

School of English Church Music

QUARTERLY NEWS SHEET

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OPENING OF ST. NICOLAS COLLEGE.

Apology is due for the late issue of this number of the "NEWS SHEET," but the fault may be condoned by those anxious to read of the official opening of the College of St. Nicolas on July 3rd by the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was felt that so important an event could not wait three months for its chronicle to appear.

First it must be said that the occasion was blest in its weather. It took place on the one really genial summer day between a week of cold winds and a period of thunderstorm. When clergy, choirs and robed Doctors of Music were grouped round the front door of the College, when the Archbishop's procession approached along the drive, and some six hundred guests were assembled on the terrace, the crowning mercy of fine weather was fully realised. To have carried through the ceremony with any degree of fitness on a bad day, (to say nothing of the delightful garden party which followed it), must have defeated the ingenuity even of Dr. Nicholson.

The service began with the hymn "Christ is our Corner Stone" (tune S. S. Wesley) sung by the choirs of St. Nicolas, Rochester Cathedral, and some members of Westminster Abbey.

The Warden addressed the Archbishop, saying,

Most Reverend Father in God, we ask you to hallow and set apart this place as a College for the advancement of music in the Worship of the Church.

The Archbishop replied "I am ready so to do"; then standing before the door of the College he said,

Peace be to this house from God our heavenly Father.
Peace be to this house from His Son who is our peace.
Peace be to this house from the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

After prayers offered by the Chaplain (the Rev. G. H. Salter), the Archbishop dedicated the College in these words—

In the faith of Jesus Christ we dedicate and set apart this College of Saint Nicolas to the greater glory of God, and his worship in the beauty of holiness. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

Then turning to the people he said,

Here let the true faith and fear of God, with brotherly love, ever abide: and may this place now set apart with prayers, and with the invocation and praise of the most Holy Name, be ever more the Temple of the Most High God.

Three Psalms (cxxi., cxxii. and cxxxii.) were sung to plainsong with *faux bourdon* verses as the procession moved from the door of the College to the Hostel. It consisted of—

The Archbishop's procession, the six Cantors—the Reverends G. H. Salter, F. W. Baggaley, Hugh Glaisyer (Vicar of Bickley), Noel Hopkins (St. Paul's Cathedral), L. H. Nixon (Precentor of Westminster), and N. C. Woods (Winchester Cathedral)—the choirs conducted by Dr. Nicholson (Mr. Hylton Stewart of Rochester Cathedral acting as Sub-Conductor), Bishop King (representing the Bishop of Rochester), the Deans of Westminster and Windsor, Sir Hugh Allen (Royal College of Music), Dr. Armstrong (Exeter Cathedral), Dr. Coleman (Peterborough Cathedral).

The Hostel was dedicated with a short form of prayer and four hymns were sung as the procession returned to the lower terrace. There the Archbishop addressed the people after the singing of Stanford's anthem, "Glorious and powerful God."

The Archbishop said that the blessing he had pronounced on the place and on the work to be undertaken therein might be held to be the blessing of the Church. He wished personally as president of the Church Music Society to commend the object for which the College had been founded. He recalled the long and high tradition of English church music. He himself had been nurtured in it at Magdalen College, Oxford, at Leeds Parish Church, at St. Paul's Cathedral and, last but by no means least, at York Minster. But though the ages had given a great heritage there had been some falling away. He discussed the low level to which Church art of all kinds had sunk in the last century. A recovery was being made, but "sickliness, silliness and sentimentality" still disfigured church music. It was folly to attempt to reproduce the Cathedral service in every parish church. We must aim at the noble rendering of simple music. He was about to dedicate memorials in the house to two whose lives had been a testimony to the highest and best, the Lady Mary Trefusis and Canon Harold Hall Wright. The one, alike among Cornish villages and in the Royal Household, the other through 36 years as Precentor of Chester Cathedral, had set examples of Christian devotion which he called on his hearers to follow. Let them not think that because this College founded by the efforts of Dr. Nicholson and others in these beautiful surroundings was now open, that nothing remained to be done. "It cannot dispense," he said "with the help of all the sons and daughters of the Church, if it is to be made a worthy gift to the Church, to the art and to God."

After the singing of the "Te Deum" (Orlando Gibbons), the Blessing was pronounced by the Archbishop, who then re-entered the house to dedicate the tablets, one in the Chapel to the memory of Lady Mary Trefusis, the other to Canon Hall Wright at the entrance to the choir school (endowed by the generosity of Mrs. Wright). The guests then had the opportunity of visiting all parts of the College and Hostel, and admiring the ingenuity with which Sir Charles Nicholson had adapted the premises to the needs of the College, the beauty of Mr. A. K. Nicholson's stained glass window of St. Nicolas and the three choristers in the Chapel, and other gifts. The charm of the gardens, tea in a marquee, and the informal singing of partsongs on the terrace engaged attention till it was time for the usual Evensong sung in the chapel at 7.30.

CONFERENCE OF DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES.

The Diocesan Representatives were invited by the Warden to hold a Conference at St. Nicolas College on April 23, and the following twelve representatives were able to be present:—

<i>Diocese.</i>	<i>Name.</i>	<i>Diocese.</i>	<i>Name.</i>
Bristol	Col. F. W. Hek	Hereford	Rev. O. A. S. Edwards
Carlisle	Col. G. Dixon	Leicester	Dr. Gordon Slater
Chelmsford	Mr. F. D. L. Penny	Oxford	Mr. B. Ramsey
Chichester	Rev. S. M. Morgan		Mr. E. L. Street
Derby	Rev. Canon Ham	St. Edmundsbury & I.	Rev. W. N. Matthews
Exeter	Rev. Edgar Bell	Winchester	Mr. Cyril Fogwell

The Council of the School of English Church Music was represented by Mr. H. P. Chadwyck-Healey and the Chaplain of the College, the Rev. G. H. Salter, was also present.

The delegates arrived in time for lunch and were afterwards shown over the College. A meeting in the library followed and each of those present was invited to make a statement on the position in his Diocese. Much useful exchange of ideas took place, and many valuable suggestions were made. Some of the delegates expressed the view that the affiliated choirs—particularly the country ones—felt very much isolated, since they had no means of getting into and keeping touch with each other. It was agreed that it was highly desirable, if not essential, to weld them all together into one body and, to this end, it was proposed by Canon Ham that a guild be formed. All felt this to be a most valuable suggestion, and the working out of details was left to the evening session.

