Kennedy then quotes two short passages from the final chapter of Tono-Bungay, and these have since become a standard point of reference for other writers on the symphony. They have appeared in record sleeve and programme notes, and in other places, such as Hugh Ottaway's BBC Music Guide to the Vaughan Williams Symphonies.  


The final chapter of H. G. Wells's novel, Tono-Bungay (1909) has given rise to surprisingly wide differences of opinion among commentators. Geoffrey West, an early admirer of the novel, thought that 'in the last chapter, one of the most splendid passages Wells has ever written, is focused the whole spirit of the book'; more recently J. R. Hammond referred to the chapter's 'series of brilliant images' and considered it 'one of the most carefully written . . . in the whole corpus of [Wells's] fiction'. At the opposite extreme from these views is Mark Schorer's familiar dismissal of Tono-Bungay in his essay 'Technique as Discovery' (1948) and his condemnation of the final chapter as a 'significant failure' because it is merely 'a kind of meditative rhapsody which denies every value that the book has been aiming towards'.

'TX': The Final Chapter of Tono-Bungay

in Critical Survey

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