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CHARLES JOSEPH FROST, on Sunday, October 13. He was born at Westbury-on-Trym, near Clifton, on June 20, 1848, and studied under his father (organist at Tewkesbury), George Cooper, Steggall, and Goss. After holding various posts as organist and choirmaster, he was appointed in 1884 to St. Peter's, Brockley. Here he remained until the end, which came suddenly, within a few hours of his conducting a performance of 'The Creation.' He was a fairly prolific composer, chiefly in the direction of church and organ music. He graduated Mus. Bac., Cambridge, 1876, and Mus. Doc., 1882. A man of many activities, he will be widely missed.

KATE ELEANOR, the wife of Mr. Ernest Newman. The sympathy of our readers will, we are sure, go out to one whose able contributions have so often been an important feature of this journal.

Letters to the Editor.

BRISTOL CITY LIBRARY AND THE PEARSALL MANUSCRIPTS.

SIR,—Your reference to the recent gift to the Bristol City Library of the Pearsall manuscripts and genealogies started by R. L. Pearsall and continued by his daughter, Mrs. Hughes, 'with the help of Dr. Verdon,' is news to me, as regards the last statement, as although I met him several times at Mrs. Hughes's house, I should not say that he contributed in the ordinary meaning of the word to the compilation upon which I worked off and on with Mrs. Hughes for forty years.

I am exceedingly glad that Mr. Hunt suggested to the brother of the late Dr. Verdon that the manuscripts should be deposited in the care of the Bristol Library; but at the same time it has seriously interfered with the work I am at present engaged on, viz., 'The History of the Pearsall Family,' about to be published in America.—Yours, &c.,

ROBERT PEARSALL

(Member of the London Survey Committee;
Assist. Architect L.C.C. (retired)).

34, Queen's Road, Teddington, Middlesex,
September 25, 1918.

MR. CLUTSAM'S ARTICLES ON 'PRINCIPLES OF MODERN COMPOSITION.'

SIR,—Having read Mr. Clutsam's thoughtful series of articles in your columns with close consideration, I would desire to call attention to only one point. He has formulated a very broad and bold system of chord-classification, and has entitled it 'Principles of Modern Composition.' So have many other theorists in the past—according to their lights. The *Musical Times* in September and October, 1910, described several of these elaborate treatises on the A B C of music, and pointed out that all their contents had not the remotest bearing upon composition. It even reproduced the frontispiece of one, illustrating the popular idea of the act of music-production. But all Mr. Clutsam's patient industry must pale before a work reviewed by the late Dr. Prout in the *Monthly Musical Record* for June and July, 1895. I have seen this volume, which is about the size of the full score of 'Tristan.' It contains, engraved in music-type, several thousands of examples of combinations of notes, all the permutations of 1, 2, 3 . . . 12 notes, in fact, taken 2, 3, 4 . . . n together, without any reference to whether they are possible or desirable. But *cui bono?* M. Anatole Loquin's treatise—and, I fear, Mr. Clutsam's much milder classification—leaves the art of composition just where it was before. No cartload of chords such as those who call themselves 'moderns' keep dumping before an uninterested public has a particle of the interest evoked by Elgar's glorious 'Carillon,' or even Beethoven's despised Symphonies. To clean up one's mental workshop, and put all the contents in labelled boxes, is an excellent preliminary to creating a masterpiece; but it has nothing whatever to do with composing musical works—masterpieces or otherwise.—I am, Sir, Yours truly,

F. CORDER.

13, Albion Road, South Hampstead, N.W. 6,
October 4, 1918.

THE SMALL ORCHESTRA.

SIR,—Amongst the many interesting and illuminating articles in your September issue, one which attracted my attention particularly was M. Jean-Aubry's 'A Plea for the small Orchestra.' This admirable article expressed most clearly the views I have long held, and which I am sure are held by a very large number of earnest musicians throughout the whole music-loving world. Undoubtedly the War has been of great—though perhaps indirect—benefit to music and musicians: it has shattered many false idols, brought us to a greater sense of self-reliance, and caused us—chiefly involuntarily—to revert to simplicity in place of much of our old, blundering complexity. Even if we desired to do so, we could not, in view of the urgent necessity for work in other and, temporarily, more necessary spheres of activity, maintain the gigantic orchestras and choral organizations which we were accustomed to before the War; and as a result we have had to adopt simpler means—at first perfunctorily, but now appreciatively. It has perhaps taken us a long time to accustom ourselves to the absence of the colossal orchestras of 'Tod und Verklärung' and 'Elektra'; but having eventually done so, we have begun to realise that power (sometimes degenerating into mere noise!) is not necessarily a *sine qua non* for beauty and art—that it is still possible to express an infinite variety of emotions with an orchestra of the Mozart and Beethoven calibre, and that such 'extras' as the celesta and the vast army of wood-wind (such as that so frequently employed by Richard Strauss) are, after all, only superficialities.

Most people, I should imagine, will agree that all the blarings and hootings of the super-orchestras of the Mahler variety have never—in spite of the immensity of the orchestra required to render them, and the amazing complexity of the scoring employed—produced more impressive effects than those produced with the beautifully-balanced orchestras of Beethoven. There is infinitely more 'thrill,' to my mind, in that passage from the Scherzo of Beethoven's C minor Symphony, where a low C is sustained for several bars, accompanied solely by the mysteriousappings of the timpani, than in any passage from Strauss's 'Tod und Verklärung'—and what a contrast in means these two works present!

Another aspect of the matter is this: that because of the very enormity of the orchestras required to render certain modern works, much of the inner beauty of the music is lost on ninety-nine out of a hundred listeners. With the simple orchestras of Mozart and Beethoven, every little 'inner melody' speaks out, unobtrusively yet unmistakably; each instrument has more individuality than with the gigantic orchestras in vogue in 1913. With a small orchestra little or no mental strain is imposed on the listener, and all the finer shades of expression are able to be heard. I fancy that one of the reasons for the failure of many orchestral works was because composers—especially 'prentice hands'—were wont to imagine that hugeness spelt greatness.

Now, however, that we have been compelled to reduce our resources, let us learn the lesson that our so doing teaches us: that to be great does not necessarily require a vast array of instrumentalists, but that the greatest is he who can produce great music by the simplest means.—Yours, &c.,

A. F. MILNER (A.R.C.M., A.R.C.O.,
Lance-Corporal).

B.E.F., September 26, 1918.

'C. W. K.' and other provincial correspondents write recounting the difficulties they experience in obtaining the music alluded to in some of our recent articles. The difficulty is mostly in connection with foreign publications, of which local music-sellers are (not unnaturally) ignorant. Our correspondents suggest that, in future articles dealing with modern music, we should give the price and the publisher's address. We regret that we do not see our way to making an innovation which might easily be misunderstood or might lead to abuse. The problem will be solved to some extent if readers will remember that modern foreign publications can invariably be obtained through Messrs. Novello.