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Church Oratorio

Author(s): J. Powell Metcalfe

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to have put a little more of this power into the great, in order to enable it to take its proper place, instead of being drowned by the swell. It seems to me that very moderate-sized organs ought to have at least one eight-foot stop on the pedals to prevent the necessity of almost always coupling to one of the manuals, and thus destroying the independence of tone. Though it often is not possible to increase the number of stops, yet adding couplers would not much increase the expense and would greatly add to the expression to be derived from the instrument. For example, what beautiful effects can be produced by coupling two eight-foot stops of opposite character, the one loco to the other super-octave; thus combining the fulness of the eight-foot tone with the four-foot pitch.

Hoping that you will, while the question is in people's minds, allow it to be fully discussed in the columns of your valuable journal,—I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

CONCAVE-RADIATING.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Will you allow me to ask some of your readers if the following facts are the exception or the rule in most National Schools?

I must explain that, thanks to the Dean (Dr. Vaughan) and the energetic Succentor of Llandaff Cathedral, we have here a very high class Cathedral School, where the choristers (who are all sons of gentlemen) are educated, the only unusual feature being that the boys are allowed the ordinary public school holidays, during which time we have to draw on the National School for boys for the "holiday choir." Now I find that, although these boys have just been "passed" by the Government Inspector in vocal music, not one of them can tell what interval it is from Do to Re, or have any notion of time or tune; and on inquiry, I find that all the vocal music is taught by ear—that is, the master having taught a large number of the boys to sing a few ditties in two parts, by constantly playing the parts over on the harmonium to them, the Inspector duly "passes" them, and goes on to judge the needlework of the girls in the next room!

Is it possible that Government grants are made amounting to over £100,000 *per annum* to schools in England and Wales where the vocal music is thus taught?

Surely no one can say it is unreasonable of me to expect that boys who have been "passed in vocal music" by a Government Inspector should, at any rate, know a little of the subject in which they have passed. In some cases that have lately come under my immediate notice I can testify that the boys' knowledge was actually *nil*: I only made this discovery by accident, and should be glad to know if this case is an exceptional one.—Yours, &c.,

C. L. WILLIAMS, Organist, Llandaff Cathedral.

P.S.—Since writing the above I have been told by the schoolmaster of our National Schools that he understands the Government grant is only given "to foster the love of music in the children, and not to teach them anything of practical musical value."

I cannot think that this is the best way to foster the love of music in children, who will and can learn to read from notes easily and quickly on almost any system.

CHURCH ORATORIO.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Kindly allow me small space for a short answer to Mr. Bengough's letter in your last issue. Little streams make big rivers, and true growth has small beginning. The Church Oratorio movement in our district began with one efficient choir, under the management, however, of one of those quiet earnest laymen who form the backbone of our Church, and the mainspring of its working. I was honoured by being taken into counsel. We set our purpose before us, gathered into association the cream of a few neighbouring choirs, and a few musical ladies, and held services with a choir of but fifty or sixty voices. We repeated the process on other centres; and now look forward to

join in a festival in York Minster in July, in a choir already reaching to nearly 800 singers: and we have the satisfaction of knowing that not only will the service be repeated at most of the centres whence the larger choirs came, but that it is proposed to give "St. John the Evangelist" at a Church Congress Service in Newcastle in the autumn. One "unknown country parson" as Mr. Bengough calls himself, may thus set a stream—small at beginning—a-flowing, which in time will surely meet other streams that among them will make up the big river. At any rate, let him try. Boldly take "St. John the Evangelist" in hand, gather round the nearest good choir that will help the work, beat up recruits, hold summer rehearsals of such parts of the contingent as can be got together, and at a harvest thanksgiving in the autumn give the work with "the shortened service."—Yours truly,

J. POWELL METCALFE.

ORGAN PEDALS ATTACHED TO PIANOFORTES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Will some of your readers vouchsafe me a little information on the subject of organ pedals attached to a cottage piano? I have a cottage piano, to which I should like to apply organ pedals; and whilst I am, on the one hand, deterred from going to an organ builder for a set of pedals with organ action, I am also deterred from buying the cheap pedals advertised on account of the instability of the attachment action, which I believe consists merely of twine, subject to the influence of the weather, breakage, &c.

I shall therefore feel exceedingly obliged if some gentleman having experience in this matter will give me information on the subject, through the medium of your paper.—Yours faithfully,

PARISH CHURCH ORGANIST.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*** Notices of concerts, and other information supplied by our friends in the country, must be forwarded as early as possible after the occurrence; otherwise they cannot be inserted. Our correspondents must specifically denote the date of each concert, for without such date no notice can be taken of the performance.*

Our correspondents will oblige by writing all names as clearly as possible, as we cannot be responsible for any mistakes that may occur.

Correspondents are informed that their names and addresses must accompany all communications.

We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors therefore, will do well to retain copies.

Notice is sent to all Subscribers whose payment (in advance) is exhausted. The paper will be discontinued where the Subscription is not renewed. We again remind those who are disappointed in obtaining back numbers that, although the music pages are always stereotyped, only a sufficient quantity of the rest of the paper is printed to supply the current sale.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF COUNTRY NEWS.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for any opinions expressed in this Summary, as all the notices are either collated from the local papers or supplied to us by correspondents.

BAGSHOT.—Two Concerts were given by the members of the Choral Class on the 11th and 14th ult., under the direction of Mr. G. Paxton More, Organist and Choirmaster of the Parish Church. The programme consisted of solos, madrigals, and part-songs. Two pianoforte duets were well performed by Miss Hare and Miss A. James. "In going to my lonely bed" (Edwards), "Sweet and low" (Barnby), "The Young Musicians" (Kücken), and "Old Daddy Longlegs" (Macirone), were especially well rendered. The solo vocalists were Miss Sumpster, Miss J. Frimbley, Mr. Maskell, and Mr. Sumpster, all of whom gave much satisfaction to appreciative audiences.

BANFF.—The members of the Banff Musical Association gave their second and concluding Concert of the present session in the County Hall, on Friday evening, the 13th ult., to a large and fashionable audience. The principal work in the programme was Barnby's sacred Idyl, *Rebekah*, the libretto of which is written by Arthur Mathison. The work is perhaps, taken as a whole, one of the most meritorious of modern productions of a similar character, and in some of the parts its melody is strikingly beautiful, breathing throughout a tone of earnestness and spiritual reverence. The *dramatis personæ* are three in number—*Rebekah*, Isaac, and Eliezer—and the choruses are formed by maidens of the city, attendants, and others. Upon the rehearsal of the piece the members of the Association have spent a considerable time, and the result was a decisive success. The solo parts were taken as follows:—*Rebekah*, Miss Isa Dickson; Isaac, Mr. A. Simpson; Eliezer, Mr. W. Williamson; and perhaps the choice could not have been more fortunately made from amongst the members of the Association, for the whole of the solo music was excellently rendered. The piano and harmonium accompaniments were played by Mrs. Clement Gordon and Miss K. Martin respectively. The second part of the programme was devoted to miscellaneous pieces,