

CHARACTERISTICS OF JENNY LIND.

JENNY LIND'S impression upon her audience was the result of four remarkable qualities united in one artist—a voice unique in power, musical beauty, and dramatic quality; a thorough musicianship; unusual intellectual culture; and a character of unaffected goodness, kindness, and high moral principle, which gave her insight into a range of emotions, especially in religious music, possessed by herself alone. She approached each piece of music from the point of view of a great musician. She conceived its dramatic possibilities as a woman of ardent temperament molded by high social culture. She studied and created her *chefs-d'œuvre* with great intelligence. Her own inner life developed a class of emotions of an exceptionally gracious character, which she sought to express through her art. Such was her effect on me, an artist; and it did not differ, except in intensity and delight, from the impression made on people who had no technical knowledge of music.

The generation which has never heard Jenny Lind is prone to suspect that the hold which she possesses upon the imagination and heart of those who heard her is no test of her greatness; that she is still supreme in memory because she was the first great artist that sang to the young, ardent, and unsophisticated audience which this new country offered. This is an error. Jenny Lind differed from all other great artists, not in degree, but in kind. She was unique. I have heard almost every great singer of my generation; Jenny Lind could be compared to none of them. Her art was altogether different in its nature. It took hold on us in a different way.

The public were mad about her. Wherever she sang, every window and roof for blocks from the concert-hall was packed with people waiting to see her pass. I have it on the authority of Mr. Henry Rochester that once when she dropped her shawl from a balcony, it was caught and in a moment torn to shreds by the crowd below. In America were repeated the scenes of London, where the frantic rush of people fighting their way toward her in the concert-room had generated a new name—the «Jenny Lind crush.» Yet her mastery over this crazed mob was complete.

During her presence on the stage the hush of reverent expectation was so intense that one could hear a pin drop. I use the word «reverent» advisedly; her public invariably left her presence uplifted into higher regions of feeling and of desire.

Jenny Lind united in her concerts three fields of music usually quite distinct, and was equally great in all. Although she did not sing in opera in America, her programs contained the arias which were inseparably connected with her triumphs in that field of art. She sang the greatest of the oratorio arias, and a variety of folk-music, Swedish and English. In whatever she sang there was a pathetic quality in her voice that vibrated in the feeling even to tears. I was a young artist just come to New York when she returned there from her tour in the interior to give her great concerts in Tripler Hall, which had been built for her, and on one of these occasions I was engaged as solo violinist. This brought me in contact with her as a musician, and I heard her with the enthusiasm of an artist. I remember as if it were yesterday how she used to dance out sidewise before her audience. I can see her now, a young woman in a dress low in the neck, with short sleeves, and with a full skirt reaching only to the ankle, according to the fashion of the day. Her eyes were light blue, very bright and sparkling; her hair was the true Swedish yellow; her complexion was pale and clear; her cheek-bones were high; and her mouth was most lovable and cultivated in its play of expression. In her own character she was not a woman to fall in love with; she was too reserved. She gave the impression of great dignity and high breeding. Her manners were those of the nobility, very simple and modest, and yet stately. She possessed a fine education and great force of character, and she was so kind and good!

Jenny Lind's voice was a soprano, in richness more like Parepa's than that of any other modern singer, or perhaps like Scalchi's at its best. Its timbre was like a clarinet, penetrating and tearful and sweet, and it flowed out with great volume and power. When she sang in Rochester, people bought standing-room in the Arcade, across the street from Corinthian Hall, where her con-



LITHOGRAPH BY SARONY, 1859.

JENNY LIND.

cert was held. Through the open windows they heard her perfectly, and at a distance the listening crowd caught the swell of that mighty tone. She possessed two qualities of voice—one somber, the other of a clear, sunny ring, brilliant and sparkling. She carried her middle voice in one quality up to high B flat without a break, and sang there in the same rich tone as in her middle octaves. She used to throw this extraordinary «medium» voice right up on her upper notes with tremendous power. It rang out there as no other voice has ever rung before or since. This was the source of many of her grandest effects. But the peculiarity of her singing was the astonishing sympathy and dramatic intensity which she threw into everything, and the intelligence that guided her. Bravura, sympathy, and intellectual art are each the gift of a different artistic temperament; she united them all. Moreover, behind her interpretation was her high training of mind and feeling. This lent power and variety to her artistic conception.

Jenny Lind sang each piece from its own proper mental standpoint. She was the pupil of Garcia, the brother of Malibran, and in acting had studied carefully the art of the French stage, especially that of Rachel. She was the one ideal opera-singer for Meyerbeer, whose tender friendship for her is well known. For her he wrote the part of *Selika*, for her *Vielka*. In her operatic singing she threw herself with absolute abandon into each character, and sang with alternate tenderness and fire of irresistible intensity. Hers was a fiery voice. In America, of course, she expressed her temperament through her singing only. I cannot see how she could have been the great actress Europe recognized in her. Here she was awkward in her movements; but I used to think, from her habit of dancing on and off the stage sidewise, that she had been slightly lamed by some mishap.

Jenny Lind created her success in London in the rôle of *Alice* in Meyerbeer's «*Robert le Diable*.» Lumley relates how the dramatic censor withheld permission to produce the work there, on the ground of the damage to public morals which would result from bringing a live devil upon the stage. For Jenny Lind, however, this and every other opera was a passionate exposition of human life. She is said to have carried the interpretation of the rôle of *Alice*, with the climax of the terzetto preceding the finale, to a height of dramatic power never reached by any other artist. «How can I tell how I sang?» she said after the opera. «I stood

on the man's right hand, and the fiend on his left, and my one thought was how to save him.»

For a singer of such instincts the friendship of Mendelssohn was sure to be of the closest. He quotes her as «a member of that church invisible,» and delighted in her «splendid enthusiasm.» He himself taught her the spirit and interpretation of oratorio music. She was only fulfilling his inspiration when she gave vent to the exaltation of artistic-religious feeling in such strains. «I know that my Redeemer liveth» she sang with such a fervor of religious passion that it caught one up, as it seemed, into the sacred presence. And so it was with all her sacred melodies. In her the art of music was grafted upon a religious nature so deep that practical Christianity was the master-spring of her life. This girl, a ballet-dancer as a child, a comedy actress in her teens, a most passionate and yet most womanly exponent of the great tragic rôles of opera as a mature artist, was supposed in America to be the daughter of a Lutheran clergyman.

It was in ballad-singing that Jenny Lind's childlike sympathy of character came out most clearly. She reveled in the ventriloquial displays of her bird-song; she threw herself with delight into the homely lieds of Sweden. No one ever heard her sing «Home, Sweet Home» without weeping. The quality of tone as she spoke the words wrung the heart. In everything she sang she revealed, apparently with perfect artlessness, beauties of which nobody had dreamed. She was perfectly original in all that she did.

Looking at Jenny Lind's art from the standpoint of its artistic school, it is easy to cite singers who have, in one or another charm, excelled her. She had not the soft warmth of an Italian singer in her voice. Many have been her superiors in feats of execution—Alboni, Tietjens, even Mme. La Grange; but she had a magnificent trill, and a scale of astounding evenness, purity, and brilliancy. The great power of her voice made it impossible for her to equal the colorature of singers possessing a lighter timbre. But this great voice she had under very high cultivation. She sang firmly, without a tremolo; purely, no slightest aspirate marring the sunny quality of her embellishments; and she could pass from the most tremendous crescendo to the most delicate pianissimo. Her climax in the part-singing of *Agatha* in «*Der Freischütz*» stands before me as the acme of passion; her bird-song as an example of airy and exquisitely graceful colorature.



FROM LITHOGRAPH BY D'AVIGNON, 1850; DAGUERRETYPE BY ROOT.

JENNY LIND.

I was present at Jenny Lind's last concert. The late Mr. Scharfenberg, one of New York's pioneer musicians, sat beside me. «What do you think?» I asked him. «She will never sing again,» he answered. Glorious as her voice still was, there had come a veil over the upper notes, once so brilliant; the delicacy and sympathy were gone from the

lower—they had become harsh and cold. I did not hear her in the future triumphs in oratorio of which her biographers write so enthusiastically. To my mind, her fiery temperament, which she had thrown against her voice, had worn her and her voice out together. The American tour had destroyed her.

Henri Appy.

WHAT JENNY LIND DID FOR AMERICA.

JENNY LIND'S sojourn in America was fruitful in many ways. Her progress left a chain of charities through the land by which orphans and sick are still nurtured and healed. The rapture of her music created a criterion by which the success of every other artist has been measured from that day to this. The tradition of her pure and noble womanhood has remained to music a bulwark against which the scandal and corruption of the operatic and musical world has broken in vain. In the memory of every human being who heard her, her singing has rung to the hour of death as the one perfect and sublime revelation of the beauty and ecstasy of music itself. This is much. But America owes Jenny Lind one other and greater debt that has never been recognized, which it is the purpose of this article to consider. She brought the musical temperament of America to consciousness of itself. Her tour was the supreme moment in our national history when young America, ardent, enthusiastic, impressible, heard and knew its own capacity for musical feeling forever. From that hour it has received or denied the world's great artists who have made pilgrimage hither, supreme in its own consciousness of its artistic needs and temperament.

In the foregoing article Mr. Appy has summed up the musical gifts of Jenny Lind, and if we apply his analysis to the effect of these gifts on ourselves, it will help us to see ourselves from the outside.

The very first fact that stares us in the face is that she was what Rockstro calls her—«a passionate idealist.» It is Jenny Lind the idealist who won our first fealty. America is «a passionate idealist» also. A nation that left home to plant itself in the wilderness for a religious idea; that fought for a moral idea a bloody and devastating civil war; that has chosen for its national saints the ideal magnanimity of Washington and the strong and yet tender patriotism of Lin-

coln; that builds its homes on an ideal of love, and has taught its sons and daughters to believe that romance is a short word for the happy end of true affection—such is the nation to which Jenny Lind sang. And since her day, whatever partial following musicians may have had for other gifts, it is the idealist and the poet alone who have gathered the consent of the whole nation. Nay, more; America has idealized the character and life of every genius it has loved from that day to this.

The second criterion of our temperament follows from the first. While Jenny Lind was the one perfect singer for the composer of «Robert le Diable,» she was undoubtedly the greatest interpreter of such strains as «I know that my Redeemer liveth.» It is as a singer of religious music that America reveres her most. She touched the master-chord of a profoundly religious people, and, while America stands, this, the highest cause and revelation of music, will be most potent to its temperament.

She was, moreover, in earnest. «Through Jenny Lind,» wrote Hans Christian Andersen, «I first became sensible of the holiness of art. Through her I learned that one must forget one's self in the service of the Supreme. No books, no men, have had a more ennobling influence on me as a poet than Jenny Lind.» In fact, she revered her own art, not only as a musician, but as a dramatic artist. When called upon by her fiancé, Mr. Harris, «not only to abandon my profession, but to be ashamed of it,» she, who had already decided to quit the stage, first threw over her lover.

Jenny Lind was intelligible to every one that heard her. Mr. D. W. Powers related to me that six Tonawanda Indian chiefs came in from their reservation and called on her at the Eagle Tavern in Rochester. Sitting in his office down-stairs, he heard her sing to them. They understood her art, and went away satisfied. She was very simple and