CONTENTS

1. To a Wild Rose 4
2. Will o' the Wisp 6
3. At an Old Trysting Place 10
4. In Autumn. 12
5. From an Indian Lodge 16
6. To a Water Lily 18
7. From Uncle Remus. 21
8. A Deserted Farm. 24
9. By a Meadow Brook 26
10. Told at Sunset 29

ABOUT *WOODLAND SKETCHES* AND ITS COMPOSER

Edward MacDowell (1861-1908) has the distinction of being regarded as the first great American composer, although he disliked being classified as any sort of nationalist. He regarded music as a truly international language, and he knew that his style was largely the product of European, particularly German, influence. Enthusiastic, brilliant, tall, handsome and red-haired, he was idolized as a super-star during his lifetime, both in the United States and abroad. He was a virtuoso pianist, good enough to really impress the incredible Franz Liszt, with whom he studied for a time. He was a thoroughly educated and dedicated musician, and when he was appointed the first head of the Columbia University Department of Music in 1896, his appointment bore the acknowledgment that he was "the greatest musical genius America has produced." The lectures he delivered at Columbia University covered an amazing array of musical subjects, which he made interesting by his ability to illustrate at the keyboard, with great success. One of his students wrote:

> *They were beautifully illuminated talks, delivered with so much freedom and such a rush of enthusiasm that one felt the hour never held all that wanted to be said, and in its longing to get out, the abundant knowledge kept spilling over into the tomorrows. His ideas were not tied up in manuscript, nor doled out from notes. They came untrammeledfrom a wonderfully versatile mind, and they were illustrated with countless musical quotations and interlined with a wealth of literary and historical references.*

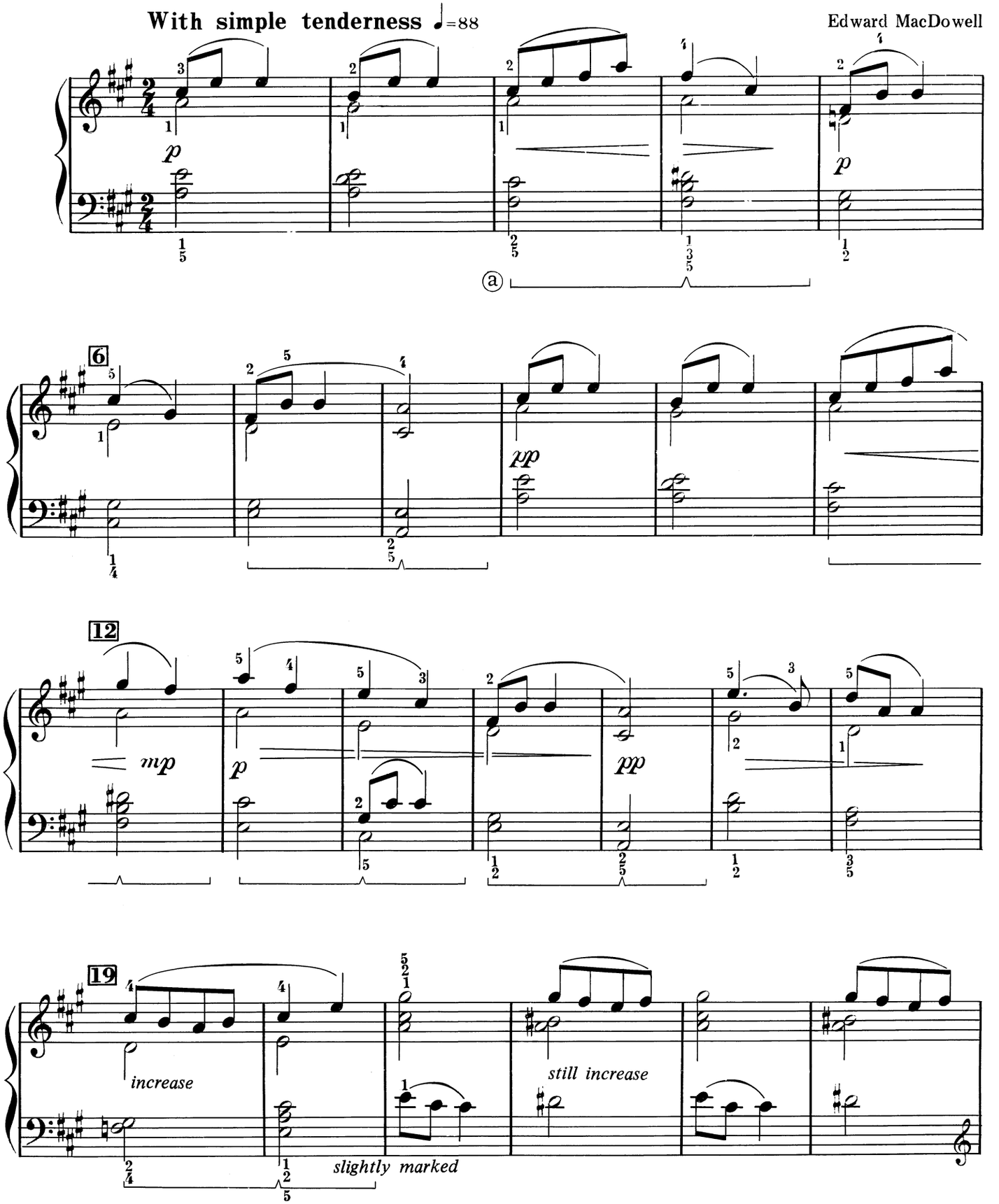
MacDowell clubs and societies were formed in cities large and small. Books of poetry and essays were written about him and his music. He was honored by Princeton and by the University of Pennsylvania with honorary doctorates.

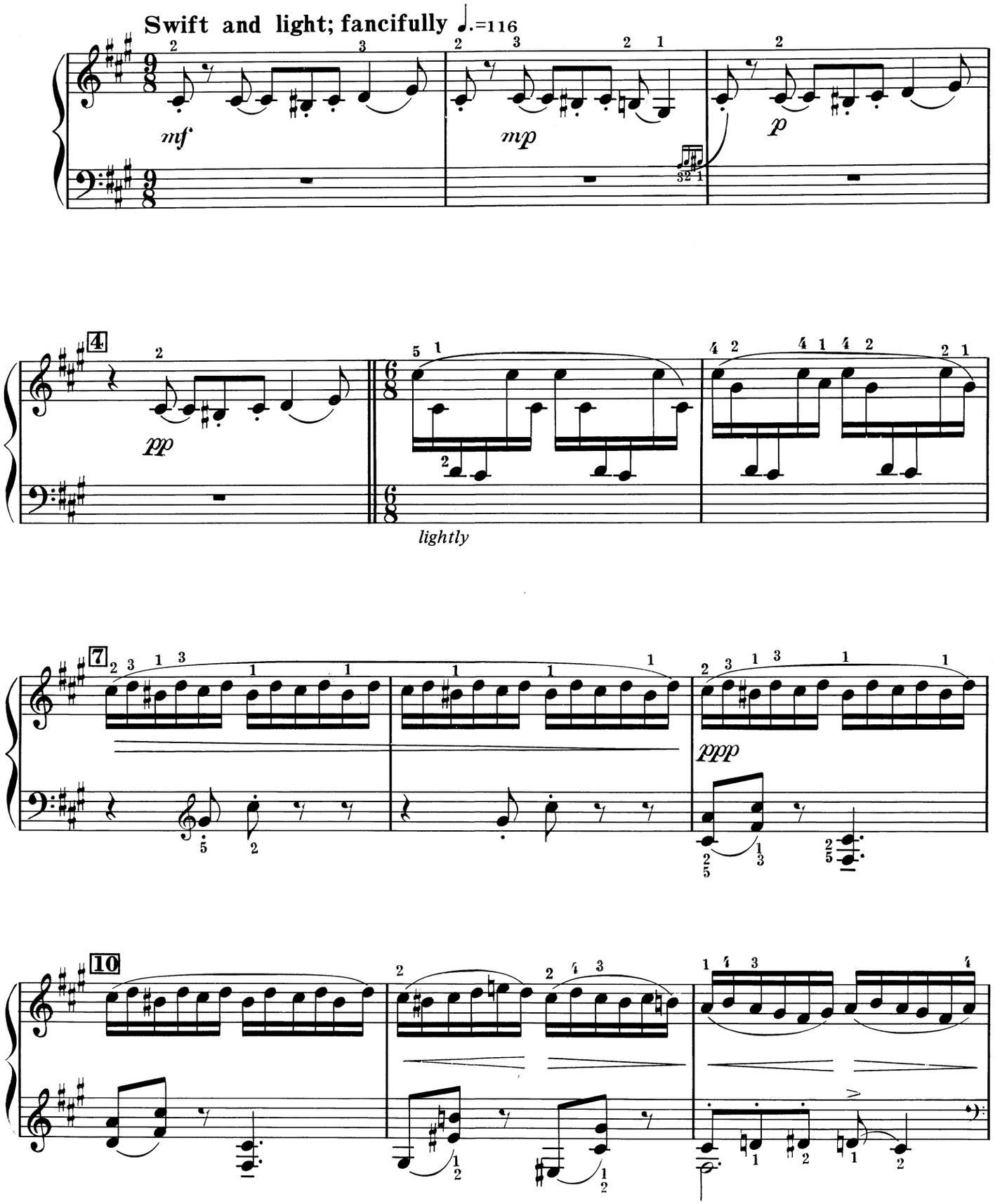
MacDowell composed a vast quantity of piano music, including four large sonatas. He also wrote several dozen songs and a number of orchestral pieces. Of all these efforts, it is the charming, unpretentious suite of musical minatures, Woodland Sketches, that has survived as his best known work. The titles themselves, "To a Wild Rose," "Will o' the Wisp," "From Uncle Remus," etc., add to the nostalgia expressed in these cameos whose worth transcends their designation as period pieces. It is precisely this son of composition that found MacDowell at his best. The simplistic honesty of these diminutive tone-poems is responsible for their enduring success, and has led one prominent music critic of our own era to observe that "To a Wild Rose" is worth all the four piano sonatas rolled together.

The thematic material of "From an Indian Lodge" is known to have been taken from a melody of the Brotherton Indians. The last selection in the suite, "Told at Sunset," reiterates a considerable amount of thematic material heard in the other pieces of the set. Beginning in measure 17, the melody of "At an Old Trysting Place" is re-stated. Measure 60 begins a quotation of the principal theme of "A Deserted Farm, " and the piece ends boldly with the concluding material of "From an Indian Lodge." This interesting thematic continuity, also evident in more subtle similarities that may be discovered between the various individual pieces, gives the suite a considerable element of drama when it is performed in its entirety.

Willard A. Palmer

1. To a Wild Rose



ⓐ Pedal indications are by the editor.

2. Will o' the Wisp