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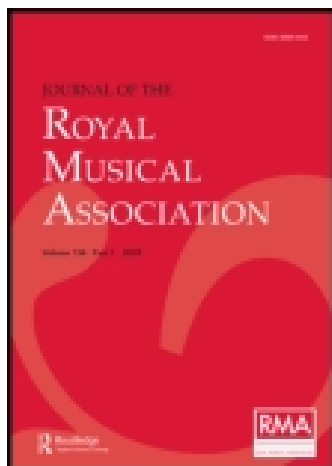
On: 19 February 2015, At: 08:55

Publisher: Routledge

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Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41

Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Proceedings of the Musical Association

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rma18>

Thomas Weelkes

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Published online: 28 Jan 2009.

To cite this article: Edmund H. Fellowes M.A., MUS.B.OXON. (1915) Thomas Weelkes, *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 42:1, 117-143, DOI: [10.1093/jrma/42.1.117](https://doi.org/10.1093/jrma/42.1.117)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jrma/42.1.117>

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MAY 16, 1916.

SIR J. FREDERICK BRIDGE, C.V.O.

VICE-PRESIDENT,

IN THE CHAIR.

THOMAS WEEBKES.

BY THE REV. EDMUND H. FELLOWES, M.A., MUS.B. OXON.

A YEAR ago when addressing this Association I dealt with the subject of John Wilbye, who by general consent is regarded as the greatest figure in the English Madrigal School. This afternoon I propose to say something about another of the English madrigalists, Thomas Weelkes, whose work in this class of composition closely approaches the excellence attained by Wilbye, although in many details the styles of these two madrigal-writers are dissimilar. I should mention that Weelkes also composed quite a considerable amount of Church music which has survived to our day, although I believe I am right in stating that not a single note of it is sung in any cathedral or collegiate church in this country at the present time; my paper this afternoon will, however, be confined exclusively to the consideration of his secular vocal work.

Like that of Wilbye, and indeed that of all the English madrigalists, Weelkes's work, both sacred and secular, has been neglected in a lamentable manner by English musicians ever since his own time; and that small portion of his music which is known to the present generation is limited, even within the select circles of madrigal societies, to a few madrigals of that straightforward kind which is represented, as a typical example, by his splendid contribution to the "Triumphs of Oriana," "When Vesta was from Latmos hill descending." But in the capacity of the daring innovator which he was, Weelkes is unfortunately quite unrecognized. Many musicians at the present day hold him in high esteem as the composer of the Oriana madrigal just mentioned, and of the popular "Nightingale" and one or two other undoubted masterpieces; but who now knows him as the young man (by many years the junior of Byrd, of

Morley, and of John Mundy, who alone of English madrigalists were in the field before him) who defied all musical convention of his time, who struck out a new and brilliant line of his own, who introduced novel harmonic effects, who displayed a keen dramatic sense, and who provided some of the earliest examples of the constructive principles of musical form?

The novel chromatic harmonies introduced by Weelkes, some of which fell into disuse again after the decay of the English Madrigal School until comparatively recent times, must have rudely shocked the minds of the more conservative musicians among his contemporaries. It is noteworthy in this connection that neither Byrd nor Morley in their subsequent work seem to show much trace of the influence which Weelkes first exerted by the publication of his 1597 Set. Yet among the younger generation few entirely escaped this influence, especially in the matter of harmonic latitude and of dramatic treatment. In these two directions, however, none of his contemporaries ever quite equalled the imaginative power such as enabled Weelkes through the medium of sound to suggest with perfect sympathy the varying moods of the lyrics which he set to music. But unlike so many innovators in the various fields of creative art, Weelkes was led on by his originality, as a general rule, to broader paths of beauty rather than the reverse; his experiments seldom impress the hearer so much from the point of view of their novelty, astonishing though that was in his case, as by their inherent interest and suitability, as well as by their actual beauty. And the same thing may be said about his imaginative skill; for even in its most original flights it rarely fails in its purpose of intensifying the particular feeling of the words or of portraying some visionary scene.

As an innovator striving after ampler methods of expression and defying the academic limitations prescribed by conventional musical laws, Weelkes may be compared with Monteverde; indeed, much that Sir Hubert Parry recently said before the Musical Association upon this aspect of the work of Monteverde in Italy applies equally to Weelkes in England. It seems improbable that Monteverde's music, or at least his more characteristic work—even as a madrigal composer apart from his operatic work—was known in England so early as the last decade of the 16th century; it is important therefore to emphasise the fact that the harmonic revolution of this period, which is so commonly ascribed *entirely* to Italian influence, can be shown to have originated simultaneously and independently in England also. This fact has been overlooked chiefly for two reasons. In the first place because the Italian experiments of Monteverde, Peri, Caccini, and the other members of that important coterie were not confined to harmonic innovations, but led on to those still more important developments to which Opera as an art-form

owes its origin ; consequently this revolutionary movement has not unnaturally presented itself as a single entity to the minds of subsequent historians, and the credit for it in all its separate details has come to be generally ascribed to these Italians alone. As evidence of what was actually being done in England by way of daring experiment and amazing harmonic novelty at this period I will ask you to listen to a passage from Weelkes's madrigal "O Care, thou wilt despatch me," which was published in 1600, and to which I shall refer again presently at greater length. I do not think that anything of Monteverde at this same date could be cited as showing greater originality of harmonic treatment :—



And a second reason why the part played by the English composers in the vastly important harmonic developments of

this period have been overlooked, is due to the fact that not only the popularity but even the bare knowledge of their madrigals has, with a neglect that is more than a little discreditable to the musicians of their own country who have succeeded them, been limited to those particular compositions which are designed upon a simple rhythmic outline and clothed with the more conventional harmonies of their time. Furthermore, the musical public has in many instances been deceived by deplorable editorial methods that have resulted in the elimination of unexpected harmonies such as have been judged by certain academic minds to be of the nature of improprieties committed by the madrigalists, and as being chords scarcely decent for the ears of respectable folk. The disappearance of the augmented chord in Gibbons's "Silver Swan" in all ordinary modern copies of that madrigal is no isolated example of this kind of editorial procedure.

Such, then, are the aspects of Weelkes's madrigals which it is my purpose especially to lay stress upon in this paper, although in saying this it is important to add that when Weelkes wrote in the more conventional manner—as of course he often did—he could in that manner also achieve success of the very highest order; but of this aspect of his work it is less necessary to speak since it has, to some extent at least, been recognized in principle, even though many of his fine madrigals of this simpler type also remain unsung and neglected.

Nothing is known as to the birthplace of this composer, nor can the date of his birth be fixed with certainty. The surname itself, which is obviously a variant of Wilks, and possibly also of Weekes, is very rarely to be met with in the form in which it appears on the title-pages of the original editions of his works. In this connection it is worth mentioning that a family of Weelkes, so spelt, was resident at Sawley, near Ripon, in the 15th century, and continued there for some generations; but no evidence is forthcoming which can identify the composer with that district. Other circumstances in his life suggest that he came originally from the town or county of Chester, more than one of his friends being connected with that county; but, again, there is no actual evidence to support this theory. Once more, it has been thought that his native county was either Hampshire or Sussex, where the name of Weekes was not uncommon at this period; and moreover, one of his principal patrons, Sir George Phillpott, of Thrupton, was a Hampshire man.

The date of Weelkes's birth may be fixed with much probability at about 1575, for this year fits in with certain facts connected with his history.

About the year 1598 Weelkes became organist of Winchester College,—*not* the Cathedral, as sometimes stated—and during the four years or so in which he held the post he resided in the College itself: this has been lately proved by a discovery in the

Bursar's accounts for the year 1598-99, where he is mentioned by name in an entry relating to the glazing of his bedroom window in the College. His salary as the College organist was 13s. 4d. per annum, the Chaplain receiving the same remuneration. This was a very small sum, even when it is remembered that money at that period was worth about sixteen times its present value. He would, however, have received board and lodging in the College without charge; and it can be seen from the household accounts at Hengrave Hall, where Wilbye lived, that music lessons at that period were sometimes very remunerative, for a fee of £3 was paid for teaching the two Kytson children the virginal for a period of only three months.

In 1602 Weelkes took his Mus.Bac. degree at Oxford, and left Winchester College for Chichester Cathedral, where he held the post of organist until his death on November 30th, 1623. He died while on a visit to London, at the house of his friend Henry Drinkwater, which was situated somewhere in the parish of St. Bride's, Fleet Street. He was buried on the following day at St. Bride's Church, where the entry which records the fact may be seen in the registers. It is a curious coincidence that the very first meetings of the Madrigal Society, in 1741, should have been held at the Twelve Bells Tavern in Bride Lane, so close to the spot where Weelkes lies buried—for it is most improbable that this fact was known to John Immyns, the original founder of that Society.

Drinkwater was Weelkes's executor, and he proved the will on December 6th at Chichester—it was dated on the day of his death. His wife had died in the previous year, but three children survived him. No other information of any interest is contained in the will. I should add that the above-mentioned facts concerning Weelkes's death and his burial-place are stated here for the first time, having remained unknown till now.

Weelkes published five Sets of Madrigals in all, but if we regard the two Winchester Sets as one, in accordance with his evident original intention, the four publications may be taken as representing four distinct types of his work, and we may in consequence review his writings this afternoon under those four headings.

It is important to bear in mind that when Weelkes published his first volume, which bore the title "Madrigals to 3, 4, 5 and 6 voices made and newly published by Thomas Weelkes," he was probably not more than twenty-two years of age; he was, indeed, somewhat diffident in venturing into the field with a volume of this kind when, as he himself described it in his prefatory dedication, he was "still of unripened yeeres." Weelkes used this phrase in something more than that conventional spirit of modesty which was so often assumed by the composers of this period in the dedicatory addresses at the beginning of their

volumes: for it is not generally realised that before this volume of Madrigals appeared in 1597, the only English publications already issued were Byrd's two sets in 1588 and 1589; four out of the five of Morley's sets, and a set by John Mundy. These three composers were men of proved capacity and of mature years, Byrd and Morley especially enjoying an exceedingly high reputation among their contemporaries, so that it required a good deal of courage for so young a man to challenge public criticism in this manner.

It is also to be noted that this was but the second English publication of the kind to be styled a Set of Madrigals on the title-page, that term having hitherto been alone employed by Morley in connection with his Set of Madrigals to four voices published in 1594. Yet Weelkes's presumption, if such it was, was more than justified by the result, for the Set contained twenty-four first-rate Madrigals, quite mature in style, some of which are especially remarkable as foreshadowing the still greater work which this composer was destined to achieve.

At the very beginning of this Set, Weelkes struck out a new line, for out of the first six madrigals (which constitute the three-part section of the volume) only two are of the conventional, gay pastoral character commonly associated with the word Madrigal in England up to that time. The actual application of this term to musical settings of words of a sad or serious or emotional type was a definite innovation by Weelkes, and the use of the word Madrigal in this wider sense was adopted by all the subsequent Tudor madrigalists, notably by Wilbye and Gibbons; and whereas the older composers had hitherto styled their compositions of this character by such titles as "Songs of sundry natures," or "Songs of sadness," or what not, those who published their works after the year 1597 did not hesitate, as a general rule, to describe as madrigals the grave as well as the gay type of song. It is important to lay stress on this point, because it is neither fully comprehended at the present day, nor has it been realised throughout the history of madrigal-singing for over two hundred years. In the days of Burney and Hawkins, it was only the bright kind of madrigal with a regular and simple rhythm which enjoyed any popularity; and in later times even so important an enthusiast as R. L. de Pearsall, in an article which he contributed to a Bristol newspaper, stated it as an *essential* feature that a madrigal should be of a bright and cheerful character.

Nos. 3, 4, and 5 in Weelkes's first volume are a setting of Richard Barnfield's words from the "Passionate Pilgrim," which used commonly, but erroneously, to be attributed to Shakespeare. There are one or two light touches of realism in this piece just worth noticing in passing; for example, on the words "rings doleful knell," a little bell passage is introduced with some small

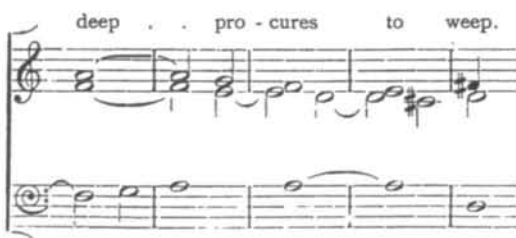
irregularities of stroke which exactly recall the limited skill of village bell-ringers of to-day :—



Another early experiment in realism is the sudden introduction of the chord of B major at the word "afraid" in the following passage :—

My curtall dog that wont to have played
Plays not at all, but seems afraid.

This chord is followed by a bar's silence and a beautiful modulation on the words "my sighs so deep procures to weep" :—



In view of the large number of more important points of this kind to be found in Weelkes's later music, these instances might have been passed by without comment except for the fact of their absolute originality at the time of their production, a point which must be emphasised.

"Cease sorrows now," No. 6 of the Set, is even more remarkable, as well as being wonderfully effective. The climax is reached in a truly artistic manner at the final couplet of the words:—

Yet, whilst I hear the knolling of the bell,
Before I die I'll sing my faint farewell.

The knolling of the bell is treated with a pedal in the bassus part, very novel in its time, and then follows a remarkable chromatic passage in which each voice in turn takes up a phrase consisting of a succession of semitones to the words "I'll sing my faint farewell." This must have been an entirely new and surprising musical effect in 1597. At the final cadence there occurs a clash between C sharp in the Bassus and C natural in the Cantus part. This type of harmonic collision is not infrequently to be found in the work of the Tudor madrigalists; several examples are to be found in the work of Byrd, who has been said to have originated it, although at least one still earlier example has been found. Weelkes used it occasionally with very harsh effect, as judged by our modern experience: but such discords must not be explained away, as they sometimes are, as misprints; and, in this instance, when the harmonies are analysed horizontally rather than perpendicularly, the explanation becomes obvious, and the musical effect, when the phrase is carefully handled, is by no means cacophonous.

[Here was sung "Cease sorrows now" (No. 6 of the 1597 Set.)]

A word must be said about the Form upon which "Ay me, my wonted joys forsake me" (No. 9) is constructed, for it is a very interesting example of an early endeavour to find in recapitulation one of the main principles of Form in musical construction. Weelkes was not singular among the English madrigalists in this kind of endeavour, for similar examples even before his time are to be seen in Morley's work and shortly afterwards in that of Wilbye and others. The first half of this madrigal is repeated in the ordinary manner, which of course also involves the repetition of the second phrase of the music: but at the conclusion of the whole madrigal this same phrase which formed part of the opening section is again recapitulated in full to different words.

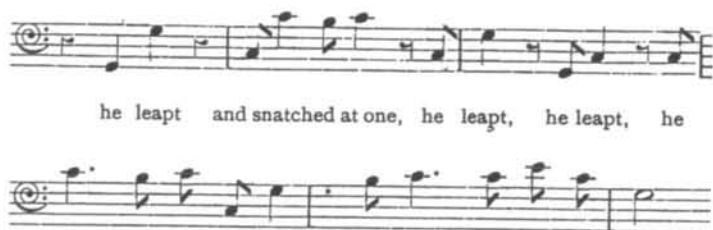
Several other examples are to be found in Weelkes's work which show that he was seeking after the principles of Form.

"Three virgin nymphs" (No. 10) is written in a humorous vein for three sopranos, and a bass voice to represent Silvanus. It opens with the three nymphs walking in a demure fashion to a passage of regular crotchets. After about ten bars the bass enters with the words "till rude Silvanus chanced to meet them," first of all in a low register, as it were in the

distance, but at last in a higher register with truly terrifying effect, while the alarm of the nymphs is expressed simultaneously in broken quaver phrases:—



The climax is reached when Silvanus snatches at them in grotesque musical figures which graphically illustrate the situation:—



he leapt and snatched at one, he leapt, he leapt, he

leapt and snatched at one, and snatched, and snatched at one.

Two charming pastoral subjects in this Set are "Our country swains in the Morris dance" and "Lo, country sports that seldom fades" (Nos. 11 and 12). Both of these are of such a compass that they can be sung by four female voices.

Weelkes's second Set was published in 1598, and consisted of a collection of ballets and madrigals to five voices. In point of fact, the large majority of this Set are ballets. The Ballet or *Fa-la* has met with a larger measure of popularity since Tudor times than any other class of composition of the madrigal type; but it is sometimes forgotten that out of an aggregate of forty or fifty volumes published by the Tudor composers, only three were sets of ballets, even if we include the younger Hilton's very second-rate *l'a-las* issued in 1627. Several composers also included three or four compositions of the Ballet or *Fa-la* type in

their sets of madrigals without any distinctive title, but it is a mistake to suppose that the majority of madrigals are *Fa-las*, or even that the *Fa-la* is an essential feature of a madrigal, though this is a very widespread error. Those three great madrigal composers Byrd, Wilbye, and Gibbons wrote no ballets at all.

The ballets of Morley and Weelkes have a good deal in common, and in some of them the rhythmic outline is almost identical: this may be accounted for by certain conventions in connection with the ballet rhythm which were no doubt traditional at the end of the 16th century, just as the minuet was in the time of Haydn and Mozart, and dated back to the time when the ballet was simultaneously sung and danced. Morley has left it on record that the ballet had long ceased to be danced in his day, and this fact in consequence gave the composers considerable scope for freedom in treating the ballet. Thus we find that several of the ballets of both Morley and Weelkes are marked by a good deal of originality as well as individuality of treatment.

Two very characteristic ballets in Weelkes's Set are "On the plains" (No. 5) and "Hark, all ye lovely saints above" (No. 8). Each of these begins with a strong but delightfully broken rhythm, although the change of rhythm is not indicated in the original edition except for one triple in No. 5 at the words "Now they dance." I need not to-day go into the subject of irregular rhythms in madrigal music, as I dealt with it last year in my Wilbye paper.

But one important point must be mentioned. In the article on Weelkes in the first edition of Grove's "Dictionary of Music," Mr. W. H. Husk qualified his praise of Weelkes as a madrigal-writer by saying that his work was distinguished "by a certain characteristic stiffness." What meaning Mr. Husk intended to convey by this curiously vague criticism, unsupported as it is by any kind of illustration or example, cannot be exactly conjectured, nor does a close study of Weelkes's madrigals clear the matter up, though it certainly disproves what he may be presumed to have suggested. The statement might have been set aside as of small consequence but for the fact that it has been copied almost verbatim, and with a want of critical originality quite inconsistent with the rest of their work, by two well-known writers in more modern times; nor have either of these writers defined their meaning with any less vagueness than did Mr. Husk. The statement is, however, most probably founded upon the widespread misconception as to the rhythms employed by the Tudor musicians. If, for example, the opening phrases of either of the two ballets which you shall now hear were treated in strict rhythm of 4, as indicated by the time-signature, an angularity or stiffness of an absurd kind could reasonably be urged against Weelkes. By way of illustrating this point,

the opening bars will first be sung in strict time, regardless of the obvious triple rhythm and other irregularities, the interpretation of which the composer left to the commonsense of the musicians who should come after him, not anticipating that a complete lack of that very uncommon faculty was destined for centuries so seriously to mar the meaning of so much Tudor music.

[Here was sung "Hark, all ye lovely saints above" (No. 8), the opening bars being rendered first of all with a rigid rhythm of four in a bar. The performance of "On the plains" (No. 5) was omitted owing to pressure of time.]

"Now is my Cloris fresh as May" (No. 22) is another very fine example of a Ballet in which Weelkes has dissociated himself in a marked degree from the conventional traditions of rhythm which usually govern this form of song. Especially noticeable is the complex rhythm in triple measure in the *Fa-la's*. In the first section the irregularity is simultaneous in all the parts, but in the final *Fa-la* the bass and the soprano follow each other with the triple rhythm at the distance apart of one crotchet beat. The bass part runs thus:—



If this is treated rigidly, as barred here according to the time-signature, it clearly makes nonsense, whereas there is a splendid swing in the triple rhythm, and the soprano part must obviously be treated similarly. There is no "characteristic stiffness" in such a place for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Another type of Ballet altogether is exemplified in "Farewell, my joy" (No. 21), which is a particularly beautiful piece of music, unlike anything to be found in Morley's Set, and which shows Weelkes even defying the convention that a ballet or *Fa-la* should necessarily be bright and happy in feeling. It expresses in tones of sadness, yet without too heavy a touch, the feelings of two lovers on parting. The music is designed on a much more

extended scale, and also calls for a less rapid tempo than was usual with the ballet. But incidentally it may be remarked that many ballets, and almost all madrigals, suffer by the very prevalent error of adopting for them all a stereotyped jog-trot tempo, regardless of their individual subject-matter and of the particular character of the music.

The two Winchester Sets published in 1600 may be treated as one. For it seems clear that the composer had intended them to form one volume, but that this intention was altered on the eve of publication in order to include dedications to two different patrons; this resulted in the separation of the five-part from the six-part madrigals, ten compositions being included in each Set. There can be little doubt that this music was composed at Winchester College, where Weelkes was then living as organist. These madrigals represent Weelkes's finest work, and indeed as a Set they are scarcely to be matched in the whole range of madrigal literature.

One important feature must be noted with regard to these Sets, namely that they are the very earliest volumes to bear on their title-page the description "Apt for voices and viols." We may consequently presume that this formula, which was so commonly employed in the great majority of English madrigal sets that appeared after the year 1600, was invented by Weelkes; and if this conjecture be supported, it is at least consistent with the personality of one who showed his originality in so many directions.

Passing first to a consideration of the five-part Set, the volume begins with the setting of a charming lyric so ruthlessly handled by Thomas Oliphant in his published version of this madrigal:—

"Cold winter's ice is fled and gone
 And summer brags on every tree;
 The Redbreast peeps amidst the throng
 Of wood-born birds that wanton be.
 Each one forgets what they have been,
 And so does Phyllis, summer's Queen."

It opens with a short phrase in which "Cold winter's ice" seems to melt visibly before one's eyes. But the suddenness of the effect is reduced by the composer, who, with true artistic touch, repeats the phrase in the three lower voices; then follows a gay quaver figure which bursts in irrepressibly before its time in the tenor and bass parts, and eventually expresses in all the parts the arrival of summer. Not content

with his unpardonable "alterations in the poetry," as he called them on his title-pages, Oliphant proceeded further to destroy the composer's whole point by changing the first B flat to B natural and the F natural to F sharp, and so to publish the madrigal without the smallest comment, evidently under the impression that he was able, as well as willing, to improve upon the original. Oliphant was certainly representing the feeling of the time in which he lived and worked, and is not individually to be censured more severely than many of his contemporaries. But it is much to be regretted that these "alterations in the poetry," not to mention the music, should even now be regarded as the standard text and be held in veneration as such by many who profess to care about madrigals and literature.

"Take here my heart," No. 3 of this Set, is an exceedingly beautiful madrigal representing a whole-hearted avowal of love expressed in perfect simplicity with exactly the right degree of emotion :—

"Take here my heart, I give it thee for ever,
No better pledge can love to love deliver.
Fear not, my dear, it will not fly away,
For hope and love command my heart to stay.
But if thou doubt, desire will make it range ;
Love but my heart, my heart will never change."

It opens with a phrase which anticipates the sound of the wedding bells, first expressed singly and then in runs of tenths, reaching a wonderfully effective climax when the tenor voice on the word "thee" holds the high G above the other voices as the bell passage glides through it in the final cadence of the first section of the madrigal. A very beautiful but perfectly simple phrase occurs at the words of the fourth line of the stanza. After another suggestion of the wedding bells the madrigal ends with great dignity and strength. I had hoped to include this madrigal among the illustrations to-day, but time will not permit of it.

"O Care, thou wilt despatch me" (Nos. 4 and 5) is in many respects the most remarkable of all Weelkes's madrigals, and as an example of daring harmonic treatment, as well as of imaginative expression, it stands alone in madrigal literature. Incidentally, I may mention that the modulations of this madrigal involve the employment of an A sharp—a note which appears in no other instance whatever in English madrigal literature, as far as I have been able to discover. The subject deals with a careworn man who seeks to find relief in music, but only partially succeeds ;

throughout the composition the struggle is continuous between deadly Care and the Mirth that music alone can bring:—

O Care, thou wilt despatch me
If music do not match thee ;

Fa-la-la.

So deadly dost thou sting me
Mirth only, help can bring me.

Fa-la-la.

Hence, Care, thou art too cruel !
Come, Music, sick man's jewell ;

Fa-la-la.

His force had well-nigh slain me,
But thou must now sustain me.

Fa-la-la.

The madrigal opens with a chromatic passage which is of amazing modernity, and is intended to express the effect of bitter care ; the repeated disappointment of the expectation of a full close in the music much intensifies this effect. Then follows a rather brighter figure to the second line which exactly foreshadows the phrase of the first *Fa-la*. It should here be mentioned parenthetically that this madrigal, in spite of the *Fa-la* refrains, is in no sort of sense a ballet.

The deadly sting is expressed by another series of discords, the opening phrase of this passage being based upon that of the first bars of the madrigal, a characteristic example of Weelkes's anticipation of one of the principles of Form as developed by a later generation of musicians. In this second passage, however, the development of the phrase after the first few bars is carried out on a rather different plan : the three opening notes of the Cantus part are repeated alone in the bass a fifth lower, and then, after a rest, still a fifth lower in the same part. The sting is finally introduced with a discord in which both the major and the minor third of the chord are present simultaneously, and the effect upon our modern ears is perhaps rather more cacophonous than we should nowadays be inclined to sanction.

The closing passage of the first part of the composition represents a brave attempt at gaiety with a quaver figure of an almost conventional type, and purposely designed as such by the composer ; but the nature of the harmonies always, and with wonderful cleverness, just—and only just—precludes the feeling of actual mirth, while the final cadence with its F naturals confesses to temporary failure.

The first two notes of the second half of the madrigal suggest that the phrase with which the first part began is again to be repeated; but at this point the E flat is succeeded in the cantus part by an E natural, and the words of the first line of the second stanza are represented by a truly astonishing series of chromatic modulations, already alluded to and quoted at the beginning of this paper. The next line is set very quietly to a phrase which anticipates the *Fa-la* that follows it, the phrase being treated by the device of augmentation in the ratio of a minim to a quaver. This is among the most beautiful things in this very remarkable madrigal, for the quaver figure of the *Fa-la* is clothed with harmonies that give it an exquisite pathos which, in contrast to the *Fa-la* of the first section, is now wholly removed from any feeling of gaiety:—



The syncopated passage set to the words of the next line is again reminiscent of the *Fa-la* figure by augmentation, the quavers being represented this time by semibreves. After a pedal-point, upon which some very unusual harmonies are built at the words "Thou must now sustain me," the madrigal ends in a final heartbroken attempt at mirth.

[Here was sung "O Care, thou wilt despatch me."]

With reference to the Discussion which took place at the conclusion of my paper on Wilbye a year ago as to the possibility

of writing in modern days a madrigal that had the true Elizabethan ring, I submit that though it may be possible to write good madrigals of a kind, yet the study of such a madrigal as the one which we have just analysed must damp the courage of anyone so bold as to think he could escape detection in an attempt to pass his cleverest counterfeit as genuine coin.

It will not be possible within the limits of time at our disposal to-day to notice all these madrigals in such detail, but two more in this five-part Set may be briefly mentioned: one of these is "Hark, I hear some dancing" (No. 8), which is in reality the second part of "Why are you ladies staying?" Here are introduced some passages in triple rhythm expressive of dancing, and attention should be drawn to the fact that the first small snatch of the dancing phrase anticipates, although in a different key, the melodic material which is more fully developed at the close of the madrigal. And the other is, "Lady, the birds right early" (No. 9), in which there is a very pretty phrase to the words "the make-sport cuckoo and the quail." Weelkes's defiance of the older rules and conventions with regard to vocal writing is well illustrated in such a passage as the following, which occurs more than once in this madrigal:—



This may be compared with similar progressions in the Noel Elegy and elsewhere in Weelkes's music.

Passing to the Set of ten six-part madrigals: "Like two proud armies" (No. 1) is a fine, massive piece of vocal-writing, with a very effective quaver run of considerable length for the two bass parts to suggest the "thundering fight." The final passage of this madrigal is constructed on a bass which consists of the phrase that is sung by the five upper parts in imitative fashion, augmented in the ratio of a semibreve to a crotchet. "When Thoralis delights to walk" (No. 2) is an admirable example of the healthy, straightforward type of madrigal with charming words, somewhat similar to this composer's "Oriana" madrigal, "As Vesta was from Latmos Hill descending," which was written at the same period. "What have the Gods their comfort sent" (Nos. 3 and 4) is full of interest, and special attention may be directed in this composition to a long pedal-point on which some very uncommon harmonies are built at the words "Whilst that old Phemius softly plays the ground." "Mars in a fury" (No. 6) is another fine specimen of massive writing in the more conventional kind of madrigal. One little point is to be noticed in the construction of

this piece : the phrase used by the cantus and quintus parts when last they sing the words "gainst Love's brightest queen," recurs in the final bars of the composition, by augmentation in the three top parts, and by inversion in the two lowest parts.

"Thule, the period of cosmography" (Nos. 7 and 8), is another madrigal in which Weelkes displayed the rare subtlety of his imagination. This madrigal has in it nothing of the emotional character of "O Care, thou wilt despatch me," but in many respects its realistic effects are almost as noteworthy. By far the most remarkable passage in this composition is that which deals with the words, "how strangely Fogo burns"; by means of extraordinarily original chromatic harmonies, Weelkes has succeeded in creating a thoroughly weird atmosphere and in portraying a graphic picture of the mysterious volcanic eruption, as viewed from the far distance over the sea, in the strange unknown region of Terra del Fuego, the other extreme to Thule, or Iceland, within the limits of cosmographical knowledge of those days.

[This passage was here played upon the pianoforte.]

A mere glance at the full vocal score in itself affords an ideal picture of the "ocean full of flying fishes"; this ingenious piece of writing offers excellent scope for independence of part-singing, and is capable of being very effectively rendered. Each of the two main sections of the madrigal ends with the same couplet, set identically as regards the music :—

"These things seem wondrous, yet more wondrous I
Whose heart with fear doth freeze, with love doth fry."

The final verbal expression is frequently to be met with in Elizabethan literature, and the whole lyric, though not among the finest of the madrigal poems, is by no means to be dismissed as doggerel as some have rather thoughtlessly done. Weelkes makes a capital point of emphasis in this passage by following the E flat with E natural on the word "more":—

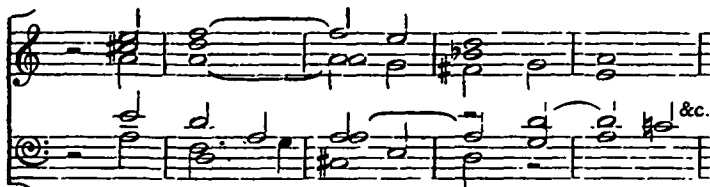


The Set concludes with an Elegy on one Henry Noel, a courtier on whose name (No—L) Queen Elizabeth is said to have made the "rebus":—

"The word of negation and letter of fifty
Is that gentleman's name who will never be thrifty."

It was to his memory that Morley wrote his fine "Hark Alleluia" ("Canzonets to five and six voices," No. 21). Weelkes included three of these Elegies in his published sets, all of which are finely written, and all for six voices. The first of these was printed as No. 24 of his Set of Ballets and Madrigals, and was written in memory of a certain Lord Borough. The Borough Elegy is of considerable length and full of fine feeling, but is chiefly remarkable for its constructive interest, which is worked out elaborately.

The Noel Elegy is perhaps the finest of the three, and is of great length; it has in it more variety of texture than the other two, and shows a good deal of dramatic interest. The six beats of silence that follow the words "when thou in dust art laid" are most impressive, succeeded as they are by a beautiful passage to the lines, "Bedew, my notes, his death-bed with your tears." At the conclusion of this same passage there occur as many as three examples of those harsh dissonances which are to be found elsewhere in the work of Weelkes, as well as in that of some of the other Tudor madrigalists, which involve the simultaneous employment of the major and minor third of the chord. Weelkes introduces at least one such discord in each of his Elegies. The harshness of the effect, which is of course considerably less severe when heard in the voices than upon a modern pianoforte tuned on the principle of equal temperament, can be greatly lessened by thoughtful treatment; for instance, in this passage in the Noel Elegy, if the C natural, falling on the word "death-bed" is attacked *sforzando* with much emotion while the C sharp on the word "with" is not specially emphasised, the composer's intention will be adequately realised in the expression of poignant grief. While speaking of discords employed by Weelkes in these Elegies, reference may be made to a most impressive piece of harmonic treatment of the words, "Now thou art dead," in the Noel Elegy:—



The whole of the concluding section of this Elegy is full of unexpected and beautiful effects which will well repay close study, and which illustrate forcibly the daring originality and imagination which are so characteristic of Weelkes's genius.

The third of these Elegies was in memory of Thomas Morley, and was published at the end of Weelkes's "Airs or Fantastic Spirits." The Morley Elegy is much shorter than the other two; it also falls short of them in actual beauty, but there are in it some remarkably interesting dramatic points, and the final passage is extremely beautiful. The words of this piece were originally written by John Davies of Hereford, in 1590, as a "Dump upon the death of the most noble Henry, late Earl of Pembroke." "Dump" is here used in its meaning of *Dirge*, and in that sense has survived in the expression "down in the dumps." The word "dump" is occasionally used to signify a species of dance, but it has no reference to that meaning here. Davies's lines contain no personal allusion to Lord Pembroke, so that Weelkes was able to adopt them for his purpose just as they stood.

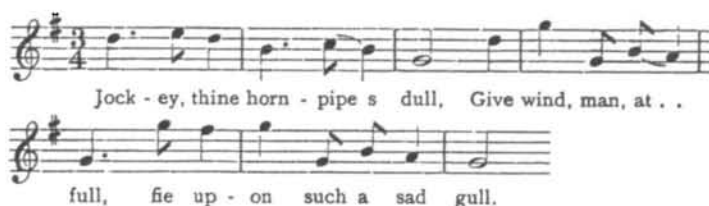
Without commenting in complete detail on this composition, attention may be drawn to a few points in it: for example, the effect produced by the employment of the first inversion of the chord of E flat immediately following a full close in G major, at the words "My dearest friend is dead"; again, the impressive chord in the low register of the voices sustained for two whole bars on the word "grave." A few bars later an extraordinary passage occurs which was undoubtedly intended by the composer to represent the crack of doom. A reminiscence of this phrase in augmented form is introduced in the next line at the words "all things must have an end." The composition ends with a very beautiful passage on a dominant pedal, and with a lovely phrase for the tenor in the final cadence.

[The Elegy on Thomas Morley ("Airs or Fantastic Spirits," No. 26), was then sung.]

Weelkes was not more than about twenty-five years of age when he published his splendid Winchester Sets of madrigals, and it is more than strange that, though he lived for nearly a quarter of a century afterwards, he should have published nothing further in this class of composition except the volume entitled "Airs or Fantastic Spirits," almost all of which were of a very light character, and for no more than three voices—the Morley Elegy, already mentioned as having been included in this volume, being of course an exception.

Yet it is a mistake to regard this volume, which was published in 1608, as having no real artistic value, for there is much in it that is first-rate art of its kind, albeit in quite a light vein. "The nightingale the organ of delight" (No. 25) is too well known to call for comment here to-day: it is certainly the most

attractive thing in the Set. "Strike it up, Tabor" (No. 18) and "Jockey, thine hornpipe's dull" (No. 2) are bright and attractive. The latter opens with a charming phrase:—



Several of the pieces in this book can be sung by female voices alone, and the majority are even more suitable for male voices if sung an octave lower.

There are two pretty settings of Italian words, Nos. 17 and 24, each of which lies within a vocal range of two octaves. Certain songs in this Set are of the nature of skits either of a personal or political kind: for instance, "Ha, ha, this world doth pass most merrily" (No. 19), "Since Robin Hood, Maid Marian" (No. 20), "The Ape, the Monkey, and Baboon" (No. 10), and others. This latter carries with it a definite reference to the Mermaid Tavern in Friday Street, famous as the resort of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and many another among the distinguished literary men of that day. Though we cannot now identify the characters of this madrigal, there is no doubt that they would have been easily recognized in Weelkes's own time. "Since Robin Hood" (No. 20) refers directly by name to Will Kemp, the famous comedian and dancer. Kemp was the original creator of Dogberry and other similar parts in Shakespeare's plays, but he was more famous as a dancer. How he danced the Morris from London to Norwich, and his tremendous reception in that city, is described in his own words in a most delightful manner in his "Nine Days' Wonder." His fame as a dancer was also well known on the Continent, a fact that is alluded to in this madrigal in the couplet:—

"He did labour after the tabor
For to dance then into France."

Another interesting couplet in the same song runs:—

"The hobby-horse was quite forgot
When Kemp did dance alone."

The hobby-horse was of course the buffoon in a troupe of Morris-dancers, and it is quite possible that he is the direct lineal ancestor of the horses of the merry-go-rounds in modern fairs. The

word is derived from the old French *Hobin*, of which Hobbin or Dobbin was the English equivalent. The line as it stands suggests that Kemp's dancing was so attractive as even to divert attention from the antics and rough comedy of the hobby-horse. Whether this circumstance was the origin of it cannot be determined with certainty, but it is a fact that the line became a popular catchword, and is used at least twice by Shakespeare as if it were in everyone's mouth at the time. Thus in the play-scene in *Hamlet* the Prince says: "... Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half-a-year: But by'r lady, he must build churches then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is *For O, for O, the hobby-horse is forgot.*" Again, in "*Love's Labour's Lost*," Act 3, Scene 1:—

Armado. How hast thou purchased this experience?

Moth. By my penny of observation.

Armado. But O—but O—

Moth. —the hobby-horse is forgot.

[Here was sung "*Since Robin Hood*" ("*Airs or Fantastic Spirits*," No. 20); but the singing of "*The Nightingale*" ("*Airs or Fantastic Spirits*," No. 25) was omitted for lack of time.]

Weelkes must, in fact, be regarded as one of the greatest of the English madrigalists, surpassed only by Wilbye. Wilbye undoubtedly wrote in a more polished style and with a greater delicacy of expression; he also showed a rather more subtle sense of beauty than Weelkes. In the latter's work there is nothing quite so beautiful as Wilbye's "*Oft have I vowed*" (Set II., No. 20) or so graceful as "*Adieu, sweet Amaryllis*" (Set I., No. 12), and Wilbye was unrivalled in that kind of madrigal of which "*Happy, O happy he*" (Set II., No. 16) is a typical example. On the other hand, Weelkes certainly surpassed all his contemporaries in wealth of imagination and in originality, and the whole of his work reaches a wonderfully high level of excellence.

It is impossible to close this paper without an expression of regret that far more of Weelkes's very attractive madrigals should not be made popular favourites; however, there is good ground for confidence that since the people of this country are at last learning to fall back on their own resources in music as in other things, they will not be slow to recognize the priceless heritage left them by those great musicians of our own nation who at the Tudor period made English music to stand in the forefront of the music of Europe.

DISCUSSION.

THE CHAIRMAN : You will agree with me that Mr. Fellowes is a model lecturer. First of all, he has really kept to time. We all appreciate deeply the immense amount of research that Mr. Fellowes has undertaken, and the result of which is shown in this very remarkable piece of work. We know what he has done in connection with Wilbye, and he has now given us a further contribution to our musical history. Although the love of madrigal singing has been kept alive a good deal by the old Madrigal Society of London, yet we know perfectly well—those who have had the opportunity of engaging in antiquarian work—that unfortunately for a long period there was very great lack of really careful editing ; there was too much desire on the part of those editing to make the music fit in with what they considered the right thing and not with what the composer thought right. They could not believe their own eyes, let alone their own ears. It is, for instance, extraordinary the alterations made in Purcell's sacred plays. We must speak with respect of Oliphant, because no one can have had to do with the Madrigal Society without being conscious of the immense amount of trouble he took ! There were certain chords he could not understand, but then he was not alone in that. You have only got to look into Burney's "History of Music," and there you find the most extraordinary mis-statements about people : there is, for instance, a mis-statement about Lawes which makes me savage every time I read it. He could not understand why Lawes was praised by Milton and others, and speaks about his music as not having any particular interest in it. It was too much the fashion for madrigal writers of the last century to suggest that a madrigal must be essentially of a church-like nature : that there must not be anything of the chromatic in it. Then there is another remarkable composer, Richard Dering. Burney dismisses Dering in a most perfunctory manner, he does not know anything at all about him. Yet I have found no less than forty splendid motets written in five and six parts published in 1617-18. I have had most of them done at my Gresham Lectures, and have published eight or ten. And I do not believe a single note of Dering had been heard for many years till I launched some

of his work ; yet it is full of the most surprising chromatic harmonies and devices. This Weelkes music we have been hearing reminds me of Dering's. Of course Dering came later, in 1617-18, whereas Weelkes published his work in 1608. Dering took his degree at Oxford in 1610. We have only lately found out that our writers of instrumental music were not such fools as we thought. There were a lot of Fancies written about that period full of extraordinary things. Sir Alexander Mackenzie is going to lecture at the Royal Institution, and he is going to perform two or three Fancies ; he has borrowed copies from me, copies which filled him with astonishment and delight. But at one time I was amongst those who thought the instrumental music of that time was represented by the Fancies of Gibbons, an imitation of dull church music. I have praised them often, but I do not do so now, because I have got more sense. We have learnt much this afternoon, and I am glad that we have had such an epoch-marking paper in connection with this Society. I am sure that those who love madrigals, and those who perform madrigals, only desire to do the right thing. The job is to get hold of the right thing. If the Madrigal Society would only get the real thing put in a convenient form, then we could get rid of spurious imitation.

Dr. SOUTHGATE: When our Lecturer spoke about dealing with the secular music of Weelkes, apart from his sacred music, I thought he was going to say something about his instrumental music. Of course one knows that madrigals were composed for voices and as commonly played upon viols. Last year Mr. Fellowes had his illustrations played on stringed instruments, and I remember Dr. Cummings, who was in the Chair at the time, said, "I had often seen this announcement on the title-page of madrigals, but I had never heard one played before. I am delighted to hear them so rendered." But there is some purely instrumental music of Weelkes', if I remember rightly, at the British Museum in the Manuscript Music Department. This gives me the opportunity of saying that Sir Frederick Bridge has brought forward many of the instrumental Fancies and Suites by our old composers. Perhaps he might look at any such work of Weelkes, and see whether it is possible to let us hear that. If such should prove so extraordinarily modern in tone, as are some of the examples we have heard this evening, I think it would be a revelation to let those of this generation listen to them. I was a little surprised to hear the Lecturer say that a Dump was originally a doleful piece, a dirge. No doubt he has good evidence for that, but I had regarded the word as referring to a rather bright dance. Shakespeare in one place speaks of "some merry dumps."

Mr. OSCAR STREET (Secretary of the Madrigal Society).—May I add something to what has been said about the late

Thomas Oliphant, whose place I have now the honour to fill. I was rather surprised to hear what Mr. Fellowes said about Oliphant being such a dreadful malefactor. I happen to have here a book he gave to my father called "*La Musa Madrigalesca*," and the very madrigal which Mr. Fellowes says Oliphant altered, viz., "Cold winter's ice is fled and gone," I see is given here exactly as we have heard it read this evening. I followed each line carefully, expecting to come across some dreadful alteration, but it is given here word for word. And not only that, Oliphant was so pleased with the words that he went on to say, "What would not a Cockney sonneteer give to be able to write anything like the first four lines of this ditty! How far superior is such a sketch to all the trash about 'mermaids' and 'grottoes' in the 'deep, deep sea,' or about

'Two little birds that whistled thirds
Behind my father's house.'

The Rev. E. H. FELLOWES.—Oliphant published two editions of these words. In his other edition, which is given with the music, you will find the version which I quoted. It is strange he should have made this subsequent alteration. What could have been his purpose? "*La Musa Madrigalesca*" was published ten years before his version of the music and words together. But I am not by any means the first to draw attention to the serious literary defects of "*La Musa Madrigalesca*" or to criticise Oliphant's taste in this matter. As long ago as 1847 Dr. Rimbault, in the preface to his "*Bibliotheca Madrigaliana*," wrote thus of it: "It is to be regretted that the editor has so frequently modernised and interpolated his text as almost to destroy its character as a collection of Elizabethan poetry. The remarks and annotations contain some valuable matter, but are too frequently disfigured by frivolity unworthy of the subject." As an example of Oliphant's "alterations in the poetry," take Campion's well-known tune, "There is a garden in her face"; Oliphant altered this to "A garden is my lady's face." I could quote numbers of such instances. But I am glad to be reminded that the particular lines I mentioned are given in the correct form in "*La Musa Madrigalesca*," albeit the allusion to the Cockney sonneteer, and the general tone of his criticism, argue a lack of serious appreciation; while even that is limited to the first four lines of the lyric: the final couplet was exempted from Oliphant's approval, and he followed up this exemption by substituting entirely new material for it in his subsequent version ten years later. As I remarked to Mr. Street in the tea-room just now, I do not wish to impute too great blame to Oliphant personally, for he only represented the taste of many musicians of his own time; and, as I said in my paper, we all admire the enthusiasm with which Oliphant tried to work up a love for madrigals eighty years or

so ago. In a certain old Madrigal Society in the Provinces, when one of these alterations was pointed out by their conductor in connection with the version in my own edition, some members said at once: "How is that? What is Mr. Fellowes working from? Surely the books we've got are old enough—they are more than seventy years old"! But what about the age and value of the original editions? I was asked just before the lecture this afternoon: "What did I work from in producing my edition?" I replied: "I worked of course from the original editions of these composers published in their own time, in the last decade of the 16th century and the first of the 17th." We are a conservative people, but surely the conservatism is misplaced of those who stick to a text of seventy years ago as if that text were gospel, when the original text is three hundred years old and more and is still extant. It is the original editions that we must go to in these matters; and let us stand by the originals alone. Dr. J. F. Read has sent me a message to say that he was not able to remain for the Discussion, but that when he was organist at Chichester Cathedral they did one anthem by Weelkes at Christmas-time every year. Some years ago I tabulated the music sung at all the Cathedrals and the principal College Chapels of the United Kingdom in order to see what was being done; and I may say, incidentally, that the result shown was deplorable. I do not think I can recollect anything by Weelkes being included in the returns sent in from any choir, but it is satisfactory to hear now from Dr. Read, the successor of Weelkes as organist of Chichester, that at least one anthem of his is remembered at his own Cathedral. In regard to the word "dump," I would refer Dr. Southgate to what I have already said on this point in my paper, although I may add that it is perfectly true that Shakespeare uses it in the sense of a dance; but it is also used in the sense of a dirge. The word was used in both senses in Tudor literature. With reference to Weelkes's instrumental music—as well as his church music—one would of course like to deal with this at full length, but one must confine oneself within the limits of a subject as well as of time, for it would require another hour or two to deal with what Dr. Southgate has suggested. However, I hope someone will choose such a subject for a future paper before the Musical Association. Weelkes is among our greatest men, yet of him we know almost nothing. Weelkes stands amongst those in the forefront of European music in his own day, and it is a disgrace to musicians of the present time that we should be so ignorant of Tudor music as a whole, whether sacred, secular, or instrumental. I would certainly not have spoken of it otherwise, but Sir Frederick having led the way, perhaps I may be pardoned if I follow with a few remarks about my own edition. Do let us make up our mind to have the

complete original text of these works in modern editions, whoever will edit them. Sometimes I feel on the border of absolute despair in trying to bring out the English madrigal school series. I have thirteen volumes already in print, and three more are finished and ready to be published when the war is over; but thirty-six volumes will be needed in all. Whatever else we do, or don't do, why cannot we arrange to have complete editions of our English madrigalists textually correct? Personally, I only want to get enough support to enable the thing to be paid for without any question of profit; yet even for this purpose I cannot get enough people sufficiently interested. Do let us make an effort to render accessible in modern and practical form the work of these splendid old English musician-poets so that it may be secure for the use of future generations.

Dr. SOUTHGATE: Why not approach the Madrigal Societies of such places as Manchester and Bristol, where they claim to know more about madrigals than we do in London?

Sir FREDERICK BRIDGE: I sometimes think the Discussion is even better than the paper that preceded it. Certainly it is of value in bringing out the points of an address. And in this case it has given us the advantage of a few more words from Mr. Fellowes. I feel strongly about this matter also. When I come across the work, for instance, of such a composer as Dering, I feel angry that I cannot have the whole of his compositions in print. But what is one to do? I prevailed upon a publisher to give us nine or ten before the war; but now there is war he says he will see me somewhere else before he will publish another. But after all, we have to remember that these people have their living to get, and they cannot afford to publish things unless there is some chance of profit. What we want are correct copies of these masterpieces, of these madrigals, these motets of Weelkes, Dering, and so on. But I think something could be done if we only put our back into it. Of course we cannot expect a private firm, or a great firm like Novello's, to take the thing up at its own risk. But if we made a great fuss we might get the trustees of certain funds to help. For instance, there is one old City Company, the Musicians' Company; they have done a great deal to help on modern chamber music—why not suggest that they find the money to produce the work of this great English composer who lived in London 300 years ago? I have talked to the Mercers' Company, I have talked to the Corporation that administers Gresham College, and explained: "I have produced these things at your College, cannot you let me publish them for the benefit of the country?" Something, then, might be done to secure the support of these old Companies, for of course we cannot expect ordinary musical publishers to take the work up and perhaps be out of pocket by it. I feel more strongly than ever about Dering after what we have heard this evening from

Mr. Fellowes ; I had no idea till this afternoon that Weelkes was so great a man. I was educated in the old-fashioned madrigal style, and in those days people would have been horrified to hear of madrigals containing such harmonies as those we have heard to-day. However, we are going to do what we can in that matter that has been brought before us by Mr. Fellowes. It only remains for us to thank Dr. Terry and those who have rendered these difficult things so beautifully.

Votes of thanks to the Rev. E. H. Fellowes, and to Dr. Terry and the Choir, were then passed.
