

A Forgotten Enthusiast

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before Master Wood joined. After having been deputy-organist of Rochester Cathedral, Dr. Wood held, in succession, the organistships of Holy Trinity Church, Old Brompton (Kent); Cranbrook Parish Church; Lee Parish Church; Boston (Lincolnshire) Parish Church; and Chichester Cathedral. In 1876, upon the death of Alfred Angel, Dr. Wood was appointed organist of Exeter Cathedral, a post which he still worthily holds, the services testifying to the reverent and painstaking care with which he discharges his duties. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and Bachelor of Music in the University of Oxford; in 1896 he received the Degree of Doctor of Music *Cantuar.* As conductor of the Western Counties Musical Association and the Exeter Orchestral Society, Dr. Wood extends the scope of his artistic interests beyond the Cathedral precincts, and his influence on music in the city and surroundings of Exeter is distinctly for its progress and well being. In the Rev. Arnold D. Culley, Mus. Bac., one of the Priest Vicars, Dr. Wood has an excellent colleague as Sub-Organist, an official appointment rightly made by the Dean and Chapter.

Finally, full acknowledgment, coupled with thanks, must be made of the valued assistance rendered by the Rev. Chancellor W. J. Edmonds, B.D., Canon of Exeter, and Dr. D. J. Wood, organist, in the preparation of these notes on Exeter and its Cathedral.

DOTTED CROCHET.

A FORGOTTEN ENTHUSIAST.

In the history of English Music it would not be easy—I may go farther, and declare that it would be absolutely impossible—to find so genuine a critic, so thorough a learner, so indefatigable a labourer in the fields of his art as was Dr. Charles Burney. Not for the first time have I taken pen wherewith to expound his merits, and to linger upon his most indubitable gifts of resolution, of stern devotion to his innermost ideals, and to note the physical martyrdom to which he chose to subject himself in the pursuit of his pet aims. Burney, as I shall attempt to show through his own words, was an insatiable musician. His accomplishment lay almost altogether on the critical side of the matter, and in this province he thirsted for refreshment. No traveller stepping the desert (and music in England was a veritable desert in the day of his enthusiasm) was more eager for an oasis, for a pool with its triple palms, than was Burney for the confirmation of his desires, for the ‘Invention’—in the elder sense of the term—of his assured fellowship in art throughout the whole world. There is a strange picture of him in Macaulay. To the literary man whose sense of literary prose rhythm was only surpassed by his utter, his abased, his acknowledged ignorance

of musical rhythm, Dr. Burney was famous merely and actually as the father of the author of ‘Evelina,’ ‘Cecilia,’ ‘Camilla.’* Macaulay rightly appreciated the value of the Lady of Fiction. Yet who now reads ‘Cecilia’? Who reads the ‘Diary’? On the other hand, Macaulay was totally ignorant of the real value of Fanny Burney’s father. It was far more important to him that Johnson should have petted the young girl at the house in St. Martin’s Lane, than that Charles Burney should have speculated profoundly upon the art of his choice, and upon the musical tendencies of the various countries through which he travelled. Macaulay makes indeed the most casual of references, as though he were unearthing a *dilettante* matter of the least historical moment, to certain musical parties given by Burney, at which his daughter met the types of such characters as she embodied in the pages of ‘Evelina.’

All the while that grave and reverend ‘Signior’ had been building up unseen foundations of a really great future reputation. Just as it may be the fashion of to-day for a ‘man about town’ to assure a musician, not without pride in the assurance, that—‘I know nothing whatever about music, but I think very little of Edward Elgar’—so the wits and fops made a goddess of the daughter, and frankly confessed that the father was a negligible quantity. And to-day some of us who agree very whole-heartedly with the verdict of praise given in favour of Fanny Burney, cannot help feeling a certain regret that a tradition bolstered up by Macaulay should still remain a matter of serious influence with the bulk of readers. ‘Mr. Burney,’ writes this master of the greatest *occasional* prose in the language, ‘obtained the degree of Doctor of Music from the University of Oxford; and his works on subjects connected with his art gained him a place, respectable, though certainly not eminent, among men of letters.’ It sufficed for Macaulay that his literary master, Johnson, ‘condescended to growl out that Burney was an honest fellow, a man whom it was impossible not to like.’ Nor did it occur to this man of rare accomplishment, so disdainful of every art other than his own, that it must necessarily have ensured the possession of surely an amazing and extraordinary capacity that, for example, the cream of Italian artists in visiting England ‘exerted themselves to obtain his suffrage,’ that Pachierotti became his most intimate friend, that even Agujari sang for him for the pleasure of the thing, or that all the lovers of music who visited the glimpses of a too often obscured London moon created a blockade on his concert nights with their chariots, or that on these occasions ‘his little drawing-room was crowded

* Sir George Trevelyan records that Macaulay knew two tunes—‘God save the Queen,’ and the other. The splendid formalist of words was rather proud of his limitations in this respect; and yet the same writer conceived the peroration to the Essay on ‘Warren Hastings,’ and he wrote the Roll Call of St. Peter’s *ad Vincula* of the Tower. With these prose fantasies to remember him by, the mystery of music becomes all the more remote and insoluble, in view of his entire lack of musical ear.

with peers, peeresses, ministers, and ambassadors.' In a word, to Macaulay, Dr. Burney was the father of his daughter; it is permissible to thank 'whatever gods may be' that the historian may to-day recognise Fanny Burney as the daughter of her father.

And yet 'A Forgotten Enthusiast'—as I have called this paper—surely describes him not inaptly. Madame D'Arblay's novels are of course gone hence, and Burney is haply read not widely. But whereas the modern reader cannot (to be frank) *go on*, in Lowell's expressive phrase, with her books, Burney has only to be read in order to charm, to pique, and to engross. I have called him an insatiable musician. 'I travelled,' says he, 'not as a musician usually travels, to *get* money, but to *spend* it in search of musical merit and talents, wherever I could find them, in order to display them to my countrymen.' He is a man of his opinions. (He would have had none of Wagner.) 'The rage,' he cries, 'for crude, equivocal and affected modulation which now prevails generally all over Germany renders voluntary playing a torture to the ear. A little of this high sauce, discreetly used, produces great and surprising effects; but for ever to be seeking for far-fetched and extraneous harmony is giving a man that is hungry nothing but *chian* to eat, instead of plain and wholesome food.' Then again there are his views upon John Sebastian the Great and Emanuel the Lesser Bach. The first he admired for his 'technical quality,' but his accomplishment had 'crabbed' him; the second was the divine melodist. And to-day where is the level of the son when you compare it to the level of the father? However these verdicts (and I have given a few of the more surprising only) may to-day be regarded—and Burney, awaiting us all in the Elysian Fields may, for aught we know, have some final words to say on the subject of his opinions—they prove how nobly enthusiastic was this man in the cause of his art. They show his magnificent single-mindedness, his splendid intolerance, his fine industry, his yet finer fanaticism.

Art and the phases of Art must hang under, in some respects,—in those, namely, of immediately personal judgment—somewhat mobile influences. Those rare creatures (in creative no less than in critical art) who fly ahead of their time, even as pioneer swallows start perilously on their Southward pathway, must encounter storm and stress in their going. Burney was not among these. Even his admiration of Gluck was unpunctual, however whole-hearted. He was pre-eminently a practical theorist of his time. A man, I take him to be, who with almost acute sentiment appreciated the best in the world that had just passed over his head. Keenly critical, brave to even splendid excesses, a man of candour and of kindness, affectionate to a fault, liberal with certain precautions, he just remained within the circle—that teasing circle!—of his own particular period. Still, he lives

to-day, a pleasant creature, a most engrossing entertainer, to any modern mind with a bent of curious enquiry. I am not at all persuaded that his books would not be read with quite keen interest, if presented to the public of this generation in modern dress—with as keen an interest, I will even dare to add, as to-day the 'Journey to the Hebrides' is read, with an interest far more vital than that which approaches that dreary classic 'Rasselas.' The ghosts of that day may well be awestruck to consider the possibility of such a judgment, written more than a century since the death of my forgotten enthusiast. Let us, however, think of him crowned with posthumous honours among his shadowy companions, and now invited, by reason of the fact, to quaff an extra goblet of nectar.

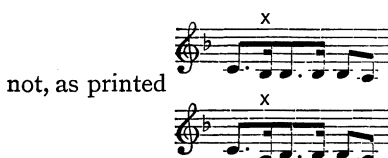
VERNON BLACKBURN.

HANDEL'S MESSIAH: PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION.

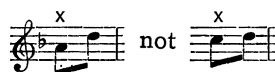
By PROFESSOR PROUT.

(Concluded from page 594.)

No. 33.—CHORUS.—'Lift up your heads.' There is hardly another number of the oratorio in which the text is so corrupt as in this chorus. At bar 11, Handel, following the authorized version of the 24th Psalm, writes 'Who is this King of Glory?' I have felt it my duty to give Handel's original text here; but I have inserted it in smaller type above the version in general use, which is certainly rather easier to sing. Conductors can choose whichever version they prefer. In bar 13 the first violin part must be—



For this error Walsh is not responsible; he gives the passage correctly. But the next mistake is found in his score. At bar 24 the last two quavers of Viol. 1^o must be—



In bars 27 to 29 Handel wrote—



Every edition I have seen gives—



The composer writes a semiquaver to the word 'of' in each of the three bars.