

Account of Purley on Thames

A Concert at Purley School 1879

R200636 30/6/19

An article by Jean Debney in the series From my History Notebook article 89 March 1989

A Concert at Purley School in 1879

On Monday evening, 17th February 1879, the Rector of Purley, Rev. C. Travers, put on an entertainment in Purley School. The children were given a half day holiday while the school room was prepared. The participants in the Concert were evidently all friends of the Rector who used the following rhyming monologue to introduce the programme:

(The punctuation and underlining are as in the original)

I crave a few moments, but will not keep you long
While I recount the "Music" and the "Song"
With which we would tonight beguile
Some portion of your leisure time, while
You, we hopefully believe, will find
In the selection something for each mind
To carry home, as each thinks best
To lull their charmed fancy into rest
And if we ask no one here tonight to read
You will agree with me we have no need
When at the touch of our enchanted wand
So many songsters to our call respond.

One other we would fain have here tonight
Whose voice we always hear with much delight
But the wild War-cry in the Zulu land
Calls him thither with his gallant band
To win back at whatever cost
The Laurels which for a time our troops have lost.

And now to our programme

"Col H. Alexander under orders for the Cape, 1st Dragoons"*

First a "Welcome Song" from our youthful choir
Which breathes forth the laudible desire
That here in Purley harmony and love
May ever a sure safe-guard prove
Against the inroad of discordant wills
Those fatal harbingers of untold ills!!
Then Mrs. Travers ably aided by Miss West
Will on the Piano, do their best
To give what the great Mendelssohn has wrote
In "Athalia" the march with its inspired note.

Next will follow, rendered by Miss Hole
The "Little Mountain Lad", sung with that full soul
For music, which must ever give
To all it touches, the power to speak and live.

Mr. Trevelyan will then sing an air
Which will not leave us "Wasting in despair",
All the contrary "rejoicing" that again
He's here, your just applause to gain;
Then from "Alsatian Mountains Blue"
Will sound a voice, so very dear to you.
Whether its sweet tones come to cheer
Some lonely sufferer in their homes, or here
To charm, as it will do tonight
With refined melody and with talent bright.

From Bradfield also, despite the length of way
My friend Mr. Sealey comes, to add his lay,
And though few would, with complacent will
Come down at present, "Purley's rugged hill",
We prize the more, the spirit bold and brave
Which "Mans the life boat" and stems the wave;
The "Meeting of the Waters" a Parody will sound
To us, whom waters now, too plentiful surround
But Mr. (Rev C L) Alexander, adds some to our store
And then the first part of our Programme's o'er.

The "Echo" by the choir begins the second part
Miss Hole again will amply touch each heart
With "Darby and Joan", a favourite song
Whose principle, we hope, does not belong
Only to days gone by, but even here
To all wedded folk and those about to wed is dear.

Next in the list of names I see
"Martha" an operatic piece by Mrs. T.
Mr. Seely (sic) "with no foe to fear"
Steps in again to help us here;
Then we shall have our Nightingale once more
In "Bonnie Dundee" and I hope "Encore"!!
While without any personal allusion
The "Yeoman's Wedding" will draw to a conclusion,
Followed by a Ballad of the Great Tom Moore
Heard and liked, by us, in days of yore

Then singing "God Save the Queen" with all our numbers
We'll say "Good night" and home to our peaceful slumbers."

* The reason for this interjection is not clear.

P.S. I wonder if our present Rector can match this?

Jean Debney

