New Light on Early Tudor Composers. VII. Richard Sampson

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'as yet we have not more than about thirty English songs that have even any pretension to being at once first-rate and English.' True—estimate if anything on generous side, but that is Ernest's lavish, enthusiastic way—I should have put the total at twenty, and of these three are by Purcell and one by Hook—which shows what a poor lot our modern native composers are, as I and my friend remind them at times. German songs thus essential to our musical life—must be sung in German because peculiar beauty of words evades translators—just as we may imagine such equally fine native lyrics as 'Somewhere a voice is calling' or 'The Heart of a Rose' losing some of their poignant beauty if translated into German—Mischa-Leon to be praised for offering feast of song by Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Wolf, &c., unspoiled by being put into our wretched, unsingable language. Distressing to record that group of ill-mannered fellows interrupted singer before he had had time to expel more than dozen of those rich gutturals we have so missed during past five years—I and my friend ashamed of them (the ill-mannered fellows, not the gutturals) hope Mischa-Leon will treat them as deserve by shaking dust of England off feet and taking programme of German songs to quarters where likely to be appreciated—somewhere nearer the Rhine. Got through programme all right after quarter of hour's scene that was disgrace to London. After objectors persuaded to withdraw, settled down and enjoyed ourselves. Overwhelming superiority of German songs shown in first five minutes—Beethoven's 'Adelaide'—lovely poem by Matthison—here is brief extract in English :

Soon, O wonder !
On my tomb will blossom
One small flower from my fond heart's ashes springing.
On its petals one name will brightly glisten,
Can you not guess it ?

Can we not? 'Adelaide only,' of course! Music thoroughly worthy—rich harmony—daring and passionate accompaniment. For example :

on its petals, on its petals one
deut - lich schimmert, deut - lich schimmert auf

name will bright-ly glis - ten,
je - dem Pur - pur - blätt-chen, &c.

No doubt about that being the stuff to give us. Then had Schubert's song about schoolboy who plucked rose and pricked finger—profound moral lesson on danger of undue haste in pursuit of beauty.

Note thus struck well maintained throughout recital. Why bother us with settings by Vaughan Williams, Ireland, Bridge, Holst, Bax, Parry, Stanford, and others, of reputed poems by Masfield, Yeats, Brooke, Stevenson, &c., when there are the treasures of German lyricism to draw from? Me for Snitzel, Hoggeneimer & Co. all the time. Must really talk seriously to the youth Capell of *Daily Mail*—has been saying nasty things about German songs—poking fun at them—disrespectful, very. He must cultivate fine detached attitude of 'internationals'—will then see that Britain is hungry after five years' deprivation of German language and modern German music—has given thorough trial to substitutes from France, Russia, Italy, America, Spain, and even Britain—thought it good enough at first, but soon began to see through it—colourable imitations—inferior Dosset—anxious to get back to genuine article made in Germany by old firm. To-day's motto for musical Britain (if she can be called musical), is 'Back to 1913.'

Hooh !

NEW LIGHT ON EARLY TUDOR COMPOSERS

By W. H. GRATTAN FLOOD

VII.—RICHARD SAMPSON

Among the many distinguished composers who flourished during the reign of Henry VIII. the name of Richard Sampson holds an honoured place. Dr. Ernest Walker, in his excellent 'History of Music in England' (1907) gives prominence to Sampson in his brief list, but of biographical data he furnishes none save that he was 'Dean of the Chapel Royal in 1516'—an error of date, as will be seen in the course of the present article. No previous musical writer has taken the trouble to piece together the scattered references to this remarkable ecclesiastic and composer to be found in the 'Calendar of Letters and Papers of Henry VIII.,' and I confess it was no easy task to wade through the twenty volumes (in reality thirty-one parts) of that monumental work, on which account the material unearthed will be serviceable to future investigators of early Tudor music.

To begin with, Richard Sampson, LL.D., was not Dean of the Chapel Royal in 1516. This coveted position, which was generally the prelude to a bishopric, was held by John Vesey during 1514-19 (in which latter year he was made Bishop of Exeter), and by John Clark during 1519-23.

One of the earliest references to Sampson is on January 12, 1517, when he was appointed Proctor at Tournay. Three years later he appears as Dean of St. Stephen's, Westminster, and, on April 1, 1522, he was given the canonry of St. Paul's Cathedral, vacant by the death of C. Urswick, to which post was added on June 29 the sacristship of St. Paul's. At length, after the appointment of Dr. John Clark as Bishop of Bath and Wells (March 26, 1523), and his

restitution of temporalities (May 2), Richard Sampson was promoted to the Deanery of the Chapel Royal at a salary of £33 6s. 8d. a year.

In the King's Book of Expenses for 1532 we meet with an item under date August 11: 'To Master Dean of the King's Chapel [Dr. Sampson], the ordinary reward for the Chapel, 40s.' Not long afterwards, on March 13, 1533, Dr. Sampson was granted the Prebend of Stotfield in the diocese of Lichfield, and four months later (July 9) he was given the Deanery of Lichfield. He was thus a super-pluralist, enjoying the revenues of Dean of St. Stephen's, Dean of the Chapel Royal, and Dean of Lichfield, as well as Dean of Windsor. Further preferment awaited him, and on March 31, 1534, he was presented to the Rectory of Hackney, but as a sort of set-off he resigned the vicarage of Stepney.

Among the MSS. in the British Museum (Royal ii. and xi.), c. 1520, there is a beautiful Motet for five voices by R. Sampson, 'Quam pulcra es amica'; also a Motet by him, in honour of Henry VIII., entitled 'Psallite felices protecti culmine rose purpuree,' for four voices in parts (Royal ii. and xi.).

Owing to the illness of Dean Pace of St. Paul's, it was found necessary to have a Vice-Dean, and hence on February 20, 1536, Cromwell appointed Sampson 'Coadjutor.' Consequently on Pace's death in May, 1536, we are not surprised to find Sampson advanced to the Deanery of St. Paul's, followed by his promotion to the see of Chichester on June 11, obtaining restitution of the temporalities on July 4. He was subsequently (July 20) dispensed to hold the Deanery of St. Paul's *in commendam*, having previously resigned the Deanery of Windsor.

Yet although Bishop Sampson owed so much to royal favour, he was a stout partisan of the old faith. On August 21, 1538, he wrote to a dignitary at Rye expressing his aversion to any service sung openly in English, and advising the non-adoption of 'such novelties.' For suspected leanings towards Catholic doctrines he was imprisoned in July, 1540. As Dr. Gairdner writes, 'Sampson, Bishop of Chichester, was one morning nominated as the first Bishop of Westminster; two hours later he was disgraced and imprisoned.' He was, however, soon released and restored to favour, only to be replaced as Dean of the Chapel Royal by Thirlby, the new Bishop of Westminster. As a solatium he was promoted by Henry VIII. to the see of Lichfield and Coventry on March 3, 1543, receiving the temporalities of the same on March 14.

It does not come within the scope of this brief memoir to touch on the career of Sampson as Bishop of Lichfield, but he was one of the six bishops that voted for retaining the old Service books. His musical career practically ended in 1536. There is much obscurity about his religious views under Edward VI., and it is most probable that inwardly he adhered to the old faith. He died at Eccleshall on September 25, 1554, almost eighty years of age.

We are sorry to hear that the British Symphony Orchestra's series of concerts at Queen's Hall is to be discontinued for lack of public support. This unfortunate occurrence should remind concert-givers of the need for decentralisation. At present we have too many concerts in the middle of London, and too few on the outskirts. There is a huge public in the more distant suburbs wanting music, but wanting it near home. Why not take it to them?

A BIT OF OLD LONDON LIFE

As a rule we look to old books and pictures to give us authentic glimpses of past times. Only rarely does music help us, and even then such help is usually indirect. The art was merely groping its way towards expression at a period when writers and painters could set down in unmistakable terms the things they saw. There is, however, one feature of old London life that only music can reconstruct for us. Writers have told us of the street cries: painters have given us pictures of hawkers crying their wares: it is left to the musician to show us the fragments of tunes to which the cries were sung. Few are in use to-day. Like the old signs, they have largely disappeared as the need for them ceased. Some among us who live in what are known as 'select neighbourhoods' even put up minatory notices warning the hawker that if he must needs peddle in 'Our Street,' he must peddle silently. But it is easy to imagine the importance of street cries in days when few of the population could read, and when the retail merchant pushed his shop and stock-in-trade before him on a barrow, or carried it on his head. It is not surprising that old composers should have been interested in these cries: the surprising thing is that only lately have we been able to see the practical result of such interest. As is now well known, Sir Frederick Bridge recently discovered manuscripts of Weekes, Gibbons, and Deering, in which street cries were worked into a kind of choral fantasy, or 'fancy,' as the form was called. Sir Frederick has lectured on his discovery, and our readers will remember that a résumé of one of these lectures appeared in the *Musical Times* for February. The works have now been published by Messrs. Novello, as Nos. 1343, 1344, and 1345 of their Part-Song Book. The first is by Weekes, and in its original form was for a single voice with viol accompaniment. Sir Frederick suggests that different voices may be used for the sake of variety, and also to give more point to the various cries. He has made the work suitable for choral performance by arranging three sections for S.A.T.B., adapting the composer's viol harmony. The Gibbons specimen is more elaborate, and consists of a fragment of plainsong given to the third viol, round which the other viols weave counterpoint, while the chorus delivers the various cries, sometimes singly, sometimes in combination. The 'fancy' is in two parts, the first ending with a brief five-part setting of the words, 'And so wee make an end,' the second with the Watchman's cry, 'Twelve o'clocke, looke well to your locke, your fier, and your light, and so good-night.' There is far more scope for choralists than might be imagined, great contrasts in the way of tone-colour being possible. There is a world of difference, for example, between the pathetic begging of the Bedlamites and the strident bass 'Oyez! if any man or woman can tell any tydyngs of a gray mare, with a long mane and a short tayle, she halts downe right before, and is starke lame behind, and was lost this thirtieth day of February. He that can tell any tydyngs of her let him come to the Cryer and he shall have well for his hier.' The song 'Swepe, chimney swepe' is a delightful tune of sixteen bars.

Good as is the Gibbons 'fancy,' that of Deering is even better. It contains a good many cries not used by Weekes and Gibbons, and the purely musical interest is perhaps greater. The chimney sweep's song is here given to soprano and tenor, a reminder that the sweep was always accompanied by a small boy. The