

Easter Music

The arrival of Easter is always marked by special music and the glad strains of the best composers are sung by choristers and soloists who have been rehearsing for weeks to fitly celebrate the resurrection of the Crucified One.

It is a good thing that Easter is celebrated magnificently, for it attracts to the churches many persons who make their annual visit to the temple of the Lord of Hosts. Many of these annual church-goers, who pride themselves on their regular church attendance—that is, every Easter—are attracted by the music. The churches aim to make the day the most memorable of the year, and why not? In celebrating Christmas they celebrate the birth of Christ, but other men were born: in celebrating Good Friday they commemorate the suffering and death of Christ, but others have suffered and died, but on Easter comes the climax, the celebration of the resurrection, for who else died and was buried and rose again from the dead?

Easter calls forth the most dignified, the most sublime and the most exalted strains. In Protestant churches the "Hallelujah" Chorus, from Handel's wonderful masterpiece, "The Messiah," will be sung. That thrilling chorus is the real climax of the work and Handel says that while composing it he did think that he "saw all heaven before him and the great God himself."

The great musical creed, the most marvelous confession of faith that has been put in the mouth of a singer, "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth," from the same oratorio, will be sung by many a soprano. In the Episcopal churches the paschal chant will be sung, "Christ Our Passover Is Sacrificed for Us." Easter hymns and glad carols will pour forth from the willing lips of many singers and the grand organs will be heard praising the God of all Harmony, with lips of wood and metal, with the trumpet and the diapason, doing the bidding of the soul of a man.

Favorite Chorals.

The processional and the recessional will be filled with joy and the spirit of the church music will be "Hallelujah." In the Catholic churches the priest will repeat the "Haec dies," (This is the day that the Lord hath made), after the second collect, and again at the post-communion, while in some places it will be sung at the offertory. The glad strains of the "Regina coeli, laetare" will be heard and the "Vida aquam" will, in most large churches, be heard instead of the "Asperges." The "resurrexit" in the Credo will be emphasized. In connection with the famous "Regina coeli" the following story is told. It is related that in the days of St. Gregory the Great, Rome was visited by a serious plague. The pope ordered all the people to march in procession, carrying the picture of the Blessed Virgin, painted by St. Luke. As the crowds went toward St. Peter's and reached the bridge across the Tiber a multitude of angels was seen above the picture, singing the first lines of the anthem. The pontiff, tradition says, cried out, "Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia," completing the anthem, and the angel of the plague was seen sheathing his sword above Adrian's mausoleum, which henceforth was known as the castle of Sant Angelo.

The "Regina coeli" is an anthem in honor of the Blessed Virgin, which begins with these words, and after each of the four clauses therein contained come the word "alleluia." It is said at the end of the offices of the Breviary during the Easter season. The well-known modern composer, Pietro Mascagni, who has made himself famous by his opera, "Cavalleria Rusticana," uses part of this hymn for the opening of his celebrated scene and prayer, familiarly known as the "Easter Chorus." One of the reasons for the ecclesiastical importance of Easter is that all the movable feasts are reckoned from that day.

The origin of the word is attributed to the Saxon goddess "Eastre," who is again met with in the German "Ostrara," the divinity of dawn, and the word has been retained just in the same way as the name of some of our week days, for instance, "Thor's Day."

Easter Hymns.

In the scripture lessons which are read on Easter day, as well as in the hymns that are sung, there is frequent allusion to the Paschal Lamb and the Passover. The word "passover" is the literal translation of the Hebrew name for the feast. The "Passover," or "Pasch," was the feast celebrated on the fourteenth day of Nisan, and was instituted in commemoration of the wonderful deliverance God wrought for the Jews on the night when they made their departure from Egypt. Christ observed the "Passover" on the night previous to His death, and so He has typified the "Paschal lamb," which was offered as a sacrifice. The bread eaten on occasions of the Passover feast was to be unleavened, and hence the allusion in the "Christ, Our Passover," already referred to, wherein the words are sung, "Not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

It is unfortunate that the present generation of writers has contributed little of worth to musical literature in the way of hymns, anthems or oratorios. Where in all modern hymnology is there a poem equalling the splendid majesty and the heart throbbing pathos of the old "Stabat Mater Dolorosa?"

There is a trend in the direction of trashy hymns and insulting doggerel which is sold as praise of the Almighty and which smacks more of the music publisher than the musician. The country is flooded with hymn-books which are more compatible with the worship of Venus and Bacchus than the worship of the Risen Lord. These hymn-books are sold and ministers of the gospel

have been known to receive royalties for introducing them, and the trivial effusions of hysterical song writers are driving the people to a revulsion of feeling such as was experienced once before in the opposite direction when the church people were regaled with such doleful stuff as this:

My thoughts on awful subjects roll,
Damnation and the Dead,
What horrors seize the guilty soul
Upon a dying bed,
It is not strange that hymns of this nature would not appeal to men and women unless they were dyspeptics.

Milton's Ideal Music.

Milton had the right idea of praising the Creator of All Things, Judge of all Men, when he said:

Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of heaven's joy,
Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse,
Wed your divine sounds and mixed power employ,
Dead things, with inbreathed sense, able to pierce,

And to our high-raised fantasy present
That undisturbed song of pure concert,
Aye sung before the sapphire-colored throne
To Him that sits thereon,
With saturnally shout and solemn jubilee,
Where the bright Seraphim in burning row
Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow,
And the cherubic host in thousand choirs
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires
With those just spirits that wear victorious palms.

Hymns devout and holy psalms,
Singing everlastingly.

It was in this way that the mediaeval hymn-writers impressed the world. Then sacred music was in reality a mastery and superb by the arts of poetry and music. It was in truth a wedding of voice and verse. In the quiet seclusion of a cloister, in the frugal plainness of an ascetic's cell much of the immortal Easter music of the world was born.

With no allurements to hold them to this earth the pious monks feasted their imaginations and their souls on the hopes of the future state. They dreamed, thought and sang of Paradise and no lover ever sang with more burning zeal of his beloved than did they when singing of their future home and the glories thereof.

It was this feeling of intense desire and longing for Paradise that Bernard of Cluny, the pious old saint, felt in his soul, which impelled him to write, away back in the twelfth century, that glorious hymn so well known to modern church-goers of every denomination:

Jerusalem, the golden,
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice oppressed.

This is part of an old poem written by Bernard, the title of the whole work being "De contemptu mundi." The earliest Easter hymn of which we have any definite knowledge is that entitled "Hic est die verus Dei" (This is the very day of God). It was written by St. Ambrosius, bishop of Milan, about the year 374 A. D. This is the same distinguished ecclesiastical luminary to whom is attributed the "Te Deum." The latter is doubtful, however, but the authenticity of the former is unquestioned.

Ancient Easter Poems.

Another ancient Easter poem, whose origin is traced to the sixth century, is the one beginning "Ad coenam Agni providi." This is said to have been a favorite hymn to be sung by the newly baptized catechumens in the early church, when for the first time they, clad in white, partook of the blessed sacrament. A modern and fairly literal translation of this hymn is found in many hymnals of the present day and begins:

At the Lamb's high feast we sing,
The next writer to whom we are attracted by his beautiful work is Venantius Fortunatus, who was born about the year 530. He was a great scholar and being impressed with the solemnity of the responsibilities of life he connected himself with a monastery and he has given to the collection of church music three famous hymns. The first is "Vexilla Regis prodeunt," which is introduced into the oratorio of "The Redemption," by Charles Gounod and which

is well known by its translation, "Forth the Royal Banners Go."

The second is the "Pange Lingua gloriosi" (Sing, my tongue, the Savior's battle), a translation found in the Episcopal hymnal of today. The third is a well known Easter hymn. Its Latin title is "Salve, festa dies," and the English title is "Welcome, Happy Morning."

One of the most beautiful of the early Easter hymns is that which begins "Pone luctum, Magdalena." It is of uncertain authorship and unfortunate is it indeed that such is the case. It has been happily translated by Rev. E. A. Washburn and a verse of it will suggest the beauty of its thought and construction:

Still thy sorrow, Magdalena,
Wipe the tear drops from thine eyes
Not at Simon's board thou kneelest,
Pouring thy repentant sighs,
All with thy glad heart rejoices
All things sing with happy voices,
Hallelujah!

Old-Time Easter Hymns.

In the twelfth century there stands out conspicuously Bernard of Clairvaux, one of whose most comforting hymns is a popular favorite today, in its English form:

Jesu, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills the breast,
Many persons do not know that this is an Easter hymn, for the reason that hymnal compilers have for some reason omitted two of the most beautiful stanzas:

With Mary to the tomb I'll haste,
Before the dawning skies,
And all around, with longing cast
My soul's inquiring eyes.

Beside thy grave I'll make my moan,
And sob my heart away,
Then at thy feet sink trembling down,
And there adoring stay.

Before closing it must be mentioned also that the beautiful hymn which stands at the top of the list of Easter hymns of modern days,

The strife is o'er; the battle done,
is from one of the early and unknown writers, but it is evidently from the twelfth

century. The title is "Finita iam sunt proelia."

Would that the mantle of these old writers might fall on some in this generation. The idea of life, however, is so changed, and there are so many beautiful things in this life for which to exist, that there is less thought of the future joys, and the nervous hurry of events precludes the idea of contemplation. Let us be thankful for the works of the past, at any rate, and use them.

THOMAS J. KELLY.

Richest Church

In America

Old Trinity church, New York City, has attained to distinction in two widely divergent matters; in the honor of its territory; in the wealth of its corporation. What is written below concerns its corporate wealth. As a matter of history, the original church was opened for worship in 1697. The early church was maintained by the income from the "church farm," a royal grant from Queen Anne. Out of this income Rev. William Vesey, first rector of Trinity church, received a yearly salary of \$5,100. Today that same "church farm" is valued at from \$9,000,000 to \$10,000,000, and its possession makes Trinity the wealthiest single church corporation in the United States. Out of its annual income of over \$500,000 Rev. Morgan Dix receives a salary of \$25,000. This salary is more than double that of Bishop Potter of the diocese of New York, who receives but \$12,000. This large income is exhausted by many claims; the expenses of the church proper, the support of the chapels, the large yearly grants to twenty-four parishes, the payment of taxes and assessments and the maintenance of the parochial schools and other parish charities. The rental of the "church farm" property constitutes the main source of Trinity's income. The property is scattered widely throughout the city. Much of it, however,



THOMAS J. KELLY—MUSICAL CRITIC OF THE BEE.

lies in the near vicinity of the church. It is rented for various purposes—for public buildings, stores and tenements. The year book of Trinity parish states that the parish is "systematically canvassed, and all cases where the ministrations of the church are needed are reported immediately to the rector."

Among the considerable drains on the Trinity income are the expenses of the church proper and the support of the chapels. Twenty-five thousand dollars goes, as above stated, for the salary of Rev. Mr. Dix. Assisting Mr. Dix in the work of the church and its chapels are eight vicars and sixteen curates and they receive each one from \$5,000 to \$10,000. The sextons of the church and the several chapels receive \$15,000 and each one is furnished with a deputy and an assistant.

The music of the church costs much. The many choir boys receive, each one, from \$24 to \$100 yearly. The soloists, of which there are eighteen, receive from \$200 to \$400. For the church itself there is a yearly musical appropriation of \$10,000, for each one of the seven chapels, \$7,500, making a total of over \$60,000. That the maintenance of excellent music in churches is right and admirable is conceded. The church has ever held music to be a softening influence on the hearts of the sinful, solace to all the penitent. A good work is carried on by Trinity in the matter of its schools. For the maintenance of parochial schools the vestry yearly appropriates the sum of \$22,000; for the maintenance of night and industrial schools, \$5,000.

Trinity hospital for the sick and poor is maintained by the corporation at a yearly expense of \$9,000. The corporation also makes provision of \$3,000 for the support of seven beds in other hospitals. From the corporation income a yearly contribution of \$10,000 is made for the support of the poor of \$6,000 is made. The whole yearly cost of the maintenance of charities within the parish, which are supported out of the corporation income, averages \$50,000; for charities without the parish, \$30,000—a total of \$80,000.

Ballad of the Barren Easter

Clinton Scollard in Woman's Home Companion.

It was the barren Easter,
And o'er Pamello plain,
Where'er the sweeping eye might rove,
From beechen grove to beechen grove,
Greened neither grass nor grain.

It was the barren Easter:
By vale and windy hill,
Where blossoms tossed on yester year
Now bourgeoned no narcissus spear,
And glowed no daffodil.

It was the barren Easter,
And toward the grinding-floor,
A store of wheat within his pack,
Along the dreary meadow-track
Went good Saint Isadore.

It was the barren Easter,
And when the sweet saint came
To where a mighty live-oak spread,
A host of wrens and starlings red
Seemed crying out his name.

It was the barren Easter,
And to his ears their cry,
Rang plaintively, "O Isadore,
Grant us thy pity, we implore!
Give succor, or we die!"

It was the barren Easter,
When wild he flung his store,
And all the feathered folk of air
Sped whirling downward for their share
From kind Saint Isadore.

It was the barren Easter,
And onward to the mill
Along the dreary meadow-track,
The empty bags within his pack,
The good saint plodded still.

It was the barren Easter;
He scarce knew why on went,
Save that he did not dare return
To face his master, grim and stern,
Now all the grain was spent.

It was the barren Easter;
When at the miller's feet
He cast the sacks in dull despair,
Behold, he saw them open there
Abram with golden wheat!

It was the barren Easter;
Oh, meager are men's words,
To tell how He who rose that day,
And drove the wrath of Death away,
Helped him who fed the birds!

The Easter Window

Philadelphia Times.
'Twas Eastertide and Easter gowns
Approached the window space
Where each was told in accents mild
To occupy her place.

With maiden joy the Organist
Essayed to take her stand
Just where she thought the morning sun
Could slyly kiss her hand.

And then the Grenadine walked up
With lace and frills galore,
And crowded to the foremost place
Upon that showroom floor.

Unmindful of the modest Cloth,
With military braid,
Of dainty Lawn, or dotted Swiss,
Or natty Tailor-made.

But all her grace began to place
When, with a mighty stride,
The Brocade Silk moved in apace,
And bade them all aside.

"I've held the leading place," she said,
"In yonder gay Parterre,
My Louis Fourteenth neck must show
My birth of high degree.

"At every ball I enter first,
At drawing rooms and teas—
Keep off my train, you Linnen Miss!
What country bumpkins these!"

With that the Purple Velvet frowned,
The Breakfast Gown turned green,
While one by one the passersby
Looked in upon the scene.



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