

School of English Church Music

QUARTERLY NEWS SHEET

Edited by a Committee appointed by the CHURCH MUSIC SOCIETY and issued from the office of the SCHOOL OF ENGLISH CHURCH MUSIC, 105, GOWER STREET, W.C.1

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LET IT BE GRANTED.

Since the last issue of the "NEWS SHEET" in July much has happened, and though we are still very far from realizing the means necessary for the complete foundation of the School of English Church Music it is possible that even while this issue is in the press the Provisional Council will have taken decisions which will give the School a home and enable it to test in practical work the schemes which have been so carefully prepared. These schemes have been outlined in two issues of the "NEWS SHEET." They have met with widespread approval, and Dr. Nicholson, moving from diocese to diocese and from rural deanery to rural deanery, has listened to every question and to every criticism which had a "But" in it, in order that the scheme might be framed to practical ends. Now that its realisation is at hand comes the moment when we may turn away in thought from the problems, the difficulties to be surmounted, the short-comings to be guarded against, and take an imaginary glance at the School in being.

It has been generally granted that the thing is worth doing; enough support has come to show that it can be done; let it be granted that it will be done. Suppose it to be established in a large house in a suburb from which there is direct communication by tube to the centre of London. Some sixteen to twenty students live in the house with the Warden. Some of them are, or have been, organ students at one or other of the great music schools of London; others are theological students or are already ordained.

They are there to fit themselves for the special province of the art which is called Church Musicianship. Ten or a dozen chorister boys live in an annex under their own master. There is a simple but well-furnished Chapel in which services are sung daily by the students and choristers forming a choir. The services are not of one fixed type; they employ a very wide range of music, unison melodies and harmonised chants, great church compositions and simple ones. The students are taught to draw up service lists with a knowledge of varied resources, ancient and modern. They take their turns in organ accompaniment on a small two-manual instrument. Apart from the services themselves they take choir practices, attend lectures on all aspects of church music, its history and that of the liturgy and kindred matters. They also have hours for their own instrumental work as organists and as pianists, and have lessons in speaking, intoning, singing. It is a wide curriculum, and it is further widened by a troop of Boy Scouts who have just come in off the neighbouring common and are making their tea in the garden. Presently it will be some students' business to give them a singing lesson for there must be raw material to work with as well as trained choristers. Perchance the student will learn something from the Scouts of the necessary art of managing boys, managing, that is, without compulsion.

In the evening another set of students arrive at the School. They are young men and women engaged in business or as teachers, and who want to take up work in their spare time as amateurs or as "semi-professional" organists and choirmasters. Some of them are already doing such work and have begun to discover the difficulties. One can play the organ pretty well but knows nothing about the training of boys' voices. Another, an elementary school teacher, who knows all there is to be known about taking singing classes of boys or girls, wants to know what music to choose or what to play for a "Voluntary." Another, again, has been recently faced with the necessity for accompanying plain-song for the first time and is non-plussed. Others with no special problem or consciousness of defect in themselves just want to widen their experience, feeling that their best is not quite good enough. At the School they can discuss things; they can learn from each other's experience and widen their own. Those who are already actively engaged can here make experiments without having to run the gauntlet of criticism from the entire parish. They escape from the routine of accepted limitations into a stimulating atmosphere of keenness for the best things.

It is not only Londoners who profit. Visitors come and go. Perhaps a country Vicar whose choir is affiliated calls. His organist would like to come up for a short course but there is no one to take his place. What can be done? There is a resident student just finishing his course at the School. It would be excellent practice for him to take the country organist's place for a fortnight or three weeks. It is all fixed up in a few minutes' talk. Or another, parish priest or choirmaster, has a very promising boy; his voice may be broken; he ought to have a musical career before him but he is not yet ready to go up to the R.A.M. or R.C.M. Could not a course at the School form a bridge between the choir-boy stage and the Music School? Of course it could; nothing better.

Meantime the country affiliated choirs profit not only by their visits to the School but by the School's visits to them. Its choir is not tied to its own Chapel as a Cathedral Choir is tied. From time to time it goes out on short demonstration tours; or its individual members go out to help in the Choir Festivals which are doing such excellent work in many parts of the country.

So the work both in the School itself and outside it expands from day to day. The School of English Church Music is not a patent remedy offering immediate cure for every ill. If we were given the money tomorrow to start it on the largest scale and in the most ideal conditions its influence would still be slow, and only a minute fraction of the Church Musicians of the country could be immediately benefitted by it. But with even the most modest establishment it can begin both its direct and its indirect processes of education. It can draw musically-minded Churchmen together, stimulate co-operation and give to music a more vital place in Church life.

The main postulate of those who have supported the project has been: Let it be granted that there is work for such a School to do. To that they now add: Let the necessary support be granted that the work may be begun.

THE SCHOOL'S FIRST COMMISSIONER.

It is with great pleasure that we announce the appointment of Mr. Harvey Grace as Commissioner for the School of English Church Music. His authority as a practical church musician stands high, and those who know his singularly penetrating book *The Complete Organist* will realize that he adds the qualities of sympathy and understanding to his attainments as a musician. At the invitation of a group of Affiliated choirs the School's Commissioner will arrange

to visit a district, hold demonstrations of methods in choir training or congregational practices, and give advice on matters relating to Church music. The conditions of Affiliation were set forth in the last "NEWS SHEET" (No. 2) published in July. Applications for the Commissioner's services must be made to the Secretary of the School of English Church Music, 105, Gower Street, W.C.1.

CAROLS.

A few years ago the choice of Carols in most Churches was confined to a few "old favourites" and to modern examples of no great merit. But now many excellent collections are available, such as the two volumes of the Cowley Carol Book and the two volumes of English Carols edited by Martin Shaw (both collections published by Mowbray). These contain several good things not to be found elsewhere, and are particularly valuable in that they give correct and well-harmonized versions of many of the most popular of the old carols which have hitherto appeared in a corrupt form; an advantage is that many of the most popular numbers are issued as separate leaflets at small cost.

It may be useful to call attention at this time to two other collections which are less well known, in both of which the late Professor Charles Wood was responsible for the harmonization of the melodies, the words being mainly supplied by that prince of carol-poets, The Rev. Dr. G. R. Woodward.

The "ITALIAN CAROL BOOK" (Faith Press, 2/6) consists of melodies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries gathered principally from the Italian "Laudi Spirituali." There are seventeen carols for Christmas and twenty for other seasons. Many of them, such as "Once as I remember," "Ah, Gabriel," "Ho, merry herdsman," "It was a young mother," are extraordinarily attractive, and all are simply set and well within the capacity of an ordinary choir.

The "CAMBRIDGE CAROL BOOK" (S.P.C.K.) contains fifty-three carols drawn from various sources, English and foreign, and there are carols for other seasons besides Christmas. Here also the settings are quite simple and straightforward. Among the most attractive are "Ding, dong, merrily on high," "Hail Holy Child," "My Lord and my God," "Our Lady sat within her bower," "Past three o'clock, on a cold and frosty morning," but the collection is full of beautiful things which breathe the very spirit of Christmas.

NOTES ON SERVICE MUSIC.

The following notes are written by members of the Committee who are themselves choirmasters. The inclusion of a work implies that it is considered to be good music of its kind. Suitability to choirs of differing types is suggested by the use of initials.

L.—Large urban choirs where a repertory more or less of the Cathedral type is maintained.

S.—Small urban choirs to which such things as the division of voice parts and the use of extreme compass of voices may prove difficult.

V.—Village choirs.

COMMUNION SERVICES.

L.

PERCY W. WHITLOCK. With organ accompaniment. O.U.P., 1/-. Contains Benedictus and Agnus Dei but no nine-fold Kyrie. Voices occasionally divide. Soprano: compass G; Alto C (D in one unison passage); Tenor G; Bass E. An excellent setting for Festivals; short, with almost no word-repetition; of moderate difficulty, but with well produced contrasts of unison, harmony and imitative passages.

S.

C. E. HOYLAND. "Missa Sancti Wilfridi." Faith Press, 8d. An easy unison setting, but includes alternative settings in harmony of the Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei. There is a nine-fold Kyrie as well as responses to Commandments, but no Creed. The melodies are phrased in accordance with the verbal clauses, that is rather in the plain song idiom than in that of mensural music.

H. C. L. STOCKS. In E flat. Faith Press, 8d. Contains Benedictus and Agnus Dei, but no nine-fold Kyrie. An easy setting in four-part harmony with organ accompaniment. Moderate Compass.

V.

C. W. PEARCE. "Missa Brevis." Curwen, 6d. A short and easy setting for voices and organ. All, or certain parts can be sung in unison at the discretion of the choirmaster. Includes nine-fold Kyrie, Benedictus and Agnus Dei. Organ part only doubles the voices. Moderate compass; easily learnt by congregation.

MARTIN SHAW. Modal Communion Service; An Anglican Folk-Mass; A Parish Communion Service. These are three easy settings, all Curwen, 6d. each. They are mainly in unison, but certain parts can be sung in harmony if desired. All are very suitable for congregational singing.

CANTICLES.

L.

O. GIBBONS. (Edited by Francis Burgess and Royle Shore.) Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. Set to 5th and 1st Tones with Faux Bourdon. Novello, 4d. The Faux Bourdon is polyphonic in style. In the Magnificat, the first phrase is in four parts, the second is in five, S. S. A. T. B. The Faux Bourdon of the Nunc Dimittis is entirely in five parts, S. A. T. B. B. The setting is of moderate difficulty. The compass of the voice parts is small, Alto lowest note is B below the treble stave. There is an optional accompaniment given for the alternate plainsong verses.

S.

E. BULLOCK. Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. In C with the minor seventh. Novello, 4d. Mostly written in unison or two parts, (i.e., S. and T., and A. and B. singing together in 8ves.) with occasional four-part writing, all these sections are of moderate difficulty. Two verses written for semi-chorus, with accompaniment *ad lib.*, are slightly more difficult. Average compass of voice parts: Alto lowest note is G below the treble stave. The free organ accompaniment, moderately difficult, can be played on a two manual organ.

C. WOOD. Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. In C minor. Novello, 6d. Moderately difficult service for four voices, sopranos divide for one short phrase only. Several passages written for unison singing. Average compass for all voices, lowest note for Alto is G below treble stave. Moderately difficult organ accompaniment, written for a two-manual instrument.

ANTHEMS, ETC. (SEASONAL).

L.

Sunday Next Before Advent.

The most suitable anthem for this Sunday is Steggall's "Remember now Thy Creator," Novello, 6d., for the words occur in the Lesson both in Old and New Lectionary. It begins and ends with a beautiful and simple solo (only two lines long) for Soprano. The first Chorus is well worth doing and it can be sung alone, if the anthem should be found too long.

L.

Advent Sunday and throughout Advent.

THE COLLECT FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT. "Almighty God, give us grace," by Ivor Atkins, for five voices, S. S. A. T. B., in one movement. Novello, 4d. Unaccompanied. A magnificent setting for capable choirs, vigorous and inspired throughout, demanding great variety of expression.

S. and V.

Advent.

AN ADVENT PROSE. "Drop down ye heavens." Very simple Plain Song (sung between Epistle and Gospel at Holy Communion. Ch. Mus. Soc. and S.P.C.K., 3d. Unison throughout. Compass: D to D. May be sung with or without organ accompaniment. Broken or unbroken voices equally suitable. An old French Church melody. Time about 3 minutes.

CHRISTMAS CHORALES.

V.

THREE CHORALES. By J. S. Bach. All published separately. In staff or solfa. Paterson, (95, Wimpole Street.) (3d.) Edited by Michael Diack.

"HALLELUJAH! O PRAISE THE LORD." From the Christmas Oratorio. Soprano range: (five notes) middle C up to F; Alto: C (middle) up to A (six notes); Tenor: G up to F (seven notes); Bass: middle C down to F (low) (twelve notes). The range of notes very small except for Bass which has a splendid rolling part to sing. The whole Chorale could be sung in unison with organ accompaniment. Two verses long.

"FROM ALL THAT DWELL." One verse only. Sung at proper pace (slow) about 2 minutes. Sopranos: E to E (octave); Altos: middle C up to A (six notes); Tenors: E up to F (nine notes); Bass: low G up to middle C (eleven notes). The melody goes too high to sing in unison, but the whole is no more difficult than Dykes's tune to "Holy, Holy, Holy." Words by Isaac Watts.

"WAKE! THE WELCOME DAY." A joyful melody, not to be sung too slowly. Three verses, about 1 minute each. Soprano: G up to high F (nine notes); Alto: D up to B (six notes); Tenor: G up to F (seven notes); Bass: low G up to middle C (eleven notes). A jolly tune. Second verse might be sung unaccompanied; it would then make a charming anthem.

CHRISTMAS—A SERVICE. THE GOSPEL CAROL SERVICE for Christmastide. Words and music complete, 9d.; words only, for congregations, 1d., or 8/- a 100. Pub., Faith Press. In staff and tonic solfa. This service contains the following music:—

Carols: "Good Christian men rejoice"; "A Virgin most pure"; "Joys Seven (the first good Joy)"; "Christ was born on Xmas Day"; "It came upon the midnight." Hymn: "Brightest and Best." Carols: "Behold! A Child is born!"; "The First Nowell." Hymn: "O come all ye faithful."

Very suitable for a village congregational service for it can all be sung by everybody, led by a choir or not. When there is a choir it can all be sung in harmony or unison. Time about an hour or rather more. It can be "cut" to suit convenience.

For Christmas Eve or Day.

"WITH ALL THY HOSTS." By A. W. Wilson. Novello, 1½d. Short unaccompanied anthem for S.A.T.B. 2 minutes. More effective if sung through twice, i.e., 4 minutes. Soprano: E to G (ten notes); Alto: C to C (eight notes); Tenor: G to G (8 notes); Bass: low A up to high D (eleven notes). A strong, flowing, and joyful work, full of Christmas feeling, very vocal, consequently easy to sing.