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MAY 12, 1903.

THOMAS LEA SOUTHGATE, Esq.,

IN THE CHAIR.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ORGAN IN MUSICAL HISTORY.

BY A. MADELEY RICHARDSON, M.A., MUS. DOC.

GAZING at the stones of some great Cathedral, filled with wonder and admiration at its grace and beauty, as we watch the sweep of its Gothic arches, the intricacy of its tracery, the perfection of its proportions, our eye falls upon the organ, and we are set a-musing. Some five hundred years ago the last word was said in the development of Gothic architecture. Since then fashions have come and gone; one generation has praised its virtues, another has ignored them altogether, but none has been able to improve upon them. Reproduction and imitation we have had in plenty, but no advance. The architecture of the Middle Ages culminated some time in the fifteenth century; it has left its witness in stone poems all over the land. Since then all attempts at development have meant decadence, all endeavours after improvement, corruption.

Arts have their rise, their culmination and their fall. At the time when architecture was at its zenith the art of organ-building was in its infancy. If we could now see one of the organs used by the builders of our great Cathedrals we should smile at its crudity and ineffectual simplicity. What would one of our forefathers of five hundred years ago say if he could rise from the dead and see and hear that marvel of human ingenuity a modern organ? Such development would seem to him absolutely incredible: he would attribute it to the agency of the evil one.

The wonderful growth of the organ in the last five hundred years corresponds with the growth of the musical art itself: the instrument has changed and varied to as great an extent as musical form; the two have acted and reacted upon one another. So much can hardly be said of any other one instrument; this distinction belongs solely to the organ.

As an instrument the organ surely is now perfect, having reached the point attained by architecture five hundred years ago. Is further development possible? Who can tell? If not, must we inevitably look forward to decadence and decline? Maybe,—both with regard to the organ and to the musical art generally—but this is anticipating.

It is interesting to note what are the characteristics that distinguish the organ from other instruments.

There is the diapason or pure organ tone—that produced by open metal pipes. This is peculiar to the organ, and has never been imitated by any other means.

Then again there is the use of compound tones—that is the sounding together of a number of pipes to a single note which will include, besides duplication of the unison and its octaves, other sounds taken from the harmonies of nature, blending together in such a way as to give the effect of one brilliant sound—just as a ray of sunlight is compounded of many colours, but to the naked eye appears as one and simple, its composition only becoming evident when subjected to scientific experiment. The justification for compound tones on an organ is just the same as for the ray of sunlight, though the mixture stops were used for centuries before they were proved to be scientifically correct by Helmholtz's theory of musical quality.

Further, there is the compass. The organ possesses an upward and a downward range far beyond that of any other instrument. In both directions it reaches the utmost limit of human hearing. Its compass extends from the enormous depth of a pipe sixty-four feet long to the tiny sound of one three-quarters of an inch in length, both brought instantly into play by the touch of a finger. The use of these extreme sounds has alone been rendered possible by the ingenious mechanism of the organ; except for it we should never have heard them at all. The value of the grand and stately bass associated with the pedals of an organ is undeniable, but all attempts to reproduce it in orchestral instruments have hitherto failed.

Finally, the organ possesses the power of sustaining any number of notes for any length of time; a power which in itself separates it from all other single instruments.

The organ stands unique and alone among instruments. It is at once the greatest and the least. It possesses the greatest power and the greatest variety. It is in itself a whole orchestra, controlled by a single player. But there is the one thing lacking, in which it falls short of all, that is the power of expression. In this it is absolutely deficient. What is known as the human element belongs not to it. It is grand, stately, cold and still; completely wanting in what is considered by some the one essential of music.

What do we mean by expression? We talk of it freely—we regard it as the one guiding principle in musical performance. What is the thing itself? It is the *living* element in music. Life implies growth and constant change: musical expression means continual variety. In the highest of all instruments, the human voice, the sounds are produced by the living body itself; they possess its life; they proceed direct from the mind of the performer to the ear of the listener with no intervening artificial agency, and so they possess that poetic beauty which is associated with the works of nature. As no two flowers can be found precisely alike in every particular, so no two notes in the human voice will be exactly identical. Is it not this that gives it its power? To pass on to other instruments—the more completely the production of the tone is under the control of the player the more perfect is the expressive element; and so we place the violin, on which each note is new made every time it is sounded, as next to the human voice in order of merit. The pianoforte is further removed, as on it the sound is only partially under the control of the player; he can govern its commencement alone, beyond that he is helpless. And when we come to the organ, the performer has lost all power of controlling the quality of sound: all he can do is to decide when it shall commence and when it shall cease, its production is entirely through artificial means. It is the voice of the pipe not the player who gives the tone: what the former makes it that it remains. It may be never so beautiful, much more perfect than many of the notes produced by singers or players on other instruments; but that does not satisfy us. We rebel at its changeless identity: it is lacking in the essential element of musical expression—moving and living variety.

The genius of the organ is not in the direction of expression, the most it can do in this way is the artificial effect of the silencing or sounding of whole sets of pipes and the opening and closing of swell shutters upon all pipes in use. These produce only general effects, and are a mere makeshift substitute for true expression, which must be found in individual sounds.

Nevertheless, the organ has a virtue of its own, even in this particular. Sometimes the ear craves for a broad sustained stillness of sound from which human emotion is absent. This the organ can give as no other instrument can. Its very defects appear as virtues.

The stately and soothing tones of the organ are seen to be specially appropriate to religious music, suggesting rest and peace after strife and turmoil, and so it has come about that the natural home of the organ is the Church: there it has grown up and developed, there it has been and is in constant use.

The use of the organ in secular music is the exception, in sacred, the rule.

In tracing the development and influence of the organ it is further noticed as remarkable that in its employment in connection with sacred music it has been more in evidence in Protestant than in Catholic worship music. The reason for this is not quite clear, but the fact is patent.

It will be interesting to notice very briefly some points in the development of the organ from the earliest times to the present day.

Plainly the earliest germ of the organ is to be seen in the familiar *Pan pipes*. When these were made to sound by mechanical means then we had the first organ.

Examining the information that has come down to us through history, we are struck by the seeming extreme slowness of development. Contrivances that might seem obvious at once to a person of ordinary intelligence took centuries of invention.

The earliest record we have of anything bearing a resemblance to our modern organ is that of the *Magrephar* mentioned in the Talmud as having stood in the Temple of Jerusalem. It is said to have had ten notes with ten pipes to each note—a hundred pipes sounded by mechanical means. Clearly an organ as we understood the word, but as to the details of construction and the effect it produced we must be content to remain in ignorance. The word organ when used in the Old Testament must be understood in its general sense as meaning "instrument"; there is no evidence to show that in the early Jewish days anything corresponding with the word in its limited sense was known.

Let it be remembered that in early organs the pipes were all sounded at once: it was the business of the player to stop those that were not required. What an obstacle to advance! and it took centuries to devise another plan. The plan, when it came, was to control the sound by means of wooden sliders under each pipe, which acted by being drawn forward or pushed back. This device continued in use for further centuries until it was superseded by huge pallets with levers to work them. The levers were the first germ of the keyboard, which in course of time emerged from them.

In the early days of the Christian era organs were not used in churches, their first introduction is supposed to have been between the fifth and seventh centuries. The poet Claudian, writing A.D. 400, describes an organist's performance as follows:—"Let there be also one who by his light touch forcing out deep murmurs and managing the unnumbered tongues of the field of brazen tubes, can with nimble fingers cause a mighty sound; and can rouse to song the waters stirred to the depths by the massive lever."

This refers to a hydraulic organ, and it will be noted that the pipes mentioned were of brass. It must not be supposed that the water was actually driven through the pipes when they were sounded. Hydraulic organs, which appear to have been much in vogue at this period, were also pneumatic organs, the weight of the water being used to give a continuous pressure to the air, the modern bellows and reservoir being a much later invention.

The progress made during the next five hundred years can be seen by the following translation of a Latin poem by Wulstan (died 963). It is the description of an organ built in Winchester Cathedral by order of Bishop Elphege, and for it I am indebted to Dr. Hopkins' article on the organ in "*Grove's Dictionary of Music*":—

"Such organs as you have built are seen nowhere, fabricated on a double ground. Twice six bellows above are ranged in a row, and fourteen lie below. These, by alternate blasts, supply an immense quantity of wind, and are worked by seventy strong men, labouring with their arms, covered with perspiration, each inciting his companions to drive the wind up with all his strength, that the full-bosomed box may speak with its four hundred pipes which the hand of the organist governs. Some when closed he opens, others when open he closes, as the individual nature of the varied sound requires. Two brethren (religious) of concordant spirit sit at the instrument, and each manages his own alphabet. There are moreover hidden notes in its forty tongues, and each has ten pipes in their due order. Some are conducted hither, others thither, each preserving the proper point for its own note. They strike the seven differences of joyous sounds, adding the music of the lyric semitone. Like thunder the iron tones batter the ear, so that it may receive no sound but that alone. To such an amount does it reverberate, echoing in every direction, that everyone stops with his hand his gaping ears, being in no wise able to draw near and bear the sound which so many combinations produce. The music is heard throughout the town, and the flying fame thereof is gone out over the whole country."

Notice that it is not a modern notion to value the effect of a musical performance by the strength of its tone. A striking proof of the growth in size of the organ is shown by this account. The four hundred pipes are mentioned as a remarkable number; a large modern organ will contain four or five thousand.

When we come to the end of the eleventh century the sliders for sounding the pipes gave place to the keys or levers already mentioned. But what sort of keys were they! Huge, clumsy things from three to five inches wide, an inch

and a-half thick, half-a-yard to a yard in length, and with a fall of as much as a foot. Not much promise yet of our modern instrument ; but we must progress slowly.

In the twelfth century we notice that mutation pipes were introduced sounding fifths and octaves, and later thirds and tenths. This is an important step, and we shall have more to say about it. Still there was no means of silencing pipes that were not required ; all belonging to any given note must be heard together—a perpetual full-organ. What a seemingly hopeless condition of things !

In the fourteenth century, according to Prætorius, the remaining chromatic semitones were introduced. It will be remembered that in the Winchester organ of the tenth century there was only one, “the lyric semitone,” *i.e.*, B flat.

Prætorius gives an interesting description of the organ in Halberstadt Cathedral in 1361. It possessed chromatic keyboards, the earliest of which we have any record. But it must be observed that the chromatic notes were placed above and apart from the naturals, forming practically a separate keyboard. However, there they were—twelve notes within the octave, pointing forward to the wonders of our chromatic harmony, though this was little dreamt of by the men of those days. This organ also was the first that could be varied in regard to strength of tone, being divided into two manuals and pedal organ. One manual gave the full organ, and the other acted upon a single row of pipes, the pedal governed the lowest bass pipes, which were of thirty-two feet pitch. This all marks great advance, though, to be sure, the keys were still of an enormous size, and had to be manipulated by the whole weight of the hand and arm as before. Hence the description of the early organist as “*pulsator organorum*.”

From this point onwards the instrument rapidly developed until three hundred years later it resembled in most essentials the organ of to-day. The keys were steadily reduced in size until at last they reached the point at which an octave comes within a span, and there they have stopped. The compass was increased upwards and downwards. Pedal keyboards became general in Germany, though, strange to say, they were not adopted in England till the beginning of the nineteenth century. After the introduction of means by which any single row of pipes could be used either alone or in combination, new effects were gained by the use of metal pipes of varying size and shape, and of wooden pipes, closed and open. Reeds were introduced in the fifteenth century, and paved the way to the invention of the various imitative stops in which the organ is now so rich.

The influence of the organ in musical history has been without doubt real and extensive, and may be seen in the development of tonality, the scale, harmony, counterpoint

and musical form, on individual musicians and on styles of composition.

When a mental comparison is made between our modern chromatic scale and the scale of seven sounds of the early organs it will be seen how wide is the gap which separates the two. The foundations of music have completely shifted. The art-material now used is quite a different thing from that of seven or eight hundred years ago. In the gradual growth and development of the scale, upon which everything depends, the keyboard instruments have played a prominent part, and the parent of all keyed instruments is the organ. Mr. Hipkins, in an interesting article in "Grove's Dictionary of Music," writes: "The influence of the keyboard upon the development of modern music is as conspicuous as it has been important. To this day C major is natural on the keys, as it is in the corresponding notation. Other scales are formed by substituting accidentals, sharps, and flats for naturals both in notation and on the keyed instrument, a fact which is evidence of the common origin and early growth together of the two. But the notation out-grew the keyboard. It has been remarked by Professor Huxley that the ingenuity of human inventions has been paralleled by the tenacity with which original forms have been preserved. Although the number of keys within the octave of the keyboard is quite inadequate to render the written notation of the four-and-twenty major and minor modes, or even the semitones allied to the one that it was first mainly contrived for, no attempts to augment the number of keys in the octave or to change the familiar disposition have yet succeeded."

It will be remembered that the early scale of seven notes in the ancient organs was something that we cannot now reproduce; it is not accurately represented by the seven white keys upon the modern organ or piano, because equal temperament has stepped in and changed the character of the intervals. The organ was the only early instrument with a fixed tuning which could be taken as a permanent guide to the scale. The flue pipes of the organ once tuned will stand for an indefinite length of time; some other instruments are liable to become constantly out of tune; others again, including the human voice, have to determine the pitch of every note at the time of its production; therefore the scale of the organ would be the one guide and assistance in the transformation which was necessary in order that the old pure melodic modes should give way, first to the tonality of the pure choral style, and finally to the modern chromatic scale.

I suppose that the gradual changes involved were introduced not so much by logical and scientific means as by

artistic selection and instinctive preference. By no manner of means can our modern scale be defended on scientific grounds; it is false and imperfect through and through, but without it modern harmony would be an impossibility, and so we choose it: we prefer the poetry of the imperfect to the cold logic of the perfect.

The organ having a fixed tuned scale and also the power of prolonging any given sounds for an indefinite length of time would naturally be the means for the experiments that must have accompanied the early attempts at Harmony which ultimately involved the change of tonality.

The old "Organum and Diaphony," was flourishing in the tenth century.

The first Equal temperament was used between 1688 and 1693.

The final triumph of Equal temperament was only reached about the middle of the nineteenth century.

These points may be regarded as landmarks in the history of tonality, which (is it too much to say?) has owed its development to the influence of the organ.

We are in the habit of making merry over the first attempts at Harmony known as "Organum"—those successions of fourths and fifths which sound to our ears so intolerable. Nevertheless, they were a necessary step in the progress of music. Without them we should never have had Harmony at all; and it must be remembered that the intervals in question were the only consonances at first available; the third—now so dear to the modern harmonist—being at that time so out of tune as to be intolerable to the ear.

The term "Organum," although when used by mediæval writers invariably referring to a vocal part, must have been derived from the instrument itself, meaning *a part added after the manner of organ-playing*. How else came it into use? And this view is supported by Burney, who quotes a writer of 1286 defining "organum" as "canere in modo organi."

All Harmony may be divided into concords and discords.

If the evidence of one word points to the fact that we owe the former to the organ, does not another tell us that for the latter we are indebted to the same source?

What is the meaning of *Organ-Point* and *Pedal-Point*? The sustaining of one part at a fixed pitch while others pass from concord to concord through one or more intervening discords. At first applied to a lower note, and later to one in any position, these terms are obviously derived from the use of organ-players, and from this has been developed one of the most important principles of modern Harmony and Counterpoint—the principle of all passing notes, which are the life and soul of our music. Every instance of a part

passing through a discord from one concord to another displays the germ of a pedal-point.

It is curious to note how the influence of the organ is indicated by the use of words. The early Counterpoint was rendered by singers who sang a new tune against one already known. This was called the "art of organising," and the performers who practised it were called "organisers."

So it is seen all down the History of Harmony it is ever the organ as the representative of keyed instruments that is guiding the way. Its sustaining power first suggested the combination of two melodies—that Counterpoint which led the way to Harmony; its chromatic keyboard necessitated the definite nomenclature of chromatically altered sounds which were originally supplied from memory by the performer, guided by certain rules. As new keys and modulations were attempted, its fixed pitch suggested that adjustment of intervals which resulted in equal temperament. Equal temperament, that compromise so dreadfully illogical and unsatisfactory from a theoretical point of view, is the one thing that has made the wondrous complex system of chromatic harmony practicable, and has pointed the way to effects and combinations which can only be justified on the basis of its acceptance. Coming as a makeshift it has remained as a foundation; coming as an apology it has remained as a principle.

In going through the names of individual musicians that stand as landmarks in musical history, it is remarkable to note that while some appear to have been much influenced by the organ others have been not at all.

One of the earliest records of a distinguished organist is given by Burney, who writes:—"The organ being the most complicated instrument in use in the Middle Ages, and capable of producing greater effects than any other, seems to have excited the first amazement at the performer's skill, which modern history has recorded." Philip Villani (1343-1405) writes of Francesco Cieco: "Many are the Florentines who have rendered themselves memorable by the art of music; but all those of former times have been far surpassed by Francesco Cieco, who still lives; and who during childhood was deprived of sight by the small-pox. He was the son of Jacobo, a Florentine painter, of great probity and simplicity of manners; and being arrived at adolescence, and beginning to be sensible of the misery of blindness, in order to diminish the horror of perpetual night, he began in a childish manner to sing; but advancing towards maturity, and becoming more and more captivated with music, he began seriously to study it, first by learning to sing, and afterwards by applying himself to the practice of instruments, particularly the organ, which he soon played, without ever having seen the keys, in

so masterly and sweet a manner as astonished every hearer. Indeed his superiority was soon acknowledged so unanimously that by common consent of all the musicians of his time, he was publicly honoured at Venice with the laurel crown for his performance on the organ, before the King of Cyprus and the Duke of Venice, in the manner of a poet laureate."

Germany is undoubtedly the home of great musicians who were influenced by the organ. Hear Burney's account of celebrated organists in that country who flourished in the seventeenth century: "The number, size and excellence of the organs erected in the churches of Germany have been productive of great diligence and emulation in the organists; and as the passion for learned and polyphonic music was not so early discountenanced by a partiality for simple melody in the cultivation of the musical drama in this country as in Italy, the reign of harmony and fugue continued much longer uninterrupted." He mentions John Klemme, who in 1631 published thirty-six fugues for the organ, "after the manner of voluntaries"; John Jacob Froberger, who had studied under the celebrated Frescobaldi, and who was considered about the middle of the seventeenth century the greatest performer on the organ in Germany; Andreas Hammerschmidt, called "the glory of Germany"; Schein; Scheidt; Schütz; Kindermann; Scheidemann; and Reinke. "This last arrived at the great age of one hundred within a few months. In his younger days having been elected successor to the famous Scheidemann, organist of St. Katherine's Church, Hamburg, it is related that a musician of Amsterdam having said that he must be such a presumptuous man who would venture to take his place that he should like to see him. Which speech having been repeated to Reinke, he sent him one of his compositions, with the following superscription, 'this is the portrait of the audacious man you so much wish to see.' The Dutchman found so much genius and learning in the composition that he went to Hamburg purposely to hear him perform on the organ, which having done, he would have kissed his feet in testimony of the veneration with which his performance had impressed him." Burney further mentions several organists of the name of Pachabel, John Henry Buttstett, born in 1666, "a scholar of John Pachabel," and Dietrich Buxtehude, ranked by Mattheson among the greatest organists of Germany. This last name is one of great importance, as it is a link with those two giants of the eighteenth century—Bach and Handel. Both visited Lubeck to hear Buxtehude, but the visits were at different times, from different motives, and characteristic of the two men. We all know the story of Bach's fifty-mile journey on foot to hear the great man play, of his prolonged stay at Lubeck, and the influence of Buxtehude's style upon his immortal

disciple. Handel's visit was more of a business transaction. His object was to compete for the appointment about to be vacated by the Lubeck organist, and he was only deterred from going farther in the matter by the intelligence that one of the conditions of the appointment was that the successful candidate should marry the daughter of the outgoing musician. He made a precipitate retreat.

Handel and Bach both employed the organ very extensively in their compositions, but their methods differed. Handel used it as a means for filling in and general effects, usually only indicating the chords by a figured bass, and in solo passages only adding above this the melody. Bach, on the other hand, treated it with as much care and completeness as would a twentieth-century musician. Every note to be employed is fully written out, and such a thing as filling in or altering his writing is properly regarded by intelligent organists as little less than sacrilege. Bach's organ music is as voluminous as it is excellent, and in it is contained much of his most interesting, advanced and prophetic writing. It includes pieces in an infinite variety of forms, an immense number of variations on chorales, preludes and fugues, innumerable fantasias, toccatas, concertos, a canzona, and the famous set of six sonatas or trios for two manuals and pedals.

In the last volume of the "Oxford History of Music," Mr. Fuller Maitland compares the different styles of playing produced by the difference in touch of the organ and harpsichord at the period we are considering. He says: "The difference in touch may have had something to do with the difference in styles, of which we receive a very definite idea if we compare any of Handel's concertos with some of the most characteristic of Bach's solos, such as the great Fantasia in G, where the rapid passages of the opening and closing movements, and the massive grandeur of the middle one suggest a far heavier touch than is implied in Handel's passages; these do not differ very widely from harpsichord passages, their smoothness and the exact cessation of each note which they demand are totally unlike the bewildering rush of Bach's movement labelled 'très vitement,' in which a certain roughness is required and which undoubtedly loses something if played with too much refinement of detail on a modern organ with a very light touch."

I will now ask Mr. Ford to play a movement of Handel's Organ Concerto in G, and after it the Fantasia by Bach above referred to.

As the orchestra developed the organ fell into disuse. The three great classical composers Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven practically ignored its existence; the orchestra was to them the great vehicle for musical expression, after it the

human voice and the growing pianoforte. True, Mozart has left a set of so-called organ sonatas, but they are amongst his least interesting works, and in them the organ is merely used as a support for other instruments.

The organ, however, was not dead, but only dormant, and it was for Mendelssohn to be next thrown under its influence and through it to influence others. He, himself a devout student of Bach, took up, a century later, that great master's position with regard to the organ, developed its resources, and left for it immortal compositions.

Mendelssohn stood almost alone among the great ones of his day. Schubert, Schumann, and Chopin ignored the organ, and the same may be said of their successors, Wagner and Brahms, although the latter did just recognise its claims by a slight tribute in his closing days. Now, however, the organ appears to be really asserting its influence to its fullest extent. In Germany, France, and England there are composers who, while excelling in the branches of composition which have been associated with the giants of the past, yet give full attention to the organ as a real power among musical instruments. Of German writers, the names of Merkel and Rheinberger represent organ music of the highest seriousness, the set of eighteen sonatas by the latter forming a worthy continuation of the works of Bach and Mendelssohn.

Among French writers there are a goodly company of organists who, while writing in a more tuneful and popular style than the German School, have legitimately developed the resources of the instrument. Widor stands at their head, his eight grand organ symphonies, some of extreme difficulty and intricacy, forming a monumental series of works. Saint-Saëns, Guilmant, Dubois, Salomé, Gigout, are all writers of admirable music for the instrument.

Coming to England the names of distinguished organists and organ-writers are too well known to need mention, and in no country has more attention been given to the artistic and judicious employment of the instrument in sacred music. The anthems and services now composed for the use of the English Church, in which the organ is treated as a solo instrument as well as an important accompanying force, form a school in themselves and have no exact counterpart in any other country.

The history of English music is to a very great extent the history of organists of cathedrals or great churches, and the influence of the organ all along has been without doubt both wide and real.

At the period of the Restoration the demand for new organs to replace those destroyed during the Commonwealth gave employment to the famous builders Bernard Smith and

Renatus Harris, whose work has never been excelled if it has been equalled. An idea of the public interest taken in organ-building of the time may be gathered from Burney's account of the contention for the erection of the instrument in the Temple Church. He tells us that: "About the latter end of King Charles II.'s reign, the master of the Temple and the benchers being determined to have as complete an organ erected in their church as possible, received proposals from both these eminent artists (Bernard Smith and Renatus Harris), backed by the recommendation of such an equal number of powerful friends and celebrated organists, that they were unable to determine among themselves which to employ. They therefore told the candidates if each of them would erect an organ, in different parts of the church, they would retain that which, in the greatest number of excellencies, should be allowed to deserve the preference. Smith and Harris agreeing to this proposal, in about eight or nine months, each had, with the utmost exertion of his abilities, an instrument ready for trial. Dr. Tudway living at the time, the intimate acquaintance of both, says that Blow and Purcell, then in their prime, performed on Father Smith's organ, on appropriate days, and displayed its excellence; and till the other was heard, every one believed that this must be chosen.

"Harris employed M. Lulli, Organist to Queen Catherine, a very eminent master, to touch his organ, which brought it into favour; and then they continued vying with each other for near a twelvemonth.

"At length, Harris challenged Father Smith to make additional reed-stops in a given time. These were the vox-humana, cromorne, the double-courtel, or double bassoon, and some others.

"The stops which were newly invented, or at least new to English ears, gave great delight to the crowd who attended the trials; and the imitations were so exact and pleasing on both sides, that it was difficult to determine who had best succeeded. At length the decision was left to Lord Chief Justice Jeffries, afterwards King James II.'s pliant chancellor, who was of that Society, and he determined the controversy in favour of Father Smith, so that Harris' organ was taken away without loss of reputation, having so long pleased and puzzled better judges than Jeffries.

"The Honourable Roger North who was in London at the time of the contention at the Temple Church, says, in his memoirs of music, that the competition between Smith and Harris, the two best artists in Europe, was carried on with such violence by the friends of both sides that they 'were just not ruined.' Indeed, old Roseingrave assured me that the partizans for each candidate in the fury of their zeal

proceeded to the most mischievous and unwarrantable acts of hostility; and that in the night preceding the last trial of the reed stops, the friends of Harris cut the bellows of Smith's organ in such a manner that when the time came for playing upon it no wind could be conveyed into the wind-chest."

We catch a glimpse of the rivalry between these two men a few years later in an article written by Steele in the "Spectator," December 3, 1712. Steele is speaking of Harris whose ambition it was to build an organ for St. Paul's Cathedral, which task was actually entrusted to Father Smith:—"The ambition of this artificer is to erect an organ in St. Paul's Cathedral over the west door, at the entrance into the body of the church, which in art and magnificence shall transcend any work of that kind ever before invented. The proposal in perspicuous language sets forth the honour and advantage such a performance would be to the British name, as well as that it would apply the power of sounds in a manner more amazingly forcible than perhaps has yet been known, and I am sure to an end much more worthy. Had the vast sums which had been laid out in operas without skill of conduct, and to no other purpose than to suspend or vitiate our understandings, been disposed this way, we should now perhaps have an engine so formed, as to strike the minds of half a people at once, in a place of worship with a forgetfulness of present care and calamity, and a hope of endless rapture, joy, and hallelujah hereafter."

If Steele could have heard the magnificent instrument now in our great London Cathedral he would surely have been satisfied.

Before concluding, we ought to consider for a moment the position of the organ with regard to the orchestra. We have noticed that in the early days of instrumental music the organ held a very prominent place. As the orchestra developed the organ fell into the background; now it is again asserting its rights. But though the organ and the orchestra go on side by side, attempts hitherto made to combine them have met with but small success. The organ has been used with the orchestra, but it is never felt to be of it.

The organ concerto flourished in the days of Handel, then it fell into abeyance. Now the combination of the organ with orchestral instruments has been again attracting the attention of composers. Conspicuous among them, Rheinberger has written music for organ and violin, a trio for organ and strings, a concerto for organ, strings, and horns, and other combinations. The late C. A. Fisher wrote a series of symphonies for organ and orchestra in which the former was treated as an essential ingredient of the latter. But these works are exceptional. The general rule is, when

writing for the orchestra, to ignore the existence of the organ. The organ has never succeeded in establishing its position as an orchestral instrument. Enthusiasts may well inquire the reason of this and hope for a new state of things in the future. The difficulty in the composer's path is doubtless the fact that there can be no certainty as to the exact effect that will be produced by an organ passage. No two organs are alike in size, voicing, and general effect, and the composer of organ music is more dependent upon the skill and taste of the player than the writer in any other line. Much of this uncertainty could doubtless be removed by something in the way of "Standardization," though there will always be much remaining that is inherent in the nature of the instrument.

The organ is essentially an intellectual instrument; for its significance it depends upon progressions rather than upon tone quality and expression. This is apparently the reason why it has always been accepted in theory that real organ music should be in the contrapuntal style. Looked at closely the reason for this does not seem obvious, because in listening to organ tone it is more difficult to follow the progression of parts than with voices or combinations of orchestral instruments, for the reason that each orchestral instrument has its characteristic colouring, whereas the colouring of organ tone, when one manual only is in use, is unvarying.

However, whatever theory may dictate, we now have composers trying every device and resource in organ-writing, and with so many men of genius amongst us we may safely leave the working-out of the matter in their hands.

The following "Illustrations" to Dr. Richardson's paper were played on the College Organ by Mr. C. E. Ford, F.R.C.O.:—

1. Prelude and Fugue in E	...	...	BUXTEHUDE.
2. Fantasia in G	...	...	J. S. BACH.
3. Concerto in G (First Movement)	...	...	HANDEL.
4. Prelude and Fugue in G	...	...	MERKEL.

DISCUSSION.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Ladies and Gentlemen, it is our first duty to pass a vote of thanks to Dr. Madeley Richardson for his interesting paper. I am sure we have all heard it with pleasure, as we are always glad to listen to those who can speak with authority on their subjects. We must also thank Mr. Ford for the admirable illustrations he has played on the organ.

(Votes of thanks passed unanimously.)

May I point out that the organ of to-day, especially if it is furnished with electric action, is a more complicated piece of apparatus than the steam-engines in a man-o'-war; moreover, while in the case of the engine a large number of persons is required to look after it to make it go, the organ (provided the wind is all right) can be controlled and operated by a single player. Dr. Richardson asked, "Is further development possible?" That question has been asked with regard to instruments of music from all time. Each man when he has improved what has gone before thinks he has arrived at perfection. Certainly when we look at the organ of to-day and compare it with the rude instruments used in very early times, it does seem as though we had pretty well reached the limits of completeness. But though I am an old organist, I cannot but say that even the organ of to-day does not quite satisfy me. I believe there are others who would say the same. I think the defect, if I may so express it in a word, is that the organ is wanting in accent. You can of course get a *sforzando* by means of a combination or a swell pedal; you can by means of clever fingering and phrasing enable the hearer to imagine the accent to some extent, but you cannot get true dynamic accent. Some will say that is an acoustic impossibility, because in order to get an accent on any wind instrument a player has to increase the pressure of wind, and if this is done on the organ the note immediately jumps up to a harmonic; so that would not do. But I am not sure that mechanicians of the future may not devise some way by which the strength of the tone may be temporarily increased. Attempts in this direction have been made. There are organs with the double touch, *i.e.*, when you press the key down only a little distance you get a certain quantity of tone, but when you push it down to its full extent you obtain an increase of tone. But these instruments are terribly difficult to play. I would not advise anyone who is not used to it to attempt a recital on the double-touch organ. But I would remind you that on a harmonium furnished with an "expression stop," the sound being produced by small vibrators, that these reeds obey a

different law to organ-pipes ; you can get an accent on them by regulating the pressure of wind from the feet. No doubt the fact that it is contrary to the genius of the organ to play with accent has led to the characteristic difference that will be found between music written for the harmonium and that written for the organ. The capabilities of an instrument always affect its music. Dr. Richardson said that the natural home of the organ was the church, and he ventured on the suggestion that it had been more successful in Protestant than in Roman Catholic countries. I think that is true ; but perhaps if the latter countries had had such a giant as Bach they might have done something more for organ music. Sir Hubert Parry, in his volume of the "Oxford History of Music," traces the orchestral music of Germany entirely to the influence of the organ. Of course we must remember that in most of the Protestant countries the people take a considerable part in the performance of the music of the churches, such as they do not in other countries. That must have some influence on the music, as where there is only a single voice to accompany, or the comparatively small number that constitute a choir, so large an organ is not wanted as where there is a body of voices singing hymns, chants, and chorales loud enough in some cases to drown the organ itself. The sketch of the early mechanism that Dr. Richardson gave us was very interesting. I do not think sufficient notice has been taken of the use of the word *δάκτυλος* in that famous epigram of Julian. Surely that evidently means a finger. I think that is important, because it is generally supposed that at the earliest period the organs were instruments in which the pipes were severally governed by a slider ; later, when keys were introduced, these were very large and were struck by the fist. Claudian (*cir.* 400 A.D.), speaking of a player on the hydraulic organ, uses the words, "*intonat erranti digito*," which would seem to convey a similar idea, viz., that the *fingers* were employed rather than the fist. I may mention that in some Cathedral statutes that I have had to wade through, the organist is called *pulsator organorum* to quite a late period. But if the fingers were used so many centuries earlier, it opens the question as to whether the men of those days did not know and play a little more than we give them credit for. Of course, Dr. Richardson's subject has been the effect of the organ on music, but I think there is a plea to be put in for the string clavier and its effect. I cannot help believing that if Bach had not also had his clavier to write for, his organ music would not have been so free and florid as it is. My impression is that the two instruments reacted on each other. Dr. Richardson said that no efforts to increase the number of notes in the

scale had succeeded. They have not; but a great many attempts have been made, and that from a very early period. In the valuable book of Mersennus, 1611, will be found a specification as to the number of notes which would be required for a perfect scale, and the author supplies a diagram to show how a keyboard could be constructed which he considered would give something like perfect intonation. No doubt it could be constructed, but it could hardly be played on. In modern times Colonel Perronet Thompson, in his work on temperament, had thirty-eight or forty notes to the octave for his keyboard; but he could not get anybody to play it till a blind girl, Miss Stafford Northcote, came forward. I remember in Hullah's company hearing her at the Welsh Chapel in Jewin Street, Aldersgate; she played, amongst other pieces, Mendelssohn's "Wedding March," which was then rather new, and Hullah said he had never heard it sound so perfect in intonation. The Temple organ had formerly some quarter-tones, A sharp and D sharp were distinct from the B flat and E flat and had separate pipes; they remained till Dr. Hopkins went there, and then after a good deal of discussion these quarter-tones were taken away. Possibly one reason for the abolition was that equal temperament had come in, and that compromise altered the whole complexion of our modern tonal system. Is not one reason why the organ and orchestra do not go well together the fact that practically they are differently tuned? The organ, like the pianoforte, has now to be tuned to equal temperament, but in the orchestra the strings can certainly be played to absolutely just intonation, and our wind players are now sufficiently skilful to play a note a little flat or sharp when the necessity of true intonation requires it. Consequently the orchestra of to-day is almost absolutely in tune. For many years I used to attend the concerts at the Crystal Palace. After the concert was over a performance was given on the organ, at that time by Mr. J. Coward. Coming from the concert-room where one had heard the superb orchestra under the direction of dear old Dr. Manns—I am sure we are all rejoiced that he is to-day receiving his Mus. Doc. degree at Oxford, *honoris causâ* (cheers)—I must confess that when I heard the organ I wanted to run away, it seemed so terribly out of tune. People may say that the same is true of the pianoforte; but in that case the sounds are so evanescent that you do not begin to measure the intervals before they are lost, whereas in the organ they are sustained. But even on the pianoforte those who are accustomed to the perfect intonation of the orchestra are not quite satisfied. Dr. Richardson spoke of the invention of the organ or pedal point. It is a

notable invention. It was so easily managed on the organ, and such highly-coloured, magnificent harmonies were superimposed on it, that composers for the orchestra soon began to see the value of it. I think we have to thank the organ for this effect. Dr. Richardson spoke of Handel's harmony for the organ as more of the nature of filling-up than Bach's. Undoubtedly Handel's was lighter music; but I do not think I should so express my feeling about it. In the performance of the Concerto that was so excellently played to us, you cannot say there was much filling-up. Handel was free in his melodies, and often liked to accompany them with simple chords; but he could give us moving counterpoint when he thought fit to do so, only his method was not Bach's. The reason why orchestral composers have neglected the organ is, I think, to be found in the suggestion I have already made, viz., that it does not mix very well. But is not the fault very often with the organist? Some register very carelessly, indeed badly. I have heard the same piece played with the orchestra by organists of different types, and the effect of the combination has been altogether different. But we are not without examples of the combination of organ with orchestra. It has been used as you all know with great success in Sullivan's "In Memoriam" Overture. No one feels that the organ is out of place in that imposing composition; on the contrary, the character of the main subject and its transfer to the organ enormously enhance the value of the whole work. I think you cannot help admitting that in this case at least the organ does combine well with the orchestra. Good effects are also obtained with the Concertos by Professor Prout and Henry Gadsby. The question of standardization is a very thorny one. If organs were standardized they would be more accessible to players, and composers would probably be more inclined to write for the instrument, because then they would know exactly what would be the effect of the music they were setting down.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—With reference to the combination of the organ with other instruments, I may mention that in the Bodleian Library at Oxford (Music School Collection) there are two autograph volumes of music by William Lawes (1582-1645) containing among the instrumental numbers several "Fantazys" and other pieces in score for strings, which at first sight appeared to be complete in themselves; but I afterwards came across an oblong folio volume of organ music (also autograph of W. Lawes) which contains organ parts for several of the above-mentioned "Fantazys," &c., written to a considerable extent in an independent manner, and not being mere reproductions of the string parts in short score. These are probably among the earliest instrumental

pieces expressly scored for a combination of organ and other instruments. The two first-mentioned volumes are No. xxx. in the Bodleian Catalogue, and the organ volume is No. xcvi.!

Mr. GOLDSCHMIDT.—If I venture to rise and say a very few words after the two lectures we have had to-night, it is merely to pay my tribute to the English organists; for knowing the Protestant service, both in Germany and Scandinavia, I think the difference of their achievements is very great. It consists in this: the English organist has a complicated service to accompany, whereas the German organist to this day has for the most part only to play the introits and concluding voluntaries and to accompany the chorales. The way in which English organists accompany the service, and especially that most difficult item of the service, the chanting of the Psalms, is hardly sufficiently recognised in the musical world. I am not a professed organist myself; but I have had the honour of being a pupil for a time of one of the greatest organists of the latter part of last century, namely, Frederick Schneider. He had a superb instrument at the great church in Dresden, one of Silbermann's four or five great organs which are the pride of Dresden. He came to England once or twice, and played at Exeter Hall. His playing at the service was a very conscientious one, but it consisted mainly in the accompaniment of chorales, and included none of those features of which English organists certainly may justly be proud.

Mr. MATTHEW.—I must just mention that it has been stated over and over again by all the books on the subject that Lulli played on one of the organs in the Temple Church. That is altogether a misapprehension. North's statement is that Baptist played on the organ. That was J. Baptist Draghi, a celebrated organist of the time. It was not Lulli, who was never in England so far as is known. The mistake has been so often repeated that it is time it was nailed to the wall.