

New Light on Early Tudor Composers. I.-William Newark

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is not any better known in Russia. He was born at Karevo (Central Russia) in 1839; he died in the Nicolas Military Hospital at Petersburg, in 1881. It can be seen by these dates that he had little time to lose in order to become a genius; he did not lose any, and he has left indelible traces in the memories of those who love him or who will love him some day. No one has addressed himself to what is best in us with tenderer or more penetrating accents; he is unique, and on account of his unaffected art, devoid of all withering formulæ, he will continue to remain unique. Never has such a refined sensibility used such simple means for revealing itself. It resembles the art of a strange savage discovering music by the tracks of his own impressions; there is never any question either of any particular kind of form, or at any rate the form is so many-sided that it is impossible to connect it with any authenticated, or what one might call administrative forms. It is held together by, and composed of, a succession of little touches bound by mysterious fetters and by a gift of luminous clairvoyance; occasionally Moussorgsky evokes a vision of restless, shuddering spectres which takes possession of one's being and almost wrings the heart with anguish. 'The Children's Nursery' contains the prayer said by the little girl before going to sleep, in which the actions, the tender perplexity of a child's mind, and even the charming way little girls have of showing off before grown-ups, are recorded in a tone of feverish accuracy that is peculiar to this song. Every word of the 'Doll's Lullaby' seems to have been divined. It is a wonderful assimilation of the special faculty possessed by children of imagining scenes out of fairyland; the termination of this lullaby is so soothingly soporific that the little *raconteuse* is lulled to sleep by her own stories. There is also the terrible little boy astride a stick, who transforms the room into a battlefield, breaking here an arm and there a leg of the poor defenceless chairs. These deeds are not done without a certain amount of personal injury! And then there are screams, tears, and a good-bye to happiness! But the injuries are not serious two seconds on his mother's lap, kisses that make him well again, and—the battle recommences and the chairs once more know not where to hide themselves. All these little dramas, I repeat, are set to music of an extreme simplicity; a chord suffices to Moussorgsky that would seem commonplace to Monsieur (I cannot remember his name!), or such a perfectly natural modulation as would appear strange to Monsieur (as above). We shall have more to say another time about Moussorgsky; he has numerous claims to our regard.

Madame Marie Olenine sang these songs at the last concert of the Société Nationale in a manner that would have satisfied Moussorgsky himself, if I may be permitted to make this affirmation in his name.

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NEW LIGHT ON EARLY TUDOR COMPOSERS.

BY W. H. GRATTAN FLOOD.

I.—WILLIAM NEWARK.

Notwithstanding the researches of many painstaking historians of English music, the biographical data to be found recorded in regard to the great English masters of the period 1485-1545 may be regarded as meagre in the extreme. For instance, the details of the lives of Newark, Burton, Cornish, Crane, Aston, Pigot, Ludford, Taverner, Farthing, Gwineth, Redford, Sturton, Whytbroke, and others, have eluded previous investigators, and hence musical readers will, I am sure, be glad to learn new facts as to these worthies. Although it is only by the properly-organized help of a band of skilful investigators that we may reasonably expect to pierce the obscurity which has so long veiled the personalities of many of those early Tudor composers, yet it is to be hoped that the present series of articles will be helpful, especially as the information is gleaned at first hand from Patent Rolls, State Papers, and other official sources. Fortunately, much of the music of those old English masters has escaped the ravages of time, and not a little of it has been edited by careful musicologists like Mr. G. E. P. Arkwright, Mr. Barclay Squire, Dr. R. R. Terry, Mr. H. B. Collins, Mr. Royle Shore, and others. But as to their biographies, as Dr. Ernest Walker well puts it in his commendable 'History of Music in England' (1907), 'the information we possess is but scanty, and dates have often to be supplied approximately, if at all.'

Let us commence with William Newark, who was Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal from 1493 till his resignation in September, 1509. Seven of his vocal compositions are included in the Fairfax volume preserved in the British Museum, one of which—for three voices—has been printed by Burney, while another ('Thus musing in my mind') has been published by Messrs. Novello.

William Newark was a native of Newark-on-Trent, where he was born *circa* 1450. He became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1477, and served as such under Edward IV., Edward V., Richard III., Henry VII., and the first year of Henry VIII. He must soon have got into favour, for in 1479 we find him in possession of a *corrody** in the monastery of St. Mary, Thetford, a fact made known by an entry on the Patent Rolls of November 28, 1480. Four years later his services were recognized in a more substantial form, and he was given a grant for life of a yearly rent of £20 accruing from the King's manor of Bletchingly, Surrey. This grant is entered on the Patent Rolls, 2 Richard III., and is dated April 6, 1485.

Gilbert Banestre, Master of the Children, resigned his office on September 29, 1486, but retained three valuable *corrodies* till his death on August 19, 1487. One of these *corrodies* was that in the Monastery of St. Benet, Holme, Norfolk; and on September 1, 1487, King Henry VII. granted it to Newark for life. Meantime, Laurence Squire, Chaplain to the King, and Canon of the Collegiate Church of St. Mary, Warwick, was appointed Master of the Children at a salary of forty marks a year, on September 29, 1486. This, however, was only a temporary arrangement, and on the death of Squire, May 30, 1493, William Newark was given the Mastership—the patent for which was formally enrolled on September 17. On

* A *corrody* was a right of sustenance, or a certain refection of victual and provision for one's maintenance, in an Abbey or Monastery, and frequently compounded for by a yearly pension to the recipient.

the previous New Year's Day (January 1, 1493), Newark was given the then not inconsiderable sum of twenty shillings 'for making of a song,' as is recorded in the Household Book of Henry VII., 1491-1505, under date of January 6 (B. Mus., Add. MSS., 7099, folio 7).

During the Christmas festivities of 1505-6, and again in 1506-7 and 1507-8, Newark had to superintend and devise the musical entertainments at Court. His patent as Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal was renewed under Henry VIII. on June 4, 1509, but he fell seriously ill in the early autumn of the same year, and died in the second week of November. His will is dated November 5, 1509, and it was proved on December 13 (Rochester Wills, Book 6, folio 262). His body was laid at rest in the porch of Greenwich Church.

The titles of Newark's vocal compositions in the Fayfax volume in the British Museum are as follows: 'The farther I go, the more behind' (2 voices); 'What causeth me woful thoughts?' (2 voices); 'So far, I trow, from remedy' (2 voices); 'O my desire, what aileth thee?' (2 voices); 'But why am I so abused?' (3 voices); 'Your counterfeiting with double dealing' (3 voices); 'Thus musing in my mind' (3 voices).

II.—DAVID BURTON.

Among the many eminent English composers of the early Tudor period David Burton occupies a high place—and yet up to the present his biography has presented little more than conjecture. In the dozen lines accorded to him in the new edition of Grove's Dictionary of Music (vol. i., p. 425) his name appears as 'Avery Burton.' Mr. G. E. P. Arkwright, one of the best living authorities on early English music, says that 'he may be identified with the Avarie whom Morley names in his list of authorities ('Plaine and Easie Introduction,' 1597), whose name appears as composer of a piece for the organ in B. M. Add. MS. 29976.' He also adds that a five-part Mass by him ('Ut Ra Mi Fa Sol La') is in the Oxford Music School Collection (MS. Mus. Sch. E. 376-381), and notes that 'the name of "Davy" Burton appears in the list of Henry VIII.'s Chapel, 1520.'

From a close search of the State Papers the following entries throw new light on the high estimation in which David Burton was held, no doubt testifying to his powers as a musician and composer.

Mr. Arkwright's surmise as to the identity of 'Davy' Burton with 'Aubree' or Avery Burton is amply substantiated by official records; in fact his name appears in four varying forms, namely, David Burton, Davy Burton, Avery Burton, and Avery Burnett—also as 'Davy,' 'Avery' and 'Burton.'

The first notice of this distinguished musician is in 1494, when we find him as the recipient of the then respectable douceur of twenty shillings for composing a Mass. This record appears in the Privy Purse expenses of Henry VII., in which the brief entry is chronicled as follows: 'To Burton, for making a Mass, 20s.,' under date of November 29, 1494.

Fifteen years later, in November, 1509, David Burton was appointed a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, filling the vacancy created by the promotion of William Cornish as Master of the Children, in succession to William Newark, deceased. He received livery for the funeral of Prince Henry, on February 22, 1511. Not long afterwards, on August 16, he received a lucrative emolument as Keeper of Chestenwood, Kent, *vice* John Pender, deceased. This office was confirmed to him on April 1, 1512, when an order was

made that he was to be paid '2*d.* a day and arrears from 16 August last.'

On June 20, 1513, Burton went overseas with the rest of the Chapel Royal in the train of King Henry VIII., and we read that on September 17, after the High Mass was sung at Tournai, the Te Deum was performed by the English singers, followed by a sermon by Edmund Birkhead, Bishop of St. Asaph. A fortnight previously the English Chapel Royal sang in Terouenne Cathedral, the items including 'An Anthem of Our Lady and another of St. George.' On October 21, the English monarch embarked from Calais, 'the Chapel Royal being with the Middle Ward.'

Burton, on promise of further preferment, resigned his Keepership of Chestenwood, Kent, on April 16, 1518, and on May 12 he surrendered a monastic corrody. Two years later, in June, 1520, 'Davy' Burton took part in the magnificent ceremonies of the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

In the list of salaries of the King's household for the year 1526, Burton appears as Gentleman of the Chapel at 7½*d.* a day, but his name is disguised as 'Avery Burnett.' On February 20 of same year he was leased valuable lands in Lewisham and Lee, Kent, for sixty years, at the rent of 50*s.* A year later, on April 5, 1527, Burton and a fellow-singer of the Chapel Royal, John Till, were leased the fee farms of the manor of Camberwell and Peckham, at £7 per annum.

Among the entries in the 'King's Book of Payments for half-yearly wages due at Lady Day' (25 March), 1529, is that of John Till and David Burton, 70*s.*

On October 31, 1538, an annuity of twenty marks was granted in survivorship to Burton and another member of the King's Household called Haryington. In this grant the name is given as 'Avery Burnet, a Gentleman of the King's Chapel,' while Haryington had replaced John Till, then recently deceased.

The dissolution of the monasteries gave an opening to Henry VIII. to distribute royal favours among the Court officials, and hence we are not surprised to read that an old servant of the King's Chapel, David Burton, had a lease of monastic lands. From the Books of the Court of Augmentations, there is an entry under date of March 16, 1541, in which 'Avery Burnet of the Household' was granted a lease for twenty-one years of the cell of Fenkeloo and St. Oswald's, parish of Durham.

However, Burton was now advanced in years, and not likely to live much longer, so there is nothing very unusual in the entry among the Royal grants of 1542 of a reversionary interest in Burton's Crown lease of February 20, 1526, to Henry Byrd, 'yeoman of the chamber.' In this grant, which is in the Patent Rolls, the composer is correctly described as 'David Burton, Gentleman of the King's Chapel.' The date of the patent is October 25, 1542.

I have not succeeded in tracing the exact date of Burton's death, but it probably occurred at the close of the year 1542 or early in 1543.

III.—WILLIAM CORNISH.

The career of William Cornish as a dramatist, actor, and producer of Interludes, Pageants, &c., has been admirably dealt with by Professor Wallace in his 'Evolution of the English Drama up to Shakespeare' (Berlin, 1912). In the present article his musical activities and the details of his life will occupy our attention. The extraordinary blunder of the late Mr. W. H. Husk in making two individuals out of the one and of actually contributing memoirs of the two to

Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians—in fact the two memoirs appear in the current edition of Grove—renders it particularly necessary to set forth the actual biographical data of William Cornish. We have read no doubt of 'the two single gentlemen rolled into one,' but in the present case we have to deal with one single gentleman who has been expanded into two!

William Cornish was born *circa* 1465 and was a contemporary of Newark and Burton. The first record of him is under date of November 12, 1493, when we find him as the recipient of 13s. 4d. 'for a prophecy,' written for Henry VII.—as entered in the Household Book of Henry VII., 1491-1505. A short time previously he had been paid a hundred shillings, as a present from the King; and on July 13, 1494, he was granted by the King the keeping of a brewhouse and four other messuages at Charing Cross—a grant unnoticed by Professor Wallace. It is quite evident that he must have been a member of the King's Household from 1492, but it is not till 1496 (September 1) that we meet with an entry implying that he was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. This entry reads: 'Item, to Cornish of the King's Chapel, 26s. 8d.' Four months later, on January 24, 1497, he was given a commission to impress sailors to go to Scotland.

There was a grand performance at Court on November 18, 1501, to celebrate the marriage of Arthur, Prince of Wales to Katharine of Aragon, in which the Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal took part, while the Children of the Chapel appeared as mermaids and 'sang most sweetly and harmoniously' (Harl. MSS. 69). This performance was a pantomime or disguising, and was probably prepared by Newark, assisted by Cornish. A year later he was paid 13s. 4d. 'for setting of a carol upon Christmas Day.'

Evidently Cornish's pen was not sufficiently guarded as a satirical writer, because he was confined to the Fleet prison in January, 1504, for penning a satire on Sir Richard Empson (Stowe's 'Annales,' 1615). While in prison, in July, he wrote a poem entitled 'A Treatise between Truth and Information,' and was very soon after released.

The Fayrfax MS. (Add. MSS. 31922) contains sixty-three vocal items and forty-nine instrumental—a hundred and twelve in all, and of these thirteen pieces are from the pen of Cornish—amply evidencing his musical powers. The pieces are twelve vocal and one instrumental—the latter being a setting for three instruments—folio 63b. A 'Salve Regina' for five voices, by him, is among the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum, while an 'Ave Maria,' also for five voices, is in the Library of the Royal College of Music. Other sacred music by Cornish is to be found in the Eton MSS. and at Caius College, Cambridge.

Among his songs in the Fayrfax MS. are 'Ah! the sighs that come from my heart,' 'Blow thy horn, hunter,' 'Trolly lolly lolly lo,' 'While life or breath is in my breast,' 'My love she mourneth for me,' and 'Adieu, courage, adieu.' He composed also the music for three of Skelton's songs, namely, 'Manerly Margery Mylk and Ale,' 'Wofully Araid,' and 'Hayde jolly Rutter-Kyn,' as well as 'Pleasure it is,' and 'Concord as Musical,' and probably 'By a bank as I lay.'

Owing to the continued ill-health of William Newark much of the work of training the Children of the Chapel Royal devolved on Cornish, and at length on September 29, 1509, he took over the mastership formally. Between the years 1510-16 Cornish, Crane, and Kite were the principal performers in the Court plays. Of course the master accompanied Henry VIII. with the Chapel Royal, and arranged the musical performances at Terouenne and Tournai in September, 1513. We are given an interesting tribute

to the Chapel Royal choir in a letter from Nic. Sagudino to Alf. Foscari, dated May 3, 1515: 'Mass was sung by his Majesty's choir, whose voices were more divine than human; never heard such counter basses. After dinner was a concert where the writer was desired to play upon the clavichords and organ; among the audience was a Brescian [Peter Carmelianus] to whom the King gives 300 ducats annually for playing the lute.'

Perhaps the greatest spectacular triumph of Cornish as Master of the Children was at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in June, 1520; and we have an entry in the King's Book of Payments of the sum of 103s. 4d. paid him 'for the diets of ten children at 2d. a day for 62 days, from 29 May to 22 July.'

Evidently in 1521 Cornish became invalided, but the King continued to favour him, and on August 20, 1523, he was granted the manor of Hylden, Kent, the grant being made in survivorship to 'Wm. Cornish, Jane, his wife, and Henry, his son.' Not long afterwards he died, probably at the end of October. One thing is certain, his will was proved on December 14, 1523.

Occasional Notes.

It was unfortunate that the performance of Elgar's first Symphony at the Promenade Concerts took place during the railway strike. The result was a meagre attendance. The Symphony was splendidly played, and the applause was loud and long. We hope the work will be performed again soon under more normal conditions. We note with pleasure that it is announced for performance in Paris on October 26 at a Lamoureux concert, conducted by Mr. Landon Ronald. The Symphony thus comes to a first hearing in the French capital, and we wait the verdict with interest.

Owing to the success of the opera 'Pro Patria,' the librettist and composer—Mr. Alfred Kalisch and Mr. Percy Colson—have been commissioned by the Carl Rosa Company to write a work based on 'She Stoops to Conquer.'

We sympathise with Mr. Kalisch, by the way, on being made to say in a recent issue of the *Daily News* that the works to be added to the repertory of the Beecham Opera Company are 'Parsifal and Delius,' 'Village,' 'Romeo and Juliet,' and 'several others.' We wish the printer had kept up his brilliant start by giving us the titles of the 'others.'

On page 393 of the August *Musical Times* we gave some particulars of the projected European visit of the New York Symphony Society in May, 1920. The tour will, it is hoped, include a visit to London in June,—not July, as was erroneously stated in our article. In view of the interest shown in the matter, we reproduce on the following page a facsimile and translation of the invitation from the French Government. We give also extracts (translations) from letters received by Mr. Damrosch from Belgium and Italy in reference to the Society's visit to those countries. We think there will be no disputing the weight such invitations carry when issued, as these are, through Government channels.