

■ MUSIC IN 19TH-CENTURY BRITAIN ■

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Charles Villiers Stanford

PAUL RODMELL



Charles Villiers Stanford



Frontispiece Charles Villiers Stanford by Sir William Orpen. By permission of the Masters and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

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Contents

<i>List of Plates</i>	ix
<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	x
<i>List of Music Examples</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xv
<i>Preface</i>	xvii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xxi

Part One: Life and Work

1 An Anglo-Irish Childhood	3
2 Early Years at Cambridge	34
3 From Proud Marriage to Operatic Fall	66
4 At Cambridge Triumphant	109
5 A Man about London Town	169
Appendix: The Relationship of the Fifth Symphony to Milton's <i>L'Allegro</i> and <i>Il Penseroso</i>	222
6 A Long Edwardian Summer	228
7 Last Years	305

Part Two: Appraisal and Conclusions

8 Stanford the Pegagogue	341
Conductor and Writer	341
'Damned ugly me bhoy' – Stanford the Teacher	349
9 Stanford the Composer	374
Every Inch an (Anglo-)Irishman?	384
Reception, Perception and Legacy	400
Appendices	
1 Select List of Works	419
2 Discography	447

<i>Select Bibliography</i>	464
<i>Index of Compositions by Stanford</i>	473
<i>General Index</i>	479

General Editor's Preface

The life and music of Charles Villiers Stanford represents a conspicuous absence for much of twentieth-century British musicology. Despite his central importance as a composer, teacher, conductor and writer, Stanford – like his times in general – was in part a casualty of the British self-uninterest engendered by the fallout from the ‘land without music’. This malediction, which held sway for such a considerable time in the twentieth century, is only now beginning to be understood in its rich historiographical context, and it is because of this that its effects on the minds of musicologists and the listening public are beginning to be reconsidered. It is precisely because of works such as Rodmell’s *Stanford* that our understanding of that period in time, and the musicians who lived in it, can achieve any level of clarity devoid of inherited prejudice. In Rodmell’s book we have a ‘land without “a land without music”’.

In addition to re-establishing Stanford as a musicological focal point, Rodmell also provides the first biography of Stanford since Henry Plunkett Greene’s *Charles Villiers Stanford* (London, 1935). At the same time, he provides an extensive array of musical examples illustrative of his biographical considerations. These are informed by an equally extensive reading in issues of reception and the musical culture of Stanford’s time. The combination of these affords the reader the first comprehensive investigation of its kind. For all this, however, Rodmell is not uncritical of Stanford’s music, and neither does he indulge in analysis devoid of aesthetic judgement. Rather, he contextualizes his criticism in terms which relate to the continuum of Stanford’s wide-ranging career, and through this there emerges a picture of the man and his music which is both humane yet discriminating. This is evident not only in the way individual compositions are treated, but also in the division of the book into two distinct parts, a life and works, and an appraisal and conclusion. Whilst the first part of the book explores the general inter-relationships between the man and his music, the second part underscores the significance of this in relation to Stanford’s working environment as teacher, writer, and composer. This twofold methodology has obvious advantages in allowing the author to establish clear biographical information which can then be cast in increasingly specified ways. Rodmell’s conclusion is framed in issues of national identity and multiple aspects of reception, and in this regard it affords as much

a locus for critical overview as a vehicle for further debate. Taken as a whole, Rodmell's *Stanford* does this same thing on a wider basis, by providing scholars with an overview of one important figure, and also by situating him within a broader musicological debate about music and its cultural significance in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain.

Bennett Zon

University of Durham

List of Plates

Between pages 234 and 235

- 1 2 Herbert Street, Dublin
- 2 50 Holland Street, Kensington, London
- 3 Photograph of Stanford in the 1880s
- 4 Portrait of Jennie Stanford by Hubert von Herkommer
- 5 'Spy' drawing of Stanford (*Vanity Fair*, 14 April 1904)
- 6 'Physical Energy' by George Frederick Watts
- 7 'Love and Life' by George Frederick Watts
- 8 'Love and Death' by George Frederick Watts
- 9 'Good Luck to your Fishing' by George Frederick Watts
- 10 Stanford with Parry, Mackenzie, German, Elgar and Godfrey at Bournemouth, 1910
- 11 Stanford with Elgar, Brewer, Bantock, Hadow and others at Gloucester, 1922
- 12 Drawings of (a) Stanford, (b) Vaughan Williams, (c) Holst and (d) Goossens by Eric Kapp

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

- | | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 1.1 | Inner south-east Dublin in 1850, from <i>The Illustrated Atlas and Modern History of the World</i> , ed. Montgomery Martin (London, ?1849–51). By permission of Birmingham Central Library | 2 |
| 1.2 | Genealogical table of the Stanford family | 10 |
| 1.3 | Genealogical table of the Henn family | 14 |

Tables

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 1.1 | Selected operas performed by the company of Her Majesty's Theatre, London, at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, 1862–70 | 27 |
| 5.1 | Variations on 'Down among the Dead Men', Op. 71 | 202 |
| 5.2 | Principal works performed at the Leeds Festival, 1901 | 214 |
| 8.1 | RCM opera productions conducted by Stanford, 1885–1914 | 345 |
| 8.2 | Selective list of Stanford's composition students (RCM and Cambridge) | 351 |
| 8.3 | Selective list of appointments held by former Stanford pupils | 371 |
| 9.1 | Selective list of Stanford's works with the year of withdrawal from sale | 401 |
| 9.2 | Sales of vocal scores of <i>The Revenge</i> in five-year periods | 402 |

List of Music Examples

All music is by Stanford unless otherwise stated.

1.1	'Puss-in-Boots' March (?1864), bars 1–16	29
1.2	'A Venetian Dirge' (1864), bars 1–14	31
2.1	Piano Concerto (1874), first movement, subjects	40
2.2	'The world is great' (from Eight Songs from <i>The Spanish Gypsy</i>), Op. 1 No. 6, bars 1–6	42
2.3	'The Radiant Dark' (from Eight Songs from <i>The Spanish Gypsy</i>), Op. 1 No. 8, excerpts	43
2.4	<i>God is our hope and strength</i> , Op. 8, transition from No. 4 to No. 5	51
2.5	Cello Sonata in A, Op. 9, first movement, excerpts	59
2.6	Violin Sonata in D, Op. 11, second movement, excerpts	61
2.7	<i>La Belle Dame sans Merci</i> (1877) and Schubert, 'Der Doppelgänger' from <i>Schwanengesang</i> , excerpts	62
3.1	Service in B flat, Op. 10, Te Deum, bars 1–7 and 31–6	70
3.2	Service in B flat, Op. 10, Magnificat, opening theme	71
3.3	Service in B flat, Op. 10, Magnificat, bars 21–4	71
3.4	Service in B flat, Op. 10, Magnificat, bars 29–34	71
3.5	Service in B flat, Op. 10, Magnificat, bars 45–57	72
3.6	Piano Quartet in F, Op. 15, excerpts	76
3.7	<i>The Veiled Prophet</i> (1877), reminiscence motifs	80
3.8	'Marching Along' (from <i>Cavalier Songs</i>), Op. 17 No. 1, bars 1–13	87
3.9	Serenade in G, Op. 18, scherzo, bars 1–17	91
3.10	<i>Savonarola</i> (1884), Prologue, bars 627–35	100
3.11	<i>The Canterbury Pilgrims</i> (1884), Act II, Sir Christopher's serenade	103
3.12	<i>The Canterbury Pilgrims</i> (1884), Act II, opening	104
3.13	<i>The Canterbury Pilgrims</i> (1884), Act I, bars 25–32	105
4.1	<i>Elegiac Ode</i> , Op. 21 (No. 1), opening	111
4.2	<i>Elegiac Ode</i> , Op. 21 (No. 4), bars 11–28	112
4.3	<i>The Three Holy Children</i> , Op. 22, no. 1, 'Chorus of Jewish Women', bars 64–7	115

4.4	<i>The Three Holy Children</i> , Op. 22, no. 13, bars 22–30	116
4.5	<i>The Revenge</i> , Op. 24, bars 214–23	120
4.6	<i>The Revenge</i> , Op. 24, bars 58–68	121
4.7	<i>The Revenge</i> , Op. 24, bars 104–21	122
4.8	‘Irish’ Symphony, Op. 28, Scherzo, principal theme	125
4.9	‘Irish’ Symphony, Op. 28, Scherzo, ‘B’ section of Trio, bars 13–16	125
4.10	‘Irish’ Symphony, Op. 28, Scherzo, ‘B’ section of Trio, bars 23–6	126
4.11	(a) ‘Irish’ Symphony, Op. 28, third movement, bars 66–78; (b) Brahms, Fourth Symphony in E Minor, Op. 98, second movement, bars 1–3; (c) <i>Songs of Old Ireland</i> (1882), ‘The Lament of Owen Roe O’Neill’	127
4.12	‘Irish’ Symphony, Op. 28, fourth movement, bars 32–9	128
4.13	<i>Oedipus Tyrannus</i> , Op. 29, prelude, bars 11–20	136
4.14	Fourth Symphony in F, Op. 31: (a) Intermezzo, bars 1–9; (b) first movement, second subject; (c) Brahms, <i>Liebeslieder</i> , Op. 52 No. 1, opening theme	145
4.15	Fourth Symphony in F, Op. 31, third movement, first theme	145
4.16	Service in F, Op. 36, common doxology	148
4.17	<i>Justorum animae</i> , Op. 38 No. 1, bars 1–14 and bars 41–6	149
4.18	<i>Eden</i> , Op. 40, development of motifs	159
4.19	<i>Eden</i> , Op. 40, Act II, no. 7, bars 1–9	160
5.1	Mass in G, Op. 46, Gloria, bars 94–103	175
5.2	Mass in G, Op. 46, Sanctus, bars 9–16	175
5.3	Mass in G, Op. 46, Agnus Dei, bars 44–9	176
5.4	<i>Shamus O’Brien</i> , Op. 61, Act I, no. 8, bars 100–104	186
5.5	<i>Shamus O’Brien</i> , Op. 61: (a) ‘Father O’Flynn’ motto; (b) Act I, no. 8 (Jig), bars 182–98	187
5.6	<i>Shamus O’Brien</i> , Op. 61 (‘I’ve sharpened the sword’ and ‘Push the jug around’) and <i>Moore’s Irish Melodies</i> (‘Cruachan ne feine’ and ‘Bob and Joan’)	187
5.7	<i>Christopher Patch</i> , Op. 69, Act II, no. 15, bars 165–95	193
5.8	<i>Christopher Patch</i> , Op. 69, Act I, no. 3, bars 73–80	194
5.9	<i>Requiem</i> , Op. 63: (a) Introit, bars 1–17; (b) Introit, transition to ‘Et lux’	196
5.10	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i> , Op. 76a, Act II, bars 68–76 (Claudio’s Serenade)	210
5.11	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i> , Op. 76a, Act II, Love Duet, skeleton harmonic structure of refrains 1–3	210

5.12	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i> , Op. 76a, Act I, bars 230–32	211
5.13	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i> , Op. 76a, Act III, bars 12–14	211
5.14	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i> , Op. 76a: (a) Act III, bars 62–8; (b) Act IV, bars 471–4	212
5.15	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i> , Op. 76a: (a) Act III, bars 320–23; (b) Act IV, bars 545–53	213
5.16	Themes in the Fifth Symphony, Op. 56	225
6.1	<i>Irish Rhapsody No. 1</i> , Op. 78, bars 492–5	230
6.2	‘The Fairy Lough’ (from <i>An Irish Idyll</i>), Op. 77 No. 2, bars 24–41	231
6.3	Clarinet Concerto, Op. 80, subjects	234
6.4	Service in G, Op. 81, Magnificat, bars 1–13	236
6.5	‘The Old Superb’ (from <i>Songs of the Sea</i>), Op. 91 No. 5, bars 114–21	245
6.6	‘Drake’s Drum’ (from <i>Songs of the Sea</i>), Op. 91 No. 1, bars 3–9	245
6.7	Sixth Symphony, Op. 94, ‘Love’ and ‘Death’ themes	247
6.8	‘To the Soul’ (from <i>Songs of Faith</i>), Op. 97 No. 4, bars 1–9	248
6.9	‘To the Soul’ (from <i>Songs of Faith</i>), Op. 97 No. 4, bars 31–46	249
6.10	<i>Stabat Mater</i> , Op. 96, ‘Paradise’ theme	252
6.11	<i>Stabat Mater</i> , Op. 96, no. 5, bars 198–206	252
6.12	<i>Stabat Mater</i> , Op. 96, no. 5, bars 221–5	253
6.13	<i>Ave atque vale</i> , Op. 114, bars 1–5 and 203–11	258
6.14	<i>Ode to Discord</i> (1908), Bass Clarinet ‘quasi cadenza’, and ‘a feverish pulsation of the approved pattern on the wind’	260
6.15	Service in C, Op. 115, Sanctus, bars 1–9	261
6.16	‘Cushendall’ (from <i>Cushendall</i>), Op. 118 No. 3, bars 45–53	262
6.17	‘The Bluebird’ (from <i>Eight Partsongs</i>), Op. 119 No. 3, bars 1–13	263
6.18	Seventh Symphony, Op. 124, excerpts	270
6.19	Second Piano Concerto, Op. 126, first movement, second subject	272
6.20	<i>Drake</i> , Op. 130, <i>Adagio</i> from Scene I, bars 1–6	277
6.21	‘Grandeur’ (from <i>A Sheaf of Songs from Leinster</i>), Op. 140 No. 1, bars 1–8	282
6.22	‘Grandeur’ (from <i>A Sheaf of Songs from Leinster</i>), Op. 140 No. 1, bars 42–50	283
6.23	<i>Irish Rhapsody No. 4</i> , Op. 141, bars 1–13	285

6.24	<i>The Critic</i> , Op. 144, Act II, <i>Scherzino Passo</i> (Tilburina's Mad Scene), opening and reprise	293
6.25	<i>The Critic</i> , Op. 144, Act I, bars 251–62	294
6.26	<i>The Critic</i> , Op. 144, Act II, Beefeater's Entrance, bars 249–54	295
6.27	<i>The Travelling Companion</i> , Op. 146, developments of the Companion's motif	299
6.28	<i>The Travelling Companion</i> , Op. 146, Act I, bars 402–18	301
6.29	<i>The Travelling Companion</i> , Op. 146, Act III, bars 31–7 and 126–30	302
7.1	'The Pibroch' (from <i>Songs of a Roving Celt</i>), Op. 157 No. 1, bars 1–5	313
7.2	<i>Magnificat</i> , Op. 164, 'Fecit potentiam', bars 115–24	316
7.3	<i>At the Abbey Gate</i> , Op. 177, bars 143–9	319
7.4	'Denny's Daughter' (from <i>Songs from the Glens of Antrim</i>), Op. 174 No. 1, bars 4–13	321
7.5	Preludes for Piano, Op. 163, excerpts	322
7.6	Sonatina in G for Piano (1921), first movement, bars 1–15	329
7.7	<i>Nonsense Rhymes</i> (1923), no. 14 ('A Visit from Elizabeth'), bars 1–15	331
9.1	Fourth Symphony, Op. 31, first movement, bars 1–11	380
9.2	Seventh Symphony, Op. 124, first movement, bars 1–10	380
9.3	<i>Justorum animae</i> , Op. 38 No. 1, bars 8–21	381
9.4	(a) <i>Phaudrig Croohore</i> , Op. 62, bars 149–56; (b) Variations on 'Down among the Dead Men', Op. 71, variation 6, bars 21–35	382
9.5	<i>Beati quorum via</i> , Op. 38 No. 3, bars 1–17 and 49–62	383
9.6	'The valley lay smiling before me' (from <i>Moore's Irish Melodies</i>) with accompaniments by Stevenson, Balfe and Stanford	392

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Preface

This is the first book to be devoted to the life and music of Charles Villiers Stanford since the biography written by his friend Harry Plunket Greene in 1935.¹ Since then Stanford's music has remained for a long time out of favour; it has only been in the last twenty years or so that the decline in interest in both the man and his music has been halted and reversed. This has been mainly attributable to the general growth in scholarly research on the 'English Musical Renaissance',² to a growing belief that Britain before 1914 was not 'das Land ohne Musik',³ and to the rapid expansion of the recorded repertory which followed the success of the CD medium.

In the course of this wider resurgence Stanford has remained somewhat at the margin. Along with his contemporaries, Stanford has been examined in such general works as Nicholas Temperley's *Music in Britain: The Romantic Age* and Stephen Banfield's generic study *Sensibility and English Song*.⁴ But while other 'renaissance' composers such as Vaughan Williams, Holst, Moeran, Parry, Stainer, Bax and Balfour Gardiner – to name just some – have been the subject of monographs or collections of articles,⁵ Stanford has hitherto been substantially left

¹ Harry Plunket Greene, *Charles Villiers Stanford* (London, 1935).

² The term 'English [or British] Musical Renaissance' was coined by Morton Latham, who gave a lecture 'The Musical Renaissance in England' at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1888; he later published a book, *The Renaissance of Music* (London, 1890). Latham focused on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in his work, but the term was soon taken up by musicians as a way to refer to the perceived growth in musical activity in Britain in the late nineteenth century and later became common currency. For further, provocative, discussion see Robert Stradling and Merion Hughes, *The British Musical Renaissance: Construction and Deconstruction* (London, 1995; 2nd rev. edn, Manchester, 2001); for a discussion of how perceptions of when the 'Renaissance' started have changed see Nicholas Temperley, 'Xenophilia in British Musical History', in Bennett Zon (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies*, 1 (Aldershot, 1999), 3–19.

³ This term was first used by Oskar Schmitz late in 1914; see ch. 3 of Stradling and Hughes, *The British Musical Renaissance*.

⁴ Nicholas Temperley (ed.), *Music in Britain: The Romantic Age 1800–1914* (London, 1981); Stephen Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1985).

⁵ Respectively, Alain Frogley (ed.), *Vaughan Williams Studies* (Cambridge, 1996); Michael Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music* (Oxford, 1990); Geoffrey Self, *The Music of E. J. Moeran* (London, 1986); Peter Charlton, *John Stainer and the Musical Life of Victorian Britain* (Newton Abbot, 1984); Jeremy Dibble, *C. Hubert H. Parry: His Life and Music* (Oxford, 1992) and Bernard Benoliel, *Parry before Jerusalem: Studies of his*

alone. Since the mid-1960s, however, the late Frederick Hudson was tracing, collecting and cataloguing Stanford's music.⁶ In attempting to produce a definitive list, Dr Hudson located nearly all of Stanford's manuscripts; it is regrettable that his death in 1994 prevented him from completing the catalogue to which he had devoted so much time. Stanford himself has also been the subject of scholarly and editorial interest, exemplified by the work of Geoffrey Bush, Heinrich van der Mescht, Jean Hoover, Michael Allis, Jeremy Dibble and myself.⁷

While finding and examining Stanford's music has proved to be relatively straightforward, I have been surprised at just how difficult it has been to piece together the story of the life of such a prominent pre-First World War musician. In addition to Greene's book, the most important sources of published information are Stanford's own autobiography,⁸ his other published writings,⁹ and a few other articles, such as those by Thomas Dunhill and Herbert Howells.¹⁰ To a large extent, however, all of these works merely repeat each other, reiterate the same facts and figures, and concentrate, understandably, on Stanford's public life and work. Stanford himself was almost wholly reticent about his personal life after leaving Dublin in *Pages from an Unwritten Diary* (he does not, for example, mention his wife or marriage at all), while Greene, despite

Life and Music (Aldershot, 1997); Lewis Foreman, *Arnold Bax: A Composer and his Times* (Aldershot, 1983; 2nd edn, 1988); Stephen Lloyd, *H. Balfour Gardiner* (Cambridge, 1984).

⁶ The ongoing results of this research were published in 'C. V. Stanford: Nova Bibliographica', *Musical Times*, 104 (1963), 728–31; 'C. V. Stanford: Nova Bibliographica II', *Musical Times*, 105 (1964), 734–8; 'C. V. Stanford: Nova Bibliographica III', *Musical Times*, 108 (1967), 326, and 'A Revised and Extended Catalogue of C. V. Stanford', *Music Review*, 37 (1976), 106–29.

⁷ Respectively Geoffrey Bush's edition of Stanford's songs (*Musica Britannica*, 52); Jean Hoover and Heinrich van der Mescht both gave papers on Stanford at the Second Biennial Conference on Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain at Durham in 1999; Jeremy Dibble has played a crucial part in the issuing of several CDs of Stanford's music (see App. 2) and is also the author of 'Stanford's Service in B flat, op. 10, and the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge', *Irish Musical Studies*, 2 (Dublin, 1993), 129–48; see also Michael Allis, 'Another "48": Stanford and "Historic Sensibility"', *Music Review*, 55 (1994), 119–37 and Paul Rodmell, 'A Tale of Two Operas: Stanford's *Savonarola* and *The Canterbury Pilgrims* from Gestation to Production', *Music & Letters*, 78 (1997), 77–91.

⁸ Charles Stanford, *Pages from an Unwritten Diary* (London, 1914).

⁹ From a biographical perspective the anthologies *Studies and Memories* (London, 1908) and *Interludes, Records and Recollections* (London, 1922) are the most useful. Other works, such as *Musical Composition* (London, 1911), are an exposition of Stanford's aesthetics rather than autobiographical comment.

¹⁰ Thomas Dunhill, 'Charles Villiers Stanford: Some Aspects of his Work and Influence', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 42 (1927), 41–65. Herbert Howells, 'Charles Villiers Stanford: An Address at his Centenary', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 80 (1952–3), 19–31.

attempts to the contrary, was not only biased but often factually incorrect in his biography. Trying to go one step further, to build up a detailed picture of Stanford's day-to-day life and opinions, has proved to be a major stumbling block, for very few of Stanford's personal papers remain in existence. I have traced about 800 autograph letters in various locations, but this is only a small fraction of the conservative estimate of 28,000 letters which he probably wrote during his adult life.¹¹ Sources which might have proved particularly useful, for example his letters to such close friends as Greene, Fuller Maitland, Barclay Squire and George Grove, and to his own family, have proved impossible to trace and are presumed destroyed. Some rich sources of correspondence have survived, however, most notably Stanford's letters to Francis Jenkinson, Hans Richter and Joseph Joachim.¹² Research was further handicapped by the fact that hardly any letters written to Stanford survive;¹³ it is not known when these letters were lost or destroyed but they have not found their way into any public depository; Stanford's own children, Guy and Geraldine, both died childless in the 1950s and there are, therefore, no direct living descendants. As Stanford himself was an only child, this leaves no close family to whom personal papers might have been left; in fact, the lack of any mention of such papers in the wills of either Guy or Geraldine Stanford suggests that they may already have been destroyed. To handicap research further, Stanford kept no diary.

The result is that Stanford remains, in many respects, a figure of mystery. Secondary sources have enabled a fairly thorough biography of his official tasks to be assembled; periodicals such as the *Musical Times*, *The Times* and the *Cambridge Review* have proved invaluable, as have the official records of the Royal College of Music, Cambridge University and Trinity College, Cambridge. Even here, however, it is very difficult to build a picture of Stanford's day-to-day schedule; while occasional flurries of activity enable one to trace brief periods in detail, there are frequently long periods where very little is known. In respect of Stanford's private life we still know next to nothing: his marriage,

¹¹ One can reasonably assume that Stanford wrote at least ten letters every week or 520 letters each year; taking his adult life only into consideration (from 1870 onwards), this amounts to a total of just over 28,000. Stanford probably produced far more than this, although many letters would have been brief notes and postcards; a more realistic estimate is at least twenty letters per week, or about 56,000 in total.

¹² These collections are to be found in Cambridge University Library, Royal College of Music Library and the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Tiergartenstraße) respectively; specific references are given in the main body of the text.

¹³ Most of these are to be found in Stanford's 'Autograph Book' (RCM, MS 4253), a collection of letters, postcards and autographs from significant people. There are only one or two items from each correspondent, however, so the value of the collection is sometimes limited.

his relationships with his children and with his parents, his view on most moral issues, and his opinion of most of his friends are all areas into which one gains only fleeting glimpses, mostly through his autobiography and Greene's book, both of which control the dissemination of facts carefully.

Those caveats aside, it is still the case that an immense amount of information on Stanford remains to be related. I have attempted in this book to convey much information on Stanford's activities, not least because it has never been assembled in one place until now. Inevitably, given his diverse workload and hectic life, there are many details that could not be included here. Rather I have aimed to give the reader an impression, backed by fact, of Stanford's life, taking time to deal with particular issues and incidents, public and private, which have struck me as being particularly significant. Hence there are discussions not only of Stanford's musical activities, such as conducting and teaching, but of other issues, most notably his attitude to Ireland. Generally speaking, I have dealt with these issues in Chapters 1 to 7 as they arise chronologically but, in some cases, where a subject was of central importance in Stanford's life, for example, his role as a teacher, I have dealt with it in Chapters 8 and 9 in order to avoid fragmentation.

I have taken a similar approach to Stanford's music in Chapter 9. He was renowned in his own lifetime for his rapid rate of production: he produced almost 200 works with opus numbers (the last known number is 194) and this total does not include many other works, most notably two symphonies, three operas and three concertos. Consequently I have examined in most detail the works which I consider to be the most interesting and important. I have used a number of criteria in this assessment, including contemporary popularity, stylistic innovation, formal innovation, and works which I consider to be of exceptional quality in his output. Inevitably this partially reflects my own research interests and the reader will no doubt find less or more on some works than s/he may expect. This may be particularly the case for the time devoted to Stanford's nine operas, but I make no apology for this; it is my contention, despite his general lack of popular success with this genre, that the composition of opera was one of his greatest loves and that he felt more passionately about converting Britain into a nation of opera-lovers than on almost any other musical issue.

My primary hope is that this book will prove to be a starting point for discussion and assessment of Stanford's life and of his contribution to musical life, as there is still much to be discovered, debated and assessed. He remains in many respects an enigma, a man of peculiar talents and frailties and, above all, a source of fascination.

P. R.
Birmingham, 2002

List of Abbreviations

Libraries and archives frequently referred to are denoted by the following abbreviations:

BCL	Birmingham Central Library
BerSt	Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz (sites at Unter den Linden and Tiergartenstraße)
BL	British Library, London
CUL	Cambridge University Library
FWC	Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
KCC	King's College, Cambridge
LCL	Lincoln City Library (Tennyson Archive)
LUL	Leeds University Library
MA	Moldenhauer Archive, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.
NLI	National Library of Ireland, Dublin
NUL	Newcastle University Library
PML	Pierpont Morgan Library, New York
RAM	Royal Academy of Music, London
RCM	Royal College of Music, London
ShP	Shulbrede Priory, Lynchmere, West Sussex
TCC	Trinity College, Cambridge
WRO	Worcester Records Office
WYAS	West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds



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PART ONE

Life and Work

An Anglo-Irish Childhood

A town mouse I was born and bred, and the town which sheltered me was one likely to leave its mark upon its youngest citizens, and to lay up for them vivid and stirring memories. Dublin, as I woke to it, was a city of glaring contrasts. Grandeur and squalor lived next door to each other, squalor sometimes under the roof of grandeur.¹

One of the most striking architectural features of the Dublin in which Stanford grew up was the network of residential streets (now mainly converted into offices) which lay south of the Liffey and centred on St Stephen's Green (see Fig. 1.1). Generally a product of eighteenth-century prosperity, showing some elements of enlightened town-planning not normally associated with Great Britain, the rows of Georgian terraces and squares, with their deliberate symmetry and uniformity, are now one of the most imposing remnants of the Anglo-Irish ruling class which dominated Ireland from the eighteenth century to the formation of the Irish Free State in 1922. Many street names reflect their Georgian heyday, referring to famous politicians and other luminaries of the time – Grattan, Fitzwilliam, Harcourt and Herbert – and it was here that much of Ireland's political, social, cultural and bureaucratic elite made its home, from the days of the area's first being built until the community's decline and virtual disappearance in the inter-war years.

The foundations of this ruling class are to be found in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when successive monarchs, most notably Elizabeth I and James I, and the republican Cromwell, encouraged members of the English gentry and middle class to emigrate to Ireland and to 'civilise' and subordinate the indigenous population. As in so many aspects of British history, it was the outcome of Henry VIII's break with Rome that led to this change in policy towards Ireland, which had, by and large, been ignored by earlier monarchs except when insurrection was at its most blatant. The Catholic clergy of Ireland were far more resistant to the Reformation than their English counterparts and Henry acted decisively against them and others. Land seized from the monasteries was redistributed to a new wave of English immigrants and the Dublin parliament passed a law explicitly recognising

¹ Stanford, *Pages from an Unwritten Diary*, 1.

Henry's supremacy as monarch. The policy was sustained over decades; after monastic lands ran out property was seized from the indigenous population.

The policies of Henry, Elizabeth and James were relatively benign compared with what followed. Believing that Charles I had some pro-Catholic sympathies, much of Ireland supported the Royalist cause in the Civil War. After Cromwell's victory in 1649 the Irish were subjugated with little or no mercy. Land redistribution to English incomers took place on a vastly greater scale than hitherto and there was an attempt at 'ethnic cleansing' through a combination of slaughter of Catholics and the passing of a law (the Act of Settlement, 1652) which forced rebellious Catholic landowners to move west of the Shannon.² James was defeated in the Williamite Wars (1689–91), and the Protestant hegemony cemented.

The upshot of this last and most dangerous act of Catholic rebellion was the determination of successive English monarchs and governments to maintain Protestant supremacy. This was mostly achieved by a succession of Acts passed over the four decades from 1690 collectively known as the Penal Code (contemporaneously known as the 'Popery Laws'). This legislation forbade, amongst other things, the entry of any Catholic into the army or navy, the holding of posts in central or local government, entry into the legal profession, and the education of a child in the Catholic faith; it also removed the right of Catholics to vote. Catholic land could be passed from generation to generation but only on the old Merovingian principle of equal division of property between all sons – a simple method of ensuring that Catholic landholdings, already negligible as a part of the whole, became progressively more fragmented. The Penal Code cemented the Protestant domination of Ireland by emasculating the power of the remaining Catholic gentry.³

This social construction of Protestant, or rather more specifically Anglican, supremacy leads us directly to the physical construction of Dublin's Georgian terraces, a tangible manifestation of the domination and prosperity of the Anglo-Irish ruling class in the eighteenth century. Ireland was prosperous and Dublin was its thriving cultural, social and

² Displaced landowners received some property as compensation, but the amount was scaled according to the extent of their anti-Cromwellian actions. Some restoration of land was achieved under the Act of Settlement, 1662, but it far from cancelled out the resettlements of the 1650s.

³ The provisions of the Penal Code, aimed principally at the professions and the laws of inheritance, had less direct effect on mercantile and lower classes than on the gentry. Legalised discrimination became, however, a rallying point for many, especially as the restrictions on the Catholic Church affected all classes; campaigns for relief started in the mid-eighteenth century. For further discussion see T. P. Power and Kevin Whelan (eds), *Endurance and Emergence: Catholics in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (Dublin, 1990).

commercial centre. Their position secured by prosperity combined with legalised discrimination, the Anglo-Irish easily became a ruling elite, confident and optimistic. Such was this degree of prosperity and self-sufficiency that during the course of the century the Anglo-Irish began to identify themselves less with England and more with Ireland. English rule seemed to them to comprise much taking but little giving. An economically strong but politically compliant Ireland was also in English interests and, in order to assuage the growing Anglo-Irish spirit of independence, the British government consented to the modification of the powers of the Irish Parliament in 1782. Its leader, Henry Grattan, supported the repeal of aspects of the Penal Code, but made little progress since many more of the Anglo-Irish were sceptical about the need for such action and there was little material change between pre- and post-1782 parliaments.⁴ Grattan's lack of success was unfortunate, to say the least: growing frustration amongst Catholics and some Protestants, most notably Wolf Tone, allowed the success of the French Revolution to fire their imagination and culminated in the Irish Rebellion of 1798. This revolt was swiftly and brutally put down by the British Army but had so winded the Anglo-Irish that they voted their own Parliament out of existence and accepted the Act of Union – a concept to which most of them had previously been thoroughly hostile – with barely a murmur.

The Act of Union sounded the muted death knell of the Anglo-Irish. During the nineteenth century Dublin declined gradually as England became the overwhelmingly dominant partner in the relationship. The industrialisation of England was not matched in Ireland, not least because of its relative paucity of natural resources, and this dearth of heavy industry contributed greatly to the shift in England's favour. These unfavourable circumstances were amplified by poor agricultural conditions and unsympathetic rule from London, which preferred coercion to encouragement. Even the most tentative shoots of the welfare state which emerged in Great Britain in the nineteenth century were unknown in Ireland, while the circumstances in which the poor and needy lived were much worse than those on the mainland. Inhumane government was exacerbated by natural disasters, the worst of which was, of course, the potato famine of the late 1840s. Perhaps one million people died and the crisis triggered a wave of emigration, mainly to the United States, sustained for the rest of the century. The population declined rapidly and never recovered: in 2000 it was still barely two-thirds that of 150 years earlier.

⁴ Limited emancipation was given in a succession of Catholic Relief Acts passed between 1775 and 1795.

In the midst of these crises the Anglo-Irish found themselves in an uncomfortable midway position, neither fully endorsing the actions of the British government nor supporting the demands of the Catholic majority. Had it not been for its own cohesiveness the community might well have disintegrated into two rival camps – one pro-Nationalist and one pro-Union – reflecting the potential schizophrenia inherent in its constitution and history. Of decreasing use to the British government, effectively undermined by Catholic Emancipation and other subsequent measures,⁵ and regarded with increasing suspicion by the Catholic Irish, the Anglo-Irish found themselves steadily marginalised during the nineteenth century. They were, in effect, the forerunners of the last gasp of the British Raj of the twentieth century, upholding their social exclusivity, their dominance of the professions and civil service, and refuting their geographical isolation and declining status by a hectic social calendar of soirées, dances, concerts, nights at the theatre and days at the races.

The point from which the Anglo-Irish themselves perceived this decline is not clear. Joseph O'Brien asserts that

Gradually the wealthiest segment of the population withdrew from Dublin, and the noble residences adorning the best streets and fashionable squares exchanged their occupants [the aristocracy] for the new pace-setters of society – the professional classes, especially the barristers and attorneys, who thrived on an admixture of law and politics in a city that retained in Dublin Castle a top-heavy bureaucracy.⁶

⁵ Emancipation was passed for the whole of Great Britain and Ireland in 1828 (Grattan had introduced a bill to the Commons which failed by only two votes in 1819 and a bill introduced by William Conyngham Greene in 1821 passed in the Commons but failed in the Lords). Emancipation gave Catholics rights almost equal to those of Anglicans, including the right to vote, subject to the same property qualifications as Anglicans. University education remained one of the most contentious issues during the nineteenth century, not least because the possession of a degree was a prerequisite for entry into many professions. Technically, Catholics were allowed to attend Trinity College, Dublin, from 1793, but few did so because of its high-Church, high-Tory ethos, and religious 'tests' were not fully abolished until 1873. Various attempts during the nineteenth century to establish forms of higher education in Ireland widely acceptable to Catholics were unsuccessful and the situation was not resolved until the passing of the 1908 Irish Universities Act. It was not impossible for Catholics to enter either Oxford or Cambridge, but religious tests and requirements at both institutions made it extremely difficult; a succession of parliamentary Acts passed between 1854 and 1871 removed the tests gradually, enabling men to graduate without regard to religious affiliation and, eventually, to join the universities' staff. Practically speaking, in Ireland these various reforms together meant a gradual decline in the disproportionate dominance of various professions by Anglicans; for statistics see Mary E. Daly, *Dublin: The Deposed Capital* (Cork, 1984).

⁶ Joseph V. O'Brien, *Dear Dirty Dublin: A City in Distress 1899–1916* (Berkeley, Calif., 1982), 5.

For those born in the centre of this professional, and especially legal, milieu, however, Dublin's status may well have grown during the nineteenth century: Harry Plunket Greene wrote that, 'Ireland in those days ... was a country of intensive brilliance, more of imagination even than culture.'⁷ Certainly Georgian-style terraces were still being built in Dublin's exclusive Merrion Square area in the 1830s, suggesting that at this point, little or no decline was evident. Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, so close to the social upheavals leading to partition and independence, the city was still viewed by those looking back from the wholly different world of the inter-war years as a major social centre: 'Dublin at this time, about 1900, was amazingly gay and the season was a brilliant one. People used still to come up and take houses for the season, and wealthy and poor and good family mingled for a few weeks at dinners, dances, Court functions, and all sorts of miscellaneous sports and games.'⁸ In truth, for the professions at least, post-Union Ireland was a rich and generally pleasant place with sour notes only creeping in towards the end of the century, when the number of people questioning their status and exclusivity exceeded the small group any elite can reasonably expect to have to deal with and to shrug off.

The nineteenth-century professional cadre comprised Dublin's most successful lawyers, merchants, clerics, doctors and civil servants. As in the eighteenth century their sense of cohesiveness was greatly reinforced by their being almost exclusively Anglican (this dominance declined steadily during the nineteenth century but Anglicans remained over-represented in proportion to their population in most professions). The group was also content to stay in Ireland: summer was often spent on a rural estate or at a resort and the winter in Dublin. Visits to England were generally unnecessary, as well as being long and, especially in the earlier part of the century, sometimes dangerous (steamships commenced regular journeys across the Irish Sea shortly after the end of Napoleonic Wars, but the railway did not reach Holyhead until the late 1840s, meaning that any journey further than the British western coastal areas remained a gruelling expedition until well into the 1850s). Inter-marriage reinforced insularity. As Harry Greene put it: 'The "home" spirit so pervaded the families that each fresh generation settled down comfortably to carry on the family tradition in the familiar sphere. With the exception of a few restless spirits its youth went into the Church or the Law or Medicine or took root in the land at home.'⁹

⁷ Greene, *Stanford*, 19.

⁸ Page L. Dickinson, *The Dublin of Yesterday* (London, 1929), 5.

⁹ Greene, *Stanford*, 20.

As Joseph O'Brien has noted, it was the legal profession which led the Anglo-Irish elite. Law could lead to the very pinnacle of the social ladder and was a safe and eminently respectable occupation. This supremacy was recognised by all, as was the role the law played in Dublin social life:

It is quite certain that the legal element dominates society in Dublin and is held in the highest respect. The leading members, i.e. the Chancellor and the Judges, do duty for the absentee nobility who have long since ceased to reside in the little capital, only putting in an appearance during the Castle season. Hence the lawyers and their wives do the 'representation', live in the finest houses, drive the finest carriages, and entertain the Lord Lieutenant.¹⁰

Even in this small group a noted pecking order was maintained: 'Judges entertained lavishly, or meanly (according to their personalities and the incomes of their wives). The Senior Bar did the same in a slightly modified way; and the Junior Bar dined out whenever and wherever it could, but more especially in the houses of solicitors with pretty daughters.'¹¹ If one takes 'law' as 'legal profession' then the perception of Anglo-Irish Dubliners was clearly that 'the law is the true embodiment of everything that is excellent'.¹² And it was into the geographical and social centre of this embodiment of excellence that Charles Villiers Stanford was born at 2 Herbert Street on 30 September 1852.

Stanford was indeed, both socially and geographically, the archetypal Anglo-Irishman. His birthplace lies towards the edge of the Anglo-Irish enclave (though the houses in and around Herbert Street were not built until about 1830, so their claim to be truly Georgian is marginal). His forebears, Stanfords on the one side, Henns on the other, comprised stalwart Anglo-Irish stock, able to trace their Irish lineage for almost two hundred years, following emigration from England in the seventeenth century. The men of both families played a significant role in Anglo-Irish society. Thus, in an atmosphere of comfort, some privilege and eminent respectability, the infant Charles started his life's journey.

Of the two sides of Charles's family, rather less is known of his paternal ancestry (see Fig. 1.2; letters refer to the notes in the figure). The earliest forebear resident in Ireland is Luke Stanford, a landowner and 'merchant of large dealing'¹³ of Belturbet, Co. Cavan, who died in 1733. Quite how Luke Stanford acquired his land is unknown; nor is

¹⁰ Frances A. Gerard, *Picturesque Dublin, Old and New* (London, 1898), 135.

¹¹ Dickinson, *Dublin of Yesterday*, 18.

¹² William Schwenk Gilbert, *Iolanthe* (opening line of the Lord Chancellor's Act I song).

¹³ Quoted without source in Trinity College, Dublin, MS 5888.

it known from where in England he originated.¹⁴ It seems likely, however, that he came to Ireland at some point during the reign of Charles II since his son John was born in Killeshandra, Co. Cavan, in 1686. In subsequent generations the men of the Stanford family, born and brought up in Co. Cavan, were sent to Trinity College, Dublin for their university education,¹⁵ and showed, in the eighteenth century, a disposition towards careers in the army and navy (for example, Luke Stanford^b, who was at one time Commander of HM Schooner 'Hope' and William Luttrell Stanford^d, who was a Captain in the 56th Regiment). Several Stanfords became High Sheriffs of Co. Cavan, an indication of the regard in which the family was held (but all descended through Daniel, third son of John Stanford^a and grandson of the first Luke). Charles's grandfather, William Stanford^e, returned to his great-grandfather's profession and was described as a 'merchant', 'seller of woolen cloth' and 'gentleman'.¹⁶ He is known to have lived at 33 Lower Sackville Street (now Lower O'Connell Street, at the heart of Dublin's northern commercial district) and subsequently resided in the northern suburb of Clontarf. In his wife, Sarah McCullan, daughter of James McCullan, KC, Bencher of King's Inn, the Stanford family acquired one of its first links to the legal profession.

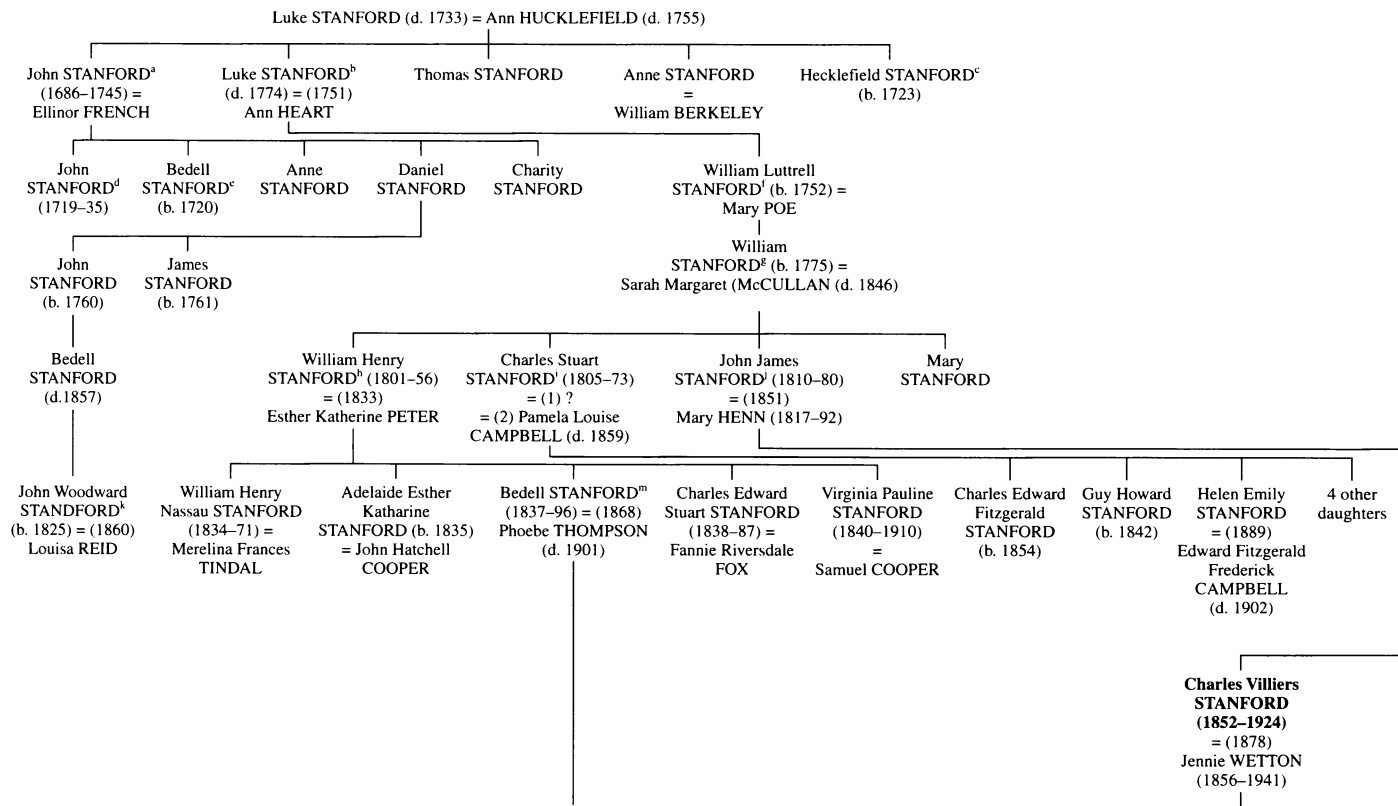
William fathered three sons and one daughter: William, Charles, John and Mary. All three sons were educated at Trinity College; William and Charles both entered the church and were rectors in Co. Cork and Dublin respectively. William appears to have led a quiet life but Charles had literary and quasi-political pretensions: he edited the *Dublin University Magazine* and wrote several pamphlets attacking Catholicism, the most successful of which was his *Handbook to the Romish Controversy* in which he wrote, 'I believe it wholly impossible for any one who accepts the doctrines of the Church of Rome as true, to know anything of the Gospel of Christ, as being "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth"',¹⁷ an ample demonstration of the distance between Anglican and Catholic faiths at this time. Charles Stuart Stanford was not only an author: he also composed. The 'Adelaide Mazurka' (the sole piece held by the British Library) does not, however, presage a great future for his nephew: it is an uninspiring piece

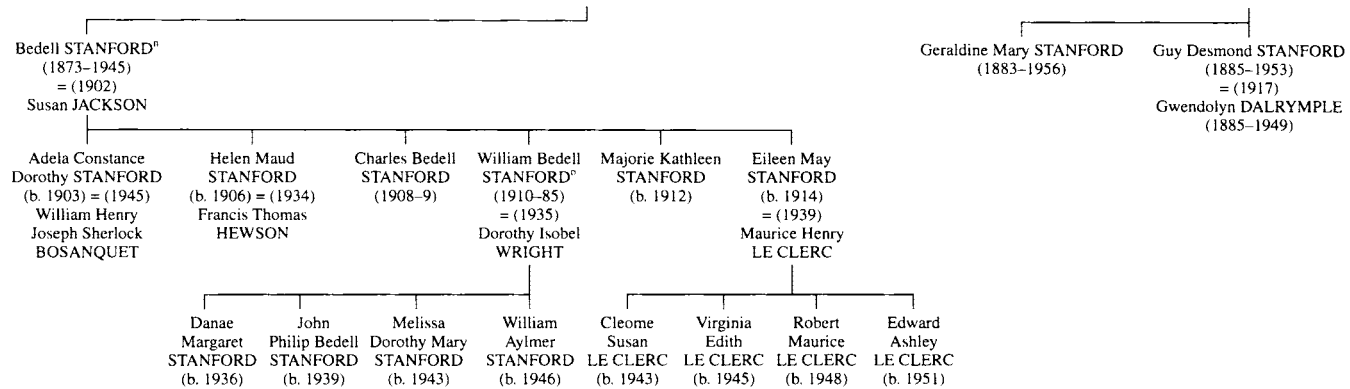
¹⁴ Although the birth of a Luke Stanford in London in 1633 with siblings born in Angmering in Sussex suggests, just possibly, that this was the origin of the family (assuming that the two Lukes were father and son).

¹⁵ See George Burtchaell and Thomas Sadler, *Alumni Dublinenses 1593-1846* (Dublin, 1924), 774.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Charles Stuart Stanford, *A Handbook to the Romish Controversy, being a Refutation in Detail of the Creed of Pope Pius IV* (3rd edn, Dublin, 1870), p. i.





Notes:

^a BA Trinity College, Dublin (1706); Ellinor French was the great-grand-daughter of Revd William Beddell, Lord Bishop of Kilmore, first translator of the New Testament into Irish.

^b Commander of HM Schooner 'Hope'.

^c BA Trinity College, Dublin (1744).

^d Entered Trinity College, Dublin (1734).

^e Entered Trinity College, Dublin (1736); no record of graduation.

^f Captain in the 56th Regiment.

^g 'Seller of woollen cloth; merchant; gentleman'; resident 33 Lower Sackville Street, Dublin; Sarah McCullan was daughter of John McCullan, KC, Bencher of King's Inn.

^h BA Trinity College, Dublin (1828); MA ditto (1832); Rector of Kincurran, Co. Cork.

ⁱ BA Trinity College, Dublin (1828); MA, ditto (1832); BD and DD, ditto (1855); Revd Canon; Rector of St John's, St Michan's, and St Thomas's, Dublin. Pamela Louise Campbell was the second daughter of Sir Guy Campbell (Bart.).

^j Entered Trinity College, Dublin (1828); no record of graduation; Clerk of Crown for Co. Meath; Examiner in Chancery.

^k MP.

^l Second son of second baronet (see note i).

^m BA Trinity College, Dublin (1863); Curate of St Luke's, St Paul's, and Molyneux churches, Dublin.

ⁿ MA Trinity College, Dublin (1899); Rector of Trinity Church, Belfast, and Ballintemple, Co. Tipperary.

^o BA Trinity College, Dublin (1935); LittD, ditto (1940); Regius Professor of Greek, Dublin University (1940); Representative for Dublin University in Irish Senate (1948); Member of Irish Delegation to the Council of Europe (1951).

Figure 1.2 Genealogical table of the Stanford family

Source: L. G. Pine (ed.), *Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry in Ireland*, London, 1958; George Burtchaell and Thomas Sadler, *Alumni Dublinenses*, Dublin, 1935.

comprising solely four-bar phrases and almost exclusively tonic and dominant chords in root position. Its existence, however, suggests that music had played a part in the Stanford family's life for many years.

While Charles Stuart Stanford exhibited some modest musical talents, his younger brother possessed far more ability, which manifested itself in his gift for singing. These talents, coupled with a strong degree of determination, caused his family much difficulty. The chronology is unclear but his son summed up the problem: 'As he was a born actor, with a great love for the stage, it was with the greatest difficulty that his very Low Church family prevented him from becoming an operatic singer, a scandal which in their opinion would have shaken their character and traditions to the core.'¹⁸ In fact John Stanford matriculated at Trinity College, Dublin in 1828, aged 18, and entered King's Inn in 1831; he was evidently destined, so far as his family was concerned, for the legal profession. He is not noted as having graduated from Trinity and this may have been the reason that he became a legal administrator rather than a barrister. John held various posts in the Irish legal establishment, including Registrar to the Chief Justice of Common Pleas, Clerk of the Crown for Co. Meath, and Examiner in Chancery.¹⁹ A flavour of his work can be given by citing some of the duties of the Clerks of the Crown:

to receive and preserve all informations, examinations, and recognizances of magistrates and all depositions, inquests and recognizances of Coroners; to draw indictments in cases where they are not prepared by the Crown Solicitor; to swear the Grand Jury; to attend the Crown Court; to arraign the prisoners; to enter and record all pleas, orders and proceedings of the Court in the Crown book; swear and, if necessary, examine the several witnesses on the trials; prepare and keep all records of the Assizes, and prepare all warrants for the transmission of prisoners.²⁰

Upon his death his obituarist tactfully referred to his legal career as 'a somewhat unobtrusive and uneventful one'.²¹

The Henns, Charles Stanford's maternal family, were of the cream of Dublin's legal elite (see Fig. 1.3). Like the Stanfords, they had come to Ireland during the reign of Charles II. Henry Henn^a had been a Justice of the Court of Common Pleas for three years before being issued with

¹⁸ Stanford, *Pages*, 28.

¹⁹ According to A. E. M'Clintock and C. Brady, *The Law Directory for Ireland 1846* (Dublin, 1846) and his obituary notice (see n. 21) John Stanford held the first of these positions during the office of Lord Chief Justice Doherty; upon Doherty's death Stanford was recommended for the position of Clerk of the Crown by the Earl of Clarendon (the Viceroy), and held the post of Examiner in Chancery during the office of Master Fitzgibbon.

²⁰ M'Clintock and Brady, *Law Directory*, 78.

²¹ *Dublin Daily Express*, 20 July 1880, p. 2.

his patent as Lord Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer in Ireland in March 1679; another branch of the family had also at one time held a baronetcy²² and claimed to be able to trace its ancestry as far as the Domesday Book. His career was not a smooth one: he was removed from office by James II in 1687, and replaced by Sir Stephen Rice (who was himself removed after the accession of William III and Mary); generations later the two families were linked when William Henn^f (Charles's grandfather) married Mary Rice in 1809.

Henry's son Richard^b was granted land at Paradise Hill, Co. Clare, by the Earl of Thomond in 1685 and from their settlement in Ireland the Henns were pillars of the Irish legal establishment. Following the obligatory degree invariably taken at Trinity, almost all the men became barristers and judges and thus were always at the centre of Irish professional society. Although they held land in Co. Clare, the Henns generally resided in Dublin's Georgian squares; the easy-going nature of the legal profession, however, no doubt allowed for extended visits to the family estate.

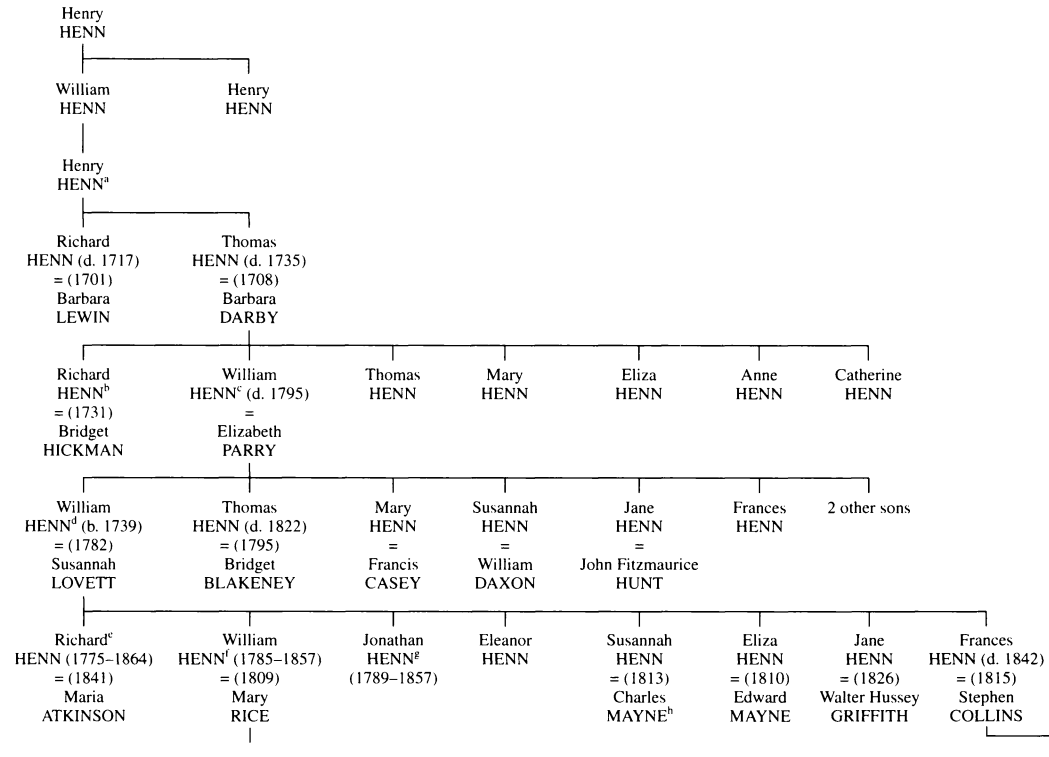
Charles's grandfather and great-grandfather rose highest and both became Masters in Chancery (William Henn^d in 1793 and William Henn^f in 1822). The post of Master in Chancery was that of a senior justice with the responsibility of 'executing the orders of the Court upon references made to them, and, by reports in writing to certify the result'.²³ This mundane description disguises the status of the Masters (of whom there were four in the 1840s) as only the Lord Chancellor had power to make rulings (a power often delegated to the Master of the Rolls) and the Masters were next in seniority to the Master of the Rolls. Furthermore, these powers were extensive as, being the highest judicial officer in Ireland, the Lord Chancellor appointed all Justices of the Peace, was Visitor of all hospitals and colleges of Royal Foundations, and was the 'guardian of all infants, idiots and lunatics'.²⁴ The small number of officers in the Court of Chancery led to long delays in the settlement of cases (the delays suffered in Chancery in England were, of course, witheringly portrayed in Dickens's *Bleak House* (1852–3)). In terms of social seniority the Masters appeared thirteenth in the table of precedence at Dublin Castle.²⁵

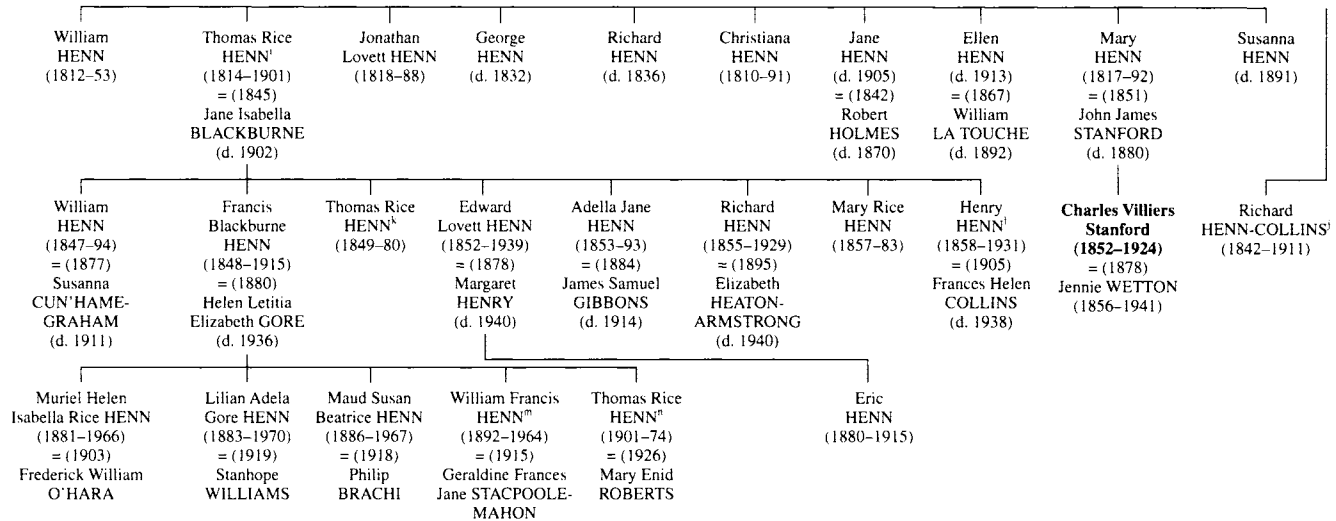
²² See John Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies of England* (2nd edn, London, 1844).

²³ M'Clintock and Brady, *Law Directory*, 8.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ This disguises their importance since seven of the higher ranks were individuals (the Lord Chancellor, Lord Chief Justice, Master of the Rolls, Lord Chief Justice of Common Pleas, Lord Chief Baron, Attorney General and Solicitor General; the other five ranks were the Judges and Barons in the other courts: Queen's Bench, Common Pleas, Exchequer, Prerogative and Admiralty).





Notes:

- ^a Lord Chief Baron of Ireland during reigns of Charles II and James II; removed by the latter in 1686 and replaced by Stephen Rice (whose descendant Mary Rice married William Henn in 1809).
- ^b First member of the family to settle in Ireland, being granted land at Paradise Hill, Co. Clare, by the Earl of Thomond in 1685.
- ^c BA at Trinity College, Dublin, (1739 or 1740); called to the Irish Bar (1744); Judge in the Court of King's Bench (1768).
- ^d Entered Trinity College, Dublin (1755); called to the Irish Bar (1784); Master in Chancery (1793); Susannah Lovett was the fifth daughter of Sir Jonathan Lovett (Bart.) of Liscombe, Buckinghamshire.
- ^e Commander in the Royal Navy.
- ^f BA at Trinity College, Dublin (1805); called to the Irish Bar (1808); Master in Chancery (1822).
- ^g BA at Trinity College, Dublin (1808); called to the Irish Bar (1811); Queen's Counsel; Chairman of Donegal Quarter Sessions.
- ^h Eldest son of his Honour, Judge Mayne; ordained priest; his younger brother Edward married Susanna Henn's sister, Eliza.
- ⁱ BA at Trinity College, Dublin (1837); called to the Irish Bar (1839); Queen's Counsel; Jane Blackburne was the second daughter of Hon. Francis Blackburne, Lord Chancellor of Ireland.
- ^j Fellow of Downing College, Cambridge; King's Counsel; Master of the Rolls in England (1901–07).
- ^k Killed at the Battle of Maiwand, Afghanistan.
- ^l Ordained priest; Doctor of Divinity; Bishop of Blackburn; Frances Helen Collins was daughter of Rt. Hon. Lord Collins of Kensington and directly related to Stephen Collins, father of Richard Henn-Collins (note j above).
- ^m Chief Constable of Gloucestershire; MVO; CBE.
- ⁿ Fellow of St Catharine's College, Cambridge (1926); Chairman of Faculty Board of English, Cambridge University; FRSL; CBE; hon. Litt. D. and hon. LLD, Cambridge University; writer on Anglo-Irish literature, most notably on W. B. Yeats.

Figure 1.3 Genealogical table of the Henn family

Source: L. G. Pine (ed.), *Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry in Ireland*, London, 1958; George Burtchaell and Thomas Sadler, *Alumni Dublinienses*, Dublin, 1935; Thomas Rice Henn, *Five Arches: A Sketch for an Autobiography*, Gerrards Cross, 1980.

Charles's grandfather, William Henn^f, the younger of the two Masters, was remembered fondly by other members of the legal establishment: 'He discharged his very important duties with marked ability and unremitting attention. Always courteous in manner, patient and kind in conduct, he earned and retained to the last, the esteem of both branches of the profession and the confidence of the public.'²⁶ Inevitably, since he died when Charles was aged 4, the grandson's memories of his grandfather are second-hand, and it was Jonathan Henn^g, Charles's great-uncle, who made a far greater impact on the young boy. Indeed Jonathan Henn made an impression on almost everyone. He acquired a wide reputation as a brilliant yet modest barrister. Although many contemporaries were convinced that he could have risen to the top of his profession and/or entered parliament, Jonathan preferred to remain in practice on the Munster Circuit and maintain his free time:

Mr Henn was in very independent circumstances and devoted to the sport of fishing. Having no domestic cares – he never married – chairman for the [Quarter Sessions of the] county of Donegal, with lucrative circuit practice and some private fortune, he preferred ease to labour, and the sport he loved to toil he disliked. Yet on circuit he flinched from no trouble in mastering his briefs. I never found him wanting either in reference to facts of law. His speeches were masterpieces of forensic oratory, unadorned it may be, yet perfectly suited to the occasion, and clear as a running stream.²⁷

Only once did he rise to national prominence, when he was part of the team which defended the Irish nationalist Daniel O'Connell in 1843, securing his acquittal by the Law Lords after all lower courts had found against him.

This love of leisure was of great benefit to Charles. It is evident that it was from Jonathan Henn that Stanford gained his love of fishing, which became an ever greater leisure pursuit as he grew older; Harry Greene recalled that Charles would 'hold up a family dinner for a considerable time while he boned a herring in the way his granduncle had shown him when he was 6 years old'.²⁸ Charles himself writes fondly of him and devoted more space in his autobiography to Jonathan Henn than to any other relative except his father.²⁹ It was Jonathan who bought Charles his first grand piano (an early recognition of the boy's ability and an indication of the regard in which music was held in

²⁶ James R. O'Flanagan, *The Irish Bar* (London, 1879), 224.

²⁷ James R. O'Flanagan, *The Munster Circuit* (London, 1880), 357; for further writings on Jonathan Henn see Oliver J. Burke, *Anecdotes of the Connaught Circuit* (Dublin, 1885), 203, and Patrick Lynch, *Some Members of the Munster Circuit* (Cork, 1946), 50.

²⁸ Greene, *Stanford*, 15.

²⁹ See Stanford, *Pages*, 4–6.

the Henn family) and who taught him whist, which Stanford played all his life and which, like fishing, became more important to him as time went on.³⁰

Before considering Charles's own childhood it is worthwhile pausing and looking at the Henns and Stanfords as they developed subsequently. Both families were of that type which somehow manages to produce a stream of talented men (and probably women, although in keeping with the social mores of the class and time the achievements of the female members of both families are much harder to trace). Coming from a class where such work was simply expected, their contribution to Irish and English society, principally in what might be defined as the 'broad public service', is notable. Charles's relatives in parallel and later generations have included, on the Henn side, Richard Henn-Collinsⁱ (b. 1842), Master of the Rolls in England, 1901–7; Rt Revd Henry Henn^l (b. 1858), one time Bishop of Burnley; William Francis Henn CBE MVO^m (b. 1892), a Chief Constable of Gloucestershire; and Thomas Rice Henn CBE FRSLⁿ (b. 1901, the third of that name), Fellow of Downing College, Cambridge, scholar of Anglo-Irish literature (notably of W. B. Yeats); and numerous JPs. On the Stanford side there have been several more clergymen and, most notably, William Bedell Stanford^o (b. 1910), Regius Professor of Greek in Dublin University, author of several scholarly texts, and a member of the Irish Senate and of the Irish Delegation to the Council of Europe in 1951. Curiously few of them seem to have had knowledge of their composing relative: *Burke's Landed Gentry in Ireland*, in its account of William Bedell Stanford's ancestry, mentions John Stanford, but refers only to him as having issue,³¹ and Thomas Rice Henn, although educated at Cambridge within the time of Stanford's Professorship, makes no reference to him in his own autobiography.³²

Returning to the years immediately prior to Charles's birth, both families are to be found in the Anglo-Irish enclave of Georgian squares. Several lived in close proximity to each other: John Stanfordⁱ at 14 Herbert Place, Jonathan Henn^g at 16 Upper Merrion Street, Willam Henn^f at 17 Merrion Square South, Thomas Rice Hennⁱ at 48 Upper Mount Street and Richard Henn^e (one time Commander in the Royal Navy, later Examiner in Chancery (like John Stanford) to his brother

³⁰ Stanford transferred his affections to bridge later in life when that game evolved from whist at the turn of the century.

³¹ *Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry in Ireland*, ed. L. G. Pine (London, 1958), 648–9; see also pp. 364–5 for information on the Henns.

³² Thomas Rice Henn, *Five Arches: Leaves from an Autobiography* (Gerrards Cross, 1980).

William Henn) at 17 Herbert Street (see Fig. 1.1).³³ Life was prosperous and enjoyable; the decline of the professional Anglo-Irish had yet to set in and even the consequences of the potato famine seemed far away.

John Stanford and Mary Henn married in 1851, taking up residence at 2 Herbert Street, the house in which they were both to live until John's death in 1880 (see Pl. 1). Neither Charles nor Harry Greene wrote much about the marriage, although the implication is that it was generally happy and stable. Although John's mercurial temper sometimes caused problems, Mary's acknowledged gentility complemented both the irritable and mischievous sides of her husband's personality. Having lived at a time when middle-class women were expected to be primarily concerned with domestic issues, it is inevitable that rather less is known about Mary Stanford than about her husband. She and her two sisters, Christiana and Susanna, were known as the 'hens of Paradise' (a pun on the surname and the family seat), which implies a degree of physical beauty. Charles noted that she appreciated her husband's wit and Harry Greene referred to her as being 'a woman of great charm and . . . gifted with all those Victorian gentle graces', but little flesh is put on these bare bones save for Greene's attributing to her Stanford's old-fashioned manners.³⁴ She remains, therefore, a shadowy figure in Charles's life, although there is certainly no implication that she was either inadequate or inept.

While the influence of his mother is generally unclear, it is much easier to see how John Stanford influenced his son. Both possessed short fuses and could explode with apparently little provocation and were sometimes remarkably obstinate over making amends. John Stanford's obituarist tactfully referred to his short temper as a 'somewhat nervous irritability (such as not seldom accompanies the finely organised mind)',³⁵ but its nature is more graphically illustrated by Alfred Graves,³⁶ who referred to John Stanford as 'An erratic person [whose] temper was not always to be relied upon. He fell out with my mother and was so rude to her on one occasion that a separation lasting several years took place between the two families, much to the distress of Mrs Stanford, a woman of the most peaceable disposition.'³⁷ On the other hand, John

³³ Information drawn from *Slater's Directory of Ireland*, 1846.

³⁴ Greene, *Stanford*, 29.

³⁵ *Dublin Daily Express*, 20 July 1880, p. 2.

³⁶ Alfred Graves (1846–1931), son of the Anglican Bishop of Limerick and father of the author Robert Graves, was a member of HM Inspectorate of Schools, but also published many volumes of Irish songs and ballads, mainly in collaboration with Stanford (see Ch. 8) and also wrote on Irish literature.

³⁷ Alfred Graves, *To Return to All That* (London, 1929), 24.

Stanford also had a lively sense of humour. Alfred Graves related another incident:

John and his son Charlie Stanford once came on a visit to us at Limerick and on hearing that we were to have a charade party at the [Bishop's] Palace, John went out to Tait's big drapery shop and said 'I want a suit of clothes for a boy of three.' 'What size, Sir?' asked the shopman. 'My size!' answered Stanford seriously, as he stood six feet four. 'Measure me for it,' which the astonished tailor proceeded to do. In this strange garb Stanford quarrelled with our chief police magistrate's wife, Mrs Moore, who acted as a little girl, her long curls hanging down her back over her short frock and pinny.³⁸

This mischievous nature was also evident in Charles, who showed a fondness for playing practical jokes and witty comments.³⁹

Predictably, most of what is known of Charles's youth is derived from what he himself wrote in his autobiography and also from Greene's biography.⁴⁰ To the extent that both men were writing many years after the event, one should treat these reminiscences with some caution, but in general terms it seems reasonable to accept the essentials of what the two men have to say about Charles's life up to the age of 18, and it is from these two sources that all information about Charles's general education is to be drawn. Unusually for a boy of his class, Charles was not sent away to school but was educated locally by a martinet named Henry Tilney Bassett. Bassett seems to have run a small but exclusive school at the time of Charles's childhood which proved to be popular with many local Anglo-Irish professionals. Quite why Bassett's school should have been so successful is not clear, but Harry Greene, who was also taught by Bassett, indicated that many boys from the local area attended this small institution.⁴¹ It is not evident when Stanford attended the school, but the implication is that he was a pupil for several years

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 148.

³⁹ Greene gave several examples in his book, for example: '[Stanford] inherited this delight in bringing off a "sell", as on the occasion at the Royal College when he announced on the notice board that the first half of the afternoon's orchestral practice was to be devoted to the works of Strauss. Richard Strauss was at that time supposed to be the last word in modernism, and all the young bloods turned up to a man, and were entertained with the "Blue Danube" and other masterpieces of the immortal Johann' (Greene, *Stanford*, 28-9).

⁴⁰ Harry Plunket Greene (1865-1936) was Stanford's greatest personal friend from their first meeting in the 1870s. He was, from the late 1890s, one of the leading British baritone recitalists and also appeared at many provincial festivals; after the Great War he also produced several books. He married Hubert Parry's daughter Gwendolen in 1899 but they later separated.

⁴¹ Greene, *Stanford*, 24-7.

prior to his admission to Cambridge; before this he was, presumably, educated at home by his mother and perhaps a governess (there are two references to there being a schoolroom at 2 Herbert Street which support this).⁴² Greene acknowledged that, even by the standards of the 1930s, the school was basic and Bassett sometimes brutally so, so from the perspective of 2000, the regime would probably be found to be horrific. It appears that Bassett's school was somewhat backward, even in mid-Victorian terms, and the reforms seen at Winchester, Rugby and Uppingham had made no impression. The curriculum was heavily focused on Classics, with Maths seen as a very poor relation. The former was taught primarily by rote learning with only a secondary emphasis on understanding grammar, while Bassett was a disciplinarian for whom corporal punishment was a *sine qua non*. Yet both Stanford and Greene paid tribute to their schoolmaster, crediting him with an interest in his charges and a degree of inspiration as a teacher. And at a time when universities viewed accomplishment in Classics as the most important entrance requirement, Bassett's intensive, if regimented, drumming in of vocabulary, literature and grammar can be seen as having much to recommend it. Indeed, when it came to applying to university, Stanford's proficiency in Latin and Greek obviously stood him in good stead (see pp. 34–6).

As well as this general education, Stanford also gained considerable musical knowledge in Dublin, both through the offices of his parents and their families, but also through the wider cultural life of the Irish capital. Dublin's geographical isolation meant that front-rank musicians visited the city rarely and the Victorian attitude which required music to be a social accomplishment rather than a means of making one's living meant that there were very few resident professionals. Music may have been, therefore, an amateur sport, but it was still an essential part of life and evidence of good breeding. Even if some people had misgivings about music in church and a suspicion that the theatre was a place of loose morals, the Anglo-Irish community loved music in the home and in the concert hall, and entertained themselves with gusto:

Music is a noted feature of afternoon parties. Passing through one of the fashionable squares during the season we note a block of carriages and cabs; and from the open windows come the strains of some popular duet or chorus. The Dublin amateur is somewhat ambitious and has a certain standpoint of excellence. The voices as a rule are tuneful and pleasing and show considerable cultivation. Tenors 'robust' and 'delicate' abound; and instrumentalists, although more rare, are of very fair quality.⁴³

⁴² Stanford, *Pages*, 64 and 74.

⁴³ Gerard, *Picturesque Dublin*, 407.

This love of music did not just manifest itself in these private parties but in many public concerts; Dublin possessed several choirs and concert societies in the mid-nineteenth century, all of which gave at least two or three concerts each season (roughly October to May), the most prestigious being the Society of Antient Concerts (*sic*), founded by John Stanford's friend Joseph Robinson in 1834.⁴⁴

It seems certain that love of music was a prime factor in bringing John Stanford and Mary Henn together in marriage. The musical abilities of the Stanfords have already been alluded to; it is also known that Mary Henn was a gifted pianist and that her father was an adept flautist although, as usual, Mary's achievements seem almost exclusively to have taken place in private. By contrast, although John's family had succeeded in deflecting him away from a career as a musician, he was well known in Dublin musical circles and made regular professional appearances up until about 1851. He maintained his musical education over many years, taking lessons with Crivelli⁴⁵ and gaining some informal advice from Lablache.⁴⁶ The extensive holidays available to the legal profession at this time no doubt greatly facilitated his continuing education. Lablache was reportedly very impressed with him,⁴⁷ and although this may have caused John twinges of regret that he had not pursued the professional career after which he had hankered early in life, the status he acquired in Dublin in the 1840s may well have made up for this to a large extent.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Robinson was just 18 when he founded the Society of Antient Concerts and, according to Stanford, held the baton for twenty-nine years. Stanford went on to say 'He produced all the best of the old masters, and introduced into Dublin the works of Mendelssohn almost contemporaneously with their performances in this country [that is, England]. The chorus was small, but perfect in balance, and of beautiful quality. They sang well individually as well as collectively; for the conductor had the gift of training them not merely in the notes themselves, but in the manner of singing them' (Charles Stanford, 'Joseph Robinson', in *Studies and Memories*, 117–27). John Stanford took many solo parts with the 'Antients' (see below, n. 48), and Joseph was also conductor of the Dublin University Choral Society.

⁴⁵ Probably Domenico Crivelli (1793–1857), son of the tenor Gaetano Crivelli, who taught at the Real Collegio, Naples, and then relocated to London.

⁴⁶ Luigi Lablache (1794–1858) had an Irish mother, and was one of the most successful baritones of the early nineteenth century. He appeared in Paris and London regularly from 1830, and subsequently sang at many provincial festivals.

⁴⁷ See Stanford, *Pages*, 28–9.

⁴⁸ For example, two reviews from 1848 report that 'Mr Stanford, whose amateur performances are estimated for their intrinsic excellence, gave the animated air "Honour and Arms Score the Foe" boldly and with energy' (*Saunders's Newsletter*, 18 Feb. 1848, p. 2) and 'Mr Stanford, who had much devolved upon him during the evening, was never heard to greater advantage, and his distinct intonation, splendid organ and impressive manner constituted some of the material which contributed to his great success on this occasion' (*Saunders's Newsletter*, 18 Apr. 1848, p. 2), both referring to concerts given by the Society of Antient Concerts.

John Stanford became a member of ‘a certain quartet of musicians who at one time were the pride and glory of Dublin society – Mrs Hercules MacDonnell, Mrs Edward Geale, Mr MacDonnell and Mr Stanford’.⁴⁹ The qualities of their voices were well remembered and Charles was evidently proud of the fact that his father sang in a trio with Mrs Geale and Jenny Lind in the presence of Queen Victoria at the Viceregal Lodge in August 1849.⁵⁰ Some greater objectivity might, perhaps, be expected from John Stanford’s obituarist, but he, also, was unstinting in his praise:

John Stanford . . . was gifted with one of the noblest vocal organs we have ever heard – a bass voice of unusually extended compass: in the medium and upper part resembling the beautiful full quality of a well-played ophicleide, rather a baritone in timbre, while the lower register in power and depth and in resonance was a bass literally unequalled in excellence. But above all this great natural gift was chastened and guided by the purest, the most correct taste.⁵¹

His greatest achievement was to sing the part of Elijah in the first Dublin performance of Mendelssohn’s oratorio, the première of which he and Joseph Robinson had attended in Birmingham in 1846. The two men determined to stage a performance in Dublin as soon as possible; this duly took place on 9 December 1847, with Robinson conducting, and Stanford acquitted himself so well that his performance was remembered for many years afterwards:

The first concert of [the Society of Antient Concerts] for the season took place last evening and upon no previous occasion have we observed a more brilliant or crowded audience. The subject for

⁴⁹ Gerard, *Picturesque Dublin*, 407.

⁵⁰ Stanford wrote the following on this quartet of singers: ‘Mrs Hercules MacDonnell, a dramatic soprano with a voice which would have rivaled even the greatest *prima donna* of her day, was in every sense an artist both technically and musically. So great a judge as [Sir Michael] Costa valued her powers at the highest estimate, and lamented that she was not enrolled in the ranks of the great public singers . . . Mrs Geale (née Josephine Clarke), the cleverest and most gifted of them all, called by Prince Puckler Muskau “that pretty little devil, José”, had by some extraordinary art manufactured for herself a tenor voice of rare Italian quality which she controlled with the best Italian skill . . . When Queen Victoria came to Ireland during the Viceroyalty of Lord Clarendon, a musical evening was arranged at the Viceregal Lodge at which Jenny Lind was the star. A trio for soprano, tenor, and bass from an Italian opera was one of the items, the two other singers being Mrs Geale and my father. Madame Goldschmidt at the rehearsal wished to wait for the tenor, but to her amazement Mrs Geale said “I am she”. When it was over, no one was more appreciative of her powers than that most critical of artists . . . Of the men, the two most distinguished were Mr Hercules MacDonnell (a son of a former Provost of Trinity) who had a baritone voice of great power, and possessed a dramatic temperament which gave great incisiveness to his delivery; and my father, John Stanford, whose bass with a compass from high F to low C was one of the finest in quality and style that I have ever heard anywhere’ (Stanford, *Pages*, 25–7).

⁵¹ *Dublin Daily Express*, 20 July 1880, p. 2.

performance was well suited for the opening night and it speaks highly indeed for the musical resources of the 'Antients' that they should have been enabled to bring forward with such admirable effect the glorious oratorio of *Elijah*, the last and the greatest of the works of Mendelssohn . . . Mr Stanford was the Staudigl of the evening [Joseph Staudigl (1807–61) had taken the solo bass part at the Birmingham première] and his fine voice and clear enunciation told admirably in the part of Elijah.⁵²

Despite this glowing achievement there are few newspaper references to John Stanford after 1850, and it seems that he decided to give up appearing in public at this time. (Why? There are many possible reasons, such as his marriage, the birth of Charles, increased workload, but none have been traced. One public performance after Charles's birth has been traced – a Fund Raising Concert for the Royal Irish Academy of Music on 11 February 1861 at the Dublin Theatre Royal – but otherwise public performance appears to have been eschewed.) He did, however, remain active in private circles, for example, as a member of the Hibernian Catch Club. Founded in 1740 by the Vicars Choral of St Patrick's and Christ Church Cathedrals, the Catch Club was more significant from a social point of view than a musical one, and is another example of the nature of the Anglo-Irish enclave:

Its members consist of a limited number of professors of music, and amateurs, catch singers at sight, who are appointed by the committee, and such honorary members as may from time to time be elected. A catch singer at sight, professional or amateur . . . [will have been] called on to take part in two or more glees or catches with which he is previously unacquainted, and if his capability be satisfactorily established, he is proposed and balloted for. The President is the Rt Hon Francis Blackburne, Lord Justice of Appeal in Ireland [later Lord Chancellor; his second daughter married Charles's uncle Thomas Rice Henn, QC; Charles's grandfather William Henn had been a past president] and the list of members contains the names of many of the nobility, gentry, members of the legal, medical, clerical and musical professions, and several of the leading mercantile gentlemen of Dublin . . . The meetings take place on the second Tuesday in every month, and on the present occasion there was a numerous assemblage . . . Amongst the talented amateurs, Mr John Stanford was present, whose glorious voice has so often been heard with delight by the members.⁵³

As is the case for his school education, most of what is known of Stanford's early musical education derives from his own writings. The first instrument on which he received tuition was the piano, taught first

⁵² *Saunders's Newsletter*, 10 Dec. 1847, p. 2.

⁵³ *Orchestra*, 12 Dec. 1863, p. 166. The four Robinson brothers (John, William, Francis and Joseph) were also prominent members of the club.

by his mother, then by his godmother Elizabeth Meeke, briefly by a Miss Flynn, and then by Michael Quarry. If the chronology implied by Stanford's account of his youth is correct then Elizabeth Meeke started teaching him at about age 7, Miss Flynn at about age 10 and Michael Quarry from about age 11. Additionally, in the summer of 1862, Stanford had a few lessons with Ernst Pauer,⁵⁴ when the family visited London. His three Dublin-based teachers had all been pupils of Ignaz Moscheles.⁵⁵ Miss Flynn, perhaps due to the brevity of her tenure, did not make much impact on him, but Stanford paid ample tribute to Elizabeth Meeke and Michael Quarry – the former emphasised the importance of touch and taught him to sightread; the latter introduced him to both contemporary and early music, primarily Schumann, Brahms, Bach and Handel.⁵⁶ These adventures with Michael Quarry were made the more exciting by the companionship of Raoul de Versan, with whom Stanford played many duets, and with whom he shared some of his visits to Germany in the 1870s.⁵⁷

Stanford had little systematic training in the theory of music but did receive a few lessons from Francis Robinson (brother of Joseph, see p. 21) and then Sir Robert Stewart.⁵⁸ Much of this time seems to have been spent playing the organ, but through this Stanford surely greatly extended his knowledge and understanding of harmony and counterpoint. Stewart is acknowledged to have had limited abilities as a composer, so it is doubtful whether he was able to give Charles much help other than that of a purely technical nature. He did, however, play the organ with a great orchestral sense and almost certainly imbued in the young Stanford a love and appreciation of the myriad colours obtainable by carefully planned registration. This love of colour was remarked upon many times when Stanford occupied the organ lofts in Cambridge (as was his ability to translate orchestral works to the organ, another

⁵⁴ Ernst Pauer (1826–1905) was an eminent pianist and teacher who settled in London in 1851. He taught at the RAM and the National Training School for Music and examined at Cambridge in the 1870s, as well as publishing arrangements, editions and musical primers.

⁵⁵ Ignaz Moscheles (1794–1870) was the foremost pianist between Hummel and Chopin and was taught composition by Salieri. He first appeared in London in 1821 and settled there in 1826, and was in constant demand as teacher and performer, and to a lesser extent composer and conductor, for the next forty years.

⁵⁶ Stanford, *Pages*, 56–9 and 75–6.

⁵⁷ See Greene, *Stanford*, 31–5 and 54–61.

⁵⁸ Robert Prescott Stewart (1825–94) became organist of Trinity College, Dublin, in 1844, and conductor of the University Choral Society in 1846. He took both his B.Mus. and D.Mus. at Trinity College in 1851 and was appointed Professor of Music there in 1861.

strength surely encouraged by Stewart, who could also manage this with ease) and probably contributed to the keen sense of orchestral colour manifest in Stanford's mature compositions.

Like most children of his generation Charles made only occasional trips out of Ireland before going up to Cambridge. His parents' interest in music and his father's numerous acquaintanceships, however, meant that he probably travelled more often to Great Britain than most of his contemporaries. It is known from his own writings that his first trip 'abroad' was to Anglesey in 1859 for a family holiday.⁵⁹ Whilst in Beaumaris Charles met J. S. Le Fanu, author of *Uncle Silas* and *Through a Glass Darkly*, who entertained him with ghost stories. This meeting was, in fact, something of a privilege since Le Fanu had been a virtual recluse since the death of his wife the previous year. It is significant that Charles recalled the return journey to Ireland as having been exceptionally rough:⁶⁰ it may have been this episode which led to his lifelong dislike of sea travel, a fear which sits somewhat paradoxically with his ability to evoke the sea musically, as exemplified in several of his finest works, for example, *The Revenge*, *Songs of the Sea* and *Songs of the Fleet*.

Of far greater significance, however, in Charles's childhood was his first visit to London, which took place in summer 1862. This trip marked the start of his wider cultural education. The 10-year-old was taken on a typical round of sightseeing but was also taken to the theatre, seeing Dion Boucicault in *The Colleen Bawn*, and on his first trip to the opera saw Adelina Patti in Flotow's *Marta* on 5 July at Covent Garden. In retrospect Charles described the opera as 'that old war horse',⁶¹ but, despite this, the occasion made a lasting impression on the boy (see pp. 26–7). It is a little sad to record that on the same visit his parents neglected to take him to the first private hearing of Sullivan's incidental music to *The Tempest* or to see Lady Bancroft, as she later became, appearing in a burlesque at a theatre in the Strand. The Stanford family returned to London in the summers of 1864 and 1868 and Charles's cultural education continued. He particularly recalled meeting Frederic Clay, Sullivan and Grove, and attending many concerts at the Crystal Palace, hearing much music not generally available in Dublin and seeing many of the leading artists of the day.⁶²

This is not to say that Charles gained no cultural experience in Dublin. The importance of small-scale music-making for social reasons has

⁵⁹ See Stanford, *Pages*, 53–4.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁶² See *ibid.*, 70–73.

already been mentioned, but Dubliners, despite the lack of facilities, were enthusiastic concert- and opera-goers. Here too 1862 was a significant year: before going to London, Charles had been taken to his first public concert, at which he saw Joseph Joachim, whose programme included Beethoven's 'Kreutzer' Sonata, and, a few weeks later, he was also taken to see Henri Vieuxtemps.⁶³ From this point forward Charles seems to have been taken to concerts regularly by his parents and, later in his adolescence, allowed to go on his own. His appetite, especially for opera, appears to have been almost insatiable. The standard of performance was probably poor on average, but Charles still managed to acquaint himself with the popular end of the orchestral and operatic canon of the time, for example, Beethoven and Mendelssohn in the concert hall, and Meyerbeer, Verdi, Bellini, Donizetti and Gounod in the opera house.

In terms of his future development it is his knowledge of opera which is most significant. The Theatre Royal, Dublin, was usually visited by the company of Her Majesty's Theatre twice a year in the 1860s and the repertoire was dominated by French and Italian composers (see Table 1.1). By virtue of his friendship with Richard Levey, the leader of the orchestra (an alias – his real name was O'Shaughnessy),⁶⁴ Stanford gained admission to many rehearsals and spent his time at the top of the stage looking down on the cast below.

This insider's view of the theatre was coupled with a keen perception of the importance of the opera seasons in social terms. More than any other occasion in the year, the visits of the Opera Company of Her Majesty's Theatre were of primary social importance and attracted the cream of Dublin's Anglo-Irish elite. Although attendance was sometimes variable, in general the theatre was full and 'the Quality'⁶⁵ appeared in droves. It was not just the elite which appeared, however. Opera appealed to many Dubliners and the cheaper seats were filled by students, servants and less well-to-do tradesmen. In the galleries the audience behaved boisterously, making catcalls at the richer sections of the audience and lavishing both scorn and adulation on those on stage.

⁶³ See *ibid.*, 61–2.

⁶⁴ Richard Michael O'Shaughnessy (1811–99) led the orchestra of the Theatre Royal from 1836 until it burnt down in 1880. Good friends with Balfe and Wallace, he claimed to have taught Stanford and Stewart, and also founded the Royal Irish Academy of Music (with John Stanford, Joseph Robinson and Sir Francis Brady) in 1850. He was also a prolific composer, producing substantial amounts of music for all manner of dramatic productions at the Theatre Royal, and also wrote operas and published two volumes of arrangements of Irish folksongs.

⁶⁵ The Irish term, according to Stanford, for those sitting in the best seats; see Stanford, *Pages*, 79.

Table 1.1 Selected operas performed by the company of Her Majesty's Theatre, London, at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, 1862–70

Beethoven	<i>Fidelio</i>
Bellini	<i>I puritani, Norma, La sonnambula</i>
Donizetti	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor, Lucrezia Borgia</i>
Flotow	<i>Marta</i>
Gounod	<i>Faust, Mirella</i>
Meyerbeer	<i>Les Huguenots, Robert le Diable</i>
Mozart	<i>Don Giovanni, Le nozze di Figaro, Die Zauberflöte</i>
Rossini	<i>Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Semiramide</i>
Verdi	<i>Un ballo in maschera, Ernani, Rigoletto, La traviata, Il trovatore</i>
Weber	<i>Der Freischütz, Oberon</i>

Although many people criticised the extrovert behaviour of the audience, there is no doubt that it made a powerful impression on Stanford – for him this world of music, drama and extreme emotions, both on the stage and in the theatre, must have been the greatest source of excitement of his adolescent years. This experience is significant for two reasons. Firstly, it imbued in Stanford an abiding fascination with opera, a genre in which he always took the greatest interest and in which, more than any other, he longed to succeed. There is no doubt that he never forgot the heightened senses that characterised his early operatic experiences and that he longed to relive them. Secondly, the repertoire played in Dublin countered, to an extent, the heavily Germanic bias of music he heard and performed in every other context; although he never cared for Donizetti or Bellini, his grudging respect for Meyerbeer and his later love for Verdi were significant for his later development as a composer, evidenced particularly in his orchestration, his predisposition to the supremacy of the melodic line, and, of course, his periodic return to operatic composition throughout his life.

From the age of 11 or so a little more impartial information on Charles's musical progress, both as performer and composer, is to be found. Most of these references come in a burst in 1863–4, but it seems reasonable to assume that these were the start of Stanford's public career, rather than a brief spate of events. The earliest traced reference is to a song entitled 'Once more my love' which was performed by the baritone Richard Smith at a concert of the Dublin Philharmonic Society on 16 November 1863. Stanford was in exalted company since at the same concert Thalberg played the 'Emperor' Concerto. The music,

unfortunately, does not survive, but the review in the *Orchestra* does give a hint of its nature:

Mr Richard Smith . . . also gave a new song 'Once more my love' from the pen of one who is but a child in years but who gives much promise of future musical excellence, Master C. V. Stanford, son of one of our well-known and most accomplished amateurs. The song betrays a depth of thought and feeling quite extraordinary for so young a writer; it is in three-eight time and in C Minor but leading at the end to the major with happy and telling effect. Mr Smith did every justice to the merits of the song which was received with well-deserved applause.⁶⁶

The next performance is claimed by Stanford himself in a biographical article published in the *Musical Times* in 1898.⁶⁷ Here Stanford claims to have composed a march for inclusion in the annual Theatre Royal pantomime. The chronology is unclear: the typeset reproduction of the music in the article gives the date of composition as September 1860, but *Puss-in-Boots*, the pantomime to which Stanford refers in the article, was not played at the Theatre Royal until the winter of 1863–4. This piece is the earliest music by Stanford that appears to survive (see Ex. 1.1) but it does not (unsurprisingly, given the age of the composer) reveal a great deal about Stanford's style: the music is simple and straightforward and the elementary tonic and dominant harmonies and the characteristic rhythmic pattern of the accompaniment are derivative of marches found in many early to mid-nineteenth-century Italian and French operas. It has, unfortunately, not proved possible to trace any contemporary corroborative evidence for Stanford's claim of a theatrical performance.

In September 1864 another song was performed at a concert given by the Dublin Exhibition Choir:

The other encores were 'When Green Leaves come Again', a charming song by the talented youth . . . Master C. V. Stanford, who still continues to pursue his musical studies with a devotion which, with his precocious and wonderful capabilities both for performance and composition, must lead to fame. Miss Barry did full justice to the inspiration of the youthful but true artist.⁶⁸

Again the music has not survived and the quoted review is the only tantalising evidence for the existence of this work. Nevertheless, the review strongly implies that Stanford's name was quite well known to music-loving Dubliners.

⁶⁶ *Orchestra*, 21 Nov. 1863, p. 118.

⁶⁷ 'Charles Villiers Stanford', *Musical Times*, 1 Dec. 1898, pp. 785–93.

⁶⁸ *Orchestra*, 17 Sept. 1864, p. 807.

Example 1.1 'Puss-in-Boots' March (?1864), bars 1–16

The image shows a musical score for 'Puss-in-Boots' March, bars 1-16. The score is written for piano and consists of four systems of music. Each system has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The melody is in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. There are triplet markings over the first measure of each system. The music is a march, characterized by its rhythmic patterns and chordal accompaniment.

The longest account of Stanford's musical achievements at this time relates to a concert given at Herbert Street on 6 June 1864. Here Charles was given the opportunity, in a typical Anglo-Irish musical soir e, to show his skills both as a composer and performer:

A most interesting and delightful 'Pianoforte Recital' took place at the house of John Stanford, Esq., Herbert Street, on Tuesday last. Mr Stanford is well known as a most accomplished amateur in music both vocal and instrumental, a liberal patron of all that is good in art, and a kind and genial friend of artists. The pianist on this occasion was Master Charles V. Stanford, his son, a youth aged about 10 years, of rare talent, who is doubtless destined for a great position in the musical world should it be his choice to follow the 'divine art' as a profession. Here is the programme:-

PART I

Sonata in C Minor, op. 10
Trio
Song 'A Venetian Dirge'
La Contemplazione
Prelude and Fugue in C Minor

Beethoven
Heller
C. V. Stanford
Hummel
Bach

PART II

Sonata in C major	Dussek
La Gaiété	Weber
Song 'Serenade'	Gounod
Waltz in E flat minor	Heller
Trio in G Major, Pianoforte, Violin and Violoncello	Haydn

When it is considered that all the above pieces were performed by Master Stanford from memory, it will be admitted as no mean proof of talent and industry, but it must be recorded in addition that a listener alone of whatever experience, not knowing of the youth, or seeing the performer would suppose an artist at the instrument who had passed through years of mature study, neatness and precision, classic and elastic touch, expression and finish seem to have been bestowed by nature in this case, for Master Stanford plays with his head as well as with his hands. His performance of [the] Prelude and Fugue was absolutely faultless, and Weber's *La Gaiété* quite enraptured his audience. The premature 'aplomb' and steadiness displayed in the trio of Haydn were nothing short of wonderful, and such as many of riper years might take example from. In addition to his talent *comme executant* Master Stanford already displays a very high class feeling for composition, as evidenced in the song 'A Venetian Dirge' one of many of equal merit from his pen. It only remains to wish him a great future and 'may we live to see it'.⁶⁹

After allowing for the excessive gushing which often accompanies reviews of adolescent performers, it is evident that Stanford was a performer of no mean talent and that he must have had quite an accomplished technique, degree of stamina and well-developed sense of musicianship to be able to execute a programme of this length, variety and technical difficulty. What makes this concert review especially interesting, however, is the fact that the song 'A Venetian Dirge' was published by Gunn & Sons of Grafton Street, Dublin; thus it is the earliest of Stanford's works for which both music and a contemporary review exist.⁷⁰

The song is a simple strophic ballad, with each of the three stanzas set identically (see Ex. 1.2) and is derivative of the Venetian gondola songs in Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte* (see Op. 19 No. 6, Op. 30 No. 6, and Op. 62 No. 5). Although the melodic line and harmony are simple, the music suggests that Stanford was already conversant with the elementary aspects of good word-setting, strophic structure, a strong melodic line and forward-moving harmonic progression. At the age of

⁶⁹ *Orchestra*, 11 June 1864, p. 590.

⁷⁰ Greene's claim that this song was written when Stanford was only 4 is surely incorrect (*Stanford*, 31) since the style shows more maturity than that of the 'Puss-in-Boots' march.

Example 1.2 'A Venetian Dirge' (1864), bars 1–14 (text: Barry Cornwall)

We bear her home— We bear her
home— O-ver the murm - 'ring salt sea foam— One who hath
fled— from the woes of life— From sor-row pain—and the sick hearts strife— O-ver the
murm - 'ring salt sea foam— We bear her home— we bear her home.

12 one would hardly expect him to have developed a strong individual voice, but this song shows that he was at least well in control of the technical dimensions of his craft and that there was potential for development.

A later, isolated, reference to Stanford's development as a composer is another tantalising one in which the music referred to does not survive. Stanford himself supplied the following review to the *Musical Times* of a concert given by the Dublin Choral Society on 15 February 1867:

The Kermesse chorus [from *Faust*] was followed by 'Heroes and Chieftains Brave', a song by Mr Kelly (and also with chorus)