



THE ARTISTIC LIFE OF LOUISA PYNE.

By RUTH LAMB.

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD.

YOUNG concert-goers of to-day would hear the name of Louisa Pyne with little interest, and perhaps ask, "Who was she? Strange that I have never heard her sing, if she held the artistic rank you say she did, or does." But mention Louisa Pyne's name in the presence of their elders, and it is enough to evoke a chorus of admiring comments, and expressions of regret that so truly great an artiste should have retired from public life when her gifts and fame were only at their zenith.

A sketch of the artistic life of the "Queen of English Sopranos," as Louisa Pyne was deservedly called, cannot fail to be interesting to the young of the present generation, or to recall delightful memories in the case of those who, many a time and oft, listened spell-bound to the notes of this queen of song during her public professional life. It is, however, because that life is a beautiful illustration of the possibility of combining Christian virtues, and the graces which most adorn the feminine character in the sanctuary of home, with a busy artistic career, that its story is now written for girls to read.

There are many proverbial expressions in favour of those who are little in stature—"Better the stuff, smaller the parcel;" "Good things are aye in small bulk;" "Little and good." True it is that articles of luxury are found in small quantities, and those really essential to life, health, and comfort are bestowed in sufficient bulk to meet the needs of all humanity. So, too, with great mental or artistic powers. These are bestowed in large measure on the few, whilst the many are endowed with just those gifts which are best fitted to meet the needs of daily life. We have cause to be thankful that iron is more plentiful than gold, and that the "black diamonds" which warm our hearths are more abundant than the so-called precious stones; but we rejoice that things of beauty were not left out of the Creator's plan because less necessary for the supply of daily needs.

The words "little and good," as well as "gifted," might have been fittingly applied to the youngest child of George Pyne, who was born in London in April, 1828. Louisa Pyne came of a celebrated musical family. Her uncle, James Kendrick Pyne, used to sing with Braham. His son and namesake bears a high musicianly repute, and kept his jubilee some time ago as the honoured organist of Bath Abbey. The grandson, also of the same name, is organist of Manchester Cathedral and city. Louisa's father, George Pyne, was a famous alto singer, and associated in oratorio with Kitty Stevens, afterwards Countess of Essex. In his day contraltos were rare indeed, and the parts now allotted to such were then

taken by male voices. There are traditions respecting Louisa Pyne's ancestors, which tell that some of them attained high places in Church and State; but of these nothing need here be told.

Louisa was the youngest of George Pyne's three musical daughters. Mary Ann was nine years older, and Susan, who was specially associated with her still more gifted junior in professional life, was seven and a half years older than the little one.

It would be hard to tell when Louisa's artistic life really began, for her charming voice and great musical talent were manifested from her baby days. She was extremely small as a child and young girl, and her elder sisters delighted to dress up the tiny creature and send her into the drawing-room when guests were present. At three and a half she used to sing a little song called "Blue Violets," and though unable to pronounce the words properly, her tuneful voice called forth admiration and praise from her hearers.

From five to nine years of age Louisa was carefully taught by her father, but from that date she was placed under Sir George Smart, who always manifested a paternal interest and pride in his gifted pupil. The families lived very near each other—the Pynes at 76, the Smarts at 91, Great Portland Street. Louisa was generally to be found under her teacher's roof, as Sir George had a little daughter of similar age, and the children were almost inseparable. Their friendship was only ended by the death of one of them.

At nine years of age, Louisa, when staying at Hastings, joined her sister Susan in singing the duet, "Deh Con Te," from *Norma*. This was at a large evening party given by the wife of the then member for the borough. All present were equally amazed and delighted, and the hostess carried the child round in her arms to receive the congratulations of the guests. Such praises would have been injurious to many natures, but in the case of Louisa they rather caused her to shrink within herself, whilst increasing her anxiety to improve her God-given talents.

Through her whole public career her sensitive nature was rather humbled than otherwise by the many marks of appreciation showered upon her. She felt an ever-growing sense of responsibility, and strove by ceaseless efforts to improve her gifts to the uttermost. "Better to merit approval than even to gain it," was her motto, and there was in Louisa Pyne none of the craving after prominence and boundless adulation to which a less noble nature endowed with such talents might have yielded. As a child she was taught that her glorious voice was a trust, for the use of which she would have to account. As girl and woman she never lost sight of this truth.

It is often said that our greatest men and

women have owed more to the influence of good mothers than to the wider training received at school and college. Truly, the importance of a mother's influence cannot be over-estimated. Louisa Pyne owed her musical gifts and training to her father, but she was even more fortunate in being blessed with a good mother.

Mrs. Pyne was an earnest Christian, who desired for her children, above all things, that they should grow up in the faith and fear of God, and serve Him in whatever sphere their lot might be cast. One of Louisa's great delights as a child was to sit on her mother's knee, with an old pictorial Bible before her, and to listen whilst Mrs. Pyne told the story which each quaint engraving illustrated. The sensitive child would weep over the sorrows and rejoice in the joys of the various Bible characters. The impressions received proved lasting, and influenced her whole after life. This was notably the case with regard to the observance of the Sabbath, and the privilege and duty of prayer. During Louisa Pyne's professional life she would avoid Sunday travelling at any cost of money, time, and convenience, and refused many valuable engagements on account of her determination to observe God's day, in accordance with the teaching received from her mother. This was notably the case when she declined engagements for Berlin and the Grand Opera at Paris, because of the Sunday performances in these places. Every event and circumstance, both in domestic and public life, was made a subject of prayer; and as a child even the simple faith of the little songstress gave her infinite comfort. From the second volume of *Queens of Song* the following account of her first appearance is taken:—

"Miss Pyne was placed with Sir George Smart, and so quickly did she profit by the instruction of that master, that at the age of ten she made her *début* at the Queen's Concert Rooms, Hanover Square. Her voice was even then clear and powerful, and amidst the crash of more than fifty orchestral performers was heard distinctly. She was rewarded with the most enthusiastic plaudits."

Her songs on that occasion were "Over Hill, over Dale," and "Where the Bee Sucks." In the latter song an unfortunate *contretemps* took place, which might have disconcerted a singer of any age. Some members of the orchestra failed to notice a "cut" in the music, and threw the accompaniment hopelessly wrong. Despite this, the child went bravely on, keeping perfect time and tune, and finished in charming style, unaccompanied for several bars. This incident increased the warmth of her reception, and evoked a storm of applause from her audience. Self-possessed on the platform, Louisa was a thorough child as soon as she left it. She retreated as rapidly



as possible, and her overwrought feelings found vent in tears as she sought the loving arms of her mother. Mrs. Frederic Lablache, who was with Mrs. Pyne, promptly took possession of the child, comforted her with sweeties, and in order to turn her attention from self, asked, "Do you know my fat father?" and suggested a visit to him. Signor Lablache was enormously stout—so much so that a charming prima donna of his day used to dance round him, and declare that to make this tour was *L'ouvrage d'une semaine*. So naturally the sight of him made the child forgetful of all beside.

From the singing lesson or the concert room Louisa was accustomed to retreat to the society of her dolls, of which she had a large family. One, the gift of her mother, was her special darling, and was always dressed in the very clothes worn by herself as an infant; for, as has been already told, she was an extremely small baby. During a performance she would say to herself, "One more song, and then I can go to my dear baby;" and no mother could have bestowed more tender care upon her child than the little songstress gave to her inanimate darling, whose toilet was as regularly

attended to as was her own, and the practice was continued until Louisa was thirteen.

From the time of her *début*, however, her professional life was continuous, and was occupied in hard study, and in fulfilling concert engagements both in London and the provinces. When twelve years of age, she sang in a duet with her elder sister Susan, at the house of the Duke and Duchess of Hamilton, in Portman Square. Louisa was mounted on a stool to bring her more on a level with her sister, and to enable the audience to see her. The Grand Duchess of Baden-Baden and her daughter were present amongst many distinguished guests.

At the close of the duet, the hostess noticed that Louisa was nervous, and she went to her, put her arms round the child's neck, and kissed her affectionately. "You felt very nervous, my dear, did you not?" said the Duchess.

"Yes, your Grace—very nervous," was the reply.

"Then let me tell you something which I want you to think of all through your life. God has gifted you with a marvellously beautiful talent, which places you on a par with

Dukes and Duchesses. Therefore, never be afraid to use it in the presence of any human beings, however exalted may be their earthly position."

On the following day the Duchess sent a piece of exquisitely embroidered muslin to make into a frock for the little artiste. After this, and during the two or three following years, Louisa used frequently to visit this sympathetic friend, the Duchess of Hamilton, and used her voice to give her pleasure when her failing sight made her still more susceptible to the charm of sweet sounds. The Duchess subsequently became totally blind.

Another exalted lady would have shown her liking for Louisa Pyne in a still more practical manner. She expressed to Sir George Smart her wish to adopt the gifted child, as she was about to lose the society of her own only daughter through her marriage. Sir George, however, did not mention the subject to the Pynes until some years afterwards, as he was most anxious that so promising a pupil should not be withdrawn from the profession in which he foretold she would attain the highest position.

(To be continued.)

particular as to the way his coffee was made, and on the first morning the wife went into the kitchen, saying to the girl, "I will make the coffee this morning, and if you will watch me carefully this once you will find it quite easy to make in the future."

The girl did so, and noted that her mistress broke an egg, smelt it, and threw it away; she did the same with a second, but after breaking and smelling the third, she used it to clear the coffee. No word of explanation was given as to why the two eggs were thrown away, and she evidently concluded it was part of the process. For a fortnight the coffee went up quite satisfactorily; but the day following it was so filthy that no one could drink it. The mistress, hurrying to the kitchen, told the girl to make some fresh while she in her turn watched. To her amazement she saw the servant break two eggs, smell them, throw them away, and with the third clear the coffee exactly as she herself had done on the first morning. Of course on this particular day the third egg had been specially bad. The mistress was very angry, and dismissed her. I was very sorry, for though she may have been stupid, I do think with patience and kindness she could have been educated into a good and faithful servant. What should we think of a dressmaker who demanded of a young apprentice that she should undertake to make a beautiful silk dress? Yet such a proceeding would not be at all more unreasonable than to expect an untrained girl to perform the duties of a cook or housemaid in a gentleman's family.

The very best education for domestic service is to start in life under a good house-keeper or upper servant, who does not mind the trouble of teaching, and who will be patient and kind with the girl, whose very desire to please makes her nervous and clumsy.

The great mass of servants, however, are not

in the houses of the rich, and it may be that a girl's first place is as general servant in a small household; and well for her if the mistress is very particular about the work, as well as kind, and capable of teaching. Such good chances as these, however, only happen to the few, and girls thus fortunate almost always turn out well.

There are good conscientious upper servants, and kind, yet strict, mistresses, who believe in the good effects of kindness and patience; and between such and the poor servant-girl a bond of attachment is formed, far outweighing all pecuniary consideration.

The career of a maid-servant is almost wholly decided by the start, or first launch, as it were, into the new life. Very many of our London servants are from pure, happy homes in the country; they come to London full of hope, and brave resolves to be good, industrious, and faithful; but they know nothing of the great city, its people, its habits, its temptations, and its vices. For all these reasons mistresses think themselves fortunate in securing them as servants. And so they are, and probably all would turn out well if the mistresses would only think of the increased responsibilities entailed upon them by receiving into their homes girls so thoroughly ignorant and innocent of the world's ways.

Such girls as these stand in the greatest need of a tender friend and watchful superintendent combined; and unless a mistress is prepared to act in this double capacity, she makes a mistake in taking a girl into her service who knows no one in London.

Another peculiarity of domestic service is, that the supply of really good and efficient workers falls far short of the demand, while in every trade and profession the opposite obtains, and the supply literally gluts the market.

This is the more remarkable because domestic service is thoroughly respectable,

very comfortable, exceptionally well paid, and infinitely superior to the wretched life of the ordinary shop-girl or machinist: the wages are higher even than those earned by the teacher or the type-writer, and yet there is a large, unsatisfied demand for good servants. The majority of girls stick to the overcrowded and poorly-paid industries rather than enter a comfortable, respectable, and exceptionally well-paid service. There must be various reasons for this. What are they?

As far as I can ascertain from the large number of women and girls whom I have questioned, there are three. The first, which affects all classes of servants alike, is the *loss of liberty*; the second, which applies more especially to general servants, who as a rule are members of poor, large families, is the *utter loneliness of their position*; they eat alone, live alone, sleep alone, and are cut off from the rough sympathy of their own people, with no one to speak to; it is very dull, and any other life or means of livelihood seems preferable to being an only servant in a house.

The third reason is a very important one, although hitherto it has escaped notice. It is, I think, a good and sufficient reason why so many good girls and women choose the ill-paid employments rather than domestic service, and one which calls forth our admiration and respect. It is, that they have sick parents, or little sisters and brothers, wholly dependent on them, and for whom it is necessary to have a home, however poor, if they are to be saved from the workhouse. I could not have known this had I not visited a great deal among these poor people and their wretched homes.

Were these self-denying, self-sacrificing women and girls added to the ranks of domestic service, it would do much to add to the character and high standard of *our friends the servants*.

(To be continued.)



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CHAPTER II.

GIRLHOOD.

UNDER the careful training of Sir George Smart the young singer's voice gained rapidly in compass, strength, and quality. The compass was indeed remarkable, embracing three octaves. Her F in *alt.* was usually her highest note; but when the voice had reached full maturity she was able to touch the A above this five times during the song, "Queen of Night," in *Die Zauberflöte*.

From Louisa's childhood she was noted for the ease with which she sang at sight. At Sir George Smart's she met all the musical celebrities of the day, and these delighted to test her powers in this respect. To Spohr she sang his ever-popular "Rose Softly Blooming," and took part in the trio from his opera, *Azor and Zamira*. She was fifteen at the time, and at nearly the same date she was introduced to Mendelssohn, who accompanied her in the lovely air "Jerusalem," from his oratorio *St. Paul*. Her rendering of this song called forth his enthusiastic commendations.

He told Louisa that she must sing for him at Berlin, and that he would arrange for her appearance at a series of concerts which would be given in all the great cities of Germany. Mendelssohn's death, however, prevented this plan from being carried into effect, to Louisa's deep regret. She also met and sang to the great pianists of that day—Litolff, Dreyschock, and Liszt, all of whom greatly admired her voice and style.

Probably Liszt's admiration of the girl's singing was greater than her enjoyment of his playing, for during his performance she was in continual dread that her teacher's piano would be rendered useless by the merciless thumping it received at the hands of his guest.

Louisa's elder sister, Susan Pyne, was also a pupil of Sir George Smart. Contemporary papers state that in 1841-2 the London concerts of the Misses Pyne were largely and fashionably attended. Our heroine was only fourteen years old in the latter year.

When very little older, Louisa sang at a large garden-party given by the Duke and Duchess of Buccleugh at Richmond. Three

queens were entertained on that occasion—her present Majesty, the Queen-Dowager, widow of William IV., and the Queen of the Belgians.

"There were only part-songs," said Miss Pyne, in describing what took place; "and I was one of the singers. I was taken to the party by Sir George Smart. I shall never forget one incident. When it was growing dusk, three Scottish dukes of that day—Buccleugh, Argyll, and, I think, the Duke of Athole—danced a reel in the great tent for the amusement of Her Majesty. The Duchess of Buccleugh took me into the tent, accompanied by Sir George Smart, and there, standing behind the principal spectator, we saw the performance. The dance was kept up with immense spirit and all the usual accompaniments of a Scotch reel, each noble performer being apparently determined not to be the first to give in. I cannot say now which proved the victor. The Queen sat on a low chair, laughing most heartily, and applauding by clapping her hands from time to time, in evident enjoyment. She left at the close of

the dance; but owing to the vast number of guests whose waiting carriages extended four miles, I did not reach home till day had dawned. I was almost worn out with excitement and weariness; but there was no remedy, for Sir George made every effort to find our carriage and get me home earlier, but in vain."

Louisa was about sixteen when Rossini's *Stabat Mater* was first produced in England at a morning concert at Sir George Smart's. She and her sister Susan sang the duet, "Quis est Homo?" then, and four years later the composer heard them in this and other works, and was charmed with their rendering of his musical creations.

In 1846 the sisters essayed a longer flight. They went to Paris, where they were enthusiastically received. There they gained not only applause, but won the esteem of all who made their closer acquaintance.

The singing of Louisa Pyne especially took Paris by storm. One writer described the sisters as "the two little nightingales whom London has sent to us this season, and who have charmingly sustained the musical credit of their *pays* in the salons of Paris." Another announced, "A rich feast for the lovers of music! The Misses Pyne and Thalberg on the same evening!" adding, "Make room, M. Delplanque!" *La France Musicale*, after showering praises on the sisters, added the following: "Two Englishwomen who know how to sing! What a miracle! It is unheard of! And the more so because it is true. Nothing is wanting to complete their triumph. The salons and concerts will dispute the possession of these charming pearls."

It would take many pages of print even to give an outline of the favourable *critiques* which Louisa Pyne's singing called forth from Parisian judges. Her voice was described as "A full, sparkling, harmonious stream of thrilling melody"; "A pure and limpid soprano, with remarkable flexibility and great elegance of style"; "The very perfection of a *prima donna*"; "The most delicious singer of *roulades* ever listened to. In vain should we attempt to describe the exquisite adornments, the capricious and ravishing *fiorituras*, with which she embellished one of the delightful *cavatins* of Auber. Every difficulty was surmounted with a self-reliance, or, we should say, a perfection, enough to kill the nightingale with jealousy."

These were the days when great singers were few, and yet great finish and excellence were needed in those who took a high professional place. The florid style which found acceptance was of necessity the result of hard work, careful study, and incessant practice.

It was said of Louisa Pyne that "her marvellous brilliancy of execution had only been equalled by Persiani in her best days"—a proof of the extraordinary gifts and industry of the young singer. She was only eighteen when she first went to Paris, and was the subject of such extravagant praises as might have turned the head of any girl, or spoiled a less pure and high nature. There she met and was praised by the greatest composers and musicians of the day, and made the acquaintance of the most distinguished persons of various nationalities to be found in the French capital at that time.

A famous German *prima donna*, Wilhelmina Schröder Devrient, called the "Siddons of Germany," and a woman to whom extraordinary honours were paid by the Emperor Francis I., heard of Louisa Pyne during her successful sojourn at Paris, and was deeply interested by the reports which reached her.

Madame Devrient was lying ill at the time, and unable to receive visitors. She, however, manifested her sympathy with, and desire to be of use to, the girl artiste, by sending her the whole of her own special *cadenzas*. Thus she showed her large-mindedness and freedom from the petty jealousies which have been flaws in the characters of many great artistes, but which found no place in the breast of this accomplished woman.

Another incident is worth relating. Someone chanced to speak of a plan for establishing a model *salle d'asile*, or orphan infant school, in the French capital, in the presence of the Misses Pyne, adding that he "feared the plan would break down for want of funds."

"You wish to complete the school and adopt poor children?" said the girls. "Let us be your fellow-workers by singing for the little ones."

As the sisters were to leave Paris a few days later, a concert was rapidly improvised, of which the following is an account from the pen of a French contemporary. "The generous offer made by these English girls, artistes of rare talent, was accepted, and thus Great Britain was the first to come forward and help to found our little school. To England, Belgium and Poland have joined, being worthily represented in the persons of M. Massart, the learned Professor of the Conservatoire, his brother Léon, the little violinist, and Wienawski, the eminent violinist, Emile Prudent, and others. The Misses Pyne are young, fair, and marked by that air of power, vivacity, and loyalty, which characterise the highest types of the English race. Miss Louisa sang French songs in a manner to excite the envy of the most *spirituelles Françaises*," etc.

In conclusion, the writer, addressing the concert-givers, says: "We thank you all on behalf of the poor. We place your names at the head of the list of patrons. When you revisit the school our children shall sing you a joyous welcome; and we know their simple hymn of thanksgiving will make sweet music to your hearts, as to-day your efforts, inspired by piety, are acceptable to God."

Thus by the happy thought of the two girls a most valuable institution was placed on a firm footing.

Louisa Pyne was to have sung at the Tuilleries, and was actually engaged for two state concerts to be given by the then monarch, Louis Philippe. Unfortunately, an attack of *grippe*, or influenza, prostrated her for fully three weeks, and she was unable to keep these engagements. They were to have been renewed at a future visit. But France is the country of sudden changes, and before the time arrived for the return of Louisa to Paris, Louis Philippe had been driven from his throne by the revolution of 1848, and was an exile in this country.

If the young singer deserved and won professional laurels, and was idolised in public life, she merited greater honour for the manner in which she performed the more sacred duties of home and family. Her deep reverence for her parents, her filial affection, her tender and unvarying devotion to the interests of her family, are beyond all praise, though only the few were privileged to know the beauty of her domestic life and character in comparison with the many who delighted in the exercise of her musical talents.

Her father had been quite disabled from the year 1847, when Louisa was nineteen, and she thenceforward constituted herself the breadwinner for both her parents. Susan did something; but much less than her younger sister.

The eldest daughter of the family had married at the time of Louisa's first appearance as a child of ten. Eleven years after she returned home, widowed, and with four young children to maintain.

Louisa was the stay, supporter, and helper of the re-united family, and the self-devoting staff of her parents' age. She educated her four nephews and nieces, and by means of the influence won by her gifts and virtues in later days amongst some of the noble of the land she obtained excellent situations for the boys in public offices.

One of these died young; the other still holds with credit an important post, to which he has risen from the early beginning secured to him by his aunt's influence so many years ago, and stands to her in the place of a son.

(To be continued.)



THE USE OF EMPTIES.

IN many houses empty boxes and pots, etc., are often thrown away when, with the expenditure of a little time and trouble, they might be easily converted into pretty and useful articles, the list of which it would not be possible to exhaust. However, I intend here to suggest how some of these can be made, and inventive minds and handy fingers will soon evolve many varieties for themselves.

Empty fruit-boxes can be utilised in many ways. They make capital flower-boxes if painted green, and used with a little drainage in the way of broken flower-pots and stones placed at the bottom, and the boxes themselves stood on small supports an inch or so high, so as to allow water to escape.

In Fig. 1 you will see exactly how an empty box can be turned into a very convenient

receptacle for hanging above your washstand, to contain the many bottles, etc., which, though useful, are not as a rule ornamental. If you merely stain the box, you should plane any uneven surface, and then use whatever stain or enamel you select. But if you cover the entire box, inside and out, with American cloth or Japanese paper, then the latter hides all infirmities of unevenness. A frill or curtain,

stuck laurestinus and holly in her wavy hair in return for the wreaths and bunches with which she had decorated their heads; and Arthur justly thought he had rarely seen so charming a group of young people.

But there was small time for consideration. Mrs. Fane came in to say that the farm supper was ready, and if the children would like to come, they could see the servants before they began to eat. Laura's brother Harry lingered behind the excited youngsters to ask Arthur to join them; so he fell into the rear, coupled with the widow, who, he afterwards found, was another Mrs. Fane, mother of Laura, Harry, and two or three of the other children.

There was warmth, food, and jollity in the big-raftered kitchen, where all the labourers and servants in any way belonging to Lowdown, together with sundry poor neighbours and the driver of the luckless dogcart, were seated at a long table, surrounding a good supper of Christmas cheer. Arthur's heart warmed at the sight, and at the cheers and "God bless them!" that greeted Mr. Fane and his family. His eyes followed Laura, as she went from one to another of the guests, shaking hands, laughing, blushing, and nodding her pretty head by turns.

"My daughter has just left school, and they have not seen her before since her return," said Mrs. Fane apologetically.

Arthur turned from Laura to her mother, and seeing tears in that lady's eyes, looked at Laura again. Sounds from without distracted the general attention.

"The waits! The waits!" shrieked the children, rushing to the hall-door, followed by Mr. Fane, exclaiming, "Bless their hearts! What brought 'em here such a night as this?"

Arthur, still in the rear, saw a large company in the porch, open-mouthed, strong-chested, red-faced in spite of their snow-covered garments, and Laura and the children in the midst of them.

"Come in—come in!" said Mr. and Mrs. Fane, interrupting a carol, the like of which Arthur had never heard before.

The waits were soon added to the kitchen-party, and while they were standing about the crackling fagot-fire, regaled with bread-and-cheese and cider, Laura proposed a game of forfeits for the children.

"Let's have 'I carried water in my glove, and by the way I dropped it;' then we can see who will catch Laura under the mistletoe," cried the children.

They went into the hall, and Harry led Arthur into the ring, in spite of the whispered remonstrances of his mother and Laura, and he soon found himself dropping the glove and

chasing, and chased by, the merry little girls, who, charmed to have a grown man amongst them, still made much show of resistance when he kissed them under the mistletoe-bough. He and Laura studiously avoided the temptation of such agreeable contact; but Harry mischievously caught the glove from her hand as she was going the round, and made it drop at Arthur's heels, tugging his coat-tail to announce the fact. But Laura, with cheek of crimson, broke the ring and joined the circle before he could attempt to catch her.

Then came the family supper, laid in the parlour; then bed.

Next morning before daybreak Arthur was aroused from a dream of the most perfect of washerwomen, with Laura's head on her shoulders, by the sound of a chorus of sweet young voices. The children were singing a Christmas hymn at his door, and when it was ended there was a simultaneous cry of "A merry Christmas, Mr. Dalzel!" Dropping off to sleep again, he had confused visions of angels and cupids looking at him with Laura's trusting eyes. Once more he was aroused by the pattering of little feet, and fresh hymns and carols; so he got up and looked out of the window. The sun was rising gloriously over a snow-sheeted world. Frost had set in. The sky looked as clear as if it had never been obscured by tens of millions of snow-flakes, and the "Day of days" for the human race awoke for the eighteen hundred and eighty-eighth time, rejoicing not only in its own strength, but in the strength of Him whose blessed name it bears.

Friendly Christmas wishes greeted Arthur as he entered the hall, where breakfast was laid. The elder ladies were engaged in tea-making and food-preparing, Laura in heaping the plates with all sorts of presents. Mr. Fane and the children were not yet admitted. Arthur asked Laura if he might slip such coins as he possessed at the bottom of the presents. She laughed merrily, and said the children would be delighted, showed him their plates, stayed his hand when he came to those of the parents, and shut her eyes as he approached her own, saying that she was supposed to know nothing about that. He had a tiny Russian coin in his purse, a sort of curiosity, and he ventured to add it to her heaped-up plate. This done, in came Mr. Fane and the children.

"Grace first," said the farmer, as the joyous troop rushed to their places. "Now, Trotty!"

Trotty, the youngest of the party, planted by a high-chair at her mother the widow's side, folded her hands and said grace demurely; then they all fell to work at their presents. Christmas-cards, toys, books, ribbons, mats,

pincushions, pocket-books, almanacs, covered the table. There was a pretty card with robins, a holly-wreath, and "A Merry Christmas" on Arthur's plate; and as he glanced his thanks at Laura, she returned him a smile and a blush, as she held up the strange little coin which everyone examined. His Christmas-boxes won favour with the little ones, who wanted him to have half their presents in return. Feeling his somewhat icy heart thaw, he wished he were not obliged to join the grander festivities of the Park.

An uproarious breakfast followed. Then the crumbs were collected for the robins, and Arthur found himself sweeping off the snow from the window-sill, while Laura and the children strewed them, and then waited breathless to watch the pensioners feed.

Mr. Fane announced that they could manage to drive to church, and it was agreed that Arthur should go with them, and join his friends the Albons after service. While the ladies were getting ready, Harry took possession of Arthur, and soon acquainted him with the family history. Poor Laura was going out as a governess or companion, because, since papa's death—who had been a doctor in the neighbouring town—mamma couldn't afford to keep them all at home. They were trying to get him or his younger brother into the Bluecoat School; but he hoped it would be Jimmy, because he wanted to be at home to help his mother. Mrs. Albon of the Park had promised to get Laura a situation, and to do what she could in regard to the Bluecoat School; for Mrs. Albon and mamma used to be friends when mamma lived at the Rectory, and grandpapa, the rector, was alive. Mamma hoped that Laura would marry Mr. Hart, the curate, as he might be rector some day, and he was very fond of Laura.

While Harry was making these communications, Arthur wrote in imagination the following letter, which he afterwards put on paper and forwarded by the post:—

"DEAR AUNT MATILDA,—I understand that Mrs. Albon knows all about companions. You had better ask her to help you in your quest. I am all right.—In haste, your affectionate nephew,

"ARTHUR DALZEL."

A large covered car came to the door, and was soon closely packed. Arthur sat between Laura and Harry, wondering at the bright, happy faces. Mr. Fane drove off over the snow-clad road, and under the cheerful winter sun; and so ended Arthur Dalzel's glimpse of Christmas at Lowdown.

(To be continued.)

THE ARTISTIC LIFE OF LOUISA PYNE.

By RUTH LAMB.

CHAPTER III.

A CONTEMPORARY critic thus describes Louisa Pyne at twenty years of age:—

"In appearance, as everybody knows, she is petite and blonde, with a most agreeable expression and peculiar piquancy; her face sparkling with liveliness and intelligence. Her intonation is correct, her method and style are fine, her vocal ornaments are always admirably placed and appropriate. She is ever in harmony with the intentions of the composer."

Others tell us that her exquisite florid embellishments were always in good taste, and that whilst extraordinarily fluent she was scrupulously correct. "Mistress of every branch of her art, she has taken Town by storm."

As is well known, the young vocalist's operatic career began under most careful guardianship, when she was only eighteen, and was the commencement of a long series of

triumphs. Probably no singer of any nation was ever more praised as such during her public career than was Louisa Pyne. Every epithet that could suggest profound admiration for her voice and mode of using it was applied to her, and if praise could have spoiled her it was lavished in no stinted measure. But it is delightful to look back over the many years during which the "Queen of English song" held the highest place in a profession beset by many temptations, and to note how pure and beautiful was the influence she exercised over all who came within its sphere. She was not only lauded as the greatest of English operatic singers, but as an example of womanly virtue and filial piety, whose career was never dulled by even a breath of scandal.

"If in her public capacity she is admired, flattered, and caressed for her more brilliant

qualities, in woman's yet more holy sphere of private life she is esteemed, respected, and loved for her many domestic virtues. Indefatigable in the study and exercise of her arduous profession, she is equally so in the practice of those duties which form the everyday task of life. Her example in every relation as a dutiful daughter, affectionate sister, kind friend, and indulgent mistress is one that may be fearlessly followed by every young Englishwoman."

This last-quoted paragraph is from a sketch of Louisa Pyne's life, written when she was at the zenith of her reputation, and was expressly meant for English girls to read. In quoting it, however, we have anticipated too much, and must return to earlier days, even whilst thus made aware that the fair promise of a gifted and industrious girlhood has been more than fulfilled.

In 1851 Louisa Pyne made her first appearance before the Queen and the Prince Consort in *Il Flauto Magico*. Both these exalted personages were prompt to recognise her talents, and to encourage their exercise in the most practical manner. From 1851 to 1854 the English soprano sang frequently at State concerts both at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. It was stated as "much to Miss Pyne's credit that she should have been honoured at the Court of so admirable a judge of music as the Queen of England, and by the high approbation of that exalted personage, honourable alike to the singer's natural talent and promise of superior excellence."

On the occasion of that first concert at Windsor Castle, Mrs. Pyne, who had accompanied her daughter, was in the organ loft. The Queen always approached the orchestra during the interval, and spoke most kindly and appreciatively to the principal vocalists. She was addressing Miss Pyne when Mr. Cusins overheard Mrs. Pyne talking to herself but as if to her daughter, and in a tone loud enough for him to catch every word, "Cursey, my dear. Now, lower, dear. My dear, you are not curtseying enough!"

Eventually she was satisfied with the homage paid to royalty, and exclaimed, "That's right, dear, that's right!" in an approving tone, and as if the improvement were the result of her own instructions.

Mr. Cusins was convulsed with laughter as these remarks fell on his ear, and he afterwards repeated them with great gusto to Miss Pyne.

At the first Buckingham Palace concert Louisa sang "Cease Your Funning," with variations, reaching the E in *alt.* with perfect ease. The Queen was greatly pleased, and said so.

"Indeed, Her Majesty was never slow to express the approbation she felt, and always said kind things in the kindest way possible," was the testimony of the young singer. "As to the Prince Consort, he never lost an opportunity of manifesting his goodwill. It was at his instance that I was chosen to take the part of 'Queen of Night' in *Il Flauto Magico*. Madame Anna Zerr had been taken suddenly ill, and I was called upon to fill her place at a few hours notice."

Thus unexpectedly associated with Grisi, Mario, Ronconi, Viardot, Garcia, and Herr Formes, the girl of twenty-three achieved a complete triumph in the presence of the Queen, Prince Consort, and a magnificent audience.

Miss Pyne was in height and figure strikingly like the Queen. This resemblance was heightened when, in certain characters, she wore Coronation robes similar to those of Her Majesty, and it is said the Queen was herself not a little amused at it. Certainly it was noticed by many persons. In America it was said "Miss Pyne certainly bears a wonderful resemblance to Queen Victoria. She queens it well, too, and, unlike most imitators, maintains the grace and dignity of the original."

In later years another writer states: "Many will recollect Miss Pyne with jewels bedecked and flowing robes, reminding us not a little of the most exalted personage in our land."

At the opening of the first Great Exhibition, in 1851, Miss Pyne was one of the singers. After the ceremony was over, she was met by the then Duke of Devonshire, who complimented her warmly, then added that for a moment he had been in doubt as to her identity, so much had the resemblance to Her Majesty puzzled him. He then offered to show Miss Pyne the prettiest thing in the building, and led her to a case containing a rose tree in full bloom, exquisitely modelled in wax.

"I saw it grow, your Grace," replied Miss Pyne, and then explained that it was the work of her eldest sister, Mrs. Galton, who possessed remarkable taste and skill in modelling from nature.

When Miss Pyne's mother died in 1858, the

Queen took an early opportunity of telling Louisa how much she sympathised with her in her sorrow. "But," she added, "you are singing as charmingly as ever."

It was not then etiquette for an artist to appear at a State concert in deep mourning; but the Queen gave Miss Pyne permission to wear it, not once only, but for all three State concerts during the season which followed her mother's death.

At one of the concerts, when the Princess Royal, now Dowager Empress of Germany, was a little girl, she sent a message saying that she wished to speak to Miss Pyne.

The audience were at one end of the concert-room, and the orchestra, of course, at the other; but there was a little seat at the side, and here the child Princess met Miss Pyne, and at once bade her "sit down."

Miss Pyne replied, "I must not sit in the presence of Her Majesty."

"Then I will ask mamma if you may," was the reply, and she ran to prefer her request.

This was granted, and the Princess returned with the message, "Mamma says you may sit beside me." Then she added, "I want to tell you how much I like to hear you sing, and what a pretty dress you have on. Mamma has one like it, only not so pretty, because yours is trimmed with flowers."

She chatted merrily on until the interval came to an end, and Miss Pyne had to resume her place on the platform.

In January, 1858, festival performances were given in honour of the approaching marriage of the same Royal Princess who had so naively expressed her childish approval of Miss Pyne's singing and floral adornments. On these occasions, the gifted artiste took a leading part, and was, we are told, listened to with admiration by Her Majesty and her illustrious guests.

The marriage of the Princess Royal took place on January 25th, and she departed to her German home, carrying with her the affection of the English nation and their prayers and wishes for her happiness in wedded life.

When Her Majesty and the Prince Consort paid their first visit to their married daughter, they and some of the younger members of the Royal family embarked at Gravesend. Miss Pyne had a house there at the time. There was a great assemblage at the pier to see their departure, but, as usual, the central space was roped off and no one permitted to pass the barrier.

It happened that Miss Pyne arrived on the spot rather late, owing to an important professional engagement, and was unable to reach the proper side of the barrier, where her father awaited her, before the Royal party came in sight.

The Mayor was not a little concerned at this unintentional trespass, and hastened to request Miss Pyne to pass under the rope. The dense crowd made it impossible for her to obey. The Mayor must perforce go to attend Her Majesty, and she was left alone. She could do nothing when the Royal party approached but make a low obeisance, which might have satisfied Mrs. Pyne herself, and wait for an opportunity to retreat.

The Princess Alice, to whom Miss Pyne's appearance was familiar enough, called the Queen's attention to the solitary figure on the wrong side of the barrier, and herself gave her a smiling recognition.

Both Her Majesty and the Prince Consort at once recognised her most graciously, and almost immediately afterwards the Mayor brought a kind message from the Royal pair. It was to tell Miss Pyne that if she would like to go on the barge, which was in waiting to convey the party to the Royal yacht, she was at liberty to do so.

Needless to say that she availed herself of this permission and saw the yacht start on her voyage. When Miss Pyne returned to shore she received quite an ovation from the crowd,

who were delighted at the honour paid to the favourite vocalist.

Meyerbeer was a warm admirer of Louisa Pyne's marvellous powers. He placed the original MS. of one of his works in her hands for the purpose of study, and her singing of the part assigned to her surprised even her most enthusiastic admirers. In 1859 a critic thus wrote of it:—"That Miss Louisa Pyne would make it one of those most brilliant and marvellous feats of vocalism that she alone of English singers can accomplish was expected by everyone; but that she should have eclipsed all her previous realisations was hardly to have been anticipated. Yet she has done so, and her rendering places her foremost among living artistes, whether native or foreign. Meyerbeer has so studded this part with difficulties of the most elaborate character, and written the pitch so high, that scarcely any voice can touch it; but anything more truly beautiful, finished, and exquisite in the execution it is impossible to imagine. Miss Pyne's was the perfection of florid singing."

Thus wrote a great critic of that day, and in just as warm terms did others describe the deep feeling, tenderness, pathos, and, when fitted, the even severe simplicity with which Louisa Pyne rendered music requiring these.

Only a few years ago a gentleman, who had been at a concert got up for a charitable object by distinguished amateurs, was asked how one of them sang "Home, sweet Home." "Till she was black in the face," was the prompt reply. "She *twiddled* on every note till we lost sight of the air altogether, and she so strained every nerve to give force to the song that everybody thought she would bring on a fit of apoplexy."

Louisa Pyne's singing of this popular song was marked by the absence of all ornament and such exquisite pathos that few could hear it without being moved to tears. In fact, only six years ago, and forty-eight years after her first appearance in public as a child of ten, her singing of "Home, sweet Home" had this effect on every individual who was privileged to hear it in a private drawing-room.

At a concert in the City Hall, Glasgow, when there were 4,500 people present, Miss Pyne sang "The Land of the Leal." Accustomed to bursts of applause it was a strange experience for the singer to hear no sound of approbation from so vast an audience, and for the moment she felt depressed and nervous. But in an instant she realised the cause. In place of the usual signs of approval, sobs were heard from all parts of the hall. She quietly withdrew from the platform, and on entering the ante-room she was greeted by the gentlemen of the committee with the words, "Your singing was a perfect sermon, Miss Pyne. No one would dare to applaud it in the ordinary way."

More than one great singer of to-day has acknowledged to haunting concert-rooms when Louisa Pyne was singing, in order to obtain valuable lessons whilst listening to her.

On one occasion an incident occurred which might have disconcerted any artiste. Miss Pyne had sung the first verse of "Home, sweet Home," and when about to begin the second, found that the words had escaped her memory. With a movement of her hand she stopped the accompaniment, and, addressing her audience, said, "I have forgotten the next line. Will anyone kindly prompt me?" A voice replied, but the words given were not correct.

"No," said Miss Pyne; "that is not the beginning of the verse."

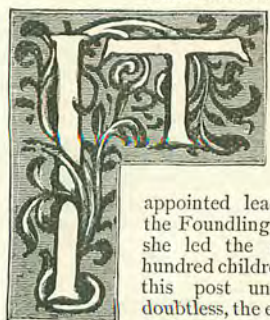
A second speaker gave the line required, and the artiste thanked him and resumed her song. The close of it was followed by a storm of applause elicited equally by the charming singing and the simple appeal of the singer for the help of her audience.

(To be continued.)

THE ARTISTIC LIFE OF LOUISA PYNE.

By RUTH LAMB.

CHAPTER IV.



IT is necessary to go back a little in order to notice two important interludes in Louisa Pyne's career. At the age of fifteen she was appointed leading soprano to the Foundling Hospital; there she led the singing of four hundred children. She retained this post until 1854; and, doubtless, the experience gained during these nine years proved most valuable to her. The constant practice of sacred music was in itself delightful to the young singer, and was in perfect harmony with the deeply seated religious feelings which began at her mother's knee, and strengthened with every subsequent year of her life.

As an interpreter of sacred music, Louisa Pyne was probably never excelled. When she first appeared in the *Messiah* a critic wrote the following: "As an oratorio singer, Miss Louisa Pyne will be a great gain to the public. Even her greatest admirers were not prepared for the display of power now made by her in the noblest branch of her art."

"Unobtrusively devotional feeling was manifested in every note she sang," wrote another, after hearing her in the *Elijah*, and similar expressions were invariably called forth whenever she appeared in oratorio.

Who can doubt that the impression produced on her hearers, by her exquisite rendering of sacred music, arose from the fact that, with her, such singing was no mere performance, but an act of worship, a solemn dedication of her God-given powers to the service of the Divine Bestower of every good and perfect gift, and in full accordance with the heart-felt homage of her being?

A modest fidelity to the music was a noticeable trait in Louisa Pyne's singing. This was often commented upon, and her example might be followed with benefit by many a self-confident, but less distinguished, artiste.

"There was an absolute adherence to the text, as rare as it is grateful, and what is more, that sympathetic expression which constitutes the greatest triumph of vocal art," was the summing up of one who had scarcely known how to eulogise in sufficiently warm terms her interpretation of the soprano airs in *Judas Maccabeus*. It may well be added, that no matter how great has been the vocal culture, or to what artistic heights a singer may have attained, true feeling cannot be successfully simulated. Heart and song must be in sympathy, or there will be none worth the name between the artiste and her audience.

During the years that Louisa Pyne led the young choir at the Foundling she was also a prominent figure at State concerts, musical festivals, and at the concerts of the Philharmonic and other great societies.

Between seasons, both Louisa and her sister occupied spare intervals in teaching. In this, as in all that our heroine undertook, she was a hard and most conscientious worker, and at the same time a most popular member of society, whose presence was eagerly sought on every possible occasion.

Such popularity is not always a thing to be desired by those who lead busy lives, and there were times when the sisters would gladly have declined the many hospitalities which were pressed upon them by their friends.

"On one occasion," says Louisa, "my sister

and I were at Boulogne, and working very hard at teaching—it was in the winter of 1847; and after our daily toil was over, we were much better fitted for rest than gaiety.

"We had been at parties four nights running, and were invited to a large gathering on the fifth; but we were so weary that we made up our minds to go to bed at seven o'clock, and endeavour to obtain a refreshing rest to fit us for the renewed work of the morrow. No sooner were our heads on the pillows than we fell asleep, but at ten o'clock we were roused by loud and continuous knocking at our doors. This was caused by a party of ten young ladies and gentlemen, who had obtained admission to the house in which we had private rooms.

"We asked what was the matter, and were told that we *must* get up and accompany these untimely visitors. Protestations were useless. The young people persisted in remaining until we were ready, and we were absolutely compelled to rise, dress, and go with them to the party we had striven to shirk. We were much annoyed, for we sadly needed rest. However, for once, I was determined not to comply with their entreaties, and though urged on all sides, I declined to sing a note. One can no more be compelled to sing than can the proverbial horse be obliged to drink when led to the water. So I sat silent and not very good-tempered, though I own that, on returning home, I felt not a little gratified that I had for once disappointed these enthusiastic, but not wholly unselfish admirers of mine. As a rule, however, people were very kind to me, and I received many tokens of appreciation and good will without knowing whence they came. For instance: When I was about twenty-one I was fulfilling what was really my first dramatic engagement of importance. My part was that of a peasant girl, Rose de Mai, an orphan who had been adopted by a good old man called Father Jacques.

"One evening the door-keeper said to me as I entered, 'Miss Pyne, here is a parcel for you.'

"On opening it I found a case containing twelve very handsome silver tea spoons, and on a slip of paper the words, 'From Father Jacques.'

"To this day I have not found out who sent me this handsome and useful, if rather unusual present for a young girl."

In August, 1854, Louisa Pyne sailed for America accompanied by her sister Susan, her parents, and Mr. Harrison, who was so long associated professionally with her. On the 1st of October she made her first appearance before a New York audience. The building was packed in every part, and the first night decided the success of the "English Skylark," as her Transatlantic friends delighted to call her. The words applied to her in London were repeated there. "She took the city by storm," and all through her long tour in the States she was made the recipient of costly gifts and tokens, alike of respect for her character and appreciation of her great talents.

The art of puffing had not then reached the perfection it has since attained. Now, one often hears the remark that the applause of an audience is exactly in proportion to the flourish of trumpets which has heralded the coming of an artiste.

This may not be altogether true, for real genius will make itself felt, despite the silence of trumpets; but it is largely so. Many hearers are not sufficiently musical to form a decided opinion for themselves, and they praise and applaud what they often care little for, because in so doing they follow the fashion of the day.

Louisa Pyne's own account of her reception gains in interest by its very simplicity.

"The first night I sang in New York, I went without any previous puffing or flourish of trumpets, and made a tremendous success. The bouquets I had filled a room at my hotel.

"The next day I had a letter from a lady, saying that she hoped I had received hers, for her brother, who was with her, had taken a diamond ring from his finger, and attached it to the stems of the flowers, before the bouquet was thrown. Moreover, the ring was an heirloom, with a single stone diamond worth a hundred and fifty pounds.

"I am sorry to say this valuable gift was lost. The stage had a large round grating at each side, by which the heat ascended, and it was supposed the ring must have been loosened from the flowers, and rolled down one of these.

"A thorough search was, of course, made, but in vain, and I must say I was greatly concerned for the generous giver, and disappointed on my own account.

"Again, after a fortnight at Philadelphia, during the evening of my last appearance, my dresser handed me a little packet. Inside was a case, and on opening it I found resting on purple velvet a pair of diamond earrings. The centre stones were very beautiful, and were valued at a large sum. On a little pink card attached to the case were the words, 'From an admirer of real talent.'

"On my next visit to the same city, a very handsome diamond star was sent me under precisely similar circumstances. I thought it probable that both gifts came from the same person, but I never knew from whom. Naturally I should have liked to thank the donor, but at the same time I was deeply sensible of the delicate manner in which these costly presents had been bestowed. There could be nothing intended but to show appreciation of my singing in the kindest and most generous fashion, and as the donor maintained his incognito, I could not feel any of the scruples about accepting what was so intrinsically valuable, which I should have done under other circumstances."

When Miss Pyne left England she only intended to be absent for a year, but so great was the enthusiasm aroused by her singing, and so unvarying her success, that three years elapsed before she was again heard on this side the Atlantic.

It was not, however, Miss Pyne's vocal accomplishments which took such a hold on the affection of the American public, but the many admirable qualities which made up the character of the woman. Her charities were equally spontaneous and widespread. Many valuable institutions were greatly benefited by the unsolicited exercise of her talents. It was enough for her to know that help was needed, and she gave it with all her heart.

It is known on what slight excuses a vain or petulant artiste will disappoint an audience. Alluding to such an occurrence, a writer remarks, "This was slightly in contrast with Miss Louisa Pyne. She, after receiving a severe injury, appeared the next evening at 'The Musical Fund Hall,' doing all she had promised, though she had to be supported to the platform, and the pain caused by the exertion was apparent to all present." And again: "In her professional capacity it is stated that she has never been heard to sing a false note or one in the least out of tune. She has never but once disappointed an American audience, and then unavoidably. If all the foreign song-birds would imitate her example they would find it to their advantage.

"Miss Louisa Pyne came amongst us not only heralded by the fame of great talents, but with the reputation of high principles and the

pure conduct which is not always the concomitant of artistic eminence, but which, with a people like us, will always prove a strong recommendation to support.

"One of the most affectionate and devoted of daughters, she would not consent to the tempting inducements held out to her to visit this country, unless she might be accompanied by her parents, both, we regret to say, confirmed invalids. In her professional tours they have invariably travelled with her; her affection, as well as her delicate sense of propriety, rendering their society indispensable.

"We mention these facts, because they bring into bolder relief the virtue and amiability of a character which we have learned to love and esteem. This is but the homage due to the union of qualities rarely combined in a profession offering greater temptations than prizes."

The same city which had first welcomed Louisa Pyne to America was the one in which she bade her Transatlantic friends farewell. One of the most densely packed audiences ever seen in New York, assembled to hear the last notes of the English lark, and to bid her farewell and God speed. Numbers of applicants were turned away, but hundreds insisted on paying their money just to get inside the building and obtain a last glimpse of, or catch a few of the notes of, "The little Queen of Song."

At the close there was an immense call for Louisa Pyne, who came forward and spoke with much grace and deep feeling as follows: "*Ladies and gentlemen*—or rather let me call you dear kind friends, for such you have ever been to me—I come before you for the last time to thank you, with an overflowing heart, for all your kindness, and to bid you farewell. It is nearly three years since, in this city, I made my first appearance in America. You gave me on that occasion the cordial welcome you ever extend to the stranger seeking your support. You gave me your hands in friendly greeting that night. You have never withdrawn them again, and in each I have found a heart.

"In the Old World I left warm hearts and dear friends who bade me 'God speed' across the wide Atlantic, and told me that when my wanderings were over, and, like a truant child, I returned home again, I should find them

unaltered. In this new and glorious world I have found friends as dear and hearts as warm as those I left behind.

"If in the vanity which your kindness has fed, I say and believe that you, too, will wish me 'God speed' in my homeward flight, and that, should I return again, you will welcome me back, I think I shall only be doing you justice. I would thank you if I could, for all the marks of kindness you have bestowed upon me, but I have not words to express how deeply I feel them.

"There is but one way in which I can show my gratitude, and that is by telling of your greatness, freedom, and power as a nation. When asked about America, I shall reply, 'In her sons you will find brothers, in her daughters sisters, and everywhere friends.'

"I would delay if I could the utterance of the little word which conveys so much sorrowful regret, but it must be spoken, and if not quickly my swelling heart will prevent its utterance. Dear friends, though absent, do not forget me! May we meet again, and now may God bless you! Farewell!"

Sobs choked the speaker's utterance as she closed an address which, all who have ever known her would say, came straight from her heart.

There was scarcely a dry eye amongst the vast audience as she ceased to speak. As she left the platform three enthusiastic cheers were given for "the English Lark."

The writer adds, "Let us hope she will return some other spring and once more delight us with her melodious songs."

Later in the evening a magnificent bracelet, one of many such marks of affectionate esteem, was presented to Miss Louisa Pyne by a number of ladies and gentlemen who were awaiting her at her rooms.

It was a tribute "to her artistic merits, the purity and tenderness of her private life, and the exemplary manner in which she had ever fulfilled the social relations of daughter, sister, and friend."

Thus our English Queen of Song left the American shore, and, as it proved, to return thither no more. Not that she was forgotten, or there was any doubt that the first welcome would be more than repeated if she went

thither again. Neither was it for want of opportunity.

In 1865 a magnificent offer was made to Louisa Pyne for a second tour in America. If carried into effect it would probably have been the most lucrative of her engagements. But filial duty ever came before self with this affectionate daughter. Her father had a serious illness, and Louisa promptly relinquished the advantages which were within her grasp, that she might by her presence, secure for him all the devoted care and attention which his condition demanded.

The following letter abundantly proves that up to present times the name of Louisa Pyne is a household word in America, and it will fitly close this account of a remarkable interlude in her artistic life:—

"New York, May 25th, 1891.

"DEAR MADAM,—Mr. Orlando Harley, my good friend, has enclosed me the picture you were so kind as to send him with the letter from yourself. Both have now their place in 'Ireland's Records of the New York Stage,' in company with many like memorials of artists who have honoured and adorned it. Permit me to thank you for the keen delight you gave my youth. 'Savourneen Deelish,' 'The Skylark,' and the 'Variations of Rode' come to me over this long lapse of years like the utterances of a happy spirit.

"An experience, too, which includes Madame Gassier, Madame Adelina Patti, Madame Marie Cabel, Madame Carvalho, Mademoiselle Marimon, Ilma di Murska, and very many others, convinces me that I shall never again hear *The Crown Diamonds* or *The Daughter of the Regiment* as they were presented in 1854-5-6. And when I am asked who in upwards of thirty years is the most nearly perfect singer I have heard, the answer is still 'Miss Louisa Pyne.'

"This may sound like flattery. It is not. It is truth, and I trust you will accept it as the expression of gratitude of one who loves the beautiful art you followed, and which few have illustrated as you have. With renewed thanks, believe me.—Yours very truly,

"ALFRED COMING CLARK.

"To Madame Louisa (Bodda) Pyne."

(To be continued.)

"GRACE'S PROBATION."

By J. A. OWEN, Author of "Candelaria," "West Dene Manor," etc.

CHAPTER II.

DETERMINATION.

GRACE HAMMOND was just eighteen when she left her quiet home in Hampshire for the gay French capital. To some of her mother's friends it seemed a very unsuitable, nay, a dangerous, thing for a girl to go unchaperoned and unprotected to such a town as Paris. They shook their heads over it, and hoped—in the hopeless fashion of some otherwise good people—that no harm would come of it. Mrs. Hammond, however, had discussed the question of a safe home for Grace very carefully, and the result of enquiry about the matter was that a letter came from the secretary of a little society of religious women in Paris, having the interests of young women who took situations or went as students to their city, very much at heart. It gave the address of a home for such.

This was situated two miles away from the quarter where Monsieur Carton, the great artist, had his studio: but that was rather a good thing than otherwise, for it ensured exercise in the open air regularly—an important consideration for all, but especially for students.

Boarders in this home paid according to their means; there were terms to suit the slender purses of young women in business and the well-filled ones of rich Americans who came to study art in amateur fashion or otherwise. It was merely a question of the apartments occupied, for there was only one table for all. The seats at the ample morning and evening meals were apportioned also according to the rooms, so that the question of class naturally settled itself fairly; and girls of the various positions in life found themselves generally in a corresponding neighbourhood at meal-times.

"I must apply for one of the smallest rooms, mother," said Grace decisively.

"I fear that will not answer," replied her mother; "it would associate you with young people in shops, and you would be out of your element."

Our heroine was a brave, sensible girl. "They are often more particular and conscientious than those who are better off, though. Think of the Morrisons, mother!"

These were five sisters, the children of a good woman, whose worthless husband had deserted her whilst they were only children.

The mother had died a few years ago, and the way the two elder girls had supported and guided the younger three, carrying on the millinery business which had been their mother's, was the admiration of the little town. Grace had met two of them each week in the confirmation class.

"Few are like the Morrisons, my dear," rejoined Mrs. Hammond.

"You see, we do not know many like them, mother dear. Any way, I should feel better to be near girls of small means like our own than beside some of those rich ones we hear of, who go to Paris as much for amusement as for study."

"I am glad you are so brave, Grace."

"Oh, I am not brave at all," she replied. "It is just because I have a great deal of the coward in me that I should dread mixing with some. Do you know, mother, I often think of a little thing that made me quite unhappy when I was a child, and it would be the same again in a different degree now if I were exposed to the same criticisms. Do you remember when the boarders at Miss White's school used to sit behind us in church?"

"Yes; what of them?"

"is one the wife of Squire Bathurst might readily condone. He is a schismatic—finds fault with the King, his pleasure; forsooth, a most treasonable matter. This is the third time he hath been warned by prison walls, and now his gracious judges do propose that he shall publicly recant his treasonable words, or be whipped at the back of the hangman's cart at Tyburn Hill."

"A harsh punishment, methinks, for a few words," said Mrs. Bathurst boldly. "Expect not a woman to hear such things unmoved. Still, your duty must be done. We will row ashore, and my son shall lead you to the gardens—"

"Nay, madam; we have here a search-warrant for your house, and do propose to make our way from garret to cellar. It is well known that the squire doth league with those who would set his Majesty on fire with their rabid denunciations if words could light the brimstone of their speech."

"Then you must to the squire himself," replied Rowland with dignity. "No man enters my father's house unbidden; and as for schismatics, I promise

you that no man, woman, or child is in hiding on my father's estate!"

At this moment Molly, who had bared her arm to catch a lily from its stem in the water, and whose golden curls trailed in the lake as she bent her head, broke into a light laugh. It provoked Rowland by its irrelevance and want of heart, at a moment which held the others pale with fear.

"You have enough lilies," said he sternly, grasping Molly's rounded arm. She looked up at him with a disobedient light in her blue eyes, and so mischievous withal, that Mrs. Bathurst sharply slapped her as she pulled her back into her place.

"How dare you strike a—a—" Molly's passion outstepped her memory. Had it been a little less, her struggling efforts to remember her name might have been successful. As it was, she relapsed into a sulky humour, and nursed her wrongs with a longing to avenge them.

Mrs. Bathurst had no idea of spoiling the little beauty. "If you are in my house and disobey me, I shall punish

you as if you were my own child," she said.

In the meantime, secure that no old man would be found on the premises, the good lady returned to the house. Here the jolly squire was found zealously heading the search-party, throwing open doors and cupboards without hesitation. In the cellar he gained the approval of the party by tapping some of his best-brewed October for their benefit. The troopers went away on the most cordial terms with the squire, making rough apology for their troublesome business.

The squire watched them depart, wiping beads of perspiration from his face, and, turning to his wife, said quietly, "Well, that's over! What if they had come a week ago?"

She shuddered. Her own father had been hidden in the manor for weeks. They had managed his escape only a few days previous to this domiciliary visit. How little they dreamed of the near presence of one still dearer to them, or of the danger he had been in an hour ago!

(To be continued.)

THE ARTISTIC LIFE OF LOUISA PYNE.

By RUTH LAMB.

CHAPTER V.



It was hardly likely that three years' journeyings would be accomplished without accident, and on two occasions Miss Pyne had hair-breadth escapes which show vividly the perils that accompany the triumphs of an artiste.

She left New Orleans on February 29th, 1856, for Memphis, 700 miles distant, on the Mississippi. The river had risen forty-five feet, owing to the breaking up of the ice after the most severe winter that could then be remembered. The flood brought down with it huge blocks of ice and enormous drifts of timber, through which the vessel had to work its way. The pilot calculated that vast trees, covering at least fifteen acres of ground, had been torn up to form one of these drifts which was being floated down the river. The vessel was in great danger of injury from the trees which were forced against it, and, in addition, the captain was trying to race with other boats.

Miss Pyne became greatly alarmed, not merely for her own safety, but for that of her companions in travel. She had a peculiar presentiment that the vessel would not reach St. Louis in safety, so she called together the whole of her company, forty in number, and urged them to land at Cairo, and complete the journey by train. At first her arguments excited only amusement, and she was ridiculed for her fears, but in the end she gained her point. The whole of the party landed at Cairo, and less than two hours afterwards one of the floating trees stove in the hull of the vessel they had left. It filled rapidly, and eventually sank. Many of the passengers were saved, but the loss of life was considerable. It need hardly be said that those who had ridiculed Miss Pyne's fears, were now deeply thankful for her persistency in urging them to land before the accident happened.

At Philadelphia an accident had nearly cut short her career. An almost instantaneous change of dress was required in one part, and this was effected by an assistant, who took hold of a ring affixed to the hem of a loose robe, worn over another, and drew it quickly through a plate trap.

The change had been practised carefully, and all had gone well, but at night a substitute came in place of the proper person, who had been taken suddenly ill. The tyro made an unfortunate mistake, and seized not only the ring, but the satin under-dress, with such force that Miss Pyne was dragged to the ground, and fell upon some iron grooves on which a partition worked. The blow splintered the bottom of the spine, and caused intense pain. The artiste strove to be brave, and at first said, "I am all right," but when led forward between her sister and Mr. Harrison, she began to sing the finale of another work instead of the one in progress; then broke down and fainted. This mischance caused her great suffering, and it was thought she would never walk again, but after being laid by for five months she was able to resume her professional work.

"From a plump girl," she states, "I became a poor emaciated-looking creature, and was obliged to have my garments padded to appear at all presentable, and I have felt the effects of that fall more or less ever since."

There were, however, sweets as well as bitters, and the former were of most frequent occurrence.

When Miss Pyne was at Cincinnati, some ladies living at Brooklyn sent her a delicious plum pudding, probably as a seasonable gift. To her great surprise, when cutting towards the centre of it, she discovered a beautiful diamond and opal ring. Naturally she considered this the best and decidedly the richest pudding she had ever tasted.

When Miss Pyne took Madame Zerr's part, she had only from Monday afternoon till Tuesday evening at seven to study the music and learn the Italian words by heart, and, of course, had to sit up all night to do it.

Mr. Frederick Gye, the then manager, was so delighted that he had not been compelled to disappoint Her Majesty and the Prince Consort, who particularly wished to hear *Il Flauto Magico* on that evening, that he subsequently had a watch made to match the dress worn by her as "Queen of Night," and presented it to her as a souvenir. It was of dark green enamel, and studded with gold stars.

Many years later the artiste went to fulfil an engagement at a town in the north of Yorkshire. She was entertained at the house of a gentleman of position there, and on entering she saw hanging on the wall a beautifully printed account of that same memorable appearance. It was enclosed in a handsome frame. Miss Pyne's host asked with a smile if the incidents were correctly told. She replied that they were. "Then," said he, "will you favour me by accepting this as a memento of that night?"

Of course Miss Pyne was sensible alike of the kindness and delicacy of the compliment, and accepted the souvenir, which she still esteems as a valued possession.

It would be impossible to continue the record of Louisa Pyne's artistic career without giving prominence to the names of some of those who were most closely associated with her, both in America and in the brilliant career which followed her return to England.

William Harrison, the great tenor singer and accomplished musician, had won for himself no small share in the credit and triumphs of the transatlantic tour.

The popularity of Miss Susan Pyne was second only to that of her more highly gifted younger sister. It will be remembered that from the very beginning of Louisa's public life the two sisters had been most closely associated at home and abroad. The outcome of that three years' tour was a business partnership between the two principals as co-lessees—first, for a few months, of the Lyceum, and, with intervals, in other leading London places previous to 1859—for several years at Covent Garden. During the whole long

period of the Pyne and Harrison Company's career the efforts of the principals were directed to the encouragement of English musicians and to the careful production of their works.

Mr. Willert Beale in his work, 'The Light of Other Days,' pays this well-merited tribute to the value of their efforts. "No two singers are more closely identified with the progress of English dramatic music than are Louisa Pyne and William Harrison. Through their exertions, English opera, when it seemed doomed to perish from neglect, was made to flourish. They gave English composers liberal commissions, and produced their works with the greatest care."

Her Majesty and the Prince Consort gave the greatest encouragement to the enterprise. The Royal box was regularly engaged and frequently occupied by them—sometimes twice in a week. The Prince Consort especially took the deepest interest in the success of the undertaking. He was most anxious to establish a National Opera on a firm basis, and on one occasion, when Louisa Pyne was singing at Windsor Castle, he spoke to her on the subject of obtaining a subsidy from Government towards its support. He promised that if the performances were continued up to a certain time, influence should be exerted to bring the matter before Parliament.

The lamented death of the Prince Consort just after this promise was made prevented its fulfilment, and was a real misfortune to the partners.

The following letter is only another proof of the estimation in which Louisa Pyne was held both as artiste and woman. It reached her two months after her return from America, and shows the value placed on her friendship by the writer, the daughter of an English Duke.

"Lymington, Hants. Dec. 3rd, 1857.

"DEAR MISS PYNE,—I received your kind note forwarded to me from the London hotel, and I return you many thanks for it, and regret I was not able to acknowledge it sooner. You could not have been more pleased than I was to hear that H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge had been and was so highly pleased and gratified by the performance of *The Rose of Castille*, and by the music.

"Were I to say all H.R.H. expressed about your own singing I fear you would think it was flattery on my part. However, there is and can be but one opinion about your singing, and that is that it is perfection. Believe me, I say what I mean, and you deserve, as also Mr. Harrison, the highest praise and the greatest encouragement for the way you have brought out English opera. If this be not the means of our having a national opera for the winter, we shall never have one.

"All English artists and lovers of music ought to be eternally grateful to you, Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Alfred Mellon for showing the world at large that we have musical talent of the highest order, and only require opportunity to be a musical nation of the first order. I only trust that this golden and cheering ray of hope to all English musicians, professional and amateur, may not be dimmed by the ignorance and prejudice of fashion and by the jealousy of artists.

"I assure you all speak in the highest praise. I met Benedict and Schultz, both of whom I know very well. I only wish you could have heard all they said as to the music and the performance of it. This, coming from two great German musicians, performers and composers who had no national feeling to bias them, is most satisfactory. I wish it lay in my power to do all I so much desire for the encouragement of talent and the right appreciation of a great and glorious genius. However, at all times believe me if I can do anything towards it, I shall be ever ready. And

may I ask you, if ever in need of a friend, or of one to do anything for you in any way, not to forget me. I do assure you when I say a thing I mean it, and therefore hope you will remember that at all times you will find a true friend in Henrietta—."

If Louisa Pyne and her partner delighted to produce the works of great composers, it was no less a pleasure for these to write for so gifted an artiste as Miss Pyne. It is related that on one occasion Balfe wished to add a cadence to a favourite song, and Mr. Alfred Mellon, who was conducting the orchestra, said that he was sure Miss Pyne could sing any phrase of a florid character which any instrumentalist could play. On this Pratten the flautist, and Lazarus the clarionettist, improvised the most intricate passages they could contrive on their several instruments. The *prima donna* immediately took up the challenge and imitated them with an accuracy and precision which amazed and delighted Balfe and all the orchestra. The same narrator adds, "I have heard Balfe exclaim with enthusiasm while composing, 'I love to write for Louisa Pyne. Her voice is amazingly sympathetic; she listens attentively to all my suggestions, and I can rely upon her carrying them out exactly as I wish.'"

Profound conscientiousness was in her case joined to the enthusiasm of the true musician and the most charming *naïveté*. All qualities were amusingly manifested on the first night of a new work of Balfe's. Concert-goers well know what it is to be disturbed by the entrance or departure of persons whilst music is in progress. "As the end was approaching," says Miss Pyne, "many of the audience rose to go. The *finale* was particularly fine, and I had bestowed a long time on the study of what was in itself so beautiful that I felt sorry it should be lost to those who would care for it. So I stopped the orchestra and said, 'Ladies and gentlemen: Those who are leaving are missing the best part of the work, but I trust they will make haste, and I will wait till they are gone before I finish.'"

As might be expected, the naturalness of this appeal delighted the audience, and was warmly applauded.

"On another night, at Leeds, Mr. Harrison was singing the song of the muleteer. My sister Susan and I were near him, when suddenly we saw the borders above us had just caught fire. The building was crammed with people, and we knew that if a cry of 'fire' were raised, the panic would be terrible and many lives would probably be sacrificed, so we kept quiet, though greatly alarmed. Mr. Harrison was very tall, and he actually managed whilst singing to whip out the fire. He used to crack a large whip to the words 'Click, clack, the muleteer,' and by a very unusual amount of hard smacking he literally whipped out the fire. Not until the song was over and encored did any one behind know that there had been danger, and that it was already over."

Many singers were brought conspicuously to the front under the Pyne and Harrison management, amongst whom were Madame Parepa and Mr. Santley.

A somewhat dangerous though ludicrous accident happened to Madame Parepa whilst taking the character of Victorine. Scenic furniture, as is well known, is made for show rather than service, and is often of an extremely unsubstantial character. In one scene Victorine is seen lying asleep, dreaming of her mother, who hovers over her in angelic form. In the midst of this pretty picture the couch on which Madame Parepa lay suddenly collapsed, and she was literally doubled up amid its ruins. She was inclined to *embonpoint*, and her weight had been too much for her resting-place. Fortunately she was not seriously hurt, but in spite of the danger and the

interruption caused by the accident, Miss Pyne owned that she gave way to a hearty laugh, the whole affair being mirth-provoking to a degree.

Not very long before the death of the Prince Consort, *The Puritan's Daughter*, by Balfe, was produced with great success, and in it Mr. Santley took the part of Clifford, whilst Miss Pyne enacted that of the heroine, Mary Wolf. This was in 1861. About four or five years ago the great baritone made a graceful allusion to this professional association. He and his wife were coming out of the Albert Hall after a concert, when he caught sight of Madame Louisa Pyne, who was also waiting for her carriage. Leading Mrs. Santley to the "English Queen of Song," he said, "Let me introduce to my Mary of olden days my Mary of to-day."

Those olden days were golden ones to the Pyne and Harrison partnership, but the sad and sudden blow which fell upon the beloved Sovereign, and filled the nation with sorrow and deepest sympathy, proved to be a fatal one to the hitherto successful managers. All places of amusement suffered seriously through the death of the Prince Consort, none more than that which the Queen and he had so steadily patronised. Instead of seeing the Royal box frequently occupied, it was by command covered and draped with crape. The very sight of it gave a gloomy appearance to the house and proved a constant reminder of a great sorrow. People did not care to see these signs of mourning in a place of amusement, and the tide of prosperity began to ebb. This change involved terrible loss to the two principals. "All my hard earnings in America, amounting to many thousands, melted away during this sad time," said Miss Pyne, "and we were left with nothing to show for all our long years of toil and enterprise."

Miss Pyne's final retirement from the management of the Royal English Opera, Covent Garden, did not, however, take place until March 19th, 1864, when she and Mr. Harrison were severally made the recipients of a very handsome service of plate. The givers were "the artists, officers, and employés of the establishment, many members of the musical profession, as well as amateurs, admirers of the art, and of its exponents in Miss Louisa Pyne and Mr. Harrison."

A little later, on July 21st, 1864, at the mansion of the Marchioness of Downshire, in Belgrave Square, a beautiful silver dinner service was given to Miss Pyne. Mr. Brinley Richards was in the chair, and after an appropriate preface he added, "It was felt by every lady in the land that the spotless integrity of Miss Pyne's public life, and the virtues of her private life, merited recognition more special and peculiar than even the ovation of March 19th. We are met to do homage to talent and to express our admiration of her irreproachable life in a position which we all know is beset with many difficulties and temptations." In the address which accompanied the gift, allusions were made to the artiste's musical career, and to the joint efforts of herself and Mr. Harrison, and it concludes thus: "Though these have unfortunately involved great pecuniary sacrifices, you will not be without some compensation in having gained not only the approbation of your own conscience as having sacrificed self-interest for a worthy object, but in having secured public appreciation and the gratitude of the English people."

The autographs of members of the committee are most interesting. Every signature is that of a celebrity in some branch of art, music, or literature. The styles are as varied as the hands which formed the letters, but most are remarkable alike for beauty and legibility; qualities which are not always associated with the calligraphy of famous men and women.

(To be continued.)

THE ARTISTIC LIFE OF LOUISA PYNE.

By RUTH LAMB.

CHAPTER VI.



HE life of Louisa Pyne was not without its romantic side, and this was equally connected with her artistic career and her filial duty. The former initiated it, the latter held it in check through many a long year of suspense and faithful waiting, a mid much to try and discourage its heroine.

Louisa was only fifteen when she first met Mr. Frank Bodda, himself a singer, and

subsequently a most able teacher. He had given up a mercantile career, in which he had every prospect of success, and more than a probability of early attaining wealth and position, in order to devote himself to music. "Commerce was all very well, but Art was too strong for Commerce," said Mr. Bodda, "so I abandoned the pursuits to which I could give only a kind of mechanical allegiance, and devoted myself to music, much to my own loss in a pecuniary sense, but greatly to my advantage so far as enjoyment of my occupation was concerned."

When he first met Miss Pyne, there was, of course, no question of wooing or wedding the girl of fifteen. He was, however, often professionally associated with her and her elder sister Susan, and it fell to his lot, five years later, to prepare Louisa for her first operatic appearance at Boulogne in 1848. An attachment between teacher and pupil was the result, and in the same year it culminated in an engagement. But in their case, the old proverb was to be verified, and the path on which they hoped to walk together was strewn with difficulties, which for many a year proved insurmountable. Owing to certain misrepresentations—subsequently fully proved to be such—Louisa's parents interfered, and in deference to their wishes, the engagement was cancelled soon after it had been entered into.

It was ever the young singer's lot to sacrifice inclination to filial duty, and so she, who had begun to be one of the family bread-winners at ten years old, devoted her more cultured gifts and greater earnings to the same sacred purpose. For ten years more she worked on, ever gaining fresh laurels in public, and respect in private life, never varying in her fidelity to the one love of her life, but making it subservient to a daughter's duty and obedience.

The pair met from time to time, but there was no definite engagement or correspondence, no allusion to the possibility of the closer union once contemplated until 1858. Then after ten years of silence the engagement was renewed, but as it proved only that the former disappointing experience might be repeated.

On this second occasion, however, the engagement was suspended by the pair most closely interested in its continuance.

"Much as we cared for each other, there were claims which we felt we must place before

even this long and sacred attachment," said Miss Pyne. "My dear old father, then nearly seventy and an invalid, lived with another member of the family; but it was my privilege to maintain him by my work. Frank had his aged mother living with him, and equally dependent, so what could we do but once more resolve to give up any definite engagement, and do what conscience said was right at any cost to ourselves."

So through the seasons that followed, the families were neighbours and friends, and there was frequent and kindly intercourse between all the members for nine more years. In August, 1867, Mr. Bodda's mother died; and late in the following autumn the faithful pair were united, nearly twenty-one years after the attachment began which was to know so many disappointments and vicissitudes. During that long interval Louisa Pyne received many offers of marriage, but Frank Bodda was the one love of her life, and consistent in everything else, she was no less so in faithful affection.

"Many a time," she said, "reports would reach me that Frank was going to be married, for people's minds and tongues are ever busy with the private affairs of those who live much before the public. But when these rumours reached my ears, I used to smile and say, not to those who brought the tales, but to myself, 'No, he is not—I know better.'"

"Frank was just the same. Report gave me in marriage, or proposed to do so on many different occasions, but he, who was alone interested, never doubted me through all those years, and I never gave him cause. Our wedding was a very quiet one when it did take place. Too quiet I have always thought. We made a great mistake in having it so, for our professional prestige should have been considered. But we had waited so long, and after our engagement had been twice broken off, and each time for ten years, who could wonder that Frank's great anxiety was rather for the ceremony to take place, which was to unite us, than for the surrounding circumstances. I always regretted that our marriage was not celebrated with more publicity, and with at least a portion of the *éclat* which a bride loves, even though she may be just turned forty. It seemed a little *infra dig*, to finish such a long first chapter of a life's love story by what, in a younger couple, would have resembled a clandestine marriage."

"Frank and I, quite unattended, met on that October morning at Trinity Church, Marylebone, and there we were married in the presence of such witnesses as chanced to be in the building—enough, however, to satisfy the law's requirements. I always remember the reverent manner of the honoured clergyman who performed the ceremony, his kind sympathetic after-words and fatherly hand clasp. And I know that whatever might be lacking in outward display, true affection and esteem sanctified our union. Our great desire was that God's blessing should attend it, and that we might be to each other all that He intended man and wife should be when He ordained the marriage tie in the beginning."

"It seems strange to tell that, even on our wedding-day we went on with our work. Most married folk can look back and say that they left work and care behind on their wedding morning, and took holiday for once. But Frank and I went straight from church to fulfil our several professional engagements. My single life had been one of constant work as long back as I could remember, and my married life was a continuance of it, though not wholly of the same kind."

"Frank and I had always hoped that when

we married I should retire altogether from public professional life, and I had brought my operatic career to a close in 1866."

This retirement was greatly regretted by Miss Pyne's admirers both in London and the provinces, but she was still constantly in request at the festivals, and as an oratorio and concert singer, her time being filled up with teaching in the season. Such engagements under the greatest conductors, and in company with other artistes of the highest rank, together with two concert tours through Scotland, England and Wales, occupied the years until 1871. Then, owing to a severe illness, Madam Bodda Pyne's public appearances were suspended for some years, and Mr. Bodda did not wish them to be resumed. She still, however, retained her glorious voice, though in consequence of her retirement a report was spread that she had entirely lost it. This story reached her ears early in 1876, and she at once took means to disprove it. "I had not sung in London for some years," she said, when questioned as to this period of her life, "so I asked and gained the consent of my dear husband, to appear once more where it had always been a delight to me to sing, namely, at a concert of the London Philharmonic Society. This was either in May or June, I cannot remember which."

This reappearance evoked immense enthusiasm. The audience were delighted to see the favourite of so many past years once more exercising her wonderful powers for their benefit. All were astonished at the continued power, purity, and flexibility of a voice which had been exposed to the wear and tear of a public life for thirty-eight years. There are many who will remember the ovation Madam Bodda Pyne received from her audience on that occasion, and it was felt that whilst the English Queen of Song might lay down her sceptre and retire to the privacy of home life, she did so of her own free will, and not because she no longer deserved her title.

In August, the Philharmonic Society conferred on our heroine the greatest mark of appreciation which was in their power to bestow. The following letter tells in what this consisted.

"August 4th, 1876.

"DEAR MADAM,—I am instructed by the Directors of the Philharmonic Society to thank you sincerely for the service you rendered the society in singing at one of the concerts of last season, and they beg your acceptance of the Beethoven Gold Medal, in recognition of your great talent, and as a slight *souvenir* of many kindnesses the Society has received from you during your artistic career.—I have the honour to remain, dear madam, yours very faithfully,

"STANLEY LUCAS, Secretary."

At that time the "Beethoven Gold Medal" had never previously been given to a lady. This fact enhanced the value and significance of the gift, and the gratification of her on whom it was so spontaneously conferred. To the present day the occasions on which this medal is bestowed are few and far between, and only the rarest artistic excellence can win the much-coveted honour.

From 1876 Madam Bodda Pyne devoted herself wholly to teaching in conjunction with her gifted husband. Three or four years later Mr. Bodda founded a college for musical students which attained much success, and the heads of it were no less valued as teachers than as faithful friends and wise advisers by their pupils.

On academy days the Beethoven Gold Medal

was always worn, and when Madam Bodda Pyne was asked which of all her costly presents she valued most, she would point to it and say, "This is one of two that are specially precious to me."

"And what is the second?" asked a friend.

"A gold bracelet—not in a sense one of my most costly gifts, but of priceless value to me. It was bought for me by the united pence of the working-men of Hull, whose warm-hearted kindness I shall never forget."

From other sources the cause of this gift was ascertained. The working-men of Hull presented it to mark their sense of Louisa Pyne's generous kindness in giving special performances, year after year, for the benefit of the infirmary in that town.

It is delightful to know that the married life of our heroine, so long looked forward to and waited for, was so far as true affection and harmony of character and tastes could make it, an ideally happy one—not without hard and continuous work, or the trials inseparable from a professional life. Hardly-won gains were carried away by unlooked-for losses, too often the result of an endeavour to help others who proved unworthy of the trust. But the home was deserving of the name; and though no living child blessed the long-deferred union, there were others beneath that roof who needed constant care and attention.

Old Mr. Pyne spent the last years of his life in the house of his son-in-law, and was eighty-eight when he died. Mr. Bodda had an aged bed-ridden aunt also, who was five years younger than his wife's father. The two cheered each other, and the octogenarian singer was often to be found reading the sweet promises of God's Word to the helpless listener, whose face would light with joy as the familiar passages fell on her ear.

"They must have been a great care and source of anxiety to you and Mr. Bodda," said a guest, when alluding to the two aged people.

"Care! Anxiety! No, indeed," was the answer of Madam Bodda Pyne; "they are the great comfort of our lives. When Frank and I are weary, dispirited, or disappointed, we betake ourselves to the room occupied by one or other of these aged dear ones. They are the sweetest Christians. Those upper chambers are little sanctuaries, and if we go to them feeling downhearted, we come away cheered, refreshed, and strengthened by the sympathy of the occupants. Some precious promise has been brought to mind by them, familiar enough to us both, but lost sight of when most needed. So we go back to work, thinking of God's great goodness rather than our own trouble. So far from adding to our burdens, they help to lighten them."

Mr. Pyne died in 1877; the aged aunt in 1879.

From the beginning of Bonally College in 1880 Louisa and her husband worked together as one, successfully as regarded the musical culture of their pupils, unweariedly in their efforts to influence for good those who were resident under their roof. In 1891 Mr. Bodda was often ailing, and in the early spring of 1892 the devoted wife experienced the great sorrow of her life. She was left widowed, childless, and, so far as very near family ties were concerned, alone, for her two sisters were dead also.

The ages of both husband and wife were such that they might reasonably have hoped for a longer union after the previous waiting, and for a quiet, restful age after so many years of hard and continuous work. But Mr. Bodda's labours only ceased a few days before life ended; and though the college was discontinued, his sorrowing widow found it necessary to dry her tears as best she might, and go on with her work as a teacher. She, who had been the helper and the bread-winner for so many during half a century, is a worker still—perforce.

In the case of many great artistes enormous gains have been foolishly squandered, and narrow means in later life have resulted from reckless extravagance. But how different has been the example of her about whose artistic career and private virtues it has been a pleasure and privilege to write. She would be living in ease and opulence to-day but for the fact of her perfect unselfishness in the past. She found her pleasure and reward in working for those she loved, and in placing their comfort and well-being before her own. The idea of providing for her own future was wholly put aside. Surely she will yet be amongst the number who will realise to the full the truth of the Divinely uttered words, "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

* * * * *

The following words, taken from a musical journal, may not be an unsuitable finish to these brief biographical sketches of a great artiste and a noble woman: "A young vocalist would need no better recommendation than that of Madam Bodda Pyne's instruction to obtain a favourable reception. The student will derive a double benefit in listening to such a consummate artiste. Madam Pyne is the most accomplished songstress our nation has ever produced, and we may well look in vain for her successor."

Only a few weeks ago one of a large audience was listening to a singer of to-day who was giving a *rendering of music* formerly sung to enthusiastic hearers by the subject of these papers. Behind her was sitting a grey-haired man, evidently alone. From time to time he uttered comments on the work and the composer, highly complimentary to both. Of the prima donna he said nothing, but as if in pity for the audience of to-day, he remarked, loud enough to be heard by all around him, "If they could but have heard Louisa Pyne sing that!"

[THE END.]



NOTICES OF NEW MUSIC.

VOCAL SOLOS.

Ritornelle, Amoroso, and I Would Believe are the titles of three graceful songs by C. Chaminade (Enoch & Sons).—This talented lady invariably charms us, and the above songs are quite equal to her other efforts in this direction. They (and nine others by her) are published in high and low keys to suit all voices.

Voices of the Angels.—This is a good contralto song by H. Lane Wilson (Enoch & Sons). Mr. Wilson has added to the piano-forte accompaniment a judiciously-written part for harmonium or American organ.

Rosette, by H. Bemberg; *Bonjour Suzon, Adieu du Matin*, both by Emile Pessard; and *Vous Souviendrez Vous?* by Gabriel Pierné (Laudy & Co.), are all four charming songs, of course very French in character, very piquant in phrase, and musically in accompaniment. They are provided with an excellent English translation by Frederick Corder.

Spinning Song and When Thou Art Near, two songs by Mary Watt (Laudy & Co.), are decidedly above the average, and express nice feeling in a nice way.

Cradle Song, by Gerard Cobb (Laudy & Co.).—This will add somewhat to Mr. Cobb's

reputation for musically writing. There is a very appropriate little modulation into D flat major, which, immediately following C major, produces a most soothing effect.

DUETS AND PART-SONGS.

Evening Fancies, part-song by Grieg (Laudy & Co.), arranged for mixed voices to words by F. Corder.

Spring, the Sweet Spring, glee for four voices, and *O, the Sweet Contentment*, ballet madrigal for five voices, are both by E. D. Rendall (Laudy & Co.), and show considerable talent. The latter is from "The Compleat Angler," Mr. Rendall having set a version of old Izaak Walton's idyll for solo voices, chorus and orchestra. There is quite the old ring about both glee and madrigal.

Four Vocal Duets, by Halldan Kjerulf, with English words by Marzials (Stanley Lucas & Co.).—A cheap but well got up volume, which will be welcomed by singers.

PIANO MUSIC.

Trois Valses de Sentiment, by Liza Lehmann (Chappell & Co.).—Graceful and full of delicate expression. They are from the *Album of Ten Pianoforte Sketches*.

Favourite Pieces, by Sterndale Bennett and Schumann (Hammond & Co.).—These handy volumes are produced at 2s., and are well and clearly printed; the latter includes several of the *Phantasistücke* and the *Noveletten*, and the former such well-known pieces as the *Serenata* from his early Sonata, his sketch "The Lake," the *Rondino* in E, and so on.

Arabesque and Berceuse, by Alfred Mistowski (Hammond).—These two very clever pieces are the work of a young student at Trinity College, and deserve encouraging notice.

Valse, by Dr. Gordon Saunders (Hammond).—A brilliant valse, and an evident tribute to the memory of that great valse-writer Chopin. On page 3 the effect of cross accents—six-eight in the melody and three-four in the accompaniment—is the same as in its prototype.

Mazurka, by Edith Hollingdrake (London Music Publishing Company), is a useful teaching piece and characteristic.

Pianoforte Albums, Nos. 52-55 (Novello).—No. 52 contains five piano pieces and two scherzi by Schubert; No. 55 is devoted to fourteen more or less descriptive pieces by Hofmann. The books are, as usual, excellently printed.