

Church Music Society

OCCASIONAL PAPERS, NO. I

THE NEED FOR REFORM IN CHURCH MUSIC

A LECTURE DELIVERED TO THE MEMBERS OF
THE CHURCH MUSIC SOCIETY, ON MAY 29, 1910,
IN ST. PAUL'S CHAPTER HOUSE

BY

J. A. FULLER-MAITLAND, Esq., F.S.A.

PUBLISHED FOR THE CHURCH MUSIC SOCIETY

BY

HENRY FROWDE
AMEN CORNER, LONDON, E.C.

Price Twopenee

OXFORD: HORACE HART
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

THE NEED FOR REFORM IN CHURCH MUSIC

A LECTURE DELIVERED TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH
MUSIC SOCIETY, ON MAY 29, 1910, IN ST. PAUL'S
CHAPTER HOUSE

By J. A. FULLER-MAITLAND, Esq., F.S.A.

I FEAR I am obliged to bore you at the beginning of my remarks on the Need for Reform in Church Music, by some definitions, without which we have no chance of arriving at any clear or practical conclusion. Church Music is a term which must of course include all music performed in a church, or intended to be so performed. In the opinion of certain strict religionists of the past, no music should be allowed to be performed in church but that in which the congregation itself can take audible part. Hymns and chants must naturally form a very important part of church music; but it is surely unnecessary to discuss the question of whether they are the whole. I propose to leave what I have to say about hymns and chants until later, and to deal first with that non-congregational side of church music to which the Church Music Society has for the present confined its attention. For the present, too, the Society refrains from touching the question of organ voluntaries and those oratorio performances which are gaining in frequency in churches that are ambitious about their music.

Towards music that is not actually uttered by the voices of the congregation in praise, supplication, or devotion, it is most desirable that we should each of us

realize our own attitude. Is it to be regarded as an offering, an oblation presented solemnly to the Most High God, or is it simply treated as a means of attracting a large congregation? It seems to me that these two points of view are really directly opposed to one another, although in practice many of us are too apt to merge them in a kind of pious haze in which the glory of God and the amusement of man are agreeably confused. How often do we hear the phrase, 'a bright, cheery, hearty service' used without a thought of the higher things for which services were ordained, and also without any feeling of incongruity or irreverence on the part of those who use it or those who listen to it! Whether acknowledged or not, we can hardly doubt that the motive of the organizers of these 'cheery' services is to get large congregations together, no doubt with the perfectly laudable object of reaching classes otherwise averse from church attendance. But sometimes one feels that this habit of truckling to the passing tastes of the public is debasing music to the level at which it is used by keepers of fashionable restaurants, who hope to disguise the inferiority of their food by the ministrations of a few miserable fiddlers; or by theatrical managers who engage musicians apparently in order that the poverty of the acting may be concealed. But even if we grant that music is to be a kind of 'side-show', or a bait to tempt people into church, then here too a good deal of reform is needed, for the standard of execution must be brought up to a level as high as that attained on the average music-hall stage, where a performer is a hopeless failure unless he possesses not only perfect accomplishment in his own department of skill, but what is called 'conviction', the power that makes it seem as though he enjoyed what he does with all his heart. In churches where music is

used as an attraction to the public, the standard of performance is generally almost as low as the standard of the music performed. Anthems written to catch the ear of the least educated people are sung through in the most perfunctory way, with slipshod execution of the music, bad tone, and every sign of indifference on the part of the choir. In a music-hall no manager would dare to risk his popularity by allowing such carelessly-prepared exhibitions to be placed before his patrons; but the authorities, clerical or lay, of the churches I am speaking of seem to think that what is too bad for men is good enough for God, and they are always ready to excuse the shortcomings of their choir by pointing out that they have no endowment such as cathedrals enjoy, that the choir is largely made up of voluntary helpers, or that we ought to make allowances for defects when the motive is good. They forget that for choirs of every degree of proficiency there exists music that is suitable and within their powers. But, after all, it is a matter of very slight importance how the music in such establishments is done, for most likely it is intrinsically so unfit to be offered as an oblation to the Deity that it can only be properly regarded as a kind of bonus on going to church.

Turning now to the other ideal of church music, that the non-congregational part of the music is held to be a veritable sacrifice offered to a God who has shown, from the first day of creation onwards, that well-ordered beauty is pleasing in His sight, we must surely see to it that what we offer is the best that is possible with the means at our disposal. No part of the Christian Church has a more glorious heritage of music than our own, for, in the old days when England was not behind the other nations in musical creativeness, the greatest of English composers wrote their sublimest music for the church.

From Byrd, Tallis, and Gibbons, by way of Purcell, Humfrey, and Blow, down to the present day, there have been men who have composed undying music for our own ritual with the sincerest devotion and the utmost simplicity of aim, that aim being to glorify God, not to draw their fellow men to hear it performed. Even if our old cathedral music were of less supreme quality than it is, it would still deserve to be had in lasting remembrance on account of the wonderful and truly providential way in which it was preserved to us. In 1641 the Rev. John Barnard, a minor canon of St. Paul's, published the first collection of English Church Music, under the title 'The First Book of Selected Church Musick, consisting of Services and Anthems, such as are now used in the Cathedrall and Collegiat Churches of this Kingdome. Never before printed. Whereby such Bookes as were heretofore with much difficulty and charges, transcribed for the use of the Quire, are now to the saving of much labour and expence, publisht for the general good of all such as shall desire them either for publick or private exercise. Collected out of divers approved Authors.' The work contained a great number of the services and anthems then in use, although, alas! not the whole, for the words 'The First Book' in the title imply that more was to follow. There are ten separate part-books, all of which (it is necessary to bear in mind) were needed for the performance of any of the music contained in the collection. For in those days, as I need hardly tell you, the full score of modern times was a thing unknown. The separate parts, of even the most complicated compositions, existed only in separate books, so that each individual singer contributed his share to the general effect by performing his own part correctly, independently of what the other singers were doing. The difficulty of

practising music under such conditions may be imagined, but no doubt a sort of instinct grew up for certain conventional phrases and turns of thought, and prevented, or at least lessened, the awful confusion that would now be the consequence of a restoration of this way of writing out music. For the guidance of the organist or conductor, a mere skeleton of the leading parts was occasionally provided (this important part seems to have been left out in Barnard's printed edition), but even if it had been there, the 'organ-part', as it was called, would by itself have been of little use in reconstituting the music if the other parts were missing. Now, in the Civil War, which broke out in the year after the book was published, the Parliamentarians devoted a good deal of their energies to the task of annihilating all traces of church music, and they succeeded so well that when in after-years search was made for the book in the cathedral libraries, only eight of the part-books were discovered in the most complete set then existing, that at Hereford Cathedral. I do not say that there was not contributory negligence on the part of choir boys, or that all the fault was with the Roundhead soldiers; but the fact remains that from one or other cause, the copies of a printed book published in the ordinary way were apparently reduced to one, and that incomplete. In 1862 the Sacred Harmonic Society discovered and bought another incomplete set, also consisting of eight books. On comparison with the Hereford books, it was found that a complete set could be made up. So nearly was our glorious English church music turned into a useless relic which, from its imperfection, would have been nothing more. A clever enthusiast, Mr. John Bishop, of Cheltenham, copied the whole of the music out, of course in score, and deposited it in the British Museum, where we of the Church Music Society

and others make good use of it in re-editing the music of the past. It is one of the great hopes of our Society that the complete contents of Barnard may be made available in print again, in so many copies that the iconoclasts of the future shall not be able to bring it so near extermination as the Roundheads did. But I must not linger on the almost miraculous preservation of this treasure, or you will think I am one of those who admire everything that is old simply because it is old. We are none of us, I hope, so blind as that in the Church Music Society, for though we do hold that the old music has suffered unjust neglect in cathedrals and churches alike, yet we recognize that some of it is rather dull, that in all ages men of pure heart have been inspired to create music of the noblest and most truly sacred kind, and that such masters as Walmisley and the two Wesleys, to say nothing of men of more modern days, have written music as devotional and eloquent as that of the old masters.

If the motives of all composers had been equally above reproach, even though the standard of musical attainment had been lower, there would be little need for the reforms which some of us now think most urgently required; but it is unfortunately the fact that a class of composers who were really traffickers in church music arose in the latter part of the Victorian era, and that their productions have gone very far to keep the splendid music of our land out of practical use. The art of music, as we all know, was at an uncommonly low ebb in the middle of the nineteenth century, and the only means of livelihood for one who had a musical turn and wished to live by it was the post of organist. Whether he was a religious man or not, he must almost certainly starve if he could not secure such a post in church or cathedral.

If he were not a real musician, he would be forced to prove his powers by turning out the dry, commonplace works which any tradesman could learn to write; if he were, and his genius lay in the direction of comic opera, he would be driven to express, in trivial chants and anthems, ideas which quite possibly would have gained him real artistic success in the operatic world. Probably, even the author of the notoriously flimsy service called (I am informed, called wrongly) 'Jackson in F' might have won a lasting success in light comic opera. The state of things in which men wrote church music merely because they were organists, and church music was expected of them, is exactly analogous to the condition in which German music found itself in the early days of Wagner, whose famous expression 'Kapellmeister-musik' is used of the productions (generally operatic) of men who wrote music simply because they held certain important posts as conductors.

With the famous ecclesiastical revival of the nineteenth century, when everything was done to revive the ancient glories of the English Church, it might have been expected that some effort would be made to give practical recognition to the splendid music which is the peculiar property of the Anglican Communion, and to bring back the noble cathedral music of England into practical use. Of course, in the cathedrals themselves, the tradition of the great school never quite passed away, but, as I hope to show later on, the tradition of that school has become sensibly weaker in late years. The musical results of the Anglican revival were threefold:—The restoration of Gregorian music to a place of honour; the encouragement of the practice of making adaptations from sacred music written for the Roman Church; and the creation of a school of composers whose education was not sound enough to

keep them from outside influences, men who perpetrated weak imitations of Spohr or Gounod with the utmost complacency and pecuniary success. The models might vary in each generation (the predecessors of these men had, of course, copied Handel and Mendelssohn at different times), but the ineptitude of the imitators remained the same, and if their race should remain, we may look forward to a time when the popular anthem throughout England will be a colourable imitation of Debussy, Richard Strauss, or whoever may be the composer of the moment. It is such men as these imitators who are mainly responsible for the condition in which we find church music to-day. They are perhaps not so much to blame for what they fondly imagine to be their original works as for their treatment of the great monuments of the past. Of the great sets of versicles and responses by Tallis, which are familiar to us all, the only editions easily procurable before the Church Music Society was founded were of such a kind that any student of the strict counterpoint of Tallis's time would have rejected the things as spurious, and a musical contemporary of that master's would have denied their claim to be called music at all. In compositions of that date, as many of you are no doubt aware, the leading part is the tenor, not the treble, as it is in modern music, and in most of these responses, the tenor part (or 'the people's part', as it was called) repeats the musical phrase uttered by the priest in the versicle. This circumstance escaped the notice of the Victorian organists, who brought out one edition after another, with a tenor part of their own manufacture, keeping the treble part, which in the original was of secondary importance, and harmonizing it as if it were a part-song of their own. In like manner their ignorance of the laws of modal harmony allowed

them to present, as Gregorian music, a hybrid of the ancient church tones with all sorts of modern harmonic tricks, and it is no wonder that in this strange guise a great dislike was felt for 'Gregorian' music by ordinary people who had never had the opportunity of judging it on its merits, or hearing it in its pure and austere beauty. Perhaps I ought to point out here that the Church Music Society is not at present dealing with the question of plainsong or Gregorian music; there are at least two other societies which devote themselves to this important branch of church music, and though our own society is on most amicable terms with those who support the movement in favour of the Solesmes form of plainsong, yet it is not our immediate purpose to deal mainly with Gregorian music, further than concerns the plainsong of the ordinary daily services. You may be anxious to ask, perhaps, why the older form of such things is better than the newer, considering the advance which music has made in these latter days. Well, the question is so much a matter of taste that it is not quite easy to answer very convincingly; but in everything else connected with ritual the archaeological position is held to be a very strong one, and in this, the greatest argument in favour of the pure old harmonies in association with the traditional plainsong is based upon the enormous superiority of the effect they produce upon unprejudiced if unlearned hearers. We should, I fancy, have heard little of any musical objection to 'Gregorians' if 'Gregorians' had always been presented in their true guise. In the north of England, and occasionally elsewhere, you may hear sentimental versions of the Litany, which are sometimes the composition of members of the choir or of a former organist. I need not, I am sure, refer to the usual responses after the Commandments, which are sometimes

just tolerable for about three repetitions, and after that excite many people to unseemly emotions; or to the charming selection of waltz-airs to which we are treated as settings of the Benedicite during Lent and Advent.

Although the music to the actual offices of our Prayer Book is of the highest importance, yet the great class of services and anthems must claim almost an equal place in our regard. In almost every cathedral and parish church throughout the kingdom there is the greatest need for reform, for notwithstanding all the talk we hear of the 'Cathedral School of Composers', the authorities who arrange the services of the church very seldom show much practical admiration for the compositions of that school. The cathedrals are of course capable of performing the music of the great period, but too many of them, while keeping the fine anthems in what may be called their repertory, yet give way to prevailing fashion, and admit worthless modern compositions in undue proportions. Obviously a cathedral repertory may contain side by side such noble anthems as Gibbons's 'Almighty and everlasting God' and some miserable part-song to sacred words, but if the part-song is done twenty times in the year, and Gibbons's anthem once, the musical influence of that cathedral can hardly be considered as very satisfactory. Attempts were lately made to ascertain what proportion the old bore to the new music in actual performance; in one case the number of performances given to each anthem during the year was found, and in another, the music of all the cathedrals for one particular week (not a special festival) was compared, with the aid of their weekly lists. The result of both investigations was horrifying to those who care for good music, for the amount of real cathedral music, either ancient or modern, in actual

ordinary use, was as nothing compared with the ocean of cheap and easy productions of the present moment, which could hardly be expected to appeal directly to any conceivable grade of hearer. On one occasion I spent the Easter holidays in the West of England, and saw the lists of three cathedrals, two abbeys, and a number of parish churches, all of which had regular choral establishments. In the aggregate lists of those churches for Easter week, there were literally only two compositions which could be regarded as fine or truly sacred music. One church announced the lovely anthem, 'Lord, for Thy tender mercy's sake,' and in another list there was (I think) an evening service by a modern composer of real eminence. Apart from these there was not a single note at any one of the churches in which a musically-educated person could take the smallest pleasure, and it is difficult to imagine that even the lower class of domestic servant—for whose enjoyment so much of our religious music seems to be designed—could find much to delight them. In nearly all, from cathedral to parish churches, a special feature was the performance of a certain Easter anthem dealing with the appearance of the risen Saviour to the Magdalene, in the course of which the voices of all the trebles shout 'Rabboni!' and the close of which suggests that the proceedings are being terminated by a waltz. There are cathedrals in which, with a properly-trained solo boy, the scene might acquire some of the verisimilitude of an operatic extract, but with a whole row of country boys attempting to impersonate the enraptured Magdalene, the effect produced was very far indeed from edifying. This leads me to the consideration of the evils that arise from not realizing the scope and limitations of each class of choir. On the one hand, many cathedrals have practically lowered their standard to a point far

beneath what they are technically competent to perform, and sing trash excusable only in a village choir; on the other, the parish churches are not less to blame for attempting things that lie far beyond their powers. It is true that the only actual breakdown I ever heard, so that there was a perceptible pause and a recommencement, was in a cathedral—not in a parish church—during a service from which the boys were absent, but at how many parish churches of all kinds may we not find careless performances resulting from the choice of music being unsuited in one direction or other to the abilities of the choir! I well remember that in my own boyhood, there was only one place of worship within a considerable radius of my home in London where any specimens of the fine sacred music of England could be heard, and that was at a Congregationalist chapel, where there was a choir of enthusiasts, and a very well chosen little book of the noblest and simplest anthems in the world.

It seems to me that there are three chief causes for the condition into which church music has come:—
(i) Commercialism, or Professionalism; (ii) want of co-operation between the clergyman and his organist, or, in cathedrals or other foundations, between the different parties among those who arrange the music; and (iii) the desire to attract large congregations by 'playing down' to an assumed standard of bad taste.

(i) Commercialism and Professionalism may for the present purpose be considered as identical. It is the spirit without which all the arts would flourish, and by which artistic and literary progress is hindered to an extent that it is difficult to exaggerate. It is needless to refer to the force which compels so many successful painters, novelists and poets to repeat themselves until they lose all zest in their work; the same power is even

more constantly busy in church music, repressing all originality as if it were irreverent, and forcing the composer, who is dependent on his talent for a living, to turn out commonplaces upon which he has expended no ideas whatever. In this way perhaps things are now not quite as bad as they once were, but as lately as the lifetime of the great Samuel Sebastian Wesley, that master's magnificent service in E was considered so iconoclastic that it only got published through the public-spirited generosity of a Leeds ironmaster. It is hard to believe that in the present day an original service or a sincerely-felt anthem would not get published, but in the ocean of easy compositions which tax listeners' patience more severely than the powers of the average choir, what chance is there of an original piece of church music becoming as familiar to congregations as it ought to be? In this connexion it is also worth considering that the commercial success of a trumpety anthem is an important business matter, while the old music, which brings in nothing to anybody, is (not unnaturally, perhaps) shelved for something more lucrative to the composer. Not that any organist would be so foolish as to recommend his own works for frequent performance in his own church; but we may feel sure that Dr. A.'s popular service will be done at the cathedral where Dr. B. is organist, while in return Dr. B.'s favourite anthem will be duly set before the congregation of Dr. A.'s church under the most favourable conditions.

(ii) The want of co-operation between the clergyman and his organist is a very prolific cause of the vogue of bad music. Things are no doubt better in this respect in cathedral and collegiate foundations, where a broader kind of supervision is the rule; but in the average church it is very rare to find the incumbent and the

organist in real active agreement as to their music. And as generally happens in such cases, it is always the good music that goes to the wall. If the organist is a really enthusiastic and cultivated musician, he will in many cases be so continually galled by the rector's sentimental preferences that he will end by giving way to him altogether and allowing the music to fall into that perfunctory state to which I have before referred. If, as happens more rarely, a clergyman of musical taste has an organist of the commonplace, commercial kind, he will find that an occasional piece of good music is only to be smuggled in with the utmost difficulty. There is always the facile excuse that the choir cannot read even the simplest of the old anthems, that copies are difficult to obtain, or that the singers, the pew-opener, or the sexton, have not been educated up to the standard of appreciation required for the enjoyment of good music. Against these pleas the clergyman will often find it hard to fight, for it is difficult for him to know what anthems there are which will really suit his choir among the crowds of cheap music in publishers' catalogues.

(iii) The third cause of the present state of church music is one of the hardest to combat, the habit of submitting everything to an imagined standard of low taste in music. We are often, I might say always, met by the objection on the part of ecclesiastical authorities with whom we may be pleading for a little good music as an occasional relief to the bad, 'You must remember that we have to consult all tastes, and that the church is not a concert-room.' If all tastes were really consulted, there would be nothing to say against this remark, but as a fact it generally happens that those who make it are careful to consult only one taste, their own and that of the average domestic servant. Has it ever been con-

sidered, I wonder, that 'popular' services may drive out of church some of those whose spiritual well-being is no less important than that of the kitchenmaid? Let the kitchenmaid wallow in the most sentimental effusions of Moody and Sankey, or the warlike strains of the Salvation Army, but let provision also be made for people whose education prevents them from enjoying these methods of exciting religious fervour. There is, besides, a considerable danger of under-estimating the artistic level of the general public, and in the world of music outside the church this has been illustrated in a way which has astonished all but the few who for years past used vain endeavours to get the experiment tried of giving good music unadulterated to the people. The Promenade Concerts of London were formerly rather dismal affairs, the 'popular' programmes of which were 'popular' only in the sense of being of poor quality, and when Sir Henry Wood had the courage to give the best possible music without any timid compromise, the result very soon showed that his confidence was not misplaced, and that there was an amount of musical taste and instinct spread throughout the public of London which was quite beyond the expectation of anybody but a few enthusiasts. The crowds which stand nightly in the summer to hear symphonies of Beethoven are no 'faddists', but genuinely delight in music. Why, then, should not some attempt be made somewhere to cater for these same tastes in the services of the church, even if we take the low ideal of church music to which I referred at the beginning? There is an inherent 'driving power', as we may call it, in art of the finest kind, which must carry it home to the general public, while bad art of all kinds requires encouragement from the outside in order to make it tolerable even to the uneducated.

The Church Music Society deals with all these three drawbacks, for its lists of services and anthems, classified according to difficulty, cannot fail to encourage the artistic aspirations of those who are crying out for reform and do not know how to set about it; and while the antiquarian value of the reprints is carefully kept in mind by those who edit them from the best authorities, there is no want of catholicity in the selection of the music reprinted, which has only two points in common, that all are of fine quality, and that for one reason or another they have hitherto been difficult to procure in editions at once accurate and cheap.

I have purposely deferred till now the difficult question of hymn-tunes for several reasons. In the first place, the Church Music Society has as yet left that branch of work untouched; and, in the second, the question is one on which it is hardly possible to find two people in exact agreement. Go through a hymn-book with your most intimate friend, one who thinks as you do on every detail of musical taste, and you will, I think, be surprised to find that he will confess to a sneaking regard for some dreadful piece of inanity, while he will probably hold up hands of horror at some of your own preferences. The reason is, of course, obvious to every one who considers the power of association. We are all accustomed to certain hymns from childhood; we heard them at our mother's knee, or sang them at school, and thus grew up to delight in some and to detest others, both opinions being quite possibly baseless and prejudiced. Association is, indeed, one of the great attractions of hymns, and happy are the people who, like the Germans or the Scots, have inherited in past generations such noble things as the chorales with their splendid tunes, or the metrical Psalms with their fine melodies gathered from different quarters. These

racers have a groundwork of solid, sincere, straightforward music to fall back upon, and even if some of the Scottish Psalms (versified, I may remark, by an Englishman) contain quaint turns of expression or forced rhymes, there is much in them that comes home to a Scotsman's heart as nothing else can ever do. In the case of some of the Scottish hymn-books the work of certain editors has been wholly harmful; many have been brought into line with the most mawkish of the Anglican collections, and in many other ways evil has been done. To trace, from one book to another, the changes made in the noble tune which Burns alludes to as 'plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name', is to receive a striking lesson in the incredible narrowness of artistic sense which was engendered in our commonplace organists during the nineteenth century. With the scientific study of the church modes—which are, of course, not the exclusive property of any one sect or creed—there has come into being of late years a race of accomplished, wide-minded musicians who have done much to restore to such a tune as this its original austerity, ruggedness, and emotional force. The plainsong hymns of the Catholic Church are already enshrined and preserved in their purity, and there is no fear that these melodies will be tampered with as they were in the days of the Tractarian movement in England. Some day, perhaps, we may see the subject of hymns treated with the same reverence that other works of art receive, with a result that will be less disappointing than the reception given to the most remarkable attempt of the kind that has yet been made. The popular collection, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, had, in the course of years, become overlaid with sentimentalism of every description, and the proprietors recently sought the aid of a strongly representative committee, to whom

they entrusted the work of preparing a new edition. The office hymns were set to their proper tunes, and these were associated with harmonies in keeping with their character; beautiful old hymns were restored to the collection, and the original versions of the words and the music were found and printed wherever it was possible, though, of course, there were many cases of questionable alteration. The weight of public prejudice was found to be too strong for the book, and in a great number of churches the old collection is retained in use, while the comparative failure of the new edition has called forth a certain number of rivals, in some of which an attempt was made to 'run with the hare and hunt with the hounds' by placing hymns and tunes of the Salvation Army pattern side by side with the plainsongs of antiquity. The annotated historical edition of the new *Hymns Ancient and Modern* throws much light on the uncompromising attitude of the edition, and there can be no reasonable doubt that some day, when our nineteenth-century prejudices have faded away a little, we shall see what a fine piece of work it is. If only the general public could be got to study hymns and tunes with some of the attention they devote to the text of a favourite poet, things would soon right themselves. But for the present we must be content to wait until the characteristics of the modern fashionable hymn shall have gone to join the ridiculous conventions of certain eighteenth-century effusions, with their odd little attempts at contrapuntal imitation. The only specimens of this type of tune now in common use, as far as I know, are the Christmas 'Adeste Fideles' and 'Miles Lane', and it may be that some of the best of the mawkish tunes of which some of us are now so tired will remain, like these, for the sake of old times, when

the bulk of them shall have ceased to resound in our churches.

Another rather thorny question is that of the Chant, which after all is to some extent dependent upon the attitude we take up in regard to plainsong. The Anglican chant is, of course, an anomaly from the historical point of view as well as from the artistic. It is, in its essence, an attempt to combine some of the features of plainsong with a metrical regularity which is entirely foreign to the spirit of plainsong. The jiggy chants which have to be changed so often in the course of a long psalm because the congregation would get so tired of them if only one were kept for each psalm, are supposed to be a source of genuine gratification to many worshippers; but one cannot help suspecting that their popularity has been fostered by the circumstance that a chant is the very easiest thing in the world to write. Notwithstanding certain specimens which approach the simplicity of plainsong, such as Pelham Humfrey's 'Grand Chant', some of us feel that the restoration of the real plainsong would not only be a positive gain in itself, but would have the additional advantage that it would sweep away the Anglican chant. As for the Double chant, association is the only thing which can excuse it, and the Quadruple chant is an invention which it is difficult to refer to in temperate language.

With all the faults of the old 'twirly' hymn-tunes or of the sugary and effeminate tunes of modern days, and notwithstanding the monotonous rhythm of the Anglican chants, and their poverty of invention, we may yet feel sure that many of them, if not all, have at some time been, to some one or other, a vehicle for a pure offering of devotion; only, is there any real reason why a composition of sterling merit and appropriateness

should not serve the purpose as well as a trashy one? The argument based on the difficulty of understanding the better sort of music is a good deal weaker than it sounds, for in all other things people are quite ready to accept the fact that a poem, a picture, a symphony, and even an opera may not convey its whole message to the untrained mind at the very first moment. There is indeed a force in the phrase 'omne ignotum pro magnifico' which recognizes the fact that people are impressed by what they do not as yet thoroughly understand. Surely, too, each of us can realize that in early life we were often impressed by things inherently big that we could not at once appreciate or apprehend; and these kind of impressions, like acquired tastes, are very apt to remain with us through life, being strengthened, not weakened, as 'knowledge grows from more to more'. As Keble says:

O say not, dream not, heavenly notes
In childish ears are vain;
That the young mind at random floats
And cannot catch the strain.

One great power of the Roman Church is its encouragement of this sense of mystery, and without imitating that church in other ways we might well take a hint from her as to a perfectly natural human feeling, and we should be in a happier position in regard to our music if we were under some such authority as the wise Pope who has enjoined on his church the compulsory use of the finest music at the most important services, leaving the music at later services of the day to be as vulgar as may be desired. The result of this decree, though it has not been universally obeyed by any means, is that at the Westminster Cathedral we have a church, where cultivated musicians, the people who throng to the Queen's

Hall to hear symphonies and high-class music of all kinds, can be fairly certain of hearing music that is truly sacred performed in the best way possible, and not a single note unworthy of the sanctuary. Would that it were easy to point to Anglican churches where the same confidence could be felt! There are a few churches even in London, like the Temple, where a splendidly high standard is maintained; at various college chapels in both Universities, notably at St. John's College, Cambridge, and New College, Oxford, one is sure to be musically as well as spiritually edified; and at the Birmingham Cathedral a spirit of ardent enthusiasm for the best things has been reigning for some time, so that the services there are, I believe, always beautiful and impressive, and the unimportant result of a large congregation has been one of the lesser rewards of the undertaking. I do not wish to imply that these are all the churches where good music is the rule.

If the splendour of our cathedral music were oftener allowed to illuminate our lives, even those who might at first be dazzled by it would soon acquire some of the taste for its enjoyment, and, more than this, they would insensibly gain the power of joining actually, though not audibly, in music of the elaborate kind; so it would become a real oblation offered to God with a single-hearted sincerity, for, whatever our musical capacity, we may really take part in the music, 'singing and making melody in our hearts unto the Lord.'