French Organ Music

Past and Present

By

Harvey Grace

New York: The H. W. Gray Co.
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Reprinted from the
New Music Review

PREFACE

Voici un ouvrage d'histoire musicale qui arrive à son heure.

Bien avant la guerre de 1914, les Allemands avaient déjà établi des anthologies de l'art musical, confisquant à leur profit tout progrès et tout effort méritoire,et oubliant systématiquement que nombre de musiciens d'autres nationalités avaient fortement contribué à ces progrès et pris part à ces efforts.

Pendant ce temps-là nos musicographes français, négligeant les vies d'ensemble se bornaient, la plupart du temps, à publier quelque étude de détail sur la vie où l'œuvre d'un compositeur.

Pour l'orgue, notamment, les Allemands, ayant eu l'heureuse chance de voir naitre parmi eux un génie admirable et universel: J. S. Bach, en profitaient pour accabler de leur mépris le reste du monde, et publiaient à grands frais, en les présentant comme d'incontestables chefs-d'œuvre, les productions de musiciens tout à fait médiocres qui auraient dû rester à jamais dans l'oubli ou leur siècle même les avait laissées. Pendant ce temps-là, nous autres Français, nous soupçonnions à peine, par les publications de Guilmant fort peu répandues lesérieux et important travil fourni par nos vieux organistes, antérieurs même à Bach, et nous n'avions pas l'idée qu'il existât chez nous une sorte de corps de doctrine inauguré par ces anciens et se répercutant de siècle en siècle jusqu'à nos auteurs les plus modernes.

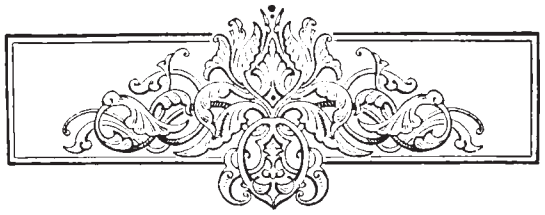
Et il a fallu que ce fut un musicien *anglais*, épris de beauté, qui vint combler cette lacune et nous offrir, en un ouvrage fort bien conçu et minutieusement étudié une histoire complète de notre école française d'orgue.

Je n'hésite pas à recommander à tous ceux qui aiment l'instrument qu'un poète a dénommé "*la grande voix de l'Eglise*" la captivante étude de Mr. Harvey Grace sur la "Musique d'orgue française, passée et présente" parce qu'elle est bien écrite, bien composée, et qu'avec des renseignements complets sur notre école d'orgue, on y trouve (chose rare en ce temps où les musicographes s'acharnent généralement à de sèches nomenclatures) des appréciations sur les œuvres et les styles fort judicieusement motivées, et aussi l'amour et l'enthousiasme pour l'Art qui devraient être les qualités primordiales de tout artiste digne de ce nom.

Cet amour et cet enthousiasme furent bien les qualités caractéristiques de mon vénéré maître César Franck.

Le livre de Mr. Harvey Grace me devient donc doublement cher, et par la matière artistique qu'il contient et par sa pieuse dédicace à la mémoire du musicien de génie qui fut un des grands maîtres de l'orgue en même temps qu'un incomparable improvisateur, et le fondateur véritable de toute notre école française de symphonie.

VINCENT D'INDY,
directeur de la "Schola Cantorum,"
October, 1919. Paris.



CHAPTER I

I

THAT a good deal of old German organ music is fairly familiar today, whereas the early French writers for the instrument are hardly known, even by name, is due to the fact that most of the German pioneers had some connection with the Bach tribe. They taught, or were taught by, or influenced a Bach, or married a daughter of the house. A glance through the mighty volumes of Spitta, nominally a Life of Bach, shows them to be rather a history of early German music, with the accent on John Sebastian. For example, how many of us would know anything about old Reinken, had not Bach tramped his way to Hamburg on at least two occasions in order to hear the veteran play? Buxtehude, Pachelbel, Bohm, and others are fairly well known to us, but had they not been forerunners of Bach, their names, as well as their works, would have been forgotten. As a result of this connection a proportion of their music has been published in convenient form,[1] and their

[1] See especially two volumes published by Peters: *Alte Meister* and *Choralvorspiele alter Meister.*

modest niche in the temple of fame assured.

The old French organ composers have been lost sight of for various reasons. Not only had they no musical sun from whose rays they could borrow some gleams, but their association with the organ is frequently overshadowed by their excellences in other departments of the art. Take, for example, the Couperins, who may be called the Bachs of France, ten of them, including Marie Antoinette, daughter of François I., having acted as organists. This François left a collection of organ pieces, and no doubt other members of the family composed for their instrument. But owing to the great fame of François II. (called "Le Grand") both as composer for, and performer on, the harpsichord, the name to modern ears has no connection with the organ. Three other excellent old French organ composers—Metru, Roberday, and Gigault—are known, if at all, chiefly by reason of their having taught Lully. We may feel surprised at the great opera composer being the pupil of three organists, but the fact is explained by their excellence as general practitioners. By no means wedded to their church, they wrote alternative versions of most of their organ music for string and wind instruments, and, in the case of Gigault at least, taught dancing.[1] The organ music of these old composers is known to very few, not having had the advantage of publication in handy form. The

[1] Romain Rolland, *Musicians of Yesterday*. Art. "Lully."

monumental edition of Guilmant and Pirro[1] is more suitable for the library than the organ loft, its very completeness being a drawback for practical purposes. Inevitably the interest of much of the music is purely antiquarian. A judicious selection of the more attractive pieces, adapted to English organs, would, I am sure, be successful in drawing attention to a field containing much that is delightful.

II

The first French organ music published, so far as we have record, was a set of five volumes of pieces based on plain-song tones, secular songs, and dances, "le tous" (says the title) "mys en tablature des orgues, espinettes, et manichordions, et telz sainables instrumentz." The work was printed at Paris in 1530 by Pierre Attaingnant. An extract quoted by Ritter,[2] consists merely of the plain-song tone usually associated with *Te Deum laudamus*, with three counterpoints added, one of which is generally indulging in a trite flourish.

We find but few traces of this rudimentary style in the works of the first French organ composer of note, and one of the greatest of the pre-Bach era—JEAN TITELOUZE. Born in 1563—one hundred and twenty-two years before Bach—Titelouze was organist at the church of St. John, Rouen, from 1585 till

[1] *Archives de Maîtres de l'Orgue*, Guilmant and Pirro (Schott). I am indebted to this fine collection for most of the information in this chapter.

[2] *Zur Geschichte des Orgelspiels.* (1884), Vol. I.

1588, when he was appointed, after competition, to the Cathedral of that city. In 1610 he was made Canon. He died in 1633, leaving two collections of organ pieces, one set founded on the tones for *Magnificat*, and the other on some plain-song hymn melodies.

The title-page of the former may be quoted:

LE
MAGNIFICAT,
OV
CANTIQVE DE LA VIERGE
povr tovcher svr l'orgve,
svivant les hvit tons
de l'Eglise
par
I. TITELOVZE,
Chanoine, & Organiste de l'Eglise de Roüen

À PARIS.

Par PIERRE BALLARD, Imprimeur de la Musique du Roy, demeurant Rue S. Iean de Beauuais, à l'enseigne du mont Parnasse.

1626

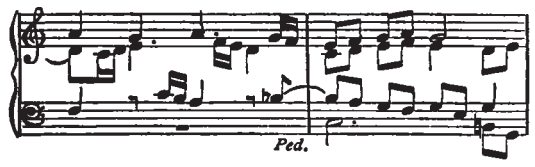
Auec Priuilège du Roy

Judging from the eight poetical tributes which follow the Preface, Titelouze was held in high repute. The second, signed "G. Habert," concludes with lines which may be freely translated: "In your music we have a

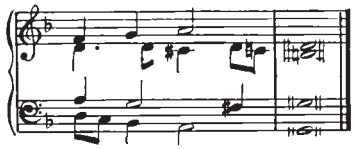
foretaste of the joys reserved for us in Heaven"; while "I. Villeneuve" points out in ten neat lines that, while Arion, Amphion, and Orpheus charmed by their strains the rocks, the seas, and the fish, Titelouze charmed mankind,—a comparison made by other poets, though the severe style of the priest-organist makes the analogy somewhat far-fetched.

An austere gravity is the prime characteristic of Titelouze's music. Guilmant considers his style to resemble that of Froberger (born fifty years later than the Frenchman) but Titelouze strikes me as being altogether more vigorous, besides which the flavor of his work is more markedly modal, owing to his music being based almost entirely on plain-song themes.

In spite of the limitations imposed by the modal themes he chose for treatment, Titelouze was considerably ahead of his time in several respects. He introduces diatonic discords with excellent effect, and his use of the dominant seventh frequently makes his music sound as if it belonged to a later generation. Note, for example, the bold entry of the bass in this extract from a piece on "Urbs Beata":

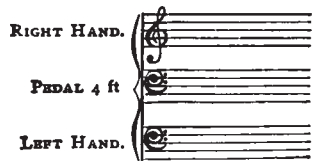


Here, from one of the *Magnificat* interludes, is a very early use of a supertonic seventh:



He is singularly modern, too, in his ability to keep his music going a long while without the irritating halts and full closes so common with old composers. The texture of his work is far more homogeneous than that of some later writers. If he is engaged on a scheme in minims and crochets, we do not find him suddenly giving us a couple of bars of semibreves, followed by a meaningless semiquaver scale passage, as do some composers of a century later. Although his polyphony in the slower movements is inevitably somewhat vocal in style, he shows elsewhere an exceptionally good grasp of the instrumental idiom.

Like some of his successors, he seems to have employed 8 ft. and 4 ft. pedal stops for the delivery of a *canto fermo* in the tenor, though he does not lay the music out, as did Raison and Gigault later, with this three-



stave arrangement, which most of us find awkward to-day, but which is quite logical in cases where the left hand plays the real bass.

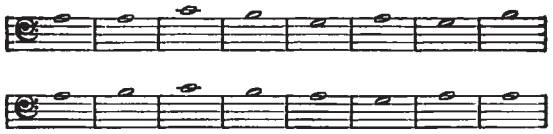
Organists who play Dubois' "March of the Magi" may be disposed to regard the high note kept down throughout by a weight or wedge as a piece of modern trickery. It is, however, probably as old as Titelouze, for an "Amen," a piece of fifty-five bars' length, has an E sustained in the treble throughout, while three parts below are employed in imitative work. A note at the beginning (apparently by Guilmant) explains that the E should be kept down "par un petit poids placé sur la touche." If the piece is played on the manuals only, as it was evidently intended to be, this is the only way in which it could be done. We shall see later that other devices such as quick changes of manual, echo effects, and "thumbing" were used in France in the early days of organ playing.

III

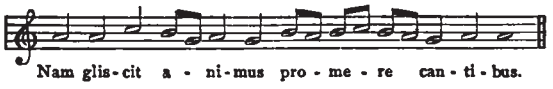
Excellent as is Titelouze's work on the whole, it leaves one with the impression that he would have done even better had he not been fettered by his *canto fermo*. A comparison of early French and German organ music gives convincing proof that Schweitzer is right in his contention that the choral is much more satisfactory than plain song as a basis for composition.[1] Only the

[1] J. S. Bach, *Le Musicien-Poète*, chap. v.

simplest—that is, the syllabic,—hymn melodies as a rule lend themselves easily to treatment, and the vague tonality is often a difficulty in fugal working. The rhythmical obstacle is the greater of the two, and composers have generally got over it either by regularizing the rhythm, or by making all the notes of the theme of equal value, after the manner of a *canto fermo* in strict counterpoint. The early French composers usually adopted the latter plan, sometimes with disastrous effects. Here, for example, is what poor Titelouze has for a bass, as a result of this treatment:

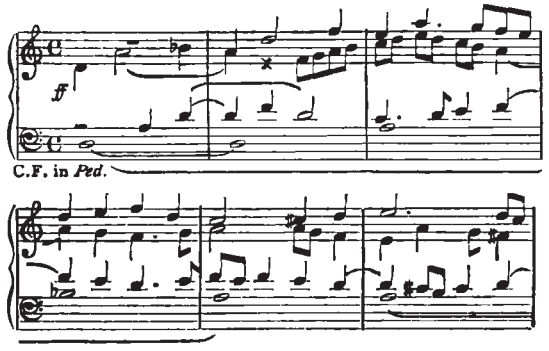


This is the melody of the third line of the hymn "Sanctorum Meritis." What would an examinee say if such a C. F. were handed him for treatment? As a melody, sung freely and fairly quickly,



it has some point: as a bass of semibreves it is a tedious string of notes giving little opportunity for an interesting superstructure. Titelouze shows an amount of resource surprising at such an early date, but he generally writes much better music when he puts the plain song in the tenor, and so is free to choose

his bass. A comparison of the first and third *versets* (as these pieces are called) on "Urbs Beata" shows an astonishing difference in artistic result. The first, with the theme in the bass, is good only in parts,—that is, when the bass allows it to be,—while the third, which treats line after line fugally, is an admirable piece of organ music, well worthy of being heard to-day. (Apropos of this method, it should be pointed out that what is known as the Pachelbel style of choral prelude[1] is clearly foreshadowed in several pieces by Titelouze.) His fugal writing, though necessarily consisting mostly of mere exposition is so good that one wishes he had lived in a time when that form was fully established. He frequently shows himself able to write excellent *stretti*. Note, as an example, the opening bars of the first verse of "Sanctorum Meritis":



[1] In which each line of the tune enters after it has been treated fugally, generally in diminution.

This shows also the vigor of his style, and its suitability for the instrument: a good deal of later French organ work suggests the harpsichord rather than the organ.

IV

Altogether, this old priest-organist is a worthy of whom more should be heard. I know of no organ music of the period so good as his. Sweelinck is perhaps his most serious rival, but even the Fleming's best work, such as the "Fantasia Cromatica," is rambling and lacking in sustained power beside that of Titelouze. It is worth noting, too, that the French composer has but few moments of the vague tonality induced by conflict between the modes and the major and minor scales. Here and there we find him wavering, and feel that an accidental would be a relief to the modern ear, but such moments are far more frequent in writers of a generation later, perhaps because they had a less firm grasp of the modal system. Nor does he so often halt between major and minor as do Raison, d'Anglebert, and other later writers. As an example of this uncertain touch, a fugue subject of d'Anglebert may be quoted.

The harmonic vagueness that arises in the course of its treatment may be imagined. But d'Anglebert evidently liked it, for he wrote

a set of five fugues thereon, changing its form with each, after the Frescobaldi manner, but carefully retaining the juxtaposition of B flat and natural. Of such crudities, as I have said, Titelouze is singularly free, and a close examination of the five volumes devoted to him in the Guilmant–Pirro "Archives" leaves me convinced that much of his music, with its serious, aloof spirit, well-knit polyphony, and strong harmonic basis deserves the attention of organists to-day.

Before we pass on to other composers, it might be well to give some idea of the organ of the period. Here is the specification drawn up by Titelouze in 1632 for St. Godard:

GREAT: 48 notes, C to C. (I translate the terms into their equivalents of to-day).

Open Diapason	16 feet	Mixture 4 ranks
Bourdon	8 "	Cymbale 3 ranks
Principal	4 "	Cornet 5 ranks
Doublette	2 "	(from the middle of the keyboard to the top)
Flute	4 "	Trumpet 8 feet
Piccolo	2 "	Clarion 4 feet
Sifflet	1 foot	Régale for *voix humaine*
Quint fl. (Nazard)	3 feet	
Little Quint	1½ "	Tremulant, Rossignol, and Tambour

CHOIR	48 notes
Open Diapason	8 feet
Principal	4 "
Doublette	2 "
Mixture	3 ranks
Cymbale	2 "
Quint Flute	3 feet
Cromhorne	8 "
Pedal	28 notes C to F
Bourdon	8 feet
Flute	4 "
Trumpet	8 "
Couplers to choir and great.	

The Cymbale was a high mixture, the Régale a beating reed to serve as *voix humaine*, the Tambour probably a single drum note (a few 18th century English organs had 2 drum notes), the Rossignol an imitation of the nightingale (an organ erected in 1750 at Weingarten had nightingale, cuckoo, and thunder stops!), and the Cromhorne a very popular solo stop of the period called in Germany Krummhorn, *i. e.*, "Crooked Horn."[1]

The name has long been corrupted to "Cremona."

[1] An interesting derivation is given by Mr. Wallace Goodrich in "The Organ in France,"—*Fr.* cor, horn; and morne, somber or melancholy.

CHAPTER II

I

AFTER Titelouze, we meet with no French organ composer of note for nearly a century. We then (1660) find FRANCIS ROBERDAY issuing a volume of fugues. Of the life of Roberday little seems to be known beyond the fact that he was the son of a goldsmith, and that in 1663 he became one of the *valets de chambre* to Maria-Thérèse.

Although we know so little of Roberday as to be ignorant even of the dates of his birth and death, his preface to the "Fugues and Caprices" sheds a little light on his tastes and views. His pronouncement on liberty *versus* academic rules is such sound common sense that it is worth repeating:

"There will be found in this work a few places where the composition may seem rather daring to those who rely upon the old rules, and think they should always be observed. But it should be remembered that music was made to please the ear, and so if I allow that a composer should never step outside the

canons of his art, it should be agreed also that music which is pleasing to the ear is within the rules of music. It is the ear that we must consult." Playing through his fugues we can easily imagine that some of the passages that sound so fresh and interesting to-day must have been regarded as licenses in 1660.

Roberday's little collection is a kind of tribute to his musical idols. He says in his "Avertissement":

"As it would not be right to obtain credit for the work of others, I must tell you that this book contains three pieces not of my composition: one is by the illustrious Frescobaldi, another by Monsieur Ebner, and the third by Monsieur Froberger."

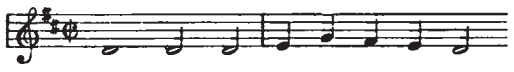
He then goes on to explain that his own fugues are written on subjects presented to him by de la Barre, Couperin, Cambert, d'Anglebert, Froberger, Bertalli, and Cavalli. The last-named, organist at St. Mark's, Venice, "was on a visit to France," says Roberday, "when my book was being printed, so I asked him to give me a subject, in order that my volume might be honored by his name."

As Roberday does not indicate which are his fugues and which are not, musicians were for a long time divided on the matter. It is difficult to understand how they could fail to detect the three borrowed works. The volume contains twelve fugues: all the first nine consist of two or more separate movements,

and six of the last of these movements are entitled "Caprice sur le mesme sujet." With the tenth we have a fugue almost three times the length of any of its predecessors, with no detached second movement, but merely a change from $\frac{4}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{2}$ time, and a brief treatment of a modification of the subject. Both form and style clearly show the hand of Frescobaldi, as clearly as Roberday's own fugues show the influence of the "illustrious" Italian. The eleventh and twelfth fugues are evidently by Ebner and Froberger respectively. Not only are the composers mentioned in this order in Roberday's preface, but the subject and treatment of No. 12 point to Froberger.[1]

Evidently the placing of the three "out-

[1] The subject is

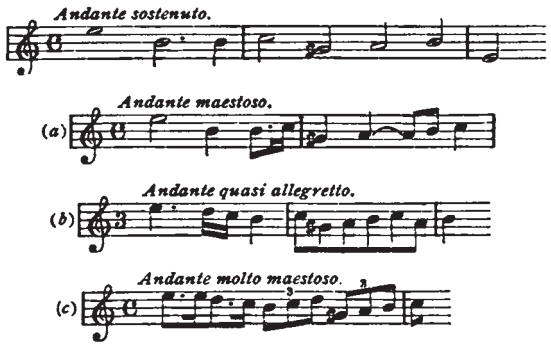


a useful theme that has done duty many a time and oft. It appears in a canzona by Gabrieli (1596), in a fugue by Mortaro (1609), and in works by Frescobaldi, Froberger (who put it into the Phrygian mode:

and wrote a charming little organ fugue on it), Kerl (whose treatment of it served Handel for the chorus "Egypt was glad when they departed" in "Israel"), J. K. Fischer, and—it is hardly necessary to remark,—Bach, who in the fugue in E major, which old Wesley well named "The Saints in Glory," did such wonders with it that the simple phrase was transfigured.

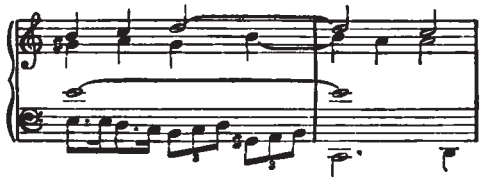
siders" at the end of the book seemed such a natural arrangement to Roberday that he considered no further indication was necessary.

Roberday's own work is generally good and sound, and frequently interesting even to modern ears. He uses the metamorphosis of theme that so many musicians still regard as the invention of Lizst, although it was used by Italian composers centuries before Lizst's day. We will glance at Fugue 8, as a specimen. Here is the subject, with its variants:

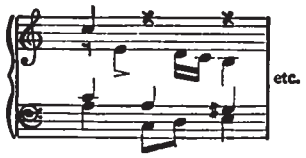


The Fugue pulls up awkwardly for a section in $\frac{3}{2}$ time,—a fairly common practice, in those days, and one that was dropped probably because composers found that the variety so attained was dearly bought by the loss of homogeneity. The "Caprice sur le mesme sujet," is divided into three parts dealing with *a*, *b*, and *c*. There is some spirited writing here, and the composer negotiates the awkward diminished interval very neatly, though it leads to some passages that he

perhaps had in view when speaking of licenses that sound well. Here, in the bass, is a downward-plunging seventh that is quite Bachian:



He has a keen eye for a pointed entry and frequently shortens the opening note of the subject for that purpose, as in this example from the treatment of *b:*



Altogether, this *valet de chambre* is an interesting figure. There is something very piquant in the fact of one who spent so much of his time amid the distractions of a court wooing his muse in so strict a fashion.

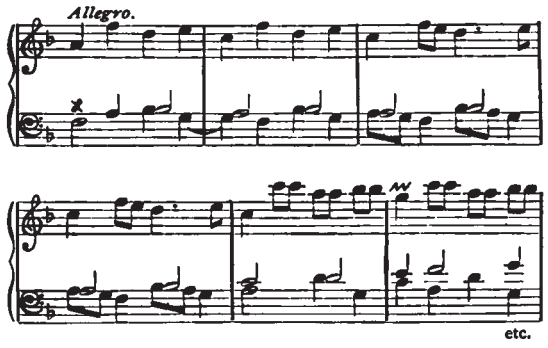
II

Far greater and more varied was the output of NICOLAS LE BÈGUE (1630–1702). He was court organist to the King, one of the finest players of his day, and skilled in matters pertaining to the building of his instrument. He published three collections of pieces. The

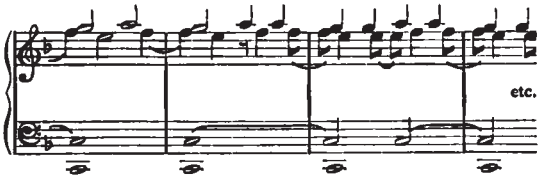
first was "pour les sçavans" [learned], and apparently was too hard a nut for the majority. He made amends in his second book, remarking in the preface that "he has here worked chiefly for those who have but 'moderate skill.'" In his third book he became difficult again, but in a way more grateful to the player.

Le Bègue's music generally is much slighter and lighter than that of his predecessors. He was probably the first notable French organ writer to break away from fugal and other severe forms in favor of pieces consisting of frank tunes, with a liberal use of solo stops, *voix humaine*, and change of registers and manuals. He does not hesitate to order a change of keyboard at each bar for ten or a dozen bars consecutively. In spite of all this, his music is mostly more out of date than that of Titelouze and Roberday,—one more proof that good polyphony wears better than anything in music. Still he has many naïvely charming moments, and it would not be difficult to extract a set of short pieces that are well worth keeping alive. Although his essays in fugal form are generally, very short and by no means well knit, he gives us some excellent contrapuntal writing in trios for three claviers,—one of the claviers being the pedal board. It is easy to imagine that his contemporaries must have found these works difficult to play, as their technical skill lay almost entirely in the direction of brilliant manual passage work. Some of Le Bègue's treatments of old Christmas carols are pleas-

ing, and he gives us in his third book a piece called "Les Cloches," which is interesting in itself, as well as by reason of its being a very early essay in a form that has always appealed to French composers. "Les Cloches" aims at imitating bells of various sizes, tolling and pealing. Here is a pretty chiming effect, with the small bells carrying on the figures in repeated notes:



Later he gives a very tolerable imitation of jangling overtones, with a big bell booming beneath:



III

Of Du Mage (16—17—) nothing seems to be known save that he was a pupil of Marchand,

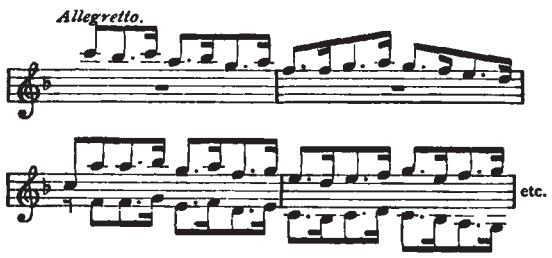
and organist at St. Quentin. He put forth in 1708 his First (and apparently his last) Organ Book, a modest collection which shows him to have been a musician of solid worth.

We meet with the bearer of a great name in FRANÇOIS COUPERIN (1632?–1701?), the second of the three brothers who founded the family. His "Pièces d' orgue consistantes en deux messes, l'une à l'usage ordinaire des paroisses pour les fêtes solemnelles, l'autre propre pour les Couvents de Religieux et Religieuses," contain some fine work, showing a notable advance on his forerunners, both in fluency and harmonic interest. The Pièces are based on fragments of the plainsong of the Mass and include austere contrapuntal treatments of a *canto fermo*, fugues on themes derived from the plainchant, short solid interludes, and some distinctly skittish movements. The influence of the clavecin shows itself not only in the passage-work and ornamentation, but in the use of the suite form and the term "couplet" for the various movements. I must resist the temptation to quote from the music, and give instead the plan of one of these suites. Thus, the "Gloria" consists of 1.er Couplet, "Et in terra pax" (with the plainsong given to the pedal in long notes, while the manuals treat the opening figure in three-part imitation); 2.e Couplet, "Benedicamus me," Petite Fugue sur le Cromhorne; 3.e Couplet, 'Glorificamus te," duo sur les Tierces; 4.e Couplet, "Domine Deus, Rex Cœlestis," dialogue sur les jeux de trompettes, clairons et

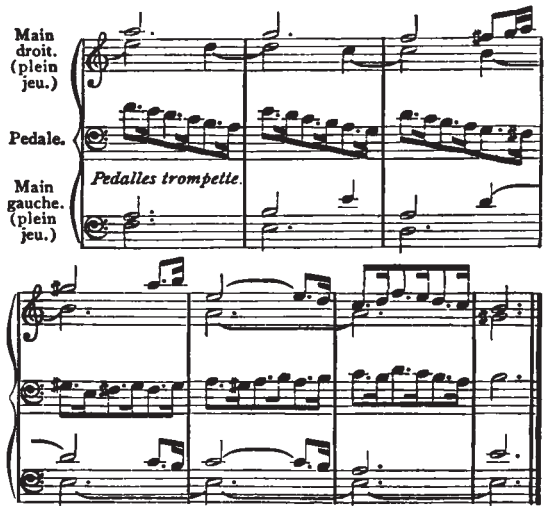
tierces du grand clavier, et le bourdon avec le larigot du positif: 5.e Couplet, "Domine Deus, Agnus Dei," Trio a deux dessus de Cromhorne et la basse de tierce; 6.e Couplet. "Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe," tierce en taille; 7.e couplet, "Quoniam tu Solus," dialogue sur la voix humaine; 8.e Couplet, "Tu solus altissimus," dialogue en trio du cornet et de la tierce; dernier couplet du Gloria, Amen, dialogue sur les grands jeux. "Tierce en taille" was an arrangement much used by these old composers, and consisted of a solo stop in the tenor register, with a simple accompaniment and pedal bass.

IV

NICOLAS GIGAULT (1624 or 1625–1707) published in 1685 a volume of 180 pieces. His work varies in quality more widely than that of most of his fellows. He is at his weakest when he essays a fugue, his attempts being generally puerile. Indeed, there is only one creditable example of the form and that is avowedly "poursuivie a la manière italienne," with such satisfactory results that one wishes the composer had more often gone to school in the same quarter. Usually he seems quite unable to see the importance of making any rhythmical difference between the subject and its counterpoint, and will complacently go on for twenty bars in this style:



But we must give Gigault credit for being something of a pioneer, his harmony being enterprising at times, while he was probably one of the first of his craft to fully realize the melodic possibilities of the pedals. His contemporaries were content to give the pedals a *canto fermo* in long notes, often with stodgy effect. Gigault uses them for passages of more animated character. Here is the best example, being the end of a "Qui tollis" for five voices:



(Note the close juxtaposition of G♯ and G♮ in bars 3–4,—a favorite effect of these old writers.)

Gigault makes the most of the variety to be obtained from manual changes, an extreme instance being a piece "à 2, 3, et 4 choeurs du 2.e ton d'un mouvement preste," consisting of about fifty bars $\frac{3}{4}$, with twenty-six changes of keyboard. The claviers used are Positif, Grand, Cornet, and Echo. (Even five manual organs were not unknown at that date. They were the Grand Orgue, Positif, Clavier des Bombards, Clavier du Récit, and Echo. The first corresponded to our great, the second to our choir, the third was a set of powerful reeds, the fourth consisted of a cornet and trumpet and gave its name later to the swell, and the fifth of a few stops enclosed in a box in order to give a remote effect.)

In parting with Gigault, I may mention that he dedicates his volume "A La Saincte Vierge," surely the only ascription of the kind. I wish space allowed of a translation of the whole of this quaint dedication. I give the opening and closing sentences:

"I am sure, loving and holy mother of my Saviour, that the offering I dare to make you of my works will not be unwelcome. There may be some weaknesses and defects; but it will ensure your love that their object is the glory of your Son, and the service of the church in singing His praises at solemn festivals. . . . Receive, then, Queen of Heaven, these weak tokens of my gratitude; deign to

give to the song I offer you the power of pleasing the heart rather than the ear, of raising the souls of the listeners towards you and your Son, and of filling them with longing to hear in Heaven that ineffable music which will be our eternal happiness."

V

Very little is known of ANDRÉ RAISON. He seems to have lived a retired, almost monastic life, spending his early years in a seminary at Nanterre, and being later organist of Ste. Geneviève-du-Mont, Paris. He was born about 1650, and died between 1714 and 1720. His collection of organ music was published at Paris in 1688, with a charming engraving of a shepherdess by way of frontispiece, and an ornate title-page, the type of which is a joy to the eye. These old composers were nothing if not explicit in their titles, as the following will show:

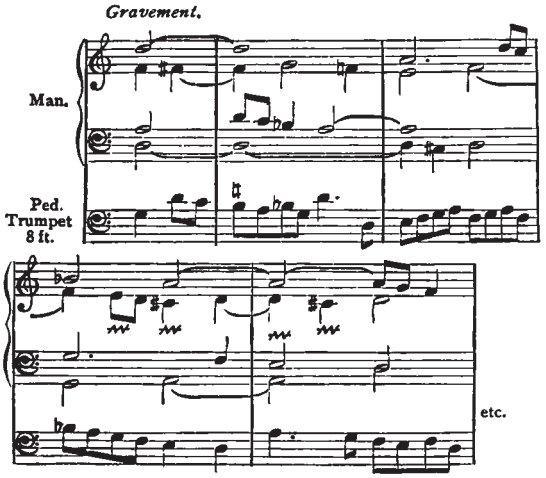
LIVRE D'ORGVE
Contenant CINQ MESSES SVFFISANTES
Pour tous les Tons de l'Eglise
ou QVINZE MAGNIFICATS pour ceux qui n'ont pas besoin de Messe avec des Eleuations toutes particuliere, Ensuite des Benedictus: Et une Offerte en action de Grace pour l'heureuse Conualescence Dv Roy en 1687. Laquelle se peut aussi toucher sur le clavecin. Le tout au naturel et facile auec les plus beaux mouuemens et les plus belles varietez

du temps tant aux Musiques vocales qu' Instrumentales et le chiffre à bien des endroits pour bien passer les Interualles et les agrèmens, et bien placer les doits, auec des jnstructions tres vtiles pour ceux qui n'ont point de m^e^ et qui veule, se perfectiõner Eux memes

Composé par André Raison, etc., etc.

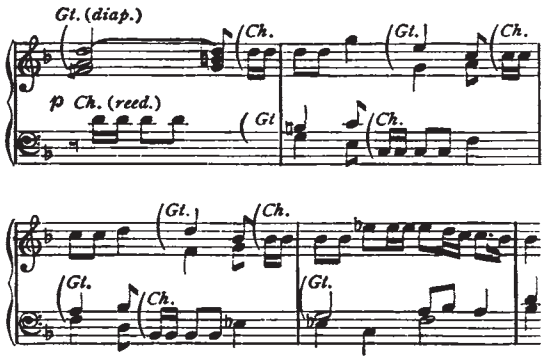
Perhaps the most notable piece in Raison's volume is the second, an excellent example of five-part writing, with a florid tenor part played on the pedals. Evidently Raison feared that this pedal part was beyond the powers of most players, for a note at the beginning suggests that it may be played by a third hand on the full choir.

I quote a few bars, beginning at the pedal entry, using the arrangement of Guilmant. In the original, the pedal stave was in the middle.



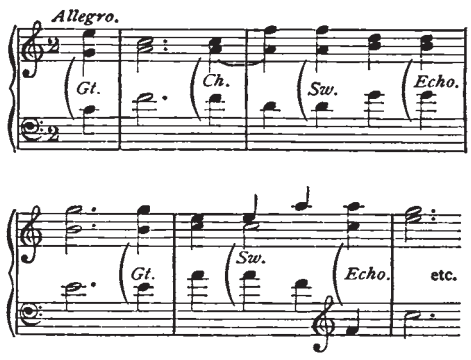
Raison's solicitude for the player is shown in various ways. As the title-page indicates, the pieces for use at Mass may also be played as interludes for the Magnificat. He points out in his lengthy preface that "there are three in each key which will serve not only for different Festivals, but also for less advanced players. If there are three players in one (religious) house, all of varying capacity, they may choose the piece that best suits them. The shorter and easier are not less beautiful." He also suggests that the trios for two manuals and pedals may be performed by the help of a friend playing on the great keyboard the part given to the pedal flute. He concludes by directing the performer how to give "the movement and air to all the pieces." The great full organ, he says, should be played very slowly, the chords well joined. The full choir (*Le Petit plein jeu*) to be played lightly and flowingly. The Duos (two-voice pieces for two manuals) are to be quick, in a free and neat style, the Cromorne or the Tierce on the swell very tenderly, the cadences being held long, especially the last; the Cornet quick, animated and flowing; the Trumpet bass boldly and neatly; the Cromorne in the tenor very tenderly; the Tierce in the tenor smoothly and flowingly; the ***voix humaine*** tenderly and the chords well tied. These directions are preceded by minute particulars as to the functions of the various stops. Both in the preface and the music we see Raison anxious

to exploit to the full the work of the organ builder. Indeed, he expressly says that his object is "to show organists, both male and female, who are shut up in provincial cloisters, how to make use of the excellent novelties and the increase in the number of keyboards introduced by modern organ builders." In this he resembles most of his colleagues, who, like the French organ builders, were far ahead of their German brethren in the matter of variety of tone color. Most of these old French composers give us pieces with change of manual at almost every bar. Sometimes the effect is puerile, but not always. Here, for example, is an episode from a charming little three-voice fugue by Raison, for manuals only:



The Choir and Great suggestions are Guilmant's and represent the *Dessus de Trompette* and *Jeu doux* of the original. One does not expect to come upon such a piquant piece

of dialogue in the course of a fugue! It is worth noticing, too, that the figure given to the Choir is the first half of the subject, so the passage is not irrelevant. In the following extract from a "Dialogue" we find Raison ringing the changes on four keyboards:



The original directions are "Grand," "Petit," "Cornet," and "Eco." With a minim as the unit, and the time *allegro*, this passage requires neat handling.

Raison has a slight, but interesting connection with Bach, who, in his organ Passacaglia borrows half of the subject from the French composer. Bach's interest in the work of composers of other nationality is well known, and we may fairly assume that we have here one of the not infrequent cases of borrowing. Raison's subject is

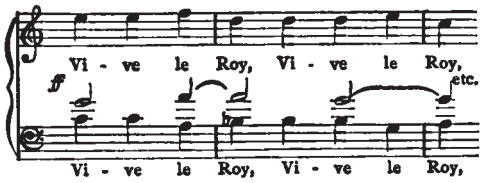
and pretty strong evidence of Bach's indebtedness is found in the title,—"Trio en Passacaille." M. Pirro points out[1] another indication of Bach's knowledge of the Frenchman's book in the strong similarity between the theme of a Duo in D minor and the "Dorian" Toccata.

Although various imitative devices play a prominent part in Raison's music, we have few fugues, and those are usually very brief and somewhat loose in structure. The composer seems unable to dispense with solo stops or manual changes for many bars. He has, however, a fund of frank tunefulness that makes much of his music pleasant to listen to even now, limited as it is in harmonic and rhythmical devices. We may well believe that he was a popular composer in his generation. We find a decided concession to this popularity in the "Offerte du 5^{m} Ton" (C major), played at the king's entry of the Hotel de Ville on January 30, 1687. Here, after a pompous *adagio* opening, we have a section marked "guayment" leading to a popular song played as a trumpet solo. The jolly air begins thus:

and is suitably treated at some length, the piece ending with a couple of dozen bars representing the acclamations of the crowd. The means employed are delightfully naïve.

[1] *L'Esthétique de Jean Sebastian Bach*, p. 429.

Little figures of four notes appear in various parts, labelled "Viue le Roy," thus:



After having written the loyal shout eight times, however, the composer's patience evidently gave out, and the next twenty-nine entries are shown by a mere "V."

VI

A much less entertaining composer is JEAN HENRY D'ANGLEBERT, who was born and died we know not when. We know only that he was chamber-musician to Louis XIV., and that his one published work appeared in 1689. This was a set of Pieces for clavecin, a collection of airs and pieces (mostly original, though some were borrowed from Lully), arranged for harpsichord and organ. His interest for us lies in a set of Five Fugues and a Quartet for organ, which were a part of the volume. The little collection is important in the history of the fugue, because, as we have seen, the French organ composers had not so far taken the form very seriously. D'Anglebert is much more thoroughgoing, and sticks faithfully to his text. He even limits his scope by adopting the same text for each of his discourses, though varying it

after the Frescobaldi manner. There is this difference, however: whereas the Italian composer and his numerous followers used variants of a subject for the purpose of several movements of one work, d'Anglebert writes a complete fugue, and then begins another headed "2e Fugue sur le même sujet," and so is delivered of five. I give the subject and the most interesting of its variants.

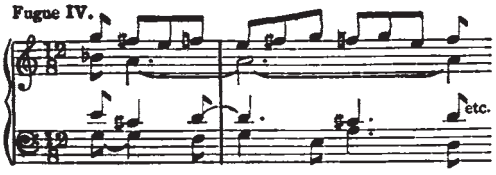
Fort Lentement.

Fugue I.

Fugue V.

The uncomfortable swaying between the major and minor sixth of the scale is a feature, and leads to some awkward corners, as, for example:

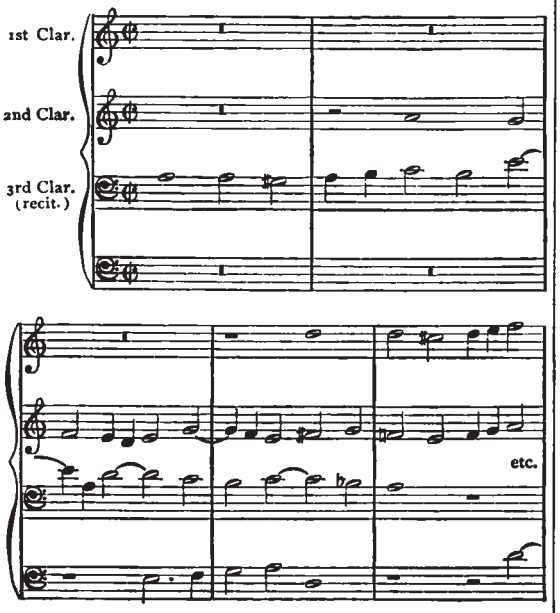
Fugue IV.



The fugues suffer badly from lack of enterprise in the matter of key, the composer being content throughout with tonic and dominant entries; and as there is the very minimum of relief in the way of episode,

we cannot call d'Anglebert's music other than monotonous. The wonder is that written under such limitations, it should be so good as it is. Considerable interest is attached to the little piece which follows the fugues. It is called "Quatuor sur la kyrie à trois Sujets, tirés du Plain-chant," and is intended to be played on three separate manuals and pedals. The composer in his preface says that he requires "three claviers for the hands, and the pedals, with stops of equal force and of different character (*harmonie*) to show clearly the entries of the parts." Guilmant, in editing the piece, has marked the fingering for this method of playing, but considers that "it is not possible to play all the manual notes *legato*. The old French organists "(he goes on), "often played two parts with the same hand on two keyboards for trio and quartet purposes. If, in accordance with the composer's wish, one intends to use three different manuals, it will be better to obtain the help of a friend for the third part." This example of the very early use in France of the "thumbing" made popular later by Guilmant himself is of considerable interest. We see no signs of its regular employment in the early organ music of any other country, though one or two passages in Bach's choral Preludes seem to imply a slight use of the device. (See the little Prelude on "Tonus Peregrinus" where the soloing of the C. F. is impossible without a momentary use of one hand on two manu-

als.) The opening bars of d'Anglebert's Quartet may be quoted:



VII

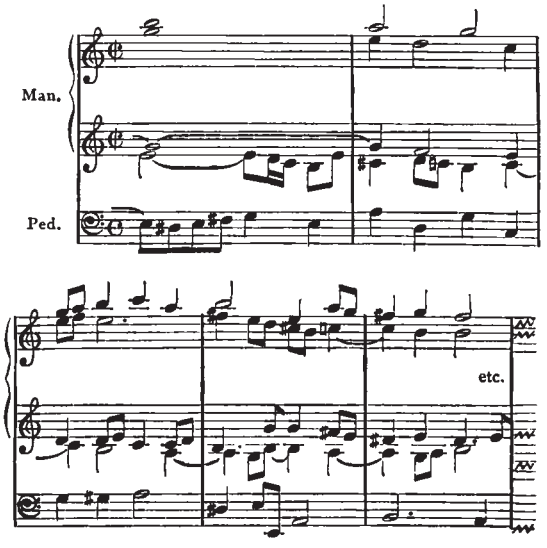
Passing by Couperin "le Grand," who, though a noted organist, seems to have neglected the instrument when composing, we come to one of the greatest of all the old French writers,—NICOLAS DE GRIGNY. He was organist of Rheims Cathedral, and died in 1703, "about 32 years old," says the parish register, so we may put his birth year as 1671 or 1672. He left one work only, a

book of organ pieces published in 1711. M. Pirro is of opinion that there was an earlier edition, since a manuscript copy entitled "First organ book" etc., dated 1700, is in the Royal Library at Berlin. This copy is of interest because its last possessor was Nehrlich, a pupil of C. P. E. Bach, and there can be no doubt that it was made from the book of De Grigny's pieces which John Sebastian had copied for his own edification. Spitta credits de Grigny also with a clavecin suite, but later evidence shows Dieupart to be the composer.

De Grigny takes a high place among his contemporaries. His best work shows a breadth and power that no French organ composer of his day approached. His book contains the usual pieces for use at Mass, and a very important set based on hymns. Throughout we find a gravity that was too often lacking in church music of his day. There are very few of the rapid duos of which his contemporaries were so fond,—two part inventions, which said very little at great speed. Nor do we find trivial short pieces suggestive of the clavecin and of courtly rather than ecclesiastical surroundings. Instead we have movements of considerable length, and many with skilful four- and five-part writing. He shows a great advance on any of his predecessors in the important matter of keeping up a lengthy fugal movement. His music, serious though it is, hangs fire much less frequently than the more cheerful strains of

Raison, Gigault, or Le Begue. Nor does he make liberal use of registration or changes of manual. He seems to have aimed at the creation of music which should be good enough to need little aid of the kind. Both in his treatment of plain-song themes and in the derivation of subjects therefrom, he shows a flexibility generally lacking in other old writers.

His settings of plain-song hymns consist of groups of pieces of widely different styles. Thus, that on "Veni Creator" gives us first the melody in long notes played on the pedals (8 feet and 4 feet reeds) with four parts on the manual. The effect is very broad and massive. Then follows a five-voiced fugue, the subject of which is a contracted form of the first half of the second line of the hymn tune. The third movement is a Duo, the beginning of the subject being taken from the third line; the fourth is a "Recit de Cromorne" the melody of which seems to have little connection with the hymn; and, by way of finale, a "Dialogue sur les grands jeux," a free fugal movement for light stops, preceded and followed by a brief *maestoso* for full organ. Although the title-page promises only four hymns, the book contains five,—"Veni Creator," "Pange Lingua," "Ave Maris Stella," "Verbum Supernum," and "A Solis Ortus." Perhaps the best is "Pange Lingua," the fugue (five voices) being particularly good. A few bars will show de Grigny's powerful and sonorous disposition of the parts:



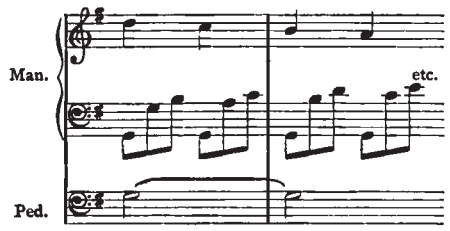
Looking at such work as this, one may well ask what might not have been expected from the composer but for his untimely taking off. His book ends with a lengthy piece entitled "Point d'orgue sur les grands jeux," a treatment of a continuous pedal A, and one not without harmonic interest even to-day.

VIII

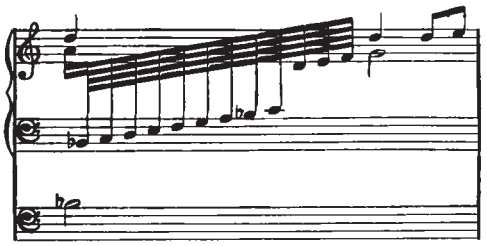
With Louis Claude d'Aquin we return once more to a lighter style. He was born at Paris in 1694, and died in 1772. He is best known to us as a composer for the clavecin, and one of his pieces "Le Coucou" is still popular with pianists. He does not appear to

have taken the organ very seriously, and his Book of Noels is announced as for the organ and clavecin, "the greater part of them being playable on violins, flutes, hautboys, etc.," says the title-page. Certainly the organ idiom is very little in evidence. D'Aquin seems to have set great store by technical brilliancy, and although his variations on the old Carol tunes begin with delightful and appropriate simplicity, they too often end in becoming mere pegs on which to hang digital fireworks.

In his anxiety to make his music suitable for divers instruments, he frequently spoils it from an organ point of view. There are many pages of this kind of writing:



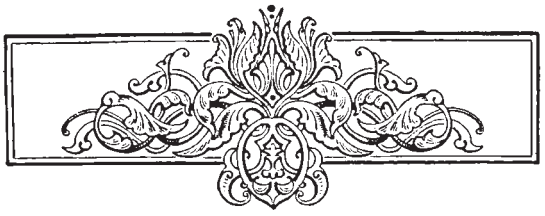
and



D'Aquin did so little in the development of organ music that he need concern us no longer.

Much more important are JEAN FRANÇOIS DANDRIEU and LOUIS NICOLAS CLÉRAMBAULT. Dandrieu was born at Paris in 1684, and died there in 1740. He was organist of St. Merry, and of St. Bartholomew, and left a book of organ pieces and a good deal of music for strings. Clérambault (Paris 1676–1749) was a pupil of Raison. He published a book of organ music in 1710. Unfortunately I have been able to see only one piece of each of these composers, the collected works being at present out of print. Guilmant in his *Concert Historique* includes a Musette by Dandrieu, a very simple and charming piece, and a prelude of Clérambault,—music so engaging that one wishes there were more of the composer's work available.

For the greater part of a century after the death of these two last-named men, the history of French organ music is a blank. We shall resume our considerations with Boëly, who served as a link between the old and new.



CHAPTER III

I

A MUSICAL journalist speaking of the importance of individual style, and wishing to deliver himself of a verbal firework, said recently, "If you try to write like Bach, you will end by writing like—Offenbach." The epigram sounds passable, but will not bear looking at twice, for if there is one thing that can be safely guaranteed, it is that an attempt to write like Bach will produce music strongly suggestive of Bach, and of course not in the least like Offenbach. A good knowledge of counterpoint, *plus* industry and spare time, is all that is required. The fatal drawback will be that the result of such misspent energy can only recall Bach in his uninspired moments. In the case of ALEXANDER PIERRE FRANÇOIS BOËLY, however, we have an example of a composer whose work is imitative of Bach, and at the same time so good that some of it might well be included in a recital of Bach's best music, and not disgrace its company. Boëly was born at Versailles on

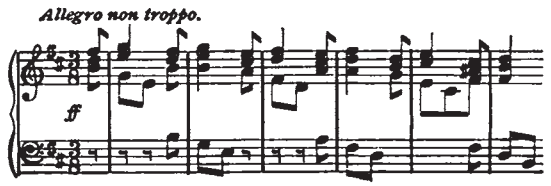
April 19, 1785, and died at Paris on December 27, 1858. He studied violin and piano at the Paris Conservatoire, and wrote a good deal of chamber music. His name, however, is best known to-day as an organ composer, though not many of his works are familiar. In a preface to a recent edition of a collection of "Noels," Saint-Saëns says of him:

"An impeccable writer of music and a theorist of the first rank, Boëly had that bizarre originality of trying to live in the past. He endeavored to write in the style of Scarlatti and J. S. Bach, who excited his greatest admiration. An artist impregnated with such a system must not count on the approbation of his contemporaries; he can only draw attention to himself later when the question of actuality does not exist any longer. That is why the time has come now when the works of this greatly talented and very conscientious musician should be appreciated. He applied, often with success, to the Gregorian melodies the methods by which Sebastian Bach made good use of the German chorals; and the result has been a great number of pieces which adapt themselves perfectly to the Catholic liturgy. It pleases one to find in them no error of taste, no unequal passages, no echo of the worldly style which would jar with the austerity of the church."

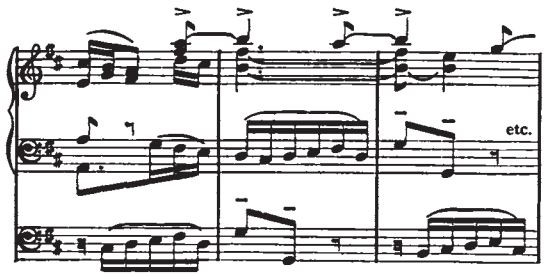
However good the results of Boëly's imitative writing may be, one cannot but regret that he did not make use of his excellent

taste and skill in a manner more likely to be of benefit to his generation, who badly needed some such refining influence. The best known of his works to-day are some fugues, scattered about in various organ albums, a Toccata in B minor, a Fantasia in G, an Andante con Moto in G minor, a Scherzo in B, and the collection of "Noels" already mentioned. The fugues are just what we might expect from such a source; the composer sticks to his text, joins his flats well, and delivers sound and reliable examples. The best of them are effective on the organ, because they are solid and dignified, and suit the instrument. More cannot be said for them, but then more cannot be said for seventy per cent. of organ fugues, so Boëly has done as well as the majority. When he left this safe ground he was not always so successful. The neatly written and attractive Andante con Moto is perhaps the most frequently played of his pieces, and deserves to be remembered. Other efforts deserve to be forgotten. A prelude in C which looks brilliant and interesting but sounds dull and commonplace; a Fantasia in G with an opening like Bach, a middle section like Mozart (with both composers at their worst) and a good deal of platitude that might be ascribed to any uninspired cappellmeister; a few short pieces that contrive in a thoroughly respectable manner to say nothing;—if these were all of Boëly's organ works, we might well pass him by.

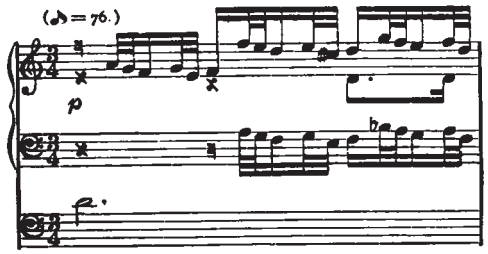
But there are others. His Toccata in B minor is a fine piece that well deserves frequent performance, being suitable either for postludial or recital purposes. It is a striking example of what a well-trained composer can sometimes effect by the skillful manipulation of thematic small beer. Here is the simple sequence with which the Toccata opens:

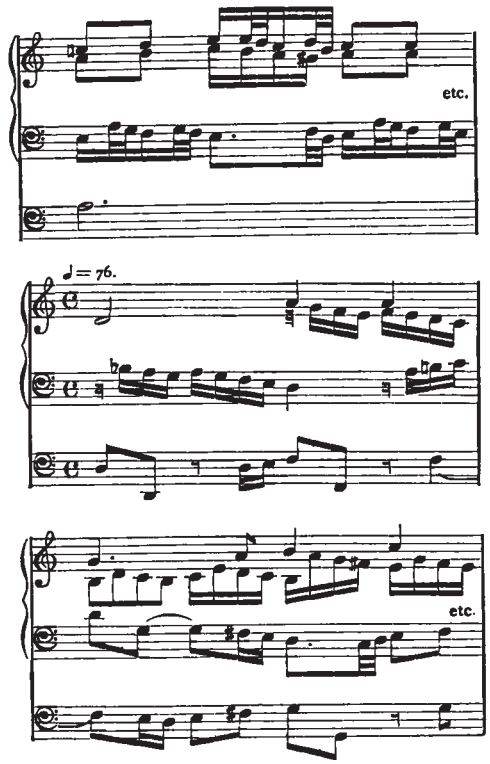


The other constituents are equally familiar, but so well are they and the above used that the result is surprisingly fresh and vital. The melody (if it can be so called) of the passage I have quoted makes a much better bass than it promises to, and is effectively treated. A major version, with florid imitative counterpoints below is really imposing, partly by reason of the sonorous disposition of the left hand and pedals:

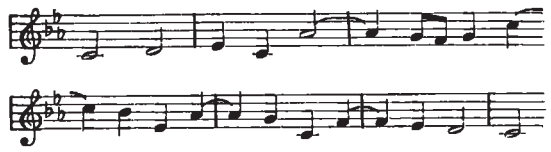


There are other arresting features, such as the treatment of the theme with two semi-quaver parts below, over a double pedal, and the alternate repercussion of the two B's on the last page. The piece as a whole is one that improves greatly on acquaintance, and in its rolling dignified way is well calculated to show off a big organ. Saint-Saëns does not hesitate to call it a masterpiece, and (so great is his admiration for Boëly) goes on to say that the arrangement of Christmas carols "places the composer in the ranks of the greatest musicians . . . J. S. Bach's pupil has come up to his model." The work thus eulogized is a collection of fourteen carol-melodies by Denizot (sixteenth century) arranged after the manner of the Little Organ Book of Bach. There is genuine charm and feeling in the treatments throughout. How closely and successfully Boëly shows his admiration for Bach by the sincerest form of flattery may be seen in the opening bars of a couple, chosen almost at random:





It would be difficult to find more faithful discipleship than this! Boëly's work generally is full of reminiscences of his idol. For example the Dorian fugue was surely at the back of his mind when he hit on this subject:



Perhaps Boëly's most attractive work is to be found in a collection of thirty-seven pieces, edited by Guilmant and published by Costallat, Paris. The book contains a few dull pages, but a fine Fantasia and Fugue in B flat and about a dozen other numbers are far too good to be neglected. Particularly charming are a couple of pieces written in imitation of the old "Tierce en taille" style, *i. e.* a florid solo on the great, chiefly in the alto and tenor register, accompanied simply on the swell, with a very plain bass on the pedals. There are also some excellent examples of two-part writing, in which the composer seems to have taken as his model the clavecin school of Couperin and Rameau.

Apparently Boëly had no great fund of invention, as the works in which he is either imitating or treating other composers' themes show him so much at his best.

But we may take leave of the composer with regard and esteem. He had lofty ideals and great skill, and had he not turned his gaze so constantly to the past, he might have done much for French organ music. Coming, as he did, at a time when the serious side of his art was under a cloud he could hardly gain the ears of his contemporaries by music almost uniformly thoughtful and severe.

II

However, the contemporary ear received ample consideration at the hands of two composers a little later in date,—Lefèbure-Wèly

and Batiste. Both were excellent musicians whose gifts are so inadequately represented by their published works as to suggest "the strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," transferred to music, and multiplied by two. LOUIS JAMES ALFRED LEFÈBURE-WÈLY was born at Paris on November 13, 1817, and very early showed extraordinary aptitude for music. He deputized for his father when eight years old, and succeeded him at his death seven years later. He entered the conservatoire in 1832, taking second prizes for pianoforte and organ in 1834, and firsts in the following year. He studied with Halévy, Berton, Adolphe Adam, and Séjan, and was a thoroughly well-equipped all-round musician. His first success seems to have been as a composer of pianoforte pieces, but his gifts as an organ player, and especially as an improviser, are his most lasting claims to fame. He composed much in various departments,—orchestral symphonies, masses, chamber music, a comic opera, etc., etc. He was organist at the Madeleine from 1847 to 1858, during which time he received the Legion of Honour. He was at St. Sulpice during the last six years of his life, dying in Paris on December 31, 1869. One proof of the esteem in which he was held is the fact of César Franck dedicating to him No. 6 of the "Six Pieces."

Looking at his numerous works, it is easy to believe that Lefèbure-Wèly was a brilliant extemporé player. His music is

rarely other than spontaneous; there is great facility of invention; the harmonic coloring is bright—even garish—and the rhythms piquant. The laying-out for the instrument is generally well calculated to produce the most telling results, and the works as a whole are skilfully designed to obtain the maximum of effect with the minimum of difficulty.

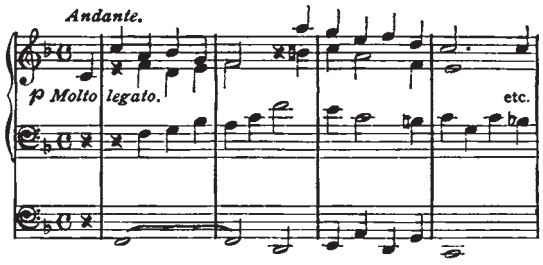
Lefèbure-Wèly's works are now so neglected that to the new generation of organists they are hardly known save by name. Few young players of serious tastes are likely to possess them save as a gift, in which case they would stow the volumes in the darkest corner of their music cupboard, and be reluctant to admit ownership. As for making use of them . . . !

This revulsion of taste is easily understood, but like most changes of the kind, is too sweeping. While there are very few pieces by Lefèbure-Wèly that may fittingly be played as voluntaries, there are a fair number that deserve a place in concert schemes. Recital players who would shy at the Frenchman's name on their programs frequently include worse music than the best of his. They strain at the gnat of one of the Offertoires or the March in E flat, but swallow easily the camel of something far more vulgar by a contemporary composer who happens to be in fashion. More: there are many works played frequently at recitals that I am sure owe their inclusion almost

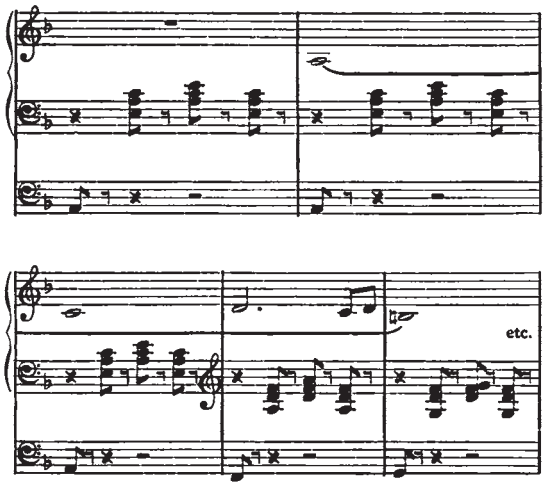
entirely to their composer's name,—works not vulgar but unfortunately not interesting either. They are above reproach as to antecedents and technique. Looked at on paper they are faultless; transferred to the keyboard, they are lifeless. But they are played while Lefèbure-Wèly's music—most of which is certainly not lifeless—is neglected. The sooner we get rid of snobbery of this kind the better.

No *concert* recital program is complete without its light constituent, and there is a good handful of Lefèbure-Wèly's works that well deserve occasional use in this way.

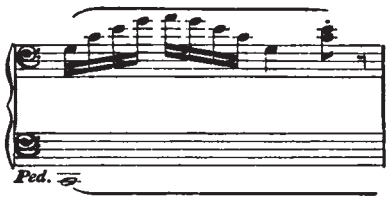
Of pieces suitable for use in church there are Nos. 3, 6, 10, 13, 14, 17, 22, 24, 30, 31, and 33 of the W. T. Best edition. (Novello.) All these are short. Some long ones begin decorously, and just as we think they might be passed for general service in ecclesiastical circles, they start misbehaving. For example, a Communion in F opens thus (note the courageous consecutive 5ths):



and continues in this excellent preludial manner for thirty bars. Then the composer starts a new subject chiefly in long notes, and can find nothing in the way of accompaniment better than a wretched *boom*-tum-*tum*-tum:

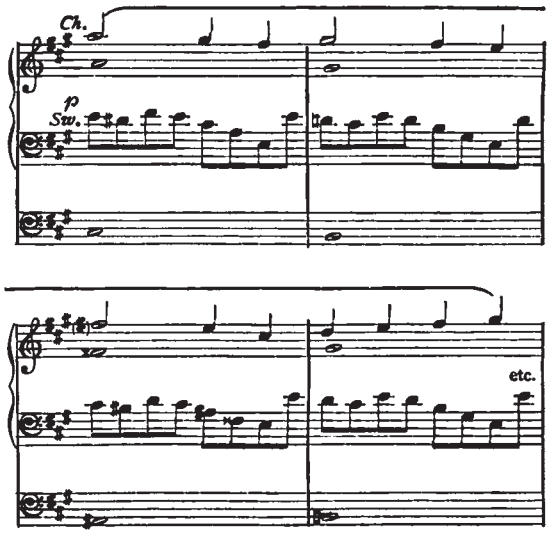


which of course puts the piece outside the pale. Again, a long Allegretto Cantabile gives us about fifty bars with a really well-written accompaniment, after which the composer comes to earth with



by way of support for a feeble melody. Imagine your state of mind after twenty-seven repetitions of this banal figure!

As a general rule, Lefèbure-Wèly's second subjects are his most trivial. He seems unable to do more than open the ball in a fairly dignified manner. An honorable exception is to be found in the Offertoire in D (No. 27), one of his best works, with the further advantage of not having been played to death formerly as the "Six Grand Offertoires" were. The second subject begins in this attractive style



and sails along capitally, with the accompanimental figure consistently kept going. Altogether, this offertoire contains plenty of

music that would be frequently heard if we had not long since given the composer a bad name and hanged him.

There are a few fugues among his works, but they are all short, and not good specimens. They consist usually of an exposition, an episode, a counter-exposition, all according to Cocker, after which the hitherto silent pedal enters with a few holding notes, sometimes merely a tonic pedal, whereupon the thing fizzles out,—a kind of sacrifice to the proprieties, not to be prolonged unduly.

III

Lefèbure-Wèly was a man with really brilliant gifts as a composer, though, as we have seen, he did not turn them to the best account. In ANTOINE EDOUARD BATISTE we have a much more singular case;—a man with a leaning to pedagogy and severity in general, whose published works are even more flippant than Lefèbure-Wèly's. He was born at Paris on March 28, 1820, and died there on November 9, 1876. He was a successful and diligent student at the Conservatoire, where he soon rose to be a professor. The works by which he deserves to be remembered are educational,—books on Solfeggi, sight-reading, and accompaniments for the figured basses of famous Solfeggi by old composers. He was a brilliant executant, and an untiring, devoted teacher,—in short, "a musician of severe and unerring taste," says his biog-

rapher in Grove. He was organist of St. Eustache at the time of his death.

Batiste's compositions show less spontaneity and inventive power than those of Lefèbure-Wèly. A few of his works perhaps deserve occasional performance to-day,—*e. g.*, one or two of the best of the offertoires, such as the A minor, the D minor, the "Cecilia," and that on "O Filii et Filiæ." Some of the numerous suave little preludes and interludes are better than a good deal of organ music written since and in wide use,—though perhaps that is not saying much. The one piece of Batiste's that should be put on the highest shelf and kept there is the terrible Andante in G, *alias* the "Pilgrims' Song of Hope." It is not easy to say which is the worst of all Batiste's pieces, but one may safely back the "Song of Hope" for a "place." Unfortunately it is the work by which the composer is best known at present, if we may judge from recital programs.

I have met with only one fugue by Batiste. There are, of course, plenty of short pieces in fughetta style,—some that might have come straight from the pages of Rinck—but only one full-blown fugue. Full-blown is the word for it, since it is for five voices and is worked out at considerable length. It is very serious, and there is no lapse anywhere from the standard of conduct expected in an organ fugue. I am bound to confess, however, that I found certain of the offertoires better worth playing.

Like Lefèbure-Wèly, Batiste wrote a "Storm." His is rather the better of two particularly bad specimens of a bad form. He begins to call for the "Thunder-pedal," at the twelfth bar, and gives us a rumble with the final *pp* chord, so the meteorological interest is well maintained.

On the whole, Batiste, as a composer, may be described as a second-rate Lefèbure-Wèly. All the faults of the latter are found in his works, with a good many new ones. Batiste's sentiment is sloppier, his figuration more commonplace, his harmony much less interesting, his development weaker (which is saying a good deal), and his use of trivial rhythms and such poor accompanimental devices as repeated chords much more liberal.

There is a touch of pathos in the fact of two such excellent musicians leaving behind so little music of permanent value. But it is the old story of facile success followed by a corresponding slump. The fairest thing we can do is to remember that they were infinitely better musicians than they are generally supposed to have been, and that they were to a great extent victims of environment.

Only men of commanding personality and high ideals can rise superior to such a drawback. Our next chapter will deal with such a man,—César Franck.

CHAPTER IV

I

IN CÉSAR FRANCK we have a composer who must be considered at greater length than most, because of his influence not only on some of his contemporaries and immediate successors, but on many musicians of to-day. As we shall see later, this influence is not merely musical. The man himself, with his lofty ideals, his modesty and simplicity, and his patient industrious life, was an inspiration to his little circle of earnest pupils, and much of this inspiration is felt by those of us who read his life and study his music.

He was born at Liège on December 10, 1822, and began his studies early at the local Conservatoire. His family moved to Paris in 1837, and young César became a pupil at the Conservatoire, working at fugue and counterpoint with Leborne and at pianoforte with Zimmerman.

His student days were chequered, and like so many other gifted musicians he was not a great success when prizes were to be won. He

differed from most, however, in failing through doing more than was demanded of him. Thus in a pianoforte-playing competition, he staggered the judges by transposing the sight-reading test a third lower. One would expect such a feat to ensure success, but Cherubini looked disapprovingly on departures from the normal, and disqualified the boy, who was afterwards consoled by a special award. Young César gave his examiners another shock a few years later, at his organ examination. The tests included the improvisation of a movement in sonata form and a fugue, the subjects for both being provided by the authorities. Franck saw that the themes could be combined, and introduced the fugue subject into the sonata movement, working the two at great length and with such complications that the bewildered and impatient judges decided against him. His master, old Benoist, interceded, and they grudgingly gave him a second prize.

On leaving the Conservatoire in 1842, Franck began at once to work hard as teacher and composer. He returned to his native country, but only for a couple of years, and in 1844 we find him established with the rest of the Franck household in Paris. Here the family experienced a lean time. Most of the wealthier of Franck's pupils took part in the exodus from Paris during the political troubles that preceded the Revolution of 1848, and the unpractical César chose this moment to take to himself a wife. He was married on

February 22, 1848, at the Church of Notre Dame de Lorette (where he had recently been appointed organist) to an actress, a daughter of Madame Desmousseaux, a well-known tragedienne. The city was in the throes of the Revolution, and the wedding party could reach the church only by negotiating a barricade, being helped over by the insurgents who were holding it. His efficiency as bread-winner to the Franck establishment being impaired through the loss of his best pupils, and relations becoming strained through his parents' resenting the introduction of an actress into the family circle, César shortly after sallied forth to make a home of his own. To do this he had to undertake teaching at low fees, and much musical hack-work. From the first, however, he determined to reserve an hour or two of each day for composition, study, or general reading—"time for thought" he called it. This resolution he kept to his dying day, and to it his works owe much.

After some years as organist of Saint-Jean-Saint-François au Marais (where he was happy with a fine Cavaille-Coll), Franck was appointed to Ste. Clotilde, "that fixed and quiet haven," says d'Indy, "which I have no hesitation in affirming was the starting-point of a new phrase of his art, and from which dates what may be described as his second musical period." In 1872 he was appointed, to the general surprise, organ professor at the Conservatoire, in the place of Benoist, who

had reached the age limit. Here his simplicity, high ideals, and incapacity for intrigue of any sort, made him from the first an object of animosity to his brother-professors. This appointment did not relieve him of the necessity of drudgery in other directions. To the end he was compelled to give pianoforte lessons, and to teach classes in boarding-schools. At the close of a long day's teaching, however, he was still able to find time and energy for the copying of scores, or for being "at home" to organ and composition pupils.

His end was hastened by an accident. In May, 1890, on his way to give a lesson, he was run into by an omnibus, the pole of which struck his side. He went on to keep his engagement, but fainted on reaching the house. Disregarding the injury, he continued his strenuous life, but in the following autumn an attack of pleurisy, with complications due to the accident, ended fatally on November 8th. No official notice was taken of his death. "Even the Conservatoire," say d'Indy, "neglected to send a representative to the funeral of this organist whose lofty views of art had always seemed dangerous to the peace of this official institution. The Director, Ambroise Thomas, who had all his life been given to pouring forth platitudes on less worthy tombs, quickly took to his bed when he heard that a member of Franck's family had come to invite him to the funeral. Other important professors followed suit, and were

conveniently taken ill in order to avoid compromising themselves."

Fourteen years later, the pupils and friends who had gathered round his grave met in the square before Ste. Clotilde at the unveiling of a monument to his memory. But this time not only was an enthusiastic crowd present; the Director of the Beaux Arts, and the head of the Conservatoire with the leading officials, were in the foreground delivering panegyrics on the musician they had cold-shouldered so recently.

It seems almost incredible that a man so mild and good-hearted should have had to die in order to break down the opposition of his colleagues, but so it was.

. . . . . .

There are few (if any) more important figures in modern music than this unobtrusive church organist. It is difficult to overestimate his share in founding a brilliant French school of to-day. The measure of his influence can be best shown by a recital of the names of some of his most distinguished pupils: Alexis de Castillon, Henri Duparc, Gabriel Pierné, Vincent d'Indy, Guy Ropartz, Camille Benoit, Ernest Chausson, Samuel Rousseau, Augusta Holmès, Pièrre de Brevel, Charles Bordes, and the untimely-cut-off Guillaume Lekeu.

"There was nothing in Franck's appearance," says M. d'Indy, "to reveal the con-

ventional artistic type according to romance, or the legends of Montmartre. Any one who happened to meet this man in the street, invariably in a hurry, invariably absent-minded and making grimaces, running rather than walking dressed in an overcoat a size too large, and trousers a size too short for him, would never have suspected the transformation that took place, when, seated at the piano, he explained or commented upon some fine composition, or, with one hand to his forehead and the other poised above his stops, prepared the organ for one of his great improvisations."

He had a tremendous capacity for work. He rose all the year round at half-past five and two hours later started on his round of lessons. His finest compositions were the result of the time thus snatched at the beginning of the day, plus a few weeks when his pupils took holiday.

Fortunately for French organ music, Franck began his serious work for the instrument when entering on what is reckoned as his second period,—roughly about his fortieth year. More than most composers, he was late in arriving at full maturity. A voluminous writer from boyhood, his first works give only occasional hints of his future greatness. A great deal of his early writing was of the nature of hack-work, and much of his church-music was written hastily for use at Ste. Clotilde, under circumstances that gave him no chance of the polishing process to which

his finest creations were subjected. Here is a list of the organ works:

SIX PIECES (1862)

1. Fantaisie in C.
2. Grande Pièce Symphonique.
3. Prelude, Fugue, and Variation.
4. Pastorale.
5. Prière.
6. Finale.

THREE PIECES (1878)

1. Fantaisie in A.
2. Cantabile.
3. Pièce Héroïque.

Andantino (1889).

Three Chorals (1890), in E, B minor, and A minor.

Posthumous Pieces for Harmonium and Organ.

Looked at from a catalogue point of view, this is a meagre output. But this handful of organ music, apart from its fine quality, is of great importance on account of the date of its appearance,—the first works especially so. When the Six Pieces were published organ music in France was at a very low level. Gigout, Widor, Saint-Saëns, Salomé and Dubois were little more than lads. Guilmant

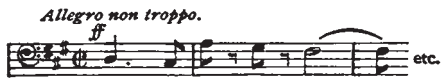
was a promising young organist at Boulogne, Boëly had been dead two years, and Boëllmann was in the first year of his all-too-short life. The cheerful strains of Lefèbure-Wèly and Batiste were what the public wanted, and they got them. What this public thought of the Six Pieces, and especially of such a complex and mystical work as the Prayer, we shall never know. What Liszt thought of them we know from d'Indy. The great pianist, hearing them played by the composer, exclaimed with enthusiasm, "These poems have their place beside the masterpieces of John Sebastian Bach." Fifty years have passed since Liszt gave his verdict, and it still stands.

The Three Chorals are often spoken of as being Franck's best organ works. But many of us, I am sure, feel that fine as the Chorals are, the Six Pieces are on the whole better, being more varied both in manner and matter.

The Fantaisie is hardly what its title leads us to expect. Fantasias are generally long and stormy: this is short and calm. The first of its three movements is an epitome of the serene and devotional side of Franck's art. The repetition of the canon, with the simple new theme added above, gives us the same impression of other-worldliness as do the most intimate of the choral-preludes of Bach. A short bridge-passage leads to what is, however, the *clou* of the Fantasia,—a lengthy

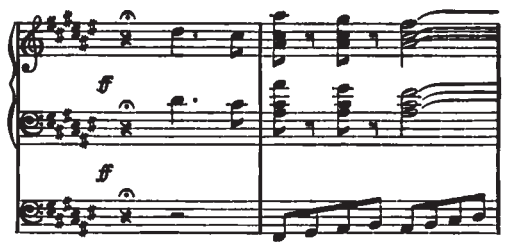
Allegretto Cantando in which a characteristic theme of great charm is beautifully treated. The soft stops of three manuals (uncoupled) provide some dainty coloring, and the piece from start to finish is a perfect example of finished writing. Another bridge-passage—which, it must be confessed, lets us down somewhat—leads to a short and almost *too* simple Adagio by way of finale.

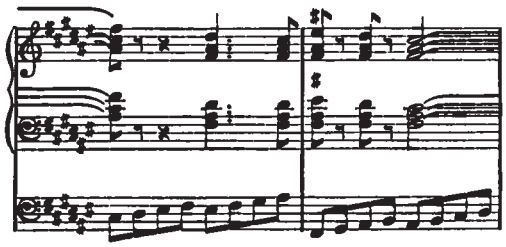
The Grand Pièce Symphonique is a real symphony. The first movement (preceded by a weighty introduction) consists chiefly of masterly treatment of a theme commencing,



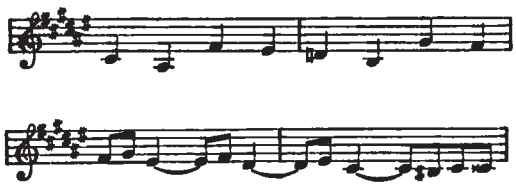
contrast being obtained by a second subject in minims in the relative major. There is some splendid harmony and skillful development in this movement, but it hangs fire at the end, the composer introducing a rather halting bridge-passage to lead into the Andante. This is a beautiful example of the song form. It includes a pleasant piece of canonic writing in the octave below with three free parts. The Andante, after two pages, breaks off into an Allegro in B minor marked *pp;* a caprice-

like movement neat and effective, though of no particular freshness. It is followed by a partial repetition of the Andante, with which this section ends. The following two pages are a reproduction of Beethoven's method of leading up to the great D major tune in the Finale of the Choral Symphony. Franck quotes in turn the subject of the first movement, the Introduction, the Allegro, and the Andante, as if testing their suitability for further use. The subject quoted above seems to be the strong favorite, for hints of it appear between the other quotations. It must be confessed that the device has less point here than in the Choral Symphony. There it is of great dramatic effect. The crashing discords with which Beethoven begins this section of the Symphony, the angry refusal of each theme in succession, and the passionate recitative all combine to make a vivid little piece of program music. Moreover, as a result of the alarums and excursions, a *new* theme makes its appearance, and so justifies the to-do. Franck's use of the plan, though less dramatic, has some striking features. The leading into the Finale is splendidly managed. Six bars of struggling music, based on the themes of the first movement and the Andante, lead to a silent pause after a dominant seventh on C sharp. Then, the composer's mind made up, the chosen theme (that of the first movement, now in the major) blazes out thus:





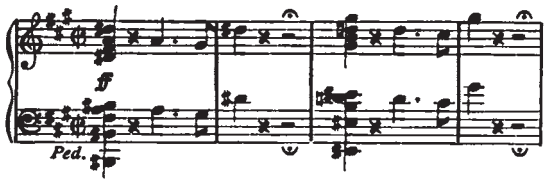
After two glorious pages we have a fugal section, the first eight notes of the subject—



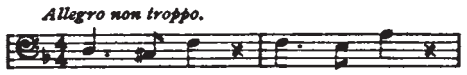
being obviously based on the same theme.

This last movement is one of the finest pieces of organ music by Franck or anybody else. The opening two pages with the rolling pedal passages are thrilling.

The Pièce Symphonique anticipates in several respects the Symphony in D minor written twenty years later. In both we have a slow movement containing a section in quick time, which thus does duty as a Scherzo, and in both the principal subject of the first movement has a place in the Finale. There is even a strong family likeness between the dominating idea of the organ work, especially the questioning passage leading to it:—



and the opening of the first subject of the Symphony:



II

The Prelude, Fugue, and Variation is also recalled by some later works of Franck,—the Prelude, Choral, and Fugue and the Prelude, Aria, and Finale for piano. The organ piece is a good example of the composer's ability to write long cantabile phrases. The Prelude is not one of those turgid affairs generally

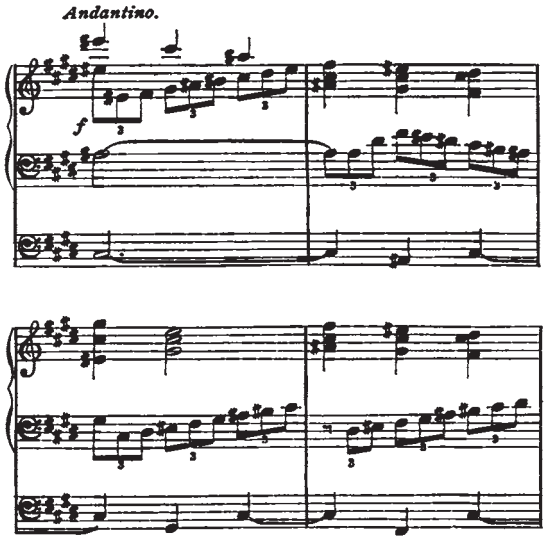
associated with a fugue, but a genuine song without words. It ends on the dominant and is followed by a short section connecting it with the Fugue, the subject being foreshadowed in this bridge-passage. The Fugue (marked *Sempre Cantando*) is as quiet and melodious as the Prelude. The Variation is not a variation in the modern sense of the word, being merely a repetition of the Prelude with semiquaver embellishment. The whole is a very attractive work to all who can appreciate quiet, refined music.

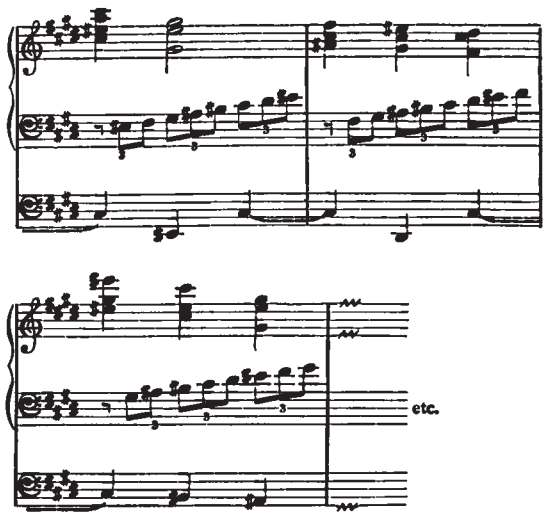
The same judgment may be passed on the Pastorale. It contains an unusual feature in a long middle section[1] with rapid *staccato* chords *pp* leading to a fugal exposition and working back by means of the *staccato* theme through various keys to a resumption of the opening subject, the treble of the passage commencing at the fifth bar being now used as a counter-theme above with charming effect. The last three pages are delicious.

The Prayer strikes a deep, even sombre, note. A fine broad theme, in five-part harmony, is given out on the diapasons. This, with more animated matter following makes up the first section—six pages. A

[1] Mr. Wallace Goodrich points out in *The Organ in France*, that Franck's indication "Trompette" must be read with caution. Franck, we know from D'Indy, settled the registration of his works at the keyboard of his organ at St. Clotilde, and this organ happens to contain a charming and quickly-voiced Trumpet.

quasi recitativo and a unison passage with a typically Franckian outline lead back to the opening subject, which now receives fresh treatment, including a canon in the fifth below between treble and bass, some pungent discords resulting. The part-writing in the next three pages is very complicated, five and sometimes six voices being busy. At the end of this involved section, the clouds lift, and we have a passage expressive of rapt exaltation. I quote a few bars of this because it is characteristic of the composer in several respects. (Note the ninth followed by two sevenths at the end of the quotation.)

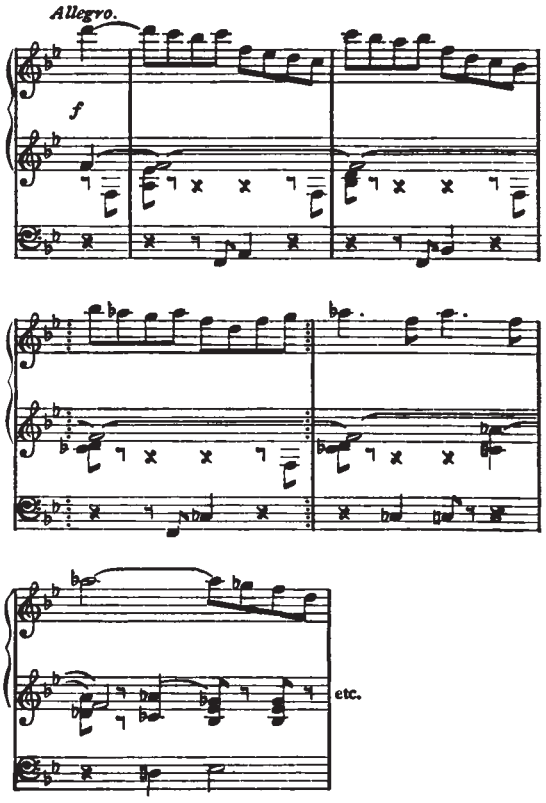




It is one of many instances of his fondness for keys with many sharps: both treble and bass are good examples of his favorite device of widening leaps from a fixed note,—an effect of oblique expansion; and the whole passage illustrates his power of making much from little, for reduced to its constituents, the music is merely a glorification of the chord of C sharp major. I do not know how this part of the Prayer strikes most players; to me it is one of the most spacious and uplifting of strains. Just as the simplicity of Franck is shown in the Fantasia and the Pastorale so is his brooding mysticism in this piece. Some critics—M. Hugues Imbert, for example—complain of

its length. Long it certainly is, taking twelve minutes to play, but it would be difficult to select half a dozen bars that could be spared. It is really great music, broad-based, finely wrought, and worthy of Beethoven. It can hardly be popular, but many an organist playing to himself or to a few kindred spirits will revel in it. He will find it good practice too, for it abounds in difficult cross-rhythms.

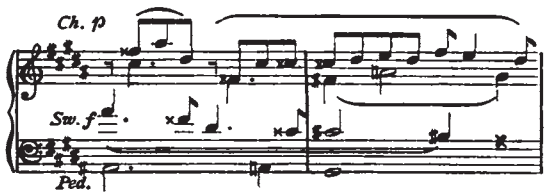
In more popular vein is the Finale in B flat, though the music is quite as good in its way. It is a way, however, more understanded of the people. It begins with a long pedal solo, a fine vigorous tune of martial character, on which a good deal of the rest of the work is founded. The second subject—a suave melody in the composer's favorite key of F sharp major—forms a good foil. Note in passing that Franck's weakness for sharps leads him to give us a passage in A sharp major—one of the few in existence. The working out of the Finale is lengthy, the piece filling eighteen pages; but there is no flagging, from the stirring opening to the crashing last page. Dedicated to Lefèbure-Wèly, it has much of his brilliant style, though it is of infinitely higher value as music. Here are a few bars as a sample of the way in which the composer has caught the Lefèbure-Wèly manner without sacrificing the Franckian matter:



III

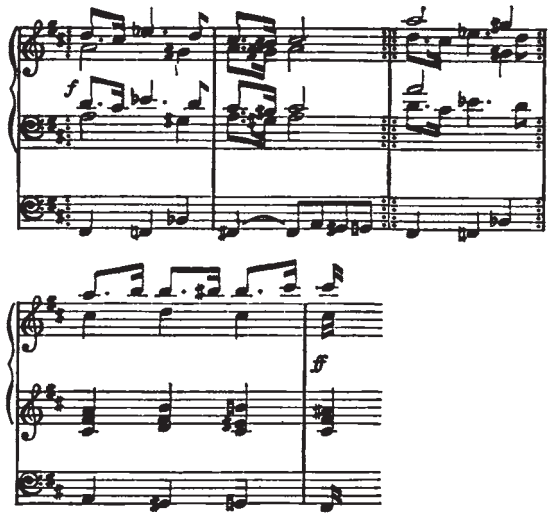
Sixteen years elapsed before Franck put forth any more organ works. Of the three pieces which then appeared, pride of place must be given to the Pièce Héroïque. The Fan-

tasie in A is unequal, many beautiful harmonic and rhythmic effects alternating with some dull and hesitating patches. It contains so much good music, however, that it should not be neglected. There is a very touching second subject, and a glorious climax. The Cantabile shows Franck in melodious vein. It happens to be the only one of his organ pieces in which we find any pronounced trace of Wagner's influence. The page commencing



might have come from "Tristan."

In the "Pièce Héroïque" Franck is again at his best. The questioning, troubled opening subject is very striking and there is some gorgeous harmony. The second subject is less original, a specially unfortunate fact, for the composer ends with a loud treatment of it. The work thus finishes (in my opinion) less well than it began, and the comparative weakness of the conclusion is emphasized by the bold splendor of the preceding page. But there can be no question of the excellence of the work as a whole. Here is a brief extract, as a taste of some of the striking harmony:



The Andantino is a pleasing piece of no great moment. It has many characteristic touches, but lacks the outstanding originality of the best of the music we have been considering.

IV

Franck's Three Chorals are sometimes announced on recital programs as Choral Preludes. Presumably organists feel that the word "Choral" is suggestive of a mere hymn tune rather than of a long important movement, and alter Franck's title accordingly. But a Choral Prelude is a

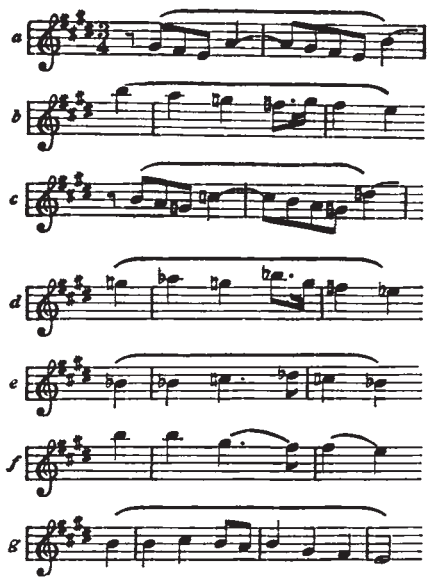
definite musical form, and as these three works are certainly not cast in that form it is a pity to miscall them. They have nothing of the choral prelude about them beyond the fact that their main themes are of a hymn-like character. They are fine examples of the large variation form brought to perfection by Beethoven in his last works. Franck's music has much of the lofty and remote feeling of Bach, but in regard to form and methods of development it is clear that he looked more to Bonn than to Leipsic.

The Three Chorals are full of interest from a structural point of view, No. 1 especially so. I propose to analyze them somewhat fully, because, more perhaps than any of the composer's organ works, they must be thoroughly understood to be enjoyed.

No. 1 presents us at the outset with a departure from "choral prelude" tradition, the choral making its first appearance as a kind of coda to a section consisting of several subjects also in hymn-like style. It continues in this modest rôle until the third variation (page 10), from which point it becomes more and more insistent, until on page 14 it appears on the full organ and ends the work. The management of this emergence and final triumph of a theme that had so far been kept in the background is as fine as the form is novel. Franck used to say of it: "You will see the *real* choral. It is not the *choral;* it is something that grows out of the work."

This remark seems cryptic until one carefully examines the music, so let us take the subjects set out by Franck, and see how this "growing out" is managed.

The exposition lasts until the third line on page 3, and may be divided into seven sections: *a*, bars 1–8; *b*, 8–15; *c*, 15–23; *d*, 23–30; *e*, 30–36; *f*, 36–46. What proves eventually to be "the real choral" then follows; we will call it *g*. Here are the beginnings of these seven themes, in their order of entry:



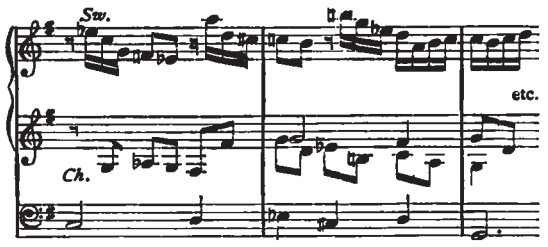
The first six are more or less connected; *c* is a repetition of *a*, exact as to the first half,

but changed as to the second; the rhythms of *b* and *d* are similar; *f* is a variant of *e*. It may be asked, why not consider the whole of these forty-six bars as one section? The answer is that Franck evidently regarded them as made up of separate themes, for in the first variation we find only *a*, *c*, and *e* treated, and in the second, *a* and *d*.

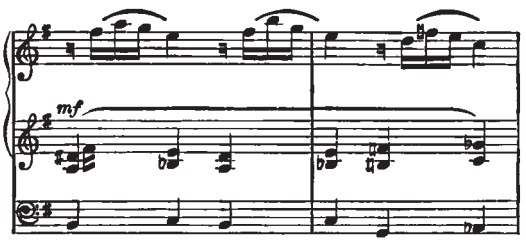
Although the first appearance of the choral is in the character of appendix to forty-six bars of important matter, the end of the first variation finds it made a little more of by means of fuller laying-out, and with decorative interludes derived from *a*. It is still suggestive of a coda, however.

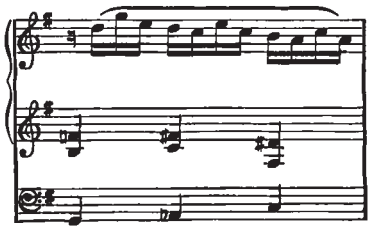
The *maestoso* passage on page 6 is important because it brings on to the scene the figure

from which a highly expressive theme is evolved and used in the second variation. This begins on page 7, and is a long free commentary on *a* and *d*, though the former is not easily identified owing to its being presented in the tonic minor, and merely suggested harmonically. The part that catches the ear is the melody developed from the quotation above. There is some beautiful harmony in these pages, for instance.

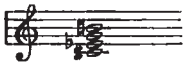


and (a good example of Franck's use of sliding consecutive sevenths):

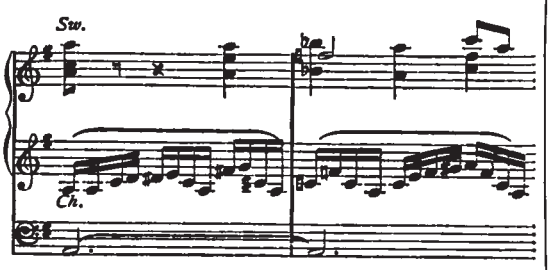




The pungent discord



in bar two of the first of these extracts is a prominent feature subsequently. Very easily identified is *d* (page 8), now treated with arpeggio accompaniment. The sudden plunge into the key of a major third below with which it opens is a favorite device of Franck. Here it is combined with another characteristic effect,—a pedal point on the mediant:



The third variation begins on line 2 of page 10, and at once begins to bring *g* (the choral) into prominence. We have glances at *a* on page 13, but save for this brief space, and during the working-up section which follows, *g* becomes increasingly important, finally appearing *ff* on pages 14 and 15.

There is an element of the dramatic in this struggling forth of a theme from the position of pendant to that of principal. One wonders if Franck got the idea from Beethoven's somewhat analogous procedure in the "Prometheus" music, and in the Finale to the "Eroica," where what appears to be a theme for variations, after being treated twice,

turns out after all to be merely the bass of the real subject.

While the first two pages of this work are perhaps unsatisfactory owing to their restless chromaticism, there can be no question as to the eloquent and appealing beauty of the remainder. Like most of Franck's music, it is on the melancholy side, but its melancholy is of the fine and healthy type that stimulates rather than depresses, and it gives way to a note of triumph.

The second Choral has for its main theme a bold melody of sixteen bars, ending in the dominant. It is given out by the pedals without preamble of any kind, and has a strong *passacaglia* flavor. Very impressive is its first appearance, accompanied chiefly by a bare octave F sharp above. It is repeated three times, with varied harmony and figuration, the third repetition beginning in the subdominant and ending, of course, in the tonic. Finer harmonization than Franck gives us in these three variations it would be difficult to imagine. Unfortunately the long section which follows is not so interesting. It suffers from scrappiness, no fewer than four new subjects being announced, all of them much less striking than the first. The return to the latter is deferred still longer by a *Largamente con fantasia*, the most striking feature of which is a descending passage based chiefly on diminished thirds, and therefore suggestive of the tonal scale.

At first sight very odd, the passage becomes simple if the implied harmony

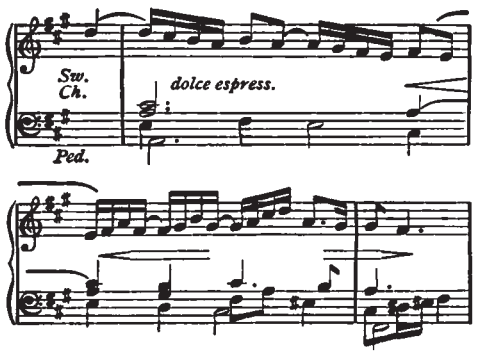
is borne in mind.

The first half of the principal subject is then treated fugally (with some beautiful writing), after which the whole of it is played twice on the pedals, with the second subject (which first appeared at the end of page 18) used above it. There may be some difference of opinion as to whether this passage should be played with 8 ft. or 16 ft. stops. The composer gives no directions, and we should therefore be right in continuing with the 16 ft. pedal already in use. On the other hand, the harmony here and there suggests that the real bass is in the left-hand part, and that a pedal 8 ft. alone would be better. This would give the chief subject as a tenor solo,—a frequent device in French organ music, as we have seen. Both methods are so feasible that the question must be left open. I think, however, we should be safe in making the pedal part rather more prominent than is suggested by Franck: an 8 ft. stop

of telling (not loud) quality might be added to the 16 ft. already drawn.

Two pages of fine working-up lead to the last imposing statement of the chief theme, after which one of the secondary subjects ends the piece softly. Not so subtle a work as the first, No. 2 nevertheless contains some splendid music, being always first rate when dealing with the opening subject.

In No. 3 the choral does not appear until after two pages of preludial matter consisting chiefly of broken arpeggios,—material of which considerable use is made later. In spite of some chromatic harmony, the choral has a distinctly modal flavor. After it has been stated twice, with some development of the introductory matter, we come to a section marked *adagio*, in which we find the composer in his tenderest and most mystical vein:



After two pages of a lovely stream of melody, the first phrase of the *adagio* is used

as an interlude to the lines of the choral, the latter now richly harmonized,—a most beautiful passage, this. A powerful climax over Franck's favorite pedal on the mediant is then worked up, after which we have a couple of exciting pages based chiefly on the preludial matter, introduced *pp.* and modulating over a series of pedal points through D flat, D major, B major to C sharp minor, at which point the choral begins to assert itself. Finally, after a vigorous *crescendo*, it appears *ff.* in chords in the right hand, the left hand playing arpeggios founded on the introduction, and so producing a brilliant and sonorous ending.

Comparison between the three works is inevitable. Personally I think that No. 3 is by far the best of the set, and its superiority is due largely to the fact of its being based on three subjects instead of on six or seven, as is the case with its fellows. There is not a weak line in it, and its animated and comparatively straightforward character seems likely to make it much more popular than Nos. 1 and 2, subtle and beautiful though they are.

The Three Chorals were Franck's last works. Just before his death he wished to drag himself once more to the organ loft at St. Clotilde, in order to settle some details in their registration, and the manuscript was lying on his bed when the priest came, at his earnest desire, to give him his viaticum.

In order that our survey of Franck's organ

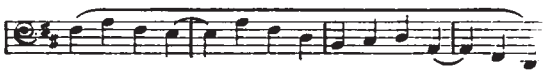
music may be complete, mention should be made of two volumes of pieces published posthumously. They were written and sent off from time to time to an old friend who held an organist's post in the provinces. Franck had in view a player of modest abilities as an improviser, and therefore many of the pieces are short passages for use as interludes. There are some long movements, and some fine ideas, but the latter are rarely made the most of, and the collection gives us a mere shadow of the composer of the works we have been considering. Perhaps the best of the bunch are some arrangements of old carol tunes. These are well worth playing. There are also some short pieces which show the simple side of Franck's art at its best, and in spite of the inferior pages (which have a pronounced smack of Lefèbure-Wèly) the volumes are too good to be neglected, especially by players who need easy pieces for voluntaries or studies.

V

Franck's music is easily identified, not only by its breadth and harmonic warmth, but by certain little traits, some so pronounced as to deserve the less complimentary title of mannerisms. He is fond of repeating a figure with slight changes. Often this change takes the form of an enlarged leap, giving an effect of oblique expansion. His organ works are full of examples, and he

made use of some form of the device throughout his career. It appears even in his opus 1, the Trio in F sharp:

Sometimes he employs it with splendid effect as a bass, as in the Prière for organ. A more elastic use of it is to be found in his last works, *e. g.*, in the theme of the Finale of the Symphony:

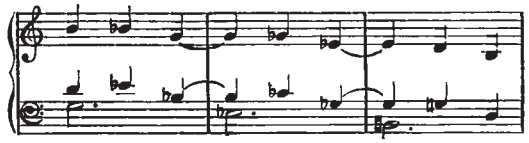


as well as in many accompanimental figures in "The Beatitudes."

He shows a strong preference for keys involving the use of many sharps. His most rapt and ecstatic strains are usually in the key of B, F♯, and C♯, and he uses the notation of these keys even when the process involves a score peppered with double sharps. Highly characteristic are certain harmonic progressions. Successions of 9ths and 7ths are by way of becoming sickly commonplaces today. They were somewhat of a novelty in Franck's time, and he uses them liberally, though by making them a basis rather than a feature, he strengthens progressions that otherwise tend to become cloying.

His fondness for canon and pedal-points he perhaps owes to Bach. His canonic writing is never dry, and his pedal-points full of daring. He was one of the first to fully realize the dramatic and sinister effects to be obtained from the mediant used in this way.

His favorite device of modulation by thirds is one that is easily recognized. Here is a scheme that is used as a basis for a great variety of treatments.



But the distinguishing feature of Franck's best music is its mysticism—a matter of spirit rather than letter. With other composers this subtle quality shows itself in isolated passages; with Franck it tinges and permeates whole movements. It is an amazing fact that this brooding, intimate feeling, this subtle aloofness, should be the prime characteristic of one whose life, to an unusual degree, was given to drudgery and pot-boiling task-work. There can be no more eloquent proof of the real greatness of Franck's personality than this ability to rise superior to his environment.

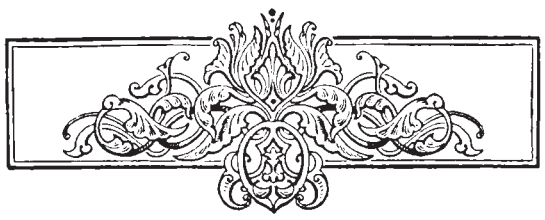
His best work has an undercurrent of sadness. Apropos of this quality, the following

extract from a letter written to me recently by a distinguished Belgian organist may be of interest. He says: "The French call him a French master—now!—but his music is true Belgian music, with the high colors of the Flemish painters and the melancholic and *tourmentée* melodic line which is characteristic of the Walloon people,"—a comment worth quoting, I think, not only for its acuteness, but because it serves to remind us of the marked difference between Franck and the more distinctively French School of Debussy and Ravel.

Perhaps this chapter can most fittingly conclude with tributes from two of his compatriots. M. Camille Manclair, in his "La Religion de la Musique" (Paris, 1909), says of Franck: "No one else has that faculty of suave and sensuous mysticism, that unique charm, that serene plenitude of fervor, that purity of soaring melody, above all, that power of joy which springs from a religious effusion, that radiant whiteness resulting from a harmony at once ingenuous and ecstatic. There is no severity in this evangelical mysticism. Undoubtedly the organ Chorals and pianoforte works are of powerful construction, and have the magnificent rectitude which proceeds directly from Bach. But Bach is formidable: he thunders, he has the robust faith of the Middle Ages, his rhythm is colossal; even his gaiety is as alarming as the laughter of a giant. Franck is enamored of gentleness and consolation,

and his music rolls into the soul in long waves, as on the slack of a moonlit tide. It is tenderness itself; divine tenderness borrowing the humble smile of humanity." He hastens to point out, however, that there is no lack of passion or romance when these are called for.

And thus the author of "Jean Christophe": "Franck stood outside the Wagnerian movement, in a serene and fecund solitude. To the attraction which he exercised by his genius, his personality, and his moral greatness, upon the little circle of friends who knew and respected him, must be added the authority of his scientific knowledge. In the face of the Wagnerian art, he unconsciously resuscitated the spirit of John Sebastian Bach, the infinitely rich and profound spirit of the past. In this way he found himself unintentionally the head of a school, and the greatest educational force in contemporary French music."



CHAPTER V

I

A FEW months after Franck's birth, there came on the scene another Belgian destined to play an important part in the history of French organ music—NICHOLAS JACQUES LEMMENS. Son of an organist, he was born on January 3, 1823, at Zoerle-Parwys, Westerloo. After a few years' study with Van der Broeck at Dieste, he entered the Brussels Conservatoire in 1839, leaving it shortly afterwards owing to the illness of his father, and succeeding his former master at Dieste. The end of 1841, however, found him back at the Conservatoire, working hard under Fétis. Five years later he went (at the government's cost) to Breslau, where he studied playing with Adolph Hesse for a year. In 1849 he became organ professor at Brussels, and by his skill and enthusiasm speedily raised the standard of organ-playing throughout France and Belgium. His influence was far-reaching, for not only had he a large number of brilliant pupils,

including Guilmant, but his "Organ School" was officially used at the conservatoires at Brussels, Paris, Madrid, and other centers, besides being translated and adapted to English organs. He was engaged for many years on a method of accompanying Plainsong, wrote much miscellaneous work for his instrument, and was altogether a well-equipped and earnest musician whose name deserves a high place in the history of the art. He died at Castle Linterport, near Malines, on January 30, 1881.

Although Lemmens's works had considerable vogue a generation ago, far too many organists to-day know him chiefly as the composer of a "Storm." This is unfortunate, for with the more severe occupants of our organ-loft, "storms" are taboo and their composer anathema, though we do not find that Beethoven, Rossini, Spohr, or any other of the classical composers who gave us orchestral bad weather have suffered in reputation as a consequence. "Storms," whether for orchestra or organ, should surely be judged on their merits as music, instead of being condemned as a class. Looked at critically, whether as a piece of music or as tone-painting, Lemmens's effort is the best organ work of its kind. True, this is not very high praise, organ "storms" being notoriously bad. But Lemmens's example contains good writing, and if some of the pictorial means employed are conventional, he is hardly to be blamed. After all, if chromatic scales answer a particu-

lar purpose better than any other material, a man is foolish who refrains from using them because they are a trifle well worn. Lemmens, however, employs them less than some other storm-brewers, and only in the working-up of his meteorological climax, at which point we have downward-rushing arpeggios and shattering chords used with fine effect. On the whole, in spite of some platitudinous patches (which make it about four minutes too long) the piece is better worth playing and hearing than a good many works which are standing dishes merely because they happen to have been concocted by a classical composer. There is a good deal in a name, especially in the organ-loft, and too many of us deliberately choose an admittedly dull work by Bach in preference to a very-much-alive one by (say) William Jones, partly because it is less trouble to go on playing Bach than it is to investigate William's claim to consideration. Also (and perhaps most important of all) Bach's name looks well on a program, whereas poor Bill Jones. . . .

What a heaven-on-earth it will be when we players shed our snobbishness and judge works honestly on their merits!

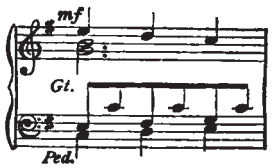
But those who have no stomach for Lemmens's "Storm" can hardly deny the excellence of his Three Sonatas, works good enough for any company. They are perhaps a trifle weak as to their slow movements, but in other respects are admirable. The "Pontificale" especially makes a fine big recital number. The

"Four Pieces in Free Style" consist of the "Storm," a Fantasia in A minor, the Christmas Offertorium, and the Allegretto in B flat. The Fantasia and the "Adoration" from the Offertorium do duty also as the first two movements of the "Sonata Pascale." The Allegretto is the pick of a good set, being quite Mozartean in tunefulness and grace.

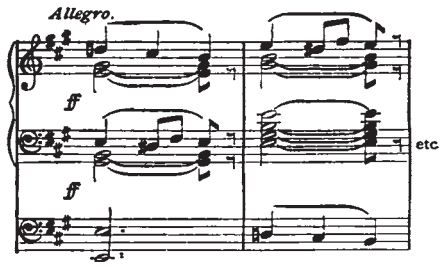
Although the organ school is inevitably somewhat out-of-date on the technical side, its name is assured of long life by virtue of the pieces extracted from it. About a score were published separately under the editorship of W. T. Best, and of these the "Triumphal March," the "Finale," and "Ite missa est," are by no means destined for the shelf yet awhile, though they do not show the composer to such advantage as do the best movements of the Sonatas. Less well known, but worthy of use when a good voluntary of a solid type is required, are "Laudate Dominum" (a massive five-part fugal treatment of a simple theme of ecclesiastical character), "Lauda Sion Salvatore" (a similar work on the opening phrase of the ancient plainsong sequence), and "Hosannah," a capital free postlude. There are also a couple of well-written and effective fugues in C minor and F minor. In fact, Lemmens's "Organ School" probably contains more good and attractive music than any other work of its kind.

His contrapuntal writing is usually first-rate

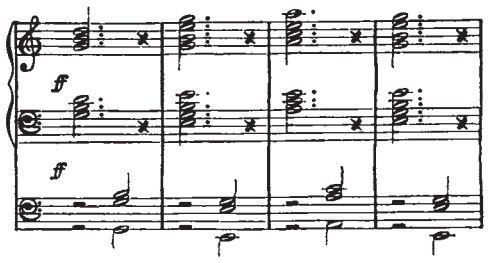
in flow, and somewhat Hesse-ian in flavor. Thanks to his animated style and eye for effect, he is rarely dry, even in his most industrious moods. For example, looked at, or read through slowly, his "Ite missa est" seems to be a terrible specimen of a contrapuntal "much ado about nothing." The theme is of little interest, and a composer undertaking to extract eight pages of music from it sets himself a stiff task. But thanks to his fluency and an enterprising key-scheme, Lemmens does it, and the result, played up to pace on a big organ, "comes off" with surprising *éclat*. Occasionally we find him nodding in a way unexpected in such a good workman; for instance, in a passage in the "Cantabile," of which I quote the worst bar:



The dotted minims are very ugly on the organ, though they could be written orchestrally, or even for piano, in which case the sound would be decreasing. Again, the Scherzo Symphonique suffers from a "too, too solid" left-hand part and some harshly-disposed auxiliary notes, *e. g.*:



There are some striking anticipations of Guilmant in the "Organ School." Thus, the fine sonorous appearance of the second subject at the end of the Finale of Guilmant's first sonata might have appeared minus the triple-pedal chords on the second and fourth beats of the bar had not Lemmens given us this for his ending of "Lauda Sion":



and so on for twenty bars. Again we can hardly play the Cantabile in B minor without being reminded of Guilmant's Cantilène in the same key, especially in such passages as the

return of the first subject, with the right thumb sustaining F sharp. And there are others.

On the whole, we are not likely to overestimate the influence of Lemmens on his contemporaries and successors. As player, teacher, and composer, he had a powerful and wholesome effect on organ music everywhere outside Germany, and organists who keep his memory green by playing the handful of his best works will be giving him no more than his deserts.

II

In CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS we have a composer of extraordinary versatility, and one whose success in widely different branches of creative work, in literature, and as performer, fairly entitles him to be regarded as the Admirable Crichton of modern music. He was born at Paris on October 9, 1835, and is still busy. Though his output for the organ is small in bulk, it is high in quality, as may be expected. Here is the modest list:

Op. 7.—Three Rhapsodies on Breton Themes.
Op. 9.—Bénédiction Nuptiale.
Fantaisie (E flat).
Elévation.
Op. 99.—Three Preludes and Fugues.
Op. 101.—Fantaisie (D flat).
Op. 107.—Marche Religieuse.
Op. 109.—Three Preludes and Fugues.
Op. 150.—Seven Improvisations.

Perhaps nothing is more striking in the organ music of Saint-Saëns than the maturity of the early works. In the Rhapsodies, the Bénédiction Nuptiale, and the Fantaisie in E♭, all of which were composed when he was a mere lad, his touch is as sure and his style as formed as in works written fifty years later. We have in them the simplicity and clearness, the almost cold precision that we find in the bulk of his work. For him the title Rhapsody or Fantaisie is no excuse for any kind of sloppiness in either material or treatment. Through it all we find neatness, balance, and polish, with at times some of the intimate quality of good chamber music.

Perhaps it is this last quality in Saint-Saëns's organ music that has hindered the best of it from achieving anything like the popularity it deserves. Much of it is "musicians' music," and therefore

> "too good
> For [amateur] human nature's daily food."

For Rhapsodies (and youthful works at that) the three pieces in op. 7 are surprisingly free from extravagance. Not many composers writing a rhapsody in the heyday of youth can discover so orderly a muse as does Saint-Saëns, —probably because he can hardly be said to have had a heyday in the usual sense of the word. One who produces, as he did, a successful symphony at the age of sixteen, is a seasoned, almost *blasé*, practitioner at a time

of life when most composers are in the storm-and-stress, rule-breaking, and convention-defying stage. Partly because of his phenomenal early success, and partly of course for temperamental reasons, Saint-Saëns is that rare bird, a composer with no storm-and-stress period. Thus the Rhapsodies are conspicuous for an economy of means, a studied simplicity and reticence rarely shown by any but mature composers. Indeed, we might safely challenge any one not knowing the dates of the works to say which were written first, the Rhapsodies, or the Marche Religieuse and D flat Fantaisie. We should probably be told that all were produced in the composer's middle period, whereas op. 7 was written by a boy, and opp. 101 and 107 when the boy was about fifty years older.

The Rhapsodies are useful items in the recitalist *répertoire*. They are of moderate length, and while their many musicianly touches make them enjoyable to the player, their simple tunefulness appeals to the average listener.

The "Bénédiction Nuptiale" is also so well known that little need be said of it. The bell-like effect of the quietly jangling fourths with which it opens, its pleasant little tune, and its exquisitely simple close have long made it a favorite. The Fantaisie in E♭ is a much bigger piece of work. It bears no *opus* number or date, but in the earlier editions (very badly engraved) it is just possible to make out under the composer's name the words "Or-

ganiste de Saint-Merri." This proves it to be a youthful work, as Saint-Saëns was at Saint-Merri from 1853 to 1858, in which year he went to the Madeleine. The Fantaisie is perhaps the best known and appreciated of all his organ music. The effective dodging from manual to manual has surely never been made better use of than in the opening *Con moto*. But good as all this is, the *Allegro* has greater value from a purely musical point of view. The theme with which it opens can fairly be described as jolly, a character it retains even when undergoing the ordeal of being treated fugally. This buoyancy is found in the rest of the material,—a vigorous springing figure appearing first in the bass at the end of the fifth page (recalling the pedal theme in Bach's great 9–8 Prelude in C) and used with fine effect on the seventh page, and brilliant rushing scales in octaves and sixths. The result is a remarkably attractive work.

The Elévation is a pleasant little piece of no great moment. It might have come from the pen of any other French church composer of the period. It is not particularly characteristic of the composer: Gounod might have written the tune and Lefèbure-Wèly the accompaniment.

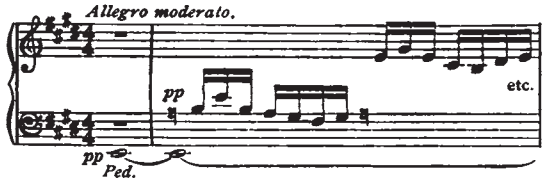
III

After this, Saint-Saëns, while turning out a vast quantity of work of various kinds, remained silent as an organ composer for

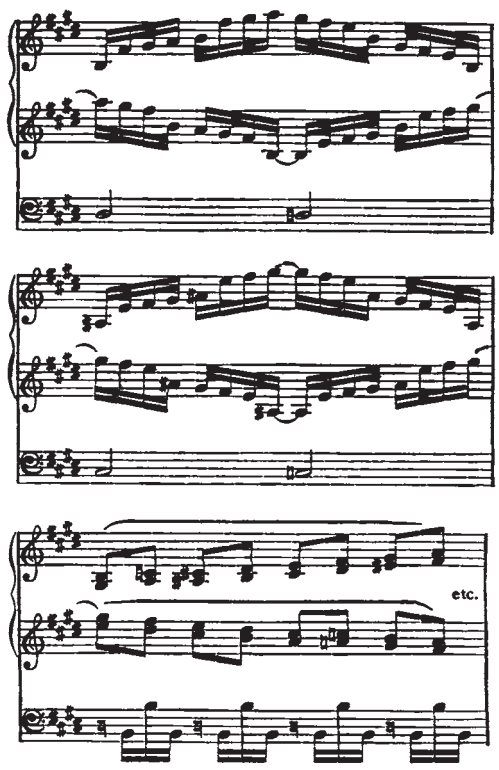
nearly forty years. In 1891, he produced a set of Three Preludes and Fugues, works of the highest class. Unfortunately, their excellences are of the kind that do not make for popularity. Only musicians are likely to fully appreciate their scholarly refinement. This fact should ensure their being in every organist's *répertoire*, but does not, for reasons which we need not discuss.

But if full appreciation of them is to be expected only from cultivated hearers, it is difficult to believe that any fairly intelligent audience will not take pleasure in these Preludes and Fugues. So many organists have yet to make their acquaintance, that a brief description may be useful.

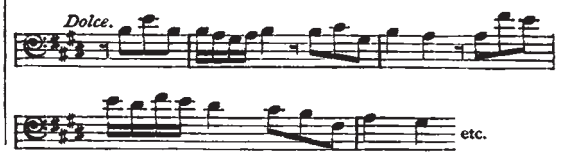
No. 1, in E major, is chiefly in three-part harmony, and its five pages are developed almost entirely from the graceful semiquaver figure with which it opens:



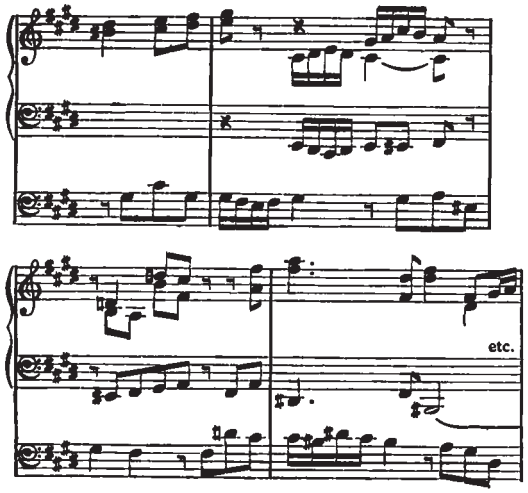
Two manuals are required uncoupled,—a frequent arrangement with French composers. Delightful coloring results from the interlacing of the two manual parts. Here is a particularly effective passage:



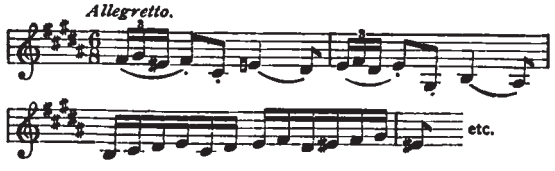
The fugue is in the same tuneful vein, as might be expected from its subject:



Nevertheless the treatment is decidedly complex at times. Of the many points of interest, note the beginning of page 8, where the left hand supplies the real bass of the harmony, in spite of the 16-ft. stop of the pedals:—



The second Prelude is a delicious piece in B major, consisting of a duet between the left hand and pedals accompanied by undulating chords in triplets. The fugue to which it leads is concerned with a subject equally lyrical:



No. 3 provides us with a more strenuous couple of pieces. The Prelude consists of five pages of brilliant arpeggio work for the manuals in demisemiquavers (*vivace*). From this hail of notes a simple tune emerges, while the pedals, at first contenting themselves with a mere bass, later on help out the melodic interest. But, after all, the main effect of the movement is in its scintillating brilliance. It is really a first-rate toccata. The Fugue (*allegro maestoso*) supplies a solid contrast. Care should be taken not to overdo the *maestoso* at the expense of the *allegro*. It is a fine effective Fugue, but only when played at a good round pace. The simplicity of the final cadence is characteristic, the seventh of the dominant chord being conspicuous by its absence. If you would realize how uncommon this is, hunt through any volume of modern music, even of hymn tunes or chants.

The second set of Preludes and Fugues is as valuable as the first, though very different in style, and perhaps a little less attractive at first hearing.

No. 1, in D minor (*assez lent*), commences with a vague questioning little phrase of two notes, repetitions of which lead to a more extended theme, the little two-note query being still suggested from time to time. A half-close leads to a fugal exposition of a subject, the opening of which has a slender connection with what has gone before. The Prelude, which is quite short, ends *pp*. It is a melancholy little piece, full of suspensions and

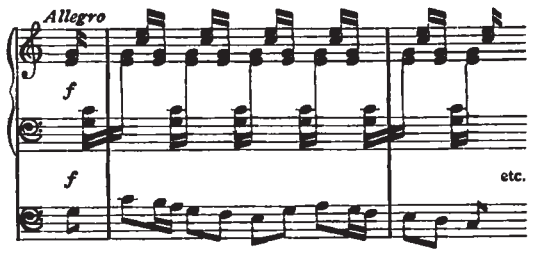
poignant discords. Notice the way in which the treble on the third page drags itself down, mostly by semitones, from the top of the keyboard to the final cadence on the middle D.

The subject of the Fugue begins with the two notes which opened the Prelude. A second subject of more animated (and also more conventional) character appears on the fifth page and is worked at considerable length. The two subjects are combined eventually in the orthodox way. A difficult work this and "caviare to the general." There is a bleakness about it, however, that has an attraction all its own. It is big music too, not in sound (for it never goes beyond a mere *f.*) nor in the piling up of notes (for we find no more than four parts going until the close), but in idea and treatment. This spacious feeling is especially present throughout the last two pages, even where the harmony is in only three parts. There are but two expression marks throughout the Fugue's six pages: a *p.* at the beginning and an *f.* at the pedal entry on the eighth page. The austere, almost bitter, melancholy of the music makes itself felt without such aids.

No. 2, in G major, is throughout quietly cheerful, with a smack of the pastoral. In both movements much play is made with two contrasted manuals. The Fugue is a double one for three voices, and is quite Mozartean, not only in its graceful tunefulness, but also in the ease with which the composer shows that scientific devices are his humble and

obedient servants. Thus, while the counterpoint will delight the pedagogue, the resultant music will please all but the veriest Philistine.

No. 3 opens with a Bach-like treatment of the chord of C and then resolves itself into a brilliant affair, in which passages of thirds play a prominent part. The pedals are principally concerned with the figure of the opening bars, and a breezy, straightforward theme, given out by the pedals under a broken chord of C:



In the last page it appears as a canon by inversion. The Fugue is very long, but the interest is well sustained, and grows splendidly at the end. It is all very strong and masculine. In its bigness it recalls the first Fugue of the set, though in much more cheerful vein.

We have here two groups of pieces deserving wider recognition than they have so far received. Why do our examining bodies still go on asking candidates of ripe age to prove their abilities by playing hackneyed

fugues which they learned in their pupilage, instead of encouraging them to break fresh ground by studying such works as these?

The "Fantaisie" in D♭ differs much in mood from the earlier work in E♭. There all was abounding vigor; here we find the composer in much more chastened vein. It opens with a wistful little theme, and for the first six pages is decidedly *triste*. Then follows a fugal section (*sotto voce*) in F♯ minor, somewhat Franckian (compare with that composer's Fugue in B minor), which in turn gives way to an Allegro in D♭. This begins with a metamorphosis of the Fugue subject, yet another version of which will be found on page 13. This section also makes considerable use of the opening theme.

In the last page we have a novel and beautiful treatment of a tonic pedal, the manuals (I. and II., uncoupled) supplying arpeggios of D♭, C, C♭, B♭, and A, the effect being made more striking by the use on II. of a 4-ft. flute only, and on I. of an 8-ft. alone. If I call the Fantaisie in E♭ "Spring" or "Youth," and this in D♭ "Autumn," you will get a fair idea of their respective qualities. The later work is hardly likely to be so popular as its fellow. It is long, and its beauties are too often of the subtle and elusive kind to make a wide appeal. Throughout it has much of the brooding spirit of Franck.

In op. 107 we have that uncommon thing, an original march. It strikes out a bold path

at once by giving us a page and a half of syncopated bass,—a very un-marchlike procedure. This, with the swaying tune above it, results in a strong suggestion of bells. There is no regular trio. We have instead a quaver figure played on the pedals, with the slenderest of accompaniments in a little phrase of two notes on the manuals. The figure then appears in the tenor, rather more fully accompanied, and from it is derived the animated manual passages following. Under these, on page 5, the bass is heard struggling to deliver itself of the march theme. It gives up the attempt, however, and at the top of page 6 contents itself with the syncopation with which it opened; while the theme appears *ff* on the manuals, hidden in widespread arpeggios. A coda in the sustained style of the commencement brings a striking work to an end.

CHAPTER VI

I

WE come now to a group of composers whose works were until recently looked on as representative of modern French organ music. We have gradually come to see, however, that they represented only one side of the national art, and by no means the strong side. We need not concern ourselves here with Lemaigre, Grison, Collin, MacMaster, and Deshayes. Their work is not large in bulk; the best of it is slight, and the worst is as the worst of Lefèbure-Wèly and Batiste, without the brilliance that saves some of the latter from entire reprobation. Nor need we dwell long on Salomé, Guilmant, Dubois, Claussmann, and de la Tombelle, excellent as much of their music is. No useful purpose is served by detailed criticism of works that are in every organist's repertory and which make their full appeal at a first hearing. Our space will be more profitably spent on Widor's symphonies (some of the finest movements of which are little known), and on the music of Louis Vierné and other writers of to-day who are making notable additions to the store of really original organ music.

Before considering the above named group individually, let us notice a few characteristics common to its members. First, it will be admitted, I think, that their best work is almost always to be found in their shorter flights. Their genius is lyrical rather than epic or dramatic. Generally speaking, they are not strong in the matter of development, and so their sonatas are only moderately successful. Although they have produced some excellent fugues, the best are of the short and spirited type. We search their longer movements in vain for such fine examples of cumulative (or even sustained) interest as we find in Franck, Saint-Saëns, and Widor, or in Vierné or Barie among the younger school.

Perhaps this is partly owing to the fact that they seem to have somehow escaped the influence of Franck, whose skill in development (derived chiefly from Beethoven) has had a marked effect on certain modern French composers.

Despite their lack of harmonic enterprise there is generally enough piquancy and variety to keep the palate whetted, especially in Salomé and Dubois. Curiously enough the most adventurous harmonist is one of the lesser lights of the group, Claussmann, who at times indulges in chromaticism of a decidedly Franckian flavor. It is also apparent that the most conventional harmonist is the most prolific composer, Guilmant.

We may easily adopt a superior air, and belittle the work of this school. In fairness,

however, we must remember that their works played an important part in raising the standard of organ music. A public not ready for Franck, Saint-Saëns, and Widor could understand and enjoy Salomé, Dubois, and Guilmant. An important step forward is made when it can be demonstrated (as it was by these men) that music may be so well written as to satisfy the critic, without lacking qualities attractive to the layman.

II

Coming to personalities, we have in THÉODORE CÉSAR SALOMÉ a composer whose best work is remarkably graceful and charming. He was born on January 20, 1834, at Paris, was educated at the Conservatoire, for many years played the small organ at La Trinité, and died at St. Germain-en-Laye in July, 1896. Of his five books of pieces the first, I think, is the best as a whole. Its successors contain some good numbers, but too many lack the spontaneity of the earliest set. There are some capital marches, the one in E flat in Book II. being a particularly good specimen. Salomé's one sonata contains some very effective passages, but is not convincing as a complete work. Its Finale is a well-written vigorous fugue, and the Andante is unexpectedly subtle, but a good deal of the energy of the first movement is spent on rather conventional material. The best of Salomé's short pieces will long retain the popularity they fully deserve.

When we come to consider the great mass of work left by FÉLIX ALEXANDRE GUILMANT, an awkward question arises. What would be his position as a composer, had he not been also one of the greatest and most popular of players? A critical examination of his works leaves one with a feeling that the composer owes much to the world-famous recitalist. Even allowing for the proportion of inferior work that is more or less inevitable in the case of such a busy writer, one cannot help thinking that Guilmant has been overrated. His music is still widely played, and will be for a long time yet, but how much of it? Out of the long list of his miscellaneous works it would be difficult to select more than a dozen as being destined for a long life. Perhaps this dozen would be the following: Funeral March; Cantilène Pastorale; Allegretto in B minor; Meditation in F sharp minor; Lamentation; March on a Theme of Handel; Grand Chœur in D; Prayer and Cradle-song; Offertory on Christmas Themes; Triumphal March;—but here I begin to have doubts about the remaining places in the team, so I leave the reader to finish the selection. These and perhaps a few more pieces away, there remains a huge stack of work that can only be described as consisting chiefly of amiable commonplace.

In spite of the genuinely French character of most of the lighter compositions, there is a good deal in Guilmant's writing that suggests the Teuton rather than the Gaul. His fugal

writing and counterpoint generally is of the energetic and workmanlike stamp that German composers have always been able to deliver in any quantity, and at the shortest notice. We miss the subtlety and reticence characteristic of the best French organ music. (Compare Saint-Saëns's Six Fugues with any half-dozen of Guilmant, if you wish to see this difference at a glance.)

Perhaps his admiration for Handel is responsible for his massive chordal effects. They are generally in keeping, especially in the "Grand Chœur alla Handel" (in the Trio of which the *alla* is not very apparent), and in the March on "Lift up your Heads." But the effect is apt to be fatiguing to both player and audience, save in a large building. And Guilmant might with advantage have remembered sometimes that big chords do not necessarily produce a big effect, whereas big ideas and fine polyphony are unfailing.

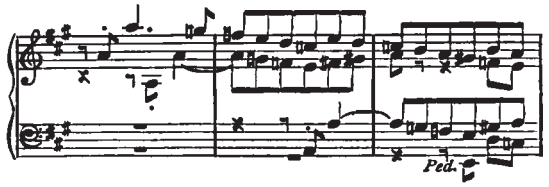
I have tried hard to feel enthusiastic about the sonatas, but in vain. They contain a few excellent movements, but in bulk they merely show that the composer's real strength lay in the smaller forms. Generally they are weak in the matter of second subjects. This weakness is fatal, because in cases where the sonata form is strictly adhered to, the interest of the movement fails at the end, the matter not being strong enough to stand the ordeal of repetition and working out.

They begin splendidly with No. 1. It is true that the matter is not very original, but

the manner saves the situation, with a bit to spare. The abounding energy and the unfailing eye for effect make it one of the most enjoyable of organ sonatas. The Pastorale is a perfect example of a kind of piece that only a Frenchman could write. In spite of the rather threadbare passage work, the Finale is brilliantly successful, being a good example of the French type of Toccata.

This whole work deserves more frequent performance in its original form of symphony for orchestra and organ.

Guilmant never wrote another sonata so good as No. 1. The second symphony in A (called also sonata, rather confusingly, as there is also a second sonata in D) was written in 1906,—thirty-two years later than the first. It is never likely to be anything like so popular as its predecessor, nor does it deserve to be. The first movement has good stuff in it, and is effective chiefly by means of its vigor and animation. But there is too much rather facile imitative work, and we get rather tired of such points as:



The second movement is a not very interesting Adagio con affetto, and the Scherzo that follows is also a failure. It is not saved by mere pace as are some movements of this

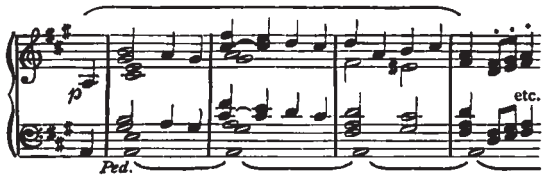
type. Skillful treatment of the principal subject might have redeemed it, but the composer is satisfied with mere repetition. As there are two trios, it will be seen at once that the amount of repetition involved is fatal to anything but a strong subject, which this is certainly not. As the trios do not help matters, the result is a damp squib, instead of the cracker promised in the title. A superfluous Andante Sostenuto, followed by an equally unnecessary Intermede, leads to an Allegro con brio in which the interest revives, the fugal writing being spirited, and the movement not too long.

The Second Sonata (D major) is the smallest and weakest of the seven, and need not detain us. The Third (C minor) is much better—a capital work, on the short side, and deservedly popular. The Fourth (D minor) bustles about a good deal without delivering itself of anything momentous.

The Fifth Sonata (C minor) most nearly approaches No. 1 in all-round excellence. It is true that the passion of the first movement is noisy rather than deep, and we have some conventional passages (*e. g.*, bars 11–14 on page 2; a longer stretch beginning at bar 16 on page 4; and perhaps bars 3–5 of the opening subject), but the net result is so rousing as to atone for these defects. The Adagio is pleasing, especially when the two subjects are combined, but the emotional appeal is small, despite the composer's request for ***molt' espressione.*** The Scherzo is a rattling move-

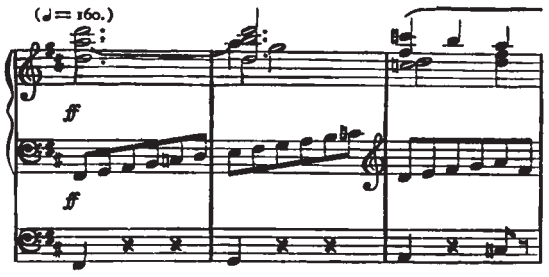
ment, with a hint of the later scherzi of Beethoven at times. But the best part of the Sonata is surely the Choral and Fugue with which it ends; a big piece of work showing a welcome blend of science and freedom. Very exciting is the dominant pedal on pages 41 and 42, and there is a real thrill in the final presentment of the Choral and Fugue subject in combination, and yet another in the bold tonic seventh of the last two lines. Altogether an unusual Sonata in that the farther it goes the better it gets.

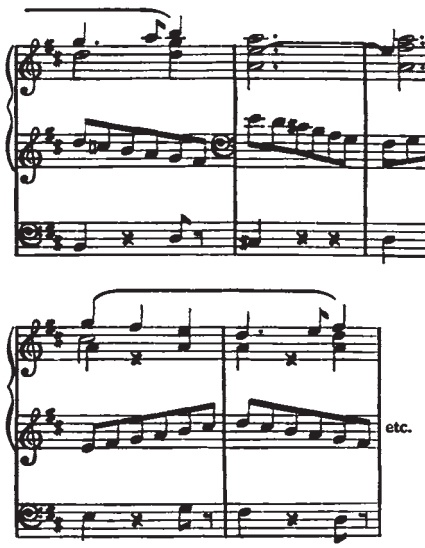
Its successor (in B minor) shows a decided falling-off. The opening Allegro con fuoco contains a lot of "padding," even for Guilmant, and its second subject is very weak. I quote the first half:



This theme becomes tamer still as it grows (if it can be said to grow), pulling up badly with a trite full close on A three bars later. By the time the composer has finished with it, the poor dominant 9th has fairly outstayed its welcome. The remainder of the work consists of a not very interesting Meditation, and a Fugue and Adagio—the Fugue serious and on the dull side, and the Adagio (based on the Fugue subject) a two-page affair that makes a rather feeble ending.

Sonata 7 (in F) is an improvement. The first movement—Entrée—would be one of the best of Guilmant's pieces were it not for the uninspired subject beginning in the last bar of page 5. The Lento Assai, with the subtitle "Dreams," begins with a succession of sevenths in root position, and raises expectation of something modern and spicy, but at the seventh bar a very ordinary theme is announced, and in spite of a few more sevenths and a bar of $\frac{5}{4}$ time toward the end the result is a very prosaic dream. The Intermezzo which follows is also matter-of-fact, its chief subject gaining little in interest by being set out in arpeggios. The fourth movement is a Grand Chœur (Tempo di minuetto), a jolly movement full of "go," and worth all the rest of the Sonata put together in attractive powers. It is fugal in a loose kind of way, the pedal entries being especially casual, but it is so spontaneous that criticism is ungracious. From many good bits, I select a few bars showing part of a brilliant scale passage in the left hand. (Notice the care with which the pedal is prevented from spoiling the scale.)





The Cantabile gives us a taste of the Guilmant of some of the earlier melodious pieces, and is, I think, the best of the Sonata slow movements save the Pastorale of No. 1. The Finale is strenuous, but not entirely convincing. It is a pity the composer did not make more use of the syncopated subject introduced on page 33. It is one of those accommodating themes that lend themselves equally well to soft or loud treatment. Its entry, *pomposo*, at the end of the movement, would perhaps have made a better finish than the one provided.

If Guilmant the composer turns out to be after all a smaller man than he appeared to

be twenty years ago, there is no question as to his greatness as a player. As the teacher of many eminent organists, too, his influence has been great and beneficial. Another side of his work that deserves honorable mention was his enthusiastic labor on behalf of music by long-forgotten old composers, and especially his editing (with M. Pirro) of the works of early French organ writers. I add a few biographical details for the sake of completeness: *b.* Boulogne, March 12, 1837; first appointment when fifteen years old; in 1860 became for a short time a pupil of Lemmens; in 1871 moved to Paris, and became organist at La Trinité, which post he held until his death. As a great all-rounder, he is certain of a permanently high place in the history of organ music.

III

François Clément Théodore Dubois was born a few months later than Guilmant—August 24, 1837—at Rosnay (Marne), and still lives, highly esteemed. He was brilliantly successful at the Conservatoire, winning the Prix de Rome in 1861. He was appointed Maître de Chapelle of St. Clotilde in 1866, and later to a similar post at the Madeleine, where he succeeded Saint-Saëns as organist in 1877. Dubois is a prolific composer in many fields, but outside France his fame rests almost entirely on his organ works. These are a mere handful beside the output of Guilmant,

but the general level is higher, and the thematic and harmonic interest is on the whole greater. It is unfortunate that his rather trivial Toccata in G is insisted on by players, to the neglect of some far better works. The pleasantly-flowing Fantaisie in E, and the vigorous Grand Chœur in the same book, are more worthy of him. The set of Twelve New Pieces (1893) is even better, the admirable Prelude and Fugue, a really fresh and charming Chant Pastoral, the "Fête Dieu" (on "Ecce Panis," and punningly dedicated to Abbe Panis of the Madeleine), the "Alleluia," the picturesque "Fiat Lux" and "In Paradisum," and the strong little offertoire in D minor, are among the very best examples of French organ music of the popular type. The three detached pieces, "Adoration and Voix Celeste," "Hosannah," and "Præludium Grave" are also good. The set of Ten Pieces is on a much smaller scale—useful short preludes and postludes. The Messe du Mariage opens with a blatant number and is unequal, but the offertoire, Cantilène, and "Laus Deo" are very effective.

The year 1837 saw the birth of CHARLES ALEXIS CHAUVET, a composer of great promise who was untimely cut off. His organ works show that he had not quite found himself. They begin well, but fall away. His most satisfying work is perhaps his simplest, a set of Nine Offertories for Advent and Christmas, in which traditional carol tunes are treated

with delightful results. The writing is largely modal, and the laying-out simple and on two staves.

ALOYS CLAUSSMANN and F. DE LA TOMBELLE are still living. The former has written a long series of pieces usually attractive, of light character and neat workmanship. Most of it is easy to play. His two Sonatas show him out of his element. I do not know how he fares in America; in England his best work hardly receives its due. This remark applies also to de la Tombelle. His Sonatas are stronger than Claussmann's, but his detached pieces show him at his best. Both these writers are apt to develop their movements at too great length and both occasionally show their admiration of César Franck by the sincerest form of flattery. (See, as remarkable instances, Claussmann's Pastorale in D, and de la Tombelle's in E, both of which contain a middle section that we may safely say would never have been written had there been no Franck Pastorale.) De la Tombelle has written some good pieces in more serious style, especially a fine Prelude and Fugue in D, dedicated to Franck.

Mention may be made also of SAMUEL ROUSSEAU (June 11, 1853–Oct. 1, 1904). He was a pupil of Franck, and his two volumes of pieces show some of the influence of his teacher in their naïve simplicity. He was, however, more successful in other fields, especially the operatic.

CHAPTER VII

EUGÈNE GIGOUT was born at Nancy on March 23, 1844. In 1863 he became organist at St. Augustin's, Paris, a post which he still holds. He is so well known through a few pieces of attractive character that the uncompromising severity of the bulk of his work comes as a surprise.

Much of his best music is of the kind that only musicians are likely to appreciate fully. Not even Saint-Saëns shows more polished neatness: not even Franck can be more broodingly aloof. These are hardly qualities that make for popularity. Surveying the works of Gigout as a whole, one is left with the impression of a deeply serious man, scholarly and somewhat of a mystic. A few light and popular works he has written, of course. He would be no Frenchman if the national feeling for brilliant effectiveness did not show itself at times. For instance, there is surely no more piquant Minuet in organ music than that in the set of Ten Pieces, nor can any Toccata be more brightly and deftly touched off than the work in B minor in the same book. The Christmas Rhapsody, again, has the right fes-

tive feeling, with the suggestion of jangling bells and homely rustic jubilation. But these and a few others are exceptions in a collection of works which for the most part are strong and musicianly rather than immediately attractive.

Here is what I believe to be a complete list of his organ music, followed by a few comments. I shall, in speaking of them, deal with the pieces in the order in which they appear below—an order which is quite haphazard, as the works are neither numbered nor dated:

Album Grégorien (organ or harmonium), containing two hundred and thirty short pieces in the ancient modes. Two vols.

One Hundred Short Pieces of similar character. One vol.

Ten pieces.

Prelude and Fugue in E major.

Poèmes Mystiques.—Prière, Cortège Rustique, Pélerinage.

En Forme de Légende.
Marche des Rogations.

Prelude and Fugue in E minor.
Andante and Allegretto in A.
Fantaisie in G.
Andantino in E minor.
Larghetto in D minor
Andante Sostenuto in A.

Meditation in D.

Introduction et Thème fugue.
Communion.
Marche Réligieuse.
Marche Funèbre.
Andante Symphonique.

Grand Chœur dialogué.
Prélude et Fugue en B♭.
Andante varié.
Allegro con brio.

Rhapsodie sur des Airs Catalans.

Rhapsodie sur des Airs populaires de Canada.

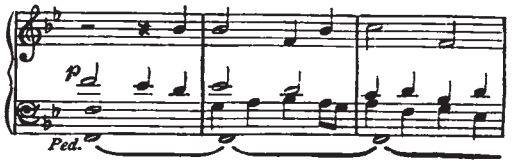
Marche Rustique.
Lied.
Marche de Fête.

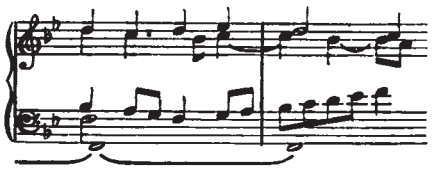
Twelve pieces.

The Gregorian Album and Pièces Brèves were written in order to provide organists with interludes in keeping with the traditional music of the Church. In his preface to the Album, the composer says: "In the dialogues between choir and organ, the latter seems to know of nothing but our major and minor keys, while the ancient modes are used in the choirstalls. The result of this lack of unity is clashing and disorder where should be the most perfect harmony." Accordingly, these pieces, varying in length from two or three bars to a couple of pages, contain all that an organist should need in the way of pieces for filling up gaps in the service. Some are contrapuntal, but the majority are in free form. Many contain ideas that one feels are worthy of development, and all are of interest to those who have any feeling for the charm of modal music. The influence of these ancient modes is very much in evidence in most of Gigout's organ music. To it may be traced his frequently gray harmonic scheme, his austerity,

—I had nearly said bleakness. You will search his works almost in vain for the luscious progressions of his pupil Boëllmann. Rather will you find a subacid quality, a tang with a charm of its own, though not for every palate.

The Ten Pieces may be dealt with briefly, as they are tolerably well known. They are certainly on the whole the most attractive set from a popular point of view, and no organ loft should be without them. The Toccata, the Minuet, and the Christmas Rhapsody are perhaps most appreciated, the many merits of the Prelude, Choral, and Allegro having scarcely received their due. In this piece, by the bye, it is characteristic of the composer that the fine opening pedal solo is marked to be played *p*. One is so accustomed to hearing such passages incoherently floundering along with full pedal that any other treatment is almost startling. The Christmas Rhapsody deserves to be even more widely known than it is. One has many enjoyable moments in playing it, with quite special pleasure at this combination of the first and third lines of "Adeste Fideles." Could anything be more natural?





The most scientific number of this set is the Andante Religioso, a very elaborately wrought canon between treble and bass with two and sometimes three free parts which, not content with merely filling in the harmony, indulge in imitative work of their own from time to time. The Scherzo is very neat and effective, with some particularly good use of alternate manuals in its second subject.

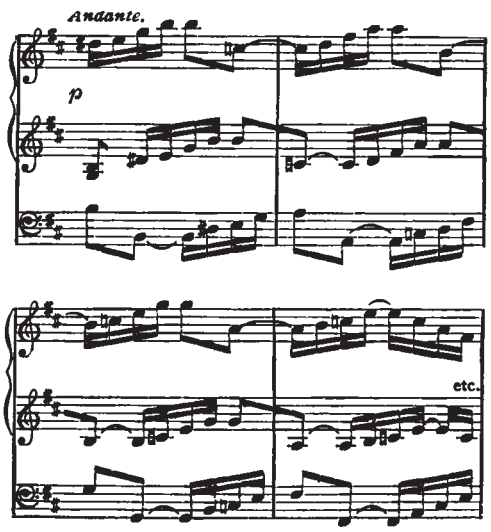
The Prelude and Fugue in E major is mostly on quiet lines. The Prelude is simple and tuneful in a pastoral kind of way, while the fugue, more animated, is still quiet until the last few bars. A delightful work altogether, with a strong flavor of Saint-Saëns.

The Poèmes Mystiques are on first acquaintance curious rather than beautiful. The Prière, with its long notes at the top, its swaying inner parts, and its persistent three-note figure in the pedals, is quite unlike any other piece so named. But it grows on one and would make an excellent study. The suggestions of rusticity in the Cortège are to be found mostly in the rhythm and in the quaint figure played by the left hand. The Pèlerinage is perhaps the most curious piece of the set. Dedicated to the Superior of the Mission at

Lourdes, it appears to be a tone picture of the arrival and cure of a band of cripples. Considerable use is made of a modal hymn tune and a folk song (the latter, a footnote tells us, sung at Lourdes to "Ave maris stella"), the two themes being combined and used very cleverly. The halting rhythm and suspensions can mean nothing else than the walking of lame people; while the use of the folk song in diminution against its normal form, its sudden appearance as a bass in 3-4 instead of 2-4 time, the curious little attempts at a cadence on page 5, with the stumping bass figure on the second and third beats of the bar (attempts which fail, for just as one feels that the key of C♯ major is established we are led to a point of repose on a first inversion on A) all give one the impression of the halt and lame gathering together for a service, which now apparently begins with a loud treatment of the two themes. The ending is tranquil, and free from rhythmic complications: (Like the Prière, this curious piece, grows on one) the pilgrims have evidently been cured. En Forme de Légende and Marche des Rogations are comparatively simple works, the Légende being on the melancholy side while the Marche is a happy little affair of a rustic kind. Note especially the charming treatment of the theme in the bass on page 2.

The six pieces next in the list are of sterner stuff. The Prelude and Fugue contain no expression marks. We are told at the beginning of the Prelude to use "Fonds de 8 pieds"

and thereafter, save for a few directions as to the manual couplers, we are left severely alone. This Prelude is a beautiful piece of writing in a restrained way, while the Fugue has some ingenious *stretti* by inversion. The closest imitative writing, however, is in the Prelude, *e. g.*,



Of the Andante and Allegretto in A, the Allegretto is by far the better part. It flows along much after the manner of Guilmant's First Meditation. The Fantaisie in G is a good example of what a skillful composer can do with indifferent material. None of the three themes on which the work is based is

of any particular interest; but their treatment is so good that the result is a fine piece of work, with a really brilliant four pages at the end. Note that its effectiveness depends largely upon a vigorous, animated rendering; it is unexpectedly difficult to play at a quick pace, though easy to read. An interesting feature is the fact of one of the themes recalling, both in itself and in its accompaniment, the second subject of the Allegro in Mendelssohn's Fifth Sonata. The resemblance in style is quite startling.

The Andantino in E minor is a simple work as to subject matter, but beautifully written. There are no expression marks, and the only stops needed are an 8-ft. harmonic flute on the great, and a bourdon, gamba, and céleste on the swell, with the ordinary 8-ft. and 16-ft. pedal. These two manual colors are used for the greater part of the eight pages separately, the couplers being drawn only towards the end,—a frequent device of Gigout.

The Larghetto in D minor is a melancholy piece of somewhat Brahmsian flavor. Only foundation stops are used; there is no "soloing" and not one expression mark except *m p* at the beginning, the result being an impressive movement, of severe, even stern character;—an ideal voluntary to play before or after a solemn service.

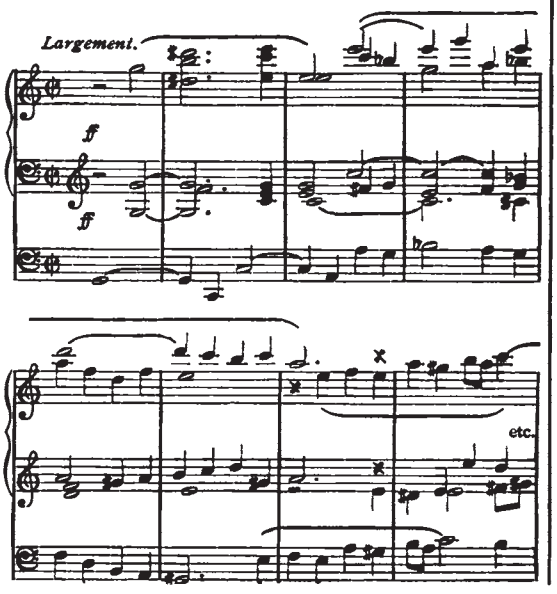
The Andante Sostenuto in A, a more cheerful essay, is another piece that would make an admirable prelude to a service. These three last-named pieces are good examples of Gigout's ability to write sustained, quiet

music for page after page, the interest being maintained without the aid of startling harmony or registration. The Meditation in D is yet another instance, though somewhat more variety of color is employed.

The outstanding pieces in the next set of six are the Introduction et Thème Fugue and the Grand Chœur Dialogue. The Introduction and Fugue are vigorous affairs, with something of the stark energy that we find as a rule more in German than in French organ music. The Grand Chœur Dialogue is fairly well known and is an effective work for a big organ. I am told by a friend of Gigout that this piece was written for use at St. Augustin's, where, the east and west organs being connected, the "dialogue" produces a particularly striking effect. The other pieces in this collection are not up to Gigout's highest level, save perhaps the Marche Religieuse, which has simple dignity of the right sort.

The Prelude and Fugue in B♭ in the next set is very much out of the beaten track. The Prelude consists of five pages based almost entirely on an ornamental treatment of the common chord. It looks monotonous (and is so played on the piano), but with the three manual effects intended by the composer the result is charming. It needs very neat playing. The Fugue is on two subjects given out together. Though short, it contains some skillful devices, but is nevertheless far removed from a *kappelmeister* fugue.

The Andante Varié is distinctly original, the theme being given out by the pedals under a single part in the tenor, and then presented by inversion, the inverted form appearing almost as many times as the other. There is some beautiful writing in this piece, with suggestions of both Beethoven and Franck. The Allegro con brio is a lengthy work (twelve pages), and the interest is not always redhot, in spite of some very clever development. But the final portion is well worth waiting for, and the last three and a half pages, beginning with this reappearance of the second subject,



can fairly be described as magnificent. This work is very difficult to play at a pace sufficiently fast to give the *brio* a chance. Played with the right brilliant effect, it should be a splendid recital item of the big kind.

The Rhapsodies on Spanish and Canadian airs are mainly of local interest, though it goes without saying that they contain many instances of the composer's characteristic skill and treatment.

The Marche Rustique, Lied, and Marche de Fête are not particularly good specimens of Gigout. The first is more *bizarre* than pleasing and the second and third are rather unduly spun out.

The book of Twelve Pieces is somewhat disappointing. There are some fine pages, and the craftsmanship is as admirable as we expect from the composer, but there is at times a lack of spontaneity, and some of the best themes lose much of their attractive power by being developed at far too great a length.

But when we put aside the comparative failures amongst Gigout's works there remains a goodly quantity that must compel the respect of all lovers of organ music of serious aim.

It should be borne in mind that he is a composer for the church rather than for the concert hall, and that most of his music is better adapted for use in connection with services than for recitals. A touch of austerity is not out of place in material for this purpose, and organists with a liking for music contain-

ing feeling without sentimentality, simplicity without triteness, and brains without pedantry, will find much to please them in the works of Eugène Gigout.

CHAPTER VIII

I

OF the fine modern French school of organ composers, there is surely no more sincere member than CHARLES MARIE WIDOR. Born on February 22, 1845, at Lyons—where his father was organist of St. François—he was sent at an early age to Belgium, where he studied with Lemmens and Fétis. He was appointed to St. Sulpice, Paris, in January, 1870, succeeded César Franck at the Conservatoire as organ professor, and later became professor of composition in place of Dubois.

His organ works consist entirely of symphonies. (It is not always easy to ascertain at a foreign composer's complete output, and there may be some smaller pieces in existence. Enquiries and references to catalogues, however, have not brought any to light.)

A question as to the number of Widor's symphonies would almost invariably elicit the answer "eight." As a matter of fact, however, there are eleven. Here they are in their order:

No. 1 in C, 2 in D, 3 in E, 4 in F.—Op. 13.
No. 5 in F, 6 in G, 7 in A, 8 in B.—Op. 42.
Symphonie Gothique, Op. 70.
Symphonie Romane, Op. 73.
Sinfonia Sacra (organ and orchestra), Op. 81.

Of the first eight, a new edition—"revised and entirely modified by the composer"—appeared in 1901. This revision was of so sweeping a nature that it will be necessary to allude to it from time to time. So many organists have the old edition in use that reference to the text may otherwise be confusing. For example, if in speaking of No. 2, I refer to the fourth movement as a "Salve Regina," the possessor of the old edition who turns up his copy will look for it in vain: he will find instead a Scherzo. Similarly, the Fugue which originally formed the fifth movement of No. 3 does not appear in the 1901 edition. No substitute is provided, so the work now consists of five movements instead of six. Revision and modification are mild terms to apply to such drastic changes. How far these and the considerable textual alterations are improvements, we shall consider as we go along.

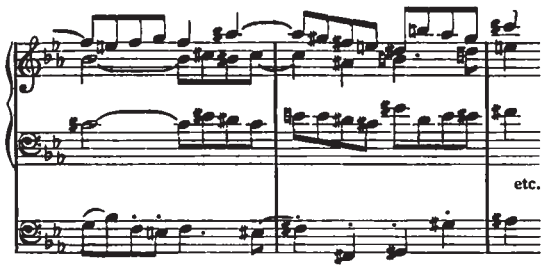
The composer sounds an ambitious note even on the title page, "Soar above" appearing as a motto on the top right-hand corner. If he does not always remain at a notable altitude, if at times his wings flutter very near the ground, who shall complain? There is merit in the attempt—even in the wish—to soar, though probably not all of us would announce our aspiration in this way.

The title "symphonies" is perhaps hardly suitable for works which are really collections of pieces. As some of the movements—especially in the earlier sets—are of slender proportions, and as we now associate the term with music on a big scale, the works might be more fairly called suites. With the exception of the sixth and seventh (and perhaps the fifth) they hardly suggest the symphonic to those of us who associate the title with the great orchestral creations in that form. However, the name is little, the matter much, and with eleven symphonies on the *tapis*, we must not dwell longer on the title page.

Number 1 consists of seven movements,—Prelude, Allegro, Intermezzo, Marche Pontificale, Méditation, and Finale. The pedals open the Prelude by announcing a strong subject, which is treated imitatively for a page. Hard on its heels comes a second, worked fugally, with a countersubject drawn partly from the opening theme. From this material we get four pages of music, on the dry side perhaps, but good sterling stuff and good organ music. Certain characteristics of the composer show themselves thus early; for example, in the sixth bar, where we have a rhythm (.) very frequently to be met with in the rest of his works, and in the second line on page 5[1] where is a typically Widorish modulation from D minor to the remote key of B

[1] Unless otherwise stated, the page numbers refer to the new edition.

major, effected, as so many long shots are, enharmonically:



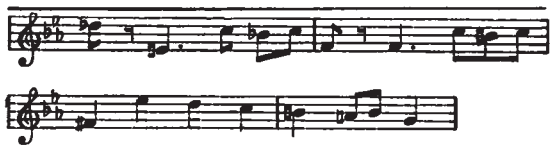
The Allegro is a quiet movement in A♭, very tuneful and attractive, though perhaps a little too long for its thematic interest. This is one of the sections that came in for such drastic revision in 1901. The changes are not so much in the way of new material as in treatment of the old. Opinions will differ as to the comparative merits of the two versions. Second thoughts are not always best, and there are players who will find the original version more spontaneous. The Intermezzo (G minor) consists of seven pages of arpeggio work for the manuals in semiquavers (- 120) with a rather poor hymn-like theme in the pedals. This theme makes four complete appearances,—in G minor, D minor, B♭ minor, and G minor. This is the only disappointing movement in the symphony. Having got through the fidgety *arpeggi* (with frequent change of manual), one feels that a lot of trouble has been taken with very little

result. The Adagio is much better,—a deeply felt little movement in 9-8 time. By the bye, the unsharpened C's in bars 5 to 8 of page 23 sound at first as if the engraver had forgotten the sharps. On further acquaintance, the passage is pleasingly quaint.

The well-known Marche Pontificale follows. There is no need to say much about this splendid movement, as there are surely few organists who do not give it frequent performance. Fortunately the new version leaves it untouched, save for the removal of the difficult double-pedal passage in the last page, where the awkward leaps were risky. The composer has now written single notes,—a simplification in which most players had anticipated him. Is there a finer march for the organ than this?

The Meditation is a two-page movement in E♭ minor,—a pleading little piece, rich in suspensions. It recalls the slow movement style of Bach. The old composer's fondness for the fall of a seventh in cadences is outdone here, Widor leaping from the supertonic to the ninth below (bar 13). This movement is all too short.

The Finale is a fugue of the most relentless description. It has a fine subject worth quoting. Note the harmonic interest involved in the first bar and the insistence in bars 1, 3, and 4 on the rhythm mentioned above:

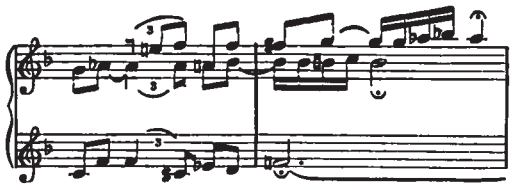


This movement differs materially in its two editions, both in subject and in working out. The Coda is new and contains a reference to the opening subject of the Prelude. The new ending is not so effective as the old,—a straightforward succession of big chords. A tremendously strong piece of work this fugue, and difficult to play. One feels that it is not in its right position in the scheme. It is surely the natural pendant to the Prelude. If the symphony be played in its entirety, such a tough morsel should not come at the end. The March would be a more fitting Finale.

Altogether No. 1 is a fine symphony, and it is a pity so many organists play the March only. Let me strongly recommend them to give a trial to the Adagio, Meditation (both easy), and the Fugue (a terrible handful, but well worth the necessary grind).

The Second Symphony contains six movements,—Præludium Circulare, Pastorale, Andante, Salve Regina, Adagio, and Finale. The first movement is true to its title, circling through many keys in its four pages. The resultant vague, restless feeling is not unattractive on due acquaintance. It is just the kind of music to play before a service, having much of the character of improvisation. It

is also a good movement for showing off the diapasons. It was rather badly handled by the composer at the revision, several excellent passages—such as that at the end of page 44 of the old edition, where the left hand crosses the right, and a fine spacious bit of writing in the third line of the page following—having been replaced by material of less interest, I venture to think. Some of the new matter is even rather niggling, and a poor substitute for what has been deleted, as for example the following:



which shows Widor at a moment when he is certainly not soaring.

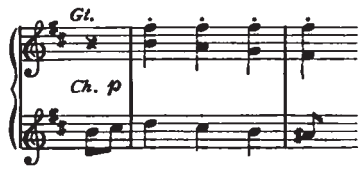
The Pastorale is a very tuneful piece and has long been popular. In it we find much use made of 8-ft. pedal,—a favorite device of the composer, as we shall see from time to time. The Andante has patches of effective music and would be a beautiful movement but for some of the halts to which Widor in these early symphonies seems liable. There is an irritating "pull-up" at the end of pages 14 and 15, and at other places we seem to be in a state of suspended animation. The Salve Regina, as was said above, replaces the some-

what trivial Scherzo of the first edition. It is evidently founded on some form of the antiphon, but no guide is given, and such passages as appear to be plainsong have only a slight resemblance to the melody as given in the Solesmes books. Probably some local or modernized form is used. The movement opens with some rather conventional passage work on the manuals, and is not particularly interesting until the last two of its five pages, when the composer wakes up and gives some fine vigorous music. A good voluntary this, but not a recital piece.

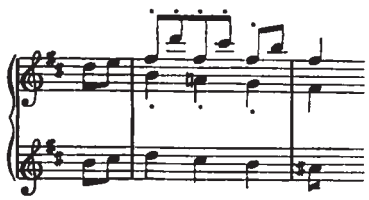
The Adagio shows Widor at his best. A graceful little arabesque opens a movement full of quiet and melancholy beauty,—all too short. The Finale is well known and popular, and deservedly so. Full of animation, with contrast provided by massive chords and rapid thirds and sixths, it makes a splendid ending to a rather unequal symphony. The only difference between the two editions of this movement is in the last page, where the unnecessary repeat has been done away with and the exuberance of the pedal passages somewhat curbed.

The Third Symphony is made up of five movements (Prelude, Minuetto, Marcia, Adagio, and Finale). The Prelude in matter and manner recalls the first movement of No. 2, being a somewhat wandering diapason piece of steady gait and melancholy color. It is real organ music and will be enjoyed by all who still regard the organ as an instrument best employed in the delivery of serious mat-

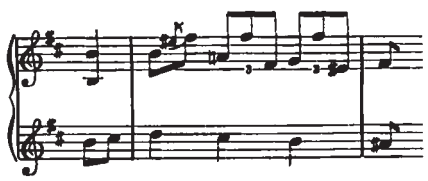
ter. The Minuetto is more attractive in a popular way. We have several passages showing characteristics that become more pronounced in Widor's later work. For example, while his fondness for inverted pedal points is very evident in all the symphonies, we have in the following a foretaste of methods of elaboration used so finely in op. 42. Here is the opening bar of the minuet:



which at its second and third appearance becomes:



and



In this movement the pedal throughout is of 8-ft. pitch.

The March, although not the equal of the Marche Pontificale, is a fine effective movement. The new version fills seven pages against six of the original. The splendid E minor passage on the third page of the old edition has gone, with the stirring scale leading to the resumption of the opening theme a couple of pages later. These are sore losses, and most of us who have played the old version for years will not be easily persuaded that the new is better. Still, it remains a good march, for which we must be duly grateful. The Adagio following is a quiet two-page movement in canon and a pleasant little piece. The fugue which formerly succeeded it has gone,—unlamented, for it was very dry, with a subject rhythmically halting. I could never hear it without seeing a shadowy wooden leg in the background. Here is the opening bar:

On an instrument so lacking in accent as the organ, such a subject is particularly ineffective. It is not printed correctly, by the bye. The dotted minim should be a minim with a quaver tied; as printed, there are four and a half beats in the bar.

The Finale, formerly ten pages in length,

is now twelve. The broken *arpeggi* of the opening are now to be played with *legatissimo* effect and the time signature is altered from C to 12-8. It is a curious movement, quiet throughout save for the *f f f* climax (which somehow seems hardly in the picture), half Toccata, half Scherzo, with little melancholy touches alien to both, and some very fascinating moments. One feels that it should change places with the March in the general scheme, as it carries scarcely enough weight for a finale.

The Fourth Symphony is the most popular of the first set. Of its six movements—Toccata, Fugue, Andante Cantabile, Scherzo, Adagio, Finale—all are successful and attractive. The Toccata is hardly in toccata style, lacking the brilliance demanded by the title. It is instead a weighty prelude, with more emotional import than we expect from a Toccata. This Fugue is quite short and full of interest. The tonic pedal on page 9 has some daring harmonies over it. We do not travel from B♭ minor *via* A♭ minor and G minor back to the tonic without pangs on the way; but all's well that ends well, as this fugue does, with a couple of bars of contrary motion between right hand and pedals that are the more effective for the grinding discords they follow. The charming Andante Cantabile is so widely known and played that there is no need to dwell on it. The Scherzo is very little, if any, behind it in favor. Possibly it would gain with a little less repetition.

The canonic section is a delight. Note that the pedal is of 8-ft. pitch until the last two bars, when the great bourdon is coupled. This movement gains in most buildings by being played at rather less than the pace marked,—say 108 instead of 120. The Adagio is perhaps the least striking movement of the symphony, but it is by no means without charm. The Finale is a rousing success. It is the only movement, by the bye, that has been altered, the left-hand part over the long dominant pedal before the close having been made somewhat more exciting. This symphony is easily the best of the first set, taken as a whole. The composer's touch is more sure, and we have none of the temporary stagnations that spoil some of the movements of the first three. In the four splendid works that make up op. 42, we shall find the composer rising to far greater heights.

II

Between a composer's op. 13 and op. 42, we may reasonably expect great differences. We shall look for fuller command of technical resources (especially in the matter of development), for more sustained power, and, above all, for greater depth on the mental and imaginative sides. All these we find in the later symphonies of Widor. We find also an increase of inventive power, greater exuberance, and a keener sense of color and climax, —qualities which usually show themselves early

rather than late in a composer's career. One may say with confidence that the four symphonies contained in op. 42 are among the most notable contributions to modern organ music. One may say, too, that they are so far by no means valued as they should be. The first of the set is popular, the second less so, and the third and fourth are almost unknown to the bulk of the organists and public. As for Nos. IX–XI, we may almost describe them as a sealed book. We thus have a *diminuendo* of appreciation from the fifth to the eleventh symphonies. How far this is deserved is not easily determined. The popularity of a work so often depends upon adventitious circumstances that the discreet among us have long since ceased to regard it as a test of merit. In this particular case, the Fifth Symphony owes much to the Toccata which forms its finale and also to the fact of its being the first of its set. On the score of actual merit, opinions will differ, of course. I give mine for what it is worth, and place No. 6 first, bracketing Nos. 5 and 7 for second place, with No. 8 a good third. The three remaining works are in a category by themselves and cannot fairly be compared with op. 42, as we shall see later.[1]

As the object of these chapters is not so much to dwell on the familiar, as to draw

[1] I have been unable to obtain an early edition of op. 42, and so cannot compare it with the revised version of 1901. In speaking of these four works, the page numbers refer to the 1901 edition in one volume.

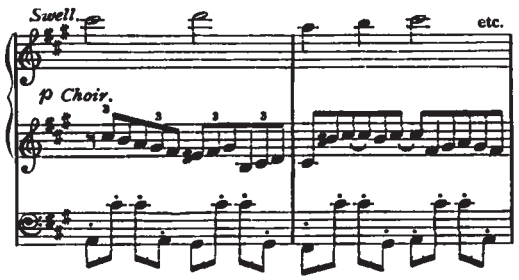
attention to new, neglected, or less known works, consideration of the Fifth Symphony need not detain us long. There are five movements:—Allegro vivace, Allegro cantabile, Andantino *quasi*-allegretto, Adagio, and Toccata. The first movement is a set of variations with some unusual features. To begin with, the matter for treatment is far longer than is commonly the case in the variation form, filling no less than forty bars. Another unusual feature is the introduction of episodical matter having little or no relation to the subject, and at the same time not sufficiently frequent or important to suggest rondo form. Oddly, too, while the variations are concerned mainly with figuration and changes of key and harmony, so that the theme is never lost sight of, the music is so continuous in effect that one might quite well hear it without realizing that it is a set of variations. It is the best part of the symphony,—a fine subject worthily treated.

The second movement is very tuneful, with the two drawbacks of undue length and a rather obvious melody. The third, which has much of the character of a Scherzo, is a good deal better, the staccato pedal in the *più mosso* section being very effective. There are a couple of fine climaxes. The Adagio is a movement of a couple of pages cast in antique mould. The pedal is of 4-ft. pitch save for the final bars, and delivers the opening subject canonically in the octave below. There is a good deal of restrained emotion in this little piece,

which is too often cold-shouldered. It is a perfect in-voluntary. The Toccata may be dismissed briefly. It is Widor's most popular movement. To the listener it is undoubtedly a highly exciting and enjoyable work, but of actual musical interest it contains very little. There is, however, so much organ music that interests the player chiefly (or even solely) that one must not complain if the boot is occasionally on the other leg, as it certainly is here.

The first movement of the Sixth Symphony, like that of the Fifth, concerns itself almost entirely with treatment of the opening subject. In the later work, however, we have more treatment by development and less by harmonic and figuration devices. The result is a movement second to none in the whole of the symphonies. The theme itself is a broad imposing tune of thirty-two bars. Its announcement is followed by a *quasi-recitativo* passage in the treble, destined to play an important part throughout. After a restatement of the first few bars of the opening subject, the *quasi-recitativo* reappears in octaves on the manuals, now extended considerably and ranging over the whole keyboard. Its movement is kept up for three pages, in the second and third of which it is made to do duty as a counterpoint to the first part of the subject proper. With the exception of ten bars of broken arpeggio shortly before the end, the entire movement is derived from these two sources.

Half-way through, the composer gives us what is from the player's point of view perhaps the most ungrateful passage in the whole of his works. To the combination of the subject with the triplet *recitativo*, he now adds a staccato pedal in quavers,—a pedal moreover in which the leaps are sometimes so wide that the regular daily playing of the passage might be recommended to a gymnast in the early stage of acquiring "the splits." Here is the opening of this trying part:—

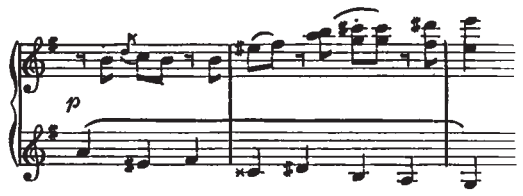


Whether the musical result is quite worth the trouble involved may be questioned. Most of us will think it is not. A simple staccato crotchet delivery of the real bass would be almost—if not quite—as effective and would have presented no difficulty.

This noble movement is followed by an Adagio on the same high level,—a piece only four pages long but containing in its modest compass more beauty and deeply felt emotion than stacks of popular organ music in which

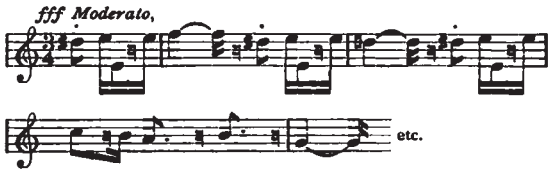
these qualities are mainly supplied by the title and the registration.

The Intermezzo that follows is brilliant enough though not quite free from fussiness. The fourth movement is a Cantabile of great charm, of moderate length and easy to play. The semiquaver accompaniment to the theme on its resumption is curiously like the *recitativo* in the first movement. The Finale is in every way a great advance on the Toccata of the preceding symphony. The thematic material is of greater interest and is splendidly used. Here we meet with a by no means regular feature in Widor,—a second subject. It is a modest affair, but from its last two bars

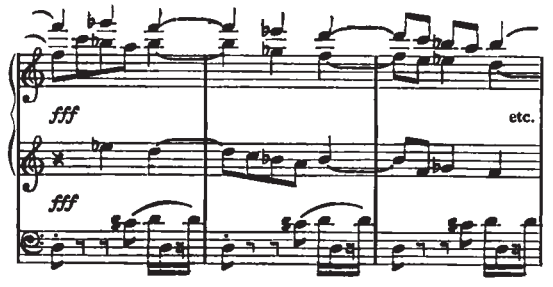


the composer extracts the greater part of the remainder of the movement,—a hundred bars, in round figures. A glance at the quotation will indicate its possibilities in the way of interesting harmony *via* auxiliary notes,—possibilities of which Widor makes the most. I believe this brilliant movement would oust the more popular Toccata in public estimation if it had as frequent hearing.

In the Seventh Symphony, we have another very fine work. It is very little known, and its mood—harsh and sinister for the most part—is perhaps against its ever achieving wide popularity. The first movement has for its main theme an eight-bar phrase commencing:



This is delivered *fff* with manuals and pedals in octaves and is at once repeated harmonized over a pedal. A new theme makes its appearance (♩=108) at the end of the second page, with an accompanying figure derived from the opening; and from these two sources the bulk of the movement is derived. Two particularly good examples of inverted pedal-points occur on pages 235 and 236. Even finer is the pedal on the mediant on page 238, with an ornamentation drawn from the first subject:—



This extract gives a good idea of the tremendous energy of the whole movement,—a tough proposition for both player and listener. The Choral following begins in a very different vein. The broad hymn-like theme is laid out in a manner calculated to produce extraordinary sonority. The swell manual, with 4-ft. and 8-ft. stops, supplies four-part harmony with the theme in the treble; while on the pedals—coupled to great 8-ft. and 16-ft. foundation stops and swell—the right foot delivers the melody an octave below the treble, the left playing the bass. The effect is very full and rich. Various treatments of the Choral are alternated with an *agitato* passage, the result being impressive and picturesque.

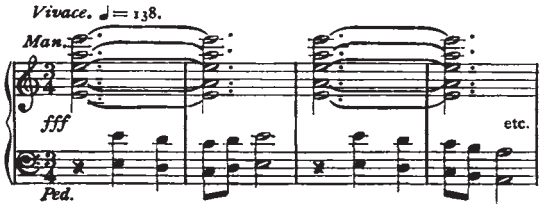
The Allegretto is in lighter mood, recalling somewhat the Cantabile of the Fifth Symphony. It contains a few uncomfortable moments for the player, whose left hand has occasionally to soar and hover in unaccustomed altitudes. There is no apparent reason why the music should not have been written in a more convenient manner,—for example in the *animato* beginning on page 251, where the two treble staves might be reversed with advantage.

I find the fourth movement somewhat on the dry side. It is very long; and, while the matter is of no great interest, its manner is fussy, which is a double fault. It opens with the first strain of the choral, now in A minor instead of major. Later on we have what appear to be allusions to other matter in the

earlier movements,—for instance the curious theme in the left hand on page 261 seems to be a distorted version of a part of the Choral, while later (pages 263–5) the pedal hints at the opening theme of the first movement. This part of the symphony suffers from vagueness. There are interesting moments, it is true; but the music as a whole shows us the composer a long way below his best form. He rouses himself and us with his next movement, a very striking Lento, commencing *ff*, and with effective alternations of *fortissimo* and *pianissimo*. This is a first-rate essay in a style quite out of the beaten track.

The Finale of this Symphony is a terrific affair. In barbaric energy it recalls the first movement and easily leaves it far behind. How recitalists anxious to thrill their listeners have apparently failed to discover it, I cannot understand,—save on the hypothesis that it suffers from the hopeless drawback of having been written for the organ by Widor instead of for the orchestra by Wagner or Tschaikowsky. Had the latter been its good fortune, with for title (say) "The Ride of the Night Hags," it would have long since been familiar, even hackneyed. Things being as they are, it will be rarely heard. Its difficulty places it outside the sphere of practical politics for any but players of exceptional skill; and too many of these, as we know, still subscribe to that ancient heresy that the organ has had no music written for it in modern idiom, because Berlioz, Wagner,

Tschaikowsky, Dvořák, Strauss, Stravinski, etc., have written none. This Finale opens with a subject delivered in pedal octaves under a bare fifth sustained in the manuals. The G♯ in bar 7 gives a pronounced Phrygian flavour, as the same note does in bar 5 of the first movement. Here is the opening:



A thrilling example of Widor's favourite device of inverted pedal appears in the third line, when the top F on the manual is held, an under part creeping up to it by semitones, while the pedal bass goes tumbling down in quavers. This quaver passage turns up again at the end of the next page in the left hand and becomes one of the most important constituents of the work. On page 279, it develops into a descending scale, repeated high in the treble with slight changes of key and rhythm—sometimes 8, 9, 10, or 11 quavers in a bar—for some sixty bars. As this is preceded by the like number of repetitions in other forms, its persistence is one of the dominant features of the music,—a very dramatic one, too, especially in its gradual subsidence leading to the coda. Altogether a

fine movement, which, in spite of its harsh —even savage—character, would, I believe, be thoroughly enjoyed if played with a proper appreciation of its *diablerie*.

The last Symphony of the set shows a more genial side of the composer. The first movement is of romantic cast, and the harmonic colour is warmer than is usual with Widor. There is practically only one subject, for what appears to be a second subject is really—at all events, as to its first half—a derivative of the first, a broad sweeping theme, which after an octave leap goes on in the direction of the leap,—contrary to the law which tells the student it should go the other way. Here is the beginning of the subject, from which you will see with what good effect a quite common sense rule may be broken—when you are no longer a pupil:

There is a fine springing vigor about this movement, as may be expected from such a text. It is big music, too, quite deserving the title of symphonic, as indeed are most of the movements in this set, not because of their length, but by reason of a certain spacious feeling, difficult to mark down as the result of any particular progression, but none the less unmistakably present.

The second movement is a Cantabile,—one

of Widor's most beautiful inspirations. A lovely melody, most exquisitely treated,—there is its description in brief. It is rather difficult, with plenty of double pedal, and some rather extended writing for the left hand, but every bit of trouble is richly repaid. The Scherzo is largely in canon form, and, owing to a not very promising theme, opens in somewhat conventional style. The movement improves as it goes on, however. There are some rather unnecessary difficulties such as the three notes against two in the left hand and pedal on page 308. These are at times so nearly consecutive fifths, fourths, ninths, and seconds, as to be anything but euphonious. The fourth movement, entitled "Variations," is a really fine piece of work, showing the austere side of the composer at its best. Some will call it dry. But dry music is surely music that is uninteresting. There are various ways of being interesting,—the emotional, the picturesque, and the intellectual among others. In this case the interest is mainly intellectual, and therefore the work will appeal only to those of us who like our music mixed at times (like the painter's colours) with brains. Music is a poor limited art if its appeal is to the emotions only. Man is a thinking animal, as well as a weeping and laughing one. Here then is a movement to appeal to the intellectual side of him. It is a very free passacaglia, but instead of a subject of eight bars in 3-4 time, such as most well-behaved passacaglias

deal with, it gives us one of eight bars of 6-8. The subject is often quite lost sight of. Among the fine treatments of the theme may be mentioned specially those on pages 319 and 320, and the brilliant pages 326–328, with the subject stalking along in the bass under a hail of semi-quaver *arpeggi*. This fine movement, worth careful examination by the student of composition, ends quietly.

The Adagio, in F # major, is a highly wrought piece, with melodiousness of an uncommon kind treated throughout in a very complex manner. In the *poco agitato* section, we have some sinister music,—and indeed the movement is brooding and aloof throughout. It is perhaps the most difficult of all Widor's slow movements.

With the Finale, we break out at once *fff* into quite a jovial tune in B minor,—a piece that might easily become popular. It is difficult, though less so than most of these works, and the difficulties are generally of a straightforward kind.

The three remaining Symphonies may be dealt with briefly. The Sinfonia Sacra may be placed aside at once, as it is for orchestra and organ; and, so far as I can learn no arrangement for organ solo exists. In the remaining two, we have the composer at his best and worst. He handicaps himself by taking for treatment in each symphony a fragment of plainsong. This more or less limits the appeal of the music to those who are familiar with the theme and its

associations. Further, the Gothic Symphony gives the player no clue at all as to the composer's intentions. One finds passages suggestive of an ancient theme, but it is not until one reads the preface to the Roman Symphony, published five years later, that one learns that the subject is a portion of the Christmas Introit "Hodie Christus natus est." The later work takes for text the beginning of the Easter Grail "Hæc dies."

From the nature of their subjects and from their (at times) deliberately archaic treatment, these symphonies are *caviare*. They improve on acquaintance, however, and they have the further practical advantage of being only moderately difficult. There are four movements in the Gothic: the first one a gloomy Moderato, perhaps the harshest and most grindingly discordant music that Widor has ever written; a beautiful Andante, with effective double pedaling throughout; a fugal Gigue, in which the plainchant makes its first appearance in the bass; a slow movement, treating the *canto fermo* in canon, leading to a rather loosely constructed Allegro, an unequal affair with some brilliant music in it.

The Roman Symphony has also four movements. It is brighter in style and has the advantage of a somewhat more flexible subject for treatment. The first movement rambles somewhat; the second, called Choral, though also diffuse, contains some good writing, the double pedaling being again a feature; the third, a Cantilène, is beautiful, and mostly

in five parts; the Finale is brilliant. In these later works, while the composer's hand has by no means lost its cunning, there is at times a lack of spontaneity. They contain, none the less, too much good music to be neglected.

However, Symphonies 5 to 8 are his *magnum opus*. They are worthy of being placed beside the finest in the literature of the orchestra or of any solo instrument. When our leading recitalists give the best movements frequent performance, Widor will take an even higher place among modern composers than he occupies at present.

CHAPTER IX

LEON BOËLLMANN was born at Énsisheim (Alsace), on September 25, 1862. He studied at the Ecole de Musique Religieuse in Paris, with Eugene Gigout for his master, and after a successful pupilage was appointed (1881) sub-organist at St. Vincent de Paul, Paris, becoming chief organist later. He was a very fine player, and an exceptionally gifted improviser. His death (Paris, October 11, 1897) at the early age of thirty-five was a great loss to French music generally, and organ music in particular. He tried his hand successfully at every important musical form but the dramatic. Apart from his organ music his chief works are a Symphony, Trio, Piano Quartet, Sonata for piano and 'cello, Symphonic Variations for 'cello and orchestra, songs and piano pieces, and a great deal of miscellaneous work for church use.

The 'cello variations are so deservedly popular that one is surprised at the neglect of the rest of this list. Apparently Boëllmann will in the long run owe most of his reputation to his organ music—not because it is better than his other work, but because the repertory of the organ is small beside that for most other

mediums, and so organ music of a good class is less likely to be lost sight of.

Here is a list of his organ works:

Gothic Suite.
Suite No. 2 in C.
Twelve Pieces.
Offertoire on Two Noëls.
Fantasia in A.
Fantaisie Dialoguée (organ and orchestra).

Not a large output, this, but an important contribution to organ literature by reason of its originality and uniform excellence. We may safely say that it contains no failures.

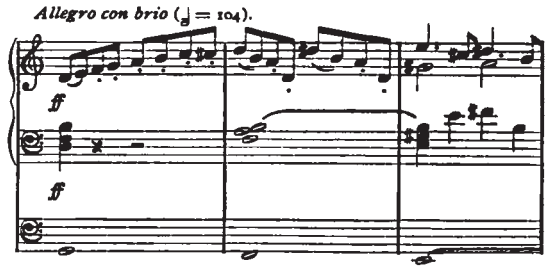
The Gothic Suite is so familiar as to call for little remark. A piquant effect is obtained by the broad introductory Choral leading, not to a fugal or other development of the matter just stated, but to a dance. The Prayer is the least original of the four movements, and is perhaps open to the charge of oversweetness. The Toccata is a splendid example of a form in which French organ composers generally excel, a simple but telling theme accompanied by brilliant passage work.

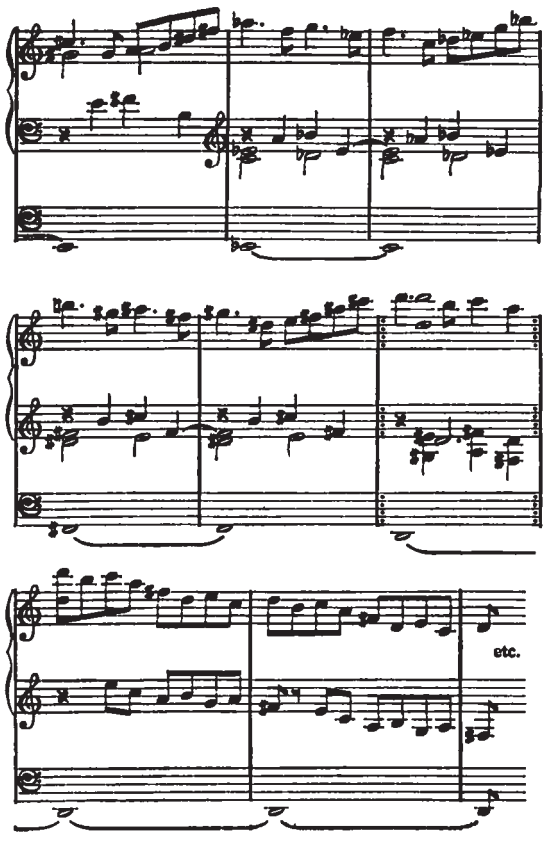
Admirable as the suite is, some of us perhaps regret its extreme popularity, on the ground of its success having thrown Boëllmann's other and better works in the shade. One would expect, of course, that an organist coming across the Gothic Suite, and being struck by its attractive qualities, would at once say, "The man who wrote this must surely have written other excellent organ music," and forthwith overhaul the rest of

Boëllmann's works. But very few organists do that. The majority go on playing the Gothic Suite threadbare, and trouble themselves no further. It is one of the curiosities of the musical world, that the vogue of a piece does not necessarily stimulate curiosity as to other works from the same source.

Leaving this over-familiar suite, let us turn to its successor in C. Here we have, in my opinion, a much better work. It consists of four movements,—a delightful Prelude Pastorale, an Allegro con moto of the light Capriccio order, a quiet Andantino full of feeling, and a brilliant March by way of finale. The last-named is one of the most attractive of organ solos, abounding in striking effects, harmonic and rhythmical, and full of "go" from start to finish.

There are several passages I should like to quote, but perhaps this rather long extract will be most useful, as showing the style and quality of the work:





This passage serves as bridge between the first and second subjects. Not often do we find the progress from C to G so exciting! Who would expect that usually uneventful path to be enlivened by brief and brilliant dashes into E, A♭, and B? The harmonic boldness is nicely balanced by thematic

consistency, the whole passage being founded on the first few notes of the opening subject. Even the quaver figure of the last two bars is relevant, as it is a diminution of

Very characteristic is the clear, incisive writing. In this respect Boëllmann is truly French. If a few notes suffice for the matter in hand, only a few are used. How much better ninety per cent. of the pages of Reger and Karg-Elert would be for some of this economy and reticence!

The Collection of Twelve Pieces opens with a Prelude and Fugue in E minor, a work not of the vigorous type usually associated with such a title. You may have noticed that, whereas the German and English organ composer usually thinks of a prelude and fugue as being necessarily a work involving the use of full organ, a Frenchman as often as not writes fugues of a lighter texture and quietly registered,—probably because the Gallic mind above all things likes clarity and finds little pleasure in vague masses of sound. The prelude in this case is a quiet movement, tuneful and pleasing, with some neat canonic writing on pages 3 and 4; the fugue is a trio for a great 8-ft. flute, swell oboe, and pedal 8-ft. stop only. It is the only fugue that I have so far met with in which no 4-ft. or 16-ft.

stops are used, and is quite pleasing in a naturally somewhat cold way. It would be a valuable study. Next in the volume comes a Marche Religieuse,—perhaps the least original work of the set, but saved from being quite ordinary by the very fine treatment on page 16 of a chiming figure of four notes derived from the first bar and used as a ground bass for nineteen bars. The March ends very effectively *pp*, with a suggestion of a procession gradually getting out of earshot. No. 4, an Intermezzo, makes use of light stops and needs dainty management. It is a capital recital piece. The piquant toying with the little quaver figure of three notes is a typical Boëllmann effect. His ingenuity in this way is splendidly shown in No. 5, a Carillon. Here we have the notes D F♯ E announced by the pedals *ff* and treated as an *ostinato*. The little subject is found in every one of the hundred and thirty-three bars of which the piece consists. Particularly charming is the use made of it in the quiet middle section in G. Altogether an uncommonly clever and attractive work.

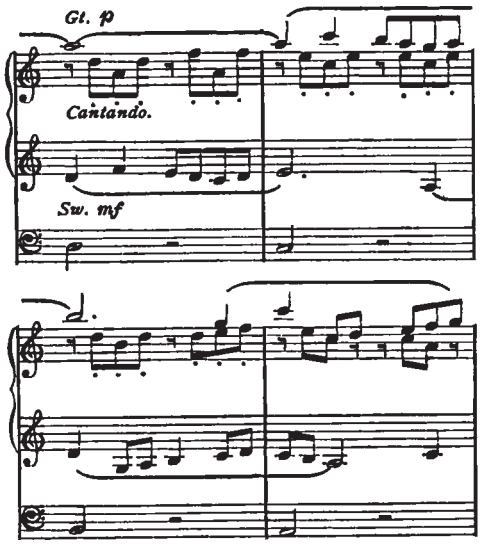
The composer's liking for bell-like figures is shown elsewhere. In the next number, a Choral, after some fluent treatment of the theme, we have a descending figure

started by the pedals, and used as a ground-bass for thirty-eight bars, the Choral with florid interludes being played meanwhile. The figure is quite apropos, as it is a part of the third phrase of the tune. Moreover it is so led up to by the pedal that it does not strike one as being dragged in. Of Boëllmann's skill in managing this sort of thing I shall speak later. The Choral, especially in its last two pages with the theme in big chords over the insistent chiming bass, is a fine piece of work. No. 7, an Elegy in B♭ minor, opens with appropriately somber color, but the second subject is perhaps too sentimental to be quite in keeping, though its later treatment improves it. The repetition of the first theme, accompanied by sextolets chiefly in thirds and sixths, with a drum-like figure in the bass, is very striking.

The next two pieces are preludes on the plainsong hymn-tune "Adoro Te, devote." In the first, which concerns itself with the opening half of the melody, we find the composer again using the first four notes of the descending scale as an *ostinato*. The result is a beautiful little movement charged with religious feeling. The second prelude (*tempo di marcia*) deals with the third and fourth lines of the plainchant, and makes a first-rate postlude.

Perhaps Boëllmann is nowhere seen to greater advantage than in the next work, a Canzone in the Dorian mode. Many organ pieces are called modal, but there are few as long as this (five pages) in which the modal

writing is strict throughout. The Canzone has a beautiful melody, presented three times. Its third appearance is in the tenor, with canonic imitation and a little *staccato* figure above. Here is the opening of this section:



After this modal piece, with its gray color, we have an Adagietto, conspicuous for harmonic warmth. It contains a charming little bit of canon and some effective cross-rhythms. The volume closes with a paraphrase of a chorus, "Laudate Dominum," which is far more successful than choral works usually are when transferred to the keyboard. It has a very stirring close, and

on the way the composer indulges in some clever treatment of the opening subject as a canon in the octave by augmentation.

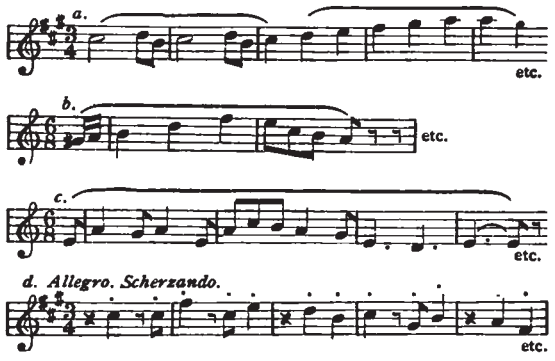
The "Offertoire sur des Noëls" is a small work and slight in texture, but it contains some very characteristic features, such as the modal flavor, the canonic treatment on the second page, the combination of both subjects on the fourth page, and at the end the use of a descending scalewise theme of four notes in the pedal, similar to passages mentioned above.

The "Fantaisie Dialoguée" for organ and orchestra has been a popular item in the London Queen's Hall Promenade concerts for many years. Gigout has made a good arrangement for organ solo. The work naturally loses something in the process, but remains a capital recital piece.

II

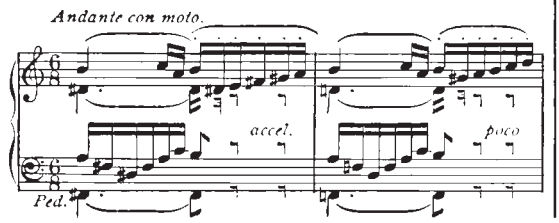
I have already mentioned the composer's skill in developing some little figure and in leading easily into new subject-matter. Nothing shows his real excellence as a composer more than this ability to make his music seem to grow quite naturally. This power of development he and Franck possess, it seems to me, far more than any other French organ writers.

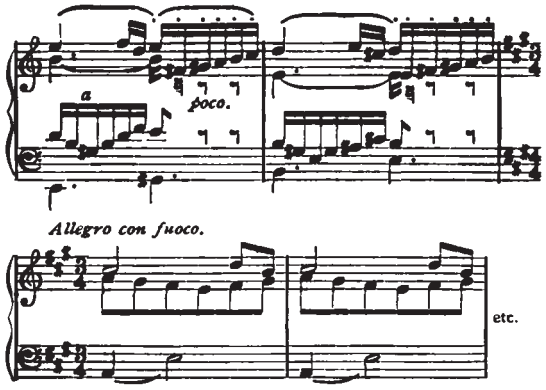
If you want to see Boëllmann's skill at its best, examine the Fantasia in A. The whole of this delightful work of nineteen pages is taken up with adroit development and use of the following subjects:



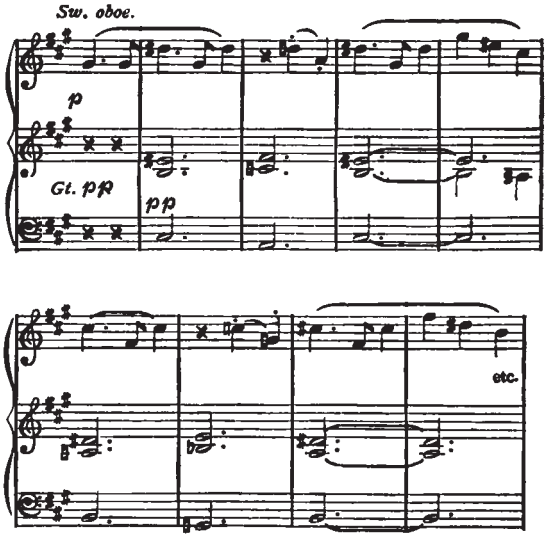
A glance at these themes is sufficient to show their suitability for development. As may be expected, the composer makes great play with the little figure with which *a* begins. The opening of the modal theme *c* is obviously the source of *d*, which comes in for much playful bandying to and fro. Some effective cross-rhythms result from the syncopation in bar 2 of *b*.

Of many passages calling for quotation I select two. The first shows the easy and natural way in which we pass from the Introduction (*Andante con moto* $\frac{6}{8}$) into the main body of the work (*Allegro con fuoco* $\frac{3}{4}$):





The other extract is from page 15, giving us a derivative of *d* lusciously harmonized:



Such passages as this are in fine contrast to the modal harmony with which *c* is usually accompanied. The Fantasia, which I regard as Boëllmann's best organ work, is a mine of good things, and might well serve a teacher of composition as a basis for a valuable lesson on the use of material. It is an outstanding example of the composer's deft and polished style, which is merely another way of saying that he eschews the untidy and superfluous. This, of course, is one of the first things every composer should learn to do, instead of which . . .

The Fantasia is not very difficult, but it requires a neat style and careful registration. Three uncoupled manuals of contrasted quality and equal power are needed for most of it. Having much of the quality of chamber music, it calls for intelligent hearers, but its general character is so tuneful that an average audience will enjoy it, even if many of its subtleties escape them.

By way of coda, I cannot do better than quote Mr. Hugues Imbert, the eminent French critic, who says of Boëllmann:

"His music is naturally fresh, graceful and poetic, and built on solid scientific foundations. It is genuinely French, in that his harmonic treatment, though often bold, is never otherwise than clear. His symphonic compositions are written in a pure style, derived from his intimacy with the classics of music, and are admirably scored."

CHAPTER X

LOUIS VIERNE was born at Poitiers in 1870. He entered the Paris Conservatoire in 1890, studying counterpoint and fugue under César Franck and organ under Widor. (His period of work with the former was brief, for Franck died in November of that year.) After acting as assistant to Widor at St. Sulpice, he was appointed to the grand organ at Notre Dame, where his magnificent playing and improvisations speedily brought him fame.

His organ works are:

SIX PIECES.—Various publishers: Paris.

SYMPHONY I., Op. 14 (1899).—A. Pèregally & Parvy, Paris.

SYMPHONY II., Op. 20 (1903).—Same publishers.

SYMPHONY III., Op. 28 (1912).—Durand & Sons, Paris.

MESSE BASSE (1913).—Library of Catholic Art, Paris.

TWENTY-FOUR PIECES IN FREE STYLE (1915).—Durand & Sons, Paris.

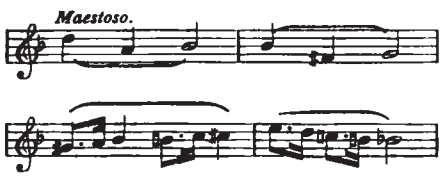
SYMPHONY IV., Op. 32 (1917).—G. Schirmer, Boston, U. S. A.

His other works include a mass for chorus and orchestra, a string quartet, a sonata for violin and piano and one for cello and piano, a symphony for orchestra, a legend for *soli*, chorus, and orchestra, numerous songs (some with orchestral accompaniment), and piano and other instrumental pieces, among them a rhapsody for harp.

As might be expected, Vierne's organ music shows a good deal of the influence of Widor and Franck. To the former he probably owes his partiality for inverted and other pedal-points, his use of the former being especially striking. To Franck we may ascribe his frequent and admirable use of canon, his skillful combination of themes, and his excellence in development. His harmony, even in the early works, is invariably fresh and interesting, and at times daring; in his later efforts, it is frequently bold to roughness.

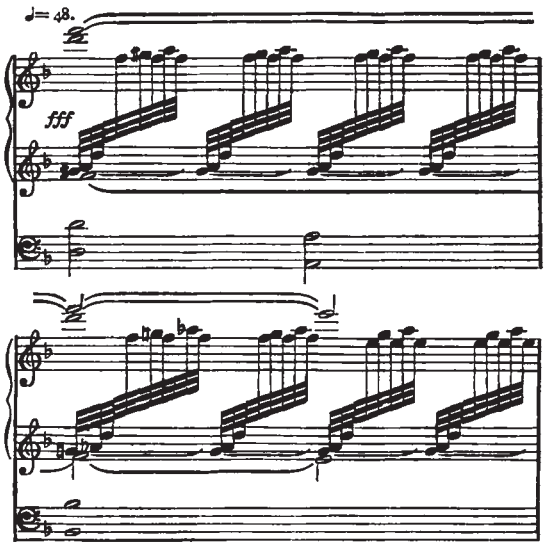
Of the Six Pieces only two seem to be obtainable to-day,—a Prelude Funèbre and an Allegretto in B minor. Both are excellent, the former a richly harmonized slow movement and the latter a tuneful *cantilène*. They are to be found in the "Orgue Moderne," a set of books edited by Widor and Guilmant, published by Leduc. Of the remaining four I can find no trace. The composer himself tells me that they appeared in collections apparently now out of print.

The First Symphony contains six movements,—published separately, by the bye. It opens with a Prelude in D minor, in which the theme



is used in a variety of ways after the manner of an *ostinato*. There is plenty of harmonic interest, with some progressions that may be described as pungent or ugly, according to taste. There can be no two opinions, however, about the last two pages, wherein the subject appears augmented in pedal octaves, under a hail of demi-semiquavers, with thrilling effect.

I quote the opening of this section:



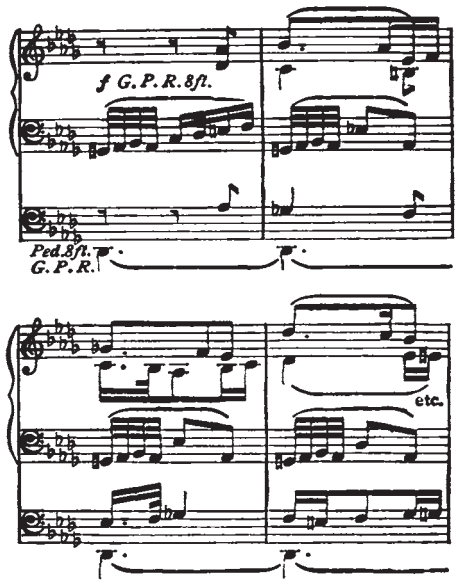
This highly original Prelude is a fine opening for the symphony, and the fugue which follows maintains the level. Its outstanding merit is the easy flow of its counterpoint. Notable, too, is the beautiful diatonic writing at the beginning of the second page, and the skillful episodical use on page 3 of the first few notes of the countersubject.

Such customary fugal devices as inversion of the subject and *stretti* are used with unobtrusive cleverness, and the whole affair has an effect of spontaneity and freedom from pedantry as welcome as it is uncommon.

One pastorale is bound to be pretty much like another so if the third movement is less original one need not complain. It is a tuneful affair, with some effective use of double pedal.

The Allegro vivace is a deftly written and attractive *scherzo*, with a canonic middle section no less pleasing in a different way.

There is no severer test of a composer's abilities than a slow movement. One might almost adapt a well-worn proverb and say: "Show me a composer's slow movements and I will tell you what he is." Out of this test Vierne surely comes with flying colors. The Andante of this Symphony is a gem,—melodious and beautifully harmonized. Note the gracefulness of the section commencing thus:



and the daring harmonization of the theme on page 8, where the turn with which this quotation begins persists for nine bars over a tonic bass, with the tune as a pedal solo (8 ft.) high on the keyboard, accompanied by sliding chromatic thirds in the right hand.

In the Finale, we find decided traces of the influence of Widor, being reminded of the last movement of his second symphony. The theme, given out by the pedals under a broken chordal accompaniment, is of a simple—almost rustic—nature. There is an excellent piece of canonic writing for the second section. On the re-appearance of the first subject (now in the tenor) on page 7, the pedals

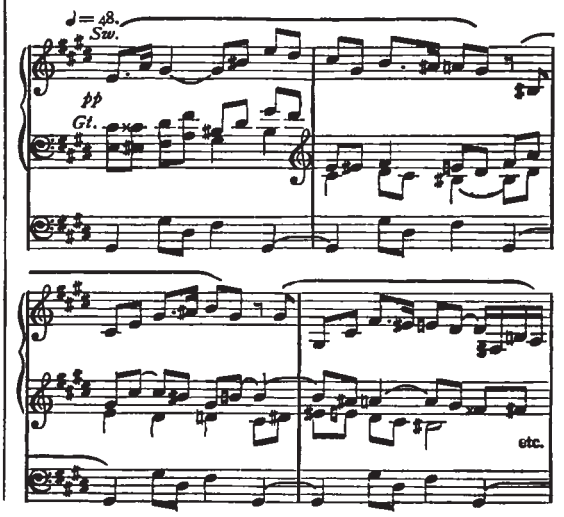
drop a sly reference to the first three notes of the canon theme and for the next three pages insist on it with almost humorous effect. This Finale, which during its fourteen pages shows no sign of flagging, would be an instant success as a recital piece, and needs only to be known to ensure frequent performance. The subjects are not strikingly original, nor is there any out-of-the-way harmony: it appeals mainly by its vigor and tunefulness.

Symphony II. marks an advance chiefly in the direction of emotional qualities. The lights are higher and the shadows deeper, the *scherzo* being more piquant and the slow movement more intensely felt than in its predecessor. The first movement is a resolute affair, with a suave second subject. The last page shows the composer's skill in combining themes. The second subject, now in E minor instead of G major, is at the top, the first subject in the middle, while the pedal persists in the repetition of the bass figure which made its first appearance in the second half of page 5.

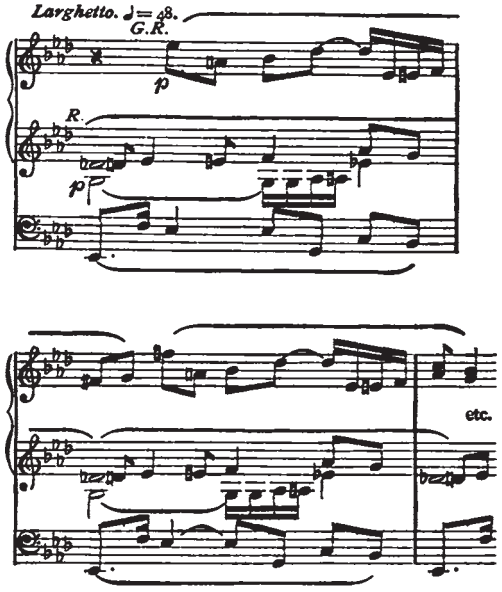
The second movement, a choral, is a good specimen of a form which French composers have evolved from the German Choral Prelude. In this case we have not so much a variation on the hymn-like theme, as an effective contrasting thereof with a sinister and agitated second subject. The movement ends with a fortissimo presentment of the choral high on the manual with broken chordal accompaniment over a dominant pedal fired off at intervals with striking results.

The Scherzo (as said above) is a great advance on that in the first symphony. Sparkling from the first to the last of its eleven pages, it is perhaps the best example of an extended light movement in the repertory of the organ. The pedals are used melodically with charming effect.

A poignant note is struck in the Cantabile. The yearning opening theme makes three appearances, the second in the tenor, with a syncopated treble painfully dragging itself along; and finally in the treble, with two new moving parts for alto and tenor and the first bar of the second subject (p. 35) treated as a ground bass. I quote the opening of this passage as a specimen of Vierne's ability to combine the skillful and the expressive:



There is some complex writing in the middle section, with bold use of auxiliary notes. The passage commencing,

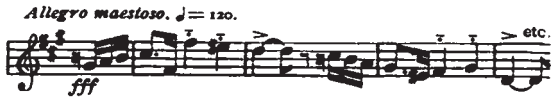


sounds much better than it looks.

The Finale is much more serious than a finale as a rule has a right to be, and perhaps a little chaotic as to form. But when we get such fine stuff as we do in this case we will not complain. The sinister side of the composer is again to the fore,—for instance, in the long pedal point commencing on page 43 where we go through some gruesome experiences before emerging sixteen bars later in E♭ major.

There are a few passages,—*e. g.*, the first three lines of page 40—where one feels that accidentals are rather too liberally thrown about, and generally the best treatments of the chief subject are the boldest and most diatonic. The Coda is brilliant and strenuous and a worthy finish to a very fine work.

The first movement of the Third Symphony is decidedly strong meat. A theme of very pronounced character

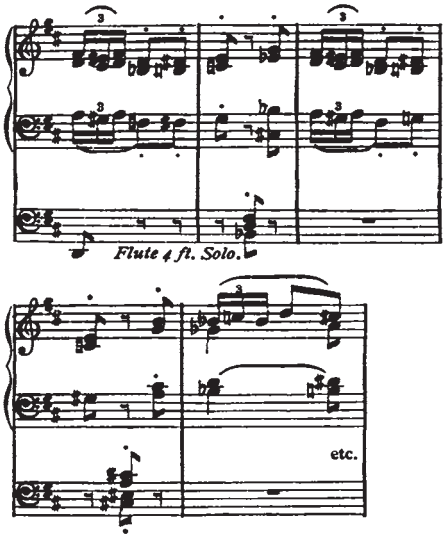


is delivered by manuals and pedals in unison. Of the various striking treatments of this perhaps the finest are those on page 3, with the subject in big chords over a left-hand scale passage and a pedal of an *ostinato* character, and on page 7, where the theme appears in the bass. The harsh and sinister mood of the opening is maintained throughout, the second subject being an angular affair grindingly harmonized. Altogether a very fine piece of work, though caviare to those who demand that music should be a series of pleasing sounds.

The composer relents in the succeeding Cantilène, giving us a haunting melody with some luscious harmony. A real song without words, this would be a popular recital piece.

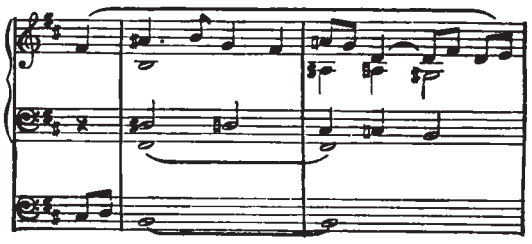
The Intermezzo is a caprice and a very

uncanny piece of work, with some odd coloring. Notice for instance the chords of three and four notes for pedals (4-ft. flute solo) on page 19.

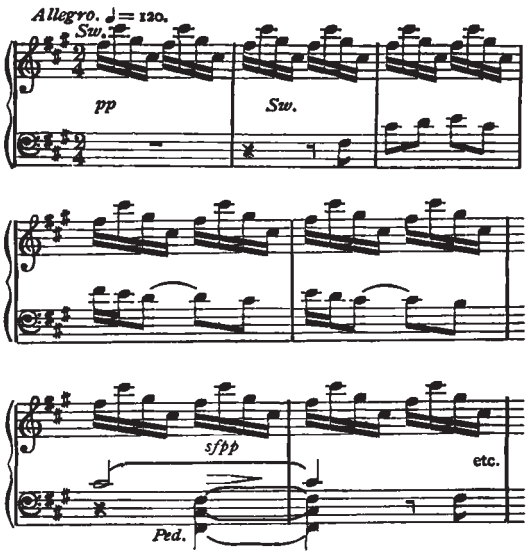


Decidedly a *bizarre* piece of work and difficult.

In the Adagio which follows, we find the composer at his very best. Perhaps of all the movements in these symphonies this deeply felt Adagio is the most beautiful. By the bye, do you know a more audacious auxiliary note than the A♯ at the beginning of the theme?

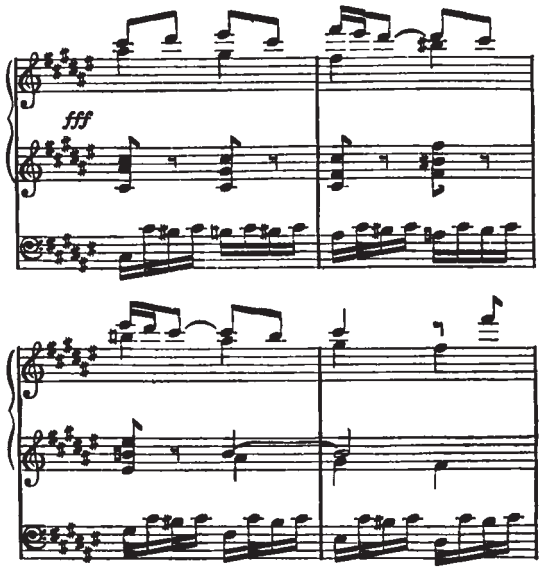


The Finale is a brilliant movement with a simple subject of folksong character, which makes its first appearance under a chord of the eleventh in arpeggio:



The greatest possible contrast is provided later by its use on page 32 in augmented form as a bass.

There is a little second subject of a Widorish character, and the semiquaver motion then ceases for a while, but there is no lack of animation and no flagging of interest throughout. The movement (which has a pronounced Toccata flavor) winds up with a blaze of triumph in the tonic major, the chief theme soaring out at the top:



The symphony must be accounted as one of the most notable of modern organ works.

The Twenty-four Pieces in Free Style, though mostly characteristic of the composer at his best, are by no means difficult.

They are published in two books, each containing a dozen numbers. Book II. is perhaps the better of the two, but both may be heartily commended to organists who care for really original work. Of outstanding merit are the Préambule, Cortège, Prelude, and Idylle Mélancolique in the first book; and the Scherzetto, Arabesque (a piece of elusive charm, largely concerned with harmony based on the tonal scale), Marche Funèbre (particularly fine and original), the brilliant Carillon, and a deeply felt Elegie in the second book.

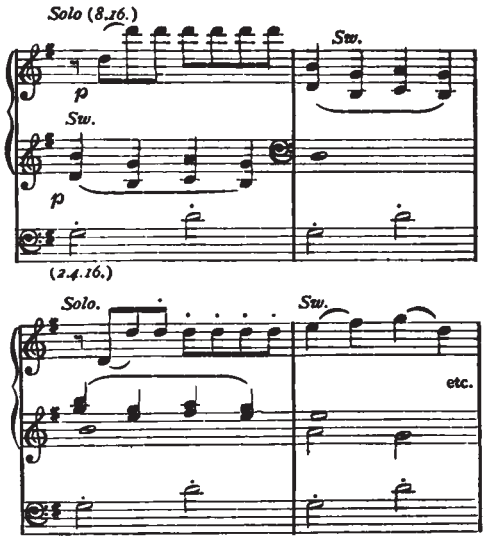
The "Messe Basse," like the "Twenty-four Pieces," is written on two staves and so is available for harmonium or piano. It consists of six movements, a delightfully cheerful "Entrée," a sombre "Introit," a bright "Offertoire," a delicate and charming "Elevation" (note the successive six-fours under the melody in the last two lines), an expressive "Communion," and a very brilliant "Sortie." All the movements are easy save the last, which needs a neat finger.

As Vierne is still on the right side of fifty, we may reasonably expect much more good work from him. His output so far, however, though modest in bulk, is so strong and original that it needs no addition to place him in the front rank of organ composers.

CHAPTER XI

A COMPOSER of whom one wishes to hear more is HENRI DALLIER. I have so far met with only one three-stave work by him, but that is so striking as to whet the appetite. It is a set of Six Preludes for use in connection with the Magnificat on the Feast of All Saints. The composer explains that in the Roman Catholic Church the office of Vespers of the Dead is often sung immediately after that of All Saints, and that during "Magnificat" at the latter, the funeral bell announcing the office of the dead is tolled. This coincidence of the festal and the funeral he attempts to represent. The laying-out is generally for a four-manual organ, and shows a fine knowledge of effective treatment of music thematically simple. The first Prelude is short, and the bell part of the scheme consists of a group of three G's, played twelve times, followed by the same note alternating with the fifth above. The notes are played on the pedals, with a 4-ft. flute coupled to choir 16 ft. and 2 ft. On the great are 8 ft. and 16 ft., on the bombarde (or solo organ) 8 ft. and 16 ft., and on the

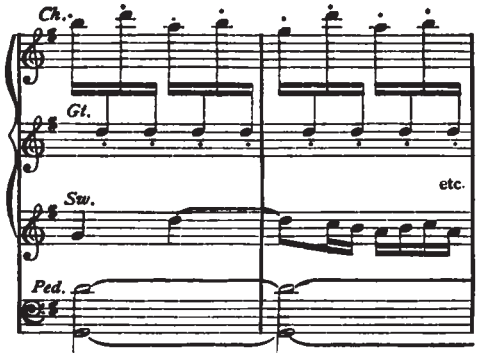
swell voix celeste and gamba. These colors are mixed with striking result. I quote a few bars:



The second Prelude is a felicitous treatment of the first four notes of the descending major scale. The effectiveness depends less upon registration than upon harmony and figuration. No. 3 treats several figures of a bell-like character, and is chiefly remarkable for its very striking "storm" episode. The conventional chromatic scales and thunder-pedal are employed, but the affair is lifted above the average by the use of the bell figure and the "Dies Iræ." In his preface the composer says that the introduction of the latter should

cause no surprise; in a conflict of the elements the sublime melody is in right place.

An extreme contrast is provided by No. 4, with a little chiming figure in quavers played high on the choir (8 ft.), a series of sustained notes "thumbed" on the great (8 ft.), and a pastoral tune given first to the swell (Hautbois) and then to the solo (Cor Anglais), the pedal commenting briefly from time to time. In the final stage we have an unusual "thumbing" effect. The chime and the note formerly sustained by the thumb are broken up into semiquavers and played alternately,[1] thus:



This is a charming piece, and deserves to be well known.

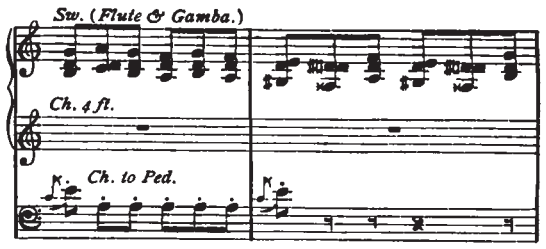
No. 6 is only a little less pleasing, and in the last of the set we have a brilliant wind-up, with daringly simple scale passages, and a final hint of the "Dies Iræ" in its crashing close.

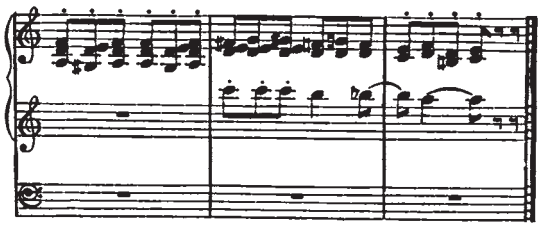
[1] It should be pointed out that on French organs the great manual is *below* the choir.

This modest collection of pieces shows a skilled hand in every respect, and, as I said above, makes us wish for more from the same pen.

A very remarkable essay in the direction of program music is "Les Heures Bourgui-gnonnes," a set of twelve pieces by GEORGES JACOB, based on a like number of pictures by Maurice Lena. The titles are Lever de Soleil; Le Réveil; Le Départ du Troupeau; Vendanges; La Chanson du Berger; Midi; La Pluie; Sous le Noyer; En Revenant des Vignes; Chanson de Pressoir; La Ronde; and Tombée du Soir.

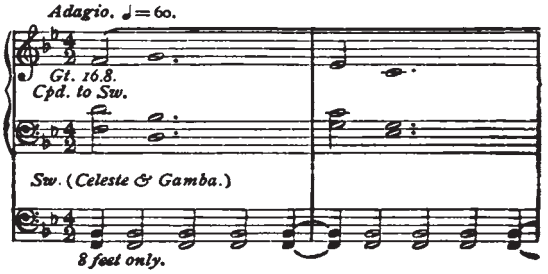
Each piece is headed with a little description of the scene portrayed,—a description so naïve in most cases that translation would spoil it. I have not space for detailed consideration of these cleverly contrived sketches. I say "cleverly contrived," because at times the interest is rather in the registration than in the music, and the latter is most striking when it is most imitative. Some of these imitations are amusingly realistic. For example, in "Le Réveil," the clucking of fowls and the crowing of the cock are thus combined with the "caquets de commères":



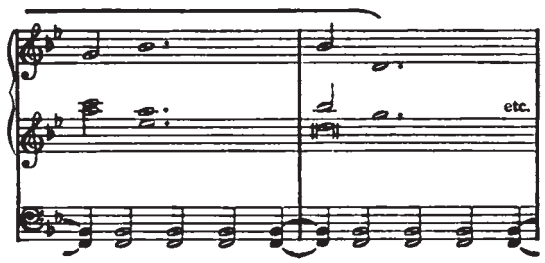


An agile pair of feet is needed for the twenty-four bars of clucking. The rooster's call is distinctly funny. Again, in "Le Départ du Troupeau," the bleating is well expressed by:

Excellent, too, is the suggestion of languorous heat in "Midi," produced by syncopated double pedal (8 ft.)with 16-ft. and 8-ft. solo stops on the great:



The whole set deserves careful attention by recitalists blessed with adequate organs. A



concert player including two or three of the sketches in a program (providing his audience with a translation of the headings and a few descriptive notes), would, I believe, find his enterprise well rewarded by interest and appreciation.

Jacob has published also a set of pieces and a symphony. These appeared in 1909, the same year in which "Les Heures Bourguignonnes" saw the light. I mention the fact of the three works appearing in the same year, because of the remarkable inequality they show. The pieces are so far below the rest in every way that it is difficult to regard them as other than early works. They show hardly a sign of the originality or the uncommon eye for effect that we find so often in the symphony or "Les Heures." The Symphony is rather slight for its title, the music having little of the sweep and size that we associate with the title. There are four movements. An admirable Prelude, Funèbre, Fugue, and variation (the variation consisting of the fugue subject used as a counter-theme to the

Prelude on its repetition), an expressive Andante (with particularly good use of the pedals in the delivery of a baritone solo), a capital Scherzo, and a Finale which treats a bucolic theme at too great length. The Finale suffers also from some awkward laying-out for the hands. Only players with exceptionally large grasp will be able to manage some passages with comfort. Perhaps the worst is

which continues for five bars, and (to make matters worse) is combined with triplets for the left hand.

A grand Pièce Symphonique by PIERRE KUNC contains some highly colored and very effective music. It is perhaps too markedly imitative of Franck. The key is F sharp minor and major, as in Franck's work of the same name, and there is even a family likeness between the theme of the great Belgian's work and that with which Kunc begins. There is also much chromaticism with the true Franckian flavor. There is, however, a good deal that is really powerful, and with emotional impulse behind it. Kunc has another excellent work to his credit in a Sortie Fuguée, in which a conventional Handelian subject is treated with brilliantly effective results.

Mention of Franck serves to remind us of the organ music of a few of his pupils. VINCENT D'INDY has written little, but that little

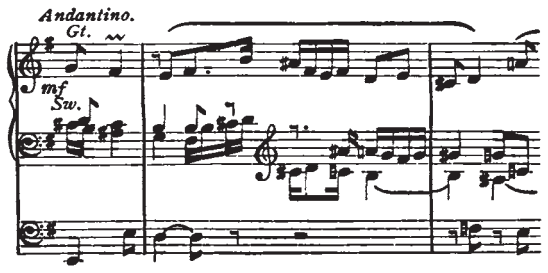
is of high quality, as might be expected. It is not of a character that ensures popularity,—which is perhaps also to be expected. There is a striking little Prelude in E flat minor, curiously bitter in flavor, though it grows on one after one acquaintance. Some interludes for the Vespers of a Martyr are good examples of the kind of thing these French composers do particularly well,—little pieces treating a fragment of plainsong with an effect too austere for the average taste, perhaps, but admirably designed for use during a solemn service at which the church's ancient music is the staple.

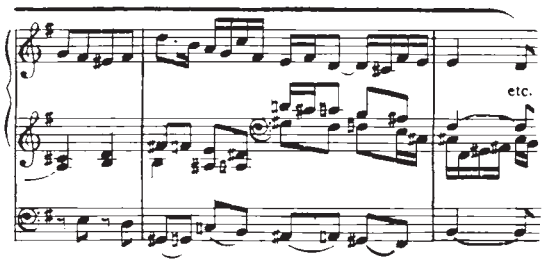
PIERRE DE BRÉVILLE shows fastidious taste in his "Suite Brève," the best movement of which is the third and last, a fantasy on an old French Noël,—the tune treated by Guilmant in his well-known offertoire on Two Christmas Themes. De Bréville, however, makes use of a more primitive and striking form. This capital movement is not helped by a few extremely chromatic passages which seem out of the picture, and are, moreover, too reminiscent of Franck in his more restless moments.

Much better altogether are the essays of GUY ROPARTZ. A set of three pieces consisting of a striking treatment of a Breton folk-tune, an Intermede, and a Fugue are among the best examples of modern French organ music. There is some beautiful color and warm feeling in the Intermede, and the Fugue is a fine strong piece of work. Excellent also, in their very different way, are the Interludes for a Saint's Day Vespers. ERNEST CHAUSSON

seems to have written only a set of pieces for the Vespers of Virgins. These are first rate, especially Nos. 7 and 8. The idiom of the former is at times far removed from what we generally consider appropriate to the instrument, for example, the "chopstick" chords at the end,—but they "come off" remarkably well, and make one regret that this accomplished composer wrote so little organ music. The organ works by these pupils of Franck are published (appropriately) in the "Repertoire Moderne" of the Schola Cantorum.

In this series appears also a fine suite by DEODAT DE SÉVERAC, consisting of a Prelude, Choral, Fantaisie Pastorale, and Fugue. The suite, especially in the first and last movements, is strongly suggestive of chamber music, being subtle and beautifully woven. The choral is rather sombre, with some striking harmony, and the Pastorale is tuneful and attractive, though there are subtleties that will escape the casual ear. I quote a few bars of the difficult and complex fugue, in order to show its texture and rich harmonization. The subject is in the treble:





Like most French composers, de Séverac has a happy knack of writing short pieces for harmonium. His "Petit Suite Scholastique," a set of five pieces based on a carillon, is a delightful example of this kind of work, and well worth the attention of those of us who—naturally—sniff at the harmonium.

RENÉ VIERNE has written a few striking organ pieces, notably a Prelude grave. He is also responsible for some delightful short works on two staves, a suite of Ten Pieces being particularly good. (We organists might well give our pedal boards a rest at times, and play some of the best of this French harmonium music. It is a remarkable combination of simplicity and originality.) René Vierne's music has much in common with that of Louis. Are they brothers?

As I have already pointed out, the real strength of the modern French School of organ music lies in the fact that a large number of distinguished men have contributed to it. These contributions are often modest in bulk, but they imply a recognition of the artistic possibilities of the organ, and undoubtedly

have done much to raise the prestige of the instrument in France. In addition to the composers already named, the following have written organ music of striking character: ROGER DUCASSE (a very remarkable Pastorale, of great length and difficulty, and perhaps too sophisticated for its title, but containing some exquisite music, as well as some guidingly discordant).

FLORENT SCHMITT (various pieces in "L' Orgue Moderne," striking in a rather acid and tortuous way), G. DUPONT (a delicately beautiful "meditation" in the same series), VICTOR DYNAM FUMET (a set of pieces called "Canticum Novum," a mystical blend of beauty and futurism), and CHARLES TOURNEMIRE (several rather ambitious large works which, I think, do not quite convince, and some delightful short pieces on two staves).

A noteworthy fact is the rapidity with which France has established a really national school of organ music. As we have seen, there was a long blank period before Boëly. That admirable musician did little either in the direction of founding a new school or continuing the old one, being content to speak alternately in the idiom of Bach and the old French clavecinists. Lefèbure-Wèly and Batiste left things rather worse than they found them and until Saint-Saëns and Franck produced their best work it might be said that French organ music as an artistic factor did not exist. In other words, it has reached its present position in about fifty years—a very

remarkable rate of growth. Shall we be wrong if we ascribe this success to the truly national character of the music? How if Franck, Saint-Saëns, and Widor had written with an eye on German models. Happily they did not, with the result that the best organ music of their school is as distinctively French as any other kind of music produced in their country. (Is there not a lesson here, by the bye, for English and American composers?)

In a former article we divided French organ composers roughly into two branches—the Franck, Saint-Saëns, Widor, Gigout, Boëllmann, and the less severe and therefore more popular Guilmant, Salome, Dubois, Clausssman, Bonnet. It is interesting to note the growing influence of the former. Practically all the newer writers show some at least of the characteristics of the Franckian school. Of living composers perhaps the most potent influence will be wielded by Vierne, who, as we know, derives a good deal from Widor and (rather less) from Franck. As a result, French organ music of to-day has little of the suavity and sweetness formerly associated with it. The newer school has an astringent, sub-acid,—even bitter—flavor for one of its most pronounced characteristics. Moreover although composed by church organists for use at services (for recitals are rare in France), it does not as a rule strike a religious note. Much of it, especially the most recent, sounds like the work of a brilliantly clever pagan with

clerical leanings. This is likely to retard its popularity in circles where well-behaved church and organ music is expected to contain a liberal portion of the soothing and platitudinous quality that we have been brought up to regard as "sacred." But those who challenge its fitness for church use must admit its excellence as music.

It is a fascinating blend of the sentimental, picturesque, intellectual, ironic, naïve, bizarre, and austere. Even the macabre peeps out at times, especially in the later works of Vierne. It is not everybody's music, and a full appreciation of it will be possible only when we understand thoroughly the national character it expresses so completely.

Certainly we organists must be grateful to it for having raised the status of our instrument and its repertory. For a couple of generations after Bach's death, the best organ music, was well below the standard of contemporary work in other departments of the art. In Germany, despite Max Reger and Karg-Elert, the balance is not yet redressed. But it can hardly be denied that the best organ works of Widor, Franck, Boëllmann, Vierne, and Jongen are as representative of modern France as the music of Debussy, Ravel, or Dukas.

Meanwhile, those of us who needed no Armageddon to draw our attention to it, claim that on the score of originality, technical finish, clarity, brilliance (of a somewhat hard kind, perhaps), variety in mood and expres-

sion, skillful use of the resources of the organ in detail rather than bulk, and disregard of convention, the modern French School is second to none in vitality and importance.

CHAPTER XII

A Group of Living Composers

WE come now to the men chiefly responsible for the future of French Organ Music. In the case of most of them it is perhaps too early to speculate on their ultimate position. Their output is not large, and here and there we must regard their work as showing promise rather than fulfillment. The strength of the school at present seems to lie in the number of men who are turning out small quantities of good work rather than in any dominating or prolific composer. Only Louis Vierne is by way of being notable on the score of quantity.

There can be no question that this is a more promising state of affairs than that obtaining a generation ago, when Saint-Saëns, Franck, and Widor were practically the only three high-class organ composers in France. Scattered about in such collections as the "Orgue Moderne," "La Schola Paroissiale," and the publications of the Schola Cantoram are dozens of delightful works by more composers than we have space to consider

now. The quality is extraordinarily high; exemplifying delicate finish, ability to write pieces expressing genuine musical thought in very small compass,[1] and a fastidious sense of color, they are unique in organ literature.

Among the most promising of the younger men is AUGUSTIN BARIÉ, who has so far produced a symphony and a set of three pieces. The symphony (op. 7) is in B♭, and is dedicated to his teacher, Louis Vierne, whose influence is apparent in a good many passages.

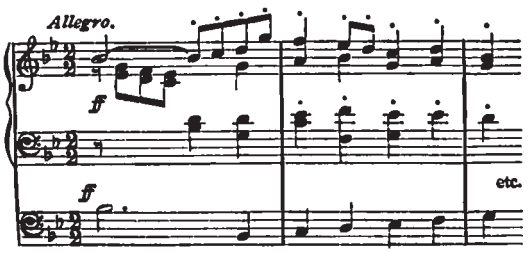
It opens with a Prelude and Fugue in B♭ minor, in which we find throughout that austerity which pervades so much modern French music, in spite of all its harmonic daring. The Prelude is a brief but impressive introduction, foreshadowing the subject of the Fugue. The latter is a good specimen of the form, growing well in interest with good free counterpoint and a fine big last page with the subject inverted in the bass. Note as an example of economy in the use of material, that the graver counter subject on the second page is the subject in dimination. From the severe test of the Adagio, the composer emerges successfully. There is deep feeling, melodic interest, and some really beautiful harmony. This movement—seven pages in length—is by no means easy to play well. For Scherzo we have a piquant Intermezzo. A *più lento*

[1] See specially the numerous admirable collections of music on two staves for harmonium use.

section gives us again some beautiful harmony. Neat playing is necessary in this movement, which would be a capital recital piece.

The Finale is surely unique in its construction. It is a common practice for a composer to refer in his last movement to some preceding subject. Barié goes further, and makes his Finale practically a *potpourri* of themes from the other movements. This is done so skillfully that the fact would escape any but an attentive listener, though only one theme undergoes any real change,—the fugue subject,

being majorized add transformed into this stirring theme:—



For second subject, the composer takes a strain from the end of the first page of the Adagio, serves it up with simpler harmony and a canon in the octave below, and it has

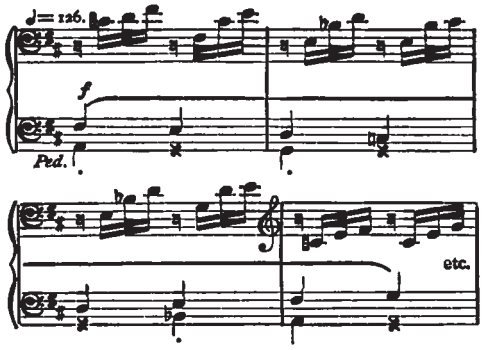
all the interest of a new theme,—which is well, for it plays an important part in the Finale. Again, the bass of the F♯ major passage on page 26 is the opening phrase of the Adagio. It makes an appearance later, combined with the second subject. The whole movement is well worth careful study. The question may be asked: "With all this constructional ingenuity, is the music effective?" In my opinion, there is only one place where it hangs fire for a few bars,—on page 26, in the bridge passage leading to the Cantabile. With this exception—a mere trifle—the movement, and indeed the whole Symphony, may be written down as a striking success.

The high standard of this work is fully maintained in Barié's next work, Three Pieces (Op. 7)—Marche, Lamento, and Toccata.

The Marche is a fine, vigorous affair with some striking harmony, especially in its quieter section. (By the way, the repeat marks on pages 2 and 3 might be overlooked with advantage.) An unusual feature is the addition of an *ad libitum* counter-theme at the repetition of the second subject. This optional part is to be played on the pedals with 4-ft. stop only. The effect would be charming. The Toccata is concerned chiefly with a broad simple theme played by the left hand accompanied by a detached bass and broken arpeggios. This theme is so delightfully harmonized that its simplicity and even

occasional baldness is forgotten. For example:—

is not particularly arresting when looked at thus,—undressed, so to speak. But clothed in this manner:



it is quite another thing. The unexpected glance at the harmony of F is very striking and a little sinister. The middle section is almost entirely devoted to broken arpeggios for manuals alone and is somewhat fidgety on first acquaintance, though in a building with just the right amount of resonance it would be effective. The theme quoted above appears at the end *fff*, high on the keyboard, doubled by the pedals in octaves, these two extremes being filled in with arpeggio groups

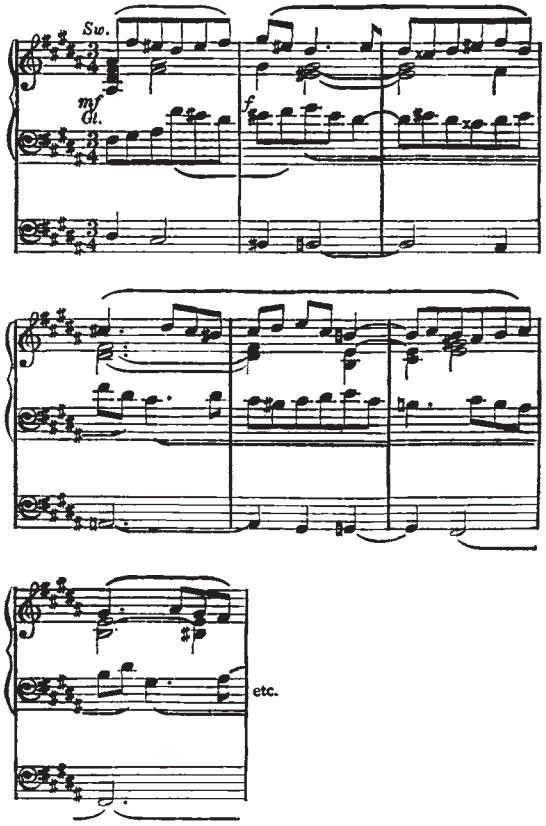
of four notes in the right hand against three in the left,—a fine finish with some very striking harmony. Good as are these two pieces, the best of the three is, I think, the Lamento,—a deeply felt work, with interest and originality in its simplest passages.

Altogether, assuming Barié to be a young man, he seems likely to loom large in French organ music.

Some delightful works for the instrument have been written by JOSEPH JONGEN, a Belgian who is included in this survey for reasons given on page 193. Jongen has an established reputation as a composer of chamber music, and his organ works are as finished and subtle as may be expected from such a source. Like the bulk of this school, his output is notable for quality rather than quantity. It consists so far of Four Pieces (op. 37) and a couple of sets of Two Pieces. The four pieces are a Cantabile, Improvisation-Caprice, Prière, and Choral. The Cantabile opens and closes with a canon between the treble and tenor, so easily managed and so melodious that one loses sight of the skill at the back of it. A middle section (*un peu plus vite*) has another long streaming melody,—a derivative of the opening theme.

The Improvisation Caprice is touched off with the utmost neatness, and, though properly light and freakish, is not superficial. There is a kind of wistfulness about a good deal of it, and the engaging melody on page 5 takes one captive at once.

The Prière strikes a deeper note. A broad theme (*calme et réligieux*) occupies a couple of pages, followed by a contrasted middle section. The opening subject then returns, with a canon in the octave below. Here is a brief quotation:—



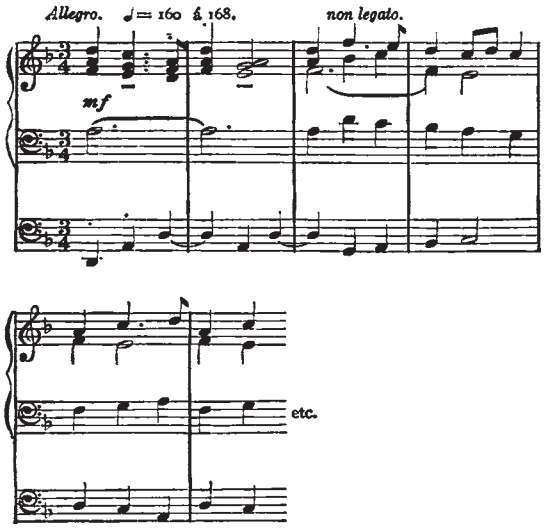
The canon throughout its twenty bars is so natural that a fairly attentive listener might

easily overlook it. He would be conscious of some enrichment of the theme, but would be surprised to find that the increased beauty and expressiveness was brought about by one of the most scientific of devices. There is some admirable five-part writing in this piece.

The last of the set—Choral—is also in canon. It is quite short, filling only three pages, and is less attractive to the listener than to the player. It contains some excellent polyphonic music, with a fine climax at the close.

A Prélude Élégiaque and Pensée d'Automne, published together by Augener, show the composer's liking for high harmonic color. There is deep feeling in the first; the second is somewhat bizarre. Perhaps Jongen's two most recent works—Chant de Mai, and Minuet-Scherzo show him at his very best. The first is fairly short, and is conspicuous for its warmth. The second is an extended movement, requiring neat playing in order to make its full effect. It contains all kinds of interesting things in the way of rhythm and harmony. Note, for instance, how at the very start the composer gives us a couple of four-bar phrases and then a series of three-bar. There is a good deal of canonic writing of the neat kind we expect from Jongen, and plenty of harmony based on the tonal scale.

These and other modern touches are thrown into high relief by the diatonic archaism of the opening subject:—



Altogether, a delightful work that should be in favor with recitalists. It is to be hoped that there are many more organ pieces to come from this gifted Belgian.

A volume with distinction on every page is the set of pieces by P. L. HILLEMACHER. A curiosity in connection with it is the fact of the music being the work of two men,—the brothers Paul and Lucien Hillemacher, the latter of whom died in 1909. They occupy a high position in modern French music, mainly by reason of their work in opera, though they have also produced a considerable amount of songs and chamber music. They commenced writing in collaboration in 1881. Both distinguished themselves by

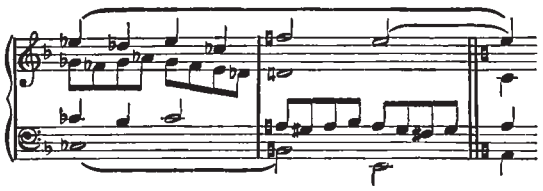
gaining the Grand Prix de Rome,—surely the only case of such a feat being accomplished by two brothers. Their organ album contains a fine sombre Prélude Funèbre, a Meditation full of subtle charm, a highly complex Fughetta a Tre Voci, a suite of Four Short Pastorales (the third and fourth being gems), a three-part Prelude in canon form, and a highly colored and original March, as well as various short Interludes, most of them distinguished by some felicitous harmonic touches. With the exception of the Fughetta and the Canon, the pieces are not difficult. The music is of that intimate, subtle character which demands musicianship and sympathy rather than technique.

Paul Hillemacher has recently published a Prélude Archaique marked by the same admirable qualities as the best of the above.

Among the younger composers, JOSEPH BONNET, the organist of St. Eustache, Paris, has met with great popular success. He is a dazzlingly brilliant player who has delighted audiences not only on the continent but in England and America, with obvious advantage to his fame as a composer. His works usually contain elements that ensure popularity. Many of the quieter and shorter pieces are very easy to play; they are melodious, laid out and registered with an unfailing eye for effect, and there is generally sufficient up-to-date harmony to please the fairly advanced lay ear, and rarely enough to confound it. The lay ear is well catered for, too, in

regard to melody, most of the examples being of a definite, and occasionally even obvious, type. The best are those in which the composer catches something of the naïve spirit of folk-song.

Harmonically, Bonnet is much less original than appears at first sight. His enterprise is too often of the modest kind that consists in plunging into a remote key. Even this is not always managed in a convincing manner, for example:

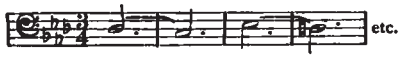


We find few of the pungencies and subtleties with which the pages of the most characteristic of modern French music are sprinkled. Nor do we find the skill in development which is so pronounced a feature of the same school. In fact, it must be confessed that the longer works of Bonnet reveal his deficiencies in no uncertain way. They open attractively enough, but thereafter the interest is apt to flag until the close, at which point the composer is able to be brilliant again. This comparative weakness of the middle stages is due to various causes. First, the materials are rarely so well knit as they should be. See, for example, the "Fan-

taisie Sur deux Noëls." (No. 8, Book 1.) It opens with a couple of pages of preludial matter dealing imitatively with a theme derived from the initial phrase of "Adeste Fideles." This begins and comes to a full close in C. Then the whole of "Adeste Fideles" is played through in F, after which the melody is given to the right hand and played (again in full) as a trumpet solo while the left hand adds a counterpoint in quaver triplets. By the time we have heard the long melody thus slowly played through twice in the same key, we are heartily tired of it. Nothing but exceptionally good treatment could make the second presentment interesting, and this is not forthcoming. Instead we have a counterpoint which ambles along in the most conventional manner. Moreover, one of the merits of good two-part writing is a harmonic suggestiveness that makes the music sound fuller than it really is. In the example under notice this suggestiveness is lacking, the result being thin as well as dull. Resuming our analysis, we find this section ending with a full close in F, after which the next begins *in the same key*, with some rather tame imitative treatment of a graver theme anticipating the second Noël. Two pages of this lead into C minor, and we end the Fantaisie with a really splendid version of the carol *fff*. A comparison of this work with similar pieces by Gigout (Rhapsody on Christmas Themes), Boëllmann (Offertoire sur des Noëls), de la Tombelle

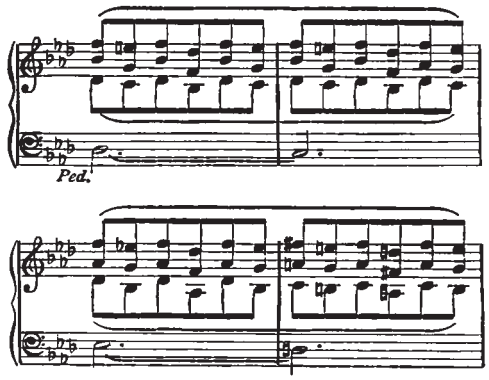
(Fantaisie sur Noëls), de Breville (Finale from Suite Breve), or the three Breton Rhapsodies of Saint-Saëns, will show at a glance how much Bonnet's work suffers through his inability to lead naturally and almost imperceptibly from one subject to another. Nor is he happier when following the first statement of his main theme with a fugal exposition. His writing in work of this kind is so conventional that the interest raised by the opening is damped. See, as examples, the Rhapsodie Catalane, the Canzona, and the Legende Symphonique (all in Book 1).

Evidently Bonnet has no strong leaning towards the severer forms. His works contain no complete fugue, and his use of canon is slight compared with that of the other composers we are considering. His Third Book contains one of his few scientific essays,—a Chaconne showing him below his best form throughout. Observe, by the way, as a small point in workmanship, one of the treatments of the third and fourth notes of the ground bass. The bass is in F minor and opens thus:



Without being too strict in the matter, it must be conceded that generally speaking, the custom of accompanying a melodic

sequence with sequential harmony is based on sound principles. In his treatment of these four bars Bonnet is usually sufficiently sequential to produce the desired homogeneous effect. But on page 33 we find what must be described as an extraordinarily weak treatment of the third bar. Instead of regarding the E flat as the dominant minor ninth of the new key of G minor, he elects to look on it as the dominant of A flat. This would not have mattered, had he treated the D natural as a constituent of one of the attendant keys of A flat. Unfortunately, he harmonizes it as the dominant of G minor, with this unhappy result:



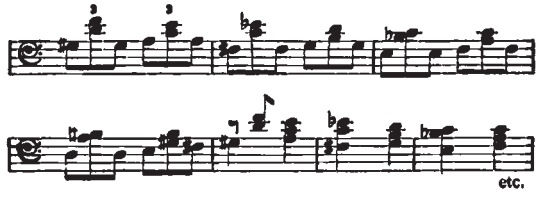
Of course, it is possible to regard the harmony of bar 3 as an ornamental version of an augmented sixth on E flat, but even then

the passage is open to objection as being far too much like the accompaniment of the bass of bar 1. A further awkward join occurs at the end of the passage quoted, which is followed by a first inversion of the chord of D flat. It is an ungrateful task, this of finding fault, but I have dwelt somewhat on the weak side of Bonnet's work because there seems to be a disposition to allow his brilliance as a player to cast a glamour over his work as a composer.

The unpleasant duty performed, it remains only to draw attention briefly to the many delightful smaller works of Bonnet. They are so well known that little more than mention is necessary. As was said above, he has an unfailing instinct for effect. The delicate "Épithalame" (with its suggestions of the "Siegfried Idyll"), the brilliant "Étude de Concert," the splendidly laid-out Legende in D minor (easily his best big work, in my opinion), the picturesque "Lied des Chrysanthemes," and a dozen more, all bear witness to his ability to write music which "comes off" exceptionally well. As already implied, it does not always bear repetition. Many pieces, *e. g.*, the Caprice Héroïque, Chant de Printemps, the Poème Tchèque, Elfes, Ariel, etc., are thematically of no great moment. They make their effect largely by means of pace or registration, or both. They offer at times fine opportunity for the brilliant technician.

Indeed, the technical side is rather too evi-

dent occasionally. The worst example is perhaps the long pedal solo in the Rhapsodie Catalane. There is the minimum of musical interest in this. Players may revel in it, but artistically what is the value of such a passage



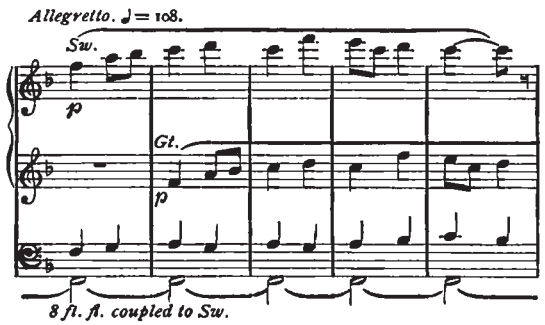
as, or indeed the whole of, the forty bars from which it is extracted? It reminds one of the terrible cadenzas which violin players at times inflict on us. The few hearers interested in three-part pedalling may be edified: the remainder will listen to it merely as music.

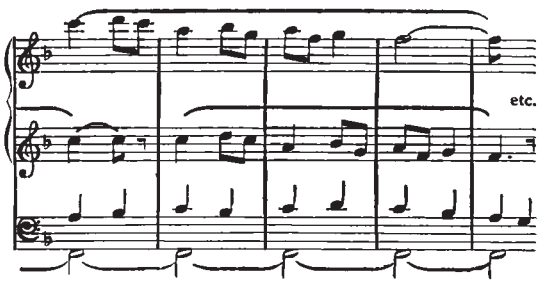
But let our last word of Bonnet be one of appreciation. His delicate lyrical fancies give pleasure to countless folk whose ears are closed to greater music, while the rest of us may profitably turn at times from the strong meat of Franck, Widor, or Vierne, and indulge in a *bonne bouche*.

A composer with a charming vein of melody and very tasteful and refined methods is CHARLES QUEF, the successor of Guilmant at La Trinité. He has published a book of Twelve Pieces, several Rhapsodies on Breton, and other folk tunes and carols,

some detached Pieces, as well as items in various albums. The best of the Twelve Pieces is perhaps "Pour Paques," a striking treatment of the old Easter tune to "O Sons and Daughters." Like Bonnet, he is at his best when he resists the temptation to make what should be a short piece into a long one. His development is apt to become thin, not from lack of skill so much as because his themes are not usually of the type calling for extended treatment. His talent lies chiefly in the direction of tastefully accompanied *Cantilena*. Playing his music, one is constantly thinking "what a good violin solo this would make."

His works based on carol themes are admirable. Among the best is the paraphrase of a theme by Clement Marot. It has throughout the right note of unaffected simplicity, and the canonic treatment at the end, over a double pedal is a good example of skill applied in such a way as not to destroy the unsophisticated character of the piece. I quote the opening phrase of this section:





The set of Three Pieces, of which this is No. 1, shows Quef at his best. The other two are a Dialogue (making effective use of three contrasted manuals, and containing some good canonic writing, and a very striking use of Dorian harmony) and a tuneful Idyll. Altogether, Quef is a writer whose talent, graceful though somewhat slender, has perhaps hardly received due recognition outside France.