

PETER

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The Adventures of a Chorister

Sydney Nicholson

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endpapers : 8 colour plates & 13 line drawings by Hans Tisdall
Preface to this new edition by Dr Lionel Dakers, CBE
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THE CHAIN OF SONG

Peter, the Adventures of a Chorister, by Sir Sydney Nicholson, the founder of the Royal School of Church Music, was first published in 1944. He wrote an imaginative fictional biography of a young boy who undergoes a succession of lives as a chorister during the eight centuries between 1137 and 1937.

Starting his historical journey in a twelfth century monastery, he next became a medieval boy-bishop, and then an Elizabethan singing-boy in the Chapel Royal at Windsor. He saw the prohibition of cathedral music by the Puritans and its later restoration in the reign of Charles II.

As an orphan in the Foundling Hospital, he was chosen by Handel as a soloist for *Messiah*; he sang in a village church during the Victorian religious revival; and finally represented his cathedral choir for the coronation service of George VI in Westminster Abbey.

The author provides a most readable factual account of the hitherto unbroken 'chain of song' of English church music linking one generation to the next. This new edition is particularly welcome at a time when the secularization of the liturgy makes musical and literary links with the past increasingly tenuous.

This remarkable book will no doubt receive the same affection from new readers as it did half a century ago, and makes a most suitable gift for choristers of any age.

DAVID BYRAM-WIGFIELD
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