

Sir Alexander Mackenzie on His Canadian Tour. Letter II

Author(s): A. C. Mackenzie

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and Mr. Francis Harford. The band consisted of seventy performers, and, of course, Mr. Bosville conducted. A special feature of interest was the performance—for the first time in its complete form in England—of the 'De Profundis' Psalm (Op. 49), for soli, chorus, and orchestra, by Josef Nešvera, whose portrait we give—a musician born sixty years ago at Proskoles, in Bohemia, and now Capellmeister of the Cathedral at Olmütz, Moravia. This little-known work is not only charged with sincerity of purpose, but one feels that it is impregnated with that emotional feeling so deep-rooted in the Bohemian temperament. A beautiful contralto solo received an excellent rendering by Mrs. Burrell, and Mr. Francis Harford specially distinguished himself in the bass solos assigned to him. The concluding section of this 'De Profundis' consists of a finely developed movement for soli and chorus, in which the composer employs some effective climaxes, the deft introduction of a Plain Song intonation adding to its effectiveness. Mrs. Bosville



JOSEF NEŠVERA.

—who most heartily supports her husband in his musical hobby—then sang 'Let the bright seraphim' with true Handelian fervour to the trumpet obbligato of Mr. M. Hemingway. Two orchestral pieces followed—Mr. Arthur Hervey's inspiring 'Youth' Overture, and the 'Peer Gynt' Suite of Grieg. Dr. Harford Lloyd's melodious cantata 'Hero and Leander' seemed to be particularly enjoyable to all who took part, more especially perhaps to the youthful son of the conductor, the bass drummer of the orchestra, for whom Dr. Lloyd had written 'specially for this occasion only' a bass drum part that G. M. Bosville played to perfection. Mr. G. T. Patman, organist of Bridlington Priory Church, provided a Festival Novelty in the form of an orchestral suite on the subject of 'Cinderella,' a brightly-scored and imaginative work that is unusually full of promise as an *Opus* 1. A selection from 'Die Meistersinger' (including the Overture) concluded the afternoon concert.

The evening fare consisted of the Overture followed by the bass scena (well sung by Mr. Harford) from Act II. of Weber's 'Euryanthe'; Beethoven's Fourth Symphony; and Dvorák's 'Spectre's Bride.' In the

last-named work that excellent artist Miss Agnes Nicholls did full justice to the soprano music, and Mr. Gregory Hast and Mr. Campbell McInnes rendered efficient aid. The inevitable discrepancy between band and chorus manifested itself—inevitable because of the lack of sufficient combined rehearsal. The chorus were a very intelligent body of people, and with a little more stiffening of the tone and a more razor-like edge of sharpness of attack they will do still better in the future. The good work of these Bridlington folk, as shown at the recent Festival, deserves all encouragement and sympathy. It is not often that the tastes of a country gentleman take this form, and although Mr. Bosville would scorn to be regarded as a philanthropist in his musical propaganda, yet his influence and his well-directed efforts distinctly, if unconsciously to himself, lie in that direction. It is easy enough to pay the bill—many a squire could do that, if he only would—but to give such whole-hearted devotion to the cause of art is as rare as it is in the highest degree praiseworthy.

DOTTED CROCHET.

SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE ON HIS CANADIAN TOUR.

LETTER II.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MUSICAL TIMES.

DEAR SIR,—En route from Montreal, the Canadian Metropolis to Winnipeg, the Metropolis of the Canadian Northwest, as the crow flies a railway journey of 1,500 miles, through a moving panorama of forest, mountain crag, lakes,—beautiful Lake Superior illumined by a full-orbed sun out of a blue sky which glints upon its rippling waters—I find leisure at last to review the musical results of the past fortnight, which embrace the Festivals given in the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

This is not so easy a task as I had anticipated, considering that I have conducted eighteen concerts and a like number of rehearsals in the short space of fourteen days, and without the help of a set of programme books it is extremely difficult to recall the varied incidents and experiences it has been my lot to meet with during that time. Happily fortune has smiled upon our efforts from the commencement of this second and most important section of Festivals, and I am able frankly and honestly to say that the successes everywhere met with have been not only of the most encouraging kind, but considering the gigantic proportions of the scheme probably unique. This result is mainly due to two factors: the generous and ungrudging support and active co-operation of the musical profession, and a warm-hearted and enthusiastic support on the part of a Canadian people who have filled the largest buildings in the country on every occasion. Of the social events and hospitalities so amiably extended to me in each city I may not speak, since so purely personal attentions hardly enter into the purpose of this letter. Suffice it to say the many marks of kindness shown me have been much beyond my deserts and positively overwhelming in their cordiality.

At Hamilton on Easter Sunday, April 12, I met the excellent Chicago Symphony Orchestra, whose conductor, Mr. Adolph Rosenbecker, handed over to me his baton, and moreover gave me his invaluable personal assistance in the most willing and self-sacrificing manner. The manager of the Orchestra,

* Sir Alexander's first letter appeared in the May issue, p. 317.

Mr. Charles Beech, also accompanied us, and did yeoman service in helping to relieve the strain upon nerves and body which naturally enough attended the continuous exertions upon all concerned.

Of the Orchestra itself I shall have nothing but pleasant recollections. Their performances among other things of Stanford's 'Irish' and Cowen's 'Scandinavian' Symphonies and my own Rhapsodies were admirable, and the orchestral items of the programmes, which as you know were performed in this country for the first time, were presented by this Orchestra. The result, I have no hesitation in saying, is that our native music has not only been cordially received, but enthusiastically appreciated by the audiences, and I would take this opportunity of expressing my thanks for the eminent services which the Chicago Symphony Orchestra have rendered to a school of music which, I almost regret to say, had been hitherto unfamiliar to them.

It will serve my purpose better if I now enumerate separately the choral performances which took place in each town, since a mere general statement would hardly do justice to their importance or give your readers a fair idea of the interest awakened or the amount of preparation bestowed upon these Festivals. At 'bonnie' Hamilton—I use the word advisedly—the campaign began with Cowen's 'Coronation Ode,' Parry's 'St. Cecilia's Day,' and my own 'Cotter's Saturday Night,' the first of these works being conducted by Dr. C. L. M. Harris. He had provided an excellently trained choir of over two hundred singers called together specially for our purpose. The Festivals were given in the Drill Hall, seating some three thousand people, this large auditorium being quite filled. Next in order was Brantford, where I found another capital chorus of two hundred voices, which like the choruses in Hamilton, Woodstock, and London, were specially formed and trained for this present Cycle. Elgar's 'The Banner of St. George' had a spirited rendering here; 'St. Cecilia's Day' was also good.

Wednesday, April 15, was a memorable day for us all, worthy a special note with reference to activity in covering the ground. We were taken by special train to London after the previous evening's performance, arriving at 2.0 o'clock in the morning. The hour of 9.30 a.m. saw us rehearsing in the theatre there my 'Dream of Jubal.' At 12.30 we started by another special train to give an afternoon performance at Woodstock, where the 'Cotter's Saturday Night' was performed. On our arrival at Woodstock there ought to have been a full rehearsal previous to the performance at 3.0 o'clock, but I preferred being merciful to the orchestra, and held it with the accompaniment of a pianoforte, in order to allow the instrumentalists some reasonable time for refreshment, without which no man can work.

Incidentally I may observe upon that occasion I had to deprive myself of the pleasures of the table provided by the Mayor of Woodstock, who received us, together with the leading citizens. I had, however, to leave these hospitable gentlemen and proceed to the theatre, where I rehearsed until the inflowing tide of an eager public told me to desist. In spite of the hurry I had little fear of the result, for did I not mark that the members of the choir wore badges of 'Mackenzie' Tartan and were eager to follow their chief? All went well, thanks to the preliminary efforts of Mr. J. H. Chadfield, and we sped to our cars on our return 'special' to London for the evening's Festival Concert there. The choral works were 'The Death of Minnehaha' and the first performance of 'Jubal.' Here I found a large chorus of excellent material and tone, prepared by Mr. Roselle Pococke.

Everything went well, except for the fact that the eagerness of the choir on one occasion caused it to make a 'bolt.' I had every reason indeed to be thoroughly satisfied, and here I may say any weaknesses found in these newly-formed choirs may be excused by their zeal and the novelty of the situation in which they were placed and the works they had to perform. The difficulties overcome by these good people in the smaller places compared most favourably with the efforts of the choirs which have had the advantage of frequent public appearances. All honour to those who have done such excellent work!

After this exacting day the artists, together with Mr. Harriss and myself, were invited by Mr. Adam Beck, the Mayor of London, to a reception and supper, luxurious in its appointments. This brilliant function was another proof of the great interest taken by the municipal authorities of the towns we have been privileged to visit. I must add that one feature of the various choral bodies is that all classes meet shoulder to shoulder in a common cause. I reached my sleeping compartment at two in the morning. At what hour the train started deponent sayeth not, for I awoke six hours later to find myself quite ready for work in the city of Toronto.

The Festival here consisted of four concerts, which took place in a magnificent building called Massey Hall, seating over 4,000 people—with stage accommodation for 500 voices and Orchestra—which was completely filled at each of the three evening performances. The first night's programme was selected from my own compositions, the choral work being Joseph Bennett's 'Dream of Jubal.' I was doubly honoured by the presence of His Excellency The Earl of Minto, Governor-General, and the Countess of Minto, who had journeyed expressly from Ottawa to inaugurate the series of Concerts, thus showing their active and personal interest in the prosperity of this musical movement. Indeed, I know their Excellencies have from the outset of our tour displayed the keenest desire to aid its success in every possible way, even to attending the banquet given by the Festival Committee at Toronto, which took place after the first concert, with Mr. Albert Nordheimer in the Chair.

Mr. Ben Davies now joined our forces, appearing for the first time in my work, Mr. Charles Fry also taking his familiar part in the 'Dream of Jubal' with his accustomed success. The second night brought a most successful performance of 'The Golden Legend,' conducted by Dr. Torrington; also Stanford's 'Battle of the Baltic,' under the direction of the same baton, the soloists being Miss Ethel Wood, Miss Mary Louise Clary, and my old friends Ben Davies and Watkin Mills. The two latter vocalists are established favourites here, while Miss Wood was most successful in her admirable singing of the part of *Elsie*. The chorus on these two nights distinguished themselves by vigorous and intelligent singing, reflecting infinite credit upon the Toronto Festival chorus-conductor, Dr. F. H. Torrington, who has been established here for many years, and to whom this city owes much for his musical enthusiasm.

I had, comparatively speaking, a holiday on this occasion, as I was only called upon to conduct my Suite 'London day by day.' After a morning rehearsal we gave an afternoon concert of instrumental and vocal works, at which were introduced and much appreciated Corder's 'Prospero' Overture, the Ballade from Cliffe's C minor Symphony, Stanford's 'Irish' Rhapsody, Cowen's 'Scandinavian' Symphony, and vocal pieces to orchestral accompaniment, ending with the 'Cricket on the hearth'

Overture. The concluding concert took place on the same evening, with the assistance of a newly-formed choir of three hundred voices, entitled The National Chorus, trained by Dr. Albert Ham, who pleased me exceedingly in a finished performance of the 'Cotter's Saturday Night.' No less successful was the rendering of Elgar's 'Banner of St. George,' under the direction of Dr. Ham, who had devoted much time and care to these works, and who must have been gratified by the appreciation bestowed by the large audience, which attended this 'National Night.' Madame Blauvelt made her first appearance on this occasion in Elgar's work, and won hearty appreciation from a brilliant audience.

We left for Ottawa immediately after this concert. Here we again met on the following afternoon for rehearsal in the Russell Theatre, a really beautiful Opera House seating 2,300 people. On Monday we had ample time to rehearse Elgar's 'Coronation Ode' and Charles Harriss's Coronation Mass 'Edward VII.' The latter was given in the Capital for the first time; in the evening the chief works consisted of the 'Death of Minnehaha' and the 'Dream of Jubal.' The Ottawa Choral Society, an old-established body led by Mr. J. Edgar Birch (who conducted Coleridge-Taylor's work), is a fine choir, who were ambitious to do honour to the works they had to perform, otherwise they could hardly have coped so successfully with the exacting task entrusted to them. The Mass was conducted by the composer himself, the director and founder of this long chain of really important musical events in so young a country. This is his second Mass, written as its title denotes for the occasion; the first one, as I mentioned in my former letter, having been performed at Halifax. The one under present consideration is a marked advance upon his Festival Mass, and shows much skilful and effective choral-writing, and is particularly distinguished for melodic gifts amply displayed throughout the entire work. The soloists were Miss Millicent Brennan, a young and promising Canadian soprano, Miss Clary, and Messrs. Wilfrid Virgo and Watkin Mills, who contributed greatly to a success which must have gratified this energetic and talented musician.

I have great satisfaction in the recollection of a remarkably good performance of Elgar's 'Coronation Ode,' and of which, as I am informed by one who had previously taken part in it in England, the entire rendering would bear most favourable comparison with English performances of the work. The Festival here may be said to have been a brilliant success (even the matinée performance on the afternoon of the second day being exceedingly well attended), and the presence of their Excellencies, who remained to offer their warm congratulations to Mr. Harriss and myself, gave distinction and encouragement to everyone participating on both sides of the footlights.

The beautiful city of Montreal was reached the next day at noon, when our company proceeded at once to the Windsor Hall for rehearsal. I had again to deal with two different choirs, namely, the Oratorio Society, conducted by Mr. Horace Reyner, and a new Festival Chorus which had been gathered together and partly trained by my friend Mr. Harriss. The latter body was already on the platform anxiously awaiting our arrival, so I immediately proceeded to rehearse the choral numbers in 'Jubal,' which was performed with the success which has invariably attended it throughout the tour. Between the rehearsal and performance I attended a reception which had been prepared in my honour by the authorities of the Victoria College of the University

of McGill, Dr. Peterson, Principal of McGill, and Miss Clara Lichtenstein, the Lady Superintendent, presenting me to the numerous invited guests. On the second night the Coronation Mass 'Edward VII.' by Harriss was given, and the composer-conductor secured an excellent performance of his work. The event must have been gratifying to him, as twenty years ago he came from England to this city to fill the post of Organist of the Cathedral, fresh from Tenbury, where under Sir Frederick Gore Ouseley he became imbued with the best traditions of English Cathedral Music, a training which without doubt enabled him to do much towards the elevation of Church music in his adopted country at a time when it was considerably below the mark it has now reached in Canada.

The second part of the programme contained Coleridge-Taylor's 'Death of Minnehaha,' under the direction of Mr. Reyner, who introduced this work in a most worthy manner. This concert proved to be of abnormal length; but the very large audience, which not only filled the place but crowded the passages, remained to hear and applaud the three orchestral numbers which brought the concert to a close at 11.30 p.m., my suggestion to curtail the evening's entertainment being overruled. The professional musicians of the city entertained us at supper afterwards, Mr. R. R. Stevenson presiding, the Vice-Chairman being Mr. Percy J. Illsley. During the evening a graceful tribute was paid to British composers by the French musician M. Couture, and mutual congratulations were exchanged until 'cockcrow'!

The matinée on the third day (with an instrumental and vocal programme) was again well attended. In the evening I conducted bright performances of Cowen's 'Coronation Ode' and Parry's 'St. Cecilia's Day,' admirably sung by the Montreal Oratorio Society; and this Society, under Mr. Reyner's baton, nominally brought the Festival in this city to a close with Elgar's 'The Banner of St. George.' The musical proceedings in Montreal were originally intended to end here, but the Fates had decided otherwise, for it was found necessary to give two additional concerts, on the day following (April 25), and in spite of the fact that only one day's notice of this extension could be given in the local press the house was completely filled again on both occasions. Luckily Mr. Charles Fry was able to postpone his departure for England and thus appear in my 'Dream of Jubal,' a second performance of which in this city had been requested. Orchestra and chorus being now thoroughly familiar with the work, I could not have desired a better or more sympathetic rendering of it, and on my regretfully taking leave of the chorus, I had an opportunity of expressing the complete satisfaction and pleasure it gave me. I had also to part with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which had served us so faithfully during what was in all probability the most exacting fortnight's work ever undertaken, and I was more than gratified to be received on my entrance at the beginning of the evening in good old German fashion with a 'Tusch' (or flourish) from these hard-worked gentlemen, who furthermore capped their efforts by a delicate rendering of the orchestral accompaniment of the Cantata above mentioned. The finish of the Festival here was a scene of enthusiasm. Needless to say that such well-known artists as Madame Blauvelt, Ben Davies, Watkin Mills, and Charles Fry have been everywhere received as their great reputation deserves. The younger vocalists who accompanied me, and who have done the lion's share of the fatiguing work, had still to make their mark, and it is

particularly gratifying to place on record that they have each and all been uniformly successful. Miss Ethel Wood (who made a distinct impression in the 'Golden Legend' and 'Jubal'), Mr. Wilfrid Virgo, and Mr. Reginald Davidson may be indeed warmly congratulated; nor may I forget the services of Mr. Reyner, whose accomplishments as Chorus Director of the Montreal Oratorio Society have earned my appreciation and thanks.

Here ends satisfactorily the second section of the Festivals which cover the Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario, and we are now about to enter the granary of the great Northwest, known as the Province of Manitoba, with Winnipeg as its Metropolis. I hope in a third letter for your next issue to give you as satisfactory a report of our doings there and in British Columbia, to which I may be tempted to add some general remarks of my interesting musical and other experiences connected with this pleasurable, novel, and instructive tour.

Our already sufficiently long journey has been unfortunately extended by another day, on account of an accident to one of the Canadian Pacific trains ahead of us, and, oddly enough, we were 'held up' for the entire night at a station called 'Mackenzie!' This contretemps cancels a reception offered us by his Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, Sir Daniel Macmillan, which was to have taken place at Government House this afternoon, as well as my first choral rehearsal this evening; however, a little additional pressure upon the forces I have to deal with will doubtless overcome the difficulty of this temporary check.

Yours faithfully,

A. C. MACKENZIE.

Posted (en route) at Moose-jaw,
May 2, 1903.

DR. AUGUST MANNS.

Honour to whom honour is due! On Tuesday, the 12th ult., the University of Oxford conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Music upon the much revered August Manns. Oxford so rarely confers this distinction, that its bestowal upon the venerable conductor who has done so much for English music during his long life is all the more significant and gratifying. Therefore the natural congratulations consequent upon the event must be shared equally by the University and Dr. Manns. Through the kindness of the Professor of Music (Sir Hubert Parry) we are enabled to give the Latin speech delivered by him in presenting the 'snow-clad' musician to the Vice-Chancellor. Sir Hubert has also supplied an English version of the well-expressed oration, for the elegant Latin of which he was mainly indebted to Dr. Russell, of Brasenose.

INSIGNISSIME VICE-CANCELLARIE,—

Praesento tibi hunc praestantissimum virum, Augustum Manns, si quis alius optime meritum de Republicâ Musicorum. Is enim est qui per novem lustra pro virili parte ita studiis incubuerit ut ceteris fere omnibus in Arte Musicâ, laboribus, peritiâ, diligentia, antecellat.

Quinquaginta abhinc annis cum ad has oras appulisset, Handelium imitatus, Teutonicum illum Nestora, et paene noster evasit et civis Anglicus. In Aula Vitrea choragus constitutus est, concentusque symphoniacos, adhuc inauditos, promovebat. Moderabatur argumento, ut ita dixerim, 'baculino,' magnae catervae hominum peritissimorum, ubi ex disparibus sonis inter se certantium organorum dulcissima exoritur harmonia. Hujus enim sollertiâ audiendus erat bellicus ille 'strepitus litui clangorque

tubarum,' tibiae quoque cum fistulâ exilis et queribunda dulcedo; necnon illecebrosa vox fidium; ut vere laudaretur 'Entheus ad rabiem corripuisse lyram.' Et haec omnia adeo accurate distincta et temperata et ad cycnea et daedala μέλη accommodata et ad unius arbitri nutum obtemperantia, ut paene omnium consensu optimus interpres et veterum et recentium Musicorum rite adjudicatus sit. Primus enim ad Britannos attulit (toto, ut aiunt, orbe divisos) Schubertum et Schumannum, quorum opera insignissima sine hujus auxilio jacerent ignota et sine honore; 'carent quia vate sacro.' Profuit etiam nostratium ingeniis et pluribus juvenum in causâ erat cur magno animo Polyhymniae se dicarent. Neque alter magis melius indigenum segnitiam in arte Musica excussit, excitavit, arrexerit, non passus molli torpere veterno et tantummodo in deliciis habere κραιβήν illam repetitam, sed et peregrina et nova semper indagare studuit, ne quid alicunde optimi immerito sileretur.

Et haec omnia per quadraginta quinque annos adeo sedulus artis melioris nuntius, adeo fidelis in interpretando, adeo diligens et simplex et candidus amicus virorum, ut ita dicam, mercurialium, ut vix alius magis reverentiâ et amore inter cives suos floruerit. Quem igitur, vir insignissime, tibi praesento, ut in gradum Doctoris in Arte Musicâ adhibeatur, honoris causâ.

DISTINGUISHED VICE-CHANCELLOR,—

I present to you this most pre-eminent man, August Manns, who has rendered such conspicuous artistic service and has laboured so strenuously for the good of music for nearly half-a-century, that in energy, skill, and devotion, he stands second to none. Since his arrival in England, fifty years ago, he has, like the Teutonic Nestor, Handel, made himself almost one of us, and a member of our English fraternity. When appointed Musical Director at the Crystal Palace he instituted Symphony Concerts, of merit hitherto almost unheard of. By judicious application of the 'Argument by the stick,' so to speak, he brought under his sway a large force of skilled artists, raising sweetest harmony from the discordant sounds of conflicting bodies. To his efforts we are indebted for that 'Trumpet's loud clangour,' that plaintive sweetness of the flute and pipe, and those enticing strains of strings: and his interpretations showed such excellent clearness of balance, such a genius for the sweetness of varied song, and such perfect obedience to the master mind, that he is universally acknowledged to be one of the finest exponents of the ancient and modern masterpieces. It was he who first made known to English audiences (as they say, 'enjoying splendid isolation') Schubert and Schumann, whose greatest works might be still unknown and unhonoured but for his efforts, and for the lack of the divine sympathy of the interpreter. Our native talent, too, he always encouraged, and spurred on many a young composer to pursue his art with enthusiasm. No one has done more to rouse and stimulate the love of music in England, nor would he suffer fusty traditions and 'damnable iteration,' but would always endeavour to keep in touch with new works by foreign composers, being anxious that no good work, from whatever source, should be undeservedly neglected.

For forty-five years has he remained a zealous apostle of his noble art, so true to its traditions and so loyal and so sincere a friend of the versatile among men, that it is difficult to exaggerate the affection and esteem in which he is universally held.

This most distinguished man I therefore present to you that he may be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Music, *honoris causâ*.

The paper read at the seventh meeting of the Musical Association, held on the 12th ult., was contributed by Dr. A. Madeley Richardson, who took for his subject 'The influence of the organ in musical history.'