

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

"WHAT DOEST THOU FOR ME?"

A motto placed under a print of Christ in the study of a German Divine.

"I gave my life for thee,
My precious blood I shed,
That thou might'st be convinced
And quickened from the dead—
I gave my life for thee:
What hast thou given for Me?"

"I spent long years for thee,
In weariness and woe,
That an eternity
Of joy thou might'st know—
I spent long years for thee:
Hast thou spent one for Me?"

"My Father's house of light—
My rainbow-circled throne
I left for earthly night,
For wanderings sad and lone—
I left it all for thee:
Hast thou left aught for Me?"

"I suffered much for thee,
More than thy tongue can tell,
Of bitterest agony,
Thee to preserve from hell—
I suffered much for thee,
What dost thou bear for Me?"

"And I have brought to thee,
Down from My home above,
Salvation full and free,
My Spirit and My love,
Great gifts I brought to thee:
What hast thou brought to Me?"

"Oh, let thy life be given,
Thy years for Me be spent,
World-letters all be riven,
And joy with suffering blent—
Give thou thyself to Me,
Gladly I'll welcome thee!"

Religious.

RITUALISM IN LONDON.

On Good Friday there were exhibitions and religious processions in London, such as have not been seen since the Reformation. The Church of England Ritualists appeared in the streets of St. Georges-in-the-East, and went through a number of them, carrying a large gilt cross covered with crape, &c.

It had been announced during the week that on Good Friday there would be a series of services in the church, and that in the afternoon there would be a procession of "The Way of the Cross" through the parish with litanies, hymns, and short addresses. Accordingly, at four o'clock, the church being tolerably full, Mr. Lowder, who was habited in a plain cassock, and accompanied by Mr. Stanham, his curate, and another clergyman, entered, and kneeling before a large cross, draped in black, which stood on the high altar, said one or two short prayers. The clergy and congregation then proceeded into the courtyard of the church, a vast mass of persons having meanwhile assembled outside the gates. Mr. Lowder having invited as many as chose to come in, delivered a short address on the leading characteristics of the day, and a special litany was sung. Then a procession was formed, consisting of choristers, clergy, and such other persons as were inclined to join it. Preceding it was a gentleman who held on high a gold cross veiled in crape, and this was carried before the clergy during the whole of the ceremony of the day. Mr. Lowder and his friends made a halt at the corner of Worcester street. Addressing the people, he said they were going that day through the painful stations of the way of the Cross. Of the first he had spoken in the court-yard before they started. The second station in the way of the Cross was when Christ received his cross, and when he was condemned to death. On this point he delivered an impassioned address, in which he showed how every disciple of Christ received his Cross in the world. At its close the procession re-formed, the upraised veiled Cross being, as before, carried in

front, and the choristers and sympathisers with the movement singing the hymn, "Jesus, Refuge of the Weary." The procession again halted at a place called Greyhound-court, and here Mr. Lowder said the third station in the way of the Cross was that in which Christ fell under the weight of the Cross. On this he preached with great fervour, showing how men were continually falling through sin and temptation. Then another movement was made, the hymn, "Oh, come and mourn with me awhile" being solemnly sung. The next halt was made in Trench-street. Mr. Lowder said the fourth station in the way of the Cross was when Christ was met by his mother when he was going out of Jerusalem. On this he founded an energetic appeal to mothers, of whom there were at least a hundred before him with babies in their arms. In Bird-street Mr. Lowder delivered an address on the fifth station, in which the Cross was laid upon Simon of Cyrene. Christ had fallen down under the weight of his Cross, and his cruel persecutors, rather than lose the sight of his death, made a poor countryman bear it. The influence of the Cross penetrated his heart, and on this incident Mr. Lowder founded his instruction. Mr. Lowder said the fifth station of the Cross was that in which the woman coming out from the crowd, and seeing the sad face of Jesus and his exhausted state, gave him a cloth to wipe his face. It had been said that the impression of his face was made upon the cloth. The next halt was made at the corner of King-street, when Mr. Lowder spoke of the sixth station, when Jesus fell a second time. Then on a large open space at the end of King-street, he spoke of the eighth station of the cross—the women of Jerusalem weeping for Christ. A little farther on he spoke of the ninth station, when Christ fell a third time, after having nearly reached the top of Mount Calvary. At Wapping-wall Mr. Lowder spoke of the tenth station on the way to the Cross—Jesus stripped of his garments at the place of execution; and farther on, of the eleventh station, in which Christ was laid on the Cross. The procession then moved to Calvert-street, and here Mr. Lowder spoke of the twelfth station, and the death of Christ after hanging for three hours on the Cross; and the thirteenth station, Christ taken down from the Cross. This concluded the circuit of the parish, in which just three hours were occupied; and the vast mass of persons who had by this time assembled, and many of whom had followed Mr. Lowder throughout, sang with great vigour Toplady's celebrated hymn, "Rock of ages, cleft for me." The procession then moved into the court-yard of the church, where Mr. Lowder spoke briefly on the fourteenth stage of the way of the Cross—"Christ taken down from the Cross;" and then pronounced the benediction. Immediately afterwards the church was crowded, and evening service was commenced.

Notwithstanding such demonstrations as these the church that allows them pretends to be a great bulwark of Protestantism. Instead of that we think its tendency is rather in the way of helping on genuine Romanism, and bringing those of the people who do not discriminate between the Cross and the crucifix, to prefer the more imposing ceremonials of the Catholic Church to the pure and simple gospel of Christ.

Musical.

The principal public gatherings in London on the week before Easter, and especially on Good Friday were to listen to sacred Oratorios. In the Crystal Palace at Sydenham it is estimated that there were more than 50,000 persons present. Of course there were also the ordinary attractions, amongst which are the Siamese twins, the Nova Scotia giantess, Miss Swan, &c., &c. but the chief feature on that day was the Sacred Concert. The London Standard describes the audience as "a sea of human heads—one mighty mass of men and women

covering the floor, the orchestra, the side passages, and all the galleries as far as the eye can stretch. To fill such a space is a task to which no voice, however clear, powerful, or piercing, could be equal. The concert began with the grand Old Hundredth Psalm, sung by the chorus and the audience, accompanied by the united bands and the great organ."

Handel's "Messiah" is the great masterpiece of music for such occasions. Out of seven great popular musical festivals during that week, the "Messiah" was performed at four of them. The high estimation in which this musical composition is held is regarded as proof of the superior musical cultivation of the present day in London.

THE MUSIC OF ORIENTAL COUNTRIES.

BY ROBERT MORRIS, L.L.D.

The first thought that occurs to a traveler in an oriental city, while listening to the natives as they break into singing, which they are prone to do upon the least provocation, is, "Can this be a relic of the ancient music of this country?" I went to Syria favorably disposed towards all the antique customs of Bible lands. My heart was not set upon the recognition of usages, laws and habits, dating back to the days of Abraham. I had the Holy Scriptures at my fingers' ends, and meant to stamp upon all the sights and sounds that I should observe there, the mark of Biblical identity, as far as possible.

Well, in regard to the music of the country, it appears to me an utter and irremediable failure. It can not be a relic of ancient days, for it is inconceivable that a people possessing an iota of musical taste could ever have practiced it or tolerated it. The Hebrews, we know, had an elevated system of harmony,—not so perfect, of course, as some of the systems of modern times, but one that permitted a blending of vocal and instrumental notes,—a course of solo, duet, and chorus, of fugue and simple strains, of the softest and the loudest sounds. Compare those passages in 2d Chronicles, fifth chapter, where the dedication of Solomon's temple was accompanied with sublimest music. "The Levites, which were the singers, all those of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons, and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals, psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets. The trumpets and singers were as one to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord. And they lifted up their voice with the trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, 'For he is good; his mercy endureth forever.'" In reading these and similar passages, must we not admit that the Hebrew music, like the Hebrew psalms, was incomparable? What a pity that while the latter are preserved as David and his successors wrote them, the former is irrevocably lost. Let the reader, for instance, visit a Jewish synagogue and compare the unequalled words of the chanting with the disagreeable whine to which they are sung.

In regard to the popular music of Syria and Palestine, I am not doing it any injustice when I say that it is a compound of all the unpleasant sounds in nature. Even when sung by professional singers, (and I listened to professional singers at Jebale and Jerusalem by the hour together), it is scarcely endurable. Rarely exceeding in range three tones, (with the semi-tones, five notes in all), the monotony alone is appalling.

TIME AND LEADERSHIP IN CHURCH MUSIC.

A correspondent of the New York Musical Gazette asks a question, which has doubtless suggested itself to many others: "Some singers always sing faster when singing louder, and sing slower when singing softer; is this right?" The editor replies:

"No, no, and again we say no. How often we have had to fight this universal tendency of choirs and choruses. While singing forte or mezzo all goes well enough, but in rendering a piano passage the time is retarded more and more till perhaps the original movement is entirely lost sight of.—Why it should be so difficult we do not understand, but certain it is that it is one of the last achievements of even the best trained choruses to sing a pianissimo passage in strict time. Yet that is the only proper way. If the composer wishes a piano passage retarded he will unquestionably give directions to that effect."

Another question submitted is,

"Our organist thinks that he ought to play just as he thinks best, while the choir-leader thinks that he (the choir-leader) being the musical director, should control the organ as well as the singers, and whenever the playing does not suit him, he has the same right to tell the organist to alter his playing as he has to tell one of his choir to sing differently. What do you think about it?"

To this a very sensible reply is given, by the editor, as follows:

"'No man can serve two masters.' There cannot properly be two directing or controlling influences in a choir any more than in an army, and if there is to be but one head the choir leader should be that one. He is virtually responsible for the whole, and ought therefore, to have the control of the whole. Yet any chorister of good sense, will be very unwilling to raise an issue between himself and the organist. On the other hand, any organist of right feeling will certainly strive earnestly to carry out the wishes of the leader; yes, we may say even if the doing so conflicts a little with his own judgment and taste. What a golden opportunity is afforded under such circumstances for the exercise of mutual forbearance. We cannot undertake to give definite advice in the case alluded to by our correspondent, not knowing enough about the circumstances. But we will give a recipe that is warranted to be sure in its results. If faithfully followed there can never be the least shadow of a difficulty between the two parties. It is not original. We saw it in a quaint old-fashioned book we were reading one day, and it seemed to us to furnish a sure preventive to many of the ills that choirs are heir to. It is this: 'Let brotherly love continue.'"

PITCH.—A London correspondent of the N. Y. Musical Gazette says:

We are as far from the settlement of the pitch question as ever. Agreement is hardly to be looked for, and even if it were obtained, the money necessary for new instruments, &c., would not be forthcoming. So the only result is likely to be confusion. Already we have three different pitches in use—the "Operatic," the "French," and the "Philosophic."

It is not unlikely that we may have more before things come to the worst. Such is the penalty we pay for living in a free country. In France, the Minister of State issued a decree and order followed. Here we see before us a chronic chaos.

IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT.

THE DEBATE ON THE IRISH CHURCH QUESTION.

The debate on the second reading of the Irish Church Bill was worthy of the great occasion. For the most part the speakers felt the magnitude of the prize for which they were contending, and stretched their intellectual powers to the utmost in defence of their respective positions. Mr. Disraeli began the discussion on Thursday, in a very ambitious style. At the opening he was as profound as Basle himself in laying down first principles to which the measure was afterwards to be brought as a test.—He had taken great pains with his speech, as he had polished it to a high degree of perfection in all that relates to outward display. It was delivered with all the graces of oratory, and his hearers cheered him