



Cornell University Library  
ML 390.R87

The private life of the great composers.



3 1924 022 191 781

CORNELL  
UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY



BOUGHT WITH THE INCOME  
OF THE SAGE ENDOWMENT  
FUND GIVEN IN 1891 BY  
HENRY WILLIAMS SAGE

MUSIC LIBRARY



Cornell University  
Library

The original of this book is in  
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in  
the United States on the use of the text.

<http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924022191781>



THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE GREAT  
COMPOSERS







BEETHOVEN.



# THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE GREAT COMPOSERS

BY

JOHN FREDERICK ROWBOTHAM

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF MUSIC," ETC.

*WITH PORTRAITS*

LONDON

ISBISTER AND COMPANY LIMITED

15 & 16 TAVISTOCK STREET, COVENT GARDEN

1892

v

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY J. S. VIRTUE AND CO., LIMITED,  
CITY ROAD.

*To my esteemed Friend*

**Mrs. Allen**

*Of Endcliffe, Sheffield*



## PREFACE.

---

FOR the Lists of Works which are appended to each Life I have to express my obligation to Mr. James D. Brown, the learned author of the "Dictionary of Musicians," whose admirable compilations exceed in correctness and completeness most foreign bibliographies.

J. F. R.



# CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
1. BEETHOVEN . . . . .	1
2. MOZART . . . . .	33
3. HAYDN . . . . .	56
4. BACH . . . . .	78
5. HANDEL . . . . .	98
6. GLUCK . . . . .	127
7. MENDELSSOHN . . . . .	152
8. CHOPIN . . . . .	173
9. SCHUBERT . . . . .	192
10. LISZT . . . . .	211
11. ROSSINI . . . . .	231
12. SCHUMANN . . . . .	251
13. DONIZETTI . . . . .	272
14. MEYERBEER . . . . .	294
15. WAGNER . . . . .	316





## BEETHOVEN.

IT is seven o'clock in the morning at No. 6, Schinkelsgasse, Vienna, and the summer sun is pouring in ~~full flood~~ through the brown holland blinds, which are the solitary awning that the many-paned windows possess. In a small room overlooking the street, Beethoven, the only lodger of the house, has risen, and is performing a rapid toilet, in which appearance is sacrificed to speed, for he never looks at the glass, which is hanging conveniently in front of him; and, in tying his stock, he twists it into such a knot that every fold of the carefully starched article disappears in a multitude of creases, and there seems no prospect of untying it again without actually cutting it asunder. He seems in a tremendous hurry to finish the introductory business of the day. His coat is at last huddled on; and, as he rushes across the passage which separates his bedroom from his study behind, we may see very well that, in his hurry, he has forgotten to brush his hair, which gives him a very wild look as he bursts into the latter apartment, still slumbering undisturbed in the precise condition wherein he left it on the preceding evening. Not a paper seems to have been moved; but he gazes suspiciously round to assure himself of this fact. ~~It is one of his peculiarities to insist that the servant shall never enter his apartment.~~ All "tidying" and dusting have,

therefore, to be done by stealth, and generally take place before he is up in the morning.

The reason of his precipitate toilet this morning, if we would know the truth, is because he had left a valuable symphony lying among some old newspapers the night before, which might easily have been carried off to light the fire with, and he was tortured by anxiety until he had assured himself of the safety of his treasure. There it is, however, safe and sound. Although he strongly suspects that periodical visits are made to his apartments by the maid-of-all-work, she has evidently not been here this morning. He draws up the blinds with a sigh of relief.

The room which serves him at once as a study and a parlour is a large one, looking out on the court behind, and except for the confusion in which it is kept would be a well-furnished one. A grand piano is a conspicuous object in the corner nearest the window; opposite is a small writing table positively piled with manuscripts of every description. Not only do they load the table with their mountains of paper, but a number of them have fallen off at the sides, and form a goodly pile on the floor, where they have evidently lain for some time, if the dust that has accumulated on them is any evidence.

In the centre of the room is the large oblong table, covered with a baize cloth, where he generally sits, to judge by the armchair drawn close up, and the pen and ink ready to hand.

Like the writing table, it is littered with manuscripts; but they are manuscripts in the course of manufacture. Some are only just begun, others are nearly finished, but are provokingly left incomplete, when only a few more bars would end them; others, and the majority,

are more or less advanced. There are specimens of several styles of music on the table; and, side by side with an incomplete quartet and an unfinished sonata, are waltzes, transcriptions, variations on popular airs, and even arrangements of Scotch songs. The cherished symphony lies on a chair close to the stove, or *ofen*, which decorates the apartment, and is carefully unrolled by the composer from a *Wiener Zeitung*, wherein for some reason or another he had wrapped up the piece during the preceding evening.

That task over, he proceeds to a cupboard, which occupies one corner of the apartment, and taking thence a coffee canister, very solemnly and with much deliberation counts out seventeen beans, which are to serve for his breakfast. Carrying them to the door he calls to the servant, and bids her prepare his coffee. Thoroughly used to his peculiar ways, she departs with the coffee beans without a word, and, by the time she returns with the beverage, Beethoven is so immersed in his work as not to notice her entry.

This morning he is engaged in the composition of the Seventh Symphony, and all his energies are absorbed in the task. Round him, on his table, lie a pile of little, dirty, bethumbed note-books,—some of them with covers (evidently having been bought in a shop); others, simply pieces of paper loosely stitched together; others, nothing more than the backs of envelopes folded together in a bunch. They all have their dates, however, these little books; and as the present year is 1812, we may see, by examining their superscriptions, that they go back year by year to 1803, or even earlier, and form a connected chain, with a few omissions here and there, so that, in the whole nine years, there is scarcely a month which is not accounted for. By the care he

takes of these little books he seems to treasure them highly. He selects first one, then another; inspects them earnestly, tidies up the heap for the year, and passes on to the next pile.

His occupation at present will elucidate one cardinal principle of his manner of work, which was to jot down his musical thoughts as they occurred to him in stray moments, and model them into connected compositions at his leisure; hence the very great interest that he displays in his note-books. He may be working at the *allegro* of the symphony: the first theme may have occurred to him yesterday, the second may have been pondered over and jotted down seven years ago, and the note-book when called upon can yield it up to him. Nay, more: a theme in a sonata or symphony, which reads to the eye and sounds to the ear the most flowing and spontaneous of melodies, may be made up of stray thoughts, each of a few bars only, disjointed, unconnected, and jotted down years apart; but which he, by his marvellous art, can form into a beautiful and symmetrical whole.

There are instances of such skilful fusion of ideas in the symphony which he is writing. For the leading theme of the second movement, to revive his conception of it he will have to look back six years; and, at last, in an old thumbed and dog-eared note-book of the year 1806, he will find its beautiful melody first delineated. Even then it will be in a different form from what he is inclined to accept, and he will spend hours in trifling with this note, altering that, making corrections, and re-corrections, until his fastidious taste is finally satisfied, and the lovely air is allowed to pass. His note-books will reveal him many thoughts for this Seventh Symphony, all of a remote

date, and all of a simple and primitive form, which his mornings are now occupied in refining into immortal passages.

If we take the liberty of examining these note-books for ourselves, we shall find them a hard task to decipher. Beethoven was always very jealous of a stranger inspecting these little books, for fear that he might steal any of the golden ideas. He need not have been so apprehensive; nobody but himself could by any possibility read them.

As we look at them we see a veritable chaos before us on the paper. The notes are written without lines, and, to discover their relative heights, we have to rely on the purest guesswork. They are thrown about, too, in such a confusion, and so heedlessly dotted down, that we can never tell where one air ends and another begins, or calculate that the same distance above which marked a major third may not be used at the very next interval to denote an octave. Being written down in pencil, they are often smeared and illegible; besides which, as if to increase the confusion, the musical notation, such as it is, is mixed freely with letters of the alphabet, and other recondite contrivances—such as drawings—which were probably used when the thought was too fleeting or too faintly conceived to admit of its being expressed by any regular notation. Yet, despite this, the composer seems to find no difficulty in deciphering them, as his easy and rapid reference from one to the other manifestly shows.

When he has tracked a thought from its first lurking place, some years ago, through book after book, seeing it growing in beauty and maturity all the while, till it has attained almost the full measure of beauty, with nothing further to complete it than a few touches,—

when he has given it those touches, and consigned it to the score, he gets up and snaps his fingers, and takes a few hasty turns round the room as if to recover himself from the intoxication of the idea which fills him. Sometimes he is carried away as if by an ecstasy, and starts up wildly from his seat, sits down at the piano, strikes a few hurried chords, sings, howls like one possessed, and is lost for many minutes to the world around him.

While engaged in one of these latter fits, which are not rare by any means, someone taps at the door, and a friend who has come to see him puts in his head; but, observing how Beethoven is engaged—whose back is turned—he wisely withdraws without making his presence known. Had he come in, he would have been sure of a surly reception from the eccentric composer; or, very likely, Beethoven would have failed to recognize him at all, and would have continued without interruption his fit of abstraction.

We have an authentic anecdote of such a case, which occurred to the composer's pupil, Ries,—a man whom Beethoven knew as well as anybody in Vienna. Ries took a friend with him to see the great musician—an enthusiastic and sympathetic friend, who looked forward to the interview with ardour, and was almost ready to worship the Titan of the nine symphonies. When they arrived at the room Beethoven was in an ecstasy. They could hear him from outside the door stamping, and shouting, and howling within—he was engaged in the composition of his Second Mass at that time—and evidently completely overpowered by some thought of unusual magnitude that filled him. At last he was heard approaching the door, and Ries, not to be deprived of the interview which he had promised

his friend, opened it. Beethoven was standing before them. He glared at them in complete unconsciousness of who they were, and still continued to howl and stamp on the ground. "It was the saddest and most deplorable sight I had ever seen in my life," said Ries, in his description of the visit. But, in making such a remark, we think that he is decidedly wrong. There is nothing sad or deplorable in a great genius being abstracted by his ideas, and carried, as it were, from earth; and how those ideas worked on the delicate temperament of Beethoven can only be appreciated by one who has written nine symphonies as immortal and as sublime.

By this the time has worn on to midday. Beethoven's morning work has come to an end. The servant girl timidly pushes open the door, and brings in his *Mittagsessen*,—a large tray on which may be detected soup, *rinderbraten* (roast beef), *kalbfleisch* (veal), and conserves. She sets it down before him with a demure air, not daring to look him in the face, and seems heartily glad to get out of the room again. Although Beethoven is a great thinker, he is possessed of a good appetite, and sits down to his meal with a relish. Perhaps he would have agreed with the philosopher, Schopenhauer, who once said to a German officer, aghast at his powers of eating: "I eat a great deal, sir, because I have a great mind," and who loudly maintained the necessity of vigorous eating for vigorous thought.

At any rate, Beethoven, on the present occasion, imagines himself in clover. He was not always so lucky as to have meat on his table. When publishers were slow of paying, or commissions scanty of coming in—he had no other means of support, for he detested pupils—he was occasionally left entirely on the rocks,

and had to go without any dinner at all. In a desultory journal, which he kept for a short period, there is an affecting allusion to one of these occasions, worded as follows: "To-day I only had a little beer for dinner, having no money in the house to buy meat." He was accustomed to denominate these days of starvation "beer days," when a glass of beer, eked out by being mixed with a little water, served him for his sole bodily refreshment. To-day, however, is not a "beer day," and he is eating as if he enjoyed himself.

After dinner he sits down to another enjoyment infinitely greater,—not the physical one of eating, but the spiritual one of playing. His musical work in the morning is one thing; his music in the afternoon is another. In the latter he is no longer tied to the toilsome task of hunting through note-books, the labour of elaborate composition, the drudgery of filling in scores. He sits at the keys and abandons himself to the control of sweet sound, with little attempt at form, regularity, or purpose, and with no design beyond that of pleasure and refreshment. He extemporises for two hours uninterruptedly, sometimes with lightning rapidity, so that one would wonder how such cascades of notes could fashion themselves in the mind, and be almost simultaneously transferred to the key-board; sometimes with ponderous majesty, great chords coming out like blasts of trumpets from the piano, and the steady rhythm recalling the solidity of a host of soldiers marching; sometimes in the tenderest and most sentimental strains of pure pathos, pouring forth melodies which might express the most sensitive feelings of the heart,—melodies of love, of happiness, of regret, of grief, of despair.

In the midst of one of these sublime strains there is



a sudden jangle heard in the harmony : he has laid his left hand with a crash on the key-board, while his right hand is engaged alone in the evolution of some intricate passage in the upper octaves. He is stone deaf ; he does not hear the crash of the jangling keys ; and as little does he hear the torrents of beauty and divine melody which his hands have been pouring forth these two hours. Not a note has reached his ears. Were the piano a dumb digitorium instead of a sonorous key-board, it would be all the same to him—but not to those outside his door, a listening group who are gathered there, and with ears intent are standing awe-struck, amazed, drinking in the sound which pours through the crevices.

Knowing Beethoven's habits, which are pretty regular, and the time that he generally improvises in the course of the day, it is a common custom for musical enthusiasts in Vienna to gain private admission to his lodgings either on the plea of acquaintance or by liberally tipping his landlord, and to ensconce themselves in the passages while he extemporises within. Sometimes they have to beat a hasty retreat, when the irate master—who would never forgive anybody whom he deemed to be a spy and intruder on his privacy—suddenly quits his piano to make an abrupt incursion into the adjoining room.

As this knot of listeners is standing there to-day, they hear the melodies pass off from those mournful strains which so lately occupied the player, and float away into a very chaos of musical jesting,—capricious runs, broken phrases, leaps, flutterings about the piano, intricate syncopations, sallies of racy melody, a *scherzo* of *scherzos*, such as Beethoven delighted in when he was alone. He used frequently to boast that he was the

first man who ever introduced the faculty of humour into music, or, at least, into long formal compositions. He declared that he had taken the idea from Shakespeare; and that, as the English dramatist mixed light scenes of mirth with those of the deepest tragedy in his plays, so in symphonies and sonatas a similar relief had been obtained by giving such prominence as he had done to the light *scherzo* and *allegretto*.

But the piano now ceases. The assembled listeners take hurried flight,—they may expect Beethoven out of the room at any minute. The master is, in fact, still seated in his chair at the instrument; but he has wheeled it round, and is looking at the weather. It is just the sort of day for him,—a small, drizzling rain is falling, a time above all others when he delights to take a walk. No time is to be lost, lest the rain may clear off, and the appearance of a blue sky deter him from his intended ramble. He seizes his hat and stick, and makes a rush for the door. The departing visitors have all left the house by this, or have concealed themselves in the downstairs regions so that he cannot see them. Alas! he cannot hear them; and he passes out of the house with great glee into the humid atmosphere outside. His pace is a very brisk one, and he dashes through the streets regardless of those around him, upsetting a few children on his way. At this headlong speed it is not long before he has gained the outskirts of the town, and he is now on the ramparts in the pouring rain, taking a constitutional walk.

He returns home at last. It is the dusk of the evening, and he finds his *Abendessen* on the table. It is his intention to employ the evening in composition. His head is full of glorious musical ideas, which have all sorted and arranged themselves, as they always do

in those walks of his, and are ready to be committed bodily to paper. What pleasure is in store for him! One of the ideas strikes his fancy particularly, and he commences to hum it as, in a fit of abstraction, he takes up the large water jug in his bedroom and pours the contents of it over his hands, quite unconscious that there is no basin beneath. This he continues to do until the whole floor is swimming with the water, and the distracted landlord, hammering at his door to no purpose, pushes under it a piece of paper, on which he has written to say that the people in the room below were being deluged.

"My friend," bawls Beethoven from the inside, after perusing the paper, "I know not what you mean. I am washing my hands previous to sitting down to *Abendessen*. Mind your business, and go away."

"You are deluging the people below," exclaims the irritated landlord, forcing his way into the room, and scribbling on the paper, "You must stop!"

"I shall not stop," retorts the indignant composer. "Leave me!"

"I will not leave you!" scribbles the landlord.

"Then I," replies Beethoven, "shall leave *you*. I give notice to quit, and shall leave your house to-morrow morning."

Alas for the glorious ocean of thoughts that had been floating in his head, and that were to be committed so carefully to paper to-night! Not one of them will ever see manuscript. The whole of the evening will have to be occupied in packing up his effects to leave the detested lodging, and the whole of the next morning will be consumed in looking for another. Good-bye to any work for two days to come, for it will take him another day to get in order at his new place. This is

the fifth lodging that he has entered and left during the past month. One of them he only remained in one day, and the present one, where he has sojourned a fortnight, will have to be quitted at a loss, as the landlord, mindful of his peculiarities, has exacted a month's rent in advance. There is no helping that, however, and to work he falls, pushing symphonies into one trunk, sonatas into another; note-books of priceless value are crammed in and crumpled anyhow into any hole and corner of the boxes; his favourite composers—large folios, under the weight of which he staggers as he carries them—are piled on the top of his clothes and his manuscripts, to the equal detriment of both. In this laborious task the evening has rapidly passed, until it is now almost midnight; and next morning will see him whirling in a *droschke* half over Vienna to secure other apartments where he may write a few more bars of his immortal works.

It would have been well for Beethoven if his domestic troubles had been limited to such trials and inconveniences as we have noticed here. But there are other trials in life, of a far deeper and more impressive kind than the occasional quarrel with a landlord, the loss of a manuscript, or the inconveniences of late or unpunctual meals—and these came in due course. With a strong yearning after a settled domestic life, though himself a most unsettled man and a confirmed bachelor, Beethoven, in the absence of bestowing his affection on a woman who would have made his home happy and taken care of him, lavished all his fondness on an unworthy nephew, who, far from reciprocating his attachment, seems to have treated his generous uncle with studied and deliberate disregard.

It is known that for some years in the later part of his life Beethoven scraped and saved with the intention of leaving a fortune to his nephew. He was excessively solicitous with respect to the young man's education; always kept him well supplied with funds; and never omitted an opportunity, when possible, of giving him the soundest and best advice.

We so often find it the way in life, that when a person deliberately makes his happiness dependent on the kindness or good behaviour of one special individual, fatal disappointment is the result. Such a result happened in the case of Beethoven. The lonely man, with oceans of affection at his disposal, which, however, he had hitherto only employed artistically, suddenly by one of those caprices to which he was subject, concentrated the full flood on his nephew.

Thenceforward he scarcely had a happy hour. Directly he laid down his pen, in place of the abstract dreams and visions which used to employ his fancy so happily, his time was occupied in searching out this ungrateful young man, writing him passionate appealing letters, endeavouring to turn him from his evil ways—for a while apparently succeeding, but always without any lasting effect.

Young Carl Beethoven, after receiving and wasting quantities of his uncle's money, signalised his public career of viciousness by being expelled from the university—which almost broke his uncle's heart. An outcast from academic life, and failing at every occupation he undertook, the profligate young man fell from one condition of vice to another. His intemperance was as great as his licentiousness, and both were as nothing compared to his reckless extravagance.

The nervous and irritable Beethoven was driven well-nigh distracted by these escapades of young Carl, whose guardian he had voluntarily constituted himself, and was often heard to lament how hard ingratitude was to bear, and what price he would pay if only he might be assured that his nephew with all his wildness loved him. The nephew, however, was too much immersed in dissolute pleasures to think anything whatever about his uncle, and it was really a relief to the unfortunate composer when the misguided youth, after having unsuccessfully attempted to commit suicide, was cast into prison to repent of his ill-advised action at his leisure. During the time that he lay there, his uncle had at least peace of mind, for the prisoner could not get into debt, or stagger intoxicated down the street, and knocking at the composer's door, insolently demand money.

On consulting with some of his wealthy patrons as to the best means of dealing with the unprincipled youth on his exit from gaol, the advice which he received and acted on was to procure him a pair of epaulettes in the army, in order that the reprobate might at least distinguish himself by an honourable death. Out of a warm feeling of personal respect for the great composer, this entry into the service was kindly procured for his nephew by a high state official; and the drunkard and would-be suicide was at length duly installed in the service of the Emperor of Austria.

But as if his sinister influence over Beethoven was not destined to end here, the malevolence of fortune pursued the composer until the very end. Beethoven was persuaded to take the young cadet to join his regiment in midwinter. He performed for this purpose a long journey in an open vehicle, and contracted a

terrible chill, from which he never recovered. It was the beginning of the end. From the chill he fell into a dropsy, and from the dropsy he got his death. Thus we may directly attribute all Beethoven's evils, culminating with his premature decease, to the unhealthy influence of this young man, who did not deserve that a silly girl should waste a sigh over him, much less that one of the divinest masters of song should rend his heart to shreds and be brought to an untimely death because of him.

It was in the year 1827 that Beethoven died, the day being the 26th of March, and it was noticed by his contemporaries as a singular fact that he died in the midst of one of the greatest thunderstorms which ever broke over Vienna. He was fifty-six years old at the time of his death, having been born on the 17th of December, 1770, at Bonn, where his father was a musician in the chapel of the Archbishop of Cologne.

The early years of the great master were passed in the utmost squalor and misery. His father was a dissolute, drunken man—indeed this strain of character in the nephew seems to have been hereditary—and the home in which the marvellous boy was reared was distinguished only by its uncleanness and penury. Whatever sums the father received for his singing, he regularly spent in drink, allowing his family to be without food if only he might satisfy his craving.

It was a few years before this time that Mozart, a juvenile phenomenon of European reputation—such a phenomenon, we may add, as has never again appeared in the world—was dazzling and astonishing the musical

circles of all the great capitals with his marvellous prodigies of pianoforte playing. Beethoven's father, a confirmed sot, who had no means of increasing his income except by a miracle, suddenly began to imagine that such a miracle was possible. When he came home from his drunken orgies he always hiccupped about "Mozart!" "Mozart, that wonderful child! Oh, if I had a son who could play like him, what a lot of money I should make!" "And what perpetual toping," he ought to have added, "I shall be able to indulge in!" These drunken dreams at last took effect in a most unpleasant way, and the aspiring toper one day calling his clever child to him, informed him that from this very moment he was to commence his musical education, in order that he might become as great a musician as Mozart, might play at concerts before kings and queens, and put money in his father's pocket.

This was the beginning of Beethoven's musical education, and those who hold exalted ideas about art and artists may well exclaim, "A pretty beginning!" The young boy at first took amazing delight in the instructions of his father; but when the latter after passing the day in idleness used to rouse the poor boy up from bed to play his scales late at night, when he came reeling in from some drunken bout with a lot of pot companions at his heels, the whole nature of the child rose in revolt against such treatment, and he conceived that aversion to steady systematic study which he never afterwards overcame.

Such scenes were not uncommon by any means. When young Beethoven went to bed, he was never sure what Bacchanalian scene he might not witness before the morning, and dreaded being awakened from slumber by cries of "Ludwig! Ludwig!" from below.



Hastily attiring himself he would descend, and his father pointing him out, and vaunting his excellence to the friends who might happen to be with him, would bid Ludwig sit down and give the company a specimen of his powers. First one piece would be given, then another, varied by an abundance of scales and exercises. The company must tolerate these, his father explained, as the sucking Mozart had to keep his hand in at technical practice.

This burlesque of musical instruction, this positive cruelty to a child of such tender years, would last sometimes till the dawn of a summer's morning, and be accompanied by the clatter of flagons and snatches of uproarious drinking songs. If ever a person in the whole world hated the very name of Mozart, it must have been Beethoven in childhood. When first told of his father's intention, he may have clapped his hands in joy, but he shed many bitter tears before the experiment was concluded.

As a matter of fact Beethoven as a boy was slow of study. Even if his father had treated him properly, it is very questionable if he could have attained to anything like the precocious proficiency of the young Mozart. As it was, the course of instruction he was subjected to had but the effect of rendering him dogged, sullen, and unruly, and of causing him to register a vow that he would never be a musician. It was one of the happiest days of his life when his father became at last convinced that the making of an infant phenomenon was not in him.

It was not till the age of seventeen that Beethoven was brought face to face with the musician whose name he had learnt in early childhood so heartily to detest. Since that time, however, he had naturally got

over his childish aversion, and had learnt to yield Mozart the honour due to him and the affectionate sympathy which one who studies the music of that most classical of all the composers can never refuse to render.

It was in Vienna that the meeting between these two celebrated men occurred. Beethoven was desired by Mozart to play a piece to him, and in return requested a theme on which he might extemporise. This was given him, and the young composer began to improvise in a very masterly manner. Mozart was very much struck by the skill of the young Beethoven as a pianist, and is reported to have predicted his future greatness in words similar to those wherein Marius foretold the glory of Cæsar.

The life of Beethoven when he passed into the world was singularly uneventful, it was the monotonous life of an indefatigable student, whose studies were only varied by his eccentricities. It is even questionable if he were ever really and truly in love. He formed platonic attachments with at least two women, and may have dreamt that he loved several, but we have no indication in his correspondence and in the testimony of his friends that his fancies in this respect ever went out into acts. The Countess Giulietta Guiccardi is generally supposed to have received his earliest and most impassioned homage, principally, we imagine, because the Moonlight Sonata is dedicated to her. Biographers of Beethoven who fancy that they ought to find in a man's life the counterpart of his works dwell strongly on Beethoven's attachment to this young lady. They say that he was infatuated with her, and despite the distance of their relative social positions looked forward one day to marrying her; according to one authority he proposed and was rejected.

There is but slight evidence for the truth of these assertions, especially for the latter. For our part we do not believe that Beethoven ever proposed to a woman in his life. Macaulay mentions two typical ways of conducting love-making—like cattle and like seraphim. Beethoven's love-making bore the nearest relationship to the latter. A German biographer, anxious to show his hero in the light of a lover, adduces as the principal piece of evidence for Beethoven's ardent affection for the young Countess, the fact that when the composer heard she was married to another man, he made very kind enquiries about her, and was always glad to know how she prospered and enjoyed her new existence. There could be no weaker testimony quoted, we imagine. A love-stricken swain, who has been jilted for somebody else, is rather apt to resent it as an affront if the lady's name is mentioned in his presence, and, far from pursuing her career with tender interrogatory and solicitude, generally does his best to forget that such a being ever existed. We should not do wrong to set down Beethoven's attachment to this lady as merely a passing fancy, such as often occurs to many a man and leaves no permanent impression on his life.

The other lady whom Beethoven is credited with paying his devotions to was Bettina von Arnim, a cultivated and literary woman, who was eminently capable of appreciating the composer's good qualities, and pardoning his eccentricities and *gaucheries*. Yet the most careful investigation fails to reveal the fact that anything serious ever entered the thoughts of either of them, and that from first to last this friendship ever went beyond the bounds of purely intellectual sympathy. The lady and he were both very demonstrative with their pens and their tongue; yet Beethoven never

dreamed of any warmer aspect to his friendship, and she was quite content to do without it. We should do wrong to lay any special stress on this connection, and once more we must regret to find an absence of that romance in the life of the composer which breathes in such aroma through his music.

Beethoven was born on the 17th of December, 1770, and it will be observed that his career was contemporaneous with the stirring events of the French Revolution. He was a young man of nineteen when Mirabeau arose among the deputies to enunciate the principles of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity; and we have good evidence that Beethoven, like many another young man in Europe, followed the progress of the movement with the greatest eagerness and attention. His sympathetic heart pulsated in time with the aspirations of France; his views of life and his religious ideas received their complexion from the influence of the Revolution. During the greater part of his life he was to all intents and purposes a sceptic, if not actually and entirely so; and thought that he had effected a very great step indeed in his religious development, when he composed the Ninth Symphony as a testimony to the existence of a God. Such is the great aim and teaching of this much-talked-of composition, so far as its definite moral purpose is concerned, and Beethoven in this instance often declared that his aim was quite as much a devotional as a musical one. It is true, that considering him in the light of a revolutionist, he had made a great stride in admitting the existence of God, and reconciling freedom with piety. Otherwise the spiritual import of this symphony does not express for us these momentous truths with greater clearness and emphasis than Handel, Bach, and Haydn had uttered them before him.

In the Nine Symphonies, whose fame in music rivals that of the nine Muses in poetry, or the nine Wonders in the history of the world, we may mark admirably the main features of his development and progress from the style of Haydn and Mozart to a thoroughly marked and characteristic style of his own, so original and strong that a school has reposed on its foundations. This progress of style analysts of Beethoven's writings are fond of dividing into three periods, which they arrange by minute reference to his various works in chronological order.

The Symphonies show the transition and musical growth in admirably bold outline.

In the First Symphony we find the composer overrunning with artless melody and prolific in the joy of tune, scarcely differing, but by a greater gravity and a certain melancholy, from Haydn and Mozart in their symphonies and sonatas.

The Second Symphony shows this joyous melodious prattling passing away, and giving place to deeper feelings which demand more thought and elaborate musical detail for their due exposition.

In the Third Symphony Beethoven for the first time stands forth a master, un beholden to any other luminary for borrowed light, but shining in his own radiance, and scintillating with self-created beams. Appropriately enough, this symphony was originally dedicated to Napoleon Bonaparte. It is known as the Heroic Symphony from being written in honour of a hero, and from containing a funeral march on a hero's death—solemn, pompous, impressive, worthy of so redoubtable a theme. Beethoven, the child of the Revolution, knew no loftier image on earth than that of the Great Consul, and threw his whole unwearied

energies into penning a work that should be worthy of the theme. But by a ridiculous freak of fortune, scarcely was the manuscript finally complete, and ready to pass into the printer's hands, when the news came to Vienna that Napoleon had made himself Emperor! This was indeed a shock to the ardent Republican, Beethoven. He tore the title-page to fragments, but had enough self-control to keep his hands off the remainder of the manuscript. He could not restrain himself, however, from dashing the symphony on the floor, and forbidding anyone to pick it up again, unless they wished to insult him. When the symphony saw the light the name of Napoleon had disappeared from the dedication, and an impersonal and anonymous hero had taken his place.

If the Third Symphony shows Beethoven independent and self-reliant, the Fifth Symphony reveals him in still greater grandeur as the inventor of a new form in music, which consists in the substitution of one leading subject for two. It is this symphony which Liszt has taken as the starting-point of his "Symphonic Poems"—it is in this symphony that the Leit Motiv was first heard in music. By the Leit Motiv we mean a simple theme which is pursued and developed throughout the piece to the exclusion of any second subject, such as we find in the ordinary sonata and symphony form. Many fanciful explanations have been given of Beethoven's symphonies and sonatas by those who delight to find in them the outlines of romantic dreams. But Beethoven has only given us one or two explanations himself, and that of the Fifth Symphony is one. Its theme is "Fate knocking at the door." The four notes which constitute the Leit Motiv are this terrible knocking.

The Sixth, or Pastoral, Symphony is perhaps the most

popular of the nine, and may be taken as the starting-point of all the "programme music" which has been written from that day to this. By "programme music" we understand that music which endeavours to represent a given scene or occurrence by the aid of instruments only, without the help of voices. And in this way the Sixth Symphony undertakes to paint a pastoral scene.

It is divided into five parts. The first depicts the cheerful impressions excited on arriving in the country. The second, which is an *andante* movement, is inscribed in Beethoven's manuscript, "Am Bach" ("By the Brook") and consists of a most melodious current of sound, through all of which the gurgling of the brook is distinctly heard, being kept up now on one instrument, now on the other, but generally on the violins, which can give the effect of running water perhaps better than any other instrument in the orchestra. The third movement, the *Scherzo*, is descriptive of a peasant's merrymaking, and it is as different from the two preceding ones as can well be imagined. There is a thoroughly rustic aroma about it. At the commencement we hear the hautboy, quaintly accompanied by two violins. After a time the hautboy is joined by the bassoon, and the violins give an imitation of the drone of the bagpipe. This effect is said to have been imitated by Beethoven from the performance of a village band he once heard.

The next movement deals with the storm which bursts on the pleasure party, and puts a stop to all their merrymaking. The nature of this movement needs no description, as we are all familiar with the common devices for making lightning and thunder, which musicians even of the highest order do not disdain

to employ. In the last movement the storm clears away, and we have the song of the shepherds, and then a long passage descriptive of feelings of joy and thankfulness at the conclusion of the storm. Such, briefly sketched, is this remarkable work, which may be regarded almost as an experiment of its eminent composer, but which, nevertheless, has had many followers in the same track since his time.

One of the most interesting ideas in the Symphony we have omitted to mention, and that is the imitation of birds' voices in the second movement "By the Brook." We hear the brook getting softer and softer, and then of a sudden there come chirping out quite distinctly the notes of the nightingale, the quail, and the cuckoo. The nightingale's voice is imitated by the flute, the quail's by the hautboy, and the cuckoo's by the clarionet. It was a bold experiment to make in the midst of so sublime a composition; and there was the danger lest this imitation of the birds might seem trivial perhaps, and lead to burlesque. But no such result takes place and the realism of the picture is only heightened by these means, as Beethoven intended it should be.

The Seventh Symphony is justly considered the most melodious of the nine, and was written in the breathing-space between the Fifth, the turning-point of his new style, and the Ninth, its culmination. Between these two extremes the Seventh stands midway, and seems to partake closely of neither. It is a majestic and mighty work. Its very introduction is pompous and striking, and the free use of the *crescendo* all through the symphony contributes to sustain its loftiness of tone.

The Ninth Symphony and some of the later sonatas are very pronounced instances of Beethoven's last



period, in which he rises above the ordinary rules, the ordinary devices of art to express the thoughts of music, and, so to speak, becomes a law to himself, and while he creates also determines the principles of his own art.

The Ninth Symphony, like many great works of so high an order, was but little appreciated or understood during the life-time of the composer. In the opinion of the critics it transgressed all rules of art, firstly, in the unusual harmonies which were indulged in throughout the piece, and secondly, by the introduction of a chorus of singers into a symphony—an innovation for which up till then there had been no precedent. It will ever remain more or less of a mystery why Beethoven broke through the practice of previous composers so entirely as to employ this innovation. Many are the theories broached in explanation of it, and one of the wildest, which is also the most celebrated, is that of Wagner, who imagined that the vocal element was introduced into the symphony because Beethoven saw that instrumental music as an art was quite played out, and henceforth the instruments must never part company with the voice. The gross exaggeration of such an idea did not prevent Wagner founding his whole system of music upon it, and endeavouring in his legendary operas to carry out what he conceived was Beethoven's intention in the Ninth Symphony.

The first man however to demonstrate the real secret of this great musical puzzle was neither a musician nor a critic, but a literary *dilettante* of the name of W. R. Griepenkerl, who, in a short and humorous *brochure*, did more to reveal the true conceptions of Beethoven than all the theory has done which has run on since his time till now.

Another work which belongs to the same period of Beethoven's genius is the colossal Mass in D, perhaps taken as a whole, the most difficult composition of modern times. It is one of Beethoven's latest works, and he spent four years in constant labour upon it. The characteristic anecdote is told that he began the Mass in a great hurry one day with the intention of finishing it in a month or two, so as to have it ready for performance at the installation of Duke Rudolph as Archbishop of Olmütz. The day of the installation arrived in due course, and the Mass was not ready. Beethoven had become more interested in the subject than he imagined he should be, and four years rolled by before the Mass saw completion. It was one of his latest compositions, as we have said, and like the Ninth Symphony sums up the profoundest results of his whole artistic life.

This last period of his genius has been condemned by many as wild and erratic; has been vilified by others as monstrous and deficient in taste; and has been praised and eulogised by many more as holding out promise for future development such as no close and servile adherence to the old forms could secure. The reader can judge from these various opinions here quoted what are the excellences and what are the weaknesses of Beethoven's latest style. Its virtues are Herculean strength, robust and definite expression, original and ear-striking effects; its defects arise from the fact that many of these good qualities are at times emphasized too strongly, with the result that the charge of ill-taste if sedulously pushed never lacks support. The three periods have each their appropriate class of students: the works of the first period should be studied by those who love to look upon

music as the joy of life; of the second period by those who regard the art as commensurate with the whole range of human emotion, and as containing in its utterances the best outpourings of the human soul; of the third, by those who, themselves creative artists, desire to find beacon fires and planetary lights to guide them on the path of music's future development.

## SYNOPSIS OF LIFE, AND WORKS.\*

---

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN was born at Bonn on the 17th of Dec., 1770; began to study music under the inadequate superintendence of his father, 1775; was instructed by Pfeiffer, a vocalist, 1779; visited Vienna for the first time, and played before Mozart, 1787. His first works, three trios for pianoforte, violin, and violoncello, were produced 1795. He produced the Eroica Symphony, 1804; the Fifth Symphony in C minor, 1809; the Choral Symphony, 1823; the Mass in D, 1824. He died at Vienna on the 26th of March, 1827, aged fifty-six.

---

### *Opus Numbers.*

1. Three Trios for Pf., vn., and 'cello, in E flat, G, and C min., 1795.
2. Three Sonatas for Pf., in F minor, A, and C, 1796.
3. Trio in E flat for vn., tenor, and 'cello, 1797.
4. Quintett in E flat for 2 vns., 2 tenors, and 'cello, 1796.
5. Two Sonatas for Pf. and 'cello, in F and G min., 1796.
6. Sonata for Pf. duet, in D minor, 1796.
7. Sonata for Pf., in E flat, 1797.
8. Serenade for vn., tenor, and 'cello in D, 1786 (?).
9. Three Trios for vn., tenor, and 'cello, in G, D, and C min., 1797-8.
10. Three Sonatas for Pf. in C min., F, and D, 1797-8.
11. Grand Trio for Pf., clarionet, and 'cello, 1798.
12. Three Sonatas for Pf., in D, A, and E flat, 1799.
13. Sonata (Pathétique) for Pf., in C min., 1799.
14. Two Sonatas for Pf., in E and G, 1799.
15. First Concerto for Pf. and orch., in C, 1795.

---

\* The dates given are those of production or publication.

16. Grand Quintett for Pf., hautboy, clarionet, horn, and bassoon, in E flat, 1797.
17. Sonata for Pf. and horn, in F, 1798.
18. Six Quartetts for 2 vns., tenor, and 'cello, in F, G, D, C min., A, and B flat, 1800.
19. Second Concerto for Pf. and orch., in B flat, 1795.
20. Septett for vn., tenor, horn, clarionet, bassoon, 'cello, and bass, in E flat, 1800-2.
21. First Grand Symphony for orchestra, in C, 1800.
22. Grand Sonata for Pf., in B flat, 1802.
23. Sonata for Pf. and vn., in A min., 1801.
24. Sonata for Pf. and vn., in F.
25. Serenade for flute, vn., and tenor, in D, 1802.
26. Grand Sonata for Pf., in A flat, 1802.
27. Two Sonatas for Pf., in E flat, and C sharp min. ("Moonlight Sonata"), 1802.
28. Grand Sonata (Pastorale) for Pf., in D, 1802.
29. Quintett for 2 vns., 2 tenors, and 'cello, in C, 1802.
30. Three Sonatas for Pf. and vn., A, C min., and G, 1802.
31. Three Sonatas for Pf., in G, D min., and E flat, 1803.
32. Six Songs (cantiques) of Gellert for voice and Pf., 1803.
33. Bagatelles for Pf., 1792.
34. Six Variations on an original theme, for Pf., 1803.
35. Fifteen Variations with one Fugue for Pf., in E flat, 1803.
36. Second Symphony for orch., in D, 1804.
37. Third Concerto, for Pf. and orch., in C min., 1805.
38. Grand Trio, for Pf., clarionet, and 'cello, in E flat (arranged from op. 20), 1803.
39. Two Preludes on the major and minor scales for Pf. or Organ, 1803.
40. Romance for vn. and orch., in G, 1803.
41. Serenade for Pf. and flute, in D (arranged from op. 25), 1804.
42. Nocturne for Pf. and tenor, in D (arranged from op. 8), 1804.
43. Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus, Ballet, 1801.
44. Fourteen Variations for Pf., vn., and 'cello, in E flat, 1804.
45. Three Grand Marches for Pf. duet, in C, E flat, and D, 1804.
46. "Adelaide," Cantata for tenor solo and Pf. (Poem by Matthison), in F, 1797.
47. Sonata for Pf. and vn., in A (Kreutzer), 1803.
48. Scene and Air—"Ah! Perfido," for soprano voice and orch., 1803.
49. Two Sonatas (easy) for Pf., in G min., and D, 1796.
50. Romance for vn. and orch., in F, 1804.
51. Two Rondos for Pf., in C and G.

52. Eight Songs for solo voice and Pf., 1791.
53. Grand Sonata for Pf., in C, 1803.
54. Sonata for Pf., in F, 1805-6.
55. Third Symphony for orchestra ("Eroica"), in E flat, 1802-4.
56. Concerto for Pf., vn., and 'cello, with orch., in C, 1807.
57. Grand Sonata (Appassionata) for Pf., in F min., 1803-7.
58. Fourth Concerto for Pf. and orch., in G, 1806.
59. Three Grand Quartetts for strings, in F, E min., and C, 1806.
60. Fourth Symphony for orch., in B flat, 1809.
61. Concerto for vn. and orch., in D, 1806.
62. Overture ("Coriolan") for orch., in C minor, 1808.
63. Sonata for Pf., vn., and 'cello, in E flat (arranged from op. 4).
64. Grand Sonata for Pf. and 'cello, in E flat (arranged from op. 3).
65. Scena and Air ("Ah! Perfido," op. 48), arranged for Pf.
66. Twelve Variations in F, for Pf. and 'cello.
67. Fifth Symphony for orch., in C minor, 1809.
68. Sixth Symphony for orch. ("The Pastoral") in F, 1808.
69. Grand Sonata for Pf. and 'cello, in A, 1809.
70. Two Trios for Pf., vn., and 'cello, in D and E flat, 1809.
71. Sestett for 2 clarionets, 2 horns, and 2 bassoons, in E flat, 1810.
72. Leonore ("Fidelio"), Opera in two acts, produced Vienna, Nov., 1805; London, 1832; in English, 1835.
73. Fifth Concerto for Pf. and vn., in E flat, 1811.
74. Quartett for strings, in E flat, 1810.
75. Six Songs by Goethe, for solo voice and Pf.
76. Variations for Pf., in D, 1810.
77. Fantasia for Pf., in G minor.
78. Sonata for Pf., in F sharp, 1810.
79. Sonata for Pf., in G, 1810.
80. Fantasia for Pf., chorus, and orch., in C minor (Choral Fantasia), 1811.
81. Sonata (Les Adieux) for Pf., in E flat, 1811.
- 81a. Sestett for 2 vns., tenor, 'cello, and 2 horns, oblig., in E flat, 1811.
82. Four Ariettas, and one Duet, for voice and Pf.
83. Three Songs by Goethe, for voice and Pf.
84. Overture and Entr'actes to "Egmont" (Goethe), 1810.
85. The Mount of Olives, Oratorio for solo voices, chorus, and orchestra, 1800.
86. Mass, in C, for 4 voices and orch., 1810.
87. Trio for 2 hautboys and oer anglais, in C (arranged from op. 53), 1806.
88. "Das Glück der Freundschaft," song.
89. Polonaise for Pf. in C, 1815.

90. Sonata for Pf., in E flat, 1815.
91. The Victory of Wellington, or the Battle of Vittoria, for orchestra, 1816.
92. Seventh Symphony for orch., in A, 1812-16.
93. Eighth Symphony for orch., in F, 1812-16.
94. An die Hoffnung, Song for solo voice and Pf.
95. Quartett for 2 vns., tenor, and 'cello, in F minor, 1816.
96. Sonata for Pf. and vn., in G, 1816.
97. Grand Trio for Pf., vn., and 'cello, in B flat, 1816.
98. An die ferne Geliebte, Song for voice and Pf., 1816.
99. Der Mann vorn Wort, for solo voice and Pf.
100. Merkenstein, Ballad for solo voice and Pf.
101. Sonata for Pf., in A.
102. Two Sonatas for Pf. and 'cello, in C and D.
103. Grand Octett for 2 clarionets, 2 hautboys, 2 horns, and 2 bassoons, in E flat.
104. Quintett for 2 vns., 2 tenors, and 'cello (arranged from op. 1).
105. Six Themes with Variations for Pf., vn., and flute.
106. Sonata for Pf., in B flat (Hammer-Clavier), 1819.
107. Ten Themes for Pf., vn., and flute.
108. Twenty-five Scottish Songs, arranged for voice, with Pf., vn., and 'cello accomp., 1815.
109. Sonata for Pf., in E, 1822.
110. Sonata for Pf., in A flat, 1823.
111. Sonata for Pf., in C, 1823.
112. Meerestille und Glückliche Fahrt (Goethe), "Calm sea and a prosperous voyage," for 4 voices and orch., 1823.
- 113, 114. The Ruins of Athens (Cantata or Secular Oratorio), for solo voices, chorus, and orch., 1812.
115. Grand Overture for orch., in C.
116. Trio for soprano, tenor, and bass, with orch. accomp.
117. Overture, King Stephen, in E flat, 1812.
118. Chant Elégiaque for 4 voices, with accomp. for 2 vns., tenor, 'cello, and Pf.
119. Twelve Bagatelles for Pf., 1822.
120. Thirty-three Variations on a valse by Diabelli, in C.
121. Adagio, variations, and rondo, for Pf. in G.
- 121a. Opferlied, by Matthison, for solo voice, chorus, and orch.
122. Bunderslied (Song of Federation), by Goethe, for solo voices, and small chorus and orch.
123. Second Mass for 4 voices and orch., in D, 1822-24.
124. Overture for orch., in C, 1822.
125. Ninth Symphony (Choral Symphony) on Schiller's "Ode an die Freude" for chorus and orchestra, in D minor, 1822-23.

126. Six Bagatelles for Pf., 1822.
127. Quartett for strings, in E flat.
128. Der Kuss, arietta for solo voice and Pf.
129. Rondo a Capriccio for Pf., in G (posthumous).
130. Quartett for strings, in B flat.
131. Quartett, in C sharp minor, for strings, 1825.
132. Quartett for strings, in A minor, 1825.
133. Grand Fugue in B flat, for string quartett, 1825.
134. Do., arranged for Pf. duet, 1825.
135. Quartett for strings, in F, 1825.
136. Das Glorreiche Augenblick, Cantata on poem of Weissenbach's, for 4 voices and orch., 1814.
137. Fugue for 2 vns., 2 tenors, and 'cello, Nov., 1817.
138. Second Overture to "Leonore," for orch., in C, 1807.

*Principal Unnumbered Works.*

- Three Quartetts for Pf. and stringed instruments, in E flat, D, and C.  
 Third Overture to "Leonore," in C, for orch., 1806.  
 Rondino for 2 clarionets, 2 hautboys, 2 bassoons, and 2 horns, in E flat.  
 Three Sonatas for Pf., in E flat, F minor, and D, 1780.  
 Variations (various) for Pf.  
 Numerous Dances and Marches.  
 Songs (various).

*Summary.*

- Instrumental: 9 Symphonies; 8 Overtures, 1 vn. Concerto, 5 Pf. Concertos, 1 Octett, 1 Septett, 1 Sestett, 4 Quintetts, 17 Quartetts, 18 Trios (various), 38 Pf. Sonatas, Songs (many single), etc.  
 Vocal and Instrumental: 1 Oratorio, 1 opera, 2 Masses, 2 Cantatas, 1 Ballet.



## MOZART.

OUR ancestors were much earlier risers than we are, and perhaps the Viennese of last century eclipsed in this particular the English of George the Third's time, with whom eight o'clock for breakfast was not thought late, nor were vigils until midnight considered very bad hours.

It is six o'clock in the morning, and all Vienna is astir. Already the rumble of traffic has begun down those narrow old-fashioned streets which are so suggestive of the quaint mediæval town that has gradually grown into the glittering capital of Austria. The cries of the hucksters and the tradesmen's porters making their morning rounds begin to rise on the air. Down most of the streets, the sashes of the windows have been flung open, and the *dienslmädchen* are busy shaking their dusters out of the windows, and ever and anon peeping out themselves, as if the window rather than the room within were the special object of their solicitude.

The houses in Vienna are enormous ones. In those days there were some that contained five hundred families. They are built in great square piles, surrounding a court within, and if we wish to penetrate to a particular set of rooms and a particular household in any of these labyrinths of architecture, it is a case of threading one's way through interminable passages and mounting countless stairs—very much in the

manner of exploring a large London hotel—until at last we reach the special spot that we desire.

Let us suppose that we have arrived there. We stand before a door of modest dimensions at the end of a long passage, which is furnished with a knocker and a plate, as if shutting off the apartments within from all connection with the rest of the house. So it does; in this enormous house there are many houses, each complete in itself, and each pretty much on the model of that which we shall now visit. We read on the plate (we have described it as a plate, but as a matter of fact it is only a piece of painted board) the name “Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart,” and after a short delay we enter.

The house contains but four rooms. There is a large, long, and narrow room which serves for the parlour; an ante-room in a niche between that and the front door; a bed-room at the back; and a kitchen. Mozart and his wife, like many of the middle-class Viennese of their day, are evidently not able to afford the luxury of keeping a servant on the premises. Instead of that expensive article, for economy they employ one of the numerous *stubenmädchens*, who let out their services by the day and form quite a class in Vienna, coming early in the morning and going away at night. The girl has just entered, and is now engaged at work in the kitchen.

But before her entry some one else has arrived, whom, in the absence of any domestic, Mozart must have let in himself. The *perruquier*, barber, hair-dresser, factotum of all news and all intelligence to many households in Vienna,—this is the dignitary whom the great composer admits at so early an hour in the morning, and, indeed, feels greatly obliged to

him for making the Mozart mansion his first place of call. With numerous clients awaiting his attention, fashionable aristocracy among the rest, on all of whom the *perruquier* has to devote an hour apiece, it is indeed a favour that he should reserve the first hour of the day for a poor music-master. But so it is. And there they sit chatting in that long narrow room which serves Mozart at once for a parlour, a study, a reception room, and a room to give lessons in when good fortune enables him to take his pupils at home, the *perruquier* walking round and round the composer, who is swathed and towelled up in an enormous arm-chair, receiving very placidly the attentions of the barber, which must be sadly wearisome to him. With comb, curling tongs, and pouncet box, the *perruquier* walks round and round the composer, twisting and turning his hair in all possible directions, and powdering it freely meanwhile until it bears a strong resemblance to a footman's at the present day. He has already shaved the subject of his attentions, and at last, after nearly an hour's tedious flow of gossip and curling tongs, has finished his wig. He gathers it into a graceful *queue*, ties it with a piece of black ribbon, and prepares to take his departure.

At last Mozart is free, and without bestowing a thought on a large looking-glass which hangs at one end of the room, by which he might rectify any imperfections or oversights on the part of the barber, he strides across the floor to a writing table opposite him, on which lies an unfinished score, evidently so recently left, judging by the condition of the writing implements and paper, that the ink, one might imagine, was still wet. The ink is dry, however; but he was at it late last night.

“Let me see,” he says to himself, “where was I?”

He sits down, and the next moment is immersed in his occupation, so as to be entirely unconscious of all around him. He throws off page after page with unusual rapidity, and without a pause. The servant enters to lay the breakfast things, but he regards her not. Although she makes enough clatter to distract anyone, bustling in and out the room, flinging open the window, lighting the fire in the stove, and cracking the wood loudly, he does not raise his eyes. Off fly the pages—page after page written with unerring hand—as he sits there calm, abstracted, and inattentive to all but his work. Almost two hours have passed thus, and at length his wife enters. He raises his eyes, but immediately drops them and goes on with his music. Her entry has, however, had this effect on him, to signify that it is near the breakfast hour; and with a view to come to an easy completion of his labours for the morning, and not to break off suddenly in the midst of some most interesting passage, he is now looking over some of the back sheets of his score so as to determine whether he had best work to a conclusion at the place where he is now writing, or hurry on with a few additional pages, and end further on.

Let us take advantage of this interval to scrutinise the couple before us. The lady can scarcely be called good-looking, except by a stretch of the term. She is a brunette who looks prematurely *passée* by reason of dyspepsia and habitual ill health. A pair of bright black eyes, which seem to promise vivacity, and an almost perfect figure, are her sole recommendation to the esteem of the other sex, over and above the charms that may possibly reside in her mind. But with these latter she does not seem to be superabundantly endowed. She

has that peculiar expression which, perhaps, may mean bad temper, but certainly indicates wilfulness of character; while, on the other hand, her lavish display of jewels and finery, which appear strangely out of keeping with the homely surroundings, seem to betray rather expensive tastes on the lady's part; of which let her husband beware.

Mozart, on the contrary, who has just risen, is as handsome a man as one could wish to look upon. He is a trifle above the medium height, and his build is symmetrical, more inclined to delicacy than to strength, and to nervous power than to muscular vigour. His face is fair and open, with a dimple in his chin, and a mouth of striking sensitiveness. There would be something feminine in the general aspect of his face, were it not for the clear and classically chiselled features, which give a masculine dignity to the beauty of their possessor. His forehead is broad and prominent; his eyebrows so finely drawn that they seem to be pencilled; his hair, even amidst its powder, arrests the attention by its luxuriance and silky fineness. His eyes are large and blue and dreamy, the latter expression being most remarkable when he is left for a moment to his own meditations.

He advances to the table and sits down by his wife, who is dispensing coffee out of a small urn for breakfast. But his most playful sallies fail to awaken any lively response from her.

"I am sure something dreadful will happen to-day, Wolfgang," she says, "I had such a bad dream last night. And then there's last quarter's rent that has been standing for more than a month, and Herr Buchmeister said that he would call to-day."

The mention of this last topic makes Mozart suddenly

as grave as his wife. The ways and means of the small household were never very exuberant; but at rent time there was always terrible pinching necessary to provide the *wohnzins*, which the inexorable Buchmeister demanded with unfailing punctuality. The sudden appearance of so prosaic a reality amid Mozart's scores and airy musical architectures is a sad depression to his morning's spirits. He takes two or three turns up and down the room. But he has no time to spare to indulge in complaints against the malevolence of fortune. It is now approaching nine o'clock, at which hour he has to begin his lessons, some of them at the most distant parts of Vienna. Bidding his wife therefore turn over in her mind where she can raise some florins, and remembering that various money is almost due to him from some pupils, which he may anticipate and so gather the desired amount, he takes up his three-cornered hat, buckles his sword round his waist, thrusts a roll of music under his arm, and, blowing a kiss laughingly to his wife, is off.

Many are the fair eyes which watch the handsome young music-master as he threads street after street in the aristocratic districts of Vienna. His step is light and springy, his head is erect, and his countenance calm and smiling. One would scarcely imagine him the man who does not know where to find his quarter's rent by the afternoon. But what are rent and all its base belongings to a mind full of celestial music, at peace with itself, and ever tranquil and composed?

At last he stops at a palatial mansion in one of the large squares, and in a short time has entered; and, after being kept waiting in the hall among some other humble callers, is at length ushered very unceremoniously into the apartment of the lady, his pupil. She

is the daughter of the Count Von Altstadt, and, as is apparent from her demeanour to her music-master, a spoilt child. All Mozart's genius is thrown away on such a pupil. He attempts to show her how to play certain passages. She endeavours to imitate him; but, finding that she cannot do so, flounces from her chair and almosts bursts into tears. He succeeds after a while in pacifying her; and, in an agreeable alternation of such fits of passion and lucid intervals of playing, the lesson passes. His request at the end to see her father brings down first the steward, who says that he cannot do anything without his lordship's permission, and finally the Count Von Altstadt himself, who looks intensely surprised at Mozart's insolence in asking an advance of the money due to him for the lessons. After a great deal of humming and hawing, and unfeeling remarks about the poverty of musicians, &c., the great man eventually bids his steward pay ten florins instead of the twenty requested, which Mozart accepts with a sigh, well knowing that he will have to make a similarly humiliating application to some one else before the morning is over.

His morning passes in a series of such calls and such lessons. At length, by two o'clock, he has wended his way homewards, with the intention of dining before the work of the afternoon begins. He has in his pocket the necessary florins to stave off the wrath of the relentless Buchmeister, and expects a happy welcome from his wife, and a plentiful, if a plain, dinner. Alas! she is afflicted with one of her chronic headaches, and lies fanning herself on the couch. Of dinner there is not a sign. She is very sorry, but has been too ill to attend to it. She hears of the rent-money with indifference, and the composer has to search out the *hausmädchen* and

trust to her kindly offices for arranging on the table anything there may be in the house.

Such unexpected delay—which is not, however, an uncommon thing—has sorely abridged the thin margin of time which he allows himself for his dinner. Scarcely has he swallowed his extemporised repast before he is up and out again,—this time to conduct a concert at a nobleman's house, in whose family he holds the appointment of capellmeister.

Here we may see him in his glory. The assemblage is a brilliant one, and contains much of the fashion and some of the beauties of Vienna. The large array of gentlemen in powdered wigs, frills, ruffles, silk coats, with swords at their waists, tapping their snuff boxes, and moving about the hall; the equally large concourse of ladies in hoops and furbelows, patches and powder, whose hair is coiled to enormous heights by the arts of their *coiffeurs*; the bright liveries of the footmen and pages, who move about the throng, all combine to form a very picturesque and lively spectacle.

At the end of the hall there is a small string orchestra, with one or two hautboys, a flute, and a piano. Mozart takes his seat at the latter, amid universal applause, and leads off the performance of some composition of his own. The conclusion is greeted with bravos by all present. Some of the gentlemen advance to tender him their compliments, and, after a piece or two more, he is led down among the ladies, who overwhelm him with their congratulations. The reception and the society are gratifying to him. This concert, like many others at the same mansion, is an entire success.

He was not always so fortunate. The nightly concerts, which he was compelled to give when acting as



capellmeister to the Archbishop of Salzburg, were very different affairs from the present one. The archbishop and his friends used to sit clustering round the piano, drinking beer and smoking long clay pipes, which was the elegant mode in which tobacco was taken in those days. While Mozart was pouring forth his harmonious strains on the piano, they talked loudly, often so loudly as to drown the notes of the instrument. Occasionally the archbishop would interrupt his divine extemporisations, and beg him to hand one of the candles for the purpose of lighting his pipe. They would place their pots of beer on the piano, and knock their ashes over the keys. Spittoons were rare articles in those days, and the floor in the neighbourhood of the performer suffered accordingly; till between the smoke, and the talk, and the spitting, and the laughter, Mozart felt his distraction equal to his humiliation.

Such was Mozart's first experience of the post of capellmeister. We do not know if he had any more so bad. We do not think so. But of one thing we are assured,—that his experiences in that direction were not all so pleasant as are those he is enjoying to-day.

The concert has drawn to its end; the guests are leaving the hall, most of them to mansions as palatial as that wherein the concert has been held, others to the haunts of frivolity and pleasure. The genius, whose brain has conceived and whose hands have in part executed the entire pleasant enchantment of the afternoon, can follow neither one nor the other party of guests. He goes to recommence his round of pupils again, which without intermission will last from now till nine or ten at night.

After a brief repast, which he takes in the kitchen along with the other musicians, the steward, the house-

keeper, and the chaplain, he sallies out into the Viennese streets again in the dusk of the evening. His evening pupils are more in the centre of the town than those of the morning. They belong to the middle class rather than to the aristocracy. He does not stay so long with each; and he is not treated with that insolent patronage which has been his lot earlier in the day, but receives, in many cases, an honest and genial welcome. From house to house he goes in a sort of mechanical way, his head brimful of noble musical ideas, of which he cannot jot down even a memorandum, so occupied is every moment, and which he must needs retain in his mind as best he may till, the labours of the day all over, he may snatch a few hours from the night to pen them down.

The round of lessons is at last finished. The time is past ten at night, and the rain is falling heavily. He goes home wet and weary. The house is quite dark when he enters. One little lamp burning in the parlour reflects a feeble ray. He has half expected to find his wife up, and ready to welcome him, after such a wearing day, with a cheerful supper and a lively chat; and yet he is quite prepared for the disappointment, so often has she disappointed him. As it is, he finds a note scrawled in pencil lying just under the glimmer of the lamp on the table, to say that Constance has again had a very bad headache and could not sit up so late as ten. If he wants any supper he will find something to eat in the kitchen cupboard,—so says the note. Without a thought as to the last part of this interesting billet, Mozart kindles a large lamp that stands on his writing-table, draws together his scores and his writing materials. In a few minutes he is lost to all but heaven.

As a child he was the darling of European courts, caressed by queens, smiled on by the great, treated with distinction, kindness, and flattery everywhere. This is what made his after-life the more bitter, when he sank into the lower strata of middle-class society, and except in the way of ostentatious patronage had very little consideration shown him by any one. In the old palmy days of his boyhood Maria Theresa used to take him on her lap, as if he were some charming child of her own, and in this familiar and distinguished position he would be the cynosure of all eyes in the palace hall. The Elector of Bavaria received him at his court with the same kindly familiarity, and Queen Charlotte of England extended her favour to him when he played before her in London at St. James's Palace.

But at that time in his life he was only six years of age, and the ladies were divided in their opinion whether to consider him as a beautiful doll or a freak of nature. In either case there could be no harm in playing with this pretty puppet, and amusing themselves at the risk of spoiling the boy. But Mozart's sweet and amiable nature was not spoilt by this injudicious treatment, and he bore the depressing conditions of his manhood with uncomplaining good-nature, appearing indeed quite unconscious of what a change had come over the scene.

There seems little doubt that Mozart might have kept up some of the valuable friendships he made when a child, had he been disposed to do so. It is true that after he passed from the rank of juvenile phenomenon, he fell very much into the background, and was glad to accept a poor appointment as organist and choir-master to the Archbishop of Salzburg; but wealthy and aristocratic friends who have an esteem for a man on account of his abilities are not apt to let him drop because

he is poor. They know this from the beginning, and their appreciation is founded on considerations totally independent of wealth and fortune. Even in his halcyon days, when he was the plaything of queens and empresses, Mozart's gains must have been quite an inconsiderable item compared with the fortunes of those who moved in the brilliant society to which he had been introduced, and the question of reckoning up the increase or decrease in his paltry income would never have entered the heads of the exalted personages with whom he came in contact. We read that not only were kings and princes his very good friends when a child, but that the nobility of the several courts where he visited imitated the example set by their sovereigns, and flooded him and his father with invitations to their town mansions and country seats, where if a musical performance were expected as a *sine quâ non* of the visit, very princely hospitality would be yielded in return.

The puzzle to the writer of Mozart's biography is, where did all these great friends go to as the composer's life advanced? What became of them, that we find him deeply plunged in the lowest strata of middle-class life, as we represented him at the beginning of this chapter, without society and almost without a friend?

The truth of the matter was as follows. When the great, we mean the socially great, extend their friendship, as they often do, to a man of inferior social status, on account of his reputation or his talents, their friendship is like that of all other people, it requires to be kept up. If the individual who is thus honoured by the esteem of those far higher in the social scale than himself is himself a man with a natural *penchant* for the highest society, he will take the necessary steps, without

being obsequious, for preserving the friendship on its original footing as long as the opportunities allow. We have plenty of instances in literature, few in music, of such an interchange of courtesies and of solid and valuable friendships resulting therefrom. We need only quote the examples of Gay, Congreve, Voltaire, Addison, Swift, and the list might be indefinitely extended, of men sprung from the middle classes who have passed their life on terms of the closest intimacy with the great, solely on the passport of their admitted genius and worth.

Mozart, however, bore a nearer resemblance to Goldsmith than to any of those whose names we have just quoted. He had a strong, an invincible tendency to the *bourgeoisie*, and if he was indifferent to the aristocratic admirers who offered him at first their incense, we may be sure that they in like manner soon became indifferent to him.

It was with these predilections and under these circumstances that Mozart, then at the age of twenty-one, for whom princesses were sighing, became entangled in the private affairs of a family of daughters, who had a match-making mother, and in place of seeking the society of those who might have aided him on his onward path, preferred that of those who he soon found expected to receive assistance rather than give it.

The father of the family was a man-of-all-work at the Mannheim Theatre, in receipt of a paltry and precarious income, which he eked out by musical tuition. He taught his daughters to sing and play a little, as far as his poor abilities allowed him, and it was doubtless this qualification occurring in the young ladies that first attracted the notice of Mozart. The eldest of them, on whom he fixed his affection, was much younger

than he, being a girl of fifteen, pretty, coquettish, and thoroughly selfish, who had no real appreciation of the composer, or indeed of anybody, as at her age we could hardly expect her to have. Henceforth, by some inexplicable infatuation, Mozart begins to find his chief pleasure, almost the main object of his existence, in acting the part of cavalier to this family of girls. We hear of him proposing to escort the whole tribe of them to Italy at his own expense—an expedition he was plainly unable to carry through; to conduct them to this fête, to attend them to that ball, paying expenses in every case; and last, not least, to bring the entire family, including the father and mother, on a long and protracted visit to his crusty old father at Salzburg.

This produced an explosion at home, as was very natural; but the climax of opposition in one quarter brought, as is usually the case, a reaction in the other. Mozart, in order to make amends for the very brusque behaviour of his father, and to console the wounded feelings of the family, whom he had thus voluntarily taken on his shoulders, went through the formal German ceremony of engaging himself to the eldest daughter, Alice, and it was finally arranged that as soon as he obtained a post at such and such a salary—sufficient to keep a wife and family on—he should marry her, and with her, as all expected, no doubt he would marry the whole family.

He had frittered away a good deal of his precious talents in writing solfeggios and exercises for the young lady, who was destined by her father to become a *prima donna*, as soon as Mozart could pay for her to be sent to Italy, or write an opera which could be produced free of all expense to the most interested parties, and

in which she could play the title *rôle*. He had even proposed to write the opera in question, and only at the last moment was prevented from so doing, probably by the utter hopelessness of ever getting it performed with such a *prima donna*. And now, having pledged himself to marry the girl, he considered it his duty to plunge energetically into his work, in order to increase his income as much as possible, and lay by sufficient money to enable a home to be started, and the marriage to take place.

Some months intervened before he saw the lady again, and then he had reason to repent that he had ever met her. She received him with contemptuous indifference, and affected to regard herself as so much his superior in social position that she wished him to forget he had ever known her; and as for herself she had her own plans, which were very different from what they used to be.

The truth was that in the meantime Alice Weber had been offered a very good operatic engagement, and with her coarse and vulgar mind accustomed to reckon her love in ducats, she was very sure that she would not marry a man who had a smaller income than herself, and who besides had a father to keep, and a sister, let alone the possible support of her own family.

Mozart was stunned at this heartless behaviour. He could not believe his eyes when he saw the girl for whom he was ready to do so much, and whose face had been before him in all his midnight vigils of the last few months, when he was writing for very life in order to attain the stipulated fortune, stand before him mute, motionless, all her affection gone, and nothing but the cruellest insult to give him if he pressed his just suit upon her. Miss Alice, acting on her keen sense of







MOZART.



young composer began to confess to himself that he was in love with her.

This is certainly one of the oddest pieces of domestic history that we have to narrate in these pages, and is only distantly approached by a somewhat similar occurrence in the life of Haydn. Mozart, forgetting his scandalous treatment by the other sister, blinding his eyes to the tricks of that old matrimonial agent, the match-making mother, and pardoning all the family, who every one of them had taken their sister's part, plunged head over ears in love with this girl, who all testimony concurs to prove was no beauty, was blessed with little or no amiability of disposition, was endowed with but indifferent health, and whose sole recommendation, if recommendation it can be called, was that she was the sister of Alice Weber, whom he had once loved, and by whom he had been jilted.

Old Mozart, taking snuff and copying endless music at Salzburg, was aroused from his paradise of existence, which consisted in these two things, by the horrifying report that his son was dancing attendance on the Weber girls again, and that if something were not done to prevent it he would be contracting marriage with one of them. He stormed and blustered, as was usual with him, and extracted from his son a faint denial of the likelihood of such a thing; but parental opposition had taught Mozart to dissemble, and he misled his father with reports of his indifference to matrimony, while all the time he was visiting Constance Weber every day of his life, calling her the most ridiculous pet names, and promising that unless the world were cloven asunder by thunderbolts he would marry her.

Matters had in the meanwhile changed for the worse with that family. The father had died; the match-

making mother had taken to drinking! But even in her cups she had a good deal more coarse practical sense than many women out of them, resembling in this respect her daughter Alice, now doing well on the actor's regular salary. Frau Weber, who had never understood the "ins and outs" of the fracas between Mozart and her daughter—for lovers never tell their secrets unreservedly—and had imagined that Mozart was as much to blame as Alice in the matter, determined that there should at any rate be no jilting this time, to secure which end she hit upon about as singular and prosaic a scheme as the brain of woman ever fashioned.

She caused a contract to be drawn up by her notary, which Mozart signed, to the effect that he was pleased and determined to marry Constance Weber in the course of three years; and before the expiration of the third year would, if not before, at all hazards and risks, make her his wife. But if he found there was any opposition from the influence of his father, or from any other cause, which might prevent him from carrying out his promise, he hereby bound himself to pay the young lady an annuity of three hundred florins a year, which she was to enjoy as long as he lived, without regard to the fact where she lived or how she lived, so long as she did not marry anybody else, and which he was to pay faithfully in monthly or quarterly instalments for the rest of his mortal life.

Such a contract has probably never been drawn up in human history before. To undertake to marry a woman, and as the penalty for refusal to pledge yourself to support her all your life long—nobody but the easy and good-natured Mozart could have signed such a self-denying ordinance.

The marriage between Mozart and this young lady took place in 1782, in the month of August. She outlived him, and after his death married a civil official of ample means, whose wealth doubtless commended itself to her practical mind. It is she whom we have represented at the beginning of this chapter, and, alas! we wish we could say that she made her illustrious husband a good wife.

Of Mozart's greater works, the opera of *Idomeneo* was composed in the year 1781, *Il Seraglio* in 1782, and the oratorio of *Davide Penitente* in 1785. The *Marriage of Figaro* was the outcome of the same year, the work having been undertaken at the express wish of a number of friends of German opera, who desired to place a national and indigenous work on the same level of popularity with the hitherto exclusively patronised Italian lyric dramas. *Don Giovanni* was written for Prague, where this immortal opera attained the most distinguished success, compared to which its reception in Vienna was cool in the extreme. The composer Salieri had possession of the public ear in the latter capital, and enjoying the favour of a host of friends he could undertake to drive Mozart almost entirely from the stage.

Late hours, unwearied vigils, everlasting labour, the effect of chills, damp, and exposure, in the hard life he led—a life alternating between brilliant passages and the most loathsome drudgery, between rosy anticipations of fortune, and inevitable and eternal disappointments—had their effect on the vigorous constitution of Mozart. His lamp of life burnt out untimely; while still a young man—only thirty-five years old—he fell into ill-health, the symptoms of which were a fitful,

restless nervousness, a craving for inordinate excitement, and a rapid decay of the physical stamina of his constitution.

Unfortunately for him, in the absence of any strong influence at home which might keep him in the path of duty, he was tempted to seek his recreation abroad, and fell into the company of a dissipated set of men, haunters of the theatres and taverns of Vienna, the chief spirit of whom was one Schikaneder, a low, coarse man of neither refinement nor talent. In company with this crew the glorious genius, whose critical state of health demanded the utmost care and attention from loving hands, flitted night after night from tavern to tavern in Vienna, deluding himself with vice under the idea that he was gathering the secret spirit of Freemasonry for use in his opera *Il Flauto Magico*, on which he at that time was engaged.

His wife was completely passive and indifferent to her husband's alteration of life and habits. Whether she remonstrated with him we know not; certainly she did not persist in her advice. Her method was to go to bed and nurse her own trifling ailments, while her brilliant husband, whose hectic complexion and feverish air might have told the most blind how things were going, was suffered to roam the town in company with his dissipated comrades unrebuked, unchecked, unadvised.

The end came at last. His illness increased so fast on him that he was unable to go out, and remained at home a prisoner in the house, a helpless invalid who had worn all vital force away. In this condition he was still exceedingly interested in the doings of the world of music outside; and when the *Magic Flute*, his last opera, was being performed he sat in his arm-chair

propped up by pillows, and, with his watch by his side, followed in fancy the various incidents of the opera.

“The overture is now being played,” he would say ; and humming the lovely fugue to himself, would allow sufficient time to elapse, until the hands of his watch pointed to a more advanced hour.

“Now the curtain rises,” he would continue. “Now the opera begins. I can see the bird-catcher. I can see Tameno. Oh, God!” And then he would drop back in a faint.

He died on the 5th of December, 1791. So reduced were his circumstances that there was no money to bury him, and he had to be interred with a pauper’s funeral. The body was carried to the cemetery by the hands of strangers. His wife did not attend the bier to the grave.

As the service was being read a sudden shower of snow and hail came on. All that stood around hurried off, leaving the coffin, and sheltering themselves. At the conclusion of the storm the body was hastily put into the ground and earth shovelled on it. Even the undertakers had gone away. No one knew where the body was laid. It was in the paupers’ part of the cemetery, where men and women of the poorest class were indiscriminately buried. The search and inquiries of admirers in after-times have failed to discover the resting-place of Mozart.

## SYNOPSIS OF LIFE, AND WORKS.

---

JOHANN CHRYSOSTOM WOLFGANG AMADEUS OR GOTTLIEB MOZART was born at Salzburg, Jan. 27th, 1756. He was the son of Leopold Mozart, sub-director of the chapel of the Archbishop of Salzburg; studied under his father, and was taken by him as an infant prodigy to various European courts—Munich, 1762; Vienna, 1762; Paris, 1763; London, 1764-5. He returned to Salzburg in 1766; became director of the Archbishop of Salzburg's music, 1769; settled in Vienna, 1779; produced *Idomeneo*, 1781; married Constance Weber, Aug. 16th, 1782. *Il Seraglio* performed, 1782; *The Marriage of Figaro* produced at Vienna, 1786; *Don Giovanni* first performed at Prague, 1787; *Il Flauto Magico* produced, 1791. Mozart died at Vienna, Dec. 5th, 1791, aged thirty-five.

---

Operas: *Bastien and Bastienne*, 1768; *La Finta Semplice*, Vienna, 1768; *Mitridate*, Milan, Dec., 1770; *Ascanio in Alba* (cantata), Milan, 1771; *Il Sogno di Scipione*, 1772; *Lucio Silla*, Milan, 1773; *Zaide*, Venice [1773]; *La Finta Giardiniera*, Munich, 1774; *Il Re Pastore*, pastorale, Salzburg, 1775; *Idomeneo*, Re di Creta, Munich, 1781; *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Vienna, 1782, London, "The Seraglio," 1827; *Der Schauspieldirector*, 1786; *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Vienna, 1786; *Il Dissoluto punito, ossia il Don Giovanni*, Prague, 1787 (Vienna, 1787; London, King's Theatre, 1817); *Così fan tutte*, Vienna, 1790; *Die Zauberflöte*, Vienna, 1791; *La Clemenza di Tito*, Prague, 1791.

Masses: No 1, in C; 2, in C; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7, in B flat; 8, in F; 9, in G; 10, in C; 11; 12, in G; 13, in E flat; 14; 15, *Requiem*, in D minor; 16, in E flat (part of 13); 17, in C; 18, *Requiem* (short), in D minor; 19 and 20.



Cantata: Davide Penitente, for solo, chorus, and orch. Other cantatas, eight vespers and litanies, scenas, arias, lieder, and miscellaneous vocal music.

Forty-nine Symphonies for orch.: in D, op. 7; "Jupiter," in C, op. 38, 1788; G minor, op. 45, 1788; C, op. 34; D, op. 87; D, op. 88; E flat, op. 58, etc.

Fifteen overtures for orch.

Ten quintetts for 2 vns., 2 tenors, and 'cello, in C minor, C major, G minor, D, E flat, etc.

Quintett for strings and horn, E flat; Quintett for Pf., hautboy, clarionet, horn, and bassoon.

Thirty-two Quartetts for 2 vns., viola, and 'cello.

Nine Trios for 2 vns., and 'cello.

Twenty-three Trios for Pf., vn., and 'cello.

Twenty-seven Concertos for Pf. and orch. in C, A, F, B, E flat, C minor, D minor, G, A, B, etc.

Seven Concertos for vn. and orch.

Five Concertos for flute and orch.

Concertos for clarionet and orch., and bassoon and orch.

Forty-five Sonatas for Pf. and vn., op. 2 (6), op. 8 (3), op. 110, and in F, B, A, C, D, E minor, G, etc.

Sonatas for Pf. solo: No. 1, in C; 2, in F; 3, in B flat; 4, in B flat; 5, in G; 6, in D; 7, in C; 8, in A minor; 9, in D; 10, in C; 11, in A; 12, in F; 13, in B flat; 14, in C minor; 15, in F; 16, in C; 17, in F; 18, in B flat; 19, in D; 20, in B flat; 21, in B flat; 22, in G. Concerto for 3 Pf.'s and orch., 1777.

Marches, serenades, and miscellaneous instrumental music. Sonatas for organ, motetts, hymnus, etc.

## HAYDN.

THE scene is a large and winding river, with verdant banks and arching boughs of trees that make here and there a perfect canopy over the water. The hour is the early forenoon, and three large pleasure boats, each with a bevy of laughing passengers, are slowly wending their way along the windings of the stream. The rowers ply their oars steadily, while the occupants of the barges engage in conversation with those of the neighbouring boat, or bandy jests with one another, or play dice at tables, or drink the wine of Tokay, the vineyards of which are not far away.

It is a water-party at Prince Esterhazy's estate at Eisenstadt; the rowers, as their livery shows, are the lackeys of the great Austrian noble; the company are guests whom he has invited down to stay with him for months, it may be, at a time. This is one of the many means the prince uses for their entertainment.

But the chief diversion of this water-party we have not yet mentioned. Three boats are full of guests; but there is also a fourth, a smaller one and a less pretentious one, which is crowded with musicians. In it, on an elevated seat above the rest of the band, sits the capellmeister of Prince Esterhazy, one Joseph Haydn by name, who, with his instrumentalists round him, is diligently engaged in leading them on his violin, and occasionally breaking off to beat time with his bow.

These water-parties of Prince Esterhazy cause his capellmeister some trouble. In the first place, they are of almost daily occurrence, and the capellmeister is expected to provide new music for them on each occasion. The prince's ear is not a particularly good one, but he has a marvellous faculty for finding out if a piece has ever been played before. If such presumption is practised by the band, he is down on the capellmeister in an instant. "Haydn, my good friend, I fancy, but am not quite sure, that I have heard that piece before. Was it this day last year at an afternoon concert, or was it about nine months ago at another water-party, when we sailed up to the Bolsinger Lake, and concluded by a dance on the island?"

In vain the capellmeister denies; the prince's recollection is not to be shaken. Long ago, Haydn had to leave off serving up old music: he was detected so often, and things were made so unpleasant for him in consequence. He was compelled to face the difficulty and write new compositions in inexhaustible profusion. Such is his talent that this demand laid on his powers does not injure his originality. He confessed in after years that nothing ever did him so much good as the eternal music he had to pour forth for the benefit of Prince Esterhazy.

Every morning of his life he was expected to be ready with a new composition to be played at the prince's breakfast; or, if the latter held a reception, at that ceremony while the guests were assembling. But this was a trifle to what Haydn had also to undertake. Close on the heels of the breakfast came often, in the country, a water-party. Of this the composer received due notice; and even if there were two or three a week, he must serve up brand-new music for the occasion. In the

afternoon there was frequently a concert. An original selection from his own pen—perhaps more than one—was expected to be included in the programme of that too. In the evening there was nearly always a dance, not seldom a large ball; and all the minuets, cotillons, and sarabandes were expected to be genuine “Haydn.”

In addition to these regular calls upon his musical invention, the Esterhazys were a large family, and birthdays were not an uncommon occurrence. Sometimes to poor Haydn it would seem as if there were a birthday every week. For the birthdays, a specially elaborate programme of new music was necessary; a chorale and an aubade to arouse the happy person whose birthday it was from his or her slumbers; a quantity of original music to play at a midday banquet, very long and very noisy,—possibly on these occasions Haydn might utilise some twice-told tales—an operetta, perhaps, in the afternoon, which would imply rehearsing and instructing the characters; and, finally, the dance-music in the evening. Fête-days were honoured by the pleasure-loving prince no less than birthdays, and new music in abundance must be found for them. A private theatre on the prince’s grounds was a mute reproach to the indefatigable composer, if he ever wasted a spare moment. Were there not operas he might write for this? Were the neighbouring gentry not dying to be invited to Prince Esterhazy’s theatre, and the prince plainly unable to ask them without the co-operation of his capellmeister? Plainly enough in these multifarious occupations there was work enough for six capellmeisters. And yet Haydn contrived to get through it all.

His plan was simple. From early morning till last thing at night, he did not waste a minute of the day.

He rose at daybreak, and having dressed himself with scrupulous care, sat down to write—a practice he adhered to all his life. We say that he used “scrupulous care” in attiring himself; the fact was, he arrayed himself at that early hour in full court-dress. The idea was an odd one, and Haydn has been censured by his biographers for foppishness, for oddity, or at least for stiff punctiliousness.

Probably none of these explanations is the right one, but he donned his court-dress to save time, and spare himself a second robing later in the day. In the early forenoon, he had to attend the prince’s reception, and, by dressing once for all, he was enabled to immerse himself in his music up to the very moment when his presence was required. One article of his attire which he was certainly very particular in assuming—indeed, he declared that he could never write without it—was a massive diamond ring, which the emperor, when on a visit to Prince Esterhazy, had given the composer. “Not a musical thought enters my head if I have not that ring on my finger,” said Haydn. And another fanciful idea of his was that the paper he wrote on must be of superfine quality and the most exquisite whiteness.

Thus accoutred, he sat down to work before the lark had begun his song in the air, and before any soul was astir in the house or in the neighbourhood but he. To rise so terribly early was a necessity with him, if he were to accomplish all the tasks which lay before him for the day; yet he is by no means such a rapid worker as we might fancy he would be. His pen travels very slowly; he constantly seems to be pausing and balancing his ideas. Occasionally he lays down his pen, and walks up and down the room, humming and singing.

By the easy way in which he takes his work, we might imagine that he was "playing" at composition. Yet ere eleven o'clock rings from a neighbouring steeple he has got through an enormous amount of work, to judge by the piles of manuscript that lie by him. This music is the music for the morrow. He will give it to his vice-capellmeister, who will have the parts copied for the players against the coming day, when they will play them at sight as they usually do.

But the avocations of the study are now over. He lays down his pen, takes one look at himself in the Venetian mirror, adjusts his cocked hat and a disordered bow, and hastens off to the prince's reception, where he is to direct a short piece, after which the water-party will take place, in which we have already found him engaged.

As he strides in his court-dress across the great square of Eisenstadt Schloss, let us draw his picture. Unfortunately, he has nothing in the way of good looks to lay claim to. His face is deeply pitted with the smallpox, a malady which ravaged so many good-looking countenances of the period, and among the rest the plain and perhaps commonplace visage of our composer. His complexion is exceedingly dark—so dark as to be swarthy—and his eyebrows are as black as jet. His expression is stern and forbidding,—so entirely contrary to what his music would lead us to suppose. So persistent was this peculiar character of his face, that many of his friends were known to declare that they had never seen him smile, or, at least, never laugh aloud. If his face is uninteresting, his body is ungainly. He is decidedly a little man; his frame is unwieldy, and his legs are much too short for his body. His costume is neat even to foppery,—not a ribbon,

not a ruffle, is out of order. His strict attention to external adornment, combined with a homely person, does not tend to improve the impression ; and possibly the "Father of the Symphony" would have passed unnoticed in a crowd, or have merely elicited the remark that he was a very ordinary man.

The reception over, and the water-party in which we found him engaged concluded, he is enabled to hurry away from the princely mansion to his house in Eisenstadt, for the purpose of having dinner.

His house had a history. It was an example of the many pieces of munificence which Prince Esterhazy showed to Haydn during the thirty years of service which the musician passed in his family. During Haydn's absence on a short excursion in the country, his house in Eisenstadt caught fire, owing presumably to the carelessness of his wife, and was burnt to the ground. Many inestimable manuscripts perished in the flames. Although we have copious reams of Haydn's compositions, we might have had double the quantity, had it not been for this unfortunate fire. In addition, the entire place was gutted and not an article of property was left undestroyed. This lamentable intelligence was conveyed by letter to the composer in the country, who, hearing that he was a ruined man, was in no particular hurry to return to town, and put off the evil day of facing his disaster as long as he could.

In the meanwhile, Prince Esterhazy assembled bricklayers without number from the adjoining districts, and they were engaged to work day and night until they had built up the house again in the identical form and on the identical spot on which it had a few days previously stood. Furniture and other effects were

ordered to be sent post-haste from the nearest large town; and, by the combined efforts of the workmen and the zeal of the prince, the house was within a few weeks' time complete, reconstructed inside and out, and everything restored to its original position except the precious manuscripts, which there was no replacing. But instead of them the prince caused some valuable presents to be deposited on the shelves. When Haydn returned home, expecting to find his hearth-stone desolate, his roof-tree blackened and in ruins—for he was expressly kept in ignorance of what was taking place—he saw an elegant house superseding the first, and was tempted to rub his eyes and imagine that some Aladdin's magic had transported to the spot the vision before him.

To this house he has now returned, the water-party over, to take his *mittagstisch*. The house is beautiful without, but, alas, it is not beautiful within. Frau Haydn has not the best of tempers, is popularly known among her neighbours as a scold, and leads the composer such a life that he has often vowed to separate from her,—which he ultimately did. On the present occasion it is a certain Mdlle. Boselli who has awakened her wrath. “Mdlle. Boselli,” she avers, “was singing at the water-party: if not, she will be singing at the concert this afternoon, so that it is all the same.” In vain the composer expostulates; she is deaf to his deprecations. She saw them on Sunday at church, she declares, looking at one another in a very guilty way, it is common talk that he is more attentive to Mdlle. Boselli than he is to his own wife—with much more to the same effect.

Haydn, after enduring this torrent of female abuse with exemplary patience, proceeds to eat his dinner



during the remainder of it,—to which he pays very little attention. That repast concluded, he gets up, remarking that it is now time to go to the afternoon concert at the Schloss, and muttering as he retires that he will not be home till late. The shrill voice of the virago, his spouse, repeats the last words in a high key, and hurls at his retreating form the name of *Mdlle. Boselli*.

“I cannot expect you to keep very good hours,” she says, “when you are at the beck and call of a person like that.”

But Haydn has by this time gained the passage and the outer door, whence, emerging into the open air, he is at last safe from the persecutions of his tormentor.

The entertainment of the afternoon at the Schloss takes the form of a concert. Haydn conducts; many of the guests take part in the proceedings, having fair voices, and being often well-trained musicians. A symphony is played, some chamber-music performed, a few songs delivered; the afternoon passes delightfully. Haydn sits at the clavier the greater part of the time, sometimes beating time with his disengaged hand, at other times filling up the harmonies of his small orchestra by timely and effective chords. There is a theatre in the grounds—another afternoon we might have found him directing an opera there. But the concert is the more frequent and regular recreation.

This evening there is no ball or rout to require the attendance of the orchestra. The evening is a lovely one, in the height of summer, and the prince and his friends have arranged to ride out to a neighbouring *château* to pass the evening in merriment there. Haydn has his holiday as well as the rest of the band. He was perfectly aware that he should have a free evening

to-night, and yet he told his wife that he should not be at home till late. What are his movements then? Perhaps he goes to a *café*; perhaps he sups with an old acquaintance; perhaps he pays a visit to Mdlle. Boselli. Who can say?

But he has comparatively few evenings such as this in which he can indulge "a truant disposition." In the ordinary way, he would be in the great saloon of Eisenstadt Schloss, directing his band until nearly midnight, and returning home shortly before twelve, tired out with his day's work.

He was thirty years in the service of the Esterhazy family (during the best period of his life), from thirty years of age till sixty; and for thirty years his life passed daily, with very little variation, in the manner in which it has been described above.

Such circumstances as these were eminently favourable to the development of Haydn's genius. Removed from the temptations and distractions of a town, encouraged to frequent and regular composition, with all the cares which so often beset the artist entirely removed from him—I mean the provision of the ways and means of everyday life—he was in a position such as few men have been so favoured by fortune as to enjoy.

—It was a mild and balmy noon, which had succeeded a stormy morning. Haydn's early career was chequered by vicissitudes, and the most grinding poverty which ever beset a composer fell to his share. When a boy he was elected a chorister in the choir of St. Stephen's Cathedral at Vienna, but in due course of time his voice broke, and his occupation was at an end. Possibly he might have been kept on in some capacity connected with the cathedral, until the



HAYDN.



transition from treble to tenor or bass was accomplished, and the young singer re-engaged. But he was always given to practical joking, and had made himself conspicuous among the choir-boys by his pranks of that nature. The choir-master, after repeated warnings, threatened finally to expel him if he perpetrated any more of his practical jests.

Haydn's innate love of horseplay got the better of him, and one night in church he cut off the queue of one of the other choristers' wigs, making the unfortunate boy on whom he perpetrated the joke a ridiculous object during the service, and the cause of many ill-concealed smiles among the congregation. This offence brought down on the head of the errant chorister condign punishment. The choir-master expelled him on the spot from the choir-school and the precincts of the cathedral, and on a cold winter's night with the snow falling on the ground—a night when, to use a colloquialism, one would not shut a cat out—Haydn found himself in the streets of Vienna to shift as best he could, without money and without a friend.

All night long he paced the streets, varying this occupation by lying down on a stone bench near the cathedral, with the snow falling on him fast, and without even an extra coat to shield him from the cold. Next morning, after a night of such cheerless fare, he was the recipient of a stroke of luck. As he paced the snowy streets wearied and worn out, a wig-maker named Keller, who happened to know him slightly, met him, and heard from him the whole of his unfortunate story.

“Since you lost your place by damaging a wig,” said the wig-maker, “it is but right that a repairer of wigs should take you under his charge.”

And with this or some similar pleasantry the kind-hearted fellow, who lived in a couple of rooms in the neighbourhood, wherein he contrived to house himself, his wife, and his family, took the poor worn-out boy under his arm and led him off home. After supplying the wanderer with a warm breakfast and bidding him rest himself upon the couch in the work-room of the family, the wig-maker and his wife held a consultation as to where the new arrival was to be lodged. There was not an inch of room to spare in the house itself, and the difficulty was increased all the more by the fact of there being a couple of grown-up daughters in the family.

At length the wig-maker bethought him of the *Boden*, a sort of attic or loft in German houses which is generally used to keep lumber in, and where sometimes the housewife holds her periodical washings. In Keller's house there was not much in the shape of lumber in the *Boden*, for a wig-maker's trade does not require a large supply of tools; so that, with the exception of a few bundles of horse-hair, the attic was free. With the greatest kindness imaginable it was placed at Haydn's disposal, and the poor bewildered boy was told that he might consider the house his home—there should always be a knife and fork for him at the table downstairs, he should be sole tenant of the *Boden* up above, and for neither privilege need he pay a farthing.

Such excessive and single-minded generosity is very rare in the usual intercourse of life. Haydn was privileged to find by the merest accident that most admirable object in nature—a really kind-hearted, benevolent man. And, perhaps, one of the most pleasing personages to dwell upon, not only in Haydn's life, but in

that of all the great composers, is Franz Keller, the wig-maker of Vienna.

A room all to himself, poor though it was, and complete liberty of action to pursue his beloved music in his own way, these two conditions constituted Paradise for Haydn.

By some means he managed to obtain an old worn-out harpsichord, and to give lessons upon it to a few poor pupils, which afforded him the wherewith to make some trifling return to Keller for his kindness. But the greatest pleasure which he enjoyed from the instrument was to sit and practise at it on his own account. His chief object was to educate himself in the true theory of composition, and his exercises on the harpsichord were rather devoted to this end than to the acquisition of any manual dexterity.

For the same purpose likewise he was accustomed to steal out at nights and visit the second-hand bookstalls in the by-streets of Vienna—the reason for making these visits nocturnal being that his clothes were so shabby and so few that he did not like to show himself by day. Beneath the oil lights which the tradesmen burnt at their doors he would anxiously turn over and over the heaps of tattered and mouldy books, with the hope of finding a treatise on musical theory among them. When found he would request the bookseller to put it aside for him, and then it became a question of laying by kreutzer after kreutzer until he had saved the desired amount.

In this way he gradually collected a little library, which he himself confessed was of immense value to him; for he was almost entirely self-taught, and his silent labours at theory in Keller's attic were almost the only schooling he received.

For the same reason that he slunk out at nights to avoid observation on his shabby garments, he also lay in bed at times, like the poets in Pope's Grub Street, who, feeding on verse as he on music, were no less distressed for the ways and means of life. In winter-time, too, when the frost and snow were on the ground, and there was no fire in the *Boden*, for the very good reason that stoves are never put in German attics, he was accustomed to pass whole days under the bedclothes, only getting up to go down to Keller's dinner, and pursuing his musical studies most indefatigably under these unpromising conditions.

The bed in which he spent so much time in the cold weather was made of sacking, the solitary chair was a very perilous article to sit upon, and the table had ricketty legs. Yet it was here that Haydn nursed his fine genius into its early maturity, and it was here that by the study of Ch. P. E. Bach's Sonatas he acquired that masterly knowledge of musical form which distinguishes him even among the great composers as its typical expositor.

To add to his slender income he did not disdain to play at night in the streets of Vienna, as struggling musicians are doing at the present hour in London, and by this means earned many a kreutzer most opportunely. The Viennese in those days, devoted to pleasure and gallantry, were very munificent in their patronage of *spielleute*, as they called them, and the occupation attracted other young men besides Haydn, so that sometimes he would combine a few of these into a band like our Waits, and play in the silent thoroughfares in the best quarter of the town with considerable profit to all concerned. He would often compose the music which was to be performed at these open-air



concerts, and, indeed, we believe that these were his first essays at composition.

Happening to play a piece of his own one evening, with the assistance of some friends, under the window of an actor, the latter was very much struck with the music, and gave the struggling youth a commission to write a short operetta for him. This incident first brought Haydn into public notice, and led to his receiving several engagements. In the year 1760, at the age of twenty-eight, he received the offer of Prince Esterhazy, which he accepted, as we have seen at the beginning of this chapter. This first raised him above indigence, and enabled him to cultivate his art with a feeling of security.

His experiences of "hard times" at Keller's house passed over him, leaving but a faint impression on his nature, which was ever agreeable, easy, placid, and contented. The real influence of his sojourn there was communicated in a very different manner, and had an abiding effect on his life for good and evil until his dying day. It was at Keller's house that he found his wife.

The excellent wig-maker had two daughters, of whom the elder was as much distinguished for her amiable temper and sweetness of disposition as the younger for her scolding tongue, her quarrelsome nature, and her narrow views on all subjects. While Haydn was a poor half-starved boy at Keller's house, the bright eyes and sweet face of the elder sister made a deep impression on his heart. He often dreamt of her when up in his garret; and if his undivided attention was concentrated on his studies by day, we may be sure that his sleep was filled with visions of Laura Keller, a maiden too lofty for him to aspire to in the condition

wherein he was, but whom one day he fervently hoped that he would be able to make his wife.

It is highly probable that the young girl reciprocated Haydn's attachment; but, unfortunately for the composer, if she loved Haydn much—to apply a Shakespearian quotation—she loved Rome more. The only flaw, if flaw it can be called, in the character of Keller, was a depth of religious feeling bordering on superstition, and being the most devout of Roman Catholics, he himself, his wife and daughters, were all under the sway of the priests. For some reason or other the confessor of the Keller family thought that the elder sister should enter a convent, and she, like a docile daughter of the Church, gave in her adhesion to the scheme with very little difficulty, forgetting her *penchant* for Haydn, who, it must be remembered, had never formally demanded her hand. He had, however, told Keller over and over again how much he should like to call him father-in-law, and there is perhaps no broader hint you could give to a man that you want to marry his daughter than this. Keller, however, completely under the control of priests and principles, did not take the hint as it was offered, and Haydn, fearful of a refusal, gradually allowed the matter to drop.

Some years had now passed since then, and Haydn, no longer a poor *waif* of the streets, but enjoying a competence from the liberality of the Esterhazys, again came into contact with Keller, no longer a flourishing wig-maker, but in reduced circumstances and poor. In order to show his gratitude to Keller, and partly also to help his benefactor now that help was needed, Haydn proposed formally for the hand of the younger daughter, and was accepted.

There was more benevolence than wisdom in this action. The temper of this young lady must have been well known to him. Indeed, scandal whispered that her sister had entered the convent to escape her everlasting tongue. Nor does she seem to have been more celebrated for virtue than she was for amiability. On the whole she was a woman to be avoided rather than be courted ; but she was Keller's daughter. The mild and effusive soul of Haydn overlooked all the drawbacks to the match, and only thought how much it would please his old benefactor, what a comfort it would be to his declining years to know that his child was well provided for, with many more reasons of a no less generous but equally unpractical nature. However, there was no pause between the conception of the project and its execution. Haydn married Marie Anna Keller, and his life ever afterwards was as miserable as an ill-tempered woman could make it.

The effect of this injudicious step was to drive Haydn away from his home, whenever he wanted recreation or quiet. Like all discreet men, he bowed to the storm of female passion, and never attempted to resist it. His happiest evenings were henceforth spent out of doors, at other people's houses, and generally at the house of some female acquaintance, whom he treated as a *confidante*, or paid court to as an admirer. Haydn was by nature very much disposed to gallantry, and in his later years his relations with the sex were of a somewhat loose nature. This we may attribute directly to the unhappy life he led with his wife, than which there can be no surer way to throw a man into the arms of rivals and to lead to a ruined household. Haydn's good sense and steady sobriety of mind saved him from the last consequence, but could not

rescue him from the former. And if it is impossible to actually excuse the composer for this weakness and levity of life, there are few people who will not sympathise with the cause which forced a naturally domestic and well-disposed man into courses from which his better nature recoiled.

After remaining with Prince Esterhazy for thirty years, Haydn accepted an engagement to compose music in London, for the concert-manager Salomon.

The story of this engagement is a singular one. Salomon was an English Jew, as remarkable for his enterprise as his eccentricities. It being his duty to cater for the public as concert *impresario* in London, he one day found himself at a standstill, with no one to write him any music, which in those days of appetite for ever fresh compositions was a serious dilemma for a concert-manager to be in. In despair Salomon turned his eyes abroad, but no one would accept the offers he made them. At last he thought of Haydn, and without giving any notice of his intentions, either to his friends or to the composer himself, started off post to Vienna—at that time a serious piece of travelling—and one afternoon presented himself in Haydn's study, and locking the door behind him informed the amazed musician that he must immediately pack up his effects and come to London, or out of that door he should not go. After many ejaculations and refusals on the part of the composer the enterprising Jew at last had his own way, and Haydn in the space of a day or two was *en route* for England.

The symphonies he wrote under the direction of this spirited *impresario* have descended to posterity under the latter's name. They are twelve in all, and without

pausing to specify the style of simplicity which Haydn has made familiar to everybody, we may say in one word that they are his masterpieces in the domain of instrumental music. "You will never surpass those symphonies," said Salomon to him one day; Haydn answered, "I never intend to try."

The composer's great success in London led to a second visit, and on his return from England, probably in emulation of Handel's *Messiah*, which he heard with rapture in this country, he undertook the composition of the *Creation*. He was sixty-three years of age when he began this work, and sixty-five when he finished it. With the production of *The Seasons*, which followed the *Creation*, Haydn's career as a composer terminated. He did not live long to enjoy the modest competence which his labours had acquired him, but after laying down his pen fell by slow degrees into a gradually feebler state of health.

A touching scene was witnessed at the last performance of the *Creation* which he lived to hear. It took place in the palace of Prince Obkowitz, and numbers of the Austrian nobility were present. The old composer was carried in in an easy-chair, and attended on by a bevy of ladies, who went to meet him. The performance began, and the interest of the listeners was redoubled by the fact of the presence of the venerable composer. A physician, who sat near him, having noticed that his legs were insufficiently protected from the cold, the finest and most costly shawls were instantly pulled from the shoulders of the fair wearers who surrounded him, and employed in making him warm and comfortable. The old man was deeply touched at this mark of affection.

The year of his death was that in which Napo-

leon marched to the very gates of Vienna—1809. During the campaign, Haydn, in feeble health and sinking fast, was greatly agitated. He was constantly enquiring for news, and used to sit by his bedside singing in a feeble and tremulous voice, "God preserve the Emperor!" On the night of the 10th of May the French reached Schönbrunn, and next morning, from a position within a few yards of Haydn's house, they fired fifteen hundred cannon-shot and shells upon the city, which the old man's imagination represented to him as given up to sack and desolation. Four bombs fell close to his dwelling, and their explosion filled his little household with terror. He raised himself, and getting up from his chair rebuked his servants for their want of firmness. A few days afterwards he died, having shortly before his death sat once more at the piano and sung "God preserve the Emperor!" in the midst of which he fell into a swoon, from which he never recovered. The day of his death was the 31st of May, 1809.

Haydn possessed a strong sense of humour, and was never weary of playing a practical joke whenever an opportunity occurred. It was a practical joke which lost him his place at the cathedral when a boy, and when a man of mature years he was no less fond of his jest than in the days of childhood. Once meeting Mozart in Vienna, then a young and brilliant performer on the pianoforte, whom no difficulty on the instrument could deter from attempting and successfully executing a piece, Haydn undertook to challenge the young virtuoso that he would write a composition which Mozart could not play. The wager was accepted, and Mozart fretted with impatience until the piece was before him. At once the youthful pianist dashed into

the composition, and after playing a page or two complained of the exceeding easiness of the music, and declared that Haydn must be joking to set such a piece before him. But on turning the next leaf he found himself in a dilemma. The music required his two hands to be one at one end of the piano, the other at the other, while in the middle of the key-board, where neither hand could by any means reach, a note was to be struck. Mozart reddened at the unexpected difficulty, and, muttering some excuse, rose from the piano, exclaiming that music so written was clearly impossible to be played, for it was not suited to the capacities of the human frame.

“Pray, Haydn, how would you play such a passage yourself?” he said.

Haydn sat down at the piano, placed his hands at the extremities of the key-board, and, bending down, played the note between them with his nose.

## SYNOPSIS OF LIFE, AND WORKS.

---

FRANZ JOSEF HAYDN was born at Rohrau, April 1st, 1732 ; was the son of Matthias Haydn, a wheelwright ; was employed as a chorister in St. Stephen's, Vienna, 1740-1748 ; wrote his first operetta, 1750. He was appointed capellmeister to Prince Esterhazy in 1760, and remained in his service till 1790 ; married Marie Anna Keller, Nov. 26th, 1760 ; resided in Vienna, 1790 ; visited London for the first time, 1791 ; wrote the Twelve Salomon Symphonies, 1791-4 ; left England, 1792 ; taught Beethoven music, 1792 ; appeared in London again, 1794 ; returned to Vienna, 1795 ; wrote *The Creation*, 1795-7 ; wrote *The Seasons*, 1801 ; died at Gumpendorf, near Vienna, May 31st, 1809, aged seventy-seven.

---

Symphonies, 125 in all, with overtures, including : Twelve Symphonies (*Salomon Set*), No. 1, 1791 ; 2, 1791 ; 3 (*Surprise*), 1791 ; 4, 1792 ; 5, 1791 ; 6, 1791 ; 7, 1795 ; 8, 1795 ; 9, 1795 ; 10, 1793 ; 11 (*Clock*), 1794 ; 12 (*Military*), 1794. Letter A, 1780 ; B (*Farewell*), 1772 ; H, 1774 ; I, 1772 ; L, 1772 ; Q, Oxford, 1788 ; R, 1788 ; T, 1787 ; V, 1787 ; W, 1787. *Le Matin*, 1761 (?) ; *Le Midi*, 1761 ; *Le Soir*, 1761 (?) ; *Der Philosoph*, 1764 ; *Lamentation*, 1772 ; *Mercury*, 1772 ; *Maria Theresa*, 1773 ; *La Passione*, 1773 ; *Schoolmaster*, 1774 ; *Feuer-symphonie*, 1774 ; *Il Distrato*, 1776 ; *Roxelano*, 1777 ; *Kinder-symphonie* ; *Laudon*, 1779 ; *La Chasse*, 1780 ; *La Reine de France*, 1780 ; *La Poule*, 1786 ; *L'Ours*, 1786 ; etc.

Eighty-four String Quartetts. Thirty Trios, for stringed, etc., instruments. Thirty-one Concertos for various instruments. Fifty-three Sonatas for Harpsichord. Twenty Concertos for Harpsichord etc.



Oratorios: *The Creation*, Vienna, 1798; London, 1800. *The Seasons* (Thomson), 1800; *Seven Words from the Cross*; *Il Ritorno di Tobia*; *Invocation of Neptune*.

Cantatas, various.

Masses, etc., for voices and orch., No. 1, in B flat; 2, in C; 3, *The Imperial*, in D; 4, B flat; 5, C; 6, B flat; 7, G; 8, B flat; 9, C; 10; 11; 12; 13, C; 14, D; 15; 16, B flat.

*Stabat Mater*. Offertories (13); Motetts; *Salve Regina*; *Tantum Ergo*; Sacred songs (arias), etc.

Operas, etc.: 1 German; 4 Italian, "*Le Pescatrici*," "*L'Incontro improvviso*," "*L'Infedeltà delusa*," "*La Fedeltà premiata*;" 14 *Buffa* comedies, and 5 *Marionette* operas.

Twelve German *Lieder*, 1782; twelve do., 1784. Six Original *Canzonets* (Mrs. Hunter), London, 1796. *Accompaniments to Scottish Songs* (for George Thomson, Edinburgh). *Welsh airs*, arranged. *A Requiem*, etc.

*Notturnos*, *Minuets*, 1 *Sestett*, 1 *Quintett*, *Marches*, music for *baritone*, etc.

## BACH.

It is a glorious summer evening, the sun is just sinking to rest in the midst of a rosy sunset, and the tapers are being lighted in the suburbs and the city of Leipsic. Window after window kindles its pale illumination, and about the streets and squares groups of people are assembled in the twilight at the doors of the houses for the regularly recurring gossip on the events of the past day. Proceeding along the streets of the city we come in no long time to the School of St. Thomas, an institution for the cultivation of music, of no very pretentious appearance in the way of building, and evidently not particularly blessed with fair endowments and wealthy revenue. One small portion of the school is set aside for a dwelling-house. The principal window of the latter is on the ground floor, looking into the street.

As we thread the twilight avenues approaching it we see that the window is lighted, and pealing from the room within swell the sounds of an ancient Lutheran hymn, sung with such surprising beauty of intonation and depth of feeling that the most unmusical wayfarer would be constrained to stop and listen to the unusual concert within.

If we enter the room we shall find it full of people, most of them youths and maidens of varying ages from

early manhood and womanhood down almost to infancy. At the harpsichord round which they are clustering sits a noble and majestic man, wearing one of the full-bottomed wigs which were the fashion of the time, and dressed in the frogged coat and knee-breeches which are the garb of all the male members of the assembly beyond the age of childhood. He seems completely abstracted from earth as he gazes upward while sitting at the harpsichord playing the notes of the chorale, and joining in the general chorus with deep and sonorous voice. His face is somewhat large and heavy, but possessing an expression of supreme intellectual power. He has a broad and expansive forehead, eyes singularly weak and timid (quite out of keeping with his face), a mouth at once delicate, refined, and expressive, a ponderous nose, and a vast double chin. This is John Sebastian Bach, the father of musicians, and himself the descendant of generations of musicians—the greatest man of a musical race, which could meet once a year at Eisenach, in Germany, to the number of one hundred and fifty musicians, all of the name of Bach, and could keep chronicles of its various branches, which, under the name of the “Archives of the Bächs,” are still to be seen in the Royal Library of Berlin.

This is John Sebastian Bach, and round him in the room are his numerous sons and daughters, all singing in the chorale. His wife, too, is there, her melodious voice blending with the rest, as—like the other female members of the assembly—she sits on a stool and plies at once the labours of knitting and singing.

The hymn over, Bach calls for his son, Philip Emmanuel, to extemporise on the harpsichord; and at once a bright intelligent boy comes forward out of the

throng, and, seating himself before the instrument, begins to improvise in a very free and unfettered style, whilst his brothers and sisters cluster round to listen, and his father with paternal pride looks on. Bach had employed a different system of education with Philip Emmanuel than with all his other sons. While with the latter he had educated their style in the stricter principles of counterpoint, and had kept them to hard and fast rules of harmony and form with the most unbending severity, in the case of Emmanuel he had encouraged freedom, had fostered the boy's natural genius for pouring forth impromptu melody, and had even bidden him break rules if he could do so with dexterity.

After a beautiful outburst of music from his young hands, Wilhelm Friedemann is called forward to exhibit his powers; and then a completely different style is apparent. The most knotty intricacies of fugue are laid down and unravelled by this performer; the strictest harmonies only are used; the subject and counter-subject are blended, varied, and imitated in countless and bewildering ways, yet in every case without infringing the smallest rule of the science. Bach claps his hands when Wilhelm has finished, in token of cordial approval. He lays one hand on Philip Emmanuel's head, and says, "Here is my musical experiment!" The other he places on Wilhelm Friedemann's with the words, "But here is the heir of my science!"

Then he sits down to the harpsichord himself, and improvises in a divine and masterly manner, in the midst of rapt attention from his family circle. All the attention which they could give him was most emphatically deserved, as—with the exception of



J. S. BACH.



Handel, who was his equal—there was no extempore player in Europe who could surpass their father. To paint the wonders of his performance would be an elaborate and well-nigh impossible task. Suffice it to say that, along with the more recondite effects of profound science, he does not disdain to intermingle the lightness and gaiety of a good-natured humour. He breaks off into a jig, and then again into a gavotte of most dance-provoking character, which makes everybody present feel inclined to caper about the room; and then as unexpectedly he gives them an imitation of the cat running over the keys of the harpsichord, which causes everyone to laugh.

Supper time has now come, as the great clock on the mantelpiece shows; and on the conclusion of the last piece the female members of the household trip away to make the necessary preparations for the evening meal. The brothers leave the room one after another, and Bach, left to himself, is busily at work tuning his harpsichord. Although supper will be ready in ten minutes, he has yet time, for such skill did he possess in adjusting the complicated quill mechanism of the instrument, that he was able at any moment to tune the most refractory harpsichord in less than a quarter of an hour. His sensitive ear required the instrument to be kept in perfect tune, and any odd ten minutes he was very fond of turning to account by such useful and indispensable labour. On the present occasion he finishes the task within the necessary time, and has just tuned the last string to his satisfaction when one of his younger children comes running into the room with the announcement that supper is ready.

With his hand on the boy's shoulder, Bach leaves the best room of the house, where the musical gathering

has just been held, and proceeds to the kitchen. Here, at a large table, is an ample repast of *schinken* and *belegtes butterbrod*, flanked with a large jug of Nuremberg beer; and to this frugal supper the whole family sit down. At its conclusion the family Bible is brought in with great ceremony and placed before the head of the house. The book looks well worn, and on reference to the inscription at the beginning we should find that it had belonged to the Bach family for six generations. Turning the pages reverently until he finds a fitting place the great composer commences to read aloud. Then they sing a hymn and kneel down to prayers, on the conclusion of which they all betake themselves to rest.

The next morning Bach is up early—the first in the house; and by the time breakfast is ready has written for two hours, making considerable progress in an elaborate motett on which he is engaged. Although a tolerably rapid writer he never attained the lightning speed of Handel or the impetuous pace of Mozart. A very cogent reason caused delay. Bach was fond of copying and recopying his compositions, being a neat penman; and each time he copied he made some important change in the manuscript, on which it often required great thought and reflection to determine. He is reported to have said that he hoped he made a composition better every time he copied it, for he could never miss seeing a chance of improvement so long as he had the paper before him.

According to this theory of writing, he might have worked at one piece all his life long, or at least have emulated Beethoven in the abundance of his corrections; and doubtless would have done so, were it not that he had to compose the music of four churches,



which gave him plenty to do, and did not allow him to rest on his oars.

Owing to this plethora of occupation, he had habituated himself to write music at all times and seasons. He composed one of the books of "The Well-tempered Clavichord" while on a journey, snatching such opportunities as the halt at a hostelry might afford him; and falling to work at his imperishable masterpiece in such out of the way places as the kitchen at an inn, an attic bedroom, the top of a diligence; or even a road side. He had a profound contempt for that class of musicians who can never compose except when seated at the piano, with pen, ink, and paper at their side, to jot down inspirations as they occur. He used to call these gentlemen "harpsichord knights," and beg devoutly to be delivered from their company and their compositions.

He believed firmly that neither was uninterrupted leisure necessary for composition, nor complete tranquillity, nor an easy life, nor freedom from care, nor money, nor appreciation, nor any of the other prime needs for inspiration which many a musician pleads as indispensable to writing. On the contrary, he believed—and he acted on his belief—that a man with a wife and twenty children to support, and an income of only thirteen pounds a year to do it on, a man beset with the cares of a large family, and occupied nearly all day long by onerous duties which never gave him a moment of leisure time, might yet write such compositions as should entitle him to the proud pre-eminence of being one of the immortal masters of his art.

The total income on which he relied for the support of himself and family was a stated sum paid him by instalments once a month of £13 a year. To this

was added an extra £2 at Christmas-time for wood and candles. And the following perquisites combined to swell his scanty income by a few pounds more:—a fee of one thaler on every wedding at St. Thomas's Church; a like fee at every baptism and funeral; the annual interest on £3 or £4 which was left to the organist by some charitable donor, consisting of the small payment once a year of one thaler ten silver groschen—about four shillings in our money. These trifling sums were of immense importance to Bach, with whom every shilling had its value; and, though he was certainly not a greedy man—who could be who was content to pass twenty-seven years of his life with such an income as this?—he was very scrupulous in exacting these various perquisites, even down to the four-shilling annuity.

Completely satisfied with his position and his resources, he rose every morning with a light heart, and a comparative immunity from care, to discharge the various duties for which he received so magnificent a stipend. Two or three hours' writing generally preceded breakfast; immediately after which meal he betook himself to the school, in the precincts of which he lived—indeed, his small house formed part of the school building; and we omitted to say that he inhabited that house rent free.

A number of youths await him in one of the class rooms, among whom some of his own sons take their place. This is the first class in music, and for the next two or three hours Bach is hard at work explaining and sometimes hammering the mysteries of fugue and counterpoint into the heads of these young gentlemen, some of whom are highly intelligent scholars, but others most unconscionable dunderheads.

The great clock in the schoolroom by this time shows that the hour is well-nigh eleven, and with a sigh of relief at the termination of duties, which he evidently does not regard with great pleasure, he hurries off to St. Thomas's Church to play at the service, this being a saint's day. What masterly melodies sweep from his fingers! What wondrous musical structures are the voluntaries! What divine and ideal counterpoint controls the effusions of his fancy! For everything, except the music sung by the choir, is extemporised—voluntaries, interludes, offertories, &c., are all poured unpremeditated forth. The choral portion of the service is of his own composition likewise, but has been carefully written and rehearsed; and for the first time that day chorales and motetts, destined to be imperishable, fall on the ears of listeners in St. Thomas's Church.

The service over, he betakes himself to the school again, and for an hour or an hour and a half inspects all the classes in music—an arduous task, which, however, he performs with the strictest fidelity. Then comes the dinner hour, and round the large table the whole family once more assemble. After it is over, they severally disperse to rest or recreation; but their indefatigable father sits down to work immediately, and composes for at least an hour before he leaves the house again.

This time his journey is to visit one of the three churches whose musical arrangements he is responsible for in addition to those of St. Thomas. A new organ has just been put up in one of these edifices, and Bach has promised to try the instrument this afternoon. His first action on sitting down on the organ-stool is to draw out all the stops and to play with the full organ. His object, as he himself expresses it, is

to know "if the instrument has good lungs." When he has satisfied himself as to its lung-power, he proceeds to examine the single parts; nothing in the complicated fabric of the instrument escapes his penetrating attention; and, having finally completed his scrutiny, he declares that the instrument is an excellent one, and deserves more money than the builder asked for it. The latter having shown him an estimate of the expenses, and pointed out what a small margin of profit accrues on the instrument, Bach promises to bring the question before the proper authorities, and if possible get a rise in the price.

The remainder of the afternoon, from five o'clock to about seven, is free time—the only undisturbed leisure he possesses during the day, except what he can snatch from the early morning hours before the day begins. This sacred interval is most scrupulously devoted to composition. There must be no interruptions then. Bach will see nobody, have no intruders in his room, and touch nothing else but his divine and glorious compositions. With seven o'clock comes the hour for choir practice at the church, and thither with a whole posse of his children he betakes himself.

The choir was disciplined and drilled like an army. Every one stood in awe of him, though it was an awe tinged with veneration. Woe betide any unfortunate chorister who sang a wrong note! He was at once singled out for public and stern rebuke. At times the great composer was known to grow so irritated that he would pluck off his wig and hurl it at any unfortunate member of the choir who stupidly persisted in an error. These fits of passion were, however, only occasional, as Bach in general was a man of easy and agreeable temper, who enjoyed the love of all around him. After

the choir practice is concluded, he returns home with his children, and spends the rest of the evening in the simple and patriarchal style in which we found him engaged at the beginning of this narrative.

Bach was born in 1685, and died in 1750. Like Handel, he became blind before his death, an ailment which it is said could be traced to his assiduity in studying music when a boy. His brother, John Christopher Bach, organist of Ohrdruff, practically acted as his guardian in his childhood, his father having died early, and left scarcely any provision for his family.

But the guardian unfortunately seems to have been a very imperious man, and, among other prohibitions, forbade the young student the use of a coveted volume of musical instruction which seemed to the latter entirely necessary for his studies. Nothing apparently could baulk the zeal of Bach even as a boy, when he had once set his mind on obtaining anything, and finding that he could not gain access to the volume by fair means he resolved to do so surreptitiously. Every evening, therefore, when his brother was in bed or otherwise engaged, he paid a visit to the bookcase where the volume was kept, and by degrees copied out every note contained therein, having no other light but that of the moon. Rightly or wrongly, this strain on his eyes is said to have laid in them the seeds of that blindness which attacked him in his declining years.

His life in early youth is remarkable for the indomitable desire for instruction and improvement which characterised him. We hear of his making long journeys on foot in order to listen to great players, of his enduring hunger and privations for the same reason. Gradually his assiduity built up in him a fine style

and laid the foundations of that profound learning so conspicuous in every phrase he wrote.

His first wife, whom he married in 1707, was Maria Barbara Bach, his cousin, the daughter of John Michael Bach, an organist of local celebrity. She seems to have been an excellent housewife, and her interests were chiefly centred on the domestic side of Bach's existence, in this respect offering a great contrast to his second wife, who possessed the rare union of an artistic nature and of those homely domestic faculties so essential to a happy household, with the strong and very proper prominence of the former. The fruit of his marriage with Maria Barbara Bach was seven children, who included Wilhelm Friedemann, Charles Philip Emanuel, Johann Gottfried, and Leopold Augustus.

After thirteen years of wedded life this excellent woman died, and Bach was next united to Anna Magdalena Wülkens, who survived him. Not only capable of entirely consulting every detail of his domestic happiness, this accomplished woman possessed the strongest sympathy with her husband's musical genius, was one of his warmest admirers and most delighted hearers. She was indefatigable in assisting him in all his artistic labours, which will be all the more apparent when we say that numerous manuscripts of Bach's music are in her handwriting. His children were impressed into the task of copying to save their father unnecessary labour, but his wife seems to have been more industrious than them all in this thankless yet necessary task.

To this epoch of his life, that is shortly after his second marriage, belong the Six Short Preludes for Beginners, the Fifteen Two-part Inventions, the First Part of the Well-tempered Clavichord, the Six Sonatas

for Harpsichord with Violin *obbligato*, the Nine Trios for Harpsichord, Flute, and Violin, with other important compositions. All these works show the master-hand of the consummate musician. The days of trial and feverish study had passed, and Bach's matured genius was putting forth its fruits.

In 1723 he was named cantor to St. Thomas's school at Leipsic, having before that appointment held successively the posts of organist of Arnstadt Church, organist of St. Blasius' Church, organist at Weimar, and capellmeister at Köthen. The period of his career during his cantorship at Leipsic, being the most typical of his whole life, we have already selected for detailed consideration. Though content with the humble pay and uneventful patriarchal life which we have shown him leading, his fame had travelled far and wide. Men were becoming curious about him, and his name was already regarded with a certain awe.

Once it is related of him that entering a church where there was very inefficient organ-playing, he heard with impatience the awkward efforts of the organist, till, the service ended, he entered the organ-loft, and volunteered to play a little music on his own account. The organist, to whom he was a perfect stranger, resigned his organ-stool to the new-comer, and listened with astonishment to the masterly descants, the sublime rolls of tone which came pouring from the instrument directly the strange player laid his fingers on it. Piece after piece was executed by the brilliant performer, the greatest difficulties of the instrument were lightly and easily overcome, the ear was delighted, the heart awakened, and the understanding dazed at the marvellous execution and consummate skill.

The people who had remained in the church, no less

than the organist himself, were amazed at so unusual a performance—a performance, they all agreed, such as they had never listened to in their lives before. The organist was therefore deputed to ask the strange player his name, for many guesses went about the church, some conjecturing one great name, others another, though all agreed that the present player entirely eclipsed those whose names were mentioned. The strange performer refused to give his name, but instead struck four notes on the organ, B, A, C, H, and proceeded to extemporise a fugue thereon. The musical revelation thus given does not appear to have dawned on the hearers all at once; but when they heard this subject treated with a skill which baffled all imagination, they unanimously thought of that greatest of all musicians whose name they had omitted in their former guesses, and simultaneously the development and repetition of the four notes came to their minds and gave the solution of the problem. But ere they could unite in a formal demonstration of their respect and veneration, Bach, who hated any such attention, had brought his fugue to a conclusion, risen from the organ-stool, and left the church.

A story somewhat similar is told of his interview with Frederick the Great. This monarch, it will be remembered from Macaulay and Voltaire, was a player on the flute, and a very fair performer too, despite the jibes of the witty Frenchman. When Bach had played before the king for some time, he begged Frederick to furnish him with a subject for extemporisation. The king took up his flute and played B, A, C, H; then, laying it down, requested Bach to extemporise thereon. No doubt the monarch thought that he had set the musician a puzzle, but if so he forgot that he



had to do with the greatest contrapuntist in the world. Bach played him such a fugue, so intricate, so elaborate, so unconstrained and easy in all its serpentine developments, that Frederick was fain to confess that nothing was beyond old Bach, for that he could set the alphabet to music. German music, we may mention in explanation of the occurrence of the letter H in this notation, admits this letter as an essential part of the scale, which we on the other hand do not employ. H represents to them B natural, the letter B being reserved for B flat.

It was while cantor at St. Thomas's School, Leipsic (1725-1750), that all the greatest works of his life were written. To these twenty-five years belong five complete courses of church music for the whole year, five "Passion Music," the fresh and ever-youthful Christmas Oratorio, and the Mass in B minor, "The Gothic Cathedral," as some, in their enthusiasm, have called it.

This colossal composition is the most mighty of all his works. It is written for five voices: two sopranos, alto, tenor, and bass, and a full orchestra, and contains passages of most formidable difficulty. The Credo may be named as a remarkable instance of the latter, being a series of fugues and desperate imitations, which may well dismay the whole race of singers. The fugue in the Sanctus, "Pleni sunt cœli," may be noticed for its admirably clear and decisive opening, begun as it is by the tenors, who are taken up by the altos, who are followed by the first and second sopranos, and last of all by the basses. The Mass in B minor contains the triumph of Bach's art. All the science and knowledge which he had been collecting through a long life are there, and the most appalling difficulties of composition are mastered by the great musician without

any apparent effort. The Mass is one maze of fugues from beginning to end, and yet there is no confusion of treatment, nor anything to detract from the classic calmness which wraps the music and keeps it tranquil in the midst of storm.

In this way Bach's Mass in B minor offers considerable contrast to Beethoven's Mass in D, which cannot be said to reach that high level of art where such sublime tranquillity reigns. On the contrary, it is torn by passion and instinct with emotion, and on that account has been denied the name of "ecclesiastical," which Bach's work so eminently merits.

The Christmas Oratorio, which belongs to the same period of composition as the Mass, is not less remarkable for the majesty of its choruses than for the beauty of its solos, of which a large number are found in it. The title "Christmas Oratorio" is somewhat of a misnomer, since the original conception of the work had no relation to a complete oratorio, but was designed on the contrary to depict, in a series of six separate cantatas, the events connected with Our Lord's birth and circumcision. The first three of these were intended for performance on Christmas Day and the two following days; the fourth for the Feast of Circumcision; the fifth for the Sunday after that festival; and the sixth for the Epiphany. We are well assured that in the manner described the six cantatas were performed in St. Thomas's Church, Leipsic, during Bach's lifetime, and doubtless their effect would be much heightened if such a method of performance were pursued at any of our churches to-day.

The quaint and antique instrumentation of the Christmas Oratorio is one of its main charms. The effect of the hautboy in the chorale, "For us to earth He

cometh poor," and of the flute in the tenor air, "Haste, ye shepherds," where it forms a delightful accompaniment to the voice, is very charming, as likewise of the hautboys in the Echo Song, where hautboy echoes hautboy as voice repeats voice. But in the great orchestral movement of the Oratorio, the Pastoral Symphony, the instruments, as is natural, make their most masterly effort, and sweep together in a sea of sweetness. Of the grand concluding chorale of the Oratorio, "Now vengeance hath been taken," it may be said with truth, never was there so noble a chorale, and never so florid and mighty an accompaniment.

For depth of musical feeling, combined with transcendent intricacy of structure, Bach's music bears the palm. The convolutions of his counterpoint are never tedious and wearisome, as is so often the case with inferior composers, who after starting their subject have not enough invention to carry it out, and, consequently, by endless repetition or by flat and commonplace monotony, excite no interest in the hearer, who awaits with impatience the end of the composition. But Bach's inexhaustible musical imagination ever bubbles up in fresh passages of melody, and new interest accumulates as the piece proceeds. It is often noticeable that when close at the end of one of his fugues, and, as we might be led to think, with his vein of variety completely exhausted, some of his noblest inspirations and finest effects occur.

He is such a master of the severe fugal form that he frolics in double counterpoint where other men would plod and pant heavily along. Many of his dances reveal in marvellous beauty and lightness all the outlines of regular contrapuntal structure, and partake thereby of an air of serious dignity. His skill in this lighter form of composition is best seen in his Suites,

which are collections of dances, including the Allemande, the Gigue, the Courante, the Bourrée, the Gavotte, and the Sarabande. His dances are remarkable for their crisp rhythms, quaint effects, and clear-cut outlines. The thought of Bach disporting in dances may seem strange to many, but his association with a comic cantata will be more unexpected still; yet such is the case, and in these simple frolics of humour he found his recreation from the almost continuous severity of his studies.

A curious composition, called The Coffee Cantata, comes to us with Bach as its authentic author, and like Homer's Battle of the Frogs and Mice is humorously couched in the style of his sublimer works. The Coffee Cantata and the Bachian oratorio resemble one another in form—each has its tenor narrator, its *dramatis personæ*, and its chorus—but the subject is in ludicrous contrast. The narrator bids us observe that a father and daughter are approaching, who differ from one another in their opinions as to the merits of coffee—the father detesting it, the daughter devoted to it. In due course the parties are supposed to enter, and we have a humorous interchange of air and recitative, in which the former condemns and the latter exalts her favourite beverage. The promise of a husband at last overcomes the lady's obstinacy—matrimony triumphs over coffee, and the self-denial of the daughter brings in the wedding-day. Yet still we hear her murmuring, "Dear husband, just one cup." The music is replete with the usual Bachian devices of "imitation," though here divested of much of their difficulty. The chorus, when it appears, is treated *à la chorale* instead of in the fugal style, and all things concur to make the Coffee Cantata a quaint and amusing composition.

When blindness fell upon Bach in the latter end of his life, he did not maintain that desperate conflict with the malady, as was the case with Handel, but seems to have sunk under it, weary and worn to death. His last composition, "Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen sein," he dictated to his son-in-law, being unable to write himself. It breathes heavenly patience and resignation, but without a trace of any desire to combat his affliction.

Strange to say, shortly before his death he recovered the use of his eyes, and was enabled with unspeakable joy to gaze around on the faces of his beloved family, and the objects in the dear home about him. Soon after this temporary recovery he died, amid the tears of his children, the heart-broken grief of his wife, and the sympathy and sorrow of his friends and acquaintances. The day of his death was the 28th of July, 1750, the hour a quarter-past eight in the evening. His grave is decorated with no stone, no cross. No one, indeed, knows where the greatest master of the old counterpoint lies buried. His accomplished wife, now advanced in years, fell into poverty at her husband's death, and, we believe, died in an almshouse. It is sad to reflect on the vicissitudes which pursue our greatest men with as much impartiality as the rest of mankind.

## SYNOPSIS OF LIFE, AND WORKS.

---

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH was born at Eisenach, March 21st, 1685. To a great extent he was a self-taught musician. He studied under his brother, Johann Christoph, at Ohrdruff, from 1693; was chorister in the college of St. Michael at Lüneberg, 1700; became organist of Arnstadt Church, 1703; went to Mühlhausen as organist of St. Blasius' Church, 1707; married for the first time, Oct. 17th, 1707; became court organist at Weimar, 1708. His first wife died, 1720; he married his second wife, Dec. 3rd, 1721; became cantor of the Thomas-Schule, Leipsic, 1723; wrote the first part of the Well-tempered Clavichord, 1725; produced the Passion according to St. Matthew, 1729; the Mass in B minor, *circa* 1734; the Christmas Oratorio, 1734; the second part of the Well-tempered Clavichord, 1740. He died at Leipsic, July 28th, 1750, aged sixty-five.

---

Church Music: Grosse Passionsmusik nach dem Evangelium Matthei (Passion according to St. Matthew), 1729; Passionsmusik nach dem Evangelium Johannis (Do. St. John), 1729. Two other Passion-oratorios are ascribed to him, one being on St. Luke; but both are disputed, and one is entirely lost. Cantatas for the Church, scored for solo voices and chorus, organ and orchestra. Of these works 230 only survive, out of an estimated total of 400. Motetts. Masses in B minor, G minor, A, G, F, C, etc. Christmas Oratorio, 1734. Magnificats in various keys. Psalms, the 7th, 117th, 149th, etc., for double choir, organ, and orch. Litanies. Offertories. Kirchengesänge für solo und chorstimmen mit Instrumental begleitung. Miscellaneous pieces, as psalms, hymns, chorales, etc.

Organ Music: Passacaglia für Orgel, 1736; Clavierübung, bestehend in verschiedenen Vorspielen über die Catechismus und andere Gesänge vor die Orgel, Leipzig, 1739; Sechs Choräle verschiedener Art, auf einer Orgel mit zwei Clavieren und Pedal vorzuspielen, 1740; Canonische Veränderungen über das Weihnachtslied, 1747; Die Kunst der Fuge (The art of fugue), 1749; Choral-Vorspiele für die Orgel mit einem und zwei Clavieren und Pedal; 44 Kleine Choral-Vorspiele; 15 Grosse-Choral-Vorspiele; 52 Choral-Vorspiele verschiedener Form; 18 Choral-Vorspiele mit den 5 variationem; Praktische Orgelschule, enthaltend 6 sonaten für 2 Manuale und oblig. Pedal, Zurich. Miscellaneous pieces consisting of Pastorals, Preludes, Fugues, Themes, etc.

Music for the Clavichord: Das Wohltemperirte Clavier (The Well-tempered Clavichord), 48 fugues and 48 preludes, v. 1, 1725, v. 2, 1740. Clavierübungen, bestehend in Præludien Allemanden, etc., Leipzig, 1728-31; Part two, do., 1735; Part three, do., 1739; Part four, do., 1742. Chromatische Fantaisie. Toccatas. Fifteen inventions. Fifteen symphonies in 3 parts. Fantasias. Six Suites. Suites Anglaises. Six sonatas for clavier with vn. oblig. Miscellaneous pieces.

Concerted Instrumental Music: Three sonatas for vn.; Five duets for 2 vns.; Six sonatas for violoncello; Six concertos for various instruments; Overtures in B minor, D, etc.; Symphonies in D, D minor, etc.; Caprices for lute; Concertos for vn. and orch. A great quantity of miscellaneous pieces.

Secular Vocal Music: Secular Cantatas, various. Two of these cantatas were introduced to the London musical public for the first time by Mr. S. Reay of Newark-on-Trent, in 1879; their titles were "The Coffee Cantata," and "The Peasant's Cantata." Odes, Choruses, Songs, etc.

## HANDEL.

THE house in which Handel resided in London was on the south side of Brook Street, near Hanover Square, four doors from Bond Street, and two from the passage to the stable yard. It is now No. 57, Brook Street; but those who visit it with the hope of finding any souvenirs of the great composer, or even of suffering their imagination to recall any reminiscences of him in a spot sanctified by his former presence, will find little in the interior of the house to reward them for their trouble or to suggest in the slightest degree that Handel once lived there. Yet here for many years he lived last century, and here he died; and here every morning, when stage coaches, sedan chairs, three-cornered hats and knee-breeches were the ordinary objects to be seen in the London thoroughfares, Handel might have been found, between the hours of nine and eleven, holding a levée of morning callers, musicians in search of employment, singers whom he had secured for his operas, and vocalists whose voices he was anxious to try, preparatory to offering or refusing them engagements.

Handel is at this time the *impresario* and conductor of the popular opera house in the Haymarket, and enjoys a position in the musical world of London similar to that which would result if Sir Augustus Harris and Sir Arthur Sullivan were rolled into one. His



popularity is unbounded. The daily papers vie with one another in chronicling the most minute incidents of his life; and paragraphs are constantly appearing in one or the other of them to the effect that "Mr. Handel passed through Devizes this morning on his way to Bath. The Orpheus of modern harmony put up at the 'Swan with Two Necks,' and smoked a pipe of tobacco in the coffee room amidst a large circle of admirers;" or, "Mr. Handel, in alighting from his carriage yesterday, strained his ankle slightly, but this did not prevent the illustrious servant of Apollo from proceeding to the opera the same evening and conducting one of his divine compositions."

In the meantime, let us follow him at his levée in Brook Street. Among the company who fill the room and, despite the musical exercises which are going on, keep up a constant chatter of subdued conversation, are Margherita Durastanti (the celebrated soprano), Signor Senesino the equally celebrated soprano—for in Handel's time the practice of employing men sopranos in the opera was at its heyday—Madame Cuzzoni, Madame Bernacchi, Christopher Smith (Handel's amanuensis), Fabri (the tenor), Castrucci (the violinist), Caporale (the violoncellist), and a host more. In the midst of them sits Handel at the harpsichord, and by his side stands an Italian vocalist, who is trying over a solo in the forthcoming opera of "Lothario," in which he is to enact the title rôle.

There seems to be some point of contention between the composer and the singer. They come to a certain passage in the song at which the vocalist invariably breaks down, and, amid the angry protestations of the somewhat irascible composer, has to commence the piece over again. There is evidently a storm brewing.

The company in interested attention cease their buzz of conversation, and curiously await the *dénouement* of the scene. Once more the Italian commences his song; once more he comes to the fatal passage, and once more he breaks down. This time, seeing a number of his musical brethren around him, and hoping to gain their support by his audacity,

"I think, Mr. Handel," he says, "that the passage as you have written it is not suitable for my voice, and I would beg you to alter the notes a little here and there so as to put it within my compass."

He scarcely has time to finish his sentence when Handel is up from his seat in a terrible rage, and, shaking his fist in the unfortunate singer's face, "You tog," he cries, "vill you teach me how to write de moosik? Do I not know dat better dan you, lazy, ignorant rogue? If you vill not sing all de song dat I give you, I vill not pay you 'ein stiver.'" The Italian, completely subdued by the composer's energy, commences the song again, looking very crestfallen, and this time overcomes the difficulty with remarkable agility.

Everybody in the room seems exceedingly afraid of Handel, and as he looks round to select the next one whose voice he wants to try, the same sort of feeling appears to run through the circle which animates a party of schoolboys when the master is about to single out one for punishment. This time it is Signora Cuzzoni whom he asks to come forward, and a remarkably tall and handsome woman steps out from the group and takes her place by Handel's side. Her clear and liquid voice makes light work of the numerous *fiorituras* and *roulades* with which the song is studded, agreeably to the custom of the day; but she makes a

wry face at the number of sustained notes occurring near the end of the piece, and sings them in such a negligent style as to provoke a titter among those who are listening.

"Dese notes, madame," says Handel, stopping short, "must be sung much better, or dey vill not do."

"I can sing them no better," replies the lady, bridling, "and I do not care about them. Please, Mr. Handel, take them out."

Here ensues a scene which almost defies description—Handel, spluttering and swearing in oaths the most extraordinary—which, it must be remarked, was the prevailing fashion of the day—Signora Cuzzoni screaming in Italian at him, the whole room in confusion at this unexpected verbal duel. The climax of the quarrel is reached by Handel seizing the lady by the arm, shaking her as a terrier does a rat, and threatening to throw her out of the window. At this last threat, the indignant *prima donna* bursts into a flood of tears, and confesses amid her sobs that she was in error; whereat Handel exhibits signs of pacification likewise. A reconciliation is effected between the two by the company, and, after more songs and more quarrels, the morning levée comes to a conclusion.

Handel is now left alone—it is about noon—and he seems heartily glad of the privacy. He takes two or three turns up and down his apartment, buried in thought. His figure is large, somewhat corpulent, and unwieldy; but his countenance is full of fire and dignity, such as reveals at once the aspect of intellectual superiority and genius. His general look as he paces the room is somewhat heavy and sour; but his friends have said that when he smiled, which was rarely, it was like the sun bursting out of a dark cloud—a sudden

flash of intelligence, wit, and good humour beamed upon his countenance on such occasions, which was never seen on the face of any living man.

He looks, as he walks his room, bored and worried beyond measure, as if he longed to be at his composition, yet was denied that pleasure by some unpleasant but indispensable duties which have to be got over beforehand. What these duties are we may learn immediately, by a chariot and four dashing up to his door and a gigantic footman descending therefrom to sound a peal on Handel's knocker which echoes through the street. This is Lord D——, who has come for tickets for a concert which Handel proposes to give next Wednesday.

In those days there were no concert agents, or if there were, Handel, like many other musicians of his time, did not trust them. Consequently, to the announcements of his concerts in the newspapers of the time, the following notice may always be found appended: "Tickets may be applied for any day of the week at Mr. Handel's house in Brook Street, between the hours of twelve and three." Lord D—— is one of the prominent subscribers to the concerts, and Handel has to see him, talk to him, and thank him for his money, which he does, by-the-by, with very ill grace.

Scarcely has Lord D—— gone, when up drive three chariots at once. A lady of fashion descends from one, and has a chat with Handel preparatory to taking her ticket; the other two content themselves with sending their footmen to the door, who pay the money to the servant, inscribing their mistresses' names in a great book kept in the hall for that purpose, and going away with the cards of admission. Such visits, with a few minutes' interval between, continue steadily on

till nearly three o'clock, when the maid has instructions to tell every caller that Mr. Handel is at dinner, at which repast he now seats himself in an inner apartment at the back of the house.

Here, likewise, is his study, in an adjoining room, removed completely from the bustle of the street without; and scarcely has he swallowed his meal when he strides to his study, with the intention of utilising the hours of the afternoon in composition. His domestics have orders to admit no one during that sacred time, from about half-past three to half-past six—a short interval in a long and busy day, yet enough for Handel.

His rapidity of composition was something tremendous. By the time that other men would scarcely have closed the door and put their writing-table to rights before commencing, he has seized an immense ream of score paper, and already one fully-written sheet is on the floor. It is his habit to toss the sheets from the table as fast as he writes them, partly to disencumber the table of an accumulating pile, partly to save the time which would otherwise have been wasted in sprinkling pouncet over the pages—for there was no blotting paper in those days—and drying the sheets as they were placed one on the other. This slight gain, which in the case of any other man would have been inconsiderable, in Handel's case was a serious and important acquisition of many a minute. So fast did he write that he completed a page of score in about as short a time as a neat and fastidious man would have carefully sprinkled sand over the complete surface of the sheet, cautiously shaken the dust over every ink-mark on the page, poured it back into the pouncet box, and finally, applying his eye sideways to the paper, scraped off any morsels which yet adhered to

the surface by the assistance of a knife. All these aids to a dainty caligraphy were unknown or despised by Handel. His writing was the worst ever known, so much so that there was only one man living, his copyist Smith, who could read it with fluency. His manuscript was also deformed with unspeakable blots, by reason of the wet sheets often falling on one another on the floor, and adhering together.

Nevertheless, the main essential in Handel's idea of composition was achieved, to which all these imperfections were but trifles,—lightning rapidity. No composer, no penman, has ever written faster than Handel wrote,—and wrote, too, be it observed, simultaneously, the sublimest music of the world. As he wrote, the table snowed paper on the floor, till at last, at the end of his sitting, the sheets of manuscript lined the ground as thick as if an extra carpet of white material overspread the real one. When he rises this afternoon at half-past six, after three hours' work, he has written two acts of an opera, *Porus*. He might have written half-a-dozen choruses in the *Messiah* had he been engaged on that oratorio, for the whole of that sublime masterpiece, which has been the admiration of Europe and the world for a hundred and fifty years, was penned in the brief space of twenty-three days.

His carriage is now at the door to take him to the opera, and thither, after a hasty cup of coffee, he proceeds, carrying under his arm a number of empty bags, the object of which is to bring away the money that he expects to take as the evening's receipts. His vehicle whisks through the intervening streets, and is soon at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, for which—when it was called the Royal Academy of

Music—he had written operas in company with Buononcini and Attilio Ariosti, but of which he is now sole *impresario* and lessee.

The opera announced for the evening's performance is *Rinaldo*, a safe piece to draw a full house; and a bumper house has assembled to hear the work. Handel is in excellent spirits. He has a kind word for everybody behind the scenes: for Madame Bernacchi, for Senesino, even for Madame Cuzzoni, with whom he quarrelled so outrageously this morning. To the instrumentalists, also, who are now trooping into the orchestra, he is as gracious as to the singers, and when the bell rings for his attendance takes his place among them, seating himself at the harpsichord—it being the fashion in those days for the conductor not to wield a *bâton* at a desk as at present, but to play the harpsichord in the midst of the band, directing them from time to time with uplifted hand. Each instrumentalist is provided with a tin candlestick, which he places on his music-stand before him, blowing it out carefully between the acts, for that candle has to last the whole performance.

The opera begins; it proceeds admirably, and there are roars of applause; Handel is immensely pleased, as his wig (!) indicates. It was the custom of people in the audience, who only saw the back of his head, to speculate, according to the appearance of his wig, whether he was in a bad or a good temper. If he were in a bad one, the wig looked tremendously frizzy, the locks were tossed and tumbled, the entire headgear jerked violently from side to side. In fact, there was no mistaking the temper of the head which was under it. On the contrary, when the wig was in a good temper, it nodded and shook most merrily, lay quite

sleek on the shoulder, undulated and turned in the suavest manner possible; in which case people were accustomed to say, "Handel's wig is in a good humour; we shall have a fine performance this evening."

He was not always so contented as on the present occasion. The story is told, though we know not with what truth, that once, when the Prince of Wales was at the opera, a musical wag perpetrated an atrocious joke at the composer's expense. Handel, it seems, always insisted on having the instruments tuned before the doors opened and the audience assembled; and the practical joker, knowing this fact, slipped into the orchestra a few minutes before the instrumentalists filed in to commence the overture, and tuned each instrument at a different pitch. When Handel gave the signal to commence the overture, the noise made by the band was perfectly diabolical, and the irate composer is reported to have kicked to pieces a double bass, flung a kettledrum at the leader of the band, with much more to the same effect. We may remark, however, that this story is not an authentic one, and bears on the face of it the aspect of unreality.

To-night Handel's "wig" is in a good temper, and there will be no *fiasco*, no scolding of the band, no recrimination of the singers. The evening passes pleasantly away. The opera, thanks especially to Senesino's lovely singing, maintains its audience spell-bound to the last. The people file out of the theatre, and Handel proceeds to the treasury. The singers are wrapping themselves up in cloaks and mufflers preparatory to departing from the theatre; and Handel finds that the receipts of the evening amount to £600.

He, too, takes his departure, and his carriage rumbles through the darkened streets of London on its



way to Brook Street, carrying its owner, and by his side the money of the evening carefully packed in bags. His servants are at the door waiting to escort their master and his treasures in safety into the house. On some of these occasions the enormous amount of gold and silver which was thus transferred from the carriage to the house, part of it in bags and part loose, is described as like the removal of a bank. On other nights the composer, like many of his brethren before and since, would return almost empty-handed. Such during his career as an opera writer, was Handel's life from day to day. ✕

The question has sometimes been asked, Was Handel ever in love? In all his relations with the musical society of London, with whom he was so intimately connected, there is not one single instance on record of his being impressed with the tender passion for any of the brilliant and beautiful women around him. He stands before us, so to speak, entirely impersonal and passionless, showing no deep and heartfelt interest in anything else but his art, and no regard for women other than what concerned their voices or their capacities for buying tickets for his performances. So purely unimpassioned a character is vouchsafed to few men, and if we would strike his nearest parallel we should turn to his contemporary, Dean Swift, whose apathy to the other sex was only equalled by their general admiration of him.

Handel as a man was exceedingly handsome. His presence is described as noble and majestic, his features as beautifully moulded, his eyes full of expressive sympathy, and his general aspect dignified and striking to a degree. In his youth, when he figured in the

*salons* of Italy, all the ladies, to use a hackneyed but very expressive remark, were in love with him. Several of them actually threw themselves at his head, but we have no news of any amour, any passing attachment which ruffled even for a moment the serenity of the composer; and are perforce compelled to believe that his heart amid the bevy of Italian beauty was entirely unaffected. Similar attractions awaited him on his advent to England. Like Swift, he was the common object of feminine regard, but did not reciprocate what was so freely accorded him.

Yet if we penetrate behind the scenes of Handel's life two figures meet us; not so clearly marked and apparent as Stella and Vanessa, for the very good reason that his relations to them did not proceed so far, yet moving palpably if dimly in the background of his career.

One of his pupils fell in love with him, and Handel returned her passion. The whole matter has been so carefully hushed up that we are unaware even of her name, or where she lived, beyond the fact that she was a London girl, and a member of the aristocracy. The attachment between the master and pupil subsisted for some time, and Handel, with his naturally practical temper, was anxious to bring matters to an issue and marry the girl for whom he had conceived so strong an affection. It is most probable, however, that her parents interfered, and either spirited their daughter away or forbade her any further communication with the composer—a prohibition which he with his chivalrous temper was careful to observe on his side. Although in point of wealth he was a very eligible suitor for their daughter, yet a foreign musician to the English aristocracy of that day was a very

questionable individual. It would have been a decided *mésalliance*, and the parents would not hear of it.

There is reason to believe that overtures were made to the composer that if he would abandon his profession and abstain from writing any more music in the future the question of marriage with the young lady might be entertained. How such a proposal would come to a high-spirited man like Handel may readily be imagined. He rejected it with scorn, and added words to the effect that he regarded music as the noblest occupation that a man could engage in, and not in the slightest degree would he suffer that occupation to be disparaged. There was plainly no basis of agreement in this state of feeling on the part of the composer. He loved his art better than his mistress, and the pair who imagined they were destined for one another parted for ever.

Years passed by, and a similar circumstance occurred again in the life of Handel. Once more he was the object of silent adoration by a beautiful pupil, and once more his cold and severe temperament was roused from its passionless lethargy to respond to the advances of beauty. The course of true love in this case was almost identical, so far as the few shreds of information which alone we are enabled to glean instruct us. The prospect of marriage with the lady was again dashed by the fact of his want of an equal social standing. Nothing short of a complete renunciation of musical and theatrical enterprise in the future would bring the parents to consent to their daughter's union with Handel. Once again the choice was open to the composer of domestic bliss coupled with the abnegation of all that rendered life valuable to him, and without a moment's hesitation he refused the proffered privilege.

Not a love letter remains to prattle its interesting revelations respecting these two passages of affection in the life of the great composer. They passed out of the life of the mighty master, and left no visible trace behind. Yet occasionally in the soft melodies of *Theodora* or in the impassioned strains of *Acis and Galatea*, we may fancy we hear the inmost chords of his heart thrilling with fond memory, and his stupendous genius pouring forth a tribute of sympathy to his lost lovers, whom, because he loved his art more than either of them, he was not permitted by destiny to possess.

It is strange to think of Handel as a lover, but it is still stranger to think of him as a swashbuckler and a duellist; yet he fought duels as he made love, and, if we may be permitted a conceit, it was music which saved him from the evil consequences of both.

After leaving Halle and Berlin, where he was *in statu pupillari* and safe under his father's wing, he proceeded at the age of eighteen to Hamburg, where he obtained a post as violinist in the opera orchestra. His rapid advancement from the position of violinist to that of conductor excited the animosity of his fellow-players, and one of them, named Mattheson, challenged him to a duel. This was an odd way of objecting to young Handel's advancement in the musical profession, but it would have been a most successful one had it been carried out to its intended end.

The combatants met armed with rapiers one evening outside the stage door of the Hamburg Opera House, while crowds of supers and others stood by looking on. Handel, though an excellent performer on the harpsichord and violin, was no match for his antagonist at the rapier. After several awkward parries, his guard was completely broken down, and Mattheson lunged

at his breast. By good luck Handel had placed an enormous roll of music in his pocket before proceeding to the duel, and Mattheson's sword, meeting this instead of the heart of the future composer of the *Messiah*, snapped asunder and left Handel uninjured. The termination of the encounter was slightly ludicrous, but eminently appropriate to a duel between musicians.

The two duellists became good friends, and Mattheson, so far from disparaging and decrying Handel in future, used his best endeavours to promote his advancement. They once had an amusing adventure together, which illustrates the tenure of country organistships in those days, and bears some slight resemblance to what existed in our own country in somewhat superior circles about the same time. The English custom to which we allude was in relation to the presentation of church livings. Some patrons in those days made it a *sine quâ non* that the clergyman who was presented to the living should marry the cook, who was generally the cast-off mistress of the patron. This was a means of providing for the lady in question, which certain unprincipled men proposed, and which certain unscrupulous clergymen accepted.

In Handel's case the ordeal was not such a trying one, for the new organist of certain places in Germany was only expected to marry his predecessor's daughter, who if she were a comely girl might doubtless make as good a wife as the new-comer had reason to expect. Handel and Mattheson set out on a journey to compete for the election to an organist's appointment, which, without their knowing, had this unpleasant condition attached to it. They arrived at the town where the competition was to take place, and after playing on the

organ to the admiration of the electing body they were informed of the indispensable condition annexed. The first sight of the lady decided the two aspirants; they left the place much more speedily than they came, and in any future application were careful to make full inquiries before undertaking the journey:

A tour in Italy followed Handel's residence at Hamburg, where he had saved sufficient money to enable him to travel to the land of song. He came over to England first in 1710, when he was engaged as composer to the Haymarket Opera House, and from that day forward his life is intimately bound up with the musical life of London.

He was at various times organist and music-master in noblemen's families, such as at Lord Burlington's, in Piccadilly, at the Duke of Chandos', at Cannons, composer to the Court, manager of opera houses, of the Opera House in the Haymarket, of Covent Garden Theatre, of Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre—an active, enterprising, money-making man. London, with its busy life, and with the new-found wealth which flowed into it from the American colonies and from the operations of the East India Company, was just the place for him. He amassed a large fortune, and his house in Brook Street was the busy, pulsating centre of all the musical life of England.

Such a life did he lead for ten, for twenty years, until at last reverses came—the attractions of rival operas, actuated as their supporters were by personal hostility to and jealousy of Handel, diminished the patronage hitherto bestowed upon him, so seriously at last that he had to shut the doors of his opera house and declare himself bankrupt. This severe reverse of fortune was followed by a stroke of paralysis, from which he



HANDEL.





only recovered by resorting to the waters of Aix-la-Chapelle.

Whether it was that these pecuniary losses sobered his ardent spirit, or that his bodily affliction subdued his fiery soul, certain it is that, on his return from abroad, we find the great composer transformed, elevated, exalted from the fiery opera writer into the fervent and enthusiastic religious composer, in which character the world chiefly knows him. Very possibly the effect of a well-nigh fatal illness on a spirit unconsciously religious, or the sobering influence of terrible financial reverses on a haughty mind, may have turned his attention more exclusively to oratorio writing, for from this time onwards we find that it is in this domain that he elects to excel. His operas pass into the background for ever, and his imperishable oratorios loom to the front, to remain for ever the world's wonder, as they were the delight and admiration of his own age.

Shortly after his return from abroad he entered on this his chosen empire with earnestness. He wrote the oratorio of *Saul* in the summer of 1738, and the daily papers of January, 1739, announce the performance of this masterpiece at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket. It is there stated that "A new oratorio, composed by Mr. Handel, and called *Saul*, will be produced at the opening of this theatre. The pit and boxes will be put together. The gallery doors will be opened at 4, the pit and boxes at 5. To begin at 6 o'clock."

His rapid method of composition has not deserted him with these great works of art. As he undertook to pen a complete opera in an amazingly short space of time, so he would allow himself a space as brief for the composition of an oratorio. The sublime *Israel in*

*Egypt*, the most colossal work in the whole range of music, with its double choruses and pompous concerted effects, was composed in the incredibly short time of twenty-seven days. The *Messiah*, a more sublime but less stupendous composition, was dashed off in twenty-three days. His pen, trained in long experience of writing operas to order, of composing works within a given time which had to be ready to the hour for rehearsal or production, found no difficulty, but rather its natural habit, in tossing off the religious oratorio with the same lightness of touch wherewith it had treated the opera.

The past experience of Handel was of untold value to him; and also his past writings. Many are the operatic themes, many the secular airs which he has idealised, transfigured, and embalmed in his oratorios. Nay, sometimes he availed himself of still more unpromising sources, and made the most unexpected springs yield a rich supply. Thus, for *Israel in Egypt* he drew on a number of lessons for the harpsichord which he had written early in life. Six fugues for the harpsichord furnished materials for the choruses, "They loathed to drink of the river," and "He smote all the first-born of Egypt," in the first part of the oratorio; while a *Magnificat*, with Latin words, for a double choir, probably composed during his residence in Rome in 1707, was laid under contribution for seven or eight pieces in the second part. He did not even disdain to borrow ideas from other sources than his own writings when he was in a hurry, or when such borrowing served his purpose; and in the same oratorio he has drawn a good many passages in the first part from a serenade for voices and instruments by the famous Stradella, while the chorus, "Egypt was glad at their

departing," is an adaptation of a canzone by Johann Caspar Karl. Those who have heard this colossal work would certainly never believe its origin in many places to have been so humble.

As a vast and cyclopean work of music it is unrivalled. The centre of gravity is entirely in the choruses, and the various stages of Israel's trial are displayed in a solemn and stately panorama before us.

A recitative opens the oratorio, which is followed by a solo and chorus, "And the children of Israel sighed," a plaintive and pathetic movement, set for double chorus like most of those that follow. A second recitative introduces the first of the descriptive choruses, entitled "They loathed to drink of the river," and in it by the use of augmented intervals and chromatic passages Handel has conjured up the feeling of "loathing" in a way that no art has ever equalled.

To this chorus there succeeds an air which is yet more realistic in its design, for, passing from the plague of the waters he portrays the plague of frogs, and in this contralto air, "Their land brought forth frogs," he taxes the resources of music to express (we quote the words of a critic of the past generation) "the hopping or skipping of that lively animal through the chambers of Pharaoh." The next chorus treats of the plague of flies, and you may hear them buzzing. The violins are skilfully used to produce this illusion, which the voices supplement by descriptive language. The hailstone chorus which follows next in order is the masterpiece of the oratorio. This is the third of these pictorial choruses, which henceforward run on without a break to the end of the first part, forming a series of twelve in all.

The plague of darkness is one of the most happily

conceived. The subject might well defy a meaner master than Handel, but the darkness which *his* music has expressed certainly deserves the words of the chorus as its motto—"Even a darkness that might be felt." In the chorus, "The waters overwhelmed their enemies," we may notice the fine effect of the continuous and unflagging bass, which comes surging in a roll of tones from the pedals of the organ, and serves as a most graphic commentary on the declamation of the singers.

The second part of *Israel in Egypt* is confessedly inferior to the first, and the reason is plain—the subject of the oratorio is by this time exhausted, and, with the exception of two descriptive numbers, the whole of the second part is occupied with songs of thanksgiving. The two exceptions are "The depths have covered them" and "With the blast of thy nostrils," both choruses, in the first of which the telling passage, "They sank unto the bottom like a stone" offers a splendid chance for the basses, and likewise the second analogous phrase, "The depths were congealed in the heart of the sea."

This most colossal of Handel's oratorios was written in a little over a fortnight, and thrown together in the manner we have alluded to. Thus its composition occupied a week less than the *Messiah*, which took three weeks and three days to compose. It would tax a copyist to the utmost even to write down the music of either of these two oratorios in so short a time, and yet this sublime genius could as rapidly compose it.

How well deserved was that remark of Beethoven's in reference to Handel, "He is a giant!" while other composers have not been behindhand in testifying their admiration. "He is the father of us all," said Haydn.

And Mozart said, "Handel knows better than any of us what is capable of producing a great effect; when he chooses he can strike like a thunderbolt." The scene on Beethoven's death-bed also must not pass without record. As he lay at the point of death he was told that one of his friends had sent him as a present forty volumes of Handel's compositions. He ordered them to be brought into the room, and, gazing at them for a moment, he pointed with his fingers to the books and said, "There is the truth."

We have mentioned that Handel was as rapid as ever in his composition in his later days; but, if voluminous and fluent in the oratorio as in the opera, he was none the less deeply sincere, even to the verge of enthusiasm, in this style of religious writing which he had taken up.

Let us pass a day with him in the midst of his oratorio life, as we have previously done in his operatic.

He works at composition early in the morning now; whether this is done to save his eyes, which already are feeling the effects of that fell complaint which was destined one day to involve him in total darkness, or whether it be that his days are busier, or that he prefers to pass his afternoons in leisure instead of work as heretofore, we know not. Certain it is that the early morning hours see most of his oratorio writing performed. He rises early, and steals into his study, where the music paper lies ready for his use. This morning he has observed his usual habit, and though it is an hour when London is not yet astir, and none of the familiar street cries have begun to echo in the air in the neighbourhood of Brook Street, yet Handel's Muse is in full activity, if we may judge from the paper which has begun to snow upon the floor.

But as he writes his oratorio, he cannot, despite himself, maintain uninterruptedly that imperturbable indifference which was his characteristic when penning his operas, wherein the most emotional scenes awoke no more expression on the face of the composer than the homeliest words of a recitative. On the contrary, as Handel writes he sobs, he weeps; he sighs with long-drawn sighs when his tears have passed away, and occasionally looks up to heaven and lays down his pen, overcome with emotion. Some of the manuscripts of his sacred writings are blotted with tears, and all are fragrant with his sighs.

He has written for an hour or two. Despite these occasional interruptions to his usual celerity the sheets fly off the table, and as it gets on towards eight o'clock a goodly quantity of the paper is covered. It is at this hour that a knock comes to the door, and a man-servant enters with Handel's coffee, which he sets down in a convenient place on the table. As the man is bending down to arrange the cups and jug, he looks with surprise at the pages of the manuscript which lie immediately under his eyes, and sees the ink mixed with tears in such abundance that the notes are blurred and illegible, and many might almost have been written with a pen dipped in water. The servant departs, leaving Handel once more alone, who drinks his coffee and proceeds with renewed ardour with his composition.

At about ten o'clock in the morning a friend of his calls, and finds him lost to earth and its surroundings, engaged in the composition of some glorious chorus which has abstracted his soul from earth. "When I wrote the 'Hallelujah Chorus,'" said Handel on another occasion, in answer to a friend's remark, "I thought

I saw the heavens open, and the figure of the great God himself standing and looking down upon me."

The object of his friend's visit is to assure the composer with regard to the subscription money for the oratorio shortly to be produced. Handel, according to his usual custom, has caused to be inserted in the newspapers the following paragraph: "On Monday next, being the 21st of March, and every day following, there will be attendance given at Mr. Handel's house in Brook Street, from ten o'clock in the morning till three in the afternoon, to receive subscription money for admission to his new oratorio, after which will be performed a concert. Each subscriber will have a ticket delivered to him which will entitle him to three tickets each night of the performance, either for ladies or gentlemen. N.B. Subscriptions will be also received at Covent Garden."

His friend has come to inform him that the Covent Garden subscriptions are going off well; and this success seems a preliminary to his own, for even as they are talking the knocker begins to sound, and the filing in of lords, ladies, and footmen, which we mentioned as so constant a feature in his establishment during his operatic days, commences and continues till late in the afternoon.

The new oratorio to be performed is the immortal *Messiah*, which a year before had been produced in Dublin, and had excited considerable attention there. According to the daily papers, "Mr. Handel's sacred grand oratorio was performed here in the New Music Hall in Fishamble Street, the best judges allowing it to be a most finished piece of music. The gentlemen of the two choirs, Mrs. Avolio, Mr. Delany, and Mrs. Cibber all performed their parts to perfection, and the

oratorio greatly delighted the fashion who assembled to listen to it."

Mrs. Cibber it appears, though an admirable singer, was a lady whose general character did not bear the closest inspection—nay, some chroniclers go still further and declare she was one of the worst women on the stage or concert platform. However that may be, she sang delightfully in that first performance of the *Messiah*, so much so that an old clergyman who sat in the body of the hall, hearing her lovely voice, and listening with rapture to her sublime execution, rose up and said with a loud voice: "Woman, for this be all thy sins forgiven thee." Such was the impression which the *Messiah* made at Dublin. And now it was to be given in London.

The evening of the day we are recording, the 23rd of March, is the time fixed for the first performance, and Handel's expectation is high as to the result. When three o'clock approaches he has barely time to run down to his carriage and drive to the theatre to be ready for the rehearsal, which is fixed for three o'clock punctually. He arrives a quarter of an hour late—a very unusual event with him—and puts the orchestra through their facings, professes himself thoroughly delighted with their playing, and departs home again to snatch a hurried meal before the evening's performance begins.

We have the record of an eye-witness as to the success achieved on that occasion. The theatre was crowded with the *élite* of England, the King himself being among the audience, and beauty and fashion being amply represented in every part of the house. Handel takes his place at the organ; there is an instantaneous pause, and the massive overture begins. We need not pursue the progress of the oratorio to



further lengths, beyond giving the words of one who saw it as to an incident which occurred on that occasion: "The audience," says our informant, writing in a letter to his friend, "were exceedingly struck and affected by the music in general throughout the oratorio. But when they came to that part where the chorus struck up, 'For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth,' in the 'Hallelujah,' they were so transported that they all together, with the King, who happened to be present, started up and remained standing till the chorus ended." Such was the origin of the present practice, and such is a description of the scene which occurred on the evening of the day which we have selected to describe.

Let us pass a few years further on in the life of Handel, and see him once more before death has asserted its rights over the greatest musician of the world. If we were readers of the newspapers in those days, two paragraphs in the daily journals, which have been copied from one to the other, and originally saw light in the *Theatrical Register*, would have prepared us for the great, the appalling change, which we are about to witness.

On the 4th of May, 1752, a paragraph appeared as follows: "Yesterday George Frederick Handel, Esq., was couched by William Bramfield, Esq., surgeon to Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, when it was thought there was all imaginable hopes of success by the operation, which must give the greatest pleasure to all lovers of music."

A few months later, however, the newspaper reader of that epoch would have noticed a paragraph of more sinister omen. It was to this effect: "The great Mr. Handel has at length, we regret to say, most un-

happily lost his sight. Upon his being couched some time since by the surgeon to Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, he saw so well that his friends flattered themselves with the hope that his eyesight was restored for a continuance; but the ailment of the last few days has entirely put an end to that delusive hope."

Many persons reading such intelligence about the great composer would imagine that his life was at an end, so far as art and industry were concerned, and that little more remained for him to do than to retire from the scene as decorously as possible, and pass the rest of his life in complaining or uncomplaining solitude, as might suit his disposition best.

But Handel had the same spirit which animated Milton. In their ideas, in their habits, and in their highest ambitions, wedded as these were to religious dreams, the two men were singularly on a par. And now, in the blindness which fell on both and in the stern resolution with which they met their fate, there was a similar strong resemblance. The only difference was that the calamity of Milton fell on him before he had laid a finger to his great work, that of Handel occurred at the very end of his career, when all his labours were over, when his name and fame were safe beyond the attacks of malice, and when his bodily powers, too, were failing. Milton was still hale and vigorous, and in complete possession of his wonderful imagination, unclouded and unimpaired. Milton's task was perhaps the hardest; but then to counterbalance this he had greater strength to undertake that task. It would be hard to gauge the capabilities of these twin Samsons for humanity's hardest suffering; they were both giants and both showed in their misfortune the highest gifts of human nature.

Upon the first realisation of his total blindness, Handel summoned his copyist Christopher Smith, who was travelling in France, in order that he might have his assistance at the concerts which he had announced for performance during Lent. Smith came, and the general public, who expected to hear or see no more of Handel, were astonished to behold him led into the hall on the occasion of the first concert of his season, and to witness him seat himself at the organ, and commence to play a concerto, which he performed to perfection.

At another concert the oratorio of *Samson* was set down for production. In spite of Handel's moral energy, the audience could not listen untroubled to the air of the sightless Hércules of the Hebrews, in which he gave utterance to his infinite and irremediable grief, "Total eclipse! no sun, no moon!" Then it was that they saw the mighty master who was at the organ grow pale and tremble, and when he was led blind and helpless to the front of the platform before the audience, many of those present were so forcibly affected that they were moved likewise to tears, and wept in sympathy and in company with the great musician who stood before them.

This period of darkness and trial was protracted for nearly six years, during the whole of which time the great man kept up his indomitable energy, even till the very last moment of his life. He was very sensible of the approach of death, and refused to be flattered by any hopes of a recovery.

The last performance he ever attended was that of the *Messiah* at Covent Garden on the 5th of April, 1759, at which he played the organ. After returning home from this performance, he went to bed never to rise again. Seized with a mortal exhaustion, and feeling

that his last hour was come, he retained consciousness sufficient to indicate the disposition of some necessary business arrangements, and afterwards fell asleep.

He died on Good Friday, 1759, the day of the month being the 13th of April. A public funeral, attended by upwards of three thousand persons, followed his body to Westminster Abbey, where he was interred with extraordinary solemnities, and now sleeps among the great of the nation.

## SYNOPSIS OF LIFE, AND WORKS.

---

GEORGE FRIEDRICH HANDEL (properly HÄNDEL), born at Halle, in Lower Saxony, Feb. 23rd, 1685, was the son of a doctor, or possibly a barber-surgeon; studied under Zachau, organist of Halle Cathedral, 1692; went to Berlin, 1698; was violinist at Hamburg Opera House, 1704; went to Florence, 1706; visited Venice, Rome, Naples, &c, 1706—9; returned to Germany, and became capellmeister to the Elector of Hanover (George I. of England), 1709; visited London, 1710; returned to Germany, 1710—12; composed *Rinaldo*, 1711; settled in London, as organist, 1712—16; became musician to King George I. at Hanover, 1716—18; organist and conductor to the Duke of Chandos, 1718—21; director of the Italian Opera, London, 1720; musical director or manager of the King's Theatre (with Heidegger), 1729—34. He became bankrupt, 1737; visited Aix-la-Chapelle to take the waters, 1737; composed *Saul*, July 3rd—Sept. 27th, 1738; *Samson*, 1741; resided in Dublin, and produced the *Messiah*, April 18th, 1742; composed *The Occasional Oratorio*, 1746; *Judas Maccabeus*, 1746; *Jephthah*, 1751; became blind, 1752; and died in London, Good Friday, April 13th, 1759, aged seventy-four.

---

Operas: *Almira*, 1704; *Nero*, 1705; *Florindo und Daphne*, 1708; *Roderigo*, 1706; *Agrippina*, 1707; *Silla*, 1707; *Rinaldo*, 1711; *Pastor Fido*, 1712; *Teseo*, 1712; *Amadigi* [1715]; *Radamisto* [1720]; *Muzio Scævola* (with Ariosto and Buononcini), 1721; *Floridante*, 1721; *Otho*, 1722; *Flavio*, 1723; *Giulio Cesare*, 1723; *Tamerlano*, 1724; *Rodelinda*, 1725; *Scipione*, 1726; *Alessandro*, 1726; *Admeto*, 1727; *Riccardo*, 1727; *Sirce*, 1728; *Tolomeo*, 1728; *Lotario*, 1729; *Partenope*,

1730; Poro, 1731; Ezio, 1731; Sosarme, 1732; Orlando, 1732; Arianna, 1733; Ariodante, 1734; Alcina, 1734; Atalanta, 1736; Giustino, 1736; Arminio, 1736; Berenice, 1737; Faramondo, 1737; Serse, 1738; Jupiter in Argos (pasticcio), 1739; Imeneo, 1738; Didamia, 1740; Lucio Vero, 1747; Alcestes (English opera), 1749; Flavio Olibrio, Titus, unfinished operas; part of the music for Semiramide; Arbace; Caio; Fabrizio.

Serenatas, etc.: *Acis, Galatea, e Polifemo*, 1708; *Parnasso in Festa*, 1734; *Acis and Galatea*, English serenata, 1721—no resemblance to 1708 version; *Semele*, 1743; *The Choice of Hercules*, interlude, 1750; *Terpsichore*, intermezzo.

Oratorios: *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*, 1707; *La Resurrezione*, 1708; *Passion oratorio*, 1717; *Esther*, 1720; *Deborah*, 1733; *Athalia*, 1733; *Saul*, 1738; *Israel in Egypt*, 1738; *Messiah*, 1741; (Dublin, April 18, 1742; London, March 23, 1749); *Samson*, 1741; *Joseph*, 1743; *Hercules*, 1744; *Belshazzar*, 1744; *Occasional*, 1746; *Judas Maccabeus*, 1746; *Alexander Balus*, 1747; *Joshua*, 1747; *Solomon*, 1748; *Susanna*, 1748; *Theodora*, 1749; *Jephthah*, 1751; *Triumph of Time and Truth* (altered English version of *Trionfo del Tempo*), 1757.

Odes: *Queen Anne's Birthday*, 1712; *Alexander's Feast* (Dryden), 1736; *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day* (Dryden), 1739; *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato*, 1740.

Anthems: *Twelve Chandos anthems*, 1718-20; *Arrangements of do. for Chap.-Roy*. [1727]; *Four Coronation do.*, 1727; *Wedding anthem*, 1736; *Funeral*, 1737; *Foundling Hospital*, 1749.

Te Deums, etc.: *Utrecht Te Deum*, 1713; *Queen Caroline do.* [1737]; *Dettingen Te Deum*, 1743; *Dixit Dominus et Gloria*, 1707; *Laudate et Gloria*, 1707, and other Psalms, etc.

Miscellaneous Vocal Music: *Three Chamber Trios*, 1708; *Twenty-five chamber duets*; *Cecilia, volgi, cantata*, 1736; *Sei del Cielo, do.*, 1736; *One Passion Cantata*; *Twelve Hanover Cantatas*, 1711; *Seventy-nine Italian cantatas*, 1706-12; *French and English songs and Italian canzonets*, various, detached.

Instrumental Music: *Twelve sonatas for harpsichord*, op. 1, 1732; *Six do. trios*, op. 2, 1732; *Six hautboy concertos*, op. 3, 1734; *First set of six organ concertos*, op. 4, 1734; *Seven sonatas for 2 vns. and 'cello*, op. 5, 1735; *Twelve grand concertos*, op. 6, 1739-49; *Second set of six organ concertos*, 1741; *Third do.*, op. 7, 1761; *Three organ concertos* (Arnold), 1727; *Water Musick*, 7 parts, 1715; *Forest Musick*, 1741-2; *Firework Musick*, 1749; *Sonata for 2 vns.*, 1736; *do.*, in 5 parts, 1736; *Two suites of harpsichord pieces*, 1720, 1733; *Act tunes in "The Alchymist,"* 1732. A number of miscellaneous pieces of minor importance.

## GLUCK.

It is the days of periwigs and swords, of lace ruffles and gorgeous coats. The society we move amongst—for the large apartment which we are now entering is crowded with people—are all remarkable for their gay and brilliant attire, for their flashing jewellery, and for the youthful liveliness and hilarity which seem to infect all alike. In those days nobody ever looked old. That painful multitude of bald heads which decorates so tragically the stalls of our theatres, and besprinkles so gruesomely the areas of our ball rooms, was a spectacle of senility that never interfered to damp the spirits of society a century and a half ago. Every one, young and old alike, wears grey wigs, liberally dusted over with powder, and the young are distinguished in no invidious manner from the old by their brown locks and golden curls. All the gentlemen are clean-shaven, and grey beards are not present in this gay assemblage to suggest lessons of wisdom or act as reminders of mortality. The people are walking about and talking with one another, the gentlemen for ever tapping their gold snuff-boxes, the ladies flirting their feather fans about as they listen to the compliments of the other sex, or tattle the scandal of their own.

We should scarcely imagine that this was a concert room, yet such is the case. A rehearsal of *Orfeo* is being carried on under these unpropitious circumstances,

which drive the composer nearly wild, whose remonstrances with the company present are almost as frequent as his advice and suggestions to the singers.

"Ladies, ladies!" rings the cry above the hum of conversation which fills the room. "And you, gentlemen, who profess such an unbounded admiration for the piece, the next air is about to be sung. May I beg you to be silent and to listen?"

It is Gluck himself who speaks,—a grave and majestic figure seated at the pianoforte in the centre of the room, while round him in a small circle sit a group of instrumentalists, and in the centre of the ring are placed the singers. The lovely aria, "*Che farò senza Euridice*" is about to be sung, and to fall for the first time on the ears of many who are there. After some difficulty, silence is obtained, and the lovely notes peal forth from a silvery voice which enchants the ear of all.

The song is carried satisfactorily to its conclusion, but directly the termination is reached, again there is a buzz of conversation, again the snuff-boxes are tapped, the ladies brandish their fans; and the orchestral passage which succeeds the air has to be carried on amidst a tempest of small talk, scandal, and laughter.

"I tell you, mademoiselle," says Gluck, turning round to the *prima donna* who sits next him, "it is really too bad of you to insist on such a scene. Were it not you yourself who had insisted on it, had it been any other singer in the world but you, I would rather have resigned all thought of producing the opera than have submitted to such treatment."

"But there it is, Monsieur Gluck," says the lady, with a winning smile, and tapping the old man playfully with her fan as she speaks, "*C'est moi, moi-même*; it is I myself, the real and *only* Sophie Ar-





GLUCK.



nauld, as you are pleased to call me, who has had this caprice; and you are charming enough to have yielded compliance. Why, you would not have had me," she added with a pout, "cross my doors on my birthday?"

Gluck smiles at the *naïveté* of the remark, and, resigning himself to the inevitable, turns to resume the conducting of his orchestra through the next number in the opera.

*Prima donnas* have always had the reputation of being a very unmanageable class. We, at the present day, grumble considerably, or, at least, managers do at their caprices: and an *impresario* of the nineteenth century imagines himself very badly treated if his leading *prima donna* sends as an excuse for not attending rehearsal that she has a very bad cold, or that the weather is too raw for her to venture out. Mr. Mapleson and Sir Augustus Harris have, we may well believe, often stormed at receiving such an excuse. What would their astonishment and anger be, however, if, instead of even such a modified message as this from a leading lady, they were to receive the intimation that if they wished to have her services in the production of the opera, they must bring all their orchestra and all their singers round to her house, and rehearse the opera for her special benefit in her drawing-room? What would their stupefaction be at the receipt of such a message; and what would be the astonishment of the public if the manager calmly yielded compliance to such a tyrannical mandate and went?

Yet such was the message which Gluck received this very morning from his *prima donna*, and as we may judge from the party assembled in the *salon*, he has thought it his best policy to obey: Here he is,

with the full orchestra of the opera, installed in the lady's *salon*, rich with furniture and *bric-à-brac* of the time of Louis Quatorze, with the wonderful golden clocks and lapis-lazuli tables, with curiously carved furniture and pictures *à la* Watteau representing lords and ladies in the attire of shepherdesses, with gorgeous mirrors on the ceiling, and Venetian looking-glasses all round the room, doing his best to conduct a satisfactory rehearsal amid the hum of the guests and the oddity of the surroundings.

It is evident from the old man's face that he is by no means pleased with the way things are going. He is of a choleric disposition, as the members of his orchestra can well testify; and if they are amazed at his equanimity this morning, they are none the less prepared for an explosion when it does come. As the opera continues, Gluck's frowns and whispers to Mademoiselle Arnauld become more frequent.

"I have stood a great many things this afternoon, mademoiselle," he is heard to say, "but I really cannot put up with everything. Something may occur to stir my passion to boiling-point, in which case I bid you beware, for I shall take all my orchestra with me, and you will have to attend the theatre in despite of yourself, or I will inform the queen."

"My dear Gluck," replies the lady, "it is really very good of you to have humoured me so far as you have, and I am indeed very sorry that these people are behaving themselves as they are. Only wait a moment, and I will try and make them be quiet."

So saying, she rises from her seat, and going hither and thither about through the crowd of people, she contrives to silence them in a very great measure. Many at her strong representations take their seats, and at

last there is scarcely a whisper to be heard throughout the hall.

Gluck, delighted, raises his *bâton*. The orchestra starts a beautiful soft movement, one of the vocalists whose turn it is to sing is on the point of commencing, when suddenly the door of the saloon opens with a crash, and four footmen are seen at the door ushering into the room with many bows a gentleman resplendent with gold lace, his waistcoat a blaze of jewels, and the colours of his elaborate costume flashing like the hues of the rainbow, from a grass-green coat, a scarlet waistcoat, and orange-coloured breeches—all of velvet except the latter, which shine and shimmer of the most lustrous silk.

“The Prince d’Hennin!” roars the footman, and immediately the whole of the guests rise to their feet, producing that surging noise which swells like the sea whenever a vast number of people rise at once.

Gluck—who has three or four times commenced the movement which he is now engaged in conducting, and has had to stop as many times as he has commenced—being now fairly under weigh and listening with rapture to the voice of the singer who is expressing the most intimate emotion of the melody, pays not the slightest attention to the entry of this exalted personage which has occasioned so much confusion among the occupants of the *salon*; and while all else have risen he and his orchestra doggedly keep their seats, fiddling and playing on delighted, as if unconscious—as doubtless some of them are—that any one has come into the room at all.

This, however, does not suit the Prince d’Hennin, who, after acknowledging the low salaams of the audience, turns imperiously to the performers, as if he

expected them too to pay him the obeisance so readily yielded by the rest. Finding the artists taking not the slightest notice of his distinguished presence, he remarks in a voice loud enough to be heard above all the instruments, which at that time are playing *piano*,

“It is the custom in France, Monsieur Gluck—in France, where we know manners—for everybody to rise from their seats when an exalted personage enters the room.”

Gluck, starting up in a burst of passion, replies, “And it is the custom in Germany, prince—in Germany, where we pay honour to merit rather than rank—only to rise from our seats for people whom we value and esteem.”

Then, closing the piano with a crash, and assembling his orchestra round him, the irate composer strides out of the room at their head, muttering to Mademoiselle Arnauld as he passes her that he will have her at the theatre in despite of herself, and that he has never received such treatment in his life.

How the company who had assembled to hear the rehearsal amused themselves when composer and orchestra had left, and all chance of music for the day was gone, history does not report, but they all certainly richly deserved the lesson which Gluck taught them; and we may add that many a gathering would be none the worse for a similar lesson, not perhaps so abrupt and angry, but equally firm and impressive.

Arrived home, Gluck bids adieu to the members of his orchestra, who follow him with a chorus of sympathy and commiseration to his own door; and, bouncing indoors, still in a storm of rage, proceeds to unfold the woes of the morning to Madame Gluck, who

knows by experience what an unsatisfactory rehearsal means. Although Gluck does not let fall one angry word against his wife, he never ceases abusing the Prince d'Hennin and Sophie Arnauld; nor does he desist from his objurgations until he has finally decided to see the queen on the subject that very evening, and to bring by her assistance the recalcitrant *prima donna* to order.

This solace to his wounded feelings has the effect of pacifying him entirely; and from an abyss of passion he passes to a condition of very good humour at the thought of having a free afternoon, to spend in composition, whereas he expected to have wasted all the precious hours of the day in rehearsing the unruly Mademoiselle Arnauld and her companion artists in the opera of *Orfeo*, amid a babel of voices and the most unsatisfactory surroundings.

"I shall compose, this afternoon, my dear," says Gluck, with a smile of satisfaction; "and as I have had some capital ideas running in my head ever since the morning, I make no doubt my time will be far more usefully employed than in that abominable rehearsal, of which I can scarcely speak without falling into a passion again."

"Then pray do not mention it," says Madame Gluck, who is extremely wary of returning to the subject. "I will put everything in readiness for you on the lawn after dinner, and you shall pass an afternoon of undisturbed study, before you go to the queen."

Everything in Gluck's house speaks of wealth, even of luxury; the furniture is sumptuous, there is no lack of servants to do their mistress's bidding, and an abundance of pictures and musical instruments of great value are to be seen in many of the rooms.

Meanwhile, Madame Gluck is arranging the lawn for "composition." And how does she proceed? In the first place, the phrase is an extraordinary one. "To arrange the lawn for composition" speaks of writing in the open air for one thing, and secondly it seems to imply that the whole lawn was taken up for that purpose, as if Gluck when in the throes of composing spread himself over the whole lawn, and monopolised an acre when other composers have been content with the corner of a room.

Madame Gluck's first step is to order two stalwart lackeys to carry out the piano on to the lawn, which they do with much staggering and difficulty. To the piano next follow a chair, an armchair, a footstool, and a table with pens and ink. The chair is placed before the piano, the armchair, provided with a luxurious cushion, is deposited in front of the table, with the hassock at its feet. The pens, ink, and score paper are carefully arranged in their particular places by the dexterous hands of Madame Gluck, who looks towards the door and beholds with approval the two lackeys once more labouring along under the burden of several champagne bottles and buckets of ice. These are deposited on the ground at a convenient distance from the table. They are the finishing touch, the crown to all the other arrangements for "composition."

Madame Gluck looks on her handiwork, and is satisfied. She has no doubt that her husband will spend a very happy afternoon over his music and his wine; and we who behold these preparations have likewise no doubt that before the sun has sunk to evening there will be some noble choruses written, some divine orchestral movements penned, and that art will be all the richer by these extraordinary preliminaries, which



almost invariably preceded a fit of composition in the great opera writer.

The time wears on, and meanwhile Gluck has been freeing himself from the last dregs of his wrath under the genial influence of dinner. Like most men, he is quite another being when he rises from that repast compared to what he was when he sat down to it. And when he strides out on the lawn in the full glow of the afternoon sun, which lights up his noble, intellectual head, he reminds one of some ancient Greek who has risen to walk the earth amid the surroundings of the eighteenth century. Such is the man's appearance; almost a counterpart of that of his music. There is no awning on the lawn which might shelter him from the blaze of the sultry sun. His theory was that bright sunshine was favourable to inspiration. Perhaps we might say of him, as it has been said of Sophocles, that he drew his inspiration from the sun. At all events, he loved to feel it beating on him, and averred that his ideas always flowed freest and best with such an atmosphere glowing and gilding all around him.

He seats himself at the piano, and strikes some pompous chords: grave, severe, massive. The instrument becomes almost an organ in his hands. He performs on it a glorious march, in which we seem to hear reminiscences of many of his massive operatic movements; ideas which may have been the repetitions of compositions in the past, or anticipations of those in the future. He continues for a little while playing sonorously on the piano; at last he turns to his music table, and, uncorking one of the bottles of champagne, sets himself to work in earnest.

He proceeds steadily along in his work. He has not the lightning rapidity of Handel, who snowed paper on

the ground as he composed ; nor has he the airy velocity of Mozart. There is a plodding about Gluck's style, if we may say so ; a serious solid progress, which, without being fast, manages to cover a great deal of ground within a given time. As he writes he drinks ; and the hours pass in the alternation of these two employments. The occasional pop of a champagne cork and the incessant scratching of a pen on the paper are the only sounds that come to disturb the stillness of the lawn.

The singing of birds overhead, the rustling of the leaves on the trees—nature's soft sounds, unheeded by the ear—are the quiet and tranquil accompaniment, which harmonise well with the engrossed mood of the composer. The sun beams overhead, and gradually slopes its course as the afternoon advances, and he still goes writing on ; until at last an increasing quiet among the birds and the leaves on the trees, and a ruddy tinge which suffuses the outline of the tree tops and flushes in the western skies overhead, warn the world, and Gluck among the rest, that evening is about to fall.

At last he rises from his table, flushed like the sunset above him, unsteady in his motions, looking tired and weary. But on the table before him lies the whole act of an opera ; an act full of fine passages and glorious conceptions. And the composer walks unsteadily from the table to his house, carrying the music score under his arm. The *débris* of his "composition"—broken quills, an overturned inkpot, empty champagne bottles, which are all small ones no larger than our lemonade bottles—remains on the table for the footmen to remove along with the grand piano. The valuable portion of the afternoon's work is carefully conveyed away by the composer to a desk in his study, where it is duly sorted

with other sheets of the same work and arranged in its proper place.

Tea in those days cost nearly a *louis d'or* a pound, and was a luxury reserved for the wealthy. Yet Gluck's easy circumstances enable him to indulge in that costly beverage, which, *en passant*, it may be imagined he sorely needs after his potations of the afternoon. He has a strong head, however, and, like King Darius, who caused it to be engraved on his tomb that he "carried his wine well," Gluck, beyond an occasional unsteady movement, scarcely betrays at all the manner in which he has passed the afternoon. Every trace of the dissipation vanishes soon under the influence of Bohea; and by the time the *candelabras* of wax candles are lighted by the servant, and dusk has passed away into evening, he has recovered almost entirely from his "potations pottle deep."

It is now time for him to make his promised visit to the queen, and donning a handsome coat and girding round his waist a sword, the gift of her majesty herself, he starts off to walk in the direction of the Tuileries. What is that which he carries under his arm, and which he treats with far greater care than the rapier which trails at his side? It is a roll of music, and if we could examine it narrowly, we should find it to be the score of the identical act which he has written in the course of the afternoon.

Marie Antoinette is so condescending, and takes such an interest in music—Gluck ever declares that he values her opinion most highly—that she consents to hear and criticise any music which he likes to bring to her before it is submitted to the verdict of the public. Surely this must have been a piece of astute courtiership on the part of the composer. Yet he himself averred

that he had altered many things according to her suggestion.

“I play the music,” he said, “and notice how it affects her majesty. If she is pleased with it, I know that all the world will be delighted, for she is an ideal listener; if she does not appear satisfied with it, and is listless, uninterested, and apathetic, I say to myself, ‘There is something wrong here; I must revise that passage to give it greater vivacity.’”

On his arrival at the Tuileries, he is admitted at once by the private door, and for nearly two hours enjoys what princes and ambassadors might have sighed for in vain—the pleasure of a *tête-à-tête* with the Queen of France. Marie Antoinette is very sympathetic when the old man tells her how he had been treated by Prince d’Hennin, and what intolerable caprices he had to put up with at the hands of Mademoiselle Arnauld. Her majesty graciously promises to reprimand the gentleman, and to compel the lady to do her duty. After this consolation to the *amour propre* of the composer, she desires him to play her the very latest music he has written, a request which Gluck has come carefully prepared for; and accordingly he brings out his music-roll, and proceeds to play the afternoon’s composition.

Marie Antoinette sits and listens, nodding her head approvingly at certain passages, and displaying obvious signs of *ennui* at others, all of which behaviour is carefully noted by the composer, with a view to the improvement of his effects.

“You are the first to hear my music, madame,” he says. “I never find a truer critic. I will one day write an opera specially in your honour.”

At this the queen laughs, and asks him what the name of it will be.

Although Gluck could not give her any very definite information about his proposed work at the time, in a few years afterwards he actually composed the opera of which he this day threw out the suggestion. It was called *Armida*, and was one of the greatest of his works. He himself believed it to be his greatest, "for," he said, "I have the most potent source of inspiration that man could have in my beautiful patroness and critic." Marie Antoinette was equally enamoured of the opera, not entirely because the heroine was a type of herself, but on account of the beautiful music which pervaded the piece.

When Gluck returned that evening from the Tuileries, doubtless many conceptions of *Armida* were floating in his head, to be treasured up and brought to realisation two or three years after when that great opera was penned. Under the ægis of so powerful a patroness he could afford to laugh at the cabals which were set on foot against him and the caprices of singers; and we have no doubt that on the morrow of the day we have described, he found his *prima donna* much more manageable, and thoroughly repentant of her overbearing behaviour.

Gluck was a foreigner in a far-off land, and yet he received far livelier welcome there and wider appreciation than had ever been his lot in his own country. He had been a conspicuous failure in London; he had achieved only a temporary success in Vienna. In Italy he had been more fortunate than either in England or in Austria, and had raised the cultivated *dilettanti* of that country to something like enthusiasm.

But all previous acknowledgment paled before the immense repute and *prestigé* which he acquired in Paris. It was in Paris that he was enabled to work

out his deeply meditated reforms of operatic usage ; it was in Paris that parties were formed, rivalling political zealots in their animosities, for and against his music ; and it was in Paris that his grandest works were written and his most powerful patrons found.

Gluck was fifty years old before he wrote an opera of any abiding renown. This lateness of maturity was preceded by a youth of adversity and a middle age of struggle. In the quiet town of Weidenwang, where he was born, there was nothing either in the place or the people to encourage a musical bent or to suggest the possibility of one. The calm, serene Bohemian landscapes around must however have potently impressed the wonderful child, who saw much of nature in his earliest years, and learnt to appreciate its beauty and simplicity. His father was a huntsman ; country scenes and sylvan habits were familiar to the future great composer from the first. The associations of his childhood, deeply imprinting themselves on his emotional nature, were calculated to lay the foundation and, indeed, to be the direct inspiration of that ideal of beauty in simplicity and strength in repose, which in Gluck's slowly developing genius ultimately rose before him on the threshold of old age as the true and only satisfactory end at which art should strive.

The possibility of gathering such impressions, potent in future utility, was secured him by poverty and adversity. He was left much to himself—far more so than most children. The circumstances of his father were such that there was no possibility of sending the child to any but a dame's school of the most elementary description, where at an age when most boys would have acquired a fair smattering of the more advanced

subjects of knowledge, he was still blundering over the rudiments of education, without interest or progress in aught save what little he could pick up there of music. Small as was the benefit which he derived from education up till now, it was destined to become smaller still. His father died and left the child totally unprovided for. Schooling was now a luxury no longer to be thought of, and the youthful genius, entirely unconscious of his powers, was brought face to face with the stern necessity of procuring his livelihood.

He tried many shifts, no doubt with greater or less success, to earn the necessary means of support, but might have sunk to the level of those around him, and rusticated all his life as a peasant in a Bohemian village, had he not had the good fortune to get possession of an old viol da gamba along with a book of exercises for that instrument. These two precious treasures secured, he set himself assiduously to work to learn how to play.

We can imagine his slow and deliberate style of practice, but likewise his sound and substantial progress in the mastery of his instrument, until at last he became a competent performer on that which fortune had so benevolently thrown in his way.

In country places in the remoter districts of Europe there was then and there is now always a market for itinerant minstrels of the better class. Although the days of the jongleurs and glee-maidens have passed away, never to be recalled, yet there are, so to speak, "survivals" of the mediæval life even at the present hour. Christine Nilsson gained her livelihood for years by playing the violin at fairs and merrymakings in the vicinity of Wexlo in Sweden—by performing, in short, in the nineteenth century, the rôle filled by

the glee-maiden of the eleventh century. And if scope were found for such a life as late as forty years ago in Sweden, we may quite imagine that two centuries ago in Bohemia there was still more ample opportunity for its exercise.

Gluck having tried divers ways of earning a livelihood, found that his viol da gamba offered him the surest, and uniting with a few other spirits no less impecunious and musical than himself, the party determined to stump the country, giving entertainments as they went at any fair, merrymaking, fête, tavern, or theatre, which they might happen to fall in with on their way. Fortune smiled on the strollers, and far from being under the necessity of disbanding their little fraternity, they found no lack of agreeable employment. The gains which they made were sufficient for all the requirements of the party, and having first touched at Prague they were so pleased with the pleasures of a capital that they determined to make Vienna the ultimate goal of their journey.

It was exceedingly fortunate for Gluck that they did so. In that city strolling players found little difficulty in earning a livelihood, as we may judge by the example of Haydn, who, some fifteen or twenty years after Gluck arrived there, kept body and soul together by means of this precarious occupation. Gluck did more than that. He obtained pupils in music, and made the acquaintance of some influential friends, who persuaded him to settle down in the Austrian capital for awhile and abandon the strolling life which he had hitherto followed.

The first use which Gluck made of his savings in Vienna was to obtain what he so much longed for, but had been entirely debarred from—a proper musical



education. Although he was then twenty-two years of age, his slowly maturing genius did not find the time too late to submit itself to the tedium of study. On the contrary, Gluck at twenty-two seemed to have the habit and pliancy of a boy of sixteen, and with the greatest eagerness and readiest submission he undertook the study of counterpoint and composition. Nay, two years later, when he left Vienna for Italy, we find him still humbly and assiduously carrying on his great scheme of self-improvement, and for four more years accepting the position of a pupil, delighted and uncomplaining.

In Italy it was under the celebrated Padre Martini that he studied, the most learned theorist of his age, whose essay on counterpoint in two volumes is the most profound work of the latter part of the eighteenth century. Gluck therefore did not complete his education till he was close on thirty years of age. The slow maturity of his genius, which did not reach its perfection till he was over fifty, was faithfully reflected in the tardy and deliberate growth of his powers in early manhood. At the age when Mozart had written *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, at the time when Handel had composed nearly a dozen operas, and had spread his name and fame through England, Italy, and Germany, Gluck had completed his education, and was just ready to commence his musical career.

It may be asked how he contrived to take the journey to Italy in the reduced circumstances in which he was. The answer to this question is that he had obtained an appointment in Prince Melzi's band at Vienna, and, on the prince's leaving for Italy, Gluck went with him and his household.

Gluck, being now fortified with the long and laborious

education which he had received, and accoutred, as it were, for the battle, shook himself, and without delay entered the lists with an opera, *Artaserse*.

This was composed in the ordinary Italian style, without any attempt to diverge from the common operatic form. Compared to its author's matured efforts of twenty years later, it reads like a college exercise, and would never be known as a composition of Gluck's unless we were expressly informed that such it was.

*Artaserse* was succeeded in a year's time by *Demofoonte*, *Demetrius*, *Hypermnestra*—three operas composed in one year. *Artamenes* and *Syphax* are the two productions of the following year. *Phædra* was produced two years later, and an opera on a heroic theme—*Alexander in India*. Most of these operas were performed at Milan, one at Venice, and one at Turin.

The English aristocracy who ran the King's Theatre in the Haymarket against Handel now invited Gluck to come to London, and undertake the arduous rôle of Handel's rival. He accepted the offer, though but little success attended his efforts. It is reported that Handel, on Gluck's arrival, attended the performance of an opera composed by the slow and patient musician, whose laborious education was pursued so late in life. Handel, after listening for awhile, rose up from his seat to go home, making the laconic remark as he did so, "This man knows no more counterpoint than my cook."

During Gluck's residence in England, after many unsuccessful endeavours to write a really popular opera, he hit on one of the strangest devices, a patent scheme of his own, for so doing, which, like all patent methods, did not exactly answer its projector's anticipations, and, in fact, was from the first foredoomed to disaster.

Without so much experience in opera writing as Handel, and believing that opera-making was very much amenable to rule of thumb, Gluck conceived, what in theory seems plausible enough, that if the sweetest melodies his pen had ever written, the gems, the pearls of his fancy, were all strung together and heard consecutively in one opera, that opera could not fail to be the most attractive composition ever penned. Accordingly he set to work on the task of selection, and sifting his past operas as one would sift wheat, he gathered together a most choice assemblage of beautiful melodies, and served them up in one work to the London public. Strange to say, the opera thus laboriously pieced together fell very flat on the ears of the town, and did not excite one encomium.

From this signal failure Gluck learnt the great lesson that the general impression of the whole is the main object to study, and this cannot be procured in its true and finest form but by the unity and homogeneousness of the constituent parts.

We cannot in such a work as the present follow the development of this extraordinary man's genius, since we are more concerned with the incidents of his life. But we may see from the last-mentioned fact that he was still learning, and was as ready to receive instruction from the experiences of life as from the teachings of a master.

His ideas as to the proper functions of music had altered considerably by the time he wrote *Alceste*, his first great work of genius, some years after in Vienna. By that time he had experienced many other failures, had written many other operas, but had gradually built up the theory of the new style of

music, the style of classical simplicity, the severe, simple "Doric School"—if we may use such an expression—of musical composition, which considered the homogeneousness of the parts and the balance of the whole to be the great objects at which a musician should aim.

Let us hear Gluck express himself on the matter. In the few paragraphs that follow, he lays bare in epitome all his theory. It is especially in relation to *Alceste* that he is speaking, an opera which he wrote in 1767, and which succeeded in securing the ear of Vienna:—

"When I undertook to compose music to *Alceste*, I proposed entirely to abolish all those abuses introduced by the injudicious vanity of singers, or by the excessive complaisance of masters, which have so long disfigured the Italian opera, and instead of the most splendid and beautiful of all entertainments, thus rendering it the most ridiculous and tiresome. My purpose was to restrict music to its true office, that of ministering to the expression of the poetry, and to the situations of the plot, without interrupting the action, or chilling it by superfluons and needless ornamentation.

"I thought that it should accomplish what brilliancy of colour and a skilfully adapted contrast of light and shade effect for a correct and well-designed drawing, by animating the figures without distorting their contours. I wished, therefore, to avoid arresting an actor in the most excited moment of his dialogue, by causing him to wait for a tiresome *ritournelle*, or, in the midst of half uttered words, to detain him on a favourable note, either for the purpose of displaying his fine voice and flexibility in some long passage, or causing him to pause till the orchestra gave him time to take breath for a cadence.

"It did not appear to me that I ought to hurry over the second part of an aria, possibly the most impassioned and important of all, in order to have the opportunity of repeating regularly four times over the words of the first part, causing the aria to end where in all probability the sense did not end, merely for the convenience of the singer, and to enable him to vary a passage according to his caprice; in short, I have striven to banish the abuses against which reason and good sense have so long protested in vain.

"My idea was that the overture should prepare the spectators for the plot to be represented, and give some indication of its nature; that the concerted instruments ought to be regulated according to the

interest and passion of the drama, and not leave a void in the dialogue between the air and recitative, so that the meaning of a passage might not be perverted, nor the force and warmth of the action improperly interrupted.

“Further, I thought that my most strenuous efforts must be directed in search of a noble simplicity, thus avoiding a parade of difficulty at the expense of clearness. I did not consider a mere display of novelty valuable, unless naturally suggested by the situation and the expression, and on this point no rule in composition exists that I would not have gladly sacrificed in favour of the effect produced.

“Such are my principles. Fortunately, the libretto was wonderfully adapted to my purpose, in which the celebrated author (Calzabigi), having imagined a new dramatic plan, replaced flowery descriptions, superfluous similes, and cold sententious morality by the language of the heart, strong passions, interesting situations, and an ever-varying *spectacle*.”

It was at this time or shortly before it that Gluck, now resident in Vienna again, having left London in despair, became music-master to Marie Antoinette, then one of the Austrian princesses at Vienna. Maria Theresa seems to have had a high opinion of Gluck, both as a music-master and as a composer, in which latter capacity she sometimes engaged him to write light operettas or vaudevilles for the royal family to perform in.

A private theatre was one of the delights of the Emperor Francis and his accomplished children, and for this theatre Gluck was commissioned to compose the music. His new and peculiar theories of opera-writing he kept in the background in the compositions which he wrote for the royal theatre, but yet his music was sufficiently “advanced” to enable the listeners to learn to appreciate his more elaborate efforts at the theatres. The performers at these private theatricals were the Emperor Francis himself, Marie Antoinette, her brother Joseph, afterwards Emperor, and various ladies and gentlemen of the Court. The connections

which Gluck made here were of untold value to him when he went to Paris—more especially the patronage of Marie Antoinette.

Gluck went to Paris in search of renown, and found it. Paris was at that time, far more emphatically than to-day, the capital of Europe. Not to have conquered Paris, to a man of Gluck's steady and exalted purpose, was to leave half the world unsubdued. When in a fair way of realising his dreams with the production of *Iphigenia in Aulis* in the French capital, he encountered unexpected opposition and animosity from Madame du Barry, who, an Italian by birth, was a warm supporter of the old and florid school of opera which it was Gluck's main object to overthrow.

She pitted against Gluck the Neapolitan Piccini. The latter was invited to the French capital, and the two musicians were hounded on and urged to animosity against one another by the nobility, as if they were a pair of gamecocks. All that could be done in the way of suggestion or stimulus was done to intensify their rivalry. They were encouraged to compose operas on the same theme, in order that their relative partisans might have the pleasure of judging of their respective merits. Piccini composed an opera called *Orlando*. At once Gluck set to work on an *Orlando*. Gluck wrote an *Iphigenia in Tauris*. Piccini immediately commenced an *Iphigenia in Tauris* likewise.

It was the old antagonism which appears again and again in the history of literature and art, between the natural and the conventional. It was the struggle for a reformation of music on Gluck's part, and for keeping it as it was on the part of Piccini. But so famous a struggle has never occurred in the quiet annals of art before or since.

The people at large took up the quarrel—not the nobility alone. The barbers as they shaved their customers inquired what was their way of thinking on the burning question of the day. Shopkeepers as they bartered their wares let fall observations on the merits of Gluck and Piccini. The subject became as perpetual a commonplace in ordinary conversation as the weather is at present. Literature joined in the cry. Squibs, lampoons, and pamphlets without number fell in showers on society, and exasperated all the more the already acute state of feeling between the parties.

The truth was that Paris was within a dozen years of the Revolution. Debate and controversy were in the air, soon to burst in a deadly whirlwind on the ill-fated capital; but meanwhile, in the last gay days which preceded the universal overthrow, they were frolicking and making sport. People were playing at party warfare, without knowing that it was a prelude to the awful fray.

The rivalry between Gluck and Piccini, long continued, culminated with the two operas of *Iphigenia in Tauris*. Each composer was at work on one, and the question was, who would finish his opera first. Gluck, who had had the advantage of commencing earlier, enjoyed the singular good fortune of having his piece first completed and produced. Piccini's did not see the light till a short while afterwards. It was confessed even by many Piccinists to be inferior to Gluck's masterpiece, and on the night when the King was present an awkward *contretemps* covered the Piccinists with ridicule.

The *prima donna*, Mdlle. Laguerre, who was taking the part of Iphigenia, was seen to stride about the stage in an extraordinary manner; her gestures were

wild and ungoverned; her voice was thick and husky; and her memory of her lines completely failed her. It soon became evident that she was intoxicated, and her actions on the stage, where she continued in spite of every effort to lead her off, excited the uproarious mirth of the audience. A wit exclaimed, "This is not *Iphigenia in Tauris*, but *Iphigenia in Champagne*," and the *bon mot* completed the humiliation of the Piccinists. Piccini's opera never recovered from the effects of this unfortunate incident.

Gluck before his death returned to Vienna, where he lived in elegance and comfort on the ample means he had acquired in Paris. Fortunately for himself and the sincere affection which he entertained for his royal patroness, he died eighteen months before the outbreak of the French Revolution, which heeded neither opera writers nor queens.



## SYNOPSIS OF LIFE, AND WORKS.

---

CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD RITTER VON GLUCK was born at Weidenwang, in Bohemia, July 2nd, 1714; studied in Vienna, 1736; studied under Padre Martini, at Milan, 1737—1741; wrote operas in Italy, 1742—1746; went to London to oppose Handel, 1746; produced *Alceste* in Vienna, 1767; settled in Paris, 1774; produced *Iphigenia in Aulis*, 1774; *Armida*, 1777; *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 1779; he died at Vienna, Nov. 15th, 1787, aged seventy-three.

---

Operas: *Artaserse*, Milan, 1741; *Demofonte*, Milan, 1742; *Demetrio*, Venice, 1742; *Ipermestra*, Venice, 1742; *Artamene*, Cremona, 1743; *Siface*, Milan, 1743; *Fedra*, Milan, 1745; *Alessandro nell'Indie*, Turin, 1745; *La Caduta de' giganti*, London, 1746; *L'Artamene*, London, 1746; *Piramo e Tisbe* (pasticcio), do., 1746; *Le Semiramide riconosciuta*, Vienna, 1748; *Telemacco*, Rome, 1750; *La Clemenza di Tito*, Naples, 1751; *L'Eroe Cinese*, Vienna, 1754; *Il Trionfo di Camillo*, Rome, 1754; *Antigono*, do., 1754; *La Danza*, 1755; *L'Innocenza Giustificata*, Vienna, 1756; *Il Re Pastore* (Metastasio), Vienna, 1756; *Tetide*, 1760; *Il Trionfo di Clelia*, 1762; *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Calzabigi), Vienna, 1762; *Ezio* (Metastasio), do., 1763; *Die Pilgrime von Mekka* (*La Rencontre Imprévue*), Vienna, 1764; *Il Parnasso Confuso*, 1765; *Telemacco*, Vienna, 1765; *Le Corona*, do., 1765; *Alceste* (Calzabigi), Vienna, 1767; *Paride ed Elena*, do., 1769; *Le Feste di Apollo*, Parma, 1769; *Bauci e Filemone*, do., 1769; *Aristeo*, do., 1769; *Iphigenie en Aulide*, Paris, 1774; *Orphée et Eurydice* (adapted to French stage by Moline), 1774; *L'Arbre enchanté* (Vadé), Versailles, 1775; *Cythère assiégée*, do., 1775; *Armide* (Quinault), Paris, 1777; *Iphigénie en Tauride* (Guillard), do., 1779; *Echo et Narcisse* (Tschudy), do., 1779; *Filide*, serenade, Copenhagen, 1749; *Don Juan*, ballet, Vienna, 1761.

## MENDELSSOHN.

MENDELSSOHN'S house in Leipsic is pleasantly situated, with a nice open look-out from the front upon the boulevard and the St. Thomas's Church and schools. The hall leads to a dining-room facing the street door, a sitting-room lies on the right of the hall, and the composer's study on the left. In the latter, Mendelssohn is accustomed to immure himself during the early part of the day, though by no means a regular and indefatigable worker like J. S. Bach or Haydn. He rose usually between seven and eight. The latter hour is the time for breakfast, and his wife being a thoroughly good housekeeper, the meal was generally as punctual as the clock.

For breakfast Mendelssohn would take a cup or two of coffee, into which he broke slices of bread, eating the compound with a spoon, and with apparent relish. This he used to confess was a practice he learned at school, where appetizing morsels for breakfast were rarely put on the table, and the scholars varied their regular *menu* of bread and coffee with sopped bread and coffee, coffee and sopped toast, sopped crust and coffee, and other unspeakable variations of the eternal viands. Mendelssohn had a horror of butter. It would not be too much to say that one pat of it never passed his lips all his life through. When rallied by his friends on this unaccountable antipathy he would

reply, "I make wine my substitute for butter," and, though a very abstemious man, would suit the action to the word by washing down a slice of dry bread with a glass or two of Madeira.

Breakfast over, his first care is to devour the pile of correspondence which by about nine o'clock was brought by the post. He skimmed through his letters very rapidly, and, making them into a bundle under his arm, would betake himself without delay to his study. Strange as it may appear he seemed to esteem his correspondence of even more importance than his composition—at least, by the attention he bestowed upon it. Some of his friends would have us believe that far more of his time was lavished on writing letters than on penning music. But this was not the case. He certainly wrote an abundance of letters; but, getting over them very quickly, he reserved the great part of his time for the more important business of his life.

This morning we may see him wading through the heap in his study—answering them one after the other; for, like all voluminous letter writers, he never left over till the next day a single letter unanswered, being well aware—we suppose by the same experience which teaches other men—that this is the infallible road to a speedy congestion of correspondence. At length his task is over. Some of the letters are tossed into the waste-paper basket; others are placed with careful solicitude in the pigeon-holes of an *escritoire*; and a goodly pile of missives lies on his writing-table awaiting the entry of the servant to take them off to the post.

That duty despatched, he applies himself to composition. And now, in place of that matter-of-fact

business-like demeanour with which he has travelled through his letter-writing, an entirely different mood seems to come over him. He brings out from a private drawer a huge score, and spreads it, with many smiles, on the table. He looks at it lovingly, but does not attempt to pen a note for some time to come. Instead of that he walks up and down the room snapping his fingers and giving vent to inarticulate expressions of delight. This pantomime continues for awhile. At last a fascinating idea strikes him. He sits down and commits it to paper. A few more turns round the room, and he repeats the process of writing; this time for a considerable period. From this protracted fit of inspiration he rises at length with much abruptness, and walking about the apartment keeps muttering to himself, "Good! good! excellent!" while he snaps his fingers in time to his steps.

He is a fast worker despite the constant interruptions to which he subjects the current of his inspiration, and by the time that one o'clock arrives has covered a goodly quantity of score paper. He might have done even half as much again had it not been for that intolerable amount of correspondence with which the best part of the morning is occupied. But, as he himself says, in defence of his epistolary weakness, "a man's friends have a strong claim on his time, nearly as strong a claim as has the Muse herself."

After dinner Mendelssohn has business to perform in the shape of conducting the rehearsal of a new symphony. But as this does not require his presence until four o'clock he determines to while away the interim by paying a few visits on his way to the hall. His wife and he were always on the most harmonious terms; but on this occasion, owing to his ultimate

destination being the concert-room, she does not accompany him, and, taking his hat and cane, he strolls out by himself.

He numbers among his acquaintances most people worth knowing in Leipsic, particularly those of literary, artistic and musical tastes. He has the *entrée* to hundreds of houses, and is welcomed in all.

To-day he chooses as his place of call the house of a lady well known in Leipsic as one of the finest amateur artists in the town, and several of Mendelssohn's own sketches—for the accomplished composer was no mean artist, although he did not attach much importance to his skill with the pencil—adorn her album, and he is somewhat anxious to obtain her opinion on a picture which he is about to purchase. He knocks at the door, and to his disappointment hears that she is not at home.

“But,” says Gretchen, smiling and simpering, “the children are in, mein Herr, and would like so much to see you.”

“The children?” returns Mendelssohn, with a merry laugh. “Well, I have not much to do for an hour or two; I had as soon spend the time with them as with anyone else.”

Accordingly he is ushered into the parlour, and in a few minutes a bevy of laughing children precipitate themselves into the room, with whom he at once proceeds to romp. He plays leapfrog with them, hide-and-seek, and all sorts of games, and ends by chasing them round and round the table, to the tremendous jeopardy of mamma's china ornaments, which lie disposed in profusion about the room.

At length, tired of the sport, he sits down to the piano, and, forgetful of his youthful companions, pro-

ceeds to extemporise sublimely upon the instrument in a way calculated to hush to silence anyone on whose ears the melodious sounds fall. But his romping play-fellows are not at all affected by the harmony; which, on the contrary, they have reason to strongly object to, owing to its having interrupted their game. Accordingly, they crowd round him as he sits on the piano-stool, and attempt to catch his hands that run skimming lightly over the ivory keys.

Mendelssohn continues his extemporisation quite undisturbed by the noisy *entourage*. But the music takes a different complexion. When the children attempt to seize his right hand he whisks it suddenly up to the top of the piano and strikes a few notes there. When they seek to capture his left hand the latter dives down to the profundity of the bass, and they lose it as effectually as they did the right. The frolic proceeds; but the eccentric improvisation by-and-by settles down into a definite and strangely melodious air. When Mendelssohn returns home that evening he writes this peculiar air down. It may be found among his *Lieder ohne Worte*, and is one of the most famous of them all.

His fondness for children, which proceeded almost to infatuation, was not exemplified only in occasional frolics such as these, but in a constant delight at being among them whenever opportunity offered. A story is told of him, which we have reason to believe authentic. When playing at Windsor, by command of the Queen, before her and the Prince Consort, the performance over—at which, by-the-by, the Queen sang some German songs, Mendelssohn accompanying her—her Majesty expressed herself as highly delighted with the proceedings, and said to the composer very graciously,

“ You have given me so much pleasure now, what can I do to give you pleasure ? ”

Mendelssohn at first protested that he could not take so great a liberty as to name any request, for the gratification of which he thus had *carte blanche* afforded him. As the Queen still continued to urge him, he confessed that he had, and had always had, one wish that she alone could gratify.

“ As the head of a family myself, your Majesty, ” said the composer, “ it has ever been my most earnest wish to see the royal children in the nursery. If you will gratify this desire, you will make me the happiest man in England. ”

The Queen, who was not only astonished but amused, consented without demur to his request, and, leading the way herself, she conducted him through the various nurseries at Windsor, in which the young princes and princesses, at that time in pinafores, were commencing their acquaintance with life.

His frolic with the particular children who engrossed his attention this afternoon is at length over, and he betakes himself to the concert hall, where the orchestra, tuning their instruments and speculating on the reason of his delay, await him. When once in the conductor's seat, his demeanour changes sensibly from that boyish hilarity which marked him when in the drawing room just now, and he becomes the most petulant of men. Nothing that the band can do seems to satisfy him,—at least, at their first attempt. Each section has to be played over and over again. He grows very angry if they cannot exactly hit the shade of tone, time, or expression which he desires.

The members of the orchestra, though they have a respect for him befitting his vast musical genius, have

no very great fondness for playing under so exacting a conductor, and are heartily glad when the rehearsal is over. They must have stood in considerable awe of him, it would seem, if we are able to believe the story of one who often played in the orchestra under Mendelssohn's *bâton*. "He had the peculiar faculty," says this man, "of seeming to dilate with the music. At a *crescendo*, he threw his soul so tremendously into the gradually increasing torrent of sound that he seemed actually to grow in height as he stood waving his *bâton* at the conductor's desk above us. To the imagination, he might seem to swell to gigantic size, and to over-arch the whole orchestra when the *fortissimo* came." Other informants relate how he would appear to dwindle—probably by contracting his shoulders and leaning down behind his desk—when the *pianos* were played; describing further his habit of laying his head on one side when he was at last pleased with a passage, and becoming lost in ecstasy at any unusually sweet strain that occurred in the music.

The rehearsal at length over, he betakes himself home, where his family circle as the evening wears on is increased by a number of visitors who drop in, some by invitation, some casually. Mendelssohn is very fond of society. Nearly every evening, if he were not abroad at a party himself, there was a social gathering at his own house. Music and conversation beguiled the time very pleasantly. Sometimes quartetts and part songs would be sung, or some chamber music performed, for there were always plenty of instruments at Mendelssohn's house, so as to spare anybody the trouble of bringing his instrument with him. Often there was a charade, a species of entertainment in which Mendelssohn delighted, and which he was very clever at devising.



We have an account in Moscheles's diary of a charade thus performed at Mendelssohn's on the word *Gewandhaus*, a very appropriate selection, as at that time he was conductor of the *Gewandhaus* concerts. For the first syllable, Joachim, dressed up with a fantastic wig *à la Paganini*, came in and played a fantasia on the G (German *Ge*) string on his violin. The syllable *wand*, which in English means "a wall," was very neatly dramatized by a reproduction of the scene from "A Midsummer Night's Dream," where Pyramus and Thisbe whisper through the crannies of a wall. Meanwhile, a few accompanists at the piano and with violins played a short selection from Mendelssohn's own music to that play. This was generally acknowledged to be the most successful of the syllables.

The last syllable of the word *haus* was represented by Mrs. Moscheles, who sat alone in a room when the curtain drew up, being discovered in the act of darning a blue stocking. She took occasion to dilate upon the comforts of "home," as contrasted with the frivolous pleasure to be found abroad, and ended by calling in the celebrated pianist her husband, who, dressed as a cook, entered and proceeded to discuss with her the *menu* of the day. The complete word *Gewandhaus* was depicted, in compliment to Mendelssohn, by the introduction of an extraordinary orchestra consisting of Mendelssohn's children and other youngsters who were present. All of them were provided with toy instruments; their leader was no less a personage than Herr Joachim himself, furnished like the rest with a toy violin on which he played to perfection, standing in front of the miniature orchestra, and occasionally waving his bow to conduct them.

Such are the happy recreations which occupied the

evenings in Mendelssohn's family circle. This special charade which we have described has a somewhat mournful association connected with it, inasmuch as it was the performance which took place on Mendelssohn's last birthday. He was never a very strong man, and the effects of long fits of composing appear to have been very marked upon his health. After he had been at work at an oratorio or a symphony for several successive days, he would frequently fall into a lethargy which passed off into a deep sleep, lasting at times for twenty hours or more. At the end of this time he would awake greatly refreshed, and would eat ravenously. A short interval of recreation then brought him to his usual self again, and he was ready for a new outburst of inspiration, to last for several days, and to have a similar termination.

Such an impressionable and delicate organism as this is not the constitution of a strong man, and Mendelssohn died at the early age of thirty-eight, in the prime of his wonderful endowments.

Mendelssohn's wife was a young lady of Frankfort-on-the-Main, by name Cécile Jean Renaud. She seems to have engaged the affection and esteem of all who came in contact with her, and under her beneficent administration the home of Mendelssohn was a veritable paradise. Moscheles, in his diary, thus describes her: "One must congratulate the excitable, effervescent Mendelssohn. He has met with a wife so gentle, so exquisitely feminine, they are perfectly matched. Madame Mendelssohn is very charming, very unassuming and childlike, but not in my judgment a perfect beauty, because she is a blonde. Her mouth and nose are like Sontag's. Her way of speaking is interesting and simple. Her German is Frankforty, and therefore



MENDELSSOHN.



not pure. She said naïvely at dinner, 'I speak too slowly for Felix, and he so quickly that I do not always understand him.' She is so simple in her ways that she often got up to hand us something."

Such a soft feminine influence in the household was indeed necessary to complete and to give ballast to Mendelssohn's lively and volatile disposition, which but for some such steadier was liable to waste its energies in useless enthusiasms. The young couple were married in 1837, and five children were the offspring of the union. Mendelssohn at that time was in the prime of his powers, and his reputation had already extended all over Europe as the composer of *St. Paul*. There was a bright prospect for the newly wedded pair which subsequent events did not come to cloud.

Mendelssohn, unlike most composers before or after him, was a man of considerable private fortune, which he had inherited from his father, Abraham Mendelssohn, a Hamburg merchant. He was thus placed far above the ordinary anxieties of life, and was enabled to devote himself to his art, not as a means of earning a competence, but in the pure spirit of enjoyment. Hence the happy surroundings amid which he was enabled to work, and the complete freedom from those soul-racking struggles for bread which embittered the lives of other great composers.

From his childhood upwards he was watched over with the tenderest solicitude, and nothing that money could effect was denied to further him in the pursuit of music, to which he had early consecrated his soul. It is said, though we confess ourselves to be very sceptical on the point, that Mendelssohn showed his musical genius before he was four years old. This

much, however, is certain: that his mother, who fortunately for him happened to be a cultivated musician, early discovered his strong bent for the art, and set herself carefully to work, with the view of cultivating his surpassing gifts in the most natural and advantageous manner. The years of early childhood were thus spent under the tuition of his mother, but ere he was ten years old he had shown himself to be considerably beyond her, and she confided his musical training henceforth to Zelter and Berger, two excellent musicians, the former being rich in traditions of the method and school of Sebastian Bach, under which celebrated composer we believe he studied.

The youthful genius began to compose at the age of eleven, and though everything written at that time of life was necessarily ephemeral, it nevertheless earned the encomiums of his masters, and produced high anticipations of his future greatness.

The Overture to "A Midsummer Night's Dream," written when he was about eighteen years old, was the first piece which spread his name beyond the boundaries of Berlin. "It was composed and put to paper," writes his friend Klingemann, "in 1826. Part of the score was written in the beautiful summer of that year, in the open air, in the Mendelssohns' garden in Berlin, as I can witness from having been present." "He played me the Midsummer Night's Dream Overture," says Ferdinand Hiller. "He had told me privately how long and how eagerly he had been working at it: how in his spare time between the lectures at the Berlin University he had gone on extemporising at it on the piano of a beautiful lady who lived close by. 'For a whole year I hardly did anything else,' he said, and he had certainly not wasted his time."

If ever there was an incarnation of fairy music, this is that embodiment. As its light tripping and airy tones pour upon the ear, we may fancy we hear the tinkling feet of myriads of elves keeping time to the light and dainty rhythms of the violins. The whole romantic poetry of German fairy legend seems to be focussed and rendered musical in the charming strains of this piece. There could be no better commentary on the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which it illuminates and renders clear to the conception of fancy far better than the most vividly descriptive essay or the most lively poem. A misfortune attended the score of this overture, which Sir George Smart left in a hackney coach by mistake, and was never able to recover it. This accident, however, did not happen until the work was in print, so that except to musical antiquarians the loss was not a serious one.

When twenty-one years of age Mendelssohn made an Italian tour, probably at the instigation of Goethe, who seems to think with much justice that a visit to Italy paid at an impressionable epoch in a man's life and before his taste has set for good or evil, is calculated to fix his interest on the best models of beauty, and to shape his genius in the mould of a fine idealism. Mendelssohn more than most men was peculiarly susceptible to impressions from without—drawn from landscapes, cities, foreign society, and other kindred sources. There can be no doubt his Italian tour turned his mind to the consideration and proper estimation of that eternal truth, that beauty alone should be the object of the artist's endeavours, and that as a general principle all things should be subordinated to it. Filled with this glowing principle of art, Mendelssohn returned from his Italian tour to delight and

astonish Germany; and through all future ages, as it was said of Orlandus Lassus, "to refresh a weary world."

His letters descriptive of his tour through Italy describe successively the beauties of Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples and Milan. He mixed in the best artistic society of these cities, and had for his friends there the sculptor Thorwaldsen, Horace Vernet the painter, and a crowd of other distinguished men, who were astonished at the spectacle of a musician who was at the same time an artist, a *littérateur*, and a man of varied culture. His *wanderjähre*, "years of probation," were certainly passed under the most pleasant auspices. Unlike his great precursor Bach, who at the same age was walking twenty miles in a day to hear celebrated organists, sitting down on the roadside for very weariness, and glad at times even to accept the charity of passers-by, Mendelssohn was dashing like a brilliant meteor through the *salons* of the fashionable Italian cities, provided with introductions to the best society obtainable there, and drinking in at every pore the impressions of glowing sunsets, gorgeous foliage, purple grapes, enchanting landscapes, lovely women, dances, routs, carnivals, pleasures of every kind, the conversation of great artists, picture galleries, stately architectures, and finally those white marble figures which come to us from a far-off age, the realisation of eternal beauty unapproachable again.

From Italy Mendelssohn passed to Paris, but found society there, by comparison with what he had left, frivolous and uninteresting. "They do not care for art here," he writes. "All they regard is society." London seemed very much more to his mind, and directly he touched our shores the fretfulness which beset him



in the French capital seems completely to pass away, and he writes in the same joyous, happy strain which marks his letters from Italy.

Like Handel, he seems to have had a marvellous affinity for the English, even more than for his own German countrymen. Perhaps his Low German extraction may have conduced to bring this about. But a few miles from his birthplace, Hamburg, lay the flats and wealds whence our ancestors centuries ago poured in their multitudes into Britain.

While in England this time he conducted at a concert of the Philharmonic Society his Hebrides Overture—a piece which had been written from impressions during a tour in the West of Scotland. The idea of embalming these impressions of loch and glen in a musical work, first conceived and executed in this piece, was carried out with greater elaborateness in his Scotch Symphony, composed in 1842. Known as the Symphony in A minor, this piece is a masterpiece of characterisation. In it Mendelssohn has endeavoured to hit off the peculiarities of Scotch music itself, without introducing any actual melody, or approximating his composition in any way to the *potpourri* style of treatment, which a composer of less genius would most surely have fallen into. As a result he has given us in epitome the essence of all Scotch music.

The Symphony in A was the direct outcome of the same tour in the Highlands which produced the Hebrides Overture, and the first conception of it was formed and written at Edinburgh on the 30th July, 1829. It is thus a genuine native production, and exactly what it pretends to be. We hear the bagpipe in some parts, but it does not grate on our ears, for its effect is softened by the instrument to which its pro-

duction is assigned—the clarionet. In other parts we listen to the echoes of a Highland reel, but its natural uncouthness is toned down by the use of apt harmonies and pleasing modulations. Again we have touches of those tender melodies that breathe through the songs of Burns. But suddenly in the finale we are astonished at the complete disappearance of all this, and the passionate outburst of a grand old German chorale. We see at once that the idea in Mendelssohn's mind was "Home again! Back to Germany once more, and farewell to Scotland!"

But greater things were in store for Mendelssohn's genius. He brought out his *St. Paul* in 1836, and ten years later, in 1846, his *Elijah*. The English estimate of these two works is inclined to set the latter above the former; not so in Germany. The Germans ever place *St. Paul* in the post of precedency, admire its dramatic power, its marvellous nervous vigour, and find all sorts of reasons for decrying the rival composition.

"*Elijah* is an affected work," says one. "It is puerile," maintains another; while a third gravely complains that *Elijah* makes too great a demand on his faith. The miracles, he says, of calling down fire from heaven, and bringing timely rain to heal the drought in the land of Israel, are things which he, as a German, cannot be expected to believe. After which he proceeds to blame Mendelssohn for adhering to the narrative as it appears in the Bible, and declares that the proper way to treat it would have been to have given a rationalistic version of the "wonderful tale," which all Germans might then have consistently accepted.

If the truth be told, in accounting for this animus of the Germans against *Elijah*, and their preference for

*St. Paul*, the real reason is that the former is not so national a work as the latter. *Elijah* has fewer chorales, and a less German cast throughout. But if it is less German, it is perhaps a more original outcome of the composer's mind, and this may account for its greater popularity in England. Mendelssohn could never forget that he was a Jew, and the *Elijah* had the merit to him of treating a Jewish theme, while the *St. Paul* was concerned with a Christian one. In this way he put more individuality into the former work than the latter, and was thereby all the more heartily welcomed by a public who place originality above all things.

“Happy is the country,” says Montesquieu, “whose annals are uninteresting!” And happy the man, we may add, whose biography contains no striking incident! The glimpse at Mendelssohn's inner life, which we gave at the beginning of this chapter, will hold good as a representation of his normal life always. He might change his locality, and instead of living at Leipsic migrate to Frankfort, to Berlin, to Munich, to Düsseldorf; but the happy German home still went on untroubled, unmolested by calamity, unchanged in happiness and contentment. Five children were the offspring of Mendelssohn's marriage, and with a sweet wife and with popularity and European reputation smiling around him, Mendelssohn, whose name was “Felix,” was confessed by all his friends to deserve that appellation more than any man living.

But at last the great trouble of the household began —this was the condition of Mendelssohn himself. His state of health had given his wife serious cause for anxiety even before the production of the *Elijah*. He seemed to her to be more than usually restless and

excited. A fever might have got in his blood, judging from his unnatural activity. And the labour entailed in the production of the *Elijah* in 1846 at Birmingham, and its subsequent performance at Exeter Hall in the beginning of 1847, together with the various social functions which required his attendance at the same time, laid on him a strain which his already enfeebled constitution could not sustain.

The beginning of the end came four or five months afterwards at Leipsic, where, while accompanying a lady on the pianoforte, he was seized with delirium, and swooned away. Taken home to his house in the König Strasse, he received all the attention that affectionate love can bestow; but although he recovered slightly, a relapse supervened, and, after lingering for a few weeks, he died in presence of his wife and children on the 4th of November, 1847, aged thirty-eight years.

## SYNOPSIS OF LIFE, AND WORKS.

---

### JAKOB LUDWIG FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY

was born at Hamburg, Feb. 3rd, 1809 ; was the grandson of Moses Mendelssohn, the Jewish philosopher, and the son of Abraham Mendelssohn, a wealthy merchant ; studied the pianoforte under Ludwig Berger ; composition under Zelter ; and the violin under Henning, at Berlin ; first appeared as a public performer, Oct., 1818 ; first began to compose, 1820 ; wrote Overture to "A Midsummer Night's Dream," 1827 ; visited London and Edinburgh, and travelled in the Highlands of Scotland, 1829 ; visited Italy and Switzerland, 1830 ; visited England a second time, 1831 ; became director at Düsseldorf, 1833 ; conductor of Gewandhaus Concerts, 1835 ; married Cécile Jean Renaud, 1837 ; produced St. Paul at Düsseldorf, 1837 ; Hymn of Praise, at Leipsic, 1840 ; became musical director of Leipsic Conservatorium, 1843 ; conductor of the Philharmonic Concerts, London, 1844 ; produced Elijah at Birmingham, 1846 ; died at Leipsic, Nov. 4th, 1847, aged thirty-eight.

---

#### *Opus Numbers.*

1. Quartett for Pf. and strings, in C min., 1822.
2. Do., No. 2, in F. min., 1823.
3. Do. in B min., 1825.
4. Sonata for Pf. and vn., F min.
5. Capriccio for Pf., in F sharp min., 1825.
6. Sonata for Pf., in E, 1826.
7. Seven characteristic pieces for Pf.
8. Twelve songs for voice and Pf., 1829.

9. Twelve songs for voice and Pf., 1829.
10. The Wedding of Comacho (Die Hochzeit des Camacho), comic operetta in 2 acts, Aug. 10, 1825.
11. Symphony No. 1, in C min., 1824.
12. First quartett for strings, in E flat.
13. Second do., in A min.
14. Andante and Rondo capriccioso, in E, Pf.
15. Fantasia on the Last Rose of Summer, in E, Pf.
16. Three Fantasias, Pf.
17. Variations concertants, in D, Pf. and 'cello.
18. First quintett, in A, for strings.
19. Six songs.
20. Octett, in E flat, for strings.
21. Overture: Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream, 1826.
22. Capriccio brilliant, in B min., Pf. and orch.
23. In Deep Distress, Psalm 130 (Bartholomew), for solo and chorus, 2 motetts.
24. Overture, in C, for military band.
25. First concerto, in G min., Pf. and orch.
26. Overture: The Hebrides, in B min., 1829.
27. Overture in D, Die Meeresstille und Glückliche Fahrt.
28. Fantasia for Pf. in F sharp min.
29. Rondo Brillante, for Pf. and orch., in E flat.
30. Sechs Lieder ohne Worte, Pf., Book 2.
31. Psalm 115, for solo, chorus, and orch. [1830].
32. Overture, in E, Märchen von die Schöne Melusine [1833].
33. Three caprices for Pf.
34. Sechs Gesänge [1824].
35. Sechs Präludien und 6 Fugen.
36. St. Paul, oratorio ("Paulus"), Düsseldorf [1836].
37. 3 Präludien und Fugen für Orgel.
38. Sechs Lieder ohne Worte.
39. Three motetts.
40. Second concerto, for Pf. and orch., in D min., 1837.
41. Six four-part Lieder.
42. Psalm 42, for solo, chorus, and orch.
43. Serenade und Allegro giojoso, for Pf. and orch., in D.
44. First, second, and third quartetts, for strings, in D, E minor, and E flat [1837-8].
45. Sonata for Pf. and 'cello, in B.
46. Psalm 95, for solo, chorns, and orch [1838].
47. Sechs Lieder, voice and Pf.
48. Six Lieder, for 4 voices, 2nd set.
49. First trio for Pf., vn., and 'cello [1839].

50. Six Lieder for male voices.
51. Psalm 114, for 8 voice choir and orch.
52. Lobgesang Symphonie-cantate [1840].
53. Sechs Lieder ohne Worte, Pf.
54. Variations (17) Sérieuses, for Pf.
55. Music for the "Antigone" of Sophocles, male choir and orch. [1841].
56. Third Symphony, in A min., "Scotch" [1843].
57. Sechs Lieder.
58. Sonata for Pf. and 'cello, in D.
59. Sechs Lieder, for 4 voices, 3rd set.
60. Die erste Walpurgisnacht, Ballade von Goethe, for chorus and orch., 1832 (2nd version, 1843).
61. Musik zu Sommernachtstraum von Shakespeare (Incidental music to "Midsummer Night's Dream").
62. Lieder ohne Worte, Pf. book 5.
63. Sechs Lieder for 2 voices and Pf.
64. Concerto for vn. and orch. in E minor [1844].
65. Six Sonatas for organ.
66. Second trio for Pf., vn., and 'cello, in C min.
67. Lieder ohne Worte, Pf., 6th book.
68. Festgesang: "An die Künstler" (Schiller), chorus and orch.
69. Three motetts, solo and chorus.
70. Elijah, oratorio, Birmingham, Aug. 26, 1864.
71. Sechs Lieder.
72. Sechs Kinderstücke (children's pieces), Pf.
73. Landa Sion for chorus, solo, and orch., 1846 [op. 1. posthumous].
74. Musik zu "Athalia" von Racine [1843-5].
75. Four Lieder for 4 male voices, 2nd set.
76. Do., 3rd set.
77. Three Lieder for 2 voices and Pf.
78. Three Psalms (2nd, 43rd, and 22nd), for solo and chorus [1844].
79. Six Sprüche (motetts) for 8 part choir.
80. Sixth quartett for strings, in F min. [1847].
81. Andante, scherzo, capriccio, and fugue for strings, in E, A min., E min., and E flat.
82. Variation for Pf. in E flat.
83. Do. in B flat.
- 83a. Andante and variation, in B, Pf. 4 hands.
84. Three songs for a deep voice.
85. Lieder ohne Worte, Pf., book 7.
86. Six songs, voice and Pf.
87. Second quintett for strings, in B [1845].
88. Six Lieder for four voices, 4th set.

89. Heimkehr aus der Fremde ("Son and Stranger,") operetta or leiderspiel in 1 act [1829].
  90. Fourth Symphony for orch. "Italian," in A [1833].
  91. Psalm 98 for 8 voice choir, solo, and orch. [1844].
  92. Allegro brillante, Pf. in A.
  93. Musik for "Oedipus in Kolonos" of Sophocles, for male chorus and orch. [1845].
  94. "Concertarie" (scena) for soprano, solo, and orch.
  95. Overture for orch. "Ruy Blas" (Hugo) in C min. [1839].
  96. Hymn for alto solo, chorus, and orch.
  97. Christus, unfinished oratorio (8 members).
  98. Loreley, unfinished opera, comprising finale to act 1, Ave Maria and chorus, and Vintage chorus for male voices [1847].
  99. Six songs, for voice and Pf.
  100. Four Lieder for 4 voices.
  101. "Trumpet" overture, for orch., in C.
  102. Lieder ohne Worte, Pf., book 8.
  103. Trauermarsch for orch. in A min.
  104. Three preludes and three studies for Pf.
  105. Sonata for Pf. in G min. [1821].
  106. Do. in B flat [1827].
  107. Fifth Symphony for orch., "Reformation," in D min. [1832].
  108. March for orch. in D.
  109. Lieder ohne Worte, for 'cello and Pf., in D.
  110. Sextett for Pf. and strings, in D.
  111. "Tu es Petrus," chorus for 5 voice choir and orch.
  112. Two sacred songs for solo voice and Pf.
  113. Concertstück for clarinet, basset-horn, and Pf., in F.
  114. Do. in D min.
  115. Two sacred choruses for male voices.
  116. Trauergesang (funeral hymn), for mixed choir.
  117. Albumblatt, Pf., in E min.
  118. Capriccio, Pf., in E.
  119. Perpetuum mobile, Pf., in C.
  120. Four Lieder for 4 male voices.
  121. Responsorium et Hymnus, for male voices and org. "Hear my prayer," Psalm for solo, chorus, and orch. [1844].
- Numerous unnumbered works, including songs, part-songs, sacred music (hymns, anthems, etc.), and pianoforte music (studies, "gondellied," preludes, etc.).



## CHOPIN.

ALTHOUGH Chopin was reputed handsome in his youth, the ravages of an illness to which he was very subject converted him in middle life into a pale and cadaverous man, who could only by a stretch of imagination be credited with good looks. Added to this unprepossessing facial appearance was a very fragile and delicate build, which spoke of great physical weakness, combined with a restlessness of manner indicative of an extreme and morbid sensitiveness.

Fond as he was of mixing in society, his natural temperament was the reverse of gay, being exceedingly taciturn and reserved. He seemed like a man plunged in habitual melancholy; and on one of his friends rallying him upon this failing, he is said to have replied: "The truth is, I am always thinking of my oppressed and unhappy country." This alluded to Poland, where he was born in a little village near Warsaw. But we may be allowed to comment on the foolishness of such a speech from any one except a most ardent patriot. However much Chopin loved his country, his zeal, tested by any self-sacrifice on his part, was not equal to that of the humblest Polish refugee who risked his neck or his liberty for the pleasure of dabbling in political plots. The excessive and sensitive patriotism affected by Chopin was probably, in a great measure, hollow pretence, although he may have deceived himself into a belief in its veracity.

But our purpose is not to discuss his claims to rank with the followers of Kosciusko, but to follow him in his everyday life at Paris, where the greater portion of his existence was passed. His house was in the Chaussée d'Antin, and he had the good luck to be the fashionable music-master of Paris in his day. Countesses, duchesses, and even princesses of royal blood contended for the privilege of being his pupils; and the large sums which he was enabled to amass by the lessons he gave were amply sufficient to maintain him in that ease and luxury which, to a man so delicately nurtured as he was, seemed indispensable for any enjoyment of life.

He is a late riser; and his first pupil of the morning, a very fashionable lady whose great ambition is to play one of his waltzes correctly, is kept waiting some time while the dilatory composer performs the function of his toilette, and partakes of a slight breakfast, which is all his slender appetite is capable of at this early hour of the day. Alone with his pupil, and sitting by the side of the piano, he is the most amiable of men, but seems to take more interest in *petite causerie* than in the more serious question of notes and fingering. His fair pupil appears to be similarly disposed and the lesson passes pleasantly along, to the accompaniment of a good deal of chatting, and as little music as can conscientiously be imparted in the short space of one hour.

The first pupil having gone is succeeded by a second, with whom the agreeable method of the preceding lesson is repeated down to details. This young lady has a great deal to tell Chopin about the Duchesse de B——'s ball last night, and who were there; topics to which he listens with apparently the greatest interest, ever and anon recalling her to the piece of music before her, and suggesting that perhaps it would be

better if she were to vary her conversation by a little playing.

This method of dealing with his fair pupils was in a measure forced upon Chopin, owing to the fact that his principal connection as a teacher of the pianoforte was with the gay and idle class at the head of Parisian society, who desired nothing more from his lessons than the reputation of having studied under him, and were entirely disinclined to approach music in a serious spirit or engage in any laborious exercises with a view to proficiency. Occasionally, however, a pupil came to him of exceptional abilities, and with a strong ambition to shine as a pianist. With such as these—and they were few and far between—we have the best evidence that Chopin threw off the *dilettante* manner which he assumed with others, and proved himself a zealous and industrious teacher. His heart was too much in the cause of pianoforte playing to refuse assistance to those who truly desired it.

At length his last pupil has left him, and he sits down to a late *déjeuner*, after which he intends to devote the remainder of the day until the evening to pianoforte practice and perhaps to composition. It is strange to find the greatest virtuoso of Europe in his day meditating so homely an occupation as the drudgery of practice. Yet such, if we follow Chopin to his piano, we shall find he is about to engage in, with as great assiduity and with tenfold more patience than is displayed by the humblest beginner. His practice at the pianoforte was so incessant, so tremendous (if we may use so strong a term), that he caused permanent injury to his spine by sitting on the stool before the instrument with his back unsupported and erect for hours at a stretch. These habits seem to have been contracted in

early life, and—with the exception, perhaps, of Adolph Henselt, who is said to have frequently sat for sixteen hours daily, absorbed in technical exercises at his instrument—the pianoforte has had no more ardent and faithful votary than Frédéric Chopin.

On taking his place at the piano, his first act is to play over innumerable scales and exercises, which fall like the tones of flutes upon the air, and gain by the purity of his tone and touch a tolerable, even an interesting character, which their ordinary delivery is very far from possessing. Many of these exercises are especially constructed by himself with the view to developing some beauty of his style or remedying some weakness; for, unlike the majority of performers, he is alive to his defects, and does not consider it beneath him to use his best pains towards counteracting them. These preliminary studies seem interminable. His fingers fly like lightning over the keys, at times adopting a slower movement, and coquetting with the notes as if they were endeavouring to extract some strange and unearthly sweetness therefrom which they alone could elicit. At such times as these Chopin bends down his head sideways, and listens intently to the tone, smiling occasionally when it attains that pitch of beauty which alone can satisfy him.

After a while he ceases the exercises for another division of his practice, which, judging by the earnest way in which he settles himself to it, seems to be the serious business of the afternoon. This is, perhaps, the dullest drudgery which the pianist can undergo, and consists in nothing less than trying over on the pianoforte various isolated passages, some consisting of no more than a bar each, and all disconnected fragments, being, indeed, difficult *morceaux* which have



CHOPIN



proved stumbling-blocks to the executant in various pieces he had been playing previously. All these, apparently, have been carefully remembered (he has a small list of them), and now comes the unenviable labour of wearing down their difficulty by constant repetition, until at last they flow off his fingers without a sign of effort in their production.

This was Chopin's own peculiar style of practice, in pursuing which he believed his success as a player to lie. Whatever caused a difficulty, he would make a note of, and indefatigably work at that passage, if need were, for hours together. He has been known to repeat one bar over and over again, without flinching, nearly a thousand times, till people in the house with him were aghast at the monotony and at the terrible pains about trifles which the great pianist condescended to take. This afternoon he repeats some passages fifty, sixty, a hundred times, before he considers his execution of them perfect.

The afternoon wears away, the sun sinks, twilight steals into the room,—and still, completely absorbed in his task as if he were a schoolgirl diligently rehearsing some difficult passage in order to escape the censure of her governess next morning, he sits going over the same bar again and again; and, when at last he has perfected it, varying his labour by beginning a new one.

If Chopin's method of practice is unique among players, his method of fingering is equally singular. Kalkbrenner and others of the old school, when Chopin made his first public appearance, beheld his fingering with horror. There seems little doubt that Chopin was guilty of a peculiar use of the first finger, but no doubt he had the best of reasons for it. He was the first pronounced champion of those long stretches in piano-

forte playing which have since been carried to such excess by Liszt and Henselt; and, in endeavouring to realise those great chords which are so effective on the piano, he was led to a method of fingering which may have seemed extraordinary and revolutionary to the old style of players, but which was none the less justified by the circumstances of the case and indispensable for the effects which he aimed at producing.

Many hours have been consumed in these patient exercises which we have spoken of, and dusk is now drawing on apace. He orders in candles, and when these have been brought, after a cup of coffee, wheels a table up to the side of the piano-stool and once more seats himself at the instrument. On this table are pens, ink, and music paper. It is Chopin's composing table,—a small, light piece of furniture which can be pushed in the corner when necessary, and without any trouble can be lifted from one part of the room to the other.

Such special qualities in the table are entirely necessary for Chopin's purpose. He never composes except when seated at the piano, and a dozen times a day this table is brought up to the side of the keys and then pushed away again, according as a momentary impulse of composition seizes the composer, only to be abandoned again—or, worse than that, obliged to be postponed, owing to the unexpected entrance of visitors. The great Bach would have looked with contempt upon such a musician as this, who could not conceive an idea in his head apart from the instrument. He would have called him, as he dubbed similar men in his own time, “a harpsichord knight,” and would have declared that nothing he wrote could possibly have been worth listening to.



Nevertheless, what beauty, what exquisite purity of music lurk in the melodies of Chopin, all conceived in this illegal manner, with the composer planted in front of the instrument extemporising the melody on the ivory keys, and transferring it laboriously to the paper which lies at his side ! He was accustomed to try many versions of a passage before deciding on its final form, which will account in a great measure for the almost fastidious refinement of his melodies.

With his harmony he was even more precise and particular, and the use of the piano was even more indispensable to him. He himself confessed that he could never tell how a chord sounded until he had tried it on the piano. His harmonies, as all will admit, are rare and beautiful. There is nothing commonplace about them, and they agree with the melody in a marvellous affinity of sentiment, which scarcely any other composer has succeeded so effectually in securing. This is owing to the laborious industry of the composer-player, who has built them up note by note in the course of repeated efforts towards perfection, trying over many possibilities of harmony before he secured the right one, and listening anxiously and incessantly to his various experiments, which were destined to result eventually in so beautiful a concord.

The harmonies of Chopin will submit themselves to the analysis of no rules. He himself affected a lofty disregard of every principle of concord. He declared his ignorance of system, and openly made the confession that whatever pleased his ear was from that fact alone accepted by him as answering all the requirements of art. He was a thorough revolutionist : but, unlike most of his kin, managed to get his doctrines accepted by his admirers, and since then by

the world at large, so far as his own writings are concerned.

The fastidiousness with which he picks out the chords on the piano, and transfers them to his paper; the rapt and dreamy manner in which he toys with fragments of melody, repeating them over and over again, as if enchanted with their beauty; the slow and deliberate way in which he pens the music on the paper by his side; all testify to the fact that he is a very slow and tardy composer. The paucity of his compositions would alone show this; but even more so their elaborate workmanship.

Whoever has scanned a painting by Leonardo da Vinci, and noted the multitude of minute details which conspire to produce the *tout ensemble*, will not be surprised to hear that he was the slowest of the painters; often pausing, often hesitating, and even deliberately postponing the completion of a work, in order to have the pleasure of continuing it. Such was Chopin among the composers, and although he cannot be rated so high, comparatively speaking, as the great painter we have mentioned, he has made a name for himself in music second only to the greatest.

His labours of composition are at length over, imperatively so, for it is now getting on towards seven o'clock, and he must play at a concert at eight or half past. Hurriedly dressing, he hastens off into the midst of Paris; and, dropping in at a restaurant on the Boulevards on his way to the concert room, partakes of a light dinner. He reaches the hall, and his playing this evening is of the sublimest order. The whole audience are in an ecstasy of delight at his wondrous power, and he has to bow his acknowledgments again and again. Yet this evening, when a select gathering

of friends assemble at his house after the concert is over, he will be full of complaints and dissatisfaction with himself. His words will be, as they ever were, "I am not made for concert playing. The sight, the personality of the people before me unnerve and weary me. I cannot rightly interpret a piece with a great bold audience staring upon me. They may think that my playing is very good; I say that it was second-rate to-night, and always is at all public concerts."

This evening, after the concert has concluded, a bevy of ladies and a number of well-known musical amateurs present themselves at his lodging, and a delightful *réunion* is formed, which continues till the small hours of the morning. Chopin, at first loud in disparagement of his recent performance at the concert, and full of resolutions that he will never play again in public, gradually quiets down, and ere long is seated at the piano in the midst of a rapt and attentive circle, extemporising, improvising, and lost to all but his music. Chandeliers and brackets of wax candles illumine the apartment with a soft and mellow light; the furniture is elegant and artistic; fair faces are seen around, entranced at the revelations and the power of harmony. Parisian refinement breathes around, and nowhere is it more strikingly exemplified than in the central figure of the company, who, from the ivory keys of his piano, strikes forth enchanting strains that linger in the ear and subdue the soul of sadness.

Chopin first played in Paris in 1831, when he was barely twenty-one years of age, and this was the occasion when the pianists of that capital first became aware that they had got an infant Hercules among them who threatened the very existence of their most cherished traditions. All sorts of objections were taken to his

playing. "He uses his forefinger like a thumb," said one. "He plays with a flat hand," cried another. "He passes his third finger over his fourth," said a third. "He deserves to be whipped and sent to school again," cried a fourth; "he is ignorant of the simplest elements of fingering."

The fact was, in that dainty age the art of fingering had reached such a point of fastidiousness that the slightest motions were the subject of deep consideration. Herz, the pianist, had invented a machine which was like an elongated mouse-trap, consisting of a number of wire holes, one before each key on the piano. The fingers running in and out were compared to mice by the wags of the time, and to attain this daintiness of execution was thought to be the highest goal of every pianist. Chopin was the first to break through these prim traditions, and hence the outcry against him.

He was original in his method of playing, as he was original in the harmonies which he made use of for his waltzes and other compositions. He was not disposed by nature to be an imitator of other methods or to follow in other people's footsteps. Everything, to satisfy him, must come fresh and original from his own consciousness. Only thus could he interest himself in his work. Directly he became an imitator, as, for instance, in his orchestration—where he had no original talent whatever—he signally failed.

To people of the present generation, the player, recently passed away, who in personal eminence and in masterly execution bore most resemblance to Chopin, was Liszt. Yet, how wide the difference between them! Chopin's style had greater grace and elegance, less solidity and power than Liszt's. Chopin was essentially the gentler player of the two. He had

the art of playing *with* the piano, rather than *on* it. We have heard of pianists of Liszt's school boxing their piano. Chopin caressed his. He nursed it as a mother would do a child, and seemed to make the music come rather by humouring the instrument to speak than by actually touching notes and keys as ordinary players do. "Well, velvet fingers," George Sand would say to him, as she bent over him at his practice, "you are at your music again." And this epithet exactly epitomises his style.

The son of a French teacher of languages who settled in Warsaw, after having spent many years of his life in Lorraine, Chopin had the accident of being born a Pole rather than a Frenchman. This fact disposes at once of much of his romantic talk about Polish patriotism, indulged in by him, we fear, because it was the fashion rather than from any deep and soul-stirring motive. We do not wish to tax Chopin with perpetual affectation in the matter, but we think that he himself was often deceived as to the reality of his patriotic spirit.

Unlike most of the great composers, he did not display much musical capacity till he was close on his teens, when he took a sudden turn for the better so far as music was concerned, and distinguished himself in the Warsaw Conservatoire. After appearing at Prague, Dresden, Munich, Vienna, Berlin, London, and elsewhere as a pianist, with increasing success, he settled down in Paris in 1831, as the fashionable music-master of the capital, he himself being at the age of twenty-two at the time. Some years were spent in this way, and his life differed but little day by day from the form in which we have described it.

After having thus lived a happy and comparatively untroubled life in Paris for about six years, the seeds of consumption began to develop in his delicate frame, and about the same time he formed the acquaintance of, and afterwards conceived an attachment for, George Sand. It would be impossible to say which of these two events caused most suffering and sorrow to the sensitive composer during the short span of his future life. This attachment lasted nearly eleven years, from about 1836 to 1847, and when it was broken, the effect on the enfeebled constitution of Chopin was to hasten that death which would have come soon enough without being precipitated.

George Sand, we may at once say, must have been a most ill-matched companion for the sensitive and susceptible musician. He was the constant prey of jealousies, for which she for her part gave him every reason. Her eccentricities caused him frequent pain, and, naturally a fastidious man himself, he shrank from looking on the lady clad in a suit of male apparel, cocking one leg over a chair-back, and emitting blue clouds of smoke from a mouth whose teeth were less white than yellow. Yet such eccentricities did he have to tolerate as long as he maintained his association with this lady, which was from his twenty-eighth year to his thirty-seventh, an unfortunate and not the most typical epoch of his life.

From the very first Chopin's health was gradually failing. He sank into sickness soon after their acquaintance began, and on George Sand devolved the duty of nursing him. In the hope of recruiting his health she took him to Majorca, where they obtained lodgings at the monastery of Valdemosa, at that time tenanted by a Spanish refugee and his wife. For a certain consideration the latter resigned possession of their furniture to

the new-comers, who thought themselves very well off to get any house-room at all in so outlandish a place.

The spot was romantic—a charming nook for music and poetry. Yet neither with the musician nor the novelist did things go well. They could get nothing that they wanted. The absence of a stove to warm the apartment, and of wood to light the fire, was sufficient to banish the Muses for ever from the haunt where their presence seemed so congenial to the surroundings, and to make the feelings of the two travellers not only disagreeable towards others, but also to themselves. All romance had disappeared from Majorca, when George Sand wrote as follows:—

“The domestic is a brute ; bigoted, lazy, and gluttonous ; a veritable son of a monk (I think all are that). Happily, the maid whom I have brought with me from Paris is very devoted, and resigns herself to do heavy work ; but she is not strong, and I must help her. Besides, everything is dear, and proper nourishment is difficult to get when the stomach cannot stand either rancid oil or pigs’ grease. I begin to get accustomed to it ; but Chopin is ill every time that we do not prepare his food ourselves. In short, our expedition here is, in many respects, a frightful *fiasco*.”

Matters were not improved by the fact that Chopin became visibly worse. George Sand quarrelled with the doctor and persisted in the opposite treatment to that which the leech recommended. It was impossible to say who was right, he or she. Neither of them did Chopin any good.

In her work, “*Un Hiver à Majorque*,” George Sand gives us a glimpse of how matters were going on. The people of the island regarded them both as very “uncanny” individuals, and especially Chopin.

“This consumptive person,” said these barbarians, “is going to hell : firstly because he is consumptive, secondly because he does not confess. If he is in this

condition when he dies we shall not bury him in consecrated ground ; and as no one will be willing to give him a grave his friends will have to manage matters as best they can."

Let us hear what George Sand says about her patient at this time. We quote from the "*Histoire de ma Vie*":—

"The poor great artist was a detestable patient. What I had feared, but unfortunately not enough, happened. He became completely demoralised. Bearing pain courageously enough, he could not overcome the disquietude of his imagination. The monastery was for him full of terrors and phantoms, even when he was well. He did not say so, and I had to guess it.

"On returning from my nocturnal explorations in the ruins with my children, I found him at ten o'clock at night before his piano, his face pale, his eyes wild, and his hair almost standing on end. It was some minutes before he could recognise us. He then made an attempt to laugh, and played to us sublime things that he had just composed ; or, rather, to be more accurate, terrible and heart-rending ideas which had taken possession of him, as it were without his knowledge, in that hour of solitude, sadness, and terror. It was then that he composed the most beautiful of those short pieces he modestly entitled '*Preludes.*' They are masterpieces. Several present to the mind visions of deceased monks, and the sounds of the funeral chants which beset his imagination ; others are melancholy and sweet. They occurred to him in the hours of sunshine and health, with the noise of the children's laughter under the window, the distant sound of guitars, the warbling of the birds among the humid foliage, and the sight of the pale little full blown roses on the snow."

Chopin did not improve until they left Majorca and went to Barcelona. But the journey to the latter port was very unpleasantly performed, and there is a grotesque humour in the fact that the musician and the novelist, who sailed thence some time before in pursuit of health mingled with romance, returned to the place from whence they started "in company with a hundred pigs, whose horrible squealing and fetid odour allowed Chopin no rest and no air that he could



breathe." At Barcelona they had at least a respectable doctor on whose opinion they could rely, and the invalid grew better day by day. Ere long they were enabled to go to Marseilles, where they stayed till the following summer.

It was at this time that the *liaison* between these two ill-matched beings threatened to become the closest. Let us hear how George Sand speaks on the subject:—

"I entertained eventually the idea that Chopin might rest and regain his health by spending a few summers with us, his work necessarily calling him back to Paris in the winter. Nevertheless, the prospect of this kind of family union with a newly made friend caused me to reflect. I felt alarmed at the task I was about to undertake, and which I had believed would be limited to the journey to Spain. A kind of terror seized me in presence of this new duty. I was not under the illusion of passion. I had for the artist a kind of maternal adoration, which was very warm, very real; but which could not for a moment contend with maternal love, the only chaste feeling which may be passionate.

"I was still young enough [George Sand was at this time thirty-five] to have perhaps to contend with love, with passion properly so-called. The contingency of my age, of my situation, and of the destiny of artistic women—especially when they have a horror of passing diversions—alarmed me much; and, resolved as I was never to submit to any influence which might divert me from my children, I saw a less but still possible danger in the tender friendship with which Chopin had inspired me. Well, after reflection, this danger disappeared, and even assumed an opposite character,—that of a preservative against emotions which I no longer wished to know. One duty more in my life (already so full and so overburdened with work) appeared to me one chance more to attain the austerity towards which I felt myself attracted with a kind of religious enthusiasm."

In the autumn of 1839 accordingly she accompanied Chopin to Paris, and during the spring and summer he came to her place at Nohant. And in this way the years passed by until the separation of the pair, which might naturally have been expected one day to take place.

Various causes are adduced by those who were acquainted with the pair, or by chroniclers of their *liaison*, to account for the separation. According to Liszt, who was intimately acquainted with both parties, Chopin was strongly opposed to the marriage of George Sand's daughter, and this was the cause of the rupture.

Karasowski maintains, with greater probability, that the lady grew tired of the invalid, and finding that the broadest of hints could not get rid of him she caricatured him in the novel "Lucrezia Floriani," the proof-sheets of which she handed him to correct. There can be no doubt that the Prince Karol in that book is intended for Chopin. If the world at large can see the resemblance, could he fail to detect it?

Whatever were the cause, the separation came at last in 1847. Chopin took it bitterly to heart. He flew to London to escape from himself, and gave concerts both there and in Scotland. They were the last he ever gave. His visit to the latter country, with its cold air and damp climate, was singularly unfavourable to his health, and he returned to France only to die, expiring of consumption and of a broken heart in 1849, in the forty-first year of his age.

## SYNOPSIS OF LIFE, AND WORKS.

---

FRANÇOIS FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN was born at Zelazowa Wola, Warsaw, March 1st, 1809 ; was the son of Nicholas Chopin, a French teacher ; studied at Warsaw under Zywny and Elsner ; appeared at Vienna, Prague, and Dresden, 1829 ; at Berlin, Munich, and London, 1831 ; settled in Paris, Sept., 1831 ; was intimately acquainted with Madame Dudevant (George Sand), 1836—47 ; visited Majorca with George Sand, 1837 ; visited England and Scotland, and gave concerts there, 1848 ; died at Paris, Oct. 17th, 1849, aged forty.

---

### *Opus Numbers.*

1. First Rondo for Pf., in C minor.
2. "La ci darem la mano" for Pf. and orch., in B flat minor.
3. Introduction and Polonaise brillante for Pf. and 'cello.
4. Sonata for Pf., in C minor.
5. Rondo for Pf., in F.
6. Four Mazurkas for Pf.
7. Five Mazurkas for Pf.
8. First Trio for Pf., vn., and 'cello.
9. Three Nocturnes for Pf.
10. Twelve Grand Studies for Pf.
11. Grand Concerto for Pf. and orch., in E minor.
12. Variations on Hérold's "Je vends des Scapulaires," for Pf.
13. Grand Fantasia for Pf. and orch., in A.
14. Krakowiak, Grand Rondo for Pf. and orch., in F.
15. Three Nocturnes for Pf.
16. Rondo, in E flat.
17. Four Mazurkas for Pf.

18. Grand Valse for Pf., in E flat.
19. Bolero for Pf., in C.
20. First Scherzo for Pf.
21. Second Concerto for Pf. and orch., in F minor.
22. Grand Polonaise brillante for Pf. and orch., in E flat.
23. Ballade for Pf., in G minor.
24. Four Mazurkas for Pf.
25. Twelve Studies for Pf.
26. Two Polonaises for Pf.
27. Two Nocturnes for Pf.
28. Twenty-four Preludes for Pf.
29. First Impromptu for Pf., in A flat.
30. Four Mazurkas for Pf.
31. Second Scherzo for Pf., in B minor.
32. Two Nocturnes for Pf.
33. Four Mazurkas for Pf.
34. Three Valses for Pf.
35. Sonata for Pf., in B minor.
36. Second Impromptu for Pf.
37. Two Nocturnes for Pf.
38. Second Ballade for Pf.
39. Third Scherzo for Pf.
40. Two Polonaises for Pf.
41. Four Mazurkas for Pf.
42. Valse for Pf., in A flat.
43. Tarantelle for Pf., in A flat.
44. Polonaise for Pf., in F sharp.
45. Prelude for Pf., in C sharp minor.
46. Allegro de Concert for Pf., in A.
47. Third Ballade for Pf.
48. Two Nocturnes for Pf., in C minor, and F sharp minor.
49. Fantasia for Pf., in F minor.
50. Three Mazurkas for Pf.
51. Third Impromptu for Pf.
52. Fourth Ballade for Pf., in F minor.
53. Polonaise for Pf.
54. Fourth Scherzo for Pf., in E.
55. Two Nocturnes for Pf.
56. Three Mazurkas for Pf.
57. Berceuse for Pf., in D flat.
58. Sonata, in B minor.
59. Three Mazurkas for Pf.
60. Barcarolle for Pf., in F sharp.
61. Polonaise-Fantasia for Pf., in A flat.

62. Two Nocturnes for Pf.
63. Three Mazurkas for Pf.
64. Three Waltzes for Pf.
65. Sonata for Pf. and 'cello, in G minor.

*Posthumous Works.*

66. Fantasia-Impromptu for Pf.
  67. Four Mazurkas for Pf.
  68. Four Mazurkas.
- A number of minor and detached Pf. pieces without op. numbers.

## SCHUBERT.

SCHUBERT'S chief friend, before he went to undertake the duties of music-master in Count Esterhazy's family, was a literary man and poet named Schober, who was not only excellent company himself, but had the faculty of gathering round him a number of friends all more or less distinguished in their vocations in life, which were chiefly literary and musical. Schober was a bachelor who lived with a widowed mother, and when Schubert left his father's house and prepared to start life in Vienna on his own account, to whom could he more naturally turn than to his friend, Schober, who, although not by nature musical, had other tastes in common, and had collected a knot of very musical people around him? Schubert accordingly took up his abode in Schober's house, renting an apartment there, and mixing freely with the company which often assembled in the rooms of his bachelor host, always so ardent a votary of the Muses.

Schubert, although not by nature a methodical man, was marvellously regular in his attention to composition. No sooner was breakfast over every morning than he very unceremoniously quitted the family circle and betook himself to his room, where pens, ink, and paper lay out before him.

While some composers have been blessed with the enviable temperament of Cimarosa—who could take up



SCHUBERT.





his pen amid a roomful of talkative people and proceed undisturbed in the composition of an opera, and on whom the action of writing music made no more serious impression than that of taking a cup of coffee or having an agreeable chat with a friend—there have been other musicians, on the contrary, with whom composition was a terrible and soul-rending reality, and who expressed most vividly in the external appearance of their body the throes and wrestlings of their mind. Such a one was Schubert.

During the time that he was composing his features worked, his eyes flashed, his limbs twitched. He was a prey to violent and unnatural excitement, which held complete control of him until the fit of composition had passed away, after which time he relapsed into his usual mien, which was that of a somewhat dull and heavy man. These raptures of composition—for by no other word can we aptly describe the feelings which agitated him—seemed necessary to his existence; and perhaps the regularity with which he indulged them may find its true explanation in the pleasure that the act of penning music afforded him.

He was a fairly rapid writer, and was seldom troubled with hesitation about beginning,—such hesitation, for instance, as would perplex and embarrass a man like Meyerbeer, who would sit pulling the music paper about for twenty minutes and more before he would pen a line. Schubert's facility and fluency were extraordinary. Schumann has been credited with the remark concerning him that he could set everything down to a toll ticket to music; and if we observe the rapt and visionary man as he sits in his room this morning, a prey to the intoxication of inspiration, and penning page after page, we shall readily believe that

such an account of him is correct. So absorbed is he in his work that he pauses not to go downstairs for his "second breakfast," which in German households takes the place of a lunch, but sacrifices the meal to his enthusiasm, and rapidly fills page after page until the dinner time arrives, by which hour he has set to music a large quantity of poetry.

Among those who meet him at dinner in Schober's hospitable household is Mayrhofer, a poet, some of whose effusions he has spent the morning in setting to music. Mayrhofer, taciturn and reserved in other company, becomes talkative enough in Schubert's, and very soon his tongue and that of Schober are wagging loudly on questions of poetry and music—themes on which they seem never tired of descanting. Others at the table are Gatry and Vogl,—the latter an elderly man in comparison with his companions, and much more sedate than the rest.

The conversation grows more and more animated as the dinner proceeds; and, indulging in the usual foible of Germans, which is to talk louder and louder each moment, before the repast is ended a veritable roar is humming round the table. Flagons of Pilsener beer, and occasional draughts of something stronger, help the company to the indulgence of their loquacity; and, although it is still broad afternoon, they seem on the point of turning the dinner into a carouse. From this weakness they are preserved by the gravity and decorum of Vogl, who rises from the table with the intention of singing one of Schubert's songs, and the composer, perhaps unwillingly, accedes to this first step towards breaking up the party, and accompanies the vocalist to the piano.

How divinely Vogl sings need not be commented on.

His style is that of the oratorio rather than the opera, despite the fact that the greater part of his life has been passed on the lyric stage. He was the first vocalist of any note who took upon himself the task of making Schubert's songs known to the public, and the still obscure composer is too grateful to his friend to refuse him any favour, not to mention the paltry one of leaving the Pilsener beer for the pianoforte. As Vogl sings, the whole room becomes hushed; even the noisy tongues of Mayrhofer and Schober are stilled to silence. Such a perfect exposition of the favourite *Lieder* has probably never been listened to; for, unlike the subsequent singers who perform the airs as they would any other ditty, Vogl was not only deeply impressed with their beauty, but conceived it his mission in life to sing them. This celebrated vocalist had been educated at a monastery in early life, and the strictness of his training had left its trace upon him in a steadfastness of purpose, which was in remarkable contrast with the volatility of many of his comrades on the stage.

The song is succeeded by another entertainment no less welcome to the musical and artistic company. This is a series of duets played by Schubert and Gatty, who begin their labours with a noble symphony of Beethoven's, arranged from the score by Schubert himself, and this is followed by an overture, a fantasia, a set of dances—all from the latter composer's pen. The company, as they sit and listen to such music, no longer regret the interruption to their potations, and when the concert is over do not feel inclined to renew them. As the weather is fine, and there are yet two or three hours to dusk, they propose a walk into the country; and, taking up their hats and sticks, the party of friends

troop off to enjoy themselves in the fresh air, indulging in laughter and jests without end as they descend the staircase to the street.

Schubert perhaps passed too much time in the pleasures of social intercourse and yet there never was a man so shy, so modest, and so reserved as he. With his own special friends, such as Schober and his set, he would unbend himself to the excess of familiarity; but with strangers, and especially with ladies, he was awkward, constrained,—almost, if we may use the word, a boor.

His personal appearance had little in it to commend him. He was short, his figure was squat and ungainly, and he added to its homely appearance by an awkward habit of stooping, which gave to his walk the semblance of a slouch, and to his stationary postures the aspect of clumsiness and ungracefulness. His face was pale and puffy, and his features commonplace in the extreme. His nose was stumpy and his eyebrows bushy, and the pen of a biographer, however anxious to pass a compliment upon his personal appearance, wavers in the attempt and finally gives up the task. He added to the unprepossessing nature of his looks by the custom of nearly always wearing spectacles, which was the last touch that completed as uninteresting a figure as the portrait gallery of the great composers has to show.

The friends, having now returned from their walk, separate, and Schubert betakes himself to his room in order to make his toilette for the evening—a task which he neither took any interest in nor troubled himself much to perform, but which nevertheless has to be done. This evening he has an engagement to act as accompanist to his friend Vogl at the house of an Austrian nobleman, whom the singer is very anxious to interest

in the young and unknown composer. In due time Schubert and Vogl set off on their way thither, and are ushered up a magnificent staircase into a hall brilliantly lighted with wax candles and crowded with guests.

There is quite a buzz of excitement on the entrance of the great singer Vogl, whose form is well known to every *habitué* of the grand opera; and the hall contains many such *habitués*. Vogl is pressed by one lady to sing an air from Handel's opera of *Rinaldo*, by another to give a *scena* from one of Hasse's, while another would prefer the popular aria by Rameau, "Un inconstant devrait être il heureux?" But Vogl resists all entreaties, and declares that he has come there to sing no other songs but those of Schubert, adding that he has the sanction of their noble host for doing so.

"Who is Schubert?" inquires one lady from the other.

"My dear," replies her friend, "he is probably the composer of the new opera in which Herr Vogl is to have the principal part, and that is the reason why the Herr is so anxious to sing his songs."

This theory, however, turns out to be baseless, on the discovery being made that the composer of the forthcoming opera is a person by the name of Hofmann.

"Who, then, is Schubert?" repeats the inquisitive lady. Nobody knows, and nobody seems to care. Not one among that fashionable assembly has bestowed a glance on the awkward youth who has entered the *salon*, shambling at Vogl's heels, and almost tripping up over a hassock on his way between an aisle of ladies to the piano. That youth is, of course, Vogl's accompanist. In due course he begins to play. "Very melodious," the ladies remark, and begin to scrutinize

him through their eye-glasses, without having a suspicion as to who he is.

Herr Vogl sings song after song in excellent style, and quite enchants the company with his performance. "It is most extraordinary," is the general remark, "that all these songs are by one man; and still more so that no one knows who this one man is." By common consent it is agreed that when Herr Vogl comes to the end of his last song he shall be interrogated on the matter.

The opportunity at length arrives. Herr Vogl, amid a storm of aristocratic applause, steps down from the cushioned platform on which he had been standing, and passes into the midst of the company.

"Who is this Schubert?" arises the cry in a chorus of female voices on every side of him.

"Schubert," says Herr Vogl, striking a theatrical attitude, having prepared the scene in his own imagination the evening before, "Schubert, ladies, is there!"

With that he turns round and points to the piano, where his young accompanist has lately poured forth his floods of melody. But, to his own surprise, and still more to that of the company, there is no one to be seen on the piano stool. The modest accompanist has evidently taken alarm and fled.

"Where is he?" chorus the ladies, looking intently through their eye-glasses.

"This Schubert," add the gentlemen, tapping their snuff-boxes and concluding their remarks with a pinch, "is evidently a mystery!"

The truth was as we have surmised. At the first inkling that he was to be made a public spectacle, to be stared at, perhaps to be spoken to and complimented, the timid and reserved Schubert had taken alarm and

fled precipitately to an ante-chamber, where he was found by Vogl some half hour afterwards, diligently engaged in turning over the pages of a volume of Bach's oratorios which he had discovered there, and lamenting to himself in audible tones that he had not studied counterpoint.

Vogl scolds him for his conduct, and tells him pretty plainly that if he does not throw aside this unconquerable reserve which overwhelms him he will never become either popular or famous. Schubert listens very meekly to the remonstrances of his friend, promising that another time he will be less timid, and begins to talk rather boldly of his powers of self-assurance if he only likes to assert them—when suddenly he hears a party of the guests descending the staircase and approaching the room where he and Vogl are sitting. Without waiting to learn whether they are coming to see him (which is most unlikely), or are only passing the door, he seizes Vogl's arm and hurries him down the grand staircase, declaring that he can only breathe freely when they are in the open air.

Schubert and his friend walk home on a beautiful starry night. He leaves Vogl at the latter's lodgings, which are near those of Schubert; but, despite his friend's earnest injunctions that he should go straight home and get early to bed, he does not pass the *Bier Halle* in the next street without turning in to enjoy himself with the good company there assembled. Here he finds, deep amid the fumes of tobacco, wine, and beer, not only the convivial Schober, but Mayrhofer, Gatry, and several more choice spirits of their persuasion, who are now joyfully renewing the carouse in which they were interrupted during the afternoon.

Schubert's entry into their midst is hailed with

delight, and very soon he sits with a flagon before him, the loudest and the most indefatigable in the merriment. Here he can enjoy himself thoroughly. That icy reserve which seems to beset him when in the society of strangers has completely disappeared. Song after song goes round the board, and the revel becomes more and more bacchanalian as the night advances into the small hours of the morning.

Schubert, seated at an old rickety piano, and pouring forth unpremeditated strains amid such uproarious surroundings, is perhaps happier—or, at least, quite as happy, as if he were the centre of attention amid a courtly circle, with an instrument before him the finest in Vienna. The worst of it is that the company are not entirely calculated to appreciate his genius at the present moment, since the prolonged revelry has had a marked effect upon some of them. But if a stranger in the midnight street had heard the music, uncontaminated by the clinking of glasses and the occasional staves of pothouse songs with which it was intermixed, he would have said to himself, "Some mighty musician is at work within. If I could steal these lovely tones he is pouring forth, and put them down on paper as my own, I might make a name for myself second to none in Vienna."

A very good parallel might be drawn between Schubert and Burns. Both were the sweet singers of the people, both were neglected by their own generation, and both were men whose habits were rather compatible with a world of Bohemians than with the ways of ordinary society. But Schubert's pride was a distinguishing characteristic which severed the musician from the poet, and alas! for the former did much to prejudice his interests.



On one occasion, for instance, to give an example of it, he was a candidate for the post of conductor at a Viennese theatre, and as the preliminary step for the candidature was to write an operatic *scena*. He had no difficulty in doing that. The next step was to get the *prima donna* to sing it. The lady was very willing to render the air on condition that some trifling alteration should be made in the notes, to suit her voice. As the music stood she declared that she was unable to sing it. Although the whole question of his success in gaining the appointment rested on the delivery of this air by the *prima donna*, Schubert entirely declined to alter a single note. The manager asked him very civilly to oblige the singer, but Schubert, bursting into a passion, bawled out, "I never make an alteration;" and clapping his music under his arm and his hat on his head strode out of the theatre.

The neglect which the composer experienced did much to emphasise and intensify his natural recalcitrancy and haughtiness. Being habitually ignored as a man of genius, he came to look upon such treatment as his certain due, and almost to court it by his forbidding demeanour. It is a puzzle to us at this point of time to think how entirely Schubert was slighted by his contemporaries. Two years before his death, when all his great compositions had been written and his life was on the point of being concluded, he was among the candidates for the post of deputy-organist in the Imperial Court Chapel in Vienna. The capellmeister, who had the task of electing the successful candidate, when asked if Schubert were not among the applicants, replied that a man called Schubert was certainly a candidate for the post, but that there was not much chance of his election, as he;

the capellmeister, had never heard his name before until the present moment. We may imagine the intense obscurity of any English musician whose name, being submitted to Sir John Stainer or Sir Walter Parratt, might provoke a similar remark; and having imagined that intense obscurity, let us reflect that such was Franz Schubert's.

Schubert's father was a schoolmaster at Lichtenthal, near Vienna, and Franz was one of a numerous family of brothers and sisters. The first instruction which the lad received was from his own father, but the extreme facility of the child's apprehension soon compelled his father to pass him on to more competent instructors.

Education however fell lightly on Schubert. The little he received does not seem to have made much impression on his genius. He was ever a child of nature, and preferred rather the unfettered principles of fancy than the traditions and rules of art. Without waiting for the slow methods of his teachers he, was perpetually scribbling music of all sorts and styles, from the opera and symphony downwards. One of his main difficulties apparently was not so much to compose unending music as to find words to compose it to. His fertility was so great that he ultimately exhausted all the available poems and sonnets within his reach and began to lay hold of apparently the most uncongenial words to pour his floods of melody upon them. Schumann's remark about the toll ticket was scarcely an exaggeration, such was the superabundance of melodic power which he was ready to lavish at any moment upon even unworthy and trifling objects.

This excessive effusiveness was specially characteristic of his early years, when he was a chorister in the

Imperial Chapel, and when he was an usher in the Lichtenthal school. In after times his genius seems to have alternated between fits of the greatest copiousness of expression and of torpid inactivity.

Most uncongenial was the employment which awaited him after he left the choir of the Emperor's chapel. Sorely against his will he had to become his father's assistant in the management of the school. It would have been his father's day-dream fulfilled if the moody and wayward youth had quietly given up his music, and settled down in good earnest to teaching the children arithmetic and spelling. Schubert, however, preferred the more precarious but congenial occupation of music-teacher and composer, in which, though many struggles were to await him, he yet would be able to follow to the full his engrossing and absorbing bent.

One of the most pleasant experiences of his life was the time which he spent as music-master in Count Esterhazy's family. This appointment had the advantage of taking him for awhile away from his loose companions, and of bringing him into contact with one of the most refined families in Austria. His duties there were to teach the daughters of the house and the countess music, and the drudgery generally entailed in such an occupation was considerably lightened by the fact that one and all the ladies were very cultivated musicians to begin with. Consequently the lessons resolved themselves into very agreeable duet and trio playing and concerted music, as delightful to Schubert himself as it was no doubt improving to the young pupils. He was tempted to compose pieces of his own for the use of the young ladies, and this lent an additional element of interest to the rehearsals.

Schubert's sentimental and romantic spirit, in which

he strongly resembled Beethoven, led him to prefer by nature that seraphic form of affection towards the other sex to which we have alluded before in the case of the former composer, rather than the homelier and more common style of the passion, which results in reciprocity of love and marriage. This peculiar and exalted conception of the tender passion the writer of musical biography has to notice again and again as the peculiarity of many composers, as the various lives pass before him in review.

The passion of Dante for Beatrice may be taken as an excellent example of the form of attachment—which we might almost characterise by the term celestial. It is celestial in that it seems invariably to lead either to no results at all or else to such unfortunate dilemmas that those who foster it are involved in hopeless disappointment—and therefore the phase of affection is celestial, as being quite out of place on this earth. Dante fell in love with Beatrice when she was a little girl of very tender years, and all his life long nursed the imagination of her beauty. Tasso involved himself in tremendous complications by becoming enamoured of the daughter of the Duke of Este. Schubert combined both the examples thus set him by distinguished men of the past, and fell head over ears in love with Count Esterhazy's youngest daughter, a bit of a girl who was only ten or eleven years old, and could certainly not be expected to be capable of the slightest real regard for the composer. Yet he continued to nurse his hopeless passion—hopeless in a double sense, both from the child's extreme youth and from her social position, which made anything like an ultimate alliance out of the question.

Caroline, for that was her name, was undeniably

pretty—as pretty and charming as her extraordinary lover was plain and uncouth. She was ten, he was a man over twenty. She was the daughter of one of the proudest princes in Austria; he was of humble extraction, without a penny in the world. Certainly, if Schubert had deliberately planned a piece of hopeless infatuation for his own sorrow, he could not have contrived one superior to this masterpiece.

We can only regret that the details of this seraphic amour are not more abundant than they are, for the love passages between the pair, and the love letters, if any were written, would prove very curious and interesting reading.

One characteristic anecdote is reported of them. Amid the abundant compositions which he wrote for his musical *réunions* with his fair pupils, he had penned dedications to every one in the household, and doubtless to a good many out of it. Scarcely an Esterhazy existed, or a friend of the Esterhazys, who had not a composition of Schubert's dedicated to his or her honour. Caroline alone of the whole family circle could not boast the distinction, and one day she interrogated her submissive lover on the point.

“What is the reason,” she said, “that I alone of the whole house have no composition dedicated to me?”

“To you,” replied Schubert, with a gallantry which sometimes awkward men can display when they are uttering the sentiments of their heart, “to you all my music is dedicated. All is written for you”—a compliment so well turned that we might defy the Duc de Richelieu to have improved upon it.

The more hopeless a passion the more does it seem to recommend itself to the minds of a certain class of men. Schubert certainly belonged to this category. So did

Beethoven. But the younger composer's feelings were keener, more sensitive, livelier, than those of the grey recluse of Vienna. Many the exquisite pangs of sorrow which Schubert endured in consequence of this infatuated love. At the same time, many the exquisite joys of meditation and recollection, from some trifling incident which only the eye of a lover would have remarked, and of which the young beauty herself was probably quite unconscious.

In these vicissitudes of amorous fancy—for such was the frail foundation of his happiness—his life passed while he was the music-master in this distinguished household. But long after, and indeed to his last hour on earth, the image of Caroline Esterhazy was ever present to his mind, to cheer him in his lonely life and to offer him, if not the comfort of hope, at least the consolation of delightful woe.

After leaving the Esterhazys he took up his quarters again with some bachelor friends of his, and resumed the erratic and Bohemian existence which we have sketched at the beginning of this chapter.

Schubert's lot was rendered much harder than a musician's need be owing to his strong aversion to teaching. In nearly every town in Europe a man who sets himself down steadily to the work of teaching music can make a competent living, and it depends upon himself whether competence ever passes into opulence. But when a musician begins his professional life by throwing away the staff that should support him, and determines to exist by composing alone, the struggle is necessarily a hard one, the prospects are not bright; he must be prepared for everlasting reverses, and be content if he achieves the independence he is in search of

just in time to say that he possesses it, and then to die.

Schubert, composing for a livelihood, was once more thrown into the precarious circumstances we allude to. As the years passed away the discomfort of his position was increased by attacks of nervous depression, which often lingered on him for days together. Neglected by those who should have appreciated him, disappointed of obtaining a permanent post with a definite income, the prey of constant dejection and pecuniary difficulty, his spirits began to droop, and his health with them. A lodging in a new and damp house laid the seeds of the complaint which undermined his already enfeebled constitution, and on the 19th of November, 1828, at the age of thirty-one years, he died of fever, lamented by those that knew him.

Almost the last work he wrote, the Mass in E flat, was composed a few months before his death. It contains, so far as the expression is appropriate about such a composer, the climax of his art. Yet how little trace of art and labour is apparent in it! Nature seems to have the largest share in the composition, and its weaknesses—those of looseness of structure, want of control of ideas, and deficiency of taste in admitting the commonplace to ready company with the sublime—are the same which mark and detract from the universal enjoyment of Schubert's music. Not long after completing this great work, he signified to his friends that he had formed the intention of studying counterpoint, for he was not blind to those defects in his style which we have just noticed. In making such a resolution, we must admire his zeal for his art. He proposed to commence the study of elementary principle at the very period when most men have long abandoned study

altogether, and within a month before his death professed himself anxious to be a learner in that art wherein succeeding generations have pronounced him a master. His intention is specially interesting from the fact that it is a tacit admission on his own part that all his compositions had been the effusion of untrained nature. His songs and shorter pieces will probably be the most enduring of his works.



## SYNOPSIS OF LIFE, AND WORKS.

---

FRANZ PETER SCHUBERT was born at Vienna, Jan. 31st, 1797; was the son of Franz Schubert, a schoolmaster; was chorister in the Imperial Choir, Vienna, 1808; became pupil-teacher in his father's school for three years; resided in Vienna, 1812—1818; composed *The Erl King*, 1812; the music to *Rosamunde*, 1813; *The Wanderer*, 1816; became teacher of music in Count Johann Esterhazy's family, Jan., 1818; died at Vienna, Nov. 19th, 1828, aged thirty-one.

---

Lieder: originally issued in collections of 3 or more, or singly, and including *Erlkönig*, op. 1; *Das Wirthshaus*; *Ave Maria*; *Am meer*; *Adieu*; *Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings*; *Serenade*; *Der Fischer*; *The Fishermayden*; *The Post*; *Wanderer*; *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt*; *Das Wandern*; *Der König von Thule*; *Memnon*; *Gretchen am Spinnrade*; *Ganymed*; *Der Sänger*; *Der Jäger*; *Sehnsucht*; *Des Mädchen's Klage*; *Thekla*; *Schlummerlied*; *Der Kampf*; *Der Pilgrim*; *Die Rose*; *Schwanengesang* (collection), etc. Four-part songs for various combinations of voices, trios, and other vocal works.

Symphonies: No. 1, in D, 1813; No. 2, in B flat, 1815; No. 3, in D, 1815; No. 4 (tragic), in C minor, 1816; No. 5, in B flat, 1816; No. 6, in C, 1818; No. 7, in E, 1821; No. 8 (unfinished), in B minor; No. 9; No. 10, in C, 1828.

Overtures: Italian, op. 170, others in MS., and arrangements for Pf. Octett for 2 vns., 'cello, D-bass, horn, bassoon, and clarionet, op. 166. Quintett for Pf. and strings, op. 114.

String Quartetts: Twenty, of which numbers 9; 12, op. 168; 13; 16-17, op. 125; 18, op. 29; 19; and 20, op. 161, are published. Trio: for Pf., vn., and 'cello, op. 99, 100. Notturmo for Pf., vn., and 'cello,

op. 148. Rondo for Pf. and vn., op. 70; Phantasie, do, op. 159; Duo, do., op. 162.

Pianoforte: Sonatas, twenty-four in all, op. 30, 40, 42, 53, 78, 120, 143, 147, 162, 164, and others published; op. 9. Originaltänze; op. 10. Variations (4 hands); op. 15. Phantasie; op. 18. Walzer, Ländler; etc.; op. 27. Marches (4 hands); op. 33. Deutsche Tänze; op. 35. Variations (4 hands); op. 40. Six marches (4 hands); op. 49. Galopp und Ecossaisen; op. 50. Valses sentimentales; op. 51. Three marches militaires (4 hands); op. 54. Divertissement à la Hongroise (4 hands); op. 55. Funeral march of Alexander I. (4 hands); op. 61. Polonaises (4 hands); op. 62. Divertissement (4 hands); op. 63. March héroïque; op. 64. Wiener Damen-Ländler; op. 75. Four Polonaises; op. 77. Valses; op. 78. Phantasie; op. 82. Variations (4 hands); op. 84. Andantino and Rondo (4 hands); op. 90. Four Impromptus; op. 91. Grätzer Walzer; op. 94. Moments musicaux (also arranged for orch.); op. 103. Phantasie (4 hands); op. 107. Rondo (4 hands); op. 121. Two marches (4 hands); op. 127. Letzte Walzer; op. 138. Rondo (4 hands); op. 140. Grand Duo (4 hands); op. 142. Impromptus; op. 144. Lebensstürme, allegro (4 hands); op. 152. Fugue; op. 171. Twelve Ländler; etc.

Masses: No. 1, in F, 1814; No. 2, in G, 1815; No. 3, in B flat, op. 141, 1815; No. 4, in C, op. 48, 1818; No. 5, in A flat, 1822; No. 6, in E flat, 1828. Cantatas; Salve Regina, op. 47; Stabat Mater; Miriam's Siegesgesang, oratorio, op. 136.

Operas, operettas, etc.: Der Teufels Lustschloss, 1814; Die Vierjährige Posten, 1815; Fernando, 1815; Der Spiegelritter, 1815; Die Freunde von Salamanka, 1815; Die Zwillingsbrüder, 1819; Die Zauberharfe, 1820; Alfonso und Estrella, 1822; Die Verschworenen, 1823; Fierabras, 1823; Rosamunde, op. 26, 1823.

## LISZT.

LISZT was not an early riser. His evenings were too entirely devoted to the brilliant life of *salons* and concert rooms to admit of his making a practice of getting up betimes in the morning. When he was a young man, living in Paris, his friends were accustomed to hold a sort of *levée* in his rooms at mid-day. On these occasions he would generally be in bed, and his visitors would sit about the apartment and discourse to him in that recumbent position. As he lay back on the pillows he as often as not had a *digitorium* (or dumb piano) lying across the bedclothes, and over its keys his fingers would incessantly travel, while he talked and jested with those around him. The object of this arrangement was that he might combine the necessary technical practice, which he had to undertake, with the pleasures of social intercourse, and that when he rose he might have the whole day before him unbroken by any interval of enforced exercise at the pianoforte.

Whether such a plan of practising would be sufficient for the majority of players is a point that seems doubtful; but for Liszt certainly it answered all requirements, and for a long time he does not appear to have troubled himself with any closer attention to technical exercises than was furnished by the preceding method.

At that time his fingers were so supple and strong that he could touch a key so softly as to elicit a sound as if the string were being breathed upon; and the next moment he could strike it so hard as to break the wire. We have heard it stated that he could crack a walnut by a blow of his finger, but believe the story to be a fable.

When living at Weimar—which may be taken as a typical period in his life—he inhabited a beautiful house in the park, which the Grand Duke had presented to him. Here he lived in very elegant style, and free of all expense. The place was originally furnished and put in order by the Grand Duchess herself. The walls of his study were pale grey, with a gilded border running round the room, or rather two rooms, for the study was separated into two distinct chambers by crimson curtains. The furniture was crimson, and the hue of richness which this communicated to the apartment was a great contrast to the bareness and stiffness which one often sees in German houses. A splendid grand piano stood in one window; the sash of this window was nearly always wide open, and looked on the park.

To have to sit and play at an open window in all weathers was a penance which many a pupil of Liszt has had reluctantly to undergo. Still, there was no gainsaying any of his humours, or else the refusal of the lesson might follow, as he was a man who acted entirely by caprice or impulse, and whom it was necessary to humour extremely. Just opposite this historic window used to be a dovecote. The doves kept up a frequent flutter in front of the open sash, and sometimes would come and settle on the sill itself.

The writing table in the room was beautifully fitted

up with things that all matched. Everything was in bronze—inkstand, paperweight, matchbox, &c.—and there was always a lighted candle standing on it by which Liszt might light his cigars at any moment without troubling to strike a match. The floor was carpeted throughout its entire extent—an unusual occurrence in German houses, where one piece of carpet in the middle of the room is generally considered sufficient covering for the polished floor.

Such is the room in which Liszt gives his lessons, and he enters it on the morning in question late. He looks as if he has only just risen, his toilette being somewhat negligent, and he carries in his mouth a large cigar. There are half-a-dozen ladies in the room, waiting for their lessons. These pupils, as he does not receive any fees for them, he allows himself to treat somewhat cavalierly. Sometimes he sends them all away, declaring that he is not in the mood for giving a lesson that day. At other times he will give a lesson to one only, and the remainder of the pupils, after waiting an hour or two in hopes of their turn coming, have to depart without any instruction, to their great mortification. As a rule, however, he does not let his caprices extend so far as that, but accords to each of his fair visitors the proper meed of tuition.

Liszt's tuition is of a very singular kind. He scarcely ever troubled himself to give advice concerning the technical portion of the performance. Possibly he may have thought such details as these beneath him. What he looked for and endeavoured to inspire into his pupils as the main consideration was the general effect of the entire rendering. The young ladies have each brought their piece of music (Liszt will never suffer a piece to be brought twice), and the various

*morceaux* are laid reverently on the piano, awaiting the master's perusal.

He enters, smoking his cigar, and, taking up the pieces, makes selection of one, and calls upon the young lady whose name is written upon it to play the composition. As she performs it he walks up and down the room, muttering to himself, and emitting volumes of smoke by way of accompaniment to his remarks. Suddenly he pauses to listen intently to a passage, which evidently does not satisfy him; and, striding up to the piano, he bends over the performer and delivers the phrase or two as they ought to be. A second objectionable passage occurs further on in the piece, and perhaps a third. Liszt uses the same means for rectifying the errors, not troubling himself to see that the pupil plays the notes herself, but merely giving her the illustration, which she can practise up at her leisure. At the conclusion of the performance, if the great *virtuoso* happens to be in a good humour, he will sit down and play over the whole work from beginning to end. Otherwise he turns over the assortment of pieces on the piano and calls out the name of another young lady.

When his pupils were gentlemen, he was not so considerate by any means as with the fair sex. He would frequently upbraid and rate the unfortunate player who blundered in his music, and would sometimes play a practical joke upon him.

We have heard the following anecdote illustrative of the latter point. A dull and stupid pupil was once playing to Liszt, in the presence of several others who were waiting their turn to be called up to the instrument. The piece which the performer was rendering was a composition of Liszt's own, and therefore the

master was more than usually attentive to its delivery. The wretched young man stumbled again and again in his performance. Liszt hummed, and muttered, "That is not the way I would play it." At last he sat down by the side of the youth, apparently to show him, with one hand, how to perform a particular passage; but, little by little, he encroached more and more on the keyboard until he had monopolised the entire piano. Then giving the young man a smart push, he precipitated him from the stool on to the floor amid the laughter of all assembled, and finished the piece himself.

After his pupils were gone he would take a walk in the park and a light lunch, after which he would devote himself to composition. He had only one method of working, which was to seat himself at a table with a large roll of music paper, and smoke cigarettes the whole time. He is not troubled with any difficulty of expression, and the notes of the score leave his hand with a fluency second only to that of a few of the very greatest and most rapid composers, such as Handel and Mozart. He is completely above any such weakness as that to which Chopin so frequently yielded, viz., of interrupting his composition to try over the effect of certain phrases on the piano. Admirably as the freedom and florid variety of his pianoforte playing is preserved in his orchestral works, yet there was never any deliberate production of that effect by seeking help from the pianoforte during his hours of composition. The thoughts came straight from his mind to the paper, as alone they ought to do, any other method being false and prejudicial to inspiration.

Two or three hours at this double labour of rolling cigarettes and covering music paper with notes seem enough for the composer; and scorning to take any

refreshment in the shape of dinner until all the labours of the day are over, he hastens off to conduct a rehearsal of one of his symphonic poems, *Die Hunnenschlacht, nach Kaulbach*, in the concert-room.

Liszt's remarkable powers of long abstinence from food, and his general indifference to regular mealtimes, were perhaps natural to him; perhaps they were engendered by his experiences when a young man in Paris. In those days he had so many pupils that he allowed himself no interval for meals from morning till evening, and after sallying out on a slight breakfast in early morning would not touch food till his return home at nightfall. These habits or natural peculiarities retained their hold on him long afterwards; and on the present occasion, although he has a long rehearsal before him, he either forgets or disregards the natural calls of appetite in his eagerness to hear the first rehearsal of his new symphony.

This piece, *Die Hunnenschlacht*, was written by Liszt with the singular intention of transfusing the spirit of a picture into music, and with so delicate a design the execution of the orchestra, to satisfy him, must be equally delicate and perfect. How often he stops them in full career, how often he stamps on the platform and hawls out his favourite phrase, "Das ist nichts," need not be told. The rehearsal is a long and wearisome one, and its conductor returns to his domicile not improved in temper by his long fast and his many annoyances in the course of the rehearsal.

Here a repast awaits him, and also a pressing invitation from the Grand Duchess to come to her reception that evening. The latter request he is in the mood to comply with, and shortly afterwards dresses for the ceremony. His toilet is very quickly made, for his full



dress attire differs from his ordinary habiliments in only one particular, which consists in donning his long abbé's coat instead of the short coat which he wears in his own house. The exchange of raiment is made very expeditiously, and, grasping his stick, the abbé walks over to the palace.

The company which await him in the state drawing-room are numerous and brilliant. He appears to know them all, as they certainly know him. His fluency of speech, his ready wit, his powers of repartee and railery were as remarkable endowments of Liszt as was his musical genius. On the present occasion, the former qualities have full opportunities to display themselves, and he is soon the centre of a brilliant circle of conversation. The wish which is in everybody's heart, and would fain be on everybody's tongue, that Liszt will play upon the piano is unexpressed even by the Grand Duchess herself, for a very good reason. It is unfortunately a fact well known to all that the great *virtuoso* hates to be asked to play unless he is in the mood for so doing. With regard to his dealings with the piano, he is omnipotent. He has no respect for princes or the great, and an ill-timed request may result in an unexpected and severe retort.

Once at Rome he was invited to one of the great Italian families' houses to dinner. A sumptuous repast awaited him, and all went well till after the banquet, when, to his surprise, a large number of new guests began to file into the rooms as if in expectation of something. The lady of the house hereupon came up to Liszt and asked him to play on the piano. He refused. She entreated him, with a like result. She passed from entreaty to angry remark. The great *virtuoso* hereupon went up to the piano, and, dashing off a brilliant

cascade of notes, exclaimed, "There, madame, I have paid for my dinner, and I wish you good evening." Whereupon he stalked out of the room. On another occasion he was pestered by some Americans to play, and, after much refusal, walked up to the piano, and, turning his back to the instrument, played a tune with his hands behind him, and made a similar exit immediately afterwards.

On the present occasion, however, he is under no reluctance to oblige; and, without waiting to be asked, has walked up to the pianoforte, and, seating himself before the keys, pours forth a divine strain of extemporisation, which lasts until he has enchanted all present. He plays on and on, until the hour grows late. Nobody cares to touch the piano after he has left it.

When not at the Grand Duke's residence, he generally passes the evening at a similar *réunion* in some other house at Weimar. Occasionally he issues invitations for a party at his own house, and then he is never known to refuse to gratify his guests with as much music as they can possibly desire.

Liszt's life at Weimar from 1849 onwards may be taken as eminently typical of the general tenor of his existence day by day. But he was then a man of over forty years of age, and many things had passed before. His boyhood had been a marvellous one. From his earliest years he had astonished all who came into contact with him by the supernatural skill of his pianoforte playing.

It is an interesting fact to know that Beethoven listened to him when a child with every sign of approval. The marvellous boy, who positively adored all that was connected with the great master, often

tried to penetrate into Beethoven's sanctum, in order to make personal acquaintance with the composer. Beethoven, however, had a great horror of people who tried to force themselves upon him, and gave strict orders that the clever child and his importunate father should never be admitted. The latter, however, managed to secure the good offices of Schindler, a friend of Beethoven's, who wrote the following note to the eccentric composer:—

“Little Liszt has entreated me to beg you to write for him a theme, on which to play a fantasia at the concert which he is to give to-morrow. Put it in a letter and seal it up. He will not break the seal until the concert begins. As for the little one's fantasias they are not very serious, and the day is still distant when one will be able to say *Er phantasirt.*”

In reply to various questions of Beethoven, Schindler wrote, “Carl Czerny is his teacher. The boy is only eleven years old. Come to his concert. It will encourage the boy.”

This was the second concert that Liszt, then a boy of eleven, as has just been mentioned, gave at Vienna. The hall was crowded, and the young performer, stepping on the platform, was overjoyed to see Beethoven sitting near, with his eyes fixed upon him. Young Liszt played superbly on that occasion. Hummel's Concerto in B flat was one of the chief features of the programme; but the free fantasia with which the young lad concluded was the most unmistakable proof of his genius. Beethoven, with his habitual negligence, had not written the theme desired, and Liszt had to take it from some other source. The reception which awaited the young pianist at the conclusion of the concert was overwhelming. And people's appreciation

was roused to a *furor* when they saw Beethoven mount the platform, and in a transport of admiration kiss the marvellous boy repeatedly on the cheek.

Liszt's father, who, like the elder Mozart, acted to his son the part of guide, philosopher, and friend, was encouraged by the success which his boy had achieved at Vienna to take him to Paris, with the intention of his studying music at the Conservatoire, under Cherubini. But the long journey to that capital brought only disappointment. Cherubini treated father and son like a bear, and refused to admit the young musician as a student on any terms. But this disappointment was amply compensated for by the fact that engagements and invitations poured in upon the young *virtuoso* from the best people in Parisian society, and the acquaintances he made then were of great use to him afterwards when he settled as a music-teacher in Paris.

This change in his life happened at his father's death, when the whirl of concerts ceased, and he a young man of eighteen or nineteen, found himself left with his mother to support. They took a house in the Rue Montholon, and Liszt caused it to be known among his influential friends that he was about to commence teaching music.

Among the first pupils he received were the daughters of Lord Granville, then English Ambassador at Paris; the daughters of the Comtes de Saint Cricq and de Montesquieu, and numerous others of the *élite* of Paris.

The Comte de Saint Cricq was then Minister of the Interior, a Legitimist of the most uncompromising school, and a great stickler for the privileges of his class. His wife, the Countess, who had heard Liszt play at some *salon* where she happened to be

present, thought very injudiciously that she could not do better than engage him to act as music-master to her youngest daughter, Caroline de St. Cricq, a romantic and impressionable girl, who was barely seventeen years of age, and had scarcely seen anything of the world. The engagement thus heedlessly entered into was likely to have disastrous consequences for all parties concerned.

But at first everything went smoothly. The Count and Countess were delighted with the progress their daughter was making, and with the enthusiasm with which she carried out the instructions of her young music-master. The Countess always made it her business to be present at these lessons, and not a sign, not a look, could have passed between the young couple, who, indeed, seem at this time to have been without suspicion what an inroad love was making in their hearts. The Countess' attention, as is generally the way in such cases, grew however gradually slacker, and having left them to themselves very much for a few months, she suddenly awoke to the fact that her daughter was in love with Liszt, and that he reciprocated her passion.

The Countess was a woman considerably above the prejudices of class, and being at the same time a fond and doting mother, was willing to humour her daughter in whatsoever way she pleased. Had she alone had the shaping of the young girl's fortunes, there is no doubt the much-desired marriage would have been contracted. But in an evil hour for the fortunes of the young pair she fell ill and died, adjuring her husband, as she lay on her death-bed, not to lay his veto on the union of these two young hearts, if they seemed anxious to form one. The Count carried out her instructions in this matter in a reluctant and mechanical manner. He

allowed Liszt to continue giving the young girl lessons, but kept his eyes wide open to what was going on.

The young lovers felt themselves drawn still more closely together in their sympathies after the death of Madame de St. Cricq than before. Liszt had lost his father; Mademoiselle de St. Cricq her mother. When Liszt first found himself in presence of his lovely pupil after her bereavement, clad in deep mourning as she was, the copy of his own garb, and with her eyes red with weeping and her cheeks pale with vigils, he was seized with inexpressible grief, and, unable to control his feelings, burst into a passionate fit of tears.

Their mutual sympathies thus strongly increased led them at length beyond the bounds of prudence. The Count was never present at the lessons, but he had an Argus in the shape of his *concierge*, who faithfully reported what time the music-master left every day. The Count was thus enabled to judge how matters were progressing. The storm was gathering on the horizon, when one evening Liszt, after having given his lesson, remained in earnest and endearing conversation with his pupil hour after hour unconscious of the time; till at last the lovers were roused to a sense of sublunary things by hearing the clock strike twelve. Liszt's attempt to pass the *concierge* without being seen was futile. He could not get out without the usual summons of "*Cordon, s'il vous platt,*" and the matter was reported with sundry exaggerations to the Count next morning.

On the following day, when Liszt came to the house to give his usual lesson, he was informed that he was discharged, his services being no longer required. In a few months afterwards, Mademoiselle de St. Cricq

was married against her will to the Baron d'Artignan, a wealthy nobleman of her father's acquaintance, and Liszt was left without his lover to stifle his grief as best he might.

The blow struck him so heavily that he languished into sickness, and was for some days at the doors of death. A fit of supreme melancholy seized him, and for months together he was never seen abroad. The report began to spread that he was dead, and a wayfarer walking in the streets of Paris at this time might have seen his portrait in all the shop windows, edged with black, and with the words on it, "Franz Liszt, born at Raiding, Oct. 22nd, 1811; died at Paris, 1828."

In despair he made up his mind to become a monk. It was his serious intention at this time to abandon music altogether, as a thing which only brought him into worldliness and misery, and devote the remainder of his days to religious contemplation. His mother, a woman of strong common sense, weaned him from this wild project with the assistance of his confessor.

Two or three years passed away, and Liszt having recovered his habitual health and gaiety long ago, was to fall a victim to an attachment of a totally different order. This time it was not a sweet girl of seventeen that captivated his heart, but a *blasée* woman of the world, who possessed no genuine affection for the idol of the hour.

George Sand had just returned from her famous escapade in Venice in the society of Alfred de Musset, the incidents of which are detailed in "Le Secrétaire Intime," "Lettres d'un Voyageur," and "Elle et Lui." She met Liszt, and fell in love with him. He returned her affection in the way that it was given, that is to say, not with any depth of romantic feeling, but as the ex-

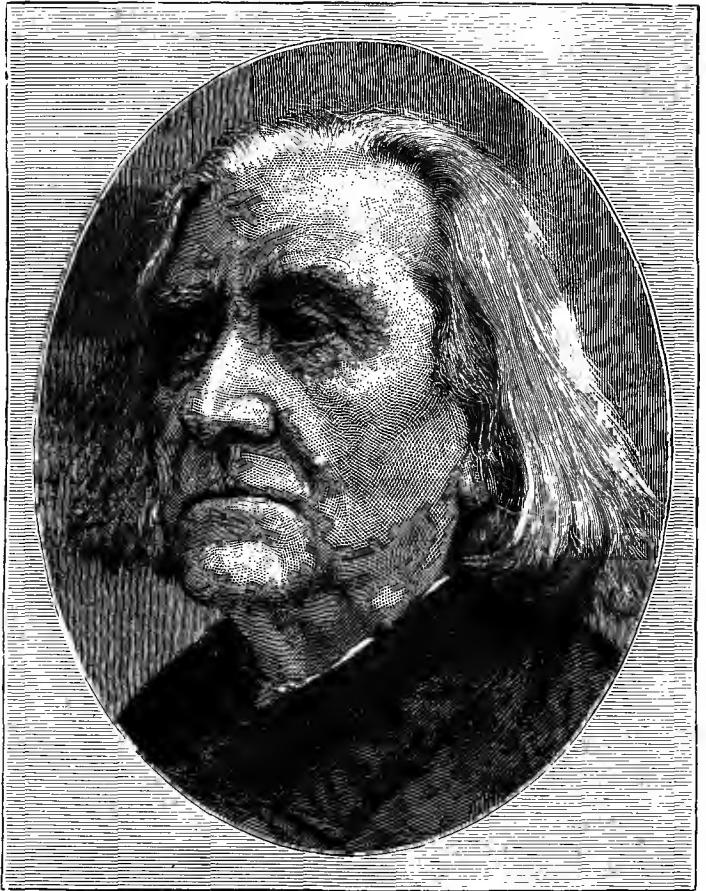
pression of a capricious fancy, which either party was at liberty to cancel when inclined. On these terms they formed a close *liaison* which lasted for three years, when it was dissolved by mutual consent, and George Sand transferred her affections to Chopin.

The next lady with whom the effusive heart of Liszt connected itself was the Countess Adèle Laprunarède, who afterwards became the Duchesse de Fleury. Madame Laprunarède had been married while very young to an elderly man without talents, accomplishments, or sympathies with any of her tastes and amusements. The natural result of this vacuity at home was to make the Countess seek recreation elsewhere, and she haunted the *salons* where Liszt played, as one of his chief and ever-present admirers.

Her infatuation for him increased to such a point that she persuaded her husband to invite Liszt to spend the winter with them at their château at Marlioz, in Switzerland, a beautiful spot lying between Geneva and the Alps. The old Count must be credited with stone blindness in thus throwing his charming wife into the company of the man for whom she openly expressed her admiration. Nevertheless he did so, and for a whole winter Liszt, like a second Antony in the society of his Cleopatra, buried himself from the eyes of the world at the château of Marlioz. The Parisian boulevardists made several speculations as to where he was, but, although none of them could name the precise spot, the cause of his disappearance was apparently a mystery to nobody. The riddle was easily solved according to them by due attention to the proverb; "*Cherchez la femme.*"

But the most serious of his attachments, "*la grande passion,*" was yet to come. The Countess d'Agoult,





LISZT.



known in the world of letters under the pseudonym of "Daniel Stern," was a woman of thirty years of age when she first met Liszt, and the mistress of one of the most intellectual *salons* in Paris. Hither resorted Sainte-Beuve, Meyerbeer, Deschamps, Rossini, Mignet, Heine, Ingres, Alfred de Vigny, and other celebrated men of the time. She herself was the mother of three children, her husband, the Count d'Agoult, being a man of high position in the army. George Sand has sketched her portrait: divinely fair, with a wealth of yellow hair falling in soft locks on her white shoulders, and her eyes reflecting the finest blue of the firmament.

The Countess d'Agoult became acquainted with Liszt through his frequenting her *salon* in company with some of his friends. From the very first moment she conceived a strong attachment to him, and the friendship, rapidly formed between them, ripened very soon into most ardent affection. It was at this time that the Countess's youngest daughter fell ill and died. With the inconsistency of sorrow the Countess forbade the composer her house, and simultaneously confessed to herself that in her lost child one more link which had bound her to her husband was gone. Her prohibition of Liszt's visits to her house was of no long continuance, and when the first anguish of her grief was over she encouraged him to come with greater eagerness than before.

Time wore on, and the concert season in Paris for that year came to an end. Liszt intimated to her that he must now travel in Europe for the purpose of giving concerts. But to his surprise she entirely refused to allow him to separate himself from her thus. The pianist accordingly cancelled all his engagements, and remained in Paris, taking a lodging at a remote quarter

of the town, where the Countess was his assiduous visitor. Such a connection was, however, not sufficient to satisfy the inclinations of a woman who scorned a life of subterfuge, and if she made a false step preferred to own it in the face of the world and to brave the consequences. She declared deliberately to Liszt that when he left Paris she would leave husband and family and go with him. In vain Liszt appealed to her mother, the Countess de Flavigny to dissuade her daughter from this suicidal step; to the Abbé De Guerry, the lady's confessor, who exercised an infinite influence over her mind; and as a last resource to the family lawyer, who naturally failed with his reasons of everyday life where a mother's love and religion had failed before him. The Countess de Flavigny at length prevailed upon her daughter, if not to give up Liszt, at least to leave Paris for a time, until absence had soothed and mitigated her passion. She consented, and both ladies proceeded to Basle.

But now commences Liszt's share of blame in the matter. No sooner did he hear that the Countess d'Agoult had gone to Basle, than he followed her there—a strange action in a man who had been so very solicitous to prevent her accompanying him. But as he confesses, he forgot himself, and was carried away by his passion, when he learnt that she had gone. This action on his part precipitated the scandal. The Countess d'Agoult, learning that he was in Basle, left her mother and went to the hotel where he was staying. He might aver that he had been hurried away by his passion in going to Basle after her; she might declare that she had merely gone to Basle for a change; but the world very naturally concluded that the whole of the Basle incident had been arranged beforehand,

and was merely an elaborate method of carrying into execution a barefaced elopement.

The lady went to the hotel where Liszt was staying, as we mentioned, and for the next ten years she was his constant companion. Society held up its hands. The pair were ostracised from the world of fashion for a while, but Liszt could not be debarred from the concert platform. And in company with the Countess d'Agoult he travelled to Milan, Vienna, Venice, Rome, London, Leipsic, Brussels, Berlin, and other places, teaching and giving concerts as opportunity invited. For ten years this life lasted, and at the end of that time he separated from the Countess on account of her violent temper, which had made life unendurable to him, and settled down shortly after at Weimar, where we have already described his daily life.

He was ordained Abbé in 1865, and died at Wahnfried on the 1st of August, 1886.

His works have not even yet attained the recognition they deserve, owing to the apparent inability of criticism to shake itself free from popular opinion. The public thought that because Liszt was such a great player he could not be a composer. This prejudice has stood much in the way of his reception in the latter rôle. As a matter of fact, Liszt's genius for composition developed late in life, but when it did come it showed itself to be as vigorous and as masterly as his talent for execution.

To him must be attributed the great and transcendent merit of discovering a new form in music. In the "Symphonic Poem," he has achieved the legitimate development of the symphony, and we may add, the only form in which the symphony, if it is to last, can endure. The symphonic poem differs from the symphony in consisting of but one single movement

instead of the stereotyped four. Through this movement runs a leading theme which gives unity to the often heterogeneous materials introduced in the course of the piece, and is heard again and again in every conceivable connection which counterpoint and genius can invent. Of this noble style he has left us twelve masterpieces.

Another aim which he has set before himself in these symphonic poems is to recite by means of instrumental sound a perfect narrative. The names of some of the symphonic poems will show us how definitely Liszt has conceived his task. Mazeppa, Hamlet, Orpheus, The Battle of the Huns—all aim at narrating the story connected with their title; and in the latter work he has boldly made music enter the lists with painting, giving out in his preface to the Battle of the Huns that he would treat by means of instrumental sound the same subject which Kaulbach has made the theme of his well-known picture.

## SYNOPSIS OF LIFE, AND WORKS.

---

FRANZ LISZT, born at Raiding, Oct. 22nd, 1811 ; received his earliest instruction in music from his father ; gave his first public performance on the pianoforte at Oldenburg, 1820, playing Ries' Concerto in E flat ; studied at Vienna under Czerny and Salieri ; made his *début* as pianist at Vienna, 1823 ; Paris, 1823 ; London, 1824 ; was refused admission to the Paris Conservatoire by Cherubini ; his father died, 1827 ; he became teacher of music and pianist in Paris, 1827—1835 ; made acquaintance of Mlle. de St. Cricq, 1828 ; formed intimacy with the Countess d'Agoult (Daniel Stern), by whom he had one son and two daughters ; resided in Geneva, 1835—1845 ; travelled in Italy and other countries of Europe ; became capellmeister to the Duke of Weimar, 1849—61 ; was ordained Abbé, 1865 : died at Wahnfried, Aug. 1st, 1886, aged seventy-four.

---

Numerous transcriptions and arrangements for Pf., solo, etc., and for orch.

Zwei Episoden aus Lenau's Faust, for orch. ; Huldigungs-Marsch (orch.), 1853 ; Fest-Marsch for Goethe and Schiller Festival (orch.), 1857 ; Gaudeamus Igitur, humoreske for orch., soli, and chorus ; Concerto for Pf., in E flat (I.) ; Concerto for Pf., in A (II.) ; Etudes d'Execution transcendante (Pf.) ; Hungarian Rhapsodies for orch., Pf., etc.

Symphonic Poems : Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne (Victor

Hugo); Tasso; Les Préludes; Orphée; Prometheus; Mazeppa (Victor Hugo); Festklänge; Heröide Funèbre; Hungaria; Hamlet; Hunnen-Schlacht (Kaulbach); Die Ideale (Schiller); Dante's Divina Commedia für grosses orch. und sopran-und-alt-chor; Faust-symphonie in drei charakterbildern (Goethe).

Christus, oratorio; Legend of St. Elizabeth, oratorio; St. Cecilia, cantata; Die Glocken des Strassburger, cantata; Ungarische Krönungsmesse. Various other masses, etc., Lieder, numerous, for various solo voices and Pf.



## ROSSINI.

IN our almost exclusive admiration of Germany's leading musicians as *par excellence* "the great composers," we are apt to forget the claims of a man who, whatever his blemishes as a writer, must be allowed the possession of a great and prolific musical genius, and of a faculty of melody rarely if ever equalled. The time was when Rossini was the lion of Europe, and even in Vienna the rival, the successful rival, of Beethoven. The public of that capital crowded to see Rossini's operas, while they left Beethoven's concert-room empty; and the great German composer was heard to say that he thought the end of all music was approaching, if an Italian piper was to lead everybody by the nose. Nevertheless, he condescended to read Rossini's *Barbiere* when it was shown him—being unable to hear it, owing to his deafness—and expressed himself highly delighted with the opera.

"It is a splendid work," said Beethoven, "full of melody and replete with spirit. Nevertheless, Rossini ought to have been well whipped when he was young. What a composer he would have made if the birch had been freely applied to him to keep him hard at work at his counterpoint!"

It is only recently that the "Swan of Pesaro" has been honoured through all Italy on the occasion of the

centenary of his birth. For a man's memory to be green after a hundred years have passed away is perhaps a more convincing proof of his greatness than any which argument can adduce, or reasoning demonstrate. There is, indeed, no doubt that Rossini was a great composer, although perhaps a capricious and a careless one. Few men had the gift of fluent composition to such an extent as he; not even Handel could excel him in this particular.

If we would see this faculty in full play, and also gain an intimate view of his private life, let us pass a day with him, as we have previously passed it with the other composers, and, selecting that period of his life in Italy before he had attained to European fame, let us follow him through a typical day's work; although in Rossini's case the word "work" can hardly be applicable, seeing that he took everything in the easiest and most amiable spirit, detesting any occupation directly it attained the character of "labour," and endeavouring to perpetuate through his life that *dolce far niente* which, as an Italian, from his earliest years he had been accustomed to regard as the beau-ideal of existence.

It is late in the morning, about half-past nine or ten, and Rossini has just awoke. He rubs his eyes and gazes out of the window to mark by the appearance of the sunlight what hour it is, but without any intention of getting up. This, indeed, is most remote from his thoughts. Having judged that the day has worn on to about ten o'clock, he stretches his hand out of the bed-clothes to a table near, on which lie a roll of score paper and a pencil—the materials for composing an opera that is to be performed that very evening.

Do not let it be thought that in stating such a fact

we are in any way guilty of an exaggeration. There are several instances in the life of Rossini of operas that were produced under the most inauspicious circumstances; when the soprano or the tenor did not receive the music of their rôles until an hour or two before the performance; when the overture was only delivered to the band to try over half an hour before the doors opened; or when a chorus, such as that in *Mosé in Egitto*, was an afterthought, which the amazed choristers, after imagining that all their work was over, had to rehearse in a desperate hurry just before going on the stage.

So it is with Rossini this morning. A duet for soprano and tenor, an aria for the *prima donna*, and a *finale*, have all to be written by the afternoon, in order to complete the opera and allow the evening's performance to take place. Accordingly the lazy *maestro*, stretching out his hand for the roll of music paper, as we said, falls to work on the *finale* with considerable vigour, considering the fact that his head is on the pillow, and the rest of his person comfortably tucked up under the bedclothes. His facility of composition aids him greatly, and ere an hour is over he has put on paper the greater part of the *finale*, when his labours are interrupted by the entry of breakfast. This, brought in by a buxom Italian woman, is deposited on a table within reach of his arm, and the steaming chocolate, the odour of the savoury omelette, the appearance of the crisp rolls, and the spotless white tablecloth, are too much for the epicurean composer, who, tucking his roll of music under his pillow, proceeds to demolish the viands with a hearty appetite.

At the end of his meal he returns with renewed vigour to his composition, finishes the *finale*, rapidly

pens the aria, and has already set the soprano portion of the duet. Everything seems in excellent trim for a speedy completion of the whole task, and Rossini, turning his eyes to the window, once more reckons the hour of day in his mind, and mentally calculates whether there will be time to have a nap before he goes to the theatre. Alas, for the vanity of human anticipations! The duet which promised to be so soon completed, and on the completion of which his second sleep depends, drops in an unexpected moment from his hand, and, tumbling off the bedclothes, rolls right under the bed, quite out of reach.

What is to be done? If he gets up to look for it he will entirely disarrange his present luxurious position, besides giving himself a great deal of trouble that might be avoided. Accordingly he comes to a resolution, which will be easiest for him, though harder for most men—that is, to take some fresh music paper and write a new duet altogether, for he cannot be troubled to think how the other one went; and this time he determines not to let the music slip on to the floor again. No sooner said than done. The new duet is finished in a short time, and the luxurious *maestro* abandons himself to the delights of the pillow.

“Signor Rossini! Signor Rossini! destatevi!” These words bawled at his ear awake the sleeping composer. On looking up from his luxurious couch, he beholds at his bedside the *impresario*, who tells him that he has overslept himself, and that the whole company at the theatre are waiting for the *finale*, the aria, and the duet. There is no time to lose now, and in a quarter of an hour Rossini is on his way thither.

The city is Palermo, where there is a fine opera house, and generally a company of very good singers.

The short time allowed the latter for rehearsal is therefore sufficient, and, under Rossini's energetic direction, by the afternoon they have not only shown themselves tolerably competent in the opera at large, but have tried over with success the very latest additions to the score, which they promise to master before nightfall. Rossini, thus left at liberty, devotes his afternoon first to dining—at which repast his favourite macaroni is his staple dish—and then to paying a visit to a few friends in Palermo, whom he takes advantage of his presence in that capital to call on.

Wine, laughter, and rollicking humour were the unfailing companions, apparently, of Rossini wherever he went. He took a great interest in the children of a household, and was always pleased to hear them sing, giving his opinion as to their musical capabilities with much frankness, and nearly always, as results proved, with exactitude. Sometimes he would oblige his friends by executing a composition of his own on the piano-forte. "I shall never forget," said a great composer who heard him play in one of these informal moments, "the tremendous effect produced upon me by his marvellous executive powers. When he had finished, I looked mechanically at the ivory keys; I fancied I could see them smoking." He was very good-natured in sitting down to the piano in the houses of friends, and would oblige people in this respect far more than is generally the case with professional musicians.

The afternoon has now worn on to evening, the time of opening the opera house is approaching, and Rossini, with very high anticipations of a successful production, betakes himself thither with a chosen body of friends. Arriving at the house, he is, as usual, late, and finds that all the musicians are in their places, the singers

fretting at the prospect of delay, and everything only awaiting his presence. He enters the orchestra—his appearance is the signal for loud applause from a crowded house—and seats himself at the pianoforte, the usual position of the conductor in those days. With his right hand uplifted, and his left upon the keys, he gives the signal for commencing the overture, which goes with tremendous dash and spirit. At the conclusion, one prolonged outburst of applause breaks from the audience.

In Italian theatres in those days, and at present likewise, the emotions of the listeners are far more vividly and emphatically expressed than in these colder regions of the north. When they applaud they do so in earnest; they shout, they scream, they stamp, they belabour the backs of their seats with their canes, and indulge in all the most violent uproar that man is capable of. When they disapprove, equally demonstrative are their actions; they hiss, they howl, they hoot, they grimace, they point sarcastically, leaving nothing undone to express their scorn and contempt. Not content with thus ventilating their feelings at the end of the overture, at the termination of every act and of the piece, they behave similarly at the conclusion of every air. They do not let an opportunity pass by to testify their disapprobation or the reverse. Equally discriminative are they. They distinguish perfectly between the success or fault of the composer and of the singer. If an air is well sung, but feebly written, they cry, "Bravo, Nozzarri!" or whatever may happen to be the singer's name. Should the composer, on the contrary, merit the praise more than the vocalist, they bawl, "Bravo, *Maestro!*"

Many plaudits of this nature are showered on the

fortunate composer this evening as he sits at the piano-forte, leading his forces through a very difficult and elaborate opera. Every fresh air excites the approbation of the audience in a greater degree, until the roof seems in danger of coming off, from the abundance and reiteration of the applause.

Had the reception of the piece been the reverse, Rossini would not have broken his heart about it. Although, of course, he was delighted at success, he was comparatively indifferent to failure. On one occasion, when the audience, instead of indulging in continuous plaudits as at present, unbosomed themselves of very different sentiments, he turned round and, in the middle of a tempest of hisses, shrugged his shoulders, and clapped his hands. At this the tumult became greater, and he had to beat a very hasty retreat to escape a mobbing.

On another occasion he was in still greater danger of a like fate, for the exasperation of the audience was considerably keener. In order to pay off an old score with an *impresario*, or to revenge himself on the audience for some previous rebuff, he introduced a ridiculous device into the overture, for which nobody was prepared but the players and himself. He had ordered the players to stop at every bar and tap the shades of their candlesticks with their bows. This they did most obediently on the evening of the performance. Whether the men really thought that the tapping was an improvement to the music, and a constituent part of the overture, we do not know. At any rate, they followed the directions of Rossini in the matter, until the audience was almost wild with indignation. The performance had to be stopped; the theatre was turned into a pandemonium; and com-

posers, players, and singers had to beat a rather precipitate retreat.

On the present occasion, however, the greatest enthusiasm and order prevail. There is not a hiss; there is not a single murmur of disapprobation; and, at the conclusion of the opera, Rossini is made the subject of a very pretty demonstration by the audience, who shower on him flowers without end, accompanied by a rain of all the compliments of which the Italian language is capable.

Well pleased at the success which has smiled upon him, he adjourns along with a number of the singers and their friends to a grand supper at the principal hotel in the town. But even as he passes along the streets the enthusiasm of the townspeople does not seem to have exhausted itself, for they recognise him and cheer him again and again.

The supper is served in the large hall of the hotel, on the first storey, with a balcony before the large window. It is a fine night, and as the company sit down to table they can hear from the streets below the hum and even the talk of the promenaders, who seem to be discussing the opera, and still expressing their unbounded admiration of it.

The supper proceeds, but in the meantime the enthusiasm of those below seems to have taken a more practical turn, for loud cries are heard through the window from the streets below for Rossini to appear. These increasing, and no denial being possible, the *maestro* humours his audience so far as to appear on the balcony. Here he has to make a speech, and ultimately to sing a song. For the latter purpose he chooses "Largo al factotum," from his own *Figaro*, and, being possessed of a very good baritone voice, declaims it in excellent



style to the complete satisfaction of those below, who, having got what they want, disperse with shouts of applause. Rossini returns to supper, which is protracted till a late hour in the night.

Such is a specimen of a day spent with this mercurial composer when his opera had been a success. But whether successful or the reverse he always contrived to enjoy himself.

His *sang-froid* was equal to Fielding's, who when the audience were heard hissing a new piece of his, calmly remarked, "Oh, they have found out that the play is a bad one." In a similar way, after an opera of Rossini's had been as effectually condemned as Fielding's play, a few friends of the composer left the theatre, stormy as it was with uproar and with its air seething with hootings and hisses, and stole off to comfort the composer in his great misfortune. On arriving at his house they found him fast asleep in bed, oblivious of operas and all their cares.

Rossini came of that stock whose tendency to light-hearted gaiety is so instinctive and hereditary that their whole lives are passed in the clear open air of Italy, and their nature is redolent of the free country and of the sunshine.

Troupes of strolling players were common itinerants of the roads in that country at the latter end of last century. They made their tours from village to village, or from fair to fair, now on foot, now in ox waggons, or in market carts, according as their means or the opportunities of the country allowed. Theophile Gautier, in his novel, "Le Capitaine Fracasse," has given a charming account of the adventures of a troupe of strolling players in France in the days of Louis XIII.,

who, furnished with a long and roomy waggon which could accommodate the whole party comfortably, travelled from place to place in this easy and gipsy-like fashion, with open air and smiling landscapes as their constant companions. Change the venue, call France Italy, and the days of Louis Treize the latter end of the eighteenth century, and we shall have a very fair idea of the life which Rossini's ancestors lived as strolling players and musicians of the country districts of Italy.

His mother was celebrated no less for her excellent voice than for her personal beauty. She was one of the *prime donne* of the troupe, and on her exquisite gifts of person and of song depended much of the attractiveness which the entertainment offered to its patrons. Her husband was a musician in the small band which accompanied the performances of the singers. He is stated to have been a horn-player, but could probably perform on other instruments as well.

From place to place they wandered all the summer through beneath the clear blue sky of Italy, timing their perambulations so as to be present at all the vintage feasts, the village *fêtes*, the fairs, the merry-makings, the carnivals, which in that land of pleasure, and in its most pleasant days, occurred in abundance, to delight the hearts of its light-spirited inhabitants, and to keep up a constant flood of gaiety.

When the winter came the little party retired into the towns, where they lived on the small accumulation of savings which they had made in their halcyon days in the summer. The elder Rossini and his family frequented Pesaro for this double purpose of repose and retirement, and it was here on the 29th of February, in the year 1792, that Gioachino Rossini was born.



ROSSINI.



The boy's earliest experiences with the free and lawless Bohemians of the road must have imbued him deeply with that spirit of light-hearted and often frivolous gaiety, which though it interfered frequently with the serious discharge of his functions as a composer, was one of the greatest safeguards, one of the most enviable properties, with which nature could have endowed either him or any man. We hear of Rossini being himself placed on the temporary stages of this troupe at an early age—singing songs in a sweet and charming manner, so much so that Madame Giorgi-Righetti, the famous singer for whom he afterwards wrote the principal female rôle in *Il Barbiere*, declared that she remembered nothing more enchanting than the voice of the youthful vocalist when he stood on the stage at the age of seven years to sing an air from an opera which had been assigned to him. Nor were his functions limited to singing songs. His father also entrusted him with the part of second horn-player in their orchestra; and gradually other instruments opened their secrets to the young composer.

What little education fell in Rossini's way was given him at Bologna, where the professor of counterpoint at the School of Music in that town carried him on during the winter months through a course of composition, with much reluctance on the part of the lad, whose subsequent position in the great world of music suffered sadly from the want of a firm and controlling hand being kept over him when a boy. Had his parents insisted on his at least completing that education which was begun at Bologna, only to be interrupted before the most useful portions of musical knowledge were imparted to him, he would most probably have stood

on a pinnacle of equality with the two or three highest geniuses of the art.

He began to write operas at the age of eighteen, and contrived to combine music and pleasure in a way which no one has been able to do before or since. If we would think of him as he actually was, we should conjure up to our minds Sheridan and his brilliant contemporaries, whose life seemed to pass in a whirl of pleasure, although it was not without its fruits of good work. In the same way Rossini ever seemed to make pleasure the main object of his existence, and self-indulgence the motto of his life. Nevertheless he contrived to write operas in multitudinous profusion, and to hold the world spell-bound at his genius, while he himself affected to scoff at art, to undervalue effort, and to place enjoyment pure and simple as the sole object worth attending to in life.

His uncontrollable laziness we have alluded to already. This did not confine itself to lying in bed of a morning and neglecting punctuality at rehearsals, but was noticeable in his invariable habit of putting off all work of any description to the last moment. If he had an opera to compose, and six weeks to compose it in, it would never have entered his thoughts to sit down directly he received the commission and commence penning the score; in fact, he would have been morally unable to write a word under such circumstances. But he would waste his time in frivolities, and delay the composition of the piece until a fortnight or ten days before the date announced for its production, when he would set to work with desperate energy, and invariably finish it in time.

The bulk of his life was thus passed in pleasant society, with gay associates, often in questionable intrigues, at

the dinner-tables of the wealthy, and at the drinking bouts of dissipated musicians. When the manager was deep in business estimates in his office at the theatre, when stage-carpenters were hard at work hammering plankings for the scenery, when scene-painters were indefatigably engaged with brush and paint fashioning the scenes of the future opera, if the question had been asked, Where is the composer, on whose creative genius the structure of the whole opera is to be reared? the reply would have been, Seek him in one of the *salons* of the town, it might be Naples or Palermo or elsewhere, amusing himself with listening to some soft voice warbling a song to the accompaniment of the guitar, or holding forth in praise of Neapolitan beauty to a circle of admiring listeners,—with not a note of the opera written in connection with which so much stir was going on at the theatre; and, as he sits at the supper-table afterwards he drains his bumpers of sparkling Moselle, completely oblivious of the fact that any such opera is waiting to be written by him, or, indeed, that the very name of such an opera exists at all.

Nevertheless, sharp observers of this everlasting nonchalance of Rossini, might have noticed that as the time approached nearer and nearer, without appearing to rouse himself from his dream of lethargy, he really did so. If he happened to meet the *prima donna* he would ask her to sing him a song, and, without seeming to pay any attention, would silently remark the best notes in her voice, and judge what effects it would be most suitable to assign to her. He would make the same scrutiny of the baritone and the tenor. He would begin to talk about his libretto a little, which showed that he had read it; and though he said nothing in its praise—for he invariably ran down the “books” of his

operas, although he accepted them—yet he betrayed clearly enough a sufficient familiarity with the outlines of the plot and the exigencies of the characters to enable him to begin composing at any moment.

Still time was allowed to slip away, as if time were of no consequence, and as if his addiction to pleasure were eternal, until, when only a short fortnight remained before the day of the production, hounded on by the manager, implored and entreated by the singers, bullied by his friends and acquaintances, he seized his pen, filled the score with glorious music, and just in time completed the piece.

A man who can thus combine work and pleasure in his life leads a happy existence, and is, perhaps, of all mortals the one most to be envied.

An amusing example of Rossini's numerous amorous adventures is related by some of his biographers. It was when he was at Palermo that a messenger, grotesque in appearance, ugly, ill-shapen, and hump-backed, entered the room with a letter. This little note, a perfumed one, was a billet-doux from a lady appointing a rendezvous with the gallant composer at a sequestered place in the outskirts of the city. On arriving there he found a vision lovely enough to dazzle any man's eyes, and to precipitate him into the most romantic passion for the charmer. The interview passed in the usual mutual protestations of affection, and at length the pair separated entirely delighted with one another.

A few days afterwards the portent of ugliness, the messenger, again appeared in Rossini's *appartement*, and delivering his letter went away as before. There was something in the man's gait which recalled to Rossini's mind his charmer of a few days before, and



accordingly suspecting a mystery he resolved to follow him. He traced him to the mansion of a wealthy Sicilian merchant, and from his observations made on the way was perfectly convinced that the lady and the messenger were one and the same. He now congratulated himself on having gathered together the threads of an admirable intrigue; but at the next assignation, no sooner had he clasped the lady in his arms than a loud report was heard and a bullet whistled past his head. Rossini, who was naturally of a timid disposition, dropped the houri at once, and made off home with the utmost speed, vowing that among the cut-throat Sicilians he would never indulge in an intrigue again.

He was twice married, first to Isabella Colbran, a *prima donna* of repute and talent, who, despite his numerous infidelities, made him a very good wife; and, secondly, when he was fifty-four years of age, to Olympe Pelissier, who survived him.

By the time of his second marriage he had long retired from the world of music. In fact, with the composition of *William Tell* his career may be said to have come to an end. It was the first "grand" opera he had ever attempted, and it was destined to be the last. Though only thirty-seven years of age, and in the zenith of his popularity, he laid down his pen the day after the first performance of this work and resumed it no more, except to write the *Stabat Mater* and the *Messe Solennelle*, although he lived to his seventy-seventh year. For forty years he lay idle and reposed on his laurels, and he is one of the few instances of any celebrated man who has done so. "One success more," he said to his friends, "would add nothing to my fame, and one failure might impair it. I have no need of the

one, and I will not expose myself to the risk of the other."

The opera from his pen which seems destined to last longest and indeed to be immortal is the *Barber of Seville*. The *Barber of Seville*, which owes its creation to the French comic dramatist Beaumarchais, was first turned into an opera by Paisiello, and was considered a very successful piece in the setting of that composer. Rossini, however, applied to Paisiello for permission to re-set the opera, and this was granted him on condition that he should obtain a new libretto. That task was not a hard one, and, assisted by Sterbini, Rossini turned out libretto and music in a fortnight's time.

The opera was brought out at Rome during the Carnival of 1816, and what must ever amaze us is that on the first performance it was hissed from the boards. Various causes had concurred to produce this untoward result, for we can scarcely think that the music was to blame; but the chapter of accidents had so ordained it that scarcely half the music was heard. The Count's guitar strings as he was serenading under the balcony broke one after another in quick succession, and this was the first occasion for laughter; next the idea of a barber carrying a guitar, as he does in his opening air, instead of a razor and basin, seemed to provoke the merriment of the audience. Don Basilio tumbled over a trap that had been incautiously left open on the stage, and had to sing his aria with his pocket-handkerchief to his nose. And to crown all, a cat appeared on the stage during the grand *finale*, and the efforts of the singers to drive it off the stage threw the whole theatre into uproarious laughter, and brought the opera to an end amid universal hubbub.

Rossini conferred a boon on operatic music by check-

ing the licence of the singers, and prohibiting them from introducing roulades and fiorituras of their own into the music. With this end in view he adopted the plan of writing all the roulades and runs himself, often abridging them to half their length, and always toning down the many eccentricities in which they abounded. The irony of fortune has however ordained that Rossini, the great opponent of the florid style, should achieve the reputation of one of its most remarkable expositors, from the fact that he wrote down in black and white in this music the adornments and decorations for which other composers left the blank spaces.

Opera-goers who have heard *La Gazza Ladra* without knowing the extravagances of ornament that were tolerated before Rossini came, would certainly never have been disposed to credit him with the character we have alluded to. The music sounds like a shower of beautiful runs from beginning to end. *The Thieving Magpie*, however, is a work that for enduring power will never compare with the *Barber*, although it achieved great popularity here when first performed in Rossini's lifetime. When Ebers, the then manager of the King's Theatre, entered the stage-door on the first night of its performance, he was dismayed by meeting a friend, who said with a grave air, "My dear Ebers, I pity you; from my heart I pity you." "Empty benches, I suppose," replied Ebers. "Not so," was the reply, "but they have not left you a seat in your own house." It may be mentioned that the libretto of *La Gazza Ladra* was stolen from the composer Paer, and placed at the disposal of Rossini by a person who had a grudge against the first-named. In this way did *The Thieving Magpie* justify its title from the first moment of its existence.

Rossini's dilatory habits did not forsake him till his dying day. We mentioned that the *Stabat Mater* was composed during his retirement. In the last number of this work there is a fugue, about which a humorous story is told. Rossini disliked fugues, and this is one of the very few instances wherein he has attempted the form. It appears that when he commenced the *Stabat Mater* he thought it his duty, as he was writing in the religious style, to commence with a good strong fugue. But he could not summon up enough energy to compose the fugue for the first chorus of the work, so he postponed the task till the second chorus. The second passed off like the first—still no fugue—till at last the concluding number of the oratorio arrived, and then there was no drawing back. Accordingly he began his fugue with the best intentions, but after a dozen bars or so his resolution gave way, and thinking he had done enough for counterpoint he wound up with one of his old melodious choruses, which perhaps makes a better ending than scientific conscientiousness could have produced.

## SYNOPSIS OF LIFE, AND WORKS.

---

- GIOACHINO ANTONIO ROSSINI was born at Pesaro, Feb. 29th, 1792; was the son of Giuseppe Rossini, a travelling musician; studied at Bologna under Tesei and Padre Mattei, 1807—8; travelled about from town to town in Italy as composer and conductor, 1810—1814; composed *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, 1816; *La Gazza Ladra*, 1817; married Isabella Colbran, 1822; appeared at Vienna, 1822; composed *Semiramide*, 1823; visited London, Dec., 1823; became musical director of the *Théâtre Italien*, Paris, 1824; was appointed composer to the King of France, 1826; returned to Bologna, 1829; his first wife died, 1845; he married Olympe Pelissier, 1847; resided in Italy till 1855; returned to Paris, 1855, and resided there in future, at Passy; died at Passy, Nov. 1st, 1868, aged seventy-six.
- 

Operas: *La Cambiale di Matrimonio*, Venice, 1810; *L'Equivoco Stravagante*, Bologna, 1811; *Demetrio et Polibio*, 1812; *L'Inganno Felice*, Venice, 1812 (London 1819); *La Scala di Seta*, Venice, 1812; *La Pietra del Paragone*, Milan, 1812; *L'Occasione fa il Ladro*, Venice, 1812; *Il Figlio per azzardo*, 1813; *Tancredi*, Venice, 1813 (Lond., May, 1820); *I due Bruschini*, Venice, 1813; *L'Italiana in Algeri*, Venice, 1813 (Lond., 1819), *Aureliano in Palmira*, Milan, 1813 (Lond., 1826); *Il Turco in Italia*, Milan, 1814 (Lond., 1821); *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*, Naples, 1815 (Lond., 1818); *Sigismundo*, Venice, 1815; *Torvaldo e Dorliska*, Rome, 1815; *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Rome, Feb. 5, 1816 (London, 1818; Paris, 1824); *La Gazzetta*, Naples, 1816; *Otello*, Naples, 1816 (London, 1822; Paris, 1844); *La Cenerentola*, Rome, 1817 (London, 1820); *La Gazza Ladra*, Milan, 1817

(London, 1821); *Armida*, Naples, 1817; *Adelaide di Borgogna*, Rome, 1818; *Adina, o il Califfo di Bagdad*, 1818; *Mosè in Egitto*, Naples, 1818 (London as "*Pietro l'Ermita*," 1822; Paris, 1827); *Ricciardo e Zoraide*, Naples, 1818 (London, 1823); *Ermione*, Naples, 1819; *Eduardo e Cristina*, Venice, 1819; *La Donna del Lago*, (Naples) Oct. 4, 1819 (London, 1823; Paris, 1825); *Bianca e Faliero*, Milan, 1819; *Maometto Secondo*, Naples, 1820; *Matilde di Shabran*, Rome, 1821 (London, 1823; Paris, 1857); *Zelmira*, Naples, 1821 (London, 1824); *La Pie Voleuse*, Paris, 1822; *Semiramide*, Venice, 1823 (London, 1824; Paris 1860); *Il Viaggio a Reims*, Paris, 1825; *Le Siège de Corinthe* (a revision of *Maometto II.*), Paris, 1826 (London, as "*L'Assedio di Corinto*"); *Le Comte Ory*, Paris, 1828 (London, 1829); *Guillaume Tell*, Paris, Aug. 3, 1829 (London, in Italian, July, 1839); *Robert Bruce* (pasticcio by Niedermeyer, from "*La Donna del Lago*," "*Zelmira*," and "*Armida*"), Paris, 1846.

*Ciro in Babilonia*, oratorio, Ferrara, 1812.

Cantatas and occasional pieces: *Il Pianto d'Armonia*, 1808; *Didone abbandonata*, Bologna, 1810; *Irene e Egle*; *Teti e Peleo*, 1816; *Partenope*, 1819; *La Riconoscenza*, 1821; *Il Vero Ommaggio*, Verona, 1823; *L'Augurio felice*, 1823; *Il Bardo*, 1823; *La Sacra Alleanza*, 1823; *Il Pianto delle Muse*, London, 1823; *Il Ritorno*, 1823; *I Pastori*, 1825; *Il Serto votivo*, 1829; *La Foi, l'Espérance et la Charité*, for female voices, 1844; Cantata for the Paris Exhibition, 1867.

Sacred: *Stabat Mater*, 1832-41; *Petite Messe Solennelle*, 1864; *Tantum ergo*; *O Salutaris*. *Les Soirées musicales*, ariettas and duets (these have been transcribed for Pf.); *Gorgheggi e Solfeggio*, exercises and *Solfeggios*, Lond., fo., n. d. (trans. by Sabilla Novello).

Instrumental; *Mariage de S. A. R. le Duc d'Orléans*, 3 marches pour musique militaire (Pf. arrangement also); Quartett for flute, clarinet, horn, and bassoon, in F; *Le Rendez-vous de Chasse*, fanfare for 4 trumpets (1828); *Serenade* for orch., in E flat; 5 *Sonatinas* for Pf. (arranged from string quartets), in G, A, B, E flat, and D; *Variations* for clarinet and orch., in B. Numerous pieces for Pf., mostly in MS., and consisting of short sketches with whimsical titles.





SCHUMANN.



## SCHUMANN.

SCHUMANN'S grave, earnest face is an index to his mind. The melancholy eyes, the long straight hair, the firm-set lips—all tell of the man of fixed ideas, the man of strong opinions, the musing, meditative idealist. More, perhaps, than any other composer in the long roll of fame, Schumann set high store on his art. He idolised his vocation ; he regarded musicians as the most important personages on the face of the earth, and music as the only thing worth living for. He had taken to the art comparatively late in life, having been educated for the law, and having done his best to imbue himself with the proper affection for ledgers and codexes. But in vain. When at the University of Heidelberg he had won more fame among his compeers for his exploits at the piano and in the music-room than for any profound knowledge of his jurisprudence ; and after vainly battling with the terrible incubus of the latter, he finally persuaded his fond mother to allow him to cross the Rubicon—in other words, to lay down the lawyer's quill, and take up the *bâton* or the music-roll, or whatever else may be the fittest symbol for the profession of the art of music.

The old lady had indulged in many day-dreams about her son, who she fondly hoped would distinguish himself in one of the learned professions, and thereby raise himself a few steps higher than his father, whose

vocation was a learned *trade*—that of bookseller. But neither the worldly motives of ambition, nor the stronger inducements of filial affection, which in his case had more than ordinary weight, could sway Robert Schumann's natural inclination in the slightest. He was bent on becoming a musician—though, curiously enough, the influence of his parentage and bringing-up showed itself most conspicuously in his career; he was the most literary, perhaps the most learned musician amongst the great composers.

To spend a day with this remarkable man, let us single out for the purpose that epoch in his life when he had been married a few years to Clara Wieck, when all things smiled around him, when there was happiness in his home and promise of prosperity abroad, and when the house rang with the prattle of children. Let us enter the house where this interesting family have their abode, and look to the centrepiece of the family circle—the composer Schumann himself.

At once we shall find a curious contrast to the universal blitheness of the place, and shall confess after a few minutes' observation that all the happiness and gaiety of the family spring from the wife and mother. The composer has not been long up. He is moving about the house like a man in a dream, his face utterly abstracted from all surroundings, his whole thoughts engrossed upon some rare fantastic melody which he is pondering in his mind, and his every attitude betokening a supreme indifference to all else in the world save that. It is immaterial to him whether he has breakfasted or whether he has not. If you were to ask him, ten to one he would not be able to give you a certain answer; he would say, "Perhaps I have; but what is breakfast to the development of this admirable theme?"

with which he would sit down to the piano and explain with appropriate musical illustration the precise idea which he was engaged in realising.

But to put any such interrogatory is what no one dare do among his own family. The children have been taught to subdue the noise of their games when he is near. They have been told their papa is often engaged in poring over some intricate musical problem which is of great importance to the family's prosperity ; and for their own sake and their mother's, no less than for his, they should indulge him in the silence he so imperatively demands.

In this way and by this clever management on the part of his wife, the abstracted, moody man has generally full liberty to indulge his humours to the full, and though the house resembles oftentimes a great nursery, things are so well managed that he does not feel the presence of the children any inconvenience at all.

In this way he goes about during the morning hours with a roll of music paper under one arm and a newspaper under the other, to each of which articles he makes alternate application—sometimes filling the score with abundance of rapidly written notes and phrases, while at other times he unfolds the journal which he hugs with so much affection, and, opening it, reads several paragraphs with the deepest interest, occasionally interrupting his reading with gestures of dissent or smiles of approbation. But the reading is no sooner commenced than it is abandoned again, and he falls with renewed energy on his score, which is fast accumulating music from one margin to the other.

Occasionally he breaks off both occupations to play a passage on the piano, and then we notice a peculiarity of his playing—a weakness, a hesitancy of the right

hand, which, while he moves it, seems now and then to cause him pain, judging by the shade which from time to time passes over his features. The truth is that the middle finger of his right hand is sprained, and can only be used with the greatest difficulty. In his *Sturm und Drang* days, as the Germans delight to call that buoyant and ardent period of our existence which precedes solid manhood, Schumann, let loose from the legal desk and launched in the plenitude of his desire on the sea of music, was afflicted with such devouring ambition to excel as a pianist, that, not content with practising to an unearthly extent and nearly ruining his health thereby, he made use of some mechanical instrument for stretching his hand, the effect of which on the irritated sinews was to sprain a finger and incapacitate him for a while from touching the piano at all. The maimed finger gradually got well, but the unfortunate composer, who aspired to be a concert *virtuoso*, was debarred from appearing on the platform all the rest of his life; and even in private, when he sat down to play, the weakness of the hand was quite perceptible, at times unpleasantly so.

He is, however, able to give utterance to a crowd of his extemporised inventions as he sits before the keys, and that, too, with the greatest facility. Although, in the book of advice which he wrote for young musicians, he is most careful to warn them against indulging in the pleasant folly of extempore playing, as destructive to style and ruinous to chastity of invention; yet there is no man who so readily yields to the weakness which he is so loud in condemning. He would often sit for hours together pouring off fanciful strains, wild, disconnected, and capricious; and then at the end of the time would rise up and reproach himself for his

weakness. Such might have been his mood to-day, but the sound of a piano from an adjoining chamber, where his wife is teaching—the steady sound of scales and exercises—admonishes him that he must be up and doing, and not give way to the *dolce far niente* of music, which he declared extemporisation to be. Accordingly, he recommences his composition again, and by dinner-time has so far advanced that he can be free from that self-reproach, which was so habitual to him, for the rest of the day.

At dinner, what a happy family assemble round the board! The bright faces of his children, the smiling countenance of his wife facing him at the other end of the table, much news to tell, trifling though its import be, universal happiness and merriment—till at last Schumann relaxes the rigour of his brow, and takes an interest, or affects to take an interest, in the conversation that is passing round him. The children tell their innocent tales, his wife discusses the financial aspect of her pupils, and while she demonstrates the prosperity of their circumstances labours all the time to prove that her husband's symphonies and cantatas are the real source of the family *bien-être*, not her own patient and indefatigable teaching.

In the afternoon Schumann is perforce diverted from his attention to his music, which, if left alone, he would pursue with ardour every hour of the day. Various literary friends drop in to see him, all more or less musical, but all unlike him in having their strongest leaning rather to the literature than the music. Schumann, besides his rôle of composer and conductor, is likewise editor of a paper—the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*—a journal which still exists in unimpaired prosperity, perhaps we should say in en-

hanced and multiplied prosperity, and is at present the great organ of the German musical world. In Schumann's days it was a very small affair. He had founded this journal himself, and had seen it rise from a humble sheet into being a very fair paper.

His connection with the *Neue Zeitschrift* may be taken as an illustration of that double rôle of musician and literary man, which we elsewhere advert to as being exemplified so strongly in him. Next to his music he takes the deepest possible interest in his paper. It is practically his only relaxation.

This afternoon some of the contributors and friends of the paper drop in one by one to see him. One contributor comes to suggest an article on Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, in which he has found an analogy to the pomp of military processions and the gorgeous pageants described in the visions of the English Opium-eater; and as the poetical critic details the sketch which he proposes to give, Schumann listens entranced and radiant, interrupting his ardent fellow-spirit from time to time with the words, "Schön!" "Gut!" "Wunderschön!" etc., or occasionally with only a grunt of satisfaction when the expression of his opinion seems to defy the power of language to convey it.

Another contributor comes to submit the proof of a concert criticism, which appears to please the editor mightily. It is profoundly philosophical, and approaches the musical programme with the same circumlocution and deference with which Descartes might have commenced to consider the vortex of the universe or Immanuel Kant the immortality of the soul. Both Schumann and the critic appear alike to consider that this profound and dignified treatment is thoroughly justified by the magnitude of the subject, and the

tremendous issues which depend on even a trifling error of judgment in such a matter.

Another visitor, a friend of the paper and its editor, comes to suggest a letter on a topic which at that time attracted great interest among the readers of the journal, viz., the proper place of the symphony in a concert programme. Should it come first or last, or in the middle? If the latter, why should it stand in that particular place, from the nature of all things in general and of music in particular? These points are discussed with the greatest seriousness. The proposed letter, after a certain necessary curtailment, is promised a corner in the journal, and the visitors, coming one by one, go away again in like fashion. By the time the last of them has left, *Abendessen* is ready, and the family once more assemble round the genial board to partake of their evening meal.

There was nothing patriarchal about the Schumann household, such as we have had occasion to mention in the case of the Bachs, when, domineered as it were by that old patriarch, all the family had their due subordination, and, *cæteris paribus*, we might almost imagine the days of the plains of Mamre repeated, when mankind lived in tents a life of primeval simplicity. But in the Schumann household that strict subordination to the head of the house is wanting. There is rather a tacit subordination of every one to the mistress of the establishment, who without obtruding her personality in any way, seems nevertheless to be instinctively looked up to as the real guiding spirit of the place. It is to her the children come to unburden their minds of their troubles or designs; it is from her that her husband seeks advice on every emergency, scarcely a few hours of the day passing

without her assistance in this way being desired by him. A happy man was Schumann, to be blessed with such a helpmate. One cannot help thinking what a terrible muddle his life would have been without her. It was as if some good angel came after him wherever he went, and put everything straight. Such was her influence in the household—the spirit of order, of method, of refinement, of peace.

This evening how admirably is this illustrated! After the evening meal the children are put to bed, and she and her husband remain alone. Both alike ardent enthusiasts for music, they sit down to the piano side by side, and from the mass of music lying on the stand play piece after piece together, she performing the treble with her right hand, he the bass with his left. Often their disengaged arms are locked round one another's waists in an embrace of mutual affection, and they play as lovers, not as a married couple of eight or nine years' standing. Occasionally one of the duettists, as if impelled by some irresistible desire to play a more prominent rôle on the instrument, monopolises for a while the keyboard, and executes some favourite passage alone, while the other, enchanted, listens.

At last it is Schumann's turn to play by himself. All the music on the stand has been played through, and he falls into his old luxury of extemporising. Looking at his wife, he tells her that she shall form the theme for his extemporisation, and taking the letters of her name, "Clara," omitting the non-musical ones, L and R, and confining himself to the C, A, A, he pours forth a wealth of tones in beautiful euphony on a theme so near his heart. "Do you hear the vowels?" he says, as he strikes them clearly in the midst of his extemporisation. "And here," he adds, thumping



vigorously two notes in the bass, "are the two consonants which I could not get in."

He was full of these humorous devices in music, and indeed the first to introduce them. He would make a little run, as long as a scale, and then a jump, to imitate a harlequin. He would flip the treble notes in a charming manner to mimic the fluttering of butterflies. The quips and cranks of music were assuredly Schumann's. No man could equal him in this elegant trifling. He contrived to propose to his wife on the pianoforte before their marriage without ever uttering a syllable of language to tell her what he meant. This evening he is full of this musical humour. Having played a free fantasia and also a fugue on her name, he reproduces the effect of what he heard that morning when she was teaching music in one room and he was composing a symphony in another. The intermingling of prosaic scales and sublime harmonies is a ridiculous travesty at which she cannot choose but laugh, and in this delightful trifling the evening wears slowly and tranquilly away.

Their life had been one long romance before their marriage, and it remained so until the end. Clara Wieck was only nine years old when Schumann, then a great gawky lad a good many years her senior, first set eyes on her. Schumann had just come to study under Wieck at No. 36, Grimmisch Strasse, Leipzig. His passion for music, which, as we mentioned, defied all attempts on the part of his mother to restrain it, had reached such excess that the good lady consented to lay the case before some experienced musician, on the condition that Robert would abide by his decision. Wieck was the chosen judge, and, for-

tunately for art, his verdict was favourable. He declared that the youthful aspirant, by patience and perseverance, had sufficient abilities to reach the highest distinction.

Installed as pupil in Wieck's domicile, he saw daily, at *Mittagsessen*, the little fairy of whom report spoke so highly as a phenomenal pianist, and whose feats of execution, even at that early age, were sufficient to put his own to shame. The romantic affection which he seems to have entertained for her from the very first resembles the highly idealised passion of Dante for Beatrice, whom he tells us he met when she was but a young girl of seven or eight at a banquet, and her image from that day forth was never effaced from his mind. With a passion no less ethereal did Clara Wieck inspire the enthusiastic young musician of twenty summers, who had come to take up his abode in her father's house. The case of the Italian poet and the German composer were thus far different, in that Dante in the events of life became separated from Beatrice, and was forced to nurse her memory as a celestial dream alone, while Schumann and Clara Wieck were constantly thrown together, saw one another repeatedly while the young girl was growing to womanhood, until, at last, the time arrived in the course of years when a declaration of mutual affection affianced them, at least in their own ideas of things, to one another.

Unfortunately the lovers had made their calculations of future happiness without taking into the reckoning one very important party to the agreement. "Papa" Wieck had never been consulted while the match was making, and when, at last, his consent was requested he obstinately refused to grant it. Despite Clara's . . . .

entreaties, and her declaration that the future happiness of her whole life was at stake, her father had no idea of possessing a penniless musician for a son-in-law. Robert Schumann was banished the house. No. 36, Grimmisch Strasse was abandoned to gloom and dissension. The father thought one way; the daughter implored another. Not a letter was allowed to be conveyed into the establishment without personal inspection on the part of the angry father. He forbade Robert to write to his daughter, and for fear that the audacious youth might contrive to convey surreptitious missives to her by writing a feigned hand on the envelope, opened every letter addressed to the young lady from whatever source it came.

Robert Schumann even at that early date was editor of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. Driven to desperation by the obduracy of his lady-love's father, the young editor conceived the bold idea of printing "Letters to Clara" in the body of the newspaper, in which he poured forth the most extraordinary and imaginative rhapsodies of love, in the hope that the paper would be delivered at Wieck's house, and that the lady might possibly see the effusions. Readers of the newspaper, however, imagined, and with considerable reason, that the editor had gone mad. Side by side with grave essays on recondite points of harmony and dry reports of concerts, a series of passionate love-letters continued to run week by week with the greatest regularity.

Eventually the opposition of Wieck gave way, and Clara was married to the composer in 1840. Their wedding took place at a small country church near Leipzig, and shortly after its occurrence they toured together in Hamburg, Copenhagen, and Vienna.

Clara Wieck made an excellent wife. From first to

last her husband has no expression to record about her but the purest and fullest love and veneration. She seems to have supplied that place in his morbidly sensitive nature which was wanting to complete his artistic character. If he doubted of the excellence of some of his inspirations, she was ever ready to remove his vacillation; if he failed, she was at hand to encourage him to proceed.

The cares of the world, the disappointments of life, were suddenly lightened for Schumann when he married. His wife undertook the bearing of them all, and he was privileged to pass his time in a musing and meditative world of fancy without much solicitude as to the practical events of every day. Such, as has been well said of Madame Schumann, is the wife which the musician, the poet, the artist should above all other men possess, and such a woman is completely necessary to the perfection of their natures. How many wasted or ill-spent lives do we see in this special sphere of human action, owing to the want of such a friend and supporter as Clara Wieck proved to Robert Schumann!

“As a woman,” he writes ecstatically about her to a bosom friend, “she is a gift from above. She deserves the greatest affection that man can bestow.” The constant refrain of his letters is his bliss and happiness in the domestic part of his existence. When she was absent from him Schumann seemed the most miserable of men. Her power over him for joyousness and good was something marvellous.

That other imaginative dreamer, Franz Schubert, passed through this life the most unhappy of men, so far as his domestic circumstances were concerned; and we may well ask what would his existence have been,

how entirely would it have been cheered and brightened and perfected had he had a Clara Wieck to share his fortunes! Indeed, there is no man, great or small, whose sweetness of life, or lack of it, and the place such sweetness or the lack of it must have in his life-work, is not due to the hidden influence of the woman who shares his home.

The arrangements of the Schumann family were very methodical and regular; the children were brought up in the old and simple German fashion, the theory of which may be summed up in the two cardinal principles, "Fear God and honour thy father." The expenses which arose as the family increased were met by the growing profits of Schumann's compositions, and by occasional concert tours undertaken by Madame Schumann.

In 1846 they both went a tour to St. Petersburg, where they made the acquaintance of the celebrated Russian pianist, Adolphe Henselt. Madame Schumann and he played many duets together, and were filled with a strong admiration for one another's powers. Henselt was anxious that the talented pianist should undertake an extensive concert tour at this period extending through Europe, but the invitation was not much to Madame Schumann's mind. As she herself expressed it, "There was no absolute need for a large influx of wealth, but there was great need of a settled life, for there were young children waiting at home who demanded her constant attention and care." She was only too glad to be at home again. "Our house is very merry," says Schumann in one of his letters at this period; "five children are running about in it, and all are happy as the day is long. The little ones already begin to listen to Mozart and Beethoven."

The letter then branches off into a panegyric on his wife.

Madame Schumann superintended the musical education of her children herself. She taught them, above all things, to delight in their father's compositions. At her instigation, in order to further the musical culture of the children in the pleasantest and most effectual way possible, her husband wrote the "Kinderalbum," or "Album for Children." The first five pieces in this, we have been told, were written for his eldest child, and the remainder were composed for the purposes of general tuition, the idea having pleased him so much that he resolved to develop the album into a lengthy collection of pieces. Madame Schumann held her high place in her family because she loved and ruled it firmly yet temperately. The children's tasks were arranged with a due regard to their powers, and the schoolroom became as pleasant to them as the parlour, owing to their hours for lessons being comparatively short and at the same time rendered interesting by excellent teaching.

It is a happy picture to dwell upon, this little German interior!—the laughing faces and happy voices of the children; the sedate and much-absorbed composer, who moved about in a dream of inspiration, and, so far as the world and the knowledge of it were concerned, as simple and innocent as a child; and, finally, the careful and anxious mother and wife, who was the guide and guardian of the whole household, on whom all depended, the children for their nurture and education, the father for advice, encouragement, and sympathy, which were as dear and as indispensable to him as was the parental guidance to the children.

Schumann's music bears the strong impress of

his dreamy and meditative mind. It is full of fanciful colouring. His earlier works display this peculiar and typical character more than his later ones, which exhibit to a considerable extent the restraining influence of Mendelssohn.

As a representative composition of Schumann's we cannot do better than allude to *The Carnival*, a set of romantic and fantastic pieces for the pianoforte, written in his early period. We have in preceding pages mentioned fugues on the name of "Bach," but in *The Carnival* we have a long and amply-developed collection of pieces on the name of "Schumann," that is to say, on the letters in "Schumann" which are at the same time musical notes, these being S, C, H, and A, for A S in German is the term for A flat, and H is our B natural, so that in these four letters we are provided with a passable theme, which, in its musical equivalents, A flat, C, B, becomes henceforth the theme of *The Carnival*.

All sorts of things take place to the music of these letters. Harlequins jump to them, butterflies flutter to them, midnight promenades are conducted, and all to the music of these four letters, which are charmingly diversified and worked up in every conceivable musical manner, yet still are heard as the main theme throughout. Now it is a waltz that has them, and now two lovers are saying adieu to their accompaniment. Thus the various and glancing scenes of *The Carnival* are depicted and ingeniously suggested to our minds.

Perhaps the happiest moment of *The Carnival* is when Paganini is supposed to come in and play a *roulade* on his violin. Then the letters are taxed to the utmost, as we may well suppose, but they stand the ordeal well.

*The Carnival* winds up with a spirited march, still on the same theme, and with this the long musical panorama is brought to a close.

In 1850 Schumann became Director of Music at Düsseldorf, having previously been settled at Dresden, where he was conductor of the principal choral society in succession to Ferdinand Heller. While at Dresden he wrote the music to *Manfred* and to *Faust*. At Düsseldorf his principal compositions were the Rhenish Symphony, the "Pilgrimage of the Rose," and many others of his later works.

Up till 1853 Schumann had worked most laboriously at his compositions; but the effect of indiscreet and excessive industry on his delicately-organised mind had been to unhinge gradually its secret springs, until at length strange fancies took possession of him. He imagined that the souls of Beethoven and Mendelssohn had entered into him, and under their inspiration he was compelled to write. Various other ideas of a similar nature testified only too truly to the terrible fate which had come upon the gifted musician.

His wife was now called upon to bear this cruel weight of calamity. She had seven children to support—three girls and four boys; she had the expense of her husband's long and dangerous malady to meet, and through it all—what must have been exceedingly irksome to her—her sole, or at least chief, means of providing for the necessities of the home, was by appearing on the public platform. Yet from this duty the brave woman never flinched. Nay, we do not even hear that she ever murmured at the load of woes which had thus fallen suddenly upon her; but instead, summoning up her heroism, she prepared to meet them.

At one moment she was striving to soothe the sorrows



of her afflicted husband and to comfort her grieving children ; at the next, she was flying off in trains to play at some distant town, thence to return at the earliest moment to recommence the wearing labours which awaited her at home.

On arriving home from one of these journeys, it was to find that the main cause of all her sorrows was soon to pass away, and give her that relief for which she could not pray, but which, nevertheless, was a merciful release both for the unhappy sufferer and herself. Her beloved husband died in her arms shortly after her return. His death-bed was surrounded by his seven children ; and a life which for some years past had been racked with storm, passed at length tranquilly away on the 29th of July, 1856.

## SYNOPSIS OF LIFE, AND WORKS.

---

ROBERT ALEXANDER SCHUMANN was born at Zwickau, Saxony, on the 8th of June, 1810; was the son of F. A. G. Schumann, a bookseller of that town; studied for the law at Leipsic and Heidelberg Universities; studied pianoforte under Wieck, and harmony under Dorn, at Leipsic; established the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 1834; married Clara Wieck, 1840; travelled with Madame Schumann on a concert tour in Austria, Russia, and Germany; settled at Dresden, 1844; became Director of Music at Düsseldorf, 1850; died at Enderich, near Bonn, July 29th, 1856, aged forty-six.

---

### *Opus Numbers.*

1. Variations, Pf.
2. Papillons, Pf.
3. Studies (Paganini), Pf.
4. Intermezzi, Pf.
5. Impromptus, Pf.
6. Davidsbündlertänze, Pf.
7. Toccata, Pf.
8. Allegro, Pf.
9. Carnaval, Pf.
10. Six studies (Paganini), Pf.
11. Sonata in F sharp min., Pf.
12. Phantasiestücke, Pf.
13. Studies, Pf.
14. Sonata in F min., Pf.
15. Kinder-scenen, Pf.
16. Kreisleriana, Pf.
17. Fantasia, Pf.
18. Arabeske, Pf.
19. Blumenstück, Pf.
20. Humoreske, Pf.
21. Novelletten, Pf.

22. Sonata in G min., Pf.
23. Nachtstücke, Pf.
24. Liederkreis, voice and Pf.
25. Myrthen (26 songs).
26. Faschingsschwank aus Wien, Pf.
27. Five Lieder.
28. Three romances, Pf.
29. Three songs, of Geibel.
30. Three do.
31. Three songs, by Chamisso.
32. Four pieces for Pf.
33. Six four-part songs for male voices.
34. Four vocal duets.
35. Twelve songs, by Körner.
36. Six do., by Reinick.
37. Rückert's "Liebesfrühling" (songs).
38. Symphony for orch. in B flat [1840].
39. Liederkreis (12 songs).
40. Five songs.
41. Three string quartets [1842].
42. Songs by Chamisso.
43. Three two-part songs.
44. Quintett for Pf. and strings, in E flat.
45. Three romances (vocal).
46. Andante and variations, Pf. (4 hands).
47. Quartett for Pf. and strings.
48. Sixteen Songs by Heine.
50. Das Paradies und die Peri, for soli, chorus, and orch. (T. Moore's  
"Lalla Rookh"), 1843.
52. Overture, scherzo, and finale, for orch.
53. Three romances (vocal).
54. Concerto for Pf. and orch., in A min.
55. Five part-songs, by Burns.
56. Studies for the Pedal, Pf.
57. Belsatzer, ballad (Heine).
58. Sketches for Pedal Pf.
59. Four part-songs.
60. Six Fugues on name B A C H.
61. Symphony for orch., in C, 1846.
62. Three part-songs for male voices.
63. Trio for Pf., vn., and 'cello, in D min.
64. Three romances (vocal).
65. Ritornelle von Rückert, in canon form, for male voices.
66. Bilder aus Osten, Pf. duet.

67. Five romances for chorus.
68. Album of 40 Pf. pieces.
69. Romances for female voices.
70. Adagio and Allegro, Pf. and horn.
71. Adventlied, Rückert, for solo, chorus, and orch.
72. Four fugues, Pf.
73. Phantasiestücke for Pf. and clarinet.
74. Spanisches Liederspiel (songs).
75. Five romances for chorus.
76. Four marches for Pf.
77. Lieder and songs.
78. Four vocal duets.
79. Liederalbum für die jugend.
80. Trio for Pf., vn., and 'cello, in F.
81. Genoveva, opera in 4 acts, Leipsic, 1850.
82. Waldscenen, Pf.
83. Three songs.
84. Parting song, for solo, chorus, and orch.
85. Twelve pieces for Pf. duet.
86. Concertstück for 4 horns and orch.
87. Der Handschuh, ballad.
88. Phantasiestücke for Pf., vn., and 'cello.
89. Six Songs (Nenn).
90. Six Songs (Lenau).
91. Romances for female voices.
92. Concertstück for Pf. and orch. (Introduction and Allegro appassionato), in G.
93. Motett for double male chorus.
94. Three Romances, Pf. and oboe.
95. Three Songs (Byron).
96. Five Lieder.
97. Symphony in E flat, for orch, 1850.
- 98a. Nine Lieder (Goethe).
- 98b. Requiem for Mignon, solo, chorus and orch.
99. Bunte Blatter, Pf.
100. Overture to Schiller's "Braut von Messina," 1851.
101. Minnespiel (Rückert), voices and Pf.
102. Five pieces for Pf. and 'cello.
103. Mädchenlieder, for two soprano voices.
104. Seven songs.
105. Sonata, Pf. and vn.
106. Schön Hedwig, ballad by Hebbel, voice and Pf.
107. Six songs.
108. Nachtlied (Hebbel), solo, chorus, and orch.

109. Ballscenen, Pf. duet.
110. Trio for Pf., vn., and 'cello, in G. min.
111. Three Phantasiestücke, Pf.
112. Der Rose Pilgerfahrt (Pilgrimage of the Rose), for solo, chorus, and orch., 1851.
113. Märchenbilder, for Pf. and viola.
114. Three trios for female voices.
115. Music for Byron's "Manfred," Weimar, 1852.
116. Der Königssohn, ballad by Uhland, solo, chorus, and orch.
117. Four Lieder (Lenau).
118. Three sonatas, Pf.
119. Three songs.
120. Symphony in D min., for orch, 1851.
121. Sonata for Pf. and vn., in D min.
122. Ballad in "Haideknabe" (Hebbel).
123. Festival overture, on the "Rheinweinlied," with chorus, 1853.
124. Albumblätter, Pf.
125. Five songs.
126. Seven Pf. pieces in fugetta form.
127. Five Lieder.
128. Overture to Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar."
129. Concerto for 'cello and orch. in A min.
130. Kinderball, 6 dances, Pf. duet.
131. Fantasia for vn. and orch.
132. Märchenerzählungen, 4 pieces, for Pf., clarinet, and viola.
133. Morning songs, Pf.
134. Concert allegro, Pf. and orch.
135. Five songs of Mary Stuart.
136. Overture to Goethe's "Hermann und Dorothea."
137. Five hunting songs, male voices and horn accomp.
139. Des Sängers Finch, ballad (Uhland).
140. Vom Pagen und der Königstochter, ballads.
141. Four part-songs for double chorus.
142. Four songs.
143. Der Glück von Edenhall, ballad.
144. New Year's Song (Rückert), solo, chorus, and orch.
145. Romances for chorus.
146. Do.
147. Mass for solo, chorus, and orch. (1852).
148. Requiem Mass, do., 1852.

Scenes from Goethe's "Faust." Edition of Bach's violin suites, &c. Other works unpublished. Many critical notices on music, issued as "Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker," Leipzig, 1854, 4 vols.

## DONIZETTI.

IT is evening in Paris—an evening in summer. The sun has just sunk tardily to rest, and the boulevards, bright all day with its beams, are now brightened with lesser lustre by the myriads of gaslights, which twinkle among the trees, and by the blaze of cafés and restaurants, which, from their open windows or large spacious doors, revealing the brilliant interior, throw great waves of light on the pavement as the throngs of wayfarers pass. Outside the cafés sit the usual crowds of talkers, drinkers, and readers, whose perpetual chatter and clatter give such an air of vivacity to the streets of Paris compared with the grave and sombre appearance of the thoroughfares of London.

Passers-by in the Avenue de l'Opéra notice that the vast building is closed. Huge posters, placed in conspicuous positions round the house, intimate the fact that there will be no performance this evening, and that the theatre is closed for the purpose of the preparation of a grand new opera by Donizetti.

A listener who had strolled by the cafés, in the vicinity of the Opéra, and had been able to single out what sounds he liked from the hum of conversation, would have heard a great many remarks passed on this same Donizetti by the loungers and idlers who drank their absinthe, smoked their cigars, and discussed in an animated manner the various events of the day.



DONIZETTI.





“Who is this Donizetti,” says one, “that is making such a stir in the world nowadays?”

“One of the greatest composers,” returns one of the circle, who is evidently more familiar with musical matters than the first speaker; “one of the greatest composers who ever lived, they say. He has electrified Milan with his *Anna Bolena*, Venice with his *Belisario*, Naples with his *Lucia*, and now he has come to Paris to astonish us poor Parisians with this grand new work which is to be launched on us in a night or two.”

“What sort of a man is he?” inquires another speaker. “Who has met him?”

“I have,” remarks another of the group. “He is positively the most charming, vivacious, brilliant, and lively fellow that the world has ever seen. He is excellent company, and, I doubt not, never has a dull hour. He is tremendously sought after, I should imagine, by those interested in great musicians and great men; and if we could see him at the present moment, my friends, instead of finding him sitting outside a paltry little café in the street, chattering nonsense and laughing at his own jokes, we should behold him the centre of some brilliant throng, to whom all present were rendering homage as to the king of the modern musical world.”

From thence their talk began to pass to the question of Donizetti's writings, and to the probable character of the new piece which was about to be produced in a few nights, on which subject they indulged the most fanciful speculations.

Let us pass from their surroundings, away from the bright streets that circle like serpents of light round that centre of Paris's gay artistic life—the Opéra—and pass away to duller scenes and more homely surround-

ings; along streets each moment growing quieter the further we proceed from the pulsating focus of life, till we come to the outlying boulevards, where lamplights are few and far between, where scarcely a sound comes to disturb the dead tranquillity of the night, and where the trees, looming black in the obscurity of the evening, look like funeral plumes waving in the night wind, as they sway their sable tops to and fro beneath the breeze that whispers down the streets.

Let us pause before one of the houses which constitute these long and funereal avenues. There is a light shining in a large room on the first floor, and as we stand in the shade and watch the window we see occasionally a shadow cross the blind. Let us ascend and examine the interior of the apartment. We enter the door on our invisible errand and are at last in the solitary room.

At the table sits a man bending over a music score, which he fills with amazing rapidity, though, as we watch him, with fitful and feverish industry. There is an absence of complete self-absorption in his task, as he lays down his pen occasionally and falls musing for a few moments, then takes it up again and dashes off a number of new pages.

His lips are black, as if they had been stained with coal; his tongue, which is sometimes visible as he opens his mouth feverishly to draw his breath, is also black and stained. It looks as if he has been eating blackberries to a terrible extent, for this berry when consumed in any quantity discolours the lips and makes the mouth almost black.

Most people would not, however, accept the explanation of the blackberries as a valid account of the matter. They would say he has been consuming betel-nut, which

is so common a thing for the people of the East to chew, and which has the effect of dyeing the most lovely lady's mouth a black or deep indigo tinge, to the immense discomfort of her swain and to the very great disadvantage of her personal appearance.

This lonely man in this lonely room in Paris must therefore have been at the same practice, if we may judge by the stained, discoloured, and blackened hue which pervades his lips and mouth. But while betel-nut, so far as we know, has no deleterious effect on the health, his sallow cheeks, his ravaged face, his deep-sunken eyes, the generally unhealthy hue which is spread over his visage, speak but too plainly of ill-health fast increasing on him, of terrible lowness of condition almost on the verge of disease, of a feeble frame unhinged and out of sorts.

But a nearer scrutiny of the table may reveal the cause which we are in search of. At his right hand as he sits writing there lies a small tray, on which are a cup and saucer and a large coffee pot. Every now and then, as he writes, he helps himself to a cup of coffee. His hands are stained with coffee no less than his lips; they are stained and yellow with the liquid. His cheeks and face seem to exude the hue of coffee; and his lips and mouth, the cause of whose blackness defied us before, obviously owe their unsightly aspect to the liquid which lies on the tray at his side. How many cups of coffee has he drunk while he filled the last five pages of his score? We should not like to say. Writing rapidly as he does, and dashing off page after page with great celerity, he yet has found time to drink two or three cups on an average to each page of music. No doubt the cups are small ones, but then he is always at it, filling and refilling, and on the assumption that

each cup contains only a little more than a wine-glass, he still must drink an amazing, an appalling, quantity of the liquid in an hour.

The coffee-pot finished, he touches a small bell at his side, and a servant enters, who apparently well accustomed to her duties does not exchange a single word with her master or even bestow a look on him, but taking up the empty coffee-pot bears it away, and in a few minutes comes back with it filled again.

In this way he sits and works the whole day, sometimes the whole night through. When the hour grows late, and the domestics are about to retire for the night, the servant places an apparatus on a charcoal stove not far from her master, by which he can go on brewing the coffee on his own account all night long if he likes—an operation for which he always seems to find time, even in the midst of his most interesting pages.

The evening has passed into night; the whole house has gone to rest, except the tenant of this solitary chamber. This man, this slave of coffee-drinking, who sits there with the music-score before him, between which and the ghastly habit he has contracted he divides all his time—is Gaetano Donizetti, the famous opera-writer, the admired of all admirers in the world of music in his day; the envied of thousands of inferior musicians, a marvellous genius, the wonder of his generation.

A lonely man he is, in that solitary chamber, at the hour of midnight. He heaves sighs occasionally, and as he pauses in his work to muse a moment his eyes sometimes fill with tears. At the table in front of him, so placed that his gaze may fall there whenever it is lifted for a moment from his writing, is the portrait of

a beautiful woman. He seems to adore that portrait, and sometimes, with his eyes fixed on it as if for inspiration, will sit entranced for a few minutes together, and then dash off page after page, refreshing himself at the end of his rush with another feast of the portrait. We said that he divided his attention between his coffee and his writing—we should rather have admitted three elements into the question, and should have phrased it the coffee, the writing, and the portrait.

His history for the last few years has, according to the general idea of Europe, been that of a most brilliant and fortunate man, a most successful opera-writer, a personage fêted, flattered, and entertained in the best and most distinguished society. People at large argued most naturally thus, "Has not Donizetti written *Anna Bolena*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Parisina*, *Torquato Tasso*, and *Lucrezia Borgia*? What a happy, what a lucky, what an enviable man! What a splendid life he must lead with his successful operas and his appreciative friends, with all the rank and talent of Europe bowing down before him and striving to do him honour! How delightful to have one's genius appreciated in that satisfactory manner! Nature could not have framed a more enviable and desirable lot than his." Such was the world's opinion of the man; such the world's account of his history.

But his real history, his private history—for that is a man's real history—has been something quite different. How very little the world knows of what goes on behind the scenes! How very erroneous sometimes are its estimates of people! No wonder, therefore, that the world's ideas about a man often count actually for nothing, so far as he himself is concerned, and that his real and genuine life proceeds in a different channel

altogether, hidden out of sight, unpenetrated, unknown; while mankind with gaping mouth is gazing at some empty watercourse, imagining that the river flows there.

During all these latter years when men were envying him, Donizetti's real life had been as follows. He had begun his career of composer with a strong appetite for pleasure and enjoyment, and, like many other young men of his time, had plunged into considerable dissipation, a course of conduct which was varied by the writing of operas. During this epoch of his existence, the world's later view of him might have really had some foundation, if the world at that time had known anything about him, which it did not, for he went anywhere and everywhere, delighted with any kind acknowledgment of his genius, overjoyed at any slight success which one of his operas might have made, and altogether ready to welcome smiles and to bask in that sunshine of everlasting enjoyment which all successful men, no matter what their private inclinations may be, are popularly supposed to covet and to acquire.

But Donizetti was cut short in the midst of his career of pleasure. The beautiful Laura Vasselli, one among many of the Roman beauties to whom he paid assiduous court, threw the spell of her charms so potently on him, that he fell a victim to the most ardent passion for her, and the happiest day of his life was when she gave her consent to be his bride. In marrying her he married goodness, virtue, and beauty. She was the most excellent as well as the loveliest of women, and her consent to the union was only wrung from her by repeated requests on the part of Donizetti, and by the most solemn assurances of amendment in his life. Let us hasten to say that these vows were most faithfully kept. From the

day when Laura promised him her hand Donizetti became a changed man, and the energy of his disposition, which had wasted itself often on the excitement of pleasure, found far more effective vent in renewed concentration on work.

The union was the happiest that could have been conceived. A friend of Donizetti's, speaking of the wedded pair at no long date after their marriage, says:—

“It is impossible even to imagine a more united couple. I will not call them man and wife, because so often in Italy when we use that expression we think of something very different from union, and a man and wife nowadays sometimes develop into having a third party to the alliance in the shape of a *cavalier servente*. But in order to show how nothing of the kind can ever happen in the case of the Donizettis, I will call them, not man and wife, but a pair of lovers, who love, not like boy and girl with perpetual billing and cooing, but with the steady and deep affection which years of married life passed in El Dorado and not in Italy might be calculated to produce.”

Later on we have testimony about them: “He (Gaetano) is never away from her side. Not that he is jealous, but that he loves her. He loves her, my friend, as man has not loved woman in my experience. He idolises her, and would give his life for her, but she, like a sensible woman, requires no sacrifice. Consequently they have the happiness of angels.”

This exemplary woman, besides being endowed with beauty and amiability, was likewise highly intellectual, her father, Signor Vasselli, being a Roman barrister and having accorded his daughter a very liberal education. The wild and wayward spirit of Donizetti was

caught in the silken chains of this beautiful paragon of her sex, and found in her the rest, the advice, the superior influence, the companionship, which his volatile spirit so sorely desired. Two children were the pledges of their mutual affection. Happiness resounded in the composer's home—a home which he was accustomed to call "heaven," so he loved the angel who inhabited it.

Two years wore away in this Elysian bliss, and when the second year had come to an end the cholera visited Italy, and among those whom it attacked was Madame Donizetti. She contended in vain against the plague, and to her husband's uncontrollable and awful grief she died. With her died a part of him—that is to say, all his interest in life, all his capacity for enjoyment, all his care or concern for himself and what became of him. The loss of one of the children, which either followed or preceded that of their mother, was a blow slight and innocuous in comparison to the terrible and crushing affliction which made him a widower.

One of his friends has described him to us as like a person who was dazed, who went about not well knowing what he did. His eyes stared upon vacancy, when addressed he knew not who was speaking to him, and was often unable to answer. He would sit for hours in one posture, his gaze fastened on the ground, dead to all around him, taking no nourishment, oblivious of the vicissitudes of night and day, and would be found in the early morning in the same position in which he was seen the night before—a prey to grief, melancholy, and unspeakable woe.

He was like another Orpheus who had lost his Eurydice—so the affliction seemed to have eaten into his mind and to have taken away the power of action and



certainly that of song. The ancient fable had indeed received its modern version in the case of Donizetti. The sensitive musical nature, so keen to feel the slightest pang of grief, so acutely experiencing the most trifling sorrow, was in the case of both these men suddenly exposed to the full north wind of misery, with such results in the case of him whose sorrow we can study that it almost unhinged his reason. Musical natures can rejoice in tasting of some of the greatest spiritual pleasures which it has been permitted poor mankind to know; but they are terribly exposed to the rawness of life's breeze, which cannot be tempered to their feelings, owing to these feelings being always so delicate and high-strung.

Donizetti, we said, acted and comported himself in a way which made his friends feel anxious about his reason. He would sit for hours together in the room where she chiefly sat, would peruse the books which she chiefly loved, would take up the embroidery which she had worked at, or the drawings which her fingers had sketched, and brooding over these things for a while would lay them down and burst into tears, lamenting, and asking fortune why she was so unpropitious in taking from him the only being which made life of any value to him. These fits of hysterical sobbing would overtake him at the most unexpected moments, and as he would do no work and constantly secluded himself in the house his friends endeavoured to prevail upon him to seek consolation in travel, being convinced that if he remained at home he would fall from one grief to another, until he became afflicted with settled and incurable melancholy.

At length, sorely against his will, Donizetti yielded to their exhortations. He flew to capital after capital,

to city after city, in Europe, seeking oblivion of his woe and finding none. In the search for forgetfulness, however, he once more acquired the taste for work. His glorious musical gifts, so redolent as they are of his real emotional nature, in their tenderness, their passion, their divine depth of feeling, could not remain long without awaking into activity, directly his soul once more began to stir.

But alas, along with them something else came into being which brought death as surely as they did immortality: This was the beginning of the age of narcotics, the era of the opiate-takers. De Quincey, of laudanum fame, the opium-eater of our country—this was his age; and in Europe at large there were many more like De Quincey. But what De Quincey did to stay the racking pains of hunger, Donizetti did from a much more spiritual cause,—to allay the racking pains of sorrow in the soul. He tried to purchase forgetfulness of his sorrow, and chose an anodyne which, if to all appearance far less noxious than that notorious drug which carried De Quincey captive to its power, is none the less injurious if taken to the fearful extent in which the habitual drinker of it indulges.

Coffee, which we drink sparingly in the morning at our breakfasts, is used by some people of the East for the same purpose for which a sottish Englishman takes alcohol—to drive away care. And this Eastern practice found its imitators in Europe at this time, as did the taking of opium and other drugs, which, as we said, first came prominently forward at that date and received their literary exposition—in precisely the same manner that haschish, a drug of later importation or popularity, has within the last thirty years met its literary exponent in Charles Baudelaire.

Alas for Donizetti and his wonderful powers of mind! He drank the coffee in the first days of his grief. He drank it to greater excess as the taste grew on him and as the deep-seated sorrow, which was never forgotten, required more potent removal. He drank it, and by its cheering aid was enabled to apply himself once more to his work, though the image of her he loved always loomed over his pages. But the stimulus of the coffee, agreeing in its effects with all stimulants, gradually drove this richly endowed man from society to solitude, to morbid seclusion, to those surroundings in which he might indulge his inordinate craving for the cup without fear of observation or of interruption. He was a drunkard, though alcohol never passed his lips; he was a sot, though his feet never staggered and his tongue never hiccupped as he spoke. But he was still the sweetest and most melodious composer of Europe, and those who at that day had searched for the source of all music's melody in its purest and most liquid tones, would have found it in this morose and secluded coffee-drinker in a deserted boulevard of Paris.

I have stood by the grave of Donizetti at Bergamo, in Italy, and have beheld with emotion the spot where his exhausted frame, worn out with work, and abused to death with insidious poison, was committed to its last resting-place by the hands of friends. And as I stood brooding over the lifeless dust that lay beneath me, once the perennial fountain of such harmonious song, the melody in that most plaintive of his operas, *La Favorita*, "Spirto gentil, ne' sogni miei," floated through my mind in all its beauty of contour and wealth of soul, and seemed to me to epitomise in

its music and its language the romantic life of him who lay before me.

In this song Donizetti appeals to his dead wife, though she is veiled beneath the person of Leonora, and in tones of anguish, yet of celestial beauty, he exclaims that only for one short day did her loveliness shine upon him, and then he lost her for ever. The song is a summary of his biography; it is also a typical illustration of his art—he could probe to the depths of emotion, wring from his sympathetic nature the true accents of woe, and transmute these into plastic forms of beauty.

Donizetti was a man undeniably accomplished, his culture being not confined to music alone, but ranging over many walks of knowledge apparently uncongenial thereto. He was well read in general literature, and was a Latin scholar, as well as an excellent linguist in the modern tongues, speaking French and German with fluency, and English with correctness. His retentive memory treasured copious selections from the works of the great Italian poets, and the poetical literature of other European nations had been studied by him with appreciation and zeal.

In addition to being an admirer and a refined critic of the poetry of others, he was likewise himself a poet. His poetry bears the impress of the same *intimité* of emotional feeling which is the characteristic of his music; the diction is chaste and pure; the versification elegant and melodious. He was likewise an artist, and though we have no record that he ever proceeded to oil-painting, his drawing and water-colours gave evidence of more than usual ability, so much so, indeed, that had he elected to become an artist instead of a musician, he could have earned his bread by his pencil, though he might not have succeeded in achieving renown. His studies

had included among other subjects architecture and engineering, in which he advanced some way. In fact, had the age paid that deference to copiousness and versatility of culture which the Renaissance so liberally accorded, Donizetti might have rivalled in the variety of his accomplishments so shining a type of versatility as Leonardo da Vinci; although in supreme eminence in his own chosen branch, he would scarce have equalled the renown of the fourth painter of the world.

But the age in which he lived was not a broad and liberal era which yielded homage to multiplicity of talents, but a narrow and confined age which honoured special excellence in one. Donizetti became a musician, and his other brilliant gifts were soon suffered to languish unheeded.

In music he was specially gifted from the first, and beyond all the other endowments of his mind his genius for that art was easily preeminent. His French and Italian biographers liken the amazing quickness of his musical memory to that of Mozart, and introduce comparisons between the two composers in their early life, both in relation to their musical sensibility of the pitch of individual notes, and their retentive recollection of long and elaborate compositions. The *Miserere* of Allegri was unknown to the outside world, owing to the absence of any copy of the music, until Mozart happened to attend the Sistine Chapel in uncontrolled curiosity to hear the famous work, and coming out when the performance was over wrote down every note which he had listened to. Donizetti, in like manner, when a youth, was consulted by a friend acquainted with his marvellous gifts, in relation to a similar difficulty. The friend, who was a theatrical manager, desired to procure a copy of an opera then being played

at Bologna, but though he had offered to purchase the score, the privilege was refused him, and the opera seemed likely to remain as much a sealed book as Allegri's *Miserere*. He therefore begged Donizetti to attend a performance, and to jot down a few of the airs as he heard them. Donizetti, however, volunteered to visit Bologna and bring back a complete copy of the work in two days.

"A copy of the whole opera!" exclaimed the astonished visitor. "But how will you get it? They have refused to send me a copy."

"I will bring it," replied Donizetti, "in my head."

He accordingly travelled to Bologna, and after attending the opera-house two nights successively, was able to write down with tolerable accuracy the whole of the score.

His father, who was a man of some means, took care that the brilliant boy should have the best education which money could give him, and was sorely distressed when he found the growing partiality for music which each year, each month, betrayed in his son's disposition. The boy had been intended for an advocate, and this was partly the reason of the careful education he received. But the older he grew the more distasteful the career of a lawyer appeared to him, and he eventually persuaded his father himself to tolerate and permit his adoption of music as a profession. The elder Donizetti did so under protest. He had a great aversion to such a calling, and only gave way to the irresistible enthusiasm of his son. But, to his mind, there was music and music—there was the music of the Church and the music of the stage; and he very soon gave his son to understand that if he had expressed his approval of the musical profession, it was of the ecclesiastical

branch of it alone that he was thinking at the time. If his son liked to devote himself to that, well and good; he would have his father's approval, and all would go well with him. If not, the case was entirely different, and the young man must prepare for the worst.

It must be mentioned as a curious commentary on this family disagreement, that the Donizettis had Scotch blood in their veins, and the elder Donizetti evidently retained some of the wholesome, if narrow, prejudices of his nation against music in general and stage music in particular. The history of the family was a strange one. Two generations before the composer saw the light there lived in Perthshire an excellent farmer named Izett, who was a tenant of the Earl of Breadalbane, and carried on his farming operations with success, which led to comparative opulence. But Izett's son and heir, Donald, was a very different man from his father, being one of the most hare-brained scapegraces in the county. If a precipice were to be scaled, or cattle "lifted" for a frolic, or if a drinking bout were to be engaged in in a neighbouring village, Donald Izett was always the ringleader in the adventure, and gradually attained for himself a reputation among his neighbours somewhat similar to that achieved by the equally hare-brained Clive when a youth of the same age.

After scores of escapades, Donald brought matters to a climax by enlisting in a regiment which happened to pass through the village, and, to borrow Voltaire's expression, "marched away with them to glory." The secluded strath in Perthshire heard no more of Donald Izett, and perhaps never will while the earth endures. His mother, who was tenderly attached to the scapegrace, fell ill, and died of a broken heart. His father,

dispirited and depressed, sank into poor circumstances, and soon followed her to the grave.

But meanwhile Donald Izett was pursuing a career, if not of glory, at any rate of romantic vicissitude, which culminated for him in a very satisfactory manner. His regiment was sent to take part in the campaign in Ireland, where General La Hoche was one of the leading commanders on the enemy's side. Donald, who certainly was no upholder of Voltaire's theory of war, carefully considered, not on which side the right lay or on which the most glory was to be won, but which was most likely to be beneficial to his interest. Having deliberated on this point and come to a careful decision, he deserted to the enemy, and entered General La Hoche's service as a man-servant. According to other accounts, he was taken prisoner by the General's forces—a more glorious way of arriving at the same conclusion.

He found that his resolution had been for the best. He rose to high advancement in the General's service; from man-servant became valet, from valet became secretary, and in the latter responsible and trusted position gained universal respect, and laid by a considerable sum of money. At this time of his life he met an Italian lady of great wealth, whom he married, and the pair went to live in Italy. Here he Italianised his name, and from Donald Izett became Donizetti—an appellation rendered famous by his distinguished son.

The father's opposition to the son's desire for the musical profession did not relax, but rather increased. Having seen him in his mind's eye a lawyer, the elder Donizetti was very angry to think of the social gulf which separated the two careers.



“If you will only confine yourself to church music,” he said, “a sober, staid, respectable occupation, approaching to the dignity of the law itself, you will have your father’s help and encouragement. But operas——”

“It is operas, and operas alone,” exclaimed the younger man, “that I intend to write.”

“In that case,” returned Donizetti the elder, “you must shift for yourself.”

“That I am quite prepared to do,” replied the son. And taking his father at his word, young Donizetti, in a fit of passion, enlisted in the army—an action for which he was afterwards very sorry, but which, fortunately, was not irremediable. The regulations of military service were very irksome to the restless and accomplished man. His father had cut him off with a shilling, and no one would buy him out. In this dilemma he bethought himself of employing his musical talents to “raise the wind.” Accordingly, amid the clattering of muskets and the hubbub of the guard-room, he wrote his first opera, *Enrico di Borgogna*, which was produced at Venice, and with the proceeds of which he was enabled to purchase his release from military service.

Henceforth he was an opera-writer by profession. In the following year *Il Falegname di Livonia* saw the light. *Le Nozze in Villa* was the outcome of the succeeding year. But the year which followed was an exceptionally busy one, seeing the production of no less than four operas from his pen, viz. *Zoraïde di Granata*, *La Zingara*, *La Lettera anonima*, and *Chiara e Serafina*. In 1830 he composed no less than seven operas.

He was a very rapid writer. The lightning velocity of Handel lived again in the brilliant fluency of Donizetti. It was no uncommon thing for him to write the

whole act of an opera after dinner, as a task which cost him no effort, and was a pleasure rather than a toil. By the time that he supped the act was complete, even to detail, and he remained unaffected by an exertion which would have taxed most men's energies to the full. The opera of *Belisario* he composed and produced in the short space between a Monday and a Saturday. Many other operas might be mentioned the composition of which did not exceed the same duration, while one opera, which was commissioned at a moment's notice, was begun and completed in the incredibly short space of thirty hours.

Donizetti—to borrow an expression constantly in his mouth—knew not the meaning of fatigue. He was never so delighted as when the time was short and the exertion was great. The effort which such circumstances laid on his mind seemed to extract from his inspired imagination the sweetest honey of his song. One case wherein he composed both the words and music of an opera in a week is the most commonly quoted example of his facility, although it pales before the last instance we have given. It is said that being requested by the operatic troupe of a Neapolitan theatre, where failure had been the order of the day for months past, to give them something that would prove attractive and recoup them for their previous losses, he sat down without hesitation and wrote the words and music of *La Campanella di Notte* in less than a week—a charming opera, which filled the theatre and prevented the house from having to close its doors.

Donizetti was fortunate in having some of the finest singers the world has ever heard to interpret his music—the celebrated tenor, Rubini, whom to hear was to be in rapture; Madame Pasta, queen of the tragic stage;

Fanny Persiani, Jenny Lind, and, last not least, the famous quartette who were so renowned in *Don Pasquale*—Grisi, Mario, Tamburini, and Lablache. It was the age of great singers, and Donizetti's melodious music found an interpretation in his lifetime such as it can never receive in the present decadence of song.

There is little more to be added to what we have said above. The habituation to the vice to which he had enchained himself gradually stole away his powers, and sapped the foundations of his reason. In this distressing state, and assailed by paralysis, he lingered some time, and at length exchanged his misery here, most gladly, for death, which overtook him at Bergamo, in Italy, on the 8th of April, 1848.\*

\* One of the most interesting spots in the Vienna Musical and Dramatic Exhibition was a little room devoted to the memory of Donizetti, and completely filled with souvenirs and relics of the deceased musician. Among other things there was the composer's piano, at which many of his imperishable operas were composed. In his last will and testament he bequeathed this instrument in very touching words as a legacy to his daughter, adding that he prayed she would never sell it, however much she might be in want of money. We believe Donizetti's daughter scrupulously observed her father's wishes in the matter, and on her death bequeathed the precious relic to the family of the Scottis, in Milan, whose ancestors had acted as Donizetti's patrons at the outset of his career. A brass plate has been let into the woodwork of the piano by Baron Scotti, the present possessor of the instrument, containing an appropriate allusion to the above fact. The plain and unpretentious bedstead on which the composer slept and whereon he breathed his last is another ornament of the room. Above the bedstead hangs the composer's portrait—the original one from which most of the reproductions of his likeness have been taken. Donizetti's writing-table and arm-chair, the coffee-pot from which he drank to such fatal excess, and numerous other interesting relics, were to be seen in the apartment, which was constantly crowded with fervent admirers from Italy, Spain, and indeed from most countries of Europe, except Germany, where alone his ear-ravishing strains have not found a very cordial welcome.

## SYNOPSIS OF LIFE, AND WORKS.

---

GAETANO DONIZETTI was born at Bergamo, Nov. 29th, 1798; enlisted as a soldier, 1818; wrote his first opera, *Enrico di Borgogna*, 1818; wrote *Anna Bolena*, 1830; married *Laura Vasselli*, 1833; wrote *Lucrezia Borgia*, 1833; his wife died, 1835; he visited Paris, 1835; composed *Lucia di Lammermoor*, 1835; resided in Paris, 1840; composed *La Fille du Régiment*, 1840; *Don Pasquale*, 1843; died at Bergamo, April 8th, 1848, aged forty-nine.

---

Operas: *Enrico di Borgogna*, Venice, 1818; *Il Falegname di Livonia*, 1819; *Le Nozze in Villa*, 1820; *Zoraïde di Granata*, 1822; *La Zingara*, 1822; *La Lettera anonima*, 1822; *Chiara e Serafina*, 1822; *Il Fortunato inganno*, 1823; *Alfredo il Grande*, 1823; *Una Follia*, 1823; *L'Ajo nell' imbarazzo*, 1824; *Emilia di Liverpool*, 1824; *Alahor in Granata*, 1826; *Il Castello degli Invalidi*, 1826; *Il Giovedì Grasso*, 1827; *Olivo e Pasquale*, 1827; *Il Borgomastro de Saardam*, 1827; *Le Convenienze teatrali*, 1827; *Otto mese in due ore*, 1828; *L'Esule di Roma*, 1828; *La Regina di Golconda*, 1828; *Gianni di Calais*, 1828; *Il Paria*, 1829; *Il Castello di Kenilworth*, 1829; *Il Diluvio Universale*, 1829; *I Pazzi per progetto*, 1830; *Francesca di Foix*, 1830; *Isnelda de' Lambertazzi*, 1830; *La Romanziera*, 1830; *Anna Bolena*, Milan, 1830—Lond., 1831; *Fausta*, 1830; *L'Elisire d' amore*, Naples, 1832—Lond., 1836; *Ugo, Conte di Parigi*, 1832; *Sancia di Castilla*, 1832; *Il Nuova Pourceaugnac*, 1832; *Il Furioso nell' isola di San Domingo*, 1833; *Parisina*, 1833; *Torquato Tasso*, Rome, 1833; *Lucrezia Borgia*, Milan, 1833—Lond., 1839, in English, 1843; *Rosamunda d'Inghilterra*, 1834; *Maria Stuarda*, Naples, 1834; *Gemma di Vergi*, Milan, 1834; *Marino*

Faliero, Paris, 1835, Lond., 1835; Lucia di Lammermoor, Naples, 1835, Lond., 1838, English, 1843; Belisario, 1836; La Campanella di Notte, 1836; Betly, 1836; L'Assedio di Calais, 1836; Pio di Tolomei, 1836; Roberto Devereux, 1836; Maria di Rudenz, Venice, 1838; Polinto, 1838; Gianni di Parigi, 1839; Gabriella di Vergi, 1840; La Fille du Régiment, Paris, 1840—Lond., 1847; Les Martyrs, 1840; La Favorite, 1840—Lond., 1847; Adelasia, 1841; Maria Padilla, 1841; Linda di Chamouni, Vienna, 1842—Lond., 1843; Don Pasquale, Paris, 1843—Lond., 1843; Maria di Roban, Vienna, 1843—Lond., 1847; Don Sebastien, Paris, 1843; Catarina Cornaro, 1844; Elisabeth, 1853; Il Duca di Alba, 1881-82.

Masses, cantatas, etc.

## MEYERBEER.

ETERNAL study—everlasting and unremitting work—such is the motto of Meyerbeer's daily life. "Of making books there is no end," says Solomon; and Meyerbeer might have echoed the Jewish king's words, "There is no end to making music."

It is reported of Michael Angelo that a friend, calling on him one evening, found him still engaged on one particular statue which appeared to the unpractised eye to have been finished long ago. With a candle stuck through the rim of his paper cap, the great sculptor was laboriously chiselling away at this marble figure as if his life depended on it. The friend remarked—

"I really fail to see, Michael Angelo, why you cannot give yourself a holiday. You have done plenty of work this week; surely, to satisfy the most ardent appetite for labour, and as to this statue which seems to have enlisted your interest so engrossingly during the past few days, why, it seemed to me to have been finished a month ago, and I wonder that at present it is not in the galleries."

Michael Angelo replied by bidding him look at the statue. "Observe this muscle," he said; "when you saw the sculpture a month ago, this muscle was raised a little too much. It is now toned down. The

turn of this arm was a little too sharp. It is now modified. The hair at the back of the head was not sufficiently separated into delicate filaments. All that imperfection is now altered. The drapery, whose folds were a trifle too shallow and therefore not sufficiently impressive, has had its wrinkles deepened, and now hangs as it should in a heavy garment such as this figure is supposed to wear." A hundred other trifling points were laid bare to the comprehension of the astonished visitor by the great sculptor, which an unpractised eye was entirely unable to remark, until shown how to recognise the imperfections by a master in the craft.

In a similar way Meyerbeer, when taxed with his unremitting and continual laboriousness, was accustomed to reply—

"Look at this air. When I had it down on paper a fortnight ago, there was no running accompaniment of the bassoon in the bass. These three notes of the flute in the tenth bar, which give such a charm to the melody at that part, were absent. Likewise the *rallentando* on the two high notes—which you yourself admit is a very masterly thought and gives so much opportunity of fine effect to the singer—had not been introduced, and would never have been unless I had sat at the piece day after day poring over possible improvements. Look at this sudden change of key in the middle. How abrupt! how striking! how satisfactory to the ear!—these are your own words I quote. That abrupt transition was an afterthought. This chord, which emphasises the singer's declaration of his strength of purpose, was laboriously built up note by note after the most careful deliberation, and the rejection of at least a dozen other commonplace chords which would never have satisfied the exigencies of the emotion. This *cadenza* was an

afterthought; this sudden entry of the cymbals an inspiration which came to me only a minute or two ago. No, believe me, my friend, there is plenty for me to do on my scores if I would attain the perfection that I so unceasingly aspire after; but if I were to take your advice and dash my work off heedlessly, I should be Meyerbeer no longer, but should sink into the composer of a fourth-rate vaudeville in Paris."

It is early morning when we pay our visit. The grey dawn is just creeping over Paris, and whitening with its glimmering the city's broad boulevards and pleasant squares. You might drive from one end of the town to the other without meeting a soul abroad, unless it were an itinerant tramp, or the occupant of a *fiacre* hurrying to the station to catch an early train. Not a person is astir, and in the best part of the town the universal stillness is, if possible, more dense, leaden, and unbroken than in the commoner quarters.

In Meyerbeer's house all are asleep, save the occupant of one room—the study. This study is in a secluded part of the house, carefully removed from all chance of accidental interruption or from the penetration of unwelcome sound on the morbidly acute ears of its tenant. Keenly nervous and sensitive to the highest degree, Meyerbeer had as much horror of the intrusion of unpleasant and accidental sounds as the Sybarites had, who, to spare their tender ears the misery of horrid noises, forbade the trades of blacksmith and carpenter being practised in their city. What they did for the satisfaction of a refined voluptuousness, Meyerbeer has done for the contentment of a delicate and fastidious sentiment of art. Not that there is any danger of extraneous noises reaching his apartment at this early hour in the morning, when scarce a sound whispers



through the whole city ; but as it is his habit to go on composing all day long, the noises of the house would certainly effect an entry into his sanctum unless he took this careful plan to keep them at a distance.

He furthermore likes to elaborate his compositions without the possibility of being overheard by any listener. He might sit down at the piano and play three notes, let us say, which would gradually develop into a beautiful air, by couples of notes at a time. When the whole charming melody was complete and perfect, like some modelling in wax, it would surely be an unpleasant thing to imagine that some prying ear had been cognisant of its growth note by note, or phrase by phrase—in fact, with the consciousness of such a witness to his creation, the composer himself confessed that he could never have composed at all.

The secrets of Meyerbeer's study, where, to borrow a simile from pottery, there were a thousand coarse pitchers waiting to be turned into the most elegant vases, were mysteries not to be revealed to the uninitiated or the profane. A potter or a sculptor can pursue his course of patient detailed industry, and build up his work of art piece by piece without fear of the homely secrets of his work passing from his workshop to the world without. But a musician cannot—if he play as he composes : each single note reverberates to the exterior of his chamber, and reaches other ears than his own. Consequently, unless his work-room is most carefully secluded and safeguarded, he has no freedom and can enjoy no complete abandonment. But this privacy Meyerbeer was careful to secure.

As we enter his study in the cold grey light of the morning we find him hard at work, as if he had never been to bed at all. Perhaps he has indeed sat up all

night; perhaps he has lain down in his clothes for a few hours, and then has arisen directly daylight has dawned, to recommence his labours. To the latter opinion we are most inclined to adhere, for the tumbled state of his attire, and his hair straggling all over his brow and face point to a restless couch, in which little more has been gained than a few hours' respite from toil, not any real rest. There he sits, with a lamp on the table, and with his papers before him, peering into this bar, scrutinising this passage, examining that, and occasionally going up to a great grand piano which stands conveniently near him, and striking ponderous chords, colossal harmonies, which sound very weird and ghostly in this early grey twilight of the morning, when all the world except himself is asleep and oblivious of its cares and of its music.

But Meyerbeer never forgets. His art is ever before him. He broods over it by day: he dreams of it at night. As he walks along the streets he turns over in his mind the last passage he has written, and wonders how it can be improved. As he is conversing with friends, occasionally a rapt or preoccupied air gives them very plainly to understand that the great opera-writer is far more absorbed in considering his latest *scena* than in listening to their prattle about the weather and the news.

We said that our opinion was that he had but newly risen from a short and unrefreshing sleep, to commence his studies before the rest of the world were up. And our opinion is confirmed by discovering a couch in the room, on which lie a few disordered coverlets or quilts, which speak plainly enough as to where the composer has passed his few hours of the night. Doubtless at the present moment, when we find him, he

may be given up to one of his abnormally long fits of composition which without interrupting the continuous study which so engrossed his time, were, so to speak, superimposed upon it, and carried the ardour of his work to fever pitch.

During one of these long spells of labour he would immerse himself in his study, and never leave it by day or night. For days together he would remain toiling indefatigably at his scores, sounding his piano, composing, correcting, re-correcting, blotting out, fitting in, polishing, pruning, and finally completing his beloved manuscripts. No one knew, scarcely his own family were aware, what he did with himself during these fits of enthusiasm: whether he slept or no, whether he ate, whether he drank, whether he ever rested from the first moment of the fit to the last. His meals, if he took them at all, were conveyed to him by stealth, as it were; and were eaten or left, as he felt inclined. The only thing quite certain about him during these epochs of unrest was that he was alive, and wrote his scores the whole time.

There is but one person that we know in the whole range of musical history to whom he may be adequately compared. And we have to go back nearly a thousand years to find the parallel. Just as Schopenhauer said that in order to shake hands with his intellectual brother he must traverse many centuries to find him, so under the most unexpected guise, and a thousand years ago, we find Meyerbeer's musical double.

This was Ratpert, a monk in the Middle Ages, who lived at the monastery of St. Gall. It is strange to turn back from the gay, modern, and frivolous Paris to the sombre and severe cloisters of mediæval times and strike a relationship between two of the denizens of

each. Yet the parallel is too close to be passed over, and the men, though in such different surroundings, were, to quote Schopenhauer's expression, musical brethren. The monk and the opera-writer were both afflicted with the fever of extraordinary and excessive industry.

Ratpert was the master of the Song School at the monastery of St. Gall, and though he never composed an opera he was an indefatigable writer of hymns, sequences, chants, anthems, and instruction books for the scholars who resorted to the monastery for their education. He only wore out one pair of shoes a year, made of the thinnest leather, so seldom did he ever stir from his room, so little did he use his feet, chaining himself to his desk from morning till night, often through the night, and composing, elaborating, and correcting his music all the time. Perhaps, of the two, the monk must be allowed the palm for excessive industry, but Meyerbeer does not come far behind.

He is sitting now, deeply absorbed in his score, and the dawn is passing into morning, and soon the morning will pass into broad day, and the noises of the house will begin. He, however, is fortified against all such intrusion on his privacy, and goes on with his writing unheeding. By the daylight it must be now getting on towards eight o'clock. At this moment a voice is heard outside the study door:—

“Monsieur, here is the *café au lait* for your breakfast, and some bread-and-butter. Is it your pleasure that I should leave it here?”

To this question there is no answer. The composer turns his head towards the ceiling, utterly engrossed in his work, and seems revolving the contour of some celestial tune which has at this moment occurred to his

mind, rather than considering any such sublunary matter as an invitation to breakfast.

“Monsieur, here is the *café au lait* for your breakfast, and some bread-and-butter,” again repeats the Hebe at the door. “Is it your pleasure that I should leave it here?”

Meyerbeer has heard this time, and a frown passes over his brow as he answers:—

“Place it there, and depart *tout de suite, tout de suite*. Tell your mistress,” he adds, “not to send anything to me again to-day; I do not want it.”

The girl lays down the tray with the breakfast things with a silent chuckle, being well assured that in two or three hours the *déjeuner à la fourchette* will be making its appearance at Meyerbeer’s door, and the composer be subjected to another interruption.

But her cogitations have no part in the reveries of the recluse in the study, who proceeds with his work, oblivious of breakfast, maid-servants, and all the world.

When the girl, who has carefully abstained from telling her mistress her master’s wishes in the matter (“for very Christian charity,” as she explains to the other domestics in the kitchen), appears at eleven o’clock with a most appetising *déjeuner* on the whitest of cloths, flanked by a bottle of excellent wine, she finds, to her surprise and astonishment, the *café au lait* and the other ingredients of the early breakfast tray absolutely untouched and lying in the same place where she had left them.

Mustering up courage to beard the eremitical composer once more, she timidly knocks at the door, and informs him in a weak accent that his lunch is ready and on the floor outside.

“Depart!” roars an angry voice from the interior,

and the sound of feet coming in the direction of the door causes the girl to beat a precipitate retreat with her two trays full of appetising viands.

This excessive zeal for his art, this inured habit of painstaking, while partially innate in Meyerbeer to begin with, was very much fostered and strengthened owing to his studies when a youth with the Abbé Vogler—a musician, who though fantastic and unreal as an executant, and leavened with too much of the spirit of a charlatan, seems to have been a most remarkable instructor, judging from the encomiums which were lavished on him by his pupils.

Firstly, it was the custom of the Abbé Vogler to treat musicians very much as a modeller might have treated a moulding in wax. In place of enquiring whether a person had any innate talent for music, and any strong inclination to become a musician by profession, the Abbé, as if he were keeping a shop and puffing his wares, was in the habit of declaring that he could turn any man into a composer in three months, or six months, or more, as the case might be. He vaunted his powers of instruction as if he had possession of some wonderful nostrum, and undertook to make the unmusical musical, to make music grow where it had never grown before by his patent method of tuition and his exact knowledge of how to proceed with this purpose in view. From this theoretical principle of his master's, Meyerbeer was taught first and foremost the perilous lesson that the effects of music can be deliberately manufactured, very much as the articles of a handicraft can be, forgetting that the precise difference between art and handicraft consists in this, that in the former there is that unexplainable element of inspiration and nature which the latter is entirely unfamiliar with.

Secondly, the Abbé, if he boasted of a nostrum for educating his pupils, certainly went a very practical way to put it into effect. The secret of success in study, we have always understood, is hard work, and the Abbé worked his pupils to death. He practised them incessantly in original composition, every composition being undone as fast as it was done. Thus, the pupils wrote, let us say, each of them a *motett* in the morning among the other tasks imposed on them. In the afternoon or evening the Abbé criticised the composition of each pupil in full class, and encouraged every other pupil to raise objections likewise. The author of the composition was compelled to defend his music against the criticisms of those present, and to find reasons for any peculiarities, or improvements, or any weaknesses which might be detected. After this *séance* was over the young composer was bidden to rectify all the errors and feeble passages in his composition, and to go over it again and again until he had purged it of its dross, and converted it into satisfactory and unimpeachable music.

Is it not likely that such a method of study would develop the habit of industry, even to music-grubbing and a spirit of fastidious self-criticism that in many cases led to silly results? Meyerbeer certainly learnt his superhuman industry from this second great article of the Abbé Vogler's creed, which was "to improve and improve and again improve." Unfortunately many of the Abbé's pupils were not so gifted as Meyerbeer. The system spoilt them, and turned them into pedantic, crotchety composers. But on his glorious talents the method produced no permanent deterioration, but merely intensified that zeal for labour, that fever for industry, which to this great man were his natural no less than his acquired habits.

No wonder, then, that we find him hour by hour still poring over the manuscript that lies before him, for ever blotting it and scratching out, and, so to speak, no sooner writing a passage than he becomes dissatisfied with it and deems that it can be phrased better.

But at last, when the late afternoon comes, an imperative summons breaks in on his three days' seclusion. The hours which have been spent day by day without an interval of interruption on his beloved scores must come to an end at last. A persistent knocking resounds at his door and he recognises the voices of his wife and his daughter, Bianca, and knows full well on hearing these that something important brings them there.

He opens the door, and hears what they have to say.

Ah! true, he has forgotten the rehearsal, he says. But it would not entirely have slipped his mind, for he has a good memory, he goes on to remark. And as a matter of fact, despite his absorption in his work, he was never accused of unpunctuality.

"The rehearsal is for five o'clock this evening at the Opera, and the manager has just sent here to beg that you will be sure to come," says his wife.

"True, my dear," replies Meyerbeer; "I will make my toilette and will be on my way there in a few minutes."

Madame Meyerbeer and his daughter, anxious to divert him, whenever possible, from his ascetic fever for study, proceed to inform him that they have invited some friends to dinner that evening, and more are coming after dinner—in fact, Madame Meyerbeer is going to hold a reception that night—and they trust that it will be a great recreation and relaxation to him.





MEYERBEER.



He replies with the greatest good humour, tells them how much he will enjoy the change, and as he arranges his manuscripts, preparatory to leaving his study, asks the names of some of the ladies who are to be present.

“I look forward to it,” says Meyerbeer, preparing to depart, “with the very greatest pleasure, and be sure that I shall enliven our guests with some music.”

This was very pleasant news for the family, for the composer was not always disposed to play before people at his own house; and already Madame Meyerbeer predicted in her fancy the brilliant success of her reception.

Her husband by this had hurried away, and, throwing himself into a *fiacre* at the door, was soon in the conductor's seat at the Opera, where the instrumentalists already gathered applauded him as he entered, and very soon, under his able *bâton*, began to make way among the intricacies of a glorious overture. The rehearsal lasted till about half-past six and then came to an enforced end. There was to be an opera at the Opera-house that night, but it was not one of Meyerbeer's, and he for the rest of the evening was entirely free.

With light heart and a feeling of great pleasure at the admirable playing of the orchestra, a sense of pleasant anticipation at the recreation of the party that evening, and a strong sympathy with his wife's wishes in the matter, whose little gatherings he liked to see go off as lightly as possible, he hurried home and began to dress for dinner. That task accomplished, he hastened down to the drawing-room, where some guests were already assembled, and where more were coming in, and was very soon the life and soul of the party.

During the dinner he joked and told anecdotes in

the happiest vein, and all present freely admitted to themselves that when Monsieur Meyerbeer liked he could make one of the best hosts in Paris. The dinner, however, was but an item in the arrangements of the evening. The guests looked forward with great eagerness to the reception that was to follow, to which a number of notabilities had been invited, and which, with Meyerbeer in his present exalted vein of entertainment, seemed likely to be a remarkable success.

Just before the dessert was put on the table, the atmosphere, which had been hot and sultry during all the afternoon, grew absolutely oppressive, and the windows of the *salle-à-manger* were thrown open wide to allow of the entrance of a little cool air to play around the tables. So oppressive grew the atmosphere that there seemed the speedy prospect of a thunderstorm.

Those who had scrutinised the faces of the company assembled round the table would have noticed at this juncture that the countenance of Madame Meyerbeer wore a very anxious look, and that while everybody else, her husband included, seemed to have delivered themselves to the most light-hearted merriment, she alone in all that gay company was sad, and dumb, and distracted, though the cause of her anxiety would have been hard to indicate.

Suddenly a vivid flash of lightning lit up the room, and caused several ladies to ejaculate, "*Mon Dieu!*" A peal of thunder followed the lightning, and the rain began to descend in a deluge outside.

At this moment the countenance of Meyerbeer was a study for a physiognomist. He frowned, he knit his brow, he compressed his lips, his eyes seemed to flash with the elements, and he nervously clutched the table.

Madame Meyerbeer from the other end of the table observed these signs with dismay, and remarked *sotto voce* to her daughter Bianca, who sat by her side,

“My dear, your papa will not be at the reception to-night. There is going to be a terrible thunder-storm.”

These words taken by themselves might have proved enigmatical to any ordinary hearer, or at the best they would have denoted that Meyerbeer was a cowardly fellow who was afraid of a little thunder and lightning. But the sequel of events showed too plainly the import of what Madame Meyerbeer had said.

“We shall have to manage the whole reception by ourselves to-night, my dear,” she again remarked to her daughter. “See, your papa is getting the people away from the dinner-table.”

Sure enough Meyerbeer, after fidgeting in his chair for a few minutes, signed to his wife to retire with the ladies, although the dessert had scarcely been placed upon the table; and no sooner had the female element of the dinner-party left the room than he framed some hurried excuse to leave likewise, and leaving the gentlemen amply provided with wine and cigars, stole upstairs to his study in order to recommence his composition.

The thunder always inspired him from his earliest years. He could never see the flashing lightning and hear the portentous rumbling of the thunder, without falling at once into a musical mood, the outcome of which was always the most precious of all his work. Beautiful melodies poured forth then from his unhesitating pen with all the fluency and facility with which they rushed from the pen of Handel. Charming airs fashioned themselves in his brain to the accompaniment

of the growling explosions of heaven above. He himself has confessed that his happiest inspirations have been conceived amidst the war and confusion of the elements, when the thunder roared, the wind howled, and the rain dashed in deluging sheets down the window-panes and skylight of his lonely study. It is to court such an inspiration that he tears himself away now from the companionship of his friends, from the gay society which is adorning his brilliantly lighted rooms below, and steals to his secluded chamber, to his beloved scores, whereon he knows he will lay the loveliest flowers of his fancy before the tempestuous night is over.

Below, the elegant and sumptuous *salon* is thrown open to crowds of guests and swims in rich toilettes and bright array. All that is fashionable and adorable in Paris is there congregated. It is a bevy of beautiful women, an assembly of noble men, which might attract any but the most obdurate heart to come and join it.

Above, Meyerbeer sits in his solitary chamber, listening to the roaring of the thunder, to the swish of the rain, to the bluster of the wind, with joy in his heart. Tunes of celestial sweetness are playing through his mind, and on his beloved score, as on an altar meet to receive the most precious offerings, he is laying them. There he sits and will sit all the while till the reception is over; and long after the last guest has left the house he will still be sitting there, penning his sublime music in communion with the elements of the universe. A few hours' hastily snatched repose will see him again at his desk, as we found him early in the morning of this day, unwearied, unflinching, everlasting.

If such the labours of the man, we may know why his works are so massive, pompous, and elaborate.

The subjects he chose for his operas were generally of an epic and heroic character, giving scope to this interminable elaboration, which on more slender themes would have been unnatural and excessive. The opera of *Les Huguenots*, turning as it does on so vast and appalling a subject as the massacre of St. Bartholomew, is raised from the ordinary levels of operatic style to the height of a sublime historical drama, and proportionate tax is laid on the composer to support the dignity, and characterise the expression of the various *dramatis personæ*. To satisfy his conceptions of what should be, two leading sopranos are sometimes employed—as, for instance, in *Les Huguenots* and *Robert le Diable*—to one of whom the light and florid music of the opera is assigned, and to the other music of a severer and more dramatic style.

What a glorious drama would he have made if he had been fortunate enough to acquire that libretto which he had sighed after all his life!—a libretto with one of the ancient prophets of Israel in the title rôle. Himself a Jew, he had nursed for years this project, and brooded over it much. But whether he confided the task of the libretto to some incompetent hand, or whether he delayed the execution of the project till he found it too late to realise, the result in either case was the same. In despair at ever procuring the ideal “prophet” of his dreams, he took the first prophet that came to hand, who happened to be the notorious John of Leyden. On the romantic adventures of this remarkable Anabaptist, a libretto had been written which was shown to Meyerbeer and took his fancy. But even on the adventures of this very shady prophet he has built up one of the greatest architectures of sound that the European stage has ever seen.

Meyerbeer's birthplace was Berlin, where his father was a wealthy merchant. The boy's serious mood and unmistakable passion for music were subjects of remark in his childhood, and his father, with solicitude for his best interests and happiness, resolved to allow him to be educated from the first with the prospect of a musical career in view. Accordingly, a master for the piano-forte was obtained for the boy, who received daily instruction of the most careful nature, and soon showed a progress which was something phenomenal.

The same industry which Meyerbeer displayed in after life in laboriously elaborating his scores, he showed when a mere child of six or seven in unremitting industry in scales and exercises. His technical dexterity at this early age was wonderful in the extreme. In Berlin, a city of pianists, he was admittedly one of the finest executants at the age of ten. The future operatic composer, who seldom or never touched an instrument except in the fever of composition in his later years, commenced his career as a piano *virtuoso*. He gave concerts of his own before he was thirteen, and his reputation as a juvenile phenomenon well-nigh equalled that of Mozart before him.

A remarkable instance of his zeal and assiduity is recorded by his biographers in connection with his first visit to Vienna. He had arranged to give a series of concerts there, and, relying on his brilliant powers of *technique*, was not afraid to enter the lists against Hummel, who, in the opinion of all Vienna, was the greatest pianist of the time. But on arriving by the coach from Prague in the afternoon, he strolled through the town, and saw a handbill containing an announcement of a concert of Hummel's that same evening. Young Meyerbeer attended the concert *incog.*, and,



seated in a retired part of the hall, listened to the liquid notes, the warbling trills, the clear precision, the wonderful sentiment, melody, and sweetness which Hummel drew from his favourite instrument. These qualities of style charmed Meyerbeer, as they charmed all the auditors around him; and, with a depth of penetration far beyond his years, he at once apprehended that no one could gain popularity in Vienna without these favourite qualities. His own style, that of transcendent execution and sensational effect, was entirely at variance with the method of Hummel.

Accordingly, he resolved not to play before the Viennese until he had accommodated his style to their tastes. He cancelled all his engagements, and—according to the story, which we are quite ready to believe from the nature of the man—for ten months immured himself in an *appartement* in Vienna, practising indefatigably in the new style which accident had thus opportunely introduced to his notice. At the end of that period he appeared on the platform, and won all hearts by his masterly and popular performance.

Meyerbeer's impulse to composition came immediately from his association with his master, the Abbé Vogler, who encouraged him to abandon the lower walk of the art for the higher.

We have mentioned the Abbé's system of training, and what influence it undoubtedly had on Meyerbeer's future habit of work. It had the same influence on the direction which that work took. Under the superintendence and encouragement of the Abbé, Meyerbeer composed fugues, motetts, and masses, and also became a skilful master of all the intricacies of the ecclesiastical style.

From this he passed to writing for the pianoforte,

or, rather, we should say, to "composing" for it. His compositions were destined for his own performance, and were designed with the special object of showing off his exceptional powers, and at the same time of captivating public taste by appealing to the favourite mode in vogue at the capital where he performed. So jealous was he, however, of any rivalry, that he preserved these special compositions as an *arcantum* of his art. It is stated that he did not even write them down for fear the manuscript might get into anyone else's hands. Certainly he never made them public; and other players less talented than he listened with envy to masterly effusions which displayed the finest points of their rival's playing, and were marvellously effective in impressing the public, but of which they themselves were unable to procure any copy, so as to display their own powers to equal perfection.

There is a grim humour in the way in which Meyerbeer used his twofold gifts of a composer and a *virtuoso* to discomfit his rivals in the latter field. The pianists grumbled that they could not contend with him on equal terms. They did not know where to have him. He played music which they could not procure; he produced effects which if they had only had the notes before them they could have produced likewise, but in the absence of that indispensable preliminary they could only wonder at, not imitate.

From these strifes and emulations, unworthy of his great powers, Meyerbeer was recalled by the advice and influence of the Abbé Vogler, and encouraged to compose higher works of art than pianoforte *pot-pourris* and fantasias.

His first attempt in the operatic field was a comic opera entitled, *The Two Caliphs*. The piece was not

very successful, the melodies being too laboured, the general treatment too stiff and formal. His operas resembled those of his master, the Abbé, who in *La Kermesse*, *Gustavus Adolphus*, *Castor and Pollux*, and *Albert of Bavaria*, had launched four operas on the world which were too full of mannerisms to acquire general popularity.

Vogler was more honest with his pupil than he was with himself. While continuing in the fixed belief that his own operas were very laudable performances, he advised Meyerbeer, in order to get rid of his constrained style of writing, to visit Italy, and compose for the theatres there.

This was the last piece of advice which Meyerbeer received from his master. The Abbé died soon after ; but, curiously enough, the first success which the pupil subsequently attained was in a great measure due to the influence of Vogler. The Abbé had many friends at Padua, and it was at Padua that Meyerbeer produced his first Italian opera. This was *Romilda e Costanza*, produced in 1815, the year after Vogler's death. The opera was received with acclamation. The composer was loaded with plaudits and demonstrations of admiration ; and Meyerbeer, who had retired in discomfiture from Vienna, found at Padua, and afterwards at Venice, ample acknowledgment of his undoubted powers.

A residence of some years in Italy was followed by a lifelong sojourn in Paris, so that with the same cosmopolitanism which is such an abiding feature in Handel's music, Meyerbeer drew to himself and absorbed the spirit of many lands, and a power of pleasing and impressing which is almost of universal potency. In Germany, and especially in the school

of Vogler, he had thoroughly mastered the strict ecclesiastical style of musical composition. In Italy he became proficient in flowing melody. In France he learnt the secret of crisp, alluring rhythm. His masterful genius and intense industry enabled him to combine the best features of all these styles into a harmonious whole, which is visible in all its grandeur in his great heroic operas. His long experience in all schools enabled him to enrich music with a multitude of new effects, and his unwearying laboriousness made it possible for him to carry the art of the musical characterisation of his *dramatis personæ* to greater heights than any other composer before or since his time.

He produced *Robert le Diable* at Paris in 1831. *Les Huguenots* was not brought out till five years later—in 1836. *Le Prophète* was given to the world in 1849. *L'Africaine* was a posthumous production. He died at Paris on the 2nd of May, 1864, being at the time seventy-two years old.

## SYNOPSIS OF LIFE, AND WORKS.

---

JACOB MEYERBEER, or BEER, was born at Berlin, Sept. 5th, 1791; first played in public, 1800; studied under the Abbé Vogler, 1806; played in Vienna, as the rival of Hummel, 1809; produced *The Two Caliphs* in Vienna, 1813; visited Italy, 1815; produced *Romilda e Costanza*, 1815; resided in Italy, 1815—26; resided in Paris, 1826, till his death; died at Paris, May 2nd, 1864, aged seventy-two.

---

Operas: *Les Amours de Teyelinde*, 1813; *Wirth und Geist*, 1813; *Romilda e Costanza*, 1815; *Emma di Resburgo*, 1819; *Semiramide riconosciuta*, 1819; *Margherita d'Anjou*, Milan, 1820; *L'Esule di Granata*, 1822; *Almanzor*; *Das Brandenburger*, 1823; *Il Crociato in Egitto*, Venice, 1824; *Robert le Diable* (libretto by Scribe and Delavigne), Paris, Nov. 21, 1831 (Lond., 1831); *Les Huguenots* (Scribe), Paris, Feb. 21, 1836; Lond., 1842; *Ein Feldlager in Schlesien*, 1840; *Struensée*, Berlin, 1846; *Le Prophète*, Paris, 1849 (Lond., July, 1850); *L'Etoile du Nord*, Paris, Feb., 1854 (Lond., July, 1854); *Le Pardon de Ploërmel*, Paris, 1859 (Lond., as "*Dinorah*"); *L'Africaine*, 1864.

Oratorios: *Gott und die Natur*, 1811; *Jephtha's Gelübde*, 1811.

Cantatas, etc.: *Seven Sacred Cantatas of Klopstock*, for 4 voices and accomp.; *Le Génie de la Musique à la tombe de Beethoven*, cantata; Cantata for the inauguration of *Gutenberg's Statue at Mayence*, 1836; *Le Fête à la cour de Ferrare*, 1843; Cantatas for the marriages of *Royal personages*; *Ode au Sculpteur Rauch*, 1851; *Ninety-first Psalm* for 8 voices; *Stabat Mater*; *March for Schiller Centenary Festival*, Paris, 1859; *Overture for London International Exhibition*, 1861; *Coronation March*, 1863. Numerous Pf. and lyrical pieces.

## WAGNER.

As Wagner himself took an ideal pilgrimage to Beethoven, let us, in like manner, take a pilgrimage to Wagner, and observe, not any special incident in his career, but rather his daily life in the little town of Baireuth, which he has imperishably connected with his name, but which, at the time when we choose to visit him, had not yet become the chief centre of the Wagnerian cult. Things are just beginning there, let us say, and before public curiosity has become sufficiently strong to allure crowds of inquisitive people to stare at the composer as an extraordinary being, we wend our way thither to see how he goes about his daily life, and to reflect upon what we see.

Arrived at the little town, which has since become quite wedded in its association with Wagner's name, we find many people who can undertake to direct us to Wagner's house. Although not a man of European reputation at this time, he is a local celebrity, and all appear to know him. But having reached the portal of his dwelling we are informed that he is not at home, but has gone down to superintend the building of his new theatre. This remark rather surprises us, as we should imagine that he would have left this for the architect to do; but apparently not so. He is, no doubt, extremely interested in the progress of the structure, we say to ourselves, and is, probably, pestering the

architect with all sorts of suggestions, which are courteously put aside by that functionary as totally unpractical and undesirable.

To the site of the new theatre we accordingly take our way—a mass of bricks it is at present—a vast heap of mortar, scaffolding, rubbish, and the builders are hard at work on it; though from the fewness of the men's numbers we should say that their progress would be slow. We ask a workman where Wagner is? The man gruffly replies:—

“Ich weiss nicht.” Herr Wagner, he goes on to say, was there a short time ago, but he has not seen him for the last ten minutes or more.

We make the inquiry of a second bricklayer, with equally futile effect, and of a third. Finding inquiry vain, we go about the edifice ourselves to try and spy out the opera-writer on our own account. As we look our eyes fasten on a little man wearing spectacles, who has his coat off and a workman's cap on his head; in his hand he carries a trowel, while over his shoulder is a hod of bricks and mortar. So far as we can judge, from the portraits with which we are familiar, this bricklayer is suspiciously like Wagner; though, of course, it cannot be he, we say to ourselves. The composer would never appear in such a peculiar garb; yet a near scrutiny is sufficient to convince us that the bricklayer is, indeed, none other than Wagner himself.

It is characteristic of the ardent energy of the man that he is thus plunging into the mechanical portion of his ambitious enterprises, no less than into the speculative and visionary portion of them. Unlike most composers, he is by no means an unbusiness-like, ideal, imaginative man in life at large, but an exceedingly

practical individual, who can put two and two together, knows how to drive a bargain, and places no reliance on human nature when it appears in the persons of workmen and architects. He is convinced that the building of his theatre will go on much faster if he only pays an occasional visit to the builders of it, and we have come in the nick of time to see him, having thrown down the pen and abandoned the conductor's *báton*, take a turn at building and carpentry to the amazement of the workmen and the secret dissatisfaction of the foremen. The theatre, destined one day to become the temple of the Wagnerian cult, is growing apace, and if its deviser and contriver can help it, shall not stand still for lack of his example and precept.

Wagner, when caught in this apparently uncongenial occupation by any chance visitors, was never ashamed either of the garb or the position in which he was found, but, brimming over as he was with enthusiasm for his great work, would frequently take the stranger round to the various points of interest in the future building, and descant for the hour on the admirable proportions, the mathematical exactness, and, above all, the artistic necessity of such a building. His operas were of such a nature that to do them adequate justice they must have a theatre all to themselves. Neither the stages of Paris nor of Dresden gave his ideas full scope; to do so, a theatre devoted wholly and solely to Wagnerian drama was imperative.

As we all know, by his unwearied energy and by the steadfastness with which he clung to his dominant idea, he ultimately got such a theatre, but in the meantime the idea must be confessed to be as much in the clouds as the scaffolding is, and there are not many visitors who, after making a journey to Baireuth, would care to



take a large wager on the probability of the Wagnerian theatre ever attaining its proposed completion.

After taking us to the various points of the compass within the unfinished edifice, Wagner proposes a return to his house. He is a good host, and while we partake of a meal at his expense he stuns our ears with eternal disquisitions on the music of the future, the future conversion of all his opera-houses into churches, with other matter very interesting, no doubt, to him, but which we for our part are glad to get rid of by beating a retreat as speedily as we can consistently with courtesy.

Wagner shared the peculiarity of Thackeray and some other men, that he would sometimes go for weeks without putting pen to paper; and then as suddenly, after a long spell of idleness and inertia, would close with his scores and write a great deal of music in a long fit of composition, abandoning it and lapsing into his previous inactivity of invention as soon as the humour had passed away. This afternoon he is seized with a fit of writing, and accordingly proceeds to his study, which has as its most remarkable piece of furniture a large grand piano, generally open, and ready to be thumped on by the eccentric composer, whenever the fancy takes him.

We employ the term "thumped on" of set purpose, for Wagner, like Costa and some other great conductors, was a very poor player. We say "like Costa," but we fear that Wagner's playing was not anything like so good as Costa's, and should rather be denoted by the term "hammering" or "thumping" than by the word "playing" at all.

A friend of ours, on a visit to Wagner, being a very good pianist, was asked by the composer to sit down

and interpret the score of one of his operas on the piano in the study. Our friend played in excellent style, but probably did not give sufficient accent, emphasis, or expression to some particular passage; and Wagner, in order to set him right, sat down at the piano to show him what to do. To his intense surprise the pianist saw Wagner finger the scale by beginning with the thumb, then putting down the first finger, and next passing the thumb under for the third note of the scale. This struck the pianist as odd, and a closer examination of the composer's fingering, revealed still more extraordinary methods of playing, such as crossing one finger over another, &c., which it is needless to set down here.

The wonder is that with such a poor capacity for playing, Wagner should have been able to master Beethoven's works so well as, according to all accounts, he did. Both he and his biographers declare that few people were better acquainted with Beethoven's works than he was; yet all he could do was to whistle them. He never attained the capability of playing them fluently on the pianoforte.

He has come to compose, this afternoon, and the pianoforte is open and ready before him when he likes to use it—which, however, he seldom does. Accustomed to carry music in his head to a great degree—this is obviously one of the advantages of not being a player, that it makes a man rely more on his mental grasp of music than on his sensual appreciation of it—he writes all his work at a table with scarcely any reference to the instrument which stands beside him. He has got into a good mood for composing, and the sheets fly off pretty rapidly. Since he is his own librettist he experiences little trouble in making a change in the words



WAGNER.



now and then if need be, and occasionally varies his labours at the music by writing a line or two of poetry which amends or is substituted for a verse that has been erased.

His poetry, however, is very poor stuff, as may be judged from such examples of it as the following:—

“ Mimi hight,  
A mannikin grim,  
Who in nought but greed  
Granted me care  
To count on me  
When manful I'd wax'd,  
In the wood to slay a worm  
Which long had hidden there a hoard.

“ Do you know me,  
Mis'erable dwarf?  
Who is't, now say,  
At whom you would snarl?  
In frigid lair,  
Where freezing you lay,  
Where were your light  
And warming illume  
If on Loki you had not looked?”

“ ISOLDE (*jeeringly*).

“ In shrinking trepidation  
His shame he seeks to hide,  
While to the King, his relation,  
He brings the corpse-like bride.”\*

Alterations are easy, if any are needed, progress is rapid, and the opera proceeds apace. Thus the time wears on, and Wagner is tolerably well satisfied, when the evening comes, with his work during the day.

A number of friends have been invited to dinner, and

\* The English rendering is from the version of Mr. F. Corder, which, if it does not improve upon, at least keeps pace with, the divine original.

his table-talk is noticeable for its great freedom of expression on religious and political subjects. Accustomed not to keep back anything that comes to his pen, he is equally lax in laying any constraint on his tongue. At length he begins to descant on "death"! The subject is an appalling one for introduction at a dinner-table, but like the skeleton which was paraded at Egyptian feasts to the horror of the guests, Wagner's digression on this funereal theme seems equally ill-timed, and calculated to force his guests into the very state of depression which it should have been his duty as host to counteract. He harangues the company loudly on the theme, while they heartily wish his discourse ended and a more congenial topic of conversation introduced.

We have heard that Madame Sarah Bernhardt—like the Persian king who was reminded every morning by a servant deputed for that purpose that we all must die—was accustomed to carry a coffin about with her, and with this morbid and gloomy article to chill the veins of her friends whenever the eccentric fit seized her. Nay, once when the great actress was suffering from what on the Continent is called "the spleen," she attired herself in a shroud, and with her hair undone, lay down in this famous coffin—an elegant piece of cabinet-work made of ebony and comfortably padded with white satin. She closed her eyes, opened her mouth, and requested a friend to play a *Miserere* on the organ. Not content with this she caused a number of tapers to be lighted, and sent for her bosom friend, Louise Abbema. This celebrated artiste was requested by Sarah to assume the garb of a nun, and to kneel beside the coffin as in prayer, while in the background the servants of the house were grouped, some praying, others in attitudes

of despair. Liebert, the photographer, was then ordered to call with his apparatus and to take a photograph of the scene, in order to preserve an appropriate means of recalling this ghastly performance.

Similarly, Wagner, though he was not quite so realistic as Madame Bernhardt, yet harped on the same theme in a way no less morbid. He had his tomb made in the garden of his house, in a pleasant retreat, hidden from ordinary observation, yet so that at any moment he could visit and behold it. On the particular evening which we have selected for description he insists on conducting the party of guests to see this sepulchre, himself acting the part of *cicerone*, and informing them why he had it built and whom it is destined to contain. He does not fail to point the moral, and impress on his companions that they too will one day or other be received into a similar habitation—a most unnecessary reminder, we should say, and a very ill-timed subject to introduce at a dinner-party.

If Wagner was in the habit of regaling his guests more than occasionally—frequently, with glimpses of this sepulchral structure and with corresponding remarks on the spirit world, as we are credibly informed he was, all we can say is that his dinners must have resembled the banquet of Trimalcion in Petronius, where, in addition to much that was pleasant and gay, an admixture of unseasonable drollery was introduced which very much detracted from the enjoyment of the repast.

After dinner there is music in the drawing-room, and the hours pass enjoyably enough. In the pauses of the music the voice of Wagner can be heard declaiming on his favourite theme of the reform of the opera, the corruption of the Italian stage, and the only

panacea for that corruption in the shape of the Wagnerian music-drama. The composer, after a while, fidgets to get back to his work again, and is soon once more seated in his study composing with the same rapidity which he displayed before. Unlike Meyerbeer, who sat at his work continuously whether he were in the mood or not, Wagner, unless he is entirely inclined to write, will not touch a pen at all, and consequently comes with renewed vigour to his writing after so long a spell of recreation.

But if we observe him as he is writing there we shall find that he does not limit himself to music alone. He has now finished an act and has laid it down. He pauses for a moment, hesitating apparently whether he shall begin a new one or whether he shall take up quite a different sort of work—and decides on the latter. An enormous literary manuscript lies before him now, which consists in a general indictment of all people who differ from his opinion as to what opera ought to be, and a renewed declaration of what he himself thinks about it. The manuscript, as we said, is already a huge one, but by the way in which he falls energetically upon it, it will ere long become a monstrous and portentous article, no doubt requiring two or three volumes to give it expression in print.

This combination of literary talent with musical endowment, we have before adverted to in the case of Schumann; but the difference between the two men is this, that while Schuman employed his literary gifts for the purpose of refined criticism, fanciful lucubrations, and good-natured suggestion, Wagner's pen is constantly dipped in gall, and he fulminates objurgations with the same facility with which Schumann wrote criticisms. Another purpose for which he employs his



quill is to compile portly volumes in defence of his musical theories. The present bulky pile of manuscript might be either ; but judging by the excessive satisfaction with which he seems to be dipping his pen and bedewing the surface of the paper with the ink, we should say it was a polemic.

He works late into the night, and on the morrow will be up and stirring, mixing once again with the workmen, to urge them forward and to complete his temple of art—until the completion of which he will know no rest.

Wagner's first wife was an actress whose acquaintance he made when living at Riga, and with whom he travelled to Paris in his *Wanderjahre*, as we have yet to relate. At a later period of his life he became deeply enamoured of Liszt's natural daughter, Cosima, who at that time was the wife of Dr. Hans von Bülow. We hasten to draw a veil over a very unpleasant circumstance, which brought unhappiness where there should never have been such, and which gave Wagner a wife in a way wherein most men would not desire to have one.

Madame Wagner soon showed herself a very managing woman, and if it be true, as often asserted, that Mrs. Booth, of the Salvation Army, has had much more to do with the success of that movement than has the "General," it is beyond a doubt that to Madame Wagner the successes of Baireuth were due almost as much as to her husband. If he could compose the music and attract the admiration of multitudes of people, she knew how to turn that admiration to the best possible advantage, to manage the theatre, to finance the enterprises—in a word, to make herself useful in a thousand

ways, and to prove herself a positive boon and blessing to Wagner amid his often chimerical undertakings.

We have described his character as that of a practical man : so it was ; but like all projectors, who, in the words of Swift, are sure to be lost in the clouds some day—there was always the danger of his soaring away from sublunary things to some utterly wild and impossible project and placing that before everything. The good sense of his wife saved him from this. She was a very different woman from the wife of his early years, with whom in the days of his romance he travelled to Paris and shared both poverty and obscurity. Frau Wagner of Baireuth fame was a great practical genius, who could have saved the composer many a trip and fall had she been united to him earlier, and was a worthy partner in the successful climax of his career ; scarcely anyone could have been chosen by him who could have suited his position better.

Wagner was born in 1813 at Leipsic, and in his youth was remarkably backward in his musical studies. He was, however, filled from his childhood with inordinate ambition, and projected numerous works at an early age. He was educated at the Kreuz-Schule of Dresden, and matriculated at Leipsic University in 1830. He studied music under Weinlig while at that university, obtained a fair knowledge of the works of the great composers, and passed through a very necessary grounding in counterpoint.

Through the good offices of his teacher, Weinlig, an overture from the young musician's pen was performed at the Gewandhaus, Leipsic, and met with some little success. The advance which he made in musical knowledge secured him the post of chorus-master

at the Würzburg Theatre, in the year 1833. He became musical director at Magdeburg Theatre in 1834, and when at Riga in a similar capacity in 1836 married an actress in the theatre, as we mentioned before.

Two or three years afterwards he travelled to Paris with the intention of getting his *Rienzi* performed at the Grand Opera, but was unsuccessful in doing so. This was the period of his life which will commend itself most strongly to the sympathies of the world at large. In company with his wife he was well content to live in a humble lodging in the French capital, and to haunt the theatre-doors in the expectation of at last having his work performed. His principal occupation in Paris, however, lay not in directing the rehearsals of *Rienzi*, but in arranging airs for the cornet-à-piston, which he was glad to do in return for the pittance which the music publishers doled out to him by way of remuneration. Disgusted with this prosaic termination to his dreams of conquest, Wagner determined to try the appreciation of his native land. Here he was more successful, and *Rienzi*, produced at Dresden in 1842, achieved him renown throughout Germany.

It has been unfortunate for himself and his music that he wielded a bitter pen, and indulged in acrimonious controversy with avidity whenever chance threw the occasion in his way. At this early period of his career he had conceived a violent jealousy and antipathy to Meyerbeer, who had befriended him in France; and at a later period he poured the foulest abuse on the benevolent composer, to whose kind influence and interest he was indebted for the only friends he made in Paris and in an indirect manner for his bodily maintenance while there. This spirit of perpetual hostility, which his hot and hasty disposition showed, made him many enemies,

and created in after times most violent opposition to his music.

He produced *Der Fliegende Holländer* at Dresden in 1843, *Tannhäuser* at the same place in 1845, and *Lohengrin* at Weimar in 1850. But the works most typical of the ultimate development of his operatic theories are *Tristan und Isolde* and *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, which we therefore propose briefly to consider.

In *Tristan und Isolde*, as in all Wagner's music-dramas, we are transported from the ordinary regions of operatic narrative to the extravagant realms of fable familiar to our minds before we reached our "teens"; and the difficulty felt by many a would-be admirer of the master is to attain the requisite sympathy for appreciating the often puerile incidents of the narrative. *Tristan und Isolde* opens with the return of the hero and heroine from Ireland, where the former has journeyed in order to escort the latter to the court of King Mark, his uncle, of whom she is the destined bride. During a previous visit Tristan had been nursed by Isolde in sickness, and she had fallen in love with him. Although she is now destined to be the bride of another, her *amour propre* is piqued at the knight's apparent indifference to her, and she resolves to destroy him by poison. By mistake she gives him one of those marvelous love-philtres of which we have all read in our childhood, the effect of which is to inspire undying passion in the person who drinks the magic draught. We are not astonished, therefore, to find that Tristan and Isolde at once become the most ardent of lovers.

In the sequel, we find the bride of King Mark, presumably under the influence of the magic draught, which excuses all things, devoting herself heart and

soul to her passion for Tristan, and arranging clandestine meetings, in one of which they are discovered by King Mark and his friends. Tristan is mortally wounded, and when Isolde comes to nurse him, as in his former illness when she nursed him in Ireland, he resolves to die in her presence. Whereupon he proceeds to the ghastly act of tearing the bandages off his wounds, which very soon finishes him. Isolde dies with him, and so ends this deplorable plot.

Not only is it fabulous and puerile, but a hero is held up for admiration who transgresses every dictate of knightly honour, and a heroine is presented for our esteem who violates the first principles of womanhood. The music, in this most typical of Wagner's operas, is vague and formless to a degree, and the composer, shaking himself quite free from all fetters of musical tradition, seems content to wander on with little regard to either key or tune, so long as he can express with greater or less approximation the emotions of the moment.

Admirers of the master may maintain that constant change of time and modulation of key give a beautiful tone-colour. But to this we reply with the question, Is not such restlessness the very way to destroy all true tone-colour, as surely as too great a mixture of tints in painting produces but bewilderment to the eye and confusion?

The development of representative themes is the main system of form on which Wagner relies in this and his other later operas for giving cohesion to the whole. But unfortunately this system of musical treatment is employed by Wagner with such indiscretion that, for the sake of his favourite method of workmanship, he neglects and sets at nought all the ordinary principles

of musical art—with the result that supreme formlessness ensues.

In *Das Rheingold*, the first opera in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Wagner proceeds to the extreme limit of extravagance so far as subject is concerned, beyond which no composer, dramatist, or even pantomime writer would ever venture to go. The main incidents of *Das Rheingold* are indeed far more akin to the subjects which interest children in pantomimes, than to the reasonable plots and developments of story which enlist the attention of grown-up people in comedy or opera.

In witnessing this remarkable music-drama we are expected to behold with gravity a procession of events which might raise a smile on the face of a child ten years old. Magic rings which give their possessors complete omnipotence, the ways and doings of giants, the transformation of men into toads; nymphs, gods, invisible caps *à la* Harlequin—in fact, all the familiar personages and contrivances of magic tale and fairy legend, from Aladdin down to Jack the Giant-killer—out of these materials *Das Rheingold* is formed; yet in this portentous work they are not treated with the light and graceful pencil of the fairy tale or the extravaganza, but with the utmost seriousness and gravity, as if we were expected to believe implicitly, and to find perfectly reasonable, every incident in the drama.

*Das Rheingold*, or “The Rhine Gold,” to give it its English name, is a quantity of magic gold hidden in the river Rhine, possessed of the peculiar property of giving irresistible omnipotence to the person who is lucky enough to obtain possession of it, and make a ring out of its precious metal. This idea bears obviously

a general resemblance to that of Aladdin, who had, if we remember rightly, a ring as well as a lamp with which he did his wonders.

The lucky robber of the gold is Alberich the Nibelung, who steals it from the custody of the Rhine maidens to whom it is committed, and having treated the metal in the prescribed manner, at once obtains complete supremacy over the world. In doing so, however, he excites the envy of two gods, Wotan and Loge by name, who determine, if possible, to deprive him of this talisman, and in their pursuit of Alberich dive into the bowels of the earth, where he, too, has betaken himself. By various trickery they induce him to change himself into a toad, and having seized another important talisman of his while he is in this defenceless condition, they make him their prisoner without much difficulty. Alberich, chafing under his captivity, offers as a ransom the magic ring and also the rest of the gold out of which he made the talisman. This is accepted, and Alberich goes free.

The plot is complicated by the doings of two giants, who are also inclined to search for the magic ring and gold, though prevented at first by the diplomacy of Wotan. Ultimately the giants obtain both—and the drama ends unsatisfactorily. We neither see why Alberich should have been dispossessed of the ring, nor why Wotan should have so freely made away with it after all the trouble he has taken to acquire it.

The music of *Das Rheingold* belongs to Wagner's most elaborate period of style, and floats along in a vague and formless swell. It is utterly impossible for the musician to analyse it, or for the ordinary listener to do more than abandon himself to the general impression, through the lack of tuneful airs to catch his fancy,

and of striking and clear-cut musical effects likely to dwell in his memory.

In each of Wagner's music-dramas there is some strongly objectionable feature, which even the warmest partisans of the master can scarcely excuse, and which the anti-Wagnerians bitterly condemn. In *Die Walküre*, the second drama in the *Ring des Nibelungen*, the composer has deliberately chosen to handle a theme which the pen of man has hitherto rejected from a feeling of invincible delicacy and shame.

Siegmond and Sieglinde are twin brother and sister, the children of the god Wotan and a mortal mother, whose mission is to restore the fallen prosperity of heaven; though how they do so, so far as the revelations of this drama go, does not very clearly appear. Sieglinde has been abducted by Hunding, and against her will has been forced to marry him. Siegmund, her brother, fleeing from the battle, chances to come to her abode, where he finds his sister alone, her husband being absent and concerned in the very fray from which he has made his escape. The pair fall in love with one another, and on Hunding's return Sieglinde drugs her husband's drink in order that she may have the greater leisure to pursue her guilty purposes. Left once more alone with one another, they discover that they are blood relations of the nearest possible degree; but this does not seem to interfere in the slightest with their passion, and they carry their affection to its most disastrous climax.

The son of this precious pair is Siegfried, who has a whole play to himself at a further stage of "The Ring," but fortunately for ordinary notions of decorum does not appear in *Die Walküre*. In the sequel we have the vengeance of Hunding, who slays Siegmund, his sister



being enabled to effect her escape through the agency of Brünnhilde, a daughter of Wotan, who had been specially instructed by that deity to effect her destruction.

In the third act we find Brünnhilde assuming the rôle of protectress to Sieglinde, and for that reason becoming the object of Wotan's wrath. As a punishment for acting contrary to the orders she had received, Brünnhilde is condemned to perpetual sleep on a rock until a man destined to be her husband breaks through the barrier that surrounds her and wakes her. The idea is somewhat similar to that of the princess in the old fairy tale, who was condemned to sleep for a hundred years. The difference is that while the princess was surrounded with a hedge of briars, Brünnhilde is encompassed with a ring of fire; and while the prince who wakes the lady in the fairy tale is an utter stranger, poor Brünnhilde is destined to be awakened by and to have for her husband her own nephew. The views on consanguinity in the Wagnerian cycle are indeed most extraordinary, and the composer seems positively to revel in these strange alliances.

*Die Walküre* ends with Brünnhilde's slumber; the entrance of the hero who is to wake her being reserved for another section of "The Ring."

For the sake of brevity we omit allusion to *Siegfried*, the next drama of the cycle, and proceed finally to consider *Die Götterdämmerung*, which brings "The Ring" to a conclusion.

"The Twilight of the Gods," for such is the meaning of the title, forms the subject of a very celebrated Scandinavian poem of great antiquity, and the name has obviously been borrowed from that source by Wagner, who applies it to a German legend of far less

dignity and beauty. The events narrated in the Norwegian poem would probably defy the invention of any dramatist to mould into presentable form, and would tax the resources of the most experienced stage-manager to place on the boards of a theatre. The throne of Odin, in that poem, is shivered in pieces; the god Thor enters into a desperate conflict with the serpent of the Universe; and the enormous wolf, whose lower jaw rests upon earth, and its upper one upon the sky, and which is itself the type of Eternity, opens its yawning mouth, and swallows at one great gulp, amid a tempest of thunder, lightning, and sulphurous smoke, all the deities of the Norwegian Pantheon.

This barbarous but sublime old legend is replaced in the Wagnerian cycle by a much tamer and more commonplace myth, which deals with the adventures of a magical ring, the deaths of one or two heroes and a heroine, and the final loss of the ring, entailing as a consequence the destruction of the house of the gods by fire—not a very logical or very dignified *dénouement*.

The opening of *Die Götterdämmerung* is very dreary. The characters first introduced spend most of their time in an elaborate attempt to harmonise the state of things to be depicted in the new drama with the events which have preceded it. We are then shown the aunt and nephew, Brünnhilde and Siegfried, the former of whom becomes the recipient of the famous magical ring. After giving her this present, Siegfried sets off in the manner of a knight-errant to hunt for adventures.

But no sooner has he started on his quest than the little drama of Rinaldo and Angelica is enacted over again; and, as that ardent and amorous knight received by mistake a magical draught which made him forget

entirely the face of his lady-love, so does Siegfried in like manner drink a potion which obliterates all remembrance of Brünnhilde. His affections are transferred to the beautiful Guttrune, and this lady's father determines to supplant him in the good graces of his aunt. Consequently, when Siegfried and Brünnhilde meet at last, the hero's natural impulse is to wrest from her hand the magic ring—a proceeding which Brünnhilde fiercely resents, but is unable to prevent.

Siegfried, once more the possessor of this famous talisman, is brought into contact with the three Rhine maidens, owing to whose indiscretion the magic gold had been first discovered, and though ardently entreated by the water-nymphs to give up the ring, he steadily refuses to do so. Shortly after he is slain by Hagen, but even in death he still retains possession of the ring. Hagen is as unsuccessful in his attempts to obtain the amulet as is Zampa, in the opera of that name, who, having put a wedding-ring on the finger of a marble statue, finds to his horror that the finger has closed on the trinket and that he is doomed to accept the stone figure as his bride. No fate so deplorable overtakes Hagen, but he is quite as frightened as Zampa, and equally balked of his object. Brünnhilde finds no difficulty in performing the feat which baffled Hagen. But, having got possession of the ring, she has recourse to an act hitherto limited in our imaginations to Indian widows, whose predilection for the Suttee had to be stopped by Government—that is to say, she throws herself into Siegfried's funeral pyre. The ring is lost in the Rhine, and the house of the gods is wrapt in conflagration. Thus ends the music-drama. The climax, it will be admitted, is quite out of proportion to the insignificant events that preceded it, and the

incidents of the piece follow one another in random and illogical succession.

The music of *Die Götterdämmerung* is of a superior character to that of any of the preceding dramas of the series. The "Trauermarsch" of Siegfried in the last act is popular in most German concert-rooms, and occurring where it does in the opera, with all the advantage of context and surroundings, produces a very marked impression on the audience. The composer also avails himself of a chorus with considerable skill, and seems inclined now and then to write in the way of ordinary musicians. But these variations from his usual method are unfortunately but occasional, and *Die Götterdämmerung* contains large masses of music, unredeemed by any beauty, or even by any efforts at producing pleasing effect.

There remains little more to say, except to remark that Wagner has indulged in a great deal of turgid writing, to prove the moral excellence of the various characters in his musical dramas. Amid much verbal wandering and repetition, one main fact is steadily adhered to—every hero is a type of eternal manhood, and every heroine is a type of eternal womanhood. Many of these characters would strike an ordinary observer as far from blameless beings, and in the nature of the legends themselves from which they are selected, their virtue and vice is of an exceedingly raw, hideous, and obtrusive kind.

In order to counteract these impressions the theory of types has been evolved. We are told that no better or more natural being than a perpetual sinner could be selected as a hero, because eternal manhood is for ever sinning. Perfection is entirely unattainable, nor must it be sought for; otherwise Wagner

would have selected saints for his heroes. But in these Siegfrieds, and Siegmunds, and Sieglindes, and Brünnhildes, and the rest, we may see our unfortunate erring selves, and may profit by the example.

If one, however, would be a finished Wagnerian, it is necessary that he proceed further than musical theories and peculiar views on morality. He must also add a strong dash of politics to his mental possessions. Wagner himself was exiled from Germany for his share in the Dresden revolutionary movement; and, strongly bitten with political animosities and theories himself, he has imported them into the creed which his disciples are expected to accept.

These political notions are chiefly the ordinary democratic opinions of modern Germany, together with a semi-socialistic dream of elevating the masses by education, and other means, to the point of understanding and appreciating the Wagnerian dramas. When that desired consummation arrives there will be no more need for further culture, for the dramas will teach men everything that is necessary to be known by means of the types of eternal womanhood and manhood.

Then, goodbye to religion: it will be no longer necessary. Churches will fall into decay through the length and breadth of Europe; and theatres, where nothing but musical dramas are to be performed, will take their place entirely. All rivalry in art will cease, for all musicians will be Wagnerians. Parties in politics and sects in religion will disappear for ever; for mankind, instructed by the eternal types and receiving a virtuous infusion from the glorious morality of the dramas, will be in harmony over the face of the globe. In such jargon as this did Wagner foretell his own millennium. The ravings of John of Leyden were

indeed nothing to it. And what makes the whole case the more extraordinary is that, for some time at least, there were many honest people who placed faith in these portentous dreams.\*

Wagner married Cosima von Bülow in 1870, and settled at Baireuth in 1872. There he carried out his plan of a theatre built exclusively for himself, and had all his larger works performed there. He died at Venice on the 13th of February, 1883.

\* A statement of the whole case for and against Wagner's theories will be found in an article by Mr. Rowbotham in *The Nineteenth Century* of October, 1888.

## SYNOPSIS OF LIFE, AND WORKS.

---

WILHELM RICHARD WAGNER was born at Leipsic, May 22nd, 1813; was educated at the Kreuz-Schule of Dresden, and matriculated at Leipsic University, 1830; studied music under Weinlig; became chorus-master at Wurzburg Theatre, 1833; music director at Magdeburg Theatre, 1834; married Fraülein Planer, 1836; became music director at Riga, 1838; went to Paris, 1839; Rienzi produced, 1842; he was conductor of the Royal Opera at Dresden, 1842—49; produced Tannhäuser, 1845; resided at Zurich, 1849; established himself in Munich, 1864; composed *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, 1868—1876; married Cosima von Bülow, 1870; settled at Baireuth, 1872; died at Venice, Feb. 13th, 1883, aged sixty-nine.

---

Operas: *Die Feen*, 1833 (MS.); *Das Liebesverbot*, 1836 (MS.); *Rienzi, der letzte der Tribunen*, 5 acts, Dresden, 1842 (London, 1879); *Der fliegende Holländer*, 3 acts, Dresden, 1843 (London, 1870); *Tannhäuser, und der Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg*, Dresden, 1845 (London, 1876); *Lohengrin*, Weimar, 1850 (London, 1875).

*Der Ring des Nibelungen*—Part 1, *Das Rheingold*, Munich, 1869; Part 2, *Die Walküre*, Munich, 1870; Part 3, *Siegfried*, Baireuth, 1876; Part 4, *Götterdämmerung*, Bayreuth, 1876. *Tristan und Isolde*, 3 acts, Munich, 1865 (London, 1882); *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, 3 acts, Munich, 1868; *Parsifal, eine Bühnenweihfestspiel*, 3 acts, Baireuth, 1882. *Das Liebesmahl der Apostel, eine Biblische scene*, Dresden, 1847. *Symphony in C* (1832); MS. overtures in D min., 1831; C, 1833; “*Polonia*,” in C, 1832; “*Columbus*,”

1835 ; Eine Faust Overture, 1855. Huldigungsmarsch, orch., 1864 ; Siegfried Idyll, orch., 1870 ; Kaisermarsch, orch., 1871 ; Grosser Fests-marsch (Philadelphia Exhibition), 1876. Sonatas, albumblatt, and other Pf. pieces. Songs, and arrangements for Pf.

Literary: A collected edition was issued at Leipzig, 1871-85, 10 vols., as "Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen." The separate publication of some of the principal is as follows:—Die Kunst und die Revolution, 1849 ; Das Kunstwerke der Zukunft, 1850 ; Kunst und Klima, 1850 ; Oper und Drama, 1852 ; Das Judenthum in der Musik, 1852 ; Ueber Staat und Religion, 1864 ; Ueber das Dirigiren [1870] ; Beethoven, 1870 (trans. by A. R. Parsons, Indianapolis, 1873 ; also, London, trans. by Dannreuther, 1880) ; Deutsch Kunst und Deutsch Politik, 1868 ; Uber Schauspieler und Sänger, 1882, etc.

THE END.



NEW AND CHEAP EDITION.

---

# MARY HOWITT.

An Autobiography.

Edited by her Daughter, MARGARET HOWITT.

With Portrait and Numerous Illustrations.

One Vol., Demy 8vo, 10s. 6d.

---

**Glasgow Herald.**—"The new edition is popular in price only. In all else—paper, print, and binding—it is worthy of a place in the best libraries."

**Athenæum.**—"A smaller work than this might have told all that is permanently interesting to the public about Mrs. Howitt and her amiable and talented husband—for it is really a memoir of both that we have here; but the work contains so much pleasant reminiscence and appropriate anecdote, that its redundances can readily be excused. . . . It was a hard-working and honourable literary life that the Howitts led during nearly half a century."

**Academy.**—"One of the most companionable books of our time. There is a nameless charm in holding converse with one who has lived in our own world, and who can yet tell us how her mother met Dr. Johnson and Miss Burney. The genial presence of the author makes the atmosphere of the book fresh and fragrant; and to learn to know her as we know her here is to enrich life with a new delight. These volumes are pleasant to look at and to hold, and are beautifully printed."

**Times.**—"We have greatly enjoyed the frank and simple narrative, and we have been interested in hearing much we never knew about two of our oldest and dearest literary friends. Howitt and his wife are inseparably associated with all that is enchanting in rural England."

**Standard.**—"It is simply one of the most charming pictures of still life that has appeared for a long time."

**Daily Telegraph.**—"In such simple graceful words as befit the introduction of her mother's life, Miss Howitt prefaces a worthy record of a sincere and lovable as well as literary and religious career. Altogether this autobiography contains some of the pleasantest and sincerest work we have had for many a long day."

**British Weekly.**—"It is a book to take away the fear of life, which is more common than many people imagine. Many who have no fear of death dread old age. They are tired of battle and burden; they are afraid that courage and endurance will not hold out. These two lived within sight of a hundred, and the calmest and most golden of their days seem to have come latest."

---

ISBISTER & CO., LIMITED, 15 & 16, Tavistock St., Covent Garden, W.C.

A A

*Two Vols., Demy 8vo, 32s.*

---

THE LIFE OF  
**RICHARD STEELE.**

BY G. A. AITKEN.

With Numerous Portraits.

---

**Athenæum.**—"Mr. Aitken's 'Life of Steele' is a remarkable instance of what may be accomplished by industry and perseverance. The work has cost its author many years of labour and research, and the time has certainly not been misspent. We are confident that all who are interested in the history of that epoch will be grateful to him for this valuable contribution to our knowledge of Steele, his contemporaries, and his times."

**Saturday Review.**—"Every chapter, every page even, is sown with the traces of patient investigation. It will remain that, in a plain and unaffected style, Mr. Aitken has written a biography of Richard Steele which is unsurpassed for its exhaustive collection of material and for its patient pertinacity of inquiry."

**Spectator.**—"The careful student will not find, we believe, anything wanting in this Life which it was possible for the most painstaking research to discover. It would almost seem that nothing remains to be done by any future writer in favour of this delightful essayist. To know all about Steele that can be known, the student must go to Mr. Aitken."

**Times.**—"They will prove an invaluable and inexhaustible treasure-house for all who are interested in the facts and materials in any way relating to Steele or his distinguished contemporaries."

**Daily Telegraph.**—"We can honestly recommend Mr. Aitken's biography. He has done his work most exhaustively, and the result is the production of this really important addition to the libraries of all lovers of English literature."

**World.**—"The harvest of many years' patient wide-ranging research. . . . Everything is here; all that Steele wrote about himself, all that his contemporaries wrote about him, all that posterity has said about him."

---

ISBISTER & CO., LIMITED, 15 & 16, Tavistock St., Covent Garden, W.C.







