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MASTER OF THE CHORUS

Sir Henry Coward's Death

SIR HENRY COWARD, who was acknowledged to be England's leading chorus master, died at his home in Sheffield in June, aged 94. Some of our readers may remember Sir Henry's visit to New Zealand as conductor of the Sheffield Choir in 1911, and many will be interested in these details of his life, supplied to us by a Nelson reader.

Sir Henry Coward (said the *Sheffield Telegraph* in an obituary notice) was the Grand Old Man of English choral music, and for more than half a century the name of Coward has been a magical one for music-lovers in two continents. A man of wonderful vitality, he was at the height of his mental vigour when he passed "the allotted span," and at 76 his life work was crowned with new honours.

In 1926 the Sheffield Musical Union, which he had brought to perfection, celebrated its 50th anniversary, and the event was recognised by conferring the Freedom of the City upon its gifted conductor. The Freedom of the Cutlers'



SIR HENRY COWARD
A daring resolve succeeded

Company followed, and later in the year he received a knighthood.

Sir Henry Wood (whose death was announced last month) paid this tribute: "Sir Henry Coward improved our already great tradition for choral singing. He put the Sheffield Festival in front rank because he insisted upon very clear diction and fine tone with an ensemble that was unsurpassed."

With his Sheffield Choir he was a frequent and welcome visitor to London, and he brought back honours from tours in France, Germany and Canada. Then there was the memorable world tour in 1911, when 200 singers were away from England six months visiting 56 places in three continents (and also New Zealand).

Began Work at Eight

Sir Henry was born at the Shakespeare Hotel, Liverpool, of which his father, originally a Sheffield grinder, was the landlord. When the father died, the family removed to Sheffield, and the boy Henry was put in the care of his uncle, a cutler.

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