

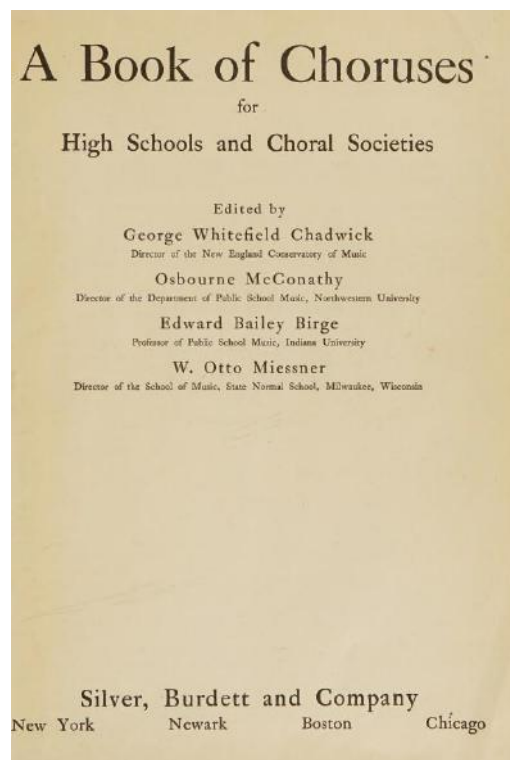
## Stanfordian Thoughts

A periodical series of reflections on recorded and unrecorded works by Stanford  
by Christopher Howell

### 23. Stanford and Chadwick's Book of Choruses

Vast as Stanford's catalogue of compositions is, things are still turning up. A few days ago, I chanced upon a title that was new to me: *Sweet is Tipperary*. This is now on offer at ChoralWiki<sup>1</sup>. It is a piece for unaccompanied SATB choir with a text by Denis Aloysius McCarthy. The ChoralWiki version has been edited and typeset by David Anderson, the "discovering researcher". His title page has "Old Irish Air" writ large on it. He tells us it was first published in 1923 by Silver, Burdett and Company and that, "commissioned for use by school choirs in the U.S., this Irish folksong setting was never published in the UK and was unknown to scholars for nearly a century".

All honour to David Anderson for discovering and making it available, but I was puzzled to find it described as an "Irish folksong setting". The first four bars are melodically identical to the tune of *My Ship and Me*, from Stanford's Stevenson settings op. 30, a song for voice and piano published in 1892<sup>2</sup>. Did *My Ship and Me* make undeclared use of an Irish folksong?



As it happens, the source book<sup>3</sup> is available at Internet Archive<sup>4</sup>. A glance at the first page of the music (reproduced below) shows that it was "composed for this book", while the two other pieces included by Stanford, *Emer's Farewell to Cucullain* and *Sweet Innisfallen*, are described as "arranged for this book". *Sweet is Tipperary* is therefore an original composition, and I hope Anderson's oversight will not lead to programmers labelling it as "An Old Irish Air" into the far future. Anderson has also edited the other two pieces for ChoralWiki and here, of course, his description is correct.

The volume by Chadwick *et al* is a fairly ambitious affair, containing a total of 79 pieces, of which 35 were specially written. A complete list is given in Appendix 1. There is an understandable concentration on American composers of a more conservative disposition and indeed, this collection makes a useful introduction to their smaller works. The only other British composer to contribute a new piece was Arthur Hinton. Most of the songs have piano accompaniment and a few contain brief vocal solos, though Stanford was not alone in writing for unaccompanied SATB. So here we have three previously

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Sweet\\_Is\\_Tipperary\\_\(Charles\\_Villiers\\_Stanford\)](https://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Sweet_Is_Tipperary_(Charles_Villiers_Stanford)). Retrieved 7 June 2024.

<sup>2</sup> I discuss "A Child's Garland of Songs" here: <https://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2022/Jun/Stanfordian-thoughts-10.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> *A Book of Choruses for High Schools and Choral Societies*, edited by George Whitefield Chadwick, Osbourne McCarthy, Edward Bailey Birge and W. Otto Miessner, Silver, Burdett and Company, 1923

<sup>4</sup> <https://archive.org/details/bookofchorusesfo0000chad/page/n5/mode/2up>, retrieved 7 June 2024.

unknown part-songs by Stanford<sup>5</sup>, one an original piece, the other two arrangements of Irish folk songs. How far do they enlarge our knowledge of the composer?

*Sweet is Tipperary* uses a poem found in a good many Irish anthologies. It was included in *A Round of Rimes* by Denis A. McCarthy (Review Publishing Company, Boston, 1900), though the foreword mentions that it had previously appeared in *The Boston Pilot*. McCarthy (1871-1931) was born in Tipperary but came to America at the age of fifteen, settling in Boston. Stanford provides a strophic setting of the three verses, though with a few variations in the third. A certain variety of pacing is built into the music, since the quaver (eighth note) movement at the beginning gives way to a broader, chorale like passage in crotchets (quarter notes), followed by some imitative writing in the voices. It is a well-wrought piece and should be effective enough in performance, though it is difficult not to feel that, after the initial borrowing from *My Ship and Me*, it rather runs out of steam. Stanford (or the original editor) forgot to put a tempo marking, and Anderson has not attempted to supply the omission. This same music in *My Ship and Me* had a very sprightly tempo and perhaps this piece should be sung in

the same way, otherwise the section with crotchet movement risks hanging fire.

Regarding the quotation from op. 30, Stanford's compositions frequently carry citations of his own or other people's works<sup>6</sup>, but he normally has a clear agenda – the words or context of the earlier piece have a bearing on the new one, for instance. In this case, I can see no linking thread between "Oh! 'Tis I that am the captain of a tidy little ship" and "Ah, sweet is Tipperary in the springtime of the year" and am inclined to suppose it an accidental self-quotation. Stanford was by now ailing and in the last year of his life. A guarded welcome to this new entry, then. There would seem to be plenty of almost equally unknown Stanford part-songs with prior claims.

The two folk song settings, on the other hand, deserve a warm welcome. Stanford had already set *Sweet Innisfallen* for voice and piano in *Moore's Melodies Restored* op. 60 (1895), a delicately flowing version with a charming prelude and postlude. A few small chromatic touches might cause purist eyes to frown. Dutifully, he had all nine of Moore's verses printed, though he provided only a single setting to serve them all. Just three verses are given for the SATB version, and again, the same setting suffices for each of them. There are no chromatic touches this time – not an accidental is to be seen. The harmonization is a little more mobile than before and textural variety is obtained by having the sopranos remain silent during the third line. In its sheer simplicity, this setting of a beautiful melody should prove deeply satisfying.

<sup>5</sup> Not discussed, obviously, in my attempt to provide a complete picture of the part-songs:

[https://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2018/Dec/Stanfordian\\_thoughts\\_8.pdf](https://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2018/Dec/Stanfordian_thoughts_8.pdf). Anderson has also discovered and edited two other Irish folk song arrangements published only in America, *Come o'er the Sea and Sing, Sweet Harp*, which I will discuss in another article, and has made available many of the items I had not been able to see back in 2018.

<sup>6</sup> See [https://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2003/oct03/Stanford\\_Quotation.htm](https://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2003/oct03/Stanford_Quotation.htm), though this article will need revising at some point since other quotations have come to light in the 20-odd years since it was written.

*Emer's Farewell to Cucullain* is the tune usually known as the "Derry Air". Stanford first set this – to these same words by Alfred Perceval Graves – in *Songs of Old Ireland* (1882). Although the melody had been published, with a simple piano arrangement, in Petrie's 1855 collection<sup>7</sup>, where it appeared without words or name, it is generally held that Stanford's 1882 setting marked the beginning of the tune's rise to fame. Stanford later incorporated it in his First Irish Rhapsody op. 78 (1902) and subsequently resented the fact that, thanks to this inclusion, it dwarfed the rest of his orchestral music in popularity. The 1882 setting was not without its problems. Stanford followed Petrie in sharpening the B flat in the sixth bar. According to Plunket Greene, "This was in the tune as he first found it and against his better judgement he left it in, though he had doubts as to its genuineness. Later on he felt sure that it should have been B flat, but not in time to put it right in the first Irish Rhapsody"<sup>8</sup>. Unfortunately, the offending note is doubled in the accompaniment, preventing the singer from surreptitiously singing B flat anyway. There are other chromatic touches that do not convince and, most seriously of all, the harmonization fails to support the melody through to the end, sitting statically on a tonic chord after the climax. This is managed better in the Rhapsody, where the dubious B natural disturbs less in the context of what feels like a composition rather than a simple arrangement.

Stanford returned to this tune, it now emerges, three times in his very last years. His final voice and piano setting uses a different Graves poem, *The Irish Lover* (Cramer, 1924). This has the proper B flat and is harmonically well paced. When a Stanford setting of the Derry Air is sung, it is usually this one, but the austere texture of the piano writing, which comments on the tune rather than supporting it, does not make life easy for the singer. An arrangement for organ, *Intermezzo founded upon an Irish Air*, op. 189 no. 4 (Novello 1923) appears, to judge from the number of YouTube performances now available, to be gaining favour. It is curious that, having chosen a different poem for his last voice and piano version, Stanford reverted to the over-literary *Emer's Farewell* for the SATB setting. *Songs of Old Ireland* was a much-loved volume in America, particularly among the populous Irish communities, so perhaps Chadwick asked that the words should remain the same. Little or no harm would be done to the music by using other words, even Weatherly's ubiquitous poem "Oh, Danny Boy", and compilers of hymn books might give this a look, too. If you want a version that is rich but not over-lush, and perfectly paced harmonically, this should meet your needs. It deserves to become the standard version for unaccompanied choirs wishing to sing this tune.

**Christopher Howell © 2024**

### Appendix 1

Contents of the Book of Choruses, listed in order of composer, title, author of text and scoring. The 35 specially composed (or arranged) for the book are marked with an asterisk.

1. GEORGE WHITEFIELD CHADWICK: Land of our Hearts (John Hall Ingham) (SATB)
2. CHADWICK: Caravan Song (Alfred H. Hyatt) (SATB + piano)\*
3. W. OTTO MIESSNER: Summer Night (William O. Lord) (SATB + piano)\*
4. EDWARD B. BIRGE: Spring's Message (W. E. Henley) (SATB + piano)\*
5. OFFENBACH: Song of General Boom (from "La Grande Duchesse") (Bass solo, SATB + piano)
6. BEETHOVEN arr. C. B. Rich: The Heavens, Resounding (C. B. Rich) (SATB + piano)
7. CHADWICK: Mexican Serenade (Arthur Guiterman) (SATB + piano)\*
8. VITTORIA: Loving Father (Jesu dulcis memoria) (SATB)

<sup>7</sup> *The Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland, arranged for the pianoforte*. Ed. George Petrie. M. H. Gill, Dublin, 1855.

<sup>8</sup> Harry Plunket Greene: *Charles Villiers Stanford*, Edward Arnold, 1935, p. 181.

9. JULIUS ROENTGEN: The tide rises, the tide falls (Longfellow) (SATB + piano)\*
10. STANFORD: Emer's farewell to Cucullain (Irish folksong arr.) (A. P. Graves) (SATB)\*
11. BACH: My heart ever faithful (unison + piano)
12. VICTOR HERBERT: Native Music (Samuel Lover) (SATB)\*
13. HENRY HADLEY: Sea Fever (Masefield) (SATB)\*
14. CHARLES WAKEFIELD CADMAN: The Boy and the Brook (Longfellow) (baritone solo, SATB + piano)\*
15. FRANK VAN DER STUCKEN: December (Clare) (SATB)\*
16. GOUNOD: Chorus of Bacchantes (from "Philemon et Baucis") (SATB + piano)
17. HORATIO PARKER: I Remember (Longfellow) (SSA + piano)
18. MABEL W. DANIELS: Harvest Song (Dora Read Goodale) (SATB + piano)\*
19. MENDELSSOHN: How lovely are the messengers (from "St. Paul") (SATB + piano)
20. RHEINBERGER: The Stars in Heaven (SATB)
21. STANFORD: Sweet is Tipperary (Denis A. McCarthy) (SATB)\*
22. FRIEDRICH GERNSHEIM: Snowflakes (John Vance Cheney) (SATB + piano)\*
23. BERLIOZ: The Flight into Egypt (translation by H. Chorley) (SATB + piano)
24. SCHUBERT arr. OSBOURNE McCONATHY: Hark! Hark! The Lark! (Shakespeare) (SSA + piano)
25. ARTHUR HINTON: Sun and Shadow (Oliver Wendell Holmes) (SATB + piano ad lib)\*
26. EDGAR STILLMAN KELLEY: By the Yule Log (Clinton Scollard) (SATB + piano)\*
27. FREDERICK S. CONVERSE: The Water-Lily (Mary Frances Butts attrib.) (SATB + piano)\*
28. JOHN E. WEST: Pack, Clouds, Away (Thomas Heywood) (SATB + piano ad lib)\*
29. A. GORING THOMAS: Night Hymn at Sea (Felicia Hemans) (SA + piano)
30. SULLIVAN (arranged from): Hail, Poesie (Abbie Farwell Brown) (SATB)
31. Mrs. H. H. A. BEACH: May Eve (Thomas S. Jones Jr.) (SATB + piano)\*
32. MASCAGNI: Opening Chorus – Cavalleria Rusticana (trans. Nathan Haskell Dole) (SATB + piano)
33. CHADWICK: Mister Moon (Bliss Carman) (SSA + piano)\*
34. BACH: Commit thy Ways (from "St. Matthew Passion) (SATB)
35. ARTHUR FOOTE: A Canadian Boat Song (Thomas Moore) (SATB + piano)\*
36. BRAHMS: Fidelin (translation by George L. Osgood) (SSAA + piano)
37. MARGARET RUTHVEN LANG: Spring Flowers (Nixon Waterman) (SATB + piano)\*
38. RUBINSTEIN: Chorus of the Sons of Japheth (from "The Tower of Babel") (SATB + piano)
39. ROSSETTER G. COLE: Evening (John Vance Cheney) (SATB)\*
40. MOZART: Teach me Thy Statutes (Ave Verum) (SATB + piano)
41. MIESSNER: When ships put out to sea (Madison Cawein) (SATB + piano)\*
42. LUISE REICHARDT: In the time of Roses (Unison + piano)
43. CHADWICK: Buie Annajohn (Bliss Carman) (SATB + piano)\*
44. HANDEL: And the Glory of the Lord (from "The Messiah") (SATB + piano)
45. JOHN ALDEN CARPENTER: The Home Road (J. A. Carpenter) (Unison or SATB + piano)
46. HADLEY: The Immortal (Cale Young Rice) (SATB [+ piano])\*
47. PHILIP GREELEY CLAPP: The Song of the Bell Buoy (Herbert Bashford) (SATB + piano)\*
48. STEPHEN C. FOSTER: Come where my love lies dreaming (S. C. Foster) (SATB + piano)
49. ARTHUR FARWELL: Night in the Desert (Robert Southey) (SATB + piano)\*
50. CLAY: I'll sing thee songs of Araby (W. G. Wills) (Unison + piano)
51. PALESTRINA: Lord of Mercy (O Bone Jesu) (SATB)
52. CHADWICK: Chorus of Pilgrim Women (Josephine Preston Peabody) (SSAA + piano)
53. AUBER: Hail! Festal Morn (SATB + piano)
54. STANFORD: Sweet Innisfallen (Irish folksong arr.) (Moore) (SATB)\*
55. DANIEL PROTHEROE: Mariners' Song (Abbie Farwell Brown) (SATB + piano)\*
56. ARCADELT: Benediction (Ave Maria) (SATB)

57. STAINER: Sevenfold Amen (SATB)
58. CHADWICK: Deep in the soul of a rose (Alfred H. Hyatt) (SSA + piano)\*
59. OFFENBACH: Sabre Song (from "La Grande Duchesse") (Soprano solo, SATB + piano)
60. HUGO KAUN: A Lullaby (Edith Sanford Tillotson) (SATB + piano)\*
61. JOHN LYMAN MOLLOY: The Kerry Dance (J. L. Molloy) (Alto solo, SATB + piano)
62. PRAETORIUS: The Rose-Tree (SATB)
63. BALFE: In the Gypsy's Life (from "The Bohemian Girl") (SATB + piano)
64. CARL BUSCH: Fireflies (Agnes M. F. Robinson) (SATB + piano)\*
65. HARVEY LOOMINGTON LOOMIS: The Cobbler (David Stevens) (SATB + piano)
66. HORATIO PARKER: National Hymn (D. C. Roberts) (SATB)
67. FELIX BOROWSKI: The Pine Tree (Heine, translated John Todhunter) (SATB + piano)\*
68. WAGNER: The King's Prayer (from "Lohengrin") (Optional bass solo + piano)
69. SCHUBERT arr. McCONATHY: The Erlking (Goethe) (SATB solos, SATB + piano)
70. HENRY CAREY: America (Samuel F. Smith) (SATB)
71. CHADWICK: Little Lac Grenier (William Henry Drummond) (SATB + piano)\*
72. PHILIP JAMES: American Anthem (Edwin Fairfax Naulty) (Unison + piano)
73. PARKER: Freedom, Our Queen (Oliver Wendell Holmes) (SATB + piano)
74. NAUMANN: Dresden Amen (SATB)
75. HAYDN: Come, my soul, thou must be waking (F. R. L. Canitz) (SATB)
76. BARNBY: Now the day is over (S. Baring-Gould) (SATB)
77. CROFT: O God, our help in ages past (SATB)
78. JOHN STAFFORD SMITH: The Star-Spangled Banner (Frances Scott Key) (SATB)
79. BIRGE: The American Flag (Joseph Rodman Drake) (SATB)\*