



## Two Chester Madrigal Writers, Thomas Bateson and Francis Pilkington

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**T**HOMAS BATESON became Organist, or, to use his official title, "Master of the Choristers" of Chester Cathedral about the year 1600, having succeeded Robert Stevenson who had held the appointment since 1569. Rimbault, in Grove's Dictionary, gives the date of Bateson's appointment as 1599; and Mr. Thomas Hughes, in the list he compiled from the Cathedral Treasurer's Accounts, says 1602. On inspecting these accounts, I find Bateson's name first occurs in 1602, but as the accounts are incomplete for some years previously, I think it quite possible that the date given in Grove is correct.

In going over the Cathedral Treasurer's books it is interesting and pleasing to note how the chorister boy often develops into a lay clerk or conduct, and finally organist or minor canon. This is the case with most of the old organists. Bateson, however, was a stranger. Where he came from, and his age, are unknown; but, judging from the preface to his first work, he was a young man. In 1604 he produced—

"The first set of English Madrigales to 3, 4, 5 and 6 voices. Newly composed by Thomas Bateson, practitioner in the Art .

of Musicke, and Organist of the Cathedral Church of Christ in the Citie of Chester, 1604. 4to. *In London, Printed by Thomas Este.*”

## CONTENTS.

*Songs to 3 Voices—*

1. Beautie is a lovely sweet
2. Love would discharge the dutie
3. The Nightingale so soone as Aprille
4. Aye me, my Mistresse scorns my love
5. Come, follow me faire nymphes
6. Your shining eyes and golden hair

*Songs to 4 Voices—*

7. Whither so fast, see how the kindly flowres
8. Dame Venus hence to Paphos goe
9. Down from above falls Jove
10. Aduē, sweet love, adue
11. If love be blinde
12. Phillis farewell

*Songs to 5 Voices—*

13. Those sweet delightful lillies
14. And must I needs depart then ?
15. Sweet Gemma when I first beheld (1st part)
16. Yet stay alway, be chained to my hart (2nd part)
17. Strange were the life that every man
18. Alas ! where is my love
19. O fly not love, O fly not me
20. Who prostrate lyes at women's feet
21. Sister, awake, close not your eyes
22. Harke ! heare you not heavenly harmony ? (*Oriana's farewell*)

*Songs to 6 Voices—*

23. Deare if you wish my dying
24. Faire Hebe, when dame Flora meets
25. Phyllis farewell, I may no longer live
26. Thirsio, on his faire Phyllis
27. Merely my love and I
28. Musick some thinks no Musick is

There were six parts—cantus, altus, tenor, medius, sextus, and bassus, dedicated to his “honourable and most respected good friend Sir William Norres, Knight of the most honourable Order of the Bath.”

In the preface he compares his compositions to "young birds feared out of the nest before they be well feathered," and hopes "they will be so shrouded in the leaves of his patron's good liking," so that "neither any ravenous kite nor crafty fowler, any open mouthed momus or more sly detractor, may devour or harm them that cannot succour or shift for themselves."

At the back of the dedication to Sir William Norris is a madrigal "When Oriana walkt to take the ayre," and the following note:—"This song was sent too late, and should have been printed in the set of Orianas; but being a work of this author, I have placed it before the set of his songs." This refers to a splendid book of madrigals in honour of Queen Elizabeth, published in 1601, entitled "The Triumphs of Oriana," and shows that Bateson was deemed worthy to join the other celebrated English musicians who contributed to that work. The words of this madrigal are as follows, and were considered by Mr. Thomas Oliphant, the well-known musical antiquary, as "the best poetry in the set":—

"When Oriana walked to take the air,  
The world did strive to entertain the fair.  
By Flora fair the sweetest flowers were strown  
Along the way for her to tread upon.  
The trees did blossom, silver rivers ran,  
The wind did gently play upon her fan.  
And then to delight her grace's ear  
The woods a temple seem'd, the birds a choir.  
Then sang the nymphs and shepherds of Diana,  
Long live fair Oriana."

Bateson's volume also contains a madrigal called "Oriana's Farewell," evidently written after the death of Queen Elizabeth. The whole book was reprinted in score some fifty years ago by the Musical Antiquarian Society of London.

In 1609-10 Bateson left Chester for Ireland, and in 1618 he produced—

“The Second Set of Madrigals to 3, 4, 5, and 6 parts. A part for Viols and Voyces. Newly Composed by Thomas Bateson, Bachelor of Musicke, Organist and Master of the Children of the Cathedrall Church of the blessed Trinitie, Dublin, in the Realme of Ireland. 4to. *London: Printed by Thomas Snodham for Matthew Lownes and John Browne, 1618, cum Privilegio.*”

Six parts: cantus, altus, tenor, quintus, sextus, and bassus. Dedicated—

“To the Right Honourable Arthure Lord Chichester, Baron of Belfast, Lord High Treasurer of Ireland, and one of his Majesties most Honourable Privy Councill of that Kingdome.”

The arms of Lord Chichester are on the title page, and the following are the contents of the book:—

*Songs of 3 Voyces—*

1. Love is the fire that burnes me
2. My Mistress after service due
3. One Woman scarce of twenty
4. If I seeke to injoy
5. Pleasure is a wanton thing
6. Sweete, those trammels of your haire

*Songs of 4 Voyces—*

7. Live not poore bloome
8. The Nightingale in silent night
9. Oh, what is she? (first part)
10. See, see forth her eyes (second part)
11. When to the gloomy woods
12. If floods of teares

*Songs of 5 Voyces—*

13. Have I found her?<sup>1</sup>
14. Downe the hills
15. Camella faire, tript
16. Sadness sit downe
17. Life of my life
18. I heard a noise
19. With bitter sighes

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<sup>1</sup> No. 13 “Have I found her?” had previously been set by Pilkington in 1612.

20. Why doe I dying live ?
21. In depth of greife
22. All the day I wast in weeping (1st part)
23. Why doest thou flye ? (2nd part)
24. Come sorrow

*Songs of 6 Voyces—*

25. Cupid in a bed of Roses (1st part)
26. Cytherea smiling said (2nd part)
27. Her haire, the net of goulden wire
28. Fond love is blinde (1st part)
29. Ah Cupid ! grant that I (2nd part)
30. She with a cruell frowne

This is now a rare work, and very few perfect copies are extant. As the title page shows, Bateson had taken the degree of Bachelor of Music in Dublin. This was in 1612, and seems to have been the first musical degree conferred by the University.

Of Bateson's life and the date of his death nothing is known ; but his madrigals alone have assured for him a high place among the English Composers of the Elizabethan era. Some specimens of his church music are included in "Anthems by Composers of the Madrigalian Era," published by the Musical Antiquarian Society.

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FRANCIS PILKINGTON was admitted a Bachelor of Music at Lincoln College, Oxford, in 1595. No residence was then, or is now, required for a musical degree, and he would probably obtain the degree by proving that he had studied music for some years, and by paying a fee ; or he may have been called upon to write some musical composition. As he did not reside, no information concerning him is obtainable from the University records.

He probably belonged to the great Lancashire family of Pilkington (though his parentage cannot be traced), for

he himself states that his brother and father "followed" the Earl of Derby—*i.e.*, were in his employment; and Francis Pilkington most probably came to Chester through the same influential patron.

He appears for the first time on the Cathedral Treasurer's books as a Singing-man or Conduct—or, as Pilkington styles himself, a "Chaunter"—at Midsummer, 1602.

Bateson was already at Chester, and must have been preparing his first book for publication, which came out in 1604. This was speedily followed, perhaps in friendly emulation, by Pilkington's first compositions.

"The First Booke of Songs or Ayres of 4 parts; with Tableture for the Lute or Orpherion, with the Violl de Gamba; newly composed by F. Pilkington, Bachelor of Musicke, and Lutenist: and one of the Cathedrall Church of Christ, in the Citie of Chester. Folio. *London, Printed by I. Este, dwelling in Aldersgate-streete, and are ther to be sould, 1605.*"

It is dedicated "To the Right Honourable William Earl of Darby, Lord Stanley, Lord Strange of Knocking, and of the Isle of Man, and Knight of The Most Noble Order of the Garter," and in the preface Pilkington says: "I must confess my selfe many waies obliged to your Lordship's familie, not onely, for that my Father and brother received many Graces of your Honour's noble father whom they followed, but that myself had the like of your most honourable Brother even from the first notice he chanced to take of me."

THE TABLE.

1. How peep, boe peep
2. My choise is made
3. Can she disdaine?
4. Alas! faire face
5. Whether so fast?
6. Rest Sweet Nimphes
7. Aye mee, she frownes

8. Now let her change
9. Underneath a Cypris shade
10. Sound wofull plaints<sup>1</sup>
11. You that pine in long desire
12. Looke, Mistress, mine
13. Clime, O Hart!<sup>2</sup>
14. Thanks, gentle moone
15. I sigh as sure to weare the fruit
16. Down a down
17. Diapheina
18. Beauty sate bathing
19. Musicke, dear solace
20. With fragrant flowers
21. Come all you that draw<sup>3</sup>
22. A Pavin for the Lute and Bass Violl

There is a copy of the work in the British Museum. Nos. 1, 7, and 15 have been reprinted in score, with some alterations of the words by Mr. Thomas Oliphant; and No. 6 by John Hullah.

When Bateson left Pilkington was still a Conduct, but shortly afterwards, in 1612, he was made a Minor Canon, and in 1613 he issued his second work.

"The First Set of Madrigals and Pastorals of 3, 4, and 5 parts. Newly composed by Francis Pilkington, Batchelor of Musicke, and Lutenist, and one of the Cathedrall Church of Christ and blessed Mary the Virgin, in Chester. 4to. London, Printed for M.L., F.B., and T.S., the assignees of William Barley, 1613."

In five parts, dedicated "To the Right Worshipfull Sir Thomas Smith, of Hough, in the County of Chester." Pilkington says, "It is unworthy, yet in regard of the many and manifold favours which I have received at your hands, and your exquisite skill both in theorique and practique of that excellent art, I doe presume to

<sup>1</sup> No. 10 is stated to be "for his unfortunate friend William Harwood."

<sup>2</sup> No. 13 is inscribed "to his loving friend M. Holder, Master of Arts."

<sup>3</sup> No. 21 is "An Elegie in remembrance of his worshipful friend Thomas Leighton, Esquire."

tend it to your patronage and protection." The preface is signed—"From my own mansion in the Monastery, Chester, the 25th day of September, 1612, your worship's in all observancy, Francis Pilkington." Seeing that he was now a Minor Canon, there is perhaps a legitimate touch of pride in writing from "his own mansion in the Monastery."

There is a fine copy in the British Museum, which is interesting as having formerly belonged to Conyers Darcy, the Gunpowder Plot conspirator. His name, in bold autograph, is on the title page. The following is a list of the contents :

*Of 3 Voyces—*

1. See where my love
2. I follow loe the footing
3. Poure forth mine eyes
4. Stay Nimph, O stay
5. Dorus, a silly shepheard
6. Is this thy doome?

*Of 4 Voyces—*

7. Amintos with his Phillis faire
8. Heere rest my thoughts
9. Why should I grieve?
10. The messenger of the delightfull spring
11. Have I found her? Oh, rich finding!
12. What though her frownes
13. Love is a secret feeding fire
14. Why doe I fret?
15. All in a cave

*Of 5 Voyces.*

16. Sing we, dance we
17. Under the tops of Helicon
18. Sweet Phillida, my flockes
19. My heart is dead
20. No, no, it will not be
21. When Oriana walkt to take the ayre
22. Now I see thou floutest me

The words of No. 11, "Have I found her?" were afterwards set by Bateson, and are perhaps worth quoting, as they were undoubtedly popular.



“Have I found her? O rich finding!  
 Goddess like for to behold  
 Her fair tresses seemly binding  
 In a chain of pearl and gold.  
 Chain me, chain me, O most fair,  
 Chain me to thee with that hair.”

On the other hand, No. 21, “When Oriana walkt to take the ayre,” is a setting of the same words as Bateson’s Madrigal for the “Triumphs of Oriana;” the only difference being in the concluding lines where the couplet—

“Thus sang the Nymphs and Shepherds of Diana:  
 In Heaven lives fair Oriana.”

shows that Pilkington had written this after the death of Elizabeth.

In 1614 appeared “The Teares or Lamentacions of a Sorrowfull Soule,” compiled by “Sir William Leighton, Knight, one of His Majesties’ Honourable Band of Gentleman Pensioners.” To this work Pilkington contributed a “song” or anthem in four parts, “Hidden O Lorde”; and another in five parts, “High, Mighty God.” Probably Sir William Leighton was a relative of the Thomas Leighton whom Pilkington had commemorated in an elegy in his first work, 1605.

And now we come to Pilkington’s last work:—

“The Second set of Madrigals and Pastorals of 3, 4, 5, and 6 parts; apt for Violls and Voyces: newly composed by Francis Pilkington, Batchelar of Musicke, and Lutenist, and Chaunter of the Cathedrall Church of Christ and blessed Mary the Virgin, in Chester. 4to. London: Printed by Thomas Snodham<sup>1</sup> for M. L. and A. B., 1624.”

The preface is so quaint that it is worth quoting in entirety.

“To the Right Worshipfull and worthy of much honour Sir Peter Leigh of Lyme, Knight.

<sup>1</sup> Este, for some reason unknown, has changed his name to Snodham.

“Of him that shall demand of me, why I presume to send this print of my (now aged) *muse* to seeke patronage under your worth, my answer shall be this: ask the little sparks why they dare flie upwards to the glorious Sunne, or the small Riverets and Brookes, why they with a hastie boldnesse strive to be engulfed into the bosom of the vaste ocean.

“*Nature* herself hath taught all her workers to tend into their proper place; and the *Subjects of Vertue* can never offer their service, nor her *Priests* bring their Sacrifice, but where their Souveraigne *Queen* erects a temple.

“Sir: Your noble disposition invites all eyes to behold the generous respect you beare to all the poor travellers, that labour in the tedious journey which leads to *Merit* and *Perfection*; and if *I*, the meanest and unabled of these (encouraged by all mens generall Admiration of your noble Courtesies, and imboldened by your particular acceptation of such former services, as my good hap hath beene to performe in some of your employments) may now procure the Reflection of the least beame of your faire *Aspect*, upon this my little *Bundle of Rushes*, that I carry towards the strewing of the flore of that *Amiable Temple*, when that *Great Goddess* hath her *Chaire*, the *Muses* sit in the *Quier*, and the *Noise* is nothing but *Melodie* and *Harmonious Sweetnesse*: It will infinitely refresh my wearie steppes: and (happily) yet enlive my fainting spirits, that I may lagge on, yet one journey more, (if not in the middest) yet in the Rereward of those many expert and able servants of this Souveraigne Queen to doe her and you some further service. To which I devote the Remainder of my poor endeavours, and myselfe to be

ever your worships at command,

FRANCIS PILKINGTON.”

#### CONTENTS.

Of 3 *Voyces*—

1. Sov'raigne of my delight
2. Yond hill-tops Phœbus kist
3. Wake sleeping Thirsis
4. Stay hart, runne not so fast
5. Ye bubling springs
6. Your fond preferments

*Of 4 Voyces—*

7. Manalcas in an evening walking
8. Coy Daphne fled from Phœbus (first part)
9. Chaste Daphne fled from Phœbus (second part)
10. If shee neglect me
11. Palemon and his Sylvia
12. Yon gentle Nymphs

*Of 5 Voyces—*

13. Chaste Syrinx fled
14. Come shepherds weeds
15. Crowned with flowers
16. Weep sad Urania
17. O gracious God
18. Goe you skipping
19. Care for thy Soule
20. Drowne not with tears

*Of 6 Voyces—*

21. Dear Shepheardesse (first part)
22. Cruel Fabrilla (second part)
23. A Fancie for the Violls
24. O softly singing lute
25. O praise the Lord
26. Surcease you youthfull Shepheardesses
27. A Pavan by the Earle of Darbie (for the Orpherion)

As the collection is "apt for violls and voyces," that is, capable of being played or sung, it seems as if Pilkington had been practising or taking more interest in instrumental music; and No. 23 is a "Fancie for the Violls" only. In No. 27 we see the "Earle of Darbie" as a composer:—

"A Pavin made for the Orpharion, by the Right Honorable William, Earle of Darbie, and by him consented to be in my Bookes placed."

The work also contains the following laudatory poems, which are interesting as showing that Pilkington was held in high estimation as a composer:—

"To my approved Friend, Master Francis Pilkington, Bachelor of Musicke.

## A SONNET.

Those great achievements our Heroicke Spirits  
 Have done in England's old or later victories,  
 Shall we attribute wholly to the merrits  
 Of our Brave Leaders? And faire Industries  
 Which their *not*-named followers have exprest  
 Lie hid? And must the matchlesse excellencies  
 Of Bird, Bull, Douland, Morley, and the rest  
 Of our rare artists ('who now dim the lights  
 Of other lands) be only in Request?  
 Thy selfe (and others) loosing your due Rights  
 To high Desert? Nay make it (yet) more plaine  
 That thou cans't hit the ayres of every vaine.  
 Their praise was their Reward, and so 'tis thine:  
 The Pleasure of thy paines all mens and mine.

WILLIAM WEBBE."

"To Master Francis Pilkington, Batchelar of Musicke:—

Art's praise, and skill's high pitch, are not so tyed  
 To Bankes of Po, or silver Thames (we see)  
 But Jove's faire bird may haunt some streams beside,  
 And chaunt sweet layes on brinkes of Antique Dee.  
 Old Chester is not so with Eld ore-laine,  
 That where Contention is for praise, shee then  
 Should not her old-borne title still maintain,  
 And put in for her claime to chiefe of men.  
 Witnessse more Instances hereof, then cast  
 Into few lines can be (some larger Quill  
 Shall labour that) witnessse thy first and last  
 Rare-fram'de Composures, and this witnessse will  
 Thy choice for Patron: one for glorious fame,  
 Chief in our clyme, Grace to thy worke, Thy name.  
 Thine and the Muses friends of Chester,

HENRY HARPUR." <sup>2</sup>

In the transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Vol. V., p. 88, in a paper by Thomas Heywood, Esq., on a portion of the Harleian MSS., these commendatory verses are referred to and partly printed, and the statement made that "the Choir

<sup>1</sup> Webbe's statement that "Byrd, Bull, Douland, etc.," could "dim the lights of other lands" was certainly a bold one, but time has shown that it was quite correct.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Harpur was formerly a Chorister, 1607-8.

of Chester Cathedral had, at the close of the 16th century, acquired great celebrity under the direction of Pilkington." This statement, however, cannot be correct, as Pilkington did not belong to the choir, as we have seen, until 1602. Although he hoped to "lagge on one journey more" Pilkington never, so far as we know, published anything further. He became Precentor in 1623, and held this office until his death in 1638.<sup>1</sup>

As he speaks of his "now aged muse" in 1624, it is probable that Pilkington came to Chester when fairly old, and he seems to have been married, and to have had a large family, judging from the Treasurer's books which mention the following members of the family:—

ZACHARIAS (?) PILKINGTON.—A chorister for several years, ending 1612.

THOMAS PILKINGTON.—Chorister from 1612 to 1618. In 1625 he appears again as 6th Conduct. In 1627 we find him and Francis still filling their respective positions, and another

THOMAS PILKINGTON<sup>2</sup> as Third Chorister; so that three generations of the family were probably serving the Cathedral at one and the same time.

Lastly we find that at his death in 1638 Francis Pilkington's place as Minor Canon was filled by a

JOHN PILKINGTON, who had been appointed a Conduct the previous year.

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<sup>1</sup> I have searched the old Cathedral (S. Oswald's) register of burials, but cannot find any entry relating to Pilkington.

<sup>2</sup> It seems almost certain that this was the Thomas Pilkington mentioned by Anthony A'Wood in his "Fasti Oxonienses," vol. i., p. 269. He refers to "Francis Pilkington, of Lincoln College, Bachelor of Music," and says:—"Some of his compositions I have seen, and I think some are extant. He was father to, or at least near of kin, to Thomas Pilkington, one of the musicians belonging sometimes to Queen Henrietta Maria; who, being a most excellent artist, his memory was celebrated by many persons, particularly by Sir Aston Cockain, Baronet, who hath written [in his Choice Poems of several sorts, etc., London, 1658] his funeral elegy and his epitaph. The said Thomas Pilkington died at Wolverhampton, in Staffordshire, aged 35, and was buried there, in the times of the rebellion or usurpation."

While Bateson's music is fairly well-known to Musical Authorities and Antiquaries, Pilkington's has been strangely neglected. It is to be hoped that means may be taken before long to reprint some of it.

Chester Cathedral may be proud of having had two such excellent writers on its staff; and it is pleasant to think that these two old friends and composers of 300 years ago, still live together in their music, side by side.

