

Mr. S. Coleridge-Taylor's "The Death of Minnehaha" (Concluded)

Author(s): A. J. J.

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Stevenson Hoyte, organist of All Saints' Church, Margaret Street, London, and Mr. C. W. Perkins, organist of the Birmingham Town Hall. Dr. Bunnett, Corporation Organist and an old Norwich Cathedral chorister, will give a recital early in January.

STOURBRIDGE, a town in the Black Country, famous for the manufacture of fire-bricks, iron, nails, and such hardnasses, seems to be unusually enterprising in matters musical. The "concert scheme" for the current season of the "People's Concert Society," conducted by Mr. George Halford, includes such works as Brahms's "Song of Destiny," Stanford's "Phaudrig Crohoore," Parry's "Ode to St. Cecilia's Day," Schumann's "Paradise and the Peri," Tschaikowsky's "Casse-Noisette" Suite for orchestra, and that terribly hard nut to crack, Beethoven's Choral Symphony! The last-named work received "a highly creditable rendering" on the 13th ult., according to an account received from a correspondent which appears in another column. At the last census Stourbridge had a population of something under 10,000 inhabitants. It is probably a unique occurrence for a town of that size to give a performance of the "Choral." Such an achievement deserves the fullest publicity and highest commendation.

At the instance of the German Emperor, a new version is being prepared of Weber's "Oberon." Planché's libretto, which certainly will bear revision, is to be completely overhauled by Major Lauff, and new recitatives are to be compiled, from Weberian *motivi*, by Herr Schlar, the conductor of the Wiesbaden Opera, though there already exist those written by Weber's pupil, the late Julius Benedict, and by Dr. Wüllner, of Cologne. If it should lead to a general revival of this too much neglected work, lovers of the master will have reason to welcome the new version.

THE project of removing the mortal remains of Chopin from Paris to Cracow, which has been on the *tapis* for some years past, has received a fresh impulse from the recent commemorations of the fiftieth anniversary of the Polish composer's death. Collections, with that object in view, are being made by his compatriots, M. Paderewski having contributed the sum of two thousand florins. It remains to be seen, however, whether France, the scene of Chopin's most inspired artistic activity, and the country of his adoption, will agree to the proposed relinquishment of so precious a charge.

A REPORT has got into circulation to the effect that the British Museum authorities are about to issue "treatises," or "books," on Beethoven and Wagner. We have the best authority for asserting that there is absolutely no truth in the statement. It probably took its origin from a proposed scheme to print and publish all the headings under Beethoven and Wagner in the music catalogue. This will, in due time, be done, but no "treatises" will be issued from Great Russell Street.

It is always interesting to hear of the success attending the sons of musicians. The son of Dr. Henry Coward, of Sheffield, has just gained a Mathematical Scholarship at Caius College, Cambridge, of the value of £60 per annum. If the young man only turns out as good a mathematician as his father is a chorus-master, he has every chance of becoming a Senior Wrangler. May all success attend him.

SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN has resigned the conductorship of the Leeds Musical Festival, which he has held, in succession to the late Sir Michael Costa, since 1880. He has thus conducted seven triennial festivals, the outstanding feature of which is the production of his "Golden Legend," written for the great Yorkshire meeting of 1886. The performance of Bach's great B minor Mass in that memorable year will also rank amongst the highest of Sir Arthur's achievements as a conductor. The appointment of his successor will be awaited with more than usual interest.

MESSRS. BREITKOPF AND HÄRTEL have issued an English version of Dr. S. Jadassohn's treatise on Instrumentation, which has been translated from the German, under the careful supervision of the author, by Mr. Harry P. Wilkins, of Washington, U.S.A.

PROFESSOR EBENEZER PROUT (Professor of Music at Dublin University) has accepted the Queen Victoria Lectureship at Trinity College (London) for the present session.

BACH'S "Christmas" Oratorio (Parts I. and II.) will be the anthem at the 3 o'clock service at the Temple Church, on Christmas Eve.

M. EMILE SAURET will form the subject of the biographical sketch in our next issue.

MR. S. COLERIDGE-TAYLOR'S "THE DEATH OF MINNEHAHA."

(Concluded from page 744.)

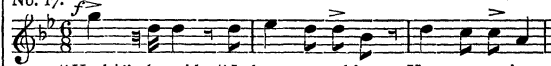
WOOD-WIND and strings have whirring chromatic triplet scale passages, against which bassoons, horns, trumpets, and one trombone hurl *ff* the opening theme from "Hiawatha's Wedding-Feast":—

No. 16. *Animato.*



When you ask the young composer what the introduction of this theme at this point might signify, he laughs at you with his merry eyes and says: "Oh! I don't know; I thought it would sound nice." And it *will* "sound nice"! Genius often works unconsciously, and we have no doubt that Mr. Taylor's spiritual co-worker meant to suggest that poor Minnehaha's feverish brain is busy with the happy time of her early wedded life. The poet's description of her hallucinations—so suggestive of Goethe's "Erl-King"—would have given some "advanced" composers a rare opportunity for indulging in descriptive music of much wanton ugliness and unlovely cacophony. Mr. Taylor, on the other hand, keeps the orchestra in the background and leaves the voice to tell the sad story, *e.g.*:—

No. 17. *Agitato.*



"Hark!" she said, "I hear a rushing, Hear a roar-ing



and a rushing, Hear the falls of Min-ne-ha-ha



Call-ing to me . . from a dis-tance!"

Note the short pauses (∩) suggestive of the feverish gasping for breath, or of moments of agonising suspense, while fearfully listening for imaginary sounds and calls.

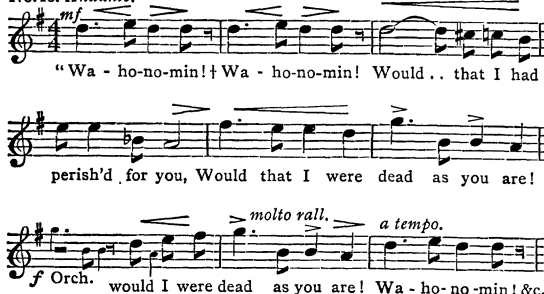
The answer, "No, my child, said old Nokomis, 'tis the night wind," &c., is sung by the chorus (s. and A) to the same phrase, but in E flat major and *tranquillo*. Three times, in more and more agitated accents, does *Minnehaha* describe the wraiths that affright her disordered brain, *Nokomis* the while endeavouring to calm her fears with matter-of-fact explanations of the apparitions. *Minnehaha's* last outcry, *con terrore*:—

"Ah!" she said, "the eyes of Pauguk *
Glare upon me in the darkness;
I can feel his icy fingers
Clasping mine amid the darkness!"

is followed immediately by a *ff* scream, "Hiawatha!" uttered twice to a descending diminished seventh from A flat, echoed by oboes and clarinets and afterwards by the full orchestra. The chorus repeats much of what *Minnehaha* has sung, though, of course, to different words, describing how *Hiawatha* heard his wife's "cry of anguish, far away amid the forest," and, with crashing chords of the diminished seventh, voices and orchestra repeat again and again with the utmost emphasis the agonised cry of "Hiawatha!" This will prove a very effective and impressive passage.

At last silence reigns for a moment. Then with the "wail," No. 2, richly harmonised, we return to a slower *tempo*, and, with quieter passages of fresh interest, and forestalling in the orchestra the next quotation (18), we approach an important section, standing in wonderful contrast with what has gone before. *Hiawatha* has hurried home "empty-handed, heavy-hearted," and hears *Nokomis* bemoaning *Minnehaha's* death. The old crone sings a strain of such touching, simple beauty that we are not surprised at the composer's evident liking for it. Here is the theme:—

No. 18. *Andante*.



He repeats it first in E minor for baritone solo, as if *Hiawatha*, standing outside the wigwam, took up the strain, and again for chorus, unaccompanied, as if the Chief's braves and their squaws joined in the lamentation. This is a liberty a composer of such music may surely take.

Between the several sections of this short *ensemble* the orchestra reiterates with strange but suggestive persistence the rhythm of the cry of lamentation, "Wahonomin" (No. 18, first bar).

Hiawatha rushes into the wigwam to see his lovely *Minnehaha* "lying dead and cold before him" (theme 4 b), and as he utters "such a cry of anguish that the very stars in heaven shook and trembled!" we have another stirring climax, in which the full powers of chorus and orchestra are employed.

* *i.e.*, Death.

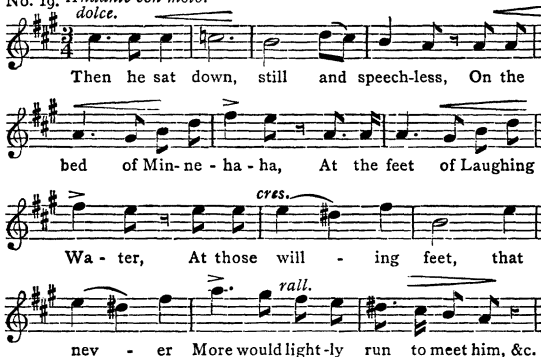
† "Wahonomin," a cry of lamentation.

Then the soprano soloist describes how *Hiawatha* sat down, still and speechless, as in a swoon—

On the bed of *Minnehaha*,
At the feet of Laughing Water,
At those willing feet, that never
More would lightly run to meet him,
Never more would lightly follow.

The vocal phrases are so spontaneous, so pure and affecting in their simple expression of deep sorrow and great compassion, that our heart seems to go out to poor *Hiawatha*. We must quote the opening phrase of the voice-part—

No. 19. *Andante con moto*.



The orchestra has a suave independent accompaniment of great charm, and, the short solo ended, the composer, with the "Wahonomin" theme (No. 18, first bar) four times played below an inverted pedal on A, modulates into D minor, in which solemn key the *Finale* starts.

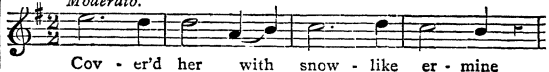
The movement is a *Moderato, quasi una marcia funebre*, and a most impressive funeral march withal. The orchestra has for its chief theme No. 11, and works especially the last six notes thereof. The following extract will give a good idea of the general arrangement—

No. 20. *Moderato*.

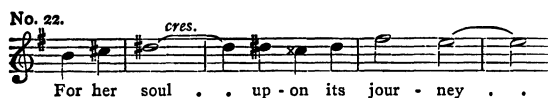


The voices sing largely in unison, the orchestration is full and sombre, big drum and cymbals, struck with drumstick, helping to produce a quasi-barbaric effect. The chorus have several impressive themes, such as this—

No. 21. *Moderato*.



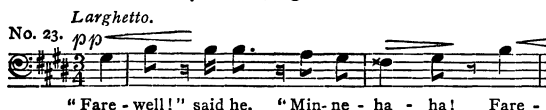
which the orchestra promptly echoes, and this—



all of which are of course subjected to effective, albeit concise, treatment. At the reference to the fire that was lighted at night on *Minnehaha's* grave, piccolo and flutes lend a realistic touch to the picture by rapid tremolos in thirds, and mention must be made of the "Wahonomin" theme (No. 18, first bar), entering at the words: "Stood and watched it at the doorway." Nine times in succession chorus in unison and orchestra utter the sad phrase of four notes, on different degrees of the scale and against ever changing harmonies in the rich and solemn accompaniment for brass and drums. The feeling of solemnity and grief, combined with aspiration, which this striking example of Mr. Taylor's powers produces is remarkable.

As the orchestra gradually subsides to *ppp*, and time and tempo change respectively to 3-4 and *Larghetto* *lento*, come *al prima*, we reach the last solo, *Hiawatha's* farewell to the dead *Minnehaha*. The orchestra deals for a few bars with Nos. 1 and 2; then the key changes to E, and *Hiawatha* utters one of the most pathetic yet dignified strains that has come from the heart of a composer for many a long day. Like the whole work, it is quite simple and natural, merely the out-pouring of a heart overflowing with grief and pity. But how beautiful, how affecting; how pure and true in sentiment! This is the simplicity of genius, that simplicity which, as Felix Weingartner truly says, "will at all times and from every point of view have a happy and stirring effect, and will ever appear new and young."

The solo, which has a very richly harmonised independent accompaniment, is more or less an extension of Nos. 7 and 8, e.g. :—

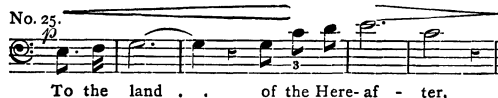


As No. 8 recurs, the orchestra supports the voice with such graceful curves of melody as shown below—

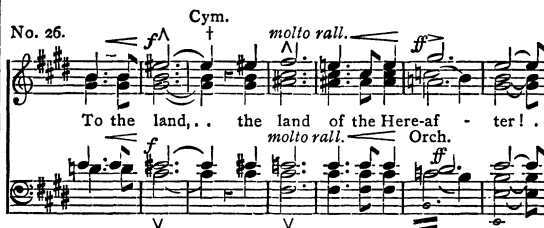


At the reference to the "Islands of the Blessed" to which *Hiawatha* promises soon to follow his beloved wife, the key suddenly changes to C major, and the

orchestra accompanies the voice lightly with tremolos for strings, harp *arpeggios*, triplet drum taps and horn chords—



The last words, "To the land of the Hereafter," are even more lightly accompanied, and for a good reason: the words should at this important point be understood by everyone in the audience. Wood-wind, horns, and trumpets repeat the last five notes, but soon the solo voice and orchestra (*Tutti*, including full percussion) plunge back into the brightest E major. The orchestra subsides within the last two bars quickly from *ff* to *pp*. Then the chorus repeats, but with numerous and noteworthy variations, what *Hiawatha* has sung. The part-writing for the voices is remarkably beautiful, and the orchestration of the largely independent and very expressive accompaniment glows with richer and richer colour as the long, broad stream of melody flows slowly onwards. The words, "To the land of the Hereafter," are unaccompanied save for a single clash of the cymbals at the point indicated below. With the word "Hereafter" the orchestra re-enters with the chord of the dominant minor ninth, above which the sopranos sound, with thrilling effect, the bright major thirteenth—



Ten bars of orchestral postlude, original and impressive as everything else in the work, and we reach the end.

A. J. J.

SIR HUBERT PARRY ON "THE ESSENTIALS OF CHURCH MUSIC."

A PAPER READ AT THE CHURCH CONGRESS.

IN discussing essentials of Church music it must be confessed that a great deal depends upon the point of view. People who have leanings towards Puritanism have always taken different views from such as have leanings in more highly ornamental directions; and if we enter closely into details from any special point of view we should have to discuss deep-seated differences of opinion with regard to the meaning and purpose of Church services. But if we content ourselves with a broad and general view, there is less likelihood of our wasting time on matters of detail which only concern special groups of men. One would like, indeed, to discuss the question altogether from outside—where the predispositions of the various groups who are represented by all sorts of distinctive names are not so likely to disturb the judgment.

Most people who have given any attention to the subject will agree that one of the essentials of any kind of art is fitness for the place and circumstances in which it is to be executed. Even the unthinking and uncritical would see the absurdity of endeavouring to enliven an infant school by reading to them Browning's "Sordello," or playing them excerpts