

CHURCH-MUSIC SOCIETY

# CATHEDRAL MUSIC

TODAY AND TOMORROW

*The Report of a Sub-committee appointed by  
the Cathedral Organists' Association and  
the Church-Music Society, prefaced by  
a message from*

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

Price 1/-

PROPERTY OF THE CHURCH MUSIC SOCIETY

## A MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

I warmly commend this Report to the serious attention both of Cathedral Chapters and of all who value the place of Music in Worship and the maintenance of one of the noblest traditions of the English Church. No one can question the truth of the opening words of the Introduction to the Report. But there is I fear some truth also in the statement that "in the present century there have been ominous signs of decay". If so, this is no doubt partly due to the necessities of a time of war. But there is good ground for the warning that these necessities are apt to be "readily accepted as normal practice in peace time". Moreover, full allowance must be made for the financial straits from which Cathedral Chapters are suffering and which are more likely to be increased than diminished in the future. There will always be the temptation to regard the Music of the Cathedral as one of the most obvious spheres of economy. But the great tradition of English Church Music is a sacred trust and the offering of music is a true part of worship. I therefore venture to plead that the maintenance of Cathedral Music should rank with the maintenance of the fabric as one of the primary duties and responsibilities of the Chapters.

Further, it is not enough merely to maintain this great tradition. If it is not to become sterile it must be continually enriched by the development both of higher ideals of worship and of music itself. There can be little doubt that any general curtailment of the daily Services in the Cathedral Churches would tend to dry up the sources of renewal. Again, one of the ways in which a Cathedral can be an influence for good in the Diocese is to set a standard for the music of its parish churches. If this influence wanes there will always be the danger of a general surrender to music which is regarded as popular but which too often is merely trivial or even vulgar.

I trust that this Report may help to re-establish Cathedral Music.

Whatever changes may be at hand in the Church as well as in the State, it is to be hoped that there will be no restraint of that river of noble music consecrated by the spirit of worship which has for centuries made glad the City of God.

COSMO CANTUAR.

Old Palace, Canterbury.

15th April, 1941.

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## INTRODUCTION

THE Cathedral Service is among the glories of the Church of England; it has been for some 400 years the very foundation of all that can be called distinctively English music; and, almost alone among our musical institutions, it has secured the unqualified respect and admiration of musicians throughout the civilized world. For us English churchmen it has an intrinsic value as the highest expression in artistic terms of the Anglican attitude towards the Catholic Faith and its worship. It has for others an extrinsic value as presenting them with the union of the English language and music in choral song.

From the reign of Queen Elizabeth, whose Chapel determined our traditions of cathedral music, till the foundation of the Royal Academy of Music in 1822, the cathedrals provided the only permanent music schools of the country.<sup>1</sup> They were responsible for a long line of eminent composers and executants whose careers began either as choristers or as articulated pupils of cathedral organists.<sup>2</sup> Arthur Sullivan marks the junction of the two educational methods. He began as a child of the Chapel Royal and then won a scholarship at the

<sup>1</sup> During the Protectorate of Cromwell, when the cathedral establishments were in abeyance, the Government considered, but did not last long enough to put into effect, a scheme for founding a national school of music on similar lines. Charles II made haste to re-establish his Royal Chapel, together with cathedral choirs and their schools.

<sup>2</sup> Among the long list may be named—

Chapel Royal:	Pelham Humfrey 1647-74
	John Blow 1648/9-1708
	Michael Wise 1648-87
	Henry Purcell 1658-95
	Jeremiah Clarke 1659-1707
	William Croft 1678-1727
	Daniel Roseingrave -1727
	John Goss 1790-1880
	S. S. Wesley 1810-1876
	Arthur Sullivan 1842-1900
St. Paul's Cathedral:	Maurice Greene 1695-1755
	William Boyce 1710-1779
	John Stainer 1840-1901



R.A.M. Since then the cathedrals and the several secular schools have worked hand in hand, and many musicians to-day who have attained distinction in various branches of secular music owe the foundations of their craftsmanship to the cathedral choir and organ loft.<sup>3</sup> The present Dean of Gloucester (The Very Rev. H. Costley White) and the organist (Mr. H. W. Sumsion) both began their careers as chorister boys in their own cathedral, and though this is exceptional it is certain that cathedral choir schools have been the starting points of many fruitful careers in the Ministry, as in the music, of the Church.

<sup>3</sup> The following are outstanding instances—

SIR HUGH ALLEN, Heyther Professor of Music, Oxford Univ.  
(Articled pupil to Dr. F. J. Read, Chichester)

MR. LAURENCE COLLINGWOOD, Conductor at Sadlers Wells  
(Westminster Abbey)

SIR WALFORD DAVIES, Master of the King's Musick (St. George's,  
Windsor). (d. March 11, 1941)

DR. T. P. FIELDEN, Director of Music at the Charterhouse  
(Chichester)

MR. H. M. HAVERGAL, Director of Music at Hartow (Salisbury)

MR. LESLIE HEWARD, Conductor Birmingham City Orchestra  
(Manchester)

DR. HERBERT HOWELLS, Composer; (Gloucester)

DR. HENRY G. LEY, Precentor of Eton (St. George's, Windsor)

MR. E. STANLEY ROPER, Composer and Organist to H.M. Chapel  
Royal (Westminster Abbey)

DR. MALCOLM SARGENT, Conductor of the R.C.S., the L.P.O. and  
other choral and orchestral societies; (articled pupil to Keeton  
at Peterborough)

DR. GEOFFREY SHAW, late H.M. Inspector of Music in Schools  
(St. Paul's)

DR. W. K. STANTON, Director of the Midland Station, B.B.C.  
(Salisbury)

MR. WILLIAM WALTON, Composer; (Ch. Ch. Oxford)

MR. CYRIL WINN, H.M. Inspector of Music in Schools (St. Paul's)

Leading Cathedral Organists to-day, trained in Cathedrals,  
include—

DR. T. H. W. ARMSTRONG, Christ Church, Oxford (Chorister of  
the Chapel Royal and articled pupil to Haydn Keeton,  
Peterborough)

SIR IVOR ATKINS, Worcester. (Pupil asst. to G. R. Sinclair,  
Hereford)

SIR EDWARD BAIRSTOW, York Minster. (Articled pupil to Sir  
Frederick Bridge, Westminster Abbey)

DR. PERCY HULL, Hereford. (Hereford)

MR. GERALD KNIGHT, Canterbury. (Truro)

DR. H. D. STATHAM, Norwich. (St. Michael's, Tenbury)

MR. H. W. SUMSION, Gloucester. (Gloucester)

In the present century, and especially between the first war (1914-18) and the second (1939), there have been ominous signs of decay, alike in the cathedral musical establishments themselves (the choirs and choir schools) and in the number, and to some extent the quality, of the musical services the choirs are permitted to render in the cathedrals.<sup>4</sup> It seems only too probable that after the present war economic, political and social conditions will lead to proposals for drastic changes not only in the constitution of cathedral establishments, clerical and lay, but in the Church herself as at present established in this realm. Endowments of every kind will be called in question. Many age-long traditions are likely to be thrust aside and many friends as well as foes of the Church will further the thrust.

The plea for a more personal tone (described as "reality") in cathedral worship, the appeal to what is called "modern thought", the desire to attract the ill-educated, may all too easily reinforce the need for economy in cathedral budgets. It will be declared that few people attend the daily sung services, and their maintenance will be branded as extravagant waste of time and money. The many excellent voluntary choirs of parish churches will be pointed to as models for cathedral Sunday services. The claims of women to raise their voices equally with men will certainly be heard. Evidence of their efficiency will be adduced from wartime experience (see *Appendix II*). Already where boys have been evacuated and male altos are unobtainable women have been admitted to the stalls in more than one cathedral. The historic Chapel Royal choir which reared among its children so many famous composers, has been replaced by a mixed choir of men and women who sing hymns in the Chapel of St. James's Palace on Sundays. These changes are all described as temporary, but experience of the first war (1914-18) has shown that the necessities of wartime are very readily accepted as normal practice in peace time.

<sup>4</sup> See *The Present State of Cathedral Music*, published by the Church-Music Society (1934) as Occasional Paper No. 11.



Such are the causes for the serious apprehension felt by those who value cathedral music and its service both to the Church and Nation. They are convinced that every effort must be made not only to maintain it now but to prepare for its richer development in the future. With that in view the Cathedral Organists' Association and the Church-Music Society met separately and in a joint conference at the Church House, Westminster, on June 19, 1940, and passed certain resolutions (see *Appendix I*). A joint sub-committee of their members was appointed to examine the whole situation and report.

## THE CATHEDRAL SERVICE

### Historical Note.

It has been said above that the Chapel of Queen Elizabeth determined our traditions of Cathedral Music. It was by no means the founder of them. Though we cannot identify cathedral choirs and their schools with the singing schools founded by the Augustine Mission (597) and subsequently, it is certain that as soon as harmony entered into church music the need for boys' voices to sing the upper part (Cantus) was felt in England, and cathedrals then began to establish schools for the education, general and musical, of these boys. By the 13th century, that is by the time of the famous Reading Rota, "*Sumer is icumen in*", such schools were becoming customary,<sup>1</sup> and the choirs then consisted of these boys with the clergy, regular or secular, according to the nature of the Cathedral Foundation.

The boys were thus first among the laity to take part in the performance of the Cathedral Service. As the composition of "Conductus" and "Motet" developed together with the art of improvised descant to a plainsong, church singing became increasingly an affair for specialists. Canons sufficiently musical to sing plainsong in choir together could not compass the intricacies of mensural music. Moreover, the definitely unmusical canon became, as we should say to-day, class-conscious. This "modern stuff" was beyond him, and probably he expressed his dislike of it as definitely as do his brothers of to-day. But he could not withstand it; he could only stand aside from it. The unmusical canons were compelled to do such work as they were unable to perform personally by means of deputies, or *Vicarii* as they were styled. Subsequently we find in the statutes of Old Foundations (e.g.

<sup>1</sup> *Quires and Places where they sing*, by S. H. Nicholson (Bell), quoting from A. F. Leach's *Schools of Medieval England* (Methuen), assembles several instances. "The earliest mention of a separate choristers' school is of that existing at Lincoln in 1236."



Salisbury, Lichfield, Wells) the appointment of Priest Vicars and Lay Vicars (Vicars Choral) on the Foundation, the former to sing the priest's part, the latter to participate in the polyphony of the choir.

Thenceforward polyphonic singing in choir was increasingly practised and elaborated<sup>2</sup> until the style reached its zenith after the Wars of the Roses in the composers of the early Tudor period.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the rise of that dynasty was the richest artistic epoch of the Church in architecture and in music. It would be possible to draw an analogy between the polyphonic Masses of Taverner, first organist of Wolsey's College at Oxford, and the decorated perpendicular style as it appears in Henry VII's Chapel at Westminster. An artistic epoch was completed, soon to be dissipated by influences and impulses far from artistic in themselves. The practice of retaining lay musicians to teach the boys, play on the organs and sing in the cathedrals and greater monasteries, was a natural concomitant of this advanced stage of the art. Robert Fayrfax of St. Albans, John Taverner, "a singing man" of Wolsey's College, and Thomas Tallis at Waltham Abbey, sufficiently attest the fact that the professional musician was now a recognized factor in ecclesiastical music. These men were the great composers of their generation. Others of less distinction were increasingly finding employment as Vicars-Choral<sup>4</sup> or lay clerks in the cathedral choirs. While the singing of High Mass was their primary concern, the choir offices, particularly Evensong, were also rendered chorally with organ music.<sup>5</sup> Before the dissolution of the monasteries, then, the organ-

<sup>2</sup> For examples see:

(1) *Worcester Medieval Harmony of the 13th and 14th centuries*, edited by Dom. Anselm Hughes, with a preface by Sir Ivor Atkins.

(2) *The Old Hall Manuscript*, transcribed by Rev. A. Ramsbotham, H. B. Collins and Dom Anselm Hughes. Both are published by the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society.

<sup>3</sup> See *Tudor Church Music*, vol. I. John Taverner. The development from Dunstable (1390-1453) is sketched in an *Historical Survey*.

<sup>4</sup> See *Sarum Close*, p. 122, by Dora H. Robertson.

<sup>5</sup> See *Tudor Church Music*, vol. I. John Taverner, p. xlix.

ization of what we know to-day as the Cathedral Choir with its organist was complete in them as well as in the cathedrals.

The monasteries were swept away, but the cathedrals of the Old Foundation remained practically unaltered so far as the constitution of their choirs was concerned. To a certain extent some of them were reinforced by the lay musicians discharged from service in the abbey churches. To them were added the New Foundations of Henry VIII (e.g. Winchester, Ely). These New Foundations were established mainly on the lines of the Old, but with Minor Canons (not deputies of the canons but musical priests having their own status as canons of a lesser order) and with choirmen, styled Lay Clerks, instead of Lay Vicars. Moreover the position of the Precentor in the New Foundations differed essentially from that of the Old (see below: *Precentors and Minor Canons*).

The clerical offices associated with the cathedrals were reduced by reforming zeal, while the lay musical offices were increased. It seems clear that of all the age-long institutions attacked in the middle of the 16th century the musical establishments were least threatened. The measures of Henry VIII's reign were ostensibly concerned with the reform of abuses, and cathedral choirs were not held to be one of them. It was at a later stage that Puritanism became strong enough to level its attack at "curious singing".

The consummation of many liturgical changes (including the use of the English language in church services) came with the issue of the First Prayer Book of Edward VI (1549). Musicians sought to accommodate their art to official demands by composing new music and adapting old works to the Liturgy in English. Foremost among them was John Merbecke, a singing man of St. George's, Windsor, who produced a "Book of Common Prayer Noted" (1550). This was a book of unison chant, partly based on plainsong, partly original, for the English Offices. A second Prayer Book (1552) by altering the wording of the Offices made Merbecke's effort largely ineffectual, and then followed the Marian reaction which reinstated the Latin Liturgy. Through all this the



cathedral choirs held their ground. A proposal to banish organs and organ playing from the churches was successfully resisted.<sup>6</sup> The fluctuating decade was brought to a close with the issue of the Prayerbook of Elizabeth implemented by the Act of Uniformity (1559).

In this Act was found a settlement which has determined the nature of the cathedral service from that day to this. It retained the professional choirs of men and boys but focussed their attention mainly on the due singing of the daily offices of Morning and Evening Prayer, with the Litany on prescribed days, and on Sundays the first part of the Communion Service, including as its chief musical features the Responses to the Commandments (called Kyrie) and the Nicene Creed. Elizabeth's personal influence was invaluable. She insisted on the maintenance of her royal dignity in her Chapel, alike in ornaments, ceremonial and music. She took into her service the finest musicians of the day. The Queen's Chapel became the musical centre of all the artistic enterprise which is included for us in the term Elizabethan. Its "Gentlemen" addressed themselves to the composition of choral Responses, several types of Psalmody, polyphonic settings of the Canticles, anthems for general use and special occasions. They were not restricted in style or in time of performance, except that their most expansive settings of Canticles were described as "Great Services", and they provided more concise ones ("Short Services") for everyday use. Much, perhaps the greater part, of their output is now generally regarded as for voices unaccompanied, and so sung; but the organ books of the time show that organ accompaniment was generally implied and sometimes independent organ parts were written. The example of the Chapel Royal defined the type and set an example to the cathedrals which the latter emulated in their several degrees and according to their opportunities.

William Byrd (1542/3-1623), whose name stands in English music level with that of William Shakespeare in poetry and drama, shared with Tallis the post of organist to the Chapel

<sup>6</sup> See *Tudor Church Music*, Vol. X, p. 126. The appointments as organists of Merbecke and Thaxton at St. George's, Windsor.

Royal. They were close collaborators, and Byrd inherited from Tallis all that was finest in the older monastic style of church music, imbuing it with his own rare genius, much as in another sphere and at a later time the young Beethoven fulfilled the symphonic types of his master Haydn. Among Byrd's colleagues and pupils were some whose work came near to his quality though his reputation outshone theirs. He was the head of the greatest "School" of English Church composition, as his contemporary, Palestrina, was of the Roman.<sup>7</sup>

It is rare that any great artistic epoch lasts through more than two generations. We may date this one from 1570, when Byrd was sworn a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, to 1646, when his former pupil, Thomas Tomkins, had to retire after 50 years as organist of Worcester Cathedral because the cathedral services were suspended after the second siege of Worcester. That was a period of 76 years, and it ended abruptly for reasons that were political rather than artistic. The later years of the Civil War and the decade of the Commonwealth produced the one brief break in the tradition of English Cathedral Music.

Twice in times of crisis the Sovereign has stepped into the breach and salved the cathedral musical tradition through the Chapel Royal. Can that happen a third time? It is too early to predict till we know the nature of the crisis to which present events are tending. It is an ominous sign that one of the first acts of the present war was the dispersal of the choristers of the Chapel Royal in September 1939, followed by the dismissal, giving six months notice, to the "Gentlemen".<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The question of Byrd's personal attitude towards the religious controversies of the time does not affect this. Though his predilection may have been for the Latin Liturgy, and he was the last great English writer for it, he was also the first who fully realized the opportunities which the English language offers to the musician. He blazed the trail for English vocal music, alike sacred and secular.

<sup>8</sup> This step was taken by the Lord Chamberlain without consulting either the Precentor or the Organist. At the time, the office of Dean of the Chapel Royal was vacant pending the appointment of a new Bishop of London after the retirement of the Right Reverend the Rt.



The Chapel of Charles I fell with the monarchy, and cathedral musical establishments had fallen with the Church of England herself. The reading of Common Prayer was forbidden in the churches, organs were taken down and in some cases wantonly destroyed with other ornaments; choir books were burned or torn up, thereby losing once and for all a great part of the musical compositions of the Elizabethans. In this matter no restoration could be complete.

Restoration came none the less with the proclamation of Charles II as King of England; and his speedy re-constitution of his Royal Chapel with Captain Cooke as Master of the Children<sup>9</sup> not only set an example to the cathedrals but in process of time provided them with musicians trained as choristers under Cooke.<sup>10</sup> Moreover the Chapel of Charles II brought a new birth of great cathedral music totally different in style from that of the Elizabethans, in the works of Humfrey, Blow, Wise and, above all, Henry Purcell, all of them what would now be called "modern composers." They created a second great era of English cathedral music, but it was shorter-lived than the Elizabethan one, largely because the finest of their works were the music of occasion rather than the daily offering of prayer and praise. Nevertheless the Restoration era restored the tradition of the chanting of psalms, versicles and responses, brought back into daily use what survived of the older settings of canticles and added a great number of fine anthems to the repertory.

During two centuries since the death of Henry Purcell (1695) the tradition of the daily sung services in English cathedrals

Hon. A. F. Winnington Ingram. There is therefore at the present time no Chapel Royal Choir, but informal assurances were given that it should be restored after the war.

<sup>9</sup> See Pepys' Diary, Sept. 14, 1662, on Cooke's "new musique".

<sup>10</sup> Blow and Purcell became successively organists of Westminster Abbey. Turner became a member of the choir (counter-tenor) of Lincoln Cathedral, then a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, Vicar Choral of St. Paul's and Lay Vicar of Westminster. Wise became organist and Master of the Choristers at Salisbury. Humfrey succeeded Cooke as Master of the Choristers of the Chapel Royal, but died young.

was unbroken. At times it appeared to be in a state of degeneration as regards the quality of music performed, the constitution of the choirs, the condition of the choir schools and the care of the boys.<sup>11</sup> Reforms were called for and somewhat tardily accomplished, but no suggestion of abandoning the system appeared from any quarter save from those who were the avowed enemies of the Church herself.

In the middle of the 19th century the Rev. Sir Frederick Gore Ouseley, scenting danger to come, founded his College of St. Michael at Tenbury, so that in whatever way the cathedrals might be attacked or despoiled there might never be wanting one example in this country of the cathedral musical service sung daily during term in the beautiful church which he built beside the college. At about the same time Dr. S. S. Wesley, the greatest church composer and cathedral organist of his day, stimulated internal reform in the cathedrals themselves with a pamphlet described as "A Few Words on Cathedral Music and the Musical System of the Church, with a Plan of Reform". A generation later Sir John Stainer (a pupil of Ouseley and for a time his organist at Tenbury) gave a practical exposition at St. Paul's Cathedral of what the cathedral service could be as a result of judicious reform; the Holy Communion sung on Sundays and Holy days to music suitable to the simple dignity of Anglican ceremonial; Morning and Evening Prayer sung daily throughout the year by a well-balanced choir trained in a wide repertory of music; special performances by an enlarged choir with orchestra at certain seasons, such as the Holy Week performances of Bach's *Passion according to St. Matthew*. This notable example was widely followed by other cathedrals having the means to do so. It brought the cathedral services once more into the lives of large masses of the people whose musical perceptions had been newly awakened by secular education. At the present day there are many thousands of people who will be drawn to a cathedral to

<sup>11</sup> See the article CHORISTERS in Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*; also *Quires and Places where they sing*, by Sydney H. Nicholson, p. 48 et seq.



hear music but would not be attracted by the most eloquent preaching.

A pamphlet issued by the Church-Music Society entitled *Forty Years of Cathedral Music (1898-1938)* shows by comparison of the music sung in the eighteen-nineties and the nineteen-thirties what has been done to wash the face of the cathedral repertoires in the generations following Ouseley and Stainer. The abolition of the freeholds of Lay Clerks had helped to secure the singing efficiency of choirs, and the system of pensions for superannuated Lay Clerks adopted by most of the leading cathedrals had eased the hardships arising from this abolition. But it may be said here without fear of contradiction, and despite the fact that this report is rendered by a committee mainly consisting of cathedral organists, that the generally high level of efficiency in our cathedral choirs to-day is primarily due to the unremitting efforts of the organists who train them.<sup>12</sup>

It is evident that cathedral music intrinsically has been on the up-grade (like all other forms of music in this country) just at the time when the attitude of cathedral dignitaries (members of Chapters) has become increasingly opposed to it, and when it has suffered the heavy blows of two shattering wars. Whether it can survive these blows will depend on how seriously church people want it, and how far they will contribute to its maintenance. Up to the present time the societies called "Friends" of the several cathedrals have been very little canvassed in regard to the maintenance of the music. An attempt to rally their support should certainly be made before drastic changes crippling to the work of organists and choirs are accepted as inevitable. It is sometimes too readily assumed by unmusical members of Chapters that measures for shortening services, simplifying the music, substituting chants and hymns for settings of canticles and anthems, are certain to be "popular". Musicians, ecclesiastical

<sup>12</sup> This sentence is insisted on by the Chairman of the Church-Music Society, the one member of the committee who is not, and has never been, a cathedral organist, but has had exceptional opportunities of observing their work.

and secular alike, are ready to challenge that assumption (see Sir Sydney Nicholson's comments, *Appendix II*).

Everywhere the greatest symphonies draw the largest audiences to the concert halls. Can it be said that those parish churches which confine themselves to Anglican chants and hackneyed hymns are filled to overflowing? There is good reason to believe that the people want great music whether in the concert room or in church. They certainly expect to find church music at its best in cathedrals, which represent to them an age-long tradition of worship expressed in terms of such art as Milton declared might "bring all Heaven before mine eyes".



## CHOIR SCHOOLS AND CHORISTERS

Among the cathedral problems that are likely to become acute in the near future is the schooling of the choristers. Choir boarding-schools that are maintained partly by the fees of non-singing boys will almost certainly suffer, in common with public and preparatory schools in general, from the need for economy among the folk from whom they have hitherto drawn most of their support. Underpaid and over-taxed parents are already turning in growing numbers to the Secondary School, with its highly qualified staff and comprehensive modern equipment.

If the Choir Boarding-School has to be given up, what is to take its place?<sup>1</sup> Obviously the answer will vary with the place, and the differences will be so wide that each locality may regard its problems as unique. Actually, however, those problems appear to have been already solved elsewhere, if we may judge from data supplied by the Cathedral Organists' Association.

A list of cathedrals, representing every type from St. Paul's to those in small provincial centres (but excluding the new parish-church-cathedral as being outside the scope of this enquiry) shows six methods of arranging for the education of the choir-boys:

- (a) Choir Boarding-School<sup>2</sup>
- (b) Choir Day-School run by Dean and Chapter; all local boys
- (c) Boys educated free at Grammar School attached to the Cathedral

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey have decided to close their Choir School and disband the boys, who during a year of war had been kept at Horsham (See Appendix III.). During that time the organist and his assistant had visited them alternately week by week to carry on the boys' musical education and superintend their singing practice. A similar disbandment of the Canterbury School was threatened but has been averted. (See Mr. Gerald Knight's letter to *The Times*, Jan. 7, 1941).

<sup>2</sup> Some admit non-singing boys as boarders or as day boys.

- (d) No education provided; boys drawn from local elementary and secondary schools
- (e) Boys educated at local Grammar School at the expense of the Dean and Chapter.
- (f) Boys partly local and partly boarded at Grammar School.

Of these, (a) embodies the highest ideal, but it is undoubtedly costly. There is much to be said for (b), especially for provincial cathedrals.<sup>3</sup> It develops local pride and interest in the cathedral and its music, not only in the boys themselves, but also among their parents and friends; the cathedral authorities are relieved of responsibilities that are more suitably borne by parents; and there is little possibility of the choir being suddenly deprived of its boys through the school being placed in quarantine owing to a few of its members having contracted an infectious complaint—a disaster which befalls many boarding-schools at least once a year.

Most of the advantages of (b) are given by (c) at less cost.

In some cases (d) may present difficulties in regard to practices and weekday services owing to the variability of two important factors—the schoolmaster and the local education authority. The attitude of either or both may be unsympathetic or even hostile; an accommodating master may be succeeded by one who can impede the work of the choir-master by a too literal observance of regulations, and so on.<sup>4</sup>

A hindrance to week-day choir work may arise when boys are drawn from several schools, some of which are a considerable distance from the cathedral. At least one cathedral organist who suffers in this way has found it difficult to obtain an average week-day attendance of more than about 60%, and has been compelled to increase proportionately the number of boys, so as to ensure the presence of the necessary

<sup>3</sup> In London and in a few of our largest cities the distances which the day boys may have to travel make the (a) type preferable.

<sup>4</sup> Instances of this have been brought to the notice of the Cathedral Organists' Association.



minimum. This unsatisfactory method has one advantage, however; it spreads the influence of the choir and the advantages of the musical training among a large number of boys, and widens the circle of interested parents. For this reason the principle of the large class of probationers deserves general adoption. In addition to the advantage mentioned above, it provides extra singers for festivals and for special musical services and recitals.

There appears to be little in favour of (f). *Esprit de corps* may be difficult to achieve when half the boys come from local homes and of parents in poor circumstances, and the remainder are imported and boarded in a private school. Moreover, now that the festival movement and the School of English Church Music have shown that there is no scarcity of potential singers, even in small towns and villages, the all-local choir is more than ever desirable as a means of developing the musical life of the district.

Does cathedral work interfere seriously with a boy's general education? The question is often heard to-day, when overcrowded professions have greatly increased the competitive element in education; it will be even more urgently asked when the war is over.

The answer is provided by the results achieved in choir schools. Here are two representative examples:

Taking one of the (b) type first, we find that York has long been distinguished for its high total of scholarships and other distinctions. No doubt the headmaster will readily answer enquiries on the subject.

For our (c) type we go to the autobiography of the late Sir Herbert Brewer, *Memories of Choirs and Cloisters (Fifty Years of Music)*. He says that in his choirboy days at the King's School, Gloucester, the large amount of time spent in the cathedral at morning and afternoon weekday services and at practices all came in school hours. Nevertheless, the choristers more than held their own with the non-singing boys in the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations and in open scholarships at the universities. The school buildings were so inadequate that nearly all the forms were held in

one room, the result being a pandemonium which (Brewer maintains) developed the boys' powers of concentration.

His experience was that boys with a keen ear and a knowledge of music have a great advantage over their fellows; and in this view he was supported by such headmasters as Wood of Harrow and Lyttelton of Eton. (Probably the chief factor is the well-developed memory that choristers soon acquire.) Moreover, cathedral choirboys have to be quick learners and readers, and, owing to their work and environment, they develop resourcefulness, courage, individuality, artistic perception and powers of expression beyond their years. The end of their training thus finds them with a valuable equipment which no amount of purely scholastic training could give them.

Actual conditions in certain schools to-day are described by several writers in *Appendix II*. They provide examples of different ways of handling the problems, financial and educational, according to local circumstances, with further testimony as to the advantages of a chorister's training. See also *Typical Examples* below.



## PRECENTOR (OR SUCCENTOR) AND MINOR CANONS

In medieval days the knowledge of music was confined almost entirely to the clergy, and among them almost exclusively to those connected with monastic establishments. The music of the services was controlled and performed entirely by the clergy themselves, the chief musician being the Precentor (Chanter). The gradual process of the participation of the laity (beginning with the boy choristers) has been described in the Historical Note above, where it is also mentioned that the position of the Precentor in the New Foundation differs from that in the Old, a point to be further considered here.

But first it may be pointed out that the medieval Precentor, like the other Canons, had his share in the process of appointing deputies to do specialised work for which the principal might be incompetent. For his relief the office of Succentor (Sub-Chanter) was created and held by one of the Priest Vicars. Musical interests could be represented in the Chapter by the Precentor while the Succentor took charge of the music itself in choir. On the other hand the supreme musical authority in the New Foundation of Henry VIII was vested in a Minor Canon with the title of Precentor. In these Foundations music had no direct representation in the Chapter.

The Precentor in the Old Foundation cathedrals is a Prebendary and member of the Chapter. He ranks next to the Dean—hence the terms "Decani side" and "Cantoris side". In the cathedrals of the New Foundation the Precentor is a Minor Canon with authority over musical matters, and in particular is responsible for the choice of music. To-day no precentor of discretion will act independently of the advice of the cathedral organist, who is the person of expert knowledge. But he has the power to do so. There are some instances where precentors assert themselves unwisely, and

Statutes recently framed confirm them in their authority to act arbitrarily.

The standard of performance of cathedral music has advanced so considerably that only a skilled and trained musician can deal adequately with the many problems that are bound to arise. With a wider repertory and a greater degree of sensibility regarding its performance, artistic considerations are involved which did not affect an easy-going precentor and organist even a quarter of a century ago; and these are essentially the organist's business.

A Precentor, or Succentor, if the office is to survive at all, should not be lacking in artistic sense and organizing ability. Unfortunately the present has brought certain precentors (and the future will probably bring more) who know little of cathedral traditions, who have not the cathedral mind, because their early training and experience have been associated mainly with parochial work. This must needs be a real hindrance to the well-being of cathedral music, and the danger should be forestalled either by the training of musical priests who have a vocation for such work or by divesting the offices of Precentor and Succentor of any musical authority and placing that authority in the hands of those competent to exercise it—that is, the organists.

Musical training for the clergy has been urged over and over again but has not been dealt with by authority in any broadly planned fashion. The theological colleges have tried to find place for some elementary musical instruction in their overcrowded syllabus, and we would not wish to under-rate efforts which have sent many ordinands to their first curacies with sufficient knowledge to enable them to keep a watchful eye on, and take a sympathetic interest in, the work of parochial organists and choirs.

In 1928, Sir Sydney Nicholson founded St. Nicolas College of Church Music at Chislehurst, with the declared intention of putting into practice the educational recommendations of the Archbishops' Committee's Report, *Music in Worship* (1922). These recommendations included the musical training of the clergy. Courses for ordinands and young clergy were



planned and met with some success, but the difficulties of choosing suitable times were great, and it cannot be said that in the twelve strenuous years in which St. Nicolas College functioned the clerical side of the education was commensurate with that of lay musicians, organists and singers.

Even if such efforts were diffused far more widely than has been possible up to the present time, they could not be expected to lead up to so important an undertaking as the choice of repertory and the direction of a cathedral's musical policy. Music is and must always remain a side-issue in a course of preparation for the Ministry. Therefore, if a musical priest is appointed to the office of Precentor or Succentor, it should be in order that he may take counsel with the Musical Director (the organist), not that he may direct the expert. Even if he realizes that, and acts only in a consultative capacity, it will be right that the organist should have direct access to the Chapter of which logically he should be a member.

It is rare that a priest of really high musical attainments is obtainable for the office of Precentor or Succentor.<sup>1</sup> Failing that, if these offices are to be retained, a man of distinguished scholarship in some other branch of learning is desirable, since fine scholarship respects its counterpart in other types of culture. It is the man of small knowledge of many things (including music) who is liable to be dangerous in the anomalous position assigned to the modern precentor.

One duty of the precentor which is outside the province of a lay musician is the choice of hymns. It is only recently that hymns, imported from the parish churches, have become a substantial feature of cathedral services. Now they are inescapable, and in their choice a precentor with a sense of poetic and literary values may do good work, while one whose sole standard is popularity may be calamitous. In any case the organist should have the right of veto in regard to hymn

<sup>1</sup> Even when a first-rate scholar of church music is obtainable he is liable to be passed over because Deans and Chapters are fearful of admitting a colleague who is a specialist. It may be that the organist shares that fear.

tunes. In one cathedral the quater-centenary of the English Bible was celebrated by the singing of "I love to hear the story" by the cathedral choir. No musical veto (even if the organist had possessed the right, which he did not) could have availed in that case, since Gauntlett's innocent tune is no worse than Mrs. Miller's childish prattle. In fact words and music belong to one another. A precentor of any scholarship or taste would have perceived that they do not belong to the cathedral tradition, and are no worthy memorial of an event of high significance in the history of the Christian Faith.

**MINOR CANONS.** At least two minor canons are necessary. At present the number varies from one to four. Formerly there were as many as twelve. In the Chapel Royal of the 17th century and probably earlier, minor canons had to sing with the choir. A tenor minor canon was chosen when a tenor vacancy occurred, and numbers were replaced in this way. The number of singers was therefore much more adequate, and the contrast between "verse" and "chorus" meant something. (See *Singing Men* below.)

The practice of the minor canons singing in choir as well as singing the priest's part solo undoubtedly helped the *ensemble*. That may be impossible to revive now, but it is highly desirable that minor canons should attend full rehearsals periodically and take part in choral singing.

The minimum required of a minor canon is that he should sing in tune, should maintain the pitch in monotoning the responses and prayers, and possess some sense of style in regard to what is proper to cathedral music and its interpretation. These abilities should invariably be tested by the organist before an appointment is made.

Indeed, a minor canon's work is very important, for on him will largely depend the alert response of a trained choir. While his leadership can be stimulating, the best choir in the world can be thrown off its balance by a priest who cannot keep his part alive and musical. To this end he must cultivate in himself a sense of rhythm and of word values. He should have more than the average curate's knowledge of



liturgiology, and he should set himself conscientiously to study the repertory of his cathedral's music. Such a study will naturally lead to discernment in regard to the setting of the same words by several composers. Why is Stanford's setting of the Te Deum in B flat better than Henry Smart's in F? The educated minor canon, who nowadays has frequently to speak the words in daily services without music, will realize that this is not a question of which tune he likes best. Stanford's verbal declamation can be reproduced in speech, whereas Smart's so reproduced is a caricature of the words. Rhythmical (not dramatic) reading should be the basis of a minor canon's technique.

## ORGANISTS

In medieval times the organist of a cathedral was merely the *pulsator organorum*. Since then his responsibilities have greatly increased, but the increased importance of his position has not been proportionately recognised. Now that the organist is entirely responsible for the training and direction of the choir, and in charge of all the musical life of the cathedral, it follows that if he is not actually a member of the Chapter, his advice on all musical matters should be sought, accepted and acted on by the Chapter as that of the expert. It has been pointed out above that frequently at the present time the holders of the office of Precentor or Succentor are not qualified by musical training and attainments to control the music of the cathedral, or to speak with authority on matters of music in general, and of church music in particular. It was recommended by the Archbishops' Committee (1922) that "the music-director" should "occupy a position in the Chapter as a Canon, not necessarily in Holy Orders."<sup>1</sup> In Cathedrals of the Old Foundation the original offices in order of importance were first the Dean and second the Precentor.<sup>2</sup> This order places the music and its director in a position second only to that of the controlling head. It would be in accordance with the spirit of the original Foundations if the present-day organists were appointed Precentor and given a place on the Chapter. The Choral

<sup>1</sup> *Music in Worship*, the Report of the Archbishops' Committee (May 1922), p. 37. The recommendation has not received the attention it deserves. It could be acted on presumably only after some revision of the Statutes or other legal adjustments. Pending that, it would be within the competence of the Dean and Chapter to admit the music-director's right to attend Chapter meetings wherein matters affecting the music are to be discussed.

<sup>2</sup> See *Walter Howard Frere, a collection of his papers on liturgical and historical subjects*, Alcuin Club Collections No. xxxv. "The Connexion between English and Norman Rites", p. 34.



Foundation of Eton College already appoints a layman as Precentor.<sup>3</sup>

Another reason for giving due recognition to the changed position of the cathedral organist is to be found in conditions prevailing in the secular musical life of the country, which now offer to musicians many opportunities of occupying a variety of musical posts. A hundred years ago the only musical posts in existence were cathedral organistships, professorships at the older universities and the principalship of the Royal Academy of Music. Now the university professorships have multiplied; there are other music-schools and important positions as musical director in Public Schools and in the B.B.C.; county and town educational bodies and other institutions provide openings for music organizers and teachers; and choral and orchestral conductors are in demand. All these offer to the musician a livelihood, greater or less, but some of them considerably greater than, the average cathedral organistship, and in consequence good men are lost to the cathedrals. Therefore, if the cathedral authorities wish to attract and retain the best musicians of the future, they must make the position a worthy one, and one that carries weight in the voice of the Chapter.

On the other hand, if the musician is to be endowed with the authority due to his position it becomes doubly necessary that he should have a genuine vocation for cathedral work. The varied opportunities of secular musical life help to insure this, for the brilliant recitalist tends to seek a post as City Organist rather than in a cathedral. Moreover, in London and the larger cities the cathedral organ loft no longer gives the musician the prior claim to outside work. Only a man with a serious sense of vocation is likely, therefore, to be ready to shoulder the complex responsibilities of a cathedral

<sup>3</sup> A Chapter Minute of St. George's, Windsor of Dec. 6, 1764, records "Mr. Edward Webb, Organist, was chosen sub-chantor in the room of Mr. John Mapleloft deceased". The precedent was followed in the case of Theodore Aylward, Webb's successor as organist of St. George's (1781-1801).

See *Windsor Organists*, by E. H. Fellowes (S.P.C.K. 1939).

organistship. This is all to the good from the Church's point of view.

For such an important position as this is (or at least ought to be) it is necessary that the organist should be a man of wide general education, have a comprehensive knowledge of music and particularly of church music, a balanced judgment of its worth, its performance and suitability, together with a knowledge of liturgiology;<sup>4</sup> he should be imbued with the tradition, be gifted with organizing power, and be able to deal tactfully with Chapters, choirs and congregations.

Ability as a practical choir-trainer is essential, and this should include technical knowledge of vocal production as well as the art of the conductor. The latter in the case of choir work means blending tone and securing consistent phrasing in rehearsal, and generally rounding the *ensemble* into a well-considered interpretation of the composition.

He must be a good player, and one who understands the art of accompanying a cathedral service. Although he need not be a brilliant executant and recitalist, his organ playing must not be considered a secondary qualification. It must be first-rate of its kind, and it may be added that organ music is likely to be of greater importance in a small provincial cathedral than in a great city. In a country cathedral organ recitals may be the chief instrumental music available to the inhabitants.

Fortunately it rarely happens at the present day that a cathedral organist is appointed by a Dean and Chapter without their seeking expert advice. This is a safe rule, and if Deans and Chapters followed it as consistently in other matters relating to cathedral music, the preparation of this report might have been rendered unnecessary.

<sup>4</sup> The Archbishop of Canterbury has recently instituted a Diploma in Church Music (A.C.D.C.M.) worked jointly through the School of English Church Music and the Royal College of Organists, which tests these qualifications as far as examination may do so.



## SINGING MEN

In order to carry on the Choral Foundations of cathedral and collegiate churches a bare minimum of six singing men is needed, two for each part, A.T.B. It is not advisable to use older boys for alto singing, because of the limited compass of the voice, especially in the lower register; moreover the ineffective quality of voice balances badly, and makes the use of the older classical cathedral music impossible. In the larger and more important cathedrals it is desirable to employ a greater number of singing men, and this becomes a necessity if the choral service is to be maintained daily throughout the year.<sup>1</sup> If only six singing men are employed, they can be responsible for the weekday services, but it is desirable to add to this number for Sunday duty as local conditions allow.

On musical grounds more than six men are required at all times when the larger works of the classical cathedral repertory are sung. Moreover "more than six" must mean at least twelve (the parts doubled on each side) if such directions as "Dec: verse" and "Dec: full" are to be rendered effectively. With only three men a side the difference between "verse" and "full" applies only to the boys.<sup>2</sup>

**DUTIES.** If six men are employed, the statutory Mattins and Evensong on at least one day a week will have to be

<sup>1</sup> Dr. W. H. Harris points out that the choral services for the greater part of the year were formerly maintained at Christ Church, Oxford with only six singing men. No doubt it has been done elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> Much can be done (and something has been) by the judicious employment of members of ex-choristers' associations to increase the numbers and the quality of the singing men on occasion. These associations keep together young men often engaged in business in the town, who having been boy choristers know the traditions of cathedral singing, have good voices, and are delighted to resume their places in the choir stalls, not only on Sundays, but sometimes for the performance of special works at the daily Evensong. Their co-operation should be encouraged for every reason, musical, religious and social. An invitation to well-meaning but inexperienced amateurs to lend their aid is unlikely to be justified by results. Singing in an amateur choral society is not necessarily a qualification for cathedral work.

without music. On other days these two services will be choral as well as on Sundays. When there is a choral celebration of the Holy Communion, it may be sung instead of, or in addition to, Mattins. Normally in cathedrals where a Sunday Evening Service other than the statutory service is the custom, there is no obligation for the singing men to attend, except by special arrangement.

At least two full rehearsals a week are desirable—in addition to any rehearsal lasting only for a few minutes before a particular service. Services which are extra to the statutory services require an extra rehearsal, and the singing men should receive a fee for them. For broadcast services, whether statutory or not, a fee should be paid.

**BEHAVIOUR DURING SERVICE.** Singing men should be enjoined that they are required to conform strictly to the use of the cathedral in the matter of ceremonial in so far as it may affect them. So far as behaviour is concerned, the singing men of to-day are greatly superior to their predecessors of a few generations ago. Nevertheless there is room for further improvement, particularly in the entrance and exit of the choir. It is often evident to a member of the congregation that the men are less well instructed and less subject to discipline than the boys, and that is not to their credit.<sup>3</sup>

**QUALIFICATIONS.** It goes without saying that a good voice is required, particularly a voice of blending quality. The singer must be able to control and use his voice well, and must possess a suitable sense of performance, style and fitness, so that the important message of the words is paramount. His musicianship must be good, he must be able to sing at sight, and have a sense of rhythm in contrast to a mere sense of time. In short, he must be an experienced choralist. A sense

<sup>3</sup> Particularly is this noticeable in those cathedrals where a reverence towards the Altar is the custom on entering and leaving the stalls. The clergy practice it and the boys are taught it, while the singing men pointedly omit it. If it is the use of the cathedral, all should conform to it, just as they conform without question to the practice of turning to the East for the Creed.



of vocation and a sincere churchmanship are essential. He should also be a good colleague and a loyal member of the choir. Old choristers are obviously the best men to be employed, because of their early training in church music and the influence of their church teaching. General character is a matter for the authorities who engage the men.

**SALARIES.** These vary in the greater English cathedrals from £80 per ann. to £230 per ann.<sup>4</sup> The majority range between £100 and £150. The higher of these figures is certainly not too much for a competent Lay Clerk whose attendance at daily services is regular. (See *Typical Examples* below).

A singing man's work is part-time employment, and it is better that he should have another trade or occupation. The number of professional singing men in the provinces is at present very small, and it is likely to become much smaller. The Cathedral Establishment itself is often able to absorb some of its singing men in other posts, as vergers, clerks in chapter offices, guides, librarians, bookstall keepers, and assistant masters at the choir schools. Where this is done the singing men are able to attend services and rehearsals without the obstacles liable to arise when they are engaged in outside occupations. In provincial cathedral cities it should not be hard to find outside work for the singing men, thanks to the influence of the cathedral clergy with local employers.

It is desirable for each Chapter to promote a contributory pension scheme, in order that the singing men may be able to retire at the age of 60 or earlier according to the policy arrangements. Few singers can be really useful in a cathedral much after that age.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In some cases a house is given.

<sup>5</sup> Tenors and perhaps altos tend to lose their voices sooner than baritones and basses. Some of the latter are quite serviceable up to 70. 65 has been suggested as a good all-round retiring age.

## TYPICAL EXAMPLES

Some of the statements made above may be illustrated by a few facts and figures obtained from four cathedrals of differing types and widely different resources. They are chosen as samples because of these differences. The names of numbers 3 and 4 are withheld in deference to the wishes of the authorities who have supplied the information. They are as follows:—

1. St. Paul's Cathedral, London.
2. Canterbury Cathedral.
3. A provincial cathedral not richly endowed.
4. A cathedral in a country town left poor by the dis-establishment of the Church in Wales.

1. Up to the time of the war (1939) the full complement of daily choral services was maintained, with the Holy Communion sung on Sundays and Saints' Days.

Some forty choristers and probationers were educated in a boarding school of the (a) type (See *Choir Schools and Choristers* above, also *Appendix II*) at a cost which has been estimated at from £4,700 to £4,800 p.a. (i.e. about £120 per boy), apart from the value of and charges on the school building.

Five minor canons had salaries of £500 each p.a., one of them was headmaster of the Choir School. There were eighteen lay clerks paid salaries of £230 each p.a., with four or five former lay clerks (freeholders) who were granted pensions by the Dean and Chapter estimated in the aggregate at £750 p.a. This last is a gradually disappearing charge since a pension scheme through an insurance company is now in being. The estimated cost to the Dean and Chapter in premiums on this scheme is about £300 p.a.

The salaries of the organist and assistant organist together amount to £1,050 p.a. The organist has a house.

These figures undoubtedly show a liberal expenditure on the music, and certain minor details would have to be added



to them to arrive at the total. But it is an expenditure amply repaid in the reputation which the music has gained for the cathedral, and if there is any meaning in the name of "the parish church of the Empire" it is that here, not only the inhabitants of the great diocese which the cathedral serves, but citizens from all over the English-speaking world congregate for worship, and in that worship music plays a leading part. It may be added that the stipends of the Dean and four Canons amount to £7,000 p.a., with houses in addition. So the salaries of the musicians cannot be regarded as disproportionately high considering the amount of attendance (to say nothing of the quality of the work) required of them.

2. That this cathedral has hitherto made the music a first charge on the revenue is evidenced by the fact that there are no fixed stipends for the Dean and Canons. Each year a budget is drawn and what is available after all the expenses of maintaining the cathedral, its services and its choir school, have been met is divided between the Dean and the five Canons, the Dean being entitled to two sevenths of the sum, the Canons to one seventh each. All are provided with houses on which they pay their own rates. Each also pays a premium to the Church of England Pensions Board which will entitle him to a small pension on retirement.

This method (as well as the constitution of the choir) which has been planned to provide for the full number of daily services without overtaxing the capacities of the singers, is exceptional, and deserves particular attention. The constitution—in force up to the outbreak of the present war—is therefore set out here in some detail, and in a more or less tabulated form.

#### Boys.

The number of boys aimed at and in process of being obtained at the outbreak of war was 48 (24 each of day-boys and boarders); this number would be divided as follows:

- 10 Choristers (provided for in the old and proposed Statutes)
- 22 Singing-boys
- 16 Probationers

The object in having so many was to enable full Choral Services to continue throughout the year and provide adequate holidays for every boy.

There would be three choirs:

- (a) The Full Choir, consisting of the choristers and 6 senior singing-boys. Total 16.
  - (b) The Decani Choir, consisting of the Decani choristers, the 3 senior Decani singing-boys and 8 other singing-boys. Total 16.
  - (c) The Cantoris Choir, consisting of the Cantoris choristers, the 3 senior Cantoris singing-boys and 8 other singing-boys. Total 16.
- (b) and (c) take turns in singing week-day services and in taking holidays.

#### EDUCATION.

The Dean and Chapter has always maintained a Choir School from the earliest times, but it was not until 1938 that a boarding section was added. Choristers and singing-boys receive their education free, but day-boy probationers pay £2. 2. 0. a term for tuition. Boarding fees are 45 guineas a year, but 15 guineas of this is set apart towards providing scholarships for boys who leave to go to the King's School, where they pay £80 instead of £150 a year in fees, the difference being made good by the Dean and Chapter. There is a bequest from which day-boys receive grants towards their further education.

Choristers receive £2. 6. 0. per quarter (in lieu of clothing in the Old Statutes), and free piano lessons.

THE SCHOOL STAFF consists of 4: the Headmaster, who is a minor canon and also acts as alto lay-clerk; 2 assistant masters (1 resident), and 1 mistress.

SALARIES. Headmaster £350 and keep. (£250 as Minor Canon, £50 each as Headmaster and lay-clerk).

Masters: Resident £150 and keep; non-resident £250;  
Mistress: £150.



THE COST OF THE SCHOOL over and above the fees paid amounts to over £1,000 a year.

#### LAY CLERKS.

There are seven regulars who sing daily:

3 Altos (1 is a minor canon and Headmaster of the Choir School); a 4th alto comes at week-ends and receives £25 p.a.

2 Tenors with 2 extra, of whom one comes at week-ends and is a volunteer; the other is a deputy and receives no pay for his singing; he works in the cathedral library.

2 Basses (1 is Chapter Secretary). Of 2 extras, one is a volunteer who comes at week-ends; the other is the assistant-organist, who sings as a deputy and at week-ends, and receives 5/- a Service.

Each regular lay clerk receives £150 p.a. minus £5 as contribution to his pension premium, the balance of which is paid by the Dean and Chapter. The cost to the Dean and Chapter at present is £200 p.a. Regular lay-clerks retire at 55 on a pension of £84 p.a.

One retired lay-clerk who was also Headmaster of the Choir School receives a pension of £200.

#### THE MINOR CANONS.

There are at present 2; (a) The Precentor and Sacrist, who receives £365 and a house, and (b) The Headmaster of the Choir School, whose salary is stated above.

THE ORGANIST receives £420 p.a. and a house provided by the Dean and Chapter on which he pays the rates, amounting to about £25 p.a. He pays half his pension premium (£37 p.a.), the Dean and Chapter paying the other half. He should receive a pension of £250 at the age of 60.

The Dean and Chapter are paying a pension of £275 to the late organist, for whom no policy was taken out.

An Assistant Organist is paid £60 p.a. and also holds music teaching appointments both in the Choir School and the King's School, which secure a material increase of income.

3. Nothing like a full complement of daily choral services has been maintained here for some years. For a time only five Evensongs were sung in the week. Shortly before the war an effort was made to restore Mattins on three days in the week. Holy Communion is sung on Sundays and Saints' Days.

The 16 choristers (12 only during the war) are educated free at a local Grammar School partially supported by the Dean and Chapter's contribution (£400 p.a.). The Dean and Chapter in addition pays about £240 for the choristers' fees.

There are two minor canons (one being precentor) whose salaries together amount to £500 p.a., six lay clerks with salaries of £104 each p.a., an organist, now officially styled Master of the Music (salary £400 p.a.) and, until the war, an assistant organist (salary £50), who had also an appointment as music master in the Grammar School (salary £75 p.a.). The major expenses of the musical establishment, exclusive of the minor canons' salaries, amount to nearly £1,800, which is about 16.5% of the total income of the Cathedral. The stipends of the Dean and four Canons amount in the aggregate to £3,600 p.a., i.e. about 40% of the income.

In this cathedral there is no pension scheme for the musical staff. Certain trifling sums are paid at the present time to three superannuated lay clerks.

4. Holy Communion is sung on the first Sunday in the month; Mattins on other Sundays; Evensong on Sundays and twice in each week.

There are 16 choristers drawn from the Elementary and County Schools of the town. The cathedral, which is also a parish church, of which since the disestablishment the Dean is Vicar, makes no provision for the choristers' education. The boys' only payment, apart from what they may earn by singing at special services (weddings, funerals, etc.), is a little quarterly pocket money. The organist is allowed £8 a quarter to distribute at discretion among the 16 choristers. Their status therefore, is only that of a country parish church which prides itself on keeping up its music.



There are 6 lay clerks paid £50 p.a. each. There are no pensions for any of the musical staff. The organists' salary is £120 p.a. and he has no official assistant. There are two Vicars Choral who are curates to the Dean, but they are examined in music by the organist before appointment to the cathedral.

In the Welsh Church all clerical stipends since the disestablishment are paid by the Board of Finance. The independent income of this cathedral, including the proceeds of offertories and collecting boxes, amounts to less than £1,000 p.a. It appears therefore that even this modest provision for the maintenance of the cathedral musical tradition absorbs nearly half of the income. The clerical salaries are certainly not large; but the Dean, the Vicars Choral and 13 Canons (all benefice holders in the Diocese) cost some £1,600 p.a. to the Board of Finance, as against the £400 which the organist and choir cost the cathedral.

(The peculiar case of Southwell, described in *Appendix II*, should be compared with the above.)

## CONCLUSION.

If our national heritage of cathedral music is to be saved a drastic process of reconstruction must be undertaken, but no outward reconstruction will be of any avail unless it is accompanied by a change of heart towards the music on the part of many clergy who are now in positions of authority.

In many Chapters a majority of members has become increasingly hostile to the maintenance of the full complement of the musical services. While not sufficiently powerful to make sweeping changes, they have seized every opportunity of whittling down both the number of the sung services and their musical quality, ousting the more important musical works of the cathedral repertory on the ground of their length. The war 1914-1918 afforded them their first opportunity. A second war (1939-) has increased their powers. The plea of economy now enables them to vote against the maintenance of choir schools, to disband the boys and to declare that it is impossible to obtain the necessary lay clerks. Having virtually got rid of the choirs, their hymn-singing campaign can be pushed forward.

That the menace is sometimes realized within the Chapter is evidenced by a private letter from a Dean prominent in his efforts to uphold the high traditions of his Cathedral, from which we are permitted to quote. He writes:—

"I think the real difficulty arises from the ardent Canon, who is probably also a Suffragan Bishop or perhaps an enthusiast for social reform or missions, who regards regular and beautiful services, if attended by only a few people, as a form of spiritual luxury to be resisted as a wicked thing!

"I expect we have missed an opportunity in our recent revisions of Cathedral Statutes: we ought to have cut these officials loose from the ordinary membership of the Chapter, and given them a Canon's income to live elsewhere; it would have been an economy really. Most cathedrals can do on three Canons; and there are many



diocesan offices which certainly don't go well—nowadays at any rate—with cathedral duties.”

The Dean's proposal seems an eminently practical one, and if Statutes can be revised once they can be revised again. There can be little doubt that very extensive revisions of one sort or another will be effected after the war.

Certain it is that these conscientious objectors must be removed or otherwise rendered harmless, if any process of reconstruction is to save cathedral music from extinction. Musical proclivities must be taken into account in appointing men to deaneries and canonries. No one would wish them to be practical musicians. Indeed all matters of practical musicianship had better be left to the expert, that is the organist, who in name as well as in fact should be appointed Master of the Music (See *Typical Examples* 3 above).

The clerical appointments should be made amongst men who possess, and will diffuse, the right tone of mind towards the music, who realize that it is a trust committed to their care, like the fabric of the cathedral, its ornaments and artistic monuments. Not only must members of Chapters be convinced that to work for the reduction of the sung Offices is as disloyal to their trust as it would be wilfully to damage the fabric by some iconoclastic action, but cathedral dignitaries should be men of sufficient personal culture to appreciate the value of music, even though they may not be themselves distinctively musical. If they are at all genuinely musical they will the more readily place the executive details of so delicate an art as cathedral music in expert hands. They will know that they have not the skill to deal with it personally, and that unskilled meddling is highly dangerous.

With a Chapter who collectively and individually approach the matter with good-will the cause need not be lost. The process of reconstruction can begin, and will be honestly carried out. If economy is a pressing consideration it will be squarely faced. Instead of hasty raids on the expenses of the musical establishment while deans and canons retain their full stipends, a budget will be drawn as in the case of the second *Typical Example* above,

which considers first the needs of the cathedral (of which music is one) and apports the available income to meet them without fear or favour. Does the salary of a dean at £3,000 a year and of an organist at £650, or of a dean at £700 and an organist at £120, really represent the relative values of a Doctor of Divinity and a Doctor of Music? Is a precentor who draws a salary for duties which he is quite incompetent to perform, and which in point of fact the organist has to perform for him, an official worth retaining at all?

These are harsh questions to which we are not here concerned to give any answer, but an answer to them will be demanded probably in the near future. It will be necessary to appoint officials, from the dean downwards to the junior chorister, strictly for their value to the cathedral and the maintenance of its services. Canonries have long ceased to be the rewards of scholarship, but they are now too often bestowed as rewards for missionary or parochial services to the Church, or in order that the holders of them may undertake diocesan duties unconnected with the cathedral itself. Fitness for cathedral duties as preachers and teachers, as administrators of cathedral business and as guardians of the cathedral's treasures, are surely the proper qualifications for a canonry. A stricter adjustment of the emoluments of the clerical staff to the services actually rendered to the cathedral will in many cases relieve the burdens of finance very considerably.

Our plea is for the maintenance of the age-long tradition of the English cathedrals, that is, the daily worship of Morning and Evening Prayer sung to the finest music written for that purpose by our national composers of the past 400 years. In the past 100 years the sung Eucharist has been added to that tradition on Sundays and Festivals. For that we may be unfeignedly thankful, the more so since the usage has inspired some music of first-rate quality from our composers of modern times.

Such music, old and new, requires for its due performance a choir of men and boys carefully selected and fully trained in the style of singing most in accord with the English



tradition of the Church. It is a primary duty of the cathedrals to preserve the style and constantly add to the repertory.

For this certain material conditions are essential. They have been discussed above, but leading points brought out by the discussion may be summarized here.

(1) The chief musician (the organist) should have complete control of the choir and of the choice of the music. He should be accorded direct access to the Chapter (if not actually a seat, as a member of it) in order that musical interests may be considered as fully as clerical interests. Without his presence the music should not be discussed at all.

(2) Clerical offices (Precentor and Succentor) should no longer carry a musical authority to which the holders are not entitled by their individual abilities as musicians.

(3) Lay clerks (or Vicars Choral) must be brought fully under control of the organist. "Freeholds" are rapidly disappearing, but as the retiring age becomes a principle, a contributory pension scheme actuarially worked out becomes an act of justice. To turn these men off at a given age and make their subsequent welfare dependent on the charity of the Dean and Chapter is as immoral as it is uneconomic.

(4) The welfare of the boy choristers should be a primary consideration. Their education should be provided either at a school maintained for that purpose, or at one where the conditions can be so controlled as to meet their needs, allow opportunity for their musical development, and for their duties in the cathedral.

The choir-boys of to-day are the choir-men (in some cases also the organists and composers, in others the clergy) of to-morrow. Neglect them, and standards both of churchmanship and of musicianship inevitably suffer. Education and care for the welfare of choristers is the Church's sacred charge.

## APPENDIX I.

Extract from the Minutes of the Joint Conference of the Cathedral Organists' Association and the Church-Music Society held at the Church House, Westminster, June 19, 1940, Dr. H. C. Colles in the Chair.

Dr. Ernest Bullock gave a statement of fact and indication of policy as outlined by the Conference of the Cathedral Organists' Association held earlier in the day, viz:

1. We are the only nation in the world who possess the unique musical tradition of boys and men in Cathedral Choirs. It has been a profound influence for good on the religious and musical life of the nation, and its maintenance depends upon boys. It would be disastrous if the boys were to disappear. It is impossible to give a detailed scheme applicable to all the conditions of the future, but the discussions this morning indicated the lines that have proved successful in maintaining the supply of boys without undue extravagance.
2. In spite of the curtailment of Cathedral Musical Services during the war, it is essential that (to quote the chairman's words) "war-time economies should not become peace-time habits," and that the *whole* service should be restored. We deprecate the present tendency to curtail services. It is a matter of regret that this tendency has been fostered by the B.B.C. broadcasts of cathedral services.

After prolonged discussion it was agreed that a small sub-committee of those members of the two societies who live in or near London should be appointed to draw up a reasoned statement of the whole case to be submitted to authority at the right time.

Dr. E. H. Fellowes proposed, and Mr. E. S. Roper seconded, the election of the following to form the sub-committee:—

Dr. E. Bullock  
Dr. Harvey Grace  
Mr. John Dykes Bower  
Dr. W. H. Harris  
Dr. H. C. Colles



The motion was carried unanimously.

The following resolution, proposed by Dr. Harvey Grace and seconded by Dr. E. H. Fellowes, with the purpose of providing terms of reference for the sub-committee, was carried unanimously:

That this Conference foresees grave danger arising from many quarters, but particularly as the result of economic disturbance, to the great tradition of the Cathedral Choral Services.

It considers the following to be essential to the maintenance of that tradition:—

- (a) Choir Schools or their equivalents, *i.e.* arrangements by which the boy choristers are educated together in one school, where their hours of lessons can be made compatible with the fulfilment of their cathedral duties.
- (b) Not less than six musically qualified lay clerks in each cathedral, sufficiently salaried to justify compulsory attendance at daily services and an adequate number of rehearsals.
- (c) Minor Canons should never be appointed without having passed a musical test (voice production, sight-reading, etc.) given them by the choir director, who in most cases should be the organist.
- (d) Organists and Precentors who by early training and subsequent experience are thoroughly conversant with the principles (including repertory) of cathedral choral worship.

The Conference re-affirms that the tradition of English cathedral singing rests on the age-long habit of singing the Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer daily throughout the year. It suggests:—

- (a) That this habit should never be abandoned as the ideal to be aimed at, though it may have to be modified (indeed has been considerably modified) in current practice.
- (b) That where Holy Communion is sung on Sundays and Festivals to the exclusion or reduction of the music to

Morning Prayer, it is the more desirable that cathedral choirs should sing Morning Prayer regularly on other days.

- (c) That sufficient time should be allowed for each sung Office, so that it may not be truncated; that all the Psalms appointed in the Prayer Book for the day should be sung, and the finer settings of the Canticles and larger anthems find their appropriate places in the repertory; that hymns, carols and other little ditties, however good in themselves, should not be allowed to replace the Anthem, which is proper to "Quires and places where they sing."

The Conference further considers that the choice of music should be entrusted to an expert musician (who in most cases will be the organist) and who should always work in sympathetic consultation with Deans and Chapters or their representatives.

It desires to record its determination, individually and collectively, to strengthen the hands of those who are struggling in spite of adverse circumstances to maintain the high musical reputation which the Anglican cathedrals hold throughout the world.



## APPENDIX II.

## Comments on Various Aspects of this Report.

Sir Sydney Nicholson, formerly organist of Westminster Abbey, now director of the School of English Church Music, writes:—

(a) OF WOMEN'S *versus* BOYS' VOICES.

The advantages of the employment of women's voices in cathedral and church choirs will be supported by arguments both of convenience and economy: their voices do not break just when they are most useful: such a choir would be less costly to maintain and the problem of the choir school would be avoided.

A few years ago a cathedral choir of other than the traditional type would have been unthinkable. But nowadays the public has become so accustomed to hearing on the radio church and even cathedral services rendered by choirs of women and men, that it is probably true to say that more people hear church music thus performed than by male choirs. Such a break with tradition, therefore, would no longer be regarded as revolutionary. But even if it were so regarded there are some who would welcome the change. There are undoubtedly those who prefer the singing of women in church owing to its greater emotional appeal, which they feel to be a more sincere expression of personal religion than can be expected from boys. The more impersonal note of the boy's voice leaves them cold, just as there are many who delight in the colourful effects and tremolo of the cinema organ, but to whom the majestic tones of the cathedral instrument are simply boring.

It may readily be admitted that for many purposes women's voices are more suitable than those of boys, but not for English Church music. This was written for boys and men and cannot produce the effect intended by the composers when rendered by any other voices.

It will therefore be necessary to fight for the retention of boys' choirs not only in parish churches but in cathedrals. The substitution of women singers may well become a dangerously attractive plan, appearing, as it does, to solve

many practical difficulties: but it would destroy the most distinctive and delightful feature of English Church music and would knock the bottom out of its traditions. Indeed should such a calamity befall, it would probably mean the final extinction of cathedral music as an individual art form, for the main element that distinguishes it from other choral music would be lacking, and the specialists who devote themselves towards its perfecting would in all probability turn their attention to other forms of music, as the main interest of this special branch would be lost.

## (b) OF THE MAINTENANCE OF A HIGH STANDARD OF CATHEDRAL MUSIC.

The laudable desire to "seek peace and ensue it" sometimes brings about a tendency to yield too easily on what should be regarded as matters of principle.

Musicians rightly expect a properly constituted and efficient choir: but it is difficult to justify the heavy expenditure entailed unless such a choir is fully used. Yet some of the finest music written for cathedral choirs is seldom performed, at any rate in its entirety, for the sole reason that it is considered too long. Would such a criticism be allowed to be the deciding factor in estimating the worth of any other sort of music?

This tendency has increased in recent years: up till the time of the last war, for example, in practically every cathedral the anthem on a Sunday afternoon was one of the major works, such as those of Wesley or Purcell.

Unless those who are responsible for the music insist that these great works be preserved in the repertory of our cathedrals, as well as the many of an older period that have been brought into use in later days, the case for having an adequate choir is weakened. Indeed there are some clergy who would argue that it is better not to have too good a choir, because this may involve increased elaboration and, what is worse, greater length of the music. "If the choir cannot perform the big things, at least we shall be spared listening to them: we shall save time and we shall save money!"—two objects very dear to many members of cathedral Chapters. This kind of attitude is based on an entire misconception of the nature of the Cathedral Service, which is essentially a Chapter Office at which a general congregation is privileged to assist, but is in no sense a congregational service.



Every cathedral city is well supplied with parish churches where those who prefer the congregational type of service are provided for: the cathedral should be left to fulfil its proper function, be the congregation great or small. Time was when there was an outcry against the supposed tendency to model the parish church service on that of the cathedral: now the danger is rather that the music of cathedrals should be brought to the level of that which is suitable for parish churches.

The "cathedral public" may not be a very large one, but it is certainly not increased if those who value this type of service are deprived of hearing the finest examples of music that have been written for it.

#### CHOIR SCHOOLS AND CHORISTERS.

The Revd. R. H. Couchman, formerly Headmaster of St. Paul's Cathedral Choir School (type *a*) writes:—

At a School Prize Day a few years ago, the Dean referred to two remarkable statements which had been made to him in praise of choir schools. A leading figure in the educational and ecclesiastical world had said that if he had a son he would send him to a choir school, for "they were the best of Preparatory Schools"; and an Inspector of the Board of Education had written that for boys to be trying to do, regularly every day, as choristers, one thing as well as it could possibly be done, was of the very highest educational value.

Without necessarily endorsing fully the former of these opinions, my experience of 23 years at St. Paul's left me confident that a choir school can be so administered and organised as to hold its own well with other schools of any type, preparatory to further education and to future careers. The claims of the choir work on the boys' time, for about three hours a day, necessarily involve a temporary 'lag' in the standard of their attainments in the ordinary subjects of the school curriculum. But this is amply compensated in the long run by the intensity of their application to the study and practice of a great art. The value of this mental discipline is well illustrated by the striking fact that although boys, proceeding to Public Schools at the age of about 15, were not infrequently placed in forms in which the average age was perhaps a year below their own, it was rarely that they did not progress up the school at an unusual rate. Many remarkable instances could be given of this. The Headmaster of a great Public School, to which many choristers pro-

ceeded, said to me that 'he did not understand how it was done!' A fair proportion of these Old Boys proceeded to the University, some with open scholarships and exhibitions, others with choral scholarships. I know of very few cases in which these and other ex-choristers have not made good in their careers.

The school has produced, among living musicians, a Cathedral Organist, a Sub-Organist, a Director of Music in a Public School, two Inspectors of Music for the Board of Education, two Professors at the Royal College of Music, and a well-known operatic singer. Of the last generation, Charles Macpherson, organist of St. Paul's from 1916 to 1927, was a chorister in the days of Stainer. The special service of this cathedral and school training to the Church is illustrated by the fact that there are at present about 30 old choristers in Holy Orders. It is not perhaps out of place to record that the Old Boys, in spite of their long youthful sojourn in the heart of the City, with their daily exercise in games limited to the use of a playground on the roof of the school, can put into the field a really strong cricket side, and that many of them have attained some distinction in football and other sports.

Since the days of Dean Church (1874) the school has been administered by an enlightened and sympathetic Chapter, who have realized that the care of the 'children' has been amongst their primary responsibilities. The fact that within the last five years they have expended many thousands of pounds in the extension and improvement of the school accommodation affords good hope that its future is secure from the threat of surrender or suppression. Such surrender, apart from the grievous blow to the life and work of the cathedral, would create yet another regrettable gap in the tried series of varied experiments, of which the English educational system has reason to be proud.

The Rev. R. W. B. Langhorne, Headmaster of the Choristers' School, Exeter (type *a*) writes:—

When H.M. Inspectors visited us in 1934, they gave us an absolutely first-class report, remarking in conclusion:—

This is a very well-conducted small school. The boys are exceptionally alert and self-reliant, lead a busy, happy life, and get a sound general upbringing, which, together with their musical training, appears fully to compensate for the inevitable limitations of the curri-



culum. Boys are enabled to continue their education when their voices break, and it is significant that they have no difficulty in entering other schools and subsequently in passing the school certificate examination.

I may tell you that, since I became Headmaster of this school in 1915, no boy has failed to pass the Common Entrance Examination at the Public Schools, nor has any boy subsequently failed to get his School Certificate at the first attempt, most of them obtaining the "Credits" necessary to secure exemption from matriculation.

I don't pretend that such results are not expensive, but they prove that the discharge of the primary obligation of a cathedral church is not incompatible with the attainment of a standard of scholarship on the part of the choristers which (as the Chief Inspector said to me) is "distinctly in advance of that of their contemporaries in ordinary Preparatory Schools."

You will be aware that this verdict was delivered in respect of boys who, Wednesday excepted, sing the Quire Offices every day and a considerable number of extra services in the course of every term. . . . .

I have been at the job for upwards of 30 years, and I have not the slightest hesitation in asserting that the cathedral choristers have always more than held their own in the field of scholarship with their contemporaries in any other first-class Preparatory School. I have had numerous letters from the Headmasters of Public Schools thanking me for the admirable foundation which my boys have had, and asking for more of them. It will be remembered that ex-choristers normally sit for the "Common Entrance" a year or more later than boys from other Preparatory Schools—often not until they are 15+—and that a correspondingly high standard of attainment is expected of them.  
(Dec 20, 1940.)

The Rev. A. C. Deane, Canon and Steward of St. George's, Windsor, contributes the following notes on the history of its Choir School (type *a*, with non-singing boys) writes:—

Our choristers can claim a pedigree reaching back over nearly six centuries. St. George's provides, indeed, an interesting example of the continuity of the English Church. The Reformation made no change in its government by Dean and Canons, who from the beginning were "secular" and not monastic priests. Because it is a collegiate foundation and

not a cathedral, none of the "Cathedral Commissions" have been able to interfere with its Statutes, and those which control it to-day are of the year 1352, as modified by Edwardine and Elizabethan Injunctions.

These Statutes of 1352 provided that there should be six choristers, qualified by "richness of voice." They ordered also that one of the priest-vicars (or minor canons) should teach the boys "grammar" and singing, and should be paid £1. 6. 8. a year for this work, in addition to his stipend of £8. From the beginning, therefore, a primitive choir-school existed. "Grammar" included, of course, Latin composition and translation, not merely accident and syntax.

In his monograph on the Organists and Masters of the Choristers Dr. Fellowes shows that the first ten names are given as holding the latter of these offices alone. The first mention of an organist occurs in 1406, and in 1415 for the first time we find an "organist and master of the choristers." In the reign of Henry VII the number of choristers was increased to 13; then it dropped to 12, and remained at this modest figure until Sir Walter Parratt's days, when it was raised to the present total of 24.

There is evidence that from Henry VII's time the choristers had a common residence, as well as a class-room. During the succeeding centuries this Choir School was moved to various houses belonging to the Dean and Canons. In 1895 a large building adjoining the Chapter Garden became vacant. It belonged to the Admiralty and had housed the "Naval Knights of Windsor," a foundation which, after a tempestuous existence of some 90 years, had to be dissolved. The Chapter obtained a 40-years lease of the building from the Admiralty, and it became the choir-school. Its size enabled six non-choristers to be taken, at higher fees, which aided the school's finances. From this time St. George's School became a regular preparatory-school, the boys of which proceed in due course to Public Schools, where a strikingly large proportion of them gain scholarships.

When in 1935 the 40-years lease was about to end, the Admiralty would only renew it for 20 years, and at a doubled rental. But, after lengthy and difficult negotiations, the Chapter was able to buy the freehold for £5,200. In all, about £15,000 was received from generous benefactors, enabling not only the freehold to be bought but the whole building to be enlarged, modernized, and equipped. Throughout this business the active interest of King George V was of great assistance. But the shower-baths made him remark that one



bath a week had been his allowance in his cadet days! There are now in the school 24 choristers, 16 other boarders, and a few day-boys. It is hoped that in future the average annual cost to the Chapter will be under £1,000.

Mr. J. W. Webb-Jones, Headmaster of the above school, writes:—

In this school we have almost exactly equal numbers of choristers and 'supers', so that a comparison of the two sets ought to have some significance.

The choristers are absent from school, practising or at service, for 18 hours a week and miss that amount of teaching, exercise or leisure; it would seem that this must put them at a disadvantage, but in my experience no such result appears.

On the games field in spite of the short time available for practice (particularly cricket) choristers hold their own against the 'supers' and very often defeat them because of their better team spirit which is the direct result of their choir training.

Two choristers have recently got their 1st XI colours in their second year at large public schools. Exceptionally gifted musical boys are generally of little use at games though often keen on them.

The development of individual ability to its highest point in order to fit into a team, and the training of the individual for organised service, cannot be done better than through a choir or an orchestra. Having a definite job in life, a focus for their existence, at such an early age when other boys can have few aims other than their own amusement, makes choristers grow into useful citizens who expect to have to do their share of the world's work: being members of a body which has functioned for hundreds of years gives them a right feeling of self respect which will influence all their future outlook: surroundings of such beauty in architecture, music and language cannot fail to be a strong influence for good. Boys usually do not come to understand how exceptional were their surroundings until after they have left, but for the rest of their life they remember them, and that is the root of the many flourishing old choristers' associations. Ours numbers 200, and the old boys return to the Chapel from the ends of the earth after many years.

The choir boy has to learn daily, at short notice, new and often difficult music and produce it in public: this makes him better able to concentrate, quicker to learn, and more ready

to work. The task of his teacher in covering the ground in greatly restricted time is extremely difficult. Small forms are essential, but in spite of this choristers do not just scrape into the bottom forms of Public Schools, but take places well worthy of their rather more advanced years, and win their share of scholarships and exhibitions. In fact they are, *ceteris paribus*, the equals or superiors of other boys. That more Public Schools offer music scholarships and exhibitions every year indicates how Headmasters have come to appreciate this as well as the general value of music in education. It works out that I can always say to a prospective parent that a boy's education will benefit rather than suffer from being in the choir. But the balance is finely adjusted and the slight swing caused by war-time conditions against the hours of learning may seriously upset it if no adjustment is made to the hours of singing.

The Very Reverend E. G. Selwyn, Dean of Winchester, writes of the Pilgrims' School (type *b*):—

The difficulties arising are by no means only financial; they are also educational. When I came here in 1931 I found a cathedral school which had been partly "reformed," but the process was not yet complete, and it was not possible to say what niche it filled in the educational system, nor where its boys stood on the educational ladder.

What we did was to re-found the school as a Preparatory School on lines similar to those at King's, Cambridge and St. George's, Windsor; and the result has been very satisfactory. (The cost of the education of the choristers has been reduced by about £1,000 a year.) I am not saying that this policy can be adopted everywhere. We have unusual facilities for education in Winchester, and there was room for a Preparatory School of our type . . . . . We are not entitled to train boys musically for our choirs unless we are satisfied that they are getting a thoroughly good education in other ways, provided either by ourselves or by outside bodies.

Incidentally, I may say that in the last five years two of our boys have won musical scholarships at Public Schools, and one of them goes to Cambridge next week with an organ scholarship; a third is the leading musician among the boys in College here, and a fourth is going to Trinity, Cambridge with a choral scholarship. So music has not suffered. (Sept. 30, 1940.)



The Very Revd. W. J. Conybeare, Provost of Southwell, here describes the conditions peculiar to Southwell Minster which have resulted from placing the finances of the Minster in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The school approximates to type *f*.

Nine hundred years ago in Saxon days Southwell Minster had a Choir School, and this school has continued to this day. During the last 100 years its existence has undergone important changes.

In 1840 the Collegiate Church was suppressed and the ancient endowments pooled with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the act stating that the Commissioners maintain the Minster, fabric and personnel.

The school continued to exist as a private venture, the choristers receiving free education at what was called the Southwell Minster Grammar School. It was given up as a private venture and the Bishop and Chapter asked the Local Education Authority to take it over. Consequently in 1909 a scheme was made for a Public Secondary School for boys by the Board of Education.

The governing body was to consist of 13 persons:—

The Lord Bishop of Southwell }  
The Rector of Southwell } ex-officio  
Eleven Representatives—

- 3 by the Nottinghamshire County Council
- 2 " " Hon. Canons of the Cathedral Church
- 2 " " Parish Council of Southwell
- 2 " " Rural District Council of Southwell
- 1 " " University College, Nottingham
- 1 " " Council of S. John's College, Cambridge

Under this scheme the Local Education Authority pays the deficiency grant, taking the fees of the pupils.

The Governors inherited from the past some property, which a few years ago was sold and the money invested, to bring in about £160 a year. This small sum is paid over to the Local Education Authority towards the deficiency grant.

"The School and the Foundation shall be a DAY and BOARDING School."

"If and so long as the sum of £60 a year is paid to the Governors by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England or others, the person or persons who may under any Act of Parliament or Order in Council become re-

sponsible for the expense of maintaining the services in the Minster or Cathedral Church, the choristers of the said church to a number not exceeding twelve shall be admitted to the school without payment of the tuition fees . . . . and the Headmaster shall make arrangements under which their duties as such choristers, as defined by the authorities of the church, will not be interfered with."

Fifteen years ago it was found difficult to secure a sufficient number of day boys capable of being choristers, out of so small a population (3,800) as that of Southwell. So the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were approached, and they generously granted scholarships for four boarders to be paid as Choral Scholars, the four scholarships amounting to £33. 6. 8. a term. These Choral Scholars are boarders living in the Headmaster's boarding house, their homes not being in Southwell.

At the beginning of 1939 the Board of Education gave a very good report on the tone and teaching of the school, but virtually condemned the old buildings. A new laboratory must be built, and central heating inserted, and the classrooms and dormitories repainted.

It was a very crucial moment. An appeal was made by the Governors to the Local Education Authority to meet the cost of £2,000. This the Local Education Authority consented to do. Plans were drawn up under the county architect, and eventually in July these plans were accepted by the Board of Education. Contracts were forthwith drawn up, as it was imperative the work should be in hand so soon as the summer holidays began. How imperative it was, was not foreseen! If the work had not been begun when it was, it might never have been done owing to war. As it was, we now have adequate buildings, and all the improvements demanded by the Board of Education have been carried out.

The whole story is yet more remarkable. In August 1939 one of the old Prebendal Houses, which had long ago been sold by the collegiate authorities, fell vacant. This was generously bought by Mr. W. G. Player as the Headmaster's Boarding House. Just before the war the Headmaster took possession, and instead of living in the old unsuitable buildings, now has a most attractive house and garden, which commend the school to prospective pupils.

The result of all these changes is that the numbers in the school are now 105, 36 being boarders, including 4 choral scholars, and the rest, day boys, including 12 choristers. Formerly our highest number was 75.



The Chapter holds the property of the Boarding House. The Cathedral Council is to administer it. The Governors are not responsible.

With regard to our organists and lay clerks, they are paid by the Commissioners out of the ancient funds of the College of Clergy, handed over in 1840. The organist's salary is £250 and a house at nominal rent; 5 lay clerks are paid £100 a year. There is also £50 which goes to an assistant organist.

The 8 choristers are paid £1. 5. 6. a quarter, and receive a bonus of £10 on leaving.

The organ is kept in tune and repaired from the same source.

Sir Sydney Nicholson comments on the Southwell constitution as follows:—

It was my duty to visit many cathedrals as a member of the sub-commission appointed for that purpose, which in their turn reported to the Cathedrals Commission now established. I was greatly struck by the excellence of the Southwell scheme which seemed to promote the maximum of efficiency at the minimum of cost, and this was because the Chapter had nothing to do with the finances. Certainly such a plan seems to have served the cause of the music well: for example, when the organ required rebuilding a few years ago the funds were forthcoming at once, and the same seems to have applied to the upkeep of the fabric and general improvements. It may be that the Southwell model is the one that offers the best hope for the future of cathedral management.

### APPENDIX III.

The case of Westminster Abbey Choir School was ventilated in an article which appeared in *The Times*, Nov. 2, 1940, as follows:—

#### CATHEDRAL CHOIRS

##### THE WAY OF DESTRUCTION

A correspondent referred the other day to the "lamentable destruction of historical glass in Westminster Abbey." All such destruction is lamentable, but as Canon Crum, writing of what has happened at Canterbury, reminded us recently, there may be degrees in lamentation. Cathedral authorities have had plenty of opportunity of putting away glass and other treasures the loss of which would be irreparable. But suppose that having removed their treasures they bethought themselves a year later that it was hardly worth while to continue paying for storage, that glass or precious metals, pictures or statuary, might as well be disposed of for profit or thrown on the scrap heap, their competence as guardians of those treasures would certainly be called in question.

Early in the war London Cathedral establishments and others in what were then called "evacuation areas" removed their choir schools to the country. The primary purpose of this was the greater safety of the boys, but that this was not the only purpose was shown by the fact that the boys went as a choir. Arrangements were made for them to keep up their music by singing daily or periodic services, and by having regular instruction under their own masters, the organist of the cathedral and his assistants. It was recognized in fact that a choir (especially one of boys' voices) is a work of art like a stained glass window, but with this difference, that it deteriorates with disuse. Twenty choirboys sent to a country school with no care for the maintenance of their cathedral tradition of singing will not be a choir worth having after a few weeks. That was foreseen, and so steps were taken to guard against deterioration.

Many Londoners will remember a delightful episode in the Easter holidays when it became known that the St. Paul's boys had volunteered with the consent of their parents to



sing for a week in their own cathedral, and the large congregations who flocked thither found the choir in being singing their Psalms, their Canticles, and their festival anthems as though the boys had just stepped across the way from their school in the vicinity. That was only possible because of the months of work that the boys and their masters had put in in their distant temporary school.

But now there is a reversal of policy, not at St. Paul's, we hope and believe, but at Westminster Abbey, by a recent decision of the Dean and Chapter. No doubt there are plenty of difficulties in maintaining choirs in these days. Indeed we hear of them on all sides, even from country cathedrals, where the boys are available for their daily duty of singing the service. The famous Chapel Royal choir was disbanded a year ago, the choir which had produced the flower of English musicianship from Purcell to Sullivan, and no voice of lamentation was raised. Now Westminster goes; the school is to be closed and the boys dispersed. Such men as are not eligible for national service may still occupy the stalls on Sundays and a few week-days. Sung services are now not practicable in St. Paul's for a different reason. Cathedral singing is in a state of disruption. These choirs were, and, as far as they can be preserved are, works of art, playing their part in the spiritual life of the nation. Why destroy them?

"Oh, but we can begin again," says the iconoclast. Certainly we can begin again—at the beginning. We can put in new glass which will become "historical" in course of time, but that would not excuse those who first removed the old glass for safety and then scrapped it. It is true that boys' voices will break in a few years, anyhow. But it is not the voice but continuity of tradition which produces the unique style in cathedral singing, a style in composition and performance which has been one of the chief glories of English music, and, it may be said, the envy of other nations, including our present enemies. One generation of boys teaches the oncoming one. How long it would take to produce a Westminster Abbey choir starting from the beginning no one can say, because no one has ever tried to do it. But the decision is made by vote of a Chapter better at casting accounts than at reading a score. It is left to the musician only to deplore the iconoclasm.

Letters to the Editor on this subject included the following from Sir Sydney Nicholson and the Dean of Westminster.

# TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES"

Sir,—The article on "Cathedral Choirs" in *The Times* of November 2 calls public attention to the deplorable decision of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster to disband the boys of Westminster Abbey Choir. I had the honour to be the organist and master of the choristers at the Abbey immediately after the last War, and to be in charge of the music at the many memorable services that were held then—including such wonderful occasions as the burial of the Unknown Warrior and the funeral of Nurse Edith Cavell, to mention only two of the long series. I cannot imagine how the music on these historic occasions could possibly have been adequate had there been no experienced choristers available.

After the present war the Abbey (unless it be destroyed) is certain to be the centre for many equally important national services. What is to happen to the music? For a choir cannot be formed in a day. It is easy enough to disband it, but it will take years to rebuild. That the Choir School could be kept in being in some other locality there can be no question: hundreds of other schools have successfully faced such a removal. But it might entail a good deal of expense. The Dean and Chapter have the administration of large funds. Whether or not these are adequate to meet the calls on them the public have no means of judging. But certainly one of the principal charges on their revenues is the maintenance of the choral services on an adequate scale, and a considerable sum has for many years been spent on the Choir School. Presumably if it is disbanded this will be saved.

Owing to its unique position in the national life, the internal affairs of the Abbey cannot be regarded as of purely domestic concern, and there are certain questions which may fairly be asked.

(1) Can an assurance be given by the Dean and Chapter that the Choir School will be reconstituted as soon as it is safe to bring the boys back to London?

(2) What, meanwhile, is to happen to the money that will be saved by disbanding the choristers and their school?

(3) If the maintenance of the school is beyond the present resources of the Dean and Chapter, would they be willing to issue an appeal to the many who have valued the services of the choristers in the past, in order to assist them to keep the boys together in some suitable locality and to appoint new boys as vacancies arise, so that a tradition of nearly 900 years may be continued and, after the war, an efficient choir



of boys may be ready at once to take its proper place in the Abbey?

Yours faithfully,

SYDNEY H. NICHOLSON, *Director of the School of English Church-Music.*

St. Michael's College, Tenbury, Nov. 4.

#### TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES"

Sir,—Few people have a better right than Sir Sydney Nicholson to be concerned about the fate of the Abbey music, but not even he is so poignantly affected as we are by "the deplorable decision of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster to disband the boys of Westminster Abbey Choir." The decision is deplorable indeed, and only the gaunt spectre of financial stringency compelled us to take so drastic and distasteful a step.

The three questions which Sir Sydney addresses to us can be very summarily answered:—

(1) No one can be more anxious than the Dean and Chapter to see the Choir School reconstituted, and Sir Sydney and his friends can rest assured that we shall set our hands to the task without delay as soon as conditions justify us in so doing.

(2) Sir Sydney speaks a little vaguely about the Dean and Chapter having to administer "large funds" and goes on to ask what is to happen to the money that will be saved by disbanding the choristers and their school. "Large funds" is, to be sure, a relative term. I can only say that the funds at our disposal are a rapidly diminishing quantity owing to loss of income and increased liabilities due to the war, and even if they were not, they would be wholly inadequate to meet our war-time expenditure and taxation. The funds saved by the closing of the Choir School will go towards reducing the formidable adverse balance which we show on our year's working.

(3) Sir Sydney asks whether the Dean and Chapter would be willing to issue a financial appeal to the many who have valued the services of the choristers in the past. I am very much afraid that this is not the moment for such an appeal. Only last week you were good enough to let me mention in your columns our need of financial help in connexion with A.R.P. I am indeed grateful to those who in response have

sent in funds amounting to £604. 5. 6. It may well be that when the war is over we may have to launch a large-scale appeal in connexion with the Abbey and its Choir School. I should be very reluctant to anticipate that appeal by asking help at this precise moment from the many generous friends of the Abbey who almost from day to day are being confronted with even more urgent and immediate calls to help good causes.

Only yesterday the Prime Minister told us that we must be prepared to contemplate the possibility of the war lasting till 1944. Scarcely any of the boys now with us in the School would by then retain their voices unbroken. Moreover, though we have hitherto kept up their musical education in the country, it is now found that the constant interference by air raid alerts makes it more and more difficult to do this efficiently, and the Chapter cannot believe that under existing conditions of national emergency they are justified in spending so large a sum of money in keeping up what, for practical purposes, has ceased to be a choir for the Abbey.

Yours faithfully,

PAUL DE LABILLIERE, *Bishop.  
Dean of Westminster.*

The Deanery, Westminster, S.W.1, Nov. 6.