

THE DEAR OLD DAYS.

There are no days like the dear old days
That have perished, like ships at sea;
There are no ways like the sweet old ways
That once bloomed so brightly for me;
—A halo hath died from the face of the moon,
A glory from off the hills,
And I hear no more the soft love tune
In the meadow, beside the rills.

There are no songs like the sweet old songs
That the slingers once loved to sing;
Mute are their tongues;—to the Past belongs
The chant of our life's sweet spring.
But a tenderer gloom on the churchyard sleeps,
And a glory is gathering round
Each marble slab, where the Death-angel keeps
His vigils, on holy ground.

There is no rest like the deep, sweet rest
That is found in the quiet grave—
And there is no heart that so fully is blest
But that death it will some day crave.
While the years go on with their endless round,
Day unto day and night to night,
Not a joy that will live bath ever been found,
And Hope is a meteor light.

And though I can read in the glad new spring
The hues of a prophecy grand;
How the Master-hand from the grave will bring
The harks of a broken band;—
Yet I see no days like the dear old days
That have perished on Time's wild sea,
And I walk no ways like the sweet old ways
That once bloomed so brightly for me.

THE MAY MUSIC FESTIVAL.

(From the Home Journal.)

The Seventh Regiment Armory has been honoured with peculiar consecration through the grandest of all sciences, music, in the classic acceptance of the world. The greatest, if not the first of all true musical festivals in America, has found shelter within the spacious hall of this building, and walks eminently fitted for the non-resonance of martial evolutions have by perseverance and scientific expedients, been rendered acoustic and capable of not altogether missing the classical orchestrations selected for the occasion.

When we consider all the impracticabilities the committee of arrangements has been forced to overcome, and the divers phases of human nature the musical committee has had to deal with, and above all the labour and toil of Dr. Damrosch in making that vast orchestra and chorus seize and render his idea of the master works given, New York may well be proud of the success achieved. It is a beginning, and a glorious one too of the inevitable future of America, that of becoming one of great musical nations of the world.

The arrangements of an orchestra is not arbitrary. One can telegraph church bells and cannon outside a building to give thoroughly bass foundation tones to the beating of anvils and fanfare of trumpets inside; one can triangle an orchestra and put double bass in the apex to form a broad stone-like foundation tone; one can horse-shoe-form an orchestra with the brass instruments in the keystone of the arch; and there is no law, except that of acoustics, to prevent one from making a fringe of violins connected with an airy trinity of first violins and cellos, and putting the auxiliary chorus in the centre, while the brass instruments, above the violin fringes, form a tassell-like decoration on either side. This arrangement is admirable for the director; the sound sweep down in circling tone-waves on the "lake-like air," as ripples on the water follow the tiniest pebble thrown therein, but how does this orchestra arrangement effect the audience? Let the side seats of the Seventh Regiment Armory answer that question. In front of the stage the arrangement was effective once and only once, in the strangely conceived fanfare before the *Tuba mirum* in the Berlioz "Requiem," and for this one effect the beauties of various other masterpieces were lost, or overpowered and unbalanced. Had it not been for the organ most skillfully voiced and most admirably played, the grand "Dettingen Te Deum" of the first evening concert would have sounded as a cactus looks—scrappy, out of shape. The organ not only supplied a firm foundation as accompaniment, but it blended the instruments and smoothed the voice tone of the chorus. This well trained chorus were effective in certain pianissimo passages, but their decrescendo as well as their crescendo lacked the requisite shading given by the trained choral societies of the Old World.

The soprano and alto did well, but might have done better were it possible for Americans to pronounce their a's and o's alike, but one heard in the syllable effect an *ohahohah*, while the *decrescendo* was injured by some of the voices leaving off, it did not soften down the tone, but simply rendered the tone-quality uneven. The bass and tenor did valiantly the first evening, but each man seemed singing his idea of the tone-quantity required, certainly not that of the director. It was difficult to determine what the orchestra did; the violins were overpowered by the bass, and too much cello scrape spoiled delicate rhythmic passages; the fault must have been in their position on the stage. The solos, sung by voices of exquisite culture, voices which in concert hall or opera house are sufficient, were led almost to the verge of failure by the immense space to be filled, and the acoustic difficulties impossible to overcome. Bass and tenor solos were grandly given; no space seems too great for voices like Whitney, Kemmertz and Campanini.

In the Dettingen "Te Deum," Miss Cary's solo was broadly rendered and well deserved the encore she received, while the five part chorus,

after the passage "When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death," made most effective the change to the joyous *motivo* of "Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers." The fugue in their next chorus "We therefore pray Thee"—was well managed, and the *crescendo* on "help thy servants" was above all criticism.

In the "Tower of Babel" the superbly trained boys of St. Patrick's Cathedral and St. Francis Xavier, were certainly adapted to "cool the brow" of the audience by their exquisite melody. The trembling of the violins like the pattering of rain, and the crash of the thunder in the storm, caused some cautious people in the audience to search for their water-proofs, and several ladies grasping umbrellas left the hall; they must have been astonished when they found no rain outside. The storm effect was given far better here than in Vienna when the "Tower of Babel" was performed under Rubenstein's direction three years ago. But the crowning beauty of the whole was the exquisite rendition of the chorus of the descendants of Japhet. Rubenstein's genius has fashioned in this choral melody the pure form and rhythm which stood out in bold relief from the foregoing Arabian and Egyptian methods of *Shem* and *Ham*. The arpeggio effect of the Arabic harps and reed pipes stealing through the

never ceasing current
Still we hear the Jordan flowing.

was very characteristic and the rhythmic beat of the tam-tam, and whirl of sistrums was fully prefigured in the movement of

Hasten still on without pause or rest,
Like the sand adrift in the whirlwind.

"The Ride of the Valkyrs" probably owed its effect to the very things which had damaged former compositions. The reverberation from the empty chorus seats produced the requisite hollow, ghostly tones, and the personality of each player gave the human magnetism which Wagner must have mixed up in his orchestration: "*les bonnes traditions*" do nothing for his musical sublimation of human passions. Seven years study of the "Ring der Niebelungen" under Hans Richter, in Vienna, will convince any American of this fact, and, what is still better, will prepare the student for enjoying *Siegfried's* "Love Song," as given by Campanini. During the past three years no tenor has appeared in Vienna in the part of *Siegfried* who could compare with New York's favourite artist. His rendition of

Storms of winter
Yield to gentle May.

was an artistic revelation. In the second evening the "Berlioz Requiem" was less admirably rendered. In the *Dies Ira* the voices should yield gradually to the orchestra, and sink into the tremor of fear, as the books are brought and the awful majesty of the Judgment Day paralyzes all power of speech, but under Dr. Damrosch a peculiar want of sympathy with the subject, or with each other, vibrated in the voice tones of the chorus and the effect was lost. The *Tuba mirum* announced by roll of kettle drums and trumpet fanfare, was grandly given, but whether through fault of the telegraph with which Dr. Damrosch directed his upper brass orchestras, or the dilatoriness of the bass to come to time, the effect was almost instantly lost. Campanini saved the *Sanctus* and made it the gem of the "Requiem," while the chorus under the magnetic spell of his splendid genius, sang the *Hosanna in excelsis* with such joyous clamor, that one would have desired the "Requiem" to stop there had he known that the following *Agnus Dei* would be almost ruined by the spotted effect of the "Lux aeterna luceat eis Domine." The discordant state of the instruments, the imperfect decrescendo and crescendo of the voices, gave one the impression of the feeling caused by the first big drops in a thunder shower.

On Friday night the "Messiah" was a splendid success. The chorus sang with an expression and fervor which no chorus in Europe has ever yet attained in this essentially English oratorio, the Birmingham festival not excepted. They sang with heart and soul, sympathy, and heart forgetfulness. Their rendition was not perfect, judged from a purely musical standpoint, delicate shades of tonality were ignored, perfect intonation, smooth *decrescendo* and even attack, were sometimes wanting, but the glorious tidings:

Unto us a child is born.

the sublime reverence in the passage leading to "Wonderful! Counselor!" was magnificently rendered, while the Hallelujah chorus surpassed any previous rendition of it in America. Whatever "*les bonnes traditions*" may declare, we are quite sure that the method of rendering "Glory to God" and "Unto us a child is born," as put down by Dr. Damrosch, is more effective and artistically correct than the method of former directors. The pianissimo has the effect of a prayer heard from nations afar off, while the wonder and awe expressed in the soft, low tones of "Unto us a child is born," render the Messiah's name, "Wonderful! Counselor!" the point *de mire* of the whole movement. The soloists sang well, but Parepa-Rosa, Jenny Lind, and Christine Nilsson have raised the solos from the "Messiah" to such splendid heights that it is quite impossible for any soprano now in America to attain to them. Madame Gerster did charmingly, but she seemed frightened and doubtless felt strange outside the "colorateur" school of vocalization in which Marchesi of Vienna has so splendidly trained her. Miss

Cary with her exquisite voice sang magnificently of course; how could she help it? Women of her generous nobility of nature must throw their hearts into their work; and her rendition of

"He shall feed his flock like a Shepherd,"

was worth all the sermons ever preached. Mr. Courtney has a good method and cultured voice; he sings carefully and conscientiously, but his tones are not powerful enough for the armory auditorium. Mr. Whitney is almost beyond criticism. His voice at all times glorious, rises to sublimity in the "Messiah."

"*Es gibt nur ein Wagner*" is said in Vienna as much as "*Es gibt nur ein Wien*" is sighed outside of it, but the overture to Wagner's "Meistersinger" during the past three years has never been more effectively rendered in the Imperial City than it was last Saturday evening by the orchestra under Dr. Damrosch. Quantity never compensates for quality in music, but there are passages in Wagner where slight confusion if mingled with the magnetic individuality of the performers does not greatly ruin the general effect. The playing of that wondrous *Hof oper* orchestra, and the Philharmonic Society of Vienna, is more artistic, exquisite in expression and tone-shadow; they play as one man,

Their hearts by one pulse beating,
One spirit and one thought!

and hence the music seems like the voice of a grand organ under the control of a master hand. The playing of the Damrosch orchestra had not this smooth, full tide of tone, but it possessed an individual magnetism, which, if it could not quite satisfy the ultra Wagnerians, must have given thorough enjoyment to all true musicians, who like the true saints of this world, are boundless in charity.

The ninth symphony (D moll) of Beethoven was the closing triumph of the festival. As in all classic selections interpreted by the orchestra under Dr. Damrosch the tempo was not according to "*les bonnes traditions*," but given by the caprice or subjective ideas of the director. The trio was charmingly rendered, but in the third movement the adagio was far too slow. It did not suggest the Beethoven meaning—hopeful longing, future promises just shadowed by the remembrance of past pain; it was Beethoven-Damrosch not Damrosch-Beethoven. In the andante the brass instruments were sharp; atmospheric effects cannot be controlled however and the morendo passage was uncertain, it dragged and did not die. The melody of the finale was *presto furioso*, and the "Hymn of Joy," although splendidly sung by the chorus, suffered for want of that single German word, *freude*. "Hail all!" "We hail!" and "Joy hail!" are not the grandly glorious,

Freud schöner Götter Funken,
Tochter aus Elysium.

so the voice tone became confused, but the chorus, after the solo in the allegro,

Froh wie seinen Sonnen fliegen froh.

was splendid. It did fly in tone rockets flung over the audience, and the *prestinissimo* went even better. It is a pity the fair chorus singers did not throw the miserable English translation aside and abide by the German text,

Seid umschlungen Millionen,
Diese Kuss für ganzen Welt.

How much of the kiss was intended for the "world" and how much for Director Damrosch, is an open question. They pelted him with flowers and waved their kerchiefs at him, and he deserved it all, for, like another Sir John Franklin,

He has done what man has never done—

accomplished a seeming impossibility, kept an American audience spell-bound through a week of classical music.

MARY ALICE SEYMOUR, "Octavia Hensel."

ECHOES FROM LONDON.

At one of the fashionable weddings this week the bride carried a bouquet six feet in circumference.

The portrait of Lord Beaconsfield by Mr. Millais, which is now on exhibition at the Royal Academy, has been purchased by Mr. W. H. Smith, M.P., for £2,000.

ELECTRIC lighting is found at South Kensington Museum to be much more economical than gas. Light is wanted for about 700 hours during the year, and the expense of the electric light—the actual working expense—is 3s. 10d. an hour; whereas the gas cost 16s. an hour.

MR. IRVING has received an offer of 20,000 guineas, all expenses paid, for a seven months' theatrical tour in America. Since, however, this would derange his present engagements, and scatter his company, he has declined the offer with thanks. It is practically the largest offer ever made to an actor.

THE London correspondent of the Birmingham Post mentions a report that is in circulation to the effect that Lord Beaconsfield died a Jew, and not a Christian. This is not the only paper that "vents" this remark. The fact is Lord Beaconsfield took the sacrament when he was last at Hughendon, and his Christian piety was

the theme of the sermon of the clergyman on a recent Sunday at that place.

MODERN æstheticism has accomplished one good where it might least have been expected, among the poor girls who manufacture artificial flowers. From the demand for quiet colours and neutral tints it has resulted that the making of these frail ornaments of ladies' attire, into which poisonous ingredients used largely to enter, is now, owing to the introduction of new fashions requiring more sober tints, a comparatively harmless employment.

IN strong and glaring contrast was the reception accorded to Sir Frederick Roberts on his return from South Africa with the ceremony which marked his departure to crush the Boers. His departure was celebrated by the cheers of 10,000 people. One or two of the ordinary idlers waiting the arrival of trains at Paddington saw a solitary lady, who turned out to be the wife of General Roberts. There was no other welcome for the General, who entered his carriage and drove off with Lady Roberts. The members of his staff annexed the hansoms on the stand, leaving their servants to follow with their baggage.

A NEW society has been formed in London called "The True Britons." Mr. F. Oswald is the Secretary and one of the prime movers in the affair. Mr. Oswald, among other reasons for being a "true Briton," says he regards the teetotaler and the drunkard as intemperates—the first from fanaticism, the other from weakness and ignorance. He does not think it possible to make men good and sober by act of Parliament, and he strongly objects to depotism, whether shown by the Crown, Parliament, or People. They gave a splendid banquet the other evening at St. James' Hall, with Lord Headley in the chair, and many excellent speeches were made.

THE memorable incident noted by those who were present with Lord Beaconsfield in his last moments, when he raised himself from his pillows, threw back his arms, expanded his chest, and moved his lips as if in act to speak, his well remembered gesture and manner of reply in Parliament, is another instance of the ruling passion flashing out on the very confines of mortal existence. William Pitt's last words were "Save my country." Napoleon was heard to murmur, "Tête d'armée." Rabelais ended life in a death. Montaigne, with an apophthegm. Charles XII. of Sweden clapped his hand to his sword when falling at Fredericks-hall, and Vespasian exclaimed: "It is fit that an Emperor should die standing."

THE Serjeant-at-Arms and his assistants had some misgivings in tackling Mr. Bradlaugh on the floor of the House. The hon. member is one of the most stalwart and muscular men sitting on either the liberal or the Conservative benches, and in a physical struggle in which he chose to put forth his strength would be a match for any half-dozen of the "waiters" whom the Serjeant can call to his aid. He dragged a couple of these waiters along the floor of the House the other night with the ease with which a Transatlantic liner under weigh may occasionally be seen dragging a couple of diminutive steam-tugs. Few see Mr. Bradlaugh standing defiantly at the table without having fears for the safety of the occupants of the two front benches, and, doubtless, the apprehensions are shared by those of the right hon. gentlemen themselves.

THE death of Lord Beaconsfield relieves the Exchequer of a payment of £2,000 a year. This was the pension which the late statesman drew as an ex-Cabinet Minister. It is an optional advantage which a few ex-Ministers may or may not avail themselves of, as they think proper. The salary of an English Prime Minister is a manifestly inadequate remuneration. If the matter were to be regarded merely from a monetary consideration, it is obvious that a man able enough to be a Prime Minister of England could, if he turned his attention in other directions, earn considerably more than £25,000 a year. It was, therefore, delicately arranged many years ago that two or three of the principal offices of the State should carry with them retiring pensions of £2,000 a year. Mr. Gladstone has never availed himself of this privilege. Lord Beaconsfield, being a man of smaller fortune, accepted the not too overwhelming bounty of the State. The pension lapses when the regular salary of a Minister is drawn. Thus from 1874 Mr. Disraeli disappeared from the list, but in 1880 application was made for the £2,000 in the name of the Earl of Beaconsfield.

SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT THUNDER.—A popular notion existed in the olden time that thunder prognosticated evil or good, according to the day of the week on which it occurred. If it occurred on Sunday, it brought about the death of learned men, judges and others; on Monday, the death of women; on Tuesday it augured plenty of grain; on Wednesday, the death of harlots and bloodshed; on Thursday, it brought plenty of sheep and corn; on Friday, "the slaughter of a great man and other horrible murders;" on Saturday, pestilence and death. It was also a popular fancy that the ringing of bells in populous cities charmed away thunder.