

A Church Barrel-Organ

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## A CHURCH BARREL-ORGAN.

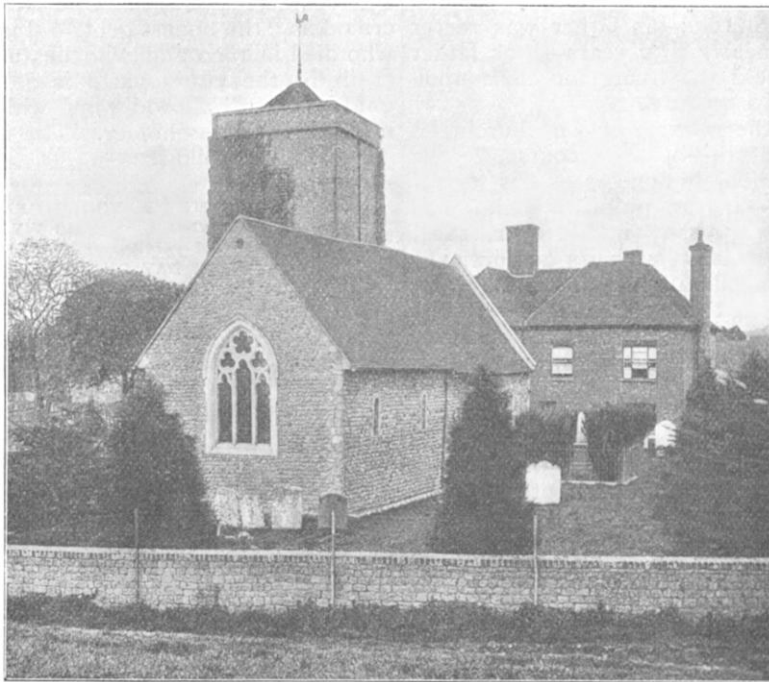
Is it possible to find a church wherein a barrel-organ is in use at its services? Yes, it is, and, moreover, within twenty-five miles of London. Here followeth the proof thereof.

In the course of a visit to the factory of Messrs. J. W. Walker and Sons, I accidentally learned that some *employés* of that old-established organ-building firm were then engaged upon repairing a barrel-organ at a church in Kent. A barrel-organ in a church! One that was in regular use! It seemed incredible. However, Messrs. Walker were good enough to supply me with the name of the clergyman of the church. To him I wrote

stating that I should like, with his permission, to see and hear the organ so that I might write something about it in *THE MUSICAL TIMES*. He not only gave a courteous consent to my request, but kindly invited me to be his guest for "a week end."

Accordingly on a September Saturday I found myself at Wrotham station, on the Maidstone branch of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway. A pleasant walk of three miles brought me to the picturesque rectory of Trottiscliffe, where the rector, the Rev. Charles W. Shepherd, dispensed a warm hospitality.

Trottiscliffe, the village in question, appears in the Postal Guide as Trotterscliffe. The local appellation of the place is, however, "Trosley,"



TROTTCISCLIFFE CHURCH, KENT.

pronounced "Trowsley"; but Trottiscliffe is a nearer approach to the ancient form of its designation—Trottesclyve. It is most beautifully situated on rising ground and sheltered on the North by a range of chalk hills, from which magnificent and extensive panoramic views may be obtained. How little the dwellers in the great Metropolis realise that an environment so charming is within such easy reach of their "smoky nest." The village, which in its present depopulated state contains less than 300 inhabitants, formerly included one of the manor houses of the mediæval Bishops of Rochester. A portion of that old episcopal habitation—the house standing behind the church—is shown in the illustration. The good Bishop would sail up the Medway in his state barge, and, landing at Halling, would proceed on his palfrey along the pilgrim road

—which is still traversable—to the seclusion of Trottesclyve. Ancient records show that these old divines were very partial to the place, and no wonder.

The church is a structure of great antiquity. The chancel is at least 800 years old, as the Domesday Survey mentions a church here in or about A.D. 1085-86. But the wide-jointed masonry in the eastern portion of the structure seems to point to a still earlier period. In the year 788, Offa, King of Mercia, "gave a portion of his possessions called 'Trottesclib,' containing six ploughlands, to the church of St. Andrew in Rochester, for religious purposes." It is possible, therefore, that Trottiscliffe affords an example of a church erected in Anglo-Saxon times. The Norman windows of the chancel call for special notice. Two of these windows in the North wall are in their original state on the

exterior. There is no sill of ashlar to them. It is difficult to discover in Kent any example of the earliest Norman walling and windows so well preserved and so unaltered as those in the chancel of Trottiscliffe Church, thanks to the care of the rector. The nave is of the transition period, between Norman and Early English. The plan of the church as it now exists was formed and completed about A.D. 1200: thus it has remained for 700 years. The outer West wall—that shown in the photograph—was rebuilt by Mr. Shepherd, the present rector, at a cost of £800. It is an excellent and rare example of cut flint work, which gives the appearance of a highly-glazed external of peculiar beauty combined with lasting solidity. It is not surprising that Mr. Shepherd, who was born at Trottiscliffe rectory, takes a special interest in the church; his father was rector before him for nearly fifty years—thus father and son have held the living for close upon three-quarters of a century.

In regard to the interior of the church, its most striking feature—next, of course, to the barrel-organ, which in one sense is not a striking feature—is the pulpit, which came from Westminster Abbey in October, 1824. The tradition associated with its acquirement is this. A London distiller—James Seager, by name—one day met the architect of the Abbey. "Do you want a pulpit?" asked the architect. "Yes," replied the distiller, "I do, for a church in Kent." Thereupon the pulpit was carted down in one of the distiller's drays and duly erected in Trottiscliffe Church. But the sounding-board came not. Upon application being made to the Dean and Chapter for this appendage, the Westminster divines were so exceeding wroth at their pulpit having been disposed of in that irregular way that they refused to part with the sounding-board. However, it ultimately found its way to Trottiscliffe, and there it is to-day. This sounding-board is a handsome piece of inlaid wood-work, supported by a slight pillar of white wood, which is intended to represent a palm tree. The prevailing characteristics of Trottiscliffe Church are more ancient than modern. The interesting Elizabethan chalice was made in 1576, and a paten upon a foot dates from 1699. The wills of old parishioners throw a curious light upon the mediæval furniture of the church. For instance, in 1451, an image of the Virgin Mary stood in the church, with a light burning before it, and "to find a taper to burn before the image," one Richard Rowse bequeathed a cow worth eight shillings. In the apex of one of the nave windows is a mediæval design which must be almost unique in a parish church. It represents the Holy Trinity. Contrary to Scriptural teaching, and to the orthodox doctrines of the Church, God the Father ("whom no man hath seen at any time") is represented as a man. Upon His knees is a crucifix, symbolical of the

sacrifice made by God the Son, over whose head appears the Sacred Dove, as the symbol of the third Person of the Blessed Trinity. The sun, moon, and stars are represented by accessory details.

The parish registers, which are in excellent condition and which have been carefully indexed by the present rector, date from 1540. It is very interesting to turn over the pages of that old parchment book, the first register. One entry of a baptism records that the rite took place on the same day as King Charles was beheaded! I was specially interested in finding the name of Attwood. It appears as early as 1543, when a George Attwood was baptised. Entries of the name, with slightly varied spelling, are to be found extending over 130 years (1543-1673). One Attwood is described as "the honest gent." James Atwoode, who died in 1600 and who lies under an altar-tomb in the churchyard, is designated "the guid housber," an odd word which may mean husband or householder. The inscription on his tomb is as follows:—

HERE LIETH THE BODIE  
OF JAMES ATWOODE GENTE  
MAN AND ALICE HIS WYF  
WHICH JAMES DECEASED  
THE XI DAY OF MAY IN  
THE YERE OF OURE  
LORD GOD 1600

Were these Attwood Trottiscliffians the ancestors of Mozart's English pupil and the "dear old Mr. Attwood" of Mendelssohn?

It is now time to turn to the barrel-organ, which, by the way, I had the privilege of turning on the Saturday evening of my visit. The instrument, placed at the extreme West end of the church, is the handiwork of T. C. Bates and Son, 6, Ludgate Hill. It has six stops—bourdon, open diapason, stopped diapason, principal, dulciana, and fifteenth. There are six barrels, of which only three can be placed in the instrument at the same time—the three remaining rotaries being in reserve for use when required. As each barrel contains ten tunes, there is, all told, a selection of sixty tunes. The three chants originally on the barrels have been taken off, and thus there is no chanting at the morning service, at which it should be stated the barrel-organ is only used. Some of the old repeat tunes have been replaced by modern examples, though such ancient specimens as "Job" and "Old 11th" yet remain. I selected "Aurelia" for my recital, and in grinding out the familiar strains I thought to myself: "What would Dr. S. S. Wesley have said to such a revolutionary proceeding!" There are no Amens to the tunes, for an obvious reason. In this connection a curious thing happened. One of the barrels was sent to London to have an old tune exchanged for a modern one. The artificer inserted pins to produce the orthodox "Amen." What was the result? There came forth an Amen at the end of every verse!

The service on the Sunday morning of my visit was one of extreme simplicity. The entire Office, including the Canticles, was read. Three hymns, from Windle's collection, are usually sung; but when, as on this occasion, the Holy Communion is celebrated, only two hymns are included in the service. These were sung to the tunes "St. Michael" and "St. Peter." The tune was played (or ground) over by the organist, who also discharges the duties of sexton. It must be admitted that the general effect was not altogether displeasing to the sympathetic listener. The tone of the organ, which was of a sweetly mellowed quality, blended well with the voices, and the congregation sang heartily. If the organist did not furnish much variety in the way of stop registration and expression, he played no wrong notes and he kept very good time.

F. G. E.

### PROFESSOR PARKER ON ENGLISH EXECUTIVE MUSICIANS.

#### AN ECHO OF THE WORCESTER FESTIVAL.

SOCIALISM was rampant at the recent Worcester Festival. Not, be it observed, a socialism of the Hyde Park oratory kind, but that which draws soul to soul, revives old memories, and makes new friends. These externals of the Festival furnish that which our American kinsfolk designate "a good time."

It was during one of the social intervals between the actual music-makings that Professor Horatio W. Parker kindly afforded "our special correspondent" at the Worcester Festival an opportunity for a chat concerning the impressions that the distinguished American composer had received in regard to the performance of music in the old country. Seated in a pleasant sunny room, under the shadow of the stately Cathedral, Professor Parker willingly consented to answer a few questions, the first of which related to chorus singing. Although this was by no means his first visit to England, he had had no opportunity of hearing an English festival choir, as his previous sojourns in the old country had taken place in the non-choral season.

It should be stated that choral preparations for the Worcester Festival are made in four places at the same time—in Worcester, which supplies the bulk of the chorus; in Gloucester, in Hereford (the cities of the "Three Choirs"), and in Leeds, which town furnishes a contingent of forty-four voices.

"I held," says Professor Parker, "choral rehearsals in Worcester, Gloucester, and Leeds during the interval which elapsed between my arrival in England and the Festival. I never shall forget the first of these rehearsals. It was as unexpected as it was delightful. I arrived in Worcester expecting to hear a rehearsal under Mr. Atkins's leadership. But he was suspended in transit from Yorkshire by

a defective locomotive, and I was at once asked to take charge. The fine volume and quality of the Worcester chorus, the business-like way in which they did their work, the intelligent sympathy they showed, and, above all, their cordial, hospitable welcome to a strange brother-musician from another country, all combined to make me feel at home. It was really a homelike feeling, as though I had come to visit relations of whom I had often heard, but whom I had never seen personally. It was an altogether delightful experience, and I am proud and glad of the opportunity afforded me to make acquaintances and friends among my brother musicians in this fine old country.

"The Gloucester contingent contained a splendid lot of basses. The Yorkshire singers gave a sensitive responsiveness to my wishes as conductor which was entirely admirable. If they always show this quality in the same degree they must indeed be an ideal instrument for the interpretation of choral music. I regret that I did not have an opportunity of hearing the Hereford section separately.

"It is hardly in order that I should make comparisons otherwise than mentally between our methods and those in use in England. But one or two things strike me that you may like to mention. In the first place, there is better material here and the singers often receive remuneration, whereas American chorus-singers usually pay for the privilege of singing, and, moreover, they frequently buy their own music. In England there is a larger and more dense population to draw upon for singers and for the support of music; thus music seems to be more easily brought close to the people. The daily services in your magnificent Cathedrals keep music in people's minds and hearts. We have comparatively little church music and that not always of the best quality. When the Puritans came to Massachusetts they brought with them only about half-a-dozen of their crabbedest psalm-tunes. They had an instinctive distrust of anything beautiful in divine service, for which we are now paying the penalty. Their influence made real live church music impossible for the best part of two centuries and, in fact, it is still felt.

"I think that the sight of the Three Choirs and their choirmasters working together, each one unselfishly giving of his best efforts to aid the others, with the sure confidence that such efforts will be duly reciprocated—I think this in itself is inspiring. Your fine Cathedrals give a touch of ineffable beauty and holiness to sacred music which is exquisite to all who are open to the influences of art."

Have you anything to say on the subject of music in England?

"It would not become me to criticise English music unfavourably even if I could, but I have no desire to do so. I had always supposed that