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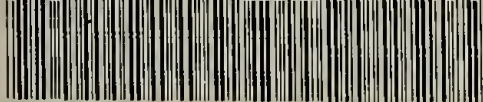
Lindomania or the Penny Press observed :: a study of the 1850 New York press in action.

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LINDOMANIA

or

THE PENNY PRESS OBSERVED

A STUDY OF THE 1850 NEW YORK PRESS IN ACTION

A Thesis Presented

By

JANET LEHRMAN BROWN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 1978

Department of History

LINDOMANIA
or
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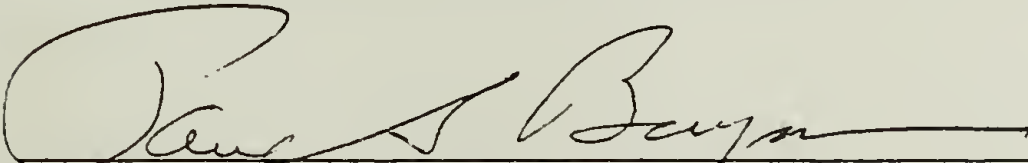
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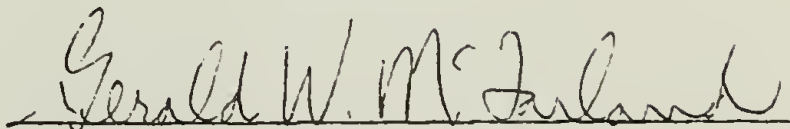
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INTRODUCTION

Of all American institutions perhaps none was as immediately affected by the enormous advances in technology which occurred in the 1840's as the fledgling penny press. Nothing more dramatically illustrates this than a comparison of the size of the investment with which each of three major New York City daily newspapers was founded. In 1835 James Gordon Bennett began the New York Herald with a modest investment of \$500. In 1841 Bennett's rival, Horace Greeley, launched his New York Tribune on \$3,000. Yet only ten years later, in 1851, the awesome amount of \$100,000 was invested by the backers of the newly begun New York Times. In the twenty years spanning from the origins of the penny press to the founding of the Times the number of people reading newspapers grew at a tremendous pace, far greater than that at which the population was expanding. Increased literacy resulting from more widespread public education played a part in this advance, so did the invention and use of the telegraph, steamship, and railroad which made possible the publication daily of exciting up-to-date news stories. The changing pace of urban life in the early Victorian era made it both possible and increasingly necessary for the common man to know of the events that could affect his own life, while the destruction of the structures of village life made the press, as an organ of public opinion, increasingly important as a social arbiter.

Yet, while scholars have paid some attention to the beginnings of the penny press in America, their studies generally focus on the early days of the penny press. They concentrate on the founding of the major New York penny papers, the Sun, the Herald, and the Tribune, and after

alluding to the role played by the telegraph in the Mexican War, skip ahead to the period directly preceding the outbreak of the Civil War. Little attention has been paid to the development in the penny press of the techniques now considered journalistic. Even less attention has been paid to the wealth of information about American attitudes and cultural values that lies buried in the pages of the developing dailies. Instead, scholars of American cultural history continue to concentrate their attention on the written remains of the literate elite; the letter writers, journal keepers and gentlemen of literary reputation whose personal tastes have been assumed to mirror those of their less vocal contemporaries.

This study was conceived in the hope of taking a first small step towards remedying this situation. Its purpose is to study a portion of the American penny press in action in the mid-nineteenth century. Its focus is the biggest cultural sensation of 1850; an event which though it brought 30,000 New Yorkers out cheering in the streets is largely forgotten today; namely, the 1850 visit to New York City of the world famous Swedish opera singer, Jenny Lind.

The Lind story is particularly suited for forming the subject of a study of the penny press. First of all, it received mammoth coverage. Almost every day of the more than three weeks that Jenny Lind spent in New York a story appeared in each of the three major dailies. With this kind of volume we should expect to see editors forced to utilize their ingenuity and whatever journalistic skills they possessed in order to keep the story alive and interesting for their readers. Secondly, because the Jenny Lind story was a local story in New York, we should expect to learn how the newspapers utilized their reporters and what, if anything,

was their approach to interviewing newsmakers. Then too, because a people reveal themselves in the heroes they choose and the manner in which they worship those heroes, we would expect to learn something about the readers of the penny press by examining the image of Jenny Lind which appears in their newspapers. Perhaps we can shed more light on the question of what it was that Americans were really celebrating when they crowded into Castle Garden, 9,000 of them at a time, to see a homely, thirty year old spinster sing.

Finally, the Jenny Lind visit is of particular interest because of the claim of Lind's promoter, P.T. Barnum, that her success was largely due to his own manipulation of the New York press, a claim which if it were to be true, would mark the beginning of an epoch and make Jenny Lind's American tour the first truly modern "media event."

We will begin by tracing the history of the New York penny press from its origins in the 1830's to the period of Lind's visit, using the contributions of historians of the press. Then we will look at a brief summary of the careers of Jenny Lind and P.T. Barnum and place Jenny Lind's tour in the context of the American musical experience before her arrival. With the background of Lind's visit thus established, we will devote the bulk of our pages to a detailed study of the three major New York penny dailies of 1850: The New York Sun, the New York Tribune, and the New York Herald. In each case we will first examine the newspaper's general format. Then we will try to establish its customary way of reporting on cultural events. Only then will we study the three phases of Jenny Lind's visit: the period before her arrival; the arrival and the days immediately following it; and finally, the weeks in which Lind gave her long awaited concert performances.

No study can totally recreate the style and atmosphere of a nineteenth century newspaper. It is possible in these pages to detect trends and to generalize about techniques. But this study is a gloss. The newspapers themselves are the text. The reader is urged to examine personally several issues of any newspaper of this period if at all possible before returning here to learn how the press functioned in one particular instance--the Jenny Lind excitement.

C H A P T E R I

THE BACKGROUND I: THE NEW YORK PENNY PRESS

New York City at the time of Jenny Lind's visit was a rapidly growing metropolis. It claimed a population of 450,000 inhabitants who were settled thickly in the area stretching from the western tip of the island up to 23rd Street. The Business Directory of the New York Mercantile Union for the year 1850-1851 listed fifteen morning daily newspapers and five evening dailies publishing in the city that year, along with a host of weekly, biweekly and monthly publications. These twenty daily newspapers were the successful veterans of an evolutionary struggle which had begun in the early 1830's, a struggle in which the stakes had grown greater each passing year.¹

The technological revolution which was to change the face of newspaper publishing began in the United States with the invention of the Fourdrinier papermaking machine in 1820. This machine led to the end of hand papermaking and also made possible the production of huge rolls of newsprint which opened the way for the development of more modern presses. The application of chlorine bleaching to rags at the same time meant that colored rags imported in bulk from Europe could now be used to make paper more cheaply. In the period from 1827 to 1832 the price of newsprint dropped from 1¢ to 1/4¢ a sheet. This drop in price in turn opened up several possibilities to newspaper publishers.

Up until 1832 all the daily newspapers published in New York City were of the type known as commercial advertising papers. Although they were published daily they were not purchased in the form of individual issues. Instead, subscribers, who were usually businessmen, paid a yearly

price of \$8 or \$10 for the privilege of receiving these papers six days a week. These newspapers featured permanent standing advertisements which were also paid for on a yearly basis. The news printed in such commercial advertising papers was exclusively of a political and mercantile nature. These newspapers, the most popular of which were the Journal of Commerce and the Courier and Enquirer, responded to the drop in the price of paper by increasing the size of their pages until they attained enormous proportions. The Journal of Commerce, for example, eventually reached 35" x 58" and contained eleven columns on a single page. These papers which James Gordon Bennett dubbed "blanket sheets" for obvious reasons, continued to publish into the middle of the 1850's, maintaining their original price of 6¢ a copy and their businessman clientele. But the lowering of the cost of paper made possible a new kind of publishing which in the long run caused the demise of the blanket sheets.

The New York Sun

In 1833, Benjamin Day, a twenty-three year old printer from Springfield, Massachusetts who had come to New York after an apprenticeship at the Springfield Republican, began publishing a 9" x 12" tabloid daily newspaper named The Sun. Day had no intention of causing a revolution in the newspaper world. His printing business had been hard hit by the cholera epidemic of the previous year and he hoped that his daily newspaper would attract business to his print shop. However The Sun was revolutionary. Individual copies cost only a penny, a price well within the reach of the working man, and were hawked on the streets by newsboys, a practice which was common in England at the time but unknown in America.²

Day's venture was not the first attempt to establish a penny press. The success of the English "Penny Magazine," published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in the hope of improving the poor, showed that the market for such cheap publications existed. In 1832 the Penny Magazine, a weekly by now, edited by Knight, claimed a circulation of 200,000 readers. Americans had attempted to publish daily penny papers in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, where Horace Greeley had begun a penny daily, The Morning Post, in 1839, a paper which lasted only three weeks. But Day's venture, The Sun, was the first successful American penny daily. Day's success was due to a large extent to the fact that he realized that a paper meant to appeal to the poorer classes must be easily accessible to them, whence the use of newsboys; and even more important, must be adapted to their interests.

The Sun ignored the political news handled by the more expensive newspapers. The death of Aaron Burr received only a line of print and the nomination of Marcy for governor of New York only an inch in its columns. The Sun offered its readers instead fictional features with titles such as "The Idiot's Revenge" or "Captain Chicken and the Gentle Sophia" which were placed prominently on the front page. It filled the rest of its columns with ghost stories, animal stories and police court items, the last of which were written up in a humorous style--another idea which had first been tried by an English newspaper, the London Morning Herald, but which found its first American application in the columns of The Sun.

The Sun, with its new format and new merchandising technique created a new class of newspaper buyers in New York City, the literate working class, and Day shrewdly encouraged this new class to advertise in his paper by offering his readers the opportunity to run one shot ads in

the Sun at 50¢ an insertion, a service no other newspaper offered. Servants seeking places, homeowners seeking servants, applicants for unskilled jobs, and people seeking to sell small items quickly made the Sun's advertising columns lucrative to its publishers and at the same time expanded the usefulness of the Sun to the working class reader.

In 1835, two years after the Sun commenced publication, an indulgent Journal of Commerce commended it and its imitators for their service to the poor in these words:

The number of newspaper readers is probably doubled by their influence, and they circulate as pioneers among those classes who have suffered greatly from want of general information.³

That same year Day became the second American publisher to use the Napier steam press (the first was used by the Cincinnati Gazette which had implemented it the previous year). This invention, which had first been implemented by the London Times in 1814, increased the speed with which the newspaper could be printed, as it was capable of 4,000 impressions an hour. This allowed the Sun to keep pace as its circulation rose to something in the area of 20,000 readers.

The Sun's circulation was given an added boost by the famous "Moon Hoax" perpetrated that same year, in which Richard Adams Locke, an Englishman writing for the Sun, wrote a series of articles claiming that by means of a new telescope, Sir John Herschel, a noted astronomer living at the Cape of Good Hope, had observed life on the moon. The articles ran from August 25 to August 30 and excited tremendous excitement with their descriptions of the inhabitants of the moon going about their business, until Locke admitted that the whole thing was a hoax. The Sun excited the public imagination the next year, 1836, with another hoax, this one the publication of "The Awful Disclosures" of Maria Monk, subtitled "A narrative of

her sufferings during a residence of five years as a novice and two years as a black nun in the Hotel Dieu Nunnery at Montreal," a scandalous memoir which appealed to the public's Catholic-phobia.

The Sun's tremendous success spawned a host of imitators, some of which, like the New York Transcript, flourished for several years and then failed, and one of which, James Gordon Bennett's New York Herald, became a formidable rival. The Sun however, by keeping its price lower than that of many of the newer "penny dailies" which actually cost 2¢, maintained its appeal among the poorer classes of the city.

In 1838 Day sold the Sun to his brother-in-law and former bookkeeper, Moses Y. Beach, for \$40,000. Throughout the '40's Beach shifted the emphasis of the Sun somewhat, giving slightly less importance to police court items and animal stories, and featuring political news which was now available in much larger amounts because of the transportation revolution and the invention of the telegraph. However the Sun continued its tradition of glorious hoaxes with the 1844 publication of Edgar Allan Poe's famous Balloon Hoax, in which the paper printed the story of how two gentlemen had supposedly crossed the Atlantic in a balloon. Before the use of steamships a crossing of the Atlantic could easily consume six or seven weeks. European news arrived irregularly and when it did arrive was already long out of date. Americans were effectively isolated from the rest of the world. The development of transatlantic steamship service suddenly put Americans in touch with a Europe in ferment. Chartists in England, republicans in France, and revolutionaries in Italy were challenging the time worn monarchies of Europe; and Americans, those first republican revolutionaries, waited to see what would be the outcome. Regular steamship service from Europe began in 1838. As the powerful

ships of the Cunard line whittled down the time necessary for the crossing of the Atlantic, the steamship crossings themselves captured the public imagination and became news stories in their own right. By 1850 it was possible to cross the Atlantic in only ten days. The Journal of Commerce, one of the 6¢ commercial advertising newspapers, began sending swift sailing yachts to meet incoming vessels at Sandy Hook, and also used trained carrier pigeons to ensure that it could get the news to its readers first. Beach's Sun, following the Journal of Commerce's lead, built a pigeon house on top of its building at Nassau and Fulton Street. A pigeon would be sent to the steamers which brought the news from Boston, which had become the Cunard Line's American port of entry, and he then returned to the Sun offices with "a slip of delicate tissue paper tied under his wing,"⁴ as the Sun described the operation in a December 14, 1843 article.

National news arrived more frequently and speedily too as railroads replaced coaches as the means of transporting the mails. The telegraph, invented in 1844, was even more revolutionary--its instantaneous transmissions annihilated distance. By 1846 the telegraph network had been extended to New York City. At first newspapers competed to get to the wire, but expediency soon led The Sun and other New York newspapers to pool their resources and form an informal association to share telegraphic dispatches. It eventually became the New York Associated Press. By 1847 the telegraph had proven so useful that of all the New York newspapers only the Herald went to the expense of sending a correspondent to the battlefields of the Mexican War.

Beach handed over the management of The Sun to his two sons, Alfred and Moses, in 1848; and it was they who were managing it at the time of

Jenny Lind's visit. Alfred Beach was more interested in pursuing a career as an inventor, and so the actual management of the paper fell the lot of Moses Sperry Beach, his brother, who concentrated on making the Sun a workingman's paper and diminished the emphasis on news reporting in favor of features and advertising.

The New York Herald

The Sun's strongest rival was the New York Herald, which was begun in 1835 by a tall, crosseyed, Scottish immigrant--James Gordon Bennett. Bennett was forty years old when he founded his paper, and had served a long apprenticeship on various American newspapers, including the powerful New York Courier and Enquirer. Bennett had risen from Washington correspondent to associate editor at the Courier and Enquirer but left it in 1832 when it shifted its allegiance away from Jackson, as he was at the time a fervent Jacksonian. On his own he now began a Jacksonian journal, the New York Globe, a small-sized newspaper which he described as being "printed on fine paper and with a beautiful type."⁵ It failed in a month. This experience was followed by a further failure as editor of the Philadelphia Pennsylvanian the following year.

In 1834 Bennett tried to interest Horace Greeley in the idea of publishing a penny daily, but had no success. Furthermore, he was turned down when he applied for a job with the Sun, whose success he greatly admired. Bennett, undaunted, decided to invest his entire capital--\$500--in his own penny paper. His avowed aim was to "give a correct picture of the world--in Wall Street--in the Exchange--in the Police office--at the theatre--in the Opera--in short wherever human nature and real life best display their freaks and vagaries."⁶

Bennett's newspaper lived up to his promise. Possessed of an excellent sense of humor and a genius for the use of words, Bennett had a keen sense of the human interest angle in reporting. Bennett's paper covered crimes as did the Sun; but Bennett went further than the Sun had ever gone. In 1836 when a beautiful young prostitute, Helen Jewett, was found hacked to death with an axe, Bennett went out personally, viewed the body, and then interviewed the madam who kept the house where the girl was found. James Crouthamel states that the Herald also, as a rule, followed stories for a longer period than the Sun did. Its sensational style was highly successful and Herald circulation rose steadily until by 1842 it equalled or surpassed that of the Sun.

Bennett's vision was a broad one. He did not limit himself to copying and improving the techniques which had made the Sun successful, but pioneered new categories of reporting which eventually were to attract a higher class of reader to the Herald's ranks. From the beginning of its publication the Herald featured a daily review of stock exchange operations which were coupled with Bennett's scathing criticisms of those operations. These reports, which were accurate and innovative, attracted readers who would normally have read the 6¢ papers. The Herald also began the practice of reporting the doings of "high society" and paid attention to the attractions at New York's many theatres. These features made the Herald particularly attractive to the growing class of petty tradesmen and skilled workers in New York, a group who had money to spend on entertainment on a small scale and who had an ambivalent curiosity about the lifestyles of those better off than themselves. Bennett pandered to their wish to know how the upper classes entertained themselves while at the same time he maintained a mocking sarcastic tone when dealing with the

rich whom he often depicted as wanting to be seen as an aristocracy in the American republic.

Bennett loved the American republic with all the fervor of an immigrant, and his love for America was linked with a deep repugnance for the establishments of a decadent Europe. This irreverence extended to the church. Bennett, a lapsed Catholic, brought down the wrath of his competitors when he attacked the prudery of his day in print. "Petticoats--petticoats--petticoats--there--you fastidious fools, vent your mawkishness on that" he thundered in 1840.⁷ The Herald in its early days sparkled with "squibs and rockets" in the words of a contemporary.⁸ But Bennett's boldness involved him in complications. He was attacked in the street on four separate occasions, the last of which occurred only weeks after Jenny Lind left New York City, in November of 1850, when Bennett was a man of 55. Bennett's fulminations and irreverence however did not hurt the circulation of the Herald which by 1836 was able to double its price to 2¢. But by 1840 his sarcastic treatment of religious topics and his open treatment of sexual matters were made into an issue by competitors in the newspaper field who organized a campaign against him which Bennett termed "the Moral War." With a flurry of epithets editors denounced Bennett as a "venomous reptile," a "leprous slanderer," a "notorious vagabond," and more.⁹ Day stated that Bennett's "only chance of dying an upright man will be that of hanging perpendicularly upon a rope."¹⁰ Bennett took this in stride. In 1835 he himself had been quite capable of attacking seven newspaper editors in a single issue of the Herald. The Sun he called at one point--typically--"a sneaking, drivelling, nigger paper"¹¹ that was produced by "the garbage of society." A more serious threat was posed to the Herald when Bennett's opponents combined forces

and tried to get the Herald's advertisers to boycott it by refusing to advertise theatres in their own pages if they advertised in the Herald.

This, however, was unsuccessful; only one theatre agreed to the boycott.

Eventually the "Moral War" sank of of sight in the campaign fever of 1840.

Bennett himself claimed "these blockheads are determined to make me the greatest man of the age,"¹² but Mott in his history of journalism claims that the "Moral War" had an adverse effect on the Herald's circulation cutting it by one third, and suggests that after 1840 the Herald's tone became more sedate. Sedate or not, throughout the 1840's Bennett's Herald continued to give detailed treatment to stories involving murder, suicide, adultery, and rape and it often published crime stories missed by its competitors. Its circulation continued to grow too, until it appears to have outstripped all its rivals.

Besides featuring lurid crime and human interest stories the Herald continued to attract readers by keeping up with the technological improvements which had revolutionized newsgathering in the 1840's. The Herald maintained a fleet of steam launches which raced to pick up the mail off of incoming European steamers and Bennett spent large sums retaining a wide-spread net of correspondents who mailed foreign and out of town stories to the Herald. Innovative in every area of journalism, Bennett decreed that no stock cuts be allowed in the advertising run in the Herald. These were small pictures which the other papers continued to run into the 50's--small pictures of a house, a truss, a piano, or a steamboat which ran at the edge of an advertisement involving such an item. Bennett also refused to print standing advertisements and persuaded his customers to publish fresh advertising copy every day, a practice which made his

advertising columns more interesting to read and which was soon copied by other papers.

By the time of Jenny Lind's visit to New York James Gordon Bennett's Herald had become probably the most widely read of New York's penny newspapers. Its sensationalism and its championship of the common man ensured it the readership of the lower middle class and lower class reader, while its excellent financial reports and detailed political reporting--slanted towards the Democratic party--attracted a better class of readers to the Herald's ranks. Bennett himself remained unspoiled by his success, and continued to put in sixteen hours daily at the Herald's office, writing, editing, and supervising his creation.

The New York Daily Tribune

A third important penny daily emerged in New York during the '40's--Horace Greeley's New York Tribune. Greeley's newspaper succeeded because it appealed to a segment of the population to whom the other dailies were distasteful.¹³

While Bennett was to characterize the readers of the Sun in 1850 as being "among the negroes, seamstresses and poor women" of the city, he abused the readers of the Tribune by calling them "college boys, school girls, dreamers, and poets, socialists who live on air, and phalanxterians who gorge on a vegetable diet," satirizing the reforming zeal and occasional absurdities of Greeley and the ex-Brook-Farmers whom he had introduced into the editorial staff of the Tribune.¹⁴ Greeley was a transplanted Yankee like Day and Beach. He had learned his trade in East Poultney, Vermont in the 1820's and had come to New York in the 30's, where he worked as a jobbing printer--printing Bibles--and later made a

name for himself by publishing a weekly magazine, *The New Yorker*, and a Whig 1840 campaign newspaper, the *Log Cabin*, the latter of which touted the virtues of William Henry Harrison.

Greeley, like Bennett, was a flamboyant character. He dressed oddly, and would often appear with one trouser leg inside his boot and the other hanging out, his pockets stuffed with clippings. He talked incessantly, proofread compulsively, cursed frequently, and was a devoted Grahamite vegetarian. All his life he was to be addicted to causes. Infused with reforming zeal and a deep faith in the Whig party of Thurlow Weed, and riding the wave of success that the *Log Cabin* had brought him, in 1841 Horace Greeley decided to begin his own daily.

He believed that the techniques that Bennett had so successfully used for his own scurrilous profit could be adapted to the ends of improving morals, correcting the world's evils, and, incidentally, promoting the interests of the Whig party in New York--a party which controlled none of the major penny papers. Greeley promised his readers that

The immoral and degrading Police Reports, advertisements and other matter which have been allowed to disgrace the columns of our leading penny papers will be carefully excluded from this, and no exertion spared to render it worthy of the hearty approval of the virtuous and refined, and a welcome visitant at the family fireside.¹⁵

The *Tribune* began publishing on April 9, 1841. From the start Greeley was fortunate in attracting capable people to help him in his enterprise. A businessman, Thomas McElrath, added his \$2,000 to Greeley's original investment of \$1,000 and counselled Greeley wisely on the business aspects of running a newspaper. He became a partner in the *Tribune* but stayed out of the editorial side of the business. At the *Tribune*'s start Greeley also received valuable editorial assistance from Henry J. Raymond, who was later to be the first editor of the *New York Times*, and from Charles A. Dana, who went on to edit the *Sun*. Lacking resources for

getting the latest news fast that the successful Herald had access to, Greeley had to resort to substitutes such as asking senators to send him copies of their speeches before they were delivered so that he could print them on time. The Tribune relied more heavily on articles cut from out-of-town newspapers than did its competitors, but its strong moral stance, its Whig slant, and its timely championship of reform, attracted a devoted readership. By the mid 1840's Sun and Tribune newsboys were known to do battle in the streets for customers. By the end of the 40's the Tribune seems to have outstripped the Sun in circulation and have posed a serious threat to the Herald.

Greeley's style as an editor was diametrically different from that of Bennett. Rather than dominating his paper as Bennett did the Herald, Greeley preferred to set the paper's tone and then rely heavily on the men working with him, his managing editors and reporters, so that his Tribune emerged as more of a team effort than did the other newspapers. Opinions found in the Tribune could vary over a wide range, depending on who wrote the article in question. Greeley's biographer, William Harlan Hale, considers Greeley's major contribution to the Tribune to be his hiring of brilliant writers and social thinkers, such as Margaret Fuller, George Ripley, and Bayard Taylor, and the overall direction which he gave the paper. As time went on, Greeley's career as a lecturer, promoter of reforms, and presidential hopeful took up increasing amounts of his time and his direct influence on the paper waned.

In harmony with his ideals, which included a firm belief in trade unionism for skilled workers, Greeley encouraged the unionization of his own printers, and himself presided over the first New York printer's union meeting which was held January 19, 1850, where he issued union cards

to the men. He also extended the ideals of socialism into the management of his paper by offering shares in the Tribune to its 125 employees at \$1,000 per share and making the terms of purchase such that employees were able to pay for their shares with the dividends those shares earned them. As the Tribune thrived, those who owned shares in it did very well. In 1849 the Tribune's stockholders divided \$25,000 in profits. By the next year they divided \$50,000--twice that amount. By 1850 then it was clear that the Tribune had captured a goodly portion of New York's newspaper readers.

Circulation figures are always unreliable. At the time of Jenny Lind's visit to New York the Sun claimed a "combined" circulation of 55,000 in its masthead, while the Herald claimed one of 75,000 and attributed 60,000 to the rival Tribune. What exactly it was that was combined to come up with these figures is uncertain. Weekly editions aimed at the out of town market seem to play a large part in the figuring of the totals. A certain amount of wishful thinking also went into it. The Herald claimed a more realistic daily readership of 30,000 and granted Greeley the 18,000 readers he claimed for the Tribune. Even allowing for exaggeration the growth in newspaper readership since the penny newspapers began publishing was enormous. In 1830 the largest circulation for any New York newspaper belonged to the Courier and Enquirer which claimed 4,000 readers. By 1850 the population of New York was only twice what it had been in 1832 but the number of readers claimed by the Herald was more than seven times as great as that the Courier and Enquirer had boasted in the earlier year. By 1850 New York's three major penny dailies accounted for some 70,000 readers, possibly more. They had survived the fierce

competition of other daily newspapers by evolving disparate styles and appealing to distinct groups within the newspaper reading public. Potentially they were in a position of considerable power as institutions reflecting public opinion in a rapidly changing society whose values were in flux. How aware they were of that power themselves, and to what extent Barnum, the "Great Showman," was able to use that power to win fame and fortune for Jenny Lind are the questions we must bear in mind when we come to examine the progress of Jenny Lind in the pages of the 1850 penny press.

Footnotes

¹For information relevant to the general history of the New York City press I am indebted to Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism, A History, 1690-1960, third edition (New York: MacMillan Company, 1962) and to Frank Presbey, The History and Development of Advertising (New York: Doubleday, 1929). James L. Crouthamel, "The Newspaper Revolution in New York, 1830-60," New York History XLV (1964) 91-114 has some useful information on the commercial advertising newspapers.

²Much useful information about the New York Sun can be found in Frank M. O'Brien, The Story of the Sun (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1928). For information about the English press in this period and the Penny Magazine see John Wendell Dodds, The Age of Paradox: A Biography of England, 1841-1851 (New York: Rinehart, 1952).

In the interest of simplicity the names of newspapers will not be underlined in this study.

³Presbrey, p. 202.

⁴O'Brien, p. 97.

⁵Don C. Seitz, The James Gordon Bennetts (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1928), p. 32. Seitz is one of the few sources for material on James Gordon Bennett. Allan Nevins, "James Gordon Bennett," Dictionary of American Biography, 195-9 is also useful. James L. Crouthamel, "James Gordon Bennett, The New York Herald, and the Development of Newspaper Sensationalism," New York History, LIV (1973) 294-316, investigates the Herald's style in its early years.

⁶Presbrey, p. 195.

⁷Seitz, p. 74.

⁸Seitz, p. 41.

⁹Seitz, p. 81.

¹⁰O'Brien, p. 62.

¹¹William Harlan Hale, Horace Greeley, Voice of the People (New York: Collier Books, 1961), p. 37.

¹²Seitz, p. 84.

¹³There does not appear to be any book on the Tribune itself. I have here drawn on Hale's biography of Horace Greeley and Henry Luther Stoddard, Horace Greeley, Printer, Editor, Crusader (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1946).

¹⁴New York Herald, March 13, 1850, p. 2.

¹⁵Stoddard, p. 61.

C H A P T E R I I

THE BACKGROUND II: JENNY LIND AND BARNUM

Few would have doubted even before Jenny Lind landed on American shores that her manager, P. T. Barnum, stood to make a profit, though Barnum himself sought to create the illusion that he had no such hopes. At the time that he engaged Lind for her American tour--he had outbid several other impressarios for the honor--Lind's reputation was at its zenith in Europe. Queen Victoria herself had attended a command performance and had tossed Lind a bouquet. Indeed, the word "Lindomania" had been coined in England--probably in emulation of the word "Lisztomania" which described an earlier public enthusiasm--and was freely used to describe the frenzied adulation that the public showered on Jenny Lind.

But although few would have doubted that Barnum stood to make a profit, none could have predicted the size of the fortune that his speculation brought him. He grossed \$535,486 from Lind's performances, more than twice the \$176,675 which went to Lind. And Lind's profits exceeded the huge sum of \$150,000 which she had demanded as a precondition for her American tour.

Many factors contributed to Lind's successes both in Europe and in America. In a 1931 collection of essays about Jenny Lind, Edward Wagenknecht sought to determine the qualities of Lind's singing, performance, and personality which led to this success, drawing his conclusion from a careful study of contemporary sources. A modern scholar, Milton Goldin, has written a delightful book on the business side of classical music in America, The Music Merchants, which places Lind's success in the context of the experience of other European musicians in America. Goldin's book is particularly useful as it clarifies the question of just what

exposure Americans had had to opera before the advent of Jenny Lind. Another scholar, Neil Harris, in his study, Humbug: The Art of P. T. Barnum, discusses Barnum's tactics and analyzes why the American national character was so particularly susceptible to Lind's allure.¹

Of Lind's European reputation little needs to be said here. Born in 1820 illegitimately--her parents married only years after her birth--Jenny Lind was taken as a small child and trained by the Royal Theatre in Stockholm. She was talented and homely, with a particularly broad nose. Performing first in melodramas and then in operas, she attained a certain measure of celebrity in her own country. But when she went to a famous teacher, Manuel Garcia, in Paris at the age of twenty-one hoping to improve her singing techniques (Manuel was the son of the Garcia who had toured America) she met with indifference and was told that she had ruined her voice by singing too hard throughout her youth. She waited a year, resting her voice and studying foreign languages, before Garcia began training her. Even then he considered another of his pupils, unknown to posterity, to be superior to her in talent. Jenny Lind began singing in Europe's main opera houses in the mid-forties and received unanimous acclaim. Composers of the stature of Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer composed arias especially for her and opera managers bid for her talents. In May of 1847 after complex negotiations--Lind appears to have had a sharp eye for her own financial affairs--Jenny Lind made her debut in London where she eclipsed all other singers, including Giulia Grisi who had reigned in London since the late 30's. Lind brought to England considerable vocal talents, but she also possessed that greater jewel, a stainless reputation. Lind was famous for her chastity in a day when most opera singers used

their positions to attract wealthy and aristocratic protectors to whom they often bore children out of wedlock. Lind's virtue was militant. She lived modestly, practiced a very visible religion, and was renowned for the large sums she contributed to charity. While in England she lavishly donated to hospitals and orphanages. In 1849, after two years of English triumphs Lind announced her desire to leave the operatic stage for good. She was twenty-nine at the time and had been a professional for nineteen years. However, she had had a significant reputation for only about five of those years. The motivation for this retirement is usually explained as being the strong religious feeling which made her uncomfortable with the stage in principle, and by the fact that by 1849 she had earned funds sufficient to support herself in retirement. Wagenknecht goes further and suggests that Lind feared being unable to live up to her reputation.

It was at this point in Jenny Lind's career that Barnum engaged her to tour America. Lind was attracted to the idea of such a tour as she would give concert performances rather than performing in operas and in America she could make a tremendous amount of money in a short time--money she intended to give to charity. Barnum outbid several other impresarios including Chevalier Wyckoff, the man who had so successfully managed the highly successful American tour of dancer Fanny Ellsler ten years earlier, and offered Jenny Lind a guaranteed \$150,000 for 150 concerts to be given over the course of a year. Barnum further provided her with all her expenses, servants, and the accompanying musicians of her choice. Lind chose Jules Benedict, a German conductor and composer who had made his reputation in London, and Giovanni Belletti, a baritone who had known

Lind since her days in the Stockholm Theatre. Barnum paid each of these men generously too.

It has been traditional in all accounts of Jenny Lind's American tour to ascribe her tremendous success to the skill of her manager, P. T. Barnum. Barnum himself started the tradition with the account of the tour he published in his 1855 biography, The Life of P. T. Barnum, Written by Himself.² Barnum's biographers, faced with an almost total absence of documents relating to much of Barnum's life, have universally depended on his own version of the story. Without denying that Barnum played a significant role in Jenny Lind's success, we should realize that there is no reason to accept the accounts found in his autobiography. Barnum wrote it at a time when he had lost most of the fortune Lind had earned him through unwise investments and needed to remind the public of his former triumphs. The book was written in a style very reminiscent of Charles Dickens, the most popular writer of the day, and was intended to be a best seller, which in fact it was. Periodically reissued in new editions throughout Barnum's long life, the autobiography sold more than a million copies and immortalized Barnum's own vision of Barnum as the huckster extraordinaire.

As will be seen later in this study, several statements of Barnum's which can be checked out are not supported by evidence. It may be wisest to regard the autobiography as a suspect source. All that can be known for certain about Barnum is that after a childhood in Connecticut he tried several ventures in storekeeping, lottery sales, and weekly newspaper publishing; that he came to New York in 1834 where he invested in an aged Black slave woman, Joice Heth, who was purported to be George Washington's

168 year old nurse; that after her death, and the subsequent autopsy report that she was in fact merely in her eighties, he travelled with several small circus companies as a showman; and that in 1841 he emerged from obscurity and purchased Scudder's American Museum, the institution with which he began making his mark on New York.

Barnum showed great flair in the methods with which he publicized his American Museum. But it is important for our purposes in this study to realize that his methods did not involve direct use of the newspapers. Presbrey points out in his history of advertising that Barnum used a brilliant assortment of stunts and posters but used very conventional newspaper advertising. Barnum drew customers with stunts such as hiring a brass band to play from atop the Museum building, or hanging a banner with the portrait of an upside-down violinist on it in front of the building to suggest the wonders that awaited within. Frauds and hoaxes like the "Feejee Mermaid"--a loathsome specimen manufactured from the chest and arms of a monkey and the body of a fish--and the "Woolly Horse" increased Barnum's celebrity. His newspaper advertisements were however similar to those published by other proprietors of similar "museums." In 1844 Barnum increased his reputation when he took a midget, Charles Stratton--renamed General Tom Thumb--to England where under Barnum's expert management he gained entry to the royal palace and delighted the Duke of Wellington.

In his autobiography Barnum claims that he decided to bring Jenny Lind to America because he wished to change his own image. Long associated with freaks, he now wished to be associated with culture. He asserts that Americans had little interest in opera and that Lind's name was virtually unknown here, telling how he told a train conductor with whom he

was acquainted that he had just engaged Jenny Lind and received the reply "Jenny Lind! Is she a dancer?"³ By Barnum's account, chilled to the bone by this evidence of the public's ignorance, he rushed into action, circulating biographies and supplying the press with a steady stream of articles about Jenny Lind's benevolence and European triumphs. While Lind gave two final concerts in Liverpool, at his suggestion, he "procured the services" of a London music critic whose rapturous account of these concerts were forwarded immediately by steamer so that they could appear in the American press before Lind's arrival, and achieve "the desired effect."⁴

Barnum then surrounded Lind's arrival with newsworthy events. He announced a contest for a prize song, "A Welcome to America," which would be sung by Lind at her performances, claiming that Lind herself had demanded such a song. (She hadn't and was never happy singing it.) He arranged for banners and floral tributes at her landing and had her visit various sites around New York each day. He held auctions for the seats to her first two concerts at which great sums were bid by tradesmen, hotel owners, and patent medicine doctors all desirous of winning for themselves the publicity that such a "foolish" expenditure was sure to bring in the national press. Besides engineering these events Barnum publicized Lind's acts of charity and took care to make sure that the arrangements for the concerts were such as to ensure the comfort and satisfaction of those who attended, by instituting a clever system of color coding for tickets and ushers so that ticket holders could easily find their seats in the cavernous Castle Garden.

Lind spent twenty-six days in New York. Arriving from Liverpool on September 1, 1850 she gave her first concert September 11, and followed

it with five more concerts, each of which attracted greater crowds than those which had gone before. On September 25 she departed to Boston and further triumphs, intending to return to New York after touring more of the country. Her travels for the next year around the United States and eventual break with Barnum are outside the scope of this study. Suffice it to say that her attempts to concertize on her own were not highly successful; but this was partly due to overexposure--and the fact that Lind, newly married to an unassuming German pianist who had come to America as an accompanist in the middle of her tour, insisted that his solo performances form a major part of her programme.

Without discounting Barnum's contribution, it is important to realize that factors independent of his management were instrumental in bringing about Lind's success. First of all it must never be forgotten what a large role European culture played in American life in the first part of the nineteenth century. Although the United States was almost sixty years old in 1850 it still retained a colonial relationship with Europe and especially England as far as the arts were concerned. English books and magazines still made up a significant proportion of the publications available in bookstores. The shadow of the European masters hung over those enterprising American painters who were attempting to hew out an American style of art. Americans had made great strides in literature since colonial days, but in 1850 James Gordon Bennett, who was as great an American chauvinist as could be found anywhere, when speaking about "the dream of a great American poet" immediately qualified the phrase by adding, "if we had one."⁵

In the fields of symphonic and operatic music America lagged even further behind. In Europe musicians flourished under the patronage of wealthy aristocrats who inherited the tradition of supporting the arts along with their titles and lands. Not that aristocrats all loved music. Boxes at the opera were a part of the insignia of privilege. At the opera patrons could flaunt their clothing, and meet with their social equals, while the opera company itself furnished beautiful young girls from whom they could select mistresses.

In the European courts and capitals musicians found a milieu in which the long, specialized training necessary for the production of accomplished composers and performers could take place, as well as the teachers who could give them that training. No such conditions existed in the American republic. While occasionally an American composer or performer appeared, the typical American musical offering consisted of ballad singers, like the popular Hutchinson family, or black-face minstrel shows.⁶

Nevertheless Americans were kept informed of the glories of the European musical scene by the periodicals that made their way across the Atlantic. Americans who could afford the expense of the journey visited Europe to improve their educations and returned with tales of what they had seen. As the century progressed, Americans, so proud of their new country, chafed at the image of themselves as rude country bumpkins. In time European artists discovered that a tour of the American hinterlands was the ideal cure for sagging finances or a professional eclipse at home.

The first of these European artists arrived in 1825. Manuel Garcia, a celebrated tenor, and his seventeen year old daughter Maria, later to be known by her married name of Malibran, accepted the enormous offer of a

New York wine importer and came to America where they performed in a series of Italian operas. Before their visit most Americans, if they had been exposed to opera at all, had been exposed to ballad opera, the older style which had been popular in eighteenth century England, or else to abridged English translations of Rossini's "Il Barbieri di Seviglia" or Mozart's "Nozze di Figaro" which were usually presented with interjected popular songs and comic afterpieces. Garcia's tour was an immense success. Box seats to the performances of his company went for \$2.00 apiece, four times the usual admission price at the fashionable Park Theatre where they were held. Garcia and his daughter Malibran earned \$3,000, while the total receipts of the company after ten months in America during which they gave seventy-nine complete performances of Italian operas were \$56,685. It was not easy work for Garcia however. Forced to work with an orchestra of twenty-four Americans, Garcia rehearsed with them for a month before he considered them fit to appear in public. Even then they were so far from being professional by European standards that Garcia, at a performance whose finale was particularly upsetting, threatened the conductor with a sword.

Attempts by members of New York's wealthy merchant class to establish a permanent Italian opera in New York after Garcia's visit, on the model of those supported by the European upper classes, were in general unsuccessful. Two opera companies were established, one in 1833 and one in 1844, but neither lasted for more than two seasons. European visitors, however, continued to have success. One troupe, a collection of Italians called "The Havana Opera Company"--its manager was from Cuba--toured successfully in 1845. Its success spurred 150 citizens of "social prominence"

to establish the Astor Place Opera in 1847 under the management of Max Maretzek. This company which featured Italian performers lingered on until the spring of 1850 but failed for financial reasons shortly after Jenny Lind's arrival. New York's elite had not enough interest in the opera to underwrite the costs of an opera company. But the failure of such permanent companies did not reflect a lack of interest in the opera itself. In 1850 the Havana company returned to New York for a highly successful engagement, performing first at the Astor Place Opera and then at Niblo's Garden before moving to Castle Garden, a huge theatre constructed out of an old fort, whose immense capacity allowed the company to charge a low 50¢ admission. This company was still enjoying success in New York City at the time of Jenny Lind's arrival, vacating Castle Garden only in time for her first concert.

Other European performing artists had also done well before Lind, exploiting the American yearning for high culture. Although Americans had acted provincially in the case of Francisquy Hutin, a ballet dancer who had received a cold welcome in New York in 1827 when every woman in the lower tier of boxes walked out at the beginning of her performance in protest at her scanty costume, by 1840 when Fanny Elssler, another dancer, arrived they had become more sophisticated. Elssler scored a tremendous success with the public. Her carriage was pulled through the streets by young men who harnessed themselves to the shafts in place of horses and Congress was adjourned so that the congressmen could attend her Washington performance. Tours by Norwegian violinist Ole Bull in 1843, Leopold De Meyer, a pianist, in 1845 and Henry Herz, another pianist in 1846 were

also financial and critical successes and demonstrated the attraction of any European virtuoso to Americans.

So Jenny Lind could expect to be well received in America, simply judging from the experience of her European colleagues. By coming across the Atlantic she was giving Americans an opportunity to see what they had previously only been able to read about in the European press. Attendance at her concerts enabled the American to feel like a cultured man of the world. But just as important an incentive to the average man to see Lind or any virtuoso was their value as curiosities--high class freaks. Americans flocked regularly to museums like Barnum's all over the country where they were treated to exhibitions of "prodigies"--dwarfs, albinos, siamese twins, and other human anomalies. It is not farfetched to suppose that in an age when few people could expect to be exposed to anything except the most amateur of musical performances, the performance of a skilled virtuoso was a true wonder. Most of the people who crowded Lind's concerts had never seen anything except at the very best the second rate Italian singers who made up the companies which had played in New York. The emotional impact of their first exposure to consummate musicianship can hardly be estimated, and Jenny Lind was a consummate musician.

All of Barnum's efforts would have been wasted if Jenny Lind had not been able to fulfill the expectations his publicity aroused. The crowds who paid three dollars apiece for their tickets expected something and they got it. To a certain extent Jenny Lind's popular success can be attributed to the qualities of her voice and the style of music she preferred to sing.

While it is hard to estimate the qualities of a voice at such a distance in time it is clear that Lind's voice was exceptionally loud and carrying, especially in her upper register which stretched up to a G three octaves above middle C. Mendelssohn considered her one of the greatest artists who ever lived, but he made the telling remark that she sang "bad music the best."⁷ Lind's repertoire in America consisted of sentimental Italian songs in the bel canto style and flashy showpieces full of octave leaps and sustained trills which enabled her to show off her voice's peculiarities. Many Europeans, including Richard Wagner (whose music she was to detest), considered her not to be as effective in entire operas as other singers of the day. But it was precisely these traits--defects to a trained musician--which rendered Jenny Lind so popular with the general public. Lind's sentimental repertoire coupled with a delivery rich in elocutionary techniques had great appeal to an audience whose musical tastes had been formed by popular ballad singers. Although Lind was presented as a performer in the highest classical music tradition she offered a version of classical music which was easily accessible to an untrained taste. Critics might wish that she sing more sophisticated arias than "The Herdsman's Song" a sentimental folk melody, but her audiences loved it. When Lind's performance was over they could go home convinced that they had attended a cultural event of the highest tone, and--and here lies her greatest appeal--enjoyed it.

Still, the fact remains that Jenny Lind's appeal went far beyond the attraction of her singing. Thousands of people who never saw her perform still idolized her. Products endorsed with her name did a brisk business. Jenny Lind, the person, became an object of veneration to a generation of

Americans. It is common to attribute this to her public image which in almost every particular embodied the qualities set forth by Barbara Welter in "The Cult of True Womanhood" as those to be desired in a woman.⁸ Modest, unsensual, self sacrificing, and self deprecating, Jenny Lind, it is claimed, was the natural idol of her age. Neil Harris propounds this idea in his book on Barnum, and introduces another idea worth consideration. In the tradition of intellectual historians Harris attributes some of the worship accorded Lind to the resurgence of an appreciation of nature sparked in America by the work of the "New England prophets" of the "religion of nature--Emerson and Greenough." Lind "displayed the benevolence of the Deity, as well as His versatility," argues Harris, drawing on statements of Emerson and anonymous magazine columnists.⁹ Her singing was artless and pure in contrast to the more artificial style affected by Italian singers and this naturalness--this unsensual naturalness--seemed to Americans the highest expression of the Northern European, Anglo-Saxon, personality, and therefore earned their praise.

The stage is now set. We have briefly examined the qualities Jenny Lind and her manager brought to their ambitious enterprise; we have looked at the artistic environment in which it was to take place; and we have briefly described the progress of the penny press which was both to aid in the creation of American Lindomania and to chronicle its progress. It is now time to turn to close examination of the individual newspapers and the treatment which they granted the Jenny Lind phenomenon.

Footnotes

¹Edward Wagenknecht, Jenny Lind (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1931), Milton Goldin, The Music Merchants (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1969), and Neil Harris, Humbug: The Art of P. T. Barnum (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1973).

Gladys Shultz, Jenny Lind (Philadelphia: Lippencott, 1962) is of some use for biographical details on Lind's life. Unfortunately it is written in a pseudo-fictional style and has no footnote references.

²P. T. Barnum, The Life of P. T. Barnum, Written by Himself (New York: Redfield, 1855).

The biography was supplemented by another one, a revised version of the first which was published eighteen years later, Struggles and Triumphs: or, Forty Years Recollections of P. T. Barnum, Written by Himself (Buffalo, New York: Warren, Johnson & Company, 1873). Presbrey discusses the immense popularity of these works and the use of them as success manuals.

³The Life of P. T. Barnum, p. 303.

⁴The Life of P. T. Barnum, p. 306.

⁵New York Herald, September 17, 1850, p. 4.

⁶I have relied heavily on Goldin in establishing what experience Americans had of classical music. Sigmund Gottfried Spaeth, A History of Popular Music in America (New York: Random House, 1948) has some information on popular performers and their material, but there does not appear to be any work on popular music in the first part of the nineteenth century which goes into the subject in depth and relates it to American culture in general.

⁷Goldin, p. 25.

⁸Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," American Quarterly, XVIII (1966).

⁹Harris, p. 137.

C H A P T E R I I I

THE NEW YORK SUN

In the year 1850 the Sun was the only one of the three major New York City penny newspapers which could actually be purchased for one penny. Its main competitors, the Herald and the Tribune, had long since raised their price to two cents. The Sun was able to afford to maintain its low price by devoting a larger percent of its columns to paid advertising and by employing a smaller staff than did its competitors. On its masthead the Sun claimed a circulation of 55,000--"double that of any other paper in the world"--and called itself the "best medium of Advertising in the United States." Advertising certainly formed a large part of the Sun's contents. Its four large pages each contained seven columns of print, giving the Sun a total of twenty-eight columns per issue. Of these, usually anywhere from fourteen to slightly over eighteen columns were taken up by paid advertising, which left less than half the paper for editorial content.

The amount of space available for news items was further limited by the Sun's practice of devoting a large part of its front page to a piece of sensational or humorous fiction or to a chatty essay on some topic like the evils of a second marriage. These features, which were the kind of material generally found in magazines, did, in fact, often come from the pages of popular English periodicals like Blackwood's Magazine or Charles Dickens' Household Words. No international copyright agreements existed in 1850 to protect the works of authors appearing in these English periodicals, a circumstance American publishers were only too glad to exploit.

The Sun, by publishing these items, was able to save money which otherwise would have had to be paid out to writers.

The theme of many of these front page feature stories is often sexual, although no overt mention of sexuality occurs. "The Forced Marriage" which appears September 20, 1850 on the front page of the Sun is typical of the genre. Set in England it tells the tale of a beautiful and pure young woman whose father forces her against her will to marry a wealthy but aging debauche. The marriage is duly consummated, the young woman retires to her husband's estate, dallies with his handsome nephew, and bears an heir. In a few years it is observed that all signs of youth and vigor have faded from her weary countenance, and at the end of the several columns of tiny print which contain this story, the heroine, now an aging recluse, must tell her son that a man whom he had just killed in a duel is in fact her husband's nephew and--the climax--her son's real father. Stories like this one are similar to the fare found in magazines like Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly, begun in 1855, the majority of whose readers tended to be working class people less bound by the moralistic podsnappery of the middle classes. The Sun's use of such sensational features--they are not found in the Herald or the Tribune--combined with its lower price may very well have drawn into the ranks of its readers members of the literate working class--the negresses and washerwomen whom Bennett sneeringly attributed to it.

The relatively few columns that the Sun could devote to the news after advertising and the cover feature were disposed of contained the major stories of the day--the telegraphic dispatches and the mail off the transoceanic steamships--and the more predictable varies of local news--

deaths by cholera, fires, visits by foreign ambassadors and firemen's meetings. The scandals of the day receive disproportionate amounts of space. Without exception the scandals reported are court cases, such as the Murder of Professor Parkman of Harvard by his colleague, Dr. Webster; the request for divorce by the wife of the celebrated actor Edwin Forrest; or the Gaines trial, an inheritance case which involved a New Orleans woman who had married two bigamists in succession. The common practice of all the newspapers at this time was to publish verbatim transcripts of the trial proceedings in such cases. This enabled the reader to learn all the spicy details of a scandal while lightening the workload for the newspaper since no investigative reporting was necessary. Such trial transcript items are longer than most other articles found in the Sun and in them we find again lightly veiled discussions of sexual topics. In the Forrest divorce case, for example, Mrs. Forrest is accused by her husband of "impropriety" with eight gentlemen (including N. Parker Willis, whose paeans to the purity of Jenny Lind published a year later form a large part of Neil Harris' discussion of the press and Jenny Lind). Mrs. Forrest in her testimony, as reproduced in the Sun, relates in her own defense that a friend of her husband quoted Forrest as saying concerning her alleged adultery that "there was no crime on her part--he wished to God there was."¹ Heady stuff for the supposedly reticent early Victorian era.

The big stories in the Sun were leavened with police blotter items such as the following:

Melancholy and Fatal Accident--Henrietta Spearhawk, a child eighteen months old, whose parents reside at 136 Greenwich St., yesterday fell from the fifth story window into the area and was instantly dashed to pieces. It had climbed up to the window to look for its father, and losing its balance fell. The Coroner held an inquest, and a verdict in accordance with the above facts was rendered.²

Bodies fished from the river, frightful affrays, doleful suicides, and young women found wandering witless in the street all furnished handy and captivating filler for the news columns of the Sun and of the other penny papers; however they stand out in the Sun because of the smaller amount of big story news coverage which it publishes.

In terms of how its pages are laid out, the Sun generally placed a magazine-type feature on the front page and then filled the rest of that page with classified advertising--often ads for steamship lines and pianos--each introduced by a small stylized picture, a stock cut. Amusement advertising never appeared on the front page of the Sun as it did in the Tribune. Page 2 was where the news of the day was to be found, while page 3 mainly bore more advertising--Missing Persons, Real Estate, For Sale, Amusements, Corporation Notices and a large number of employment ads, many for domestic servants. The back page held further advertising, usually for patent medicines and doctors who advertised quick private cures "without mercury or confinement."³ Often an advertisement for the Sun's own subsidiary printing house which did job orders appeared there along with some shipping and financial news, except on certain days when most of the back page was taken up by an alphabetic listing of letters to be picked up at the post office.

The major exception to this usual format occurred when a steamship arrived from California or Europe with the latest news. Such an event would frequently be the occasion for an "Extra" edition. Even in the regular daily edition such items would appear on the front page accompanied by an appropriate woodcut illustration which often stretched across several columns. Such a story would also be introduced by headlines which

otherwise rarely appeared in this period. The headlines would be stacked in decks in varying sizes of print, however they never were wider than the width of a single column. A typical headline of this type which appeared August 21, 1850 exclaimed "Fifteen Days Later/News From California/Arrival of the Philadelphia with \$1,000,000 in Gold." The infrequency with which the press employed headlines in 1850 is reflected in the fact that although the Jenny Lind story was a leading item in all the penny papers throughout the 3-1/2 weeks of her visit the only time that any newspaper gave it headlines was on the day after her arrival when the headline announced her arrival, the furor which greeted her and the arrival of the Atlantic's European mails.

An important class of item which appeared in the Sun is the "puff." These items, which showed up at the end of the "City News" column were set in exactly the same type as news items but were in fact advertisements. In format they were recommendations from the editor that the reader try some product or use some service which was often advertised elsewhere in the paid columns of the paper. Other forms of the puff conveyed news about an advertiser such as the note September 4, 1850 that a temperance award would be given to the leading actor in Barnum's Museum's popular play, "The Drunkard." Such puffs were most probably also paid advertising, since they often are almost identical with items published in the "Business Notices" section of the Tribune and we know from the Tribune's advertising rate section, found beneath its masthead, that those items are definitely paid copy. The latter Knox's puff and that of Anderson's Carpets are two such items which appear in the Sun under City News and in the Tribune as paid business notices.

The Sun and The Arts

Before examining the manner in which the Sun and its rivals handled the Jenny Lind visit it is worthwhile to look at the way in which they usually dealt with cultural events. The Sun ran a column entitled "Amusements," found either on the second or third page as a daily feature. This column consisted of short paragraphs about the offerings to be had at the various city theatres or amusement places which advertised in the Sun's paid advertising section. These listings were written in a puff style.

A characteristic item beginning: Miss Charlotte Cushman states,

...the distinguished actress played in Liverpool on the evening of the 16th inst., two weeks ago. Tonight she appears at Niblo's Garden, three thousand miles from the place of her last performance ... we doubt not she will be welcomed to her native land once more in a manner worthy of her abilities...⁴

Barnum's museum, which sponsors a 3-1/2 inch ad daily in the Sun, always receives a brief laudatory or informative notice in the amusement column, like the following example,

Barnum's American Museum will be open this evening after closing for the afternoon, and the sterling play, "The Drunkard" will be represente (sic) in the beautiful style that so fills this pleasant hous (sic) every night.⁵

The offerings at other theatres received similar treatment.

Books, which are occasionally advertised in the classified section on the front page, receive attention at odd intervals when the Sun lists "New Publications" and devotes a sentence or two to each one. Short items appear about Marezek's opera troupe and the visit of the Havana troupe, a three inch long news item announces the appearance of a Parisian Ballet troupe which consists of "some of the most celebrated ballet dancers of Europe, whose names we have not space now to enumerate."⁶

But compared with the attention lavished on the opera by the Herald and the Tribune, the Sun is almost silent. Its readers were very likely, in the majority at least, from that class which would be unable to afford the luxury of even the cheap 50¢ seats at the opera.

Advance Publicity for Jenny Lind in the Sun

As mentioned earlier, almost all accounts of Jenny Lind's American tour repeat Barnum's claim that he combatted the public's ignorance about the Swedish Nightingale by cleverly inserting articles written by himself or his agents in the New York newspapers.

Foreign correspondence glorified her talents and triumphs by narratives of her benevolence, and "printers ink" was employed in every possible form to put and keep Jenny Lind before the public.⁷

Neil Harris accepts this statement as he does so many others of Barnum and amplifies it.

Her current concertizing in Europe ... made excellent material for the letters published by New York newspapers and copied in every part of the country.⁸

It is therefore surprising to discover that the New York Sun, one of the most popular of the New York penny papers, did not benefit from Barnum's attentions. In the entire period from Barnum's first announcement of his engagement of Jenny Lind for an American tour to Lind's arrival in New York, a period stretching from February to September of 1850, the Sun published only four items about the singer. However, the few articles which do appear in the Sun's pages leave no doubt that Barnum was exaggerating greatly when he described Jenny Lind as being unknown. While Barnum writes

Only a small portion of the public were really aware of her musical triumphs in the old world, and this portion was confined almost entirely to musical people, travellers who had visited the old world, and the conductors of the press.⁹

the Sun addresses its readers in terms which make it clear that Lind's reputation and celebrity were already familiar to them.

The only item which the Sun publishes about Lind's visit before August 1850 is a letter which Barnum sent to all the newspapers. It was printed on February 20--appearing in all the papers with a dateline of February 22--and it proclaimed in the finest Barnumsque style,

Perhaps I may not make any money by this enterprise; but I assure you that if I know that I should not make a farthing profit I would ratify the engagement, so anxious am I that the United States should be visited by a lady whose vocal powers have never been approached by any other human being, and whose character is charity, simplicity, and goodness personified.¹⁰

Barnum's letter goes on to state that Jenny Lind "speaks of this country and its institutions in the highest terms of praise" and adds that she is not coming to make money--she has had better offers than his in Europe--but out of a desire to visit America itself.

In the 1855 autobiography Barnum says he wrote this letter to the newspapers only after being "overwhelmed with surprise and dismay" at finding that the details of his contract with Lind had been leaked to the press.¹¹ In the autobiography, by the way, Barnum claims to have sent the above letter to the press on February 22. A certain amount of light is shed on the usefulness of the autobiography by the fact that since Barnum's letter actually did appear on the 20th Barnum would have had to have sent it to the newspapers on February 19, which is the day that his agent is said to have returned from Europe and informed Barnum of the details of the secret contract. Obviously Barnum wasted no time in informing the public of his newest attraction.

After printing this letter the Sun appears to have ignored the other items which in the autobiography Barnum claims to have sent the press. He

specifically mentions a letter announcing that he has booked rooms at the Irving House, a hotel, but this letter only appears in the Herald, not in the other two major penny dailies, a subject we will return to later. Of "foreign correspondence" there is none in the New York Sun. There is however an article which takes a satirical swipe at Barnum. Entitled "A Nice Joke," it tells how the Chinese Museum, one of Barnum's competitors, has gotten the jump on him by hiring some Chinese ladies first, so that "Barnum is tearing his hair and vowing all sorts of revenge."¹² There is no further mention of Barnum or his protegee until August after this, in spite of the fact that Barnum is a steady advertiser in the Sun throughout this period with his large Museum advertisements.

On August 14 the Sun breaks its long silence and announces that Jenny Lind will give two concerts in Liverpool for which she will receive £1,000, or \$5,000 and for which tickets were selling at \$25. After this "the Nightingale" will embark for New York where she will probably arrive September 1. There are no explanatory notes about who Jenny Lind is, which suggests her reputation with the Sun readers is well established. This impression is further reinforced by a satirical front page feature published a week later entitled "How They Intend to Hear Jenny Lind: A Nut for Barnum" by Henry Howard Paul. The story, about a column long, begins,

We were lounging a few evenings since in the drawing room of one of our principal hotels, when there entered two individuals of rather equivocal appearance.

"...When do you think she will arrive?" one of the gentlemen asks "referring to world renowned cantatrice--Jenny Lind." A discussion ensues in which the other young man exclaims "Curse it the tickets are going to be so high, I'm afraid I shall be denied the luxury." The first young man, described

as "shabby genteel" suggests that the tickets will be five dollars, or may be auctioned off, "if there is a tremendous excitement." "I plan to hear her..." the other protests "my curiosity is not altogether to hear her sing, but to have a squint at the Nightingale." Eventually the two decide to wear the same necktie so that they can share one ticket and alternately slip in and out of the theatre. At the end of the piece the author concludes that "it will require all of Barnum's tact and keenness to prevent fraud and to have every note that she warbles well paid for"-especially since "Jenny sings in a very high key and her voice can be heard a long distance so that the enterprising may overhear her concerts by climbing into the neighboring treetops."¹³

The teasing tone applied to Barnum here is similar to that found in the article about the Chinese Museum, while the emphasis on the price of Lind's performance seems to be characteristic of the Sun. It is also obvious that for the Sun's readers Lind's attraction was not primarily her moral virtue and her charity. Instead it was her celebrity itself which would attract them to see her. But how the Sun's readers had come to learn of Jenny Lind's celebrity in the first place remains a mystery; they had not learned it from the pages of the New York Sun.

Lind's Arrival and First Days in New York

Because the Sun only had a limited amount of column space to devote to the news owing to the large amount of feature material and advertising which cluttered its pages we would expect it not to devote much room to the Jenny Lind visit. This is in fact the case. Nevertheless, the Sun prints at least one story a day every day but one that Lind spent in New

York. The stories tend to be short items buried in the midst of other "City News" items, except on September 2, when the Sun prints the account of Lind's arrival in the city, and September 12, the day following her first concert. When this kind of coverage is compared with that found in the other two newspapers the impression emerges that the Sun's working class readers were not as interested in Jenny Lind as were the middle class readers of the Tribune and the Herald, but they still wished to be au courant with events they could not help hearing discussed on every street corner of the city.

The story of Jenny Lind's arrival in New York received every distinction the Sun could give it save for the issuing of a special Extra edition. The front page of the September 2 edition of the Sun bears a large woodcut illustration of Jenny Lind's face which spans three columns. (The woodcut, incidentally, is taken from the pages of the London Illustrated News.) This is the only portrait of Lind appearing in any of the three newspapers. A long article filled with musical jargon taken from "Wilmer & Smith's European Times" of September 17 fills out the front page. It describes Jenny Lind's penultimate concert in Liverpool. The Sun introduces this article with the note that "The public are already so familiar with the chief events in the life of this singularly gifted being" that the concert account would be of more interest than biographical details.

The second page of the same edition carries an article about Jenny Lind's arrival which is headed with the large headlines usually reserved for gold rush stories or the arrival of European news. This article fills half of a column. "The talk of months" it says is "nothing" compared to

her reception by the crowds who swarmed to greet Lind. The arrangements made for her welcome--the wreaths, flowers and flags--are described and commended for showing "considerable taste." The article, however, omits many of the small human interest touches which are found in the longer Herald and Tribune accounts; for example, the mention of an overeager spectator falling into the water in his haste to greet the Nightingale.

An editorial remark which concludes this article shows that the Sun has not lost its earlier skepticism towards Barnum and his latest venture.

Such was the arrival of Jenny Lind. Whether she is worthy of it and whether the expectations of millions who are soon to hear her will be realized are problems which the future only can solve. We are at a loss to know what will become of scores of poor fools who seemed beside themselves merely on being informed that the occurrence here recorded was in prospect. They cannot do less than go mad now..."

The Sun devotes another short article that day to a description of Jenny Lind's "Dress and Appearance." Lind is described as "not possessed of any very great personal beauty" but having "very regular" features. The Sun notes that this article is provided for the pleasure of its "lady readers," and describes Lind's attire briefly.¹⁴

Internal evidence suggests that the Sun went to press earlier than its rivals. While the other two papers publish accounts of the serenade which the Musical Fund Society gave Jenny Lind on the evening of her arrival in the same issue as that in which they describe that arrival, the Sun publishes the serenade account one day later so that its account of her arrival ends with Lind driving to her hotel from the pier. This is characteristic of the Sun. In comparison with its rivals it usually seems to get much less information into its pages in situations where it relies on its own reporters for the story. Possibly it was understaffed.

The problem faced by all the newspapers in the days which followed Jenny Lind's arrival in New York was how to keep stories about the "Jenny Lind Excitement" as it was termed, fresh and interesting when there was not all that much to report. Barnum did his best to furnish the press with usable items by having Lind receive guests and visit various sites around the city. He opened rehearsals to reporters and sent the papers a stream of notices about the prize song, the auction and the concerts. Barnum also released information calculated to catch the public interest. He told the papers that he had been "offered \$1,000 for one hundred tickets by one person, and the same price for another hundred," but had refused the offers and forwarded copies of letters written by Jenny Lind to those who had given her gifts.¹⁵

The Sun was content to publish one or two of these items about Jenny Lind every day, without embellishing them or adding anything in the way of editorial comment. It misses or ignores several items which were picked up by the Herald and the Tribune. No mention appears in its pages, for example, about a new contract which Lind and Barnum signed, although the story appeared in the other papers September 6. A letter from the Irving House's manager denying rumors that he had paid Barnum a large sum to house Lind in his establishment is similarly ignored by the Sun although it is picked up by the other two papers. The Sun's report on Lind's first open rehearsal follows a day after the story appears in the other two papers--again possibly because of an earlier deadline--another example of the Sun's inefficiency.

Several stories which do appear in the Sun seem to have been taken from the pages of the Herald. The story of Barnum refusing the offer of

\$1,000 appears in the Herald a day before it appears in the Sun as does the fact that Jenny Lind received Mrs. Barnum as a guest. The resolution thanking Lind from the passengers of the steamship Atlantic which the Sun publishes on September 4 had appeared in both the Herald and the Tribune two days earlier.

The Sun gives relatively large amounts of attention to several items which the other newspapers merely mention in passing. These articles are about gifts. A silver service which Barnum presented to his agent, Wilton, as a reward for securing Jenny Lind's services is mentioned in two different Sun articles. In the second one dated September 5 it is described in detail. A day later, an article entitled "The Riding Hat Correspondence" prints the full text of a letter from Genin, the Hatter, presenting Miss Lind with "a specimen of a branch of manufacture which has been brought to a high state of perfection in this country"--a riding hat.¹⁶ This is followed by the text of Jenny Lind's polite reply.

The emphasis on such status objects and a continual interest in how much things cost appear to be typical of the Sun's approach, and probably reflect the interests of its readers. The Sun frequently mentions the "shilling" which was charged at the gate at Castle Garden on days when the ticket auctions were held there. A special item appeared September 9, which cited the "great dissatisfaction" the charge had aroused. It called attention to a "card" inserted by the managers of Castle Garden defending the charge as being customary and a good device for preventing dangerously large crowds.¹⁷ While the other newspapers mention the charge in passing they do not make an issue of it, nor does the management of Castle Garden feel the need to print its justification in those other newspapers.

It would be erroneous to conclude from this however that the Sun goes crusading in the interests of its readers as the Herald at times is wont to do. The amount of attention paid to the shilling charge in the Sun's pages appears to be a response to the reaction of members of the classes from which it drew its readers, not an attempt to rouse such a response. It does not devote space to editorials the way that the other managers do, but merely prints the short news items Barnum and others furnish.

The ticket auction reporting is the exception to this. The Sun does appear to have sent a reporter to the ticket auction and in its coverage of the auction again lays heavy emphasis on the money being spent.

How much for the first ticket, with the privilege of ten seats at the same price? ... Twenty dollars was the first bid and from this starting place the excitement became very great ... "Twenty-five." "Thirty." "Thirty-five." "Fifty." and so on until it reached "Two hundred and twenty-five", when Mr. Genin, the hatter, was declared the successful bidder.¹⁸

This lively account is followed by a 1-1/2 column long listing of the names of those who successfully bid for tickets and the prices they paid, a listing which is reproduced in all three dailies, and which was, no doubt, furnished by Barnum.

Lind's Concerts in the Pages of the Sun

Jenny Lind again received front page attention in the Sun on September 11, the day she was to give her first, long awaited concert. For this occasion the Sun published a poem on that portion of the front page usually devoted to fiction and feature articles. Whereas the poems in the Tribune will be found to be written by poets with some small literary reputation, the Sun's poem is the work of a fifteen year old girl, whose age is pointed out in the byline.

On that same day the Sun published its own account of the private rehearsal which had been held two days earlier and reported on September 10 in the other papers. It is written in the same style as the concert reviews which will follow it. Lind is characterized thus

Her features are not beautiful, but taken in connection with her manners they are sufficiently charming...She rambled like a very child around the hall...now suggesting an improvement, and now asking for information of the various workmen. In her actions and movements... she was extremely graceful, yet appearing in a measure, like a romping lass just in her 'teens.'...She is truly as perfectly amiable as a person can be imagined.

To add a touch of professionalism to his review the writer throws in one sentence in musical jargon. "She runs her chromatics with an electrifying rapidity, and is alike in the clearness and fullness of her lower as well as upper notes." This phrase is as technical as he usually gets, and we will encounter the astonishing rapidity of Lind's chromatics in almost all this reviewer's future reviews.¹⁹ In his description of the rehearsal this writer also dwells upon the flute-like quality of Lind's voice and gives it as his opinion that the "Welcome to America" prize song is inferior to the other arias on the programme. These points also reoccur in subsequent reviews.

The Sun's review of the first Jenny Lind concert is a long one for the Sun; it fills an entire column. Its focus is the events of the concert rather than Jenny Lind's performance. It tells of the "fairy palace" appearance of the hall and the tremendous applause which greeted Lind's appearance--and drowned out her singing. It notes that women formed a small proportion of the audience. "We have, however, dwelt too long upon the incidents of the reception to allow of more than a passing notice of other portions of the performance," the reporter explains when he comes to

describe the performance itself. His review is simple. He uses no technical language at all. To describe an aria, for example, the writer says merely that it "was perhaps the sweetest and most effective piece of the evening." A good deal of the final portion of the article is devoted to a description of the "rowdies" in small boats who moored their craft on the river near Castle Garden and "mingled their applause with that of the insiders with great good will."²⁰ The writer paints a beautiful word picture of the several hundred small boats, some of them bearing colored lanterns, dancing on the waves by the light of the moon. The other two newspapers imply censure in their description of these working class toughs, while the Sun sentimentalizes their tribute to Jenny Lind.

A letter from Barnum appears at the end of the Sun's review of Jenny Lind's first concert. It announces that Miss Lind is planning to donate her share of the proceeds of the first concert, estimated at \$10,000, to various New York City charities, and lists them. The other penny papers end their reviews of the first concert with the text of the speech Barnum gave at its conclusion. Summoned by the crowd's applause and moved by Lind's performance, Barnum exclaimed that he wished "to sink into utter insignificance"--"Barnum's nowhere" was the way he put it--and informed the rapturous crowds of Lind's charitable intentions.²¹ The omission of this in the Sun's account is further evidence that the Sun's reporter was under pressure to make an earlier deadline than his rivals. For the same reason the Sun cannot report on the serenade which followed the concert until a later edition.

In the days which follow, the Sun publishes reviews of the rest of Lind's concerts, and supplements these with brief news items which are

obviously press releases from Barnum's office. The texts of the letters which accompanied Lind's donations to charity are reproduced along with thank-you letters from her beneficiaries; an item appears informing the reader that Lind was made a life member of the Musical Fund Society; her visit to Brady's daguerrotype studio is briefly described; and her departure for Boston announced. The Sun, not surprisingly, applauds Barnum's promise to refund the shilling fee for admission to the auctions and pours out its scorn upon discovering that "a number of the would be upper ten purchased quite extensively at the auction sale...and never called for their tickets." Such people, it says, were only trying to get their names into the newspapers so that their friends would think that they were "somebody."²² The Sun is pleased on September 13 when it reports that Barnum is reducing ticket prices and predicts that many more people will now be able to attend concerts.

Concert reviews--except for the first--are allotted little space in the Sun, usually ten column inches or less. For the most part they are monotonous and predictable. They repeatedly mention the "storms" and "hurricanes" of applause which greet Lind, the "electrifying" nature of her flute-like voice, and the mediocrity of the prize song, while avoiding technical descriptions of the actual performance. Lind's goodness and virtue and conspicuously downplayed or ignored in these articles, although the reviewer clearly approves of her. The reader's support for Lind is engaged by the statement that her pronunciation of the English language is excellent and "must have cost her much labor."²³ Is it possibly directed to immigrant readers?

Two concert reviews appear to be the productions of a more erudite critic. The reviews of the third and fifth concert dwell at more length and in a more technical fashion on Jenny Lind's art, and compare her frequently with the famous Italian prima donna, Giulia Grisi, who made her London debut in 1834 and dominated the English opera stage throughout the early 1840s. Writers in all the newspapers we are studying routinely contrast Lind with Grisi, usually to Lind's advantage. Possibly this was because men whose educations had included a visit to England years before were familiar with her singing. The depictions of Lind in these reviews resemble those written by John Sullivan Dwight, the Tribune's prestigious reviewer. Jenny Lind is called "more of an enthusiast musician, singing from natural impulse and revelling in the melody of her own triumphant strains."²⁴ This reviewer, like Dwight, enters the lists for Lind and defends her against allegations by other newspaper critics that "Jenny Lind's singing fails to strike the soul." No one could maintain that, states the Sun's critic, if they had experienced her touching rendition of "By the Sad Sea Wave."²⁵

In general, however, the Sun's musical taste tends to run to "that soul stirring air 'Yankee Doodle'" and the concert reviews, while workmanlike, do not more than inform their readers that the concerts took place, were attended by enthusiastic crowds, and allowed Jenny Lind to display the marvels of her voice.²⁶ By the time that Jenny Lind embarks for Boston on September 26 the Sun has pretty much dropped the story. It devotes only three column inches to her departure.

The New York Sun of 1850 is a newspaper which furnishes adequate but uninspired coverage of Jenny Lind's visit to New York and the events which

surrounded it. It appears to give the news a working class slant, but is merely a slant--the Sun does not indulge in the extended editorializing found in the columns of its competitors. Its readership, in which women were consciously included, were particularly interested in wealth and the objects associated with wealth--the riding hat, the silver plate, and Lind's clothing--but had little interest in Jenny Lind the artist. They were not overly impressed with Lind's much heralded charity nor did they give much thought to the sociological implications of Lindomania. The Sun reflected its readers' skepticism about the enthusiasms and social pretensions of those of higher social class than themselves. Technically, the Sun did not have the resources its two penny competitors had for getting news stories quickly, nor did it employ sophisticated journalistic techniques to maintain its readers' interest. Instead it gave them basic fare--a modicum of news, larded with advertisements, and rendered palatable by the addition of sensational fictional feature material.

Footnotes

¹New York Sun, September 18, p. 2. All newspaper article here cited date from 1850.

²Ibid., September 11, p. 2.

³Ibid., September 4, p. 4. I am not able to confirm this but I suspect that the phrase "without confinement" may possibly refer to pregnancy, and thus signify that the doctor advertising performs abortions.

⁴Ibid., August 30, p. 2.

⁵Ibid., July 18, p. 2.

⁶Ibid., September 24, 1850, p. 2.

⁷The Life of P. T. Barnum, p. 316.

⁸Harris, p. 119.

⁹The Life of P. T. Barnum, p. 303.

¹⁰New York Sun, February 20, p. 2.

¹¹The Life of P. T. Barnum, p. 303.

¹²New York Sun, April 18, 1850, p. 2.

¹³Ibid., August 22, p. 1.

¹⁴Ibid., September 2, p. 2.

¹⁵Ibid., September 4, p. 2.

¹⁶Ibid., September 5, p. 2.

¹⁷Ibid., September 9, p. 2.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., September 11, p. 2. Lind's rapid chromatics are discussed again September 20, for example.

²⁰Ibid., September 12, p. 2.

²¹Harris, p. 130.

²²New York Sun, September 13, p. 2.

²³Ibid., September 20, p. 2.

²⁴Ibid., September 18, p. 2.

²⁵Ibid., September 23, p. 2.

²⁶Ibid., September 25, p. 2.

C H A P T E R I V

THE NEW YORK DAILY TRIBUNE

The New York Daily Tribune was prosperous at the beginning of the year 1850. We have seen that its shareholders divided profits of \$25,000 at the end of the previous year and that their profits were to double over the course of 1850 itself. The management of the Tribune made good use of their own share of the Tribune's profits by investing it in January 1850, in a new press, a Hoe "Lightning" rotary press, which made it feasible for the Tribune to publish a daily edition of eight pages beginning in April. This length was twice that of its former editions and twice that of its competitors. The pages of the Tribune disclose, however, that the Tribune had not achieved success without encountering a dilemma, the same dilemma which is encountered by all who enter the marketplace in the service of high ideals. Briefly stated, the dilemma of the Tribune centered on the question of how to present its readers with uplifting and unobjectionable copy and still maintain their interest. The facts of the marketplace necessitated that the Tribune compete with the Herald and Sun for the undecided reader, and so the Tribune was forced to incorporate a certain amount of sensational material in its pages, in spite of Greeley's promises to his early readers that such material would be excluded. Items with titles like "Buried Alive," "Jumped Off Dock," "Melancholy Suicide" and "Accidentally Drowned" appeared daily in the Tribune, usually on the front page unless driven off of it by exciting foreign or Gold Rush news. The Tribune's items are occasionally gruesome, as in an item about street rowdies biting off the fingers of a young boy, and must have made the

Tribune competitive with its rivals. Routine features include the reports of the chief of police on crime in the city, details of the progress of the cholera, and infant mortality statistics taken from the city health officials. Rapes are not reported, but divorce trials, although they receive less coverage here than they do in the other two newspapers, are reported, and scandals, such as the Webster-Parkman murder case, receive considerable attention. In the Webster-Parkman murder case, for example, the Tribune even publishes a diagram of the murderous professor's laboratory, which meant that it had gone to the trouble of making up special plates.

Having rendered to Caesar what was Caesar's, the Tribune filled the rest of its columns with a mix of political news and reform-oriented editorializing. The Tribune's political reporting is thorough. The Gold Rush and Congressional conflicts leading up to the Compromise of 1850 are the most important ongoing lead stories, receiving front page treatment and single column-wide headlines in the Tribune as they do in all the newspapers. Many more Tribune columns are given routinely to stories focusing on both national and local politics and reports are regularly published about "Things" in Philadelphia, Boston, Nicaragua and a host of other places. Women's Movement conventions and Trade Union meetings receive detailed coverage, while the Tribune crusades in editorials for the establishment of free schools and the abolition of flogging in the Navy, and is always happy to print a slavery atrocity story. Once the acquisition of the new press allowed for the doubling of the issue size the Tribune was able to give increased coverage to news about the communities surrounding New York, such as Hoboken, Jersey City, and Brooklyn, reporting

these items in the style used for the local New York news which appeared in the "City Items" columns. The Tribune also filled out its pages with letters to the editor and articles clipped from other newspapers, usually out-of-town ones. An article entitled "London Gossip," for example, is attributed to the pages of The Albion, an English journal.

The Tribune's political stance is unabashedly Whig and Democrats are invariably termed "locofocos" in its columns. Undoubtedly it was read by Whigs. Further inferences can be made about Tribune readership by noting that unlike its competitors the Tribune does not periodically publish a listing of letters to be picked up at the post office. These listings, which often take up the entire back page of the Sun and Herald, were quite possibly not offered to the Tribune because of its smaller circulation or the more middle class makeup of its readers, since such listings would be likely to interest a transient workingclass group. On the other hand, James Gordon Bennett laments in his own columns that although his circulation is higher than Greeley's the Tribune's advertising columns benefit from the lucrative Corporation Notices inserted by the City government while the Herald's do not. This suggests that the Tribune's readership was considered by the City to be of the class to whom such notices would be pertinent. The frequent publication of poetry by poets of some reputation also reinforces the picture of the Tribune reader as being an educated member of the middle class.

A glance at the Tribune's pages reveals that it carried a heavy volume of advertising and examination will show that the Tribune appears to have been forced to a certain extent to pander to its advertisers. While still printings its four page format in January of 1850 the Tribune averages

roughly ten columns of advertising a day out of twenty-eight total columns. In comparison, the Herald at the same time prints only an average of six columns out of its total of twenty-four. When the Tribune's format doubles much of the increased length is taken up with advertising. The eight-page Tribune generally runs roughly nineteen columns of advertisements out of a total of forty-eight columns, making ads forty percent of its total contents. As in the other newspapers advertising is presented in the classified form. The Tribune uses stock cuts to introduce several items--including trusses--and allows advertisers to use large agate capitals for the initial letter of the advertisement, a practice the Herald had prohibited. The Tribune's commitment not to offend its readers is somewhat blurred in its advertising columns. True, the Tribune does not print the advertisements of the questionable doctors found in the other two papers, however it does print the advertisements for patent medicines, the nature of which can be deduced from the September 22 advertisement for "Dr. Watts' Nervous Antidote," which boasts that it contains both "Canabis India" (sic) and "Bi-Meconate of Morphia."¹ The Tribune also with a certain lack of delicacy advertises a book about "Diseases of the Sexual System" in its New Publications section. However, by its own standards, the Tribune's greatest lapse is in its "Amusements" advertising. The Tribune's editorial policy towards the theater, which shall be examined further, was to ignore it completely because of its association with prostitution and because of the puritan belief that it eroded morals. Nevertheless, although the Tribune distained to discuss theatrical offerings in its columns, it did not hesitate to publish daily paid advertising from New York's various theaters. Moreover, when Lindomania was at its height the Tribune

began publishing Amusement advertising on its front page, beginning, of course, with advertisements for Lind's concerts; however these front page columns also included the advertising for theatres too, thus giving them a prominence repugnant to the Tribune's stated moral beliefs.

Clearly the Tribune depended on advertisers for revenue, especially since it probably did not have as large a circulation as the other newspapers. Hale claims that the Tribune's most profitable venture was not its daily edition but the weekly edition which went out across America and which could be purchased very cheaply by out of town readers who clubbed together to buy twenty copies of the weekly at the price of \$1.00 a year each. It is this edition, Hale writes, which built Greeley's nationwide reputation. The daily, not as popular, needed its advertising to survive. Certainly the classified section of the Daily Tribune contains many more categories than those of the other two dailies, including specialized items such as Window Shades, Coal, Clothing, Dry Goods, Excursions, and Farms for Sale, besides the categories carried by the other newspapers. The Tribune's New Publications advertising section is a daily feature, and reflects further the intellectual interests attributed to Tribune readers, since the other two papers rarely advertise books in their columns. The large number of Schools advertising which appears in the Tribune in September is similarly indicative of the interests of the Tribune's average reader.

The Tribune and the Arts

The only one of the arts to which the Tribune devotes consistent attention is literature. Notices of new books and magazines appear regularly

in its columns. These are more often summaries than reviews and are not critical. Quite often the Tribune will print long excerpts from a popular work, such as Charles Dickens' Household Words, or from a work it endorses, such as Horace Greeley's own Hints Towards Reforms. Usually the publications thus singled out will also appear in the paid advertising section of the Tribune. Other cultural events receive notice in short paragraphs suggesting that the reader attend--usually, again, when they are advertised in the paid advertising section. The Tribune puffs such cultural events as the concerts of the nine year old "piano prodigy," Sebastian Cook, the poetry readings of distinguished English actress Fanny Kemble, an exhibit of paintings, the performances of the popular ballad singers, the Hutchinson Family, and a phrenology lecture. Sometimes these notices, published under "City Items," will begin "We have been asked to insert the following ..." while at other times they are just formulated like news items, like the following puff for Barnum's museum, which begins "Sightseers are all on the qui vive to get a peep at the British Druids..."² In general the Tribune does not feature the arts in a manner to suggest that the editors consider them of outstanding interest.

The treatment of the Opera is an exception to the foregoing. Many of New York's elite hoped that Max Maretzek's Astor Place Opera would be a success and raise New York to the cultural level of Paris and London. The Tribune regularly prints features about Maretzek and often compliments his troupe. His donation to the victims of a fire receives special praise. The arrival of the Havana opera company in April 1850 excited further enthusiasm among those who wished to see New York as a cultural capital, and the Tribune, in response to this enthusiasm, regularly sent out a reviewer

to cover its performances. However a fundamental puritan unease permeates the Tribune's treatment of the opera. In an editorial Greeley answers the accusation of the Sunday Mercury that

The Opera, especially when it is aided by its usual adjunct the ballet, is eminently sensual in its character. In fact it seems to us to be wholly sensual.

by arguing that "the natural tendency of good Music is to refine, to harmonize, to elevate." But in the same editorial Greeley waxes eloquent about the evils of the theater stating "we think that the acted Drama (and perhaps the Ballet also) tends to a premature precocious development of the passions, whereof the consequences can hardly fail to be evil." He adds information that he has himself "been but once inside an Opera-House and has very rarely--perhaps twice--in the lifetime of the Tribune, attended a theatrical performance." Theaters, he declares, are assignation houses, "the high 'change of shameless and groveling lust.'" Worse, plays often go so far as to ridicule temperance and socialism.³

Ambivalence about the opera characterizes the reviews that the Tribune's reviewer writes on the Havana troupe's performances. These are masterpieces of the art of damning with faint praise. All of these reviews stress that this company is the best to have ever appeared on an American stage and that the public's musical taste and judgment have improved. "Had they visited us ten years ago they could have found many more worshippers but very, very few appreciators" begins a characteristic review.⁴ But another review imparts the information that the costuming was "inappropriate" and the singing of one female lead "sweet but soulless" though "rewarded with applause."⁵ In a single two column offering he tells us that the prima donna was "nearly but not quite equal to the task" of

singing her part, another "has fallen off...in true enthusiasm," while yet another sings in "a foolish style." The male singers are similarly disposed of, then the wind instruments are described as "coarse, loud, and wanting to finish" and the scenery as "detestable."⁶ Four days later the reviewer shudders at the announcement that the company will perform Verdi's Macbetto. He has "always had a distrust of seeing the creations of our grand old Saxon bard metamorphosed into the melodious heroes of Italian lyrical drama."⁷ The actual performance of Macbetto leaves him "rather agreeably disappointed." Rising to his most complimentary height he praises the production: The opera was "less noisy and not so much weakened by repetition of thought" as other Verdi operas; and the chorus excelled in that "the tendency to yell was less evident than in the choruses of I Lombardi."⁸

The judgments of this reviewer remain constant over time. Four months after the aforementioned reviews he writes of the same troupe, that "no performance was ever received with greater enthusiasm" coupling this with the further observation that "Steffanoni was not at home in the graceful girlish music of her part."⁹

Torn by a patriotic desire to proclaim "We are becoming a musical people after all, and we can sustain a good opera" and a fear that he might succumb to the sensuous strains of the Italian sirens, the Tribune reviewer hides behind a spurious aesthetic standard.¹⁰ He emerges as a cultural parvenue, provincial, and faintly ridiculous. On the other hand it must be pointed out that these reviews are the only critical reviews appearing in any of the newspapers at the time. The general practice is to say nothing that is not complimentary, merely hinting at defects in the

production. The Herald for example, at its most negative will write of Madame Steffanoni that although she was hoarse she "sang and acted with such magnificence" that her hoarseness didn't matter.¹¹ The Tribune's reviewer's negativity may be seen as a crude attempt to progress to a more objective appraisal.

In summary, the Tribune emerges in the period preceding Lind's arrival as a politically progressive newspaper with a decidedly puritanical streak. It feels no real commitment to the arts, and has no perception of the role the arts can play to further progressive goals. It reports on the arts mainly because artistic "amusements" form a significant portion of its advertising revenue and it exudes a strong spirit of ambivalence towards even those arts generally acceptable among cultured people. Chauvinism--the desire to proclaim the taste and sophistication of the American public--is the strongest force working against its fundamental distrust of the arts. The Tribune thus appears most likely to be a newspaper which would find comfort in Jenny Lind's potato-faced virtue, and which would therefore be likely to recommend her heartily to its readers.

Advance Publicity for Lind

There is some evidence that Barnum was on friendly terms with Horace Greeley. It is therefore surprising to find little advance publicity for Jenny Lind's approaching tour in the columns of the Tribune, especially in light of Barnum's claims to have inserted frequent articles in the New York press. However, what little notice there is of Lind's approaching visit suggests that the Tribune's readers were already aware of Lind's reputation and needed little prodding to become excited about her arrival.

Barnum's friendship with Greeley extended at least as far back as 1843 when Greeley provided Barnum with a letter of introduction to the American minister in London at the time of Barnum's visit to England with "General" Tom Thumb. Barnum also received puffs periodically in the Tribune as we have seen from previous examples.

The Tribune was the first of our penny papers to publish the news that Lind and Barnum had concluded drawing up a contract. A brief item appeared on February 19 on page 2 in which the Tribune claims to have gotten information about the contract from a biweekly musical and literary periodical, The Message Bird. The article alludes to the huge sum, \$30,000, that Barnum must raise to fulfill his side of the contract, but furnishes little information about Jenny Lind. This is printed the very day that Barnum claimed in his autobiography to have found out himself about the final completion of the contract with the return to America of his agent, John Hall Wilton. On February 20 the Tribune, like the other newspapers, publishes Barnum's letter formally announcing Lind's visit, and an editorial follows three days later demanding that a concert hall be constructed especially for Lind's concerts.

Lind's name had already appeared in the Tribune on numerous occasions even before Barnum began his campaign, as for instance in an article written by the Tribune's European correspondent published on January 12 which states in passing, "I never heard but two divine sopranos--one in America and the other in England, the latter being Jenny Lind."¹² In the next two months four articles appear in the Tribune which make up the sum total of all the advance publicity that the Tribune gives Jenny Lind before August.

All of these articles, it should be noted, are taken from the pages of other periodicals. On March 15 a short item from the Home Journal, N. Parker Willis' publication, describes her modest style of living and the joy she takes at the height of her English fame in tending her coachman's baby in the shelter of a haymow. Another article on March 29, this one from The Independent, points out that in America Lind will be giving recitals, not operas, and the author assures the fastidious reader that "I think very little of the morality of persons of her profession; but I must cordially say she merits the esteem of everyone."¹³ An article on March 30 returns again to her fondness for the children of peasants and in thus establishing her character ignores the subject of her talent almost entirely while a final article published a month later and taken from the Lynn Pioneer written in a slangy, broadly humorous style asserts that her voice would "lull to sleep the fiercest passions" and that "the man whose evil desires could be stirred by the sight of JENNY LIND would... plan seductive excursions to the moon."¹⁴

After these articles have laid to rest the fears of the Tribune's readers a deep silence descends on the subject of Jenny Lind in the pages of the Tribune. Barnum's letter announcing that he had engaged rooms for Lind at the Irving House is conspicuously absent. The only place Lind's name appears is in the advertising columns.

Lind's name first appears there in the advertisement of a seamstress, Mrs. Beman, which we shall return to later. Then advertisements for two different biographies of Jenny Lind, one by C. G. Rosenberg and one by G. G. Foster, reoccur at frequent intervals in the Tribune's columns, while magazines in the Tribune often mention an article or portrait of Jenny Lind

when they announce the contents of their next issue. For example, on May 18 Sartain's Magazine announces that it will publish both a portrait and an article about Lind by a noted writer, Frederika Bremer, in June. The way in which Lind's name is used by the magazines as bait suggests further that her popularity was well established long before her arrival.

It is only several weeks before Lind's arrival that the Tribune again begins paying attention to the story, and then it is because Barnum uses the columns of the Tribune to launch his prize song contest for the best song on the theme "A Welcome to America in a Kind of a National Song." As a means of appealing to the intellectuals presumed to read the Tribune the contest was a master stroke, and before the contest was over 750 would-be poets sent in their works, hoping to win the \$200 prize Barnum offered two days after he announced the contest originally on August 14. It is likely that the idea of the contest captivated the imagination of Greeley. At the time America's only true national song appears to have been Yankee Doodle," a rousing tune somewhat lacking in poetic merit. The panel of judges chosen by Barnum to choose the prize song, by the way, included a Tribune staffer, George Ripley, and, for the record, it awarded the prize to the entry of Tribune columnist Bayard Taylor. Predictably, this led to outcries of "collusion!" in other newspapers. While the contest for the prize song appears to be a shrewd move on the part of Barnum, the contest appeared only in the Tribune at this time and was ignored by the Sun and Herald, which found other stories connected with Lind to write about in this period. The important thing to note is, that outside of the two articles introducing the contest and the August 24 publication of a front page "National Ode," a poem subtitled "to be

sung by Jenny Lind if she likes it," the Tribune continues to ignore Barnum's protegee until the Steamer bearing her approaches the American coast. Characteristically, although the Tribune ignores the items Barnum's office sent out about Lind, it was quite pleased to write up a notice of a Temperance lecture at which Barnum was to speak, and on August 30, right before Jenny Lind's arrival the Tribune also puffs a portrait of Lind on its first page, one, of course, advertised inside.

From Lind's Arrival to Her First Concert

Having been first with the story of Barnum's engagement of Lind, the Tribune continued as it had begun, and it was the first of the three major dailies to publish an account of Jenny Lind's last days in Liverpool. This account, which arrived on the same boat that brought Lind herself, appears on an inside page of the Tribune on August 31, and is a copy of an article from the Liverpool Times. It abounds in superlatives and describes Lind as one "whose virtues are even more dazzling than her genius, unparelled as that is--and whose successes have thrown completely into the shade those of every other vocalist of modern times."¹⁵ Barnum claims in his account to have hired a critic to write an enthusiastic review which would be brought over with the European mails. Possibly this article by a Mr. Davidson is the one. However, all the newspapers publish similar articles--the Herald the next day and the Sun two days later when Lind has arrived--and all three articles are supposedly taken from different English newspapers. The fact is that such was the enthusiasm in England for Lind at this time that it was not necessary to hire writers to wax ecstatic about Lind's art. They did it without prompting. After

all, Lind's original fame had been achieved in England without the use of chicane or the attentions of a hired clique.

The Tribune's next edition blared forth the news that the Swedish Nightingale had indeed arrived. It is characteristic of the Tribune that of the five columns of the front page which were devoted to Lind, one, the first column, contained a long pedantic verse offering, larded with Nordic mythological allusions and supplemented for the edification of the Tribune's readers by fifty-two explanatory footnotes. Lind's actual landing and the crowds which thronged the dock to meet her emerge in a long, novelistic account which meanders towards its goal. No lead sentences hurry the reader on his way. Instead the author paints the dock-side scene and after describing everything in sight eventually gets around to describing Lind herself. Confronted with the singer the reporter is rhapsodic, but unfortunately somewhat vague. Lind's appearance conveys "an impression of benevolence and sound goodness of heart." But the reporter fails to mention her costume. He does call attention to her lap dog and notes that it was a gift from Queen Victoria herself--the ultimate seal of respectability. Overeager spectators falling off the pier, the splended decorative arches proclaiming welcome and of course gotten up by "attaches of Barnum's Museum," and the serenade of the Musical Fund Society with their escort of Firemen are all described in detail, but the reporter seems to have been more alert for details which would emphasize the glories of his American homeland, rather than those of the foreign singer, and the article is packed with chauvinistic touches. Lind pronounces "New York Bay the finest she had ever seen." "Seeing the American flag flying at the Quarentine" goes on the Tribune's reporter, "she

said, 'there is the most beautiful standard of Freedom. The oppressed of all nations worship it.'" To Barnum, viewing the crowd from her carriage: "Have you no poor people in your country? Everyone here appears to be well dressed." At the Serenade the world famous singer appears at a window where she "kept time with much spirit" during a rendition of Yankee Doodle, and demands that the serenaders repeat it.¹⁶

A supplement to the main account of Lind's arrival, a letter from "A Passenger," recalls anecdotes of Lind's passage on the steamship Atlantic and sounds the themes of her talent, simplicity and benevolence. A further English article, excerpted from the European Times, rounds out the Tribune's notice of Lind's arrival by describing the more ludicrous excesses of Lindomania in Liverpool. The Tribune introduces this article with the assurance that "Lindomania reached a hight (sic) in Liverpool which it will hardly attain here."¹⁷

The furor which appears to have surrounded Lind during her entire visit is downplayed in the Tribune's reporting, while chauvinism is a dominant strain throughout subsequent stories. Upon examining her hotel room Lind is very curious to know whether every article had actually been manufactured in this country, as she is "evidently unprepared to find such a display of wealth and taste in a land still regarded through the greater part of Europe as having barely reached the standard of civilization." However the days that lead up to the ticket auction and the first concert yield little in the way of real news. The Tribune supplies its readers with short items about Lind's movements which are scattered randomly on the page. Lind visits Castle Garden; she receives the mayor; and she declares that she will sing to benefit the School for the Blind. Genin,

the Hatter, presents her with a riding hat and gloves. Barnum explains his arrangements for the auctions and the concerts. These stories are brief, unadorned statements of fact. No journalistic tricks heighten their interest for the reader. Only the text of the letter of the prize committee appears to tell us who has won the hotly contested song writing prize. There is no comment on the part of the Tribune itself. The ticket auction finally gives the reporter something to dig into and a lengthy account of the auction results, supplemented again with the list of the bidders and the amounts of their bids. For the idea of an auction the Tribune, unlike the Herald, has nothing but praise; nor does it make an issue of the shilling admittance price.

The Tribune's style of journalism in this interim period leading up to the concerts is adequate. The Tribune is far more detailed in its offerings than the Sun and it reports several items each day where the Sun was content to offer one. Nevertheless the Tribune's coverage is written without sparkle. It lacks the human interest touches which we will find in the Herald's coverage of the same period, and there is a tendency to a monotony in the way the articles are written. It is also worth noting that the Tribune puffs more portraits on September 4.

In this period the Tribune makes little editorial comment on the Lind phenomenon. There are only two editorials on the subject. They are published together on an inside page on September 3. One of these, "The Inconvenience of Being Lionized" is a plea that the reader respect Lind's privacy, while the other "Jenny Lind's Recompense" takes issue with those, who, like Bennett, balk at the huge sums Lind will make, the Tribune arguing "no one but Mr. BARNUM is under obligation to pay her a farthing."

Unlike the Herald, the Tribune does not confront in its columns the question of why Lind is able to cause such a furor or ask what Lindomania really is.

The Concerts

In order "to sustain the character" of its paper the Tribune hired a special music critic--"the best writer on Music in America"--to review Lind's concerts.¹⁸ The man they chose was John Sullivan Dwight, and a glance at his credentials shows him indeed to be ideal to sustain the Tribune's "character." Dwight at thirty-seven years of age had some reputation in Boston as a lecturer and writer on musical subjects. He had begun adult life as a Unitarian clergyman in Northampton, Massachusetts but had quit the clergy to join his friend George Ripley at Brook Farm. A member of America's most refined intellectual elite--the coterie that centered around Concord, Dwight's reviews are literate examinations of Lind's musicianship which constantly return to the theme of the naturalness of Lind's expression and the effortlessness of her performance. Attending a rehearsal before the first concert, Dwight describes her voice saying it "could not be distinguished from the flute, but absolutely was an improvement on it."¹⁹ This is only a hint of what will follow. After the first concert Dwight fills two and one half columns of the front page with ecstatic praise which begins "All doubts are an end. She is the greatest singer we have ever heard." His picture of Lind, a woman of almost thirty years of age, is idealized and saccharine. Lind sang "blending a childlike simplicity and a half trembling womanly modesty with the beautiful confidence of Genius and serene wisdom of Art." Again and again he

returns to her naturalness, mentioning "her active intimacy with nature," and adding "there is plainly no vanity in her...it is all frank and real and harmoniously earnest." His only regrets center around the program which Lind has chosen to sing. He would prefer to hear her in the works of the German composers, instead of those of the effete Italians. Lind's opening aria, Casta Diva from Norma, Dwight declares beyond analysis, although--a fact he omits--Lind appears to have faltered in her performance. Dwight declares "she was the very music of it." Dwight is unhappy about a banner which formed part of the decoration of Castle Garden which proclaimed "Welcome Sweet Warbler." It was "not only tame and commonplace but decidedly out of place." Of the rowdies in boats, whom we have already met in the Sun's picturesque description, the Tribune has little sympathy, stating, "if the River Police asked for by Chief Matsell had been in existence this attempt could not have been made."²⁰

In the concert reviews that follow Dwight maintains his initial attitudes toward Lind but expands his approach by also replying to attacks on the singer's performance which have been made by critics in other periodicals. He returns to the subject of Lind's rendition of Casta Diva admitting--probably in response to the Herald's critic--that Lind did indeed falter, but maintaining that it made no difference, and explaining that "she felt as if in her first blushing maidenhood of song."²¹ To critics who have accused Lind's singing of being "mechanical" and "passionless" Dwight replies,

Her fresher, chaster, more intellectual, and...colder strains come in due season to recover our souls from the delicious langour of a Music which has been so wholly of the Feelings, that for want of some intellectual tonic, and some spiritual temper, Feeling has degenerated into...a very cheap kind of superficial, skin-deep excitability that usurps the name of Passion.²²

This argument against "Feeling" i.e. the emotional, sexual Italian style harks back to the position we have seen Greeley take towards the theatre, a basic fear of exciting the "passions." Over and over Dwight alludes to Lind's virginity and her spirituality. Lind is the "Artist Woman" whose "true voice is the audible vibration of the soul."²³ The Northern Queen of Song," she "draws no tears," but is "like the tall shaft of a fountain sparkling in the sun" an image chosen (somewhat questionably) to represent a pure, unsensual state.²⁴

Dwight continues to disapprove of Lind's choice of repertoire, and at the end of the fifth concert he grumbles that "there was scarcely a piece which could be regarded as more than a graceful and ingenious play of the voice." He ascribes this to "too timid and exclusive an eye to gratifying the public taste."²⁵ Dwight does not analyze the public taste further, but he does state that the first and second concerts "immense as they were, were composed almost entirely of the intelligent and appreciative middle class; and that only at the third concert did he catch "glimpses of the fashionable society from above Bleeker."²⁶ More than the other critics Dwight also gives considerable attention to the other performers who shared the bill with Lind: Jules Benedict, the conductor and composer of several works performend; Signor Belletti, the accompanying tenor; and the American pianist Richard Hoffman.

Dwight contributed an article, after Lind left New York for Boston, in which he summarized the four factors he thought had accounted for Lind's success. The first three were her execution, her voice, and her style. The last factor, the only one not entirely of a musical nature, was her "spiritual" rather than "sensual" passion. Dwight's appraisal, with its

emphasis on naturalness and lack of sensuality, was to be repeated by most of the intellectuals who attended Lind's performances, and Harris cites it as the typical American response. It is more likely the response of a certain educated segment of the population who were influenced by the New England philosophical tradition. As we shall see when we analyze the Herald's reporting, the average American was more liable to attribute Lind's success to less aesthetic causes.

Besides printing these concert reviews the Tribune continued to report on Lind's daily doings and it gave far more space than the other papers to the texts of the letters which accompanied Lind's donations of her share of the first concert's proceeds to various New York charities. It prints the gist of another Temperance lecture by Barnum and alludes to a party the Mayor will give for Lind of which we shall hear more in the Herald. The Tribune says merely that it is to be "conducted on strictly Temperance principles."²⁷ The Tribune also prints as fact in its news columns the information which appears in the Herald's advertising column, that ex-president Tyler is expected to attend the last concert. As there is no further mention of him, it is likely that he did not in truth attend.

Several editorials appear during this period. One on September 13, a day otherwise undistinguished by any interesting Lind news item, defends the gift Lind gave to the Fire Department Fund and argues that even though as critics have charged, these charitable contributions serve to help Lind make even more money, "Blessed be the deed that teaches men that doing good always does and must promote their own interest."²⁸ On a later day the Tribune devotes a short paragraph to praising Genin the Hatter's wisdom in purchasing the first auction ticket for \$225, saying,

"it would have been dirt cheap at \$5,000" because of the publicity it bought him and continuing, " it was a perfectly legitimate way of attracting attention to articles of the first class sold at the cheapest price."²⁹ If this last sounds like a puff for a heavy Tribune advertiser, consider that it appears in the pages of a paper which among the three poems it publishes on Lind's visit prints one entitled "On Seeing Mr. Anthony's Portrait of Jenny Lind," in which the poet Anna Snelling sings

Tis true to life, in every line we trace
The quick emotion of her radiant face.³⁰

Anthony's portrait is one of the several competing portraits which advertise heavily in the Tribune's paid advertising section and on September 18 Snelling's poem is printed in Anthony's advertisement. Or consider this article printed the same day which states

The tickets for tomorrow's concert are selling rapidly. Messrs. Hall and Son, as will be seen by their advertisement, have this time only purchased the choice seats which they will no doubt dispose of without difficulty.³¹

Hall is only one of many firms advertising concert seats, but he is a heavy advertiser in the Tribune's columns. In another article the Tribune also puffs the publication of "The Prize Song."

These items appeared on September 16, 17 and 19. On September 20 the Tribune felt it necessary to defend itself against accusations in other newspapers of printing paid puffs in its editorial columns. In fact, the accusations of puffery extended to the actual concert reviews themselves, and after defending Dwight's reputation the Tribune thunders in italics: "no article, no paragraph, no line has appeared in the Tribune as editorial...for which any person has paid or agreed to pay one farthing." Having disposed of this the Tribune throws in the same day for good measure

a defense of the awarding of the prize song to its reporter Bayard Taylor, and it published a letter by "one of the committee" which had originally appeared in the Evening Post, to substantiate its claim that there was no collusion involved.

Lind's visit to the Tribune's own plant affords the paper an opportunity to puff itself, and it boasts of its new press and its circulation "exceeding, in the aggregate, that of any other City journal," but no distinct image of Lind appears in the description of this visit.³² The subsequent description of her departure is also written in a style lacking the human interest touch. The Tribune reporter describes that event as it is seen from the pier, while in comparison, the Herald reporter will describe in detail the objects ornamenting Lind's stateroom aboard the steamer which will carry her from New York.

In summary, in the figure of Jenny Lind the Tribune found a subject congenial to its moral stance and thus it could comfortably abandon the ambivalent attitude which had characterized its earlier attempts to deal with the opera and the performing arts in general. The Lind story remained on the front page of the Tribune for twenty out of the twenty-three days that Lind spent in New York and articles about Lind appeared in the paper every day. Her propriety and charity delighted the Tribune; the attention paid to her musical talent was gratifying to its desire to see Americans become a people of culture and taste; but she remains a shadowy figure in the Tribune's pages and rarely is made to come alive. She is instead given the bland features of an idol, an embodiment of Northern (i.e. Anglo Saxon) values--of control, and of the intellect triumphant over the unrestrained passions. The Tribune does a perfectly adequate job of reporting

all the significant news items about Jenny Lind's visit but it does it without enthusiasm, presenting the news in a manner that would appeal to the fastidious reader who would like to think of himself as part of a cultural elite. As for the Tribune's tendency to puff its advertisers? Alas, even the virtuous have to stay in business.

Footnotes

- ¹New York Tribune, September 23, p. 5.
- ²Ibid., January 9.
- ³Ibid., May 16, p. 1.
- ⁴Ibid., April 20, p. 1.
- ⁵Ibid., April 17, p. 1.
- ⁶Ibid., April 20, p. 1.
- ⁷Ibid., April 24, p. 1.
- ⁸Ibid., April 26, p. 2.
- ⁹Ibid., August 14, p. 1.
- ¹⁰Ibid., August 29, p. 1.
- ¹¹New York Herald, April 23, p. 1.
- ¹²Ibid., New York Tribune, January 12, p. 1.
- ¹³Ibid., March 29, p. 2.
- ¹⁴Ibid., April 27, p. 2.
- ¹⁵Ibid., August 31, p. 3.
- ¹⁶Ibid., September 2, p. 1.
- ¹⁷Ibid.
- ¹⁸Ibid., September 20, p. 4.
- ¹⁹Ibid., September 10, p. 1.
- ²⁰Ibid., September 20, p. 1.
- ²¹Ibid., September 14, p. 1.
- ²²Ibid., September 18, p. 1.
- ²³Ibid., September 20, p. 1.
- ²⁴Ibid., September 18, p. 1.

²⁵Ibid., September 23, p. 1.

²⁶Ibid., September 18, p. 1.

²⁷Ibid., September 23, p. 1.

²⁸Ibid., September 13, p. 4.

²⁹Ibid., September 19, p. 1.

³⁰Ibid., September 16, p. 1.

³¹Ibid., September 20, p. 4.

³²Ibid., September 24, p. 1.

C H A P T E R V

THE NEW YORK HERALD

At first glance the New York Herald appears to resemble its rival, the Tribune. Generous helpings of political news grace a front page devoid of advertising. Telegraphic dispatches and foreign mailers bring news from around the world, while police court items reveal the seamier side of the city outside the reader's doorstep. In the back can be found stock market reports and shipping news, while advertising makes up a significant part of the inside pages.

Closer examination however reveals important differences between the Herald and the Tribune. In 1850 the Herald was still appearing in a four page format, although there was some flexibility in its length. When the volume of news warranted it, the Herald often published an eight page "double issue." However, even when it published only four pages, the Herald did not crowd the columns on its pages the way the other two newspapers did in their four page formats, but instead printed only six, rather than seven, columns on its pages. Furthermore, the Herald printed a much smaller amount of advertising than the other two newspapers. Of the twenty-four columns printed daily in the four page Herald rarely more than six contained advertising, making advertising roughly 25% of the Herald. (Compare this to its being approximately 50% the Sun and 40% the eight page Tribune.) On those days when the Herald printed a "double issue" of eight pages it maintained its usual six or so columns of advertising and filled the rest of the issue with news stories and editorials. (Compare

this with the eighteen or so columns of advertising in Greeley's eight page Tribune.) This paucity of advertising may well reflect the Herald's success--that it sold enough copies to have little need of advertising, or else that advertisers were willing to pay more for space in its columns.

In the tone of its advertising the Herald of 1850 appears to conform with the moral atmosphere of its time. Although the Herald in an earlier period had been known for the often questionable nature of its personals, no overtly sexual advertising now appeared in its columns (i.e. advertisements for prostitutes or abortionists); but the Herald on its back pages did carry advertising for those doctors who "cured" "delicate diseases" and "constitutional weaknesses...brought on by a secret habit," whose practice may well have extended to abortion.¹ The Herald may have also put off the overly sensitive with advertising for halls like the Wallhalla which advertised "living pictures," presented by "the most lovely formed women the world can produce," assuring the potential visitor that he would find "police in attendance."²

The Herald's classified advertising section did not include the variety of headings found in the Tribune. Amusement advertising formed a great part of its volume. Up to twenty separate items could appear in this section on a single day. The Herald also advertised Balls, Situations Wanted, Shipping, Financial, Fine Arts, Patent Medicines, and Announcements such as those relevant to Fireman's Meetings. The Herald's Wants advertisement column includes many appeals for skilled employees such as bookbinders, watch salesmen and needleworkers, and during Lind's visit it was in the Herald's columns that the Musical Fund Society published a

"Card of Thanks" directed to the Firemen for escorting them to serenade Jenny Lind. This suggests that the Herald was considered the paper the firemen were most likely to read. Publications were only rarely featured among its advertisements and as noted earlier the Herald did not receive the lucrative City Corporation notices although it did publish the post office letter list. Besides publishing classified advertisements innocent of stock cuts or large capitals by Bennett's decree, the Herald also printed a daily column of notices in a puff style, which was clearly set apart from news items by differences in type. These did not duplicate items found in the classified columns. No advertising ever appeared on the Herald's front page.

Unlike its rivals the Herald published a regular Sunday edition identical in format with its other daily editions. This edition however usually featured less advertising, undoubtedly because of the prejudices of merchants fearful of offending Sabbatarian customers. The violation of the commandment forbidding Sunday labor was characteristic of James Gordon Bennett's religiophobic style. Besides this Sunday edition the Herald also published a Sunday "Weekly Herald" for the out-of-town trade similar to weekly editions the other papers issued, although the fact that Barnum advertised both his New York and his Philadelphia Museum in the daily Herald suggests that the daily Herald had a significant circulation in cities not too far distant from New York.

The Herald's Style

The Herald is a more modern newspaper than its competitors in its grasp of the usefulness of introducing human interest details into its

stories. While its out-of-town correspondents concentrated on reporting the political news they also gave space to gossip, fashion, the arts, and curiosities. A Herald's gold rush report, for example, has a paragraph on "Theatricals in California" while the European correspondence of the Herald routinely features fashion, music, art, and columns titled "The Gossip of Paris." When it turns to reporting on the divorce case involving the well known actor, Edwin Forrest, the Herald publishes not only the transcripts of trial testimony found in all the newspapers, but also reports on a "fracas" between two of the principals and prints furious letters from partisans of both of the embattled Forrests, including a two column-long letter from the very indignant N. Parker Willis, who had just been cited as a correspondent in the case. Features like these were supplemented by editorials on the trial written by editor Bennett. The Herald also published society news on a regular basis, running columns on "Things at Newport" and "The Fashionable Watering Places." These are chatty--"Everybody will remain in town till the Opera season is over, and then will hasten away to the fashionable resorts"--and informative--at a Newport fancy dress ball, we are informed, masking was not popular.³ Although no actual Woman's Page type of feature appeared, it is probable that these articles about scandals, fashion, and high society may have had special appeal to female readers, at least to those not disturbed by the Herald's moral tone. The Herald also reported on the results of horse races around the country in an occasional "Sporting Intelligence" column which appeared on its back page.

The Herald has long had a well deserved reputation for sensationalism. In 1850, for example, it was possible to find in its "Police

Intelligence" column the account of the "Incest and Rape"⁴ of a daughter by her own father, an account which the Herald first states is too disgusting to appear in either the court or the press--and then describes in lurid detail. Reports of the finding of abandoned babies, alive or dead, form another common item in these columns. In actual volume, however, it is likely that the Herald carried a smaller ratio of these items to other news than the Sun, and the same one as the Tribune.

Going beyond considerations of format, when we turn to the Herald we find a newspaper dominated from first to last by the gargantuan presence of its editor, James Gordon Bennett. It is impossible to read through several issues of the Herald without building up a mental image of the wryly humorous, irascible, and always impassioned Bennett. A blatant bigot whose proslavery, racist, and antisemitic squibs should make him offensive to any sensitive reader, Bennett possesses such a force of character, such a genius for the use of words, and such a sense of life that one is left imagining him as a friendly, likeable curmudgeon. Bennett's editorials throb with concern for his city, his republic, and most importantly, his reader, who is addressed as if he is a prosperous member of the lower middle or middle class. Bennett's love for the American common man was linked with his scorn for the ruling classes of Europe and particularly of England, which no doubt endeared him to New York's growing population of immigrant Irish and working class English. Bennett's prose throbs with vitality and wit, and may very well have been a major inducement to the public to purchase his paper.

The Herald and the Arts

There is no doubt that Bennett felt passionately that it was part of a newspaper's duty to keep its readers informed and interested in the arts, for the pages of his paper consistently devote more attention to the arts than do those of either of his competitors. Directly beneath the Herald's masthead is a daily listing of the offerings of New York's theatres, a touch which signifies their importance in the paper. This listing is supplemented by a regular column entitled "Theatrical and Musical" which also appears daily--often on the front page, and which summarizes the good points of the various plays presented in the city that night.

Bennett often makes the performing arts the subject of his editorials. "We do not believe that there is another city in the world like New York City, for theatrical life and prosperity," opens one such editorial. In it Bennett attributes the health of the theatre in New York to the prosperity of the people of the city, their love for theatrical productions, the skill of local theatre managers and, most importantly, "the system of low prices" which encourages the attendance of the working man. Bennett disposes of the fears of those of Greeley's stripe who hate the theatre by asserting that plays provide their audience with a healthy release. The people who attend the play, he argues, are far better off than the ones who remain at home "meditating malice and brooding over spite. uttering scandal or looking daggers at their fellow creatures" instead of "laughing till their sides crack...and then going home...to sleep with consciences far less polluted than if they had been fomenting secret

passions."⁵ Bennett's editorials attack the theatre only for its abuses, such as promoting the star system within companies, or high admission prices.

The Herald does not offer critical reviews of theatrical performances. All plays are described--before they take place--in strictly positive terms. A typical line in the paragraph found under the "Theatrical and Musical" heading, describing the offering at Barnum's museum, states that the Martinetti Family, "justly celebrated for their pantomime performances and gymnastic feats, appear in the amusing piece, 'The Magic Trumpet.'"⁶ This is the same puff style that we have already seen in the columns of the other New York dailies. The Herald however at least puffs all the competing theaters daily, unlike the Tribune which puffs selectively.

Cultural events other than theatrical performances receive ample coverage in the columns of the Herald too. It prints the text of Emerson's latest lecture as well as that of a Dr. Antisell on Geology. It cites specific paintings when describing an art exhibit at the American Art Union. Unlike the Tribune, the Herald appears to give little attention to instrumental music, although it finds the opera a subject of burning importance. Max Maretzek is given a fair share of space. In its report on a benefit given to Maretzek at the end of his company's season, the Herald reproduces all the testimonial speeches verbatim. Column space is lavished on the visiting Havana Opera Company. Each performance is reviewed individually, always in the most complimentary terms. Bennett also composes a series of editorials on the subject of "The Opera and Fashion" which appear throughout the five or so months that the Havana

troupe is in New York. The focus of these editorials about the opera is complex and is deeply rooted in Bennett's class prejudices. He emphasizes the upper class nature of the operagoers while at the same time he makes it abundantly clear that the opera is a pleasure well within the reach of the working man.

Bennett goes to great lengths to convince his readers that the opera is of benefit to them. He appeals to tradesman and artisans stating

When we consider how many of the industrious classes of our population must have been engaged in finishing the embroideries, the coiffures and dresses of the fashionable and wealthy, an estimate may be formed of the beneficial tendency of the opera in the important economy of distribution.

He indicates the tone of the opera goes by stating that a certain performance was attended by "an aristocratic young lady" "whose beauty was heightened by a striped silk of such exquisite colors as to command general admiration."⁸ At the same time, Bennett never ceases emphasizing that the success of the opera derives from the fact that tickets are cheap enough for the common man to afford them. Prices were high when the Havana Company first performed at the Astor Place Opera House and at Niblo's, and the company did not make the good profits that it later made at Castle Garden where the cheapest seats were only 50¢.

The Herald's reviewer does not entirely neglect the musical aspects of the operatic performance. "Her notes were firmly held and she is not entitled to the charge of changing the author's work for effect" he will write of the Havana company's prima donna.⁹ Another day he writes of another singer "her fiorituri were very pleasing."¹⁰ But he avoids the quibbling over musical detail which so delighted the Tribune's critic.

The Herald's reviewer's purpose in his reviews is clearly to interest his reader in what Bennett has decided is a cultural experience that is good for them and for New York City. The Herald even goes so far as to review the rehearsal for an opera new to the public in an article which gives the opera's plot and no doubt would increase the public's interest in the performance. Bennett never ceases urging his readers to support the Havana troupe, even during the Lind excitement. He points out on September 4, in yet another editorial, that the Havana company has played for low prices and that "as the expenses of the manager of this opera are about twenty four thousand dollars a month...any failure to perform involves a direct loss."¹¹ He contrasts the Havana Opera which appeared in the city without "any previous flourish of trumpets" and made "New triumphs every week" with the yet-to-be-heard, and very expensive Miss Lind.¹²

It is worthy of note that during the Lind excitement Bennett alone does not neglect to review the other musical offerings of the day. It is in the Herald that we learn, for example, that only a day after Lind's first concert, Miss Anna Bishop, a noted American singer, gave a concert where she too sang Casta Diva--very movingly, according to the Herald--and the Herald alone gives front page tribute to the departure of the Havana opera company, an event which is swamped by the Lind excitement in the other newspapers.

Advance Publicity for Lind in the Herald

Before discussing the Herald's coverage of the Jenny Lind visit it is worthwhile to examine for a moment the relationship between Bennett and

Barnum. In his autobiography Barnum claims that the Herald was hostile to himself and describes the relationship between himself and Bennett as one of enmity. Before Lind's first concert, Barnum declares "As usual, the Herald...roundly abused Miss Lind and persistently attacked her manager."¹³ His comment on this allows him to display his business acumen:

The Herald in its desire to excite attention, has a habit of attacking public men, and I had not escaped. I was glad of such notices for they served as inexpensive advertisements to my museum, and brought custom free of charge.¹⁴

It is revealing therefore to discover in the files of the Herald letters such as the following:

April 16, 1850
American Museum

Dear Sir:

I engaged apartments at the Irving today for Jenny Lind and suite, and the above is a copy of the letter sent to Mr. Howard...If any of the above is found of public interest sufficient to get in tomorrow's Herald I shall feel much obliged, as I wish to send it in print across the Atlantic tomorrow.

Truly yours,

P.T. Barnum¹⁵

or this note dated a month later:

Mr. Barnum's compliments to Mr. Bennett and begs to say that if the enclosed 'review' should happen to be just the thing for the Herald he would like to have it appear, but if it is not apropos, or in any manner interferes with more valuable matter, let it be consigned to the flames.¹⁶

The relationship of Barnum and Bennett, two men who excelled in the art of interpreting the mind of the public, is obviously more complex than Barnum would have us believe. The question arises whether Barnum was only feigning a feud with Bennett, or whether such a feud existed but was ignored when the pressures of business made it necessary for the two men to cooperate.

The plain truth of the matter appears to be that of all the major dailies in New York, the Herald alone aided Barnum in publicizing his protegee in the months before her arrival. How many letters like the ones above passed from the American Museum to the editorial offices of the Herald is unknown, but twenty-three articles about Jenny Lind appear in the pages of the Herald in the period from February 20, 1850 to Lind's arrival on September 1, and rarely does more than two weeks go by without such an article appearing.

The articles fall into two groups: articles about Lind's current activities and articles which present chapters from her biography. The latter of these appear after the Herald's promise, published on March 11, that it will "arrange to give our readers the earliest and most authentic information in reference to the concerts of this great artist" and that it will also "be enabled to give our readers a series of statistical facts connected with the career of this illustrious cantatrice, for which we have already written to some friends in Europe."¹⁷ Eight of these biographical articles follow, each averaging a column in length, and all headed "London Correspondence" although the correspondent is clearly not the "Marcus" who usually signs the Herald's London letters, and the articles are not always published on days when the European mail has arrived. In content they present the image of Jenny Lind which one would expect Barnum to wish emphasized. Her rise from "little more than a 'nobody'" and her eventual triumph over the entrenched stars of the London opera stage form the subject of most of the articles, while accounts of her success are balanced by tales of her charity and her visits to "the back lanes and cottages of the poor."¹⁸ Details like the fact that "she is an

accomplished needlewoman, and loves nothing more than to pass her mornings in the quiet and natural occupations of her sex"¹⁹ seem designed to disarm the scruples of the flintiest puritan. It is very tempting to suppose that these are the vaunted items which Barnum claims to have supplied daily to the New York Press.

Alas for Barnum's reputation as a press agent, if these articles were supplied by him, it appears that something must have gone wrong in the middle of his campaign, for although the London correspondent panegyrics appear regularly throughout April and May, a radical shift in tone takes place in the beginning of June. On June 7th the Herald prints a ten line article stating of Lind that

Our German Correspondent informs us that this celebrated vocalist at her recent concerts at Berlin completely failed to draw a large audience, and that generally she has exhausted all the novelty of her peculiar vocalization throughout Germany.²⁰

After this, one more enthusiastic article from London describes the visit of Queen Victoria to see Lind and then the biographical series disappears from the Herald's pages, except for a sole article published on August 16--at the time the prize song contest is announced in the Tribune. In the crucial 2-1/2 months preceding Lind's arrival only a few lines about Lind occur in the Herald--usually buried in the middle of columns on "gossip of Paris" or "Foreign Drama and Musical." So careless is the reporting that one item, a one line note that Lind had contributed a donation to a Temperance group is printed twice, at an interval of a month, both times buried in articles on other subjects. The items which do appear are short bland statements of Lind's popularity and charity, which are embellished with none of the human interest flourishes which the Herald

often employs to spice up its news. The prize song contest is completely ignored, and does not, as might have been expected, even draw out the satiric pen of Bennett.

Bennett's wit is unleashed in this period on another topic however, the high price of tickets. In a satiric vein at the end of April, Bennett describes the possibility of a deluge of European artists, following Lind's lead, and charging such high prices for tickets that

One thousand dollars for tickets and five thousand dollars for dresses and decorations will be sufficient for any fashionable family in the year 1850.²¹

He returns to this theme in July (without actually mentioning Lind's name) saying

The mass of the public, who have a taste for music cannot afford from ten to thirty dollars every week for the gratification of their love of the musical art.²²

What may have occurred to drive the Lind story from the pages of the Herald is unclear. Once Lind has arrived, as we shall see, there is ample evidence that Barnum extended every courtesy to the Herald's reporters and gave them several exclusive stories. Possibly the excitement caused by the Compromise of 1850 and the death of President Zachary Taylor on the one hand, and the scandal involved in the Parkman murder trial which took place over the summer on the other, made the Lind story seem too tame to the Herald. Possibly Bennett simply did not anticipate the extent of the public's hysteria over Lind. It is even possible that Barnum, having gotten the main facts of Jenny Lind's life into the Herald's pages felt he had done what needed to be done and did not actively push for more coverage, preferring to concentrate on more visible forms of publicity. Yet the contrast between the large number of articles and editorials praising

the Havana Opera Company in the summer months, and the dearth of material about Jenny Lind in that same period is striking and makes it hard not to conclude that Bennett and Barnum may have experienced a breach in relations--a breach which was quickly mended when the popular frenzy about Lind made it a matter of personal gain to both men to cooperate.

Lind's Arrival

Contemporaries estimated that some 30,000 people crowded downtown to welcome Jenny Lind to New York on the Sunday afternoon she arrived, following her carriage to her hotel and jamming the streets outside of her hotel far into the evening. The Herald, realizing the importance of capitalizing on such excitement, devoted more column space to the Lind story than did any of its competitors. On one of her first days in the city the Herald even found it necessary to insert a notice that "owing to the great press of news" they were "compelled to omit a great amount of local and other highly interesting matter."²³ While Lind's ship approached New York harbor, on September 1, the Herald published an article from the Liverpool Chronical of August 17 about Lind's last days in Liverpool, an article brought in probably by one of the Herald's own boats from "The Atlantic" itself. This article, though different from that found in the Tribune and Sun, is similarly rapturous. The double issue printed the next day carries material about Jenny Lind in 4-1/2 columns of the front page and on two additional columns on page 2. The content of these stories is roughly similar to those found in the Tribune. The front page articles cover her last days in Liverpool and her journey over the Atlantic, and are supposed to be written by the same London correspondent who penned the

biographical sketches, a writer who may well be Barnum's agent. The page 2 article details the reception given the singer by New York's delirious masses and the serenade of the Musical Fund Society. No hint of the cynicism found in the corresponding article in the Sun can be detected here. The Herald is again entirely enthusiastic about Lind. The stories, however, contain more human interest touches and occasional humor than the ones in the Tribune on the same events. The "London Correspondent" for example quips that so popular was Jenny Lind in Liverpool, that all things Swedish were in vogue and "Swedish iron rose in the market" while "the price of Stockholm tar sensibly advanced."²⁴ The same writer describes "the perfection and graceful symmetry of Jenny Lind's figure" and his judgment is echoed by the claim of another writer elsewhere in this issue that "she has a fine bust, such as all first class singers possess."²⁵ Lind's clothes are also briefly described. The Herald furnishes fragments of dialogue, repeating what the Tribune reported the singer to say, but in a more direct quotation form. Lind is quoted as saying, in response to a question from Barnum, that New York Harbor exceeds even the beauties of the Bay of Naples, and later she is reported to be highly impressed by "an exquisite table" and supposedly asks a Herald reporter whether it was in fact, of American manufacture.

While the Herald's reporting of Lind's landing is similar to that found in the Tribune it is generally written in a more modern journalistic style. The first paragraph summarizes the theme of the article and the writer then plunges into a rapidly paced description of the events that follow. This contrasts forcibly with the more novelistic style of the Tribune. Notable also is the praise which the Herald directs at Barnum,

who is described as "one who has outstripped all the managerial skill and enterprise on this continent"--praise which will often be echoed in future Herald articles.²⁶

In the nine days which intervened between Lind's arrival and her first concert the Herald managed to keep the Lind story alive for its readers in a masterful way. Unlike the other papers which tended to scatter a few Lind items a day through their "City Items" or "City News" columns, items which merely announced that Lind had visited various spots, and the arrangements for the auction and concerts, the Herald maintained a steady stream of readable fare for its patrons, utilizing techniques sophisticated for its time. Because of the sheer bulk of articles about Lind in the Herald it is possible here only to summarize the most important of these techniques.

The first of these is alert, on-the-spot reporting. The Herald's reporter seems to have dogged Lind's footsteps, and rather than just mentioning that Lind was somewhere, the Herald reporter paints a portrait of the singer in each situation described. Thus in an account of Mayor Woodhull's visit to Jenny Lind the Herald includes a telling dialogue. When complimented by the Mayor Lind replies,

You frighten me. Everybody frightens me with too much praise. I fear I shall never come up to the expectations formed of me. I have been spoiled with flattery twice before, and I fear I shall be spoiled again.

The Mayor replies, "We know that you are accustomed to this and that it cannot injure you," to which Lind again protests.

No it is new to me. I cannot accustom myself to it. There is too much friendship shown me. I am full of imperfections and if you continue to flatter me in this way I shall tremble when I come to sing.²⁷

A visit the same day to the exhibition of paintings at the American Art Union mentions the specific paintings which called forth Lind's admiration and includes a further dialogue in which Lind, presented with a number to be entered into a drawing for a prize says, "I have never been lucky," to which the President of the Art Union replies "None more so," a remark greeted with "loud laughter."²⁸ The visit of a noted divine, Dr. Cummings, who is soliciting charity, is described succinctly. "He laid on the flattering unction in the most delicate manner," the Herald reports.²⁹

The second device utilized by the Herald to spice up its reporting is controversy. Lind was entirely praiseworthy in a dull sort of way, which must have made finding an issue to seize upon difficult for Bennett, but the old familiar issue of high ticket prices was always at hand when needed. As the price of even the inexpensive tickets for Lind's concerts was at first three dollars--several days' wages for a working man--this issue had undeniable appeal to the Herald's readers. Right from the start the Herald demands that the prices be kept low and suggests to its readers that they attend the concerts at Castle Garden where tickets will be cheaper than at subsequent performances because of the immense capacity of the hall. Lind herself is reported in favor of low prices. The Herald argues against the institution of ticket auctions several days later. Selling tickets instead on a first-come-first-served basis would have "more republican equality in it." The issue of ticket prices is related to a disdain for what Bennett terms "the Upper Ten," New York's "spurious and codfish Aristocracy," and Bennett often harps on the fact that "wealth is not accumulated here in the hands of a few" as it is in Europe, but

that it is diffused among the population, so that successful managers must appeal to the great middle class mass--and offer them "moderate prices."³⁰

In describing the auction the Herald delights to inform its readers how canny spectators "laughted outright" at the spirited bidding of New York's hotel owners for expensive seats and claims, with an air of wise superiority, that the tickets auctioned off for large sums as "choice seats" were hardly those a music lover would purchase, being too close to the stage.³¹ The cheaper seats still available to its readers, it hints, are the better ones. Lind's identification with the middle classes is heightened subtly by the Herald's publication of a letter from Lind refusing an invitation to a fancy dress ball at Newport. Bennett is eventually reconciled to the auction, and admits it in print, after it turns out that "the masses of the people" were those who thronged to bid for seats, instead of the "kid gloves exquisites" whom Bennett had feared would dominate the proceedings.³²

A third device utilized by the Herald is the explanatory editorial. Throughout the Lind excitement the Herald asks questions. Why is Lind so popular? Why did Genin the Hatter pay so much for his seat? What does it all mean? In answering these questions the Herald looks far beyond the musical and artistic considerations which satisfied the curiosity of the Tribune reporter. In an article entitled "Jenny Lind--The Secret of Her Popularity" the Herald asks how a woman "just like a Dutch woman" in looks can be "the most popular woman in the world" and then attributes her success to "sense, prudence and a high order of intellect."³³ The previous day the Herald had stated in passing that in "the high excellence

of her moral character, coupled with shrewd good sense, lies the secret of her success."³⁴ Now this shrews good sense is elaborated on in the editorial:

Thousands upon thousands of religious and moral people go to her concerts who would not be found under the same roof with some of the best Italian singers who had not been equally chary with their reputations. It is this moral and religious feeling that is her trump card, which has won and will win golden opportunities for her, and gold itself for Barnum.

The Herald's realistic appraisal goes further.

There is one little secret of her success yet untold, and without which her virtues and her talents would be alike unknown. It is the Press. This is the lever which moves the world.³⁵

Of course Bennett is tooting his own horn here, but to dismiss the importance of such a statement is to apply hindsight. Bennett often exhorted businessmen to realize the importance of the press and to utilize the mass audience which their advertising could reach in the mass circulation newspapers. Assumptions about the power of the media, common now, appear to have been far from universally accepted in Bennett's time. Even Barnum seems not to have grasped all the possibilities that press coverage can provide, so Bennett's statements about the power of the press may be taken as something more than egoism.

In answering the question of why Genin bought his \$225 ticket Bennett repeats the argument of the Tribune that Genin benefited enormously from the unpaid publicity he received as the story travelled through America, adding that among Genin's chief rivals for the ticket were "three patent medicine doctors who have made fortunes by advertising." But here the Herald again goes further, reverting to its theme of class antagonism. It asks "Why did the people cheer him so vehemently?" and then answers,

because the first choice was taken from the Upper Ten by a tradesman. And here was a capital idea of Barnum's in pitting the people against the aristocracy in a rivalry of dollars. He is a brick and deserves to make money.³⁶

The Herald combined the use of journalistic techniques mentioned above with extremely thorough coverage of all events and announcements connected with Jenny Lind. The presence of statements lauding Barnum in the Herald, when placed beside numerous items which seem to have been given by Barnum exclusively to the Herald, suggest that, as mentioned earlier, Barnum maintained a close working relationship with Bennett. Two anecdotes given to the Herald support this. The first relates that Jenny Lind had requested to meet Mrs. Barnum. The second that when that lady decided that she wished to attend the first Lind concert Barnum had to go out and buy a ticket for her as "he had not one left."³⁷ The Herald also appears to have been invited to an exclusive private rehearsal which is reported on September 5, besides attending the September 10 open rehearsal to which Barnum invited all representatives of the press. The publication of such items benefited both Barnum and Bennett. The only interesting news item which does not appear in the Herald is the story found only in the Sun--the Sun's sole scoop--that Barnum announced that Lind has been sick the day of her first concert.

The only Herald item which could be construed as an attack in this period is a short notice relating that there is deep dissatisfaction among the authors of the rejected prize songs, which occurs the day after the judges' decision and is followed by the comment that "it was well known beforehand who would win the \$200," an attack which focuses not on Barnum but on the rival New York Tribune.³⁸

The Herald and the Jenny Lind Concerts

The Herald's manner of reviewing Jenny Lind's concerts and covering the later phases of the singer's visit is consistent with what has already been observed of its practices. At the concerts as much attention is given to the audience as to the performer--sometimes more, for the audience is found to be made up of the salt of the earth, the middle class. The initial reviews of Lind's singing, while positive, do not reach the heights of idolatry scaled by the other critics we have examined; here and there a critical note intrudes. The Herald's writer (or possibly writers) use their talents to avoid the pitfall of repetitious writing as all the six concerts are reviewed. Each review contains less information about Lind's performance and more about the crowd who attended, the performers who joined Lind on the stage, and other germane topics. And throughout this period, as in the ones preceding it, the reader is treated to entertaining editorials commenting on the Jenny Lind phenomenon.

At the very first concert the Herald exults at the middle class character of the audience which greeted Jenny Lind.

It was not the aristocracy who were there: it was the middle classes--the mechanics and the storekeepers with their wives and daughters and sisters, presenting an array of dazzling beauty, in which the upper ten was lost as a drop of water in the ocean.

The triumph becomes that of the American people, rather than just that of a singer, Jenny Lind. The Herald describes how "the ladies' dresses were magnificent," and "such as the great mass of women in no other country of the world can afford to wear."³⁹ This chauvinistic theme is amplified upon and given a new twist in an editorial published several days after

the first concert. Using Lind's name rather like the advertisers who introduce it into their advertisements to catch the reader's attention, Bennett's essay entitled "Jenny Lind, The Northern Light" expatiates on the idea that Lind's success represents the progression of civilization away from the races of the south (i.e. the Romans) to the "hardy northern races." This idea has been introduced before in passing in Bennett's editorials about Lind, as when he writes "southern Europeans fall into errors from which the calculating caution of the northerns protects them" but here Bennett is able to devote several paragraphs to the theme, taking occasional swipes at the "aged, decaying, effete monarchies of Europe." Lind's greatest triumph has taken place in America because it only can take place here because of what American represents. "There is a future for this continent because it has no past," explains Bennett, "this she feels and expresses."⁴⁰ In the review of the last Lind concert the Herald again champions the middle classes and a good deal of the review is taken up with the abuse of "the uptown aristocracy, who would monopolize every refined pleasure if they could," but who have ignored Jenny Lind, because "a penny whistle would please them better than a flute."⁴¹

Besides attributing Jenny Lind's epic success with the American public to the virtues of that public itself, the Herald also advances the idea that the crowds who attended the first concert went "not so much to gratify their love of music, as their propensity for the marvelous." There is undoubtedly a good deal of truth in this analysis; and the Herald contributes to the public's curiosity with its repetition of the word "prodigy" in reference to Jenny Lind, a word reminiscent of Joice Heth or the Feejee Mermaid. It is the Herald alone, too, which describes the appearance of

the celebrated Genin at the first concert. "Every eye was on the \$225 seat" which was marked "A-1" and held the hatter wearing--most appropriate for such occasions--a giant top hat.⁴²

With so much to report, the Herald has little room to devote to a technical review of Lind's performance. In the writeup of the first concert the actual description of the performance only begins in the second column, and although the critic praises Lind, he does point out that her voice faltered at the opening of her first aria, Casta Diva. This he attributes to her sensitivity of soul. Nevertheless, on the next day, September 13, he castigates other reviewers who did not mention the fault and accuses them of setting their notices in type before attending the concert. This is typical of the Herald and even more typically, the Herald goes on to state that it prefers the judgment of "the people" over that of any critic as "they are far better judges; they are true to nature."⁴³

In the second and third concert reviews the Herald's critic makes several negative statements about Lind's performance. In the writeup of the second concert he writes "she shifted her register...producing an unpleasant harshness to a cultivated or naturally fine ear." He describes an aria as "not a composition in which Jenny Lind can shine." He raises the question of the "propriety" of training the voice to sing in the highest register, and describes baritone Belletti as being "nearly smothered" by the orchestra. In the review of the third concert he mentions "the harshness of several notes."⁴⁴ It is not to be understood that these negative statements are the rule in these reviews. They are not. They are amply balanced by reams of conventional praise. It is the fact that

any negative statements are made at all which is significant in view of the overwhelmingly adoring tone found in the reviews of both the Sun and the Tribune. The Herald's basic orientation towards Lind is in fact positive, and it repeatedly urges its readers to attend the concerts.

Furthermore the tone shifts away from all small cavils in the last three reviews, one of which is written in a different style than the rest and is far lusher in language. That review, the fourth, tells how "men started to their feet in the most frantic manner, while others might be heard exclaiming 'O God,' while Jenny Lind sang."⁴⁵ In the last three reviews there are no more negative statements about Lind. In these last three reviews, the Herald, rather than repeating descriptions of Lind's performance, shifts its emphasis to the audience, whose ever increasing size--the last concert was attended by some 9,000 people--was a prodigy in itself. The last reviews are dominated by descriptions of the crowd surging towards their seats and of the disruptions in the audience which occurred at several of the concerts. By the fifth concert less than 1/3 of the review concerns Lind.

Besides reviewing each of the concerts, the Herald continues to inform its reader of the small newsworthy items connected with Lind, for example, her launching of a ship and her visit to Yonkers. It also continues harping on the subject of ticket prices. Barnum's decision to lower prices and make the cheaper seats one dollar is announced and acclaimed and Barnum himself distinguished with an editorial entitled "Barnum and the Dollar." In the days after the first concerts the Herald may twit Barnum--"Joice Heth and the mermaid, not forgetting Tom Thumb,

are forever buried in oblivion"--but it gives him his due, saying for instance, "We wish to thank Mr. Barnum for what he has done in furthering the cause of progress in America" and calling him "one of our men of the future."⁴⁶

Human interest angles continue to spark up the reports in the Herald's pages. Where the Tribune reported that a rehearsal was attended by a large crowd, the Herald explains that many of the individuals who formed the crowd sneaked into the hall bearing violin cases, pretending to be members of the orchestra. Two articles are devoted to describing the party given by Mayor Woodhull to Jenny Lind--the party the Tribune described as being on Temperance principles. In one a letter from "One of the Invited" is reproduced, telling how the mayor committed a breach of taste by requesting that Lind provide his guests with "a taste of any little melody," and how Lind replied, with all good grace, that her contract with Barnum forbade her to sing on her own, so that she must "toe the mark as a woman of business in America."⁴⁷ In the report of Lind's departure the writer adds a distinctive touch by mentioning the presence of "a sugar model of Castle Garden" and other decorations in the singer's stateroom.⁴⁸

Certainly, if there is one feature which distinguishes the Herald from the Tribune it is the sense of humor which often pervades its articles. A letter from "A Subscriber" oppressed by the difficulties that still plague New Yorkers suggests that Lind give a benefit concert for the suffering taxpayers of the city and county of New York so that those who have moved out of town to escape taxes would contribute their share in ticket receipts. Lind's visit to the Herald's own office is full of humorous

notes, and Lind is reported telling Bennett, after touring the rooms full of inky presses, that "the Herald establishment would require a good deal of soap."⁴⁹

Lind's charitable contributions however receive scant attention. The multitude of letters to and from the various charities which are found in the other newspapers do not appear in the Herald, with the exception of those involving the Firemen whose association with the Herald has been briefly mentioned before. Bennett's feelings about that charity are summed up in the editorial where he stated that Lind's virtue was her "trump card." "We do not mean to insinuate...that such is the intent of her beautiful charity," he writes, "but Barnum need not feel alarmed for the dollars" when Lind gives charity concerts, as his money "will come back to him with interest upon interest."⁵⁰

It is not as an angel of mercy that Bennett describes Lind after her visit to the Herald's premises, but as one whose "shrewd good sense seems to pervade her every action."⁵¹ Thus with his praise of Barnum's entrepreneurial genius and his highlighting of Lind's shrewdness and intelligence, Bennett presents a Jenny Lind far more likely to appeal to the middle class man on the make than is the pallid ministering virgin so dear to the Tribune's writers. While paying conventional lip service to Lind's virtue, what Bennett really glorifies is the American middle classes, who proclaim their taste and refinement by attending concerts where they see in Jenny Lind the embodiment of the qualities--shrewdness, talent, and yes, love of their republic--which have made them what they are.

Footnotes

- ¹New York Herald, January 13, p. 4.
- ²Ibid., September 3, p. 3.
- ³Ibid., June 7, p. 4.
- ⁴Ibid., July 3, p. 1.
- ⁵Ibid., February 20, p. 2.
- ⁶Ibid., February 19, p. 1.
- ⁷Ibid., February 21, p. 4.
- ⁸Ibid., February 23, p. 1.
- ⁹Ibid., April 13, p. 1.
- ¹⁰Ibid., April 21, p. 4.
- ¹¹Ibid., September 4, p. 4.
- ¹²Ibid., September 9, p. 1.
- ¹³Barnum, Struggles and Triumphs, p. 303.
- ¹⁴Ibid., p. 327.
- ¹⁵Seitz, p. 142.
- ¹⁶Ibid.
- ¹⁷New York Herald, March 11, p. 41.
- ¹⁸New York Herald, April 6, p. 1 and April 13, p. 7.
- ¹⁹Ibid., April 18, p. 2.
- ²⁰Ibid., June 7, p. 4.
- ²¹Ibid., April 24, p. 2.
- ²²Ibid., July 16, p. 1.
- ²³Ibid., September 5, p. 2.
- ²⁴Ibid., September 2, p. 1.

²⁵Ibid., p. 1 and p. 2.

²⁶Ibid., p. 2.

²⁷Ibid., September 5, p. 2.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., September 7, p. 2.

³¹Ibid., September 8, p. 2.

³²Ibid., September 10, p. and September 7, p. 2.

³³Ibid., September 6, p. 4.

³⁴Ibid., September 5, p. 2.

³⁵Ibid., September 6, p. 4.

³⁶Ibid., September 9, p. 1.

³⁷Ibid., September 11, p. 1.

³⁸Ibid., September 7, p. 2.

³⁹Ibid., September 13, p. 1.

⁴⁰Ibid., September 17, p. 4 and September 6, p. 4.

⁴¹Ibid., September 25, p. 2.

⁴²Ibid., September 12, p. 1.

⁴³Ibid., September 13, p. 1.

⁴⁴Ibid., September 14, p. 2 and September 18, p. 2.

⁴⁵The New York Herald, September 20, p. 1.

⁴⁶Ibid., September 16, p. 2 and September 17, p. 4.

⁴⁷Ibid., September 24, p. 1.

⁴⁸Ibid., September 26, p. 2.

⁴⁹Ibid., September 24, p. 1.

⁵⁰Ibid., September 6, p. 4.

⁵¹Ibid., September 24, p. 1.

CHAPTER VI

JENNY LIND IN THE ADVERTISING COLUMNS

One peculiarity of the Jenny Lind phenomenon is that Lind's name is as visible in the advertising columns of the penny papers as it is in their news columns. If the Lind story in any way resembles a modern media event it is in the rush with which newspaper advertisers leaped aboard the Jenny Lind bandwagon.

A major cause behind this was the fact that in 1850 newspaper advertisements in America were limited by tradition to a dull, non-visual format. Illustrations were forbidden and inflexible custom dictated that advertisers confine themselves to publishing short paragraphs set in undistinguished print faces and printed with a string of similar advertisements. The only device which advertisers could employ therefore was the eye catching word or phrase, and with the arrival of Jenny Lind and the enthusiasm of the public for the Swedish Nightingale, Jenny Lind's name became such a phrase.

The bulk of the advertisements which incorporate Jenny Lind's name and reputation appear in the papers after her arrival, however there do occur several advertisements printed before she appeared which are worthy of consideration. The most interesting of these is an advertisement for a seamstress, a Mrs. Beman, whose establishment is mentioned in the advertisement itself as being near Barnum's American Museum. "Jenny Lind is Coming--And Barnum Has Done It" is the opening line of this ad which goes on to explain that "Mrs. Beman is happy to learn that she had not been making 'Jenny Lind's' and other ladies' morning gowns for nothing." This

advertisement appeared in both the Tribune and the Herald on February 21, the day after Barnum's letter to the press announcing his contract with Jenny Lind. In the body of Mrs. Beman's ad there are particular references to the terms of Lind's contract, the 150 nights she will perform and the \$300,000 she will earn. Barnum's own advertisements on the same day inform the public that in his museum they will find "a beautiful likeness of Jenny Lind and an autographed letter from her, accepting proposals for a professional engagement." It is highly possible that Barnum is actually responsible for Mrs. Beman's advertisement, especially since no other advertisements for Mrs. Beman appear anywhere else in the press in the next seven months. Around this period advertisements also begin to appear in the Tribune for two different biographies of Jenny Lind, one by C. G. Rosenberg and one by G. G. Foster, the latter of which retailed for 12-1/2¢. It is quite possible that it was actually in the advertising columns of the newspapers, rather than in their news columns that Barnum did what he could to spur the popular interest. However, the actual number of times Lind is mentioned in the advertising columns is small. Such references appear infrequently enough that they could be by no means construed as a publicity campaign in themselves.

But if the advertisement for Mrs. Beman's "Jenny Lind's" was a creation of Barnum's, the advertisements of the fifteen different merchants who also used Jenny Lind's name in their advertisements in the Herald after Lind's arrival and of the eleven who did so in the Tribune are not. It is testimony to the true extent of Lind's popularity with the public that these merchants all dragged Lind's name into their copy--especially since their product in no case had a connection with Lind at all.

The advertisement for "Twelvetree's Washing," a pamphlet distinguished at all times for its clever advertisements, is a good example of the techniques such advertisers employed. The advertisement begins "Jenny Lind Tickets Gratis,"¹ and then informs the readers that Twelvetree's washing system is better than free tickets to see Jenny Lind. A similar approach is used by the makers of Anderson's carpets who write that their products would be the "Admiration of the Swedish Nightingale" if only she had the opportunity to view them.² The purchase of the \$225 auction ticket as well as his gift of a riding hat and gloves to Jenny Lind by Genin the hatter led to a spate of advertisements from his rival hatters, Espanscheid and Knox, calling attention to their own more sober behavior. "Can't Spare the Time" begins one such advertisement found in the Sun's puff column. "The Tribune supposes that Knox will send Jenny Lind a riding hat, but is is for once mistaken. He is too busy. If she will visit him he will give her his tribute."³ The makers of hair dye, boots, liniment and clam chowder all use some variety of these stratagems in their copy.

Another common approach was to publish a testimonial letter from either Jenny Lind or one of her male colleagues, Belletti or Benedict. At the outset of Lind's tour merchants showered her with presents to which Lind politely responded by sending back thank-you letters. This resulted in the publication of advertisements beginning with statements like "Jenny Lind captivated by American Millinery," which reproduced Lind's letters in their entirety. Since Lind's response generally included some statement to the effect that she would "feel great pleasure in wearing" the

garment in question these ads must have served to advance the interests of the advertiser.⁴

Just how willing to perform this function for the local merchants Jenny Lind was is unknown. The Herald reports that she was distressed by such gifts and wished to pay the donors for them, but whether or not she felt used in this context is unclear. When Lind later broke with Barnum there was no report that this was one of the areas in which they had disagreed, although she was said to have been unhappy with the choice of halls--some of which were used for cattle shows--which he had provided her in some of America's more backwoods settlements.

In general the advertisers who resorted to using Jenny Lind's name to attract business were those advertisers who usually advertised in the columns of the various newspapers. Since the same ad for one product often appears in more than one newspaper it is likely that these ads were the productions of some of the advertising agencies which were just beginning to get a foothold in New York not of the newspapers themselves. These ads were a boost to Barnum's efforts to promote Jenny Lind but did not advance the interests of the newspapers which carried them, since the newspapers had already been paid for these ads on a monthly or yearly basis by the sponsors. Jenny Lind's visit did however generate a whole new species of advertising which it was to the profit of the newspapers to print. Besides publishing several paid advertisements from Barnum each day--announcements of the concert programme, the names of the musicians in the orchestra, and "Rules for the Governance of Hacks and Carriages" among others--the newspapers carried a good number of advertisements from ticket scalpers and the makers of Jenny Lind sheet music, Jenny Lind

portraits, Jenny Lind biographies and even Jenny Lind opera glasses. The Herald benefited most from this kind of advertising. On September 10, for example, it carried twelve advertisements inserted by scalpers, as well as the notice of the concert programme, a sold out notice, an announcement that Chickering pianos were to be used, a sheet music advertisement, an advertisement for opera glasses and an appeal from Le Grande Smith, Barnum's assistant, that a gentleman who had been given the wrong ticket at the box office return to correct the mistake. This list excludes the advertisements mentioned earlier which mentioned Lind's name without being directly concerned with her concerts. The Herald even carries a poem to Jenny Lind signed "Benjamin" in its classified section.

The fact that advertisers who wished to attract the attention of those actually going to the Lind concerts preferred to advertise in the Herald rather than in either the Sun or the Tribune, especially if they only planned one advertisement, reinforces Bennett's claim that it was in fact the tradesman and middle classes that patronized her performances. But while the Tribune carries less of this advertising it still handles a considerable amount. On September 10 when the Herald has twelve ads from scalpers the Tribune has four. On that same day the Sun carried only one, that of the largest ticket dealer, William Hall and Sons. On the other hand, the Tribune published almost exclusively the advertisements for books about Jenny Lind. These ads for Lind biographies begin to appear immediately after Barnum's announcement of Lind's proposed visit and continue to appear frequently throughout her visit. Only the Sun failed to attract a great number of new Lind-related advertising, probably because

the class from which it was assumed to draw its readers could not afford the Lind-related luxuries.

The lesson of Lind's tour and its effect on penny press advertising was not lost on the perspicacious James Gordon Bennett, and undoubtedly it is not coincidental that several editorials on the benefits of advertising--in the Herald of course--appear in his columns during the period of Lind's visit. It is apparent in these editorials that Bennett felt that local businessmen were not aware of the effectiveness of newspaper advertising. Chambermaids sensibly utilize the Herald classified column, Bennett writes, while "the clumsy, old, fussy, muddleheaded merchants" continue to put the same old tired copy in mercantile advertising papers which only reach a small number of readers.⁵ He sounds the same theme several days later in the editorial where he argues that his paper, not the Tribune, should be paid to publish the City Corporation notices. Possibly Bennett hoped that merchants who saw the effective use of the Herald's columns by those with a stake in the Jenny Lind excitement would attribute some of the success of the Lind venture to newspaper advertising. There is no doubt at all that the point at which newspaper editors realized that a public furor, such as that caused by Jenny Lind, was profitable to their newspapers was the point at which the future of the newspaper-created media event was assured.

Footnotes

¹New York Herald, September 11, p. 3.

²New York Sun, September 7, p. 3.

³Ibid., p. 2.

⁴New York Sun and New York Herald, September 4.

⁵New York Herald, September 18, p. 2.

C H A P T E R V I I

CONCLUSIONS

The Press

What conclusions can we draw about the way the penny press worked in 1850. How far had it come from its inception twenty years before?

Initially the modern reader is struck most by the failure of the press of 1850 to utilize visual techniques. Headlines are used sparingly. They appear only at the heads of those stories which deal with a small number of subjects. All other articles are merely titled, given headings in type faces hardly different from those used in the rest of the article. These headings indicate what is in the article but do not go out of their way to lure the reader's eye or attention. "Arrival of Jenny Lind/ Scenes at Quarentine--Passage up the Bay." "The Jenny Lind Excitement. The Movements of the Nightingale." "Jenny Lindiana." These are not headlines but chapter headings, and this is symptomatic of the writing style employed by the press in 1850.¹ Furthermore there is little attempt to organize the news upon the page in a way that logically leads the reader from one topic to the next. In the Sun and the Tribune, Lind items are scattered throughout the news pages in no apparent order. Only in the Herald are they sometimes blocked together by subject. Although the newspapers were technologically capable of reproducing illustrations, only the Sun appears to have utilized them. The Tribune publishes diagrams and maps occasionally, for example, it prints a map of Professor Webster's laboratory during his trial for murder, but no pictorial representations of newsworthy personages appear in either its pages or those of the Herald.

This failure to use the visual possibilities of the printed page are particularly apparent when we turn to examine newspaper advertising.

Advertisers have a choice of using the short puff paragraph or the classified listing. Neither of these affords any stimulation to the reader's eye. The only illustrations permitted in the advertising columns, the stock cuts, are identical in all advertisements in the same category and so do not really qualify as illustrations, while even these were barred from the pages of the Herald by Bennett's fiat. Yet this was an age that excelled in the production of gaudy broadsides. Advertisers freely exploited the possibilities of different type faces on posters, as an examination of the handbills of steamship companies trumpeting the allure of California will show. Certainly the failure to let advertisers use newspaper column space imaginatively is a curious one. It was only after the Civil War that American newspapers began to utilize any display advertising, yet in France the Journal des Debats was printing highly visual display copy utilizing a rich variety of typefaces and illustrations in the year 1850. Even when American newspapers advertisers did begin to utilize more visual copy techniques the first application was highly verbal still, the repetition of one line numerous times on one page. American newspapers remained locked in the visual mode.

The language in which the newspapers of 1850 are written is also strikingly unlike what we have come to expect in news reporting. Where the modern journalist writes a first paragraph which summarizes the story and then lists pertinent information in order of decreasing importance the newspaper writer of 1850, as often as not, wrote in a novelistic or epistolary style. "Correspondents" were just that, letter writers, and

their letters were published in letter form. Adjectives flourished in lush Victorian splendour, and the prejudices of the writer were allowed free reign.

The newspapers--particularly the Tribune and the Herald--are more than anything, personal expressions of their creators. The opinions of Greeley and Bennett are as much a part of their newspapers as the information they bring of the news. Reading such a newspaper was something like picking up a letter from a long winded friend. Where the twentieth century press affects omniscience and omnipresence, that of the nineteenth century sought to be nothing more than a well informed friend. There was almost no attempt to impress the reader with the newspaper's efforts to get him the best and most accurate news, and none of the newspapers appear to emphasize it when they have gotten a story first.

Here and there there are signs of what is to come. The Sun's language appears to be somewhat less complex than that of its competitors--although this is merely a subjective judgment. Florid by today's standards, it is considerably less dense than that of the other two papers. The Herald, as we have seen, understood the value of emphasizing the human interest angle and wrote a slightly more modern news article than the others. And the Herald approached a more modern conception of the role of the reporter than did the other papers. Its reporters go out after a story and at times give us more than just a glimpse of the personalities involved. Lind's dialogue with the mayor is reported, for example, rather than just the fact that she met with him. Nevertheless, one is left with the sensation that even though tremendous technological changes had altered the world of newspaper publishing since the founding of the first

penny dailies in the 1830's, the newspapers had not begun to adapt to these changes. Placed side by side the newspaper of 1833 and that of 1850 are not--as far as format and style--all that different. The news comes faster from great distances. The pages are larger. The editions are longer. But it would not be until after the Civil War that newspapers would begin harnessing the power that technology had placed within their grasp. In 1850 the New York press was still dominated by the same men who had revolutionized it in the 1830s. It would be another twenty years until a new generation came to the top.

A curious feature of the press of 1850 is the absence of the interview from its pages. Historians of the press, such as James Crouthamel, attribute the first American interview to James Gordon Bennett, citing his publication of a conversation with the madam involved in the notorious Jewett murder case of 1836. But if Bennett, in fact, invented the interview he did so unconsciously, for he did not use it again. Nowhere during the Jenny Lind visit is Lind--or anyone else for that matter--interviewed by the press. The newspapers published what they were given by Barnum's office--reproductions of the letters Lind had sent to various persons and charities, the notices pertaining to the auctions and the concerts, the information about where Lind would go that day--but they did not have the modern idea that the reporter's function is to ferret out a story. In short, they did not intrude.

This peculiarity of the press at midcentury is another indication of the personal nature of the press at this time. It preserved the social distance and the sense of decorum which had evolved to facilitate social intercourse in the intimate village society which had begun to disappear

by 1850, but whose social values were to linger on for another few generations. The press might comment on Jenny Lind. The press might follow her to the art gallery and the daguerrotype salon. But the press did not rudely pry into her personal life. Indeed, except when she chose to address them--at the pier or in their own newspaper offices--they did not speak to her at all.

Taking into consideration these evidences that the press of 1850 lagged behind in terms of being able to follow out the implications of its new technology, it is not surprising to discover that it also had no real sense of the full implications of the growth which had taken place in readership. While all the newspapers had some conception of their role as political opinion molders, only the Herald realized to any real extent the effect that a newspaper could have on the population's cultural life. When all is said and done, taking into account the small amount of advance publicity that Barnum was able to generate in the pages of the press, we must conclude that Jenny Lind's visit--despite the roaring crowds, the spin-off products and the enormous profits involved--was not in any real sense a "media event," because it was not caused by the media. In fact it seems to push its way onto the pages of a fairly surprised press.

Certainly in the future impresarios would try again and again to duplicate Barnum's success. Max Maretzek began inserting biographical articles in the pages of the Herald glorifying his protegee, Teresa Parodi, even before Lind had left New York City. Although these articles were penned in a style very similar to that of the Jenny Lind biographical material attributed to the Herald's "London Correspondent," Maretzek was to experience no such good luck with his venture as had attended Barnum's,

in spite of his circulation of rumors that Parodi was secretly engaged to the Duke of Devonshire. The press in 1850 simply did not have the awareness and thus the power to take a truly active part in America's cultural life. When it dealt with cultural events it puffed, loudly and clearly. Its attempts to render critical judgments on the art were amateurish and often uncouth. It was not to the press that the population looked for indications of who would be its next cultural heroes.

We must conclude then that Lindomania owed its birth to the English and European periodicals which spread Lind's fame in the years before her visit, and to direct advertising strategies, the posters and broadsides, leaflets and word of mouth campaigns in which Barnum excelled. If the New York press did have a role in spreading Lindomania it was in alerting the rest of the country to the magnitude of Lind's triumph in New York. Just as the New York papers extracted the most interesting news from the European press and published it on their pages, hundreds of small town editors laboriously copied out the articles of the Herald, the Sun, and the Tribune, and printed them in their journals for the edification of the local folk. The relationship of the small town presses of America to the major city dailies in this period is a fascinating one and one deserving of further study. But despite Barnum's claims to be a brilliant press agent, and despite the temptation to compare Lindomania with similar later public enthusiasms--the flight of Lindbergh or the Beatles' 1964 American tour--the fact remains that when Jenny Lind fever swept over America the penny press did little more than observe.

The Press and the Historian

We now are left with the question of what, in the final analysis, the study of aging newspaper pages can contribute to our knowledge of history. Is it worth scanning thousands of columns of tiny print when we have access to contemporary books, diaries and memoirs aplenty? The newspapers do not increase our knowledge of the characters of the people who fill its pages. Jenny Lind never really comes alive anywhere in the press accounts. She remains a shadowy simulacrum. She is benevolent. She is well mannered. She is modest and childlike, perhaps a bit insipid. She visits the mayor. She attends an art gallery. And, of course, she sings.

The newspaper may be of little help to the biographer. But what may disappoint him furnishes a treasure trove for the social historian. For it is precisely here, in the pages of these newspapers, that we may find the answer to those questions which cannot be answered by the census and the street directory, questions about the attitudes and prejudices of the common man.

Because the newspapers are writing for clearly defined and identifiable segments of the population we may feel secure that themes that recur in the press reflect popular concerns. We may also be prevented from attributing a unanimity of opinion in the population which they certainly never had because we will find a spread of attitudes and opinions if we look at newspapers representing different classes of readers.

The question of why Lind was so popular furnishes a perfect example of this. If we read the Tribune exclusively we will be tempted to agree with the analysis offered by Neil Harris that for the men of her day Lind

embodied the spirit of Nature, that she appealed because of her artlessness which had a special meaning at a time in history when the artificial was beginning to encroach in ways it never had before as society became more complex. The Tribune's emphasis on Jenny Lind's modesty, charity and benevolence, coupled with its obsession with her maidenhood, would also tend to reinforce the argument offered by all of Jenny Lind's biographers that she was the perfect cult object for a society still bound by the prejudices of its puritan heritage, and afraid of its passions and lusts.

But when we turn away from the Tribune and examine its competitors other reasons emerge for Lind's popularity, and these are reasons which probably cannot be found in the journals and letters of the intellectuals on whom scholars like Harris and Wagenknecht depend. We see Lind as a prodigy, one whose very fame is ample reason to see her. We see that bidding for tickets at the ticket auction and getting one's name in the paper are status symbols. Indeed, the heavy emphasis on money--prices, earnings, and even charity donations--is inescapable, particularly in the pages of those papers which sought to attract the less cultivated reader. Lind is constantly referred to as a speculation of Barnum's, and she is often, particularly in the Herald, mentioned in the same breath as his profits. The fact that Jenny Lind gave her enormous profits--\$10,000 for the first concert alone--to charity made the whole issue more elevated; of that there is no doubt. But there is also no doubt that the public delighted simply in contemplating the sums that were at issue. The \$225 ticket, the service of silver plate given to Barnum's agent, or Lind's gift to the Half Orphan Asylum, they all involve money in tangible form, and after reading the pages of the Herald and the Sun we can have no doubt that the public was fascinated by money.

Then too the vision of Lind which we find in the Herald challenges the concept that all early Victorian Americans perceived women in terms of the norms set out in Barbara Welter's "The Cult of True Womanhood." Lind is portrayed as self-deprecating and shy, and she seems to have been both. But she is also portrayed as "shrewd," and "a businesswoman in America," and as a woman who knows how to use her virtue to get what she wants. It is very likely that the attitudes of many early Victorian Americans towards the true and proper behavior of a woman incorporated the conflicting set of values we find here, and that the strain on women in this period may have arisen from attempting both to appear retiring and to be clever at the same time.

The images of P. T. Barnum found in the penny press also reflect a spread of opinion. The Sun sees him as a comic huckster, the Tribune would rather not see him at all, he obscures somewhat the image of Jenny Lind, the "Artist Woman," and distracts from the otherwise spiritual thoughts that such an artist should inspire; but is glad at least that he is a Temperance man. The Herald presents yet another angle. It's Barnum is a huckster, but he is an enlightened huckster. He is, in fact, the man of the future, the entrepreneur. He is an "honest republican" enriching himself as he serves the public's greater good. He is in short, a man to be emulated.

Besides making us aware of the wide range of opinions which were held by the public at any given time the penny press also gives us some insight on how the general public saw itself. Throughout the Jenny Lind excitement it is striking how only the Sun emphasizes the frenzy aspect of Lindomania. We read in all the papers of throngs blocking Jenny Lind's

carriage, and of mobs jostling their way to their concert seats, and of crowds serenading the Swedish Nightingale, but this aspect of the phenomenon is downplayed. Americans seem extremely concerned to see themselves as cultured, civilized folk. To harp on the disorder and rowdiness caused by Jenny Lind's appearances would not do. It is the Sun which presents us with the memorable image of the working class men in boats gathering outside of Castle Garden to catch what they can of the strains of The Nightingale. It is the Sun which speaks of the maddened fools who are besides themselves at Lind's arrival. The other two newspapers allude to the disorders which occurred at several of the concerts in disapproving tones and then pass on. It is also the Sun, again with less to lose because its readers seem to have no particular stake in appearing cultivated, that tells us that the crowds at Lind's performances clapped so enthusiastically that they effectively drowned out her singing, and which begs that at future performances patrons be so good as to curtail their applause. The other two newspapers prefer to see the public's devotion to Lind not as a rather ridiculous frenzy but as a sign that Americans have attained a higher level of culture as a people. Thus the Tribune must attribute Lind's success to the qualities of her voice and delivery, and the Herald, somewhat more realistic, must crow that it was the middle classes who patronized her concerts and assert that her artistic triumph is yet another demonstration of the virtues of a republican society.

The newspapers reveal yet other traits of the public, some of which historians tend to ignore. While the constant paeans to the glories of the American Nation are merely naive, the constant tirades against the

degeneracy of southern peoples is ominous. It is southern Europeans, of course, who are the subjects of these blasts, the Italian authors of operas and the Italian prima donnas who have preceded Jenny Lind on the New York stage. But there is something compelling about the uniformity with which the south is associated with all that is effete and sensual. In these attitudes so carelessly expressed in the amusement columns of a daily paper we find the prejudices which were to darken the lifetimes of generations of immigrants, and in these attitudes it is even possible to see the roots of sectional conflict in the United States itself, for it is only a short step from scorning the effete "southrons" of Europe to scorning those of America's own southland.

Data such as these are straws in the wind. The newspapers in themselves cannot tell us everything, but they can serve to keep us grounded, to remind us how the people of the time saw things without the benefit of the hindsight that time confers on the historian. Many events too small to have caught the notice of those who wrote the first accounts of the period still linger on newspaper pages, where time has given them new significance. The trial transcripts that give us snippets of daily life and daily conversation, the police court items with their sparse catalogue of shirts stolen and pockets picked, the accounts of rapes and suicides, as well as the puffs for elixers and hair dye; all of these deserve more attention; all of these can help fill in the history of the great masses who left us no written records; and by combining these kinds of evidence with the more traditional records of the educated elite, it may be possible to arrive at a more panoramic view of early Victorian American culture.

Footnote

¹New York Tribune, September 2, p. 1; New York Herald, September 3, p. 2; New York Sun, September 10, p. 2.

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