

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

logical, and therefore clear, in her interpretations. And this clearness and simplicity were the result of her convictions of art. We are told that it was her «invariable custom to reserve her great effects, with true artistic self-abnegation, for certain points which the unerring instinct of her genius indicated as the fittest for the introduction of a logical climax; and to the power and perfection of such a climax she unhesitatingly sacrificed an indefinite number of those minor effects upon which many artists gifted with less creative power are ready to seize for the purpose of securing a passing triumph at the expense of the logical whole. She kept her dramatic power in reserve, with a reticence which none but the greatest artists are ever known to exercise, for the predetermined situations in which she felt that it could be successfully exhibited with logical consistency and the deepest reverence for dramatic truth.»

This is a very intellectual type of art. By this she brought Hans Christian Andersen to tears—tears on the stage, whither he had smuggled himself in as a «supe,» as he watched her *Norma*; and Balfe to tears in the audience as she sang, «Ah! non credea,» in «*La Sonnambula*.» It would be too much to say that no American audience has ever confused blind temperament with dramatic genius; but it is certain that America has never for very long mistaken temperamental excess for the ecstasy produced by such spiritual art as Jenny Lind's. On the other hand, the breadth and intensity of passionate feeling which America recognized in her became the criterion of its future favor, and just as exact a criterion of the nation's self. Less fire than her climax, more apathy than her calm, have never since convinced. From her day to ours, every artist who has dwelt among us has been forced by his hearers into greater heights and depths in his efforts to win his public. Without temperament no one wins American listeners.

It was the greatest triumph of Jenny Lind that she carried the musical world captive by expressing the highest types and revelations of character. She would not take corrupt rôles. Her art was particularly normal, healthy, and direct. It was tragic, for the deepest suffering is the correlative of the highest natures; but it never struck the notes of brutal passion, rung so continuously nowadays. She sang with exquisite feeling the chaste part of *Valentine*. Her *Norma* failed to win her English hearers because it was a

loving woman, not a demon. In «*La Sonnambula*» her dignity and innocence convinced her listeners and brought them to tears. She appealed, in fact, to the very feelings and emotions that not only are most natural, but are most sedulously cultivated, in American women. This was the charm with which Clara Louise Kellogg afterward won America and astonished Europe.

The purity of *Amina*, the pathetic love of *Lucia*, the chastity of *Valentine*, the merriment of *Susanna*, the dignity of *Norma*—how little these resemble the dramatic situations of our modern stage! What has America to do with the polluted rôles of European degeneracy? We have room enough here for suffering of a nobler strain. Where there is suffering there may be song. Let America sing her own song on the high themes where first she found her voice.

I have shown the choice which Jenny Lind made of the emotions which she would communicate to her hearers. It follows that her art was sincere. She was sincere in technic. If she had not execution for a cadenza, she simplified it. If she found her part demanded a dangerous passage over a falling bridge, she forbade stage illusions, and walked in fear and trembling; if she worked up a climax, she did it within the intention of the composer; if she desired to excite sympathy, she became her own heroine, and suffered. It is no illusion which declares the energy of the moral force that projected such music into the souls of her hearers. It was the character of Jenny Lind behind her music that made her America's ideal. It was «something not ourselves» that spoke in her accents.

Lastly,—and this is the one unflinching characteristic of the highest art,—Jenny Lind the artist was full of sweetness and light—of *kindly* light. Her message was optimistic. Happiness informed it,—the happiness of the good,—and it had the energy of happiness, and communicated its divine spark to artists of every sister art. If it was intellectual, it was also exquisitely beautiful. It was full of sympathy, and it was just as full of innocent gaiety. The «enthusiasm of humanity» pervaded it. The characteristics briefly enumerated in this paper are those that lie at the very heart of American temperament, and that have determined the success of every artist who has visited us. These are the qualities that are struggling to find expression in our own American artists and composers. Let them speak simply and directly, and we will hear.

Fanny Morris Smith.