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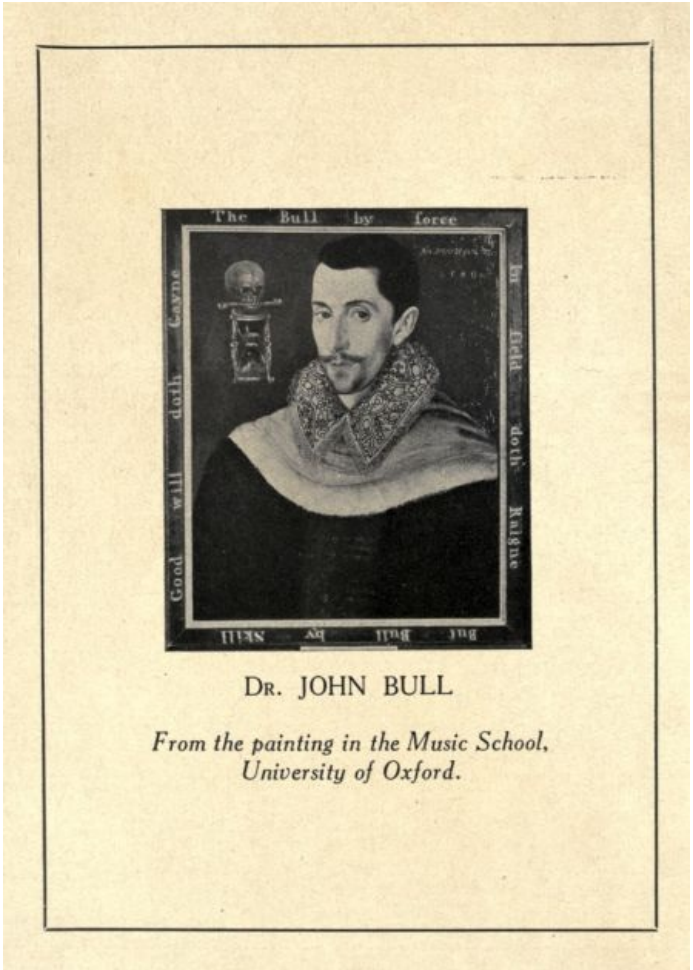

DR. JOHN BULL

From the painting in the Music School, University of Oxford.

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TWELVE GOOD MUSICIANS

From JOHN BULL to HENRY PURCELL

BY

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INTRODUCTORY

In the Preface of his admirable contribution to the *Oxford History of Music* (Vol. III.) the late Sir Hubert Parry writes: "The seventeenth century is musically almost a blank, even to those who take more than the average interest in the Art; and barely a score of composers' names during the whole time suggest anything more than a mere reputation to modern ears." Of course the distinguished author is speaking of the musical world in general, not of our own country's music only. I am inclined to think it is a little severe on us. I have always found that great interest is taken in the 17th century music and musicians of England.

Surely the century which began with the great Madrigal school at its highest point, which saw the Masque at its best in Milton's *Comus*, which witnessed the supersession of the viol by the violin, and which, at the close, had to its credit the complete works of our greatest composer, Henry Purcell, ought not to be in any sense "almost a blank," to English students at least.

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But if our musical students will only read Volume III of the *Oxford History*—so full of the author's admirable criticisms and so amply illustrated by selections from the great composers of the period—they will certainly form a high opinion of what was accomplished then, and, having finished the volume, their minds will assuredly not be a "blank."

To help to a useful view of what was done in our own country in the 17th century I took that period for my University Course in this session 1919-1920, and for my subject Twelve Good Musicians from John Bull to Henry Purcell. The substance of these lectures is given in the following chapters.

For many biographical details and other matter I have availed myself of the valuable articles in Grove's *Dictionary* and in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, which I beg to acknowledge.

To Mr Barclay Squire I am deeply indebted for much information. His work in Musical History is most valuable, and deserves the best thanks of all students.

To my brother, Professor J. C. Bridge, M.A., Mus.D., of Chester, and to Mr Jeffrey Pulver and Dr Borland I am also grateful for many interesting facts contained in these pages.

J. FREDERICK BRIDGE.

The Cloisters, Westminster Abbey, *October*, 1920.

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Twelve Good Musicians

1. DR. JOHN BULL.

1563 (?)—1628.

There is, I venture to think, a fitness in the choice of the first musician of the Twelve to be considered. John Bull is a name familiar to Englishmen, though I do not know that the musician bearing that name has anything to do with the historical and political personage whose jovial portrait is so well known to us. But Dr. John Bull, was the first to hold anything like a University Professorship in London—or indeed in England. It is true Gresham College has not developed into a University, but its founder, Sir Thomas Gresham, certainly seems to have had such an end in view, and John Bull was the first Gresham Music Lecturer. As his successor at Gresham College, and as I have the honour to be the first Musical Professor in the University of London, I think
{2} there is a justification for beginning this course in the University with a consideration of the old Gresham Professor. I must premise that in selecting twelve good men I have by no means exhausted the number of such men available, but I hope to have chosen good representatives of the various Schools and movements in the musical world of England in the 17th century. And, although necessarily concentrating my attention on the selected twelve, yet, of course, undoubtedly I shall make many references to their fellow-musicians both in this country and abroad. But it is to our own men and our own music in the 17th century that I shall direct my chief attention.

To begin then with the first of my twelve good musicians—the first Gresham Professor of Music, Dr. John Bull. Born about 1563 of a Somersetshire family, he became one of the Children of the Chapel Royal (as will be seen, always a great nursery of young English Musicians), his master being Blytheman who, we are told, "spared neither time nor labour to advance his natural gifts."

Organist of Hereford Cathedral for a time, we find him in 1585 a member of the Chapel Royal
{3} Choir—not then organist, a post to which he attained a few years later, succeeding his old master, Blytheman. He was evidently determined to get on in his profession, for, besides all these posts and varied activities, he found time in 1586 to take the degree of Bachelor of Music at Oxford (it being stated he had "practised the faculty of music for 14 years"), following this up with a Doctor's degree—this time at Cambridge.

He appears to have met with a somewhat serious adventure at Tewkesbury, in 1592, "being robbed in those parts." A Mr. W. Chelps, of Tewkesbury showed him "rare kindness" and was rewarded, no doubt by Bull's influence, with the post of a Gentleman Extraordinary in the Chapel Royal.

In 1592 our indefatigable musician took another degree, that of Doctor of Music at Oxford, the delay in taking it having been caused, according to a contemporary writer, by his having met with "rigid puritans there, that could not endure Church Music."

The next important step in his varied career was his appointment as first Gresham Professor of Music. His lectures should have been given in Latin, but he was allowed to deliver them in English. Unfortunately there is no copy of his lectures to be found, but Mr. Barclay Squire in an
{4} article on Bull in the Dictionary of National Biography, gives the following title-page of the first lecture which is all that survives of it:

"*The oration of Master John Bull, Doctor of Music and one of the Gentlemen of his Majestie's Royal Chapel, as he pronounced the same before divers worshipful persons the Aldermen and Commoners of the Citie of London, with a great multitude of other people the* 6*th day of October* 1597, *in the new erected College of Sir Thomas Gresham, Knight, deceased: made in the Commemoration of the said worthy Founder, and the excellent Science of Musicke.* (Imprinted at London by Thomas Este)."

Although a great misfortune that the Lecture itself is not to be found; it is interesting to learn the subject of the oration from the title-page.

It would, however, have been more interesting to read the lecture itself, if only to see what

Bull said about Sir Thomas Gresham and to know his views upon music in general. Of one thing we may be certain: he must have given his audience a real treat by his Clavier performance; for doubtless he obeyed the directions given in the Founder's will—directions which are observed to this day. It was wise on the part of Gresham to insist that the lectures should be adequately
{5} illustrated: an audience gains much from *hearing the examples* which have been commented upon by the lecturer. The directions are:

> "The solemn music lectures twice every week, in manner following, viz: the theoretique part for one half hour or thereabouts, and the practique by concert of voice or instruments for the rest of the hour."

Bull has been credited with the composition of our National Anthem. The matter has been investigated by many, but, so far, there seems no proof of it. We know, however, that he was honoured by King James I, as his name was amongst those to whom were given "gold chains, plates, or medals."

He appears to have been admitted into the freedom of the Merchant Taylors' Company in 1606, and in 1607 he played before the King and Prince Henry when they dined at Merchant Taylors' Hall. According to Stowe, "John Bull, Doctor of Music, one of the Organists of His Majestie's Chapel Royal and free of the Merchant Taylors', being in a citizen's goune, cappe and hood, played most excellent melodie upon a small payre of Organs placed there for that purpose only."

The Musical arrangements for this great City Company's feast were on a very elaborate scale.
{6} Besides Bull's performance (which was apparently for the King only, who dined alone in a separate chamber "where Dr. Bull did play all dinner time"), the Singing Men and Children of the Royal Chapel sang melodious songs, and some of the best singers of the day sang songs by Coperario, from a ship which was suspended in the great Hall. Besides all this the Choir of St Paul's sang songs, the words of which were by Ben Jonson. The King must have had a pretty good programme of music to listen to, unless he spent the evening in his own room where he dined alone—with Dr Bull playing to pass the time.

The numerous singers in the great Hall seem to have been rather a trouble to the givers of the feast. Bull and Gyles, the master of the Children of the Chapel Royal, who performed in the King's chamber, were rewarded the next day by being admitted into the livery of the Company as a recognition of their services at the entertainment, which are stated to have been "gratis, whereas the musicians in the greate Hall exacted unreasonable somes of the Company for the same."

During an absence abroad in 1601 his deputy at Gresham College was Thomas Byrd, son of
{7} the composer W. Byrd. Bull's fame had so spread that he had many tempting offers to attach himself to the "French and Spanish Courts," but he obeyed Queen Elizabeth's order to return to England.

In 1607, on account of a desire to marry, he relinquished the Gresham post, celibacy being one of the conditions of the appointment. The lady of his choice was "Elizabeth Walter of the Strand, maiden, aged about 24, daughter of Walter, citizen of London."

Nothing much is chronicled of him for the next four years, but in 1611 his name heads the list of the Prince of Wales' musicians at a salary of £40 a year, and another mention is made of him in connection with Princess Elizabeth's marriage, on which occasion (Feb. 14th, 1613) a benediction, *God the Father, God the Son*, was sung to an anthem "made new for that purpose by Dr. Bull."

We now come to the mysterious portion of Bull's life which culminated in his flight from England. The first hint is suggested by the following letter from Bull to Sir M. Hicks, secretary to the Earl of Salisbury:

> "Sir,
>
> I have bin many times to have spoken with you, to desire your favor to my Lord and Mr. Chancellor, to graunte me theire favors to chaunge my name, and put in my childes,
> {8} leaving out my owne. It is but £40 by yeare for my service heretofore, the matter is not great, yet it will be some reliefe for my poor childe, having nothing ells to leave it."

The letter proceeds to mention some others whose interest had been moved, and is written in a tone of great humiliation. Was it an instance of coming events casting their shadows before? The following entry in the Chapel Royal cheque-book rather supports the supposition:

> "John Bull, Doctor of Music, went beyond the seas without licence, and was admitted into the Archduke's Service, and entered into paie there about Michaelmas."

Peter Hopkins filled his place, and his quarter's salary, Michaelmas to Christmas, was divided amongst members of the Royal Chapel.

His departure created some sensation, as it is said he "was so much admired for his dexterous hand on the Organ, that many thought there was more than man in him." Wood puts it down to his "being possessed with crotchets, as many musicians are." A letter, however, from the

British Minister at Brussels to King James I, puts a rather different complexion on it. It would appear that the Minister had been charged by James I, to express his displeasure at the
{9} Archduke's want of courtesy in engaging Bull, and in the letter announcing the fulfilment of his mission the Minister says:

> "And I told him plainly, that it was notorious to all the world, the said Bull did not leave your Majesty's Service for any wrong done unto him or for matter of Religion, under which fained pretext he sought to wrong the reputation of your Majesty's justice, but did in that dishonest manner steal out of England through the guilt of a corrupt conscience to escape punishment which notoriously he had deserved and was designed to have been inflicted on him by the hand of justice for his ..... grievous crimes."

It will be noticed the writer scoffs at Bull's religious sensitiveness, but there is no doubt he was, like Byrd, a Papist at heart.

In 1617 he succeeded Waelrant at Antwerp Cathedral, dying in that city on the 12th or 13th of March, 1628, and being buried in the Cathedral.

Bull was evidently well thought of by his Antwerp friends, and Sweelinck, the great Dutch organist, included a Canon by Bull in his work on Composition. Bull returned the compliment by writing a Fantasia on a Fugue by Sweelinck.

Bull is most favourably known as a composer for the Virginals. Many fine examples are to be found in the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, and his powers as performer must have been very great,
{10} judging from his compositions. He joined Byrd and Gibbons in contributing to the celebrated collection *Parthenia* ("the first music for the Virginals ever published in England.") There are examples of his Church Music in Boyce's Cathedral Music (1760), but, like many other specimens contained in that valuable and well-known collection, these compositions of Bull do not seem to me to be the best examples of his powers. A really beautiful little motet contained in Sir William Leighton's *Teares and Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soule* (1614) entitled *In the Departure of the Lord* gives me a very high opinion of his Church Music. It is for four voices and full of beautiful harmony and expressive modulation. Indeed, I think it compares favourably with much of the kind written by contemporary musicians.

I hope to be able to edit it, with other specimens of Bull's sacred music, in the early future.

A portrait exists in the University of Oxford, and round it is written

> "The Bull by force in field doth rayne
> But Bull by skill good-will doth gaine."

A copy of this portrait is prefixed to this book.

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II. WILLIAM BYRD

1542 or 3—1623

A great contemporary of John Bull comes next for consideration. William Byrd is certainly one of the most distinguished of the remarkable company of English composers living in the early years of the 17th century. Curiously enough, he was not included amongst the contributors to *The Triumphs of Oriana*. There may be a reason, of which more anon. Anthony Wood tells us "he was bred up to musick under Thomas Tallis," and the eminent Church musician was god-father to Byrd's son Thomas. Byrd was also Tallis' executor. In early life the subject of my Lecture was Organist of Lincoln, in which city he was married on the 14th of September, 1568. His eldest son was born at Lincoln in 1569, and a daughter in 1571-2. This proves he did not at once come to London on his appointment to the Chapel Royal. This was in 1569, when he succeeded Robert Parsons as Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, the said Robert Parsons having been drowned at Newark in January of that year. It seems probable that Byrd kept up some kind of connection
{12} with Lincoln for some time after his appointment to the Chapel Royal, for an entry in the Chapter Records of Lincoln mentions the appointment of Thomas Butler as Organist and Master of the Choristers on the "nomination and commendation of Mr William Byrd." In London he shared with his old master, Tallis, the post of Organist of the Royal Chapel and he also enjoyed with him a privilege of a more profitable nature, which was no less than a patent, granted by Queen Elizabeth to print and sell music, English or foreign, and to rule, print and sell music paper for twenty-one years, and all other printers were forbidden to infringe this license under penalty of forty shillings. A petition from some printers, having reference to this license, shows it was not altogether a popular privilege. The complainants say: "Byrd and Tallys, her Majesty's Servants, have musicke bokes with note, *which the Complainants confess they would not print*, nor be furnished to print, tho' there were no privilege." I think this may be regarded as a little specimen of professional jealousy.

Whether the privilege was a great financial benefit to the two old Masters one cannot say,

but, anyhow, it was of great advantage in one way, and that was the opportunity it gave of
{13} printing and publishing their own works, and Byrd was not slow in taking advantage of it. In 1575 appeared his first published work, as a set of "Cantiones" in 4, 5, and 6 parts. Some of the compositions were by Tallis and some by Byrd, and they are fine and dignified specimens of both composers. One by Tallis in particular is a beautiful example of his treatment of a Chorale, the parts flowing in charming melody and the whole work abounding in interesting and clever "imitation." I have been able to publish this fine example of early Church music, and it has been well received "in Quires and places where they sing." With the exception of "If ye love me" I do not know any anthem by Tallis which compares with it in solemn and chaste expression. It shows Byrd's old master—one of the founders of our Cathedral music—at his very best.

On the death of Tallis 1585, the patent was enjoyed by Byrd alone, and he made very good use of it. One of his first publications was entitled *Psalmes, Sonets, and Songs of sadness and pietie, made into musicke of* 5 *parts; whereof some of them going abroad among divers, in untrue coppies, are heere truely corrected, and the other being Songs very rare and newly composed, are heere published, for the recreation of all such as delight in Musicke* (1588).

{14} At the back of the title-page of this work are the following "Eight Reasons briefly set down by the Author to perswade every one to learn to sing:"

> 1. First it is a knowledge easily taught and quickly learned where there is a good Master and an apt Scholar.
>
> 2. The exercise of singing is delightful to Nature, and good to preserve the health of Man.
>
> 3. It doth strengthen all parts of the breast and doth open the pipes.
>
> 4. It is a singular good remedy for Stutting[1] and Stammering in the speech.
>
> 5. It is the best means to procure a perfect pronunciation, and to make a good Orator.
>
> 6. It is the only way to know where Nature hath bestowed the benefit of a good voice, which gift is so rare, as there is not one among a thousand that hath it, and in many that excellent gift is lost, because they want Art to express Nature.
>
> 7. There is not any Musicke of Instruments whatsoever comparable to that which is made of the voices of Men, where the voices are good and the same well sorted and ordered.
>
> 8. The better the voice is the meeter it is to honour and serve God therewith, and the voice of man is Chiefly to be imployed to that End."

To the above is added the following couplet:

> Since Singing is so good a thing
> I wish all men would learne to sing.

{15} In the same year appeared a work which was destined to wield tremendous influence upon English Musical Art. This was a collection of Madrigals called *Musica Transalpina*. *Madrigals translated out of* 4, 5, *and* 6 *parts, chosen out of divers excellent Authors, with the first and second parts of La Virginella made by MAISTER BYRD upon two stanzas of Ariosto and brought to speak English with the rest*. The inclusion of his name in this connection gives Byrd the claim to be considered one of the first, if not the first, of English Madrigal writers. And the fact that he contributed to this work may have possibly been the cause of the absence of his name from the collection made by Morley—which, of course, was an imitation of the publication which had appeared some twelve years before. This is merely a supposition, but there must be some reason for the exclusion of such a distinguished composer, and one already famous as a Madrigal writer. It is the more remarkable from the fact that Morley spoke of Byrd with the greatest respect and even affection.[2]

Two years later he wrote two settings of *This sweet and merry month of May* for Watson's
{16} *First sett of Italian Madrigals Englished*. Among his other vocal compositions are *Psalms, Songs and Sonets, some solemne, other joyfull framed to the life of the words*. *Fit for voyces or viols*. He also was a contributor to Leighton's *Teares and Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soul*, the work in which Bull's beautiful Motet appears. One of his works he dedicated to the Earl of Northampton, and the dedication infers that not only had Byrd reason to be grateful to that nobleman, but so also had the Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal, as he seems to have been the means of securing an increase in their salaries. Of course many of Byrd's works were not published, and this is particularly the case with his compositions for the Virginals. Many are in the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*[3] and also in *Lady Nevill's Booke*, which is a collection of Virginal Lessons, copied by a singing Man of Windsor named John Baldwin. Before leaving Byrd's professional life it is interesting to note his connection with another musical worthy contemporary, Alfonso Ferabosco; a joint publication of theirs will show this. It was entitled *Medulla Musicke, sucked out of the sappe of Two of the most famous Musicians that ever lived, Master William Byrd and Master Alfonso Ferabosco, Either of whom having made 40 severall ways (without contention) shewing*
{17} *most rare and intricate skill in 2 parts in one upon the Plaine Song Miserere*. This work was most probably the outcome of a "friendly contention" which they had "each one judging his rival's

work, they both set plaine song 40 different ways."

In private life Byrd's religious feelings made his career rather an anxious one; like many others on the Chapel Royal Staff, though outwardly Protestant, he was probably a Roman Catholic. It was known that the Byrd family were "Papisticall recusants"; as early as 1581 he is mentioned as living at one of the places frequented by recusants, and is also set down as "a friend and abettor of those beyond the Sea, and is said to be living with Mr. Lister over against St Dunstans or at the Lord Padgettes house at Draighton." It is a noticeable thing that though his duties called him to the Chapel Royal, he lived nearly the whole of his life out of London. At one place, Stondon, Essex, he had some sequestrated property granted to him for three lives, but had a good deal of dispute with the previous owners, which went so far as to necessitate the King's intervention. In a law-suit in connection with it "one Petiver submitted the said Byrd did give him vile and bitter words," that when told he had no right to the property replied that "yf he could not
{18} hould it by right he would hould it by might." Byrd lived a long life, and died on July 4, 1623.

The exact entry recording this fact in the Chapel Royal Cheque Book runs "1623, William Byrd, a Father of Musick, died the 4th of July, and John Croker, a Counter Tenor of Westminster, was admitted for a year of probation of his good behaviour and civill carriage."

Mr Barclay Squire has discovered much of interest concerning Byrd, notably his Will. In this he expresses a hope that he "may live and dye a true and perfect member of God's holy Catholic Church, (without which I believe there is no salvation for me). My body to be honourably buried in that parish or place where it shall please God to take me oute of this life, which I humbly desyre (if it shall please God) may be in the parish of Stondon where my dwellinge is, and this to be buried neare unto the place where my wife lyeth buryed."

Of late years much attention has been devoted to Byrd's sacred music, which includes some remarkably fine Masses, some of which have been reprinted and used in the Roman Catholic Church. But Byrd has never been forgotten in the Cathedrals of England, for his Anthem *Bow*
{19} *Thine ear* has always found a place in the lists of the daily musical services. There is, also, a fine specimen of his composition in the volume of Cathedral music published by Dr. Hayes. It has English words, and for a long time appeared in the Abbey list as by Hayes, but it was identified as one of Byrd's Latin motets, and now is ascribed to the rightful owner.

An interesting specimen of his Clavier compositions is to be found in the Fitzwilliam volume being an arrangement of the air *O Mistress Mine*. This is one of the few pieces of Shakesperean music which was published in the Poet's life-time. It is charmingly treated by Byrd. The same air appeared in a work by Morley, an arrangement of various airs for a small Band consisting of the Treble Viol, Flute, Cittern, Pandora, Lute, and Bass Viol. It seems probable that this air was a popular tune and that Shakespeare wrote words to it, or possibly (as he did in *Willo! Willo!*) took the old words which were set to the melody and incorporated them in his play.

A contemporary opinion of Byrd can be gathered from Peacham's estimate of him in the *Compleat Gentleman*. Writing in 1622, he says: "In Motets and Musicks of piety and devotion, as well for the honour of our nation as the merit of the man, I preferre above all other our Phoenix,
{20} Mr. Wm. Byrd, whom, in that kind, I know not whether any may equall, I am sure none excell, even by the judgment of France and Italy. His *Cantiones Sacrae* and also his *Gradualia* are meere Angelicall and Divine and being himself naturally disposed to gravity and piety, his veine is not so much for light Madrigals and Canzonets, yet his Virginella and some others in his first set cannot be mended by the best Italian of them all." And Morley speaks of him as "my loving master, never without reuerence to be named of Musicians."

His name has always been associated with the Canon *Non nobis Domine*, but it would be very difficult to establish his claim to the authorship.

Altogether the old musician has a remarkable list of varied compositions to his credit. Besides those already mentioned he wrote some excellent *Fancies* and *In Nomines* for strings, making a real advance upon the somewhat stilted specimens of Instrumental Music then in vogue, and helping to free the Instrumental form of composition from the vocal. *Fancies* and *In Nomines* I shall speak of in detail in a later lecture.

William Byrd had a long and honourable career and contributed in a remarkable degree to the development of the Art of Music in England in the 17th century. There is much truth in Peacham's verdict that his music "cannot be mended by the best Italian of them all."

[1] *i.e.*, stuttering; originally *stot*, from the German *stottern*. To "stut" is still used in Cheshire dialect, (*v.* Wilbraham's *Glossary of Cheshire Words*.)

[2] It may have been because he was a Roman Catholic and his name would not have been welcome to Elizabeth.

[3] Now published. Edited by Mr. Fuller Maitland and Mr. Barclay Squire.

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III. THOMAS MORLEY.

1557—1603

The next of our twelve musicians in chronological order of birth is Thomas Morley, born in 1557, when Byrd was a young man, though his course was run long before that veteran had finished with the affairs of this world. He was a pupil of Byrd, and was probably a chorister of St Paul's Cathedral. In 1588 he graduated B.Mus. at Oxford, and some three years later was appointed Organist of St Paul's. This position he did, however, not hold long, as in 1592, he was appointed a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. In 1598 he was granted the licence, which had previously been held by Tallis and Byrd, for the exclusive right of printing and selling Books of Music and Ruled Paper, and many of the musical works which were published at that time were issued by Este, Peter Short, William Barley, and others, as the assigns of Thomas Morley. In 1602
{22} he resigned his positions at the Chapel Royal, probably from ill-health, as one gathers from the Introduction to his *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practical Music* that he was rather a confirmed invalid. Some have taken the year of his resignation as that of his death, but there is nothing to support this, and though Hawkins and Burney are at one in placing his death in 1604, the correct date is 1603.

Details of Morley's life are scanty, by his works we must know him. His compositions are both vocal and instrumental, sacred and secular; and, in addition to his work in the various branches of composition, much of his fame rests upon his authorship of the first really satisfactory treatise on music, *The Plaine and Easie Introduction* already referred to.

This work is full of interest, and has been a book of reference and of valuable information to musicians for the past three centuries. Written in the form of a dialogue between Master and Pupil, it contains many quaint discourses, and it is in the early chapters of this work that the story is told of the unfortunate gentleman who could not read music at sight when asked to do so by his hostess, with the humiliating result that the company wondered "where he had been brought up."

Morley's book was translated into German by I. C. Frost, Organist of St Martin's, Halberstadt.
{23} It is interesting to observe that more than one of his works was translated into German (e.g., the *Canzonets or Little Short Songs to Three Voyces*, published here first in 1593, was translated into German and issued at Cassel in 1612 and at Rostock in 1624; and the *Ballets for Five Voyces* of 1595 was issued at Nuremberg in 1609).

This is a striking testimony to his merits, but the most celebrated of his publications was the great edition of Madrigals called *The Triumphs of Oriana*. This is said to have been compiled as a tribute to Queen Elizabeth, whose title of "Gloriana" is well known. In this portly volume he includes no fewer than twenty-six Madrigals, contributed by many of the most famous living English composers. The work helped to make the practice of Madrigal-singing very popular in England, and to this day its influence is great and few programmes of Madrigal-music are ever issued without some specimen taken from this splendid collection.

And it is to Morley we owe a delightful contemporary setting of words by Shakespeare—the beautiful Lyric "It was a lover and his lass" from *As You Like It*. This is one of the very few things
{24} which we possess—with the words by Shakespeare and the music by a contemporary musician. Unfortunately, the charming song has been often sadly mutilated by editors, sometimes by the introduction of unwarranted "accidentals" and also by actual curtailment. I have, however, had the opportunity of referring to one of the few copies in existence of the original publication (formerly in the Halliwell-Phillip's collection), and have so been enabled to issue it in its correct form. Various attempts have been made to arrange it as a duet, on the ground that it was sung in the play by "two pages." The dialogue which precedes the song is very amusing and rather suggests that Shakespeare had some little experience of the peculiar weaknesses of singers, both amateur and professional. The following is the little episode in question:

Enter Two Pages.

1st Page: Well met, honest gentleman.

Touchstone: By my troth, well met. Come sit, sit and a song.

2nd Page: We are for you: sit i' the middle.

1st Page: Shall we clap into't roundly, without
hawking or spitting or saying we are
hoarse; which are the only prologues
to a bad voice?

2nd Page: I'faith, i'faith; and both in a tune,
like two gipsies on a horse.

{25} The words "two gipsies on a horse" have been taken to suggest that as the two gipsies must have ridden one behind the other, the two pages should sing, not in unison, but one after the other. Hence the effort to arrange the music in Canon, as it is termed. But there is no warrant for this; neither will the song admit of it.[1]

With respect to his Instrumental writing, in addition to many examples for the Virginals, he wrote for combined instruments, as will be seen later. Much of his Virginal-music is contained in the *Fitzwilliam Collection*, and in Will Forster's *Virginal Book* in Buckingham Palace. For combined instruments may be mentioned the seven Fantasias, and there is also a collection called *First Book of Consort Lessons for Six Instruments, Lute, Pandora, Cittern, Bass Viol, Flute and Treble Viol*. Writing on this collection Dr Burney does not take a very high estimate of its musical value: "they seem to have been intended for Civic Feasts" (he says), "and Master Morley,
{26} supposing perhaps that the harmony which was to be heard through the clattering of knives, forks, spoons, and plates, with the jingling of glasses and clamorous conversation of a City feast, need not be very accurate or refined, was not very nice in setting parts to these tunes, which are so far from correct that almost any one of the City Waits would have vamped as good an accompaniment on the spot."

I question if Dr Burney is justified in this scathing criticism. I do not suppose he ever heard them performed, for the good reason that there is no complete set of parts to be found, and there is no record of any such being in existence in his time. A few years ago I did my best to get these little "Band tunes" performed, but at first only the Viol and Flute parts could be found. Later on I was fortunate enough to discover a Cittern part in the Bodleian Library, and, later still, a part for the Pandora has been found in the Christ Church Library. We still want the parts for Lute and Bass Viol, but with these four we get a very good representation of the original, and at the Exhibition initiated by the Worshipful Company of Musicians we had one of these little tunes played by the six instruments, under the direction of the Rev. W. Galpin. We had to supply parts
{27} for Lute and Bass Viol, but as we had the original Harmony supplied by the Flute (i.e. a small Recorder), which was an inner part, and by the Cittern and Pandora—both of which played Chords—we could not go far wrong. The effect was both interesting and charming, and altogether discounted Burney's unreliable criticism. It would be a great delight to all lovers of this early music if the two missing parts could be found, but I fear we shall hunt in vain.

His Sacred works include two Services and an Anthem, which was published in Barnard's collection, and a setting of the Burial Service, which appears in Boyce's collection. There are also examples, in MS. amongst the Harleian MSS., in the Christ Church Library at Oxford, and the Fitzwilliam and Peterhouse Libraries at Cambridge. A curious thing, rather, in connection with his Sacred works is, that, unlike his secular compositions, none was published during his lifetime.

His style was not so broad as that of Tallis or so noble as that of Byrd, but he had a great influence upon the art. His own compositions include examples of his talent in many directions. As a theoretical writer he is really distinguished above his contemporaries, and contributed to the stores of Sacred, Secular, and Instrumental music, besides writing for the stage.

{28} Morley's early death was a real loss to English music, and he was mourned by all his contemporaries. One of the most touching testimonies is a beautiful *Lament for Six Voices* by Thomas Weelkes, himself a distinguished composer, whom we shall consider later. The words are as follows:

A remembrance of my friend Mr. Thomas Morley.

Death hath deprived me of my dearest friend,
My dearest friend is dead and laid in grave,
In grave he rests until the world shall end,
The world shall end, as end must all things have.
All things must have an end that nature wrought
That nature wrought must unto dust be brought.

Another poetical testimony to Morley was written in his life-time, and may be given here. It is supposed to be by Michael Drayton:

Such was old Orpheus' cunning,
That senseless things drew near him;
And herds of beasts to hear him.
The stock, the stone, the ox, the ass came running.
Morley! but this enchanting
To thee, to be the music god, is wanting;
And yet thou needst not fear him.
Draw thou the shepherds still, and bonny lasses,
And envy him not stocks, stones, oxen, asses.

[1] Mr Arkwright gives us an interesting bit of information in connection with Morley and Shakespeare. "Morley lived in St Peter's, Bishopsgate, between 1596 and 1601, and his name appears in two *Rolls of Assessments for Subsidies*. In the earlier of these documents is the name of William Shakespeare, his goods being valued at the same amount as Morley's. He and Shakespeare both appealed against the assessment, and it may be supposed some amount of personal intercourse existed between them."

{20}

IV. THOMAS WEELKES

1575?—1623

In the previous Lecture I have mentioned Thomas Weelkes, and now turn for a short space to this distinguished composer. As I have said before, I do not profess to include all the great English musicians of the 17th century in this short series of Lectures, and Weelkes is selected, not only as being greatly superior to many others, but because he has given us something original in the shape of combined Instrumental and Vocal work, in addition to his valuable contributions to the Madrigal School. Of this I must speak later. As a Madrigal-writer he is notable as one of the "glorious company" of contributors to *The Triumphs of Oriana*. Although little of his Church music is published, yet as Organist of Chichester Cathedral and, as a member of the Choir of the Chapel Royal, he was an experienced Church musician. He left many Anthems,
{30} which are preserved in MS. in various Libraries; and he contributed two pieces to Leighton's *Teares and Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soul*. In his *Fancies for Strings* he displays a very fertile imagination. I have had some of his *Fancies* performed at my various Lectures, and have found them remarkable for melodic interest and very advanced as regards Harmony. His instrumental writing is surprising; and, when one compares his Fancies with those by Orlando Gibbons, one is astonished at the novelty of his ideas. As will be seen later I shall have much to say in connection with Gibbons, Deering, and Purcell in regard to the Fancy. But I may as well at once explain that this was the form which was supreme in the early days of the 17th century as a vehicle for Instrumental writing. An enormous number of these compositions exist, and it was not until Purcell's time that the Fancy disappeared—being supplanted by the Sonatas for three strings and a Basso Continuo. It was a form which helped on the progress of writing for Instruments in a wonderful way. "Apt for Voices and Viols" was the usual title-page which composers loved. But, when the Fancy developed, the writing was far too elaborate to be "apt for voices," and so we get the independent instrumental Fancy. It was, as a rule, a work of some considerable length, and,
{31} while full of variety, it was lacking in any real development. The composer indulged his "Fancy," and wandered from point to point at his own sweet will.

It was with the Fancy that Weelkes made an early experiment of adding a vocal part quite independent of the strings. And he took for his vocal part the popular series of "Cryes" which were then common to the streets of London. He did not, as has so often been wrongly stated, "set the Cryes of London to music," but he took the words and the music of these old and very interesting things and added the vocal part to what was a real Fancy for strings. It is said Morley did the same thing, but I have, so far, failed to find any example of it. Ravenscroft took many of these same old Cryes and worked them up as Rounds, and Campion introduced *Cherry Ripe* into a charming song "There is a Garden in her face" in 1617; but the *Humorous Fancy* by Weelkes is, so far as I can see at present, the earliest of this kind of work. Later, in connection with Gibbons and Deering, I shall have much to say on this subject, as these composers also wrote *Humorous Fancies*, the vocal parts being the same old Cryes of London but treated in a more elaborate manner.

{32} Weelkes' example is very charming, and although his string parts are somewhat stilted, yet there is always life in them. He makes one point which shows he was not altogether able to forget his Madrigals and Ballets. Like the latter, the *Fancy* at one point leaves its regular course, and for a few bars a delightful Dance tune is introduced, to the words—whatever they mean —"Twincledowne Tavye." It is as if the vendors of fish, fruit and vegetables met in the street and had a bit of a frolic together. The Fancy is resumed with the Cryes of the Chimney Sweep, Bellows-Mender etc., and later on a beautiful song for the seller of "Broome" is introduced. The words of this song date back before Weelkes, being found with slight variation in an old play called *Three Ladies of London*, 1584. They are sung by a character named "Conscience" who enters with brooms, and sings the song.

No doubt the tune given by Weelkes is the original one.

The conclusion of this Fancy is very charming and rather like an Anthem:

Then let us sing
And so we will make an end
With Alleluia.

{33} There are two MSS. of this work in the British Museum. I have followed the shorter version, as the longer is not only rather dull and prolonged but includes a little deviation into vulgarity, and so is hardly suitable for modern ears. The "Alleluia" occurs in the longer MS. and I have

included it in my version.

It is fortunate that there are two sets of parts, as neither of them is complete. But having been so fortunate as to find these two sets I have been able to restore the missing part.

The discovery of this Fancy is the reason why I select Weelkes instead of Wilbye, one of his great contemporaries, and I think all lovers of Shakespeare will be glad to make acquaintance with the music of the *Cryes of London* which saluted the Poet's ears in his daily walks.

Weelkes paid a loving tribute to "his dearest friend" Morley, on the latter's death. The date of Weelkes' death (1623) and other particulars have been brought to light by the investigations of the Rev. Dr. Fellowes, whose devotion to the madrigal school is so well known and appreciated. His paper on Weelkes (Musical Association, May, 1916) is an eloquent testimony to the worth of this composer, to whose madrigal writing I have not space quite to do justice. The *Humorous Fancy*, however, shows him in a new and interesting light.

{34}

V. ORLANDO GIBBONS

1583—1625

Orlando Gibbons is certainly the most outstanding name of the English musicians in the early part of the 17th century. A good deal of this is, no doubt, due to the fact that his contributions to Sacred Music have been one of the great possessions of our Cathedral School, and their presence in service lists has been—and I venture to hope will always be—a constant tribute to their excellence.

Gibbons' upbringing was, of course, such as turned his mind naturally, though by no means exclusively, to Church Music.

He was the son of one of the City waifs of Cambridge, William Gibbons, and was born in 1583. Placed in the Choir of King's College, he is mentioned amongst the Choristers during the years 1596-97; at which time his elder brother, Edward Gibbons, was Organist of the College. It
{35} might be noted in passing that this Edward Gibbons was himself a B.Mus. of both Universities; and, after occupying an appointment at Bristol at the beginning of the 17th century, was, later, organist and Priest Vicar at Exeter Cathedral, where he had to answer a charge of neglecting his duties; this, however, he managed to do successfully. He died about 1653.

To return to Orlando. There are some interesting entries in the College Records of 1601, 1602, and 1603, of sums of from 2s. to 2s. 6d. paid to Gibbons—or Gibbins, as it is there spelt—for music composed "*in festo Dominae Reginae*," and also in the two latter years for music for the Purification. No Christian name is given, but there is little doubt it was Orlando Gibbons. He was placed in an important and honourable appointment at an early age, for in 1604 he became Organist of the Chapel Royal, and in 1606 took his bachelor's degree at Cambridge.

In 1611 his name appears as an associate with Byrd and Bull in a work called *Parthenia*, a collection of pieces for the Virginals of which I shall speak later on.

We do not hear much more of him until 1612, with the exception of a mention in the State Papers of that period, wherein we find a petition in 1611 to the Earl of Salisbury "for a lease in
{36} reversion of forty marks per annum of Duchy lands, without fine, as promised him by the Queen." The year 1612 sees the publication of his *First sett of Madrigals and Mottets of* 5 *parts, apt for viols or voyces*. *Newly composed by ORLANDO GIBBONS, Batchelor of Music, Organist of H. M. Chapel in Ordinary*. The work is dedicated to Sir Christopher Hatton, and the dedication runs thus: "They were most of them composed in your owne house and doe therefore properly belong to you. The language you provided them, I only furnished them with tongues to utter the same." It is thought from this that Sir C. Hatton wrote the words, as Gibbons was on terms of close intimacy with him. Another proof of this is shown by a piece in Ben Coszyn's *Virginal Book*, where Gibbons is represented by a "Hatten's" Galliard. The collection, *Madrigals and Mottets*, is rather misleading as to title, for there is not one Motet in it, though there are thirteen Madrigals, some divided into 2, 3 and 4 sections, each as long as an ordinary Madrigal. One of the 'sett' is *The Silver Swan*.

It has been stated that besides the published Madrigals, no secular or vocal compositions exist in MS. except a kind of *Burlesque Madrigal* called *The Cryes of London for* 6 *voices*.

{37} This statement is altogether incorrect. To mention one, a song, *A Soldier's Farewell to his Mistress* ("My love, adieu") is in existence, and I have often had it performed. And the statement about the *Burlesque Madrigal* is truly absurd. It is curious that the musical historians have, as in Burney's case, either neglected to notice the existence of the work on the Cryes of London, or have, quite incorrectly, called it a Madrigal. It is a particularly interesting form of composition. Like Weelkes' *Humourous Fancy*, it has parts for Viols and a superimposed vocal score for S.A.T.B. (not 6 voices) consisting of the Old Cryes of London. But it differs in one respect from

Weelkes', for it is an "In Nomine" for strings. This is an older form of the Fancy, and has the peculiarity of one part for the Viol—an inner part—being allotted a well-known old ecclesiastical melody. This Plainsong melody is to be found in the *Sarum Missal* to the words "*Gloria Tibi Trinitas*," and, curiously enough, the same Plainsong is used by many composers of "*In Nomines*," Byrd and Ferabosco amongst others. But this is the only example I have come across where a sacred melody is introduced in connection with secular, and, in the case of Cryes, somewhat
{38} humourous words. Examples of the introduction of secular tunes into the sacred works by composers of the Italian school of the 16th century are, of course, very common. This is a curious reversal of the custom, i.e. the introduction of a sacred tune into a secular vocal work. It says much for Gibbons' skill that he is able to write very effective and flowing Viol parts and to introduce so many examples of the old Cryes, quite untrammelled by the Plainsong persistently played by one of the Viols. The copy from which this interesting work is taken is a MS. written by Thomas Myriell in 1616, so the Fancy was composed before that date. The copyist who preserved this work for us was the Rector of St Stephen's, Wallbrook, the church adjoining the Mansion House. Between 1612 and 1622 must have been published the best known Fantasies by Gibbons, for the collection is dedicated to Edward Wray as one of the Grooms of the Bedchamber, and Wray was dismissed in 1622. *Fantasies of Three parts composed by Orlando Gibbons, Batchelor of Musick, and late organist to His M. Chapel Royal in Ordinary*. Cut in Copper, the like not here-to-fore Extant. The word "late" is rather surprising, when he is not recorded to have resigned his position at the Chapel Royal. He was appointed Organist of Westminster Abbey in 1623.

{39} These Fantasies were published by The Musical Antiquarian Society in 1843; and in some respects this publication has been the cause of a good deal of ignorance as to the real progress which Instrumental music made in the early years of the 17th century. They are undoubtedly somewhat dull when placed by the side of Fancies by Byrd and others. No doubt the veneration for Gibbons and the rightful appreciation of his fine Cathedral music made the members of the old and valuable Musical Antiquarian Society more ready to edit his Fancies than to select from less eminent Church writers. But one cannot have much respect for Burney's judgment when he pronounces Orlando Gibbons to have been "utterly contemptible in his productions for instruments." He must be judged alongside of other 16th century composers; for, although he indeed lived through the first quarter of the *seventeenth* century, his instrumental music is characteristic of the *sixteenth*.

In common with other composers of his day, Gibbons shows in his Clavier works an earlier and more successful attempt at a true Instrumental style than he does in his music for Strings.
{40} The Viols were later in forsaking the vocal polyphonic style than the keyed instruments, simply because the vocal style suited the bowed instruments so much better than the Clavier. So we find composers for the Clavier borrowing the rhythmic features of folk-songs and dance-tunes much earlier than they found it desirable or necessary to do in Viol music.

Out of six pieces by Gibbons in *Parthenia*, three are dances (a Pavane and two Galliards); one (*The Queenes Commande*) is an air with variations; and the other two are the *Preludium* (a piece of very simple harmonic design, with florid figuration like the early organ preludes) and a quite remarkable *Fantasia in four parts*—remarkable because rather exceptional as a Clavier piece, and also because of its protracted and serious working in the Canzona style. In the *Fitzwilliam Collection* the only pieces by Gibbons are an air with variations, *The Woods so Wilde*, and a Pavane—the latter, however, being identical with *The Lord of Salisbury his Pavin*, which is found also in *Parthenia*.

With regard to the Fancies written for "Base Viall," "Mean Viall," and "Trebble Viall," after the manner of the period, these were published absolutely devoid of any indications of pace, of phrasing, or of expression. To this fact is probably due some of their loss of popularity. They
{41} require artists to interpret them, and in good hands are capable of considerable effect in the old quaint style. The robust tones of the modern 'Cello, Viola and Violin can hardly give us a correct impression of these pieces, but by muting them a very good suggestion of "Viall" tone is obtainable.

One may mention another "Fancy" written this time for two "trebble Vialls" and a "Base." Whether it is the difference of the instruments, or the fact that it is a later number in the collection and may therefore be a later composition, I cannot say; but there is a distinctly more modern spirit about this "Fancy." It is more rhythmic, the sections are more marked, and at the end there is a complete repetition of an eight-bar phrase, the only difference in the repeat being that the first viall here takes the second part, and *vice versa*.

In the domain of Sacred Music Orlando Gibbons certainly holds the foremost place amongst the English composers of the contrapuntal school. No name is better known in our Cathedrals. In great gatherings of Cathedral Choirs in my young days (alas! we do not now have such gatherings to any great extent) Gibbons' splendid Service in F was always an item to which we
{42} looked forward. And he has left us almost as great a collection of anthems as Purcell did in later years. Many of them were composed for special occasions. One was a wedding Anthem "for my Lord Somerset"; another "made for the King's being in Scotland" (this was, of course, James I, and it was from this Anthem I extracted the splendid concluding "Amen" which was sung at the Coronations of King Edward VII and King George V, and which is now the recognized "Abbey Amen").

The Anthem "This is the record of John" has a string accompaniment for Viols; this was "made

for Laud, President of St John's, Oxford, for St John Baptist's Day." Another "Behold thou hast made my days" was composed at the entreaty of Dr Maxey, Dean of Windsor, "the same day se'night before his death."

Mention must also be made of "O clap your hands," which has always had a suspicion attached to it of having played the part of Dr Heyther's Doctor's Exercise. This suspicion is deepened by the fact that Dr Cummings possessed a MS. of it with the following inscription upon it: "Dr Heyther's Commencement Song Composed by Dr Orlando Gibbons". They both took their
{43} degrees at Oxford on the same occasion viz: the foundation of the Camden History Professorship. Heyther was a Lay Vicar of Westminster, and it was he who founded the Oxford Music Lecture, now represented by the Professorship. It was originally worth £3 a year. The degrees were conferred on the two friends of Camden at his special request.

Gibbons was also a contributor to Wither's *Hymns and Songs of the Church*. Withers himself pays him the following tribute: "He hath chosen to make his music agreeable to the matter, and what the common apprehension can best admit, rather than to the curious fancies of the time; which path both of us could more easily have trodden."

Gibbons appears to have had a sense of humour, judging from a letter which we found in the Westminster Abbey Muniment Room some years ago. I believe this is the only letter of Gibbons' that is known. It is addressed to the Treasurer of the Abbey, asking that the organ-tuner, one Burrard, might be paid; it runs as follows:

> Mr. Ireland: I know this bill to be very resonable for I have alredy cut him off ten shillings therfore I pray despathe him, for he hath delt honestly wth ye church soe shall I rest yr servant,
>
> Orlando Gibbons.

The whole bill was very small, and by "cutting him off ten shillings" I think old Orlando was rather hard!

{44} We get a glimpse of Orlando Gibbons' organ-playing in the Abbey from the *Life of Archbishop Williams*, sometime Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. The French Ambassadors who came over to arrange the marriage of the Prince of Wales (afterwards Charles I) with Henrietta Maria were entertained at supper in the Jerusalem Chamber. But before the Supper we are told "The Embassadors, with the Nobles and Gentlemen in their Company, were brought in at the North Gate of the Abbey, which was stuck with Flambeaux everywhere that strangers might cast their eyes upon the stateliness of the Church. At the Door of the Quire the Lord Keeper besought their Lordships to go in and take their seats there for a while. At their entrance the organ was touched by the best Finger of that age, Mr Orlando Gibbons. The Lord Embassadors and their Great Train took up all the stalls where they continued about half-an-hour, while the Quiremen, vested in their Rich Copes, sang three several Anthems with most exquisite voices before them."

This Dean Williams was a very great man, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England, Bishop of Lincoln, and afterwards Archbishop of York; he was Dean of Westminster in 1620. We are told
{45} in his *Life*, written by John Halket, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry: "He procured the sweetest music both for the organ and for voices of all parts, that ever was heard in English music. In those days the Abbey and the Jerusalem Chamber, where he gave entertainment to his friends, were the votaries of the Choicest Songs that the Land has heard. The greatest masters of that delightful faculty frequented here above all others." I think it must be to this patron of music that we owe the fine collection of Madrigals and Motets (including the very rare and valuable books of Deering) which are now preserved in the Abbey Library.

This account of the perfection of the music at the Abbey in these remote days, under the fostering care of a Dean distinguished both as a statesman and a musician, may perhaps be followed by a contemporary description of the members of a choir—not, of course, of the Abbey Choir in particular by another Dean. This was Dean Earle, the first Dean after the Restoration. But the work from which I quote was first printed in 1628, so that it is only a year or two after the time of Gibbons. Earle was not Dean of Westminster until more than 30 years later. The book is entitled *Microcosmographie: a piece of the World discovered in Essays and Characters*, and
{46} was first published anonymously. I hope this description of what the writer calls "A Merry Crew, the Common Singing-men in Cathedrall Churches," is not a true description of the great body of such choirs at the time, but it is worth quoting.

> *The Common Singing-men in Cathedral Churches*
>
> Are a bad Society, and yet a Company of good Fellowes, that roare deep in the Quire, deeper in the Taverne. They are the eight parts of speech, which goe to the Syntaxis of Service, and are distinguish't by their noyses much like Bells, for they make not a Consort but a Peale. Their pastime or recreation is prayers, their exercise drinking, yet herein so religiously addicted that they serve God oftest when they are drunke. Their humanity is a legge [=consists in a bow] to the Residencer, their learning a Chapter, for they learne it commonly before they read it, yet the old Hebrew names are little beholden to them, for they mis-call them worse then one another. Though they never expound the Scripture, they handle it much, and pollute the Gospell with two things, their Conversation and their thumbes. Upon worky-dayes they behave themselves at Prayers as at their pots, for they swallow them downe in an instant. Their Gownes are

> lac'd [=streaked] commonly with steamings of ale, the superfluities of a cup or throat above measure. Their skill in melody makes them the better companions abroad, and their Anthemes abler to sing Catches. Long liv'd for the most part they are not, especially the base, they overflow their banke so oft to drowne the Organs. Briefly, if they escape arresting, they dye constantly in God's Service; and to take their death with more
> {47} patience, they have Wine and Cakes at their Funerall: and now they keepe the Church a great deale better, and helpe to fill it with their bones as before with their noyse.

This quotation must not be taken too seriously. Earle's book was written when he was a young man, probably under the inspiration of Casaubon's translation of the fourth-century Theophrastus' *Characters* published in 1592. It consists of 77 "Characters," some of them serious studies, and others, such as the above, humorous or satirical sketches, not intended to be true representations, yet containing a basis of truth. Richard Baxter, writing to Earle, says: "In charity, and gentleness, and peaceableness of mind, you are very eminent."

A very unusual adventure is chronicled as having taken place on St Peter's Day, 1620: "Eveseed, Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, did violently and sodenly without cause runne upon Mr Gibbons, took him up and threw him down upon a Standard whereby he received such hurt that he is not yet recovered of the same, and withal he tare the band from his neck to his prejudice and disgrace."

In 1625 Gibbons had to compose and direct the music for the reception at Canterbury of Henrietta Maria, on the occasion of her marriage with Charles I. It was to be his last commission, for he died on Whitsunday, June 5th.

{48} With regard to his death, we have always been led to believe that he died of small-pox—all the histories, including the admirable Grove's *Dictionary*, have taught us so. Mr W. Barclay Squire, of the British Museum, has, however, shown this to be incorrect. In a letter, which he found among the State Papers, from Sir Albertus Morton to Lord Edward Conway, and endorsed "Mr Secretary Morton, touching the Musician that dyed at Canterburie and supposed to have died of the plague," a medical certificate is enclosed signed by Drs Poe and Domingo, stating that his sickness was at first "lethargicall" followed by convulsions: "he grew apoplecticall and so died"—thus refuting the small-pox theory in favour of apoplexy.

His portrait is in the collection at Oxford, and a fine monument with an excellent bust was erected in Canterbury Cathedral by the composer's widow.

It was my privilege to suggest and organize a Musical Festival of Gibbons' works in Westminster Abbey in 1907. Some of his finest Church music was given by a very large choir, and a beautiful replica in black marble of the bust of the composer, which is in Canterbury Cathedral,
{49} was unveiled. It has always seemed to me a reflection upon the Abbey that no memorial to the greatest of its organists—save Purcell—should be found there. This Festival created very great interest, and brought a munificent offer from Mr Crews, a well-known amateur and Master of the Worshipful Company of Musicians, to defray the expense of a bust of the celebrated organist. It is well placed in close proximity to the memorials of his worthy successors, Blow, Purcell, and Croft.

{50}

VI. RICHARD DEERING

1580 (?)—1630

In considering the careers and works of the first five musicians on my list of twelve, I have, it is true, been treating of men whose names are to be found in all musical histories. But of the next name on my list I am able to say I am on comparatively new ground. There is nothing so surprising to me as the universal neglect—nay, I may even use the word disdain—with which musical historians of many periods have treated the name of Richard Deering. In common with most people of my own age I knew very little about this composer, and certainly in common with, I venture to say, all my contemporaries, I never heard a note of his music until a few years ago.

The story of my awakening to the real merits of this admirable composer is simple. Looking over the music in the Chapter Library at Westminster, I found among many fine collections of Madrigals—original copies, mostly published in the 16th and early part of the 17th centuries—
{51} two sets of Latin Motets in 5 and 6 parts by Richard Deering. They were bound up in covers made out of an illuminated MS. On looking at the bindings, our late Dean, Dr Armitage Robinson (always interested in the Library, and also, I may add, in my musical researches) found that they were part of the Wedding Service of the fourteenth century. The binding was promptly taken off, the Deering books rebound, and handed on to me. I proceeded to score some of the first book—published in 1617—and had not done many bars before it was plain I was indeed about to unearth a treasure. Full of beautiful Harmony and Contrapuntal devices with examples of melodic progressions, new and original, these works were speedily brought to a hearing at my Gresham Lectures, and, with as little delay as possible, edited (with English translations), published, and introduced into the Abbey Services. Since then many Cathedrals and great Churches have used

them. The Bach Choir has performed some of them, and Deering's fame has, I hope, been re-established!

I may say, before proceeding to give details of Deering's career, that nearly a hundred years ago an effort was made by a musical amateur to get these Motets scored. By a curious chance I have come into the possession of letters which passed between the owner of copies of these fine
{52} things and Mr Sale of Westminster Abbey. The owner was the Rev Thomas Streatfeild, Vicar of Chart Edge, a well-known Kentish antiquary, and he came into possession—probably at a sale of some of the old Deering books—of a set of parts of these Motets. He applied to Mr Sale (a very prominent member of the musical profession, a Lay-Vicar of Westminster Abbey and a principal singer at the "Ancient Concerts") to get these Motets scored for him. A letter from Sale's daughter apologizes for delay, and says "her father does not think it will be worth while to go to any great expense, as he has tried some parts of it (*i.e.* the music of the Motets) with some who are used to and admire that ancient style of music and they do not form a very high opinion of it!" Curiously enough, a few bars in score of one of the most beautiful Motets was enclosed with a note from a copyist saying that it would take much time and be very expensive. So Deering's Motets were laid to rest again for nearly 100 years. I may add Mr Sale was the music instructor to Queen Victoria when she was a child.

Mr Streatfeild's copies of the 1617 Motets (*uncut!*) were sold (at his death) by auction, and fetched £4 16s. 0d.

{53} The neglect of Deering is certainly extraordinary. He was, as usual, absurdly criticized by Dr Burney, who spoke of his music as "very sober, innocent, psalmodic, dry, and uninteresting," and further he "was never able to discern in any of his works a single stroke of genius, either in his melody or modulation." And Sir Frederick Ouseley actually writes of his style as "severe and correct, but very dry"! These verdicts amaze me! They are absolutely untrue, at least as regards Deering's great works, his Motets. I question if Burney or Ouseley ever heard one of them. They may have founded their opinion upon some of his less important works, published by Playford some 30 or 40 years after Deering's death, which Playford himself does not vouch for as being certainly by Deering. And, as regards Deering's Fancies, I can hardly believe either Burney or Ouseley had any real knowledge of them, for one which I produced at a University Lecture in 1912 was of a high order of merit.

That Deering was appreciated at his proper value by his contemporaries is apparent from the way in which Peacham, in his *Compleat Gentleman* (1622) couples his name with others "for depth of skill and quickness of concept." Almost the only bit of information which historians tell
{54} us is that "Cromwell was very fond of his music," and that John Kingston, the organist, with two of his boys, often sang Deering's music to the Protector. The mention of "two boys" points to the Two-part Motets as being the music performed—not, of course, to the Motets for five or six voices. Mace in his *Musick's Monument* (1676) mentions Deering's *Gloria Patri* and other of his Latin settings.

I must now turn to the personal history of this good musician.

Richard Deering was descended from an ancient family—the Deerings of the County of Kent. The branch from which Richard Deering traces his descent was the one headed by William Deering of Petworth, in co. Sussex, and his wife, Eleanor Dyke. The Deering of this sketch was the son of Henry Deering of Liss, near Petworth, by the Lady Elizabeth Grey. He died in 1630.

It is stated by Anthony Wood that Deering was "bred up in Italy, where he obtained the name of a most admirable musician. After his return he practised his Faculty for some time in England, where his name being highly cried up, became after many entreaties, Organist to the English Nuns living at Brussels." It is not easy to discover anything about Deering's Italian life or work.
{55} My friend, the Rev Dr Spooner Lillingston, made some Inquiries for me in Italy, and is kind enough to write as follows:

"The Earl of Kent's family (of which Deering's mother was a member) remained Catholic for many years, and this family, half a century before, seem to have intermarried with certain of the Italian nobility. Lady Elizabeth Grey does not appear in any record of the Greys of Kent. May not Deering's mother have been of Italian extraction? Hence his Catholic religion and Italian training."

As to his Italian sojourn Dr Spooner Lillingston continues: "There is no record of his first Communion at St John Lateran, so probably he did not go to Italy until about ten years of age, all such records of First Communions made in Italy being registered at St John's Lateran." Dr Lillingston also tells us there is a record of an 8-part Motet by Deering having been performed in one of the Churches, the title being *O quam Gloriosa*.

That Deering studied hard and composed while in Italy seems pretty certain. Judged from an observation in his "Dedication" of the 1617 Motets it would appear that it was in Rome that he wrote them. In this dedication he speaks of having composed them in the chief city of the world. I
{56} cannot help thinking that "the chief city of the world" to Deering—a Catholic—was Rome.

Almost the first fact of which we have very certain knowledge in connection with his life in England is the "Supplication" which he made for the degree of Bachelor of Music at Oxford, in

April, 1610. In answer to an inquiry, the Keeper of the Archives said that there is a record of Deering's supplication, and it is stated that his plea is granted "providing he shall have composed a work of eight parts for the next 'Act.'" Dr Scott, the learned custodian of our Abbey Muniments for many years, made some inquiries for me on this matter, and gives the following note which he had apparently received from Oxford:

> "Supplicateth in like manner Richard Deering, a scholar most highly trained in music, of Christ Church, forasmuch as he hath spent ten years in the study and practise of music, that this may suffice for him to be admitted to the lectures of the music of Boethius."

The statement by Deering that he had spent "ten years in the study and practise of music" absolutely disposes of the legend, so often repeated, that Deering published a set of 5-part
{57} Motets in Antwerp, in 1597. I have always entirely doubted that this had any foundation in fact. I believe it is a misprint for 1617, and it was not likely twenty years would elapse between the publication of two sets of Motets by so prolific a composer. "Ten years" makes the date of Deering's *studies* to begin in 1600, so he could not have published in 1597. I am glad to be able to correct this error on the authority of the Master himself.

It is very amusing, and rather annoying, to see how the musical historians have copied from one another the most untrue statements about Deering. Burney, Hawkins, and Mr Husk in the first edition of Grove's *Dictionary*, *all* give 1597 instead of 1617; and Burney and Hawkins say he was forced to leave England when the troubles of Charles I began. Hawkins says he was Organist to Henrietta Maria until *she* was compelled to leave England. The fact is Deering was dead before all this! He returned to England as Organist to Henrietta Maria in 1625, and died in 1630.

But space would fail me to point out more of the absurd statements about this musician. Let me rather now turn to his greatest contribution to our musical treasures.

I leave for a time further comment upon his work in England, and proceed to consider his
{58} magnificent Motets. It appears that on the invitation of the English nuns at Brussels he proceeded to that city and became Organist to the Convent. It was whilst there that he published in 1617 his fine series of *Cantiones Sacrae* for five voices; this was issued from the press of Peter Phalese in Antwerp. There are 18 Motets, all to Latin words, for five voices, and "Basso Continuo" for Organ.

I have already spoken of the way I made acquaintance with these masterpieces. It is very gratifying to find the increased favour with which they are received and the frequent performance of them by great choirs. The ignorant accounts of them which I have quoted shake one's faith in the opinion of such writers on other musical works.

{59} The first set of Motets was dedicated to a remarkable personage, Sir William Stanley,[1] and the Preface is so interesting I feel justified in giving it (with the title-page). The original Dedication is in Latin, but I give it in a translation.[2]

{60} In the second set, published in 1618, Deering claims to have written in the Madrigalian style. It looks as if he had tried to imitate the Madrigals he had heard, and to adapt some of the phrases to sacred words. I do not think the second set is as good as the first. But there are some very fine things in it, one of the best being "Silence prevailed in Heaven," a dramatic account of St Michael's war with the Dragon. I have had this printed, and it produces a splendid effect, and hope in time to restore to life many more of these unknown and really beautiful masterpieces.

I have not space to chronicle all Deering's musical works. But I must conclude this notice by some account of his secular music, and, more particularly, his remarkable *Humorous Fancy, The Crycs of London*. This is the third of these interesting Fancies which I have had the opportunity
{61} of recovering from oblivion. I have already in the case of Weelkes and Gibbons explained the circumstances attending this recovery. Deering's *Fancy* is the most elaborate of the three, and, besides a number of *Cryes* which the other musicians omitted, he has preserved to us some most interesting and charming Tradesmen's Songs—those of the Swepe, the Blacking-seller, the Vendor of Garlick, the Rat-catcher, and the Tooth-drawer. The whole *Fancy* is full of life, and shows Deering to be both dramatic and humourous. This work (and a similar one on *Country Cryes*) were written before he left England for Brussels, as the copy in the British Museum was made 1616.

There are a few Anthems scattered about in various Libraries, but as a Catholic his contributions to English Cathedral music would, no doubt, be few. Some are to be found in Durham Cathedral Library. On the marriage of Charles I, he was appointed Organist to the Queen Henrietta Maria. On July 11th, 1628, his name appears in a list of musicians in ordinary to the King, and he was evidently a member of the King's Private Band.

Most historians have stated that he lived to 1657, but this is just as incorrect as their other
{62} statements concerning Deering and his music. I have devoted much time to the elucidation of the history and the reproduction of his work, and feel in doing this I have helped to restore to his rightful place one of the greatest English musicians of the 17th, or indeed of any, century.

[1] Sir William Stanley was a Roman Catholic and a very extraordinary man. I think the following account from the *Dictionary of National Biography* will be of interest.

Sir W. Stanley, Adventurer, one of the Cheshire Stanleys. He served in the Netherlands under Alva. He quitted the Spanish service in 1570 and served in Ireland under Elizabeth, and later on was appointed Sheriff of Cork. He was very severe on the rebels and he reported he had hanged 300 of them and so terrified the rest that "a man might now travel the whole country and no one molest him." He thought he was not properly rewarded, and later on was guilty of treachery. He was, of course, Roman Catholic and greatly in the confidence of the Jesuits. He actually went to Spain to advise the best method of conquering England. He recommended that Ireland should be made the basis of operations, and that troops should disembark at Milford Haven rather than at Portsmouth. When Elizabeth died Stanley sent no less a person than Guy Fawkes, his subaltern officer, with an emissary of Catesby to Spain, to warn Philip against James. There is no evidence that he was concerned in the Gunpowder Plot, but he was placed under arrest at Brussels on suspicion of being concerned in it.

He spent the latter part of his life in complete obscurity. In 1616 he contributed largely to a Jesuit College of Liége, and was Governor of Mechlin. He sought in vain for permission to return to England, and died at Ghent in 1630, and was honoured with a magnificent public funeral. He married Elizabeth, daughter of John Egerton of Egerton, who was buried in Mechlin Cathedral, in 1614. The male line of the Stanleys of Horton became extinct by the death of the twelfth baronet Sir John Stanley-Errington in 1883.

[2] Cantiones Sacrae for 5 Voices
with Basso Continuo for Organ.

by

RICHARD DEERING, Englishman,
Organist to the venerable
English Nuns in the Monastery
of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Brussels.
Antwerp.
at the house of Peter Phalese
1617.

Dedication

To Sir William Stanley, Knight, renewed at home and in Military life, Councillor at war to the most honourable and invincible Catholic King, his most worshipful Lord.

For long my Music has desired to come forward. She is not unpolished (for she was born in the first City of the World) but she is modest. For it is customary with new men, especially those that are bashful, not to bring their offspring however excellent to the light, until they find some distinguished man, whose approval if they win, they need fear neither the abuse of rivals nor the criticism of the ignorant.

But what patron should my music choose in preference to your lordship? When permitted to relax your mind from military cares, you think no delight, no pleasure greater than music. To music you give the chief place after war, in which none surpass you. Therefore let my child go forth with you for its patron. If you are the first to smile upon it as it takes its first modest steps, you will give it wonderful courage, for greater things. Live, flourish and conquer.

In War we long for Peace; Peace endeth wars,
Music makes jocund Peace to know no jars.

Your most obedient servant,
R. Deering.

{63}

VII. JOHN MILTON

1553—1646-7

To many the name of John Milton will hardly suggest a musical composer. And yet I am able to include this name—the name of the father of the poet—among the band of "Good Musicians" whose careers and works I am considering. I have always felt greatly interested in him and desired to find out all I could of his personal history, and particularly of his musical education, for undoubtedly in the elder Milton we have a really accomplished musician. We are told he educated his distinguished son in music, and that he had an organ in his house.

Dr Burney gives a very good and concise account of him, upon which I cannot improve and from which I venture to quote. (Burney, Vol. III, p. 134):

"We come now to John Milton, the father of our great poet, who though a scrivener by profession, was a voluminous composer, and equal in science, if not genius, to the best musicians of his age: in conjunction and on a level with whom, his name and works appeared in numerous

{64} musical publications of the time, particularly in those of old Wilbye; in the *Triumphs of Oriana* published by Morley; in Ravenscroft's *Psalms*; in the *Lamentations* published by Sir William Leighton; and in MS. collections, still in the possession of the curious.

Mr Warton, in his Notes upon Milton's *Poems on Several Occasions*, tells us, from the MS. *Life of the Poet* by Aubrey, the antiquary, in the Mus. Ashm. Oxon, that Milton's father, though a "scrivener," was not apprenticed to that trade, having been bred a scholar and of Christ Church, Oxford; and that he took to trade in consequence of being disinherited.

His son celebrates his musical abilities in an admirable Latin poem, *Ad Patrem*, where, alluding to his father's musical science, he says that Apollo had divided his favours in the sister arts between them; giving Music to the father and Poetry to the son.

> Nor blame, Oh much-lov'd sire! the sacred Nine,
> Who thee have honour'd with such gifts divine;
> Who taught thee how to charm the list'ning throng,
> With all the sweetness of a siren's song;
> Blending such tones as every breast inflame
> And made thee heir to great Orion's fame.
> By blood united, and by kindred arts,
> On each Apollo his refulgence darts:
> To thee points out the magic power of sound,
> To me the mazes of poetic ground;
> And fostered thus by his parental care,
> We equal seem Divinity to share." (*Translation*).

{65} The elder Milton was born in 1553, and is said to have been in the choir of Christ Church, Oxford. His father was a Roman Catholic, and it is said he disinherited his son for abjuring the Catholic faith. The son went to London, and became a member of the Scriveners Company (1599-1600). In 1632 he retired to Horton, in Buckinghamshire, having made a considerable fortune. In London he lived in Bread Street, where John Milton, the poet, was born. He contributed an admirable six-part Madrigal to *The Triumphs of Oriana* (1601), Motets to Leighton's *Teares and Lamentations* (1614), and Tunes to Ravenscroft's *Psalter* (1621). There are various Anthems and Fancies in five and six parts in MS. in various libraries.

Now here is a man who contributed to three or four important musical publications, and was included in a list of the best known English composers. Had he been a professional musician he could not have done more. But we know he was a scrivener. What was he before he became a scrivener? and whence did he get his musical knowledge? If we could prove that the suggestion is true which makes him a Chorister at Christ Church, Oxford, we should know where he probably
{66} got his musical knowledge and his proficiency in Latin. But this information seems to be impossible of proof. For the purpose of these Lectures I have devoted a good deal of time to this subject. Dr Strong, the Dean of Christ Church, now Bishop of Ripon, has been kind enough to look into the matter very carefully, and he writes me the following interesting letter:

> Christ Church,
> Oxford.
> June 25, 1919.
>
> My dear Bridge,
>
> I am sorry to say that I cannot discover anything about Mr. John Milton, Senior. We have here a very important series of books called Disbursement books. These contain a sort of summary statement of the payments made under various heads. But what makes them of interest is that all the members of the Foundation, from the Dean down to the cook, received their payments through the Treasurer and signed a receipt for them in the book. So there is a whole list of signatures beginning about 1570 and going down (with the exception of the Civil War period) to about 1830, when new methods were adopted. It is always possible to discover by this who held each office, and whether they were in residence on a particular day. Unfortunately, they do not go back beyond 1570. I searched through a volume in hopes that Mr. Milton or the organist might be among the signatories. The singing-men and even the choristers are there. But apparently at that time there was no organist, and certainly there is no allusion to Milton or any names such as you want, I think. It is a great pity we have not got the books from the beginning:
> {67} the first 23 years would have been very useful. Also, my matriculation book, which is in this house, is very inaccurate and incomplete for the earlier years. I am afraid, therefore, I cannot help you as regards Mr. Milton. You will understand how very interesting these signatures are when I say that in the volumes I looked at the other day I found a whole series of signatures of Richard Hakluyt the geographer, who was a student of the House.
>
> Yours very sincerely,
> THOMAS B. STRONG.

It is very unfortunate that the records in Christ Church do not exist before 1570. But it may be remarked, if Milton the elder was born in 1553, he would be seventeen in 1570, and would therefore certainly have left the choir of Christ Church, if he ever belonged to it; and this, of course, before the entries began. As to this matter, there are one or two facts brought out in *Notes and Queries* some years since which bear upon it.

Richard Milton, the grandfather of the poet, although a Roman Catholic, appears to have been Churchwarden of the Parish (Stanton St John) in 1552. Mr Allnutt, of Oxford, who contributed this bit of historical knowledge, writes: "Does this render it less probable that the Poet's grandfather was Richard Milton of Stanton, or are other instances known of Roman
{68} Catholics serving the office of Churchwarden under the Protestant regime of the period?" (*N. & Q.*, Feby. 1880; W. H. Allnutt, Oxford.)

In the same paper, a little later, Mr Hyde Clarke writes on the subject of Milton's father being a choir-boy at Christ Church: "My Oxford and other correspondents, including Mr Mark Pattison, the eloquent critic of the Poet, who has laboured in this investigation have looked unfavourably on my proposition (*i.e.* that he was a Chorister of Christ Church), because they consider the Roman Catholic *recusant* can never have sent his son to any heretical school. An answer is now given in my favour by Mr. Allnutt, because if in 1552 Richard Milton could serve as Churchwarden, the other matter of providing a scholarship for his son was but a small one. It is further probable that Richard Milton became a confirmed Roman Catholic only in his later years."—Hyde Clarke.

I think it is quite possible and even very probable that Milton's father learnt his music at Christ Church. Then who taught him? Whoever it was, he turned out a thoroughly good musician. Milton's own compositions prove it, and, as we have seen, he is associated with all the best English composers of the period in more than one work. Coming to London, we are told he had
{69} an organ and other instruments in his house and to the practice of music he devoted his leisure. Masson says: "His special faculty was music, and it is possible on his first coming to London he had taught or practised music professionally." He was evidently in the musical world of London, and his house was probably the resort of many of the best musicians of the time.

The short Motet for *Teares and Lamentations* is in a good contrapuntal style, with many devices which a man would use if he had been educated in a Cathedral Choir. The style had "eaten into his marrow," as old Sir John Goss once said to me, in reference to a Chorister's daily musical work.

Another interesting matter is Milton's contribution to Ravenscroft's *Whole Book of Psalms*, published in 1621. Here are found two tunes credited to John Milton, but I think there is no doubt they were merely harmonized by him. The best one is a tune still often sung in our Churches—entitled *York*: this seems to be an old Scottish tune; it was published in Edinburgh in 1615. It appears three times in Ravenscroft's book and with different harmonies, two of them being by the elder Milton. The melody in this tune is, of course, given to the tenor, as was the custom at this
{70} time. The tune has always been a favourite, and an old author says that "it was so well known that half the nurses in England used to sing the tenor part as a lullaby."

This sounds rather startling! One would not believe that any baby could be put to sleep by hearing the tenor part of any hymn-tune. But the tenor part here is the melody, and really it has a gentle, swaying style about it, so that I, for one, believe the story of the Nurses and the Babies!

The melody is given in *English Country Songs* edited by Miss Broadwood and Mr Fuller Maitland, allied to some amusing words.

Although we cannot claim the elder Milton as a musician who did much to advance the art, I think I may be forgiven for having included his name in my list. So little is said about him in musical histories, and I have been able, I think, to get together some comparatively unknown matter regarding him, that I hope I have done right in giving a place among my Twelve Good Musicians to John Milton the elder.

{71}

VIII. HENRY LAWES

1595—1662

In Henry Lawes we have a subject of particular interest. No musician of the 17th or probably of any century, has been so praised by the poets, and few musicians of reputation have been so disdainfully treated by the old musical historians. I think we shall find Henry Lawes worthy of inclusion amongst the Twelve Good Musicians with whom I am dealing. His life was a chequered one. He lived in troublous days, and in an era of great changes in the political and musical worlds. Born in 1595, at Dinton, in Wiltshire, he became a pupil of Giovanni Coperario (or John Cooper, to give him his English name), and I think this had a considerable influence on the direction which his compositions took, and about which I shall say more later. We find him a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1625, and later on a Gentleman of the Private Music to King
{72} Charles the First. On the breaking out of the Rebellion, he lost his posts, and employed himself principally in teaching singing. He lived a long life; long enough to see the Restoration, and to compose the Coronation Anthem for King Charles the Second, dying in 1662.

Lawes' contributions to English music begin with the Masque. The earliest date seems to be

1633-4, when he set the songs in a Masque written by Thomas Carew, entitled *Coelum Britannicum*. This was written at the particular invitation of the King, and performed for the first time at Whitehall.

The poem was published in 1634 and was wrongly attributed to Sir William Davenant. Another Masque, by James Shirley, *The Triumph of Peace*, was produced in the same year, Lawes and another well-known musician, Simon Ives, writing the music, for which they received the sum of £100. The following year saw the production of *Comus*, the greatest of Masques. It will be seen that Lawes differed from most of our English Composers in devoting himself, at the outset of his career, almost exclusively to the stage. I cannot help thinking this is to be explained by the fact that he was not educated in a Cathedral Choir, but was a pupil of Giovanni Coperario. Now this
{73} musician had an experience which few of his contemporaries enjoyed. He studied in Italy—going there as plain John Cooper and returning to his native country as Giovanni Coperario. His sojourn in Italy was at a remarkable time; the time when the first Opera and the first Oratorio were given. It is very interesting to be told—and I have been told on the authority of my friend Rev. Spooner Lillingston—that among the names given in a certain record of the performance of the first Opera was found that of the Englishman, Giovanni Coperario. This seems to me to be an important fact. Lawes would come under the influence of Coperario, who, with his love for Italian music and experience of the beginning of Opera would, no doubt, help Lawes to take up the music of the stage, instead of the music of the Church.

Our composer was not, however, long before he embarked on some Church music by setting *A Paraphrase upon the Psalms of David* by George Sandys, and also contributing another volume of tunes to *Church Psalms*, in which he was joined by his clever brother William, who was, later on, killed at the siege of Chester.

Among the commendatory poems prefixed to this volume was the well-known sonnet by Milton addressed to Lawes, beginning:

{74} Harry, whose tuneful and well measured Song
First taught our English musick how to span
Words with just note and accent——

He was a prolific writer of songs and Masque-music, but his great opportunity was in writing the music and producing Milton's *Masque of Comus*, at Ludlow, in 1634. Milton was a friend, and I think there is no doubt a pupil in music of Lawes. Milton's father had much music in his house in Bread Street, and no doubt, Lawes was among the eminent musicians who gathered there. When Milton's father removed to Horton, in Buckinghamshire, we are told that the young Milton came up to London to receive instruction in music, as well as in other things. It was Lawes who apparently got Milton to write the Masque, which he desired to produce at Ludlow Castle in September 1634. The story of Comus and its origin is so well known that I need not dwell upon it. The music of the Masque was not published in the composer's life-time, but, curiously enough, it was Lawes who edited Milton's Poem in 1637. This was published without the name of the poet appearing[1], and was dedicated to Viscount Brackly, one of those who took part in the
{75} performance at Ludlow. In the dedication Lawes says: "Although not openly acknowledged by the Author, yet it is legitimate offspring, so lovely, and so much to be desired, that the often copying of it hath tired my pen to give my several friends satisfaction, and brought me to the necessity of producing it to the public view."

Unfortunately we have only five songs of the original music. There are a great number of places in the Masque for which Milton desires music—and many directions for instrumental movements particularly. What these were we do not know. The merits of Lawes' music have been decried, but having edited the *Comus* music, after careful correction from Lawes' original MS., which I was fortunate enough to be able to see[2], I am confident that all who hear it will find the songs full of beauty and expression, and well worthy of the words to which they were so admirably fitted.

I must not dwell longer upon *Comus*, for there is much to be said about Lawes' other work.

Playford was a great patron and admirer of Lawes. He published no fewer than three books of *Ayres and Dialogues*, which contain some charming settings of excellent poetry. The first book of
{76} *Ayres* was dedicated to his pupils, Lady Alice Egerton and her sister, daughters of Lord Bridgwater, and in it he says: "No sooner had I thought of making these public than I resolved upon inscribing them to your Ladyships; most of them being composed when I was employed by your ever honoured Parents to attend your Ladyships' education in music."

Lawes is often said to have "introduced the Italian style of music into this kingdom," but this is hardly correct. That he admired and understood the Italian style is quite certain. His studies with Coperario would have influenced him in that direction, and he himself, in one of his numerous Prefaces (and he was a great writer of Prefaces), speaks of the Italians as being great masters of music, but at the same time he contends "that our own nation has produced as many able musicians as any in Europe." He laughs at the partiality of the age for songs sung in a foreign language. In one of the prefaces to his *Book of Ayres* he says: "This present generation is so sated with what's native, that nothing takes their ears but what's sung in a Language which (commonly) they understand as little as they do the music. And to make them a little sensible of this ridiculous humour I took a Table or Index of old Italian Songs (for one, two, and three

{77} voyces), and this Index (which read together made a strange medley of nonsense) I set to a varyed Ayre, and gave out that it came from Italy, whereby it hath passed for a *rare Italian song*. This very song I have since printed."

This shows him a real humorist, and it is, I should suppose, the first real Comic Song! It is set quite in the style of an Italian song, with much declamation and with some charming melodious phrases. I have often had it performed at my Lectures, and when sung in Italian it is listened to very stolidly, but when the English translation is given it creates much hilarity. I give the English translation, whereby it will be seen it is indeed "a strange medley of nonsense."

The title is given in Lawes' book as *Tavola* (i.e. a Table or Index):

Tavola.

In that frozen heart .... (for one voice)
Weep, my lady, weep, and if your eyes .... (for two voices)
'Tis ever thus, ev'n when you seem to sive me,
Truly you scorn me.
Unhappy, unbelieving,
Alas! of splendour yet!
But why, oh why? from the pallid lips
And so my life .... (for three voices).

{78} There is no doubt Lawes was a well-educated man, and it was certainly one of the reasons why he set words with "just note and accent," and obtained the great praise of so many contemporary poets. It is said he never set bad poetry[3]; and he set songs to Italian, to Spanish, and even to Greek words. An interesting fact in connection with his love for good poetry is given in J. P. Collier's *Catalogue of Early English Literature in the Bridgwater House Library*, 1837. Amongst the books catalogued is a volume of poems by Francis Beaumont, which was presented to the Earl of Bridgwater by Henry Lawes. The following inscription is found fastened to the cover:

> For the Right Honble. John, Earl of Bridgwater, my most honoured Lord, from his Lordship's most humble servant
>
> Henry Lawes.

The Earl of Bridgwater is the Nobleman for whom *Comus* was produced.

Lawes was a real champion of English music and English musicians, and certainly understood
{79} what he was writing about. Although somewhat lengthy, I really cannot refrain from giving the Preface to one of his *Books of Ayres*, which goes into this subject. It is both amusing and improving, and deserves to be read by all.

> To all Understanders or Lovers of Musick.
>
> In my former you saw what temptations I had to publish my Compositions: and now I had not repeated that Error (if it prove to be one) but upon the same grounds, back'd with a promise I made to the World.
>
> Though the civill Reception my last Book found were sufficient invitation, for which I gladly here offer my Thanks, especially to those worthy and grateful Strangers, who are far more candid and equall in their Censures than some new Judges of our own Country, who (in spite of their starrs) will sit and pronounce upon things they understand not.
>
> But this is the Fate of all mankind, to be render'd less at home than abroad. For my part I can say (and there are will believe me) that if any man have low thoughts of mee, hee is of my opinion. Yet the way of Composition I chiefly possess (which is to shape Notes to the Words and Sense) is not hit by too many: and I have been often sad to observe some (otherwise able Musicians) guilty of such Lapses and mistakes this way. And possibly this is it makes many of us hear so ill abroad; which works a Beleefe amongst ourselves, that English words will not run well in Musick: This I have said, and must ever avow, is one of the Errors of this Generation.
>
> I confess I could wish that some of our words could spare a Consonant (which must
> {80} not be slur'd, for fear of removing those Landmarks in spelling which tell their Originall); but those are very few, and seldom occur; and when they do, are manageable enough by giving each syllable its particular humour; provided the breath of the sense be observed. And (I speak it freely once for all) that if English words which are fitted for song do not run smooth enough 'tis the fault either of the Composer or Singer.
>
> Our English is so stor'd with plenty of Monosyllables (which, like small stones, fill up the chinks) that it hath great priviledge over divers of its neighbours, and in some particulars (with reverence be it spoken) above the very Latin, which Language we find overcharg'd with the letter (S) especially in (bus) and such hissing Terminations. But our new Criticks lodge not the fault in our words only; 'tis the Artist they tax as a man unspirited for forraign delights: which vanity so spreads, that those our productions they please to like must be born beyond the Alpes, and father'd upon Strangers. And this is so notorious, that not long since some young Gentlemen, who were not untravell'd, hearing some Songs I had set to Italian words (publickly sung by excellent voyces) concluded those songs were begotten in Italy, and said (too loud) "they would faine heare such

songs to be made by an Englishman." Had they layd their sceane a little nearer home, there had been more colour; for, a short Ayre of mine (neare 20 years old) was lately reviv'd in our neighbour Nation, and publickly sung to words of their own as a new borne piece, without alteration of any one Note: Tis the Ayre to those words, "Old Poets Hippocrene admire etc." a sorry trifle (a man would think) to be rais'd from the dead after 18 years burial. But (to meet with this humour of lusting after Novelties) a friend of mine told some of that company, that a rare new Book was come from Italy, which taught
{81} the reason why an Eighth was the sweetest of all notes in Musick; because (said he) Jubal who was Founder of Musick was the eighth man from Adam; and this went down as current as my songs came from Italy. I beg your pardon for instancing such particulars. But there are knowing persons, who have been long bred in those worthily admired parts of Europe, who ascribe more to us than we to ourselves; and able Musicians returning from Travaill doe wonder to see us so thirsty after Forraigners.

For they can tell us (if we knew it not) that Musick is the same in England as in Italy; the Concords and Discords, the Passions, Spirits, Majesty and Humours, are all the same they are in England; their manner of composing is sufficiently known to us, their best Compositions being brought over hither by those who are able enough to choose.

But we must not here expect to find Music at the highest, when all Arts and Sciences are at so low an ebbe. As for myself, although I have lost my Fortunes with my Master (of ever blessed Memory) I am not so low to bow for a subsistence to the follies of this Age; and to humour such as wil seem to understand our Art, better than we that have spent our lives in it.

If anything here bring you benefit or delight, I have my design. I have printed the Greek in a Roman Character for the ease of Musicians of both sexes.

Farewell,
H. L.

This is in the Second Book of *Ayres and Dialogues. Dedicated to the Hon. the Lady Dering, wife to Sir Edward Dering, Bart*.

{82} During the Civil War he appears to have lived in London, composing and teaching. His compositions for the Church in the way of Anthems were but few. As we have seen in his early days, he preferred the stage, and during the Commonwealth there was no inducement to write Cathedral music. But the words of several of his Anthems are to be found in Clifford's *Divine Services and Anthems*, published in 1666.

In 1656 he joined Captain Cooke and others in writing music for Davenant's *First Day's Entertainment at Rutland House*, e.g., declamation and music. A little later he assisted in the production of *The Siege of Rhodes*, which Roger North calls a semi-opera.

This was produced during the Commonwealth, and is of particular interest from the fact that Purcell's father, Henry Purcell the elder, took part in the performance. This is the first notice we get of the Purcell family, about whom I hope to say more in a later Lecture. It is an interesting fact that the composer of the music to the last important Masque (Milton's *Comus*) should have helped also in what was apparently the first English Opera.[4]

{83} Lawes at the Restoration was re-appointed to his Chapel Royal post, and composed the Anthem *Zadok the Priest* for the Coronation of Charles II. He did not long survive the revival of his fortunes. He lived in the little Almonry at Westminster, the block of ancient buildings in which the Purcell family lived. He probably knew the young Henry Purcell, then a child of tender years, and one wonders if he detected the musical genius of the little boy.

We get a glimpse of him in his last days from the *Diary* of Samuel Pepys, who, on December 30th, 1660, makes the following entry:

> Mr. Child and I spent some time at the Lute, and so promising to prick me some lessons to my theorbo he went away to see Henry Lawes who lies very sick.... I to the Abbey, and walked there, seeing the great companies of people that come there to hear the organs.

The Coronation was in April, 1661, so Lawes recovered from his illness, though he died the following year. He was buried in the Cloisters of Westminster Abbey though unfortunately there is nothing to mark the spot of his interment. I think it is probably in the "Little Cloister" as Dr Wilson, a brother musician, was interred there a few years later.

In Henry and William Lawes we have "two noble brothers" who deserve to be remembered with affectionate respect. The portraits of both are preserved at Oxford.

[1] The Author's name first appeared in the 1645 edition.

[2] It is in the possession of the Rev. Dr Cooper Smith, and is contained in a large volume of songs, all in the handwriting of Lawes.

[3] One of his most beautiful songs, *The Lark*, contained a curious misprint which I have

been able to correct. The song was printed by Playford, after Lawes' death, so he could not correct the proofs. The second line stands

"While nights *shall be* shades abide."

This always struck me as odd, and when I saw the original in Dr Cooper Smith's book I looked for this line. It reads:

"While night's *sable* shades abide."

It has been reprinted many times with the typographical error, but I hope it is now put right.

[4] It was in this performance that a woman (Mrs Coleman) first appeared upon the dramatic stage in this country.

{84}

IX. MATTHEW LOCKE

1630 (?)—1677

A prominent personage in the seventeenth-century musical world was Matthew Locke. The exact date of his birth is not known, but it was approximately 1630. Matthew Locke laid the foundation of his art as a chorister in an English Cathedral, and at Exeter there is evidence that he occupied that position in 1638. The evidence cannot be disputed, as it is graven in the very fabric of the old Cathedral. The embryo musician took the trouble, upon two occasions, to inscribe his name upon the walls of the Cathedral, together with the dates. Upon the inner side of the old organ screen runs the legend "Matthew Lock, 1638," and in a more abbreviated form at a later date "M. L., 1641." As a boy he seems to have been content with a name of four letters *Lock*; in his later years he always attached a final "e" to his patronymic. At Exeter he had the advantage of being trained by Edward Gibbons, brother of the great Orlando, and, in addition to Gibbons'
{85} share in his training, he owed much to William Wake, Organist, for whom he wrote one of his first published works.

The period following Locke's later inscription—1641—was one not calculated to encourage or foster the art of music; the country was in a state of civil war, the soldiers of Cromwell wrought sad havoc in the Cathedrals, and the musical portions of those establishments came in for no small share of their destroying wrath.

At Westminster Abbey we are told "the soldiers brake down the organs for pots of ale," and the Cathedral at which Locke served his pupilage fared very badly at the hands of the Roundheads.

It is natural, then, that during the stormy times which marked that period we have little intelligence concerning the doings of Locke. We have the dates of some of his compositions, one as early as 1651. The chief interest, however, which attaches to his work between 1650 and 1660 is that it is so much connected with the stage, and in that way marks the progress towards the Opera, of the English form of which Locke is sometimes credited with being the originator. As instances of this kind of work we might, perhaps, draw attention to his association with
{86} Christopher Gibbons in Shirley's Masque *Cupid and Death* (1653), and the music he wrote in 1656 for Davenant's *Siege of Rhodes*, in the production of which he himself shared—playing the part of the Admiral. Henry Lawes wrote some of the music of this Opera, and Purcell's father was one of the actors.

The next item of importance that we have concerning him is in the *Diary* of Samuel Pepys; there, under date February 21st, 1659/60, we read:

> "After dinner I back to Westminster Hall. Here met with Mr. Lock and Pursell, Master of Musique, and with them to the Coffee House, into a room next the Water by ourselves. Here we had a variety of brave Italian and Spanish Songs, and a Canon of eight voices which Mr. Locke had lately made on these words 'Domine Salvum fac Regem,' an admirable thing."

This is a very interesting entry. It shows Locke associated with Purcell's father; it gives another instance of Mr Pepys never missing the opportunity of cultivating the friendship of good musicians, and, apart from the musical side, as an historical matter of interest the words of the Canon *Domine Salvum fac Regem* show the feeling of loyalty towards the Crown which ended in the Restoration; words which ten years before it would have been a heresy to utter. It may be
{87} pointed out that the entry February, 1659, by the old way of reckoning, was really February, 1660, and therefore the year of the Restoration. In the Ceremonies connected with that great event Locke played an important part; it was to his music for *Sagbutts and Cornets* that the Royal Progress was made, from the Tower to Whitehall, the day before the Coronation 1661. As a reward he was made "Composer in ordinary to His Majesty," and "One of the Gentlemen of His Majesty's Private Musick."

For the next year or two he appears to have been engaged in composition, both for Church and stage; amongst the former may be mentioned some Anthems, whilst his music for Stapylton's *Stepmother* presents another instance of his association with dramatic music. This dramatic side of his nature may have been the cause of Roger North's complaint that "he sacrificed the 'old Style' for the modes of his time" and of "his theatrical way."

The year 1666, the year of the Fire of London, is rather an important one in the consideration of Locke's life. It introduces us to him in another character, and that of a literary type. As will be seen later, he was a scathing and bitter critic of his detractors, and first gave evidence of this
{88} quality in the year now under notice. The cause of this outpouring of his wrath was the treatment a Kyrie of his composition had received at the hands of the Chapel Royal choir. It would appear that he had set the Kyrie in an original way, giving different music to each response; such an innovation did not meet with the approval of the Choir, and they seem to have given it rather a rough time. The result was that Locke published it, and supplied a Preface entitled "Modern Church Music; Pre-Accused, Censured, and obstructed in its performance before His Majesty, 1st of April, 1666. Vindicated by its Author, Matthew Locke." Some of his observations are very severe and abusive. I give a small portion of the somewhat long and windy preface.

> "He is a slender observer of human actions who finds not pride generally accompanied with ignorance and malice, in what habit soever it wears. In my case zeal was its vizor and innovation the crime. The fact, changing the custom of the Church by varying that which was ever sung in one tune, and occasioning confusion in the Service by its ill performance. That such defects should take their rise from the difficulty or novelty of the composition I utterly deny, the whole being a kind of counterpoint, and no one change from the beginning to the end but what naturally flows from, and returns to the proper centre, the key".

With regard to the Vindication, however convincing it might be, I believe the Kyrie was not performed again at the Royal Chapel.

{89} Pepys refers to the incident in his *Diary* of September 2nd, 1667, in which he says: "Spent all the afternoon, Pelling, Howe and I and my boy, singing of Locke's response to the ten commandments, which he hath set very finely, and was a good while since sung before the King, and spoiled in the performance which occasioned the printing them, and are excellent good." Mr Pepys evidently sympathized with the lacerated feelings of the injured author.

I may say that some little time ago I edited these *Kyries* and the *Creed*, and they have been sung in the Abbey and in various Cathedrals. The *Kyries* are, many of them, very tuneful, and the whole setting of *Kyrie* and *Creed* does Locke great credit.

I have not space to dwell longer upon his Church music, of which we have some excellent specimens in the way of Anthems.

Somewhat later he was appointed Organist of the Chapel at Somerset House; this Chapel was part of the establishment of Queen Catherine, the Queen of Charles II, who throughout her life remained a Roman Catholic. It would appear from Roger North that Locke was not altogether a success in this position. He says: "Locke was organist of Somerset House Chapel as long as he
{90} lived, but the Italian Masters that served there did not approve of his manner of play; but must be attended by more polite hands, and one while, one Signor Baptista Sabancino, and afterwards Signor Baptista Draghi used the Great Organ, and Locke (who must not be turned out of his place, nor the execution) had a small Chamber Organ by, on which he performed with them the same Services." This seems a somewhat humbling position for such a man—and one wonders what he said about it!

Another sharp controversy he took part in was in answer to Mr Thomas Salmon, M.A., of Trinity College, Oxford, who had written and published *An Essay to the Advancement of Music by casting away the perplexity of different cliffs and writing all sorts of music in one universal character*.

The desire to simplify musical signs seems to have been an old theme and one that gave rise to a fierce controversy between Matthew Locke and Mr Salmon. It is only fair to say that Mr Salmon was not over judicious in his method of recommending his scheme. He seems to have purposely hit out at music masters (of whom Locke was one of the most eminent), and suggested
{91} that their opposition to his ideas sprang from the sordid desire to make as much as they could out of their pupils, by keeping them as long as possible under tuition.

Matthew Locke replied to this in a treatise entitled *The Present Practice of Musick vindicated against the exceptions and new way of attaining music lately published by Thomas Salmon, M.A.* The controversy was very warm. You shall hear a short address "To the Reader" which will give some idea of the style of discussion Locke adopted.

> Though I may without scruple aver that nothing has done Mr. Salmon more kindness than that his books have had the honour to be answered, yet I have been forced to afford him this favour rather to chastise the Reproaches which he hath thrown upon the most eminent Professors of Musick than for anything of learning that I found in him. Those gentlemen he accused of ignorance for not embracing his illiterate absurdities for which it was necessary to bring him to the "Bar of Reason" to do him that justice which his follies merited. Though for the fame he gets by this, I shall not much envy him, with

whom it will fare as with common criminals, who are seldom talked of above two or three days after execution.

A little farther on he gets angry and says:

> Had I been "purblind," "copper-nosed," "sparrow-mouthed," "goggle-eyed," "hunch-backed" or the like (ornaments which the best of my antagonists are adorned with) what work would there have been with me?

{92} Attention has already been directed to Locke's association with dramatic music, and so it would be well to glance briefly at the claim he possesses to be considered the "Father of English Opera." The work which entitles him to be ranked as the writer of the first English Opera is Shadwell's *Psyche*; this, with the music to *The Tempest*, was produced in 1673, with the title of *The English Opera*. It contained a Preface, setting forth Locke's opinions on real Opera. North calls his works in this branch of Art "semi-Operas," but from the title just quoted it may be inferred that Locke, at any rate, considered them full-grown specimens. It should be added that the Act tunes in *Psyche* were written by Draghi. The writer on Opera in Grove's *Dictionary* marks Purcell as the originator of English Opera. "Henry Purcell (he says) transformed the Masque into the Opera, or rather annihilated the one and introduced the other." Perhaps Roger North's term "semi-Opera" is the best expression for Locke's essays in this connection.

With regard to Locke's other dramatic music, reference must be made to the *Macbeth* music, which has for so many years been associated with his name. For long the matter has been the subject of conjecture as to whether he was really the author of it or not.

{93} The music of *Psyche* is so good that there is no ground for saying he could not have written the *Macbeth* music. He was exceedingly dramatic and also melodious. There is a beautiful Dialogue on the death of Lord Sandwich, the great patron of Samuel Pepys, which is to be found in the Pepys Library of Magdalene College, Cambridge. No doubt this was written at the suggestion of Pepys. And there is a remarkable setting of Hamlet's soliloquy, also in MS., in Pepys' book, which I firmly believe is by Locke.

As usual Locke wrote an aggressive Preface to *Psyche*. It begins:

> That Poetry and Musick, the chief manifestives of Harmonical Phancy, should provoke such discordant effects in many is more to be pityed than wondered at: it having become a fashionable art to peck and carp at other men's conceptions, how mean soever their own are. Expecting, therefore, to fall under the lash of some soft-headed or hard-hearted composers (for there are too many better at finding of faults than mending them) I shall endeavour to remove these few blocks which perhaps they may take occasion to stumble at.

He goes on to say the title Opera is of the Italian, and claims that as far as his ability could reach, he had written agreeably to the design of the author, and that the variety of his setting
{94} was never in Court or Theatre till now presented to the nation, "though I must confess there has been something done, and more by me than any other of this kind."

Locke evidently considered *Psyche* as a real Opera and a novelty in this country. The work was dedicated to James, Duke of Monmouth, who (the composer says) "gave this life by your often hearing this practised and encouraged and heartened the almost heartless undertakers and performers."

Amongst his other works was one called *Melothesia, or Certain general Rules for playing upon a continued Bass*. This is said to be the first book of its kind, and he contributed to many other works. Roger North tells us "Locke set most of the Psalms to music in parts for the use of some vertuoso ladyes in the City, and he composed a magnifick Consort of four parts after the old style which is the last that hath been made."

His life was not long, but it was important, and perhaps the greatest tribute to his memory was that Henry Purcell wrote an ode commemorative of his decease "On the death of his worthy friend Mr Matthew Locke, Music Composer in Ordinary to *His* Majesty, and Organist of *Her* Majesty's Chappell, who dyed in August, 1677."

{95}

X. PELHAM HUMFREY

1647—1674

We have all heard of "Single-speech Hamilton," a Member of Parliament, who, it is said, made a "single speech," and by it achieved lasting fame. As a matter of history, Hamilton made other speeches, but it was by the first that he earned his well-known cognomen. And we have a somewhat similar example in connection with a celebrated musician, John Jenkins. Born in 1592, he lived until 1678, and wrote, as North expresses it, "horse-loads of music." He was most prolific and most celebrated, and yet until a few years ago, when I revived many of his compositions

—*Dialogues, Fancies for Strings*, and *Latin Motets*—not a note of his music was heard anywhere, save one little piece. But this was sung in every school where vocal music was taught—it is the charming little round *A boat, a boat, haste to the ferry*.

The subject of our present consideration is another example of the same fate. "Pelham
{96} Humfrey, Composer of the Grand Chant" is about all people know of him. This so-called Grand Chant is known and sung in every Protestant Church in the world. Humfrey is, however, a worthy member of the band of musicians whose work I am following, and we will see what else he did besides writing the Grand Chant.

Born in 1647, he is said to have been a nephew of Colonel John Humphrey, Bradshaw's sword-bearer.

From the arms which were on his tomb we can learn a little of his family and forbears—these arms, I regret to say, have long since been obliterated, in fact they had gone in Sir John Hawkins' time, together with the epitaph; and at the present time the exact position of the grave can be only a matter of conjecture.[1] But what was on it has been preserved to us in a valuable old work, *Keepe's Monumenta Westmonasteriensia*, 1682. In this work a description is given of the armorial bearings, and by them we can trace him to an old Northamptonshire stock. The family is mentioned as being settled in the County in *The Visitation of Northampton* of 1564, but had disappeared from it before the next Visitation some years later.

{97} We know nothing of Pelham Humfrey's life until 1660, the year of the Restoration, when we find him, at the age of thirteen, entered as one of the first set of children of the reconstructed Chapel Royal Choir, under Henry Cooke, generally known as Captain Cooke, who having fought in the Civil War, obtained his Captain's Commission as early in the struggle as 1642; and retained his military title for the rest of his life.

While at the Chapel Royal, Humfrey displayed signs of that precocity which so often shows itself in the musical genius. He began composition while yet a boy, and in 1664 we find the words of no fewer than five of his Anthems published in Clifford's *Divine Services and Anthems*.

A reference to one of these Anthems is in the *Diary* of Samuel Pepys, which contains, by the way, several interesting references to Humfrey's career. Under date November 22nd, 1663, we find:

> At Chapel: I had room in the Privy Seale pew with other gentlemen, and there heard Dr. Lilligrew preach. The Anthem was good after Sermon, being the 51st Psalm made for five voices by one of Captain Cooke's boys, a pretty boy. And they say there are four or five of them that can do as much. And here I first perceived that the King is a little Musical and kept good time with his hand all along the Anthem.

{98} Now that Anthem was written by a Choir-boy in the Royal Chapel, but it is a remarkable fact, as Pepys says, that he was not the only boy-composer in the same choir and at the same time. Captain Cooke appears to have been rarely fortunate in having in his newly-formed choral body a set of phenomenally gifted boys, and doubtless no small credit is due to the loyal and gallant musician for the skill and care he must have devoted to their training.

Captain Cooke must have been a clever teacher and a still cleverer selector of boys for his choir; and this brilliant little school he gathered round him (including such names as Humfrey, Blow, and Purcell) shines out like a beacon light in our musical world. A curious and interesting fact bearing upon this came to my knowledge quite lately. A Thesis for a Doctor's degree in the University of Paris (in 1912) was on the subject of *Captain Cooke's Choir Boys*, and it was a clever yet concise account of the work done by these three pupils of Cooke—Humfrey, Blow, and Purcell. English music seems to be looking up when we find a period of our musical history and three of our past great musicians taken as the subject for a thesis in a foreign University!

The same year that witnessed the production of this Anthem was an all-important one, not
{99} only for Humfrey but also for English art. On leaving the Royal Choir, Charles II sent him abroad to continue his musical studies; the cost of the trip was paid out of the Secret Service Fund, and was expended in the following way:

1664. "To defray the charge of his journey into France and Italy £200." In the two following years also he was granted £100 and £150 respectively.

Most of the time Humfrey spent abroad was passed in Paris with J. B. Lully, an Italian by birth but a Frenchman by adoption, the most celebrated dramatic musical composer of his day. He wrote many Operas in the most varied styles, both grave and gay, was the composer of a good deal of sacred music, and was also a reformer in Opera-writing; he introduced the accompanied recitative in place of the Italian *Recitative secco*, making many changes in the ballets. Of still more importance was his development of the Overture, for which service he cannot be too highly valued.

It is very probable that the instruction given by Lully to Humfrey was less by precept than by example. The pupil listened with eager ears to his master's music and doubtless often took part in the performance of it. Under this influence—the influence of the greatest master of dramatic
{100} music of his time—it is not surprising that the already precocious genius of the young

Englishman quickened, and that he returned to his native country with a different conception of his art. Another world had been opened up to him whose earliest instruction had, necessarily, been chiefly confined to the ecclesiastical side of it.

Before his return to England he had been appointed a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, in the place of one Thomas Hazard, January, 1667, and he was duly sworn in the October following. A glance at Pepys' *Diary* under dates November 1st and 15th, 1667, gives us that shrewd observer's opinion of our hero as he appears fresh from his Continental trip.

> November 1st, 1667. To Chapel, and heard a fine Anthem made by Pelham, who is come over.

The entry, however, of a fortnight later is of more interest, as apparently being Mr Pepys' first personal encounter with him since his return.

> November 15th, 1667. Home, and there I find, as I expected, Mr. Caesar and little Pelham Humfrey lately returned from France, and is an absolute Monsieur as full of form and confidence and vanity, and disparages everything and everybody's skill but his own. But to hear how he laughs at all the King's Musick here, as Blagrave and others, that they cannot keep time nor tune nor understand anything; and that Grebus, the
> {101} Frenchman, the King's Master of the Music, how he understands nothing nor can play on any instrument and so cannot compose; and that he will give him a lift out of his place; and that he and the King are mighty great. I had a good dinner for them, a venison pasty and some fowl, and after dinner we did play, he on the Theorbo, Mr. Caesar on his French lute, and I on the viol, but made but mean Musique, nor do I see that this Frenchman do so much wonders on the Theorbo, but without question, he is a good musician, but his vanity do offend me.

Grebus (or rather Grabu) was the King's Master of the Music. He displaced Bannister, who was dismissed, according to the historians, because he championed English violinists and said he preferred them to Frenchmen. He may have said this, but the real cause of his dismissal was that he kept back the money which he ought to have paid to the Private Band! King Charles has often been blamed for dismissing Bannister on account of his patriotic sentiments and defence of English players, but this charge is not true.

Returning to Mr Pepys for a record of his next day's doings, November 16, 1667, we find a very interesting reference to Humfrey and a somewhat scathing criticism from the Diarist:

> 1667, November 16th. To White Hall, where there is to be a performance of Music of Pelham's before the King. The company not come; but I did go into the Music Room where Captain Cooke and many others, and here I did hear the best and the smallest
> {102} Organ go that ever I saw in my life and such a one as by the grace of God I will have the next year, if I continue in this Condition, whatever it cost me.

Mr Pepys then records a short walk and talk with Mr Gregory, returning to Whitehall:

> And there got into the theatre room and there heard both the vocall and instrumentall Music, where the little fellow (Pelham Humfrey) stood keeping time, but for my part I see no great matter, but quite the contrary, in both sorts of Music. The composition, I believe, is very good, but no more of delightfulness to the eare or understanding, but what is very ordinary.

In addition to being a composer, Humfrey was an accomplished lutenist, and in the State Papers for the year 1668, under date January 20th, we find a promotion of his in the Royal Service; the record runs as follows:

> January 20th, 1668. Warrant to pay Pelham Humfreys, Musician in Ordinary on the Lute, in place of Nich. Sawyer deceased £40 yearly, and £16 2s. 6d. for Livery.

On May 29th of this same year Mr Pepys again refers to him:

> May 29th, 1668. Home, whither by agreement by and by comes Mercer and Gayet
> {103} and two gentlemen with them, Mr. Monteith and Pelham, the former a swaggering young handsome gentleman, the latter a sober citizen merchant.[2] Both sing, and the latter with great skill, the other no skill, but a good voice and a good basse, but used only to tavern tunes; and so I spent all this evening till eleven at night, singing with them till I was tired of them, because of the swaggering fellow, tho' the girl Mercer did mightily commend him before me.

Later in the year (July) another reference is made in the *Diary*:

> July 11th, 1668. So home, it being almost night (Mr. Pepys had been after an espinette at Deptford), and there find in the garden Pelling, who hath brought Tempest, Wallington, and Pelham to sing, and there had most excellent Musick late, in the dark with great pleasure.

Humfrey's Sacred music is a clear evidence of his French experience. He puts symphonies for strings and is dramatic at times and often somewhat light. An Anthem *O Praise the Lord* is a good example of the latter tendency. There are two short Bass solos, one to the words *Sing praises lustily*, which is almost like the song of a jovial sailor! It is in triple time, and is the sort of thing King Charles would certainly have beaten time to with his hand "all along the Anthem," in Pepys'

{104} words. The Bass solo in the Anthem he wrote when a boy and before his French training is in a quite different style, and might have been written by any of our good Cathedral writers, such as Locke, or Blow, or even Purcell.

In addition to his Sacred works Humfrey wrote three Odes and many songs. These latter fall under the critical notice of Dr Burney, who refers to them, I think, rather unfairly and harshly. Speaking of a collection called *Choice Songs and Aires*, Burney says: "Among these songs, to the number of near fifty, there is not one air that is either ingenious, graceful, cheerful or solemn: an insipid languor or vulgar pertness pervades the whole. From Pelham Humphry, whose Church Music is so excellent, I own I expected to find originality, or merit of some kind or other; but his songs are quite on a level with the rest."

Burney's remarks are not only spiteful, but untrue. To mention only one song, Humfrey's setting of *Where the Bee Sucks*, which he wrote for Dryden and Davenant's altered version of *The Tempest* (the oldest setting but one which we possess), is charming, both as regards melody and harmony. The first part is in the minor key, for which Humfrey seems—like Purcell—to have a weakness. There is an effective change to the Tonic Major at *Merrily, merrily shall I live now*,
{105} with a most striking and delicious drop of a 7th (I expect Burney regarded this as a crudity), To me the song seems one of the best of the time.

Humfrey went on adding rapidly to his honours. On January 24th, 1672, he was elected one of the wardens of "the Corporation for regulating the Art and Science of Musick," and in July of the same year his old master, Captain Cooke, died; his death being accelerated—so Antony Wood tells us—by chagrin at finding himself getting supplanted by his old pupil. This I do not believe: Cooke would have had a soul above such foibles, and had too many successful pupils to be jealous of poor little Humfrey.

However this may be, Humfrey succeeded him as Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal, and later, jointly with Thomas Purcell, he was appointed Composer in Ordinary for the Violins to His Majesty.

It was in this year, 1672, that he wrote a charming little song called *Wherever I am and Whatever I do*. It was written for Dryden's *Conquest of Granada*, produced in that year.

Nothing of any importance is chronicled of him for the last two years of his all too short life. He died at Windsor on July 13th, 1674, and was buried in the Cloisters of Westminster Abbey,
{106} near the south east door. His last will and testament, witnessed by his old schoolfellow, Dr Blow, is interesting:

> Aprill ye 23rd, 74.
>
> Bee itt knowne to all people whomsoever itt may Concerne that I leave my deare wife my sole executrix and Mrs. of all I have in the world after those few debts I owe are payd:
>
> I only desire that 3 Legacyes may bee given that is to say to my cousin Betty Jelfe: to Mr. Blow ad to Besse Gill each of them twenty shillings to buy them Rings.
>
> Pell. Humfrey.
>
> 30 July, 1674.
>
> Which day appeared personally John Blow of Westminster and made oath that he was present when Mr. Pelham Humfrey wrote the above written writing containing his last will and testament and he the sd Mr. Pelham Humfrey being of perfect mind and sound memory published and declared the same for his last will and testament.
>
> John Blow.
>
> 30 July, 74.
>
> (Proved 30 July 1674 by Catherine Humfrey Relict and sole executrix).

Humfrey's life, brief though it was, must be regarded as a turning point in our art's history—not alone by his own compositions, but by the infusion of his influence into the greater Purcell. He was not only Purcell's master at the Chapel Royal, but actually composed an Anthem jointly with Purcell, called *By the Waters of Babylon*. In Boyce's opinion "he was the first of our
{107} ecclesiastical composers who had the least idea of musical pathos and expression of the words," but this is an exaggeration.

This great advance in our music was carried on by the immortal Purcell, who, as a choir-boy under Humfrey, was, no doubt, an eager listener to the "new effects" which his master introduced. The pupil is so great, one is in danger of forgetting the master. At least here we have endeavoured to do some justice to the short-lived genius Pelham Humfrey.

[1] I have lately identified the spot. Keepe was for eighteen years a member of the Abbey Choir, and probably sang at Humfrey's funeral.

[2] I cannot help thinking Pepys meant Pelham as the swaggering young handsome gentleman, and Monteith as the sober citizen merchant.

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XI. DR JOHN BLOW

1648—1708

If there is one name among the Twelve Musicians with whom I am dealing in this course of Lectures to which I desire specially to do justice, it is that of Dr. John Blow. As a child I sang his Anthems in Rochester Cathedral, and I well remember the delight with which I listened to, and took part in, his beautiful and expressive *I beheld, and lo a great multitude*, and *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day*. In those days the great masterpieces of the English Cathedral School were constantly done, and very well done, at Rochester, and none of the Anthems except I may say, perhaps, Purcell's great Anthem *O Sing unto the Lord*, touched me and thrilled me as did that of Blow. And as long as I played in Manchester Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, so long did I feel the power and religious impressions of these splendid specimens of Blow's genius. Of course there are many Anthems and Services by this master, but none, to me at least, ever spoke
{109} so eloquently as did the two I have mentioned. This is one reason why I approach the subject of Blow's career with such a desire to do him justice. Another is the strange neglect of most of his secular music, and lastly the absurd and ignorant criticism of Dr Burney, as displayed in his *History*, when he talks of "Blow's crudities."

Without further delay let us proceed to trace his musical life. I refrain, on account of time, from dwelling much on biographical details in these Lectures. So I will merely state that it seems pretty certain that Blow was born at North Collingham, in Nottinghamshire, and baptised in the Parish Church of Newark in February 1648-9. Let us begin with recording his admission as a Chorister to the Chapel Royal—one of the "clever boys" whom Captain Cooke got together and taught. Of his school-fellow, Pelham Humfrey, I have already spoken, and, like Humfrey, Blow composed Anthems while in the choir. It is possible—or rather, I think, probable—that an entry in Pepys' *Diary* refers to him. Under the head of August 21, 1667, we read:

> This morning come two of Captain Cooke's boys, whose voices are broke, and are gone from the Chappell, but have extraordinary skill, and they and my boy, with his broken voice, did sing three parts: their names were Blaew and Loggings, but
> {110} notwithstanding their skill, yet to hear them sing with their broken voices, which they could not command to keep in tune, would make a man mad, so bad it was.

If this refers to Blow he would be about nineteen years old, and could have had but a very broken voice. But it is not impossible, as many boys retain their voices until a good age, and continue singing "alto" in a moderate sort of style. It is hardly likely there would be a boy named Blaew and one named Blow. And there was some arrangement whereby boys who had left the Choir continued to reside with the Masters, possibly to study.[1]

At the early age of twenty-one, in 1669, he became Organist of Westminster Abbey, and the appointment, apparently, was not enough for his ambition (or, more probably, for his needs!), for in 1674 he succeeded Humfrey as Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal, becoming Organist also (while still holding Westminster Abbey) in 1676. As regards his degree of Mus. Doc. I have (on the authority of the late Dr Southgate) to make a little correction of former statements. It has
{111} generally been said the degree was conferred upon Blow by Archbishop Sancroft, but Dr Southgate told me in a note, when I was about to lecture on Blow, some years ago, that the degree was granted by Bancroft's *representative* the Dean of Canterbury—the Archbishop being dead. It is marked in the Lambeth Register "*Sede vacante*": it was thus bestowed when the "See was vacant." It is a curious fact that Blow gave up his Abbey post in 1680, being succeeded by Purcell; and on Purcell's death, in 1695, he was again appointed organist of the Abbey, and held that post until his death.

But I have to record yet another important Cathedral appointment which our indefatigable musician held. He was Almoner and Master of the Choristers in St Paul's Cathedral, holding those offices for six years, from 1687 to 1693. Again he seems to have resigned in favour of a pupil, Mr Jeremiah Clarke. It is a remarkable testimony to the esteem in which he was held that he should have filled posts at the Chapel Royal, St Paul's Cathedral, and Westminster Abbey, all at the same time. Bishops, in the old days, often presided over a Diocese, filled a Canonry or directed a College and occupied a "Living" or two, simultaneously; but Blow seems to me to have been the greatest Organist pluralist on record!

{112} But this is a testimony to his worth, and in following up our investigation of his contributions to music I will not dwell longer upon his Church music, except to mention that he wrote an Anthem *I was glad*, for the opening of St Paul's Cathedral in 1697, and to tell the story of the composition of the Anthem which I mentioned in the early part of my lecture, *I beheld and Lo*!

When it was performed in the Chapel Royal, the King (who had asked him to compose it) sent Father Petre to say he was greatly pleased with it; "but (added Petre) I myself think it too long!" "That (answered Blow) is the opinion of but one fool—I heed it not." The Priest was greatly incensed at this remark, and it is said that, had not James II lost his place by his sudden flight to France, Dr Blow would have lost *his*!

Among the Anthems of this composer may be mentioned two which he wrote for the Coronation of James II, and he also took part in the funeral of William III in the Abbey, receiving, according to an Abbey record, the very large fee of 7s. 10d. for the latter. He does not seem to have directed the music at the Coronation, but took part in the choir. On the death of his pupil, Purcell, he wrote an ode, the words by Dryden, beginning *Mark how the lark and linnet sing*.

{113} I must not omit to mention that he and Purcell were the Organists selected by Father Smith to display the organ of the Temple Church at the memorable competition between Smith and Harris, the two rival organ-builders. Smith won the day, and showed his wisdom in getting the best men to preside at his instrument. It was the custom for many years to have an *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* composed for and performed in Stationers Hall on the Saint's Day. Blow wrote the second of these *Odes* in 1684—the year of the Temple Church competition. He published, in 1700, a great collection of his secular vocal music, under the title of *Amphion Anglicus*, and in his dedication to the Princess Anne of Denmark he announces that he is preparing "as fast as I can a second musical Present, my Church Services and Divine composition." He gives his sentiments with regard to Sacred composition in the same dedication, which are worth repeating:

> To those in truth I have ever more especially consecrated the thoughts of my whole life. All the rest I consider but the blossoms or rather the leaves those I only esteem as the Fruits of all my labours in this kind. With them I began my first Raptures in this Art, with them I hope calmly and comfortably to finish my days.

The composer did not carry out his design, though he lived about eight years after this.

{114} A very interesting work, which has only of late years been made known, is a Masque entitled *Venus and Adonis*. Some years ago I noticed it among the music in the Chapter Library at Westminster. It has since been edited by Mr Arkwright, and, quite lately, produced upon the stage at Glastonbury. It is very interesting, as it shows that Blow, like Purcell, had a leaning to dramatic music and this Masque is specially noticeable as it consists of musical dialogue—not spoken—thus coming very near to a little Opera.

Blow also contributed to some *Choice Lessons for the Harpsichord*, a collection published by Playford, to which also Henry Purcell contributed. There are also interesting specimens of organ music, among which is a curious arrangement of the *Hundredth Psalm Tune* "as they are played in Churches and Chapels." I have also a copy of a MS. *Lesson on the Hundredth Psalm*. It would now be called a Choral Prelude for the Organ. After a short introduction, the whole tune appears at intervals in the Bass, with very florid upper counterpoint. It is evidence of Blow's knowledge of organ effects and of his ability as a player.

{115} A writer in 1711, three years after Blow's death, tells us "he was reckoned the greatest Master in the world for playing most gravely and serenely in his Voluntaries", and we have Purcell's testimony to him as "one of the greatest masters in the world". With this testimony before him it seems incredible that Dr Burney should have made such a fierce onslaught upon this really excellent man and versatile musician, on account of what he calls his "crudities." He has actually given four pages of music type in his History, full of quotations of Blow's misdeeds. I have examined these carefully, and in many cases the examples are really a remarkable testimony to Blow's advanced ideas, and his feeling for pathetic and expressive harmony. In some specimens there are obvious mis-prints, accidentals omitted, etc., which Burney, had he not been prejudiced, would certainly have perceived. But it is not worth while to follow up this matter, although I am sorry to say Sir Frederick Ouseley took rather the same line when commenting on Blow's music. He really pays Blow a compliment when he says that "he always appears to have been trying experiments in harmony or introducing new combinations and discords". This was what was said of another great musician, Monteverde, to whom we owe so much, and such criticisms only bring discredit upon the writers who failed to see the value behind the novelty. Sir
{116} Hubert Parry, in speaking of these "crudities" says "they do Blow, for the most part, great credit, for they show that he adventured beyond the range of the mere conventional, and often with the success that betokens genuine musical insight."

I have already commented upon his greatest Anthems *I beheld and lo!* and *I was in the Spirit*. They are full of examples of Blow's melodious power, and this also comes out in some of his secular airs. Perhaps one of the best is his beautiful song which is to be found in *Amphion Anglicus* entitled *The Self Banished* beginning "It is not that I love you less"; the words are by Waller, and the music is worthy of them.

Blow, as described by Sir John Hawkins, was "a very handsome man in his person, and remarkable for a gravity and decency in his deportment, suited to his station".

This worthy musician died in 1708, aged 60, and is buried in Westminster Abbey, near the old entrance to the organ-loft and in close proximity to Purcell. A fine monument is erected near the spot, and a specimen of his composition, in the form of a *Gloria* from one of his services is engraved thereupon. This *Gloria* is said to have been sung at St Peter's at Rome. I remember an

{117} interesting matter in connection with this monument. In my early days at the Abbey (during Dean Stanley's time) the Emperor of Brazil paid a visit and was shown round the Abbey by the Dean. The only thing he specially asked to be shown was "Dr. Blow's monument"! The Dean told me His Majesty inspected it very closely and seemed to be reading the music. He probably knew more about Blow's music than Burney's *History*!

[1] There is an account preserved in the Bodleian Library of Blow being paid £40 a year for "keeping and teaching two boys" but this was in 1685. It shows that it was usual for boys whose voices were gone, to be kept on for tuition.

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XII. HENRY PURCELL

1658—1695

In Henry Purcell I reach the last and the greatest of my Twelve Good Musicians. And to attempt to consider and discuss completely his life and work in the short space of a University Lecture, would be an absurd effort. But, as I have before pointed out, my object has been to endeavour to interest the musical student—amateur and professional—in certain prominent masters of music, and in the remarkable progress made in our own country by their aid in the seventeenth century. I can do little more than arouse interest, and I cannot pretend to write a complete history, but I trust the Lectures will have helped to fill up the "blank" which Sir Hubert Parry declared existed in many minds as regards the music of this period.

Henry Purcell

In the consideration of the various musicians of whom I have already treated I have avoided biographical detail. As a rule information in these matters may be gleaned from the well-known
{119} books of reference. But in the case of Purcell I am obliged to enlarge a little on his life, in the hope that I may be able to contribute a few interesting facts with regard to his family that are not generally known.

Let me begin, then, with Purcell's father. It is an extraordinary thing that we know nothing whatever of him until we find his name among distinguished musicians, such as Captain Cooke,

Locke, and Lawes, as one of the performers in the *Siege of Rhodes*, in 1656. In the Preface to this publication it is claimed that "The Musick was composed and both the Vocal and Instrumental is exercised by the most transcendent of England in that Art."

What did the elder Purcell do before he attained to such a position? We know absolutely nothing as regards his origin, his training, or his career up to this. I have made diligent search in the archives of Westminster to see if there were anything to be learned there, and have gleaned a few small facts.

The name of Roger Pursell occurs in a bill for bringing timber to the College—in August 1628. The items of the bill include Carriage by land 1s. 6d., for watching 6d., for helping to land ye timber 6d. This would seem to apply to a load of timber brought from a distance for the use of the
{120} carpenters of the College. Roger Pursell may have come up with the timber or he may have been one of the carpenters. He was paid 3s. for two days' work. The name appears again in 1659 when we find in a page of accounts "Expended by George Blackborn and Joseph Hobbes for the travelling charges about the Colledge affaires at Offord, in the County of Huntingdon" the following note: "In the Bonds taken from Mr Throgmorton and *Roger Pursell* there is included £4 towards travelling charges." Then Roger Pursell is spoken of as "the 'Bayliffe' of Mr Giles." It is rather curious that the name of Roger Pursell should occur at such a wide interval, 1628 and again in 1659. One wonders if Roger's connection with the Abbey and its property was the beginning of the musical members of the family coming to Westminster.

There was a Shropshire Purcell family of some standing, and in the *Herald's Visitation of Shropshire* in 1623 it was given as of Onslow, and Shrewsbury; and there were many distinguished Purcells in Ireland.

We know and hear nothing more of the elder Purcell after the production of the *Siege of Rhodes* in 1656 until his name appears in a book in the Library at Westminster. This book records
{121} the admission of one or two Petty Canons in 1660, and the payment by them of 5s. for the entry. Mr Henry Purcell's name is also entered with the note "instead of 5s. *this book*."

Here, then, we have the great musician's father installed in the Abbey as Master of the Choristers (not organist also) and Copyist. He was also a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and a Singing Man of Westminster. Later on we find him a member of the Royal Band (1663). All these important appointments testify to his leading musical position.

We have a glimpse of him in Pepys' *Diary*, under date February 21st, 1660.

> "After dinner I back to Westminster Hall. Here I met with Mr. Lock and Pursell, Master of Music, and with them to the Coffee House into a room next the Water by ourselves. Here we had variety of brave Italian and Spanish songs and a Canon for eight voices which Mr. Locke had lately made on these words '*Domine Salvum fac Regem*.'"

Another small fact of interest in connection with the elder Purcell is furnished me by my brother of Chester. He finds in the Chirk Castle accounts, by the steward of Sir Thomas Myddelton, an allusion to Mr Purcell, who is, no doubt, our elder Purcell. Dr. Bridge writes as follows:

> "In 1661 the family had gone up to London and we find the Steward there and recording
>
> Dec. 24, Paid for a quart of
> Purle with Mr. Purcell .... 2d.
>
> {122} As a rule only the names of important personages are put in the accounts. As the Steward did not *live* in London, it looks as if Mr. Purcell was a former acquaintance from somewhere near Chirk. This place is on the borders of three Counties of which Shropshire is one, and as the Purcells probably came from Salop, their birth-place or place of residence, may have been at the Chirk end of the County. Possibly Mr. Purcell was an old friend of the Steward's."

There is no doubt the elder Purcell lived in the place called the Almonry, where the "Singing Men" had houses. These stood where the well-known Westminster Palace Hotel now stands. And here his distinguished son was born.[1]

It is generally stated that he was born in 1658. It seems, however, just as likely—or even more likely—the date should be 1659. Unfortunately it has been impossible to find the record of his baptism. The Register at St Margaret's Church, Westminster, for this period (which was then very carefully kept) does not show Henry Purcell's name. The approximate date is fixed fairly well for us by the fact that in June, 1683, Purcell published some Sonatas to which his portrait was
{123} prefixed. On this portrait he is said to be "*aetat: suae* 24," i.e. in the twenty-fourth year of his age. Again on his monument in the Abbey we find "*Anno Aetatis suae 37*," i.e., in the thirty-seventh year of his age. Therefore, if he was in his thirty-seventh year on November 21, 1695 (the date of his death), he must have been born between November 21st, 1658, and November 20th, 1659.

Not only is his baptism during these years not recorded at St Margaret's, but the *Rate Books* of St Margaret's for 1658 and 1659 *do not contain the name of Purcell*, as they certainly would have had his father had a house in the parish.

A friend has made most careful enquiries for me on this point. I expect the Almonry was in the precincts of Westminster Abbey, and so would not be "in the parish," and it is quite reasonable to suppose the child born in the Almonry was christened in the Abbey: but I have never yet found any record of this. Purcell's own son, Edward, was christened in the Abbey in 1689.

It is interesting to know that Henry Lawes lived also in the Almonry, and so must have known the little boy Purcell; but, as Lawes died in 1662, the child could not have given any great proof
{124} of his future genius. The elder Purcell died in 1664, and the young boy was placed in the Chapel Royal Choir at the early age of six years.

Thomas Purcell, brother of the elder Purcell, was a distinguished musician also and a member of the Chapel Royal, besides holding other important posts. He looked after his clever little nephew, and was a real father to him. As in the case of Henry Purcell, Senior, we know nothing of the previous history of Thomas Purcell until we find him in his high position. Who trained him and his brother Henry we know not.

Henry Purcell was thus one of the remarkable set of boys to which I have often alluded in these Lectures, among his fellow choristers being Pelham Humfrey and Blow. Like the other boys, he began to compose, and the first reliable composition we have was the *Address of the Children of the Chapel Royal to the King and their Master, Captain Cooke, on His Majestie's Birthday A.D. 1670, composed by MASTER PURCELL, one of the Children of the said Chapel*.

Purcell, no doubt, owed much to Captain Cooke, but it is also certain that the influence of Pelham Humfrey, with the experience he gained by his studies with Lully, must have made a deep impression. As we know, Humfrey died at the early age of twenty-seven, and Purcell continued
{125} his studies with Blow, whose monument in the Abbey records he was "Master to the famous Henry Purcell."

The first appointment Purcell held was that of copyist to Westminster Abbey (1676), a post which his father had held before him. We know little for certain as to his compositions for the Church in his early days. As a matter of fact, he seems to have been drawn (like Henry Lawes) more to the secular side, writing for the theatre. It has been suggested that he was introduced to this kind of work by Locke, who we know was a prominent composer for the stage. We must also remember that Humfrey would, very likely, have helped to influence the mind of the young Purcell in that direction. On Locke's death in 1677 Purcell wrote an ode *On the death of his worthy friend, Matthew Locke*.

In 1680 Dr Blow resigned his position as Organist of Westminster Abbey, and Purcell succeeded him. There is no record of Blow resigning or the cause of it in the Chapter Books; one simply finds in the Treasurer's accounts that Purcell drew the salary as Organist instead of Blow. Probably his appointment to Westminster turned his mind more towards Church than stage.

{126} The composition of the Opera *Dido and Æneas* is, I think, proved by Mr Barclay Squire's clever article on Purcell's dramatic music not to be a composition of his early years. It is not possible for me to go minutely into the subject of Purcell's many compositions, but I will for a few moments call attention to what I consider almost his master-piece. I allude to the splendid and original set of Sonatas which he issued in 1683.[2] This was Purcell's first publication, and it was issued from St Ann's Lane, beyond Westminster Abbey, where the composer resided—having been married in 1681. (It should be added that he was made Organist of the Chapel Royal in 1682, holding that post at the same time as the Abbey.)

These Sonatas are a very interesting study in Purcell's career. Like many of the composers mentioned in these Lectures, Purcell wrote Fancies; but the Sonatas are a very different thing. Written for Two Violins 'Cello and Basso Continuo, and consisting of three or four movements of differing character, they are a wonderful advance on anything previously done in this direction, either in England or abroad.

Corelli issued his Sonatas in the same year that Purcell's appeared. But Corelli's—although
{127} beautiful—have not the depth or originality of Purcell's, which are admirably written for the strings and abound in clever devices, but are in no way dull or suggestive of vocal writing. The three strings are often complete without the Continuo, but occasionally there is an extra part for this. My own experience of them in performance is that the least possible accompaniment is best, and it should be remembered that the Continuo is not written for a modern pianoforte with its powerful tone, but for the Harpsichord or Organ.

Purcell in his Preface says: "for its Author he has faithfully endeavoured a just imitation of the most favour'd Italian Masters". He goes on to explain the meaning of certain Italian "terms of Art perhaps unusual," such as *Adagio, Grave, Presto, Largo*, etc., and concludes with a wish that his book may fall into no other hands but those who carry musical souls about them; for he is willing to flatter himself into a belief that with such his labours will seem neither unpleasant nor unprofitable."

The question of the models that Purcell had in writing these fine Sonatas and what famous Italian Masters he imitated has been often debated. For myself I cannot but believe that Purcell owed much to a remarkable Neapolitan violinist, Nicola Matteis.

{128} This Italian violinist and composer came to London about 1672, and resided there till after Purcell's death. The date of Matteis's birth is not known, but the accounts of his playing given from personal observation by such authorities as John Evelyn in his contemporary *Diary*, and Roger North in his *Memoirs of Musick*, show that he came here as a mature artist. Purcell was then fifteen years old, and during the eleven years which elapsed till the publication of the 1683 Purcell Sonatas, Matteis was much the most prominent foreign musician, and the only Italian musician of any rank resident in London. The propagation of musical styles from one country to another was carried out in those days very little by the dissemination of copies, whether manuscript or printed, and much more by the activity of persons who went here and there giving performances and concerts. And Roger North says specifically: "But as yet wee have given no account of the decadence of the French musick, and the Italian coming in its room. This happened by degrees, and the overture was by accident, for the coming over of Sig. Nicolai Matteis gave the first start. He was an excellent musician, &c., &c., &c." Purcell, the Organist of
{129} Westminster Abbey, must of course have known Matteis, as he directed the concerts of Chief Justice Francis North (Roger North's brother) in Queen Street, and it is evident from the writings of Roger that the Norths were supporters of Matteis. In the Bodleian Library I have found Chief Justice North's name inscribed as the owner on one of the volumes of Matteis's *Aires for the Violin*. Then as to the explanation of Italian terms in Purcell's Preface, it is a little singular that much the same sort of information is found prefixed to Matteis's second volume of Violin Pieces. Again I have discovered in MS. parts in the Bodleian Library, and had performed at a Lecture at the Royal Institution, a Sonata in A by Matteis, in the exact Sonata form used by Purcell in 1683; and, though the date of this MS. composition cannot be traced, it is at least as likely to have been composed before 1683 as after. However, I am not asserting that a composer like Purcell copied Matteis's works. I am only saying that it was Matteis who made the Italian chamber-music prevalent in London, and that but for him Purcell would possibly never have thought or written in that style. And I cannot better conclude than by quoting from one of North's voluminous manuscripts, *Essay of Musical Ayre* (Brit. Museum, *Addit.* MSS., 32, 536, folio 78):

{130} > The poor man (Matteis) as a grateful legacy to the English nation, left with them a generall savour for the Itallian manner of Harmony, and after him the French was wholly layd aside, and nothing in towne had a relish without a spice of Itally, and the masters here began to imitate them, *wittness Mr. H. Purcell, in his noble set of Sonnatas*.

Purcell composed another set of Sonatas, which was published after his death. One of them, generally called *The Golden Sonata*, is, perhaps, the best known of any in either of the issues. But it is inferior to others, particularly No. 4 of the first set, and altogether I do not think the second is at all on a level with the first. I may add that I have in my library the parts of the original publication of the first set. The Continuo contains an immense number of additional figures, and there are a few corrections in the other parts, which I have never found in any other copy. It would appear almost as if Purcell had himself made the corrections, and, indeed, Sir Hubert Parry was of opinion this was so. I hope I may be able shortly to print these Sonatas in separate parts so that they may be accessible to lovers of Purcell.

I cannot linger now over these interesting Sonatas, but must glance at Purcell's further
{131} activities. He wrote an *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* in this year (1683) and many Anthems about this time. In 1686 he took part in the competition of Organ-Builders at the Temple Church, already spoken of in my Lecture on Dr Blow.

In 1685 he produced music for the Coronation of James II, himself singing in the choir with Blow, Child, and others. Who directed the music, i.e., played the organ, as was customary, we are not told. I possess a very rare engraving of this great ceremony, and one of the Choir seems certainly to hold a baton in his hand, but it was not usual to have a Conductor.

A second Coronation in which Purcell took part had a rather serious turn. It was that of William and Mary, and Purcell admitted persons to the organ-loft to see the Ceremony, for which they evidently paid pretty well. Purcell thought it was a "perquisite" (I do not suppose he was paid for his extra work on the occasion); but the Dean and Chapter claimed the money and passed the following Chapter Order:

> April 18, 1689. It is ordered that Mr. Purcell, organist to ye Dean and Chapter of Westminster, do pay to the hand of Mr. John Needham, Receiver of the College, all such moneys as was received by him for places in the Organ Loft at ye Coronation of King
{132} William and Queen Mary, by or before Saturday next, being ye 20th day of this instant Aprill. And in default thereof his place is ordered to be null and void. And it is further ordered that his stipend or salary due at our Lady Day past be detayned in the hands of the Treasurer until further order.
>
> (*Entry in Chapter Book*)

Poor Purcell paid up, as an entry in the Treasurer's book states:

> "Received of Mr. Purcell (his poundage and charges being deducted) £78 4s. 6d."

The visitors to the organ-loft could not have been many, as it was but small, so they paid pretty well for their seats, and Purcell seems to have had some sort of commission in the way of "poundage and other charges."

The Opera of *Dido and Æneas* has often been quoted as a marvellous effort of Purcell's early

days. Being a complete Opera without spoken Dialogue, it is a most interesting example of Purcell's advanced views, and, had he written it in 1675 (when only seventeen years of age), it would indeed have been a marvel. But I feel sure Mr Barclay Squire is right in putting it much later—in 1689. Although a splendid piece of work it is that of a man of experience and not of a youth.

One of the composer's best Operas is *Dioclesian*, an adaption from Beaumont and Fletcher by
{133} Betterton. It is scored for strings, flutes, hautboys (3), bassoons and trumpets. It is very interesting music, and there is a "Masque" included in it, containing some of the host of Purcell's operatic work. Purcell corrected the copies of the first issue by his own hand.

I possess one of these scarce books. He tells us a little of his troubles with the printer in an advertisement at the end of the book. "In order to the speedier publication of the Book I employed two several printers, but one of them falling into some trouble and the volume swelling to a bulk beyond my expectations have been the occasion of this delay." The music to *Dioclesian* and to *Amphitryon* (a play by Dryden), added greatly to Purcell's fame; and Dryden who at one time thought Grabu, the French master of the King's Music, to be far superior to any English composer, now mentions Purcell as one "in whose Person we have at length found an Englishman equal with the best abroad. At least my opinion of him has been such since his happy and judicious performances in the last Opera." (Dryden's.)

Dryden wrote another Opera in 1691, *King Arthur*, which Purcell set to music. This is, I think,
{134} the best (excepting *Dido and Æneas*) of Purcell's dramatic works, containing as it does the celebrated Air *Come if you dare* and the Frost Scene.

I cannot dwell longer on Purcell's dramatic music, but will turn for a moment to the music for *St Cecilia's Day* in 1692. This was performed, as usual, in Stationers Hall (the Hall still stands at the bottom of Paternoster Row), and *The Gentleman's Magazine* of the time mentions the performance and tells us the interesting fact that the second stanza was sung with incredible graces by Mr. Purcell himself. So it seems that Purcell had an alto voice; and it is pleasant to go into the very Hall, with the Musicians Company of the present day, and think of the old building echoing, years ago, to the strains of Purcell's voice.

And now I must turn to one of the finest of Purcell's contributions to the Services of the Church. In 1694 he wrote an elaborate *Te Deum* and *Jubilate* with orchestral accompaniment: this is the first of its kind by an English composer. It was written for the festival of *St Cecilia's Day*, 1694, but was not published until after the composer's death. The *Te Deum* was performed in St Paul's at the Annual Festival Service of the Sons of the Clergy until 1713, when Handel's *Te*
{135} *Deum*, composed for the Peace of Utrecht, took its place. From that time for some years the two rival *Te Deums* were performed alternately. There are some points of resemblance. Handel must have heard Purcell's setting, but the version of it which, until lately, was known—and sometimes performed—was a sad corruption of the original. Boyce, with the intention no doubt of helping Purcell's *Te Deum* to compete with Handel's, broke it up into various movements, made some alterations in the harmony, and added many dull symphonies. The original Purcell score consisted of 325 bars and Boyce added 149 more! The result was disastrous and practically killed the Purcell setting. A performance of it was given in 1829, again at the Festival of the Sons of the Clergy. A very interesting letter from M. Fétis, the great French writer, is preserved in a musical paper of June 1829, which I will quote:

> I must confess that my curiosity was considerable to hear the music of Purcell, whom the English proudly cite as being worthy of being placed in the same rank with the greatest composers of Germany and Italy. I was in a perfectly admiring disposition of mind when the Te Deum of this giant began; but what was my disappointment upon hearing, instead of the masterpiece which they had promised me, a long succession of insignificant phrases, ill-connected modulations and incorrect, albeit pretending harmonies. At first I imagined myself deceived, and that I ought to doubt my judgment on
> {136} a style of music to which I was unaccustomed but M. Felix Mendelssohn, a young and highly distinguished German composer, who stood beside me, received precisely the same impressions. Such indeed was the inconvenience felt by him that he would not prolong it, but escaped, leaving me to encounter Purcell alone during the performance of the Jubilate[3], which appeared to me no way superior.

It was a great anxiety to me to know what to do about introducing this *Te Deum* in the music of the Abbey Purcell Celebration. I consulted Sir Hubert Parry, who said it was "long-winded and dull"! And so I had always found it, and the result was I gave up the idea. But—most providentially—the MS. score of this work was brought to me one day in the Cloisters of the Abbey; the announcement of the coming celebration had called the owner's attention to it. He sold it to me—and when I looked it over I found out what was the real reason of its failure. It was Boyce's edition and not Purcell's music. A new edition was prepared and the *Te Deum* again restored to life!

In another direction Purcell showed his remarkable versatility. He corrected and amended Playford's Introduction to the Skill of Musick, a book of great interest. Purcell's observations on Canon are particularly good and valuable.

{137} In 1695 the funeral of Queen Mary took place in the Abbey, Purcell contributing an Anthem and other music. The solemn March for "flat mournful trumpets" has lately been recovered and

published; this is a beautiful specimen of Purcell's art, and, it is said, was played at his own funeral.

Purcell died on November 21st, 1695, and Dr Cummings, in his *Life of Purcell*, draws a moving picture of the death of the composer "in a house on the west side of Dean's Yard." But—Purcell never lived in Dean's Yard. Rate Books are not romantic, but generally trustworthy. The Rate Books of Westminster show that in 1682 Purcell paid rates for a house in Great St Ann's Lane, in 1686 for a house in Bowling Alley East, and in 1693, 1694, and 1695 (the year of his death) for a house in Marsham Street. All these houses are now demolished, but the one in Bowling Alley existed until lately, and I possess cupboards made from the mantelpieces and balusters of the staircase of Purcell's house.

Further proof that he rented houses lies in the fact that he was allowed £8 a year in lieu of a house, and this same payment continued up to the time of my predecessor, who had no house for the early years of his organistship.

{138} The death of this great man was a grievous loss to English music. Although he had worthy pupils in Dr Croft and others, yet he had no real successor; and the arrival of Handel and the musical domination which he exercised did much to cause Purcell's name to sink somewhat into oblivion. But it was only for a time—and now there is no English musician whose name and fame is more assured. A Purcell Society is gradually publishing all his works and making them more accessible. His Operas of *Dido and Æneas* and *The Fairy Queen* have been performed with great success, and his Church music is still constantly on the lists of our Cathedrals.

It has not been possible for me to notice all his work as I would wish to have done, but we must all feel that, not only was he the last of my *Twelve Good Musicians*, but by far the greatest.

A translation of the lines upon his gravestone in Westminster Abbey may fitly close this chapter.

> Applaud so great a guest, celestial powers,
> Who now resides with you but once was ours,
> Yet let invidious earth no more reclaim
> Her short-lived fav'rite and her chiefest fame,
> Complaining that so prematurely died
> Good-natured pleasure and devotion's pride.
> Died? no, he lives while yonder Organs sound
> And sacred echoes to the Choir rebound.

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NOTE

Since the preceding pages were written I have been in correspondence with Dr W. H. Grattan-Flood, of Enniscorthy, with reference to the Irish Purcells mentioned on p. 120. Dr Grattan-Flood claims to have proved Henry Purcell to be descended from a distinguished Irish family. Before quoting from his kind communication, I may say it seems to me very probable the Purcells were of good family. Both the elder Henry and his brother Thomas, were musicians of note when we first hear of them, and at the Restoration were members of the King's Band, Henry being also "Master of the Choristers" of Westminster Abbey. Edward Purcell, an elder brother of the composer, was a distinguished officer, who took part in the Siege of Gibraltar, and ended his days in honourable retirement at the seat of the Earl of Abingdon, at Wytham, near Oxford, in the chancel of which Church he is interred. Another small point is the fact that Purcell's first published work, the Sonatas, was issued with a portrait of the composer and with a coat-of-arms. All this looks as if "Roger Purcell, the 'Bayliffe' of Mr. Giles," (see p. 120) is not so likely to have been an ancestor of the musician as one of the Irish Purcells.

I am not able to give all the matter kindly sent to me—which I hope Dr Grattan-Flood will make public—but append his observations on the most important points:—

"Henry Purcell, the composer, was the younger son of Henry Purcell the Elder; and was adopted at the age of six by his uncle Thomas. The puzzle, then, is: Who was the father of Henry Purcell the Elder and of Thomas Purcell?

{140} "In order to answer this, I have made a systematic search in the *Fiants* of Elizabeth and James I, in the *Calendars of State Papers, Ireland*, 1623-1670, in the *Inquisitions, Funeral Entries in the Office of Arms*, etc., and have succeeded in tracing the father and grandfather of Henry Purcell the Elder. I had unusual opportunities of making this investigation inasmuch as I assisted Capt R. P. Mahaffy, B.L., in the editing of the *Irish State Papers of Charles I and Charles II*.

"Henry Purcell the Elder was the son of Thomas Purcell of Gortanny and Ballycross, Co. Tipperary, the son of Thomas Fitz Piers Purcell, cousin of the Baron of Loughmoe, and cousin of the Purcells of Croagh, Co. Limerick. Both Henry and Thomas Purcell were brought when quite young to England by their aunt, and placed in the Chapel Royal. Their aunt was a blood-relation of the Marquis of Ormonde, who was on intimate terms with King Charles I. Mrs James Purcell,

their aunt, took for her second husband Colonel John Fitzpatrick, who was also a personal friend of Charles I and of Charles II. This lady was Elizabeth Butler, 4th daughter of Thomas, Viscount Thurles; her marriage jointure is dated 11 February, 1639. She returned from London in 1643.

At the Restoration, through the influence of the Marquis of Ormonde, who was created Duke of Ormonde on March 30, 1661, both Henry Purcell the Elder and his brother Thomas were given posts as Gentlemen in the Chapel Royal, and were in the immediate entourage of the Court, and not unregarded by the observant Pepys. Henry married *circa* 1651, and his eldest son, Edward, called after an uncle of the same name, was born in 1653."

"W. H. GRATTAN-FLOOD."

{141} It will be seen Dr Grattan-Flood gives interesting particulars of the Irish family. On one point the suggestion that the elder Purcell and his brother Thomas were "placed in the Chapel Royal," I wish he could give some real proof, for it would, I think, explain all the ensuing musical success of Purcell's father, his Uncle Thomas, and himself. But I can only hope that Dr Grattan-Flood's further researches may end in completely clearing up the mystery of the ancestry of Henry Purcell.

J.F.B.

[1] Mr Hooper, the Organist, and Mr John Parsons, the Master of the Choristers, both had houses in the Little Almonry in 1616. Their names appear on a document of that time, a lease from Dr Montaigne and the Chapter.

[2] The portrait which was issued with these sonatas has been reproduced for this volume.

[3] The *Jubilate* was also "improved" by Boyce.

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