

School of English Church Music

QUARTERLY NEWS SHEET

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WORK BEGINS AT ST. NICHOLAS.

We started work without any formality other than the Dedication of gifts to the Chapel and of the Choir School, of which an account is given below. Our company consists of ten choristers, three resident men students (all we have room for), one non-resident woman student, the Secretary, the Master of the Choristers, the Chaplain and the Warden.

The work on the main house is now practically completed ; the Students and the Secretary have been in temporary quarters in a cottage in the grounds, pending the completion of the Students' Hostel which will be ready about Easter ; we shall have room for about 12 to 14 additional students next term, which starts on April 26.

The organ has been overhauled, modernised and revoiced by Mr. Arthur Harrison, and was used for the first time on March 14. It is a small two-manual instrument with a charming tone and is admirably suited to our needs.

In the Chapel we have kept up our two regular daily Church services at 7.30 a.m. and 7.0 p.m. ; fortunately amongst us we have all four parts represented, so we are able to do a good deal of unaccompanied music ; we are trying to make our service lists comprehensive, and aim at doing about one-third plain-song and two-thirds Anglican music. We have been enormously helped by the generous way in which all the music publishers whom we have approached have given us sufficient copies of all the music we want entirely without charge. Our Chaplain has been with us about three days a week, through the great kindness of the Dean and Chapter of Winchester, where he is still Precentor ; on other days the services are taken by the Warden, who has received the licence of the Bishop of Rochester. On Sunday mornings as a rule our choir has been joining with the regular choir at the Parish Church of St. George's, Bickley. Besides taking part, in various capacities, in the Services and Choir practices, the students have had two lectures each week.

In spite of burst pipes, the failure of heating apparatus, arctic cold through constantly open doors and such discomforts as are inseparable from the presence of workmen, we have escaped the ravages of the " flu " and our bill of health has been remarkably good, thanks largely to the unremitting care of our excellent Matron.

Perhaps the most far-reaching and important development has been the appointment of our Chaplain, the Rev. G. H. Salter, as Vicar of St. Sepulchre's, Holborn, with the definite intention that the work of the School of English Church Music should be linked up with that Church, and should find a centre for its practical activities in the very heart of London. Exactly how this connection will work out in actual practice it is too early to say, but it must be obvious that the opportunities afforded by a noble Church seating 1000 people, in a commanding position within little more than half an hour's journey from the College, and possessing an extremely fine and interesting Renatus Harris organ (now, alas, in total disrepair), furnishes a wonderful

opportunity of expansion, and of bringing the work of the School right into the heart of London. Further it is felt that by means of this connection a valuable use will be found for one of the most prominent of the City Churches where, at present, a congregation is almost non-existent.

As to the future, we hope next term to have our full complement of resident students, and also to begin some of our external activities. One of these will probably be a Summer School, which is being organized by the Church Music Society, to be held at the College from August 12 to 15. We are getting many applications from clergy and others seeking for choirmasters and organists; some of these posts we have been able to fill, and in all cases we are making efforts to find the right sort of candidates, and are offering to test them at the College. This development is welcome evidence that those who have appointments to offer are looking for people who have the kind of training that the School can give.

So far all is going well, but (and it is a large BUT), we have not nearly enough financial support to enable us to carry out the developments that are contemplated, and until things are more secure the present anxiety under which we have to work must continue. So it is urgently necessary that all who wish the School to go on and prosper should make it their *personal* business to interest those able to help substantially, and to urge choirs all over the country to become affiliated. We greatly value good wishes, but these do not pay bills! and we badly want money *now*, not only for future needs but to meet our present obligations.

THE OPENING SERVICE.

A small company, including members of the Provisional Council of the School of English Church Music, assembled at St. Nicolas College on January 16 for the service in which the Bishop of Truro dedicated the Chapel and its ornaments. The choristers from Clumber had arrived only the day before and the music of the service was necessarily simple, but with the help of ex-choristers from Westminster Abbey a full choir was formed, and the first principle of the School was well illustrated in their singing. Let Church music be as simple as circumstances require; it may still be good. A second principle was illustrated in the fact that the small congregation had not come to listen to the choir but to take part in a service of prayer and thanksgiving. At last, that which had been hopefully yet anxiously planned had come to the first stage of realisation.

The choir entered the Chapel singing the hymn "Christ is our Corner Stone." The Bishop first said a prayer of general dedication of the Chapel and then proceeded to the special dedication of the Altar, beginning with the "Sursum Corda." The Altar, hitherto bare, was then vested by the Chaplain, while the hymn "Hosanna in the Highest" was sung. Next the Bishop received the gifts; the Chalice and Paten brought by the Bursar of the Society of the Faith, the Cross and Candlesticks brought by an ex-chorister of Westminster Abbey. The antiphon "I will go to the Altar of God" and Psalm, "O send out thy light," was sung.

These simple ceremonies completed, the Bishop gave a short address in which he emphasized the age long association of music with the evangelistic functions of the Church. The Monks of Augustine came singing. Their song, perhaps more than their preaching, converted Britain. The Church in England had always been a musical church. We must not only uphold the high tradition of the past but must strengthen it with the best this generation can bring. This was his message. After the hymn "Love Divine," the clergy, choir and congregation went to the entrance of the choir school, where the Bishop prayed for

