

Book Reviews

Robert Guy McCutchan, *Hymn Tune Names: Their Sources and Significance*. New York and Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1957. Pp. 206.

This book is indeed the "pioneer Study" which its author calls it. No other book in English deals with its subject more than parenthetically, and much of the information it contains had to be sought in relatively obscure religious and musical publications and in private correspondence. The basic subject matter — this hitherto almost inaccessible information about the names given to musical settings of Christian hymns — is presented clearly, intelligently, and with few exceptions accurately.

The systematic organization of the book is one of its major virtues. First come three introductory chapters on the history of tune naming, the classes of names used for this purpose (most important are place names, saints' names, and names taken from or suggested by the verses to which the tunes are set), and the practice of individual composers in christening their tunes. These are followed by the "Alphabetical List of Tunes," which gives for each tune the name by which it is most commonly known; its metrical structure and melodic scheme; composer and date of composition, if known; and derivation of the name. The book is completed by a melodic index, a list of names treated in the introductory essays but not in the main text, and an index of the first lines of hymn lyrics.

Students of names who lack the author's extensive knowledge of hymnology and musicology will find the preliminary chapters more interesting than the itemized entries. They serve as a thorough, lucid, and intelligent guide to the understanding and evaluation of the wealth of detail in the Alphabetical List, and they are enriched by parenthetical comments on onomastic trends and patterns in other areas of human endeavor; see the discussion of "made names" (pp. 20—21) and the paragraph on the relation of religion to Welsh

toponymy (p. 23). The third chapter is the most interesting to this reviewer, for it provides proof that tune naming was to many composers an important adjunct to their art. Some were careful to use only names derived from the texts which the tunes were written to accompany. Others christened their compositions according to elaborate systems of religious nomenclature. The tunes in one 19th century British hymnal bore names taken from "the *Natural Geography* of the Bible" and from those of "the friends of Saint Paul."

The Alphabetical List of Tunes is a compendium of information whose value is surely not lessened by the fact that older standard works on hymnody (Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology*, Lightwood's *Hymn Tunes and Their Story*) either contain very few onomastic facts or else scatter them, making them difficult to locate. Only rarely does one feel justified in disagreeing with McCutchan on a question of derivation. My only real quibble is with his selection as the source of *Dominica* (p. 61) the West Indian island of that name (so called because discovered on a Sunday) rather than the Latin *dies dominica*, which is a much more probable because a more immediate source, especially since the poem for which it was written — Ellerton's "This Is the Day of Light" — is definitely a Sunday morning hymn.

A few entries manifest irrelevance and incorrectness in the selection and presentation of background material. In the paragraph on *Mirfield* (p. 103) a mysterious authority identified only as "Lewis" is paraphrased at length and to little onomastic purpose. This Lewis I have discovered to be Samuel Lewis, author of *A Topographical Dictionary of England*, from the seventh edition of which (London, 1849) McCutchan has adapted part of an entry, completely muddling chronology and ecclesiastical language in the process. (A parish church is called a chapel; the year 1261 is identified with the era of the Heptarchy!) The most notable irrelevance is the entry for *Varina* (p. 165). Here the only pertinent fact in 29 lines appears in the first: *Varina* is "a woman's name." The remainder of the paragraph is given over to the story of Swift's "Varina," Jane Waryng, and a reference to Jefferson Davis' second wife, who bore the name, although McCutchan blandly admits that neither woman is at all connected with the tune or its composer!

Such vagaries, however, remain incidental to the author's main task, and detract only moderately from the value of an otherwise capably done and useful study.

G. Thomas Fairclough

University of Nebraska

Names for Every Child, a Guide to Personal Names and their Meanings. By Christine Campbell Thomson. London, Arco Publications, 1961. Pp. 159. Price 10s 6d.

This is a reprint, without changes, of a book first published in London in 1947 by Banner Books Limited. It does have a more attractive dust cover and the simple illustrations bear a dash of red instead of blue. Otherwise, there is no improvement. The meanings are very casually done. As an example, William is noted as "A Norse name which means The Helmet." The five pages at the end on numerology accentuate the quality of scholarship involved.

Elsdon C. Smith