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ERRATA.

Page 4, line 14 from below, for "*mise*," read "*mis*."
" 9, " 7 " " "*de*," read "*di*."
" 9, " 2 " " " "*he*," read "*it*."
" 23, " 1 " " " "*was*," read "*were*."
" 53, " 12 " below " "*draperie*," read "*draperies*."
" 60, " 9 " " " "*as*," read "*as to*."
" 303, " 2 " top " "*but*," read "*and*."
" 317, " 12 " below, omit full stop.



IL CONTE DI CANDIA, AFTERWARDS SIGNOR MARIO.

“Natura lo fece, poi ruppe la stampa.”

Vide p. 124.

1 CENTURY

MEMORIES—

7 &c.



Dr. [Name] of [Location], [Title]

[Date]

GOSSIP OF THE CENTURY

PERSONAL AND TRADITIONAL MEMORIES—
SOCIAL LITERARY ARTISTIC &c.

BY THE AUTHOR

OF

“ FLEMISH INTERIORS,” “ DE OMNIBUS REBUS,” &c.

“ ‘ Where is the world ? ’ cries Young at *eighty*— ‘ Where
The world in which a man was born ? ’ Alas !
Where is the world of eight years past ? ’ *Twas there—*
I look for it—’tis gone ! A globe of glass !
Crack’d, shiver’d, vanished, scarcely gazed on, ere
A silent change dissolves the glittering mass.
Statesmen, chiefs, orators, queens, patriots, kings,
And dandies, all are gone on the winds’ wings.”

DON JUAN.

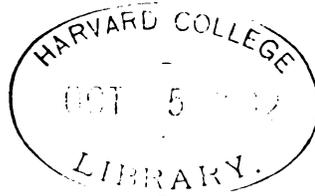
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MUSICAL NOTES AND THEIR ECHOES.
ENGLISH AND OTHER VOCALISTS.

VOL. II.

2

“ C'est le ton qui fait la musique.”—FRENCH PROVERB.

GOSSIP OF THE CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.

MUSICAL NOTES AND THEIR ECHOES.

ENGLISH AND OTHER VOCALISTS.

“They rant by note, and through the gamut rage,
In songs and airs express their martial fire,
Combat in trills, and in a fugue expire.”—ADDISON.

“All musical people seem to be happy : it is the engrossing pursuit ; almost the only innocent and unpunished passion.”—SYDNEY SMITH.

IF we set aside all sentimentality and calmly analyse an operatic performance, we are forced to admit the absurdity and falseness of the situations.

At the same time we cannot but admire the power of music, which can adapt itself to all passions, all circumstances, and give such expression to the sentiments they call forth, that we lose all sense of incongruity and follow the composer through every phase of feeling—such as mirth, terror, love, hatred, ambition or pathos, with rapt attention and willing approbation.

Happy is the composer who has found artistes capable of seconding his efforts by the intelligent interpretation of his language, for he is altogether at their mercy, and can be rendered winning or repulsive, ridiculous or sublime, according to their apprehension of his meaning and their power of conveying it to the audience.

The gradual falling off in Italian music is very significant. It had, apparently, already made itself felt even in Rossini's

time, for he deplored it and accounted for the rarity of real artistes partly by the degeneration of their vocal qualities, and partly by the concomitant degeneration of public taste, which had become so vitiated that audiences had either ceased to be good judges of good music, or had become indifferent as to what was offered them. He used to say that the change which had taken place in the style of composition had much to do with it: in former days the music required that the voice should be trained by a severe discipline, such as that which Garcia and Tacchi-Nardi imposed on their pupils, when they respectively turned out such artistes as Malibran, Viardot, and Persiani; but "now," he added, "as soon as singers know their notes, they consider themselves qualified to sing," so that an *impresario* has but little choice. As if to contribute still further to the disappearance of Italian *maestri* and Italian voices, a new school of music has come in to claim the day.* At first

* An able musical critic, writing from Vienna in May, 1890, supplies the following suggestive information:—

"The unexpected success which has attended the revival of *Ernani* and the *Trovatore*, at the Vienna Court Opera, furnishes fresh evidence that Wagnerism has seen its best days. For many years past Wagner's music has enjoyed a semi-monopoly at the Hof Oper. *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser*, and the *Meistersinger* naturally form part of the regular *répertoire* of every German opera-house; but in Vienna we have had the *Nibelungen Ring*, the *Flying Dutchman*, and *Rienzi* besides. Then, after the public had been satiated with bi-weekly Wagnerian evenings, the whole series was given together as a sort of annual commemoration. This was too much for everybody but the Bayreuth fanatics, who, fortunately, are in a minority. Money had been spent lavishly—too much so—on the *mise-en-scène*; Hans Richter or Director Jahn were always at the conductor's desk on Wagner nights; the stars of the company held the leading *rôles*; yet the public at last got weary of the 'music of the future.' Wagner's operas ceased to attract full houses, and it became evident that a change must be effected.

"The first attempt was not made in the right direction. An influential *coterie* refused to admit that Wagner's music was no longer as popular as it used to be. It was thought sufficient to give ballet-evenings more frequently. Two large spectacular ballets—with very little dancing in them—were added to the *répertoire*, and produced, at least, twice weekly. The *Puppenfee* and *Sonne und Erde* failed, however, to save Wagner. When people had seen them each a dozen times they began to find them tiresome, and a murmur arose amongst the *habitues* of the opera at the frequency of their appearance on the play-bill. It then became evident that the public would be satisfied with nothing short of the revival of some

tolerated, it ultimately began to obtain favour; it was new and strange, and therefore arrested the attention, gradually it became the fashion, and scientific and "classical" music now bids fair to usurp the place of pure, natural, and emotional melody.

Time was when no music but Italian would satisfy the world, and however excellent might be, whether the voice or the method of singers, they could make themselves acceptable to the public only by Italianizing their names.

England, however, has produced one great tenor whose perfection was so transcendent that he came boldly forward and presented himself to the world under his own patronymic, though it is only fair to add that both the purity and the grandeur of his style were due to Italian training. Nature gave him a matchless voice, but it was Leoni, Rauzzini, and Storace who made him a singer. John Brahm.

One tenor—especially one *such* tenor—in a century, is as much as can be expected of any country, and the only tenors since John Brahm—Rubini and Mario—were Italians.

There are probably few surviving, certainly few of the present generation, who remember the surpassing beauty of that voice and the exquisite purity of that style which

of its old favourites. Director Jahn consequently devoted all his energies to the production of *Ernani*. He selected the most powerful cast available, and conducted, himself. The first performance was given before a crowded house. Not a seat was vacant: it might have been a real *première*. Such enthusiasm had not been witnessed at the Court Opera for years. There was no occupation for the *claque*. The audience themselves applauded, heart and soul at the close of every act, partly to express their satisfaction with the excellent singing, and partly, too, as a demonstration against the long, weary Wagnerian epoch. A few nights ago the experiment was renewed by producing the *Trovatore*, with the best voices in the Vienna company, reinforced by a stranger, Herr Scheidemantel, first barytone at the Dresden Court Opera, and now one of the best singers in Germany. The management scored another success. Every seat in the house was occupied, and the audience was quite as enthusiastic as at the *Ernani* revival night.

"The Viennese are musical to the backbone, and Wagner's works are, of course appreciated at their just merit; but the attempt to suppress the Italian opera altogether because Wagner himself scorned it, and invented powerful emotional methods in music which dazzled his followers, has proved abortive. That is clear beyond doubt from the unwonted favour with which the most musical audience in the world has greeted the recent productions of *Ernani* and the *Trovatore*."

elevated Braham, by universal acclamation, immeasurably above every artiste of his own or, I might fairly say, of any other day. Every connoisseur, whether English or Italian, awarded him the palm of supremacy, and the whole of his prolonged career was a triumph.

My father used to call him "the god of song," and I have never forgotten his having had me taken out of bed and dressed one night, when we were at Brighton, that I might go to hear Braham, whose "farewell night" it was *said* to be. He sang between the two pieces, and was announced on the bills for *Scots wha hae wi Wallace bled*.

Happily for the public, who worshipped Braham, this was a false alarm, as he made many "appearances" after that, and I had the satisfaction of hearing him often; the last time was at my own house, when I had a son of the age at which I had first heard him myself: Braham was then over eighty.

I can vividly recall his presence on that first far-off night on the Brighton stage; I had never before seen the inside of a theatre, and if the impression of that sight was lasting, it has not been more lasting than the memory of his delicious voice—its softness, its sweetness, its power. I can, to this day, see his somewhat punchy figure, costumed—not very correctly by the way—as a Highland chieftain, the attitude he assumed as he approached the footlights with the conventional stage step, and the style in which he retired, waving his hand with a movement intended to be dignified, as he gave out the last line—*Let him follow me*. Alas! *On ne saurait avoir tous les bonheurs*, and Braham was no actor; he left the "acting" to his voice; he was not even a stage-figure, but what he was, sufficed to win the admiration of every musician in Europe.

In my own case,—even had it not been a child's initiation into dramatic proceedings, the shouts, the applause, the bravos, the encores, the calls before the curtain, and the general enthusiasm would have been bewildering; Braham was radiant: thrice he returned to the footlights, and thrice

he responded to the shouts of frantic delight. The great singer knew his public, and that he would not be let off without one of his popular songs; the orchestra struck up *'Twas in Trafalgar's Bay*, and even before he had opened his lips the very symphony was applauded to the echo. This spirited and also pathetic song touched the hearts of the audience, and their shouts for a second *encore* were so persistent that it was in vain the singer tried to pacify them with bows and smiles; no—it was a marine audience, and a sea-song they were determined to have; a demand at once supplicatory and imperative was made for the *Bay of Biscay*, and, whatever Braham's intention may have been, there was nothing for it but compliance. He sang the *Bay of Biscay*; the sudden lull was positively startling—it was a calm in which, after the discordant cries, his melodious voice seemed additionally sweet; but no sooner had the last mellifluous note died away than a simultaneous and intensified shout burst forth, the shrill cries of women and hurrahs of men combining to support the bravos and clappings of ladies as well as gentlemen. The pit and gallery *roared* their applause, which continued long after the object of their hearty and unanimous approval had made his final obeisance. Braham's sea-songs, even when *not* at the seaside, were always captivating to the million, and he so well knew their effect on the masses that he was too often willing to sacrifice musical taste in order to respond to the demands of a public who worshipped him. It must be allowed, however, that to these songs, which, when others have attempted them have never risen above vulgarity,—Braham knew how to impart an heroic grandeur.

In those days a popular and unreasoning, but powerful prejudice prevailed against anything foreign, and this was a cause of much vexation to Braham, who, being a passionate admirer of the Italian school, always endeavoured to introduce that music into his programmes.

On one occasion, at the Hanover Square Rooms, he had

introduced the exquisite tenor air—the gem of *Don Giovanni*, and had not proceeded far when he found himself literally hissed into silence! Braham was disgusted, he paused, signed to the orchestra to cease playing, and folding his arms stood mutely contemplating the audience with an expression of ill-concealed contempt on his face. This attitude, and the patent fact that no resistance was being offered to their tyrannical stupidity, seemed to recall the malcontents to reason, and when the fury of the storm had abated, he said in a calm and audible voice: “Gentlemen, you do not probably know that it is Mozart whom you have been hissing.”

He then gave a hint to the conductor (who quickly changed the score), sang *The Jolly Young Waterman*, and won roars of approbation! Such was the taste of the majority; they actually preferred such music as this, and the shout of those *bravura* songs, to the tender grace with which Braham could sing, *Il mio tesoro!*

A day or two after I first heard Braham, a second “farewell” was announced in Brighton, as having been “unexpectedly secured” by the manager of the Theatre Royal; the bills also stated that it was in *The Devil’s Bridge*—a musical drama of his own composition—that Mr. Braham had consented to appear for “*positively* the last time.” To this also I was taken, and though the plot was too complicated for an infantile comprehension I have not to this day forgotten the thrilling tones of Braham’s voice: perhaps I listened with the greater intensity, that I then guilelessly believed in “farewells,” and honestly thought those sounds would never be heard again.

It has been remarked, and I think with truth, that there is little in the music of some of Braham’s most successful songs to account for the favour they always won, so that “we can only suppose that favour to have been due to the rare quality of his voice, his faultless style, and the graceful ornamentation with which he embellished them.”

Braham's early history was not indicative of his exceptionally brilliant future. His parents (by name Abraham) were German Jews, and died when he was a mere child; but, even children, of Israelitish birth are seldom at a loss for expedients, and the boy, thrown on his own resources, started a little trade in lead pencils, selling them about the streets. It was quite by chance that Leoni met him, and detecting his rich vocal gifts and his musical tastes, undertook to instruct him and bring him out. The willing pupil at once became an infant prodigy, and appeared for the first time at Covent Garden, on April 21, 1787, in *The Duenna*, singing between the pieces, *The Soldier Tired* and *Ma Chère Amie*. The bills announced him as "Master Braham, his first appearance on any stage," and the *Morning Post* reported these songs as having been "given with great success by a little boy, Master Abram, a young pupil of Signor Leoni, who promises to attain perfection, possessing every requisite to form a capital singer." The prognostic certainly was realized to the full, though Braham had a hard fight for it in his early days; but gifted, as I have said, with the endless perseverance which characterizes his race, when his voice broke, he worked early and late at instrumental music, and became an admirable violoncellist.

When a boy, and before he had lost his beautiful rich soprano, he appeared as *Cupid* at the Royalty Theatre, Well Street, Wellclose Square, and when in due course he recovered his voice, it proved a superb tenor—*tenore robusto* in its fullest acceptation, and yet, notwithstanding the force and fulness of his notes, it was capable of infinite pathos and tenderness, combining the *tenore de grazia* qualifications. His reserved force was one of his finest resources, and after pouring out the most intricate and delicate passages with a facility which enthralled the audience, he would produce phrases requiring a volume of sound, which rang out like the booming of a great bell; yet was he never wanting in that exquisite sweetness which, for my own part, I can remember

“ C'est le ton qui fait la musique.”—FRENCH PROVERB.

GOSSIP OF THE CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.

MUSICAL NOTES AND THEIR ECHOES.

ENGLISH AND OTHER VOCALISTS.

“They rant by note, and through the gamut rage,
In songs and airs express their martial fire,
Combat in trills, and in a fugue expire.”—ADDISON.

“All musical people seem to be happy: it is the engrossing pursuit; almost the only innocent and unpunished passion.”—SYDNEY SMITH.

IF we set aside all sentimentality and calmly analyse an operatic performance, we are forced to admit the absurdity and falseness of the situations.

At the same time we cannot but admire the power of music, which can adapt itself to all passions, all circumstances, and give such expression to the sentiments they call forth, that we lose all sense of incongruity and follow the composer through every phase of feeling—such as mirth, terror, love, hatred, ambition or pathos, with rapt attention and willing approbation.

Happy is the composer who has found artistes capable of seconding his efforts by the intelligent interpretation of his language, for he is altogether at their mercy, and can be rendered winning or repulsive, ridiculous or sublime, according to their apprehension of his meaning and their power of conveying it to the audience.

The gradual falling off in Italian music is very significant. It had, apparently, already made itself felt even in Rossini's

in no other voice I ever heard ; it had the softness of velvet and the lusciousness of honey.

When he discovered what an organ he possessed, Braham, with laudable ambition, resolved (notwithstanding the brilliant offers he had to remain in England), to visit Italy and study there : he himself was scarcely prepared for the unbounded admiration of which he became the object all over that peninsula. All the connoisseurs and artistes were enraptured with him ; at Florence, Tacchi-Nardi, the father of Madame Persiani, who, till he heard Braham, had never recognized a rival, listened, entranced, to his first performance, and then exclaimed, enthusiastically—" There are now two tenors in the world : I and this Englishman." A similar story is told of David, who met him at Venice, where he turned the heads of men as well as women, and being asked his opinion as to who was the greatest living tenor, he replied, with characteristic self-consciousness: "*Dopo di me, l'Inglese.*" No doubt he considered this a great concession. All Europe did homage to this transcendent artiste, but naturally his triumphs in the land of poetry and song were the most gratifying, though his reception in Paris, where he had an engagement of three weeks to sing with Madame Storace, was so encouraging that he prolonged his stay there to eight months.

While at Venice, where he took the whole population by storm, Cimarosa, then residing at Naples, travelled to the City of the Doges expressly to hear him, and was enchanted. He at once undertook to write an opera for the special display of Braham's qualifications, the originality and rarity of which he immediately recognized, declaring there should be in it a *scena* such as had never been heard in Venice. Unfortunately he did not live to carry out this project, for he was poisoned by a jealous rival while engaged on the score.

Sir G. Grove states that " Braham's voice had a compass of nineteen notes from D to A in alt." : that his *falsetto* was perfection ; but the skill with which he managed it would

have been futile had it not been for the exceptional flexibility of his voice: a rival tenor of much merit named Johnstone, it appears, failed so signally in masking the transition from the natural voice to the *falsetto*, though his was nearly equal in quality to Braham's, that he acquired the nickname of "Bubble and Squeak."

In Braham's employment of the *falsetto*, this same accomplished musician tells us, that "so complete was his command of his means that he could execute with incredible rapidity and unfailing accuracy the most complicated passages, in which the shrewdest listener could not have detected when or how the one voice glided into the other." Braham was the first English singer who succeeded in, or even attempted, this difficult feat, and it is probable he acquired the art in Italy during his long residence there. He also made good use of his time in mastering the Italian language, which he spoke fluently.

Braham wrote an incredible number of operas and songs; indeed, when he sang in an opera by another composer, he took out all the songs allotted to his part and wrote them over again to suit his own taste and special capacities.

In 1803 Braham wrote an opera called *The English Fleet in 1342* (for which he received £1,000). It was of a character to afford him a fine opportunity for the display of those exciting sea-songs which so intoxicated the British public; the gem of it however is that admired song, *All's Well*: it would be difficult to forget the spirit he threw into such music, and the effective *moriendo* of the watchword repeated from distance to distance which literally hushed the house and gave an added enthusiasm to the burst of applause heralded by that intense silence.

The Death of Nelson, which, like Patti's *Home, Sweet Home*, served as Braham's *cheval de bataille* whenever he was asked for an *encore* by an English audience, occurs in an opera he wrote, called *The Americans*, and it was a

chance if the " gods " did not join in and make a chorus of the concluding lines :—

" For honour, home, and beauty,
England expects that every man
This day will do his duty."

That notorious courtesan and consummate actress, Lady Hamilton, made a point whenever she could, of being present when Braham sang this song, and by one of her clever feints had herself carried out fainting.

Of his successes in Italian music, perhaps the most remarkable were his *Sesto* in the *Clemenza di Tito*; *Guglielmo* in *Così fan tutte*, and *Don Ottavio* in *Don Giovanni*. Mario himself never sang *Il mio tesoro* with more tenderness. This quality was also well brought out in *John Anderson*. There is no doubt Braham was heard to most advantage in the more severe style of classical music, and in oratorio he was especially grand; in *Acis and Galatea*, for example, he was superb; did ever any other singer know how to render *Oh! ruddier than the Cherry*? It was simply perfection; and when he sang in Mendelssohn's *St. Paul* at Liverpool in 1853, it was his rendering of *Be Thou Faithful unto Death*, magnificently accompanied by Lindley, that saved that somewhat heavy and tedious composition. This episode in the performance was appreciatively noticed by the critic of *The Athenæum* at the time.

Hazlitt, who, in his strictures on vocalists, is nothing if not hypercritical, remarks of Braham :—

" His forte certainly is in platform-music and his talent is thrown away on the ballad-airs which fall to his characters on the stage; the sweetness of his voice becomes languishing and effeminate unless when sustained by depth and power. But on these occasions there is a rich mellifluous tone in his cadences recalling that of bees swarming; his chest is dilated, he heaves the loud torrent of sound with power from his heart; his voice rises like a peal of thunder, and his whole frame seems inspired with the god. . . . He sang

Luther's hymn," continues this writer, "most impressively with the exception of one quavering *falsetto*. . . . This appears to me the simplest and sublimest of compositions; and thus sung, it is music to which the dead might awake."

Harrison the tenor singer has been compared to Braham, but, however successfully he may have copied Braham's style, he followed him only *longo intervallo*, for it would be impossible to establish any parity between the two voices.



MR. YARNOLD.

MR. BRAHAM.

MR. BLAND.

(In a Scene from "Masaniello.")

Braham's was as unique in quality as in power and, apart from its unapproachable sweetness, force was among its distinguishing characteristics, while Harrison's utmost efforts could never have raised *his* tones above a feminine whisper beside the full, rich luxuriance of Braham's magnificent notes: although Braham's voice was a tenor and that of Lablache a *basso*, the latter in respect of power is the only voice with which it could be compared.

The prodigious power of voice which Braham had at

command, and with which, like Lablache, he could make his notes vibrate through the house, was specially remarkable (on the stage) in the music of Masaniello, but in oratorio his declamation was so fine that even after his voice was comparatively gone, his interpretation of Handel surpassed that of any other singer, and the perfection he attained in recitative was never equalled by any one but Lablache, also it must be remembered that those who trained our English tenor formed his style on the pure Italian method.

It cannot but be regretted that Braham should ever have trodden the boards : never perhaps was a figure less adapted to the stage than his, nor did he ever attain any histrionic proficiency. Such gifts however as he supremely possessed, far more than compensated for those that had been denied him, and no remark could be more happy than that of Sir Walter Scott, that "if a devil of an actor, he was an angel of a singer."

Miss Stephens • Braham and Miss Stephens—afterwards Countess of Essex—used many years ago to grace the services at Quebec Chapel, where as a child I often heard them, and I retain a vivid remembrance of both voices in the anthems. It would be impossible to forget Miss Stephens's exquisite rendering of *Angels Ever Bright and Fair*, her sweet, clear tones floating as melodiously as mysteriously over the faded red moreen curtains of the organ-loft, and making one wonder what the owner of such a voice could be like. As for Braham's *Deeper and Deeper Still*, which I remember hearing there, as well as at Exeter Hall, it was one of the finest of his performances.

Mrs. Billington. It is difficult to realize to oneself that Braham, who lived so far into the century, should have sung with Storage, whose very name is scarcely known to the present generation, and with Mrs. Billington who died in 1818. Indeed there were one or two professional quarrels between Braham and the latter or rather her husband M. Félicent; one, notably, on the occasion of the production of Nasolini's

opera *Il trionfo di Clelia*. In the course of the arrangements, Braham fancied some slight was put on him, and revenged himself by "taking off" Mrs. Billington's ornamentations, in fact producing a clever caricature of them, in a duet he had to sing with her: the house was convulsed, but the lady was greatly displeased, although they made it up and became good friends subsequently.

They both sang at the Norwich Musical Festival (Oct. 13,



MISS STEPHENS.

1802), when the first day's performance came to an abrupt and untoward termination owing to a singular incident. An enthusiastic musical amateur, by name James had taken pains to secure a seat immediately under the front of the orchestra, and had listened with rapt attention to Mrs. Billington's *I Know that My Redeemer*, but was so overpowered by the performance, that scarcely had Braham, who followed, sung the first few bars of his much-famed air—*To*

Arms! Your Country's Cause — than the too-sensitive listener fell from his seat in a fit, the blood gushing from his mouth, and was carried out presenting so ghastly a spectacle that the utmost consternation seized upon those in his immediate neighbourhood and the confusion soon spread through the dense assembly; the sensation produced among the professionals was scarcely less grave, though it was increased among the audience by the apprehension that, as every one had risen and many were trying to get away, there might occur some serious accident. In the midst of the sudden derangement, Mrs. Billington fainted, and was borne apparently lifeless into the sacristy of the Cathedral; it was now evident the performance could not proceed, and by common consent it was brought to a close. At the suggestion of Alderman Brown and one of the Stewards, the audience were played out to the strains of the *Coronation Anthem*.

It seems that when Mrs. Billington was at Naples in 1784 and, being engaged at the San Carlo Theatre, was singing there for the first time, an eruption of Mount Vesuvius took place, and was immediately set down by the populace as a judgment on the audience for employing a heretic to amuse them.

I have spoken of Braham's singing one night at my house; this was at the age of 82, about two years before he died; all the Italian troupe were present that evening, with Costa as their accompanist. Braham was often my guest, but I had never asked him to sing, nor had I for a moment supposed he *could* be asked: most of us know of the humorous trick he played Lord Burghersh when after dining at his house one day, and having readily complied with that nobleman's somewhat haughty request that he would sing—he sent in next day, his claim to a fee of £40. There was, indeed, a general understanding that he never exhibited at private parties, and being on terms of friendly acquaintance and reciprocal interchange of civilities, I was

quite content to receive him simply as a friend. Greatly to my astonishment was it, therefore, that he came up to me that evening and asked "if I should like him to sing" (!). The pleasure of all present was equal to my own, and when he sat down to the piano—for he accompanied himself—the Italian artistes crowded round, eager to hear the remnants of that voice which had enchained the admiration of the civilized world for nearly three-quarters of a century. The singer seemed well pleased to find he could still command the attention of such listeners, nor could he have selected from his ample *répertoire* any song better suited to his capabilities than Handel's *Vieni o cara*. Notwithstanding his advanced age, the rendering was exquisite, and the Italians testified their appreciation in words as well as in plaudits; but when he attempted to rise from the instrument he had no chance, and so earnest was the insistence, that he most good-naturedly yielded to the flattering compulsion, and then with an amazing spirit and power as well as pathos, gave *The Death of Nelson*; it was wonderful to all present how his voice still retained its power, its sweetness and flexibility, and how entirely without effort was its flow: Sir David Salomons was among the guests, and patting the veteran singer on the back, he said, in hearty tones: "Ah! even now, there's not a voice like that in all the world."

Although in Braham's time artistes did not demand the fabulous prices they now exact, he had amassed a considerable fortune, and, from his first start of selling pencils in the street, had achieved a position of which he had every right to be proud. He had acquired the finished manners of a gentleman, and having lived abroad from time to time, to much purpose, had made himself master of many languages; he was a consummate musician, a recognized man of taste, a man of the world, an admirable host and *raconteur*, and his conversation was so agreeable that Society was only too glad to accept him among its upper ranks and to get him to

Arms! Your Country's Cause — than the listener fell from his seat in a fit, the blood from his mouth, and was carried out presenting a spectacle that the utmost consternation seized his immediate neighbourhood and the confusion through the dense assembly; the sensation produced among the professionals was scarcely less grave, and increased among the audience by the apprehension every one had risen and many were trying to escape might occur some serious accident. In this sudden derangement, Mrs. Billington fainted apparently lifeless into the sacristy of the church; it was now evident the performance could not go on, and by common consent it was brought to a close. The suggestion of Alderman Brown and one of the audience were played out to the strains of the *Anthem*.

It seems that when Mrs. Billington was in London, and, being engaged at the San Carlo Theatre, there for the first time, an eruption of cholera broke out in place, and was immediately set down to the influence of judgment on the audience for employing her in them.

I have spoken of Braham's singing, and this was at the age of 82, about 1830, when all the Italian troupe were present, and he acted as their accompanist. Braham had never asked him to sing, but he proposed he *could* be asked: no one would have thought he played Lord Byron's *House of Burgundy* one day, and having done so, the man's somewhat hoarse voice was sent in next day, and he was indeed, a general favourite at private parties.

quite content to receive his services (many others) it was a to my astonishment was his father, and so far from to me that evening and was the same, it altogether went

ing" (1). The pleasure of singing was his own, and when he set himself to sing, however, Braham would poned himself—the first of his ingenious endeavour, by hear the remnants of the English public, to admiration of his performance. With this view, he gave, of a century. The manner was remarkable and unparalleled could still command the attention of the audience, which contained no names but he have selected from the works of his son!

suited to the occasion, and evinced a profound sympathy standing his advanced age, he would rapidly, and never perhaps the audience overflowed into the plaintive, but was the work of a select public of aristocratic ment in music, and it is true the occasion was, and that he most judiciously selected a unique in the musical annals of the public, and his admirers were interested in the as public gave him credit, or whether his vocal all present (including the English public was new and flexible, and gave him credit, or whether his vocal flow: Sir David's performance, by his trip across the ocean, is putting the rest of the world to no question but that the audience was better: "All were delighted with the entertainment. Some the world"

Although he was then in his prime, more highly distinguished fabulous performance, he was worthy of his brilliant antecedents. his performance was always an unrivalled success—was as strong as any which had made him famous, with difficulty the audience could be pacified with *encore*; *encores* however were out of the question of an intriguing programme, and yet the final—*Scots wha* he evinced such a tumult of applause that Braham was obliged to repeat it. The recitative, *O'er Nelson's* was enunciated as Braham alone—who was past-master of recitative and declamation—could give it; and as

frequent its tables and *salons*. Besides his country seat, Dee Bank, Cheshire, he had a splendid villa, "The Grange," at Brompton, decorated and furnished with great taste and profusion, and there gave brilliant fêtes, entertaining in princely style; but his love for the active life he had always led was still strong within him, and the *otium cum* (or rather, *sine*) *dignitate*, so dear to the retired Cheapside-man, had no attraction for Braham. He started a theatre, going to work, unfortunately, in a most expensive and extravagant way, and though he kept it alive bravely for some time, and brought out pieces in which he himself appeared, such as *The Devil's Bridge*, *The Cabinet*, *Artaxerxes*, the *Postillon de Lonjumeau*, &c., and engaged vocalists and actors of celebrity, the St. James's Theatre came to grief, and together with the *Colosseum* in the Regent's Park, in which he made another unfortunate speculation, determined his ruin in 1838. There must have been something like £70,000 sunk in these two miscalculated enterprizes; but Braham's brave spirit carried him through even this disaster, and he at once resolved to make the most of his remaining resources. Having, of necessity, given up his country place and his Brompton Villa, the scenes of his luxurious days, and sold off his elegant furniture and valuable collections, he undertook an American tour, and, notwithstanding his advanced age, started with his son Charles, of whose professional possibilities he entertained great expectations; unhappily these were not destined to be fulfilled: Braham may, however, be said to have made a not unsuccessful expedition.

Charles
Braham.

Charles Braham's voice was a tenor, and it was quite possible to trace in its tone, though not in its power, a distinct resemblance to that of his father; but alas! it was but an echo: although, no doubt, he had been well taught, he had not caught the divine *afflatus*; he was not an artiste, and it was tolerably evident he never would be a singer of any celebrity. If you could make up your mind you were listening to an amateur, you would find Charles Braham

charming; but in his case (as in many others) it was a misfortune to have had a celebrated father, and so far from his deriving any benefit from his name, it altogether went against him in a musical career.

On their return from America, however, Braham would not abandon all hope and made an ingenious endeavour, by introducing his son to the notice of the English public, to establish him here as a vocalist. With this view, he gave, at the St. James's Theatre, that remarkable and unparalleled concert, the programme of which contained no names but those of the veteran tenor and his son!

Braham was a universal favourite and a profound sympathy was felt for him; the tickets sold rapidly, and never perhaps was a theatre so crammed; the audience overflowed into the lobbies, and yet it consisted of a select public of aristocratic patrons and connoisseurs; it is true the occasion was, and still remains, absolutely unique in the musical annals of the century, and all Braham's admirers were interested in the issue. Whether Braham exerted himself to his utmost to do justice to a reputation for which the English public was only too willing still to give him credit, or whether his vocal powers had really gained by his trip across the ocean, is immaterial; there is no question but that the audience was both surprised and delighted with the entertainment. Some of his pieces were so splendidly executed that it was asserted he had never, even in his prime, more highly distinguished himself, and in all, he was worthy of his brilliant antecedents. *Waft Her, Angels!*—always an unrivalled success—was as perfect a performance as any which had made him famous, and it was with difficulty the audience could be pacified without an *encore*; *encores* however were out of the question in such a fatiguing programme, and yet the final—*Scots wha hae*—raised such a tumult of applause that Braham was literally *obliged* to repeat it. The recitative, *O'er Nelson's Tomb*, was enunciated as Braham alone—who was past-master of *recitative* and declamation—could give it; and as

usual the sea-songs in which no contemporary artist could touch him, raised the enthusiasm of the audience to something like frenzy, while Lover's sweet and winning Irish melody, *Molly Bawn*, exhibited the exhaustless versatility of Braham's genius.

I might go through the whole performance in detail, with notes of admiration after every item, but *cui bono*? What pen can call into being the memory of sweet sounds, or impart anything, whether of the intensity of passion, or the delicacy of sentiment which those sounds could convey? What words can describe the nameless grace, or bring to the imagination any idea, of the thrilling power of a voice long hushed!

I should state that although, as I have said, the assembly which flocked to this unrivalled entertainment was of the more polished class, they were so completely carried away by their feelings that they forgot all the restraints of conventionality, and shouted their delight with all the unchastened vehemence of natural impulse. The Duke of Wellington stood up in his box and leaned forward to applaud, as likewise others of the "upper ten," and bravoed the veteran singer till every attitude of acknowledgment he had at command was exhausted, and the tears came into his eyes as he hurried to the wings, unable to do more than wave his hand as he disappeared from sight.

Braham had married Miss Bolton in 1816, and after the death of his wife, her sister helped him to bring up his young family. After his return from America he settled down with them in Gloster Terrace, Hyde Park. His elder daughter—Frances Lady Waldegrave—was already at her second husband, but she had been assured by a "wise woman" that "she would marry four times and leave her fourth husband a widower"—a prophecy which was duly fulfilled; nor was it "a prophecy after the event," for I heard of it previously to the death of her second husband, Lord Waldegrave. Besides his son Charles, Braham had

one son before his marriage with Miss Bolton,—Spencer, —who was in holy orders—two other sons, Hamilton and Augustus, whose fine bass voice—so deep it might have been styled a “double bass”—ought to have made an artist of him, and a daughter who married young. It was after this daughter’s marriage that the family broke up and Braham retired with his sister-in-law to a boarding-house in Westbourne Terrace, where he died on Sunday, February 17, 1856, aged 83, and *not* (as stated in Leslie Stephen’s biographical dictionary) “at ‘the Grange,’ Brompton,” which, as I have said, he was forced to relinquish in 1843, when all its choice contents were dispersed under the hammer of the famous George Robins. He had been advised to visit Brighton for his health, and passed the evening before his return, at the house of an old friend of his and my own (Lady Briggs, in Royal Crescent), where he took cold, and having called in medical aid as soon as he reached London, death—

“ Assisted by a doctor of renown,”

carried him off, very speedily !

Braham was, as I have said, not handsome either in face or figure even when young, but that mattered little, we went to *hear*, not to *see* him. In his later years he grew too stout for his height ; his face, though still fleshy, became wrinkled, and as he wore a small and by no means becoming curly brown wig, his personal appearance was rather characteristic than attractive.

His last performance in public was in 1852, but few were aware of his age, which he naturally concealed for professional reasons, though it made him a connecting link between the existing generation and their grandfathers.

In Lord Mount-Edgumbe’s musical reminiscences, it is interesting to refer to that most critical connoisseur’s appreciation of Braham, to whom even he, accords *almost* unqualified praise. Thus, in his account of the Musical

Festival in Westminster Abbey in 1834, his lordship writes:

“Decidedly the most prominent among the vocalists was Mr. Braham, who on this occasion surpassed himself and whose performance was really surprising. He has long,” he continues, “been at the head of the profession—so long that it is marvellous he can be so, still. He is now far advanced in life, and it is almost beyond my recollection when, as a boy, I first heard him : yet he retains, to their full extent, all his powers, without diminution or decay. His voice is just what it was in his prime ; it has become neither weak nor husky ; it is never tremulous, and it filled with its volume all the vast space of the Abbey with the finest effect : his singing too was most excellent ; in my first account of him I gave him credit for the ability always to sing well, and lamented his occasional deviations from good style ; no such fault could be found now. He manifested on this occasion the most faultless taste and judgment throughout. Nothing, for example, could be imagined finer than his delivery of the beautiful recitative in *Jephthah—Deeper and Deeper Still*, or of that which opens the *Messiah—Comfort Ye.*” Further on, the noble critic (condemning the extraordinary misapprehension of the use of recitative by the majority of singers) describes how it *should* be employed, and concludes that “those who would avoid the lamentable defects so common among English singers, should study Mr. Braham.” *

* I never heard Braham perform in the *Creation*, but more than once he took part in that oratorio which offers such magnificent opportunities. Who could forget the thrilling surprise of that unique arrangement which gives such force to the words—*Let there be . . . Light?* I have seen graphically described somewhere, as absolutely overwhelming that startling burst of the whole orchestra in the resounding key of C, accompanied by the most exquisite harmony, the ear having been deftly prepared by the gradual fading of the previous sounds, so that the instantaneous crash of all the instruments produces the effect of a thousand torches suddenly flashing from a dark corner and illuminating the whole space.

This splendid work was given at Vienna, in March, 1808, and Haydn, then

Praise from so censorious a pen has its value, especially when it hesitates not, to frequently call attention to the "short-comings" of—among other first-class artistes—the great Catalani herself!

While doing justice to the incomparable quality of the voice of that celebrated singer, its almost supernatural richness, sweetness, compass, and volume, as well as its skilfully attained flexibility, and also speaking in raptures of her grace, beauty, and intelligence, he asserts that "her taste is vicious," says of her "wonderful powers" that she "seeks less to please with them than to surprise," talks of "her lamentable misapplication of that finest instrument the human voice," but concludes that, "with all her faults (and no great singer ever had so many), she must be reckoned a very fine performer, and *if* the natural powers with which she is so highly gifted were guided by sound taste and judgment, she *might* (!) have been a perfect one."

Madame
Catalani.

Yet we read that her performances in all the capitals of Europe were so many triumphs. At Berlin the King sent her the grand medal of the Academy, with an autograph letter of compliments; the Emperor of Austria gave her, with his own hand, a necklace of opals and diamonds; and the King of Wurtemberg, among the last words he spoke, alluded to her unique genius. In Madrid she was *fêtée* most lavishly, and during the four years she spent in Lisbon, she received a liberal pension. In Italy she was, naturally, regarded as one of the national glories; and during her first visit to England she earned over £50,000.

The power of Catalani's voice—a power which never took either from its softness or sweetness—was its most remark-

very feeble—it was only a year before his death—having expressed a wish to hear it, was taken there, at some risk. He enjoyed, however, the very brilliant execution of his composition; but when the orchestra came to this passage, and the whole audience rose and turning to the old man, applauded with enthusiasm—after pointing upwards and falteringly exclaiming—"It came from there" !—he was so overcome, that he had to be carried out.

able characteristic ; and, fully to enjoy her singing, it was necessary to be placed at some distance from the stage or platform on which she stood.

Of course such an artiste might do whatever she pleased, and one evening she pleased to appear in trousers. Any eccentricity has its attraction for the profane vulgar, and accordingly there was so much eagerness to see her in this attire that the crush at the entrances of the theatre occasioned some serious accidents. Byron, lamenting the degeneracy of dramatic literature and histrionic proficiency in England, says with justifiable sarcasm—

“ Well may they smile on Italy’s buffoons
And worship Catalani’s pantaloons,
Since our own drama yields no finer trace
Of wit, than puns; of humour, than grimace.”

Though Lord Mount-Edgumbe admits that Pasta and Malibran were “worthy successors to Catalani,” he no doubt means as regards their respective voices, and not their vocalization, for he always condemned her style.

It is said that “the formation of Catalani’s throat was absolutely unique, as it gave her a power of emission as well as agility in chromatic passages altogether unrivalled, and so splendid a voice has never been heard before or since ;” but in the matter of execution, Lord Mount-Edgumbe is far from being her only unfavourable critic. It appears that she was so conscious of her deficiency that she had an absolute dread of appearing on the operatic stage, and great as she was in her profession, never did herself justice, there. In the concert-room she was at her ease, and threw all her energies into her performance, but it was in oratorios that she gained her greatest triumphs, and the success with which she could make her voice fill the vast area of a cathedral, never failed to create as much surprise as admiration.

On her return to England in 1828, after many years of an adventurous professional life, though still incomparably

superior to any but Pasta's, her voice had lost some of the brilliancy of the higher notes ; and when she sang in the *Messiah* with Braham, at the York Festival, she insisted that the opening strophe *Comfort Ye*, should be transposed a whole tone lower. Braham was furious, but had to submit, as Madame Catalani's will was not to be disputed ; but he was quite delighted when, notwithstanding that this concession had been made, she sang flat throughout. Henry Phillips states that as he and Braham met while walking about behind the great organ, Braham said to him, " Ha, ha ! the two Jews have had the best of it this time ; " meaning himself and Phillips, whose descent was Israelitish, and who rather piqued himself upon it.

I have spoken elsewhere of the favourite beverages of Italian singers, and the preference they gave, when in England, to beer : Madame Catalani yielded apparently to none in this matter, for we are told that the sum spent on beer for herself and servants in one year, amounted to £105 ! Catalani retired to Paris after she gave up professional life, and died there of the cholera in 1849.

Amiable as Catalani was, she was very intolerant of rivalry, especially with singers of her own sex ; and yet, with such a voice as hers, which we are assured on all hands was absolutely singular in its quality, she might have done herself the justice to treat such considerations with indifference. Cyrus Redding describes this *Diva* as " a kind, generous creature without a particle of pretension, an excellent mother, an exemplary wife wedded to a narrow-minded fellow who sometimes got her an ill name from his avarice," and who drank, gambled, and otherwise squandered the money she earned, for it was not without good reason he called her " *ma poule aux œufs d'or*," and managed all her engagements himself. Redding adds she was beautiful and fascinating, and " there was an openness and candour about her, which was quite charming : " she used to say with the *naïveté* of a child :—

“I speak no language propre; not your tongue, nor French; no, not my own.”

Her husband was not invited with her to houses of persons of position, and seems to have been generally detested—among the artistes especially: when hiring her out (for he did hire her out like any chattel) he used to say to the *impresario*, in order to get better terms for her—“What do you want with all these singers who only become a needless expense? Ma femme, et une demie douzaine de poupées, c'est tout ce qu'il vous faut.”

Being once asked what had possessed her to marry this worthless vagabond, she answered with the utmost simplicity—“I will tell you: I went to Lisbon; zee Portugais, zey love mousique—zee grand signoris, zee princes and zee counts, zey all tell to me of love, and zey promesse much zings; but zey no speak of spousing: M. Valbreque he ask me to spouse 'im; I spouse M. Valbreque—voilà.”

When Catalani first came to England she was received with great disfavour by the English public, at that time violently prejudiced against all foreigners. It was by singing persistently *Rule Britannia* and *God Save the King*, that she won her way to their good graces. After she had risen in favour, she, or rather her husband, used to demand two hundred guineas for one performance of *God Save the King*, and used to get it, too; absolutely refusing to grant an *encore* without a second payment!

I have been told that Catalani's pronunciation when she sang English, was very droll, especially at first, and she persistently continued to say, after the Italian fashion—“*Rule-er Britannia—Britannia rule-er the waves.*” She however was the first who publicly introduced that vast improvement into the phrasing of the last line of the National Anthem and sang it, instead of *God save the King* as four equal notes—*God sa-ave the-King*, i.e., two notes to “*save*” and “*the King*” with a dotted note, a distribution which has been preserved ever since. The first time the

audience heard this innovation there was a great demonstration of approval.

This agrees with Dr. Kitchiner's phrasing of the National Anthem, but it does not appear whether he adopted it from Catalani or Catalani from him, or whether it occurred severally to them both.*

When Duprez the somewhat over-praised French tenor Duprez. was over here, he frequently took part in oratorios, and on one occasion when I heard him at Exeter Hall in the



DUPREZ.

Messiah, I found it difficult to follow the subject with any kind of gravity, owing to his ludicrous pronunciation of the English words. It was plain he could have taken no pains to study the method in which they should be adapted to the music; apparently all his efforts were directed to making two syllables into one wherever it could be managed, thus:

* I am sorry I cannot remember where I found the following relating to the undiscovered origin of *God Save the King*. An "ayre" dated 1619 exists at p. 98 of a MS. music-book attributed to "Dr. Jan Bull." It was formerly in possession of Pepusch, but passed into that of Dr. Kitchiner, and at his death fell into the hands of Mrs. Clark, who not only refused to give it up at any price, but would not

“Thou shalt break them in *pies's* like a *pott's vess'l*,” as if he had an idea that the genius of the English tongue was monosyllabic, and that that form must on no account be departed from. At the same time, there were passages where his voice and style told with a certain effect, and

even let it be seen by Sir George Grove : there is, however, an authenticated copy of it, which was made by Sir George Smart. I subjoin, while on this subject, a copy of a curious ancient National Anthem, in acrostic form, entitled :—

A SONG OF REJOYSING FOR THE PROSPEROUS REIGNE OF OUR MOST
GRATIOUS SOVERAIGNE LADYE QUEENE ELIZABETH.

G Geve laude unto the Lorde
 And praise His holy name
O O let us all with one accord
 Now magnifie the same
D Due thanks unto Him yeeld
 Who evermore hath beene
S So strong defence buckler and shielde
 To our most Royall Queene

A And as for her this daie
 Each where about us rounde
V Up to the skie right solemnelie
 The bells doe make a sounde
E Even so let us rejoyce
 Before the Lord our King
T To him let us now frame our voyce
 With chearefull hearts to sing

H Her Majesties intent
 By thy good grace and will
E Ever O Lord hath bene most bent
 Thy lawe for to fulfill
Q Quite Thou that loving minde
 With love to her agayne
U Unto her as Thou hast beene kinde
 O Lord so still remain

E Extende thy mightie hand
 Against her mortall foes
E Expresse and shewe that Thou wilt stand
 With her against all those
N Nigh unto her abide
 Upholde her scepter strong
E Eke graunt us with a joyfull guide
 She may continue long

AMEN

to some extent justified that dread of rivalry which made the too sensitive Nourrit abandon the contest, though a due consciousness of his own great qualities would certainly have kept him from the despondency which resulted from his needless fears, and terminated in suicide.

Duprez was one of thirteen children; his father was a performer, and having decided that, of his sons, this one should be a performer likewise, he gave him a musical education. The youth made good progress, and was found to have a sympathetic voice, but without very much power; he nevertheless made his *début* at the Odéon in 1806; but it is probable that if Nourrit's nervous and mistaken apprehensions had not led him to fear competition and to withdraw from the favoured position he had won in Paris, and finally from the world, Duprez's career would have been short-lived. *Au pays des aveugles le borgne est roi*, and Duprez's success was in a great measure owing to his standing almost alone in Paris in his capacity of tenor. He obtained considerable approval for his somewhat original treatment of the tenor music in *Guillaume Tell*: I think it is Sir George Grove who remarks upon the peculiarity of his *voix sombre*, but considers he often abused his power of producing those tones which made his style remarkable.

I had already heard Duprez in Paris in Halévy's *Juive*, to Falcon's *Rachel*: this was in the year '40 and not long after the death of the justly admired and lamented Nourrit, for whom the *Juive* had been written, and by whom much of the music was modified; for Nourrit was a man of varied education, great cultivation, fine judgment, and of finished taste to which more than one composer had been glad to defer: thus it was entirely at his suggestion that Halévy altered the end of the fourth act of the *Juive*, concluding it with the fine air *Rachel! Quand du Seigneur*. And a yet more important modification was made, also at Nourrit's instance, by Meyerbeer, in the fourth act of the *Huguenots*, which, as originally written, ended with the benediction of the daggers, whereas

Nourrit.

to Nourrit we owe that impassioned duet between *Raoul* and *Valentine* which all who have heard the opera must admit to be its brightest gem. Crowds used to press in to hear Nourrit and Falcon execute this thrilling passage, a statement fully credible by those who have heard it by Grisi and Mario: the words of this immortal duet were written by Emile Deschamps.

Nourrit's story is an interesting and pathetic one, for he was a man eminently entitled by his private character to sympathy and respect. He had unmistakable genius, and



ADOLPHE NOURRIT.

when once he had started on the career to which he was so manifestly called, he pursued it earnestly, steadily, and conscientiously. It was to Rossini he owed his first trial on the boards, for his father, though he possessed a fine tenor voice and was also an admired singer, had no ambition whether for himself or his son—indeed he openly admitted his indifference to fame—

“You have no ambition!” said Garat to him, “then what do you come here for?”

He intended young Adolphe for the counting-house, not-

withstanding his beautiful voice and his great desire to cultivate it and make the opera-stage his world. It was when the youth had, after a hard struggle, consented to comply with his father's wishes, that one day during an hour of relaxation while he was singing an air from the opera of *Armide* in his own rooms, Rossini who happened to occupy one on the same floor, heard him, and was so struck by the rare quality of his voice, and the intense feeling he manifested that he went straight to his father and told him that it was a real sin to force the possessor of such a gift and such talent in employing it, into any profession but the one for which Nature had unmistakably destined him. This argument, and from such a source, prevailed, and Adolphe Nourrit was at once placed under Garcia, who soon became proud of his pupil—a pupil who was to win the suffrages of all the connoisseurs in Europe; for, from Garcia he acquired and put in practice all the secrets of the Italian method, which no other French singer had ever understood.

He sang in the *Siège de Corinthe* with a success which has never been equalled, and Rossini, delighted to have such a tenor at command, once more brought out his *Moïse*, and gave Adolphe the part of *Amenophis*, in which he proved a formidable rival to that tenor of tenors, Rubini himself!

A stirring night at the Paris opera was that which saw Nourrit's first appearance in *Guillaume Tell*. It was the year 1829; mutiny was in the air, and in the breast of every Frenchman was a spark of revolt which needed but a breath to kindle it into a flame, for the revolution of 1830 was looming in the near distance. This impulse was suddenly and even unconsciously given, when, with a degree of spirit and power which sent a thrill through the house, came, in the midst of the magnificent and well-known *trio*, the portentous words *Ou l'indépendance ou la mort*. No French audience, of course, could resist this! Stendhal says, "Lorsqu'un peuple est spirituel et mécontent, tout fait allusion." The force of music and the mysterious influence of the

human voice have never been doubted ; still less will any one dispute the inflammability of a number of restless and sentimental Frenchmen smarting under that sense of wrong which they always seem to keep somewhere about them, ready for the first occasion. In an instant the whole audience had risen to their feet ; they cheered and hallooed as only Frenchmen can, and then rushing to the doors in an unrestrainable stampede, they poured or rather gushed out into the streets, were joined as if by enchantment by a numerous band of sympathizing "patriots," and promenaded the highways until they became thoroughly excited ; in fact for eleven days Paris was in a state of complete uproar. The theatres were closed during the greater part, and the Opera-house during the whole, of that time ; Nourrit, who was as hot-blooded as any of them, took advantage of the suspension of his professional duties to distribute himself everywhere, singing the *Marseillaise* with that penetrating voice of his, as he struck an attitude on the barricades, and in true stagey style appeared there with a drawn sword which he brandished to his heart's content : this spirited fraternization with the excited populace filled them with enthusiasm, and they followed him from theatre to theatre, where he continued to rouse them with the air of the *Parisienne* and other patriotic songs.

As soon as this little political storm had blown over and the Parisians, having had enough of it, calmed down once more to their normal state of frivolity and ephemeral light-heartedness, Nourrit reappeared at the opera ; it was in the character of *Robert le Diable*. Those who have reported his success in this opera, assert that it was absolute and complete, and that no singer, before or since, has ever interpreted the music as did Nourrit. He was on this occasion so absorbed in it, as actually to mistake his part, and in a moment of abstraction, at the point where *Bertram* drops through a trap-door, instead of remaining on the stage to sing the final trio with *Isabelle* whom he is to marry, he followed him, and only discovered his mistake when Levas-

seur, who was playing *Bertram*, turned round and asked how in the devil's name he came there—"or," said he, "has there been a variation made in the *dénoûement*?" Meanwhile the house was in terror, and voices were heard wildly exclaiming, "*Nourrit s'est tué!*" "*Nourrit est mort!*" Fortunately the mattress prepared for *Bertram* had not been removed, and Nourrit in an instant found his way on to the stage again. His first care was to reassure the audience, who, persuaded there had been an accident, and that some mischief had befallen their favourite tenor, received him with a salvo of applause. As soon as the performance was over, Nourrit saw a surgeon who found it necessary to bleed him, and would not allow him to go on the stage again for two nights.

A curious experiment was tried with the music of *Don Giovanni* in order to enable Nourrit to sing in that beautiful opera. The music allotted to the *Don* was all tenorized; but this scheme was not happy in its results. It is very doubtful whether *any* music can safely be transposed from the key in which it was first inspired.

It was in the year 1836 that Duponchel, thinking Nourrit overworked, and having heard of Duprez, engaged him in order to afford Nourrit regular intervals of repose. It is deeply to be regretted that Nourrit seemed at once to sink under the influence of a fatal presentiment. It was in March, 1837, that Duponchel, having concluded the engagement with the new tenor, walked into the stalls one night with him, while Nourrit was on the stage executing his part of *Masaniello* in the *Muette de Portici*: the effect upon him, of this unexpected appearance was inexplicably distressing; he immediately supposed the two had come there to criticize his performance, and his voice suddenly failed him: not a note could he produce, so that he had no choice but to leave the stage and send on an apology to the public for his sudden indisposition; nor could any persuasions, entreaties, or promises induce him to appear again in Paris.

On the 1st of April, being then only thirty-five years old, he made his farewell tour through the provinces, and was received everywhere with the most enthusiastic evidences of appreciation; but though these ovations somewhat raised his drooping spirits, they by no means compensated for those from which his dread of rivalry had driven him, and he could not forget his triumphs in the Capital. One night at Marseilles, in the midst of a performance, his voice once more suddenly forsook him; he rushed off to Milan, but his peace of mind was so disturbed he could rest nowhere; in wild desperation he returned to Paris, where, meeting Benedict, the latter was terrified by his appearance and manner, and declared him to be completely mad. His stay in the Capital was brief; he could not bear the sight of the place, altered as it was to him by the morbid condition of his mind, so he again hastened back to Milan, where he was met with the most passionate signs of welcome. Thence he went to Naples, and stayed at Rossini's house. In May, 1838, he sang at San Carlo, where the admiration he excited knew no bounds, and Rossini and Donizetti were among the most encouraging of his friends. The latter was eager to write an opera for him; but it would seem the shock he had received had been too great; his mind was so completely unhinged that he would not believe that any of the applause he received was genuine, but thought that it was a mere compassionate concession to his weakness. In vain his friends and his wife reassured him; he would no longer come before the public, and was induced to appear one night, solely as a matter of charity for the benefit of a poor artiste in distress. It was remarked that he had never sang more divinely than on that night, and he returned home in better spirits; he supped and retired to rest; his wife, who had watched him for nights with the greatest anxiety, sat beside his bed; but, worn out with anxiety, she dropped off to sleep. When she awoke, to her horror, the bed was empty; she sought her husband in vain, and in the midst of her trouble the neighbours rushed

in with the appalling story that he had fallen from an upper window on to the stone pavement below. It was only natural to suppose that under an attack of insanity he had thrown himself out, but Madame Garcia, Malibran's mother, who lived in the same house always declared her conviction that he had placed himself at the window for fresh air and had accidentally overbalanced himself.

Being in Paris in the year 1840, I went one night with



THE PARIS OPERA HOUSE.

the Comtesse de Thurny to her box at the French Opera ; the occasion being a remarkable one ; it was the reappearance of Cornélie Falcon—the *Diva* of her day—on her return from Italy. Castle Blaze and other *conoscitori* who have left their opinions of this faultless *cantatrice*, describe her as altogether *hors ligne*. They assert that with grace, facility, and purity of style, she combined a voice such as had rarely before been heard ; the notes were clear and ringing, the tone was at once sweet and rich, and it had been trained to

Cornélie
Falcon.

be perfectly at the command of its owner, whose cultivated taste directed its gushing volume and controlled its warbling flexibility. Falcon's handsome face and well-proportioned, graceful figure added their charms to her perfections as a singer and actress, and her moral character was so pure and simple that out of respect for her innocence, Meyerbeer modified several passages in the character of *Valentine* in the *Huguenots*. It was asserted that this purity of mind was not only traceable in her face and reflected in her artless manner, but had the happiest effect on her voice, and was the cause of its unwonted freshness and brilliancy.

Falcon, who was born in 1812, was a pupil of the *Conservatoire*; she had studied vocalization under Henri, and the careful production of her voice under Pellegrini, with extraordinarily happy results. Her great triumph was the splendid duet in the fourth act of the *Huguenots*, her performance of which, Blaze asserts to have been nothing less than sublime, its perfection never having been attained by any other singer.

Unhappily there came a terribly sudden check to this dazzling career. In the year 1837, when only twenty-five, Falcon's health broke down, and repose became absolutely necessary, as her voice was seriously affected. She therefore went to Italy, hoping that a southern winter might restore her to her normal condition. She returned to Paris in 1840, and was announced to appear in the character of *Rachel* in Halévy's *Juive* for her benefit (with Duprez in the place of Nourrit). The theatre was filled to overflowing, and the moment the favourite singer appeared she was welcomed with round after round of enthusiastic applause which quite overcame her. The opera began, and she started with her well-known recitative; the hushed silence of the house formed a singular contrast to the shouts and clappings of the previous moment; a strange surprise however awaited the audience and . . . also the singer; the orchestra played the symphony according to its wont, the admired actress stood

before them in her character, but the notes—the notes so long the admiration of the musical world—where were they? Instead of the bright, full, bell-like tones, the ear was waiting for—harsh, cracked, hoarse, and tuneless, they came to astonish and bitterly disappoint the hearers. The audience seemed struck dumb; they looked at one another in stupefied silence; the singer lifted her eyes to them with such despair in her features, that they at once understood the disaster, and in their compassion struck up a round of applause. Falcon, overcome simultaneously by her own misfortune and their generosity, burst into tears: it was a pathetic scene and one not to be forgotten; the opera proceeded, the singer got through her part as best she could; but she knew herself lost for evermore to art, and never again did she venture before any public; a few days after, she disappeared from Paris; even her friends could never learn the place of retreat she had chosen, and every effort failed to trace her. Various reports were circulated as to her mysterious whereabouts; some said she had retired into a convent, some that she had married and others that she had gone to Russia where she supported herself by giving singing lessons; but none of these rumours were ever confirmed, and to this day it is unknown whether the once admired Falcon even survived that disastrous *fiasco*.

Rosina Stoltz (married to M. Lecuyer) appeared at this time, and ventured on some of Falcon's characters. She was perhaps most successful as *Rachel* in Halévy's *Juive*. She was pretty and "taking," but cannot be considered to have been an *artiste sérieuse*, though she won a certain reputation and had many admirers: Léon Pellet was the *impresario* under whom she made her *début*. There is a story that as Madame Stoltz and a party of artistes were going home one night after performing at the *Théâtre Feydeau*, they were suddenly startled by the sound of music through an open window. Struck by the beauty of the melody, they entered the house and ascended to the flat whence the sounds proceeded; they knocked, and were admitted, to find

Madame
Stoltz.

that it was the residence of Mermet the composer, who after passing through the arduous *cours* of the *Ecole Polytechnique* abandoned his intended profession and gave himself up to music. He was at this time composing his opera of *Le Roi David*, the title rôle being written for a mezzo-soprano. Madame Stoltz announced herself to him and begged he would let her hear the music, which delighted her ; moreover, *Le Roi David* was a rôle à jambes—a character belonging in fact to the leg-itimate drama. Léon Pellet being applied to, agreed to produce it, and a day was shortly after fixed for the *première*. Unfortunately Madame Stoltz forgot that, to give due finish to a great work, a reasonable time must be allowed to the composer, and was in so great a hurry to appear in the part, to which she had taken a violent fancy, that she would not listen to his remonstrances ; the consequence was that the opera was put on the stage in a crude and unpolished condition, and proved a failure. Mermet, however, vindicated his reputation subsequently in *Roland à Roncevaux*, of which he wrote words and music.

It is a curious fact that the finest point in a great work is often the result of an accident, and, in many cases, has been introduced after the composition has been allowed by its author to go forth to the world as complete ; I have already alluded to that magnificent duet in the fourth act of Meyerbeer's *Huguenots*, and may here mention the sublime *Preghiera* in Rossini's *Mosè*. In each case, the interpolation has proved the *clou de l'opéra*.

Rossini.

The latter came—we might say, burst—into existence on this wise : the “Passage of the Red Sea” had, from the first, presented a serious—or rather, a ridiculous—obstacle to the success of this fine work ; the two first acts had proved impressive and were always well received, but the conclusion of the third—intended to be solemn and effective—was simply grotesque. Abbé Tottola, the librettist, was deeply mortified at this *fiasco*, which the composer nevertheless continued to regard with equanimity, conscious of the value

of his work, and content to leave to time and experience the task of bringing the audience to a due appreciation of it. Tottola's irritation, however, was not to be allayed in this way; he turned the matter over and over in his own mind, and at last hit upon an innovation, which he was in such haste to communicate to the *maestro*, that he rushed into his room before he was out of bed one morning, to submit to him the words of a prayer he had written, with the view of having it set to appropriate music, and sung by the chorus of the Israelites while preparing to cross the Red Sea.

Rossini cast his eyes over the paper, and listened to the proposal with the attention of a man open to conviction. He rose immediately, and in a very short time produced the magnificent *Dal tuo stellato soglio*, now the most admired passage in the opera. It was introduced that very evening, and aroused the most enthusiastic admiration. Stendhal relates that at Naples it produced an absolute frenzy among the audience, and that he had been told by a Neapolitan *medico* that serious nervous affections had manifested themselves in the Neapolitan audience by the change from the minor to the major key in the concluding verse.*

Rossini's ingenuity in *adapting* an already existing melody of his own to these words, altering the time and the key, may be very commendable, but that is really all he did, taking *Assis' a piè d'un salice*, from his *Otello*, for the purpose: the time and the key being changed, the plagiarism was not detected at the time. Moreover this was far from being the only occasion on which he played this little professional trick and repeated himself. The vagaries of composers are no less presuming than those of opera-singers; in fact, Genius, when worshipped, is apt to give itself airs, no matter in what department of knowledge it triumphs.

* The Marquis de Pontécoulant has written an elaborate little volume (*Phénomènes de la Musique*), comprising instances which he declares to be authentic, in proof of the effect of music on the nerves of persons of peculiar temperament; and affirms that cures have been effected by music in cases of physical as well as mental disease which had resisted every other remedy.

Rossini was a man of broad sentiments, but even he, was not exempt from the weakness which accompanies great gifts: an instance of this is to be found in his dealings with Prince Torlonia in connection with an opera he had undertaken to supply within a given time to the manager of the Apollo Theatre in Rome.

The *libretto*—the subject of which was *Corradino*—had been given him: time went by, but the *maestro* made no sign; the Prince continued to press him, but without result; Rossini only shrugged his shoulders, and gave his patron to understand that, short of an inspiration, he could produce nothing, adding, with grim facetiousness, “An opera can’t be turned out like a dish of macaroni.” The “inspiration” excuse was allowed for a reasonable time, and then the Prince, exasperated, tried the serious remedy of a legal action. Rossini, summoned before the Tribunal of Commerce, dispensed with the assistance of a lawyer, and pleaded his own cause; notwithstanding his eloquence, however, the Tribunal condemned him to produce the promised work and deliver it within two months, on pain of a heavy fine.

The composer was furious; he went home, shut his doors, and would not be seen for two days: on the third he presented himself at the Prince’s house with bundles of MS. under his arms.

“The Court,” he said, “condemned me to write an opera in two months, which shows how much such people know about music, and how much more quickly it can be written than they suppose; there is your opera; I have written it in two *days!*”

Torlonia was enchanted; but his satisfaction was not very long-lived, for when he handed the score to the conductor of the orchestra, a rapid glance sufficed to reveal to this professional expert, the trick played off by the unwilling composer.

“Impossible,” said he, “to play *that!* There is not a bar of new music in it; it is neither more nor less than a *pot-*

pourri, consisting of melodies by Rossini, well known and already popular." Of course this opera was never put on the stage.

Guillaume Tell, written in Paris in 1829, was the last operatic work of the great *maestro*. That divine production, the *Stabat*, of which the beauties may well be considered to redeem the defects, but which has fallen under the censure of conceited and captious critics, was produced in 1849,—fortunately for Londoners, at a time when full justice could be done to it by the mighty forces, vocal and orchestral, of the Italian *troupe*.

Soi-disant admirers of the heavy, unmelodious German school of music, have always professed the utmost contempt for this fine and imposing production. Its solemnity and its exquisitely expressive melody—or series of melodies—are alike lost upon them. It *has* been presented to the English public as it never can be again; and those who—being unprejudiced by a Germanized taste, or above the vanity of wishing to be thought singular—heard it then, must admit it to have been one of the noblest and most stirring performances ever produced. If Rubini found his greatest triumph in the *Cujus animam* to which his divine voice gave such intensely pathetic expression, Lablache never was grander than in the solemn impressiveness of the *Pro Peccatis*: but it is surely invidious to single out any individual portion of so admirable a whole, and we find it difficult to imagine any human being “with soul so dead” as to have heard this splendid composition, rendered by such voices, with the support of a full orchestra—and such an orchestra—and not to remember to the end of his days its profound magnificence.

Rossini often composed before rising. One cold day, having no fire in his room, he was writing out a duet as he sat up in bed; he accidentally dropped the sheet he had written. Unwilling to expose himself to the cold by getting out to pick it up, he suffered it to remain there, finding it less

trouble to write another; this turned out to be quite different, but he was better satisfied with it.

Donizetti, who wrote the *Favorita* in a very few days, and *Don Pasquale* in a week, on hearing that the *Barbiere* had occupied Rossini a fortnight, replied—"Cela ne m'étonne pas, il est si paresseux."

Rossini's receptions were of the simplest, yet how delightful they were! Who would not envy the privileged guests who had the *entrée* to those charming rooms at the corner of the Chaussée d'Antin and the Boulevard des Italiens?—consecrated ground. At nine o'clock the suite of *salons*, three in number, were open, and in another half hour they were filled; the entertainment was purely intellectual and artistic; no rattle of china, no clatter of teaspoons, no interruption of any kind to the feast of art; these gatherings were conversations interspersed with music—and what music! The great *maestro* himself accompanied; he also sparkled in conversation, and the brilliancy of his humour was more sparkling than champagne.

Men and women of rank crowded those rooms; choice diamonds as well as bright eyes glittered there; but the brilliant toilettes which surrounded the host were not emulated in his own person. Rossini was indolent, and so far from resenting the jokes his apathy called forth from his friends, he appeared to accept them as an encouragement. If he were in the humour for dressing on these occasions he dressed; if he felt disinclined to give himself that trouble, he received in the most careless *déshabillé*, usually a brown breakfast coat, so easy and comfortable as to set all conventionality at defiance; but such a genius as Rossini was free to do as he pleased, his distinction was due not to the quality and cut of his integuments, but to the elevation of his soul. All the dressed-up dolls that surrounded him, had they combined all their powers could not have produced so much as a single passage of any of the operas he had composed, and when he took his place at the piano and inspiration beamed

from his features, it needed no adventitious externals to proclaim his superiority.

Rossini was an eminently kind-hearted fellow, and was always a willing patron of those aspirants in whom he could trace a single ray of genius. His soirées were from nine till eleven, and the two hours passed only too rapidly; every incident that occurred was interesting, and of the guests, the greater number were those who may be said to have a history; some, a world-famed reputation. It was delightful to hear, and also to see, Rossini accompanying—whether an established or an untried, singer; for how many aspirants were there not, who went to Rossini hoping to enlist his sympathies in their favour! Nor was it in vain; Rossini tried their voices, pronounced upon their style and their general aptitude for the profession; and always candidly told them his opinion, practically encouraging those in whom he saw hopes of future fame.

Rossini's music was much to the taste of the Prince Regent, who also took pleasure in the great composer's conversation and society, and when King, was always glad to see him at the Pavilion. On these occasions the Prince used to sing, but he irritated the great *maestro* terribly (though his voice was good) by his utter inability to keep time. One day His Majesty, having performed, asked Rossini's opinion of his execution. The question was embarrassing, but Rossini got out of it by replying: "I know no one in your Majesty's position who could have approached it."

Charles X. granted Rossini a pension of 6,000 francs with the title of "First Composer to the King," and made him contract to write, in ten years, five grand Operas for the *Académie Royale de Musique*—the 6,000 francs to be considered for past services, and the five Operas to be paid for, besides. Rossini's pension was stopped at the revolution of 1830, and in March, 1834, he sued the paymaster of the Civil List for its continuation and for the arrears since

1830. Dupin, on the composer's behalf, applied for this restitution, and obtained both the arrears and a continuation of the pension; but by the Government, and not by the *Académie*.

Charles
Gounod.

At the time when Gounod was residing in England, domiciled with Mr. and Mrs. Weldon at Tavistock House, I occasionally looked in at their Sunday *après-midis*, which were very popular and generally comprised a sprinkling of more or less celebrated virtuosi. They were organized with a view to musical performances as well as to give the visitors an opportunity for conversation: in one portion of the room, which to the best of my recollection was uncarpeted, was a raised platform, and on this stood a fine concert-Grand, the rooms being arranged so as to afford singers or instrumentalists every advantage in exhibiting their talents.

Mr. Weldon sometimes appeared, but could not be considered a "musical man"; Mrs. Weldon,—at that time young and very pretty (though it does not appear she had then begun to use Pears' soap), had been gifted with a sweet voice, and sang Gounod's compositions with an ability acquired under Gounod's eye—or rather ear—accompanied by the admired French *maestro* himself. She had taste, but her vocalization was altogether peculiar, and she thought so highly of her system that her daydream was to start, on these premises, a school of music which should one day take the world by storm. Of its rise and progress, decline and fall, it is needless to speak further; . . . the Weldonian episode in Gounod's life is now a thing of the past, and the school of music whose shadowy existence exhaled itself under pressure of circumstances never arrived at maturity.

Of Mrs. Weldon's admirable renderings of Gounod's music, acquired, as I have said, under the auspices of the composer himself, all who heard them will retain a very pleasing recollection; but the school she tried to establish

led to no perceptible result in the history of vocal music—*Vox et præterea nihil*, and is now dead and buried—R. I. P.

In the first instance, Gounod himself believed he had discovered a pupil who understood, appreciated, and intelligently interpreted him, and for a time the harmony, musical and material, at Tavistock House, was undisturbed. It was apparently, however, not undisturbable, for never, perhaps, was any harmony succeeded by fiercer discord ; but the details are of little interest to the outside world, and are too nearly a thing of the present, to find a place here.

One of the rarely-failing *habitués* at Gounod's "At Soria. Homes" was Soria. His excellent style and fine voice would have fully justified his entering the profession, but Soria—a Portuguese by nationality and a Jew by tradition—was a wine merchant by trade, and preferred business to art. If his business was a good one, no doubt he was wise ; besides, that was his *own* business ; it is one thing to be an artistè, and another to be a *successful* artiste, and it is only successful artistes who make fortunes,—which, however, they generally lose. Perhaps he decided that, on the old lines, it was good to be "a composer of wines and an importer of music."

MUSICAL NOTES AND THEIR ECHOES.
THE ITALIAN OPERA.

“ Hence the pert shopkeeper whose throbbing ear
Aches with orchestras which he pays to hear,
Whom shame, not sympathy, forbids to snore
His anguish doubled by his own *encore* !
Squeezed in ‘ Fop’s Alley,’ jostled by the beaux,
Teased with his hat, and trembling for his toes,
Scarce wrestles through the night, nor tastes of ease
Till the drop’t curtain gives a glad release :
Why this, and more he suffers, can you guess ?—
Because it costs him dear, and makes him dress.”

“ When time has passed and seasons fled,
Your hearts will feel like mine ;
And aye the sang will maist delight,
That minds ye o’ lang syne.”

CHAPTER II.

MUSICAL NOTES AND THEIR ECHOES.

THE ITALIAN OPERA.

“A cette époque, le public de l'opéra était une famille aujourd'hui ce n'est plus qu'une foule.”—MADAME DE GIRARDIN.

THERE is a strong tendency with each one of us to become with advancing years

“ . . . laudator temporis acti
Se puero ! ”

but not necessarily on captious grounds or from the fretfulness of age,—though that may have something to do with it.

We must, however, acknowledge that it is strange, things should have been going on from bad to worse for two thousand years since Horace made the sapient remark,—to say nothing of what had happened before !

We do not perhaps sufficiently realize that there is no such state as what we are wont to call “the present.” While we speak or write, the end of our phrase leaves the beginning of it as utterly beyond our reach as the far-off yesterdays of our infancy : there are, really, only two tenses in life, the past and the future, and even these are not ours !

“Things past belong to Memory alone,
Things future are the property of Hope.”

Youth lives longingly in the latter ; Age lingeringly in the former, and its garrulity indulges itself in encomiums on

“the good old times.” “The good old times,” wrote Byron significantly—“all times are good, when old!”

Taking the term “present” in its conventional acceptation, the “present” of age is employed in retrospectively contemplations, and as it is the attribute of humanity to undervalue, relatively, whatever is attainable, it is natural when comparing the things we have, with the things departed, to overvalue the latter to the prejudice of the former: even the rainy days of childhood which seemed so dreary then, are seen through a halo which gilds them with a bright glint of sunshine, and when we look back on them through the delusive prism of memory, we perceive only their rainbows. How many an incident or adventure fraught with terror and distress to us at the time because we could not tell how it would end,—and we took *omne ignotum pro terribili*,—is now remembered with pleasure and related with mirth, so that we might often say with the great Corduban philosopher—*quod durum fuit pati, meminisse dulce est*.

I am not, however, going to speak here of things suffered, but of things enjoyed; and, without being the *laudator* Horace has shown us, I am quite satisfied that regret for the “music of the past” is more than justified by the facts—facts patent to the most unprejudiced—which admit of little comparison with the music of the present. As to the “music of the future,” it would be presumptuous to assert what that may be going to be, but it is at least, presumable that it will require a public taste educated to its peculiarities, and which will have nothing in common with the taste of the bygone time and that of its survivors. The German school has long been steadily working its way, and favoured by the deplorable collapse in Italian *maestri* and Italian voices, seems threatening to prevail. Solemn and severe, correct and uncompromising, it is claiming its sway over the connoisseurs of the day whose opinion carries weight, in fact, enjoys the privilege of setting

the fashion, and which has, thus far, pronounced for it : lesser lights, naturally beguiled by greater, hold up their small flickering flame, *faute de mieux*, before it, and the general public, which knows nothing about the matter and is content to applaud what it is *told* to admire, follows in the wake, though they may find it dull, dry, dreary, deficient in melody, wearisome even ; and sometimes they admit it—perhaps whispering confidentially—“only it won't do to *say* so.” *

There are still, however, independent spirits who have the courage of their opinions, and openly indulge in a lingering sigh for the winning melody of Italian composers and for Italian throats to express it—that music which charmed our youth and has disappeared, alas ! with its bright transient days ! These will always wonder how there can be any appreciators, *e.g.*, of *buffo* music, who would not willingly sit before such works as the immortal *Matrimonio*, that masterpiece of the prolific Cimarosa, and laugh again as they laughed before, applauding as if they felt that no applause could ever come up to the merits of that expressive music : but the music is not all ; when *can* we expect ever to see that perfection repeated ? Where are we to look for a second Lablache to invest himself with the personality he rendered with such inimitable truth to nature, and to bring into play those traits of character so fine in the original, and so responsive in the representation ?

And if it were possible such a *Geronimo* could be created, where are we to seek the other perfections who supported the great Lablache when monarch of the Italian stage ? As the orchestra of those days was composed of soloists, so were all the singers “stars,” and three of the grandest *prime*

* Spohr professed considerable admiration for Wagner as a composer, yet when, in 1855, after much difficulty, he succeeded in bringing out that master's *Tannhäuser*, at Cassell, he wrote of it with amusing naïveté—“This Opera contains much that is new and beautiful, but also many things which are ugly, and excruciate the ear.” And again, referring to Act II., he permits himself to remark—“In the finale, now and then, a frightful music is produced.”

donne who ever electrified an audience were brought into requisition to enhance the production : when shall we ever again hear *Le faccio un inchino* rendered as Viardot, Grisi, and Persiani gave it to us ? And who shall replace Rubini and Tamburini, who completed the six,—the finest tenor and the most popular barytone of this or any age ? There may have been admired—nay, in a certain sense, great—singers since ; but to mention *any* of them in the same breath with the glorious troupe that came, triumphed, and, alas ! went, when the century was in its prime, would be simple blasphemy of art.

But those are fast disappearing who knew anything of the music of the past ; the generation is rapidly passing away that remembers the palmy days of the Italian opera in this country, culminating in that brilliant but too brief epoch when the opera-stage displayed only *primos* and *primas*, and the orchestra only soloists under a unique conductor. No wonder that His (afterwards Her) Majesty's Theatre became the resort of fashion and the delight of Royalty. The house itself was, in a material sense, made eminently attractive. Its chaste and elegant decorations of white and gold, harmonized to perfection with the amber satin draperies and box-cushions, forming a flattering *cadre* for the fair *habituées* who on special occasions attended in full dress with laces, feathers, and diamonds, and made a show of wealth, grace, and beauty such as no other opera-house in Europe could present. The arrangements of the theatre were altogether different from those of the subsequently-constructed house, and the social tone of the *assistance* manifested a certain reserve and exclusiveness which has now passed away, changing, together with the change that has come over all our social relations.

The facilities which have been insensibly accepted in the mode of travelling, and indeed in general locomotion, have had much to do with the levelling of classes and the breaking down of social barriers the existence of which we seem now

to have almost forgotten. When private travelling-carriages made way for railway compartments, private landaus and tilburies for omnibuses, private hotel-dinners for *tables d'hôte* and *restaurants*, it was natural that private boxes at places of amusement should disappear; and when this temple of the aristocracy had to be reconstructed, it necessarily followed suit, and the new design was planned with due regard to the exigencies of the times. Each day brings fresh conviction of the changes in our social habits, and the social revolution which has brought it about has been accomplished with an imperceptibility, a rapidity, and a conviction to which we can no longer be blind.

The opera-house, then, has undergone both a moral and material change. Though still, to a certain extent, a *rendez-vous* of fashionable company, Society itself is more mixed, and the line of demarcation has been now so often *reculée* that no one can say how much longer it will exist at all. Marriages with the plutocracy have helped the dilution of the *sangre azul*, and not only has the attendance at this once fashionable resort become altogether promiscuous and *inclusive*, but the entertainment itself has entirely lost its *cachet*.

The structure of the original opera-house consisted of boxes only, the privacy of which, regardless of acoustic considerations, was still further secured by the ornamental addition of draperie. There were only two rows of stalls, and the pit, filled with spectators in evening dress, was divided down the middle by a passage known as "Fop's Alley." As the several denominations of seats were crowded by distinguished persons, a visitor to the metropolis, whether from his county or from the continent, was fortunate if conducted thither by one of those convenient fashionable *ciceroni*, who, familiar with their "*tout Londres*," could put names to the physiognomies of the "*lions and lionnes*" who figured there.

In the days of the Prince Consort (who, in addition to his many other qualifications, was himself an accomplished musician and a keen critic of the capabilities of others),

Her Majesty's attendance was very frequent, and not only brought to bear on that of others, the prestige of Royal participation, but gave life and encouragement to the performers, while the presence of other members of the Royal Family in their boxes added to the animation and interest of the assembly.

In the Royal suite was conspicuous the grand and imposing figure of the Duchess of Sutherland, Mistress of the Robes, whose office it was to remove, and when Her Majesty left, to replace, the Queen's wraps. Always handsome, the Duchess seemed to remain always young; there is on record an occasion on which Her Grace and her two daughters were all simultaneously requiring the services of the famous Mrs. Lilley, so frequently needed at the Palace during the earlier years of the reign.

It is interesting to recall to mind the components of that illustrious throng, of which, alas! how large a proportion has, notwithstanding the stir they once made, now joined the silent majority! Whatever or wherever they may be now, they were then, the great ones of the earth, the leaders of that evanescent crowd, nay, more than that; for among them—the *point de mire* of every eye—was the “Iron Duke,” so distinguished, physically by his features, and morally by his fame, that no one could fail to recognize him. Besides, he always made a point of occupying the end stall, even when there were alterations in their arrangement; but wherever he might be, every eye was raised and every hat was lifted to honour him with the tokens of an affectionate respect.* Other officers there were, naval and military—heroes also, who would have been remarkable, and *were* singled out—when the “Duke” was not present. There was the old Duke

* In Galt's Memoirs we find it stated that when Wellington was in Paris in 1816, he was the object of the most intense hero-worship on the part of French ladies, who, whether young or old, almost waylaid His Grace whenever he appeared in society, to try to get a word from him, or if not that, at least a recognition or a smile. Unhappily the Duke never succeeded in speaking French with any kind of facility—occasioning, no doubt, frequent disappointments to these fair admirers.

of Cambridge, and with him the Duchess, their son the present Duke, and their elder daughter, the then young Princess Augusta (Princess Mary of Teck was a child in the nursery, lovable and loved even then, as now), the Duke's good-natured voice being heard at intervals, especially during the *entr'actes*, all over the house; and his remarks, as if in order that they might be not secret, as usual repeated thrice. Then there was the yet evergreen Maria



MARIA, MARCHIONESS OF AYLESBURY.

Marchioness of Aylesbury, who, with her abundant and wonderful blonde ringlets, looked as if she had stepped out of the Book of Beauty, in which Chalon's graceful pencil had enshrined her. But she was not only a beauty, she was a *maitresse femme*. It was said, to her credit, that she understood business better than many a man, and had given practical evidence of her ability: Lord Dudley too a distinguished connoisseur, whose eccentricities made him an

object of interest to a public always entertained by anything socially abnormal, and his brother, figured there. Ambassadors from many Courts were among the *habitués*, and *chargés d'affaires*, and probably also *chargées*, including that consummate political mystifier, the Princess de Lieven; and there, too, was the (apparently) unsuspecting minister out of whom this "much-loved friend" was always scheming to cajole such State secrets as could serve the Government for which she worked. There were Count Orloff and the handsome Baroness Brunnow, the Vicomte and Vicomtesse St. Aulaire, and many other foreigners of distinction. The Marquis of Douro, Lord Burghersh, Lord Wilton, Sir John Campbell, and other patron saints of musical geniuses shone in their several places, and, though very rarely, Lord Mount-Edgumbe, who criticized all artists so mercilessly.* But what celebrity and what critic was *not* there?

Opposite the Royal box, where that appreciative *connaissanceur*, the Prince Consort sat beside our Queen and the Duchess of Kent, delighting the artistes by his just and judicious recognition of their merits, was the box of Lady Blessington, that queen (in her own way) of an idiosyncratic *coterie*, who made it their *rendezvous*; and d'Orsay, the exquisite, the brilliant, the self-conscious, the much-dressed leader of the *haut-ton* of the day, whose fine stature, graceful carriage, and handsome person could carry off with elegance accessories of *toilette*, which made caricatures of his imitators at whom he laughed in those sleeves for which he never paid. Lady Waldegrave too was there whose history was so full of marriages and other incidents, and scarcely less romantic than that of Lady Molesworth; both distinguished and both deservedly admired for their brilliant social qualifications,

* Lord Mount-Edgumbe considered that "he had heard all that ever was or ever would be worth hearing in the way of musical art," and used to say of the opera of which *we* thought so much, what we say of the miserable attempts at operas of the present day, that "it is not worth while turning out in the evening to attend them." But he scarcely lived long enough to witness the perfection to which "Her Majesty's Theatre" was brought, during the dazzling period that preceded its *décadence*.

and as much for the dignity as for the amiability with which they held their respective positions in the *monde* to which they had acceded; but it would take many pages to merely enumerate in detail the component individuals of those be-diamonded circles which decorated the unique interior of the opera-house in the "merry days when we were young."

In the midst of the most approved *mondaines* was to be seen, as a specimen of pseudo-aristocracy, the Duchessa di Cannizzaro, whose history was a laughable, if not a very creditable, romance.*

Among the Opera *habitués* of a somewhat earlier date was Lady Fanny Wilson, of whom a curious story is told. She was an excellent, but remarkably plain-featured person, and yet found herself night after night the *point de mire* of the *lorgnon* of a gentleman, who always selected a particular spot in Fop's Alley from which to gaze at her. For a time this proceeding proved very annoying to her, but she at last ceased to notice it. One day, to her surprise, she received

* She was originally a Miss Johnstone, and by no means handsome or refined; short, stout, ungraceful and uncultivated, she would probably never have been heard of but for the death of her only brother, from whom she inherited a very large fortune. With these means of attraction, she proceeded to acquire the well-sounding title of *Duchessa* (by courtesy translated "Duchess," though not at all the same thing!) and this feat she accomplished by her marriage with a handsome, but unprincipled Sicilian pauper noble. They started on a trip, which should have been a honeymoon to *her*, but was only a harvest-moon to *him*, and it was scarcely over when he one day recollected he had left at Milan a charmer (and a *mondaine* to boot, for she was mother of a "prince"—such as he was), whose remembered beauties contrasted too favourably with the physical peculiarities of the ungraceful lady whose fortune he had wedded. Though the later idol was gilt and the earlier guilty, the Duke resolved to abandon the legitimate for the illegal connection, and, without so much as crying "*gare*," snapped in sunder the matrimonial bonds to resume the rosy fetters of his former love. It was a sad and startling day for the abandoned heiress when she discovered the flight of her *Duca*! After weeping and wailing, and gnashing all the teeth she possessed, she sped to Dover as quickly as the engine of that day could drag her, but alas! she was what one of our *Anglaises pour rire* called "*une mauvaise matelotte*." There was the usual "half-gale" blowing in her face, and her ardour was so damped by the salt spray that she returned, utterly discouraged, to London. Here she conducted herself after the most Calypsoic fashion, though she must have been at least half a head shorter (and not a head taller) than the ladies who surrounded her and were laughing behind their fans. The wind having changed, the poor "Duchess" made a

an intimation of the death of this gentleman, who had left her all his fortune. By dint of searching for an explanation, she discovered that the persistent observation of which she had supposed herself the object, was directed to a lady of extraordinary beauty, who occupied, in the adjoining box, the seat which was in close proximity to hers, and that the romantic gentleman having pointed out the more beautiful lady, and inquired her name of some one sitting near, his informant mistaking Lady Fanny for the object of his admiration, gave her name instead of the other, and thus, by a stroke of good luck, it was put into the will.

Contemporary with her was the well-known Duchess of Gordon, who followed, or rather led, all fashionable customs, and attended all fashionable amusements. When Her Grace was in France, her great delight was to abuse the English, till even Frenchmen rebuked her for her want of patriotism. She had a box at the Paris, as well as at the London, Opera-House. In Paris, the Duchess made herself very remarkable both in French and English society: among the latter, who were very glad to be noticed and invited by her, all the same, she was nicknamed "Scotch collops:" her French was very amusing. One day, after an English

second start, and lost no time in repairing to the old city of Milano. The arrival of a wealthy Englishwoman, styling herself "Duchess," made so much stir in the place that the news soon reached the *palazzo Visconti*, and some undignified sparring took place between the rival ladies who severally claimed the ducal heart. Their chances had, however, become more equalized, for, by a singular fatality, the Visconti had also increased considerably in breadth. Finding, after a prolonged struggle, that she could not whistle back her faithless partner, Madame de Cannizzaro replaced him with a fiddler from the orchestra of a small local theatre, whom she took to London. Society rejoiced in having so good a reason for turning its back upon this unrepresentable *Duchessa*, and agreed to ignore her, as a lunatic. The low fellow on whom she had set her liberated affections, and who had not even the family traditions of an impoverished Italian *Duca* on which to rear his equivocal principles, treated her with the grossest indignity, and after robbing her remorselessly, spent her money in the most scandalous way. The end of it all was, that, with a forbearance, a generosity, and we must add, a singular degree of folly, the unfortunate woman made a will bequeathing to her disgraceful husband, all, of which the still more disgraceful fiddler had not plundered her, and he survived her to enjoy it. So much for "poetical justice"!

adventurer had gained admission to her box at the French Opera-House, she gave orders to the box-keeper in the following form: "Je vous remercierai de jamais montrer un Anglais dans mon boîte."

A distinguished amateur, so rarely absent from his stall that he might be considered a fixture of the house, was Sir Thomas Webb. He was so devoted to music, and the Italian stage had such charms for him, that when offered a coveted diplomatic post at a foreign Court, his first step was to ascertain whether there were a good opera there, and being answered in the negative, he declined it at once. Sir Thomas* was a fine type of an Englishman, and was the representative of a baronetcy, granted for services rendered by one of his ancestors to the Royal cause during the Civil wars of 1642-8.

Another *habitué* who never missed a subscription-night was Major Buckley, as remarkable for his personal appearance as for his eccentric ways: he was an old Indian officer, tanned in Eastern climes, and wearing a very black moustache which seemed to be a prolongation of his equally black whiskers; his height and figure were imposing, and (perhaps from the fierceness of his military facial adornments), he obtained the *sobriquet* of "The Bengal Tiger;" but there really was nothing tigerish about him; indeed his whole life was given up to a benevolent gallantry wholly original, and of the most harmless, nay, the most delicate, kind. It was addressed entirely to young girls of position, and in order to extend as much as possible his attentions, and to render them obviously impartial, he never offered them to less than six at a time; his carriage was a handsome and extra-roomy

* The well-known Lady Newburgh, of Slindon House, Sussex, and who died there (it being her dower-house), in 1861, aged 99, was Sir Thomas's sister. The Lord Newburgh, whose widow she was, died in 1814. He was the grandson of the Charles Radcliffe, who was attainted of high treason in 1716, and who, on returning from France, where he had remained thirty years for safety, was arrested and beheaded:—rather hard lines!

landau, holding seven persons, and in this hospitable vehicle he conveyed them to all the sights of London—

“Were there lions to be seen, Old Blucher, Mr. Kean,”

layings of first stones, unveilings of statues, openings of new buildings, or meetings at which celebrities were to speak, &c., &c., the *gallant* and *gallant* Major knew how to provide himself with tickets and admissions which nobody else could get for love or money; to say nothing of private views of exhibitions, gatherings at public gardens, flower-shows, theatres, and a mighty sight of other sights.

He had, at the opera, on the first tier, and very near the centre of the house, a box which contained the required number of seats; his pew at Warwick Street Chapel, was equally roomy, for, though not on Catholic grounds, he conveyed his fair guests and himself thither, whenever Grisi or any of the other Italians sang. In the late summer when there was nothing more going on in town, and before all London withdrew to their seats or to Scotland, he would drive his fair bevy to pic-nic parties in the vicinity, or to water-parties at Richmond or elsewhere; and of course whenever there were races, he and his “young ladies” were sure to be found in the best places. If he made his *villeggiatura* to a watering-place, he carried on his favourite amusement there, suiting his pleasure-parties to the facilities afforded by the locality. There was now and then—and in these very “proper” days, it was not to be wondered at—a little talk as how it was that mammas and chaperons trusted their unprotected lambs with “The Bengal Tiger;” but these whispers were rarely uttered aloud, and indeed the “Tiger’s” demeanour was so paternal, that at last every one felt quite satisfied he had no intention of devouring the innocents. I know but of one case where, having repeatedly invited two sisters—at whose parents’ house he frequently dined—to join his party, and being always put off with a polite excuse, his *flair* of man of the world, satisfied him

that *their* mother did not choose her girls to be seen in public without her ; so he made an exception in their favour, and never again omitted her name from the invitations. The Major's custom was to drive round to the houses of his fair guests to collect them, and to present each young lady with an elegant bouquet as he handed her into the carriage. While generous, amiable, and gallant, the Major's conduct was propriety itself, and, whimsical as he evidently was, the polished and courteous reserve with which he met and conversed with these daughters of the upper ten, showed him to be a gentleman in every sense of the word.

The entertainments at *Her Majesty's* at this time as I have said, offered every possible attraction ; they were a perfect and harmonious whole ; the selections were carefully made and liberally varied, the cream of artistes was to be had and never perhaps did any *impresario* get such a chance ; as in both opera and ballet, so also in the orchestra, no more perfect collection of talent could have been found all the world over.

Histrionic ability, it would appear, was not at that time regarded as an indispensable requirement to fit an artiste for the operatic stage : either it was not thought of at all, or was regarded as beneath the dignity of a great singer, so that for the most part, the "acting" of a singer was confined to throwing the requisite amount of feeling, occasionally amounting to passion, into the one or two more prominent songs or duets that illustrated the character.

The wonderful verve and aptitude of Lablache for the drama, made him a striking exception to the conventional opera-singer. Lablache was essentially an actor : Nature had so liberally endowed him with all the necessary qualifications, that the difficulty with him would have been *not* to act ; no finer (and certainly no *greater*) comedian or tragedian ever trod any stage, for, like Garrick, he was equally perfect whether he wore the sock or the buskin ; it is strange that so brilliant and so successful an example should not have

earlier inspired those who were brought into contact with it.

As regards Grisi and Mario, I well remember that remarkable first night of the *Favorita*, when their impassioned acting seemed a revelation (not more to the public than perhaps to themselves) of their thitherto latent and unsuspected powers; the same remark may be made on their acting in that superb duet which adorns the fourth act of the *Ugonotti*. It was something *more* than acting. Transcendent as were *Mario's* gifts and graces, it was *Grisi* who transformed him from a dummy into an actor. It was a practical illustration of *Bégrez's* sentiment which I have quoted in a subsequent page—"Zat vil come ven she do faal in lofe," but when he had once caught the inspiration, what a perfection he became!

Rubini.

His predecessor Rubini, so perfect as a singer, was strangely devoid of any qualifications as an actor; though, like Braham—no actor either,—the intensity of expression he could give to his voice, the consummate skill with which he managed his reserved force, and his practical appreciation of what may be called *chiar' oscuro*, gave an indescribably thrilling effect to his singing. Rubini's judicious employment of the *tremolo*, which he introduced only when he desired to intensify the passion he threw into the music, would draw the rapt admiration of the house to him, as that of one man; each and all listened on entranced, in breathless stillness, till the moment came for a deafening thunder of applause and *encores* innumerable. There were *scenas* in which all the refinements of art, disguised under apparent artlessness, produced an effect which drew shouts of enthusiasm from an audience so impatient to testify their delight that they could not wait for the final note; few artistes have known, but how few have deserved, such triumphs! If Rubini could not act,—like Braham,—he made his voice act for him.

Bellini's *Pirata* was written expressly for Rubini, and

contains some of the most delicious music that *maestro* ever composed. It is full of pathetic situations, and Rubini identified himself completely with the character of the hero : unfortunately the *soprano* part is a subordinate one, and few *prime donne* have been willing to accept it. Rubini's wife, Mad^{ella}. Chomel (Italianized into Signora Comelli), and who, at one time, was an admired artiste, readily co-operated in the production of this opera and it was then occasionally given in London. The *finale*,—*Tu vedrai la sventurata*, in recitative, followed by the exquisitely touching air,—*Ma non sia sempre*, continued to be occasionally introduced between the opera and ballet as a *scena*, as long as Rubini remained on the stage, and always drew crowds ; for in none of his admirable performances were his thrilling voice and faultless style heard to greater advantage than in this exquisite composition. A critic of the time wrote of it, that “the music would alone have sufficed to immortalize the composer, as its execution, the singer.” The enthusiasm of the London audience proved so exacting that they were never satisfied with one, sometimes not even with two, repetitions of this *scena* ; but Rubini was used to this, and complied with an amiability which made him the idol of the public.

Pacchierotti, in his old age, told Beyle* how, on many consecutive nights, the public of *La Scale* made Rubini repeat as many as five times, a certain air of Cimarosa ; but though he adds that other witnesses of this fact have also recorded it, he unfortunately fails to state either what was the air itself, or in what opera it occurs.

It is worthy of remark that the early years of this phenomenal tenor, so far from affording any indication of his subsequent glories, gave his father great anxiety ; for at 14, the village choir-master, under whose musical tutition he had then been placed for two years, sent him home with the despondent intimation that all instruction was wasted

* *Vide*, Introduction to Beyle's *Vie de Rossini*, p. 18.

upon him ; that he would never sing, and had far better turn his thoughts to some other occupation. His father, however, would not altogether abandon his original expectations of the boy, and got him received, though with some difficulty, at the theatre of Bergamo, where for singing an air of Lamberti's, which no one else was able to manage, he earned the magnificent remuneration of 5 francs ! He was for some years tolerated rather than sought after, by one *impresario* after another, and had to undergo many depressing humiliations and hard bargainings, often getting less than £2 a month, and that only provided he continued for the season. Leaving Pavia he came to Milan for the Carnival of 1815, at the absurd salary of 1000 frs. (£40) for the season ; Barbaja enticed him to Naples at £18 a month with a promised rise ; but when the time came, threatened to dismiss him unless he consented to a reduction, instead : he was forced to consent, for, strange to say, neither he nor any one else suspected that the day would come when a London manager would send him a written engagement containing every possible concession and leaving the sum in blank for *him* to fill in, could he but induce him to defer his retirement ; when, however, that day had come the great tenor was not to be tempted ; he was resolved to leave behind him an impression worthy of the reputation he had earned, and to all Lumley's entreaties, the utmost he would concede was " *Mon cher ami*, if ever I sing again it shall be for you."

Little is generally known of Rubini's career previous to his *début*, but strange to say, it was a long series of struggles and mortifications till he was heard in Palermo in 1817, in the part of *Giannetto* in the *Gazza Ladra*. The music there allotted to the tenor is tame, and by no means calculated to produce a marked result, notwithstanding this, however, he was most favourably received, and meeting at last with an appreciative audience, the *impresario* began to foresee his value, and immediately offered him a prolongation of the term, at an advance on the price at which he had

been engaged; even this "advance" was ludicrously inadequate to his merits. In 1825 he appeared in Paris, as Ramiro in the *Cenerentola*, astonishing and enchanting the public. Connoisseurs listened amazed, and knowing that a real tenor,—a *tenore di grazia*,—is as rare as a phoenix, looked at each other incredulously, wondering how so finished an artist with so divine a voice, could possibly have remained



RUBINI.

so long buried in obscurity, and wasting his powers on small theatres in the inferior towns of his native land.

His delicious voice and the consummate taste and purity of his style needed to be of the first order; for never perhaps was the *physique* of a performer (unless we except Braham's) less fitted for the stage. Admired—we might with more truth say, worshipped—as he was, Rubini had no pretensions to physical distinction; he was not handsome, whether in features or figure; his height was not commanding, nor his

person graceful ; his hair was rough and bushy ; and though he wore an extremely pleasing expression, his face (like Mirabeau's) was deeply seamed with small-pox ! And yet . . . who for a moment thought of all this ? Who even noted that he was not an Adonis ? As a French critic remarked—" Son adorable voix faisait tout pardonner,"—and as his taste in vocalization was faultless, the witchery of these tones enthralled the whole civilized world.

Not only had Rubini not the remotest idea of acting, but his get-up was utterly regardless either of accuracy or effect, and he never attempted an attitude, though now and then when he came to one of those impassioned songs into which he threw his whole soul, his entire frame, as it were unconsciously, expressed the emotions of his mind. Thus, almost throughout the *Pirata* he was *forced* to act, and I believe it was Chorley who said that the " father's curse " in *Linda* as he gave it, was finer than any effect Rachel herself had ever produced.

Rubini and his wife lived quietly and domestically, unmoved by the harmless chaffing they now and then experienced from those artistes who were themselves prodigal of their means ; it used to be said among them of Madame Rubini that (*haud incauta futuri*) " she was in the habit of going to market with her basket on her arm, and thus catering for the requirements of their modest home." However, they could afford to be laughed at, for this great artist, whose first fee had been a five-franc piece grudgingly accorded, retired on a fortune of nearly 3,000,000 francs ; and as he had no family, he and his wife having returned to Italy, passed their latter years in ease and honour in a very fine villa he had bought near Romano.

Rubini was agreeable in society, and never gave himself airs, or appeared to be at all spoilt by the adulation of which he was everywhere the object : his manner indeed partook of a certain shyness, the result probably of his consciousness that he had risen from a subordinate rank of life, and had—

strange as it may now seem—passed through equally subordinate grades in his profession before the musical world woke up to the fact that he was the first tenor of the age—perhaps of any age.

M. Castil-Blaze relates a curious episode which occurred in Rubini's earlier career (in 1831) just after he had entered into an engagement with the *impresario* of the *Scala* at Milan. It appears that he had acquired a reputation for a vocal feat by no means common to singers, and he naturally piqued himself on maintaining it. It consisted in taking the B flat of the upper stave without preparation and sustaining it for a considerable time. So long did he hold it artistically and imperceptibly *moriendo* that the listeners could hardly believe their ears. On one occasion, after repeating this unique effect more than once, in compliance with the vociferous *encores* of the company, he found himself suddenly unable to produce the eagerly expected note. Resolved not to give in, he made a supreme effort, and the note came with its wonted power, brilliancy, sweetness, and duration, but at the expense of a fractured clavicle.

If the narrator were not a serious writer it would be permissible to doubt the accuracy of his statement, but he persistently adds the detail, that on surgical inspection, the cause was found to be the tension of the singer's lungs, which had been too powerful for the strength of the collar-bone. After the surgeon had examined the patient, the patient proceeded to cross-examine the surgeon, and learned to his dismay that it would require two months' perfect rest to re-unite the fragments: this the singer at once declared to be impossible, and inquired further whether he could sing at all with a fractured clavicle. Finding it would make no difference to his voice, he resolved to leave matters as they were. The *medico*, however, gravely cautioned him to carefully avoid lifting weights or otherwise unduly exerting himself—above all, to leave the B flat alone for the future. Under these circumstances he continued and terminated

the engagement of which seven days only had expired at the time of the accident. Castil-Blaze supplements his anecdote with the statement that on the occurrence becoming known, upwards of three hundred persons called at the tenor's house the next day to verify the report and to inquire after the patient.

Malibran used to electrify her audiences with her prolonged and brilliant shake on that same B flat, a feat which no one who heard it, is likely to forget.

Rubini showed his wisdom in withdrawing from his professional calling with his glory still about him. He had already lost power (imperceptibly to the majority) in some of those exquisite notes which could "wake to ecstasy" the sensibilities of an audience and send a thrill through the house. Alas! a night came which brought with it a warning note: he had reached the pathetic *finale* to *Lucia*. A breathless silence reigned as Rubini attacked the admired *Tu che a Dio*, which had been to him the source of so many triumphs. The public, led on as the song proceeded, to the culminating point of enthusiasm, listened in expectation of that enthralling note that *ought* to have been there; but, irresponsive for the first time to the call of its master, it came not! Rubini, with a presence of mind worthy of a great artist, maintained his entranced attitude, his head thrown back and lips parted, while with consummate address the first flute supplied it with so much delicacy and finish, that few, if any, of the audience were conscious of the substitution, and the roars of an applause which knew no bounds drowned every sound that succeeded that splendid scene.

Wiser than the famous Archbishop of Granada, Rubini did not wait for others to remind him that time had laid—though lightly—its defacing finger upon his powers. He never again risked *that* attempt, and only awaited the close of his engagement to bid a final adieu to his successes, maintaining to the last the undimmed brilliancy of his

reputation.* There is no doubt that with careful management he might still have prolonged his career and have continued for some years longer to bewitch the world, but to his friends who told him so, he replied with rare self-command and good sense: "E troppo tosto?—Dunque è tempo."

There was a story of a country gentleman unversed in the *arcana* of London entertainments, who, when he returned to his country "sports," said he had been to the opera to hear "Rubini and his brother Tom Rubini:" the mistake was the more amusing that perhaps no two men of the same nationality could be less like brothers. Without any disparagement to Rubini, who was of an altogether different type, and could in no way be compared with him, Tamburini must be described as of a free and joyous nature, handsome, spirited, and full of humour, with manners singularly easy and prepossessing, and when the "Italians" were together it was he who combined with Lablache to supply the element of joviality to the party. But the buoyancy of his spirits was habitually tempered by a gentlemanly reserve not without its dignity, resulting from that *usage du monde* he had acquired in society generally, and also in Courts where he had always been freely received and warmly *fêté*, Kings and Emperors shaking hands with him and inviting him to their tables, and he frequently stayed at Walmer with the Duke of Wellington. Those whose knowledge of Tamburini was borrowed from such stage impersonations as those of the gay, reckless, dissipated libertine *Don Giovanni*, or the intriguing, ubiquitous, and ingeniously unprincipled *Figaro*, would scarcely have recognized him in the calm dignity of private life as the most thoughtful, tender, almost patriarchal *père de famille*, the most considerate of hosts, and always essentially a gentleman. Having known Tamburini in these endearing

* Rubini's voice was admitted to be of the richest quality; its compass was of twelve notes, from F to C, and besides these notes, his falsetto rose to F in alt.

domestic relations, it is a pleasure to testify to the geniality of his disposition and the grace of his manners ; sparkling, yet without frivolity, his conversation had a charm of its own, and he could enrich it with well-chosen anecdotes and adventures personal to himself narrated therefore with spirit and spontaneity. His life had been full of vicissitudes, and sometimes he would dwell on its darker passages, but he rarely alluded to what seemed to him the greatest sorrow of his life, the loss of his mother ; for it had not only so deeply affected him at the time, that it required the united efforts of all his friends to prevent him from entering a religious order, but he could never speak of it without emotion : yet was his disposition naturally bright and humorous, and a decided touch of vivacious originality distinguished his remarks.

I remember one of his smart answers when some one, talking of an upstart little Jew, sub-editor of *The Morning Post*, said jokingly : "I am told he is to be made a marquis."

"Bah, mon cher," said Tamburini, "c'est un conte."

This same vulgar little fellow having gratified himself with a *particule* (!) and set up a coat of arms (!) giving out that he was descended from the "Doges of Venice !" —

"The doggies of Venice !" remarked Mrs. Trollope, who heard these funny particulars ; "ah, that accounts for his being such a puppy."

Tamburini was present, and though he did not speak English fluently, understood the joke, for he laughed as heartily as any of us at its *à-propos*.

Tamburini had travelled much, and spoke several languages ; his society was sought after everywhere, and independently of his valuable professional gifts and attributes he was a universal favourite : he owned a very interesting collection of valuable—mostly Royal—gifts, the latter presented to him at the Courts of Europe which he had visited.

Tamburini's voice was a deep, rich, powerful *contrabasso* (or shall we say *basso-cantante* ?), tempered by much sweet-

ness, and managed with the skill and taste of a consummate artiste; his notes, therefore, flowed with a facility which intensified the pleasure of his hearers; and his *falsetto*, which he had completely under control, was one of the most perfect ever owned by a barytone.

In Tamburini's acting there was spirit, *verve*, spontaneity, which at once created a favourable impression, and won the confidence of the audience; indeed, he was so completely master of his powers that whatever part he undertook, always seemed to have been written for him. If his success in comic characters furnished laurels to his fame, his many-sided genius enabled him to represent with equal felicity those of a totally different type; he was essentially conscientious, and whatever he undertook he accomplished to the best of his ability, that ability being the outcome of natural gifts, much cultivation and also of special study.

The extent to which his value, whether as a singer or an actor, was recognized by the English public, may be estimated by the fury and persistence of the memorable "Tamburini riots," when, in the season of 1840, the manager thought it would be a fine stroke of economy to engage the services of an inferior barytone in his place. The attempt proved an utter *fiasco*, and Laporte must have been disagreeably surprised at the resentment with which it was met. Tamburini, he discovered to be a much greater favourite than he had supposed, for he had no choice but to give in, though without escaping the obloquy that attached to his ill-advised attempt: besides the very practically expressed displeasure of his aristocratic patrons, the luckless manager was assailed with lampoons, sarcasms, and caricatures, in the comic press, and the history of what d'Orsay characteristically described as the "shuffling de Laporte," was immortalized among the *Ingoldsby Legends*, under the title of "*The Omnibus Box*." Tamburini was at this time on a visit to the Duke of Wellington at Strathfieldsaye, and knew nothing of the contest between the management and the

habitués, till informed of it by the Duke of Beaufort and Lord Castlereagh, who acted as intermediaries and arranged the terms of his return. His reappearance took place on the next subscription night in the character of *Don Giovanni*, and his welcome was stunning; the Queen and Prince Consort who attended, applauded him from the Royal box, and Her Majesty did him the honour to throw him her bouquet.



TAMBURINI.

Among the curious adventures Tamburini used to relate as having marked his professional life was an episode which befell him at Venice, where, having arrived during the presence of the Emperors of Austria and Russia in that City of the Sea, he was politely arrested and detained some days, being courteously treated, but laid under contribution to sing before these Imperial Majesties, who however were lavish in their expressions of approbation, and

at once invited him to their respective Courts. After this, Barbaja, the famous *impresario*, secured Tamburini's services for four years, during which he delighted the *connaisseurs* of Naples, Milan, and Vienna. For ten years Tamburini divided his talents between London and Paris, forming one of that powerful *troupe* consisting of Grisi, Persiani, Lablache, Rubini, and himself. The finish of Tamburini's style was so exquisite, and so unusual in a barytone, that the Parisian audiences named him "*Le Rubini des basses tailles*," and in England it was admitted that no singer, except perhaps Lablache, had ever proved so universally and uniformly attractive.

It is difficult to give an adequate idea of the protean versatility of Tamburini's genius; no type of character was there that he did not grasp, and render with consummate feeling and intelligence. In *Figaro*—a crucial test of an actor's appreciativeness—he was almost unsurpassable; also in *Dandini* of the *Cenerentola*; and who but he and Lablache were ever able to produce the unapproachable perfection of *Se fiato*, in the *Matrimonio*? Though an entirely different cast of character, his *Don Giovanni* was irresistibly fascinating; and on the other hand, what could be more solemnly impressive than the paternal curse in *Agnese*, unless the demeanour of the justly irritated husband in *Parisina*? Of those who were familiar with the music of the *Puritani*, when we still had Italian singers, is there any who would care to hear it, now that Tamburini and Lablache are no more? What becomes, now, of that grand duet which was then watched and waited for, and when it came, sent an electric thrill through the house? Who is there now, to give us *Vi ravviso* in the *Sonnambula*, and what can replace Tamburini's *Pro Peccatis* in Rossini's *Stabat*? When shall we witness again that indescribable enthusiasm which broke from every corner of the house when his fine volume of voice burst upon the audience? for it would be difficult to imagine anything more solemn, more majestic, or more

penetrating. This was in 1842, and in 1854, at his performance of *Don Giovanni* it was remarked by a musical critic : " If the *man* has grown old, the *artiste* is as youthful and as fascinating as ever ; " and he might have added, his voice is as full, as fresh, and as flexible.

In Paer's opera of *Agnese*—founded on Mrs. Opie's *Father and Daughter*—his representation of madness was one of Tamburini's most remarkable successes. It was an effort altogether *sui generis*, and though only five and twenty when he was first cast for this part, he mastered it so completely that it is said he absolutely terrified the audience, and became unrecognizable even by his own friends and colleagues ; but the force and energy required for this abnormal impersonation always produced in him a reactionary depression for some days after.

Tamburini possessed that essential qualification in an *artiste*—a belief in himself ; and for the reason, that, with a conscientiousness worthy of all praise, he never undertook anything he did not feel sure he could carry through. Often he was equal to sudden emergencies which would have staggered more experienced heads, and his presence of mind and ready wit saved many a desperate situation.

The memorable *tour de force*, of which Palermo was the scene, showed of what he was capable when thrown on his own resources ; but it must first be stated that among the vast number of accomplishments in which he was *facile princeps*, was the command he had acquired over his *falsetto* notes, the compass of which was most unusual, and their purity throughout, was as remarkable as their power and flexibility. Thus, he could produce a woman's voice of the richest quality, and employ it with a degree of execution and finish unsurpassable by Persiani herself. More than once this faculty stood him in good stead, while it also called forth both astonishment and admiration.

It was during the uncontrollable licence and hilarity of a Palermitan Carnival-night that Tamburini had been

announced to sing in a favourite *Opera buffa* of Mercadante's *Elisa e Claudio*. I should mention that it was then, and possibly may be still, the custom in Sicily on the last day of the *Carnevale*, for the public to arrive at the theatre loaded with all manner of noisy instruments reinforced with all their *batterie de cuisine*, and wearing strings of bells round their necks; in short, anything that would contribute to make and to increase the din they were bent on raising. The wonder is that any respectable spectators, or any amateurs of music, should have thought it worth while to attend a performance of which it was evident they could not distinguish two consecutive notes; but on these occasions the upper classes, for the most part, stayed away; so intent were these wild folks on carrying out their traditional orgie on this occasion, that a thunderstorm would have been unheard. Not even the voice of the mighty Lablache—the *Jupiter tonans* of the Opera—could have made itself audible above the *tintamarre*.

The uproar was at its height when Tamburini appeared on the stage; his presence was of course the signal for a fresh outburst, and the rioters made it an excuse to offer him a welcome in the language they had adopted for the evening: most artistes would have lost their temper or their courage; not so our barytone, who preserved both. His quick intelligence told him at a glance, that there was only one thing to be done, and he did it,—proceeding to answer these fools according to their folly. The plan of this frantic audience was to wait for the great singer's first song, which they naturally expected he would give, and immediately to drown it with a salvo of applause of their own invention, reinforced by all the yelling, roaring, clanging instruments, they had at command; but Tamburini feeling it to be a moment of unchecked licence only to be met by some sudden and startling surprise, at once bethought him of the expedient of utilizing his unique power of voice, and he took advantage of the first pause to start off his *romanza* in a brilliant *soprano*.

This novelty so bewildered the assembly, prepared as they were for the tones of his fine deep barytone, that in an instant they forgot their own intended performance and became all ears ; thus the joke was at once taken in good part, and the audience full of fun themselves, could appreciate the temper of a man whose humorous acceptance of their rough and riotous play, responded ingeniously and congenially to their mood ; thus by the end of the first song, reason was restored, and the house had resumed an almost tranquil attitude. Tamburini was a favourite everywhere, and even these Carnival revellers respected, as much as they admired, him ; but the rest of the actors were apparently not deemed deserving of similar forbearance, and the house meant to have its joke out with *them*.

It was Madame Lipparini's turn to appear ; but, though a much admired *Elisa*, her entrance was destined to be met after the same boisterous fashion as Tamburini's ; unfortunately she did not regard the treatment in the same light ; she at once took it—and showed she took it—as an unpardonable affront ; in fact, so intense was her indignation, that she was as unable as unwilling, to sing a single note, and swooned on the stage. She was carried into her dressing-room where, on recovering her senses, she launched out in the most violent invectives against the “savage Palermitans,” and declared that “horses shouldn't drag her on to that stage again” ; then, suiting the action to the word, she uncostumed herself and departed, utterly regardless of the consequences.

Tamburini, having come off the stage, learned the story of Madame Lipparini's dissatisfaction, and knowing the dilemma in which her defection would place the manager, began to tremble for the result ; bearing in mind the temper of the public—at that moment utterly wild and unreasonable—he foresaw that their next step would be to smash every thing they could reach, should they but discover they were balked of the fun they had promised themselves : greatly

was he exercised, however, as to how the menaced tumult could be avoided, but hastened at all hazards, to Madame Lipparini's room to persuade her to return to the stage. Alas! it was too late; all he found of her, was a heap of "stage properties" in disorder on the floor. The enterprising barytone was dumbfounded, and it was only after a few moments' reflection that a happy inspiration dawned upon his fertile mind. Although distracted by the cries which issued from every part of the house, penetrating to the remotest recesses of the wings, he promptly decided on a course which should avert the impending riot. The corridors were ringing with reiterated calls of "*La prima donna!*" — "*La prima donna!*" was uttered in every available human tone, and, as if to echo the universal cry— "*La prima donna!*" muttered between his teeth, the embarrassed artiste, while the manager stood by tearing his hair, as long as there was any left. Another roar of "*La prima donna!*" more vehement than the last, came to convince them that *something* must be attempted, and that, promptly.

"Ah!" soliloquized Tamburini, in the solitude of the *prima donna's* dressing-room, while contemplating the *défroque* with which she had strewn the floor previous to her flight. "Ah! you want a *prima donna!* I will serve you up a *prima donna* with whom you will have to be satisfied, whether you like her or not."

In an instant he had hurriedly sorted the heap, and had picked up a skirt which he proceeded to throw over his head and fasten (albeit leaving a wide gap behind for it could scarcely be expected to meet) round his too ample waist; in another instant on went a jacket, the sleeves of which, reaching but little below the elbows, were supplemented by the lace cuffs of his own costume: utilizing his resources of strength and skill, he contrived to work himself into this piece of toggery, though without a hope of being able to close it, while the brief dimensions of the skirt displayed a well-turned, if not feminine, leg, encased in the silken hose of the

Signor Conte; *Elisa's* satin hat was perched on his powdered wig, and its veil adjusted with all the coquetry he could summon to his aid.

Meantime, the assembled multitude had resumed their clattering, jingling instruments by way of accompaniment to the still reiterated and now rhythmical cries of "*La prima donna!*" expecting every minute that Madame Lipparini would feel compelled to present herself and was only toying with their impatience: no doubt they enjoyed the foretaste of what they had in store for her as soon as they did get her before them.

The orchestra had started a dozen times with the symphony of the coming *cavatina*; and now, the more violent of the rioters had begun to clamber on to the stage, when, to the stupefaction of every one, suddenly appeared before the footlights an *Elisa* they little expected to see, wearing the jocund features which could always command a welcome.

To describe the explosion of bravos, peals of laughter, stamping of feet, hurrahs and cries, not to say howls, of delight which acclaimed the arrival of the ingenious and good-humoured artiste in this extraordinary disguise, would be impossible, nor did they decrease as he assumed a bashful attitude holding a fan before his face and curtsying his acknowledgment of their applause. But when—this pantomime at length over—he sang the *cavatina* in a woman's tones and imitated the very *floriture* introduced by Madame Lipparini, the transports of enthusiasm assumed the most delirious proportions, and if, after a time, they somewhat calmed down, it was only to give scope to the further feats of the popular singer.

As long as there were only *solos* for both characters, things went on admirably, for Tamburini was quite equal to the expedient of singing *alternately* in the voices of *Elisa* and of the *Conte*; but the great duet between the two singers was imminent, and the public was becoming alarmed at the prospect

of an abrupt conclusion to their joy under the impossibility of an attempt at a duet by one singer. But no : no difficulty could stagger such a genius as Tamburini, and without any hesitation he took the two parts, changing his voice with the most marvellous exactitude, and turning rapidly in one direction or the other, according as he represented the *Conte* or his daughter-in-law. The clever scheme succeeded completely ; the opera was listened to with respectful silence to the end, only interrupted by frequent and deafening applause, which redoubled at the conclusion, when this consummate master of his art was called twelve or fourteen times before the curtain.

But the end was not yet ; the opera over, Tamburini came once more upon the scene, and this time—who will credit the statement ?—this time, it was in the ballet that, *décolleté*, short-sleeved and short-skirted, he joined so heartily in the spirit of Carnival-time as to dance, first the *pas seul* announced for the *prima ballerina*, and then to join in a *pas de quatre* with Mdlle. Rinaldi and the two Taglionis. A great artiste, only, can be privileged to take such liberties with the profession ; the occasion was an exceptional one, and Tamburini, knowing his own capabilities, felt sure of himself when he took advantage of it : he saved the *impresario* from a great disaster, and besides, delighted him by executing during his tenure of office, a feat which made an epoch in the history of the Palermitan Opera and will never be forgotten in Sicily. The delight of the Palermitans knew no bounds, and they expressed their pleasure with so much demonstrativeness that whenever Tamburini was seen in public, he was immediately surrounded by crowds who insisted on shaking hands with him and seemed capable of devouring him.

Nor was this, by many, the only occasion on which his splendid falsetto astonished and enchanted an audience. Once when singing in *la prova d'un opera seria*, with Madame Viardot as *prima donna assolutissima*, they mutually agreed

that she should take the *basso*, with her fine contralto voice, while Tamburini assumed the soprano part; those who heard this rarity were so completely taken by surprise that they did not know whether of the two to admire most.

The great artiste's career was a series of triumphs, of ovations, of substantial recognitions from crowned heads and managers, as well as of unstinting admiration from the general public; the testimonials he received during his professional life were as numerous as they were choice and costly. When at Vienna, he and Rubini were decorated with the order of St. Salvador, a very rare distinction, the Duke of Wellington being the only other foreigner on whom it was ever conferred.

Tamburini had married a very admired singer, Marietta Gioja, who had brought him several children, and when he retired from public, into family, life, it was on a princely fortune.

“J'ai tant gagné d'argent,” he would say, “que malgré tout le bien-être dont je puisse nous entourer, moi et les miens, je n'arrive pas à dépenser mon revenu.” To his honour be it said, his liberality was proportioned to his means, and he knew no greater happiness than making costly presents and bestowing charity, and always with as open a heart as hand. He was worshipped by his family, and no man could be more loved, esteemed, and admired by his friends. Brimborion, near Sévres, was the lovely spot he chose for his retreat, and he made a perfect gem of the *Villa Bellevue*. He bought it in 1849, selecting it as much for its historical interest as its intrinsic beauty. This fine property—under Louis XV., part of the domain of *Les Dames de France*—was beautifully situated on the Seine, and was manipulated by his and his wife's taste into a most commodious as well as elegant residence, where they led a delightful existence in the midst of *fêtes*, balls, concerts, dramatic representations, field-sports, and parties of pleasure; in short, all that Fortune could bestow on a favoured child

whom she *wished* to spoil was his: Bellevue became the centre of attraction, not only to the artistes and men of letters who inhabited the Capital, but to all who enjoyed the friendship of its wealthy and generous owner, and most of the *fêtes* organized there were got up by his affectionate wife and children to testify their love for the excellent *pater-familias* and their joy at having him, once for all, among them.

Once when I was in Paris in, I think, the year 1858, I was walking down the *Rue Royale* when I was suddenly overtaken by a foot-passenger, who, laying a friendly hand on my shoulder, addressed me in a cheerful tone, by name; I turned round to recognize Tamburini whom I had not seen for some time, and was delighted to meet again. After the first greeting, nothing would satisfy him but my acceptance of his cordially expressed invitation to come down and spend not a day, but that very day, with him and his family at Bellevue; I had no wish but to comply, for I had always entertained the greatest regard for this excellent fellow; so we took the next train and went down in company.

The day was splendid, and the place charmed me; the owner did the honours of it with grace and simplicity: the villa, or villas,—for the dwelling consisted of two separate *corps de bâtiment* united by a glass-covered arcade,—were delightfully contrived so that in one, were the reception-rooms, billiard-room, *fumoir*, &c., and in the other, the kitchens and offices on the ground floor, and the sleeping-rooms above; the grounds were most tastefully laid out and on one side, extended to the river, while half way across the water a picturesque little island, reached by a boat moored on the bank, formed part of the property.

The interior—though not the *Villa Salviati*—was remarkable for the admirable taste of its luxurious decorations and furniture, while an abundance of flowers scented the atmosphere and shed a fairy-like grace over it.

Dinner was served at the patriarchal hour of six, and the

arrangement of the table was patriarchal also; round it were gathered father, mother, children, and grandchildren—the latter, the children of Gardoni, married to Tamburini's eldest daughter.

Impossible to imagine a brighter, happier family circle, or a more genial *père de famille* than my jovial and amiable host, who seemed to look round with affectionate pride on that happy *entourage*. His wife was an attractive woman, winning in the dignity of her matronly responsibilities, though still as youthful in her appearance as her excellent husband. The two beautiful little children prattled artlessly in Italian with their parents, and in English with the nurse who stood behind their chairs: Tamburini spoke French fluently, but with an unmistakable Italian accent, and French and Italian seemed to be equally employed by the family; one of the little ones made us laugh by exclaiming when she wanted to be taken out of her chair, “*Déprochez moi de la table.*”

As for myself I was made welcome by all, and thoroughly enjoyed the frank cordiality of this joyous, happy, and united family. Tamburini was full of fun and frolic, bantering the young ones, telling good stories to their elders, and doing the honours of his well-served table with friendly hospitality: he was a true *gourmet*, and never travelled without his cook; another indispensable travelling-companion, he said, “especially when he was in England,” was his umbrella.

We were in the midst of summer, the evening was warm and balmy, and my host proposed we should unmoor the boat and row over to the island, where there was a fairy *pavillon* covered with roses, to take our coffee there; it was thus we finished the evening, enjoying the pink glow of the rich sunset, and lingering there in pleasant talk of remembered travel and other experiences of life, till I recollected I had to catch the latest train for Paris.

That was the last I ever saw of poor Tamburini! It is well we know not the fate that hangs over us: what a

gloom would have been cast over that cheerful day had any one of us foreseen how soon that harmonious family circle was to be broken, its component segments scattered to the four winds of heaven, and that the same party would never meet again!

It was not long after, that Tamburini's eldest son, Salvatore, who possessed a certain amount of voice, but not sufficient to encourage him in pursuing a professional career, abandoned the attempt, and like many other sanguine young men, thought he would court dame Fortune in another capacity, so went to worship the fickle goddess in her temple—*Place de la Bourse!*

At first she fulfilled his wildest expectations, till encouraged by these successes, he became more venturesome, and a day arrived when he found himself the loser of a sum which he had no means of paying, and no hopes of being able to raise. Fearful of distressing his parents by relating to them his imprudence and the misfortune by which it had been followed, in a fit of unreflecting desperation he had recourse to a frightful and irremediable expedient. His excellent father, whose integrity and high sense of honour would not suffer him to let his son's and his own name fall into discredit, did not hesitate, under this crushing blow, to redeem it by fulfilling that son's reckless obligations. His mother—for to both parents the state of his affairs was an entirely unsuspected revelation—never recovered from the shock, and died shortly after. Poor Tamburini broke down under these heavy calamities; he wandered, joyless and wifeless, away from the spot where he had known so many domestic joys, and where he had hoped to end his days: the Villa Bellevue, alas! my introduction to which had left so bright an impression, passed into the hands of stranger occupants. Tamburini was sent by medical decree to Nice, where lived a married daughter, and where he was beloved, respected, and honoured; he accepted his changed lot with the Christian philosophy which had sustained him in the earlier vicissitudes of his

chequered life, and strangers who saw him in the public promenades would ask who was that fine-featured, venerable man who bore himself with such calm cheerfulness and dignity. Notwithstanding his reverses, Tamburini's splendid voice retained to a late period, together with its force and sweetness, its compass of two and a half octaves, and its facility of vocalization—thus keeping pace with the rare vigour of his old age, and to the last he was always willing to contribute his valuable aid towards any charity that was being organized. It is needless to say that the announcement of a name which had made so many hearts vibrate, always brought crowds of devotees willing enough, on condition of hearing him again, to co-operate in the good work he had been induced to support.

On these occasions, great was the wondering admiration of the audience, scarcely able to believe in the surviving charm of those tones which had so long enchanted all the connoisseurs and all the Courts of Europe, and had procured for their owner the friendship of monarchs; but Tamburini's style was perfect, and doubtless it was his refined taste and his rare knowledge of art which enabled him to make such admirable use of the gifts it pleased Nature still to accord him.

The last time his majestic notes were heard was when the sexagenarian barytone emerged from his retreat to honour the memory of his respected colleague and friend, the great Lablache, whose requiem he sang; and if, now and then, during the solemn function, that noble voice spoke in broken accents, the emotion thus betrayed, served only to intensify the expression with which the sacred strains were uttered. The veteran artiste died at Nice in November, 1876, aged 76. Some years after this, I met his two granddaughters, the Signorine Gardoni, in London, wearing deep mourning for their father who died too early for his fame.

All the members of the Italian *troupe* were remarkable for their good temper and good fellowship; they lived in

the utmost harmony with one another, and all seemed to lead tranquil and happy family lives.

Coming after Tamburini, Ronconi may be said to have rivalled him in some of his *rôles*, more especially, perhaps, in *Figaro*, but when he attempted *Don Giovanni*, Tamburini was vindicated, being at once recognized as by very far his superior: nevertheless Ronconi was an intelligent and excellent actor; his voice too was powerful, clear, and sweet, but, like his acting, could never be relied upon, and occasionally failed altogether.

Of the many incidents in Tamburini's professional life which show him to have been among the most disinterested and amiable of men, one may be narrated here as relating to Ronconi. It was at the time of Tamburini's approaching retirement that *Figaro*, being one of the characters on which Ronconi had bestowed great study, the manager proposed to Tamburini to give it up to him: as *Figaro* was a *rôle* in which the public always cordially applauded Tamburini, it could not have been yielded without a considerable professional sacrifice; however, he did not hesitate for an instant to comply. On the first night that Ronconi was announced for the *Barbieri*, the first scene was half through and no Ronconi had appeared. The manager was nervously perplexed; Tamburini was in the house, but after having asked him to concede this part to a rival, he felt ashamed to turn to him in the emergency created by this same rival. The case however was becoming urgent, and at last he had no choice but to go to Tamburini's box and lay the circumstances before him. The great *contra-basso*, who must have been known to be good-nature in person, at once hastened to dress for the part, and was ready and waiting for his call, when Ronconi's tardy appearance came to create a new difficulty. What was worse, notwithstanding that his negligence and *insouciance* had created so much annoyance, Ronconi had no idea of forfeiting his performance, and roundly told the manager to settle it as

he liked, but that for himself, he was not going to allow his part to be taken by any one else. The dispute soon reached Tamburini's ears, and finding Ronconi had arrived, though at the eleventh hour, he at once, and without even waiting to be asked, expressed his perfect readiness to withdraw, and proceeded to uncostume himself. The public would have been surprised had they known that while they were waiting, there were two Figaros ready dressed in the wings! These defections of Ronconi were not infrequent, and greatly damaged his professional reputation. Ronconi was, nevertheless, a true *artiste*, versatile and capable of manifesting his genius in a variety of styles, but unfortunately he was apt to be unequal.

In *Maria di Rohan*, he took the character of *Chevreuse*, and positively startled the public by the power he threw into it. Critics of the time agreed that nothing higher in art was ever witnessed, and no tragic representation unless by Pasta or Lablache had ever equalled it, on the Italian stage.

After Tamburini's retirement Ronconi was the best *Figaro* we have had; he even ventured on some of the characters which had made the great Lablache so famous, and to those who had not seen Lablache in *Leporello*, he seemed to acquit himself supremely well. His wife stood very much in the way of his professional success, as was discovered after their separation. Having, as he believed, outstripped Tamburini in the *Barbieri*, he went in for *Don Giovanni*; but the attempt did *not* "go" at all, and no one advised him to try it a second time. Ronconi, however, proved an invaluable resource to the *impresario* in the vicissitudes of matters operatic, which were often, at the best of times, in a menacing condition undreamed of by the thoughtless spectators before the curtain, who came there to be amused, and troubled their heads little about the *modus in quo*.

Balfe.

A formidable rival to Ronconi in *Figaro*, was Balfe—"Balfini"—as I have heard him called among the Italians,

who fraternized with him most amicably ; he had been long in Italy, and spoke their language fluently, and when an Irishman pleases to make himself agreeable he generally succeeds.

Rossini made Balfe go through the *Figaro*, and highly approved of his rendering : his *Largo al factotum* was altogether to the taste of the composer, who was as much pleased as surprised at the readiness and facility with which he executed the voluble passages. This became his *cheval de bataille* at concerts, private and public : Balfe made his get-up absolutely characteristic of the Peninsula, and his *Largo* was, as it ought to be, essentially a *Cosa de España*.

Balfe was, however, rather a composer than a singer or performer, and gained considerable contemporary reputation by his operas ; the success of, at least, three of them being mainly due to the fortunate circumstance of his obtaining the co-operation of the unrivalled Malibran as the representative of his heroines.

One of his songs, the *Light of other Days*, rendered with great success by H. Philipps unquestionably owed its popularity to the happy idea of prefacing it with the trombone symphony. This was somewhat of a novelty, and as such it "fetched" the public at once : the effect also was good in itself, even although there may have been a little clap-trap about it. Balfe's voice was remarkable rather for sweetness than for power, but his style was good, and he had all the persuasive ways of his countrymen, so that he was much sought after during the season, as a drawing-room singer, and found it a profitable business : his terms were high, and he had a trick of disappearing as soon as he considered he had done enough for the money. In the society of his own set he was natural and agreeable ; he had a decided sense of humour and other national characteristics which readily won him friends, while his sallies of wit and repartee, and readiness with impromptu anecdotes, contributed to win general favour.

One night, when at my house, I asked him to accompany a young lady who had been brought to me by Sola with a strong recommendation : she imagined herself predestined for the boards and under the impression that she could sing, she had brought with her Rode's air, with the intention of airing it in the presence of a gathering of professionals, asserting herself with such consummate *aplomb* that we all entertained great expectations of her performance. Alas ! it proved a lamentable mistake, at which every one was distressed, except—strange to say—the performer herself, who seemed perfectly unconscious of her failure : her stupid self-satisfaction became irritating to Balfe, who, as he rose from the instrument, remarked to me in a tone evidently intended for her benefit :—

“ When a young lady goes for a five-barred gate she ought to be quite sure she can clear it : ” but even this sally did not open her eyes.

Though Balfe was accepted almost as one of themselves by the opera-singers, and joined them in provincial tours, and although some of his operas held the stage for a time, and Malibran contributed to their success, he is scarcely remembered as an opera-singer—indeed, his voice (a barytone) was altogether inadequate to the dimensions of a large theatre. He soon discovered this himself, and limited his aspirations to a less ambitious height. *Falstaff* was the opera on which he founded his hopes of musical immortality, but the *Bohemian Girl*, the *Maid of Artois*, and one or two others were those in which the great *prima donna* appeared : these admired performances were to be among the latest of poor Malibran's brilliant but shortlived successes, as she was soon to leave Grisi unrivalled mistress of the Italian stage.

Malibran.

Malibran was in the apogee of her too brief career when Grisi came before the public. Malibran saw and heard her ; she heard too what the public thought of the new charmer, and at once recognized in her a formidable rival. Malibran, unique in the fine attributes which made her pre-eminent,

could have held her own anywhere, but she was jealous of the reputation she had won, and of the popular favour she enjoyed, and always tried to avoid any professional encounter with Grisi: their names may occasionally—though rarely—have been seen on the same programme at public concerts, but if ever there was a chance of their combined presence at a private house, Malibran invariably contrived to retard her arrival till she was pretty sure Grisi would have left.

I remember one night being at a well-sustained private concert at the house of Mr. Wm. Pitt Byrne—himself an excellent musician and admired flutist—where there was a brilliant assemblage of stars, including, of course, the Italian *troupe*; Grisi was amiability itself; she sang solos, duets, concerted pieces; the others liberally contributed from their repertories, and the evening was very far advanced when the great five took their leave: the guests thought it time to be moving also, but our host knew better, and assured us that Malibran and de Beriot were imminent; and so indeed it proved. I was among the fortunate number who remained, and well were we rewarded; the gifted pair not only came, but they behaved with boundless amiability. Malibran was charming, and, gifted and constituted as she was, it was not difficult for her to bewitch an audience. She sang *Bel' raggio* with a richness of voice, a luxuriance of ornamentation, an *élan* and a brilliancy all her own, accompanying herself on the piano; needless to say how rapturously she was applauded. To Costa's accompaniment she then sang, with faultless grace, ease, and *abandon*, the *finale* to the *Sonnambula*,—*Ah! non giunge*; and, finally, accompanied de Beriot in a delicious *fantasia* of his own composition, which won all sympathies. No one who was present will ever have forgotten that evening, for it was one of the last few occasions on which Malibran was heard, being shortly followed by that early and lamented death which put such a sad and sudden period to her promising career. Malibran had been much

shaken by two successive carriage accidents, followed by a fall from her horse in London, but persisted in fulfilling her engagement at Manchester—a very laborious one, and calling for more physical strength than, under the circumstances, she possessed. On the last day on which she appeared in public—totally regardless of her ailments, and of the effects of another accident while riding, she had sung some very trying pieces in the morning, concluding them with, *Sing ye to the Lord*, and as if with a prescience of the fate, then impending over her, this swan-like episode filled the audience with more than wonted ecstasy: in the evening she sang with Caradori the fine duet from *Andronico*, *Vanne, se alberghi*, and consented to the *encore* tempestuously demanded of her; but with the last bar—the last she was ever to sing—she broke down, and was carried fainting from the stage! Nine days of exhausting fever followed, and on the tenth, this wondrous artiste, and beautiful woman, had ceased to be! So unexpected was the lamented event that it might be described like the startling fate of the Duchess of Orleans—“*Madame se meurt—Madame est morte*,” while the promise of Malibran’s unfulfilled future added an inexpressibly melancholy interest to a loss which fell with absolute consternation on the whole musical world; as we look back on the detail of her life and the position she had achieved, we are amazed to remember that she had attained but eight and twenty years, when she was snatched from her glories, in full possession of every attribute that goes to make a great artiste. To have heard Malibran, more especially on the boards, has always seemed to me a high and unique privilege; for, take her for all in all, no artiste of our time has ever approached her. Malibran had everything for her—youth, grace, beauty, paternal prestige, impassioned expression, a purity of style as admirable as rare, and a voice the quality of which penetrated the soul. Its compass was of three and a half octaves, and, while sweetness itself throughout, was as rich and thrilling in the upper, as in the lower and middle, notes.

As perfect in grand and imposing, as in simpler, music, she impressed her audience in the one, as effectually as she charmed them in the other, and while unrivalled in oratorio, equally delighted them whether as the Egyptian Queen or the Village Maiden. No *Amina* has ever approached hers, and that she should have so admirably sustained that character we might be justified in expecting, as the English words of the *Sonnambula* were written expressly to suit that exquisite



MADAME MALIBRAN DE BERIOT.

voice and style, and were, under her own careful instructions, adapted to the peculiarities of her pronunciation, by Beazley, who, though by profession an architect, possessed considerable taste in other fine arts, and was overjoyed to bestow his time and energies on the work.

The only moment Malibran could spare for the consultations necessary to accomplish the arrangement of this *libretto*, was before rising in the morning; it was at this early hour therefore that Beazley visited her for the purpose, sitting,

pen in hand, by her bedside, day by day, till the task was accomplished.

Malibran may be said to have been predestined for the profession. From her birth, her gifted father had determined she should be one of the wonders of the musical world, and this resolve was carried out with a severity which nothing could resist. She was put on the stage at three years old, to take the child's part in Paer's *Agnese*, and at five, she, one night, took it into her head to *sing* the soprano part of the duet in the second act. The public was startled at the unconscious presumption of the precocious child, but took the freak in good part, and applauded loudly. Under the rigorous system pursued by Garcia—and he treated all his pupils similarly—by the time *Maria* was fifteen, she could sing, and also act, *Rosina* in the *Barbieri* with facile grace, while the winning archness and sprightliness of her age gave a nameless charm to her performance. Lord Mount-Edgcombe's surprise when she appeared one night at that age was not unaccompanied with disapprobation, and he expressed his fears that so early an introduction before her professional training could possibly be completed would damage her future career. However, this premature exhibition of her gifts was due to a complication of circumstances which left the manager no other resource, and the result fully justified the expedient. Pasta had been engaged for a limited number of alternate nights, and owing to the unexpected illness of Ronzi de Begnis, the manager suddenly found himself without a *cantatrice* who could take the *soprano* part in the *Barbieri*, already announced for that evening. Caradori, applied to, declared she was not sufficiently familiar with the part; and Vestris, after undertaking it, had cried off: there was no alternative but to make a hasty arrangement with Garcia's daughter, who, child though she was, produced a most favourable impression, still remembered with advantage when, in 1825, she made her *début*, and met with a reception so enthusiastic that her

reputation was at once assured. After this, whether in England or abroad, in Europe or America, her professional life was one continued series of triumphs; and prices, then considered fabulous, were offered by way of securing her services. Her *répertoire* was extensive, comprising all the favourite operas, and Signor Persiani wrote for her *Inez de Castro*.

Though so superior to every other artiste, *as* an artiste—musical and dramatic attainments formed by no means the whole of Malibran's accomplishments: her society qualifications fitted her for any company, and so great was her proficiency in languages that she found herself at home everywhere: her horsemanship was the admiration of all who understood that difficult art, while her fingers were as familiar with the pencil as with the keys, and the taste and finish of her sketches showed her to possess imagination as well as touch, affording another manifestation of her intense love of art, and of the indefatigable application of her protean powers: neither was there any affectation in her character, nor, indeed, any need of such, for in everything she attempted there was the same irrepressible gush of genius, and she was superb in all.

Caradori was a very successful contemporary of Malibran's, and to the credit of the former be it said that she proved a formidable rival to the great *prima donna* at the Manchester festival, at which both appeared: but no artiste could touch Malibran in recitative; her declamation was the result of intuitive dramatic power.

Malibran, more especially when on the stage, was so carried away by passion, that she was always in danger of overtaxing her physical forces, and required strong tonics to support her frame under efforts of which she was herself scarcely conscious: she found it absolutely necessary to drink English porter to carry her through such exertions, and preferred it in the pewter! A generous draught of this beverage was therefore always kept ready for her in the

wings. One night she had requested the manager to let her have a supply of it when performing the *Maid of Artois*, finding at the end of the first act that she seemed unequal to the strain, for she had sung at two concerts in the morning. The composer and the *impresario* had both been under some alarm as to her capability of terminating the performance, but such was her confidence in her own prescription, that she assured them her finale should bring an amount of applause such as had never rung before within the walls of Drury Lane. The matter was arranged by an ingenious contrivance—the “medicine” being poured into the gourd from which the *Maid* has to drink in the course of her part. Malibran was as good as her word, and even found courage to respond to the vehement *encore*, without which the audience refused to be satisfied.

I had from Madame Persiani the following interesting little anecdote of Malibran :—

Marie Dorval.

A very remarkable French actress—Marie Delaunay—better known by her married name of Marie Dorval—had made her *début* at the *Porte St. Martin*, where, extraordinary as was her histrionic genius, she somehow failed to be appreciated until one night when playing *Adèle Hervey* in *Antony*, a sudden and startling cry of admiration from a *baignoire* occupied by a lady half-concealed under a black veil, seemed all at once, as if by magnetic influence, to awaken the audience to a sense of the perfection of the performance they were witnessing, and a burst of applause immediately rose from every part of the house; the actress was called before the curtain, and her triumph of that night was the beginning of a career of well-merited success. No sooner was the piece over than the veiled lady, irresistibly drawn to the performer who had enchanted her, left her box and followed her to her dressing-room, where, throwing her arms round her, she exclaimed: “Ah! laissez moi vous embrasser! Combien vous avez été belle!”

Madame Dorval, flattered beyond all expression, returned

the embrace, but could not help adding : “ Mais qui êtes vous donc, Madame ? ”

“ C’est juste,” replied her admirer, raising her veil. “ Connaissez vous la Malibran ? ”

“ Dieu ! si je la connais ! et si je l’admire ! Comment— c’est bien vous ! voyez plutôt,” and leading her to the end of her *loge* she drew aside a curtain and showed her behind it, her own portrait framed and enshrined there.

“ Combien je suis heureuse,” she continued, “ d’avoir été applaudie par vous ; c’est vous qui avez enthousiasmé la salle.”

From that night Marie Dorval’s audiences needed no impulse to express their admiration ; indeed, it was said of her that so powerfully did she impress them, that with three words, as she knew how to speak them, she could create a burst of applause which moved the whole house.

A story runs that Madame Dorval and Frederic Lemâitre had one night been playing in the same piece, when each was so enchanted with the performance of the other, that Frederic went to Madame Dorval’s *loge* after the play to compliment her on her success, and when they met neither could find words to express to the other the extent of their mutual admiration ; they embraced, and tears came to the eyes of both. Very French of course, but still, no doubt genuine.

Of Malibran’s private character it is only just to say a few words, because all that has been collected on that score redounds to her praise. Generous and open-handed to a degree, she was always ready to relieve a case of distress whether within or without the profession.

Though this fact is forgotten now, her excellent deeds are as deserving of record as those of other artistes, who (lacking the retiring modesty which impelled her to do good in secret) have left their acts of charity behind them emblazoned with their name. Instances, however, are more numerous than the public is at all aware of, of her silent, thoughtful,

unpretending benevolence, of considerable sums—proportioned to the gravity of the case—cheerfully and freely given, and of occasions on which the produce of her personal exertions found its way to the hands of the needy who invoked her aid, all bestowed with the most unostentatious simplicity. In corroboration of my own impression of this greatest of *prime donne*, I am glad to have fallen in with a contemporary critique of Chorley's, which I quote :—

“ Malibran comes back to us after two years, and one feels in a moment the force of her genius. First among first, she was and is. The greatest compliment that can be paid to her singing is to say that it is worthy of her acting: the greatest, to her acting, that it is worthy of her singing. Both are close upon perfection, and taking into consideration the extraordinary combination of the two in one person, her performance may be said to reach it. We cannot say more, we dare not say less. We may *notice* other performances—*hers* we can only record; for criticism, whose province it is to teach others, goes to school to Malibran.”

The Times of Tuesday, May 19, 1836, thus reports her *rentrée*: “ Madame Malibran appeared last night as *Amina* in the *Sonnambula*, a part she has made her own, and in which she displays such astonishing excellence as to render any competition a very dangerous experiment.

“ Her performance in this part is too well known to require any detailed description, but we cannot pass it by without characterizing it as one of the most perfect and exquisite specimens of scenic art of which the stage can boast. As a piece of acting, merely, it is the perfection of truth and simplicity. The *naïveté* of the earlier scenes, the pathetic force of those in which *Amina* suffers the agonies of despair from the shame and horror of imputations of which she knows the error; and the sleep-walking scenes where her waking fancy presents strange and busy contrasts to the slumber in which her physical senses are bound—give full

scope for the extraordinary skill of the actress. . . . But, delicious as is the acting of Malibran, it is surpassed by the consummate ability with which the vocal part is executed. It is impossible to conceive anything of this description superior to it: the purity of her voice, the accuracy and facility of her execution, the profusion of gracefulness, and the intensity of feeling which she displays, give a charm to the whole representation which reaches the highest point of excellence. Among the best singers of Europe the first place belongs to Malibran; and of all the parts she has played in England this of the *Sonnambula* is her *capo d'opera*. At the end of the second act the force of Malibran's exertions appeared to have exhausted her: she remained for some moments in the arms of the stage-attendants apparently insensible. The audience were breathless with alarm which however was dissipated by her appearing before the drop, and acknowledging the plaudits which poured down on her like a torrent."

An amusing anecdote is told of Malibran, which, simple as it may seem beside the grandeur of her professional character, serves to show what a thorough musician she was. She had been asked, at a private party, to bestow a contribution on the company, and seating herself at the piano played with solemn force and effect a magnificent march. All were impressed and delighted; then, reserving the same melody, she simply changed the time and the key, and the air assumed an entirely different aspect; proceeding on this principle, gradually it became a jig, and ultimately turned out to be neither more nor less than *Polly, Put the Kettle On*, as she ended by adding the words to the music.

It was a grand *coup* for the *impresario** of the time when Malibran made her original *début*, to be able to give *Don Giovanni* with the three *prime donne* it requires—these were Pasta, Sontag, and Malibran. I can recollect being taken

* I think it must have been Laporte.

to the rehearsal, and on another similar occasion to have heard Pasta and Malibran sing *Sull' aria* and *Giorno d'orrore*.

Pasta.

Pasta, whose grand perfections have been immortalized by all writers on art, of her day, seems to have been still in her prime in 1827, if we are to credit the rapturous account given of this great singer by Uwins the painter: his description is almost too glowing.

“I have had,” he relates in that year to his brother: “a



MADAME PASTA.

sitting of the celebrated Pasta. I never saw a person with so little of the manners of a woman of the theatre. La Pasta, great and unrivalled on the stage, does not act when she is off it. She is the simplest, gentlest, kindest, most unassuming creature I ever met with. She has so much genuine modesty and unaffected simplicity that, while sitting in her company, it is difficult to believe she can be the same person whose very appearance on the stage is hailed with such enthusiastic plaudits, and about whom all the world is mad. She talks little, and what she does say is expressed

with energy and feeling. Though long accustomed to the stage, I am told she never appears on it without timidity and apprehension."

To such an extent had this wonderful singer enchanted the artist that he writes a duplicate account of her charms, personal and professional, to another correspondent, Mr. Severn:—"I have been making a small drawing of the celebrated Madame Pasta. What a magnificent creature she is! Such faces are not made in these degenerate days; I wish you could see her, and hear her. If she should honour Rome with a display of her talents, let nothing prevent your going to witness her performance. She is the first singer who ever made me feel the power of music; I have never missed a single night of her performance!" The description that follows, of her habitat and her habits is not uninteresting:—

"La Pasta's morning-room," he writes, "offers one of the funniest scenes imaginable. There is a sculptor at work on her, and two painters: three of us altogether. We attack her so early, she sometimes comes to us in a flannel nightgown, and we keep her so long, that the hour of visiting arrives before she has time to dress, so in this guise her crowded levée commences. Poets come with sonnets in her praise; painters are too proud if she will accept their pictures; dukes and marquises, with their studied bows and state compliments, pour out on her altar an incense which she receives with smiles, gracious in their eyes, but to us who are examining her inmost thoughts, full of ineffable contempt." . . . Rather inconsistently he adds: "Though an actress and a woman living in the world, she seems almost incapable of disguise. Sir Joshua held the doctrine, in opposition to Fresnoy [why go through Fresnoy to Horace?], that it was not necessary to feel to be able to express! La Pasta is an instance to the contrary; I never saw a creature give herself up so entirely to her feelings, and I never saw the various passions which agitate the

human mind expressed so fully and so effectually. Talma was a wooden puppet to Pasta (!), and I fear even Kemble (!) and Siddons (!) would be light if weighed against her wondrous powers. She said a thing yesterday that *noi altri* would do well to think of. Overwhelmed and broken down by her exertions as Desdemona on the preceding evening, one of her flatterers said: 'And all this sacrifice for an audience amongst whom not a dozen are found capable of appreciating your excellence.' 'Very true, Signor Marchese,' she answered: 'but that dozen are gifted with a ear so nice, and a taste so exquisite, that all that the best of us can do will scarcely satisfy them: to satisfy the general public only, is the lowest aim of all the arts.'"

I can give but little personal information about Pasta, as I was too young to form any opinion of her when I first heard her, and though I thought her voice most brilliant, and could not but be struck with her dramatic figure and attitudes, probably my admiration arose from what I heard said, and was rather prompted than impromptu. Her reappearance after retiring with an exalted professional reputation I can, however, state was a regrettable blunder. When on the 9th of July, 1850, she once again trod the stage, her voice was no more than the ghost of its former self; the disappointment of the public was painfully apparent, though there seemed to be a tacit understanding that it would be humane to disguise it, and the grandeur of her unique style which survived in all its splendour, justified a considerable concession of applause; but it was, to say the least, impolitic on her own account to publish the fact of her vocal superannuation.

Where would Uwin's *näif* enthusiasm have been, had he seen her then!

Garcia.

Malibran and Viardot had enjoyed the immense advantage of their father's training, and no finer musician or better instructor than Garcia perhaps ever existed, though

his uncompromising severity made him a formidable master. As an actor he was exemplary, and was so terrible in *Othello* that Malibran used to say she was sometimes frightened at his vehemence, not knowing how far he might be carried away.

Desdemona was one of her favourite characters, and her cry : "Ah ! se'l padre m'abbandona," transfixed the audience.

Garcia must, according to Malibran's ideas, have been as much too demonstrative as Templeton was too tame ; for on the first occasion of her performing *Amina* to the *Elvino* of the latter, she was so irritated by his apathy, that she rated him soundly, and told him if he did not co-operate with her more conformably to his part, she would "kill" him.

She tried to make him understand what would be the attitude of a real lover under such circumstances, and asked him whether it had never occurred to him that he would half massacre his suspected *fiancée* ; till Templeton pleaded : "he was afraid of hurting her." However, it seems he took the drilling in earnest ; for a little while after, as if to show her he knew how to throw spirit into his acting, he so far forgot himself as, during the simulation of a passionate embrace, to imprint a real kiss on her shoulder. This *excess* of compliance with her injunctions greatly displeased Malibran, who was never slow to resent a liberty, and gave him very clearly to understand the limits within which he was to restrain his zeal.

Garcia's *Don Giovanni* was one of his most successful representations, and he costumed himself for it to such perfection, that he looked like a picture of Velasquez suddenly come to life ; he had a noble bearing, and was every inch an *hidalgo*.

Sontag—Contessa Rossi—who, fortunately for the *im-* Sontag.
presario of Her Majesty's Theatre, returned to the stage in July, 1849, after twenty years' absence, possessed a voice of remarkable sweetness, and had acquired a facility

in vocalization which reminded one of the warbling of birds; her notes, however, were rich and full, but her style was perhaps *too* pure: though less apathetic than her more recent successor, Jenny Lind, her voice partook of the same type, and testified to the vast difference between the German and Italian temperaments. At the same time, it must be remembered that Sontag had a beautiful face and graceful figure, altogether in contrast with the clumsy movements and plain features of the Swedish artiste. Sontag was a charming *Rosina*, and Rodes' air in the singing lesson has rarely been more winningly warbled; while rich as were the *floriture* with which she adorned those variations, their luxuriance was not in excess of good taste.

We find Lord Grey on April 10, 1828, writing to the Princess Lieven: ". . . Last night I went to Devonshire House; the attraction of the evening was Sontag. I was disappointed in her beauty." My own recollection of Sontag is that though not *beautiful* she was attractively *pretty*, and that her features were youthful and wore a very sweet expression, while the grace of her person assisted the favourable impression she produced. His letter continues: "I was charmed with her singing; her voice is clear, sweet, and flexible, her execution perfect, and, though it is the fashion to say so, particularly by those who will not allow there is a singer in the world but Pasta, I do not find her at all wanting in feeling and expression. The only doubt is whether the passages which are so beautiful in a room will be sufficiently heard at the theatre."

Further on, viz., on July 24, 1829, Lord Grey appears to have accepted as true, some evil report as to Sontag's private life, and informs his loving and beloved correspondent that Count Rossi is *not* Sontag's husband, "though," he adds: "a husband there certainly is *de facto*, but perhaps not *de jure*." I must say this is the first time I ever heard the slightest slur on the moral character of Sontag, who, to the best of my recollection, never gave any ground for the

smallest scandal, . . . but perhaps Lord Grey knew better. Count Rossi certainly did not ; for he adored his charming wife ; and a proof of her devotedness to *him* is that, when she returned to the stage as Countess Rossi, it was to restore his fallen fortunes. This was, as I have said, in 1849, and her voice was not only unimpaired, but it remained fresh and beautiful to the end of her career.

On her return she was not simply welcomed with enthusiasm by the public, but her position as Count Rossi's wife was recognized in English society, where, though still an artiste, she was received as entitled to rank among the upper ten, and when there, showed herself a thorough woman of the world ; for the position was a delicate, and might have been a difficult, one.

Pasta's *contralto* notes were, in the days of her glory, magnificent ; but, while she had the compensation of a much greater compass, their beauty was surpassed by those of Brambilla and Alboni, especially the latter. Both of these became immense favourites with the English public, though neither could boast of much beauty of form ; but perhaps their superfluous *embonpoint* was due to that unruffled good-humour which characterized both and won upon all who knew them respectively, whether in public or in private.

My recollection of Brambilla is somewhat weakened by time, though it would be impossible to forget the perfection with which she acquitted herself in the *Gazza Ladra* in the character of *Pippo*, and she was considered worthy to succeed Pasta in the *Carcano* Theatre at Milan. It was in 1845 that Brambilla enchanted London connoisseurs with her full, sweet, and mellow notes, and the admirable style with which she managed a very remarkable voice ; for a true *contralto* of fine quality is as rare as a phoenix or a true tenor. After Brambilla's departure, the London opera remained without a *contralto* worthy to be called such until the unexpected advent of Alboni, who was hailed

with a delight proportioned to the fine artistic qualities which enhanced the value of her splendid tones.

Whether in London or Paris, this great singer was welcomed with enthusiasm; her method was admirable, and her voice has been pronounced the finest contralto of the age; it maintained an equal perfection throughout its compass, which was limited to two octaves; but never perhaps was there an organ so even, full, rich, and ex-



MADAME ALBONI.

quisitely sweet. It had also the charm of flexibility, and she managed it with such complete mastery that her notes seemed to flow spontaneously from some honied source. It was often remarked that (unlike Persiani, who rarely sang the same cadence twice, so rich were her resources) Alboni never varied the *fioriture* she had once introduced into a song, however often she might have to sing it. On her first appearance in England she could take *Pippo* (*Gazza Ladra*) with a success never surpassed even by Brambilla,

and the *encores* which followed the *Ebben, per mia memoria* in that opera, as well as the page's song—*Nobil Signor*—in the *Ugonotti*, have been known to result in three, and even four, hotly-demanded repetitions. *Il Segreto per esser felice* in *Lucrezia* was another of her triumphs, and her *Fides* quite threw into the shade even Madame Viardot's, which till then had been considered perfect.

Alboni was born in 1824; she was therefore quite young when she made her *début* in London in 1847, and astonished English connoisseurs by the purity of her thoroughly Italian style, acquired from her master, Rossini himself, whose only pupil she was. At one time she tried to increase the range of her high notes, but fortunately abandoned the attempt and never, after, claimed more than those two perfect octaves from G to G.

If *Fides* was her best character, it was that a certain severity of style is needed for the music of that part; and if her acting was occasionally somewhat cold for other operas, the sweetness and volume of her notes, the ease with which she produced them, and the purity and grace of her vocalization made great amends for any want of warmth and enthusiasm. She succeeded in making a character-part of the somewhat ungrateful *rôle* of *Fidalma* in the *Matrimonio*. This had usually been given to a subordinate—a great mistake, as was evinced when the public *encored* for a third time the quarrelling *trio*—*Signora Contessa*—never before heard to such advantage except on the too rare occasions when *Fidalma* had been taken by Malibran.

Alboni's *début* took place at Covent Garden on the first night of its opening, April 6, 1847, just a month before the arrival of Jenny Lind at Her Majesty's. Her engagement was unannounced, and her perfections were heralded by no puff preliminary, but they were of a character to assert *themselves*; and at the rehearsal of *Semiramide*, with which the theatre was to open, Costa almost uncon-

sciously betrayed how much he was amazed at the magnificence of her voice, the luscious flow of her notes, and the delightful facility of her execution; and Grisi, after the *Giorno d'Orrore*, was unable to restrain her admiration, which burst forth in genuine *bravas*. When the opening night came, the public too, was taken by surprise, and before the opera was over, her reputation had made *itself* without an effort, while each occasion on which she subsequently appeared procured her a fresh ovation.

Among the profession her amiable manners, bright disposition, and even temper, won all suffrages, especially during the provincial tours in which she was included; and great as was uniformly her success, no one could feel jealous of an artiste who was always good-humoured and never showed the least vanity or sought any self-glorification. Alboni was not beautiful; but her figure, though too stout, was commanding, her head fine and well poised, her hair glossy black, and her features pleasing. She married young, and remained but a short time after her marriage on the opera stage. To her great grief, her husband, the Marchese di Pepoli, died very prematurely, and she withdrew from public life in the zenith of her success and went to live in Paris, where she brought up her young family most creditably, and soon gathered round her a circle of friends.

A relative of mine living in Paris assures me that her voice was still (1891) rich, powerful, and flexible, and that she constantly sang in private for the entertainment of her family and friends and to their genuine enjoyment.

MUSICAL NOTES AND THEIR ECHOES.

THE ITALIAN TROUPE.

**“Music resembles poetry; in each
Are nameless graces which no methods teach,
And which a master-mind alone can reach.”**
POPE.

CHAPTER III.

MUSICAL NOTES AND THEIR ECHOES.

THE ITALIAN TROUPE.

“We are all too apt to think that the best actors and singers we have heard, are the best that ever existed.”

IT is impossible not to sympathize with Lord Mount-Edgecumbe * in his expressive lament over the music of *his* past, and there must be very many in the present generation who, in like manner, after frequenting the operas and oratorios of their youth, become disgusted with the inferiority of the music which succeeds them, and prefer to stand aloof from the performances of the day, rather than risk destroying those early impressions, the bare recollection of which gives so much delight.

“For the best portion of my life,” he writes, “I was one of the most constant frequenters of the opera, but for the last twenty years have ceased to take the same interest in it, and have been but an occasional, even a rare, visitor of the theatre ; for several seasons I have scarcely entered its doors. As the good singers disappeared and remained unreplaced, as the style of the compositions changed, and as their execution deviated more and more from what I had been accustomed to in the *golden age* of the opera, my interest diminished with my pleasure, and though both have been occasionally revived, yet I never expect to hear again what I have heard, nor to witness any new music or new singers that will make me amends for those which are gone.”

There may be much truth in Bacon’s remark that—“ Most

* Richard, Second Earl, the severe musical critic, b. 1764, d. 1839.

men, unjust to the present times hang upon antiquity:”—it must be admitted that the noble critic always showed himself over-fastidious, and to us who know the value of at least some of the artistes he affected to despise, his prejudices in favour of the singers of his youth appear somewhat narrow. However, he lived long enough to hear Grisi in her prime, and though he would not place her on a level with the singers of his early days, or even with Malibran, he condescended to express not only approval of, but admiration for, this charming artiste.

Grisi.

Nothing could have been more fortunate for the Italian stage, or rather for the musical public, *and . . .* for the *impresario*, than Grisi's appearance at the very moment when the unexpected and lamented death of Malibran left the company without a soprano.

Grisi's elder sister, Giuditta, had attempted to take a position in the opera troupe, but must have been very inferior in all ways to Giulia, as after a brief trial, she returned to Italy, and was soon forgotten. I myself never heard or saw her. Both were nieces of the famous Madame Grassini, greatly admired—some say “more than admired”—by both Napoleon and Wellington. The story runs that when Giulia was yet a mere child, her aunt made her sing to her one day, and was so charmed that she told her she should leave legacies to her sisters, but should bequeath nothing to her, though she was her favourite, because, gifted as she was, she would certainly one day become a great artiste, and would need no help from any one. In England, Giulia Grisi was no sooner seen and heard than she took the *cognoscenti* of the day by storm.

The statuesque beauty of her face and figure at once gave her a prestige which was confirmed by the rich splendour of her voice, and the winning graces of her style, for these were such as might have won their way with even a less captivating physique. The public was bewitched by her youthful freshness and charming manner, and the slight physical

infirmary of her gait was willingly overlooked, if not admitted as a grace. Why, laVallière herself, limped! Such cases justify the proverb: "On n'est pas aimé parcequ'on est beau, on est beau parcequ'on est aimé," and although *prima facie*, her walk was not elegant, she contrived to associate it so intimately with her rare artistic attractions, that, in the end, it simply imparted a *cachet* to her individuality.

The first time I heard Grisi was when she was very young, and I, still younger; but I thought her the impersonation of all that was captivating in an artiste, and I heard this opinion of her expressed by all. The opera was *La Gazza Ladra*, and she was of course *Ninetta*, a character which, at that age, she filled to perfection in that now rarely heard opera. Impossible to forget the clear, rich, and bell-like tones of her voice as she bounded on to the stage with her little basket of flowers, to the gushing strains of *Di piacer*.* Grisi turned the heads of all Paris with this *cavatina*.

The capabilities of the whole troupe seemed put to the test in this opera. Lablache's *Podestà*, one of his more serious rôles, gave him some fine music to sing, and also some fine acting to display. Brambilla as *Pippo* won immense applause, especially in the touching duet: *Ebben, per mia memoria*, with Grisi, who, as *Ninetta* on her way to the scaffold, takes off her little gold cross and presses it on her faithful friend. To Tamburini, as *Ninetta's* father, *Fernando*, falls the solemn and pathetic *O Nume benefico*, which he gave with great effect. The part of the lover, *Giannetto*, assigned to Rubini, fell flat; it wanted more acting than he was able, or perhaps willing, to put into it, and it was difficult to recognize in him the same artiste who could sing with such passionate tenderness the *A te o cara!* of the *Puritani*, or *Tu vedrai* of the *Pirata*.

There is some uncertainty as to the year of Grisi's birth,

* I once heard Scappa remark of that song that the whole of its effect was due to the key in which it is written, and that, transposed into any other, the exulting joyousness which gives to it its whole spirit, would be lost.

but 1812 is supposed to be the accurate date. At an early age she was placed at the *Conservatorio* at Milan, where under Marlioni's careful training, her wonderful gifts developed with surprising rapidity and success; for at sixteen she appeared at the opera there, in *Zelmira*, her voice having attained a degree of richness which took even her master by surprise. She was also a marvel of beauty, and her histrionic powers were far beyond her years. The *Capuletti* was written for her, and she produced so profound a sensation in her impersonation of *Giulietta* that the respective *impresarii* of Milan and Pisa both became eager to secure her services. It was to the former she gave the preference, and came out at the *Scala* in the opera of *Norma*, in which, though she was then cast for *Adalgisa*, she ultimately took the leading rôle, and made it so essentially her own, that every singer who has since attempted it has herself felt it to be an act of presumption. No *Norma* has there ever been, or will there ever be—not excepting Titjens who was next to her—like Grisi when in the very zenith of her physical perfection she enchanted the world with it. The Italian stage, that had been filled by Malibran—the *beau-ideal* of connoisseurs of every nationality—would have intimidated a less perfect artiste than Grisi; but when she assumed the character of *Semiramide*, and manifested the full force of her genius, they were content to class her with the most distinguished of her predecessors, and Théophile Gautier thought it no robbery to elevate her to the golden throne left vacant successively by Catalani, Pasta, and Malibran. He speaks in raptures of the faultless beauty of her head, so majestically poised on her magnificent throat and shoulders, and of the noble lines of her mobile and expressive features. Of her fitness for the operatic stage, he writes:—

“ Si vous aimez le vrai chant Italien—simple, large, d'une facilité toujours heureuse, d'une justesse toujours sûre, le chant d'un gosier humain et non un gazouillis de flûte; si vous voulez entendre comment l'amour, la colère, l'indignation

et la douleur se mêlent aux mélodies des grands maîtres, et comment ce qui n'était qu'un opéra devient tout à coup une tragédie et un poëme, il faut aller au theatre Italien un soir de *Sémiramide* ou de *Norma*."

Those who saw—and heard—Grisi in these grand and



GRISI AND LABLACHE, IN *I Puritani*.

imposing characters, declared her to be a far finer tragedian than Rachel, and certainly a more captivating one. I don't know if Arsène Houssaye was of this opinion; probably not.

Did any who heard Grisi's *Casta Diva* come away unmoved? Did they ever forget either her tones or her

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attitude? Even in what may be called the expiring efforts she made to cling to that popularity she so dearly loved, there were flashes of the old brilliancy and traces of its pristine beauty in the remains of that once lovely voice :

“ E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires ! ”

The *Puritani* was written for Grisi, though both Lablache and Tamburini had effective parts in the score ; but when we speak of that opera, the *Polacca* * is perhaps the first melody that comes to our memory, and we see the Grisi of our youthful days in her white bridal veil, and then we remember that Rubini had a triumph of his own in the solo parts of that exquisite air : *A te, o cara*, which he sang with such infinite tenderness and grace, and had to repeat, sometimes *thrice*, to a delighted and exacting audience. The resources of Grisi's powers were boundless, and when they outgrew the youthful charm of her *Aminas*, *Rosinas*, *Leonoras*, or *Elviras*, these impersonations were succeeded by the grand and more mature perfections of her *Lucrezias*, *Semiramides*, or *Normas* ; but with such a type as Grisi's, every period had its grace.

It is interesting to compare with that of Théophile Gautier, the opinions of other contemporary critics. Lord Mount-Edgcombe records the steady and rapid progress with which the *diva* won public favour in England ; and from so hypercritical a censor it seems high praise that he should have pronounced her “ excellent in everything.”

N. P. Willis's phlegmatic appreciation of Grisi is as follows :—

* A certain living singer, whom the world seems to have combined to over-rate—undoubtedly because there happens to exist nothing better—once sang this exquisite *Polacca* in Bellini's presence. When the performance was over, the composer approached her with many gallant compliments, and then said he should very much like to know who had written that melody ; and well might he ask the question. I can fully believe the story, for I have heard the song perpetrated by the same vocalist, and I wondered all the while whether the author could have given his imprimatur to the entirely new version she had been palming off on the public, as his.

“Grisi is young and very pretty” (“pretty” seems hardly the word), “and an admirable actress—three great advantages to a singer. Her voice,” (no mention of its marvellous quality!), “is under absolute control, and she manages it beautifully; but it lacks the infusion of soul, the gushing, uncontrollable, passionate feeling of Malibran. You feel Grisi to be merely an accomplished artiste, but Malibran melts all your criticism into love and admiration.”

Who, indeed, could mistake “The mind . . . the music breathing from her face!”

It would be curious to know in how many, and in which of her characters Willis heard Grisi; it is quite certain that had he ever seen her on the stage with Mario, he could have complained of no “lack of passion” in her performance. In fact, a new era in Grisi’s professional career dawned with Mario’s *début* on this side the Channel; and, strange as it may seem, its opening *locale* was not London, but Dublin.*

A musical critic wrote rapturously of Grisi’s success on this occasion: his enthusiasm was not confined to her “superb voice,” or her “perfect style,” he bowed equally low before her classical beauty; and of the shape of her arms, and the thousand graceful attitudes she made them assume. He declared, “No sculptor could look on and not be inspired to model a Venus from his impression of her.”

I often met the Italian troupe in Park Lane at the house of Dr. Billing—himself a most agreeable and cultivated man, M.D. to the Italian Opera Company; also at that of the Surgeon to the Company, the Comte de la Belinaye in George Street, Hanover Square. Of course the magnates of the Press could always claim their presence, and it was at the house of Mr. William Pitt Byrne that I first saw Grisi, accompanied by her first husband, M. de Melcy, a very insignificant and common sort of fellow, of the barber’s-

* It was not, however, till they had acted together for some time, that the dramatic instincts of these two unique artistes developed into that splendour for which their combined performance ultimately became famous.

block type. Lord Castlereagh's duel with him is probably still remembered, and was made no secret of at the moment, —the noble lord parading his wounded arm in a sling in the Row, for some little time after. A separation took place between the *diva* and this gentleman, who came pretty well out of the affair, imposing as a condition a fine of £2,000 a year for life, to be paid out of his wife's earnings as long as she remained on the stage. Mapleson, it seems, enabled her to evade this payment, by arranging that during provincial tours she was to sing for him gratuitously, but that Mario should receive £300 a week. In return, the invaluable pair behaved most liberally, delighting in fulfilling their engagements and never indulging in those tricks and affectations so often meanly played off by inferior artists.

Grisi's social qualifications would never have given an idea of her professional capabilities: Lord Mount-Edgumbe, Rogers, Crabb Robinson, and others who knew her in private, may be cited as having found her "uninteresting and characterless in her home-life, commonplace in conversation, and poorly-furnished with ideas."

Yet, though they may have failed to discover evidences of very profound cultivation, when on the stage, Grisi exhibited an apparently carefully studied knowledge of every character she impersonated, while her intelligence in delineating the emotions, and the truth to nature with which she rendered all human passions, constituted the greatest charm of her acting.*

Nor yet was she slow to discern and also to adapt what

* Grisi, without possessing much sense of humour, often said droll things, and the quaintness of her Italianized English, abounding with literally translated Italian idiom, was amusing, not only to others, but even to herself. However she, like the others, took kindly to English customs, and I remember one day in the *foyer des artistes*, during a concert at the *Bijou* theatre (when various views were being expressed as to the beverage least pernicious to the voice) all agreed in condemning tea as *détestable*; coffee allowable only if taken *noir*; champagne, admissible; and *Madere* only doubtful. Grisi confessed that for her part she

was good in other artistes, and often she improved on her adaptations. Thus was her *Doña Anna* the admiration of the most fastidious connoisseurs, and though it was manifestly modelled on Pasta's fine conception of that character all who saw it admitted that Grisi had surpassed her prototype, and that it was one of her most admirable impersonations: the others in which she shone were her own unassisted creations.

In disposition, Grisi was frank and cordial and if not brilliant in conversation, at least, she never said smart things to make others smart, for she was thoroughly amiable. Those who knew her only in her public capacity would perhaps smile incredulously if informed of her homely domestic virtues; yet she was an excellent *ménagère*, nor was she ashamed to be seen during the morning hours *en peignoir* with her account books and key basket, conscientiously regulating the details of her household, carefully studying Mario's comfort and wishes, full of consideration for her children and dependents, and neglecting nothing, even at the time she still had to attend to her arduous professional obligations.

It was curious to observe the change in her character after her marriage, and to note how cheerfully and contentedly she settled down to her practical recognition of the serious side of life.

Her maternal instincts were early developed. I remember when residing in the Rue de Rivoli, many years ago, frequently meeting her out with her children and their nurses: on a wet day she would walk with them beneath the arcades, the carriage slowly following; when fine, they

was very partial to "arf-an-arf," and Malibran revealed that in the desert scene in one of Balfe's operas where she has to drink from a gourd, she always had it filled with . . . bottled stout! In fact, this stimulant seemed absolutely necessary to supply the dash and spirit needed in a *bravura* song, or in any scene requiring energy near the end of a performance. It is known that she once fainted on the stage, after singing *Ah non giunge*,—the *finale* to the *Sonnambula*, just as if she had been the real *Amina*.

were to be seen among the little fashionables, disporting themselves under her vigilant eye in the Tuileries Gardens, or enjoying that delight of Parisian *bébés*, the Guignol Theatre in the Avenues of the Champs Elysées.

As Grisi's beautiful daughters grew up, she could not bear to be separated from them, and when on her provincial tours, her thoughts seemed to be always wandering back to the spot where she had left them with a trustworthy governess, to whom, however, she was always writing new instructions as to their treatment and care. Every leisure moment was devoted to maternal correspondence, and if the answers she expected happened to be delayed, she was thrown into a state of nervous excitement calculated to compromise her professional performance. Her first care on arriving at a fresh *étape* was to ransack every shop and bazaar for souvenirs, and then to despatch a large box of toys and trinkets to "the children." Yet in this somewhat exaggerated affection, there was not a particle of affectation.

Grisi had an acute intuitive perception of the value of other artistes, and her diagnosis of their merits seldom proved inaccurate. If she pronounced an opinion on the future failure or success of a *débutant* or *débutante*, her predictions nearly always proved correct: on the night of Alboni's first appearance, Grisi was so struck with the purity of her style and the magnificence of her voice that she could not restrain her admiration, and at the *foyer des artistes* manifested the most enthusiastic delight in her performance. Alboni being a contralto, and therefore entirely out of competition with her, she could afford to express her real sentiments on the merits of the new artiste.

In fact, whatever Grisi's faults, they were in a large measure redeemed by her qualities: those who had an opportunity of judging, admitted that her heart was excellent, her thoughtfulness practical, and that she often

proved herself as kind and considerate as she was gifted and beautiful.

By those who knew her, are still remembered many instances of the goodness of her heart ; though, like all artistes, she had her share of professional susceptibilities, jealousies, and rivalries, with a full consciousness of her professional claims ; but to these class sentiments we must be indulgent : an amusing illustration of the extent to which they may be carried was related to me by a lady friend to whose house Grisi had been invited in view of a musical entertainment. Before accepting the invitation she inquired whether *Madame une telle* (a sister professional) would be there. The hostess was obliged to admit she had already asked that lady, but was not sure whether she would accept. "Oh ! that is to be regretted," said Grisi ; "if she were certainly not coming, I should place myself at your service with pleasure ; but, il faut que je vous prévienne que si je la vois entrer par une porte, moi je sortirai par l'autre. Comment donc se fait-il," she continued, "que vous ne saviez pas que nous sommes brouillées ; et avec ça, qu'elle est capable de me parler, cette femme !"

Strange as it may seem, a few weeks later these implacable rivals were once more the best friends in the world ! Truly has the French writer said of such professional differences—

"J'admire leurs talents autant que leur génie,
Mais, au fait, ils ont un grand tort :—
C'est de s'instituer professeurs d'harmonie,
Et de n'être jamais d'accord !"

Though impetuous, Grisi was not vindictive ; she was also capable of disinterested generosity, and was, as a rule, very popular among the fraternity.

Out of many instances I could mention of Grisi's true-heartedness, one may be cited here, as follows :

A well-known young tenor singer more remarkable for his beauty of his voice or his abilities as a singer, but whose Ciabatta.

upright character and amiable disposition made him a favourite with the profession, was Signor Ciabatta. By no means qualified for the stage, he was yet an agreeable and correct platform and drawing-room singer, and was moreover an excellent and conscientious teacher. His "fatal gift of beauty" was somewhat of a drawback to his success in the teaching career, since, however reserved in his behaviour, his young-lady pupils constantly persisted in falling in love with him.

Honestly pursuing his calling, Ciabatta neither sought nor encouraged their personal admiration; on the contrary, his object being to increase his means, never very abundant, his great care was not to lose his pupils, and one of these proved so irrepressible, that he saw reason to apprehend a scandal which would ruin his position as a master. He was in the habit of visiting, for weekly lessons, a fashionable watering-place, and it was there that resided the pupil in question. One day on his return home, his astonishment may be imagined on finding a young lady whose face was concealed by a black veil, seated in his drawing-room in London. On his arrival she rose and with outstretched hands advanced to meet him, expecting that in his position he would be only too pleased to find he had won the favour of a handsome young heiress, whose smiles were extensively courted in her own *monde*.

Ciabatta tried to represent to this infatuated little simpleton the compromising position in which her foolish act had placed both herself and him, but there was no hesitation on his part as to the proper course to adopt, and he lost no time in taking her back to her father's house, taking his own place outside, and hers within, the stage coach: the girl's parents were greatly touched by the delicacy of his behaviour.

Ciabatta's health had suffered seriously from the effects of the English climate, and consumption having declared itself, his case required constant care and attention. He was here with few relations, and Grisi, now married and living

with her husband and young family in their well-appointed villa, Mulgrave House, Fulham, finding how dangerously ill he was, generously took charge of the invalid. She drove to Seymour Street, bringing him back in her carriage, and keeping him many weeks under her maternal *surveillance*.

His condition improved visibly, but he could no longer continue his lessons; Grisi therefore organized for his benefit a concert, exerting herself to obtain the co-operation of all the best artistes, and coming out of her retirement for the occasion in order to add to the attraction of the programme. Ciabatta had many kind friends and patrons, and the proceeds were considerable, so far rewarding the *diva's* beneyolent efforts, that the sum helped to keep the poor fellow in comparative comfort during the remainder of his doomed life.

Grisi has been censured, and not (it must be admitted) unfairly, for deferring her retirement till it was too apparent that her once matchless voice had lost its charm; in fact, she continued before the public until those who—in those later performances—heard her for the first time, must have wondered how it was she had ever achieved the reputation she had enjoyed. There was a melancholy occasion at the Crystal Palace, when being apparently quite unaware of the extent to which her earlier qualifications had forsaken her, she fairly broke down, and for the first time in her life was startled by that sound of which a French performer once said: “C'est là pour nous la vraie excommunication.” A Crystal Palace audience is apt to be somewhat mixed, and those who thus treated a woman, and one who had so long given them of her best, and had been literally idolized by the public, cannot have been of the *fine fleur*; still it does not do to strain the bow-string till it snaps, and Grisi should have felt that day that her further connection with public audiences was severed. Notwithstanding this severe lesson, some time after, finding herself in excellent form and presuming on the pristine worship of her admirers—though

not without some misgivings—she ventured once more on the scene of her early triumphs. It was in the year 1866 that, too readily yielding to the blandishments and entreaties of Mapleson, who was sadly in want of a spicy seasoning to his season's programme, she consented to return temporarily to the stage, and rashly entered into an engagement with him though only of a few weeks. It is true she had been for some short time previously, in particularly excellent voice, and—

“So prone our hearts to whisper what we wish,”

she was willing to concur in the *impresario's* representations of the sufficiency of her surviving powers. No doubt the heart of an artiste such as she had but lately been, beat high at the thought of once more winning the smiles and the applause of an indulgent public, and at least reminding the world of her past glory; but it was a deplorable mistake, and apparently the great artist became conscious of it as soon as she found herself on the boards. Had she felt more confidence in herself she might have surmounted the difficulties of the position, and probably it was her anxiety to maintain her grand traditions that contributed to make her fall short even of what she might have been capable of achieving.

It was on May 5th of that year, and the opera was *Lucrezia Borgia*. The house was crowded, the curtain rose, and her reception was enthusiastic. She was still a beautiful woman, and she descended from the gondola with all her imposing prestige unimpaired. A breathless silence succeeded the burst of applause that had welcomed her appearance, and though the attendance was as eager as numerous, there was a hushed anxiety to listen. Not a sound could have been detected throughout the assembly as she sang *Com'è bello*, perhaps as finely as even in her palmiest days. Still it must have cost her a considerable effort, for she was by no means herself, and when she came off the stage her nervous

condition could not escape any of those who met her behind the scenes. The manager took her hands and found them icy cold. It was in vain all tried to reassure her; her apprehensions overcame her. An unfortunate *contretemps* at the close of the first act, owing to her miscalculation of the depth of the stage, contributed to upset her moral equilibrium: when the curtain fell, Grisi was left kneeling in front of it, and a weakness in one of her knees prevented her from rising till assisted by persons from the other side who came to her succour; during the second act therefore her nervousness had increased so much that her voice was perceptibly failing her. Although she had never before experienced any difficulty in reaching the A natural above the stave, on this occasion she took it flat, and from that moment all her courage forsook her, though she finished her part in the opera with success, and was warmly cheered. Grisi at once rescinded the engagement into which she now saw she should not have entered, and this proved to be her last appearance on the stage.

Mario, like Grisi, came to the fore during one of those critical emergencies which would have perhaps made even an inferior artiste welcome; what therefore was the good fortune of an *impresario* who could fall upon such an unexpected chance as the possession of the very king of tenors! There was in fact no other tenor in the world who could possibly have succeeded Rubini with any prospect of favour from the public whom his perfection had rendered so fastidious. Gardoni had conquered all hearts in Paris, but he was so lamentably spoiled by all the adulation of which he had become the object, that his natural indolence had increased to a degree which precluded any hope of his attaining the eminence to which his many gifts entitled him to aspire; added to this want of energy, was a deficiency of power in his voice, fatal to the possibility of his ever becoming a *primo tenore* in London. Mario therefore, on Rubini's retirement, stood alone.

As the elegant and admired Conte di Candia, he was, and had been for some seasons, the reigning "lion" in Parisian social circles of *haut ton*, and when the thitherto unimagined beauty of his delicious voice revealed itself at the *amateur* concerts given by the *crème de la crème* of the gay capital, he found himself the *coqueluche* of his *monde*. Widows sighed and heiresses died (probably the widows dyed too) for him, in vain; but the heir to the Marquisate of Candia was not a marrying man. His position as a young bachelor of rank, exceptionally handsome, was far too agreeable to be lightly abandoned, and he was yet heart-whole. His contented air seemed to say: "J'y suis, J'y reste," and the degree of *hauteur* which naturally resulted from all this courting, well became his dignified and graceful bearing. This was probably his mode of protecting himself from his fair admirers whose money-bags had no more effect on him than their personal attractions, and yet the Comte was penniless! His charming manners and captivating person had proved an unfailing passport to the *élite* of Paris society who, although conscious of the inadequacy of his means, neither knew, nor ventured to ask, nor perhaps cared to know, in what way he had rid himself of his fortune? The Conte di Candia was himself, and who could want more? Society did not manifest any mistrust of him, nor treat him as a foreign adventurer, for he always conducted himself as a well-born, well-bred, and thoroughly gentlemanly man. At the same time, the idea of utilizing his wondrous gifts as a stepping-stone to fortune did not originate in his own brain, and it was his friends, and chief among them, the Comte de Belgioioso, being in the habit of meeting him, frequenting his house, and singing duets with him, who suggested to him that when a man has a "plum" in his throat it is illogical to let it bide there unproductive, and that he ought to turn it to account while it lasts. Belgioioso, moreover, hinted at his young friend's unique qualifications for the opera stage.

The *Signor Conte* was startled at the proposal. He was so essentially an *homme du grand monde*, and he owed so much of his attraction to the prestige of his birth, education, and social position, that the idea of selling, as it were, his personality to the public, for a living, shocked his aristocratic susceptibilities; neither—when the detail came before him in its reality—could he reconcile himself to the humiliation of signing his paternal name to the venal contract. It must be supposed, however, that when a man is—

“Obliged by hunger and *request of friends*”

he ultimately gives in, and so Mario* at last consented, compromising the matter by appending an assumed name to the document, and continuing to retain his place in society with a loftiness of demeanour which, however, he very soon had reason to modify: the colleagues among whom he found himself, he at once recognized as of refined manners, irreproachable conduct, and fine feeling; moreover, he found them highly considered in a social point of view, for they were received by crowned heads and invited to the tables of Monarchs. Indeed, the social prejudices of the Marchese di Candia, as we know, ultimately entirely gave way. Mario's qualifications were so unique that into whatever *monde* he might have passed or howsoever he might have disguised himself, he must of necessity always have remained a man of distinction.

Born at Cagliari in 1808, he had received the education of a nobleman's son. He studied music among other accomplishments at a school specially affected to youths of good family, but had also natural musical gifts. At an early age he entered the corps of *Chasseurs Sardes* (then quartered at Genoa) with the epaulettes of an officer. He was also one of the Pope's *Guardia nobile*.

* It is said that the Marchese fixed upon the name of Mario because a remote ancestor, son of Cesare, and brother of Lucrezia, Borgia, was killed in battle on Monte Mario.

His professional career dates from 1838, when he made a triumphant *début* at the French opera in *Robert le Diable*, although at that time a mere simulacrum of what he was afterwards to become.

Mario, who particularly disliked singing in French,* as soon as his engagement of two and a half years was over, migrated to the Italian opera in Paris.



SIGNOR MARIO.

All this time he was receiving pressing offers from St.

* Mario, like all the other Italian singers, never lost his Italian accent in speaking French, and never sang French words if he could help it. He knew the value to a vocalist of the Italian terminations, and he also knew that there was a choice even among those. As Braham used to re-write the *music* of the parts assigned to him in an opera, so Mario used to re-write his portion of the *libretto*, choosing the words most favourable to music. Why not? There is a well-known story of an Italian *prima donna* who always insisted on the insertion of a clause in her contracts, to the effect that it was immediately to become null and void if she were required to undertake any song that did not end with the word "*felicità*."

Petersburg, and finally yielding to these, he went to Russia, where he remained eight or nine years, charming the Court as well as the public, and receiving from the Emperor the most flattering distinctions.

It was in 1842 that Mario first crossed the Channel, and it was, as I have said, not in London, but in Dublin, that he made his *début*, Benedict having arranged for him an engagement with the *impresario* there, including with him Tamburini, Grisi, and Lablache. He recounts all this in his diary, and adds with much candour: "Ensuite je revins à Paris, où j'ai chanté tout le répertoire de Rubini, ce qui ne fut pas une *petite* fortune pour moi."

After his first season in London, with the exception of the year 1849, when he again returned to Russia, and of one season which he passed in America, Mario divided his professional life between London and Paris, until his final retirement in 1869. It is strange that (according to his own statement) he never sang in Italy.

It was, as I have said in speaking of Grisi, at the *première* of the *Favorita* that she first inspired Mario with a practical feeling for the histrionic art. It seemed a new departure to himself, as it was a delicious surprise to those who witnessed that passionate awakening of a hitherto latent genius—a dormant spark suddenly kindled, and then fanned into a flame—a flame not to be extinguished as long as these two well-matched artistes remained before the public.

The *Favorita* had been splendidly got up, the *mise en scène* being brought out with considerable art; the attendance was full to overflowing; the two unapproachable artistes on whose powers the opera depended, rose to the occasion, and seemed impelled, whether by the music or the *libretto*, to throw their whole soul into their performance.

Not often has greater enthusiasm been manifested by an audience than when the perfection of this gifted pair culminated in the intensity of the situation in the last act;

indeed, nothing could be more stirring than when in the hushed stillness of the house Mario sang with irresistible pathos the exquisite strains of "*Spirto gentil*."

The *Favorita*, till then scarcely known, became at once a favourite opera; its beauties had been discovered for the first time, and *habitués* singled out the several points which illustrated it as—alone—worth witnessing. *Una Vergine* in the first act; Mario's thrilling version of the sword-scene with the King; the whole of the last act, of course, and Grisi's memorable "*Ah! mio Fernando!*"—all were gems, transpierced through the opera:—

"*Ah! mio Fernando!*" . . . that was song divine,
And *Favorita's* ecstasy complete
When, with a passion that has conquered time
The broken sword fell at your noble feet!

King of the hearts of all! . . . With folded arms
As—white-robed monk—by Leonora's cell
You stand in fancy, while the myriad charms
Come with love-music and your magic spell,
'*Angiol' d'amor!*'—that was the song you sung
In tragic torture of accented pain.
Mario! my master!—Would that we were young
To see enchanted women weep again!"*

The deafening applause that followed the performance that night testified to the profound impression made by the surpassing genius of Grisi and Mario, who carried every heart captive by this manifestation of whether their dramatic or their vocal powers.

The composer and the librettist came in for their share of admiration, but would certainly never have obtained it without the interpretation which gave their work its value. I was practically convinced of this, one night, when, passing through Aix-les-bains and having nothing better to do, I strolled into the *casino* theatre, where the *Favorita* was being given—French version and French singers, &c. I do not remember ever passing a more wearisome evening; it

* I cannot recall who wrote these lines, but they are taken from some stanzas that appeared in *Punch* in December, 1883.

was simply impossible to recognize a single feeling that had been awakened during that too well-remembered representation at "Her Majesty's," and I went on wondering and waiting for some trait that should at least recall it: the score was the same; the *libretto* the same; yet, but for my former experience, I should have gone away convinced that neither was worth putting before the public. Where, I asked myself, was the witchery that had held that vast London audience entranced? Where, the nameless enchantment that stole away the souls of the listeners? Where, the breathless eagerness which, all-unconsciously, drew together in enthralled sympathy the hearts of the vast numbers present? Where, the intentness with which this miscellaneous assembly hung upon the lips from which issued these impassioned tones? Where, indeed! . . . Gone, alas!—Dispersed with the vibrations which had won their enthusiastic admiration, uniting in the spontaneous expression of a common sentiment, a multitude,—strangers to each other in all else. Do we sufficiently realize how entirely the work of a composer or a playwright is at the mercy of those to whose interpretation it is entrusted?

Occasionally, it is true, a great actor or a great singer does more for a drama or for a composition than the author himself, who—on such occasions—is astonished at what he conceives to be the surpassing sublimity of his own genius; more often unhappily, a character or a sentiment is marred by the want of appreciation of him who undertakes to illustrate it, and then, the author very well knows to whom the failures in the new version are due.

Lablache's *Baldassare* added its share to the perfection of the *Favorita*, nor could *he* have a recognized successor.

Another of Mario's triumphs, in which his recollected excellence makes him still remain pre-eminent, was that scene which may be characterized as the *clou* of Meyerbeer's *Profeta*—the Coronation-hymn—the magnificent *Re del cielo*, a grand and solemn composition which de-

serves an execution in accord with its conception. There is probably no tenor of the present day who would undertake it without diffidence. In the same composer's *Ugonotti*, the interpolated duet in the fourth Act—which must, nevertheless, be regarded as the gem of that opera—gives scope to a similar manifestation of artistic genius, and was appreciatively understood by Grisi and Mario, who took full advantage of the opportunity it gave them; the *libretto* is not a popular one; it deserves the character it has acquired of being dull, heavy, much too “long drawn out,” (without the “linked sweetness,”) and its redeeming feature may fairly be considered the duet in question; yet was it an after-thought. Strange to say, it was, much to his credit, introduced, not by the composer nor yet by the *librettist*, but by the great French tenor Nourrit, author of both words and music: whether as rendered by Nourrit and Falcon, or by Mario and Grisi, it was always a noble and effective performance; moreover, the opera is incomplete without it, as any one who looks over either the music or the *libretto* will soon discover.

Few scenes containing more pathos than this, have ever been put on the stage; indeed the unpopularity of the opera before it was introduced became almost insurmountable, though Viardot's *Valentina* was admitted to be an admirable rendering: it was greatly approved by the Duke of Wellington, who was much impressed by the fervour she threw into the character, and especially into the phase of it which is brought out in the scene referred to: it was not, however, till Grisi had succeeded in replacing her and in surpassing her in that duet with Mario, that its full beauty was recognized. It was this opera that was selected (Grisi and Mario being cast for it) on the occasion of Her Majesty's grand State visit to Covent Garden.

It may be observed that, exceptional as were Mario's qualifications as a tenor vocalist, he never attained the power so remarkable in both Braham and Rubini of blend-

ing the head- and chest-notes so that the finest ear could not detect where the natural voice merged into the falsetto.

After Grisi and Mario had astonished the public with their unique capacity for presenting them with such manifestations of genius, they remained during the rest of their joint career, true to the precedent they had thus established, and the whole musical world intoxicated by the matchless combination, made deities of them and worshipped at their shrine.

It was of great advantage to Mario in his profession, that he had a practically artistic mind, modelling with taste and skill, and handling both the chisel and the pencil with considerable mastery, and if his appearance on the stage was as refined as his singing and his acting, it was that, having a cultivated eye for form and colour, backed by consummate taste and aided by historical study, he was intolerant of any costume that was not carried out with the most fastidious accuracy. His practice, in fact, was to copy his dress from the work of some great painter of the period, on whose responsibility he was content to rely for its correctness : not a button, nor a loop of cord must be omitted, nor out of its place ; the fit had to be absolutely faultless, the tones of all the colours were to be harmoniously combined, and these as well as the textures, to be such as could have existed in the period whence the exigencies of the character required that the costume should be taken ; so that when he stood on the stage he faithfully represented the external attributes of the impersonation he had assumed ; and thus his figure, when framed within the circle of an opera-glass, suggested some masterly portrait of the Venetian school.

Tamburini was also well versed in the art of costume, and Lablache showed himself most punctilious as to the accuracy of his *travestissements* ; but Mario's exceptional personal advantages were so remarkable, that they could not but call attention to every detail of his dress ; he was always careful too, that the material employed should be of the finest

and richest quality, and probably a consciousness of his personal graces led him to do himself this justice : it has been universally remarked that he was always at his best in the character of a *grand seigneur* ; destiny, as well as nature, had made him one, and none of his rôles became him better than that of *Almaviva*, a name by which he came to be familiarly called among his colleagues : the *sangre azul* unmistakably declared itself when Mario assumed the character of the elegant *Conte*.

As a vocalist, Mario's method was so admirable, that even after his voice failed he was still superior to every other singer. In 1848 the death of Mario's father, by which event he became Marchese di Candia, so far influenced his social ideas that, although fate had decided he should charm the world for yet another twenty years, he entertained serious thoughts of returning to his native Sardinia and there resuming his position, together with the rank and the privileges to which he was entitled.

Being intimate with d'Orsay he consulted him on the subject, both as a friend and as a man of the world ; but the Count's opinion would seem to have been unfavourable to the measure ; or was the Marchese's intention modified by the impending ties which he soon after formed, and which finally bound him to the profession ? The event seems to show that he contented himself with the compensations they offered him, for he settled down with every appearance of domestic happiness at Mulgrave House, Fulham, for the remainder of his operatic career.

During the great tenor's professional life the impression he made upon the fair sex generally was sometimes more profound than he intended or desired ; in the case of one well-known English lady in particular, so troublesome were her attentions that he was obliged to take measures to protect himself from her pursuit, but to little purpose ; her admiration was so irrepressible that although her persistent presents were returned with as polite a

message as the circumstances would permit, she systematically followed him from place to place and notwithstanding the precautions he took of keeping as secret as he was able, the days and hours of his departures and arrivals, by some means she always contrived to turn up, and was constantly to be found in the same train or boat by which he travelled, nor did she ever miss a performance in which he figured.

Ouida, as from genius to genius, presented Mario with an elegant ivory and gold cigar-case of her own design, inscribed with this graceful citation from Dante :

“Pietosi, dissero i dei,—‘Oda la terra una volta
La musica del ciel’, e le labbre toccaro di . . *Mario.*’”

In private life, Mario was as charming as before the public, although quite in a different way : well educated from his youth, he had always mixed much in the world whether at Courts, or in the camp, or in chosen company ; his conversation was bright and humorous, and he had made friends among the most distinguished persons of many nationalities. He and Grisi received with perfect *savoir-vivre*, and always with a geniality which constituted the most winning of welcomes ; his remarks were often quaint and original, and it was amusing to lure him into the subject of superstitions, lucky and unlucky days, omens generally, and especially the “evil eye ;”—what Italian, especially what *Southern* Italian, does not hold a belief in that ? as for the ill-fated number “13” and “Friday,” both Grisi and he, strongly shared the feeling of Dr. Johnson, Byron, Scott, Sheridan, and other great geniuses, and spoke of it as of an established and a justifiable conviction. Nothing would induce Mario to undertake or begin anything on a Friday, and neither he nor Grisi would sit down to table if there were thirteen guests : if his frequent attitude, especially while residing in this country, was that of the *dolce far niente*, it must be admitted he smoked most industriously : it may be said that, except when actually *on* the stage, he was

never to be seen without a cigar between his lips; even during the performance, the instant he could escape to the wings, he would seize the cigar always held ready for him, and smoke, literally till called on again.

Mario's practical love of order, and his habit of being always ready before any one else on all occasions, were proverbial, and his arrangement of his time throughout the day, was a matter of punctilious conscientiousness; conscientious, too, and also most affectionate, he showed himself in his paternal duties, and so careful was he of the morals of his daughters, that among other operas, *Don Giovanni* was one he never allowed them to see.

Mario's ample means justified him in allowing himself the luxury of a second residence, and having visited the Villa Salviati,* near Florence, formerly the princely residence of Arthur Vansittart (nephew and heir to Lord Bexley), he was so charmed with its beauties that he became its purchaser, and laid out upon it large sums in decorations, chiefly of his own designing. Mario had a singularly cultivated judgment, and also a remarkable aptitude for art; his tastes, like his instincts, were those of a gentleman: painting and sculpture being among his personal accomplishments, he not only designed and executed some of the wood-carvings which ornamented his library and other portions of the Villa, but modelled the fountains and statues which adorned his grounds: at this splendid residence he formed collections of books, pictures and curios, kept a suitable establishment, and received in almost regal style: indeed it is difficult to understand how, after being able to keep up so much state, he fell in his closing years into the penury and dependence which it required all his philosophy to endure. He used to admit that during his professional life, his average earnings might be taken at £10,000 a year.

Clever and intelligent, however, as he may have been,

* The Villa Salviati is known as the scene of the *Cybo Mystery*.

Mario was; unhappily, no man of business, and he was reckless to a dangerous degree: much of the trouble he brought on himself, and much of his loss of fortune, was due to his becoming implicated in money transactions on behalf of needy artists and others, who, with utter unscrupulousness, took advantage of his generosity and benevolence, and he lived alas! to learn, that those who come to borrow seldom come to pay, and more generally come to grief, so far therefore, from reciprocating the service they claim, they verify the old adage:—

“If to your ‘friend,’ your money you lend,
You lose your money and *also* your friend;”

however, when in this forlorn condition, we have the consolation of feeling we are not utterly forsaken; for there is something noble in Poverty, which continues faithfully to cling to us when all our friends have deserted us.

Mario’s charmed existence in his Florentine home, with his devoted wife and their beautiful daughters, was probably the most agreeable episode in his life; for here he was appreciated and esteemed by compatriots of his own rank, who admired his social qualifications and enjoyed his company. Although a collector of musical curios, and from his youth a recognized authority on matters of musical lore, after he joined the profession, Mario rarely alluded in any way to music in his private life, rendered sufficiently interesting to himself and to others by his extensive, practical, and accurate knowledge of other subjects.

As a politician he often made shrewd observations showing his acquaintance with the policy of different countries and the profoundness of his reflections on what he knew: his life had been an eventful one, even before he took to the lyric stage, and though part of his youth had been spent in Rome, where he was one of the Pope’s *Guardia Nobile*, some years of his early life had been fertile in military exploits and political adventures. There were certain traits of resemblance in the lives as well as the characters, respectively,

of the Conte di Candia and the Comte d'Orsay; probably, therefore, there was a sympathetic feeling which made them take pleasure in each other's society.

Grisi's homely virtues had so endeared her to her husband and children that her unexpected death (while at Berlin in 1869) left them inconsolable, and Mario never ceased to feel her loss deeply. His daughters having married, he ultimately retired to Rome, where he lived in such reduced circumstances



MARIO.

that an income, for which he was deeply grateful, was made up for him, chiefly by the liberal subscription of the friends he had acquired in England: added to this, he enjoyed only the modest stipend of an official position—that of Inspector of Public Works. Amidst his fallen fortunes, the Marchese di Candia manifested a serenity which won the respect and affection of his family and friends, and even when changed almost beyond recognition he continued to retain a noble presence, nor did he ever lose the gentleness of his

manners nor the winning suavity of his features, rendered venerable by his long, snow-white beard. He died, aged 75, in 1883 of a pulmonary complaint, occasioned by his too rash reliance on a splendid constitution; for, when warned of the probability of increasing a slight chill he had taken, by exposure to the night air, he smiled at the idea of coddling a frame which had resisted the cold of nine Russian winters. How apt we all are, as we grow old, to forget that the icy finger of Age has touched us, though we may not have noticed how effectually its insidious approach has told upon our frame!

Fanny Kemble, in the last series of her Diary, published in 1891, makes a strange statement, on the authority of her sister Adelaide, to the effect that in 1877 Mario (in whose house, says Mrs. Sartorius, she took a very uncomfortable flat for the sake of helping him), had become blind! Mrs. Butler asserts that her sister *must* have known all about him, for she describes him as being constantly in and out of her rooms, and the impression she gives of him is that he passed the life of an idle *flâneur*, whose chief pastime was smoking and telling stories of a character *plus que grivois*; she adds that, "although she does not pity him for having fallen on evil days after having gold literally showered upon him, she cannot withhold her compassion on hearing that his blind old age is passed with a daughter who is unkind to him."

I thought all these statements so extraordinary, that, on my attention being called to them, I wrote to a nephew of my own, long resident in Rome, and who, as a friend of Prince O——, was in a position to verify them. His reply was that, so far from being afflicted with blindness, Mario still practically indulged his fondness for, and proficiency in, sculpture which was the delight of his winter, as gardening of his summer, leisure; that his conversation was as charming as ever—for he could talk more or less instructively about every thing—and that, as throughout his previous life, no one could

be more completely at home whether in art or politics ; that he lived entirely alone, two of his daughters being married and the third not even in Italy.

Mario, he further informed me, spent half the year, not in "a house of his own, part of which was hired by Mrs. Sartorius," but in a flat of the Palazzo on the Corso belonging to the Prince in question, and the other half at a beautiful castello, the property of the same landlord, at Palo, a favourite bathing-place, four and twenty miles from Rome.

When in Rome, Mario often passed an evening at the theatre, but seldom went to the opera. His death made quite a sensation in Rome, and all the celebrities of whatsoever nationality in the Eternal City assisted at the funeral mass performed at his temporary interment in S. Rocco, though no elaborate music accompanied his obsequies, only the grand and simple plain-chant of the Church. Our Queen sent a wreath, which was placed on his coffin, and it is curious, that almost his last words referred to Her Majesty : an English friend of his, holding an official position in Rome, having visited him a few hours before his death, he asked him : "How is the Queen of England ?" He hardly spoke after this.

Mario's end was most edifying, and his confessor came away from his bedside deeply impressed with the condition of his mind. Long will this great artist—for whom Nature had done so much, and who repaid that debt so liberally to Art—be mourned by the votaries of music ; all must feel that it will be long—if ever—before the world will welcome his like.

"Voice of the golden past ! The stage is dark !
The end has come, and slow the curtain falls.
Mario is dead ! . . . It cannot be ; for, hark !
His name is echoed in repeated calls.
Long have we lost him ; but fond memory slips
Back to the days his song so glorified ;
His magic fame falls from a thousand lips !
Music grew dumb the day that Mario died !"

The remains of the great tenor were claimed by the inha-

bitants of his native town, and were removed thither with all the mockery of a costly and pompous ceremony. Ungrateful Cagliari! she had no pity for him in the days of his adversity, but fate is often sarcastic, and was never more ironical than when the absurd authorities of Sardinia's capital turned out to receive the ashes of her neglected son, and to conduct his coffin to the grave.

There can be few surviving opera-*habitués* of that date Jenny Lind. memorable in the annals of Her Majesty's Theatre—1847, who have forgotten the Jenny Lind fever; and fewer still of those at all "behind the scenes" who can even now recall without a smile the managng and manœuvring, the puffing and humbugging practised on the British public to secure their suffrages for the coming wonder.

The gullibility of certain publics is proverbial—" *Crede quod habes et habes!*" We were told Jenny Lind was a phenomenon, and we made up our minds to find her such; we were held in tantalized expectation, while she was selling herself to the highest bidder, making contracts and breaking them, promising and withdrawing herself, partly, we must suppose, *pour se faire désirer*, and partly, probably, to secure the most advantageous terms, all the while the clever and desperate *impresario* was lending her those qualifications which were likely to attract the public, and announcing her advent as a much-to-be-desired *possibility*. A crowned head could not have assumed greater airs, and the negotiation, with its announcements and contradictions in the daily papers, threatened to assume absurd proportions, and indeed had already become ridiculous in the eyes of steady-going, practical people.—"She would," and then "she wouldn't," and "she wouldn't," and then "she would," till the joke was found to be going a little too far, and the elasticity of British patience was becoming over-strained.

It is scarcely possible to condone on the part of a mere singer, such a mode of trifling with public dignity, but what *was* an *impresario* to do in such a fix as that in which

Lumley found himself? The rival house, enriched with all the wealth of talent which he had alienated, was carrying everything before it; the season had already begun; and not the ghost of a programme to lay before his subscribers! *Aux grands maux, les grands remèdes.* Nothing short of a miracle could save the situation, and there was no miracle at hand; there was nothing for it but to invent one, and great credit, we admit, was due to *feu* Lumley's ingenuity in working the slender materials he possessed, with such consummate skill; one cannot help admiring his knowledge of human nature and the use he made of that knowledge, but then Lumley was a solicitor by profession. We are after all only grown-up babies, and we go on all our lives crying for the moon; whatever is difficult of access, is, for that reason, coveted; and so he dangled before us a tinsel bauble till he made us believe it was solid gold, and some of us were so willing to be taken in, that we adopted his view as if hypnotized, and agreed that Jenny Lind, who personated the required prodigy, really must be the wonder of wonders which he had described. At last it was announced that the capricious "nightingale" was caged; the public was appeased, and all went on oiled wheels.

The neatly-contrived succession first of delays and doubts, then of refusals and hesitations and consents, had so worked up expectation that the consequent eager competition for seats necessarily justified a rise in prices; and then of course all fashion became eager for the costly privilege of being able to *say* it had paid so much to be among the favoured few who had had the first sight and hearing of, and could pronounce upon, the long-talked-of marvel. Not only boxes and stalls but the very *pliants* squeezed in between them were at a premium; applicants by the thousand, were sent empty away; it was something to obtain *any* seat at *any* price, a fortnight on; no one will ever know now how much paper there was in the house during that first fortnight, nor what carriages those were that thronged

the length and breadth of the Haymarket on those memorable summer-nights.

It was rather an unwelcome surprise to the audience when they discovered that *Roberto*, in which Jenny Lind insisted on making her *début*, was one of only five operas which constituted her entire *répertoire*, and they saw with disappointment there were not many changes to ring. However, on the following morning the reporters, who had had their cue (and something more), told a flattering tale of unqualified success; it was something to have at last seen this hitherto mysteriously-invisible lady and to be able to assert she was not a myth; for, of her very existence, some had, not unnaturally, begun to doubt. A roaring round of applause startled the propriety of the aristocratic house as soon as the tip of Miss Lind's nose—and a tolerably punchy one it was,—emerged from the *coulisses*, and the *claqueurs* drawing out Leviathan with a hook, raised and maintained the noisy demonstration. The *entrainement* proved as complete as could be desired. Throughout the performance the same system prevailed, so as to justify the report that Jenny Lind was found all she had been represented to be.

It is rare to meet with a just and true appreciation of this Swedish singer, who presented herself, surrounded with so much false glamour, before subscribers whom her *impresario* was bound to compensate for the loss of the glorious *troupe* he had allowed to secede from him. The majority of the public (themselves totally unable to form any judgment in matters of art) were completely caught, and it was only the real *cognoscenti* who discerned where falsehood ended and truth began. The public were entirely guided by "what the papers said next day," like the Irishman who, being asked whether he meant to plead *guilty* or *not guilty*, prudently replied—"Och, thin! How can I tell till I've heard the ividence"?

The "ividence" in this case was whisked up like whipped cream, and public opinion whipped itself up to the same frothy

height; but that did not alter the facts, and there can be no more doubt about Miss Lind's incomparable inferiority to Malibran, Grisi or Persiana, than about her disgraceful breach of faith with the contractor with whom, before she ever heard of Lumley, she had not only entered into, but had signed an engagement.

It was imperative that Lumley should have a "star"—he was always speculating in "stars"—whom he thought he could supplement with half-a-dozen satellites, and so he determined to take advantage of another man's discovery; though in appropriating his neighbour's maid-servant, whom he had begun by coveting, he did not escape a law-suit, nor the payment of £2,500 damages, which the tribunal awarded to the man he had robbed.

When he had secured his prize, the next thing was to make people believe in her, at whatever cost; either the musical world must be gulled, or he must be ruined: *impresarii* cannot afford to be very nice when they find themselves on the horns of such a dilemma—*Va pour le mensonge*; after all, lies are always popular, and the puff preliminary had already created a faction, the partisans of which, piquing themselves on the correctness of their opinion, resolved to shut their ears and eyes, and stick bravely to their colours.

I willingly quote a page I lately met with in a book called *Musical Recollections*, because the writer's judgment of this girl (of whom, as Charles Mathews said: "the more they called her the more she wouldn't come") is absolutely identical with my own.

The fear of law proceedings and of an English prison—the qualms of a guilty conscience—having at length been set at rest, the young person consented to cross the Channel; the Lord Chamberlain was memorialized to obtain permission for the performance of *Roberto*, the lady's *répertoire* being so limited that *Alice* was the best—at the moment, the only—*rôle* she had to offer the public.

“It was,” says this writer,* “on Tuesday, 4th May, 1848, that the long-protracted event came off, causing a *furor* not likely to be forgotten by any one who, like myself, had to undergo the crush of getting within Her Majesty’s Theatre; the public at once went mad about the Swedish *prima donna*, with whom I must confess to have been greatly disappointed—a feeling I was never able to overcome during the whole period of her career, more on account of the fact that (to my ear) she invariably sang sharp, nor can I by any means consider any *prima donna* to be a great *artiste* who was only *positively* successful in four operas—*Roberto*, *La Sonnambula*, *La Figlia del Reggimento*, and *Le Nozze di Figaro*, her *Norma* having been a complete failure. . . . Later on the *Barbiere* was given, the new *prima donna* appearing as *Rosina*, for which she was entirely unsuited.”

A year later, “May 4, 1849, witnessed a repetition of the previous excitement”; Mr. Lumley’s description of the scene † in the Haymarket is graphic: “Again,” he writes: “were struggling crowds at the doors; again were hats doubled up and dresses torn; and again was the throng of coachmen, servants, policemen, mob, the same as before, for the adored Swedish *prima donna* was to make her re-appearance in the part—*Amina* in *La Sonnambula*—which more than all had fascinated her enraptured admirers.” Dr. Cox, on the other hand, continues: “As for the Press generally, no louder praise could have been accorded to her performance. Very few of the London journals were found brave enough to point out her faults: yet *one* ‡ among the then well-known staff of critics defied the opprobrium which was of course immediately raised against his honest dealing: he boldly said that ‘if Mad^{elle}. Lind’s voice had gained power, it had also coarsened since last year’; that ‘her execution

* Dr. Cox, *Musical Recollections*, vol. ii. p. 194.

† *Reminiscences of the Opera*, p. 218.

‡ It scarcely needs to be said that the critique quoted by Dr. Cox is from the *Athenæum* (1848, p. 468) and that Mr. Chorley was the writer. I knew very well Mr. C. L. Gruneisen, whose opinion of Jenny Lind was of the same modified order.

was not careful'; that 'the chamber-scene' (in which the soprano had largely possessed herself of the tenor's part) 'was sung with too unmitigated a *forte*' (as was her wont); that 'the *largo—Ah! non credea* was given with a sensible diminution of its former plaintive delicacy, and the *rondo Ah! non giunge* was more or less out of time throughout.' The writer, after 'hoping for a change for the better,' concludes with the warning that 'if Mad^{elle}. Lind was to maintain her high popularity, her future career craved no ordinary capacity in shaping,' and that 'he waited with some curiosity to see in what direction she was intending to extend her *répertoire* during her second season; seeing that, as yet, it virtually consisted of two operas, *La Sonnambula* and *La Figlia; Roberto* being beyond the immediate resources of the management, and *Norma* an experiment which it would be unwise to repeat.' He waited in vain: Miss Lind was not fated to be heard either as *Desdemona* in Rossini's *Otello* or as *Ninetta* in *La Gazza Ladra*," though these were ostentatiously talked about; however, on Thursday, August 24, it was the same old story, and apparently the famous and "*très capable*" (?) *prima donna* could not be got beyond the *Sonnambula*, though she attempted *Elvira* in the *Puritani* and signally failed. Dr. Cox backs out of any criticism on this performance, simply stating that "he understood it was not successful, but he was not present." I was; and never heard the beautiful *Polacca*, Grisi's triumph, so cruelly murdered, unless by Patti, who always disfigures it beyond recognition.

I have heard the following characteristic trait of Miss Lind. On the occasion of her first rehearsal, Lablache, who happened to be present, paid her the compliment to liken her notes to pearls; the lady, whose opinion of herself was not diminished by the exaggeration with which it had been found necessary to herald her appearance, at once took the great *basso* at his word, and when called on for her *cavatina* prefaced the performance by borrowing his hat; naturally

surprised at the request, but too gallant to hesitate, he complied, having, however, first taken the wise precaution of throwing a silk pocket-handkerchief over his head ; we all know how draughty the stage may sometimes be during the morning practising, and how perilous to a singer ; but Miss Lind, somehow, overlooked that fact ! The song over, Miss Lind returned the borrowed head-gear, which she had held under her chin all the time, and told the mystified owner (whom, again oblivious of circumstances, she inconsiderately desired to kneel ! while he received it) that he might now consider himself a wealthy man, as she had given him a hatful of pearls. Probably there are many who will see humour in this childish proceeding ; if they had seen *bad* humour in Lablache's face, it would not have been surprising ; but nothing could ruffle the great *basso's* temper.

No one would dispute the merits of this artist if her admirers would be content to let her rest upon those as they were, and relinquish their desperate efforts to exalt her so exaggeratedly beyond them ; she had a fresh young voice, clear and even full in part of its compass, but very unequal and she sang not always in time ; her histrionic intelligence was decidedly below the average, her acting was deliberate, correct, conscientious, but so utterly passionless and unpoetical, that it is impossible to conceive how she can ever have excited any enthusiasm. Her movements were the reverse of graceful ; indeed her *physique* was incompatible with grace, though she wore a pleasant and amiable expression ; her complexion was thick, her features thick, her figure thick, her ankles thick, and then she was always Jenny Lind, for she had not the art of merging her own personality in that of the character she represented.

If, however, Jenny Lind's stage-figure was a failure and her acting stiff, cold, and graceless, it is only just to say that all the artistic ability she possessed came out in oratorio, and her recitative manifested the excellent training of Garcia ;

she was probably naturally intelligent and a good example of what she could do in sacred music was afforded by her treatment of the soprano music of the *Messiah*. Some went so far as to say that her rendering of the *Messiah* was a *creation*, but whether they meant this literally, or stated it only for the sake of the joke, I cannot say: certain it is that she succeeded in very effectively dramatizing the opening scene, with its pastoral accessories, phrasing the words with consummate skill and apparently with a thorough comprehension of what she had to describe.

The art of "phrasing," though, so great a help to all music, is too little understood among performers, especially those of our day; vocal artistes are apt to be satisfied with the quality of their voices, and think it much if they devote all their attention to its management while the generality of instrumentalists are too much engrossed with their technique to bestow due study on it. Yet is not the phrasing the principal charm of either, and one that would compensate, as it often has, for an inferior voice or for less elaborate execution? It was this that made Braham's recitative so impressive, and obtained for him the highest distinction above all other artistes in declamation.

So much, however, has been scribbled about the Swedish singer, that no one can possibly want to hear any more: biographical notices *ad nauseam* have appeared, verses have been written in her praise, sermons have been preached in her honour, her virtue has been exalted to the skies, though in this respect she was in no way superior to Catalani,* Persiani, Malibran, Falcon, and a host of others; her charity has been lauded in unmeasured terms, and possibly she may have deserved all that has been said of her; but the

* Catalani was educated in a convent and retained habits of strict but unaffected piety throughout her career. On its being remarked to her that she threw more enthusiasm into her sacred than her profane performances, she exclaimed: "I do like to sing to my God," and she never began any new enterprize, or even went on to the stage, without a preliminary prayer.

absurdity and also the invidiousness of singling her out from among her peers for such excessive encomium can only make enemies and damage her memory.

It is on record,—to cite only a few out of many examples,—that Catalani bestowed generously out of her earnings, and the concerts she organized for charitable objects, alone produced £8,000. She also founded, at Florence, a school for the vocal instruction of young girls, and had the delicate forbearance *not* to call it by her name. Malibran was remarkable for the unostentatious liberality with which she not only contributed to public charities, but assisted brother and sister artistes in distress. Persiani, even in the days of her poverty and when earning her subsistence by lessons, was known all round the Ternes, where she passed the latter part of her life, as “*la dame de charité.*” Rubini, who lived in the simplest but most hospitable way at his beautiful villa at Romano, left three million francs to found a school of singing there.

Déjazet’s kind actions and charitable deeds made her the idol of the Parisian public; and of Grisi’s benevolence I have spoken elsewhere; but none of these, founded schools or hospitals *with their own names* attached to their foundations, and therefore the memory of them is being allowed to pass away by an ungrateful, thoughtless, and unappreciative public.

Having speedily come to the end of her limited capabilities, Jenny Lind prudently quitted the stage, which she certainly never adorned. She did not “take” in Paris, and at last had to fall back upon Barnum! Whether the showman included in his travelling *ménagerie* the “two-headed,” together with the Swedish, “nightingale,” or whether he exhibited them separately, I do not remember; but he sapiently availed himself of Lumley’s experience, and by blowing the trumpet sonorously before producing her, succeeded in netting a little fortune even after he had paid her the large sum at which she valued herself. Indeed, Barnum

used to say "he did not think even *Tom Thumb* had proved a better speculation."

Ludlow relates in his *Experiences of Dramatic Life* how, by the grasping policy of exacting higher terms for a re-engagement, she over-reached herself, and the second *tournee* came to grief. In the diary of Henry Greville, that calm and impartial recorder of contemporary events, we read the following dispassionate statement of this incident of the opera season :

"Jenny Lind has *at last* appeared at the Queen's Theatre. She is decidedly a great artiste, a great musician, and a great executant. Her voice is of a peculiar quality, strong in the upper notes, but a good deal veiled in the rest; she is a good actress *up to a certain point*, but her style of singing is essentially German. Her success is prodigious, and perhaps greater than that of any other singer of our time; but she owes some of this to the skilful manner in which the 'puff preliminary' has been brought into play, and by which public curiosity had been raised and kept up by artificial means. However, she is certainly an artiste of the first class, though not, as is asserted, 'the greatest that ever appeared'; far from it."

That she *was* altogether apathetic and deficient therefore in passion, without which no singer can be an artiste, is borne out by Lord Houghton's remark when speaking of her: "She really dislikes the stage, and doesn't seem to like anything else"—in the next line it is evident he has been mentally comparing her with "Viardot, who," he says, "is *my* genius": and truly the latter was an artiste who, though she did not at first hit it off with the British public, commanded the intense admiration of the cultivated, whether amateur or professional. Equally with her sister, the great Malibran, she had been under the matchless, if somewhat too severe, training of the incomparable Garcia, many of whose pupils have owed the success of their career to the simple fact of having had him for a master.

Pauline Garcia (afterwards married to the *impresario* of the Paris Opera, M. Viardot) had grand capabilities; she was a fine musician and a consummate artist; her voice, rather a contralto than a mezzo-soprano, had the same compass as that of Malibran, comprising three octaves; she was also gifted with indomitable patience and perseverance; unfortunately she had neither her sister's exquisite *physique* nor her fascinating manners.

Pauline
Viardot.

Her qualifications therefore were intrinsically, sufficient to win her a favourable reception, yet for want of the *prestige* which would have made her irresistible, she failed to be appreciated at anything near her real worth; her subsequent greatness did not at that time seem to dawn upon the public; all they thought of was the remembered perfection of her beautiful and lamented sister, and instead of welcoming the promise she manifested, they only noted her inferiority to their ideal of what they expected her to be.

To the honour of the great Duke of Wellington, be it said that, detecting the earnestness of her endeavours to succeed, and feeling for the mortification she must experience at the coldness of her reception, he took every opportunity of applauding her loudly throughout her performances, and showed the niceness of his discrimination in declaring to those around him, that her sister's genius was shared by her, and that a brilliant future was before her. How shrewd his Grace's estimate was, was proved by the event.

No doubt the secret of the indifference at first shown to Madame Viardot, lay in the fact that she was not beautiful; but when she afterwards won the public by her exceptional artistic excellence, this was forgotten, and her powers of stirring them carried the day.

Madame Viardot perhaps committed an error in judgment when she débuted in *Desdemona* at the Paris Opera, not but that she was probably a more able interpreter of the character and of the music than any of her contemporaries, but

it was a part in which Malibran had achieved so triumphant a success that it necessarily provoked a comparison. Fortunately she came brilliantly through the trial, and those critics who heard her, recorded that in several points, though not by any means in all, she excelled her sister, even in her palmiest days, . . . still, she was not Malibran, and had to undergo a comparison which, as regarded grace of manner and beauty of person, could never be in her favour.

A spectator of Pauline Garcia's *début* at the Odéon, in Paris, as *Desdemona*, has left the following account of the event. Pauline had seen Rossini's *Otello* sustained by her father and her matchless sister, whose *chef d'œuvre* was always said to be this character, but the writer in question "has no hesitation in asserting that in several points she gave a deeper expression of pathos to the character than even the divine Malibran." "In the great scene (Act ii.), not only did she master all the passion of the song and give all its splendid passages with a fervour and a brilliancy all her own, but this true artist took every one by surprise with the strength and enthusiasm she had reserved for a most effective *cadenza* in the last *io moriro*, which she produced with a burst as magnificent as any to which her sister had given expression, and which made the critical as well as the general audience feel that a new genius was added to the lyric stage: the whole of the third act was faultless. *Assis' à pie d'un salice* came with a plaintive desolateness intensely touching—the *preghiera* in the true tone of supplication without one solitary ornament—snatches of the *recitative* being uttered with an intensity of expression belonging to the highest order of tragic pathos; not that, taught in schools, but coming direct from the heart.

Pauline Garcia's next appearance was in the *Sonnambula*, in which so undisputed was her success that the *Athenæum* critic pronounced her entitled to a place among the highest modern artistes, and the Duke of Wellington remarked:

“That girl is just as clever as her sister. Nature has not given her an equally brilliant voice, but the impulse to be great is in her, and great she will be, as those who live long enough will see ;” and meeting her at a private party soon after he made a point of addressing her, and in words of so much encouragement that she declared she always after that, sang and acted with increased care and vigilance, that she might justify his generous encomiums.

It has been asserted, and with probability, that Mario owed a great deal of his tardy histrionic excellence to the hints that Viardot—the apt pupil of her father—imparted to him whenever they acted together.

I have seen her make a great success of *Romeo* in the *Montecchi e Capuletti*, and throw a truly martial spirit into her execution of *La tremenda, ultrice spada*, preceded by the soft and placid introduction—*Se Romeo*. Such an artist was sure to make the most of the contrast.

The same may be remarked of *Amina*, in which Persiani alone can be said to have approached Malibran, and yet Pauline Viardot chose it for her *début* in London ; her greatest success, however, was undoubtedly *Fidés*, a character which she assuredly “created.” Grisi did not object to her assuming this part though—or perhaps *because*—she had herself attempted it, but when Pauline was cast for *Valentine*, with Mario as *Raoul*, the *diva's* jealousy was aroused ; she had made an unmistakable hit in that marvellous duet in the fourth act, and she could not endure to see it taken by another, and . . . with Mario, too ! Twice she made him cry off almost at the last moment ; but Viardot was equal to the occasion ; to both defections she diplomatically responded by finding an approved substitute. The first time it was Roger, who, happening to be at home in the part, acquitted himself to the enthusiastic admiration of the house : the second time she had Maralti ready to take Mario's place, and his *Raoul* completely captivated the audience, who began to think they could dispense with

their favourite : his caprice (as they interpreted it) had, in fact, irritated their susceptibilities:—they were not behind the scenes—but Mario never defaulted again.

Bosio.

Among Grisi's successors at Covent Garden was a charming singer, Bosio. She possessed a fine soprano of full compass, and her pure Italian style was much in her favour: still, to succeed Grisi, and in characters that *diva* had created, required singular qualifications, and superior to her contemporaries as Bosio may have been, she did not altogether satisfy a public who had become fastidious under Grisi's perfections; her *début* was consequently an unfortunate one, and her desire to please was chilled by an almost ungracious reception. If not absolutely beautiful, she was elegant and graceful, after the type of Persiani: but although fresh and comparatively young, she failed to win the sympathies of the house. After a little time, however, the public began to warm to the new singer on discovering her capabilities, and she ultimately became a much admired favourite, especially in *Fra Diavolo*, with Gardoni and Ronconi. Her *physique* seemed to undergo a favourable transformation under the smiles of the public, who went so far as to change her name of Bosio into *Beaux yeux* and she occupied the London opera-stage with great success for two seasons. On visiting Spain she took at once with the Madrilenese; from Spain she went to Moscow, where she pleased greatly, and thence to St. Petersburg, but the severity of the climate proved too trying for her Southern constitution, and she succumbed to a pulmonary disease contracted there. The unlooked-for death of this excellent artiste seemed to reveal what an acquisition she had been during the short time she was on the lyric stage, for she was universally regretted.

Piccolomini.

Among those who followed Jenny Lind, one of the most shameless pretenders to art, was Piccolomini, who, wondrous to say, though she had not the shadow of a title to figure in any artistic capacity, unless *perhaps* that of

chorus-singer, actually found admirers—verifying the remark of *Samson* in his *Art théâtral*—

. . . . “Et pour les mauvais acteurs,
Dieu créa le faux goût et les sots spectateurs.”

This ill-qualified young woman, who had about as much right as a street-Punch to appear on the opera-stage, succeeded by sheer impudence; and she knew as well as any one what a couple of humbugs were she and the *impresario* who foisted her on a credulous public.

“One say,” she herself shamelessly remarked: “zat Piccolomini one leetel *farçeuse*; but zey give me moneys and *bouquets* and clap-hands, what for not *be* a leetel *farçeuse*?”

MUSICAL NOTES AND THEIR ECHOES.
THE ITALIAN OPERA.

Of all the arts beneath the heaven
That man has found or God has given,
None draws the soul so sweet away
As music's mighty mystic lay.
Slight emblem, though, of bliss above
It soothes the spirit all to love."

Hogg.

CHAPTER IV.

MUSICAL NOTES AND THEIR ECHOES.

THE ITALIAN OPERA.

"Another page of finished time we turn
And read of fame—terrestrial fame which died."

POLLOCK.

IT is time we spoke of that exceptionally cultivated artiste, Madame Persiani, daughter and pupil of the celebrated Florentine tenor, Tacchi-Nardi, and to whose professional excellences amateurs and colleagues alike bore an admiring testimony. She was not only a finished singer, but a thorough musician, and none who survive to remember her will have forgotten the purity and accuracy of her style and the exquisite delicacy and polish of those unrivalled *floriture*, of which she seemed to possess an endless variety. The luxuriant gush of these ornamentations was only restrained by her extreme good taste and consummate appreciation of art. Persiani's organ was sweet, clear, brilliant, and flexible, and she threw a winning grace over all her performances:—

"That voice was as the warble of a bird,
So soft, so sweet, so delicately clear,
That finer music ne'er was heard;—
The sort of sound we echo with a tear,
Without knowing why; an overpowering tone
Whence melody descends as from a throne."

There was at once a conquest of her hearers in the precision and brilliancy of Persiani's *attaque*; it brought with it the conviction of her entire confidence in her own

powers, and made one feel there could be no possible flaw in her performance of whatever she undertook.

She made her *début* in Paris in *Rosina* in 1837 and bewitched her audience. This remained one of her most successful characters. I cannot remember any *Zerlina* who ever approached her in grace and archness, and in the exquisite music allotted to that charming character by its grand *maestro*, she was in her very element. Nor was her *Carolina*, in the masterpiece of *Cimarosa*, in which she produced a great sensation in Paris, less fascinating; indeed this at once made her reputation as a finished artiste among all the most scrutinizing connoisseurs. Donizetti wrote *Lucia* for her, and she was always recognized mistress of that character which proved so lamentably ill-suited to Jenny Lind; unlike the Swedish singer, Persiani's *répertoire* was voluminous, and the difficulty was to decide in which of her many characters she was most perfect. *Linda*, *Amina*—perhaps above all, *Amina*—*Rosina* with Rode's air in which she surpassed all rivals by the grace, finish and sparkle of her labyrinthine *floriture*,—were triumphs, and soon rendered Persiani indispensable to the completeness of the great Italian Opera troupe which made an epoch in the history of operatic music throughout Europe. This charming soprano continued for some years the delight of Florence, Milan, Rome, Naples, Vienna, Paris, St. Petersburg, and London.

Persiani's private character was honourable and admirable from every point of view: a more devoted daughter, wife, and mother never existed: it was, in fact, her affection for her husband and her faith in his musical genius which led both her and himself into the legal intricacies which ended in the loss of all her laboriously-earned savings. Lumley having failed in his undertaking to produce Signor Persiani's opera, *Il Fantasma*, at Her Majesty's, and having also too long permitted himself to treat with overbearing tyranny the Italian artistes generally, they formed a combination, in



MADAME PERSIANI.

which Persiani and her husband took the leading and responsible part, to start a rival opera-house, and to this new stage all readily seceded, except Lablache.

Unhappily both husband and wife were too guileless for those into whose unscrupulous hands they fell, and being entirely unversed in the legal machinations, the quirks and quibbles in which they became entangled, they were no match for those who cleverly took advantage of them. Many attempts have been made to explain away the dishonesty which wrought this disaster. It is useless to refer to it now that the victims are beyond any further persecution ; but it should serve as a salutary lesson to others not to commit the mistake of entering into a speculative undertaking in a country and with persons of whose ways they are totally ignorant, and should save them from paying equally dearly the penalty of their simplicity and trustfulness. The project was a splendid one, but its results benefited not its promoters but others, who treated them as "strangers, and took them in."

As usual, roguery triumphed, and the discreditable fact remains, that while the knowing ones grew rich, the Persianis left England fleeced of the golden earnings of a persevering professional life, which went to enrich English managers and lawyers. Persiani bore her ruin with heroic equanimity : she retired to a more than modest dwelling at Les Ternes, near Paris, her only son with his young wife sharing this home with his parents, and following his *penchant* for the improvement of musical instruments. As for Persiani, her professional fame and proverbial superiority as a musician, and her reputation for faultless taste and perfect style, readily procured her pupils, both professional and amateur, and she courageously surrendered her energies to teaching, giving as many lessons in the day as her strength would admit. Her household was now reduced to a gardener and two English maids who worshipped her and clung to her in her fallen fortunes : she used to call

them her "perles," and certainly with justice. All her spare time was passed in works of benevolence, and in the neighbourhood she was adored.

One day, in the year 1867, she had just parted with one pupil and was expecting another, when in crossing the room she suddenly fell forward, and was picked up . . . dead ! Her husband and her son's young wife—for, as I have said, they all lived together *en famille*—had gone out for a walk, and the overwhelming grief which followed their return may be imagined.

Mr. Chorley, in a notice of Persiani published in the *Athenæum*, remarks that "Her beautiful *fair* hair was her only personal attraction," and I cannot understand his meaning. Though not "beautiful," she had a particularly sweet face, and whether on or off the stage, an irresistibly winning manner. In *Lucia* and other characters of that class she could draw the sympathies of the whole audience, while the charm, the grace, and arch coquetry of her *Zerlina* or *Rosina* showed her capable of excelling in characters of quite a different order ; but Persiani was universally recognized as absolute mistress of her art, and whatever she may have wanted in beauty was never missed, seeing how entirely she succeeded in idealizing whatever part she undertook : as for the "long fair hair" which charmed Mr. Chorley, it certainly had no existence but in his own imagination, for there can be no doubt it was raven-black, scarcely streaked with white notwithstanding her great sorrows. I possess a beautiful lock of it, sent me by her husband, together with her portrait, after her death, and should be happy to show it to any one who desires to verify my contradiction of Mr. Chorley's statement.

Madame Persiani was singularly bright and intelligent, and possessed fascinating conversational gifts ; no one could be *ennuyé* in her society ; she had travelled much, and had been appreciated everywhere : familiar with Courts and aristocratic circles, where she had been received

with a due recognition of her value, she had the most refined manners, and was always charming in society. She had received valuable gifts from all the crowned heads in Europe, and might have been excusably proud of the collection. Her experiences and adventures, as she used to relate them, would have made a very popular volume; for she had a graphic, picturesque, and striking way of narrating, altogether Italian in its flow. Even the hackneyed event of crossing the Channel she would describe with a degree of imagery which made it into a comic picture, and one was surprised to find that a new interest could be created in so well-worn a subject: she used to declare that though she had crossed so much salt water she knew of no passage more detestable. The boats, however, were undeniably faulty in those days, and no doubt if they and the sea were more of one mind the *trajet* would be a very different affair. But "there it is," she would say, "the horrid thing rocks you with its *roulis* till you make up your mind to that disagreeable movement, then suddenly it changes its *allures* and begins making its irritating 'salutations' in perverse contradiction to all your expectations, till you don't know where you are, and become utterly demoralized. I declare to you—and you know how fond a mother I am—if any one at that moment came and told me 'Alexandre' was drowning, I should be quite capable of exclaiming: '*Laissez moi donc tranquille! Mon Dieu! qu'il noie, et tout le monde avec lui!*'"

When in Seville, Persiani had been vehemently urged to see a bull-fight: her whole nature recoiled from such an exhibition, and she resisted firmly: her Spanish friends, however, whose idea of their national sport was so exalted they thought it must prove a delight to every one, would take no denial; she finally found there was no escape, and reluctantly consented. The experience was an unfortunate one, for it was marked by an incident which has ever since remained memorable in the annals of that essentially

Spanish pastime—the tragic death of that prince of *matadori*, Pepete. The description I once heard her give of this horrifying scene was truly graphic, and it vividly recurred to me when, some years after, I was myself witness of a bull-fight on the same arena.

While on the subject of bull-fights I am tempted to quote About's very telling, impressive, and epitomized description of this barbarous entertainment, in *Maitre Pierre*.

“Il y a,” he says, “des gens que vont jusqu'en Espagne, pour voir vingt hommes, et autant de chevaux, s'acharner contre une malheureuse bête à cornes; on la fatigue en fuyant devant elle, et on lui plante un grand conteau dans l'épaule lorsqu'elle n'en peut plus, et qu'elle demande grâce.”

This is, however, rather hard upon the horses, poor blind-folded wretches! whose fate always seems far more cruel than that of the bull. This latter, though doomed, is at least comparatively a free agent, . . . and though numbers are unfairly against him, he can, as long as he is allowed to live, retort with the means nature has given him; while the miserable horses are goaded on, trembling in every limb, and even after they are gored, go on doing their best to carry their riders away from danger. Moreover, as they lie, torn and mangled, expiring and defenceless on the ground, they are ridden over and trampled on by other horses, and tossed again and again by the bull, as he tears madly round the circus.

Lablache.

Among the gifted Italian Opera troupe none was greater—in every sense of the word—than that universal favourite, from the throne downwards—the great Lablache. His life and his character are full of interest; the former curious in all its details, the latter undeviating in its integrity and generosity, while the gentlemanliness and dignity which seemed part of his nature were never at fault, though whether on or off the stage, he was overflowing with a humour and a drollery which, however, never exceeded the limits of good taste.

The good-humoured *gros de Naples*, whose parentage was English and French though born and bred among the light-hearted sons of Southern Italy, had so entirely acquired their light-hearted characteristics that it never occurred to any one that he could possibly be other than a Neapolitan. Wherever Lablache might be, he always, at once, became the living centre of every social gathering in which he might find himself, and that there was point and true wit in his humour the following anecdote will show :

At the time "General Tom Thumb" was first Barnum-ed to England, Lablache was lodging in the same hotel as that



TOM THUMB.

minimized *lusus Naturæ*. A Russian lady, who was leaving England early next morning and was anxious to see the dwarf, went to the Egyptian Hall one day, but found the *séance* was over : disappointed but undaunted, she discovered his private address, and was directed by a waiter to proceed along the corridor till she reached a door he pointed out. Following these instructions as well as the semi-obscurity permitted, she hazarded a knock at one of the doors. . . . It was opened by an individual of such colossal proportions that the lady would have started back in alarm had not the amiable expression of his face and the graciousness of his

attitude reassured her, as, bowing with gentlemanly ease and politeness :

“ Qu’y a’-t-il pour votre service, Madame ? ” he said.

“ Mais, Monsieur,” she replied : “ je dois m’être mal adressée, et je vous fais mes excuses ; c’est ‘ Tom Thumb ’ que je cherchais à voir.”

“ Eh bien, Madame,” said the giant, with ready aplomb : “ c’est moi,” and he repeated the polite bow.

“ Vous, Monsieur ! comment vous ? C’est qu’on m’avait dit qu’il était si petit si petit.”

“ Cela, Madame,” answered the consummate actor, with the most absolute gravity : “ cela c’est pour le public ; mais quand je rentre chez moi, je me remets à mon aise.”

“ Monsieur, vous m’étonnez de plus en plus ; en m’avait assuré que ‘ Tom Thumb ’ était venu au monde dans ces dimensions là.”

“ Ah, Madame, Madame ! pour le coup vous ne flattez guère le public Anglais ! Comment vous croyez qu’il se rendrait, en foule, pour voir un simple avorton ! Mais, je vous le demande, Madame, de quelle valeur serait l’admiration de tous ces spectateurs si elle ne s’adressait pas au génie qui sait effectuer une transformation surprenante.”

“ Mais oui, Monsieur,” said the lady, completely convinced by the excellent logic as well as by the serious tone of the speaker : “ vous devez avoir raison, c’est bien plus curieux que je n’avais pensé ; je remettrai certainement mon départ pour avoir le plaisir de vous revoir demain sous votre seconde forme.”

The credulous lady probably discovered on the morrow the just sarcasm contained in Lablache’s mystification ; for it was just after Haydon had terminated his existence, in disgust at the false taste and *niaiserie* of the *tout Londres*, who would pass by works of genius and art while rushing to visit a contemptible not to say repulsive deformity.

A droll incident, showing the spontaneity of Lablache’s humour, occurred on the occasion of his having been sent

for by the King of Naples. Awaiting in the ante-room his turn to be admitted into the Royal presence, he perceived a draught in the room, and, fearing the consequences, begged to be allowed to remain covered. A moment or two after, he was beckoned by the usher, and forgetting that he wore his hat, took up one he found near him and with one hat on his head and another in his hand entered the room in which was His Majesty. The King at once perceived the mistake and was so mightily amused at it that he received the great *basso* with a hearty laugh, which so startled the object of it that he soon discovered what had happened, and with his prompt wit exclaimed: "Sire, your Majesty is quite right; *one* hat would be already too much for a fellow who has no head."

To be in Lablache's company was to be always entertained, always cheerful, I may add, always instructed, for he had had much experience of life, and he possessed to a marked extent *le petit mot pour rire*. Yet never did his jokes even verge on the unseemly; it was not that his conversation was interlarded with anecdotes, though when he did relate such, they were as remarkable for their *à propos* as for their humour, but he had acquired the great secret of natural mirth—the birthright of the Neapolitan—and with it the rare and happy faculty of imparting a natural and original tone of drollery to his conversation, as if he saw life only through rose-tinted spectacles and would inspire others with the brightness of his sympathetic gaiety. The charm of Lablache's society consisted, however, in the surprisingly abundant stores he possessed of general information, and especially his knowledge of languages, in the cultivation also of his mind, and the ease and refinement of his manners. Thus, although a musician of first-class attainments, a born actor, and the finest vocalist perhaps ever known,—to those who knew Lablache, even his professional distinction was not his highest attraction. He was essentially a man of honour and integrity and of warm family

affections, and his general *bonhomie* and thoughtful consideration for those about him, deservedly endeared him to all who came within his more intimate circle.

To the Italian troupe, Lablache was invaluable, and Lumley used to say he was always a resource in every emergency.

Lablache, though a thorough Neapolitan, must have become so by early association and long habit, his father having been French and his mother English. His southern



L. LABLACHE.

characteristics were, however, strongly marked: not only did his countenance and his features with their bright mobile expression and winning smile, bespeak the type of that unmistakable nationality—but those telling gestures which may be said to contain a language in themselves without the help of words, had become habitual to him.

I remember a remark of Cardinal Wiseman's on this subject which aptly describes this feature in the Neapolitan race. He said that he had often seen from the window

a group of two or more of these natives, and although quite beyond earshot he could interpret the whole dialogue by watching their quick and expressive movements.

Lablache's tastes, too, partook of the Italian type. He once said to me, in his droll way :

"Faites moi servir un bon *stoffato* et je ferai des bassesses," and truly those who have seen the skill and the *gusto* with which, as *Leporello*, he used to unwind the long pipes of macaroni and drop them down his throat, could never believe he was not to the manner born ; but then what was there that such an actor could not simulate, from the most elevated aspiration to the lowest impulse?

What gradations of feeling and of passion he could display in *Caliban* ! No actor, on any stage, ever impersonated that bizarre character, and the variety of phases it suggested to his clear, intelligent perceptions, as did Lablache. He studied it in its minutest detail and made a masterpiece of the performance: but which of his characters did he *not* deal with in this way? Halévy was a fortunate composer to have his music illustrated by so rare a genius ; but Lablache was nothing if not conscientious, and he put himself face to face with Shakespeare, read and re-read *The Tempest*, and made himself so thoroughly master of the character in its minutest details and its almost imperceptible *nuances* that he altogether set aside the second-hand version, however accurate, of the librettist—Scribe—and gave to the delighted audience so faithful a transcript of the original delineation that had Pope been present he would certainly have told them that the *Caliban* they saw was the self-same creation that had germed in the brain of our great dramatist.

This opera, in two acts, was produced at Her Majesty's on June 14, 1850, with the following cast : *Miranda*, Sontag ; *Ariel*, Carlotta Grisi ; *Fernando*, Gardoni ; *Prospero*, Colini ; and *Caliban*, Lablache, Balfe conducting. The *mise-en-scène* was elaborate, and was considered wonderful *at the time*, though I cannot imagine how it would be received

now! but then what vast and rapid improvements in scenery and scenic adaptations have taken place since then;—more than forty years ago! I particularly remember the more than clumsy way in which the waves behaved, though a most costly mechanism had been employed to work them up. However, it served the purpose, for the perfection of *Caliban* alone, was such that it would have saved any opera, and *The Tempest* was repeated again and again for the sake of that one character.

Sontag, to do her justice, was a charming *Miranda*, and came out well in the fine duet: *S'odio, orror di me non hai. Par'mi d'una voce il murmure.*

On the occasion of Sontag's first appearance in *Miranda*, Scribe, the librettist of this opera, addressed to her husband, Count Rossi, the following well-intentioned lines, but of questionable *poetical* merit:

" C'est toi seul qui pouvais enchaîner, dans son vol,
Ce rossignol divin qui nous charme à l'entendre ;
Car de tout temps ' Rossi,' chacun doit le comprendre,
Fut la moitié de rossignol."

Lablache succeeded better when, inspired by the same music he thus complimented the composer, Halévy:

" Quanto dalle altre, varia
Di Halévy la Tempesta !
Quelle fan piover grandine ;
Oro, fa piover questa."

Lablache's superb rendering of *Caliban* was lauded to the skies by French as well as English critics; and one of the former expatiated admiringly on the genius of an actor who, without losing sight of the consistency of the character he represented, could show himself in the same piece " terrible et grotesque, tour à tour méchant et tendre."

His get-up itself, was a marvel of study and genius, and while wearing it he contrived to excite now the terror, now the mirth of the audience. I have never heard that *Caliban* has been so much as attempted by any other Italian artiste.

Lablache first saw the light at Naples in 1796, and from



LABLACHE AS CALIBAN.

that year, passed all his childhood and his youth under the bright sky of Southern Italy or of Sicily, for Palermo was the

nursing-mother of many great artistes. He did not, however—with other national characteristics which he acquired and which became part of his nature—share the love of these children of the South for the *dolce far niente*, or if he did, with the energy that always distinguished him he rose superior to its temptations, for we cannot trace an hour of his respected life in which he was not up and doing.

Lablache's early history, like that of many who have lived to achieve greatness, gives little indication of the brilliant position he was destined to attain; for he himself seems to have entertained no consciousness of the marvellous gifts with which nature had so richly endowed him. His happy temperament made him feel contented with whatever came in his way, and as a boy the *buffo* stage was his highest ambition. He escaped five times from the control of the *Conservatorio della pietà dei Turchini*, where his parents had placed him, to indulge his passion for this walk of art, engaging himself at small Neapolitan theatres, where he never heeded the paltriness of the emolument.

The last time he got away, the *gendarmes* were called into requisition to pursue him and bring him back. Finally, when not more than sixteen, he entered into an engagement to join an insignificant operatic troupe at Salerno, agreeing to accept fifteen ducats a month—about 1s. 8d. a day—and received a month's pay in advance to clench the bargain. He was delighted with the magnificence of the remuneration, little suspecting the fabulous sums which were subsequently to be laid at his feet.

Fortunately for him, this absurd arrangement was destined not to be carried out. The money he thus became possessed of, seemed to him quite a fortune; and, thinking it would never come to an end, he proceeded to spend it, remembering only when it was nearly exhausted that he had not a *soldo* to take with him to his destination. Luckily the *impresario* had undertaken to convey him thither, but arrived at Salerno, an unforeseen difficulty arose; the manager suddenly dis-

covered the existence of a royal edict which forbade any engagement with a pupil of the *Conservatorio* unless by special authorization, and compliance with certain inconvenient formalities. Furious at his disappointment, he called the young man to him, and told him the contract must be cancelled and the bargain-money returned. Here was a pretty dilemma; the sum re-demanded no longer existed, and the lad was obliged to confess the unwelcome truth: thereupon, the manager, declaring he had been swindled, proceeded to seize the young singer's portmanteau, and was somewhat pacified in finding it tolerably heavy; this mollification, however, was of brief duration, for on breaking it open he found it to contain nothing but bits of wood and brickbats! The fact was that Lablache, unwilling on his arrival among strangers to appear as utterly denuded as he was, had employed this ingenious device to inspire sufficient confidence in some landlord to grant him a lodging till he should have earned a month's pay.

In 1813 Lablache, still pursuing the *buffo* branch of the histrionic profession, concluded an engagement at the little popular theatre of San Carlino, in Naples, and made his *début* there in Fieravanti's *Molinera*. Most English tourists know San Carlino; it is essentially the theatre of the people, an old-standing resort chiefly of *lazzaroni*, but one where no liberties are allowed to be taken with its traditional characteristics. Like the *Théâtre Guignol* of the Lyonnese, it is a *Cosa di Napoli*, and the fact that the character of its performances had always maintained its integrity, has imparted to it a local *prestige* which (*risqués* as are the performances and the jokes) gives it a *cachet* of its own.

The future *primo basso-cantante* was then but at the immature age of seventeen—a child of nature and not a man of business. Though the pay that he earned was ridiculously small, he literally bewitched his audiences; he was received night after night with frantic demonstrations of appreciation, and the delight he gave so reverberated its

joy on himself that he remained perfectly content with the conscientious fulfilment, to the very best of his ability, of what he had undertaken, and indulged no higher aspirations. The little theatre overflowed every night; the admirable singer, who was thus unconsciously wasting upon the populace the best years of his life, became their idol; they would have carried him in triumph through the streets whenever they met him, but for his own modesty, and also but for his, even then, overpowering dimensions; for the Neapolitans are not a colossal race, and by comparison he seemed as much above his fellow-citizens in a physical as in a professional, sense.

How long this lavish abuse of genius might have continued it is difficult to say; but, fortunately for the youthful prodigy, at eighteen, he met, and was charmed by the young Teresa Pinotti, soon to be his intelligent and admirable wife, and in *his* case "marriage" certainly did *not* prove "a failure": she was, though young, a shrewd and clever woman, devoted to her husband and thoroughly conscious of his rare capabilities. She could not tolerate the thought that such talents should be thrown away in shrieking *patois* to a public of *contadini* and *lazzaroni* whom any buffoon would serve to amuse, and she succeeded in persuading him not to renew his contract at *San Carlino*, but to look to a higher position more in accordance with his vast, varied and pre-eminent powers.

The *buffo* scenes traditional to *San Carlino* and dear to the "people" were known to have in a very short time ruined successively each voice that had been employed to enact them, and truly it was pitiable to see this gifted artiste chained to an occupation so immeasurably below his level. He accordingly went to Palermo, where he made an engagement as *primo basso*, his voice being already of so fine a quality that no other recommendation was needed, and here his wife reluctantly consented to let him bind himself for five years; but long before the expiration of that time

his fame had reached Milan, where the manager, only too eager to secure such an addition to his company, engaged him preliminarily, and as soon as his term at Palermo was over he made his *début* at *La Scala* as *Dandini* in the *Cenerentola*. This character was peculiarly adapted to his humorous vein, and Mercadante having heard him, immediately wrote expressly for him the opera of *Elisa e Claudio*.

Notwithstanding however his successes in Northern Italy, Naples still held his heart; but it was to the aristocratic and critical public of *San Carlo*, and not to the debased populace which thronged *San Carlino*, that he was to return. Here he was retained for twelve years; when his unprecedented success in all he undertook culminated in his splendid representation of *Assur*. Never had *Semiramide* been received before as it was on the night of Lablache's *début*; the report of its splendour spread throughout the musical world, and in 1822 the quondam hero of the port-manteau packed with brick-bats, had every manager in Europe at his feet. Ebers, who was then *impresario* of the King's Theatre, was among the rest, but failed to secure this phenomenal artiste; and when in 1824 the Neapolitan engagement closed, it was Vienna that had the good fortune to bring out the great *basso*. There he made a brilliant *début* in the *Matrimonio*,* and never before or since was there such a *Geronimo*, nor can it be possible for those fortunate enough to have been present at his representation

* Cimarosa was a wonderfully fertile composer; in the course of the seventeen years that followed his departure from the *Conservatorio* at Naples he composed seventy operas, besides a prodigious number of other pieces. It is remarkable that so few of them are known; it has been asserted that *Le Astuzie Femminili* is even superior to the *Matrimonio*; this last took so readily with all who heard it that when the composer returned to Naples in 1783 the public insisted that it should be produced at *S. Carlo*, and as soon as it was known, so great was the *furor* it created that it had a run of sixty-seven consecutive nights; to testify his appreciation of the homage paid to his genius, that Cimarosa gave them four fresh operas, which met with a cordial reception.

But the charming composer's greatest triumph seems to have been at Vienna,

of this character, ever to forget that racy and genuine expression of humour.

Lablache had acquired the difficult art of being a consummate *buffo* without ever degenerating into a buffoon, and audiences must have been forcibly struck with this fact when witnessing the admirable by-play he introduced into his *Geronimo*; while, so hearty was his apprehension of the tortuosities of the old man's mind, equally divided between his care for his money-bags and his affection for his daughter, that Tamburini, when performing with him the unrivalled quarrelling duet—*Un segreto d'importanza*—seemed to be additionally inspired with the spirit Lablache brought to bear on the words and music, and it thenceforth became one of those *scenas* which remain for ever impressed on the memory.

Lablache's droll way of turning, with appealing eyes and shrugged shoulders, to the house and introducing some English phrase as if to make the humiliation of which he had become the victim more intelligible to their sympathies, used to win the entire audience, and was so ingeniously employed as to seem a legitimate episode in a *buffo* performance. Her Majesty and the Prince did not disdain to testify their appreciation of his humour by the genuineness of their mirth, and the good old Duke of Cambridge would utter his "trilogistic" eulogies at the top of his voice as if he wished all the world to share his enjoyment; nor was even the Iron Duke unwilling to unbend when such scenes as *Se fiat' in*

where the *Matrimonio* was played before the Emperor Joseph II. in 1792, and so enchanted His Imperial Majesty that he forthwith *encored* the whole opera! one hour being allowed the singers for refreshment and repose. It was performed in Paris in 1801; in London, January 5, 1803. The next time it was given in Vienna was before that handsome and popular monarch, Leopold I., and he expressed his approbation by settling on the composer an annuity of 12,000 florins, and appointing him Maestro di Capella: Cimarosa was then thirty-eight. The *libretto* of the *Matrimonio* was by Bertali; it is a short opera of only two acts, but the spirit that pervades it is well sustained throughout, and every line of the music is bewitching. The plot is taken from Coleman and Garrett's *Clandestine Marriage*.

corp' avet,' avet,' avete, brought out the innate fun of the "Gros de Naples."

When in this scene the *Count* has flatly refused to marry his betrothed, *Elizetta*, how naturally the disappointed father would claim the sympathy of all whom he could enlist in his cause! the helpless expression of inability to cope with the recalcitrant suitor, and the desperation in which he called the house to witness the perverse treatment of which he was the victim, was so earnest and at the same time so irresistibly comical that it entirely excused the departure from rules which no true artist—Labache, therefore, least of all—would have transgressed in a more serious opera.

The acting of this scene, on the contrary, would scarcely have seemed complete without the introduction of *Geronimo's* appeal to the audience, which makes the enormity of the *Conte's* refusal seem absolutely unpardonable.

What an expression that was that he assumed, as, directing his hands towards the offender, he invokes the attention of the house to the situation!

"Sentite, ma sentite quel' che dice quel' birbonaccio!"

"He say he weel not!"

Then resuming his part, as if fortified by general approval, he approaches the *Conte* with ferocious gestures: "Vi dico, si, si, si," stamping his foot at each repetition of the word; with *Tamburini* as the *Conte*, no *buffo* duet could be more spirited, nor did the incomparable pair ever escape without two *encores*.

It was only in 1829 that Lablache's matchless genius had first become known to the British public, and only in 1830 that he made his *début* in Paris, in both cases to enraptured audiences, who wondered how it was possible such a prodigy had not been secured by their respective managers long before: however, from those dates until his final retirement, in 1850, he divided his professional services between the two Capitals, ultimately becoming the greatest ornament of the splendid five who so grandly illustrated the history of the opera.

In their respective artistic careers there are many points of resemblance between Lablache and Braham. The voices of both, as boys, were strikingly beautiful, that of Lablache being as fine in contralto, as was Braham's in soprano, denomination; both were so remarkable in quality that they were clearly distinguishable among all the rest in choirs in which they respectively sung.

The last time Lablache sang in public as a boy, was when he was entrusted with the solos in Mozart's *Requiem*, performed in 1809 on the death of Haydn: the young performer was then thirteen, and his voice barely held out to the end of the function, and it was the last occasion on which it was to be heard as a contralto. From that time till 1816, when, at the age of twenty he manifested the matchless *basso-cantante* which was to make him famous, like Braham during the corresponding period of *his* life, he employed his energies in the acquisition of instrumental skill and became a consummate violoncellist; indeed he played several instruments and his proficiency in all was considerable: his rapidly-acquired mastery of the double bass has remained one of the marvels afforded by the history of music. It is maintained as a fact by the keenest judges that Lablache's voice has never been surpassed in its combination of volume, power, and mellowed sweetness, flexibility, and rapidity; its compass of two octaves extended from E flat below, to E flat above, the bass stave. Its full force, which, however, he rarely put on, was such as literally to overtop the full orchestra and the voices of all the other singers. This however would be nothing were it not that so far from the roaring or bellowing with which others might possibly have accomplished this feat, Lablache could execute it without the smallest detriment to its sweetness.

Braham is cited as having possessed a similar power though his voice was a pure tenor, and it created even more surprise in proportion to the difference in physical dimensions between the two men: both artistes were finished musicians and

finished masters of the difficult art of modulation, of which they knew the indispensable importance, so that even when these stentorian tones dominated the orchestra, they came to the ear with a ringing brilliancy and melody peculiarly their own. It is further notable in comparing these two great singers that the same vocal power which made the walls of the vastest buildings vibrate with its force could be hushed almost to a whisper, when a passage in the music required it, or could execute with the most delicate crispness and rapidity elaborately complicated *fioriture*, and yet remain distinctly audible at the remotest distance.

A droll story is told of Lablache on the occasion of his having to perform the staccato passage in the polacca of the *Puritani*, with Grisi. He had rehearsed it with her so persistently for several consecutive days that it seems to have got on his nerves, for one night during these protracted repetitions he started off into it, during his sleep; the notes he produced were so deep, resounding, clear and bell-like in their tone that they not only aroused his wife, but in the suddenness of the start they gave her, impressed her with the idea that they proceeded from the *tocsin* and were ringing the fire-alarm, and in her fright she rushed to the staircase screaming out "fire" with all her might.

Lablache, whether on or off the stage, carried with grace and dignity his colossal but well-proportioned figure and his shapely head, while in his handsome and genial features, beaming with intelligence and benevolence, could be traced the integrity and good feeling which won universal confidence and esteem. His humour was contagious, and his laugh, which betrayed the sunshine of his disposition, irresistible; but the typical Neapolitan countenance is in itself a revelation of mirth. A French critic described him as possessing "the proportions of a Titan, and the brow of Olympian Jove"; he might have added to these, the lyric attributes of Apollo.

Whether as an actor or a singer he could do whatever
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he pleased, and so versatile were his histrionic gifts that his comic escapades were as natural to him as the stirring pathos or the tragic solemnity of his more serious representations. Like Mario, he knew the importance of *looking* the character he assumed, and that a conscientious make-up ought to be so accurate that the actor could be actually mistaken for the individual he personates. Before appearing on the stage as *Henry VIII. in Anna Bolena*, Lablache paid several visits to the Tower of London accompanied by his *costumier*, and insisted that every detail of that monarch's integuments should be copied with absolute fidelity; this model was helped out with Holbein's portrait of the tyrant king; in like manner, the *Doge* in *Marino Faliero* was taken from a Venetian picture; as for *Falstaff*, he made-up for that doughty knight without any extraneous padding.

After the type of Garrick, Lablache was so entirely at home, whether in tragedy or comedy, that few would be able to decide whether they admired him more in *Orovese* or *Leporello*; *Assur* or *Dulcamara*; the *Podestà* or *Dandini*; *Giorgio* or *Geronimo*; where all were so excellent it seems invidious to name a preference; though, to mention his perhaps rarest effort, we must make an exception of his *Caliban* as a work of art entirely *sui generis*.

The histrionic element in Lablache's professional character no doubt went far in suggesting to the other Italian vocalists how much their art would be enhanced by the addition of action to their singing; but it was a long time before they caught the inspiration, and even then, none ever came up to the great originator of this new departure.

Operas, the *libretti* and music of which are of the comic cast, were those which, with the other singers, seemed to lend themselves the most successfully to dramatic action; but as far as Lablache was concerned he had always acted with absolute spontaneity, because it was natural to him to throw himself into his part and to identify himself for the time being, with the man he represented, no

matter what his character — imposingly grand in a serious, and irresistibly amusing in a humorous one. His *Bartolo* in Rossini's *Barbiere* was an absolute creation of his own, transforming a part intended to be altogether subordinate into the *clou* of the opera. Both the composer and the librettist were struck with wonder at a success which placed the *Barbiere* (till then an inadequately-appreciated work) among the most popular operas of its time, and of our own. Take him in the music-lesson scene where, already suspicious of the strange singing-master, he dodges all the movements of *Figaro*, who while shaving him, persists in trying to screen the lovers from his *surveillance*: again,—when, the lesson over, the piano has to be removed—he introduces a by-play suggested by his own personal dimensions and corresponding strength, eliciting the most unmistakable evidences of appreciation from every corner of the house. Lablache knew how to improvise these traits of humour, especially in an opera *buffa*, without compromising the dignity of his character.

A similar incident introduced into *Don Giovanni* in the scene in which *Mazetto* is nervously hovering round his *fiancée* to intercept the *Don's* dangerous attentions. *Leporello*, zealous in his master's interests and finding him annoyed by the pertinacious intervention of the peasant bridegroom, simply picks him up and carries him away from the stage. When I saw this feat, *Mazetto* was acted by a tall, powerful fellow, Guibilei by name, not easily removable. The unrolling of the formidable *catalogo* of the *Don's amourettes* afforded a fine opportunity of which Lablache knew how to avail himself, and the gesture with which he turned to the house, as he repeated the “mille e tre” as forming the Spanish contingent alone, contained an inimitable mixture of *naïf* surprise and terror at the enormity of his reckless master's amorous aberrations. The whole play of this soliloquy supplied as fine a sample of comic acting as has ever been seen on the stage.

One night, on the occasion of Puzzi's benefit, a scared cat—in fact, the well-known black Opera-house cat—perhaps harmless and necessary—suddenly darted from the wings, and, terrified by the glare of the footlights, after wheeling about in a most eccentric way, dashed off the stage by the opposite slips. The improvised scene tickled the house, which, moved to hilarity, immediately started a round of applause with cries of "Bravo pussy!" Lablache was on the stage, and, taking advantage of the opportunity, joined in the clapping of hands, at the same time altering the cry to "Bravo Puzzi!" The audience took up the idea, and made a general call for the *bénéficiaire*, who, responding to the appeal, appeared on the stage carrying his French horn, and with graceful amiability treated his patrons to one of those delicious solos so universally admired. It was the beautiful tenor air from the *Puritani*—*A te, o cara!*—that he selected, with the full orchestral accompaniment; one might have mistaken these delicate notes, produced as they were with intense feeling, for the human voice itself. The escapade of the black cat had produced as much merriment in the Royal box as in any other part of the house, and its unlooked-for result was apparently as warmly appreciated by Her Majesty and the Prince Consort as by any other members of the audience.

In testimony to the versatility of Lablache's gifts, I may mention that in addition to all those capabilities in which he excelled, he turned whistling into a fine art; one day after dining at my house he seated himself at the piano, played a few chords, and then introduced a Neapolitan air, but by what means he produced the notes we were at a loss to understand, supposing it to be by the employment of some novel and ingenious instrument made to imitate the most bird-like tones; and yet, every now and then, as the expression required it, they seemed to evince a power and volume which partook of the richness of the human voice. How surprised we all were when we found that this melo-

dious and effective performance was mere whistling ! As if to show us what could be produced by this simple means, the great singer changed to Rode's air with its well-known elaborated variations. Nicholson's "double-tonguing" on the flute, which held his hearers breathless, was not more rapid in its execution, nor more crisp and clear in its finish : the great *basso* modulated his tones and kept them as completely under command as if he produced them with his voice.

Lablache's Royal pupil, the Queen of England, always treated him with the most cordial and considerate appreciation, while on his part he became warmly attached to Her Majesty, and not one of her own subjects was more indignant than he, when, on May 19, 1849, Oxford, the would-be regicide, perpetrated his cowardly outrage upon our Sovereign.*

"Ah! Le malheureux," exclaimed Lablache, when he heard of it : "il faudrait *commencer* par le faire pendre."

It happened to be an opera night and the house was full. As soon as the news of the dastardly attempt reached the Haymarket the performance was suddenly suspended, the curtain was dropped before the puzzled audience, singularly perturbed by so unusual a proceeding ; but the manager appeared promptly on the stage and announced the momentous news, which was followed by a universal shout of horror and consternation.

The orchestra immediately struck up the National Anthem, and after a short pause, when the curtain rose again, the whole opera troupe was on the stage. Lablache and Persiani, who were not in the cast that night, were dining at the house of Mr. Wm. Pitt Byrne, whence they promptly arrived. The five great vocalists stood in a line before the footlights, the whole *personnel* filling up the background

* I saw Oxford in Bedlam, where he was confined twenty years, and whatever may have been his condition at the time of his stupid freak worthy of the imagination of a pot-boy, he certainly was sane enough *then*. I have been told he took to teaching himself French, and in two years' time considered himself so fully cognizant of that language that he proceeded to turn his attention to Italian.

and forming the chorus, to which all the audience added their united voices, all standing; each stanza being sung as a solo by the five great singers in succession. There are few musical compositions capable of producing a more imposing effect than that grand and solemn hymn, especially when executed by a full orchestra, and while singers—and *such* singers—and audience were under the immediate influence of the startling incident that had called for it.

Effective at all times, there are occasions which make it additionally impressive; never, perhaps, was it more inspiring than when during the earlier years of Her Majesty's reign it was performed on a Birthday night, every surrounding circumstance tending to enhance its effect.

The Opera-house on such a night must have struck all, and especially foreigners, with singular admiration. The Queen and Prince Consort, attended by their suite, occupying the Royal box in full dress, the Peeresses and other ladies who had attended the Birthday drawing-room retaining their plumes and diamonds, and the men their evening dress, with their stars, ribbons, and decorations, while the youth, grace and beauty of England's daughters were seen to the best advantage; then the splendid orchestra of that day struck up the thrilling strains of the National Anthem, the whole assembly rising simultaneously to their feet, and every voice joining in the chorus. There was a majestic awe in the hushed stillness that waited for those five matchless voices which in succession took up the solos, and it would have been difficult for even a red Republican to remain disloyal during that soul-stirring performance.

Lablache brought his professional career to a close in 1850, and withdrew to Paris, remaining for some time at his house, at Maisons-Lafitte; but Naples still continued to attract him, and he went to winter at Posilippo. Here he found the air too keen for the state of his lungs, and hastened to the beloved city itself, but even his native air failed to restore his broken health, and, surrounded by his affectionate family

and friends who loved and venerated him, he died on January 29, 1858, aged only sixty-two. His remains were carried to Maisons-Lafitte, though the funeral service was performed at Naples, Tamburini coming out of his retirement to sing the *Requiem*.

This great artiste was honoured by the notice of many crowned heads. He used to show with emotion the splendid gifts he received from the various Sovereigns of Europe. The Emperor Alexander, who had treated him with great favour at St. Petersburg, once met him at one of the German watering-places, and there decorated him with his own hand, placing on his breast the insignia of a Russian order. After Lablache's first season in Vienna, public enthusiasm rose to such a pitch, that a gold medal was struck expressly for him, and was presented to him publicly.

The disappearance of this mighty man of song, brings to a close the history of that dazzling group which for a few too brief seasons became the luminaries of the musical horizon: their remembered brilliancy has served to make the darkness that has succeeded it yet more obscure; for what have we had since but the vain struggle of a few feeble rays—by some, mis-called “stars,” yet not even of the sixteenth magnitude—helped out by an *entourage* of imperceptibles? Who will venture to say whether the future has in store any attempt to reintegrate Italian music? but none surely will be sanguine enough to hope it can ever be restored to us under such auspices as attended it when it charmed the middle of the century. Scarcely, since that memorable period, has there been heard a solitary Italian voice; and although Sweden, Germany, Russia, Hungary, and Spain, and the vast Continent of America, have been ransacked, not so much as an asteroid has been discovered. Indeed, it is only after successive years of failure that we have learned to appreciate the perspicacity of *impresarii* who knew how to find and to bring together such artistes as those we had the good

fortune then to enjoy. Italians, however, are hopeful, and consider, as regards composers, the youthful Mascagni, "the coming man, who is to send German opera-music back into its secondary place."

Chorley has left the following discriminating, and also interesting, appreciation of that universal favourite, dear old Lablache. He thus wrote in *The Athenæum* in 1845:—

" . . . Lablache made his first appearance in England about sixteen years ago, and from that time, with the exception of one year in St. Petersburg, has returned every spring with augmented favouritism ; . . . indeed, if the management for a moment contemplated parting with him, they dare not attempt it ; but there could be no danger of this ; his place is not to be supplied. Independent of his faculties as an actor and a singer, so great a delight does he take in his art, that he is ready to accept the most insignificant characters. Other artistes cannot afford to do this ; but with Lablache it was always enough for him to undertake a small part to *make* it an important one.

" Assign to Lablache the meanest character in an opera, let him have the slightest foundation on which to build, and he will erect a superstructure which shall, like his own stature, dominate all the others. Lablache could never let himself down to the level of any character ; he draws up the character to his own elevation.

" No singer, therefore, within our recollection has undertaken such a variety of parts ; we find him in every possible grade of representation. From the loftiest tragedy to the most burlesque comedy he is equally great and efficient. From *Brabantio* to *Don Pasquale*, from *Marino Faliero* to *Dandini*, through all the gradations of passion and humour, he exhibits a profound insight into humanity, and, with the finest dramatic artifice and discernment, seizes on the most salient points, and strikes them out into bold relief, giving life and verisimilitude to his abstractions. His tragedy is high-toned, calm, dignified, and expressive, and at times fraught with most truthful energy. His imprecation on his daughter in *Otello* has been pronounced equal in power and effect to anything known on any stage. In comedy the whole artillery of his forces is called into requisition. ' His comedy is *instinct*, his tragedy is *skill*.' He fills up the stage with his acting, no less than with his surpassing voice and size ; everything around him becomes subsidiary. In comedy he is the sun of humour, about which the other actors as planets perform their revolutions, deriving from him their light and heat. He is the centre of gravity that attracts all the laughing humours from his auditory. We use the word gravity advisedly, for in his most whimsical performances his countenance is as grave as that of a mid-day owl. While all around are convulsed, his face remains as composed as that of a Chinese mandarin or of a Spanish hidalgo sitting for a genealogical portrait.

" His comedy is not effervescent and evanescent like champagne ; it partakes more of the flavour and body of Tokay. You may sip it ; the smallest taste is palatable. With the assumed stolidity of Liston he combines the rich and subtle raciness of Downton.

" Lablache's voice is an organ of unexampled power. No description could convey any notion of its volume and sound : he is an ophicleide among singers. It is a fact that when the entire opera band is playing, and the entire chorus singing,

forte, Lablache's voice is heard above the combined sound as distinctly as a trumpet is heard among violins—a very Stentor of vocalists.

“When he sings he arouses the audience as the bugle, the war-horse; with this prodigious vehicle of sound, his singing is also capable of the utmost softness and expression, for he is thorough master of his art, and manages his *chiar' oscuro* with rare judgment and skill. Lablache being a thorough musician, no artist on the stage excels him in the knowledge of the resources and appliances of his art. He has written a work on the principles of singing, and was chosen some years since as the vocal instructor of Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

“Lablache is as great in person as he is in fame. Over six feet high and well proportioned, his figure is portly and commanding, and his head is one of the finest that ever decorated a human body.”

It is interesting to recall the part so long, so laboriously, ^{Puzzi.} and so efficiently taken by Signor Puzzi in the fortunes of the Italian Opera in London: those fortunes had their lights and shadows, their periods of gloom and their epochs of glory, and Puzzi's relations with both, were as intimate as his services were valuable. As a child he had spontaneously taken up that difficult instrument, the *cornet à pistons*, and came out as an infant prodigy. Having when still very young been taken to Paris, he was noticed as he played in the orchestra at a grand concert, by the First Consul, who sent for him and testified his admiration for his rare genius by appointing him horn-player in his private band. In their moments of *délassement*, Napoleon and Josephine would send for the little fellow and make him play a solo for their delectation. One day after he had been thus performing, *déjeuner* was announced, when Napoleon said in a paternal tone: “Allons, petit, viens déjeuner,” and leading him in, seated him at table, next to himself: a rice-pudding being served, the First Consul asked him how he liked it. The boy, naturally feeling shy in such a position, incautiously answered that it was excellent: but whenever after that he ate at Napoleon's table, the inevitable rice-pudding made its appearance, Napoleon, whether in a spirit of bonhomie or of satire, always addressing him with: “Voilà, petit bonhomme, ton plat de prédilection.”

The Duke of Wellington, who heard Puzzi in Paris in 1815, was much struck with his playing, and after compli-

menting him on it, asked him why he did not come to London: "What should I do in London, Monseigneur?" said the boy: "I know no one there."

"Well said," answered the Duke: "If that is your reason, come to London, find out Apsley House, and ask for the Duke of Wellington."

Young Puzzi was too clever a boy to neglect such an invitation; he came over in 1816, and may therefore fairly be called the *Doyen* of all the Italian artistes in London. Having reached Dover, the Custom-house officers pounced upon and detained the box containing his instrument; the young musician therefore arrived at the Duke's residence empty-handed, and when, after a hearty welcome from His Grace, the latter desired him to exhibit his talent, he was fain to shrug his shoulders and explain that if *he* were there, his horn was not. "How is that?" said the Duke, mystified. The misadventure was explained, and the "F. M." immediately wrote to the Custom-house authorities to forward the detained instrument on, by the first possible opportunity.

Puzzi's fine talent attracted similar notice from another high quarter, when after playing in Paris before the Royal family, Louis Philippe sent for him, previously to his return to England, and presented him with a very fine French horn inscribed as his gift.

Puzzi was not only an admirable artiste, and an unrivalled performer on an instrument to which he imparted intense expression, and which he played with tasteful facility, but he was a highly cultivated musician, on whose capacity for judging the qualities of a *débutant* or *débutante* the utmost reliance could be placed. To his skill also were confided, —not merely by the managers of the Italian opera, but also by private and professional concert-givers,—the special musical arrangements, whether of the stage or the platform. Puzzi's value in the musical world was therefore considerable, especially as, although one of the most amiable of men,

his principles were as incorruptible as his judgment was appreciative.

It was in 1826 that Puzzi was despatched to Florence by the London manager to hear and report on the qualifications of a certain Signora Tosi, whose fame—whether there or at Milan—had reached our shores. He was empowered to secure her services at once as *prima donna*, provided she satisfied his fastidious taste. Arrived there, he was assured there must be some grave error; that the Signora Tosi would never come up to the requirements of the English public, and that he should go on to Turin and hear the Signorina Toso, with whom he would certainly be delighted. Puzzi accordingly made his way to that city, and learning that the Signorina would sing that evening at the opera, he went, he heard, *she* conquered. Puzzi was charmed. The lady had everything in her favour—youth, beauty, grace; a simple and natural, yet impassioned, style; a pure method and brilliant vocalization; a fine, clear, fresh, and melodious *mezzo-soprano* voice of considerable power. Without hesitation he engaged the Signorina Toso, and her advent in February, 1827, is thus mentioned in the diary of that severe and uncompromising musical critic, Lord Mount-Edgumbe:—

“Caradori has been superseded by Signorina Giacinta Toso, who has the recommendation of not only a brilliant voice, but of extraordinary beauty. She is extremely young, consequently she cannot yet be a finished *prima donna*, whatever promise of future excellence she may hold out. Signorina Toso’s voice is one of great compass; her upper notes are clear and full, and the lower, partake of the richness of a *mezzo-soprano*.” “She soon,” he continues, “married Puzzi, the celebrated French horn player.”

In this same diary we read an entry to the effect that “for Madame Toso-Puzzi’s benefit Mercadante’s opera of *Didone* was played, the *beneficiaire* taking the part of *Enea*, and Madame Pasta that of *Didone*.”

What became of Signora Tosi, "whose fame had reached England," and who was supposed worthy of a special mission, but apparently never knew it, we learn some few years later, when she came over, uninvited, in search of an engagement, and professionally proved an utter failure.

Lord Mount-Edgcombe's meagre account of the early days of Madame Toso-Puzzi's career does not contain the sad story of the accident which brought her artiste-life to a premature close. This is its detail, as she related it to me not very long before her death, which occurred in the summer of 1889:—

Artistes, even of merit, were not remunerated in 1827 as liberally as in 1891, and the family of this gifted young lady was not rich. Signorina Toso did not keep her carriage—far better economy would it have been if she had; but who can tell what is in the mind of the gods? When leaving the opera one night, after a most successful performance, she found the rain coming down heavily, and had to wait in the draughty entrance of the theatre till a coach could be drawn up. The pavement was wet—carriage-rollers were an unthought-of luxury—the *prima donna* still wore her thin satin shoes; she caught a violent cold, which shortly turned to rheumatic fever, and her engagement necessarily came to an end. Her illness was apparently misapprehended by the homœopathic doctor who attended her, and after the lapse of as much as six months, she had not recovered even her speaking-voice. Alas! her career was closed, and she never sang again.

Madame Puzzi's palmy days were somewhat before my time, so that I never heard her sing in public; there are, however, singers like Tom Moore and Sam Lover who are such thorough musicians, that they can charm their hearers *without* a voice and I do not remember to have ever heard anything more expressive and more pathetic than Madame Puzzi's rendering of *Una furtiva lagrima*, one evening, when, after dining at our house and the conversation

happening to turn on that beautiful melody, she sang it for us, as she sat on the sofa, and without any accompaniment. After she ceased to sing in public she was eagerly sought as an instructress to the daughters of our English nobility, her method being admirable. Signor Puzzi's health required that he should pass his latter years in his native Italy, whither one of his daughters always accompanied him; the others, who were also models of filial devotedness, remained in England with their mother, who long survived her husband. She continued to hold a highly respected position in the profession, and to be on the most agreeable, not to say affectionate, terms with her pupils, mostly amateurs from among "the upper ten."

All members of the musical profession manifested a tender regard for Madame Puzzi, and were always ready to appear at her annual and other concerts. To the end of her life her name among artistes was always "Maman Puzzi," for truly she was always ready to mother and to help on young *débutants* of either sex, and many were those who went to take her counsel in their difficulties. Fanny Puzzi, her third daughter, became an instructress of recognized merit, under her mother's excellent tuition: like her, she is a thorough musician, and has composed many much-admired songs. Her voice is a very sweet and flexible soprano, and has attained a high degree of perfection in execution and finish.

At Puzzi's house—then in Jermyn Street—the musical gatherings were necessarily interesting: one met there, not only all the vocal and instrumental celebrities themselves, but an agreeable sprinkling of their patrons, and of magnates of the press. That severe critic, Lord Mount-Edgumbe, was a kind friend of the Puzzis, Lord Burghersh, afterward Earl of Westmorland, the Marquis of Douro,* whose

* There was a very marked musical talent in the Wellesley family. The Marquis of Douro's grandfather, Lord Mornington, had great natural gifts in music, and has left many admired compositions; he also sang remarkably well, and his

knowledge of music entitled him to hold his place among connoisseurs, Lord Wilton, Sir John Campbell, Sir Thomas Webb, and many other distinguished judges frequented Puzzi's house.

Thither flocked the whole Italian troupe and other musicians of that nationality, thoroughly enjoying the *sans gêne* of this genial and artistic atmosphere, and very charming they were; on the pleasantest terms with each other and with their lively and amiable hosts, to whom they seemed only too pleased to offer the homage of their talents. Costa was of course their accompanier and accompanist, and they sung with such good-humoured willingness that they seemed really to share the pleasure they gave.

"38, Jermyn Street" might have been styled "the house of call" for all the musical talent in London, for it was at Puzzi's door that first knocked every artiste who came to the Metropolis. Puzzi's recommendation was in fact a passport to the consideration of an *impresario*, and few succeeded in obtaining engagements unless their gifts and capabilities were backed and warranted by the opinion of either Signor or Signora Puzzi.

Gardoni.

How well I remember meeting at their house at one of these brilliant musical gatherings the (afterwards favourite) young tenor, Italo Gardoni, already the *enfant gâté* of the Parisian public, who went so far as to put him on the same platform, in their estimation, with Mario himself. Gardoni came therefore with all the prestige of having been *primo tenore assoluto* in Paris, where he was the idol of the *habitués*.

He arrived in England only just as Rubini had made up his mind to withdraw, though still in the very apogee

scholarly and distinguished son, the Marquis of Wellesley, was proficient in music, as in so many other branches of knowledge. He was even asked by Pitt to write a ballad—music and words, and on his compliance it was sung at an entertainment given to the venerable Lord Duncan, in October, 1797, in commemoration of the victory of Camperdown, and was received with general enthusiasm.

of popular adoration: he had always generously, and without any jealous reticence, put forward the new tenor, commending Gardoni's youth and grace, his elegant person, his fresh and beautiful voice, and his more modern style; and truly Gardoni, as I remember him that night, had everything in his favour, . . . but Rubini! *who* could ever hope to replace *him*? Gardoni knew as well as any one that even with all these rare advantages he was no *substitute* for him though he might be a *successor*.

Rubini was an undeniable foil to Gardoni in the matter of *physique*, for he was winningly handsome—nay, more than handsome: the French would have described him as *sympathique*, the English, as “interesting.” There was a delicacy in his slight, supple figure, graceful attitude, “chiselled” features, and almost girlish complexion. A simplicity which was not without its coquetry, characterized his attire, which harmonized with his beardless face and supple figure. His black watered-silk waistcoat, of course *en cœur*, was buttoned with three fine turquoises, and three studs of the same stones fastened his spotless shirt-front; the little bit of colour told with artistic effect, and helped to explain the amount of study which betrayed itself in the accurate arrangement of his stage costumes.

At Puzzi's request he sang the beautiful tenor *barcarola* from Donizetti's *Marino Faliero*—*Or' che in ciel'*, with a sweetness, ease, and finish which, together with the exquisite *timbre* of his voice, charmed every one. In fact, the only drawback to Gardoni's singing was its want of power; delicious in a room, it did not adequately fill a large theatre.

I have often remarked, in a society consisting chiefly of artistes, how telling is the semi-suppressed murmur with which they notify their approval of a performance they seem to be judging with critical acumen: it has the effect of an official *imprimatur*, and in the case of this *tenorino* as yet untried by an English audience, the half-reserved notification

of professional admiration—only waiting for the end to declare itself—seemed to enhance the value of his qualifications. This was, in fact, Gardoni's private professional *début*, and he went through the ordeal triumphantly.

Gardoni was born at Parma in 1820 and came to London in 1847. It was an advantageous moment, for Lumley was in terrible straits, as Mario had followed Grisi along with the cream of the troupe, and though he had patched up his company with a few inferior singers whom he hoped to palm off on the subscribers by dint of puffing—a tenor, he was bound to supply. Gardoni was still under an engagement with the Paris *impresario*, but so desperate was Lumley's position that he had to submit to any terms, and it cost him 60,000 francs to rescind this engagement and secure Gardoni.

Notwithstanding the young tenor's success in Paris, it was necessarily a severe trial to satisfy ears accustomed to the finished perfection, splendid style, and matchless voice of Rubini, but the English public well knew it would have to make allowances for *any* successor of this unique artiste, and they allowed Gardoni the full meed of his merits, which in themselves were considerable, so that he won and maintained a very honourable *proximè accessit*.

Notwithstanding this, it is quite true that Gardoni did not do justice to the gifts nature had bestowed on him ; the fact being that he was too much praised and too much admired in the earlier part of his career by the Parisian musical world and the Paris Press, and he became idle and indifferent. In that modern Capua, those who would succeed in *any* profession must exercise both energy and self-command, resolving to steadily pursue, without turning to the right or to the left, the study and practice which can alone make them great. Gardoni had received an excellent education, and was a man of much cultivation : he owed his musical training to the severe teaching of de Cesari, and the facility with which he followed it, to Nature. Théophile

Gautier was one of those who helped to spoil him, for he could not conceal the admiration he felt whether for his voice and his accomplishments or for his *physique*, and he used to impress on the Paris public his exalted opinion of Gardoni's value.

It was as *Bothwell* in *Marie Stuart* that he made his *début* in Paris before an enthusiastic audience, and in the following year, in Berlin, he took *Rodrigo* to Rubini's *Otello*. He may be said to have created the tenor *rôle* in Verdi's *I Masnadieri*, but his *répertoire* was voluminous.

One night, in Paris, he was singing the beautiful serenade in *Don Pasquale*, when an occupant of an orchestra stall, apparently a fervent admirer of the young tenor, was so carried away by his approval as to be betrayed into following the air with his voice: his next neighbour, somewhat disgusted with the proceeding, tried to hint his annoyance by fidgety movements which at length attracted the attention of the musical amateur, who turned and asked him if he were ill.

"Ce n'est pas cela, monsieur," he replied: "c'est cet animal de Gardoni qui m'empêche de vous entendre."

On the 26th of May of the year in which he arrived in London he played *Edgardo* to the *Lucia* of Jenny Lind—a character in which she might *perhaps* satisfy those who had never heard Persiani execute it. Gardoni, whose experience in the music of that Opera, and whose *Edgardo*, considered perfection in Paris, enabled him to make it the leading character whenever he performed it, was—to the astonishment, annoyance, and indignation of the respectable part of the audience—coarsely interrupted in the midst of his first *cavatina* by a cry from the gallery of "Sims Reeves," immediately taken up by similar cat-calls from confederates located *ad hoc* in various parts of the house. As, however, with becoming dignity, he courageously proceeded, disregarding the disgraceful outrage, the partisans of the English singer raised sufficient

din to overtop the young Italian's voice. However, they had it all to themselves; no respectable persons, of course, took any part in such a cabal; and if the English tenor had any personal wish to supplant the prepossessing young *débutant*, his "friends" (?) went to work very clumsily; for the result of the disturbance they had the bad taste to make was, that the obloquy fell back on the artiste they represented, and rendered more than remote, any chance he might have had of success. It was the English tenor's name that was now hissed, and the uproar took sufficient proportions to require the manager's intervention.

Order having been restored, the opera proceeded, but much disgust was felt at the stupid and unmannerly interruption. Gardoni could hardly have resented this malicious demonstration—a weak vengeance from one tenor upon another who had obtained a coveted engagement—nor could he take offence at the method in which it was imposed, for there could be no possible rivalry between the Sims Reeves—even of *that* day—and the young, elegant and fresh-voiced Italian, whose obvious superiority drew heartily to him the sympathies of the public.

Gardoni married Tamburini's eldest daughter, by whom he had two daughters, both now well married, and the two families lived together in the most delightful harmony at Bellevue; he did not long survive his retirement, which took place in 1874.

Tamberlik.

Tamberlik was an admired tenor of the "*robusto*" type, who readily took with the English public, though his organ showed little pretension to that bewitching variant which adds to it so much value; still there was considerable charm about its tones, and his style was pure and precise: doubts, however, were expressed as to whether the voice was a tenor by nature or by art, and this was the more difficult to determine, because when first heard in London it was by no means in its *première jeunesse*, and there could be no mistake

as to its lack of freshness. However, it may be said of tenors as of "friends," that,

"They grow not thick on every bough,"

and, to cite La Rochefoucauld, we all have to learn that "Lorsqu'on n'a pas ce que l'on aime, il faut aimer ce que l'on a;" thus we took Tamberlik as a *pis aller*, and on the whole he turned out better than we expected, for when — with a wisdom and forbearance not too often practised in the profession—in 1864 he withdrew from the stage just in time to escape the withdrawal of his audiences from him, the public were surprised to find what a favourite he had made himself, and his retirement was universally deplored.

His features were expressive, his figure well built, and his acting above the average, for he understood how to throw the force and expression the situation required, into his singing, and sometimes won enthusiastic applause, but his mistaken adoption and abuse of the *tremolo* were much to be regretted. This artifice, too often the refuge of singers on the wane, to conceal their want of vigour and firmness, was not needed in his case, and was besides altogether out of character with a tenor *mezzo-carattere* of "robusto" classification. Bellini's music always seemed to suit him best, and in the *Montecchi e Capuletti* he as *Tibaldo*, with Brambilla as *Romeo*, always achieved a great success. Rarely has Rossini's admired trio in *Guglielmo Tell—Troncar suoi di*—been given with finer effect than when Tamberlik's tenor was heard in it; and the richness of his "*Ut dièse*," always eagerly waited for, produced subdued murmurs of delight, which interpreted themselves in shouts of admiration as soon as the last note was reached. Tamberlik's Hungarian parentage did not prevent him from being a *Romano di Roma* to the backbone; no inducement was strong enough to make him sing in any language but Italian, and as for French and German, he repudiated both, whether for singing or speaking. Tamberlik's greatest successes were perhaps in South

America, and at Rio and Buenos Ayres he earned fabulous sums. He survived his retirement from the stage long enough to be so completely forgotten that when he died, in 1889, every one was surprised to find that he had been still living up to that date. Tamberlik managed his affairs well, sang more or less all over the world, and realized a very fine fortune, which enabled him to live luxuriously after his retirement.

To Naples the musical world owes much; music, poetry, romance, sentiment, are luxuriant in that unconventional, beautiful and unpractical land. Mirth and jollity are native elements in the Neapolitan character; reckless, improvident, recognizing only the present hour, the Neapolitan laughs and sings in rags that hardly hold together; if it depended on him alone, he would dispense with them altogether. The sunshine of his lovely climate, the cloudless sky, the azure bay surround him with an atmosphere in itself suggestive of the proverbial idleness of his race; and, like the Roman *plebs*, all he asks is *panem et circenses!* "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die" he translates into "Let us laugh and sleep;" to eating and drinking he is, so to speak, indifferent, and for an hour's amusement at *San Carlino* he would starve for a week and not perceive the privation.

The national melodies of Naples are for the most part joyous, light-hearted inspirations when not tender and sentimental; they could not be the production of musical genius of any other clime: a genuine Neapolitan air is essentially *sui generis*, and it imparts to the listener the gleefulness of its own spirit. Nevertheless, the cultivated Neapolitan musician is apt to leave behind him, along with the sunny sky—which, like himself, laughs all day long—the characteristics of the soil from which he sprang; Marras, among others, has left us some bewitching Neapolitan melodies, which carry us away at once to the superb and richly-tinted bay: the same may be said, but not sweepingly,

of Verdi, whose earlier compositions did not please even the Italians; they declared he had no mercy on their voices, and Madame Persiani, speaking of one of his early operas, told me that at that time none of the Italians cared for his compositions, alleging that they bid fair to destroy their voices. As for herself, she shunned being cast for one of his rôles, adding expressively that the music of the first two acts could be likened only to swallowing a cat, and the last two, to pulling him up again by the tail! Fortunately, the composer mended his ways as he proceeded; and his later works have found a wide circle of admirers in the various capitals where his music is familiarly known.

When visiting, some years ago, that admirable and logically-devised institution at Naples, *l'Albergo dei Poveri*; I was told—with what truth I cannot say—that Paesiello and Verdi were both brought up there, and having elected music as a future profession, it was there they received their early instruction. If so, it is immensely to the credit of Verdi that he should have not only accumulated a large fortune by his own merits, but that he should have spent it in erecting on a large scale, and in the most approvable style, a spacious and thoroughly-well organized hospital, and in endowing the same: but *his* name is not attached to this fine building. Let the British tourist who has “sat under” Verdi at Her Majesty’s or Covent Garden, betake himself to Villa Franca, a beautifully-situated little town on the banks of the Po, and in view of the Apennine Chain, only about fifteen miles from Piacenza, where, at the picturesque villa of S^{ta} Agata close by, he will find Verdi passing his retirement in Arcadian ease and simplicity, his excellent wife, happy in sharing his good works, and lending her efficient and willing aid to their advancement. It is an instance of the purest and most unostentatious benevolence, which will, however, not surprise those who know this estimable couple; but what *will* surprise them is the

Verdi.

singular fact that Verdi has so entirely broken with his Muse, utterly abjuring all musical instruments, that, search as you may, you will not find so much as a Jew's harp in the house!

We now come to that indispensable functionary whose task is so complicated, and whose ability, of such vast importance to the artistes—the conductor. He is virtually the pivot on which the whole machine turns, and not artistes alone, but composers likewise are essentially at his mercy. As for the public, it is to be feared they are by no means aware of how much depends whether on his capabilities or his humour, nor probably does it occur to them to what an extent his temper is tried by the whole *personnel*: even the *impresario*, who *ought* to know this, and *ought* to take into consideration the onerousness and responsibility of the conductor's duties, is far too apt to forget it.

Costa.

It is pretty certain that there never was at any time a conductor who more completely typified what a conductor ought to be, than Signor, afterwards Sir Michael, Costa. When he took in hand the operatic orchestra at "Her Majesty's," he began with a complete reorganization of the whole staff, arranging the number and the grouping of the instrumentalists on Spohr's principle (started by him in 1820, and now universally approved and adopted), and retaining or admitting into his band none but tried performers who were also soloists. Himself known to be a first-class musician, his practised familiarity with the details of his profession was recognized by those over whom he presided; his judgment was respected, and he took care that his word should be law: he held his subordinates under a strict discipline recognized as such, and as no deviation from passive acquiescence would have been passed over, none was attempted.

Musician though he proved himself, Costa seemed born to the *bâton*, and Fate kept him to it; for, strange to say, he found no chance as either a singer or a composer: in the

former capacity his voice refused to serve him ; and in the latter his imagination was so crushed out by the musical thoughts of others ceaselessly dinned into his ears, that, in spite of himself, these ideas persisted in pervading his own, and instead of producing original work, his operas proved almost a *pot-pourri* of the works of previous composers : on the other hand, conducting was his *spécialité*, and that difficult task he understood and executed to perfection. Great, therefore, was Lumley's despair when Costa's support was withdrawn from him, and carried over to the rival, Operahouse ; it was only then, and when he had no choice but to replace him *tant bien que mal* by Balfe, that the manager began to repent of having given him umbrage on so many occasions ; the fact being that the offended functionary was only too glad of an opportunity to escape from treatment he had long silently resented.

Costa was of an old Spanish family, though as far as appearance went he had nothing of the *hildalgo* about him. His face might have been good-looking but for the vestiges of small-pox it retained, and also but for a nervous *tic* which kept his features in an almost continuous twitch. It was curious that, although a man of most amiable manners and extremely agreeable in all his social relations, he carried on his countenance an expression we are wont to regard as an indication of bad temper, and I used always to wonder whether it was not that the constant habit of drilling instrumentalists and singers had rendered permanent, a contraction of brow he must have been obliged constantly to assume. If his work was hard, its results were certainly compensatory ; for no orchestra could be more perfect than his had become under the exercise of his judgment, taste, and skill ; and perhaps not the least excellent of his qualifications were the firmness and energy of his character, and the tact with which he knew how to manage a recalcitrant *prima donna*. The scenes which sometimes took place at rehearsals between Costa and Grisi were as ludicrous as

those of any *opera buffa*: all play-goers ought now and then to see a rehearsal.

Costa's paramount ability as a conductor was proved not only by the perfection to which he brought the orchestra at Her Majesty's Theatre, and its rapid decline after he had ceded his rod of office to Balfe, but also by the wonderful *ensemble* of the 3,000 instrumentalists who combined under his able guidance to illustrate the Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace on June 23, 1857. Probably no one but Costa would have even undertaken, much less have brought to a successful issue, so colossal an enterprize.

He had become the moving, vivifying spirit of the band he headed; the mind and attention, the intelligence and devotedness of each component member of it seemed, as if compelled under a magnetic influence, to follow his direction and his intention. By what power he had arrived at obtaining this concentration of wills in his own, who can say? Perhaps he himself hardly knew how he accomplished the moral phenomenon; all he cared to know was that each instrument was as entirely under his control as if he were playing it with his own hand; so he led them with an easy confidence in their quick apprehension even of his as yet unexpressed intention; it was, in fact, like the mystery of military discipline, and those he conducted followed, not merely with unhesitating, but with enthusiastic, compliance.

Lumley considered Costa's well-earned £2,000 for a season a large sum; but was it not his orchestra that sustained the spirit of the singers, as well as the reputation of the house, and what orchestra could be too perfect for such a troupe?

Sir Michael was distinguished by the favourable appreciation of Her Majesty and the Prince Consort, and it was no small gratification to him to receive the evidence of it. He was not without a certain amount of professional vanity, and ventured to take liberties, not only with the works of minor composers, but with those of the great Handel himself.

It is interesting to record Meyerbeer's admiration for Sir Michael, whom he declared to be "the greatest *chef d'orchestre* the world had ever seen." On the opening of the National Exhibition in 1862, when Meyerbeer's overture was played at Exeter Hall, he representing Germany; Auber, France; and Sterndale Bennett, England; Meyerbeer said, "There is no other band in all Europe that could have played my music at first sight and without a mistake."

And it was no easy matter to satisfy Meyerbeer: an amusing anecdote of this master illustrates the *punctilio* with which he himself supervised the performers who interpreted him. When his *Camp of Silesia* was to be performed in Berlin, he made a point of being present at the rehearsals: there was a spirited march in the opera which he intended should produce a stirring effect, and as it was his practice to caution the instrumentalists beforehand, and, according to their deserts, to praise or reprimand them afterwards, he called the special attention of the cymbal-player to his part, expressly intended to emphasize this episode. After the first performance, he told him that though he had played his part fairly well, he should like a great deal more force given to the claps he had to strike. The "cymbals" bowed obsequiously, and assured the composer he should be obeyed; however, with all his good will, he failed to satisfy the ambitious *maestro*, who insisted on hearing the martial instrument louder still. At the third rehearsal the poor fellow felt so mortified at Meyerbeer's reproofs that he determined nothing should be wanting on his side to content him, and in his zeal he struck his brass plates together so violently, that both were smashed by the concussion; the composer turned round with a smile of satisfaction, but only to behold the unfortunate musician holding up the fragments with a shrug of his shoulders which seemed to plead that, though he had not failed again, he had overworked his instruments.

The most valuable auxiliary and interpreter Meyerbeer's

music ever had was Pauline Garcia, and in *Fidès* all her genius, all her vocal resources, all her histrionic powers were called into requisition and responded to the call. Meyerbeer knew what a *prima donna* he was securing when he wrote this character for her, and so far from being mistaken in his prognostics, her rendering of it exceeded his most sanguine expectations. It is a case in which it may truly be said that an actress *created a rôle*; young as she was when Meyerbeer recognized her great gifts on seeing her in *Norma* at Berlin, and young as she was when she assumed the character of an almost venerable matron, she not only surpassed every other artiste who has since attempted that difficult part, but she surpassed *herself*, however much admired she may have been in other Operas.

At the musical festival given in Meyerbeer's honour in November, 1891, Madame Viardot was present at the Paris Opera-house, being one of the few survivors of those who have contributed to illustrate that composer's works. Among them was a singer who made a sensation in London half a century ago as *prima donna*: she may be said to have materially assisted in the success of *Robert le Diable*, and to have given its stamp to the part of *Alice* in that opera; Madame Dorus-Gras was eighty-six at that date, but her youthful charm in the character, in 1832, remains recorded in the musical annals of that period, and doubtless in the memories of those who heard it. I can well remember her at a somewhat later period, but when she was still delightful, whether on the Opera-stage or the platform. Marie Sass, though she never found much favour in England, was another of Meyerbeer's professional *protégées*, who made her *début* in *Alice*, as much as a quarter of a century ago, at Paris, and also distinguished herself in *l'Africaine*: she, too, is still living, and was among the company at the Meyerbeer festival.

CHOREGRAPHY.
THE BALLET.

“ And further on a group of Grecian girls,
The first and tallest her white kerchief waving,
Were strung together like a row of pearls,
Link'd hand in hand, and dancing ; each too having
Down her white neck, long floating auburn curls—
(The least of which would send ten poets raving) ;
Their leader sang—and bounded to her song,
With choral step and voice, the virgin throng.”

CHAPTER V.

CHOREGRAPHY.

THE BALLET.

“Again in scenic pomp the Vestris shines,
His altar raised again, and decked his shrines ;
From scarlet boxes, sparkling eyes behold
His manly port and vest bespeck'd with gold :
His spring, his turn, agility and face,
His passing foot and all-surpassing grace :
The illusive charm that Fashion can bestow,
That halo, round the gods, the Graces throw.”

VESTRIAD.

WE cannot take leave of the Opera-house without at least a few words about the ballet and its celebrities ; for at one time—and that, a long period—viz. : from 1820 to 1850—the ballet formed a very important feature in the amusements of that fashionable resort. So important did it gradually become that it constituted no despicable factor in that ominous quarrel which culminated in the setting up of a second Opera-house beside the first, to the ruin of both. Lumley had got into one of those awkward dilemmas, too familiar to *impresarii*, between the necessity of contenting his noble patrons, and at the same time not *dis*-contenting his vocal *troupe*, the latter considering themselves unfairly damaged by the ever-encroaching pretensions of the dancers. Patrons were peremptory, and these admirers of the ballet refused to have their amusement abridged ; the only abridgment they did *not* object to was that of the skirts of the *ballerine* : the dimensions to which these have gradually dwindled must be explained by those who study the moral character of the age, for that was not always as

now ; and if we revert to the laws of decency which ruled public taste three-quarters of a century ago, we shall see how facile has been the *descensus* with which those laws have been rolled down head over heels into complete obliteration. Let us see what time and "civilization" and "education" have done towards this result !

The first ballet given at the Italian Opera House was in 1820 under the management of Ebers : the *personnel* consisted of a troupe of dancers—among whom were Noblet and Mercandotti—borrowed from the Paris *Académie Royale de Musique* by way of experiment, and it showed some pluck on the part of the manager, for he must have known what risk he ran in importing any French novelty at a time when everything belonging to that nationality was still cordially detested by the British public.

An old friend of mine, now long dead, (a Fellow of New College, Oxford) was present at the inauguration of this entertainment at the King's Theatre, and used to relate, as an incident of his youth, the reception it met with from the spectators : although the skirts of these dancers were not more than eight inches above the ankle, the whirling, pirouetting, and other inevitable movements so disturbed this (even ample) drapery, that the house, and more especially the occupants of the pit, with few dissentients, at once gave tongue to unmitigated feelings of disgust. Some turned away their heads ; some went out, hurrying away their wives and daughters ; and some remained to hiss the performance so loudly that the manager had no resource but to drop the curtain.

As the *mise-en-scène* of the ballet, the dresses, and the already-signed contracts had put him to considerable expense, the *impresario*, who could not afford to throw up all this, set himself to conciliate the public, and before the next opera-night, the concession of a few inches more muslin in each case was made, and the public was appeased. To appreciate this pious prudery we must remember that

the skirts hung tolerably close to the limbs, and that even in the days of Taglioni they were not arranged *bouffantes* as subsequently, when to compensate for their—comparative—shortness, they were supplied with a multitude of under-skirts of the most gauzy texture, which, as an Irishman would say, “except for the honour of the thing,” might just as well not have been there.

What is there in life that does not daily remind us of the subjectivity of things? At the present day we all know that the benches would be torn up if a manager presumed to send on his dancers costumed as they were—even before the row—in 1820.

For some time after the introduction of the ballet at the King's Theatre, men-dancers mingled with the women, had their *pas seuls*, and shared their *pas de deux* or *de quatre*; but whether the public did not care to see men flying in the air and exhibiting their *tours de force* in the ballet, or whether it was difficult to procure men-dancers sufficiently perfect, they at last came to the *pas dutout*, and since about the middle of the century their place has been taken by women, to whom this arrangement gave the *rôles à jambes* and *pas de jupes*. Before this abolition, Vestris and, later, Perrot and Duport were among the most distinguished, and Vestris was quite a character. Vestris.

Vestris *père*, and also Vestris *filis*, were, of course, before my time; but both had their curious and amusing characteristics. My father, who wrote a clever satire on the latter, called the “*Vestriad*,” used to tell very laughable stories of them. The elder Vestris (Gaetano) entertained the most exalted ideas of his family, and tried to instil into his children a traditional sense of its importance. He used to say of his son—

“Auguste ought to make a great figure in the world, he has had Gaetano for his father, an advantage which has been denied to me.”

Auguste got into disgrace with his *impresario* for refusing

to dance according to contract in the *divertissement* of *Armide*, by Glück, and for this he was sent to *Fort l'éveque*. As he was being led away under arrest, his father said to him—

“Go, Auguste, go to prison with dignity: when you are there, ask for the room of my friend the King of Poland, and introduce yourself to him as my son, at the same time presenting to him my compliments.”

He also reproved his son for “failing in *his* duty to dance before the King of Sweden when the Queen had performed *hers* in asking him,” he added: “Remember, in future I will have no misunderstandings between the houses of Vestris and Bourbon, which have always been on the best terms.”

Some think that a man who is destitute of vanity is also destitute of ambition and will never achieve anything great: if this be so, and vanity be the basis on which greatness is built, we need not be surprised at the surpassing excellence in his profession of Gaetano Vestris, or as he pleased to call himself, “Vestris 1st.” His vanity was not only large, but thoroughly amusing by reason of its largeness, no less than of the self-consciousness with which he asserted it. Though he could neither read nor write, the perfection he attained in the art he practised made him really feel himself on a level with those who had attained an equal degree of perfection in any other art or calling. He shared in fact, without knowing it, the elevated and logical opinion of Bacon on this point.

“I hold,” writes the English philosopher, “every man to be a debtor to his profession whatever it may be, from which as men do of course seek to receive countenance and profit, so ought they, of justice, to exercise themselves, by way of amends, to be a help and ornament thereto.”

Vestris 1st, as he called himself, or *le beau Vestris*, as others called him, acting on this lofty principle, was firmly persuaded that he spoke only the truth when he proudly affirmed that there were “only three great men to illustrate

the *siècle* to which he belonged—himself, Voltaire, and the King of Prussia.”

On the death of Voltaire, when Gardel asked him if he did not think his son's name should be inserted in the triad, to make up the complement :

“Corpo di Bacco!” exclaimed the proud father: “what can you be thinking of? Why the King of Prussia and myself put together are not up to Auguste's ankle!”

Nothing delighted the old man more than relating the story for which there was some foundation, of the meeting of Parliament having been on some plausible pretext deferred for a day on account of the eagerness of so many of the Lords to witness the *début* of “Auguste”!

To a man who held his head so high, it was probably a humiliation to remember that after all—

“. . . dancers and heroes must
Lie undistinguished in one common dust.”

Armand Vestris, Vestris III., a son of Auguste's, eloped with the elder grand-daughter of Bartolozzi, the famous engraver, and married her. She became well known in the world of art in Paris and London: but she shortly after separated from her volatile husband.

Among the *danseuses* whom I remember, the most celebrated was Taglioni, who died at Marseilles not so long ago, viz., in 1884. She was born in 1804 at Stockholm; her father was a man of considerable taste, and his chief occupation seems to have been writing the *libretti* (for we may well so call them) of ballets. After his daughter became a *danseuse*, he arranged for her every scene of every ballet in which she appeared. It was in 1822 that this incomparable artiste made her *début* in Vienna, remaining in Germany, between Vienna, Strasburg, and Munich, till 1826; in her earlier years she had danced the *menuet de la Cour* with Vestris. When she appeared in Paris in 1827 in *Le Sicilien*, her success was tremendous; in 1828 Paris welcomed her

with equal delight in the *Bayadère* ; but her performance in the ballet of *Psyché* placed her on an elevation never attained by any other *danseuse* ; for Taglioni's was the poetry of dancing, and she was universally acclaimed as the Queen of Choregraphy. Nothing more ideally beautiful can be conceived than her histrionic performance. Throughout the dramatized poem of *Pysché*, it was the perfection



TAGLIONI AS PSYCHÉ.

of silent, but eloquent acting. She was dressed with a grace and elegance which set off her exquisite form and fairy movements, and her diaphanous wings seemed to raise her from the floor which her delicate feet appeared scarcely to touch ; but when, after her long coyness, *Pysché* allows herself to be vanquished by Cupid, and her wings fall off, the expression of her face and attitude, her tearful eyes and

resigned air sufficed to convey the complicated emotions of her mind, and the spectators understand without an uttered word that she is more than content to love and expire simultaneously. Greville writes in his diary—July 6, 1832—“Taglioni is dancing at Covent Garden: it is impossible to conceive the perfection to which she has brought the art. She is an animated statue, her motions are the perfection of grace and decency, and her strength quite marvellous.” The *Sylphide*, written for her, was one of her best impersonations. Théophile Gautier wrote of this rare artiste: “Taglioni est une danseuse Chrétienne, elle ressemble à une âme heureuse qui fait ployer, à peine du bout de ses pieds roses, la pointe des fleurs célestes. C’est la grâce aérienne:” like the ethereal Camilla who—

“ . . . vel intactæ segetis per summa volaret
Gramina: nec teneras cursu læsisset aristas:
Vel mare per medium, fluctu suspensa tumentis,
Ferret iter: celeres nec tingeret æquore plantas.”

VIRG.

Taglioni made a large fortune, and married the Comte Gilbert des Voisins, who died in 1863; she had a beautiful summer residence on Lake Como, and her Palace, the *Ca d'Oro* at Venice was one of the most beautiful in that exceptional old city. Taglioni had collected admiration and friendships, jewels and gold in all European countries, for Germany, Italy, England, Russia, and France had always eagerly sought to secure her services.

Taglioni made one of those unaccountable mistakes too often committed by great artistes, in returning to the stage after she had once retired; no one who had seen her in her palmy days would have recognized her: her joints seemed to have become stiffened, her limbs had lost their activity, her muscles their power, and as for her mime-ic genius, it had altogether departed: I thought it a much-to-be-deplored exhibition of vanished and scarcely traceable perfection. This is *not* surprising, but it *is* astonishing she

Cerito. should not have been aware of the change : as it was, she had remained before the public for a much longer time than any other dancer ; she was still dancing when Cerito appeared, and the manager of Her Majesty's Theatre had some difficulty in settling between the two a dispute which arose out of jealousy in the matter of privileges : he had appointed a box to Cerito on the uppermost tier, and she failed to understand why she should not have as good a one as the great Taglioni ! . . . *hinc illæ lacryme.*

Fanny Ellsler Ellsler — Fanny Ellsler — was, however, a far more formidable rival of Taglioni. She and her tall elder sister Thérèse were as absolutely perfect in their style of dancing as Taglioni was in hers, only hers was a much *finer* style.

Ellsler's *Cachucha* was a bewitching performance—though Duvernay also turned many heads with it—but that and other national dances of which Ellsler was so prodigal and which she performed so deliciously, could not bear comparison with the terpsichorean poems which Taglioni could bring before her spectators. A French critic remarked of these two celebrated and admired dancers :

“ Fanny danse pour subjuguier et pour charmer, Taglioni nous a révélé la danse des déesses.”

Thérèse
Ellsler.

As for Thérèse Ellsler, though only six years older than her sister, she tended her with a motherly care and pride which often helped to eclipse her own value ; but her talents and her qualifications were too great to be hidden, and during the short time she was before the public, though she appeared always with her sister and for the sake of adding to the *éclat* of her performances, she attracted so much admiration that the King of Prussia conferred upon her the title of Baronne de Barnim (not Barnum), and she realized a very large fortune during her brief professional career which ended in her marrying Prince Adalbert of Prussia, first cousin to the King.

The two sisters during their joint career, visited most of the capitals of Europe, and Dr. Véron was so anxious to get

them to Paris, that at a dinner given in their honour at the Clarendon, a silver waiter containing jewellery to the amount of 200,000 frs. was handed to them at dessert, that they might make choice of whatever ornaments they preferred; they *modestly* accepted presents of the value of only seven or eight thousand francs: at this dinner they were to sign engagements of three years to the Paris *impresario*, Fanny



FANNY ELLSLER.

making her *début* there in the *Tempesta*. She was obliged to accept an inferior part in this ballet, because it was one in which Taglioni took the principal character (*Miranda*); nevertheless Ellsler made the most of the opportunity, gave a new reading to the part, and acquitted herself so admirably in the mime-ic art, of which she was absolute mistress, that she was called enthusiastically before the curtain, and her performance immediately gave new importance to the

character. As a *danseuse*, a remarkable characteristic of Ellsler's style was the power she possessed of executing *tours de force* on the points of her toes; yet she was frail and delicate in appearance, especially beside her sister, who was of unusual stature and almost virile vigour of frame.

A peculiarity of Fanny Ellsler's temperament, which may be classed among the phenomena of music, was that during her whole artiste-life she never went on the stage without so serious a nervous depression that she was often on the point of abandoning her profession, but the moment the orchestra struck up, she felt as if new life had been infused into her, and became capable of any effort. There was a widely-believed report that, among other admirers, Ellsler had captivated the young Duke of Reichstadt: she herself, however, always denied its truth, and went so far as to say she had never seen the ill-fated Imperial youth.

Carlotta Grisi.

Carlotta Grisi was a charming *danseuse*, but without any of those lofty pretensions for which her contemporaries contended; she was very elegant and very pretty, but did not remain long on the stage, for she married Perrot while still very young: she delighted the public, however, by her grace and beauty; the "shadow dance" was one of her most favoured performances, and in *Esmeralda*, one of the ballets composed by Perrot, she was charming. With Ellsler, Carlotta danced the *menuet de la Cour* as an *entr'acte* in *Don Giovanni*. Heine, Gautier, and Adam united their talents to write *Giselle* for her, and her execution of her part justified their combined expectations of her success.

Ballets introducing skating-scenes seem to have been willingly accepted by English spectators; the first of these that I remember, bore the Polish title of *Poniatowsky*, and gave an opportunity for the introduction of rich and elegant Polish costumes, afterwards much copied for a time at fancy balls.

At the period when young Delafield was holding open his then ample purse to meet the most ill-considered expenses

of the Opera-house, the idea was revived, and ice-scenes were once more introduced in a Hungarian ballet called *Les Plaisirs de l'hiver*: in this, in addition to the complicated skating-scene carried on in spite of showers of "snow" which fell all the time: there was a grand *finale* consisting of a battle with snowballs: it is to be hoped these were made of some soft material, as they were thrown about with considerable profusion, and this scene always delighted the general public.

It seems worth mentioning here that the introduction of the *ballet* on the stage of the *Académie Royale de Musique in Paris* was co-eval with its opening; but ballets were conducted on totally different lines from those of our day. Women did not appear in them, and their characters were taken by young men in female attire, wearing masks! It is difficult to imagine the effect.

The first ballet in which women danced was entitled *Le Triomphe de l'Amour* by Lulli, and was given in 1681, Louis XIV. having founded an *Académie de Danse* twenty years before this.

It was not until 1772 that the masks were abolished, and by MM. Daubival and Gardel, whose example was soon followed by others. It was only under Louis XV. that ballets were arranged as dramatic pieces: these entertainments were not interrupted by the Revolution, and during those times of unchecked licence, a ballet was written *embellished* by a scene representing the devil dancing in the wildest attitudes with two nuns; the performers being the great Auguste Vestris ("Vestris II.") and Mmes. Perignon and Adeline. Needless to say it drew overflowing houses: this ballet was styled *La Rosière Républicaine* and its *libretto* was altogether suited to the spirit of the times.

MUSICAL NOTES AND THEIR ECHOES.

INSTRUMENTALISTS.

**“ Their instruments were various in their kind,
Some for the bow, some for the breathing wind.’
DRYDEN.**

CHAPTER VI.

MUSICAL NOTES AND THEIR ECHOES.

INSTRUMENTALISTS.

“Lo ! Minstrels played on every side
Vain of their art, and for the mastery vied.”
DRYDEN.

THE effect and power of music seem from a very early period to have engaged the attention of scientists and philosophers; some, whether as the result of theory or experiment, believing they had discovered in the application of melody, important and efficacious remedies; thus Pythagoras directed certain mental disorders to be treated by music alone; and Xenocrates is stated to have *cured* maniacs by its means. We may perhaps accord evidence to the effect of music in nervous cases, for in much more modern times we hear that when Rossini's grand march—*Dall' tuo stellato soglio*—was introduced for the first time into his *Mose in Egitto*, half the susceptible Neapolitan audience fainted at the change from the minor to the major key: in a little volume by the Marquis de Pontécoulant,* there are records of many other such surprising instances. Some persons, however, will be inclined to doubt whether it can be *quite* true that the power of music on disorders supposed to be purely *physical*, can be as effectual as has been represented, though it may be difficult to define the point at which a disorder ceases to be “nervous.” Perhaps, therefore, the affirmation of Martinus Capellus, that he had known fevers cured by the mild intervention of melody, may be worth considering; also whether, as Aulus Gellius states, a

* *Phénomènes de la musique.*

case of sciatica could be cured by gentle and judicious modulation of sounds. Asclepiades found music useful when administered in a more violent form, having cured a deaf person with the blast of a trumpet! others seem to have had recourse to musical intervention with a success which each must make up his own mind to believe or doubt, but to the general apprehension it is somewhat startling to learn that Thales was called from Crete to Sparta to remove an epidemic, and did mitigate the disastrous pestilence by the employment of music, and that Theophrastus believed the bites of serpents and other venomous reptiles to have been relieved by its agency.

One of the doctrines of ancient medicine was that harmonious sounds would drive away evil spirits; indeed, we have Biblical testimony to this result. We also find in modern history that the only cure for King Philip II. of Spain, when beset by "blue devils," was Farinelli's voice, and that consequently, like David at the court of Saul, that *charming* singer was always kept on the premises.

The great Luther, speaking of music, does not say how he discovered—but of course he *must* be right—that "Satan is a bitter enemy to this most beautiful and wondrous gift of God"; while Tartini, composer of *The Devil's Sonata*, entered into a competition with his Satanic Majesty to produce a finer composition than himself, and in proof of his having vanquished, named—we can't well say "christened"—his own production by a name that should commemorate its origin.

Rousseau had a theory as to the effect produced on the nerves by Italian and French music respectively, and considered the question sufficiently tested by an experiment which, if of individual value, will hardly suffice to establish a general rule. M. Jean Jacques took advantage of his acquaintance with an Armenian gentleman of cultivated tastes, but who knew nothing whatever of European music, for he had just landed at Venice, to put the matter to him practically. He began by requesting the attention of this

Oriental to the French air, *Temple sacré ; séjour tranquille !* and immediately after, to an Italian air by Galuppi, *Voi che languite senza speranza*. It appears that during the first performance the patient remained absolutely passive, manifesting no signs whether of pleasure or emotion ; but as the second proceeded, his whole *physique* underwent a change, and his features expressed the most vivid sentiments, in unison with the melody : from this time the subject of the experiment attached himself enthusiastically to Italian, and retained his indifference for French, music.

The effect of national and military music on the *moral*, whether of armies or populations, has long been practically recognized, more especially in mountain races ; and it is generally supposed that music exercises a civilizing and refining influence on mankind generally ; hence, we must suppose, the experimental School Board piano !

Of full orchestras no one will deny the stirring power, and no regiment would be complete without its band ; though there was a recent time in France when they *tried* to dispense with the inspiring roll of the drum.

When we come to solo instruments (though, like the men on the chess-board, each has its distinct value), there is none which, taken singly, can compare with the violin. It is moreover from its construction, the most docile of instruments, and is also capable, perhaps for that reason, of producing without adventitious support, the finest effects.

An instance of the capabilities of this king of instruments, when in adequately skilled hands, occurs in the career of a violinist who gained great celebrity in the earlier years of the century. Alexandre Boucher, in whose character and history there is much that is interesting, had, it would seem, unusual command of this instrument, and indeed, could still astonish an audience after he was eighty-eight (when I heard him). This happened by a rare chance, one night, when he left his retirement to play for a special benefit, at the *Salle Hertz* in May, 1860. No one who saw

him, and certainly no one who heard him, would have given him that age, for he retained a degree of vivacity incredible in any but a Frenchman. His figure was not bent, but neither was he tall, his personal appearance recalling to a most extraordinary degree, that of the Emperor Napoleon. This peculiarity he tried in every way to make the most of, though he paraded with some affectation the histories of misfortunes that had befallen him in consequence of what he *called* "ma malheureuse ressemblance." This could only be affectation, as he was wont to ape his prototype to the fullest of his power, copying every peculiarity in his outward appearance and imitating, after careful and vigilant study, every act and attitude which distinguished him; thus, after the Imperial fashion, he carried his snuff loose in his waistcoat pocket, and reproduced to the life Napoleon's knack of taking it; now and then he even contrived to filch a salute or a recognition intended for the Emperor from persons, even officers, who took him for His Majesty.*

It is difficult to know to what degree of perfection the average violinist had attained in the days when Boucher was in his prime, but the following incident, recorded in the annals of the Custom-House in 1815, serves to show what an effect he could produce with his bow.

It appears that in the month of February Alexandre Boucher came over to England in search of an engagement, but on arriving at Dover was struck with consternation on finding his instruments seized by the Customs officers: his explanations that they were not articles of commerce, but brought for his own personal use, made no impression on the obdurate and obtuse fiscal agents, who, probably sharing the

* It is wonderful how a well-known attitude assumed by an individual who bears any resemblance to another, will help a *travestissement*. An amusing story is told of the Emperor Napoleon attending in disguise a fancy ball at which he did not wish to be recognized: forgetting himself for a moment as he stood in a remote corner watching the scene, he folded his arms, putting one foot back, when his figure in an instant betrayed him, and cries of "l'Empereur! l'Empereur!" were heard from all parts of the hall.

national prejudice of the time against all Frenchmen, and taking no pains to understand him, claimed either the goods or an *ad valorem* duty, desiring the owner to fix their value ; the bewildered artiste thoughtlessly fell into the snare, and named a very low figure. The Custom-House officers, availing themselves of a right unknown to the unfortunate foreigner, replied they would give 15 per cent. over the price he had stated as their worth, and keep the fiddles, the law entitling them to adopt this course. All musicians know that the intrinsic value of an instrument, even at its full cost, bears no proportion to the worth set upon it by its master who is accustomed to handle it, who has, as it were, a mutual understanding with it—a friendship for it, “ knows its stops,” and can attune it to his mood. Poor Boucher, who loved his fiddles for their own sake, was in despair ; he groaned, he wept, he entreated, and finding all in vain, finally he threatened and swore ; but to no purpose ; there was only one course open to him, to go to London and appeal to the French consul. But then he must lose sight, at least for a time, of his precious instruments—a separation, the thought of which he could not brook. In his desperation he did what would have scarcely occurred to any but a Frenchman : he seized the fiddle he loved best and his face streaming with tears, expressed on it a passionate lament, followed by a pathetic adieu to his treasures. Congreve has stated that “ music hath charms,” &c. The officers, accordingly, though they began by looking on in astonishment and seeming inclined to laugh at a proceeding so foreign to their national habit of mind, shortly proceeded to listen, next they became interested, and finally, so touching was the pathos of the unfortunate artiste’s tones that they ended by turning to one another with a mutual suggestion of pity for the woes he so feelingly described.

The plaintive melody came to an end, but not so the admiration of the listeners ; they were even induced to beg

for an *encore*, and in order to give more scope to the artiste's ability, they led him to the top of some stone steps, around which, one by one, gathered all who came within hearing, so that he soon found himself the centre of a considerable audience : flattered by the genuine attention of which he had become the object, he felt himself fired with new enthusiasm, and, in the second performance surpassed himself, introducing one or two popular melodies, and winding up with *God save the King*. By the time the last bar was played, the French fiddler had won all hearts, and the cordial cheers of those who had gathered round him testified to the warmth of the approval he had elicited. The desire of his *quondam* persecutors now was to reward to the best of their power both the talent and the complaisance of the wonderful violinist ; the dispute was forgotten, even fiscal severity was relaxed, and the superintending officer, after cordially shaking hands with the magic player, said—

“ Monsieur, we can no longer entertain any doubt that these violins are for your own use, and not for sale ; you are therefore entitled to retain them duty-free : you may,” he added facetiously : “ boast of having achieved a greater triumph than Orpheus, for he tamed only the infernal deities, while you, you have subdued the stony hearts of British Customs officers.”

That Alexandre Boucher had considerable talent there is every reason to suppose ; any way, he believed in himself, and even went so far as to call himself “ *l'Alexandre des Violonistes*.” He indulged, as a musician, singularly ambitious aspirations, and among other pretensions to eminence used to tell a long rigmarole story to prove that it was he who was the originator of the *Marseillaise*, which he alleged he had written as a march, even stating that he once met Rouget de l'Isle at a tavern and dined with him, and that Rouget laid claim to the words only, himself admitting that he (Boucher) had set them to the music of a popular march he heard played by a military band at Marseilles, and

that the sole alteration in the composition had been, omitting one of the movements. Boucher was known to be somewhat of a *charlatan*, and most people laughed at his ingenious story; moreover, Rouget de l'Isle was dead before Boucher came out with it.* Boucher, however, is not the only claimant to the authorship of the *Marseillaise*. It has been confidently asserted, and with some semblance of proof, that neither Rouget de l'Isle—the long-accepted author—nor Boucher, had anything to do with this martial air, for it is to be found as a march in the opera of *Esther*, the production of Grison. Another sceptic asserts it to be a German canticle imported into France by Julien Navoigille in 1782, and first played at Mad^{elle}. de Montesson's concert. But even these statements do not terminate the contested authorship. A writer in the *Gazette de Cologne*, April 24, 1861, declares that Rouget de l'Isle, though he gave it out as his original composition, simply adapted the *Credo* from Holtzmann's *Missa Solemnis*, No. 4. Its *provenance*, however, is apparently not a matter of much moment at the present day; the air is a popular one everywhere, and as for the combination of words and music its value has been great in the French army. One of Napoleon's generals once said, when on the eve of an engagement the results of which were considered doubtful: "Give me a thousand men and a copy of the *Marseillaise* for our band, and I will answer for everything." At the cry, "*Aux armes!*" men, women, and even little children and the aged have always been intoxicated with enthusiasm, and more than one serious *emeute* has been the consequence.

The life of this violinist was full of the most curious and romantic episodes; but, distinguished as he became, his memory has now, alas! almost vanished in the dim distance of bygone days.

A fine trait in Boucher's character was his fidelity to

* Rouget de l'Isle, forgotten under the Restoration, was drawn out of his retirement, decorated and pensioned by Louis Philippe, and died at Choisy-le-Roi in 1836.

Charles IV. of Spain in his fallen fortunes. While travelling about the world he had been received with great favour at foreign courts, and the King of Spain especially, had been so pleased with his talents that he attached him to his service and kept him many years at the "only Court," treating him with great kindness and consideration. It was some time after Boucher had returned to Paris, that the Spanish monarch found himself in exile at Fontainebleau, when Boucher immediately requested an audience that he might pay his respects to His Majesty, assuring him of his enduring gratitude for past favours and his continued loyalty to his person; the King, it appears, was deeply touched by this demonstration of disinterested affection.

Alexandre Boucher was in the habit of calling attention to his performances by curious antics and movements of the head and limbs while playing, not altogether unassociated with other performers on the same instrument, yet he enjoyed the enthusiastic admiration, not alone of the public generally, but of the professional fraternity; and the great *tragédienne*, Mad^{lle}. Georges, said of him that if he was the "*violoniste des rois*," he was also "*le roi des violonistes*." Madame Catalani, at whose concert he performed in 1807, exclaimed, in the gush of her enthusiasm—

"*Les autres jouent du violon, mais lui, il en chante.*"

Perhaps she meant "*il enchante*" for a pun; if so, those who have quoted her, have not recorded it as such. When comparatively old, in 1829, he gave a concert in Paris, and, as I have said, played in public at the *salle Herz* thirty years later (May, 1860) with a degree of success which excited the envy of many younger professors. This was the time at which I heard him, and, like the rest of the *assistance*, was as greatly charmed as astonished at the vigour of his bow and the precision of his fingering; not less, certainly, at the originality of both conception and execution, for the music of the two movements he played successively, was his own improvised composition; the first, of

a soft and pathetic character, was played with singular depth of feeling, and the lingering and sustained notes were drawn out with a delicacy which imparted to them the tenderness of the human voice. The applause of the listeners was loud and hearty, but a half-suppressed laugh went round when the old man, faithful to the tradition he had promulgated, changed the mood of his measure and struck up the *Marseillaise* * playing it in the form in which he had always averred he had written it, not as "mutilated by Rouget de l'Isle," but in double-quick time as a *pas redoublé*.

The verve he threw into this spirited air transfigured his whole person; the Napoleonic calmness was forgotten in his enthusiastic desire to show that he was exhibiting his own offspring; his colour became heightened, and from the tremulousness of his hands as he approached the termination, I began to think it was well the performance was concluded.

Poor old Alexandre Boucher, the *doyen des artistes*, died, aged 90, not very long after this his last appearance in public; apparently he had been appreciated everywhere; for his harmless little vanities were excused in favour of his talents, and of the amiable readiness with which he gave others the benefit of them. His wife was a musician also, and sometimes exhibited at concerts the unique accomplishment of playing pianoforte accompaniment to her own performance on the harp.

Another violinist who appeared in London in the Thirties, Emiliani. by name Emiliani, was physically a second copy of Napoleon and bore fully as striking a resemblance to the Emperor, as Boucher; but though these two violinists may be said to have been contemporaries, Emiliani was born fully a generation later, viz., in 1814. He was more or less frequently in England from about 1836 to 1846, after which time I do

* Castil-Blaze seems to think that the *Marseillaise* was taken from a German hymn.

not remember seeing him, though he died as late as in 1865, only five years later than Boucher.

He was exceedingly polished and gentlemanly, and became so universal a favourite in London society, that his patrons treated him quite as a friend, and he was constantly invited to stay with them at their country houses.

Emiliani's demeanour was characterized by a certain self-consciousness which, though never in the least obtrusive, seemed to proceed from a habit of holding himself and conducting himself after the type he so strongly resembled, and whose moral attributes he perhaps shared. His aspirations may have been also ambitious, but they had not strayed to so lofty an altitude, and he continued quite content with having reached such a degree of proficiency in his art as gave him a certain supremacy over other *artistes de salon*. The fascination of the Emperor's manner, of which so much was always said by those about him, could be traced in that of Emiliani, and the calm dignity he always maintained while he was playing—as if under inspiration—won him a large share of admiration. Emiliani played with intense feeling, and his style was winningly attractive, but he seemed to regard any approach to a *tour de force* as beneath him, and savouring more of the mountebank than the *artiste*; he could, indeed, afford to dispense with such devices, for his *technique* was perfect, his bow-ing excellent, and he had a complete command of his instrument.

Of living violinists there is perhaps not one more *sympathique* and more *really* pleasing than Ovide Musin—still among us—who is very much of the school which Emiliani represented.

In speaking of the composition of Costa's grand orchestra at the Opera-house, I have necessarily mentioned Mori, Molique, his pupil Carrodus, and Ella, among its components; as soloists there is much to be remembered of them all, for each had his distinctive qualifications.

Mori.

Mori's pleasant, good-humoured face was indicative of his

amiable character and made it easy to believe he was always *au mieux* with his colleagues of the orchestra; his desk was near that of Dragonetti and Lindley, and they were the three veterans of the company. Mori was a pupil of Viotti, and his method was of the purest: like his master, he was eminent not only as a violinist but as a composer. His humour was appreciated when he bantered in his amiable way, the other members of the orchestra, or related with thorough enjoyment, stories characteristic of his musical contemporaries; but his jokes were always tempered by good feeling and never led to ill blood. Mori took for his motto—"Memento Mori," and the programme of his last concert bore this heading.

Ella was what would be termed a "charming" player. He Ella. was admired by *connaisseurs*, but by none more fervently and more honestly than by himself. Ella had royal ideas; he not only considered that he held under his command the monarch of instruments and played it right royally, but claimed to be descended *atavis regibus*; he was so persuaded of the authenticity of his kingly pedigree that he coolly traced it up to Ella, the Saxon monarch! Ella had a harmless weakness for the upper crust of society, and to hear him talk, one would have supposed he recognized the acquaintance of those alone who enjoy the addition of a handle to their names; it was always—"My friend the Duke of So-and-so," or "My former schoolfellow the Earl of Three Stars," or "My distinguished acquaintance the Marquis of Blank"; in fact, one day when asked at whose house he dined oftenest when in Rome, he replied, unhesitatingly—"At the house of my friend the Marquis of Lepre." Lablache, amused at Ella's unconscious pomposity, said to him one day:

"Are you aware, my dear fellow, that ever since you have been residing in England, no Englishman can visit Italy but that he is immediately asked for news of your health?"

"Really!" replied the self-satisfied violinist, not much

surprised, but delighted that all the bystanders should hear such a flattering statement.

“Yes; I can assure you,” answered the mighty *basso*, “the first question an Italian asks them is always, ‘Come sta ella?’”

Ella was *impayable* in his vanity—and that vanity was so genuine, so unconscious, one felt it would be a shame to laugh at it.

The *Musical Union* concerts might have been called Ella's *At Homes*, so entirely did he make himself “at home” on the platform. He was never so fully in his glory as when he could thus take advantage of his aristocratic patrons and show the rest of the audience, by the familiarity of his manner, how friendly were the terms he was on with them. It was *he* who assumed the patronizing tone when, during the intervals of the performance, he walked about among Duchesses and Marchionesses, and with courteous, but not obsequious, ease, led up his performers and presented them to his visitors. His voice was audible nearly all over the hall as, when a piece had been applauded, he politely inquired, “whether Her Grace or His Serene Highness would like it repeated.” Yet it was all done so amiably, so gracefully, and with such complete good faith that no one ever seemed to take it amiss, even before his bent figure and his grey hair made him venerable. Ella's programmes, always drawn up by himself, were models of an ingenious policy, more especially as he so far departed from conventional usage as to call attention, in bracketed sentences, to such items as he desired should be encored. Ella was one of those to whom the punctilio of a posting-bill was a matter of the utmost moment. With *all* artistes the order of the names on a programme or announcement is a matter so weighty that it would require the edict of a Herald's college to decide on the etiquette of professional precedence. It has long, I think, been settled that the first in merit or honour should come

last in print: *but* preceded, and divided from the rest, by a huge "AND."

A story on the subject of this same professional precedence is told of an ingenious *impresario* who finding himself distracted by the claims of two rival singers, bethought him of an expedient which produced a generous contention on the part of each at once to give way to the other.

"Ladies," he said, "let us adopt the just and simple course of giving precedence to the elder."

If ever Ella received a communication from a patron of rank, the whole letter, or at least the signature, was immediately pasted into a handsomely-bound book entitled *Celebrated Autographs*. One day he addressed to a "noble Earl," whom, by the by, he scarcely knew, an ingeniously-devised inquiry, hoping to get an answer which would make a show in his collection. The "noble Earl's" secretary sent a telegram in reply, but it went in among *Celebrated Autographs* all the same.

Notwithstanding these little peculiarities, Ella had many friends, and held an honourable position in the profession, being by universal professional consent categorized with artistes of merit. He well knew, also, how to maintain this position, asserting himself with an *air capable*, and proclaiming views of his own on the subject of music. Despising melody, Ella affected the severe style, and went in for classical compositions.

The *Musical Union*, founded by him in the Forties, was his hobby, and remained completely under his management; besides publishing several books of musical interest, he edited the *Annual Record of the Musical Union*, and the notices and criticisms it contained were not without interest. The *Musical Union* gave two oratorios each year; but always the *Creation* and the *Messiah*: at these all the subscribers were entitled to be present.

Ole Bull, a violinist of Norwegian origin who took his

Ole Bull.

place in the musical world about 1832, was considered by some as a first-class musician, but these were the eclectic minority; more sober judges considered his play much prejudiced by his charlatanism, being unable to discover in it any fundamental principles of legitimate art. Bull was a genius, and under the influence of an impulsive and enthusiastic character, became the sport of circumstances rather than the steady pursuer of a methodical system. Nature had probably intended him for a musician, for in his early youth he showed strong dispositions towards a musical career; but having quarrelled with Spohr, with whom he was working, he gave up music, and arrived at the age at which he had seriously to decide on a profession, he went to Göttingen to study jurisprudence. During this time the town was visited by Paganini; and here Bull heard him. This incident suddenly awakened his dormant musical tastes and at once changed all his ideas and intentions. Fired with the belief that he had it in him to tread in the footsteps of the great virtuoso, he scattered his half-prosecuted studies to the winds, and returned with the most frantic determination to his violin.

So extravagant an estimate as he had formed of his own capabilities could not but come to grief, and failing to reach the standard of his wild imagination, he abandoned himself to despair; the cholera epidemic for a time put an end to all social enterprises, and Bull having gone to Paris, where after a little time his resources were exhausted, was robbed of his violin, and sinking under these accumulated misfortunes, lost all courage and threw himself into the Seine.

Rescued from death, he was taken to the *Hôtel Dieu*, where he chanced to be seen by a lady visiting the ward in which he lay, and who, struck with his resemblance to a son she had lost, had him removed to her own house, where she nursed and kept him till he recovered his health; having heard of the loss of his instrument, she made him a present of her son's Guarnerius and assisted him in

giving a concert, which proved a signal success, for the proceeds enabled him to visit Italy. There he met Malibran, and at Florence, through her protection, gained his *entrée* among the profession: thus befriended, Bull made a most promising start, and from that time his fortune was secured. In America, whither he resorted, he became the object of the most enthusiastic admiration: the same good fortune attended him whithersoever he carried his talents, for, having returned to the Old World, he visited successively Italy, Sicily, Germany, England, Scotland, and Ireland, meeting with a continued succession of triumphs.

Though a sincere admirer of Paganini and a would-be emulator of his style, Ole Bull gave no proof that he really understood what grand music was, and seduced by his own aptitude for graces of style, and by the admiration of the vulgar for frivolous adornments, he lost sight of the greater capabilities of his instrument, and fell into that snare always open to violinists, of resorting to tricks and *tours de force*, seeking less to please than to astonish. So depraved did his taste at last become, that to pander to the coarse ideas of an uncultivated public, he imagined a kind of pantomimic violin performance which he entitled *Le bœuf mangé par le tigre*: this childish absurdity, with its *harmonie imitative*, became so popular in America that it brought him no less a sum than 300,000 frs. Fétis styles him an *excentrique* and condemns his contempt for art; however, his worldly wisdom must be admired, for, while despising art in his profession, he seems to have discovered the art of making a fortune!

Somewhere about the year 1825, an ingenious Frenchman named Michel Bosi obtained popularity by amusing the public with a musical performance executed without any instrument. He contented himself with the aids alone that nature had given him, and called into requisition his chin and the knuckles of his two fists. With these he contrived to produce sounds resembling those of castagnets,

Michel Bosi

but with distinct musical tones of great compass. Accompanied by a violin, he executed several airs with variations in which he manifested surprising precision, rapidity, and expression !

De Beriot.

Of all violinists of our time, de Beriot was the one perhaps who played with the least effort and the least mannerism. To the skill, experience, and self-confidence of a professional performer he united the quiet, gentlemanly style of an amateur. It cannot be said that he displayed genius, or made any great mark in his profession, but he was recognized as a man of taste, and his compositions, for the most part graceful and elegant, are those of a musician. They were more remarkable, perhaps, for prettiness than for any more imposing quality ; at the same time there is a genuineness about his music which inspires respect and draws attention, and both in his compositions and in his execution of them, there was an entire absence of that charlatanism which so often disfigures the performances of the best violinists : de Beriot sought rather to please than to astonish, and nothing could be more charming to hear than de Beriot's violin accompanied by Malibran on the piano : he rarely played any but his own compositions.

Vieuxtemps.

Among violinists of his day, Vieuxtemps, who began his public performances when very young, came to hold a deservedly distinguished place. His style, I remember, as very taking, marked as it was by softness, grace, and expression ; more like that of de Beriot than of any other contemporary, showing perhaps more vigour, but it must also be said to de Beriot's credit that he did not attitudinize : here again Vieuxtemps resembled him, but neither of them were so entirely free from these adventitious and clap-trap aids as the solid, steady English violinist, Sainton, who had his admirers also. Vieuxtemps, like Sainton, who executed with science and skill, was of what may be called the dignified school, but the former certainly excited more enthusiasm among his listeners than the latter.

Sainton.

Ernst and Sivori, though contemporaries, were never rivals. Both with rare determination fixed on Paganini as their ideal of perfection, though both were too profoundly musicians for an instant to imagine they could ever rival him: he was their far-off model, and the idol of both; they worshipped him in their hearts, and when they worshipped him on their instruments it was from a very respectful distance.

Ernst and
Sivori.

As for Paganini's phenomenal one-string effects, they were convinced these could be due only to supernatural assistance; for never were they attained either by them or any other mortal man, if we except Bottesini's soul-stirring productions on the one string of his matchless double-bass.

It must be admitted, however, that these devotees succeeded in snatching something more than a shred from the mantle of their prophet, and shared it between them; for both were grand artistes, maintaining intact the individuality of their own respective geniuses.

Camillo Sivori certainly now and then caught flashes of inspiration from this great violinist; and as for Ernst, he carried his enthusiasm so far as not only to imitate Paganini in his style, but to affect his peculiarities of dress and *coiffure*, and his characteristic attitudes: by some mysterious means he even contrived to get up what might be considered a striking family likeness to him. It was well known that Ernst was so smitten with Paganini's genius that, at the age of sixteen, learning that the great *maestro* was travelling about Central Europe, he started off and, noting his engagements, followed him from town to town, halting where he halted, never missing a single opportunity of hearing him play, and watching his every movement with such absorbing interest as to seem unconscious of all else. Like Ernst, Sivori was profoundly penetrated by the marvels of Paganini's genius, and the power with which he exercised it, and they severally set him down as a phenomenon, whose very eccentricities of method they were bound

to acquire, and they pursued their efforts with religious fidelity; yet both had too much originality to become servile followers of any artiste, however great, and the result was that the original stock on which each chose to graft a new shoot remained predominant in both. Sivori was possessed with the idea that Paganini's surpassing success was due to his discovery of some secret by which to manage the instrument, and of this secret he determined he would make himself master; but, watch him as he would, the secret, if there was one, always eluded his perspicacity. Alas!—*N'est pas violoniste qui le voudrait!* Like the poet—*nascitur non fit*: the divine *afflatus* of genius is not the privilege of all: Sivori was a brilliant and most effective player, but, though a nephew of the rare *maestro*, his genius was not the genius of Paganini, and his admirers justly thought he might have been content with that which Nature had bestowed on himself. Still we can excuse the longing of a great musician to approach as nearly as possible to a greater, and that nearest approach was, alas! to hear said of him that “he was Paganini in prose!”

If Camillo Sivori loved his art, he intended that those before whom he played should love it also—that they should give heed to the music he bestowed on them and should appreciate its every *nuance*.

I remember an evening at the Albert Hall when performing one of these marvellous variations of *Paganini's* in some *Fantasias*, which had contributed to earn for the weird composer his phenomenal reputation—Sivori found that he was in the presence of a cold, dull, phlegmatic audience, whose soul even *he* had failed to touch!

The little violinist, mortified to his inmost core, was furious, but commanded his temper, and also the expression of it; then suddenly a bright idea struck him; without a pause, he changed time and tune, and by way of answering a fool according to his folly, started the music of a farm-yard. As he could command from his instrument

what sounds he pleased, he treated these hitherto apathetic listeners to the grunt of a pig, the braying of an ass, the lowing of an ox, the quack of a duck, down to the croaking of a frog—at last the audience was roused, an unbroken round of applause welcomed and encored his performance, and the ingenious musician, to his utter disgust, had to make his bow three times to the audience in response to their re-calls !

Sivori passed among contemporary artistes, as possessing many little peculiarities of character, which afforded much amusement on those pleasant and often jovial excursions denominated “provincial tours.” His portmanteau was noted for contents as multifarious as “Mary the housemaid’s drawer,” so ingeniously described by Swift : it went by the name of “the Noah’s Ark,” and realized the French idea of a “*Capharnaum*” ; but though a mass of confusion to others, he always seemed to know exactly where to find whatever he himself wanted, even in the dark. The thing itself was a ramshackle concern ; but, unsafe as it appeared, it went on holding together by some special dispensation of Providence ; and the diamond rings, pins and studs which took their chance loose among cigars, pocket-handkerchiefs, used and unused resin, fiddle-strings, collars, visiting-cards, memoranda, neck-ties, socks, and heaven knows what besides, never seemed to get lost, to the astonishment of all who knew anything of his easy-going habits. He was more indifferent to the commissariat department than any of the artistes on their travels except Bottesini and like this great ’cellist, was satisfied with whatever fare was put before him, often scarcely leaving himself time for his meals ; but his amiability and contentment at all times, was proverbial.

I never heard Paganini, though I can remember hearing Paganini. him talked of as a wonder of his time, and I remember, too, that when my father and mother went to hear him, admission was obtained with difficulty, owing to the crowds who flocked to his performances. Tickets were taken, weeks

beforehand, and the sensation he created throughout the musical world was immense and unprecedented.

The following doggerel, scribbled in one of the "jester's columns" of the time, has remained in my memory :

" When men of taste their guineas gladly pay
To hear the far-famed Paganini play,
I must confess I'd rather pay my guinea
To hear a Christian, than a Pagan, ninny."

Not more gently were the artiste's admirers handled by Sir Charles Wetherell, who wrote among his Echo-songs—

" Who are they who pay their guineas
To hear a tune of Paganini's ?
ECHO— Pack o' ninnies."

Crabb Robinson gives in his multifarious diary a *naïf*, but evidently conscientious, description of this singular artiste, so mysterious in his habits, his appearance, his genius, that many hesitated not to believe him a præternatural being, belonging "down below."

"Paganini," writes this entertaining diarist, "is really an object of wonder. His very appearance announces something extraordinary, his figure and face amounting to caricature. He is tall and slim, with limbs which remind one of a spider; face very thin, forehead broad, eyes grey and piercing, eyebrows bushy and black; nose thin and long, cheeks hollow, chin sharp and narrow. His face forms an irregular triangle; his hands, the oddest imaginable; fingers of enormous length and thumbs bending backwards. It is, perhaps, from the length of finger and thumb that he has been able to make his fiddle also a sort of lute. He came forward and played his own compositions, but from notes. Though no musician myself, I can state the sounds he produced were wonderful: high notes very faint, resembling the chirruping of birds, and then in an instant, with a startling change, rich and melodious tones as of a bass viol. It was difficult to believe this variety of sounds could proceed from one instrument. The effect was heightened by his extrava-

gant gesticulations, and whimsical attitudes. He sometimes played with his fingers as on a harp, and sometimes struck the chords with his bow as if it were a drumstick, sometimes sticking his elbow into his side and sometimes flourishing his bow. Oftentimes the sounds were sharp, like those of musical glasses, and only now and then really delicious to my vulgar ear, which is gratified merely by the flute and other melodious instruments, and has little sense of harmony."

Had these lines been read to me leaving the name of the artiste in blank, I should at once have filled in "Ernst," for



PAGANINI.

in all points it describes his appearance, his attitudes, his feats and the effects he produced, which must have been, indeed were, perhaps insensibly, modelled on those of the great master.

This writer, however, does not mention Paganini's original, and until after his time unique, *tours de force* in the magical effects he could produce with one string. The sounds his commanding hand knew how to draw out of the mysterious recesses of his violin were as eloquent as the most pathetic or the most joyous utterances of the human throat; now, it would be a touching air rendered as if there were tears

in the voice ; then an elaborate *bravura* song would come to the surprised ear with a *brio* and a power, a grace and a flexibility which—now joyful, now tender at the will of the great artiste—made the audience forget the absence of words, so absolutely *speaking* was the music. It was in 1816 that Paganini first heard that captivating popular air, *The Carnevale di Venezia*, and seized upon it, making it known all over the world by his magic treatment. Like all national airs, its origin is not to be traced, but Paganini felt at once what might be made of it, and a not-to-be-forgotten triumph of artistic skill were those fantastic variations which seemed to be derived from some impish source.

Ernst—whose very soul went with that of Paganini, and whose study of him had been so conscientious, that he would have thought it sacrilege to copy him imperfectly—used to reproduce them with dramatic effect. His hearers, oblivious of their actual surroundings, felt themselves transported into the reckless and motley crowd that filled the Venetian *Piazza*. The bright sun of Italy shone upon them ; they were canopied by its blue sky and fanned by the whirr of St. Mark's pigeons, while the *confettacci* seemed to be whizzing round their heads and peppering their faces : jostled by masques and dominoes, the sharp innuendo and the sparkling repartee were as if spoken in human tones by that magic bow, accompanied by the flash of dark, velvety eyes and the dazzle of white teeth ; so marvellously did the bantering phrases, responding to each other in pauseless succession, represent the mirth-provoking scene.

Paganini's *physique* was strangely remarkable ; there could be no mistake as to his race, and his character was as significant of it as his appearance ; his history has been romanticised more than once ; but its romanticism is not altogether fanciful. His primary object seems to have been to amass money, but, though he became fabulously wealthy, he continued to grudge every penny he parted with, and spent so little on himself that he acquired the mean and sordid

aspect, as well as the reputation, of a miser ; it was said of him by a French biographer, " On ne saurait dire de Paganini — ' C'était un avare ' ; il faudrait dire ' C'était l'avare. ' " Yet, like many other misers, he could and did perform munificent acts. When Beethoven died, he said that " more should be made of Berlioz, who was alone worthy to succeed him, " and he gratuitously sent him a cheque on Rothschild, for 25,000 francs.

But for the intense expression of genius which nothing could obscure, Paganini's features and figure would have been absolutely repulsive ; as it was, his appearance and manner suggested that there must be something either more or less than human about him, and the weirdness of his performances (never approached by any other artiste) may have gone far to give colour to the popular suspicion that his skill was the result of Satanic aid.

This great genius died at the early age of fifty-six, and his memory is held in almost deified reverence throughout his native country, more especially in Parma, where he lies buried. His son, the Barone Achille, has preserved with pious care in the Villa Gaione (to which Paganini retired in 1834), as in a museum, a multitude of interesting objects that belonged to his distinguished father : among these is the mandoline on which, as a child, he acquired the first rudiments of music ; a small Amati, on which he performed the first time he played in public, at the theatre of S. Agostino in Genoa, executing most complicated extempore variations on the French air, *La Carmagnole* ; and a violoncello made also by the Amati in 1739.

Paganini bequeathed his celebrated full-sized Guarnerius, the witness of and contributor to his fame, to Genoa, his native city, where it is preserved in a hall of the municipal palace ; but the bow is kept at Gaione, as well as a guitar, which recalls another period of his life. In this precious collection are to be found a multitude of autograph scores of music composed by Paganini, for the most part unpublished. One

section is devoted to testimonials, decorations, royal gifts, and other honourable recognitions of this virtuoso's unique genius.

Paganini's Guarnerius, as may be supposed, was inexpressibly valuable in his eyes; he cherished it with an affection at once jealous and paternal, and never lost sight of it: this violin may be said to have been almost a second self, for he had come to identify its existence with his own. One day, when returning from England, the *diligence* in the *banquette* of which he was seated, made a sudden lurch, and the box containing the precious fiddle fell to the ground; Paganini's consternation expressed itself in the most frantic exclamations, though it appeared on examination to be but slightly damaged. However, on reaching Paris, he sent it to Vuillaume, the great violin-maker of modern times: Vuillaume soon restored it to its pristine condition, but manufactured at the same time, an exact facsimile of the rare and valued instrument. He then took them both to the great *maestro*, and with grief in his countenance told him that having made an exact copy of his Guarnerius, he had somehow confused them, and now was unable to distinguish the original from the facsimile, adding that of course he (Paganini) would have only to try the two, to recognize his own.

Paganini, smiling at the possibility of a doubt, took his bow in hand and played first on one and then on the other, seemed puzzled but made a second trial, and was dismayed to find he himself could not detect the smallest difference;—so much for *prestige*!—His vexation was so intense that, after laying down these perplexing twins, he began to pace the room and at last burst into tears, when Vuillaume, feeling the joke had lasted long enough—for he had never imagined it would have become so serious—told him he had carefully marked the real one; but begged him to keep them both.

Sir William Knighton, on one of the mysterious missions he was always performing for George IV., heard Paganini in 1831 at Berlin. "He is marvellous," he wrote to a

connoisseur friend. "You are right in calling him the 'Michael Angelo of music.'"

An amusing passage of arms once took place between those two unique artistes—Paganini and Malibran: it was reported to him that the great songstress, while recognizing in him a "violoniste *au delà de la première force*," had added: "mais il ne fait pas *chanter* son instru-



PAGANINI AND MALIBRAN.
(A Contemporary Caricature.)

ment." Deep was the *maestro's* indignation: "Ha, ha!" said he; "c'est comme ça; attendez que je lui fasse voir;" and he forthwith challenged his fair critic to perform a duet with his violin which should take either part, and that, with the limited resources of one string. Malibran thought it prudent to decline this contest, but the violinist could not thus swallow the affront. Shortly after, both were to perform in the same concert. Malibran was

down for *Di piacer*, one of her most splendid successes; Paganini was to follow; he chose the same music, and divesting his violin before the public, of all but one string, he called forth all his genius, all his skill, and so marvelously simulated the *prima donna's* voice and execution, that the audience, mystified beyond expression, were persuaded that the tones could only be vocal, and that Paganini was not simply an instrumentalist of magic power, but a vocalist who, moreover, owned a splendid falsetto, and they wondered why he had so long withheld the revelation: when, however, really satisfied that what they had listened to was the *bona fide* production of a single string, they went away more confirmed than ever in their suspicions of the demoniacal agency which mysteriously aided the weird performer.

Bernard
Molique.

Of an altogether different type from any already mentioned, was that fine violinist, Bernard Molique, of the severe, rather than the graceful, school:—solid, conscientious, strictly scientific, undeviatingly correct, ruled by laws rather than fancy; classical rather than imaginative; perfect in his *technique* and conscientious in his performance—you could see what he was when you looked at his thick German figure, his square German face, his heavy German spectacles (framed, probably, in German silver). There was an honesty in his style which commanded approval rather than won admiration, but he had a wonderful mechanical facility, and played with a breadth which was the outcome of genuine musical feeling.

If Molique had an unpoetical *physique* and somewhat of a stolid expression of face, there was atonement in his tones, or rather in the tones of the mellow Stradivarius, of which he was justly proud. He had its pedigree, like its strings, at his fingers' ends, and reckoned a royal orchestra as among the scenes in which it had figured. Molique used to assert that it was a *genuine* instrument, not one of those called by courtesy a Stradivarius from having some little portion of one engrafted into some part of its structure: it had, in fact,

been made for George I., and remained in the Royal Family until after the beginning of the present century, at which time it came into the possession of a Scotch nobleman, who took it to Waterloo, he being engaged in the battle. It does not appear, however, what this Scotch warrior wanted with a fiddle on such an occasion, nor have I been able to ascertain his name, but it seems he was killed there, and his effects being sold at Brussels, Molique became the purchaser of the valuable instrument, the worth of which however, not being known to the vendor, Molique made a very fortunate acquisition: tradition has not told us why or how, but at his death the instrument passed to Baron von Dreifus, a distinguished amateur: it must have been subsequently sold again, for its present owner, Waldemar Meyer, bought it of an instrument-dealer at Berlin for £1,250.*

Molique's accompanist and inseparable companion was his clever and amiable daughter, *Fraülein* Anna, whose playing was modelled on her father's method. Molique was a reliable artiste, and during the years that he formed part of

* The following extract from the *Evénement* may be interesting to philo-violins. The date of the paper from which it is taken is somewhere during the year 1888.

"Jacob Stainer held the appointment of violinist at the court of Charles VI. ; he owned an instrument which was reputed a marvel of construction. An *écuyer* of the Prince—a veritable *mélomane*—cast an envious eye upon this musical treasure, and determined at any cost to obtain possession of it: to this end, he left no expedient untried to coax or to threaten Stainer out of it. The violinist, on his part, clung to his fiddle with as much tenacity as to his life, and it was only after being persecuted by his rival to such an extent as to embitter his days that he consented to listen to any proposal; but he named a price so extravagant that he thought the would-be purchaser would cease any longer to desire its acquisition.

"The terms he mentioned as irrevocably fixed, were the payment of a thousand silver *livres*, the undertaking to board him for the rest of his life, to defray all the expenses of his marriage in case it should please him to wed, to supply him with a complete suit of clothes once a year, and to remit to him a pension of twenty francs a month: moreover, the seller reserved the right of playing on the instrument two hours every day, and it was a strict clause in the bargain that the purchaser should never part with it under any circumstances.

"As Jacob Stainer survived this agreement twenty years, the price paid for the coveted fiddle amounted to more than thirty thousand *livres*.

"A few years ago this storied instrument belonged to M. Fraenzel, choir-master at Mannheim."

the Opera-orchestra, was regarded as one of its main-stays. It was to him that the musical education of young Carrodus was confided from the age of eleven or twelve till he made his *début* as a solo player in 1863.

The musical world agreed in opinion as to the sterling value of Molique's talent; one great merit of his style being that it was *sui generis*; he was no imitator, and if such faults as could be found with him were his own, so was the excellent quality of his performance.

To quote a recognized critic, "Molique's playing was firm in tone, and he was past-master in the management of his 'time'; he well understood the manipulation of *tempo rubato*, the largest sweeps and arpeggi being brought with a triumphant certainty within the compass of the bar in which they occurred: he was profound in his expression, without the affectation of over-intensity; *naïf* and pointed when his quaint *finale* required it and without an atom of false grotesque or caricature."

Poor Molique, after securing a really great reputation in England, returned to Stuttgart, where he fell a victim to what the French call a *maladie de langueur*, and died during the year 1869, having lost his reason some time previously.

Bazzini.

An admirable violinist was Bazzini, too little known in this country. He was one evening brought to my house by Puzzi, at whose *salon* in Jermyn Street so much talent was always to be found, and all who had heard him once, were only too delighted to experience again the pleasure his masterly performances always gave. Bazzini, notwithstanding his great gifts, was singularly modest in his self-appreciation, and if he rarely consented to perform before an English public, he was yet more reserved in submitting his talent to the judgment of a Parisian audience. Notwithstanding this hesitation, when he finally appeared before that fastidious public he was received with acclamation, and the "Grand Fantasias"—his principal compositions

—securely established his reputation in the French capital. Bazzini's personal appearance was quiet and gentlemanly, not to say commanding; his dark-whiskered face was handsome and intelligent, and he played without assuming any of those attitudes which violinists too often affect: this collectedness of manner had the effect of reserved force in an actor, and added to, rather than took from, the impassioned earnestness of some of his passages.

It has become the fashion of our day to award to Sarasate Sarasate. the palm of superiority over all artistes who have ever handled the bow—always, it must be presumed, excepting the phenomenal Paganini.

It is, however, very difficult, if even possible, to compare the merits of a present with those of a departed musical or histrionic artiste; we *do* not—in fact, we *can* not—compare them: we can only compare the *actual* with the *impression* that remains to us of the bygone performance, and the comparison, therefore, can never be quite fair. Original unquestionably is his manipulation; wondrous also are his *tours de force*; new are his attitudes; and singular is the general expression of his outward aspect, for he may be said to have assumed—whether figuratively or not—the lion's mane. It can scarcely be denied, however, that there is a little of the *poseur* in all this; few—very few—artistes are entirely free from this description of affectation, though some indulge in it to a greater extent than others. It is, however, as profitless as invidious to institute comparisons; all these celebrities are capable of standing on their own special pedestals.

Sarasate is a fine player, and has improved visibly since he first appeared amongst us. His bow-ing is perhaps exceptional, as characterized by a masterliness of style which no connoisseur could fail to observe. His performance, speaking generally, unites many perfections, and he knows how to draw the admiration and sympathy of his public. I remember one of his farewell concerts at St.

James's Hall, where the audience welcomed every piece (and he was the sole contributor) with an eagerness which could not wait till it was fairly finished: at the end, it became what may be termed a frantic ovation. In the midst of the din, a laurel wreath made its appearance: two members of the orchestra (told off for the occasion) ascended the platform to crown with it the idol of the moment. It was a stagey idea rather of the order of French sentimentality; still, had there been no hitch in the performance, the British mind might have accepted it; but apparently the ceremonial had not been rehearsed, or the promoters of the intended compliment, thinking if a thing be good there cannot be too much of it, had provided a wreath on a scale of such liberality, that instead of resting, as a well-behaved crown should, on the wearer's leonine locks, it first dropped over his eyes and thence fell on his shoulders, suggesting the idea of a face grinning through a horse-collar. The effect was so ludicrous that John Bull's sentimentalism failed to hold out, and a loud laugh, which shook the sides of the hall as well as those of the company, attended the retreat of the humiliated hero of the platform, and helped to drive his wonderful surprises and originalities out of their heads.

Bottesini.

To no double-bassist has it perhaps ever been given to "sing" more witchingly on his instrument than to that admired genius, Bottesini, too early lost to fame. His production of a tone, human in its eloquence, was startling when it pleased him to execute a *cavatina* on his huge but delicate instrument, almost of the height of his own tall figure, and yet capable of such fairy-like softness, and of such impassioned power: his command of it was complete; it seemed part of himself and responded to his touch as if he communicated to it his very soul, while, as if by mystic attraction, he drew to him the unreserved and admiring sympathy of his audience: when his master-hand controlled those magic strings and bade them speak their

thrilling utterances, it was difficult not to believe the sounds were human and that their various inflections were not modulated by the emotions of the singer.

Like Paganini, Bottesini could produce with a single string, effects which other artists have failed to carry out with *all* theirs (and that, without any loss of expression or variety of tone). Enthusiastic bravos used to welcome the telling notes—as powerful as tender—which he could produce from this frail appliance. He might have been called “Lord of the unerring bow,” as he stood there toying with his instrument and handling it with a facility and a self-possession which told how harmoniously united were master and servant, for he could make it say what he pleased and express what he felt: it was difficult to discover which of the two inspired the other.

Bottesini's own compositions and improvisations, so marked by taste and expression, always charmed as much as they astonished; but he often adopted Paganini's music, and like the weird *maestro* himself, absolutely dramatised the *Carnaval de Venise* with his intelligent phrasing of those appealing variations. No second double-bassist has arisen to touch the soul of his audience as did Bottesini, and well may those who were privileged to hear him, lament the premature death of so rare an artiste and linger in memory over those exquisite performances to which they will listen no more.

The public as a rule is selfish and ungrateful; its neglect of Bottesini's memory is an instance of it. Bottesini's name on a programme had a magical attraction, and connoisseurs would rush in crowds to hear the eloquent music of his bow. One day in 1890 he died! yes; while still capable of affording delight by his great gifts. His admirers deplored their loss—as a loss to themselves: he would never enchant them, never enthral them, never astonish them again, and they were grieved that he was dead. In the early fervour of their grief, his countrymen voted him a monument, and a

subscription was raised: the contributions came in but slowly—one franc at a time! . . . at last they reached 300 francs; 300 francs! in other words, £12; and it turned out that £10 of this amount was an offering from one single source, the house of Erard, pianoforte-manufacturers: but what follows is worse.

In an Italian musical periodical, *Il Trovatore*, under date March, 1891, we find an advertisement headed—

“CELEBRE CONTRABASSO DA VENDERE”—

and reading on, it proves to be the well-known instrument which in Bottesini's hands once made so many hearts vibrate to the marvellous harmony he drew from it—the companion and auxiliary of his genius and his glory!

“Signor
Rossignol.”

Having recalled the memory of two immortal artistes who could contrive to dispense with all their strings save one, I may mention, as recorded in the year 1805, the death of an artiste calling himself “Signor Rossignol,” who earned his living by exhibiting a yet more ingenious musical feat. Though he may be said to have had “two strings to his bow,” he had *no* strings—not even *one*—to his fiddle. Besides being a clever musician, he showed off the tricks of a number of birds whom he had ingeniously and skilfully cultivated into clever performers; and as for himself, taking in one hand a fiddle guiltless of strings, which he held in the usual way, and in the other a bow with which he *appeared* to play it, he contrived to produce an astonishing variety of rich and penetrating notes and to execute elaborate pieces. Great curiosity was evinced as to how he managed the business, suspected by some to be the result of ventriloquism. A shrewd fellow, however, watching him more closely than the rest, at last discovered the secret. Signor Rossignol had introduced into his mouth a small instrument with the aid of which he produced his harmonious airs and the marvellous *fioriture* with which he embellished them, entirely misleading his audience as to their source.

This disclosure was fatal to his reputation, and instead of obtaining credit for the ingenuity of his device and the admirable result of his invention, like poor Chatterton he was scouted as an "impostor"! and died in great poverty. "Ce que c'est que de vouloir être plus saint que le bon Dieu!"

There have been during the century some fine orchestra-
lists who splendidly illustrated the capabilities both of the Dragonetti.
violoncello and the double-bass, and how can we allude to
the instrumentalists of a bygone day without reverting to



D. DRAGONETTI.

that monarch among musicians,—the "*Patriarca dei Contrabassi*," as it became the custom to style the great and venerable Dragonetti:—so skilled in his art, so admired in the place to which his genius had lifted him in the musical world, so original in his character, so *naïf* in his observations, so droll in his expressions, so whimsical in his habits, and so respected by his contemporaries.

Apart from his professional reputation, Dragonetti in private life, was a very singular character: his lingo was perhaps the most amusing that any foreigner ever succeeded

in originating ; the perfect unconsciousness with which he interlarded his conversation, making it a veritable *cipollata* of English, French, and Bergamese, rendered all the more ludicrous, that no one could ever make out which of these three languages he *thought* he was talking.

One day, after playing before Napoleon, such was the Emperor's delight, that he inquired of him if there was not some favour he could ask, that he might have the satisfaction of according it. As Dragonetti was of a generous and disinterested disposition, it is probable his intention was to decline any reward, but he began one of his mingled speeches, uttered in his usual fluent and rapid way, till the Emperor was perfectly bewildered, nor could the bystanders, to whom His Majesty appealed for an interpretation, in any way assist him : at last, as the only way out of it, the Emperor said :

“ Tell him to take up his instrument and play it.”

With Dragonetti, as with many Italians, every one and everything was “ she,” and when angry with any one, his favourite form of abuse was—“ She ! dirty blackguard : ” he once, under pressure of some imaginary affront, applied this epithet to the Archbishop of York.

That he was the most perfect double-bassist of his day it seems superfluous to recall. The double-bass, with which he always employed a curved bow, though essentially an orchestral instrument, is well capable of being played as a solo, but Dragonetti was never heard as a soloist except on the rare occasions when a solo passage occurred in an overture or a symphony, and then the house listened with enraptured ear, loudly cheering and encoring him at the end of it. He came to form a very important component part in the opera orchestra, and it seems hardly credible that this valuable and indispensable instrumentalist never earned more than £5 a night. Costa, nevertheless, attached the greatest value to his assistance and that of his brother-patriarch, Lindley, and used to compare them to the grand old pedals

of an organ. They were inseparable in the orchestra; if one were absent so was the other, and without them Costa used to say nothing went right: he used to find himself constantly looking round for something he felt was missing, but the moment he remembered the veterans were not in their places, the shortcomings of the band were accounted for.

Dragonetti, who was born in 1755, very early manifested his musical genius, and may be said to have been absolutely self-taught; he even discovered for himself all the mechanism of the double-bass. Berini gave him a dozen lessons and then said there was nothing more he could teach him; and at eighteen he was solicited to become choir-master of St. Mark's, Venice. At Vicenza, he, quite accidentally, discovered a very wonderful instrument, which he determined to possess at any cost, and having, to his intense delight become its owner, from that time he may be said to have never lost sight of it; it was thenceforward the companion of his life and the sharer of his glory, and no offer would ever induce him to part with it. The effects he found he could produce on his favourite instrument were marvellous, and one night, thinking to try it on the monks of Sta. Giustina, at Padua, he imitated a thunderstorm; the experiment proved only too successful, for the poor fellows were so scared by what they took to be an atmospheric phenomenon, that they came out of their cells and walked in solemn procession to the chapel to deprecate the ire of heaven, which they thought had fallen on the old city.

The manager of the opera at St. Petersburg having heard of the fame of the young genius, made him a brilliant offer, but his attachment to St. Mark's was so strong that he could not be persuaded to leave it, and the Venetians on their part were so loth to lose him that, by way of inducement to him to remain, his salary was doubled. In the year 1791, however, he was persuaded by his friend Pacchierotti to visit London, and obtained a year's leave

of absence for that purpose. He was at once engaged for concerts at the King's Theatre, and at these he astonished every one by the marvellous agility with which he performed on his ponderous instrument; having speedily established his reputation he consented to remain attached to the orchestral staff of the Opera-house. So rapid and at the same time so expressive was his execution that he could take the part of the violoncello and even of the second violin in a violin quatuor: Viotti was amazed, and by way of a joke challenged him to play the part of the first violin; so marvellous was his dexterity that he succeeded to perfection, and those who had not witnessed the feat were with difficulty persuaded it had been performed. Dragonetti was for many years one of the pillars of the orchestra at the King's Theatre, where he continued to play nearly to the end of his life.

Dragonetti and Lindley soon fraternized, and, whether at the *Philharmonic* or *Ancient Concerts*, in the opera orchestra or during provincial tours and festivals, they played (and continued for nearly half a century to play) from the same desk. There is a touch of sentiment about this fact which wins our sympathy, but it was not perhaps the best thing for orchestral effect, and when, in 1833, Costa assumed the management of the orchestra at the King's Theatre, the first step he took was to alter the old arrangement of the instrumentalists, and to place them in an order that should produce the most effective result.

As a musician, Dragonetti was noticeable not only for the facile rapidity with which he read music and took in its meaning, but for the telling expression he at once threw into it, and, further, for the richness of the tone he could produce, which soon became indispensable to the requirements of the orchestra, of which he had so long been one of the chief supports. The unusually large size of Dragonetti's hands was of great advantage to him in manipulating the double-bass, and his left hand had a claw-like form, to the firmness

and tenacity of which was due that rare mastery of the strings which made his execution so even and reliable.

When residing in Vienna, Dragonetti always found a home under the hospitable roof of Prince de Staremburg, and though he resolutely adhered to his determination not to play before any one during his stay, he made an exception in favour of the Prince and his family, but he always kept his instrument under lock and key. At Vienna he formed the acquaintance of Haydn, at that time engaged on the *Creation*; also of Sechter and Beethoven.

If Dragonetti is to be considered an altogether sane man, it must be conceded he was a very eccentric one. He went, or professed to go about, in mortal fear of Napoleon, who he alleged would, if he could lay hands on him, seize and carry him off to Paris for the sake of his professional services.

Dragonetti was a confirmed snuff-taker; but, beyond this fashionable indulgence, he was given to amusing himself with dolls, of which his collection was almost as large as that of his snuff-boxes. For these latter there was the excuse that some of them were very valuable, and had been royal gifts: he was also a great amateur and collector of *chinoiseries*, and having considerable knowledge of objects of art and antiquity, he got together a valuable collection of more or less quaint and curious musical instruments, MSS., autographs, and pictures; but, once catalogued and cabinetted, he left them at rest, while the dolls constituted a daily amusement: they were quaintly costumed and far from beautiful, more especially the black one which he styled his "wife," but the whole wooden family accompanied him whithersoever he went, and he would find amusement for hours in talking to them. His little dog Carlo was never separated from him, and wherever he might be playing, it always lay at his feet.

Dragonetti died in London (1845) aged ninety, and was buried in Moorfields. He bequeathed his beloved and

certainly incomparable instrument, on which he had played for sixty years, to the sacristy of St. Mark's, Venice, the scene of his earliest triumphs ; it was made by Gasparo di Salò, the master of the Amati ; to the Prince Consort he left a fine violoncello by Bartlevi, and his vast collection of 132 original operas he bestowed on the British Museum.

But Dragonetti cannot be mentioned unattended by his shadow, the almost equally great Lindley, the violoncellist, who, with an appreciation, a fidelity, and a magnanimity not often met with between rival musicians, shared all his own musical engagements with him.

Robert Lindley, a Yorkshireman, was born in 1776, and succeeded Sperati as first violoncellist at the King's Theatre, being fully recognized as master of his instrument, in the management of which he attained such high proficiency that, while fulfilling an engagement at the Brighton theatre, he was sent for by George IV. to the Pavilion ; the King was a connoisseur, and himself no mean musician, and he delighted in Lindley's performances. The professor under whom His Majesty studied the violoncello was Crossdill, and he one day asked Lindley to make an arrangement to play a duet with this performer at a public concert at which the King intended to assist. Lindley consented, but only on condition that the score was to be strictly followed, and that neither player was to introduce any extraneous variation of it.

The duet came off ; but contrary to stipulation Crossdill struck out into the most complicated extemporaneous *floriture*, which would readily have bewildered an artiste less master of his art, and I may add, of himself, than was Lindley. The latter said nothing, and without appearing even to notice his rival's departure from the mutual understanding, contented himself with following his example, but with so much greater brilliancy and luxuriance, that it soon became a competitive game, and the audience, delighted beyond measure with what they took for the unlimited genius of

the performers, applauded to the echo, the King himself shouting—" *Bravo, bravo, Crossdill!*" "*Bravo, bravissimo, Lindley!*" to the end of the piece.

When it was over, Lindley showed his reserved displeasure, and as he put up his instrument, intimated to Crossdill that he would never again play with a man who had so flagrantly broken faith with him.

Lindley laboured under the physical and, in his case,



ROBERT LINDLEY.

serious, social disadvantage of stammering; but notwithstanding this, he made himself so agreeable that he was a universal favourite: however, although gentlemanly, hospitable, and sociable, he was before all, a musician. Once, when making a provincial tour with a party of artistes, the stage-coach capsized, and though no serious mischief ensued, all were more or less shaken: Lindley was among the latter,

and his first thought was for his violoncello; having found it under the disturbed luggage, he unlocked the case and took it out, then choosing a convenient seat on a bank by the roadside, he hastened to try it, to ascertain how it had fared. As he plied one string after the other, it emitted the most unearthly sounds, and an old lady, who in the dusk was incapable of discerning whence they proceeded, said to a gentleman who was assisting her—"Oh! never mind me, pray; go to that poor fellow on the bank who is groaning so piteously!" A very similar accident occurred a few years later to another party of artistes: in the interior of the coach were Lablache, Rubini, and Clara Novello; fortunately for the latter it was she who fell on Lablache; had she been on the other seat, she would have had but little chance of escaping a complete smash!

That Crossdill was a very distinguished violoncellist there is no reason to doubt, but he was certainly not equal to Lindley, and there is a story told of him which goes rather to diminish the fame he enjoyed during his life. One evening, when he had been playing at a concert at Carlton House, and the audience were still applauding him, an Italian instrumentalist among the listeners being asked his opinion of the performance, replied with an expressive shrug: "It was not bad for an amateur!"

George IV. often employed his leisure in playing on the instruments on which he was proficient, and among the artistes favoured by His Majesty was Holmes, who was continually summoned to the Palace to play and sing with the King.

It used to be remarked of Lindley that "with those stooping shoulders and that staid expression of countenance, he never could have been young," yet there is an anecdote told of him, by which it would appear he was once *very* young. One day he had been called upon to accompany Catalani at a rehearsal in the Argyll Rooms, a task which he modestly regarded as altogether above his merits, and he

was so entirely thrown off his balance, first by the situation, and then by the grandeur of her voice and style, in *Della superba Roma*—a magnificent air composed by the Marchese de Sampiero—that he altogether forgot himself and played a wrong note! His dismay reached the culminating point when the great singer turned upon him with an expression which seemed to annihilate him, and he fell from his seat in a fainting-fit.

Lindley attempted composition, but was not always successful; his great *forte* was the unique perfection of his accompaniment,—especially of recitative; in this he was never equalled. He was also remarkable for the quality of the tone he produced, which was full, rich, and mellow, constantly calling forth the scarcely suppressed admiration of the other orchestralists. No 'cellists or double-bassists were ever found adequately to replace the veterans Lindley and Dragonetti, though their places were, after their retirement, taken by Piatti and Bottesini, both nevertheless very fine performers. Lindley died in 1835. His daughter was married to John Barnett, the composer.

We have had few proficient on the French horn, yet is it a delicious instrument in able hands. The perfection attained by Puzzi sorely put to the test the capabilities of his nevertheless admired successor, Vivier. Puzzi had shown of what this beautiful and expressive but delicate instrument is capable, for its success entirely depends on taste and feeling, and to play it well, an artiste need be a thorough musician.

Vivier was a genius, and though he had skill and originality enough to counterbalance a multitude of shortcomings, he was incapable of submitting to the trammels of method. Puzzi's musical taste was refined, and he threw great feeling into his performances; his tone was sweet, and he had the art to select the music that suited his capabilities. Vivier was a good-looking young fellow, and there was a *brio* in his manner which took with every one, and made him a

special favourite, although his humour was of the practical class, and was apt to degenerate into the perpetration of jokes not universally popular. A practical joke, if it is to be a "good" one, requires a victim, and therefore if very *good*, it must necessarily be also very *bad*. Vivier's were occasionally harmless, but often they had too pronounced a character, in common with those of the school of Charles Nodier, Henri Murger, &c., in fact, it is evident Vivier must at some time or other have been a sharer in their *Vie de Bohème*. Even when in sedate and phlegmatic "Albion," he did not lay aside his wild vagaries: within the circle of those who understood him these were appreciated and encouraged; in Paris therefore he seemed to be under no social restraint.

One of his favourite pranks was usually played off on the occupants of any omnibus in which he happened to be a passenger and if not a very elevated performance, was at least both droll and harmless. The manner he assumed was so perfectly natural that, while condemning his practice, one could not help admiring his cleverness.

It consisted in his suddenly starting up with the air of a man who has just discovered he has forgotten something: he then sat down again, and began feeling in all his pockets and turning them inside out; after this unsuccessful search, he assumed an air of profound abstraction and perplexity. Then sitting for some time in a meditative and puzzled attitude, he seemed to remember his great-coat pockets, and proceeded to search them also; when this had been done, he got up, turned round, examined the cushion, scanned the floor, resuming the reflective position; presently, with a startling movement, he put on an expression which seemed to say: "Why, of course! What a fool I was not to think of that before!" and then with a relieved air took off his hat, looked into it, and at last secured the missing object—a letter. Replacing his hat and giving it a smart tap on the crown, he held the closed letter abstractedly before

him; all this time simulating the most *naïf* unconsciousness of the presence of any other persons. He then appeared to remember he had not put on his glasses, and laid the letter on his knee while he fumbled for them; this was a long operation, but at last they were produced and placed on his nose, proving to be a pair of most extraordinary green goggles, in heavy old tortoise-shell frames, at which it was impossible to suppress a titter; on this he looked up innocently, pretending to stare through them at the company all round, with the utmost astonishment, as if he had just discovered their existence. He now took up the letter, and having examined the handwriting of the address, seemed lost in thought as to whose autograph it could possibly be; then shaking his head as if that search were quite useless, he turned to the post-mark, scanning that closely, and then again shaking his head, as if that also afforded him no clue, he turned it over on the other side, where an enormous seal of yellow wax once more brought a broad smile to the faces of the passengers. All these sources of enlightenment proving futile, he seemed suddenly to remember that opening it would perhaps prove the best plan; with an expressive smile at his own simplicity he carefully opened the envelope, cutting deliberately round the huge seal with a grotesque old penknife produced from his waistcoat pocket. From within the envelope he drew a letter, folded in the most tortuous way, but at last got it fairly under control, flattened it smartly with the back of his hand, and began to peruse it. At the first line or two a gratified smile overspread his countenance, gradually broadening into an immoderate laugh, only to be succeeded by a sudden start, this in its turn followed by signs of disappointment and vexation, and finally by a violent stamp of the foot, with which he rose as if half frantic, and rushed out of the vehicle: the *assistance* looked at each other in a state of half mirth, half consternation; the letter, which he had flung down on the floor and left behind him, was quickly taken up by the nearest

passenger, as likely to afford some explanation of the strange pantomime, but the surprise and amusement of all was crowned, as the finder turned it towards them, and showed a piece of blank paper!

Like Frédéric Lemaître, Vivier had probably been rehearsing an intended scene and trying its effect. I had seen this gentleman before, and (though not yet personally acquainted) knew who he was. I could therefore pretty well guess at the nature of his pranks and enjoy the amazement and amusement of my uninitiated fellow-passengers. He was at that time young, and also very handsome, with a certain elegance of manner, and was got up in the *jeune France* or Boulevardier style. As may be supposed, he somewhat damaged his professional reputation by his indulgence in these questionable jokes, which he really worked up into scenes; but he acted them among, and not before, the public.

His ventriloquistic powers were remarkable, and the delicacy and accuracy of his ear were shown by the quickness with which he would acquire, and the exactness with which he would render, not only voices, accents and dialects, but the cries of beasts and birds, and the distinct notes of every musical instrument, imitating them all, down to the metallic tone and rapid execution of a musical snuff-box, so as to constitute a complete deception. His love of fun led him often to make use of these rare powers to mystify those with whom he was in company.

Vivier once played off on his *propriétaire* a droll trick; he began by imitating for some weeks, at intervals, the lowing of a cow, and to such perfection that the occupants of the other flats became convinced that he kept one in his rooms. One of them venturing one day to ask him if that were the case, he implied that it was perfectly true, and also led the inquirer to suppose he had carried it up when a very small calf, and it had now grown so large he did not know how to get it down again. The *propriétaire* being informed,

went up to Vivier's rooms and demanded to be admitted. Vivier stoutly refused, alleging he was *chez lui*, and no one had a right to enter; and when asked as to his keeping a cow on the premises he fenced so cleverly with the landlord, parrying his questions without either admitting or denying the fact, that the man went down again completely baffled. Under these circumstances, however, he considered himself justified in calling in the *commissaire*, and, accompanied by this functionary, returned to the charge. Vivier was now all bows and smiles, and with the utmost readiness invited both gentlemen into his rooms, opening all doors and even cupboards and drawers to satisfy their minds, and assuring the landlord that as he objected so strongly to his cow and he wished to be agreeable to him he had already parted with his pet, was willing to deprive himself of fresh milk, and would promise to keep no cattle on the premises in future. The *commissaire* was as much puzzled as the landlord, and went away wondering whether he himself was off his head, or if not, which of the other two was a lunatic. But the unfortunate *propriétaire* was often the victim of the tricks of his incorrigible tenant. One day Vivier called on him to request he would have a search made after two or three boa-constrictors which he missed, and thought they must have escaped into some of the recesses of the landings or staircase: the poor wretch was terrified out of his wits every time he had to leave or to return to his rooms, and certainly never loitered on the stairs.

The Emperor Napoleon III. delighted in Vivier's company, and he would often have him to spend days with him at Compiègne, to enjoy these exhibitions of his originality. The Emperor indeed bestowed on him so many marks of favour, in the form of sinecures, that invidious remarks were made on the subject, and one of the malcontents, apparently also a wit, remarked that he supposed his Imperial patron would one day make Vivier "Librarian of the *Bois de Boulogne*." Vivier had a strong physical resemblance to Napoleon III.,

and could personate him to perfection, deceiving those best acquainted with His Majesty. The Emperor would sometimes ask him to perform this feat, and would withdraw behind a curtain to enjoy the scene that followed. It must not, however, be supposed that Vivier was a mere buffoon; the singular accuracy and sensitiveness of his musical ear were almost supernatural. He took frantically to the French horn in preference to any other instrument, and besides playing it with consummate taste and exquisite expression, he was the discoverer of a phenomenal property in the instrument, till then unknown, and even since, not understood nor explained, nor yet producible by any other musician. The secret of it he always refused to impart, professing not to be able to explain it himself: the fact was nevertheless patent that he could make the instrument produce several simultaneous sounds, all perfectly harmonizing and analogous to those caused by the vibrating string of a harp; the only difference being that while the vibration of the horn gave, besides the principal sound, harmonics of the third, major fifth, eighth, minor seventh, and ninth, all intense and brilliant—that of the harp-string produces only the third, fifth, and eighth, and those very faintly. Various theories have been suggested as to the means by which he managed this extraordinary effect, but they cannot be supported, as no one else has ever succeeded in bringing it out. Vivier's concerts were the most peculiar of entertainments; all Paris rushed to them; that is, the *élite* of Paris society; they took place once a year only, and at the *Théâtre-Italien*.

The *Salle* was full almost as soon as the doors were open; there was not so much of it that the audience could afford to lose a single note, but so completely established was the character of the *beneficiaire* for eccentricity that whatever he chose to do was accepted as altogether beyond discussion. The hour announced struck. Vivier was punctuality itself; with the last stroke of the clock he appeared on the platform; no accompanist supported the tones of his instrument;

he was alone to perform, but . . . he was Vivier. He was sure to be loudly acclaimed, and he bowed his acknowledgments. A minute after, and the horn was to his lips: a performance—but what a charming performance!—. . . of ten minutes, followed; this was succeeded by an *entr'acte* of half an hour's duration, but the company was select, and they mostly knew each other; the half hour's interlude therefore occasioned no annoyance, it made a lounge and supplied an opportunity for these fashionables to meet and chat; the performance recurred three, rarely four, times, so did the intervals, and the concert was concluded: no auxiliary helped to fill up the programme or the time. Vivier was the sole performer; and the audience, who would have resented such treatment from any other artiste, knew full well that they must let him do as he pleased.

When Vivier made his provincial tours he took advantage of his visits to the different towns to pose as an eccentric, and seemed always to find some original and ingenious farce to play off, by way of astonishing the natives. In one town, he would parade the streets with a snow-white cock perched on his shoulder. In another, viz.: Lisbon, he hired an expensive *appartement* with a handsome balcony, and there he would parade himself habited in a gorgeous dressing-gown, much after the fashion of the Duke of Brunswick, only instead of smoking a hookah, Vivier employed himself in blowing soap-bubbles, as if for his own amusement, utterly unheeding the crowd which he knew must be gathering below: in short, by these ludicrous tricks he made himself so remarkable that he was constantly mobbed in the streets, and on that occasion was obliged to leave the Capital without giving his concert.

The horn, which has become so valuable an orchestral auxiliary, was originally employed only when a loud, sonorous, and far-sounding signal was required, whether in the hunting, or the battle, field, and when first introduced into the orchestra was regarded as too loud and coarse to be

often available; its modification by means of stops, and the manageable condition to which it has been brought as the the "French horn," has capacitated it for rendering soft, delicate, and mellow tones and for producing the utmost tenderness of expression.

Rossini, who was the son of a horn-player, introduced horn-music into his operas, where it always told effectively. In the beautiful music of *Guglielmo Tell*, it has always been greatly admired. Balfe owed to the horn-introduction preceding his *Light of Other Days* the popularity of that once well-known song.

Perfection on the horn is not to be acquired without considerable labour and practice: indeed, its acquisition at all, would seem to require unsuspected skill and perseverance. This fact is illustrated by an amusing incident in the career of Spohr, who discovered the difficulties of the instrument in a singular way.

Spohr.

In 1808, when Napoleon held the Congress of Princes at Erfurt, the violinist in question felt an invincible curiosity to see this assemblage of royalties; he therefore betook himself to Erfurt, where the Emperor, who was very fond of music and the drama, enjoyed those amusements in the evenings. A French troupe, including the great actors of the time, among whom were, of course, Talma and Mad^{lle}. Mars, had been engaged, and Spohr hoped to be able to wriggle himself into some corner of the house to see the celebrities both before and on the stage. Great therefore was his mortification to find the public altogether excluded and every seat appropriated to such persons as the King delighted to honour: blue blood alone could enter there, and the very pit was filled with sovereigns and their suites! Never was such a house before or since.

Spohr had a friend who was second horn-player, and bethought him, in this emergency, of claiming his co-operation; he persuaded him to feign illness, and to apply to the bandmaster to allow him to take his place. To this end,

of course he was obliged to acquire his friend's part, and it was only on taking up the instrument to try it that he found what a difficult task he had set himself: it took him a day and a half to be able to produce the simple notes; but by the evening, with all the muscles of his face strained and stiff, and his lips swollen and black, he could just contrive to get through his part which happily was not very elaborate. Napoleon had chosen the centre stall of the front row for himself, and was to sit enthroned there in the midst of his princely guests. Spohr was rejoicing in the fine view he should enjoy of all these personages, when he discovered, to his dismay, that the formal orders of the Emperor were that the musicians should play with their backs turned to the audience, and that they were forbidden under any circumstances to turn their heads! But the German virtuoso was a man of persevering and determined character, so he imagined a second expedient, and providing himself with a pocket-mirror, he contrived at last to obtain an excellent view of those who composed this unique audience.

Spohr had a fine Guarneri which seems to have excited the cupidity of some dishonest fellow, who must have coveted it for its intrinsic or its professional value; but its loss was disastrous to its owner. He had made up his mind to visit Paris, where he intended to make his *début* in 1804, and had it with him on the top of the diligence. It was apparently abstracted with some cleverness, for he never heard of it again: his journey to Paris was abandoned, his engagement was never concluded, and he only saw the Capital for the first time in 1834.

I don't know if any one still remembers Schlesinger, best known in France, where he was admired as a composer and musical critic. He played the violin and also the piano, and was a *salon* performer, especially of his own graceful and taking airs. One of his favourite compositions was a waltz-tune with elaborate variations. One day, in London, the young master of a house where the composer was much received,

Schlesinger.

taking advantage of the waxed floor prepared for a ball in the evening, caught his sister round the waist and they started off on a round dance together; a brother who was present, sat down to the piano, and by way of accompaniment played off a waltz of Schlesinger's. In the midst of their hilarity, the door opened, and Schlesinger was announced: owing to the noise no one had heard his arrival till he had advanced to the middle of the room, and there he stood, transfixed with indignation, his face dangerously crimsoned.

"Vat do you dere, sare?" he said in tones which brought all the giddy young people to their sober senses. "Know you den not"—he continued, as soon as he found he had caught their ear—"dat *my* valtzes aire not meened for to valtz to?" and grievously hurt, he turned and left the house.

Schlesinger was editor of the *Gazette Musicale* in Paris, where his musical talents were highly appreciated; his criticisms were respected for their fairness and were admired for the knowledge of art they displayed: in March, 1837, the *Opéra Comique* in that capital was under the (mis-)management of a M. Crosnier, who appears to have been guiltily conscious of his inability to carry out his undertaking, for knowing that Schlesinger, whose judgment was universally recognized, could not but give an unfavourable report of the very faulty orchestration at that house, he refused him admittance.

Schlesinger made no observation, and withdrew; but in justice to his "columns" he was obliged to state why no report of the performance would appear in them. Besides this, he brought a *citation* against M. Crosnier for the damage done to his paper, inasmuch as he had disabled him from fulfilling his promise to give his readers an account of the performance. On the case being heard, M. Crosnier was condemned to hand over five hundred francs to M. Schlesinger, to pay the costs of the action, and to cause a copy of the judgment to be published in fifty copies of the theatrical bill, as well as in four journals.

Among the professional instrumentalists known to the musical public a quarter of a century ago, was that modest and retiring, but intelligent and talented young fellow, Giulio Regondi. He excelled on two instruments which no one else ever succeeded in perfecting, but in his hands they became unrecognizable. One of these was the concertina, the other the meagre and ungrateful guitar to which he imparted the fulness, sweetness, and softness of the harp; the rattling and jarring jingle, thitherto its

Giulio
Regondi.



GIULIO REGONDI.

notorious characteristic, was no longer heard, for he had discovered a mode of carrying on the tone so as to give it a power and a force of which no one had ever thought it capable. In fact he may be said to have converted the guitar into a solo instrument, astonishing all his hearers by the unprecedented and beautiful effects he produced.

Regondi was still young when he was overtaken by a frightful malady—a cancer in the throat—which put an end

to his professional career. He bore this terrible affliction with rarely-exemplified courage and resignation for more than two years before he died.

We must suppose Regondi's talent was unique; for, notwithstanding the practical evidence he gave of the capabilities of the instruments he had chosen, no performer has ever followed in his wake, and they have, since his death, relapsed into their former insignificance.

Whether among his fellow-artistes or in general society, Regondi was always amiable and agreeable, nor was there in his character the smallest tinge of vanity, self-sufficiency, or professional jealousy; if he had a fault it was that he was too unconscious of his remarkable gifts: indeed, his proficiency came to him by nature, and became great by experience and practice; at eight years old he was already performing in public, and at that early age had attained to a mastery never reached by any other professor of the instruments he subsequently made so entirely his own. Regondi's features beamed with good nature, and his face always remained innocent and boyish; it would have been difficult to guess his age from his personal appearance, his light, elastic step and general expression; so youthful was his bearing. Every one who knew Regondi esteemed him, and my own sympathy for him was greatly increased by what I heard of him from the good Father who attended him during the two years that he lay dying, never repining at his hard fate or deploring the premature close of his unfulfilled existence.

Liszt.

There has not been perhaps a more eccentric character among the musicians of the century than the so-styled "Abbé" Liszt. For a man of unusually powerful intellect, the narrowness of mind which made him an unmitigated *poseur* is unaccountable; his great ability placed him so much above the ordinary level of his fellow-musicians that one would have expected to find him content with the grand and indisputable superiority with which nature had endowed

him ; it is strange it should never have occurred to him that, by seeking to distinguish himself from others by ridiculous and contemptible singularity, he was unconsciously doing his best to undermine the pre-eminence that all were so willing to recognize.

Abbé Liszt's life has been the theme of so much gossip, as well as so much biographizing, and his sayings and doings have been made so familiar to the public, that there is little left to say of him even by a personal acquaintance. My earliest recollection of this much-talked-of worthy is when he was first in England as a young man, known only as a musician of genius and a phenomenal performer on the pianoforte. He came one night, by invitation, to a private concert at my house, and before going upstairs inquired whether the piano was a "grand," as he could not think of playing on any other. As every one was eager to hear him, I suppose I must say "fortunately" it was, and we were treated to one of his extraordinary performances. I can picture him to myself now, with his long, straight hempen hair shaken periodically back, his wild attitudes, now stooping over the keys, now with his figure thrown back, his hands flying up and down, backwards and forwards, with a rapidity incredible, his vehement blows on the notes, his equally vehement use of the pedals, as if every limb must be pressed into the service, his eccentric pauses, his abstracted air ; all so very effective in their way, and no doubt intended to be so.

Liszt studied under his compatriot, Czerny, who was fond of chaffing, and sometimes of puzzling him. One evening, when some of Czerny's professional chums were in his music-room, he took a sheet of music-paper, filled it with notes, and placing it on the piano-desk before Liszt, desired him to play it. The pupil looked at it without being able to make out what it meant, but obeyed, and then, rising from the music-stool, remarked—

"Maître, c'est pourtant bien difficile."

Czerny's smile, however, betrayed a trick, on which Liszt, not altogether pleased at having been caught, could not help saying—

“Comment, Maître, c'était donc de la drogue?”

“Guesce gue cela fous fait,” answered the Hungarian *maestro*, “buisque fous l'afez choué?” and he added to those around him that there was not one of them who could have played it, admitting that he had taken advantage of their presence to test the powers of his favourite pupil.

Liszt was one of those men who are enthusiastically admired and contemptuously satirized at the same time according to the appreciation of their public; those who extravagantly lauded him being convinced of the marvellous magnitude of his genius, while those who ridiculed him were dissatisfied with what they considered his affectation. Sims Reeves and Henry Irving, among others, may be cited as examples of artistes who are also admired and disliked in extremes.

Kontski.

A popular pianist of Russian birth was Chevalier Kontski, whom I have often heard play; but, apart from his great facility and good taste, I do not know that there is anything very distinctive in his style. The Chevalier was, however, always a great favourite with his *confrères* for his imperturbable good humour, and especially for his talent in narrating adventures and anecdotes, of which he had, it appears, an immense fund at command, and he would bring them out during the travelling hours of provincial tours in which the others were always pleased to include him.

Numerous are the pianoforte players (nearly all Jews) of whose proficiency on that unsatisfactory instrument I could relate personal experiences. Leopold de Meyer, Assher, Kuhe, Rubinstein, Tito Mattei, &c., though each was marked by distinguishing characteristics, all agreed in their merciless treatment of the instrument, and the first mentioned once actually dislocated a finger from the excess of his energy!

Of all the pianists I have heard, and their name is legion, I venture to confess that, not excepting Arabella Goddard, Mrs. Anderson pleased me the most. She is probably almost forgotten now, though such of her contemporaries as still survive, will remember those wonderfully (and not beautifully) prominent eyes of hers, said by physiologists to be indicative of musical genius. Mrs. Anderson, considered the finest interpreter of Beethoven's music, was a favourite with the Queen and Royal Family, and had the honour of giving lessons at the Palace, where, even after her Royal pupils grew up, she was always received with the greatest affability and kindness. Although encouraged by the approval of connoisseurs and chosen as the instructress of persons of rank, Mrs. Anderson had so little vanity, and was so wanting in self-confidence, that—as she once told me—she never could overcome the nervous terror with which she always sat down to the instrument in public performances. Perhaps with a woman's tact, she discerned on the countenances and in the attitude of her audiences, the feeling of dread which so often pervades a room whenever a pianist, even professional, places himself at the piano, and she may have noted the weariness of spirit which sends one half of the company to sleep, and sets the rest whispering to relieve the monotony of the performance, till, having dragged its slow length along through the prescribed "movements" to the wished-for end, the last note is drowned in the tremendous applause accorded to it. . . .
"perchè è finito."

Mrs.
Anderson

MUSICAL NOTES AND THEIR ECHOES.
MISCELLANEOUS MUSICAL ARTISTES OF NOTE.

CHAPTER VII.

MUSICAL NOTES AND THEIR ECHOES.

MISCELLANEOUS MUSICAL ARTISTES OF NOTE.

“Such music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory.”

SHELLEY.

ANY one speaking of “John Parry,” *tout court*, would certainly be supposed to allude to John Parry, junr., and it may surprise those of his day who admired the singular genius of the son in all its versatility, to learn that he had a father to whom he was in many respects inferior.

John Parry
(père).

Many years ago I knew John Parry, senr., he was then getting on in years, though at that time and up to his death still engaged as musical critic to the *Morning Post*, and held in great esteem by its then proprietor, Mr. Nicholas Byrne and his son and successor, Mr. William Pitt Byrne.

John Parry, senr., was, *intùs et in cute*, a musician: he could command any instrument he took into his hands, and once there, could make it “discourse most excellent music.” The fertility of his musical imagination was astonishing, and the countless number of pieces he composed found the highest favour with his contemporaries. There are fashions in melodies as in all else that addresses itself to human taste, and this must account for the fact that Parry’s once popular compositions are little known to the present generation: he seemed to have music intuitively in his nature, and while excelling on the piano and the organ, manipulated, with equal facility and effect, the fife, clarinet, flute, flageolet, ’cello, violin, harp and guitar; he could

manage the stops of any wind instrument, and played them with consummate skill, taste, and feeling.

A musician, *primis cunis*, his musical genius developed itself without adventitious training; he once told me that while quite a boy, so determined was he to try his powers, that he manufactured the instrument which was to test them, out of a piece of cane which he picked up; of this he formed a rough fife, and without having received any musical instruction, could play on this primitive instrument any tune he had once heard: his father had a friend, a good-



JOHN PARRY, SENR.

natured old French dancing-master, who showed the boy the musical notes on his kit, and, possessed of this knowledge, he proceeded to perform airs of his own imagining. The parish clergyman chancing one day to hear some of these improvisations, coaxed him to join the village choir, and he was very soon promoted to its leadership.

From this humble beginning he progressed so rapidly that he was in a few months advanced to play in the band of the Denbigh Militia, and ultimately (in 1797) when he had reached his twentieth year, became their band-master.

I forget what brought him to London—probably his own ambition—but when he arrived in the metropolis, he discovered what he modestly termed his “deplorable *ignorance*,” and no doubt there was considerable deficiency in his attainments with regard to the career on which he proposed to enter; he therefore set himself to work to acquire the knowledge he found he must possess if he were ever to take a place in the profession. In order to support himself while pursuing his studies, he was obliged to sacrifice part of his time to giving lessons on the flageolet, clarinet, and flute, earning just enough for his imperative needs, but his perseverance was ultimately rewarded; he soon became known, and had the satisfaction of finding his proficiency appreciated far beyond his own inadequate estimation of its value.

John Parry (*père*) was a delightful old fellow, and when I first knew him, in 1842, his conversation was always lively and interesting. He had passed through many vicissitudes, but nothing could ever weaken his patriotism; he thoroughly enjoyed conducting the Bardic congresses, and presided over them for many years. Get him on Welsh bardism and its traditions, the Triads, the Mabinoggion, or indeed any legendary lore of the Cwmry, and his whole soul was poured out, with the most enthusiastic impulsiveness. For his collection of Welsh melodies, he obtained from the Cambrian Society a silver medal, of which he was very proud, as well as of the bardic degree conferred on him at a *gorsedd*, where he was named *Bardd Alaw* (master of song).

He once performed the feat of playing at the same time on three flageolets fixed before him on a stand: this unique exhibition of skill and musical knowledge was so highly appreciated by the audience, that the fame of it was not allowed to drop, and on the occasion of an entertainment given to assist Dibdin's widow, Parry was requested to repeat it. The double flageolet was his preferred instrument, and I still possess the one on which he was in the habit of per-

forming, and which he bequeathed to me. John Parry's eminence as an instrumentalist did not prevent him from writing as well as composing for the stage, and besides his successful and admired songs, of which many volumes exist, he wrote a very good piece called *A Hint to Husbands*, which had a run of twenty-five nights, and two capital musical farces,—words and music. Exclusive of his dramatic efforts, of setting to music the *libretti* of several operas, and compiling books of musical instruction, he composed upwards of three hundred pieces of the most varied character.

John Parry used frequently to dine at our house, and on one of these occasions I remember his taking from his pocket a small instrument on which he performed under the table; it had a very sweet tone and was capable of great execution, but though he afterwards again brought it, he never would let it be seen, nor would he say what it was, nor yet in what way it was played.

John Parry
(*filia*).

It is a noteworthy fact that, with the sole exception of John Parry, not one of all the celebrated artistes we have had—whether vocal or instrumental—seems to have left a son or a daughter inheriting the parental gifts or capable in any way of perpetuating the fame of names borne with so much professional distinction. The precocious taste for music manifested by young John was carefully cultivated, and as he showed a predilection for the harp, his father humoured his taste and instructed him on that instrument; later, he developed a capacity for singing, and took to the guitar, on which instrument, as well as on the harp he would accompany himself when quite young with great skill and feeling, generally preferring pathetic and sentimental ballads. His father being intimate with Mr. Nicholas Byrne, often dined at his house; on these occasions “Johnnie” used to be put on the table after dinner where he would delight the guests by the display of his talents, truly remarkable at this very early age. In after years, when he had become a celebrity, Mr. Byrne having remarked

one day to his old friend John Parry (*père*), "Johnnie has become quite a lion now!" the old man answered, not without emotion—

"Yes, Mr. Byrne; but I shall never forget that it was you who gave him his mane."

The intense feeling young John could throw into sentimental songs charmed musical connoisseurs, and it would



JOHN PARRY, JUNR.

have been regrettable that he did not retain that style as a *spécialité*, had he not shone with equal brilliancy in an altogether opposite class of music. I remember, when he was about twenty, hearing him (at the "Assembly Rooms" on the "pantiles") at Tunbridge Wells, where he sang to his own harp accompaniment *The Auld Kirkyard*

with infinite sweetness, and such exquisite pathos as to bring tears to the eyes of the audience. It was in 1836 that he first exhibited his comic genius in a duet with Malibran, —*When a little farm we keep*,—which brought him great applause. He was a very clever mimic, and used to convulse the audience with his imitations of various professional singers and actors, especially Harley, Buckstone, and Keeley. In 1838 he made a great hit at the St. James's Theatre as an actor, taking the character of *Noodle* in the revived performance of *Tom Thumb*; he also sang at this theatre, in three voices, a clever *buffo trio* in which he personated Grisi, Ivanoff, and Lablache—Lablache! fancy that! In 1840 followed the well-known series of comic songs which attracted such abundant audiences—*Fayre Rosamonde*—in which he introduced a parody of Mario's serenade from *Don Pasquale*, altering *Comè gentil*, to “*Come, if genteel, my addresses you feel*”—*Miss Myrtle is going to marry*, *The Old Bachelor*, *Blue-Beard*, *Wanted a Governess*, &c. In 1840 John Parry showed himself to be an expert limner, exhibiting some exceedingly clever pencil and water-colour sketches, after which he was recognized as a complete master of the pencil; his touch was unmistakably that of an artist, and there was, about all his productions in whatever style, a feeling which immediately attracted and enchained the eye. About 1850 John Parry's health began to give way, and he became subject to attacks of nervousness which made it extremely difficult for him to continue his profession as a public performer. His father told me that but for his excellent and devoted wife, he would have had to give in long before; but she used to accompany him to the theatre or concert-room as the case might be, and after standing by, helping and encouraging him all the time he was dressing, she would push him gently on to the stage or platform: once there, all went well, but after the performance, his nervous depression returned, and at length took so serious a turn that he was obliged to abandon his occupation. For some

time, to the universal regret, nothing was seen or heard of John Parry ; but in 1853, having gone to Southsea for the benefit of his health, he accepted the post of organist at the church, and was so sought after as a master that he was induced to give lessons there and obtained a very large *clientèle*. It was in 1860 that, comparatively restored to his former self, he joined Mr. and Mrs. German Reed and by his smart and ingenious contributions, imagined, written and composed by himself, ensured the success and fame of those popular entertainments which his genius made so attractive. It was not till 1869 that John Parry finally made his bow to the British public ; but, unfortunately, after he had realized a handsome fortune, he was induced to speculate in Welsh slate mines, and so lost nearly all he had earned ! A benefit night at the Gaiety was got up on his behalf in 1877, and in 1879 he died.

It should be noted that John Parry's musical genius was entirely idiosyncratic, there never was another artiste like him ; his gifts were universal and seemed exhaustless, like the compass of his voice, which gave him a singularly felicitous capacity for singing either tenor or barytone songs ; the power and scope of his *falsetto* often took his audiences by surprise.

John Parry's descriptive powers were marvellous ; in the character-sketches he produced, he not only gave evidence of an extraordinarily rare originality and humour, to which there seemed no limit but that of good taste, but, unaided by any kind of accessory and supported solely by the piano, which he had under complete control, he could bring to the imagination of his listeners, as it were concrete representations of places and people with the accompaniments of time, weather, atmosphere, and detail of circumstance, all so vividly rendered, that when it was over, it required a mental effort on the part of the audience to realize that they had not been actual spectators of, and participators in, the scenes with which he had surrounded them. I know of only one other artiste—Levassor—who could in any way be

said to bear comparison with John Parry; but even he, supremely clever as he was, yet wanted some of Parry's qualifications, among them his unique musical pre-eminence and the magic skill with which he touched the piano, making it literally respond to every humour in which he chose to address it; this never failed each time to arouse the astonishment of his auditors.—To those who build theories on atavism, this instance of heredity from a gifted father may be interesting.—Nor was Levassor a draughtsman, whereas John Parry, whether with the magic touch of an instrument or the expressive stroke of his pencil, could convey to the minds of others the fresh and original impressions of his own, as eloquently as by uttered words. There is no doubt that John Parry might have been a great artist had he confined himself to the studio, but so versatile were his gifts, that he would have succeeded in whatever he undertook.

Levassor.

My recollection of Levassor's peculiar genius must not be passed over in this record of departed singers and entertainers. His performances were marked by a delightfully surprising originality of thought and imagination; but, though an admirable actor, he shone more brightly on the platform than on the stage. He was the best representative of the irresistibly-amusing *chanté-parlé* style for which he wrote both his own music and words. His compositions were comic songs of an elaborate character; they were produced with scenery and costume, and in the course of the several stanzas of which they consisted he related some ludicrous story, alternately spoken in prose and sung in verse. Their number and variety were marvellous, and the spontaneity of their humour, which never flagged, and never degenerated into coarseness, was marked by a freshness which was delightful. His *répertoire* was inexhaustible, for so was the fertility of his imagination; he seemed able to do any thing he pleased, and his *tours de force* as an actor were incredible to those who had not witnessed them. He would undertake the entire *dramatis personæ* of a piece, and so

cleverly was the dialogue arranged, it was only when it was over that one remembered there had been only one performer throughout.

By means of a highly developed power of ventriloquism he would play scene after scene, without any co-operation, carrying on a conversation—sometimes while standing at a window, or on the threshold of a door—with three or four imaginary persons outside, or with unseen persons upstairs, downstairs or in an adjoining room ; sometimes the dummy



LEVASSOR.

would be in bed, or lying on a couch, or inside a sentry-box, or within a trunk ; but under whatever form he disguised his interlocutors, the voices were so skilfully changed, that each remained distinctly the same throughout, and also distinctly apart from his own.

I remember him in a piece in which he assumed and maintained three characters concurrently:—the young recruit drawn for the conscription, groaning over his *mauvais*

numero, and taking a broken-hearted leave of his mother; the *troupiér* in the flower of his age hankering after "*la gloire*," raving about his "*patrie*," and ready to seek "the bubble reputation e'en in the cannon's mouth"; and lastly, the lean and slippered pantaloon, the patriarch of the family seated in the chimney corner fighting his long-since battles over again, and tended with admiring veneration by his grandchildren. I have also seen Levassor sustain with complete distinctness seven characters in the same piece; and in the *Troubadour Omnibus* he appeared simultaneously in ten parts, his ubiquitous genius enabling him to exhibit each as an absolutely distinctive personality.

In *Le mal de mer* he was *impayable*; never was there a more humorous representation of the typical British tourist, and nowhere was this character more successful than in London. "Sir Robinson" is on the steamer crossing the Channel: he is accompanied by his faithful umbrella, his hold-all, carpet-bag, rug, walking-stick, field-glass, gun, overcoat, waterproof, portmanteau, hat-box, and of course Murray's handbook, each in its turn slipping out of his grasp, while he talks the most incomprehensible cockney-French and makes himself generally ridiculous; then in the midst of it all, he suddenly rushes or rather reels to the side of the vessel, and after a few minutes' contemplation of the sea, turns round with a complexion he has contrived to render perfectly green. One evening after dining at my house, he chose to perform this piece, and so life-like was the representation that a friend who had crossed that day, and had had a very bad passage, declared she could not trust herself to remain in the room.

He could disguise himself so cleverly as to deceive his most intimate acquaintances; one night at a *souper fin* at *Champeaux's*, where there was a joyous gathering of artistes, he laid a wager with the famous L'Héritier (of the *Palais Royal*) that he would some day or other assume a *travesti* so deceptive that even *he* would not discover him.

L'Héritier laughed him to scorn, but accepted the bet, assuring him that he really presumed too much on his powers, and resolving to keep a sharp look-out for the promised *épreuve*. The little banquet went on with a succession of *propos joyeux*, in which every one was absorbed, when the *garçon* came in to serve the coffee. He was smart and active enough in his service, but astonished the company by his insolent and off-hand manner,—clumsily tilting over Ozy's cup, spurting the liquid on to Hyacinthe's irreproachable shirt-front, scalding L'Héritier's hand, which happened to be on the table, pouring out only about a teaspoonful for Ravel, and after coolly helping himself with his fingers to a lump of sugar and dipping it into Déjazet's coffee, seating himself on the edge of the table and proceeding to suck it. The guests looked in astonishment first at this ill-mannered cub, and then at one another; and L'Héritier—the president and organizer of the little *fête*—became so irritated at the cool impudence of his behaviour that losing all command of his temper, he collared the fellow and shook him contemptuously, expressing his indignation in unmeasured terms.

“ Ah! c'est comme ça! Voilà qui est un peu fort! je m'en vais vous faire chasser sur le champ. . . .” Then, accompanying each epithet with a fresh shake, and calling him — “ impertinent! malappris! maladroit!” he finally opened the door and sent him into the passage with a kick, *là où le dos perd son nom*.

The *garçon* resisted, vociferated, apologized, and finally began to blubber, till, to put an end to the *quid pro quo*, Levassor—for it was no other—dropped his apron, pulled off his wig, whiskers, and other distinguishing characteristics of the calling he had personated, exclaiming: “ Ah, L'Héritier! te voilà pris, et encore pris de bonne guerre.”

The fact was, neither L'Héritier, albeit he had been warned nor any of the others, though all practically aware of the deceptions of a clever disguise, entertained the re-

motest suspicion as to who the ill-mannered *garçon* might be. But Levassor was a born actor; he was more—he was a *poet* in the classical sense of the word; he might be called the poet *par excellence* of *genre*, and as such we may accord him the homage of our grateful appreciation. The man who, by the force of his natural wit, by the power of his unassisted humour, and the spontaneity of his intelligent invention, can withdraw his fellow-beings for even one refreshing hour from the wearing strain of business and the stern realities of life, has a large claim upon our gratitude, for he is a moral benefactor.

Those who have experienced in the genial presence of poor Levassor's sunny smile a temporary suspension of the graver occupations of life and the anxious cares of duty—who have enjoyed the relief of being carried away by the spirit of his brilliantly artistic impersonations, who have been interested in following the nice and ingenious appreciation with which every muscle, whether of his face or figure, responded to the ideal his imagination had devised, will not be sorry to linger a moment over the memory of one whose joyous humour and unique attributes will never more, except in recollection, call up a smile round their lips.

Levassor dated from the last century, and was born at Fontainebleau; his father was an officer under the first Napoleon, a "*vieux de la vieille*," and although he was amused at the imitative powers of his precocious child, he was so far from foreseeing the professional eminence to which these remarkable gifts would lead him that he had from his birth destined him for the priesthood, and young Levassor himself passed from infancy to youth in the belief that he had a vocation for the sacerdotal office. That he was destined to be an artiste, however, soon became obvious to himself, but the transition from the career for which he had been intended to that for which he now felt himself to be fitted, was so violent that he long hesitated to broach the subject to his father: still there was no avoiding this

preliminary step, and he at last made up his mind to break the matter to him as delicately as he could.

Levassor was at this time little more than fifteen, but his powers of mimicry, which had always been a source of intense amusement to his family and friends, now developed so rapidly that he felt convinced he could entertain and astonish a general audience if he could only obtain permission to study and practice the detail of histrionic art. His imagination was as brilliant and as fertile as were his powers of execution, so he set to work to invent a scene, in which he should personate a dozen characters, and when he had perfected his little *libretto*, coaxed his father to listen to the performance from an adjoining room, leading him to suppose the affair was got up between himself and a party of his schoolfellows. He had devised a *diligence*-episode and started by acting the postillion whose tone and jargon he imitated to perfection, at the same time producing the creaking of the wheels, the smacking of the whip, and the oaths administered to the horses, who were represented as being driven over a rough road with considerable stumbling and kicking; then the ponderous vehicle, clattering into the inn-yard, was brought to a halt, the conductor roaring out for the *maritorne*—"Catherine!"—who replied in a hoarse female voice that she was coming, but did not omit to swear at the impatience of the driver, her words, at first muffled by the distance, becoming more distinct as her heavy *sabots* brought her out of the house, carrying the wine for which she had been asked: meanwhile the ostlers were heard bustling about, changing the horses and making their observations partly to the driver, partly to the passengers, who, waking up from their jolted slumbers, began uttering their various sentiments. The travelling Englishman, with "*son fa-a-me et sa parapluie*," hopes that that cursed *nourrice* and her *bébé* which is screeching violently, are going to alight; a maiden lady utters a loud scream on finding that her *Mimi*, which she had carefully

packed in a basket, has bounded through the window while she opened the lid just to give him air, and a *gamin* is making fun of the incident.

In the *rotonde* is a "*fin Normand*," who discovers he has lost his purse and insists on having his neighbour searched; the latter, who is a *Gascon*, replying in quite another dialect, and with a succession of "*Cent-dis et caddé-dis*" declaring he will cite that *Normand* before the *tribunal* for defamation of character, for an Italian passenger proclaims in broken French that he has just picked up the purse where the *Normand* must himself have dropped it: from the *banquette*, an *Alsacienne* and a *Marseillaise* are quarrelling over a basket, both claiming it with equal vehemence, till a second basket is found so similar to it in all respects, that the dispute is fully explained: all this time the horses are stamping their hoofs on the stones—the tired team puffing and panting, the fresh team eager to be off, while the ostlers keep up a running fire of that peculiar lingo which may be termed the *argot* of the stables: at length matters are adjusted *tant bien que mal*; the irritating shout, "En voiture, messieurs, en voiture," provokes a mingled volley of abuse from all the passengers at once, in their various tones, sexes and dialects, and the *diligence* scrambles out of the yard to pursue its pitch-and-toss pace on the road.

The old gentleman's surprise may be imagined when, (after laughing so heartily at the droll *réparties* with which this complicated scene has been carried on, that the tears were running down his face) on being allowed to penetrate into the room he found neither actors nor scenery, and no one there but his boy.

After this practical demonstration, the old man could scarcely be indisposed to listen to his son's proposal to abandon the seminary and prepare himself for the stage or the platform, his ambition being to take his start on his own independent capabilities as a public entertainer. The *Capitaine* was embarrassed only as to the ways and

means of carrying out his son's wishes, but the latter seems to have had an excellent head for business ; he had planned to get somehow or anyhow to Paris, and when once there, to bide his time and hit upon any expedient that chanced to turn up. As soon as his father considered him old enough to be trusted alone in the great, wicked Capital he got him a situation as traveller in silks, and it was while carrying on this business that Levassor was fortunate enough to come under the notice of Déjazet,—Déjazet to whom so many aspiring artistes, and even authors of subsequent celebrity, owed their first step in life.

It has been said that however quickly a clever lad may have run up the ladder whether of fame or fortune, it will always be found that he was lucky enough to find some one to put his foot for him on the first rung.

Déjazet was (as any one familiar with her quick, intelligent face will readily believe,) wonderfully accurate in her appreciation of her fellow-beings, and often detected in young *débutants* latent genius for which others gave them no credit. A passing remark sufficed—like a straw on the stream—to indicate to her discerning eye what there was in a man, and some such hint, of which Levassor was probably not conscious himself, afforded her the key-note of his character and led to the patronage and protection she so successfully afforded him, and which formed the starting-point of his brilliant career. The Duchess d'Uzès to whom Déjazet presented him was extremely kind and helpful to this clever and adventurous youth, and got him the *entrée* of “the *Faubourg*” and its *Théâtres de Salon*, where he was the more appreciatively received on account of the excellent character he bore. When he had become celebrated he was, like Déjazet, always ready to do a good turn whether to fellow-artistes or to the poor ; and whenever a priest had a case of special distress in his parish, or wanted help for any *œuvre de charité*, he well knew he might apply to either of these distinguished performers for their valuable services.

A characteristic story is told of Levassor on one such occasion when he not only himself performed, but obtained the concurrence of several gifted friends, on behalf of a charitable *œuvre*; the patrons of the *œuvre* had so often before appealed to his benevolence that when they found how large were the receipts realized, they thought it only fair to compensate him for the loss of time incurred by the bestowal of his valuable services. At the conclusion of the entertainment, therefore, the *curé* brought him a basket of moss on which lay a large egg manufactured in sugar: the weight of the offering soon revealed to the artiste what was the friendly and delicately-disguised intention of the donors, and, of course, with such an imagination as his, he was at no loss for a clever subterfuge for refusing the fee. He broke the egg, and remarking: "I am very fond of eggs, *mon père*, but I never eat the yolk; keep it to feed the poor," returned the *rouleau* of *Napoléons* enclosed in it.

In Paris, and also in London, he was the delight of fashionable *salons*; and witty and humorous as he was, he had the good feeling, as well as the good taste, to temper his wildest sallies by a regard for the most refined decorum.

Charles
Mathews.

It was Charles Mathews, *père* (slightly before my time) who started the idea of entertaining an audience by his own unaided efforts, and probably Levassor, feeling he possessed equally abnormal qualifications, borrowed the notion from him. I have heard my father describe Mathews's "At Homes" as showing him to be a man of singular genius, a close observer, a quick imitator, an intelligent adapter, and full of ingenious resources: his ventriloquism was perfect, and served him as a valuable auxiliary, enabling him to enrich his performances and to multiply his imaginary *dramatis personæ*, by turning wooden puppets into humorous fellow-comedians, convulsing his audience with the droll speeches he put into their mouths, and the witty

dialogue he carried on with them. Mathews was also an admirable actor, and must have had an astounding memory; the number of characters he took in the course of his professional life—receiving boundless applause in every one of them—almost exceeds belief. Strange to say, however, admirably as he adorned the stage, he is better remembered by his “At Homes.” Many performers since Mathews have tried to organize similar entertainments; but the first who attempted the difficult feat of keeping a whole audience amused without any assistance either from one or more



CHARLES MATHEWS “AT HOME.”

colleagues or from scenery and decorations, must have been possessed of singular courage and confidence in himself: Mathews, however, was quite equal to the undertaking, and, from the first, his seats were nightly crowded to overflowing. No one attempted to rival him for some years after his death, but the same class of entertainment has of late been resorted to with considerable success and among Mathews’s earlier imitators was Love the Polyphonist, who plagiarized to a large extent Mathews’s jokes as well as his general mode of proceeding.

Mathews may be considered as having been unique, and if he has now been followed by imitators innumerable, he yet cannot be said to have ever been approached; his gifts were of the rarest and his humour seemed to flow from an exhaustless source, enabling him to vary his witticisms and his representations with refreshing novelty.

In one of his "At Homes" he used to personate sixteen characters with a distinctiveness not more remarkable for the celerity with which the changes were effected than for the contrast each presented to every other. In the twinkling of an eye he could so entirely change his appearance as to be wholly unrecognizable; he would whisk behind a screen, or disappear for an instant behind an easy-chair or a table, and come forward again completely transmogrified; his size, shape, complexion, dress, face, figure, voice, accent and gait representing a being of a different age, sex, and nationality. He possessed a peculiar flexibility of voice and flow of language, with so keen an appreciation of the different forms of broken English, accent or brogue belonging to each provincial or foreigner he represented, that the audience could discern in an instant the *provenance* he intended to suggest. So acute were his perceptions, that after hearing a speaker once, he could reproduce to perfection his style, tone and peculiarities, so that the hearers doubted whether it could be any but the individual himself, to whom they were listening.

One of his ingenious ventriloquial feats was his representation of a toastmaster, and after proposing various toasts in one voice, replying in the several voices and tones of those to whom the compliment was paid.

Charles Mathews and Dr. Kitchiner appreciated each other's attributes and thoroughly enjoyed each other's society. They met at dinner at Braham's, and parted at the door of the great tenor's house one short hour before the good Doctor's sudden death.

Albert Smith. As for Albert Smith, who started a solo entertainment,

intelligent and ingenious on the platform, no one could observe him in a private drawing-room without perceiving in his demeanour a want of familiarity with those little social niceties which are at once nothing and everything. In his character of "amuser" he became one of those ephemeral "lions" of the season who obtain an *entrée* into Society, and sometimes not only forget why they are "made much" of, but have the bad taste to let this be perceived; I have seen him so buoyant under the flattering welcome he sometimes experienced, that his words as well as his acts would betray his vanity and would serve to remind the company that he was trying to make them forget his not very refined antecedents. There was, of course, no reason that *because* he was a medical student preparing for "dental surgery," he should be coarse in his manners and unbecomingly free and easy in his speech (though it was then too frequently the practice of medical students to be "wild" after their manner); but so it was, and it is hardly worth our while, now, to discuss the matter. After all, if his remarks were slangy, they were harmless, and did not hurt even himself, as he was utterly unconscious of the kind of amusement he was offering to his hearers.

Albert Smith's self-confidence was not without its value to himself, for it greatly helped to advance him in the world by suggesting to him to abandon the forceps and the file, and step into light (if not very enlightened) literature: he was clever enough to see that the majority of readers of modern times "read to be amused"; that a conventional, frivolous, easily-apprehended style such as he felt himself quite able to provide, was the most popular, and from a commercial point of view, therefore the most advantageous, and he went in for it. He chose a commonplace subject, suited to the meanest capacity, took his public into scenes in which they felt themselves at home—scenes peopled with folks of their own class, and in which it delighted them to recognize and laugh at the vulgarities of their acquaintances, for of course they all

took care not to recognize *themselves*: these scenes, he seasoned with jokes which he made amusing by uttering them in a matter-of-course way, as if quite unconscious of them himself.

Albert Smith became a success, and on the whole he deserved it; for he manifested, in his choice of an occupation, more discernment and ingenuity than might have been expected of him, and the entertainment he provided was necessarily on a level with the intelligences that took pleasure in it. In this, the class and amount of education he had received was of great service to him: a better educated man would probably not have made it pay, for he could not have descended so naturally to the required level, and it would have needed a different stamp of mind to collect a public whom he could have drawn up to a higher one. After following the typical British tourist and his well-known absurdities to the land he has helped to convert into a Cockney tea-garden, and writing his impressions in a really clever and amusing satire, he proceeded to dramatize his pages and to recite them, surrounded with appropriate scenic illustrations, and it is wonderful to relate how many spectators, even from the upper ranks, he contrived to attract. In a very short time he had the satisfaction of winning a widespread celebrity, culminating in the more substantial earnings of £5,000. There was an undeniable spice of genius in Albert Smith's enterprising character, and if his gifts were not of the most brilliant order, he, at least, had the sense which great geniuses often lack, to make the most of all he had.

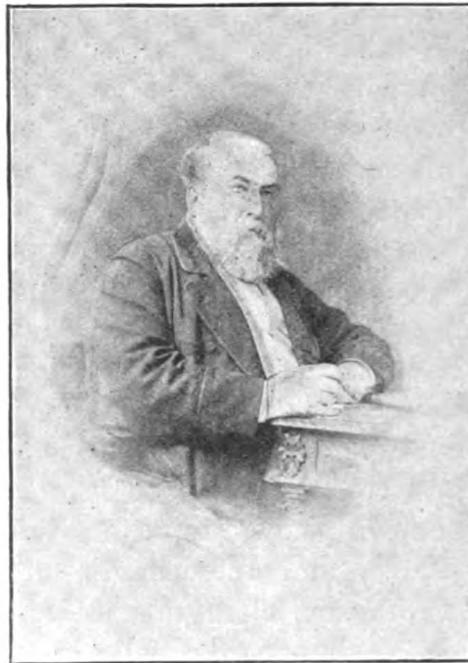
Though no musician, and owning not the ghost of a voice, Albert Smith learnt enough music to accompany himself in snatches of his Anglo-Swiss narrative turned into rhyme, after the fashion of Levassor's *chanté-parlé* style. This variety introduced into the entertainment, answered several purposes: it broke the monotony of a mere prose description, supplied a series of what might be, and were considered

by the public, comic songs, which were bought by amateurs, and they offered (as in the case of the one called "Galignani's Messenger") a fine opportunity for passing off already well-remunerated *réclames* upon the public. That song, no doubt, paid very well; and, after all, why shouldn't a journalist, equally with a blacking-maker or a soap-boiler, keep his own poet, if he need one?

Albert Smith married Keeley's daughter, and was comparatively young when his unexpected death took him from his very promising prospects. He was missed, not only by his friends, but by the mixed public he had drawn round him, who had come to regard the Egyptian Hall as a convenient afternoon or evening lounge, or as a place to which to take children or country cousins who were sure to enjoy such an episode in their day.

The vacancy thus left, created a fine opening for any George Rose. aspiring genius, desirous and also capable of occupying Albert Smith's place; and "Arthur Sketchley"—excellent, genial, amusing Arthur Sketchley—succeeded Albert Smith in popular favour and with better reason: his satires were not only much more numerous, but much more varied than Albert Smith's, and comprised subjects with which Albert Smith would have been puzzled to cope. George Rose was a man of good family and antecedents, an Oxford M.A., and had been a Protestant clergyman; his religious views having undergone a change, he felt his inability conscientiously to continue his parochial duties, and was ultimately received into the Catholic Church, thereby necessarily finding himself the poorer by his relinquished stipend: as he was well known and greatly respected in Sussex, the late Duke of Norfolk having heard the circumstances, sent for him in order to entrust to him the education of his son, then Earl of Arundel, and Mr. Rose continued to occupy the position of private tutor to the future Duke, till the time came for the latter to go up to Oxford, when, being too independent to rely on anything but his own

exertions, Mr. Rose at once fell back on the resources of his genius. The scheme he planned was marked by freshness and originality, his intention being to hold *séances* by means of which he might, in a more or less entertaining form, bring before his audiences any matter of interest that happened to occupy public attention, and to make each in turn the subject of popular comment, the opinions of his auditors being ingeniously led by himself. In selecting his



“ARTHUR SKETCHLEY.”

mouthpiece from among the *plebs* he adroitly created an opportunity for employing a palatable as well as a more amusing mode of communicating his remarks. As Mr. Rose was new to the platform, he contemplated this fresh start in life with some diffidence, and it was after dining at my house one day, that he made a little rehearsal of *Mrs. Brown at the Play*, which was to be the first of this most entertaining (and also instructive) series.

The attempt won such signal success that neither I nor any of those present felt any misgivings as to its issue, and he told me a few days after, that he had begun his arrangements for introducing the garrulous old lady to public notice, but warned me that he should hold me responsible for "Mrs. Brown's" reception, since, but for the encouragement I had given him at and after the "rehearsal" he should still have hesitated to produce her.

The Egyptian Hall became the scene of "Mrs. Brown's" gossip conferences, and long before the fun of her experiences of "Queen Victoria's own Theayter" was exhausted, she had trotted about hither and thither and given the world the benefit of her quaint plebeian opinions expressed in the purest Cockney vernacular.

In course of time, not only had all parts of the globe been visited, but endless subjects—moral, social, political—had been thus discussed in the most humorous and at the same time the most logical spirit. "Mrs. Brown's" irrepressible energy was proof against all fatigue: her enterprise and courage were dauntless; she clambered up the "Great Pyramus," and floundered about in the "Sewage Canal"; she discussed with equal complacency the Great "Sara" and the Great Sahara; she crossed the Atlantic, she visited the Antœci, the Perieci and the Antipodes, and she had her say upon all, her comments being always shrewd, terse, and original: what is more, however drastic it may sometimes have pleased her to show herself, she always felt sure of a welcome.

How George Rose contrived to "catch the manners living as they rise," of that class which he devoted his energies to describe, puzzled many; his success in acquiring the pronunciation and intonation, the grammatical, linguistic, and idiomatic speech of the London *plebs*, and his admirable imitation of their accent and their manner, testify to a quick and intelligent perception of the characteristics he undertook to reproduce, while his apparent familiarity with the

technicalities and details of their various callings gave a finish to his dialogue which added greatly to the amusement of his *séances*, and therefore to their popularity.

The "Brown papers" were floating gaily along the stream of public favour when their intelligent, ingenious, and popular author was suddenly called away to make a longer expedition than any he had as yet accomplished. "Mrs. Brown" disappeared simultaneously with him from the admiration of those to whom she had afforded so much amusement and information; for, homely as was her speech, she had yet said much that

"Might make thousands,—perhaps millions,—think."

"Mrs. Brown" has not reappeared, and probably will not—unless under the auspices of Mr. Stead,—return from her latest journey to tell us what she thinks of that further world of which we are none of us likely ever to gain any information but from our own experience.

As long as "Mrs. Brown" remained amongst us, we must admit that her character was ably sustained, and that to the end she continued to show herself true to her colours: we cannot therefore but give George Rose credit for the fidelity with which he contrived, while dilating upon a vast variety of subjects, to portray the idiosyncrasies of a class whose peculiarities we all recognize so readily. The masses may be doing their best to lessen the distance between themselves and the classes, but the line of demarcation still remains very distinct, notwithstanding all the expectations founded on the extension of so-called "national education."

George Rose possessed a fair knowledge of music, and had, as an amateur, acquired a considerable social reputation for his pungent rendering of comic songs: this talent, therefore, greatly helped to enliven, vary, and illustrate his entertainment. He had a vast fund of dry humour, very pleasant to recollect, and very attractive at the time,

on account of its appropriateness and spontaneity—difficult, however, to record so as to afford a correct idea of its effect. Flashes of wit, extempore puns, and real or improvised anecdotes, which also contribute to the brilliancy of a man’s conversation, are easily remembered, put on paper, and repeated so as to tickle the sense of the ludicrous in successive audiences ; but there is a kind of humour equally attractive at the time, yet of such subtlety that it escapes us afterwards, though the general impression may still remain on our minds.

A lady friend of mine, a collector of autographs, meeting George Rose one day on the step of the door as she was leaving his house, told him she had been asking his sister for his autograph.

“ Did you get it ? ” said he.

“ Oh yes,” she answered : “ here it is.”

“ Well, you *are* a lucky creature,” he replied, with a seriousness most amusing.

I remember many occasions on which he “ set the table in a roar.”

One night, after an exhibition of “ Mrs. Brown,” he met a young lady who had been present, and having observed that she had remained very serious, he said—

“ ‘ Mrs. Brown ’ wasn’t fortunate enough to please you this evening, Miss B— ; I didn’t see you laugh.”

“ No, Mr. Rose,” she replied : “ I never can laugh at anything that is arranged beforehand ; it must come out naturally, to make me laugh.”

“ Ah ! ” answered he : “ wait till you get a pimple at the end of your nose, then ; that comes out naturally.”

“ Well, *now*,” said the girl : “ I *can* laugh at that ; I consider it the best thing you’ve said this evening.”

George Rose was one day calling at a house where one of the little ones after greeting him exclaimed :

“ Oh ! Mr. Rose ! only think, a stray cat came into the house this morning with a little kitten in her mouth.”

“ Ah ! ” he gravely replied : “ well, you couldn't turn *them* out, you know.”

“ No,” said the child, “ I don't want to ; but why ? ”

“ What ! ” he replied with horrified surprise—“ the widow and the orphan ! ”

The name of “ Arthur Sketchley ” was adopted by Mr. Rose in his professional capacity, out of deference to his uncle, Sir George.

Sam Lover.

It may appear paradoxical to say there are some singers—and most fascinating singers, too—who have no voices ; and what is more, so charmingly do they warble that no listener misses the voice, nor would wish them to be anything but what they are.

I have in my mind's ear the attractive and delightful performances of clever, genial, witty, and most ingenious Sam Lover. Without any recognized or recognizable voice, what a delicious singer he was ! How winning his smile, how matchless the humour of his compositions, and how admirably words, music, and expression of countenance went with his soft, flexible, expressive tones ; never loud, it is true, but so clear, so distinct ! The words,—and how arch they were !—arch as the sparkle of his eye, and the meaning he contrived to throw into them,—were never lost : what a hush there was, the moment he approached the instrument ! No need then for a General Paoli to warn the company present : “ Hush ! hush ! Doctor Yonson is going to say somezing ”—the “ hush ” was spontaneous ; and, as good little Lover took his seat, the gratified air with which he looked round, showed—albeit modestly—that he knew what was expected of him. I can recall a fashionable *soirée* at the house of a certain lady of “ lions,” who, despising the wise proverb, “ *Qui trop embrasse mal étreint,* ” had tried to compass a “ mixed evening,” during which dancing and music should alternate. It is not always possible, however, to *ménager la chèvre et le chou* ; and unhappily, just as Lover, on whose support Mrs. Leo mainly relied, had been coaxed up to the

instrument and had sat down with one of his blandest smiles; but while the majority of the guests were on the tip-toe of expectation, a silly young couple (who had no idea of any tip-toe but that of the German waltz, and had just stood up to dance), so far forgot their manners as to manifest their annoyance in a loud whisper, the gentleman



SAM LOVER.

trying to pacify his partner with the recommendation :
“ Never mind, it’ll soon be over ! ”

And very “ soon over ” it was. Lover, unluckily, had caught this pretty speech ; his Irish blood was up in an instant, and so was he. It was *all* over with the song !

“ Oh, Mr. Lover, you’re *not* going to get up ! ” exclaimed Mrs. *Leo Hunter*, rushing across the room, for she had been

round to call the attention of her weary wallflowers to the welcome fact that Lover was going to sing "one of his own lovely Irish melodies, you know."

Lover bowed politely but stiffly: "Another day, another day, my dear *Mrs. Leo Hunter*. You are so rich in amusements to-night, and dancing really is so much more popular than music, that I know, if you don't excuse me, there are those here who gladly *will*," and he glanced at the offending couple, who looked as if they would gladly have been swallowed up by an opening in the *parqueterie*: but the *parqueterie* held firm: so did Lover.

The whole room was in *émoi*, Lover was surrounded, he was entreated; he was assured that *every one* was dying to hear him; but no: good-natured as he was, under *these* circumstances he became inexorable, and making his way quietly but resolutely through the crowd, he soon afterwards disappeared. Whether he was ever seen in that house again I cannot say; but from what I knew of him I should say he was *not*, though his resentment would stop *there*.

Lover was a genius, and I believe it is not unusual for geniuses to be touchy, but if he was peppery, the provocation given, unless of a very aggravated nature, was, as a rule, soon forgiven.

I remember his telling me how, at a ball one night, in a crowded supper-room, happening to espy a friend, he attempted to carry on a conversation with him, notwithstanding the din: the subject of the weather, the temperature of the room, and the character of the assembly having been exhausted, Lover asked him if he had seen his new song, naming the title of it.

"Oh yes, to be sure," replied the other, thinking he had caught the name: "the 'Angel Swiss Boy,' and a capital song too, my dear fellow; you never did anything better. . . ."

Lover was disgusted. He repeated the title in a

louder tone, but with no better effect, eliciting the reply—

“Yes, yes, of course—‘The Ancient Sister’—isn’t that what I said? Everybody’s talking about it, and no wonder—”

“‘Ancient Sister’ be ——” exclaimed Lover, thoroughly exasperated: “‘Ancient Sister’ indeed!” and putting his mouth close to his friend’s ear, he shouted: “THE ANGEL’S WHISPER!”

“Eh! eh!” said the other, hurrying away to hide his confusion: “that’s more like a *Devil’s yell*.”

Lover was amiable enough to sing often at my house, and I had many occasions for remarking how much he was admired by any of the Italian artistes who might be present.

Dear, good Lover had a weakness for wishing the world to believe that Tom Moore’s mantle had fallen on his shoulders: I never could understand this desire; for Lover had quite genius enough to hold his own, and to be independent of the mantle of any predecessor; nevertheless, so possessed was he with this idea that he absolutely startled me one day when, reverting (as was a sort of habit with him) to the subject, he suddenly said, musingly—

“Yes, the analogy between us is complete; same tastes, same capacity, same genius, same capabilities, same nationality, *same name!*” and he turned to me as we walked along, for a confirmation of the singular assertion which made me think he must have gone off his head. I am afraid I must have stared disappointingly; for, thus taken off my guard, I could not for the life of me make out his meaning: nothing daunted, however, he repeated:

“Yes; same *name*; it’s very curious, isn’t it?” Then, without giving me time to recover, he continued:

“Don’t you see? Same number of letters, ex-actly: Tom Moore—Sam Lover: same number of syllables; Tom—Sam; Moore, Lover; I’ve often thought how strange that is.”

It was a sort of self-delusion: he would even contrive to

write his signature in such a way that it was quite capable of the two readings.

Although Lover's celebrity is due rather to his musical than to his other talents, it was far from being his highest accomplishment; he was a correct draughtsman, and his pencil was a delicate one: his miniatures he painted *con amore*, and therefore with success; among those which did him most credit were his portraits of the Duke of Wellington, Paganini, and Lord Brougham—three representative men.

Whether, as a matter of prudence he preferred a form of art less trying to his eyes, or merely as a test of the versatility of his powers, he pursued oil-painting for a time, and next took to literature, publishing several characteristically humorous novels; but with these divers gifts, Lover was a scientific musician, and had already produced some of his charming melodies when in 1818 he for the first time met Tom Moore, and having sung before him one of these Irish songs, Moore was so delighted and expressed his admiration so warmly, that Lover at once turned his attention to musical composition. Having, in his turn, heard Moore sing, he was fired with enthusiasm, and very soon became his rival, though there was never any jealousy between them, and they were always the best friends. Moore's singing was most fascinating, and if it impressed Lover as it impressed Willis, his enthusiastic friendship for him can readily be accounted for.

Tom Moore.

Willis, in a letter, picturesquely describes as follows Moore's singing at an evening spent at Lady Blessington's:—

“ . . . Moore went glittering on with criticisms on Grisi, the delicious songstress now ravishing the world; this, introduced music, and with difficulty he was coaxed to the piano: I have no power to describe his singing. It is well known, however that its effect is equalled only by the beauty of his own words, and I could have taken him to my heart with delight. He makes no attempt at music; it

is a kind of melodious recitative in which every shade of thought is syllabled and dwelt upon, and the sentiment of the song goes through your blood, warming you to the very eyelids and starting your tears if you have a soul in you; I have heard of women fainting at a song of Moore's; and if the burden of it answered by any chance to a secret in the bosom of the listener, I should think from its comparative effect on so old a stager as myself, that the heart would break with it.

“We all sat round the piano,” he continues; “and after two or three songs of Lady Blessington's choice, he rambled over the keys awhile, and then, the stillness of the room becoming absolute silence, he softly, and as it were gradually, melted into—‘When first I met thee,’ with a pathos that beggars description. When the last word had died away, he rose and took Lady Blessington's hand, said ‘good-night,’ and was gone before a word was uttered.”

To Moore's exquisite ear for melody, which can be traced in the rhythmical sweetness of all he wrote, must be attributed all, or nearly all, his success as a poet; for though he certainly expresses, now and then, ideas which bespeak a certain degree of imagination and originality, that he did not possess that superabundance of both that might have been expected, is plain from the frequent repetitions we find in his poems; but it is true that the form of expression is varied when he thus plagiarizes himself.

Moore's manner was enchanting, and when he sat down to the piano and accompanied his mellifluous words with the melodies which suited them so well, none could resist the witchery by which he attracted them. Personally, Tom Moore was far less taking than Lover, and he was much smaller in stature; it was only after you knew Moore that a certain vulgarity of appearance and manner which he frequently betrayed, was forgotten. Byron pays a high and sincere tribute of appreciation to his social qualifications, and declares him to be “gentlemanly, gentle, and most

pleasing—more so than any individual with whom I am acquainted.”

His biographical works brought him in large sums, for he had the sense to choose popular subjects: his verse, too, always pleases, though it will not bear analysing, and his satire is often brilliant. As Moore's intellect was of a high order, it was a loss as well as a sorrow to his friends that he ended his life with three melancholy years of imbecility; his state was very deplorable to witness, and led to his having completely withdrawn from the world of letters, of which he had been so bright an ornament, long before his actual death.

My recollections of Lover must not be dismissed without mention of the warmth of feeling and generous sentiments which distinguished him, his kindness of heart, his jollity and the “go” there was in him. Get him to a picnic or a supper-party; put him on his mettle; adroitly work him up into his narrating mood, and he would never fail to justify his reputation for racy humour; he couldn't help it, fun was a component element in his nature, and that nature was entirely made up of all that is good in an Irishman's character. His was not that dry wit, which however also has its charm; there was a roguish twinkle in Lover's eye when he said or sang a good thing, which communicated to you electrically the mirth it created in his own mind.

The frankness and simplicity of Lover's disposition came out in his correspondence as well as in his conversation, with alternations of feeling and of sparkle, illustrative of the versatility of his character; and while quick in observation, and smart and true in his remarks, he eminently possessed the gift of repartee common to his countrymen.

Meeting him one night at a dance which was kept up to a very late hour we were noticing the jaded appearance of the musicians; the pianoforte-player to whom he called my attention, was strumming away by purely mechanical habit, as he was literally fast asleep! “but,” said I, “what do you say

to the French horn? he *must* keep awake, night after night, puffing on, hour after hour, in this frightful atmosphere." "Oh! as for *that* poor devil," he answered: "he's simply blowing himself away."

I have many of Lover's letters; of these I subjoin two as fair specimens of his style.

"BARNES, S.W.

"13th Aug., '58.

"MY DEAR —

"You may have wondered perhaps that I have not written sooner to thank you for your kind attention in sending me the critique on the 'Reading Afternoon' of Mr. Thompson, and the very handsome mention made of myself incidentally; but the truth is I have been in the condition of that little attorney of whom Fielding speaks in *Tom Jones*, who was always declaring that if he were cut up into sixteen pieces he had enough for every piece to do: I have had brothers and their wives, sisters-in-law and their nieces, on visits with me, and I, all the time, in dazed uncertainty as to whether I shall be able to keep on my present house; along with which, a dash of some troublesome matter concerning copyright which has kept me on the *qui vive* overmuch: in fact, I've been regularly frothed up. You will pardon me, I know, when you have this explanation from me.

"I am glad Mr. Thompson was so fortunate as to make your acquaintance and that you think well of him. I consider he has a great deal of talent and am much pleased he appears to take well with the public.

"Believe me always,

"Most faithfully yours,

"SAM. LOVER."

I entirely forget who "Mr. Thompson" (with a *p*) was, or what he did, and in what way he earned little Lover's goodwill; but after an interval of thirty-four years, this lapse of memory may be pardoned, for I don't think Thompson

(with a *p*) can have maintained himself in public favour. If he should happen to be still living and to have become famous, I apologise for my ignorance.

Another letter of Lover's runs thus :

" BARNES,
" Aug. 27, '59.

" MY DEAR —

" I would be very hard to please were I not *more* than content with your most kind and complimentary notice of myself and my editorial doings. There is not one word I could wish altered.

" Mrs. Lover and I are obliged to stay at home this year, but we wish well to our more fortunate friends who are able to go abroad and therefore to you and yours we heartily say *bon voyage*.

" Most truly yours,
" SAM. LOVER."

Lover was twice married and had two daughters by his first wife.

In 1868, Lover's wife, alas! had to write for him from Jersey, under date June 25, as follows, in reply to an invitation from myself to my daughter's wedding on the 30th: it was a sad letter, and I found it difficult to connect Lover with any thought of sadness:—

" MY DEAR —

" Your great kindness assures me my beloved husband's dangerous illness will be sufficient apology for the delay in acknowledging your very gratifying letter and invitation; also am I sure you will deeply regret the cause which prevents our availing ourselves of the pleasure you propose for us. My dear husband begs me to tell you the gratification it would afford him to be with you on this interesting occasion as well as to participate in the marriage festivities of the daughter of his dearly valued friend. He

laments casting a shadow where all should be joyous, but he cannot deny himself the expression of the affectionate interest he takes in your two children, and rejoices that they give you so much cause for happiness. It is a great pleasure to him that your son has taken honours at Oxford; to your daughter we both offer our cordial congratulations and sincere wishes for herself and husband.

“ He often speaks to me of former happy days when, living in full enjoyment of a refined and choice society, he experienced so much pleasure in the charming literary and artistic *réunions* under your roof and the kind smile of welcome that ever greeted him there; and he desires me to assure you that the esteem and kindly regard you have always testified towards him, have found an echo in his heart for you and yours. I am thankful to close my letter somewhat more cheerily: our kind doctor has left, saying my husband is stronger than yesterday. . . .”

Before the 30th dawned, my poor friend Lover had departed this world!

There was, in spite of his harmless little vanities, a diffidence in Lover's manner which gives plausibility to a story I once heard of him.

It seems that in New York he was asked to take part in an amateur dramatic performance of a piece written by himself: it was a dramatized version of that most clever, original, and amusing volume, *The White Horse of the Peppers*, and the character was full of Irish fun, such as one would have supposed the man who wrote it would have rollicked in delivering. Not so, however; when, after an elaborate make up, he appeared in costume in the extemporized green-room, his aspect suggested the idea of a cat coming out of a shower bath; his clothes hung listlessly upon his limbs, the feathers in his hat drooped like a weeping willow, his sword assumed the most inebriated attitudes, and his complexion was nearer a delicate ginger than any other hue. The rest of the company took pity on him, for Lover

was a favourite wherever he might be: while one adjusted the component details of his dress, another added more rouge to his cheeks, and a third administered a cordial, all joining in encouraging him with words as they hustled him on to the stage at the call-boy's summons. Poor Lover contrived to get through the ordeal, and with better success than he expected, but the stage, he vowed he would never tread again.

It is difficult to understand how this nervous diffidence could have taken possession of so popular an artiste, one also who ought to have felt so sure of his ability to please. I remember hearing him give on the platform recitals intermingled with songs, and certainly on those occasions there was no appearance of timidity, nor was there any reason for it.

Bégrez.

Signor Bégrez—though why “Signor”? as he was a Belgian—was long a favourite tenor with the London public, and at one time held a most creditable position as *primo tenore* on the operatic stage. I do not know what his personal appearance may have been when young, but at the time I knew him, there was nothing either in his face or figure that would indicate traces of the *jeune premier*, though his voice continued to be remarkably full, sweet and flowing: he had also much taste and an excellent method and was therefore reputed an admirable master, numbering his pupils among amateurs of fashion. In his capacity of professor, the style of his appearance was an advantage, it encouraged parents to entrust their young daughters to his teaching, whereas in the case of Ciabatta, who was strikingly handsome, they took exception to his attractiveness: as I have said before, however, with this very winning exterior, Ciabatta was a model of severe but unaffected propriety, while our good friend Bégrez—somewhat spoiled by the admiration accorded to his artistic gifts—tried to compensate in gallantry for what he lacked in beauty, and it was said, sought to win the attention and

application of his pupils, not only to their task, but to their teacher. Although, however, he assumed the graces of an *élégant*, posing at every movement, he was powerless to bring these *allures* into harmony with his physique: Nature had never been more to him than a step-mother, and had certainly given him no right to believe himself an Adonis.

Of average height, he was somewhat disproportioned in width, and while Belgian in type, his face was broad, flat, and florid, his features being widely spread over it, so that as he dressed, spoke, grimaced, and moved with all the characteristics of an exquisite, he was unconsciously only doing his best to make himself ridiculous: I always regretted the mistake, for he was such a thoroughly good-hearted, good-natured fellow, always ready to sing when asked, and obliging to a degree, that one would have liked to be able to respect him throughout.

We all have our little vanities, and if conceit was his foible, I really believe it arose from an amiable wish to please, and from his imagining that he possessed rights and means commensurate with this desire. He accompanied himself in an easy and masterly style, but he had a way of seating himself half sideways at the piano, so as to turn towards the audience with what he meant for a fascinating smile, and while giving a very marked expression to the words, would address them to one lady or another, as he uttered them in a gushing or a sentimental tone. I do not think—so infatuated was he—that he ever had the mortification of discovering that they thought him “great fun,” and of course he never knew that those who were clever enough, used to amuse the company by taking him off as soon as he was gone. They were even so mischievous as to circulate a story about him which may possibly have had its foundation in fact; for that however, I will not vouch, for I always liked Bégrez, despite his small weaknesses, and regret that his assumed airs and too gallant attentions should have suggested its invention, if untrue. It was to the effect that his head became rather

turned by the social prestige as well as by the personal charms of one of his pupils, a young newly-married Countess, fair enough of face to figure in that year's "Book of Beauty." Bégrez donned his most bewitching graces each time he attended in Park Lane, and one day happening to find himself alone with his beautiful pupil, he committed the folly of expressing to her his admiration, &c. The conversation went no further, for before she could reply he was interrupted; but as soon as the lesson was over she indignantly told her husband of the liberty her singing-master had assumed.

The course this gentleman took was a very simple one; he kept his own counsel and allowed matters to go on as usual. The day for the next lesson arrived, and with it Bégrez more fashionably attired than ever, and with an eloquent flower in his button-hole; the lady was already at the piano, and by her husband's desire was alone in the room: her adventurous admirer, thinking the opportunity too good to be lost, at once took up the subject where it had been broken off and imprudently went down on his knees (an attitude for which his obese figure was most unsuited), venturing to pour forth an elegant declaration, in the intricacies of which he was so absorbed, that he never heard the door open, nor yet detected the sound of approaching footsteps on the soft carpet. The first intimation he received that he and the object of his worship were no longer *en tête à tête*, was a tremendous whack from something very like a horsewhip across his shoulders, which at once awoke him to the reality of the situation; a second stroke brought him not without an awkward struggle to his feet, and then . . . Well . . . luckily for the misdemeanant the door had been left open; at one glance he saw it was his sole chance; not a word had been spoken on either side; indeed, there was nothing to *say*; he bolted through it with an activity altogether out of character with the dignity of his dimensions, and never stopped running till he reached home.

Professionally, however, Bégrez's talent won deserved admiration, and the grace and taste with which he sang were not only undeniable, but would have brought him more approval had his manner been more natural. He developed musical taste, and even skill, at the early age of six years, and he began by studying the violin; but on its being found that he had a very fine tenor voice, he gave up instrumental to devote himself to vocal music. He was placed under Garat in 1806, and in 1814 carried off the first prize at the *Conservatoire*. In 1815 he obtained an engagement at the London Opera-House, where he remained till 1822, and as *Don Ottavio* in *Don Giovanni*, it is said he won all suffrages by his exquisite rendering of *Il mio tesoro*. Bégrez died in 1863, after continuing to sing professionally till within a few years of his death, having made many friends and formed many pupils.

I was once present when he was giving a lesson to a young lady; her father stood beside the piano, and as soon as she had finished her air—*A te, O cara* (I think it was)—he complained to the master that she did not give it any expression.

“Let be, let be, sare,” said Bégrez, with a meaning smile: “Dat veel comb ven she do fa-al in lofe.” Possibly it was in conscientious pursuance of this idea that Bégrez affected making “lofe” to his pupils, since he believed they would never do him credit till they practically acquired this secret.

Another drawing-room and platform tenor of this time was Signor Brizzi. Brizzi, whose excellent method recommended him widely in the fashionable world as a professor; he was amiable and gentlemanly, and as his voice was of very pleasing quality and he sang with facile grace and correctness of style, he was found a great acquisition, whether in public or private concerts. Though an Italian *pur sang*, he had become quite Anglicised, and made many friends as well as patrons in the *monde* into which his talent had introduced him; he had the good sense never to attempt anything beyond

his capacity and was therefore always found excellent, hence no doubt the admiration his performances were sure to win, and the welcome reception he met with everywhere.

Ivanoff.

Ivanoff—whose name some stupid punster travestied into *I've enough*—was another *tenore di grazia*, always heard with pleasure; though born a Russian, his style was that of his adopted country, Italy; but his voice, though extremely sweet and sympathetic, was never powerful, and did not suffice for the Opera, nor was it very lasting. No one was ever tired of hearing him sing the delicious Venetian *barcarole* from *Marino Faliero—Or'che in ciel'*, and it was so often asked for, that it insensibly became his *spécialité*; *Una furtiva lagrima* was another melody well adapted to his voice and to the degree of power he possessed. Ivanoff's first season in England was in 1835, and he was heard more or less frequently during the following seven or eight years, but never deviated from the sentimental style. He was remarkable for his good temper, being always exceedingly amiable, and at private concerts willing to give valuable assistance in any way that was agreeable to others, joining in duets or concerted pieces, and never striving to put himself forward to the detriment of other artistes.

Signor
Marras.

Of drawing-room singers of this date, Signor Marras may be considered the first. A Neapolitan by birth, he possessed the native *entrain* of that nationality in his style of singing as well as in his extremely attractive compositions, which carried upon them their distinctive *cachet*; whether remarkable for their verve or their elegance, they are always masterly and original. Marras had pleasing, gentlemanly manners, these adding greatly to the value of his talents and rendering him an acquisition in any society; he possessed a very sympathetic tenor voice and an admirable falsetto with great taste and skill in its management, and he adapted his charming tones with equal success to spirited or tender

strains. His style was so much admired that pupils gathered to him, chiefly from the upper ranks: among those he instructed, he had the advantage of numbering the Princess Mary of Cambridge; and Her Royal Highness and the Duchess were kind patrons to Marras; they did him the honour to attend his concerts personally even when these were given at his private residence, and showed an appreciative discrimination in the spontaneity and heartiness of the applause they accorded whether to his own performances or those of other artistes who co-operated with him. Marras's system of instruction was excellent; his *cours*, confined to amateurs of the higher class, partook of the nature of musical *réunions*, and as he was very earnest in his teaching, his pupils might be recognized by the style he had impressed on them. His house in Queen's Gate faced the Park, and was well suited for the musical meetings to which it was chiefly devoted; the floors were of *parqueterie*, the draperies were limited to lace and muslin, and the staircase was kept uncarpeted; it will scarcely be believed what a wonderfully fine effect these arrangements produced in the matter of acoustics, but Marras was a musician and knew the value of this practical detail.

It is impossible to remember Marras without recalling his magical touch when at the piano. I think I should have recognized it blindedfolded, among a hundred performers; there was something almost supernatural about it of which no description can give an idea. His singing was the perfection of grace and taste, and his voice essentially a *tenore di grazia*. He married a lady of birth and fortune, and his children showed very remarkable intelligence: his health required he should retire from professional occupation and reside on the Riviera, where he died about 1880.

A successful and much-sought drawing-room performer, but not a singer, was Mad^{elle}. Damain, for, though married to *Sivori*, she was professionally known by her maiden name.

Mad^{elle}.
Damain.

Her *verve* and *esprit* were manifested in the successful production of refined little *saynètes*, in which she was assisted by her "niece," a young girl charmingly French. Fashionable Society patronized these two clever performers with readiness, for they were *safe* as well as *spirituelles*, and, without being by any means prudish, they never overstepped the bounds of strict propriety. Mad^{elle}. Damain was, in fact, as ladylike in feeling and manner as any of her patronesses, and far more elegant than many of them. She could thoroughly amuse an audience for a couple of hours (including interludes) without having recourse to a single sentence that could be called *risquée*. The tragically romantic fate of her niece, soon followed by her own death, deprived the "*high-life*" circles of Paris, London, and Vienna of one of their best Season attractions.

Madelle
Dumas.

Mad^{elle}. Dumas (of the Variétés), who was a contemporary organizer and performer of similar little scenes, was as talented, if less refined, and was also much taken up by givers of "*après-midis*" during the London Season, and by owners of country houses after that effervescent period was over. She was remarkable for her initiative, and was, moreover, smart at repartee in her own, as well as in her assumed, characters. I one evening heard her administer a deservedly sharp *quietus* to a young *débutante* whose mother had offended her. Mad^{elle}. Dumas had recited with excellent effect a humorous little *saynète* entitled "*Oh! Monsieur!*" the story being a very simple one, and the merit of the performance consisting entirely in the way in which it is dialogued.

Thus: a young *ingénue* fresh from her convent, receives maternal instructions, to direct her conduct in the world which is quite new to her, and she is especially warned to exercise the utmost reticence and reserve in her conversation with gentlemen. The prudent mother informs her that there is scarcely any answer that it would be safe for her to give, when replying to even a chance observation; "Men are so insidious."

“But surely, mamma,” says the youthful innocent, “there could be no harm in my using the simple monosyllables ‘Yes’ and ‘No.’”

“‘Yes’ or ‘No!’ Why, my dear child, you could not employ two more compromising words; never think of uttering anything so positive as that. Let me see,” she continues reflectively: “what is there you can safely say? You might, perhaps, venture as far as the exclamation ‘Oh!’ Yes. ‘Oh! monsieur!’ I think that will do.”

No sooner has the mother gone out, leaving her daughter to practice her music, than a young beau appears, and finding the young lady alone, suggests the propriety of his withdrawal.

The *ingénue*, however, notwithstanding her simplicity, is too anxious to put her lesson to the test, to allow such an opportune occasion to slip, she therefore forthwith replies, “Oh, monsieur!” the tone, however, being such that the gentleman interprets the words according to his own ideas, and readily accepts the delicate invitation to remain. A conversation—if it can be so called under the circumstances—ensues. After an incredibly short time, the young folks discover, to their mutual astonishment and satisfaction, that they are quite old friends, having played and romped together in infancy, and they are soon deep in the pleasing souvenirs of bygone days; in fact, the inter-communication goes on so spiritedly by help of the ever-varying change of emphasis, that the audience hardly realizes that, during the whole time, the girl has continued faithful to her promise, and has uttered no word of any kind but the two monosyllables authorized by maternal prudence: the youth talks to his heart’s content; but so significant, and also so ingeniously adapted, is the expression with which the two permitted words are employed in response, that neither does *he* seem conscious of the restriction. Of course it is a case of love at first sight, and so rapid in its development, that

when mamma returns, she discovers that her daughter has found "*Oh! Monsieur!*" quite sufficient for all purposes; for, with no other lingual assistance, she has contrived to encourage the young man's courtship, to respond to his declaration, and to engage herself to him for life!

This smart and ingenious little recitation as performed by Mad^{elle}. Dumas in the private *salon* where I heard it, was received with unanimous and merited applause; but among the company there happened to be the above-named lady and her daughter; the latter, studying for the stage, had apparently mistaken her vocation, and it was evident that her mother looked with a jealous eye on the success Mad^{elle}. Dumas had just achieved, for I heard her reply, in a venomous tone, to another of the company sitting near her, and quite loud enough for Mad^{elle}. Dumas to hear it:

"Yes . . . I don't say it wasn't a clever piece of acting; but you must have felt all the time, as I did, that Mad^{elle}. Dumas was *rather* beyond the *rôle* of the *ingénue*, who should have been represented by a girl of seventeen or eighteen—say, *par exemple*, of the age of my daughter."

I looked at the young woman in question, and remarked her almost exceptional *gaucherie*, and glancing at her countenance, I could trace no capacity for emulating the *finesse* of the graceful and arch little character which had been so charmingly and skilfully represented. Presently she sidled up to the actress:

"Oh, Mademoiselle Dumas," she said, "how well you did that! I shall certainly learn it; it is a most effective little scene; don't you think I should succeed in it?"

"Vous n'avez qu' à essayer, mademoiselle," replied Mad^{elle}. Dumas, by no means at a loss for an answer: "mais je vous conseillerais de vous contenter de votre jeunesse."

One day, while Mad^{elle}. Dumas was staying at an English country house, the host, being kept within doors by a storm, turned to her as he drew out his cigar-case, remark-

ing, in a *nonchalant* manner: "You don't object to my smoking?"

"Vous êtes chez vous, monsieur," she politely replied: "agissez en conséquence, je vous prie."

Among those who admire the light and graceful style of Jules Lefort. French sentimental *romances*, Jules Lefort, who frequented the London Seasons some years ago, became a great favourite. Any one would have taken him for a Parisian, so entirely had he parted with any Norman characteristics he may have been born with; and certainly no artiste could have acquitted himself more attractively in the department of art he selected than this admired barytone. His voice was rich and *sympathique*, his *physique* agreeable and gentlemanly, and as for the *genre* he adopted, he may be said to have made it his own. Jules Lefort's name at once gave interest to a programme, and he was one of those artistes whose mere appearance was a signal for applause (especially among the ladies) before he opened his lips. Perhaps one secret of his popularity was that he was a master of expression, and when occasion required it could throw it skilfully and passionately into his songs. As his manners were gentlemanly and agreeable, and he had a fine sense of humour, he pleased universally in London Society, and when he retired was much missed at fashionable *soirées*, whether in the Metropolis or at country houses to which he was often invited. It would have been difficult to find a cleverer mimic, and as he possessed a peculiar talent in the imitation of languages and dialects, it was very amusing to hear him carry on a humorous dialogue in two tongues. Jules Lefort, however, had a conscientious love for his art, and though, on his retirement, he made a very excellent second marriage, he would not consent to be idle, but established in Paris classes for the promotion of a new method of singing, which he considered the only one for the successful *émission de la voix*.

He once tried the stage, but it did not appear to be in

Campden
House.

his line, and he soon gave up the idea, though I have seen him act very spiritedly in smart *levers de rideau* and amusing vaudevilles, at Campden House, a favourite resort for musical *matinées* before the ill-omened fire took place there, which not only burnt down the fine and interesting old mansion—said to be the birth-place of Queen Anne—but (on the occasion of the trial for arson which followed) threw an indiscreet light on some incidents of private life never intended to be so publicly revealed. Tunbridge Castle, where certain untoward events had also happened, belonged to the same owner; but mere coincidences are often curious.

Campden House was admirably adapted for such entertainments; it was not only a model palace of Queen Anne's day, and extremely picturesque within and without, but the grounds were very tastefully laid out in the style of the period; it contained a most perfect little theatre, with all its appointments and properties, and it was on this stage that the performers exhibited, whether dramatically or simply vocally. The *matinées* given here, which generally occupied a long afternoon, were arranged in three parts, the intervals serving for a stroll in the grounds, where the visitors met; and tea was also served in one of the quaint old rooms opening into the garden. There were interesting curiosities and relics, ancient portraits and tapestries, to be seen in the old lobbies and galleries, which were kept in their pristine style.

When lent for a concert or other morning entertainment, an arrangement was made with the proprietor, by which the expenses all fell on the *bénéficiaire*, although theoretically, there was no charge; but there existed an understanding by which a prescribed fee was awarded to the servants, who always declared they got no other wages, but I do not vouch for this statement: the artistes used to tell me that the hire of chairs and benches, and of the band that played in the gardens during the intervals, the providing of refreshments, &c., rendered it such an expensive affair, that when

they made a *bonâ fide* hiring of Willis's, or the Hanover Square Rooms they spent far less. At the same time, there was something *chic* about the Campden House entertainment: people liked the drive when the weather was fine; the ladies could exhibit their toilettes with good effect in the pretty Watteau-like old gardens with their stone terraces and moss-grown balustrades; young folks could make a *rendezvous* of the concert, and when there, could stroll about the romantic alleys; and young ladies could slip their chaperons in the by-paths when—quite accidentally of course—they happened to meet old Lord This or young Sir Arthur That, and tickets sold in consequence.

The *propriétaire* was always somewhere about—for, of course, he stipulated for so many tickets for self and friends—but took no ostensible part in the proceedings.

A new Campden House has been reared on the site of the ancient palace, and I believe it is a costly and correct reproduction, but it lacks the prestige of its predecessor, and like itself, its associations have all “vanished, ghost-like, into air.”

Lady Vassal Webster's house—Granard Lodge—at Roehampton, with its beautiful grounds, was also often thrown open to the public, artistes being allowed to give their concerts there, where these were sure to be always well attended. Granard Lodge, it may be mentioned, was once the scene of an atrocious crime; a footman named Goode—but not too good, and afterwards hanged—having, as will be remembered by many, murdered a fellow-servant, whose remains he cut up and hid away in the stables: the house was at that time tenanted by an old Catholic family named Sheil, friends of my own, who left it immediately after.

Granard
Lodge.

Granard Lodge contained many curios and interesting historical relics—among them a beautiful portrait by Romney of the late Lady Holland.

When the Queen and Prince Albert went in state to the Italian Opera, Covent Garden—Delafield being the respon-

Royal State
Visit to the
Italian Opera.

sible manager at the time—the Royal box (consisting of five boxes, three on the grand, and two on the first tier, thrown into one for the occasion and facing the stage) was furnished with contributions—including seven magnificent glass chandeliers—from Granard Lodge, lent by Lady Vassal Webster: it was a gala occasion, and no expense was spared that could enhance the magnificence of the fête. A handsome private (though only temporary) entrance, staircase and lobby were erected, and the Royal box, with the ante-rooms that preceded it, were decorated with a taste and at a cost which converted them into fairyland. Parterres of flowers, arranged to have the appearance of growing there, decorated the passage through which the Royal party walked; a refreshment buffet, supplied with the choicest delicacies, was prepared in one of the ante-rooms; crimson velvet covered the floor, and the richest draperies elegantly festooned the walls; huge vases of delicate scents stood at intervals round the walls of the Royal box—from which the view of the stage was magnificent; while the effect of the box itself, as seen from all parts of the house, amazed and impressed the whole *assistance*. Two of Her Majesty's "beef-eaters" stood, one on either side, on the pit floor, just beneath the projection formed by the Royal box beyond the rest of the circle; the opera chosen was the *Ugonotti*.

The effect was most imposing when, on the appearance of the Royal party, who arrived with commendable punctuality, the whole House rose, as by one act, and the familiar but always impressive, National Anthem, played by the full orchestra, sent forth its loyal strains, the whole strength of the company executing the vocal solos and choruses from the stage. Of course, the conventional white satin programmes were not wanting, nor yet were bouquets of the rarest exotics forgotten. *Libretti*, also worthy of royal handling, and got up "regardless of expense," were provided: the Queen was pleased, the fashionable world admired; everybody, especially the eye-witnesses, talked

about the State visit to Covent Garden, and it was long remembered: but, however long, the remembrance came to an end at last, as all remembrances will; for some do not survive even in tradition! But, never mind, it was a goodly sight for those who saw it, all the same, and was shortly afterwards imitated when a rival ovation was offered to Her Majesty and the Prince at the Haymarket Opera-House; but, alas! that too has passed into oblivion: the subject lends itself to much moralization, but this is not perhaps the place for it.

One moral of the story may be found in the melancholy Mr Delafield. fact that, after a short-lived glory of two seasons, Mr. Delafield came to an end also; for during that comparatively brief period, £100,000 had slipped through his fingers; the examination into his affairs in the Court of Bankruptcy, on the 6th September, 1849, showed that not one shilling was left for his creditors. *They* had been altogether overlooked! *Ex pede, Herculem*: we may form a pretty accurate opinion of the business capacity of this young man—to say nothing of his morality—by noting only two items of expenditure which appeared in the accounts:

“Outlay on estate at Willow-Bank, Fulham, £8,540.”

“Housekeeping and personal expenses, £22,228.”

What a jolly time the *servants* must have had of it!

Nor was this result very surprising; apart from private extravagance, there had never been a record of *any impresario's* having realized a fortune by the Italian Opera; so far from this, most of those who had entered upon the speculation had come utterly to grief: and in this case there would seem to have been no attempt made to avert the result. Ebers, Laporte, Lumley, within my own recollection, were all, from some cause or other, ruined. The last named was a solicitor (Laporte's solicitor), and yet even he, could not make it pay: he took the management, on Laporte's death, in 1841, and was much disliked by the singers; one cause of offence was the prominence he gave

to the *ballet* over the opera, though it was not the principal occasion of disagreement; but nearly all his staff seceded, *de cœur léger*, to Covent Garden in 1846. The expedient to which he had recourse, of palming off Jenny Lind on the credulous public, kept him going for a couple of Seasons; a third was saved by the return of Sontag in unexpected perfection, after twenty years' absence; but in 1852 all resources failed him, and there would have been an end of his reign that year had it not been for the fire which destroyed the rival Opera-House at Covent Garden.* This accident enabled him to make a fresh start, but his ultimate failure was only deferred: in 1858 he abandoned the attempt, and retreated into the office he had formerly occupied, practically convinced that, obscure and unpopular as may be the calling of an attorney, it affords better opportunities for filling the pockets than catering for public amusement. So Lumley went back from his opera-boxes to his deed-boxes, and in 1875, died an attorney after all!

* Two fires at the same theatre, but which were promptly extinguished, had already taken place, and gave rise to much obvious conjecture as to their origin.

HISTRIONIC MEMORIES.

**“Your profession and you,” said Johnson to Garrick, “are mutually indebted ;
it has made you rich, and you have made it respectable.”—BOSWELL.**

CHAPTER VIII.

HISTRIONIC MEMORIES.

“Ad quàm stupenda opera, industria humana pervenit! Quæ in theatris mirabilia spectantibus, audientibus, incredibilia facienda et exhibenda molita est.”—S. AUGUSTINE.

THERE has always existed an almost universal feeling of interest and curiosity anent the private lives of stage professionals—those anomalous beings whom the public hear talking by the hour together, yet without ever uttering either a joke or a sentiment of their own, and whom it sees only through a halo of mystery—generally also of romance. They are familiar to that public in their assumed characters only, and are so seldom visible out of their disguises, that if they happen to be pointed out—generally in a whisper—in any public place, as “Miss A” or “Mr. B” they are looked after and even stared at, as if it were quite a new idea that they could exist in the flesh and participate in the habits of ordinary individuals. It is true the days are long gone by when “players” were *ipso facto* excommunicated,* being denied even a right to Christian burial; still, up to the early part of the present century, actors even of the higher grade, did much to bring the profession into disrepute, so that there was point in the old “Joe Miller” which relates the dialogue between the sweep and the dustman on meeting Garrick in Drury Lane. Materially as this view has been

* A great French actor—apparently not much terrified by ecclesiastical denunciation—once remarked *a propos* of hissing, “Les trompettes du jugement dernier ne seront pas plus terribles aux coupables que ne l'est à nos oreilles ce bruit humiliant; certes, la véritable souffrance de notre état, est là; c'est là l'excommunication réelle.”

modified by the force of circumstances, an actor's calling still continues to be regarded by the public more or less as "a thing apart." Theoretically, the actor is, in his own personal capacity, unknown to the public, who yet are so familiar with him on the stage: his individuality is as shadowy to the million, as that of the Punch-and-Judy man to the infant mind. He is rarely seen, and very rarely recognized, by daylight—never, in fact, ostensibly seen but in the haze of artificial presentation, assumed costume and make-believe surroundings; so studiously disguised is he that the majority of the spectators scarcely detect his identity even when he appears in a second piece on the same evening.

The mystery which thus envelopes the player's existence, the necessarily abnormal nature of his habits, and of the hours he keeps, seem to invest him with a prestige which tickles the imagination of the uninitiated, and excites their curiosity as to the mysteries of the *coulisses*; it makes them long for a peep behind the scenes, to see what can possibly be going on in those queer recesses they guess at through the wings, and above all to penetrate the arcana of the green-room. Nor does the inquisitive public pause here; when it has followed the hero of a drama through the five acts, during which it has been brought to make common cause with him, and, as it were, to take a personal part whether in his wrongs or his triumphs, it begins to feel a strange longing to follow him home, to take him apart from the character with which he has identified himself, to wash off his war-paint, and learn how he acquits himself in the domestic and social relations of life, in fact, to examine him soberly away from the glare of the footlights and the glamour of his professional accessories.

No doubt the actor experiences many enjoyable and also joyous episodes in his life; but his work is arduous, and to do justice to what he undertakes, he *ought* to be—not only a man of principle and a man of the world—but a man of

education, of genius, and of resources ; to natural intelligence, initiative, presence of mind, and quickness of perception, he must join a good memory, a good address, self-discipline, and agreeable manners ; and if he would be on the highest platform of his profession, he must—like a novelist—be not only a scholar, but a man of general culture. It is true that players lacking the advantages of early cultivation have succeeded in becoming great actors ; but such must have encountered much more difficulty in attaining eminence : moreover, their deficiencies must have been counter-balanced by exceptional natural gifts, accompanied by unflagging energy and unwearied patience. Often—ah ! how often !—it has happened that an intelligent actor has detected—oftener still, perhaps, elicited—point and meaning—the former in characters that have long been misunderstood because misinterpreted, the latter in such as even their author had failed to conceive. It is within the observation of most of us that a skilful actor has often not only imported into a piece one character, but has imparted to the whole plot, a broad signification which never so much as germed in the playwright's brain, and has even invested the dialogue with a brilliancy of which the latter would have been incapable. The annals of the stage teem with such instances—sometimes the result of histrionic ability, sometimes of circumstances of which an intelligent actor has known how to take advantage by his own originality, thus obtaining a permanent and living reputation for a piece composed of the most worthless materials.

A memorable instance of an opera being saved by the performer, to whom the principal character was entrusted, is to be found in the case of *Maria di Rohan*, one of Donizetti's weakest compositions. Ronconi, in the character of *Chevreuse*, literally startled the public by the withering scorn of his irony in a scene which *might* have been ludicrous had he not rendered it sublime. The suppressed fury of his look and gesture when Chalais

appears at the secret door can be compared only with the most thrilling effects of the finest tragedians the stage has produced. After this passage, the house seemed as if fired with the actor's own inspiration, and by the time the last scene was reached, the wearisomeness of the earlier acts was so far forgotten that the composer came in for most of the applause.

True, it is only the minority of actors who succeed in so critical and delicate an attempt as a departure from their text, and unhappily authors have too often a right to complain of their treatment at the hands of those who try to interpret them after their own fashion. How often have any of us seen Shakespeare's characters represented as they should be, even by the best actors?—for, what a countless number of accessories must they not bring to the task! Shakespeare's personages, whether in tragedy or comedy, are definite and concrete beings, whose individuality has to be *discovered* and not invented or improved by those who represent them.

Charles
Macklin.

One of the most conscientious and most successful practical appreciators of Shakespeare whom our stage has known, was Charles Macklin, whose veneration for the great dramatist was the more remarkable that on a memorable occasion he stood alone, not only unsupported, but vigorously opposed, in his determination to revert to Shakespeare's ideas, and to uphold the integrity of his text.*

* The frequent contests as to the authorship of Shakespeare's plays, which crop up now and again, seem to have thrown no new light on the question, and no proof has been adduced that they were written by any one else, though it may be safely admitted that the entire collection is not the work of one brain. One is reminded of the dispute between two undergrads., one of whom "felt sure that Homer never wrote the Iliad." "No," said the other; "it is now universally acknowledged that it was another man of the name of Homer, who lived at the same time." *A propos* of the Shakespeare disputes, Gaskell is said to have remarked that "if Shakespeare had not written the plays attributed to him, Bacon would have taken very good care to expose his assumption of the authorship; and if Bacon had himself been their author, he would not have failed to let the world know it."

Liberties taken with authors, like liberties taken with discipline, are pardoned only when successful ; but there are writers with whom no liberty can be easily justifiable. When we come to Shakespeare or Molière—to add to, or take from, whose copy would be resented by the whole civilized world—the task of the actor is of an altogether special order ; his part is no longer that of a reformer, but of a humble and subservient student bringing all the resources of his intelligence to the consideration and correct



MACKLIN.

apprehension of the work before him—a work he can be allowed to approach, only if he have already given proof of taste, experience, keen appreciation, and general knowledge adequate to such a task.

Macklin's heroic struggle to restore to the British stage one of Shakespeare's grandest works, *The Merchant of Venice*, forms therefore, one of the most interesting episodes in the dramatic history of the century.

It is singular to be able to record that this fine play had been deliberately thrust aside, so that to the majority of

playgoers, it became and remained unrecognized, and the only knowledge the public had of the existence of such a play, was from the very imperfectly paraphrased version of Lord Lansdowne. It is strange that this imitation—for it could hardly be considered more—should have been foisted on them for so long: its very nomenclature was changed; but though it was called “The *Jew* of Venice,” the character of Shylock had become a subordinate one, and some inferior low-comedian was always cast for the part.

Macklin, having bestowed the most patient study on the original play, was struck by the absurdity of Lord Lansdowne’s transmogrification, and with the feeling of a true artiste he caught the inspiration of the great dramatist, and became deeply impressed with the working out of the plot: the delineation of the character in which was centred the true interest of the play at once caught his fancy, for he saw in it a wide scope for the manifestation of his own genius, feeling sure of his power to develop it, and from that moment he resolved that justice should be done to Shakespeare’s transcendent merit by the prompt reinstatement of his text.

Macklin’s courage and perseverance in his determination to vindicate the reputation of the great dramatist in the minds of those who had been led to ignore or misconstrue him can be appreciated only by reverting to the facts which marked his honest and almost superhuman efforts: in these he found himself literally abandoned, whether by the company or the public, while the former assumed a fierce and menacing tone, even conspiring together to thwart and overthrow his attempts.

The familiarity of both public and actors with the garbled version, created in the minds especially of the latter,—who had all their parts at their fingers’ ends—so strong a prejudice, that they were doubly irritated by Macklin’s proposal; however, fortunately for truth and for art, his courage never for a moment flagged, and was destined to be crowned with a merited triumph.

The play, writes a contemporary chronicler, was put in rehearsal, but the actors, one and all, manifested a spirit of sullen perversity, the adversaries of the scheme being (perhaps honestly) convinced of its folly and futility: the attitude assumed by Macklin for reasons of his own, gave colour to this presumed result: during the rehearsal, he carefully concealed his intended treatment of the character, simply going through the words as if to show he was "letter-perfect," and cautiously avoiding to betray by look, tone, or gesture, the view he had adopted.

The manager who was present, and the actors, looked at each other in dismay, and not daring at this late period of the proceedings, openly to express their discontent, muttered to each other their disapprobation in mutinous asides, convinced that the performance was doomed. Quin, whose position enabled him to be more out-spoken than the rest, went so far as to tell Macklin that *he* would infallibly be hissed off the stage, and that the manager and the whole *troupe* would have to share the consequences of his presumption. Macklin, though his self-confidence was somewhat shaken by these discouraging observations, contrived to conceal the apprehensions that began to steal over him, therefore, by way of making his determination irrevocable, he had *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE* announced for representation on the 14th of February.

The evening came while all these conflicting feelings were still rife: the street was thronged, and no sooner were the doors open than a crowd such as had rarely been seen there before, invaded the vestibule; the numbers who had gathered during the preceding hour, laying siege to the entrance, manifested so eager an interest that the house was at once filled in every part.

Before the rising of the curtain the manager visited the green-room in nervous anxiety, but only to find the players, as much alarmed as himself, gloomily anticipating the reception that awaited them, and attributing the coming

failure, to which they had made up their minds, to Macklin's obstinate vanity.

During this time, as Macklin afterwards told Kirkman, his feelings were not to be described: though still sure that he was right, he now began to wonder what would be the attitude of the crowded audience, doubting whether among them would be found sufficient taste and intelligence, as well as sufficient candour and independence, to proclaim his justification.

The fateful hour struck; the curtain slowly rose, and the performers in the two first scenes were received with the welcome usually accorded to players when in favour with the audience.

The third scene was to bring the crucial test: *Bassanio* and *Shylock* entered: Macklin's dismay, already so great as almost to impede his utterance, was intensified by the situation in which he immediately found himself: instead of the bravos and acclamations of which he had thitherto been the object, a dead silence suggesting the most ominous forebodings, suddenly reigned throughout the house: had a pin dropped upon the stage it could have been heard: Macklin afterwards declared that in the whole course of his adventurous life, nothing had ever affected him as the startling coldness of that audience on his appearance. Not so much as a smile was to be seen on any face, not a monosyllable from any part of the house revived his stricken courage, not a hand was lifted to support him under the depressing discomfiture. The vindictive glare of the manager, the malicious sneers of the players, the unanimous sullenness of the massed and brilliant spectators all united against him, seemed a burden too heavy to bear: yet, summoning all his fortitude, he contrived to proceed.

Shylock advances towards the footlights, *Bassanio* following, to solicit the loan of 3,000 ducats on the credit of *Antonio*. *Shylock's* attitude is new to the audience; they take time to consider it; still, not so much as a whisper

breaks the silence of the public, and no indication of their feeling is elicited. *Antonio* enters, and the Jew exposes in weird and Satanic tones his implacable detestation of the merchant. No sooner had Macklin uttered this speech, never before thus delivered, than he had won the whole audience; overcome by simultaneous and spontaneous admiration, they rose as if by one action and gave tongue to their enthusiasm with a vehemence which burst upon the theatre like a peal of thunder. As the brave actor proceeded, marking with an artistic power altogether new to the stage of that day, the complicated characteristics of the Israelitish usurer, so did the delighted audience testify their astonishment and admiration of the dramatist's transcendent genius, and the skilful revelation of it by the actor's histrionic power. The performers themselves, Quin at their head, were carried away with the common enthusiasm; and Pope, seated in the stage-box, forgetting all conventionality, leaned forward and crowned the actor's triumph with that pungent and immortal testimony which was afterwards to be his epitaph—and it came with peculiar significance under the circumstances:—

“*This is the Jew that Shakespeare drew.*”

No ovation could be more justly accorded than that received by Macklin, no discomfiture more abject than that of his opponents, and as for Lord Lansdowne's miserable paraphrase, it disappeared and was never heard of again.*

I have heard my father describe Macklin's wonderful performance of *Shylock* when in his hundredth year: though a lad at the time, he retained a vivid remembrance of the event, and of the power and appreciation manifested by the veteran actor; for Macklin's rendering of this difficult character was, it appears, even at that age, very fine, and he went through it to the end, though, now and then, his memory

* It might be curious, but would no doubt be difficult, to obtain the perusal of a copy of *The Jew of Venice*, now.

failed him ; but he was fully conscious of it, and pathetically appealed to the audience for indulgence, with tears in his eyes, pleading his "great age." Needless to say that a generous encouragement, which deeply affected the old man, was cheerfully accorded by the enthusiastic audience. The occasion was Macklin's farewell benefit, and before retiring he even made a little speech which was very touching : the date of this remarkable histrionic incident was May 7, 1789, and Macklin survived it nearly eight years, for he died in 1797. Up to the day, indeed to the hour, of his burial, there was great uncertainty as to his true age which, like Braham, he concealed probably for professional reasons. There is a tradition that while the coffin was being lowered into the grave, a packet arrived containing the registry of Macklin's birth which proved the correctness of what he had always stated on the subject, viz., that it took place two months before the battle of the Boyne, in July, 1690. The chief mourner hastily asked for a penknife, and with the point, cut in "107" on the brass coffin-plate, where a blank space had been left for the figures : this took place in the churchyard of St. Paul's, Covent Garden.

Macklin's success in *Shylock* suggested to the manager as well as to himself that he should make as searching a study of *Macbeth*, and should appear in that character on a given day : unhappily it was by no means suited to his powers, and what with his own shortcomings and the jealousy of a rival who already claimed that character as his own, the attempt came to grief. Macklin became the victim of a powerful faction influential enough to be able to insist that the manager should, however reluctantly, at once exclude him from the company.

Macklin in self-defence was compelled to bring an action in the Court of King's Bench against the ringleaders of this party who had ruined his reputation and taken the bread out of his mouth. Dunning—afterwards Lord Ashburton—was his counsel : the trial lasted several days, but Macklin came

out of it with flying colours, for he showed so much forbearance and generosity towards his cowardly assailants, that Lord Mansfield—the Judge—shook hands with him as he left the court, and said, not without emotion—

“Mr. Macklin, let me congratulate you, not on your success, but on your conduct: you are a great actor, but you never in your life acted more superbly than you have to-day.”

Dunning, who conducted the plaintiff's case *con amore*, lost no opportunity of throwing ridicule and contempt on those who had planned the invidious attack upon Macklin: never slow to detect the absurd where he could make it serve, Dunning seized on a ludicrous cue in the cross-examination of a witness who had been one of the most violent promoters of the riot. This man, by name Miles, dwelt persistently on an assault committed on him by “a woman in the gallery,” who, he falsely insisted, was Mrs. Macklin, and declared that she “scratched his face, tore his hair, shirt, and cravat, otherwise maltreating him.”

Dunning persisted in joining two words in the accusation, and by making a succession of ingenious jokes on “Mr. Miles's *hair-shirt*,” convulsed the Court (even compromising the gravity of the Judge) and won the jury.

The trial is cited in Lord Eldon's Anecdote Book, but he has forgotten to record this facetious little episode in Lord Ashburton's defence of his client.

Justice should be done to Macklin's fine—indeed re-fined—moral character: he was open, generous, and considerate; he had keen sensibilities and entertained a self-sacrificing affection towards all the members of his family. His letters to his son afford a testimony most creditable to the integrity of his principles and the manliness of his feelings: still, his character was disfigured by the vices of his nationality—among them, an ungovernably pugnacious disposition. In a fit of passion he killed a fellow-actor in the green-room of Drury Lane Theatre, because he had possessed himself of a

stock-wig which Macklin intended to wear himself. He was tried for murder, and though acquitted, was branded in the hand, surviving the event sixty-three years.* He also had a desperate quarrel, in a more justifiable cause, with a baronet who insulted his daughter, and was very near taking a life on that occasion also.

It would be difficult to find a career of any actor more varied in feature and more romantic in detail, than that of Macklin, and there is a thrilling interest in many of the incidents that mark it.

Few portraits of Macklin have come down to us; Nollekens, for some reason unexplained, refused to make a bust of him, to his great mortification; he retorted, bitterly reproaching the sculptor with having executed one of Garrick: Nollekens contented himself with affirming that Garrick had *not* sat to him.

I have heard two anecdotes of Macklin and Garrick respectively, showing how keen an appreciation both possessed of the varied and refined qualifications which go to make a good actor, and how small a trial is needed to enable such performers as they both were, to judge of a postulant's capabilities.

Macklin was once induced to pass judgment on a young man who believed himself born for the stage: he watched him narrowly through the first act of a play under rehearsal, and then went up to him, and setting his teeth, asked him—

“What trade do you belong to, sir?”

“Trade! Oh, dear! no *trade*; I'm a gentleman.”

“Then,” said Macklin, furiously, “stick to that, sir; for you'll never be an actor.”

Garrick had similarly met the application of a stage-struck young woman, and set her to read a scene out of *Venice Preserved*. As she proceeded, he with difficulty kept his

* One of the hygienic processes to which Macklin attributed his vigorous old age was that of sponging all over, every night, with warm gin.

temper, but when she wobbled on without a shadow of intelligence, to the impassioned exclamation :—“ Could you kill my father, Giaffier ! ” he could stand it no longer ; he advanced to her with his hands crossed under his coat-tails as if he feared he should strike her, and shaking his head at her while stamping his foot, roared out, “ Go and chop cabbage, ma'am.”

Even while Macklin was working his intelligence to raise the character of dramatic art, it would seem that the stage of Drury Lane was, at least occasionally, put to less dignified uses, for on December 5, 1803, a piece of Reynold's was brought out there by Sheridan, called *The Driver and His Dog*, the chief attraction being the clever performance of Carlo, the dog ; the *Driver's* part being taken by Dignam. Sheridan went with a friend to see the piece, when they were met near the spot by Dignam, who with a woful countenance was proceeding to apprise Sheridan of the necessity of distributing hand-bills in the theatre to announce that in consequence of the illness of the principal performer, a substitute had come forward to take his part.

“ Illness ! Is it serious ? ” exclaimed Sheridan in consternation, “ Substitute ! Where'll you get him ? ”

“ Not exactly serious,” replied Dignam ; “ but I should be afraid to attempt going on the stage to-night.”

“ You ! ” said Sheridan, with a sigh of relief : “ oh ! it's you ! I was deucedly terrified ; you said ‘ the principal performer,’ so, of course, I thought you meant the *dog* ; yes, get a substitute for yourself by all means.”

In 1820 a curious incident occurred at Drury Lane Theatre on 29th of April, when at the conclusion of the performance of *King Lear* it was discovered that the second piece, a musical comedy, called *The Innkeeper's Daughter*, could not be produced. It appeared that the music, which was all in MS., had been stolen while the first piece was progressing !

Sir Joshua's surpassingly fine portrait of Mrs. Siddons Mrs. Siddons.

has no doubt suggested to most of those who are acquainted with it, that it must have been an impressive experience to see that great actress on the stage, though we may perhaps be permitted to ask ourselves whether she really was as great as tradition has made her seem, just as we ask ourselves whether, *e.g.*, Walter Scott, had he been a writer of our day, would have won as great a name, and have been pronounced a phoenix among novelists.

In both cases there seems to be a strong probability that although Mrs. Siddons and Sir Walter respectively, have had successors who in their triumphs might have not unworthily contested the palm with them, yet we should in all likelihood never have had an actress who could compete with the one, nor a writer who could compare with the other but for the model each has afforded to those who were to come after them.

Literature lives, and succeeding generations can form their own estimate of Sir Walter's pre-eminence; histrionic perfection can be only legendary, and our acceptance of the traditional superiority of Mrs. Siddons must be proportioned to the confidence we place in the taste and judgment of those to whose reports we have to trust. There can be none now surviving who are able to boast of having been even in the presence of Mrs. Siddons and her contemporary celebrities, still less of having seen her on the stage, for her final retirement was on June 9, 1812.

Crabb Robinson (and he has been dead now over a quarter of a century) relates in his Diary, how, being at the gallery of the Louvre in September, 1814, and hearing that Mrs. Siddons was among the visitors, he immediately made for the spot where she was pointed out to him walking with another lady—the mother of Horace Twiss; how he then followed, closely watching her and holding his ears open for a word, but he seems not even to have heard her voice, though he did observe her so attentively that he says she appeared to frown by half-closing her eyes in her efforts to

study the pictures which she saw, apparently only with difficulty: moreover, he takes exception to a "frivolous chip hat" she wore, pronouncing it altogether incongruous, and inconsistent with the dignity of her age and character. This observant gentleman most tantalizingly overheard nothing more than a confused murmur of the gossip carried on between the great actress and her companion, but failed to catch any of her conversation, or even a solitary characteristic remark. In this respect he was less fortunate than an old friend of my own—the widow of Mr. Joseph Parkes—then a young girl, but who died a few years ago, aged 82. She must have been present, curiously enough, in the same place, on the same day as Crabb Robinson, and when she caught sight of the celebrated tragedian, found her contemplating the famous Venus de Medici which, being part of the plunder brought from Italy to Paris, had not then been restored. According to this lady's account, Mrs. Siddons, who was nothing if not dramatic, after contemplating for some time in silence this marvel of art, struck an attitude and exclaimed in a loud soliloquy—

"So stands the statue that enchants the world!"

Ah! If "Jemmy Thomson" had caught that far-off echo of his line, he would unquestionably have accepted the spontaneous quotation from such lips as a compensation for some of the criticisms that have been passed upon his works.

But Mrs. Siddons, whether seriously, or in a humorous spirit and for the fun of their effect, was fond of introducing these sudden and startling quotations or remarks into the common-place of every-day life.

At a dinner, once, when a salad had been handed and she had been inadvertently passed over, she turned upon the butler, and in tones of command, appalling in their severity, said—

"Give *me* the bowl."

The man was too terrified to obey, and hurried out of the room.

A lady of rank having taken her little daughter to visit this queen of the stage that she might remember having seen her, she took the child's hand, and with questionable taste, said—

“Yes, my child! Look at me well, for you will never see the likes of me again.”

Probably she was right, but how different the effect would have been if some one else had said it for her!

George III. and his Queen entered warmly into the general enthusiasm excited by this great actress. During the winter of 1783 she performed *Lady Macbeth* by Royal command, and so delighted were Their Majesties that thenceforward they honoured her with marked attention: the perfection with which she read dramatic compositions, having reached their knowledge, she was frequently invited to Buckingham House and Windsor Castle, that the Royal Family might enjoy the pleasure of hearing her. The King was an intelligent appreciator of histrionic art, and made much of first-class actors. When His Majesty was visiting Stonehenge with his family and suite, during a summer tour in the south-west of England, David Garrick, who happened to be at Salisbury, having ridden over for the sake of showing himself in the Royal *cortège*, had taken up his position on horseback as near as he could to the King. Having dismounted for a moment to tighten the saddle-girth, his horse became restive and, escaping from his hold, ran away. Garrick hereupon cried out, with much humour—

David
Garrick.

“A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!”

This exclamation in the great actor's unmistakable tones did not escape the Royal ear, and while it astonished most of the bystanders who failed to recognize its point, the King at once remarked—

“That must be Garrick; see if he is not on the ground.”

The dismounted monarch of the stage was immediately conducted to His Majesty, who, after joking with him on the vagaries of his nag, complimented him on his readiness as a wag, shown by the aptitude of his quotation, adding, amiably, that “his delivery of Shakespeare could never pass undiscovered.”

Mrs. Siddons and John Philip Kemble having been quite before my time, such knowledge as I have of their perfections has come to me traditionally from my father, who, during a tour he made in England, saw them for the first time when acting in a barn in Wilts. In fact they belonged to a strolling company under the auspices of Vandenhoff: I have, however, many personal recollections of Charles Kemble, and remember being taken to the *début* of his daughter Fanny as *Mrs. Hallar* in *The Stranger*,* he taking the title-character.

Charles Kemble had histrionic gifts and, with these, graces peculiarly his own; such they were as to secure him many and fervent admirers; my father, having both seen and known his brother John Philip, used to think it a mistake on the part of Charles to attempt any of the characters with which John had identified himself, as he would not allow any possible comparison between the two brothers, and considered it impolitic in the younger to court it, more especially as he had quite sufficient genius and talent, as well as personal advantages, to stand on his own ground; for even the admirers of John never denied that Charles also was a great actor, and that he well merited the fame he earned when he limited his ambition to parts to which he was specially suited.

Charles
Kemble.

Charles Kemble paid a fine tribute to his brother's genius when he said that the tears would always gush into his

* I have been told that when the Kembles were in the zenith of their fame, they occupied “a cottage which stood at the back of Covent Garden Theatre,” and it was there that Fanny Kemble was born.

eyes when, while playing *Cassio* to John Kemble's *Othello*, the latter spoke the words—

“ I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.”

Charles Kemble was not a good *Macbeth*, but there were characters he made his own, and in scenes in which he had to “ die,” he was always excellent.

Byron's estimate of four great contemporary actors was as follows : Cooke, he thought “ the most natural ” ; “ Kemble the most supernatural ” ; “ Kean the medium between them ; and Mrs. Siddons worth all three.” Kean's acting in *Sir Giles Overreach* so powerfully affected Byron that at the close of the performance witnessed by him, he fainted and had to be carried out of the theatre.

All great actors will be found to have specially worked up at least one character, and to have identified themselves with it more than with any other they have undertaken ; *Mercutio*, I think, must have been Charles Kemble's pet representation ; he certainly tinted it with a nameless grace, due partly to his artistic proclivities, elegant taste, and the strong feeling for beauty generally which might be traced as the incentive to all his work ; he owed a great deal, however to his personal advantages ; for to few has been given a presence at once so suave and so noble, a voice so flexible, a manner so graceful, and the proper degree of intelligence and power to make the most of these. We cannot say that Charles Kemble *created Mercutio*, for he respected the Shakespearean text throughout, and in making the character his own, one felt that he also made it what Shakespeare meant it should be ; he gave a refined finish to his performance by the control of his action and the modulation of his voice, skilfully and artistically suiting them not only to the character generally but to every phase of it : the result was that in *Romeo and Juliet*,—*Mercutio* killed,—the chief interest of the play seemed withdrawn.*

* William Lewis left the reputation of being the best *Mercutio* of his day.

Greatly successful also was he in *Benedick*, for which his fine features and easy carriage peculiarly fitted him; the *bizurrerie* of this character has rarely been interpreted with success; but Charles Kemble appreciated its subtleties, and his impersonation was altogether distinctive. There was something irresistibly captivating in the change he used to make from the courtly gallantry of his earlier approaches to Beatrice, to the unwillingly betrayed tenderness of his banter as she gradually bewitched him with her coquettish sarcasms. In hearing Fanny Kemble read *Much Ado About Nothing*, it was curious to remark how entirely she had been imbued with her father's version of this difficult character.

Fanny
Kemble.

My personal recollections of Fanny Kemble as an actress are necessarily of the haziest; the first time I saw her she played *Mrs. Hallar* in that old-fashioned play, *The Stranger*, my attention however was more absorbed in the little children who appear in that play, than in the stars whose brilliancy I was too young to appreciate; still I perfectly recollect Fanny Kemble's youthful face and figure and the style in which she was *coiffée*, her hair being twisted up in two *quasi* horns.

The Stranger was not performed many times with this cast, the public taking exception to the situation, not admitting that husband and wife could be with propriety represented by father and daughter. Later, however, Charles Kemble and his daughter certainly performed together under similar circumstances, as I remember seeing them at the little Tunbridge Wells theatre on the Pantiles, as *Katharine* and *Petruchio*; but my most appreciative recollection of both is of a later date still, when they respectively appeared as readers.

The grace of Charles Kemble, the fascination of his manner, his gentlemanly figure, and his handsome face were perhaps more valuable to him in mufti, and in Society, than under the *travestis* of the stage, and the distinctness of his pronunciation, the tone of his voice and the expression of his features were admirable accessories to his readings; but

Fanny Kemble was *hors ligne* in this accomplishment; she took the public by storm, and was certainly never surpassed, nor even equalled, in this capacity. Nothing could be more flashing than the intelligence with which she seized the situations, while the versatility she manifested in the changes from one character to another, and from one voice to another, without ever in any degree mingling or mistaking them, was surprising. Those who heard her, however, were more surprised on subsequent reflection than at the time; she showed herself so thoroughly *au fait* of the maxim *ars est celare artem*, and the detail of each scene was given so naturally and with such entire limpidity, that the audience were hardly aware they had not before them the whole *mise en scène*, and every performer in his and her proper place. Fanny Kemble, it may be asserted, achieved a triumph in every one of these complicated performances, due importance being fully given to delineating and preserving the characteristics of each several personage she brought before her hearers: it required indeed no small ability to keep up with entire consistency throughout the piece, the character of each, and also to be able to dispense with every accessory, and every auxiliary resource of dramatic art, while yet producing and maintaining a complete illusion.

I heard her thus read all Shakespeare's plays, some in London and some at Brighton, to crowded audiences, who must have been as much impressed with the intelligent beauty of her features, as with her marvellous dramatic power. Her *Juliet* was delicious.

Impetuosity is probably a characteristic of genius, and Fanny Kemble now and then afforded a proof of it. I remember an occasion during the series of Brighton readings when, the appointed hour having arrived, and with it a very numerous audience, the time continued to pass and no signs of any performance appeared; we waited very patiently, and no doubt all were making efforts at forbearance; when a tedious half hour having slipped away, a growing murmur,



FANNY KEMBLE AS "JULIET."

too reasonable to be objected to by the *impresario*, made itself heard, and that worthy could no longer defer presenting himself on the platform : the cheers and applause with which he was received afforded him a moment's respite ; but he was evidently as much up a tree as Zacchæus himself, and his white lips uttered sounds so faint that they failed to reach the audience. After a round of " Speak ups " had shown Mr. Wright that he was wrong, and that the section of the British public before him intended to have their entertainment or their money—he falteringly begged their indulgence for Mrs. Fanny Kemble, who had suddenly found herself too indisposed to appear : one voice in the assembly called out, " Say *ill*-disposed," and possibly its owner knew, but the little man on the platform, as soon as he could get a hearing, explained that the blame was not his, that he sympathized heartily with all present, that their money should be returned at the doors, and that the performance was simply deferred for four-and-twenty hours.

The cause of all this disturbance, I afterwards learnt, was a domestic dispute, in the course of which Fanny had become so much excited as to be unable to do justice to the author, the public, or herself.

The following story, illustrative of Fanny Kemble's warm temper, tells of an incident which occurred at a dinner where my informant was one of the guests, and where the lady in question was seated next to " Poodle Byng." An altercation, for it proved nothing less, had arisen between the two on the vexed subject of " women's rights " (which, *par parenthèse*, I may remark, have been humorously described as especially contended for, by " men's lefts "). Fanny Kemble defended her views with so much spirit and so much gesticulation that the gentleman—noted for his urbanity and gentle manners—was quite overpowered, and took refuge in an attitude of cowed silence.

" Poodle
Byng."

This forbearance seemed to bring " Fanny " to a recognition of her vehemence, and after a pause she tranquilly

inquired his opinion. Byng's gently uttered answer was a fine contrast to her assertive demonstrativeness. It consisted of five words: "I don't agree with you."

On May 15, 1847, Fanny Kemble appeared at St. James's Theatre as *Julia* in *The Hunchback*, to assist in a performance given in aid of funds collected in England for the be-famined Scotch and Irish. The affair proved a great success, but that success may fairly be attributed to the fact that Mrs. Butler was to take part in the proceedings. Her musical voice and graceful as well as powerful conception of the part were beyond all praise; probably she was unconsciously incited to aim at a perfection which she must have felt would be appreciated by the cultivated and brilliant audience that gathered round her, and, we may fairly say, paid homage to her talent. The Court attended, and both the Queen and Prince Albert evinced their pleasure by the most spontaneous applause.

This was the last occasion on which I ever saw Fanny Kemble on the stage. I cannot remember any time when she was not considered a more or less worthy scion of the Kemble family, and was surprised lately to read in Charles Greville's Diary the following somewhat disparaging account of what *he* thought of her in 1829. It is true his description is a good deal mixed, and it is not easy to make out what his appreciation of her really was.

"I saw Fanny Kemble," he writes (vol. i. p. 246), "for the first time on Friday, and was disappointed. She is short, ill-made, with large hands and feet, an expressive countenance, though not handsome; fine teeth, fine eyes and hair; not devoid of grace, and with great energy and spirit; her voice good, though she has a little of the drawl of her family. She wants the pathos and tenderness of Miss O'Neil, and she excites no emotion; but she is very young, clever, and may become a very good, perhaps a fine, actress. Mrs. Siddons was not so good at her age. She fills the house every night."

Macready, apart from his unfortunate touchiness, of which, ^{Macready.} however, he was himself conscious, and was always trying to subdue, was an excellent fellow and a great favourite in Society. He had an honest mind, and was not only an intelligent, painstaking, and powerful, but also a conscientious, actor. He was earnest in all he did, and studied his rôles with the desire of making his performances as perfect as possible. He had a straightforward conviction of his own capabilities, and of the position he considered they



MACREADY.

entitled him to hold, and would never consent to accept any but a leading part; but he worked valiantly and unsparingly to attain the degree of proficiency which should justify him in aiming at the highest rank in his profession. If, however, Macready possessed many of the attributes most desirable in an actor, he was not without his faults, and among these must be reckoned a monotony both of tone and action which often disfigured his performances: some of his attitudes were not only awkward in themselves,

but he often dropped into them obliviously and did not seem to perceive they were unsuited to the part he was playing. There were, however, some characters which he played admirably; he considered himself at his best in *Macbeth*; he had made a special study of the dagger-scene, and some points he introduced in that difficult character, used to thrill the audience. *Richelieu*, if not altogether perfect, may yet be reckoned one of his successes: indeed Phelps modelled his representation of *Richelieu* so closely on that of Macready, that it became a complete reflection of it. I was at the *première* of this play (March 8, 1839) at the Princess's theatre, Macready *the Cardinal*; but I have seen Charles Kean, Phelps, and (later) Irving, assume this fine and complicated character: of these four several impersonations, Macready's was the finest to my taste, as I now recall the impression he produced in the many striking situations with which that drama abounds.

He was particularly successful in the scene in which he awes the king's armed soldiers into submission solely by the moral power of an infirm and defenceless old man. This passage is a forcible one; there is no protector but the aged *Cardinal* between *Julie de Mauprat* his ward, who clings to him for help, and the Royal messengers who have been ordered to carry her away. There is no struggle, no resistance on his part; the tone of his voice coupled with the attitude he assumes are more than enough. Most of my readers will remember it:

" Mark where she stands! Around her form I draw
The awful circle of our solemn Church :—
Set but a foot within that sacred ground,
And on thy head yea—though it wore a crown,
I launch the curse of ROME ! "

The very audience seemed to feel that in "Rome" and her "curse" lay the *nec plus ultra* of power and authority, and to share the terror of those to whom it was addressed.

Macready was perhaps less strong than Irving in the

scene where *Richelieu* simulates death, the detail of which the latter renders with photographic rather than artistic accuracy; but nothing could exceed the force thrown by Macready into the triumphant irony of the *Cardinal*, when, after his disgrace, the king discovers that he is lost without his wily prelate's help, and *Richelieu* is able to impose his own conditions in condescending to resume the reins of the State.

But how difficult it is to compare an actuality with a by-gone impression which has gradually become an ideal. We forget how far it may have been cumulatively shaped and tinted by the prismatic lens of imagination through which we have gone on looking back upon it, and we are generally led to give the preference to what we have lost, over what we still have.

Charles Greville has devoted a page in his diary to this same "first night" of Bulwer's admired production.

He describes it as "a fine play admirably got up, and well acted by Macready," but he takes exception to the concluding scene, condemning that actor's conception of it as "altogether bad." "Macready," he says, "turned Richelieu into an exaggerated Sixtus V., who completely forgot his dignity and swaggered about the stage taunting his foes and hugging his friends with an exultation quite unbecoming and out of character.* With this exception it was a fine performance; the success," continues the diarist, "was unbounded, and the audience transported. After Macready had been called on, they found out Bulwer who was in a small private box next the one I occupied with d'Orsay and Lady Blessington, and were vociferous for his appearance

* I am afraid this was literally as the diarist describes it, and this intemperate recognition of a triumph so securely his, would have been so superfluous, that the Cardinal Richelieu of history and of the former scenes in this play, would have been far too diplomatic to place himself in so vulgar a position. It is to be regretted that as Charles Greville had the opportunity of learning the author's view of the matter, he did not discover and relate it.

to receive their applause. After a long delay, he bowed twice or thrice from his box and instantly retreated.

Directly after, he came into our box looking very serious and rather agitated; while Lady Blessington burst into floods of tears at his success, which was certainly very brilliant." It will be seen that Greville makes rather a sentimental story out of his materials.

Whether from his own view of the character, or profiting by Macready's version, Charles Kean, when he assumed the *Cardinal's* personality, avoided this error, and presented a much more consistent Richelieu; there was even a marked loftiness in the noble forbearance with which he bore himself after having reconquered his former position; appearing to accept his reinstatement as a matter of course and as a result needing no justification.

Phelps did not succeed in enlisting the sympathies of the audience in behalf of the despotic *Eminenza* as either Macready or Kean; but speaking of him generally, whether in tragedy or comedy, he cannot be said to have possessed any very remarkable personal qualifications to create a prestige in his favour; nor was he capable of that earnest, conscientious absorption peculiar to Macready, which identified him as it were, with whatever character he assumed, and irresistibly claimed the suffrages of the audience, accounting for his popularity with the general public.

Of *Coriolanus*, Macready seemed to have made a special study and to feel himself at home in it; yet his *Sardanapalus*, though so different in every respect, was well carried out. He certainly possessed the art of adapting his powers to the occasion, and,—if we except a few mannerisms,—of varying his personality so that the spectators should see before them, not Macready, but the *dramatis persona* he represented. His *Macbeth* was one of the best that had at that time been put before the public; he had apparently given more thought and study to it than to any Shakespearean character he had assumed, and that this was his own opinion seems probable

from his choosing it for his farewell performance : with his *Othello* no one perhaps was less satisfied than himself, while in *Iago* he showed himself consummate master of his art ; still the pre-eminence was, I think, always given to his *Macbeth*, in which the dagger-scene was a triumph of dramatic declamation.

Hazlitt seems to have preferred Edmund Kean's *Macbeth* altogether, and was particularly struck with his appreciation of the moral change undergone by *Macbeth* after the murder, describing with enthusiastic rapture the delicate touches by which that master of tragedy intimated the state of mind of a man "waking up to the full conviction of the gulf he had himself interposed between his past and his present."

As to Macready's rendering of *Hamlet* (as a whole) it has not found many admirers ; he was too heavy for the character, though he made several good points in the course of the play, especially in the play-scene, and these were for the most part original and the result of his own taste and reflection. Whether because he misapprehended the complicated character of the Danish Prince, and in his inability to seize on its finer shades and to blend them deftly into a harmonious and consistent whole, it is difficult to say,—but he certainly fell into the error of making *Hamlet* appear harsh and morose, bitter and cynical without any compensatory qualities, and physically, Macready certainly lacked the grace and polish without which no *Hamlet* seems possible.

As regards his character off the stage, Macready was somewhat prone to indulge among his colleagues in an overbearing manner, but he had an excellent heart, and there were many instances in which he showed a practical sympathy with those beneath him in position and fortune.

Clarkson Stanfield was a staunch friend of Macready's, and when the latter was harassed in the Drury Lane management he exerted himself to the utmost in his own department, to lighten his anxieties : some of the embellish-

ments and scenic effects thus produced won universal public admiration, and made quite an epoch in the history of stage decoration. It was under Stanfield's auspices that *Acis and Galatea* was put on the stage with a success which has never been forgotten.

Macready's diary is a remarkable and most interesting record of an actor's life and trials, revealing a character marked not only by much originality of thought, but of persevering purpose, whether in his moral training, or his professional capacity. We also find there, valuable anecdotes regarding individuals or incidents mingled with his career. In many respects his life does not seem to have been a happy one; but, according to his own unconscious demonstration, his miseries were in a great measure of his own creation, or were at least mainly due to a fretful disposition and to a want of philosophical resignation to petty as well as to more serious, vexations. Yet was he strongly imbued with religious principles, and seems to have been always ingenuously ready to admit and to regret his shortcomings. It would be impossible not to entertain a sincere respect for Macready's moral character after reading his diary; it shows a frank, simple, honest and conscientious mind, and no one would be the worse either as a man or a critic, for perusing those pages.

Samuel
Phelps.

Phelps must be considered as of a later date than Macready; for, although born in 1806, and making his *début* in London in 1827, he remained much longer before the public. He first appeared at the Haymarket, when under the management of Webster; and *Shylock* was the part he took. Macready, who had a very high opinion of Phelps's abilities, engaged him when he assumed the management of Covent Garden in 1839, and used to say that he was one of the leading performers of his day; but his capacities were far better suited to comedy than tragedy, and his best Shakespearean character was that of *Bottom* the weaver. Phelps had the management of Sadler's Wells

from 1845 to 1863, and it was there I saw him in *Richelieu*. The stage is a remarkably fine one and the *mis en scène* was elaborate, for that day.

His strong Scotch accent formed, to a certain extent, a drawback to his aptitude for the stage, inasmuch as, like Charlotte Cushman's American intonation, it could not but continually remind the audience that the actor was an impersonator only, and *not* the man it was his business to identify himself with, the effect therefore was often irritating.

Nevertheless, Phelps must be reckoned among our great tragedians, and was in many respects superior to any of his time. His *Cardinal Wolsey* in *Henry VIII.* has often been cited as worthy of record, and his *Macbeth* was a careful study, full of excellent points; now and then, he would produce phases of the character quite new to the stage, and showing how deeply he had thought it out. I saw him in *Macbeth* with Helen Faucit, whose *Lady Macbeth* was quite of the old school, but the joint performance was a grand and suggestive one, notwithstanding her conventional style. It was amusing on that occasion to hear the boys in the lobbies hawking their *libretti* ambiguously describing them as:—
“The words of *Macbeth*, sixpence apiece.”

Phelps's figure was tall but bony, and not altogether commanding, nor were his attitudes graceful. His face was not in itself prepossessing; the eyes being small and nearer together than comports with artistic prescription; it is, I believe, one of the principles of art that a wide space between the eyes should be observed, to give to a face an expression of innocence and simplicity, while bringing the eyes nearer together conveys an idea of sagacity, shrewdness, and cunning. It must, I think, have been noticed by others as well as by myself that Phelps often took his cue from Macready, and in his performance of *Richelieu* there could be no doubt that he had that model in his mind's eye.

The elder Kean can have been known to few at present Charles Kean.

living, otherwise than by tradition; it is difficult, therefore, for us to judge in what way and to what extent, tradition would have us believe him to have been so vastly superior to actors who have come within our personal ken. Coleridge's admiration has been thrown into a form which sounds like a genuine exclamation, and it very concisely expresses an exalted degree of admiration:—"To see Kean act," he said, "was like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning."

Charles Kean was, as he himself often said, "under the great disadvantage of having had a distinguished father," and there is every probability—so subjective are all things—that on this account he did not get all the credit he deserved; yet of *Richelieu*, a character which has been assumed by so many rival actors, he must be admitted to have proved a very appreciative representative: again, and perhaps more especially, in his *Louis XI.* no one would refuse to recognize a brilliant success. There were artistic touches which graphically rendered the cruelty and craftiness combined with obstinate superstition, with which history has invested that miserable King. At the same time he never lost sight of the dignity of Royalty, even in his representation of the King's meanest acts, and it was evident he had bestowed careful reflection on all the auxiliary accessories of costume which he took care should be altogether characteristic. He often showed originality in his other impersonations and won many admirers.

Ellen Tree.

I have but a slight and far-off recollection of Mrs. Charles Kean and only as *Myrrha* (when Ellen Tree) to Macready's *Sardanapalus*, Cooper being cast for *Salamenes*: I can, however, recall the figure of the "Greek girl" as draped with classical elegance and statuesqueness. *Myrrha* has to play an heroic part in this tragic drama, and Ellen Tree acquitted herself with much grace and distinction. I never saw her sister, Maria Tree, who first called attention to the name, but did not remain long on the stage.

The after-piece that followed *Sardanapalus*, I remember,

was one of Kenney's clever adaptations of a two-act French comedy called *Michel Perrin*, and entitled by him *Secret Service*; like most of such pieces, it was partially pathetic, and relieved by a due proportion of humour; it afforded two very good characters: one, that of a simple-minded old *Abbé*, rendered by William Farren with delightful ingenuousness; and the other by Cooper, who represented *Fouché* employing his spies under Napoleon I.

I have also seen William Farren in *Sir Peter Teazle*, in which character I believe he made his very successful *début*. The extraordinary admiration he commanded in old men's

William
Farren.



MR. W. FARREN AS "LORD OGLEBY."

characters when quite a youth, was fully justified, but the attitude he was wont to assume had the effect of producing a stoop in his gait, so that although nearly six feet high, he passed for a short man; but his make-up in such parts was never equalled. As *Isaac* in *Ivanhoe*, he was very successful, and he must have been very perfect in this part to justify the following encomium which I found in an old contemporary periodical; the writer remarking that—"With consummate art and with no apparent effort he brought before the spectators as in *propria personâ*, the miserable victim of bigotry, fanaticism and intolerance:—hunted and

helpless, his every glance was that of fear and suspicion ; he had a bow of servility even for his own shadow, and his sigh as he gazed on his beautiful *Rebecca* was faultlessly true to nature."

Cooper.

Cooper, I remember as *Salamenes* in *Sardanapalus*, which held the stage at Drury Lane for only a short time, though brilliantly brought out, Macready acting the *King*; the cast bringing in Miss Phillips (who died not long after of consumption), as the "gentle, wronged Xarina."

Cooper, taking another line, also personated the Master of the Establishment in the ludicrous farce of *High Life Below Stairs*, rarely if ever, given now, probably because no longer ludicrous, the domestic assumptions of those days having become not only realities, but being admitted as matters of course, in these : every housekeeper's room, if not every kitchen, has to-day its appreciators of "Shickspur," and servants all know now that "*Finis*" is *not* the name of the author, though they *don't* know how to make a bed, to sweep a room, or to boil a potato.

Harley.

The success of Harley, a favourite actor of this date, can scarcely be considered as due to genius: he owed his popularity in a great measure to the peculiar formation and expression of his face and features, and to the brightness and natural expression of his humour; but there may have been genius in knowing how to turn these peculiarities into capital: he would have done well, with perhaps an occasional exception, to confine himself to farce; though eccentric, Harley was rarely original, and while apparently always overflowing with drollery on the stage, he was (like Liston and others among comic actors) of a naturally gloomy and desponding temperament unsuspected by those whose mirth he could so readily command. Several times he ventured very near matrimony, but never could "screw his courage to the sticking-place," and therefore he *did* "fail" on each occasion.

He came out as long ago as 1815, as *Lissardo* in *The*

Wonder, and I think it is Crabb Robinson who records his first appearance, together with the expression of his opinion that "he is a young man who will make his way and may be considered a promising comedian." His performance on this occasion was a decided success and established his favour with playgoers, but his habit of unpunctuality was resented



MR. HARLEY.

by the proprietor of the English Opera-House who, at last exasperated, brought an action against him, and he was condemned to pay a forfeit of £1,000.

Harley's face, like Liston's, betokened his branch of the profession, and, if the reverse of handsome, was irresistibly droll, the lines of his features being so simian that they gave

occasion for a pretty good joke in the *Pré aux clercs* when some one asking him in the character of *Cantarelli* an Italian musician, "what he had brought home from his travels," he replies—"A monkey"; calling forth the reply—"Ha! *Cantarelli*, I shall never see thee without thinking of a monkey."

This was, of course, always received with roars of laughter as a justifiable reference to Harley's peculiar countenance. Such a face was a fortune to a low comedian, and Harley employed it as part of his stock-in-trade. He was an excellent singer in the style required for the parts he took, and was always sure of an *encore*.

Harley's face had not always been marked by the lines which rendered it so comic; I have seen a picture of him at about forty, which gives him excellent features and a very pleasing, intelligent expression; later he incurred a paralytic stroke which affected the facial muscles, so that his countenance seemed to be drawn out of shape and when he spoke it was with a trick (or rather a *tic*), conveying an intimation of mirthfulness which often mystified those with whom he was conversing, as it did not always accord with the remark it accompanied.

At home, and also in intimate society, notwithstanding the habitual gloom of his character, he often delighted his friends by indulging them with some of his admirable songs, which he knew how to hit off with dashing spirit and undeviating good humour. Like so many in his devil-may-care profession, he was practically acquainted with the vicissitudes of fortune; but good or ill luck always found him the same, and he was as admirable as he was admired, for a philosophical evenness of temper which won the affection and esteem of all his friends. At one time, Harley lived at No. 34, King Street, Covent Garden, over a print-seller's, but he afterwards removed to Gower Street, where he enjoyed the cheerful companionship of his two sisters, and where he died at a very advanced age. He may be said to have died in

harness, for it was while (or just after) performing his excellent rôle of *Launcelot Gobbo* that he was seized with the malady which, not long after, terminated his life; his last words were a characteristic quotation—"I feel an exposition of sleep come upon me."

Harley appreciatively understood and admirably rendered Shakespeare's clowns.

I have a very early recollection of having been taken to see Douglas Jerrold's play *Black-eyed Susan*, in which T. P. Cooke was cast for *William*, and Madame Vestris for *Susan*. T. P. Cooke's was a very singular existence, and it was mainly to his life-like representation of the hero, that the piece owed the favour it won and maintained. Cooke, born in 1786, died in 1848, and the first half of his life was full of stirring adventure. He acquired a passion for a naval career from having seen a play, full of nautical incident, at a sea-side theatre, and as his father, a country apothecary, died when he was almost an infant, and his mother made no objection to his following his bent, he left his native shores in His Majesty's ship *The Raven*, and sailing for the Bay of Toulon, got at once into active, not to say perilous, service; for he took part in the Siege (1796). A year later we find him fighting under Admiral Lord St. Vincent in the battle that took place off Cape St. Vincent, nor were these by any means the only naval actions in which he took part, for, on his first return home, after passing through a hairbreadth escape from shipwreck at Cuxhaven, he again started on board *The Prince of Wales* for Brest where he found himself during the blockade. Cooke distinguished himself during his naval service, and was even publicly thanked by his Admiral. In 1802 the Peace of Amiens brought his sea-life to a close, and being then thrown on his own resources he turned to the stage, for which he was eminently fitted. Sea-pieces were those most congenial to his tastes, and his experience of naval life naturally helped him to pre-eminence in that branch of dramatic art. In 1804 he made his *début* on the

T. P. Cooke.

same boards on which Braham had appeared also for the first time—those of the *Royalty*, Welclose Square. He was engaged to personate *Nelson* in a piece given at Astley's, and afterwards appeared at the theatre in Peter Street, Dublin. The Lyceum public in London, saw him on its stage, and in 1816 he was claimed at Drury Lane, where he appeared in *The Watchword*. At the Porte St. Martin, Paris, he appeared in the difficult character of *The Monster*, in *Frankenstein*, and with so much success that it had a run of one hundred nights. Elliston then engaged him for the Surrey, where he secured a triumph in *Black-eyed Susan* (then just written). So great was the favour with which the play thus supported, met, that the manager of Covent Garden Theatre brought it out there, engaging Cooke to take the character of the hero, and he had good reason to congratulate himself on the arrangement. Cooke delighted the public, and remained there till 1834: in 1837 he played in this piece on the occasion of the "Jerrold Remembrance nights," and exhibited to general admiration those aptitudes which made Wilson say of him in his *Noctes Ambrosianæ* that "no actor had ever personated a marine as he." It is satisfactory to know that the indefatigable perseverance of his laborious life was rewarded by the realization of a more than comfortable independence, of which at his death he made a very sensible distribution.

Elliston.

Elliston would have been to me little more than a name had I not been taken to the Surrey Theatre one night in 1831, where he was to play *Sweet William* in *Black-eyed Susan*, always the delight of the Surrey audiences, Madame Vestris (I think) taking the heroine's part. It was Elliston's farewell benefit, and at the close of the performance after being called for the third time before the curtain and still in his sailor's costume, which greatly aided his naturally youthful appearance, he intimated that he had something to say.

Immediately the House was hushed, and then he humorously "apologized for the liberty which he, a mere boy,

feared he was taking in addressing the audience, but he desired to thank them for the many tokens of favour with which they had honoured him and he hoped they would, now he was about to part from them, continue to think kindly of him, for the sake of *his old grandfather*, Mr. Robert Elliston, between whom and the public the pleasantest relations had so long existed."

Some of the audience were taken in by the gravity of his tone and the juvenility of his appearance, and wondered whether he really was a grandson of their old favourite who had taken his duty for the night,—his own grandson, in fact.

This was not long before Elliston's death, and it is surprising that the long course of intemperance with which he had tried his constitution, should have left him the physical requirements for passing off this original joke.

A clever Irish dramatist or rather farce-writer who was much taken up by Rogers and other wits of the day, was James Kenney, known by his excellent translations and adaptations from the French *répertoire*, besides his original contributions to dramatic literature and his humorous farces.

James
Kenney.

James Kenney was born as long ago as 1776, and was an elderly man at the time I remember him; he was a very prolific writer and made a sensation with the first farce he produced (1804), *Raising the Wind*. I do not remember ever seeing that, but have seen with some of his later very amusing productions. *Secret Service*—rather above a farce; also *False Alarms*, *Touchstone*, and *Too many Cooks*; but his plays are too numerous to put on record here; those who could judge of these pieces as they appeared were unanimous in asserting that his first was by far his best, though Kenney was indisputably at the head of contemporary farce-writers. He tried his pen at poetry, and published a poem called *Society*, and later, another called *Valdi*.

Kenney married in 1820 the widow of Thomas Holcroft, who had himself been twice married. Holcroft's daughter

(aged seventy) by his first wife used, I remember, to call herself the sister of Kenney's youngest child, a boy of seven. By this marriage he had twin daughters, who were educated in France, and one of these was an early governess in our family. She had at command (whether authentic or dressed up) amusing stories of the stage, and had a great deal to tell about the Kembles, also about Macready and other dramatic celebrities of the time, but I forbear quoting these narrations because they might be apocryphal, though there is no doubt her father must have been much in that kind of society. He certainly was a frequent guest at Rogers's hospitable table : and there is other evidence that the Banker-poet appreciated Kenney's Irish humour, of which the following is not a bad instance.

He was one day dining with a party of professionals at Greenwich, when he suddenly began to cough violently, and one of the party observing : " Is that a fish-bone gone the wrong way ? "

" On my word," he replied, " it was just going the way to kill Kenney."

He was once in a Brighton lodging in the days when the high price of tea made it worth purloining, and the attraction of the tea-caddy for landladies was proverbial. Kenney's landlady—an Irish woman to boot—was no exception to the generally understood order of lodging-house-keepers, and accordingly, day by day Kenney missed portions of tea from his stock, though the caddy had a lock, and he made a point of keeping the key—*his* key—in his pocket.

As the depredations became more serious, he one day bethought him of a delicate mode of intimating that his eyes were open, and wrote on a slip of paper : " Don't steal the lodger's tea," locking it up in the caddy before he went out. On his return the dame seemed altogether beside herself with anger, and flinging open the door of his sitting-room, asked him whom it was he suspected of robbing him of his " dirty tay."

Kenney had not foreseen there would be such a storm in a tea-cup, and as he didn't at all care to be on terms of hostility with the lady, he answered meekly: "I make a point of never suspecting anybody but the cat, when anything's missed."

"Och! and ye know as well as iver I do that it *isn't* the cat ye mane, and there's no other livin' thing in the house."

"Well, perhaps," suggested he, "it's one of your hens out of the yard?"

"Hens, is it ye say? I'd like just to know if ye iver saw a hen shtalin'?"

"No," he replied, "I can't say I ever did see a hen stealing, but I don't know why I shouldn't, for I *have* seen a cock robin."

Miss Paton I do not think I ever heard, but can remember hearing of her and can also recall a *bon mot* of Kenney's which, in allusion to her rupture with Lord Lennox and her subsequent marriage with Mr. Wood, likened her to the Israelites, because "she forsook her Lord and made unto herself an idol of Wood."

Miss Paton.

Miss Foote I just recollect having seen when very young, in *The Little Jockey*, and at about the same time Miss Kelly, in *Gil Blas de Santillane*, and I remember finding it very difficult, in both cases, to believe that in those respective attires the performers *could* be women: nor was it easy for a child to realize the fact, that *The Little Jockey* in buckskins and top-boots, was identical with the lady who reappeared in white satin in the succeeding piece—*A Wonder A Woman keeps a Secret*. The plots entirely escaped my infant mind, but not so the beauty of the actress, whom I thought the loveliest creature in existence.

Miss Foote.

Miss Kelly.

So, however, thought a good many others; among them, the wealthy "Pea-green Hayne," who rashly proposed to marry her and was accepted: not only the day, hour, and church, &c., were fixed, but the bride came to the appoint-

"Pea-green Hayne."

ment, and lo! the bridegroom it was, who tarried. Where was *he*? Why, he was taken in charge by "friends," who considered him less sane than a normally expected to be; so they . . . yes indeed they locked him up! and, strange to say, finally succeeded in convincing him that he'd much better *not*.

The bride had "friends" too, and though P. Gal not an Adonis, he possessed qualifications which made a desirable bridegroom:—an action, therefore, "for *le* &c." was brought. The learned Counsel who defended the disappointed lady, recovered for her the not very large sum of £3,000 as "damages." Still on the whole she has much cause to regret this affair, for had this marriage afterwards sported, when she became what the world probably consider a fortunate woman. But alas! there rose, however sweet, without its thorns, and it was inevitable that there should be thorns here. *On ne saurait avoir les bonheurs*, and after all, the *patrimoine* possessor of beauty, health, wealth, and a title, &c., cannot altogether be an object of sorrowing sympathy, if to these enviable gifts cannot also be added social position: still it must be admitted that a mother cannot be altogether happy who is regarded by the world as below the level of her children, and has to sit waiting in the carriage (however singularly appointed and magnificent that equipage may be) in her bonnet and shawl, when her daughter in her Court train and plumes has gone within to be presented.

Madame Vestris is among my early recollections, and her brilliant singing of *Cherry Ripe*, written for her, is still fresh in my memory, though I entirely forget into what play she introduced it, but I think she was playing *Plaire in Paul Pop*. I also remember her in a play called *M. des*, in which the gods and goddesses were drawn up and down in a large Pastelard cloud, probably a marvel of stage-effect in those days, but, unquestionably, the clumsy contrivance would excite much mirth now, let to say derision.

Madame
Vestris.

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The bride had "friends" too, and though P. G. H. was not an Adonis, he possessed qualifications which made him a desirable bridegroom:—an action, therefore, "for Breach, &c.," was brought. The learned Counsel who defended the disappointed lady, recovered for her the not very large sum of £3,000 as "damages." Still on the whole she had not much cause to regret this affair, for had this marriage gone through, she would have missed the Countess's coronet she afterwards sported, when she became what the world would probably consider a fortunate woman. But alas! there is no rose, however sweet, without its thorns, and it was inevitable that there should be thorns here. *On ne saurait avoir tous les bonheurs*, and after all, the *parvenue* possessor of beauty, health, wealth, and a title, &c., cannot altogether be an object of sorrowing sympathy, if to these enviable gifts cannot also be added social position: still it must be admitted that a mother cannot be altogether happy who is regarded by the world as below the level of her children, and has to sit waiting in the carriage (however singularly appointed and magnificent that equipage may be) in her bonnet and shawl, when her daughter in her Court train and plumes has gone within to be presented.

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Madame Vestris is among my early recollections, and her brilliant singing of *Cherry Ripe*, written for her, is still fresh in my memory, though I entirely forget into what play she introduced it, but I think she was playing *Phæbe* in *Paul Pry*. I also remember her in a play called *Midas*, in which the gods and goddesses were drawn up and down in a large pasteboard cloud, probably a marvel of stage-effect in those days, but, unquestionably, the clumsy contrivance would excite much mirth now, not to say derision.



MADAME VESTRIS.

Madame Vestris's character was *Apollo*, and her dress (what there was of it) was very "classical" in its arrangement which required such a form as hers, to be forgiven: she was then past thirty, but maintained her juvenile appearance long after that, and her voice remained almost in its early perfection till she quitted the stage. All sorts of stories were circulated as to the arts by which she set time at defiance; but if true that her brilliant complexion was due to "enamel," the clearness and brightness of her large and beautiful eyes must have been their own, as also the form of her well-defined, yet delicate features, and the lines of beauty that played about her lips and eyes; the archness of expression she could impart to her features and attitudes, formed one of the charms of her acting, and she remained to the end an admired favourite with the public. Her first marriage at fifteen (after her elopement with him) to Armand Vestris, the famous ballet-dancer of the Opera-house (then called The King's Theatre) took her into a very remarkable family, who had a traditional idea that there was no one like a Vestris in the whole world, and many amusing anecdotes are related illustrative of this—after all harmless—vanity. It was at her husband's instigation that Madame Vestris made a profession of the stage. She appeared in 1815 for her husband's benefit, as *Proserpina* in Winter's Opera, making so brilliant a success of *Vaghi colli, ameni prati*, that the Princess Charlotte went to hear her. Being as familiar with French as with English, she performed in Paris for some time both in tragedy and comedy, and it was in 1819 that she signed a contract with Elliston, then manager of Drury Lane, where she delighted her audiences, as subsequently at Covent Garden: presuming, however, on her great favour with the London public, she ventured to take a lease of the Olympic Theatre, and to become its manageress.

In her hands it speedily ranked as the most elegant theatre in the metropolis and was frequented by the first and fore-

most votaries of fashion: she selected her Company with taste and judgment and pressed into her service the best writers, or adapters, of light comedy. In 1835 her *troupe* was joined by Charles J. Mathews, for whom Planché wrote *He would be an Actor*, in allusion to the private history of the young man, whose father, the celebrated comedian, had given him the choice of following the profession of an architect or that of a clergyman. Liston, too, supported the reputation of the house; but Madame Vestris was not a business-woman and seems never to have acquired any idea of the value of money, and thus the spirited enterprize came to an untimely end: this was to be regretted on the score of art, as her taste was unquestionable and the *mise en scène* of the pieces she produced, marked an altogether new departure in the history of the class of dramas affected at the Olympic: they were for the most part *genre* pieces, and the scenery and costume were in studied harmony with the style of the day, introducing the familiar accessories of modern life after the style habitual to the French stage, many of the pieces thus given, being translations from the French.

When the Olympic came to grief, Madame Vestris, who had married young Mathews—very much her junior—went with him to America; but, strange to say, neither of them made any way on that side the Atlantic, though on their return to England they were enthusiastically welcomed, entering into several successive engagements, until the health of Mrs. Charles Mathews made it prudent that she should retire. Of her private life it is scarcely necessary to speak, but it is well known she was greatly admired by the fashionables and beaux of the day, and was remarkable for her wit, grace, and sparkling conversation. Born in 1797, she was nearly sixty when she died in 1856, retaining much of her beauty, and to the last regarded as an authority on all matters connected with dramatic art. She might have withdrawn with a large fortune, for she could command very high terms, but

it is not in the habit of "stage-players" to be provident, and her reckless personal expenditure often brought her into untoward circumstances. But even when the wolf was at the door, the butter on her breakfast-table had to be trimmed with rosebuds as early as in the month of March, on the plea that she had been so long deprived of them, and throughout the winter her house was scented from attic to basement with violets: but she delighted in astonishing people and had no objection that her extravagances and singularities should be talked about. After all, are not these fads within the characteristics of an actress, though some may be above indulging in them; but the generation that knows Sara Bernhardt ceases to turn up its eyes at the traditional vagaries of Madame Vestris.

If this charming actress led a life which may certainly be called fast and free, the fact is not to be wondered at. Although her father, the intelligent, clever, and celebrated Bartolozzi, held a high position in his profession and was generally respected, he was too much engrossed by his art, to attend to the training of his daughters, and his wife was an unscrupulous and profligate woman, so that these two girls (who were marvels of beauty), may truly be said to have been "dragged up," without education either moral or material. Quick and clever, they took advantage of the migrations of their parents into different countries, to acquire the several languages they heard spoken, and could converse with equal facility and correctness in English, Portuguese, and French; in fact Madame Vestris had all the characteristics as well as the coquetries of a Parisian, and she performed with equal success on the French and English stage. Though married at so early an age she had already gained a tolerably wide experience of life. A juvenile adventure with a gentleman of,—to employ the language of her day—"charming appearance and bewitching manners," introduced to her under the name of "George," she afterwards found had brought her ac-

quainted with no meaner a personage than "*Prince Florizel*" himself! The names of those who succeeded His Royal Highness in the enjoyment of her favour, would form a lengthy "*catalogo*" into which it is needless to pry: suffice it to say, that names of noble houses were conspicuous therein.

As an actress she was admirable in whatever she undertook; but it must be admitted she did not aspire to the higher walks of histrionic art. It is curious that though the delicate feminineness of her face, figure, and action, and the elegance of her style and movement constituted the charm of her impersonations of women—when she represented a man, she knew how to hit off the masculine characteristics of the stronger sex with so much dash and spirit, that no one, unaware of the fact, would have believed she could be a woman; her height was rather above than below average, and she was a perfect marvel of grace and symmetry.

Her way of life gave rise to anecdotes without end, more of them false perhaps, than true, and none edifying, though she appears to have had some redeeming qualities, was capable of kind actions, and occasionally rendered services to others with amiable alacrity.

Madame Vestris was a bright creature; her step was buoyant, her complexion as brilliant as her voice, her eyes laughed, and her wit made others laugh: there was a sparkle about her which is remembered along with every recollection of her, and the success with which she transformed into a very temple of fashion, a low, vulgar play-house in a cut-throat street surrounded by slums and shunned by all respectable people, says much for her energy, intelligence, and judgment.

Madame Vestris succeeded so well in "breeches-characters" that to induce her to continue her performance of them, Elliston raised her salary and she took alternately the characters of *Captain Macheath* in the *Beggars' Opera* and *Don Giovanni* in *Giovanni in London*. It is not im-

probable that the "inducement" was altogether superfluous. After her separation from her husband, Captain Best persuaded her to let him manage her affairs and also advised her to leave London and accept an engagement at Manchester, where she gave seven nights for £100, making a most favourable impression. In fact her fame had preceded her thither, so that before she arrived every seat in the House was taken and applicants were eagerly demanding places at increased prices. The receipts amounted to £400 that night—a sum never before realized on a single night in that theatre. The manager was so delighted with the lady's efforts that he went to her dressing-room to present her with a bouquet of roses, out of which dropped a purse containing thirty guineas.

The delicate generosity of this proceeding so profoundly touched the clever actress that she sent him a note—laconic and expressive—as follows :

"DEAR SIR,—I will play '*Cowslip*' to-night (in *The Agreeable Surprise*), and to-morrow will take *Don Giovanni*. You are a queer fellow—I wish to oblige you.—VESTRIS."

I can just remember Dowton in Bickerstaff's play of *The Hypocrite*, called, by some, *Tartuffe and Water*, but redeemed by the excellent play of Liston in the character of *Maw-worm*, and that of Dowton in *Dr. Cantwell*. Dowton.

It was while performing the part of *Dr. Cantwell*, and immediately after uttering the phrase—"There is another and a better world," that Dowton, it was said, fell down in a fit, was carried out, and shortly after expired.

My recollection of the performance, I am sorry to say, passes over the merits of Dowton, who, however, was an excellent actor and acquired fame in this character, especially by the extreme *finesse* of his play, the expression of his features, the modulation of his voice, and the varied meaning he knew how to throw into his dialogue.

Maw-worm was one of Liston's best characters ; had he

lived in these days we should have to say he "created" it. He made this stinging satire intensely ridiculous, and my recollection of that remains very distinct to this day: his make-up too, as the ranting Methodist preacher, narrow and bigoted, but virtuous and conscientious, was ludicrous in the extreme, and so was his conception of the character the fun of which culminates in the scene in which *Cantwell*, making a declaration to the wife of his



MR. DOWTON AS "DR. CANTWELL."

confiding host, is surprised by *Maw-worm*, who, sliding behind a folding-screen in front of which the couple sit, contrives by standing on a table, to over-top it, and from this elevation startles them with a loud and terrifying denunciation: in his fervour, however, forgetting he is not in the pulpit, he strikes with his fist a powerful blow on the top of the screen, which falls on the guilty pair and brings himself sprawling to the ground, this undignified attitude,

affording a capital opportunity for such an actor, sends the audience into fits of laughter.

Nathaniel Russell, the admirable comedian who copied most of Liston's characters and with great success, was an excellent *Maw-worm*. I remember this actor well—Ah! how many years ago!—as the life and soul and also the manager of the Theatre Royal, Brighton, the boards of which were trodden by many a player of merit in the days when George IV. was



MR. LISTON AS "MAW-WORM."

King, and for some years after. Brighton was but a small place in those times, and my father, who owned a good deal of property there, was often requested by the manager, as one of his patrons, to select a play from a list submitted to him and taken from the general *répertoire*. Russell was really a host in himself, and my father used to say that, as far as imitation could be compared with originality, he now and then gave a very good idea of Liston though he could not

imitate Liston's face, nor yet the use to which he turned those remarkable features of his.

Lady M—. Singers as well as actors have thrown lustre on the cosy little Brighton theatre. Some, who became subsequent celebrities, began by making their *début* and trying their fortune there; among these was a young and unpretending ballad-singer, who, from this humble starting-point, attained



MR. RUSSELL AS "SPARKISH."

to one of the highest positions—whether socially or politically considered—in the country.

The proverbial half-crown of those who make fortunes, with which this subsequently exalted personage began life, was not even in her pocket till she had earned it; but a similar amount was paid her every night in return for a song between the *lever de rideau* and the *pièce de résistance* which followed. She had little experience and no method for she was the untaught daughter of a washerwoman, and it was to her

clear young voice and her natural grace, beauty, and taste that was accorded the applause of the Brighton public.

Among this public, however, Miss —— counted special admirers, one of whom was so sincere in that admiration, that finding her steadfast in her refusal to ratify his homage unless brought within the compass of the wedding-ring—he laid his name and wealth together with his heart already hers, at her feet. By his care, her education was completed, he married her, and at a comparatively early age he left her a widow, with the entire possession and control of his princely fortune.

After this event, whether as a coincidence or a consequence, “un-numbered suitors came;” the lady was fastidious; she dismissed all but two—both baronets—and made her own conditions. I have heard, but cannot recall, what these conditions were, but she imposed them frankly, informing these wooers that with that *sine quâ non*, she would give her hand to whichever made up his mind first. (I *think* her requisition was that her mother should continue to live with her).

At three o'clock arrived Sir E. E—— ready to submit to every condition. Alas! he was too late! He was not even received; a polite communication was made to him that his rival Sir W. M—— had been beforehand with him, and it was by the latter's name that Mrs. T. W—— was destined to rule an aristocratic political *salon* and to become justly famous in the *grand monde*. To few women, even of rank and cultivation, has it been given to occupy so dazzling a position as that which it fell to the lot of the beautiful young singer to illustrate; but so surpassing was her aptitude for its difficult and delicate duties, and so consummate the tact and skill with which she performed them, that even those who envied her brilliant lot, were fain to confess that no woman of birth could have acquitted herself with more grace and distinction.

One of the attractions at the St. James's Theatre under John Barnett.

Morris
Barnett.

Braham's management was a young English singer, and "pupil of the Academy," John Barnett—afterwards favourably known as a composer and married to the daughter of Robert Lindley. Morris Barnett (not a relation of his) also had an engagement at the St. James's and drew crowded houses by his excellent performance of the title character in a two-act piece translated from the French, called *Monsieur Jacques*. This was one of Frédéric Lemaître's triumphs, and the wonderful degree of sentiment of that great actor's rendering was successfully emulated by Morris Barnett, the pathos of the situation being increased by the broken English, in which the aged exile uncomplainingly accepts his forlorn position in a foreign country.

The story is that of an aged French *émigré* who in escaping from the horrors of the Revolution has been separated from his wife and child; but such is his confidence in the mercy of Providence and in his conviction that his wife will never cease to seek him out, that he lives on from day to day, in the assured belief that he must find a communication from her at the Post Office, to which he repairs regularly as his first act every morning, for years: then he returns home and settles down with touching resignation to his work till the next morning; with the eternal *refrain*:—

"Ah! Again is there no letter! but she veel come, for she know I espec her zese twenty yeeres." At last one day the door of his wretched garret opens and before him stands a beautiful girl; he rises and looking at her with less surprise than tenderness, opens his arms, and as she throws herself into his embrace he falters out in broken accents, "At last is she heere! I knew she would come, for she know I espec her zese twenty yeeres."

In his faith and joy, he has forgotten that the wife who *was* a beautiful girl twenty years ago, cannot be the girl he holds in his arms, though she resembles her so closely; and it is her difficult task to break to him the sad truth that the re-union for which he has waited with so much fidelity and

patience is destined never to take place ; her mother, who is dead, having enjoined her to spare no trouble in tracing out her father and communicating to him her own protracted anxiety to find him, and her death which resulted from the failure of her hopes ; but his grief is softened by recovering his daughter.

When Frédéric Lemaître performed *Monsieur Jacques*—

Frédéric
Lemaître.

a character (like all those in which he shone most) of his own creation—the piece generally preceded some grotesque farce or rather farcical comedy, the humour he dis-



FRÉDÉRIC LEMAÎTRE.

played in this, forming an astounding contrast to the deep pathos of his melodramatic muse : but to so true a genius, no impersonation was an effort, he was past-master of whatever he undertook : whether in velvet or in rags, a cavalier or a highwayman, a courtier or a dancing-master, a peer or a peasant, an elegant *Boulevardier* or a tipsy *Concierge*, there he stood and spoke and behaved as if he really were the man he placed before you.

“ *Les autres sont des masques,*” said Théophile Gautier—

“*Lemaitre, c'est un homme.*” He might have said “*C'est un Maitre,*” but perhaps he scorned the pun.

If ever he fell short of his aspirations it was in characters carrying out their measures by crafty and calculating villainy; passion was his element, and where impulse, enthusiasm, desperation, rage and, still more, sarcasm and irony were called for, he was startlingly grand.

His easy manner, commanding figure, and handsome features, were invaluable on the stage and helped him through many a scrape. His habits were unfortunately those of many of the fraternity: making money freely and spending not *as*, but alas! *more* freely, he was constantly penniless, while habits of intemperance (such as some years ago were the disgrace and the ruin of some of our own most splendid actors) became part of his nature.

One night at the *Gymnase* he arrived barely in time to obey the call-boy's summons, and when dressed, was reeling on to the stage, when he was observed by the *régisseur*, who called after him—

“*Non, Monsieur Frédéric, c'est ignoble; vous n'entrerez pas sur la scène.*”

“*Si fait, si fait, Monsieur le Régisseur,*” answered the incorrigible toper eluding the official's attempt to stop him. “*J'y vais tout de même, ne vous inquiétez de rien.*” And on the stage he went, performing admirably and as if suddenly sobered by a sense of duty and by the encouraging cheers with which he was always received.

He could “make-up” so as to produce an irresistibly comic caricature, whether in face or figure, of any well-known character, and once during the reign of the “Citizen King” exceeded prudence by getting himself up so unmistakably like *Louis Philippe*, in Balzac's *Dernière Incarnation de Vautrin*, that the house rung again with cries of mixed delight and consternation, and the piece had to be summarily suppressed. But Frédéric cared for nobody and feared nothing.

One day when he was in rather more *elevated* spirits than was quite safe for the stage, he observed a titter go round the house at some incident of speech or manner which betrayed his condition; he was sobered in an instant, and speedily taking offence, he so far forgot himself as to exclaim—addressing the audience:

“*Allez ; vous êtes des mufles.*”

The audience had its susceptibilities also (though it could take a great deal from Frédéric), and, greatly incensed at this insult, claimed an instant apology.

“*Des excuses ; des excuses ;*”—was heard on every side. Frédéric stood sulkily in his place, in no way inclined to give in; then he tried to go on with his part; but the public was not to be appeased, and they shouted the expression of their displeasure more vehemently than before: the *comédien* was equally incensed, but finding the piece could not proceed, he said in a contumacious tone but with pauses which served to mark his meaning:

“*J'ai dit que vous étiez des mufles—c'est vrai—Je vous fais des excuses—J'ai tort.*”

This cleverly ambiguous speech, uttered however in a tone and with an accentuation by no means ambiguous, was accompanied with Frédéric's own special “*geste*” which added to its point; this “*geste*” was a *tic* he had of lifting a lock of hair (which often hung over his forehead) and flinging it over the back of his head, and he could give to this simple act various expressions, all perfectly well understood.

Frédéric's public winked at his impertinence in favour of the wit of its form, for after all they knew his unique value.

It is as curious as instructive to revert to the antecedents and early efforts of some of those who have ultimately shone with the most brilliant *éclat*, and Frédéric Lemaitre was one of these. It is hardly credible that at first starting he found it so difficult to get admitted to the stage on any terms, that he actually made his *début* on all fours—as the *Lion* in *Pyrame et Tisbé*, and that, at an inferior theatre,

Les Variétés Amusantes! Persistently working his way to the *Odéon*, he was hissed for his pains, but having obtained a conditional engagement at the *Ambigu*, he there first obtained a recognition of his genius in the *Auberge des Adrets* in which he absolutely did "create" the rôle of *Robert Macaire*. The author had written the part as that of an altogether secondary character; Lemaître, who saw that he must make a bold stroke or give up the profession, so completely altered the text and the character, that *Macaire* at once became the one attraction of the piece, and one of the glories of Frédéric's career: the squeaking of the snuff-box-lid, simple as it may seem, was one of the happiest hits, and became an indispensable accessory to the success of the play, while his performance of the character was a continual triumph throughout, and so enthusiastically was he admired that all Paris began to talk about him. His subsequent greatness is well known.

The last time I saw poor Frédéric on the stage, was not very long before his death, in 1876. He had retired some years previously, but his reckless disposition had been fatal to securing for himself anything like comfort in his declining years; in fact, so ill provided was he, that his brother-actors determined to give a benefit performance on his behalf at the *Gymnase*, and Frédéric, whose "reappearance for one night," of course, formed the greatest attraction of the evening, represented the half-pathetic, half-humorous, *concierge* in the *Loge du Portier*. It was as fine a piece of acting as I ever saw, even from him, and was well suited to the occasion, which I am glad to say brought in a pretty round sum. A sad misfortune clouded his latter years—the suicide, during a fever, of his elder son, Charles Lemaître, who might have been a not unsuccessful actor, had he not been the son of the great Frédéric.

I think it is Sarcey who, in support of his theory that the actor's art is rather the result of study and experience than the fruit of inspiration, states that Frédéric Lemaître's

inimitable representations of human character were the outcome of a practice he adopted of first trying the effects he wished to produce, on any individual or individuals upon whom it was convenient to experiment.

Having to personate an invalid, the idea of rehearsing his part suddenly came into his head while a passenger in the "*Intérieur*" of the *Diligence*: he thereupon proceeded to assume, one by one, all the most marked symptoms of a man in failing health, and who is gradually approaching the point of death; his fellow-passengers could not but observe the changes that were occurring in his demeanour and countenance, and attributing them to natural causes, looked at each other in dismay; they started a *sotto voce* consultation, and finally agreed in whispers (of which he took care to appear wholly unconscious), that the vehicle should be stopped, and the sick traveller should be deposited at the nearest inn. Finding this course was seriously contemplated and having ascertained all he needed, viz.: that he could completely take in all present, he considered the essay had gone far enough, and to their complete mystification, he quietly resumed his natural attitude and appearance.

Another of this unscrupulous fellow's public rehearsals very nearly got him into an ugly scrape. This time he had to perfect himself in the character of a swaggerer, and to test his powers in that line, he walked into a *Café*, strolling with his hands in his pockets along and across the room where the *chalands* were seated, staring them in the face in a defiant manner, and at length, pausing at a table at which were seated a gentleman and two ladies, and resting his hands on it, he proceeded without opening his lips, to direct impertinent glances towards all three: when he found he had roused their indignation and that they had therefore undergone the trial to good purpose, he turned, walked slowly and demurely away, and taking a seat looked up with the most *hébété* expression as if perfectly unconscious of his recent aggressive behaviour; the gentleman, who on this

unwarrantable provocation had risen to demand an explanation, contented himself with shrugging his shoulders and regarding him as beneath contempt. Lemaitre then moved to another table, took up a newspaper, and ordering a cup of coffee sat down to sip it in the most innocent manner, so that it became difficult, if not impossible, to connect him in any way with the apparently insane fellow who had just before forgotten himself so strangely.

Rossi.

Foreign actors are very fond of having their try at Shakespeare: some years ago when Rossi was in Paris I went to see him in *Hamlet*. It was—as I think Hamlet always must be—a distinct and novel impersonation. Each individual among us constructs an ideal Hamlet in his own mind, and each stage-representation of this weird and chamæleonic character most unquestionably exhibits it in a different way. There are of course actors who, having no ideas of their own, are fain to adopt a servile copy of some previous rendering; but among the higher class of actors, each one of those who have ventured on this delicate task, has produced a version of his own: in this lies the danger but also the glory of the attempt. Rossi's was a fine conception, though his personal appearance was most ill-suited to the character, and as far as the eye was concerned, might be considered a satire on the outward presentment of the youthful, graceful, and almost preternatural Prince of Denmark. The mad-scene seemed an exaggeration, even supposing it was intended that this idiosyncratic insanity should be manifested in muscular aberrations; but the dialogue was delivered generally with fine utterance and remarkably intelligent appreciation.

Whenever *Hamlet* is put on the stage it most probably occurs to all thoughtful spectators that it is a play to *read* and not to see *acted*. The fact is that by the time an actor (fortified by that mental training only to be acquired by experience of life) has honestly mastered the tortuosities and complications of the character, and is able to give

expression to his view of it, he has become too old to adequately personate the youthful and almost ideal Prince; few actors therefore have played *Hamlet* without disappointing a larger or smaller proportion of their audience. In Rossi's performance it was plainly perceptible that he had bestowed profound study on the many moods of this perplexing character, and intended to give very special point to the world-famed soliloquy, "To be, or not to be," &c. It may be admitted that the inflexion of his voice and the form of his attitude when he came to the words "To sleep . . . perchance . . . to . . . dream . . ." were eminently striking and suggestive—perhaps also, original—and deeply impressed the audience, for the hushed demeanour of the house seemed an eloquent approval.

But his well-nourished form leaping about the stage after an almost mountebank fashion, in the mad scene, produced an altogether unfavourable effect, and tended to mar more or less all the rest of the performance.

I saw Salvini in London, but only in *Othello*. It was a Salvini. fine performance and exhibited some new readings which, however, have not apparently been adopted by English actors, nor did they obtain universal approval though the general impression of his impersonation was admittedly favourable. Salvini's *physique*, altogether unlike Rossi's, is peculiarly adapted to the stage, and his action is remarkable for its ease and naturalness, there is also a decision in his manner which commands; it was evident that he was following a line, thoughtfully and deliberately marked out, in pursuance of a previous study of the part.

If well-made and well-proportioned, Salvini has a good stage-figure, he has also a sympathetic countenance, the expression of which is quick in its changes, and gives the idea of intelligence and conscientiousness; his movements are versatile and appropriate, and he shows a due apprehension of the business of an actor by harmonizing his words and his action. He assumed the hue and the costume, and sustained the

character of the jealous Moor with fidelity, appearing to be thoroughly imbued with the intricacies of the mind he was representing, changing his countenance and attitude, with every change of mood, as his hopes and fears fluctuated under Iago's insinuations.

The concluding scene was however of doubtful taste ; for though it may be true to nature to show that the hot blood of the impetuous Moor worked upon by Iago's merciless innuendoes, must at last boil over and drive him to desperation, yet he should not have forgotten to "beget a temperance" which in accordance with the Horatian rule—*Ne pueros coram populo, &c.*, would have restrained him from dragging Desdemona round the stage and handling her with the coarseness of "the coster, a-tramplin' on his mother"—before inflicting the traditional bolster. An unseemly struggle suggested behind the bed curtain, the muttered imprecations of the murderer and stifled cries of the victim, savoured too much of Whitechapel realism to be artistic, and instead of inspiring horror and compassion were more likely to give rise to loathing and disgust, in a refined nineteenth-century audience. It has been said that "no one has as yet succeeded in computing how many Desdemonas Salvini has finished off during his simulated uxoricides"! Even Garcia could hardly have represented this scene more vividly: it was throughout a thoughtful and suggestive study of a complicated character, and when the pathetic element came to the fore, it was artistically brought to bear, while every detail was replete with evidences of the depth and subtlety with which the actor had appreciated the nature of the man he was personating.

Neither Rossi nor Salvini were originally intended for the stage, and it was from studying Alfieri that the former was gradually led to make himself acquainted with Shakespeare. Both placed themselves under the guidance and training of the famous Italian tragedian Modena, and both left their native land and went to Paris in the wake of Madame

Ristori, then in the apogee of her fame. It was under the auspices of this great artiste that they enrolled themselves in the profession, and respectively acquired a European celebrity.

HISTRIONIC MEMORIES.

“ The play’s the thing.”—HAMLET.

CHAPTER IX.

HISTRIONIC MEMORIES (continued).

“Totus mundus agit histrionem.”—PETRON. ARBITER.

I CAN just recollect being taken to see Mad^{elle}. Mars play Mad^{elle}. Mars.
Eliante to the *Alceste* of Perlet, when he was acting Molière's *Misanthrope* in London, but I am sorry to state the incident has left no impression worth recording. All I remember of it is that it seemed a very wearisome performance, though to those of an age and a cultivation to understand that fine play and fine acting, Mars was a delight in all European capitals. Subsequently, in 1841, I again saw this finished actress, when better able to appreciate her—in *Célimène*. Her figure was slight and graceful, her movements and attitudes perfectly under her command, and her voice as rich and harmonious as ever; the preservation of her youthfulness was a marvel, for she was then sixty-two! She took her farewell benefit, in 1845, in *Mad^{elle}. de Belleisle*. Of this wonderful actress—the Siddons of France—many amusing anecdotes are preserved, some of them showing her wit, vivacity, and spirit. One cannot, however, admire her private character, for she turned about like a weathercock, giving her adherence now to the Bourbons, now to the Bonapartes, according to whether of the two Houses was in the ascendant, her politics being always, unfortunately like those of too many others, such as were most advantageous to her personal interests. That her “*relations*” with Napoleon were of an intimate character is supposable from the existence, among other evidences, of a little *pavillon*

on a lake near Rambouillet, where the two held clandestine meetings, probably not connected with affairs of State. She had many distinguished admirers besides Napoleon, and was heard to say more than once when arranging her *écrin*: "Ah! Si mes bijoux allaient être indiscrets!" Her diamonds, indeed, were superb, and the robbery, of which they were the object, was romantic enough to justify its being classed among *Causes célèbres*.



TALMA.

Struck with the taste and logic of Talma's reform in stage-costume, and fired by the energy and courage that great actor had displayed, she succeeded in showing up the absurdity of putting *Roxane* and *Cléopâtre* on the stage in *manches-à-gigot*, &c.

Talma had paved the way for the innovation urged by Mars, but not without an heroic struggle in behalf of the laws of art; he had the courage to disregard the ridicule of prejudiced and ignorant blockheads, though one objector had been heard to remark that if draped like a statue he ought to

remain as mute and motionless as one (!) and the wife of the great Gaetano Vestris asked him derisively whether he meant the public to think that having no inclination to dress, he had pulled a sheet off his bed and wrapped it round him.

Born in 1779, Mars died only in 1847, though she retired some years before her death, leaving the reputation of having been perhaps the finest actress the French stage had at that time known. Her voice was musical, her enunciation and phrasing showed great intelligence, and her declamation, as well as her attitudes, singular dramatic power. It is said that during the delirium of her last illness she would burst out with recitations from her favourite parts, delivering them with meaning and emphasis.

The immediate successor of Mad^elle. Mars was Mad^elle. Georges, of whom I have a much more distinct recollection; she made her *début* at fifteen at the *Français* in *Cléopâtre*. I saw her when she was much older (also with Perlet) to whose *Tartuffe* she played *Elmire*, a character requiring a degree of *finesse* still better exemplified in Madame Plessy, one of the most graceful as well as the most capable actresses the French stage has ever produced. In the *Supplice d'une femme*, Plessy was admirable; far more suited to the character than that great favourite of the *Comédie Française*, Favart: the plot is full of interest, and affords excellent situations for the manifestation of dramatic power. A weak translation of it was brought out at the Haymarket in 1889 under the name of *The Weaker Sex*, but without any acknowledgment of its origin; it fell very flat, and was soon withdrawn.

The beautiful Madame Doche was another example of talent combined with beauty, the latter qualification, however, preponderating: still she attracted good houses in *Marie*, *La Perle de Savoie*, a version of *Linda de Chamounix*.

Later—though Plessy was still acting at the *Français*, and acting most ably—came Favart. Favart and De-

Madelle
Georges.

Madame
Plessy.

Madame
Doche.

Madame
Favar

launay were together irresistible—the latter continuing to delight as a delicious *jeune premier* after he had a son old enough to replace him; unfortunately Favart did not retain her juvenility as successfully as her ever-green colleague; the pieces therefore that they had acted together so attractively, became no longer possible, and those who were born too late to see and admire them have just cause to envy their predecessors who can recollect such rare perfection.

Favart's birth took place only in 1833, and it is difficult to account for her ageing so prematurely, especially as she was so consummate a mistress of her profession that one might have expected that Art would compensate for what Time was taking away.

She used to play *Marion Delorme* with great appreciation of the character and situations; but her greatest success always seemed to be a *rôle* which few could have ventured on, in Alfred de Musset's "*Une nuit d'Octobre*"—the acting in this, by both Favart and Delaunay, was a poem, as much as was the episode itself. It offered little or no detail, and yet thus performed it entranced the most fastidious of audiences. Favart's costume and attitudes were most striking in their statuesqueness, while Delaunay made himself every inch a poet. I do not think any other pair of performers ever attempted this piece, full of delicate *nuances* and depending entirely on the appreciation and rendering of the situation; the bare story of it might be related in a dozen words. Again in Alfred de Musset's *Proverbe*: "*Il ne faut pas badiner avec l'amour*," these two perfections, Favart and Delaunay, realized a perennial triumph: but Delaunay was a model of excellence in all he undertook, and *Le menteur* may be cited, among characters of a different class, as one well suited to bring out the subtlety of his conception and his talent in producing it.

Favart was the one recognized *Doña Sol*, and always more than satisfied the public, till Sara Bernhardt's new rendering of the character began to make them doubt their former

judgment. Of this eccentric woman's many and various performances, any mention here would seem out of place. She still lives to hold her own, and any remarks upon her would be rather a contemporary criticism, than a record of past experiences.

Delaunay and de Musset seem to have been made to illustrate each other, and while Delaunay was rarely seen to such advantage as when interpreting that author, it is doubtful if any but he could have rendered possible on the stage, de Musset's airy nothings: "nothings," however, full of poetry, sentiment, and grace, taking cynical views of life it is true; but when uttered with Delaunay's sympathetic voice—the tone of which was recognized as altogether *sui generis*—audiences listened enchanted, though there was not so much as the ghost of a plot to enchain their attention. De Musset too was one of those dissatisfied individuals who seemed to be always nursing a pet grievance, generally of his own creation, and for which it was not easy to accord him sympathy. In this he out-byroned Byron, taking him for his model, but forgetting the prestige which gave a glint even to the noble poet's faults: by the cynical view he took of life he succeeded only in marring his own prospects, and justified Heine's witty and paradoxical remark that "de Musset was a young man with a great future *behind* him."

Laporte, who was a very fair comedian, and far better as a comedian than as a manager made more than one attempt to carry on the French plays and afterwards the Italian Opera, in London; both ventures proved unfortunate, and he had to abandon them, retiring with great loss. There was one occasion during the French plays on which the performers, having failed to receive their salaries, and seeing no prospect of improvement in the affairs of the theatre, refused to appear, and the house had to be closed, though the public stood outside in mingled disappointment and anger, vociferating with *double entente*: "Ouvrez Laporte—mais ouvrez donc, la porte!"

One night during Laporte's management, I remember being in the stage-box (which my father always preferred), while Perlet, the star of the evening, was acting in the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, when an alarm of fire was raised, and there was a general disturbance among the spectators ; Laporte appeared, came to the front, and assured them there was no danger ; this produced a tranquilizing effect, but my father got on to the stage, and helping out our party, conducted us to the stage-entrance, and we quickly found ourselves in the street. The fire was not serious, being soon got under, scarcely any damage was done, and no lives were lost though there was a momentary panic in the house, but every one must have behaved very well.

I was once in the stalls of the theatre at Parma, when suddenly part of the cloud-scenery was seen to be ablaze. Two English people occupying the stalls next those of our party, instantly rose, and others were about to follow their example, when some Italian gentlemen in the row behind us begged them not to move, urging that there was no danger, and that if there were, the escape from the stalls would be perfectly secure, for there was an immediate issue on either side, separate from the rest of the house, into a wide, vaulted stone vestibule, accessible by stone passages. The whole audience was calm and collected, and not an individual left his place ; meanwhile a garden hose had been quickly brought on to the stage, and a stream of water being at once directed on the flaming draperies, in a very few minutes the fire was extinguished. It was only when the audience had been able to satisfy themselves there was no danger, that the manager asked permission to lower the curtain for ten minutes in order to re-adjust the scenery—after which the play proceeded as if nothing had happened.

Perlet.

It was during Laporte's management that Perlet produced a very favourable impression on the English public : among lighter pieces, he made an excellent hit in *Les Anglaises*

pour rire,* and showed great cleverness in the *Comédien d'Etampes*, a character requiring peculiar power of face, command of voice, and dexterity of action. The *Comédien d'Etampes* appears before the audience under a score of different aspects ; sometimes of one age, sometimes of another ; sometimes of one sex, sometimes of the other ; of diverse nationalities and classes ; now expressing himself in the eclectic language of a *précieuse*, and again in the roughest *patois* of a *Savoyard* or a *Gascon* : at one moment he is a *milord Anglais* travelling with a luxurious retinue, at another a poor German student covered with pedestrian dust, his bundle tied in a red handkerchief on the end of a stick over one shoulder and his shoes slung across the other ; he not only has to deliver himself in various provincial dialects, but to speak French with the purity of an *Orléanais*, the *grassement* of a Parisian, and also with a succession of foreign accents : yet all these changes are made in the twinkling of an eye without leaving the stage, and without so much as a folding screen to mask the proceedings.

It might be objected that there is a little too much buffoonery in this to comport with the dignity of a serious comedian ; but it did not prevent Perlet, who was one of the first actors of the day, from excelling in his renderings of Molière, or representing with exceptional felicity the *Misanthrope* or *Tartuffe*, while his *Malade Imaginaire* entitled him to count as a star among the *Sociétaires* of the "*Français*."

Perlet was born about 1795, and died in 1850. He came to England several times in the earlier part of his career after he had split with the "*Français*," of which he had

* This piece was originally put on the French stage in 1815, under a feeling of petty vengeance after the defeat of Waterloo, and nearly created a disturbance in Paris. A party of English soldiers, indignant at what they considered an insult to their country-women, took upon themselves to invade the theatre where it was performing, and stopped the piece *vi et armis*. The English, as a nation, however, could afford to laugh and did laugh, at it, especially when it was given in England.

been received *Sociétaire* by acclamation in 1814, but, for reasons which affected his dignity, he thought proper to withdraw from the "House of Molière."

A gentleman in feeling as well as in manners, he proved himself nobly such on an occasion when many might have been swayed by professional jealousy. One of his friends and fellow-*comédiens*, Samson, had proposed to compete for the *prix de l'Académie*, chiefly in the hope that if he won it he would be exempted from the Conscription. Perlet, who had, the previous year, obtained the second prize, at once withdrew from the contest in order to afford his friend a better chance, and Samson succeeded in obtaining the first prize; unhappily this did not save him from the fate he had hoped to avoid.

Perlet entered the *Gymnase* after he left the *Français*, and made the fortune of that theatre; meantime the *Sociétaires* of the *Français*, who had previously treated him with indifference, and even with invidiousness, began to discover their mistake which they tried to repair by exerting themselves by every means in their power to get him back, but to no purpose; for though Perlet showed no temper and conducted himself throughout with perfect propriety, he would not again put himself in the power of those who had failed to duly recognize his value.

Pélissier.

A contemporary of Perlet's who acted with him in London was Pélissier, more remarkable for the graces of his person than his qualification as a comedian. Compared even with the young Count d'Orsay, he was said to bear off the palm, and his intrigue with the beautiful Madame Vestris drew to him the attention of a certain *monde*. I remember seeing him act with Perlet in *Les Anglaises pour rire*, and other pieces of that *calibre*, but he never attained to any great celebrity as an actor, probably because he was too much admired as a man.

However, that an actor may attract admiration for his personal advantages, and yet indulge in ambitious aspira-

tions as an artiste, we have a good example in Lafont, who first appeared at a somewhat later date than Pélissier, but was also a contemporary of Perlet's, remaining, however, on the stage long after the death of both.

Painstaking and conscientious, Lafont gave us of his best, Lafont. and that best entitled him to rank as a representative comedian of that excellent school of French dramatic art, as a votary of which, he may be styled essentially an *artiste de genre*.



LAFONT WHEN YOUNG.

He did not aspire to the classical drama, but was content to attain pre-eminence in that department of histrionic representation which includes comedies and melodramas, at the same time not disdaining lighter pieces, but always commendable in whatever he offered to the public. In the style he adopted, Lafont was unsurpassed, for the simple reason that he was unsurpassable. Tall and commanding in figure, his face was strikingly handsome and sympathetic, and all his attitudes were marked by an easy grace: up to his

latest performances he was still an Adonis, though without the slightest affectation. In his earlier days there was not a woman in Paris, from a *Duchesse* to a *blanchisseuse*, who was not in love with Lafont; indeed his universally recognized *sobriquet*—was—“*l'enfant chéri des dames*.” Lafont ought to have been, at least to a certain extent, spoiled by the attentions and suffrages showered upon him from every quarter; but this admiration never told unfavourably on his acting, which continued what it had always been, the very best of its kind, and that kind unquestionably the most popular: the quiet dignity of his manner seemed to defy criticism.

Sardou's play of *Les Vieux Garçons* (which, be it said, is full of disappointing faults) would have utterly failed but for Lafont's *M. de Mortemart*. I saw it often with the same cast, Léonide Leblanc taking the part of the *ingénue*, and Daubray that of the second *vieux garçon*, *Vaucourtois*. After poor Lafont's death, a friend to whom I had spoken highly of this play, asked me to accompany him to see it; but Lafont has never had a successor, and it would perhaps be invidious to state the name of the *remplaçant* who attempted *M. de Mortemart* on that occasion. All I can say is that I was not only strangely disappointed with the piece, but there was a humiliation in being told by the friend who had trusted to my judgment, that he was surprised to find it so indifferent a play!

It is obvious that the most approved dramatic author must be entirely dependent on those who interpret him to the public, but no piece in which Lafont performed can ever have proved a failure. Even in so slight a *lever de rideau* as the little “*proverbe*,” *Il faut qu'une porte soit ouverte ou fermée*—illustrated in Alfred de Musset's hands by a sparkling dialogue—Lafont, whether with Nathalie or Léonide Leblanc, used to bewitch his audience, for never was an actor more entirely a man of the world, and in the best sense of the term—than in dramas like *Les Vieux Garçons*, *Montjoye*, *Nos bons*

Villageois; *Une visite à Bedlam*; *Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait*, &c.—for the whole house he was the one performer on the stage, and they forgot all the others. His best piece, though it is difficult to select a “best” where all were excellent, was said to be *Pierre le Rouge*; for myself I preferred him in characters *de genre*—English playgoers of the last century used, I think, to style this “genteel comedy”—where he had allotted to him the part of a man of society, for his gentlemanly carriage and refined manner eminently fitted him to represent such. His acting never seemed to be “acting,” his deportment on the stage being that of a man speaking his own improvised words under the unpremeditated impulse of the moment, and his remarks always flowed as if suggested by the situation in which he found himself; he appeared unconscious of the existence of an audience, and the audience, in their turn carried away by the ease of his manner, forgot that he was repeating words learnt by heart.

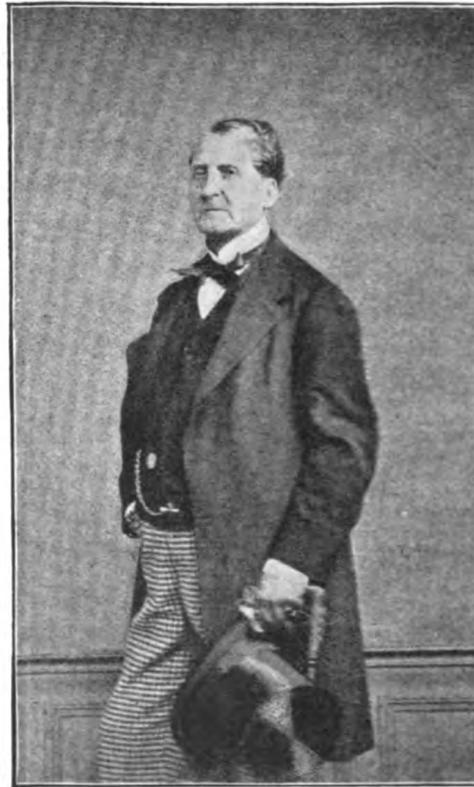
Joubert wrote—“In really good acting we should be able to believe that what we hear and see is of our own imagining. It should seem to us as a charming dream.”

This was exactly realized by Lafont: in love scenes, we might say of him to the last, what the famous *Mademoiselle Contat* said of *Molé*—the incomparable, the seductive *Molé*, of a long prior day—

“*Molé* compte ses soixante-sept ans, et cependant il n’y a pas un de nos jeunes amoureux qui sache se jeter comme lui, aux genoux d’une femme.”

Few actors of any nationality (not excepting *Fechter*) ever “made love” with the grace and spontaneity, the tenderness and irresistible charm of Lafont, who could be impassioned without compromising his dignity, and who knew how to make the most of his reserved force on all such intimate occasions. Lafont was born in 1801 at *Bordeaux*, and had retired from the stage but a short time before his death in 1873. He had the good taste, as well as the good sense, to accom-

modate his *répertoire* to the advancing notions of a public with whom he had himself progressed, and never grudged learning a new part, and creating in it an interest which must often have surprised and delighted the author. Though Lafont remained on the stage till he had attained a somewhat advanced age, he continued excellent to the last, and was equally respected whether in private or professional life.



LAFONT'S OLDER PORTRAIT.

Marcellin
Lafont.

Lafont's brother, Marcellin, an exceptionally fine tenor, was known only in France, where he was a contemporary and almost rival, of the great Nourrit; though so highly gifted he was modest and retiring, and when he died quite unexpectedly, in 1838, it was without having been by any means adequately appreciated.

Jenny Vertpré, who retired after marrying Coulon the dancer, was, during Lafont’s earlier professional life, one of his most admired contemporaries. One of her graceful performances was in the elegant little *Vaudeville*, founded on La Fontaine’s fable of *La chatte métamorphosée en femme*, in which, in a costume of white gauze and swansdown, she went through a series of *chatteries* of the most pussy-like character with a *finesse* of movement and action which Mrs. Siddons, who studied all the antics of kittens, would certainly have approved and admired. In the pathetic little drama of *La pie voleuse* she also excelled, showing her capacity for representing more touching scenes as effectively as those characterized by their *espèglerie*.

Jenny had a small “ French voice,” sufficient for *Vaudeville* singing ; but would probably have been incapable of attempting that style which has come in since her time, with the music of Offenbach, Lecocq, Bizet, &c., and constitutes the charm of modern French operettas. In French, that charm may—perhaps *must*—be admitted when the music is committed to such clever, intelligent, and irresistibly arch *comédiennes* as Schneider, Granier, Judic, Yvette Guilbert, and a few others who have so completely mastered the difficult “ *art de dire la chanson*,” of which, thus far, France holds the monopoly : is it an art, or not rather a natural gift ? —a perception, as it were ; the outcome of intelligence, spirit, archness, adroitly combined and expressing itself with a nameless grace : it could never be taught, and can scarcely be imitated, for study alone would fail to produce it. Not only is vocal power, as such, not needed, but a fine organ has been known to prove a hindrance rather than a help. An undeniable exemplification of this may be adduced from the attempts of a certain Fraülein Palms, who, a year or two ago, in a German version of the operetta *Mam’selle Nitouche*, given at the *Theater an der Wien*, was cast for the *rôle* in which Judic had turned so many heads in Paris : the fraülein ignored or failed to apprehend, the style of rendering the

Jenny Vertpré

Fraülein
Palms.

operetta *chansonette*, and supplied no idea of the character of that class of music, declaiming her songs, apparently with a view to showing off the quality and power of her voice!

Ravel.

Of the many admirably clever and amusing actors who have become idols of Palais-Royal audiences, scarcely any have surpassed Ravel, who has left also in London an immortal name for the class of characters he so well performed: yet, like so many who have had to work their way up to



MADAME SCHNEIDER.

fame, he began life with very different ideas, having been first a notary and then an optician, before he discovered his real genius, and even then he spent more than a year in testing his capabilities in the provinces, where he was content to play in barns and inns, gaining confidence in himself from the uproarious mirth of his provincial audiences. The first time he performed on "real" boards was at the theatre at

Château-Thierry (birthplace of La Fontaine), where he actually enjoyed the honour of sharing the stage with the great . . . the transcendent Mad^{elle}. Mars! playing *Pasquin*, in *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hazard*, as it had never been played before, and opening the eyes of the dramatic world to his thitherto undiscovered merits. After passing



RAVEL.

the censure of the publics severally, of Rouen, Bordeaux his native city, and Marseille, Ravel at last attained the goal of his ambition, and not only reached Paris, but obtained a long-coveted engagement at the Palais-Royal. Here in his true element, his spirits rose with the occasion, and his *début* in one of the best pieces of Arnol's *répertoire*,—*Lustucru*, at once fixed his reputation. *Les Diabes roses*, which gave

him the rôle of "*le jeune homme empoisonné*," confirmed the reputation he had won as a first-class comic actor, and Schneider—as Flora, one of the "*Diabes Roses*"—found in him a valuable co-adjutor. Schneider was *impayable* in this piece; the bare recollection of its now far-off drolleries, its songs, and the "go" with which these two insurpassable comedians carried on its genuine fun, suffices to produce a fit of laughter. Though Schneider is still living, it seems justifiable to allude here to her unrivalled qualifications for the class of acting and singing in which she has had no rivals but among her imitators: these may pass muster with audiences who never saw or heard their original, but those whose admiration was won by the commanding power of her natural and exhaustless initiative, will estimate them only at their proportionate value.

We must, however, not part with Ravel without recalling not only his excellence in such pieces as *Le Caporal et sa Payse*, *Un Monsieur qui suit les Dames*, *Le Carnaval des Troupiers*, &c., &c., in which he created all his characters, but the *vis comica* of his nature, which overflowed in all his acts, even when off the stage. His verve was just such as to captivate a *Palais-Royal* audience, and he enjoyed as much as they, the effect of those unrehearsed improvisations with which he would often fill up the *Entr'actes* by the most original devices; sometimes he would disguise himself as a hawker of play-bills and newspapers, walk through the benches, and when any spectator beckoned to him, would contrive to raise all sorts of ridiculous and perplexing misunderstandings, which at once made a scene in the pit or gallery, and mystified not only the individual attacked, but the unemployed spectators, who were only too pleased to listen to the altercation. One night he assumed the character, and with it the costume and the basket, of a refreshment-vendor, imitating, with a strong Provençal accent, the well-known cry:—" *Demandez de la Valence, sucre d'orge, sucre de pomme*," &c., &c., taking advantage of the occasion to play

off his tricks on the would-be purchasers of his wares : on another evening he dressed up like a provincial, behaving as if he had never before been in a theatre, and making the most ludicrously *naïves* remarks to his immediate neighbours, whose laughter being overheard, gradually attracted the attention of all who had remained in the theatre, or had returned to their places. Great was the roar of the audience when they discovered the joke that had been practised on them. Ravel's busy, fussy, little manner manifested itself in all his gestures, and made him appear always on the *qui vive*, and as if his limbs and features were on wires ; his small, active figure and wicked little eyes were ever in movement, and every movement meant something : yet, notwithstanding his strong propensity to indulge in comic humour, and the tendency of his features to provoke mirth in others even without opening his lips, Ravel possessed a wonderful power of moving his auditors to tears by the depth of feeling he could throw into his voice and action.

An amusing anecdote will serve to illustrate the readiness of Ravel's wit. One night, returning home by the *Boulevards* at a very late hour, when they were almost deserted, he was met by a fellow who barring the way, addressed him with—

“ La bourse ou la vie ! ”

“ Tenez, mon ami,” he replied with a coolness which not only astonished but disarmed his assailant : “ vous n'avez qu' à prendre la première à droite, puis la première à gauche ; le grand monument que vous verrez sur la place, c'est la *Bourse* ; quant à *l'avis*, celui que je vous donne, c'est de me laisser tranquille,” and he walked quietly on.

A worthy successor of Ravel's, also best known by his creations on the *Palais-Royal* stage, was L'Héritier—Ravel's senior by five years for he was born in 1809 ; of him was said very much what was said of Liston, his originality having been almost as remarkable :—“ Il ne saurait être autre chose que son propre singe.” Having determined to make the stage his profession, L'Héritier spent two or three years

Brasseur.

in testing his powers, and in order to discover what class of acting suited him best, he travelled or tramped about from one provincial theatre to another, taking all the various characters he could get cast for, till he found out his own specialities. At the *Palais-Royal* he was in his right place, and on Ravel's retirement, the management might well consider itself fortunate in securing such a substitute. Not a rôle that he undertook did he not make his own; and when he had appeared in *Otez votre fille, s'il vous plait: Tricoche et Cacolet, La Cagnotte, Le Réveillon*, and other pieces of this class, no other actor would attempt them. L'Héritier never came to London and was devoted to his own public, who repaid his fidelity with enthusiastic marks of appreciation: so he lived and died a *Palais-Royaliste*, for he never migrated to any other theatre even in Paris after he was engaged there. Brasseur, on the other hand, one of the cleverest of his colleagues, and who was one of the lights and de-lights of the *Palais-Royal habitués*, not only ultimately abandoned that theatre, but started another of the same class on the Boulevard des Capucines, under the name of the *Nouveautés*, and while undertaking the management, continued to appear on the stage as before. Simply to indicate the number of characters created by Brasseur would be a work of time. His resources as a comic actor, seemed to be exhaustless: his power of face, and facility in changing its expression and with it the expression of his whole figure, was as astonishing as amusing; with each disguise he would assume a new voice, a new accent, a new aspect, in fact the changes he could accomplish were complete in every detail, it reminded one of Garrick and Sir Joshua, for he could in an instant make himself appear another man. Brasseur used to win his audiences in a droll piece in which, after introducing himself under some ridiculous pretext to a half-blind old gentleman, he completely mystifies him in explaining who he is and what he wants; this he does in a rambling way during which he assumes a different voice,

a different dialect, and a different countenance each time his be-puzzled victim looks up, and with each change alters his story, coolly and quietly persuading the poor old fellow that he has misunderstood him before, and pretending to bear with him most patiently as he begins again with an entirely fresh version.

Of more serious actors of this date, one who made a very favourable impression in London as well as in Paris was Regnier.



REGNIER.

Regnier, who while not wanting in comic resources was yet perfect master of pathetic power. Often did he with a skill, the charm of which was that it seemed absolutely effortless, work up a phlegmatic English audience into a state of emotion surprising to themselves. Nothing in light-comedy that has been produced on the French stage has perhaps been more touching than his creation of the old family-servant in Madame Emile de Girardin's well-known and admired play—*La joie*

fait peur. The piece is melodramatic, but with touches of humour, and it was only when Regnier undertook this character, that its value as a work of dramatic art, came out; the *rôle* of *Noël* giving him an opportunity of manifesting the depth of his varied powers.

Regnier was born in 1807 and though brought up by the Oratorian Brothers always had a latent longing for the stage: notwithstanding this, he started in life as a painter and was progressing favourably in that walk of art when an unfair criticism of one of his pictures so disgusted him with his profession that he abandoned it and took refuge in a dramatic career: his intelligence and originality procured him after a very short time both approbation and patronage and by steady steps he rose to be a *Sociétaire* of the *Français*: during his connection with that theatre which lasted forty years he is said to have created two hundred and fifty-one characters all admirable in their way. Regnier was sufficiently gifted to become an ornament to his profession, but if he had much, he had not *everything* for it: neither his figure nor his face were by nature, suited for the stage, and on this account the scope of his ability was much restricted. His energy, good judgment, and determination, however, overcame his natural disadvantages, and by limiting his aspirations to characters for which his *physique* fitted him he attained the highest place in whatever he undertook. Professional presence of mind so indispensable to an actor, he eminently possessed; this never failed him, and besides giving proof of his quick intelligence, saved many a questionable situation.

He was one night performing in a piece, in which Beauvallet acted the part of a doctor. In Regnier's character of *valet*, he had been sent to fetch the apothecary: by some mis-chance Beauvallet missed his entry, on which Regnier's ready wit supplied the clever gag which covered his colleague's default: he retreated to the back of the stage and looking down the wings, initiated, to fill up the

awkward pause, a monologue which no one suspected to be improvised :

“Tiens ; voilà le docteur ! Mon Dieu ! marche-t-il lentement ! Avec ça, il faut encore qu'il s'amuse ! Bon ! voilà qu'il salue une dame ; elle s'arrête ; ils causent. Qu'ont ils donc à se dire ? Ah ! . . . Encore une connaissance ! on dirait qu'il connaît tout le pays ! Ah ! coquin de docteur, va ! . . . Allons, bon ! Cette fois c'est un monsieur qui lui demande du feu !—Ah ! . . . enfin ! Voilà qu'il arrive. . . .” Beauvallet enters ; but on the opposite side so as to face Regnier's back, undisconcerted however by this new accident, he simply addressed him without any kind of embarrassment—“Comment ! Docteur, il n'était pas déjà assez tard qu'il vous a encore fallu faire le tour de la pelouse ?”

Regnier's *Figaro* ranked next to that of Monrose styled “*le Figaro des Figaros*,” and it was in this character that he took his leave of the public. After relinquishing the stage, Regnier became *Archiviste* of the *Théâtre Français* and appreciated the value of his rare and precious deposits. His opinion as to the merits of any new candidate for employment at the *Français* was always sought and always respected. Regnier wrote part of *La Joconde*, a play in five acts, and co-operated in the production of *Mad^{me} de la Seiglière*, in which he was seen to great advantage in the character since taken by Fèvre.

It is worth noting how often, especially in France, an actor will find in a simple exclamation an opportunity for making a hit by which he becomes and remains a celebrity. Strange as it may seem, the foundation of Regnier's favour is to be traced to the happy expression he gave to the cry, “*Vive Jean !*” in a piece by Scribe—*Bertrand et Raton* : in fact he and Scribe thoroughly understood each other and the latter wrote for him exactly what he could best execute. In *La Bataille des Dames*, *Les Demoiselles de St. Cyr*, *Le Chemin retrouvé*, *Le Mari à la Campagne*, and many others, Regnier never had his equal.

Bouffé.

French actors when good, are generally *very* good, and among the best and most versatile of those I remember, was Bouffé, long one of the glories of the French stage, and who won a host of admirers in London at the St. James's, in the fifties. Born the son of a house-painter, it was entirely due to the force of his genius that he raised himself to so high a place in the profession he had determined to illustrate. The pathos he could throw into a character was



BOUFFÉ.

the result of the finest art, and he knew how to draw tears even from a phlegmatic English audience, not one half of whom understood his spoken words. I have seen the Iron Duke give way to visible emotion, and the old Duke of Cambridge heartily applaud, during some of the touching passages in *La fille de l'Avare* (Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet* dramatized). Here the performer has to cope with a difficult task; first he has to make the miser contemptible and hateful,

and then, when a dire misfortune has fallen upon him, to draw out the warmest sympathies of the audience on his behalf, at the sight of his helpless and hopeless desperation. As an astonishing contrast to the character he immortalized in this clever and moving drama, Bouffé used to appear on the same evening in the *Gamin de Paris* as a mischievous young schoolboy, his reckless tricks and monkey-like agility making it almost impossible for the spectators to believe that he could be identical with the infirm old man they had just seen tearing his hair: and yet even this was not all; those admitted to the privileges of the *coulisses*, met with a third almost incredible surprise.

Once off the stage and having resumed his natural character, all that remained of this clever and versatile actor was a bent and creeping invalid, whose shuffling gait, sunken cheeks, feeble voice, hollow eyes and waxy complexion drew to him respect and sympathy.

Bouffé was a man of warm feelings, and his intelligence was highly cultivated; those who knew him in his home circle, which it had been the joy of his life to make bright and happy, adored by his wife and children, and loved by his friends, readily understood the secret of his public successes. Honest and conscientious in all things, he never undertook a character without applying his utmost abilities to master and apprehend its depths and capabilities, and to represent it with the utmost truth to nature. Hence the strong and unerring power he exercised over his audience, moving them, on the Horatian principle, to tears or laughter as he thought fit: his words, his actions and his accents were the ministers and interpreters of his own emotions and these he knew how to communicate, touching all hearts and leading them hither and thither by true sympathetic influence.

Bouffé retired as long ago as 1864 when the Emperor attended his farewell benefit. He will therefore be missed by few of the present generation of playgoers, who

cannot regret him as must those who knew what it was to be stirred by his singular aptitudes, and more especially those who during nearly a quarter of a century, from time to time witnessed and enjoyed the brightness of his private life, in his refined and patriarchal retreat at Auteuil. A statuette of the Virgin and Child over his house-door was no mock or hypocritical emblem; it told, and truly, of the simple faith in which he and his excellent wife had been reared and had continued to live: a well-fitted workshop with a lathe at the rear of the house bespoke the activity which took him thither daily, and while maintaining his bodily health, gave scope to his taste and ingenuity.

Bouffé and his wife enjoyed the rare happiness of keeping their silver, golden and diamond weddings; the last, only two years before his death, after sixty years of marriage, yet it was they who gladdened the hearts of all their guests with their own imparted sunshine. Bouffé's domestic happiness brightened his days to the end, when, in full possession of his faculties, he calmly died at the advanced age of eighty-eight, having been born with the century.

Liston.

The singular contrast between Bouffé on the stage and Bouffé in private society bears some similarity to that remarked in Liston. Once in mufti, this intensely comic actor (of whom it might be said, as it was of Doggett, that "there was a farce in his face") became a grave and serious individual. The life, the spirit, the gaiety seemed to have evaporated, and all that remained was a prematurely aged man, walking pensively along the street, to all appearance absorbed in some gloomy contemplation, his listless step conveying the idea of a general depression, possibly an inevitable reaction after the necessary self-imposed coercion during the performance, though the comic vein, when appealed to, always seemed to be perfectly natural and abundant in its flow.

The mental dejection from which Liston suffered is however well known, and stories, whether true or apocryphal,

have been narrated to prove the extent to which it told on his private life.

I went—I ought to say was taken—when very young, to see Liston in *Paul Pry* (written expressly for him in 1825, by John Poole *). I cannot boast of having understood much about the plot, but that most singular countenance, and the stolidity with which the owner could invest it at pleasure, his ludicrous dress and attitudes, and the *naïveté* of his repeated apology, "I hope I don't intrude," were traits of genius (of a certain kind) never to be forgotten; the pink-striped, baggy small-clothes and the top-boots, the blue coat and bright buttons, the characteristic hat, the two watch ribbons and seals depending from his fobs, and above all, the bulging old "gingham" always under his arm, form a distinct personality which will always be associated with the name of Liston: nor could one forget the dry, serious tone in which he uttered the most ludicrous remarks, nor the upturned glance to the "gods" (who worshipped him), as if in unconscious wonder at what he could possibly have said or done to provoke their hilarity. Liston's face alone was always the signal for a roar, and he and his public understood each other so thoroughly that every performance afforded a delight of its own particular kind.

I have spoken of Liston's *Maw-worm* which I remember seeing, but of his *Leporello* I can only report what I have heard, to the effect that though a very clever version, it was by no means his most successful effort: he appears not to have conceived a very distinct idea of the particular genius.

* It is said that *Paul Pry* was suggested to Poole by the idiosyncrasies of a well-known barrister, Michael Angelo Taylor, who (probably merely from habit) never met an acquaintance but he greeted him with the question, "What's the news?" and one day he was indiscreet enough to put this inquiry to Pitt himself. With ready wit the Premier replied: "I can't say; I've not yet seen the papers." But of course he frequently got similar snubs. One day, meeting Lord Westmorland, and making the usual inquiry: "News," replied the addressee: "why, the latest news is that I ordered a leg of Welsh mutton for dinner, and finished it too." Others however have been indicated as satirized in the absurdities of the popular character of *Paul Pry*.

of *Leporello's* character, and played it "in a mixed style; something between a burlesque of the Italian opera and his own inimitable manner." It is difficult to conceive that *any* Englishman could be expected to apprehend a character so entirely Neapolitan; those who saw Lablache in his treatment of it can scarcely be expected to imagine any other *Leporello*: not an opportunity did he miss that could give local colour to his impersonation. The mixed feelings of devotedness to his master, admiration for his successes, astonishment at his audacity, and terror at his reckless profligacy, were not more genuinely expressed than his *Lazzaronish* proclivities culminating in the native skill with which in winding the long coils of macaroni round the spoon and letting it unwind again down his throat, he exhibited a feat known only to the practised hand and mouth of a son of Naples. Liston of course could not have introduced this incident, but no doubt, from his rich resources, he substituted some equivalent. "We like him best," says Hazlitt, of Liston, "when he is his own great original, and copies only himself."

"None but himself can be his parallel."

I do not think any one who remembered Liston's acting could believe he "copied" *even* himself: the great charm of it, as I myself recollect him, was its (apparent) spontaneity and *naïveté*: his jokes and his gestures, the stolid stare he would assume, and the dry tone in which he uttered the most ludicrous remarks, always seemed to be the outcome of the moment, but of course it must have all been *réchauffé*, proving how thoroughly and practically he must have understood the *arcana* of histrionic art.

Nothing could be more amusing than the droll way he had of addressing himself to the audience—a trick of which he often availed himself and with so much success that it was subsequently adopted by others;—the half-stupid expression with which he directed his asides to the pit, as if courting their sympathy, was irresistibly comic:

the house used to overflow with mirth when Liston introduced any kind of gag; I have heard my father describe the first occasion on which he remembered this little device of Liston's. In his character of master he has to reprove an insolent valet, and after ordering him from his presence he turned to the pit with the scowl still on his face, and as if appealing to their sense of justice, said in a muttered aside, "I *hate* to be answered by a servant."

Reports of such departures from the usual course of a performance could not fail to attract audiences who, by a precisely similar impulse, flock to the pulpits of popular preachers hoping they may chance to come in for some of these eccentricities: it is, however, a liberty which can be resorted to only with skill and discretion: the audiences of Liston and other actors who may have amused them with a clever impromptu, have been known to encore it as they would a song or a dance.

Audiences, as a rule, seem to be wholly unaware that however effective an impromptu may prove on the first occasion, a repetition of it can never produce a similar effect: it reminds us of the child asking his father to go behind the door and frighten him over again. But is not this, more or less, the case with all *encores*; I remember once hearing Judic sing as she alone can, one of those ephemeral French trifles the attraction of which depends entirely on their idiosyncratic rendering; this song, obviously *de circonstance*, was entitled: "*J'ai pleuré*." It was just after the Franco-German war, and the several stanzas were written to lead up to the climax in the last line, to which the singer imparted a thrilling effect. The effect was marvellous—as, after recalling in succession the various episodes in her life, from infancy upwards which had called for her tears, she arrives at the latest, the humiliating victory of the Prussians, and literally flings out the last line . . . "*de BAGE, j'ai pleuré*"; as if with it, she inflicted a stinging *soufflet* on the whole German nation.

It is impossible to describe the power she threw into those four words ; the audience (including those personages occupying the box of His Royal Highness) was electrified—there was an absolute pause before the deafening roar of bravos told of a full and entire appreciation. And then—ah ! why couldn't they be satisfied ? But no : if there are some boys who swallow their lollipop without sucking it, there are others who will go on sucking it till it has lost its sweetness and they have revealed the naked plaster of Paris : you *can't* have an effect of that description, twice ; but, on this as on so many other occasions, the audience did not realize this patent fact ; they thought you *could* ; and they resolved to try : *Judic* did her best to avoid marring the result she *had* produced, and she resisted ; but it was quite useless ; the roars went on ; bad taste prevailed ; the audience gained its point ; the performer, with visible reluctance, gave in :—“ *J'ai pleuré* ” *had* to be repeated ! The music struck up again ; the words came once more ; the singer tried to inspire herself once again with virtuous indignation at her country's betrayal, but somehow it didn't do : the cry of patriotic humiliation and helpless despair which had before overtaken the audience as a surprise, had no longer the spirited ring of her first exclamation ; the spontaneous and unexpected cry had been replaced by the repetition of a well-learned lesson, and it lacked the freshness, the *imprévu* of the original utterance—the touch of nature, which was everything : its passion had evaporated, and it stirred no sympathetic emotion in the hearts of the listeners. For my own part I was disillusioned and disappointed, but I laid the experience to heart.

Robson.

It would perhaps be more correct to class Robson, than Liston, with Bouffé. There were many points of similarity between them, and it would be difficult to say that one was a better actor than the other : Bouffé had certainly more marked versatility, but both possessed a wonderful power of expressing the melodramatic, and of contrasting it artistically with the comic ; and both could, at pleasure, command the tears, as well

as the mirth of their audience. When *La fille de l'Avare* was translated and arranged for the English stage, Robson carefully studied Bouffé's rendering of the *Miser*, and modelled his own, most successfully upon it: both actors made a great success of this drama, which was very well translated, and the humorous touches which brightened the more serious scenes told effectively in both.

In the French version, if Bouffé made a good point of the scowling contempt with which he looked on while his nephew was breakfasting, muttering to himself with ill-restrained disgust—"Voyez donc cet animal, qui s'amuse à manger des biscuits, comme un oiseau!"—Robson turned it equally to account by putting on a similar expression of grudging avarice as he remarked in a semi-aside, "How ugly a fellow does look with his mouth full of bread-and-butter!"

There was a joke in the French version which the translator had not attempted; this nephew observes: "Je mangerais volontiers un sandveeche:" "Que veut'il dire avec son *sandveeche*, qu'est ce que c'est que ce plat là?" asks the *Avare*, still out of temper, "Ma foi! je ne sais trop," is the reply: "c'est un plat Anglais; quelque espèce de ragoût, sans doute"—this joke being of course introduced to amuse the English. The miser's affection for his daughter was well portrayed by both; and both made an excellent bit of play of her father's presenting her with a gold piece, which she receives with an indifference that shocks him and makes him half recall his gift: in the French piece Forget, who was a charming actress, accepted the coin with a well-defined feeling of pleasure at being the object of an attention which she knows must have cost her father a pang, and at the same time she as clearly indicated that its intrinsic value was not of the slightest moment to her: this misappreciation offers a telling opportunity for illustrating the avaricious phase of the miser's character, and the first act, interspersed with characteristic little traits of this nature, forms a needed preparation for the catastrophe of

the second—the sudden and unexpected disappearance of the miser's daughter and his hoard: the story, it will be seen, is not new; like Molière's *L'Avare* it is that of *Jessica* and *Shylock*, but it affords opportunities for the display of varieties, and also gradations, of passion to be represented only by a finished actor: the situation also enables him to show, simultaneously, in their fullest force, the extrêmes of two conflicting affections; for the *Avare* scarcely loves even his gold more than his daughter, especially when he has lost her; and the situation is enhanced by the discovery that it is she who has robbed him to save the honour of an old man who is at the same time the father of her lover, and the miser's own brother.

Bouffé's fidelity to nature went home to every heart as he depicted the minutest inflections of the old miser's maddened condition, and admitting that Robson as powerfully touched his audience, we must not forget that his was only an excellent copy of an admirable original: Robson was a fine actor all the same, and among the many brilliant successes of his stage-career, *Peter Probity* may be taken as an example of the feeling he could manifest in a simple and unromantic character. Robson will long be gratefully and approvingly remembered by the British public; for it generally happens that those who possess the finest sense of humour are also those who know how most readily to stir our deeper emotions. Again like Bouffé, Robson possessed much initiative in his conception of the characters he played, and made them his conscientious study.

Tyrone Power Of the grotesque school, the Irish comedian, Tyrone Power (whose real name was Thomas Powell), was an excellent exponent. He was also an admirable representative of the typical Hibernian of whatever class; but his career was a brief one: I remember seeing him at the Haymarket in 1840, on the last occasion on which he performed previous to sailing for New York where so great was his success, that he took his passage back with £40,000 in his possession.

Unhappily he sailed by that ill-starred ship *The President*, whose fate, after it left the port, will remain a mystery to the end of time; poor Power and the fortune he had made were never heard of more! Nor was Power the only remarkable man on board; among others was a son of the Duke of Richmond, who had gone out with Power for the sake of his companionship: two brothers, named Morton, also went down in her. There were four Mortons, whose individual destinies realized a remarkable series of fatalities in one family: of these one died blind and the three others by violent deaths, the fourth having been killed in Paris while correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle*, by Elyott Bower, the correspondent of the *Morning Post*, in a fit of jealousy.

For Power's farewell-performance when leaving England was given an amusing farce called the *Irish Lion*, written for him, and well suited to his capabilities, though it was extravagant even for a farce; but he also appeared that night as *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*, in *The Rivals*. Though his brogue was only an accident of his nationality, it was of great value to him in his Irish characters, adding an additional truth and raciness to his Hibernian humour; besides this he had plenty of national initiative, and could "gag" a dull dialogue so as to make it sparkle, especially when delivered in his *déagagé* manner which took with the audience, and made him a universal favourite. His depth was not great, but neither did he attempt anything beyond the light, airy, rattling style; still, in whatever character, he was always Power, and his success could only be ensured by passing from one public to another, and amusing each for a time: his venture across the ocean was therefore a very politic measure, though unhappily destined to meet with so luckless a result.

Power's melancholy and premature fate at once aroused on his behalf a feeling of profound and universal sympathy. Lord Melbourne took upon himself the future of one of his sons, who fortunately happened to be a youth of some

promise, and whose subsequent steady conduct and marked ability justified this generous and valuable patronage. Another of these youths unhappily did not turn out so well.

C. J. Mathews.

Charles J. Mathews, who was one of the Haymarket company at this time, performed that same night in the clever farce of *Patter v. Clatter*. The character of *Patter*, written for Mathews, has never, I think, been attempted by any one else; and no wonder, for it is no figure of speech to assert that he was perhaps more inimitable in that character than in any other—indeed, in his own style he had no rival.

The life of Charles J. Mathews has been given to the public in so many forms that there is little left to say about him. Almost every one is acquainted with the details of his existence so full of incident from the time when, abandoning his profession as an architect, "he would be an actor," to that in which, as *Adonis Evergreen*, he practically asserted his inability to grow old, whether as a man or an actor. That the versatility and universality of his genius were coeval with his other gifts and equally supreme, might be implied by his admirable performance of a witty French piece in the original language which he spoke with a purity of accent and an aplomb of manner seldom attained by a foreigner. Perhaps he acquired this from his first wife, whose French was absolutely Parisian. One might pick out *Puff* in *The Critic*, as Charles Mathews's happiest representation, but when recalling him in the long succession of others, it is difficult to select that or any one in particular, or to compare him even with himself.

On one point, if not on all, there can be no dissentient voice—that the great charm of his acting consisted in that he was always a gentleman, and, like Lafont on the French stage, manifested the instincts of class to an extent which, while perfectly unobtrusive, yet spread a polish over his whole personality.



CHARLES J. MATHIEWS.



CHARLES J. MATHEWS.

Clever as Charles J. Mathews proved, in the variety of styles in which he shone and inheriting a considerable share of his father's humour, we may still be justified in saying :

“ *Sequiturque patrem non passibus quis.* ”

The humour of the son, if almost as abundant, was altogether of a different class from that of the father, for its dryness was its most striking and also its most taking characteristic, and it was the quiet, unconcerned manner in which the younger Mathews said droll things, that rendered them irresistibly ludicrous. His wit did not flash, it seemed to proceed in an inexhaustible stream from an abundant source, and flowed as plentifully from his pen as from his tongue : neither was it like that of Rogers, of whom Sydney Smith so drolly remarked that “ he fired off his jokes like minute-guns.”

The following answer to a letter from Charles Reade, which I also subjoin, was hit off on the spur of the moment, and is a not inapt illustration of Mathews's humour :

From Charles Reade to Charles J. Mathews.

“ GARRICK CLUB, COVENT GARDEN,
“ 28th Nov.

“ DEAR SIR,—I was stopped the other night at the door of Drury Lane Theatre by people whom I remember to have seen at the Lyceum under your reign : this is the first time such an affront was put upon me in any theatre where I have produced a play, and is without precedent when an affront was not intended.

“ As I never forgive an affront, I am not hasty to suppose one intended. It is very possible that this was done inadvertently, and the present stage-list may have been made out without the older claims being examined. Will you be so kind as to let me know at once whether this is so, and if the people who stopped me at the stage-door are yours, will

you protect the author of '*Gold*,' &c., from any repetition of such annoyance?—I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

“CHARLES READE.”

Charles Mathews's Answer.

“T. R., DRURY LANE,

“Nov. 29.

“DEAR SIR,—If ignorance be bliss on general occasions, on the present it certainly *would* be folly to be wise. I am happy therefore to be able to inform you that I am ignorant of your having produced a play at this theatre; ignorant that you are the author of '*Gold*,' &c.; ignorant of the merits of that play; ignorant that your name has been erased from the stage-door list; ignorant that it had ever been on it; ignorant that you had presented yourself for admittance; ignorant that it had been refused; ignorant that such refusal was without precedent; ignorant that, in the 'people' who stopped you, you recognized the persons lately with me at the Lyceum; ignorant that the door-keeper was ever in that theatre; ignorant that you never forgave an affront; ignorant that any had been offered; ignorant of when, how, or by whom the stage-list was made out; and equally ignorant by whom it was altered.

“Allow me to add that I am quite incapable of offering any discourtesy to a gentleman I have barely the pleasure of knowing; I have moreover no power to interfere with Mr. Smith's arrangements or disarrangements; and with this unreserved admission of ignorance, incapacity, and impotence, believe me, yours faithfully,

“C. J. MATHEWS.”

Sothern.

A much-admired actor who followed Charles J. Mathews, and bore some relation to him in type, was Sothern, who rapidly won a very extensive and most enthusiastic popularity. Personally he had much in his favour, his stage-presence was very winning, and his acting was easy

and natural; he was fully entitled to be considered an artist, for there was a refined subtlety in the varied expressions he could assume, and the celerity with which he could pass from one to another; he had also much originality, and a quick perception of the telling points in a character, of which he in many cases availed himself, by bringing them out with effect so as often to make the rôles he performed, creations of his own.

Sothorn appeared in many characters, and threw lustre on them all, but *Lord Dundreary* is that with which his name will chiefly be associated, for the author of the play in which it occurs had really nothing to do with this most ingenious and altogether original individual, the offspring of Sothorn's own brain: it was only just, therefore, that it should make his reputation and his fortune, at the same time that it made that of the manager who was lucky enough to secure him.

The history of this piece is that of many other pieces, and also of many men who have suddenly burst out of obscurity by some fortunate accident. The MS. of *Our American Cousin* had lain neglected and almost forgotten in its mysterious pigeon-hole among the manager's "doubtfuls," the utmost thought he had bestowed on it being that, insignificant and comparatively characterless as it was, it might possibly some day be turned to account: it was by the merest accident and the fortunate coincidence of Sothorn's being on the spot, that it ever saw the light: in a sudden emergency a new piece was in requisition, when some one happened to remember the existence of the one in question, which was looked up, proposed, and overhauled: even then it was very nearly abandoned, for all the actors to whom the parts were allotted made a wry face and seemed to wish to back out of them. When Sothorn received his summons to play *Lord Dundreary* he positively refused, and it was very reluctantly and only out of consideration for the straits in which the

manager was placed that he at last relented. However, he made it an indispensable condition that he was to have absolute control over the piece, and might "gag" his own part to any extent he pleased. Thus the character he manufactured out of *Lord Dundreary* (as we know, the making of the piece) was an entirely new addition, and indeed it grew as the piece went on. The sums it brought in seem fabulous, and its immense popularity will not yet have been forgotten, nor the extraordinary hold it took on the play-going public, though for a very good reason it is rarely, if ever, attempted now. Sothern certainly must have been inspired by genius of a very practical sort when he turned out this popular character.

His representation of the hero in a sensational piece translated and adapted for the stage from Eugène Sue's *Roman d'un jeune homme pauvre* was also admired, and filled the house; but—alas! how trivial is the taste of the *profanum vulgus*!—the chief attraction consisted in the hero's leap from a tower, a feat which always produced a thrilling interest. This supposed leap however, which "the hero of romance" has no choice but to take, in order to save the honour of a woman, was, for effect, made to appear as if the height from which he throws himself were abnormally dangerous. All manner of contrivances were discussed between actor and stage-manager to secure the safe accomplishment of this gymnastic exploit; the usual mode of dropping into a blanket held by the four corners by "supers," met with unmitigated disapproval from Mr. Sothern—there was too much of the stage-clown about it: besides dark rumours have long been afloat as to the mischievous or malicious proclivities of these imps of the *coulisses*, who, if they owe a grudge to their patient, or consider that he does not tip them with sufficient liberality, have only to "let go" at the critical moment, and penitently "regret" afterwards "the unaccountable accident by which the stupid old blanket went and slipped itself

away, just as the holder thought he had made it extra secure."

Sothorn knew the little ways of these gentry too well to trust himself to the caprice of such a chance, and preferred having a tall pile of hay-trusses raised to the height required for a soft, short and elastic fall, the instant he was out of sight of the spectators. Even this device, however, was only temporary, for at last it dawned on them all, that the thing could be much more simply accomplished without in any way damaging the effect, by the employment of a dummy, cleverly substituted for the living lover, under cover of the ivy with which the turret was overgrown. The hay (suggested perhaps by the "market" in which the theatre stands) formed, after all, a very dangerous expedient, besides occupying too much of the small space there is at the back of the stage; it was, therefore, in many ways, a relief to get that abolished.

Happily, Sothorn was not so rigid in his principles as the conscientious *Othello* Joe Miller tells us of, and yet this joke has had a realization in actual life, and a long space is devoted to the admiring narration of it in the recently published biography of a well-known opera-singer. Whether from sheer stupidity or from mock-conscientiousness, this actress refused to avail herself of the practice usually followed in the *Sonnambula* of employing a columbine disguised as a duplicate-*Amina*, to cross the stage in the bridge scene; her objections being,—first, that "she was bound to incur the danger (what danger?) herself," and secondly that she would be practising a "deception" on the spectators if a second actress were employed! It seems paradoxical to draw the line at one "act of stage-deception," when all acting must necessarily be deception from beginning to end! This lady seems to have forgotten, too, that, being a singer, her duty to the public was to avoid whatever could damage the condition of her voice, and to secure, by every means in her power, the

freshness and firmness of the vocal part which follows this scene. Why, therefore, preface it by a stroke of pantomime which any chorus-dancer could execute equally well? Biographers are sometimes so injudicious that if the subjects of their mistaken zeal could only call out from their graves, their refrain would be, "Save me from my friends!"

Tom Taylor.

I was asked one day to meet the popular critic Tom Taylor at the house of a lady friend: she was not a female prig, but had a very precise mind, and, as a woman of the world, considered it in very bad taste, whether as regarded herself or others, for any of her acquaintance to deviate from the generally understood usages of the *monde* to which she belonged. There was a saying at our house whenever she dined with us, that she was "as punctual as death," and the interchange of hospitalities between herself and her other friends must have been frequent enough to render them equally cognizant of her practical feeling on this subject; there was therefore an additional reason for observing at her house the social law which regulates the punctilio of dinners. How it was that Tom Taylor acquired the reputation of disregarding this law, I cannot say, I simply state the fact. On this occasion, after the handsome allowance of half-an-hour, the damaged dinner was served, and the first *entrée* was simultaneous with that of Mr. Tom Taylor.

It is difficult to say what countenance it is the most politic for a man to assume when he has committed a social blunder—one which, as Dr. Kitchiner has said, "puts out hostess, cook, and company, as well as himself," and suggested the motto with which the Doctor sealed his invitations: "*Better never than late.*" The gentleman, however, proved equal to the occasion, simply remarking with a friendly nod: "Ah! I'm glad you haven't waited." The *sans gêne* of this remark was delightful; but I have heard the same "neat and appropriate speech" attributed to Lord Palmerston; possibly *he* may have been the plagiarist; at any rate he *was* Lord Palmerston.

To return to the stage. A lady not born to the profession, nor yet qualified by personal charms to adopt it, although her histrionic theories were clever and artistic, was Miss Charlotte Cushman. Her *provenance* was American, and her nationality unmistakable. After seeing her on the stage in England, I made her acquaintance socially in Rome, where, in 1866, her nephew was American Consul, and I found her a most agreeable person: they had a pleasant *entourage*, and the house was one which all liked to frequent. They gave one or two dramatic entertainments that winter, and these little plays were extremely well got up, the acting being much above that of average amateur-displays; the performers, who were evidently picked, were all American, and the pieces were played in English. Miss Cushman had at that time undergone an operation for a "malignant tumour," and was supposed to have recovered, but the insidious complaint appeared again, and I think she underwent another excision: finally, she died of this dreadful malady, after her return to America, leaving behind her many sincere regrets.

Though I had already seen her on the English stage in one or two characters, the one I remember best was at the Princess's, where she played *Romeo* to her sister Susan's *Juliet*. Susan was extremely pretty, but was not particularly gifted: in personal appearance she was altogether unlike Charlotte, who was not prepossessing either in face or figure: the latter was a large, tall, bony woman, and when she threw herself full length on the ground, an act she performed most ungracefully, her length must have represented very nearly the six-foot "measure of a new-made grave."

I forget what was the general impression she produced on the public in *Romeo*, and do not know whether I shall be considered as giving proof of good or of bad taste when I say that I *could* not bring myself to admire the performance, though personally I liked Charlotte Cushman, and believe her to have been kindly, amiable, and excellent in every

Miss
Cushman.

way. I think her friends generally must have regretted the mistake she made in rushing into public dramatic attempts, for which she was in so many ways ill-suited: she preferred men's characters, but was less fitted for *Romeo* than for any other: her features were most singular, and the depression of the nose gave to her countenance the appearance of having been sat upon: her face was, in fact, absolutely deformed, and it was impossible to forget it, for there was nothing in her acting either to compensate for absence of beauty, or to excuse her from placing herself in so prominent a position: she was said to be good as *Julia* in the *Hunchback*, but I did not see her in this.

In private life, Miss Cushman was highly and universally esteemed, and her sad fate won for her the most cordial and universal sympathy. She was never spoken of by those who knew her but with admiration and affectionate respect, although it was pretty generally admitted that she mis-apprehended her vocation. At the same time she had excellent taste and an intelligent appreciation of art, and her counsels to stage-players were eagerly sought and respectfully considered. In her dramatic character she acquired among the profession, the *sobriquet* of "Captain Charlotte."

I remember hearing Miss Cushman express a wish to see some of the fine old Greek plays performed—in fact, restored—in all their quaintness and simplicity, which would be going rather beyond the attempt made in that direction in London some forty or more years ago when, at least, women assumed women's characters: even that, however, did not save the experiment, and it did not take long to discover that such a representation was not to the taste of even the restricted public who patronized it, still less to the million. V. C. James Bacon privately admitted that he thought the performance exceedingly heavy and wearisome; and such, to all intents and purposes, must have been the view of the majority, for the speculation soon failed and came to an end, nor has a revival of it been attempted.

I distinctly remember seeing the *Antigone* performed, my impression being that it took place at Willis's Rooms, and that it was Ellen Tree who appeared in it, wearing a statuesquely fashioned drapery. On trying to get this recollection corroborated by that of others, all I have been able to find towards it is, according to one source, that the performance took place at Drury Lane on the 2nd of January, 1845, accompanied by Mendelssohn's music, and fell so flat that it was not repeated: a second authority, agreeing as to the date, asserts that the *locale* was Covent Garden, and that the performance was under the direction of Mr. (afterwards Sir George) Macfarren; but having incurred much ridicule, it was altered and modified, and went on through the months of January and February. One thing is certain, the very clever caricature by which Punch satirized it, appeared in that periodical on January 18, 1845.

Our recollections of Fechter are so fresh that it is difficult to believe he can have passed out of being. He pleased generally, being a clever and also a gentlemanly actor, and though he was below the average height, and, withal (especially latterly), too thick-set, he contrived to make a very favourable impression on the British public. Fechter betrayed a decidedly foreign accent, though he was a Cockney by birth, and his mother was English: his father was German (or Belgian), and he was brought up chiefly in Paris. As he proceeded he improved considerably in his acquisition of the English language: it was a brave attempt he had made, in invading the English stage, and it deserved the success he seemed resolved to win. Fechter.

I remember one night in the earlier days of *The Duke's Motto*, when his accent left much to be desired, some gallery patriot, irritated by "the attempt of a confounded *mounseer*" to act an English play, and not content with a loud guffaw at the distorted delivery of the Duke's motto, "*I am heere*," shouted out—"The *duck's* motto—'Quack.'"

Fechter's forte—at least so judged the women—was his

wonderful proficiency in love-making: this, it was considered he managed to perfection; he also handled the sword gracefully, and "a duel," with Fechter as one of the combatants, always attracted.

His love-making was as successful in England as in France, where the admiration he drew in *Armand Duval* (*La dame aux camélias*) earned him a great reputation. Maquet was so much struck with the effect the elegant *jeune premier* produced on the audience, that he some time after wrote a play expressly for him, and agreed with the *Directeur* (I think) of the *Gymnase*, that, with Fechter for the hero, the success would be tremendous. They accordingly wrote to London offering high terms to secure his co-operation, and succeeded in getting him to sign an engagement.

In due time Fechter arrived; but alas! instead of welcoming him with open arms, it was with open eyes they met him, started and paused in speechless consternation. *Was it—could it be the graceful, flexible, fascinating youth who, when last in Paris, could throw himself with such winning abandon at a woman's feet!* They hardly recognized in him the charming *jeune premier* of their recollections. How could it have happened? . . . Why, they had reckoned without the English roast-beef! and English bottled stout! What was to be done, however? there he was, and time pressed: the hour had come, and so had the man; yet neither author nor manager could feel sanguine as to the result: but there was no alternative; the piece had to come off. Fechter did his best; but the charm was gone, and the performance was a *fiasco*. A duel had been introduced because, as I have intimated, fencing was one of Fechter's highest accomplishments,* but his unfortunate obesity marred this scene deplor-

* Though Fechter piqued himself on his swordsmanship, he had the misfortune to inflict an ugly wound, in the hand, on Jourdan (who acted with him) in the duel scene of *The Duke's Motto*, and it is curious that his son Paul, who seems to have inherited his father's fondness for sword-exercise, was killed while fencing with a young friend.

ably. However, up to the time of his death in New York in 1879, Fechter continued to delight both English and American audiences in characters which did not depend so entirely as this one, on the youthful agility and grace which he had owed to his diet of frogs and *orgeat*.

In *Ruy Blas*, Fechter excelled most of his contemporaries, though Mounet Sully obtained great applause in the title-*rôle*. Fechter was admirable in the pocket-handkerchief scene, but Mounet Sully, with Sara Bernhardt as *Doña Sol*, made an exciting performance of it, and attained a perfection which I do not think Fechter ever reached. It is a very difficult task to depict the conflicting emotions under which the interview is passed, and Mounet Sully had the advantage of the fair Sara's co-operation and support.

Fechter's study of *Hamlet* and its result took the dramatic world by surprise; so few have come through that severe test with even passable success; but there were passages of the play in which Fechter displayed much discrimination and intelligence. Have any two minds ever agreed as to the attributes of that most bizarre character, and has *any Hamlet* ever fully satisfied *any* audience? It was a bold attempt on Fechter's part, but though not resulting in perfection, could by no means be called a failure.

His version of the *Corsican Brothers* has been much discussed, but it is difficult to agree with those who prefer Irving's. Fechter's make-up representation of Napoleon in the last scene of *Monte Christo* produced a wonderful effect, and certainly in that, Irving could not even attempt to follow him! it is true that his *physique* at that time greatly assisted in accomplishing the disguise.

Fechter's domestic relations were not happy either for himself or his family; at the time I knew his wife, she was living apart from him, very quietly, with a young son and daughter, the latter a very handsome and pleasing, but not particularly intelligent, girl considering the advantages of her parentage. Madame Fechter was an extremely ladylike woman,

and retained to a certain extent the beauty for which she had been famed at the time when she gained her high reputation as a *tragédienne*; this was just before Rachel's appearance, and she exceeded the young Jewess as much in grace and personal attraction, as the latter exceeded her in histrionic talent. She played at the *Français* as Mad^{elle} Rabut, in *Marie Stuart*, *Chimène*, and other critical rôles with great success; and in *Bajazet*, took *Atalide* to Rachel's *Roxane*, and it was very interesting to see the two act together.

Rachel appreciated Mad^{elle} Rabut's talents, and said one night to S^{te}. Beuve, with a generosity always to be admired in a rival performer:—

“To-night you came to see *me* play; to-morrow, remember, you must come for Mad^{elle} Rabut.”

But, if Rachel could afford to admit the merits of a rival *tragédienne*, not so the rival; with prudent tact, therefore, Mad^{elle} Rabut, who said she would not play second fiddle even to Rachel, left the *Français* and went to Brussels, where she reigned supreme.

Mad^{elle} Fechter at an early age tried the stage as a profession, but the prestige of her parentage did not suffice to compensate for the personal capabilities that were wanting, and she soon ceased to be heard of, having married and withdrawn into private life.

Rachel. Of Rachel's short but remarkable career, there has necessarily been very much said, for she attracted the attention of the whole world of dramatic art while she lived, and has left behind her an almost unrivalled professional reputation. Arsène Houssaye has drawn a very circumstantial picture of her in his volume entitled *Une Comédienne*, but whatever his intention, he has not produced a pleasing impression of this distinguished actress.

I heard Rachel for the first time, as I have said, in the very early days of her career, in *Hermione*. I remember the effect she produced on myself, and was producing on the public; for her future fame was then rapidly establishing itself. Our seats were in the centre of the first row of the

balcony (always the best for judging of a performance), and scarcely had the curtain risen on the tragedy, when two spectators, a youth and maiden of unmistakably Israelitish type, came in and took their places immediately behind us. They were by no means *distingués* in appearance, seemed absorbed in the new *débutante*, and made no secret of the interest they took in her success ; for, presently, finding our party carried away by the general approval, and joining heartily in it, they leaned over, informing us with undissembled pride and delight—" C'est là notre jeune sœur ; n'est-ce pas qu'elle sera la plus grande tragédienne du siècle ? "

Raphaël, and Sara Félix, also subsequently made their little way in the theatrical world, but rather as relations of Rachel's than by any particular merit of their own. Sara died wealthy ; but *her* fortune was the result of a successful speculation in oyster-beds, and Raphaël came before the public chiefly as a theatrical manager, for he altogether failed as an actor.

Later on Rachel unhappily frequently deviated from her original style which she ultimately over-did, and in some of her characters ranted so extravagantly that, notwithstanding her high prestige, she no longer commanded unqualified admiration : this may truly be said of her representation of *Elizabeth* in *Marie Stuart*, and when she assumed the character of the Scottish Queen on alternate nights, she often mistook, or appeared to mistake, the genius of *that* character, and made *Marie Stuart* into a vindictive shrew. Rachel was great in *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, but *Phèdre* was perhaps the play in which she was seen to most advantage, and in such characters her personal attributes were always in her favour ; she had or made up, a thoroughly classical figure ; and though her features showed plainly her Jewish type, she so cleverly adapted herself to the personality she represented, that the peculiarity was lost sight of, and the spectators saw in her only the character she was personating. Her voice was naturally harsh, but she modulated it with skill, and it was

only when carried away by the passion she was interpreting, and rendering it with a force, as it were, beyond her control, that the inherent roughness of its tone (an Israelitish characteristic) grated on the ear. At all times, but more especially in her later career, her declamation was better suited to the stage than to the *salon*.

Madame
Ristori.

With Ristori, this was otherwise, and she always had her voice as well as her remarkable powers under complete command. Her personality, too, was far more winning, and if less severe than that of Rachel, was far more graceful. I do not think, however, this qualification can be applied to her *Medea*; the costume it seems to require would disfigure an angel of beauty: it also hampered her movements, imparting to them an embarrassment and an awkwardness which were really no part of her nature: she was well aware of this and complained of it. If I mistake not (for it is many years ago), even Ristori, now and then, forgot her dignity, and ranted in *this* character. Rachel doggedly refused to perform it at all; though it was translated from the Italian tragedy into French expressly for her, by Legouv e, and the *Soci taires* had gone to great expense to put it on the stage.

When Ristori was in England she went one night to see Robson burlesque her in *Medea*, and was greatly amused; this was on January 15, 1856.

I saw Ristori often at the *Valle* in Rome in 1866, and particularly remember her *Maria Stuarta*, in favourable comparison with Rachel's. Like Rachel, Ristori alternated that *r le* with the *Elisabetta* of the same play, and contrived to maintain the regal character of the despotic Queen without making her appear less odious.

It is true Ristori had had more experience of life and of the stage than Rachel; she had also had the benefit of early education, and was more capable of studying and appreciating an historical drama. Her *Francesca di Rimini* was a delicate creation, while her *Giuditta* by its power and spirit served

to show the versatility of her gifts: indeed, she was a finished actress and capable of every mood.

In comic parts she was sparkling and brilliant, as those who have seen her in Goldoni's *Locandiera*, *La Scozzese*, or *La serva padrona* can testify: *I gelosi fortunati* was another of her comic successes.

In all the characters Ristori assumed, she was thoroughly



MADAME RISTORI.

conscientious, and would study, reading it up with care, not only the dialogue of the playwright, but every book that could throw light upon them, even visiting, whenever possible, the spot where the scene was laid. When preparing for the character of Marie Antoinette she visited the Conciergerie and remained alone part of two days in the cell which had been occupied by the unfortunate Queen.

It is no doubt well known that Ristori was married for many years to the Marchese Capranica.

Rachel was really a phenomenon, for she rose from the basis of her own genius without any adventitious aid; her antecedents were deplorable; one only wonders whence she drew her appreciations of the characters on which she threw so much lustre. Without any kind of historical reference to guide her, each *rôle* as she assumed it—arriving, as it were, from an unknown source—must have come to her crudely, undefinedly, and not only requiring special study itself, but the study of all its surroundings. The child of a starving family, singing for coppers, almost barefoot in the slums of Lyons, we may well ask ourselves where, except in the mysterious inspiration of genius, she could have found the courage and self-confidence to trust herself on the most classical and most exacting stage in the world, and also how it was she attained perhaps the loftiest reputation that ever was made there.

It is true that not only in the case of *Medea*, but occasionally, to the end of her career, she was obstructed by nervous misgivings as to possible failures, and there were many other instances where, even after having accepted and studied a character and put the *administration* to the heavy expense of getting up a play, she would withdraw at the last moment and express her absolute inability to go through with it.

The *Sociétaires*, in fact, so often suffered severe losses from this cause, that the result was considerable irritation on both sides, and Rachel came to be suspected of caprice, vanity, professional pique and other motives besides the reason she gave, viz., timidity, and mistrust of her own ability.

She always modestly disclaimed the power of her own genius, and so entirely attributed her success to the directions and counsels of M. Samson, who had taken a large part in her dramatic training, that when, on the occasion of a dispute, he withdrew from her his support, and refused to give her

further instruction, she was found weeping bitterly and lamenting over what she regarded as her lost career, declaring she owed to him all she was, and that whatever talent of her own she might possess, it would become useless to her without him to direct it.

Her training, from the time that Choron, struck with the beauty of her voice, followed her to her squalid home and obtained her father's consent to let him shape her into a public singer, was conducted on systematic rules. The first two years after her family removed to Paris, where she was placed in the *Institution Musicale Classique*, were entirely given up to the cultivation of her vocal powers, for it was only at the end of that period that she suddenly lost her voice, and, unhappily, her "speaking-voice" became harsh and grating. She was then handed over by Choron, who still took an interest in her, to a *quondam* actor, St. Aulaire, who, having left the stage, occupied himself in the training of histrionic aspirants. During the years 1834-6 Rachel was on the traditional boards of the *Maison de Molière*, but only in inferior characters, her personal appearance being so insignificant as to call for no notice of any kind. St. Aulaire, however, seems to have discovered the latent spark of genius in his pupil, and one day begged Védel, the *Caissier* of the theatre, to hear her go through the character of *Hermione*. Védel consented, and even listened to St. Aulaire's prognostics, but shook his head as he remarked on her short stature, inelegant figure, rough complexion, general uncomeliness, and unsympathetic voice, urging that she had everything *against* her. "I admit it," said St. Aulaire, "and yet I have a profound belief in her future development." Jouslin de la Salle, the Director of the theatre, was then appealed to, and although he could not but agree with Védel as to her unprepossessing exterior, admitted that she might still be worth cultivating, and had her put on trial in *Tancrède*, submitting her performance to the judgment of M. Samson and Mad^{elle}. Mars. These two

critics, among many who passed their opinion on her on that occasion, were the only ones who discovered any possible merit in her acting; and on the meanness of her figure being remarked upon, the latter replied: "Laissez faire; elle grandira, cette enfant." A singularly-fulfilled prediction.

It must be remembered she was at that time only fifteen:



RACHEL.

it was comparatively long however before she grew, whether in stature or in ability, and meantime she herself wearied of being still kept in the background; in September, 1837, therefore she suddenly turned her back on the *Français*, accepting an offer of 3,000 francs a year from the *Gymnase*, where she made her *début* in the following July in the

Vendéenne, with disappointing results. She next tried her powers in the *Mariage de Raison* at the same theatre, but having produced very little impression, she thought it wise to retrace her steps, and place herself once more under her former teachers.

By Samson's advice she was put into *Camille* in *Les Horaces*, *Sabine* being played by Mad^{elle}. Rabut (afterwards Madame Fechter). Here her success was much more marked, but chiefly among the *Sociétaires*, for it was not until September, 1838, that Rachel's acting was noticed by the Press, when Julès Janin called public attention to her merits in the *Débats*.

Rachel's ascent of the ladder of fame was as tedious as laborious, but when she had reached the summit, no praise was thought too high for her; though she never became beautiful, she acquired, together with her physical development, a decided *cachet de distinction* on the stage; she succeeded in obtaining graceful *poses* and sculptural attitudes, and understood the art of draping her figure with classical taste, always keeping within the bounds of a strict decorum: indeed on one occasion she refused to take the character of *Valéria*—in which, as the Empress's double (acted by the same performer), she had to dress as a courtesan—unless she were allowed to wear her tunic closed down to the knee. This chasteness of sentiment in her stage-performances she shared with Taglioni, to whom could never be applied that significant remark of Sallust:

“Saltabat melius quàm necesse est probæ.”

Rachel had magnificent eyes, into which she could throw the most impassioned expression, according to the mood of any character she had to represent. There were also certain tones in her voice which she knew how to render penetrating; and on one occasion when she suggested to the Company that she should be announced to sing the *Marseillaise*, and obtained only a reluctant consent to what

they had fully made up their minds must be an inevitable failure, she convinced them that they did not know what they were refusing, revealing her intention *not* to attempt to *sing* this martial air, but to make of it a "*mélodie lyrique*," which should startle the audience as much by its originality as by its power. Rachel was as good as her word, and raised an unprecedented enthusiasm by the marvellous skill with which, masking her want of voice, she contrived so to stir every heart by the accentuation, the spirit, and the fire with which she delivered the words that the delight of the audience became frantic, and every time this splendid performance was subsequently announced the struggle for seats was amazing.

Rachel's early death was due partly to her irrepressible love of gain, and partly to her jealousy of Madame Ristori, who was being engaged at the *Salle Ventadour* just as Rachel was deliberating whether or not she should join a company which her brother Raphaël had formed for a Transatlantic expedition: this circumstance decided her, and in a moment of pique she resolved to avoid the dreaded rivalry by quitting the field.

The sensation Rachel produced and the enormous sums she gained in her extended tour to North and South America and the West Indies, no doubt compensated for the position she had relinquished, but her European career had closed with her departure; she returned to France in a condition of health which precluded the possibility of her appearing again on any stage; and she was ordered by the Faculty to winter in the South of France. She accordingly took a villa at Le Cannet, near Cannes, but never recovered, dying there in 1858.

There are on record one or two instances of noble generosity on the part of Rachel, though the general cast of her character showed her to be sordidly avaricious. She was not popular at the *foyer des artistes*, where she was fully aware that her little meannesses were often the sub-

ject of *sotto voce* comments; she consequently tried to conciliate the favour of her colleagues by flattering speeches, and by promises which she always forgot to fulfil.

Rachel had a young sister, Rebecca Félix, of whom she was very fond, and of whose talents she was so proud that when Rebecca was received, at a very early age, *Sociétaire* of the *Théâtre Français*, Rachel generously planned for her a very agreeable surprise : she took her one night into an elegantly decorated and elaborately supplied *appartement*, close to her own house, in which every kind of need had been forestalled, servants engaged, and even supper prepared, and presenting her with the key, told her the first year's rent was paid, and she was mistress of these luxurious quarters and all they contained. Rebecca unhappily did not live long to enjoy the costly gift her sister's affection had provided, for she died in 1854, and Rachel herself survived her only four years.

Another of her sisters—Sara, already mentioned—was not remarkable for talent : she was very “plump” in figure, and when about to attend a fancy ball given by Rachel, having proposed to attire herself as a shepherdess :

“Quelle idée!” said Rachel : “tu aurais l'air d'une bergère . . . qui aurait avalé tous ses moutons !”

Rachel, while in America, was always greatly annoyed by the reports which continually appeared in the Paris papers about the many aspirants to her hand, the assertion being frequently repeated that she had made her selection and was shortly to be married. She at last wrote for publication, a friendly letter to one of the editors, begging he would contradict the false statement, adding characteristically : “Why on earth should I be foolish enough to marry? I have exactly the position I desire, with a sufficient fortune, and *two beautiful boys whom I adore.*” One of these was, after her death, recognized by Count Walewski and bore his name. If therefore, reports be true, Rachel's son is a grandson of Napoleon I. Rachel's

last performance in Paris took place on January 23, 1855, when she appeared in *Andromaque* and *Le Moineau de Lesbie*. Charles Greville who saw Rachel make her *début* in London in *Hermione* (*Andromaque*), admired her "clear and beautiful voice" (!) * he found her "graceful, with dignity, feeling, and passion, and as much nature as French tragedy admits of." He adds that "the creatures who acted with her were the veriest sticks;" and in the concluding scene "the madness of *Orestes* excited the hilarity of the audience even more than Laporte's *Mascarille* in the piece that followed, which, however, was very good." "Rachel," he says, "was received with great applause, and when called on at the end of the piece was so overcome that she nearly fainted, and would have fallen had not some one rushed on the stage to support her."

The Queen was present, though Greville does not state the fact; but I remember it well, and Her Majesty was so profoundly impressed by her extraordinary genius that she made her a present of a diamond bracelet, gracefully inscribed, "*Victoria R. à Rachel.*"

The London public, struck with such acting as had never been seen here before, learned to admire the rare merits of this tragic muse, to be thrilled by the *improvisation* with which she rendered well-known passages, and to recognize the value of her version of them. Rachel's action was her own—the outcome of the deep study she bestowed on every character she assumed, and there were tones in her voice, glances in her eye, and attitudes of her figure, which could send what may be called a shudder through the house.

Déjazet

One of the most extraordinary sights I remember to have ever seen in Paris was the funeral of Déjazet. The service took place in the church of *La Sainte Trinité*, at the

* This is very remarkable, as Rachel's greatest stage-defect was the roughness not to say, huskiness—of her voice: this was so notorious that one wonders whether the diarist did not mean the contrary of what he wrote!

extremity of the *Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin*; the church and its approaches were densely crowded, the assembly overflowing at the doors and for a great distance round. All appeared more or less concerned, and the immediate mourners manifested the most overwhelming grief, among them being, naturally, a large contingent of dramatic and other artistic celebrities. Déjazet's son seemed quite unable to control his feelings, and walked so unsteadily after the coffin, his face streaming with tears, that he had to be supported by two of his friends; one of these was Eugène Sue, who, like many other celebrities, owed to Déjazet's kind and encouraging words and efforts, his early successes and his subsequent brilliant career. The hearse containing the coffin was so entirely masked by white bouquets, garlands, and wreaths, that no part of it could be seen, and it moved along like an enormous waggon, top-heavy with flowers. The crowd was as dense in the railed enclosure in front of the church as within the doors, and when the coffin reached the street, the hearse could scarcely move for the masses which surrounded it, and it was with the greatest difficulty one could edge one's way down the *Chaussée* to the *Boulevard*; arrived there, a countless *cortège* of voluntary followers joined the rest, and continued to gather as they proceeded; the whole length and width of the *Boulevard* from this spot to the cemetery was literally paved with heads, a large proportion being workmen *en blouse* with their wives, all showing the sincerest sympathy. Meantime every window was crowded with spectators; every roof was covered with men, women, and children; every balcony was filled, the behaviour of all continuing quiet, orderly, and respectful. I do not believe that, in proportion to the population, the concourse was less numerous, or perhaps less eager, than that which turned out in London on the memorable occasion of the Duke of Wellington's funeral.

Possibly, to many of the present day, the name of Déjazet,

who so long delighted Parisians of all classes by her delicate, refined, and graceful acting, and the perfection of all her performances, and who won the hearts of the working classes by her generous charities, is a mere traditional abstraction. By those survivors who have seen her, however, not one trait in her matchless representations will ever be forgotten. If any one would form an idea of what she could do, at least in one of her most remarkable pieces, they may yet enjoy in *Monsieur Garat* the successful imitation



DÉJAZET.

of her, by her best pupil—*Chaumont*. In *that*, *Chaumont* is not “*canaille*”—not even so much as “*genti'ment canaille*”; she is almost as graceful and refined, and as universally clever as *Déjazet* herself—only there is always the vast difference between the genius of originality and the skilfulness of imitation. There was nothing within the profession that *Déjazet* could not accomplish: she was equally excel-

lent in comic and in pathetic parts, in men's and in women's, in youthful and in aged, characters; she danced, she fenced, she sang, she played the violin, the guitar, the piano; and though her earliest appearance in public was at three years of age, she went on, and went on with success, till she was *seventy-three*!

Her *Premières armes de Richelieu* drew crowds, and her *Jeunesse de Louis Quinze* was not less attractive; while in pieces where she was intended to be *canaille*, she had the unique art of presenting a picture which suggested only the poetry of *canaillerie*.

Déjazet was, however, much more than an *artiste* and an actress; she was the most generous and unselfish of women, and many an *artiste* and author, afterwards of distinction, owed his and her whole success in life to the helping hand freely extended to them by Déjazet at the outset of their career. No one, perhaps, had a keener perception of latent merit in others than this inimitable actress, and she was always ready to foster, wherever she might discover, it. It would be difficult to say how many literary and artistic celebrities could attribute their fame to Déjazet's patronage, and no one ever perceived in this benevolent woman a vestige of unworthy jealousy. Her last appearance was at the Variétés, where she performed for the benefit of a needy actor, on October 2, 1875, having retired September 7, 1874. She died, aged 78, December 1, 1875.

Déjazet, always sparkling, always alert, had the singular faculty of being able to dispense with sleep to a wonderful extent; those about her declared she "*never* slept," and it would seem this assertion was scarcely exaggerated: as a consequence of her abnormal vivacity, she was quite unable to understand what others wanted with so much rest. When there was any press of business in the theatre, she was always on the spot, as active and self-possessed as if she had reposed during the conventional number of hours, continuing her work and remaining as fresh as when she

began, when the rest of the company were wearied out and incapable of giving any further attention to the task before them. As to her stage-manager, she would sometimes detain him in consultation till two or three o'clock in the morning, and at five o'clock would call for him again. When told he was not up, she would exclaim, incredulously, in her little wiry voice—

“Comment! Vous n'allez pas me dire qu'il est encore couché, ce garçon là!”

It must be supposed that, notwithstanding this apparent exaction, Déjazet was, as a rule, kind and considerate to her *troupe*, for she was adored by all about her.

There was an old porter attached for so many years to the well-known *Théâtre Déjazet*, in the *Boulevard du Temple*, that he was regarded as one of its “properties.” Déjazet treated him with the utmost confidence and regard, appreciating the fidelity, and often availing herself of the judgment, of *Père Perrin*, as he was called; while he, on his part, was wont to address his benefactress with droll but respectful familiarity.

Sara
Bernhardt.

Having witnessed the *début* of Sara Bernhardt, I have had occasion to refer to her already; but as she is still (very much) to the fore, and, moreover, has been exhaustively discussed under every possible aspect, it would be out of place to introduce remarks upon her here; nevertheless, having mentioned Rachel's *Adrienne Lecouvreur* (since produced once more by Sara Bernhardt), I may perhaps take occasion to say that her version of the character did not impress the public as did that of Rachel. Possibly this may be due to the fact that Rachel's rendering was so effective it had remained stereotyped in the public mind as the standard of the character, while that of the more recent actress conveyed a different idea of it. The tragedy is not in itself an attractive one, and many would accept the less realistic representation of Rachel as in far better taste; but in Rachel's time, realism, as we know it now, had not

obtruded itself upon art, and the artist of that day knew that the veiled was not only more interesting and more presentable, but also more suggestive, than the nude; for realism would soon destroy imagination. Neither was *Frou-Frou* by any means Sara Bernhardt's happiest effort; for though she treated the character with far greater artistic skill than Léonide Leblanc—charming in so many other impersonations—it called for peculiar aptitudes, and it is unanimously accorded that, though not written for her, none have ever caught, as aptly as poor Desclées, the mixed ideal of the frivolous, worldly and thoughtless, but not vicious, young wife and mother, whose repentance can be made so touching. . . . I saw Desclées in *Frou-Frou* twice, with Lafont as the father—an ungrateful part, and one which usually proves a failure; Lafont made the most of it, but it was by no means suited to his powers, and afforded no opportunity for the display of his most admired characteristics. At the time I speak of, when Desclées came over to England, though she acted splendidly, she was literally dying; her engagement here was brief; it was also her last, as she survived her return to Paris but a very short time. Her grave is in *Père la Chaise* cemetery.

I was in Paris when, at the date of over two years from her *début*, Croizette first began to make a sensation on the stage of the *Français*. She was, no doubt, ambitious, for she disdained any stage below that, although she could not, at that time, have expected to take any but inferior parts *there*. She had not even been educated for the stage, and although she always passed for a Frenchwoman, her nationality was Russian, her father, it is said, having been of the *haute noblesse* of that country. She was born in 1848, and was comparatively young when her mother brought her to Paris, where for some time she earned her living as a governess. She was striking in appearance, being remarkably tall and well-grown, and, moreover, had strong proclivities for the boards: at starting she contented herself with subordinate

characters, and made her first appearance, in 1870, as *Anna* in the *Verre d'eau*, but all the time she was benefiting by the instructions of Regnier, under whom, at the end of two years, she had made such remarkable progress that in 1873 she had risen to the envied rank of *Jeune Première*. In '74 I saw her in the *Sphinx*, with Sara Bernhardt. In the death-scene, she not only acted with the most minute realism throughout, but, by some artificial device, contrived to produce the ashy pallor of lips and cheeks, the convulsive movements, and even the glazed eye, natural to the condition of the dying, her voice and accent carrying on the illusion.

Indeed, this fidelity to nature was obviously a studied copy of phases with which she must have familiarized herself for the purpose of creating a sensation, and the result was so utterly unredeemed by any of the poetry of art, that it proved too coarse a representation even for the Parisian public, and was candidly censured by the press: strange to say, however, it made Croizette's reputation which thenceforward became European. Though this crude and inartistic death-scene was condemned, every one went to see it, and Croizette continued to perform in the *Sphinx*; but ultimately the objectionable form of the last scene was modified, and for some time the piece was given nightly, Sara and Croizette alternating the two parts of *Blanche de Chelles* and *Berthe de Chavigny*. Croizette had personal attractions enough to be much noticed and much talked about; but it seems to have been generally considered that as an actress she owed her success less to genius than to art: and yet some of her most striking performances seem to have been due rather to impulse—perhaps we might say, to inspiration—than to study.

Carolus
Duran.

Her sister was married to Carolus Duran, who made a tremendous hit with Croizette's equestrian portrait. It was pronounced the finest piece of work he ever executed, and he was censured not very lightly for bestowing

on it more care, time, labour, and pains than on portraits of persons of rank and high consideration who sat to him, paying him fabulous prices.

This master-piece represents Croizette in a riding-dress, seated on a beautiful mare whose portrait is as *soigné* as that of the rider herself; in fact every accessory (including the "button-hole" of double-geranium, which as a bit of bright but harmonious colour is most artistically introduced) is painted with a finish so exquisite that the picture is a work on which no one—however uncultivated—could look without being fascinated. The face is bewitching; so is the attitude, and the latter is so characteristic that it is as recognizable as the features.

Moreover Carolus Duran was not the only artist who was won over by Croizette's charms to try to immortalize them; the sculptor, Carrier Belleuse, executed a marble bust of her—somewhat *décolleté* it is true—but numbering so many admirers that when it was exhibited at the *Salon* in 1873 I never visited the gallery without remarking a knot of *connaisseurs* round it, discussing its merits and admiring the skill of the modeller and the beauty of the sitter.

Daubray has long been a favourite with the admirers of French comedy, and he certainly deserves commendation; for his *physique*, not being happy, instead of helping him on, obliges him to make his audience forget it. In some characters portliness may be an advantage, but undue dimensions constitute a considerable obstacle in others—as, for instance, in the part of the husband in *Divorçons*; and yet that is perhaps one of Daubray's most eminent successes, for he carries with him all the sympathies of the *Salle*.

It is a fact that unwieldy as he has become, he was in early youth "slim and genteel," and admirably suited to the rôles of *jeune premier*, till a premature obesity transformed his figure and thickened his features. His talents as an actor are, however, of a high class, and he has

grandly triumphed over the difficulties Nature has maliciously placed in his path.

I was at the *première* of *La Jolie Parfumeuse*, the beautiful Madame Théo (at that time delicate and youthful) played the title-character. Daubray's comic vein showed itself at its best on this occasion, and the tone in which he uttered the simple exclamation "*C'est immense*" was a revelation of his initiative as well as his comic power. The house burst into a paroxysm of applause, the phrase became popular, and was repeated all over Paris; people went to see *La Jolie Parfumeuse* for no other reason than to hear



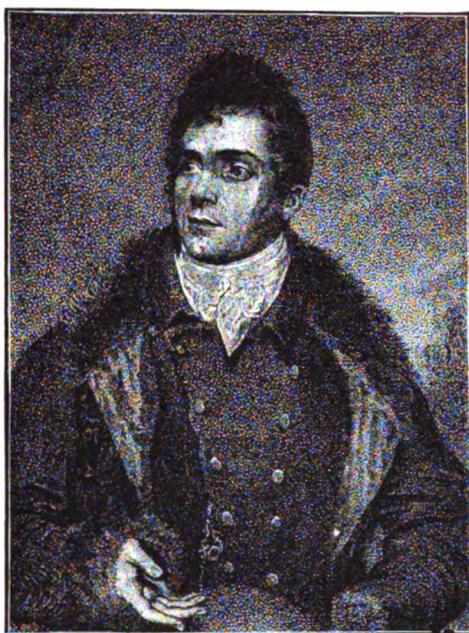
DAUBRAY.

Daubray utter those two words! What it is to make a hit! His *Vaucourtois* in Sardou's "*Les Vieux Garçons*" procured him a great reputation, but though the amount of *vis comica* he has at his command has done much to render him a favourite, he does not sacrifice to grotesqueness his ability for more serious and especially for pathetic parts: the chronic hoarseness which characterizes his voice would be a disadvantage to any one else; he, however, has made capital of it, and contrives that every tone of it shall tell. There are some peculiarities which, though by no means in themselves beauties, yet make their possessor attractive: he must,

however, begin by winning the sympathies of his audience, and Daubray has made himself so universal a favourite that his public would not have him any otherwise than as he is.

An individual who attained a certain prominence in London society over half a century ago was Robert Coates —better known in London as “Romeo” Coates.

This gentleman possessed a considerable fortune ; his father was a wealthy sugar-planter in the West Indies, and



“ROMEO” COATES.

he was born in Antigua in 1772. Coates *père* manifested his patriotism by a voluntary loan of £10,000 to the Government towards the expenses of warding off the aggressions of France and Spain in 1805 : he had nine children, of whom, as Robert was the sole survivor, he inherited the whole of the paternal fortune, and with it a collection of very fine diamonds : he came over to England and settled at Bath, where he cut a great dash and seemed to delight in making himself remarkable, driving about

Bath to the astonishment of the natives, in a carriage shaped like a shell and drawn by four milk-white horses. The ladies of Bath took a great fancy to him, for they thought him very handsome, and finding he had a passion for the stage, encouraged him to appear at the Bath Theatre, where, according to the bills, he made his *début*, as "an amateur of fashion," on February 9, 1810, in *Romeo*. From this time he was called "Romeo" Coates and "Diamond Coates," but he described *himself* as "The Celebrated Philanthropic Amateur." He assumed several characters, but preferred tragedy to comedy: when it came to his lot to die on the stage he always prepared for his simulation of death by spreading a large white silk handkerchief of delicate texture over the spot on which he intended to fall. his stage costumes being always of the costliest materials. He was fond of wearing his diamonds when performing, and there was a story to the effect that on one occasion having to fall in a duel, he lay close enough to the stage-box to overhear the remark of one of its occupants, a lady.

"I wonder now," said she to a friend, "whether those diamonds he wears are real!" On which he sat up, bowed to her and after replying, with his hand on his heart: "I can assure you, madam, on my word and honour they are." resumed his former attitude.

He played *Lothario* in *The Fair Penitent* at the Haymarket for a charitable purpose, but, after being first tolerated and then laughed at, he was finally hissed, and then became the butt of the satirical prints of the day.

During this wonderful performance, the absurdity of his vagaries was increased by the continued applause of a social adventurer, who under the pseudonym of "Baron Geramb" puzzled the town by his singular *allures*; and for some little time the "world" being unable to make out who or what he was, gave him too readily the benefit of the doubt. On this occasion the "Baron" occupied the stage-box, assuming an air of dignity, and passing himself off as a judge and patron

of artistic merit. While the pit and gallery were making derisive jokes over the ridiculous amateur, the “Hungarian Baron” clapped his hands loudly, encouraging the would-be actor with *bravos* accompanied by smiles, winks, and nods. “Romeo” was thoroughly caught by these flattering demonstrations, and it was not until the sham “Baron” had swindled him out of a considerable sum that he began



The Royal ROMEOs or COATES & MATHEWS —

to discern in what had befallen himself, an illustration of *Maitre Corbeau*.

Charles Mathews (the elder) introduced Coates into his “At Homes” by the title of *Cock-a-doodle-doo*, and parodied him as *Romeo Rantall*: this representation became very popular and had a great run.

I never saw “Romeo” Coates on the stage; indeed, I knew him only when he was far advanced in life. It was about

the year 1838 that I was in Belgium with a party, and while visiting the Cathedral at Bruges, a tall, elderly gentleman, seeing we were strangers, came up to us and very courteously offered his services "in case we needed information of any kind"; he walked with us to several of the buildings and other curiosities of the place, behaving with a politeness which savoured of the *ancien régime* in France. A day or two after, when we were in Ghent, he again turned up, and this time called at our hotel. We were out, and on our return the waiter, who professed to "speak English," told us a visitor had been to ask for us; and, trying to describe him, drolly said: "He is a long man, and a man of ages."

On his return to England, where we had already arrived, he one day surprised us with a visit at our London house, the address of which he must have ferreted out of the *Court Guide*. He drove up with his wife (who was stylishly dressed) in a gorgeous carriage and pair; the shape of it was quite unique, and attracted a crowd round the door: it had a brown cloth hammercloth trimmed with gold bullion-fringe; on the sides of which as a crest, figured a raised gold-embroidered cock, while beneath it, on a scroll, ran the motto, "*While I live I crow.*" Coates's manners were gentlemanly notwithstanding this charlatanism, and his gallantry and politeness—somewhat overdone—were in character with the anachronism of his costume: though perfectly new, it was more than half a century out of date. No doubt "Romeo" Coates had a loose tile somewhere over the upper story, and the effect manifested itself in a straining after notice, which he found most easily purchased by singularity of habits and also of habit. Besides this conspicuous carriage, he was to be seen about town driving a curricule, also a very showy equipage; the bar was said to be of solid silver, and in the middle of it was perched an effigy of the before-mentioned cock, likewise of silver, but gilt.

Theodore Hook played off on "Romeo" one of his heartless practical jokes by forging an invitation, pur-

porting to come from Carlton House, to a ball given there in honour of the Bourbon Princes in 1821, but widely as Coates's eccentricities were ridiculed, no one was found to excuse Master Hook. Coates had magnificent ideas, kept no account of his expenses, entertained liberally, spent and lent, right and left, till there was no more to spend and no more to lend. He retreated to Boulogne—in those days the resort of broken-down spendthrifts—but being lucky enough to marry a woman of fortune, he was able to make an arrangement with his creditors, returned to London, and took a house, 28, Montagu Square, where he lived in excellent style.

In February, 1848, after attending Allcroft's Grand Annual Concert at Drury Lane, he was crossing Catherine Street to get to his carriage, when a hansom cab drove up and he was crushed between the two vehicles. At the inquest held on his remains, the verdict was “*manslaughter*” against the driver, . . . and exit *Romeo*!

Coates and his wife had been in the habit of staying at Oatlands with Mr. Mark Boyd, of Merton Hall, Newton Stewart, N.B., a man of literary tastes and promoter of the colonization of Australia and New Zealand. After Coates's death, Boyd married the widow. Up to the day of his fatal accident Coates had continued to frequent society, where he was tolerated, partly as a “character,” partly as a dinner-giver and diner-out who could render himself agreeable, and partly because his eccentricities made him an amusing social lion. His sudden and unexpected death was a shock to those to whom he was known; “Romeo” Coates's epitaph might have been modelled on that which Luttrell wrote in Dora Wordsworth's album, on the occurrence of a similar disaster:

“Killed by an omnibus!—why not?
So quick a death a boon is:
Let not his friends lament his lot,
Mors omnibus communis.”

SOME ATELIERS OF THE PAST.

“All art should be an idealized, elevated *representation*, not an *imitation*, of Nature.”—THORWALDSEN.

CHAPTER X.

SOME ATELIERS OF THE PAST.

“Study art: no gentleman’s education is complete, if he cannot tell a good picture from a bad one.”—BULWER.

“Mutum est pictura, poema.”—MARTIAL.

HOW many gentlemen did Bulwer fall in with during his life of man of the world, who *could* “tell a good picture from a bad one”? Alas! then—How many incomplete educations!

There once was a critic named Waagen, who made, with collectors a bargain—to walk more or less reflectively through their galleries and tell them, so-to-speak at a glance, not only whether their collections were good or bad, but the name of the painter who had executed each picture that each gallery contained. He came over to England in 1835 at the age of 39 already a finished connoisseur; he had made art the study and the object of his life—not in a practical, but in a scientific, sense, and he held an official position in the world of art: in 1823 (twelve years previously) he had been appointed to the care and supervision of the Royal Museum at Berlin and to other positions of trust, indicating the confidence felt by his countrymen in his acumen and candour. Notwithstanding his occupations at home, he travelled to all the Capitals of Europe, both to study and to criticize their art treasures; for, though abroad, he was apparently at home in *all* the arts, and the tone of his voluminous descriptions is such as to impress the general public with his own conviction that he understood

not only pictures but drawings, cuts, engravings, etchings, illuminations, MSS. of any date or age, frescoes, water-colour-drawings, glass-painting, miniatures and enamels, wedgwoods, sculpture, bronzes, terra-cotta objects, antiques of all kinds, as well as samples of Mediæval art, vases, cups, flagons, coins and medals, armour and weapons, Oriental art in all its branches, and of all dates; architecture substantial or decorative—in short, he passed a broad, —very broad—opinion upon art generally, a minute one on all its detail; his three ponderous volumes supplemented by a fourth and entitled *Treasures of Art in Great Britain* can be perused only with breathless surprise by the unsophisticated reader. What was there—let us pause to ask—that Waagen *didn't* know, and was *not* ready to pronounce upon! Waagen not only believed in himself, but was widely believed in in England as well as throughout the rest of Europe which he visited minutely and painstakingly, and the owners of collections were proud to reckon an added value to their treasures, by the mention they received in Waagen's vast catalogue.

Waagen was very German, he enjoyed his visits to the *Châteaux* of Britain, especially when their *Seigneurs* were in residence; I may add that a champagne-lunch, to which he was Germanically partial, rendered him additionally amiable and appreciative; sometimes the host of the occasion neglected to bestow this mark of hospitality, and then—as was but fair—the pictures fared as badly as the guest: the critic would walk along the gallery, note-book in hand, scanning with much attention every picture and inscribing his remarks the while; but when he had come to the end, and the owner ventured anxiously to put a question or two, he would point out, one after the other, the works he had made up his mind to condemn—those perhaps which were just the special pride of their owner and on the authenticity of which he felt the greatest certainty—and in a calm, sagacious tone would articulate the blasting verdict: “*co-*

pie." As so many noblemen's collections have of late been speculatively dealt with, it is only logical in looking back to the days of the Waagen valuation, to consider them, as at that time, investments: Waagen's opinion consequently, of each picture, which remains in black and white in his book, constitutes a sort of title-deed in its history and was worth considerably more than a lunch: it is therefore probable that, with a German eye to business, Master Waagen not only enjoyed the cosy and elegant meal but considered lunch-time as affording a favourable moment for drawing attention to the importance of his services.

But now let us resort to some *ateliers*, into which we shall take the liberty of peeping, whether invited or not. It is not every painter who cares for indiscriminate visits to his workshop; he may willingly admit any number of the fraternity—those to the manner born or trained who know how to judge of the roughest *ébauche* and can foresee the brilliant future of a rough sketch, which an *amateur* would pass by with indifference, perhaps even contempt; but he does not care to be disgusted with the polite admiration of what he himself knows to be bad work, and he is sick of realizing the subtle force of the Scotch proverb:—"Never show a half-finished thing to a fool." Moreover the fool doesn't care to look over these "daubs," for such he dubs them as soon as the painter is out of hearing; yet to the artist or the connoisseur, what more delightful way can there be of spending a morning.

There are few words in our English vocabulary, whether indigenous or imported, that call up a brighter and more attractive image than that by which the French designate the den of an artist,—let him be sculptor, painter or engraver, but especially painter. We have no equivalent in our language to describe the often lofty and spacious area contained within the ceiled or raftered roof and four walls—themselves indiscreetly characteristic—within which he passes the working hours of his day; the windows

The Atelier.

are not ordinary windows, the light must be coaxed to come in as he chooses, or rather as the laws of art prescribe, and often it has to make its way through a skylight. We enter. What a collection of heterogeneous objects! The order, or rather dis-order with which they have come together and have accumulated, impresses a stranger with a sense of hopeless confusion as he first invades the consecrated precincts; yet is it a *discordia concors*, for as we become more familiar with the elements of this mass of apparent incongruities, we begin to discern that the incongruity is rather apparent than real; that every item in the capricious medley might, at some time or other be brought into requisition, and that there are quaintness and character even in the confusion into which they have been gradually and unconsciously thrown.

There is an idiosyncratic picturesqueness in the aspect of almost every painter's *atelier*; and that it is also a *suggestive* picturesqueness is indicated by the fact that many painters have taken such interiors as the subject of a picture, which always proves an attractive one. The details are all such as to invite the eye, being more or less unconventional and more or less rich in outline and colour, and as we gaze around we are interested if only in trying to disentangle the *méli-mélo*.

The limner who is inspired with the humorous idea of transferring to canvas the mixed curiosities of his studio has his accessories all at command: his resources are endless; and every object he introduces is ready to hand to give accuracy and local colour to his work. What a wealth of draperies of every hue and texture he has to choose from, armour and weapons, vestments, integuments, costumes and drapings of every age, nation, profession, and religion;—plumages, tapestries, flowers, banners; everything that affords opportunity whether for striking contrast, or for soothing harmony of tint and form; striped awnings and curtains to form or to divide his background, and also

to enable him to mass his *chiaroscuro*, are suspended across his studio, and serve to determine and to phrase his composition, as fancy, taste, and imagination may dictate.

The last time I was in the Museum at Marseille my attention was called to a picture painted by a Marseillais which had taken the prize at the *Palais des Beaux Arts* at Paris, and according to custom had been presented to the local collection. It was called *Le début du modèle*. The scene is a painter's studio, in all its picturesque untidiness, knowingly represented with richness of colour and all the attractive items of which such an "interior" admits. The story is well told; the picture is divided by a gorgeous folding screen and on either side are distributed the four figures which constitute the subject, two in either group. Before the screen stands the painter near his easel on which is an untouched panel: a female model, obviously hardened to the business, lolls on a divan in the middle of the picture, fanning herself lazily, and coarsely joking with the painter on the timidity of the young girl who is preparing to take her first step in the occupation by which she is to earn her bread: her mother is with her, and these two are in the shade, on the other side of the screen.

"Le début du modèle."

The modest attitude of the blushing girl, still clinging to her last garment—the rest lying in a heap round her feet—is rendered pathetic by the hard expression of the mother's face, as, seated behind her, she is urging her whether with ridicule or menaces, to overcome her scruples and to offer herself, to the artist's scrutiny; the latter appears to be employing gentle arguments, as one already experienced in the natural reluctance often manifested by the more youthful models, on first realizing all that is expected of them. The picture is a suggestive one, and recommends itself to the admiration of the reflective as well as to the approval of the art-critic.

The Flemish school which has taught its disciples to delight in "Interiors" has also afforded examples of scenes

supplied by the *atelier*, but few artists have been so successful as Horace Vernet in depicting this characteristic subject; perhaps one reason why it interests the public is that it affords a certain initiation into the inner life and even into some of the Bohemianisms of a painter's existence and while engaging their curiosity arouses their sympathies. This may be said to be the case more especially with that famous picture of Horace Vernet's in which he seems to invite us to his intimacy and to offer to introduce us not only to himself, but to several of his brethren of the brush, who are lounging and smoking cigars among his curious and multifarious "properties."

It would be difficult to say what there is we do *not* find in Horace Vernet's studio: that it was of spacious dimensions we may judge from its admitting of the introduction of a living horse, probably the one on which his Imperial sitter was hoisted for Horace's equestrian portrait of His Majesty Napoleon III.

A-propos of this portrait, Arsène Houssaye describes a visit he paid to Horace's *atelier* while it was in progress. He called there one morning, and had hardly been welcomed by the painter, when the Emperor himself was announced. Vernet, with his well-known smile, descended his ladder, and received the felicitations of his Imperial patron who had at once proceeded to examine the work and to note its advance with a compliment to the painter, the latter replied with the grace of a courtier:

"Sire, c'est votre Majesté qu'il faut féliciter, car je n'ai jamais vu un homme poser si bien à cheval."

"Je pose d'autant mieux," said Louis Napoleon, "que je ne pose pas dutout."

"Voyez de quels privilèges vous jouissez, M.M. les peintres:" interposed Houssaye: "ce superbe cheval va porter Vernet jusqu' à la postérité la plus éloignée, car ce sera un cheval historique."

"M. Horace Vernet," answered the Emperor, who knew

very well how to turn a compliment : “ n’a pas besoin de mon cheval pour voyager jusque dans ce pays là.”

When I saw Horace Vernet’s *atelier*, Horace was in it. Horace Verne
 His easy, gentlemanly manner, commanding figure, and handsome features must have impressed every one favourably even before he uttered a word ; and truly his popularity with his friends was easily accounted for by his frank and open character, his cultivated tastes and the simplicity of his disposition ; many traits are recorded of him which represent him as full of *bonhomie*, and thoroughly appreciative of humour. His facile pencil, bold draughtsmanship, dashing composition, and broad colouring were all typical of the man as well as indicative of the power and taste of the artist, but Horace was one of what may be called a *dynasty* of painters ; the first of them who reckoned among the fraternity of the palette, was born just one hundred years before Horace, viz., in 1689. From the celebrated Claude Joseph Vernet, the pride of his native city Avignon, Horace was lineally descended ; he was not only the last of the race (also destined to be the last of that line), but the only child of his father, who loved him to adoration, and could scarcely bear to have him out of his sight ; it may be added that this affection was warmly reciprocated.

Horace seems to have taken to painting intuitively as well as traditionally : he was brought up in his father’s *atelier*, and followed drawing and painting as if in the natural course of his young life. It was his delight whenever he could get hold of a piece of chalk, black or white, to draw outlines, whether of marine subjects or horses ; then to group horses and men in imaginary battle-pieces which subsequently became insensibly his *spécialité*. The Empress Marie Louise once saw some of these spirited sketches, and was so delighted with them that she used to give the young artist orders for small pictures, for which she paid him most liberal prices. Thus encouraged, Horace went on till he produced a large and important picture,

representing an *émeute* in the streets of Paris, and sent it to the *Salon* of 1822. To his surprise and disgust, his picture, and many subsequent pictures, excellent as they all were, were refused, on account, as he was told, of the tricoloured cockades and the political tone these betrayed; but young Vernet was not to be daunted, and indeed these rejections proved the most fortunate events of his fortunate life: he spiritedly declared that as the public exhibitors would not have his pictures he would set up a private exhibition of his own, and he availed himself of his *atelier* for the purpose. The result of the expedient was a most incredible success; the comparatively narrow premises were daily crowded to suffocation, and order followed upon order. He painted scenes from sacred and profane history and battle-fields, among which Jena, Friedland, and Wagram (all so many excuses for introducing portraits of Napoleon), brought him enviable and envied fame: the Emperor was delighted, and thought his pictures perfection, though M. Beule wrote censoriously of them, declaring they were not battle-pieces, but "anecdotal episodes in the history of the war"; this opinion however did not affect Vernet, who had purposely struck out a new and more truthful treatment of fighting-scenes, avoiding the unmeaning conventionalities of cuirasses and helmets which it had till then been the custom to employ in the thitherto stilted mode of representing battles.

It was not long before the public came to understand and to appreciate the more real and natural mode of treating this class of subjects introduced by Horace Vernet, and when Louis Philippe came to the throne he readily commissioned the now distinguished painter to embellish the galleries of Versailles with illustrations of French history.

The death of Vernet's father was a deep and lasting sorrow to him, and on its occurrence he went to Africa for change of scene; but his *atelier* still held him, and he not long after returned to it. He was intelligent enough to

know that it is not "Time" but occupation that softens our grief to us: awaiting him, was the series of battle-subjects for Versailles, which he had already begun, and as he was treating them on a principle of art engendered in his own mind, the work offered him all the speculative interest of novelty and experiment. When Haydon saw Vernet's picture of the battle of Constantine, the earliest of the series, he stood amazed before it, admiring the remarkable power it manifested.

Vernet's mind was eminently susceptible of the beautiful, whether in nature or art, and when he saw Rachel he was profoundly struck with both the type of her face, and the consummate grace and picturesqueness of her attitudes. His imagination, while studying her *poses* one night, suggested her to him as so bewitching a model for a *Rebecca at the Well*, that he said, if it were possible to propose such a thing to her, he would willingly pay 1,000 francs an hour for the model. There had been a time when Rachel would gladly have accepted as many centimes!

Horace Vernet's universal popularity in Paris has thrown a halo of interest over himself and his work, and numerous are the anecdotes of him which pass current among his countless admirers. I remember an amusing one which I may call a passage of arms—gold and silver arms—between the painter and a well-known Israelitish banker of colossal fortune known as "*Le Baron*." This shrewd millionaire, thinking that a portrait painted by Horace Vernet would certainly prove an excellent investment, visited him one day at Versailles, where he was engaged on *La Prise de la Smala*—one of the finest of the Algerian battle-pieces which adorn the gallery there; * the object of the interview was to strike the bargain on which he was calculating. Vernet, mounted on his platform, received him with indifference, contenting himself with simply saying: "Excusez M. le Baron, si je continue."

* Probably one of the largest pictures that ever was painted.

“Le Baron” proceeded to business, and after telling him he wanted a *portrait en pied* by his hand, arrived at the question of price, “hoping he would name a moderate figure.”

“For you, M. le Baron, I have but one price,” said the painter, discreetly; “it would be 50,000 francs.”

“Preposterous! My dear Vernet, you are joking, I couldn’t think of paying even half that sum.”

“Then you will have to do without the picture.”

“Come, come, be rational, my dear fellow; you know you and I have always been very good friends; don’t let us fall out over such a matter.”

“Exactly so; why should we?”

“Because *you* are making fun while *I* am serious, and so we don’t agree.”

“I never was more serious.”

“Oh! well, if that really is so, I must say ‘good-morning,’ I can’t even discuss such a price.”

“It seems to me you *are* discussing it.”

“Not at all; but I see you are not in the humour for attending to anything but the brush you have in your hand; I shall leave you to reflect, and will look in again in a few days.”

“It will be quite useless, M. le Baron; you will not find any alteration in the sum I have named.”

“Oh, yes, I shall; you’ll have come to a better mind by that time; only, don’t imagine I shall dream of treating with you on such ridiculous terms.”

“If I *am* induced to make any alteration, it will be to double the amount.”

“And I, I offer you a *bonâ fide* quarter of it.”

Again and again was this comical scene repeated, Horace, whom it rather amused, continuing his great historical work, while “Le Baron” walked up and down the *atelier* alternately cajoling and grumbling, but making no advance in his cause. The *Prise de la Smala* was finished and hung.

Vernet had returned to his Paris *atelier*, and one day, after a longer interval than usual, "Le Baron" lounged in.

"Well, Vernet," said he, "we may as well settle that matter about the portrait; you know my terms; now, when shall I give you my first sitting?"

"Oh! I've had sittings enough; as I found you couldn't afford to pay to be painted, I have painted you for nothing; the thing's done."

"Painted *me!* How, when, where? for *nothing!* I don't understand?"

"You asked me to paint a full length portrait of you, Baron, and you're painted; won't that suffice?"

But "Le Baron" was thoroughly mystified. "Painted! and without knowing it? What does it mean?" he muttered to himself; then he exclaimed aloud—

"You are a most generous fellow, Vernet; how can I thank you?"

"Oh, don't thank me till you have seen it: sitters, you know, (or if *you* don't, *I* do), are seldom satisfied with their portraits."

"No one could be dissatisfied with a portrait painted by you, M. Vernet; but where is it? When can I see it, and are you going to *give* it me?"

"You can *see* it any day you like to go to Versailles; but *giving* it is another matter; I can't do that, for the canvas is not mine. The fact is that I wanted a figure for my foreground, and you wanted me to paint you; you stood there so temptingly day after day, I could not resist the impulse; so there you are, immortalized in the *Prise de la Smala*; will not that satisfy your ambition?"

"Le Baron" went straight off to Versailles; the huge battle-piece covered an entire wall, and there it hung, as it still hangs, in all its glory; a dense crowd of enthusiastic admirers standing before it, seemed unable to tear themselves away from its contemplation; "Le Baron" pushed his way so eagerly that the people, annoyed at the disturb-

ance, turned round angrily to examine the new-comer ; they looked at him and they looked again, and then they looked at the picture and seemed to be comparing him with some figure in the scene. "Le Baron" looked also, and the object that met his eye was the most prominent personage in that colossal painting, for he occupies the centre of the foreground and seems to be rushing out of the frame into the very arms of the spectator ; behind him, amid all the confusion of the battle scene, a herd of wild cattle is madly tearing away from the chargers and guns ; a woman and child have been overtaken, and while the mother is frantically struggling to rescue her babe from under their trampling feet, she is imploring his aid ; but no—nothing can stop his precipitous course ; you can almost see the speed with which he is escaping, and what is more, with something he is trying to secrete. "Le Baron" cannot disbelieve his eyes, for he has recognized the "full-length portrait," and at the same time he hears the observations of the spectators.

"Who is that man to whom the woman is appealing to save her child and who appears not to hear her ?"

"Why, don't you see ? He's a Jew running away with a casket."

"Le Baron" turned on his heel ; he was indignant now ; he very soon found himself once more in Vernet's *atelier* ; he began with threats and went on to entreaties, he even ended with a bribe ; but Horace was inexorable. No, he would not, he *could* not, paint it out. The picture was not his ; it was sold, and he could not touch it—no, not even for the amount he had at first asked for the portrait ; not for double that amount, which "Le Baron" now offered him. Alas ! for "Le Baron," *he* is no more, but that striking effigy has already long survived the original.

It is a characteristic fact that when Vernet had accomplished the Herculean task he had undertaken at Versailles, the proverbial meanness of the King at once betrayed itself, he had secured the work and when came the *quart d'heure*

de Rabelais he tried to back out of the payment, and began to dispute the artist's claim.

Vernet was disgusted, and to the infinite delight of the Emperor of Russia, who had again and again invited the great Master to his Court, he betook himself thither, and delighted in adorning the galleries of the capital with some of his finest works. He was made so much of by the Czar and his family that he willingly lingered in the land in which he had taken refuge, but a sad blow awaited him. The death of his dearly-loved daughter took place while he was still retained at the Russian Court. Vernet felt this loss perhaps more than the death of his father, and could only mingle his tears with those of her affectionate husband, Paul de la Roche, who, however, did not survive his wife many years, while Vernet's expression was such, that he had no heart to pursue his profession.

His accomplished contemporary and son-in-law, the painter of the famous "*Hémicycle*," I missed, when visiting his studio, and never saw him. Shortly after his death, however, I was at the Palais d'Orsay (since burnt by the *Communards*) and entering one of the large and lofty *salles* into which the strong sunlight filtered through the closed Venetian shutters, I observed in one of the further corners what I at once took to be a living person. The figure was tall, the countenance intelligent, not to say speaking, but a nearer approach proved it to be a life-size painting executed on a dark ground and draped with crimson velvet curtains which so skilfully concealed the frame, as to cause a complete illusion, not only to myself, but, as the *gardien* told me, to all who entered. The portrait is that of Paul de la Roche, and its history is curious. At the time of this favourite painter's death, in March, 1856, it was found, to the great regret of his admirers and friends, that there existed not a single portrait of him of any kind: this deficiency *Fleury* undertook to supply, although he possessed no practical help beyond a faint pen-and-ink

Paul de la
Roche.

sketch he had hit off, by way of a joke one day, and another taken from the corpse itself on the day after death,

“’Ere yet Decay’s defacing fingers
Had swept the lines where Beauty lingers.”

His best auxiliary was a faithful memory: the portrait was painted, and, notwithstanding the circumstances, proved a wonderful success; the attitude was so life-like and the resemblance so perfect that the *gardien* remarked: “*Même à nous autres qui le voyons tous les jours, ce portrait fait impression chaque fois que nous entrons ici.*”

Paul de la Roche was a man of prepossessing appearance, with a fine forehead, bright intelligent eyes, and a most agreeable manner: he was well-informed, and his conversation was pleasant and suggestive; his wife, who was still young when she died, was a very pretty woman. I was in Paris when De la Roche’s bold and admired *Hémicycle* was inaugurated at the *Palais des Beaux Arts*. Crowds flocked to see this grand work and study its skilful grouping and elaborate execution. Uwins said of it, “It is a picture to mark the age in which it was produced,” but its painter was one of the most justly-approved representatives of the modern French school, and a thorough master of his art; he was as remarkable for finish as for boldness, and I once heard it observed of his work (I suppose on this account): “*ses grands tableaux sont petits et ses petits tableaux sont grands.*”

Great as was Paul de la Roche, it must be admitted that he had the *défauts de ses qualités*; gifted with an accurate and discerning eye, he was very successful in producing *texture*, and there was no mistaking the nature of the *surfaces* he represented; but sometimes this fidelity to fact, was apt to lead him into an exaggerated degree of finish and to result in a certain prettiness which occasionally took from the grandeur of the subject. This was a fault into which Maclise often fell, and the consequence was a tea-boardy effect which marred

some of his finest conceptions: de la Roche did not carry his realism to this excess, but some of his pictures are over *soignés*, "too clean," as we should say in English.

His success in portraiture was of the same nature as that of Richmond; he gave you the mind and character rather than the features and complexion of his sitters: there was no mistaking the individual for an instant, and you had himself rather than his outward envelope: De la Roche's historical pictures are numerous; they are well known and most impressive, at once picturesque and dignified; there is, so to speak, a halo of thought round every one that I can recall at this moment, and the spectator can see that he threw his whole soul into the scenes he represented. He seems to have preferred solemn subjects, for among those furnished him by history, are several of a serious cast; indeed it was said of him that "he had painted a whole gallery of decapitated sovereigns."

His *Assassination of the Duc de Guise* in the grand old Château of Blois, is considered his *chef-d'œuvre*, and yet the *Execution of Lady Jane Grey*, and other fine works taken from English history also have their fame; e.g., the *Princes in the Tower*, *Cromwell beside the coffin of Charles I.*, and especially the *Death of Queen Elizabeth*,—a most strikingly imagined scene. I remember seeing it when first placed in the Luxembourg, during the painter's life, and regretted that the picture should have been hung so high, for the perspective was thereby greatly distorted and the effect spoiled; the attitude of the wretched Queen as she lies dying on the floor (being determined not to aid in fulfilling the well-known prediction, by remaining in her bed) appears extremely awkward as seen from *below* the level on which it was painted; the grouping is, however, extremely dramatic and the whole composition original and impressive.

A certain degree of majesty characterizes all De la Roche's work, the outcome of the high principles which regulated his life and his productions; his aim was to inspire a love

of moral beauty, and to make his profession a means of practical utility to the world ; his theory being that a more profound and lasting impression might be produced by *one* picture, than by *ten* volumes.

“*Segnius irritant animos dimissa per aures,
Quàm quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.*”

Thomas
Phillips, R.A.

There is in the possession of Lord Leconfield a curious portrait of Napoleon, painted in 1802 when he was First Consul, by Thos. Phillips, R.A., and the first portrait of him that was ever taken by a British artist.

Lord Egremont was one of Phillips's patrons, and sent him to Paris on purpose that he might paint Bonaparte's portrait. It appears to have been no easy matter to get a sitting out of this busy individual, who positively refused to listen to the proposal. Josephine's aid, however, having been invoked, she ingeniously contrived that the painter should see him,—not through a glass, darkly,—but through an orifice made in a folding-screen * which stood at the end of the table while he sat at dinner. The artist was obliged to make the best of this small opportunity, and produced a very satisfactory likeness. This is one version of the story, but there is a well-sustained tradition to the effect that the painter being unable to obtain a sitting from the First Consul, had no resource but to watch every opportunity of seeing him whenever he appeared in public, and to take such close observation of his form, features, and expression, as to be able to paint him from memory. Either way, he was heavily handicapped, and yet the likeness was pronounced excellent. It gives us a man of some thirty-five years, with a thoughtful expression and pre-occupied air, dressed in a military uniform but with bare head: his hair, represented as then abundant, hangs in long, straight meshes over his forehead, which is finely developed. This canvas shows the bust only.

* It was thus that Schalchen produced his candle-light effects.



C. C. Eastlake

A duplicate, though with some variation, was painted at the same time, also for Lord Egremont, who gave it to his friend Mr. Tredcroft (half-brother to Lady Anglesey). The first of these pictures went to Petworth, where it remained till 1890, when it was removed by Lord Leconfield to his new London residence in Chesterfield Gardens; it is not very favourably hung there: the replica was, at the death of Mr. Tredcroft, included in the sale of his pictures and property: his half-sister, desirous of possessing it, commissioned Pollard the picture-dealer of Green Street, Leicester Square, to purchase it on her behalf, but at a price not to exceed £50. He was fortunate enough to secure it for her for £10: but he subsequently sold it for her for £100. It was ultimately purchased by Mr. Henry Irving, who has hung it in the dining-room at the "Beef-Steak Club." The date, very distinctly marked on it, is 1802.

Thomas Phillips, born 1770, lived till 1845; among his many portraits of contemporary celebrities he painted more than one of his patron Lord Egremont, two of Walter Scott, and two of Byron, one of these in an Albanian costume.

Phillips was a fine painter of "heads," but his style was rather heavy than delicate, and he had not the best notion of the anatomy of the figure, nor of arranging attitudes either correctly or gracefully. He must have been a remarkably handsome man, to judge by his expressive and attractive portrait (life-size, half-length) painted by himself, and now owned by the Royal Academy.

I one day saw, when visiting Lady Eastlake, at her house in Fitzroy Square, the portrait of Napoleon taken by Sir Charles when quite a young man, in fact not more than twenty-two years of age. Happening to be at Plymouth, he heard that the subdued tyrant was caged on board the *Bellerophon*, and immediately went out in a small boat, obtaining the best view of him that such circumstances would admit, in order to make a sketch of him: that it is a truthful one there is no reason to doubt, for it represents

Eastlake's
Portrait of
Napoleon.

the real monster, and not the imaginary angel that Baron Jean Gros and other French flatterers have given to a deluded posterity. I do not know if any visitor to Chatsworth has noticed the very remarkable deficiency of chin in Canova's beautiful white marble bust of Napoleon in the gallery there.

No one would deny Napoleon's unsurpassed military genius, nor the marvellous power he acquired over others; his art in magnetizing the minds of those he could make tools of, and captivating their intelligence and their affection is well known—but even supposing his fascinations to have been disinterested, his record remains, and nothing can save Napoleon from being classed as a mean, cruel, selfish tyrant, willing to sacrifice the whole world (regardless of its including his best friends), to his own paltry ambition; and *that* is the man Eastlake has drawn. He afterwards painted a life-size portrait from his first sketch, which became the property of the Marquis of Lansdowne. In fact it sold so well that the painter was enabled with the proceeds to visit Rome in 1817 in order to pursue his artistic studies.

Portrait of
Napoleon by
Baron Jean
Gros.

Even in his best days it is impossible Napoleon can ever have resembled the idealized effigy shown in the central equestrian figure in that fine canvas of the Battle of Eylau.

It is a picture which cannot but arrest the attention and win the interest of even the most casual visitor to the Louvre gallery, and that interest is intensified when its admirers learn the early and melancholy fate of the young genius who imagined and executed along with this glorified likeness, all the touching details which marked this frightful episode of the disastrous Russian campaign.

Jean Gros has there invested his hero with attributes that irresistibly draw the hearts of those who contemplate the noble presence and winning attitude; his features, of the most marked type of purity, wear an almost divine expression of compassion and practical benevolence, and his gesture is that of the deepest sympathy with the poor

fellows lying all round him on the snow-covered ground, wounded and bleeding, and while dying, among the dead or still struggling horses, looking up to him as if they felt the sacrifice of their lives too small a compensation for the honour of serving so adored a master !

Yet this was the fellow who, after decimating the army to gratify his own unchastened vanity (regardless of the misery and destruction of the poor fellows who fondly believed in him), sneaked back to the luxuries of his palace in Paris while the disheartened remnant of his troops were left to die as they dropped off one by one, frozen and worn out, on the road : what made the fate of these confiding followers more touching, was that they still supposed him in their midst, at least bravely sharing the doom to which he had consigned them, and never suspecting he had abandoned them, helpless, to their own exhausted resources !

Of his iniquitous Jaffa exploits and countless kindred atrocities, we will not speak, though the list of his meannesses and his crimes would fill volumes, and ought to be truthfully, strongly and widely impressed on posterity : yet history and art have combined to misrepresent and exalt this selfish visionary !

I was taken one day, while young, by my mother to pay a visit to Mrs. Opie (Ann Alderson) the authoress, and wife of Opie the painter. The house was of large and imposing dimensions—one of those ancient and magnificent mansions in Lincoln's Inn Fields, now let in chambers and offices, and occupied chiefly by lawyers. Amelia Opie.

Mrs. Opie had become a convert to Quakerism, and as often is the case with converts,—unconsciously perhaps,—desirous of marking the step they have taken, she wore a rigidly Quakeress costume, and employed "Friends' language." I remember little of what passed during the visit, but on taking leave she presented me with a copy of one of her books, called *Simple Tales*, and I thought her very gentle and amiable. She appeared to me elderly

even at that time, yet she lived many years after, dying only in 1865 ; but she had then reached ninety-three.

No one could see Mrs. Opie without being impressed by her calm, quiet, self-possessed manner : but it must be admitted there was considerable inconsistency in her character. She seemed the personification of repose and unaffected dignity, yet there was an occasion on which she appears to have lost all control over herself : Beloe relates in his *Sexagenarian*, that, looking upon Horne Tooke as a "model patriot," she insisted on being present at his trial, and when he was acquitted, she clambered unheedingly over all material as well as moral obstacles, and having made her way to him, threw her arms round him and kissed him before all the public. She was young *then* !

Mrs. Opie was a musician and sang well, but she was apt to expect to be *asked* to sing whenever in society, and would then overdo matters by singing noisy *bravura* songs, which did not always please ; she also made enemies among her lady acquaintances by manifesting a disposition to take undue precedence of others on such occasions.

Mrs. Opie's reputation as an authoress was chiefly due to her production of a pathetic story called *Father and Daughter*. Though one seldom hears it spoken of now, it claimed in its day a pre-eminence over any of its contemporary novelettes, and became the subject of an opera by Paër called *Agnese*. Tamburini did justice to the character of the *Father*, which requires a great deal of acting, especially in the scenes which follow his discovery of his daughter's disgrace, and his consequent loss of reason.

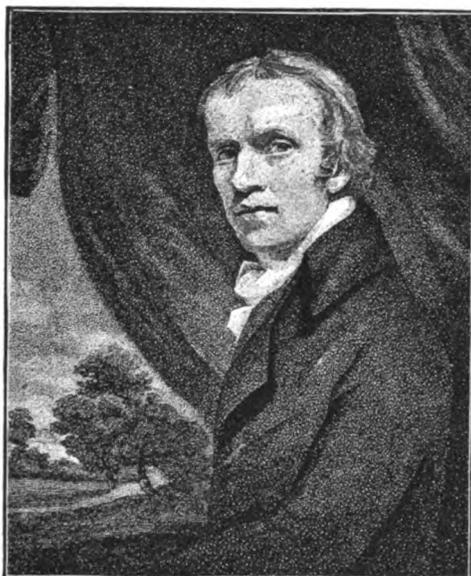
Mrs. Opie's marriage took not only her friends but her other contemporaries by surprise. Essentially ladylike, her extreme refinement of appearance and carriage, formed a singular contrast with Opie's coarseness. It is true that Opie improved visibly, under her gentle companionship, for she inspired him with a certain self-respect which led him to reform his style and his manners, but he never succeeded

in losing the traces of his "humble" origin. Opie had been previously married, and was divorced from his first wife.

His real patronymic was "Oppy," and his history, a curious one. He was of Cornish origin, and his father being poor, the boy had to work very hard. Dr. Wolcot (Peter Pindar) being in medical practice at Foy, came across Opie's father, and having frequently seen him ill-using the boy, asked him to let him have him.

John Opie,
R.A.

The Doctor had no particular use for him, and took



JOHN OPIE, R.A.

him really out of benevolence; however he contrived to make odd work for him, until one day he manifested so extraordinary a genius for portraiture, bringing home an exceedingly clever caricature of a carcass-butcher to whom he had been sent on an errand, that his master posed himself in an arm-chair and bade him take his likeness. His success was surprising, and the Doctor, struck with the lad's performances, showed them to his friends; among others, to Mr. Phillips, a man of wealth and of great taste; this gentleman at once resolved to help him on. He provided

him with all the accessories of the *atelier*, and Oppy set to work copying everything animate and inanimate that came in his way. Foy is a small place even now,—then, it was still smaller; Oppy became the talk of its inhabitants, and appears to have succeeded in winning the hearts of parrots as well as of men, by the success with which he represented one of that verdant race, the effigy being immediately recognized by all parrots to whom it was exhibited! I suppose they must have said so. John Oppy became passionately fond of his art, and soon his domestic duties were nowhere; in fact, his good master had to give him up as a servant, and allowed him to paint portraits of all comers. He got excellent practice by this means, and 7s. 6d. “a head,” into the bargain, so that when he followed his master to London he had thirty guineas of his own earning in his pocket.

The Doctor's experience of life told him there *was* something in a name, and therefore advised him to forego the Cornish pronunciation and have himself called “Opie,” and it was by his new nomenclature that he was presented to Sir Joshua, under whose advice he greatly improved, and under whose auspices he became known as “the Cornish wonder.”

He soon gained many patrons among amateurs of rank; Sir Merrik Burrell being one of those who employed and helped him on.

Though Opie managed to captivate two wives, he was by no means prepossessing in his appearance, nor did his manners help to recommend him to the more polished. His exterior was rough, and his language, accent, and mode of speech, coarse: however, after his second marriage, his wife among other means by which she hoped to civilize him, persuaded him to give a lecture on painting at the Royal Institute in Albemarle Street. He acquitted himself so well in this, that he was greatly applauded and soon began to gain confidence in himself: his subsequent lecture at the Royal Academy was an improvement on his

first attempt, raising him in the estimation of the Academicians and also of the general public. An increase of self-respect followed and contributed to somewhat soften the painter's disposition: his principles however appear to have been not much more refined than his manners, for after he had gained a respectable social position, he seems to have forgotten all he owed to Dr. Wolcot, who, whatever his character, had certainly patronized him to good purpose.

Dr. Wolcot allowed Opie to live with him at one time, and on one occasion he permitted himself to take a mean advantage of his position. The Doctor was courting a lady and incautiously introduced the painter to her; Opie, restrained by no sense of honour or gratitude, and remembering only that he was twenty years the Doctor's junior, proceeded to make love to her himself, imagining his chances of success must be the greater, and in order to doubly secure his visits to the lady from interruption by the Doctor, he used to borrow his horse when he went to see her.

Wolcot was quite shrewd enough to perceive the game of his former *protégé*, but looked on complacently, contenting himself with remarking—

“Jan had much youthful vanity even *before* he knew the great world.”

It does not appear whether of the two, who thus laid siege to the lady's heart, came off victorious. Opie, however did not behave well to the Doctor on other occasions, and finally (notwithstanding their long intimacy) they drifted apart and died without making up their differences.

Sir Martin Archer Shee's description of Opie in 1789 is worth citing here:—“He is,” says the President, “in manners and appearance as great a clown and as stupid-looking a fellow as ever I set my eyes on: nothing but incontrovertible fact would force me to think him capable of anything above the capacity of a journeyman carpenter—so little, in this case, has Nature proportioned exterior grace

to interior worth." It must be remembered however that the President was a man of particularly refined mind and gentlemanly feeling, his manners being rather those of a courtier than of an ordinary individual; Opie's vulgarity therefore could not but shock him.

G. H. Harlow. With Harlow, though he was before my time, I seem to be familiar, from having all my life had before me a beautiful family group, painted by that master. He was a man of singular character, and very unequal in his work; he first studied under Drummond, but Sir Thomas Lawrence having seen some of his pictures, took him up and generously instructed him without any remuneration.

The young man's disposition, it would appear, was not amiable, and he showed no gratitude to his benefactor. He was very conceited and dressed with foppish affectation, thereby making himself the laughing-stock of his brother artists, who nick-named him "Clarissa." His aspirations were absurd, being out of all proportion either to his position or his means, for his whole income did not suffice to pay his tailor's bills. He was fond of wine when he could get it; but being unused to the luxury, a few glasses easily overcame him, and when in his cups, he was apt to indulge in improper language.

Though he at one time produced much indifferent work, he possessed great powers as a painter, and the fine picture he has left of Mrs. Siddons as *Queen Katherine* would alone have sufficed to make his reputation. His pencil was active and his powers of observation acute; a feat he performed in Rome gives an idea of the quickness of his perception and the rapidity of his manipulation, for he produced a splendid copy of Raffaele's *Transfiguration* in eighteen days.

He painted the Duchess of St. Albans, who was one of his patronesses, and this portrait, which has merit and was highly esteemed by the family, was hung in her house in Stratton Street, where it probably still is. Harlow was on intimate terms with Tomkisson, who patronized him liberally,

and his walls exhibited many of Harlow's pictures when he was living in one of those fine old houses in Dean Street, Soho, built for a class of occupants very different from those to whom they have descended. I myself remember when Dean Street was still inhabited by one or two of the ancient proprietors who lingered on in those grand old rooms entered from lofty and spacious vestibules and staircases, as if clinging to those fast-decaying traces of former magnificence.

Harlow had a great admiration for Sir Thomas Lawrence and caught much of his inspiration from that graceful portrait-painter. He made an arrangement with Lawrence to be privileged to work in his studio, hoping to get personal instruction from this master, but Lawrence had not bargained to *teach* him: after being on good terms for some time, a dispute arose about some assistance which Harlow denied having promised in finishing a picture of Lawrence's, the truth being that Harlow did not care for the work he found assigned to him. This quarrel might have been made up had not Harlow who was of an ungovernable temper, aggravated matters by painting a signboard for a roadside inn at Epsom, on which he parodied one of Lawrence's compositions, and went so far as to initial it "T. L."

Harlow once offered himself as a candidate for the honour of R.A., but Fuseli alone voted for him.

He was in his element when he reached Italy; his work was thought far more of there than in his own country where Fuseli (or rather Fuesli) was almost the only artist who discerned his merit. Arrived in Rome, Canova took a fancy to him and insisted on introducing him to the Pope; he was elected a member of the Academy of St. Luke, an honour rarely bestowed on foreign painters and at Florence he was so well received that before he left, he was asked for his portrait to hang in the *Uffizii*, and other marks of distinction were showered on him. He could paint heads divinely, but when he attempted an original work he often proved altogether deficient in composition and grouping. It

was said that his friend and patron Tomkisson charmed with the faces in one of his pictures, bought it and cut out all the heads, which he got framed separately.

Harlow painted a group of five figures representing Charles Mathews in as many different characters: it was engraved by Greatbatch as a frontispiece to the second volume of *Memoirs of Charles Mathews* by his widow. One of his best pictures, though an ambitious one, was painted for Mr. Welch and represents the trial scene in *Henry VIII.*, Mrs. Siddons having sat to him for *Queen Katherine*; among the rest of the characters are other members of the Kemble family. This was exhibited among the Academy pictures in 1817.

Harlow contracted a throat complaint when returning from Rome and died after a few days' illness when only thirty-two, yet he left behind him an incredible number of pictures. He is buried beneath the altar of St James's Church, Piccadilly.

It is greatly to be deplored that the beautiful art of miniature painting which may be said to have flourished in perfection in the hands of its only too rare votaries, at the earlier part of the century, should almost from that time have been allowed to fall gradually away, till the invention of photography gave it an apparently decisive blow, and to judge from the present aspect of things it seems unlikely to resume its former high position as a fine art.

Nothing can be more indicative of the vitiated taste of the day and the utter want of appreciation of art than the wide-spread idea that a photograph can be a substitute for a miniature, or indeed for *any* portrait. One might as well suppose a *gourmet* satisfied with small beer when he has asked for champagne.

A photo-portrait is a photo and has all the merits as well as all the disabilities of a likeness taken by machinery,* but

* This is not exactly the place to discuss the respective merits of photography and

in the estimation of persons of cultivated taste, it never can take the place of *mind-*, *eye-*, and *hand-*work, nor can it ever be a satisfactory, or even a *real*, likeness. It may give the features of the sitter at one moment of his existence—a moment too, when he is seen under every possible disadvantage, and cannot by any stretch of imagination be regarded as his actual self. The artist's business is to give you his sitter *not* as he appears at one (nor at any) moment of time,—and with his head in a vice! (enough to make any one look vicious)—but to get into his picture a representation of what he is, under normal conditions, all his life through. Art alone can effect this, and it must also be *consummate* art. The sooner this is popularly and practically understood, the better.

I have some exquisite miniatures by Nathaniel Hone, one of them being the portrait of his son Horace Hone. Hone was a contemporary of Nollekens, but they did not get on well together, and physically they were remarkable opposites. Hone was a very fine man with a noble head, unusually tall and well made; I have often heard my father, who knew both well, speak of his free and easy, self-conscious manner, and Nollekens, being below the middle size, Hone,—somewhat ungenerously it must be admitted,—affected towards him a patronizing tone for which Nollekens did not exactly care; he would walk into his studio without any ceremony, or stop him in the street if he happened to meet him, with—"Joseph Nollekens, Esq., R.A., how may you be faring to-day?" and on most occasions he treated the little sculptor in a manner not flattering to his vanity; but their mutual antipathy was brought to a climax when Nathaniel produced a would-be

Nathaniel
Hone.

landscape-painting, but we may briefly conclude that as an *auxiliary*, photography may be made extremely useful to the landscape-painter; but only provided he be an *artist*, and provided he be not led to abuse its utility: nothing can be more inartistic, for instance, than a tree copied from a photograph, and if this help be admitted at all, it should be only in an extreme case and when it can be employed with the utmost caution and skill.

humorous, but really scurrilous, picture called *The Conjuror*, palpably directed against Sir Joshua and also Angelica Kaufmann. It brought the painter into such bad odour throughout the profession that he was obliged to deny in the most formal terms the existence of any such intention as that imputed to him in this caricature; but he was not believed, and the incident did not add to his popularity. Nollekens espoused the cause of Sir Joshua. When this picture was sent to the Royal Academy Exhibition, the committee, naturally, refused to hang it; Hone therefore adopted the course which many disappointed artists have followed, and sometimes with much greater advantage than would have been derived from the admission of their picture to the general show;—he organized a private exhibition of his own works, presenting to the public nearly seventy gems of art, for they were mostly miniatures or enamels: the room he hired for the purpose was in St. Martin's Lane, opposite Slaughter's Coffee-house, but the fact that *The Conjuror* was on show among them, did not add to the success of the enterprize.

It appears that after Hone's death, at the sale of his works of art and *atelier* "properties," which came to the hammer at Hutchins's, in King Street, Covent Garden, in March, 1785, Sir Joshua was seen gazing intently for some time on *The Conjuror*, but probably *not* with a view to its purchase.

It is to be regretted that even for a short period, Hone should have mistaken his vocation and sacrificed valuable time and energy in working at large oil-paintings with which he had little success, while among miniaturists of his time he was almost, if not altogether, unrivalled. Recognized as a skilful artist, possessing taste as well as ability, Hone executed his work with exquisite delicacy and finish, and in all his productions of this class is to be remarked a keen appreciation of those little niceties which add so great a charm to that style of painting. His enamels are very

beautiful and those who know them must deplore that they should be so few.

In my very young days there was living at Brighton on the Old Steine, a lady miniaturist of some ability, considerably patronized by George IV.: she was born a "*cul de jatte*" and having neither legs nor arms, was hard put to it to earn a living. Her name was Miss Biffin and she was the only one of her family thus deformed. She painted with a fine miniature brush which was fixed to the stump of what should have been her right arm and it was surprising to note how minute was the finish of her work. At the time I was taken to see her, she had just completed two portraits, one of George IV., the other of Mrs. Fitzherbert, at that time living in Brighton. I was no judge whether of art or of likeness at that time, but Miss Biffin was considered by connoisseurs an artist of much ability and the King's patronage brought her work into repute.

The most celebrated miniaturist of this date and whose life was a most singular one, was Cosway; his character was not attractive, at all events to his brothers of the brush, with most of whom he seems to have continually carried on little sparring-matches. He was known among them as "The Macaroni Miniaturist," and was specially satirized by Dighton. Anonymous caricatures of him were constantly appearing and were always to be found at Mat. Darby's in the Strand. One of these, which was rapidly bought up, represented him in female attire in an affected attitude and styled him "Betty Dimple"; possibly there was a grain of jealousy in the animosity shown him, as Cosway's work was very beautiful, and he has left a very distinguished name in the branch of art to which he applied himself. At the same time his manner and his vagaries were such as to bring just ridicule upon him, for he seemed to court notice at whatever cost and to defy criticism: thus he would parade the most *outrés* costumes in public places, especially those where he was likely to meet members of his profes-

Miss Biffin.

Richard
Cosway, R.A.

sion, whom he too often took occasion to treat with a haughty and supercilious air.

He is described as habitually frequenting Christie's rooms full dressed in a mulberry-coloured silk coat profusely embroidered with scarlet strawberries; on his head a powdered toupee surmounted by a three-cornered hat; a sword and bag completing this ostentatious attire. He painted his own portrait in this ridiculous costume and wrote beneath it, "*Ipse pinxit*," but he was capable of good work and his angels are models of ideal beauty.

It was when living at 4, Berkeley Street, St. James's, that Cosway first came under the notice of the Prince Regent and his Royal brothers, the Prince entrusting him with a commission to paint Mrs. Fitzherbert.* His Royal Highness used to attend Cosway's elaborate and luxurious parties at his rooms there which were tastefully decorated being also full of ancient armour and choice antique furniture of considerable value. Cosway's *atelier* was the rendezvous of fashion and there he received many distinguished sitters, among them the famous Countess of Aldborough, whom he painted full length. Mrs. Cosway was a fine musician, and gave concerts after they settled in Stratford Place, which were attended by the Prince of Wales and, among other celebrities, by Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire: on Sunday evenings the carriages were so numerous that they completely blocked the street.

But Cosway's wife was remarkable in many more ways than one. She was Maria, one of the two daughters of a Salopian, by name Hatfield, who kept an hotel near Florence, where Cosway met her; but they were married in London at St. George's, Hanover Square, for her mother was living in that

* One of the feats of Cosway's delicate brush, was the production of two exquisite companion-miniatures, executed by the Prince's desire, consisting—each of a single eye, seen mysteriously breaking through an *entourage* of clouds; one being the eye of Mrs. Fitzherbert and the other that of H.R.H. himself! One is blue, the other hazel.

neighbourhood in the house afterwards occupied by Thomas Phillips, R.A. The other daughter, Charlotte, married Coombe (Dr. Syntax), but was shortly afterwards separated from him.

Besides being a musician, Mrs. Cosway painted portraits of a certain merit, but she gave more of her time to playing and singing: she was a most eccentric person in all ways, and held singular spiritualistic beliefs: it would be too digressive to follow this strange pair through all the vicissitudes of their lives; the birth, precocity, education and (perhaps happily for herself) early death of their only child, the religious phases through which they respectively passed, and their frequent changes of domicile.

Cosway was very fond of his little daughter; when she died her mother was absent on one of her long Continental visits, and her father could not bear the thought of consigning her remains to the grave. On Mrs. Cosway's return therefore she found to her intense astonishment a fine white marble sarcophagus established in the drawing-room, and learned that it contained the remains of her little daughter. Mrs. Cosway seems to have made very short work of it, for she sent the body off to Bunhill Fields Cemetery, and got Nollekens to take the sarcophagus.

Among other curiosities in Cosway's house he kept a black servant, who wrote and published an 8vo. volume on Slavery!

After living in Berkeley Street, where they had arranged such an elaborate *intérieur*, they had occupied in Pall Mall the centre house of a block of three with a continuous façade,* originally built for the Duke of Schomberg: but their final removal had been to No. 20, Stratford Place, their tenancy of the house they first occupied there having been of brief duration; that was No. 21, standing at the

*Jarvis the painter had resided here, and as Pope had immortalized him, he showed his gratitude by painting a full-length portrait of the poet, adroitly concealing his deformity.

south-west corner and, like the opposite house, having an abutment on Oxford Street surmounted by a stone effigy of a lion. This incident gave occasion to Peter Pindar to play off a joke on Cosway, by way of resenting the arrogance with which he bore himself; consequently, on the morning after his installation, Cosway found chalked on his door the following not very flattering lines :—

“ When a man to a fair, for a show, brings a lion,
 'Tis usual a monkey, the sign-post to tie on ;
 But here the old custom reverséd is seen,
 For the lion's without and the monkey's within.”

Cosway, as may be supposed, was furious, and immediately removed to the next house—No. 20—which happened to be vacant. The corner house however is quite an historical one, having been successively occupied by a long list of celebrities.

Ashley the violinist* was among its earlier tenants, and then Nathaniel Hone, the celebrated miniaturist, whose daughter-in-law—Miss Rigg—was a great beauty: the “ Celestial Doctor ” Graham (the lecturer) followed, and is said to have exhibited here the famous—or rather in-famous—Emma Lyon. Cosway and his singular wife were the next occupants, if so short a stay can be reckoned as a tenancy.

The Polygraphic Society established itself here for a while, and after it, Bryan the picture-dealer, in whose

* Ashley and his three brothers, sons of a violinist, were all pupils of Giardini and Bartolomeo: it is to be hoped they did not all practice in the same house or the neighbours might have exclaimed with Byron—

“ We have, alas! no music of the Spheres,
 But an unhallowed sound of fiddling!”

They all took part in the Handel Commemoration in 1784, and they marked it with a curious incident, the outcome of a jealous feeling against an Italian rival. As the orchestra was tuning up, the din was suddenly increased by an outcry among the musicians; so noisy was it that His Majesty George III. sent to inquire the cause. The reply brought to the Royal box was that “some one” had nailed to his music-stool, the coat of one of the violins, and had filled his instrument with halfpence! Ashley married a lady with money and retired from the profession; he died in 1805.

employ was Wm. Brooks whose calling was touching up old pictures, and who went on living there after Bryan's death, and next came Peter Coxe, auctioneer, but also author, who wrote *The Social Day*. Payne the owner, who had been living in Mewgate then took up his abode under its roof for a short time, but gave place to Fop the bookseller, whose partner was "Honest Tom Payne."

Cosway, who has left a deservedly great reputation as a miniature-painter for the delicacy of his touch and the refinement of his taste scarcely ever surpassed, died in 1821, aged eighty-one, while taking an airing in the Uxbridge Road in Miss Udney's carriage, which she was in the habit of lending him. His wish was to be buried "either beside Rubens at Antwerp or in St. Paul's, London:" but, alas! for the vanity of human aspirations, notwithstanding this expression of his desires, he somehow found his last resting-place in St. Marylebone Church, where a tablet on the north wall bears his epitaph written by W. Coombe (Dr. Syntax) in the inflated style of the day:—

"Art weeps, Taste mourns, and Genius drops a tear
O'er him so long they loved, who slumbers here:
While colours last and Time allows to give
The all-resembling grace, his name shall live."

A considerable collection of miniatures, mostly Cosway's, was sold at Christie's in 1890; they had previously been on loan at the Burlington Club Fine-Art-Exhibition in 1888. Among the four of Byron, one was by Cosway, but it must have been taken at the time when he was living on "biscuits and soda water" and before this *régime* had restored his slim and elegant figure: it seems strange that Byron who made no secret of the annoyance his obesity occasioned him, should have given sittings to any painter, during the time he considered himself so wofully disfigured. The three others were not much more favourable to the "noble poet:" not one represented the ideal Byron

given us by Sir Thomas Lawrence which fortunately, seems to have stereotyped itself on the public mind. The earliest, taken when he was about twenty, was by Holmes and is the portrait of a sickly, affected and insignificant youth without distinction, and with little sign of intelligence; it does not seem possible that Byron could ever have resembled this, at any period of his life. I lately met with a dealer through whose hands this miniature had passed—Mr. Pollard—and from him I learnt its history. It was painted by Holmes (who was much favoured by the Byron family) for Byron's half-sister Mrs. Leigh: having, some time after, fallen into unfortunate circumstances she was obliged to part with everything by which she could raise money. Among her curios was this portrait, a MS. poem of Byron's and a lock of Ada Byron's hair which Byron had always worn, besides a brooch, also in his daily use, engraved with the letter "B." Mr. Pollard bought the lot for £20, but a client whom he was always glad to oblige, happening to come into his gallery he showed him these interesting articles and was induced to pass them to him for the absurd sum of £25.

Sir Martin
Archer Shee,
P.R.A.

The late Sir Martin Archer Shee was an old family friend. A remarkable man as well as a remarkable artist, but was especially distinguished for that which is of more value than either *esprit* or genius—though he excelled in these also—high principle, a thoroughly conscientious character, great intelligence and courteous manners.

His eldest son Mr. Martin Archer Shee, Q.C., has written an admirable life of him and his times, in two extremely well-indited and most entertaining volumes.

I remember being taken to the President's house, when young, by my mother who was paying a visit to Lady Shee. As we were coming away we were invited into Sir Martin's studio where on the dais was posing—not a royal sitter, but a lay figure draped in the royal robes, for the portrait of the Queen who for the nonce had become Sir Martin's subject.

Mr. Martin Archer Shee once told me an amusing story

of his father's *atelier* which I do not think has appeared in print. At a very early period of the President's career, being in Dublin about the year 1787 he was engaged upon the first portrait he ever painted in oils—that of the beautiful Miss Blake* of Ardfry, Co. Galway. Her sister-in-law Lady Eleanor Blake, wife of Mr. Blake of Ardfry—afterwards the first Lord Walliscourt—called late one day, on her way to a dinner-party, to inspect the progress of the picture and finding Sir Martin engaged on the work, stood beside him and was conversing with him when he was called away for a moment. Lady Eleanor while awaiting his return, after looking round the studio at the other works in hand, came back to the easel and seated herself on the painting-stool that she might get a better view of it. On Sir Martin's re-appearance, being about to resume his place, he began to look about for his palette and brushes which were nowhere to be seen, till after a diligent search in which the lady assisted him, she was found to be the delinquent! Moreover the dainty satin dress donned for the dinner-party was seriously damaged in the "back breadth" for Lady Eleanor had omitted to look whether the seat was already occupied, and the disaster was serious as there was no time to return home for a change of attire.

In his early days, Sir Martin executed portraits in pastels, but abandoned that style for a very valid reason; one of his most successful efforts having come to grief through the officiousness of a servant who, in dusting the panel, dusted off all his work!—" *Point de zèle, Monsieur, surtout, point de zèle* ; " would have been a useful caution here.

Yet if *not* meddled with how durable such pictures are; I once had one, for a long time under my care, dated 106 years ago, while that of Madame de Pompadour (life-size) seated in a *fauteuil* with her Pompadour gown and her

* This lady afterwards married *en premières noces* the Earl of Erroll and when his widow became the wife of the Right Hon. John Hookham Frere, Canning's *collaborateur* in the immortal Squibs of the Anti-Jacobin.

high red-heeled shoes, in the drawing gallery of the Louvre, is as fresh as if it had just left the easel.

Sir Martin's youngest son, William, was remarkable for keen intelligence and a high sense of humour, even at an early age: he had too, a droll way of turning his remarks which made him very popular in society: he might be said to possess the *don des mots heureux*, and of this the following offers an amusing instance. A story was told in his presence of a Mr. Green, who being one Sunday at Morning Service in a comparatively crowded church, noticed an elderly gentleman who had arrived late and was looking round in an embarrassed way for a seat. Mr. Green politely threw open the door of his pew and pointed to a vacant seat beside him which the stranger gladly accepted. The service over, they left the church together, and as they lived in the same direction they walked on in each other's company till reaching first, the strange gentleman's house, Mr. Green was invited by him in to lunch. Acquaintances made in this fortuitous way often lead to agreeable and valuable friendships, and that was the case here; indeed the friendship proved a substantially valuable one to Mr. Green who cannot be said to have been at the time in very prosperous circumstances, whereas the stranger was wealthy and heir-less—probably also hair-less—but that has nothing to do with our story. His name was Wilkinson, and when his *will* (without mention of either *kin* or *son*) was opened, it was found that he had left a considerable fortune to Mr. Green, on the light and easy condition that he should affix the name of Wilkinson to his existing patronymic, and quarter with his own, the testator's armorial bearings. Moral: Always be on the look-out while in church.

"I hope," said Mr. Shee, when the narrator came to an end, "that Mr. Green took for his motto '*Proh pudor!*'"

Chantrey's admiration for Sir Martin was profound; he understood and appreciated the uprightness of his nature

and the uniform disinterestedness of his proceedings, and often spoke in terms of warm commendation of the President's courageous expression of opinions which others did not always share, but which were always honourable to his taste, judgment, and conscientiousness.

It was owing to his high esteem for this distinguished man that he left a yearly sum to subvention a stipend which he felt was inadequate to the office of President of the Royal Academy in cases where there was no private fortune to fall back upon.

Sir Martin who was of the old-school type in courtesy and gentle breeding was as popular in society, from the Court downwards, as among the profession; and, surviving to the year 1850, became a veteran among painters; for, having been nominated Associate of the Royal Academy in 1798, and elected R.A. in 1800, he outlived the whole thirty and nine by whom he was elected.

It was on January 5, 1830, that Sir Thomas Lawrence was assisted out of the world by the lancets of the miserable Sangrados of his day, and on the 25th of the month his successor was chosen. Six were to be voted for, and of these the votes on behalf of Shee out-numbered those of all the others put together: while he had eighteen, Sir William Beechey had only six, Sir David Wilkie two, and Phillips and Calcott, but one each.

Death of
Sir Thomas
Lawrence,
P.R.A.

A congenial task devolved upon Sir Martin on the installation of the Royal Academy in their new galleries in Trafalgar Square on the 28th of April, 1837; the first R.A. exhibition took place there a year later. The King—one of whose last appearances in public this was to prove—was to arrive from Windsor at one o'clock, whereas the general company were admitted at three o'clock. The King was punctual to his time, and just before the hour struck at St. Martin's Church, the Royal *cortège* appeared in view in Pall Mall. The chimes rang out merrily and it was an inspiring moment, for cheers rose loudly and continued long

on all sides, every available space being thronged with people who waved their hats and handkerchiefs in a united welcome. His Majesty, however, seemed under the influence of a depression which was universally remarked, and was attributed to the loss of one of his numerous daughters, of whom he was very fond: the absence of the Queen, who was too unwell to take the journey, also contributed to damp the joyousness of the ceremonial. The band, however, stationed in front of the building behind the guard of honour, struck up "*God save the King*," ceasing to play only when the King was inside the building. The Royal party was large, His Majesty being accompanied by two of his brothers and several others of the Royal family. The *cortège* consisted of seven or eight carriages containing the suites, and the scarlet liveries heightened the effect. The President received His Majesty under the portico, and on his presenting him with the keys on a silver salver, recognized Sir Martin whom he held in great esteem, and in a friendly tone repeated the usual formula to the effect that "they could not be in better hands."

It was fortunate that etiquette did not require the King to unlock the doors, as it was afterwards found that these fine ornamental instruments did not fit the locks! Sir Martin ushered the King through all the rooms, carrying a description specially printed and bound for the Royal use, Lord Albemarle walking on the other side with a duplicate copy so as to be ready to satisfy His Majesty when he made any inquiry as to the plans and arrangements, &c. The King, though he did not seem able to recover his spirits, was apparently interested in all he saw, and gave more time to some of the rooms than to others; but, probably for reasons of Royal etiquette, forbore to express himself in words as to the merits of the building.

At a quarter to three the King gave the signal for departure: the suite and the Princes and Princesses leaving first, and the King's carriage drawing up last of all, the King and the Princess Augusta entered it together. As His

Majesty came out into the portico a stunning cheer went round, which he acknowledged by uncovering his head and bowing.

It was when the rooms were crowded with those who had been admitted with special tickets that the Princess Victoria—so soon to be Queen—appeared with her mother: she was immediately recognized, and spoke to all those she knew, who were able to approach her; necessarily among the company were many celebrities, social and professional, and of the latter she singled out several by name and desired the President to present them to her.

Before the Exhibition of that year closed, the Princess was Queen, and Her Majesty went quite privately to see the pictures before they were removed. It was remarked that on this occasion, one of the first on which she appeared as Queen, she was most simple and even child-like in her ways, often turning to her mother with a remark and addressing her as “Mamma.” On this occasion also she desired Sir Martin to present to her all the painters who were present and, young as she was, ingeniously as well as graciously found something pleasant and appropriate to say to each, while to the President himself Her Majesty paid many amiable compliments as he accompanied her through the gallery.

Besides his gifts as an art-student and painter, Sir Martin had great literary ability and taste, handsomely recognized by Byron, who highly compliments the painter’s poetical genius, together with his success in art, in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

Alluding to the President’s *Rhymes on Art*, the noble poet writes:—

“And here let Shee and Genius find a place,
Whose pen and pencil yield an equal grace:
To guide whose hand the sister arts combine,
And trace the poet’s in the painter’s line;
Whose magic touch can bid the canvas glow,
Or pour the easy rhyme’s harmonious flow,
While honors, doubly merited, attend
The poet’s rival and the painter’s friend.”

Lady Archer
Shee.

Lady Archer Shee enjoyed in society a popularity which surprised no one who knew her amiable disposition and had experienced the charm of her conversation. She possessed the invaluable advantage of an accurate and retentive memory, and thus continued to enjoy the benefit of her extensive reading and to make others enjoy it, to the end of her life.

George
Romney, R.A.

Sir Martin's house—32, Cavendish Square—had a curious history; it was built in great part by Mr. F. Cotes, R.A., who, having collected in Holland a number of valuable pictures, and also having executed a number of those crayon portraits for which he attained great celebrity, wanted a gallery to hang them advantageously. On the first floor were seven handsome, lofty saloons besides the gallery; and the front staircase branched off so as to give two separate accesses to this fine suite of rooms. Cotes died in 1770 and the lease of his house was sold to Romney who occupied it till 1798 when it passed to Sir Martin, who remained there during his professional life.

Lady William
Gordon.

Sir Joshua, it would seem, despite his pre-eminence as a painter and promoter of art, had a mean side to his character, for at the time when Romney was acquiring fame by his wonderfully fine portraits, Sir Joshua used contemptuously to designate that admired painter as "The man in Cavendish Square." How could Sir Joshua, *honestly*, ignore his merits?

One day when a child, I accompanied my father in a morning call he was paying to Lady William Gordon,* then living at the Ranger's lodge (Green Park), which, as widow of the Deputy-Ranger, she retained the right to occupy for life. It was surrounded by a garden, and Wheatly states this was laid out very ornamentally in Lord William's life-time. In the grounds was a curious summer-

* Frances, daughter of Charles Viscount Irvine in the Scotch peerage; married 1781 to Lord William Gordon, Deputy-Ranger of St. James's Park from 1788: he died 1828, leaving an only daughter, Frances Isabella, who died unmarried.

house called "The Hermitage." All that is gone now! not a vestige remains of the dwelling and its tasteful appurtenances any more than of its occupants! when Lady William died, the house was pulled down and the grounds were thrown into the Green Park.

To return to our visit; when my father rose to take leave, the old lady on whose trembling hands glittered several diamond rings, spoke kindly to me, commended the propriety of my behaviour and asked me if I should like to see her little daughter: at the same time, leading us up to an alcove at the extremity of the room, she drew aside a crimson velvet curtain and displayed not as I expected, another child, but a picture representing five beautiful life-size cherubs' heads surrounded by clouds. "That picture," she said, "is all that is left me of my child, now with the angels, as she is represented there. Sir Joshua has given me these five views of the beautiful face and he remarked how very rare it was to find a head every view of which was equally perfect."

The venerable lady's voice faltered as she spoke, and the tears were in her eyes: I have never forgotten that touching little scene. When Lady William died, she bequeathed this picture to the National Gallery where it has long been one of the most interesting "Sir Joshuas" in our collection, and I never see it without recalling this, my first and far-off acquaintance with it.

The Angerstein Collection, which I remember being frequently taken to see (though at that time without much appreciation on my part) while still distributed over the rooms and staircase of that eminent connoisseur's residence in Pall Mall, consisted of eight and thirty valuable pictures which were purchased for the nation at the paltry price, according to some of £51,000, according to others of only £34,000, to form the nucleus of our now fine National Gallery. The public opening of the building which now contains them, took place (*vid.* p. 497) in April, 1838, and among those who

The
Angerstein
Collection.

criticised the elevation of Wilkins's Gallery was Richard Monckton Milnes, who remarked "It would make a capital warehouse for foreign corn."

Angerstein's house, for some years the dwelling-place of these masterpieces, stood somewhere about the spot now occupied by the *Travellers'* and *Reform Clubs*; the sill of the door, for there was no step, was flush with the pavement of the street, and the house, whether within or without, impressed one as antiquated and dingy, and if grand, was also gloomy,—a dark receptacle wholly unworthy of the priceless art-treasures which had gradually accumulated there, and where not one of the pictures could be seen, much less studied, to any advantage.

I see before me now the somewhat low but solemn entrance-hall, paved with squares of black and white marble; the Farnese Hercules, of dimensions wholly disproportionate to its surroundings, stood at right angles to the entrance, while valuable canvases lamentably discoloured by time and neglect, covered the walls: on the right, was *The Death of the Earl of Chatham* in the House of Lords, wearing his scarlet robes and surrounded by other peers similarly habited; opposite, was the *Angelica Kaufmann*; and between them, *Benjamin West's* large picture of the miraculous cure of the paralytic.

Round the dining-room, just above the dado, were hung the *Hogarth* series; but, of all the collection, the most conspicuous and the most valuable was the *Raising of Lazarus*, which, as well as *Raffaele's St. John* and many others, was on the first floor.

Pall Mall was an important street from its commanding and also aristocratic situation, but it consisted of many old houses at the same time shabby and grand, of which Angerstein's was one, all long since pulled down to make room for the clubs, though they must originally have been handsome and imposing, for I remember the plan of the staircase at Mr. Angerstein's, which had a noble effect,

and the decorations were such as (having done our best to destroy a little while ago), we are now doing our best to resuscitate.

I cannot call to mind a fashionable shop which I have been told must have stood close to Mr. Angerstein's house. It was regarded as the "Snelgrove's" of that day, though on a very much smaller scale; for the "Company" system of shop-keeping was then unknown. It was kept by a Catholic, a man of good family but small means, by name Barrett, and went by the sign of "*The Golden Ball*," or as I have been told by some, "The Two Golden Balls"—no one has gone so far as to assert there were "*three*." But this was not the only "Golden Ball" of that time, for this name became the *sobriquet* of a wealthy and eccentric bachelor whose real name was Ball Hughes, but who coming to London in 1822, acquired and deserved this kind of notoriety from the ridiculous caprices by which he loved to call attention to himself. His person was commanding, his face handsome, and his demeanour that of a gentleman, till by a too flunkeyish imitation of the "dandies," to whose school he attached himself, he unconsciously made himself an exaggerated copy of their type.

Notwithstanding this, for a time, he might have had his pick of half the eligible young ladies of his set; but he was so spoiled that he gave himself unseemly airs, and when the charm of youth had left him he found it difficult, if not impossible, to get mated according to his own ideas of his value. At last, disgusted with being refused first by one *mondaine* and then by another, he offered his attentions to women of another class, and began to pay his court to the celebrated Spanish *bailarina* Señora Mercandotte.

She appears to have been singularly beautiful and bewitchingly graceful, and it became the fashion among London beaux to lay their homage at the lovely feet which twinkled before them with such charming agility. A certain Lord Fife was so constantly the foremost of her

admirers that it was probably due to the fear of being outrivalled by him that the "Golden Ball" resolved on extreme measures in order to secure the *danseuse* to himself.

One night when the Opera-house was crowded with the dancing lady's devotees—for they cared little for the Opera so that they could obtain an unintercepted view of the ballet—(on this occasion Auber's *Alfred* in which the Señora was to exhibit her graces) the performance took a sudden and unexpected turn and closed very abruptly. All had gone well till the eagerly-anticipated moment for the *pas seul*; but who shall describe the consternation—general and particular—when after long and dire hesitation, Mr. Ebers was forced to appear and to announce that the heroine of the evening, with her charms and her castanets, was not to be found! It was then ascertained that an "elopement" had taken place, and that the "Golden Ball," in a handsome carriage and pair, had rolled away with her. Why an elopement (when there was nothing to prevent Ball Hughes from marrying any one he pleased—even a *danseuse* if such were his taste—in the regular way) no one could understand; but he had his own mode of doing whatever he did, and liked to make himself remarkable. He underwent after this, rises and falls in the matter of fortune, and after buying estates which Royal Dukes could not afford to keep, he had to make acquaintance with all the mortifications and miseries which poverty brings in her train. Gambling, in which vice he freely indulged, had reduced him to extremities, but he recouped himself handsomely in the unsuspected value of his Oatlands property. He had bought it as a freak of extravagance, but fortunately for him, it proved a splendid investment, and the ground-leases he granted for building-plots when the neighbourhood became popular, brought him in a princely income. His good fortune, however, did not contribute to his longevity, for he died at a by no means advanced age: but we are rattling away from our ateliers.

A friend of mine possesses a remarkably fine portrait of J. M. Turner painted by himself and the most critical connoisseur would admit its authenticity; but it has been seen and countersigned by Ruskin, whose admiration it has largely won. It is, moreover, an interesting memento of a romantic incident; alas! the only one in that solitary life which ultimately became so cheerless. It appears that J. M. Turner when young—for even *he* was young, once!—formed an attachment for a very pretty and attractive young lady, and they pledged to each other their troth in spite of the prohibitory interference of the “stern parients,” who prudently considered that the circumstances of the two young folks—equally needy—did not admit of their contemplating marriage: but Turner had confidence in his genius or his star, or both; and persisting in his suit, went to Rome to advance his profession, making a compact with his *fiancée* that they would maintain a close correspondence: moreover by way of a parting gift he painted his own portrait—(giving himself the most beautiful deep blue eyes imaginable)—and left it with the lady, lest she should forget him in his absence.

J. M. Turner,
R.A.

Time went on, and mails travelled backwards and forwards between Italy and England, as mails will travel, regardless of what news they carry, or fail to carry; but in vain the separated lovers waited, and in vain they wrote, not a word of communication reached either! Both were first surprised, then heartstricken, and finally mutually indignant at each other's faithlessness; the lady, mortified at the supposed *spretæ injuria formæ*, behaved as ladies often have behaved before under similar provocation: guilelessly unsuspecting of fraud, she gave too ready heed to her parents when, working upon her wounded pride they urged her to favour the suit of another and wealthier lover: she yielded to their persuasions, and in due course married the man they presented to her.

Turner came back to England, found his early love lost to him for ever, but did not console himself in a mode

similar to that she had followed : the history of his single, as well as singular and mysterious life is pretty well known. Though always amiable and naturally humorous, he acquired a touch of misanthropy ; he became close and niggardly in his ways, allowing himself little or no change of air or scene but what was to be got by oscillating between his residence in Queen Anne Street and the obscure and comfortless lodging where even his landlady never knew his name till after his death : but he consoled himself with his love of, and proficiency in, art, and though he made many fast and admiring friends, he indulged a tendency to live in a world of his own and did not care to take even his best friends into his confidence.

The portrait which my friend owns, besides the intrinsic merit of the picture, claims an additional value from the story attached to it, and also from the fact that Turner rarely painted portraits : he has, it is true, left other portraits of himself, and that, now in the National Gallery, is very inferior to the one he painted for his lady-love : another effigy of him which I have seen in a shabby and hideous old hat by Sir Wm. Allan, P.R.S.A., represents him as a most unattractive individual.

As for those unique and wildly beautiful combinations of colour to which he gave any name that came into his head (for the subjects are open to a free choice of nomenclature) it is hardly possible sufficiently to regret the painter's inexplicable indifference to the quality and durability of his pigments, some—not to say most—of those he used in pictures of his second manner having irretrievably disappeared. Yet how wonderful were those very canvases when first exhibited, and what a marvellous imagination they betoken ! richness and variety of colour, and harmony of combination which take the spectator by surprise and literally fascinate him : and yet these tints were obviously taken from the fancy and not from nature ; we should wonder how it is they escape tawdriness and vulgarity were it not that we know what a

consummate artist was this eccentric painter. Turner's subjects were often mere pegs on which to hang his idiosyncratic effects of colour, and some of his most admired pictures were painted from recollection. He would be struck by a fine view at sea or on land, a fine sunset, or even a view of wet streets, and the representation he meant to make was already in his mind; all the groundwork he needed to give it consistency was the merest sketch made, at some time or other, in a few seconds, if not on his thumbnail or his shirt-cuff, on the back of a letter or the inside of an envelope.

In the private correspondence of a young Englishman who met Turner and travelled with him for some days in Italy without the least idea as to his identity, occurs a curious and genuine as well as amusing account of this remarkable painter. He is there described as "a droll but good-tempered little old gentleman," whom the writer "was delighted to have for a fellow-traveller;" "he can," says this tourist, "speak but a few words of Italian and French, and these he muddles together in a most impartial way, but he is so good-tempered that he gets on as well as if he spoke both languages fluently. He talks as if he were an artist or near of kin to one, and you would love him if you watched his indefatigable determination to sketch everything, popping his head first out of one window and then out of the other, and D—ing the conductor as without taste or feeling, because he would not stop to let him sketch the sunrise at Macerata. Perhaps," he concludes with amusing *naïveté*, "you may know something of him, the name on his trunk is, I see, J. M. Turner." (!)

Chantrey was an ardent admirer of Turner, and did justice to his great and singular genius, indeed each thoroughly appreciated the other, but Chantrey's native fun had such a hold on him that he could never resist a joke when a peculiarity in his friend's work offered an occasion for one. Fortunately Chantrey's jokes were characterised by good-

nature, and they were always made in the presence, never in the absence, of the subject of them.

One cold day while the pictures were being hung for the Academy Exhibition, Chantrey, simulating a shiver, approached one of Turner's glowing pictures; presenting to it the palms of his hands and addressing the painter, he said: "I declare, Turner, this is the only comfortable corner in the room."

On another occasion, Turner having shown him a richly-coloured canvas he had just completed, he asked him whether that was the picture he heard he was painting as a sign for the Sun Fire Office.

A similar joke was passed on a sunset marine picture of Turner's which hung opposite to a *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego* by Jones, in an Academy Exhibition. It was varnishing day, Leslie came in to look for Turner, and Sydney Cooper being asked where he was, replied: "He was here just now, but is probably gone for the engines."

"Engines!" said Leslie.

"Yes," was the reply; "don't you see that a coal has popped out of Jones's furnace and has set Turner's sea on fire?"

That Turner's pictures often had a "killing" effect on those in their immediate neighbourhood there are many anecdotes to show, and indeed this may be naturally inferred. Leslie says, with reference to this form of subjectivity: "I remember Benjamin West once remarking to me how very different at different times and under different circumstances, the same picture may appear to us, and how powerfully we are often influenced in the impression we receive from one picture, according to the effect produced on us by another in its immediate neighbourhood."

While Turner was at Petworth painting landscapes for his patron Lord Egremont, he was in the habit of locking himself into his *atelier*, and allowing no one to see his work but Lord Egremont himself, who would come in from time

to time, to have a chat with him and to judge how he was getting on: Turner knew his footstep well, and he also knew the signal he employed of three measured taps. Chantrey was more than once a visitor at Lord Egremont's simultaneously with Turner, and on one occasion being curious to know what it was on which Turner was engaged, he imitated Lord Egremont's step and so successfully copied the triple knock, that Turner, completely taken in, came to the door with his palette on his thumb, and Chantrey slid in before he recovered from his amazement: Turner was so much amused at the little artifice, that the two enjoyed a hearty laugh over it.

At the time when that miserable *lusus naturæ* Tom Thumb was being Barnumed at the Egyptian Hall, poor Haydon the historical painter was exhibiting under the same roof some of his best pictures: his life had been a series of ups and downs—the “ups” a very little way up, and the “downs,” a great depth down. It was one of the “downs” with him at this time, and it was a “down” that threatened to become “deeper and deeper, still.” Haydon was of a gloomy temperament and always prone to look on the seamy side of life; it was in one of his fits of discouragement that he wrote to a friend describing how all his work was profitlessly scattered about, while it was with difficulty he could manage to pay his way, and a great part of his life was divided between the inside and the outside of the Fleet. “All my most admired canvases,” he said, “are stowed away out of sight; my *Judgment of Solomon* is rolled up in the Borough; my *Entry into Jerusalem* is doubled up in a garret in Holland; my *Lazarus* buried at an upholsterer's in Mount Street; my *Crucifixion* aloft, in a loft in Lisson Grove.”

In his extremity he made an appeal to the public and a subscription was raised for him: it barely sufficed to pay his debts! He had recourse to every expedient; he painted *genre* pictures; he gave lectures on Art; but he profoundly

B. R. Haydon.

felt the blow when he found himself excluded from among the competitors for the decoration of the Houses of Parliament, although it was he who had originally suggested and subsequently advocated these mural adornments.

Haydon was one of those beings we cannot help, in spite of ourselves, terming an "unlucky fellow"; genius he had, and—up to a certain, or rather an un-certain, point—energy; but he lacked perseverance, and he lacked self-restraint, prudence, foresight—ballast. He never acquired a knowledge of the value of money, and had a Hibernian habit of spending it as soon as he got it whether earned or, alas! borrowed: in fact it was virtually useless to assist him; a few hours after he had been supplied he was back in the same straits again, so that he really discouraged the kindness of his friends and patrons. The climax to his growing difficulties seems to have been the failure of a scheme which he had started as a last resort by hiring a room in the Egyptian Hall at a price he could ill afford, for the purpose of exhibiting there his two large pictures *Aristides* and *Nero*: few were those who visited them and in a short time he had lost £110.

It was said that he took up a position whence he could hear the carriages drive up, and when their occupants alighted and entered the Hall it was with a beating heart and failing courage that he found nearly every one of them turned their steps the "wrong way": thus while *Tom Thumb's* admirers could be counted by hundreds, his could scarcely be numbered by units, often not even that. One cannot be surprised that daily increasing anxiety and dejection were the results of this protracted disappointment. The end was lamentable, whether for himself or his family.*

Tom Thumb.

Meantime his contemptible little rival in public favour, visited by great and small, saw the public flock to his levées, and he was even carried to Court to be there favoured

* Haydon was born in 1780 and died in 1846 at his residence in Brunswick Place.

with special Royal notice. At Windsor, the dwarf had a conversation with Her Majesty, the detail of which he repeated daily with his squeaky little cracked voice for the edification of the Sovereign's liege subjects. Being asked "who gave him his name," he did not keep silence like the child who refused to reply "lest he should be made to go on with the rest of it,"—but boldly answered that "the honour of naming him was shared between Mr. Barnum and the Queen of England."—Godfather and Godmother?—He proceeded to explain that at the time he went to Buckingham Palace, in 1844, he was "plain Tom Thumb"—"plain" he *always* was: but on his "presentation" to Her Majesty, she remarked: "'I think you ought to have a title, General Tom Thumb,' and of course I am now a General," the little imp used to add in relating the incident; and he took the joke *au grand sérieux*. The Duke of Wellington and others of the nobility were present and were ear-witnesses to the Royal promotion of which the little abortion so ingeniously made capital.

Haydon's style was powerful and masterly; but he wanted judgment in his artistic as well as in his moral character; his independence of spirit was observable in both; he had genius enough to despise any kind of servile imitation of style, and pluck enough to strike out a line of his own, but he was too vain of what gifts he had, to make friends or obtain admirers.* One of his pictures the *Raising of Lazarus* was, however, bought for the National Gallery.

One of Haydon's pictures which I remember seeing

* Haydon has left an amusingly written volume of Table-talk, by no means uninteresting as a record of contemporary events. Among incidents relating to Scott, he remarks upon that writer's asseverations as to not being the author of *Waverley*, and states that he asked Sir J. Hobhouse what he thought of Scott's denial to the Prince Regent, "upon his honour." Sir John answered that the Prince had no right to allude to the subject, but he could not approve of the form of Scott's reply. He added that he himself had heard Scott assure Byron—and that, without being asked—that he was *not* the author.

Of Sir T. N. Talfourd, Haydon said, "Talfourd is the noblest creature I ever knew, take him as father, husband, brother, son, friend, or enemy."

exhibited at the Royal Academy was *Curtius leaping into the gulf*; while standing near it, I heard a mamma telling her young daughter to look at “*Quintus Curtius urging his horse to the fatal leap.*”

“Oh! mamma,” replied the unsophisticated child, quite indifferent to the inaccuracy of the name, and even to the fate of the man—“how cruel to make the horse go in too!”

Poor Haydon’s failure in his artistic speculations was greatly due to his ignorance of human nature. Jenny Lind was far more sagacious; probably if Haydon had entered into a contract with Barnum, he would have proved as great a success as the Swedish nightingale and as great a hero as “General Tom Thumb!”

George
Cruikshank.

Haydon was not the only artist who felt aggrieved by the absurdly-lavish favour shown to Tom Thumb; and one of George Cruikshank’s cleverest caricatures was one in which, by means of two contrasted pictures, respectively entitled *Born a Genius* and *Born a Dwarf*, he shows himself as a starving painter in a miserable garret with all the evidences of poverty about him, while the hideous little dwarf is lolling idly on a sofa buried in all the accessories of wealth and luxury. However, Fate cannot be said to have been altogether hard on “Teetotal George”; he enjoyed the friendship as well as the admiring appreciation of Society, and among the pall-bearers who followed his remains to the grave were men who had themselves earned much distinction. Lord Houghton was one, and as well as I can remember, the others were General Macmurdo, Charles Landseer, George Ellis, George Sala, and S. C. Hall of course—for the two fully shared each other’s enthusiasm in the matter of abstinence from smoke and drink.

Though the British lion in Cruikshank’s nature was roused by what he felt to be a stupid injustice on the part of the public, he was really of a mild temperament, and his light spirits generally rose above his temporary depressions. Disappointments he certainly had, for he was always ex-

travagantly sanguine in his hopes and aspirations; yet, frequently as these were repeated, they seemed powerless to destroy his almost child-like belief in himself, and to the end he maintained an indomitable confidence in his capacity for carrying to a prosperous issue whatever he conceived.

The most terrible of all the blows that fell upon him—for it was proportioned to the exaggerated expectations he entertained of his success—was the cold indifference with which his *Worship of Bacchus* was met by the public. This really ingenious, if not very artistic, composition which was not only to bring its author fame and fortune, encomiums and honours, but was to thoroughly and permanently reform the world, proved, alas! an utter failure!

If poor old "George" had flung cold water in the teeth of wine- and beer-bibbers, including the temperate and uncontrolled, the sober man and the sot, in one common anathema, he certainly received it back with interest, for never surely was any attempt at reform more effectually damped, and he felt it severely.

Cruikshank was a universal favourite wherever he was known; accordingly his friends and acquaintances rallied round him, applauded his idea, lauded his work, and the most influential (among these, Thackeray and Sala) determined that the world should see and appreciate its merits; they called attention to his wonderful picture in *The Times* and the first-class periodicals, but to no purpose; in vain they piped, the public would not dance: the subject was not popular, and although the posting-bills and advertisements describing the curious and elaborate groups in this crowded canvas were drawn up in the most tempting language, they had no attraction for the general mind, and day by day saw—concealed from the gaze of his fellow-men—the discouraged inventor vainly waiting for the spectators who somehow forgot to look in! The Queen and Prince Consort graciously sent for the picture, which was accordingly taken to Windsor, but even the Royal favour did nothing for it, and during the

whole time it was exhibited, scarcely a dozen shillings were taken at the doors !

Gradually, nevertheless—wonderful as it may seem, considering that in addition to the mortification, the loss was ruinous—George Cruikshank recovered those buoyant spirits which must be regarded as some compensation for his repeated ill-fortune. His professional friends however considered that he could not get on without a more substantial and practical consolation, so they got up a Benefit-performance for him at the Haymarket which happily proved remunerative and enabled him to get on. He was generously assisted in other ways, as I have already mentioned * in mentioning my personal introduction to this singular genius.

A characteristic trait, however, must not be omitted : when George was told of the form in which his generous friends proposed to do him honour and service, the irrepressible old man seriously expressed his wish to take the character of *Macbeth* himself, “ that he might show the profession how the dagger-scene *ought* to be declaimed.”

John
Constable,
R.A.

I knew the sisters of John Constable, R.A., but only after the close of their brother's life, which, like the lives of all self-made men, was full of interest ; he rose to eminence through many struggles and by much perseverance, from a very humble origin. His father not only was a miller himself but, having a great wish that his son should follow the same calling, did his best to crush out his aspirations for an artistic career. “ Genius ” however “ does what it *must*,” and although Constable was made to grind at the mill for a twelvemonth, he contrived during that time, to study nature and also to apply art to his studies, having no better co-operator than a painter and glazier in his village, who happened to have a mind above his class. Finally Constable contrived to get to London, where his merits were after some time, only partially recognized ; but he was ultimately

* Vol. I. p. 224.

admitted A.R.A. From 1814 to 1819 he advanced steadily but slowly in public favour and a very remarkable picture exhibited in the latter year—*View on the Stour*—established his reputation. It was not however till after the painter's death that the full value of his pictures was recognized and by an irony of Fate the prices he himself realized by them, bore no kind of proportion to those they fetched after his death.

Constable seems, like so many other geniuses, to have been always more or less the victim of circumstances; though elected R.A. the honour was conferred so tardily, that, however ardently he had longed for it, he received it with utter indifference; it was after the death of his wife to whom he was tenderly attached, and the only remark he made, was: "The distinction has been bestowed so late that I have ceased to value it; once, it would have caused me intense pleasure, but now I can no longer impart it."

Simrock says, with melancholy truthfulness, "Le plus amer des malheurs, c'est le bonheur qui arrive trop tard."

However, as it takes a dead R.A. to make a live one, the blame could scarcely fall on any but the man who did not die soon enough.

Constable adopted certain mannerisms and at one time laid on his colours so thickly as to incur the good-natured criticism of his brother-painters. It must be supposed that he became sensible of his mistake for he at last allowed that he was "cutting his own throat with his palette-knife."

Among amateur artists of our time probably none ever approached so near professional perfection, as my late friend

Madame
Bodichon.

Madame Bodichon. A French critic made the flattering remark that she ought to be called the Rosa Bonheur of landscape painting: however she may unexaggeratedly be said to have left her mark, nay, more properly speaking, many marks on the age. She was grandly simple in all she did, still her light could not be hidden: the active part she took in the question of the

social position of women was well known at the time, and ought to be widely remembered; one phase of the projected reform occupied public attention more or less actively from 1854 to 1870 when the law which gave to married women the possession and control of their own earnings, was finally passed. Madame Bodichon's wealth and influence were always liberally bestowed in the support of any measure she thought desirable for the public welfare; but it was in bettering the condition of women that she most earnestly exerted herself, and among other practical means to that end, she organized and personally assisted in establishing the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women started by Miss Jessie Boucherett in 1859. In the formation of Girton College Madame Bodichon again came liberally forward with £1,000, besides giving her yet more valuable personal influence, and at her death she bequeathed £10,000 to the College. Her marriage with Dr. Bodichon took her often to Algeria where she occasionally resided, but the many interests she cherished in England kept her for long intervals both at Blandford Square and Robertsbridge. It was at the latter place she died, very widely lamented, after having been withdrawn by paralysis for fourteen years from her philanthropic labours. Madame Bodichon was the daughter and grand-daughter, respectively, of two William Smiths successively Members for Norwich.

Sir Henry
Raeburn, R.A.

During many years I have intimately known the family of that admired portrait painter, styled by some the *Scotch Velasquez*, by others, the *Scotch Vandyk*—Sir Henry Raeburn. A very exhaustive and interesting biographical sketch of this distinguished artist was published a few years ago by his youngest grandson, W. Raeburn Andrew, younger son of Sir William Andrew, C.I.E. Sir William himself was a man of mark, well known for his works on India, and (among other public enterprizes in which he interested himself) for his

persevering efforts in the promotion of the Euphrates Valley Railway-route to India—a most valuable and important national proposition. Sir William married a very charming woman, Sir Henry Raeburn's eldest surviving daughter, Ann, and always had the greatest admiration for his father-in-law's genius and ability. Among his interesting collection of pictures, Sir William owned several valuable Raeburns—more valuable to him, as being family portraits. Of these were the portrait of Raeburn by himself, a half-length



SIR HENRY RAEBURN, R.A.

figure, of which the P.R.S.A. said: "No better portrait exists;" a full length of Lady Raeburn, seated; their eldest son, a youth wearing a crimson coat, mounted on a white horse: a picture immensely admired by all connoisseurs; these were shown at the Raeburn exhibition in Edinburgh in 1876, with the painter's incredibly numerous other works. Sir William paid a very high price for the portrait of Lady Raeburn, although the auctioneer remarked on learning who the bidder was that had he been aware at the time, of

that gentleman's relationship to the subject and the painter, he would have managed matters more adroitly.

The history of Raeburn's marriage is quite a romance, and the first portrait he painted of his subsequent wife, was the occasion of it. His first meeting with this lady was in a forest whither he had gone to make some studies of fine trees he had observed there; this introduction would probably, however, not have led to any further acquaintance, had not the lady presented herself some little time after, at his *atelier* proposing to have her portrait taken. During the sittings, the painter discovered that in addition to a personal appearance greatly in her favour, she was refined, intelligent, and amiable; the charming subject of his picture inspired him with unwonted energy, and he made a very fine portrait of her: the lady was the widow of a French Count by name Leslie, and daughter of the Laird of Bridgelands. She, on her side, was so pleased with the manners and conversation of the painter that she shortly after gave him her hand, and enriched him with her large fortune. As was afterwards the case with Chantrey this improvement in his financial position, was of great service to Sir Henry in his profession, although he was even then earning a handsome income. An accidental introduction to Sir Joshua previous to his marriage had led to Raeburn's visiting Rome; that great master's advice was accompanied by a generous offer to tide him over the unlooked-for cost of the expedition, by supplying the means; this offer Raeburn gratefully declined, though he gladly accepted letters of introduction from him to all the noted men of art and science residing there. Two years of diligent study—during which he was most beneficially aided by the kind advice of Gavin Hamilton, who had been established some time in Rome, and took a kind and practical interest in young painters—brought about a great improvement in young Raeburn's style, and he took quite a new departure in his work, though David Martin, who began to

discover in him a formidable rival, said of him, as Hudson had said of Sir Joshua himself, "*The lad in George Street* painted better *before* he went to Rome."

Though Raeburn had entered the profession as a miniaturist and had applied himself for some time to that branch of art, after he had taken to life-size oil-pictures he acquired a breadth of style which at once struck the connoisseur as being its most remarkable characteristic. In spite of Martin's protestations, the public maintained their opinion as to the extraordinary improvement manifested in the "breathing heads and bold attitudes" of his figures.

Cunningham in his *Lives of British Painters* speaks of the "astonishment" which filled him when he found his way into Raeburn's *atelier*. "I had never before seen," he says, "works of art, or rather of genius, and had no conception of the spirit and mind which colours could embody."

Cunningham likewise speaks of his habits, which were "as regular as those of the clock." He rose at seven, breakfasted with his wife and children at eight, and at nine was ready for his first sitter. He received three or four of these every day, and never gave more than two hours to each, unless they happened to be particularly agreeable, when he almost insensibly prolonged the time till a new sitter arrived, and he had no choice but to close the interview.

He delighted in painting heads and hands, and always copied the latter as carefully as the former, considering them equally indicative of character. He made a great point of discovering as far as possible, the mind and disposition of his sitter, and generally succeeded in expressing it, though, for a head, he never gave more than five sittings. He never sketched in a head with a chalk outline, but started at once with the brush, touching in, as the earliest points, the forehead, chin, nose, and mouth. So steady was his hand that he never employed a mahlstick, and always painted standing, and such was the accuracy of his eye and the firmness of his nerve, that he

could introduce the most delicate touches by his own unaided dexterity ; at 5 o'clock he generally left his *atelier*. It has been regretted that Raeburn kept no accounts, for although he painted so large a number of portraits, the names of all his sitters cannot be traced.

It is rare to find a man of more calm temperament and cheerful disposition, and he was never known to have a dispute with any one, within or without his profession.

There were many peculiarities in Raeburn's professional practices ; some of these corresponding very much with habits adopted by Oules ; but whether they were suggested to the latter by Raeburn's mode of proceeding, or were original in both, who can say. "Raeburn," writes one of his sitters, "painted standing, and it was his wont on receiving a sitter, after saying a few pleasant words, to place him in a chair on the daïs at one end of the room, after setting up his easel beside him with the canvas on it. He would then take up his palette and brush, retreat, step by step, with his eye fixed on the face he was about to paint, till he reached the other end of the room. Then he would study the face for another minute, and finally, coming up to the canvas, without looking any more, would work apparently from the impression he had mentally received. After painting for some minutes, he would again retreat, again observe the features, again return to the canvas and resume the brush."

Raeburn succeeded surprisingly in the general result of expression, and effected by broad handling what other painters obtain by a multitude of little touches : other painters give more of the man, Raeburn gave more of the mind. He had a peculiar facility for drawing horses and also riders—as such ; and his equestrian portraits are the most admired of his productions ; it is perhaps from this circumstance that he obtained the name of "the modern Velasquez" ; for of the latter it was said that he "not only painted mounted cavaliers, but he made them ride."

One is often surprised at the number of works that have proceeded whether from the pen or the pencil of one great man, even though his life may not have been very long: in Raeburn's case, 325 pictures have been traced to his easel, and formed the above-mentioned exhibition in Edinburgh; but it is known there were many more, and the majority of these may be considered master-pieces.

Raeburn can never have had to struggle with the domestic difficulties which have hampered the wings of so many geniuses in their upward flight; no pot-boilers retarded his aspirations to the expansion of his powers; always a man of means, he inherited comparatively early in life, the family property, and became a Scottish landowner, occupying the family seat of Charlesfield.

Wealth and honours were his portion. George IV. appointed him his "first limner and painter in Scotland, with all fees, profits, salaries, rights, privileges, and advantages thereto belonging." When conferring upon him the honour of knighthood the King expressed a wish to have a portrait of himself by this great artist; and His Majesty was so much struck with his fine person and dignified manner that he remarked to Sir Walter Scott that "he would have made Raeburn a baronet could he have done so without injustice to the memory of Reynolds."

SOME ATELIERS OF THE PAST.

“Un homme qui sait voir un tableau, sait mieux voir le tableau du monde ; ce que je dis de la nature, je le dirai à plus forte raison, de la société.”—ARSENÉ HOUSSAYE.

CHAPTER XI.

SOME ATELIERS OF THE PAST.

“Talk not of Genius baffled ;—Genius is master of man
Genius does what it must—Talent does what it can.”

LORD LYTON.

“For years I painted patrons as they were,
And neither Fame nor Fortune came to me,
But now, I'm rich ; I changed my method, sir,
And painted each as each one *wished* to be.”

THE name of Alfred Chalon is deservedly celebrated in the history of British art, for he made himself so completely a son of his adopted country that we almost forget his nationality. He was nevertheless Swiss, and his father was an ingenious Genevese watch-and clock-maker who possessed much mechanical skill and had likewise become a proficient in languages and literature. At the time when the horrors of the French revolution had paralyzed the Continent, Chalon *père*, and with him a number of his compatriots, determined to leave their country and take refuge in our isles : they realized all their property, banking the proceeds, and being invited to settle as watchmakers at Cork, the Chalon family started with the intention of availing themselves of this opportunity, but never reached Ireland. Intending only to pass through England, they took up a temporary abode in London in the neighbourhood of the British Museum, but continued to reside there. M. Chalon's knowledge of languages, and perhaps the possession of other qualifications which fitted him for the service, occasioned his being

Alfred
Chalon, R.A.

commissioned by the British Government to visit France, in order to make himself master of certain political facts with which it was very important they should be acquainted: he accepted the task, though at that moment no such mission could be undertaken without danger; but he executed it with zeal, diplomacy, and success, and on his return obtained the appointment of Professor of the French language and French literature at the Royal Military College of Sandhurst: how far he was qualified for such a position does not seem quite clear.

His family consisted of three children, John James, Alfred, and Louise; the two boys, and especially the second, showed an early disposition for art; they were both naturally clever at music and drawing, and Alfred started as a miniature painter; this was what may be called his "first manner," for he proceeded to paint life-size portraits in oil, illustrated several new editions of modern classics, and devoted much of his life to the production of those elegant sketches of contemporary beauties and celebrities, which had a distinctive *cachet*, and were soon in eager requisition among the upper ten: all the *débutantes* of the season sought to be touched off by his graceful and flattering pencil, and as a consequence, to be displayed on the walls of the Exhibition *salon*, as well as in the pages of the *Book of Beauty*.

Of the Italian artistes, whether of the opera or ballet, Chalon made a series of most successful likenesses; d'Orsay, with whom he was very intimate, and who also had many artistic sympathies, he portrayed to the life; indeed it was evident that, had his father's original intention of giving him a commercial education, been carried out, art as well as the artist would have been grievously wronged: never was a vocation more clearly indicated, nor perhaps pursued with more signal success.

It was but natural that d'Orsay should be on the friendliest terms with Alfred Chalon: there was so much

congeniality in the genius which severally distinguished them: both were so ready with the pencil that they thumbnailed every face and figure that struck them, sometimes seriously, but often with a ludicrous turn, and by a few touches, either could produce a caricature-portrait of which no one could doubt the original. A cousin of Herring's, the admired animal-painter, was telling me lately, that he went with d'Orsay to see Courvoisier executed, and was startled when the Count one day showed him in his little pocket-*carnet* a clever reproduction of the ghastly scene, hit off unperceived during the gloomy exhibition, with amazing rapidity and spirit.

A great financial misfortune had overtaken the Chalon family at a somewhat early period of their residence in London; the bank in which they had deposited their capital, failed, and but for the prudent custom, prevalent among the Swiss of always keeping one year's income in hand, they would have been left penniless.

The Government appointment now opportunely bestowed on M. Chalon *père*, became very helpful; they gave up the house in Great Russell Street and found one of much larger dimensions, but at a much lower rent, in Kensington Square, where, with the help of an old Swiss servant who had faithfully followed their fortunes and was an excellent cook, they established a boarding-house for foreigners. Thus it was that the boys John and Alfred were enabled to pursue their artistic education and to rise to fame.

The Duchess of Kent and the Princess Victoria were among the *sommités* who sat to Chalon, and he was fond of relating an interesting incident which marked one of these sittings. The Princess was at that time taking lessons from Lablache, who always declared Her Royal Highness had a fine voice, great taste, and good ability; she was, presumably, practising for him in the room next to that in which Chalon was painting, and the door of communication was open. Chalon, himself a consummate musician, was

immediately struck by the quality of the performance, and when it ceased could not resist asking, with many apologies for his curiosity, whose was the lovely voice he heard.

“Oh!” replied the Duchess with unaffected affability, “that is my daughter Victoria, who is singing.”

On this she called in the young Princess, presented the painter to H. R. H., and begged her to continue her song for his edification. Chalon, it may be observed, was essentially gentlemanly and cultivated; he was, besides, a born musician, and his musical taste and judgment were faultless.

Not long after the Queen came to the throne, Alfred Chalon was appointed Portrait-Painter to Her Majesty, and painted the first portrait that was taken of Queen Victoria — the well-known full length in Royal robes: probably it looked better at the time than now, when it strikes one as, anatomically speaking, singularly incorrect.

Chalon, though professedly a portrait-painter, yet executed some historical pieces, and sometimes took for his theme sacred subjects; those he produced have considerable merit. His earlier attempts were not worthy of his subsequent successes, and this he himself acknowledged in one remarkable case; but who is there who, having reached distinction in whatever profession, is not surprised when he compares what he has become with what he was!

The first portraits he took professionally were those, in a group, of the three beautiful Misses Chesshyre of Bath, and though the family were quite satisfied with both the composition and the likenesses, on his coming across the picture some years after, its defects stood out so glaringly to his then practised eye that he offered the family £50 for it: they however objected to part with it, and it remained in the possession of the nephew of the originals, the late General Chesshyre. Chalon was never very strong in his anatomy, and some of his portraits, where the likenesses are happy, are disappointingly marred

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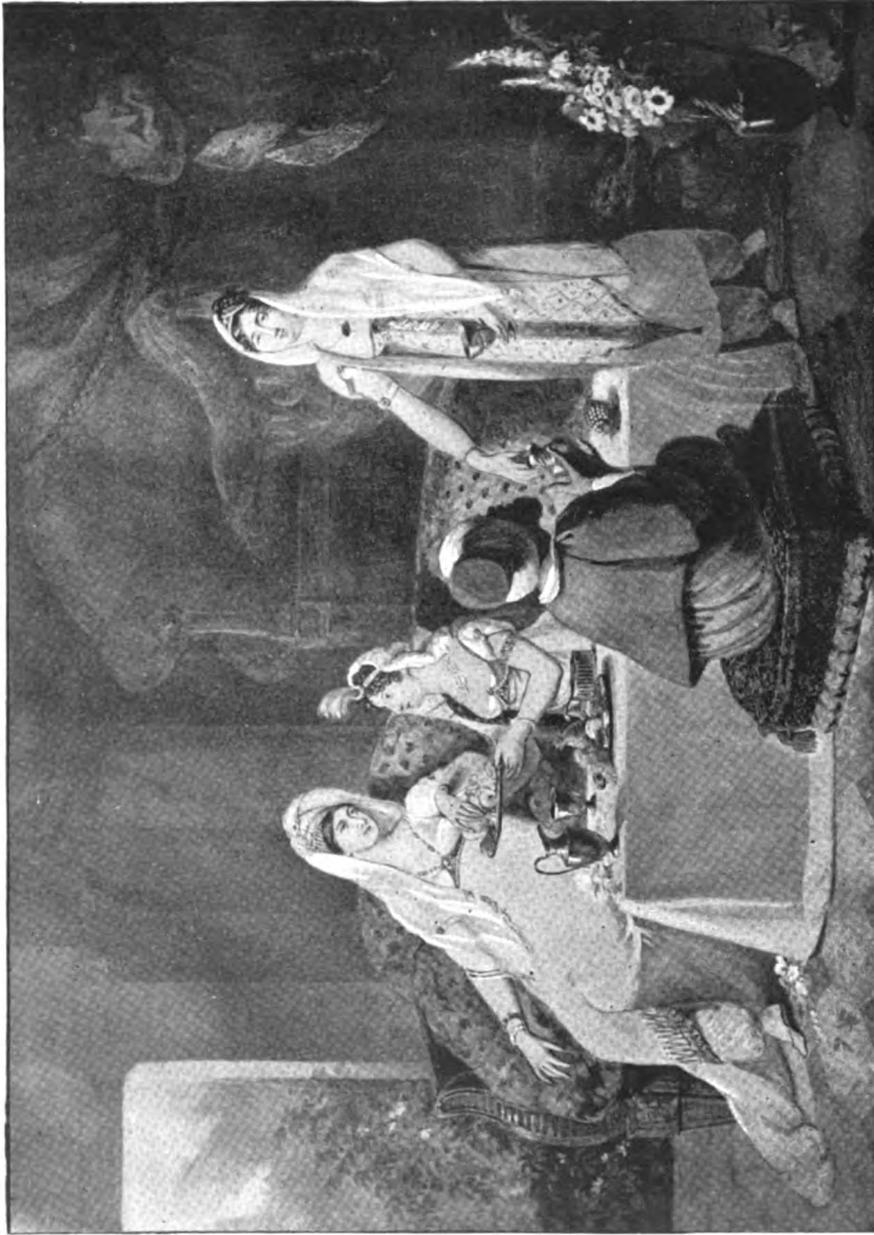
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FAMILY-GROUP OF THE THREE BEAUTIFUL MISSES CHESHYRE, OF BATH.
(Painted by Alfred E. Chalon, R.A.)

by his neglect of this branch of artistic education ; he was also not always successful in representing texture.

Besides his proficiency as a painter, Chalon was well known as a decided musical genius : there was scarcely a musical instrument on which he could not perform ; he had a charming voice, sang with great taste, and accompanied himself with professional ease. His mastery of the flute was so complete that sometimes in the middle of a piece, he would astonish his auditors by suddenly breaking off and (calling to his aid his extraordinary mimetic powers) glide into so ridiculously accurate an imitation of the peculiarities of Nicholson, Sola,* or any other popular flutist of the day, that there was no mistaking any of these clever caricatures.

With the same facility and success he would parody Braham and other well-known singers, performing ludicrous duets between male and female voices to the infinite delight of the company. Always full of fun and frolic, he was the delight of every circle he frequented, and for organizing balls, *fêtes*, private dramatic representations and entertainments, he had not his equal ; his arrangement of groups and costumes, of scenic decorations and draperies, was marked by a degree of taste which seemed natural to him ; indeed it was at a very early age that he developed these artistic proclivities, but it was his taste and skill in miniature-painting that first brought Alfred Chalon into public notice, and it was only in 1810 that he first exhibited those graceful portrait-sketches which were to establish his reputation by the charm of their originality and the perfection of their execution.

In 1808 he and his brother, John James Chalon, started *The Sketching Club*, a Society very beneficial to art, and

* Sola was left-handed, and played on a silver flute made expressly for him ; when Chalon took him off he held up his own flute the wrong way, and made the mimicry the more ludicrous by imitating the sound with his lips only, unaided by the instrument.

very agreeable to its members: it lasted forty years, and brought together, at delightful hebdomadal sketching-meetings, some of the most distinguished artists of the day. Of these kindred spirits were Clarkson Stanfield, Richard Lane, Charles Landseer, Charles Robert Leslie, Cristall, Partridge, Uwins, Stuart Newton, Bone, the famous miniaturist and enamel painter, and others more or less distinguished. It was Alfred Chalon who, with his exhaustless spirits, kept everything going at these and other artists' gatherings, and who used to be applied to, as a sure help, whenever any enterprise that required taste and imagination was on hand: he was always invited early and consulted eagerly when a masquerade or a fancy ball was to be given, and when he assisted at any such function, the character he intended to illustrate was never revealed to any one before he appeared among the company; it became therefore a matter of eager speculation among the coterie. Being a tall, well-proportioned figure, he used to increase the amusement by frequently assuming a woman's attire, and one night, carried out the original idea of dressing up in a somewhat *décolleté* ballet-costume with short sleeves and short skirt, and personating or rather parodying, Taglioni in a "*pas seul*." Of course it was the success of the evening and as long as any of those who witnessed the *escapade* survive, it will not be forgotten any more than his cleverly-devised group of *Charlotte and Werther*, introduced one night at a fancy ball at Sir William Beechey's, Stuart Newton, the celebrated engraver and painter, personating the German sentimentalist, and Chalon choosing *Charlotte*, probably because being somewhat the bigger man of the two, his dress-up as a woman became more absurd: anything more ridiculous than his rendering of the character can hardly be imagined. At first he showed her as the strong-minded woman who after Werther's death

". . . When she saw his body
Brought before her on a shutter,

Like a very proper person,
Went on cutting bread and butter,"

and then, the two started off in an absurd *pas de deux* imagined and carefully practised for the occasion, the German petticoats, short sleeves, and characteristic *coiffure*, adding to the grotesqueness of Chalon's movements. A ludicrous mistake was made by Sir Wm's. butler, who, misunderstanding the names given him, announced them, instead of Charlotte and Werther, as "Charlotte under the Water." *

Another time Chalon costumed himself after the likeness of the god Pan, and as he had a peculiar method of playing the Pandean pipes, he took every one by surprise with the effect he produced, and the sobriquet of "Pan" was unanimously given to him by his intimates ever after.

Those who knew Alfred Chalon by that class of his work which was of the most airy, delicate, and fantastic character, would scarcely picture to themselves his personal dimensions: while his pencil was all grace, his colouring all harmonious softness, his draperies diaphanous, and his general finish that of a fairy touch, it is curious to know that all this elegant fancy work was due to the manipulation of hands of the largest make and boniest aspect, and of fingers which seemed constructed to hold nothing finer than a pickaxe. In vain the curious might have looked into the construction of his frame to find any indication of the grace and finish which characterized Chalon's productions; those who invaded his *atelier* found there a tall, not inelegant, but listless figure, the long, shaggy hair hanging untidily below his ears, and the brush held as if there was nothing to prevent its dropping on the floor: and yet what

* I remember at a party given at our house near Tunbridge Wells when I was a child, a butler who had grown old and deaf in our service making a similar *fasco*. Among the guests was a Mr. Offley (of the Crewe family), and notorious among the gossips there for the pride he took in his patronymic: this gentleman brought with him a friend by name "Sainsbury," who was staying at his house. The servant (not catching the names as pronounced by Offley) proceeded to perform his part with, as he supposed, conscientious accuracy, and in clear and distinct tones announced "Mr. Hopkins from Salisbury."

work that brush could do! Alfred Chalon's fingers were marked by a peculiarity often found among musical geniuses—the bending back of the first joint, while the thumb could be reversed so as to touch the wrist: there was however a grace in his movements almost amounting to effeminacy, and his manners partook of a degree of gallantry attributable to his foreign birth and early education, but so happily tempered by his frequentation of the best English society as to produce a very charming result, and his courtly bearing won him friends everywhere, from the Court downwards.

In his features was observable an intelligent shrewdness in which were happily blended the humorous and the serious. It was an indication of his facility in portraying character. Much of this aptitude appears in his illustrations of Molière's, and also of Walter Scott's, works, while his sketches of the Italian artistes are hit off with a free pencil, which seems to aim at fixing their peculiarities as well as their features, and his admirable sketch of d'Orsay, though an obvious caricature, is not a malicious one, and succeeds in supplying a most characteristic representation of that remarkable and unique type.

John James
Chalon, R.A

Alfred's eldest brother, John James Chalon, left portrait-painting to him, and followed landscape-painting and *genre* pictures; in fact no style came amiss to him, and he painted both in oils and water-colour. The first picture he sent to the Royal Academy (in 1800) gained much notice; the subject—*Banditti Feasting*—offered a fine opportunity for colour and also for interesting and telling detail: a few years after this, he took to water-colours, joining the Water-colour Society in 1808, but left it in 1813. Shortly after this he exhibited a picture considered worthy of high commendation, *Napoleon on board the Bellerophon*, which he afterwards gave to Greenwich Hospital. J. J. Chalon became a Royal Academician in 1841, the first picture he exhibited after that event, being *Gil Blas in the Souterrain*; the picture representing the landing of the Boulogne steamer

at Folkestone was however the one most approved by his admirers.

Like all artists, J. J. Chalon was unequal in his work, and I remember an oil picture of his at the Royal Academy Exhibition, I think in 1839, called the *Château de Chillon*, which certainly was not worthy of him. Mr. W. Pitt Byrne who wrote the critique of the Exhibition for the *Morning Post*, dismissed it somewhat summarily as follows :

“ ‘Chillon, by Chalon,’ ; the alliteration is good, we cannot say as much for the painting.”

The artist however, utterly unvindictive, took the satirical verdict in good part, and meeting the writer of it shortly after at a ball, good-naturedly button-holed him, saying :

“Come down and take a glass of champagne with that fellow who paints such d——d bad pictures.” *

After the death of Papa and Maman Chalon, the little *ménage*, consisting of the sister and two brothers, transferred its penates to a beautiful old semi-detached villa, of Queen Anne pattern, at Campden Hill : they called it *El Retiro*, and imparted to it the unmistakable *cachet* of an artist's dwelling. No family arrangement could be imagined more uniformly bright and harmonious than this *vie à trois*. Each understood and appreciated the other two, and they were all devoted to each other. Disastrous therefore was the break-up of this united little community when it came to an end with the death of Louise, and the sorrowing survivors had to reconcile themselves to the dreariness which followed her loss. John was the next to depart, but not till he had undergone years of suffering, through which his brother nursed him with the tenderest solicitude ; though so affectionately attached, these two brothers were singularly unlike, especially in outward appearance ; John being almost as stout as his brother was slim and lithe.

* There was a third Chalon, in no way related to John and Alfred, who employed himself with hunting and coaching-scenes.

When the last survivor was left alone in his now dreary home, his sole companions were his two dogs, which never left him, and used to drive out with him every day in his carriage.

Chalon occasionally assumed a *brusque* manner of speaking, but he was of a delicate and sensitive nature; as an instance I may mention that a relative of my own had his wife's portrait painted by him. It is a beautiful work of art which came to me at their death, and is hanging before me now. They were delighted with it when it was brought home handsomely framed, and showed it to their friends with pride, though neither considered the likeness striking. It was a fifty-guinea affair, and a cheque for the amount was sent, but Chalon having heard that they did not consider the likeness had been caught, tore out the signature and returned it with a polite explanation. I forget how the affair ended, but the picture certainly remained theirs.

A year before his death, which took place October 8, 1860, Chalon generously offered to the inhabitants of Hampstead (a locality he had once inhabited) his and his brother's collection of oil-paintings, and also their water-colour and pencil sketches, on the modest condition that the parishioners should provide for them a suitable gallery and guarantee a small salary to the curator. It is to be regretted that these favoured folks lacked either the means or the public spirit to accept his munificent offer. Under these circumstances Chalon decided to propose these pictures on the same terms to the University of Cambridge, but did not carry out this resolution, though he was evidently in earnest, as he ended by bequeathing them to the University: unfortunately for the University and for his other legatees, Chalon's knowledge of testamentary laws was very superficial, for it never occurred to him that any signature was needed to his will, to witness his own; the will was therefore declared null and void, and, as he left no heir, all his property went to the city of Geneva!

Stuart Newton, whom I have mentioned above, lived in Great Marlborough Street, at No. 41, next door to his friend Chalon, and was a painter of some merit: patronized by the Duke of Bedford and other noble connoisseurs, he often received as much as £500 for an historical or a *genre* picture and although an American by birth became an R.A. Towards the end of his life it was found necessary to place him under restraint; but, four days before his death, he recovered his reason and spoke with great calmness of his condition; he died in 1835, aged only about forty, a great favourite among the profession.

Stuart
Newton, R.A.

Stuart Newton was rather a dandy in his dress and exceedingly particular about his appearance, which was quite in contrast with the wild disorder of his studio. He was the successful engraver of eleven valuable plates which were collected by Henry Murray, and were published in 1843 with a memoir of him.

The Marquis of Lansdowne was a kind patron of Stuart Newton, and on his return from America, the Marquis gave a ball at Lansdowne House to which he invited the artist and his bride—a handsome American girl. On the day this *fête* was to come off, Mrs. Newton contrived to get a bad cold, which tinted the tip of her nose with a more rubicund hue than was becoming. Anxious not to miss the opportunity of introducing his wife, and hoping to remove the disfigurement, her husband suggested the application of a leech; both appear to have been in a state of very primitive simplicity, for the suggestion was not only serious, but was carried out, and the result, which was still more serious, may be imagined by any person of common sense.

Stuart Newton gets an honourable mention in the general preface to the *Waverley* novels, where, speaking of the illustrations added to the edition of 1829, Sir Walter says:—"To my distinguished countryman David Wilkie, to Edwin Landseer, who has exercised his talents so much on Scottish subjects and scenery, to Messrs. Leslie and

Newton, my thanks are due, from a friend as well as an author."

This was the first illustrated edition, and Scott speaks a few lines before, of his publishers as "encouraging British Art by illustrating this edition of 1829 with designs *by the most eminent living artists.*"

Henry Pierce
Bone.

Among the sons of genius who met at the genial fireside of the Chalons was the miniaturist and enamelist, Henry Pierce



HENRY BONE, R.A.

Henry Bone,
R.A.

Bone, eldest son of the justly celebrated artist whose profession he followed; but he and his wife were never seen there (or anywhere else) unless when there was a temporary lull in that famous artist's work. Bone always baked his own enamels and the detail of this process required an accuracy, attention, patience and general skill which none but the painter himself could have been relied on to bestow. When therefore there was a social gathering at the Chalons, from

which Bone was absent, all the guests knew that there must be a solemn operation going on at his house, and that both he and his wife were in a state of nervous anxiety while it lasted; it was an affair of days, and not of hours, and to regulate the exact temperature of the furnace, it was necessary they should keep their vigil through the nights, relieving each other at intervals, but allowing no incident of life to interfere with the delicate task. Henry Bone, junr., was a fine artist in the line which he elected to follow, but never attained to the eminence of his father, which was such as to induce the Academy to confer on him the full honours of the institution.* Bone (*père*) began by enamelling fans and watches, scent bottles, and other small and delicate articles of *virtù*—priceless at this day and very rare,—he also painted china with extreme skill and finish. He and Dr. Wolcot were great friends, and the doctor was an ardent admirer of Bone's work. He had a large family to support, as, of his twelve children, ten survived. Two of these were painters, and Henry, the elder, was Chalon's friend, named above. Bone's most celebrated production—an admirable copy of Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* (18 × 16)—was purchased by Mr. George Bradley for the sum of £2,200. It is on record that the artist having received payment for his work in the form of a cheque drawn upon Fautleroy's Bank, and having to pass that bank as he returned home, at once cashed it. It was well for his patron that he did take this measure, as it was probably the last amount passed across that counter; the bank never opened again, and it was the very next day that it stopped payment. This must be a curious incident in the history of banking;

* An enamel painter of ordinary merit, unless he employed his own designs, would not have obtained the grade of R.A., the nature of his art being open to the objection of absence of originality or inventive capacity. It is on this ground (or pretext?) that as a rule, engravers were at that time precluded from rising beyond the rank of A.R.A.

the sum drawn was unusually large, and there seems to be no reason why it should have been parted with so readily when the banker must have known that the firm was on the eve of suspension.

My friend Mr. Martin Archer Shee, Q.C., tells me that he remembers as the property of the Bones, a fine collection of enamel copies of historical portraits illustrative of English society at different epochs, and he recalls, as an incident of social gossip at the time—some sixty or more years ago—that it was laid under contribution to furnish models for the principal costumes which figured at a fancy-dress ball given at Holderness House by Frances Marchioness of Londonderry, where the guests were expected to appear in Elizabethan style. It was said that the MM. Bone courteously placed their gallery at her disposal for the occasion, and they themselves appeared on the scene attired as Yeomen of the Guard. This ball must have been a striking affair; the *Morning Post* of the following day reported that Sir Thos. Lawrence, then P.R.A., figured at Holderness House on that occasion in the character of the great Spanish painter, *Zurbaran*.

Thos. Uwins.

Uwins was another of Chalon's friends and contemporaries: and his correspondence is full of information as to the daily life of artists of his time, while his notes on the period he spent in the study of art in Italy, is interesting as a record of events and persons with whose names the world is familiar and as a collection of observations on art and on life in general, it affords pleasant entertainment. Uwins had to work his way to fame with industry and perseverance, and to enable him to study in Italy he replenished his purse by painting sitters wherever he could beat them up, and encouraging them to come to him by lending charms to those who had none. He writes in a letter to Chalon:—
 "Making old women young and ugly women handsome is now my daily occupation, and on this innocent fraud depends all my reputation and success."

The Landseer brothers were intimate frequenters of Chalon's house, and their presence added much to the cheerfulness of the society that met there. Tom Landseer, the eldest, had as fine a sense of humour as Edwin, and in society was the more attractive of the two. It was perfectly delightful to watch Tom whenever his brother's genius was on the *tapis*; he seemed to think that his first, if not his sole, duty in life was to admire him and that the only occupation worth existing for, consisted in engraving Edwin's pictures. Tom followed the profession of his father, an engraver, and his works are highly esteemed; his plate of Rosa Bonheur's Horse Fair brought him great praise, and delighted the paintress. It has been considered by many competent judges of such work, that Tom's engravings were often an improvement on Edwin's pictures; but this is not surprising since to succeed in bringing the latter forward by no matter how much labour and application, was the joy of his life. He was so thoroughly amiable and also so unaffected and genuine that his popularity followed as a matter of course; he would have enjoyed the society of others as much as they enjoyed his, had he not become prematurely deaf: it was very difficult to maintain any kind of conversation with him on this account, and yet he was full of fun and anecdote. I remember once, before his infirmity became serious, meeting him at dinner at Dr. Prout's where he contrived to amuse everybody with his puns and anecdotes.

A succession of arithmetical puzzles having gone round the table, when it came to his turn to propose one, he asked, "What is the difference between 18 and 81?" One turned it one way; another, another; one said it must have something to do with nine, a figure full of mystery and a number characterized by so many peculiarities: it would be endless to repeat the knowing answers given by those who thought it a good opportunity to air their mathematics, but the laugh was rather against them when it turned out to be no question of figures at all; but

The
Landseers.

simply that—"Eighteen is careless and happy, and eighty-one is hairless and cappy."

Tom Landseer told me that when Edwin was quite a little fellow he joined the "Life-Academy," where Fuseli took a great fancy to him, used to rub up his curly hair and call him his "little dog-boy."

There was a third brother, Charles, who painted landscapes, *scènes d'intérieur* and *genre* pictures, but he never attained any great celebrity, even through the advantage of his patronymic.

Sir Edwin
Landseer,
P.R.A.

Sir Edwin was a frequent visitor at Great Bounds, near Tunbridge Wells, and also at Penshurst, where I can remember how he delighted in strolling about the grand old deer-park and sketching the animals and the fine timber there. His love of animals was very remarkable and seemed to arise from some profound source; it could scarcely be likened to the ordinary partiality which is entertained for them, sometimes in a greater, sometimes in a less degree by those among us who are known in a general way as lovers of animals; Landseer's feeling for them may be said to have been idiosyncratic; he seemed to understand their nature so well that he loved each individual dog, horse, or deer as if for the sake of its own special attributes. He took in their character by studying it as he would that of a man, apprehended their mute language as if he had conversed with them, and interpreted their sentiments by touches which no other painter ever yet found in his brush. Sometimes, it is true, his enthusiasm for dumb nature carried him to the verge of mistaking the nature of their intelligence, and of giving an absolutely human expression to their attitudes and countenances, but the probability is that he had unconsciously brought himself to see in them what he painted, and this truthfulness often wins the spectator to view his four-footed sitters in almost as favourable a light as he himself, and to excuse if not admire, his somewhat exaggerated partiality.



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Sir Edwin
Landseer,
P.R.A.



SIR EDWIN LANDSEER, P.R.A.

It is to be regretted that Landseer did not confine himself to depicting animals; his capacity for representing the human subject is not favourably shown in any of the examples he has left. I have found many to agree with me in the belief that Landseer's talent has been a little over-rated possibly owing to his few contemporary rivals. I was much struck with this conviction when recently (1892) visiting Chatsworth, and could not help wondering on what ground it could have been that Edwin Landseer's very exalted reputation—though admittedly great—was founded: we certainly have gone on to better things since, and our present appreciation of the works he has left has therefore become a matter of subjectivity.

It was by Lord Holland's advice, in a letter still extant, that the Duchess of Bedford decided not to marry Edwin Landseer, for it seems she had seriously contemplated the step and he himself certainly had, for he seemed as much surprised as disappointed on her making known to him her decision.

Richard Lane, among other artists, was a frequenter of Chalon's studio, and reckoned among his intimates; he was also much in the society of d'Orsay who admired his talent and was always glad of his friendly hints (and perhaps something more) on any work of art he was producing.

Richard Lane,
A.R.A.

Charles Robert Leslie another component of the Chalon coterie was much favoured among these congenial spirits: he loved his art, and many of his pictures manifest genius and originality; he was happy in his choice of subjects, and produced several excellent illustrations of the great work of Cervantes. His *Sancho and the Duchess* was a well-conceived composition and added greatly to his reputation. Admiring crowds stood daily before this canvas during the season it was exhibited: it was characterized by much spirit and local colour, and his conception of the grotesque but honest and *naïf* little *escudero* at once recommends itself. Lord

C. R. Leslie,
R.A.

Egremont, a generous patron of art, showed much special kindness to Leslie and his family.

In speaking of Chantrey I have described Leslie's picture of *Sancho and the Doctor*, interesting from its amusing history, but also a good picture though not a first-rate work of art, indeed one is immediately struck by the unaccountable neglect of the artist to avail himself of the opportunity of giving *à propos* to his picture by the selection of characteristic accessories: in this case they might have been made to supply rich tones and picturesque detail as well as local colour. John Philip, and his great successor Burgess, knew better.

At the time of the Coronation, several full-length portraits were painted of Her Majesty in her robes, and naturally the subject was chosen by many painters, respectively, for their Exhibition pictures. The various treatments were interesting as characteristic of the manner of each competing artist. Uwins thus mentions them in a letter to Severn. Of Leslie's, he writes very laudatorily:—

“ . . . So beautiful a treatment of a subject which in ordinary hands would be parade or ceremony I have never seen by any painter ancient or modern. The young Queen stripped of her ornaments and placed on her knees before the altar, produces an arrangement as picturesque as it is suggestive.

“ Of the four painters who have taken up this interesting event, choosing different incidents of it . . . has placed the crown on the Queen's head and has made the rest of the party raising their coronets to their noddles . . . chooses the moment before putting on the crown, with man, woman, and child all bolt upright like leeks in a garden . . . makes Lord Rolle tumble on his nose, and the little Queen straddle forward to pick him up. To Leslie alone did it occur that the taking of the Sacrament was the moment of real and sublime interest,—the moment which calls forth the sympathies of the subjects of a Christian Queen, and is

responded to by every heart throughout Her Majesty's dominions. This picture will form a point of attraction in the next Exhibition. . . ."

It will be found that very few other judges thought as highly of it, and as for the rest, with which the Victorian exhibition has enabled us to refresh our memories we can only lament that historical pictures (save the mark!) which ought to have been perennial, should have been entrusted to such hands. In fact, it is difficult to conceive a gallery of more disgraceful and ludicrous caricatures than the whole series of royal-function pictures lent by the Queen. I was told that a certain Royal personage walked through the room in which they were hung, with an ill-suppressed smile on his face; but when he arrived at the canvas representing Her Majesty, the Prince Consort, and the Royal children meeting King Louis Philippe on his arrival at Windsor in 1844, he fairly broke down, and if the ghost of F. Winterhalter happened to be hovering near, it must have been a (? grim) satisfaction to him to feel that he had occasioned H. R. H. one of the heartiest laughs he ever enjoyed in his life. Yet to the nation generally as well as to the Royal family, the occasions of every one of these pictures are eminently interesting.

Martin was often to be found among this brotherhood of John Martin. painters: he and Leslie were introduced to each other by the veteran Benjamin West in a paternal and benevolent way, and under his auspices, became fast friends.

Martin had to struggle hard to make a reputation; for a long time he was not understood, and as one looks at his pictures it is impossible not to recollect that his brother, the incendiary of York Minster, was a lunatic. Martin was unquestionably a genius, and those who did admire his strange style were enthusiastic, but unfortunately they were the minority; and those who did not, thought him a visionary. In 1812 he produced his *Sadak seeking for the waters of Oblivion*, and while contemplating it in his studies

with satisfied vanity, was horror-stricken to overhear the men who had brought the frame disputing as to which was the top of the picture !

This composition produced him only fifty guineas, and was bought by the late Mr. Charles Manning, who was fond of collecting works of art : he was brother of the late Cardinal Manning, and his senior by eight years, having been born with the century.

Martin's brother set fire to York Minster it was supposed in a fit of insanity : in the evidence it appeared that his



JOHN MARTIN.

vengeance was chiefly directed against what he called the "buzzing" of the organ, and that like the gardener who while stamping on a garden pest was heard to mutter—"I'll teach yer to be a toad,"—Martin, according to one of the witnesses, was heard menacing the organ with "I'll teach thee to buzz." It appears that among some ladies looking on at the conflagration, one was heard to exclaim, between awe and admiration—"What a subject that would make for Martin!" little dreaming the scene was of his brother's contrivance.

Gustav
Wappers.

It is now many years ago that I had a letter of introduction from Sir David Salomons to a wealthy banker at

Antwerp, by name Neight. His family consisted of a charming wife and two daughters, the younger a remarkable pretty girl; I dined with them and met there this young lady's *fiancé*, Gustav Wappers, the celebrated Flemish historical painter.

Wappers was a fierce politician and his spirited historical compositions were all inspired by political feeling. He was nearly double the age of his betrothed, who could not have been more than eighteen; he had led a somewhat adventurous life, having gone to Paris about the year 1830, where he joined the party of Cavaignac, Raspail, Barbés, &c., and where in accordance with the principles he shared with them, he painted his famous picture entitled "*Le dévouement des Bourguemestres de Leyde*," which created an absolute *fureur*: the subject alone was calculated to fire men's minds at that particular moment and the masterly mode in which he had treated it enhanced the enthusiasm with which it was received.

Gustav
Wappers.

The picture, in fact, made such a stir, that Wappers was called back to his native country and was persuaded to establish himself in Brussels, but although his *atelier* was there, he sent all his pictures to Paris where they were only too pleased to give them wall-room in the *Salon*.

He was a prolific painter but continued always to adhere to what may be called the politico-historical style. He and Hendrik Conscience thoroughly appreciated each other and became fast friends, though Conscience was considerably younger. The King Leopold I. conferred on Wappers the title of Baron, and the French Government gave him the cross of the Legion of Honour: he died in 1874.

Wappers was a good-looking man with an intelligent head; but his rather stout figure would have been improved by a few more inches in his height. There was a certain air of self-consciousness in his manner, scarcely surprising when one knew how greatly his character as well as his talent were appreciated both in his native land and in France, and

he was undoubtedly flattered by the enthusiasm with which he was received by the French: he knew also that the commissions given him in Belgium were poured into his *atelier* with the object of keeping him in his own country, while they testified to the jealousy with which his countrymen regarded his partiality for the sister-nation, and therefore to the high estimation in which they themselves held him.

Eugène Verboeckhoven.

Eugène Verboeckhoven, the Flemish cattle-painter, was also rising into eminence at this time, and his countrymen were not a little proud of him; he as well as Wappers was one of Hendrik Conscience's friends; but he was more faithful to his art as such, and was less mixed up in political demonstrations. Verboeckhoven possessed a wonderful talent for drawing and painting animals, but excelled especially in sheep: he had acquired a touch which rendered the wool with admirable character, but unfortunately the woolliness crept into other surfaces, and sometimes in his pictures everything is suggestive of wool—though not of “wool-gathering.”

It is to Verboeckhoven we are indebted for the works of our distinguished cattle-painter, Sidney Cooper. This artist—having an accurate eye for likenesses—started in the character of a portrait-painter; he went to Holland and Belgium, where he made the Dutch and Flemish schools his study, and not being overburdened with wealth he literally painted his way along. Stopping at some small town, or even village, he took portraits of the worthies of the place, being content with a few florins when he could not get more, and thus helping himself on from place to place.

Meeting at last with Verboeckhoven, the brother-geniuses fraternized, and Cooper was so taken with the Flemish painter's striking productions that he changed his purpose and became a cattle-painter.

James Inskipp.

Extremely popular, whether in the *atelier* or in society, was James Inskipp: the broad touches of his free pencil went well with his open heart and generous sentiments. He had a style of his own, and a very happy eye for jotting down

points of character and from them, securing a striking resemblance.

His theory of portrait-painting was logical, and his practical development of that theory, successful. In Inskipp's portraits the form of the features and the lines of the contour seemed to come right of themselves, he did not trouble himself about them; he aimed at catching the *likeness* and that was always unmistakable. What is there indeed in the whole round of art so subtle as likeness in a portrait, and who can say on what it depends?

It is irritating to be obliged to admit that a bad painter will often produce an admirable likeness. We have an instance of this in almost every shop-parlour or lodging-house drawing-room: those tea-boardy canvases in heavy gilt frames which tickle the family pride of the cheese-monger are for the most part wonderfully accurate—if sometimes caricatured—representations of their originals. Could any one who has noticed the parties behind the counter, mistake for an instant the *intention* of the self-satisfied dauber who produced them, while we shall often see the matter of resemblance wholly missed by some “first-rate” R.A. whose picture—as a work of art—may be faultless.

Inskipp's theory, then, of likenesses was this:—

“You see a man in the distance,” he used to say: “and as soon as he comes within the focus of your sight (though like the prodigal son, ‘yet a great way off’) you recognize him as your friend Smith, and you don't wait to certify this recognition till he is near enough for you to approach him and examine the size of his mouth, the shape of his nose, or the colour of his eyes”; it is the old story of the Chinese painter who, when representing a meadow, conscientiously determines to delineate each individual blade of grass he *knows* to be there, instead of transferring to his canvas the impression the whole surface produces upon his eye.

If Inskipp had lived a little longer, he would probably

have been the first to point out that this it is which constitutes the difference between a photograph and a portrait from the hand—or rather the mind—of an artist. In the photograph you have the features, in the portrait, the *ideal*, of the man.

Inskipp's portraits were delightful in their sketchy fidelity: in a few touches the *character* of the sitter was hit off and, for the most part, he had the good sense and the rare forbearance to touch it no more after this result was obtained.

Alas! how many painters, lacking the valuable attribute of self-command, have forgotten how fragile, how indefinable, how spritelike is that nameless something which gives what we call a "likeness," and which that luckless "one touch more" often entirely obliterates! We don't sufficiently remember—" *Le mieux est l'enemi du bien.*"

Inskipp was such an entertaining talker; it was the pleasantest possible way of spending a summer morning to go out with him on a sketching expedition; he had a pretty cottage between Guildford and Godalming where the beautiful scenery seemed to inspire his brush. When he had fixed on a shady nook in which he could establish himself with a choice little bit of river scenery before him, he would bring out his apparatus and after setting within reach all he would require, his first operation on the canvas he had placed on the easel, was the application of a dab of yellow ochre on the spot on which he intended his highest light should be, and he would say, "There; now you stop there till I make you white." This was his way of pursuing the "Golden manner" advocated by Sir Joshua, and adopted by so many landscape painters of his day. Wilkie, at first incredulous as to the result of making his highest light even Naples yellow, became an enthusiastic convert to the practice, but not a more fervent follower than Eastlake, who in his correspondence impressed its value on all painters with whom he had any influence.

Eastlake presses it on Uwins and urges that even "Naples yellow is not nearly so warm as the lights in some of the pictures of Rembrandt"—that consummate master of light and shade; but he makes no allowance for the discolouration of time which renders it perfectly *possible* that Rembrandt may have employed pure white.

A droll illustration of Inskipp's love of fun which I remember was the ingenious little stroke of professional vengeance he administered to the judiciary committee of the Royal Academy, from whom he considered he had received an unmerited snub.

I was one day strolling through the exhibition of the British artists in Suffolk Street, and was examining a sunny bit of landscape with a group of half-life-size gipsies, surrounded by their picturesque accessories, among which was a ragged-looking, unkempt, half-starved, and stupid-faced donkey. In the artistic touch and treatment I at once recognized my old friend Inskipp, when suddenly a material touch on my shoulder called my attention from the work, and on turning round I found myself face to face with the painter.

"Would you like to know the history of that picture?" said he.

"Yes, I should," I answered. "You have chosen a capital subject, and you have turned your opportunities to good account; but a history of a picture is always worth having."

"Delighted with your approval," said Inskipp; "which is more than certain R.A.'s have accorded it; but then they're apparently not blessed with so much taste, honesty, and discrimination: fancy the beggars *rejecting* my picture!"

"Because it's *yours*," I answered; "jealousy, my dear friend, jealousy, depend on it; and it ought to make you feel proud."

"It *does*, it does, I assure you," he rejoined: "deuced proud; so it's only fair I should give *them* something to be

proud of too. As soon as I got my picture safely back I sent it hither, where I consider it is very creditably hung, and d'ye see that?" he added, chuckling over the fun, as he pointed to a conspicuous R.A. branded on the ass's haunches.

Inskipp had a keen eye for effect, and well knew how potently a bit of bright colour, discreetly proportioned and judiciously applied, will light up a subject, not only when the subject is on canvas, but also when one of Her Majesty's liege subjects in broadcloth: this idea he carried out practically: a man has, as a rule, little chance of being able to cast this helpful and character-giving accessory into his nineteenth-century costume; but you might always recognize Inskipp by a minute corner of a rich crimson silk handkerchief peeping *quant. suff.* from his exterior breast-coat-pocket. He used to say that he would have condescended to wear the ribbon of the *légion d'honneur* for the sake of the bit of crimson at his button-hole.

A telling artistic expedient must have been remarked by many in Frank Holl's admirable portrait of Lord Dufferin, where, notwithstanding the perfection of the face and attitude, the accessories have received a large share of the painter's attention: the address with which he has introduced—as a charming contrast to the rich, golden-brown lights on the seal-skin coat lining—a glimpse of the sky-blue ribbon of the Star of India, manifests a delightful artistic feeling, for it is wonderful how that small hint of it lights up the whole of that splendid picture. Another fine example of general artistic skill and ability he has left us is to be found in his full-length, seated portrait of Lord Overstone. His representation there of the glazed and sightless eyes is the work of no ordinary painter. Art need long mourn the loss of Frank Holl.

E. M. Ward,
R.A.

I used to know E. M. Ward, R.A., and his kind, genial wife. They were first cousins, and Mrs. Ward's father—E. M. Ward's uncle—was a bright addition to the receptions

they gave at their picturesque and hospitable villa. Their Sunday evening gatherings were charming, for both host and hostess were intellectually gifted to a remarkable degree, and they knew how to draw around them kindred spirits. There was a family of sons and daughters, and of these it had been Mrs. Ward's custom to take likenesses year by year, so that the "rise and progress" of these young ones might be followed with great interest, and a charming little gallery these pictures made. Husband and wife had their respective



E. M. WARD, R.A.

ateliers, and many productions sincerely admired by the public have issued from both.

One day when calling at their villa, I happened to ask Mrs. Ward what had been the fate of a picture of her husband's, which had impressed me very much when first exhibited, some years previously: it was painted from a sentence in Macaulay's *History of England*, vol. i. p. 438, where, after detailing the circumstances that accompanied the death of Charles II., and the admission to his bedside of the Catholic priest who brought him the *viaticum*, he writes: "The King found so much difficulty in swallowing the 'bread,' that

it was necessary to open the door and procure a glass of water." The artist has painted the ante-room of the King's bed-chamber where he lay dying, and the door of communication as draped by heavy green velvet curtains. Scattered over this ante-room are courtiers of both sexes awaiting the issue, and ready to take in the consecrated proclamation, "Le Roi est mort—Vive le Roi." The faces and attitudes are significant, and expressively rendered. A jewelled hand is passed through the opening of the curtains to take from a page in scarlet livery the glass of water he is holding ready on a gold salver. The picture was a striking one, rich in colour, and skilful in its grouping, while the subject was such as to arrest the attention of the spectator, and to arouse many suggestive thoughts.

"It is singular," replied Mrs. Ward: "you should have happened to call here to-day, and also to ask for that picture; by the merest chance it is, but only till to-morrow, in my husband's *atelier*; owing to a slight accident it was sent to him to retouch, and as soon as the varnish is dry, it will be returned to St. George's Hall, Liverpool, for which it was bought." We then passed into her husband's painting-room, where I had the satisfaction of finding him and also of seeing this picture once more; but I am not sure it surpasses in interest, certainly not in pathos, his famous *Last Sleep of Argyll*.

Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Ward frequently attended the Sunday afternoon "At Homes" at Gounod's house in Tavistock Place. It was a house once occupied by Dickens, and let at a very low rent on account of the annoyance produced by the bell of the church immediately adjoining it. An allusion to this circumstance gave rise to a conversation between the painter and myself on the subject of bells, in the course of which I quoted to him the following epigram:—

"Qui sonitu horrendo nostras obtunditis aures,
Pendula dum longis funibus aera sonant,

Hi vestro funes manibus quos scepe tenetis
Aptati collo, quam bene conveniant."

of which I told him I had seen a French version as follows:—

"Persécuteurs du genre humain,
Qui sonnez sans miséricorde,
Que n'avez vous au cou la corde
Que vous tenez en vos mains?"

He took up a pen from the table, and with a merry twinkle in his eye, wrote off impromptu

"ATTEMPTED FREE TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH

BY A BELL-HATER,

WITH A BELL-ICOSE FEELING AGAINST RINGERS."

"Tormentors of the human kind,
From whom these noises spring,
Why are not round your necks entwined
The cords with which you ring?"

Below this he drew a sketch of himself, his palette and brushes laid aside, with a frowning countenance, and with elbows on the table, his hands covering his ears; above, a large bell swinging, inscribed, "Old Tom," and clinging to it in a grotesque attitude, a representation of "Old Nick."

I once had an interesting conversation with Ward on hereditary physical resemblances—the result of what, in the present day, would be styled "atavism"—and he expressed his regret that one of the advantages to be derived from photography could take effect only some time hence: to the generations that succeed us it will afford means of knowing when, in what degree, and how often the same type recurs in a family, and whether the resemblance is accompanied by moral similarity also.

He mentioned to me a curious instance of a recurring resemblance in his own family after an interval of, I think, two, or perhaps three, generations. Having been told by a friend that he had seen at Oxford a portrait resembling him so strongly that it might have been painted for him, he went to see it, and was as much struck by the likeness as

his friend. On inquiry he learnt that the name of the original was Ward, and tracing his identity found him to have been an ancestral kinsman.

I had committed to my care some years ago by a friend who was abroad, a portrait of his mother; he was an elderly man, and the original of the portrait had been dead many years: it represented a beautiful girl, or rather child, of some twelve years old, and had been done in pastels more than a century before. One day a friend of the owner called at my house, and this interesting portrait at once caught his eye: presently he referred to it, asking how it could possibly have become so old and faded, but admiring its accuracy as a portrait. Strange to say he was taking it for a portrait of the grand-daughter of the original at the same age. This certainly was a case of atavism.

At a ball at the Baronne de St. Martin's in Paris I observed a stout, portly lady, whose resemblance to King George IV. it was impossible not to remark, and I learned on inquiry that she claimed that Royal personage for her father.

Le Duc
de Gramont.

The late Duc de Gramont whom I used to meet frequently in Paris, bore so striking a resemblance to his royal ancestor, Henri IV., that I can fully enter into the figurative suggestion often made by those who knew him, that he must have dismounted from the "*cheval de bronze*" on the Pont Neuf. This atavistic resemblance is remarkable after the lapse of so many generations. Anthony Hamilton in his very interesting *Mémoires du Comte de Grammont* (his brother-in-law) relates how willingly *le bon Henri* would have recognized that nobleman as his son; but the Comte proudly refused the proffered honour; he was not to be tempted even by the insinuation that he might if he pleased thus take precedence with *les Césars de Vendôme*: but he replied with regal dignity, "J'aime mieux rester gentilhomme que compter parmi les bâtards de Roi."

H. W. Pickers-
gill, R.A.

Among portrait-painters of fifty or more years since, was

Pickersgill who, though he never rose to a very distinguished degree of eminence, possessed a certain talent and was also decidedly what may be called "a character." His opinion of his own ability was one most satisfactory to *himself*. After painting the portrait of a friend, he said to her—"There—now you may consider you possess a Vandyk." I know the portrait well and I don't think I ever saw a picture by that enchanting master *quite* on a level with it.

Pickersgill lived to a great age, and during the three or four last years of his life took to criticizing his own work so severely, that whenever he could get hold of any of his former pictures he set himself vehemently to work to "correct" them. This "correction" however produced such awful results that, at his death, it was found necessary to burn all the pictures he had subjected to the new treatment.

A year or two before his death, when nearly ninety, he undertook a large historical picture; so large indeed as to require a scaffold on wheels from which to work. I was told by a very intimate old friend of Pickersgill's that he one evening went in to have an after-dinner chat with him, and noticed, to his surprise, that the old limner sat over the fire with his face sedulously turned from him, and at the same time—though usually remarkably cheerful—he answered him on this occasion very briefly and surlily, till at length he said with some abruptness:

"Well, I *am* surprised at you Mr. R., I *am* surprised, after all the years we've known each other, that you should find nothing to say."

Mr. R. was perhaps even more surprised than he, for he couldn't imagine what he was *expected* to say, so he gently craved an explanation.

"Why, I should have thought a mere stranger would have made *some* remark upon a face in the state mine's in;" he then turned partially round, and Mr. R. was so shocked that he remained for some moments more dumb than before.

The explanation that ensued was to the effect that while at work on his huge and unmanageable canvas, he had "stepped back," as artists will step back—to see the effect of a touch he had put in, and forgetting his elevated position, had experienced a severe fall. His face had fared most seriously in the disaster, and was bruised, almost skinned, and bleeding profusely. Strange to say, notwithstanding his advanced age, he completely recovered from the accident, and, unchastened by the warning, was soon on his moving scaffold again.

John Rogers
Herbert, R.A.

I was very well acquainted with John R. Herbert, R.A., whose qualifications and peculiarities were pretty extensively known. The first picture that called public attention to this very unequal painter was remarkable for an ingenious and original conceit. It represented Our Lord as a child in the carpenter's workshop, where, having been employed to sweep together the shavings, He stands with the besom still in His hand lost in a contemplation of the heap before Him, which has taken the form of a cross, roughly marked out. Herbert, who was a close friend of Pugin's, became a Catholic, and after that, confined himself to sacred subjects; having obtained a share in the commission for the mural decorations of the House of Lords he contributed the large fresco representing Moses giving out the tables of the Law.

I went to see him one day while he was at work on the cartoon: while I was examining it and listening to his explanations, some ladies came into the *atelier*. One of them who had been looking round at the artistic litter of the studio and seemed inquisitive about all that was *not* shown her, was preparing to peep behind a large folding-screen which divided the studio, when Herbert, who was only just in time to frustrate her intention, exclaimed: "Oh, Miss — don't move that screen, there's an *undraped* Asiatic sitting behind it."

I believe Herbert went to work very conscientiously about that picture and even visited its supposed scene, to be able

to give it more truthfulness. Like most artists, Herbert was not without his little vanities and susceptibilities, and dearly liked to pass for a man of original mind. Æstheticism was his element, and he seemed literally to float in it when talking of the East. Why and how Herbert came to speak English with a French accent does not seem to be known, but the practice was first manifested on his return from a visit to France; it ultimately became so confirmed a habit, that once when in conversation with a gentleman who took him for a Frenchman, the former said to him: "If you prefer speaking French, Mr. Herbert, I'm your man, for I was brought up in Paris." The suggestion was made in good faith, but as Herbert did not speak a word of French, it created a certain awkwardness. After all, why should he not have been allowed to enjoy in peace the harmless pleasure of pronouncing English after the French fashion? But people will have their little jokes even at the expense of their friends, and when Herbert was going to the East, a brother-brush meeting him, said to him:

"So, Herbert, old fellow, you're going to be a month in Arabia: I suppose when you come back you'll be talking gum-arabic."

As "personally-conducted" tours had not yet been invented, a journey or (as I believe Herbert was pleased to to consider it) a pilgrimage to Araby the Blest (or more correctly speaking Arabia Petræa) was a matter of some interest, and Herbert on his return was fond of reverting to his Oriental experiences—sometimes in very poetical language: as he is dead and gone I will not describe the ludicrous fashion in which he used to relate them. He brought back with him some characteristic "properties," which lay scattered about his *atelier*; these were intended to serve him in the finishing of such accessories as gave truth, fulness, and local colour to his subject, but he made them useful also in illustrating the narratives of his adventures of travel in those remote lands. A garment, perhaps

“tailor-made,” but very simple in its cut and mode of wear, and familiar to Oriental, or even Spanish, travellers, he brought over, considering it to be identical with the “coat of many colours” manufactured by Jacob for the wardrobe of his beloved son Joseph. It did not require much fashioning, being shaped like a chasuble, and as easy to put on as to cut out. It is made of a woven texture resembling canvas, but a dandy of that day sported stripes, red, green, blue, in fact, “many colours” woven into it, while those less punctilious as to their personal appearance wore the garment plain. Herbert found the Asiatic models far better suited to an artist’s requirements than the European, as being more steady when once posed, and able to maintain a fixed position for a larger time, though it was necessary, he said, to humour them in letting them assume the attitude most natural to themselves; but this he considered an advantage to the artist who employed them. Herbert was popular with many.

Chevalier
Desanges.

Of portrait-painters of this time, Louis Desanges may be said to have found much favour among contemporary fashionables. The belles of the season thronged Stratford Place eager to get their portraits into the Academy Exhibition, just as their great-grandmothers had thronged it a century before to get painted by Cosway.

The Chevalier delighted in painting children, and one day showing me in his studio a charming group of the children of one of our English aristocracy. “How beautiful they are!” I said; “you *must* have flattered them.” “Indeed not,” he replied,—“you *can’t* flatter children.”

That he sometimes flattered less juvenile sitters I am afraid there is not much doubt. Desanges was once asked to paint a lovely woman—she was *still* lovely—for *her years*:—but had been a great beauty, and unfortunately she could not bring herself to forget it; but however leniently time had dealt with her, she was neither so lovely nor so youthful as she had been formerly.

One day having taken leave after a sitting, as she went

downstairs, a visitor happened to be coming up: being an intimate friend of the Chevalier's he walked straight into the *atelier*; the canvas on which the portraitist had just been working was still exposed, and his first exclamation on entering was:—"I say, Desanges, you lucky dog! what a charming girl you are painting there";—the portrait was a full length, the figure elegant and graceful, the hair fell in golden ripples, the complexion was peach-like, the eyes celestially blue, the expression that of a budding *ingénue*.

"It's worth while to be a portrait painter," he continued: "to enjoy the privilege of contemplating such charms, and to be able to prolong and repeat your *tête-à-têtes ad libitum*! You are indeed *le peintre des anges*."

Somehow the painter did not appear to share his friend's enthusiasm, though he could not have helped admiring his own work.

"How old should you take my sitter to be, then?" he asked, somewhat sullenly.

"Sweet seventeen?" answered his friend inquiringly.

"Well, you can judge for yourself," replied the painter, "for you must have met her as you came up."

"WHAT!" he exclaimed, "that old woman on the stairs?"

"The same; and the worst is, she has been finding fault with me because I haven't made her *young* enough."

This lady should have adopted the device of an acquaintance of mine, Mrs. Kerr, well known some years ago in London Society. I once asked her for her photograph:—

"With pleasure," said she; and immediately produced from a cabinet in which she kept a store of them, a photo taken from a cameo medallion-portrait, one of the loveliest and most classically beautiful three-quarter faces I had ever seen,—the representation was that of a girl of eighteen.

I looked at *it*, and then at *her*, and honestly thought the old lady had made a mistake, though she was a handsome woman still. She observed my surprise, and proceeded to explain.

“ You see I *was* eighteen once, and as I had no reason to suppose I should ever look younger or more attractive than at that time, I had a medallion-portrait taken in Venice by a first-rate Italian artist: it *was* a perfect resemblance, and since photographs have come into fashion and I am often asked for mine, I think it best to stick to this one, which I have had photographed, and I never give away any other.”

To my thinking Mrs. Kerr took an altogether mistaken view of the case; there may be subsequent periods in the life of every man and woman in which their portrait would be quite as interesting, and in many respects more so than at that unformed epoch. A face may be more beautiful, *as* a face, at eighteen than it is likely to be later; but as an indication of mind and character it is far less interesting. It says nothing to you; it *can* only tell of a person who has not lived, felt, suffered, loved, fought the battle of life, played a part in the world. There are, in the face of more mature age, lines which those who observe may read; lines which interest and attract, perhaps from the very fact that there is a secret satisfaction in trying to decipher their meaning.

George
Richmond,
R.A.

No one perhaps ever so fully succeeded in that marvellous idealization of a sitter as has George Richmond; he sets before him a man, and lo! he makes out of him a poem; and, what is more inexplicable in that rare genius of his,—while we may truly say of him

“ Nihil quod tetigit non ornavit,”

—there is no want of truthfulness to nature in his portraits. I don't know,—nor do I care,—whether he *copies* the *features*—between ourselves, I don't believe he does; but what of that? He gives you the mind, the character, the inner self of his sitter, and always with a facile grace which while it transfigures the subject, still faithfully reproduces him. This success is, I take it, the outcome of genius; not

an art that can be acquired: is it not hence, as Rogers asks :

“ . . . the keen delight a portrait gives ?
We gaze on every feature till it lives ;
Here the fond lover views the absent maid ;
And our lost friend still lingers in his shade.”

We need take but one or two examples from the magic easel of George Richmond to prove what I advance : there can be few of my readers who are not familiar with the personality of the late Cardinal Manning (whose splendid head and refined face could not but have inspired the painter as irresistibly as they have impressed and attracted all who ever saw him) ; Samuel Wilberforce is another well-known individuality, and Lord Houghton, an-equally distinguished type : to any intelligent person these three from among the vast number of portraits painted by Richmond will suffice to illustrate my meaning. As to that of Cardinal Manning, taken in his very prime and, like the features it portrays, suggesting many marked and remarkable characteristics, it is the very perfection of a portrait, and as such, instantly recommends itself to every spectator ; with consummate art, the painter's genius has imparted to it all the winning grace of the original, presenting us with a type which Nature has scattered very sparingly over the world. In this case the painter's skill was so materially assisted by the qualifications of his model that it only remained for him to take advantage of the chance ; but of the three I have named there is one which as it did not supply these auxiliaries, left him to find his inspiration in his own resources. Samuel Wilberforce had an attractive manner and a charming expression,—an expression of mingled benevolence, intelligence, and humour, and there was also an impressive dignity in his bearing ; all this the painter has given us with the remarkable ability which has established his reputation. Though the lines of beauty were entirely wanting in the Bishop's features, and the contour

of his face was not such as to redeem or even to soften their defects, this proved no drawback to Richmond's production of a pleasing and most attractive portrait.

In studying any of this painter's works one is struck by the idea that he did not care for the *physique* of his sitter, he made himself master of his *character* and painted that. It must be conceded that Samuel Wilberforce's countenance was of those made to change perceptibly with the thoughts and feelings which impress and animate the man. He was a fascinating conversationist, and his mobile features were to a wonderful degree influenced by what was passing in his mind. It is no unimportant part of the limner's skill to draw out his sitter, and Richmond practically understood this, so that when the intelligence and geniality of Wilberforce came to the fore and the sparkle of his humour illumined his face, the painter adroitly caught the passing expression and fixed it there. Paradoxical, therefore, as the assertion may seem, the painter really has,—without flattering his Lordship,—given him an undeniably handsome face. while the likeness is equally undeniable.

Not less interesting, and not less creditable to the genius of this remarkable painter, is the beautiful portrait of Lord Houghton, which the admirable engraving of Holl has made known to an admiring public: the history of this picture I have given in a former chapter.

Richmond's portrait of Bishop Tait is scarcely as happy; one cannot examine it without feeling that there is some element of the character wanting; but who would have done it better? "*Ubi plurima*," &c. The number of portraits, could it be ascertained, executed by this painter in the course of his professional career must be startling. Lady Eastlake told me that when Sir Charles proposed him for election as a member of the Athenæum he put forward as one of his titles to the suffrages of the electors that he was the painter of three thousand portraits; and he continued his work many years after that.

It seems that some little time before the Queen's jubilee Lady Salisbury applied to Richmond to paint a portrait of the Premier. Richmond, who since the death of his wife had never taken a brush in his hand, excused himself on the plea that he had already painted the Marquis; but on Lady Salisbury informing him that it was her wish to present the picture to Her Majesty as a jubilee gift, the painter relented and the portrait was executed.

Elijah, or as he preferred to be called, "Robin," Walton's pictures must be remembered by many of the present generation: he had but one style, but may be said to have excelled in that and to have won admirers, for his execution of Alpine scenery is very successful. As a draughtsman, few could do better, but unfortunately his eye for colour was not to be relied on, and many of his pictures are lamentably deficient in both truth and harmony of tone. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, whether in crudeness of colouring or variety of subject, Walton entertained a tolerably flattering idea of himself, and I have heard a story,* which if it were not well authenticated could scarcely be credited, of the price he once put on one of his pictures, and the mean advantage he took of the generosity of a patron.

Elijah
Walton.

A West-country gentleman of County-family position, travelling abroad, met Elijah, and being taken with his manner, proposed that he should join him in a rather extensive tour to the East, liberally defraying all his expenses; on one occasion the tourist was so much struck with a place they visited, that he intimated to his travelling companion he should like a sketch of it, his idea being that it would make a striking little picture of perhaps two feet by eighteen inches. After his return home, he forgot all about the sketch Walton had made in his presence, when some two years after, to his intense surprise, he one day received a letter from Walton, informing him that "his" picture had

* The late Professor Freeman, whom I one day met at dinner, among much interesting and informing talk, related to me this anecdote.

just been despatched to him, and that he had insured it for £1,500. The unconscious purchaser of this costly work of art was taken aback at the communication, and his horror was equal to his astonishment when the huge canvas arrived. It was so large that it would cost another fortune to frame, and moreover he was puzzled, even in his large country-mansion, to find a wall on which it could be hung: he manfully paid the price of his rashness, but resolved to give Mr. Walton a wide berth in future. I do not know whether by similar means or in a less unscrupulous way Elijah realized a sufficient income to enable him to claim a certain position in the profession, but a few years after this incident he fell into very reduced circumstances (for he was a reckless spendthrift), and shamelessly wrote to his former patron and dupe, asking him to assist him: the addressee, unfortunately for the painter, was travelling in Egypt, so did not receive the letter, and Walton died in abject poverty.

He was a man of what biographers are wont to style, "humble origin," his father being a tailor in Birmingham; being however a good-looking youth, with curly hair and of gentlemanly appearance, he became popular in his native place where his early cleverness with his pencil was appreciated; he succeeded in marrying a lady of a class superior to his own, though with little or no fortune; but the marriage was not a happy one, owing to Walton's dissipation and general misconduct.

Rosa
Bonheur.

I was in Paris in the year "*de la comète*," and had occasion to visit frequently the school of design where Rosa Bonheur was holding a class. She was very remarkable in appearance, unreservedly affecting the artistic style and manner; she wore her hair, which was curly, short like that of a man, and parted at the side: her dress was also mannish, even when she was not wearing the conventional *blouse d'atelier*: when habited in that, it would scarcely strike any one who did not know her, that she could be a woman, and she was perfectly at home in this Bohemian costume. Even clothed

in the attire of her sex, her appearance still remained singular, for in those days of monstrous crinolines, Rosa Bonheur was strong-minded enough to eschew the hooped skirt. There was a tone of *camaraderie* in her address which did not exactly mis-become her, but she was very curt with her pupils, whom she reprimanded in a tone of marked severity if she found them idle or inattentive, and they soon learned she was not to be trifled with.

When too much engaged to attend to these classes, Rosa was replaced by her sister, Madame Peyrol, also an artist and of a certain merit, but not to be named in any kind of comparison with Rosa : Madame Peyrol's successes as well as those of her brother at the *Salon*, were however very marked.

Rosa's history is a touching, not to say a romantic one, and shows her to have nobly struggled both with adversity and sorrow. Her father had a remarkable artistic genius, which Rosa inherited in an improved degree, and in her childhood was never so happy as when, with any odd bit of paper and a stump of a pencil, she could stow herself away in some unmolested corner and copy anything and everything she saw around her. Some of her animals and figures, even at this early period of her life, were so clever and manifested so artistic a touch, that her father was wont to collect them and lay them by, though with only a very vague notion of what this precocious taste was ultimately to lead to.

She was still very young when her mother died, and her father, overwhelmed with grief for his loss, found himself with four small children on his unaided hands. It was then that Rosa's great talent began suddenly to develop itself, and her father resolved to make her his special pupil, both with a view to fit her for a profession for which she showed such wonderful aptitude, and in the hope that so interesting an occupation would divert his mind from his abiding grief.

Pursuing her studies with an intense love for her art, she courageously visited the *abattoirs*, and there, day after day, laboured with an energy and a determination such as alone

could have overcome the natural antipathy she felt to the inevitable surroundings of her work. The first picture Rosa Bonheur ever exhibited, and that was in 1840, presented a simple subject, but there appeared unmistakable artistic feeling in the treatment. It was nothing more than a group of two rabbits munching carrots, and was valuable only as the promising precursor of priceless works. It was readily sold, but was subsequently repurchased by the family as a memorial of Rosa's early proficiency and perseverance, and is now in the possession of her sister, Madame Peyrol.

In 1849 Rosa Bonheur had the incalculable misfortune to lose her father, and was so affected by the calamity that for a long time it was thought she would have succumbed to it: happily her love of art, and the absorbing interest she took in its pursuit, saved her from the depressing consequences of her sorrow; she worked with an energy born of her desperation, and the first production which followed her bereavement was the beautiful picture known as *Labourage Nivernais*, and full of freshness and feeling: other masterpieces followed in due course, and as they succeeded each other, won for her that surpassing admiration which has made her name famous throughout the world. It is said that few of Rosa Bonheur's pictures grace the galleries, public or private, of her native country; the English are such demonstrative amateurs of them, that they buy up these favourite and valuable canvasses wherever they can find them. Napoleon III. and the Empress Eugénie highly appreciated this artist's talents; and the latter went to her *atelier* to decorate her personally with the cross of the Legion of Honour.

Though it was Rosa Bonheur's custom to appear when at work in the conventional artist's outer integuments and to wear her hair cropped, it must not be supposed (although her appearance thus in some degree approached that of the male Bohemian painter of the day) that there was in her character any leaning towards masculine habits or towards any kind of roughness or coarseness of manner: on the

contrary, all her feelings and sentiments were essentially feminine, soft and refined, and her life has always been a practical illustration of the most delicate womanly attributes. At the same time, with these outer insignia she has, it must be admitted, acquired also the outer semblance of a man, and, as her subjoined portrait will testify, the disguise is absolutely deceptive. No face, let it be that of man or woman, could bear a more *manly* expression, nor, it must be added, one more singularly tempered with



ROSA BONHEUR.

benevolence. Rosa now occupies a commanding social position; no word even in that scandal-mongering country—her *patrie*,—has ever been uttered against her fair fame, and she is not less beloved by those who enjoy her personal friendship than she is respected by all who have ever heard of her.

She has a delightful home, the home of an artist—an artist possessed of taste and wealth, the result of her own genius and industry; her house is on the edge of the forest

of Fontainebleau, and with its extensive lands is known as the Château de By. The building is quaint and attractive, and dates from the time of Louis XV., the gardens having been laid out by Le Nôtre. Rosa's *atelier* is charming; it is well worth the journey to see that alone and to be shown over it by its accomplished mistress; but everything about the dwelling is delightfully characteristic, and what may be called its *ménagerie* intensely amusing. Dogs of several breeds, a parrot, an owl dwell there, and (like the toys of the present day) all of them can "do something": the dogs occupy the court-yard and guard the gates to some purpose: Rosa Bonheur receives with the most graceful hospitality her invited or introduced guests, but she very properly objects to admit absolute strangers; she has probably found by experience there is no limit to the impertinence of tourists. The peasants who live in her vicinity treat her with affectionate respect, and she is looked up to as the *Dame du Château*, a title her benevolence fully justifies.

John Doyle.

I used occasionally to meet Richard (known among his familiars as "Dicky") Doyle, the clever son of a clever father; and brother of an intelligent and capable brother. Father and son were both draughtsmen, but in a totally different style. If "H. B." could hit off an unmistakable human likeness or represent with living character an equine attitude, it was not in consequence, but in spite, of his anatomical treatment of them. "H. B." possessed the genius of caricature—political caricature—and could give you the expression of a man (also that of a horse with a fidelity which jumped to the eyes; still, though his effigies may be said to move and speak, and that not vaguely, but as beings they represented would have moved and spoken under the influences with which he surrounded them, yet his "drawing" was nowhere: it was not missed, however, for it was not needed; the "story—God bless you"—he had "to tell, Sir," was told by a politician and not by an artist, and it was so vividly told that it appealed to

every intelligence under whose notice it came. For years these cartoons continued to appear at periodical intervals, and for years their source was as much a mystery as the authorship of Junius : one individual alone was in the secret, —Mr. Doyle’s only daughter, and faithfully she kept it ; John Doyle’s own sons living in the same house knew nothing about the matter, and would come home and talk about each fresh caricature as it appeared, little suspecting they were in the author’s company, and that it was under that very roof that the drawings in question first saw the light. John Doyle’s equestrian series is worthy of study, and it is curious to note that no two of his horses are alike in form or attitude.

Richard Doyle had essentially the touch of an artist ; he too could hit off a character with the happiest success, but it was done with a few significant strokes every one of which had its worth and its meaning, so knowingly was it applied. During some years Richard Doyle was the mainstay and the glory of *Punch*, and may be said to have pushed that paper into public favour and kept it well to the fore : but the connection between that periodical and its most valuable artist was severed upon a question of principle ; Doyle, who was a conscientious Catholic, refusing his services in the illustration of the criticisms which it pleased that uncompromising paper to pass on the Pope.

Richard
Doyle.

Richard Doyle’s personality betrayed no outward indications of his singular genius ; essentially gentlemanly and unassuming, he had nothing of the “ artist ” in his bearing and manners, affecting no singularity of style, and conforming to the habits of the society he frequented instead of adopting the intentional peculiarities by which so many artists seem desirous of making themselves a class apart.

So popular was Richard Doyle among those whose friendship and appreciation he had won, that his society was widely sought, and during nearly twenty years of his life he but rarely found an opportunity for dining at home.

When once the owner of a country-house had secured Richard Doyle's company he never let him go till compelled to part with him. From his earliest years he had given remarkable indications of his peculiar genius, and also of a pervading principle which kept his most humorous sketches strictly but unaffectedly within the bounds of a pure and excellent taste; the same may be said of his conversation, which was as refined as witty.

There are few modern works of art more delicate in design and more exquisite in finish than Richard Doyle's pictures; as one looks at them one is tempted to believe he must have lived in fairyland; the style is altogether unique and testifies to a singularly original mind and most graceful imagination; the colouring suggests that when painting, he must always have had before his eyes a parterre of flowers possessing such singular harmoniousness that, group their hues as you will, and mingle them as promiscuously as you may, you run no risk of making the effect vulgar. By a curious coincidence Richard Doyle and Mario—each a celebrity in his own way—died on the same day, December 11, 1883.

Miss Setchell.

As a remarkable instance of artists who make a hopeful mark on their times, give promise of winning name and fame, and then disappear and are forgotten, may be mentioned a clever girl, daughter of a bookseller in King Street, Covent Garden, who at an early age produced and exhibited a water-colour composition, admired more perhaps as an indication of ripening talent than for the extent of its actual merit. It was a group of only two figures, and the subject was taken from one of Crabbe's tales. It represented a prison-cell, the gloom of which was effectively rendered, and in which, surrounded by bare walls and dreary accessories, were seated on a stone bench a young fellow in the prime of robust health and strength, in an attitude of stern despair, and beside him his betrothed, a village maiden who clasps his hand while with anxious

earnestness she is appealing to him to tell her whether he is innocent or guilty. The young woman's figure and expression seemed to me weak and scarcely on a level with the name given to the picture—" *The Momentous Question.*"

So general however was the admiration the work elicited, that not only was it immediately purchased, engraved and extensively circulated, but artists as well as amateurs called at her father's house day after day, congratulating Miss Setchell on her ability and giving her so much encouragement that it is almost incredible she should have laid down her palette and brushes and never have given her first success a successor.

It was in 1890 that passing the shop, where books are still sold, though a different name is over the door, I looked in at the printseller's opposite with whom I have often dealt. It was a little time before I could make even him recall the incident; at last, however, it all came back to his mind, and the sequel to what I already knew was very sad:—" Ah, poor thing!" he said, " she went quite off her head, and they had to take her away. I'm pretty sure," he added: " she has now long been dead."

Setchell, the old bookseller, was still living and carrying on business in this house, up to 1875.

At the house of Mdme. Bodichon I met the French painter Daubigny and his son, both of whom had come over during the Gallo-Prussian war (1870). Among the guests was a well-known lady physician, Dr. Elizabeth —, to whom our hostess wished to call the attention of the French painter, as lady graduates were at that time scarcely known in France; she accordingly said to me: " As you speak French, do tell M. Daubigny all about Dr. Elizabeth, and point her out to him."

Les
Daubigny,
père et fils.

" That is more easily imagined than said," I replied: " for I don't know of any French word which would convey the idea of a female doctor; in English, you see, we *can* say ' doctress,' but in French to feminize *un médecin* we

must say *une médecine*, which would suggest an altogether erroneous impression."

Of Daubigny's work I have often thought how strange it was that, the son of a miniaturist, and getting his first ideas of art from him *as* a miniaturist, he should, when he had established his own style as a landscape painter, have been distinguished for the roughness, boldness, and absence of finish in his work. One difficulty, universally admitted by artists, Daubigny seems to have overcome; his verdure is painted with a truth to nature attained by few of his contemporaries. It is impossible to look at his pictures without recognizing this fact, and it is no doubt one reason why they are so much admired.

Cabanel.

Of the French portrait-painters of our day, is there one whose loss is more to be regretted than that of the admirable portraitist, Cabanel, whose death, when no more than sixty-four, took place in January, 1888? Cabanel had been for a long time before the public, who were accustomed to look with eagerness for his annual exhibits in the Salon. I met him one day in the *Champs Élysées* with a friend, who introduced me to him, and I was charmed with the distinction of his appearance and the frank courtesy of his manner. On horseback, Cabanel was the picture of a perfect *cavalier*; he rode with a grace and ease (rare enough in France) which reminded one of Velasquez's equestrian pictures: it at once called the attention even of strangers to his presence, which was in character with his handsome, intelligent countenance. Cabanel's proficiency in his art had been reached by close application, steady purpose, natural gifts, and a real love for his profession: his earlier efforts were almost always applied to the illustration of sacred subjects, and these seem to have culminated in his picture of *Christ in the Prætorium*, exhibited in 1845 to an appreciative public, winning for him the award of the second gold medal. After this period, Cabanel occasionally had recourse to profane history for his in-

spirations, but it was not until 1853 that he developed his genius for portraits. In that year he produced a lady's portrait so admirably painted, that the approbation it secured encouraged him to further efforts in the same direction, and he soon after undertook the portrait of Madame de Clermont-Tonnerre, which established his fame as the finest portraitist of his time. In the same *Salon* in which this portrait was hung, there was also a painting of Cabanel's, the subject of which was *Une Nymphe enlevée par un Faune*; the following year, appeared his *Naissance de Vénus*, also an exquisite picture. In 1863 Cabanel was admitted *Membre de l'Institut des Beaux Arts* as successor to Horace Vernet. He painted more than one portrait of the Emperor Napoleon III., but never succeeded so well with men's as with women's portraits.

Cabanel possessed that enviable talent, so brilliantly exemplified in the works of George Richmond, of delineating the individual himself and not merely his outward form; in this way producing a really beautiful portrait of a face, the chief beauty of which consisted in its intelligence and expression; the likeness was always unmistakable at the same time that the countenance seemed idealized, transfigured, and invested with a beauty which till then had not always been discernible in the original.

Cabanel's strong point in a portrait was the perfection with which he drew and finished the hands and arms, especially the latter: this may have been one reason which made him prefer painting portraits of women to those of men, and he stipulated wherever possible, that the arms should be bared up to the shoulder.

Nor did Cabanel content himself with painting a conventional arm; with the eye of a true artist, he saw character in this detail of portraiture, and as conscientiously copied the arm as the eye or the lips. For a painter to admit that he "paints the hands from his chamber-maid," he must either be very careless of his art, or must wish to "take down"

the vanity of a sitter : every painter *must* know, or *ought* to know, that the hand is a most essential feature in a portrait, and is as telling as any other part of the picture : yet how greatly it has often been neglected ; Gainsborough's hands have no anatomy in them, they are not even like hands, much less like any special hands, and Vandyck's, beautiful, carefully drawn, and exquisitely finished as they are, are all of one type, and not the hands of his sitters.*

I had a friend in Paris, a very beautiful woman—the late Vicomtesse de St. Priest—who owned most exquisite hands. She was so careful of them (although she painted and modelled) that she never wore rings—not even her wedding-ring, alleging that it spoiled the shape, and with it the character, of the finger! *She* certainly would not have been content with a portrait in which her *own* hands were not reproduced.

One of my friends, a *Marquise du "Faubourg Noble,"* by her husband's desire, sat to Cabanel for a half-length portrait : the painter having learned that this lady had very beautiful arms and hands, made it an absolute condition that the arrangement of the drapery should be left to him, and that the arms should be introduced nude into the picture. As the family was of the *ancienne noblesse*, and held rigidly to the exclusive notions of the Faubourg St. Germain, it was thought necessary to call together a family council to consider the propriety of acceding to the proposition, and it was only after much deliberation that consent was obtained. I saw this picture at my friend's house after it was finished ; it was a life-size "kit-cat," and the likeness was both admirable and agreeable ; the dress was of black velvet, and this rich background gave to the arms and hands a wonderful *éclat*. It was impossible not to admire this brilliant sample of flesh-tint in arms

* To take, at random, an example in modern painting of how badly hands can be drawn, *vide* those of "Henry Fawcett, M.P., and Mrs. Fawcett," a group (altogether *peculiar*), lent by Sir Charles Dilke to the Victorian Exhibition.

exquisitely anatomized, rounded and finished, but, as I thought, somewhat ostentatiously displayed, and I could not help wishing some good genius of taste had whispered into the painter's ear the counsel to throw a delicate fabric of black lace, or even an "accidental shadow" partly across one of them: when the picture was seen at a distance, the coal-black texture of the velvet dress formed too conspicuous a contrast with the ivory fairness of the arms, and all that met the eye was two white stripes crossing the canvas.

A relative of mine, a collector of works of art, has a very interesting portrait by Gainsborough, of that painter's daughter, Mrs. Fischer, who died of consumption when comparatively young, and before the picture was completed: she is represented playing on a guitar, and the arms and hands are roughly sketched in, while the rest of the picture is more or less finished: this portrait was taken from the easel, in its present state, on the day the sitter died, and her father never had the courage to touch it again. It is just as well the arms and hands *were* left in *ébauche*.

Gainsborough's daughter.

It is well known that Whistler is in the habit of exhibiting at the *Salon*, and though by no means an admirer of his productions as a rule, I have always remembered that when visiting the *Palais de l'Industrie* on the *Vernissage*-day of 1884, I saw there a bewitching full-length portrait by that eccentric artist of a young girl of about fourteen. It was charmingly "arranged": the pose, the expression, the drapery, were each and all delightful; the background was unobtrusive and harmonious, and the effect grew upon the spectator the more it was examined. The simplicity of the whole composition was irresistibly winning, and probably the majority of connoisseurs who saw it will have wished that the painter had always adhered to that unaffected style.

Whistler.

I once met Whistler at the house of Mr. Norman Lockyer, the astronomer. His appearance is characteristic; there is intelligence and purpose in his features, not to describe them

Professor Norman Lockyer.

as regular and classical ; his hair was then very dark and it clustered like a black bush, but in the midst of it was the one white lock, of which, it is said that all who possess this peculiarity are so proud.

There were other celebrities at that reception, and Mr. Lockyer's cultivated and charming little wife, who was then living, presided with her wonted grace and amiability. Mr. Lockyer was almost monopolized by the Chinese Ambassador and his suite, who were present : it was curious to remark the profound interest they manifested in his astronomical pursuits, not only minutely examining all the scientific instruments and drawings they could lay their hands on, but absorbing with hungry eagerness the explanations of the several uses they served and of the results they had aided in obtaining ; Mr. Macartney, the well-known Chinese scholar, accompanied these inquisitive visitors as interpreter, and the learned Orientalist sustained a most lively and technical conversation in English and Chinese between the grave, dignified, and gorgeously attired Celestials and their distinguished host, who seemed quite inspired by the reverent attention with which they listened to and devoured his information.

It adds greatly to the merit of this gifted *savant*, who has so far outstripped all others of his profession in spectroscopic and other discoveries, that he should possess the perfect sight of one eye, only.

SOME ATELIERS OF THE PAST.

SCULPTORS.

VOL. II.

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“ Art is the link between the material and the ideal, the highest outcome of our spiritual aspirations, a breath of divinity, and an instinct of that beauty that is eternal in heaven.”

CHAPTER XII.

SOME ATELIERS OF THE PAST.

SCULPTORS.

“ . . . The clay of the modeller is more *real* ; but the marble of the sculptor is the clay glorified.”—THORWALDSEN.

I HAVE often heard my father speak of the curious character of Nollekens the sculptor, whose bust of my grandfather always under my eyes, brought me early acquainted with his name. He must have been a strange compound of conflicting attributes, but it seems the good were his own, while the bad were acquired from his wife. It was a case of “ *Cherchez la femme* : ” she was coarse, vulgar, noisy, and mean, and kept him entirely under petticoat-government ; but although he fell into rough habits and parsimonious ways, his native *bonhomie* and his sense of humour made him so agreeable a companion that he enjoyed the friendship of many of the wits and literary characters of the day ; nor did his eccentricities alienate their regard, for he was always a man of high principle, and, as such, retained the respect of those who knew and understood him.

Joseph Nollekens, R.A.

There is a story illustrative of this fact to the effect that one day Dr. Wolcot (Peter Pindar), seeing him near his house, the former, who was very tall, while Nollekens was very short, looking down upon him in a patronizing way, said :

“ How is it you never come to see me now, Nolly ? ”

“ Because you have presumed to slander His Majesty, and even to send me the lies you have published. I like the Royal family ; the King has been very good to me, as he

is to all artists, and I won't have anything to do with persons who speak against him."

On this, Wolcot tapped him on the shoulder with his walking-stick, exclaiming—

"Hey day! my little Nolly! Why, you're quite a champion for the Court; that's right; stand up for your friends; I like you all the better for that; you shall make a bust of me."

"I'll see you d——d first!" said Nolly; "I don't like *your* ways, though you may approve of *mine*. If you want another effigy of yourself, go and ask Opie to paint you, I'm sure no one else would."

To this, Wolcot finding no answer, whistled up his dog, went in, and shut the door.

Nollekens, close and stingy as he could often be, was full of sympathetic feeling for those in straitened circumstances, and when he acted on the impulse of his own heart, was generous in the extreme: this is a curious trait common to many miserly individuals, but the character of Nollekens was full of incongruities.

Poor Nollekens was, however, the most harmless, good-natured soul in the world, and besides being guided by rigid principles, had real talent; nevertheless, he seems to have been constantly the butt of his associates, who got into a way of treating his peculiarities with a kind of good-humoured contempt, while they recognized his finer attributes only after his death.

Smith (the author of *A Book for a Rainy Day*) tells us that he one day heard Fuseli call after the sculptor in the street: "Nollekens! Nollekens! why do you walk in the sun? If you have no regard for your few brains, you need not melt your coat-buttons." And James Boswell meeting him in the pit of the Pantheon, exclaimed aloud: "Why, Nollekens! how dirty you go, now! I recollect when you were the gayest dressed of any in the house." To whom Nollekens made the retort un-courteous of—"That's more

than I could ever say of you." This reply was justified, for Boswell it appears had a worse appearance when dressed, than when *en déshabillé*: as he seldom washed himself, his clean ruffles, which he changed regularly, served as a striking contrast to his dirty flesh.

The eccentric Lord Coleraine (*alias* Jack Hanger), who



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attracted more attention in the streets, than any man in London, never met Nollekens without calling to him, "Well, Nolly, my boy! what have you done with my bust of the Prince? Why don't you send it home?"

"Why, my lord, you know," Nollekens would reply: "you always said you would fetch it away in a hackney coach and give me the money for it."

But the anecdotes that might be related of Nollekens would fill pages, and amusing pages too. He and his wife and their faithful servant Bronze must have formed a droll trio; Nollekens was not refined either in manners or conversation, and his wife's society did not improve him; Mrs. Nollekens being a woman of low and sordid mind; they constantly quarrelled, but as constantly made up their quarrels. Nollekens was shrewd in planning and carrying out his economical ideas, but on one occasion he overreached himself: while in Italy he exercised great taste and consummate artistic knowledge in discovering and collecting objects of antique art; and, by scraping, cleaning, and repairing such things as he bought broken and dirty, he realized the important sums which became the foundation of his fortune: among other works of art that he brought from that country was a large picture of great value, and wishing to avoid paying the duty on it, he—somewhat too cleverly—hit upon the expedient of dividing it into portions. For some reason, the Custom-House authorities entertaining a suspicion that all was not square, had the pieces unpacked; the nature of them suggested that they should be put together, and this proceeding at once showed there had been an intention to defraud; they accordingly levied the duty on the pieces, charging for each as a distinct picture! In *this* case honesty *would* have proved the better policy.

Charles Townley, the wealthy and eminent collector, bought of Nollekens all the curious and rare terra-cotta figures he was clever enough to pick up in Rome, and had them let into the walls of his house, which might more properly have been called a museum than a dwelling.

Towards the end of his life Mr. Coutts wished to have a bust of himself, and consulted Fuseli as to what sculptor he should commission to execute it, price being no consideration; Fuseli replied that if it were question of a group he should certainly recommend Flaxman; but for a



bust, Nollekens would be vastly preferable to any other artist. The work was accordingly entrusted to Nollekens, and was the last that ever passed through his hands: the likeness was faithfully preserved, every wrinkle being reproduced with Denner-like conscientiousness. Droll stories were told of the inconvenience to which Nollekens' sitters were subjected by his stinginess in not sufficiently warming his studio, and when Coutts was sitting to him, Mrs. Coutts (afterwards Duchess of St. Albans) would bring in her carriage, soups and jellies ready prepared, which she used herself to warm in a silver saucepan, over such fire as was provided, and administer to her husband.

The old man so thoroughly enjoyed these little hot repasts, to which the cold atmosphere of the room gave an additional relish, that Nollekens used to say it was quite a pleasure to see him feed. Nollekens sometimes took advantage of his sitter's company to worm financial information out of him, hoping to get a tip as to investments, and it would have made a characteristic picture could any limner have portrayed the heads of the two old men, one eagerly catechising, and the other listening and reflecting, as he held his spoon half-way to his mouth while he paused to reply, according as the inquiry happened to interest him.

Wealthy as Nollekens became,—having insensibly adopted his wife's ideas—he grudged himself any kind of amusement, and the wildest vagary in which he and Mrs. N. seem ever to have indulged was an expedition to Uxbridge and back! Such an extravagance would probably never have entered into their parsimonious minds had they not seen advertised a cheap excursion by barge to that remote spot. This affair was literally an event in their stay-at-home lives, and for months after, Mrs. Nollekens, who was anxious all the town should hear of it, talked of nothing else, at each fresh narration magnifying the perils of the “voyage” and adding new “adventures”!

Sir Francis
Chantrey,
R.A.

Of Sir Francis and Lady Chantrey I have heard so much from a friend of my own—a late Indian cavalry officer, to whose son Chantrey was godfather—that I may perhaps be able to record some incidents of the admired sculptor's life less familiar than others to the general public. He, nevertheless, lived so near the present time and so much has been said and written about him, that the broad history of his humble antecedents as an artizan, his early manifestation of artistic feeling, and his self-developed genius, together with the large fortune he realized, and his liberal employment and disposal of it, are all more or less known to the world. Strange to say, however, there exist people who appear to know him chiefly as “the man who ‘accidentally’ killed two birds with one shot,” and speak of him as if he had made no other mark on the age!

Chantrey's father, a carpenter and joiner, occupied a small cottage and workshop at a village in Derbyshire, and as the boy went daily past the shop of a carver named Ramsay on his way to school, he would look wistfully in at the specimens displayed there, though their merit was not of a very high order. However, to young Francis they were so attractive that nothing would satisfy him but trying his hand at the work, till finally his father was advised by John Raphael Smith to apprentice him to this man for seven years. The lad soon got beyond his master, and the moment his engagement was at end, left him, being at that time undecided as to whether he should pursue sculpture or painting, for he felt one must be given up if he would be perfect in either.

He soon found he had a “knack” on which he could rely, of taking likenesses and consequently, in 1802, advertised himself as “a painter of portraits.” He was then living at Sheffield, and his studio was at 23, Paradise Square: he fixed his price at the modest sum of “two to three guineas,” it was no wonder therefore that he soon found patrons; in proportion as he improved by practice, he gradually raised his prices, but they still remained very moderate. His first

attempt—and a very creditable one it was—was a profile of his uncle, Mr. Wale, whose daughter he afterwards married in 1807. Mr. and Mrs. Wale were the confidential and trusted servants of Mr. and Mrs. D'Oyley, living in Curzon Street, and their daughter was maid to Mrs. D'Oyley, who left her a little fortune of £10,000, no doubt the first foundation of Chantrey's professional success, as she ultimately married him.

Chantrey finding his occupation in Sheffield less productive than he had expected, came to London, where he hired a little garret in a house adjoining that of the D'Oyleys, and here he resumed sculpture, earning a pittance of 5s. a day as a wood carver! It was here that in his "off-hours" he modelled his famous *Head of Satan*; he used to relate afterwards how he "worked at this, with a paper cap on his head, and how, as he could afford but one candle, he ingeniously stuck that in his cap, so that it might light him whichever way he turned."

This *Head of Satan* must not be confounded with the bust of his friend, *Satan Montgomery*—quite another character—which was one of his later works. Chantrey used to say that his *Head of Satan* was greatly instrumental in bringing him into notice: however even this master-piece was less advantageous to the sculptor's reputation than his bust of Horne Tooke, the first work he undertook after his return from Rome, which may be said to have been the foundation-stone of his fame; it was no sooner exhibited than its merit was widely recognized: a substantial proof of this approval being that a continuous stream of orders flowed in, producing no less than £12,000. For the start thus obtained in his profession, Chantrey always felt an indebtedness to the subject of this successful work, and never omitted to testify to him his sense of obligation.

On his marriage, Chantrey hired a house in Eccleston Street, choosing it on account of the studio attached to it, and part of his wife's money was judiciously invested

in establishing himself there, and in the purchase of marble, tools, and other indispensable accessories. A few years after—viz., in 1813—he was able to ask one hundred and fifty guineas for a bust which, from the excellence of his work, soon rose to two hundred; and on His Majesty George IV. sitting to him, the King told him that he should pay him three hundred guineas, recommending him at the same time to fix that sum as his minimum fee in future.

His admiration for Chantrey, however, whether as a man or a sculptor, was shown by the great affability and consideration with which he always honoured him. On his arrival at the palace on this occasion, the King at once proceeded to put him at his ease: His Majesty, who could fascinate every one when he pleased, after shaking hands with him, said with his wonted grace: “Remember, Chantrey, you are my guest, and you must consider yourself as such, for my pleasure as well as your own; therefore, pray make yourself perfectly at home, and use the same freedom as if you were in your own house.”

It was at this time that the King consulted him about an equestrian statue of himself for the staircase at Windsor,* and asked for suggestions from him as to the attitude of the horse. Chantrey, in the course of a few hours, much to the King's surprise and admiration, brought him what might be called a *collection* of sketches of horses in different positions, so that the Royal client was much puzzled which to select; curiously enough, he fixed on the one Chantrey had already determined in his own mind would be the best, his reason being that it was the least usual—viz., a horse at rest, with his four feet on the ground: the King considered it the most dignified. Chantrey's kind patron and friend, Lord Egremont, was of the same opinion, and told the sculptor he was “glad the King's horse was not going to be made walking off his pedestal.”

* This statue was placed on the grand staircase, Windsor Castle, April 14, 1835.

When the work was completed, the King contemplated it thoughtfully, walking round it and examining the horse as well as the rider ; his countenance expanded as he approached the sculptor, and patting him on the back, he said :

“This is one of your best works, Chantrey, and will immortalize me as well as yourself.”

Chantrey replied that he thought all who saw the statue would applaud His Majesty's choice of a mount at rest ; but he added that in the *next* equestrian statue he executed, he should, if possible, make the horse pawing the ground, less for the reason that it was a better attitude where circumstances were in accord with it, than for the sake of showing variety in his works. Though he did not like working in bronze, he executed several statues in that material, chiefly equestrian : among them that of George IV. originally intended to surmount the Marble Arch then standing before Buckingham Palace. In this group he has given the same attitude to the horse, as in the marble statue at Windsor. This statue is now placed on the long vacant pedestal at the north-east angle of Trafalgar Square : the price paid him for it was nine hundred guineas, but it was liquidated in three instalments, only two of which reached his hands, the third having gone into his estate only after his death ; the amount seems large, but the nation had no cause to complain, as it reverted to them in an increased form, through Sir Francis's liberality.

Great were the perseverance and energy with which he pursued his career, but he was also wonderfully favoured by circumstances. One of his patronesses, Lady Frederica Stanhope, was most helpful to him, and the Marquis of Wellesley's notice introduced him to many patrons. The bust of George Canning was one of his most thoughtful works, and that of Lord St. Vincent scarcely less remarkable ; these earlier efforts were followed by so many orders that in the course of a few years there was not a contemporary celebrity, from George IV. downwards,

who had not sat to Chantrey. It is therefore not surprising that he died worth £150,000, all the fruit of his own genius and industry.

Though Chantrey saw perfectly only with one eye, this disability never deterred him from pursuing an art which required all the faculties he could bring to it, nor did his productions ever suffer from the deficiency. The rapidity with which he worked whether at drawing, modelling, or sculpture, was cause of astonishment to his brother artists; an amusing exemplification of this occurred one day, when he and Ebenezer Rhodes were out on a pedestrian excursion: passing through a village, they stopped at a country-inn for refreshment: while their meal was being laid, Chantrey walked to the window, and being delighted with the view, pulled out his drawing-book and made a sketch of it; then turning to Rhodes he asked him to do him the favour of seating himself on a stone by the road-side which he pointed out to him, as he wanted a figure. Rhodes was surprised to hear him very shortly after, shout to him that he might return, but was also surprised, and something more, at finding an unmistakable full-length portrait of himself . . . *shown as sitting in the stocks!*

In the collection of General Sir Travell Phillips, hanging beside Chantrey's portrait of Mr. Wale, was another interesting picture, not *by* but *of*, Chantrey, by C. R. Leslie, the history of which is amusing.

The subject is *Sancho and the Doctor*, and under this title it was hung in the Academy exhibition the year it was painted. The humour of it consists in the fact that Chantrey sat unconsciously for *Sancho*: the sculptor's hospitality was proverbial, and, assembled round his jovial board one day, was a cosy gathering of artist chums: among these, were seated side by side Sir Travell's uncle, Tappen, the architect of Dulwich College, and C. R. Leslie, R.A., the latter, at that time, engaged on the picture of *Sancho and the Doctor*, and on the look-out for a good representative



of his hero. As second course of the dinner, a brace of splendid pheasants made their appearance, frothed up to the most appetizing nicety, and surrounded with a nimbus of golden-brown crumbs.

The good sculptor's eyes glistened with anticipatory satisfaction as he stood up and fixed the fork in one of the succulent birds, preparing to plunge the knife into its plump and savoury breast. Tappen seized Leslie by the wrist directing his attention to the expressive countenance of their host, which at once struck both as "the very thing:" at the same time, in order to secure the exceptional *pose* for his friend who had taken the hint and was already thumb-nailing the glowing features, he exclaimed in a loud, sudden and authoritative tone—"For God's sake, Chantrey, not a move further:" it may be imagined that, thus unexpectedly arrested in the midst of his delightful contemplations, Chantrey's face assumed an expression of alarm, astonishment, and disappointment, which no amount of study or suggestion could have produced. Leslie seized and fixed it with a touch or two, such as the true artist knows how to employ, and the end gained, the explanation followed. The joke was heartily appreciated all round the table, and Chantrey, once more restored to his pleasing visions, and with them to his equanimity, not only laughed as merrily as any one, but told Leslie to paint the picture for him and he would give him £300 for it: the painting was finished, and Chantrey was twice as good as his word, for he paid the painter £600. On Sir Francis's death, Lady Chantrey gave this picture to Tappen, from whom it came to his nephew, the late owner.

Chantrey was of a frank and generous nature; when his friend Ebenezer Rhodes fell into poverty, he paid him regularly the interest of £1,000 till his death; and throughout his life was in the habit of assisting poor artists to an extent of which few are aware: the judicious and liberal distribution he made of his wealth redounds greatly to his

credit, but he would probably be as much surprised as disappointed could he know of the lamentable blunders to which he has been made to contribute.

Chantrey's humour was jovial, his disposition most amiable, and he not only made many friends but entertained liberally, though his manners never became very refined; notwithstanding the advantages of travelling and his frequentation of the first society, he never entirely got over the want of early training. His artistic tastes were part of his nature, and contributed to the softening of his manners, which if not always elegant were allowed to pass in favour of his genuine kindheartedness, intelligence, and humour. He had thoroughly mastered the difficult but popular art of giving dinners, and was universally recognised as a delightful host; this proficiency went far to ensure his popularity :

" Demosthenes and Cicero
Are doubtless stately names to bear ;
But that of good Amphitryon
Sounds far more pleasing to the ear."

A sagacious lady friend of mine and thorough woman of the world once made a remark to me (the truth of which I have often since had reason to recognize),—to the effect that "Society is a fragile fabric, cemented by champagne-dinners." Chantrey had probably discovered this for himself, for his dinners acquired a brilliant reputation whether for their cheer or the cheerfulness that characterized them.

The worthy sculptor was an expert angler, and an adroit sportsman; that remarkable feat of his which brought down a brace of woodcocks at one shot seems at once to have made him an object of interest to the sporting world; indeed, not to the sporting world alone but to the world of Art, for Chantrey instead of carving them on a dish, carved a beautiful group of them in wood—a veritable masterpiece, which he gracefully presented to J. W. Coke, afterwards Lord Leicester. This sporting achievement of the sculptor's

was celebrated in verse by several wits of the time each producing a humorous and elegant epigram which has helped to immortalize it. Among the competing versions of authors who plied their muse on the occasion, are those of Lord Jeffrey, Dean Milman, and even that profound and admired scholar, the Marquis of Wellesley. One of these effusions bore the alliterative title of "Winged Words on Chantrey's Woodcocks."

Chantrey's personal appearance and amiable manner were



SIR FRANCIS CHANTREY, R.A.

exceedingly attractive, though, as I have intimated, he was rather "jolly" than dignified, and drew friends to him more by his geniality and cordiality than by any kind of society-style. His face was so round and rubicund that one of his friends made an excellent likeness of him on a red wafer; but he had a beautifully formed mouth, and the expression of his countenance was extremely pleasing, being indicative at the same time of his great intelligence and unusual sagacity. When young, his life was with difficulty saved from the effects of a fever, during which he unfortunately lost all his

hair. Chantrey's conversation was delightful, for though he had never gone through a regular course of education he had contrived to accumulate so large a store of general knowledge that he was found to be at home on almost every subject that turned up, and his information was always remarkably accurate. He was not only of a merry disposition, but showed himself an extremely clever mimic, and mimicry seems to have been an accomplishment of the times, for it was practised, under George IV. from Royalty downwards.

That Chantrey was, while still living, and indeed very early in his career, appreciated by his brother-professionals we may infer from a passage in one of Inchbald's letters under date 1809—"Let no anecdote," says he, "however trifling, of this future Phidias, be lost."

In accordance with this recommendation I am perhaps justified in recording a statement of Haydon's to the effect that when Chantrey first set up his carriage he was not to be borne. "It was all day: 'John, tell Richard to desire Betty to order Mrs. Chantrey's maid to ask Mrs. Chantrey to send down my snuff box,' " &c. What must it have been when the good little man got his title, and his wife (who had been a lady's-maid), hers? Sir Francis died November 25, 1841, aged seventy-seven, but his wife survived him many years.

Lady
Chantrey.

Lady Chantrey, I have been told by an old friend who owed to her generosity and kindness, his first start in life and the success of a subsequently brilliant career—was a very charming person; intelligent, and also domesticated: she was naturally however not of the stamp of Flaxman's wife, Ann Denman, who it appears was a profound classical scholar, and had so much native feeling for art, improved by cultivation, that it was to her that her distinguished husband always deferred for the draping of his figures and the arrangement of his groups, so much admired for the evidences they bore of a pure and simple taste.

Canova.

Though Chantrey and Canova were fervent in their

mutual admiration, they did not always agree on matters of art; yet their friendship was undisturbed by this difference of taste, and when Chantrey was leaving Rome, as a token that their regard for each other was undiminished they agreed to interchange cloaks; thus, the mantle of each may be said to have fallen on the other.

If Chantrey leaned more towards Canova than towards Thorwaldsen, it was less from entertaining a more friendly feeling for him or greater admiration for his work, than because of his sociable disposition, and as Thorwaldsen lived the life of a recluse, while Canova frequented the best society, Chantrey enjoyed his visit to the Eternal City more thoroughly in the company of the latter, who introduced him to all his friends and patrons.

When in Rome in 1866, not long before the death of Gibson, I spent a very interesting morning in that fine sculptor's studio. Gibson was another genius who had risen to fame from a humble origin, his father having been a landscape-gardener. The boy's proclivities declared themselves at the early age of nine years, and were so pronounced that his father placed him at once with a wood-carver, but his ambition soared beyond this branch of the profession: Roscoe who met the youth at Manchester, was much struck with him and predicted great things of his future, commending warmly his determination to visit Rome. Born at Conway, in Wales, his early life was passed in a wild and romantic country, where his surroundings fostered a singularly imaginative and superstitious mind: he had a firm belief in dreams and omens, in lucky and unlucky days and numbers, and having one night dreamed that he had been lifted up by an eagle and carried to Rome, he accepted this as a portent, and felt so convinced that it was a revelation of his future destiny that he betook himself to that city in 1817, as soon as he had collected the means of undertaking the journey. His ardent desire was to place himself under Canova, and so enthusiastically did he admire his genius that he imbibed all that

Thorwaldsen.

John Gibson,
R.A.

master's ideas, although scarcely conscious of the influence they exercised over him.

He was only twenty-one when he executed the admired group of *Mars and Venus*, which at once fixed his reputation and procured him a valuable patron in the Duke of Devonshire, to whom Canova, who went into raptures over the work, hastened to exhibit it. His Grace at once purchased this fine piece of sculpture, which still forms one of the most valuable adornments of the collection at Chatsworth.

After working for some time on mythological subjects, Gibson turned his attention to historical figures and groups and produced many grand masterpieces. When Canova died, Gibson attached himself to Thorwaldsen, and became a fervent admirer of the style of that master. There are two statues of our Queen by Gibson of whose works Her Majesty was a great admirer.

Gibson exhibited his tinted statues at the great Exhibition of 1862, for he had become a strong advocate for the revival of the practice followed by some of the early Greek sculptors, of passing a delicate tint of polychrome over their work. It appears that Canova first suggested this to him, but if it found favour in Gibson's eyes it was not *only* because of the advocacy of his venerated master, but because for him, Greek art was beyond all criticism, and he long tried to introduce the addition of colour into modern *ateliers*: when visiting his studio I noticed several of his statues which had undergone the tinting process, and found him eloquent in his approval of it. Gibson, however, did not make many converts, and stood almost, if not quite, alone in the view he took; I do not remember seeing when in Rome, tinted marble in any of the other *ateliers* I visited. Gibson's tinted *Venus* I saw sold at Christie's in the year 1889, Pears, of soap notoriety, being its purchaser.

It should be remarked that many who had altogether opposed the idea of colour, had reason to modify their objections

when they found how delicately the tints were applied, the fear having been that the process would vulgarize sculpture and reduce it to the level of wax-work. So far from this, the practical result showed that it offered a *suggestion*, and not an *imitation* of life.

In many of the sculptured figures of classic origin that have come down to us either fragmentarily or entire—notably in those of Tanagra—we find distinct traces of polychrome and partial gilding. However great, nevertheless, may have been Gibson's veneration for antique work, according to his own showing he originally started the plan from quite another motive: he tells us that he received the inspiration to tint his Cupid from the little god himself, who as soon as he had received the finishing touch "desired him to polychrome him"!

Most of us are familiar with Danneker's *Ariadne* which has been shown so many years at Frankfort under a very simple process of "tinting," by means of first a green and then a crimson blind, thus exhibiting it under two aspects; Gibson's proceeding was not only less transient, it was more definite; for instead of one pervading tint over the whole statue, it provided a distinguishing tint, in character with each detail.

Chantrey, on the other hand, although he entertained an intense admiration for Canova, had the courage to disagree with him in the matter of tinting marble, and altogether deprecated the addition of colour, being of the opinion of H. Mathewes, who in his *Diary of an Invalid*, alleges that "not only do these adventitious graces fade and soil, but they are beside the purport of sculpture, whose end should be to represent form, alone."

Gibson's character was in many respects unpractical; so poetical was his mind that he seemed to live in an ideal world; his constant and profound study of Greek art seemed to carry him so far back into ancient times that he almost forgot he was living in the nineteenth century.

His *atelier* was everything to him, and its atmosphere became necessary to his artistic life and like Thorwaldsen, he saw in "clay, plaster, and marble, types of life, death, and immortality." He contemplated his beautiful marble *Venus* till he seemed so greatly in danger of falling in love with her that a sagacious friend of his—Mrs. Preston—who seems to have doubted whether the gods would oblige him by breathing a soul into her, persuaded him to pack her off to the patron for whom he had brought her out of the block. Constituted as was Gibson's mind, nothing could be more opportune than this friendly interference.

Gibson was a man of independent as well as original thought; he was very firm in his opinions and gave out pretty freely that he much preferred employing his time and capabilities in working out his own ideas than in executing orders, unless it were entirely left to him to carry them out. Alterations suggested by a sitter or patron did not come within his notions of art; he would not put Pegasus into harness. As to statues in modern dress, he abhorred the thought of what he called this "desecration of art," and when required to make a statue of Huskisson, refused to sculpture his marble into a coat and trousers, insisting on draping the figure according to his own taste and not that of the tailor. He had, after his long residence in Rome, become so entirely Roman in his proclivities and habits that he could never make up his mind to return to England: Rome had become home to him. He had realized a fair fortune, though his first consideration was always the cultivation of art, and money held quite a secondary place in his estimation: when he died in 1866 he was worth between thirty and forty thousand pounds which, like Chantrey, he appropriated to the furtherance of art, bequeathing it to the Royal Academy.

Among Gibson's harmless superstitions was the importance he always gave to the number "3": no doubt much of the general regard he paid to prognostications was gained during

his study of classical art and of the ideas of those who produced it: he had a mania for travelling with never less than three packages, and if two sufficed for his requirements he carried with him a third which was empty. This was at last observed by one of his friends whom the practice puzzled immensely. "What is there," he at length said to him: "in that third box, which you always carry with you, and never open?"

"That," replied he: "whether opened or not, is an indispensable accessory to my luggage."

Lough the sculptor did some excellent work, and was much liked in the profession as well as in general society, from his amiable disposition and pleasant manners; his last work was an admirable bust of Campbell De Morgan, for many years the successful and very popular head-surgeon of the Middlesex Hospital: it was for the dining-hall of this institution that the bust was designed. Lough was taken ill at the end of March, 1876, and was nursed by his recent sitter and old friend Campbell De Morgan, who took the greatest interest in the case; but although he left the sculptor's bedside only to visit his other patients and to carry on his hospital work, Lough grew rapidly worse. De Morgan himself had been far from well for some time, but, being one of the most indefatigable and conscientious of men, as well as of doctors, he had entirely neglected his own indisposition, and he continued to attend his friend the more assiduously that he found the case becoming very serious. On the 7th of April the condition of the patient was so desperate that his doctor determined not to leave him, hoping almost against hope that by remaining with him through the night he might perhaps be able to save him: unhappily this sacrifice was not to be rewarded, and notwithstanding all De Morgan's efforts the patient died during the night.

Broken down with disappointment and grief, De Morgan left the house in the chilliest hours of the early morning,

and arrived at home thoroughly prostrated. He went to his bed, from which he was to rise no more, for he rapidly succumbed to an attack of pleurisy and died three days after the friend to whom he may be said to have given his life. He was deeply and deservedly lamented, especially at the Middlesex Hospital. Two cancer-wards are called by his name, his attention having been specially given to that malady, on which he was considered a paramount authority.

Lough was married to a sister of Lady Paget, wife of the well-known surgeon.

Miss Durant.

A sculptress, the favourite pupil of Baron Marochetti, whose studio I often visited, was Susan Durant. Endowed with considerable talent and great perseverance, she was much noticed by the Queen and Princesses; the Princess Louise having studied and worked under her instruction; Miss Durant was often therefore at Windsor, and among other commissions, was honoured by Her Majesty's commands to execute a monumental recumbent figure as a memorial of the Queen's uncle, Leopold I., King of the Belgians: the material was white Pyrenean marble, and as this was the first time it had been employed for statuary, Miss Durant was rather apprehensive as to the result of the experiment, but fortunately it proved most satisfactory; the block turned out a very fine one, and her work now adorns St. George's Chapel at Windsor. This clever artist was a fine, handsome woman, and made herself very popular both in society and in the profession; but she died of cancer at a comparatively early age, and was much regretted, especially as connoisseurs saw in her an artist of great promise.

A. N. Welby
Pugin.

I did not become acquainted with the family of the celebrated "Christian [and essentially Catholic] Architect" Augustus Northmore Welby Pugin till after his death, which took place in September, 1852. His origin was French and his father Augustus Pugin had left a distinguished reputation in the profession adopted by himself and continued by his son. Augustus Welby Pugin's passion

for not only Gothic Architecture but Gothic Art under every aspect, led him to adopt in the profession, a line which he may be said to have made peculiarly his own. As soon as the tastes and tendencies of the great master became known they drew to him the sympathies of the Catholic world, more especially in England where religion seems, so to speak, to take refuge in the mystery of cloistered aisles and "dim religious light," Italian ecclesiastical architecture finding but little favour, unless among those whose taste had been attuned to it by familiarity with its glories in the Eternal City. Cardinal Wiseman, in whose character there was nothing narrow—because his clear and logical mind regulated a nature which might otherwise have become impulsively enthusiastic—preferred Gothic ecclesiastical architecture under the cold and misty atmosphere of Northern climates, but also admired and loved the classic type as suiting the ecclesiastical and secular buildings of the brighter and sunnier South: if His Eminence was a warm personal friend of Pugin's he was also an ardent admirer of his wonderful and prolific genius and of its results.

Pugin was a man of strong feeling, entering cordially into whatever he took in hand, and the condition into which so many of the ecclesiastical buildings of this country had lapsed, irritated him to a degree he was unable to conceal; unhappily therefore, in his endeavour to enlist whether the profession or its patrons in behalf of a thorough reformation of public taste, he spoke so honestly and emotionally as in a great measure to defeat the object he had at heart.

Being taken one day into a church, recently "restored" and which could come under no denomination of style, unless that of "carpenter's Gothic," every law of art being set at defiance, he looked up and down, to the right and to the left in amused astonishment, and being naïvely asked his opinion of it, replied:—

"I'm not thinking so much about the building itself, as wondering what the inside of the designer's head could be like."

Many of Pugin's grand reforms came in time to be approved by those who at first opposed him, and not only have his countless designs for buildings, and for the multifarious objects to which he applied his genius, immortalized his name, but it is doubtful whether the vast extent of his labours is generally known; yet his attention was by no means given to buildings alone, whether ecclesiastical or secular, for although he died at so comparatively early an age, he had found time to examine, criticise, and reconstruct innumerable monuments, fonts, screens, staircases, balustrades, pulpits, lecterns, candelabra, &c., &c. His day was from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., and even his holidays formed no relaxation to his work: his mediæval metal-work designs, designs for stained glass, for domestic furniture, ornamental tiles and every kind of decoration—all of which were adopted in Windsor Castle—and for plate, jewellery, &c., by reviving old ideas, introduced new requirements in all those branches of manufacture and art, which are dependent upon the taste of the public and to this he had given quite a new impetus.

Pugin's popularity with those whom he converted to his views was immense, and in his private character he was so winning that he was surrounded by a countless host of admiring friends. He delighted in the sea, and among his exquisite landscapes, street-views and architectural drawings has left sea-scapes of wonderful breadth and spirit: his widow possesses innumerable portfolios of his beautiful work. Pugin's favourite residence was at the seaside, and he used to say "There's nothing worth living for but Christian architecture and a boat;" and when he built his residence at Ramsgate and settled there he became as much of a sailor as a landsman. With rare consideration and humanity he practically concerned himself with the "dangers of the sea" for he even instituted as an appendage to his marine home, a large cutter with which he was always prepared to push off to the succour of vessels

driven on to the Goodwin Sands. On the various occasions on which he rendered valuable service to his distressed fellow-beings he did not content himself merely with saving their lives, but supplied their needs, cared for them and helped them as long as circumstances rendered his aid and protection necessary. Moreover his practice of both "the Spiritual and the Corporal Works of Mercy" enjoined by the Catholic Church, included burying those who succumbed to the disasters of wind and weather on the ocean from which he had rescued them; they were piously laid in his own churchyard and a record of their names and deaths placed over them.

Pugin's written works are numerous and valuable, all bearing on the same subject in its different branches. He was married three times; Edward Welby Pugin, his eldest son by his first wife, followed his father's profession, and had begun to distinguish himself in a very remarkable way when unhappily he died at a very early age; after the elder Pugin's death the friends he had made, rallied round his family, who have continued to maintain the position of esteem and consideration in which he left them. Pugin's youngest son (by his third wife) is now very creditably and promisingly carrying on the profession of his celebrated father.

Pugin won for his third wife a charming woman, beautiful and cultivated, sensible, practical, and kind-hearted: having enjoyed the hospitality of Pugin's family both in Gordon Square and at "The Grange," I can testify further to her admirable qualities as *Maitresse de Maison*. At "The Grange," everything harmonized, and the home having been constructed, decorated, and fitted up under Pugin's own directions, the accessories were strictly *en suite* with the style of the building; whereas in Gordon Square, where the house was simply a "Gordon Square House" and, I may add, a *square* house into the bargain, the discrepancy between the decoration and furniture, which *were* designed by Pugin,

and the form and arrangements of the tenement, which were *not*, was too marked not to have been a matter of constant distress to himself and also probably to his family, trained as they were to see through his spectacles. I remember dining there one day to meet my dear, good friend Cardinal Wiseman, and, I think, as many as twenty Bishops who sat round the table. It was a very ecclesiastical dinner and His Eminence next to whom I was placed, greatly admired the ingenuity with which Pugin had contrived to impress on every object which met the sight, the *cachet* of his marked partialities: every candlestick, cruet, salt-cellar, spoon, fork and other article of plate was of mediæval design; the china itself partook of this strongly developed tendency, and even the linen was damasked *à l'avenant*. Mrs. Pugin's jewellery was absolutely mediæval, and as the beauty of a beautiful woman cannot but gain by the gems of art and taste that enshrine it, it admirably helped to set off her charms. One day when she dined at my house to meet the famous Père Ratisbonne, he was so struck with the becomingness of her attire, that he seemed to forget for the moment, in his expressions of admiration (poetically styling her "*Regina Martyrum*") that he was no longer a man of the world. She might however have walked out of some pious mediæval picture. The *Père*, it must be remembered, was converted by the walking out of her picture of the *Regina Martyrum* at the Church of S. Andrea delle Fratte.

These pages though perhaps already too numerous for my readers, are far from having exhausted my store of memories. It has been said somewhere that "it is possible the best books are those that have never been written" and I am pretty sure that my best and most interesting reminiscences are those I have been obliged to reserve for another volume. As far as I have already gone, I hope this

“gossip of the century” will have entertained at least some of my readers, who may perhaps be of the same mind as Sir Richard Temple, when he wrote:—

“Relations of matters of fact have a value from their substance, apart from their form, and the variousness of events will generally interest and instruct, however indifferently the tale of them may be told.”

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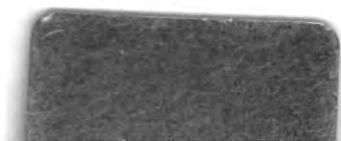
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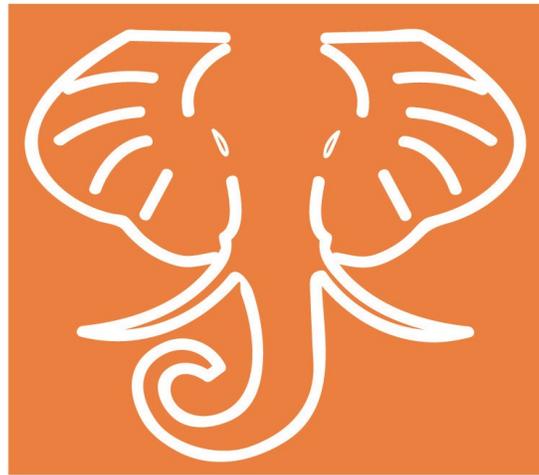


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