

characters out of the way, an excuse to stop. It would have been more frank in Mr. Hawkins to have stopped without an excuse. But the book as a whole rings true and Philip Hale, the journalist, who acts as a sort of Greek chorus between the book and reader never disappoints one. The dialogue is of course unusually fine, sometimes clever, sometimes still cleverer by reason of its stupidity, the kind of talk one likes to hear and the talk one is compelled to hear. It is the dialogue that makes Mr. Hawkins' characters seem so alive, for it is talk with which reasonable and reasoning beings might address each other. Then his characters are able to hold sweet converse upon other subjects than the grand passion, which is an unusual accomplishment in characters. The book is full of that delicate cynicism that we met in "The Prisoner of Zenda" and the "Dolly Dialogues," and there is the same quiet gentlemanly way of telling the sad truth, as when Philip Hale tells *Tora*, "One can't even be kind in the way one likes best." No, that's the curse of it all, one can't. Its when we most want to give bread that we must give the stone and the serpent. Life would be much easier if it were otherwise.

It was whispered about Tuesday that Misses Ethel and Alice Dovey, the two wonderful little daughters of Mrs. George Dovey of Plattsmouth were in town. They have recently returned from Madame Cellini's school of music in London where they will take up their musical studies again next year. Through the kindness of several persons I had an opportunity to go and hear them Tuesday afternoon, and I went.

Not that I expected to be entertained, O, dear no! I have no weakness for prodigies. I had never heard a child who could sing and I never expected to hear one. The misguided infants with white dresses and blue sashes and golden curls who sing at Sunday school concerts were never dear unto my soul, and their curls never atoned for their sharp rigid little voices. When I saw the little Dovey girls I was still more discouraged, not but that they were pretty enough, but they were so little. I had heard they were young, but here were two tiny little things, ten and twelve years old, and small for their age. They were both charming little people, but there are so many charming people who are not great. Ethel has the real tragic eyes, the big gray eyes set deep and shaded by long lashes. That was the only ray of hope I saw. After a while the little girls quietly took their place by the piano and began to sing. It was some old English song that begins "I know a bank where wild thyme grows." It was simply wonderful. That is all I can say. It was the singing of children, and yet not of children. It was the child idea glorified, like the music of young composers and the songs of young poets. So far as I could see, though so little, they were both almost perfect in method. The little soprano, the youngest of the two, has a voice of wonderful flexibility, and sang beautifully in a spirit wholly childish. But the little alto is not a child in musical feeling. It was beautiful, the way she would take up her sister and strengthen and sustain her with those deep true tones. Then they took up from the pile of music that time honored duo "Home to Our Mountains" from *Il Trovatore*. I was scarcely ready for that even then. One has a natural horror of trusting music of sentiment in the hands of children, no matter how gifted, and that duo has suffered enough abuse, heaven knows. The other was only a child's song, suited to children, but this was one of Verdi's most beautiful arias. But that little alto did not

disappoint us. Under the childish accents there were the deep full tones, and there was feeling, real musical feeling, the thing that cannot be made or acquired, that gold dust and star dust can not buy. That little voice rang full of yearning and those big gray eyes looked with dreamy intensity away from the music, away from us, beyond us all somewhere—I wondered at what. There was no doubt about it any longer. She had it, the thing, the thing of things, as much as a child could have it. Then came a solo, a lullaby, and then that old duo, "Hear me, Norma," all sung with that indefinable sympathetic and imaginative quality that is great in a woman, but is glorious in a child. Older people try their strength and make their mark, and we know their limit, but for a child we may plan so much, hope so much.

The following is a letter written to Mrs. Dovey by Sec. J. Sterling Morton, shortly after the little girls returned from England.

Mrs. Margaret A. Dovey,  
Plattsmouth, Neb.

My Dear Madam:

I hasten to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of August 31, recounting the agreeable manner in which Ambassador Thos. F. Bayard received you and the little girls in London. It is just what I expected of him, because he is one of the most tender-hearted, genial, and at the same time, courtly men, whom I have ever known, and I read of their triumph with a great deal of state and personal pride.

It is impossible for me to say when I will be at Arbor Lodge, and therefore I can give you no probable date as to my presence in Nebraska City.

Hoping that the little girls may continue in health and prosperity I remain

Very Respectfully yours,  
J. Sterling Morton.

4 Arundel Gardens, W.  
Friday night.

Dear Mrs. Dawson:

Your children are simply wonderful. I could not tell you so as they were present, for I think it a bad plan to praise children in their presence. I really believe they will be the talk of the world in a few years to come. Let me have them next year and I will do my utmost for them. No true artist will praise themselves, as you can, with your clever brain, fully realize. But you can glean from the vast assemblage of the nobility at my concert last night, that they do appreciate me as a Professor of Singing and as a friend. Please let the children come to me at Brook St. to-morrow morning (Saturday) at 11, and I will give them a lesson and try their capabilities. I cannot, I cannot help thinking that Ethel will be a Tietjens and little Alice a Patti, I was delighted with them to day in their impersonation of "Romeo and Juliet." Tell dear little Lillian, with my love, that I will go and see her on Monday if she will let me know her address. And now good night. I am very tired for I have worked so very hard the last 2 months. With love to all.

Yours affectly,  
Louise Cellini.

The Princess of Wales sent me a *Special Messenger* yesterday to say that as she had promised to go to the Marquis of Northampton's and as she was feeling far from well she felt she could not go to both my concert and Lord Northampton's. I forgot to tell you this when we met to-day.

I have "followed copy closely," as the printers say, in reproducing that letter, and I think you will find it interesting for more reasons that its

information. Could anything be more prima donna like than that underlining? Could anything be more pungently English than that entirely purposeless and superfluous postscript? Now how under the sun would the Princess of Wales excuse her absence unless by a "Special Messenger." Would she be likely to issue a general proclamation? However in spite of her little peculiarities in form and composition Mme. Cellini is one of the first authorities on vocal culture and possibilities to-day in England, and on that her word goes. The little Dovey girls will return to her school next year. It is this magnificent training, begun so early, that makes me so hopeful for these children. Most singers spend years of their lives unlearning the things they have learned wrong. There is talent enough in the world, and there is training enough too, but talent dies unknown and unrecognized by the wayside every day, and training is wasted upon lay figures and creatures of wood. They so seldom meet, but when they do they shake the stars sometimes. There is an explosion somewhere when those two get together. Of course even Mme. Cellini's word can not insure Mr. Dovey's little girls or anybody else's little girls a future. They have the great hope, the rest depends on many things.

Mrs. George Dovey, the mother of the inspired youngsters from Plattsmouth, is the daughter of Mr. Charles Dawson for fifteen or twenty years storekeeper for the Burlington road at Plattsmouth. Mr. Dawson is an Englishman of the rotund, clean shaven, Pickwickian type. The children get much of their love of Shakespear from their grandfather. He has been a student of the master all his life. The man is an artist to the ends of his tapering delicate fingers. He understood from the first that these children were not as other children are and insisted that they be put under the best teachers. Their grandmother took them to London. In an American dentist's office, where the children's teeth were being treated, Mrs. Dawson met a wealthy lady who was the manager of the American booth in a charity fair managed by Society. The lady was bewailing her lack of two little girls to sing American airs in front of her booth. The dentist told her he knew of two little American girls who sang like larks. He brought them in. They sang for her. She was enraptured. Henceforth they sang to the oldest and noblest of the English nobility. Madame Cellini, who occupies the same place in London that Marchesi does in Paris, offered to teach them for nothing. Their reception in England was a tribute to their powers. When the children arrived in Plattsmouth they were met by "the band" and the people took the horses out of the carriage and dragged it themselves. Little Ethel, the twelve year old has been requested by the *St. Nicholas* people to write them an article called "A Doll's Tour of England." It will appear in that magazine with illustrations. A small number of Mrs. David A. Campbell's friends will have an opportunity to see and hear these children in opera. Mrs. Campbell's little son has written out the parts of Faust from memory, wired the barn for electric lights, and in October sometime Ethel will take the part of Marguerite, the younger one, Martha, and the three boys, Mephisto, Faust, and Conrad. It will be an unusually interesting little show and I hope by fair means or foul to get in.

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The G. A. R. official route special train for Louisville, Ky., will leave by the Burlington at 1:20 p. m., September 9, Grand Commander Adams, his staff, Women's Relief corps and veterans, will go on this train. The route will be by St. Louis, Mo., and the Baltimore & Ohio Railway from there via Indianapolis. The special will arrive in Louisville at 4:30 p. m., twenty-seven hours and ten minutes out of Lincoln. Through sleepers and chair cars on this train. Rate from Lincoln \$18.70. For further information apply at B. & M. depot or city ticket office, corner Tenth and O streets.

G. W. BONNELL, C. P. & T. A.

If you wish to visit Boston this summer a splendid opportunity will be afforded on the occasion of the Knights Templar Conclave in August. Tickets will be on sale via the Lake Shore & Michigan Ry, Aug. 19th to 25th at one fare for the round trip. Full particulars on application. B. P. Humphrey, T. P. A., Kansas City, Mo. C. K. Wilber, W. P. A., Chicago.

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