Music and the Revised Code

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Statutes of Wells (1263) and of Exeter (1276), prescribed that every Vicar (Clergy who represented the Dignitaries and the Major Canons, whether priests, Deacons, or Sub-deacons, in their absence) should be able to play on a musical instrument. At Exeter (1540) the Choristers were to be taught by the Clericus Capellæ. At Hereford, proficiency on the viol or harp was indispensable to success on the part of an applicant for admission to the Choir. And at Westminster there is a provision that the Choristers should play on an instrument.

The stipend of an organist in the New Foundations, as at Westminster, was equal to that of a Minor Canon: the former receives for his annual fee £4, for livery 30s., and for commons £6 1s. 8d.; the latter, if also Precentor, had in addition, 40s., or at Rochester, £5 2s. 8d., and as Precentor £2, whilst the Master of Choristers was paid £5 7s. It is much to be wished that as the office of Organist is of such importance in the choral service, his position was more clearly defined, and that by means of an adequate stipend he might be relieved from the drudgery of private tuition, and enabled to devote himself to his high calling exclusively. His skill now must be greater than that of his mediæval, or even more recent, predecessor, when we find such entries as the following:

- 1374 For removing the organs from chapel into hall and preparing them for the play, 5s.
- 1407 For the expenses of 6 scholars carrying the organs from chapel to the Bishop's house at Waltham, 9d.
- 1415 For linen cloth bought to cover the organs of the college to be carried to Clere, 20d.
- For waxing the said cloth, 20d.
- For two ash poles to carry the said organs, 8d.
- 4 Hen. IV. For a pair of organs bought at London, with their carriage, £6 3s. 4d.
- 1421 For a pair of organs bought at London, 100s.
- 1520 An organ cost £13 6s. 7d.
- 1570 A pair of organs cost £6 13s. 4d.
- 1630 For 2 lbs. of tinglass used in constructing the organ, 7s.
- 1666 For a musical instrument called harpsican for the use of the chapel, £4 9s. 6d.
- For its carriage from London, 10s.

The question arises what are the relative duties of the Organist and Precentor in the New Foundations where he is not a permanent dignitary but simply an officer elective by the Dean and Chapter. The Dean has the charge of seeing that "all Divine Services are decently performed." The Precentor is to be one of the Minor Canons, elder in years and superior in learning and manners, whose duty is to guide the singers in church, decently to lead the singing and to have obedience paid him by the Minor Canons and Clerks, and the others of the Choir to sing what he directs, to note absences and keep the Choir books. The Master of the Choristers or Organist, skilful in singing and as a performer on musical instruments, has the instruction of the boys committed to him; at Westminster to teach them in the science and exercise of these requirements and their other duties in choir, whilst the Precentor of the choir, chosen by the Dean as superior to the other Priests in skilfulness of singing, is to preside over them and the other inferior ministers and singers, and his office is to prescribe the mode, order, and persons who are to sing the Common Prayer in church, and note irregularities. At Ely the Master of the Choristers is to

be chosen in addition to the Clerks for his skill as a singer and organist, to teach the boys and assist in singing the Divine Service. No rules can be more distinct and precise as regards the Precentor's right of direction (*regere chorum*), and the Organist's duty of instruction. One of the most learned Canonists decides that the office of the Precentor is to preside in choir, and to direct the Canons, Clerks, and other ministers in things pertaining to the order of singing the Divine office, and to arrange that it be offered to the Most High with gravity and due order. But this observation on his power and authority does not apply if he holds merely an office without administration, as, in that case, the power of ordering in the choir belongs to the first dignitary or President of the choir deputed by the Chapter, according to the custom of each Church.

The appointment of an Organist in the Old Foundations varied in date, but may be generally fixed in the 17th century. At Chichester his duty was to be in the choir until the psalms had been sung, and then, having "done his duty up at the organs, return to the choir to bear his part again."

In parish churches the Organist, under the Incumbent, has the direction of the choir, and there should be no infringement of his authority by the introduction of lay persons bearing fictitious titles,* who would be eminently useful in leading their respective sides of the choir (the parish priest alone being the president), but err against taste, as well as precedent and ordinary sense, in adopting privileged names which are but empty sounds in their case.

MACKENZIE E. C. WALCOTT.

MUSIC AND THE REVISED CODE.

By HENRY C. LUNN.

THE incompetence of committees, acting under official "authority," to examine into musical matters has been so long manifest to all who have really studied the art and its requirements, that no surprise could be felt when it was found that, although music was understood to be included in the new Revised Code, the inspectors selected as examiners knew nothing whatever of the subject. This was thoroughly in consonance with the usual Governmental treatment of the art in this country, and quite in accordance with the manner in which the great question of musical education had been discussed and settled by that formidable body the Society of Arts. But we must confess our astonishment when we first read the astounding fact that this ignorance, which had been so often displayed by pompous and patronising Members of Parliament whenever the subject of music was introduced in the House of Commons, was looked upon as a reason for not examining into and reporting upon the state of the art under the new Revised Code. Here, indeed, is a hopeful sign that at length music shall be admitted to its right place; for this confession of inability on the part of the inspectors shows

* The Precentor is a permanent dignitary collated by the Bishop in Cathedrals of the Old Foundation, Salisbury, Chichester, Exeter, Wells, Hereford, Lincoln, Lichfield, St. Paul's, and York; and in them the Organist is not a statutable officer except as holding a lay clerkship. But in the New Foundations the Organist is a statutable officer under this title, as well as the Precentor, who must be a Minor Canon and likewise appointed by the Dean and Chapter; that is, at Durham, Rochester, Canterbury, Worcester, Carlisle, Peterborough, Chester, Norwich, Oxford, Bristol, Gloucester, and in the collegiate churches of Westminster, Windsor, Ripon, and Manchester. (The two latter being now cathedrals.)

not only a personal modesty, which cannot be too highly commended, but it proves the admission of the fact that the subject had better be omitted from the Revised Code altogether than be entrusted to the care of persons who are not duly qualified for the office. As we have already said, however this theory may have been tacitly recognised in other arts, it is so thoroughly new with regard to music, that we can readily imagine the awkward position of Mr. Forster, when, on receiving a deputation upon the question, he found himself, for the first time, conversing upon the matter with persons who understood what they were talking about. The novelty of the situation must, perhaps, however, have been an agreeable excitement to a man so thoroughly used up in the consideration of "definite subjects"; and his frank confession of utter ignorance on the art, although it might disqualify him in the minds of musical men from delivering judgment on the case, was, at least, infinitely preferable to that assumption of knowledge to which we have been hitherto accustomed when the matter has been under official discussion.

We do not know whether it was supposed that the omission of music from the Code would be taken quietly by the public: if so the disappointment must have been great; for, no sooner was the fact announced, than letters appeared from the most eminent members of the profession, leading articles were written in the newspapers and musical journals, and a system of baiting was steadily maintained in the House of Commons, which Mr. Forster bore with an equanimity which could scarcely have been preserved had he not felt that apathy on the subject which effectually armed him against any attack that could be made. Amongst the letters which appeared may be mentioned those from Mr. Henry Leslie, Mr. J. Alfred Novello, and the Rev. J. Curwen, all expressing regret that the teaching of music in elementary schools was not considered advisable, and suggesting methods by which the difficulties might be removed. Mr. Leslie, naturally enough, mentions the names of several well-known persons who have for years been engaged in musical tuition, with whom the authorities should at once put themselves in communication. Mr. Novello especially dwells upon the beneficial mental and physical effects which would result from making singing a portion of education, and says, that in all probability it would be found the most attractive of all the studies. Mr. Curwen, with a pardonable desire to introduce the Sol-fa notation, is desirous of covering the incompetence of the inspectors to examine into musical proficiency, by extending to schools "that system of ear exercises which has for some years been introduced into the Christmas examinations at the Training Colleges, the examinations of the Society of Arts, and in the local examinations of the Universities." Then Mr. Forster has also had deputations to receive, the first one waiting upon him before the resolution to exclude music had been made public, although we can scarcely imagine that even at that time it had not been secretly formed. At this interview he had to listen to Sir John Pakington, Mr. Tufnell, Mr. Edwin Chadwick, the Rev. Canon Cromwell, and Mr. J. F. Puttick, to all of whom he made a most gracious reply—not in the slightest degree committing himself to any course of action, regretting that he had never been taught music (which certainly might have been accepted as

an argument against allowing others to grow up in like ignorance), hoping for some practical suggestion on the subject, and bowing the deputation out with many thanks. But a more formidable body had to be encountered when it was known that music was to be omitted from the subjects for which grants would be given, and this time he had to act upon the defensive. Mr. Godfrey Lushington spoke most energetically upon the question, and urged that a knowledge of the art was "valuable to everyone, whether as an individual, as a member of a school or church, or of society in general." Mr. Curwen proposed the plan of examination which he had already suggested in his letter, and Mr. J. W. Glover, on behalf of the Tonic Sol-fa Association, pointed to the excellent results of the system, and especially alluded to the yearly demonstrations given by the children of the Association at the Crystal Palace. Of course Mr. Forster agreed with them all as to the value of music; and, curiously enough, whilst adhering to his determination to exclude the subject from the Code, affirmed that the inspectors being incompetent to examine into the matter was the "fault of the education of the country." It would be almost impossible, he said, to change the inspectors; and the difficulty of organising inspection was great enough as it was. He promised to consider the subject most carefully next year; and when Mr. Curwen spoke of the rapid progress music was making in this country, and suggested that it was "a dangerous thing to check a horse in its leap," Mr. Forster replied that "it was a very small horse and a very short leap," a curious remark, some may think, coming from the same person who had just admitted that "he agreed with the most enthusiastic of the deputation as to the value of music."

It is, perhaps, easy enough to argue a question at the head of a deputation, however reluctant a Government official may be to listen to you; but everybody must feel a sense of gratitude to Mr. Winterbotham, who, in his place in the House of Commons, spoke a few home truths upon music before a whole assembly notorious for indifference on the subject. He could not understand, he said, why music was to be excluded from the Code. "What was the effect produced by the study of music? Music required order, method, attention, and quickness; it practised the memory, and was the only study that really cultivated the imagination of which young and untutored minds were capable." He had himself, he said, studied music, and could assure the members that "the pleasure it now occasioned him was so intense, that it even led him sometimes almost to resist the fascination of coming down to the House."

It might naturally be supposed by persons unacquainted with Government routine that when the incompetence of the inspectors to examine into the subject of music was discovered, the assistance of those who had made the art the study of their lives would be called in to help them. But this straightforward method of viewing the matter is by no means warranted by official precedent. A number of "Admirable Crichtons" must be searched for; and, as it might take a year to procure them, a year's delay must be granted. Mr. Forster distinctly stated that "he thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer would make a considerable objection to additional special inspectors," so that the persons appointed are presumed to know

everything. Geography, history, grammar, algebra, geometry, philosophy, physical geography, the natural sciences, political economy, languages, "or any definite subject of instruction," are matters upon which one individual is supposed to be sufficiently informed to become an inspector: whether the attempt to procure any aid surreptitiously will be considered a crime, we know not, but we strongly suspect that "needlework," which is also included, will be too often judged of by the inspectors' wives, unless a careful watch is placed over the examiners.

We can scarcely bring ourselves to believe that, after a twelvemonth's consideration of the subject, any system so absurd as that now propounded will be acted upon. When we consider, as Mr. Leslie says in his letter, that many persons have come prominently forward of late years as musical instructors of the masses, all of whom would be too glad to aid the good cause, either by their valuable advice or by their personal exertion, it seems incredible that their assistance should be refused, and that Government should still insist upon keeping the matter in its own hands. The very fact of the delay gives us a ray of hope, for it will afford time for musicians to express their opinions freely upon the subject. Again, it must be remembered that as the first step towards real knowledge should be a confession of ignorance, very much has been gained by the candid admission of the Government that the reason of the exclusion of music from the Revised Code was that the inspectors knew nothing about it. It now behoves all interested in the question to see that when the Code is re-considered next year, the matter, instead of being thrown aside, shall be placed under the care of those who *do* know something about it; and, as this knowledge can scarcely be expected to grow up in the course of a twelvemonth, we may indulge a hope that those inspectors who, according to the Governmental report, appear to know everything *but* music, may give way to acknowledged professors of the art, whose report may be of some real service. At all events, Mr. Forster may rely upon it that the subject, having been once awakened, will not be allowed to drop; and if, without some satisfactory proof of ability, the Government still insists upon appointing inspectors to examine music, the public should insist upon appointing musicians to examine the inspectors.

. Since the above article was in type it has been decided that, although music is not to be included amongst the special subjects in the Revised Code this year, a provision is to be inserted in the new minutes that after the 31st March, 1872, the grant to day-schools shall be reduced "by one shilling per scholar on the average number in attendance, unless the inspector be satisfied that vocal music is made a part of the ordinary course of instruction." Of course, this pre-supposes that music shall immediately be taught in all elementary schools without being recognised by the Government, for a year. We can scarcely imagine that this will satisfy those who have the matter really at heart; but at all events, it shows that the voice of the musical public has been heard, even in the House of Commons.

THOSE who believe with us that the status of art in a country depends very largely upon the status of artists, will be rejoiced to hear that the honour of knighthood has been conferred upon Mr. Jules

Benedict, Professor William Sterndale Bennett, and Dr. George Elvey, organist of the Chapel Royal. The long career of these well-known and estimable professors renders it unnecessary to do more than add our word of approbation as to the justice of the choice.

No one who has watched with interest the progress of music in England can doubt that of late years it has so thoroughly entered into the hearts and homes of the middle classes, that a knowledge of the creations of the great composers of the world has become almost a necessity; and we may be quite satisfied that when this feeling has taken root with the people, and grown upwards, it will not be very long before the aristocratic classes will yield to its power, and endeavour by every means to foster an art of which too many had been trained to the belief that ignorance was a virtue. That this gradual change has been materially influenced by the social position which English musicians have earned for themselves can scarcely admit of a question; for an art must always linger whilst its followers do not inspire respect. How this respect has been recently awakened by the musical artists of this country, and how respect has ripened into that feeling of brotherhood which springs from the conviction that all must be on an equality who are engaged in the divine work of elevating and refining our fellow men, it is unnecessary for us now to dwell upon. As we have already said, the one thing wanting was that this truth should be recognised by those whose power in the state rendered such admission of high practical value. That it has been acknowledged by the head of the nation, and that proof has been given of such acknowledgment by the only available means of conferring a mark of personal distinction, is a matter upon which we heartily congratulate, not only the recipients of such honours, but the whole musical profession of England, every member of which should see that the titles thus acquired by his fellow artists have, indirectly, ennobled himself.

CRYSTAL PALACE.

DURING the past month Mr. J. F. Barnett's Cantata, "Paradise and the Peri," has been performed with much success, the principal vocalists being Madame Vanzini, Madame Patey, Mr. Vernon Rigby, and Mr. Santley. The work was directed by the composer. On the 18th ult. Dr. Ferdinand Hiller's Symphony, "Es mus der Frühling Werden," was given, and most warmly received. Perhaps no work of the German composer could have been selected to display more thoroughly his great command of the resources of the orchestra, and certainly no one could have been chosen more suitable for a mixed audience, for the melodious character of every movement, especially the *Adagio* and *Allegro vivace*, must always please, even those who cannot appreciate the artistic treatment of the themes and the excellence of the instrumentation which characterise the entire Symphony. Dr. Hiller conducted the work, and afterwards performed Mozart's "Coronation" Concerto on the pianoforte, with that delicacy of touch and perfection of executive power imperatively demanded by the character of the composition. The two cadenzas, introduced by him in the first and last movements, were remarkable specimens of improvisation and in thorough sympathy with the nature of the work. Dr. Hiller also performed two of his own solos, an Etude, and a piece called "Zur Guitarre," both of which were highly effective and much applauded. The vocalists at the same concert were Madame Viardot-Garcia and Signor Piccoli.