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Ancient Organ Makers

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CORRESPONDENCE.

LADIES' SURPLICED CHOIRS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Perhaps the following particulars will interest your correspondent who is seeking information on the subject of ladies' surpliced church choirs. The Rev. Dr. Bromley is credited with having originated the novelty some two years ago at the Pro-Cathedral, Melbourne, where he officiated. At the time of the innovation, the *Church of England Messenger* of Melbourne, it would seem, published an adverse criticism on the "attraction," whereupon Dr. Bromley preached on the subject, and thus replied to his critic:—"It cannot be denied that, considering the extraordinary caprices of fashion in the matter of female attire, it would offend the taste to see the simple uniformity of surpliced men and boys disturbed by the intrusion of the grotesque and daily changing inventions of the Paris milliner. What better solution, then, of the difficulty could there be than to clothe the female members of the choir in an ecclesiastical vestment of such a suitable type as should harmonise well with the surroundings of their position, and at the same time not destroy that distinctive gracefulness of attire to which their sex entitles them?" The "ecclesiastical vestments" worn by the three young ladies of the choir consisted of surplices bordered with black, and caps of college style. I cannot say whether this church continues to have lady choristers, but in the beginning, at any rate, Dr. Bromley's zeal was not allowed to flourish unthwarted. There was quite a powerful party who objected to the choir consisting of ladies and millinery, and who held that the old traditional Cathedral usage should be adhered to. Some of the members of this opposition, when on a visit to Adelaide, happened to attend a service at the Anglican Cathedral there, and were so delighted with the singing that they declared themselves ready to guarantee the expenses of the whole choir if they would go over to Melbourne and give an octave of services in the new Cathedral.

Not long after the Melbourne incident "those who love church order and decency" were terribly shocked to find the same sensation introduced into England at a Harvest festival somewhere in Yorkshire. In this case the surplices of the ladies were not unlike M.A. gowns in shape, and consisted of Scotch lawn with pleated backs, purple velvet caps, similar to those worn by D.C.L.'s, completing the attire. A correspondent, anxious for Canon Liddon's opinion on the startling novelty, received the following reply: "It is difficult to say whether the spectacle of ladies dressed in surplices, and so on, in church, is more irreverent than it is certainly grotesque. It is greatly to be hoped that the good sense and Christian feeling of the Australian churches will steadily discourage anything of the kind, and especially for the sake of the ladies concerned."

E.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—In reply to the question of your correspondent in Hartlepool, page 275, issue of May, 1889, right column, last but one.

I read in the *Church Times* of about a year ago that the Cathedral in Melbourne, Colony of Victoria, Australia, had a ladies' choir (or a part of the choir), that the ladies wore an ordinary surplice over a dark dress and had a small cap or biretta on the head.

My niece and daughter corroborate me in this statement. Perhaps the Editor of the *Church Times* could give your correspondent more information on the subject.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

HENRY FAITHFULL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—In reference to the enquiries which have been made in your paper as to lady choristers, some of your correspondents may find it useful to know that Messrs. Nathan, Hardman Street, Liverpool, make the surplices and caps

which are used by lady choristers, and no doubt they can supply all information respecting same.

It may also be of interest to know that the originator of the costume was the Rev. Dr. Bromley, of Melbourne, who very justly contrasts the graceful ecclesiastical vestment, harmonising with its surroundings, with the daily changing caprices of fashion in feminine attire.—Yours faithfully,

K. C.

18, Selborne Street, Liverpool, June 22, 1889.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Referring to a query of one of your correspondents respecting ladies wearing surplices in choirs, I would mention that there is a fine surpliced choir in the Melbourne Cathedral. There are twelve ladies, fourteen boys, and sixteen men. The ladies wear surplices with black stoles, black velvet collars, and round black mortar-boards with silk tassels, and the whole costume is very becoming and suitable. I went to the service prepared to regard this new departure in the light of an innovation, but experienced quite different feelings. I thought there could be nothing against so simple and appropriate a costume except the stoles, and these I believe no one has a right to wear except those in holy orders.—Yours very truly,

G. MCARTHUR SCALES.

Belvoir House, Hornsey Lane, N., June 19, 1889.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—In reply to a question in the May number of your Magazine with regard to a ladies' choir. While visiting in Yorkshire last year, at the new Church of Skelton, near Saltburn-by-the-Sea, there were four ladies, forming an addition to a very good male choir.

The surplices appeared in front just as a gentleman's (long), but at the back pleated in to fit the figure; they also had violet velvet Tam o' Shanter caps (I presume to match the hangings in the church), and wore no gloves.

Any further information you could no doubt get by writing to the Vicar of the parish.

I have forgotten the name of the church, but as there is only one other very small and old one, there would be no difficulty in finding it. Hoping this may prove useful to you.—Believe me, yours truly,

ANNIE MIXER.

7, Keith Grove, Uxbridge Road, W.

May 30, 1889.

ANCIENT ORGAN MAKERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—May I ask your readers if they can give me names and dates of English organ makers prior to 1625? I have found the following:—

York:	John Gyse..	..	..	free	1431.
"	William Nyvell ..	..	..	"	1445.
Norwich:	John Asshwell ..	..	..	"	1446.
"	Arnalt Maynhamber..	..	..	"	1446.
York:	John Ross ..	..	..	"	1463.
"	Edward Boyse ..	..	..	"	1478.
"	William Hall ..	..	..	"	1478.
"	Maurice Biront ..	..	..	"	1485.
"	John Hugh or Hewe ..	..	..	"	1489.
"	James Demps ..	..	..	"	1526.
"	John Heweson ..	..	..	"	1540.
"	William Treasurer ..	..	..	"	1540.
"	Stephen Britten ..	..	..	"	1608.

Yours truly,

R. C. HOPE, F.S.A.

Scarboro', June 3, 1889.

P.S.—The word "free" refers to the date when the individual was made a freeman of the city, before which time he was unable to ply his trade.

THE GUILD OF ORGANISTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—The paragraph in your last issue referring to the Guild of Organists is calculated to mislead those unacquainted with the facts of the unpleasantness between the