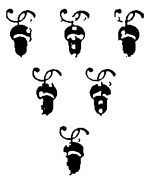


TWO SONGS
HARK! HARK!
THE LARK
AND
O'ER THE SEA
WITH
IN THE MOON
SHOWER

A RECITATION WITH
OBBLIGATO FOR VOICE
VIOLIN AND PIANO
BY

HARVEY
WORTHINGTON
LOOMIS



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INTRODUCTION

SURROUNDING and jealously guarding even the more refined delights, are their spheres of compensating dangers; and in the pleasure of tracing down, for our own better appreciation and enjoyment, the essential qualities of a man's genius, lurks the danger of cataloguing his faculties, and of unconsciously creating bounds which we suppose him to be incapable of passing. And by repeatedly insisting upon the invariable exhibition of these qualities which we have so happily discovered, we even attempt to define the province in which we would permit him to move. True progress in an individual lies not in merely surpassing his time, but in constantly surpassing himself. Had Beethoven continued to write symphonies in the manner of Haydn and Mozart, had Wagner continued to produce Lohengrins and Tannhäusers, these masters would undoubtedly have found the path of life more easy, and the barriers to contemporary fame much more readily overthrown; but we should never have known the Beethoven and the Wagner that we know to-day, nor that vague yet significant apparition, "modern music," with its freedom of tonality and its wealth and variety of content. When an artist encompasses a true and convincing expression of his thought or feeling, the world, if it approve, would have him repeat the deed *ad infinitum*; but in proportion to the upward urge of the life within him will he abandon his popularity, if he has been so fortunate, or unfortunate, as to have it, and involve himself in the dangers of a loftier flight, leaving his former friends to become enemies, or to pass on to stronger friendship.

"Allons! we must not stop here,

However sweet these laid-up stores, however convenient this dwelling, we cannot remain here,

However sheltered this port, and however calm these waters, we must not anchor here,

However welcome the hospitality that surrounds us, we are permitted to receive it but a little while."

Even so-called savage peoples have understood this spiritual truth. An American Indian once naively explained, with corresponding gestures of his hand, that "some people ascend in spirit with their growth, that others descend, while others live upon a dead level." Certain it is that much that we love must be abandoned if we would truly progress. Tolstoi sought the solution by maintaining that we should love nothing to such a degree that the loss of that which we love would cause us pain. Others find it easier to love, or at least to gracefully tolerate, pain itself. The life of a genius is a constant invitation, or exhortation, as the case may be, to those about him to cease their blind allegiance to that which they have loved before, and to seek life not in merely different but in loftier affections. It is sad that the good-will accompanying his invitation should so frequently be met with chilling disregard; and yet it is natural, since acceptance implies effort, and love of effort is not a generally prevailing characteristic

among those to whom the artist addresses himself. Moreover, energy is easily misdirected, and reacts in discouragement.

Strength is fineness, and its appreciation often takes us in that direction in which we least expect to go. An artist offers us a representation of beauty or power. Some superficial imitator, taking this for his point of departure, conceives that he has surpassed it by reinstating it before us in a stupendous or overwhelming form. The artist thereupon rebukes him by revealing that the next step beyond lay not in a mere magnifying of the idea, but in a refining of it, a fertilization of its waste spaces, and the nourishment, within its scope, of finer forms of life. In musical composition a melody, perhaps, is born of a certain mood. The composer does not immediately pass on to the creation of other and greater melodies, but supplies this with harmonies which will make it a more effective expression of that mood. Still he does not pass on, but seeks perhaps counter-melodies which, heard against the first, serve to bring its characteristics into stronger relief. Beyond this he seeks out the most significant marks of expression for each bar or phrase. And even then, if he allows the composition to stand for a greater or less time, he will discover innumerable ways of heightening its value, and may even add the one stroke which shall transform it from a merely excellent work into a masterpiece of expression. For most new or great ideas are at first crude; and all progressive ideas must exhibit qualities of newness or of increased refinement. The latter quality must include the former, though the converse is not necessarily true.

The works of the present composer, Harvey Worthington Loomis, incline toward increased refinement, and to that we must look to discover the native qualities of his talent. Spontaneous as are his ideas, he is satisfied with his expression, as a true representation of his conception, only after a vast amount of labor, often involving hours, spent upon a single bar. This fact renders it impossible that a casual examination or a reading at sight should reveal those qualities in his works which stand most truly for his particular mode of thought. We must approach them in the spirit in which they are written,—of careful attention to details,—before we can conscientiously lay claim to an understanding of them. Neither must we permit our efforts in this direction to detract from the breadth which they frequently exhibit, nor allow ourselves to regard the notes in themselves as an end, but rather as a means to the production of a certain mood.

The three compositions which follow, taken consecutively, present an interesting study in the development of musical possibilities. Thus the melody of "Hark! Hark! the Lark," to be in keeping with the archaic style of its conception, is restricted to the pentatonic scale F G A C D; the fourth, B \flat , and the seventh, E, of the natural scale being omitted, as has been customary in the music of many races at one or another period in their musical history. The song from Tieck's "Fair Magelone," which is German in feeling, employs the full diatonic scale, and represents musical art at a period before it was radically revolutionized by Wagner, following close upon the chromatic heels, as one might say, of Schubert and Chopin. It is not devoid of chromatic tendencies, but they are incidental rather than essential. "In the Moon Shower," however, depends avowedly upon chromatically changing harmonies, and involves the most distinctly modern effects.

The present musical setting of "Hark! Hark! the Lark" was composed for Margaret Mather's production of *Cymbeline*, though it possesses the distinction of having been rejected for performance, in favor of a more conventional composition, in the form of a quartette, by the same composer. The stage picture represents shepherds with archaic musical instruments of the Druidical period, in which a curious harp, and a pipe somewhat of the nature of a flute, were the chief means employed to produce musical sound. The song was therefore originally scored for harp and flute, and the imitation of these instruments in the accompaniment is obvious. The entire spirit, and one might say the musical purpose, of this work is so far removed from that of Schubert's immortal song, that happily no comparison can be instituted. In seeking the cause of this fundamental difference, it will be interesting to remember that Schubert's song was written in a café (perhaps on the back of a *Speisekarte*) upon a sudden inspiration from a "book of verses" which a friend handed to him, while the present one was written to conform to the scene in which Shakespeare originally placed it. It is quite possible that Schubert was entirely unfamiliar with *Cymbeline*.

The second song, upon a poem from "The Fair Magelone," by Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853), is a work of surpassing spontaneity and abandon, with a melodic purity and straightforwardness which holds its own by the side of works in a similar spirit by the great German song writers. Remarkable for its harmonic clarity, as well as for its grace and purity, is the almost Schubertian interlude in the accompaniment, the melody of which responds to the last preceding vocal phrase in a strikingly satisfying manner. The song burns with a fiery impatience from first to last.

In great contrast to this is "In the Moon Shower," upon a poem by Paul Verlaine. This is a recitation, accompanied by piano, violin, and voice, although each of the separate parts is sufficiently important in relation to the whole, to claim an equal attention. It is printed with these songs because of its interest from a vocal standpoint, and, as already indicated, for its correlative significance as a logical step beyond them in musical evolution. This work is thoroughly representative of a class of works brought to a notable perfection by the present composer, in which recitation is variously accompanied by an instrument or combination of instruments. "Sandalphon," by Longfellow, and other poems by Verlaine have been similarly adapted by Mr. Loomis. "In the Moon Shower" is intensely concentrated in mood, and, in marked contrast to the other compositions in the present work, is strongly subjective in feeling. Rightly interpreted, it will leave the hearer with impressions as haunting and elusive, as remote from those of the waking consciousness, as are the emotions sometimes reawakened by the sudden memory of a dream.

In offering these works, the editor wishes to call attention to the extreme care with which the marks of expression have been applied, and to ask a similar care in their observation, upon the part of the interpreter.

A. F.