SUCCESS IN MUSIC AND HOW IT IS WON

HENRY T. FINCK

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FINCK

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AND HOW IT IS WON

BY

HENRY T. FINCK

AUTHOR OF "WAGNER AND HIS WORKS," "SONGS AND SONG WRITERS," "CHOPIN," ETC.

WITH A CHAPTER ON TEMPO RUBATO

BY

IGNACE JAN PADEREWSKI

LONDON

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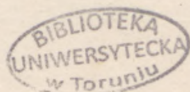
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DEDICATED TO

THE ARTISTS NAMED AND UNNAMED

WHO HELPED

TO MAKE THIS BOOK POSSIBLE

PRELUDE

WHEN I was a boy I had a flower garden in Oregon, where it seldom rains in summer. Every evening I watered the plants, yet they soon languished in spite of all my hard work. The garden was not a success—and why? Simply because there was no one to tell me that I did not go deep enough. The ground looked moist, but I had wetted the surface only; the water *did not reach the roots*, and the poor plants died of thirst.

It is because they do not reach the roots of their art that so many young musicians fail. They toil for years, covering much ground in exercising their fingers and vocal cords (usually "in indolent vacuity of thought"), but the vivifying moisture goes down only an inch or two, and after a brief season of bloom—or none at all—they disappear forever. Edward MacDowell once compared these débutants to the potted geraniums sold by the florists in spring, every year bringing new ones.

The situation is deplorable, not only on account of these discarded, disappointed young singers and players, but because good musicians are urgently needed everywhere. The demand for first-class opera singers, in particular, is very much greater than the supply. Fame and fortune await those who come up to the mark more surely than in almost any other occupation; yet of the thousands who try every year only a few succeed.

Why do these succeed where so many fail? The present volume is an attempt to answer this question. It is a sort of symposium in which many of the world's greatest singers, pianists, violinists, and teachers tell the secrets of their

success. Many of these artists I have had the privilege of knowing personally. From their conversations and letters, and from a thousand other sources, I have endeavored to construct a *Gradus ad Parnassum*, a path showing to all how they can reach the summit. The climbing they must do themselves.

Perhaps nothing will surprise, and at the same time encourage, the readers of these biographic sketches so much as the evidence they supply that there are many different avenues to success. There is a chance for everybody—for all, at any rate, who will use their brains and heed the advice given by the famous artists in these pages.

To some it may seem that Jenny Lind's career is dwelt on at disproportionate length; but it is a career which illustrates nearly every phase of artist life, and one of the main objects of this volume is to show to young women and men—and their parents—just what sort of adventures, joys, and sorrows they may expect in choosing such a life for themselves or their children.

It was, of course, impossible to provide sketches of all the successful musicians—that would have required several volumes. Some prominent artists are left out simply because I could find nothing unique or particularly interesting in their careers; and as I have placed special emphasis on the fact that every music lesson should be made interesting, it would have been inconsistent if I had not tried to make these chapters interesting too, all the more as they are not intended for students and performers alone, but also for parents, for opera-star worshippers, and for music-lovers in general; for which reason anecdotes and personal details have been interspersed liberally.

While this book is divided into sections and chapters treating separately of singers, pianists, violinists, and teachers, I most earnestly advise students to read all the chapters, whether they relate to their particular branch or

not. Vocalists can learn a great deal by reading about the art and the career of violinists or pianists, who in turn can learn much from them. Marcella Sembrich, for instance, owes much of her success *as a singer* to the fact that she is also an excellent violinist and pianist.

Special pains have been taken to make the Index helpful, but every reader who wishes to profit fully by the multitude of hints here collected would do well to follow a method I have found of great value: make marginal marks of those bits of advice which seem most useful to yourself, then jot these down briefly on a few sheets of paper and read them over again and again and again, recurring to the book for details.

Fears have been expressed that the mulitiplication of mechanical piano players and singing machines—one firm alone has done a $50,000,000 business in a single year—will injure musicians and music teachers. They need not worry. This "canned music," as Mr. Sousa has contemptuously called it, really stimulates the appetite for still better things. But it is evident that mere technic has been placed at a discount by these ingenious and brilliant automatic or semi-automatic instruments, and it follows that if the teachers, singers, and players wish to keep ahead of these machines, they must give most of their attention to the secrets of musical expression and temperament which this volume attempts to reveal.

Attention is called particularly to the epoch-making chapter, XXVIII, kindly written for this volume by Mr. Paderewski, on those slight modifications of pace which constitute the very essence and poetry of musical eloquence.

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PART I

MUSIC, MONEY, AND HAPPINESS

I

DOES MUSIC PAY?

Every year tens of thousands of young women and youths ask themselves the questions: "Shall I choose music as a profession? Will it enable me to make a living—to become rich, perhaps, and famous? Will it insure me as much happiness as I would find in some other career?"

At the ripe age of seventy-four, one of the most successful and esteemed of modern artists, Sir Charles Santley, wrote a book in which he made this confession: "It is a generally received idea that a singer's life is a merry one—little to do, storms of applause, topped up with bags of gold, and amusement without end. My experience does not confirm that idea in the least; my anticipation which pointed to merriment broke down in the realization. No gold nor amusement could repay the toil, worry, and disappointment of a singer's life as I know it."

Is this the truth in a nutshell, or is it simply the utterance of an artist soured by old age? Let us look at both sides of the question, the dark side first.

I once bought seventeen luscious Bartlett pears in San Francisco for five cents. On another occasion I read that hundreds of bushels of choice ripe peaches had been dumped into the ocean, to empty the boxes. There was an overproduction of fruit, and where there is overproduction the best is a drug in the market.

In the musical market there is a deplorable overproduction of both singers and players. The demand is for the best only, and even of the best the public easily gets a

surfeit. The others are likely to agree with the famous French prima donna, Désirée-Artôt, that "the artistic career is a paradise for those who are on top but an inferno for the mediocrities."

There is little if any exaggeration in this dismal picture drawn by the editor of the *Musical Leader and Concert-Goer:* "Recent instances in and around New York are appalling, where well-known artists have been paid $10 for a concert or recital appearance, and the singer who receives $100 or $150 for a performance is a *rara avis.* The orchestral organizations, the oratorio societies in New York and the outlying cities, make the claim that they can obtain all the artists needful because of the good advertising such appearances bring. And the larger the society or club or orchestral organization the smaller the amount paid, unless the artist happens to be of particular importance. The claim is made that the advertisement of singing with such and such a club more than repays for the artist's time and labor. Conditions in New York are absolutely outrageous. The 'free list' is in full blast—in fact, is a necessity for the obtaining of an audience—and in giving his recital an artist is bound to face considerable expenditure and no possibility of return."

Most of the recitals in New York—including many by prominent American and European players and singers—are, indeed, given with the full understanding that there is to be a deficit, but with the hope that the critical notices in the metropolitan journals will help the artists in the other cities. But unless a musician's success is sensational other cities will not hear of it, and the overworked metropolitan critics, moreover, do not usually overflow with helpful enthusiasm.

Many years ago Mr. W. S. B. Mathews wrote that Thalberg and Gottschalk could not have given their concerts in America without the assistance of a piano manufacturer

desirous of bringing his instruments before the public. This is true to the present day of all but a very few of the pianists.

Does it follow from all this that musicians should migrate to Europe and remain there? Not if they want money. Deplorable though the situation may be in America, it is better than in Europe. The one great ambition of every European musician, in fact, is to become sufficiently famous to receive a call to the "Dollarland." Even such great and sensationally successful artists as Jenny Lind and Rubinstein had to come to America, as will be seen in later chapters, to win the wealth which enabled them thenceforth to spend their days as they chose.

Germany is generally considered the world's musical head-quarters, but it is by no means the paradise of musicians. Charles Booth asserts in his book, *The Life and Labor of the People of London*, that the organ-grinders who perambulate the streets of that city earn from 80 cents to $5 a day. Germany gives less encouragement to that kind of musicians; her musical proletariat is the orchestral player. His average income is about that of the English 80-cent-a-day organ-grinder, while $5 a day is a goal to which he cannot aspire. The two leading men in the Royal Orchestra of Berlin get about $1,250 a year, but this is far above the usual salaries. The highest pay for any member of the opera orchestra in Vienna is 3,600 crowns ($720) a year, or less than $2 a day. The players in the orchestra of the Hamburg Stadttheater get only $350 a year, and in smaller cities, like Nuremberg, Würzburg, Rostock, although the musicians have to be sufficiently expert to play Wagner and Richard Strauss, the pay is from $20 to $25 a month. "The majority of German orchestral players," says Paul Busching, "belong to-day to the proletariat. Many an instrumental player is, so far as the amount and the certainty of his income are concerned, no

better off than a dock laborer on the Hamburg quays or a day laborer in the building trades." There are 50,000 of these players in Germany. As regards the independent musicians, a canvas made in Berlin showed that twenty-six per cent. of them do not earn $12.50 a month, and forty-five per cent. do not earn $15.

Equally dismal is the situation of the women and men who sing in the chorus of the German opera-houses. In sixty-four of these theatres the male members receive a monthly salary of from $18.75 to $45, while the women get from $18.75 to $37.50. Docking of salary is, moreover, a usual punishment.

These, to be sure, are the private soldiers in the musical army. The officers, surely, are better paid? Some of them, yes. There are a few eminent conductors, like Nikisch, Mottl, Weingartner, who earn up to $25,000 a year, by working like beavers, travelling from city to city; but the average German conductor in a provincial opera-house gets only $30 to $50 a month; yet the supply of men willing to work for such an income far exceeds the demand. When the city of Ratibor advertised for a conductor, there were 140 applicants for the place, and 50 of these were university graduates. Hermann Ritter, who mentions this case,* comes to this conclusion after a thorough study of the subject: "If parents ask me whether I would consider it advisable to let their son become a musician I answer: 'Do not let him, if you can prevent it; for the career of a musician has more of the dark than of the bright side of life.'" A shoemaker who knows his business will be better off, he adds.

Soloists, with very few exceptions, fare no better; indeed, they fare worse, for while the orchestral players and choris-

* *Ueber die materielle und sociale Lage des Orchester-Musikers.* Brochures on the same subject have also been written by Paul Marsop and Heinrich Waltz.

ters at least get a pittance, the givers of recitals usually get nothing—in fact, as a rule, a recital takes money out of their pockets. Among the clippings before me is one which reads: "Berlin is frequently afflicted with as many as 40, 50, or more concerts in one week. There are three concert bureaus in the city. One of these has on its books 490 musicians, including 103 pianists, 86 violinists, 85 sopranos, 53 tenors, etc. Eighteen employees are needed to take care of all these 'artists.'"

This was written some years ago. To-day the situation is worse. During the season 1907–8 Berlin had some 1,200 concerts. Dr. Leopold Schmidt, the critic of the *Tageblatt*, on discovering that he had 54 concerts to cover in one week in October, indulged in these pessimistic reflections: "We have reached a crisis. The concerts are eating one another up, like the two lions of the well-known tale. They take away one another's public, profits, and every chance to secure attention and success, and finally not even the tail remains, in the form of critical notices."

The same journal tells how the audiences at recitals are apt to be made up. Miss X, who plays or sings, sends out about 200 tickets, some of them to prominent persons. One of these is the wife of Professor N. She kindly accepts the tickets, but has no intention of attending the concert, so she gives them to her dressmaker, who in turn bestows them on her assistants, who perhaps go to the concert. In one case it was found that of the 200 free tickets only 47 were used.

In other German cities there are fewer recitals, but also fewer still who are interested in them. The well-known German composer, Hans Pfitzner, gave a recital of his own songs in Cologne for which not a single ticket was sold. Commenting on this occurrence, a correspondent wrote to the *Frankfurter Zeitung:* "That Cologne has no public for concerts has long been known. No less a man than Anton

Rubinstein once gave a concert here to empty seats. Last Wednesday we had a concert by the well-known Flonzaley Quartet, which was well attended; but the number of those who paid for their tickets was three."

Next to Germany, Italy is considered the most musical country in Europe. Are the prospects for musicians better there? Quite the contrary. Piano, violin, and song recitals are practically eliminated, the Italian interest in music being monopolized by the opera. Nor does the opera flourish there as it used to. The emoluments paid to singers are so low that all the best ones are enticed away by the higher prices paid in New York and South American cities. The situation is summed up in the words of Leoncavallo when he was asked if his *Roland* was to be given in his native country: "Three good singers are required for this opera, and with the voices we have at present here in Italy I would not dare to present myself to the fastidious opera-goers of Milan or Turin." Yet the American or English singers who fancy that this dearth might prove their opportunity will be sadly disappointed, for reasons that will be touched upon in the chapter on studying abroad.

Paris used to be a good place for recitals, but for reasons unexplained even the greatest soloists now fail to entice the French to the concert halls. Prejudice against soloists is sometimes manifested by hisses even at the well-patronized orchestral Sunday concerts. Apart from these, the Parisian appetite is appeased chiefly by opera; and the operatic artists are far from being overpaid, according to American or English ideas. The highest salary at the Opéra goes to the tenor Alvarez, who gets $1,600 a month; the leading soprano, Mme. Bréval, has $1,500 a month, while the salaries of the other singers range from $17,000 a year down to $300. At the Opéra Comique the salaries are much lower than at the Grand Opéra. Chorus singers in the Parisian opera-houses get $300 a year.

"Are organists lunatics?" is the suggestive heading of an article in the *London Truth*, in which the case is recorded of a church position worth £50 a year for which there were 140 applicants. One of the favorite topics of Sir John Stainer was the poverty of the British organist, due inevitably to overproduction. The highest cathedral salary is £300 a year, and there are some at £200; "but these are the plums of the profession." In the smaller churches from £20 to £40 a year is paid the organist. "An organ-grinder probably earns as much. It really seems strange that parents should waste their money and the time of their sons on a profession so hopelessly overstocked." Orchestral players are somewhat better off, getting £3 to £6 per week. As regards recitals by singers and players, the situation is summed up in one sentence: "The whole business is frightfully overdone." The *Telegraph* gave figures indicating that during 1907 there were 1,500 concerts in London—an average of about 29 every week; which indicates that the situation is even worse than in Berlin. The receipts equal the expenditures in very few cases. Deadheads, too, are becoming harder to get, and it may soon be necessary to provide also car fares and ice-cream or lemonade to make them accept free tickets.

Speaking of British composers, Alfred Kalisch wrote in the *London World:* "It would not be wide of the mark to say that every one of the musicians whose works have been heard or are going to be heard (with the exception of Sir Edward Elgar) is out of pocket by the performance. There is an eminent composer who is reported to have declared that as soon as he has made a clear profit of £50 by his works he will cease composing. As he is still on the active list (luckily) we may assume that his modest ambition has not yet been achieved—and he is one of the most eminent."

Let us now look at the other side of the shield.

Undoubtedly the vast majority of musicians have a hard time of it in this world. They are overworked and underpaid. But is not the same true of every other profession, every other employment? The average earnings of music teachers in America are fully equal to the earnings of other teachers, in the public schools. It has been ascertained that in a list including 467 American cities there were 53,554 positions with annual salaries of $600 and over, besides 14,193 of $500 to $600; and Commissioner W. T. Harris has remarked that "no teacher has a right to complain, on a socialistic basis, if he is receiving a salary for his annual services of $600."

There are in the United States perhaps a hundred physicians who earn $50,000 or more a year. Concerning the rest, a writer in *Harper's Weekly* estimates that "the average earnings of qualified and certified doctors of medicine in the United States do not exceed $600 a year. Nor are the United States exceptional," he adds, "as regards the inadequate pay of the medical profession. Undoubtedly in a great capital like Berlin, doctors earn more on an average than they do in the minor cities of Germany, to say nothing of the small towns and rural districts. Yet statistics show that of the 2,060 medical practitioners in Berlin, 54 earn from $225 to $260 a year, 261 from $260 to $525, and 206 from $525 to $750. Of practitioners earning from $750 to $1,250 there are 286; and, in the case of 924 practitioners, the income exceeds that last-mentioned sum. In Italy the average income of the poor-law medical officer, who is not allowed to engage in medical practice, is $500 a year. In Belgium the earnings of country doctors range from $400 to $2,000 a year."

From the foregoing it will be seen that the average physician in prosperous America earns only $300 more in a year than an operatic chorus singer does in five months. "Why," says the writer just quoted, "should a young man

or a young woman want to be a doctor in these days, unless, indeed, he or she is impelled by an irresistible attraction to the calling?" Why, indeed? Why should a young man or a young woman want to engage in any profession whatsoever in these days? All are equally overstocked; in all, those who earn over $600 a year are the lucky exceptions.*

Fortunately there is such a thing as Hope implanted in most mortals. Hope keeps the world on the move. There is always room on top; of that there is no doubt; and we all hope to arrive at the top. Those who have reached it are prosperous. There are some music teachers in New York and elsewhere who earn from $20,000 to $30,000 a year; there are many who earn from $3,000 to $5,000. In London, Paris, Berlin, and smaller cities there are wealthy music teachers.

Paderewski's receipts on his first American tour were $95,000; on his second, $160,000; on his third, $248,000; and similar sums came to him during his subsequent tours. This, to be sure, represents the climax of pianistic achievement; but Liszt, Rubinstein, Thalberg, and other players of the past earned fortunes, while among those of the present may be further named Josef Hofmann, who has in Russia and Mexico the same $5,000 houses that Paderewski has in the cities of the United States and England. Kubelik made half a million dollars with his violin in a few years.

Famous singers have at all times earned fabulous sums. Pages of names and figures might be cited in support of this assertion, but a few instances may suffice here; further details will be supplied in the section devoted to the careers

* The fact that trained nurses get $25 a week for their service and $35 for contagious cases tempts many young women. But in the words of the *New York Sun:* "The usual rule is that the nurse lasts only about a dozen years, that she has saved no money to speak of [not being employed all the time], that she has had a career of great hardship, and that she must either marry or seek some other calling."

of successful singers. Catalani, a century ago, found it easy to make $80,000 a year. Malibran got 80,000 francs for a short season in Naples; in London she had £125 per night; in 1833 she wrote to her manager that she would accept his offer to sing *Sonnambula* in English once, but demanded £250, "payable on the morning of the representation." Pasta got 80,000 rubles (equal in our money to-day to $60,000) for eight performances in St. Petersburg. In the same city Rubini took in 54,000 francs at a single concert. Tamagno once got 640,000 francs (gold) for forty appearances in South America; he left his daughter a fortune; yet this tenor's earnings were a trifle compared with those of Caruso, who has a sure $150,000 a year. Italian tenors of less repute—Zenatello, Bonci, Bassi Masini—have costly villas in picturesque localities in their country. The highest-paid tenor of our time was Jean de Reszke, who often got $3,000 for an evening's work. Of all prima donnas Patti got the highest emoluments; these amounted, in America, to $5,000 a performance—always in advance—and sometimes a percentage in addition. For single concerts, however, Jenny Lind surpassed her. Many of the German and French prima donnas, tenors, baritones, and basses might be mentioned among the wealthy individuals of their country. English and American readers need not be reminded of the vast sums earned by such favorites of the day as Sembrich, Melba, Nordica, Eames, Schumann-Heink, Gadski, Lilli Lehmann, Geraldine Farrar, Calvé, Tetrazzini, Ternina, who earn between $50,000 and $100,000 or more a year, getting $1,000 to $2,000 for each operatic performance and similar sums for singing at the musicales of millionaires. Sembrich probably averages $5,000 at her song recitals in New York.

Caruso has made as much as $200,000 in one year, $55,000 of which was for singing into one of the talking machines.

So great, indeed, are the emoluments of many musical artists to-day that we often hear an outcry that they are overpaid. Maybe they are overpaid, but what of it if it pays to overpay them? Many authors, one might say, have been overpaid—among them Gladstone, Tennyson, Kipling, the author of *Ben-Hur*, and most writers of "best sellers"—yet the publishers found that it was profitable to overpay them.*

While some artists received high prices a century or more ago, the average pay of singers and players has gone up steadily. For instance, at the Imperial Opera in Vienna, in our day, the tenor Winkelmann has received $10,000 a year, the baritone Reichmann $8,800, and Frl. Renaud $7,200; while Frau Schläger advanced in fifteen years from the $10 a month she got as a chorus girl to $8,000 a year. Half a century earlier (as Julius Stern attests in his *Fünfzig Jahre Hoftheater*) the leading singers at the same institution received only about $2,400 a year; the famous conductor Esser had $80 a month! The eminent violinist Henri Vieuxtemps offered his services as concert-master and soloist for $1,200 a year, but his offer was declined for financial reasons. The members of the orchestra at that time got only $12.40 a month.

In the financial position of composers there has also been a great improvement. Every lover of music is familiar with the sad tale of the poverty, the neglect, the underpaying of Bach, Mozart, Schubert, Weber, and other great masters. Once Mozart's publisher put a few ducats in his hands and said: "Compose in a simpler and more popular style or I will print no more of your compositions, nor will I give you

* A newspaper writer asked a few years ago whether, in view of the fact that the President of the United States is paid $137 a day, Patti was worth $5,000 a night, Jean de Reszke up to $3,000, and Paderewski from $2,000 to $7,000. To which one might reply: Why not, if they can get it? If the President of the United States engages in a pursuit which yields such shabby results, he has no one to blame but himself.

another kreutzer." To which Mozart replied sadly: "Then, my good sir, I must needs resign myself to die of starvation."

Schubert's life might have been saved had he had a few florins to leave Vienna—as he was eager to do—on the fatal summer when he got typhoid fever. Weber received only eighty Friedrichsdor for his *Freischütz*, one of the most successful operas ever written. Chopin was paid so little for his piano pieces—which have since enriched scores of publishers—that he had to teach to make his living. He died in 1849.

Contrast with the foregoing some men of our time. Brahms, who died in 1897, left his heirs about $100,000. Many other modern writers of serious music have made fortunes. Among them we may name Verdi (who made millions by his operas and $100,000 by his *Requiem*), Ambroise Thomas (whose *Mignon* brought him and his librettist 800,000 francs at a thousand performances), Massenet, Gounod, Leoncavallo, Puccini. Mascagni has earned at least $100,000 with his *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and Leoncavallo probably nearly as much with his *I Pagliacci*. Humperdinck's royalties on *Hänsel and Gretel* amounted to $50,000 in a single year. Richard Strauss's income from his operas, songs, and orchestral works was estimated at a quarter of a million marks in 1908, and he expected to double that sum in a few years.

In the realm of light opera or operetta, Offenbach, Lecocq, Audran, Johann Strauss, Suppé, Milloecker, Victor Herbert, Lehar, and many others have made fortunes. Sir Arthur Sullivan is said to have made £30,000 a year from his operettas alone. Regarding Victor Herbert, "common report has it that his income is as much as $10,000 a week for extended periods," says Mr. Lewis M. Isaacs.*

* See his "The Musician as a Money-Maker," in *The Bookman* for January, 1909.

Henry W. Savage claims that *The Merry Widow* is the most stupendous financial and popular success the theatrical world has ever known. First produced in Vienna, on December 30, 1905, it had up to the first of April, 1909, 1,503 performances in America, 1,365 in England; total number of performances everywhere, about 18,000. It had been sung in 422 German, 135 English, and 154 American cities. It had been translated into thirteen languages and produced in thirty different countries, including Turkey, Persia, Japan, China, Hindoostan, and Siberia. New York had paid a million dollars to hear it in one year; Chicago paid $364,000 in twenty-six weeks; Boston, $250,000 in eighteen weeks. More than 3,000,000 copies of *The Merry Widow* waltz had been sold in Europe; and in America the music publishers sold $400,000 worth of *Merry Widow* scores and selections in twenty-three months. Up to April 1, 1909, three American companies played to gross receipts of $2,694,000. Does music pay?

Probably the most profitable single song ever published was *Listen to the Mocking-Bird*, on which the publishers are said to have realized $3,000,000. The composer of it, Septimus Winner, sold it for $35. A royalty of ten per cent. would have yielded him $300,000. Arditi got only $250 for his famous *Kiss Waltz*, which brought the publisher who bought it a fortune of $80,000. To-day composers are usually wise enough to ask a royalty instead of a lump sum. Thus, at five cents a copy, Eugene Cowles got $15,750 for the 315,000 sold copies of his *Forgotten*. Of Chaminade's song, *The Silver Ring*, over 200,000 copies have been sold. Jaques Blumenthal, the song writer, left a fortune of $300,000.

This list of composers, players, and singers who have earned fortunes might be increased indefinitely. Sarasate's violin playing brought him two million francs.

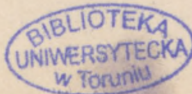
John Philip Sousa cannot touch anything without turning it to gold. Kubelik lives in a castle and has the income of a prince. Everybody has a chance to get rich—except the musical critic. And every musician is glad he hasn't!

II

ARE GREAT ARTISTS HAPPY?

When I was a freshman at Harvard, fresh from the Oregon wilderness and therefore easily amused, I used to play the violoncello occasionally at one of the Boston theatres as substitute for my esteemed teacher, Wulf Fries, when he happened to be playing sonatas with Rubinstein (1872) or was otherwise engaged. Lydia Thompson was, in those verdant days, one of my favorites, and it was her company that one evening produced at that theatre a play, the hero of which is always unhappy no matter what happens. Even when he has at last won his sweetheart and has his arm around her waist, he turns toward the audience and exclaims, in lugubrious tones: "And *yet* I am not happy."

Often have I thought of that "and *yet* I am not happy" in reading about or talking with famous artists of the musical persuasion. In 1876 I attended the first Bayreuth Festival. Wagner was anything but happy on that occasion. It is true, the grand project which had busied his mind more than twenty years had at last been realized. He had his own opera-house, just where he wanted it; he had his devoted band of players and singers, selected by himself; and among the spectators were an emperor, a king, and many notabilities in the realms of art and literature, while the whole musical world had its eyes on him. But in reality few of the singers were quite equal to their tasks, and he had not had enough money to make the stage settings satisfactory, the consequence being that he suf-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fered tortures. A mishap to the scenery during the performance of *Rheingold* distressed him so that he left the theatre and went home.

To Liszt he once wrote: "None of the past years has gone by without having at least once driven me to the verge of suicide." In another letter he said: "Oh that I might not arise from my bed to-morrow, awake no more to this loathsome life." And Liszt replied: "Your letters are sad —and your life sadder still. Your greatness constitutes also your misery—the two are united inseparably and must forever harass and torture you."

When I gathered the material for my biography of Wagner, I found so much that bore on his unhappiness that I devoted a special chapter of ten pages to it, under the heading of "A Modern Prometheus." Similar chapters might be written about other great masters. Few of them obtained what is generally considered essential to an artist's happiness—the recognition of their genius by their contemporaries.

Among the few singers at Bayreuth who approximated Wagner's ideal was Materna. Admired and applauded by all lovers of dramatic song, her fame was proclaimed on two continents. I had met her abroad, and when Theodore Thomas engaged her, with Winkelmann and Scaria, for a Wagner festival in New York, I went down the harbor and boarded the steamer to get her impressions of America before she had landed, in accordance with our charming custom. While we were conversing, the Brooklyn Bridge hove into sight. When I told her, among other things, that that bridge had cost $14,000,000, she exclaimed, "Fifty-six million marks! If I had that much money I should never sing again."

I was surprised at this speech, for I had fancied that to be the acknowledged queen of Wagnerian song was cause enough for superlative happiness—a happiness which must

find its supreme satisfaction in the exercise of her gift of song. Noticing the expression of surprise in my face, she added, with a smile: "At any rate, I should sing only once in a while, in some favorite rôle."

One of the finest operatic voices of the nineteenth century was that of Emil Fischer. His song seemed as spontaneous as a bird's, and to hear him sing the genial part of Hans Sachs, for instance, was to get the impression that he was having as good a time as his audience. And yet he was not happy. He told me one day that he never really enjoyed singing, even when he most seemed to.

One of Emma Calvé's favorite topics of conversation is to warn young girls not to take to the stage for fame or a living. She assures them that their dreams are a mere illusion, and that they will not find true happiness on the stage—not such happiness as awaits them if they will get married, darn stockings, and bring up children. I have heard Lillian Nordica talking in a similar strain; but she has now, she says, stopped giving advice on the subject, as it is useless.

Every pianist in the universe envies Paderewski his unprecedented popularity and success. No other pianist, not even Liszt or Rubinstein, ever could earn a quarter of a million dollars in five months, as he has done. But is Paderewski happy while he is earning these $250,000? He envies every bootblack or loafing policeman. To travel 20,000 miles in a few months; to sleep—or rather not to sleep—every night in a Pullman car or a wretched hotel, always near a noisy railway station; to repeat the same pieces over and over again; to feel compelled to play, whether he wants to or not, and when he is almost dead from exhaustion; to know that savage critics and envious rivals are always watching intently to discover any slight flaw in his performance and put it under a microscope; to feel that *noblesse oblige*—that he must always try to be at his

best—these things are not calculated to make a pianist happy.

Rubinstein found the American tour so irksome that no sum could ever tempt him to repeat it. With the exception of Liszt, no pianist had ever been so admired, flattered, rewarded, extolled. And yet he was not happy. In the last years of his life he was as sour as a crab-apple. To praise him as a pianist was to annoy rather than to please him. He knew he was more than a pianist—a great composer; and to see his pet aversion, Richard Wagner, become more and more popular, while he himself was neglected, made him the unhappiest of mortals.

When Liszt was asked to write his life he replied: "It was enough to live it."

Tchaikovsky once wrote to a friend: "Regretting the past, trusting the future, and dissatisfied with the present—such is my life."

Shall we then conclude that great composers, players, and singers are necessarily unhappy?

It seems difficult to avoid this conclusion. Arthur Hervey has expressed the opinion that music is probably the most disheartening of the arts, partly because of its evanescence. It would be easy to pile up facts in support of that assertion. A composer who has something new to say is almost sure to be misunderstood at first and to have a hard struggle before he can overcome the indifference of the public and the hostility of the professionals. Then, if he is lucky—and not many are lucky—he has a few years, or possibly a few decades, of popularity, which shortly is followed by indifference, neglect, oblivion. Most operas live about a week. Even the successful ones average only a few decades. Of the concert pieces written, probably one or two in a hundred are played more than once.

It would be hard to find anything more disheartening than a glance at the index of Riemann's history of music in

the nineteenth century. It contains 39 columns of names, about 2,300 altogether, mostly of composers. Of these 2,300 names how many are we likely to see during the coming season in the repertory of our opera-houses or on our concert programmes? Not fifty. What has become of the other 2,250? Alack and alas! Time has swallowed them in its abysmal maw.

This is only one aspect of the question. If even the composers, who fondly imagine they are writing for all time, are so ephemeral, what shall we say about singers and players, who are seldom at their best and popular more than twenty or thirty years, and whose art of necessity vanishes with them? And what about the critics, and the teachers, and all the others who devote their lives to music? Are they not doomed to be promptly forgotten?

Speaking of singers who outlived their fame, Mr. Joseph Bennett says: "To be unknown among favorites of a later day, to be forgotten by the public who once worshipped, is an experience sharper than any serpent's tooth. I do not know that Clara Novello ever writhed with the keenness of it, but I have seen tears of pain in the eyes of others, and hers may not have been far away."

Is music a disheartening art?

No more than any other art or profession. Everything just said about music and musicians can be repeated about literature. Do not the magazine editors tell us that they can accept only one or two of every hundred manuscripts offered to them, and do not the publishers say that books—even successful ones—seldom live more than one year, most of them, in fact, being in vogue not much longer than each successive issue of a magazine? What becomes of all the rejected manuscripts and books? How many shattered hopes do they represent? Is it not disheartening?

And think of the journalists—tens of thousands of them, in America and in Europe! Their work, from its very

nature, is ephemeral. Indeed, the best journalist is he whose articles are so peculiarly timely at the moment they are printed that they fade a few days later, like cut flowers.

In being dissatisfied with their lot and often unhappy, artists do not differ from other mortals. The doctor is apt to think he would have been happier as a lawyer, and *vice versa*—a truth already commented on by the old Roman Horace. When I first became a musical critic I thought I was in paradise. Going to concerts and operas had always been my favorite amusement, and now I was to be *paid* for hearing operas and concerts, and have an extra ticket besides for some charming companion! What could be more delightful? That was twenty-eight years ago. To-day most concerts and operas are such awful bores to me that I find it hard to praise anything, and only genius arouses my interest. I would gladly give my $150 worth of free tickets a week for a chance to live and work on a California ranch. Probably after a few years on the ranch I should wish I had my tickets back!

Dryden has shown in eight eloquent lines that in their attitude toward happiness musicians do not differ from other mortals:

> When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat,
> Yet, fool'd with hope, men favor the deceit;
> Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay,
> To-morrow's falser than the former day;
> Lies worse, and while it says we shall be blest
> With some new joys, cuts off what we possest.
> Strange cozenage! none would live past years again,
> Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain.

Artists are, to be sure, an irritable tribe. More keenly than others they feel the gibes and wounds of life. But by way of compensation, they are thrilled by joys beyond the ken of ordinary mortals. Does not the composer enjoy the voluptuous thrill of creating, and is it not a pleasure for

him—and for his interpreters—to think that thousands will be exalted and refreshed by the products of his inspiration? Failures abound in all activities, and it is unfair to lay them up against music in particular.

As for the evanescence of even genius, what of it? There are new flowers every spring, new autumn leaves of brilliant hues every September. We are too vain, too much concerned with our individualities. As long as we have the masterworks, what matters it who wrote them?

If Dryden was right in saying that:

> Pains of love be sweeter far
> Than all other pleasures are,

the same is true of the pains of artistic endeavor, creative or interpretative. As Schopenhauer has remarked: "If we look up to a great man of the past, we do not think: 'How happy he is to be still admired by all of us!' but: 'How happy he must have been in the immediate enjoyment of a genius, remains of which delight centuries of mortals!' Not in fame, but in the faculty wherewith we win it, lies the true value, and in the begetting of immortal offspring the true enjoyment."

The following short sketches of singers and players will bring before the reader's mind many scenes of happiness resulting from the artistic activity and many triumphs such as few mortals enjoy.

Caruso once said: "When you hear that an artist intends to retire, don't you believe it, for as long as he keeps his voice he will sing. You may depend upon that."

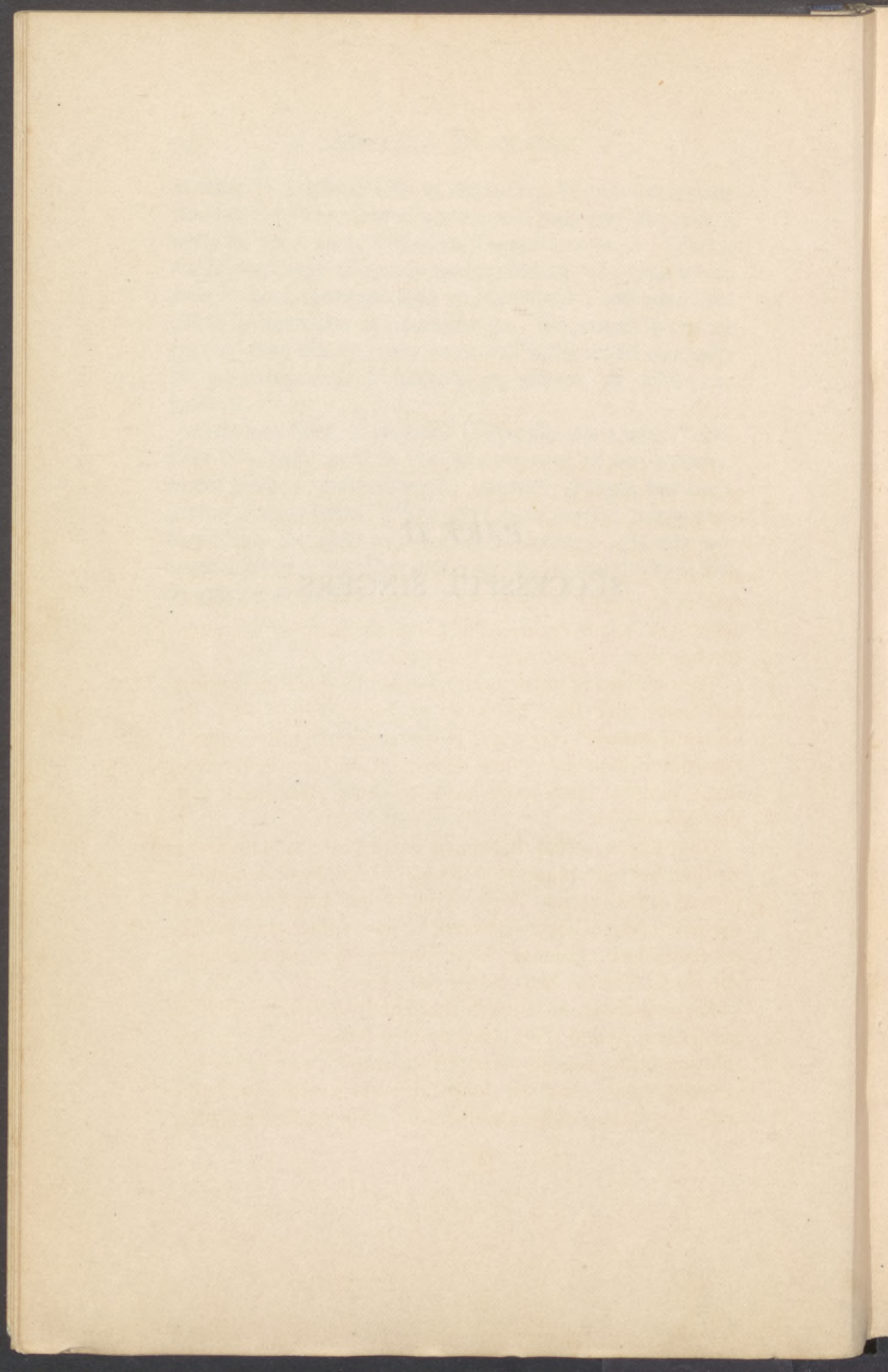
Regard Schubert as a model. No one ever had more reason than he to be disheartened. Nobody seemed to want his songs, yet he continued writing them till there were nearly six hundred. Hiller asked him one day: "Do you write much?" and Schubert replied: "I compose every morning, and when one piece is done I begin

another." Lachner tells us regarding the same composer that when he had written a piece or a song and had tried it over, he put it away and often forgot all about it. This is the highest type of genius and manhood—the type which does its best, spontaneously and inevitably, and continues doing it regardless of consequences. In proportion as we approximate this type are we useful in the world of music, be we composers, or players, or singers, or critics, or teachers.

President Eliot, of Harvard University, once said: "Delight in artistic work is the greatest need of our country. Great music is great thought; no other thought has such perfect transmission. Who gets such perfect interpretation of his thoughts as the great composer? On this account I know of no other profession in the world which has so great a reward."

PART II

SUCCESSFUL SINGERS



III

TWO SWEDISH NIGHTINGALES

Jenny Lind

Jenny Lind was fond of sewing, and we have the testimony of her maid regarding the quality of her work. "Madame's stitches," she said, "never come out."

There have been plenty of girls with voices as beautiful as Jenny Lind's. Why did they fail to duplicate her success as a singer? Chiefly because they had not the character, the perseverance, the conscientiousness to make stitches that would "never come out."

To a student of music nothing could be more interesting and instructive than the story of Jenny Lind's life. It illustrates nearly every phase in the career of a public singer regarding which the student desires information, and offers many hints of inestimable value to those preparing for a professional life.

It is to be regretted that she never carried out her plan of writing her autobiography, which would have doubtless proved a fascinating book. One of her English friends, the wife of the Bishop of Norwich, once wrote, after giving an enthusiastic account of her singing, that, nevertheless, she would "rather hear Jenny talk than sing."

Fortunately there is much that is of biographic value in her letters; and in 1887, a few months before her death, she told her oldest son how her gift for music came to be discovered. As a child she sang with every step she took and with every jump of her childish feet. She had a cat with a

blue ribbon round its neck, and to this pet she often sang seated in a window looking out on a much-frequented street in Stockholm. One day the maid of a well-known dancer at the Royal Opera passed, and when she got home she told her mistress that she had never heard any one sing so beautifully as this girl sang to her cat. The dancer, whose name was Lundberg, sent for the child, and, after hearing her, strongly advised her mother to have her trained for the stage. The mother had a prejudice against the stage; but she was willing to have Jenny taught singing, and Miss Lundberg sent her with a letter of introduction to the singing-master of the Royal Opera, named Croelius, for whom she sang a selection from an opera by Winter. Croelius was moved to tears and promptly took her to Count Puke, the Director of the Opera. The Count at first refused to hear her because she was so young (only nine), and perhaps also because (as she herself once wrote to the editor of the *Biografiskt Lexicon*) she was at the time "a small, ugly, broad-nosed, shy, *gauche*, altogether undergrown girl"; but when Croelius said: "Well, if the Count will not hear her, then I will teach her gratuitously, and she will one day astonish you," the director allowed her to sing for him, and he, too, was moved to tears.

The result was that Jenny was accepted at once as a free pupil, to be taught singing and given a general education at the expense of the Swedish government. The mother gave her consent reluctantly, under the pressure of poverty. Jenny's father having contributed little toward her support, she had been keeping a day and boarding school for girls. Thus it came about that the directors of the theatre found a way of paying for Jenny's education as well as her board and lodging while leaving her in her mother's care. It was understood that, in years to come, the young "actress-pupil" was to "make restitution for the care and expense bestowed on her education."

For ten years the Royal Theatre at Stockholm remained the nursery of Jenny Lind's talent. According to the terms of the contract, she was to receive, until old enough to get a fixed salary, "free tuition in singing, elocution, dancing, and such other branches as belong to the education of a cultivated woman and are requisite for the theatrical profession." These "other branches," for which her mother was made responsible, were "piano, religion, French, history, geography, writing, arithmetic, and drawing."

Later in life Jenny Lind realized vividly how much the value of her musical talent had been enhanced by her early theatrical and general education. She especially "valued her trained skill in expressive and beautiful motion, gained in the dancing school at the Theatre Royal. She moved exquisitely. Her perfect walk, her dignity of pose, her striking uprightness of attitude were characteristic of her to the very last; and no one can fail to recall how she stood before and while she sang. Her grace, her lightness of movement were all the more noticeable from the rather angular thinness of her natural figure; and there can be no doubt that they threw into her acting a charm which was positively entrancing. She knew the value and necessity of all this completeness of training; she felt its lack in those who had entered on the operatic stage by accident, as it were, taking it up only when fully grown simply on account of possessing a beautiful voice. She missed in them the full finish of the perfected art; no beauty in the singing could quite atone for the ignorance of dramatic methods, and of all that constitutes the peculiar environment of the stage."*

It was Jenny Lind's good fortune that she also got much practical training on the stage as an actress at an age when

* *Memoir of Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt.* By Henry Scott Holland and W. S. Rockstro. London: John Murray. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1891. Vol. I, pp. 28–29.

her voice was not yet ripe for operatic work. She was only ten years old when she made her appearance on the boards. A year and a half later a critic wrote: "She shows in her acting a quick perception, a fire and feeling, far beyond her years, which seem to denote an uncommon disposition for the theatre." In 1834, her fourteenth year of age, she appeared on the stage 22 times; in 1835, 26 times; in 1836, 18 times. It was in this year that she made her first attempt in an operatic rôle—Georgette, in Lindblad's *Frondörerne*. In 1837 she obtained a fixed salary and appeared no fewer than 92 times, in twelve new characters. In 1838 her performances were still, for the most part, in plays, without singing; but she sang the part of Agatha, in Weber's *Freischütz*, nine times, and in April, 1839, she abandoned plays altogether and thenceforth acted in operas only.

It would have been wiser if, in these critical years of a girl's bodily development, she had made less use of her voice, both for singing and acting. But the temptation on the part of the directors to make the most of her gifts at all risks was great, and Jenny came near falling a victim to the deadly peril to which so many aspirants to operatic honors succumb. So great was her popularity that, when only twenty years old, she was appointed court singer as well as a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music. The directors of the Opera eagerly offered her the highest sum at their disposal—$750 a year, for a three years' contract—and had she accepted the world would have never heard of Jenny Lind, for the overwork to which she was sure to be subjected would have damaged her voice beyond the possibility of repair.

At this crisis her common sense and artistic instincts came to the rescue. She declined the offer of the directors —or rather asked permission to postpone its acceptance a year—on the ground that her gifts were "only half devel-

oped"; and, in her own words: "In order to attain the artistic perfection open to me, I have thought it a duty to do what I can, and not to draw back before any sacrifice, either of youth, health, comfort, or labor, not to speak of the modest sum I have managed to save, in the hope of reaching what may, perhaps, prove an unattainable aim. In consequence I have decided on a journey to, and a sojourn at, some place abroad, which, through furnishing the finest models in art, would prove to me of the greatest profit."

Her plan was to go to Paris and there take lessons of Manuel Garcia, the greatest singing teacher of the nineteenth century. One foolish thing she did at this moment: she gave a series of concerts in provincial towns, thus still further exhausting her tired vocal organs; but she needed the money this brought her for a year in Paris, and she did not know how near she was to the brink of the precipice.

She found that out as soon as she arrived in the French metropolis and called on the famous Spanish master with the request that he take her as a pupil. At his bidding she sang *Perche non ho*, from *Lucia*, broke down in the attempt, and he pronounced the crushing verdict: "It would be useless to teach you, miss; you have no voice left."

With tears of disappointment in her eyes she implored his advice. Could he not bring back her voice? He knew that such cases are apt to be hopeless; but he felt sorry for this poor girl, hurled from her Swedish triumphs into the abyss of despair, so he agreed to hear her again in six weeks if she promised to speak during that period as little as possible, and not to sing a single note. This she did, spending her time studying French and Italian; and when she returned to him they were both delighted to find that the rest-cure had done some good. He agreed to give her two lessons a week, and made it clear to her that it was not overwork so much as a faulty use of the voice that had damaged her. Following his instructions, she was soon able to prac-

tise her exercises hours every day without undue effort or fatigue.

Her own account of the Garcia lessons, given in letters to friends, is instructive. To cite a few sentences:

"I have to begin again, from the beginning; to sing scales, up and down, slowly, and with great care; then to practise the shake—awfully slowly; and, to try to get rid of the hoarseness, if possible. Moreover, he is very particular about the breathing. I trust I have made a happy choice. Anyhow, he is the best master; and, expensive enough—twenty francs for an hour."

This was written after she had taken five lessons. In a later letter she said: "I am well satisfied with my singing-master. With regard to my weak points, especially, he is excellent. I think it very fortunate for me that there exists a Garcia." And again: "My singing is getting on quite satisfactorily, now. I rejoice heartily in my voice; it is clear and sonorous, with more firmness, and much greater agility."

These lessons continued ten months, and when they terminated, in June, 1842, the Swedish pupil had gained full control of her vocal organs. Ten months may seem a very short time, but the pupil was Jenny Lind and the teacher was Manuel Garcia. He recognized her weak points at once and was able to tell her exactly what to do to mend them; while she had that infinite capacity for taking pains which has been incorrectly given as a definition of genius, but which is certainly the main secret of success in singing as in everything else.

Garcia once said to the famous Parisian teacher, Mme. Marchesi, concerning Jenny Lind: "I do not remember ever having had a more attentive, intelligent pupil. Never had I to explain anything twice, but her famous shake cost her no end of trouble, and she shed many tears over the first air from *Lucia*."

In the letter to the editor of the Swedish biographic dictionary already referred to, Jenny Lind says: "As to the greater part of what I can do in my art, I have myself acquired it by incredible work, and in spite of astonishing difficulties; it is from Garcia alone that I learned some few important things. To such a degree had God written within me what I had to study. My ideal was (and is) so high, that no mortal was to be found who in the least degree could satisfy my demands; therefore I sing after no one's 'méthode'—only after that of the birds (as far as I am able); for their Teacher was the only one who responded to my requirements for truth, clearness, and expression."

In these words she indicates modestly but clearly the three factors that had helped her to success: hard work, a good teacher, and the talent God had given her. Without this talent the hardest work and the best of teachers could not have helped her to the eminence she attained; but, on the other hand, her experience had shown that hard work and talent alone may lead to shipwreck unless an expert pilot is engaged before it is too late.

Garcia was her pilot. He taught her the technic without which talent is helpless. He improved the quality of her voice. In the words of one who heard her after her training in Garcia's studio, "it had acquired a rich depth of tone, a sympathetic *timbre*, a bird-like charm in the silvery clearness of its upper register, which at once impressed the listener with the feeling that he had never before heard anything in the least degree resembling it." The same writer calls attention to another all-important point:

"One great secret—perhaps the greatest of all—the key to the whole mystery connected with this perfect mastery over the technical difficulties of vocalization—lay in the fortunate circumstance that Signor Garcia was so very particular about the breathing. For the skilful management of the breath is everything, and she attained the most

perfect control over it. Gifted by nature with comparatively limited sustaining power, she learned to fill the lungs with such dexterity that, except with her consent, it was impossible to detect either the moment at which the breath was renewed or the method by which the action was accomplished."

To sum it up in one sentence: "She was born an artist, and, under Garcia's guidance, had now become a *virtuosa*"—a complete mistress of her art.

Let it not be supposed for a moment that she fancied Garcia had given the finishing touches to her training. To the end of her career she continued to overcome "astonishing difficulties" by "incredible work." Mme. Birch-Pfeiffer relates that one day she left the prima donna practising the difficult word "zersplittre," and when she returned several hours later she found her still wrestling with the same word. By dint of such perseverance she learned to pronounce any word, in any language she knew, with perfect ease and distinctness, on any note, high or low.

Her voice was not naturally flexible. "The rich, sustained tones of the *soprano drammatico*," her biographers tell us, "were far more congenial to it than the rapid execution which usually characterizes the lighter class of soprano voices. But this she also attained by almost superhuman labor. Her perseverance was indefatigable."

The problem of making all tones in her voice equally beautiful she tackled with the same determination. Selecting the best six tones of her voice, "she practised these notes, with the semitones between them, more diligently than any others, with the full determination to extend the process until the tone of the remaining portions of the voice became as rich, as pure, and as powerful as that of the six notes which she regarded as forming the fundamental basis of the whole." She succeeded fully in carrying out this intention, "and it is scarcely too much to say that to

this firm resolve, and the clear foresight which prompted it, her ultimate success is mainly to be attributed."

Where most of the dramatic sopranos of our time fail is in dynamic shading. They can sing *forte* or *fortissimo* beautifully, often thrillingly, but when they attempt a *pianissimo*, or even a *piano*, the quality of the voice deteriorates and they lose control of pitch and steadiness. Not so with Jenny Lind. Her *pianissimo*, we are told, was one of the most beautiful features of her singing. "It reached to the remotest corner of the largest theatre or concert-room in which she sang; it was as rich and full as her *mezzo forte;* yet it was so truly piano that it fell upon the ear with the charm of a whisper, only just strong enough to be audible." Chopin wrote, after hearing her in London, in 1848: "Her singing is infallibly pure and true; but, above all, I admire her *piano* passages, the charm of which is indescribable." It was to the skilful management of her breath that she owed this fascinating *piano* and *pianissimo* as well as "that marvellous command of the *messa di voce* which enabled her to swell out a *crescendo* to its utmost limit, and follow it, without a break, with a *diminuendo* which died away to an imperceptible point, so completely covering the end of the note that no ear could detect the moment at which it faded into silence."

Two more useful hints may be cited from the excellent volumes of Holland and Rockstro. Jenny Lind, they assure us, never allowed herself to sing very difficult passages before the public until she had thoroughly mastered them, but preferred simplifying them to running the risk of an imperfect rendering of the notes. "To the end of her career she never sang in the evening without preparing for the performance by practising for a long time earlier in the day—generally *a mezza voce*, to avoid fatiguing the voice unnecessarily, but never sparing the time or trouble.

And herein lay the secret of her victory over difficulties which tempt so many less courageous aspirants to despair."

Let us now return to Paris, where we left Jenny with her worn voice rejuvenated by the magic of Garcia. She had aroused enthusiasm in Sweden even as a wrongly taught beginner; should she not attempt, now, to win the Parisians with her renovated, purified, and strengthened voice?

Madame Lindblad had written from Sweden that if Jenny came back without having sung in Paris, people would intimate that she was not fit for such a thing. To this she replied: "It is a very difficult thing to appear here in public. On the stage it would be out of the question. It could only be in the concert-room: and there I am at my weakest point and shall always remain so. What is wanted here is—'admirers.' Were I inclined to receive them, all would be smooth sailing. But there I say—STOP."

To another friend she wrote: "Applause, here, is not always given to talent, but, often enough, to vice—to any obscure person who can afford to pay for it. *Ugh!* It is too dreadful to see the *clacqueurs* sitting at the theatre, night after night, deciding the fate of those who are compelled to appear."

Her friend Lindblad, who was in Paris at this time, wrote to his wife: "Not a soul has here done the least toward making her known. She has been living as in a convent. Still, she is not sorry to return home; for the greatest stage reputations are here won only through sacrificing honor and reputation. While the world is resounding with their praise, every *salon* is closed to them, and this even in easy-going Paris. Such homage as Jenny met with in Sweden, no foreign artist ever received. This she feels; and it is for this vivifying atmosphere that she longs."

Longing for home was one of the motives which prompted her to accept an offer from the Royal Theatre at Stockholm, to which she returned without having been heard publicly in Paris. Erroneous assertions to the contrary have crept into not a few of the biographies and lexicons, some saying that she sang at the Opéra but failed, and that in consequence she vowed never again to appear in Paris. In truth, she did sing at the Grand Opéra, but not for the public, only for a few hearers, among them Meyerbeer, Léon Pillet (manager of the Opéra), and Lindblad. She was not at her best on this occasion, according to Lindblad, and, although the judges liked her voice, no steps were taken to secure her for the Opéra. The director of the Théâtre-Italien, however, made her an offer; but she declined it, thanking him for the honor of thinking her "worthy to appear before the first audience in the world," but declaring: "The more I think of it, the more I am persuaded that I am not suited for Paris, nor Paris for me."

The offer she accepted from the Stockholm Theatre was not brilliant. She was to get a salary equal to $750 a year, besides a "benefit" and extra "service money" for each appearance; while the silk costumes and bridal gowns were to be paid for by the management. In accepting these terms, she stipulated, in view of the "rather too heavy service to which I had to submit in former times, at the Royal Theatre, and from the evil consequences of which I am still suffering," that she be not obliged to sing more than twice a week, nor more than fifty times during the season, unless an extra fee of a sum equal to $27 be paid her for every representation over and above the said fifty.

She had made her last appearance at Stockholm in *Norma*. This same opera she chose for her reappearance, as if to give the public a chance to make comparisons between then and now. The critics were pleased to observe that her inability to control high sustained notes and the

necessity for simplifying florid passages had disappeared; also, the veiled tones in her voice; and as for the public, it went wild with enthusiasm. But this was Stockholm, her native city. Here she was helped by local pride and patriotic feeling. She could come on the stage, for instance, in a national piece, entitled *A May Day in Wärend*, as the heroine, riding, at one point, on horseback on to the stage and singing as she rode. These peasant scenes would stir her and the public, and no one would be overcritical. But how about the cities where the atmosphere and the scenes and the audience were not Swedish?

Jenny dreaded to risk singing on a foreign stage—even at Copenhagen. Hans Andersen relates in his autobiography that she said to him: "Except in Sweden I have never appeared in public. In my own country all are so kind and gentle toward me; and if I were to appear in Copenhagen and be hissed! I cannot risk it." But when she did appear as Alice, in *Robert le Diable*, it was, in the words of Andersen, "like a new revelation in the domain of art. The young, fresh voice went direct to the hearts of all. Here was truth and nature. Everything had clearness and meaning. In her concerts, Jenny Lind sang her Swedish songs. There was a peculiar and seductive charm about them: all recollection of the concert-room vanished: the popular melodies exerted their spell, sung as they were by a pure voice with the immortal accent of genius. All Copenhagen was in raptures. Jenny Lind was the first artist to whom the students offered a serenade: the torches flashed round the hospitable villa, where the song was sung. She expressed her thanks by a few more of the Swedish songs, and I then saw her hurry into the deepest corner and weep out her emotion. 'Yes, yes,' she said, 'I will exert myself; I will strive; I shall be more efficient than I am now when I come to Copenhagen again.'"

In her attitude toward applause and appreciation Jenny Lind was, as in everything else relating to art, a model. In a letter written in Paris and referring to her early triumphs at home, she declared that the applause of the public filled her with sorrow rather than with joy because she felt that she did not deserve it. "I knew that I had not made myself worthy of it through my own work." And now that the tribute of the Danish students made her weep with joy, her thought was not: "I have arrived," but "I will try to do better next time."

Of such is the kingdom of the divine art.

Copenhagen was still a Scandinavian city. The question was, How would the real foreigners, the Germans, for instance, receive Jenny Lind? It was answered on December 15, 1844, when she sang *Norma* in Berlin, and the leading local critic of the time, Rellstab, wrote that she was "charming from the first note to the last," adding that "among the public there was not one single dissentient voice." She won the hearts of the composers, too, among them Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, both of whom became her devoted admirers, looking on her as the model singer. Meyerbeer wrote the part of Vielka in his *Feldlager in Schlesien* expressly for her, and was intensely disappointed when the terms of the contract compelled him to give it to another, who failed to make it a success. The opera was subsequently brought out again with Lind, and, in the words of her friend Josephson, Meyerbeer had, in the interim, "to the best of my belief, called upon her at least a hundred times, to consult about this, that, or the other." Her Vielka proved a decided success. "Her singing," says the same writer, "was beautiful, her acting full of genius, life, and fire. The applause was spontaneous and enthusiastic. Her nervousness, which had kept her practising the whole afternoon and again before the beginning of the opera, was not noticed by any one; nor did it prevent her

either from singing or acting her very best. The public was enchanted and Meyerbeer happy."

As for Mendelssohn, after he had heard her in Vienna the first time he wrote to a friend: "Jenny Lind is singing here, and I will say no more than that I have caught the 'fever,' and that in its most violent form. . . . Such a voice I have never heard in all my life, nor have I ever met with so genial, so womanly, so musical a nature. . . . There is a charm in her voice that I have never known before, surpassing all that other singers have attained to, however powerful their acting on the stage. The Lind soars above all, but not through any single quality. It is the mastery wielded by this *anima candida* that works the magic."

To another friend, the eminent basso, Franz Hauser, he wrote with reference to "the Lind": "And to you, as a singer, it must be especially delightful to meet, at last, with the union of such splendid talents, with such profound study and such heart-felt enthusiasm."

Talents, Study, Enthusiasm—in those three words Mendelssohn summed up the secret of Jenny Lind's success.

She herself appears to have been the last to believe in her worth and her achievements. After her triumphs in Berlin (where she sang at prices for tickets absolutely unprecedented), she was heard in Hamburg with the same result. "It would be impossible," wrote the historian, Dr. Uhde, "to give any idea of the ecstasy into which the whole town of Hamburg was thrown." Twelve times she sang "to houses so crowded that the aid of the police had to be called in to regulate the crush." She "was the first in Hamburg whose whole figure was so completely bestrewn with flowers that she stood upon an improvised carpet of blossoms." Nor were the demonstrations of enthusiasm confined to the opera-house. There was a

serenade and a torchlight procession, followed by fireworks, in her honor.

And yet, after all this, she dreaded to sing in Vienna! "I have had the privilege," she wrote to Mme. Birch-Pfeiffer, "of speaking to the Prince and Princess of Metternich, here in Frankfurt, at Baron Rothschild's, and they have both advised me to go to Vienna. And yet—only think!—what if I lose my whole reputation! If I do not please! And this anxiety grows so much upon me! And all through next winter the thought of my first appearance in Vienna will follow me like an evil spirit. Ah, yes! I am very much to be pitied."

How futile all these fears were we know from Mendelssohn's reference to the Lind "fever," which he, too, caught in Vienna. "Never within the memory of the Viennese," we read elsewhere, "had such crowds assembled at the theatre or such prices been demanded for admission." Jenny herself wrote to a friend: "At the close I was called back sixteen times, and twelve or fourteen before that. Just count that up! And this reception! I was quite astounded." Her triumph was the greater because the tenor was a singer "at whom every one laughed," as she wrote, while "the whole Italian faction was opposed to me," and the tickets cost four to eight times as much as usual.

We cannot follow the prima donna—now in her twenty-fifth year—in her triumphal career. As a matter of course, her amazing success in the German cities soon brought her an offer from London—£4,800 for the season, beginning April 14 and ending August 20, 1847, besides a furnished house, a carriage, and a pair of horses, free of charge, for that period. She made her début on May 4th, and the excitement "exceeded anything that had ever been witnessed by the oldest frequenter of Her Majesty's Theatre." The Queen was one of the greatest enthusiasts; she cast a

superb bouquet from the royal box at the feet of the débutante—an incident unparalleled on any former occasion in London.

"Yesterday," the singer wrote to a friend, "I made my first appearance here as Alice, in *Robert*, and it went *so*, that, through the whole night I could not sleep for joy." The critics gave elaborate accounts of her triumph and her art, special attention being called by the *Times* to the fact that "the sustained notes, swelling with full richness, and fading down to the softest *piano*, without losing one iota of their quality, being delicious when loud, delicious when whispered, dwelt in the public ear, and reposed in the public heart"; while another critic was particularly impressed by this, that "at the instant the listener, from the habit of hearing other artists, expects the voice to become weak and fatigued—at that moment it bursts forth in greater beauty than ever."

A writer in the *Musical World* attempted a pen-portrait: "Jenny Lind is young, of the middle height, fair-haired, blue-eyed, neither stout nor slender, but well-proportioned, neither fat nor thin, but enough of the one for comeliness, and enough of the other for romance, meek-looking when her features are at rest, full of animation and energy when they are at play."

Socially her success was as great as artistically. The Queen not only applauded her in the opera-house but invited her to visit her in private. The Duke of Wellington asked her to his country-seat, promising, so Lumley relates, that music should form no topic of the conversation; and other invitations from members of the aristocracy were far more numerous than she could accept.

Such things, however, did not add greatly to her happiness. Ever since her girlhood she had disliked society, with its artificial etiquette, preferring the joys of nature—wild flowers, trees, and the song of birds. On one occasion,

when Mrs. Grote congratulated her on the flattering attentions bestowed on her in London, she answered: "Dear Madame, you are much more proud for me than I am for myself. It certainly was a splendid sight; but I would rather have been rambling with you among the Burnham beeches, after all."

Her attitude toward applause on the stage also was different from that of the average artist. Those who knew her best aver that many a time, amid the noisy demonstrations over her singing and acting, she would have preferred the quiet of home life. "It seems as if the usual consequences of the excitement and jubilation that she everywhere creates pass over her," wrote Heinrich Brockhaus. After her second appearance in Vienna in *Norma* she herself wrote: "Was called so many times before the curtain that I was quite exhausted. Bah! I do not like it! Everything should be done in moderation, otherwise it is not pleasing."

These peculiarities in the character of Jenny Lind prepare us for the astonishing thing that happened—her retirement from the operatic stage at the early age of twenty-nine! Her first London season, at which she appeared in *Robert le Diable*, *La Sonnambula*, *La Figlia del Reggimento*, *I Masnadieri*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Norma*, was followed by another, even more brilliantly successful, in 1848. The provinces, too, were visited, and the prima donna's share of the profits from these extra performances alone amounted to £10,000. During this time there was a disquieting rumor in the air, which became more and more positive, that the idol of the stage was about to leave it and devote herself thereafter to concerts.

It was only too true, this rumor. Lumley was eager to make a contract for the season of 1849, but she could not be persuaded, and ere long it was announced authoritatively, that Miss Lind had made up her mind positively never to

appear again on the operatic stage. The manager was in despair; the old subscribers had been wondering: "Will Jenny Lind act?" and when they heard she would not they held back. By way of compromise, she agreed to appear in six operatic concerts—operas without the stage accessories.

It was a foolish plan. Mozart's *Figaro* was the first—and the only—victim of it. There was not a trace of the "Jenny Lind fever." The house was "comparatively empty," and "the applause was cold and feeble," as Lumley himself relates in his *Reminiscences of the Opera*. The plan of the "Six Grand Classical Concerts" was abandoned, and, to save the manager from ruin, Miss Lind kindly consented to suspend her intention of retiring from the stage and to give a few more performances. That was what the public wanted; once more the house was crowded, and the Lind enthusiasm rose again to fever heat.

Carlyle once referred to a Jenny Lind audience as "some three thousand expensive-looking fools." But at this emergency the public was not as foolish as it may have looked. Operas in concert form may be a permissible makeshift—half a loaf is better than no bread—in small towns where no real operatic performances are given; but it is to be noted that Patti, Calvé, and other prima donnas who have given such concerts, have usually avoided the cities where actual opera can be heard. The Londoners naturally resented what must have seemed to them a mere caprice on the part of a prima donna, which not only needlessly mutilated a masterwork by Mozart, but deprived them of the enjoyment of one-half of her art; for Lind's acting was almost as fascinating as her singing, and this was to be ruthlessly sacrificed at these "grand classical concerts!"

We have seen that at the very beginning of her career she excelled even more as an actress than as a singer. Subse-

quently the critics seldom failed to dwell on the charm of her dramatic impersonations, and to contrast her conception of famous parts, usually to her advantage, with the acting of her predecessors. The art of these she took every opportunity to study; also that of actresses who did not sing; and she was astonishingly free from jealousy or vanity, as the following extract from a letter attests: "The difference between Mlle. Rachel and myself is, that she can be splendid when angry, but she is unsuited for tenderness. I am desperately ugly, and nasty too, when in anger; but I think I do better in tender parts. Of course, I do not compare myself with Rachel. Certainly not. She is immeasurably greater than I. Poor me!"

Lindblad, to whom this letter was addressed, wrote regarding Lind: "You know, she never does herself justice until she is in full action on the stage." A London critic, in discussing her acting, remarked: "In the absence of all stage-trickery or conventionalism may be distinguished the child of genius"; also, that "she never sacrifices sense to sound"—a vice, it may be added, to which singers of her time were generally addicted.

To an Englishman she once said: "I scarcely ever think of the effect I am producing, and if the thought does sometimes come across me it spoils my acting. It seems to me, when I act, that I feel fully all the emotions of the character I represent. I fancy myself—in fact, I believe myself—to be in her situation, and never think of the audience."

Holland and Rockstro cite a lady who wrote: "There was this peculiarity about her acting—that it was entirely part of herself. It seemed not so much that she entered into the part as that she became, for the moment, that which she had to express. For this reason her acting was unequal. She could not render anything in which there was a suggestion repugnant to her own higher nature. But in a part that suited her—such as Sonnambula—she expressed every

varying emotion of the character perfectly because she really felt it."

This same opera afforded an illustration of her exceptional conscientiousness as an actress. Most of the singers of her time who impersonated Amina, the sleep-walker, refused to cross the narrow mimic bridge over the revolving water-wheel, the usual plan being to dress up a member of the chorus for that feat. Lind would have none of this. "I should have been ashamed," she said, "to stand before the audience pretending that I had crossed the bridge if I had not really done it."

Such was Jenny Lind the actress. Naturally enough the Londoners resented her determination to deliberately extinguish one-half of her talent. It seemed a sort of semi-suicide, artistically speaking; but the semi-suicide was ruthlessly committed, regardless of everything. Having helped her manager out of his scrape, Lind said farewell to the operatic stage forever on May 10, 1849, Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable* being chosen for the occasion.

Two other musicians astounded and dismayed the world by retiring prematurely from the scenes of their triumphs. Rossini gave up composing operas thirty-nine years before his death, although the public was clamoring wildly for more and the publishers were offering fabulous sums; and Liszt gave up playing the piano in public, under similar conditions, also thirty-nine years before the end of his life. But in their cases the motives were obvious: Liszt was tired of playing and wanted to give his time to composing and teaching; while Rossini was lazy, tired of composing, and had all the money and fame he wanted.

Why did Jenny Lind, at the age of twenty-nine, thirty-eight years before her death, leave the operatic stage, when she had all the musical world at her feet?

There were several reasons. Repugnance to stage life was hereditary in the family. Concerning her mother,

Jenny once wrote: "She, like myself, had the greatest horror of all that was connected with the stage." Richard Wagner, oddly enough, records the same feeling in his own youth. He lived it down; Lind did not.

There was a time when the stage seemed to be her paradise. In October, 1841, she wrote from Paris: "I am longing for home. I am longing for my theatre. I have never said this before in any of my letters. I know I am contradicting myself, but I rejoice over it. Oh! to pour out my feelings in a beautiful part! This is, and ever will be, my continual aim, and until I stand there again I shall not know myself as I really am. Life on the stage has in it something so fascinating that I think, having once tasted it, one can never feel truly happy away from it, especially when one has given oneself wholly up to it with life and soul, as I have done. This has been my joy, my pride, my glory!"

Six years later we find her writing to a friend to express her gratitude to God for having preserved in her breast her love for her native land—"for it might have happened that I never again should have wished for Sweden after the heavenly—yes! the heavenly career which I have had."

Gradually the unpleasant side of stage life forced itself on her attention more and more. "I shall quit the stage in a year from now," she wrote in 1845; and this resolve gained more and more force until it led, as we have seen, to the regretted act in 1849.

Mrs. Grote has recorded some of the reasons, given in conversations: "that at the Opera she was liable to be continually intruded upon by curious idlers and exposed to many indescribable *ennuis;* that the combined fatigue of acting and singing was exhausting; that the exposure to cold *coulisses*, after exertions on the stage in a heated atmosphere, was trying to the chest; the labor of rehearsals, tiresome to a degree; and that, altogether, she longed

for the time when she would be rich enough to do without the theatre."

To Birch-Pfeiffer, Lind wrote: "You see, Mother Birch, this life does not suit me at all. If you could only see me—the despair I am in whenever I go to the theatre to sing! It is too much for me! This terrible nervousness destroys everything for me. I sing far less well than I should, if it were not for this enemy."

On this point one of her friends testifies that, "for instance, for several days after a performance of *Norma* her nerves would be so shattered that she would be unfit for other useful mental occupation."

To Mme. Erikson, Lind wrote: "But please to reflect, just a little, how difficult it is to stand all this racing about—alone! alone! . . . Enough to say that my connection with the stage has no attraction for me—that my soul is yearning for rest from all these persistent compliments and this persistent adulation." Her friend Brockhaus wrote: "She does not feel happy. I am convinced that she would gladly exchange all her triumphs for simple, homely happiness"; and Holland and Rockstro declare that "to her the stage, with its cold *coulisses* and its ceaseless round of monotonous hard work, was as prosaic as the routine of the school-room to a jaded governess."

Affairs of the heart and religious considerations also came into play. She was engaged for a time to a tenor in Stockholm named Günther; but to marry him would have meant a continuance of stage life, and for this, and other reasons, the engagement came to an end. In England she was inclined for a time to marry Claudius Harris, a young captain in the Indian army, whose mother had taught him to consider the theatre as outside the pale of religion. The date for the wedding was already fixed, but when the captain insisted, in the drawing up of settlements, that she should pledge herself absolutely to leave the stage forever,

and that he should have control of her earnings, her spirit of independence rebelled, and the captain passed out of her life, like the tenor.

She never could persuade herself that the theatre is in itself wicked and hostile to religion; but the general religious atmosphere of England made a deep impression on her and helped to turn her mind from opera to oratorio, the musical specialty of England. Meanwhile, to cite her own words, "poor Lumley and my colleagues tell me it is ungrateful in me, after having acquired such fame as an actress, to desert the stage as if it were a disgrace; that if I do so, then, instead of raising the profession, as I had hoped to do, I shall sink it lower, as I shall seem to fly from it as a degradation."

In nearly every other aspect of her life we have been able to hold up this woman as a model to students ambitious of stage honors. Her desertion of the stage is an exception. What if her operatic career *was* more or less of a martyrdom? Most great artists have been martyrs, and had they been unwilling to endure the discomforts accompanying a strenuous life, the history of art, creative and interpretative, would be illustrated with fewer pinnacles. Lind was a traitress to the art operatic, and that is a blot on her esthetic reputation.

However, there are not a few who believe, not only on religious grounds, that the oratorio and concert are a higher phase of music than opera. For these she exerted herself thenceforth, leaving to others (to cite her own words) "the profession which holds so many thorns amongst the roses." Her principal English biographers go so far as to say that great as were her operatic triumphs in London and the provinces, the love that made her name a household word in every English homestead was won in the concert-room and at the oratorio: "It was through *Elijah* and *Messiah*, through the *lieder* of Mendelssohn

and Lindblad, and the Swedish Melodies, and the thousand treasures that appeared, later on, in the concert programmes —that the beloved 'Swedish Nightingale' sang her way into the great heart of the British people."

In the minds of many serious music-lovers the regret that Jenny Lind abandoned the opera was probably mitigated by the thought that she had been wasting her rare gifts largely on trivial works. When Carlyle heard her in *Sonnambula* he wrote: "Nothing could exceed my ennui. . . . Lind seemed to me a very true, clear, genuine little creature, with a voice of extraordinary extent and little richness of tone, who sang, acted, etc., with consummate fidelity, but had unfortunately nothing but mere nonsense to sing or act. . . . It was one o'clock when we got home; on the whole, I do not desire to hear Lind again; it would not bring me sixpence worth of benefit, I think, to hear her sing six months in that kind of material."

In the eleven years from March 7, 1838, to May 10, 1849, she had sung 677 times, in thirty operas. Among these thirty there were eight masterworks: *Lucia*, *Freischütz*, *Magic Flute*, *Don Juan*, *Figaro*, *Les Huguenots*, *Euryanthe*, *Armida;* but the table given by Holland and Rockstro (Vol. II, p. 305) shows that, with the exception of the first two of these, she was called upon to sing much more frequently in "mere nonsense" operas, as Carlyle aptly called them. Undoubtedly this barbarian taste of the operatic audiences of her time also had some influence in inducing her to devote herself exclusively to the oratorio and the concert stage in which she could offer something better. This surmise is borne out by an extract from one of her letters to Birch-Pfeiffer: "What do you say of my having left the stage? I cannot tell you in words how happy I feel about it. I shall sing in concerts as long as I have a voice; but that only gives me pleasure. . . . I have begun to sing what has long been the wish of my

heart—Oratorio. There I can sing the music I love; and the words make me feel a better being."

She had, of course, been heard in oratorios and concerts many times before she gave up the opera. A notable occurrence was the performance in London, a year after Mendelssohn's death, of his *Elijah*, with Jenny Lind in the soprano part, which he had expressly written for her. "He had studied her voice with microscopic care, and knew the *timbre* of every note in it as well as if it had been his own."

The object of this performance of *Elijah* calls attention to what became thenceforth the leading motive in her character. It was to help to found a "Mendelssohn Foundation for Free Scholarships in the Leipzig Musical Conservatory," and it is interesting to note that the first "Mendelssohn Scholar" to benefit by this fund was Arthur Sullivan, who afterward delighted two continents with his melodious operettas.

Previous to this event she had, when she reappeared in Sweden after an absence of two years, laid the foundations of a college the object of which she indicated in these words: "I have assigned the whole amount of my portion of the receipts from the representations in which I shall appear, toward establishing a fund, the income of which is to be devoted to an institution for educating poor children who, while specially endowed for the stage, lack the care of parents or relatives, without which, in a moral and artistic respect, they either lose, or else fail to reach, the higher development for which their gifts would give reasonable hope."

Thus she tried to repay her country for the aid she had received as a child; and we are assured that "from the time that she won her place in the European drama, she never sang in her native land again on her own behalf." "To wed myself wholly to well-doing" is her declared intention as early as 1848; and there is every reason to be-

lieve that had it not been for this intention the most remarkable episode in her life would never have occurred.

This episode was her American tour under the management of the great showman, P. T. Barnum, which gave rise to incidents and aroused enthusiasm that would have been astounding had she crossed the ocean as the first of the great European prima donnas of the opera, but was doubly so in view of the fact that she sang only in concerts. The English were loath to lose her, and they gave her a "send-off" that any monarch or conquering military hero might have envied. The Liverpool police had informed Barnum's agent that if Jenny Lind took her departure from the quay at the hour generally expected, they could not insure the safety of life and limb; consequently she went to the pier "by all manner of back streets." Innumerable craft were in the river waiting for the *Atlantic* to sail; and when the steamer started, what a London journalist called a "great scene" was witnessed: "The immense floating mass began to move, and, as if by magic, all the craft that had been playing about on the surface of the river formed into lines and made a sort of procession." Thousands of men and women lined the shores and cheered as the steamer moved on, while cannon roared farewell salutes. "Every eye was strained to get a sight of Jenny Lind. There the little woman stood on the paddle-box, with her arm in that of Captain West, and waving her handkerchief enthusiastically."

The ocean was merely an intermezzo. In New York the enthusiastic demonstrations were resumed. There was a serenade by a band which was preceded by a procession of 700 members of the fire brigade; there were public receptions "at which she presided like a queen, though with less formality"; there was an auction sale for the first concert, which yielded $26,000. The singer's share—$10,000—as well as her profits on the second concert, she gave to the

principal New York charities. Her gains for the next six were $30,000. But this sum, too, as well as her subsequent gains, she did not intend to keep for her own use. Her object in accepting Barnum's offer was indicated in a letter to Mme. Wichmann: "Since I have no greater wish than to make much money in order to found schools in Sweden, I cannot help looking upon this journey to America as a gracious answer to my prayer to Heaven."

For herself she kept only what was necessary to enable her to live and to buy a cottage on the Malvern Hills, England. Her wants were few and she would not have complained if reverses of fortune had compelled her to live literally in accordance with the recipe for true happiness contained in the following lines, written in one of her letters from Boston: "Few suspect how unutterably little the world and its splendor have been able to turn my mind giddy. Herrings and potatoes—a clean wooden chair, and a wooden spoon to eat milk-soup with—that would make me skip like a child, for joy. And this—without the slightest trace of exaggeration." *

Christine Nilsson

When Jenny Lind was twenty-three years old (in 1843) there was born in Sweden a second girl who was destined to win a place in the first rank of operatic and concert singers—Christine Nilsson. Her parents were so poor

* For details regarding Jenny Lind's American tours there is no room or occasion in this volume; they may be found in Barnum's *Autobiography* and Frith's *Autobiography and Reminiscences*. It was in America, in 1852, that Lind got married—to Otto Goldschmidt, noted as pianist, conductor, and composer. Her total American profits were $154,000, of which she invested $100,000 for benevolent purposes in Sweden. In the years 1883–6 she taught singing at the Royal College of Music, in London. Her last public appearance was in 1883, at a concert given for the Railways Servants' Benevolent Fund, at the Spa, Malvern Hills. She died on November 2, 1887.

that the community of Hussaby had to help support their family of eight children. Her father had enough skill as a singer to lead the congregation in the Lutheran church, and from him she learned the A B C of music. Her brother Carl owned a violin, on which she taught herself to play. He used to earn a little money by playing at fairs and dances, and one day he took his little sister along; she had a pretty voice and sang the simple Swedish folk songs she had heard. These duos gave so much pleasure that he took her along regularly. Luckily, on one of these occasions she was heard by a magistrate named Tornerhjelm, who was so delighted with her singing that he went to her father and offered to give her, at his own expense, a musical as well as a general education.

The offer was accepted. Christine was placed in charge of the Baroness de Leuhusen, who took her to Gottenburg and instructed her in German, French, singing, and piano-playing. Subsequently, at Stockholm, she also studied harmony. "At the same time," one of her biographers relates, "she studied her violin so conscientiously that, when sixteen years old, her old friend and patron, Tornerhjelm, told her that she should, at his expense, go to Paris, and there earn the glory for which her young head was destined, and that she must, before leaving, give a great concert at Stockholm. Christine was long in doubt whether she should devote her life to the fiddle or to singing, so she decided upon coming before the public in both qualities, and played a concerto by Mr. Berwald in the Grande Salle Lacroix, and there, too, she sang the aria of Alice in French."

Her violin playing was one of the factors which contributed to her success, as we may infer from what Dr. Hanslick wrote about her many years later: "Nilsson's intonation is always so exquisitely pure that we would suspect her of being a violin player did we not happen to know that she

is one." On this point more will be said in the pages devoted to Marcella Sembrich.

A danger to which all students are exposed confronted Christine in Paris: she fell into the hands of a teacher who, by a wrong method, nearly ruined her voice. Fortunately she left him in time for Wartel, who undid the mischief by making her sing for two and a half years on ā, a, ee, every note of the scale, and the last six months with words. "Those who deem this an extraordinarily long trial, or an exaggerated, unnecessary course, may take it for granted that if they do not study so conscientiously they will not stand the test of twenty-five years' concerts and operas as Patti and Nilsson did, and retain the voice so full and fresh."

At the age of twenty-one she was engaged to sing at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris for nine months, for which she was to get $5,000. Verdi's *La Traviata* had been translated for the occasion of her début, and she made at once an unforeseen sensation. "I remember," says a writer in *Temple Bar*, "having heard people discuss what might be the reason of this sudden success. Said one, 'She is so young and pretty, she has such a commanding figure, and shows in all her candor such an immense will.' 'Oh, no,' said another; 'it is by no means her appearance; it is her extraordinary voice and the command she has over it. Yet there is something strange in her voice (*étrange dans sa voix*).' 'Well,' said one of the greatest singers Paris has known, 'is it not sufficient to have something unusual, something that no one else has, in the *timbre* of the voice; and may it not be that, because all the qualities you mention are combined in her, she made such an extraordinary impression upon her audience?' She came out of the struggle with flying colors. The strange part of it, however, is that, although she sang without the slightest emotion before her success, anxiety seized upon her afterward, and she got as nervous as a little schoolgirl at her examination.

It was during the *congé* (leave) of 1866 that she came to London, and sang at Her Majesty's with the same great and instantaneous success as in Paris. On her return to France at the expiration of her three years' engagement with the Théâtre Lyrique, she was engaged at the Grand Opéra, where Ambroise Thomas, at a loss to find an Ophelia for his Hamlet, seeing that the fair-haired, poetical, dreamy-looking Swede combined all the required qualities for this difficult part, intrusted her, as they there say, with the *création;* and she then remained three years, a member of the first lyric theatre in France, which with our modest neighbors means the first in the world."

Her first visit to America, though only a concert tour, brought her $200,000 net profit, and her manager made $60,000 besides. After her return to Europe she received the following letter, which gives a pleasant glimpse of the impression she had made:

UNITED STATES SENATE,
WASHINGTON, *July* 12, 1884.

DEAR MADAM:

I had the honor to meet you at dinner at President Arthur's a few weeks ago. While several guests were seeking to exchange written cards with you, you said you would be glad to get autographs of all the Senators; and, as in duty bound, I promised to obtain them. I beg you to accept with my respectful compliments the accompanying volume, containing autographs of the President, all the Cabinet, all the Justices of the Supreme Court, and all the Senators. The temporary absence of some of the Senators delayed the completion of the work.

I remain, Madam,
Your obedient servant,
JOS. R. HAWLEY.

Nilsson's singing reminded Luigi Arditi greatly of Bosio, "her brilliant *fioriture* being delivered with the same ex-

quisite grace and refinement that characterized the style of the Italian artist. Everything was in favor of the young Swedish artist—her youthful freshness (in itself a priceless charm) a definite individuality; her slight, supple figure, which lent itself to the draping of any classical robe; and, above all, the voice, of extensive compass, mellow, sweet, and rich."

During one season Nilsson used to study most of her parts with Arditi at his house, "and most faithfully and conscientiously did she work." The same eminent conductor relates that Nilsson, like most artists, suffered from "nerves." "I recollect when she came to my house to go over her parts with me, she used, while singing, to tear the trimmings and laces off her skirts by continually fingering them. Her lady companion, Mme. Richardson, was in despair about her dresses, and used to say how she wished it were fashionable for ladies to wear perfectly plain skirts, devoid of any kind of trimmings, so that Nilsson could not have the chance of spoiling all her *passementeries.*"

A famous prima donna must expect all sorts of experiences that will put her nerves to the test. The following appeared in the *Boston Herald* of March 18, 1887:

Once in New York a madman followed her for a week under the conviction that the words of love which he had heard her, as Marguerite, address to Faust, were intended for himself. He would spend the day in front of the hotel where she was staying, and whenever she went out he ran alongside of her carriage, kissing his hand to her and calling her his Marguerite. One evening when her parlor was full of company the door suddenly opened and the lunatic rushed in, threw his arms around her, and exclaimed: "Kiss me, Marguerite!" The attack was so sudden and the guests so surprised that none of them thought of going to her assistance; she was obliged to break away from his clutches without aid, and it was she who rang the bell and

sent for a policeman. At the hearing the fellow managed to break loose from the officers, again approached Nilsson, and began frantically to kiss her dress. In the presence of so unmistakable symptoms of madness the prima donna refused to prosecute, and only asked that he might be kept locked up until she had left the city. In Chicago she was annoyed by another madman, a student, who had fallen in love with her, and was constantly writing to ask her to marry him. One day he arrived at the door of the hotel in a sleigh drawn by four horses, and stated that he had come to take her to church. Her manager got rid of him by assuring the fellow that he was too late, and that he would find Nilsson waiting for him at the church.

Diego de Vivo, in summing up this artist's qualities in the *New York Sun*, said:

Christine Nilsson excelled in the composition of a scene, in the power of giving it its fullest importance, and of concentrating upon it the attention of the spectator. She was most successful in episodes the saliency of which was added to by her personal Swedish beauty and by her singular aspect, rather than by the development of a character or a complicated situation. Hence her permanency as the ideal Ophelia, the ideal Cherubino, and the ideal Queen of Night.

According to Dr. Hanslick, her principal charm and talisman was a simplicity and a sincerity of expression which enabled her to move an audience even where the composer had not provided an "effect."

While Nilsson was "the favorite of crowned heads and great ladies," she never tried to conceal her peasant origin. The photographs of her parents in peasant costume always were in her room, and when she built a magnificent mansion she placed in it also the violin which accompanied her first folk songs at the village fair. When she became

famous and rich she also remembered that others had helped her when she was poor, and, following the example of Jenny Lind—who had been the artistic model and inspiration of her youth—she emulated her in generosity, too. Her first earnings were devoted to buying a farm for her parents and another for one of her brothers; and thenceforth she was ever ready to use her voice in the service of the poor and the victims of misfortunes, such as the Chicago fire and the inundations in Spain. She was twice married, and is still living (1909). Her second husband was Count Casa di Miranda.

Prima donnas are supposed to be all rivalry and envy, but when Nilsson sang Mignon (which Thomas had specially altered to make it suit her voice) at Baden-Baden for the first time, she received a card from the famous Viardot-Garcia with these words: "Avec toute son admiration pour la délicieuse Mignon," and a note from Pauline Lucca saying: "You were sublime, and it gives me the greatest pleasure to tell you so."

One more glimpse of this great artist on the stage and we must ring down the curtain. Sutherland Edwards says regarding her Traviata: "She refined to the utmost a character sadly in want of refinement, and sang in absolute perfection the expressive music of the part. Her Violetta never went into hysterics; and she seemed to die, not of phthisis aided and developed by dissipation, but of a broken heart, like Clarissa Harlowe, or like that Shakespearian maiden who never told her love. Mlle. Piccolomini's Violetta was a foolish virgin; Mlle. Nilsson's a fallen angel."

IV

ITALIAN PRIMA DONNAS

Adelina Patti

There have been a few favored singers to whom the exercise of their art came as naturally as swimming does to a fish, flying to a bird. Conspicuous among these is Adelina Patti; and the secret of her remarkable success lay largely in the ease and spontaneity of her vocal utterances.

Her musical gifts were hereditary, her father, a Sicilian, having been a good tenor, her Roman mother a noted prima donna. The opera company to which they belonged happened to be in Madrid when Adelina was born (February 19, 1843), and three years later they followed an Italian impresario to New York, where she was brought up. Thus it came to pass that like so many who come to America as children, she came to look on English as her mother tongue. She did not, however, forget her Italian, and she also learned to speak French, Spanish, and German fluently, although she did not, like operatic artists of to-day, need these languages on the stage, as she nearly always sang in Italian.

It cost her little effort to learn them—and less effort to learn music. To Dr. Hanslick she gave, in 1877, the following concise account of her childhood days:

An ear for music, a gift for song and delight in it, came to me surprisingly early, wherefore I received as a mere

child lessons in singing from my stepbrother, piano lessons from my sister Carlotta. . . . Thus we lived—three sisters and a young and recently married brother, Carlo Patti—in New York with our parents, in peace and free from care. As a little child I was already possessed by a frantic love of music and the theatre. I sat in the opera-house every evening when my mother sang; every melody, every gesture, was impressed on me indelibly. When the performance was over and I had been taken home and put to bed, I got up again stealthily, and by the light of the night lamp played over all the scenes I had seen. A red-lined mantle belonging to my father and an old hat of my mother's trimmed with feathers served me as material for diverse costumes, and thus I acted, danced, twittered through all the operas, barefooted, but romantically attired. . . .

A stroke of bad luck suddenly fell upon us. The impresario became bankrupt and disappeared without paying the salaries due, the company was disbanded, and there was no more Italian opera. My parents found themselves without income; we were a large family, and thus want and distress soon made themselves felt. My father carried one thing after another to the pawnshop, and knew not on many a day what we were to live on the next. But I knew little of all this and sang on from morning till night. This at last attracted my father's attention and suggested to him that possibly I might, with my clear child-voice, save the family from the worst distress. And, thank Heaven, I did so. Only seven years old, I was asked to appear as a concert singer, and I did it with all the joy and *naïveté* of a child. I was placed in the concert hall on a table near the piano, in order that the hearers might be able to *see* the little doll, too, and there was no lack of these, or of applause. And do you know *what* I sang? That is the most remarkable thing of all: nothing but florid arias, first among them *Una voce poco fa* from the *Barber*, with the same embellishments exactly that I use to-day, and other coloratura pieces. I had the joy of seeing the pawned

clothes and jewels come back one after another, and contentment and comfort prevailed once more in our home.*

Her mother was a sensible woman; she taught Adelina dressmaking, for, she said, "a voice is easily lost and the operatic stage is the most uncertain bread-winner"—a maxim which every stage aspirant should take to heart.

In course of the next two years the little girl gave three hundred concerts, not only in the cities of the United States, but in Mexico and Cuba; her concert in Santiago was interrupted by an earthquake, and there were plenty of adventures elsewhere. It was then decided to let her voice have a rest for a few years.

The concerts referred to were under the management of Maurice Strakosch, who married Patti's older sister Amalia. Subsequently Strakosch entered into partnership with B. Ullmann, impresario of the Italian Opera in New York. This gave Adelina the desired opportunity. She was eager to make her début in opera, but she scorned the idea of appearing in a rôle of minor importance: *prima donna*, that is, first woman, or nothing, was her motto.

Ullmann at first hesitated, but on November 24, 1859, the sixteen-year-old Patti was heard for the first time in public in an operatic rôle—Lucia, with great success. The *Barber of Seville* and *La Sonnambula* followed soon. In the next year other American cities were visited, and on May 14, 1861, she made her début in London. The result of this was that at the second appearance the audience, the excitement, and the enthusiasm were as great as in the days of Jenny Lind.

The record of the rest of her career is simply a long series of stage triumphs. The accent may be placed on

* *Musikalische Stationen*, von Eduard Hanslick. Berlin: Hofmann & Co., 1880.

the "long" as well as on the "triumphs." It is almost ludicrous to note Dr. Hanslick's exclamation, written in 1879: "Her eternal youth borders on the miraculous"; and then to read what the *London Telegraph* remarked anent her appearance at a Ganz concert *twenty-nine years later* (May, 1908): "Need it be said that the diva, whose first contribution to the program was the immortal *Voi che sapete*, delighted her admirers yet again, and that they knew not how to make enough of her? As the result, Mozart's famous air was supplemented by *Pur dicesti*, in which the shakes were compassed with all the old-time perfection of finish, while Gounod's *Serenade*—with the violin obligato played by Mischa Elman—proved on the singer's lips a thing of such irresistible charm that nothing would content her hearers but a repetition of the song. Later in the afternoon came Tosti's *Serenata*, and, even after so many favors, the audience would not suffer Madame Patti to depart until she had recalled countless former triumphs by giving them *Home, Sweet Home*, sung once again with that perfect feeling for its tender sentiment which has never failed to stir her hearers to the depths of their nature. Madame Patti's voice was better than it has been for years, and it was therefore a matter of course that a marvellously beautiful and inspiring performance should arouse immense enthusiasm. But even those best accustomed to the Patti ovations of the past have seldom seen a more thrilling outburst of homage than that evoked by yesterday's magnificent display of art."

Thus, for nearly a decade more than half a century has Adelina Patti been able to arouse the enthusiasm of the public and the critics. What is the secret of this longevity of her voice?

It lies in this, that she never abused it and always took good care of her health, resisting the temptations to self-indulgence which her great wealth abundantly afforded

her. She carefully avoided vocal overexertion and excess of any kind. In her own words: "Never in my whole career have I sung oftener than three times a week, and to this precaution I attribute my many years of success."

Lilli Lehmann says in her excellent book, *How to Sing*, that "in Adelina Patti everything was united—the splendid voice, paired with great talent for singing, and the long oversight of her studies by her distinguished teacher Strakosch. She never sang rôles that did not suit her voice; in her earlier years she sang only arias and duets, or single solos, never taking part in ensembles. She never sang even her limited repertory when she was indisposed. She never attended rehearsals, but came to the theatre in the evening and sang triumphantly, without ever having seen the persons who sang and acted with her. She spared herself rehearsals, which, on the day of the performance or the day before, exhaust all singers because of the excitement of all kinds attending them, and which contribute neither to the freshness of the voice nor to the joy of the profession. . . .

"All was absolutely good, correct, and flawless, the voice like a bell that you seemed to hear long after its singing had ceased.

"Yet she could give no explanation of her art, and answered all her colleagues' questions concerning it with an '*Ah, je n'en sais rien*' (I know nothing about it)."

It must not be supposed that, since the exercise of her art came to her so easily, Patti did not have to work at all. Lessons she got in her childhood, as we have seen, from members of her family, and these, as she says, were quite systematic. Strakosch also aided her, but not to the extent generally supposed. To cite her own words: "The only rôle I learned with him is Rosina in the *Barber*; subsequently when, as an expert singer, I travelled in Europe, he went through my rôles with me." One of her biogra-

phers * makes the curious assertion that Strakosch often took her place at rehearsals: "He has gone so far as to sing her part at rehearsals; the initiated have often seen him transformed into Rosina, Lucia, or Amina, replying in character and taking part in a love duet."

Throughout her career Patti kept up her exercises, but, of course, they were easy compared to those which less fortunately endowed artists have to submit to. "Her vocal organs," wrote Hanslick in 1879, "which she has managed with such consummate skill since her childhood, and with the instinctive certainty with which the rest of us perform an ordinary action, hardly need any more practice. Patti exercises solfeggios daily for half an hour, mostly *mezza voce;* the rôles themselves she does not go over. Never does she practise facial expression or gestures before the mirror, because, as she thinks, that only yields grimaces (*singeries*)."

The same Viennese critic, who knew her well and had many talks with her, speaks of some of the remarkable things she was able to do. Her memory was amazing. She learned a new rôle thoroughly by softly singing it two or three times, and what she had once learned and sung in public she never forgot; so that it was not necessary for her to take the scores in her trunk when she was on tour. Equally remarkable was her sense of pitch. Hanslick was present once when she sang the jewel aria from *Faust*, which was followed by noisy demonstrations of enthusiasm lasting many minutes. Suddenly Patti, without signalling the orchestra, took up again the trill on b, the orchestra joined her in the next bar, and there was not the least difference in the pitch.

Hanslick's assertion that she always sang with pure intonation is not strictly true, for I have heard her sing off the pitch more than once; but that simply showed she is human. The dozens of performances by her I heard in

* Guy de Charnacé, in *Les Etoiles du Chant*. Paris, 1868.

the Academy of Music, New York, convinced me that she was above most singers of her class—a model, especially to her Italian countrywomen—in so far as she avoided all claptrap display not prescribed in her part, such as abnormally sustained high tones, interminable trills, arbitrary tempo, and explosive final notes.

Her evident relish of her own work and of stage life in general has been one of the secrets of her success. To be sure, she enjoyed the great advantage of being entirely free from nervousness. Even when, as a child of seven, she first appeared as a concert singer, or at sixteen, on the operatic stage, she was, by her own testimony, absolutely ignorant of what stage fright means.

Such are the good points of Patti and the advantages she enjoyed. Unlike Jenny Lind, moreover, she had great personal beauty, and beauty is a joy forever, on the stage as well as off.

As previously stated, Adelina Patti earned in the course of four decades and a half about $3,750,000. Inasmuch as charity is a virtue but not a duty, it would be foolish to chide her for investing a part of her enormous earnings in a splendid castle in Wales instead of founding schools and hospitals, as Lind did. Moreover, she has sung on numerous occasions in aid of meritorious charities, especially in England and Wales, the hospitals of Swansea, Brecon, and Neath, in particular, owing her a debt of gratitude.

That there is one blot on her artistic character cannot be denied. She asked so much for her services, particularly in America (where Mapleson had to pay her $5,000 in advance for each appearance), that it was often impossible to engage good singers for the other parts in an opera, which was thus apt to be bungled except so far as her own share in it was concerned. This showed a reprehensible lack of consideration for the composers as well as the audiences. In the words of La Mara, "she did not regard her artistic mission, like

Pauline Garcia or Jenny Lind, with the holy zeal of a prophet who is impelled to proclaim the exalted gospel of art."

Fault was often found with Patti, especially in the last two decades of her stage career, for confining herself to the old-fashioned "prima-donna operas"; but this criticism was injudicious; she was wise in doing what she could do best. There was a time when she was not so wise; a time when a misdirected ambition made her regard her specialty almost with contempt and aspire to things that were beyond her. She was perfection itself, both as actress and singer, in light comic rôles, particularly Rosina, in Rossini's *Barber of Seville*; Norina, in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*; Zerlina, in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. But this did not satisfy her. "I am no buffa!" she once said to Hanslick, tossing her head; and when he praised her Zerlina, she retorted: "I would rather sing Donna Anna, and I shall sing her yet." But when she did attempt modern dramatic parts, like Marguerite, in *Faust;* Valentine, in *The Huguenots*, Carmen, or even, Leonora, in *Il Trovatore*, she fell short of the achievements of many less famous singers.*

* Her repertory comprised altogether forty-one operas, as follows:

Verdi: *La Traviata, Il Trovatore, Ernani, Rigoletto, Aïda, Luisa Miller, Giovanna d'Arco, Les Vêpres Siciliennes, Un Ballo in Maschera.*

Rossini: *Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Semiramide, La Gazza Ladra, Otello, Mosé in Egitto.*

Donizetti: *Lucia di Lammermoor, Don Pasquale, L'Elisir d'Amore, La Figlia del Reggimento, Linda di Chamounix.*

Meyerbeer: *Les Huguenots, L'Etoile du Nord, Le Pardon de Ploërmel, Robert le Diable.*

Bellini: *La Sonnambula, I Puritani.*

Mozart: *Le Nozze di Figaro, Don Giovanni, Il Flauto Magico.*

Gounod: *Faust, Roméo et Juliette, Mireille.*

Auber: *Les Diamants de la Couronne, Fra Diavolo.*

Poniatowski: *Gelmina, Don Desiderio.*

Bizet: *Carmen.*

Flotow: *Marta.*

Ricci: *Crispino e la Comare.*

Campana: *Esmeralda.*

Lenepveu: *Velléda.*

Cohen: *Estrella.*

Her failure to reach a high level in dramatic rôles was a matter partly of temperament, partly of intellectual laziness. Arditi, who knew her from her girlhood, relates* that she could enter the room as bright as a ray of sunshine, all smiles and sweetness; " but if any one had had the misfortune to ruffle the pretty brows or thwart my Lady Wilful, her dark eyes would flash, her tiny fist would contract with anger, and clouds would speedily gather across the surface of her laughing face and burst forth in torrents of tears almost as quickly as a flash of lightning." But depth of feeling she had none. She married the Marquis de Caux, but not from affection. "Whoever saw her with the Marquis, before or after their marriage, could entertain no doubt that she did not marry him for love. She knew not love, the 'grand passion.'"

As for her intellect, the same friend of hers attests: "I have never perceived in Adelina the least interest in the higher problems of mankind—in science, politics, religion, not even in *belles lettres*." A book was seldom seen on her table, and he could not even interest her in the lightest of all forms of intellectual exercise—novel reading.

It is not of such minds, as we shall see, that great dramatic singers are made. She was no doubt, as Lenz called her, "the Paganini of vocal virtuosity"; but she did not move the deeper feelings. Berlioz heard her in 1864 as Martha, and it is of interest to read what he wrote about her.† He refers to her as the "ravissante petite Patti," and says that he sent her word that he pardoned her for having made him listen to such platitudes, but that he could do no more than that. "Fortunately there is in this opera the delicious Irish air, *The Last Rose of Summer*, which she sings with a poetic simplicity that would almost suffice, with its sweet perfume, to disinfect the rest of the score."

* *My Reminiscences*. By Luigi Arditi. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.

† *Lettres Intimes*. Paris: Calmann Lévy. 1882.

The most dramatic of all operas, those of Richard Wagner, Patti never attempted, although she became a great admirer of them in the later years of her career, being a frequent attendant at the Bayreuth festivals. She was reported as having once said that she would sing Wagner's music after she had lost her voice; but if she ever did make such a silly remark she learned to regret it, after hearing such artists as Lilli Lehmann and Jean de Reszke, who demonstrated that a beautiful voice is as necessary for a proper reproduction of the operas of Wagner as of the operas of Rossini or Mozart.

Catalani and Pasta

There is a story that Rossini once heard one of his arias sung by Patti, who so overloaded it with ornaments that he asked her sarcastically whose music she was singing. On being told shat she had sung the aria as Strakosch had taught it to her, he pronounced it a "Stracochonnerie" ("cochon" being French for pig).

It was not a polite speech to make, but it must be remembered that Rossini was a great and plain-spoken reformer who insisted on writing his own ornaments for his airs. Up to his time the Italian composers had usually supplied only the melodic thread for the singers to use for their embroideries, and there was a good deal of indignation (which to us seems comic) when the composers began to do their own embroidering. "Poor *Italy!*" wrote Tosi, "pray tell me: do not the Singers nowadays know where the *Appoggiaturas* are to be made, unless they are pointed at with a finger? In my Time their own Knowledge showed it them. Eternal Shame to him who first introduced these foreign Puerilities into our Nation." *

* See the *Observations on Florid Song* of Pier Francesco Tosi. London, 1743. Pp. 39, 88.

In Patti's day it was no longer the rule for singers to do their own decorating of arias; during the greater part of her career she confined herself generally to the notes set down by the composers. Her success, moreover, was due quite as much to the luscious beauty of her voice and her polished singing of sustained melodies, unadorned, as to her agile execution of embellishments. To see the old-style florid song in full bloom we must go back a few generations.

The career of Angelica Catalani, who was born in 1780, gives us a good view of the operatic ideals which prevailed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

There is a tradition that Catalani, after hearing Sontag, said: "She is the first in her style, but her style is not the first." If she really said this, she condemned her own specialty, for it was the same as Sontag's—the florid style. Sontag sometimes appropriated passages suitable for the violin or the piano rather than for the voice, but Catalani made a habit of this; in fact, it was *the secret of her success with the public.* To such an extent did she indulge in instrumental vocalism that the Parisians called her "l'instrument Catalani"—a queer sort of a compliment for a singer!

"She is fond of singing variations on some well-known simple air," wrote Lord Mount Edgcumbe, "and latterly has pushed this task to the very height of absurdity by singing, even without words, variations composed for the fiddle."

It is nothing against Catalani that, as one writer says, "she was a florid singer, and nothing but a florid singer, whether grave or airy, in the church, orchestra, or upon the stage"; for one can be a florid singer and still be a model of good taste, as we can see in the case of Patti or Sembrich; but Catalani had no artistic conscience; she was ready to do any circus trick to win applause. "Her principal pleasure was in the most extravagant and bizarre show-

pieces, such, for example, as variations composed for the violin on popular airs like *God Save the King*, *Rule Britannia*, *Cease Your Funning*."

She carried her departure from the true limits of art to such an outrageous degree as to draw on her head the severest reprobation of all good judges, though the public listened to her wonderful execution with unbounded delight and astonishment.* She not only sang music written for fiddle or flute, but sometimes chose real songs that were utterly unsuitable for a woman's voice; and at times she tried to sing so loudly as to overpower the orchestra, with all the brasses.

An English magazine writer gives this picture of her: "When she begins one of the interminable roulades up the scale, she gradually raises her body, which she had before stooped to almost a level with the ground, until, having won her way with a quivering lip and chattering chin to the very top-most note, she tosses back her head and all its nodding feathers with an air of triumph; then suddenly falls to a note two octaves and a half lower with incredible *aplomb*, and smiles like a victorious Amazon over a conquered enemy."

Her really sublime egotism is illustrated by an anecdote concerning an eminent Hamburg musician who severely criticised her vocal tricks. She shrugged her beautiful shoulders and retorted that he was an "impious man; for, when God has given to a mortal so extraordinary a talent as I possess, people ought to applaud and honor it as a miracle; it is profane to depreciate the gifts of Heaven."

Personally, she was admired for the purity of her private conduct, "amid scenes and temptations where numbers would have made shipwreck of all but professional fame"; and she was also noted for her generosity. This, however,

* *Great Singers*. By George T. Ferris. New York: D. Appleton. 1880.

did not extend to managers and audiences. Like Patti, and even more so, she insisted on being "the whole show" herself, when justice to the opera, to its composer, and to the hearers demanded a respectable ensemble. When a manager complained that the sum asked by her made it impossible for him to employ other artists of talent, her husband replied: "Talent! have you not Mme. Catalani? What would you have? If you want an opera company, my wife with four or five puppets is quite sufficient."

When she first appeared in England, the eminent tenor Braham was in the same company, but "her jealousy soon rid her of so brilliant a competitor." "She would bear no rival," wrote Lord Mount Edgcumbe, "nor any singer sufficiently good to divide the applause."

She was amazingly ignorant of everything not relating to music; nor was her knowledge of that more than superficial. She could not read a new song at sight, but had to learn it by playing it over on the piano.

As a partial excuse for her manner of singing, it might be maintained that it was not until she applied herself to the ornamental style that she succeeded, having failed in her attempts with sustained and dramatic song.

One of her unique tricks, which always astonished her audiences, is described as an undulating tone like that of a musical glass, higher than the highest notes on the pianos of her day. It began with an inconceivably fine tone, which gradually swelled in volume till it made the ears vibrate. "It particularly resembled the highest note of the nightingale, that is reiterated each time more intensely, and which with a sort of ventriloquism seems scarcely to proceed from the same bird that a moment before poured his delicate warblings at an interval so disjointed."

There is one more respect in which Catalani's career provides food for thought. She undertook for a time to

direct the Théâtre Italien in Paris, but made a failure of it—the usual result when musicians try to be managers.

Her quondam tenor, Braham, made the same mistake. He spent over £60,000 in buying the Colosseum and building the St. James's Theatre, with the consequence that he had to go on the stage again at a time when he should have enjoyed the fruits of his labors in peace. Handel, Lucca, Ilma di Murska, and Italo Campanini are four more conspicuous instances of musicians who would have been wiser to stick to their lasts.

From Catalani—whose chief defect was a lack of artistic conscience—it is a pleasure to turn to another Italian singer of infinitely greater artistic respectability—Giuditta Pasta. Though born only eighteen years later than Catalani, she is much more modern in taste, aspirations, and achievements. She deserves our commendation the more because she had to work like a beaver to attain the eminence she aimed at. At the age of eighteen (she was born in 1798, near Milan) she was for a time in Catalani's opera company without attracting favorable attention; in fact, she was a failure. Her voice was originally of limited compass, weak and husky, and her awkward gestures and general lack of grace presaged anything but the famous actress she was destined to become. Realizing her failure, she retired from the stage temporarily to study with a famous singing master named Scappa. She never succeeded in quite equalizing her tones, and there were times when she sang out of tune; but such defects were forgotten in her art of imparting "to every passage a significance beyond the reach of more spontaneous singers," as Chorley, the eminent London critic, put it. "The true secret of her greatness was in the intellect and imagination which lay behind the voice, and made every tone quiver with dramatic sensibility."

By dint of hard work she succeeded in extending the

compass of her voice to two octaves and a half, and in greatly improving its quality, giving it richness and power; its flexibility, also, was so much increased that she became famous as a florid singer; but she showed her good taste by refraining, except in rare cases, from adding to the ornaments provided by the composers. She overcame the harshness of her high tones and made of her lower register a medium for the expression of passion in a manner unprecedented on the operatic stage. Her recitative and her declamation were so realistic, so emotional, that she made her audiences forget the artificial conventionalities of opera. "Her accents were so plaintive, so penetrating, so profoundly tragical, that no one could resist their influence."

As an operatic actress, Pasta opened a new epoch. To her, says Sutherland Edwards,* "belongs the credit of having introduced genuine acting into opera. Before Pasta's time the Italian singers contented themselves with the conventional expression, the mechanical gesticulation by which operatic singing will be always more or less disfigured, so difficult is it to find vocal and histrionic talent combined in the same artist. But when Pasta had once shown how beautiful music might be rendered intensely dramatic, the singers of her time were obliged, as best they could, to follow her example."

Her dramatic art saved Bellini's *Norma* from being a failure when first produced in London. For her Bellini wrote his *Sonnambula;* this, however, though she made it famous, gave her histrionic power less scope than Rossini's *Otello*, in which she aroused the most extraordinary enthusiasm, not only on the part of the public but of the professionals, including the critics. Her skill as an actress

* *The Prima Donna: Her History and Surroundings, from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries.* By H. Sutherland Edwards. Two vols. London: Remington & Co. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

was most eloquently attested by the great Talma in these words: "Here is a woman of whom I can still learn. One turn of her beautiful head, one glance of her eye, one light motion of her hand, is, with her, sufficient to express a passion. She can raise the soul of the spectator to the highest pitch of astonishment by one tone of her voice. *O Dio!* as it comes from her breast, swelling over her lips, is of indescribable effect."

It is gratifying to record that while Pasta never stooped to conquer the masses, as Catalani did, she was no less successful in earning big emoluments. Her operatic salary alone was at one time £14,000 ($70,000) a year. Wiser than most prima donnas, she deposited her savings in a bank instead of squandering them, but, unfortunately, she chose the wrong bank. It failed, and, like so many others, she had to reappear on the stage after her voice had lost its charm. But even then the consummate artist was recognizable. When Viardot-Garcia heard her the last time, she compared her to Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper": "A wreck of a picture, but the picture is the greatest in the world."

Tetrazzini: A Musical Mystery

A modern Pasta would doubtless delight all opera-goers. Would a Catalani do the same? Not all of them. The critics would rend her savagely, yet she would probably have large and enthusiastic audiences. The general public loves florid song as much as ever.

In summing up the results of the spring and summer season of opera in London (1908) the critics agreed that a great success had been won by Miss Destinn, the dramatic soprano of the Royal Opera in Berlin, but that nevertheless the chief honors went to Mme. Melba and Mme. Tetrazzini. The latter represent the florid style of singing.

The submarine cables almost melted from the glowing accounts of their triumphs. When Mme. Melba celebrated the twentieth anniversary of her début in London (on June 24, 1908), society, headed by the King and Queen, filled the house; and when the prima donna came to the tremendous piece of virtuosity which brings the first act of *La Traviata* to a close, "the audience," according to one of the London journalists, "held its breath." The reporter adds:

Her vocal gymnastics were simply amazing, and her own intense enjoyment of them was delightful. Up and down the scale she went, in trills and runs and roulades, and when she ended, like a fireworks display, with a brilliant shower of golden notes, the whole house rose and applauded with all its might.

When Luisa Tetrazzini made her début in London, in the autumn of 1907, she created a sensation such as few singers have ever achieved. This achievement she repeated in New York a few months later; she saved the season at the Manhattan Opera House, and the newspapers had pages about her career and her art. Her second engagement in London proved no less successful. Yet she is by no means a singer of the rank of Patti, Melba, or Sembrich, her voice being perfect only in its top register. Nor is she remarkable as an actress. That she should have created so extraordinary a sensation is certainly strange, if not mysterious; but this is not the mystery we have in mind at present.

That mystery is of much wider scope. It is the mystery of florid music in general. Why have the composers of all countries given up writing such music when the public at large evidently likes it better than anything else, demands it with applausive violence, and showers diamonds on the

Pattis and Sembrichs, the Melbas and Tetrazzinis who provide it?

The Italians who founded opera, three centuries ago, had high ideals. They were so anxious that the hearers should understand the words to which the music had been wedded that they deliberately avoided not only ornament, but even melody (Caccini boasted of his "noble contempt" for it), using instead of it a dry, tuneless recitative. But the public soon tired of that sort of thing, and the shrewd composers, willing to please, began to supply not only tunes but highly ornamented arias, which the singers still further embroidered in a most lavish style. This fashion continued throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; even great masters like Handel and Mozart were compelled to bow to the will of the public. Gluck raised a protest, but it had little effect except in Paris, where Rameau had prepared the ground for him. It was not till Beethoven, Weber, and Wagner came forward and stubbornly refused to cater to the demand for meaningless staccati, trills, rapid scales, cadenzas, explosive and long-drawn-out high tones, that the spell was broken.

And now happened a strange thing—a phenomenon belying the teachings of the economists regarding demand and supply. All the composers of all countries, the great as well as the small, followed in the footsteps of the men just named, defied the paying public, and contemptuously and persistently ignored its eager demand for ornamental music. In the German operas since Wagner, including those of Humperdinck and D'Albert, you will listen in vain for florid airs; you will not hear them in the popular operas of modern Frenchmen; Gounod employed them very sparingly; Bizet not at all; florid music is not to be found in the works of Charpentier, of Bruneau, of Saint-Saëns; while the latest of the Frenchmen, Debussy, eschews not only all ornaments, but has gone back to the

recitative of the first opera composers. Stranger still, the Italians, who originated florid music and for centuries enraptured all the world with it, also have given it up completely. Verdi, in his early operas, still made some use of it, but when his genius matured and he came to write *Aïda*, *Otello*, and *Falstaff*, he avoided it as scrupulously as Wagner or Debussy; and all the young Italians followed his example. In the operas of Mascagni and Leoncavallo, of Boïto and Puccini, and their colleagues, the decorative style known as colorature is absolutely tabooed. Why?

In the reminiscences of Spaun we read how Schubert used to be delighted by the vocal art of the prima donna Milder (for whom Beethoven wrote the rôle of Fidelio). One evening, after a performance of a Gluck opera, he went to a tavern with a friend, the poet Mayrhofer. Their enthusiastic discourse was rudely interrupted by another man present, who declared that it was disgraceful to engage a singer like Milder, as she "could sing no runs or trills." This was too much for the enthusiasts. Schubert jumped up and gave this lover of florid song a piece of his mind as to what true singing meant.

Another anecdote. The "violin King," Joachim, was once asked why he had so little sympathy with the admirers of a certain prima donna who was famous for her *fioriture*. Upon which he gave this answer: "What would you have? Here have I been endeavoring all my life to imitate on the violin the exquisite tones of the human voice; this singer, on the contrary, only seeks to imitate my violin."

These two anecdotes explain why persons of musical culture, as a rule, do not care for colorature, and also why great modern composers like Wagner and the mature Verdi dispensed with it. But why do men like Mascagni and Leoncavallo, who are making such frantic efforts to catch the public ear, avoid it? Both have tried to write like Wagner, like the modern Frenchmen, and, of course,

like the Italians, old and new; but one thing they have avoided—the florid style; and in that exception lies the mystery.

Why should not composers of the rank of Mascagni and Leoncavallo construct arias trimmed with the baubles the public likes so much? In literature, in all the other arts, the public gets what it wants *in an up-to-date guise.* But in music it is obliged to put up with stale, silly operas, the very names of which make one yawn, for the sake of hearing the beloved Melba, Sembrich, or Tetrazzini. It is useless to tell the public that florid music is less artistic than dramatic song; you might as well warn it against reading the journals it likes best. After all, it is no crime to take delight in vocal arpeggios, long-drawn-out trills, rapid diatonic scales, and Eifel-tower tones; and it must always be remembered that a Viardot, a Lehmann, a Calvé can put soul even into such things. Therefore, since we *must* have such music for the clamorous public, let us at any rate have it in new operas and with new flourishes, and let us bury that silly old *Sonnambula* and its companions for good and all.*

W. J. Henderson has aptly remarked that "if this were not a period almost barren of coloratura singers and florid music, Mme. Tetrazzini would perhaps have made less stir. One thing is certain," he adds, "and it is that in this success lies a pregnant suggestion for young singers. Those with light, flexible voices should devote themselves to florid song." It will long remain true that "the singer who can rattle off staccati faster than any one else, who can trill longer than her rivals, who can run more rapid scales, and who can reach higher notes—for her the honor, the glory, the corsage bouquets torn from fair bosoms, and the ever-to-be desired upward flight of the salary."

* Goldmark may have had this view in mind when he composed his opera *A Winter's Tale*, in which florid airs are introduced.

At the same time it must be borne in mind that the modern operatic repertory calls chiefly for dramatic singers, and that in the florid field only those of sensational endowments can at present hope to succeed. The florid singer has no big orchestra to help her out in weak moments, as the dramatic singer has; a failure on her part is, therefore, the more conspicuous. Another disadvantage is that she is obliged to bear the whole burden on her shoulders, having to appear in operas which for the most part would have long ago been shelved but for the popular prima donnas who appear in them. Of Rossini's 39 operas only two have survived; of Donizetti's 67, only three or four; of Bellini's 11, only one. And there is a limit to the weight which even these singers can bear. Tetrazzini, on the top wave of her popularity, could not in New York revive popular interest in Meyerbeer's *Dinorah* or Bellini's *I Puritani*, and similar failures are on record in the activities of her leading rivals.

One rather amusing instance may be cited from my days of critical storm and stress (1896–7):

"There was a time—not so very long ago—when composers of the first rank were obliged to write operas to order for prima donnas, just as tailors make garments for society women. Even Mozart and Rossini had to submit to this tyrannic custom early in their career. *Semiramide* is an opera of this type, its only excuse for existence being that it gives two or three singers a chance to show off their vocal agility, as was the case last night when the cast included Mme. Melba, Mme. Scalchi, and M. Edouard de Reszke. Mme. Melba and M. de Reszke sang admirably, yet the audience was not large, nor did it ever warm up sufficiently to clamor for an encore. In truth, it was a funereal entertainment, the severest criticism on which was the stampede of the audience. Half the boxes and rows of seats in the parquet were empty before the end of the opera, although

that came at the very early hour of 10.50. It is to be hoped that this is the last experiment to revive this hopelessly antiquated opera. *Semiramide*, like other works of its class, was not intended to be listened to from beginning to end. The Italians for whom it was written chatted and ate ices except when a florid aria or duo was turned on. When Rossini produced this opera he was accused of imitating the Germans, because he smothered the voices 'by the overwhelming weight of the orchestra'! The charge is as amusing as Rossini's utter disregard of the dramatic spirit of the play in his music. The chorus, for instance, which is sung when the ghost of Ninus appears, would lead one to infer that a picnic was going on. The opera was well enough staged, but it should not be staged at all. *Requiescat in pace.*"

But let us return to Tetrazzini and discuss the secret of her success. It lay in part, as already intimated, in the rarity of good colorature singers to-day and in the public's abiding love for that sort of thing. In part it lay in the astonishing ease with which she executed the most difficult feats of vocalization in the highest position and the beauty of her tones in that position. Not infrequently there issues from her throat a group of notes that move a sensitive listener to tears by their sheer sensuous beauty. Nor is her singing without warmth. She realizes the importance of the heart as an ally of the throat. "Remember this," she said one day to a reporter of the *New York Sun:* "You can train the voice. You can take the raw material and make of it a finished product; not so the heart. It is there or it is not there; if it is not there you will never move an audience to tears. You will never find sympathy responding to your lack of sympathy; tears to a tearless voice, never!"

Unlike most singers, Mme. Tetrazzini never suffers from stage fright. She began to sing when she was three

years old. The faculty of imitation had something to do with her becoming an artist. Her older sister was an artist whose success fired her ambition. The parents thought one prima donna was enough for any family. She thought differently. "If one prima donna is good, why would not two be better?" She studied hard with Professor Coccherini for six months and then he told her he could teach her nothing more.

"I have never," she continued, "had any active training and teaching since those days, but the fact that, as he said, he could teach me nothing more did not mean that I had nothing more to learn, for after the doors of the Lycée are closed behind one and the farewells to the teacher are said comes the hardest work of all, the work that one has to teach oneself, that no one can impart, the education in one's profession that comes through the individual herself."

It would have been better, one feels, had Professor Coccherini known enough to teach her longer than six months. She might have been able, perhaps, to secure that equality of tonal beauty in all registers which was the greatest of Patti's vocal charms. It is significant that after the severe criticisms to which she was subjected when she first appeared in New York, she evidently began to cultivate her voice more carefully, for in the following season the inequality in her tones was much less noticeable.

She does not practise during a season except when learning new rôles. In the matter of diet she avoids highly spiced dishes and finds all greasy foods very bad for the vocal cords.

Her favorite opera is *Lucia*, doubtless because in that she finds the public most enthusiastic over her art. "I try," she said to the *Sun's* reporter, "to phrase my part according to the meaning of the words"; and this she does

even in florid music: "At the end of *Ah, fors e lui* (*La Traviata*), which is so much admired by the New York people, the upward trill I endeavor to make express the hysterical feeling of Violetta."

V

TWO SPANISH SISTERS

PAULINE VIARDOT-GARCIA

ONCE upon a time Mozart's *Don Giovanni* was chosen for performance at Florence, Italy, but after thirty-six rehearsals it was given up as beyond the powers of singers and players. The same thing happened in 1862–3 to Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, which was given up in Vienna after fifty-four rehearsals. "Ever since the first postponement of the *Tristan* rehearsals," Wagner wrote, "the musical press of Vienna had found its favorite occupation in the attempt to prove that my work could not possibly be performed under any circumstances. That no singer could hit on my notes, or remember them—this assertion became the motto of all who wrote and spoke about me in any part of Germany." Then he contrasts with this an experience he had in Paris when *Mme. Viardot-Garcia sang a whole act of* Isolde *at sight!*

To-day, when Wagner's operas are sung everywhere, it is somewhat difficult to realize what a feat that was. There was no malice in the attitude of the Viennese singers, as Wagner suspected. Von Hülsen, the manager of the Berlin Opera, wrote to Eduard Devrient for information as to why *Tristan* had been given up in Vienna, and Devrient told him in detail about the persistent and vain attempts, with his best singers, to master Wagner's difficult vocal style, adding that the opera had also been given up

as impossible in two other cities; and Franz Dingelstedt wrote to Hülsen from Weimar in a similar strain, declaring that in Liszt's opinion the second act would have to be revised and that Wagner himself was convinced of the same thing.

Yet Pauline Viardot-Garcia sang that act at sight, not only correctly, but in such a way as to impress the composer! And she was not a trained Wagner singer. The thoroughness of her art could not have been more strikingly illustrated.

She was the sister of the greatest singing teacher the world has ever known, Manuel Garcia, who died in 1906, aged one hundred and two; the sister also of Malibran, one of the greatest contraltos of the nineteenth century, and the father of these three exceptionally talented musicians was Manuel del Popolo Vicente Garcia, renowned as tenor, teacher, and composer.

It seemed as if Spain, in despair at never having given birth to a composer of the first rank, had made a supreme effort with the Garcia family to place herself at any rate in the front rank as the birthplace of singers and teachers —and with brilliant success!

Pauline's father was, in the words of Liszt,* "the perfect type of an impassioned, fiery singer, of boundless talent and vitality, with imagination, warmth, and artistic vigor." Her mother, too, was a noted stage singer, and her sister Maria, who subsequently became famous under the name of her first husband, Malibran, was already winning laurels in Paris when she herself was a child of three. Like the Patti family, the Garcias tried their operatic fortune in European cities and then in America. At first with indifferent success. Then they went to Mexico, where Pauline got her first piano lessons. Here her

* Essay on Pauline Viardot-Garcia, in his *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band III.

father won a fortune, but when about to return to Europe a band of robbers attacked his company and took all his earnings—$30,000. To add insult to injury, they made Garcia sing for them—the Mexicans are so fond of music!

It was from her mother that Pauline got her singing lessons; but on their return from Mexico to Paris she began, as a child of eight, to play the piano for her father when he gave lessons to others. Concerning this she once wrote to La Mara: "I believe I profited more by this than the pupils themselves." That she was a good accompanist may be inferred from the fact that Liszt, a few years later, accepted her as a pupil; and at the age of fifteen she played in public—so well that Moscheles hailed her as a colleague.

When training her voice she seemed to find the given exercises insufficiently difficult and wrote solfeggios to suit herself. George Sand, who used her as a model for the heroine of her *Consuelo*, spoke of her as "one of those rare, fortunate individuals to whom work is a delight, a recreation, nay, an indispensable normal condition, while inactivity would be to her an exhausting effort, a morbid state, were she capable of it."

Versatility is the key-note of Viardot's artistic character. Her first triumphs were won in the ornate operas of Rossini; Liszt declared that among all the charming Rosinas (in *Il Barbiere*) on the stage none quite equalled her either as a singer or an actress. Then she appeared as Fides, in Meyerbeer's *Prophète*, and astonished the Parisians by her dramatic realism and force. And again she chose an entirely different style, appearing in Gluck's *Orpheus* with such amazing success that this opera, which had been neglected by the Parisians for thirty years, was given 150 times to crowded audiences.

"This is divinely beautiful," wrote Berlioz, the Gluck enthusiast; and the other musicians followed suit. "She makes every rôle a unique occurrence in the history of

singing," said Theodore Pelloquet. And not only the musicians lost their heads. "Did not," exclaims La Mara, "De Musset and Turgenieff sing of her, George Sand and Liszt sketch her portrait with poetic pen, as Ary Scheffer painted it in colors and Millet formed it in marble? Did not Meyerbeer, Gounod, Berlioz write music for her? Did not the list of her friends include Rossini, Chopin, Chorley, Delacroix, Adelaide Ristori, Henry Martin, Renan, Manin, and many others?"

One phase of Mme. Viardot's versatility was that she was a society queen. She spoke the leading European languages fluently; famous men and women from all countries attended her social gatherings in Paris and at Baden-Baden, at which the King and Queen of Prussia, the Grand Duke and Duchess of Baden also were to be seen frequently. As a composer, too, she won some distinction. Some of her operettas were sung at her residence at Baden-Baden, and while her own songs are not known to the public to-day, her arrangements of Chopin's mazurkas for the voice are frequently heard. And, finally, she gave young students the benefit of her art and experience by teaching.

Among her famous pupils were Pauline Lucca, Desirée-Artôt, Marianne Brandt, Schröder-Hanfstängl, Aglaja Orenji, Bianca Bianchi, Antoinette Sterling, and Mathilde Phillips.

Mme. Viardot is still living (1909). Her voice is gone, but what made it so great—her brilliant mind—is with her still, and, as in the days of her operatic triumphs, all artistic and literary Paris is at her feet. Nor has she ceased to teach and to compose.

Maria Malibran

While Pauline Viardot is hale and active at the age of seventy-seven, and her brother Manuel lived one hundred and two years, their brilliant sister Maria did not survive her twenty-eighth year; yet she crowded into those few years more glory and romance than any other singer the world has ever known.

Not a few music teachers have been notorious for their rudeness, but the elder Garcia probably takes the palm in this respect. It is related that in giving lessons to his children he sometimes beat them till they screamed. When the shrieks became so loud as to arrest passers-by, the neighbors would calm them with the remark: "It is only Monsieur Garcia teaching his daughters to sing."

In referring to this strict discipline, Maria once said: "Father's eyes are so powerful that under their influence I could jump from the fifth floor to the street without suffering injury."

Her fear of him once contributed materially to her success. The manager of the Italian opera in New York demanded unexpectedly a performance of Rossini's *Otello*, in which Garcia was reputed to be at his best in the title rôle. Maria, then seventeen years old, was cast for Desdemona, but as she had had little time to prepare herself for the part she refused to take it; her father, however, compelled her to go on and threatened, in case she did not do her best, to use his weapon—a real dagger. In the last scene, which he was wont to play very realistically, she suddenly remembered his threat, and exclaimed in great anguish: "Padre, padre, por Dios no me mate" (Father, father, for God's sake, do not kill me). The audience took her real fear for the perfection of histrionic art—doubly marvellous in one so young—and applauded wildly.

Garcia, on his part, maintained that his severe treatment of his daughter was a necessity because of her wilful, unbridled character. She was certainly wont to indulge in the wildest pranks and to take the most imprudent risks with her voice. After singing till one o'clock at night she would not hesitate to go to the drawing-room of a society leader and sing songs till three o'clock, yet at nine in the morning one could see her taking her exercise on horseback in the Bois de Boulogne. It was her passion for horseback-riding that caused her early death. One morning she insisted on mounting a young and fiery steed, and was thrown and dragged on the ground. Her face was mutilated and she suffered a concussion of the brain; yet she stubbornly insisted in going on with her operatic and concert performances at a festival in Manchester, England, with fatal results.

Without being a beauty, Malibran fascinated spectators by her appearance; she knew particularly well how to improve her looks by skilful hair-dressing. She had a fine form, and her devotion to gymnastics and sport gave her the health which is half the battle in a singer's life. Like Schröder-Devrient, she was a pioneer in the art of dressing an operatic part as it should be. "She was thoroughly realistic," wrote Moscheles, "and in her dress and movements despised everything conventional. Thus, in the sleep-walking scene [*Sonnambula*], unlike other great representatives of the part, whose muslin *négligé* would have suited any lady, she adopted the *bonâ-fide* nightcap of the peasant girl and the loose garment of a sleeper; her *tricot* stockings were so transparent as to veil her feet but imperfectly."

Like her sister, she had a thorough knowledge of music, apart from the art of singing, and she also composed. A collection of her songs appeared in Paris with the title: *Dernières Pensées Musicales de Maria-Félicità Garcia de*

Bériot. This was her name in the last year of her life, when she married the eminent Belgian violinist Charles de Bériot. The name Malibran, by which she became famous, was that of a French merchant in New York whom she married by command of her father, who believed him to be very wealthy. She remained with him only a short time, and subsequently got a divorce; but his name she made immortal—and it took her only eleven years to do it. It was in 1825, in London, that she made her operatic début, as Rosina, in the *Barber of Seville.* Her father had trained particularly the middle tones of her voice, which developed into an alto of extraordinary compass. She had the powers of a dramatic soprano combined with the flexibility and brilliancy of the coloratura specialists.

Her ambitions were not lofty; her idols were, like Patti, money and applause, and she got both in rich abundance. It is commonly supposed that high salaries are a product of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. But we have seen already that Jenny Lind earned more under Barnum's management than any of the singers engaged by Grau or Conried ever obtained for a season's work. Malibran, also, was very well paid, her terms, in her best years, having been about 2,500 francs a performance, which, considering the difference in the value of money in her day, hardly falls short of what singers of her rank now get in New York. Those emoluments she received even in Italy, the Italians being wildly enthusiastic over this Spanish artist. At Milan, in the seasons 1835–7, she got 420,000 francs for 180 appearances, besides payment of all personal expenses.

VI

THE NATIONALITY OF SINGERS

In England and America the opinion has long prevailed that nearly all the great prima donnas have come from Italy, and that students of other countries labor under a great disadvantage. They need not worry. No doubt the Italian language has a mellifluous quality which makes it particularly easy to sing in, and perhaps the Italian vocal cords are exceptionally pliable; but the history of music shows that the number of famous singers produced by Italy is not greater than that of some other countries; and what is more, the famous Italian vocalists, Catalani, Alboni, Pasta, Grisi, etc., are for the most part a mere memory to even the older ones of the present generation; and if we look at the names of prima donnas most familiar to-day we find that most of them are Polish, Austrian, German, French, English, and American. The American singer, indeed, seems destined to take the place formerly held by the Italian.

When the late Francis Hueffer, critic of the *London Times*, issued his *Half a Century of Music in England* (1889), he said: "As to the Italian school of singing, the *bel canto*, it is practically a lost art. Even on so important an occasion as the last performance of Verdi's *Otello*, at La Scala, in Milan, Italy was unable to furnish a cast of native singers; and in other countries the so-called Italian stage is invaded by a motley assembly from all quarters of the world, knowing little or nothing of Italian traditions,

and pronouncing the language of Dante and Petrarca with multifarious accents, among which the *lingua Toscana in bocca Americana* prevails."

Some years ago the eminent English composer, Cowen, withdrew his opera *Signa* from the stage at Genoa because he found it could not be properly interpreted. In his judgment "singing has so greatly deteriorated in Italy that, in the 'land of song,' it soon bids fair to be a lost art. Whether it is true that the old race of Italian teachers is extinct, or that the $2.50 a lesson of the fair Americans has demoralized them, or that the pernicious tremolo is actually cultivated by Italian masters as a vocal grace, it is certain that we now get our best vocal recruits from the United States, France, Poland, or almost anywhere else than Italy. . . . In the supply of new oratorio and other concert singers," he adds, "Great Britain and America have long enjoyed something very like a monopoly"—a fact worth remembering.

Except among the Italians in New York, who have no use for any but Italian vocalists, there is no prejudice against singers anywhere on account of their nationality. In Italy itself it does not usually exist; nor is it to be found in Paris (where the Americans, Van Zandt, Sibyl Sanderson, Emma Eames, Mary Garden, and Geraldine Farrar have been acclaimed enthusiastically); nor in the cities of Germany. In a letter to the *Musical Leader and Concert-Goer*, dated May 25, 1908, Caroline V. Kerr relates that in 1906 she could locate twenty-five Americans singing in German cities, and she then gives a list showing that in two years that number had doubled—"eloquent proof of the recognition which the American voice finds in Europe. If to this list could be added the Americans singing at present in France and Italy, it would assume far greater proportions."

The gift of song is fortunately international, as the fol-

lowing tolerably complete list of the world's most famous vocalists shows:

ITALIANS

Agujari	Faustina	Patti
Alboni	Ferri	Persiani
Bonci	Gabrielli	Piccolomini
Bosio	Galassi	Roncone
Brignoli	Grisi (two)	Rubini
Caffarelli	Lablache	Scalchi
Campanari	Marchesi	Senesino
Campanini	Mario	Tamagno
Caruso	Mingotti	Tamberlick
Catalani	Nicolini	Tamburini
Cuzzoni	Pasta	Tetrazzini
Farinelli		

GERMANS

Alvary	Knote	Schröder-Devrient
Betz	Lehmann	Schröder-Hanfstängl
Brandt	Malten	Sontag
Burrian	Mara	Stägemann
Cruvelli	Milder-Hauptmann	Stockhausen
Dippel	Morena	Sucher
Fischer, Emil	Niemann	Tichatschek
Fischer, Ludwig	Reicher-Kindermann	Trebelli
Formes, Carl	Reichmann	Vogl
Formes, Theodor	Scaria	Wachtel
Gadski	Scheidemantel	Wagner (Johanna)
Götze	Schelper	Wiegand
Kindermann	Schnorr von Carolsfeld	Wild (Franz)

AUSTRIANS

Di Murska (Croatian)	Mallinger	Schumann-Heink
Joachim, Amalie	Materna	Staudigl
Krause, Gabrielle	Mingotti	Ternina (Croatian)
Krauss-Seidl	Mitterwurzer	Wilt
Lucca	Peschka-Leutner	

French

Achard
Arnould
Artôt, Desirée
Audran
Bataille
Bréval
Calvé
Capoul
Carvalho, Caroline
Dalmores
Delmas
Dufranne
Duprez
Faure
Galli-Marié
Gilibert
Lagrange
Lassalle
Levasseur
Maurel
Nourrit
Plançon
Pouchard
Renaud
Roger
Roze, Marie
Saleza
Samel

Spanish

Colbran
Del Puente
Garcia
Malibran
Monbelli
Nau
Viardot

Bohemians

Destinn
Gura
Krolop
Pischek

Poles

Litvinne
Reszke, Jean de
Reszke, Edouard de
Sembrich

Portuguese

Todi

Hungarians

Gerster
Tietjens
Ungher-Sabatier

Scandinavians

Arnoldson
Fremstad
Lind
Nilsson
Nissen-Salomon

British, Irish, and Colonial

Albani	Davies, Ben	Melba
Billington	Davies, Ffrangcon	Philipps, Adelaide
Braham	Garden (Scotch)	Reeves
Brema	Kirkby-Lunn	Rosa, Parepa (Scotch)
Butt, Clara	Lloyd	Santley
Crossley		

Americans

Bispham	Hauck	Rider-Kelsey
Blass	Homer	Sanderson
Carey	Kellogg	Sterling
De Lussan	Martin	Van Zandt
Eames	Nevada	Walker
Farrar	Nordica	

VII

GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN SINGERS

MARA AND SONTAG

FREDERICK THE GREAT, King of Prussia, was so unpatriotic as to say that he would as soon hear the neighing of a horse as the singing of a German prima donna. But he changed his mind when he heard Gertrud Elizabeth Mara (whose maiden name was Schmeling and who was born at Kassel in 1749). Her father, hearing that the King had opened a musical institution in Berlin, took her there and tried to get an engagement for her. The King sent his favorite singer, Morelli, to hear her, and when the Italian's report was: "She sings like a German," he refused to engage her. Subsequently, however, she had an opportunity to sing for Frederick, and he was so delighted that thenceforth she had to go to Potsdam every day to entertain him; and he took such a great interest in her that he tried hard to prevent her from marrying the violoncellist Mara, whose name she has immortalized—a worthless, brutal fellow who deserved this distinction as little as "Malibran's" husband did.

For readers of this book the most important thing to know about Mara is that her example shows that with pluck and perseverance we may win success despite serious natural disadvantages. As a child she fell and was injured so seriously that she remained somewhat disabled and an invalid all her life.

She had some lessons in London, but for the most part she was self-taught. She conquered the Parisians at a time when there was a furore over the Portuguese prima donna, Luiza Rosa de Aguiar Todi. The public split into two camps—the Todists and the Maratists. Mara earned laurels in Italy, too, being engaged at Venice and Turin in 1788–91.

There is an amusing anecdote of an Italian who, like Frederick the Great, was convinced that no German could sing. A friend induced him to go to the opera when a certain famous German prima donna sang. After hearing her first air, the Italian got up to go. The friend urged him to stay, assuring him that he would soon be converted. "I know it," the Italian replied, "and that's why I go."

This prima donna was Henriette Sontag. She was born at Coblenz in 1806, but though a pure German, she seemed to have been born with an Italian throat, for her singing of Italian music was more satisfactory than that of German music, excepting that of Mozart, in which she was considered unrivalled. She herself said that "a Donna Anna over her father's corpse, a Pamina who cannot in the air '*Ach ich fuhl's*' move the public to tears, has no idea of Mozart." Mendelssohn had a high opinion of her; Weber, after hearing her in the *Donna del Lago*, offered her the title rôle in his best opera, *Euryanthe;* and Beethoven was interested in her; it was she who sang the soprano parts in his *Mass in D* and his *Ninth Symphony*, when those works were produced in 1824.

Nevertheless, it was in Italian music of the kind which required brilliancy of execution rather than expression that she was at her best. To cite the testimony of contemporaries: "The clearness of her notes, the precision of her intonation, the fertility of her invention, and the facility of her execution were displayed in brilliant flights and lavish

fioriture; her rare flexibility being a natural gift, cultivated by taste and natural study. . . . The ease with which she sang was perfectly captivating. . . . She appeared to sing with the volubility of a bird, and to experience the pleasure she imparted." And again: "All passages are alike to her, but she has appropriated some that were hitherto believed to belong to instruments—to the pianoforte and the violin, for instance."

Such a singer could not fail to arouse the enthusiasm of the Italians—who called her "the nightingale of the North"—as well as that of the Germans, the French, the Americans. In Paris, her singing of Rode's air and variations created a sensation and made "la petite Allemande" a favorite at once. In Germany the Sontag frenzy assumed such proportions that some musicians and authors felt called upon to rise in protest. Among them were Rellstab, the critic, Börne, the poet, and Hans von Bülow, the pianist. The first two recanted; Börne, in doing so, said: "She has been called the indescribable, the heavenly, the incomparable, the divine, the universally admired, the matchless, the adorable, the adored, the delicate pearl, the dear Henriette, sweetest of all maidens, darling little girl, the heroine of song, divine child, the champion of melody, the pride of Germany, the pearl of opera." And the poet adds: "I approve of all these epithets with all my heart."

Who would not be a prima donna! To be sure, Sontag was not only a sweet and brilliant singer, but a beauty, too, of the blonde type, with large eyes, delicate features, and a slender figure. Is it a wonder that everywhere, in London, Paris, Berlin, she was the courted of courtiers, all eager to marry her? But she remained true to the Sardinian Ambassador, Count Rossi, to whom she was engaged, till the King of Prussia ennobled her (Fräulein von Klarenstein), whereupon she married the Count and retired from the stage, to the great sorrow of her many admirers.

According to Sutherland Edwards, "in the infant days of opera, marriage with a first-class nobleman was, in England at least, the ordinary termination of a prima donna's career."

In Germany and France, on the other hand, this termination of Sontag's artistic career created surprise; but this surprise turned to joy when, eighteen years later, she returned to the stage, her husband having become impoverished through the ruin of Sardinia by war. During this long interval she had not neglected her voice and it was found to be practically unimpaired. Once more she won triumphs, not only in Europe, but in the United States and in Mexico, where she died of cholera in 1854.

The romance abounding in her life suggested to a German author named Gundling the writing of a two-volume novel bearing her name.

One more incident in her career calls for mention—her rivalry with Malibran. For a time this aroused so much ill-feeling that the two singers refused to meet each other socially; but the public benefited by it, for when both sang in the same city each one was sure to do her very best. Then it occurred to some lovers of opera that it would be better still if a reconciliation could be effected and the two great singers persuaded to appear together. The plan succeeded, and Londoners were so lucky as to hear the two in several operas, among them Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *Figaro*, and Rossini's *Semiramide*.

Schröder-Devrient, Wagner's Idol

In 1804, six years later than Pasta, there was born in Hamburg an artist who first made the Germans feel the thrills of great dramatic singing. Her name was Schröder-Devrient.

Richard Wagner's sister, Cäcilie Avenarius, was fond

of relating an incident of her girlhood that made an indelible impression on her. One day their parents invited a number of friends to welcome and hear a noted prima donna who was making some appearances in Leipsic. She came, and she sang wonderfully. "In the deep embrasure of a window there stood, silent and motionless, Richard Wagner, on whom these tones made a magic impression. It was as if a bandage had fallen from his eyes. . . . For the first time he realized the nature and the effect of dramatic expression. He had awakened from an unconscious dream. His eyes shone, and his narrow, delicate face was deathly pale from emotion."

In his literary and critical essays Wagner devotes many pages to the art and the personality of this woman, who had given him a new ideal, a new kind of emotion. To him Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient was the greatest vocal interpreter of her time, the prophetess proclaiming the advent of a new vocal art. "The remotest contact with this extraordinary woman," he wrote in his *Communication to My Friends* (1851), "electrified me. For a long time I heard and felt her presence when the impulse to compose came over me, and it is so to the present day. . . . She set an example which I alone of the dramatists used as a guide. But not only this example, but all my knowledge of the nature of mimic representation, I owe to this woman."

Even the compliment paid by Mendelssohn to Jenny Lind, "She is the greatest artist I know," pales in comparison with this tribute to Schröder-Devrient by the creator of a new phase of art. Nor was Wagner the only master who grew eloquent in his enthusiasm for this German singer. Beethoven was so deeply impressed by her impersonation of the heroine of his *Fidelio* that he promised to write an opera for her. Goethe did not care for Schubert's *Erlking* as presented to him at first; but when

he heard this woman sing it, he kissed her on the cheek and exclaimed: "Thank you a thousand times for this grand artistic achievement. I heard this song once before, when I did not like it at all; but when sung in your way, it becomes a true picture."

From the singing-master's point of view Schröder-Devrient was far from being a model, and no one knew that better than she herself or Wagner. Hagemann points out that her trill was labored and too slow; that her fioriture lacked ease and fluency; that her tones had insufficient brilliancy and sometimes were guttural; and that in her later years her high tones were shrill. She had started her career as an actress, and when she turned seriously to singing it was already too late to overcome some of the natural disadvantages under which she labored. though she worked hard both with a teacher and by herself. A Jean de Reszke, a Lilli Lehmann, or a Garcia might have helped her; but none such was at hand, and so she never became a mistress of *bel canto*. We are told that she shirked "the drudgery of scale singing," and this neglect avenged itself on her throughout her career.

Her middle register had great beauty, especially in *mezza voce*. The critics praised also her distinct enunciation; but what she excelled in particularly was the art of emotional coloring of her tones; in this art of altering tones, not only quantitatively but also qualitatively, she is said to have been unequalled—a model for all time.

Her historic significance, however, lies in this, that she was the first artist who fully revealed the fact that in a dramatic opera there may be situations where *characteristic* singing is of more importance than *beautiful* singing. The difference between the two is illustrated by two sentences from Mozart's writings: "A man who is in such a violent rage oversteps all order, all moderation; he forgets himself, and the music must do the same." "Music, even in the

most awful situations, must not offend the ear, but always please." These two maxims are really contradictory. Mozart himself chose the second, while Weber, Wagner, and the later opera composers, down to Puccini and Richard Strauss, preferred to follow the first; consequently music has ceased to be a mere concord of sweet sounds; it has become the most eloquent of all languages for the expression of emotions—of evil, violent emotions as well as those of joy and contentment.

No one would ever have contradicted Hagemann's assertion that "in a drama an ugly tone may be very beautiful and a beautiful tone very ugly." But that the same may be true in a music-drama, it remained for Schröder-Devrient — and Wagner — to show. The word Beauty, through them, acquired a wider meaning—the meaning of Truth and Realism.

To take a special case. Would it not be ridiculous to have the Nibelung dwarfs, Alberich and Mime, in the second act of *Siegfried*, when they quarrel over the Ring and the Magic Helmet at the dragon's cave, sing "beautifully," in the old sense of the word—beautifully *à la* Adelina Patti? Think that question over, and you will understand the difference between dramatic or emotional singing and merely beautiful singing—understand why Wagner was *thrilled* by the singing of Schröder-Devrient; while Patti, though far her superior from the singing-master's point of view, could at most have *delighted* him. Now, delight is a very agreeable feeling, too; but *thrills*—it is for those we attend the Wagner operas; and the singer who cannot in these rôles stir us with intense emotion has missed her vocation.

The practical outcome of these considerations is of the utmost importance. Is the reader a girl who studies for the stage, but whose voice lacks the sensuous charm and the flexibility that would enable her to follow in the foot-

steps of Patti? Then, if she has brains and ambition, and dramatic instincts, she may nevertheless aspire to reach an even higher level in operatic art—the level of Schröder-Devrient.

An instructive anecdote is related concerning her first appearance in what became one of her most thrilling rôles —as Fidelio in Beethoven's opera. She had made a most thorough study of the music, and the splendid story on which it is based—the story of the wife who disguises herself as a man to find her husband, and discovers him at last starving in a dungeon and about to be assassinated—aroused all her dramatic instincts to the highest degree of excitement. Strong though she was, this excitement proved such a drain on her powers that when she reached the prison scene she felt as if collapse was imminent. "A terrific fright came over her; and presently she practically lost complete control of herself. But now a wonder happened. The public looked on this terror and its consequences in her actions—which happened to suit the situation—as an artistic achievement. The words, uttered in great agony: 'First kill his wife'; the famous unmusical outcry; and, after Florestan's exclamation: 'My wife, how you have suffered for me!' her answer: 'Nothing, nothing, nothing,' uttered with smiles and tears—all this was taken for consummate art, and a storm of applause rewarded her."

Glümer relates * that Beethoven himself was present at this performance and that when it was over he thanked her and promised to write an opera for her. He was practically deaf then, but merely to see her in this rôle must have been a rare treat. Her impersonation of Beethoven's heroine was so powerful that when, ten years later (1832), it was heard in London, *Fidelio* proved "the solitary success of a disastrous enterprise," and through it the Italians

* *Erinnerungen an Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient.*

"were beaten out of the field by the Germans," in the words of the eminent critic Chorley, who further wrote: "The intense musical vigor of Beethoven's opera was felt to be a startling variety, wrought out as it was in its principal part, by *a vocalist of a class entirely new to England.* This was Mme. Schröder-Devrient." And he proceeds to give this graphic sketch of her personality:

"She was a pale woman; her face, a thoroughly German one, though plain, was pleasing, from the intensity of expression which her large features and deep, tender eyes conveyed. She had profuse, fair hair, the value of which she thoroughly understood, delighting, in moments of great emotion, to fling it loose with the vehemence of a Mænad. Her figure was superb, though full, and she rejoiced in its display. Her voice was a strong soprano, not comparable in quality to some other German voices of its class, . . . but with an inherent expressiveness of tone which made it more attractive on the stage than many a more faultless organ."

Paris, like London, was conquered by her emotional art. Looking on herself as a high-priestess of music—like Jenny Lind, and unlike Patti—she wrote concerning her Parisian venture: "I had to think not only of my own reputation, but to establish German music. My failure would have been injurious to the music of Beethoven, Mozart, and Weber." And the composers did not fail to realize what she was doing for them.

Of Beethoven and Wagner we have already spoken. Weber, too, was enthusiastic, and so was Schumann, who dedicated to her his splendid cycle, *Dichterliebe*. These songs, as well as those of Schubert, she sang with thrilling dramatic effect. Mendelssohn, in one of his letters, describes the furore created by her singing of *Adelaide* in Leipsic, in 1841; and in London he once accompanied her in this song.

If Schröder-Devrient made the mistake of "shirking the drudgery of scale singing" at a critical period in her career, she endeavored to atone for this subsequently by incessant labor in other directions. And she was her own severest critic. "Art," she once said to a friend, "is an eternal quest, and an artist is lost as soon as she fancies she has reached her goal. Often when the public showered plaudits and flowers on me, I went ashamed to my room and asked myself: 'What have you perpetrated again?' and then I had no peace—day and night I thought the matter over until I found the better way."

She was by no means always in a serious mood, even on the stage, when she should have been. Once, when she was playing Romeo (in Bellini's opera), she was so annoyed by the apathy of the Juliet during the caresses of the last scene that she tickled her feet to wake her up.

Moscheles records the following comic episode: In the deeply tragic scene in the dungeon, where Schröder-Devrient (Fidelio) has to give Haizinger (Florestan) a piece of bread which she has kept three days for him hidden in her dress, he does not at once respond to the offer, whereupon she whispers to him: "Why don't you take it? Do you want it buttered?"

She had evidently got over her stage fright!

Lilli Lehmann, Wagner's Ideal

Probably some of the readers of the foregoing pages will say to themselves: "What a grand thing it would be if there were a singer combining Patti's luscious voice and flawless execution with the emotional power and the dramatic instinct of Schröder-Devrient!"

Such an artist actually has been on the stage for four decades, and to her art thousands owe some of the deepest impressions of their lives. Her name is Lilli Lehmann.

She was born in 1848, and sixty years later she was still delighting her admirers in song recitals and an occasional Mozart, Wagner, or Verdi opera. She tells us in a book on her vocal art * that her mother, who also was an opera singer, "kept her voice noble, beautiful, young and strong to the end of her life—that is, till her seventy-seventh year—notwithstanding enormous demands upon it and many a blow of fate."

There is no affectation about Lilli Lehmann. She bluntly tells her readers that "rarely are so many desirable and necessary antecedents united as in my case." Her mother (Maria Löw) was active many years, not only as a dramatic singer but also as a harp virtuoso, and her father also was a singer. From her mother she received instruction in singing, after having, from her fifth year, listened daily to the lessons given to others. "From my ninth year I played accompaniments on the piano-forte, sang all the missing parts, in French, Italian, German, and Bohemian, got thoroughly familiar with all the operas, and very soon knew how to tell good singing from bad. Our mother took good care, too, that we should hear all the visiting notabilities of that time in opera as well as in concert; and there were many of them every year at the Deutsches Landestheater in Prague."

Lilli Lehmann is a Bavarian, having been born at Würzburg; but it was not at Munich, the capital of Bavaria, that she passed the best years of her operatic career, but in Berlin and New York. Her first appearance was made in Bohemia, and the opera was Mozart's *Magic Flute*. "I appeared in one of the lighter rôles; but two weeks later, during the performance, the dramatic soprano was taken ill, and I then and there went on with her rôle, trusting to my memory after hearing it so often. My

* *How to Sing*. By Lilli Lehmann. Translated from the German by Richard Aldrich. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1902.

mother, who was in the audience and knew I had never studied the part, nearly fainted when she saw me come on the stage as Pamina." *

During her engagement at the Prague Theatre she appeared not only in many operas but also as an actress in a number of plays. In those days there was not the same strict division of labor between actors and singers that there is to-day; actors were expected to sing and singers to act (without music) whenever called upon to do so. When we consider how much Jenny Lind, Schröder-Devrient, and Lilli Lehmann benefited in their operatic careers by having been actresses first, one cannot but feel tempted to advise all students for the operatic stage to follow their example.

Lilli was eighteen years old when she made her operatic début in Prague. While in that city she took part daily in operas, operettas, plays, and farces. Then she went for a year and a half to Danzig, where she sang from eighteen to twenty times a month in colorature and soubrette parts; also in Leipsic, and later, fifteen years in Berlin, *chiefly in colorature parts.*

What are coloratura parts? They are rôles, like those usually sung by Patti, in which ornamental staccato tones, trills, roulades, and other vocal embellishments are the main feature. And Lilli Lehmann, who subsequently became the leading dramatic soprano of her time, was a coloratura singer during the first half of her career!

A fact of the utmost significance! The proficiency which she gained in these years in the Italian *bel canto* (which Wagner himself strongly advised all students to acquire) aided her in later years very much in mastering the difficulties of dramatic singing and the art of uniting vocal beauty with expressiveness.

* *Stars of the Opera.* By Mabel Wagnalls. New York: Funk, Wagnalls & Co. 1907.

Those who remember Lilli Lehmann chiefly as Isolde or Brünnhilde find it difficult to think of her as a rival of Patti in colorature. But such she was, and if she fell somewhat short of that diva in agility and spontaneity of utterance, she surpassed her in the art of coloring florid music emotionally. This is a point of such importance to all students of singing that we must dwell on it a moment. In her book, Lilli Lehmann says:

"If he is skilful enough, the singer can impart a certain expression of feeling to even the most superficial phrases and coloratura passages. Thus, in coloratura passages of Mozart's arias I have always sought to gain expressiveness by *crescendi*, choice of significant points for breathing, and breaking off of phrases. I have been especially successful with this in the *Entführung*, introducing a tone of lament into the first aria, a heroic dignity into the second, through the coloratura passages. Without exaggerating petty details, the artist must exploit all the means of expression that he is justified in using."

Lilli Lehmann, in other words, used her brains in singing, as well as her throat. How admirably she succeeded in this rare art of taking the chill out of florid music is attested by Mr. Apthorp in an illuminating little book,* in which he says:

It is not long ago that I got a letter from an old-time opera-goer who could still remember the Rossini operas in their heyday, and the great singers who sang in them. My correspondent called my attention, among other things, to the fact that Semiramide was written, and generally rated, as a "grand dramatic part"; it was not meant for a light, florid *soprano sfogato*, for one of the "canary birds" of the lyric stage, but for a heavy dramatic soprano—a singer like Tietjens or Lilli Lehmann, for instance. All

* *By the Way. About Musicians.* By William Foster Apthorp. Boston: Copeland & Day. 1898. Vol. II, pp. 20–22.

those florid roulades, which we now regard as the most unmitigated sort of vocal fireworks, fit only for the rapid warbling of a light, agile voice, were originally sung more slowly, with full *vibrato* and the most grandiose dramatic expression.

It takes something of a stretch of the imagination [Mr. Apthorp continues] for us to conceive nowadays of such things being sung dramatically and in the grand style; but that they were so sung is indubitable. The old "dramatic" *coloratura*, sung with the full voice and at a moderate rate of speed, is now pretty much a thing of the past; Semiramide's roulades are sung nowadays by light voices, in *mezza voce*, and at a breakneck pace; the old grand style and dramatic stress have passed away from music of this sort and made place for a sheer display of vocal agility.

I remember when Lilli Lehmann astonished all Paris—in the winter of 1890–1—with her singing of Constanze's air in Mozart's *Seraglio;* one old musician exclaimed in delight: "This is the first time in many years that I have heard the old, slow *coloratura* sung with the full power of the voice, just as the great singers of old used to sing!" Some of us remember the same great artist's singing of *Bello a me ritorna*, in Bellini's *Norma*, at the Boston Theatre. This was great dramatic singing, full of emotional stress and the carefullest regard for expressive details; it was the old grand style, whereas most other singers had shown us this music only as the lightest sort of agile warbling.

Thus did the German Lilli Lehmann serve as a model to modern Italian singers in the lost art of singing florid music dramatically! And to the German singers of her day she served as a model in the new art of singing dramatic music with all the refinements of the Italian *bel canto!* A wondrous artist, in truth!

Richard Wagner, as we have seen, used to be so annoyed at being asked regarding his idol, Schröder-Devri-

ent, whether "her voice" was so very remarkable, that he finally felt like exclaiming angrily that she had no "voice" at all, but that she could move the hearer by her singing as no one else could. At the same time, it is needless to say, he would have been only too glad if he could have said also: "Yes, she has a luscious voice—as velvety as Patti's." Unfortunately, he did not live to hear Lilli Lehmann in the height of her career as Isolde and Brünnhilde; but he was enchanted with her singing when he selected the artists for the first Bayreuth festival in 1876, and promptly engaged her as the forest bird and the first Rhinemaiden; for the heavier rôles she was too young at that time, and her voice too light.

It was really not till she broke her contract in Berlin—where she could not have the parts she most wanted to sing—and went to New York that her superlative gifts as an interpreter of Wagner's music were fully developed. Eight years—the best eight of her career—were spent in the American metropolis, and as the casts included other first-class artists, and the orchestra was usually under the greatest of all Wagner conductors, Anton Seidl, the result was eight seasons which will ever be remembered as the golden age of German opera in New York. Half a dozen great Isoldes have been heard in that city, but no other succeeded quite so well as she in depicting, in action and song, all the diverse emotions of love, indignation, scorn, bitterness, sorrow, revenge, and ecstasy of passion which alternate in that rôle. The same praise may be given her other Wagner rôles, especially the Brünnhilde, concerning which a few words from my column in the *Evening Post* may here be admitted:

"During the years when there was a quarantine against German opera at the Metropolitan, there was at least one artist who was always welcome, even to those who belonged to the opposition. Lilli Lehmann, the queen among

dramatic sopranos, was such a consummate artist, so finished a vocalist, so versatile, so catholic in taste and talent, that she was coveted by every manager and her popularity never waned. In recent years she has sung in this city under adverse conditions, but now she is again a member of the Grau Company, and all lovers of Wagner and good singing in general rejoice thereat. She made her first appearance this year last evening as Brünnhilde in the *Walküre* with a superb cast, including Emma Eames, Van Dyck, and Van Rooy. No wonder that the house was crowded, though this was the fourth performance of *Die Walküre* within a few weeks. M. Van Dyck and M. Van Rooy had a good evening, and Mme. Eames was more musical, dramatic, and charming than ever as Sieglinde, in spite of her blonde wig, which concealed her own beautiful dark hair.

"Frau Lilli Lehmann celebrated her fiftieth birthday on the 15th of May last. She makes no secret of her age, and why should she? Her voice, though of course more easily subject to fatigue, is as luscious, as mellow, as glorious as ever, and her art as an actress was never so delightful as it is now. The audience expected her to be the same 'Lilli' as of old, and when, after her first notes, expectations were fully realized, there was an outburst of great applause, which was renewed after the curtain fell. She has now sung Wagner nearly thirty years, and therefore stands before the world as a striking proof that his music does not injure the voice, provided it is sung, not shouted. She can sing lyric music, too, as well as dramatic. Bellini's Norma is one of her favorite parts, and she is anxious to sing Gluck's Armida with M. Jean de Reszke (whose admiration for her is unbounded, as is his brother's), and it is to be hoped that the plan may be carried out."

In her book, Lehmann tells us how she learned the part of Isolde. At that time she could "without weariness,

sing the first act alone six times in succession, with expression, action, and a full voice. That was my practice with all my rôles. After I had rehearsed a rôle a thousand times in my own room, I would go into the empty theatre and rehearse single scenes, as well as the whole opera, for hours at a time. That gave me the certainty of being mistress of my resonances down to the last note; and very often I felt able to begin it all over again. So must it be if one wishes to accomplish anything worth while."

It was not so with Patti; but she was the lucky exception which proves the rule. Moreover, the rôles she habitually sang were much simpler and made very much less demand on the brain and the feelings than those to which Lehmann devoted so much time and labor. On this topic more will be said in the section devoted to Jean de Reszke.

To what does Lilli Lehmann chiefly owe her great success? Partly, of course, she owes it to her luscious voice; but more even than to that, she owes it to the fact that she is a woman who thinks and feels. No singer who does not think and feel could ever satisfactorily interpret a rôle like Isolde or Brünnhilde. And Germany's greatest prima donna betrays her soul-qualities in life as well as in her art. She intends to leave all her earnings to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Her heart is big enough to sympathize not only with mankind but with those "winged poems of the air" which so many women have ruthlessly allowed to be slaughtered for fashion's sake. Now it is possible that a girl may ignorantly wear a bird, or part of a bird, on her hat; but if she wears it knowing of the sufferings she helps to cause the poor egrets and other birds and their young ones, abandoned to slow starvation, she may as well make up her mind that, however pretty her voice may be, she will never be able to interpret the great operatic rôles and the great songs in such a way as to satisfy and move her hearers.

Of her exceptional intelligence, Lilli Lehmann has given abundant proof in her book on singing and in her analysis of *Fidelio*,* a book of 72 pages containing numerous hints of the utmost importance to those who would enter into the inner spirit of Beethoven's opera. In giving her conception of the heroine's part she expresses regret that so few great artists have taken pains to do such a thing—regrets which every student of the opera will echo. Her book on singing, the German title of which is *Meine Gesangs-Kunst* (My Art of Song), is a sort of autobiographic description of the processes by which she herself learned her art.

Readers who are not students of the vocal art will still be interested in her remarks on Patti, Melba, Niemann, Betz, Wachtel, and other famous stage folk. The minuteness of some of her directions is indicated by the fact that she requires nearly a page of text and a diagram in two colors to show how she sings the word *Fräulein!* A chapter is devoted to her method of interpreting some of the most popular songs in her repertory, including the *Erlking*. She is severe on the voice factories which turn out singers in two years and contrasts this state of affairs (fostered by ignorant or unscrupulous managers) with the time when an eight-year course was required at the conservatories. There are remarks on the duration of concerts, on applause, on the behavior of audiences, and many other things of interest to music lovers. Beginners who have difficulty with their breath will be consoled on reading that the writer herself was by nature very short of breath. and will be interested in her method of overcoming this defect. To some of her suggestions reference will be made in later chapters of this volume. Our remarks on her artistic personality may fitly close with two excerpts from

* *Studie zu Fidelio*. Von Lilli Lehmann. Leipsic: Breitkopf & Härtel.

her writings, one from a newspaper article, the other from the book on singing:

"The only unalloyed joy is in the pursuit and study of art, not in the success which comes as a result. The joy of study, of acquisition, is enduring; that of success is evanescent. I know a singer to whom the continual study of the vocal art gives such pure pleasure that in spite of his youth he has not the slightest desire for a public career. As for myself, I should like to have twenty years yet to devote to study; so interesting is the science of singing that I should never grow weary of it. The more one learns, the more one realizes how much one has still to learn."

"To me it is a matter of indifference whether the public goes frantic or listens quietly and reflectively, for I give out only what I have undertaken to. If I have put my individuality, my powers, my love for the work, into a rôle or a song that is applauded by the public, I decline all thanks for it to myself personally, and consider the applause as belonging to the master whose work I am interpreting. *If I have succeeded in making him intelligible to the public, the reward therefor is contained in that fact itself, and I ask for nothing more.*"

Golden words, these! Most public singers think only of their personal success and not of winning admiration for the music itself; and that is why so few of them rise to the rank of Lilli Lehmann. Egotism brings its own punishment, in art as in life.

Marianne Brandt

The singers so far considered had the advantage of being brought up in a musical atmosphere which did for them what a rich soil does for garden plants. But let no student who lacks these advantages despair. Some of the greatest artists never enjoyed them, but grew up and flourished under the most adverse conditions. One of these was Marianne Brandt, a leading dramatic contralto of the last century, unexcelled in the Meyerbeer and Wagner operas. She was one of the singers to whom Wagner intrusted the rôle of Kundry at Bayreuth; Liszt called her "the German Viardot-Garcia."

Her real name was Maria Anna Bischof; she changed it in order that, in case of failure, she would not annoy and disgrace her parents, who had a great prejudice against stage life. They themselves were quite unmusical, and because an older daughter had had piano lessons without profiting by them, they concluded that it would be useless to let Marianne have any. The fact that she sang all day, and was forever picking out tunes on the piano, did not impress them. When she got to be thirteen, however, she was sent to a teacher, and not long thereafter she was entrusted with soprano solos in a suburban church near Vienna (in which city she was born in 1842); and soon thereafter she was promoted to the Carlskirche in the city itself, where she sang alto.

The parents now permitted her to have a piano teacher, but she had little use for one, as she could hardly find any time to practise. She might have found an hour or two in the evening available, when the day's work was over, but she did not wish to disturb her parents; indeed, they did not allow her to sing at the piano. "A well-behaved girl of the common people," they said, "must not give her time

to such useless things." During the day, however, while doing the cooking, washing, and sewing for the household, she was at liberty to sing as much as she pleased.

The family was so poor that going to the opera or the theatre was out of the question, and it was not till she was seventeen that she had a taste of such pleasures. It aroused in her a great desire to study music professionally. She knew that her parents looked on all stage folks as degraded, and that they would be horrified to think of her associating with them; but they made no objection to a purely musical career, so she took lessons of a singing-master, and at the age of twenty succeeded in entering the Conservatory. To pay for her lessons she plied the needle. "It was a hard time," she writes,* "as I had to give every day four hours of lessons in dressmaking besides doing my home work and attending the Conservatory fifteen hours a week. In those days I slept barely four or five hours, and got up in summer at three, in winter at four-thirty or five o'clock.

The critical moment in her career came at the Conservatory examination. She was cast for the part of Recha in Halévy's opera, *The Jewess*, and just as her principal scene began the sky darkened and a violent storm came on. It became so dark in the hall that the lights had to be turned on. Amid real thunder and lightning she uttered the words: "Night and its terrors, the rumbling of distant thunder, O heavens, how horrible!" The situation made a thrilling impression on her, stirring her soul to its depth and calling forth latent dramatic powers which in turn thrilled the audience. "You must go on the stage," was the admonition she heard on all sides when the performance was over. And on the stage she went, though to a

* *Musikalische Studienköpfe.* Von La Mara. Band V. This volume contains a chapter on Marianne Brandt which is obviously chiefly autobiographic, and which our narrative follows closely.

certain extent she shared her parents' instinctive aversion to it.

Her first public success was as Romeo. When her brothers saw her in man's attire, they exclaimed: "What! you are going on the stage that way? Then you are our sister no longer!"

An interesting episode occurred in 1868. She had accepted an engagement at Hamburg, and for the first time left Austria, going by way of Berlin, where she called on an agent who had intrigued against her in regard to Hamburg. He said brusquely: "What do you want in Hamburg? I have secured the place there for Recht; there is no position for you." Whereupon she replied: "My agent told me, 'Go and sing for them, and they will take you.'" The Berlin agent then asked her to sing for him, and when she had finished he said: "Dear child, you shall not go to Hamburg. I engage you for Berlin."

She was thunderstruck, but he sent her to the manager of the Royal Opera, and in the afternoon of the same day she had in her pocket a three years' contract, at an honorarium of 1,800 thalers the first year, 2,000 the second, 3,000 the third.

Her good luck did not make her vain. She knew that, even if she was the successor of no less an artist than Johanna Wagner, she still had very much to learn. One of her biographers relates that once, after a rehearsal of Weber's *Euryanthe*, she was not at all pleased with her performance. Neither was that other great singer in the cast, Mathilde Mallinger, satisfied with her own doings. "When we drove home together," Mallinger related, "we nearly wept our eyes out. Then she gave me some advice as to how I should study during the night. I for my part exhorted her to be courageous, and again we wept. But the next day everything went all right."

It is needless to dwell further on Fräulein Brandt's career;

but mention must be made of the fact that the consciousness of her shortcomings induced her to spend the summers of 1869 and 1870 at Baden-Baden, taking lessons of the famous Viardot-Garcia. Some of her greatest triumphs subsequently were won in New York, especially in the rôles of Ortrud, Fidelio, Eglantine, and Fides. "We know of no contralto on the stage," I once wrote, "who, like Fräulein Brandt, can infuse even into indifferent rôles a dramatic fervor and realism that make her the creator, in part, of every opera in which she appears. And apart from her artistic talent she has always been animated by a spirit of unselfish devotion to art itself which induced her frequently to accept small rôles in order to strengthen the cast"—a practice which cannot be too much commended to other prominent singers.

Like Jenny Lind, Marianne Brandt suffered much through stage intrigues, especially in Berlin. We have seen that it was largely on account of such intrigues that the Swedish prima donna left the stage so early in life. Fräulein Brandt was not routed by them, but they embittered her life. "The theatre," she wrote, "can suffice those only who are born comedians; to me it brought more pain than joy, although, on the other side, I must value it as the only place where I could fully develop my artistic individuality."

Ernestine Schumann-Heink

Personal beauty is a great advantage to a concert or opera singer; with it, success is only half as hard to win as without it. Yet there are more important things. To illustrate this point, let me cite a few lines from my Wagner biography (vol. II, p. 416): "An ideal Kundry (in *Parsifal*) is difficult to find, *i. e.*, one who combines the beauty called for in the second act with the histrionic talent re-

quired in the first and third acts. In case of doubt, it is better to sacrifice the beauty; at least, Wagner seemed to think so. When he invited Fräulein Brandt to be one of the Kundrys, she was delighted, but expressed doubts of her fitness, on account of the directions: 'Kundry, a young woman of the greatest beauty.' 'Never mind the beauty!' interrupted the Meister. 'I need a clever actress, and that you are; cosmetics will make up the rest.'"

Amalie Materna had a similar experience with Wagner, which she related to Mr. William Armstrong. She had wished to sing Brünnhilde, and had sent Wagner her photograph, with a request to that effect. Looking at it, as he frankly told her afterward, he said: "That face sing my Brünnhilde? Never!" But when he met her his decision was reversed at first sight. When she spoke there was a good-humored friendliness—the Germans call it *Gemütlichkeit*—that made one forget the appearance of her face in repose. "While good looks are very desirable in all singers," Mr. Armstrong continues, "good art is more so, and surely you will not stop to consider the matter before you agree that a singer is better remembered by the beauty of her song than the beauty of her features. Homeliness is a help to success. It compels more than ever to a developing of the beauty that is within, the only source of reliance when it comes to a final decision."

Ernestine Schumann-Heink, upon whom fell the mantle of Fräulein Brandt, also had to win her success without the advantage of personal beauty; and how great this success has been may be inferred from the fact that she has earned in one season, in the United States, $125,000, or two-and-one-half times as much as the President!

When she first sang for Director Jauner of the Imperial Opera in Vienna she was, in her own words,* "a thin,

* See Gustav Kobbé's *Opera Singers: A Pictorial Souvenir.* Boston: Oliver Ditson Co.

scrawny-looking girl, and shockingly dressed." Jauner was not favorably impressed, but told her to go home, get fed up, and go to a finishing school. She returned, broken-hearted, to her parents at Graz. It was there that the famous prima donna, Marie Wilt, had heard her, as a girl of sixteen, in the quartet at a performance of Beethoven's ninth symphony, and it was owing to her advice that little Ernestine had been sent to Jauner.

Fortunately, not long after this unsuccessful trip, another famous opera singer, Amalie Materna, heard Ernestine, and subsequently spoke of her so favorably in Dresden that the manager of the Royal Opera there promised to pay her expenses if she would come to sing for him. This time she had better luck. Director Platen promptly offered her an engagement at $900 a year, whereat she was so delighted that she threw her arms around him and hung to his neck. "But aren't you a mere slip of a girl to go on the operatic stage?" he asked; and she answered: "I will promise to eat and get fatter, and besides, I will grow larger of my own accord."

She certainly did—but that was later. When she came back to her parents, to await the receipt of her contract, they would not believe her story. "Nonsense!" said her father. "Do you suppose they would engage a fright like you?" But she went to Dresden in due time and made her début on September 7, 1878, as Azucena in *Il Trovatore.* She remained in that city for years, singing in church as well as at the opera. Once, at an important church service, she broke down in the midst of her solo, whereat the conductor struck her and called her a goose. It made her realize that she had neglected her musical education, so she promptly arranged for a thorough course in technical training with Franz Wüllner.

Unfortunately, she had little opportunity to show what she could do, as she had to sing minor rôles chiefly. Nor

was her lot much bettered when she left Dresden, in 1883, and accepted an engagement at the Opera in Hamburg. She had to undergo an extraordinary amount of drudgery, having to appear in comedy and farce as well as in opera. This hard and varied work gave her the experience she needed for a stage success, and was, therefore, invaluable; but it was not pleasant at the time, all the more as here, too, the big rôles were for a long time withheld from her; and it was only through an accident—the indisposition of a prima donna—that our seconda donna had a chance to show that the biggest was just her size. To cite her own words: "I had been cast for rôles without number, alto or soprano made no difference; had been compelled to submit to every humiliation; it had been shouted into my ears that I was no singer, that I had missed my vocation, that I was a comedienne and not a singer, and could meet with success only as such. For six years I had begged and entreated for an opportunity, until Pollini, in despair in the eleventh hour, gave me Carmen, without any study or rehearsal; the same with Fides, the same with Ortrud. I had been forced to sing eighteen, twenty, twenty-eight, and several times thirty-two times in one month; I had sung in the chorus; in short, I had run the gamut of every duty known to the opera stage. My husband was then an invalid and I had seven children."

She began with $900 a year, and after fifteen years of faithful service her salary had risen to only $1,700! As in the case of Lilli Lehmann, it was in New York that the financial value of her voice and art was first discovered. Maurice Grau engaged her for the season of 1898–9 at the Metropolitan Opera House, at $6,500 a year, which seemed a big sum to her; but when he found that she had made an immediate success, he tore up her contract, paid her a full season's salary for one-third of a season's work, and gave her a new contract for $12,000 a year. Before this

happened she had been offered, because of her American success, $6,000 a year for ten years in Berlin, and $10,000 a year for ten years in Hamburg.

Her fame and her income grew fast, and one day in 1904—an unlucky day for the lovers of grand opera—she accepted an engagement to head an operetta company. She was earning at that time $75,000 a year, but, as the star of a comic opera, she could command still more. So she appeared in *Love's Lottery*, by Stange and Edwards, and delighted large audiences all over the United States for many months.

The project of launching a singer like Mme. Schumann-Heink in operetta presented a peculiar difficulty. The heroine of an operetta is invariably a pretty girl and a soprano. Schumann-Heink was not a pretty girl and she was a contralto. The play, therefore, had to be written to order for her, as in the old times when even Mozart had to write "tailor-made" operas.

At the Metropolitan Opera House some of the rôles sung by her, notably Magdalena in Wagner's *Meistersinger*, had given proof of her remarkable comic gifts (which had been developed by her performances in Hamburg), and this, no doubt, had suggested her engagement as a comic-opera star.

There was great surprise when it was first announced that she had accepted this engagement. Especially did the thousands of young American women who were studying for the musical stage think it topsy-turvy that a singer who had reached the highest pinnacle of grand-opera fame should voluntarily and deliberately desert that elevated position and descend to the humbler plateau of operetta. These young women all want to be grand-opera singers from the start, and scorn the very suggestion that they should condescend to appear in operetta. The great contralto proved that one can be a first-class artist, and sing

with deep feeling, in this humble sphere, too. Fritzi Scheff is another singer who left grand opera for operetta and proved that such a step does not in itself imply artistic degradation.

Nevertheless, there was reason to rejoice when Schumann-Heink ended this successful experiment and returned to the realm of serious art. She now devoted herself for some years to concert-giving, which, while it eclipsed her skill as an actress, had the advantage, from the public's point of view, of enabling many thousands to enjoy her singing in towns where grand opera is never heard. Like Sembrich, Nordica, Gadski, and other stars of the Metropolitan, she found that she could thus in a season earn even more than at the opera-house, and quite as honorably, singing the *lieder* of the great masters.

Only in America, however! In the winter of 1908–9, she gave a concert in Hamburg which yielded $2,671. But that was quite exceptional. To the Berlin correspondent of the *Musical Courier* she stated that the receipts for her European concert tour would amount to only one-sixth of her American earnings during the preceding season, and she gave this further interesting information:

A concert tour in this country is very different from one in America. In the first place, it is not possible to visit anything like the number of cities I sing in at home [the great diva always speaks of America as her home]; in America I can give concerts in towns of 5,000 inhabitants and have full houses, as people come from long distances from the surrounding towns to hear me. Over here I find it impossible to give concerts of my own, even in cities of 100,000 inhabitants, like Magdeburg and Halle, for instance. The music lovers of the large German cities set aside a certain amount for concerts each season, and they attend the regular subscription series in their own towns, and won't spend a penny more for anything else; at least,

so my manager, Fernow, tells me. So my appearances here are limited to a few great cities, in which I can give my recitals, and to operatic engagements in the larger towns.

She further stated that, in her opinion, American audiences derive more real pleasure from concerts than Europeans, because they are less satiated and therefore less likely to indulge in carping criticism. "The Americans go to musical entertainments for the sole purpose of enjoying themselves."

Ernestine Schumann-Heink's maiden name was Roessler. She was born at Lieben, near Prague, but that does not imply that she is a Bohemian. Her father was an Austrian army officer who happened to be stationed at Lieben at the time (June 15, 1861) when his daughter was born; and her mother was an Italian. Thus it was partly by inheritance that she acquired the faculty of uniting in her art the excellences of the Italian and German vocal styles, a faculty which redounds to the advantage of operas of all schools and helps a singer who commands it to triumphant success.

Perhaps of all her rôles the two which will longest remain in the memory of those who saw her in them are Azucena in Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, and Brangäne in Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*. In Verdi's opera, thanks to her Wagnerian training, she surpassed her Italian colleagues in distinctness of enunciation and dramatic intensity, making the unhappy gypsy mother live before our eyes; and in the Wagner opera she sang—particularly the thrilling song of warning in the second act—with an opulence and luscious beauty of tone rarely heard in German opera.

By way of explaining her great success in the concert hall, let me cite two paragraphs I wrote for the *Evening Post* concerning the recital she gave in New York on March 7, 1908:

"Mme. Schumann-Heink is a big woman with a big voice and a big heart. Even without that heart to give it emotional resonance, her voice would be one of the most remarkable organs of the present time: round, full, vibrant, luscious, varied in tone color, it is a thing of beauty and a joy forever. Backed up by that heart, it becomes thrilling whenever there is a dramatic climax. The fourth song on the list at her Carnegie Hall recital on Saturday was Schubert's *The Almighty.* Liszt, who considered this the sublimest song ever written, nevertheless was not satisfied with it as Schubert had given it to the world, for a voice with pianoforte. He thought it needed a chorus and an orchestra to exhaust its overwhelming possibilities. He did not live to hear Schumann-Heink sing it. When that stupendous voice of hers, charged with deepest feeling, intoned the superb melody of Schubert, the whole vast hall was filled with a volume of sound that set the nerves vibrating with religious ecstasy like a cathedral organ.

"After all, emotion is the greatest thing in art. Schumann-Heink would be a great artist even with a mediocre voice and a small one. She does not abuse its sonority; in songs that require a soft tone and delicacy of execution, she is a superlative artist, too. She had such songs on her Saturday programme—Schubert's *Haideröslein* and Loewe's *Mutter an der Wiege,* for instance. She sang Jensen's *Lean Thy Cheek Against My Cheek,* with the fervor of a bride; she sang Rubinstein's *Forest Witch* with romantic spirit; she sang three Hungarian folksongs in the Magyar language with an abandon that suggested Paderewski's playing of a Hungarian rhapsody."

Here is a German tribute from the Munich *Allgemeine Zeitung:*

She is an enchanting *lieder* singer, and what is rarer still at present, she is a genuine Schubert interpreter. She

can venture to sing the best-known songs of that master, who is neglected in our concert halls in favor of later writers who are not worthy of tying his shoestrings. . . . Whoever has heard her sing Schubert's eternally beautiful *Allmacht* can understand that President Roosevelt enthusiastically embraced her when she sang it at the White House. . . . The enthusiasm last night was tremendous, as it is in all cities to which this glorious artist takes her chaste German art. The audience wanted more, more! She added two extras, one of them Schubert's *Death and the Maiden*, which I have not heard sung so thrillingly since the death of Hermine Spies. Mme. Schumann-Heink's big voice, which is equally at home in the alto, mezzo, and soprano registers, was at the end as fresh as at the beginning. Everything was done with playful ease, and many singers were present to hear—and to learn.

There are few, even among the greatest, who could not learn from her. She complains that singers to-day are too much like the get-rich-quick companies of which one hears so much. On students who wish to succeed she impresses above all things three points: (1) You cannot jump to the top; you must climb from the lowest rung of the ladder to the highest, omitting none; (2) begin with the old Italian method, for that alone gives the flexibility that makes it possible to do anything like justice to the Wagner operas; (3) begin with small parts, so as to gain the necessary experience and to obtain repose and confidence. She is fond of quoting Mme. Krebs-Michalesi, who said: "Consider the stage, be it concert or opera, sacred ground upon which you are fulfilling a mission as priestess of your art, and if you need only carry a chair on the stage, be as sincere and as conscientious in this task as in performing the greatest rôle."

That one can be—contrary to the general belief—a great artist and a good mother at the same time is one of the useful

lessons taught by Schumann-Heink's career. She has reared a family of eight children, to whom she is devoted with all her heart. To give them the advantages of the New World, she became an American citizen and made her home on a seventy-five-acre farm near Paterson, N. J. Her eighth child she christened George Washington, and he and his sister Maria Theresa are, as a newspaper writer has said, "as American as the flag that is raised on the lawn every Fourth of July. It is the spell of this home and these children that drew the homesick mother from Lincoln, Neb., one day. She made the journey of 1,500 miles, and took a night ride over eight miles of country roads, to surprise the sleeping youngsters with her kisses and her arms around their necks."

Pauline Lucca

Schumann-Heink's advice that a singer should begin on the lowest rung of the ladder to fame was followed—before she gave it—by two other Austrians—Amalie Materna and Pauline Lucca. Materna (whom Wagner chose to create the part of Brünnhilde at the first Bayreuth Festival and that of Kundry at the second) began as a chorus girl, and then, for four years, sang in operettas. Lucca, too, was, for a time, a chorus girl. She was first heard in a church choir, where she once took the place of the soprano soloist and astonished the congregation with the beauty of her voice. Too poor to pay for lessons, she became, at the age of fifteen, a member of the chorus in the Kärnthnerthor Theater.

There are many advantages to be obtained from such a position. A chorus singer not only becomes familiar with the music of the current operas, but has opportunities to observe the world's greatest artists at close range and thus to learn many a valuable lesson in impersonation.

On the other hand, it is held that, once in the chorus, a singer is apt to be overlooked and to remain there for lack of opportunity to show what she can do. This was actually the case with Pauline Lucca. The manager who engaged her evidently could not tell a jewel from a pebble; the only part of any distinction he gave her was the first Bridesmaid in the *Freischütz.* But she had an opportunity to appear at Olmütz as Elvira, in *Ernani,* and subsequently at Prague in the part of Valentine, in *Les Huguenots.* She stood this severe test so well that she was promptly engaged as prima donna at the Prague Opera; and in 1861 the twenty-year-old girl was offered an engagement for life at the Royal Opera in Berlin, which she, of course, accepted promptly.

It was to Meyerbeer that she owed this engagement. He had been looking for a long time for an artist qualified to create the part of the heroine in his last opera, *L'Africaine;* and when he heard Lucca he concluded at once that, under his own guidance, she would become an ideal Selika. So he took her in hand, and his prognosis proved to be correct. She benefited so much by his advice and stagecraft that she referred to him afterward as her real teacher. He, on his part, was so much pleased, not only with her singing but with her keen instinct for realistic acting, that he called her "a genuine David Garrick."

Her singing was by no means flawless, and florid music was not her *forte.* Her strength lay in her ability to blend her singing and acting so intimately that one did not consciously think of either, but enjoyed her impersonations as if they were scenes from life. As one of her biographers, La Mara, has observed, song was to her "chiefly a means of expression, and only in the service of the drama did it reveal its full power in her case."

Her popularity in Berlin rose to a frenzy, and for some years she was the queen of the Royal Opera, as capricious

and unreliable as the Carmen she impersonated with so much vivacity. A new star, Mathilde Mallinger, arose in 1869; she soon became the idol of the Wagnerites, and forthwith cliques were formed and intrigues carried on which so greatly angered Lucca that she sent in her resignation. Mallinger did the same, and hers was reluctantly accepted (though she was re-engaged a year later). Nevertheless, the capricious Lucca broke her contract in 1872 and accepted a brilliant offer for an American tour. In the United States her triumphs were like those of Jenny Lind and Nilsson. As she herself wrote to her former teacher, Uschmann:

"The first two months have yielded me the handsome sum of $44,000. . . . If the end is like the beginning, I hope to be able, after two seasons, to carry out my ardent desire to say farewell to the stage. I can see you laughing at that statement, and yet it is true! I cannot tell you how happy I shall be on the day when I shall be able to get away from this fancied bliss—the day when I shall be able to live really for myself and not always have to think of my soprano, which was and unhappily still is the greatest solicitude of my life; for I assure you I live here like a prisoner, as the climate is so bad that I have occasion for regret every time I put my nose out-of-doors."

Her second New York season was less successful. The times were hard and Strakosch brought a second Italian Opera Company, with Nilsson, to compete with Maretzek, who had Lucca and Ilma di Murska, the brilliant Austrian (Croatian) colorature singer, who could be relied on to execute "the most difficult passages of ornamentation with unerring certainty." Maretzek asked his two stars to sing for less than they had been getting, but they refused and undertook to manage an opera company of their own in Cuba—with the result to be expected, each losing a large sum of money.

A warning example in this respect, Lucca serves as a model, on the other hand, in so far as she retired from the stage before her powers were seriously impaired.

She was twice married. From her first husband, Baron von Rhaden, she obtained a divorce, and in America she married another baron, Von Wallhofen, with whom she lived happily. From the date of his death, in 1899, to her own death, in 1908, she never sang again even in her home. Her fatal illness was traced to the injuries she had received eight years previously from a fall caused by an orange peel on the sidewalk. She left property valued at $400,000.

Unlike so many other singers, she did not devote the latter part of her career to teaching. Experiments she made in that line proved so disappointing that she gave them up. In her own words: "In two months I was supposed to make great singers out of the young women who were my pupils, but, unfortunately, I knew no patent process of instilling the necessary musical knowledge. If I criticised they lost patience and stopped their lessons. That which was deadly earnest to me they considered as capriciousness. I will not go into details as to the ingratitude of pupils whom, in addition to giving free instruction, I also clothed and supported. This was all so discouraging that I gave up teaching."

Her repertory included about sixty operas. Perhaps her most conspicuous failure was Elsa, in *Lohengrin;* yet she had sense enough to realize that the fault was her own. The bitterest experience in her life was caused by the Wagnerian champions of Mallinger. But she stood up for Wagner when she heard the silly but oft-repeated accusation that his music ruins voices. "That is all foolish talk," she said. "Neither Wagner nor any other composer can ruin the voice of the vocalist who knows how to sing. Nowadays singers think they are finished and ready for the great public after only one year's study. Six years of

hard work are needed to thoroughly train the voice. Let the artists study six years and then practise scales every day, as I do, then we shall have vocalists who know how to sing—and not only Wagner, but everything."

Pauline Lucca is usually classed among Austrian singers, and an Austrian we may as well consider her. She was born in Vienna (1841); her mother was a German, her father a Jew from Venice, which for a time belonged to Austria. She also had the true Viennese chic, piquancy, and vivacity. But the secret of her success is not to be sought in parentage or nationality; it lay in her fascinating artistic personality.

Marcella Sembrich

Like Pauline Lucca, Marcella Sembrich may be classed with Austrian singers; she was born (1858) in Galicia (Austrian Poland). Her maiden name was Praxede Marcelline Kochanska, but when she went on the stage she wisely changed that for her mother's German maiden name, Sembrich.

Her experiences in early life were similar to those of Christine Nilsson. There was a large family—nine sons and four daughters—and in order to get bread and butter for all of these, the musical members of the family travelled with the father through the provinces, playing at fairs, weddings, and other merry-makings. Marcella had learned the violin from the age of six, and many a time did she play it at balls and other social gatherings. Her exceptional talent attracted the attention of an old gentleman named Lanowitch, who placed her in the Lemberg Conservatory. There she studied the piano for a number of years with Prof. Wilhelm Stengel, who subsequently became her husband. His ambition was to make of her a concert pianist, and he planned to take her to Liszt; but in passing through Vienna she played for Professor Eppstein

and also, at his request, sang for him. The result was that he advised her to cultivate her voice, but without giving up the piano. She did so, studying the voice with Rokitansky, and subsequently, at Milan, with the younger Lamperti. Like all great teachers, Lamperti gave special attention to breathing. He used to say to his pupil: "No water, no sailing; no breathing, no singing. The voice sails on the breath." In referring to these experiences Mme. Sembrich once said to Gustav Kobbé: "Think how many young singers after five years get a tremolo. They are not well taught."

It was not till she was nineteen and had married Professor Stengel that she made her first appearance on the operatic stage—at Athens, in *I Puritani.* But what is most worth noting regarding her early career is that after she had won genuine successes she felt that her voice needed further training and therefore returned to Lamperti.

As an actress she is practically self-taught—a remarkable feat those will declare who have been amused by her Rosina, her Norina, her Zerlina, or moved by the pathos of her Violetta (her favorite rôle), her Mimi, or her Gilda. Her repertory includes 37 operas, and with the exception of two of these (Marguerite and Rosina) she appeared in all of them before she had had the advantage—or disadvantage—of hearing others in them.

To the end of her operatic career, Sembrich remained as frisky as a school-girl in rôles of the Rosina type; which is the more remarkable as she is extremely short-sighted. She once told me that she overcomes this defect by carefully surveying the ground before the curtain goes up, relying also on her colleagues for an occasional warning word.*

* Eye-glasses or spectacles have heretofore been tabooed by singers and actors, but now an English optician is said to have invented a new kind of glasses which players need not hesitate to use. The lenses are very small and close to the eyeball, and the frame is practically invisible, being flesh-colored.

One of the secrets of Patti's success was, in the words of Hanslick, "her unceasing delight in her profession." The same is true of Sembrich. After one of her appearances as Rosina, in the *Barber of Seville*, with Campanari, Edouard de Reszke, Carbone, and Salignac, I wrote: "It was a great evening for Italian opera. The singers seemed to enjoy themselves in Rossini's comic music like a flock of inland ducks in a pond improvised by a shower, and their merriment proved contagious to the audience. . . . Now that Patti is practically out of the field, no singer can compete with this Austrian in Rossini's music, which requires taste as well as a voice of lovely quality and extreme agility. She has all these qualities, and in the lesson scene, particularly, displayed them so effectively that the audience went wild with enthusiasm."

No one would have ever suspected, on seeing Sembrich thus romping and warbling on the stage, that she was horribly nervous—tortured by stage fright.

It is commonly supposed that stage fever is particularly a malady of young singers, but there is one reason why it should afflict the older artists even more severely. "I find I am more nervous," Sembrich once said, "as my reputation increases, for more is expected of me."

Regarding stage life in general she remarked: "An operatic career is a fine thing, but an opera-singer really doesn't 'live,' and if it were not for a few minutes' joy when you hear thousands applauding, there would be little tempting in the career. For the minute the artist is off the stage she thinks how the next thing is going. If one only could always end a performance and never begin it! If I myself could not feel how everything was going," she added humorously, "I could tell from Stengel. He always sits in the audience and comes in to see me between the acts. He has a very long nose, and if it is longer than usual, I know that I have not done well."

Few singers have known so well as Sembrich how to preserve the youthful freshness of the voice. How did she do it? In the first place, by taking very good care of her health. During the season, she seldom missed her two-hour morning walk in the park, and in summer she put on short skirts for long walks in the Tyrolean or Swiss Alps. For years, too, she contented herself with the honors and the sums—princely both—she won in America, refusing to overfatigue her voice by singing also in European opera-houses. Her second secret lay in her having always remained within her proper sphere. While her voice was always rich and full, and had great carrying power, it was not strong enough to compete with the big orchestra in Wagner's operas, and she therefore resisted the temptation to appear in them.

For years Sembrich enjoyed the distinction of being the best living representative of the *bel canto*. Now, *bel canto* is of two kinds—one florid, the other broadly melodious. In both kinds she approached perfection, and for that reason she was the ideal Mozart singer. One might say that Sembrich was—and still is, in 1909—among singers what Mozart was among composers. Her voice, as Mr. Krehbiel has truly remarked, "awakens echoes of Mme. Patti's organ, but has warmer life-blood in it."

It is commonly supposed that the operatic stage is the only proper place for the display of what is known as *bel canto;* but that is a great mistake. Beautiful singing is as necessary for the interpretation of the *lieder* of Schubert, Schumann, and Grieg as for the operas of Mozart, Rossini, and Bellini. Mme. Sembrich applied the *bel canto* methods to the lyric song, and her success was so great that whenever she has given a recital she has had a "Paderewski audience," and her receipts are more than double the large sum she gets for a night at the opera. If her recitals have been fewer than her operatic appearances, that is only be-

cause concert-goers are much less numerous than lovers of the opera.

In choosing her songs she exercises the same discretion as in selecting her operatic parts, avoiding the intensely dramatic, tragic, and passionate, for which neither her voice nor her temperament is suited, although she is mistress of deep pathos, as witness her Violetta. Like most Poles, she has a speaking knowledge of several languages; it makes no difference to her whether a song is in Italian, French, German, English, Polish, or Russian. But it does make a difference to the foolish débutantes who imitate her!

When the admirers of Sembrich learned, in January, 1909, that she had fully made up her mind to leave the operatic stage, they were partly consoled by the fact that she would still give song recitals. The occasion of her farewell to the opera was also the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of her first appearance in New York. It occurred on February 6, and amounted to an ovation such as perhaps no other singer had ever received. After the performance of acts from *Don Pasquale*, *Barber of Seville*, and *Traviata*, in which leading singers of the Metropolitan were associated with her, came the farewell ceremonies. The curtain parted again, revealing a scene with a throne in the centre for the prima donna, who entered with Mr. Gatti-Casazza, followed by the artists and girls scattering flowers. Mr. Dippel read a set of resolutions whereby Mme. Sembrich was elected an honorary member of the Metropolitan company. Various gifts were then presented, from the directors, the singers, the orchestra, and finally a string of pearls and a jewelled watch, the gift of over a thousand admirers, which was presented by the Hon. Seth Low, with appropriate remarks. Mme. Sembrich's cordial response of thanks followed, and then the orchestra played *The Star-Spangled Banner*, and the demonstration ended. Many in the audience were in tears at various points of the

ceremonies. The tributes were so genuine, so sincere, that they touched the hearts of all.

It is well to emphasize the fact that Marcella Sembrich was honored on this occasion as a noble woman as well as a great artist. No breath of scandal had ever attached to her name, and the warmth of her reception was a reflection of the warmth of the true womanly heart which was always hers. When Anton Seidl died and a performance was arranged for the benefit of his widow, Marcella Sembrich volunteered her services, though she had never sung with Seidl. It was *that* heart which is revealed in her singing and which gives it its greatest charm.

"My memories of grand opera go back nearly half a century," said one man to me, "but never have I witnessed anything comparable to this Sembrich farewell."

A few days before this farewell I had a talk with Mme. Sembrich in which she spoke of the secrets of her success. In regard to her wonderful *cantilena*—her ability to sing a broad, sustained melody flawlessly—she said: "My violin playing helped me to acquire it! The bow is the breath of the violin; drawing it slowly across the strings is like singing a broad melody. I learned much from my bow." She continued as follows:

I was seventeen years old before I began to take singing lessons. It is not well to begin at an earlier age, though there are exceptions. For two months, while I was taking lessons of Lamperti, I did not practise at home but only under his direct supervision, so as not to acquire bad habits. Subsequently I decided that an hour and a half of practising at home was sufficient, and I found it best not to practise more than ten minutes at a time. After three years of study I thought of making my début. The manager of the Italian Opera at Athens heard me sing at Lamperti's studio in Milan, and made me an offer; thus it happened that I made my first appearance on the stage in

Greece. I was already married at the time of this début; but I concluded my voice was still too young to endure the strain of singing in public, so I retired for two more years of study.

I had to learn to act as well as to sing, although acting in those days was not nearly as important a part of an operatic artist's equipment as it is now. It so happened that I never heard another singer in any of the rôles in which I have become famous until after I had appeared in it. That made my task more difficult, but gave me a chance to do things in my own way. For students, however, nothing is so important as hearing and seeing great artists as often as possible.

By refusing to sing more than two or three times a week, and by always selecting the music that is in my line and that does not strain my vocal cords, I have been able to keep my voice in good condition for a number of years. I love my work, love the music I sing, and that is one reason why the public likes me. When I have to appear in the evening I eat at two o'clock, and then not again till after the performance. Unfortunately, I get so excited that often I find it difficult to go to sleep; but I keep myself in good health by plenty of exercise in the open air. My chief pride is that I won my success without appealing to the galleries.

At her début in New York, Mme. Sembrich not only sang, but played a violin concerto and a piano-forte solo, and played them well. In other words, she proved that she was a musician as well as a singer. She gave up playing the violin in public long ago, but at her song recitals the audience is never willing to disperse till after she has sat down at the piano and played the accompaniment to her singing of Chopin's delightful song, *The Maiden's Wish.*

VIII

MELBA, GARDEN, AND CALVÉ

NELLIE MELBA

THE British Isles have given to the world some of the greatest tenors and baritones, but no prima donnas of the highest rank. The British colony, Australia, has, however, come to the rescue with Nellie Melba, whose success as a lyric and colorature singer has been as great as that of Marcella Sembrich.

Her maiden name was Nellie Mitchell; her husband's, Charles Armstrong; but to the world she is known by the name she assumed by way of suggesting Melbourne, near which city she was born in 1859. She was a lively girl, fond of riding bareback across the Australian plains or fishing all day in a creek. Both her parents were musical. Her father was Scotch. Her mother, who was of Spanish descent, and from whom, as Gustav Kobbé suggests, Melba inherits her handsome looks, was a good pianist; when she played, little Nellie would sometimes hide under the piano listening intently. Like Sembrich, she learned as a child to play the piano and the violin; and she also played the organ in a church frequently. When not busy at school, she was always humming, and even in those days she attracted attention by that trill which subsequently alone would have sufficed to make her famous—a trill that became so pure, so easy, so even, so subtly graded in the increase or decrease of loudness, that it has been the model and despair of her greatest rivals, including Selma Kurz.

Her vocal organs were, like Patti's, seemingly built so that it was almost impossible for her to sing otherwise than beautifully. As Mabel Wagnalls says: "All things came easy to her, because her voice never had to be *placed;* her tones were jewels already set." Yet that did not absolve her from the necessity of working hard to acquire the necessary fluency and brilliancy of execution. Her parents were wealthy, and her desire to go on the stage was discouraged by them, so that it was not till after her marriage that she had an opportunity to do as she pleased. The marriage was not a happy one, and after the birth of a son Nellie returned to her father's house. She accompanied him to London, and there she was heard and admired at an entertainment. Among those present was the wife of the Austrian consul at Melbourne, who urged her to study with Mme. Marchesi in Paris, and gave her a letter of introduction.

Marchesi had hardly heard her when she excitedly called to her husband: "Salvatore, at last I have a star!" She then asked the singer: "Are you serious? Have you patience?" And when the young woman answered "Yes," Marchesi added: "Then if you will stay with me one year I will make of you something extraordinary."

The eminent German teacher kept her word to the Australian, who, in Marchesi's own words, "soon became one of my most industrious, pliant, and talented scholars." At a musicale in Marchesi's house she sang the mad scene from *Hamlet* in such a way as to win the most flattering praise of its composer, Ambroise Thomas, who was among the guests. This was in 1886; in the following year she made her operatic début at Brussels—the beginning of a brilliant career, during which she has distinguished herself particularly as Lucia, Gilda, Ophelia, Marguerite, Juliet, Nedda, Mimi, Micaela, and Desdemona.

It has always been great fun, for those who like that sort of sport, to watch Melba and the flute player, in the

mad scene from *Lucia*, run a steeplechase across a scaly country full of dangerous staccato stubble and wide leaps, or—to change the figure—to watch the dazzling explosion of runs, trills, and staccato rockets. What her voice chiefly lacks is warmth and variety of coloring, but these qualities the lovers of florid song do not care for so much as brilliant execution. Nor do they consider it a serious flaw if a prima donna enunciates indistinctly, sacrificing words to tones. Like Schopenhauer, they rather like the "contemptuous indifference" with which Rossini, Donizetti, and their singers often treat the text; and if the indifference extends to the action, as it does sometimes in Melba's case, they forgive, and applaud no less violently.*

Concerning her appearance in *La Traviata* in 1896, I wrote: "The audience saw a healthy, vigorous Australian prima donna, looking as fresh as a rose and singing like a skylark. There was not a single tuberculous microbe in this Violetta; she was simply an elegantly dressed young woman who seemed to be happy at first and more or less distressed afterward by two men, and then she suddenly expired, for no visible reason. It was neither sad nor particularly entertaining, and it showed that there was, after all, an advantage in the old indifference of operatic audiences to plots, which is most vividly illustrated by the story of the man in the gallery, in an Italian opera-house, who shouted: 'Great Heavens! the tenor is murdering the soprano!' But Mme. Melba's singing atoned for everything." There are many ways of winning great success—fortunately.

This success, however, in Nellie Melba's case, did not come at once, so far as New York is concerned. In the

* Mme. Melba knows her audiences, and she does not resent criticism or banter. I once asked her if she remembered that when she first came to America I referred to her as the kangaroo prima donna. "Oh," she laughed, "that did not worry me. My husband used to be known as Kangaroo Charlie."

same criticism from which I have just quoted I stated that "the sidewalk speculators were offering tickets at greatly reduced rates, and in the house itself there were rows of empty seats." This prima donna had to win her way slowly in America, in striking contrast to Tetrazzini, a decade and a half later. The reasons therefor are given succinctly in that invaluable storehouse of information, Mr. Krehbiel's *Chapters of Opera:* Mme. Melba "did not make all of her operas effective in her first season [1893], partly because a large portion of the public had been weaned away from the purely lyric style of composition and song, in which she excelled, partly because the dramatic methods and fascinating personality of Mme. Calvé had created a fad which soon grew to proportions that scouted at reason; partly because Miss (not Mme.) Eames had become a great popular favorite, and the people of society, who doted on her, on Jean de Reszke, his brother Edouard, and on Lassalle, found all the artistic bliss of which they were capable in listening to their combined voices in *Faust*. So popular had Gounod's opera become at this time with the patrons of the Metropolitan Opera House, that my witty colleague, Mr. W. J. Henderson, sarcastically dubbed it 'das Faustspielhaus,' in parody of the popular title of the theatre on the hill in the Wagnerian Mecca."

Subsequently Mme. Melba became so popular that she could dictate her own terms and monopolize whatever rôles she wanted. In one case, however, this proved a disadvantage. Mme. Sembrich attributes the preservation of her vocal powers during a career of nearly three decades to the fact that she always knew what rôles and songs were suited to her voice, and avoided the others. Mme. Melba did not always do this, and for her mistake on one occasion she suffered serious, but luckily not permanent, injury to her voice.

It was at the time when the De Reszkes were in New York and Wagner was all the rage, so that even Melba

longed to appear in one of these rôles that brought their interpreters so much glory, while Calvé likewise talked as if she was in similar mood. The Frenchwoman refrained, but the Australian succumbed. One day Jean de Reszke suggested to her, half jocularly, maybe, that she should try Brünnhilde, in *Siegfried*. She promptly made up her mind to do so, and had a clause inserted in her contract securing that part for herself. To sing that rôle, one must have a voice pliant and strong as a Damascus blade. Melba's was pliant, but not of steel, and it broke in its contest with the Wagnerian orchestra; she had to retire for the season and make it whole again.

There were not wanting critics who asserted that Wagner was to blame. If that was the case, were Puccini and Verdi to blame for the impairment of Caruso's voice toward the close of the season of 1908–9?

Melba's triumphs at the Metropolitan Opera House were even surpassed by those she won at Oscar Hammerstein's Manhattan Opera House, which her presence helped to make a fashionable resort. What pleased the more critical of her admirers particularly was that her biggest success was won in the season 1908–9, in a part which her matured art as singer and actress now enabled her to assume with most satisfactory results—the part of Desdemona, in Verdi's *Otello*, an opera which she actually succeeded in making popular.

Nellie Melba is one of the few lucky singers whose vocal gifts came to her naturally. Yet, as already intimated, she was from her girlhood a hard worker, practising on several instruments besides training her voice. To Mabel Wagnalls she once said: "I didn't *sing* much when a child; I only *hummed*. And, by the way, a child's voice should be carefully guarded. I consider the ensemble singing in schools as ruinous to good voices. Each one tries to outdo the other, and the tender vocal cords are strained

and tired. I, personally, did not seriously study singing until after my marriage at seventeen years of age."

Mary Garden

The assertion that the British Isles have given to the world no woman singer of the first rank is not refuted by the remarkable success of Mary Garden. Had Miss Garden depended on her voice alone, or chiefly, she would have never become famous. Her career is of interest to readers of this book because it shows that an opera singer can become remarkably popular though she has but limited vocal powers—*provided these are supported by exceptional histrionic ability.*

Mary Garden is usually considered an American, but she was born in Scotland (1877). She was in America, however, during the most impressionable period of her career, from her sixth year to her nineteenth. At the age of six her mother put a violin into her hands, and six years later she played it at a concert. She preferred the piano, however, and gave five hours a day to practising on it. Then she took part in an amateur performance, at Chicago, of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury*, made a hit, and decided to go on the stage. She was fortunate in finding a wealthy lady, the wife of a Chicago merchant, who advanced $20,000 for her musical education in Paris, a sum she repaid eleven years later, when it constituted less than one-half her earnings for one season. For two years she had her voice trained by several teachers. At that time the California soprano, Sibyl Sanderson, was a great favorite in Paris, and through her influence she got an opportunity to sing before the directors of the Opéra-Comique, who engaged her as a member of their company.

Charpentier's *Louise* was the success of that season, and Miss Garden, without having been asked to understudy

the part of the heroine, learned it nevertheless. To this wise step she owed her sudden elevation to fame. The singer who had the part of Louise became indisposed one evening in the second act, and the director, knowing that Miss Garden had studied that part, asked her to appear in the third and fourth acts. The audience grumbled at the announcement, but apprehension changed to wonder and delight. Miss Garden's success was instantaneous. She kept the rôle and sang it some two hundred times in Paris alone.

In a sketch of her career written for *Musical America* (February 27, 1909), she says: "I coached all my rôles with the director of the Opéra-Comique after my engagement there, but I have never taken an actual lesson in acting in my life. When I take up a new rôle I think, think, think it over, try to become one with the character I am to portray, and gradually one idea after another comes to me. But I seldom play a rôle twice in exactly the same way, for every time I am singing it some fresh detail, some new point will suggest itself to me, and I try it. For instance, I have never even seen the opera *Thaïs*. Everything that I do in that rôle is my own idea, carefully thought out before being tried."

In this power to create characters in her own personal way lies the secret of her success. It was in *Thaïs* that she made her American début, at the Manhattan Opera House, on November 25, 1907, and at once won the admiration of the audience by her rare art of picturesque posing, of subtle gesture, of facial expression, and passionate vocal utterance. That one of her most marked traits is versatility she showed in her second opera, *Louise*, in which, instead of as priestess of Venus, she appears as a plain Parisian working girl, distracted by the conflicting emotions of love and filial obedience. But it was in her third opera, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, that her unique art was

revealed most strikingly. In this work declamation displaces song and everything depends on the ability of the artists to help the composer and the librettist to create "atmosphere." The shadowy unreality of this opera is reflected every moment in the aspect, the motions, the voice of Miss Garden, who seems as one acting in a dream.*

The most remarkable thing about Miss Garden is that she who, at the age of nineteen, went to Paris, a Scotch-American girl, unable to speak a word of French, succeeded within a few years in entering so deeply into the inmost spirit of French art as to win the unbounded admiration of the critical and chauvinistic Parisians. They forgot her nationality and claimed her as one of their own. When it was announced that she was going back to America there was consternation, and at her farewell performance she had a tumultuous ovation.

Hardly less remarkable was her achievement in making the three operas referred to succeed in New York. They are so peculiarly Parisian in their atmosphere that various managers had doubted the wisdom of placing them before the public this side of the ocean. In her second season at the Manhattan she succeeded, with the invaluable assistance, it is true, of Maurice Renaud, in winning the same degree of popularity for another opera of the Parisian school, Massenet's miracle play, *The Juggler of Notre Dame*, in which she who, in *Thaïs*, had appeared as the physical embodiment of alluring womanhood, took the part of a young juggler. She succeeded surprisingly in disguising her femininity both of face and form, and the tonsure, when she enters the monastery, gave the finishing touch. Had she worn a red cloak instead of a white one, she would

* For a more detailed analysis of these three parts, the reader may be referred to an article by the author in the *Century Magazine* for May, 1908.

have looked completely like Abbey's "Sir Galahad," especially in the picture where Galahad fails to ask the question. Miss Garden's eyes had this lovely, innocent, wondering look in them, especially when M. Renaud was telling her the story of the Christ baby being hidden from his pursuers in the flowering sage.

Miss Garden holds that in modern opera a wonderful voice is less needed than personality, temperament, individuality; and her success shows there is some truth in this contention. To girls who have these qualities she says: "It will be impossible to hide yourself, for the public is always looking for something new. But keep a steady head; and especially is this necessary after a first success. Mark out a straight line for yourself, your career, and stick to it. Be like a horse with blinders, keeping your gaze fixed on your goal, *otherwise you will fail, even after a promising beginning.*

"No real talent was ever allowed to languish neglected and unseen."

Emma Calve

While it may be true that, as Mary Garden maintains, a wonderful voice is less needed in modern opera than personality, temperament, individuality, it is no doubt better to have a wonderful voice too. In Emma Calvé we find a combination of all these qualities; is it a wonder that her popularity in New York was at one time so great that even Nellie Melba was unable to assert herself in face of it?

The nationality of Emma Calvé is something of a puzzle. Her father was a Spanish engineer, her mother a Frenchwoman. Her baptismal name was Emma Roguer; she was born in a French village, Decazeville, in 1866. She is thus, like the opera *Carmen*, with which her name will always be inseparably associated, French with a Spanish complexion.

She was brought up almost like a nun, in a convent. A visitor heard her sing, and urged her mother to send her to Paris for a musical education. Her first engagement was at Brussels. Thence she returned to Paris with a letter from Gevaert, Director of the Brussels Conservatoire, to the famous German teacher, Mme. Marchesi,* in which the distinguished Belgian scholar said: "Take this young artist in hand. She has talent, but has still much to learn. I fancy her voice has not been properly trained. She has sung with some success in Brussels during the past year, and now wishes to work steadily with you."

Marchesi found the voice of this pretty, dark-eyed girl so tired and overworked that she advised her to rest it for some time before beginning her studies. Calvé did so, and then studied for two years with Marchesi, appearing subsequently at the Théâtre-Italien under the guidance of Victor Maurel, and then at the Opéra-Comique. Her first real successes were won, however, in Italy, at the Milan Scala. After her appearance in Samara's *Flora Mirabilis* she wrote to her teacher that she had met with *un succes très franc*, although her voice was found to be scarcely loud enough for the big Milan opera-house. "I must tell you, between ourselves," she adds, "that I am making great progress, not only as a singer but as an actress, for I have worked hard at my part." Then came her first real triumph, at the same theatre—her Santuzza, in Mascagni's sensationally successful *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Maurel had been among her advisers, and she had seen in the same part (without music) the great Duse, whose simplicity and naturalness made an indelible impression on her. After one of her appearances in this rôle in New

* Marchesi's maiden name was Mathilde Graumann, and she was born at Frankfurt. She also had under her tuition Melba, Eames, Nevada, Gerster, Ilma di Murska, Gabrielle Krauss, and others who subsequently became famous. She tells about them in her book, *Marchesi and Music*. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1897.

York, when Mascagni's opera was preceded by *Lucia*, with Melba, I wrote:

"It did not take the great French singer a minute to show how infinitely greater emotion is in music than flawless technic existing for its own sake. No longer did the audience think of trills and scales and tone production and phrasing; they saw bodily before them a poor, betrayed girl, witnessed her frantic efforts to retain her faithless lover, her despair and revenge, all revealed most pathetically in facial expression and actions that were nature's own contributions to art, while her singing simply deepened the emotion, and it required a special effort of the attention to realize how beautiful it was as singing. Why, we say it for the tenth time, does not Mme. Calvé learn some of the Wagner rôles? She would be a vocalist-actress such as Wagner dreamed of in his most Utopian moments."

Internationality achieved one of its greatest miracles in the case of Emma Calvé. Spanish father, French mother, born in France, trained by a German teacher, first great success in Italy—to these we may add that the climax of her triumphs came in America, in the season 1893-4, when she sang Carmen fourteen times to crowded houses, and, during the demonstration made at her farewell, came forward and said: "I shall never forget that to the American public I owe the greatest success of my career."

It is said * that Calvé had her tomb designed some years ago, the principal feature of it being two statues of herself, one as Ophelia, the other as Carmen. She evidently realizes as clearly as her admirers do that, while she may have achieved notable results in *Faust*, *Mefistofele*, *La Navarraise*, *Messaline*, *L'Hérodiade*, and other works, it is in *Hamlet* and *Carmen* that she won for herself a place in musical history as a creative interpreter without an equal.

* *Opera Singers. A Pictorial Souvenir.* By Gustav Kobbé. Boston: Oliver Ditson Co.

There had been great Carmens before Calvé, among them Galli-Mariée, Pauline Lucca, Minnie Hauk, but Emma Calvé surpassed them all. On December 21, 1893, the day after her first New York appearance, I said in the *Evening Post:* "Coming from Southern France, she is a neighbor of the Spanish gypsy. . . . Her impersonation is as vivid as the colors of a gypsy's garments. Sometimes it verges on coarseness, but it is the coarseness of realism. . . . She does not hesitate in a moment of excitement to leap the barriers of tonal beauty, to declaim, even to speak where song would seem artificial. . . . Her face, which would hardly be called beautiful when at rest, becomes so intensely fascinating in its constant emotional changes that one can hardly take the opera-glass from the eyes. Few rôles present all the emotions, from mischievous flirtation, amorous dalliance, coaxing, threatening, indifference, scorn, rage, and horror, as vividly as that of Carmen, and all of them are mirrored in Mme. Calvé's countenance and helped out with an endless variety of gestures. Nothing could have been truer to the low-life she represents than the self-conscious coquetry with which she adjusts her dress and hair so as to look her best before the soldiers, just after stabbing the cigarette girl."

Fifteen years later, when she sang Carmen at the Manhattan Opera House (March 13, 1908), I wrote:

"'She is universally accepted as the greatest Carmen of all who have appeared in the part,' wrote the editor of the new *Grove* four years ago. She is now forty-two years of age, yet she is still without a rival. To be sure, she has become too heavy and matronly to satisfy the eye in the opening scenes of flirtation with the sergeant Don José, or in the dance in the smuggler's den; but apart from that, her personality as an actress is as potent as ever. Nor has her voice grown fat; it is as slender, as graceful, as expressive, as capricious as ever. Her tones are clear and full,

luscious in quality, from the lower ones that have the genuine viola quality to the soprano top notes, and in her style there is inimitable chic, grace, mischief, drollery, with great intensity and passion in the tragic moments. Her song has the rare charm of a constant improvisation; it seems as if the melodies, as well as the words and the actions were inspirations of the moment; and this is the perfection of art.

"The *Habanera* (which is a real old Spanish song) and the *Seguidilla* have seldom been sung more bewitchingly by Mme. Calvé than they were last night—in the true Andalusian style, in perfect tune, with rare beauty of tone. In superb contrast was the tragic scene where she reads her impending death in the cards; the operatic stage has few things as thrilling as her face and her song, at the words 'la mort.' And in the subsequent scenes with the Toreador and her discarded lover to the moment when she falls after Don José has stabbed her, she is the same inimitable Calvé that opera-goers have always adored. Last night's audience, which completely filled the house, was delighted, moved, thrilled, and there were many recalls."

The only serious blemish in this performance, as in others of preceding years, was her refusal to sing *Je t'aime Escamillo*, the exquisite love-song which is sung with the Toreador just before he goes into the bull-ring, with the rhythmic simplicity and intensity of feeling called for. It is one of the most exquisite melodies ever penned, and not to sing it as intended is an esthetic crime. In other places, too, this capricious prima donna was inclined to overdo the improvisational manner, but not to the extent one would have supposed from some of the newspaper censures. She was still the Carmen of Carmens. To hear her sing *L'amour*, in the second act (No. 14), after the two other girls, was to realize the meaning of interpretative genius. Jean de Reszke alone has been able to sing and say so much in one word, as we shall see later.

Ophelia, in Ambroise Thomas's opera, is not nearly so fascinating a character as Bizet's Carmen, and the opera as a whole is so commonplace that even Calvé has never been able to make it popular. Her appearance in it in New York, in December, 1895, was, however, one of the marvels of the season. She entirely transformed the character; her Ophelia was not pallid and languorous, but highly emotional. She conceived the part as that of a girl who has become insane from ardent love, and all is emotional, even the florid music. Concerning this I wrote: "Whoever has heard Paderewski play the tenth Liszt Rhapsody must have noticed what wonderful effects he produces with the *glissando*. What in ordinary hands is a cheap trick, becomes, under his hands, so exquisitely dainty, so delicate in tint and execution, that it has more than once brought tears to my eyes. Tears over a few sliding octaves interrupted by a few notes of melody? Ay, there's the miracle of genius.

"And Mme. Calvé has done something similar in the mad scene of Thomas's *Hamlet*. I hate florid vocal music fanatically, I detest mad scenes in particular, and have often poured vials of wrath over that in *Hamlet;* but when Calvé sang it at the Metropolitan Opera-House, one esthetic thrill (*frisson*, as the French say) chased another down my spinal cord. It was an absolute revelation. When Patti or Melba sings that music, one admires the sensuous beauty of tone, the supple voice, the fluent execution; but here was something higher—not only flawless technic and mellow tones, but *tones infused with dramatic emotion*. It was nothing short of a miracle—something absolutely new in vocal music, an event in the history of that art; and to the credit of the audience be it said that it recognized this stroke of genius." *

* When I wrote the above for the *Looker-On*, I was not aware of the fact that Lilli Lehmann and some of the old Italian singers understood the art of putting soul into florid song (see page 108).

Food for thought: In a sketch of Calvé's career printed in the Paris *Figaro*, she is quoted as saying that she did not become a real artist till she *forgot that she had a beautiful voice and thought only of the proper expression the music demanded.* Mark that sentence and inwardly digest, and you will have learned a secret which will do more to help you to success than a thousand ordinary music lessons.

Concerning Calvé's conception of the part of Ophelia, Jules Huret relates in the Paris *Figaro* that it is based on an experience she had in Milan, where a famous alienist showed her an English girl who had gone insane after being deserted by her lover. In the words of the French journalist, "The poor girl had fits of violence, of anger, above all, of terror, of a dramatic intensity. Emma Calvé took away with her a deep impression made by this visit. Since then she always sees the poor, demented creature, offering to visitors whatever she can put her hand on, and taking it suddenly away with anguish. And, in spite of herself, whatever she may do, she cannot play Ophelia without seeing herself back in the Milan hospital."

A delightful instantaneous photograph of Calvé, the woman and the artist, was given some years ago in an interview she had with the brilliant London journalist, Mr. De Nevers. When asked if it was true, as reported, that she intended to leave the operatic stage, and if so, why, she answered:

"'When I sing—that is, when I am at work—I don't live. I must have plenty of movement and exercise; I want to see museums and picture galleries; I want to talk; I want to read; and I have to do without these if I am to be in good voice in the evening. I devour books; I read *pêle mêle*, without system, but books are as indispensable to me as nourishment. And if I am to be in singing trim I have to lie still day after day, away from all that interests me, away from books. It is a life of constant sacrifice, and

I am tired of it. When I shall be on the dramatic stage I shall be able to indulge all my favorite occupations in the daytime, and my voice, free of the cares of rhythm, pitch, quality, and intensity of sound, will be all right in the evening. And I am not so selfish after all. It is my pride to register among the sacrifices I made for my art that twice I refused quite a fortune for its sake; the first time to create Massenet's Sappho and the second time, now, to keep faith with Zola and Bruneau. And each occasion meant to me the loss of my American engagement; in other words, the sacrifice of an aggregate of £40,000.'

"'And now, madam, for the most serious of all reasons?' 'What an unbelieving one you are! But you are right, and I will tell you my best reason, because I think you guessed it. The long and short of it is, I am at cross purposes with my repertory. My temperament, all my thinking self, attracts me toward one set of parts, and the limitations of my voice compel me to remain within another set. Why haven't I the voice for Isolde, Brünnhilde, Kundry, Donna Anna, Fidelio? I would not grumble then about rhythm, or conventionalism, or discomforts in every-day life. As it is, I must try fresh fields in drama. Nobody will say I gave up singing because singing gave me up, and I hope to prove in Bruneau's *L'Ouragan* that I deserve to be trusted. And further, in attempting to sing Armida, I want to prove I can sing classic music. But after that, farewell to opera, and for the untrammelled ways of modern drama.'

"'The decision is, then, irrevocable?' 'Absolutely. Why, you are whistling *La donna è mobile, par exemple.* After all, who knows what may happen during one whole year? . . .'

"I thought so all along," Mr. De Nevers concludes.

Another instructive talk with Calvé is reported by Mabel Wagnalls in her *Stars of the Opera*. When asked

if she practised much, the singer replied: "No—not now. You see, I must have mercy on my poor voice and save it for the evenings when I sing. Formerly, of course, I practised every day, but never more than an hour with full voice. Yes, an hour at one time, once a day, that is all. But I studied much besides." To the question: "Did you ever *hum* in your practice?" she replied with much animation: "Yes, and, do you know, that is splendid! I do it a great deal even yet, especially for the high tones. . . . With Mme. Marchesi I used to hum a great deal. Yes, it is an excellent practice, for it brings the tone forward right here"—and she touched the bridge of her nose. When her visitor referred to the mad scene in *Hamlet*—the "eerie tone" which is so fearful in its pathos and terror, Calvé exclaimed: "I love that rôle! The mad scene! Ah, it is superb."

Almost as fascinating as her Ophelia and her Carmen has been her Marguerite, one more of those impersonations which showed that, instead of blindly following monotonous traditions, she tried to do everything her own way and after deep reflection. Even her errors were instructive. For instance, after the death of Valentine, at her first appearance as Marguerite, in *Faust*, she made a theatrical, horrified exit, showing in her features the oncoming of insanity. This in itself was an effective touch, but it distracted the attention of the audience from the exquisite and deeply moving pianissimo strains of the kneeling chorus. I called her attention to this, and she modified her action at subsequent performances. Her song and action were thrilling in the church and prison scenes. In the *Faust* tragedy Goethe has accomplished the miracle of making us feel the absolute innocence of a girl who is guilty of unlawful love and responsible for the death of her mother, brother, and child; and when this miracle is heightened by such music as Gounod has written for it,

and such acting and singing as Mme. Calvé's, one feels assured that opera is not only the highest form of music, but of all art, let croakers say what they will about the unrealism of singing a tragedy.

IX

THREE AMERICAN SOPRANOS

Lillian Nordica

Lillian Norton is the real name of the singer who has become world-famed as Lillian Nordica. She called herself Lillian Nordica at the suggestion of her Italian teacher, Sangiovanni, at the time when she entered on her operatic career; and she did this not because of the old custom of adopting Italian names for stage purposes but because she had received letters from home intimating that she would disgrace the family name by bringing it into the theatre. There were stern clergymen among her ancestors on the mother's side, and her father, too, had suffered from Puritan views regarding amusements; he was not allowed to bring his violin home because it was looked upon as an instrument of the devil.

"Nordica," which means "from the North," not only made a musical stage name, it also calls attention to the fact that the North as well as the South produces beautiful voices. Jenny Lind and Christine Nilsson were natives of Sweden. Lillian Norton was born in Maine, and so was Annie Louise Cary. Emma Eames happened to be born in Shanghai, China, but her parents were good Americans from Maine, and it was at Bath that Emma passed her childhood. Geraldine Farrar was born near Boston, but her ancestors came from South Paris, Maine.

Farmington was Lillian Norton's birthplace. She had five sisters, one of whom died when she was a girl of seven-

teen. The others are still living; on April 25, 1909, I had the pleasure of being present at a family reunion when the five sisters were together at Ardsley-on-the-Hudson, where Mme. Nordica intends to build a Wagner Theatre and to teach when her operatic career is over. While riding along the river in her automobile, with the superb Palisades in view, she told me the story of her life.

The sister who died had a promising voice, and to give her a chance to cultivate it the family moved to Boston. After her early death the family hopes were focussed on Lillian. Her teacher was an Irishman named John O'Neill, who had carefully studied voice culture and had some sensible ideas. He insisted on her devoting three years to technical exercises, and one day, when she offered to sing *Dove sono*, he simply laughed at her. Her first solos she sang in church, and she also appeared as soloist in a choir organized by Eben Tourgee. From the very beginning, her high C had attracted attention, and it was because of this that the Tourgee Choir sometimes sang the *Inflammatus* from Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, which continued for three decades to be a performance that always filled the house to overflowing wherever this soloist happened to sing it. When she was seventeen she had the honor of having assigned to her some of the airs in the *Messiah* at a performance of this oratorio given by the Handel and Haydn Society, of Boston, in the Music Hall.

Recalling those early days, Mme. Nordica dwelt with particular joy on one privilege she enjoyed in regard to that Music Hall when she began her lessons at the New England Conservatory. At that time the conservatory was in the same building as the concert hall, but separated from it by a grating. Being a wee, slender girl, Lillian found that she could squeeze through this grating and thus get to where she could hear the rehearsals and performances going on in the Music Hall. She was very careful not to

tell anybody about this convenient arrangement lest some one might mar it.

When Tietjens came to America, Lillian asked permission to sing for her. The prima donna informed her she had no time to hear her, but that she might sing for her niece. Lillian did so, and Tietjens, who was in the adjoining room, presently came in, asked her to sing an air from *Il Trovatore*, and gave her some tickets for the opera. She advised her to go to New York and study with Mme. Maretzek. Lillian did so, and in one summer learned with her the scores of a dozen operas.

It was through Mme. Maretzek that the little girl from Maine became acquainted with the eminent bandmaster, Patrick Gilmore. She sang for him *Ah non giunge*, from *Sonnambula*, and *See the Bright Seraphim*, with Arbuckle playing the cornet obbligato, and was promptly engaged as a soloist for a Western tour. Besides expenses for herself and her mother, she got $100 a week, which then seemed a big sum to one who, not many years later, commanded $1,500 a night as an opera singer.

About this time she received a letter from her teacher, Mr. O'Neill, reproaching her with joining a brass band when he had had such high aspirations for her. But Lillian had these same high aspirations; from the beginning she had dreamed of becoming an opera singer; but the tour with the brass band gave her a chance to earn a little money and to get some experience in singing before the public, two things not to be despised.

Gilmore was so well satisfied with the American successes of his young soprano that he took her to England, where she appeared at seventy-eight concerts, singing twice a day. This was in 1878, the year of the Exposition in Paris, which became the next place to be visited by the band. Lillian Norton had the honor of being the first singer to be heard in the new Trocadéro. While in Paris

she took some American pupils, and then, realizing that she herself ought to be still a pupil, went to Italy and took lessons of Sangiovanni, asking him to prepare her for the operatic stage.

Had she remained in England she would have become an oratorio and concert singer, in accordance with the wishes of her parents and teacher. But her heart was set on opera, and after studying for some months with Sangiovanni, she got an engagement for the season at Brescia, where she made her début in *La Traviata.* Four times a week she had to sing there, and her emoluments for three months amounted to $100 plus a benefit performance, which yielded $60 more. It was at this time that she changed her name to Nordica.

In 1880 she secured an engagement at St. Petersburg which was renewed the next season. Among the Russian incidents she remembers most vividly is a note written by Mme. Tolstoy after a performance of *Figaro* in which Nordica had taken the part of the mischievous page, Cherubino. It read: "My dear boy, come and take tea with us girls. Bring your doll."

By this time her fame as an opera singer had reached Paris and she got an engagement at the Grand Opéra, at that time the goal of all artists. There she sang eighteen months. Two of her parts were the heroines of *Faust* and *Hamlet,* which she had the great advantage of studying with the composers, Gounod and Thomas. Having married Frederick A. Gower, she retired from the stage; but her husband lost his life in an attempt to cross the English Channel in a balloon, and in 1885 she resumed her operatic career.

One of her earliest appearances in America was at the Academy of Music on November 26, 1883, in *Faust.* "She sings with feeling, but acts with more," wrote Mr. Krehbiel. "Her voice has more soul than body," I wrote,

adding that it was "sweet and sympathetic," and that the highest tones were the best. On March 12, 1887, she made her début at Covent Garden, London, "with instant success," wrote Mr. Alexis Chitty, "on account of the purity of her style and the richness and roundness of her upper register." Thenceforth the adjectives applied to her voice by critics of various countries were such as would have delighted Patti: "the silvery lyric quality which won for her such renown"; "her mellow, pure, expressive voice"; ". . . when to these we add her magnificent physique, her eloquence of face and gesture, and her rich, glowing, thrilling voice, can we wonder that she succeeded?"

When Augustus Harris organized a rival company at Drury Lane, with Jean and Edouard de Reszke, Mapleson succumbed and Mme. Nordica applied to Harris for an engagement. He informed her he had all the singers he needed, but agreed, after Mr. Mancinelli, the eminent conductor, had taken him aside for a moment, to hold her in reserve and, in case he needed her, to give her $200 for each appearance. The women of the company proving less satisfactory than the men, she was sent for on the second night of the season. Without a rehearsal she sang Aïda, and she learned the difficult part of Valentine (*Les Huguenots*) in a week.

For the next six seasons she was a regular member of the Harris company at Covent Garden. "She also sang," says Alexis Chitty, "with much success in concerts at the Crystal Palace, in oratorio at Albert Hall and St. James's Hall [Novello concerts], the Handel and provincial festivals, and other concerts." On one occasion, Mme. Albani having been taken ill, Mme. Nordica took her part in the *Golden Legend.* Sir Arthur Sullivan was greatly annoyed when he heard of the substitution, but the day after the performance he called on the young American and thanked

her for having sung his music "so beautifully," as Gustav Kobbé relates in his *Opera Singers.*

Up to this time Mme. Nordica had appeared chiefly in Italian and French operas. She sang florid music brilliantly, sustained melody with luscious beauty of tone and great charm of phrasing. Some of her rôles, like Aïda and Valentine, revealed also great dramatic power, and it was in this direction that her development thenceforth chiefly lay. In 1892 she studied Venus, in *Tannhäuser*, with Mme. Cosima Wagner, who engaged her to sing Elsa, in *Lohengrin*, at the next Bayreuth Festival—an unprecedented honor for an American. The rehearsals took up three months, and during this time the American became deeply imbued with the Wagnerian spirit of thoroughness and attention to details which characterizes the Bayreuth performances.*

American lovers of Wagner's music soon benefited by this new phase of her art. In 1895 she added to her repertory, at the Metropolitan Opera House, Isolde, Venus, and Elsa in German. It was a time of great Wagner enthusiasm in New York, on the part of the singers as well as the audiences. Anton Seidl, who had been Wagner's assistant for five years, and in whom he had greater confidence than in any other conductor, co-operated with the De Reszke brothers, Nordica, Lilli Lehmann, and others in trying to give performances of his music-dramas approximating from year to year nearer to the composer's ideal. The artists rehearsed with him, and these were the most valuable lessons Nordica ever had in the art of dramatic singing and interpretation. "I shall never forget how deeply Anton Seidl was moved," she once said to Mr. Kobbé. "We all felt that we were starting out on this new

* On June 6, 1896, Mme. Wagner wrote to Anton Seidl: "I am glad to hear from you so many good things about Madame Nordica. The hours devoted to her studying of the rôle of Elsa with me are among my pleasant reminiscences."

race side by side, with every nerve and every thought on the alert. But it was a great strain. Seidl came to me early one morning to go over my rôle with me, and he left me about two o'clock in the afternoon, having gone over the acting to the minutest detail. I had to rest for two days. Every noise, every sound brought up something from *Tristan and Isolde*."

Interesting reminiscences of these studies with Seidl, which did so much to help her to rise to the first rank as a Wagnerian vocalist and actress, were written by her for the Anton Seidl memorial volume, published in 1899 with contributions from other great artists. Even in the days when her voice was light, she relates, Seidl used often to say to her: "Wait, you will sing Wagner one of these days." He was always on the lookout for beautiful young voices which he hoped to consecrate to the cause he worshipped.

"When I did," Mme. Nordica continues, "and began to study the rôle of Venus, it was Mr. Seidl who taught it to me. Again, it was Mr. Seidl who aided me in the first study of Elsa for Bayreuth, an aid of such authority, enthusiasm, and assurance that *it laid a foundation of future purpose and determination.*

"He could act out every part in the music-dramas, and his exactness extended to the multitude of details accepted as minor, but of such importance. One day, after devoting three hours of his time to me, going over the score of *Tristan*, we went to a Broadway store to buy a veil for Isolde in the second act. He asked for samples of various kinds of tulle, and when they came he seized one after another at one end and flirted the other rapidly through the air, to the great astonishment of the shoppers and shop-girls, who were not quite sure whether he was in his right mind. But he knew just what he wanted.*

* This veil is used in the garden scene by Isolde, who waves it on the steps more and more excitedly as her lover approaches.

"With the quenching of the torch he was just as insistent that it should be thrust into water and not sand, to prevent the spreading of the flames from escaping alcohol. His devotion to his work in these details was inexhaustible. . . . In encouragement he was always ready with those earnest in their strivings, and his knowledge was at their disposal, a knowledge that meant to so many a help to advancement in their art." *

Under such guidance Mme. Nordica's impersonations grew more and more dramatic and poetic. "Never was there a more conscientious artist," I wrote after one of her appearances as Elsa, "or one more eager to seize every hint given by the composer, in libretto, score, essay, or letter—subtle touches, mostly, but such as add very much to the picturesqueness of her impersonation. She has brought some effective details from Bayreuth, too, and does not keep them for herself, but makes them extend to her environment."

After hearing her Isolde in London, the well-known song-writer, Sebastian Schlesinger, wrote: "How Nordica has mastered the German language, of which she knew nothing a little while ago, is wonderful; her enunciation is perfect, and as she 'knows how to sing' her fatigue of voice is very little—physical fatigue after a long mental strain must of course follow. While we have many singers whose high registers call forth our warmest admiration, we have few, and with the exception of Lilli Lehmann I know none, whose mezza voce is as fine as Mme. Nordica's. It

* The Seidl volume from which these citations are made contains many invaluable hints for those who wish to succeed as operatic or concert conductors. Seidl was loved by all who worked with him, feared and admired by those who played under him. He achieved greater results than any other operatic conductor. Confidence is half the battle for a singer, and, as Jean and Edouard de Reszke wrote in the Seidl book, "the artists had only to look at his authoritative glance and inspiring beat to gain absolute confidence, and feel that they would be ably steered through any difficulty that might arise."

has great carrying power, and she uses it a great deal more in this rôle than other singers do, so that her interpretation in this respect will be quite different from other singers', like Rose Sucher, who, great as she is dramatically, has evidently not had that vocal instruction which makes the voice *biegsam*, or *bel canto*, and this is required for the ideal Isolde."

What this means was shown at the time when the first Wagner festival was given at the specially built Prinz-Regenten Theater, in Munich. Nordica was one of the artists engaged, and the leading journals declared that for once the rôle of Isolde was actually *sung* in that Wagnerian town. James Huneker, who happened to be present, wrote in the *Musical Courier* that "Nordica rather startled the natives by her artistic singing. Her Isolde is a familiar assumption to us, but for Munich it seemed a revelation. I suppose the fact that a woman could sing the music without howling off-pitch provoked both wonderment and enthusiasm. . . . I have heard her give the *Liebestod* with more volume, though never with such sorrowful tenderness. . . . The enthusiasm was great over Nordica and Fremstad (Brangäne). It was decidedly a red-letter day for American singers."

Lillian Nordica helped to irreparably damage two myths: one, that devotion to Wagner's music ruins a voice prematurely, or at least unfits it for other styles of song; the other, that dramatic singing and *bel canto* are absolutely distinct and incompatible. Like Lilli Lehmann, she began her stage career as a light soprano with a bird-like voice; and, like that German singer, she retained her ability to sing lyric rôles, with or without coloratura, after she had become pre-eminent as Isolde and Brünnhilde. Once she helped Mr. Grau out of a scrape at Washington by singing *Traviata* at a moment's notice; and at the age of fifty she sings the lyric rôles as well as she does the dramatic. Of her Marguerite, I wrote in 1903:

"Marguerite does not require such a sonorous voice as Brünnhilde; accordingly, Mme. Nordica attuned her tone-volume to the part, revealing the full strength of her organ only in the church scene and the final trio. This showed not only good judgment, but superlative control of her vocal technic. She sang the jewel song happily, the spinning song sentimentally, the church scene with an agony of remorse and despair seldom witnessed on the stage. And while, in singing Wagner, she always makes noble use of the *bel canto*, so here, conversely, she infused the charms of the dramatic style into Gounod's broad melodies. The text was enunciated with surprising clearness and the phrasing most tasteful. In her action there were many new details, and her conception of the part was quite properly that of Goethe rather than that of Gounod's French librettists. In a word, she infused a hackneyed part with fresh interest, and the audience recalled her, with Mr. Alvarez and Mr. E. de Reszke, numberless times after the acts."

"Go and hear Mme. Nordica," I wrote on a later occasion, "in Italian music, and then bear in mind that she has made a specialty of Wagner ever since the days of Anton Seidl, and you will realize that Wagner, *properly sung*, strengthens and beautifies the voice. . . . To critical ears it is inexpressibly soothing to listen to a voice like this —a voice always produced without effort, always luscious, always true to the pitch, and at the same time imbued with the deepest feeling; a voice which shows that Wagner's most difficult intervals (which great artists a few decades ago considered unsingable) can be made as smooth and flowing as Mozart's cantilena; a voice which had a glorious mountain freshness in it when it sang the opening lines of *Götterdämmerung*, *Zu neuen Thaten*, and retained that freshness till she uttered the last words, *Selig gilt dir mein Gruss*, after four hours of the most exhausting song and

action." And how her final high C in *Siegfried* always thrilled the audience! Lilli Lehmann alone could equal her in that.

Lillian Nordica, like Lilli Lehmann, has had the advantage of great beauty of face and form. It was only one of many assets, to be sure, but it had its value. Never was this beauty more admired than on the occasion when it was set off by the diamond tiara presented by her friends. Concerning this occasion I wrote:

"It was the greatest event, the most triumphal occasion in her career. After the first act, when the curtain had been raised repeatedly in response to tumultuous applause, a number of baskets of flowers were handed up to her, and in one of them was a casket containing a large jewel-case. This M. Jean de Reszke gave to the prima donna, who opened it and displayed the much-talked-of tiara with the 233 diamonds, that was made for America's greatest singer with the contributions of 128 of her admirers, including the names of many leading society people. It is a tribute to genius such as few singers have ever received. On the front page of the parchment book containing the names of the donors the following is written:

"To Mme. Nordica:

"We beg your acceptance of the accompanying ornament as a token of regard from some of your friends and admirers, and in recognition of your deserved artistic success, of which, as your compatriots, we are justly proud.

"Fräulein Olitzka—who was an impassioned Ortrud—helped to put the tiara on Mme. Nordica's head, while the curtain was raised for a moment so that the audience had an opportunity to see how becoming it was. She did not need the ornament, however, for she was a most lovely Elsa unadorned. . . . One could feel that her mastery of

the difficult rôle of Isolde had made Elsa comparatively easy to her. Talk of *Tristan* ruining the voices of singers! If all singers' voices could be as delightfully ruined as Mme. Nordica's and Jean de Reszke's have been, the musical millennium would be at hand. . . . Had Wagner been present last evening he would perhaps have felt that, as he named his love-drama Tristan *and* Isolde, so he ought to have called his first Grail opera *Lohengrin and Elsa*."

With all her advantages of beauty of person and voice, opportunities for training and for singing on the concert and operatic stage, Lillian Nordica would not have succeeded as she did but for the intelligence, the energy, and will power she inherited from her clergy and soldier ancestors. "The embodiment of beauty, strength, courage, energy, and animation," one critic called her, and she herself incessantly emphasizes the fact that work means success. She learned slowly, but persevered till she knew, and some of her best chances came to her through *being prepared when called upon.*

Mr. William Armstrong once wrote: "Mme. Nordica has been to me a most interesting example of success through unstinted and unyielding work and sheer force of energy and will. She herself once said to me, in speaking of the relative successes with and without work: 'If you work five minutes, you succeed five minutes' worth; if you work five hours, you succeed five hours' worth. *Plenty*,' she added, '*have natural voices equal to mine, plenty have talent equal to mine,* BUT I HAVE WORKED.'"

That is the most important lesson in this whole book for those who would win *great* success in music. Students will do well also to memorize these maxims uttered by Mme. Nordica during the automobile ride referred to at the beginning of this sketch: "The first great step is to allow some one to tell you when you are wrong." "To

acquire the art of singing well, you must hear it, have it demonstrated to you." "Don't try to begin at the Metropolitan."

Two months before her fiftieth birthday, Mme. Nordica gave a recital in Carnegie Hall, New York, which showed her to be in her very prime, and emphasized the fact that as an interpreter of art-songs she occupies as high a rank as among opera singers. A few excerpts from my criticism of this concert help to explain her undiminished success with the public. "Often as Schumann's *Nussbaum* has been sung here, she made it marvellously interesting by the sentiment she infused into this story of the leaves whispering about the maiden who dreamed, awake, of her lover and the wedding to come till she fell asleep and dreamed again. This is usually sung monotonously, like the whispering of the leaves. Mme. Nordica emphasized the human side (the heart-story) and made a new song of it that made one sit up and listen. Her art has indeed ripened! . . . Here is the true *bel canto*, allied with German sentiment. . . . Bizet's *Vieille Chanson* gave her a chance to show that she has command of a smooth and effective trill which quite stirred the audience. *Care Selve*, an air from Handel's *Atalanta*, was sung in the true grand style, which Lilli Lehmann alone was supposed to possess. There was 'school' in that rendering! . . . By her dramatic intensity, which now and then thrills one's every fibre, Mme. Nordica reminds one of Dr. Wüllner, but a Wüllner with a voice of velvet and a finished art of vocalization. She still has full command of her breath, as was shown in her climaxes, and still more in her floating pianissimos, such as no other singer now on the stage has at command, and which would be impossible with impaired breathing power."

About a week later she showed that she was still the greatest of all Wagnerian sopranos, by singing the *Götter-*

dämmerung finale with the New York Symphony Orchestra with an opulence and lusciousness of tone and an emotional fervor that were simply thrilling. "What golden purity of tone and intonation!" I wrote. "How exquisite the pianissimo of the line *Ruhe, ruhe, du Gott!* Here was the true Brünnhilde voice—the *voix de soleil*, the voice full of sunshine, and at the end of exultation at the thought of rejoining Siegfried."

Emma Eames

"I am looking for a Juliet. Has your wife one? If so, please ask her to bring her to me. She will find me at home to-morrow at eleven o'clock."

These words were addressed by the composer Gounod to the husband of the famous singing teacher, Mme. Marchesi, who relates in her book, *Marchesi and Music:* "Well, next day we went to Gounod's house in the Place Malesherbes, M. Mangin going with us as accompanist, and when we arrived we found all his family assembled to hear the new Juliet. That morning Miss Eames sang several airs from the opera in question very successfully, and, greatly delighted, the master exclaimed, 'Here is my Juliet.' A few days later he made her rehearse her part in my presence, Mangin accompanying on the piano, and Gounod himself giving her the cue, singing and playing the part of Romeo from beginning to end. Then, after a rehearsal at the Grand Opéra, Emma Eames's engagement was signed. . . . Miss Emma Eames made her first appearance on the 13th of March, 1889. The entire Paris press sang her praises next day, and the American colony, which had been largely represented at her début, were naturally quite proud of their young countrywoman—not without reason either, for it is seldom that a foreigner who has studied in a private school

passes directly to the stage of the Grand Opéra in the French capital. But the young artist was also eminently fortunate in having the assistance of Jean de Reszke, the most celebrated tenor of the day at that time."

When this happened, Emma Eames was only twenty-one years old. She had travelled a long distance to reach Paris — all the way from Shanghai, China, where her parents happened to be at the time she was born, via Maine, where she spent her childhood (at Bath) with her grandparents. Her mother taught singing in Portland, and to her she went twice a week to take lessons, beginning with her fifteenth year, her mother holding, properly, that it was unwise to let a girl begin sooner. Then she was sent to Boston to continue her studies with Miss Munger and to breathe a musical atmosphere. Here she had the good luck to become a protégée of Professor Paine, of Harvard, who gave a series of lectures on old church music which she helped to illustrate with her lovely voice. To this experience, and the subsequent counsels of Professor Paine, Miss Eames owed much of her future success; it gave her a taste for classical music and helped to make her a great Mozart singer in particular.

Ere long she had made sufficient progress to appear at a concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. A church position was also found for her. "She became very popular," Mr. Kobbé relates, "but she did not realize this until many years later, when she returned to Boston to sing in opera. She was then told by members of the congregation that whenever it was known that she was to sing, there always had been several hundred people more in church than on other occasions. 'I never imagined until then that the crowd was for me,' she remarked with delightful naïveté, in telling me about it."

After three years in Boston she went to Paris. Before she made the brilliant début already referred to she had

suffered disappointments and been the victim of some of the intrigues which seem inseparable from stage life; but after that début everything was smooth sailing. For two years she remained at the Opéra, of which she was the chief ornament, in every sense of the word, the first of several "American beauties" who won the hearts of the Parisians. In April, 1891, she made her London début, and "at once established herself as a favorite with the more musical part of the public, who appreciated the refinement of her style and the beauty and accuracy of her phrasing," in the words of Mr. Fuller Maitland, who adds that her "middle notes have a timbre that is generally associated with mezzo-sopranos, and the higher notes are produced with such ease and flexibility as to make her execution of florid passages always delightful to listen to."

Her first appearance in America was made at the Metropolitan Opera House, in December, 1891, where she at once justified her European reputation. The opera was *Romeo and Juliet*, and with her in the cast were Jean and Edouard de Reszke. Other operas in which she excelled were *Faust*, *Otello*, *Falstaff*, *Cavalleria Rusticana;* and it was largely owing to her that *Aïda* at last began to be appreciated as the best of all Italian operas. Her voice, without losing any of its beauty, gradually became more expressive, her style more dramatic. Lovers of Wagner's operas were delighted with her Elsa, her Elizabeth, her Eva, her Sieglinde, all of which she invested with rare charm.

In this phase of her art she owed much to Anton Seidl. "He it was," she says in the Seidl memorial volume, "that urged me to study the rôle of Sieglinde. He said it was a 'good bridge' between Wagner's lyric and his heavier dramatic parts." She saw Seidl the last time in August, 1907. He had taken her to see and sing for Frau Wagner. "Mr. Seidl wheedled me into doing so, so gently that before I knew it I was singing," she remarks.

In all probability, had Seidl lived, he would have piloted Emma Eames, as he did Lillian Nordica, to the highest summits of Wagnerian art. Without this guidance and stimulus, her dramatic progress was arrested at this point, to the grief of many of her admirers, who had expected great things of her Isolde and Brünnhilde. She partly atoned for this disappointment by her splendidly subtle and dramatic Tosca.

None of her impersonations will live longer in the memory of opera-goers than her Countess, in the *Marriage of Figaro.* When she sang the "letter duo" with Sembrich, the two voices blended so marvellously that it was difficult to tell which of the two happened to be in the lead for the moment.

At one time in her career it was often said that while her singing was beautiful, it was lacking in warmth. Doubtless, at that time, it did give that impression, but this was not due to a lack of temperament but to defects in her vocal technic which she gradually overcame. "I used to be accused of coldness," she said to a writer for the *New York Times* in 1897, "but it was simply restraint. I did not dare to sing with abandon because I was not sure of myself. Now I am, and the result is that critics say I display greater warmth and breadth of style."

Emma Eames is every inch an aristocrat, and is therefore at her best, as an actress, in those parts in which she represents a lady of high birth. As Santuzza she was accused, with some reason, of being "too fine a lady." In this she resembles Jenny Lind, who was at her best only in rôles which harmonized with her personal traits.

When she first sang in New York, Anton Seidl (who subsequently became so great an admirer of her art) criticised her severely in a magazine article for making the village girl Marguerite a *grande dame* in mien and dress. She mended all that later, and became particularly famous for the appropriateness as well as the beauty of her cos-

tumes. In the devising of these she had the valuable aid of her husband, Julian Story, the well-known portrait-painter. Her Aïda—young, graceful, lithe, and picturesquely attired—would have inspired Titian.

She acknowledged having received valuable assistance from Victor Maurel while both were members of the Metropolitan company. To Mabel Wagnalls she said: "I have never done anything in my life but work. I cared for other pleasures just as any girl does, but have always foregone them."

Of her health she is very careful. "If by any chance I forget a word on the stage I know my health is run down, and I then at once take a rest for several days." She told me once that the fumes of tobacco simply paralyzed her throat, and she therefore always makes sure that no one is smoking near her when she goes on the stage. I have known few women as intelligent, as well-informed, as entertaining as Emma Eames. Nor is she afraid of anybody—not even the critics. Once she said to a reporter: "What do the critics know about the proper way to sing? I know more of the art of singing than the whole lot. Haven't I given my life to the study and practice of it?"

For years she spent her free months near Florence, Italy, where she lived in a picturesque castle resembling a tower. Concerning this life she said that "the health gained when, clad in my short skirt and shirt-waist, a good stout stick in my hand and hobnailed boots on my feet, I climbed the mountains near our Italian home, helps me all through the season of work, makes the struggle easier, because I needn't take time to look after my physical well-being."

There are, however, ailments that resist all hygienic measures, and it was because of such that Mme. Eames retired from the operatic stage in February, 1909, just twenty years after her Parisian début. She sang Tosca at the Metropolitan and received an ovation which must have

warmed her heart. In response she said: "This is good-by. Whatever is good in me you have brought out. You have been very exacting and have insisted always on the best that is in me. In the eighteen years that I have sung here I have endeavored to give you my best. My love I leave you. Good-by."

Twenty years is altogether too short a time for an operatic career, especially when an artist is still in her prime. I felt sure, therefore, that I voiced the feelings of thousands when I expressed the hope that her retirement was only temporary, and that she would go to Patti and take lessons in the art of—perennial farewelling.

Geraldine Farrar

In the Horace Mann School at Melrose, Mass., there is an "honor desk," so called not so much because it is now assigned to the pupil who has received the highest marks, as because at this desk there used to sit, until 1895, a little girl known as Gerry Farrar. In the last week of January, 1908, the two hundred pupils of the school, with flags in hand, waved their welcome to this same girl, who had in this short time succeeded in becoming one of the idols of the operatic stage, first in Berlin and Monte Carlo, then in Paris, Stockholm, and New York, where she was earning a thousand dollars for an evening's work.

But it was not only this school that was excited over the presence of the famous young prima donna. The whole town rose to the occasion, making this the most memorable day in its history. Many came from Boston, Malden, and other places to hear the songs she was to sing in the town hall, which was patriotically draped with flags in honor of the "American Jenny Lind." The leading officials were present, and after the concert Miss Farrar shook hands with more than a thousand admirers and old friends and schoolmates.

Such a "home-coming" has been granted to few artists; yet it was not unexpected. In May, 1895, the *Melrose Journal* had spoken of her as having a voice of great power and richness, adding that "she is only thirteen years of age, but has a future of great promise, and it is believed that Melrose will some day be proud of her attainments in the world of music." In the following year the *Boston Times* referred to her as "a young girl who has a phenomenal voice and gives promise of being a great singer." Already at that time she "won the hearts of the audience"—an achievement of which this most winsome of prima donnas has since made a specialty.

So far as such a thing can be inherited, Geraldine Farrar got her voice from both her parents. Her mother was a good singer and had thoughts of the stage, but gave up these plans because she married when she was only seventeen. Her husband, Sidney Farrar, sang for some years in the choir of the Universalist Church of Melrose. He owned a retail store in that city, but cared less for business than for sport, so he left the store in charge of a clerk and became a member of the Philadelphia Base-Ball Club, which owed many a victory to him; he "never missed a ball," so it was said.

Geraldine's favorite amusement as a child was to "play opera singer." When she was seven years old her mother secured a piano teacher for her, but the child refused to practise because she found the exercises monotonous. After she had had twenty lessons it was decided that it would be better to wait until she was old enough to make use of her opportunities.

In an article which appeared in *Putnam's Monthly* for May, 1908, Emily M. Burbank relates:

Miss Farrar says that it was not until she had seriously begun to have her voice trained for opera that she learned

the value and necessity of concentration and routine work. As a child she could sing anything she heard, and played "opera singer" by the hour after being taken to hear one or two operettas in Boston. The year that her daughter was twelve, Mrs. Farrar subscribed for seats at the matinée performances of grand opera given in Boston by the Savage company. Geraldine's first opera was *Faust*, with Madame Calvé as Marguerite. After that she had but one idea—to be a singer of grand opera herself. Scores were bought and fearlessly approached; arias were picked out and attempted; and she harmonized chords in the bass with the melodies, showing a skill and a sense of harmony astonishing to those who heard her. That year she sang Mignon's song, *Kennst Du das Land*, at a concert at the Melrose church—sang it badly, but with feeling and individuality. A few weeks later she repeated it at a charity concert given in Mechanics' Hall, Boston. That was her first "professional" engagement; and she received ten dollars for it. She had begun to study that winter with a Boston teacher.

This teacher was Mrs. J. H. Long. When Geraldine was fourteen she sang for Jean de Reszke. Melba heard her two years later, and was so much pleased that she hugged her and predicted that a great future awaited her. Nordica also became interested in her career, and she was persuaded to go to New York to continue her lessons in various needful branches. She studied with Victor Capoul (dramatic action), Mrs. Milward Adams (grace and poise), and Cornelia Dyas (piano). Once she sang *The Star-Spangled Banner* at the White House for President and Mrs. McKinley just after a historic telegram had been received from Admiral Dewey in the Philippines.

Before leaving Boston, Geraldine had already received an offer for operatic work from Mr. Charles A. Ellis. After two years of further training she received an offer from Maurice Grau after he had heard her sing *Connais*

tu le pays privately at the Metropolitan Opera House. Fortunately it was decided that she was still too young and had better go abroad to continue her training. The means for this were advanced by Mrs. Bertram Webb, of Boston. Accompanied by her parents, she went first to Paris, where she took lessons for a short time. Had she remained, she might have easily duplicated the Parisian triumphs of Emma Eames and other Americans. But her star was destined to rise elsewhere.

One interesting incident occurred in Paris, an incident which shows that the young singer possessed that assurance in regard to her future which is a valuable weapon in the battle of life. She went to a famous photographer and asked to have her picture taken at professional rates. He objected, on the ground that she was unknown. Her answer was: "I am not famous now, but I am going to be famous."

The prediction was soon fulfilled. Realizing that she was not getting what she wanted, she decided to try Germany and went to Berlin, where she studied with Lilli Lehmann. It was the wisest thing she could have done; the greatest dramatic soprano of the time prepared her for the stage, and, at the age of nineteen, she sang Marguerite at the Royal Opera, where she won such a sensational success that she was promptly engaged for three years.

When she first went to Germany she had not overcome a prejudice she had long felt against the language of that country, and at the time of her début at the Royal Opera she had not sufficiently mastered it to sing Marguerite in German. She insisted on doing it in Italian, and, contrary to all precedent, was allowed to do so. Other operas were sung in the same polyglot fashion, which everybody was glad to condone because of her personal beauty, the loveliness of her voice, with the morning dew still on it,

and the rare charm of her acting. Soon she became the idol of opera-goers in the German capital. The house was never so full as when she sang, and she exerted her fascination over women and men alike. The matinée girls crowded around her as if she were a victorious tenor, and sometimes the police had to be summoned to preserve order. Stories were circulated about infatuated men; about the Crown Prince wanting to abdicate so he could marry her. The American girl was reported to have sung to him, "Du bist verrückt, mein Kind, du bist aus Berlin"—and the saucy thing was quite capable of it. To a friend who asked her how much truth there was in all these stories, she replied, with a sly wink: "They were good for advertising purposes, anyway." Always American!

It is very seldom that youthful rôles like Marguerite, Juliet, Mignon, Elizabeth, Cherubino, Manon, Violetta are taken by artists who not only can sing and act well but who are young and beautiful at the same time. Is it a wonder that when it was announced that Geraldine Farrar was to leave, to join the Metropolitan company in New York, there was consternation in Berlin?

Rumors had reached New York occasionally of a young American of marvellous beauty of person and voice and rare histrionic gifts who was enrapturing the coldly critical public of Berlin two or three times a week. It also became known, however, that that Americamaniac, the German Emperor, and his family, had taken a special interest in the young singer from across the ocean, and often invited her to the royal household. That explained it! What the Kaiser liked, the Berliners, of course, all must like! But do they? The Kaiser prefers Gluck to Wagner, but Berlin has twenty performances of Wagner's operas to one of Gluck's. Moreover, Miss Farrar had sung in other cities. She had, in the summer of 1906, taken part in the Mozart festival at Salzburg, where her Zerlina was marvelled at

as an achievement unequalled since the days of Pauline Lucca. Saint-Saëns, it was reported, nearly fell out of his box in his eagerness to applaud this artist. A large supply of her photographs had been sent to local dealers; they were all gone in a few hours after she had been seen on the stage. Then she sang at the Wagner festival in Munich. Same result; and the critics, always unfriendly to American singers, confessed themselves enchanted for once. Her Wagnerian Elizabeth was lauded as highly as her Mozartian Zerlina had been in Salzburg.

The final ordeal had still to be passed. How would she be received at home, before a Metropolitan audience accustomed to the best and the highest-priced vocalists the world affords? The answer was given on November 26, 1906, when Mr. Conried opened the opera season with Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette*. The house was packed from parquet to ceiling, and after Miss Farrar had sung the valse song there was an outburst of applause so cordial, so prolonged, that she must have felt as if she was still among her Berlin admirers. It gave her confidence; up to that point she had sung some phrases slightly above the pitch; thenceforth she was herself, and one could unreservedly admire and enjoy her singing.

I wrote the next day: "She has . . . a voice of rare beauty, of an agreeable brunette timbre; a voice that speaks to the heart. It is a voice not suited for coloratura —for which let us be duly grateful; it is already of a dramatic cast, and it will probably become more pronouncedly so from year to year, like the voices of her illustrious colleagues, Lillian Nordica and Emma Eames. In quality, Miss Farrar's voice not infrequently recalls Mme. Eames's, and she has rare skill and instinctive felicity in coloring that voice to suit the momentary mood. Gounod, with his passion for expression, would have adored this Juliet.

"She was a Juliet to the eye, too—suggesting the dark-haired, dark-eyed Verona girl of fourteen as she seldom has been suggested either in the opera-house or the theatre; indeed, the opinion was expressed by many that Juliet had never been impersonated here so realistically and artistically by any actress who was not also a singer but able to concentrate all her attention on the play. Her facial expression is as fascinating, as subtle, as varied, as fitful as Calvé's; every note of the score is mirrored in those lovely features. The smile of youth was ever on her face in the early scenes of happiness; solemn and demure she knelt during the marriage ceremony; exquisitely girlish was her gesture as she gave the Friar her hand to be placed in Romeo's; the love scenes were marked by delightful impulsiveness; and in the final scene of agony, in the tomb, she was like a broken flower; it was tragic realism of the highest type.

"Many were the recalls after the several acts, and Miss Farrar's father, the famous base-ball expert, who was present, must have felt pleased to see that his daughter, too, could make a 'home run.'"

What pleased the connoisseurs particularly in this impersonation was the evidence it gave that Miss Farrar was not a mere imitator of what others had done, but an artist able to interpret the play and the music in her own way. This was shown in all the operas in which she appeared. Her Marguerite proved to be different from that of all others who had appeared in *Faust;* beside Caruso and Scotti, she looked wonderfully dainty, small, and fragile; but contrasted with the hideous, black, Mephistophelian shape of Chaliapine, she seemed almost like a child. Her lovely face was not that of a child, however. In spite of its youth and innocence, it was filled with the most intense suffering which a woman can bear. The strained terror in her eyes as she felt the evil power of Mephistopheles

and her self-abasement, with its pitiful plea for mercy and consolation, were most moving. In other and happier scenes she had a thousand new touches, always unexpected and nearly always beautifully fitting; and she varied her play from performance to performance, as Paderewski varies his interpretation of a Chopin or Schumann composition.

As Marguerite, Miss Farrar makes the audience sympathize every moment with her joys or woes. Saint-Saëns relates that Gounod sang his own melodies with an intensity of expression that no singer on the stage could equal —but when he wrote this, he had not yet heard Miss Farrar. How simple and girlish her joy, in voice and action, over the jewels! How pensive her Thule ballad! How intense her love in the garden; how agonizing her remorse in church; how true to life her horror at the demon; how pathetic her insanity in the prison! Geraldine Farrar has all the qualities that made Emma Calvé, in her best years, so fascinating. She resembles Calvé, among other things, in her constant attentiveness to details—to the trifles which make perfection.* And, like Calvé, she is always acting and life-like even when not, for the moment, the centre of dramatic interest.

Verdi's *La Traviata* has been characterized by Mr. Streatfeild as an opera "chiefly employed now as a means of allowing a popular prima donna to display her high notes and her diamonds." Miss Farrar does not treat it that way. She makes even her costumes subserve the interest of art, instead of simply flaunting them for effect, like top notes. Like Sembrich, she practically eliminates the demi-mondaine aspect of the character; and like Nilsson, "she seemed to die, not of phthisis aided and

* One of these "trifles" is, in *La Bohême*, her kissing the little cap which reminds her of happier days, the small belonging bringing home to her the sweet yet sad memories as animate things rarely do.

developed by dissipation, but of a broken heart." Unlike Patti, she does not throw champagne about the stage, but there is champagne in her voice when she sings the bacchanalian *Libiamo*. Nor does she, like Patti and some other singers, cough in the last scene in an attempt at realism which is foolish in view of the fact that she has to sing in the same scene with the full power of her lungs. Being allowed at the Metropolitan, as in Berlin, to suggest details of stage-management, she gives the death-bed scene features which pleasantly subordinate the pathological aspect; the face of the sufferer, as she lies on the couch, is suffused with a rosy hue by the light from the open fire and the lamp near her head. Subsequently, as she sits with her lover on the sofa for a few more happy moments, her face has the pathetic beauty of a Botticelli Venus.

An amazing contrast to this pathetic Violetta is presented by her Cherubino, in *The Marriage of Figaro*, one of the most delectable of her impersonations. When Geraldine Farrar assumes a new rôle she presents pictures which remain in the memory indelibly. One of these is at the moment when the cover is removed and she is seen coiled up on the chair with an expression in her face in which half a dozen emotions are amusingly commingled. And how drolly awkward this Cherubino looks "disguised" in a woman's attire, walking all over her dress! Her associates, in 1908-9, were Marcella Sembrich and Emma Eames. These three women enjoyed the fun of the plot as much as anybody, and therein largely lay the secret of the extraordinary success of this opera in that season. Enthusiasm is contagious. Let us recall the words of Hanslick: "Carlotta Patti longs for the day when she will not be obliged to sing any more. To her sister Adelina singing and acting are among the necessaries of life, and such impassioned artistic natures soon gain a magnetic influence over the public."

To Geraldine Farrar the stage is quite as real as life off the stage, and therein lies one secret of her power to electrify audiences. Her Zerlina, in *Don Giovanni*, is another illustration. Reference was made to her fascinating impersonation of this character at Salzburg, which made the whole Austrian and German press echo her praise. In New York, too, she gave her whole soul to her task and was duly rewarded. Some thought she over-acted; but is it not quite natural for a girl in Zerlina's situation to over-act in the exuberant outpouring of her feelings? She is a country girl engaged to a good-natured, jealous yokel who is in every way her inferior. She is a flirt, too, much pleased with the attentions of so noble and elegant a cavalier as Don Giovanni. She suspects that his intentions are not honorable, but, after the fashion of flirts, she plays with the fire. It is a conception of the part entirely borne out by the text as well as the music. She imparts an airy grace to the *Giovinette*, a coquettish charm to the conciliatory *Batti, batti*, sincere feeling to the *Vedrai Carino*.

Mignon is another of her fascinating impersonations. As she creeps from the cart at the bidding of her cruel gypsy master she looks like a terrified little waif, all the more forlorn for her tawdry spangled dancing dress. She is so pitifully frightened one feels like jumping on the stage to ward off the blows. It would be difficult to decide whether she looked more lovely as the gypsy, the page in boy's clothes, or the sweet *jeune fille* in Filina's gown, with a rose in her hair, or in the last act, where she is, indeed, a typical beauty from the land where the citron and the orange bloom.

An invaluable gift to an opera singer is such personal beauty and charm. Countless pictures have been taken of Geraldine Farrar in diverse attitudes in her various rôles, and with these one can easily make up an album of a hundred pictures, many of which are so unlike that it

seems impossible they should be of the same girl, so varied are the features and the expression; and in conversation this expression varies almost as incessantly as on the stage. The maker of the exquisite Rookwood pottery, in Cincinnati, once told me that a second longer in the oven completely changed the aspect of the new vases. In the same way, a second's delay in the taking of a picture of Miss Farrar is sure to result in an expression different from the one the photographer saw in looking through the camera. And her voice is, like herself, an American beauty; it is a voice animated by the same sort of subtle expressiveness which has made American faces famous the world over as types of the highest feminine charm ever known.

This expressiveness of voice and face is shown most strikingly in what is probably her best rôle—Madama Butterfly. Here, every second, *she acts with her voice*, an accomplishment rare even among the greatest operatic artists. Others have sung this part well, in a general passionate way, but not with the vocal differentiation and subtlety of emotional utterance which follow the poem line by line, just as her facial expression does. The story of the Japanese girl who stabs herself when her American husband who had gone home on his war-ship returns after a few years with a new wife, gives scope for a great variety of emotional utterance, from the happy scenes of the marriage ceremony to the patient waiting and the final tragedy. Her art is specially sunny and full of changing charms in the first act. Such tenderness, such sweet trustfulness, such sincere love—how could it fail to give a heart even to the fickle naval officer? Yet how like a tigress was this same girl when she seized her dagger to expel the insulting Goro; and how tragic her suicide, how pathetic her crawling up to the flag-waving, blindfolded child to touch it once more before expiring. No wonder Mr.

Belasco tried to persuade her to give up the operatic stage and be an actress. But that was not to be thought of. Give up that lovely voice, that art of emotional song? Never!

Enchanting and thrilling as were the scenes referred to, the climax of her impersonation is in the monologue, *Senti, un bel di*, in which the poor little geisha pictures to herself the return of her American husband—the gliding of the white vessel into the harbor, the coming of the officer up the street, his calling "Butterfly" from afar, his caressing of his "orange blossom." Few things equal to this in facial and vocal charm and sincerity of feeling—every tone quivering with dramatic sensibility—have been witnessed on the stage. In the face of art so realistic, so emotional, all the conventionalities of opera are forgotten.

If Japanese girls are ever like that, they are even more fascinating than Americans! Persons who have been in Japan—among them the writer of this book—are the most astonished at the subtle arts of make-up and mimicry which enable Miss Farrar to look and walk and gesticulate, to make curtsies and lithe movements, just like a real *musume*.

Girls who would follow in her footsteps must not suppose, however, that all these things came to her as an inspiration overnight. Operatic genius, like every other kind of genius, is dependent on hard work. Miss Farrar has sometimes worked so hard that she has fainted away at her piano. Such excess is not to be commended; but decidedly worth imitating is her procedure in studying Puccini's best opera. She read everything she could find about the Japanese. "I tried to imbue myself with their spirit," she said to Mabel Wagnalls.* "I bought up old prints, and pictures, and costumes; I learned how they eat, and sleep, and walk, and talk, and think, and feel. I read

* *Stars of the Opera.* Funk & Wagnalls Co. 1907.

books on the subject in French and German, as well as in English." The difficult music of this opera she had memorized in two weeks. "I am never afraid of forgetting my lines," she said. "When a thing is once learned, it seems to stick in a certain corner of your brain and stay there." "There was youth and girlishness in her off-hand manner of making this remark," Miss Wagnalls adds. "In fact, the artist and girl are constantly alternating in the play of her features, and it is fascinating to watch this hide-and-seek of youth and maturity."

It is because Miss Farrar applies her keen intelligence to every part in which she appears that she so keenly affects intelligent listeners. During her first three seasons in New York she appeared (alas!) in only one Wagnerian part—Elizabeth, in *Tannhäuser*—but that showed her to be an artist after Wagner's own heart—an artist who approaches music by way of the drama and is at every moment as regardful of the words and their poetic import as of the music itself. A musical chameleon, she changes her mood in accordance with the emotional color of each bar. And with the words and tones her facial expression changes every moment; an opera-glass is needed incessantly lest one may lose subtle details.

"When I can play Madama Butterfly as I play Elizabeth I shall be content," she said one day to a journalist.* "In that rôle I had a very difficult proposition to face. As you know, the saintly woman is always more or less stupid and uninteresting. She comes on the stage handicapped by that feeling we all have toward her, partly from our own experience, partly because literary tradition has made her so.

"According to stage ruling she is always a large blonde with vague gestures. She is pitted in the struggle against

* See the very interesting five-column interview in the *New York Sun* of March 1, 1908.

Venus, the luscious, fascinating, subtle, suggestive one, the type that from the beginning of things has had an easy time overcoming man's resistance. Elizabeth has got to have something that will dominate the situation. What is there for her to have? Only the force of her own personality. She has got to make men feel that the spiritual is better worth while than the mere animal allurement, make them feel it intensely. You have got to go through the spiritual struggle yourself before you can convince others of its conquering power, and that is not always an easy task for a young woman who is not herself overspiritualized, who has a healthy, normal appetite, and who has an overabundance of youthful vitality. I studied ten solid months on that rôle, and finally reduced it to the belief that it was a matter of the light in the eyes.

"What do I mean by that? Simply this: Of course after a certain point is reached we all have to work out our own interpretations; we cannot depend on those of others, for the personal must come in and rule. I worked out mine by going to the galleries and studying the paintings there.

"I looked at hundreds of old masters. I wondered, as many others have wondered, why these pictures, many of them representing hideous faces, grotesque bodies, attenuated hands and faces, should have achieved immortality, but the longer I looked at them the more I became convinced that they were great.

"I succumbed to that uncanny power in the eyes, where the art of the painters had been concentrated. The eyes of those old masters have a light in them so effulgent that you are bound to recognize it and its right to immortality. They knew!

"To make Elizabeth great she must have that effulgent light. It was by that she conquered, saving the man she loved from every evil and from the swords of his enemies. My audience must feel that soul quality, must see it shin-

ing in the eyes, illuminating the face, else the rôle is perfectly meaningless. When I raise my arm it must be something more than the gesture commanded by the score, and that something more must grip the audience so that with the uplift of the arm they get the spiritual uplift as well from the face."

After reading these remarks, one is inclined to conclude that the main secret of Geraldine Farrar's success is brains. She is always individual, does things her own way, and knows why. The strain of acting and singing as she does, with intense mental concentration at every moment, is tremendous. To counteract this, she spends much of her time in bed; but her mind is ever active. "I often spend weeks on a diagram for one opera. I do it when I am lying in bed, when I am driving in the park; for it is not until the mechanism is perfect that my other self can buzz away. When I go on the stage, everything is mathematically placed in my mind. I have diagrammed every bit of the opera, the work of the other rôles, the orchestra's part, my own business; there is nothing left to chance. I do not believe in the inspiration that some singers talk about, except for the finer, more delicate nuances, work that can only be attempted by me when I am absolutely letter-perfect in the important features of the work.

"One fallacy of students of singing," she once remarked, "is the slavish devotion to exercises. In preference to five hours of practice every day, I say *four hours of thought* and one hour of practice. You accomplish far more that way, and the wear and tear on that most delicate organ, the human voice, is minimized." At the same time she has discovered that she cannot with impunity, neglect her daily practice of the scales.

Being intensely emotional herself, Miss Farrar finds the sweetest reward for her work in the evidence that she has moved her audience—the men as well as the women—to

tears. "The frenzy of clapped hands," she says, "is not so satisfying to the artist as the vague masculine sniffle that comes over the footlights, as if men were half ashamed to show that they are human; the quiet going out; the indescribable bond of sympathy which springs up suddenly between the singer and her audience. These I have had, and in those moments I am so glad that I feel that if I had only two notes to my voice I must sing, if it were only in the chorus."

From letters written by Miss Farrar to friends—including the author and his wife, to whom she usually refers as "the twins," because we are always together and often write our enthusiastic remarks about her and other artists together so as to get both the feminine and the masculine points of view (there's the secret of *my* success as a critic!) —I am privileged to print a few excerpts. Miss Farrar is a great reader of books and a fervent admirer of other fine arts besides music—two peculiarities (few musicians share them) which have contributed to her success by fertilizing her imagination and aiding versatility. At the age of eighteen this impressionable, observant girl wrote of pictures seen in Paris: "I have spent the whole afternoon in color revel among these great masters, and my head is full of their superb lines. . . . I saw a St. Sébastien that set my heart wildly beating, so full of glory he was, and the inner divinity . . . by Mantegna, in the inevitable saints' groupings around the Virgin. . . . These have the sweetest unearthly air about them, large pensive blue eyes, faint rosy tints, small noses and perfect mouths; the Virgin's golden hair is shielded by a delicate veil, and the halo shines like a circle of sunshine about her well-shaped head. You feel that the Mother of Christ was a wonderfully pure woman, and an extraordinary one, too. The hands are long and slender, a trifle square at the finger tips. . . . How I love this old Italian school! . . . Many pictures of the dead

Christ are ghastly and sickening, but I saw a head, with thorns, most admirable, and another at the raising of Lazarus—truly divine. . . . I went to sit a bit by the Venus de Milo—what a real divinity!—don't pay attention to pictures of her unless good-sized; nothing, however, does her justice—and I worship her—I got the best bust I could find—the Beauty.

"I enjoy intensely acting; it is heaven. Am now at that stage when one is supposed to suggest ease and gracious lines, and in reality it is torture. . . . I am flung around on chairs, sofas, and the floor, 'acquiring experience.' If a peaceful scene comes I hardly know what to do without the excitement. Hope my handwriting has not alarmed you. I had to change; we have had high tragedy and my muscles are sore, but it is great.

"My French is coming—sweet language that contradicts itself every minute—inconsistent yet quite charming. Am scraping up some money to hear Sarah again—she is my inspiration and always wonderful—such a Camille *is* wonderful. . . . Capoul sent me a charming note. . . . I heard he spoke very nicely of me. . . . I nearly fainted getting seats for Sarah, in *L'Aiglon*, but the joy of anticipation is well worth it all. . . .

"A surprise! At the opera lesson I found a young and nice-looking Roméo to my Juliette; I was not abashed, and can really say in the 'hot scenes' of that opera I can hold my own; the first time I have had anything more animated than a chair to confess my sentiments to. Mamma is always with me, and critically corrects everything she thinks in need of it. The real moment of forgetfulness of self will not come, I suppose, till I am ready for public appearance, and even then my concentration will have to be very steady in order to succeed.

"I have haunted the steamship offices to know when Nordica will arrive. I am composing my letter, wondering,

hoping, and praying she will hear me, and tell me if I have been wise. . . . My French is so far along that I am not identified as an American, but I *am* just the same.

"*Aïda* and *Lohengrin* have been my portion for dramatic action, so-called; the latter is difficult by reason of its immense simplicity and breadth. Have been reading interesting stories of operatic lives and struggles. Much more attention paid to the influence of love than to the work itself; is it, then, so closely connected?"

Some years later: "Have you heard of Mr. X? . . . He says he likes to hear me sing those things that have runs and trills, but I prefer to sing out simply my soul. . . . I ought to sew, but cannot bear to feel a needle in my hands. When I come into the vast inheritance of my dreams, all will be changed. . . . We fairly live at the opera. Am so excited over it that I can hardly write. We are meeting prima donnas so fast, my head is in a whirl."

From a communication to the author, dated June 26, 1909: "Of a northern country, I feel my nature Latin—or is it Celt?—but of a long time past, and with no apparent connection with those living of that meridian. . . . I am essentially sensuous, but have a horror of vulgarity. *Suggest* all you will, but don't *be it;* but sensuous I am in love of color, line, sound, and thought, as well as appeal. Zeal and high spirits have often evoked rebuke along the lines of the very thing I have tried to avoid. I believe I *conveyed* all right, but its receiver was not primed for that *quality* of ammunition. Half always must depend on the listener. . . . Youthful exuberance should not be unkindly censured as a form of vain presumption; self-confidence is an all-important factor in conjunction with other gifts that a great Nature has seen fit to bestow. She has also endowed me with a strong will-power and a well defined sense of independent individuality that would not be denied, nor cramped in the armor of stiff convention-

ality. He who seeks the highest of himself must walk an untrodden path.

"I love to sing—not alone for its compensation and attendant laurel wreaths—to feel a divine thrill embrace artist and listener in a swirl of unconscious ecstasy; to give of your gift with intelligent modulations in its current is to renew and strengthen the fountain of personal magnetism; to tire your voice is a disagreeable fatigue; to stimulate the imagination is to nourish it on magic manna; it will expand to undreamed-of possibilities.

"Some day I'll go to a still pagan, peaceful country and really find out if I am a singer or something else whose sleeping power does influence me to say and do unordinary things. . . . It is, of course, highly flattering to be bruited abroad as a reincarnated 'Malibran,' or some other dear, delightful, departed songstress; but while I am not sure, still I prefer to think that Nature gave us all a whiff of attention and is clever enough not to cast us in the mould of others. To portray a character, absurdly conceited as it may sound, I would fashion it out of all the arts I know, but build nothing on the memories of a predecessor.

"A hard-necked German critic said of my Gilda (much to my surprise, as the music is painfully unsuited to me): 'Many things had been changed for her [not true, only, like so many others, he thought it so], but in the case of this favored singer her faults interest us more than the merits of ordinary mortals. She remains a vocal personality who has moments of the highest transport . . . she would satisfy the poet who, alas, has to depart so often disillusioned.' So it is another case of putting your soul in it! Is it not, then, legitimate, nay, art, to even disguise an attempt at an unfavorable work so well as to earn the above? I remember it well, and thought I was frankly bad; but it seems it was even interesting, and I was able

to convey . . . that is my point. . . . I have learned that talents have limitations. . . . I do not long to, nor do I believe I can, climb frozen heights like the great Lilli [Lehmann].

"At the time of my début in Berlin, there were not wanting skeptics who gave vent to loud disapproval at such an undertaking with comparatively short preparation and no knowledge of routine. . . . That I did appear when young and inexperienced was, for me, an absolutely wise thing; I learned from my mistakes; and the responsibility sharpened my perceptions and increased my self-possession, which would have rebelled otherwise and retarded progress in the conventional schooling. To take a step of this kind, requires much faith in one's power, and if that faith is not equal to the responsibility and courage to 'risk,' well—then don't.

"One of the pleasantest incidents was when the German Emperor made me *Kammersängerin.* It is not easy for a native to be so honored, let alone a foreigner; and natives must usually remain 'in the service' till such a rare and honorable 'discharge' soothes wounded breasts for the youthful days that have been, and they make way for others. The Emperor is a real emperor, and a delightful audience; his compliments and Lilli's were real treasured memories at the time of my Elizabeth.

"A most charming listener was the late King Oscar of Sweden, and I have to thank him for an unusually delightful season, two, in fact, and a fine gold medal, which he himself pinned on my gown at the conclusion of a concert.

"It was at Monte Carlo that my international reputation began. . . . If Caruso never sang a glorious note, such as he alone can, his kindness at the first rehearsal of *Bohème*, in which we were both to début, will never be forgotten. . . . With the growing confidence grew public

enthusiasm; it says something for *die Unbekannte*, the 'unknown quantity,' a product of German training, that she was not swallowed in the tide of enthusiasm that, justly, flowed at the feet of the tenor (was I not weeping at the beauty of his organ?), but earned her share of appreciation. . . .

"Paris is entrancing—but don't go there till you have a certain assurance that you are *somebody;* because everybody is somebody, and you lose your focus as to what *kind* of a one you will want to be . . . then, you're confused in the great numbers. I shall always feel a thrill of pleasure when I think that Paris held out her hand to me, and I had not to importune her. A charming incident was that of an evening of *Roméo*, when the son of Gounod was kind enough to approve my reading of the part, and especially the interpretation of the Valse. As the warmth of my feeling in this rôle had evoked caustic criticism and reflection as to my real age the preceding season in New York, it was doubly dear to hear from old opera-goers that this departure from the traditional Juliette was one of true and individual feeling.

"I should like, little by little, to adopt another side of the lyric art—*lieder* singing. If you haven't soul then, it cannot be concealed by the extravagance of operatic gesture. And then again, I'd like to have a bigger scope in the speaking drama; how often have I despaired of the ruthless sacrifice of it, to allow some foolish skylarking in the human throat, when the color is of quite another character! . . . It does tax the imagination and evokes ridicule to see a mad Marguerite persistently seek the calcium, a consumptive Traviata sob endlessly on her death-bed. . . . Where is the continuity? No time—must be something 'doing' for everybody; otherwise, stars will not 'ensemble.' But still, *Vive l'Opéra*—there's nothing like it, after all!"

Concerning the time when she was learning the part of Elizabeth with Lilli Lehmann, Miss Farrar adds: "Impulsive, restless from nervous energy, quick to change, seldom to be relied on to repeat the same 'business' (a fault or a virtue? I still have it), I found, under her guidance, repose, economy of gesture, eloquence of attitude, and clean singing. It was one of my most gratifying successes—and in Germany at that. I have never changed it in any detail since it was labelled in her salon, *fix und fertig fur's Publikum.* It was she who had urged me to try this lovely saint as a check in the French-Italian repertoire, which too easily suited my love of color, expansive gesture, and disregard of vocal outpourings. I can never be too grateful for the discipline of Lilli Lehmann. Sarah Bernhardt is another great technician from whom I could learn, perhaps, because I feel her an Element and not a sex. She played a special Tosca for me, and I went into her dressing-room and picked up innumerable hints and ideas.

"I never sing before a mirror; I learn to feel, and then hear as I feel. My hands—large, nervous, and of almost Southern flexibility—have always given me trouble. Lilli Lehmann warned me that I used them and my arms too much to express what I should have put into my face. She tied them together behind my back for many a weary lesson till I conquered the feeling of trying to employ 110 digits instead of the normal number, and learned to use my face."

Teachers would do well to make a note of that. The present sketch may be fitly closed with a translation of a note written to Miss Farrar, in French, by Mme. Lehmann regarding her Elizabeth: "The criticism is splendid and quite in accordance with my own sentiments and conviction. I must tell you once more that it was an *extremely* beautiful and good thing, and that you will not, perhaps, succeed again in making it so infantine, demure, and

saintly, even with this slight impulse to live and love. It was very beautiful, and just as I always wanted to see the rôle done. We have worked together to a good purpose, and I sincerely hope to do other things with you. I thank you for your kind letter, and I beg you sincerely and most seriously to *take good care of yourself*, for this sort of thing demands a strength of which you have not too much. As for myself, you have given me in your Elizabeth the most beautiful present."

X

IS THE ART OF SONG DECAYING?

Alas for the good old times in music, the golden age of song! Things have come to a pretty pass, indeed, when one of the leading vocal teachers is constrained to tell us that "the good taste is near lost, and the profession is going to ruin"; that some vocalists "scream like a hen when she is laying her egg"; that the singers, particularly the Italians, neglect true study, sacrifice beauty of voice to a number of ill-regulated volubilities, and neglect the pronunciation and expression of words; that, as for the recitative, some overdo it and make it barking, some speak it and some hiss it, some hallow, bellow, and sing it out of tune; that there is a scarcity of the best singers and a swarm of the worst; that, with some few exceptions, "the modern intonation is very bad"; that indistinct enunciation "is nowadays more than common"; that persons "who never sang or knew how to sing pretend not only to teach but to perfect, and find some that are weak enough to be imposed on"; that the churchmen usually choose not the best but the biggest voices; and finally:

Italy hears no more such exquisite Voices as in Times past, particularly among the Women, and to the Shame of the Guilty I'll tell the Reason: The Ignorance of Parents does not let them perceive the Badness of the Voice of their children, as their Necessity makes them believe, that to sing and grow rich is one and the same Thing, and to

learn *Musick*, it is enough to have a pretty Face: "*Can you make anything of her?*"

A sad arraignment forsooth! The one consolation is that it was written in the year 1723, in that very golden age of the *bel canto*, with which modern ignoramuses and charlatans are continually and lugubriously contrasting our own age!*

* The strictures on Italian singers, teachers, and pupils summarized in the preceding paragraph may be found, at greater length, on pp. xi, 15, 69, 141, 159, 166, of Tosi's *Observations on the Florid Song*. Pier Francesco Tosi, who was born in 1647 at Bologna, was for a time a singer, and subsequently went to London where he became one of the most famous teachers of his time. His treatise, *Opinioni de' cantori antichi e moderni o sieno osservazioni sopra il canto figorato*, was translated by Gilliard into English in 1742; a German version followed in 1759; a French, in 1874. It was a happy thought on the part of William Reeves, of London, to bring out a reprint of the second edition, as the book is a clear mirror of the musical world of the time. Tosi had spent much of his life in travelling, and he was therefore familiar with the vocal situation in the leading European countries. His book can be read with interest and profit by advanced students; but using is as a guide would not get them very far toward mastering the vocal styles now mostly in use—the styles of Verdi, Puccini, Wagner, Gounod, Bizet. To Tosi, as to his contemporaries, the chief charm of singing lay in the abundant ornaments with which all the airs were then decked out, and which the modern composers of all countries have entirely discarded. Chapter X begins with the admonition that "passages or graces being the principal Ornaments in Singing, and the most favorite Delight of the Judicious, it is proper that the Singer be very attentive to learn this Art." He admits that there may be too great an abundance of ornaments, yet considers that better than a deficiency; wherein, again, he is a child of his time. He devotes chapters to the various kinds of shakes and "graces." He waxes indignant at his countrymen for allowing the impudent "Composers in the new Stile" to write their own ornaments instead of leaving them to the discretion of the singers. "Poor *Italy!*" he exclaims; "pray tell me; do not singers nowadays know where the *Appoggiaturas* are to be made, unless they are pointed at with a Finger? . . . Eternal Shame to him who first introduced these foreign Puerilities into our Nation. . . . Let us imitate the Foreigners in those Things only, wherein they excel." On another page he says: "If, out of particular Indulgence to the sex, so many female Singers have the Graces set down in Writing, one that studies to become a good Singer should not follow the Example."

If anybody ever writes a humorous history of music a special chapter will certainly be devoted to the amusing complaint that singing is a lost art, which is made in every period. To take only a few more instances: Haydn, who was born in 1732, or nearly a century after Tosi, said: "Singing is almost one of the forgotten arts, and that is why the instruments are allowed to overpower the voices." Garcia, born in 1805, declared that "singing is becoming as much a lost art as the manufacture of Mandarin china or the varnish used by the old masters." Even Liszt, who was usually the opposite of the *laudator temporis acti*, wrote, about the middle of the last century, that "since Rossini's operas began to gradually disappear from the stage the vocalists no longer take the pains to learn to sing. . . . The acquisition of flexibility, the training, strengthening, and control of the vocal organs have become almost a legend."

All this is, of course, arrant nonsense. There have been great singers at all times within the last three centuries, and at all times the vast majority of vocalists have been mediocre and worse; but at no time since singing became a fine art were there so many great singers—vocalists versed in a variety of styles previously unknown—as during the second half of the century that closed a few years ago.*

It is doubtful if there has been a decline even in what was the specialty of former generations—florid song. After reading many contemporary accounts of the accomplishments of the singers of former generations, I feel convinced that none of them excelled Patti, Melba, and Sembrich in technical skill; and absolutely certain that in the

* Sutherland Edwards remarks in his *History of the Prima Donna*, (Vol. II, p. 190) that in 1869, "at a time when the art of singing was already said to have expired, Adelina Patti, Pauline Lucca, and Christine Nilsson were all singing together at the Royal Italian Opera—which did not look like decadence."

matter of good taste and avoidance of exaggeration these three coloratura singers are superior to most if not all of their predecessors in the same line.

It may be conceded that in the mere matter of numbers there have been times when there were more coloratura singers of the first rank than in our generation; but even in this matter caution is necessary. Looking at the past, we recall only the great names and bunch them together for comparison with those of our time, forgetting that they were scattered over nearly three centuries.

In the realm of dramatic song, not only is the number of genuine artists greater than ever before, but they have become masters of a finer and more difficult art. On this subject there are some lucid and forcible remarks in a chapter on "The Art of the Opera Singer," written by Mr. Apthorp,* which students cannot ponder too deeply. While dwelling on the undoubted charms and perfections of the *bel canto* of earlier times, from Handel to Rossini, he points out that the modern opera singer's art is a much higher and more complex thing than the operatic art of former periods. "The opera singer's position to-day is verily no joke; he has to face and conquer difficulties such as the great *bel cantists* of the Handel period never dreamt of." "Intellectually and physically his task has been doubled and trebled." Not only is it true that "the opera singer to-day needs tenfold the vocal technic that he ever needed before," he must at the same time be a great actor, whereas his predecessors had little acting to do. "In other words, beauty of vocal tone and beauty of musical plastics were the only recognized elements of emotional expression in singing beyond that general fervor of delivery which may best be described as an absence of apathy; the emotions themselves were not to be differentiated, the

* *The Opera, Past and Present.* By W. F. Apthorp. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

physical character of the *dramatis persona* was not to be taken into account, all the singer had to do was to sing—and nothing else." It is therefore obvious that it means much more to be master of the modern, complex, and difficult art, which appeals to the intellect and the emotions as well as to the senses, than to be master of the older art which appealed to the senses alone.

The difference between what is expected of artists now and what was expected of them two generations ago is brought home by comparing what Wagner wrote in one of his earliest essays (*Der Virtuos und der Künstler*) regarding the most celebrated tenor of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Rubini, with what we know of the most celebrated tenor of the last quarter, Jean de Reszke. Wagner takes several pages to describe, in that humorous style of which he was sometimes master, how a crowded Parisian audience would endure the bore of a performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, paying little attention to Persiani, Grisi, Tamburini, or even the admirable Lablache, but waiting patiently for one thing—Rubini's trill from A to B flat! That trill atoned for everything else, and was frantically applauded. Rubini, like the audience, had reserved his attention for that one thing, and after the trill was over the performance was practically over.

If we compare this with the breathless interest with which audiences of our time have been wont to follow every detail of De Reszke's highly emotional singing and acting as Tristan (even the blasé box-holders remaining in their places till the end, awed by his art), we see that not only have tenors improved greatly, but audiences, too. The subject is so important as to call for a special section.

XI

MODERN IMPROVEMENTS IN TENORS

Rubini, "King of Tenors"

The "king of tenors" in 1825 was the thirty-year-old Giovanni Battista Rubini, and he attained this position in spite of the fact that in his youth no one suspected that he had any aptitude for singing; as a boy of eight he had been told he had no talent whatever for that art; subsequently a chorus master in Milan refused to engage him because his voice seemed to him too poor; and when he finally got a chance to sing, at Naples, the manager refused to re-engage him after his first season. He persevered, however, made brilliant successes in Rome and Palermo, and by the year mentioned had become the idol of European opera-goers. For him Donizetti and Bellini wrote the tenor parts in some of their best operas. He became as famous for his trill, to which reference has just been made, as Melba has become for hers; and, like other tenors of his day, he sang much florid music, such as in our day is reserved for a few prima donnas. He is also credited with having sung simple airs with emotional expression, but on that point one may be permitted reasonable doubts in view of his thoroughly inartistic behavior on the stage as described by friendly contemporaries, who were so accustomed to that sort of thing that they did not condemn him therefor as he would be condemned by the critics of our time.

Details are given in the pages of Escudier and Chorley; He had so little regard for the plot that he made no at-

tempt to act.* He was so vain and selfish and had so little respect for the composer and his music that in concerted pieces he did not give himself the trouble of singing at all; he might go so far as to open his mouth, but not a tone did he utter. In a duet he would condescend to sing and try to make an effect by showing how well he could make his voice blend with his partner's. "He would walk through a good third of an opera languidly," wrote Chorley, "giving the notes correctly and little more, . . . but when his own moment arrived there was no longer coldness or hesitation, but a passion, a fervor, a putting forth to the utmost of every resource of consummate vocal art and emotion, which converted the most incredulous, and satisfied those till then inclined to treat him as one whose reputation had been overrated."

At the present day it is needless to point out that a singer who thus spoils a whole opera, making all the rest of it a foil to his vocal climax, is not a true artist.

Rubini showed his bad taste, furthermore, by the deliberate use of an offensive vibrato and of the unmanly falsetto; also by exaggerated contrasts between loud and soft tones, which in the last years of his career "degenerated into the alternation of a scarcely audible whisper and a shout." And such distortions his audiences apparently liked! His first concert in St. Petersburg put 54,000 francs in his purse. When he retired to Italy, in 1845, he was a millionaire, and bought himself a dukedom.

Bellini is said to have had difficulty in persuading Ru-

* A more recent rival of his in this respect was the tenor Brignoli, concerning whom Apthorp wrote: "He could probably have shared with Rubini the well-earned reputation of being the worst actor that ever walked the boards. He did not even try to act; now and then, in love-scenes, he would take the soprano's hand and clasp it to his expansive chest—at times to the soprano's conspicuous discomfiture; for, when Brignoli had once got hold of it, it was no easy matter to get it away again—but this was about all he ever did. His stage walk was notorious; one would have thought that gait acquired in following the plough."

bini to give up the highly decorative style to which he owed his greatest early successes. (The latest tenor of note who condescended to use the unmanly florid style was the German, Theodor Wachtel.) Sutherland Edwards, who is indulgent with regard to such foibles and others, nevertheless concedes, after setting forth Rubini's style and method, that the "tenor singing of fifty and sixty years ago"—this was written in 1887—"even after Bellini had done so much to reform it, differed for the worse from that of a later day. Mario had not nearly such a high voice as Rubini; but he must, at least in his maturity, have sung with truer dramatic expression than his voluble yet, by all accounts, very forcible predecessor."

Mario's Modern Traits

Giuseppe Mario, who was born in 1810 and retired from the stage in 1867, twenty-two years after Rubini, was indeed an artist of much higher character. He had not only a good voice but also good taste. A born actor he was not, but his wife, the famous Grisi, made him one. Their daughter has related how, many a time when her father was elated by the enthusiastic applause of the audience for some piece of acting which he himself thought very good, her mother would cool down his ardor by saying: "It was badly done; it was wrong; it wanted more passion; forget the audience and throw yourself more into the part." He used to answer: "You are the only one who finds fault with my acting." "Yes," she would reply, "listen to me. I will tell you when you have done very well, and then you will see the difference"; and he waited anxiously for the word of praise to make him happy. Her "Bravo, Mario!" gave him more pleasure than all the noisy applause of the public.

Mario and Grisi were probably the most conscientious

artists recorded in the history of Italian singing. Sutherland Edwards testifies from personal knowledge that Mario bestowed the most scrupulous care and study upon the production of the operas in which he and Giulia Grisi appeared. "No trouble was too great, no research too laborious to insure any rôles they had undertaken being represented as historically correct and as perfect as possible. He would rewrite a libretto if a version submitted to him did not meet with his approval. For instance, he rewrote every line of his part in Gounod's *Faust* because, he said, the original words of the Italian version were not sufficiently singable to please him. To those who have given no attention to the subject it may appear to be a matter of supreme indifference whether in words intended to be sung consonants, sibilants, or vowels predominate; whether the sentences chiefly commence and terminate with hard or soft letters. To Mario's sensitive ear and fastidious taste such points were of the utmost importance —as, indeed, they are—and he altered the versification of *Faust* and other operas accordingly." In this respect Mario was as modern as Jean de Reszke, who modified the French version of Wagner's *Siegfried* to suit his superior taste.*

Mario and Grisi also revealed their good judgment and modern attitude by their method of studying a new work. The words were considered first, and when the import of the text had been clearly ascertained and fully understood, then, and not till then, was the music associated with it, learned by heart, every salient feature and opportunity for effect being carefully noted. This is the method recommended by Wagner in his very instructive essay on the performance of *Tannhäuser*.

* On the subject of translating librettos, see Wagner's very interesting remarks in his *Letters to Mathilde Wesendonck*.

Tamagno and Campanini

Nineteen years before Mario retired from the stage there was born, at Turin, Francesco Tamagno, whose father never dreamed that the boy would some day earn millions with his voice. He intended him to become a waiter, and he actually did serve for a while in a restaurant. But his big voice could not long escape notice. Without wasting much time on study, he plunged into an operatic career, and during a period of twenty years he was the idol of the patrons of the opera-houses not only in Italy but in Spain, Portugal, and South America. When he died he left to his daughter a fortune of over 3,000,000 francs.

David Bispham has aptly described Tamagno as "another type of great voice which came to its own by its own methods. No master could teach him much of voice culture. Vanuccini said he 'bleated like a goat,' and told him so. His musical education, notwithstanding his enormous vogue in *Otello* and other Italian operas where volume was the principal requisite, was so limited that, to my knowledge, when he was engaged to sing a performance of Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, in Florence, he not only did not know the music, but had never even heard of it! He sang it, however, with the greatest success, no such effect having been created by any singer in my expereince of oratorio as in his rendering of the *Cujus Animam.*"

Tamagno represents a temporary retrogradation of the Italian tenor from the high standard set by Mario. He was no actor, and although Verdi and Boïto gave him the benefit of their advice, his Otello became little but a weaker copy of Salvini's. He imposed on the Latin audiences chiefly by his stentorian power and his abounding manliness—qualities not usually associated with Italian

tenors. In the following citations from my notices of his New York appearances (1894) his faults are perhaps more than sufficiently accentuated: "Frenzied applause greeted his volcanic outbursts of vocalism. . . . Among the 3,000,000 inhabitants of Greater New York there are doubtless thousands to whom the stentorian utterance of high notes has greater charm than the artistic singing of Jean de Reszke, just as glaring chromos and circus posters have greater charms for some than artistic engravings and sketches; but other thousands think differently. Signor Tamagno's voice is not of agreeable quality, but it has a certain dramatic forcefulness which might have been turned to good account had it not been directed into vulgar channels and exaggerations by the applause of the injudicious. As long as he can secure more violent applause by standing at the footlights and hurling his notes at the audience than by remaining in the frame of the picture and addressing his song to the dramatic personage it is intended for, he will doubtless continue to do so, whatever the judicious minority may say. This world is ruled by majorities." And again: "Whenever Signor Tamagno gets ready for a high note he grasps it in his fist, pulls it out of his throat by main force, and throws it violently, like a stone, into the auditorium. At least, that is his pantomime. It has no great artistic value, this pantomime, but, since it makes those persons who attend opera for a high note applaud all the more frantically, it doubtless has a commercial value, and it would therefore be useless to protest against it."

An artist of much higher character than Tamagno was Italo Campanini, who, unfortunately, lost his voice just when his art had become ripe. He had not only a beautiful voice, but good taste and judgment in such music as suited his style. He did not appeal to the peanut gallery, but respected the composer and his music. In

London and New York he was almost as popular as Caruso is to-day.*

Enrico Caruso

Before Tamagno died, his only serious rival among Italian tenors, Italo Campanini, had retired from the stage, and it seemed as if the croakers were right who declared that the race of Italian tenors had died out; when lo! there came in view the triumphant Enrico Caruso, a much greater artist than Tamagno, and a greater than Campanini.

Caruso was born in Naples in 1874. His father was a mechanic; he himself for some years worked in the same trade for the equivalent of forty cents a day, and he is said to have been an industrious worker. "Up to eighteen years of age," he once related, "I was in doubt whether I had a tenor or a baritone voice. I started to sing in Italian churches when I was ten years old, and when at eighteen I tired of thinking over the problem of my voice, I began to take lessons, but I left my first teacher very soon because he could not tell me anything about the quality of my voice. Another teacher found that my voice was so thin the other fellows in the class called it a glass voice, perhaps because it broke easily. While I was doing military service at Rieti I used to sing while shining the buttons of my uniform. Major Mogliati heard me and made me spend leisure hours for many months with a teacher he procured for me." On another occasion he recalled that

* Italo Campanini was not a great actor, but he was a splendid singer. I frankly admit that in my criticisms I gave him insufficient praise, dwelling, as young critics are wont to do, on his faults while ignoring his virtues; but in view of the frequent assertion that Wagner singing ruins the voice, I was perhaps justified in perpetrating this bit of banter when he appeared in New York in Verdi's *Otello:* "It is sad that Campanini's voice should be such a wreck while he is still in his prime. As he has always sung Italian music, his fate is a terrible warning to young artists to avoid Italian opera!"

his first teacher predicted a brilliant career. "You will earn 200 francs a month," he said, "when you have grown a little." Verdi had less confidence in him. "When I created Feodor, in Milan, he asked the names of the artists, and when he heard mine he interrupted: 'Caruso? They tell me that he has a fine voice, but it seems to me that his head is not in its place.'"

It is characteristic of Caruso that he should tell this joke on himself. But whatever he may have been in Verdi's day, he is now a man who has his wits about him, and a genuine humorist; no professional comedian could be funnier than he is, for instance, in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore;* at each performance he introduces new laughable details. His sense of humor is also manifested in his remarkable talent for making caricatures, on which he prides himself more than on his success as a tenor. He has sketched a whole album full of caricatures of his operatic colleagues and others, which has been printed. It is amusing to watch him at public dinners. Not knowing enough English to follow the speeches, he amuses himself sketching his neighbors and the speakers. Once when I happened to sit at the same table his menus gave out, so he drew a most amusing sketch of Ernest Schelling on the table-cloth.

It is related that when Mascagni made his début as a conductor in Paris, a lunch was given in his honor. Among the speeches made was one by Gailhard, director of the Opéra, who ventured to remark that Italian tenors do not equal the French as comedians. An Italian guest then rose and declared that the talent of an Italian singer is all in his throat: "do not ask him about the composition or what he is singing about."

This remark applied very well to Rubini and many other Italian tenors, but not to Mario; nor does it apply to Caruso.

As a tragic actor he is less praiseworthy, and in this sphere he is capable of incomprehensible blunders, as in the prison scene of Gounod's *Faust*, in which, at his first appearance in this part, he encircled Marguerite's waist, his hands decorated with white gloves!

It is to his voice that he owes his extraordinary popularity—a ringing voice of the most luscious quality, pouring from his throat without the least sense of effort and giving the impression of inexhaustible reserve power. With such a voice, and the magnificent chest-bellows that feed it, he could have won popular success without being an artist; but he *is* an artist; his phrasing of famous airs, like *Una furtiva lagrima*, *Celeste Aïda*, *La romance de la fleur*, or *Salut demeure*, is always a model of elegance and genuine musical expression—a delight and an inspiration even as echoed by the talking machine.*

Caruso's popularity is unbounded, and his income from operatic salaries and talking-machine royalties fabulous; yet he has his troubles. His very popularity is a source of distress. To a Viennese journalist he thus confided his sorrows: "It is natural enough that people should expect circus tricks of me, for the promises made in my behalf are as enormous as the prices charged to hear me. Look here, the Viennese Opera would cover expenses if it charged only double the usual rates—why, then, charge four or five times the usual rates? These things excite me dreadfully, and I am not master of my resources. The consciousness that absolutely unprecedented things are expected of me makes me ill, and I fail to do half as well as I might do otherwise."

In all probability Caruso sings better in New York than anywhere else; for at the Metropolitan he appears about

* Of all the phonographic records of artists' voices made so far, those of Caruso are the most satisfactory. They cannot be too highly commended to teachers and students, giving to the latter just what most teachers cannot give—actual vocal "demonstrations."

forty times a season instead of two or three times, as in other cities, and therefore has the comforting and helpful thought that if he fails to do himself justice on one or two occasions he can atone for it on other evenings.

On the subject of stage fright he contributed to the Paris *Matin* some curious remarks not quite free from his usual penchant for caricature. He relates that when the German Emperor paid him a compliment his emotion was so great that he lost his voice—words of thanks would not come. "There is only one trouble that I adore," he continues; "it is that which waylays me on the stage. I am seized with nervousness, and the anguish alone makes my voice what it is. There is no personal merit in it. This fever betrays itself to the public by mysterious effects which move it, but let it be known that Caruso on the boards is not responsible for the pleasure he may give to others, and that everything is the fault of that redoubtable deity called *le trac* (stage fright). And apparently my fright increases from day to day, for people say to me regularly: 'You have never sung so well as to-day.'"

Great as is Caruso in his own sphere, that sphere is a limited one, and for that reason and others to be considered in a moment he falls short of the artistic stature of another tenor of our time—the greatest tenor, undoubtedly, of all times.

Why De Reszke was Supreme

Jean de Reszke, like Caruso, did not know at first whether he was a baritone or a tenor, and the uncertainty in his case lasted longer; it was in 1874, when he was twenty-four years old, that he made his first appearance on any stage, in Venice, as Alfonso, in *La Favorita*, under the Italianized name De Reschi; while his tenor début was not made till five years later, at Madrid, in the part of

Robert. From the first, however, some of the critics had attributed to him a voice which had the quality of a robust tenor rather than that of a baritone. He himself suspected, because of the fatigue he suffered after singing, that baritone rôles were not for him; and when his famous teacher, Sbriglia, also advised him to assume tenor parts he did so, after retiring from the stage for two years to prepare his voice for the change. As a tenor he swam in his native element, and soon had all the world marvelling at his art, and paying him higher rates than any other singer of his sex had ever received. In New York he got $2,450 for each appearance, besides a percentage of the box-office receipts. That may seem a large remuneration, but was it too large if his presence in the cast added $5,000 to the box-office receipts?

To appear in the same cast with Jean de Reszke was for years the ambition of all other singers. There might be vacant seats and apathy when other famous artists were on the boards, but never when Jean sang. His presence, like that of Anton Seidl at the conductor's desk, gave an "atmosphere" which benefited the whole performance.

Why must Jean de Reszke be pronounced a greater artist than the admirable Enrico Caruso? Because the range of his gifts and powers is so much greater. Caruso's eminence is limited to Italian rôles; he has impersonated the tenor rôles in two French operas, *Carmen* and *Faust*, quite well, but not yet authoritatively; he may succeed with Wagner's Lohengrin, if given in Italian, but Tristan and Siegfried are as far beyond his powers as Isolde and Brünnhilde are beyond Patti's.

With this limited sphere compare the magnificent range of Jean de Reszke—his perfection in three schools instead of only one. The best of all Italian operas is *Aïda*, and in that, as Rhadames, no Italian vocalist-actor has equalled him. The best of all French operas are *Carmen*, *Faust*,

Romeo, and in these no French tenor has equalled him. The greatest German tenor rôles are Lohengrin, Tristan, Walter, Siegfried, and in these no German tenor has been his peer. *There* is a record for you—the record of a Pole who went to Italy, to France, to Germany, and beat the native singers on their own ground, in their own specialties!

It was in Paris that Jean (like other kings, he prefers to be referred to by his first name) first won distinction in Italian and French rôles, including Meyerbeer's Robert and his Raoul, in *Les Huguenots*—another of his incomparable parts. His John the Baptist, in the *Hérodiade*, pleased Massenet so much that he asked him to create the title-part of *Le Cid*. In 1887, we read in Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, "he appeared at Drury Lane as Rhadames and sang as Lohengrin, Faust, and Raoul. He worthily fulfilled his early promise by the marked improvement both in his singing and acting, and by his ease and gentlemanly bearing, the improvements being almost entirely due to his own hard work and exertions. On June 4, 1888, as Vasco de Gama, he made his first appearance at Covent Garden, and from that season dates the revival of opera as a fashionable amusement in London."

It was not only Italian and French opera that he made "fashionable." He did the same thing for Wagner—strange to relate—in London, in New York, and even in Paris.

The New York episode is one of the most amusing in the history of music. Anton Seidl and his admirable German artists—among them Lilli Lehmann, Marianne Brandt, Auguste Krauss, Amalie Materna, Max Alvary, Emil Fischer, Niemann, Vogl, Reichmann, had already made Wagner popular—very much so—with the general public, but not with the fashionable patrons of the Metropolitan Opera House. These were—with some exceptions—displeased with the preponderance of Wagner

during seven years of German opera, and at a secret meeting of the directors it was resolved to get rid of Wagner by engaging Jean de Reszke and giving only French and Italian operas. Poor, deluded men! They had unwittingly hired Beelzebub, prince of devils, to cast out Satan! For Jean de Reszke—who had up to that time sung only one Wagner part—soon developed into the most powerful of all Wagner singers and champions; and with the aid of Lilli Lehmann, Nordica, Ternina, Schumann-Heink, his brother Edouard, and others, he gradually brought back again the same predominance of Wagner that existed before he came. The situation can best be illustrated by one of those instantaneous photographs known as newspaper criticisms of which the author pleads guilty:

"It is sad not to have Mme. Nordica in the Wagner rôles at the Metropolitan this winter, but there is also an amusing side to the controversy now raging between the best, the best-known, and most expensive singers in the world—the artists of the 'French and Italian' company brought over here a few years ago, with a view to driving out Wagner. What are they quarrelling about? About the privilege of singing the rôles in Wagner's later music dramas! That Mme. Nordica should wish a monopoly of the rôles of Isolde and Brünnhilde is but natural; she has been brought up in that school and won her greatest triumphs in it. But how about Mme. Melba? Was she not brought over to America as a sort of new Patti to revive Italian opera of the florid type and stab Wagner in the back? And what is she doing now? Making it a condition of her returning to New York that she be allowed to sing the part of Brünnhilde, the most Wagnerian of all rôles! It was at Chicago that she became so enthusiastic over a performance of *Tristan and Isolde*, in which Nordica, the De Reszkes, and Seidl participated, that she wrote a letter of

thanks to Jean de Reszke, who in reply urged her to learn one of the later Wagner rôles herself, advising her to begin with *Siegfried*, because to a novice in Wagnerian art the strain in that is less great than in others, as the heroine appears only in the last act. Mme. Melba was delighted with the advice, and has been spending part of her vacation learning this rôle with Herr Kniese, the official vocal teacher of Bayreuth.

"M. Jean de Reszke seems to have become as ardent a Wagnerite as Mr. Seidl himself. He has no intention of leaving the stage until he has mastered all the Wagner rôles which are not yet in his repertory—the young Siegfried this year, Siegmund next, and then the Siegfried of the *Götterdämmerung*, which will leave only Loge, Tannhäuser, and Rienzi. He is to-day the best living Lohengrin, Walter, and Tristan. He advises all other singers to learn Wagner rôles—has urged Plançon to learn Fafner, and told Emma Eames that she would make a splendid Isolde. Mme. Eames is more proud of her Wagnerian repertory than of anything else. It includes Elisabeth, Elsa, Eva, and Sieglinde, and she thinks that last part (in *Die Walküre*) "the greatest part in any opera ever written." Mme. Calvé, too, who would be superb in some of the Wagner rôles, told Mr. Seidl last year that she was going to sing Isolde in Paris and that she wanted him to conduct.

"What does it all mean, this craze and eagerness for the Wagner rôles on the part of all the great singers? Haven't the critics and the teachers told them a million times that these rôles are unvocal, and that they ruin the voice? Didn't the leading Vienna paper write as late as 1892: 'Whether Herr Dippel also understands the art of singing, he could not show as Siegfried; his second rôle, Raoul, in the *Huguenots* will make that point clear'? Haven't the critics and the Italian teachers made it clear yet that Wagner's vocal music is 'instrumental,' and that it puts

the pedestal on the stage, the statue in the orchestra? Fie, it is really discouraging to try to enlighten such blockheads as these singers and the asinine public, which will persist in preferring Wagner to everything else!"

During the last years of Jean's reign in New York he sang mostly Wagnerian rôles, and as the De Reszke nights were always the fashionable nights, Wagner found himself in the amusing position of favorite of the same class of opera-goers as those Parisians who, in 1861, hissed his *Tannhäuser* because he had refused to put a ballet into the second act! Of course, this could not last; the boxholders longed for the operas in which the lights would not be turned down or conversation hissed; and when Jean retired from the stage, Wagner had to content himself again with the willing patronage and approval of those who prefer thrills to trills.

Jean was too great an artist to regard the situation as simply a personal triumph. He was working for the honor of Wagner more than for his own, and for this reason he insisted on the re-engagement of Anton Seidl, who had been side-tracked for an Italian conductor. I shall never forget his appearance when, during an intermission, I asked him in his dressing-room if he thought he could persuade Grau to take Seidl back. Drawing himself up in a way which seemed to add some inches to his great stature, he exclaimed: "Si je le veux, je le veux"—with the mien of an emperor whose every word is law.

The only thing to regret about this Wagnerian absorption was that it greatly reduced the opportunities to see and hear the incomparable Jean in the Italian and French parts he had made his own. To mention only one of them: in its manliness (think of the superb virility of the duel scene!), picturesqueness, romance, passion, tenderness, and pathos, his Romeo never has had its equal on the operatic—if on any—stage. I have seen many women,

and men, too, wiping the tears from their eyes during the death scene. It was after one of these Romeo performances that I wrote the following words, from which students may learn the chief lesson of Jean de Reszke's career:

"He enjoys the consciousness of being the greatest tenor that ever lived; he loves the rôles he impersonates so incomparably; and he must be royally happy in knowing that he does everything for art's sake and nothing for effect or applause. Ye tenors and sopranos, ye baritones, basses, and contraltos, who fancy that to win the public it is necessary to stoop to its lowest taste—look at Jean de Reszke! He never stoops to conquer, he raises the public to his own level. Never does he rely for applause or success on explosive high notes or sentimental distortion of melodies. Every bar he sings meets the composer's highest ideal, he abhors clap-trap as much as Wagner did—and his reward is such as we see."

He took great pride in the fact that while he might be great in Gounod's Romeo, he was greater still in Wagner's. To a young lady, a friend of mine, he gave his photograph, on which he had written: *Souvenir de Roméo devenu Tristan.* But, though he had "become Tristan," he still remained the ideal Romeo of so different a vocal style; and there lay the miracle.

Is it just to place Jean above the great German interpreters of Wagner's tenor rôles—above Tichatschek, Schnorr, Niemann, Vogl, Gudehus, Alvary, Burgstaller, Burrian, Knote? I never heard Tichatschek and Schnorr, concerning whom Wagner waxes so enthusiastic in his essays and letters; but from what I have read about them I conclude that while as actors they may have been the Pole's peer, they can hardly have had his thorough command of all the resources of vocal art.

In their day Wagner found it necessary to emphasize chiefly the fact that an opera singer should be an actor;

to secure good acting and emotional declamation, he was willing to make allowances on the purely vocal side, as we saw in the case of Schröder-Devrient; but it is not to be supposed that this did not cost him a bitter pang. He would certainly have preferred Lilli Lehmann; and, in the same way, he probably would have praised Jean even more cordially than he did the two tenors named. It does not seem likely that they, any more than the other splendid artists referred to, had quite succeeded as he did in amalgamating the German, Italian, and French styles into one cosmopolitan style which made the Wagnerian speech-song a branch of the Italian *bel canto*—a very difficult branch, but one which others have acquired, among them Lilli Lehmann, Lillian Nordica, Emil Scaria (in *Parsifal*), Emil Fischer (in *Die Meistersinger*), Alvary (in *Siegfried*).

But Jean is king of them all. When he sang, the statue was never in the orchestra, the voice-part was abundantly melodious, actor and singer were one—one with each other and the orchestra. I seldom heard him without recalling Wagner's splendid tribute to the first of all Tristans—Schnorr. In that essay there is a sentence which takes up almost a page. It is so intricate and polyphonic that in order to translate it into English it would be necessary to put under it a small charge of dynamite and explode it into a dozen shorter sentences. The substance of it is that, although in no opera written before *Tristan and Isolde* had there ever been so rich and involved an orchestral score as that of the third act of *Tristan*, in particular, nevertheless, Schnorr, by his wonderful art, held the attention of the whole audience in such a way that this orchestral symphony appeared in comparison to his song like the simplest accompaniment to an operatic solo, or, rather, disappeared as a separate factor and seemed to be part and parcel of his song.

How far this takes us away from those days, in the fifties of the last century, when Wagner had to write to Liszt regarding *Lohengrin:* "If, at the performance, it was always *only* the music, nay, commonly *only* the orchestra, that attracted attention, rest assured that the vocalists fell far below the level of their task."

That such a criticism was called for in those days shows how the art of song, instead of being on the decline, has progressed.

Jean de Reszke represents the climax of this progress; certain details in his impersonations mark the highest achievements of the art operatic up to date, and to them we must look for hints as to the future apotheosis of that art. When he sang *Elsa, ich liebe dich,* there was a warmth in his voice, with a sincerity and tenderness in his phrasing and mien that thrilled the audience *as this declaration of love would have thrilled an actual Elsa herself.* Another instance occurs in the forest scene of *Siegfried* when the hero, after trying in vain to learn the language of the bird, exclaims, "Vöglein, mich dünkt ich bleibe dumm" ("Birdie, methinks I'll ever be a fool")—which Jean sang with a mixture of naïve drollery and disappointment that was altogether delightful.

But the most wonderful thing he—or any artist—ever did was his delivery of the word "Isolde" in the last bar he sings in *Tristan.* It was a thrilling display of emotion, which the critic of the *London World* best succeeded in describing: "Nothing struck me more than his singing of the phrase 'Isolde' as he dies. It was most wonderful; not merely affecting as the despairing, and adoring, cry of a dying man thinking of the woman he worships; but far more than that. In it one hears not only love but death. It is the mysterious, whispering utterance of a spirit already far away; as if the soul, having started on its dark journey, were compelled by its old and beautiful earthly

passion to pause, and to look back down the shadowy vista to the garden of the world that it had left, to the woman that it had left, perhaps forever, and to send down the distance one last cry of farewell, one last dim murmur of love, spectral, magical already with the wonder of another world. Such an effect as this is utterly beyond the reach of any one who is not a great artist. It is thrilling in its imaginative beauty. It opens the gates as poetry does sometimes and shows us a faint vision of a far-away eternity."

Those who never heard Jean de Reszke may well feel inclined to doubt whether any mortal could possibly put so much significance into one short word of three syllables; but he certainly did it; I heard him do it a dozen times, and never have I heard anything approaching it for concentrated art except the "l'amour" of Calvé, previously referred to (p. 150). Have we here glimpses of a future when the art of singing will have reached a higher general level than it has now? We may well believe this, when we bear in mind the enormous progress from Rubini's trills to De Reszke's thrills. It indicates the direction in which students must aim.

To hear Jean de Reszke as Lohengrin, Walter, Tristan, or Siegfried was to realize the truth of Wagner's assertion that the human voice is "the most genuine and the most beautiful organ of music," and that, compared with the infinite variety of tone coloring of which it is capable, even "the most manifold imaginable mixture of orchestral tints must seem insignificant."

Always his own most severe critic, Jean was sure to retire from the stage as soon as he felt that he would in any respect fall short of his highest ideals. This decision was to be regretted; for while the critics dearly love to level their telescopes in search of spots on the sun, the public gladly makes allowances in order to enjoy what still

remains incomparable in an artist. Unlike other singers, Jean refused to go on the concert stage after leaving the opera. Henry Mapleson organized a syndicate which offered him $5,500 a night for an American tour, but the great tenor replied: "My dear friend: The brilliant proposition you have made to me is exceedingly tempting, and I am sure that, under your able direction, all would work well for my interests and my peace of mind—a matter of the last importance to a lyric artist. But I am so happy in Paris, and my strong desire to create Siegfried [in French] being satisfied, I have for the moment no other ambition."

Of the private school for singers which Jean has established in Paris, some account will be given in a later chapter (Teachers and Pupils). For a time he acted as *chef de chant*, or director of singing, at the Grand Opéra, his task being that of helping fully formed artists to maintain or improve the quality of their singing, and perhaps correct certain defects of manner and style. But he soon resigned, having found that his ideals were not being lived up to.

One more of the secrets of Jean's success must be revealed before we pass on. He retired from the stage as soon as he felt the least waning of his powers. But why did he remain on the stage so long? Why subject himself to the hard work of daily rehearsals, of constant practice, when he, the most high-priced singer (except Patti) of the time, the owner of vast estates in Poland, of great wealth acquired through his voice and his race-horses, might long have sat in an opera box of his own, the plutocratic peer of the millionaires, instead of entertaining them? He was impelled to do this solely by his love of art, his missionary spirit; and this prompted him to forego social pleasures for fear of injuring his voice. Of this necessary sacrifice he often spoke to me; but he was willing to make it. Contrast this with what Otto Floersheim once wrote in the

Musical Courier about Ernst Krauss, and learn how not to do it:

"He has a heroic tenor voice, and a glorious one at that, given him by nature, but he is also a *Naturbursche*, a fellow who has not learned how to use his voice, and who, besides, does not take the least care of his precious and precarious gifts. I heard him shout recently at the top of his lungs at a collegial gathering of his friends in a beer restaurant, and only a few nights later, at the Wagner Verein's concert, he was so hoarse that he could sing only the beginning of his *Siegfried* music, while the rest was, if not silence, at least only whispering."

Jean de Reszke (who was born at Warsaw in 1850) comes of a musical family. His mother was a pupil of Garcia and Viardot; his sister Josephine, who died young, had already distinguished herself as a prima donna; one brother, named Victor, had a fine tenor voice, which he preferred to keep to himself; and another brother, Edouard, became, as everybody knows, among the basses of his day what Jean was among the tenors. What Italian of our day, either as singer or actor, could equal his comical Don Basilio, in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, or his pompous King, in *Aïda?* What Frenchman his Mephistopheles, in *Faust*, his Marcel, in *Les Huguenots?* What German his Wanderer, in *Siegfried*, his Hagen, in *Götterdämmerung?* His Mephistopheles was part sinister, part humorous, with subtle touches of sarcasm in the garden scene; he was the most convincing of all stage devils. But greatest of all his rôles was his Leporello, in Mozart's *Don Giovanni.* To mention only one detail: No comic actor ever seen on the stage could have produced so amusing an effect as he did with voice and action combined in reading to Elvira the list of Don Juan's love-affairs: "in Italy, six hundred and forty; in Germany, two hundred and forty; in France, one hundred; and in Turkey, ninety; but in Spain, here, one

thousand and three." That *mille e tre* will forever ring in the ears of those who were so lucky as to hear it. Here was the perfection of operatic art; Jean himself never did anything better.

Many other tenors and basses might be profitably written about here, but the chief lessons have now been sufficiently enforced, and we may pass on to the instruments after a few more remarks about four peculiarly up-to-date baritones, an Englishman, two Frenchmen, a German, whose achievements illustrate the modern improvements in the art of singing.

XII

FOUR UP-TO-DATE BARITONES

Charles Santley

Mozart had the courage, when he wrote his *Don Giovanni*, to assign the leading part to a baritone. Before that time the tenor had usually "played first fiddle," nor did he cease to do so after Mozart. Wagner wrote some scores giving excellent opportunities to basses and baritones, yet the very names of half of his operas—*Rienzi*, *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, *Tristan and Isolde*, *Siegfried*, and *Parsifal* —indicate that the tenor is the hero. Rossini was the first Italian who gave important numbers to the bass voice, and with few exceptions the tenor remained the centre of interest at operatic performances until about half a century ago.

One of the first to show that one need not be a tenor to become very popular was the English baritone Charles Santley. Yet even he began as a tenor. When his voice recovered from the usual break, which occurred to him before he was fourteen years of age, his father insisted on his singing tenor, which he did, though he himself was convinced he was not a tenor. Before he reached his eighteenth year, however, he rebelled and dropped into the bass clef. As he had a certain power in the low notes he was then pronounced a bass, and he sang any music in the bass clef which fell to his lot. It was not until he made his operatic début as Hoel, in *Dinorah*, at the age of twenty-five, that his real register—high baritone—was re-

vealed to him. "Had I followed the commands of my first musical instructor to keep to the tenor clef, or the advice of would-be instructors when I adopted the bass clef, the inevitable result would have been ruin to, or total loss of, my voice," he declares in his book, *The Art of Song*.

In consequence of this narrow escape, and for various other reasons, he holds that only one who is or has been a good singer can be a satisfactory teacher. How many such are there among the 10,000 singing teachers who are busy in London alone?

Charles Santley's success is the more remarkable inasmuch as he had not the advantage of being brought up in a musical or theatrical atmosphere. He was born at Liverpool in 1834. As a boy the intimate desire of his heart was to be an actor, but of this he never breathed a word to any one, as he tells us in his volume of reminiscences, entitled *Student and Singer*. "My family had been brought up," he adds, "with the Puritanical notion that all stage players, singers, and such like were no better than they ought to be, and in general much worse. I seldom saw the inside of a theatre before I was seventeen or eighteen." He did get music lessons, but these soon became irksome to him, because they took up time he wanted to devote to recreation after school hours. His dislike, however, was superficial; one day he heard an orchestra in church; the effect on him was profound, and from that time he "lived on and for music."

The wonderful art of the German bass, Staudigl, did much to arouse his musical zeal and ambition. "I only heard him about three times," he relates, "and those toward the end of his career. No singer has ever had such a peculiar effect on me, apart from his singing. Each time he stepped on the platform I felt a thrill run through my whole body, as though he possessed some magnetic influence over me."

The greatest disappointment Santley experienced throughout life was the lack of earnestness and the abounding vanity and laziness which prevent so many gifted students from reaching the top of the ladder. "Man is naturally vain and lazy," he remarks, "and I think a singer, to become a real artist, has to make a harder struggle against these natural defects than the followers of any other art, and for this reason. The essential natural qualification for a singer is a sonorous voice of sympathetic quality; the unintellectual public is satisfied with the sound which pleases its ear, and bestows its applause irrespective of artistic merit. Vanity and laziness step in and say, 'The public is content, the money rolls in; why study more?' Conscience is thrust aside. How many promising young artists have come to an untimely end in consequence! Yet I have known some who, when the voice has begun to lose its charm, roused by the voice of conscience, with determined efforts have succeeded in making Art a more than efficient substitute for the magic of a fresh voice."

Fortunately, Mr. Santley himself had the energy and the capacity for hard work needful for reaching the highest rungs of the ladder. His father gave him money enough to study and experiment for a time in Italy, where his experiences were, however, rather doleful and discouraging. On his return to England he sang for Hullah, who told him: "You have still a great deal to learn"; upon which Santley comments: "It is now thirty-four years since the observation was made, and I find I have still a great deal to learn, so I am convinced Hullah was right."

He learned much about this time from the greatest of all singing-masters, Manuel Garcia. Students whose teachers inflict on them a lot of anatomical jargon will be interested to hear Santley on this point. Garcia, he says, "taught singing, not surgery! I was a pupil of his in 1858,

and a friend of his while he lived, and in all the conversations I had with him, I never heard him say a word about the larynx or pharynx, glottis, or any other organ used in the production and emission of the voice"; and Santley adds his own opinion, that the less pupils know about the construction of the vocal organs, the better.

Mr. Santley does not credit the foolish remark attributed to Rossini, that the three main requisites of a singer are "voice, voice, and voice," but thinks the anecdote has done much harm in encouraging pupils with "voices" to shirk work. If he himself were questioned as to the three requisites, he would answer: "Patience! patience! patience!" Apparently, the teacher needs this as much as the pupil, for, in his opinion, "a singing-master has the most trying task of all teachers." Of his colleagues he has no high opinion; most of them do not know the difference between the "production" and the "emission" of the voice; most of them launch their pupils too soon into the study of difficult music; and as for enunciation, their pupils may be heard any day singing, "Ow, de-ah, now!" for "Oh, dear, no," and that sort of thing.

During his career as a singer Mr. Santley suffered much from the defective acoustics of theatres and halls. A good deal has been written regarding the fact that in some parts of an auditorium the audience may hear much better than in others; on this Mr. Santley dwells (in his book, *The Art of Singing and Vocal Declamation*, which he issued at the ripe age of seventy-four); but he also presents the artist's side of the plaint. Why, he asks, was he able to go through his work in perfect comfort in one place, while in another he was glad to land safe at the end? He inveighs against the primitive waiting rooms, which are responsible frequently for sudden impairment of voice and disappointment of the audience. He also dwells at considerable length on the danger of having flowers in the artist's

room or in drawing-rooms where artists are expected to sing. Close observation showed that he was often attacked with hoarseness when there were flowers in the room, and was relieved as soon as they were removed. Tobacco, on the other hand, soothed his throat. Nor will he admit that these are personal idiosyncrasies; but it is a fact that to the throats of many singers tobacco is injurious.

In the same valuable book Santley dwells on the fatal effect of drinking or eating to excess; many promising careers have been ended prematurely by such indulgence. He declares he has never yet "encountered a great artist who led a Bohemian life, or was unsystematic in his work."

Santley's successes and failures are recounted at length in his memoirs. He achieved distinction in both Italian and English opera, as well as in oratorio, and in ballads and other concert songs. A writer in the *London Spectator* says that "Mr. Edward Lloyd, admirable singer, musician, and artist, never ventured on either French or German and was rarely heard in Italian. These languages, so indispensable to an interpreter of the best music, had no terrors for Santley, who added to them a proficiency so rare in the benighted Sassenach, in the Irish brogue. Brahms used to say of Stockhausen that he was the best musician of all the singers. Adapting this appreciation, we may safely say that Mr. Santley was the best musician among British male singers of his generation." "He always gave of his best; whatever he did, he did with his might." "If we were asked what was the quality in Mr. Santley's singing which more than anything else had endeared him to the British public, we should be inclined to say that it was manliness." "He embodied the best national qualities more thoroughly and successfully than any of his contemporaries."

"His chief achievement," in the opinion of the London *Musical World*, "was the creation of the part of the Dutch-

man in the first performance of any of Wagner's operas in this country. But England was not yet ripe for Wagner, and the failure of the work deprived us of the opportunity of seeing the great artist in any more of Wagner's creations. But for this we might perhaps have had an unrivalled Telramund and Wolfram and Sachs. . . . During his connection with the Carl Rosa Company he made a very great success with that very part of the Dutchman which six years before had been a total failure in Italian."

Distinct enunciation and the power of varying the tone-color were among his good qualities. He "made his singing of songs as dramatic as if they were scenes on the stage," writes Mr. Fuller Maitland. He was particularly admired in *Elijah*—"What do you think of the Prophet—what sort of a man was he?" Sims Reeves said to Ffrangcon Davies, when he came to him to study the part; and in that spirit Santley interpreted this music—a spirit which takes us miles away from the antics of those soloists who, as he remarks, seem to try to "get through" the recitatives as fast as they can, in order to come to the "tune." *

Victor Maurel

"It is not enough you should know your own part, you ought to make yourself well acquainted with the whole drama in which you are a figure," wrote Mr. Santley.

The eminent French baritone, Victor Maurel, carried out this principle with astonishing thoroughness. In his book, *Dix Ans de Carrière*, one hundred pages are devoted to an analysis of all the rôles in Verdi's *Otello* and of the staging of this opera in every minute detail. It is a dramaturgic masterpiece.

Verdi called Maurel "the incomparable Iago." When

* See also his remarks on the "histrionic exigencies" of Elijah, in his *Student and Singer*, pp. 168–170.

he staged his *Otello* at Milan, in 1887, he could find no Italian artist in whom he had confidence for this part; and when he wrote his *Falstaff* he again called upon Victor Maurel as the vocalist-actor most competent to carry out the refined principles of his mature style. For fifteen years these two men worked together, and their influence on Italian and French opera and operatic representation created a new epoch.

When Verdi wrote his first operas he thought only of tunes and beautiful singing, the dramatic side of the work being of minor importance. It was the custom of the time. In the same way, Victor Maurel began his career as a "star" in the old sense of the word. He was born at Marseilles, studied at the Paris Conservatoire, where he won several prizes, and made his début at the Opéra in the rôle of the Count, in *Il Trovatore.* From Paris he went to Italy, then to England, and soon he was a man of international fame.

In London an incident occurred which had an important effect on his career. As he was practising in his hotel one morning, the door of his room was opened suddenly and a stranger appeared. "We are neighbors," he said; "I live on the top floor of the hotel, and I also am an artist, a poor painter. Every morning I hear you singing, you give me the most extraordinary sensations. Your voice enters my room like a ray of sunshine. I have bought a seat for to-morrow to hear you in *William Tell.* I shall salute you after the performance."

For a time Mr. Maurel saw no more of his unceremonious visitor, but one day he met him on the street. "Why did you not come to see me?" said the singer; "did you not hear me in *William Tell?*" "I did," said the painter coldly. "Well?" "Well, I was greatly disappointed. Doubtless you have an admirable voice, and you are a great singer, but you are not yet an artist; *you do not at all*

give the impression of the character of the rude mountaineer, the fearless hunter."

This criticism set Maurel thinking. It opened his eyes to the fact that there are two sides to an operatic performer's art, one of which he had neglected. He studied the art of acting, and when he appeared in Paris as Hamlet, in 1879, "it was no longer a singer who pretended to be Hamlet, it was a Hamlet who sang." Had he remained, like so many of his colleagues, a *vox et preterea nihil*, he would now be forgotten, like them. But he had entered on a new career, the career of an opera singer who could "get inside the skin of a character," an artist who could *act and paint with the voice.* There lies the secret of his great success.

On October 31, 1892, Verdi wrote to Maurel an extremely interesting letter, which shows how the greatest of Italian opera composers had come in his old days to hold the same opinions that Wagner had always preached regarding the relations between text and music, and the manner in which the singers should approach their task. Here is the letter, in part: "You must have received from Milan the libretto of *Falstaff*. You will receive your musical rôle as soon as I have composed it. Study the lines and words of the libretto, work over them as much as you feel inclined to; but do not occupy yourself too much with the music. Let not this advice seem strange to you! If the music has the desired traits, if the character of the rôle is well understood, if the word-accent is properly placed, the music comes of itself, and is born, as it were, spontaneously."

Here we have Wagner's theory of dramatic vocalism stated in almost his own language. And Verdi not only adopted it in this last opera of his, but emphasized his new stand-point by *taking his librettist, Boïto, along to assist at the rehearsals.* Here was an innovation in Italian opera!

In the good old times the librettist had supplied merely the pegs for the composer's airs; now he was taken along to the theatre to see to it that the play no less than the music was properly presented.

Among M. Maurel's literary productions none is more valuable than an article entitled "My Relations with Sainte-Beuve," an English version of which was printed in the Boston *Musical Record.* In it the singer relates how, many years ago, that great critic predicted the lines on which the opera and opera singers would develop. He believed that the taste for glitter to which Meyerbeer's librettist, Scribe, had accustomed the public would change; that Wagner's principles would triumph, in so far as the public would no longer go to the opera simply to hear airs; and that, in consequence, there would be need of singers with higher thoughts and a more complete knowledge of their art. To Maurel he said: "You have come twenty years too soon," and Maurel says he has had the most varied proofs of the truthfulness of this speech. He has now been a public singer more than a quarter of a century. Were he nearer the beginning of his career, he would like to sing Hans Sachs and Wotan in a dramatic fashion that, according to his ideas, has not yet been known. He feels grateful to Gevaërt for interesting him in Gluck; "to know Gluck was by anticipation to know Wagner, to be in a position to divine Verdi!" The fifteen years of association and collaboration with Verdi are what M. Maurel looks back to as the brightest spots in his career, which allowed him to come nearest to his own ideal of dramatic song.

How admirably Maurel succeeded from the start in carrying out Verdi's intentions is shown by that great master's remarks in a letter after the first performance of *Otello:* "The art of Maurel is really immense. . . . I do not know whether to admire most the singer or the

interpreter—*when he sings his best, he makes one forget that he is singing*."

The same was true, as we have seen, of Emma Calvé. What a lucky chance that this wonderful artist became a pupil of Maurel at the beginning of her career! And what a lucky chance, again, that the American Calvé, Geraldine Farrar, heard *Faust*, with Calvé, before any other opera or opera singer! That performance influenced her whole career. She, too, belongs to the Maurel school, not only because of this, but because she learned much at Monte Carlo of Maurice Renaud, who based his art on what he learned by seeing and hearing Victor Maurel.

When Verdi produced his early opera *Rigoletto*, Victor Hugo was angry because his consent had not been asked for using his play (*Le Roi s'amuse*) as a libretto. But after the poet had heard this opera in Paris he wrote: "I am anxious to meet the man who has rendered by sounds the sentiments and passions which it has been so difficult for the greatest actors to render by words. . . . Victor Maurel reconciled me to Verdi's opera."

In these words Victor Hugo practically concedes the superior power of dramatic song over dramatic speech, which is the fundamental thesis of Wagnerism. On this point Maurel discourses eloquently in his *Dix Ans de Carrière* in a chapter on "L'Enseignement de l'Art du Chant." "When we associate music with words, we express the movements of the soul with greater power," he concludes.

But it is not an easy art! "We can laugh," he continues, "and jump, and cry out for a moment without losing breath, in life or even on the stage when we have to do with spoken words only. But it is far from easy to learn the art of laughing, crying out, and making other sounds all at a fixed pitch and a prescribed pace, now fast, now slow, and with varying degrees of intenseness; now loud,

now soft, but always sustained, and to keep it up for hours —and all this, mind you, rhythmically."

The French tenor, Albert Saléza, was so impressed by these difficulties that he declared that "no singer, unless he have the extraordinary physical strength of a Tamagno, should attempt the almost impossible feat of being, in the full sense of the words, both an actor and a singer."

But Saléza was behind the times. We come now to another French baritone who, like Maurel, is, in the full sense of the words, both an actor and a singer, and of whom Verdi might have said, what he said of Maurel: "When he sings his best, he makes one forget that he is singing"—which is the highest compliment that can be paid an operatic artist.

Maurice Renaud

If Oscar Hammerstein had achieved no other notable result by giving New York a second opera-house than to provide an opportunity to enjoy the vocal and histrionic art of M. Renaud, he would still deserve an honorable place in the history of operatic music in America. As long as Geraldine Farrar is at the Metropolitan and Maurice Renaud at the Manhattan, it is safe to say that better and subtler acting can be seen on our operatic stage than in the theatre.

While under the spell of M. Renaud's imaginative art, most spectators would guess that he had been an actor before he became a singer; for few singers have ever bestowed so much attention on the minute details of make-up and action; yet this great Frenchman came to the stage primarily as a singer.

He was born at Bordeaux in 1862. His first great ambition was to excel as a writer of novels and poems; but soon he decided that that was not his sphere after all, and

went to the Paris Conservatoire, where he trained his voice for a year. Then he went to Brussels, where he was engaged at the Théâtre de la Monnaie. He made his operatic début on that stage in 1883, as a priest of Odin, in Reyer's *Sigurd*. Seven years later he accepted an engagement at the Grand Opéra, in Paris, which thenceforth remained his head-quarters, although he often sang in London, too, and at Monte Carlo, St. Petersburg, and in Italian cities. In 1906–7 he joined the Manhattan Opera House Company, of which he came gradually to be acknowledged the most consummate artist.

Maurice Renaud is one of the few baritones who have won an artistic and popular success equal to that of world-famed tenors. He owes this success in about equal shares to his vocal art, his histrionic instincts, his skill in make-up, his personality, his versatility, and his infinite capacity for taking pains. He is a remarkably handsome man—in Paris he has been long known as "le beau Renaud"—and that also may be mentioned as a helpful factor in such rôles as Don Giovanni, Wolfram, Escamillo, Athanaël, Herod (in Massenet's opera); but he is no less delectable in parts which, like Rigoletto, the Jew peddler in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Beckmesser, Falstaff, are the very negation of beauty. If we add to this list of parts Mefistofele, in Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust*, Telramund, Scarpia, Hamlet, Nelusko, Flying Dutchman, we get some idea of his remarkable versatility.

Concerning his singing, Mr. W. J. Henderson has truly remarked that "such is his intelligence, his taste, and his exquisite adjustment of means that he gives the real connoisseurs of singing far more delight than many others who project into the auditorium tones of more glorious quality."

At one time he lost his voice completely for some months, and it was several years before he got it back fully under

his control—an experience not a few vocalists have gone through, as we shall see in a later chapter. In his case the voice recovered all its former charm, and its effectiveness was increased by his more mature art of singing.

He is one of the few artists who can make recitative as interesting and expressive as melody, and as there is a good deal of recitative in Mozart's and other old operas, this means much in the way of entertainment. Most other singers make one wish the recitatives were cut out altogether. When Renaud sings, no one is ever bored—and this is another secret of his success.

No factor in his composite art is more talked about and admired than his extraordinary skill in transforming his face and general aspect. One can study his assumed features like a portrait by a great master and regret that it should be made for the moment only. His make-up is never twice quite the same, no matter what pains he may take to make it so, and he sometimes spoils it, as he informed me, and has to start in all over again, for it is never successful when patched up. It takes him an hour and a half to "make his head" for Athanaël (in *Thaïs*), with the beard, which goes on in several pieces and which must be filled in with pencilling. He and M. Gilibert hold that a class should be established in the conservatories to teach this important branch of the operatic art; and yet each face must be a law unto itself, for hollows and elevations have a curiously opposite effect on the colors, and when one color would be used to produce a high light on one spot it would cause a shadow on another.

As an actor, M. Renaud is a realist, yet he avoids exaggeration, theatricalness, and vulgarity. As Mr. Henderson—who seldom praises anybody—has remarked: "He refines the most brutal operatic street type and makes of it a picture fit for a royal gallery. Yet he sacrifices no jot of the fundamental character. He is the quin-

tessence of French accomplishment in the methods of the theatre."

His Rigoletto is a case in point. No other artist has equalled him in the natural delineation of the physically and mentally deformed jester who assists the licentious Duke in securing victims and is punished by finding his own daughter one of them. The play of his features, when Monterone is cursing him for his wicked abetting of the Duke's crimes, will never be forgotten by those who have been so lucky as to see it; and no less vivid and natural is the portrayal of his one noble trait—his love for his daughter and his suffering at her ruin and death. He makes the audience share all the emotions of tortured paternal love—how infinitely pathetic and tear-compelling he looks, with his gray head bowed as he kneels begging the courtiers help him save his daughter!—of ecstasy at sight of the daughter—of revengeful rage and hate toward the man who had ruined her. The darkness of the stage in the last act makes it difficult to follow every expression of his face, but his hands, his whole body, have an eloquence that partly compensates for that loss. And his voice—what color, what feeling, what beauty in that, too! It is as emotional as his face—what more could be said?

There was a time when operatic audiences cared for nothing but beautiful singing. How completely their attitude has changed was shown by the preference given in 1908–9 at the Manhattan Opera House for the Rigoletto of M. Renaud to that of Mr. Sammarco, who has a more mellow voice but lacks his rival's gifts as an actor. M. Renaud, indeed, succeeded in making his rôle the most important one in the opera, no matter by what famous prima donna and tenor the parts of Gilda and the Duke were sung. Modern opera is a composite art, and the most successful artist is likely to be he whose art is

equally composite. Renaud is among baritones what Jean de Reszke is among tenors.

Massenet's *Jongleur de Notre Dame* is another opera in which Renaud centres attention on himself by his superlative art. He is only a monastery cook—but what a cook! There is always a great outburst of applause when he rides on the stage on his donkey, a jolly, fat moon-faced monk, laden with flowers. His unctuous praise of the old Macon wine, his funny change from the reverence of the Benedicite to the more important matter of dining bring laughter from the whole house, and his earnest sorting and preparation of the carrots and cauliflowers in the second act suggests a picture by Tenier. The climax of this part is, however, his delivery of the narrative of the sage brush opening to hide the Christ Child. Here his eyes are a study of tenderness, human and divine, and his smile when the child is safe illumines his homely cook-face to a kind of unearthly beauty. His delivery of this narrative is one of the most superb specimens of dramatic vocalism ever heard on the stage. Renaud is such a wonderful actor that one sometimes forgets that he is equally great as a singer till a number like *Marie avec l'enfant Jésus* forcibly reminds one of that fact.

Of his versatility he gives the most amazing proof in Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann*, in which, again, he is the observed of all observers from start to finish. It seems incredible that any man should be able to change himself, as he does, from a most extraordinarily misshapen, bent, and dwarfed Jew peddler, with an amusingly life-like Alsatian accent, in the first act, to the elegant, polished, and strangely handsome but evil and cynical Venetian gentleman, in the second act, and, once more, in the third, to the thin, tall, weird, sinister, diabolical Dr. Miracle. In this part the hands are perhaps the most hideously impressive part of him—the fiendish, hypnotic claws with which he draws

his victim to him. His interview with the spirit of the poor child he has placed on a chair is so uncanny as to make one shudder.*

The three characters enacted by Renaud in *The Tales of Hoffmann* are really three aspects of the arch-fiend. Another aspect of Mephistopheles is presented in Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*, an impersonation utterly different from that which has been made conventional in the operatic world. In this devil, as presented by Renaud, there is not a trace of humor, no sardonic grin, no apparent malice. He enmeshes his victim with the *sang-froid* of a huge spider. Pale, emaciated, hollow-eyed, he pursues his plan solemnly, and the spectator follows his every gesture and change of facial expression with keen interest. A weary, listless devil he seems on the surface, yet there is a subtle undertone of diabolical craft and cunning. Not for a second can one take one's eyes off his face, his hands, his body, without losing some significant detail.

Renaud's gift of transformation is sometimes revealed in conversation as strikingly as on the stage. One day he was speaking of a small rôle he had taken in *Le Cloun*— the rôle of an Apache, a Parisian *voyou*, or street boy,

* In this opera another French baritone, who really deserves a whole chapter in this book, M. Charles Gilibert, gives an instructive and amusing illustration of what a great artist can do toward enlivening a scene. Quite the funniest thing in the opera is his pretended harp-playing while the automaton sings. It is not the careless, aimless playing such as the Minnesingers in *Tannhäuser*, for instance, indulge in. The tones, of course, come from the orchestra, but in every subtle motion of plucking the strings or gliding over them he seems to do all the playing. M. Gilibert is one of those up-to-date baritones who have shown that there is no difference between major and minor rôles. He puts as much of his art into a part like this, or that of Monterone, in *Rigoletto*, as he does into that of the Father, in *Louise*, which is one of the most masterful and moving impersonations on the stage, or his incomparably funny Mazetto, in *Don Giovanni*. Mme. Gilibert, who is also an artist, once remarked to me, truly: "There are no minor rôles, but only minor artists who fail to rise to their opportunities."

when suddenly, with a sinking of his body and an ugly forward thrust of his head, he gave an instantaneous picture of the sullen street gamin—sullen, yet full of a wicked fun. It was a startling histrionic feat, this extraordinary change of an elegant gentleman into a low hoodlum by means of two gestures, and made one long to see him in his whole repertory. No matter how dull an opera might be, he would make it interesting.

Speaking of Massenet's *Thaïs*, in his *Chapters of Opera*, Mr. H. E. Krehbiel declares that its remarkable success in New York was due much more to M. Renaud than to his fair companion. It was certainly due quite as much to him as to Miss Garden. In this opera he impersonates the monk Athanaël, who leaves the monastery in the desert to save the soul of the notorious Alexandrian courtesan Thaïs. In the early scenes he is every inch the saint—stern, impulsive for his cause, fanatical in pursuance of his purpose. Every movement of those marvellously beautiful and soulful eyes is eloquent of spirituality. Even more impressive is the gradual change from the saint to the sinner in thought, from the monk to the man. His certainty of conquering the worse nature of the priestess of Venus and his joy at his victory are marvellously expressed in voice and face, but still more intense is his anguish when he has to leave her at the convent gate, and his heartbroken "*Je ne la verrai plus.*" When he returns to the dying Thaïs to implore her to become a sinner again, he looks as if he had been through the tortures of the damned.

There is a suggestion of *Parsifal* in Massenet's music, and more than a trace of it in Renaud's Athanaël. Were he a tenor, what a *Parsifal* he would make!—a Parsifal such as Bayreuth has never seen. Those who have heard his Beckmesser, his Wolfram, his Flying Dutchman, declare that in these Wagnerian parts he surpasses all

rivals. But of that I cannot speak, not having had the good fortune to see him in those rôles.

Probably his greatest achievement is his Don Giovanni. Concerning this part he once wrote to Mrs. Finck:* "I have worked over it a great deal. I changed, modified, completely remodelled the part several times." He will hardly succeed in further improving it. In my critical experience of nearly thirty years I can recall but half a dozen impersonations equal to it. Lessing says that Homer gave a better idea of Helen's beauty by noting the impression it made even on the elders than he could have done by describing it minutely. Perhaps, in the same way, Renaud's Don Giovanni can best be described by the confession that he made a veteran critic tremble with delight and excitement throughout the last act of Mozart's opera.

It is doubtful if any artist ever succeeded in presenting that Spanish cavalier in so life-like a manner. He is the very embodiment of the dashing, gallant, reckless, wanton lady-killer; when Leporello shows one of his victims the list of his "thousand-and-three" conquests, no one wonders, after looking at that splendid specimen of audacious manhood. He appears in six different costumes during the several acts, and it would take a jury of women to decide in which he looks handsomest. But that is a mere detail. Don Giovanni is a busy man throughout the opera; he not only conquers women and girls, but fights duels, sings serenades, teases Mazetto, invites the statue of the man he has killed to supper, and dies from the clasp of his stone hand.

It is in these last scenes with the ghost of the Commander in particular that M. Renaud reveals his incomparable art. In the cemetery, when the statue nods and accepts

* Her article on his career and his art, in the *Century Magazine* for February, 1909, includes hints of value to students, especially in the remarks on Falstaff. Like Geraldine Farrar, M. Renaud is a frequenter of art galleries for purposes of study.

the invitation, he is still all bravado, and ineffaceable is the picture he presents when he leans on the pedestal and, half-insolently, half-amusedly, looks up at the speaking stone man on the stone horse. Even when the ghost enters the banquet hall and the girls have fled and Leporello has crawled under the table, he keeps up his insolent courage for a time; yet, before he dares to put his hand into that of the stone man he fortifies himself with one more drink of wine, which he pours from a golden vessel into a golden cup.

These are a few details out of hundreds equally fascinating. Is it a wonder that Maurice Renaud has succeeded?

Ludwig Wüllner

An amazing feat was accomplished in the cities of the United States in the season of 1908–9—the feat of making classical German *lieder* as popular as musical comedy "hits."

The man who performed this miracle was Dr. Ludwig Wüllner. And the most astonishing thing about it was that he came heralded as "the singer without a voice."

Concerning his first recital in New York, on November 15, 1908, I wrote in the *Evening Post:*

If any one not knowing what was going on at Mendelssohn Hall on Saturday afternoon had approached the auditorium just after Dr. Ludwig Wüllner had finished one of his songs, he would have felt sure that Caruso or some other operatic idol must have been singing, so demonstrative and persistent was the applause. He has neither the beautiful voice of Caruso nor his art of singing. In Italian opera he would be as lamentable a failure as—well, as Caruso would be if he tried to sing Schubert's *Erlking* or *Doppelgaenger*, as Wüllner sang them on Saturday. Did it occur to any one of those who heard these wonder-

ful interpretations that the singer had "no voice"? As a matter of fact, he has a voice which is quite agreeable, except when he has to force it to get tones not easily within his reach; but the mere voice seemed as nothing compared to the art with which he laid bare the very soul of those songs. Not even Lilli Lehmann, with her splendid voice and her pre-eminent dramatic ability, brought out quite so vividly the terror of the child's cry that the Erlking has seized him, or the tragic pathos of the last lines where the father gallops on and finds the child dead in his arms. . . .

Evidently there is something in music besides *bel canto;* something even more worth while. Dr. Wüllner showed this in other songs on his programme—songs by Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Wolf, and Strauss; songs in diverse moods; but the two referred to were his greatest achievements. It was in the *Doppelgaenger*, too, that his pianist, Mr. Coenraad von Bos, was heard at his best, playing with thrilling breadth and accent those sombre chords which are as modern, as emotional, as those which accompany the music of Erda and Klingsor, in Wagner's *Siegfried* and *Parsifal.*

Dr. Wüllner has a repertory of 700 songs. He sang at 119 recitals throughout Europe last season. His last two Berlin recitals were heard by 3,000 persons. His American success will doubtless be equally great when once the public finds out what a magician he is. He affects audiences like a great revivalist, like an orator appealing to patriotic sentiment. His last number on Saturday was Schumann's *The Two Grenadiers*, a song which has often almost sufficed in itself to fill the Metropolitan on a Sunday night when Plançon sang it. Plançon is a great singer, with a voice of beauty as well as dramatic power; yet he never sang the *Marseillaise* with quite such fervor and thrilling effect as Dr. Wüllner.

The public soon did find out what a magician this German singer was. Criticisms as enthusiastic as the one just cited appeared in the other newspapers, and Dr. Wüllner

gave recital after recital. At his fifth appearance "it looked like a first night at the opera," said the *Journal of Commerce.* Mr. Chase, of the *Evening Sun*, wrote, on February 2, 1909: "Wüllner's twelfth appearance sold out Mendelssohn Hall yesterday, and 150 chairs in an anteroom that even the Kneisels never use. Dozens of people stood, hundreds, with money, were actually turned away. 'How does he do it?' a woman exclaimed. . . . He makes the songs talk." Max Smith, of the *Press*, wrote on the same date: "Wüllner's enormous sucess in New York and other places has been one of the biggest surprises of recent years."

Mendelssohn Hall had become too small to hold the thousands eager to hear Wüllner. He had to move, like Paderewski when he first came to America, to a larger building. On March 5 Max Smith wrote: "Dr. Ludwig Wüllner broke the Polish monopoly last night, when, alone and unaided, except for the piano accompaniments of Coenraad von Bos, he packed Carnegie Hall to the doors and held his audience spellbound for fully two hours. Sembrich and Paderewski are not the only artists who, single-handed and single-voiced, can attract an immense throng. A German, who certain connoisseurs say has no voice at all, is in the race. . . . The riot of enthusiasm that Wüllner invariably arouses caught last night's audience too."

Why do song recitals seldom pay? The programmes made for them usually bear out Maurice Renaud's assertion that "musicians do not love masterworks." One wonders, on looking at the average programme—so different from Wüllner's—what could have induced its maker to bring together such a hodge-podge of mediocrity and inanity. But the explanation is very simple. Vocalists seldom consider the intrinsic merit of a song; they seek something which is easy to sing and which brings out the most telling qualities of their own voices. Their one idea is to

impress the public with their own wonderful accomplishments; it never occurs to them that the kind of people who are likely to attend a song recital would be infinitely more impressed by the genius of Goethe and Schubert, or Heine and Franz, as united in a song, than by their own vocal feats. They have now had an opportunity to realize that this is true, as shown by Dr. Wüllner. He, thank Heaven, has no voice to show off. He simply saturates himself with the great poems and the immortal music set to them, and thus arouses a frenzy of enthusiasm. He came to give a score of concerts and gave fourscore. *His* concerts paid; he took back with him a small fortune.

"Undoubtedly," wrote the critic of the *Chicago Tribune*, "American singers, who have so long believed that their art began and ended with the placing of the voice and the production of a beautiful and unvariable tone, will realize that they stand only at its portals." This is one of the chief lessons taught by Wüllner's great success. Another is that an audience can be stirred more deeply by a singer's intellectual, emotional, interpretative gifts than by mere sensuous beauty and agility of voice. And a third lesson is that the best songs are none too good for the public provided they are interpreted with adequate art and eloquence. If it is really true that Rossini once said that the three great requisites for a singer are "voice, voice, and voice," he should have lived to hear Wüllner and realize his mistake. Where many—oh, so many!—others with fine voices and nothing else have failed, he, with an ordinary voice, but a great deal in the way of brains, poetic appreciation, and dramatic power, has triumphed. Will these other singers heed this lesson? Will they learn that the *lied*, like the opera, is a combination of poetry and music, and that dramatic power is needed as well as vocal skill to do it justice? Dr. Wüllner appeals not only to the

ears of his hearers but to their minds and emotions. He is "as deft in laughter as in tears," "a singing actor, a most magnetic personality," writes Louis C. Elson, and that is why, as Philip Hale attests, he "has his audience in the hollow of his hand."

Rarely have critics been so unanimous in their praise of an artist. To cite only one more, H. T. Parker of the *Boston Transcript*, declares that "Dr. Wüllner has been the creator of a new world of passion, mood, character, drama, and picture out of exalted musical speech in which he has set and held us." A similar eulogistic anthology might be compiled from English, German, Russian, and Swedish journals, but two or three instructive samples must suffice. Ferdinand Pfohl, the eminent Hamburg critic, says that "when Wüllner sings or recites, songs become dramas. He gives us tragedy, *apparently himself going through the events depicted, himself the tragic victim.* . . . His words burn like fire. . . . He puts us, as it were, in a trance." "It is related of Dr. Johnson," says the *London Daily News*, "that he had in a rare degree the power of tearing the heart out of a book, and it is Dr. Ludwig Wüllner's possession of much the same faculty that enables him to go straight to the heart of a song and convey its meaning to his audience." And A. Abell, of Berlin, wrote to the *New York Musical Courier* in 1907: "Johannes Messchaert, the famous Dutch baritone, one of Wüllner's leading rivals, who is now so justly popular in Germany, wins his success with diametrically opposite means—with his exquisite Italian style of singing—yet he never enthuses an audience to the extent that Wüllner does."

To trace the development of such a unique artist is a task equally interesting and instructive. But as this task can be accomplished satisfactorily by no one but Dr. Wüllner himself, I am glad to say that I succeeded in

persuading him to write for this book the following sketch of his career:

As a matter of course, I sang from my earliest childhood. As a boy I had a high soprano voice of agreeable quality, and often—especially when I was alone out in the open—I indulged in the most extraordinary warblings and improvisations. When my voice changed I continued, I regret to say, in spite of all protests, to sing; I forced my tones as long as I could, till hoarseness set in, and thus I spoiled my voice for years. When I was instructor at the University of Münster (1884–7) I sang a great deal, privately and also at concerts (under Julius Otto Grimm), but of course only to please myself and others, or to give vent to my feelings. Then when I became a musician (1887–9) I also studied singing, but my instructor at that time did not succeed in teaching me overmuch about tone emission, nor did I yet enter what subsequently became my proper domain: the German *lied*.

To that I began to devote myself during the time I was an actor at Meiningen (1889–95). At that time Fritz Steinbach was conductor of the Meiningen orchestra, and Brahms used to go there frequently as friend and guest of the Duke of Meiningen. Whenever that happened I was at once excused from all theatrical rehearsals and performances and commanded to appear at the castle. I sang only songs at that period, and Brahms took great pleasure in what I did, which made me feel proud and happy. Brahms called my attention to many neglected but most precious Schubert songs, and now and then I was permitted to sing some *lieder* of his own which were off the beaten path and which no one else had ever sung for him. Above all things, Brahms never wearied of hearing me sing the *German Folksongs* issued by him.

Encouraged by all these experiences, I gave, early in October, 1895—when I was still an actor at Meiningen—my first song recitals in Berlin, and these made such an impression, stirred up so much feeling for and against me,

that I left Meiningen a few months later and once more changed my vocation by becoming a professional *lieder* singer. I said to myself: "Of good German actors there are plenty, but in the realm of song-interpretation you have brought something new which heretofore has not existed—at any rate, not in the same degree. Here your strength will perhaps be more needed than on the stage."

I may well say that the effect I created was a surprise to myself; I had not suspected that so much that was new could be done in this direction. It so happened that I had never heard any of the older great *lieder* singers, such as Julius Stockhausen, Eugen Gura; only Georg Henschel I had heard once, as a boy; I therefore fancied that all these vocalists rendered songs in my manner, or similarly. What is this manner? Let me try to explain.

I cannot regard the *lied* from a merely musical point of view; it means more to me than an aria, a purely vocal piece. A *lied* must always seem like the liberation of a profound, soulful, personal feeling (die Aeusserung einer tiefen, seelischen Selbstbefreiung). The hearer must get the impression that the person who sings this or that song at this special moment sings it not because he wants to do so or wishes to please others, but because he *must*, because he *cannot* do otherwise, but must express himself, must give vent to his feelings. *That* alone is to me true lyric art. Thus the mood (often also the content) of every song becomes associated with some actual occurrence in the singer's own life (this, of course, will vary). In this way the *lied* becomes an improvisation; it is, as it were, born anew each time it is sung. To reach that result, to create the song over again each time from within—*that* is what I try to do. It is self-evident that in this procedure the tonal musical form must not be in the least neglected—for the form *is* here often the soul!

This is the manner in which I have been endeavoring these last thirteen or fourteen years to sing German *lieder*. At the beginning, I admit, I not seldom broke the form, as I realized later. But perhaps that also had to be as it was.

To this day some of my opponents find my method of utterance "theatrical"—nay, even "decadent"—I cannot judge that, of course. At any rate, I had not in the first years gained such control of vocal technic as I have now. I aimed only at expression, regardless of tone, and thus there was some basis to the report that I was "a singer without a voice"—one who "declaims and speaks" rather than sings. This label will probably always cling to me more or less. But I must say that I have subjected the sound, too, from year to year to a more and more strict criticism, and have labored industriously to acquire technical facility in tone emission. I have endeavored to save and to develop whatever of tonal quality was to be got out of my no longer young and often abused throat; and while I know, of course, that in my case tonal charm can never be the main thing, I nevertheless hope, despite my age, to make some little progress in this direction, above all, in the art of saturating the consonants with a musical klang, without interfering in the least with distinctness of enunciation. Mood, expression, inwardness—all these things come to me spontaneously; they are gifts for which I can never be sufficiently grateful to fate; it is only on the side of tone-emission that I need to *work.* And my endeavor is to make the tone quality, if not more beautiful, at any rate more capable of variation and richer in color.

So far Dr. Wüllner.

Edward MacDowell, in speaking of his fourth sonata, wrote: "I have made use of all the suggestion of tone-painting in my power—just as the bard would have reinforced *his* speech with gesture and facial expression." Dr. Wüllner, too, like the ancient bards who swayed the hearts of the people, makes some use of gesture and facial expression, but never to excess. What impresses one most in looking at him is an expression of *absence*—he is like one in a trance, with eyes closed, his individuality merged in the story of the song. *He is the medium through whom the poet and the composer speak to the audience.*

PART III

GREAT PIANISTS

XIII

EVOLUTION OF THE PIANO VIRTUOSO

OPERA singers were prominent in the musical world nearly two centuries before pianists began to play an equally important part. It was early in the seventeenth century that opera came into vogue in Italy, and as it appealed to the masses by presenting a plot and picturesque scenery in combination with music, it soon made its way to other countries, and there came into existence a class of vocalists who travelled from city to city, from country to country, winning fame and wealth. To this class belong, in the eighteenth century, the tenors: Paita, Raaff, Rauzzini; the women: Cuzzoni, Faustina Hasse, Agujari, Strada, Todi, Schröter, Mingotti, Pirker, Mara; the male sopranos and altos: Caffarelli, Cusanoni, Ferri, Pasi, Farinelli, Senesino, Nicolini, Gizzielo, Momoletto, Salimbeni.

If we turn from opera to the concert hall we find some violinists, as well as flute, oboe, and horn players, but only a few pianists who, before the nineteenth century, became virtuosos of world-wide celebrity, like those singers. Bach (1685–1750) wrote immortal works for the keyed instruments, and he was an expert performer on the precursors of the modern piano-forte—the clavichord and harpsichord; so was Handel (1685–1759); but neither of these was a professional concert pianist. A nearer approach to the modern virtuoso were the Italian, Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757) and the Frenchman, François Couperin (1668–1733)—but only an approach.

As a matter of fact, concert-giving was not greatly in vogue before the nineteenth century. Few cities before that time boasted of much in the way of professional organizations, while the travelling violinists, flutists, oboists, pianists, and other instrumental soloists were heard mostly at the court concerts of the higher nobility. Gradually, however, concert-giving lost this aristocratic fetter and became democratic, making its appeal, like the opera, to all classes alike; and with this change came the pianist's opportunity to compete with the prima donnas, the tenors, and the violinists.

He had been hampered theretofore by another obstacle—the character of his instrument. The singer found his voice ready for him whenever he wanted it, and violin-making reached a degree of perfection in the seventeenth century never equalled since. But until the Italian, Cristofori, invented the *piano-forte*, key-board players had to content themselves with the tinkling clavichords and harpsichords, which were incapable of those differences in loudness which were provided by the *piano e forte* (soft-and-loud), as it was originally called. Cristofori's invention was made, it is true, as early as the year 1711, but it attracted little attention until a German, Gottfried Silbermann, applied it in his instruments; and even these were at first so defective that Bach, who lived to try them, was only gradually persuaded of their superiority to the clavichord and harpsichord. The makers of these old-fashioned instruments also did all they could to retard the general introduction of the piano-forte; and thus it came about that the reign of the actual virtuoso on this instrument did not begin much more than a century ago, at the time of Beethoven, although Mozart, as a boy and youth, had won much praise for his remarkable feats on the instruments of his time.

XIV

HOW BEETHOVEN PLAYED AND TAUGHT

It is probable that the remarkable successes of young Mozart as a pianist had something to do with arousing the ardent desire of Johann van Beethoven, an impecunious tenor at Bonn, to have a profitable prodigy in his own family. At any rate, he made his talented son Ludwig practise on the key-board diligently at an early age, and the boy was only eight years old when he played concertos in the Musical Academy. Three years later he became a pupil of Neefe, who, as good luck would have it, was a Bach enthusiast and made him play chiefly the *Well-tempered Clavichord* for practice. Another fortunate occurrence was his appointment, at the age of twelve, as accompanist of operatic performances at the piano, a position which made him familiar with scores, and taught him to read and play them readily.

In 1791, when Beethoven was twenty-one years old, an intelligent amateur named Junker heard him play, and liked particularly his improvising. He had often heard the famous Abbé Vogler, the teacher and inspirer of Weber and Meyerbeer; but he found Beethoven "more eloquent, imposing, expressive—in a word," he adds, Beethoven "touches the heart more, he is, therefore, as fine in Adagio as in Allegro. . . . His playing differs so greatly from the usual method of treating the piano that it seems as if he had struck out an entirely new path for himself, in order to reach the goal of perfection to which he has attained."

Two years later Neefe pronounced him "unquestionably one of the foremost pianists."

When Beethoven was seventeen he made a short visit to Vienna. Mozart heard him on that occasion. At first he was indifferent, but when the youth began to improvise on a given theme, Mozart exclaimed: "Keep your eyes on him! He will some day make the world talk about him." When Beethoven returned to Vienna five years later (1792) to make it his permanent home, Mozart was no longer among the living. Referring to that time, a writer in the *Wiener Musikzeitung* said: "Beethoven came hither, and attracted general attention as a pianist even then. We had already lost Mozart; all the more welcome, therefore, was a new and so admirable an artist on the same instrument. True, an important difference was apparent in the style of these two; the roundness, tranquillity, and delicacy of Mozart's style were foreign to the new virtuoso; on the other hand, his enhanced vigor and fiery expression affected every listener."

There were cliques and partisans in those days as there are in ours. Among the rivals of Beethoven as pianist were Woelffl, Cramer, and Hummel. Concerning Woelffl and Beethoven, a critic wrote in 1799: "Opinions differ as to their relative superiority, but the majority incline toward Woelffl. . . . Beethoven's playing is more brilliant but less delicate, and fails sometimes in clearness. He appears to most advantage in improvisation, and it is indeed marvellous to see how easily and logically he will extemporize on any given theme, not merely by varying the figures (as many virtuosi do with much success and—bluster), but by a real development of the idea. Since the death of Mozart, who was to my mind the *non plus ultra* of players, no one has given me so much pleasure as Beethoven."

Improvising in public is no longer a habit of concert pianists. In the days of Mozart and Beethoven it was

quite the thing to do. Seyfried relates that the rivalry between Beethoven and Woelffl did not prevent the two artists from seating themselves side by side at two pianos and alternately improvising on themes proposed by one to the other. At private gatherings improvising was still more in vogue. Czerny relates how one evening, in the palace of Prince Lobkowitz, Beethoven, after many entreaties, was dragged almost by force to the piano-forte by the ladies. Angrily he snatched the second-violin part of one of Pleyel's quartets from the music-stand, and on these notes, wholly insignificant in themselves, he built up daring harmonies and melodies in the most brilliant concert style, the violin part running in the middle voices, like a thread. Old Pleyel was so amazed that he kissed the player's hands. "After such improvisations Beethoven was wont to break out into a loud and satisfied laugh."

The same authority assures us that Beethoven's general attitude in playing was "masterly in its tranquillity and refinement, without the slightest gesticulation (except bending over as his deafness increased)," and we have also an interesting description by J. Russell (an Englishman who published his *Travels in Germany in* 1820–22) of Beethoven when improvising. He "soon forgot his surroundings and for about half an hour lost himself in an improvisation the style of which was exceedingly varied and especially distinguished by sudden transitions. The amateurs were transported, and to the uninitiated it was interesting to observe how his inspirations were reflected in his countenance. He revelled rather in bold, stormy moods than in soft and gentle ones. The muscles of his face swelled, his veins were distended, his eyes rolled wildly, his mouth trembled convulsively, and he had the appearance of an enchanter mastered by the spirit he had himself conjured."

Much depended on his mood; he was not always at his

best. Cramer criticised in his playing the "uneven reproduction of one and the same composition, to-day spirited and full of characteristic expression, to-morrow eccentric to indistinctness, often confusion." According to Clementi, "his playing was but little cultivated, not seldom violent, like himself, but always full of spirit."

The supporters of Hummel accused him of "misusing the piano, of failing utterly in purity and clearness, and by his use of the pedal producing only a confused noise." We need not pay much attention to these Hummelites, who also declared that Beethoven's compositions were "far-fetched, unnatural, unmelodious, and contrary to rule." The reference to his pedalling is, however, of interest. Czerny, who knew what he was talking about (he was a pupil of Beethoven and the teacher of Liszt), tells us that Beethoven *used the pedal a great deal, far more than is indicated in his works.*

For the proper performance of his works this is a point of prime importance. The pedal is a great aid to success, as we shall see in a later chapter.

Of even greater importance to those who would succeed as authoritative Beethoven players is the question as to his attitude toward those frequent modifications of tempo which are of the essence of modern music. Was he rigid or elastic, metronomic or poetic? Schindler, his pupil, companion, and biographer, answers this question for us reliably. He himself knew Beethoven only in the last thirteen years of his life, and in that period, he says, what he heard him play "was always, with few exceptions, free of all restraint in tempo; a tempo rubato in the most exact meaning of the term." Beethoven's older friends, however, he continues, "who had attentively followed the development of his mind in every direction, affirmed that he did not assume this manner of performance until the first years of his third period, then having quite forsaken

his earlier, less expressively varied, manner." By tempo rubato Schindler means ritardandos and accelerandos of the pace as a whole, "changes in the rate of motion—mostly perceptible only to a delicate ear"—no "left-hand-in-strict-time" nonsense. Schindler also calls attention to the fact that sometimes the great master "delayed very long" over a single chord. He makes it clear that Beethoven treated a piece of music as an orator treats a speech—respecting the words and the punctuation marks, but reading in a good deal between the lines.

Here we have that rare thing, real *traditions;* and they make it obvious that Beethoven's own way of playing his works was much more like Paderewski's than like that of the academicians who, in following the letter, kill the spirit. Nothing, indeed, was more foreign to Beethoven's temperament than academic primness and literalness. He employed expression-marks more freely than any master before his time, yet he still left many nuances to the feeling of the player. The conservative Franz Kullak feels "obliged to declare that even with an exact observance of all dynamic expression-marks a 'soulful' interpretation is not arrived at. As long as nothing more is done, the interpretation will usually prove stiff and void of expression; and the hearer may well say, 'The performance did not move me.'" *

Ferdinand Riis, who was an earlier pupil of Beethoven than Schindler, also calls attention to some of the unwritten details of expression employed by the master; "sometimes he would play a crescendo with a ritardando, which made a very fine and striking effect. In playing he would

* Much interesting information is compiled, chiefly from Thayer's biography, in *Beethoven's Piano Playing*, written as an introduction to a new critical edition of the concertos, by Franz Kullak, and printed separately under that title; English, by Dr. Theodore Baker (New York: G. Schirmer, 1901). A chapter of 58 pages is devoted to the much-disputed Beethoven trill.

give, now to one passage and again to another, in the right hand or left, a beautiful, fairly inimitable expression, but he very rarely, indeed, added notes or an ornament."

Accentuation was another vital element in Beethoven's playing. Schindler tells us that he was "in the habit of accenting all suspensions, particularly that of the minor second in cantabile, more emphatically than other players whom we had heard. This imbued his playing with a characteristic pregnancy quite different from the smooth, shallow performances which never reach the height of tone-speech."

To the acrobats of the key-board who abounded in his day Beethoven referred contemptuously as pianists "who prance up and down the key-board with passages in which they have exercised themselves—*putsch*, *putsch*, *putsch;* what does that mean? Nothing." "As a rule, in the case of these gentlemen, all reason and feeling are generally lost in the nimbleness of their fingers."

Regarding Beethoven's method of teaching, Riis says: "When I made a mistake in a passage, or struck wrongly notes or leaps which he often wanted specially emphasized, he seldom said anything; but if my fault was in expression, or a crescendo, etc., or in the character of the piece, he became angry, because, as he said, the former was accidental, while the latter showed a lack of knowledge, feeling, or attention. He himself very often made mistakes of the former kind, even when playing in public."

To Czerny, who was instructing his nephew, Beethoven wrote: "With regard to his playing, I beg you, if once he has got the right fingering, plays in good time, with the notes fairly correct, then only pull him up about the rendering; and when he is arrived at that stage, don't let him stop for the sake of *small* faults, but point them out to him when he has played the piece through. Although I have done little in the way of teaching, I have always adopted

this plan; it soon forms *musicians*, which, after all, is one of the first aims of art, and it gives less trouble both to master and pupil."

When Jahn was collecting material for a biography of Beethoven he had an interview with Count Gallenberg, who informed him that the composer, when he gave lessons to the Countess Guicciardi, "had her play his pieces; he was very strict, till the interpretation had become correct down to the minutest detail; he liked an easy style of playing. He readily became violent, threw the music on the floor, or tore it up. He took no money, though he was poor, but he accepted some linen articles because the Countess had sewed them. . . . He did not like to play his own things, but merely improvised, and if the slightest noise was made he got up and left."

XV

CHOPIN AS PIANIST AND TEACHER

Two years after Beethoven died in Vienna, a concert was given in the same city by a young Pole from Warsaw named Frederick Chopin. His style was different from that of any other pianist ever heard there, and the critics, to their credit be it said, not only spoke well of him but detected at once some of his unique qualities. The following hits the nail exactly on the head: "His playing, like his compositions, . . . has a certain character of modesty which seems to indicate that to shine is not the aim of this young man, although his execution conquered difficulties the overcoming of which even here, in the home of piano-forte virtuosos, could not fail to cause astonishment; nay, with almost ironical naïveté, he takes it into his head to entertain a large audience with music as music. And lo! he succeeded in this. The unprejudiced public rewarded him with lavish applause."

This critic praises him specially for the way he performed "a free fantasia before a public in whose eyes few improvisers, with the exception of Beethoven and Hummel, have as yet found favor"; and he adds: "Mr. Chopin gave to-day so much pleasure to a small audience that one cannot help wishing he may at another performance play before a larger one."

"Mr. Chopin, a pianist from Warsaw," wrote another critic, "came before us a master of the first rank, . . . a virtuoso most liberally endowed by nature, who, without

previous blasts of trumpets, appears on the horizon like one of the most brilliant meteors."

To a youth of twenty, who had never played outside his native town, such praise, in what was then, next to Paris, the world's leading musical city, must have been encouraging. As a matter of course, not all of his peculiarities were at once understood. The critic first cited named as a defect "the non-observance of the indication by accent of the commencement of musical phrases"—not being familiar, evidently, with that irregularity in the bestowal of accents which is one of the great charms of Slavic music, and of Chopin's in particular.

The principal fault found with his playing was that it was too soft, or rather, too delicate. As he himself wrote in a letter, on that point the critics were unanimous; but, he adds: "They are accustomed to the drumming of the native piano-forte virtuoso. I fear that the newspapers will reproach me with the same thing, especially as the daughter of an editor is said to drum frightfully. However, it does not matter; as this cannot be helped, I would rather that people say I play too delicately than too roughly."

For his second concert Count Lichnowski offered him his own piano, thinking that his feeble tone might be due to the instrument used. But Chopin replied: "This is my manner of playing, which pleases the ladies so much." Upon which Niecks comments: "Chopin was already then, and remained all his life, nay, even became more and more, the ladies' pianist *par excellence*. By which, however, I do not mean that he did not please the men, but only that no other pianist was equally successful in touching the most tender and intimate chords of the female heart. Indeed, a high degree of refinement in thought and feeling, combined with a poetic disposition, are indispensable requisites for an adequate appreciation of Chopin's compositions and style of playing. His remark, therefore,

that he had captivated the learned and the poetic natures, was no doubt strictly correct with regard to his success in Vienna; but at the same time it may be accepted as a significant foreshadowing of his whole artistic career." *

Some years later, when Chopin had made his home permanently in Paris, Berlioz wrote regarding his playing: "To be able to appreciate him wholly, I think it necessary to hear him when you are near him in the salon rather than in the theatre. . . . Unfortunately, scarcely any one besides Chopin himself can play this music and give it the character of something unexpected, unforeseen, which is one of its chief charms. His performance is veined with a thousand nuances in the movement. He holds the secrets of these nuances, which cannot be pointed out. There are incredible details in his mazurkas, and he has found how to make them doubly interesting by playing them with the utmost degree of gentleness, with a superlative softness. The hammers just graze the strings so that the hearer is tempted to draw near the instrument and strain his ear, as though he were at a concert of sylphs and will-o'-the-wisps."

Nevertheless, it would be a fatal mistake to suppose that because Chopin himself played usually with a lightness of touch, a delicacy, and a gracefulness that won for him the name of Ariel of the piano-forte, others must play his music in the same way. Moscheles explained the mystery why, in Chopin's playing, one did not miss the thunderous power of other pianists: "His *piano* is so softly breathed

* *Frederick Chopin as a Man and a Musician.* By Frederick Niecks. London and New York: Novello, Ewer & Co. 1890. 2 vols. This is the most elaborate of the Chopin biographies, an invaluable depository of facts. To those who prefer a shorter work, more reliable in some of its critical verdicts, James Huneker's *Chopin, the Man and His Music* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), cannot be too highly recommended. It abounds in hints as to the correct interpretation of the unique compositions of the greatest poet of the piano-forte, of whom Saint-Saëns has justly said that he revolutionized modern music.

forth that he does not need any strong *forte* in order to produce the wished-for contrasts; it is for this reason that one does not miss the orchestra-like effects which the German school demands from a piano-forte player."

Moreover, there were times when Chopin did play with big tone and with power. His pupil, Mathias, said he had extraordinary vigor, but only in flashes. Another pupil, Mikuli, wrote: "The tone which Chopin brought out of the piano-forte was always, especially in the cantabiles, immense (*riessengross*); only Field could perhaps in this respect be compared to him. A manly energy gave to appropriate passages overpowering effect—energy without roughness (*Rohheit*)."

It must be remembered that Chopin seldom played in public and that few opportunities were therefore given to hear him in his works of the grand style, specially suitable for a large hall. To be sure, he had not the physique of Rubinstein or Liszt and could not, had he wished, thunder forth his polonaises and diverse grand climaxes as they did, or as Paderewski does; and this was true particularly in the last years of his life when he became so weak that sometimes, as Stephen Heller told Niecks, his playing was hardly audible. But it would obviously be foolish to accept such individual lack of muscularity as the key-note for the performance of music which is often delicate and feminine, but seldom, if ever, morbid and effeminate, as one is often led to suppose by the way it is played—or, rather, was played—for the pendulum has now swung the other way; many pianists play not only the polonaises and scherzos and other unmistakably masculine Chopin pieces in the muscular grand style, but also the others that are cast in more delicate mould; so that Philip Hale has not without reason poured out the vials of his sarcasm on those contemporary pianists who play Chopin altogether as if his pieces had been written for a modern

and gigantic piano-forte built to vie with the fullest modern orchestra.

Huneker's verdict hits the nail on the head: "Chopin had, we know, his salon side, when he played with elegance brilliancy, and coquetry. But he had dark moments when the key-board was too small, his ideas too big for utterance. Then he astounded, thrilled his auditors. They were rare moments. . . . Of Karl Tausig, Weitzmann said that 'he relieved the romantically sentimental Chopin of his *Weltschmerz* and showed him in his pristine vigor and wealth of imagination.' In Chopin's music there are many pianists, many styles, and all are correct if they are poetically musical, logical, and individually sincere."

When Chopin was asked to repeat a piece, he was likely to do so with quite different nuances from those of the first time. His music, more than any other, lends itself to individual, subjective interpretation, and this is one of many reasons why he is the favorite of both players and audiences.

To Schumann we owe the most poetic description of Chopin's playing—a description every word of which should be engraved in the pupil's memory; it is worth more than a hundred ordinary lessons to those aiming at success as Chopin interpreters: "Imagine an Æolian harp that had all the scales, and that these were jumbled together by the hand of an artist into all sorts of fantastic ornaments, but in such a manner that a deeper fundamental tone and a softly singing higher part were always audible, and you have an approximate idea of his playing." This refers particularly to the first étude in A flat, which Schumann calls "a poem rather than an étude." He proceeds: "It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that he brought out every one of the little notes with distinctness; it was more like a billowing of the A flat major chord, swelled anew here and there by means of the pedal; but through the

harmonies were heard the sustained tones of a wondrous melody, and only in the middle of it did a tenor part once come into greater prominence amid the chords along with that principal *cantilena.* After listening to the study one feels as one does after a blissful vision, seen in a dream, which, already half awake, one would fain bring back."

"Like a billowing of the A flat major chord, swelled anew here and there by the pedal"—in that sentence Schumann calls attention to one of the main secrets of the ravishing beauty of Chopin's performances—the source of that luscious quality and variety of tone-coloring which is of the very essence of Chopin playing—the magic of the sustaining pedal.

Moscheles wrote that "a good pianist uses the pedals as little as possible; too frequent use leads to abuse. Moreover, why should he try to produce an effect with his feet instead of his hands? A horseman might as well use his spur instead of the bridle."

The difference between the old-style piano playing and the new is suggestively summed up in those three sentences. Why, indeed, should a pianist try to produce an effect with his feet? Because the pedal opens the gate to a wealth and variety of color effects of which the older pianists never dreamed. The explanation is very simple. Pressing the right pedal removes the dampers from all the strings and thus allows the overtones of each tone that is struck to vibrate along sympathetically. It is to these overtones that differences of timbre or tone-color are due; and it is easy to see, therefore, that differences in touch and in harmonies place at the pianist's command an immense variety of new and ravishing color effects. This is one reason why in all piano music, from Bach to MacDowell, the pedal should not be used "as little as possible," but as much as possible. It is doubtless the reason why Beethoven used it, as we have seen, far more than is indicated

in his printed works. In Chopin's music it is absolutely indispensable at nearly every moment. The perfect Chopin player keeps his right foot on the pedal all the time except when a run or a change of harmony compels him to release it for a second or two; then down it goes again, if necessary ten times in a bar.

In Chopin's case the "ravishing harmonies and melodic resonances which astounded and fascinated" his hearers were due to another consequence of the continuous employment of the sustaining pedal. By means of it he was able to scatter the component tones of a chord over the whole key-board, thus producing a multitude of entirely new and enchanting harmonic color effects. The germs of this procedure were not his own; in Hummel, and still more in Field, we come across rolling arpeggios, wide melodic intervals, and broken chords scattered over the key-board; but with them these things are incidental and not essential, whereas of Chopin they constitute the very physiognomy, without which we should not recognize him. One can fancy the thrills of delight that must have agitated his sensitive frame as he made these discoveries of flower gardens in what had been theretofore the dark continent of sound. To his pupils he used to say: "The correct employment of the pedal remains a study for life."

The pedal is also indispensable to the proper performance of those dainty ornaments with which Chopin loves to decorate his melodies and which usually coalesce into exquisite harmonies. It would be a great mistake to compare them to the fioriture—the runs, trills, staccati, and cadenzas of Rossini and Donizetti, for these were written for their own sake, to give the singers a chance to astonish the natives with their brilliant technic. Chopin never dreamed of thus flaunting his technic in the public's face. His embellishments merely serve to show off the beauty of his melodies, as Venetian laces and gauzy Oriental

fabrics enhance the charms of beautiful women. To present them as anything but gossamer is to spoil them. The contours of the melodic body must remain visible beneath them.

Chopin further enhanced the romantic quality of his music by the constant use of the tempo rubato. On this point there have long prevailed the most amazing misconceptions. Rubato means robbed, and it would almost seem as if most of the historians, biographers, lexicographers, and critics, in writing about Chopin's rubato, had been temporarily robbed of their wits. They are impressed, puzzled, paralyzed, convinced by the testimony of several of his pupils that he used to say to them that however much the right hand might fluctuate in pace, the left "must always play strictly in time."

Now, it is of course possible that he may have said this to his pupils. "Chopin was unfortunate in his pupils," wrote Liszt: "None of them has become a player of any importance"; and Hans von Bülow remarked that "Chopin's pupils are as unreliable as the girls who pose as Liszt's pupils." * He may have become disheartened by the attempts of such students to imitate his elastic tempi and told them, when practising, to keep strict time, which, after all, was preferable to the caricature their efforts were likely to degenerate into. But to suppose that he, the poet of the piano-forte, played metronomically, is to suppose the impossible; it is tantamount to denying him all artistic taste and instinct.

Liszt, Rubinstein, Paderewski, all the great modern pianists, play Chopin's music, as well as their own, with modifications of pace that involve both hands; they play Schubert, they play Beethoven, they play Bach that way —and we are asked to believe that *Chopin* was so dry, so

* *A propos* of the edition of Chopin's works issued by his pupils. Bülow advised students to use the Klindworth edition.

stiff, so inelastic, unpoetic, mechanical, metronomic, that a dancing-master could have beaten time for him !

Fortunately we have on this point the testimony of France's leading composer, Hector Berlioz, which is worth more than that of any number of pupils such as Chopin had as to how he actually played: Chopin, he said, "chafed at the bridle of the measure." He "could not play strictly in time (*ne pouvait pas jouer regulièrement*)."

Liszt, in his *Life of Chopin*, says regarding the tempo rubato:

By this peculiar style of playing, Chopin imparted with most fascinating effect a constant rocking, making the melody undulate to and fro like a skiff driven over the bosom of tossing waves. This manner of execution, which set so peculiar a seal upon his own style of performance, was first indicated by the words *Tempo rubato* affixed to his works; a *tempo* broken, agitated, interrupted; a movement flexible while it was abrupt and languishing, and as vacillating as the flame under the fluctuating breath which agitates it. This direction is no longer to be found in his later productions; he was persuaded that if the player understood them he would divine this regular irregularity. All his compositions ought to be played with this accentuated and measured swaying and rocking, though it is difficult for those who never heard him play to catch hold of this secret of their proper execution.

How the unwary may be deceived in this matter they can easily ascertain in listening to Chopin II, the Polish Paderewski, who plays most composers in defiance of the metronome, but whose freedom of pace reaches its exotic climax in Chopin's mazurkas. His irregularity of movement is so natural, so unconscious, that one might easily suppose he was playing in strict time. Yet any incarnate metronome trying to keep pace with his hands—right or left—would soon be landed in a mad-house.

To play Chopin's mazurkas and many other pieces of his in strict time is to rob a rose of its fragrance, to make an orchid symmetrical. It is related by a contemporary that sometimes, to make his friends laugh, he played one of his mazurkas in metronomic time. On the other hand, it seems probable that he himself hardly realized how very irregular his playing was, notably also in the accentuation. Lenz relates* that one day when he was playing the mazurka in C, op. 33, for Chopin, Meyerbeer came in and said he was playing it in two-four time. Chopin insisted it was three-four time, and played it himself the way he had taught it to Lenz, getting very angry finally because Meyerbeer still insisted it was two-four. The German pianist. Charles Hallé, informed Niecks that one day he told Chopin that he played in his mazurkas often four-four instead of three-four time. "Chopin would not admit it at first, but when Mr. Hallé proved his case by counting to Chopin's playing, the latter admitted the correctness of the observation, and laughing said that this was national." †

When Chopin was only twenty-one years of age he referred in a letter to his "perhaps bold but noble resolve—to create a new art era." He carried out this resolve literally. He is more absolutely original and unique than any other composer for piano, and he who would succeed as a Chopin player should therefore read everything he can find regarding his life and career, so as to be able to enter

* *Great Piano Virtuosos of Our Time.* By W. von Lenz. English by Madeleine R. Baker. New York: G. Schirmer.

† A lamentable amount of confusion has been caused by the preposterous "tradition" that in playing Chopin the left hand must always play in strict time. The absurdity of this dictum (which reduces the "rubato" to a mere mechanical question of dotted notes in the right-hand part) will be further exposed in a later chapter (Hints to Pupils), in which an attempt will also be made to discover the secret of the *true* rubato in the changing emotional character of the melody.

more fully into the spirit of his music. His success in carrying out his "bold but noble resolve" is the more remarkable inasmuch as he was practically self-taught. His teacher was not much of a pianist, and the lessons ceased when Chopin was only twelve. As a matter of course, he studied the works of the masters, notably those of Bach, and these were his "conservatory." Lenz asked him whether he practised on the day when he gave a concert, and Chopin answered: "It is a terrible time for me; I dislike to play in public, but it is part of my position. For two weeks I shut myself up *and play Bach.* That is my preparation; I do not practise my own compositions."

Lenz (who is not always reliable, but in these things he may be trusted) gives us also interesting glimpses of Chopin as a teacher. "You must be punctual," he said, "everything with me goes by clockwork, my house is like a dove-cote." He always kept his watch on the piano during lessons so as not to overstep the three-quarter hour. When he was pleased with the way a pupil had played a piece he took his small, well-sharpened pencil, and made a cross on the page.

When Mikuli studied with him, single lessons often lasted for hours at a stretch, till exhaustion overcame master and pupil. Mme. Streicher also relates that many a day she began at one o'clock to play at Chopin's, "and only at four or five o'clock in the afternoon did he dismiss us." She had been told that he made his pupils study Clementi, Hummel, Cramer, Moscheles, Beethoven, and Bach, but not his own compositions. "This was not the case," she says. "To be sure, I had to study with him the works of the above-mentioned masters, but he also required me to play to him the new and newest compositions of Hiller, Thalberg, Liszt, etc. And already in the first lesson he placed before me his wondrously beautiful Preludes

and Studies. Indeed, he made me acquainted with many a composition before it had appeared in print." He took infinite pains to teach pupils his legato, cantabile way of playing, and his severest censure was "you do not know how to bind together two notes."

He did not share the opinion of his famous contemporary Kalkbrenner that a pupil might make his practice hours less tedious by reading a book while playing. In the words of Mikuli, "he taught indefatigably that the exercises in question were no mere mechanical ones, but called for the intelligence and the whole will of the pupil, on which account twenty and even forty thoughtless repetitions (up to this time the arcanum of so many schools) do no good at all."

Sometimes he was irritable and got very angry; to cite Mikuli again: "Many a beautiful eye left the high altar of the Cité d'Orleans, Rue St. Lazare, bedewed with tears, without, on that account, ever bearing the dearly beloved master the least grudge. For was not the severity which was not easily satisfied with anything, the feverish vehemence with which the master wished to raise his disciples to his own stand-point, the ceaseless repetition of a passage till it was understood, a guarantee that he had at heart the progress of the pupil? A holy artistic zeal burnt in him then, every word from his lips was incentive and inspiring."

He hated exaggeration in accentuation; in dynamic shading he was most particular about a gradual increase and decrease in loudness. He never thumped, never allowed any admixture of noise to mar the purity of his tone. His pupils he advised to study the theory of music, to play with others, duos, trios, quartets, and, above all, to hear the great opera singers. His practice with regard to giving examples by his own playing appears to have varied with the occasion and the pupils, for while some assert

that he often played at a second piano, or took up nearly the whole lesson-hour himself, others declare that he taught chiefly by word of mouth, seldom touching the instrument.*

* Concerning Chopin's startling innovations in fingering and other matters of technic, which cannot be discussed in this volume, the reader must be referred to Mikuli's preface to his edition of Chopin's works; to Niecks, Vol. II, Chapter XXVIII; and to Huneker, Part IV. It is to be regretted that Chopin never carried out his plan of writing a method. A fragment exists, which has been Englished by Mme. Janotha. "For a long time," he says in this, "players have acted against nature in seeking to give equal power to each finger."

XVI

LISZT AND HIS PUPILS

"I have now convinced myself that you are the greatest musician of all times."

Thus wrote Richard Wagner to Franz Liszt, on the 6th of December, 1856, a year in which he had given up much of his time to perusing his friend's symphonic poems.

When one considers the extraordinary diversity of Liszt's activities, and the great influence he exerted in nearly all branches of music, Wagner's exclamation seems justifiable. True, it was only as a pianist that Liszt had never had an equal; but his rank in all other branches of the art, except in opera and chamber music, is so high that the sum total of his achievements probably does make him "the greatest musician of all times." He certainly was the most many-sided.

Saint-Saëns, greatest of living French composers, has been so impressed by Liszt's influence on the destinies of the piano-forte that he knows nothing, he writes, to compare to it, except the revolution in the mechanism of the French language brought about by Victor Hugo. "This influence," he adds, "is more powerful than that of Paganini on the violin world, because the latter has remained confined to the region of the inaccessible, where he alone could dwell, whereas Liszt, starting from the same point, deigned to step down into the public roads, where any one who is willing to work hard may follow him."

At first, it is true, Liszt's pieces seemed unplayable by any one but himself; but in course of time it was found

that while he had created unprecedented difficulties for the players, he had also, by his original treatment of the fingers and a more picturesque way of writing music, provided the means of overcoming these difficulties.

He was the first to reveal the full sonority of the piano-forte, and its capacity for reproducing orchestral effects. In the first half of the nineteenth century orchestras and conductors were not up to the present mark, and thousands of amateurs got their first correct conception of Beethoven's symphonies by hearing Liszt play them on his piano-forte.

Many stories are told regarding the marvellous effect of Liszt's playing on his audiences. When he was quite a young fellow he once played a concerto in Paris so entrancingly that the members of the orchestra forgot to join him again at the proper place, to the delight of the audience. On another occasion he played at a soirée where one of the guests was the Empress of Russia, whom he had offended by not going to St. Petersburg. She was so cold that no one dared to applaud his first pieces. This piqued Liszt, and he made up his mind to conquer. His next piece was Schubert's *Ave Maria*, and this he played with such soulful expression that the Empress burst into tears, and everybody applauded frantically.

The circumstances which led to Franz Liszt's supremacy among pianists are of romantic interest, as well as instructive to all who desire to know the secrets of his success and who wish to reproduce his music in the correct international spirit. Genius, opportunity, and hard work were the pillars on which he erected his temple of fame. His genius was manifested in infancy; at the age of nine he already played in public, astonishing his hearers particularly by his improvisations. Wealthy admirers contributed 600 florins a year for six years, which enabled him to go to Vienna to study with Czerny and Salieri; the

plan of placing him with Hummel at Weimar being given up because that famous virtuoso demanded a whole louis d'or a lesson.

The key-note of Liszt's art is cosmopolitanism, and this was struck early in his career. Hungary, Austria, Germany, Italy, Poland, and France contributed their share toward his education and the development of his genius. His father was a Hungarian of pure Magyar descent, his mother an Austrian-German. His Austrian teacher, Czerny, not only improved his technic, but taught him the importance of attending to details and the charm of expression. At the age of eleven (1822) he gave his first concert in Vienna, and it was in the following year that Beethoven hastened on the stage and embraced and kissed him after a concert which had made the public wild with delight.

Chopin was, as we have seen, twelve years old when he got his last lesson on the piano. Liszt was of the same age when he left Vienna for Paris. He wanted to continue his lessons there at the Conservatoire, but Cherubini, the director of that institution, was prejudiced against young prodigies and rejected him by referring to the rule excluding foreigners; thus it came about that Liszt, also, never had a piano-forte lesson after his twelfth year. May we infer from this that others may safely follow this example? Yes—provided they have the same genius, the same artistic instincts, the same capacity for hard work, the same musical atmosphere to live in.

Liszt's mind was at this time and for years to come like a sponge, or a piece of blotting-paper, exceedingly impressionable, absorbing everything it came in contact with. He gave concerts in French and English cities, and elsewhere, but made his home in Paris, where "le petit Litz" had become a great pet, in society as well as in the concert halls. His mind and his manners were formed in the

salons of the aristocracy, where he met all the great men and women of the time. When his father died and his pension of 600 florins a year had expired, he helped to support himself and his mother by giving lessons. Like Chopin, he was treated as an equal by the members of the nobility. He became interested in French politics, in the doctrines of socialism; he absorbed the religious mysticism of the time, and this, combined with a disappointment in love, caused him to give up his career as a pianist. He wanted to become a monk, and it was with the greatest difficulty that his mother dissuaded him. He fell ill, was reported to have died, and one Paris journal actually printed an obituary notice.

It required a strong stimulus to win him back to music. This stimulus was supplied by Paganini, the Italian wizard of the violin, who came to Paris in 1831 and amazed him, as he did everybody, with his dazzling and seemingly impossible feats. What happened then is told by his principal German biographer:* "With indescribable eagerness and at the same time with victorious rejoicing, Liszt, after hearing Paganini, turned again to his instrument. He was seldom seen, never as a performer in public. His mother alone witnessed silently *his perseverance, his indefatigable toil.*"

He was constructing wings for a higher and bolder flight than any other pianist had ever essayed. What Paganini had done for the violin, revealing its unsuspected capacities, Liszt undertook to do for the piano-forte, and with even more brilliant success. The piano is an instrument of infinitely wider range and power than the violin, and it took a greater mind than Paganini's to achieve this triumph. Beginning by translating for his instruments the violin *Caprices* of the Italian, he thence proceeded to convert the piano into a veritable compendium of the whole orchestra.

* Lina Ramann: *Franz Liszt.* 1880–94.

About the same time (1831 and 1832) his impressionable mind came under the influence of two other new and stirring musical forces: Chopin and Berlioz. The second of these had much in common with Paganini. While the Italian revealed unsuspected powers in the violin the Frenchman did the same for the orchestra. His works also interested Liszt in program (pictorial) music in which he was destined to surpass his model. The essence of both Paganini and Berlioz is virtuosity, which aims at brilliant effects for their own sake. It was therefore extremely fortunate that Liszt, when undertaking to do for the piano what Paganini and Berlioz had done for the orchestra, was curbed in his inclination toward mere virtuosity by the strong influence of Chopin (and later, of Wagner) to whom technic was always a mere means to higher ends.

For a time, however, the colt was bound to prance and gallop over the key-board, working off superabundant animal spirits. When Liszt resumed his pianistic career, in 1834, he exulted in displaying his marvellous mastery of the piano-forte, and it is undeniable that his animal spirits sometimes ran away with his artistic judgment. His censors have often pointed the finger of scorn at his operatic fantasias and paraphrases as being mere show pieces. Some of them are, indeed, little more than that; they were written in Italy, for the Italians, and adapted to their taste. In the thirties of the last century the public wanted operatic melodies even in the concert hall beyond everything else. In Italy, in particular, where piano concerts never were much liked, Liszt had the alternative of either playing to empty benches or producing fantasias on popular operas. Even his brilliant études were not wanted. "Studies," the Italians exclaimed, "belong in the studio, not in the concert hall." He had to tempt them with operatic dainties else they would have refused the more substantial fare he had to offer.

Most of the operatic fantasias are, nevertheless, real works of art. "There is a great deal of pedantry and prejudice in the scorn which people often affect for works like the fantasia on Don Juan," as Saint-Saëns has truly remarked. With inimitable art Liszt selected the melodic gems of diverse operas and gave them a new jeweller's setting. Some of those operas are now obsolete, but their essence is preserved for us conveniently in these fantasias. Pianists who are not afraid of pedantic critics can still win brilliant and legitimate successes with these pieces; but as the modern taste is no longer for operatic melodies in the concert halls, it is advisable to reserve them as a rule for cities which have little or no opera.

What are the pieces with which a concert pianist at the present time is surest to delight an audience, provided he plays them well? Having been for twenty-eight years a newspaper critic in a city where all the great players are heard, I can answer that question accurately: the études of Chopin and Liszt's Hungarian rhapsodies. These rhapsodies constitute an anthology of the exquisite folk melodies of Hungary as played by the gypsies, so cleverly transferred to the piano that as even Dr. Hanslick (Liszt's chief enemy) could not help exclaiming, they make us think we are listening to the very instruments played by the gypsies. We hear in them also the diatonic and chromatic runs, the tremolos, appoggiaturas, arpeggios, and gruppetti with which the gypsies decorated the fascinating Magyar melodies. These melodies are musical odes, ballads, elegies, idyls, songs of war, of grief, of love, and conviviality, welded into musical epics as the legends of ancient Greece were welded by Homer into his epics. They are immortal folk melodies, unsurpassed in melodic originality and beauty, unequalled in rhythmic variety; and Liszt has still further and immensely enhanced their charm by welding them to appropriate harmonies, as daring, as wild, as

languishing or passionate, as the melodies themselves—and by lavishing on them an astounding wealth of pianistic bravura, in the best sense of the word, a bravura seemingly exhausting all the resources of the modern grand piano in the way of brilliancy, sonority, variety of tone color, and dazzling skill of execution.

But they must be played as Liszt played them, as the gypsies played the melodies and the ornaments he borrowed from them. No pianist, no matter how clever he may be, can render this music in the proper spirit unless he has read Liszt's book on *The Gypsies and Their Music.* That book will give him a thousand ideas; it will fan the enthusiasm without which the most astounding technic is dull; it will teach him that the true art of playing is improvisation, the unfettered, irregular art of the gypsy, to whom technic is not an end in itself but a means to an end—the expression of his melancholy or fiery feelings. These gypsies may not be geniuses, yet they play like geniuses.

Liszt played not only the rhapsodies but all his music more or less after the fashion of gypsy improvisations. If Chopin needs the genuine rubato, Liszt, in these rhapsodies and in most of his original compositions, still more imperatively demands it — an incessant modification of pace, now abrupt, now subtle and scarcely perceptible, imparting life and expression to every bar. And if the sustaining pedal is indispensable to Chopin, in whose music there is, as Lenz has aptly said, "no trace of opera or symphony," how much more so to Liszt, who makes the key-board do duty also for gypsy bands, for grand operatic ensembles, for all the clangtints and sonorities of the orchestral instruments!

In some of Liszt's piano pieces we hear broad melodies lusciously sung on the horns or cellos; in others we are impressed by the sustained harmonies of an organ; in still others (for instance *The Legend of St. Francis Walking on*

the Waves, or *Tell's Chapel*) majestic trombone chords stir the listeners. But none of these effects can be properly produced unless the player has that skilful, intelligent control of the pedal which, as Chopin said, is the study of a lifetime.*

Amy Fay one day asked Liszt how he produced a certain effect he made in his arrangement of the ballad in Wagner's *Flying Dutchman*. He smiled, and played the passage for her. "It was," she continues, "a long arpeggio, and the effect he made was, as I had supposed, a pedal effect. He kept the pedal down throughout, and played the beginning of the passage in a grand, *rolling* sort of manner, and then all the rest of it with a very pianissimo touch, and so lightly that the continuity of the arpeggios was destroyed, and the notes seemed to be just *strewn* in, as if you broke a wreath of flowers and scattered them according to your fancy. It is a most striking and beautiful effect."

Klindworth wrote that "Liszt did the most astonishing things with his left thumb, making one think it must be doubly as long as an ordinary thumb." He certainly had an ideal hand for piano-forte playing, his fingers being not only unusually long but connected by such elastic sinews that he could play as easily in tenths as others can in octaves. But this was not the secret of his success. Nor can his triumphs be explained by reference to the amazing technical facility he acquired by incessant practising in his youth—one of his daily exercises being the transposition of one of Bach's preludes and fugues into all the twenty-four keys. Dazzling as was his technic, it has probably, as one of the leading German pedagogues, Rudolf M. Breithaupt, maintains, been surpassed since by D'Albert, Bu-

* Two articles on *Liszt's Klaviertechnik*, by Rudolph M. Breithaupt, in the Berlin periodical *Die Musik*, 5. Jahr Heft 13 and 14, and the section entitled *Liszt-Stil*, in his *Die natüraliche Klaviertechnik*, 2d edition, cannot be too highly commended to the student seeking a knowledge of Lizst's innovations in piano playing. See also the excellent commentary, *Liszt-Pædagogium* (Breitkopf & Härtel).

soni, Godowski, and other virtuosos of our time. What gave him his tremendous power over audiences was the fact that his technic was spiritualized, was made subservient to the will of a unique, inspired personality. That was the reason why, as Tausig said, "No mortal can vie with Liszt; he dwells upon a solitary height." His great rival, Thalberg, we are assured, played scales and decorative passages more evenly and with a finer *jeu perlé*, but he had not Liszt's soul.

The belief that Liszt was the greatest technical wonder of all time has actually done him great harm, for it has distracted attention from the temperamental, personal, emotional qualities which were the real secret of his unequalled success. One of the most prominent American critics wrote only a few years ago that "technic is, indeed, not everything, though so eminent a pianist as Franz Liszt said it was." Others have put it in this way: Liszt said the three necessitiess for piano playing were: "first, technic; second, technic; third, technic." Liszt was the last person in the world to make such a silly assertion. What he did say was: "Technical perfection is nothing more than an artist's accursed duty, but not a special merit."

To realize his attitude toward mere technic we must read what he wrote in 1841, shortly after the death of Paganini, when he himself had just begun the great decade of his pianistic achievements, and when his juvenile enthusiasm over the dazzling achievements of that violinist had subsided:

I say it without hesitation: there will never be another Paganini. The extraordinary coincidence of a gigantic talent with all the circumstances required for its apotheosis will remain an isolated instance in the history of art. If an artist at the present day were to attempt, like Paganini, to astonish the world by deliberately assuming a garb of mystification, he would not create any surprise, and—even

supposing him to have an invaluable talent—the recollection of Paganini would subject him to the charge of charlatanry and plagiarism. Moreover, the public of our time demands other things of an artist who seeks its favor, and the way to fame and power lies in an opposite direction. . . . May the artist of the future cheerfully renounce the vain, egotistic rôle which, it is to be hoped, has found in Paganini its last brilliant representative; and may he place his goal within and not without himself, making virtuosity a means, never an end.

Upon this Prof. Hugo Riemann comments in words which should be branded with red-hot irons into the soul of every student of music:

"Liszt's prediction has been verified; though hundreds have tried since Paganini to win, like him, a royal place in the concert hall by means of brilliant technical achievements, none has succeeded. But the 'opposite way,' indicated by Liszt, has been trodden by more and more seriously ambitious artists. This way lies in 'the disposition to regard art not as a convenient method of securing selfish advantages and sterile fame, but as a sympathetic bond of union between human beings . . . and a means of nourishing in the public mind an enthusiasm for the beautiful which is so closely allied to the good.' As a matter of fact, the epoch of the *virtuosos*, which culminates in the wonderful Paganini, came to an end with him, and its place was taken by the epoch of *interpreters*."

Interpreter versus virtuoso! In those words lies the essence of the true Lisztism. He was the first to interpret Bach at piano recitals; the first to play Beethoven's sonatas in public; the first to make Schubert's songs popular, through his transcriptions; the first who did missionary work for the living as well as the dead by his inspired interpretations. What made Liszt irresistible was not only his good playing but the good music he played.

The ludicrous notion that Liszt, the greatest interpreter, "the greatest musician of all time," stood only for technic arose from the fact that most of the pianists who play his own pieces are so taken up with the difficult technic that their poetic significance and beauty escape them. When Paderewski plays them the error is exposed, and we are entranced by the emotional charm, the tenderness, the pathos, and the passion of Liszt's music—that is, the best of it; for among his 385 original compositions there is—as in the case of all great masters—much that falls below the level of his best work.

The cosmopolitan training he received in his youth helped him to become the most many-sided interpreter the art world has known, an interpreter with "a previously unknown capacity for entering into the peculiarities of the most widely separated epochs, styles, and individualities," as the historian, Professor Riemann, has well said. In one of Chopin's letters occur these sentences: "I write to you without knowing what my pen is scribbling, for Liszt is at this moment playing my studies and transports me out of my proper senses. I should like to rob him of his way of rendering my own études." Wagner said that no one could know what the Beethoven sonatas really are unless he had heard them as interpreted by Liszt. Schumann wrote to Clara Wieck in 1840: "I wish you could have heard Liszt this morning. He is most extraordinary. He played some of my own compositions—the *Novelettes*, the *Fantasia*, the *Sonata*—in a way that moved me deeply. Many of the details were quite different from the way I conceived them, but always inspired by genius." Was it Liszt's "technic" that aroused the enthusiasm of Chopin, Wagner, Schumann?

What Schumann wrote about Liszt's playing was after hearing him in a private music-room. Yet, evidently, he found the great pianist still more impressive in the concert

hall. After a Dresden concert he wrote: "I had heard him before; but it makes a difference to the hearer as well as the artist whether he plays for one or for the public. The beautiful hall, the bright lights, the well-dressed assemblage—all this affects the mood of the giver as well as of the receiver." He then goes on to relate how Liszt at first seemed to play not only for the public but with it, till he had got it completely in his power, to do with as he pleased. "Within a second he changes from tenderness to boldness, to fragrance, to madness: the instrument glows and scintillates under its master. . . . But one must see as well as hear all this; it would never do for Liszt to sit behind a screen; a great amount of poetry would be lost thereby." Chopin, he adds, "equals him in fairy-like tenderness and grace," and other players may not be his inferiors in this or that trait, but "in energy and boldness they must all yield the palm to him."

When Amy Fay, after Liszt had played for her that pedal effect in the *Flying Dutchman*, told him she didn't see how he ever thought of such a striking and beautiful effect, he answered indifferently: "Oh, I've invented a great many things, *this*, for instance"—and he began playing a double roll of octaves in chromatics in the bass of the piano. It was very grand and made the room reverberate. "Magnificent," she said; and he asked: "Did you ever hear me do a storm?" "No." "Ah, you ought to hear me do a storm! Storms are my *forte!*" Then to himself between his teeth, while a weird look came into his eyes as if he could indeed rule the blast, "*Da* KRACHEN *die Bäume* (Then *crash* the trees)!"

Such was Franz Liszt, the pianist. His concert career was a delirium of enthusiasm—until the year 1847. Then happened something strange and unprecedented. The king abdicated! In the height of his powers and his popularity, having conquered every realm of the pianist's art

and beaten all other players in their own fields, he laid down the sceptre, and during the remaining thirty-nine years played for the public no more except at a few charity concerts. To cite his own words, written in answer to a biographer's question: "Since 1847 I have not earned a penny by playing the piano, teaching, and conducting. All these things, on the contrary, have cost me time and money."

Among the motives which prompted him to take this astounding step the principal one was that, having achieved all that mortal man could attain in piano playing, he wanted to devote his time to creative work. So he established himself at Weimar and composed those immortal symphonic poems which revolutionized musical form. Luckily, he did not close the piano altogether. On the contrary, from that date to the end of his life he devoted much of his time to teaching; and as a teacher he became what he had been as pianist—the greatest the world has known. Luckily, he had—unlike poor Chopin—many gifted pupils, including most of the great pianists who succeeded him; and through them he left to the world an invaluable legacy of inspired interpretation.

The first vivid glimpse we have of Liszt as a teacher we owe to Lenz. As a youth of nineteen he went to Paris, intending to take lessons of the famous Kalkbrenner. He heard his favorite pupil, a woman who "played the piano as one wears an elegant shoe, when one is a pretty Parisienne." Nevertheless, he started to call on Kalkbrenner, but on the way he saw a poster announcing that Liszt would play at a Conservatoire entertainment, a concerto by Beethoven (then seldom played in public). His mind was made up at once. He would go to Liszt instead of to Kalkbrenner. At the music stores they told him that Liszt gave no lessons; but he called on him nevertheless. He found him a pale, haggard young man with unspeak-

ably attractive features. Reclining on a sofa, he was smoking a long Turkish pipe, apparently lost in thought, and for a time he took no notice of his visitor. Then he played a practical joke on Lenz, telling him to play on one of the three pianos in the room, which proved to have so difficult an action that it was practically an impossible instrument. He did this, as he explained, because Lenz had offered to perform for him Kalkbrenner's sonata for the left hand. When Lenz began to play Weber's *Invitation to the Dance*, Liszt, to whom it was new, became intensely interested at once. He made him bring other piano pieces by Weber, and was particularly enchanted by the A flat major sonata. It is not possible to cite here the details given by Lenz as to how Liszt went over this sonata with his pupil; every student should read them. At the end, writes Lenz: "So young and so wise! I said to myself; I felt disheartened and discouraged. I learned more from Liszt in the first four measures of the andante of that sonata than I had got in years from my earlier masters."

Eight years later (1836) Liszt taught for a time, without compensation, at the newly founded Conservatory in Geneva, which, thanks to him, became famous at once. But it was not till 1847, when he gave up public playing, that his great career as a teacher began, at Weimar, which soon became the Mecca of all piano students.

His lessons began where those of ordinary teachers end. They were lessons in accentuation, in phrasing, in interpretation, in expression, in eloquence. It was his skill in illuminating music, in revealing its poetic side, that made him the greatest teacher the world has ever known, as well as the king of pianists.

Technic he took for granted in his pupils. To those who expected help in that direction he used to say impatiently: "I am not a piano teacher" or "I am not a professor of music." On this point all his pupils agree.

"Liszt never taught in the ordinary sense of the word," wrote Dr. William Mason; "during the entire time that I was with him I did not see him give a regular lesson in the pedagogical sense." And Amy Fay attests: "Liszt doesn't tell you anything about the technic. That you must work out for yourself."

Dr. Mason relates * that at the first lesson Liszt urged him to put more enthusiasm into his playing, occasionally pushing him gently off the chair and playing a phrase or two himself by way of illustration. "He gradually got me worked up to such a pitch of enthusiasm that I put all the grit that was in me into my playing." Once he said: "Don't play it that way, play it like this," and he sat down and gave the same phrase with an accentuated, elastic movement which let in a flood of light. "That single lesson eradicated much that was mechanical, stilted, and unmusical in my playing, and developed an elasticity of touch which has lasted all my life, and which I have always tried to impart to my pupils." He was "very fond of strong accents in order to mark off periods and phrases," yet avoiding exaggeration.

By far the best and most vivid account of Liszt's individuality as a teacher is that given by Miss Amy Fay † It has that fascinating personal touch based on minute observation and intense sympathy which distinguishes the writings of very bright women, and simply must be read by every student of the piano-forte who intends to play Liszt, as all do and must; it evokes, so far as any writing can evoke, a feeling akin to what those must have felt who

* *Memories of a Musical Life.* By William Mason. New York: Century Co. 1901. Another book which every student should read.

† *Music-Study in Germany.* By Amy Fay. New York: The Macmillan Co. This book gives an admirable account of music life and teaching in Germany in 1869–75. It was translated into German at Liszt's request, and also into French. The original has passed through more than twenty editions in America and England.

had the inestimable privilege of being admitted to the "afternoons" (he hated the word *Stunden*—"hours," or lessons) of this wonderful man. He made Miss Fay think of "an old-time magician more than anything, and I felt that with a touch of his wand he could transform us all." "All Weimar adores him, and people say that women still go perfectly crazy over him. When he walks out he bows to everybody, just like a king!" "Liszt is just like a monarch, and no one dares speak to him until he addresses you first." "He says 'people fly in his face by dozens' and seem to think he is 'only there to give lessons.' He gives *no* paid lessons whatever, as he is much too grand for that, but if one has talent enough, or pleases him, he lets one come to him and play to him."

"Never was there such a delightful teacher! And he is the first sympathetic one I've had. You feel so *free* with him, and he develops the very spirit of music in you. He doesn't keep nagging at you all the time, but he leaves you your own conception. Now and then he will make a criticism, or play a passage, and with a few words give you enough to think of all the rest of your life." "Oh, he is a perfect wizard! It is as interesting to see him as it is to hear him, for his face changes with every modulation of the piece, and he looks exactly as he is playing."

"He says it is an art to turn the leaves properly." Once he made her turn them for him. "Gracious! How he *does* read! It is very difficult to turn for him, for he reads ever so far ahead of what he is playing, and takes in fully five bars at a glance, so you have to guess about where you *think* he would like to have the page over." *

* His reading ahead so far doubtless had much to do with his astounding skill in playing everything, including orchestral scores, at sight. In my *Wagner and His Works* (Vol. II, p. 190) I have cited the remarks of Pohl, who found Liszt playing at sight, from the MS., the orchestral score of *Die Meistersinger*, just completed by Wagner. Saint-Saëns once did the same thing with the *Siegfried* score in MS.

One day he played his *Au Bord d'une Source.* "The notes just seemed to ripple off his fingers' ends with scarce any perceptible motion. As he neared the close I remarked that that funny little expression came over his face which he always has when he means to surprise you, and he suddenly took an unexpected chord and extemporized a poetical little end, quite different from the written. Do you wonder that people go distracted over him?"

It must not be supposed that Liszt was infallible in his technic like his pupil Tausig. "It is certain," writes Breithaupt, "that Liszt, as Robert Schumann reports, often arrived in a town tired and battered from a journey by stage, and went directly from it to the concert hall. It is also undeniable that he often behaved in a very arbitrary way, and was dependent as no one else was on moods and caprices. An old contemporary . . . related to me that he had often heard Liszt play wrong notes and that he was quite ready on occasion to throw a whole handful of notes under the key-board. Even wrong basses and incorrect chords in the left hand were not unusual." On this point Miss Fay says: "Liszt sometimes strikes wrong notes when he plays, but it does not trouble him in the least. On the contrary, he rather enjoys it. . . . It always amuses him when he comes down squarely *wrong*, as it affords him an opportunity of displaying his ingenuity and giving things such a turn that the false note will appear simply a key leading to new and unexpected beauties"; and she gives the amusing details of an accident of that kind (p. 243).*

Liszt taught his pupils the secrets of musical rhetoric, the science of eloquence. Among living pianists, Pader-

* See also pp. 242 and 223 for illustrations of his graphic way of teaching his pupils to "throw chords out of the window," and to play "for the people in the gallery," with a tone "not loud but penetrating and far-reaching."

ewski is almost the only one who fully realizes the value of the rhetorical pause—a thing unknown to the foolish "sewing-machine players." Once Fräulein Gaul played for Liszt a piece in which there were two runs and after each run two staccato chords. She played the runs finely but struck the chords immediately after them. "No, no!" cried Liszt. "After you make a run you must wait a minute before you strike the chords, as if in admiration of your own performance. *You must pause*, as if to say, 'How nicely I did that!'" And he illustrated the point at the piano. "That," says Miss Fay, "is the way he plays everything. It seems as if the piano were speaking with a *human* tongue."

We must content ourselves with one more citation from this illuminating book: "Perhaps, after all, the secret of Liszt's fascination is this power of intense and wild emotion that you feel he possesses, together with the most perfect control over it." But we may be permitted to quote one more of her suggestive hints, from a magazine article: "Under the inspiration of Liszt's playing everybody worked 'tooth and nail' to achieve the impossible. A smile of approbation from him was all we cared for. This is how it is that he turned out such a grand school of piano playing."

In everything relating to art the student may safely take Liszt as a model. On this point one of his most famous pupils, Eugene D'Albert, once wrote in the *Neue Rundschau:*

The acquisition of technical facility is an easy matter for any one that has industry and patience, but the magnetic fluid that establishes the contact between the artist and his public can only proceed from the soul of the born artist, and cannot be acquired. The teacher can awaken this divine spark, and fan it to brightest flame if he has the fine gift of the born teacher. Undoubtedly, very few pos-

sess it, and none in the same measure as Franz Liszt, the great artist of the soul. Therefore, both teacher and taught should turn more and more to this mighty teacher as a model—the teacher by seeking to influence the soul-life of the pupil and guide him into the right paths, not by crushing it with an excess of dry, unnecessary pedagogics that clip the wings of his genius; the pupil by taking as his model the unselfishness of Liszt's life and his ideal conception of art. Let him keep himself free from all pettiness, narrowness of mind, and prosaic living. Let him not limit his knowledge to the piano. Let him mature himself, gather experience, take an interest in everything, in the fine arts and in literature.

Liszt, as already intimated, was much more fortunate in his pupils than Chopin. Among those who became famous were Rubinstein, Hans von Bülow, Tausig, Joseffy, Cornelius, D'Albert, MacDowell, William Mason, Anna Mehlig, Amy Fay, Viardot-Garcia, Ansorge, Walter Bache, Arthur Bird, Louis Brassin, Bronsart, Burmeister, L. Damrosch, Dräseke, Kienzl, Köhler, Lachmund, Lessmann, Liebling, Motta-Vianna, Nikisch, Pinner, Pohlig, Pruckner, Raff, Reisenauer, Remenyi, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Rosenthal, Saint-Saëns, Seroff, Servais, Sgambati, Sherwood, Siloti, Smetana, Stavenhagen, Van der Stucken, Weingartner, and about four hundred others.* But it was not only in Weimar that he gave his valuable time to students. His house was open to aspiring musicians at Rome, where he spent part of every year; and in the later years of his life, when he would have greatly preferred to remain at his quiet retreat near Rome, composing, he allowed himself to be persuaded to spend several

* Göllerich's little book on Liszt (Reclam edition) contains a list of Liszt's pupils who are worth naming. Albert Morris Bagby's *Miss Träumerei* gives an interesting picture, in the form of fiction, of Liszt and his Weimar pupils. Constance Bache's ***Brother Musicians*** illustrates his kindness to pupils in Rome and other traits.

months every year in his native country, at Pesth, giving four lessons a week at the National Academy of Music.

The plain truth is that Liszt was too kind, too prodigal of his valuable time, wasting much of it on unworthy pupils. An amusing story is told of how, more than once, Hans von Bülow came to the rescue at Weimar, taking his master's place for a time. On one of these occasions there were about forty pupils; three days later only five were left! One of these told Franz Friedberg what had happened. Bülow began with a speech: "Ladies and gentlemen, do not forget that the master is the incarnation of kindness and forbearance, and do not abuse him in such an outrageous manner. You, in particular, young ladies —believe me, most of you are predestined to wear the bridal veil rather than the laurels of an artist." But when Liszt returned, the "open-door policy" prevailed again, and soon the class was as large as before.

XVII

HINTS BY HANS VON BÜLOW

Better than any other of Liszt's pupils, Hans von Bülow was qualified to take his place in the class-room. No musician ever had such enviable educational opportunities. At the age of twenty he went to Zurich, fired with enthusiasm for the music of Wagner, who reciprocated by teaching him the art of orchestral conducting. After remaining a year and exercising his new art at Zurich and St. Gallen, he went to Weimar, with a letter of recommendation from Wagner. Liszt received him most cordially and gave him lessons for four years. Thus it came about that Bülow, being a man of exceptional receptivity, memory, and ability, became the embodiment and the apostle of both these great reformers. By nature and instinct he was really a conservative, and had he not come under the influence of Wagner and Liszt he might have become a pedant. Luckily he did come under their influence, and the result was a happy blend of classical and modern principles which made him an ideal teacher.

Liszt once said of him: "Bülow is a school-master, but of aristocratic rank" (ein vornehmer).

As a pianist he was strictly an interpreter, without even that slight trace of virtuosity which clung to Liszt in spite of himself. Unfortunately he lacked also the impetuous, emotional, temperamental qualities which were the magic wand in the hands of Liszt and Rubinstein. But in intellectual subtlety of interpretation he had no superior, and

for this reason he was at his best in the sonatas of Beethoven, the last five of which he was wont to play at a single recital. The comments he wrote for his edition of Beethoven's sonatas (which he called the New Testament in music, Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavichord* being the Old Testament) opened entirely new vistas in the esthetics of interpretation, and made him the originator of a new branch of literature devoted to questions of phrasing and expression in general. "How far Bülow, in his attempt to analyze the structure of musical sentences (*Periodenbau*) down to the minutest details, applied the teachings of Liszt, or aperçus by him, or abstracted them from the way in which that adored master played, we can no longer ascertain," writes Professor Riemann; "but it is quite certain that Bülow acted in this matter under the direct influence of Liszt."

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Bülow's intellect was his memory. To Adele Hippius he once said: "I had promised a friend to play a composition of his at my next concert and had not found time to play it over even once. I took the piece along on my trip, studied it in the coach, and in the evening played it at the concert. This method of studying, first with the head and then with the fingers, I cordially commend to every musician."

On his second American tour he played by memory all of Beethoven's compositions for piano-forte solo on sixteen consecutive evenings. During his first year in America, though not at all robust and of a highly nervous disposition, he stood the ordeal of giving 139 concerts without ever looking at a printed page.

Young pianists who feel discouraged because they do not at once meet with the success they deserve—or think they deserve—should read the first volume of Bülow's letters, in which the hardships and disappointments of his early years are vividly described.

From what was said a moment ago regarding the intellectuality of Bülow's playing, it must not be supposed that he had no appreciation of romance and "atmosphere." Once he played the so-called *Moonlight Sonata* in Boston Music Hall with all the gas turned down to a bead. "At first," Mr. Apthorp writes, "it seemed rather a cheap device, unworthy of both sonata and pianist; but it was sufficiently known that Von Bülow's reputation as a musician was untainted by even a suspicion of charlatanism, and most of us were quite willing to humor him in his whim. I think that, before long, we found in our heart of hearts that the half-darkness was really an admirable *cadre* for the composition—notably for the last movement."

His sympathies for the composers of the romantic school were manifested not only by the place he gave them in his programmes (though the "Three B's"—Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms—were his favorites) but by many pages in his essays and letters. To cite only two. To a friend he wrote:

> I look forward eagerly to your Chopin, that immortal romanticist *par excellence*, whose mazurkas alone are a monument more enduring than metal. Never will this great, deep, sincere, and at the same time tender and passionate poet become antiquated. On the contrary, as musical culture increases, he will appear in a much brighter light than to-day, when only the popular, the *damoiseau* Chopin is in vogue, whereas the more aristocratic, manly Chopin, the poet of the last two scherzi, the last two ballads, the barcarole, the polonaise-fantaisie, the nocturnes, Op. 9, No. 3; Op. 48; Op. 55, No. 2, etc., still awaits the interpreters who have entered into his spirit and among whom, if God grants me life, I should like to have the pride of counting myself.

He often gave entire Liszt recitals by way of exhibiting his admiration for that master. In one of his essays he

indignantly attacks the current notion that Liszt's pieces are all unplayable except by concert pianists: "Some day I shall make a list of all of Liszt's pieces for piano which most amateurs will find much easier to master and digest than the chaff of Thalberg or the wheat of Henselt or Chopin. But it seems that the name of Liszt as composer for piano has become associated inseparably with the words 'inexecutable' and 'making colossal demands.' It is a harmless prejudice of the ignorant, like many others, but for all that none the less objectionable."

In the playing of Brahms, as of other masters, he strongly disapproved of "that tiresome correctness (literalness) which some call the classical style." "We must punctuate, phrase, divide; we must speak the piano, not babble it." Nor did he approve of the dry academic way of playing Mozart. To a pupil he said:

> Mozart was not in vain half Italian. You play him as if he had been born in Stockholm instead of in Salzburg. That is too frosty. The tone is too thin, too childish. Study his operas, or play his violin sonatas with a violinist. There is always in Mozart a dramatic trait—even in his piano sonatas. Every Mozart theme is an individuality.

To another pupil he said that Bach's prelude in E flat major "must be played like a Chopin nocturne. Above all things, do not think that a monotonous, tiresome correctness in playing Bach's pieces is classical. Bach, like all other masters, must be played correctly first, then beautifully, then interestingly. You did not consider this piece difficult enough, Miss, because it did not look black enough."

In that last sentence lies a whole treatise on the philosophy of music. Most players do not realize that it takes infinitely more musicianship to play a simple, slow pre-

lude or nocturne with the required soulfulness than it does to rattle off a brilliant étude *à la* sewing-machine.

"There are no easy pieces; all are difficult," said Bülow. "I will show you how the difficulties of the easiest pieces can be recognized and overcome."

Many invaluable hints to students were given by him at his lessons and in his essays and letters. Words of wisdom fell from his lips, particularly when he was speaking of Bach. Here are a few samples:

I play—that is, practise—daily seven hours, the first of which is invariably devoted to the *Well-tempered Clavichord.*

[Regarding the performance of a Bach prelude, he said to a pupil:] Do not accent regularly the first and third beat, but *accent the changes in the harmony.*

Accents must not be used to excess, else they lose their effect. If we underscore every word we emphasize none.

Make pauses for breathing.

At the close of a Bach prelude we must retard only when there is an accumulation of harmonies. If we retard at the close of every Bach piece we commit a nuisance. Old organists do this, at the same time looking over their spectacles shrewdly.

Do not play too fast. You must bring out the harmonic and melodic beauties, and you cannot do that if you treat the piano like a sewing-machine.

Always play Bach's pieces first without their ornaments.

You must study Bach's cantatas; his declamation is wonderful; he blended word with tone as no one after him did except Wagner.

You must learn to know Bach as a writer for the voice in order to appreciate his instrumental works and to play them correctly on the piano. Bach is above all things a melodist.

Just as there used to be in Florence and at other Italian universities a special Dante faculty, whose members con-

fined their philological activity exclusively to the riddles of that mighty sphinx, so there should be at high schools of music a similar specialization for the study of the German tone-giant, Bach.

Bülow's malicious sarcasm is exemplified in the following:

"Piano playing is a difficult art. First we have to learn how to equalize the fingers, and then (in polyphonic music, where one hand has to play at the same time parts of diverse strength) to make them unequal again. That being the case, it seems best not to practise the piano at all—and that is the advice I have given to many."

A few more general hints:

"Crescendo means piano. You must not begin by being at once what you are to become gradually."

"An interpreter should be the opposite of a grave-digger; he should bring to light what is hidden and buried."

With reference to the first Brahms Ballade: "To find the correct declamation," said Bülow, "we should sing the melody." He often did this for his pupils.

Concerning Chopin's mazurka, Op. 50, No. 1, he said: "In this mazurka there is dancing, singing, gesticulating."

"If you think you have finished studying a piece, put it away a month. On resuming it, you will discover new difficulties to conquer."

"The bar-line is only for the eye. In playing, as in reading a poem, the scanning must be subordinated to the declamation; you must *speak the piano*."

A pupil who was mechanically playing a Beethoven sonata one day was interrupted by him with the word: "Please play a little with your head, won't you?"

"Repose is the pianist's first duty."

"On the whole I am not in favor of playing Beethoven's

last sonatas, for the simple reason that most people do not understand them. This is the courtesy I owe to the multitude."

One of his favorite and most effective methods of teaching was to caricature the pupil's faults, exaggerating them in such a way that their absurdity stood out glaringly.

He touched on a matter of tremendous importance when he instructed his pupils to emphasize the changes in the harmony instead of accenting always on the first beat. When a pianist gets that big idea in his head he is in a fair way of understanding the difference between the *interpretation* of a composition and the mere mechanical playing of it as if it were a piece of ordinary dance music.*

* Some of the foregoing hints are taken from Bülow's letters and the volume of his *Ausgewählte Schriften*, to which is appended a section of selected maxims and epigrams similar to Schumann's invaluable *Musikalische Haus-und Lebensregeln;* for others I am indebted to a book which should be in every student's library: *Studien bei Hans von Bülow*, by Theodor Pfeiffer and Vianna da Motta, who had the happy thought of jotting down some of the best things Bülow said to them and others in the class-room.

XVIII

RUBINSTEIN THE LEONINE

Anton Rubinstein, whom musicians have generally agreed to place next to Liszt, as second in rank among pianists, used to say that the Russians called him a German and the Germans a Russian. In truth he was both, for while his father was a Russian Jew (who had gone over to the Orthodox Church), his mother, a Löwenstein by birth, was a native of Prussian Silesia. Musically, the German predominated in him, so far as his compositions are concerned, his chief models being Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Schumann. As a pianist he displayed a truculence, an indomitable energy and emotional impetuosity which may be called Russian; they are the qualities we find in the greatest Russian composer, Tchaikovsky, and the greatest Russian conductor, Safonoff. This intense emotionality was the main secret of his success. It impelled him, at the same time, to occasional exaggerations which evoked censure. Like a Cossack cavalryman he sometimes ran away with the tempo. "Rubinstein knows no allegro but only presto and prestissimo," wrote Hanslick; "whenever he begins an allegro the demon of nervousness (or is it virtuosity?) seizes him and impels him to play as fast as the hands of man can do it." Yet the same critic was overwhelmed by the fiery, masculine character of his playing, and at the same time he declared "it was always the tender, simple pieces that he played best." In a word, Rubinstein united in his art the masculine and

feminine elements, as all the successful pianists have done. Chopin was—as a player—weak on the masculine side, hence he did not succeed as a concert pianist. In all of which there is much food for thought.

Rubinstein's father started a pen and pencil factory, which was not very profitable. His mother gave him his first lesson when he was between five and six years old. When he had learned all she knew, she placed him in charge of a Moscow teacher named Villoing, who willingly undertook his musical education free of charge. "And with him," says Rubinstein in his autobiography, "my lessons began and ended, for no other teacher did I have. In my eighth year I began to study with Villoing, and in my thirteenth my musical education was completed, and I had no other teacher." We saw in preceding pages that Liszt and Chopin also had reached the end of their piano lessons with their thirteenth year. If you are a Liszt, a Chopin, or a Rubinstein, go and do likewise; but not otherwise!

In 1839, when Rubinstein was ten years old, he gave his first public concert, playing an allegro from a Hummel concerto, an andante by Thalberg, and four pieces by Field, Liszt, and Henselt. Then for three years he travelled with his teacher all over Europe. At this time he appeared on the concert platform with no thought of shyness, looking at his playing in the light of a plaything. In 1840 he tried to get admission to the Paris Conservatory but was, like Liszt, refused; why, he did not know. Perhaps his teacher did not really want to part with him; perhaps he was considered too young or too far advanced; perhaps he was ignored as being simply one of a host of infant prodigies by whom Europe was at that time overrun and who were not favored at the Conservatoire.

At one of his Paris concerts both Chopin and Liszt were present. He also played privately for these masters, who

predicted a brilliant career for him. He tells us that in Paris he often heard Liszt and was "deeply impressed by his playing." "At that time I was a devoted imitator of Liszt, of his manners and movements, his trick of tossing back his hair, his way of holding his hands, of all the peculiar movements of his playing."

Liszt advised Villoing to take his pupil to Germany for further education. We find him in Berlin in 1844, with his mother, who sought counsel of Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer. Two years later he resided in Vienna, trying to earn his living by teaching. He met Liszt again, who bade him remember that a talented man must win the goal of ambition by his own unassisted efforts. He often had not enough money to pay for meals, and had to go hungry.

After a year and a half he returned to Berlin to play and teach, leading "the Bohemian life of an artist—feasting when money was plenty, and going hungry when it was gone." At one time he thought of going to America to try his fortunes; but friends dissuaded him. In the revolutionary year 1848 he returned to Russia, where he gave successful concerts. In St. Petersburg he was appointed court pianist and concert director; in 1862 he founded the Conservatory at St. Petersburg and for some years taught in it. The organizing and conducting of this institution was one of the great tasks of his life.

On his brilliantly successful concert tours in Europe we need not dwell. Many of them were given for charity; in twenty-eight years he gave more than 300,000 rubles to the poor, and to other good works. The foundation of his prosperity was laid in America. In 1872 he and Wieniawski began a tour in the United States during which they gave 215 concerts, playing often two or three times in one day. America gave him the opportunity to devote most of his time, on his return to Russia, to composing. But the

tour had been, he writes, "so tedious that I began to despise myself and my art. So profound was my dissatisfaction that when, several years later, I was asked to repeat my American tour with half a million [francs] guaranteed to me, I refused point-blank."

"In America," he writes on another page, "we find a little more music than in England. . . . But it is only in Germany that one learns to what noble heights it may attain."

While Rubinstein's style of playing was so unlike Von Bülow's, there were things they had in common, notably a genuine respect for art, bitter hatred of charlatan methods, and a prodigious memory. Rubinstein's memory, however, became unreliable after his fiftieth year. At the age of sixty he said on this point: "Since then I have been conscious of a growing weakness. I begin to feel an uncertainty; something like a nervous dread often takes possession of me while I am on the stage in the presence of a large audience. . . . One can hardly imagine how painful this sensation may be. . . . This sense of uncertainty has often inflicted upon me tortures only to be compared with those of the Inquisition, while the public listening to me imagines that I am perfectly calm."

His memory served him faithfully, however, in 1885-6 when he carried out a long-cherished plan of giving a series of concerts to illustrate the gradual development of piano music. Seven of these historic concerts were given by him in seven cities: St. Petersburg, Moscow, Vienna, Berlin, London, Paris, and Leipsic, and in some of these cities every concert that he gave in the evening was repeated the next day, free, for the benefit of students of music. Both morning and evening concerts were crowded. The first recital covered two centuries, from Bird to Mozart. Beethoven had a whole programme, while Chopin had not only a whole recital to himself but spilled over into

the next with eleven more pieces. It was Rubinstein's pessimistic opinion that composition came to an end with Chopin. Brahms he utterly ignored in this series; he frankly confessed he did not like his music. It is noteworthy, on the other hand, that while he also professed not to like the pieces of Liszt, he included no fewer than nine of them in his historic recitals. The modern Russians were abundantly represented; also, of course, among the great ones, Schubert, as well as Schumann, Mendelssohn, and Weber.*

Rubinstein's touch was perhaps more remarkable even than Liszt's. "He seemed to caress the sounds from the instrument where others struck them," writes "Alexander" McArthur. Being asked if this tone and touch of his was natural, he replied: "Partly natural, partly acquired. I have spent thousands of hours in an endeavor to find this tone and that, and since I can remember I have been working at the problem." Sometimes she saw him in a rage with a pupil who had studied only the notes of a piece, neglecting the tone-colors. He often said to his pupils: "Listen, attentively, when you can, to good singing, and endeavor to sing on the piano. Do not think of striking your notes; think of singing them." And Miss McArthur adds a psychological hint of extreme importance to the student: "Personally I found, when first I attended his lessons, that it was more by *willing the tone* than by hitting

* A detailed account of these historic recitals may be found in Hanslick's *Aus dem Tagebuche eines Musikers*, pp. 189–198. The English version of Rubinstein's *Autobiography*, by Aline Delano, is published by Little, Brown & Co., Boston. "Alexander" McArthur (now Mrs. Nicchia) has written a short life of Rubinstein and intends to write a longer one. Her excellent collection of hints to students, entitled *Pianoforte Study* (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser), contains valuable references to Rubinstein, some of which are quoted here. The student should also read Rubinstein's own writings, especially *Conversations on Music* and the *Gedanken-Korb*. His opinions of composers are not always to be accepted, but otherwise he is an excellent guide.

the note in some certain way that I succeeded in doing as he wanted." Hans von Bülow evidently shared Rubinstein's idea, for in his edition of Beethoven's sonatas he marks certain passages of notes "quasi clarinet" "quasi flute," etc., "evidently to give the student the key to his idea"; and he advised students of the piano to imitate Joachim's (violin) tone in playing Beethoven rather than Sarasate's.

"Rubinstein's sense of touch was almost as keenly developed as that of a blind man. He loved to caress things with his hands; where others smelled a rose, he touched its soft petals with his finger tips, much as he caressed a pianoforte when drawing forth the witching sweetness of a Chopin nocturne."

Like Liszt, Rubinstein often played wrong notes, absolute mechanical accuracy being at times incompatible with such impetuous emotionality as his. There were times when the piano-forte was quite inadequate for the expression of his feelings. Miss McArthur, who used to turn the pages for him when he practised, saw him when excited take his hands and arms, bang them down on the keys, and say with a growl: "It gets so small for me, I feel I could use twenty like this." Five minutes later he would play a Chopin prelude or a Schumann piece with a delicacy unimaginable!

Another pupil of Rubinstein, Adele Hippius, was so fortunate as to be able to hear the lion in one of his roaring moods. "This must sound majestic," he said of the piece in hand, and while he spoke he began to play. "He grew excited, heated, hair fell over his forehead; he and the piano seemed to make but one. Then appeared an exquisite melody, accompanied by chords in the bass and strengthened by the surging of powerful arpeggios over the entire instrument. He increased the difficulties, he stormed like full orchestra, the piano almost gave way

under his hands. The impression was so overwhelming, my nerves were so wrought up, that I felt stifled. I glanced at my neighbor—she had left the room weeping. We all had a feeling of involuntary terror as if in the presence of some elementary power of nature. Yes, Rubinstein was in truth awe-inspiring.*

* The reader should not fail to secure the four numbers of the *Etude* (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser,) in which the English version of Adele Hippius's class-room reports appeared.

XIX

PADEREWSKI AND HIS SECRETS

WHEN Ignace Jan Paderewski gave his first recital in Paris, in 1888, there was but a small audience in the Salle Erard. Luckily it included the eminent conductor, Colonne, who was so much impressed that he engaged the young Polish pianist to appear at one of his orchestral concerts. Playing before a large audience, he thus won an immediate success which made him "the lion of the Paris season."

Nevertheless, when this musician with the "wonderful aureole of golden hair," made his first appearance in London, on May 9, 1890, the receipts did not exceed £10, and the critics could not understand "the fuss that had been made of him" in Paris. The audience, however, liked him from the first; the second recital converted the critics, and thenceforth he played to full houses. In 1894, when he made a provincial tour of England, including twenty-two cities, the seats were, in some places, all sold two months in advance, and in London, thereafter, he seldom gave a concert which did not yield $5,000—as much as Patti earned in the most brilliant period of her operatic career. Enthusiasts who could not pay a guinea a seat provided themselves with breakfast and lunch and waited all day for the doors of St. James's Hall to open.

It was in November, 1891, that Paderewski made his first appearance in New York. He played three times with orchestra in Carnegie Hall, which had been dedicated six

months before. "No one," as Mr. Krehbiel remarked in a review of Paderewski's first American tours, "thought then of the use of the vast audience-room for recitals, not even Mr. Paderewski or his managers. In fact, the recital idea was still in its infancy, the great virtuosi who had preceded him, like Rubinstein and Von Bülow, having other artists associated with them to give the interest of variety to their entertainments." It was soon found that Paderewski did not need such variety to draw audiences. Five times he played in rapid succession at the Madison Square Garden Concert Hall. By this time popular enthusiasm had assumed such dimensions that it was found necessary to return to Carnegie Hall, which has room for over three thousand hearers; and this hall was thenceforth crowded at every recital, although the price of seats was almost on an operatic scale. He played 18 times in New York alone during this season.

As a matter of course he returned to America the following season, during which he played 67 times, the receipts aggregating $180,000. Rubinstein, in 1872, got $50,000 for 215 concerts. On his third American tour Paderewski earned $247,855 by playing 86 times.

It is needless to dwell on his triumphs during all the tours he has made in this country, but attention may be called to what will long be remembered as "Paderewski day." On the afternoon of March 8, 1902, the eminent Pole filled both the largest concert hall and the largest opera-house in New York to the last seat. Indeed, at both places hundreds more tickets might have been sold had the supply not given out. At Carnegie Hall he gave a recital; at the Metropolitan his *Manru* was sung. The gross receipts at the two houses cannot have fallen far short of $20,000. This *was* something new under the sun. Had Rubinstein been successful as an opera composer, he might have anticipated Paderewski in performing such a double

feat. As it was, Poland claimed the honor of setting a new standard of success.

Paderewski loves his piano; still, like Liszt and Rubinstein, he loves composing better. He has a house in Paris, a château in Switzerland, and he has expensive habits and hobbies; so has his wife. He needs, therefore, vast sums of money. These are most easily earned in America, where prices can be asked for seats that few would pay on the Continent of Europe. In Germany, for this reason, he has not played often; but when he has, the enthusiasm aroused was as great as in London or Paris, New York, Boston, or Chicago. I have before me dozens of clippings from Hamburg, Breslau, Vienna, Dresden, Munich, Cologne, and other German papers, and all agree in praising the Polish pianist in the same cordial tone as the English and American papers. To cite a few samples: the eminent Hamburg critic, Ferdinand Pfohl, wrote: "It was like a Nikisch concert, the same exultation, the same enthusiasm. Never before," adds the veteran critic, "did an evening of two and one-half hours at the piano seem so short. His Chopin playing fairly electrified his audience, even such small compositions as the G flat major étude inspiring his hearers to a degree of enthusiasm bordering on intoxication." In conservative Leipsic, too, "the success was colossal," wrote the *Leipziger Zeitung*, adding: "Not since Liszt has a pianist been received as M. Paderewski was last night." "The public did not applaud, it raved," said the *Tageblatt*. "If Paderewski has hitherto avoided Germany in the belief that he might be received coolly, he must have been thoroughly cured of that idea last evening. . . . Concerning his colossal success in our sister city of Dresden our readers have already been informed." The Breslau *General Anzeiger* said: "Miracles still happen! Here is a pianist who does not play to half-empty benches, but to a sold-out hall, and not at the Neue

Boerse, either, but in the far larger Breslau Concerthaus. . . . The enthusiasm of the public knew no bounds. Not since Rubinstein have we heard such storms of applause." The Munich *Allgemeine Zeitung*, in trying to account for Paderewski's world-fame, wrote: "Far from being a mere drawing-room pianist, as Oscar Bie called him, he is a poet of the piano-forte, who dives below the usual level and reveals to the hearers things before hidden. At the same time he has an extraordinary power over the multitude. We feel inclined to say that in Paderewski *Intimität* and popularity are commingled in equal degrees; he is a Chopin infinitely enlarged, a Chopin for the many." The same critic paid him the compliment of declaring him "simply incomparable" as an interpreter of Schumann, in the playing of whose F sharp minor sonata he "reproduced unchanged and undiminished the warm sensuality, which shimmers like a red glow through the musical fabric, the elasticity, the tenderness, the delicate curves, the whole improvisational character of this music. How exquisitely he played the scherzo!" The public "acted as if crazy for joy."

To return to New York. Paderewski was not only the first artist who found it necessary to go to the largest hall in the city for solo recitals, it was at his recitals also that the enthusiasm assumed such unprecedented dimensions that the audience refused to disperse when the programme was finished, while hundreds rushed forward to the stage, clamoring for more and more, till the recital had been lengthened by thirty or forty minutes. Some newspapers referred to these demonstrations as "hysterical feminine adoration"; yet one of these same papers once referred to "a soul-stirring run" by a foot-ball player and described scenes of delirious joy over such running and kicking—scenes which, if they had occurred at a piano recital as an expression of the genuine enthusiasm of refined ladies over

Paderewski's inspired playing would, of course, have been "hysterical."

As a matter of fact, these epiludes are the most enjoyable parts of the Paderewski recitals; for the great and genuine interest and enthusiasm of those who remain react on the pianist and bring out his very best. There is a certain stiffness about a concert; this disappears when nearly everybody is standing and many are trying to get as near the pianist as possible. Even the most blasé of musicians (and Paderewski is far from being blasé) would be stirred at sight of these hundreds of upturned faces, mostly of beautiful women, eagerly awaiting to hear more of his musical gospel, and uniting in a great shout of joy when he crosses the stage to play one more piece.

A music "professor" in St. Louis once left the hall in the midst of a Paderewski performance, with upturned nose, to show his contempt for this "charlatan." I once spoke to the pianist, Alfred Reisenauer (who was furiously jealous of his Polish rival), about Paderewski's amazing general culture—his being able to converse brilliantly on all conceivable topics not related to music—when Reisenauer retorted: "Yes, he knows everything—except music." There are many "professors" and professionals who take great delight in proclaiming that Paderewski "cannot play any more." The public laughs at these things and crowds the recitals of Paderewski more than ever, knowing that he now plays with a maturity of genius that makes him more fascinating even than formerly.*

What is the secret of Paderewski's great and continued success—or, rather, what are the secrets?

His strength lies not, like Samson's, in his hair; that

* A bit of advice to piano pupils: If your teacher sneers at Paderewski, leave him at once. An instructor who is not sufficiently musical to appreciate the playing of the greatest living pianist cannot possibly teach you anything worth while.

superstition was exploded long ago; in fact, one can hardly see his hair in the religious light that dims the stage while he plays. Nor does his strength lie in his muscles, though his arms have the supple power of superfine steel, as every one knows who has ever had the honor of shaking hands with him. Nor, again, does he ever stoop to conquer. Never does he resort to clap-trap, trickiness, or sensationalism in order to win applause. He makes no concessions to the popular craving for cheap tunes, but gives his hearers only the choicest products of the highest musical genius, from Bach to the present day. There are successful pianists who draw attention to their skill by an obtrusive brilliancy of execution and a parading of difficulties. That is not Paderewski's way. On the contrary, one of the main secrets of his success lies in this, that he makes us forget there is such a thing as technic by his supreme mastery of it, and that he *makes the musical ideas he interprets absorbingly interesting to all classes of hearers.*

This is a point of superlative importance. Paradoxical as it may seem, it may be said that the genius of a musician is revealed most unmistakably in his power over the unmusical. Genius makes extremes meet; it fascinates not only those who have the most highly cultivated taste for music, but also those to whom the art is usually a sealed book and the playing of ordinary musicians "all Greek." Paderewski's genius translates this Greek into English or any other language you please. There are many persons who shun piano recitals as intolerable bores, but who never miss a Paderewski concert, because, when he plays, Bach and Beethoven are no longer riddles to them but sources of pleasure.

De Pachmann once said that Paderewski was the most modest artist he had ever seen. He certainly is free from that vanity which is the principal cause of the failure of many brilliant pianists. They try to show the public, not

how beautiful the music of the great masters is, but what clever performers they themselves are. The public soon notes their insincerity and neglects their concerts. Paderewski, on the other hand, never plays *at* an audience. He hardly seems to play *for* it, but for himself. I once asked him if he ever felt nervous in playing, and he said he often did, but only because he feared he might not satisfy *himself*.

"As a boy Paderewski used to listen to the vibrations that make up a tone, and modify his touch till he got these vibrations just as his delicate sense of tonal beauty wanted them. Something similar to this he does to this day at his recitals. He has no looks, no grimaces for the audience. No public smile ever sits on his lips; yet if you look closely you will observe subtle changes of expression on his features; he is listening intently to his own playing, and if the tone is as beautiful as he wishes it, an expression of pleasure flits across his features. He seems to be far away in dreamland, playing for himself alone; and his chief reward is not the applause of the audience but the delight in his own playing."

This paragraph, cited from my *Paderewski and his Art*,* unveils one of the principal secrets of Paderewski's power over his audiences. He hypnotizes them by being seemingly hypnotized himself. Like Dr. Wüllner, he becomes the medium through whom the great composers speak to the hearers. And yet he does not in the least sacrifice his personality. On the contrary, his individuality colors everything he plays, and therein lies another secret of his success.

In order to realize what an important part the individuality of an artist plays in the interpretation of a piece of music, the reader should try to hear a familiar piece as

* This little book contains many details regarding his playing of Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, and other masters, which may be helpful to readers of the present volume.

played by several famous pianists on that ingenious instrument, the Welte-Mignon piano, which reproduces with photographic accuracy every subtle detail of each artist's style. A more vivid impression still is conveyed by placing the perforated rolls for these pieces on the floor side by side and noting how amazingly the hole-patterns differ. In some cases it seems impossible that these varying patterns of holes and slits should represent the same music; but they do; and very slight changes suffice to make all the difference between commonplace or poetic phrasing.

A Paderewski roll would differ from others particularly in the greater number of *rhetorical pauses.* If a great orator rattled off a speech in the same mechanical, metronomic manner in which most pianists reel off a piece of music, he would make but little impression on his hearers. That is not Paderewski's way. He knows the artistic value of a pause, the emotional purport of suspense. I have read criticisms in which he was censured for these pauses—which he makes, it is needless to say, to give the hearer a chance to dwell for a few seconds on some exceptionally beautiful melodic turn or modulation. These critics remind me of a story I heard one day at John Muir's home in California. A party of Sierra enthusiasts had with them a lady on whose senses mountain scenery made no impression. When they paused at a specially fine point of view she waited patiently for a while and then asked: "Are we stopping here for any particular reason?" That question has been a standing joke among members of the Sierra Club ever since.

Paderewski has particular reasons for every short stop he makes, and that is one of the secrets of his success—one of the ways in which he helps his hearers to appreciate the beauty and grandeur of good music.

The pause is either a momentary cessation of sound or a prolongation of a note or chord. Many of his most ravish-

ing effects are produced by holding down the sustaining pedal and lingering lovingly over one of those thrilling chord mixtures he alone knows how to make. Paderewski is the wizard of the pedal. As I have remarked elsewhere, "No other pianist, except perhaps Chopin, has understood the art of pedalling as Paderewski understands it. In this respect he is epoch-making; his pedalling is a source of unending delight and study to connoisseurs. No expert could mistake his chords and arpeggios for those of any other pianist. No other has quite such a limpid yet deep tone, a tone of such marvellous carrying power that its pianissimo is heard in the remotest parts of the house; no other can, like him, make you hear soft, voluptuous horns, lugubrious bassoons, superbly sustained organ-pedals, and amorous violoncello tones. So perfect is his pedalling that he never, by any accident, blurs his harmonies and passages, while at the same time he produces tone-colors never before dreamt of in a piano-forte. By rapid successive pressure of the pedal he succeeds in giving the piano a new power, that of changing the quality of a tone after it has been struck, as every one must have noticed, for instance, in his performance of his popular minuet. . . . If occasion calls for it, he can convert the piano into a stormy orchestra; but he has a way of his own for producing orchestral effects which depends on the skilful use of the pedals instead of on muscular gradations of forte and piano. For instance, as the surging sounds of some mighty arpeggios gradually die away over the pedal, you will hear above them a weird, sustained tone, like that of a muted horn from another world; another moment you will hear the wail of an oboe, or the majestic strains of trombones, or the sonorous boom of a bell; and in the Chopin Berceuse he converts the piano into an Æolian harp whose harmonies seem to rise and fall with the gentle breezes. By the clever use of pedal and

arpeggios he produces that 'continuous stream of tone' which was characteristic of Chopin's playing, and which, in its unbroken succession of multi-colored harmonies, reminds one of the magic tonecolors and mystic sounds that come up from the invisible Wagnerian orchestra at Bayreuth."

It was Liszt whose passionate, soaring genius first sought to convert the piano into an orchestra. Rubinstein followed his example. A London critic spoke of his wielding his hammers with superhuman energy, making the piano-forte shake to its centre; and the same critic declared that Paderewski "transcends his exemplar in fury and force of blow." He even "pounds" sometimes; but that is not his fault, it is the fault of his instruments. No piano has ever been built, or ever will be built, that can be converted into a full orchestra with all the Wagnerian brass and Oriental instruments of percussion which this player has in mind when he comes to one of his tidal waves of sound, his cyclonic climaxes. It was because of this that Liszt forsook the piano and began to write for and conduct the orchestra; and for this it is that Paderewski is devoting himself more and more to orchestral composition.

At the same time, the creative gift was his from the beginning. He has always played like a composer as well as like a virtuoso, and therein lies another secret of his success. Liszt and Rubinstein likewise stirred their audience so deeply, not because they were accomplished pianists—the world is full of accomplished pianists—but because they were great composers. On hearing Paderewski's *Manru* I said to myself: "It is no wonder that a man who had it in him to create such an opera moves me more deeply by his piano playing than any one else."

The public dearly loves a dramatic climax, in the orchestral manner, but it also loves the purely pianistic style as represented by Chopin. Speaking of this phase of Pade-

rewski's art of interpretation, an English critic has remarked: "His art has a certain princely quality. It is indescribably *galant* and *chevaleresque*. He knows all the secrets of the most subtle dancing rhythms. He is a reincarnation of Chopin, with almost the added virility of a Rubinstein. No wonder such a man fascinates, bewilders, and enchants the public."

He fascinates, bewilders, and enchants also by his tempo rubato, his poetic freedom of movement, a freedom and irregularity which, alas! cannot be taught any more than flying like a humming-bird unless you are born a humming-bird. Paderewski has no use for a left-hand metronome; his two hands go together, now faster, now slower, like the speech of an impassioned actor or orator. He lingers over bars which have pathos in their melody or harmony, and slightly accelerates his pace in rapid, agitated moments; but he does all this so naturally, so unobtrusively, that one does not consciously notice any change in the pace—it seems the natural movement of the piece. Virgil would have added to his *varium et mutabile semper femina* the words *et mazurka*, could he have heard Paderewski play one of Chopin's pieces of that genre.

Many concert-goers are dismayed (though they would never confess it) when they see a Beethoven sonata on the program. They have come to look upon a Beethoven sonata as being like a sermon—something edifying and educational, but not particularly entertaining. If they happen to hear Paderewski play it, they soon open wide their eyes in astonishment and delight. He plays this music with a poetic freedom which Beethoven would have been the first to applaud. If any one imagines that Lamond's academic readings of Beethoven come nearer the real thing than Paderewski's, let him read a book previously referred to, *Beethoven's Piano-Playing*, in which Franz Kullak has brought together the observations of the great composer's

contemporaries, and he will be taught otherwise. Beethoven was impulsive—extremely impulsive; to play him dryly, tamely, is to insult his genius and—empty the concert halls. Like Liszt and Rubinstein, Paderewski dares to linger fondly over a beautiful melody, and to storm wildly and lawlessly—even to "pound"—in stormy passages, just as Beethoven himself did, according to the testimony of his friends.

Even Paderewski, however, cannot make Beethoven quite as popular as Chopin and Liszt. These two have long been and still are the favorites at piano recitals, and one important reason why Paderewski draws so much larger audiences than his rivals is that he plays Chopin and Liszt better than they do. While De Pachmann almost equalled him as an interpreter of the delicate, dainty, brilliant side of Chopin, he quite failed to do justice to the dramatic, masculine, energetic side of that composer's genius, thus helping to perpetuate the foolish notion that Chopin is always "feminine." Paderewski showed that there is a virile—nay, a leonine—side, not only to the polonaises, sonatas, and scherzos, but even to some of the nocturnes. At the same time, how exquisitely he plays those dainty female valses known as mazurkas! The muscular pianists of the fair sex who give such athletic exhibitions of virility should go and learn from this strong man the secret of tenderness and poetic refinement.

After one of the Paderewski recitals in New York, Dr. Wm. Mason, a pupil of Liszt, said to me: "It seems strange that the best Liszt performer to-day should be Paderewski, who was *not* a pupil of Liszt and never even heard him play." How did he accomplish this amazing feat? By way of answer let me cite two sentences from an article by Alexander McArthur, the brilliant biographer of Rubinstein and for a time his secretary: "Paderewski's Liszt was a revelation and a novelty—in fact, while listening I

could hardly grasp the stupendous fact that new beauties had been interpreted in a Liszt rhapsody." "He did what I have never known any other pianist do: *he made one forget the display of technic and he put meaning in his passage work.*" There lies *one* secret of his success as a Liszt player, *one* reason why he arouses such frenzied enthusiasm with the rhapsodies, études, and other pieces of the maligned, the misunderstood, the wonderful Liszt.

Another secret, another reason for his success, not only as a Liszt player but as an interpreter in general, lies in his rhapsodic style. No matter what Paderewski plays, he usually seems to be *improvising*, to follow the inspiration of the moment, to create the music while he performs it. His playing is the negation of the mechanical in music, the assassination of the metronome. When ordinary pianists play a Liszt rhapsody there is nothing in their performance that a musical stenographer could not note down just as it is played. But what Paderewski plays could not be put down on paper, even for the Welte-Mignon reproductive piano. For such subtle nuances of color and accent there are no signs in our musical alphabet. But it is precisely these unwritten and unwritable things that constitute the soul of music and the instinctive command of which distinguishes a genius from a mere musician.

If Paderewski were merely a musician he could never have won the fabulous success the world is talking about. It is because he has a mind trained and active in many branches of knowledge that he is able to sound the deepest depths of music. The edge of his musical intelligence is so keen because it has been sharpened on more than one grindstone. His feelings, at the same time, were deepened by domestic affliction—the death of his first wife and of his invalid son. Grief has ever been a fertilizer of genius, a high-school for artists. In describing the portrait of Paderewski by Burne-Jones, Mr. James Huneker wrote:

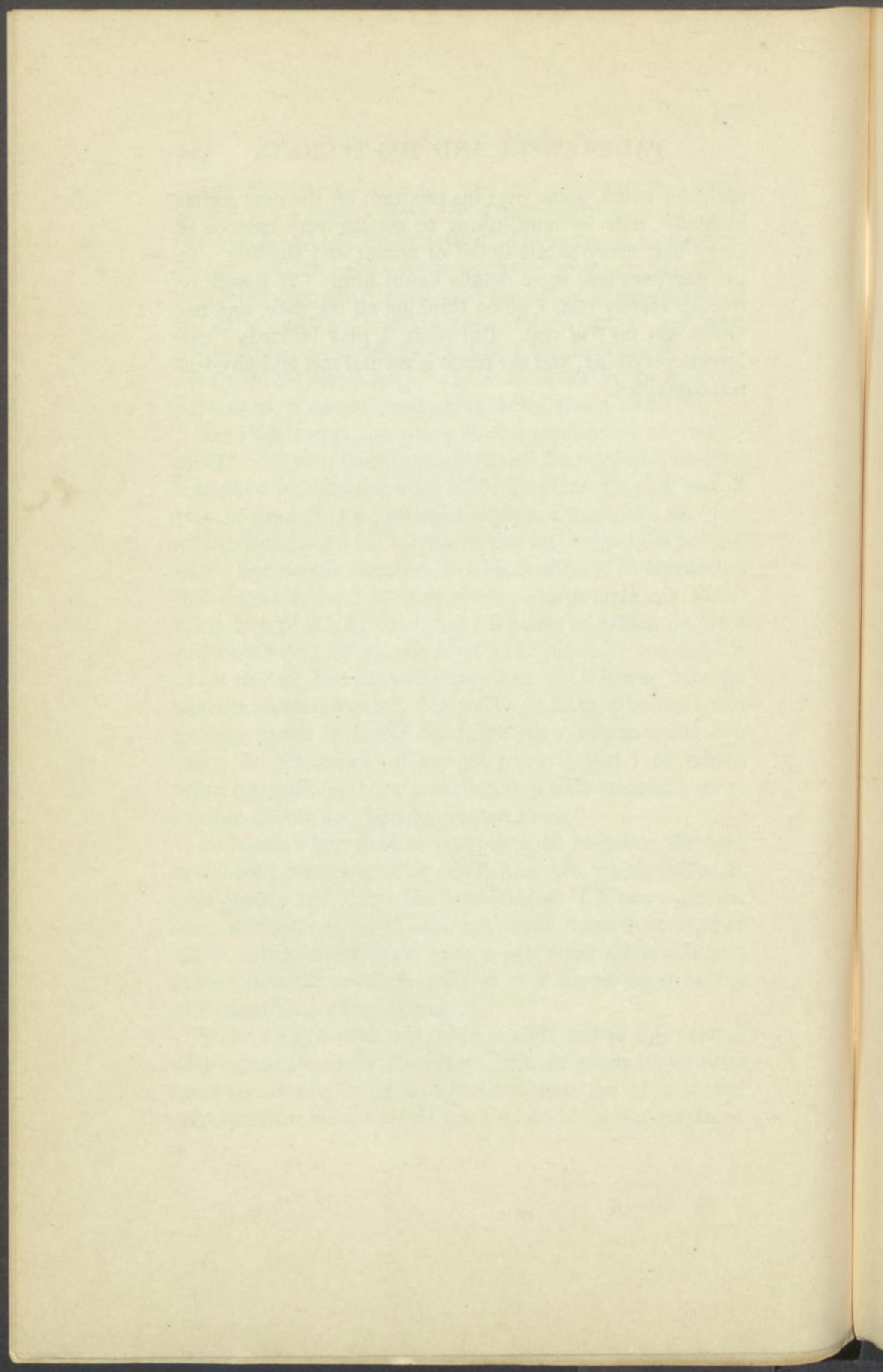
"It seems to me to be the best and most spiritual interpretation we have had as yet of this spiritual artist. His life has been full of sorrow, of adversity; of viciousness never. Nature paints every meanness, every moral weakness with unsparing brush, and I suppose, after all, one of the causes of Paderewski's phenomenal success has been his expressive, poetic personality. His heart is pure, his life clean, his ideals lofty. He is the Beau Seigneur of the key-board, a sort of conquering Admirable Crichton."

To Paderewski the piano is the greatest of all instruments. "It is at once the easiest and the hardest," he once remarked. "Any one who takes up piano playing with a view to becoming a professional pianist has taken on himself an awful burden." This burden he bears to the present day. Let no one suppose that because he is so famous he has ceased to be a hard worker. The private car which takes him from city to city has a piano on which he daily practises many hours, not merely the pieces he has to play at his recitals, but technical exercises. In this way, he once said to an interrogator, "in thirty or forty minutes I can put my hands in better condition than by practising two hours on the music of my programs. But," he added with a sly smile, "one must know which technical exercises to choose and how to practise them."

At home, when tired of practising, he goes into the field and works for an hour or two in the sun, which refreshes him greatly and allays his nervousness. "When a pianist has overworked, he should not force himself to further effort. Instead, he ought to stop practising altogether and go out into the country and rest until his strained nerves and muscles become normal."

When he practises, his mind is alert and in full control of his muscles every moment. But the main secret concerning his practising is that he does much of it in the mind alone. He once told me that he often lies awake at

night for hours, going over his program for the next recital mentally, note by note, trying to get the very essence of every bar, every subtle detail of accent and shading. In the daytime, too, these details haunt him. "If I walk or ride, or merely rest, I go on thinking all the time, and my nerves get no real rest. But when I play billiards I can forget everything, and the result is mental rest and physical rest combined."



PART IV

FOUR TYPES OF VIOLINISTS

XX

PAGANINI AND KUBELIK

Niccolo Paganini

The violin was the first of all the musical instruments now in use to attain perfection. While all the others, without exception, are still being improved from decade to decade, the best violins in existence were made two centuries ago by Antonio Stradivari. Innumerable experiments have shown that every deviation from his models results in a deterioration of tone. Fortunately, many of the best of the Cremona instruments are still in use, unimpaired by lapse of years. Indeed, the success of nearly every great violinist is inseparably associated with some old Italian instrument to which his soul was wedded.

The Italians also contributed the first of the great violinists, Corelli (1653–1713) and Tartini (1692–1770). But with the lapse of time the musical activity of Italy came to be absorbed almost entirely by the opera, which helps to explain why Italy's list of prominent violinists is so much smaller than that of some other countries.

Besides perfecting the violin and providing the first great players on it, Italy also gave to the world the man who first revealed all its technical possibilities. His name was Niccolo Paganini, and he was born at Genoa in 1782. His father gave him lessons on the mandolin; the violin he practised from the age of six. Three years later he played in public for the first time. At the age of fourteen

he was sent to Parma to continue his studies with an eminent musician named Rolla. When the boy called on him, Rolla was ill and did not wish to see any one; but hearing the visitor playing his new concerto, the manuscript of which lay on the rack, he jumped out of bed and hastened to the music-room to see the prodigy. He frankly told Niccolo he could not teach him anything. However, he did give him lessons for a few months, and that ended Paganini's tutelage.

He now travelled and gave concerts in the cities of Italy. Every few years he disappeared for a time, and during these periods he practised immoderately, ten or twelve hours a day. This excessive work, combined with a life of gambling and other dissipations, undermined his health and made him an invalid for life. Often, at a game of chance, he lost the gains from several concerts, and more than once he had to sell his violin to keep himself afloat. In this condition he found himself one day at Leghorn; but a French merchant named Livron kindly lent him his violin, a Guarneri of superlative excellence. After the concert he took it back to its owner, who, however, exclaimed: "Never will I profane strings which your fingers have touched. That instrument is now yours." On this violin Paganini subsequently played habitually, and when he died he gave it to the city of Genoa, which preserved it in a glass case in the local museum.

Of the many romantic stories told of Paganini none throws more light on his character as an artist and a man than one which he himself related. At Lucca a lady whom he had long loved without having avowed his passion attended his concerts with great regularity. He suspected that she, too, loved him, but there were reasons for concealing their feelings. One day he told her he would play a piece in which the situation would be illustrated. To the court he announced that he would produce a novelty

entitled *Scène amoureuse.* When the moment arrived he entered the room with only two strings on his violin—the first and the fourth. "I had composed a kind of dialogue," he continues, "in which the most tender accents followed the outbursts of jealousy. At one time, chords representing most tender appeals; at another, plaintive reproaches; cries of joy and anger, happiness and pain. Then followed the reconciliation; and the lovers, more convinced than ever, executed a *pas de deux*, which terminated in a brilliant coda. This novelty was eminently successful. I do not speak of the languishing looks which the goddess of my thoughts darted at me. The Princess Eliza lauded me to the skies, and said to me in the most gracious manner: 'You have just performed impossibilities; would not a single string suffice for your talent?' I promised to make the attempt. The idea delighted me; and, some weeks after, I composed my military sonata, entitled *Napoleon*, which I performed on the 25th of August, before a numerous and brilliant Court. Its success far surpassed my expectations. My predilection for the G string dates from this period. All I wrote for this string was received with enthusiasm, and I daily acquired greater facility upon it: hence I obtained a mastery of it, which you know, and should no longer surprise you."

If, at a concert, one of Paganini's strings broke, he quietly played on as if nothing had happened. He was accused of making the strings break deliberately, to astonish his audience, having previously practised the piece on three strings. He was quite capable of doing such a thing, for there was a good deal of the charlatan about him. He would, for example, imitate on his strings human voices, agreeable and disagreeable, and the voices of animals, including the braying of an ass, for the sake of cheap applause. But as for practising a piece specially on three strings instead of the usual four, that was not necessary;

his amazing technical skill helped him to overcome at any moment whatever seemingly unsurmountable difficulties might occur.

Probably no violinist before Paganini had command of such a great variety of sounds as he could get from his strings. He also greatly enlarged the use of those high, piping tones known as harmonics, not only in melody, but in staccato runs and in combination. More amazing still were his simultaneous pizzicato and bow passages—the left hand playing the pizzicato without interrupting the rapid bowing of the right hand. His use of double and even triple stops astonished the natives greatly. He executed wide intervals with unerring accuracy, and in his use of the bow went far beyond his predecessors and contemporaries. He puzzled the experts of his time by tuning his violin differently from the usual way, although this practice was known already in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries under the name of scordatura.

During the greater part of his career he did not print or even write out the solo parts of the pieces with which he amazed his audiences, for fear that others might copy his tricks. When his twenty-four *Capricci per il violino solo, dedicati agli artisti* did appear, in 1831, they created a sensation. Liszt, as we have seen, was inspired by them to attempt to develop the resources of the piano-forte as Paganini had developed those of the violin; and the compliment was doubled in value by the fact that the serious-minded Schumann also arranged these *Capricci* for the piano, in his own way. Fétis, in his *Notice biographique sur Paganini*, mentions the fact that the violinist himself at one time "conceived the singular idea of arranging his music for the piano-forte."

Until he was forty-four years of age Paganini did not play anywhere except in the cities of Italy. In 1828, at last, he left his native country and gave a series of con-

certs in Vienna which aroused frenzied demonstrations of enthusiasm. He now conquered the rest of Europe, with financial results indicated by the fact that at his death (1840) he left his son $400,000.

So astounding was the effect of his playing on his audiences that all sorts of fantastic stories were invented to explain his success. One individual in Vienna told Paganini himself that he had distinctly seen the devil directing his arm and guiding his bow. Some felt sure he must be the devil himself, and his appearance and influence on the stage seemed to bear out this idea. As his Belgian biographer remarks: "The extraordinary expression of his face, his livid paleness, his dark and penetrating eye, together with the sardonic smile which played upon his lips, appeared to the vulgar, and to certain diseased minds, unmistakable evidences of satanic origin." The famous German writer, A. B. Marx, describing Paganini's first concert in Berlin, said: "There was an overture, and then, unheard and unexpected, like an apparition, he was in his place and his violin was already sounding while the multitude still gaped breathlessly at the deathly pale man with the deep-sunk eyes sparkling in the bluish-white like black diamonds; with the over-bold Roman nose, with the high forehead emerging from the black mass of wildly tangled hair, . . . he seemed like one bewitched, and the audience, myself included, certainly was bewitched by him."

Much of Paganini's sensational success was owing to the hypnotic effect of his spectral personality, to the general mystery surrounding him, and the extraordinary stories told about his doings. He was accused of having committed various crimes, among them highway robbery and murder of his mistress or rival in a fit of jealousy. It was while expiating his crimes in prison, so the legend ran on, that he acquired his extraordinary skill on the violin, especially on the G string, the only one that remained un-

broken. According to Fétis, some of these calumnies were invented for purposes of blackmail by Parisian scoundrels who expected him to pay for their silence. There is reason to suspect that at first he did not altogether disapprove of the gossip connected with his personality, as it was good for advertising purposes. But at a later period he was greatly distressed and wrote letters to the newspapers by way of refuting his calumniators. Fétis had no difficulty in showing that these stories were manufactured.

Had Paganini been an ordinary fiddler who owed his extraordinary success entirely or chiefly to the things just spoken of, he would be mentioned in the history of charlatanism only. But he was a real artist—a man of considerable creative power even, as his *Capricci* show. As a player, however, he was a mere virtuoso, like Catalani, not an interpreter. While Liszt was the Paganini of the piano—and a great deal more—Paganini was not the Liszt of the violin—far from it. Liszt was the greatest of all interpreters, not only of his own works, but of those of other masters, classical and romantic, old and new. Paganini could play his own music only. "In his concerts in Paris," says Fétis, "he thought it necessary to flatter the national feeling by playing a concerto by Kreutzer and one by Rode—but he scarcely rose above mediocrity in their performance." . . . The unfavorable impression he made in Paris with these two pieces was a lesson to him; he never played from that time any music but his own." The same eminent authority found his playing lacking in expression and sometimes in taste:

"He was cited as the great violin singer—as the creator of a pathetic and dramatic school, applied to the art of bowing. I confess that I do not look at his prodigious talent in this light. What I experienced in listening to him was astonishment—unbounded admiration; but I was seldom moved by that feeling which appears to me insep-

arable from the true expression of music. The poetry of the great violinist consisted, principally, in his brilliancy and, if I may be allowed the expression, the mastery of his bow. There was a fulness and grandeur in his phrasing—but there was no tenderness in his accents."

One need not go far to seek the cause of this famous violinist's limitations as an artist. He lacked culture—intellectual, emotional, moral. Fétis, who knew him personally, states that he never looked into a book, not even a story—history and the sciences being sealed books to him. Political events had no interest for him, so he did not even read the newspapers. His travels took him through many interesting regions, but scenery had no charm for him. He was always thinking of himself and of the money he was making. Nor had he any of the generous impulses that moved so many artists to help other struggling artists or the poor and unfortunate. There could be no tenderness in the playing of such a man. He was a notorious miser, and all the world was amazed when he made Berlioz a present of 20,000 francs. But Ferdinand Hiller showed that that money came from the pocket of another, Paganini simply lending himself as an intermediary.

So far, we have considered the secret of Paganini's success, and the incompleteness of that success from the highest (Lisztian) artistic point of view. But there is also a special "Paganini secret" of which he often spoke and which relates to the facilitating and eliminating of violin practice. While he had practised indefatigably in his youth, it was known that in the later years of his career he never touched his instrument except at concerts and rehearsals. To his biographer, Schottky, he often said that after giving up playing in public he would impart to the world a musical secret which was taught in no conservatory, and by means of which a student could learn as much

in three years as otherwise in ten years of practice. He gave the name of a young violoncellist at Naples, a mediocre musician who in a few days, by the use of this method, became a virtuoso, astonishing all his friends. By applying this method it would, he claimed, no longer be necessary to practise four or five hours a day.

Paganini died without writing that "study for the violin" or revealing his secret. From the fact, however, that he admitted doing mute practice, it has been plausibly inferred that his secret was simply *mental practice.* Paderewski often goes through his programmes mentally again at night, deciding on details of fingering, tone-color, and phrasing, and other artists do the same, in bed or out, at home or en route. "The secret of learning music rapidly without much practice is in the mind," says a writer in *The Etude*, adding: "The violin teacher should do everything in his power to develop the *musical mentality* of the pupil. The pupil who learns to sing at sight, so that he can read music mentally, who learns harmony and theory and who cultivates his musical memory, will *save himself hundreds of weary hours of practice.*"

Jan Kubelik

Of contemporary violinists the one who perhaps most resembles Paganini is Jan Kubelik. Concerning his brilliant feats of execution in the cities of Europe, such sensational reports had come across the ocean that when he made his first appearance in New York the audience had evidently made up its mind beforehand (as in the case of Tetrazzini) to be enthusiastic; he was received with such applause as is usually bestowed only on old favorites. And after the first pause of the solo instrument in the Paganini concerto he was playing, the audience burst out into a perfect tornado of approval, although, up to that

point, the young Bohemian violinist had done nothing whatever to justify such a demonstration. His playing, so far, might have been easily duplicated by any one of the violinists in the orchestra.

As the concerto proceeded he performed feats which the orchestral players could not have imitated. Runs, skips, trills, double-stops, simultaneous pizzicato and arco, and all the other tricks of the fiddler's trade were at his command to astonish the natives. Most amazing of all were his *flageolet-töne*, or harmonics. These were flawless—a New York audience probably had never heard anything quite equal to this display of fireworks. The artistic value of a melody or a staccato run in harmonics is, to be sure, not much above that of a tune blown on one of the bird whistles sold by street peddlers.

The choice of a Paganini concerto for his American début indicated in advance what sort of a player Kubelik was. These concertos are as antiquated as the operas of Rossini and Donizetti in which the ornamental style is rampant. Possibly Paganini himself, could he be brought back, might make them interesting in a way by his diabolical art and personality. Julius Eichberg once remarked that there was a style of performance which could "make a phrase that was absolutely dripping with idiocy sound like a sublime and beautiful poem." Maybe Paganini had this style; but one cannot but agree with Mr. Apthorp when he declares that he is by no means sure that Paganini's playing, could we hear it now, "would not provoke a smile in us, in spite of all the man's wondrous personal charm and magnetism. I fear this 'much ado' of the style would be impotent to hide from us the 'nothing' of the music."

Certainly Mr. Kubelik did not succeed in restoring life to the Paganini concerto. While his playing was comparatively free from the exaggerations of the grandiose style,

he lacked the exotic charm and magnetism of Sarasate, Remenyi, and Ole Bull, and as an artist he could not be placed on the same high level as Ysaye, Kreisler, Kneisel, or Maud Powell. The only piece of good music on his first program was Schumann's hackneyed *Träumerei*, and this he played in the lackadaisical salon manner.

Nor was his second concert much better. "The fiddler's bagful of tricks is not a big one, and he is forever repeating himself," I wrote in one of those fits of impertinence which make critics so odious to the public. "Kubelik beats all living rivals in his ability to turn the violin into a pipe or a banjo; but that is nothing to be specially proud of—as a musician. Music begins where technic ends. Paganini fiddling is circus fiddling, and the player who makes a specialty of it puts himself on a level with the jugglers who can keep half a dozen knives or celluloid balls in the air at the same time. The frantic applause at Saturday's concert, as at the previous Monday's, showed that there are thousands of persons who can be stirred to enthusiasm by such displays. But where there is so much to suggest the circus, would it not be well, for the sake of consistency, to have sawdust on the floor and peanuts for sale in the lobby?"

Four years elapsed before Kubelik returned to America, where the public had applauded and enriched and the critics "roasted" him. In the meantime the European newspapers had from time to time reported his progress in the more musical side of his art. There was much curiosity in New York to hear whether these reports were well founded. They certainly were. There was a deeper comprehension of good music in Kubelik's playing, as well as the spirit, abandon, and enthusiasm that go by the comprehensive name of temperament. He now gave pleasure to those who expect a violinist to do more than dazzle them. Still, the bulk of his fortune—a big fortune it is—was made

by dazzling. *Success in Music and How it is Won* is the title of this book. Obviously there are various ways of winning success, due to the fact that there are various kinds of audiences.

XXI

REMENYI AND OLE BULL

EDOUARD REMENYI

IT is fortunate for musicians, that there are many ways of winning success. For violinists the virtuosity of Paganini or Kubelik is one way; it appeals to the public's love of sensationalism, of being astonished by brilliant and seemingly impossible feats of execution.

A more commendable way, which appeals to the public's national and patriotic sentiments, is that of Edouard Remenyi, the Hungarian, and Ole Bull, the Norwegian. Widely as their styles and the music they played differed in some respects, they had this in common that the appeal of their playing was chiefly to the hearts of the hearers.

Although Remenyi was born in Hungary, we might almost claim him as an American, for he was barely twenty when he first visited this country; it was here that he won many of his greatest triumphs; it was American life and scenery that inspired his best essays; and he died in San Francisco. He was of Jewish descent, his father's name having been Hoffmann, which the son Hungarianized to Remenyi. His coming to the United States at so early an age was for political reasons. In life as in art he was always an ardent Hungarian, and his patriotic fervor was aroused, in 1848, by the uprising against Austria organized under the leadership of Kossuth. He wanted to be a soldier, but General Görgey would not allow him to go to battle because he considered his violin a mightier

weapon than the sword; so Remenyi was asked to encourage the soldiers to action by playing patriotic battle airs, which he did with surprising success. He played not only in camp, but went from village to village, arousing the inhabitants with the Rakoczy march, with such tremendous effect that the government became alarmed and issued an edict forbidding his playing with this purpose, under the penalty of death—surely one of the grandest tributes on record to the power of music. He refused to stop, but was at last compelled to flee.

Having little money, he came to America in the steerage. His first concert was given at Niblo's Garden, on January 19, 1850. Six months later he returned to Hamburg, where he made a remarkable discovery, which was nothing more nor less than—Johannes Brahms. Schumann is the man who usually gets the credit of having discovered that composer; but to Remenyi belongs the honor of having been the first to recognize his ability and to introduce him (to Liszt) as a new genius. Brahms was at that time giving lessons in Hamburg for fifteen cents an hour. He was sent as a substitute for Remenyi's regular accompanist, who happened to be ill, and the violinist was so much impressed by his playing that he engaged him at once. So the two travelled together, paying their way by giving concerts at various places. To Brahms this association proved of incalculable value; for while Schumann's proclamation of him as the new "musical Messiah" called the attention of professionals to him, it was through his *Hungarian Dances* that he first came into vogue as a composer; and for these dances he was indebted to Remenyi.

The account of this affair given to the world by Remenyi, after a silence of twenty years, does not show Brahms in a noble light. While the two were travelling, Remenyi used to kill time in the hotels at night by playing and composing Hungarian airs. These he submitted to Brahms,

in whose judgment he had great confidence. Great was his surprise, in later years, to find his own melodies, with others well-known in Hungary, attributed to Brahms, who did not mention in the score the sources of his *Hungarian Dances*. It was for this reason that the violinist never played the "Brahms" *Hungarian Dances*. He even had reason to fear that, had he played them, the public might have thought, to cite his own words, that he was "not playing them in the right way, inasmuch as they have been accustomed to hearing them given in a style totally different from my own, although I think you will concede that I ought to be the best judge of the manner in which my own compositions should be performed." Other composers have appropriated the Magyar airs of Remenyi as folk music (as they have the melodies of Grieg); and Mr. Upton remarks that "if his Hungarian compositions and arrangements could be collected and carefully edited they would prove an important addition to the music of that nationality." *

When Remenyi returned to Hungary the second time (in 1891; the first time was in 1860) he was, his son relates, "greeted with a reception very much like the one Admiral Dewey had on his return to America. I was with him then. Soldiers lined the streets from the depot to the hotel, and my father had to make speeches. I saw an old man at a way-station shake him by the hand and say that, now he had seen Remenyi, he could die happy." This enthusiasm over him had two sources—remembrance of his youthful help in the war, and pride at the honor he had since shed on his native country by his art and his success in familiarizing the whole globe with Hungarian

* Remenyi never carried out his intention of writing his memoirs. The facts here referred to are contained in the volume on him prepared by G. D. Kelley and G. P. Upton, which the authors modestly call "a skeleton of the work that might have been." It includes the violinist's letters and essays.

melodies and the true Magyar way of playing them. He was the artistic globe-trotter *par excellence.* There are records of him in Egypt, Australia, Japan, China, Java, the Philippines, India, Ceylon, Madagascar, South Africa, and nearly every other corner of the globe. There would be long silences regarding his whereabouts, followed by lurid reports of shipwrecks, capture by cannibals, and assassination; but, fortunately, as in the case of Mark Twain, the reports of his death were always "grossly exaggerated."

Every one has read of how he played one day on the top of the Pyramid of Cheops. In India he played for native princes, and heard their musicians in return. In America he appeared at symphony concerts with Anton Seidl, but that did not prevent him from subsequently playing medleys of American airs at Colorado mining-camps. On one of these occasions, when he was completely exhausted, after repeating his patriotic medley three times, the audience became a howling mob demanding more, standing on stairs, and demolishing the furniture. His last appearance was at the Orpheum Theatre in San Francisco, where there were similar outbreaks of frenzied enthusiasm. They proved too much for him. His physician had advised him not to play, but he disregarded the warning. He had just begun a new piece when he fell forward, unconscious, thus fulfilling his own prediction to a friend: "I shall die fiddling."

If we inquire into the cause of Remenyi's remarkable power over vaudeville audiences on the one hand, and such great connoisseurs on the other as Anton Seidl and Carl Schurz (who, when Minister of the Interior, once presented him with a watch, the case of which was inlaid with twenty-florin gold pieces of Kossuth's money of 1848), we shall, perhaps, find it chiefly in the facts that to him music was an actuality, not a mere accomplishment, and that he

had a unique and fascinating personality. In the war of 1848 he learned to know the power of music as something infinitely more than a mere diversion; and such it remained to him all his life. "Art possesses me entirely," he wrote in one of his brief essays. "With me it is not an agreeable pastime; it is my life, my blood, my everything." And he played like one of whom this was true. How utterly unconventional his performance was we realize from such remarks by himself, his friends, and the critics, as these: "I always improvise my variations before the audience, never playing them twice alike, and, before commencing to play, generally commend myself to the goodwill and charity of some musical guardian angel not to leave me in the lurch." "Remenyi was impatient of any break in the stillness of a room in which he was playing, and often he would wander back and forth, his instrument in hand, his music growing fainter and fainter, as he moved farther away, and swelling as he returned, perhaps, to lean against a table or a chair, playing with eyes all but closed." Apparently absent-minded, "he rarely seems to realize that an audience is in front of him until he is awakened as from a dream by the applause.

With his complete tonsure, he looked so much like a priest that once, at a Colorado camp, a miner called out: "Hello, old man! give us your blessing first!" He was as abstemious as an anchorite. To his vegetarian diet he attributed his remarkable vigor, firmness of muscle, and strength of arm. This, he affirmed, enabled him to practise so many hours and to endure so much.

Had Remenyi's intellectuality been on a par with his technic and his power of appealing to the emotions, he might have been called the Liszt of the violin. Liszt admired him greatly. In his book on *The Hungarian Gypsies and Their Music* he says he never had heard him without experiencing an emotion which revived the recol-

lection left by Bihary, the greatest of the gypsy violinists. "Remenyi," he adds, "is gifted with a vivacious, generous disposition which rebels against monotony, and whose originality shows through everything and in spite of everything. This is a token of the vitality of his talent and insures him a special place in the gallery of men who have given new life to a deserving branch of art."

Ole Bull

The annals of music in America contain the names of three artists who, more than any others, stirred the public throughout the country to frenzied outbursts of enthusiasm. Two of these—Jenny Lind and Paderewski—have already been treated of in this volume. The third was Ole Bull, the Norwegian violinist. "He had a wonderful hold over a miscellaneous audience," writes Arthur M. Abell, "and people went to hear Ole Bull who did not care for music and who otherwise never attended concerts. A writer in an early American magazine in 1845, when the poet-violinist was making his first tour of our country, wrote: 'Ole Bull is going about the country converting more people to the violin than all our ministers of the Gospel combined are converting to Christianity.' . . . In later years, after his fame had penetrated to every nook and corner of the Union, his coming was looked upon as an event of the greatest importance; people would drive in from the country with ox carts to hear him, and the enthusiasm was unparalleled. During his last tour, in 1878–9, an Ole Bull concert caused as much excitement as a political meeting."

Sara Bull, in her *Ole Bull: A Memoir*, gives figures which, more eloquently than anything else, attest his enormous popularity. In sixteen months' time he once gave 274 concerts in the United Kingdom. During his first

American tour he travelled more than 100,000 miles in the United States, Canada, and the West Indies, giving about 200 concerts, some of which netted him over $3,000. His profits amounted to $100,000, of which he contributed more than $20,000 to charitable institutions. In European cities his audiences were equally large. From Christiania he wrote in 1841: "They are fighting like wolves for seats." In Stockholm he earned as much as $5,000 at a single concert. In St. Petersburg his audiences never numbered less than 5,000 people, and in Vienna he gave sixteen concerts in a few weeks.

Like Jenny Lind and Paderewski, Ole Bull had the power of making the unmusical delight in music. At the same time, his playing appealed no less powerfully to the connoisseurs. Liszt greatly admired his art and gave concerts with him, at some of which they played Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata.* The more conservative Mendelssohn took pleasure in playing the piano part of the same sonata with the Norwegian. Joachim, more severely classical than Mendelssohn, once said to Björnstjerne Björnson: "No artist in our time has possessed Ole Bull's poetic power." To Arthur Abell he said he had "never heard any violinist play simple melodies so touchingly, with so much feeling." In its criticism of his first concert in London, the *Times* declared that nearly all the distinguished members of the profession then in town were in the hall and applauded most cordially.

Because of his success with the masses, there were, nevertheless, not wanting envious and stupid professionals who accused him of charlatanry. The English critic just quoted declared, however, that there was "not an atom of charlatanism" in his performance; "there was no trick, no violent gesture, nor any approach to the *ad captandum* school"; and the eminent French critic, Jules Janin, wrote: "C'est un honnête jeune homme sans charlatan-

isme, qui ignore le grand art Italien de préparer un succès de longue main." In America, Ole Bull wrote and played a piece called *Niagara*, concerning which N. P. Willis wrote: "It must be said that Ole Bull has, genius-like, refused to misinterpret the voice within him—refused to play the charlatan, and 'bring the house down'—*as he might well have done by any kind of 'uttermost,' from the drums and trumpets of the orchestra*."

Why the pedants looked on him as a charlatan was explained by the New York *Tribune:* "Like every man of remarkable and pronounced genius, he is a phenomenon. He has his own standards; he makes his own rules. It is useless to pursue him with the traditional rules. His orbit will not be prescribed or prophesied, for it is eccentric. Ole Bull stands in direct opposition to the classical school, of which the peculiarity is to subdue the artist to the music. He is essentially romantic. His performance, beyond any we have ever heard, is picturesque. He uses music as color, and it matters nothing to him if the treatment be more or less elaborate or rhythmical or detailed, if it succeed in striking the hearer with the vivid impression sought. It is unavoidable, therefore, that he is called a charlatan. It is natural that the classical artists are amazed at this bold buccaneer, roving the great sea of musical approbation and capturing the costliest prizes of applause."

The irregularity which displeased the pedants and classicists was the very thing that made the masses—and the men of genius—delight in the art of Ole Bull. Personality is essential to success in music, and the more of personality—individuality—an artist has, the more he must leave the beaten path. It was the beaten path that displeased Bull when, as a youth, he travelled 500 miles to hear Spohr play with other German musicians at a festival. He was so disillusioned that he came near giving up music

and returning to his college studies. Luckily he did not do so, but went to Paris. There he heard, among others, Paganini, whose amazing skill made on him the same impression it did on Liszt. Fired with ambition, he applied himself assiduously to the task of equalling the Italian wizard, and in the opinion of many he quite succeeded. But whereas Paganini relied chiefly on his ability to dazzle, Bull made technic a means to an end and placed his chief reliance in the infinitely higher art of moving his hearers by the soulful rendering of simple melodies.

At the very beginning of his career he was severely criticised in a Milan journal. Instead of taking this amiss, he called on the critic and said: "It is not enough to tell me my faults, you must tell me how to rid myself of them." The journalist replied: "You have the spirit of a true artist. I shall introduce you to a singing-master. It is in the art of song that you will find the key to the beauties of music in general and the hidden capacities of the violin in particular; for the violin most resembles the human voice."

That same evening he took the young violinist to an aged singer who knew the traditions of the great masters and artists. "Ole Bull used to say," we read in his wife's Memoir, "that never in his life had he been so impressed as by this old singer whose voice was broken. He found in his delivery and style the clew to the power which he had admired in the great artists. Now to him also was the secret revealed. He at once became a pupil, devoting himself to continuous study and practice for six months under the guidance of able masters, throwing his whole heart and soul into his work. From this ardent study, assisted by eminent teachers of Italian song, came his command of melody, which enabled him to reproduce with their true native character the most delicate and varied modifications of foreign music that he met with—Italian, Spanish, Irish,

Arabian, Hungarian, as well as the national songs of his own country."

It was by his inspired playing of these Norwegian folk tunes that he won many of his greatest triumphs. The authors of folk songs are unknown to fame, but many of these melodies are so beautiful that the greatest composers have been glad to borrow and incorporate them in their masterworks. Bull's arrangements of Norwegian melodies betray a master hand, and he played them as no one but himself (or Grieg, had be been a violinist) could have played them. In the music he made were reflected the experiences of his boyhood. As a child he had a passion for two things—music and nature. He was never so happy as when his grandmother told him ghost stories and sang the wild songs of the peasantry. "He was very fond of composing original melodies, and in these he took especial pains to imitate the voices of nature: the wind in the trees, the rustle of the leaves, the call of birds, the babble of brooks, the roar of water-falls, and the weird sounds heard among his native mountains." He and his six brothers used to select sea-shells of different tones to blow upon, and they experimented until they succeeded in producing pleasing musical effects. When he got his violin he sometimes played almost incessantly night and day, hardly eating or sleeping in the meantime.

For the student who would like to know the secrets of Ole Bull's success the most important of the details related by his wife concerning his boyhood is a ghost story. Ole used to *seek out the most solitary places*, where he could sit and play undisturbed. Soon alarming rumors about ghosts, trolls, and other supernatural beings went abroad at Valestrand. The peasants whispered that fiddle strains had been heard at most unseasonable hours from the very mountains. At last some of the men ventured timorously to investigate. Taking the sounds as a guide, they came to

the bottom of a "giant's caldron," and there came across the boy fiddling weird dances and marches.

What does this little story teach? It teaches the vastly important lesson that a young violinist likely to make his mark will, like little Ole, want to *play for his own pleasure and not for others.* The ordinary kind of fiddler is eager chiefly to show what a brilliant player he is. That kind of a musician never reaches the first rank. He loves himself more than he loves the Muse of music, and the Muse resents that.

XXII

SPOHR AND JOACHIM

Louis Spohr

One interesting incident in Ole Bull's career to which no reference is made in the foregoing chapter was his attempt to study with Louis Spohr; but that eminent German violinist refused to give lessons to the nineteen-year-old untrained and untamed Norwegian.

"My music is not likely to appeal to the public and to arouse the enthusiasm of the masses."

In that sentence the academic, classical Spohr indicates, in his autobiography, the point wherein he chiefly differs from Ole Bull and the other violinists considered in the foregoing pages. And yet he was a most successful musician—successful as player, as conductor, as composer, as teacher. For decades, says the historian Riemann, "Spohr was the most prominent of Germany's musical notabilities." The chief ambition of the directors of music festivals was to secure him as soloist and as conductor of his own very popular works.

It was to cultivated musicians and auditors that Spohr made his principal appeal. He was born (1784) two years after Paganini, and repeatedly heard that Italian magician, but was not particularly impressed with his light, piquant effects of bowing. Brilliant passages abound in his own violin concertos, but they are usually made an integral part of the composition instead of being treated as mere

embroideries. His large fingers had amazing strength, and he executed with the greatest ease wide stretches and difficult double-stops. His bodily vigor and robust health were important aids to success. They enabled him, in his student days, to practise ten hours a day and later in life to endure the interminable journeys on jolting stage-coaches to which popular soloists were condemned in his day.

All the musical countries of Europe were visited by him, but he was not equally successful in all. The French found him too serious and somewhat dull. In Italy there were some who thought he brought back the large dignified manner of violin playing cultivated in former times by their own Pugnani and Tartini; but most of the Italians preferred the new Paganini style, and Spohr found so little popular support on his Italian tour of 1815–16 that he had to borrow money in Switzerland to pay for his return to Germany.

In England he had the greatest financial success of his life—like most Continental artists before America began to be visited by them. There, as in Germany, he was admired particularly for the way in which he made the instrument *sing* slow melodies. He humanized the violin, and his tone, also, was almost as big as a singer's. "The soul he breathes into his playing, the flight of his fantasy, the fire, the tenderness, the depth of his feeling, his fine taste and his grasping of the spirit of widely different compositions and his ability to reproduce each work in the spirit of the composer—these things stamp him the true artist," wrote a prominent German critic of his day.

Although Spohr's technical skill was second only to Paganini's, he belonged, as the foregoing shows, to the class of interpreters rather than to that of virtuosos. He abhorred the trickery and charlatanry of which Paganini often was guilty. His success was aided by his gentlemanly

and thoroughly artistic personality. Like Beethoven and Liszt, he had a way, from his youth up, of making members of the nobility understand that men of genius also are aristocrats. In London, the Dukes of Sussex and Clarence treated him and his wife with the same distinction as the invited guests of the court circle.

Joseph Joachim

It was unfortunate for Spohr that he was overrated as a composer. The pendulum in such a case usually swings too far the other way. Although he trained nearly two hundred pupils, none of them succeeded in maintaining the public's interest in his concertos. At this crisis Joseph Joachim came to the rescue. The Spohr concertos were among his favorite concert numbers, and, thanks to him chiefly, Spohr's life as a composer was maintained several decades after his body was laid in the grave.

It was Hungary that gave to the world not only Remenyi but Joachim, who became known as the "king of violinists," as the Hungarian Liszt was known as the "king of pianists."

Joachim's parents were of the Jewish persuasion, but he embraced the Christian religion in 1854. Though not born at Pesth, the family moved to that city in 1833, when he was only two years old, and he thus had the advantage of being educated in the Hungarian metropolis. Musically, however, this came near being a calamity. It so happened that the boy's first teacher paid so little attention to his bowing that when he subsequently was taken to Georg Hellmesberger, that eminent expert found his bowing so stiff that he declared he would never amount to anything as a player; and father Joachim was so much impressed by this verdict that he made up his mind to give up the idea of a musical career for his son.

Fortunately, at this moment, the eminent violinist Ernst appeared on the scene. He divined little Joseph's exceptional musical gifts and advised that he should be placed with Joseph Böhm, another noted master of the violin and teacher. Böhm took him into his own house and taught him for three years. Joachim's biographer, Andreas Moser (who was his assistant for more than a decade at the Berlin Academy of Music), admits frankly that Joachim's subsequent "great skill in imparting a special physiognomy to each manner of bowing, the capacity of calmly spinning a long tone with his bow, the pithiness of his half-bow, his spiccato in all nuances 'from snow and rain to hail,' the equalized tone-production in all parts of the finger-board, in short, all the peculiarities which adorn Joachim's method of playing the violin, have their root in the excellent method of Böhm. And Joachim simply exercises the duty of loyalty and gratitude in repeating over and over again that he owes to his Viennese teacher everything he learned about playing the violin."

So far as technical execution is concerned, Joseph Joachim was a finished artist when he left Böhm to go to Leipsic, in 1843, to enter the newly founded conservatory. He played for Mendelssohn, who was so much impressed by the skill of the twelve-year-old boy that he sent to his guardians a report containing advice, in its second part, which all young students of the violin—or other instruments—should take to heart:

"The *Posaunenengel* has no more need of a conservatory for his instrument, nor, in fact, of any teacher in violin playing. He may confidently work on by himself, and from time to time play for David, to get his advice and criticism. For the rest, I shall myself frequently and regularly play with the boy and be his musical adviser. At the same time he did his exercises in harmony so correctly that I urgently advise him to continue this branch with

Hauptmann, in order that he may learn everything that later may and must be expected of a genuine artist. By far the greatest importance attaches, however, to the boy's getting a thorough education in scientific branches, and I myself will see that this is given to him by qualified teachers."

Mendelssohn himself was not only a thoroughly well-educated gentleman, but he appreciated the growing value of general culture to a musician. When he discovered, somewhat later, that Joachim was a reader of good books and could quote from them, his interest in him became more cordial still. He paved the way to his success in London, making it clear to the directors of the Philharmonic Society that this boy was not an ordinary prodigy, but a real artist who simply happened to be still very young.

His object in having him appear at that early age in England was to win for him the good-will of music lovers. That object having been achieved, Mendelssohn gave his guardians some further advice, invaluable to all who have charge of boys or girls whose talent develops prematurely:

"I now wish that he may return soon, to rest far from all contact with public music life. He ought to devote the next two or three years entirely to the education of his mind, from every point of view, and at the same time to train himself in all branches of his art in which he still is deficient, without neglecting what he has already attained. He should compose diligently, and more diligently still go walking and tend to his bodily development, so that he may be three years hence as healthy a youth in body and mind as he is now as a boy. Without complete rest I consider that impossible."

It is for lack of a Mendelssohn to give them such advice that many a child prodigy of promise has come to grief. Josef Hofmann came near sharing this fate; he was rescued just in time through the generosity of an American

admirer, and Hofmann, instead of collapsing in his childhood, grew up to be one of the leading artists of his time, as Joachim did of his.

At the age of sixteen, Joachim was already a teacher at the Leipsic Conservatory, being considerably younger than some of his pupils. Three years later he accepted an offer from Liszt to come to Weimar and be concert-master of the opera of that town, at which Liszt was bringing out *Lohengrin* and many other works of young and untried composers. During the three years he was associated with Liszt he profited, as a matter of course, greatly, like all those who were intimates of that wonderful man; but he was not in sympathy with Liszt's music, or with that of Wagner, or Berlioz, and Liszt's other modern idols. His own idol was Brahms, and to the furtherance of his art and that of the old classical masters, as well as of the modern romanticists, Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Schumann, he devoted his skill as a violinist and his influence as a teacher, which he exercised, to the considerable detriment of modern music of the kinds he disliked, during the four decades of his directorship of the Academy of Music in Berlin.

Joachim owed his success to innate talent and to the academic thoroughness of his knowledge. As a matter of course, he scorned to make the least use of his great technical skill to dazzle his hearers. The music he chiefly played—Beethoven, Bach, Brahms—did not appeal to such hearers anyway. To him Brahms owes more of his fame in Germany, and still more in England, than to all other musicians combined. It is a wonderful example, showing what a missionary can do with zeal and perseverance.

As a player, Joachim was often compared to Hans von Bülow; his champions maintain, however, that he never revealed, as Bülow so often did, a didactic purpose in his

public playing, but confined his teaching to the class-room. It is admitted by so ardent an admirer of his as Fuller Maitland that "his tone was always distinguished by virile energy rather than by voluptuous roundness." Another admirer, Dr. Hanslick, conceded with reference to Joachim's specialty — the Beethoven concerto — that Vieuxtemps played it more brilliantly, with more animation, with a more overwhelming temperament, for the lack of which qualities, however, Joachim atoned by greater depth and ethical power. Nor did Hanslick deny that Joachim missed many of the finer, more touching details; and he adds: "There were places in Beethoven's work which would have appealed more directly to the heart as played by the subtle, sensitive Hellmesberger than they did as played with the unyielding Roman seriousness of Joachim."

Joachim's playing, in a word, was deficient in sensuous richness and emotional warmth. He did not move to tears. "He can make me cry all he chooses," wrote Amy Fay of Liszt; but, she adds, "Joachim, whom I think divine, never moved me." His strength was on the intellectual side of art, and that is why he became even more famous as a quartet player than as a soloist. In chamber music he was an unrivalled leader; as a soloist he has had many equals and some superiors. He did not deserve the epithet "king of violinists."

Nor did he create, as is commonly supposed, a new "school" of violin playing. His official and "inspired" biographer, Moser, himself takes pains (second edition, p. 219), to demolish this error; he points out that the so-called "Joachim School" is simply a compound of the best Italian, German, and French traditions. He also gives a list of Joachim's pupils; in it are the names of ten women, four of whom—Dora Becker, Eleonore Jackson, Geraldine Morgan, and Maud Powell—are American.

When the sixteenth anniversary of Joachim's entry into public life was celebrated in Berlin, 116 of his violin and viola pupils, past and present, and 24 violoncellists who had attended his ensemble classes, took part in a concert given in his honor.*

* It was hoped that Joachim would follow the example of Spohr, Baillot, De Bériot, David, and other great violin masters and write a method of instruction. He abstained, partly because he had never given elementary lessons. His assistant, Moser, however, has performed this task in the spirit of his master. Four notable points in this work (of which there is an edition with English text may be referred to: (1) expression and phrasing are taught at an early stage, and use is made, for this purpose, of folk songs among the exercises; (2) the advice is given that lessons should begin in the eighth to the tenth year; (3) teachers are impressed with the importance of letting the youngest pupils play on smaller instruments, suited to their hands; (4) students are urged to sing every melody before they play it—or, in default of a voice, to whistle it—but whistling is an abomination which nothing can justify.

XXIII

WILHELMJ AND KREISLER

August Wilhelmj

"Is it possible that there can be the least hesitation concerning your boy's career? He is a born musician. He is so entirely predestined for the violin, that if the instrument did not already exist it would have to be invented for him."

It was Franz Liszt who gave this verdict when he heard August Wilhelmj, a youth of fifteen, play for him at Weimar. August's father wanted him to become a lawyer, but the boy was eager to be a musician, and at his urgent request the father promised to let him have his way, providing that some high authority would testify to his chances of success. Liszt's enthusiastic endorsement settled the matter.

A few days later Liszt took August to Leipsic and placed him in charge of the great violinist David, whose favorite pupil he soon became. "It is a delight to listen to him," David used to say; "difficulties do not exist for him." When David published his *Violin School* he took a portrait of Wilhelmj for the vignette, which represents the picture of an ideal violinist.*

Liszt and David were not the first to go into raptures over Wilhelmj's playing. When he was only seven years old, Henriette Sontag heard him at Wiesbaden, and he played with such brilliant execution that she kissed him

* *The Musical Times*. London, June, 1901.

and exclaimed: "Some day you will be the German Paganini."

Artists have found it advantageous to shorten their names, leaving out the middle one. Wilhelmj had to leave out four middle ones, his full-name having been August Emil Daniel Ferdinand Victor Wilhelmj (the j is pronounced ee). His father was also an excellent violinist, as well as a famous grower of Rhine wines. He still played his instrument daily at the age of ninety. The mother was musical, too, having been a pupil of Chopin. Their boy made his first public appearance in 1854, and two years later, when he was eleven years old, he created a sensation at a concert in Wiesbaden. Then came the visit to Liszt and the Leipsic studies under David, which lasted from 1861 to 1864. In 1862 he successfully ran the gantlet of German criticism by playing at a Gewandhaus concert the Hungarian concerto of Joachim.

It was through the influence of Jenny Lind that he made his first appearance in London, in 1866, after he had toured in Switzerland and Holland. "A greater success could not have been possibly achieved," was the journalistic report. In Paris the saying was: "Inconnu hier, le voila célèbre aujourd'hui." Italy went into raptures; so did Russia. In St. Petersburg, Berlioz attended one of his concerts, and exclaimed: "Never before have I heard a violinist with a tone so grand, so enchanting, and so noble as that of August Wilhelmj."

The finest feather in his cap was the enthusiasm of Richard Wagner. When Wagner made preparations for his first Bayreuth Festival, he searched all Europe for the best singers and players. Hans Richter was invited to be the conductor, and to Wilhelmj fell the honor of being engaged as concert-master—that is, leader of the violins in the select orchestra. It was during the rehearsals for this festival that I first saw Wilhelmj driving up to the theatre

with Wagner. And how his intensely beautiful tone rose here and there above that of the other players, first-class though they were—like a great prima donna's voice in an operatic ensemble! The players themselves were so enthusiastic over his example and achievements that they sent him at the conclusion an address of thanks.

The volume of Wagner's letters to the singers and players who aided him at his festivals * includes fourteen to Wilhelmj, discussing details regarding orchestral matters. The most important of these letters is one in which Wagner says: "I am thinking of teaching the young folks something before I die, particularly tempo—that is, interpretation"; and then invites Wilhelmj to assist him in this task at Bayreuth.

One of the ways in which Wilhelmj showed his admiration of Wagner was by arranging some of his operatic melodies for violin and piano, among them the *Siegfried Paraphrase*, concerning which Liszt wrote to him: "From the first to the last bar it is excellent."

It was through Wilhelmj that Londoners got their first opportunity to hear Hans Richter, who became such a powerful missionary for modern music. As a teacher of the violin, also, Wilhelmj exerted a salutary influence on English musical life, as he gave lessons for some years at the Guildhall Music School. That he did not neglect to visit America it is needless to say; and here, as in Europe, in Asia, in Australia, his success was sensational. To what was his success due?

When Liszt introduced him as a youth to David, he said: "I bring you the future Paganini." Now, Wilhelmj always liked to play Paganini because it was fun for him to "ride the dangerous breakers" of that difficult music. But his heart was in the works of the classical and romantic mas-

* *Richard Wagner an seine Künstler.* Schuster & Loeffler, Berlin, 1908.

ters. These he played in a way to arouse the enthusiasm of even the unmusical. His tone had incomparable sensuous beauty, and a warmth that tempted the critics to use the word "seething." But, above all things, he was emotional in his style; he had temperament and personality; he could sway strong men as a storm sways trees. When Count von Moltke visited Wiesbaden, in 1877, his first inquiry was for Wilhelmj. When the violinist played for him he cried like a child, and afterward said: "It carries one above this mortal world." There's the secret!

Fritz Kreisler

In the closing paragraph of his essay, *On Conducting*, Richard Wagner sneers at Joachim and declares that he has no use for violinists except in the plural. He made an exception in favor of Wilhelmj, and he would have certainly made another in favor of Fritz Kreisler had he lived to hear him. Joachim played little but classical music, and played it dryly—like a professor. Kreisler also plays much classical music, but he plays it like a poet—with deep feeling. His tone is as juicy as Hawaiian sugar-cane, and it has that great variety of sensuous and emotional shading which Wagner thought could be obtained only by having violinists "in the plural"—twenty or more playing together. When he performs the Beethoven concerto, for instance, and reaches the magnificent cadenza he has written for it, one hardly notices when the orchestra stops, so full, so rich, so polyphonic, so highly colored is the soloist's part.

Fritz Kreisler arouses the same unbounded enthusiasm by his violin playing that Paderewski does when he gives a recital, and it is the enthusiasm of the most cultured audiences, which counts for infinitely more, and is very much harder to arouse than the frenzied applause a mixed au-

dience bestows on a coloratura singer or fiddler. If he pleases, he can rival any Kubelik in playing harmonics, or pizzicati with the left hand while the right continues bowing, or other dazzling tricks of that sort. Luckily he prefers the higher regions of art, and, as the size of his audiences shows, there are many music lovers ready to follow him in his upward flight. He does not need to advertise a program of technical fireworks in order to attract the public; and he has proved that it is possible to please the public with better things than double harmonics, rebounding bows, and banjo pizzicati.

It would have been easier for him to attract attention by means of fireworks, but he preferred the quieter and more enduring way, although that implied a much harder struggle. To quote his own words to an English magazine writer: * "I am thirty-three now, and from the age of twenty to twenty-seven I struggled hard for recognition, though I played every bit as well then as I do now, but people did not understand it."

Perseverance was evidently one of the main secrets of Kreisler's success. Had he become discouraged during those seven lean years, he would not now be the man highest up in the violin world.

When he plays the Beethoven concerto, Kreisler seems like an inspired prophet; especially when he proclaims that magnificent cadenza in it. After one of these performances I wrote that in an experience of over a quarter of a century as a musical critic I had never heard such great violin playing. He even made me interested in the Brahms concerto, which is little short of a miracle. This concerto was written, as a German wit remarked, "against the violin rather than for it"; but Kreisler overcomes its formidable difficulties — which appalled even Brahms's high priest, Joachim — with apparent nonchalance, and

* B. Henderson, in *The Strad*, October, 1908.

makes it seem as easy to play a concerto as to shake hands. It recalls the story of the Irishman who, on being asked whether he could play the violin, answered: "I don't know —I've never tried."

Kreisler needs no imposing concerto to impress the public; he can as easily cast a spell over it with a short piece. He has made a specialty of small pieces by Tartini, Couperin, Pugnani, Lolli, Francœur, Martini, and other eighteenth-century composers—forgotten "trifles" which, as played by him, are seen to be little masterpieces. As an English critic has remarked: "He makes the old music live without forcing it into a modern shape, and he has the instinct, which hardly another artist has ever possessed, of making the subtle differences between the French and Italian styles clearly felt." At the same time he can play Vienna waltzes as only an Austrian (Kreisler was born at Vienna in 1875) can play them—with a swing, a rubato, that are altogether enchanting. Nor does he hesitate—and this is another secret of his success—to play such dance pieces at his recitals. He is sensible enough to hold that since all the great masters, from Bach to the present day, wrote dance pieces a serious violinist need not hesitate to play them in public.

Every popular artist has a sort of hall mark which the public always looks for. Kreisler's hall mark is the Dvořák *Humoreske*, arranged by him for violin; this every Kreisler audience wants to hear—and no wonder, for he plays it entrancingly. In calling this piece—which seems Viennese rather than Bohemian—a *Humoreske*, Dvořák must have had in mind the undercurrent of sadness which it has been said characterizes the best specimens of humor. In Kreisler's hands it is all undercurrent. Exquisitely tender in itself, he plays it with such delicacy of touch, such warmth of color, such poignancy of accent that sensitive listeners are moved to tears.

If you can move *cultured* listeners to tears you are an artist of the highest type, and your success is assured. Fritz Kreisler is the greatest of living violinists because he is of all of them the most emotional, the most tear-compelling. He has what all artists so eagerly crave—temperament; and temperament, in the last analysis, is feeling plus the power to make the audience share your feeling.

The leading Berlin critic, Dr. Leopold Schmidt, in writing about Kreisler, said a few years ago: "He can now be compared only with the greatest of the violinists; and even in doing this one comes across many traits of excellence which are found only in him. . . . What I esteem above all things in Kreisler is the warmth which characterizes his playing, beginning with his silken tone. Say what you please, music is an emotional art, and it never quite takes hold of us unless it is exercised as such."

After one of Kreisler's recitals in New York, in the artist's room a little girl of five walked up to him and said: "I like your playing." She spoke for the whole audience. Few could have explained why they liked it; but they felt it. Feeling is the alpha and the omega of music. It must begin with it and end with it. The rest is mere technic —empty juggling with tones *à la* Max Reger.

There are, however, feelings and feelings. The feelings of a cultivated person differ from those of the uncultivated; they are more refined, more intense, more enduring. Kreisler's feelings are exceptionally refined and intellectualized because he is a man of exceptional mind. He might have become equally famous in some other art or profession calling for unusual intellectual power. I have talked with only one or two other musicians knowing as much as he does about things in general and philosophy in particular. He frequently emphasizes his conviction that

many musicians fail because they devote too much time to music and not enough to other things that train and broaden the mind.

He believes that if one practises well in youth the fingers should retain their suppleness in later years. To the *Strad* writer he remarked that the idea that one must practise several hours daily is the result of a self-hypnotism which really creates that necessity. He laughingly added: "I have hypnotized myself into the belief that I do not need it, and therefore I do not." He is a hard worker, nevertheless; but he does not neglect recreation, being an ardent lover of country life and an enthusiastic motorist. "He believes that an artist should not be compelled to play when he feels that he cannot do himself justice, and that he is not in a position to give us his best when he is continually strung up by travelling, rehearsing, and playing (as it were) to order." These things, alas! are true; but where's the remedy?

While collecting material for this volume I wrote to Mr. Kreisler for his opinion as to what helped him most to win his success. He replied:

"As for the hints to students I might add that in reviewing the influences that made me, I really can only see three great outstanding powerful factors: (1) my work, (2) my wife's love and help, and (3) my robust health. (1) My work branches into musical and general studies (such as philosophy, history, natural sciences, mathematics, Greek, Latin, and modern languages), and I am inclined to lay more stress on the ultimate beneficial influence of my general studies. My work in the sphere of music subdivides itself into purely violinistic and general musical studies (such as musical science, instrumentation, knowledge of the great symphonic and operatic masterworks, chamber music, piano playing, score reading, etc.), and here again I attach more importance to my *general* musical

training than to the purely violinistic, as probably the more powerful factor in making me.

"(2) and (3). As to the other two great influences in my life, the love and help of my dear wife and companion, and my robust health, I can only humbly and thankfully acknowledge their tremendous power in the making of me, without any further comment, which might, I fear, discourage such colleagues and students as have not been blessed with the gift of those two invaluable treasures."

PART V

TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND PUPILS

XXIV

SOME FAMOUS TEACHERS

WILLIAM MASON: AN AMERICAN PIONEER

IT is often said that only one or two of every hundred students of music succeed in becoming public performers; the others—unless they change their profession—being "condemned to the drudgery of teaching."

"Condemned," indeed! Is there no drudgery in the career of a singer or player? And, on the other hand, cannot a teacher win fame and fortune quite as well as a pianist or a prima donna?

The late William Mason was proof incarnate that a man does not necessarily make a mistake when he deliberately prefers teaching to playing in public. Did not his own teacher, Liszt, do the same thing in the last three decades of his life?

It was as a pianist that Mason began his career, after his return from Europe, in 1854. He used to express the belief that he was the first who dared to tour this country without a singer or player to give variety to the entertainment. Musical taste was extremely crude in those days; what his audiences liked best was such a feat as playing *Yankee Doodle* and *Old Hundred* simultaneously, one with the right hand, the other with the left. Under such circumstances, it must be admitted, it required no great self-

abnegation on the part of the young man to give up playing and turn to teaching.

It is fortunate that he decided to do so. As a player he could have done little more at that time than amuse idle crowds; as a teacher he could do his share—and a good share it was—of the educational work needed to raise American taste in music to a higher level.

For his own fame and worldly comfort also, it was lucky that Dr. Mason left the platform for the studio. Though he had remarkable gifts, it is not likely that he would have won a place among the foremost players; but as a teacher he rose to the first rank.

When he was a student it was absolutely necessary to go to Europe for a musical education. In the last three decades of his career it was no longer necessary to do so, and it was largely through his efforts that this change was brought about.

Mason imparted to his pupils a technic which had among other merits, that of devitalizing muscular action in such a way that fatigue was reduced to a minimum—an enormous advantage when one considers how many hours a day even famous professional pianists are obliged to practise.

By precept and example he taught the secret of that variety of touch which helps the pedal in securing the richness and the chameleonic changes of tone-color demanded by modern concert-goers.

The most important element in musical expression, as in elocution, is accentuation, and to this Mason paid special attention from the beginning, both as a pianist and a teacher. "All music," he said, "is full of nuances and accents of greater or less intensity, to which pupils hardly ever give any attention." He made them attend to these nuances, following the example of Liszt, who was particularly insistent on accentuation. But Mason had learned

the value of accentuation before he went abroad, as the impressive anecdote related in his book of *Reminiscences* (pp. 22–24) shows.

Had Dr. Mason taught technic alone he would never have become as famous as he did. It was his regard for expression that made him a model teacher.

His pupils felt that they were getting *results*—and that is why they all recommended him to other students, and why, finally, they came to him in such numbers that his Steinway Hall studio could hardly hold them.

He held pronounced views as to the importance of providing good instruments for beginners. An expert pianist, he said, can get a fairly good tone out of almost any piano, but young folks ought to have their ear for beauty cultivated by having mellow tones at their command from the beginning.

In discussing pianists of the day, Dr. Mason and I had many an "indignation meeting" at the modern tendency to play fast music too fast—in what Bülow called the "sewing-machine" style, and recalling Schumann's amusing directions, in one of his pieces, "as fast as possible" followed by "still faster."

He lived eighty years, but, till nearly the end, his short, stocky figure, inclined to stoutness,and his kindly face, were a familiar and welcome sight in New York concert halls. Unlike so many professionals, he was always sympathetically interested in the new composers and players. From Paderewski and MacDowell down, those who had real talent found an enthusiastic and appreciative friend in William Mason and a welcome at his home, where one could always find the elect of the musical world.

MacDowell was one of his great enthusiasms, and he has told us in his book how he made converts for him by playing his sonatas till the hearers became enthusiastic, too.

Of his tact and skill in adapting himself to circumstances,

Mr. W. S. B. Mathews gives an illustration in *The Musician.* In 1855 Mason accepted a group of pupils in one of the most fashionable boarding schools in New York. "They were mostly Southern girls, with fine ears and no industry. It was to overcome the repugnance of these charming creatures to master the key-board which led Mason to inventing one after another the devices of his system of technics—devices many of which he had learned from observing the practice of artists, and some of which he invented on the spot. As a teacher, he was the artist teacher rather than what the Germans call the 'pedagogue.' That is to say, the real thing with Mason was for the pupil to learn to play *music;* the exercises were merely means for arriving at the technic of expressing music.

"He was, so far as I know," Mr. Mathews continues, "absolutely the first piano teacher to set about teaching a musical touch and an all-round, varied tone-production as a part of elementary study. To give an idea of how far away teachers then were, and often still are, from understanding that the first thing in mastering any instrument is and must be to learn to make a good tone upon it, I will mention what a very celebrated teacher said to me—a teacher of European education. We were speaking of teaching, when he wound up the story with the dictum: 'Touch is the last thing to teach!' This was exactly the opposite of Mason's idea, as it is of all good ideas. And all that his exercises were intended to promote, his own playing illustrated in every line.

"Mason's attitude toward his instrument was that of the violinist who seeks the best instrument attainable and buys it at great cost."

Leschetizky, Paderewski's Teacher

For nearly half a century Franz Liszt devoted a considerable part of his time to giving free instruction to young

pianists. This accounts for the enormous number of his "pupils" up and down the world; a list of them takes up, as previously noted, six pages of Göllerich's biography of the great pianist. But Liszt died in 1886, and the young women and men had to look about for another instructor. Rubinstein never took many pupils, and died, moreover, eight years after Liszt. The great successor of these masters, Paderewski, has had no time or inclination to teach; but it so happened that in 1886, when he was twenty-six years old, he followed the advice of Mme. Modjeska and became a pupil of Leschetizky, with whom he studied four years; and when he became a leader among the pianists of our time, students began to flock to his teacher in the hope of discovering the secret of his success. Thus it came about that Leschetizky became the successor of Liszt as a teacher of nearly everybody who is anybody among the younger pianists. His house in Vienna became the rendezvous of a vast number of students, most of them foreigners, particularly Americans; the Viennese, indeed, got the habit of refering to his "American colony" at Währing.

Undoubtedly, Leschetizky has had in his classes more pianists who became famous than any other teacher excepting Liszt. Some of his pupils, indeed, paid him the compliment of seeking his aid when they were already celebrated. Among the well-known names in his list are Paderewski, Slivinski, Essipoff, Gabrilowitch, Hambourg, Bloomfield Zeisler, Ethel Newcomb, Helen Hopekirk, Katherine Goodson, Edward Schütt.

Leschetizky has never published a "method"—he even objects to that term, because he does not claim to have a special technical method. But two of his pupils have brought out books on some of his most important principles, and both have his approval. They are *The Groundwork of the Leschetizky Method*, by Malwine Brée (admirably Englished by Dr. Theodore Baker), and *The Hand*

of the Pianist, by Marie Unschuld. A vivid account of his classes, his personality, and his life is given by Annette Hullah, in her *Theodor Leschetizky;* and there is also a gossipy volume on him by the Comtesse Angèle Potocka, who comments, among other things, on his ability to recognize talent at once. When he first brought out Paderewski, a Viennese musician remarked that "the young man did not seem to promise much"; but his teacher retorted: "My dear sir, you will have to get used to hearing that young man's name."

Some of the details given by the Countess give the impression that this teacher must be a most irascible old gentleman. We read of his "thundering rage"; of his "throwing music at pupils"; of "the often hasty retreat of the unfortunate pupil." But there was method in this "madness."

Gabrilowitch relates that when he came to Leschetizky from Rubinstein his new master thought he must of necessity have what Americans call the "big head." "A little cold water, he reasoned, might do me good. I played a Beethoven sonata, and then he began! Such a rating I hope never to receive again. I was terribly humiliated and concluded naturally that I couldn't play a note. Then and there I made up my mind to give up music altogether and to make a fresh start at something else. But the next day I changed my mind. No one could have been more sympathetic than my master when, with an odd little twinkle, he said: 'You mustn't mind my little tantrum; it was for your own good. From now on we'll make splendid progress together.' Perhaps," concludes Gabrilowitch, "I did have the big head. But Leschetizky cured me—at least I hope so."

"Cures" are a specialty of this teacher. "I am a doctor," he says, "to whom pupils come as patients to be cured of their musical ailments, and the remedy must vary

in each case." He takes special pleasure in finding remedies for unusual ailments.

Unlike Liszt, Leschetizky gives instruction in technical matters; at any rate he did so until the number of his pupils became too large. In 1906 there were over 150, and he employed a number of assistants, giving his time—three hours a day—only to those who had been properly prepared and were sufficiently advanced to benefit by his personal instruction.

Fannie Bloomfield Zeisler says that Leschetizky's method is to have no fixed method. "Of course there are certain preparatory exercises which with slight variations he wants all his pupils to go through. But it is not so much the exercises in themselves as the patience and painful persistence in executing them to which they owe their virtue. . . . Leschetizky, without any particular method, is a great force by virtue of his tremendously interesting personality and his great qualities as an artist. He is himself a never-ending source of inspiration. At seventy-eight he is still a youth, full of vitality and enthusiasm. Some pupil who is diffident, but has merit, he will encourage; another he will incite by sarcasm; still another he will scold outright. Practical illustration on the piano, showing 'how not to do it,' telling of pertinent stories to elucidate a point, are among the means which he constantly employs to bring out the best that is in his pupils." *

"He has the genius for seizing on what the finest artists do in their best moments," says Henry C. Lahee,† "observing how they do it physically, and, in a sense, systematizing it. . . . He has no 'method' except perhaps in the

* The same brilliant Chicago pianist is cited by Genevieve Bisbee as having once said: "Yes, Leschetizky is awful to study with, but, were he to kick me down the front steps, I would crawl to him again up the back steps."

† *Famous Pianists of To-day and Yesterday.*

technical groundwork—the grammar of piano-forte playing —and this is taught by his assistants. So long as the effect is produced, he is not pedantic as to how it is done, there being many ways to attain the same end."

Annette Hullah, who has written the best book on Leschetizky, mentions, among the technical characteristics noticeable in his pupils, emphasized rhythm, clearness, inaudible pedallings, and brilliance in staccato passages. "He lays special stress on a few points: the development of strength and sensitiveness in the finger tips; clear distinction between the many varieties of touch; the necessity of an immaculate pedalling." On another point he is inexorable: the necessity of concentrated thought. The pupil has to take one bar or phrase at a time and make it at once as perfect as he can, deciding on every detail of fingering, touch, pedalling, accent, etc. He must know this so thoroughly that he can see in his mind what is written, each bar being engraved on it as on a map. "One page a day so learned will give you a trunkful of music for your repertoire at the end of the year," he says, "and, moreover, it will remain securely in your memory." This method of study will, he further maintains, serve as an antidote to stage fright.

No one could be more broad-minded than this great teacher. Concerning his way of teaching, he says to his pupils: "I have thought over these things all my life, but if you can find better ways than mine I will adopt them—yes, and I will take two lessons of you and give you a thousand florins a lesson."

At the time when he was a concert pianist he practised only three hours a day at most, and he thinks that four or five hours should be enough for any one. He never takes students for a few lessons, and acknowledges as his real pupils only those who have studied with him at least two years. He demands the most intense concentrated interest

in the lessons and in the music played, and "enthusiasm he must and will have." In teaching he uses a second piano adjoining the pupil's, on which he frequently illustrates the points he explains. He needs no printed music for this, his remarkable memory enabling him to remember in detail any piece he has heard once.

The career of Leschetizky, like that of William Mason, shows that highest honors are attainable by teachers as well as by players. Had he continued his career as pianist it is not likely that he would have rivalled his great countryman, Paderewski. Now he enjoys world-fame as the most successful of teachers and as the man who helped to make Paderewski the most successful of all pianists. There are two ways, particularly, in which he did this. He revealed to him the real Beethoven, and he taught him the superlative value of the pause in music, of which I spoke in the chapter on Paderewski. Concerning Beethoven, let me quote what Leschetizky said in an interview with E. Hughes:

"One must play Beethoven with feeling, with warmth. Beethoven himself hated this so-called 'classical' piano playing which so many pianists affect. That he was no pedant is shown by the fact that he wrote more expression signs in his compositions than any one else has ever done—and changed them more often! These things I had from his own pupil, Czerny, with whom I studied all of the Beethoven concertos and most of the sonatas."

As regards the value of the pause, Mary Hallock wrote, in an article on the *Elocution of Playing* "Leschetizky, whose greatness as a teacher depends so much on his dramatic sense in matters musical, makes his pupils realize thoroughly that a pause, no matter how slight, but utterly empty of sound, is as telling in music as when an orator makes use of the same in a peroration; providing,

of course, the moment grasped is at a fitting and crucial point of the piece or concerto and does not distort the time.

"A whole essay could be written on silence in music, and to how many has it occurred that so soon as the mêlée has commenced it needn't, parrot-like, assail the ears from beginning to end?"

Ottokar Ševčík, Kubelik's Teacher

What the world expects of a teacher is results. Paderewski made Leschetizky famous. No doubt he would have won distinction had he studied with some other teacher; but his countryman helped to put him on the right path and got his reward therefor. Leschetizky was lucky to have a Paderewski come to him. Luck also played a rôle in making the Bohemian violinist, Ottokar Ševčík, the fashionable teacher of his instrument. He had played in public and taught at various institutions until 1892, when he returned to Bohemia and accepted the post of principal professor of the violin at the Prague Conservatory. It happened that just about this time a Bohemian boy named Jan Kubelik entered this conservatory. Though only twelve years old, he already astonished every one by his brilliant playing. Then Ševčík took him in hand and made of him a modern Paganini, who soon became a modern Crœsus, too.

This alone would have sufficed to make the Prague Conservatory the head-quarters of violin students. But when Ševčík had sent forth two more successful illustrations of his method, Kocian and Marie Hall, the rush began. Among those eager to benefit by his instruction were sons of Wilhelmj and Hugo Heermann, and a daughter of Wieniawski. Soon the number of his pupils rose to a hundred, and, like Leschetizky, he had to engage assistants

to prepare them for an occasional lesson by himself once a month, or at best once a week.

Ševčík prides himself on "teaching his pupils how to learn," and he is credited with the gift of stimulating them to an almost superhuman exercise of patience by his personal magnetism. Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* gives this account of the method pursued under his direction by his pupils:

For as many hours daily as their strength will allow, they play small sections of passages backward and forward hundreds, even thousands, of times, in every possible fingering and variety of bowing. No other teacher of the violin has the knowledge which Ševčík possesses of the anatomical structure of the hand and arm. The position of the hand holding the violin he regulates according to the physique of the pupil, whose muscles (those controlling the fingers) are systematically trained by his exercises to respond quickly, so that in the end remarkable facility in shifting position is gained. The fingers of the left hand are kept down more rigidly than in the Joachim school, and the management of the bow is taught with extraordinary minuteness of detail. He divides it not only into the usual three sections, but also into subdivisions, and of course the pupil has to apportion each accurately in accordance with the nature of the phrase, thus acquiring great command of tone and accent. In short, under the Ševčík system, nothing is left undone that methodical training of ear or muscles can accomplish. In regard to interpretation, the professor (seated at the piano-forte) teaches all the great concertos on sound technical lines, but the development of the psychical side of the student's nature, the bringing to bear upon him of subtle influences which tend to make him a great interpretative artist, must come from without. In the case of some of his pupils, these influences appear to have been absent, but that is no fault of Ševčík, whose life-work lies in the domain of pure technique, which he teaches, not only to his pupils, but to the world, with a

passion which is akin to genius; to the world by means of his *Method*, which is a monument of patient toil that will secure him fame after his pupils are forgotten. It consists of four books.

Judging by this account, and by the playing of Ševčík's pupils, he is, unlike Liszt and Leschetizky, a teacher whose alpha and omega are technic. There is, therefore, nothing further to learn of him. How differently Fritz Kreisler, or Ysaye, or Maud Powell would teach!

How Garcia Helped Singers

It is a singular fact that the greatest teacher of the Italian *bel canto* that ever lived was a Spaniard; but this is only one of many remarkable things about Manuel Garcia. He was the brother of two women, Maria Malibran and Pauline Viardot, who rank among the greatest singers of all time; he taught Jenny Lind, Antoinette Sterling, Charles Santley, Johanna Wagner, Mathilde Marchesi, Julius Stockhausen, and others who became famous themselves or as teachers of Calvé, Eames, Melba, Henschel, Van Rooy, and Scheidemantel; he invented the laryngoscope, which not only put the study of the voice on a scientific basis, but proved such a boon to medical men that when his hundredth birthday was celebrated, sixteen societies of laryngologists from all parts of the world sent representatives to honor him; and he was one of the very few distinguished men who reached such an advanced age in full possession of their mental faculties and with enough physical vigor to go about and make speeches. Garcia came into the world in 1805, when Haydn, Beethoven, and Schubert were still living, and Wagner, Verdi, Liszt, Chopin, Mendelssohn, and Schumann not yet born; and on March 17, 1906, he celebrated the entrance into his one

hundred and second year by taking up a guitar and singing a Spanish song.

Let those who are sneered at as having become teachers because they failed as singers take heart! Manuel Garcia was one of them! He went with his father and his sisters to America and took part in the first regular season of Italian opera in New York. But although he had a good voice he found the work involved by an operatic career too hard for his physical resources. At last things reached a point at which, as he once told his biographer,* he went through every successive performance in a state of fear lest his voice should leave him suddenly when he was on the stage. Hard usage in Mexico damaged this organ, and he further injured it by trying to make it as big as Lablache's. This was after he had returned to Europe. Following the advice of his parents, he went to Naples and sang there; but the newspaper criticisms were so unfavorable that he sent them to his father as proof that he would never succeed as an opera singer. "From now onward," he wrote, "I am going to devote myself to the occupation which I love, and for which I believe I was born."

Thus he became a teacher, a profession for which he had prepared himself by learning the old Italian method of singing from his father, as well as from Zingarelli, and Ansani, while Fétis had taught him harmony. It seems strange that the man who thus failed to adapt himself to a stage career should have become the best helper other singers had ever had; but such was the case. We have seen how he helped Jenny Lind to recover and improve her voice when he himself had feared it was hopelessly lost. The rest-cure and the singing of scales and shakes *very slowly* were the method adopted in this case.

Another pupil whose voice Garcia restored was Bessie Palmer, the English contralto, who has told the story of

* *Garcia the Centenarian*. By M. Sterling Mackinlay, 1908.

her experiences in her book of *Musical Recollections*. She was first assigned to a teacher who made an incorrect diagnosis of her voice, maintaining that it was a soprano, and giving her soprano songs to sing. After some months she found her voice becoming thin and scratchy, and her throat in a constant state of irritation. At last she wrote to the superintendent, requesting that she should be placed in Garcia's class, because her teacher had quite altered the tone and quality of her voice, and had made a mistake. The superintendent answered that she could not go into Garcia's class, and, unless her present teacher would kindly take her back as his pupil, she could not return to the academy. She promptly replied that she would not rejoin that class, and certainly would not return at all. The rest of the story may be cited in her own words:

"On leaving the academy I went to Garcia's house and explained to him how my voice had been changed. He made me sing a few bars, and then told me I must rest entirely for some considerable time, not singing at all, and not talking too much, so as to give the throat, which was out of order, complete rest. After six months of quiet I went again to him, when he tried my voice and said I could now begin to practise. I therefore commenced lessons at once, and soon found it improving, thanks to the careful way in which he made me practise, bringing the voice back to its proper register, and giving me contralto songs after many lessons."

One day there came to Garcia a girl who had strained her voice by singing higher than she should have done. He told her not to sing anything in a high register. Once only she disobeyed, and the next time she called on him and had spoken a few words she was surprised to see his face flush with anger. He reproached her with having sung soprano. Surprised, she asked him how he knew, and he answered: "I heard you speak, that is quite enough." He told her

that in ten years not a note would be left of her brilliant voice. As she promised not to disobey his instructions again, he agreed to take her back, on condition that she would study a whole year without interruption before appearing in public.

After a few months she left London to spend the winter on the Continent. She hoped he would take her back on her return, but he sternly refused, telling her that he never went back on his word, and adding: "You will probably get engagements, but do not base your future on singing."

"Time proved that he was right," says Mr. Mackinlay. "After a few years she began to lose her high notes rapidly, and soon her voice was completely gone."

Garcia, in telling his biographer of the time when he himself was being trained by his father, related that one day, after being made to sing an endless variety of ascending scales, his desire for a change became so great that he could not resist bursting out, "Oh dear! mayn't I sing down the scale even once?"

This same thoroughness and painstaking care characterized his own teaching. The acquirement of agility in execution, he used to say, required *at least* two years' study. Vocalises, such as are used by most teachers, he did not believe in, preferring to give his pupils simple Italian arias. The first lesson for every pupil was a talk on the voice as an instrument; the lungs, he explained, were for tone emission, the glottis for pitch, the oral cavity for timbre and vowel tone, the front of the mouth for consonants.* This simple physiological explanation let in a flood of light at once; but it is worthy of special note that it was almost the

* Every teacher and student should read the *Hints on Singing* which Garcia wrote in collaboration with Hermann Klein in 1895, and also chapter XIX of Mackinlay's *Garcia*, entitled "A Nonagenarian Teacher." Mackinlay was the last pupil to go through Garcia's regular four-year course.

only reference to the anatomy of the vocal organs that Garcia, the discoverer of the laryngoscope, made in his lessons. That instrument had enabled him to prove the correctness of his theories of voice emission; "beyond that he did not see that anything further was to be gained beyond satisfying the curiosity of those who might be interested to see for themselves the forms and changes which the inside of the larynx assumed during singing and speaking." It was the medical men who chiefly benefited by his discovery.

In teaching tone emission he insisted at once and strenuously on deep breathing. To a pupil who exhausted his lung power he would cite his father's maxim: "Do not let anybody see the bottom of your purse; never spend all you possess, nor have it noticed that you are at your last resource." He emphasized the *coup de la glotte*, by which he meant that he wished the pupil to "get on to a note, without any uncertainty or feeling about for it, instead of slurring up to it (a very common fault), or taking it too sharp and having to sink to the proper pitch." He looked on exercises—scales, sustained and swelled notes, arpeggios, shakes, chromatics—as the foundations of all good singing. He taught that there are three "registers": chest, medium, and head-voice, relying for this division on the revelations of the laryngoscope.

He never claimed that he had a "method" of hard-and-fast rules, but tried to make each pupil sing in the way most natural to him, and involving the least effort. The following remarks, made by him at the age of ninety-eight to his pupil, Hermann Klein, present a pleasing contrast to the pretensions of those teachers who claim to have discovered a new method—the "only true method":

"I wish that people would disabuse their minds of the notion that there is, or can be, any new system of so-called voice production, or even any satisfactory modification or development of pre-existing theories on this subject. Only

recently I received a circular letter from Victor Maurel, asking me to send a record of the changes of idea, the variations and improvements of method, that long observation and experience had wrought in my work. If I did not answer that letter it was simply because there was nothing to say. I had no first discoveries to record."

One important detail of his method of teaching was that he took infinite pains with each of his pupils, thus winning their affection. On the other hand, he exacted the same capacity for taking pains from them. If he pointed out a mistake at one lesson and it was repeated at the next, he would shake his head sorrowfully and say: "Jenny Lind would have cut her throat sooner than have given me reason to say, 'We corrected that mistake last time.'"

"I try to awaken your intelligence," he said to his pupils, "so that you may be able to criticise your own singing as severely as I do. I want you to listen to your voice and use your brains. If you find a difficulty, do not shirk it. Make up your mind to master it. So many singers give up what they find hard. They think they are better off by leaving it, and turning their attention to other things which come more easily. Do not be like them." By way of compensation for the pains taken by pupils, he would make pauses during the lessons and tell interesting anecdotes about the great singers he had known.

His pet aversion was the tremolo. To sensitive ears a tremulous voice is as disagreeable as a flickering candle is to sensitive eyes. Nevertheless, there are teachers who deliberately cultivate a tremolo in the voices of their pupils, who are consequently doomed to inevitable failure. How did this practice originate? "The tremolo is an abomination—it is execrable," Garcia said to his biographer. He went on:

Many French singers cultivate it, and I will tell you why: There was at one time an eminent vocalist worshipped

by the Parisian public. His voice was beautiful in quality, faultless in intonation, and absolutely steady in emission. At last, however, he began to grow old. With increasing years the voice commenced to shake. But he was a great artist. Realizing that the tremolo was a fault, but one which could not then be avoided, he brought his mind to bear upon the problem before him. As a result, he adopted a style of song in which he had to display intense emotion throughout. Since in life the voice trembles at such moments, he was able to hide his failing in this way by a quality of voice which appeared natural to the situation. The Parisians did not grasp the workings of his brain and the clever way in which he had hidden his fault. They only heard that in every song which he sang his voice trembled. At once, therefore, they concluded that if so fine an effect could be obtained, it was evidently something to be imitated. Hence the singers deliberately began to cultivate a tremolo. The custom grew and grew until it became almost a canon in French singing.*

Garcia's quickness in diagnosing a singer's shortcomings and lending a helping hand is illustrated instructively in the case of the eminent American contralto, Antoinette Sterling. When she came to him she had a range of three octaves, and sang the soprano as well as the contralto parts in operas and oratorios. No sooner had he heard her than he saw the danger she was in. "If you continue as you have been doing, do you know what will happen? Look at this piece of elastic. I take it firmly at the two ends and stretch it. What is the result? It becomes thin in the middle. If I were to continue to do this constantly, it would get weaker and weaker, until finally it would break. It is thus with the human voice. Cultivate an extended range, and keep on singing big notes at both

* Read chapter XX of Lilli Lehmann's *How to Sing* on the cause and cure of the tremolo and its first stage, the vibrato.

extremes, and the same thing will occur which we have seen with the elastic. Your voice will gradually weaken in the middle. If you persist in this course long enough, it will break and the organ be rendered useless." He advised her to abandon the high notes, confine herself to real contralto music, avoid practising on the extremes, and build up her voice by exercising the middle portion of it. She followed this counsel and had every reason to be grateful for it.

Marie Tempest was helped by him in a different and quite unexpected manner. She came before him attired in a very tight-fitting dress, which drew attention to the nineteen-inch waist of which she was the proud possessor. Garcia raised his eyebrows when he saw her step forward, but said nothing until she had sung an aria for him. Then he said, with his usual polite manner: "Thank you, miss. Will you please go home at once, take off that dress, rip off those stays, and let your waist out to at least twenty-five inches! When you have done so, you may come back and sing to me, and I will tell you whether you have any voice." In relating this incident Miss Tempest added: "I went home, and—well, I've never had a nineteen-inch waist since."

If singers would walk more and eat less they would not be tempted to wear the tight corsets which disfigure their voices as well as their forms. Garcia said: "Most singers and teachers eat more than they should. A man with moderate teeth, such as I have, can grow old on sponge-cake and milk." He attributed his hale old age to this moderation and his great mental and physical activity. He did not touch wine or spirits until he was ninety.

Garcia was not one of those teachers who think that rudeness is necessary to secure results from students. His acts were characterized by unfailing courtesy, even when he had to get rid of undesirable students. Mr. Mackin-

lay's book contains an amusing anecdote (p. 251) showing how he managed to get rid of undesirable pupils without hurting their feelings. However profitable such pupils might be, he had no use for them, as he wanted to keep his reputation as a teacher who could point to results.

Jean de Reszke as Teacher

To be a "pupil of Jean de Reszke" is at present deemed quite as necessary for a student of singing as it is for a pianist to be a pupil of Leschetizky. In both cases it is fortunate that fashion has chosen the best possible idol. Jean is one of many eminent singers who decided to close their careers by teaching, but, unlike most of the others, he did not wait till his voice was a ruin, but retired from the stage with the first slight signs of impairment. While no longer able to stand the strain of a four-hour opera, he was, therefore, still able to let his pupils hear his beautiful voice in his frequent illustrations of his remarks. For these alone he continued to sing, as Liszt played only for his pupils after he left the concert platform. Lucky pupils! The old Italian masters taught that the most important feature of instruction consisted in listening to good singers and trying to imitate the quality of their voices. Jean's pupils have the inestimable advantage of daily hearing and emulating a voice which is at the same time beautiful and intensely emotional.

Jean de Reszke's studio is unique. He teaches in a theatre—his own little theatre, which he built in the rear of his residence, No. 53 Rue de la Faisanderie, in Paris. There is room in this for an audience of about a hundred, and in the sunken pit for an orchestra of thirty players. On the stage there is a piano, on which are piled a number of opera scores. All the pupils are taught here, where they breathe the atmosphere of the theatre from the beginning.

The great tenor employs an assistant to play the accompaniments, and a secretary to arrange the lesson hours and receive the fees. There are four or five pupils in a class, and each pays fifty francs per lesson.

An English journalist in Paris wrote, in July, 1907, concerning this theatre-studio, that it was a sort of "Petit Conservatoire," where, however, "singing went on from ten in the morning till six or seven in the evening, with, perhaps, more enthusiasm than at the public Conservatoire. His pupils increased to such numbers as almost to fill him with dismay, and the last time I saw him he told me he had 85. They came from America, England, Russia, Germany, and Italy, rich and poor, and every morning one could see the future Romeos, Valentines, and Brünnhildes wend their way to the Rue de la Faisanderie, from the houses adjoining the Bois de Boulogne, as if on a pilgrimage to the home of their master. But if some of his pupils belonged to fashionable society and drove to his door in luxurious broughams or motor cars, the one thing he always expected, whether they pursued singing as a profession or a pastime, was that they should have talent. If they had the latter, they might come whether they could pay his prices or not, and many a promising young star, devoid of worldly means, he has taken under his wing and taught gratuitously for the mere pleasure of art."

"For the mere pleasure of art." Those six words go far toward explaining this Polish tenor's remarkable success both as an artist and a teacher. While he is a man of broad culture, he is so enthusiastically absorbed in his profession that he seldom talks on any other than operatic topics. Many a time, when he was at my residence or I at his, I tried to get his views on various matters, but invariably, after a few minutes, the conversation drifted back to the opera. It may have been "shop talk," but if all shop talk were as interesting no one would ever want to hear any-

thing else. I learned so much on these occasions that I might quite properly put "pupil of the De Reszkes" on my visiting cards. Every detail claimed his attention; no peculiarity, no merit or fault of any of his colleagues escaped him. Many a time, at table, he and his brother Edouard kept us all breathless with laughter by their droll imitations of other singers and of diverse instruments. These two men might have made as much on the vaudeville stage as they did in grand opera! Behind the scenes at the Metropolitan, Jean sometimes imitated Plançon's rich, deep voice till that French basso was so convulsed with amusement that it was difficult for him to regain his gravity when he had to go on the stage.

From Jean's speaking voice it would have been difficult to tell what his singing voice was, for his speech sounded much deeper than his song. Herein lies a valuable hint to singers to cultivate the lower register of the voice in speaking, as that gives body to the singing voice.

When Jean first began, as a lad, to study, he was so interested in teaching what he had learned that even the servants had to have their voices tried and receive some instruction.

Edouard's sister-in-law, Mme. Litvinne, had a voice of great range and beauty, but it was divided in the middle in such a way that she seemed to possess two voices, a soprano and a contralto. One evening the brothers started to help her, and in a short time they succeeded in making her use the same quality from top to bottom of her voice.

Mrs. Dippel relates a funny story illustrating the seriousness of the brothers' teaching. One day she came home to find her husband extended on the floor on his back, with Jean standing over him and Edouard on the floor beside him. She was frightened at first, but soon discovered that Mr. Dippel was simply getting a lesson in breathing. Jean gave directions, while Edouard knelt on the floor,

making sure by Dippel's diaphragm that he was following them correctly.

Although Jean did not actually teach at that time, he was always ready with suggestions for his colleagues if they wanted them, and he occupied such a unique position that all—even the tenors!—were glad to go to him for help. Very few of the prominent singers at the Metropolitan Opera House failed to profit by his hints.

After each performance the brothers would get together and criticise each other's singing and acting; for Jean trusted to Edouard's critical estimate of his work more than he did to himself. And if Edouard would say: "Jean, you sang like a pig to-night!" Jean took it meekly, but lost no chance to return the compliment when there was occasion for it.

Edouard was of a more indolent disposition than Jean, who frequently had to exhort him to practise his parts. The valet had his instructions—which he never neglected when the time came—to compel Edouard to throw away his cigarette and sit down at the piano to study.

Since Jean established his school in Paris, great singers have continued to come to him; among them Slezak and Knote. There have been few German tenors endowed with such a fine voice as Heinrich Knote; he sang Manrico, in *Il Trovatore*, more beautifully in New York than Caruso, and won triumphs as a Wagner singer, but during his last season at the Metropolitan he had acquired the habit of "singing on the throat," resulting from insufficient use of the diaphragm and stiffening of the throat muscles. To cure this serious trouble I advised him to go to Jean, and he went. It is actually true that, as the newspapers related at the time, he went incognito, disguised as a tradesman, and that Jean was simply delighted with his "find," and told him he could make his fame and fortune on the stage.

Jean's way to avoid "singing on the throat" was absolute simplicity and naturalness, the most difficult thing to attain in singing as in writing. He opened the throat naturally and let the voice flow like a stream. Correct breathing from the diaphragm is to him the fundamental necessity for good singing. The diaphragm, pressed outward without a great effort or crowding of the lungs, gives a perfect support to the column of air which, becoming more and more powerful as the voice ascends to the upper tones, pushes the tones upward with no effort on the part of the throat, which is merely the open orifice through which the sound passes. As he picturesquely puts it: the breath should be "so you could sit on it," and then, he adds, no nervousness can make the voice tremulous. He never allows contortions of the face in singing, and insists that the tone must not be formed by the shaping of the lips.

One of those who have received instruction in the Paris studio, William H. Arnold, writes in *The Musician:* "Mr. de Reszke is justly proud of the fact that, after his many years of singing, the tones of his voice are absolutely free from any suspicion of tremolo. He claims that it is proof of the excellence of his method of singing that his voice is as steady as the tone of an organ. How he hates both tremolo and vibrato! To begin negatively, these are two things that he does *not* teach. Just as the old Italians early learned to do, he develops in a voice power, flexibility, extension of compass, and varieties of timbre, so that the tone of the voice alone without the assistance of words will express the desired sentiment."

Nasal resonance is another thing on which he places great emphasis, going so far as to say that "la grande question du chant devient une question du nez." Part of the stream of tone should always go through the nose, to prevent the tone from being what is called "nasal." In

speaking, most of us use the nose correctly, as a sounding-board, but just as soon as we begin to sing we are apt to do otherwise, to the detriment of the tone quality.

Among the famous singers who have learned from Jean is Ffrangcon Davies. Speaking of Santley and De Reszke, he says: "Their necks, throats, chests were not suggestive of those of pouter pigeons; and their attitude on the stage was free, easy, and unconstrained. They showed no rigidity, no embarrassment, at any point, when they breathed. M. Jean de Reszke favored the present writer by allowing him to make a rapid study of his breathing while he sang. He did not give one the idea that his efforts brought him near to apoplexy; nor did his facial color resemble that of a peony. He breathed upward and constitutionally. He was mentally active, too; his soul was in his work, and his soul 'went everywhere.' He even sang, in private, a 'patter' song (of the *café chantant* sort) in answer to a remark made by the writer, to the effect that a great artist must sing a comic song as well as Mr. Albert Chevalier and music drama as well as Jean de Reszke."*

One of the chief lessons taught by Jean de Reszke is the value of moderation. Many singers, having discovered that they can secure plenty of loud applause by bawling high notes and prolonging them beyond all measure, throw artistic principles to the winds and appeal chiefly to the kind of hearers who like those explosive notes. Jean never used them. I have heard him, in private, emit a high C with a power equalling Tamagno's; but, he said, "I never use these tones in public; if I did it once I would have to do it always, and my artistic standards would be lowered." He showed that one can become the most famous and the wealthiest of tenors without ever "appealing to the gallery."

"Jean de Reszke is always studying just how far the voice can go, how much he may give in passages of intense

* *The Singing of the Future.*

emotion and still keep the tone. Time and again," wrote Karleton Hackett some years ago, "I have seen him shake his head and heard him say: 'That was too much; that will spoil all.' That is why he has mounted higher and higher each year, and is to-day a greater artist and a better singer than ever. He knows that the great effect, that which thrills an audience, is produced by intense passion, so controlled that it does not overstep the possibilities of the voice. For the voice is an instrument, and the music of Wagner, if its beauty is to be revealed, must be *sung*."

Anton Seidl once said he did not believe there ever was a tenor with such a combined perfect voice and finished method as Jean de Reszke. This method has been happily defined as "the old Italian method, amalgamated with the French and Wagnerian styles." It was from Wagner's music that Jean learned the secrets of the consummate use of the voice for the utterance of poetry and passion.

XXV

HINTS TO TEACHERS

It would take a separate volume the size of this to give a bird's-eye view of all the famous teachers whose activity and methods are interesting as well as instructive. But, as in the case of singers and players, we have to content ourselves with a few samples. Every serious teacher will find an abundance of helpful hints in the preceding chapters—those relating to vocalists and players as well as those concerned with teachers. For the benefit of teachers who are just beginning, or still struggling for an established place, the following suggestions are offered. They are based partly on personal observations, partly on talks with teachers, partly on clippings gathered during a period of nearly three decades.*

How to Get Pupils

In getting a start as a music teacher, as in every other pursuit, the two most important things are summed up in the slang words "pull" and "push." If you have a "pull" with friends who believe in you and send you their children, you may get established at once; but it is much more likely that you will need "push," too. It is not

* The best of these clippings are from *The Etude*, published in Philadelphia by Theodore Presser, and *The Musician*, published in Boston by the Oliver Ditson Co. These two monthly periodicals are in a class by themselves. No other country has anything like them, or so helpful to musicians. Every teacher and student may derive incalculable benefit from reading both of them regularly.

enough to put a sign on your door. The world is full of music teachers, many of whom are well known and get the patronage of parents who have a care for the welfare of their children. Advertising in the newspapers helps to make your name known. Printed circulars mailed to mothers who have children over eight years old have been found more useful, especially if you have given concerts and can quote favorable notices from reputable journals. These circulars should be mailed a few weeks before the music season begins. Sometimes it is advisable to write personal letters to mothers or fathers, asking permission to call and discuss matters. In such cases tact is important. C. F. Easter relates, in *The Etude*, how a young teacher called on a gentleman with the object of securing his daughter as a pupil. He failed. Several days later an older teacher called on the same father, and he succeeded in getting the pupil. In answer to the question: "How did you do it?" he replied: "The first thing I noticed was a cactus, then specie upon specie until I must have counted a dozen. It struck me that the gentleman must be a sort of cactus enthusiast. I spent a half-hour at his home—twenty-five minutes talking cactus and five minutes talking music."

A teacher who is affable, who meets many people, and easily makes friends, has a great advantage over one who shuns society. The most successful teachers are usually those who have cultivated their minds by reading periodicals and books, and who can talk interestingly about miscellaneous topics. They are invited to social gatherings by women who would ignore them if they were nothing but dry pedagogues; and at these social gatherings they are likely to meet parents who are seeking teachers for their children, and who will be apt to choose them if pleased with their conversation and manners. Even Chopin got his pupils through his frequenting the drawing-rooms of his aristocratic friends in Paris.

Sometimes parents can be persuaded to engage a singing teacher if it is pointed out to them how great an aid singing is to health and beauty. Singers *must* breathe deeply; they do not die of lung troubles. Of all men and women in the world, they have the most beautiful chests. Sandow himself has not a more splendidly vaulted chest than Jean and Edouard de Reszke, Maurice Renaud, Lilli Lehmann, Emma Eames, Lillian Nordica, Marcella Sembrich, and, in fact, nearly all the great vocalists. Max Alvary was a marvel in this way. I have known girls who constantly suffered from throat trouble, but who, after learning to sing correctly, had throats as healthy as the gills of mountain trout. Persons who have learned to breathe deeply enjoy life twice as much as others, because they habitually have the buoyancy and exhilaration of health.

Where to Locate

A teacher's studio should be in an easily accessible street, in a part of town frequented by well-to-do people. This is of importance; but more important is the question: "In what town, in what State, should a young teacher locate?" On this topic there is a symposium in *The Musician* for June, 1909. The writers—all of them experienced teachers—agree that it is almost impossible for a young musician to earn his living the first year in a large city. Smaller cities, with from 5,000 to 50,000 inhabitants, are often excellent locations, unless there is an academy or convent which gets most of the pupils. It is, perhaps, advisable for a teacher to shun his home town; "it will take him twice as long to convince his friends of his value as it would strangers."

Of the large city, W. S. B. Mathews says that the prizes look larger than they are. "In Chicago I doubt whether at this moment there are ten individuals earning by music

teaching $6,000 a year or more each. Yet a former pupil of mine earned this amount in a Western university town for five years, and it was as good as $10,000 a year here, such being the natural difference in the expense involved. Moreover, the city takes a long time to begin to know you. It takes advertising of one sort or another. In the small town one pupil brings you another; here they rarely do." It is, therefore, chiefly in the smaller towns, where everybody knows everybody, that E. von Schlechtendal's maxim, "*one* well-taught pupil is worth more than a hundred advertisements," applies.

It is easy to understand why ambitious young teachers want to locate in large cities: the opportunities for hearing good music and superior artists are so much greater. On the other hand, it would be well if Borgia's motto, *Aut Cæsar aut nullus*, were more widely adopted by musicians in general. Is it not more profitable, as well as more gratifying to one's vanity, to be king or queen on the musical chess-board of a small town than to be a mere pawn on the chess-board of a metropolis? In the one case you are honored and courted as an authority; in the other you are ignored, unless you really are a king or queen. Much is said of the necessity of living in a "musical atmosphere." But which is nobler, more worthy of an ambitious musician —to go to a large city and breathe its musical atmosphere, or to go to a smaller town and *create* a musical atmosphere for the thousands who are longing for some of this artistic ozone?

Emil Liebling thinks it advisable to give preference to towns located amidst well-to-do farming communities, and where retired farmers have come to live and educate their children. Such regions may be found in any State; but the East is conservative, wary of the newcomer, and well supplied. The South and the West at present offer better opportunities. W. L. Blumenschein tells of a pupil who,

not having met with success in her home city, went to Montana and in four months had more pupils than she could take care of; this, together with her improved health, made that year the happiest of her life. Francis L. York recalls perhaps twenty pupils who went West or South in three years and had excellent success.

The musical season in American cities lasts only six or seven months. What are teachers to do the rest of the year?

They can give lessons in the country. Summer schools are coming more and more into vogue; they are chiefly for pupils who cannot go to the cities, although in many cases city pupils follow their teacher. W. L. Blumenschein knows of teachers having from forty to eighty pupils during a season in the rural districts surrounding his base of operations, the summer being, in these cases, the time of harvest.

As regards the prices to be charged, they vary with the locality, and it is wise to ascertain beforehand what successful teachers of the region demand; "yet the world is apt to take us at our own valuation. After a certain fee has been established, it is very difficult to raise one's price."*

Good engagements in music schools and young ladies' seminaries can often be secured by applying to a reliable teachers' agency. This gives an immediate standing, a sure income, and valuable experience in taking care of a number of pupils.

How to Retain Pupils

A teacher who cannot retain his old pupils will find it more and more difficult to get new ones. Music stu-

* According to a writer in *The Etude*, the prices paid to music teachers in the Southern States vary from 25 cents and 40 cents, in the rural districts, to 75 cents; in the larger towns and cities the price per lesson may reach $2.50 or even $3.

dents, especially in America, have an aggravating habit of changing teachers frequently, in the belief that they are not being advanced fast enough. Not a few change, like servants, merely for the sake of the change. The teacher's most serious problem is, "How can I keep my pupils?"

Make a distinction, in the first place, between those who wish to become professional musicians and those who want to learn to sing or play for their own pleasure, or as an accomplishment. All beginners, of course, must be taught to play some technical exercises; but it is a great mistake to subject both classes of pupils to the same kind and amount of technical drudgery—the mistake that is made in our colleges by the professors of Greek and Latin.

Many a university graduate recalls with a shudder the elaborate and intricate grammars of those two languages he was obliged to study, memorizing all the rules and their exceptions, and the exceptions to the exceptions. These grammatical details and subtleties naturally interest the professors of Greek and Latin, because they are specialists; and in their superlative folly they teach every student just as if he were going to be a teacher of Latin and Greek. The result is that the time and attention of the student are so completely taken up with the grammatical side of Virgil and Ovid, Homer and Sophocles, that their literary charms escape him entirely. I, for my part, had but a vague idea, after leaving Harvard, of the value of the ancient writers until I reread their works a few years ago in collecting material for my book on *Primitive Love.* Then I realized how one-sided the college instruction had been, how purely technical (philological), while the artistic (literary) side had been almost entirely ignored.

It is owing to this faulty—I had almost said criminal—method of teaching that so few college men keep up their interest in the works of the Greek and Roman authors. And in music it is the same: the drudgery of practising dry,

technical exercises year after year kills all interest in the art and makes many pupils wish they could burn up their pianos, as the school-boys sometimes burn their grammars and algebras.

Surely the main object of education should be to make boys and girls *love* literature and art—not hate them. And this can be achieved easily. In Germany the poor children are so overburdened with work that most of them loathe the school and would be happy if it burned down. But I once read in a German journal about a woman who taught by the Fröbel method, which eliminates the word "must" and makes everything interesting, the result being that her pupils preferred school time to vacation, and actually cried when illness or bad weather prevented them from attending the lessons!

Such a result can be secured in music in one way, and one only: arouse the pupils' enthusiasm and you will have no trouble in retaining them. Give them, as soon as possible, easy, good pieces to play; and mind, these pieces must be such as the pupil loves. No results can be expected if he is made to play dry sonatinas by the old masters in the belief that this will educate his taste for more modern music. Give him the more modern music at once. Why? Let me answer by asking two questions. Is it not a well-known fact that our opera-goers and concert audiences insist on having modern music, and that the older the music the smaller is the circle of those who can appreciate it? This being true of *adults*, is it not foolish to expect *children* to care for a Scarlatti sonata or a Haydn symphony? Give them a Beethoven adagio, or simple pieces by Bach, Chopin, Schumann, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Grieg, and they will play them with delight.

When I was a boy we used to play at home the old string quartets, among them those of Pleyel—very simple in structure and style—the kind of music so many teachers seem

to think is the best for children. This insipid stuff bored me unspeakably. Haydn and Mozart were more to my taste, but my *enthusiasm* was not really aroused until I got hold of a piano-forte version of Weber's romantic opera *Der Freischütz*. Over this I spent whole afternoons, enraptured, *taught by enthusiasm to play ten times better than I had ever played anything before.* The zeal thus aroused was afterward fanned by the songs of Schubert, the nocturnes and preludes of Chopin, and the piano scores of the Wagner operas, which I used to play evenings in the music-room at Harvard, to the great disgust of Professor Paine.

In a word, it was enthusiasm for modern music that led me to devote myself to the art and to do what little I have been able to accomplish in its behalf. Had I been brought up compulsorily on a diet of Scarlatti and other old sonatas I should have probably lost my interest in music and devoted my life entirely to scientific and philosophical problems.

It is ten times as easy to teach an interested, enthusiastic pupil as one who is indifferent, and the success is proportionately great.

After imparting an elementary technical knowledge, the instructor's first aim should be to teach the pupil to *browse.* Give him plenty of easy but good music, and let him play as much of it as possible, regardless of fingering, and everything else but the spirit of the music itself. The more he browses on modern music the more likely he will be, in course of time, to learn to appreciate also the older masters as for back as Bach and Handel, or even Palestrina and Orlando Lasso.

Those pupils who intend to become professional musicians or teachers must, of course, expect to be put through the most rigorous course of exercises. But even in these cases it is well to remember the words of Schumann: "It is very foolish to devote hours each day to mere mechanical

practice in which neither head nor heart are concerned"; and Rosenthal's answer to the question, "When is the best time to practise études?" "If you must study them at all, do so after your day's work is done. Don't throw away your morning hours; any time will do for gymnastics."

Mr. Joseffy, for years America's leading pianist and pedagogue, once said to a friend: "For the last fifteen years I have found out the uselessness of technical work in the morning. What, waste the glorious freshness of the morning in stupid finger exercises when you might be adding to your repertory! Rosenthal has only lately found this out, and does his finger practice when the day is done and something of lasting value has been accomplished."

Reisenauer remarks regarding one of the most famous German teachers: "The everlasting continuance of technical exercises was looked upon by Köhler as a ridiculous waste of time and a great injury. I myself hold this opinion. . . . Technic is the Juggernaut which has ground to pieces more musicians than one can imagine."

There are too many mechanicians, too few musicians, on the concert stage. One feels inclined to agree with what Perlee V. Jervis says to the teachers: "We must choose between making our pupils good exercise or good piece players; we can seldom do both." What the world wants is good piece players. If you understand that, your pupils will be more likely to remain with you.

Many teachers lose pupils because they think they must show their pedagogic superiority to the students by pointing out as many faults as possible. Now, fault-finding is all right, but merit-finding is equally important. Pupils are, in one respect, like cooks. If you want good meals, don't always find fault with the cook for her failures. Praise her for the things she does well, in proportion to their excellence, and she will stay and try to do the other things well, too. Great chefs go to any amount of trouble for the ap-

proval of an epicure. More good is done by praising a student for one thing well done than by pointing out a dozen flaws. "It is better to encourage than to discourage," is the motto of the best singing teacher I know.

In twenty years of teaching experience, Edith Lynwood Wynn learned that "pupils come to one because the teacher is interesting, magnetic, and kind. Young people study the art you follow fully as often because they like you as because they like the art." Be courteous, painstaking, sympathetic, and entertaining, then your pupils will like your lessons and tell their friends about you, and soon you will have all the work you can attend to. You can make your lessons entertaining by choosing the right music, by telling stories of the lives of composers and musicians, dwelling on their trials and triumphs; you can amuse and instruct them at the same time by caricaturing their faults and those of others. If they are discouraged, tell them that even Beethoven wept over his lessons at first, and that both Weber and Wagner were told that they would never amount to anything in music.

There are a thousand ways of making lessons attractive; but the best way is to foster enthusiasm for good music; then even exercises will be played cheerfully.

XXVI

ADVICE TO PARENTS

Boys will be boys, but there are ways of civilizing them, and one of the best is to teach them music. In his book, *God in Music*, John Harrington Edwards gives a brief account of the experiences of the famous choirmaster, William M. Tomlins: "For nearly or quite a score of years he taught gratuitously several large classes of children, not from the avenues, but from the alleys and poorer streets of the city. His immediate object was to train them to the right use of their voices. At first they were rough in manners and selfish in everything. But soon a better mind came to them through the influence of music taught in a Christian spirit. The children sang always and everywhere, at home and in the streets—their characters gradually changed. Rude boys became gentle and helpful, wild girls thoughtful and modest. Some went to the hospitals and sang. Others started little classes for their less favored friends. One boy established an 'Old Clothes Club' to gather up worn clothing and distribute it among the poor. Another issued a little philanthropic newspaper. With that spirit of helping others, a great blessing came to the children themselves."

An attempt was made in New York some years ago to abolish music in the public schools, whereupon one of the newspapers gathered the opinions on the subject of thousands of parents. The vast majority voted that music should be retained. There are, indeed, few families in which the importance of a musical education is not

understood. The parents, in the majority of cases, want their children not only to sing in unison with their schoolmates but to take private lessons in singing or playing. The two puzzling questions are: When to begin and how to find the best teacher.

Some singers have expressed the opinion that voice training may safely and advantageously begin at a very early age, but by far the best and most copious evidence is to the opposite effect. There is, however, a great difference between the natural and the artistic use of the voice, which was well stated by Antoinette Sterling: "A girl may commence singing as early as possible. *Cultivation* of the voice should not commence till *after* the change to womanhood, ordinarily." Doctor Stainer says: "Little girls should not be taught to sing at all, as their tender voices are often *permanently* injured by premature efforts. A female voice should not go through *any serious work or training* until womanhood has been reached." And Mrs. Curwen gives her personal testimony thus: "When I was a child, singing was not taught in schools, . . . so I escaped the habit of shouting and straining so common now with children who go to school. And I never had singing *lessons* till nearly nineteen years of age." Provided the *natural* voice is only used, *avoiding all strain and loudness*, children cannot easily sing too soon and too much.

In other words, the love of music should be fostered long before technical training can begin.

It is because of the greater delicacy of the feminine organization that boys are chosen instead of girls to sing soprano in church choirs. But even boys, though more robust, should use their voices gently at first. Soft singing is the method which alone leads to musical results. This is the most useful of the lessons dwelt on by Claude Ellsworth Johnson in his book, *The Training of Boys' Voices* (Oliver Ditson Co.). It suggests the query whether

the reason why so few American men have become famous singers is not to be sought in the fact that the American boy is so preposterously noisy. Mr. Johnson strongly disapproves of parents and teachers who urge their children to speak and sing loud, thus causing them to force the thick register of the voice in range and power until it becomes reedy, coarse, and harsh, like that of children who scream in the streets.

At the period of puberty complete rest is quite as important for a boy as for a girl, and the common neglect of such rest is probably the principal reason why the number of boy choiristers with fine voices who attain to eminence as singers in after life is very small.*

Girls have only one voice, which develops gradually, whereas a boy's larynx changes so much that a new vocal organ is practically the result. The training of this new organ must not commence too soon. The proper time to begin can be better determined by the family physician than by a teacher.

If the child is to be a player instead of a singer the regular training can, and usually does, begin much sooner—which is perhaps the reason why pianists and violinists are more likely to be all-round musicians than vocalists are as a rule. So much depends on the health and general disposition of the child that no fixed age for beginning can be named. Sarasate appeared at a concert when only six years old, and many of the great players were heard in public before their tenth year. A German pedagogue, Karl Heuser, maintains that no great success can be won unless the child's training begins with the fourth year, or at the latest with the seventh. It certainly should not begin later than the tenth.

* *The Child's Voice: Its Treatment with Regard to After-Development.* By Emil Behnke and Lennox Browne. Chicago: A. N. Marquis & Co., 1885.

Most of the great players (and composers) were infant prodigies; "but the number of great masters is very small," as Rubinstein remarked, "in comparison with the great mass of musically gifted children we admire every year, and who later fulfil none of their promises. Ordinarily, musical talent manifests itself in children at the tenderest age; but there comes a time (with boys from fifteen to twenty, with girls from fourteen to seventeen) when this musical talent suffers a crisis, is weakened, or goes to sleep forever; only those who are capable of passing this Rubicon become great artists; their number is very limited."

It is therefore a mistake to suppose that if a child is precocious it is sure to become a great musician; and a much greater mistake it is to force its talent by hot-house methods and bring it before the public prematurely. That way nearly always lies disaster, through premature exhaustion of the vital forces. The case of Josef Hofmann is well known. Even Liszt narrowly escaped; and when, many years later, the boy Reisenauer was brought by his mother to him he advised her strongly not to let him appear in public before he was a mature artist. "As a child," said Liszt, "I was exposed to public criticism as a prodigy, through the ignorance of my parents, long before I was properly prepared to meet the inevitable consequences of public appearance. This was an incalculable injury to me. Let this child be spared such a fate."

"When is a prodigy not a prodigy?" asked a wag; and the answer was: "In nine cases out of ten." Too many parents fondly imagine their sons or daughters to be "wonder children." The average teacher will, of course, confirm their diagnosis; he wants pupils, and dares not risk parental displeasure. The only safe way to get an impartial verdict is to consult a teacher who has all the pupils he can possibly take care of. He may tell the truth —so far as any one can; but he, too, is not infallible.

Spohr told the young Ole Bull that he was unfitted by nature to be a musician, and Joachim in his boyhood was informed by Hellmesberger that he could never become a violinist.

The choice of a teacher is as difficult a matter as it is important. There is in American cities an average of one teacher to perhaps every 1,500 inhabitants. Those who charge the highest prices and have the largest number of pupils are by no means always the best; they may be good business men or women and very poor teachers—perhaps even downright charlatans. "Bluff" is often effective, modesty at a discount. I once heard of an escaped convict who called himself Professor X, hired an expensive studio, charged $4 a half-hour lesson on a subject of which he had only the most rudimentary knowledge, and many parents sent their daughters to him! When a new applicant came he pretended that all his time was occupied, but, after searching his books, "just managed" to find a few unoccupied minutes.

As a rule, it is wise to avoid "professors" of singing, unless they really are professors, in or out of a conservatory; wise, also, to avoid those who claim to have a "new method" and who abuse all other teachers and methods. Beware of teachers whose main idea seems to be to sell your daughter sheet music (on which he makes a large profit, and which is usually trash). Beware of teachers who go into raptures at once and promise to make a Patti or a Nordica of your girl in a short time. Beware of teachers who claim to have discovered a short cut through the difficulties of the art.

Great teachers are as rare as great tenors or sopranos, but there are plenty of men and women who achieve good results. It is a fatal mistake not to get as good a teacher (and instrument) as possible from the very beginning. Then is the time when ineradicable habits are formed.

Lowell Mason once said to Frederick W. Root: "Frederick, music teachers ought to be promoted down." Teaching children being the most delicate work of all, he held that only the most experienced members of the profession should undertake that task.

Try to get a teacher whose pupils like to attend his lessons and who *do not complain of tired throats or fingers.* He will be likely to help your own children and develop a love of music in them. You can assist him by adopting the Tom Sawyer method. Tom got the other boys to whitewash the fence for him because he was smart enough to make them think it was a great privilege to do so. Make your children think that music is not work but recreation, to be doled out as a reward, and they will take to it as a trout takes to a mountain brook.

One more point. "Parents make a great mistake," as Emil Sauer, the eminent pianist and pedagogue, remarks, "in not insuring the general education of the child who is destined to become a concert performer. I can imagine nothing more stultifying, or more likely to result in artistic disaster, than the course that some parents take in neglecting the child's school work with an idea that if he is to become a professional musician he need only devote himself to music."

XXVII

HINTS TO PUPILS, SINGERS, AND PLAYERS

Genius, Work, and Overwork

Carlyle's definition of genius as a "transcendent capacity of taking trouble" is pronounced "incredibly stupid" by Herbert Spencer, who holds that in reality genius is quite the opposite, being the ability to do with little trouble that which cannot be done by an ordinary person with any amount of trouble.

There is an amusing story about Donizetti, who, when he heard that Rossini had written *The Barber of Seville* in two weeks, remarked: "I can quite believe it; he always was a lazy fellow."

No ordinary composer could have written an immortal opera like that in two years, or two decades, no matter how hard he worked. Work cannot take the place of genius.

Yet genius without work is helpless, and practically non-existent. As Rubinstein remarked: "Talent, even genius, will not go far without application. Without talent, but gifted with application, it is quite the contrary. Thus it is that genius slowly fades away, while the worker, in time, makes his work known."

Alexander McArthur relates that a pupil once said to Rubinstein regarding Beethoven's sonata, Opus 53: "I don't need to practise it—I know it thoroughly. It is only a waste of time to practise it more." One of his saddest

expressions came over Rubinstein's face, for there was never a master that lived as he did in the work of his pupils. "Don't you?" he said slowly. "Well, you are eighteen and I am sixty. I have been half a century practising that sonata, and I need still to practise it. I congratulate you." From that time on he took no further interest in that pupil.

The same great pianist (or was it Hans von Bülow?) said: "If I neglect my practising one day I know it; if two days, my friends know it; if three days, the public knows it." And Tausig remarked: "If I haven't practised for fourteen days I can't do anything."

Thalberg declared that he never ventured to perform one of his pieces in public till he had practised it at least fifteen hundred times. Kubelik never neglected his exercises except on the day when his wife presented him with twins. "I work, work, work," said Caruso to an inquisitive friend.

The singer's art is particularly exacting—"too exacting," says Geraldine Farrar, "to permit of other occupations. I know many operatic singers who frequent society, but every indulgence leaves its mark and experts detect it in their voices. No success can be obtained in an operatic career unless the singer concentrates her whole attention upon her work. It means that one must be 'Johnny-on-the-spot' all the time."

"Some of my best impromptus have taken me years," said a famous humorist; and an English journalist relates that Mr. Grossmith has often spent nine months or a year in the elaboration of a single item in his repertory.

Do not scorn minor rôles. An artist who is painstaking and talented can make such a rôle seem to the audience the most important part in the opera. This is the greatest possible success and triumph.

The humblest player in an orchestra is the kettle-drum man; yet this man can and should be an artist. The

London Musical Record and Review tells of one of these men, a German, who spoke of his instrument as reverently as if it were a Cremona violin. He practised the "roll" daily for hours at a time, in all degrees of volume and force. He would speak of an elastic tone, a flexible tone, an intense or indifferent tone. He would speak of how to shade a "roll" artistically, as a violinist would of a sustained fermata note. His musical feeling was of the finest. Liszt often heard this man, as a member of the Schwarzburg-Sondershausen orchestra, and bestowed on him lavish praise.

Too much cannot be said in favor of work. John Constable wrote: "The more facility of practice I get, the more pleasure I shall find in my art; without the power of execution I should be continually embarrassed, and it would be a burden to me." "There is no easy way of becoming a good painter," said Sir Joshua Reynolds; and the same is true of music.

Yet there is such a thing as overwork. "I am not the slave of my violin; the violin is my slave," said Sarasate.

Misdirected energy is worse than indolence, and there is much of it. It is said that Leschetizky pronounces the two English words "hard work" with intense scorn, and that he is annoyed with those energetic Americans who seem to think that the one requisite in music is the same as in pioneer conquests over a primitive forest: Work, work, work. Talent, judgment, brains are required, too, in music. Read James Francis Cooke's article, in *The Etude*, on *Overwork the Enemy of Success.*

There is often overwork of the hands or throat in the studio, often overexertion on the stage. Frequent pauses are advisable in studio work—pauses filled up with a walk in the open air, reading a book, or some other recreation, be it only looking out of the window. If you can do it, shut your eyes for ten minutes and, if possible, take a nap.

As regards overwork on the stage, we have seen that it nearly ended Jenny Lind's career at its beginning. When Caruso injured his voice so that he had to stop singing for weeks at the Metropolitan Opera House, I wrote a warning article for the *Evening Post* (April 17, 1909), in which I dwelt on the disasters which befell other hard-worked singers, among them three—Charlotte Cushman, Geneviève Ward, and Johanna Wagner—who had to give up opera altogether and become actresses.

Maurice Renaud told me that he once lost his voice for a whole month, and it took two years to restore it to its former condition. This was when he was about thirty. He said that singers, especially men, are apt to have vocal troubles, more particularly between the thirtieth and thirty-fifth, and up to the fortieth year. Most vocalists, M. Renaud has observed, had these losses of voice for periods more or less long. "It has a very bad effect on both the artist and the public, for the public hears flaws which it did not notice before, and sometimes purely imaginary ones. The artist never dares again to do what he had done before, even if he feels quite competent."

Lilli Lehmann, in her book, *How to Sing*, refers to the harm done to vocalists and their sensitive throats by "the rehearsals which are held in abominably bad air." She warns singers against rehearsing on the same day on which there is to be a performance, a thing done often at our opera-houses, to the advantage of the ensemble but the detriment of the stars. Some of the Metropolitan artists find that the only way they can stand the strain is to spend nearly all the time they are not singing at home in bed. They not only have to deny themselves all social diversions, but often cannot find time to take the exercise necessary for the maintenance of health. It is a strenuous, exacting life—but it has its rewards.

The champions of Wagner are indignant, and justly so,

when they hear the remark that singing his music hurts the voice. It is not the music that hurts voices but the excessive duration of most of the Wagner operas. Lilli Lehmann urges the singers to refuse to appear in them unless judicious and copious cuts are made. Wagner himself sanctioned cuts, except at festival performances; but there are zealots who clamor for every bar he wrote. These are his worst enemies.

The Short Cut to Success

There is a short cut to success, after all! It lies in substituting *brain work* for hand work and throat work. The Japanese dwarf smote the Russian Goliath because he used his brains. If the modern pianists and vocalists want to worst the piano players and singing machines, they must do so with other than mechanical means.

Musicians complain that theirs is a long and tiresome road to travel; but that is largely their own fault; most of them have not discovered the short road up Mount Parnassus. They waste an enormous amount of time *practising without brains*, when by judiciously "mixing their colors with brains," as some great artist,—was it not Sir Joshua?—is said to have done, they might save most of it.

An hour of thinking is worth more than ten hours of mechanical practice. Paganini's secret—the reason why he did not have to practise after he had won fame—lay in his "mute" practice—going over his pieces *mentally*. We have also seen that Paderewski, before interpreting a new program, often lies awake at night *mentally* rehearsing his pieces with every detail of technic and expression. He then feels sure of himself and knows that his memory will not fail him, even if he should be tired. A better way still would be to go over the program mentally on the morning of the concert, or the day before; for it is in the

morning that the memory is particularly fresh and reliable, and that impressions are most firmly fixed in it.

Opera singers have to be actors, too. The greatest of modern actors, Salvini, once said: "Nothing is left to the moment. I may act no scene twice alike; but every detail, every move, is *thought out* before I do it, and is the outcome of sleepless nights."

Harold Bauer says he encourages his pupils "to do as much work as possible away from the instrument." "The moving of the fingers," says Fannie Bloomfield Zeisler, "is not practising, for in piano work the fingers accomplish one-fourth and the brain three-fourths of the result."

D'Albert, following Kalkbrenner, advises pupils to read a book while doing their finger exercises; but this practice must be condemned. Even athletes know that mere mechanical bending and stretching of the limbs does not strengthen the muscles, but that there must be behind each movement an intense wish to attain such a result. How much more, then, is an alert, attentive mind needed in piano playing, where the muscular movements are so much more complicated and subtle!

A poor teacher is he who does too much for his pupils. They should be accustomed, nay, forced, to *use their own minds* every moment. The best way to do this—and at the same time to mitigate the monotony of technical practice—is to give them a mere skeleton of the exercises, compelling them to fill out the details themselves. They should be made to try to find the correct pace for each piece unaided, to study the music away from the piano; in short, to "spiritualize the technical practice."

"If there are still persons who think that long hours of practising tend to stupefy the mind, it is because they have not learned to use the mind while exercising." *

* *Methodik des Klavierspiels.* Von Xaver Scharwenka und August Spanuth. Breitkopf & Härtel. A book for teachers and students who wish to keep abreast of the times.

If in the vast army of players there were more who knew how to practise, more would attain to the rank of colonels and generals.

The engagement of a cheap, second-rate teacher may prove fatal to the pupil's chances, because a certain attitude of attention, of *using the mind*, must be taught from the very first lesson.

The important thing is not the amount of "hard work," but the way it is done. "It is better to practise an hour daily, with your thoughts concentrated on your work, than to practise five hours with your thoughts rambling."

"You should *read* much music; this is most useful in sharpening the mind's ear," wrote Schumann. "Never play a piece until you have thus heard it *inwardly*. For this purpose I should commend to you particularly the 320 chorals and the 'well-tempered Clavichord' of Bach."

The fugues of Bach, the études of Chopin, Liszt, and Rubinstein, entertain and educate the mind while providing an unsurpassed sporting ground for nimble fingers.

In all work, says Edison, "the chief factor of success is *the power of sticking to a thing*." It is because that power is so rare that there is always, in every science, art, and occupation, "room at the top." "For all the $3,000 and $4,000 positions," Edison added, "there are many capable candidates, but when it comes to the $10,000, $15,000, and $20,000 positions, it is very hard to find the right man. Accordingly, at the present time many important high-salaried positions are vacant for want of enough capable scientists."

Is not the same painfully true of music? Are not the operatic managers of America and Europe in despair because of the scarcity of the $20,000 and the $100,000 singers? And why are these singers so scarce? Because so few students use their minds. The "power of sticking to a thing" is mental; it is called *will power*, and few

students have it. Thousands of them start in with the determination to do their best; but very, very few "stick to it." They get good advice, they know what to do, but they won't do it. In the despairing words of Emilie Frances Bauer:

"Teachers of the piano and voice will say frankly: 'I cannot get my pupils to study harmony; they do not feel the necessity of it, and they won't.' They won't! That is the sum and substance of it. And the vocal students *won't* study languages, and they *won't* read good literature, and they *won't* study dramatic action, and they *won't* go to hear good music, even though they could hear many things of an educative nature without paying for them. What they will do is to tell you how the managers won't work for them, and how the public won't encourage them, and how much fault they find with Mme. Destinn and with Mme. Sembrich and with Mary Garden. They have time for all this. If they go to the opera they do not go to learn the great things and the good things, they go for the pleasure they derive from telling afterward how this one or that one was off the pitch, and how tired they are of others, and how badly the great artists sing and still hold their own, while struggling young artists (?) can't get a hearing. And music in this country will never be in a better condition than it is until students take themselves differently."

"It is curious to reflect," says the New York *World*, "that two prize-fighters that are going to pummel each other will devote months to preparing by strict diet and careful systematic exercise, by developing their muscles, and scarcely any man is willing to work one-half as hard to develop the mental fibre for things that are worth while."

The main object of a musical education, as of all education, is, in the words of ex-President Eliot, of Harvard, "to learn to apply one's self, to learn not to hear any sounds about you foreign to the subject in hand, not to know what

is going on in the room, but to *concentrate every power on the task of the instant*, or on the idea you want to grasp, or on the thing you want to make." The power to do this is will power. Even a frog may have it. Why not you?

Two frogs once fell into a pail of cream. One of them said, "I sink, I die." The other said, "Cheer up, you duffer, keep kicking, you don't know what may turn up." By morning they discovered that they had churned the cream into butter; they crawled on the butter and jumped out.

Will power is needed not only for the purpose of concentrating the attention on one thing at a time, but for refusing tempting offers at a time when it would be suicidal to accept them. Reginald de Koven once wrote an article in which he complained of the difficulty of finding competent singers for operetta companies. He referred to some organizations which could not start out for this reason and to others that for the same reason failed on the road. "Just think," he adds, "of pupils, after six months' study, going out and making from $125 to $175 a week." Such offers must be very tempting, indeed, but what happens to the girl who, after insufficient training, accepts one of them? Why do so many American girls lose the bloom of their voices so soon?

Let me answer these questions, Yankee fashion, by asking another. Why do girls among peasants lose their beauty at so early an age? Because they use up their vitality prematurely by incessant drudgery and too early marriage. So it is with the young voices. They are subjected to the strain of nightly performances, to which often the fatigues of daily travel are added, and the result is that they age and break down at a time when they ought to be at their best. Such opera singers are too much in a hurry. Too much in a hurry, also, are most American students. Leschetizky once said: "The Americans have amazing powers of acquiring knowledge. In that respect they are

my best pupils. They have quickness of apprehension, keenness of insight, and ability for practical application. They are unswervingly industrious. But their main fault is their extreme hurry. They come to Europe in a hurry, they want to learn everything in a hurry, they complete their studies in a hurry, and they return home in a hurry. Hurry is the curse of art in your country. In business it means progress; in music, superficiality."

Mary Garden says: "Patience, incessant work, ability to seize an opportunity and make the most of it, together with some power of interesting an audience so as to hold a position once gained—these are the things that make success."

Tetrazzini had been before the public fifteen years before she made her popular success in London and New York. As Goethe said:

> Nicht Wissenschaft und Kunst allein,
> *Geduld* will bei dem Werke sein.

Be patient! Before you face an audience, learn not only to play or sing, but *to be a musician*—to know as much as possible about harmony, counterpoint, rhythm, musical structure, and history. W. F. Apthorp once described a rehearsal, held by Theodore Thomas, of Beethoven's *Missa Solennis*. In the quartet there were four well-known singers, but three of them just managed to scrape through by the skin of their teeth. Georg Henschel, on the contrary, "sang as easily and with as much freedom as if he had been singing a simple sheet ballad, and made a real performance of his part. You see, *he was a musician*, and the music had no difficulties for him. Giuseppe Campanari once told me that he would not, for the world, have foregone his several years' experience as 'cellist in the Boston Symphony Orchestra. 'That musical experience enables me now to sing easily what bothers many of

my colleagues on the stage not a little; difficult rhythms and intervals do not trouble me at all!' "

The "Short Cut to Success" may seem a rather long one, after all. True; but *if you aim at the summit* it is not only the shortest road but the only one.

Temperament, Personality, Magnetism, Expression

Can temperament be imparted and acquired? The general opinion is that it cannot; but it can if you know how.

A young girl was studying a hunting song for the piano. She was an intelligent and painstaking student, but her playing was lifeless and mechanical. Luckily, she had a teacher who used her mind. This teacher, Maggie Wheeler Ross, relates, in *The Etude*, what she did to wake up this girl's mind. She gave her *mental pictures* of the chase, made her read the Canto, "The Chase," from the *Lady of the Lake*, and memorize and recite portions of it. She filled her, in other ways, full of the hare-and-hound spirit, and soon the girl "had the swing and lilt of the left-hand movement of her piece, and she told me with almost the life and enthusiasm of a true sportsman that she imagined that she heard the bray of the horns, the bellow of the hounds, the call of the huntsman, and the clatter of the horses' feet every time she played the piece. Her performance showed this. Her eyes would sparkle and her cheeks would glow, and it was evident that here was genuine musical delight."

In this way a bright teacher practically created a temperament; and in such ways many a seemingly dull player could be made emotional and interesting, having herself become interested and enthusiastic. The girl referred to entered at last into the real spirit of the music, and whoever does that is an artist. When an artist sings a ballad

as if he had been an eye-witness of the tragic or comic incidents related in it, he shows temperament.

If you can thrill your hearers with a simple piece of slow music, you have temperament. In that case you will feel the thrill yourself. No one should try to become a public performer unless he is occasionally moved to tears by his own playing or singing. The members of Anton Seidl's orchestra say that when he conducted an emotional work like Tchaikovsky's *Pathetic Symphony*, the tears used to roll down his cheeks. The audience could not see this, but it felt what he felt; and when Seidl died, the most temperamental of all orchestral and operatic interpreters passed from this world.

It is related of Antoinette Sterling that as her art matured her chief aim became more and more to touch and move her hearers. "*More heart and less art*," became her maxim; and, as an English journalist remarked, there could be "no question as to the extraordinary power and magnetism of her singing."

The greatest of living American violinists, and the greatest and most temperamental and successful violinist of her sex anywhere, is Maud Powell. On being asked if the financial rewards of a "career" are commensurate with the outlay of talent, time, sacrifices, and cost of education, she answered: "In rare cases, yes; generally, decidedly no. If one has the strength of an Amazon and can supplement the work with teaching, working longer and harder than any laboring man ever dreamed of doing, or if there is a certain indefinable something called *magnetism* in your personality, which wins your way irrespective of your work, then yes, the game *may* pay. Let me tell you, though, that the world is full of artists and musicians whose talent and ability command the deepest reverence, who, nevertheless, cannot swell box-office receipts by a single dollar for lack of that illusive quality of magnetism. The

great public is moved by human qualities, more than by art qualities. So suppose you spend your youth and early womanhood in the sweatshop of art, and come forth into the light of public work well equipped technically and artistically, only to find yourself gloriously snubbed by the public because you are aloof and leave them cold—where is your financial reward then?"

Miss Powell touches on an important point in intimating that the "magnetism" to which so many musicians owe much of their success is a human rather than a purely artistic quality. Think of Paganini, Liszt, Paderewski, for example. The world wants a musician to be different from others, to have individuality, personality; and this must show itself in personal (human) ways as well as in unique "readings" of compositions.

You should have something about both your personality and your interpretation that no one else has; if you have, your chances of success are much improved. Master some branch more thoroughly than any one else, and you need not worry. It has been well said that "if a man make but a mouse-trap better than his fellows, though he makes his tent in the wilderness, the world will beat a path to his door."

Success is possible without personal magnetism (attractiveness, winsomeness), provided there is a great deal of artistic temperament to compensate for its absence. If you can make the music you play or sing move an audience so deeply that it will forget even your personality, you are an artist of the highest type.

A coloratura singer can also "move an audience" to great enthusiasm, although she may not have a trace of temperament. But it is obvious that in this case the appeal is merely to the senses, not to the deeper human and esthetic feelings. To stir those, you need temperament.

In its widest denotation, temperament includes every-

thing that relates to expression, and expression in music has much in common with eloquence, which is defined as "impassioned and convincing utterance" and "expression of emotion."

In a Boston newspaper I once read about a class of Normal School girls who had "an evening with Mark Twain." A number of selections were read and recited, but only one of the girls succeeded in making anybody laugh! The others evidently lacked the gift of expression. No doubt they had been taught to read *correctly*—to pronounce the words with the right accents, to raise their voices—probably *beautiful* voices—at the interrogation points, to heed the commas and periods, the colons and semicolons; and yet they missed fire because they were *not interesting*. Mark Twain himself, reciting these selections, would have convulsed everybody with laughter. And five minutes later, with a pathetic story, he would have moved every one to tears—simply because he has magnetism, personality, temperament, expression.

The best song ever written can be sung correctly as to notes and pitch and pace and loudness, yet so dully that every one is glad when it is over, while another singer can, with the same song, make every one clamor for a repetition. The difference between the two defines the word expression: it is that which gives life and soul to music.

Omit expression and you have mere juggling with tones. Music begins where technic ends. And yet most music teachers are so absorbed with technical studies that they pay no attention whatever to expression! Is it a wonder so few of their pupils succeed?

Ever since the time of Beethoven the composers have taken more and more pains to indicate by means of expression-marks how their music ought to be played in order to make the deepest impression on the hearers. They

indicate various degrees of loudness, from the whispering pianissimos to the loudest fortissimos; various degrees of rapidity, from the slowest largo to the liveliest prestissimo. These, with the various marks for accent or stress, and indications for phrasing (the correct and intelligible "reading" of a musical thought), constitute the four chief elements of musical expression. Mistakes in any of them may distort a piece as ludicrously as a convex mirror caricatures your face and form.

Yet it is possible to perform a piece with attention to all the printed expression-marks and yet sing, play, or conduct without real expression—without kindling the fire of enthusiasm. And this brings us to the most important point in this whole volume.

What is the inner secret of musical expression? We can learn it from savages and peasants. Missionaries and explorers have recorded their impressions of the music made by the wild men of Africa, America, Australia; they tell of occasions when the deepest emotion is aroused by their singing and playing, when tears are shed until the passionate excitement becomes almost tumultuous. These primitive men and women do *not* make music to show off their technical skill or high notes, or for money or for applause; they make it because they cannot help it; it is *the natural utterance of their feelings*—the expression of their individual, tribal, and religious emotions.

Some years ago, after spending three months in a Swiss hospital, weakened by typhoid fever, I followed my doctor's advice and dwelt a few weeks on the borders of the Italian lakes. One evening, at Locarno, I took a walk along the shore of Lago Maggiore with the chief forester of Switzerland, who had been in the hospital with me. Presently, from a parapet above us, came the sound of a voice angelic in sweetness, singing with charming expression an artless folk song. We stood spellbound, and listened for half an

hour to this unpremeditated solo. We had both heard Patti, but agreed that Patti never sang with such genuine feeling. Our curiosity was aroused and we mounted the steps to see who the great artist might be. She proved to be a plain peasant woman, who blushed and looked uncomfortable when she found out that she had had other listeners besides the baby in the cradle by her side. An unhappy thought came into the forester's head. He offered the woman several francs if she would come down to our hotel and sing there for us. She blushed again and protested that she could not sing; but finally she was persuaded, and a few evenings later she appeared at the hotel and sang several pieces there. But, of course, she felt out of place and nervous, the audience frightened her, her voice trembled and lost its charm, and of expression there was not a trace. Her song was no longer the natural utterance of her feelings.

A few years later, in New York, a friend invited me to his house one evening. Among the guests was a young girl who had spent several years in Germany studying the piano, and who wanted to make her début (with dreams of a brilliant career as concert-pianist) in New York. She begged my permission to play something for me, and, without explanation or apology, sat down and—would you believe it?—played through a whole long concerto, the solo part alone, without accompaniment! Her one idea was to impress me with her "accomplishment," but the only thing she did impress on me was that she was nothing but a bundle of vanity and ambition. She played in public and was, of course, a dismal failure.

After being a musical critic for nearly three decades, I confess that I am deathly tired of concerts and operas, and recitals of all descriptions. I long more and more for *expression*, but seldom get it unless a great leader like Seidl conducts, or a great pianist like Paderewski plays, or

a Geraldine Farrar sings and acts. I long to go among savages and hear them sing their thrilling war songs or listen to their impassioned drum solos. I hate these conservatory pianists with their finicky "touch" and "methods" and "pearling scales," and technical abominations; I detest those singers of the "Italian school" whose one idea is to sing notes loud, high, and shrill, that will be sure to arouse "thunders of applause." Sometimes I come home from a long recital so hungry for real music that I have to sit down at my Steinway and play a Chopin prelude or a Grieg song to appease the craving.

Every student of music ought to read the Introduction to *The Peasant Songs of Great Russia*.* The following paragraph is particularly significant: "It is just because the whole power of the peasant song lies in *free improvisation* that the practised execution of a folk song even by the best artists cannot compare with the genuine peasant performance. The latter have always an advantage which we can only acquire by putting great strain on ourselves. The peasants *improvise* the song, while we *learn* it from music. In the performance of the peasants the song flows in a continuous stream; in our singing the division into bars and notes is always apparent.† The peasant 'tells' his song in protracted musical speech—we sing melody, frequently without knowing the words, and always very badly pronouncing them. The peasant loves his song, is enraptured by it—we condescend to it. I am convinced that, until we live in our song, as every true artist lives in his work, our execution will continue to be weak and pale."

Liszt tells us, in his book on the Hungarian gypsies, that they have no notation for their music. "Nor," he adds, "would the dead letter of their music give us an idea of

* By Eugenie Lineff. London: David Nutt.

† Read Wagner's remarks, in his essay on *Tannhäuser*, on the necessity of ignoring the bar lines if one would sing with expression.—H. T. F.

the vivacity with which the gypsy virtuoso executes it, of the incessant mobility of its rhythms, the fiery eloquence of its phrases, the expressive accent of its declamation." Their art is *a perpetual free improvisation*—and so was Liszt's art. Extremes meet.*

Wagner, as just stated, counselled his artists to ignore the division of music into regular bars. "After the singer has completely absorbed my intentions," he added, "let him freely follow his own feelings, even to the physical demands of breathing in agitated passages; and the more *independent and creative* his *emotional abandon* makes him, the more he will excite my admiration and wonder."

How far all this takes us away, not from expression itself—for the improvisational style of singing and playing is that very inner secret and perfection of expression we have been seeking for—but from mere printed expression-*marks*, which are only a crude approximation to what a great artist makes of a piece! As a rule, even these are not attended to, and then performers wonder why high-class concerts do not pay as well as vaudeville and musical comedy! They would pay equally well if the high-class music were as adequately interpreted as the low-class usually is. There's the truth in a nutshell.

Tempo Rubato, Pedal, and Accentuation

The essence of the improvisational style is great variety and elasticity of pace. Mozart said that "the most neces-

* If some one accidentally discovered a treatise on piano technic by Liszt, how the translators would pounce on and the publishers fight for it! Yet here is Liszt's book on Hungarian gypsy music, untranslated and neglected, though from it teachers and pupils could learn more about the soul of music—the qualities which made Calvé and Paderewski, the De Reszkes and Seidl, so superlatively successful—than from a million "methods" and text-books. The stubborn refusal of players and singers to use their minds, to read books that would help them to win success, is an inexplicable phenomenon.

sary, the most difficult, and the main thing in music is the tempo." Grieg once wrote to me: "Tempo should be in the blood. If it is not there, we may take our oath on it that the other intentions of the composer also will be mutilated." Other great masters expressed the same opinion. Wagner's essay, *On Conducting* (which every student must read), is chiefly a treatise on modifications of tempo, or what is usually called tempo rubato. As this subject was discussed at some length in the chapter on Chopin, a few additional remarks must suffice.

Tempo rubato, as used by great artists, is simply *applying in details* the instinctive sense of tempo required for the *general* pace of a piece. To be a great player you must have not only that *general* sense for the right pace which Mozart called the most difficult and important thing in music, but also—what is still more difficult—an instinct for the *frequent modifications* of that general pace in a given piece or movement. The player or conductor must note the emotional character of the melody, slightly retard the pace if it becomes sentimental for the moment, and accelerate it if it becomes particularly cheerful.

These slight changes of pace in a piano piece affect both hands. The dictum that "the left hand must keep strict time" was made, not by Chopin, but by Mozart, in whose music it does no harm. But since Mozart's day all music has become more irregular in accent and tempo, owing to the influence of Slavic and Hungarian music, in which the mood (and with it the pace) changes frequently, often abruptly. To play such music (Chopin and Liszt notably) with a metronomic left hand is to commit murder in the first degree. Nor should any pianist heed the ridiculous but oft-repeated assertion that if you increase the speed for a few bars you must slow up for a few bars subsequently, so that the whole piece will last just as many seconds as if you had made no change in the pace. What would an actor say if

he were told that if he spoke a few words in one line more slowly, he must make up for it by speaking a few words in the next line faster? Pianists accept these maxims vacantly. Is it a wonder so few of them succeed? Do use your brains!

Music is becoming more and more subtle—an art of many contrasting shades and colors. Corresponding to the growing habit of making slight but frequent changes in pace is the disposition to make greater, more gradual, and more frequent variations in the degree of loudness. The volume of tone in piano-fortes has been vastly increased within a century—as vastly, in proportion, as that of the orchestra. Now, the greater the tone-volume, the greater also are the possibilities of shading, from pianissimo to fortissimo; and in the utilization of these infinite gradations of tone lies one of the greatest advances of modern music, one of the main avenues to success for an up-to-date musician. Yet there are plenty of pianists who play forte and fortissimo all the time, ignoring entirely the tremendous importance of dynamic contrast as a means of musical expression and of swaying an audience. Mark Hambourg would be a much greater artist if he could restrain his vehemence, and among the pianists of the fair sex there are altogether too many Amazons who follow the noisy methods of the British suffragettes. To play that way is like dancing on a bed of violets.

"The tree with a thousand leaves can brave the storm," says Saint-Saëns; "but what is left of a flower or the wing of a butterfly after it has been bruised?"

In order to be up to date, a musician must further know how to benefit by the fact that in the varying of tone-colors, also, much greater facilities are at his disposal than the orchestras and pianos of former times provided. Orchestral conductors do not neglect their opportunities; pianists too often do. In Paderewski's playing nothing fascinates

his audiences more than the diversity of exquisite tone-colors he obtains by means of varied touch and ingenious pedalling. Rubinstein called the pedal the soul of the piano-forte, and said: "I consider the art of properly using the pedal as the most difficult problem of higher piano playing. If we have not yet heard the piano at its best, the fault possibly lies in the fact that it has not been fully understood how to exhaust the capabilities of the pedal."

In view of the importance of the pedal, and the fact that without it no distinctly idiomatic piano-forte effect is complete, I quite agree with those who hold that the study of it should begin in the pupil's first weeks.*

Attention to accentuation also should begin with the first lessons.

Has it ever occurred to the reader to ask why organ recitals are nearly always free? The organist surely has a magnificent instrument, an instrument almost as rich in tone-colors as an orchestra and rivalling it in the power of dynamic shading and climaxing. But one thing it lacks: the power of accenting individual tones—and that makes all the difference in the world. The pianist has that power, and we pay to hear him. Think that over, then study the subtle emotional art of accentuation, and your success as a public performer will be in proportion to your success in mastering that art.

One of the principal rules of musical expression is that

* In the current piano-forte "methods" the pedal receives much too little attention. There are, however, fortunately, several special publications from which students can get invaluable assistance. The best of these is *The Pedals of the Pianoforte*, by Hans Schmitt, who believes that the use of the pedal should begin early. The increased beauty of tone which is obtained by its use helps to make piano practice more attractive. Other books on this subject have been written by Louis Koehler, John A. Preston, Hugh A. Kelso, Albert F. Venino. See also Riemann's *Comparative Pianoforte School*, Kullak's *The Esthetics of Pianoforte Playing*, and the remarks in the present volume, pp. 317, 428-432.

discords must be emphasized to make them intelligible and poignant;* also, modulations. Not to emphasize discords is to produce an uncanny, mysterious impression, which in some cases is desired. But the main function of accentuation is to make the melody come out clearly every moment, like a red thread in the polyphonic web of harmonies. If the average hearer loses that thread, you might as well talk to him in Sanscrit as try to make him comprehend and enjoy your playing.

Wagner revolutionized orchestral interpretation by teaching conductors always to reveal the red string of the *melos*.

Singing Distinctly and in English

Singers have something corresponding to the pianist's endless variety of accents in the infinitely diversified inflections and modulations of the voice. A single word like "indeed" can be spoken in such an indifferent way as to betray no feeling at all; but it can also be made to express surprise, or approval, or doubt, or scorn, or sarcasm, or a dozen other states of mind by simply changing the inflection of the voice—its pitch, tone quality, and emphasis. If this is true of ordinary speech, how much more so of music, the very essence of which lies in changes of pitch and tone and accent!

Unfortunately, nine singers in every ten forfeit this advantage over mere speech by their slovenly enunciation, which makes it impossible for the hearers to tell what they are singing about. "Inarticulate smudges of sound" is the happy phrase coined by Mrs. Wodehouse for the words that issue from the mouths of most singers; and Mr. Hackett recorded "Ye tnightly pi tchmy moving ten ta da ysmar chneare rome" as one singer's way of saying,

* Read the page on *Ausdruck*, in Riemann's *Musik-Lexicon*.

"Yet nightly pitch my moving tent a day's march nearer home."

Such atrocities are largely the result of the old custom of teaching pupils to sing songs in languages of which they knew not the meaning—a custom that made them indifferent to all texts, whether poems or opera librettos.

If you wish to be up to date, remember that (unless you are a sensational coloratura singer) the time is past when it made little or no difference how slovenly your enunciation was, provided you emitted beautiful tones. In the modern opera and *lied*, distinct enunciation is half the battle won, because it enables the audience to enjoy the fun or the pathos of the lines as well as the music, and creates "atmosphere." Learn the rare art of singing words as distinctly as you speak them, and you will be surprised at the difference in your reception by the public and *its willingness to pardon faults in your vocalization.*

Recitals would be more frequently successful if the singers, furthermore, used a language every hearer can understand. It is still assumed by most performers that the English language is ill-suited for song; but Louis Arthur Russell has shown in a most admirable and important little book * that it is the vocalists who are at fault; they have not learned the language. He makes it clear that the difficulty of English is not due to the sounds in themselves, but to the *many sounds*, the closely allied vowel-colors, the finer shades with which our language abounds. The English language, he maintains, is better adapted to the requirements of *expression*, especially in the finer and more sensitive lines, than other languages. "The singer who has mastered English may well," he says, "laugh at him who can sing only in a simpler language, like Italian."

* *English Diction for Singers and Speakers.* Oliver Ditson Co.

Should Americans Study Abroad?

The goal of every musician in Europe is an engagement in America. The goal of every music student in America is a year or more in Europe. Are there valid reasons for this state of affairs?

Undoubtedly, singers and players earn more in America than they do in Europe, which is sufficient reason for their wanting to visit us. But how about the students? Why are they so eager to go to Europe? An analysis of their state of mind shows that there are seven reasons why they want to cross the Atlantic: they believe that they can find better teachers in Europe; that there is more "musical atmosphere" over there; that they will hear more good music, and for less money; that their educational and general expenses will be lower; that they will gain "prestige"; that there are better chances for a début on the other side; and that a trip to Europe has an educational value in itself.

Probably, in nine cases out of ten, if things were sifted to the bottom, it would be found that what chiefly prompts our students is the desire to travel and see Europe. That in itself is a most laudable purpose, but it should not be pursued on the alleged ground that the opportunities for musical culture and advancement are not as good in America as in Europe.

There are in this country just as good teachers of the voice, the violin, and the piano as in Italy, France, or Germany, and the proportion of incompetents and charlatans is about the same on both continents. If Europe has more of the best teachers than we have, this is due partly to the fact that they are supported chiefly by American students, who want them to be located there and not at home. I could give the names of nearly a dozen prominent

teachers who left America to settle in Berlin because, evidently, their pupils wanted to take lessons of them *there!* Godowsky is one of them. Many American girls and youths go to Berlin without knowing a dozen words of German. These, naturally, crowd the studios of the teachers from America, who thus reap a rich harvest. It is estimated that in Berlin alone music students from the United States spend over a million dollars a year.

America has a few good conservatories, but only one or two that can be compared to the best high schools of music in Europe. A conservatory presents some advantages over private instruction in offering under one roof all the diverse branches—including languages and the very important history of music—which go toward making a full-fledged performer. They also counteract the American foible of flitting from teacher to teacher. Discipline—training to obedience—seems difficult to establish in American conservatories, especially in the large cities. Pupils who are subjected to it leave and go elsewhere. Abroad, these same pupils prove more tractable.

Foreign teachers, it has been claimed, are better on the average than the American because they go more slowly. David Bispham says: "The great old Francesco Lamperti used to worry us to death, but in the end he taught us to sing."

There is such a thing, however, as going too slowly. Edith Lynwood Winn puts her finger on the weak spot of much foreign training. The teachers, she says, do not inquire whether the pupils come to prepare for the concert stage, the quiet town teaching, or the simple life of a cultured home. "They try to grind us all out after one plan. They teach the same concertos, the same sonatas, and the same études year after year, and they wonder why we Americans tire of this pedagogic stuffing. What we Americans do not get in Europe is practical teaching. A

friend of mine spent one-half year in the Berlin University studying the early life of Goethe. When she came back to America she knew nothing of Goethe's best works. So it is with music study over there."

"There is no exclusive knowledge across the big pond which we do not possess," writes Emil Liebling; "on the contrary, our methods are more practical, condensed, and concise, and we obtain far better results in less time than the great man abroad, who takes only a limited number of pupils (which is rather fortunate for the rest). But then," he adds cynically, "*mundus vult decipi*, and old Barnum very shrewdly adapted this old Latin adage, 'the world wants to be swindled,' to modern phraseology and his own uses, hence his success."

"Of those who go abroad to be 'finished' there are many who return truly in that condition," says W. Francis Gates.

Many a girl is sent to Europe for a musical education with a sum of money that would be considered ludicrously inadequate at home, under the impression that tuition fees and living expenses are much lower abroad. They are in small towns, but in the large cities, where the great teachers and artists congregate and the great performances are given—in London, Paris, Berlin, Dresden, Munich, Vienna, Milan—one cannot live for less than in American cities of similar size. The great teachers abroad charge $5 to $10 for a short lesson, and room and board in a "pension" are not under $30 a month. One of the best-known teachers in Berlin refuses to take pupils who have not an assured allowance of at least $75 a month. Twelve times $75 is $900; on less than that sum a year—better call it a round $1,000—it is unwise to go to a European capital with a view to studying with the *best* teachers and hearing *much* good music—and this is what you want to go for, isn't it?

In 1906 the American consul at Milan, Mr. Dunning,

sent a report to the State Department at Washington in which he said "Don't come" to American girls about to visit Italy. He pointed out the difficulties that confront them, and advised that no American girl should go to Italy for a musical education unless she has from $75 to $100 a month coming to her regularly. "Nearly everything costs as much as it does at home," he added.

Many pitfalls are prepared to get the American girl's money, and possessions infinitely more valuable than money. In this respect, however, Italy is no worse than other countries, including America. It is astonishing that so many American parents should allow their daughters to go unattended to Europe; but no more astonishing than that they should not realize that there is danger at home, too. As one fully conversant with the situation has said: "The time for a mother to begin to worry is not when the girl is ready to go out into the world, it is when the girl is beginning her studies. Many a mother will go on at a rate of six hundred words a minute about managers and the stage and all that sort of thing after she has permitted her young and silly—mind you, *silly*—usually silly—daughter to go unattended to the studios of men who are known to be utterly and absolutely without principle or conscience. If she has come out of her study days as guileless as she went into them, there is no use of losing any peace of mind about the experiences she will meet among the managers and on the stage. There are churches in New York and many other cities where the attitude of some members of the committee is of such an offensive nature that really modest young women are not even sent to apply for positions by such agents as know what they must encounter."

The many Americans who go to Italy to study seem to take lessons almost entirely of private teachers. There are six conservatories supported by the government—at Milan, Florence, Rome, Naples, Palermo, Parma. The largest

and best of these is the Verdi Conservatory at Milan; yet in 1908 Elise Lathrop wrote, in *Musical America*, that although it is open absolutely without charge to sufficiently talented students of any nationality whatsoever, there were at that time no North Americans enrolled among the pupils. Most Italian students get their lessons free at these institutions, or else a contract is made with a private teacher ensuring payment for lessons after the pupil has entered upon his career. Caruso was launched on the high C's in this way.

Doubtless there are still in Italy teachers who have preserved the traditions of singing *beautifully* (*bel canto*); these, however, are not likely to know how to teach the *dramatic* style of vocal music now most in demand; for this Paris and the German cities offer better opportunities.

For the study of anything except operatic singing it is not advisable to go to Italy. Oratorio and instrumental concerts are little cultivated; one can hear more piano, violin, and vocal recitals and orchestral concerts in London, Berlin, or New York in a month than in any Italian city in two years. Even church music is neglected. Rome has 365 churches, but "only half a dozen good organs and not one well-trained church choir," according to F. Spero.*

American gold has, moreover, lured away from Italy nearly all the good singers. A student can hear more first-class opera singing in New York in one week than in all the opera-houses of Italy during the whole season. This is admitted by the Italians themselves; they are the ones who lament it most loudly. Leoncavallo has gone so far as to declare that there is no use in writing any more operas until some of the good singers are brought back from America. Nor is it Italy alone that has been despoiled. France, Germany, Austria join in the *lamento*.

* *Zeitschrift der Internationalen Musik-Gesellschaft*. Breitkopf & Härtel.

Everywhere the complaint is that all the great singers have gone to New York.

It is from these singers that pupils of song can learn most. The old Italian master, Tosi, declared that students should lose no opportunity to hear great singers, "because from the attention in hearing them one *reaps more advantage than from any instruction whatsoever.*"

David C. Taylor has written a most important and suggestive book * in which he develops the doctrine that *imitation* is the rational foundation for a method of voice culture. Students should hear the best singers as often as possible, note carefully the quality of their tones and *imitate* these qualities with their own voices.† Mr. Taylor is convinced that this was the "old Italian method," of which we hear so much, and that it is the only one which leads to success.

New York has no first-class conservatory, but it offers better opportunities than any city in the world—even than London—to hear and imitate the world's great singers of all schools and countries. Why then go to Europe? Because opera is so expensive here? It is not much cheaper in Europe; and besides, for the cost of a return trip to Europe you can buy, at $3 a seat, seventy opportunities to hear the best singing in the world at the Metropolitan and Manhattan Opera Houses.

As for instrumental music, there are only two cities in the world—Berlin and London—which have more first-class concerts than New York offers. And not only New York. All of the world's great pianists and violinists cross the Atlantic and visit all American cities and most of the smaller towns. There is doubtless more "musical atmosphere" in German houses than in ours, but as far as

* *The Psychology of Singing.* The Macmillan Co.

† Compare with this the remarks in the chapter on Rubinstein, p. 306.

public performances are concerned, we have enough to breathe and be exhilarated by the artistic ozone.

But how about the prestige? Is it not necessary to make a début abroad if one would be acclaimed in America? Not in the least. Of course it helps young artists at home if they have already won praise abroad, but unless the début was in a large city, and sensational, Americans are not likely to hear of it. Criticisms in Italian journals are discounted because they are usually paid for. As a matter of fact, New York has become the grave of many a foreign reputation; and, on the other hand, the superlative merits of some singers—among them Lilli Lehmann and Max Alvary—were not discovered till they came to the American metropolis. American artists are coming more and more to the front, both at home and abroad. Most of the German opera-houses have from one to half a dozen or more Americans among their singers; and at the Metropolitan Opera House, for the season 1909–10, Mr. Dippel announced that about one-third of the vocalists would be Americans.

Starting a Career

In one respect Europe presents a great advantage over America, at any rate for young opera singers; there is a much greater demand for them. Italy has eleven opera-houses of the first rank, thirty of the second; and Germany has nearly twice as many. Thus there are more than a hundred companies, in these two countries alone, eager for recruits with good voices and other qualities likely to attract the public, whereas our country has barely half a dozen.

It is because of this great demand for young voices that one finds so many Americans at the German opera-houses. There they get the necessary experience, becoming familiar with opera after opera, and learning how to act as well as

sing. The compensation, it is true, is very small (about $1,000 the first year), and the work so hard that immature voices are in danger of being ruined.

Strange to say, Germany offers excellent opportunities not only for dramatic singers but for light American voices suitable for colorature work. The Germans like variety; while Wagner is their favorite, they also want to listen to ornamental music once in a while, wherefore every opera-house tries to secure a capable florid songstress. If one of these—or of their more dramatic colleagues—wins a notable success, the American managers are sure to hear of it and make advantageous offers.

An operatic début in Italy is likely to be an occasion very trying to the nerves. The engagements are made through agents, of whom there are over seventy in Milan, the head-quarters of Italian opera for both Italy and Spain, and also for South America. These agents are not specialists in philanthropy. The débutante has to pay for the privilege of appearing; she has to pay for the advertising, the news-paper criticisms, the clacque, the good-will of her asso-ciates in the company. As regards her respectability, the American girl under these circumstances, unless she has plenty of money, needs, in the words of Emil Bridges, "the purity of a Una and the strength of a Brünnhilde to come off victor." The operatic shores are strewn with wrecks of character as well as careers.

Few débutantes who have failed to become prima donnas in grand opera have sense enough to turn to operetta. They should ponder the words of Lulu Glaser: "I had much rather be a success in musical comedy or comic opera than be one of the minor people in grand opera, with a chance to do only small rôles at considerable intervals."

In light opera, a début is a much less formidable affair, and the chances of success are much greater. Henry W.

Savage, who has given so many excellent performances of both operettas and grand operas in English, offers this important advice: "If I were to suggest one detail in the education of American singers which would result in direct success, I would say that the need of dramatic action and stage training is the greatest. Given dramatic action, the singers right here would be of infinitely greater value to me. We need more singers who can act."

If the operatic novice has troubles of her own, they are trifling compared with those the concert singer or player has to contend with. Some of these were referred to in the introductory section on music and money. Isidore Luckstone, who, as accompanist at many recitals, knows things from the inside, declares that he thinks that "perhaps nine out of ten singers would agree that the hardship of study is not to be compared to the hardship of launching into the vortex which is supposed to lead to fame and success."

There are exceptions. Some singers — among them Emma Eames, Geraldine Farrar, Mary Garden, Riccardo Martin—were fortunate enough to have wealthy patrons who gave or advanced them sums up to $20,000 to help get an education and make a début. Others have been favored by diverse circumstances—exceptional gifts, personal magnetism, coming to the right place at the right time, and so on. But to the artist who chooses a career on the concert stage, good opportunities rarely present themselves at first. Regarding Berlin, August Spanuth writes that "even in the rarest, most fortunate cases it is necessary to wait several years before concert-giving yields even a modest profit." The same is true in America, in England, everywhere.

On returning from Europe, the American who wishes to make a début usually decides to give a song recital—an unwise thing to do, for such a recital is the severest test to which a singer can be put—much severer than an operatic

début, for in the concert hall there are no other singers, no orchestra, no chorus, no stage accessories, no millionaires in boxes, to distract the attention of the audience. Everything is focussed on the soloist's performance, every flaw stands out conspicuously. Famous opera singers have come to grief giving song recitals; what chance has a débutante?

Managers naturally advise those recitals, as they get a share of the $400 or more it costs to give one. They say, quite truly, that they cannot do anything for a novice until they have some newspaper criticisms to "circularize" as a bait to secure an engagement in or out of town. These criticisms often may not be written, after a recital, or, if written, may not be profitable to reprint. Some managers agree, for the sum of two or three thousand dollars, to secure sufficient engagements to launch the beginner successfully; and if the girl happens to be good-looking but penniless, they have the effrontery to suggest dishonorable ways of securing the sum required.

A manager it is necessary to have. Some agents are honest, some are not; inquiry among musicians is advisable. A good concert agent knows the condition of the musical market in all the cities and towns of the country; he gets demands for artists and sends circulars to inquirers and others. Of course, he is, at best, in this business primarily not to help singers or pianists, but to make money. He is interested in the artists entrusted to his care in proportion to the demand for them, and the untried beginner is likely to remain long on the waiting list. Some managers ask a booking fee in advance; others do not. The late Henry Wolfsohn, after more than a quarter of a century's experience as agent for concert-givers, said: "My experience has taught me that only about five per cent. of those who struggle and aspire can have their ambitions gratified."

Mrs. Kendall once wrote that an aspirant for stage honors should have "the face of a goddess, the form of a Venus, the strength of a lion, the voice of a dove, the disposition of an angel, the grace of a swan, the suppleness of an antelope, and, above all things, the skin of a rhinoceros." A would-be concert-giver should have, in addition, an inexhaustible fund of patience and perseverance. While waiting for the agent to provide something, it is advisable to try all other possible ways of obtaining a more or less public hearing. Amateur entertainments and charity concerts may prove helpful, and a church position is often a stepping-stone to engagements for oratorios and spring festivals as well as operas.

Church singers are not so well paid as formerly, but Corinne Rider-Kelsey gets $5,000 a year in New York. For church soloist and choir engagements there are special agencies in large cities from which information regarding vacancies may be obtained. The registration fee is $10, and the bureau also exacts five per cent. of the first year's salary. Personal interviews with organists and committeemen having engagements to offer are considered advisable. "Never write," one agent is quoted as saying. "Lay for your organist or committeeman. Lasso them, if necessary, but make them talk to you."

When a chance to appear at a concert is at last secured, it is of great importance to remember that the impression made on the audience will depend not only on the music chosen and the way it is rendered, but largely also on the personal appearance and demeanor of the performer. Not all artists can be good-looking, but all can learn how to dress becomingly, how to walk and bow, how to act in general. To learn the art of proper deportment is almost as important for a concert-giver as for an opera singer. So many things have to be considered by those who would win success!

Programs, Encores, Stage Fright

A Viennese journalist relates that one day he accompanied Brahms to a concert by an unknown singer, whose program contained a number of little-known songs by Brahms. "An unpractical fellow!" exclaimed the composer. "Unknown singers should begin with known songs."

Another thing worth remembering is that unknown singers and players, unless they are officiating at a school, should not attempt to make their program "educational." The public goes to a concert to be entertained, not educated. It pays teachers for instruction, artists for amusement.

An artist of assured position may, and should, try to do missionary work for neglected masterworks and new composers, but not too much at a time.

Pay no attention to those critics who measure the value of a composition by the time it takes to play it. Choose the shorter pieces, in which the composer says much in a short time. That's modern—everywhere except among contemporary musicians in Germany, to whom the performers give more attention than the attitude of the public warrants.

Some day singers will discover that songs which display their own private and particular best notes are not what concert-goers are primarily interested in (see p. 244); then they will begin to choose songs for their intrinsic excellence, and their recitals will be better attended. The intrinsic excellence of a song lies chiefly in its melody. Melody is what the public wants, and the most melodious song writers, next to Schubert, are Franz, Rubinstein, Liszt, Grieg, Jensen, MacDowell; yet these are the ones mostly neglected. I have attempted elsewhere * to point

* In *Songs and Song Writers* and *Grieg and His Music.*

out what are the best, that is, the most melodious, songs in existence, for the guidance of singers. If they want encores, those are the songs they should sing. But they must sing them with expression or they will fall flat. A poor cook can spoil terrapin and canvasback duck. Indeed, the more delicate the flavor, the more easily it is lost.

It is well to study the programs of famous singers and players, to learn about arrangement, variety, and contrast. The pieces more difficult to comprehend (among them sonatas) should come early. Toward the end there should be sweets, cheese, and liqueurs, as at a fine dinner. "First the intellectual, then the emotional, then the sensational" is a good motto to follow.

Above all things, make your concerts short, or they will cease to be entertainments. It is infinitely better the hearers should leave wishing there had been more than with the words, "Thank Heaven it's over." For orchestral concerts two hours should be the maximum, for a recital, an hour and a half. Paderewski, to be sure, sometimes plays two hours and a half—but that's another story.

Paderewski's one fault is that he does not sufficiently vary his programs. He shares this fault with most concert-givers. The current repertory includes about a hundred songs and a hundred piano pieces. Yet there are many hundreds more that are equally good and that would be no less relished were they sung and played. The public loves to be surprised. There are plenty of chances to surprise it with buried diamonds and gold nuggets such as South Africa does not yield.

Liszt held that the pianist should be neither the master nor the servant of the public. By stooping a little he may gradually conquer it for the higher things in art. Do not be afraid to play Liszt's fantasias—the public loves them and they are masterworks—or dance pieces. All the great masters wrote dance music, and *con amore.*

Appeal to the feelings of your hearers, and the battle is won. They will come again—*vide* Wüllner.

Artists naturally like those demands for repetitions or extras known as "encores." As a rule, they are tokens of success, but sometimes, when only a few of the hearers demand them, and persistently, the opposite impression is produced. Many a musician has cause to exclaim: "Save me from my friends." Never grant an encore unless the majority unmistakably want it. It is better in most cases to give another song—or piece—and it should be short—than to repeat the same one. Encore fiends should remember Shakespeare's

> "Enough! No more.
> 'Tis not so sweet now as it was before."

Alas! the best laid plans o' mice and men. . . . After overcoming seemingly insuperable obstacles, the young artist may at last have reached his goal of standing on the stage and appealing to an audience of music lovers, professionals, and critics, when lo! an arch fiend appears and mars everything at the last moment.

Stage fright is the artist's deadliest enemy. It makes the singer's voice tremble and get off the pitch, the violinist's arm quiver, the pianist's fingers lose their cunning. The memory becomes confused, technical execution incorrect, and expression is of course out of the question.

Are there any remedies? Drugs are worse than useless; stimulants (tea, coffee, tobacco, liquors) help in some cases, harm in others. Heinrich Pudor knew a violinist who suffered from a fearful, almost convulsive, trembling of his right arm, and who cured himself completely by cold sponge-offs of this arm. Plenty of exercise in the open air is to be recommended, and singers are greatly aided by correct and deep breathing (consciously, when the fright comes on).

Most of the great artists suffer, as we saw in the preceding biographic sketches, from stage fright; it is one of the penalties of being a great artist. But what I wish to call attention to particularly is that in these cases the fright usually precedes the performance and soon disappears. Lehmann "suffers tortures of anticipation"; Nordica "feels tempted to run away when the fateful hour appears," and Sembrich speaks of "the dreadful times" she has "before almost every performance." But as soon as the work has begun in earnest the nervousness vanishes. Why? Because great singers have a habit—a habit which is the main secret of their success—of *concentrating their mind entirely on the music, forgetting themselves as well as the audience.* Just as a trained mountain climber, to avert dizziness, thinks not of the deadly precipice, so the singer or player must learn to control his attention. It is another instance of exercising the will-power.

In the case of pianists, one of the main sources of stage fright is the habit of playing everything "by heart." Things have come to such a pass that a pianist is hardly considered up to "concert pitch" unless he plays everything from memory. Now, there is undoubtedly an advantage in thus playing—an advantage similar to that which an orator has over one who reads his speech; but there are also good reasons why the doings of giants should not be imitated by those of lesser stature unless they are favored with a particularly retentive memory. The fear of forgetting—of making a mistake—of "losing the place" altogether—is responsible for the failure of many promising débutants. It makes them so nervous that even if they make no technical mistakes they are unable to play with the proper abandon and emotional expression. The hard work of memorizing tempts them also to limit their repertory; prominent pianists thus satiate their audiences, for not all of them are like D'Albert, who once played

from memory eleven different concertos within three weeks.

Most pianists would undoubtedly improve their chances of success if they placed the music before them. Probably they would never look at it—for of course they should memorize everything they play in public—but the knowledge that in case of accident the music was before their eyes would give them confidence and allay stage fright. If Rubinstein had followed this plan, he would not have been so much tormented in the last years of his career by distrust of his memory.

Opera singers have a prompter and a conductor to come to their aid in a moment of uncertainty, and Jean de Reszke, Nordica, and others have told me what a comfort it is to know that. Why should pianists be left helpless? Pugno always has the printed music before him. Anna Mehlig did the same thing, and Clara Schumann played her husband's concerto with the score before her, though she knew, of course, every note by heart. Before Liszt, all pianists used their notes, and he dispensed with them partly because his pieces were largely improvisations, varying from concert to concert.

A phenomenal memory is not a thing to be particularly proud of. Blind Tom, the negro, could repeat any piece after hearing it once. He could, in the same way, repeat an orator's speech, with every inflection; yet he did not know what the words he repeated meant, for he was an idiot.*

A Few Health Hints

It has been said that there are only three avenues to fame: Genius, energy, and health. Of these three, health

* While the memory is the lowest of the mental faculties, its cultivation is nevertheless of great importance to musicians. The best remarks I know of on how to memorize a piece are in Lavignac's *Musical Education*, published by D. Appleton & Co. Pp. 93–100.

is by no means the least important; a musician who has to appear in public frequently needs it particularly; without it, no great and lasting success is possible. Yet there are few artists who do not daily violate the laws of health, to the detriment of their bodies, their voices, their playing, their reputation. Some commit these sins against themselves, and through themselves against their art, because the flesh is weak, the appetite strong. Others commit them because of lack of hygienic knowledge; for these, a few hints are here offered.

In nine cases out of ten the question whether or not a singer is "in good voice" is a question of health. The great artists know that, and avoid what they have found to be detrimental. Indigestion is the most frequent cause of singers not being in good voice. A well-known bass once said to me: "Good singing is seven-eighths a question of digestion." That is an exaggeration, but it has its use as a warning.

In travelling, particularly, an artist has to put up with much badly cooked food; but it is well to remember the adage that "nothing is more injurious to health than a bad cook, except a—good cook!" The good cook tempts us to eat too much. We all eat too much. Fletcher, Irving Fisher, and others have shown by experiments that half the amount of food we eat, if *properly chewed*, gives us twice the energy we now derive from our groaning tables. Here is another chance to exercise your will-power. But don't make a resolution and keep it only a week, or a month! Without perseverance nothing can be accomplished.

Strong drink has dug an early grave for many an artist by undermining the health and paralyzing the will. Beer and wine, in moderation, and if of good quality, are harmless to many; but how often can you get them good? Old wine helps digestion, young wine—and adulterated wine—retards it.

Ice-water has ruined more stomachs and voices than whiskey. The American custom of serving a goblet of ice-water at the beginning of each meal is criminal—no other word is strong enough. Ice-water does not even allay thirst; the more you drink the more you crave. "Drink nothing below sixty degrees in temperature and drink sparingly," is the advice of Dr. Wiley, who has done so much to safeguard the health of Americans. Never gulp a glass of water. Imbibe the liquid in small quantities, and you will find that half a glass goes farther than three gulped glasses, and does you more good. On hot days, when the system needs large quantities of liquid, weak *hot* tea is far preferable to cold water. On tour, never drink unboiled or unbottled water unless you know it is likely to be free from typhoid and other deadly germs. The unconcerned way in which people drink water on railway cars is amazing.

Musicians should protest on every possible occasion against the voice-murdering, spirit-depressing air in which they have to sing and play in theatres and concert halls. Often this air is hot, stuffy, stale, foul—so foul that if it could be made visible to the eyes it would look, compared to fresh air, as a mud-puddle looks compared to a mountain stream. If a picture of this air could be thrown on a screen, the audience would stampede for the doors as if some one had raised the cry of fire. This destestable air injures the chances of an artist's success in another way: it makes audiences become tired, listless, bored, indifferent, unapplausive and inclined to leave the hall, simply because there is no oxygen, no ozone to breathe. Insist on the proper ventilation of the halls you are to appear in. If there is a chance, help to lynch the architect.

The unspeakable value of being out in the open air as much as possible, and of breathing in the oxygen as deeply as one can, need not be dwelt on again. If you breathe

(always through your nose) deeply and slowly, the amount of oxygen supplied to the blood is largely increased, which is better far than iron pills and all other tonics. Deep breathing will even cure colds in their first stages—and a cold often costs a singer thousands of dollars! If you have a cold, do not cough—that simply irritates the throat. Breathe deeply, and the irritation will soon cease. A good remedy is snuffing up a pinch of boracic acid. Steaming the throat and nose (very carefully) with witch-hazel often cleans them out wonderfully and brings on refreshing sleep.

"Tired nature's sweet restorer" is, after all, the greatest of all tonics. Insomnia is quite as bad as indigestion; quite as fatal, in the long run, to voices and constitutions. Its most frequent causes are indigestion, tired eyes and nervous excitement. Apart from insufficient chewing, indigestion, and the ensuing sleeplessness, are caused most frequently by eating sweet dishes and fruits at the evening dinner. Tired eyes should be bathed in warm water in which a pinch of borax has been dissolved. Placing over them a layer of absorbent cotton soaked in good extract of witch-hazel often helps to bring on deep and dreamless sleep—the only kind which refreshes the brain. An hour's sleep in the afternoon is often most invigorating for the evening's work. Get your "beauty sleep"—before midnight—whenever possible. Morning sleep is too often marred by noises and by the light from the windows shining on your eyes. Have your bed so made up that you do not face the window. If this cannot be done, put on goggles when you are waked up by the light early in the morning. Never shut out the light with heavy curtains that prevent ventilation. Pure night air is the elixir of life, because it makes your sleep doubly invigorating. Nervous excitement inimical to sleep can be allayed by deep breathing and plenty of exercise in the open air.

Sleep can be made a habit by stubbornly banishing all thoughts after you have put your head on the pillow, and in case you wake up during the night. Above all things, never brood—in bed or out—over unpleasant occurrences or criticisms. What's the use? Be philosophical. None of the great artists escaped censure, yet that did not prevent them from winning success. And if your success is too much delayed, don't get discouraged. Remember the lines of Cowper:

> "Beware of desperate steps! The darkest day,
> Live till to-morrow, will have passed away."

XXVIII

PADEREWSKI ON TEMPO RUBATO

On the very important and much-disputed question of Tempo Rubato, Mr. Paderewski has kindly written the following in English for this volume:

Rhythm is the pulse of music. Rhythm marks the beating of its heart, proves its vitality, attests its very existence.

Rhythm is order. But this order in music cannot progress with the cosmic regularity of a planet, nor with the automatic uniformity of a clock. It reflects life, organic human life, with all its attributes, therefore it is subject to moods and emotions, to rapture and depression.

There is in music no absolute rate of movement. The tempo, as we usually call it, depends on physiological and physical conditions. It is influenced by interior or exterior temperature, by surroundings, instruments, acoustics.

There is no absolute rhythm. In the course of the dramatic development of a musical composition, the initial themes change their character, consequently rhythm changes also, and, in conformity with that character, it has to be energetic or languishing, crisp or elastic, steady or capricious. Rhythm is life.

According to a current story, Chopin used to say to his pupils: "Play freely with the right hand, but let the left one act as your conductor and keep time." We do not know whether the story should be afforded the benefit of the doubt. Even if it be exact, the great composer contradicted it most energetically in such wonderful compositions as the étude in C sharp minor, preludes No. 6

and No. 22, the polonaise in C minor, and in so many fragments of others of his masterpieces, where the left hand does not play the part of a conductor, but most distinctly that of a prima donna. Another contradiction of this theory, or rather of the way Chopin put it into practice, is the testimony of some of his contemporaries. Berlioz affirms most emphatically that Chopin could not play in time, and Sir Charles Hallé pretends to have proved to Chopin, by counting, that he played some mazurkas $\frac{4}{4}$ instead of $\frac{3}{4}$ time. In replying to Charles Hallé, Chopin is said to have observed, humorously, that this was quite in the national character. Both Berlioz and Hallé evidently intended to testify against Chopin. Berlioz, although extremely sensitive to the picturesque and the characteristic, was not emotional at all; besides, the instrument he played the best, the instrument on which he even tried to perform before some friends his *Symphonie Fantastique*, the sonorous and expressive guitar, could not have revealed to the great man all the possibilities of musical interpretation. As for Sir Charles Hallé, a distinguished but rather too scholastic pianist, this estimable gentleman, who knew so many things, ought to have known better here. Our human metronome, the heart, under the influence of emotion, ceases to beat regularly—physiology calls it *arythmia*. Chopin played from his heart. His playing was not national; it was emotional.

To be emotional in musical interpretation, yet obedient to the initial tempo and true to the metronome, means about as much as being sentimental in engineering. Mechanical execution and emotion are incompatible. To play Chopin's G major nocturne with rhythmic rigidity and pious respect for the indicated rate of movement would be as intolerably monotonous, as absurdly pedantic, as to recite Gray's famous *Elegy* to the beating of a metronome. The tempo as a general indication of character in a com-

position is undoubtedly of great importance; the metronome may be useful: Melzel's ingenious device, though far from being perfect, is quite particularly helpful to students not endowed by nature with a keen sense of rhythm; but a composer's imagination and an interpreter's emotion are not bound to be the humble slaves of either metronome or tempo.

Our Olympian predecessors, the classics, although living under different conditions, and on a plane above that of our present-day nervousness and excitement, seemed to realize the impossibility of containing some of their ideas within the limits of the indicated time and rate of movement. In Bach's works we sometimes see *Adagio* and *Allegro*, *Animato* and *Lento* in the same bar. Haydn and Mozart frequently use expressions such as *quasi cadenza*, *ad libit.*, leaving thus to the interpreter entire freedom as to the rhythm and rate of movement. The most human of them, the most passionate, the only composer who knew almost exactly how to express what he wanted, Beethoven, took quite particular care of tempi and dynamic indications. When we look at the first movements of the D minor sonata, of the op. 57, of the op. 111, at the *Largo* in the op. 106, and especially at the beginning of the *Adagio* in the op. 110, we see the embarrassment and discomfort to which all the tempo-sticklers and metronome-believers are exposed when attempting to play or to teach these works. And yet, in spite of his stupendous, almost abnormal, sense of precision, in spite of his vast knowledge of Italian terminology—a quality in which nearly all modern, non-Italian composers are positively deficient *—Beethoven could not always be precise. Why? Because there are in musical expression certain things which are vague and

* We see in Max Reger's remarkable op. 86 such gems as: *sempre poco a poco cresc.* (pages 9–10), *assai delicato sempre* (page 16), *ben espress. ed espress. ten il melodia* (page 18).

consequently cannot be defined; because they vary according to individuals, voices, or instruments; because a musical composition, printed or written, is, after all, a form, a mould: the performer infuses life into it, and, whatever the strength of that life may be, he must be given a reasonable amount of liberty, he must be endowed with some *discretional power*. In our modern meaning discretional power is *Tempo Rubato.*

Tempo Rubato, this irreconcilable foe of the metronome, is one of music's oldest friends. It is older than the romantic school, it is older than Mozart, it is older than Bach. Girolamo Frescobaldi, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, made ample use of it. Why it is called *rubato** we do not really know. All lexicons give the literal translation of it as: robbed, stolen time. Now, the most common, the most frequent, the simplest form of Tempo Rubato is obtained by a *ritenuto* or a *ritardando* which, as every one knows, serve to increase the value of respective notes. Where there is increase there can have been no robbery. Addition cannot be called subtraction. Although we protest against the use of the words: robbed, stolen time, we recognize that the very essence of Tempo Rubato is a certain disregard of the established properties of rhythm and rate of movement. The French translation of Tempo Rubato: *mouvement dérobé*, while not giving the full, modern meaning of it, is the best of all. It implies the idea of fleeing away from the strict value of the notes, evading metric discipline. We should be inclined to call it *evasive movement.*

It would be wrong to pretend that Tempo Rubato is the

* "*Rubato*" is the past participle of the Italian verb "*rubare*," which is derived from the Latin "*rapere*"—to steal. This word, carried to Germany by the Romans, was there transmuted into "*rauben*," and when the Germanic invasions brought it back to Italian soil it became the "*raubare*" of decadent Latin. With the vowel *a* suppressed, it has since passed into the Italian dictionary as "*rubare*"—to steal.

exclusive privilege of the higher artistic form in music. Popular instinct evolved it probably long before the first sonata was written. Expressed although nameless, it has always been in all national music. It is Tempo Rubato which makes the Hungarian dances so fantastic, fascinating, capricious; which so often makes the Viennese waltz sound like $\frac{2}{4}$ instead of $\frac{3}{4}$ time; which gives to the mazurka that peculiar accent on the third beat, resulting sometimes in $\frac{3}{4} + \frac{1}{16}$:

The literature concerning Tempo Rubato is not particularly rich. Apart from short notes to be found in lexicons, we can only quote a few really authoritative opinions, always admitting that there may be some others, and very valuable ones, unfortunately unknown to us. Liszt, in his beautiful though rather bombastic volume, *Frédéric Chopin*, devotes to the subject a few interesting passages; Ehlert and Hanslick, as far as we can remember, seem to pay little attention to it; on the contrary, Niecks, Kleczyński, and especially Huneker, treat it more extensively. Peculiarly enough, all the above-mentioned authors speak about the matter incidentally and in conjunction with Chopin, as if Tempo Rubato were an exclusive attribute of Chopin's music; all of them say excellent things without solving the question, which is still and will be open to further investigation.

We do not pretend to have anything new to say upon the subject; our desire is to remove the stigma of morbidness which seems to be attached to it. Tempo Rubato is not pathological, it is physiological, as it is a normal function of interpretative art. In our opinion it is not so much Tempo Rubato, as the romance of Chopin's life and his

premature end, which are responsible for the silly superstition that Chopin should be played in a soft, sentimental, sickly manner. Tempo Rubato is a potent factor in musical oratory, and every interpreter should be able to use it skilfully and judiciously, as it emphasizes the expression, introduces variety, infuses life into mechanical execution. It softens the sharpness of lines, blunts the structural angles without ruining them, because its action is not destructive: it intensifies, subtilizes, idealizes the rhythm. As stated above, it converts energy into languor, crispness into elasticity, steadiness into capriciousness. It gives music, already possessed of the metric and rhythmic accents, a third accent, emotional, individual, that which Mathis Lussy, in his excellent book on musical expression, calls *l'accent pathétique*.

The technical side of Tempo Rubato consists, as is generally admitted, of a more or less important slackening or quickening of the time or rate of movement. Some people, evidently led by laudable principles of equity, while insisting upon the fact of stolen time, pretend that what is stolen ought to be restored. We duly acknowledge the highly moral motives of this theory, but we humbly confess that our ethics do not reach such a high level. The making up of what has been lost is natural in the case of playing with the orchestra, where, for the security of the whole, in spite of fractional alterations of movement, the metric integrity should be rigorously preserved. With soloists it is quite different. The value of notes diminished in one period through an *accelerando*, cannot always be restored in another by a *ritardando*. What is lost is lost. For any lawlessness there is, after a certain term—proscription.

As we have already said, Tempo Rubato appears frequently in popular music, especially in dances, consequently it ought to be used in the works of Chopin, Schu-

bert, Schumann (*Papillons, Carnival*), Brahms, Liszt, Grieg, and in all compositions which have folk-music as a foundation. Practically, it can be used anywhere—save, perhaps, in some ancestral music, where there is room for no passion, where the serene purity of architecture, a majestic dignity and repose, lead to spheres of almost immaterial and unearthly beauty.

It would be unthinkable to play Chopin* without using Tempo Rubato; but neither would any one do justice to such works as Schumann's *Fantasia*, *Fantasiestücke*, *Carnival*, *Humoreske*, the sonata in F sharp minor, etc., without wisely applying that means of expression. However strong and peculiar was Mendelssohn's dislike of Tempo Rubato, we cannot recommend too unconditional a respect for the great composer's personal feeling in this matter. Some of his *Songs Without Words*, of predominantly lyric character, must be played freely, because whatever is lyric defies the rigidity of metric and rhythmic lines. Curiously enough, one of the most striking examples of Tempo Rubato is to be found in Mendelssohn's violin concerto, in the short *Intermezzo* leading from the *Andante* to the *Finale*. We well remember the playing of this by the great Joachim—in our opinion the greatest exponent of classical music; it was most distinctly *rubato*.

I. A. F. M., in his concise but excellent description of Tempo Rubato, published in Grove's dictionary, expresses doubt whether *rubato* should be used in Beethoven. To this we answer without hesitation in the affirmative. *Rubato* was Rubinstein's playing of the opening bars and the *Andante* of the G major concerto; *rubato* was Joachim's rendering of the middle part in the *Finale* of the violin concerto; and Bülow, whom we by no means pre-

* Most striking and really beautiful things bearing upon the interpretation of Chopin's works are to be found in Mr. J. Huneker's book, *Chopin: the Man and His Music*.

tend to put on the same level as the two artists just mentioned, but who was a great authority in Germany, indulged in Tempo Rubato very frequently, when playing Beethoven. The *Largo* in the C minor, the *Andante* in the G major, the *Adagio* in the E flat concertos call imperatively for Tempo Rubato. And what would a pianist with a grain of common sense do in passages such as

opus 111, without Tempo Rubato?

In fact, every composer, when using such words as *espressivo*, *con molto sentimento*, *con passione*, *teneramente*, etc., demands from the exponent, according to the term indicated, a certain amount of emotion, and emotion excludes regularity. Tempo Rubato then becomes an indispensable assistant, but with it, unfortunately, appears also the danger of exaggeration. Real knowledge of different styles, a cultured musical taste, and a well-balanced sense of vivid rhythm should guard the interpreter against any abuse. Excess of freedom is often more pernicious than the severity of the law.

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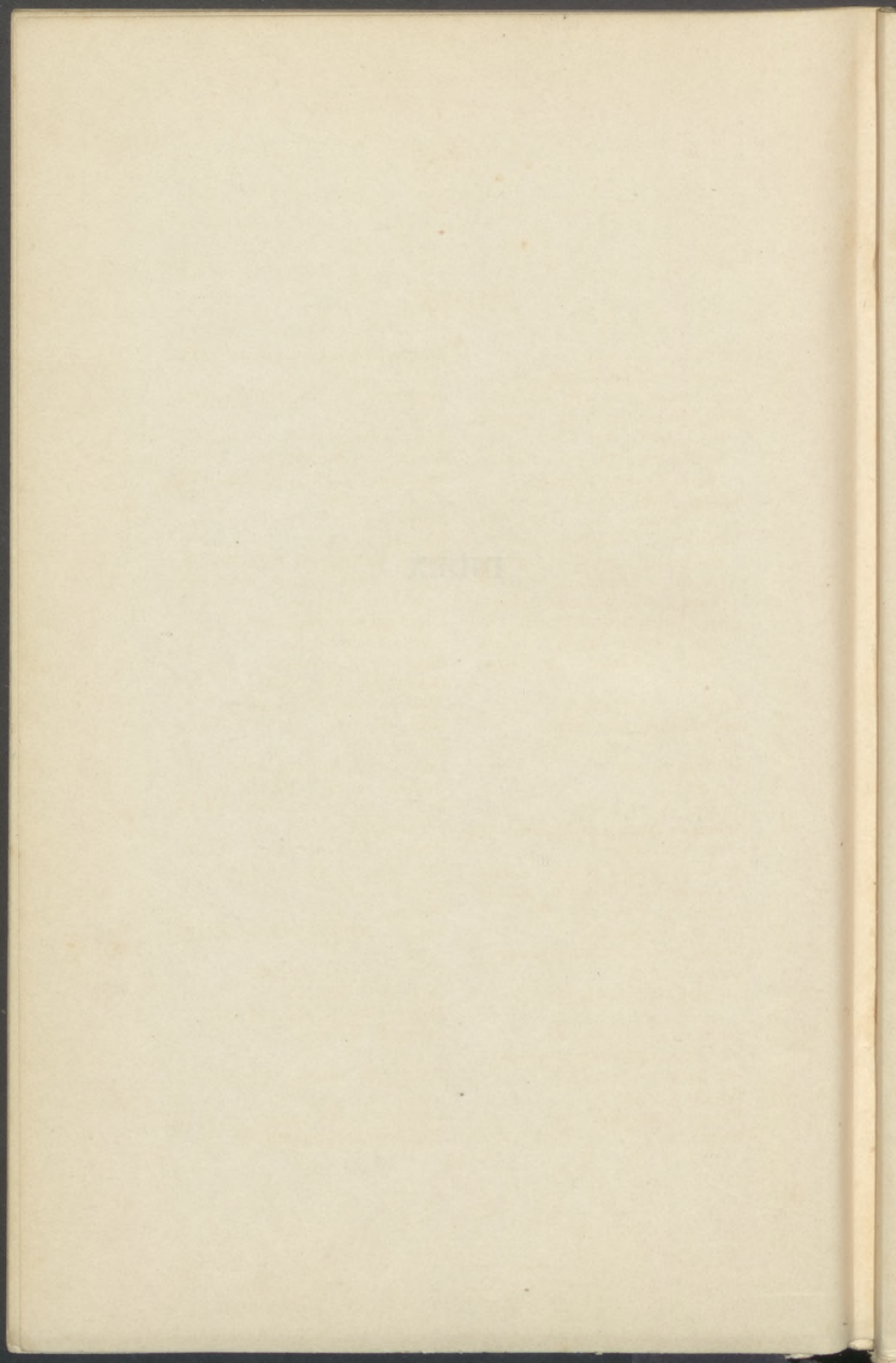

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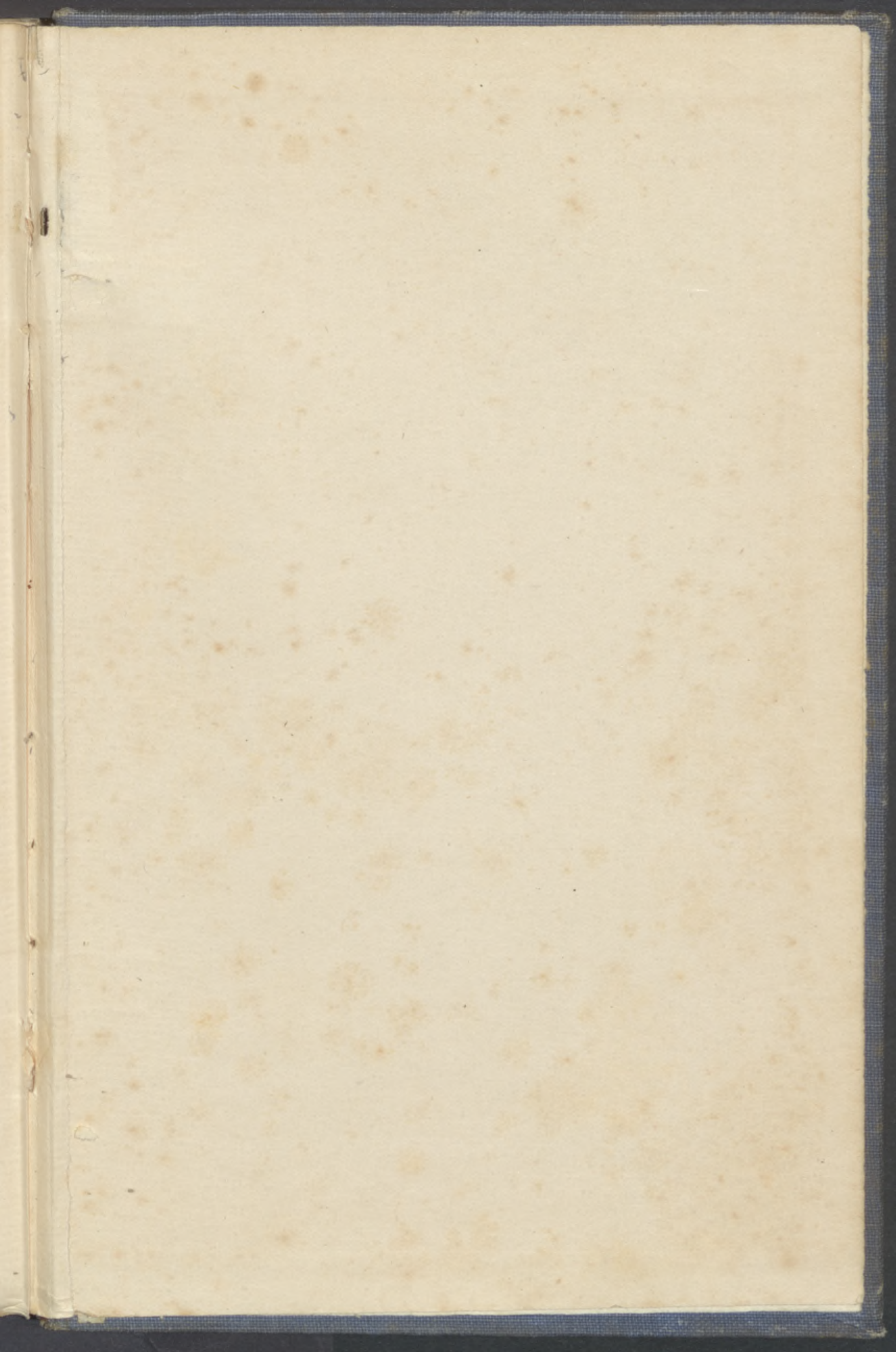

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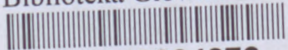
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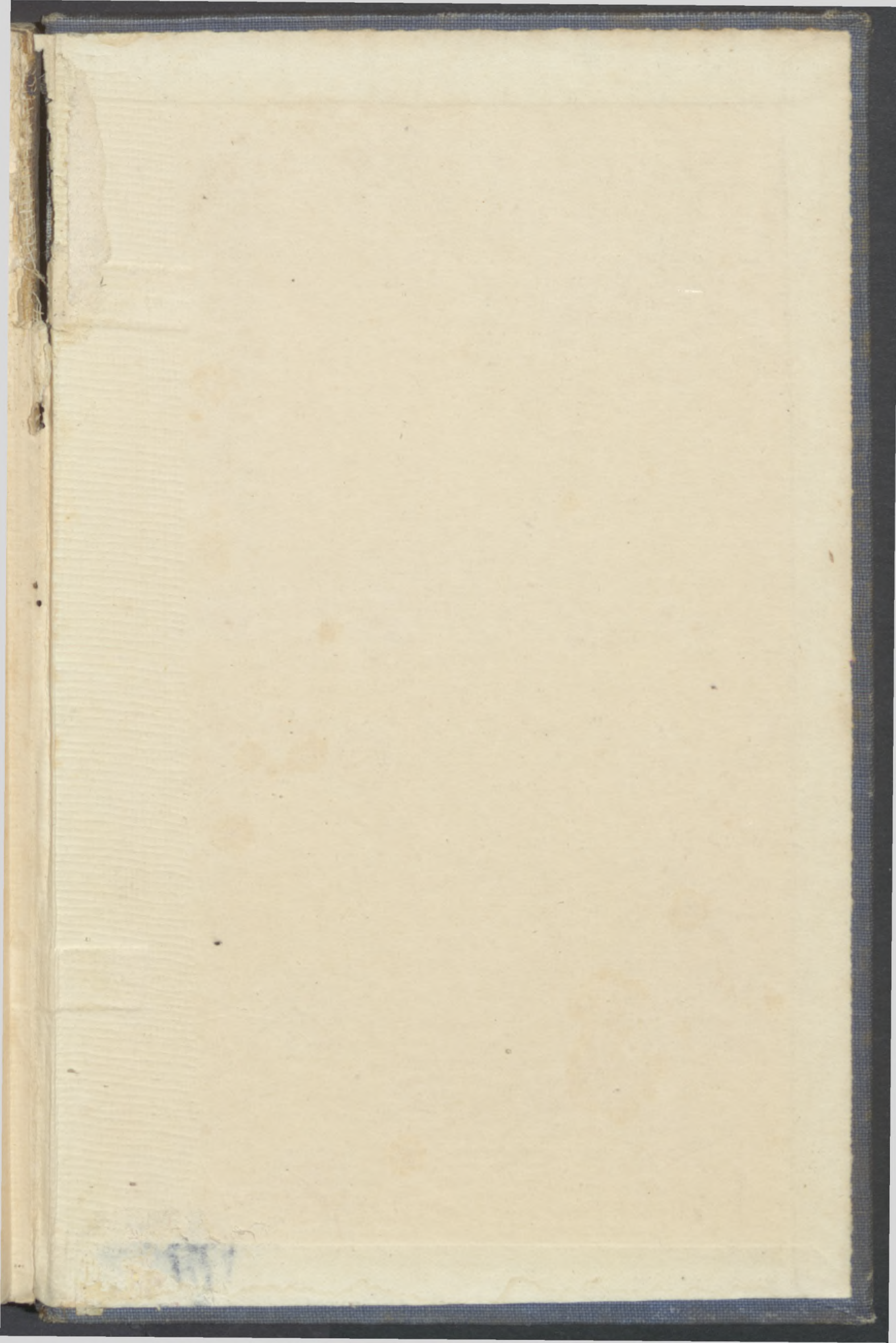

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