

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE ORGANS, ORGANISTS AND MUSIC
OF ST. GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL,
CAPE TOWN
FROM 1834 TO 1952

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
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BY

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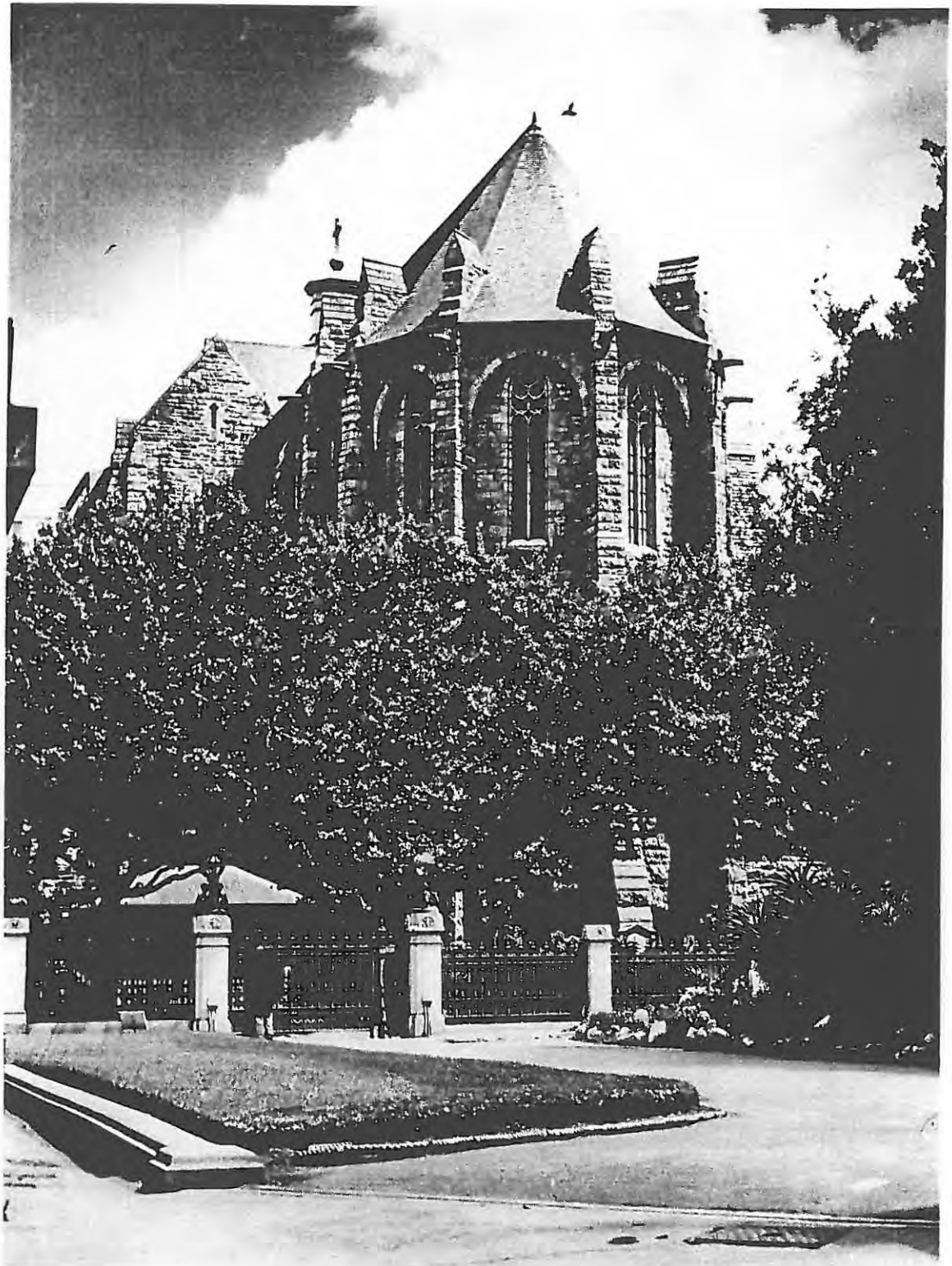
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1. St. George's Cathedral from the Parliament gardens.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ST. GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL, CAPE TOWN

The first recorded Church of England service at the Cape took place in 1749, but for almost a century after that date Anglicans had no place of worship of their own. From about 1807 onwards the Groote Kerk in Adderley Street was regularly lent to the Chaplain on Sundays and the Kerkraad even allowed their bells to be rung to inform the British that it was time for their service.

In October 1827, for the first time in history, a bishop of the Church of England visited Cape Town. This was Dr. J.T. James, Bishop of Calcutta, who landed for a few days on his first voyage to India and was met by the Governor and his staff in great state. A meeting was held at which Bishop James was present and the eighteen gentlemen discussed proposals for the building of an English Church in Cape Town. "It was proposed that the building should hold at least 1,000 people. The Bishop said that the Home Government would grant ground and half the expenses... He reminded them of their obligation to the Dutch Church, who for so many years had allowed them to use their

sanctuary, and he exhorted them to be active and persevering and remain attached to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of their forefathers, that venerable Church based on the foundation of Christ and His Apostles."⁽ⁱ⁾

As a result of this meeting the Governor gave the site in the Gardens (at the foot of the Avenue) on which St. George's Cathedral now stands, and the site was consecrated by Bishop James on October 23rd, just before he sailed for Calcutta. "But after his departure the glow faded away, difficulties and quarrels appeared... and the scheme was shelved for two years."⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

However, on St. George's Day, 23rd April 1830, the foundation stone of St. George's Church was laid by the Governor, Sir Lowry Cole, with military and Masonic honours. A triumphal arch was erected and troops lined the streets through which the procession was to pass. "The name of the street at the head of which the Cathedral stands was changed from Bergh Street to St. George's Street, and the contract was signed for a building to hold 1,100 to 1,200 persons for £12,000 exclusive of enclosure, gates, bells and organ, but including pulpit, reading and clerk's desks and all the work of the altar."⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾

- (i) Lewis & Edwards: "Historical Records of the Church of the Province of South Africa", p.18.
- (ii) *ibid*: p.18.
- (iii) *ibid*: p.20.

"Four years later invitations were sent to ministers, deacons and elders of other local churches to attend Divine Service in the newly opened building. Bells pealed, the congregation mustered, and the Reverend George Hough, Senior Colonial Chaplain, preached a sermon (which was subsequently published) on St. Thomas's Day, 21st December 1834. But as there was no bishop in Cape Town then or for a long time after, the Church remained unconsecrated; it was not even a parish church, for it had no rector, and was served by the Civil Chaplains for nearly fourteen years."⁽ⁱ⁾

Early pictures and engravings of the interior of St. George's (see illustration 3) give the impression of a nonconformist or Calvinist church rather than an Anglican one. The organ in the gallery dominated the east end, the pulpit and lectern are clearly visible on either side of the two pillars at the east end, but it is difficult to see the altar, for there were certainly no candles or cross. This arrangement was, of course, typical of Anglican worship in the first part of the nineteenth century when churchmanship was distinctly "low" and much influenced by the Latitudinarian movement which attached little importance to matters of ecclesiastical organization and liturgical practice.

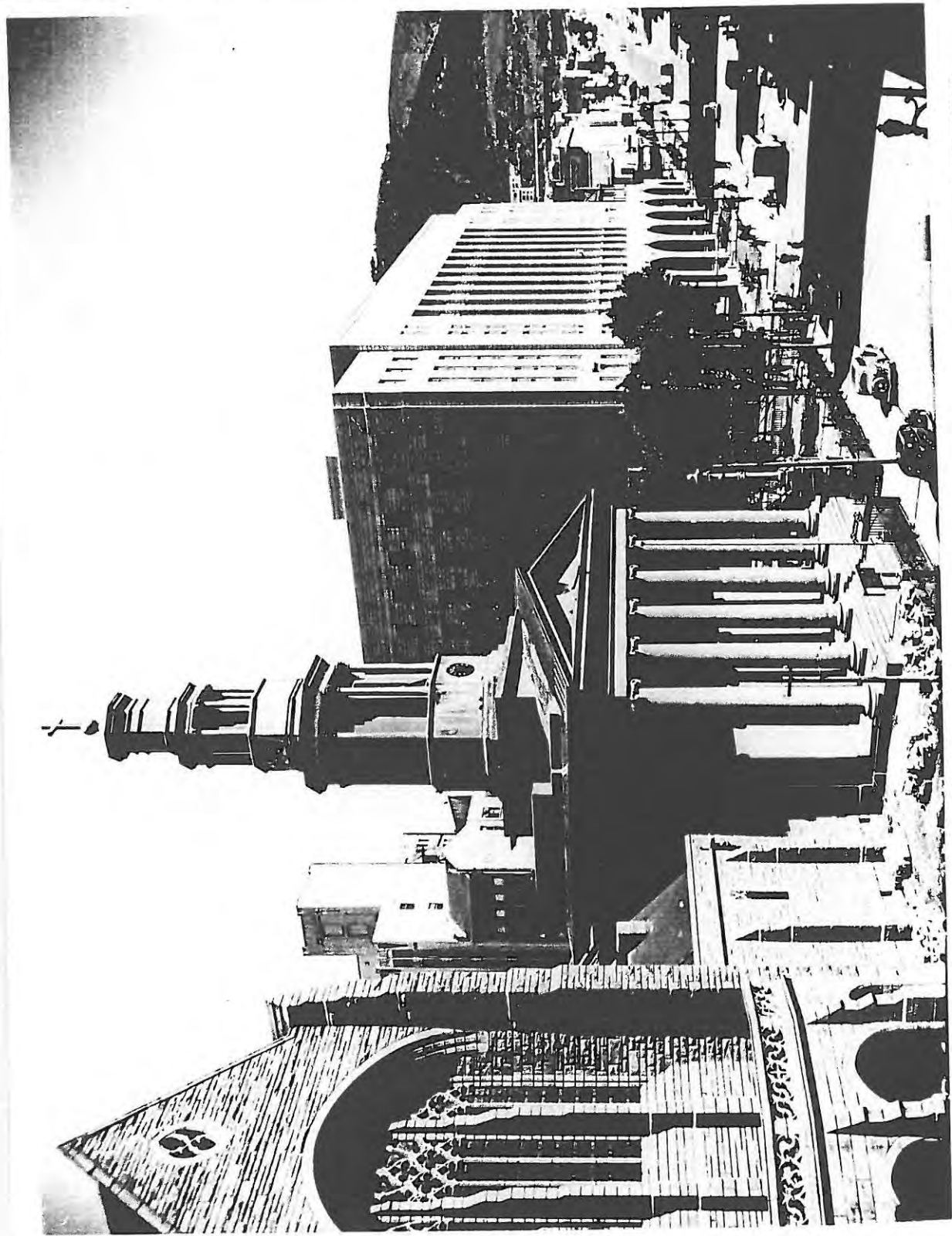
(i) Fitzroy: "A Guide to St. George's Cathedral", p.7.

Robert Gray, consecrated to the newly-founded See of Cape Town, landed on February 20th, 1848, and with his arrival St. George's became a Cathedral. Bishop Gray, a "high" churchman and closely associated with the Oxford Movement, felt that the Church had neither the size nor the dignity worthy of a Cathedral and it was his earnest wish to begin as soon as possible the building of a new and worthier place of worship. The Church was consecrated by him on August 28th, 1851 and a Chapter of Dean and four Canons constituted in the following year. However, urgent needs in the rest of the country and the bitter Natal schism prevented Bishop Gray from fulfilling his early dreams of building a new Cathedral. He did, however, effect a number of changes in the old building, notably the removal of the east end gallery in 1856 and the erection of a dominating altar in its place. (See illustration 4.)

It was not until 1897, under Archbishop West Jones, that a start was made on the building of a Cathedral which would be worthy both of the name and of the Mother City. The plans eventually accepted were those by Sir Herbert Baker - so designed to run east and west, at right-angles to the old Cathedral, and gradually to replace it entirely. It was modelled on the thirteenth century French Gothic Cathedrals and the buttress-stone in the apse was laid by King George V (then H.R.H. the

Duke of Cornwall and York) on August 22nd, 1901. However, it was nearly three years before the building really began, and only in 1906 was the crypt finished, the first part of the new Cathedral to be completed. Since that date until the 24th November 1963 when the west nave was re-opened, these building operations have continued, interrupted for a time by two World Wars. Sir Herbert Baker's plan is still incomplete and we have yet to see the completion of the nave, the west front and bell tower. But there is still the hope that one day the Cathedral will stand completed - a tribute to the vision of "the men who never saw it brought to fulfilment."⁽ⁱ⁾

(i) *ibid*: p.7.



2. Old St. George's Cathedral (demolished 1953).

P A R T I

THE ORGANS OF ST. GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL

The history of the first organ in the original St. George's Cathedral began before the 1830's, when the foundation stone was laid. When it was decided to build an Anglican Church in Cape Town, the authorities launched a special fund to cover the cost of the organ. This was supported by the Governor, Sir Lowry Cole, his successor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, and a number of other important people at the Cape. The first list of donors was issued in March 1829 and two further ones in August and November 1831, by which time £305.2.6d. had been collected.

By August of the following year, the fund stood at a sufficiently high figure for the Trustees to place an order for an organ with a builder called Thomas Joel Hitchcock, who had established himself in Cape Town as an organ-builder and pianoforte manufacturer in 1828 and traded at what he termed his "musical depository" in Market (now Greenmarket) Square. Hitchcock wrote to the Trustees on March 10th, 1832 and in his letter described the instrument he intended building, as well as drawing up his terms of contract:

"I, Thomas Joel Hitchcock of Cape Town, Organ Builder etc. do hereby undertake to build an Organ of the following description and dimensions [sic] , and to complete the same

in the best style of workmanship and with the mest materials and to set up the same in complete order and in the most perfect and workmanlike manner in the Church of St. George's now building in Cape Town.

I will enter into a Contract for the due fulfilment of the same with the Trustees of the above Church and will commence working upon it immediately on the Contract being signed.

Description of the Instrument - a Church Organ of Large Scale with three rows of keys, the Set for the Great Organ compass from GG up to F in alt - Long Octaves, viz. - all the intermediate Flats and Sharps from GG upwards - which are not always put into Organs, with the following Stops, on a bold and full quality of tone.

Great Organ

An Open Diapason of large scale	
A Stopt Diapason	- do -
A Principal	- do -
A Twelfth	- do -
A Fifteenth	- do -
A Sesquialtra and Cornet	3 Ranks
A Mixture	2 Ranks
A Trumpet	

The whole of these Stops to run throughout the Instrument, with 18 double diapason Pedal Pipes, the length of the largest to be about 24 feet - with 18 German foot Pedals and couplers to bring on the bass of the Great Organ keys.

The Second Set of keys compass from GG up to F in alt - Long Octaves with the following stops -

Choir Organ

A Stopt Diapason	throughout
A Principal	- do -
A Fifteenth	- do -
A Dulceana	to Gamut G
A Cremona	to Fiddle G

With double to reach to the lowest octave of the Stopt Diapason on the Dulceana [sic] and Diapason sliders thereby forming a perfect bass to the Dulceana.

The Third Set of Keys compass from Fiddle G up to F in alt with the following Stops, enclosed in a Swell Box with a sliding Venetian - or door front:

Swell

An Open Diapason
A Stopt - do -
A Principal
A Flute
A Hautboy
A Trumpet.

Each of these sets of Keys may also be used separately with a bass accompaniment as the Pedals will be entirely distinct from the Keys, or may be brought on to pull down the Great Organ bass Keys to add to the power.

Each set of keys may also be played upon as soft as a flute and will admit of any variation according to the taste of the player.

The whole to be manufactured in the best style of workmanship with the best materials, of a fine rich quality of tone, with double fitting Horizontal Bellows, and with all the latest improvements in the mechanical principle.

To be fitted up and completed in the Church in handsome Wainscot Case, with gilt playing pipes in front in accordance with the accompanying sketch.

The height of the front to be 20 feet - the width across the front to be 16 feet - the depth of the Instrument from back to front to be 9 feet.

For the Sum of Eight Hundred and Fifty Pounds to be paid in the following manner - viz:

The first Instalment of Three Hundred and Fifty pounds to be paid on the signing of the Contract.

The second - do - of One Hundred and Fifty pounds to be paid in six months from the date of signing the Contract.

The third -do - of One Hundred Pounds in nine months from the date of signing the Contract.

The fourth - do - of One Hundred Pounds in twelve months from the date of signing the Contract.

The fifth - do - of One Hundred and Fifty Pounds on the Organ being taken over by the Trustees,

and that the Specification be subject to the following conditions -

- 1st That all the Materials for the use of the above Organ which may be required to be brought into the Colony be landed duty free as in the instance of the Contract for building the Church.
- 2nd That in the event of the Trustees requiring any alteration to be made in the design of the Instrument, or in the arrangement of the position of the Organ, such expenses must be considered as an addition to the present sum contracted for.
- 3rd Any alteration that may be required to be made in the floor of the Gallery or under the Gallery such expenses to be defrayed by the Trustees.
- 4th That the Contractor will engage to have the Organ in such a forward state that it may be played upon if required within the term of twelve months and to have the whole completed if required within fifteen months from the date of the Contract.
- 5th To guard against any loss to the Trustees in case of the demise of the Contractor, in the intermediate time, a Policy of Insurance of his life for the full amount of

eight hundred and fifty pounds shall be made in favour of the Trustees at the Contractor's expense, from which Sum the Trustees will be duly authorized to repay themselves whatever amount they have advanced to the Contractor."

Hitchcock's task of building this organ was not without setbacks and difficulties and we find him writing to the Trustees on several occasions. On September 4th, 1833, for example, he wrote to say that:

"In consequence of the Gallery intended for the reception of the Organ not being ready at the time specified in the Contract, I beg to call your attention to the following difficulties in which I am and shall be placed on that account, and trust that you will make such arrangements as may secure me from any loss accruing therefrom.

Previously to my entering on the Contract, I made such calculations as might enable me to reduce the price of the Organ to its present cost in the Contract in order to meet the funds mentioned as likely to be the extent of what might be appropriate for that purpose.

1st That I should take the work directly from my Workshops, and put it together in the Church, thereby saving the expense of removing it from the workshop to the Store.

2nd That I should have saved the expense of building up in such store, when once putting it together would have been sufficient.

3rd That I should have saved the expense of taking it to pieces in order to remove it to the Church,

and 4th I should have saved the expense of store hire from August 18th to such time as the Gallery may be ready for its reception - all these items consequently enhance the expenses of the Organ considerably which the price of the Instrument will not allow of without my being a considerable loser ... I beg to state, Gentlemen, that I have been obliged to engage a large store expressly for the reception of the Organ which I should otherwise have had no occasion for ..."

Then again on March 5th, 1834, he writes to say that he is "still prevented from bringing the pipes into the Church in consequence of the quantity of dust made by the workmen in removing scaffolding etc."

A letter written to the Trustees on September 18th of the same year seems to have an element of despair about it:

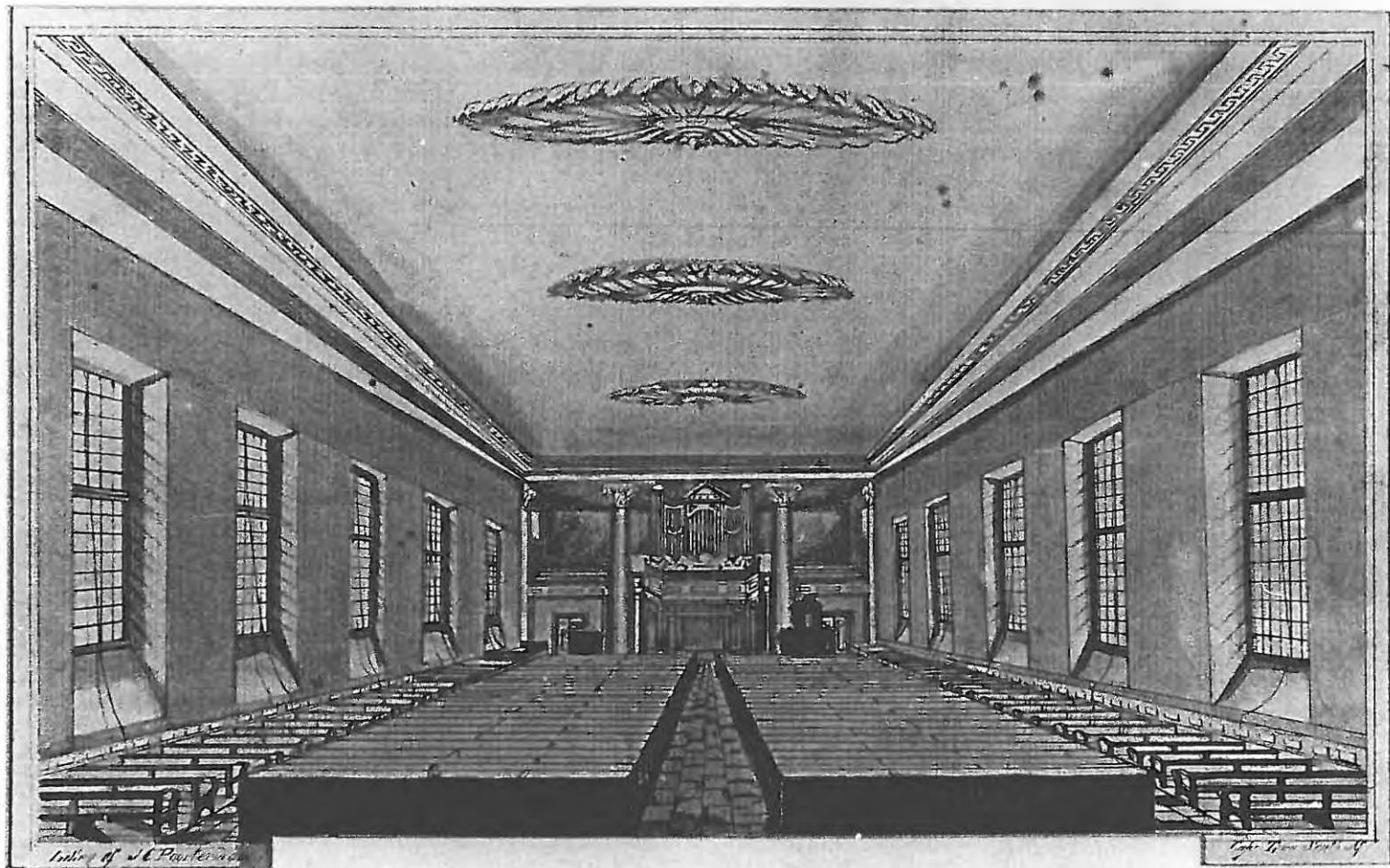
"... I have been kept in a constant state of anxiety for several months past to meet expenses on account of the Organ, which even my business could not answer as I have for some months been obliged almost entirely to give that up not being able to attend to that, or to finish the Organ, I have now exhausted all my resources even for paying my workmen..."

... I expected to have completed all, this week, but have been prevented by the carpenters and masons working underneath the gallery and having the doors continually open in very bad weather... I have repeatedly had to do the work twice and thrice over ... up to the present moment I am prevented from doing anything in the Church as the masons are still working with the doors open and I am obliged to keep one man constantly there to prevent any injury being done to the Organ."

However, Hitchcock was eventually left unhindered to complete his work and on November 20th, 1834 wrote to the Trustees that the Organ was completed and ready for them "to take over", as he put it.

The South African Commercial Advertiser of 24th December, 1834 claimed that this organ "was built entirely in Cape Town, by Mr. Hitchcock, and is considered by good judges as a decidedly successful effort. It contains upward of 1500 pipes, all of which were cast by himself."⁽ⁱ⁾ However, it is almost certain that Hitchcock would have had to import

(i) South African Commercial Advertiser, December 24th, 1834



INTERIOR VIEW OF ST GEORGE'S CHURCH

Cape Town.

3. Interior of old Cathedral showing the first organ of 1834.
(Engraving by J.C. Poortemans, c.1844)

the pipes from overseas for he would hardly have had the facilities to build an organ of that size. Moreover, organ pipes are not "cast", which indicates the rather vague nature of this newspaper report.

Of far more interest is a letter, signed "Musicorum Perstudiosus" which appeared in the South African Commercial Advertiser of December 31st, 1834. Together with Hitchcock's description in his letter to the Trustees in March, 1832, it gives a fair idea of the specification of this first instrument built for St. George's Church.

Incidentally the claim that it was "the first organ that had been manufactured in the British Colonies" is incorrect. At least two instruments had been assembled in Cape Town after the British Occupation of 1806: in the Strand Street Lutheran Church (1814) by a builder called Green, and in the Groote Kerk (1828) by Hitchcock himself. Here then is the text of the letter:

"Many persons who felt interested and delighted at the opening of the organ, have expressed a wish, that a more practical account should be given of the instrument than the brief one in your remarks on the opening of 'St. George's Church' on the 20th [sic] instant.

As this is the first organ which has been manufactured in any of the British Colonies, I hope in offering a few observations on the merits of Mr. Hitchcock's arduous undertaking, I shall not intrude upon the columns of your valuable and widely circulated journal.

The Organ built by Mr. H., and erected in St. George's Cathedral, is constructed with three rows of keys; this number constitutes what is called the legitimate or perfect organ.

The great organ, which is played by the middle row of keys, consists of a full toned open and stopt diapason; principal and twelfth, fifteenth, sesquialtra, mixture, tierce, and a very powerful trumpet; to which organ may be coupled, at the pleasure of the performer, a magnificent double diapason. This grand stop is placed by the agency of the pedal keys. It is perfectly independent in its action, and affords to the organist many facilities for giving a more sombre and subdued effect to the brilliant solo stops.

It has been said by a few persons, that the great organ is rather 'harsh', but I think, from a careful examination of the stops, that it merits rather a character for fullness, united with brilliancy of intonation.

The choir organ is played by the lowest row of keys, and contains a stopt Diapason, principal, fifteenth and two very beautiful solo stops. The Dulciana is remarkable for its mellifluous tones and the Cremona is no less estimable for its impressive and pathetic qualities of sound.

The swell organ is played by the highest row of keys. It possesses a stopt diapason, flutes, hautboy, and an echo trumpet. The organ is a neat and beautiful piece of mechanism; I would advise those who are connoisseurs of good workmanship and complicated machinery to examine this instrument with care, and they cannot, in justice to the builder, help bearing testimony to the masterly style, with which he has accomplished his arduous enterprise."⁽ⁱ⁾

Evidently the organ playing at the opening of St. George's left much to be desired, as "Musicorum Perstudiosus" attempts to explain as follows:

(i) South African Commercial Advertiser, December 31st, 1834.

"The organ ... was heard under many disadvantages. The organist had not had opportunities for making himself sufficiently acquainted with the management and combination of the stops; consequently, he could not elicit those varied effects, which it is so richly capable of producing.

To do mere common justice to an organ of this magnitude requires a well practised hand and strong nerves; but to conjure up its majestic and enchanting intonations with the master hand and genius of an Adams(i) or a Wesley, falls to the lot of very few organists of the present day...

...I cannot conclude my remarks without congratulating the friends and supporters of Mr. Hitchcock on the satisfactory completion of his contract. It is much to be regretted that the builder will sustain pecuniary loss, by the delays and many disappointments he has had to contend with.

I hope the Trustees of St. George's will present Mr. Hitchcock with some token expressive of their sense of the meritorious manner in which he has completed his difficult undertaking..."(ii)

This organ, however, was not a great success and the Vestry minutes are full of complaints about its often unsatisfactory condition during the twenty-five years it remained in the old Cathedral. On July 21st, 1836 for example, the Organist, Thomas Corder, wrote to the Vestry to say that "the keys, and movement of the Organ, have become quite stiff and unmanageable, in consequence of the current of damp air, which makes its way underneath the gallery door."

On August 27th, 1840, Hitchcock himself wrote to the Churchwardens to inform them "that the damp from the lower part of the building has affected the movement so much that the Choir Organ is at present

(i) Thomas Adams (1785-1858) - a London organist "with a high reputation for his technical skill, extemporization and composition". (Scholes)

(ii) South African Commercial Advertiser, *ibid.*

quite useless..."; whilst by July 28th, 1849, he had to report that "the whole of the instrument is in a very filthy state so that it is impossible for the pipes to obtain their quantity and strength of wind required to produce a clear and steady tone, and the bellows require a thorough repair."

By the middle of 1858 the organ was in such a state that the Organist, George Darter, had to write to the Vestry on July 7th describing its "very bad condition" and enclosed a letter from an organ-builder and tuner, Bredell, "who states that he does not think it worthwhile to do anything more to the Organ, owing to the bad condition it is in."

At this same meeting the Vestry decided that it would be more economical to replace the organ rather than repair it and they "resolved to procure from Mr. Bredell an estimate of the Cost, to be submitted to the next Meeting." Mr. Bredell duly reported that it would cost £450 to rebuild and alter the organ, and the Vestry, having decided rather to replace it entirely, resolved on August 11th 1858 to apply to the Organist of the new Dutch Reformed Church "to know whether the Dutch Church would purchase the Organ (the Vestry having learnt that that Church was about to have an Organ built) and to offer the same for £200."

The Dutch Reformed Churchwardens, however, declined to purchase the organ and so the Cathedral authorities had to discover some other way of disposing of it. Unfortunately there are no records in the Cathedral or contemporary newspapers as to what eventually became of it: V.M. Fitzroy suggests that "it was probably the one-manual organ that later became the first organ in St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral."⁽ⁱ⁾ However, as the instrument built by Hitchcock was one of three manuals, we can discount the suggestion that it was sold to St. Mary's. Perhaps an advertisement which appeared in 1857 gives us the likely clue as to its subsequent fate:

"The contemplated alterations in St. George's Cathedral rendering necessary the removal of the organ from its present site, it has been thought desirable that a new Instrument of different construction should be procured from England. The present organ, which can easily be divided into two instruments of sufficient size for country churches, is therefore offered for sale. Full parts, from Mr. Bredell, Organ builder, or to the Churchwardens."⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

It could be that some of the pipe-work from this historic instrument has found its way into other organs in South Africa, or that it still exists complete in some church or other. However, the information about its fate is so scant that it would be impossible to trace this organ unless further facts were to come to light.

(i) Fitzroy: A Guide compiled for the Friends of St. George's Cathedral, p.29.

(ii) Unidentified cutting.

In the Mercantile Advertiser of March 2nd, 1859 there is a report of a meeting "to aid in collecting funds towards defraying the expense of the new organ for St. George's Cathedral"⁽ⁱ⁾ held on 28th February, 1859.

"The Hon. Secretary had the satisfaction to announce, that subscriptions had already been received, or promised, to the amount of upwards of £260. A considerable sum has yet to be raised; the Committee therefore beg to solicit subscriptions from all who have not yet subscribed.

In making this general appeal to English Churchmen, the Committee beg to urge the following considerations: That the Cathedral is the only English Church in the Diocese, in which a fine and powerful organ can be erected. That there is a zealous Voluntary Choir, who stand much in need of the assistance of such an Organ. That the instrument which it is now proposed to procure, will not exceed in power or cost, those used in most of our large Country Parish Churches in England. That the Congregation of St. George's, although numerically large, is by no means wealthy, and though they are as a whole glad to bear a large share of the expense, they trust that the richer part of the community resident in the suburban villages and country districts, will help them to provide an Organ, in some measure, worthy of the Metropolitan Church of South Africa."⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

This second instrument was ordered from the firm of Bevington and Sons in England. Henry Bevington, who founded the firm in 1794, had been an apprentice to Ohrmann and Nutt, who were the successors to John Snetzler, the famous German organ-builder who had settled in England in 1740. "The business was subsequently carried on by Henry and Martin Bevington, sons of the founder, in Rose Street,

(i) Mercantile Advertiser, March 2nd, 1859.

(ii) *ibid.*

Soho, in the same premises as were occupied by Ohrmann."⁽ⁱ⁾ The large instrument of fifty-four speaking stops built for the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London in 1854 was one of their notable achievements and the same firm was responsible for the organs in the Foundling Hospital, London and St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

As the organ gallery had been dismantled in 1859, the new organ was set up on the floor of the Cathedral near the right-hand corner as can be seen from the interior photographs of the old St. George's. The Cape Argus of February 16th, 1861 carried the following short report:

"The new organ which has just been erected in the Cathedral, is said to be an instrument of fine tone and considerable power. It has been built by Messrs. Bevington, of London, and will be used for the first time in the public services of the Church on Sunday. It will be seen by an advertisement in another column that collections will then be made in aid of the 'Organ Fund'. The congregation of St. George's and all the Church generally, are to be congratulated on having succeeded in obtaining for the Cathedral an excellent instrument at a remarkably cheap rate."⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

This second organ remained in the Cathedral until 1889 when it was sold to the Parish Church of St. John, Wynberg for £305. The purchasers also agreed to pay half the sea-fare of one, John Smith, (£26.5.0) who was sent out by the firm of Hill to erect the third organ which had been ordered for St. George's and to transfer the old

(i) Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, p.698.

(ii) Cape Argus, February 16th, 1861.

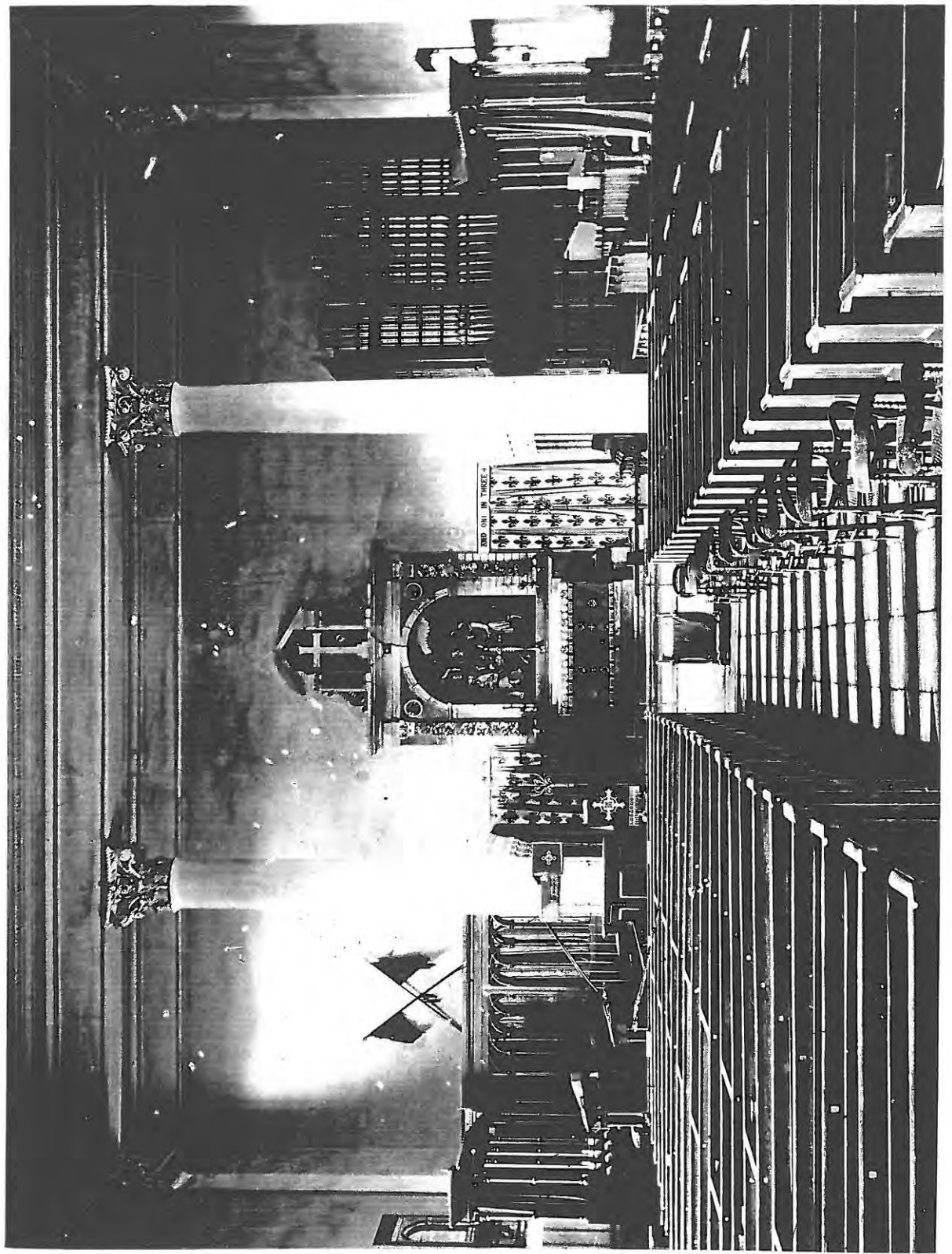
one to Wynberg. It was moved to St. John's in 1891 and during a recent overhaul the name "J. Smith 1891" was found inscribed on the pallet guards of all three soundboards (Choir, Great and Swell).

A rather amusingly emotional account of the last time the instrument was played in St. George's appeared in the Cape Times Weekly Edition on 3rd September, 1890:

"The cases containing the new organ were being delivered at St. George's Cathedral on Thursday (28th August, 1890). On Monday the decomposition of the old instrument set in, and during the days ensuing the spectacle of gradual resolution into primary elements has been a melancholy one. In the morning Sermon on Sunday last the Very Reverend the Dean bade farewell to his old friend in pathetic terms. After the evening service Mr. Barrow Dowling's recital was more than usually emotional. 'The Harmonious Blacksmith' was the closing number and never did that fascinating creation of Haydn [sic] express itself in a stronger and sweeter flood of melody. It seemed to sob itself out at the last; and the accomplished organist is said to have shed a silent tear as he turned the gas down on the keyboard to be seen no more. The new organ is said to be a fine instrument, furnished with all the latest mechanical appliances. But in richness and mellowness of tone no one can hope for any improvement on the organ now sent into rural retreat at Wynberg. The 'Harmonious Blacksmith' of last Sunday night, like that little tone of which Browning writes, 'will ring in our souls for ever.'"(i)

The Wynberg Times of September 6th, 1890 commented rather unenthusiastically on St. John's new acquisition: "Although the renovated Cathedral organ will be fully powerful and for ordinary accompaniments adequate, nevertheless it will not be up to the

(i) Cape Times Weekly Edition, September 3rd, 1890.



4. The second Organ of 1859 in the old Cathedral.

requirements of the present age, the Swell organ only extending to tenor C, nor are the Great and Choir organs at all well balanced. Nevertheless it will be a great acquisition to the Church, the size of which needs a much larger instrument than the present one."⁽ⁱ⁾

This organ now stands in a chamber on the south side of the choir of St. John's Church, in appearance exactly as it looked in pictures of the old St. George's Cathedral. However, certain alterations have been made to the specification since the time it stood in the Cathedral. The Great Mixture and the Swell Triplette have both at some stage been reduced from three to two ranks; the Great Gamba, Harmonic Flute and Suabe Flute and the Swell Salicional and Oboe are later additions, whilst the Great Octave coupler was removed in the 1959 overhaul. The Salicional is of German make and twelve bass notes are available for use should the Swell organ ever be extended to its full range from tenor C downwards. At present the Swell pipes range from tenor C upwards, the bottom twelve notes being permanently coupled to the Choir organ. These operate whatever stops happen to be drawn on that manual. Another unusual feature is that the Great drawstops are situated on the left hand side of the console and the Swell and Choir stops on the right. Traditionally the Great and Swell stops are situated the other way round.

(i) Wynberg Times, September 6th, 1890.

The present specification (1967) of the Bevington organ in
St. George's Cathedral (1859), now in St. John's Church, Wynberg:

<u>GREAT</u> (CC to G)		No. of pipes
1.	Bourdon (Tenor F sharp down) 16'	19
2.	Double Diapason (down to Tenor G) 16'	37
3.	Open Diapason No. 1 8'	56
4.	Claribel 8'	56
* 5.	Gamba 8'	49
6.	Principal 4'	56
* 7.	Suabe Flute 4'	56
* 8.	Harmonic Flute 4'	56
9.	Twelfth $\frac{2}{3}$	56
10.	Fifteenth 2'	56
11.	Mixture 2 ranks (originally 3)	112
<u>SWELL</u> (CC to G) (enclosed)		
12.	Double Diapason 16'	44
13.	Open Diapason 8'	44
14.	Stopped Diapason 8'	44
* 15.	Salicional 8'	56
16.	Principal 4'	44
17.	Triplette 2 ranks (originally 3)	88
* 18.	Oboe 8'	44
<u>CHOIR</u> (CC to G)		
19.	Dulciana (Tenor C) 8'	44
20.	Stopped Diapason Bass 8'	12
21.	Stopped Diapason Treble 8'	44
22.	Principal 4'	56
23.	Flute 4'	56
24.	Clarionette 8'	37
	Tremulant	
<u>PEDAL</u> (CCC to F)		
25.	Great Open Diapason 16'	30

COUPLERS: Swell to Great: Pedal to Great: Pedals to Choir:
Great Octave coupler (now removed). 3 composition pedals to Great.

Tracker action. Balanced Swell Pedal.

(* not in the original 1859 organ)

Had it not been for a full report of the third organ built for St. George's Cathedral by William Hill and Sons in 1890 which appeared in the Cape Times Weekly Edition of November 5th, 1890, no details of the instrument would have come down to us today. All the records of Messrs. Hill, Norman and Beard (the successors to William Hill and Sons) were destroyed in a blitz in World War II and the South African organ building firm, Messrs. Cooper, Gill and Tomkins have no records of this instrument. It is indeed fortunate that we have this very full account in the Cape Times which not only gives the complete specification of the organ but also the details of its cost and erection.

"The Dean went to England in 1885, and there interviewed Messrs. Bevington and Sons about the renovation scheme of the old organ. He also obtained valuable information from Sir John Stainer, Dr. Bridge, of Chester Cathedral, and several experts in London, Plymouth and Chester. On his return from England in 1886, the Dean reported the issue of his investigations and it was agreed eventually to accept the tender of Messrs. Hill and Sons to build an entirely new instrument for the sum of £1,230, in fact the lowest of all the estimates sent in for the required organ."(i)

The history of the firm of Hill begins in the middle of the eighteenth century with the famous builder, John Snetzler (1710-1785) who was succeeded by his foreman, a Swede named Ohrmann in 1780.

"The latter had a partner W. Nutt, in 1790, who was afterwards joined

(i) Cape Times Weekly Edition, November 5th, 1890

by Thomas Elliot about the year 1803."⁽ⁱ⁾ In 1825 Elliot took his son-in-law, William Hill, as a partner and after Elliot's death in 1832, Hill worked alone until 1837, "when he was joined by Frederick Davidson, who left the next year to become a partner of John Gray."⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ The firm was known as W. Hill & Son until 1916 when it was merged with Norman and Beard of Norwich.

The Cape Times Weekly Edition goes on to say that

"the estimate of Messrs. Hill & Sons having been duly accepted, the order for same was, after considerable delay, sent to that firm in August last year (1889). Messrs. Hill & Sons commenced work in the following November, and the organ was ready for shipment at the end of last June (1890). We are indebted to the Rev. J. Deacon for the following concise statement of the receipts and expenditure of the new instrument:

Total cost of organ, including	
hydraulic engine (still to come)	£1,330. 0. 0.
Erection, etc.	130. 0. 0
Freight, Customs, etc.	<u>330. 12. 11.</u>
	£1,790. 12. 11.
Paid to Hill & Son	* £900. 0. 0.
Freight, Customs, etc., paid	230. 12. 11.
In hand	85. 2. 2.
By sale of old organ	305. 0. 0.
Half man's passage to be paid by Wynberg	26. 5. 0.
Proceeds of magic lantern entertainment	
by Mr. Hanham	5. 10. 0.
Outstanding subscriptions, etc.	<u>130. 0. 0.</u>
	£1,682. 10. 1.

*£100 of this was for freight, etc.

Deficiency, supposing all outstanding subscriptions come in, £108.2s.10d. To this must be added expenses of platform erection.

(i) Grove: Dictionary of Music and Musicians, p.277.

(ii) Sumner: The Organ, p.227.

The new St. George's organ is a very fine specimen of its kind, and embraces in its mechanism all the most modern appliances of wind and action to facilitate the efforts of the performer. It covers the entire space of the old organ chamber with an additional foreground of about twelve feet in length, bringing the keyboard of the organ behind the centre of the Decani choir stalls. The old platform has been strengthened and largely added to, and a gateway has also been added to the new chamber. From the lower end of the Cathedral the new instrument has a grand and imposing appearance. The bass-speaking pipes of the large-scale Open Diapason are artistically decorated and arranged in groups according to their position in the front of the organ. On the chancel side a like arrangement has been designed with the Bourdon pedal pipes. Thus from each side of view the outside of the instrument presents a full and striking appearance, and entirely in keeping with its surroundings.

By the courtesy of Mr. Smith,⁽ⁱ⁾ the representative of the eminent London firm, we are enabled to give the following highly interesting account of the internal mechanism and general design of the new organ.

Besides the 32 speaking stops, which represent the entire sounding force of the organ, there are no less than 12 mechanical contrivances, by which the different combinations of stops are brought directly under the hand of the player. The composition pedals etc. are all worked upon pneumatic levers, which ensure prompt action and entire absence of noise. The draw-stop action is also worked throughout upon the tubular-pneumatic principle, which is a modern device by which all centres are done away with, the pneumatic valves acting on the slide with a tube to the wind-box at hand.

The keyboard of the instrument presents a chaste and elegant appearance. The desk is of dark polished mahogany, while the three rows of keys are of polished ivory and overlap each other. The draw-stops are of polished birch, with boxwood knobs, and have ivory labels with different coloured engravings to mark the different manuals. These stops are also placed at a convenient

(i) John Smith: he arrived at Cape Town aboard the "Hawarden Castle" in August 1890, stayed at Poole's Hotel in New Street and completed the organ in time for its opening on November 4th.

angle on each side of the key-board, which greatly facilitates the action of the player when using the different combinations by hand alone. The backfall couplers are on pneumatic levers, and are of polished mahogany, with fossil bronze connections. The pedal board is designed after the recommendations of the College of Organists, is perfectly noiseless in action, and is also worked upon the pneumatic principle.

The metal pipes throughout the organ are composed of that material known amongst organ builders as 'spotted metal', which is supposed to ensure both acoustic brilliancy and durability in wear. The wood pipes of the organ are of polished pine and mahogany. The wind chests of all the manuals are of St. John's pine and mahogany, the tables are leathered and separated in order to prevent warping.

Three bellows supply the organ with wind. Of these the large one, which fills the entire space in the centre of the organ chamber, and has a pressure of three inches, supplies all the pipes with wind. The other two are called the heavy-pressure bellows and are used for the tubular pneumatic draw-stop and pedal actions. They are placed one about the other, and perform an alternately reverse duty. These bellows will shortly be worked by three hydraulic engines, designed and manufactured expressly for this instrument by Messrs. Hill & Sons. They will be placed immediately under the bellows in a chamber built for the purpose, and will be attached to the feeders direct.⁽ⁱ⁾

The Cape Argus Weekly Edition of November 5th, 1890 has a briefer account of this Hill organ and describes it as having "three manuals, compass of each CC to F, 56 notes; pedal clavier, compass CCC to F, 30 notes... the total number of pipes is nearly 2,000." It also added that "Mr. Smith, the organ builder, has been working single handed at the erection, and there is no part of the instrument which has not passed through his experienced hands. The services during the late

(i) Cape Times Weekly Edition, November 5th, 1890.

mission naturally compelled him to suspend the work for a time; hence a considerable delay in its completion. To those, however, who have been watching its erection daily, it seems marvellous that it could, with all its minute details, have been put together in the time. The instrument is one of which the diocese may well be proud."⁽ⁱ⁾

The specification of the Hill Organ in St. George's Cathedral (1890):

GREAT ORGAN

1.	Bourdon	Wood	16'	56 pipes
2.	Open Diapason	Metal	8'	56
3.	Open Diapason	Metal	8'	56
4.	Clarabella	Wood	8'	56
5.	Principal	Metal	4'	56
6.	Harmonic Flute	Metal	4'	56
7.	Twelfth	Metal	3'	56
8.	Fifteenth	Metal	2'	56
9.	Mixture (3 ranks)	Metal	-	68
10.	Posaune	Metal	8'	56
11.	Clarion	Metal	4'	56

CHOIR ORGAN

12.	Dulciana	Metal	8'	56
13.	Viola da Gamba	Grooved	8'	44
14.	Lieblich Gedact	Wood	8'	56
15.	Suabe Flote	Wood	4'	56
16.	Flautina	Metal	2'	56
17.	Clarinet	Metal	8'	56

SWELL ORGAN

18.	Bourdon	Wood	16'	56
19.	Open Diapason	Metal	8'	56
20.	Salicional	Metal	8'	56
21.	Voix Celeste (G)	Metal	8'	44

(i) Cape Argus Weekly Edition, November 5th, 1890.

22.	Stopped Diapason	Wood	8'	56
23.	Principal	Metal	4'	56
24.	Fifteenth	Metal	2'	56
25.	Mixture (3 ranks)	Metal	-	168
26.	Cornopean	Metal	8'	56
27.	Oboe	Metal	3'	56
28.	Vox Humana (tremulant)	Metal	8'	56

PEDAL ORGAN

29.	Open Diapason	Wood	16'	30
30.	Bourdon	Wood	16'	30
31.	Violoncello	Wood	8'	30
32.	Posaune	Metal	16'	30

COUPLERS

Swell to Great
Swell to Choir
Great to Pedal
Swell to Pedal
Choir to Pedal.

The Cape Argus of November 5th, 1890 had a lengthy account of the opening recital which took place on the 4th November. As it gives a very good picture of the kind of music performed at church recitals in the late Victorian times, the major part of it is quoted below:

"The new organ just erected in St. George's Cathedral and respecting which there had been such great expectations, was formally opened last evening. The instrument fully realised the expectations that had been excited and all concerned... are to be congratulated upon the magnificent instrument which now supplies the instrumental music at St. George's. There was a large congregation, about 800 persons being within the sacred edifice.

...The service began with the hymn 'Come, let us join our cheerful songs', the harmony being played on the harmonium. Then followed a short service... the choir and clergy left the

chancel and proceeded to the organ chamber, where the Organist, Mr. Barrow Dowling, was waiting by the unopened keyboard. The Dean addressed the organist as 'Dear Brother in Christ' and formally entrusted to him the minstrelsy of the Church by handing to him the key of the organ, having full confidence in his skill and judgement... Psalm cl was then sung, accompanied by the organ and the opening piece of the recital followed, Mendelssohn's Sonata No. 4 'Allegro Maestoso Vivaci' [sic] consisting of three numbers, Allegro con brio, Andante Religioso and Allegretto. This piece was a suitable opening to the recital, the Andante Religioso being perhaps the most admired number. Guilmant's Cantilene Pastorale, the next piece, had some fine effects. Bach's 'Fugue in G minor' was, like all fugues, attractive to those who delight in classical music, its ending being grand. The Dean then announced that the debt on the organ was really between £600 and £700 of which £500 had been borrowed from another fund. The offertory was collected during the singing of 'All people that on earth do dwell'.

The cantata by Mr. T. Barrow Dowling, the organist, the words from Psalm xlvi, was a great success. The music had a fresh, yet not strange strain. The opening chorus 'God is our hope and strength' was vigorous and went well. The tenor recitative 'The rivers of the flood thereof' and the tenor solo 'God is in the midst of her' had some fine crescendo effects while there was a beautiful soft part in the chorus, sung almost pianissimo, that came well before the forte chorus 'The Lord of hosts is with us'. The quartette 'O come hither', was a very good unaccompanied number. The first chorus 'The Lord of hosts is with us' made a very effective ending to the cantata. Mr. Dowling is to be congratulated on the great success of his composition and may it be but a prelude to greater things. The organ solo, Guilmant's Postlude in A on a theme from Handel well brought out the compass of the organ, while Handel's air with variations, 'The Harmonious Blacksmith' had some fine reed stop effects. Liszt's 'March of the Crusaders' from 'St. Elizabeth', was one of the best, if not actually the best, piece of the evening. The Vox humana stop was freely used in it to great advantage, and the stirring music of the march, sometimes almost dying away in the distance, will not soon be forgotten by those who heard it. The 'Grande Entracte' from



5. The third organ of 1890 in the old Cathedral.

Wagner's 'Lohengrin' with its sometimes weird effects and massive music, was a fitting ending to the recital. The pieces in the recital had been selected with great judgment as showing the instrument in its various moods of lively, majestic, solemn and massive. The hymn 'O Praise ye the Lord' and the 'Hallelujah Chorus' brought the service to a close. The proceeds of the service amounted to almost £70."⁽ⁱ⁾

This instrument outlasted the old Cathedral and was eventually sold to the Bloemfontein Presbyterian Church for £600 in 1919.

The present instrument in St. George's Cathedral has a long and interesting history, which begins in the latter half of the seventeenth century. It originally stood in the Church of St. Margaret, Westminster, London, next to Westminster Abbey, and its earliest history goes back to 1675, fifteen years after the Restoration.

The earlier organ in St. Margaret's suffered at the hands of the Puritans, as did many English organs in Cromwell's time. In 1644 organ-playing had been prohibited in divine worship by an ordinance of the Lords and Commons "for the speedy demolishing of all organs, images and all matters of superstitious monuments in all Cathedralls [sic] and Collegiate or Parish-Churches and Chapels, throughout the Kingdom of England and the Dominion of Wales, the better to accomplish the blessed reformation so happily begun and to remove offences and things illegal in the worship of God".⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ Records of 1644 and 1645 in St. Margaret's

(i) Cape Argus, November 5th, 1890.

(ii) Sumner: "The Organ", p.129.

refer to parts of the organ - screen and pipes - being sold to various people and for almost thirty years there was no organ in the Church.

The organ of 1675 was built by one of the most famous of all post-Restoration organ builders, "Father" Smith. Dr. Charles Burney (1726-1814) related a tradition that the demand for organs immediately after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 was so great, that foreign organ-builders were encouraged to settle in England, as there were so few native organ-builders left. Dr. Burney went on to say that "Bernard Schmidt, as the Germans write the name, brought over with him from Germany, of which country he was a native, two nephews, Gerard and Bernard, his assistants; and to distinguish him from these, as well as to express the reverence due to his abilities, which placed him at the head of his profession, he was called Father Schmidt."⁽ⁱ⁾ Recent evidence, however, gives every indication that "Father" Smith was a British organ-builder who had gone abroad during the Commonwealth for lack of employment at home, and that he returned as soon as a civilized régime was restored. But whatever his history, there is no doubt of his pre-eminence in his art and he was responsible for many fine instruments, pipes of which still survive in the organs of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, and in Durham Cathedral, inter alia.

(i) Burney: "History of Music" Vol.III, p.236.

So in 1675 the St. Margaret's records show that the sum of £200 was paid to Mr. Bernard Smith for the charge of the organ newly erected. In the notebook of one J.H. Leffler, Organist of St. Katherine-by-the-Tower, London we have a record of this "Father" Smith organ as it stood in 1800 when he saw it. It was Mr. Leffler's hobby to travel around the country examining the organs and noting down their specifications and conditions, and he wrote the details of "Father" Smith's organ as follows:

Three setts [sic] of keys		Great and Choir, CC to C	
		Swell, Middle C to C (never us'd)	
GREAT (9 stops)		CHOIR (4 stops)	
Open Diapason	48 pipes	Stopped Diapason	48 pipes
Stopped Diapason	48 "	Principal	48 "
Principal	48 "	Flute	48 "
Block Flute	48 "	Cremona	48 "
Twelfth	48 "		
Fifteenth	48 "		
Sesquialter III ranks	144 "		
Cornet (from C sharp)			
III ranks	72 "		
Trumpet	47 "		

As a matter of interest "Father" Smith was a competent organist and served in this capacity at St. Margaret's from the time when he built the organ until his death in 1708, his salary being £20 a year. He died on the 20th February and was buried in the Churchyard on the south side of the Church, between St. Margaret's and the Abbey wall.

Nearly one hundred and thirty years later, in 1804, the organ-builder John Avery built a new organ for which he was paid eight hundred guineas (£840). Not much is known about Avery; Hopkins and Rimbault in their book "The Organ" refer to him as a "dissipated character",⁽ⁱ⁾ but he was nevertheless a first class craftsman. He took the old organ which he valued at £200 and in all likelihood incorporated some of "Father" Smith's pipework in his new instrument, as he had done with the organ at King's College Chapel, Cambridge, which he rebuilt in the same year, retaining some of Thomas Dallam's pipework which dates from 1606.

Henry Leffler recorded the new organ in St. Margaret's as follows:

Three setts [sic] of keys: Great and Choir, GG (long octaves) to F. Swell, Middle G to F.

GREAT (11 stops)		SWELL (6 stops)	
Open Diapason	58 pipes	Open Diapason	35 pipes
Stopped Diapason	58 "	Stopped Diapason	35 "
Principal	58 "	Principal	35 "
Flute or Nason	58 "	Cornet III ranks	105 "
Twelfth	58 "	Trumpet	35 "
Fifteenth	58 "	Hautboy	35 "
Tierce	58 "		
Sesquialtera III ranks	174 "	CHOIR (8 stops)	
Mixture II ranks	116 "	Stopped Diapason	58 pipes
Trumpet	58 "	Dulciana (C to fa ut)	42 "
Cornet (from C) II ranks	60 "	Principal	58 "
		Flute	58 "
		Fifteenth	58 "
		* Furniture	
		* Vox Humana	
		* Cremona	

PEDAL
One octave of large wooden pipes.

* The stops marked * prepared for only.

(i) Hopkins & Rimbault: "The Organ", p.153.

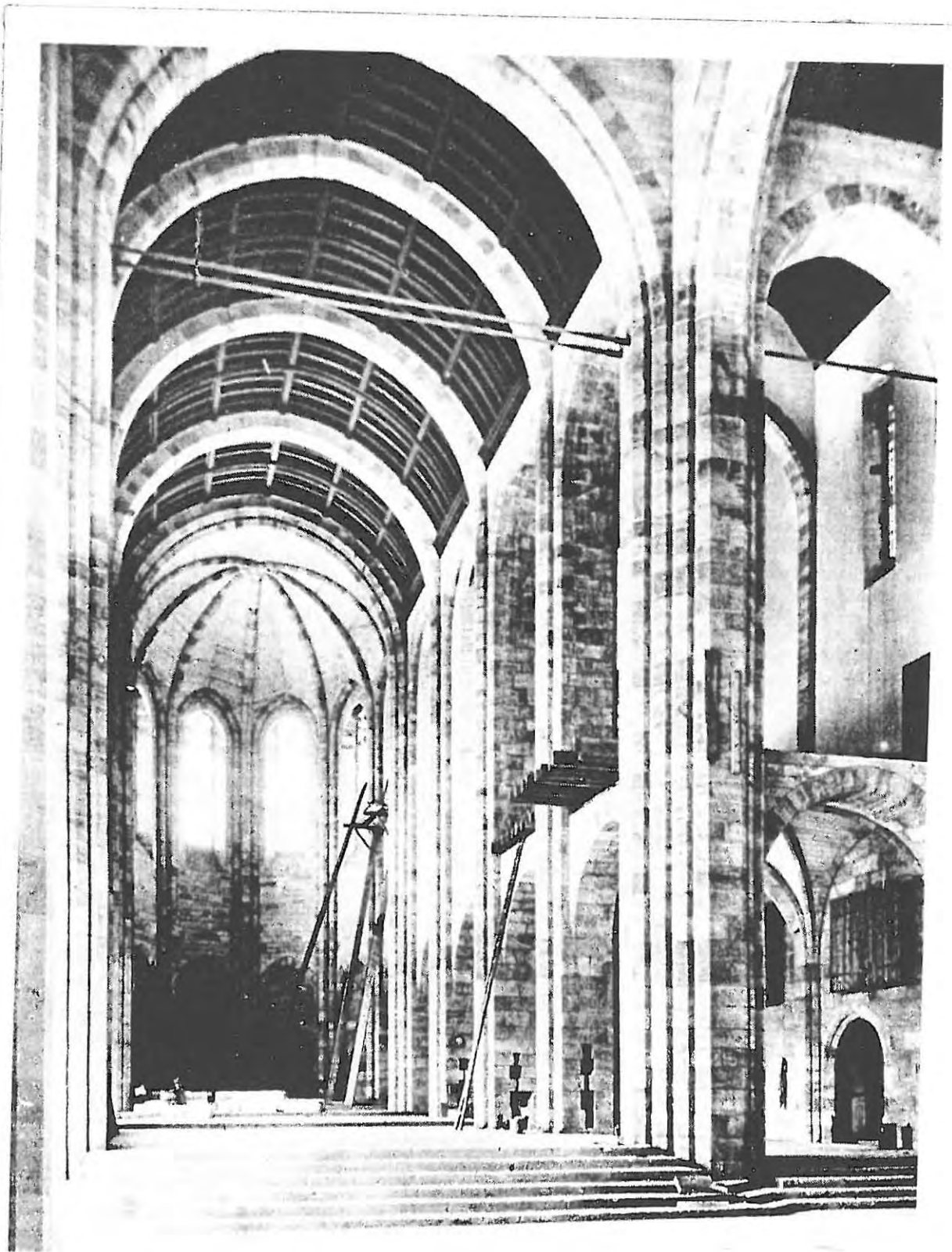
Leffler also remarked: "There is a stop which connects the Choir organ with the Great organ (Choir to Great coupler). The Bass of this Stopped Diapason, Principal, Flute and Fifteenth in the Choir from C fa ut are by communication." This organ had a curious arrangement of the manuals with the Swell the highest and the Choir in the middle.

In 1842 the organ was renovated by J.C. Bishop, one of the leading organ-builders of his day and famous for his rebuild of the "Father" Smith organ in St. Paul's Cathedral. In his rebuild of the St. Margaret's organ he replaced the Stopped Diapason on the Choir with an Open Diapason, removed the Vox Humana and modified the Furniture, renaming it Mixture. This latter step meant that the Mixture probably lost much of its brilliance and colour as Bishop introduced more and more unison and less and less mutation ranks going up the compass in his mixtures. The top octave and a half in these stops is often composed almost entirely of 8, 4 and 2 fts.

Then in less than twenty-five years the organ underwent three separate rebuilds: in 1859 by Holdich, in 1868 by Hill, and yet again rebuilt in 1883 as a large three-manual instrument by the latter firm.

This was the organ which the great "romantic" player Edwin H. Lemare (1865-1934) found when he was appointed Organist at St. Margaret's towards the end of the nineteenth century. However, Lemare wanted an instrument more suited to the playing of his transcriptions of Wagner and other orchestral works which were so popular at that time. So in 1897 the Hill organ was replaced by an instrument built by Walker, one more orchestral in tonal design and ideally suited to Lemare's needs. It is at this point that the connexion with St. George's Cathedral begins:

The Hill organ was bought by a Mr. W.H. Baxter of Harrogate in Yorkshire, who originally intended to give it to one of the Free Church Chapels in that city. However, it is said that he was rather upset by the Minister, who thought it would be too large for the Chapel, and, on hearing that a new Cathedral was being built in Cape Town, diverted his gift to South Africa instead. Mr. Baxter paid for the rebuilding and the addition of a fourth manual, together with a new console and new action chests throughout, making a total cost of something like £3,000. He also paid all the shipping charges to Cape Town and for the re-erection of the organ in the Cathedral itself, leaving the Cathedral authorities to purchase only the electric blowing apparatus, which cost a mere £300.



6. The new Cathedral under construction, showing organ loft.

The Cape Times Weekly Edition of April 5th, 1903 gave a long account of Mr. Baxter's "noble gift":

"Striking evidence of the fact that the scheme for the erection of a new Cathedral in Cape Town has more far-reaching interest than is generally supposed, has recently been received by the Building Committee here and in London. Mr. W.H. Baxter, the well-known Leeds engineer, has made a munificent offer to the new building of a gift of an up-to-date four manual church organ of 51 stops and tubular pneumatic action throughout. The offer, which it is needless to say, has been accepted with alacrity, has been followed up by Mr. Baxter with such untiring zeal and energy, that the whole scheme and design of the instrument is already in the hands of Messrs. Hill and Sons, the celebrated organ builders, and only awaits the final word for its completion. So soon as the roof of the new Cathedral is on, Cape Town will possess a truly magnificent organ, fitted with every modern contrivance for tone and effect, and to quote the words of the makers: 'the seventh largest cathedral organ we have built', in fact only smaller by one or two stops than some of the others.

The particularly striking feature of the welcome intelligence lies in the singularly disinterested generosity which has prompted it. It is surely an object less to us in South Africa. Mr. Baxter has absolutely no selfish interest to serve. Probably he will never see the church which he proposes to enrich in such a generous manner. Again his liberality is not a measured one; it does not stop at the mere gift of the organ. The conveyance hither and its erection in the Cathedral are all down in the terms of the gift. His only stipulation being, that the present cathedral organ (a fine specimen, by the way) shall be given to some deserving parish in South Africa, when it is no longer required in the old building...

The organ is to have a frontage of twenty-five feet in the chancel, while another front, decorated in the same style will appear outside the south transept. The decoration of the organ case is particularly beautiful, being a special creation of Mr. Arthur Hill, (i) whose reputation in this direction is

- (i) Arthur Hill (1857-1923), one of the partners in the firm of W. Hill and Son, also author of "Organ-cases and Organs of the Middle Ages and Renaissance,..." (1883)

well-known to be unique. Mr. Baxter has himself added to the original specification... The Archbishop of Cape Town (i) has devoted some time in conjunction with Sir George Martin Mus. Doc. and Mr. Baxter, in consideration of the specification and design of the instrument..."(ii)

In the Muniments Room of St. George's Cathedral there is a letter from Mr. Baxter written to the Archbishop of Cape Town shortly before the organ was despatched to Cape Town in 1909. It is quoted below in full because it throws interesting light not only on the circumstances surrounding this generous gift, but also on the character of its donor.

Knapping Mount,
Harrogate.

17th June, 1909

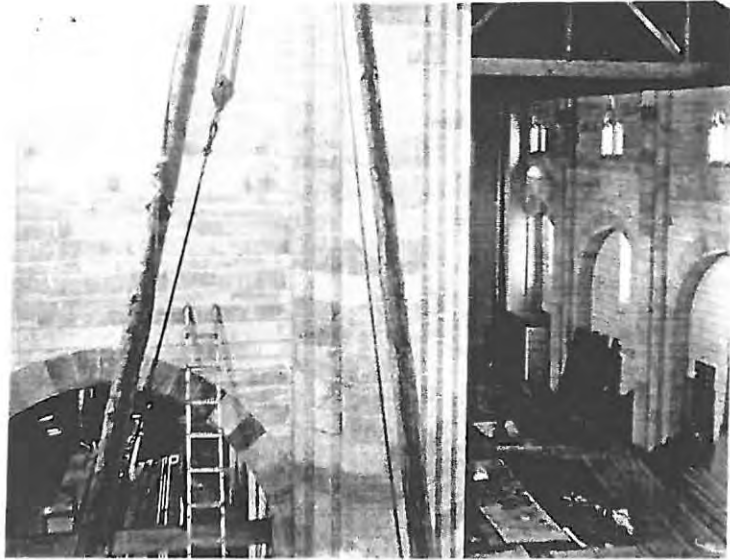
Dear Archbishop of Capetown,

Some years ago when it was decided to build the first portion of your Cathedral, to the Memory of British Soldiers who fell during the late War in Africa, and after a Meeting in London in which Lord Roberts and the Bishop of London took a prominent part towards furthering that object, and at which period I had on hand the Organ formerly in St. Margaret's, Westminster, (the case of which alone was considered very valuable) I decided out of sympathy to Lord Roberts for the loss of his Son, and as a personal Thank Offering for the success achieved by the British Army, I would offer the Organ formerly in St. Margeret's [sic] Westminster, and undertake to have it reconstructed and erected in the new Cathedral.

I made this offer through the Bishop of London, and my offer being accepted, I selected Sir George Martin to draw up the necessary specification for the reconstruction of the Organ suitable for the Cathedral.

(i) Sir George Martin (1844-1916) English organist and composer, Organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

(ii) Cape Times Weekly Edition, April 8th, 1903



7. The present organ being erected (1909).

I enclose you a copy of such specification and also a copy of the particulars of packages which I have consigned to you through Messrs. Donald Currie & Co. who are shipping the Organ so packed by the s.s. "German" which sails from London on 26th June.

This Organ is consigned to you and which is to be erected by Messrs. Cooper & Gill of your City, being introduced to me by Messrs. Wm. Hill & Son of London, the Builders, as most capable of performing this work, and who I trust will make a most satisfactory completion of the work and that it will prove worthy of the position selected for it.

I therefore trust you will accept the same and that it will prove itself thoroughly efficient, and that it may long remain to assist in the Services of Praise and Thanksgiving to Almighty God, to the satisfaction of both the players of it, as well as to those who join in the Services rendered in so worthy a Memorial to those whose memory the Chancel portion has been erected.

Yours faithfully,

W. H. BAXTER

P.S. Bills of Lading will be forwarded to you immediately I receive them, which will be made out to yourself.

The Specification of the Hill Organ in St. George's Cathedral (1909):

GREAT ORGAN (CC to C)

1. Double open diapason	...	...	16
2. Open diapason No. 1	...	...	8
3. Open diapason No. 2	...	...	8
4. Open Diapason No. 3	...	...	8
5. Gamba	...	...	8
6. Stopped diapason...	...	...	8
7. Principal	...	...	4
8. Harmonic flute	...	...	4 ²
9. Twelfth	...	...	2 ³
10. Fifteenth	...	...	2
11. Mixture	...	...	3 ranks
12. Contra posauene	...	...	16
13. Posaune	...	...	8
14. Clarion	...	...	4

i Swell to Great

ii Solo to Great

SWELL ORGAN (CC to C)

1. Bourdon	...	...	...	16
2. Open diapason	...	...	...	8
3. Salicional	...	...	...	8
4. Vox angelica (tenor C)	...	...	...	8
5. Rohr flute	...	...	...	8
6. Principal	...	...	...	4
7. Fifteenth	...	...	...	2
8. Sesquialtera	...	...	...	3 ranks
9. Oboe	...	...	...	8
10. Vox humana	...	...	...	8
11. Double trumpet	...	...	...	16
12. Cornopean	...	...	...	8
13. Clarion	...	...	...	4

iii Tremulant

iv Octave

CHOIR ORGAN (CC to C)

1. Dulciana	...	...	...	8
2. Gamba	...	...	...	8
3. Stopped diapason...	...	...	...	8
4. Lieblich gedeckt...	...	...	...	8
5. Gemshorn	...	...	...	4
6. Flute	...	...	...	4
7. Flautina	...	...	...	2
8. Corno di bassetto	...	...	...	16
9. Clarinet	...	...	...	8

v Tremulant

vi Swell to Choir

SOLO ORGAN (CC to C)

1. Harmonic flute (unenclosed)	...	...	...	8
2. Rohr gedeckt	...	...	...	8
3. Concert flute	...	...	...	4
4. Orchestral oboe	...	...	...	8
5. Tuba (unenclosed)	...	...	...	8

vii Great to pedal

viii Swell to pedal

ix Choir to pedal

x Solo to pedal

xi Great pistons to pedal pistons

PEDAL ORGAN (CCC to F)

1. Double open diapason	...	...	32
2. Open diapason (wood)	...	...	16
3. Open diapason (metal)	...	...	16
4. Violone	...	...	16
5. Bourdon	...	...	16
6. Octave (new; from 2)	...	...	8
7. Violoncello (from 4)			8
8. Bass flute (from 5)			8
9. Trombone	...	...	16

WIND PRESSURES

Great $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. (reeds and open diapason 1, 5 in.)

Swell 3 in. (reeds 5 in.)

Choir $3\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Solo 5 in. (tuba 12 in.)

Pedal $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. (trombone 7 in.)

Action 12 in.

Balanced pedals to swell and solo (enclosed) boxes.

6 thumb-pistons to Great (2 electric)

6 thumb-pistons to Swell

4 thumb-pistons to Choir (1 electric)

3 thumb-pistons to Solo

6 toe-pistons to pedal (2 electric)

6 toe-pistons to swell

Reversible thumb-piston Swell to Great *

Reversible thumb-piston Great to Pedal *

(* duplicated by toe-pistons)



3. The interior of the present Cathedral showing the organ case designed by Arthur Hill (1883).

Below the Organ on a pillar is a tablet recording Mr. Baxter's gift in the following words:

"To the glory of God this organ formerly in the Church of St. Margaret, Westminster, England, is the gift of W.H. Baxter Esq., J.P. of Leeds and Harrogate, Yorkshire at whose expense it was enlarged, beautified and erected in this Cathedral in the year of Our Lord 1909."

P A R T I I

THE ORGANISTS OF ST. GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL

a) EARLY ORGANISTS (1834-1863)

During the twenty-seven years while the English worshipped in the Groote Kerk, before the building of St. George's Cathedral in 1834, little attention was paid to the musical side of their services. The Dutch Reformed Kerkraad allowed them the use of the organ from 1813 onwards and from time to time the military bands from Cape Town Castle played at the services and accompanied the singing. When the use of the organ was eventually allowed, the Government appointed Mr. George Coles as organist to the English congregation: an appointment which meant that Anglicans in Cape Town had an organist almost twenty years before they had an organ, or even a church for that matter.

The organists for these English services for the next twenty years were:

1814 - 1815	George Coles
1816 - 1820	Frederick Osmitius
1821 - 1822	F.C. Grondleer
1823 - 1829	James Gregory
1829 - 1834	Thomas Corder
(and after)	

"Comparison of this list with the lists of Lutheran and Dutch organists shows that in 1817-1818 Osmitius was jointly organist to both the Lutheran and Anglican congregations and that in 1821-1822 Grondeleer was joint organist to the Anglicans and the Dutch."⁽ⁱ⁾

During the early years at St. George's a large number of organists came and went, and so it was impossible for any worthwhile musical tradition to be established, let alone maintained. The position in which these organists found themselves was a decidedly difficult one, for they had to satisfy the Government, the Clergy, the Cathedral Vestry and the congregation, and it was certainly not easy to keep everyone happy. These appointments were made by the Government and, to begin with, the entire salary of £30 per annum was paid by them. As it was quite impossible to make ends meet on this mere pittance, the organist had to augment his income by teaching as many private pupils as he could find. By 1839 a number of the Cathedral shareholders had realised the need for an increase in the organist's salary and three of them wrote to the Vestry on October 20th, 1839 stating "that no competent Organist could be found at the present very low salary, and we hope that, if the matter were brought under the consideration of the Government, the sum might possibly be raised to at least £50 or £60..."

(i) McIntyre: Early Organs and Organists at the Cape, p.14.

On November 7th, 1839 the Vestry therefore resolved "that an application be made... to the Government, with the prayer that the Salary of the Organist of St. George's Church be increased to £50." However, this request was refused and so the Vestry decided to guarantee the sum of £30 per annum "in addition to the salary of £30 paid by the Government". (27th November, 1839)

The meagre Cathedral funds, however, could not support this added demand and so, in 1841, a special Church Choral Fund had to be established. The Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette of October 22nd, 1841 gives notice of the meeting "in pursuance of a resolution at the Annual Meeting of the Shareholders ... for the purpose of considering the propriety of authorising the Trust Vestry, in order thus to raise a fund for continuing the Church Choral Service, to charge One Shilling and Sixpence (1s.6d.) additionally per sitting to each Pew Renter of the Church."⁽ⁱ⁾

Yet even this could hardly have proved a successful venture, for payments of the organist's salary were often not forthcoming and at times organists had to send in well-nigh desperate pleas for payment. For example, Mrs. L. Mangin (who was appointed on 27th November, 1839 as St. George's first and only woman organist) wrote to the Churchwardens on 14th June, 1841, to say:

(i) Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, October 22nd, 1841

"I am compelled by most unpleasant circumstances to beg and entreat of you to oblige me with the payment of £15 now overdue to me for the last six months' salary as Organist at St. George's Church. I would not be thus urgent upon you were I not unable to meet an immediate demand for which I have received a summons and which must be answered on Wednesday morning next ... I hope and trust that you will ... not allow me to sink for want of that which is justly my due ..."

The letter written by one of the Churchwardens to the other on the same day shows what a bad state the finances were in: "... What is to be done? If there is a possibility of doing anything to prevent her (to use her own expression) from sinking, we must do it. I have only got, as I before told you, one and a half guinea in addition to the former subscription ... but pray let us stretch a point for the payment of what Mrs. M. is entitled to, or I fear much odium will fall on the Church direction..."

Because of the necessity of the organist's having to teach privately to augment his salary, it was almost inevitable that at some time or another the Cathedral Vestry should feel that not enough time was being devoted to the Cathedral music. When complaints like this were made, the poor organist was more often than not dismissed, his successor would be equally unsatisfactory, and the whole story would begin again. Unfortunately the number of available organists in Cape Town in the mid-nineteenth century was rather limited and as often as not the "new" organist would be one of the predecessors being given yet another chance.

Another popular criticism levelled at the various organists was that the choir was impossibly bad, or that there was no choir at all. For example, in the Vestry minutes of 9th September, 1839 a resolution is recorded "that Mr. Logier the Organist ... be informed of the resolution of the Vestry to appoint another Organist in his room unless he pledge himself to form an effective Choir for service in St. George's Church within a term of six weeks." Yet again on May 31st, 1841 it was resolved at a Vestry Meeting that "the Secretary be requested to communicate to the Organist (Mrs. Mangin)... that as it is known to be the general feeling of the congregation that the Choral Service has been very insufficiently performed, this meeting would submit ... that this general disappointment on the part of the congregation shall be communicated to the Organist."

Her successor, one Charles Brookton, seems to have had a little more success with the choral music, for we read in the Vestry minutes of 3rd January, 1842 that "in consideration of the exertions of Mr. Brookton in respect of the Church choral services upon and since his appointment as Organist on the 1st October last - he be allowed Salary (including the Government Allowance of £30 per annum) from that date at the rate of sixty pounds (£60) per annum." However, a few months later (25th July, 1842) the Churchwardens had "to inform

Mr. Brookton that his dismissal from the situation of Organist will be consequent upon any under interference on his part with Mr. Adney in the tuning of the Organ".

History does not tell us whether he left the poor organ-tuner in peace after this warning, but we find in the Vestry minutes of 9th February the following year, 1843, that "a paragraph in the Verzamelaar newspaper of the 24th ulto. having been read which reports that the Organist of St. George's Church had been brought up by the police and fined ten shillings for drunkenness, and seven shillings and sixpence for disorderly conduct, and it having been ascertained by enquiry at the police office that the report in the newspaper was substantially correct, it was resolved that Mr. Brookton is hereby removed from his office, and that an advertisement be inserted in the newspapers for an Organist for St. George's Church, and that the Secretary be requested to communicate to Mr. Brookton immediately in writing the substance of this resolution."

Yet another unfortunate choice was a man called Rice, the assistant master at St. George's Grammar School. After having been organist for only a very short while, "circumstances occurred which rendered his stay at the Cape undesirable and he disappeared."⁽ⁱ⁾ The Cathedral authorities were more fortunate in their selection in 1858 of

(i) Neumann Thomas: "Recollections I fain would recall..."

George Darter, who had been a piano manufacturer in London and who was the founder of Darter's Music Shop in Cape Town. However, in later days the increased salaries attracted better qualified organists: the salary was raised from £60 to £75 in December 1851, to £80 in 1863, £100 in September 1873 and finally rose to £150 in 1889. After the many changes of these unsettled early years the three organists who followed, Neumann Thomas, Barrow Dowling and Alban Hamer, held their posts for a combined length of nearly ninety years.

Because of the difficulties experienced with the organists in the early years, it is hardly surprising that it was a long time before a choir worthy of the name existed at St. George's. The English began their services in the Groote Kerk with no choir at all and it was only at the opening of a new organ there in July 1830 that a determined effort was made to train an effective choir. A report of this "Opening of the New Organ at the Reformed Church" which appeared in the South African Commercial Advertiser of July 17th, 1830 made the following observations of this first Anglican choir in Cape Town: "... the choir, which has been formed and instructed by Mr. Corder, chaunted the services in a manner that reflects much credit upon every Individual composing it,

particularly under the circumstances through which it has been brought into public notice. It is to be hoped that some genuine lovers of 'Sacred Melody', will cherish into maturity what has been thus far reared by a single individual to a height which, with a little pecuniary assistance, promises to be a great acquisition to our Church Service."⁽ⁱ⁾

The report then goes on to describe an anthem composed especially for the occasion by the Organist, Mr. Corder: "The 98th Psalm was finely arranged by Mr. Corder as an Anthem, and the grandeur of the Organ, and the imagination of the Composer, were in true keeping with the subject harmonized, at the words of the Psalm, 'With Trumpets etc. show yourselves joyful' - 'Let the sea make a noise' - 'Let the floods clap their lands' [sic] , and 'Let the hills be joyful together before the Lord.' The Trumpets - the roaring of the sea - the clashing of the waters, and the vibratory echoes given to the hills, were indeed happily conceived and expressed.

"The anthem was sung by the gentlemen of the choir with great spirit and feeling: it was only to be regretted that there was not a little more power in the Treble and Bass, the former in particular would be greatly enriched by the introduction of a few female voices: this may be accomplished at some future period...

(i) South African Commercial Advertiser, July 17th, 1830

"The English Community are really much indebted to the Reverend Consistory of the Dutch Reformed Church for the use of their splendid organ; to Mr. Corder for his masterly performance."⁽ⁱ⁾

Evidently a number of "genuine lovers of 'Sacred Melody' did rise to this challenge and, mainly through the untiring efforts of Sir John Wylde, an enthusiastic Trustee and member of the Cathedral Vestry, an "English Cape Church Choral Society" was formed which undertook to establish and assist a choir. This choir, trained by Thomas Corder, had been duly formed and sang for the first time on Christmas Day, 1829 ..."but Tate and Brady's Metrical Psalms were found to be an obstacle to these attempts at improving the vocal music."⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

À propos of this, a correspondent, signing himself 'Jubal', wrote to the Cape of Good Hope Literary Gazette on January 5th, 1831 saying: "In our English Episcopal Church in Cape Town, much is doing to promote the improvement of that delightfully interesting part of Christian worship the Psalmody, in its vocal relations. But with such a version of the Psalms as we are obliged to adopt at present, it is not likely that we shall succeed to perfection ... what I propose is, that as we are not under the thumb of any power in this colony greater than that of our own officiating senior colonial chaplain ... that a

(i) South African Commercial Advertiser, July 17th, 1830.

(ii) Hewitt: "Sketches of English Church History in South Africa": p.53.

Selection of Psalms and Hymns should be published under that gentleman's own auspices..."(i)

When St. George's Cathedral was opened in 1834, the choir was placed in a gallery, a practice which was common in England until the time when the Oxford Movement brought about the introduction of surpliced choirs in the chancel during the second half of the nineteenth century. "Behind, but not immediately over the altar was a lofty gallery running the whole length of the church, with the organ in the middle in front of which sat an unsurpliced choir of men and a few boys, curtained off from the sight of the congregation."(ii) However, the efforts of these singers were none too successful and in 1887 we find J.A. Hewitt writing in his "Sketches of English Church History in South Africa" as follows:

"The musical services were not, however, by any means of a cathedral type; there was a mixed choir in the gallery, but there were complaints that the vocal and instrumental music were not in harmony and the organ was required to be more accommodating."(iii)

Unfortunately the existence of this early choir was a short one, for successive organists showed little interest in this direction and what choir there was eventually disappeared. As we have already

- (i) Cape of Good Hope Literary Gazette, January 5th, 1831.
- (ii) Church Chronicle, April 26th, 1905, p.249.
- (iii) Hewitt: ibid. p.79.

seen, the Cathedral Vestry registered their dissatisfaction at the lack of a choir in September, 1839 by warning Logier that he would no longer continue as Organist "unless he pledge himself to form an effective choir ... within a term of six weeks." The unhappy Logier refused to accept this ultimatum and was replaced by Mrs. Mangin two months later.

In the Vestry minutes of 9th December, 1839 there is a record of a meeting held to form a choir and the seven gentlemen present "unanimously resolved that they should assist in the Services provided that the following arrangements are agreed upon, viz:

- 1st That the curtain of the Organ Gallery be raised
12 inches
- 2nd That the Organ loft be distinct from the Gallery
- 3rd That the required practice be at the Church with
the Organist
- 4th That the meeting of the Choir for practice be
strictly private
- 5th That the Choir consider themselves under the general
control of the Vestry
- 6th That the selection and arrangement of the music be
made by the Organist Mrs. Mangin and Mr. Hitchcock
as Conductor."

Yet even all this seems to have had little success - Hitchcock lasted barely six months as Conductor and the choral music received continual criticism during the years that followed.



Eventually matters came to a head when Logier was in his second term of office (1843-1849): the Vestry recorded on 10th October, 1848 that "the very imperfect performance of this part of the service has taken place during the seven years that Mr. Logier has officiated as Organist ... Mr. Logier attributes the failure to interference ... with his functions and his mode of executing the same." He was allowed five months in which to rectify the situation and promised that he would be left "entirely free and independent in every respect as to his part in and management of his duties..." Nevertheless he did not succeed in producing any results and so was finally dismissed.

His successor, Thomas Corder, began his second term as Organist with renewed enthusiasm and wrote to the Vestry on June 2nd, 1850 to say that his "anxious desire is to form a Choir that will be competent to sing the full Cathedral Service whenever that may be required,

"And in order to do this it will be necessary to instruct the choristers in the first principles of music and to promote a more general knowledge of choral music. I propose to instruct a select number of boys and girls from the schools connected with St. George's Church and teach them the rudiments of vocal music so that they may become more competent to sing with the choristers all the chants, psalms and choruses of the anthems..."

Bishop Robert Gray's clergy, fresh from England, probably had the same poor opinion of the choir's ability as they had of many other things at St. George's. One of the many changes begun in 1856, was that the choir was brought down from the gallery to the sanctuary where they occupied the new choir stalls. During this move the less useful and not very enthusiastic members of the choir were encouraged to resign and this resulted in a more efficient choir of only six men and twelve boys.

"The men of the choir had worn surplices, while the services were held in the Dutch Church - at least since their formation into a choir by Mr. Corder, the Organist, in 1830, but for some reason or other they were discarded and not resumed until the choir was brought down into the body of the Church in 1855",⁽ⁱ⁾ presumably because they were considered unnecessary for a choir which could scarcely be seen in the gallery. But their now more conspicuous position in the new stalls, the Oxford Movement and Bishop Gray's more elaborate services demanded more formality and so surplices were once again worn.

When St. George's Cathedral Grammar School was founded in 1851, a steady and constant supply of choirboys was assured. By 1880 many of the boys were in a special boarding establishment situated in Jamison Street, and, by way of a special incentive, boys of nine to twelve were taken at reduced fees.

(i) Church Chronicle, April 26th, 1905, p.249.

As we have seen, the first choirs had very little to do; not many hymns were sung as it was considered a rather "nonconformist" thing to do. The repertoire seems to have consisted largely of Tate and Brady's metrical version of the psalms, as set in John Hullah's Psalter. The great majority of the early organists and choirmasters were evidently quite satisfied to leave things as they found them. Much of the blame can be laid at the door of the Cathedral Vestry who had on December 6th, 1841 resolved that "the Organist be desired to refer himself altogether to the said Committee as to the selection of the particular chants and choral services for the Church use previously to their adoption for practice and such services only to be so used as, upon the suggestion of the Organist, shall have been approved by the Committee." No wonder they found it so difficult to recruit suitable church musicians in those early days.

When Bishop Gray came in 1848, there had been little change or improvement musically and on February 25th he wrote to a friend as follows: "Up to this time we have not been able to establish full Cathedral Service; but we have daily prayer, morning and evening, and weekly Communion. The Canticles and Glorias, etc., are chanted, and we have regular anthems. We shall in time have full Cathedral Service."⁽ⁱ⁾ Anthems and settings of the Canticles were gradually introduced and a

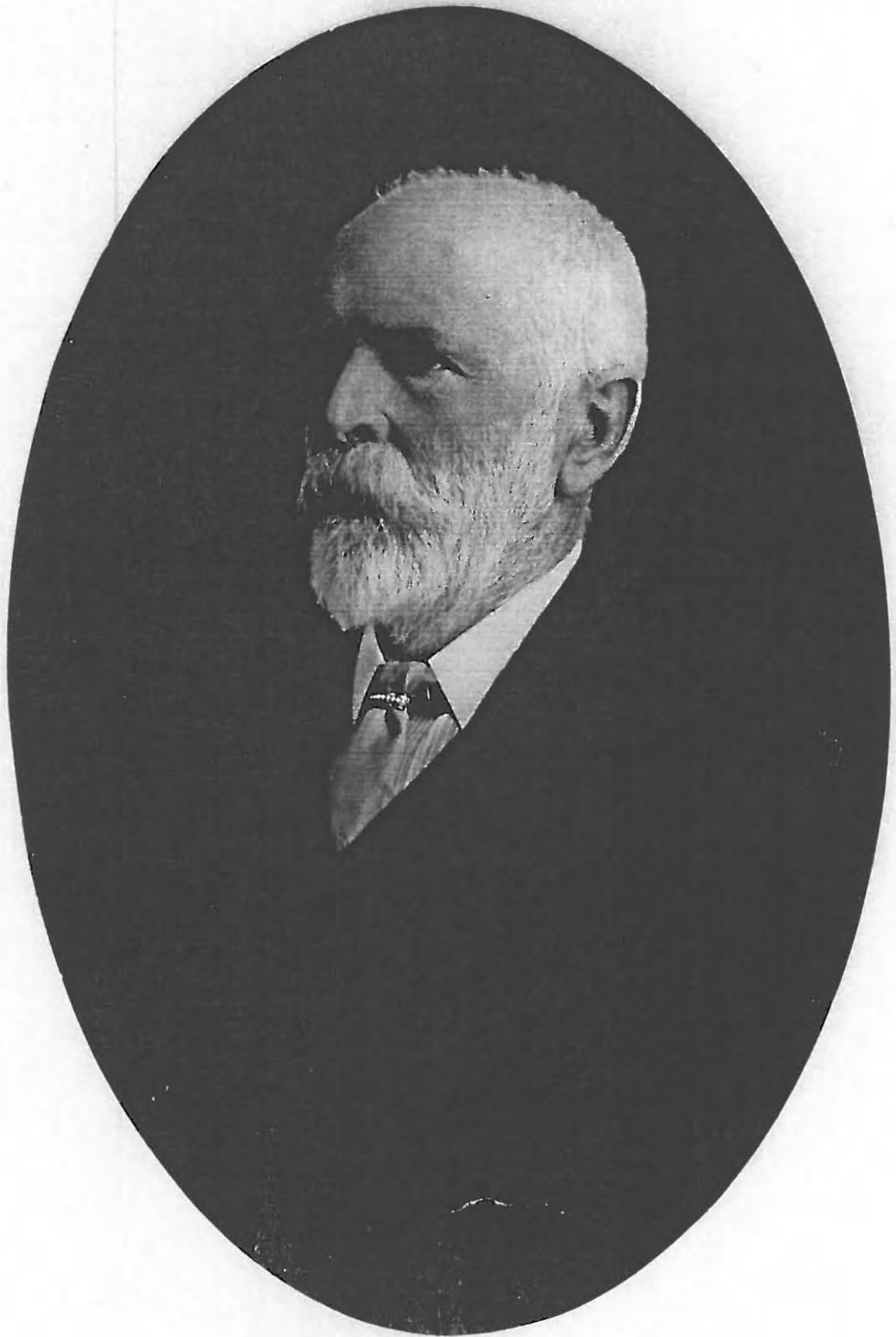
(i) Gray: "Life of Robert Gray" (Vol.I), p.241.

full Cathedral Service on proper English lines was sung for the first time at the opening of Diocesan Synod in 1857.

From then on things began to improve musically and in 1863 the Cathedral authorities appointed Charles Neumann Thomas, the first of three organists who were to serve the Church for almost a century, and who brought the music at St. George's to a standard which it had never before reached.

Early Organists at St. George's (1834 - 1863)

Thomas Corder	1834 - 1837
Frederick Logier	1837 - 1839
Mrs. L. Mangin	1839 - 1841
Charles Brookton	1841 - 1843
Frederick Logier	1843 - 1849
Thomas Corder	1849 - 1858
Mr. Rice	1858
George Darter	1858 - 1863



9. Charles Neumann Thomas.

b) CHARLES NEUMANN THOMAS (1863-1888)

Charles Neumann Thomas was born on the 16th March, 1840 at Knutsford, Chester, into a family with quite an ecclesiastical tradition: his father was for a great many years the Vicar of Christ Church, Chester; a cousin of his grandfather was Dean of Westminster Abbey at the time when the Festival of the Centenary of Handel's birth was held in the Abbey Nave in 1784, and later became Bishop of Rochester; his mother's brother was also a priest, while his father's younger sister, Mary, married a Reverend Mr. Foulkes.

In notes entitled "Some Recollections I love to recall and others I would fain forget", written in 1923, Charles Neumann Thomas says that he showed signs "of a fondness for music" while he was still young and "while under my first tuition from my mother, who was a good musician, I took a delight in sitting down to the piano and fancying myself as a maestro." His first piano teacher was a lady whose name he could not remember. His lessons with her came to rather an abrupt end when his father discovered that she was a Roman Catholic - as Thomas puts it: "Great was the horror of the danger of poor little me being tainted from such a source." His next, and only teacher for the piano was a lay-clerk at Chester Cathedral, a Mr. Scarisbrook,

while another lay-clerk, Mr. Mason, taught him singing. Evidently one of Mr. Mason's ways of compelling his pupils to keep their mouths open while singing was to place a card edgewise between the lips and teeth so that if they tried to close their mouths, they hurt themselves!

One of Thomas' earliest musical memories was that of a visit of a Mr. Hodgkinson, an architect and an excellent violinist. It was he who Thomas claims taught him "to endeavour to feel with the composer and read his mind when playing even the simplest of music". As Thomas was playing Spohr's "Blessed are the Departed", Mr. Hodgkinson called at the house. "He came quietly into the drawing room and stopped me at once. 'Now listen', he said, and began in a soft voice to hum the air, giving it an interpretation quite new to me and most fascinating. He stood by me and made me play it over and over again until he was more or less satisfied."

Like so many church musicians, Charles Neumann Thomas' interest in the organ and church music was aroused by hearing the choral services in a Cathedral. While the family lived in Chester, he would often attend Evensong in the Cathedral and sit in the gallery adjoining the organ loft where he could listen to the anthem. At the same time he was cultivating his music "a good deal ... and in addition to the piano had opportunities of acquiring the organ touch", as he frequently

deputised for Colonel Evans Lloyd, who at the time was honorary Organist of Upton Church, where Thomas sang in the Choir. When his voice broke it eventually developed into "a rather good baritone", as he modestly describes it.

When he was in his twentieth year, Charles Thomas decided to try his fortunes abroad and on the 29th December, 1859, he duly sailed for South Africa aboard the barque Genevieve, arriving in Cape Town on the 1st April, 1860. In Cape Town he took a post in the Government Surveying Office and kept up his musical interests by accompanying songs and dances in burlesques staged by an Amateur Dramatic Club. It required quite some preparation since he had often to make up accompaniments where the music was unobtainable and must, in some ways, have been a little trying to his artistic sensibilities, for, as he himself puts it, "the singing powers of the performers too were not equal to their histrionic abilities and they required very great assistance in their vocal efforts".

"When Mr. Neumann Thomas arrived in 1860 he found quite a good choir at St. George's Cathedral, and he often attended the services. Mr. Corder was the Cathedral Organist at that time, but he shortly afterwards transferred his talents and work to the D.R. Church in Adderley-street."⁽ⁱ⁾ At that time the Precentor of the Cathedral was

(i) Cape Times, July 10th, 1923

Canon Ogilvie who later resigned to become Headmaster of Diocesan College in Rondebosch. Thomas had expressed a desire to join the Cathedral Choir but exception was taken to his "theatrical proclivities", and it was not until the Reverend Mr. Parminter succeeded Ogilvie as Precentor that this objection was waived and he "donned a surplice for the first time and soon became the leading bass soloist". Writing of the new Precentor, Parminter, Thomas describes him as being "a fine man, a good scholar and preacher ... a fair knowledge of music and a magnificent bass voice".

During the short time that Thomas sang in the Cathedral Choir there were two Organists, Mr. Rice and Mr. George Darter. In 1863 Darter went to Port Elizabeth and the Dean and Chapter offered Thomas the post of Organist at £80 per annum; he accepted and held the post for the next twenty-five years. In his "Recollections" he describes some of his work and the conditions at the Cathedral:

"The duties were rather heavy. Several practices a week with the boys in the Cathedral School building and one full practice in the Cathedral, besides extra practices for festivals, oratorio services, etc. I had to play, of course, twice on Sunday and at any special services. As the Choir improved, which they rapidly did, under successive Precentors, the musical services also advanced and the choirboys required daily tuition. The Choir library also required constant attention and eventually an Assistant Organist was appointed. She was a Miss Strohl who had been a pupil of Dr. Armes, Organist of Durham Cathedral. She was quite a good player and an excellent trainer of boys. She

also kept the music in perfect order and repair. Miss Strohl always sat in the organ loft with me. I don't think the Dean quite approved but he did not interfere with the arrangement."

Thomas admits that his experience of organ playing was but slight when he accepted the post of Organist of St. George's Cathedral. He had had some lessons from Mr. Owen Allen who was Organist of St. Giles' Church, Chester, where his father had officiated before going to Christ Church. "The foundation was laid by him and I was able by assiduous practice to improve rapidly." During a visit to England a little while later he took the opportunity of having some lessons from the Organist of Chester Cathedral, Frederick Gunton.⁽ⁱ⁾ His lessons were on the Cathedral organ but he had to practise at St. Paul's Church, Broughton.

He notes that even in 1862 the St. George's Choir was a good one "and full Cathedral Service was the rule". Some of the gentlemen of the Choir were very good friends of Thomas, notably Walter Bolus, one of his earliest friends at the Cape and for many years a loyal and enthusiastic alto. Other singers included Ashburnham, Stevens, Arthur Biden, Hewitt, Boulcott, Stapleton, Hughes and Barry, some of them evidently quite distinguished soloists. "Hewitt, Stapleton and Biden were all solo boys in the Choir and developed: Hewitt and Stapleton into tenors and Biden into a bass. Hewitt possessed one

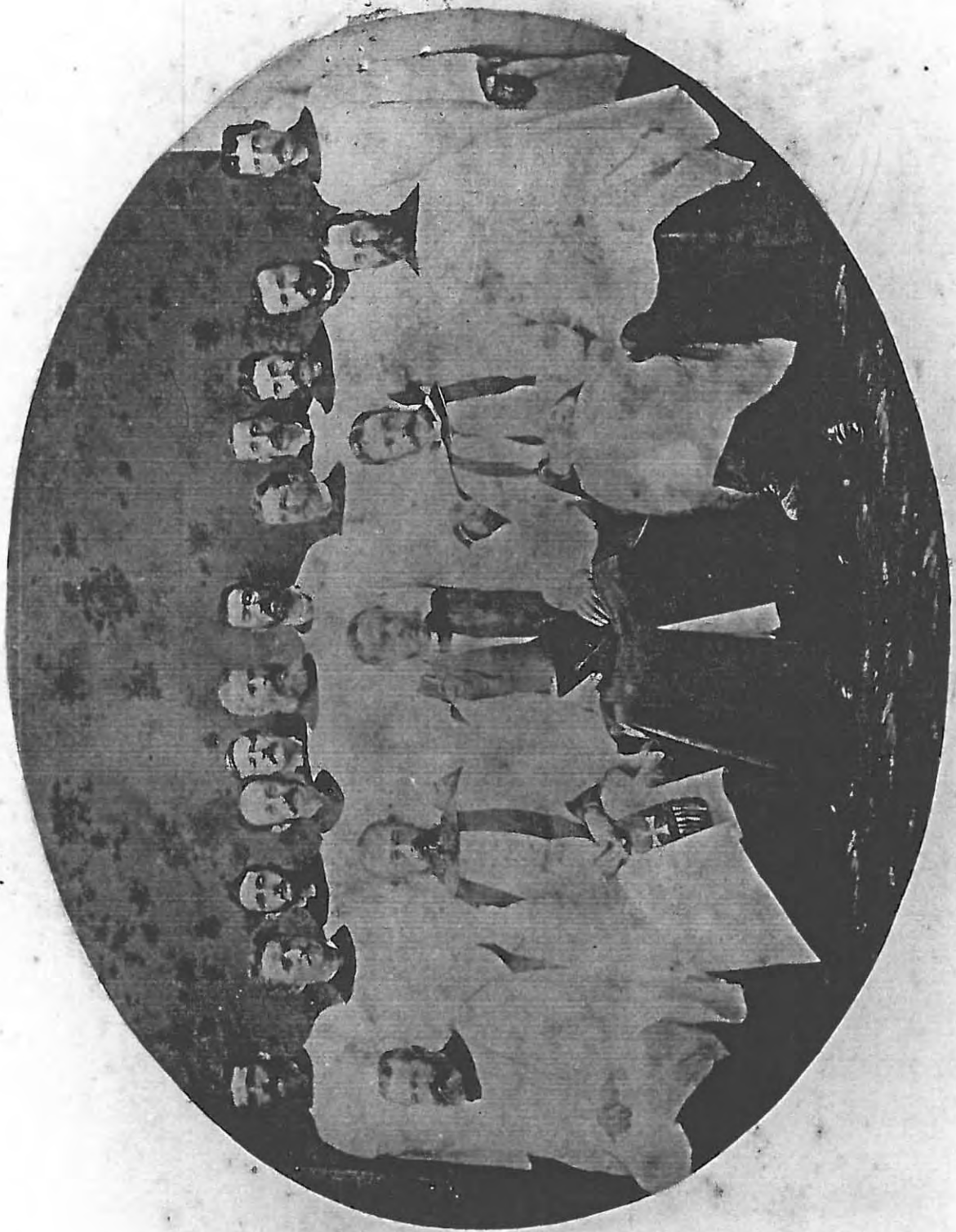
(i) Organist of Chester Cathedral, 1841-1877.

of the finest voices I have ever heard ... so charmed was Sir Philip Wodehouse, Governor of the Cape, with Arthur Biden's singing of Spohr's "As Pants the Hart" in the anthem at the Cathedral that he gave him a five pound note."

When Parminter eventually returned to England, a Mr. Bindley was appointed Precentor and he and Thomas became the greatest of friends. "Mr. Bindley had not only a good knowledge of Church music but was possessed of a pleasant tenor voice. During Mr. Bindley's Precentorship the Cathedral Choir made great strides and not only was the musical library largely augmented and the choral services elaborated, but oratorios and cantatas were occasionally given in the Cathedral."⁽ⁱ⁾ During Mr. Bindley's time and that of his successor, Mr. Bury, they sang Spohr's "Last Judgement", "Babylon", Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise", Gaul's "Holy City", Stainer's "Mary Magdalene", "Crucifixion" and "The Daughter of Jairus", as well as "The Woman of Samaria" by Sterndale Bennett.

Charles Neumann Thomas did not get on quite so well with Mr. Bury who succeeded Bindley as Precentor; although he evidently knew more about musical matters than did his predecessor, he was "inclined to be autocratic and quick-tempered". He records in detail the only one serious difference that they had during Bury's reign:

(i) Cape Times, July 10th, 1923.



10. Cathedral choirmen, clergy and Neumann Thomas (seated on extreme right), c.1880.

"It was after a rehearsal of 'St. Mary Magdalene' when he wrote me a letter directing my attention to certain pages of the work where my accompaniment had not pleased him and urging me to practise the specified passages more before the performance. I was naturally indignant, especially as I had devoted a great deal of time to perfecting myself in the work and had been complimented by members of the Choir on the excellence of the accompaniments. I sent Mr. Bury's letter to the Dean and Chapter and a few days afterwards received from Mr. Bury a long letter of apology for his hastiness. We were good friends after that."

"Mr. Bury, the Precentor ... was the Founder and Progenitor of the Church Choir Choral Festivals in 1882. This first one was a huge success ... the various church choirs proceeding up the old Cathedral centre aisle with their banners, singing the Processional Hymn."⁽ⁱ⁾

In addition to his other work Thomas took several pupils for the organ and harmonium, among whom he names a Miss Steytler, Miss Long, Mr. Edward King, Mr. Stapleton and Mrs. Alder, the wife of the Dean. The Dean "was so very careful of her, notwithstanding that I was a staid and married man that he remained in the organ loft all the time his wife was having her lesson". Mr. King and Mr. Stapleton later both became well known organists at Rondebosch and Kalk Bay respectively.

Thomas showed a keen interest in the state of Church Music throughout the Cape and, after an extended tour of the Province, wrote a letter to the Editor of the Church Chronicle offering, as he put it,

(i) Cape Times, July 10th, 1923.

"a few remarks on some faults common to purely amateur choirs and ... to some where professional assistance is available". It may be of some interest to quote from this letter, for it shows an acute awareness of many important considerations in the performance of Church Music, many of which are still often underestimated by Choirmasters today:

"First and foremost, I would draw attention to the Responses. They should be sung at much the same pace as if they were being deliberately said, and should not be drawled. The Amens in most Churches are simply horrifying. The meaning of the word (verily) does not seem to be taken into account at all. It suggests a decided and prompt acquiescence on the part of choir and congregation to the words of prayer or praise which have preceded it, and therefore should not be sung like a yawn, with a prolonged drawl on the first syllable and the mouth shut like a rat-trap on the last. The exact converse is what should be done, the first syllable being short and decisive and the last, for maximum effect, being echoed off.

Next, I desire to notice the chanting both of psalms and canticles. Great care should be taken that the words in the reciting portions of the verse are clearly and distinctly enunciated, and not slurred over. Organists will find it a good plan to pick out for practice the verses of the psalms presenting the greatest difficulties for pointing, instead of - as is usual - merely taking the opening verses and the few before and after each change of chant ... verses marked 'pp' are not meant to be sung slowly as well as softly. There should be no slowing of the time unless so marked ... Again, far too little regard is paid to marks of expression and the value of rests and pauses. No singing can be attractive, artistic or devotional when these are ignored ..."(i)

(i) Church Chronicle: unidentified date.

If, indeed, Charles Neumann Thomas put his excellent ideas into effect at St. George's Cathedral, then he could honestly say as he handed over to Thomas Barrow Dowling that he felt confident that his successor would "not only maintain the efficiency already attained by St. George's Choir, but add materially to it; and at the same time, by his executive ability, intensify the beauty of the musical services which at the present time are so deservedly admired."⁽ⁱ⁾

Self-praise of his own ability at the organ was certainly not one of Thomas' failings. One feels that he was only too aware of his own shortcomings as a player of that instrument. When he retired in 1888, after having officiated for over twenty-five years as Organist of the Cathedral, he modestly said of his own ability:

"I can lay no claim to brilliancy of execution as a player, nor have I been able to devote that time to the musical study necessary to the proficiency which you had a right to expect from one filling the important position of a Cathedral Organist. All I can point to as having merited your approval is that I have faithfully and conscientiously discharged my duties to the best of my ability, having endeavoured in accompanying the Choir to sink self and add what effect I could to their efforts; and, last but not least, to maintain cordial and happy relations, not only with the Deans and Precentors under whom it has

(i) Cape Argus, May 1st, 1888.

been my privilege to serve, but with the members of the Choir ..."(i)
Surely an almost perfect summary of what the church musician's
temperament should be? No wonder the illuminated address presented
to him on the occasion of his retirement bore the following testimony
to the high esteem in which he was held:

" ... Your labours during a period of nearly thirty years
have been productive of very great benefit to the Cathedral,
which, for the dignity and beauty of its services, stands
foremost among the Churches of South Africa. We are glad of
this opportunity of assuring you - and it is no mere idle
compliment - that the congregation have always very heartily
appreciated the untiring zeal and perseverance with which your
work has been carried on ..."(ii)

After his retirement from St. George's Cathedral Charles Neumann
Thomas lived to a ripe old age and died on 29th November 1923, aged
eighty-three.

(i) Cape Arcus, May 1st, 1888.

(ii) ibid.



11. Charles Neumann Thomas and Thomas Barrow Dowling.

c) THOMAS BARROW DOWLING (1888-1926)

There is a rather interesting correspondence in the Cape Times and Wynberg Times of October and November 1887 and February and March 1888 in connexion with the appointment of a successor to Charles Neumann Thomas.

The Wynberg Times began the whole controversy with an article on October 29th, 1887 which ran as follows: "Speaking of the Cathedral I am reminded that an organist for it is expected to arrive from England very shortly. Local applicants have been led to believe that their claims to the position will be duly considered, and even yet have not been given a refusal, while applications were called in England. A provisional selection was made and submitted for approval to Cape Town; it was favourably entertained at this end, but there was some slight hitch, and there had to be a reference back. The probability is that by this time the favoured gentleman is on the ocean nearing our shore, while those responsible for the appointment have not had the moral courage to be candid to the aspirants for the vacancy who live here!"⁽ⁱ⁾

The Precentor, the Reverend John Deacon, immediately wrote to both the Cape Times and the Wynberg Times and, in a letter published on

(i) Wynberg Times, October 29th, 1887

November 2nd, pointed out that these statements were "utterly without foundation".⁽ⁱ⁾ However, the Wynberg Times did not choose to publish Mr. Deacon's letter without comment and posed the following questions: "Is it untrue that Mr. Thomas has resigned his office as organist, or that a successor has been sought in England, or that it is expected one will start out for the Cape immediately, or that applications have been received in this Colony, and the applicants have been unable to receive a final reply, while it is fully expected the selection will be made in England?"⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

Then in the Cape Argus of November 3rd, 1887, the following report appeared:

"At a special vestry meeting held in St. George's Cathedral Vestry on Friday afternoon, it was unanimously decided to offer the post of organist by cablegram to Mr. Percy Mull, organist and choirmaster of Oswestry, and conductor of Mr. Henry Leslie's⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾ Choir. This gentleman received his musical training at the National Training School for Music, now the Royal College of Music, under Dr. Stainer, Sir Arthur Sullivan and Dr. Bridge, from the latter of whom he has very high testimonials, and also from Dr. Stainer, Sir Arthur Sullivan, Mr. Henry Leslie, and Mr. G. Gaffe, F.C.O., and organist of St. Alban's Abbey. Mr. Mull, on leaving the R.C.M. passed his final examination in all departments with honour. In justice to local applicants, together with some 24 from England, who all received the most careful consideration, it may be stated that the long delay in appointing arose in the first place from a misunderstanding which necessitated further communication, and the results were only received by the mail of Jan. 21. Many other gentlemen with very

(i) Cape Times, November 2nd, 1887

(ii) Wynberg Times, November 2nd, 1887

(iii) Henry Leslie (1822-1896), English conductor and composer.

high testimonials have applied, and two other names have been sent in to Messrs. Novello & Co., who are acting as agents in the matter, and who are instructed to offer the post to them in case any unforeseen circumstances should prevent Mr. Mull from accepting." (i)

Once again the Wynberg Times was moved to comment on the way in which this vacancy had been filled:

"When, some time ago, I directed attention to the manner in which the applicants for the appointment of organist to St. George's Cathedral were being treated, the Rev. Mr. Deacon rushed into print with a brief charge against me of having made misstatements. I then asked him, as a matter of common honesty, to point out where the misstatements were, but this he declined to do. Subsequent events have proved that what I said was absolutely correct, with the trifling exception that the final choice had not been made and it was spoken of as a probability ... While gentlemen within the colony were being assured that they would receive every consideration, the vacancy was being literally hawked about England, and after there had been several refusals a young and comparatively untried gentleman was, finally, induced to accept. There is no excuse possible for the want of candour - not to use a harsher expression - displayed throughout this matter, and a most unmerited slight has been put upon men in our midst who possess every qualification. When Mr. Thomas resigned it was freely stated that there was no intention of supplying his place from the already overstocked ranks of organists in the colony, but at the time those who should know denied the correctness of common report: it would have been in the interests of truth if such denial had never been made." (ii)

It was at this stage that Charles Neumann Thomas himself joined in this correspondence, perhaps rather unwisely, seeing that he had been deeply involved in the selection of his successor. In a

(i) Cape Argus, November 3rd, 1887

(ii) Wynberg Times, February 18th, 1888.

letter which appeared in the Cape Times of February 22nd, 1888, he attempts, as he puts it,

"... to place a plain statement of facts ... before the public and leave them to judge whether the course of action adopted is not in direct contradiction of the Wynberg Times' version. In the first place, when I resigned the appointment of Organist at St. George's I felt it my duty to recommend the appointment of a professional Organist from England, at the same time informing the only two likely gentlemen to succeed me of the fact of my resignation in order that they might be first in the field with their applications. Advertisements afterwards appeared in the Cape papers notifying the vacancy, with the result that only three applications came in. Of these it is generally admitted that the one by far the most deserving of consideration was that of a gentleman styled as an amateur who for many years has proved unmistakeably his capacity, not only as an organist, but also as a choir trainer. Fancy, however, the indignation of the profession had an amateur been selected to succeed another amateur. Of the two professional candidates the claims of one did not present themselves favourably, and the other, in the judgement of many competent authorities, had not, by his public appearances, or by his success as a private teacher, warranted any sanguine anticipation of his proving his fitness for the vacant post. So much, therefore, for one misstatement, that the whole affair was pre-arranged. The next step taken was to call for applications by advertisement in an English paper. This is described in the Wynberg Times as hawking the appointment about England. The truth of the matter is that Messrs. Novello advertised thrice only in the Daily Telegraph, with the result that in response twenty-six applications were sent in, accompanied in the majority of cases with the usual references and testimonials, all of which were forwarded here, eight out of the number being selected by Novello as specially meriting consideration. The committee appointed by the Vestry to report to them nominated, together with the local applicants, three out of the eight as eligible, and their applications were finally considered at a full meeting of the Vestry. So far from it being the case that only a sham compliment was paid

to the profession here, each of the local candidates was proposed and seconded at the meeting, and it was only after protracted discussion that it was decided to offer the appointment, in the first instance, to Mr. Mull, a gentleman neither young nor inexperienced, and holding unexceptionable references and testimonials as to ability."(i)

A few days later the Wynberg Times replied to Neumann Thomas' letter by saying that

"... in his anxiety to say something, has made matters worse than they were before he broke the discreet silence and proves that he had no inconsiderable share in the performance of the ill-planned farce of which complaint was made. He tells us that when he resigned as organist of the Cathedral, he felt it his duty to recommend the appointment of a successor from England. In the same breath, he advised two local gentlemen to be first in the field, and this in spite of his recommendation to the Church authorities! Does Mr. Thomas think he was justified in advising men to apply for an appointment when, unknown to them, he was doing his utmost to prevent either being successful? He must have known that his advice would be taken as a timely and kindly hint, instead of being regarded as the hollow mockery it was. A little later Mr. Thomas gives reasons why neither of the two who applied at his suggestion should be appointed, so that his method appears more extraordinary still. 'So much, therefore, for one misstatement that the whole affair was not prearranged' ... He denies that the appointment was hawked about England, and so I suppose hairs are to be split in fixing a definition of 'hawking'. I apply the expression to convey an idea of what is being done when man after man is solicited to accept a certain post. It is well known that the delay in filling the vacancy arose from the number of refusals the London agents for the Church met with, and after several months had been wasted in fruitless efforts to secure organists who would not accept, finally it was resolved to take a batch of three

(i) Cape Times, February 22nd, 1888.

names, and see if either one could not be induced to come. If that is not 'hawking' an appointment about, I shall feel under an obligation to anyone supplying me with a better term... It is a mistake to suppose that any amateur applied for the appointment. I take it that anyone who plays for money is a professional, and such Mr. Thomas is and others like him are..."(i)

At this point, Mr. John Deacon wrote again to the Cape Times to refute these claims which had appeared in the Wynberg Times:

"... With regard to the mis-statements which have been published ... I have neither time nor inclination to answer them all in detail; but one instance out of the many will suffice to show their general character, and whether there is much credit to be placed in them. It was asserted in the Wynberg Times of February 25th that 'it is a well-known fact that the delay in filling the vacancy arose from the number of refusals met with, and after several months had been wasted in fruitless efforts to secure organists who would not accept', etc. Now, sir, this is entirely false and misleading, as will plainly be seen from the following statement ... On the 26th of July last, a letter was written to a gentleman in London requesting him to do all that was necessary in the matter, and an answer was received from him, dated August 18, in which he expressed his willingness to do so. After nearly two full months came another letter in which he told us that all he had done was to write to the organists of St. Paul's and St. Andrew's, Wells-Street, to consult, and further to answer one advertisement. He concluded his letter with this significant sentence, 'I quite expect you will engage a man on your side.' Who led him to expect so? So much then for the assertion in the Wynberg Times that 'the number of refusals' caused the delay. At most there could have been but one. Immediately on receipt of this second letter the

(i) Wynberg Times, February 25th, 1888.

committee decided to put the matter into the hands of Messrs. Novello, Ewer & Co. According to instructions they advertised three times in one London paper. (This the Wynberg Times calls 'hawking'), and within fourteen days had received upwards of 20 applications from men who for the most part sent unexceptionable references and recommendations, many of them from the leading musicians and organists in England. From these several were chosen, together with the three colonial applicants, and eventually three were selected, and their names sent to Messrs. Novello & Co., so that should unforeseen circumstances prevent one from accepting, no time need be lost in securing one of the remaining two. You will see, then, sir, that no 'fruitless efforts' have yet been made to 'secure organists who would not accept', and that at the most the appointment can only have been offered to three men..."(i)

It was then that one of the unsuccessful "colonial" candidates, Mr. H.E. Stidolph of Wynberg, wrote to the Cape Times airing both his views and his grievances:

"... whether I am justified in the view which I and others take, I will leave you to judge by a brief statement of facts, which I can verify by letters in my possession, and by reference to the published correspondence. In the first place, I am not one of the local gentlemen to whom Mr. Thomas says he gave timely notice of his resignation, in order that they might be first in the field with their applications. I heard of Mr. Thomas' resignation incidentally in the train from Dr. Beck a day or two after the vestry meeting had been held at which it had been 'unanimously decided to act upon the counsel given by the present organist and the Precentor to engage the services of a professional organist from England' (extract from letter). The special committee appointed to carry out the selection of an organist met on July 22nd, when it was decided to write to Mr. Bolus asking him to ascertain if Dr. Stainer could recommend a gentleman for the post ... At the same time, in deference to

(i) Cape Times, 29th February, 1888

the protests against getting another professional organist out here ... it was decided to insert advertisements in the Cape papers notwithstanding the fact that it had been already decided to engage a gentleman in England. Mr. Deacon's own letter proves this, for upon the failure of Mr. Bolus to recommend a suitable man, Messrs. Novello & Co. were immediately written to, proving conclusively that the committee were carrying out a preconceived and settled plan. During all this time I and my friends were told by Mr. Thomas himself, and by one of the churchwardens, that I stood as good a chance as anyone of obtaining the appointment, so that I maintain the local candidates were not treated with that candour which they had a right to expect. I know, moreover, for a fact that the appointment was offered to a friend of mine in England, a professional organist, but was declined by him on the plea of his not caring to leave England at his age. One paragraph in Mr. Thomas' letter I must refer to briefly. It speaks of the other professional candidate, who 'in the judgement of many competent authorities had not, by his public appearances or by his success as a private teacher, warranted any sanguine expectation of his fitness for the post'. This most ungenerous and small-minded paragraph can hardly refer to me, as I am happy to say that the Most Rev. the Metropolitan, the Very Rev. the Dean, the Rev. John Deacon, Precentor, Mr. A. Biden, and Mr. Allen, have each and all upon various occasions expressed their opinion as to my fitness for the post. If the paragraph does refer to me, I am at a loss to conceive who are the 'competent authorities' mentioned therein, and I can only say that, with the opinion of the above-named gentlemen in my favour, I am content to lose the appointment upon the judgement which can be of little worth, of any other so-called, and probably prejudiced 'authorities', whose opinions seem to have over-weighted those of as many of the above more expert judges as had to vote in the election."(i)

Mr. Deacon was not slow to answer Mr. Stidolph's letter and the same day wrote to the Cape Times "to correct one or two mistakes

(i) Cape Times. March 1st, 1888.

in his letter of today. In the first place, he must have been misinformed of the 'fact' that the appointment was actually offered to, and declined by, his friend. The gentleman to whom we wrote certainly, as I said, answered one advertisement in the Church Times, but he could scarcely have offered the post to anyone, seeing that he had no authority to do so. As a matter of fact, if the post was thus offered and declined it was without authority from the committee, to whom the 'fact' is utterly unknown. There is one other statement which needs correction. I allude to the assertion that it had 'already' (i.e. when the advertisements were sent to the Cape papers) 'been decided to engage a gentleman in England.' It was not so decided until January 28th, and the decision was published in the papers on the following day ... "(i)

A footnote added to this letter by the Editor of the Cape Times at last closed the correspondence on the subject and the last reference to the matter appeared in the Wynberg Times on March 3rd, 1888 - a reply to the Precentor's letter to the Cape Times of 29th February as follows:

"Adopting the same line as Mr. C. Neumann Thomas, the Rev. Mr. Deacon finds great fault with me for asserting that the appointment of organist to St. George's Cathedral was hawked about England, and in doing so makes a full admission (probably unwittingly) of the correctness of the real charge in this unfortunate matter. What I in the first instance complained of was that applications were called in this colony

(i) Cape Times, March 2nd, 1888

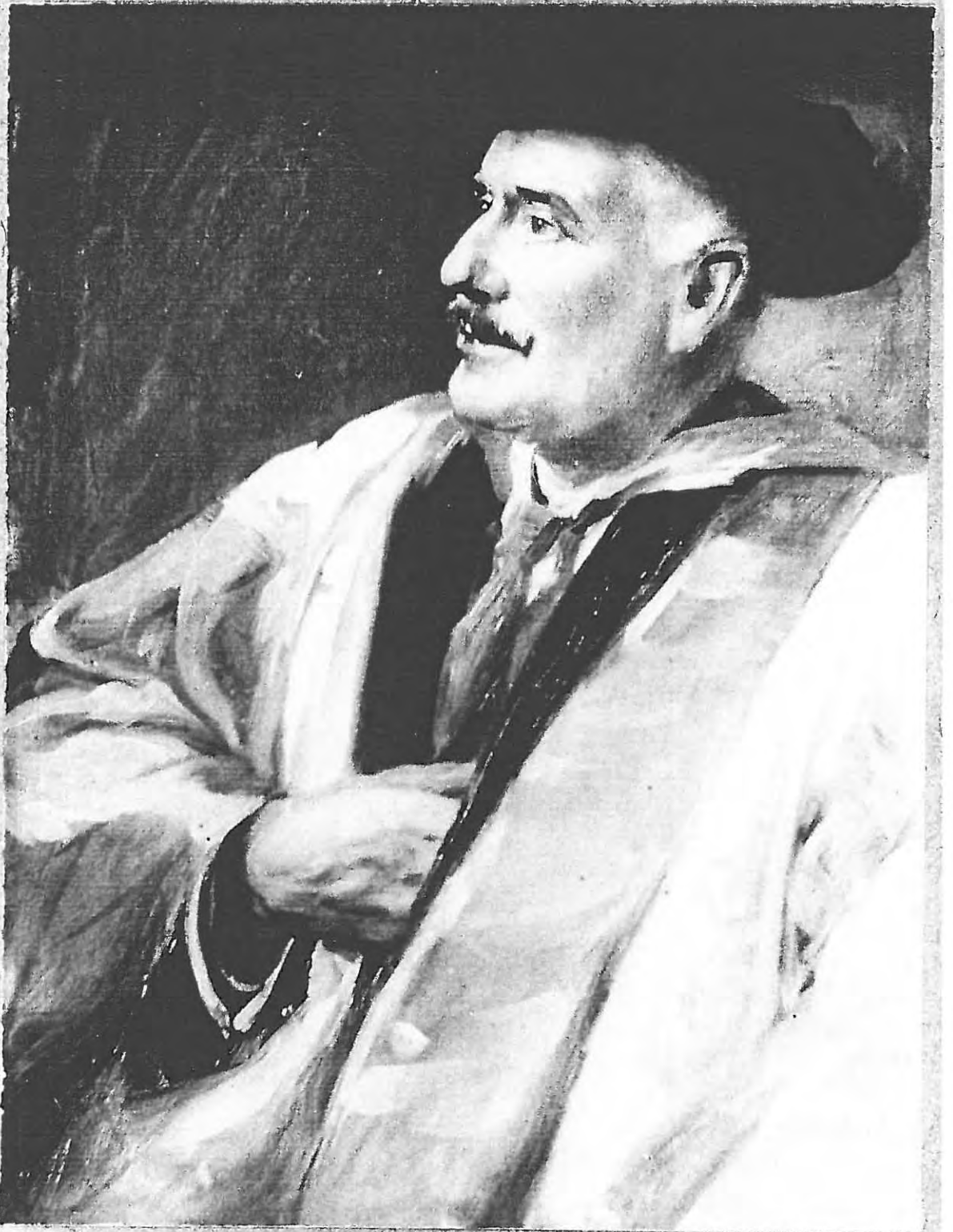
for the incumbency of a certain office when there was not the slightest intention of accepting any one of them, but to secure a man from England. Mr. Deacon chose to characterize my remarks as misstatements, and when asked to point out a single inaccuracy, he had not a sufficient sense of what is due even to an owl to attempt substantiation of his sweeping general charge. What are the facts, according to his own showing? 'On the 26th of July last, a letter was written to a gentleman in London requesting him to do all that was necessary', is Mr. Deacon's own admission in speaking of the steps taken to secure an organist for St. George's, and how he can, in the same breath, deny the justice of my comments must remain in hidden mystery. This gentleman - Mr. Bolus, for many years a valued member of St. George's Choir - evidently thought, after due enquiry, that his old friends might be sufficiently well served by looking nearer home. In the first instance he accepted the trust and took counsel with the organists of St. Paul's and St. Andrew's, but after a lapse of two months wrote back a letter in which was this significant passage: 'I quite expect you will engage a man on your side.' It is ungenerous of Mr. Deacon to impute to Mr. Bolus a gross breach of an important trust, and those who know the parties will say it is unjust: it is quite certain he gave reasons for his expectation, and it would have been more ungenerous to have published them also, even if they did not receive consideration by those to whom they were addressed. The answer to Mr. Bolus was that Messrs. Novello, Ewer & Co. were immediately written to, to advertise the vacancy, so that Mr. Deacon, while denying my accuracy, absolutely proves it. Now as to the quibble about the appointment being 'hawked' about, I repeat that it was. For two months Mr. Bolus and the gentleman he had asked to assist him were trying to carry out the duty imposed upon them, but failed, owing to those asked declining. Admitting, as Mr. Deacon asks us to, that there was only one refusal, it is not going too far to say that many suitable men were sounded, and did not formally decline because it was found to be of no use asking them. Now Mr. Deacon can scarcely deny that in the latter part of October the Cathedral authorities fully expected to receive a wire to the effect

that an organist was on the point of starting, and that they were sorely disappointed. Where, then, was the consideration of the local applications? It has taken seven months to obtain an eligible man, two sets of people have successively been engaged in the selection, and even at the last instructions had to be issued to take any one of three candidates. If this is not 'hawking' an appointment, it is only because it is not possible to 'hawk' one, but after all this issue does not affect the main charge, which is virtually admitted."(i)

So ended the long and protracted correspondence about the appointment of Neumann Thomas' successor: Mr. Percy Mull declined the post when it was eventually offered to him and one of the two other remaining applicants whose names had been sent to Messrs. Novello, Thomas Barrow Dowling, was offered the post and duly accepted.

Thomas Barrow Dowling, who served St. George's Cathedral longer than any other organist, was born on May 31st, 1861 at Over Wallop in Hampshire. Very little is known about the early musical training he received, for he seems to have come from a family without any obvious musical gifts. However, it was certainly his having been associated as a choirboy with Salisbury Cathedral (under John Elliot Richardson, Organist 1863-1881) and its music that developed within him a deep love of Church and choral music and determined his future career. He was educated as a choirboy at the Salisbury Cathedral Grammar School and afterwards at the Salisbury High School where he finished his formal education in 1878.

(i) Wynberg Times, March 3rd, 1888.



12. Thomas Barrow Dowling
(from an oil sketch by P. Tennyson Cole - 1914).

At the age of eighteen he became Organist at St. Matthew's Church, Sydenham Hill in London, and at the same time studied at the Royal Academy of Music (1880-1884). In due course - in 1902, after he had been at St. George's Cathedral for fourteen years - he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy (F.R.A.M.), an award limited to one hundred and fifty distinguished past students. After he had finished studying at the Academy, Barrow Dowling left St. Matthew's and was appointed Organist and Choirmaster at St. Philip's Church, Regent Street, London, in 1884, a post which he held for the next four years.

"During his stay in London he had worked up an excellent connection in singing and pianoforte lessons, besides conducting several suburban choral societies. Although his studies at the Royal Academy were chiefly piano, composition and the 'cello as an orchestral instrument, he always had a very strong leaning to and love for the art of singing which he studied and taught before he left Salisbury."⁽ⁱ⁾

As we have already seen, Thomas Barrow Dowling was eventually appointed to succeed Charles Neumann Thomas as Organist of St. George's Cathedral in 1888. Shortly before sailing for Cape Town, he married Marion Grant, an equally fine musician, whose assistance in many of his musical undertakings was to prove invaluable.

(i) Cape Times, 6th September, 1926

In an article by Barrow Dowling entitled "Music at the Cape from 1860 to 1912" which appeared in the Cape Times of July 10th, 1923, he gave some of his early impressions of St. George's Cathedral and its music when he first arrived in Cape Town:

"When I arrived, the Reverend John Deacon was Precentor and there was a St. George's Choral Society with Mr. Deacon as conductor and Miss Bau as pianist. Mozart's 'Twelfth Mass' was performed in the Cathedral shortly after I arrived.

The chorus, I remember, was quite good and well balanced. I have indeed a keen recollection of my first hearing of the Cathedral Choir that Sunday morning, April 15, 1888, which impressed me very much as regards the purity and refinement of the voices and their rendering of a difficult service, Garrett in D, and a portion of Spohr's 'Last Judgment' for the Introit. I felt very seriously that I had come out to fill a position with a fine, not to say splendid, tradition behind it, and talent and musicianship in its present personnel. My predecessor had been a man of attainments with a sound Cathedral upbringing and knowledge."(i)

It was not long before Barrow Dowling began to make a considerable impression on the musical life of Cape Town. "Immediately on his arrival in Cape Town he became conductor of the Suburban Choral Society, and during his first four years of office, he put through about ten performances with this society in Claremont. There was no City Choral Society at that time but Dr. Barrow Dowling successfully reorganised the Cape Town Choral Society and in 1891 amalgamated it with the Suburban Society under a new title of 'The Combined Choral Societies of Cape Town and Suburbs'."(ii) Among the many choral works he

(i) Cape Times, July 10th, 1923.

(ii) Cape Times, September 6th, 1926.

conducted were works by Handel, Haydn, Mendelssohn and Berlioz, sung at an annual musical festival. It was at these festivals that Cape Town had the opportunity of hearing some of the world's best singers who had been especially brought out to South Africa. Sir Charles Santley (1834-1922), "the greatest British baritone of his day" ⁽ⁱ⁾, visited Cape Town and sang the title part in a performance of Mendelssohn's "Elijah". One of Barrow Dowling's obituary notices states that Santley was reputed to have said that, outside London, he had never sung to such an excellent chorus as the Cape Town one trained by Barrow Dowling.

Another notable achievement was his performance in 1909 of Gabriel Pierne's (1863-1937) musical legend "The Children's Crusade", which was given with six hundred children from all the High Schools and the Training College. For this performance the composer wrote him a personal letter of thanks from Paris.

However, Barrow Dowling never allowed these outside activities to impair his work at St. George's Cathedral which was always his first love. In an article in the Cape Times entitled "A Personal Tribute to Dr. Barrow Dowling", written shortly before his death in 1926, one of Neumann Thomas' daughters wrote: "The beauty of the Cathedral services has delighted not only regular members of the congregation

(i) Scholes: "Oxford Companion to Music", p.811.

but visitors from all over the subcontinent and overseas, and many have been his triumphs with artists of world-wide fame."⁽ⁱ⁾

Her father, too, wrote glowingly in his own "Recollections" in 1923: "One of the chief attractions at Cape Town from a musical point of view is the singing of the Choir at the Anglican Cathedral. Visitors from Europe and from the Dominions are unanimous in their tribute of praise. The Organist, Dr. Barrow Dowling, who has directed the musical services for over thirty-three years with such signal success, is most heartily to be congratulated on his indefatigable and enthusiastic efforts to obtain the splendid results achieved ... The boys in particular give evidence, in purity of tone, voice production and enunciation, of their careful selection and subsequent training ... As a teacher, chorus master and choir trainer he has no equal in the Union, and the reputation of the Choir of St. George's Cathedral reaches far beyond the shores of South Africa."

A letter full of praise both for Barrow Dowling and his Cathedral Choir, signed 'G.B.', appeared in the Cape Times of March 20th, 1891. Written from St. George's Hotel, this visitor to Cape Town shows "the very great pleasure ... experienced at hearing the beautiful rendering of the musical portions of the services at St. George's Cathedral. I am aware that the boys have daily practices,

(i) Cape Times, December 14th, 1926.

when naturally something considerable is expected of them, but in much larger centres, and with far greater facilities, I have known results nothing like so satisfactory as in the present instance. As an amateur choir I consider that of St. George's Cathedral very far above the average, in fact, almost unique ... the singing by the Choir, generally, of piano passages (a most difficult attainment) is simply charming. It only remains for me to add that I consider Cape Town most fortunate in possessing, as they do at the Cathedral ... such a delightful choir, and ... in Mr. Dowling, an organist worthy of the beautiful new instrument recently erected by Hill, who not only excels as an executant of high order, but possesses that still rarer attainment, viz., a judicious discernment as an accompanist. I may say finally that the above remarks are not based on a limited experience, for being a lover of church music, I have taken every opportunity of hearing the best, not only in London, and at our English Cathedrals and Colleges, but in very many other parts of the globe."⁽ⁱ⁾

Barrow Dowling left practically nothing in the way of original musical compositions: a five-fold "Amen" for use after the blessing at the end of a service and an occasional piece written for the opening of the first Union Parliament in October 1910, incidental music entitled "The Finale, 'The Progress of Prosperity', a Masque of Consummation and Consecration."

(i) Cape Times, March 20th, 1891

The short Amen was published in the service book of the Cape Town Diocesan Church Choirs' Association in 1910 and is an innocuous setting in the Victorian tradition with a rather cloying chromaticism in the treble part in bar six:

After the Blessing.

T. BARROW-DOWLING.

Slowly.

A - men, A - men, A men,

A men, A men.

The incidental music for the finale of the Masque, "The Progress of Prosperity", (apart from the final "Te Deum") exists only in chorus part form and unfortunately no copies of the full score or accompaniments have survived. The first three sections are solo songs and it is difficult to assess their merit from the vocal part

only. The words, especially written for the occasion by Francis Hartman Markoë, are of rather poor literary quality and the attempt to introduce an element of pastoral and classical imagery produces an unintentionally comic effect as, for example, in the first lyric:

"Hence, ye dreary night-nurs'd crew, flee away,
To this place prosperity comes today.
Comes with Union's grace to crown the flowering of the seed,
Long sown by heroes of the past.
In token it shall last and, waxing great and yet more great
Support an Empire's fate. entwined,
Then derry, derry, dey,
Let's all make holiday and, with the spirits of the land,
Attend her on her way.
Come, all her rich resources, gold-bearing water courses.
Come, ye vine-clad valleys, yield your wealth ...
Pluto and Pomone's treasure mix'd with Bacchus all divine."

The concluding setting of the "Te Deum" (see page 83a) is a very straightforward piece of four-part writing, kept simple presumably because it would have been sung by a massed choir composed largely of amateur and inexperienced singers. One interesting point is to be found in the last section, where Barrow Dowling sets the words

Finale — Te Deum — J. Barrow-Dowling Mus. Doc.

ff full chorus:
 we praise Thee O God -- we ack-now-ledge Thee to be the Lord --
 ... All the Earth doth worship Thee -- The Fa-ther ev-er-lack-ing
 So Thee all angels cry a-loud --- The Heavens and all the
 powers there-in So Thee Cherubim and Seraph-ims con-tin-u-al-ly do
 cry --- Ho-ly Ho-ly Ho-ly Lord God of Sabra-oth -- Heavens
 Earth are full of Thy Ma-jes-ty of Thy Glo-ry

"O Lord, let thy mercy be upon us", instead of "O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us": a curious error for a church musician who would have been more than familiar with the words of the "Te Deum".

Thomas Barrow Dowling had the distinction of being the first musician in South Africa to receive a Lambeth D.Mus.⁽ⁱ⁾ The award of a Lambeth degree is in accordance with an ancient custom whereby the Primate of All England is empowered to confer degrees in Arts, Letters, Law and Music on distinguished servants of the Anglican Church.

When Dr. Barrow Dowling died on September 5th, 1926 the Cape Argus wrote of him: "Freshness and an unwearying enthusiasm were among the doctor's most obvious characteristics, whose deeper qualities included a love of his art, which caused him to make of his life one long sacrifice of himself. He lived for music, and his life-long devotion has largely determined the taste of Cape Town. It would indeed be difficult to find any other single person whose influence has had such effect in building up a refined taste throughout the country."⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

The Dean's tribute appeared in the Cape Times of September 6th, and spoke of him as "vigorous and enthusiastic, he threw himself heart and soul into his work and pastimes, although the former left very little time for the latter. Choirboys loved him, but they knew he could express disapproval of slackness just as forcibly as he could praise

(i) In 1903

(ii) Cape Argus, September 6th, 1926.

merit and endeavour ... during his long residence in South Africa he had made hosts of friends, and leaves a name which will be remembered with deep affection and high esteem."⁽ⁱ⁾

In St. George's Cathedral there is a memorial tablet placed on a pillar below the organ, bearing the following inscription:

"To the glory of God and in memory of Thomas Barrow Dowling, Mus. Doc., F.R.A.M., who died September 5th, 1926. For thirty-eight years Organist and Choirmaster of this Cathedral. By the vigour of his personality, his power of leadership, and his unflagging zeal, he made music a noble accompaniment to worship and did worthy service to the City of Cape Town. Lest a devoted musician, faithful friend and loyal citizen be forgotten, this tablet is placed by those to whom he was well beloved."

(i) Cape Times, September 6th, 1926



14. Alban Hamer at the console of the Cathedral organ.

d) JAMES ALBAN HAMER (1926-1952)

James Alban Hamer was born on the 25th January 1882 at Leeds, Yorkshire. His musical career began at the age of seven when a school music inspector, giving sight-singing tests at the Middle Class School where Hamer was a pupil, discovered that he had a sensitive ear. This inspector spoke to the boy's parents and advised them to give their son a musical training. A piano was duly bought, young Alban was given his early lessons by his mother, and at the same time joined the Choir of Leeds Parish Church which was noted for its fine musical tradition.

Under the tuition of Mr. Benton, the Organist, Hamer's musical talent was developed to such good effect that he became a soloist whose voice was much in demand at choral performances throughout the North of England, and he appeared together with such distinguished singers as Ada Crossley, Agnes Nicholls, Walter Hyde and Robert Radford. The fees which he received for these and other performances were wisely banked for him by his father and, by the time he was sixteen, they were sufficient to pay for his further musical education.

When his voice broke, he went on to the Leeds College of Music where, on the recommendation of Dr. Philip Armes (1836-1908), Organist of Durham Cathedral, he intended to train as a solo pianist. However, an ever-increasing interest in the organ and its music and the realization that the organist's life is less precarious than that of a concert pianist, eventually persuaded him to concentrate on the former instrument.

This change of allegiance was also largely due to the influence of, and his friendship with, Sir Edward Bairstow (1874-1946), then Organist at Leeds Parish Church (1906) and later Organist at York Minster (1913-1946). He began lessons with Bairstow and, within nine months, secured his first appointment, as Organist of St. Mary's Church, Tonge Road, Leeds. As well as holding this post, he acted as Bairstow's assistant at the Parish Church.

It was at about this time that the youthful Hamer was faced with the unenviable task of playing the organ continuo part in Bach's "Mass in B Minor" at a performance conducted by Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, at only a few hours' notice. This took place when the Choir of the Leeds Philharmonic Society, of which he was a member, visited Manchester to sing the work with the Hallé Orchestra. At the afternoon rehearsal the official organist was unable to play because

of illness, and Hamer was pressed forward by his friends to play the work at sight, and also at the evening performance.

In 1907 he became an Associate of the Royal College of Organists and three years later a Fellow. From St. Mary's Church he went to the Parish Church at Adel, and then in 1913 moved to All Souls' Church in Leeds, where he remained for the next seven years. In 1920, on the recommendation of Bairstow, he was appointed Organist and Choirmaster of Bloemfontein Cathedral, which carried with it the post of music master at St. Andrew's School there.

During his six years in Bloemfontein Hamer played an active part in the musical life of the City: he organized many concerts, trained and conducted the local Orpheus Club Choral Society for performances of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, and gave regular organ recitals, the proceeds of which went to the founding of several scholarships for choirboys at St. Andrew's School.

He came to Cape Town on several occasions to adjudicate at the annual Eisteddfod and during one of these visits he was called upon, at short notice, to deputize for Dr. Barrow Dowling at St. George's Cathedral.

On the latter's death in 1926, he was invited by Dean Parsons to become Cathedral Organist and Music Master at St. George's Grammar School, a post which he readily accepted.

Hamer's abilities were soon recognized in Cape Town beyond the sphere of School and Church Music and it was not long before he was appointed to the staff of the South African College of Music, where he taught Harmony and Counterpoint for twenty years. In addition, he lectured at the Teachers' Training College at Mowbray, visited three schools as singing master and also gave private lessons. As well as training the Cathedral Choir, he was for a time Conductor of the Cape Town Municipal Choral Society.

During his years as Cathedral Organist, Hamer gave his fullest support to the Cape Guild of Organists and was President for three terms: 1929-30, 1940-41 and 1945-46.

Despite the demands made by all these varied musical undertakings, Hamer's true dedication was, without any doubt, to the Cathedral and its music. It has been said of him that his chief joy in life was the accompaniment of the Cathedral Sunday services, and indeed, throughout his long career at St. George's

Hamer, Alban, F.R.C.O.



Photo

Akkersdyk

MR. HAMER was born in Leeds, Yorkshire, England, and educated at the Middle Class School, Leeds. He started his musical education at Leeds College of Music, and later studied under Dr. E. C. Bairstow, the present organist at York Minster. He was a Choir Boy at the Leeds Parish Church, afterwards becoming Assistant to Dr., now Sir Edward, Bairstow at the same church.

Mr. Hamer obtained his A.R.C.O. in 1907 and his F.R.C.O. in 1910 at the Royal College of Organists. He has held the position of Organist and Choir Master at Old Souls (Hook Memorial) Church, Leeds.

He arrived in South Africa in 1920 and became Organist at Bloemfontein Cathedral and Music Master at St. Andrew's School, in that city.

Later, he left for Capetown, to take up the position of Organist and Choir Master at St. George's Cathedral, which position he now holds. He is Conductor of the Municipal Choral Society, Music Master at the Teachers' Training College, Capetown, and Teacher of Singing and the Organ at the South African College of Music.

Mr. Hamer has been Chief Adjudicator at Eisteddfodau in all centres of the Union and Rhodesia for Pianoforte, Organ, Singing and Choral.

His postal address is: "Linton," Queens Road, Sea Point, Capetown.



he strove to maintain and improve the fine tradition handed down by his predecessors. His special ability to train and mould boys' voices brought St. George's Cathedral Choir a reputation not only in South Africa but also in England. Hilary Chadwyck-Healey, now (1967) a Vice-President of the Royal School of Church Music, visited Cape Town and wrote in the July 1933 edition of the magazine English Church Music:

"My experiences of visiting choirs and of interviewing choirmasters more and more tend to convince me that by far the greater portion of the credit for a keen and efficient choir must be given to the organist and choirmaster, and I am equally certain that the gentlemen and boys of Cape Town Cathedral Choir will be the first to give a general acquiescence to this statement and, with me, point to Mr. Alban Hamer, F.R.C.O. as the man responsible for the satisfactory state of affairs existing there... I have attended several services in the Cathedral and there have been occasions when great heights of artistic effect have been scaled and I was peculiarly impressed by the boys' voices. Whether their quality is due to the climate of Cape Town, or to the training they receive, or whether

it was partly because I had been out of touch for some months with this class of music, I do not know; but I never remember to have been so impressed with boys' singing as with that of Cape Town."

These eulogistic remarks made by a prominent English Church musician are of great interest as they provide an impartial and informed evaluation of Hamer's work. Chadwyck-Healey commented as favourably on one of Hamer's annual performances of Bach's "St. Matthew Passion":

"It was my privilege to take part in this Choir's performance of Bach's "St. Matthew Passion", and the renderings of the solo parts by the boys were the loveliest I have ever listened to. The men's parts also deserve commendation and the general vocal tone sounded very good. It struck me that here were singers who were musicians as well, and this was particularly noticeable in the Passion Music. The result of such a combination of qualities was the production of an excellent choral ensemble, a result brought about also by devoted attendance at choir practice and Sunday services."⁽ⁱ⁾

It is therefore not surprising to find that when his friend Sir Sydney Nicholson (1875-1947), at one time Organist of Westminster Abbey, founded the Royal School of Church Music in 1927, Hamer was

(i) Article signed HPCH: "Affiliated Choirs: No.11. St. George's Cathedral, Cape Town", pp.73-74, English Church Music, Vol.III No.3, July 1933.

appointed the Area Representative for South Africa, a position which he undertook with his customary enthusiasm and drive. Within a few years he was able to report that every Anglican Cathedral in South Africa which possessed any kind of choir had affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music.

In 1937 the Archbishop of Canterbury conferred on Hamer the degree of Doctor of Music in recognition of his services to Church Music.

Throughout his long service in Cape Town, Hamer was in constant demand as an adjudicator at eisteddfodau and vocal competitions, not only in his home town, but throughout South Africa and Rhodesia. He was especially enthusiastic in his encouragement of choral music among the Cape Coloured community, who he claimed were by far the most responsive to his advice, strictures and suggestions for improvement in their earnest desire to better their efforts. He loved to officiate at their local choir festivals and competitions, and often cancelled or postponed quite important alternative engagements in order to be able to do so. He unflinchingly demanded his professional fee in advance, simply so that he could return it either in prizes or some other means of financial encouragement to a project which meant so much to him.

With such a busy musical life, it is hardly surprising that Hamer had little time for musical composition and left only two pieces of choral music: a setting of the Evening Canticles (Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis) in F, and an anthem, a setting of Psalm 127, "Except the Lord build the house".

Neither of these two works is of any particular musical distinction, especially if one compares them with the main stream of church music being composed in England at the time. Hamer seems to have caught very little of the spark of his teacher, Sir Edward Bairstow, and in his two pieces of church music we find none of the inspiration, strength or mysticism to be found in, for example, Bairstow's fine anthem, "Let all mortal flesh keep silence". In fact, both of Hamer's works are far more typical of English church music of the late nineteenth century and are characteristically "four-square" in conception and construction.

E.H. Fellowes⁽ⁱ⁾, when discussing Victorian church music talks of the "dominating influence of the eight-bar phrase", as follows: "This influence had its origin in the great classical school of instrumental music, and many of the lesser composers of vocal music failed to perceive that verbal phrases and rhythms, varying in length, should not always be made to conform to so rigid

(i) The Reverend E.H. Fellowes, Minor Canon of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, an authority on English Church music and editor of much Tudor music (1870-1951)

a system. This is especially the case in setting the English Canticles to music."⁽ⁱ⁾

Hamer's setting of the Evening Canticles shows many of the faults which characterized Victorian church music (for example, trite themes, rather obvious and weak imitative writing, unadventurous key schemes, etc.), but by far the greatest criticism which can be levelled at him is the insensitive way in which he often sets the text:

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains a melody for the text "FOR HE HATH REGARD-ED THE LOW-LI-NESS OF HIS HAND-". The melody is written in a simple, stepwise fashion, with some notes tied across bar lines. The second staff continues the melody for "MAID-EN.", also in a simple, stepwise fashion. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across bar lines.

The "tyranny of the eight-bar phrase" often meant that words had to be repeated simply to fill out all the extra notes, sometimes with unhappy results. For example, in the "Gloria" of Hamer's "Nunc Dimittis" his repetition of the words, "as it was, it was in the beginning", produces what Sir Donald Tovey once referred to as "a strange theological dogma, that of the chorister's Fortieth Article of Religion."⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

(i) E.H. Fellowes: "English Cathedral Music from Edward VI to Edward VII", p.215.

(ii) Sir Donald Tovey: "Main Stream of Music", p.15.



His setting of Psalm 127, "Except the Lord build the house", is a work of which Hamer was said to be very proud and it was, in fact, sung as the anthem on April 20th, 1947 when the Royal Family (King George VI, Queen Elizabeth and the two Princesses, Elizabeth and Margaret) attended Matins in St. George's Cathedral. A report in the Cape Times (21st April, 1947) gave a full account of the occasion:

"Dr. Alban Hamer, Organist and Choirmaster, accompanied the service at the organ. He composed the music for the anthem, Psalm 127, and, at her request, the Queen was given a copy of it at the end of the service."⁽ⁱ⁾

This work has many of the weaknesses which characterize his setting of the Evening Canticles, for example the rather

(i) Cape Times, 21st April, 1947

Except the Lord build the House.

Alban Hamer

Psalm 127-

Adagio
F.

Handwritten musical score for the first system. It consists of five staves. The top two staves are vocal lines with lyrics: "Ex cept the Lord" and "Ex cept the Lord". The bottom three staves are piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Adagio" and the dynamic is "F.". The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and the time signature is common time (C).

Handwritten musical score for the second system. It consists of five staves. The top two staves are vocal lines with lyrics: "build the house, their labour is but lost that build it." and "build the house, their labour is but lost that build it." The bottom three staves are piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Andante". The key signature and time signature remain the same as the first system.

Banks & Son, York.

unfortunately comic effect produced by the sequence at the words
"like as the arrows":

The image shows a musical score for two voices, Tenor (T) and Bass (B). The Tenor part is in the upper staff, marked 'Maestoso', and the Bass part is in the lower staff, marked 'f'. The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The lyrics are: 'LIKE AS THE AR-R-O-W-S IN THE HAND OF THE GI-ANT'. The Tenor part has a long rest in the first two bars, then enters with a series of eighth notes. The Bass part enters with a series of eighth notes in the first two bars, then has a long rest in the third and fourth bars, then enters again with a series of eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the Bass staff.

However, it is given an effective unity by the repetition of the opening eight bars in the middle and once again at the end. It would otherwise have been rather disjointed and sectional on account of the numerous changes of tempo: no less than five changes in seventy-five bars of music.

Perhaps it was because he was only too well aware of his limitations as a composer that Alban Hamer's musical output was so small. His gifts obviously lay in the field of choirtraining and organ playing and during his distinguished career at St. George's he, perhaps more than any other organist, built up a very fine tradition and reputation, not only for himself but for the Cathedral Choir.

In an interview which appeared in the Cape Argus of December 16th, 1950, Dr. Hamer said that he hoped to remain at St. George's as long as he had the strength to climb the sixty steps to the organ loft. In a way these words proved to be prophetic for, on March 22nd, 1952, he played for two weddings in the Cathedral and died in his car while driving back to his home in Sea Point. As the Precentor wrote in an obituary notice, "it seemed fitting that in the last hour of his life on earth he should have been at the organ in St. George's Cathedral, where for just over twenty-five years he had presided as Organist and Choirmaster."⁽ⁱ⁾

(i) Good Hope, Vol.II, No. 5, May 1952.

P A R T I I I

THE MUSIC IN ST. GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL

We have already seen (pages 47-55) that between the years 1834 and 1863 very little, if anything, of musical value was achieved at St. George's. The organists came and went with such regularity (the average length of service for an organist during these years was only $3\frac{1}{2}$ years) and had such difficulty in even establishing a choir that this is not at all surprising.

When we come to consider the music sung at St. George's Cathedral from 1863 to 1952, the picture is on the whole also a somewhat depressing one, especially during the first hundred years, and certainly up to the time that Alban Hamer became Organist. The blame, however, cannot be laid entirely at the door of those responsible for the choice and performance of music at the Cathedral. The music sung at St. George's always - and rather naturally - reflected the taste and vogue of the music sung in English Cathedrals, though usually a few years behind the times. Charles Neumann Thomas, Thomas Barrow-Dowling and Alban Hamer had

strong links and associations respectively with Chester Cathedral, Salisbury Cathedral and York Minster, and their own taste in Church music was entirely influenced by what they had heard and learnt before coming to South Africa, and during their occasional return visits. We must remember, too, that they lacked the two modern media of wireless and recordings which are, in many ways, responsible for improved taste and standards, notably in the field of Church Music. This, coupled with the fact that during the 118 years under consideration there were only three organists at St. George's who made a really worthwhile musical contribution, helps to explain why the type of music performed there tended to be more than conservative and unadventurous. It is not surprising that this should be the case if one considers that, for almost ninety years, the personal taste of only three men was to decide what music was sung and played at St. George's Cathedral.

However, to understand the situation fully it is necessary to look briefly at the condition of Church Music in England during the mid-nineteenth century. Since the time that Handel had dominated the musical scene there had been no English composers of outstanding genius. In fact the position

which Handel had held so firmly in England during the eighteenth century was soon to be taken by three other continental composers - Mendelssohn, followed to a lesser extent by Spohr and, later still, by Gounod. These three composers made a tremendous impact on musical England with the result that the national composers were completely overshadowed both by them and by their music. Indeed, so stunning was the blow that these three composers unwittingly dealt to English Church Music that it was not until the beginning of the next century that it began to show signs of a renaissance.

Mendelssohn's oratorio "Elijah" received its first performance in the Town Hall, Birmingham in 1846, under the composer's direction. Its impact on the critics and public was tremendous, and the enthusiastic press comments stand comparison with those received in our own time by Walton's "Belshazzar's Feast" and, more recently, Britten's "War Requiem". It is very significant to note that, referring to the first performance of "Elijah", The Times of August 25th 1846 said: "The last note of "Elijah" was drowned in a long continued unanimous volley of plaudits, vociferous and deafening. Never was there a more complete triumph - never a more thorough and speedy recognition of a great

work of art." The very fact that it was immediately placed next to Handel's "Messiah" in popularity is added testimony to the affection in which the work was held. Composers in England began soon to imitate the Mendelssohnian idiom, unfortunately absorbing the cloying sweetness of his most facile writing and reproducing the weakest features of his style, without the addition of any spark of originality. His influence was also widely felt in Cathedral Music lists, where many excerpts, solos and choruses, from the oratorios "Elijah", "St. Paul" and "Christus" found their way as anthems into the standard repertoire at Matins and Evensong.

Another famous visitor to England at that time was Spohr, whose luscious oratorios had already become fashionable. To quote Fellowes, he "was an older man, but late in life and at this same period he earned the admiration of the English people to an extent which was far out of proportion to his actual worth as a composer. Nevertheless his influence on Cathedral music was considerable. His harmonic idiom was seductive, and composers fell to the use of chromatic chords and modulations which induced effects of prettiness and sensuousness rather than beauty. Excerpts from 'The Last Judgement', for example,

loomed large in Cathedral lists throughout the rest of the century, and such trivialities as his 'As pants the Hart' were extremely popular."⁽ⁱ⁾

Next came Gounod, and with him the cloying sentimentalism which pervades both his own Church music and that of his lesser imitators. Whilst in London he paid many visits to the Church of All Saints, Margaret Street, famous for its music and ceremonial and, in admiration for the English Church Music tradition, he unfortunately produced a flow of undistinguished English anthems and services. His imitators only needed to be shown the way, and soon the many new publishing houses in London were producing at very reasonable prices a flood of ecclesiastical trivialities. Operatic, dramatic, full of charming melodies, rousing marches and thundering diminished sevenths, these products of the Victorian era marked the nadir of English Cathedral music from which C. Hubert H. Parry, Charles Villiers Stanford and Charles Wood eventually began to rescue it at the beginning of this century.

Perhaps the best way of clearly illustrating these depressing trends in English Cathedral music is to quote a music

(i) Fellowes: *ibid.* p.221

list from an unidentified English Cathedral, May 31 to June 6,
1896: (i)

	<u>Services</u>	<u>Anthems</u>
Trinity Sunday	M. Sullivan in D Kyrie: Sullivan in D Creed: Goss in D E. Stainer in B flat	Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts - Spohr I saw the Lord - Stainer
Monday	M. Tours in F E. Tours in F	Teach me thy way - W.H. Gladstone O come, let us worship - Mendelssohn
Tuesday (Men's voices in the morning)	M. Plainsong E. Russell in A	Let all creation - Mendelssohn Wherewithal shall a young man? - Elvey
Wednesday	M. Nares in F E. Nares in F	- On Thee each living soul - Haydn
Thursday	M. Barnby in E E. Barnby in E	See what love hath the Father - Mendelssohn Stand up and bless the Lord - Goss
Friday	M. Tallis (Dorian) E. Tallis (Dorian)	- Lighten our darkness - W.H. Gladstone
Saturday	M. Wesley in F (chant) E. Walmisley in D minor	O Father, blest - Barnby O how amiable - S.S. Wesley

(i) Fellowes: *ibid.* p.259

On reading through this list one can see only too clearly the picture of Victorian Church music at the end of the nineteenth century. Of the great names in English Church Music from the time of the Tudor composers and the Restoration, only the Tallis "Dorian" service is represented. The rest of the works that make up the list come largely from oratorios by Haydn, Spohr and Mendelssohn and, needless to say, works by contemporary composers such as Barnby, Goss, Stainer, Sullivan and Tours.

There were of course composers during the Victorian period whose anthems and services have stood the test of time and which remain in the English Cathedral repertoire to this day, alongside the music of the composers of Tudor times, the Restoration period and from the twentieth century. The two names which immediately spring to mind are Thomas Attwood Walmisley (1814-1856)⁽ⁱ⁾ whose setting of the Evening Canticles in D minor is one of the classics in the whole Cathedral tradition, and Samuel Sebastian Wesley - described by Fellowes as "one of the

(i) Walmisley was appointed Professor of Music at Cambridge at the amazingly youthful age of 22, and was an early champion of Bach as well as of the serious study of the history of music in the University.

conspicuous figures in English Cathedral Music of all periods ... the greatest English Church musician between Purcell and Stanford". (i) Wesley's characteristic idiom combines the clarity of the older English style (his organ accompaniments, for example, are written with great attention to detail and nearly always independent of the voice parts) with some of the chromaticisms so beloved of Spohr and his followers; but Wesley's own unerring taste and his passion for the music of Bach never allowed him to degenerate into the sentimental of "sugary".

From the list quoted above, it is evident that the work of these more inspired composers of the Victorian age found a place in the music lists of English Cathedrals, even though it appears to have been a far more limited place than that of the more popular and transitory work of the time. Unfortunately, however, this influence did not spread as far as Cape Town, and the music sung in St. George's Cathedral reflected to a very great extent the deplorable trend of taste which characterized English Church music of this era.

Unfortunately, there is no complete record in the Cathedral Archives of the music sung at the Sunday services, and it is only occasionally that the newspapers of the time printed details

(i) Fellowes: *ibid.* pp.203, 205.

of the Cathedral Music. However, from what information there is available, it is not difficult to piece together a picture which wholly fits in with the contemporary English Church music scene. Here are a few excerpts from the music lists of June and July 1885, which clearly illustrate the type of music sung in the Cathedral at that time:

June 7, 1885:

Matins:	Service:	Tours in F
	Introit:	Psalm V - L. Colborne
Evensong:	Service:	Tours in F
	Anthem:	In humble faith - G.M. Garrett

July 12, 1885:

Matins:	Service:	Garrett in D
	Anthem:	Blessed are they - Tours
Evensong:	Service:	Calkin in B flat
	Anthem:	Send out thy light - Gounod

July 26, 1885:

Matins:	Service:	Stainer in E flat
	Anthem:	Source of all light - Hauptmann
Evensong:	Service:	Lloyd in E flat
	Anthem:	Wherewithal shall a young man Elvey

It is also interesting to note that, on Christmas Day, 1886, the choice of music for the Choral Communion Service was Gounod's "Messe Solennelle".

It is not without interest to note that in these Cape Town Cathedral lists, taken quite at random from those available, several items from the English Cathedral list (on page 103) quoted by Fellowes are to be found, presumably particular favourites at that time (viz. Tours in F, and the Elvey anthem).

As a further illustration of the type of music sung and played at St. George's, here is a programme given by Charles Neumann Thomas and the Cathedral Choir at a recital on May 26, 1885:

- | | | |
|-----|---|--------------------------|
| 1. | Introduction and allegro, in the ancient style | F.E. Bach ⁽ⁱ⁾ |
| 2. | Andante from 10th Trio | Reissigen |
| 3. | Offertoire in G | E.M. Lott |
| 4. | La Dove | Mozart |
| 5. | Sacred Song: "There is a Green Hill" ...
(Mr. T.W. Allen) | Gounod |
| 6. | Air de Louis Treize | Ghys |
| 7. | Fantasia in C minor and G major ... | Tietz |
| 8. | Duet and Chorus from Der Lobgesang ...
(The Cathedral Choir) | Mendelssohn |
| 9. | Andante | Dr. Spark |
| 10. | Romance | Gounod |
| 11. | Kyrie Eleison from First Mass ... | Haydn |

(i) Presumably a misprint for Francis Edward Bache (1833-1858), born in Birmingham, a fine pianist and prolific composer, a pupil of Sterndale Bennett and of several great continental teachers.

As we have seen on page 61, oratorios and cantatas were performed from time to time in the Cathedral under the direction of Charles Neumann Thomas - not during services, but as weekday "sacred concerts" so beloved of Victorian and Edwardian audiences. Unfortunately here, too, the music performed consisted largely of the less worthwhile effusions of contemporary composers: Spohr's "Calvary", "Last Judgement" and "Babylon"; Gaul's "Holy City"; Stainer's "Crucifixion", "Mary Magdalene", and "The Daughter of Jairus"; Sterndale Bennett's "The Woman of Samaria".

It may be of interest to quote a few excerpts from the report of a performance of Spohr's "Calvary" which was given in the Cathedral on August 17, 1886, for it gives some insight into the standards of the day. Especially interesting is the reference to an accompaniment of piano and organ and the interpolation of Handel's Hallelujah Chorus at the end:

"The long anticipated performance of the oratorio 'Calvary' took place last evening in St. George's Cathedral, which, in spite of the wet weather, was filled by a large congregation. The chorus, consisting of members of the Cathedral Choir and ladies and gentlemen who kindly volunteered their services, numbered about 70 voices. Mr. Neumann Thomas occupied his usual seat at the organ, and

Miss Stevenson played the pianoforte, the addition of which would have been more effective had it been in better tune with the former instrument ... It is not our intention to give a lengthy and detailed criticism of the performance of the work, inasmuch as we do not think it comes within the scope of the critic to animadvert upon a performance of this kind given in a place of worship, on behalf of a work of charity, by amateurs ... We may say then that the oratorio was on the whole admirably given, the choruses being sung with remarkable steadiness, and, considering the chromatic character of many of them, with commendable correctness of intonation ... To our mind there were two mistakes ... one was the interpolation of a hymn between the two parts of the oratorio for the purpose of the offertory, and the other was the addition of the 'Hallelujah Chorus' from the 'Messiah' at the conclusion." (i)

It was on Thursday 22nd December 1887 that an important musical event took place in St. George's Cathedral - a performance of the Christmas part of Handel's "Messiah" by the Cathedral Choir, assisted by the Choral Society and other friends (90 singers). Although only twenty-one sections of the work were performed (accompanied by Neumann Thomas at the organ), it was quite a substantial portion of the oratorio and the first time that such a considerable excerpt of "Messiah" had been sung in St. George's. Although the press comments were, as usual, eulogistic to say the least, one finds a few critical comments which are perhaps the key to a true assessment of the standard

(i) Cape Times: August 18, 1886

of the performance:

"The chorus, 'And the glory of the Lord' was somewhat drowned by the organ, ascribable, perhaps, to nervousness on the part of the performers." (i)

"The choruses were once or twice deficient in attack, but the leads were well taken, except in 'For unto us'." (ii)

There was another especially noteworthy occasion in St. George's Cathedral on November 4, 1887. This was the Diocesan Choir Festival in which 261 singers from the combined choirs of the Cathedral, Claremont, Rondebosch, Woodstock, St. John's, Cape Town, St. Mark's, Cape Town, Salt River, Simonstown Stellenbosch, Zonnebloem, Durbanville and Kalk Bay took part. As the Cape Argus of November 5, 1887 wrote:

"The immense body of singers with the swelling notes of the organ produced a grand effect, and the sight when the surpliced choristers had taken their places, occupying the whole of the space in front of the altar, the ordinary choir seats besides a number of additional benches, and a large portion of the middle aisle of the Church, was very impressive." (iii)

Although the music was, as one would have expected, by composers such as Garrett, Barnby, Dykes, with the inevitable excerpts from Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise", the importance and

- (i) Cape Times: December 23, 1887
- (ii) Cape Argus: December 23, 1887
- (iii) Cape Argus: November 5, 1887

effect of such an event should not be underrated. It was probably one of the rare occasions on which many of the lesser choirs could sing such comparatively elaborate music under favourable circumstances (that is, in a large church with more experienced singers, under a trained musician), and the fact that the choirs were obviously prepared to come from distances as far afield as Simonstown, Durbanville and Stellenbosch in 1887 shows how much these occasions were appreciated by the choir members.

In many ways Thomas Barrow-Dowling, during his tenure of office, continued the traditions established by his predecessor at St. George's Cathedral. Educated in the musical atmosphere of the provincial English Cathedral of Salisbury in the 1870's, it was inevitable that his taste should have been considerably influenced by the type of Church music he had sung and heard during his early and impressionable years.

During his time at St. George's Cathedral the Sunday repertoire consisted almost exclusively of the music of contemporary Victorian composers. One cannot help observing that, even though most of this music has failed to stand the test of time, yet at least in its day it was given the benefit of actual performance. Only through its own inherent deficiencies did it fail to measure up to the standards of later generations, and so fall out of the repertoire. How much of the music sung in Cathedrals and Churches today is as representative of contemporary trends as was that sung a hundred years ago? The answer is obvious; and of course this is almost entirely on account of the excessive musical and technical demands often made by present-day composers on performers and listeners alike. Most Church or even Cathedral Choirs would not relish the task of tackling a piece of twelve-tone choral music. Nor, one fears, would the average congregation prefer such a piece to any Victorian anthem one would care to name! But this is another problem, outside the scope of this present chapter.

On studying the available music lists of Barrow-Dowling one fails to find any representative pieces of fine Tudor or Restoration music; but when we remember that at this period

Church Music in England was at its lowest ebb, it is not surprising that Barrow-Dowling's service lists should have reflected this unfortunate state of affairs. Here are five of his music lists, taken from December 1891 and May 1909 (the earlier years of his term of office at St. George's) and October 1925, the year before he died:

December 25, 1891:

Choral Eucharist:	Introit:	Benedictus - Gounod
	Service:	Stainer in A

May 2, 1909:

Choral Eucharist:	Introit:	Christ is not entered into the holy places - Eaton Fanning
	Service:	Stainer in A dne D
Evensong:	Service:	Mann in A flat
	Anthem:	Lord, Thou art God alone - Mendelssohn (St. Paul)

May 9, 1909:

Matins: Service: Gadsby in C
Anthem: He is risen
- Gadsby

Evensong: Service: Gadsby in C
Anthem: The Lord is my
strength
- Goss

May 16, 1909:

Matins: Service: Calkin in B flat
Anthem: Sweet is thy mercy,
Lord
- Barnby

Evensong: Service: Calkin in B flat
Anthem: The Earth is the Lord's
- Frimmell

October 25, 1925:

Matins: Service: Stainer in B flat and D
Anthem: Thou wilt keep him
- Wesley

Evensong: Service: Luard Selby in F
Anthem: How lovely are thy
dwellings fair
- Spohr

It is perhaps sufficient comment on the obvious lack of development in musical taste and progress simply to state that when Dr. Barrow-Dowling was directing these performances of Stainer and Spohr at the end of his career in 1925, Charles Villiers Stanford had already been dead for a year, Vaughan Williams was 53, Holst 51, Herbert Howells 33, William Walton 23, and Benjamin Britten a boy of 12!

When we come to consider the organ music performed at recitals and services during the Victorian and Edwardian period, we must remember that it was the age of the organ transcription. It was more fashionable to play transcriptions rather than original organ music. Much of the orchestral repertoire was arranged for the organ by such great Victorian organists as W.T. Best, of Liverpool (1826-1897), and played at recitals. Once again it must be remembered that this fulfilled a definite need in the musical life of the time. Without radio and records, and without the large number of resident orchestras we have today, much of the great orchestral

repertoire would have gone unheard by the average music lover, had it not been for such organ transcriptions. So it is not surprising that Barrow-Dowling's choice of organ music should reflect this current vogue. In one recital programme, for example, we find included such works as Gounod's "Marche Militaire"; the Rachmaninov Prelude in C sharp minor, and a Tone Poem entitled "Ranz des Vaches" by Oliver King!

Although we find the inevitable performances of Gaul's "Holy City" in July 1890 and Spohr's "Calvary" in 1891, nevertheless Barrow-Dowling was not without the spirit of a musical pioneer. Perhaps one of the most amazing achievements of his whole career in Cape Town was a performance of the major part of Bach's "St. Matthew Passion" in St. George's Cathedral on March 20, 1894 - the first in Cape Town, and possibly the first in the whole of the African Continent. When one considers the type of religious music commonly performed at the time, it is quite remarkable that the greatest of all sacred compositions should have been performed in Cape Town at that time by a musician so deeply steeped in the atmosphere of Victorian Church music. This was indeed a landmark in all the musical history

of Cape Town. But here, of course Barrow-Dowling had before him the precedent set by Mendelssohn in 1829, when he gave his memorable performance of the "St. Matthew Passion" in Berlin. When one remembers how Mendelssohn took countless liberties with Bach's music (such as cutting all the sections not directly relating to the Passion and "filling out" the instrumentation), one cannot help wondering what liberties Barrow-Dowling took on this occasion! Nevertheless, whatever the liberties taken or the standard of performance attained, it was no mean achievement to have performed 47 of the 78 sections in those early days in Cape Town. The local newspapers were suitably impressed:

"The originators of last night's performance are to be congratulated on their valour in attacking so very arduous a work. In the alto solos Mrs. Griffith Vincent displayed a thoughtful and intelligent study of the music, her best effort being perhaps the beautiful aria, 'Grief for sin', in which the lovely sequential passages were brought out with telling effect. Mrs. Edward Mills, who took the soprano parts, was at her best in the aria 'Although mine eyes with tears o'erflow', the solo being materially assisted by a fine accompaniment on the swell reeds. In the chorale 'O Lord, thy love unbounded' the Choir rose to the occasion, and

they also gave an expressive rendering of the chorale 'O Father, let Thy will be done', a superb piece of writing in a minor key, at the close of which the tierce de Picardie, for which in this, as in his other works, Bach's predilection is manifest, is brought out with the happiest results ... The organ accompaniment was played by Mr. Dowling. In his accompaniment to the chorales and some of the solos, the organist displayed both taste and skill, but the accompaniment was occasionally too prominent. There was a large attendance, the majority of the congregation being ladies." (i)

With this first performance of the "St. Matthew Passion" in Cape Town, Barrow-Dowling established a tradition of an annual Passiontide performance which was maintained by his successor, Alban Hamer, right to the very eve of his death in 1952.

Alban Hamer was the inheritor of a Victorian tradition, both from his boyhood days in England and also at St. George's Cathedral when he took over from Thomas Barrow-Dowling in 1926. In many ways his musical taste, and certainly his few compositions, reflect this. As we have seen,

(i) Cape Argus: 21 March, 1894

however, at an early age he fortunately came under the influence of Sir Edward Bairstow, the Organist of York Minster. Some of Bairstow's compositions, particularly his unaccompanied motets, reveal a mysticism that has far more in common with, for example, some of Parry's "Songs of Farewell" than with any of the rather sickly "piety" of the typical Victorian style, and it was natural that the young Alban Hamer should have been influenced by this.

His formative years, however, were during the great period of musical renaissance in England at the beginning of this century. Both Parry and Stanford were prime movers in this rebirth of English music, and through their influence on their many pupils - notably Vaughan Williams and Herbert Howells - they began the awakening of a new freshness and vitality in English Church Music. One only has to think of the distinguished British composers of this century who have taken Church Music seriously - Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Herbert Howells, William Harris, Edmund Rubbra, William Walton, Michael Tippett and Benjamin Britten - to see how lasting their influence has been.

The service lists of St. George's Cathedral in Hamer's time show an awareness of this renaissance of English Church Music, and services and anthems by Parry and Stanford now begin to make their appearance:

December 9, 1928:

Matins:	Service:	Alcock in B flat
	Anthem:	Sleepers, wake - Mendelssohn
Evensong:	Service:	Walmisley in D minor
	Anthem:	The sorrows of death - Mendelssohn

January 1, 1937:

Matins:	Service:	Noble in B minor
	Anthem:	Teach me, O Lord - Attwood
Evensong:	Service:	Smart in F
	Anthem:	O gladsome light - Sullivan

January 31, 1937:

Matins:	Service:	Stanford in A
	Anthem:	Teach us, O Lord - Healey
Evensong:	Service:	Stanford in A
	Anthem:	Hail, gladdening light - Martin

July 7, 1937:

Choral Eucharist:	Service:	Harwood in A flat
Evensong:	Service:	Huntley in E flat
	Anthem:	O how glorious - Harwood

June 3, 1951:

Choral Eucharist:	Service:	Kitson in E flat
Evensong:	Service:	John Ireland in F
	Anthem:	Judge Eternal - Stanley Marchant

June 10, 1951:

Matins:	Service:	Lloyd in E flat
	Anthem:	Lord, for thy tender mercies' sake - Farrant
Evensong:	Service:	Walmisley in D minor
	Anthem:	Evening Hymn - Balfour Gardiner

A careful study of these and other lists which appear between 1926 and 1952 show that Alban Hamer's musical horizons remained fixed during this time. Despite his occasional holiday visits to England when he must have had the opportunity of meeting fellow church musicians - notably his good friend Sir Ernest Bullock (born 1890), a fellow pupil under Bairstow at Leeds and York, and Organist of Westminster Abbey from 1928-1941 - and of hearing contemporary trends, his taste remained almost stubbornly rooted in the past. We look in vain, for instance, for music by composers such as Vaughan Williams, Holst and - most important - Herbert Howells (born 1892), who was perhaps the greatest single influence on English Church Music during the years when Hamer was Organist of St. George's Cathedral.

Apart from the service music, Hamer carried on the tradition established by his predecessor of performing the Bach "St. Matthew Passion" at Passiontide each year. In addition to this he also regularly performed Brahms' "Requiem" at All Souls' tide. By today's standards these performances would probably have been considered inadequate in many ways:

for example, large portions were omitted, the entire orchestral accompaniment was played on the organ (except in the contralto aria, "Have mercy, Lord, on me", where Mr. Ellie Marx, leader of the Cape Town Municipal Orchestra, would play the violin obbligato); solos were sung by members of the Choir, and there was no conductor. At some early performances the Evangelist's part was even read by one of the clergy, there being presumably no adequate tenor soloist available. Nevertheless, in a time when recordings and radio were not the important media and influence that they are today, these regular efforts no doubt filled a definite need in the cultural life of Cape Town - as witness the enthusiastic press reports:

"Bach's St. Matthew Passion, which was sung by the Cathedral Choir, conducted by Mr. Alban Hamer, last night, is a work presenting enormous difficulties to the smaller bodies; and it says a great deal for Mr. Hamer's hard work that he should have given us such a consistently satisfactory performance ...

" ... The choruses were sung smoothly, easily and reverently, with a just balance of restraint and emphasis; and the soloists were all singers whose experience of devotional music enabled them to create a consistent and satisfying interpretation ...

" ... Mr. Alban Hamer did all he could to help his singers from the organ, and gave a very good account of the 'orchestral score'." (i)

(i) Cape Times (undated - from cuttings in the Cathedral Muniments Room, recognizable by the print. Date before 1937, the year in which Hamer received his Lambeth Doctorate.)

We have already seen (page 90) that Hilary Chadwick-Healey⁽ⁱ⁾ was greatly impressed with the music he heard in Cape Town. After this visit he wrote:

"It was my privilege to take part in this Choir's performance of Bach's St. Matthew Passion, and the renderings of the solo parts by the boys were the loveliest I have ever listened to. The men's parts also deserve commendation and the general vocal tone sounded very good. It struck me that here were singers who were musicians as well, and this was particularly noticeable in the Passion Music. The result of such a combination of qualities was the production of an excellent choral ensemble, a result brought about also by devoted attendance at choir practices and Sunday services." (ii)

On reading this and the many other eulogistic comments about the organists, the music and the choir at St. George's Cathedral which appear in print over the years, one cannot help wondering exactly what were the standards by which these were judged. Certainly over the past decades criticism of art has become more and more an art in itself. Today we live in an age when musical criticism is a specialized branch of the musical profession, and, ideally, the highest standards are applied when any performance is judged by a critic. Many of the comments

(i) A Vice-President of the Royal School of Church Music.

(ii) Article signed HPCH: "Affiliated Choirs: No. 11, St. George's Cathedral, Cape Town"; pp.73-74, English Church Music, Vol. III, No. 3, July 1933.

which appeared in the local press in connexion with the music at St. George's Cathedral seem to be more in the nature of appreciations or reports rather than musical critiques.

Perhaps, too, some of the undoubtedly exaggerated tributes from visitors at the time may well be the result of a certain relaxation of their critical faculties. Having been confined for several weeks to a small and probably uncomfortable steamship, passengers with any musical interest must have been so relieved to find any music at all in the principal Anglican Church of the "Colony" that they would consider as excellent anything that was merely competent. It must also be remembered that, to the newly-arrived visitor attending St. George's Cathedral for the first time, the appearance of a surpliced choir, complete with choirboys in Eton collars, would provide the final authentic touch and link with "home".

In this present self-satisfied age, however, it is all too easy to dismiss as merely mediocre the earnest endeavours of three worthy musical pioneers at Cape Town Cathedral. On paper, and out of context, the musical achievements of Charles Neumann Thomas, Thomas Barrow-Dowling and Alban Hamer may seem scant or

even negligible; but the esteem in which they were held during their own time, and the traditions they fostered and maintained according to the standards and taste of their day, are important in the cultural history of Cape Town. Without them, and their efforts, the musical history and development of the Mother City would indeed have been the poorer.

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