The Manual 32-ft. Stop, etc.

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criticism embodied in that portion of the evidence of the Report of the Royal Commission to which attention is directed; yet I contend that this evidence is not sufficiently substantiated to be taken as a text, and so the remarks based upon it lose weight in consequence. From what is written it appears that the musical genius in Wales is 'dying of inanition.' This is far from representing the truth. From intimate experience I can speak of the musical life of Wales for the past thirty years, and can testify to the very great progress that has been made in all branches of the art. Details can easily be supplied, but it may be sufficient to state that the number of complete works performed in Wales is at least tenfold compared with thirty years ago. As these works include Bach's 'St. Matthew' Passion, Beethoven's 'Choral Symphony,' Brahms's 'Requiem,' Franck's 'Beatitudes,' all Elgar's choral works, Bantock's 'Omar Khayyám,' and practically all other choral masterpieces, obviously the criticism that our standard of performance is too elementary is not justified. Progress in instrumental music has been phenomenal. The standard of pianoforte and organ playing is incomparably higher, and for every player of thirty years ago there are to-day forty.

Also, in the populous districts of South Wales a creditable orchestra can be organized for choral performances without much difficulty.

Again, reference was made to the Sol-fa system as being a bar to progress. This is in no way borne out by the facts as I know them, for in the first place it is a system which has taught the Welsh democracy to sing, and has been the means of enlarging the musical knowledge of thousands who without it would have depended entirely upon their memory of tune. So far from Sol-fa having proved a bar to further progress, I can state that a large number of those who are now professional musicians were induced to proceed with the study of the universal notation as a result of their previous knowledge of Sol-fa.—Yours, &c.,

DAVID EVANS.

(Mus. Doc., Oxon., Professor of Music in the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire.)

Cathays Park,
Cardiff.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—I perused with great interest the article on the Musical Education of Wales. It has long been my idea that Wales should have a Conservatorium of its own. The national gift of Wales with regard to music is very large, and it most badly needs a Control Power to do for it what MM. Belaiev and Moussorgsky have done for Russia. Music is a universal language with the Welsh, which up to now, comparatively speaking, has been confined to song. With a power to train her great gift, Wales would undoubtedly become one of the greatest musical countries in the world. Her many beautiful folk-songs and hymns, unsurpassed in their grandeur, lie unknown to the majority. Properly edited, they would make a work for musicians to appreciate. Russia has risen from obscurity to be one of the leading musical countries with the help of a few enthusiastic men. Why should not Wales? Her material is as good. I hope the proposition will be most strongly supported. The Welsh people I think would be the first to appreciate the efforts to educate them in the art they so love.

Yours, &c.,

K. ROBERTS CULLINGFORD.

SOLDIERS' CHOIRS.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—The interest which the *Musical Times* is good enough to take in soldiers' choirs leads me to give you an account of six months' experience here. In camps remote from any civilian population a male-voice choir is alone possible; and where the numbers are large, as at Brocton and Catterick, a sufficient supply of first tenors can be had to make the results satisfactory.

But in small camps of one or two battalions such a supply rarely exists, and in such cases it seems better, where a large village or small town is near, for soldier-singers to join the local mixed-voice societies, which are often in temporary abeyance through loss of their own men. Very decent

musical results are procurable from quite ordinary material, while the female and khaki elements are mutually attractive and assist regular attendances at rehearsal. In this village of 1,000 people, close to a camp of the same number, the village society, broken up since the War, has this season been revived; and with a well-balanced choir of sixty voices we gave 'Messiah' on Christmas Day (with Handel's original accompaniments) and a miscellaneous concert later on, both with good musical results and much enjoyment to the singers.—Yours &c.,

CHAPLAIN TO THE FORCES.

Pattingham, East Yorks.

[Our correspondent encloses a programme of one of the concerts given by the Society. Amongst the eighteen items we note the following: *Choral*: 'Sing we and chaunt it' (Pearsall), 'In going to my lonely bed' (Edwards), 'Omar's Hymn to the Sun,' for male voices (Goss), 'The Snow' (Elgar). *Vocal Solos*: 'To welcome you' (Goring Thomas), 'Sea-wrack' (Harty). *Instrumental*: Violin Sonata in E minor (Corelli), Andante from Concerto (Mendelssohn).]

THE MANUAL 32-FT. STOP, ETC.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—As I am on a few days' leave, and have not been able to see the *Musical Times* for a considerable period, I may perhaps be pardoned for adverting to a statement made by your correspondent on page 17 of the January issue in commenting on the monster Philadelphia organ. He notes the fact that there is a 32-ft. Contra Bourdon on the Great manual, and adds—'the first manual 32-ft. we have met with.' May I be allowed to point out that a stop of 32-ft. pitch on the manual is now by no means rare, and to name (amongst others) the following instances: Ely Cathedral, Newcastle Cathedral, Trinity College Cambridge, St. Nicholas' Church, Whitehaven, Doncaster Parish Church, Leeds Parish Church, St. Paul's Church, Toronto, and Johannesburg Town Hall. In the Ely instrument this register is complete to CC, in the other examples it extends at ten. C only. In the Johannesburg organ there are two, a flue stop on the Great manual and a reed on the Bombarde. The latter may perhaps be the only example of a manual 32-ft. reed extant, but I am not sure, and even this idea was foreshadowed by the late Mr. Thomas Casson in some of his tonal designs.

I entirely agree with your correspondent that a well-planned instrument of about a hundred speaking stops should satisfy all musical requirements, and in this connection I would call particular attention to the Johannesburg Town Hall organ, which contains slightly less than that number.

The specification so far as I am aware has not hitherto appeared in your columns. If so, I sincerely hope that this omission will soon be remedied, as it will amply repay careful study by all those who are interested in organ construction. This important instrument was designed by my friend Mr. Alfred Hollins, and was completed about two years ago, he himself giving the opening series of recitals. It is interesting to note that the development of the harmonic structure of some tonal families, the reed department especially, has been carried even further than in the Liverpool Cathedral organ. I need hardly say, by the way, how greatly we deplore the premature death of its designer. Taken as a whole, the Johannesburg instrument ought to appeal to all schools of players, as it presents ample resources for the adequate rendering of every kind of music, from the organ works of Bach to the latest orchestral transcriptions.—Yours faithfully,

GEORGE DIXON
(Lieut.-Colonel).

April 18, 1918.

ALBENIZ AND HIS OPERA 'MERLIN.'

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—I was much interested in Mr. Klein's article on my poor friend Albeniz, and I am always glad to see Albeniz's genius recognised. I was a little surprised however that Mr. Klein did not mention the opera 'Merlin,' the first of the