

## MELODY AND HARMONY AN IRRESPONSIBLE APOLOGUE

IN a certain rural district dwelt a maiden, equally rustic and unsophisticated with her surroundings. Her name was Melody, and she was the offspring of 'poor but honest parents.' Her father was a ploughman, and her mother had been a dairymaid. She was a slight thing, but graceful - simple in character and limited in idea. In her country garb she was, however, charming, and the old men of the village, as they sat in the parlour of the ale house, would speak of her with as much enthusiasm as farm labourers generally show - which, it must be confessed, is not much.

They would describe her as 'a bonny thing' or 'varry pretty,' and never seemed to be tired of singing her praises, and quoting the beautiful thoughts which she expressed or suggested.

In this retirement she lived respected and loved. But the outer world had heard of her from some adventurous spirit, who had penetrated into the district in which she lived, and who had sung her praises even more enthusiastically than the rustic admirers who formed her immediate circle.

It was about this time that Harmony got to know of her beauty, and longed to meet her, and, as the novelette puts it, to 'call her his own.'

Harmony had been married before, and had, besides, had many flirtations, while Melody had lived her simple obscure life without dreaming of anything outside her own daily round. It was not so much that Harmony thought he could make her happy, as that the union might prove advantageous to himself, and he was, it must be told, a little blasé, and thought that the companionship of such pure simplicity and of such a bright and charming being as Melody would be very nice and gratifying. Also, Melody had been recognized by Society as 'delightfully quaint, you know. 'So charming,' 'so unartificial,' &c., &c. Therefore this union might be beneficial and interesting. So, to again use novelette phrase, 'he lured her from her woodland home,' and they were married.

The rustics shook their heads. Such a thing had never before been heard of, and they doubted the wisdom of it - they did not think any good would come of it, and they were right. After marriage the trouble began. Melody was 'so unconventional,' 'singular,' and never conformed to the rules of life in her new position, a position to which Harmony had 'elevated' her. Harmony forgot that it was really this unconventionality that had charmed himself and others.

She had strange modes (I beg pardon, I mean moods) that upset all his preconceived theories. When taxed with these things, Melody said she did not know her modes (moods, again I mean) were any different from what they should be; her people had never complained about them, but, in fact, rather appeared to like them than otherwise. He made her conform to his notions now and then, but the result was not happy; her friends said she had lost all her spirit and charm.

Now Harmony had a stern old relative, a foreign Count, who was decidedly strict. His name was Count de Point, and he seemed to control and have a good deal of 'say' in Harmony's actions and affairs. He did not quite approve of Harmony's choice of Melody. She was not stiff enough for his taste. She might be pretty, but he did not admire prettiness, it was not correct form. He told Harmony that she must be made to conform to the established order of things. Harmony replied that he had already spoken to Melody about her waywardness and tried to make her a little more conventional, but without result.

There were awful rows between Harmony and the Count. They held long, tiresome arguments, in which one talked against the other for hours, and nothing seemed to come of it, no result obtained except a great deal of discord.

Melody used to stand trembling at the door in terror at the dreadful noise they made. Once Count de Point accused Harmony of having hidden some 'fifths,' whatever they were, and the Count was exceedingly angry.

Poor Melody was at her wits' end, she felt that she had got into uncongenial society, and wanted to go back to her own people.

But, with her changed character, she felt she would not now be welcome. At last, in desperation, after one bitter quarrel, she fled to the Music-hall stage!

When it became known to them, the old rustics shook their heads, and recalled how they had predicted that it would 'end bad.' Harmony is now looking for another victim.

EDITORIAL NOTE. - We have been favoured with the above amusing satire from our valued contributor Mr. Frank Kidson, whose articles on 'Folk Song' were such notable features in our issues for March and August this year. We fancy Mr. Kidson shares the belief that the modern composer would not compose a bar of melody if he could, and could not if he would! Let us hope our contributor is mistaken. But Mr. Kidson is evidently of the opinion that in moments when the present-day composer is tempted to introduce anything like 'tune' into his compositions, he too frequently has to fly to the rustic for his theme, and that the saving clause of music-hall music is that it is so often built upon folk airs.