retire into a bricked-up corner to play his instrument, and he would bid you go to an Idiot Asylum. Ask a singer to retire into a brick closet to show his or her vocal skill, and you would be stared at as a fool. But when space for an organ is to be provided in a church—an organ, mark, which is simply a mechanical imitation of all classes of musical instruments arranged like an orchestra, and of the human voice—then in steps the architect and ordains that this magnificent combination of musical tones, to suit his pleasure, he who knows nothing about music and cares less, shall be bricked up in a corner so that these tones shall be deadened and muffled! We denounce this as a gross wrong done to churches and to musical art, an insult to the builders of organs, an insult to organists, an insult also to every person of taste in the congregation where such a supreme folly is perpetrated.

Architects should either learn acoustics, and so have some principle to guide them, or consult with musical experts, organists, organ builders or known judges of music, in a matter of such moment as the proper position of an organ in church. At present many of our organs are deprived of half their power and half their richness by being built into cells and corners where their tones are choked and confused. Those who have a knowledge of acoustics know that musical waves driven against dead walls, like those of brick organ chambers, are broken up like water dashed against a rock. To compel the streams of tone, which like a flood or rivulet pour from an organ, tones of all qualities producing harmonies most subtle, some delicate as the finest lace, lovely as peach bloom, beautiful as the iridescence of an opal, all blent into a picture, as it were, of light and color and shade, to compel this magic-wave web of sound

waves to strike against brick walls and crowd its way through some narrow aperture in its movement outward is a barbarous offence against science, art, and common sense. Why should organists be tormented with a struggle to display effects which they know are in their instruments, but which cannot be brought out because the architect has bound the organ in a straight jacket of brick? Surely the judgment of a competent organist is, on such a question, far more entitled to respect than the notions of an architect. Surely also a good organ is as high a work of art as the building it is in, and as worthy of display. We would commend, then, to building committees the desirability of forbidding any architect perpetrating the offensive folly of placing a costly organ in a brick tomb.

Architects, the honor of your profession is involved in its art element, take that away and you are mechanics; respect then as brothers in the guild of art those who construct one of the chief triumphs of art skill, an organ; respect, too, the skill, the taste, the art learning of the organist; and in your designs remember the sacred function of the organ in worship and the responsible work of the organist, not as the player of his instrument only, but as the controller of the choir; and with these thoughts in your minds you will stand amazed and ashamed whenever you see an organ jammed into a bricked-up corner, or an organist compelled to sit in discomfort because an architect's lack of knowledge has placed him where the choir cannot be conducted or controlled.

This imperial instrument should be so placed that all its beauties may have untrammelled opportunity of delighting the ears, touching the hearts, inspiring the souls of worshippers as it joins with them in hymning the praises of the Creator of those laws of harmony which are chief among the delights of earth and the enjoyments of heaven.

## COTTAGE HOMES FOR THE AGED.

AMONG the sorrowful variety of positions into which human beings are thrown, few are more pitiable than the lot of the aged who are cast in poverty and solitude upon charity for subsistence. In the old land, where a legal provision exists for the poor, and the State provides a house for the destitute, there yet exists a terrible amount of suffering from want of food and nursing, because the repugnance is so strong in many aged persons to entering the Workhouse. In our visitations of the poor we have met with cases of heart-rending misery being stolidly endured by old men and women who literally preferred to stay in a room they could call their own, and there taking the chance of death by starvation, rather than be comfortably housed and fed in a State Poorhouse. We say "comfortably housed and fed" with a reservation, the comfort being simply that of a domestic animal freed from the necessity of seeking its own meals.

We passed one day up some rickety stairs in a building DICKENS' pen is needed to depict, and tapped at a door before entering. There, upon a heap of straw, lay a veteran soldier dead and untended like a dog on the street. He who again and again had risked his life in youthful manhood for his country lay in extreme old age a corpse, with none around to close his glazed eyes or do for him the decent offices of humanity. He was brave enough to die for his Queen, but shrank from the humiliation of dying in a workhouse. That is a noble feeling, a pride indeed which is the back-

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