SAINT URSULA:

Sacred Cantata.

COMPOSED BY

OPINIONS OF

THE

PRESS—See next Page

F H. COWEN.

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SAINT URSULA.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"The Times," Friday, October 14th, 1881.

The question whether the Norwich festival will make an important, and, it may be hoped, permanent addition to the store of English music, can be answered in the affirmative after the performance this morning of Mr. Cowen's new cantata, *St. Ursula*. Not only was the popular success of the work a most brilliant one, but, what is more, it was obtained by means alone of legitimate and elevated art, and without any of those concessions to the vulgar from which Mr. Cowen's earlier works are not always free. St. Ursula may be pronounced a worthy sequel to the so-called Scandinavian symphony, which marked the young composer's departure for a new and higher sphere of art. The legend of the somewhat mythical for a new and light sphere of all. The legend of the somewhat mythical st. Ursula and her numerous companions is tolerably familiar, and it will be suffi-cient to state the "argument" of the cantata in the words (slightly modified and abridged) of the librettist, Mr. R. E. Francillon :-Dionotus, a Christian king of Cornwall, had promised his only child, Ursula, to Conan, Prince of Brittany. But on the day appointed for the betrothal she, before her father, Conan, and the assembled Court, relates how an angel had come to her in a vision, and had mystically promised of the a heavenly crown and a heavenly spouse, bidding her to that end make a pilgrimage to Rome in sign of her readiness to submit herself to God's make a plightage to konce in sign of the readiness to submit herse in orders will. Impressed by her manifest inspiration, her father reluctantly gives his con-sent, and gathers a fleet to convey her and her maidens (the legend says 11,000) to the foreign shore. Ursula and her companions reach Rome, receive the blessings of the Holy Father, and thence depart, without any light, however, having been thrown on the mysterious prophecy. On their way back they are welcomed at Cologne by Conan, who has set out to meet them. But at this time the Huns were any and there parts and they also arise at Cologne and surround the church in ravaging these parts, and they also arrive at Cologne and surround the church in which Conan and Ursula have met. Their chief, struck by Ursula's beauty, promises her her life on condition that she will share his throne. Refusing to obey his will, she is, with all her companions, slain by the Huns, thus by her faith

his will, she is, with all her companions, slain by the Huns, thus by her faith winning the crown of martyrdom. In treating his libretto, Mr. Cowen has shown singular artistic insight. He evidently perceived at once that the chief momentum of the action lies in the heavenly message sent to Ursula, and the "vision of Ursula" accordingly supplies the key-note of his musical conception. It is painted in a subdued but deep-toned style. The measure molto moderato almost andante, relieved only by a short style. The measure mollo moderato almost andanic, relieved only by a short interval of *piu animato*, and the striking use of the violins in connection only with the harp, supplies a striking orchestral feature for the mind to dwell upon. Here also we find the "leit-motive" which is identified with the character of Ursula, and among other things, admirably indicates the arrival of the sainted maiden at Cologne in the third scene of the cantata. Mr. Cowen, it will be seen, is desirous of turning to account all the resources of modern art, and he does so by dint of genuine inspiration, not merely as a mechanical copyist. It is necessary next to genuine inspiration, not merely as a mechanical copyist. It is necessary next to refer to an admirable trio, with chorus, in which king and lover and confidante yield to the sacred vocation of Ursula, and permit her to depart. Here, and in the short duet which ensues, the mediæval tone of the whole picture is well preserved by quaint sequences of intervals. There are also instances—in these and other pieces—of that "orchestral melody," which is one of the greatest achievements of modern music. The climax of the work is reached in the second scene of the can-tata, and more especially in its *finale*. The components of that *finale* are not very ermethele. They consist of a solid's chorum of computed conventional thythm remarkable. They consist of a sailor's chorus of somewhat conventional rhythm, and a hymn of the departing maidens, not in itself very striking. But the manner in which these tunes are treated simultaneously, and their combination with the soprano solo floating on this troubled sea of sound, may be called admirable. Still more remarkable is the pictorial effect of the piano growing softer and softer as the ship carrying the chanting maidens disappears from the view of those left behind. Mr. Cowen here shows a degree of dramatic skill, which makes one regret that he has not written an opera, instead of its feeble substitute, a cantata. . . . Mr. Cowen's has not written an opera, instead of its feeble subsitiute, a cantata. . . . Mr. Cowen's music, indeed, is very forcible, and if the musical accent is occasionally placed on the wrong syllable, it may be suggested that Huns cannot be supposed to care much about arsis and thesis. The *fnade*, in which the sacred chant appears again, this time in opposition to the shouts of the savages, rises once more to a considerable degree of dramatic force, without, however, reaching the climax in the second scene before alluded to. Mr. Cowen, who conducted his own work, was ably supported by the forces under his command. Orchestra and chorus left little to be desired, and the soli were, throughout, admirable. Madame Albani, who was in excellent voice, gave all the charm of genuine feeling to the character of Ursula. Madame Patey infused into the part of Ineth, the confidante, a significance which it does not on its own merits possess, and a similar remark apples to Mr. Lloyd, who made the success of a tenor song, the only trivial piece in the score. Mr. King did all that could be expected for the two minor characters previously referred to. The decided success of the work has already been mentioned.

The "Standard," Saturday, October 15th, 1881.

Yesterday, the chief novelty of the Festival, Mr. F. H. Cowen's cantata, St. Ursula, met with the emphatic success which I anticipated. A finer work has not been heard for many years, and it may be accepted as an evidence of the "second period" of the English musician, who passed at a single step from the grove of imitative emulation into the path of absolute creativeness, in his "Scandinavian"

period of the Linguistic matter and the path of absolute creativeness, in his "Scandinavian" Symphony. There is no gilt gingerbread in the construction of the cantata, and the author has not sought to secure the suffrages of the public by appealing to vul-gar taste; on the contrary, he has sought to give us of his best, and the result justifies his determination to maintain nothing but a high standard. The poem is founded upon the ancient legend by Mr. R. E. Francillon. This subject, which at the best, is but an incomplete one, has been treated with signal ability by Mr. F. H. Cowen, who, disdaining the work for easily-acquired popularity, has wrought with a higher object for the sake of enduring fame. Not only is St. Ursula far in advance of any choral work which Mr. Cowen has pro-duced, but it is an acquisition and an ornament to English music. It seems remarkable that the young author has had the power as well as the courage to cut himself adrift from the influences which governed his early career, but it is well that such has been the case, for the "Scandinavian" Symphony instanced a new depar-ture in this style, and now we see that in St. Ursula he allows his great inherent pifts full scope, without reference to immediate popularity. Fortunately musical ture in this style, and now we see that in *St. Orsula* the above sing freat inherent gifts full scope, without reference to immediate popularity. Fortunately musical amateurs now know how to appreciate good things, even though they be not laid out in the *ad captandum* fashion, and there is no reason to doubt that *St. Ursula* will meet with the general approval which its merits claim for it. The three scenes into which the action is divided—viz., the Court of Dionotus; the sailing of Ursula; and the Christian Church at Cologne-are rendered equally forcible in their illustration. From the first, it is apparent that Mr. Cowen has moved with the times and has employed the identifying themes so dear to Wagner, and has discarded old-fashioned workmanship of every kind. One may look for fugues in St. Ursula in vain, and the nearest approach to the height of contraptunal ingenuity is the duet between Conan and Dionotus, when a clever bit of canon is introduced. It has been the composer's wish, however, to be dramatic above all things, and following the example set by Mr. Arthur Sullivan in *The Martyr of Antioch*, he has cut him-self free from pedantry altogether. A short introduction serves to introduce the first chorus, "Come forth, sweet maid," interspersed with recitatives for the bar-tone—whose part, curiously enough, is written in the treble clef. The whole con-struction of this number is admirable, and already it can be discerned that the author has followed no slavich rule in regard to bic orthestration. Conan who is duet between Conan and Dionotus, when a clever bit of canon is introduced. author has followed no slavish rule in regard to his orchestration. Conan, who is present, asks, "Hath no man sought her where she waits, with timid roses on he cheek?" and to this Ineth responds, "I found her in the garden path. All else forgot"—signifying her state of trance. Many points of clever imitation in the orchestra here present themselves, and the number concludes with an echo of the principal idea in the clarinet. The next number is called "The Vision of Ursula," and here we get a phrase which runs through the entire composition. and stands for the "Ursula motive." She describes the heavenly apparition in a beautiful strain, full of significance and highly elevated in character, the chorus adding a kind of commentary upon her state of exaltation. The music is throughout of the most imaginative and suggestive character, and here, as elsewhere, the orchestration is most original and charming. The following piece though called a tio (Ineth. Dionotus. and Conan), is in no particular set form, the author has followed no slavish rule in regard to his orchestration. Conan, who a though called a trio (Ineth, Dionotus, and Conan), is in no particular set form, the though called a trio (Ineth, Dionotus, and Conan), is in no particular set form, the chief interest centring in the chorus part, which expresses the general determin-ation to allow events to take their predestined course. A reference to the "vision motive, given out by the violins in octaves, brings this number to a close. The following duet, for Ursula and Conan, is remarkable for the suppression of the string band, with the exception of the basses, who have an occasional pizzicato note to relieve the wind chords. The melody is smooth and expressive, and full of dueting for an unsumal effect is obtained by making the charinets of devotional fervour, and an unusual effect is obtained by making the clarinets and horns move in unison with the voice part. It is, however, only a reflective piece, and does not advance the action in the least, save in regard to the expressed determination of Ursula to forego earthly joys for the heavenly crown which has been promised her. Now comes the second scene, and to my mind, the finest number of the cantata. Ursula and her maidens are about to embark, and a number of the cantata. Ursula and her maidens are about to embark, and a pretty figure in the violins serves to indicate the rising and falling of the waves—in a manner unpleasant to poor sailors. The seamen sing a suave and melodious barcarolle, "Sea winds are blowing," and presently the contralto, Ineth, gives out the "pilgrimage motive" or "prayer motive"—" Thee, God, we pray that Thou wilt bless our path by night and day." Subsequently, these two themes are used in conjunction with the happiest effect, the pervading violin figure running through the whole composition and the vocal parts being built up of the most solid the whole composition, and the vocal parts being built up of the most solid harmonies. This one piece alone would suffice, not only to make the fortune of St. Ursule, but to set the seal of unusual excellence upon the workmanship.

The finale of the cantata, is, after the big chorus in the second scene, the finest number of the work. Not only the "pilgrimage motive," but the figure which represents the relentless Huns, are present, and their combination shows once more how great a power Mr. Cowen possesses in regard of thematic development. The chorus of Huns is wonderfully characteristic, and so it will be ultimately considered. It would take, however, greater space than is now at my disposal to recapitulate all the prominent features of Mr. Cowen's admirable work. It is sure to be heard very scon in London, and expectation can yet be upheld. Mr. Lloyd sang the tenor music with faulless charm. Mr. Frederic King delivered the baritone solos with taste and discretion. The part of the Martyr was taken by Madame Albani, who sang with the fervour which she only of living singers can bring to bear upon a *role*, and Madame Patey rendered the fullest justice to the subordinate character of Ineth. The band was in capital order, and though I cannot praise the choir for the simple reason that the male contingent were so evidently tired that they could not read the proper note, the performance was not altogether bad, and the charming chorus of suitors and maidens met with a deserved *encore*. There was a display of enthusiasm at the end, and Mr. Cowen, who had conducted his own work, was called back to the platform amidst the most enthusiastic cheres.

"The Daily News," Friday, October 14th, 1881.

This morning brought forward one of the chief novelties, composed expressly for the Festival—a sacred cantata entitled *Saint Ursula*, the music of which is by Mr. F. H. Cowen. The poem is founded on the well-known ancient legend, the text on which Mr. Cowen has wrought having been skilfully written by Mr. R. E. Francillon, who supplies the following "Argument."

The work is divided into three scenes—"At the Court of Dionotus," "The Sailing of Ursula," and "At Cologne"—the characters supposed to be represented being :—Dionotus, King of Cornwall, and the Chief of the Huns (baritones); Conan, Prince of Brittany (tenor); Ursula, daughter of Dionotus (soprano), and Ineth, a companion to Ursula (contralto). Mr. Cowen's music opens with a short orchestral prelude leading to a flowing melodious phrase "Come forth, sweet maid," or choral sopranos and tenors, repeated in four-part vocal harmony, and recurring with interspersed solo passages for Ineth; following which comes "The Vision of Ursula," an effective scena for that character, in the symphonies and accompaniments to which the corno Inglese and harp are well employed. The remaining specialties in the first scene are a well-written trio, "If it be Heaven," for Ineth, Conan, and Dionotus (with chorus), and a simply melodious duettino, "God knoweth how to deal with me," for Ursula and Conan. In the trio and chorus, the reiteration of a pleasing melodio (choral) phrase, "It was an angel spoke to thee," by the various voices, is especially effective.

cnorus, the reiteration of a pleasing melodic (choral) phrase, "It was an angel spoke to thee," by the various voices, is especially effective. The second scene opens with a characteristic chorus of sailors and people, "Sea winds are blowing," in which the vocal harmony is well contrasted by some florid orchestral writing. The hymn with which the second scene closes is written for a four-part female chorus (sopranos and altos divided). Prominent above the vocal harmony are solo passages for Ineth, the whole producing an effect of religious calm. The scene culminates in some concerted music for Ursula, Conan, and Dionotus, and chorus of maidens, sailors, and the people ; a very effective climax being obtained by the combination of these enlarged materials.

being obtained by the combination of these enlarged materials. The final scene begins outside the church, some simple phrases for oboe and clarinet (the Ursula motive) leading to an agitated movement in which the orchestra is very skilfully used. The characteristic features of this prelude are continued in the accompaniments to the following chorus of Huns, "By rivers red" (for tenors and basses), in which savage fury is well expressed, the movement altogether offering an instance of sustained dramatic effect. An air, "The river sings," for Conan, is tuneful and expressive, and leads to the finale, which begins with an hymn (within the church), led off by Ursula, and supported by four-part female chorus—a repetition of the hymn in the second scene. Then is heard a chorus of Huns in the distance, reiterating their former savage denunciations, with similar characteristic orchestral accompaniments. The entry of the Huns into the church, the consternation of Conan, his entreaties for Ursula's flight, her calm, religious trust, and the resumption of the hymn by herself and attendant maidens, are full of dramatic contrast, the final combination of the soloists and the choral groups being wrought to a highly effective climax. The occasional reiterations in various portions of the work of the Ursula motive and of the leading phrase of the hymn tend much to the connected interest of the music. Prominent in the performance was the fine singing of Madame Albani, alike excellent in the passages of religious sentiment and in those of declamatory fervour. Especially admirable was her delivery of the scena entitled, "The Vision of Ursula," and of the incidental phrases in the concerted pieces. The contralto music of Ineth derived its full significance from Madame Patey's rich voice and earnest style; the tenor air for Conan, and other passages for that character, were excellently sung by Mr. E. Lloyd; as was the music for Dionotus and the Chief of the Huns by Mr. F. King. The work, which was conducted by the composer, w

"Daily Telegraph," Friday, October 14th, 1881.

The exhaustion of Biblical subjects for cantata and oratorio has had the effect of diverting the attention of composers to those early records of the Christian Church which, no less than Sacred Writ itself, abound in examples of faith and heroism. Scarcely a year now passes without the musical crowning of some martyr—a new form of beatification which may, or may not, amount to beatitude. St. Polycarp, St. Cecilia, St. Dorothea, Placida, and Margarita of Antioch are amongst the personages who have been so honoured within recent memory, while this morning St. Ursula was added to the illustrious group, Mr. Francillon acting as her poet and Mr. Cowen as her composer. Against the choice of St. Ursula nothing important can be said. . . . The scenes chosen by Mr. Francillon are first, the decision of Ursula; second, the departure of the fleet; third, the massacre; and in the course of treating these he has made a few changes, for each of which good reason might be assigned. Thus, Conan is his own and his father's ambassador to Dionotus; so that the interest of the lovers presence may not be wanting at a critical moment, while the scene of the martyrdom 's transferred from the bank of the Rhine to the interior of a church, the reason in this case, **I** apprehend, being a purely musical one, not unconnected with the "pealing organ's solemn sound."

In the music of Sl. Ursula Mr. Cowen reveals himself as working upon another system and towards another artistic end than that with which he has hitherto been associated. In his former compositions we recognized design and method based upon orthodox lines—on the lines, that is to say, of the classical rather than the modern masters. Whereas here he distinctly moves away from the first group and approaches the second. Sl. Ursula undoubtedly stands forth as representative of that in music which most distinguishes recent developments. That it is not representative in anything approaching an extravagant measure must be allowed, still the fact remains that through this work the composer gives in his adhesion to new principles and practices. Mr. Cowen has, therefore, taken a serious step, but not one that necessarily severs him from the past, or dissociates him from the musicians who made the past illustrious. No artistic progress is altogether bad. In fact, music has been wrought up to what it is by extracting and appropriating the good out of generations of faulty theories, the errors of which were long ago consigned to oblivion. There is, consequently, no need for any composer to ignore what is going on around him. While finding much to reject, he may also find something to lay hold of and use for the legitimate development of an art in respect of which it would be absurd to preach finality. But the distinguishing between what is good and what is bad demands careful judgment and a wellbalanced mind. Nor does difficulty end with choice. There is next the delicate work of so weaving the new into the texture of the old that the one may agree with the other, and the whole appear as a homogeneous fabric.

a must do prompt justice to the character of the work and the spirit in which it as been written. The composer's loftiness of aim and earnest endeavour has been written. command respect and admiration even where the end is barely reached. As for the many passages distinguished as much by achievement as purpose, they of course exact unqualified homage. Coming more to particulars, let me point out the distinctive features of *St. Ursula*. In the first place, it is a pronounced example said, that St. Ursula is a work of great interest—the serious production of an It may be concluded from what I have just earnest mind, and one not to be judged in haste or flippanly dismissed. No conclusion could be more prudent. The cantata bespeaks study in a voice of authority, and he who would adjudicate thereupon in haste condemns himself. For my own part, I shall decline to appraise the exact value of the work now, and will For my own part, I shall decline to appraise the exact value of the work now, and whi not presume to foretell its place in art, content rather to specify certain admirable numbers about which dispute is hardly possible. Although the ruggedness to which I have referred is not absent from the opening chorus, "Come forth, sweet maid," that quality exists in combination with unquestionable power of treatment and force of expression. It is no nerveless hand that Mr. Cowen here lays upon his audience, but a hand which grasps and holds. We feel that the composer has something to say, and a manner of speaking that must compel attention. In keeping is the general treatment of the whole scene, though I do not overlook pages wherein the vocal interest appears comparatively small. These, however, pages wherein the vocal interest appears comparatively small. Inese, nowever, are largely atoned for by others that rise to the point of absolute beauty. The second scene opens with a characteristic chorus of sailors, "Sea winds are blow-ing," with which is presently combined another sung by the people, "Days will be dreary while you are gone," and ultimately a third allotted to Ursula and the Virgins, "Thee, God, we pray." This scene is one of great elaboration, is least distinguished by the peculiarities upon which I have touched, and—shall I say in consequence?—bids fair to be the most popular. It is beautifully scored with a uiew to neithurscue affect - the public are used contented and well worked in comview to picturesque effect ; the subjects are well contrasted and well worked in combination, and the whole is brought to an exciting climax. A savage chorus of Huns introduces the scene of the massacre, and is fortunately not extended enough to become monotonous, as might easily have been the case owing to its uniform character. This is followed by a beautiful air for Conan, "The river sings," and thenceforth the departure hymn of the Virgins and the chorus of Huns mingle together and break apart in strange and dramatic contrast, while the action hastens on to catastrophe. Here and there through this exciting and long-continuing part of the work the composer seems to flag, but he quickly gathers fresh energy, and finally makes his climax where it should be—at the end. To sum up as far as pos-sible now, I could have wished *St. Ursula* in certain respects other than what it is; but I see in it power more than sufficient to strengthen the hope and expecta-tion of great things from its still youthful composer.

"The Echo," Friday, October 14, 1881.

The third day's performances were chiefly remarkable for the production of an original work, written expressly for this Festival by an English composer of recognized talent—namely, Mr. F. H. Cowen. This new composition, a sacred cantata, entitled *Saint Ursula*, had already awakened interest and admiration, for its singular originality and dramatic beauty, at the rehearsals preceding its performance. When given for the first time in its completeness, the music of the heroine being interpreted by Madame Albani, it fairly electrified the audience, and was at once recognized as a success of the most triumphant character.

The well-known legend of St. Ursula—her renunciation of her betrothed for an imaginary call from heaven; her departure for Rome, escorted by troops of young virgins (the legends say, eleven thousand in number); and her subsequent martyrdom, with her companions, by the Huns—affords situations of dramatic power of which the gifted composer has amply availed himself. The opening music, invoking the presence of the fair betrothed, the spirited chorus, of sailors and people, the characteristic music representing the embarkation, and the weird interest of the last scene, illustrative of the Saint's martyrdom, have been wrought up by Mr. Cowen with singular skill and originality. The instrumentation is particularly clever, abounding with bold combinations and rich harmonies. Few living composers could have illustrated the tragic theme with more genuine inspiration, tempered with scholarly art and mastery of orchestral resources. Both auditors and performers felt the ring of true genius in the work, and combined to stamp it as one of the brilliant successes of the Festival. Several attempts were made to obtain encores, which the composer judiciously declined until the departure scene, which so irresistibly appealed to the sensibility of the listeners that an imperative re-demand was complied with. At the close of the cantata Mr. Cowen responded to an enthusiastic re-call, and received the warm plaudits due to the genius displayed in his work.

"Morning Post."

Mr. F. H. Cowen's new sacred cantata, Saint Ursula, performed for the first time this morning, is his latest and matured composition. In the use of the instruments of the orchestra he has always displayed a peculiar aptitude and a picturesque fancy for expressive detail, and the qualities which have distinguished his former works have not been wanting here, but have been further developed. The cantata is good throughout, vocal, dramatic in construction, pathetic, and spirit-stirring in effect, so that some regret is felt that his subject did not possess more distinctive originality. It is based upon a martyrdom, and in the choice of a story he has trodden upon ground which has been as well traversed by musicians and dramatists for the last two centuries as any field offering a suggestive theme for the stage or concert-room. . . This is all told in eight musical numbers, mostly of a character of writing which indicates a special advance in fancy and treatment. The first section or scene, "Come forth, sweet maid," is clever, particularly in the very thoughtful effects from the band and in the attempt to give dramatic rather than melodic expression to the utterances of the characters. Throughout the composition this same idea is kept in view, and when it is for a time lost sight of, as in the song for the tenor, "What echoes wake," and when our composer produces a melody of the ballad type, his grasp of the subject is loosened, and the interest and attention of the hearer slackens in proportion. It is only braced to its former strictness by the splendid chorus of Huns, with its wild phrases of ejaculation superimposed upon the hymn sung by the nuns, and Ursula's inspired exclamations, each of a character and treatment of distinctive contrast. This number, and the chorus of sailors and people in the second part, with the charming underlying accompanying figure, producing a pure and satisfying orchestral tone, are not only the best things in the work, but the best things Mr. Cowen has done.

the chorus of sailors and people in the second part, with the charming underlying accompanying figure, producing a pure and satisfying orchestral tone, are not only the best things in the work, but the best things Mr. Cowen has done. The performance was very good. Madame Albani interpreted the part of Ursula with as much success as she had that of "The Martyr of Antioch" yesterday. Madame Patey, Mr. Lloyd. and Mr. F. King took especial pains with the work they had to do, and received due recognition and encouragement. The chorus was here and there untuneful, but nowhere deficient in spirit; and the band parts were given by the performers in full appreciation of their value and importance. The chorus of sailors was repeated by desire of the mayor, who interpreted the applause which followed the rendering as meaning a desire for repetition. The composer directed the cantata, and was well received both at his entry upon the orchestra and at the conclusion.

"Sunday Times," October 16th, 1881.

The chief novelty of the festival, Mr. Frederic H. Cowen's sacred cantata, St. Ursula, was produced at Thursday's morning concert, It is not a long work, occupying, as it does, little more than an hour in performance; but there can be no question that the composer has given considerable thought to his task, and concentrated in its execution that masterly power of grasping his subject, and handling it well, which, in the recent "Scandinavian" symphony gave such clear evidence of Mr. Cowen's ripening capacity and musicianly skill. To Mr. R. E. Francillon he is indebted for a very charming poem, admirably adapted for musical treatment, and embracing the chief events in the ancient legend that deals with St. Ursula's history. Both story and setting may be briefly described at the same time. The first scene takes place "at the Court of Dionotus," a Christian King of Cornwall, whose only child, Ursula, is betrothed to Conan. Prince of Brittany. It sets out, after a very few bars of introduction, with a chorus and recitative, "Come forth, sweet Maid," in which Dionotus (baritone) and his people invite Ursula to appear and give her promised hand to Conan. Her companion, Ineth (contralto) prepares them for a strange answer, and then Ursula (soprano) describes the vision she has had and her determination to undertake a pilgrimage to Rome. The music of this number strikingly pourtrays the woird, solemn character of Ursula's mission and frame of mind, and the opening phrase for the violins is used as a motive more than once again. A finely written trio and chorus, "If it be Heaven that leadeth thee," full of rich melody, expresses the wonder of the others and their acquiescence in the maiden's inspired wish; after which a duettino for Ursula and Conan (tenor), as remarkable for its originality as its charm, concludes the opening scene. In the second, which is the shortest of the three into which the cantata is divided, the "Sailing of Ursula" is depicted in a series of choral and concerted pieces, These comprise a bright

already acquainted with, and joining his bride bids her fly. But the Huns sur round the building, shouting the savage *refrain* of their song, whilst their chies offers Ursula to choose between himself and death. She will not listen to him, but with her maidens and Conan repeat the hymn in tones of increasing fervour. A splendid *ensemble* ensues, and finally a *coda* full of grand imposing effects, amid which the Huns are supposed to rush upon and slay their victims, brings the cantata to a close.

A finer performance of Mr. Cowen's work could scarcely have been desired eva by the most hypercritical. . . The spirited chorus of Huns, one of the most original numbers in the work, was given with immense vigour, and cordially applauded. The orchestration, which throughout the cantata is elaborate and artistic in the extreme, was played to simple perfection; nothing could have etceeded the refinement and delicacy with which the band did what was required of them. The solos, too, were in safe hands. Madame Albani sang the the music of Ursula with exquisite taste and great depth of expression, besides imparting to a all the dramatic significance of which the entire character is so eminently suceptible. Mr. Edward Lloyd as Conan was heard at his best, and obtained a genuine success with his charming air, "The river sings." Madame Patey, so Ineth, and Mr. Frederick King as Dionotus, also lent valuable help. Mr. Cover conducted the performance of his work, and at the finish was re-called to receiv the congratulations of the audience amid a scene of general enthusiasm.

"Figaro," October 19th.

It only remains to speak of the novelties, the first of which in order of interest is indisputably the *St. Ursula* of Mr. F. H. Cowen. Rarely has the announcement of such a work excited so much curiosity, enhanced perhaps by the success gained by the "Scandinavian" symphony last year. A full description has already been given, and it only remains to speak of the cantata as a whole. That it is by far the best work of its sort Mr. Cowen has yet done, is as indisputable as that some reliad to the superabundance of music in slow time in the first scene is desirable. At performance, the last scene of all undoubtedly appeared to better effect than at the rehearsal; while the beauties of one of the most delicate and highly finished scors Mr. Cowen ever wrote, were, under the loving conductorship of the composer, and with the hearty co-operation of the orchestra, brought out to their fullest advantage. It was rather unfortunate that in one of the most telling choruses, that of the sailors, at the beginning of the second scene, the tenors sank so greatly in pitch that the rest of the choir grew frightened, and the chorus suffered in consequence. Be the beauty of the scene of Ursula's vision, the excellent part writing at the end the second scene, where the sailors' chorus and the hymn of the maidens are so them, and Mr. Cowen was twice re-called, amidst the enthusiastic cheering of a audience which for the first time at this festival began to show signs of rel excitement.

"Norwich Argus."

A cordial round of applause welcomed Mr. Frederic Cowen and the vocal soloists as they took their places for the performance of *St. Ursula*. Let us at once say that a great, and as we may fairly hope, a lasting success awaited the work which Mr. Cowen has expressly written for the Festival. It proved on hearing what we had fully anticipated from our perusal of the score, namely, an original well-constructed, and scholarly work.

It is difficult to select one number in preference to another for special praise, be we may say that the most marked effect was created in the music of the second scene, in which the chorus of sailors and people, "Sea winds are blowing," is se cleverly combined with the hymn, "Thee, God, we pray," together with the high part of the number. The climax of this splendid piece of writing produced a prefound impression, and so loudly was it applauded that the concluding part of the *ensemble* had to be repeated. The first scene of the cantata, although not quite se striking in character, contains some writing that is not less musicianly and interesing. This may be exemplified by the wonderfully well contrasted setting of the "Vision of St. Ursula," the melodious trio and chorus, "If it be heaven that leaded thee," and the duettino for Ursula and Conan, "God knoweth how to deal wi me," which is equally remarkable for its individuality of style and the novel scone of the accompaniment. The chorus of Huns in the last scene, "By rivers red," is at once striking and characteristic; it completely realizes the savage nature of the barbaric warriors. There is something truly terrible in their shouts of "Hu!" accompanied by the clash of cymbals and the roll of drums. The instrumentation of this number, and indeed the entire work, is, as will have been foreshadowed by our recent description of the cantata, such as must fully sustain the reputation erjoyed by the composer of the "Scandinavian" symphony. He is the complete master of the resources of the orchestra, and knows how to produce the granded choral effects. COMPOSED EXPRESSLY FOR, AND FIRST PERFORMED AT, THE NORWICH MUSICAL FESTIVAL, OCTOBER, 1881.

SAINT URSULA.

Sacred Cantata.

THE POEM (FOUNDED ON THE ANCIENT LEGEND) BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

MUSIC BY

FREDERIC H. COWEN.

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The Orchestral Parts and Score may be had on application to the Publishers.

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ୗ୶ୄ 1. OD-is Royal 1 Highn \bigcirc ness, Çambu 6) / this work is respectfully inscribed by the Composer (.

ST. URSULA:

Bacred Cantata.

THE POEM (FOUNDED ON THE ANCIENT LEGEND) BY

R. E. FRANCILLON.

THE MUSIC BY

FREDERIC H. COWEN.

ARGUMENT.

DIONOTUS, a Christian king of Cornwall, had betrothed his only child, URSULA, to CONAN, Prince of Brittany. She, however, desiring to devote her whole life entirely to God's service, had obtained from her father a year's space wherein to seek for Heavenly guidance before giving CONAN her hand. On the day appointed for her answer, she, before her father, CONAN, and the assembled court, tells how an angel had come to her in a vision, and had mystically promised her a Heavenly crown and a Heavenly spouse, bidding her, to that end, make a pilgrimage to Rome in sign of her faith, and of her readiness to submit herself, in all things, to God's will.

Impressed by her manifest inspiration, DIONOTUS, though hardly, gives his consent, and gathers a fleet of ships to convey her and an appointed company of maidens (the legends say eleven thousand in number) to the fourign shore.

The histories tell how, after the fleet had been scattered by a storm, and after many other perils and adventures, URSULA and her companions reached Rome, received the blessing of the Holy Father, and thence departed homeward, without any light having been thrown on the mysterious prophecy. They travel back by way of the Rhine. CONAN, impatient of delay, and anxious as to what may have happened, sets out to meet them, and reaches Cologne in time to receive them there.

But at this time the Huns were ravaging these parts : and they also arrive at Cologne, carrying everywhere fire and sword. They surround the Christian Church, in which CONAN and URSULA had met: and their chief promises URSULA her life only on condition that she will share his throne. Refusing to obey his will, and filled with holy courage, she, with all her companions, is slain by the Huns ; thus, by her faith and obedience in seemingly small things, winning the crown of martyrdom and becoming the Bride of Heaven in exchange for earthly love and earthly glory.

PERSONÆ.

Baritone. Tener. Soprano. Contraito. Chorus of People, Maidens, Sailors, Huns, &c.

ST. URSULA.

¢

SCENE I.-At the Court of DIONOTUS.

CHORUS.

Come forth, sweet maid, nor longer stray In secret from thy father's hall: Not thus should bright eyes hide away From their own morn of festival.

DIONOTUS.

Bid her come forth—too long delay Her steps to answer Duty's call : Hath she forgotten how to-day She must plight troth before us all?

CONAN.

Aye, call her forth :—but softly call ! Let Love, not Duty, call her here ; I will not make my queen my thrall, I will not woo my wife with fear. Hath no one sought her where she waits With timid roses on her cheek, With steps afraid to pass the gates, And lips that feel too faint to speak?

INETH.

I found her in the garden path Among the flowers, all else forgot; As one who some strange vision hath, She moved not, heard not, answered not— Lilies are not so still and white— She stood as though some secret cloud Had wrapped her from the common light, And made me fear to speak aloud.

CHORUS.

Come forth ! To-day through gladder skics For thee and with thee mounts the sun : Come—bid us read in brightest eyes What maidens say when hearts are won.

The Vision of URSULA.

Father, whose love hath made me seek To keep thine every will till now, I own the hour that bids me speak My promised word—my bridal vow.

But, while I walked the garden through, I marked the lilies on their stem, And how in perfect grace they grew Till human hands should gather them. 'Twere surely best to taste alone Of Love that doth with these accord— The plenteous dew that rains upon The planted garden of the Lord. And lo, I caught a whispered word : An unseen presence touched my side, And, in my soul of souls, I heard :

"Hail, Ursula !---hail, chosen bride ! Not to the courts of earthly Kings, Not to the dross of earthly state, But to the height of greater things Thy life henceforth is consecrate !"

CHORUS.

What unseen wonders round her wake, And move our souls to heavenly fear ! Surely some Angel bids her speak--Some Angel's presence bids us hear !

URSULA.

Mine eyes fell open ; and I saw What I had dreamed, but never known— Above me, as a cloud of awe, I felt the shadow of the throne, It was an Angel spake the word : It was an Angel stood by me : And in the sound of harps I heard Once more that message,

"Hail to thee!

God sees the lilies, how they grow : Their sisterhood of souls he sees : And queens of earth, for all their show, Are not arrayed like one of these. Where'er thou go, whate'er betide, In light thy name is written down : Heaven may not lose a chosen bride, Nor thou let go a Heavenly Crown.

Yea, sire, with me an Angel spake With breath that pierced me as a sword : I scarce could whisper, ere I woke, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord !"

DIONOTUS.

A maiden's fancies ! Nay-not thus Can duty melt, as melts the snow : Art thou not plight to answer us ? Shall dreams let love and honour go? Speak, O my daughter !--

URSULA.

In the morning light Visions are God's : God's sun doth not betray. I am but warned to wait, till from my sight That veil of shadowed glory falls away.

DIONOTUS.

Her words sound scarce of earth.—Ah! if aright She reads that vision, dare I say her nay?

URSULA.

Now with a pilgrim-staff I'll leave the land, And seek, for light, the altar-flame of Rome : Then, if Heaven claim me not, I'll give my hand. Conan, to thee, when God shall lead me home.

DIONOTUS.

If it be Heaven that leadeth thee, Thou knowest best. So let it be.

INETH, CONAN, AND CHORUS.

It was an Angel spake to thee : His message in thy face we see : As Heaven hath willed, so let it be.

CONAN.

Ursula ! My heart is thine : Thy heart is Heaven's alone ; Yet will I wait, till Heaven and Love be one.

URSULA.

God knoweth how to deal with me : He knoweth how to guide : His Word shall all my counsel be, For greater love hath none than He, Nor strength His might beside.

CONAN.

God will yet give thy heart to me, And home thy feet will guide : I hope in Heaven, I trust in thee, That He will bring thee back to be My Queen, my Saint, my Bride.

SCENE II.-The Sailing of URSULA.

CHORUS OF SAILORS.

Sea-winds are blowing Straight to the West : Trust to their keeping All you love best : Maidens of Cornwall, Trust to the sea-Follow your Lady, Bravely as she.

CHORUS OF PEOPLE.

Days will be dreary While you are gone : Toil will be weary, Hearths will be lone.

HYMN.-INETH AND MAIDENS.

Thee, God, we pray, that Thou wilt bless Our path by night and day— Thee, who through wave and wilderness Canst keep us safe alway. For days but servants are of Thee, The nights but work Thy will : The storm-winds know Thy Majesty : Thou speakest : they are still. Thou who canst keep us, day and night,

And guide us, Thou, our God, Wilt lead us by Thy Glory's light, Nor let us lose the road. Thy staff shall guide our feet above, To reach, through nightless days, Beneath the Banner of the Dove, Thy Crown, whose name we praise.

DIONOTUS.

CONAN.

Speed thee and save thee, Child of my love : Light on thy going Shine from above. Glad be thy coming Home from the sea : The Father of fathers Bless thee for me ! Speed thee and save thee, Heart of my love : Light on thy going Shine from above.

URSULA.

Farewell, my friends, my Father ! Unto thee, Conan, once more farewell. If I may be Thine, or not thine, God's self will choose for me.

CHORUS OF SAILORS AND PEOPLE.

Sea-winds are blowing, &c.

HYMN.

URSULA, INETH, AND MAIDENS.

Thou who canst keep us, day and night, &c.

SCENE III.—At Cologne (outside the Church).

CHORUS OF HUNS.

By rivers red, through forests black, O'er mountains old and grey, The ghosts of kingdoms point our track, And by the signs of rout and wrack, The eagles mark our way:--

Hu ! be blood with wine outpoured— What is great ? The sword—the sword !

On, from the steppes that gave us birth, For cold and white are they : On to the Edens of the earth : They grow us grapes to make us mirth, They bear us foes to slay :--Hu / be blood with wine outpoured--Who is king ? The sword - the sword !

CONAN.

What echoes wake of woe and war? Not such the signs I've journeyed far To seek, that anxious hopes may tell If all be ill, or aught be well. Here stands the fane that surely she Would pass for prayer, if well it be. Heaven keep from strife thy waves, O Rhine, Till she be here, and Heaven be mine !

The river sings, the river flows— Its song of songs I hear : My heart, outworn with longing, knows At last that she is near. How should her lover's heart, grown faint With waiting, fail to rove O'er all the world to seek my saint, My lady, and my love ?

Good Angels, bring me back my heart, And give her back the faith That mortal love hath still its part In Love that conquers death. What were a heaven of starless skies, And what all stars above, But hopes of banished hearts to rise To Heaven on wings of love?

HYMN.

URSULA AND MAIDENS. (Within the Church.)

Thou who hast kept us, day and night, And led us, Thou our God Wilt lead us by Thy glory's light, Nor let us lose the road. Thy staff shall guide our feet above, To reach, through nightless days, Beneath the Banner of the Dove, Thy Crown, whose name we praise.

(The Scene changes to the Interior of the Church.)

CHORUS OF HUNS, repeated (in the distance).

By rivers red, &c.

CONAIN (to URSULA).

And thou art—here ! And o'er the ground The forms of demons swarm around— Fly, Ursula !

URSULA.

Conan ! 'Tis thou—and here ? Could'st thou not wait, and trust in me ? Why dost thou bid me fly? I see The shield of God, without whose will Is naught—

CONAN.

Alas! I boded ill— But not thy death—Away !—

CHORUS OF HUNS (gradually approaching).

On from the steppes, &c.

(They enter the Church.)

THE CHIEF OF THE HUNS.

Too late for flying !

E'en now my warriors seize upon their own: Who would escape, must choose 'twixt love and dying, And thou, fair maid, 'twixt torture and a throne! Thy beauty fires my heart—a crown awaits thee : Yet will I woo not, even for eyes like thine— A conqueror crowns thee, or his falchion mates thee.

Choose if thou wilt be Death's, fair maid, or mine !

URSULA AND MAIDENS.

Thou who hast kept us, day and night, And led us, Thou our God Wilt lead us still, by stedfast light, Nor leave us by the road. Thy staff shall guide our feet above, &c.

THE HUNS.

Hu ! be blood with wine out-poured.

URSULA. (As in the vision.)

"Not to the courts of earthly kings, Not to the dross of of earthly state, But to the height of greater things Thy life henceforth is consecrate. Where'er thou art, whate'er betide, In light thy name is written down; Heaven may not lose a chosen bride, Nor thou let go a Heavenly Crown."

(To the Chief of the Huns.)

King—since a king of men art thou— Know that thy sword can give a crown More royal than the bloodstained brow Of warrior wins, or monarchs own. Aloft, unto a kinglier throne Than thine, I mount—the throne of Him Who reigns above the worlds alone, Hid by the songs of seraphim.

THE HUNS.

Hu ! be blood with wine outpoured. Who is king ? The sword—the sword !

URSULA.

I hear their hymn—I see them stand With beckoning wings—the clouds unroll. Death's glorious Angel, take my hand : Lord, Father, God, receive my soul !

INETH, CONAN, AND MAIDENS.

Thou who didst keep us, day and night, Our Father and our God,

Hast brought us by a glorious light Into a wondrous road.

Thy wings have borne our souls above To win, for deathless days,

The Love that is more high than love, The Crown whose gold is praise !

FINE.

SAINT URSULA.

Ander.

SCENE 1.—At the Court of Dionotus.

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SAINT URSULA.

Scene 1.-AT THE COURT OF DIONOTUS.

No. 1.* CHORUS & RECIT.---" Come Forth, Sweet Maid."



Ped.

^{*} N.B. - The Nos. in each Scene of this Cantata should follow each other without any pause.



I 2





































I













No. 3. RECIT.—Dionotus & Ursula.—"A Maiden's Fancies."

TRIO (Ineth, Conan, & Dionotus) & CHORUS-" If it be Heaven that leadeth thee."






















RECITATIVE & DUETTINO---Ursula & Conan---" God knoweth how to No. 4.



























(The crotchets a little slower than the preceding dotted crotchets.) Molto moderato. (M.M. = 54.)

































Ι URSULA. Ê bove, shall guide our feet bove, Thy staff shall guide, . . . Thy staff shall guide, . . INETH. E Thy staff shall guide our CONAN. Speed thee and save thee, oh heart DIONOTUS. **P**. ۴. 20 ŧ Speed thee thee, oh and save SOPRANO. ## 8 B Thy staff shall guide, shall guide our Alto. نص 0 16 to 17 guide, Thy staff shall shall guide our IST & 2ND TENOR. Trust Sea • winds are blow - ing Straight to the west. . to their keep-ing • • . 3RD TENOR. # 1 Trust Sea - winds are blow - ing Straight to the west, to their keep-ing . . . BASS. 80 0 Θ H Thy staff shall guide their shall guide, . I 0;# đ đ ø ø ١<u>م</u>









più P well, Fare well ! -. fare . . . più P Ė whose name we praise, . . 2 ۲ Ē thee, Fare - well ! . . . save Fare well! più P × whose name we praise, . . . più P Ĺ whose name praise, . . . we 4 10 4 Trust to their keep . ing All you love best. . . . • • • 비면 . their keep Trust to • ing All you love best. . . ۲



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• This cry should be pronounced somewhat like "who," but a little more closed.
































Ped.































































































URSULA. Κ mf ĩ with the clouds un-rollbeck-on-ing wingsstand INETH. Ø hast brought us, by rious light, glo a CONAN. CONAN. Thy wings have borne our souls a -SOP. 1 & 2. sempre f 0 drous road, . In-to a won - drous road, in to won a . ALT. 1 & 2. sempre f 0 light, drous light, by a glo - rious in road, to a won . • . . TENOR. È Hu!... Be blood with wine outpoured ; Who is king? who is king? the sword! . . . THE HUNS. BASS. \mathbf{e} . 1 Ē 100 Be blood with wine outpoured ; Who is king? who is king? the Hut.,. sword! . . . -00 0 Κ



IOI







rit. Allegro con fuoco. URSULA. ¢ ī Death's glo - rious take hand. an-gel, my INETH. rit. 2 œ 9 Ġ 0 p**raise.** praise, the Crown whose gold is CONAN. a^{rit.} ¢ \boldsymbol{a} 0 • whose gold praise. praise, the Crown is SOP. 2^{rit.} -0 800 6 7 æ F gold praise, the Crown, the Crown whose is praise. ۰. ALTO. rit. 0 Æ D 5 gold praise, the Crown, the Crown whose is praise. TENOR. 8.8 œ 2 55 A poured, . . . Be blood with wine out-poured; Who is king? who is king? The sword! the sword ! BASS. S ----\$:: \$ \$:: \$ -5: Ð . 0 6 14 7 8 H Z 1 . Be blood with wine out-poured ; Who is king ? who is king ? The sword! the sword ! poured, . . . • • . molto rit. ō 20 Allegro con juoco. molto rit. f Ped. Ped. Ped. Pcd.













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