

BLACKFRIARS

liar atmosphere and on familiar ground. This is a cogent plea or the recognition of the fact that the end of the Oxford Movement is and always has been Rome and that the fundamental difference between an Anglo-Catholic and a Roman Catholic lies not in the Papal claims but in their divergent conceptions of the meaning of the word Church. Mr. Whitton shows in an exceedingly clearly written chapter that the Catholic Church could never alter her relation to Anglo-Catholicism because by doing so she would commit suicide by altering what she has always held and taught about herself—her essential indivisibility. Mr. Whitton pleads for authoritative explanation of the Church's doctrines and position. True explanation, he says, alters the mind of the learner. Here is a mind essentially Catholic; we hope there are many Anglo-Catholics who think as Mr. Whitton thinks.

HENRY ST. JOHN, O.P.

A NEW HYMN BOOK¹

We have listened for so long to sentimental words, to slushy tunes, and are so tired of them, that our range grows narrower and narrower, and finally is reduced to a mere handful of hymns which are sung because 'everybody knows them.' Surely this is the dead end of all hymn-singing! Whereas the real art is still alive and practised daily in the Liturgy of the Church, with glorious words and noble tunes. Why must our vernacular hymns fall to the other extreme? For, though vernacular hymn-singing is necessarily an extra-liturgical practice, yet there are many occasions when it can be exercised to the increase of devotion in the faithful, and when it supplies a need possibly more felt now than in the days when the Liturgy itself fulfilled that purpose.

A Daily Hymn Book aroused our expectation. It is a large book, planned on a generous scale, intended to pro-

¹ *A Daily Hymn Book*. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd. Voice Parts, 2/- cloth; 1/4 paper. Complete with accompaniments, 12/6.)

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vide hymns for most big feasts in the Church's Calendar, and arranged according to the liturgical year. It is well and clearly printed, the organist's copy is a handsome volume, the smaller copies have the advantage of including the tunes to each hymn, which is a great improvement on the usual book of words. It is prefaced by the Cardinal Archbishop, and has a formidable array of names of authors, composers, and sources. This is the impression of its make-up, after a cursory glance.

When one comes to examine its contents, feelings of pleasure and dissatisfaction are so intermingled that it is impossible to review the book except by dividing it into two complete halves, *i.e.*, the liturgical hymns, and the vernacular hymns. The division is artificial since the two are really mixed up.

The liturgical hymns number about 127 out of a total of 384. The idea of including them, in what is intended to be a *popular* hymn book, is beyond all praise. It is a great step in that movement of return to the Liturgy which has been the earnest desire of Pius X and our present Holy Father. The regular use of them would mean an enormous increase in the appreciation of the Offices of the Church by the laity, a growing knowledge not only of the masterpieces of poetry, but also of the unparalleled beauty of the plainsong melodies they contain. One rejoices to see included under the wide title of hymns such things as the Great O Antiphons of Advent, the Antiphons to Our Lady (solemn and simple tones), all the music for the Candlemas procession, the whole of the *Lauda Sion*, the *Victimae Paschali*, and so on. Translations of all the Latin words are given, though not meant to be sung, and the versions of the Plainsong are admirable, being taken from the Solesmes editions and including their rhythmic marks (why should the *ictus* have been left out of the accompaniment book?), while the accompaniments are mostly supplied by well-known plainsong experts. One little criticism here. It seems a pity to print the plainsong melodies, in the books containing the voice parts, in five-line notation, when it would have been as easy to print them in their proper four-line notation, which is so much easier to read

(after a little practice) and gives the rythm of the tunes in a way that modern notation cannot even suggest.

When we come to the vernacular hymns, pleasure gives place to dismay. It seems impossible that the same hand could have taken the two ingredients and mixed them up into what was meant to be a conglomerate whole. Out of the two hundred and fifty or so hymns, only a mere twenty could be described as having notable tunes, a few more reputable tunes, and a very few more even passable tunes. Apart from the many bad tunes, most are so colourless and insipid that it would not be worth anyone's while to attempt to teach them to a congregation as an improvement on those they already know. Below this category come the really bad tunes, the trash unfit to be offered to God in the worship of His Church, and of these there are a goodly number. It is to be hoped that the editor is not really responsible for all the forty-five to which he lays claim. So much for the music. The present writer does not feel qualified to speak so strongly of the words, knowing less of the subject. But even here there are patches, or rather large tracts, to cause shudders, or worse still uncontrollable fits of laughter if the slightest sense of humour be applied.

Let it not be urged that old favourites *must* be included, for quite a number of old favourites have been treated harshly and given new tunes and the old tunes left out. This might have been a step in the right direction if the new tunes had been improvements on the old, unfortunately they are not. In this connection it might be remarked that though some beautiful words to *In dulci jubilo* by Fr. O'Connor have been given, it was a pity not to include also the old words; that if a 'measured' version of *Angelus ad Virginem* was to be given besides the plainsong one, why not the ancient and beautiful one given by Sir Richard Terry in his *Medieval Carols*?

Finally, though there is a complete index of contents at the beginning, and an index of first lines at the end, one looks in vain for an index of tunes, a metrical index, an index of authors or composers, all of which would have made the book more valuable. A lesson in scholarly editing might have been learned from our Anglican contemporaries by a glance at such books as the *English Hymnal* or

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the new *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. In the *Daily Hymn Book* the words are usually more carefully ascribed than the tunes, though both are sometimes indicated simply by a question mark. 'Old melody' seems to cover a number of centuries. Surely a great deal more might have been done in tracking down tunes to their sources. For example, in No. 105, the version of the tune known as the 'Old Hundredth' is simply ascribed to Bach, whereas it is actually found first in the Geneva Psalter of 1551, and was arranged in three-time and harmonised by Bach. Should not some indication of this have been given? It is not as though we have not the scholars and musicians able to do the work or give the information required. It is not as though we have not the resources upon which to draw, the whole heritage of Christian poetry and Western music is ours. Why not use it? Where was the enterprise that embarked upon the publication of the liturgical hymns when it came to selecting the English ones? Where was the courage that included *O sacred Head surrounded* and its glorious tune when it dared not give us more hymns of the same quality? The editor would have given us a great hymn book if only he had lived up to his convictions.

FRANCIS MONCRIEFF, O.P.

MR. ROGER FRY ON FRENCH ART¹

The difficulty of dealing adequately with French painting as a whole is that the very use of the term 'French painting' implies a continuity, a unifying tradition, which among French painters is entirely absent. Appreciation of tradition alone suffices to explain why Sasseta was Sasseta or Greco Greco, but it is vain to ask Fragonard why Daumier was Daumier or to look in Watteau for the germ of Delacroix. In each separate case to find the original influence we have to go outside France, with Wat-

¹ *Characteristics of French Art*. By Roger Fry. (Chatto & Windus; 12/6.)