



Holt Harmonic Society

On Tuesday evening last the members of this society gave a concert in the Holt Assembly Room. The room was crowded to the doors, about 150 persons being present, including the leading families in the village and a good sprinkling from Melksham and Bradford. The programme contained a variety of vocal and instrumental pieces, which were rendered in a very creditable manner by the whole of the members who took part in the proceedings, especially the instrumental portion; the band having made marked progress since last year. The society certainly has been more successful since its formation, having secured crowded houses on each occasion of its performances; but it should be borne in mind that one important element in securing this success, has been the very kind aid the Misses Forster, two accomplished ladies of the village, whose amiability and willingness to further any project which has the moral and social welfare of their neighbours in view, have induced them to step out of the "cold shade" which too often encircles our more wealthy neighbours, and employ their talents for the good of those around them. To these ladies then, must be attributed much of the success that has attended the society, and on behalf of the whole village, we most respectfully tender them our thanks. Slightly altering the phrase which applies to Caesar, when he crossed the Rubicon, we might, without flattery, say of these ladies – "they came, they sang, they conquered". We never saw an audience more thoroughly delighted than was the audience at last Tuesday's concert, during the performances of these ladies.

The programme opened with an overture from "Fra Diavolo" (*Auber*) by the band, which consisted of Mr. R. Papps, violin; Mr. H. J. Papps, clarinet; Mr. J. Pretty, cornet; Mr. Jones, piccolo; Master Papps, violencello; and Mr. Pile, bass viol. The other instrumental pieces were "The Brides Polka", (*D'Albert*), "The Italian Campaign Quadrille", (*ditto*), "Wedding March" (*Mendelssohn*), "The Colleen Bawn Valse", (*Burchardt*), and the "Erin go Bragh Quadrilles" (*D'Albert*), and great credit is due to the instrumentalists for the taste and precision with which they rendered the several selections. The glees "All among the barley" and "The sleep of the flowers" were very well rendered by the Misses Papps, Mr. and Mrs. Pile, and Mr. Pretty, who were warmly applauded. Mr. Pretty also sang two songs, "The maids of merry England" and "O keep me in your memory" and his efforts were acknowledged by hearty plaudits. The programme was interspersed with a variety of songs which were sung by Miss Judith Forster, accompanied by Miss Forster on the piano forte. The first was a sparkling composition, from a Spanish ballad, entitled "This lost earring", which set forth a little love affair in Oriental life, and the clear articulation and sweet expression with which the fair vocalist rendered the song, so delighted the audience, that for some minutes of loud applause it was a matter of doubt as to whether they would be satisfied without a repetition. The touching composition "The three fishers" was Miss Forster's next effort, and here she was equally successful, and sang with much taste and expression, which the auditory duly recognised by prolonged applause. Her tender appreciation of Bishop's well known "Home, sweet, home" was followed by most hearty plaudits and cries of "bravo" from many in the back seats, whom we strongly suspect have snug firesides of their own, and know the true value of home. Here Miss Forster showed herself a true musical artist, and the applause that followed grew more intense till she reappeared on the platform, when she gave, with much archness, "Beautiful Mistress Crop" (*Sporle*), which won for her another burst of applause, and some of the back seat holders endeavoured to construe it into another encore. But this would have been presuming on good nature, so the audience were content to wait for Miss Forster's next song, which fairly took them by surprise, her vocal resources being apparently

inexhaustible. It was "The great Convention Show" from Buckley's Serenades, into which the young lady was constrained to import the cackling of hens and the crowing of their mates, which she imitated to perfection, to the great amusement of her auditory, and the back seat holders would not be satisfied with anything short of a repetition, with which Miss Forster complied, with great good humour. "God save the Queen" solo and chorus, brought this most pleasant evening's entertainment to a close. Miss Forster's accompaniments on the piano forte, contributed in no small degree to the success which followed her sister's vocal efforts.

During the interval between the programme, Mr. T. B. W. Forster read, with much effect "The execution of Montrose" by Aytoun. It was rendered with true feeling and emphasis, and was received with unbounded applause. Great credit is due to the conductor, Mr. R. Papps, for the satisfactory manner in which the whole was arranged. The only alloy which mingled with the evening's pleasure, was the fact that soon the village would lose the young lady whose vocal powers had contributed so much to the happiness of all, Miss Judith Forster being about to be married. Everyone, by their hearty cheers, cordially re-echoed the wish expressed by the incumbent, the Rev. Mr. Lambert, when, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Misses Forster, for their kind services that evening, he said he hoped that she and her husband would settle in the village. This is the sincere and heartfelt wish of all. A cordial vote of thanks was conveyed, by three hearty cheers, to Mr. Forster, for his aid in the evening's entertainment, in reply to which that gentleman expressed his willingness to assist, in any way in his power, a movement for establishing a Reading Society in the village. Mr. Law very kindly promises to further any efforts in that direction for the benefit of the inhabitants. With such kind friends, and with such a fund of winter and summer entertainments, surely the Holt folks have every reason to congratulate themselves that "the lines have fallen unto them in pleasant places"

Trowbridge Advertiser, 26 December 1863

OPC Notes:-

Judith Forster married Henry James Raby on 31st December 1863 at St. Katharine's church, Holt.