

Church and Organ Music. How Not to Edit Bach

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Occasional Notes.

Mr. Frederick Wedmore writes to *The Times* to point out that in Paris a GOUNOD CENTENARY tribute to Gounod on the centenary of his birth (June 19, 1918) is being proposed, and he adds:

May we not here in England plan and execute a scheme less obviously elaborate and prolonged, but still serviceable, and ask to have on June 19 our 'Gounod Day': a day in which there may be heard in church—in many churches—the 'Messe Solennelle' or others of the composer's Masses; in many concert-rooms his miscellaneous and romantic melodies, now too often ignored; and at the opera his 'Faust,' his 'Romeo and Juliet,' or, what is still better—much better for the purpose—that other opera that his own land inspired—that 'Mireille,' which is so characteristically French, and to boot, so marvellously Provençale?

WELSH Writing home to a relative,
TERRITORIAL Lieut.-General Sir Philip Chetwode
EXPANSION. states:

I attended a concert of the famous Welsh singers in Jerusalem. For the first time 'Land of my Fathers' (the Welsh National Anthem) re-echoed through the streets of Jerusalem in Welsh.

'Land of my Fathers'!! This is going back a long way for a title. Has the hereditary claim anything to do with the Lost Tribes tradition?

In a war correspondent's letter from Rome that appeared in *The Times* recently, it is stated that:

The [Sassari] Brigade was one of those which were 'broken,' but it was quickly re-made, and now it has won new glory to add to the long list of its gallant fights. These men are nearly all Sardinians—little men and silent, given to a strange, melancholy music, some of it most hauntingly beautiful. They have put fear into the Austrians in many attacks, and when they take they hold. They are grim fighters.

Who knows anything about this 'strange, melancholy music,' so 'hauntingly beautiful'?

Another news item in *The Times* says:

For the concert which he is giving at the Coliseum on Sunday next for the Waterloo Station Free Buffet, Mr. George Robey visited the London Commercial Sale Rooms in Mincing Lane, and in five minutes collected £250 from the members, after singing a song, *unaccompanied by music* [the italics are ours].

Bel canto, we know, is not as a rule a speciality of music-hall singers; but this is really too hard on good Mr. Robey.

In the course of a criticism of M. Vladimir Rosing's recent vocal recital (see page 120), the *Daily Telegraph* says:

One's pleasure would have been quite complete had it not been for the most irritating whispered conversation of sundry ill-behaved members of the audience during the singing, which did its worst to ruin such things as 'Total Eclipse' and Beethoven's 'Tears of Love.' For this sort of thing a remedy must be found.

Who has not suffered from such miserable, idiotic selfishness? A public and scornful protest might seem to be a remedy, but then the protester and many of the audience, and especially the performer, would be sorely disturbed by the scene created.

Boiling oil of course is the proper punishment, but there is obviously a difficulty in applying it. So it seems that there is no other practicable remedy than the conventional indignant 'sh, sh,' and that look of scorn (only possible if you happen to be in front of the offenders) that for generations have been so ignominiously unsuccessful.

In the *Cambridge Magazine* for February 2 we read that THAT PIANOFORTE! at a University Musical Society concert:

The new Sonata [pianoforte and violin] of John Ireland was perhaps a little severe for the majority, but it is undoubtedly a noble work which ought to be heard in Cambridge. The broad and massive style of both the executants was admirably suited to its interpretation. Mr. Sammons was heard in some solos by Pugnani and Schubert, and Mr. Murdoch played Chopin's A flat Etude and Berceuse with exquisite delicacy, as well as a picturesque 'Decoration' by John Ireland and a clever 'Caprice' by Frank Bridge. We admired especially his wonderful skill in making the best of the *peculiar qualities of the pianoforte* placed at his disposal.

There is a world of melancholy meaning in the words we have italicised.

SIR WALTER PARRATT.

RETIREMENT FROM THE OXFORD PROFESSORSHIP.

This resignation of the important post Sir Walter Parratt has so ably filled since 1908, in which year he was appointed Professor on the retirement of Sir Hubert Parry, does not imply that he is giving up work generally. He thinks that a period of ten years is sufficient for one man to hold this particular chair, and he desires to make way for a younger musician—a self-denying ordinance that will increase the respect felt for Sir Walter by his numerous professional friends, including his former pupils, many of whom occupy important posts in the land.

Church and Organ Music.

HOW NOT TO EDIT BACH.

BY HARVEY GRACE.

[Lord Burleigh comes forward, shakes his head, and exits.]

Sneer. 'Now, pray, what did he mean by that?'

Puff. 'Why, by that shake of the head, he gave you to understand that even though they had more justice in their cause, and wisdom in their measures—yet, if there was not a greater spirit shown on the part of the people, the country would at last fall a sacrifice to the hostile ambition of the Spanish monarchy.'

Sneer. 'The devil! did he mean all that?'

Puff. 'Every word of it—if he shook his head as I taught him.'

The Critic.

In the activities of the more fervid musical commentators are usually confined to programmes where, as analytical annotators, they may help, amuse, or be avoided, as the purchaser chooses. Judging from a volume before me, German enthusiasts are allowed to run wild over the pages of masterpieces, and so can hardly be escaped. The book is the second volume of Bach's organ works, edited by Herr Straube (Peters). How far the Herr is responsible for the all-too-ample footnotes, I do not know. He has been so busy peppering poor Bach's music with superfluous phrasing and other marks, that he might well have left the gassing to a subordinate. The English version is by Quentin Morwaren, who is perhaps not to be blamed if the result is occasionally on the foggy side.

We are so often told that the traditional German method of playing Bach's organ music is to draw all the stops and keep them drawn throughout, that Straube's elaborate registration comes as a surprise. Not only does he indicate numerous and violent dynamic changes; he suggests frequent soloing of subjects and other important matter. The prime objection to more than a very limited use of this device is that it sacrifices the polyphonic web in favour of a single voice accompanied—generally a much less interesting effect. But when it *is* done, it is above all important that the scheme be carried out without breaking the flow of the movement—or even risking such a break. Straube, however, seems to be so obsessed with the soloing idea, that he indicates the method even when the part can be picked out only by a liberal use of 'thumbing,' an operation impossible on some organs, difficult on all, and risky even on keyboards where the 'overhang' is convenient. When we are asked to use our thumbs thus, we expect the passage to be of the simple and sustained order. But Straube has no mercy, and calls on the player to pick out a rapid subject in this speculative manner, both thumbs being kept busy. Perhaps the best (or worst) example is his suggestion for a passage in the F minor Fugue, 'a varied form of rendering, which should demonstrate how a plastic working out of the chief motive is feasible.' Four staves are necessary for this feasibility, also large hands. I quote the manual staves only:

RIGHT HAND.
Sw. Full.

EX. I. 4 (5 4) (5 4) 5

2 3 2 2

Gt. to 15th.

L.1 R.1 1 R. 1 6 7

L.1 1 1

LEFT HAND.

4 5 (5 2) 3 4 5 5

The player who essays this will be a busy man, albeit engaged chiefly in twiddling his thumbs. And after all, is the result worth the trouble?

The industrious Straube appears to forget the limitations of the organ in the matter of accent. He is lavish with *sforzando* and similar indications. Occasionally (for instance, when they occur in a single part) something may be done with a swell pedal. But with three parts on the same manual, obviously all or none must be affected. Nor can we act on such indications as :

Ex. 2.

without a rapid pumping use of the swell pedal that would be ludicrous. This is only one of many passages in which every note has its mark. Apparently the player is not credited with sufficient intelligence to act on the word *simili*, or, better still, his own initiative. The same absurd thoroughness is seen in the fingering. Many chords admitting of little or no possibility of mistake in choice of finger have every note duly marked. The funniest example is the crashing discord at the end of the F minor Prelude. Here it is, with its little sums in addition set out beside it :

Ex. 3.

Such thoroughgoing conscientiousness reminds one of the actor who, essaying the part of Othello, blacked himself all over.

There are many points in the phrasing, registration, and other details of performance that call for comment, but I

must pass on to the annotations. These are remarkable for high falutin' windiness, but even more for their discovery of profound significance in passages that most of us have regarded as merely finely organized sound. None of us, I suppose, will deny the emotional appeal of the best of Bach's fugues. Still less, however, shall we subscribe to the theory that Bach set out on a fugal excursion with as clear a programme as the writer of, say, a Spring song or Funeral march. The mood and the emotional climaxes must often have developed more or less fortuitously,—indeed, the fugal form is one particularly liable to this kind of growth. See, for example, how some of the most significant music in the '48' has its inception in fragments of the subject or counter-subject. These fragments were adopted for treatment because of the formal demand for homogeneity, and we may be sure that Bach himself must have been surprised at the possibilities some of them revealed in the process of development.

Now see what Straube finds in the Fugue in G beginning :

[illegible]

The subject is a major version of the principal theme of the first chorus in the cantata 'My spirit was in heaviness,' and is a cheerful tune from which is evolved a vigorous and attractive fugue. A few bars near the end glance at the tonic minor, leading to a climax over a dominant pedal, but even here the music can hardly be said to decline more than very slightly from the prevailing mood of content. A lengthy footnote tells us that :

This fugue has been called by Heuss an 'Evolutionary Fugue.' He lays stress on the contrast between the 'lively outset of the fugue' and the 'inward discontent' of its ending. There can be no doubt of the pessimistic pathos which dominates the final part of the movement; the only thing to be contended [for] is the indication 'cheerfully energetic' for the commencement A vitally significant fact is that the complete composition was in its original form in three parts, the fugue following a movement which in its ornamentations stood in close relation to the florid style of a soprano air in 'Selig is der Mann.' After the joyousness of the Prelude, and the deep abstraction of the middle movement, the fugue leads back to the realities of existence. With the reversion (*sic*) the pessimist recognized the contradiction of life. Only with feelings of deep dejection is he able to return to this world, to find it ultimately, like Beethoven, 'detestable.'

After a very natural shock at Bach's finding Beethoven 'detestable,' we may ask, with Sneerwell, 'The devil! did he mean all that?'

But Straube has not yet done with the 'inward discontent' of the final cadence :

Ex. 5.

He says :

The 'inward discontent' of the conclusion finds once again an almost alarming utterance in the shrill dissonance E flat-E natural; with strict observance of the *ritardando molto* the listeners will be brought to a clearer comprehension of the psychical significance of this point.

But the cadence, so far from containing anything 'alarming,' or of 'psychical significance,' is quite conventional. The collision between the E flat and E natural comes about in the most logical way. The harmonic basis of the passage was hackneyed even before Bach's time, and the flattening of the ninth of the dominant was almost an article of faith. The treble part is simply the tail end of the subject, and therefore the E natural is inevitable. It is one of the countless cases in which a descending minor and a rising major interval come into

momentary conflict. Of course the player may *ritardando* with sufficient *molto* to produce an 'alarming utterance,' in which case the 'discontent' would be felt by the hearer.

The Herr is ever on the look out for such emotional points. In this same Fugue, for example, is a figure :



of which Bach makes a good deal. It appears first in the bass, and obviously has its origin in conventional pedal technique of the alternate feet order. If it has any emotional significance, it is surely of a cheerful, resolute, character. Straube, however, lures our eye to the foot of the page in order to describe it as a 'threatening motive,' adding unnecessarily that 'it is to be delivered with the greatest precision.'

What is the opinion of most organists concerning the A major Prelude? The Fugue is generally admired as one of the most delightful of Bach's works, but I have always felt that the Prelude contained little of interest. I have lately tried in vain to discover in it such qualities as Straube describes in the following note :

Among all the Preludes and Fugues this pastoral idyll takes a place apart. Bach has never again in these same forms entered upon like realms of fancy. The Prelude whispers of the magic of the still nights in spring. Faint strains, hardly more than dreams, lead the ethereal dance; shadowy melodic outlines float phantom-like hither and thither, to be lost in a breath of entrancing sound. . . . How to render with its whole charm the mysterious melody of the Prelude, is a problem not easy to solve. . . . 'Like the tones of an Æolian harp the euphonious strains must be there, without inducement, and without betraying their instrument.' (Novalis). The best way to obtain this is by the use of the Celestial or Echo organ, which, being placed at a distance, amply fulfils the conditions of the foregoing quotation. . . . The registration shall only as it were follow the lines of the tone-picture with a faint silver tracery. . . .

Perhaps I have never fully appreciated this work because I have not yet had the good luck to hear it played without inducement and without betraying its instrument.

Most of us have played the passage in the great A minor Fugue commencing :



without regarding it as other than a pleasant sequence. Once more we are bidden to look at a footnote, and read : 'The sigh of sweet melancholy in the middle voice with fervent expression.' I may add that the bar I have quoted contains the direction *Espr.* under the alleged sigh, nine indications of the touch to be employed, and nine fingering marks. This is by no means the worst example of over-editing : many passages are so profusely marked that the signs actually outnumber the notes !

There are other points calling for remark, but space forbids, so I must end with a few extracts from some of the more gushing comments. Of the final sixteen bars of the great B minor Fugue, Straube says :

The inner reversion of the piece Bach symbolises in visionary strains of the flowing sixteenth-note figure ; he prepares for the crowning development with a re-entry of the same passage. As, however, the whole leads up to the heights of spiritual conviction, the motive which for a time shone resplendent, to be again speedily obscured, now acquires power of expression and magnitude of form. It passes to the mighty course of the Bass, which by the proportion of its strides seems to intend gaining the highest summit of heaven by force.

Of the manual section following the exposition, he says :

The interlude of these twelve bars would be inexplicable if we did not descry in the playful grace of the sixteenth-notes the smile of a sunbeam breaking through the grey mists, to transfigure the clouds of heavy affliction. The inner course of the piece turns away from the grey melancholy of jaded resignation to reach by degrees an almost defiant acceptance of existence. This liberating development of the feelings will find its natural musical expression in a steady increase of the dynamic and rhythmic forces. How to utilise these resources in an artistically-convincing manner must be left to the individual culture and musical knowledge of the interpreter.

As may be expected, the beautiful Prelude to this Fugue gives the commentator opportunities of which he makes the most. Hear him on the full close in F sharp minor :

The austere tone of this cadence demands rigorous severity in expression. From out the dejected melancholy of the beginning, Bach has led us in carefully-linked psychical chains up into the emotional sphere of defiant perseverance against outward and inward opposition. A clear perception of this evolution is an indispensable preliminary for a living representation of the whole work. . . . Oppressed, faltering, the wonderful melody of the upper part sets in, to sink again in the following bars from the perturbed unrest of the middle section back to the calm, pensive melancholy of the beginning. . . . The thirds—like a glance into the past—to be softly emphasised.

Over the concluding bars of the Prelude he spreads himself thus :

The contrition and suppressed suffering of this concluding phrase, encircled with a filmy mantle of soft strains, raises once more the deep plaint of the Prelude as in a dream, to sink shadow-like into nothing. The Fugue, weary, apathetic, almost lifeless, then lifts up its mournful, resigned song of earthly sorrows and home yearnings.

The middle section of the 'Wedge' Fugue calls for a liberal supply of notes. I have space for only one :

The whole middle movement is to be rendered throughout fantastically and impassioned. The subdued light of the tone-colour must show the figures in the dusk of twilight, in the sense of the supernatural : ethereal, veiled, and discreet it should merge everything in the uncertain, the indefinite, and incomprehensible.

From these extracts the reader may imagine how Straube lets himself go over such works as the great C major, C minor, Preludes and Fugues, and the Fantasia and Fugue in G minor. But even smaller works provide him with matter for footnotes. Like Verges, he will be talking. For example, the final cadence of the A major Fugue, instead of being allowed to speak for its simple self, is thus helped out by the Professor :

A quiet lingering on the sublime chord of the seventh on D sharp—a momentary hush—and the cadence closes soft and tender as in a dream.

Of course such rhapsodies are harmless, so long as they are not taken too seriously. More questionable are the 'improvements' in the music itself. Thus the editor has no scruples in making a passage more emphatic by adding octaves, *e.g.*, from the 'Wedge' Fugue :



I give the bar with all its unnecessary marks thick upon it. Straube says it is 'the culminating point of the whole Symphony, and must obtain tremendous expression in the shriek of its dissonances'—a characteristic attempt to read 'frightfulness' into a progression that Bach must have used many hundreds of times.

The Choral Preludes, being largely programme music, need some elucidation, and organists are grateful for the help given by Pirro, Schweitzer, and Newman. The Preludes and Fugues are another matter. They are pure music, and like most subjective works, their emotional significance may be varied enormously by the method of performance, or by such factors as the character of the instrument, the size of the building in which they are heard, and so forth. Less, perhaps, than any music do they need such sentimental and exaggerated underlining as we find in this volume.

It is a far cry from the plain pages of the earlier Bach editors, such as Kroll, Griepenkerl, and Roitzsch, to these misty impertinences. We may be amused at some of them, but we close the volume with an uneasy feeling that Straubism has its tragic side. Viewing it in conjunction with the megalomania shown in modern German organ music, especially in that of Reger and the later examples of Karg-Elert, we see unmistakable signs of the frantic egoism and over-emphasis that are the ultimate cause of the present war.

On merely musical grounds it is worth while to remember that Straube has for years been one of the most eminent critics and editors in Germany. What should we think of the state of the art in England if (say) Sir Hubert Parry or Mr. Ernest Newman put forth such an edition, and our great teaching institutions adopted it?

The 1917 Year-Book of Christ Church Cathedral, Montreal, gives a list of choir music that reflects great credit on Mr. Arthur Egg, the organist and choirmaster. The settings of Te Deum and Jubilate are by Stanford (C and B flat), Noble in B minor, Martin in A, Smart in F, Sainer in A, and Walford Davies in G. The Communion Services include Stanford (in C and B flat), Wesley in E, and Bairstow in D; Evening Canticles are by Noble in B minor, West in E flat, Walmisley in D minor, and Stanford in B flat. There is a fine list of anthems, among them being Bach's 'Christians be joyful' and the cantata, 'God's time is the best,' Franck's 'Psalm cl.,' Ouseley's 'It came even to pass,' Stanford's 'Ye choirs of New Jerusalem,' Tye's 'Laudate nomen Domini,' Tallis's 'If ye love Me,' S. S. Wesley's 'Ascribe unto the Lord' and 'The Wilderness,' Walford Davies's 'O Thou that hearest prayer,' besides many standard oratorio choruses, seven of the best of these having been added to the repertory during the past year.

Performances of 'St. Paul' drew large congregations to St. Lawrence's Parish Church, Ludlow, on the afternoon and evening of January 24. The Church Choir, the local Choral Class, and the Ludlow Orchestral Society formed the choir and band, and Mr. Frank E. Bastich, the Parish Church organist, conducted. The soprano solos were sung by Master D. Campbell, and the other principals were Mr. J. Aikens and Mr. Batey (both from Hereford Cathedral). Mr. Ivor Atkins (Worcester Cathedral) was organist.

At a students' organ recital at the Royal Academy of Music on February 4 the performers were all ladies. The programme included Franck's Choral No. 3 (Miss Joan S. McNeill), first movement of Guilman's Sonata No. 5 (Miss Florence Whitby), Bach's B minor Fugue (Miss Florence Cook), Minuet and Allegro Maestoso from Stanford's Sonata No. 1 (Miss Enid Revell), and Bonnet's Concert Variations (Miss Marjorie Hermon).

The Church Music Society is arranging a series of conferences on hymn-singing. These will take place on Saturdays at three o'clock, the first being held at the Temple Church on March 16, when Dr. H. Walford Davies will deal with 'Hymn Festivals and Hymn Sing-songs.' The hymn-book used will be 'In hoc signo.' No tickets are required, and there will be no collection. Details of the remaining conferences will be announced later.

At the Dedication Festival at St. Paul's Cathedral, music, as usual, was given a prominent part. The Communion Service was sung to Martin in A, the Canticles and Evensong, Stanford in A, and a portion of Mendelssohn's 'St. Paul' was sung by an augmented choir. Mr Charles Macpherson conducted, and Mr. Reginald Yarrow was at the organ.

On the occasion of Dr. William A. Hall leaving Tottenham and taking up his new appointment as organist and choirmaster of All Saints', Eastbourne, he was on January 17 presented with an address and a cheque by Tottenham War Services Committee in recognition of his help in organizing concerts for war charities.

Mr. Arthur Kitson (who succeeded the late Dr. Hutchinson as organist and choirmaster at Darlington Parish Church) informs us that his name was in the pass-list for January 3 for the final Mus. Doc. Examination at Oxford. We congratulate Dr. Kitson.

It has been decided that the annual service for teachers in St. Paul's Cathedral shall be suspended for the current year owing to difficulties arising out of war conditions.

We regret we are obliged to hold over a report of the very interesting address delivered by Sir Hubert Parry on January 18 before the Royal College of Organists.

There is an informing article by Dr. Grattan Flood on Queen Mary's Chapel Royal in the *English Historical Review* for January.

ORGAN RECITALS.

Mr. Herbert Gisby, St. Thomas's, Regent Street (four recitals)—Pastorale, 'Psallite, omnes Angeli' and 'Sit laus plena, sit Sonora,' *Best*; Pastorale and Finale (Sonata No. 20), *Rheinberger*; Meditation in F, *Clausmann*; Finale in B flat, Op. 11, No. 2, *Wolstenholme*; Legend, *Harvey Grace*

Mr. Cyril A. Pearce, Unthank Road Baptist Church—Sonata in F, *Stanford*; Toccata Militaire, *H. M. Higgs*; Imperial March, *Elgar*.

Mr. Herbert Hodge, St. Nicholas Cole Abbey (five recitals)—Offertoire in C, *Wily*; Finale in E (Op. 52), *Schumann*; Overture in C, *Adams*; Prelude and Fugue in C minor, *Mendelssohn*; Fantasia in E flat, *Saint-Saëns*; Fugue in C minor, *Reubke*

Mr. W. J. Lancaster, Bolton Parish Church—Sonata, *Stanford*; Lied, *Vierne*; Fantasia on 'Hanover,' *Lemare*; Interlude in G, *Wolstenholme*.

Mr. J. Pullett, St. Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow (two recitals)—Prelude on 'Sleepers, wake!' *Bach*; Fantasy on Two Christmas Carols, *West*; Pastorale, *Franck*; Rhapsodie sur deux Noels, *Gigout*; Marche de Fête, *Busser*; Two Pastorales, *Hillemacher*; Marche Religieuse, *Saint-Saëns*. Doncaster Parish Church—Preludes on 'Martyrs,' *Harvey Grace*, 'Canterbury,' *John Pullett*, 'London New,' *Harvey Grace*, 'Rockingham' and 'Crofts 136th,' *Parry*.

Mr. Bell-Porter, Eltham Parish Church—Fantasia and Fugue in A minor, *Bach*; Allegretto in E flat, *Wolstenholme*; Gavotte, *Camidge*; Imperial March, *Elgar*.

Mr. Ezra Edson, Cawthorne Parish Church, Barnsley—Sonata No. 5, *Mendelssohn*; Storm-Fantasia, *Henry Hudson*.

Mr. W. Cary Bliss, St. John's, Red Lion Square—Prelude and Fugue in C, *Bach*; Absoute and Rhapsodie sur deux Noels, *Gigout*; Romance and Eclogue, *Salome*; Fantasia alla Marcia, *Harvey Grace*.

Mr. George Pritchard, St. George's, Altrincham—The Curfew, *Horsman*; Réverie, Op. 5, *Bonnet*; Finale in D, *Lemmens*.

Mr. Douglas G. Rogers, St. John the Baptist, Widford (two recitals)—Overture to 'Egmont'; Fantasia on Two Christmas Carols, *West*; Concerto No. 1, *Bach*.

Mr. Allan Brown, Rhos Chapel, Mountain Ash—Canon in B minor, *Schumann*; Fugue in C minor, *Reubke*.
 Mr. Harold M. Dawber, St. George's, Stockport (three recitals)—Recitative and Finale (Sonata No. 1), *Mendelssohn*; Prelude to Part 2, 'The Apostles,' *Elgar*; Romance with Variations, *Stuart Archer*; Marche Pontificale, *Widor*; Choral Prelude, 'In dulci jubilo,' *Bach*; Fantasy on 'God rest you merry, gentlemen,' *Eaglefield Hull*.
 Mr. Felix Corbett, Town Hall, Middlesbrough—Overture, 'Ptolemy,' *Handel*; Toccata and Fugue in C, *Bach*; Rondo Capriccio, *Lemare*.
 Mr. J. A. Meale, Broadway Baptist Church, Chesham—Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, *Bach*. Wesleyan Central Hall, Westminster—'St. Francis preaching to the Birds,' *Liszt*; Triumph Song, *Arthur Baynon*; Sonata No. 6, *Mendelssohn*. Wesleyan Central Hall, Westminster (four recitals)—Grand Chœur, *Haigh*; Cantilène, *Wolstenholme*; Minuet Nuptiale, *Lemare*; Fantasy, *Harvey Grace*; March of Lincolnshire Regiment and Tone-Poem, 'In peril on the sea,' *J. A. Meale*; Offertoire and Fughetta, *Commette*.

APPOINTMENT.

Mr. B. T. P. Hollins (organist Acton Congregational Church), organist and choirmaster of Beckenham Congregational Church.

Obituary.

We regret to record the following deaths:

Mr. W. J. RIDLEY, on January 20, an event that has caused sincere regret, especially to those who knew him as the designer of the new Liverpool Cathedral Organ, which is now in course of construction by Messrs. Willis. Mr. Ridley was a nephew of the widow of Mr. James Barrow, under whose will a munificent sum was set apart for the provision of an organ worthy of the greatest cathedral in the world. It is sad also to record that this venerable lady herself passed away on February 8. But although it has not been vouchsafed to them to see the completion of the great work which was so close to their hearts, it is certain that their names will long endure in its connection. To Mr. Ridley the progress of the work was his chief preoccupation in life, and the design and details of the huge instrument embodied a life-time's study and practical experience of the organ-builder's art, in which as an amateur he stood unsurpassed. With its six manual departments, played from five keyboards, its 167 speaking stops (33 on the pedal), 48 couplers, and 10,567 pipes, it was not the designer's idea to plan merely the largest organ in the world but to make it remarkable as the first organ of over a hundred speaking stops to embody correct principles of tonal design by developing the varying classes of flue, string, and reed tone to the fullest extent in 'families.' Mr. Ridley's interment was preceded by a funeral service held in the exquisite Lady Chapel of the Cathedral.

Reviews.

ORGAN MUSIC.

Morning Song, by Alfred Hollins; *Five Variations on an Old English Melody*, by J. Stuart Archer; *Chanson d'Espoir*, by J. A. Meale; *Scherzo*, by J. A. Meale. (Original Compositions, New Series, Nos. 52 to 56.)

Larghetto in F minor, by S. S. Wesley.

[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

Mr. Hollins's 'Morning Song' is as tuneful as may be expected from the composer of one of the most popular Spring Songs ever written. Indeed, it recalls that work in more than one passage, but its numerous prospective admirers will like it none the less.

Mr. Meale's two pieces are obviously intended for that portion of a recital audience to whom subtleties are merely boring. The 'Chanson d'Espoir' (why not an English title?)

is a straightforward song without words. The Scherzo gives us a tune played by the left-hand, with broken chordal accompaniment, relief being provided by a quiet middle section.

Mr. Archer has long since shown his ability to use the variation form with good results. The new set is, we think, at least as good as anything he has done, being a judicious blend of the figured method and the more interesting modern one of development. The quaint old melody is made the basis of a very attractive piece of work. It is only moderately difficult. The three other pieces mentioned above are easy.

The 'Larghetto' of S. S. Wesley, the second edition of which has just appeared, is a simple two-page piece. Like most of Wesley's organ music it is so good as to make us regret that its composer lived in days when the organ in this country was in too backward a condition to give its votaries a chance of showing their full capabilities.

BOOK RECEIVED.

Catalogue of First Editions of Edward MacDowell (1861-1908). By O. G. Sonneck, chief, Music Division of the Library of Congress. (Government Printing Office, Washington. L.C. Card, 17-26002. Price 40 cents.) This is one of the series of bibliographic studies issued by the U.S. Government that reflect appreciation of a national heritage. Edward MacDowell was the greatest musician the States have produced. The volume contains 89 pp., and is a monument of the industry of the able editor, Mr. O. G. Sonneck.

Correspondence.

MUSIC IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—Thank you for your note appended to my letter of January 8. You will probably not wish to find space for an elaborate correspondence. May I therefore briefly suggest what seems to me the root of the matter? At present English instrumental music on the whole lags behind that of some Continental nations. Therefore English teachers of instrumental music are obliged to use a preponderance of foreign music for teaching purposes. But in vocal music the case is different. We can all find English vocal music amply adequate, both in quality and quantity, for our purposes. In defence of Rugby music may I therefore state that our Christmas concert-programme included (amongst others) an important vocal work by an English composer sung by a choir of boys and accompanied by an almost complete orchestra composed mainly of boys, and that we are hoping to give a performance of English madrigals within the next few months. The two quartets in the programme quoted in your January number were sung by four gentlemen (not boys) who happened to have been practising them in private. Foreign vocal music at our Sunday concerts is the exception rather than the rule.—Yours, &c.,

ARTHUR H. PEPPIN.

Rugby, February 2, 1918.

SIR,—As a music teacher in a large public school for girls, I take exception to your remark in this month's issue: 'Gurlitt, in common with a host of German pattern-writers, much beloved in girls' schools.' In this school, girls are learning, in addition to the ordinary classics, Bach, Beethoven, &c., pieces by Bainton, Carroll, Dunhill, Earnshaw, Farjeon, Hurlstone, Balfour Gardiner, Cyril Scott, Coleridge-Taylor, &c., and of course pieces by French, Russian, and other composers, but no Gurlitt or other German pattern-writers' pieces are taught here. I enclose programme of two recent concerts, by which you will see some girls' schools at any rate support British art.—Yours faithfully,

ALLEGRO.

[We did not say that Gurlitt & Co. were beloved in all schools. The programmes sent contain twenty-nine items, of which nineteen are by British composers. Quite a model