

can readily believe that he composed it at that time, if we note the straightforward fervor of this plea. The chant melody likewise seems to have originated in a heart which made the repentant acknowledgement that "it is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I might learn Thy commands." Here is humility at prayer, and deep contrition of heart, and the fear that one might belong to those whose hearts are stony ground, who gladly admit the word of God for a time, but give it no firm rooting, with the result that, as today's Gospel says, "in time of temptation they fall away."

Therein we see the earnestness of this melody. But it has a touch of mildness, of spiritual maturity, over it all. There is something appealing in it, much like a song in the quiet of the evening, after a day of storm and stress. Now all is transfigured by the love and the pity of God.

This chant is a song of offering; in the early Church it was likewise a processional song. While it was being sung the faithful advanced to the altar and presented their gifts. These gifts voiced their sacrificial spirit, the spirit without which we cannot follow along the path marked out for us by the Man of Sorrows. In today's Epistle St. Paul shows us clearly along what thorny roads the Lord oftentimes leads His faithful ones. But he also tells us how all-sufficient God's grace is, how it makes us strong in the performance of our daily duties. All these considerations combine to effect a thoughtful and reflective rendition of this chant.

The divisions could hardly be more obvious. Each of the three imperatives, *pérŕice*, *inclína*, *mirŕfica*, begins a new phrase. The lingering of the melody at *gressus*—Codex 121 of Einsiedeln has an "x" (= *expectare*, to wait) after each bistropha, and a "hold" over the *clivis*—and the bistropha and tristropha over *moveántur* all seem to breathe confidence. They speak of quiet perseverance in doing the will of God. Thankful joy is discernible in *sémitis*, a joy which perhaps was found only after bitter experience. The formula over *mea* closes the third phrase. *Inclína* swings up with impressive fervor. *Aurem tuam* finds its fuller development in *et exaúdi verba*. *Mirŕfica* reminds one of the third phrase in the Introit for Easter Day. In both instances the melody effectively ends the foregoing phrase on *f*, the better to call attention to what follows. The progressive expansion of the melody in this phrase (*f g a*) should be brought out with a *crescendo*. In fact, the whole phrase must steadily grow in fervor until it reaches the confident upward look over *in te* and the tender *Dómine*.

In earlier times this Offertory had four verses. After each verse the words *mirŕfica misericórdias* were repeated, thus assuring the reception of this consoling truth in the trusting hearts of the faithful.