

Appendix.

APPENDIX.



The Oxford Version of the "Agincourt Song."

BURNEY, in his "History of Music," Vol. II., p. 383 *et seq.*, gives the song, "Our King went forth to Normandy" (*ante*, No. VII.), in another version, together with an account of the original MS. from which he got it, and which he describes as being at that time contained in the Pepysian Library at Cambridge. "It is written," he says, "upon Vellum in Gregorian Notes, and can be little less ancient than the event which it recorded. There is with it a paper which shows that an attempt was made in the last century to give it a modern dress; but too many liberties have been taken with the melody, and the drone base which has been set to it for the Lute is mere jargon." He tells us, also, that copies were taken of the same MS. by J. Stafford Smith, for his "Collection of Ancient English Songs" (1779), and that it was printed in Percy's "Reliques," Vol. II. (It will be found in the edition of 1889, at Vol. III., p. 29, where an absurd and gratuitous mistake has been made—whether by the compilers or the modern editors, I know not:—the staves are connected by braces, but the wrong staves are coupled together all the way down the page, so that in its present condition the music is impossible to decipher.) The Pepysian MS. is no longer to be found in the library, and the inadequate modernization of it has, of course, disappeared with it. It appears, from what Burney says, that the three copies taken from it were independent of each other; as they unite in omitting the upper part at the beginning of the song, we may conclude that it was not in their original, and, moreover, that Stafford Smith was right in believing it to be a copy of a MS. in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Most fortunately, he copied the reference from the Pepys MS., "Ex Bibliothec. Bodleiana, Arch. B. Seld. 10." The Bodleian MS. has been duly preserved, and a translation of the music into modern notation is here given:—

The first system of music consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 3/2. The music begins with a whole rest in the treble staff and a half note in the bass staff. The melody in the treble staff moves stepwise, and the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment.

The second system continues the piece. The treble staff features a triplet of eighth notes. The bass staff continues with a steady accompaniment. The system concludes with a double bar line.

The third system shows the continuation of the melody and accompaniment. The treble staff has a half rest followed by a quarter note, while the bass staff has a half note.

The fourth system continues the musical progression. The treble staff has a quarter rest followed by a quarter note, and the bass staff has a half note.

The fifth system continues the piece. The treble staff has a quarter note followed by a half note, and the bass staff has a half note.

CHORUS.

The first system of the chorus consists of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle staff is in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music begins with a whole rest in the top staff and a half note in the bottom staff.

The second system of the chorus consists of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle staff is in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music continues with a half note in the top staff and a half note in the bottom staff.

“Deo gratias anglia. redde pro victoria.

“Owre kynge went forth to normandy.
with grace and myzt of chyualry.
ther god for hym wrouzt mervelusly.
Wherfore Englonde may calle and cry. Deo gratias.

“he sette a sege the sothe for to say.
To harflu toune with ryal aray.
that toune he wan and made a fray.
that fraunce shall rywe tyl domesday. Deo gratias.

(b.) “Than for a sothe that knyzt comely.
yn agincourt feld he fauzt manly.
Thorw grace of god most myzty.
he had bothe the felde and the victory. Deo gratias.

“There dukys and erlys lorde and barone.
Were taken and slayne and that well done.
And summe were ladde in to londone.
With ioye and merthe and grete renone. Deo gratias.

“Now gracious god he saue oure kynge.
his peple and alle his wel wyllynge.
zef him gode lyfe and gode endyng.
That we with merthe mowe sauely synge. Deo gratias.

(a.) “Than went oure kynge with alle his oste
Thorwe fraunce for alle the frenche boste
he spared no drede of lest ne moste
Tyl he come to agincourt coste. Deo gratias.”

The verse here placed last is evidently the third; this is probably indicated by the letters “a” and “b” in the left margin of the MS. The copies from the Pepysian MS. place it third in order, showing that their exemplar corrected the sequence of the stanzas.

The notation of the original is in black diamond-headed notes, with ligatures, etc., as in our version. The use of red notes for triplets is the same as in our MS. The notes which represent the ligatures of the MS. are here connected by slurs. No accidentals have been added; the B flat is indicated in the MS. in two places. The last two crotchets of the third bar from the end must contain a mistake in one of the lower parts. To raise the two crotchets one place, in the middle part, brings the bar into greater conformity with our version, and this is probably the right solution. In the versions of Burney, Percy, and J. Stafford Smith, there is a blank in the upper part until the words, “forth to Normandy.” The Oxford original shows that the unisonous beginning, which is so remarkable a feature of the Cambridge version, is correct, and that the two voices sing together throughout.

The origin of the omission of the upper part is also clearly shown ; for the illuminated capital D is placed, in the Bodleian MS., against the beginning of the lower part only, and thus the transcriber doubtless thought that the line above the part so adorned belonged to the preceding song. The most interesting differences between the two versions are — first, the alteration in bar 17, where the cadence, so characteristic of our whole series of Carols, is replaced by a commoner form in the Oxford version ; and second, the first notes of the triphonia, marked as “Chorus” in the Oxford MS. As we have it, the root of the harmony is D ; in the Oxford MS. it is G. With these exceptions, the two versions are practically identical.

The Oxford version, in its integrity, seems not to have been published in any form, but there are several transcripts of the Pepysian version, or rather reprints of the published transcripts of the Pepysian version, and therefore descendants in the fourth degree from the Oxford original. Among these may be noticed an arrangement, for three voices throughout (excepting in the opening bars), by Morton Latham, Esq., Mus.B. As this arrangement is intended for general performance, the editor has not hesitated to alter the part-writing, but has marked every alteration with asterisks, without, however, indicating the reading of his original.

