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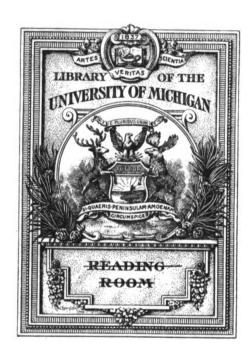
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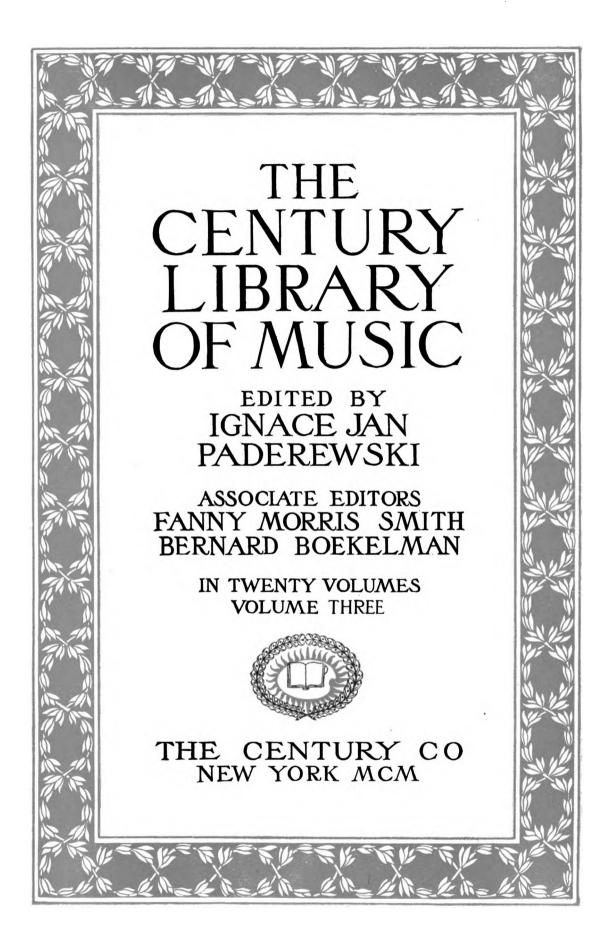
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Monty Moss Kowskil



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GIACOMO MEYERBEER

BY

MORITZ MOSZKOWSKI

THE 2d of May, 1894, was the thirtieth anniversary of the death of Meyerbeer, and according to the provision of his will, on that day his heirs entered into possession of his musical estate. Among other conditions to inheritance, Meyerbeer stipulated that his unpublished manuscripts be given to that one of his grandsons who should have developed most musical ability. These posthumous works, however, will not be published.

In commemoration of this anniversary of Meyerbeer's death "L'Africaine" was given at the Berlin royal opera-house, several papers made cursory reference to the import of the day, and there were occasional expressions of curiosity, in musical circles, as to the nature of the master's musical legacy. It was believed that there existed a completed opera of which the young Goethe was the hero, but the facts only partly sustain that assumption, for the work proved to be simply a drama by Blaze de Bury, entitled "La Jeunesse de Goethe," in which music is accorded an important rôle.

All of these discussions and conjectures attracted little attention from the outer world, and aroused less interest among musicians of the inner circles than could have been expected, considering the honored and popular name with which they were associated. This circumstance suggests an investigation of Meyerbeer's present position in public esteem, of what it once was, and as to what rank the verdict of future generations is likely to assign his creations.

Music is an art which rapidly alters its forms. We speak of "immortal masterpieces" of music, forgetting that barely four hundred years

have passed since that epoch which we of to-day look upon as the dawn of musical art. What enormous development, what unforeseen perfection, and what wide dissemination it has attained during this period! How much has been created, admired, and afterward buried! And there has been no lack of errors of diagnosis in regard to musical works. Many have been adjudged dead that contained the life-impulse, while others have been accredited with a vitality that they did not possess. Factious critics have sometimes proved too ambitious to become grave-diggers, and at other times have worshiped musical corpses, as the Portuguese court parasites did homage to the exhumed remains of Ines de Castro, which Pedro had seated upon the throne.

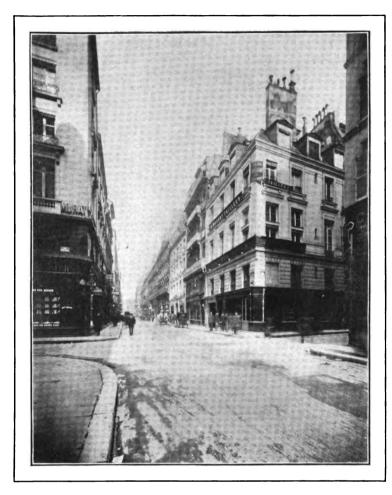
Among the energetic partizans of the so-called new German school, the men whom I have denominated grave-diggers were numerous, and it strikes me that the arrangements which they made for the wholesale burial not only of Meyerbeer's operas, but of all related works, were a trifle premature. It is not to be denied that they succeeded in somewhat discrediting the value of Meyerbeer's music, and after the absolute denial of merit in his works had become an article of faith for Wagnerism there was no hesitation in its acceptance by those who desired to be modern à tout prix.

The public at large, which has little judgment in things musical, soon became an active participant in the war for the reformation of dramatic music; for Wagner not only illustrated his art principles through his operas, but also announced them in papers on art, which most skilfully accentuated the German national element in its esthetic ambitions. He furthermore took into consideration so much that was foreign to music, attempting to establish parallels between his reformatory ideas in his own department of art and matters which concerned apparently remote domains of thought and action, that many who had originally been totally indifferent came through this indirect path of reasoning into the Wagner fold.

The anti-Semitic propaganda found a capable champion in Wagner. Had there been no other available reasons for condemning Meyerbeer's music than the Jewish origin of its author, that, with Wagner's help, would have sufficed. The interesting discovery was made that the scores of "Robert le Diable" and "Les Huguenots" were in reality nothing but Jewish brogue, though they afforded valuable documentary proof at the same time of the existence of the famous French-Jewish alliance. I will not accuse Wagner of having greeted this popularized interpretation of his ideas with satisfaction, although in his warfare against Meyerbeer and his adherents he sometimes failed to confine himself to purely artistic arguments.

It should be mentioned, however, that before Wagner's appearance

1 A supposed alliance to combat German composers.— Editors.



MEYERBEER'S HOME IN PARIS, 1851.

Rue de Richelieu, corner rue St. Marc. Meyerbeer's home was at No. 91, the house on the left. Opposite, at No. 96, Berlioz lived in 1830. At No. 89, the second door from the corner on the left, lived Ferdinand Palt, the operatic conductor, from 1830 until his death in 1839.

upon the field the fight against Meyerbeer had been conducted with great personal enmity. Spontini, who was at first overestimated, and later saw his fame fade, had done all that was possible in this reprehensible style of warfare. As soon as he became convinced that no machinations could prevail against the success of his hated rival, he overreached himself in the harebrained assertion that Meyerbeer did not compose his own operas, but that they were the products of a certain Gouin, who preferred selling his fame to endangering his position as postal clerk by the acquisition of musical renommée.

In justice it must be admitted that Meyerbeer's ardent admirers carried the glorification of their master to the borders of the ridiculous. When Dr. Schucht, for instance, in his work on Meyerbeer, says that the "Struensée" overture "takes first rank among classical overtures," and when he, in discussing that early work, "Gott und die Natur," claims that

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it evinces a command of counterpoint equal to that displayed by Händel and other masters of polyphony, every honest and intelligent person who honors Meyerbeer must regard these assertions as regrettable exaggerations.

Heine wrote of Meyerbeer in veins varying from extreme rapture to bitter mockery. In those operas composed during Meyerbeer's Italian period he found "Rossiniisms intensified by means of the most delicious exaggerations, the gold gilded, and the flowers endowed with stronger perfumes." He could not reach a similar height of absurdity in regard to "Robert le Diable" and "Les Huguenots," for their qualities precluded such a result, even though most recklessly loaded with superlative praise. With the advent of "Le Prophète" a complete change manifested itself in Heine's musical taste. He had fallen out with the composer, and thereafter saw in him only a "maître de plaisir of the aristocracy, and a music-corrupter, who composed morbid music," etc.

I remember that, even while a child, I was aware of the contradictions contained in the various opinions that I heard expressed in regard to Meyerbeer's music. How I longed to hear a stage-performance of one of his works! When I was about ten years old my wish was fulfilled. third theatrical performance that I was permitted to attend made me acquainted with "Les Huguenots." I had previously heard most of the opera played upon the piano, and had not been pleased with it thus presented; but through the medium of voices and orchestra it made an immense impression on me, the details of which are still clear in my memory. It was not until some years later that I heard "Robert le Diable" and "Le Prophète." It seems strange to me that my present estimate of the comparative artistic value of these three operas should so perfectly tally with my youthful impressions. "Le Prophète" seems to me to approach "Les Huguenots" in musical value, while "Robert" is far inferior; but this order of rank does not accord with the scale of public esteem. Recent years have developed a slight disposition to glorify "Le Prophète" at the expense of "Robert"; the latter work is nevertheless thought to possess greater melodic spontaneity, and the value of this quality is certainly beyond dispute.

Notwithstanding the fact that music is largely a matter of taste, it possesses elements that may be assayed. If we compare the scores of "Robert" and "Le Prophète" in all their details, taking into consideration the attributes of each as a musical dramatic work, we find in "Le Prophète," first of all, a far more characteristic formation of the concerted numbers. The sermon of the Anabaptists and the chorus of peasantry associated with it form together a masterpiece of choral development, evincing a power of climax possessed by no earlier dramatic composer. The rhythmic structure and modulations show a true art perception, just as the two principal motifs (in C minor and C major) show a



A DRINKING SONG.

FROM A PAINTING BY SIROUY,



PRESENT OPERA HOUSE IN BERLIN.
Where Meyerbeer's "Ein Feldlager in Schlesien" was first given.

gift for melodic invention. I have always regarded the beginning of the latter, with its audacious upward progression to the chord of the seventh,



as one of Meyerbeer's happiest inspirations. When this melody is repeated by the whole chorus in unison, it seems like a veritable cri du peuple, and the accompanying sturdy tributes of the celli, contrabassi, fagotti, and tuba sound like the dull tread of the working-classes marching to revolution. The chorus "Auf! tanzet um Leichen," in the third act, is endowed with characteristic color; but Meyerbeer's sovereign command of choral and instrumental forces is most brilliantly exemplified in the great ensemble of the church scene. The movement in D major, "Seht den König, den Propheten," is Händelian in its grandeur, and affords the most effective contrast possible to the "allegretto agitato" that succeeds it. The excitement which takes possession of the deluded people, who cannot be sure who is their betrayer, after the recognition scene between Fidès and John; the ecstatic rejoicing called forth by the seeming miracle of the

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Prophet; and the final blending of the "Domine, salvum fac regem nostrum" with the triumphant cries of the people—all this is handled with such mastery, and the manifold details are so ingeniously devised, that, excepting the sword consecration in "Les Huguenots," the whole mass of opera literature furnishes no counterpart to it. The entire act is, besides, very rich in harmonic and instrumental effects, showing that Meyerbeer was, even in these spheres, a successful innovator.

It is obvious that these enormous demands upon musical and dramatic resources could have left little for the fifth act. Librettist and composer were both entirely exhausted, and could hope for a satisfactory finale only at the hands of the stage-machinists, to whom they could, to be sure, cry as does King Philip in "Don Carlos," "Cardinal, I have done my duty; do yours." Taking it all in all, we may say that Meyerbeer reached the zenith of his technical skill in "Le Prophète," and that his creative power had at that period hardly diminished. It is not to be denied that this work exhibits numerous weak movements. The whole of the last act does not contain one important musical number; indeed, there is much in it that is repulsive. Fides's grand aria (A flat major) is a model of disagreeable and misplaced vocal bravura, and the andante in E major, in the duet between John and his mother, direct torture. What the composer intended to express through the almost endless repetition of B in the trumpets, and later in the hautboys and violins, is to me incomprehensible. Perhaps others may see his intention more clearly.

Of the ballet music in "Le Prophète" the skating dance alone has obtained great popularity. The other numbers are entirely ineffective. Meyerbeer evidently devoted little care to their production, because they had not the slightest import in the scheme of the opera. In comparing the ballets of "Robert" and "Le Prophète," I prefer the former. As both are incidental accessories, the superiority weighs less. It is of much more moment that the last act of "Robert" so far surpasses that of "Le Prophète" in healthy and soulful melody. The final trio of Alice, Robert



and Bertram is one of the most beautiful parts of the opera, and the pathetic melody played by the orchestra while Robert reads his mother's will reconciles us to the bantering of the preceding period, out of which it grows. Unfortunately, the composer's intention is never entirely realized by our opera orchestras in the performance of this melody. Meyerbeer designed that it should be played underneath the stage, and by keyed bugles. In order to avoid the considerable difficulty of securing a perfect ensemble, and the trifling extra expense thus involved, the melody is



SCENE FROM "ROBERT LE DIABLE."
From "Album de l'Opéra."

assigned to the orchestra cornets, and loses materially in poetic effect. Alice, Robert and Bertram have another fine trio in the third act, although



it is effective only from the standpoint of the old Italian operatic style, on which the composer of "Robert" had turned his back. Shreds of that school adhered to him, however, for a long time. When we consider that Meyerbeer had previously written seven operas purely in Rossini's vein, it ceases to seem strange that many traces of Italianism are to be found in "Robert."

If we compare "Crociato in Egitto," the last of Meyerbeer's operas in the Italian school, with "Robert," which he began five years later, we find an astounding change of style — even greater than that shown in the

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period of Wagner's development between "Rienzi" and "The Flying Dutchman."

Musical historians with fine perceptions, in this, as in so many similar cases, have given the world the benefit of their backward-glancing They discover the "claws of the lion in 'Crociato." one has the whole lion before him, the genuineness of the claws can no longer be questioned. Had the score of "Crociato" been submitted to me as the work of a thirty-three-year-old composer, and had I been asked for an estimate of his gifts as based thereon, I should have made a fool of myself. The whole opera impresses me as a shallow imitation of Rossini's mannerisms, and the only feature of it which I find worthy of praise is the skilful treatment of the voices. Harmony, structural forms, and impersonations are unendurably commonplace: nothing forecasts greatness.

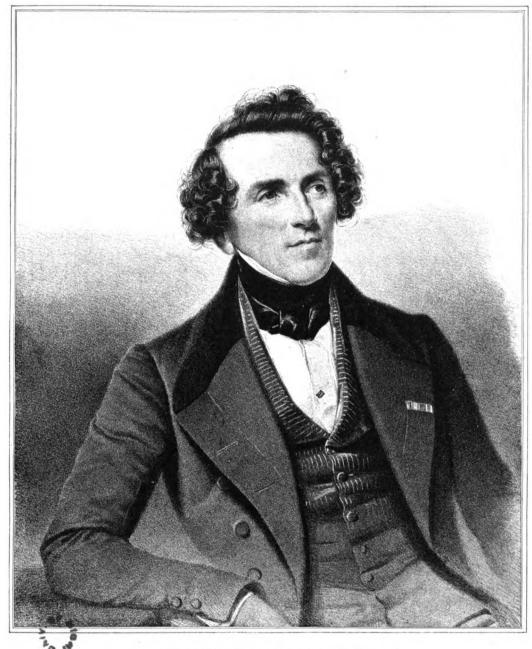
Meyerbeer's increasing musical ability, as traceable through his successive operas, "Crociato," "Robert," and "Les Huguenots," is quite analogous to the gradual development shown in Beethoven's symphonies. Berlioz says, quite properly, of the First Symphony, "This is not yet Beethoven." No one would question that the Second Symphony bears the unmistakable impress of its creator, but not until the Third Symphony does the master exhibit the full glory of his genius. The careers of Beethoven and Meyerbeer are analogous, in that each in his own province showed not only the ripest individuality but also the most perfect mastery of art forms; for just as Beethoven is the mightiest composer that has arisen in the symphonic field, so is Meyerbeer still the foremost representative of grand opera. The gap between the highest and most ideal forms of instrumental music, and grand opera, distorted here and there through concessions to stage-machinists and ballet-dancers, is too wide to push the comparison further.

Whatever one's opinion of Meyerbeer's music in general, it cannot be denied that "Les Huguenots" is a work that exhibits entirely original invention, a rare wealth of characterization, and a wonderful mastery of technical resources. Even Richard Wagner, the most spiteful of Meyerbeer's opponents, was aroused by the fourth act to the expression of the warmest praise.

Schumann alone saw retrogression from "Robert" in "Les Huguenots"; he indeed preferred "Crociato" to "Robert." This assignment of rank is incontrovertible evidence of the one-sidedness and untenableness of Schumann's opinions. The individualities of the two musicians were so unlike that they necessarily repelled each other. Schumann could accord Meyerbeer justice as long as he showed noteworthy capacity on

¹ Schumann's "Music and Musicians" (Fragments from Leipzig, No. IV): "I agree perfectly with Florestan, who clenched his criticism of the opera with the words: 'In "Crociato" Meyerbeer was a musician, in presents the Philistine ways of thinking.)

"Robert" he wavers, and from "Les Huguenots" on he is distinctly a "Franconian." " ("Franconian" refers to a character in Schumann's writings who re-

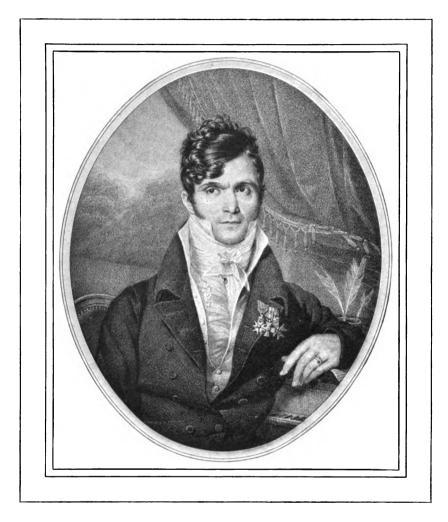


AN EARLY PORTRAIT OF MEYERBEER.

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accepted lines; but as Meyerbeer became more and more Meyerbeer, as his artistic physiognomy became more and more marked and significant, he lost Schumann's sympathy.

Rivalry, unhappily, often enough leads to enmity; but a no less deplorable, because unjust, antagonism often arises between artists having



SPONTINI.

Lithographed in 1823, from a painting by Jean Guérin.

irreconcilable tastes. Such was the case between Meyerbeer the positivist and Schumann the symbolist. The former was a cosmopolitan, and the latter a national artist. The one was attracted by the brilliancy of the footlights; the other reveled in clair-obscure. Meyerbeer was objective, *i. e.*, worked from the outside in. Schumann was subjective, *i. e.*, worked from the inside out.

All music that does not belong to the class that might be called ab-

stractly contrapuntal grows obsolete. This style alone is based on the everlasting laws of unassailable logic, for its structure rests upon combinations of actualities which are inspired by the spirit of mathematics. It is therefore not subject to the changing tastes of passing time. other is the fate of musical works in the conception of which imagination plays the principal rôle, which arouse a thousand varying moods in their hearers, and in which the whole range of resources of musical expression is exhaustively applied; for here we have to do with an art of individual feeling and temporary taste. Such music is not deathless, but its life may be shorter or longer—a long life certainly indicating inherent strength. If this be granted, we cannot refuse "Les Huguenots" a place among the masterpieces of musical dramatic literature. What composer would not rejoice to see his creations the subject of strife for fifty-eight years? While thus calling attention to the enduring vitality of "Les Huguenots," I should go too far did I claim that this work still presents the full vigor of youth.

There are two factors either of which may induce decadence in the effectiveness of a musical work. The one is the natural dullness of sensibilities toward any pleasure or stimulus with which we are too familiar; the other is the apparent change in our tastes. There is of course a wide difference between that loss of charm in a composition occasioned by too frequent hearing, and that caused by our having revised our estimate of its value. In the case of "Les Huguenots" we shall be obliged to concede the presence of both factors, but this may also be said of all works that belong to the same genre.

Did Rossini, Halévy, and Auber, in their operas, make less damaging concessions to the public, and to the vanity of singers? Did not their works also contain examples of those forced and artificially produced effects that Wagner quite aptly called "effects without motives"? Even if we grant that Meyerbeer is the greatest representative of the French Grand Opera, that is no justification for loading all of the shortcomings of his school upon his shoulders.

The score of "Les Huguenots" is so full of veritable musical beauties, it contains such a wealth of noble melody and ingenious dramatic settings, that one can well afford to overlook the many features of it that have become obsolete, and the few that are positively disagreeable. Its instrumentation is replete with characteristic qualities. A certain virtuoso-like treatment of certain instruments, entirely different from that found in Mozart's and Weber's writings, was one of Meyerbeer's characteristics. Raoul's romanza in the first act suggested to the ingenious composer the employment of the long-disused viola d'amore, the ethereal tones of which blend most exquisitely with the mezzo voce of the tenor singer. This is the last occurrence of this instrument in all musical literature—probably because the charm of its tone-color is fully developed in but few keys, best in D

major. The bass clarinet, which Meyerbeer introduced into the opera orchestra, and which he used as solo instrument in "Les Huguenots" and



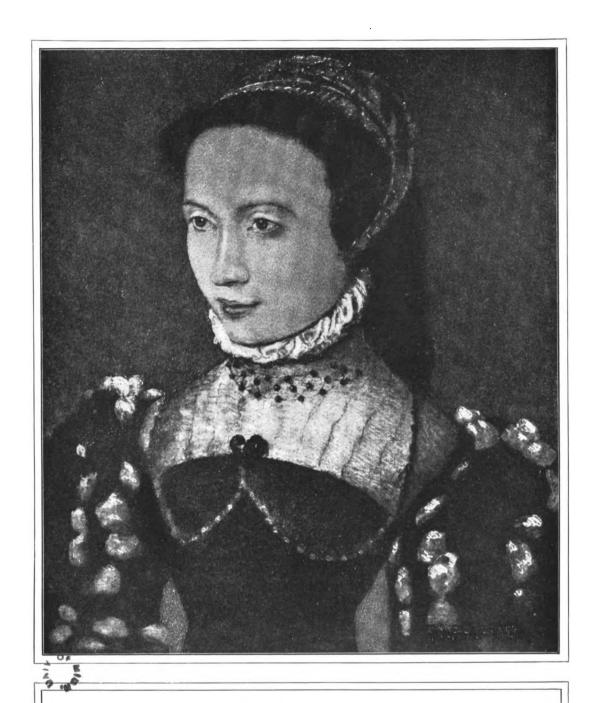
"Le Prophète," has, however, been largely adopted by later composers. Altogether Meyerbeer's treatment of the wood-wind was entirely original and suitable. Every good treatise on instrumentation contains illustrative excerpts from his works, because they show such an extraordinary sense for tone-color, and such complete familiarity with the technic of each and all instruments.

Meyerbeer's inventive faculty especially distinguished itself in producing melancholy, weird, and wild combinations. This was strikingly manifested in "Robert." The famous triplet passage for the bassoons in the cemetery scene has always ranked as one of the greatest strokes of this master's genius. He understood how to draw new and characteristic effects from this instrument. "Les Huguenots" furnishes especially numerous examples in this genre. Who does not remember the awful, hollow timbre with which the piccolo, bassoon, contrabass, and grand drum endow *Marcel's* war-song, or the hissing chromatic scales in which



the flutes, hautboys, and clarinets so horribly portray the flaming blood-thirstiness of the Catholic conspirators? Meyerbeer's employment of the trumpets to depict furious fanaticism, as in the fourth and fifth acts, was





MARGARET DE VALOIS, QUEEN OF NAVARRE AND OF FRANCE.

FROM A PAINTING BY AN UNKNOWN ARTIST (SIXTEENTH CENTURY).

BY PERMISSION OF BRAUN, CLEMENT & CO., NEW YORK.

markedly successful. In other places his treatment of the trumpets is not congenial to German taste. French and Italian operatic scores have always materially differed from German in this particular. Each of these three nations has its own physiognomic character in instrumentation.

Berlioz once said of Meyerbeer that "he not only has the luck to have talent, but he has the talent to have luck." This was equally witty and true. If it was a rare good fortune for our master to have been aided in his difficult career as operatic composer by the possession of a million thalers, there was a second good fortune, not less valuable, for which he had every reason to be profoundly thankful. This second good fortune was called Scribe. The composer had in Scribe a librettist who not only possessed astonishing dramatic inventive faculty and knowledge of stagebusiness, but who also had the talent of adaptability. Scribe could suit his work to the peculiar and often capricious demands of his collaborators. He complained often enough because of the changes that Meyerbeer required in his texts, but he always yielded until a difference of opinion arose with regard to "L'Africaine" which no amount of discussion could adjust. Meyerbeer in consequence laid aside this score, which was already far advanced toward completion, took up the "Prophète" libretto, and after that had been finished, wrote a comic opera, "Dinorah," for which Carré and Barbier furnished the text. In my opinion Meyerbeer's reason for the acceptance of this latter unsympathetic and also technically weak book is obvious. He wished to prove by the composition of this dubious idyl that the nature of his talent did not confine him to the heroic style; and it cannot be said that he failed to accomplish his purpose. "Dinorah" is not poor in characteristic graceful and brilliant vocal and instrumental effects. Still, it shows unmistakable evidence of decadence in inventive power, apparent in debilitating repetitions, rhythms, and in melismas from his earlier works. For this reason "Dinorah" has never secured a firm foothold in German opera repertoires, although even to-day it is highly regarded in France. The festival opera, "A Camp in Silesia," composed for the dedication of the new Berlin opera-house, has had a similar experience. The French adaptation called "L'Etoile du Nord" is seldom seen in Germany, although it has obtained considerable popularity in Paris.

"Le Prophète," "L'Etoile du Nord," "Dinorah," and several compositions intended for the concert-room and dating from the same period, had long since been performed when Meyerbeer returned to the neglected "L'Africaine." Negotiations with Scribe for the alterations of the last two acts were fruitless, and the death of the librettist, in 1861, blighted the composer's hopes of ever seeing the libretto revised to accord with his desires. He was therefore obliged to finish the opera on the original lines. What displeased Meyerbeer in the text was the circumstance that, according to Scribe, the supposed African heroine turns out to be a young

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East Indian queen—a somewhat violent transformation, but one that Scribe regarded as essential. He maintained that India, with her gorgeous costumes and her pompous religious ceremonials, lent herself easily to musical illustration, whereas Africa was not operatically suggestive. He was not entirely wrong, for the first performance of "L'Africaine"—after the death of both authors—developed the fact that the most effective parts of the opera were those the scenes of which were laid in India. The composer was afforded exceedingly appropriate musical colors for the pomp of the Buddhist religious service, with its exotic magnificence of processions and dances; whereas other parts of the opera are uninterestingly dry, as might be expected from the long political and geographical discussions which they contain.

During his years of exhausting labor in the operatic field, Meyerbeer found time to compose a not inconsiderable number of small choral and orchestral works,—many of them pièces d'occasion,—the majority of which are to-day entirely forgotten. Such of his cantatas and church music as have become known to me are hardly worthy of earnest consideration, but I must not fail to call attention to one of Meyerbeer's works which, although small in its proportions, equals the best creations of the master in artistic significance. It is his music to Michael Beer's tragedy "Struensée." The score embraces only fourteen numbers, but it belongs to the masterworks of its genre, and may be classed with Beethoven's "Egmont," Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream," Weber's "Preciosa," Schumann's "Manfred," and Bizet's "L'Arlesienne." Meyerbeer, with the overture to "Struensée," nullified, once for all, the reproach that he could not write orchestral pieces in symphonic form.

Few, in advance, would have accredited the great master Verdi with the ability to produce such a "Requiem" as he has given to the world; and when the painter Lenbach incidentally showed that he could paint hands as well as heads, he also did so without the permission of his critics. It is doubtless vexatious that artists sometimes venture to exhibit new features of their talent, regardless of the category to which critics have consigned them; but it is certainly most disagreeable of all when any one—like Meyerbeer, for instance—persists in living in his works, although long since declared artistically dead and buried. Yes, he lives, to the satisfaction of all unprejudiced musicians, who know no one-sidedness in art, and who will not allow doctrinaire pedants and their sterile principles to embitter their love of the beautiful.





MADAME KRAUSS.
Best latter-day "Fidès."

MADAME VIARDOT.

Original "Fidès" in "Le Prophète."

MEYERBEER'S BRANDUS CORRESPONDENCE

THE following letters, which illustrate the artistic life of Meyerbeer during the years 1859-63, are given to the public with the permission of Mr. Edward Brandus, the only son of M. Gemmy Brandus of the old music-publishing house of Brandus et Cie., Paris. The house of Brandus belongs to a group of great firms to whose exertions the literature and music of Europe owe an enormous debt. In the days of its greatest activity, character and individuality entered into the transaction of business to an extent which modern commercialism is making more and more impossible. Great works which could by no possibility bring more than a modest return for the outlay were undertaken to add to the honor of the name. A closer relation existed between the great composers and their publishers than we find today. Thus it was quite in accord with its habits that the house of Brandus should not only publish the works of Chopin, Rossini, Meyerbeer, Auber, Adam, Flotow, Halévy, Mendelssohn, Offenbach, Lecocq, and others, but also should be the close friend of the men themselves. Meyerbeer especially found in Louis and Gemmy Brandus his intimate

confidants. He depended on them for every care that insured his personal comfort or the fulfilment of his artistic ambitions, and in his frequent separations from his family, when he was busy rehearsing his works in Paris, he went in and out of the home of M. Gemmy Brandus, in the Faubourg Montmartre, as if it were his own.

How close the intimacy was, and to what extent the continuous interest which Meyerbeer felt in the fate of his compositions was shared by his publishers, these letters show plainly. The correspondence also gives a clue to that practical side of a successful composer's life without which the works of genius hardly survive the struggle for existence,—however great their merit,—but of which the world at large seldom takes account.

The wide-awake interest which Meyerbeer felt in the world of art and letters is clear from these pages. Much has been warmly said of his disinterested kindnesses to Wagner and other musicians—and vigorously denied. The fact is that Meyerbeer was interested in all musicians, and helpfully disposed toward them; but he did not trouble himself about their possible rivalry. He did not say with

Berlioz, who remarked to M. Gemmy Brandus as they sat together at the first performance of Gounod's "Faust," "I trust that you are not going to publish cette cochonnerie là." He would not have permitted the publication because it would have interfered with "Pardon"; but he was quite ready to have Gounod's works played under his own direction. Meyerbeer's was not a mean nature.

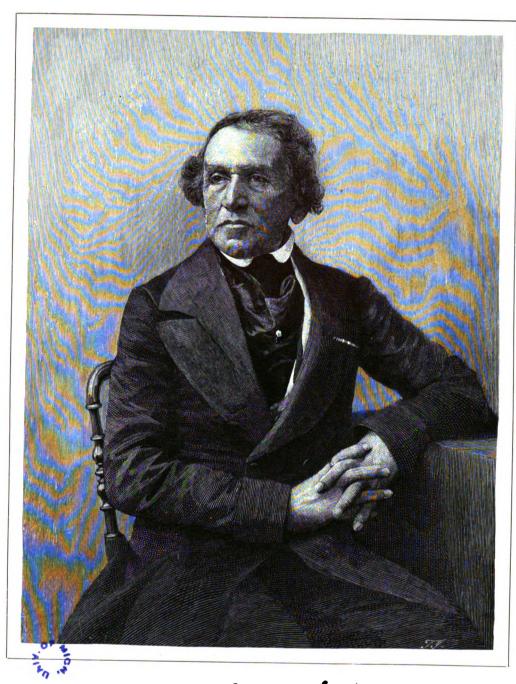
Mr. Edward Brandus adds the following particulars regarding the personality of his father's friend:

"How well I remember our parlor in Paris, how I peeped through the door to see Meverbeer at the piano, teaching Marie Battu who created Inez in 'L'Africaine' her aria 'Adieu. mon beau rivage'; or the tenor Naudin, with his frightful accent, singing 'Zè vou, Nobles Signors' instead of 'J'ai vu Nobles Seigneurs'; or Marie Sasse, who created Sélika. None of the divas suited Meyerbeer; he was urged to accept La Stolz, Cruvelli, Alboni, but none came up to his ideal for the rôle. Marie Sasse created the part after his death. She relates how one evening Meyerbeer was in the front orchestra row 'when I sang the "Huguenots," and after that whenever I went to Brandus, Meyerbeer would seat himself at the piano and call out to me, "Come, Marie, and listen to this," and then he would play and sing the morceau in an undertone and beg me to sing it to his accompaniment. That was his way of trying my voice. He bequeathed the rôle of Nelusko to Faure and that of Sélika to me.'

"Meyerbeer was never weary of retouching his operas. When, after his death, the task of putting 'L'Africaine' on the stage was really undertaken, it was found that he had written at least two different settings of every scene, and the selection which finally constituted the opera as it now stands left a second complete and different version of which twenty-two pieces are published. The present correspondence, too, shows how reasonable he was, and how ready to make the best of the voices of the artists that undertook his rôles. He was very set, however, when the matter involved what he regarded as a consideration of vital interest. For instance, when, in composing the 'Huguenots,' he arrived at the third act, the idea of the great duet between soprano and bass came to him, and he applied to his librettist, Eugène Scribe, for the words of a dialogue between Valentine and Marcel. Scribe refused on the ground that no woman of such high rank as la Comtesse de Nevers would be alone with a Huguenot soldier in one of the public squares of Paris on the night of her marriage. Meyerbeer said no more, but went to the poet Emile Deschamps, and offered him one per cent of all the royalties paid on the work if he would write the words of the duet for him. It is safe to estimate that in the sixty-odd years which have elapsed since then, Deschamps and his heirs have received at least sixty thousand dollars from this source.

"The note respecting Rossini shows a very pleasing courtesy between these rival composers; but Rossini was not without bitterness toward Meyerbeer. One day Carafa, who was accustomed to borrow of Rossini, asked for a new loan. 'Look here,' said Rossini, 'I have no money in my pocket, but take this composition to Brandus and he will buy it, and you may have the money.' So saying, he took up a manuscript lying on the piano and wrote on the cover, 'Douces Réminiscences sur "L'Africaine" de Meyerbeer, par Rossini.' The man brought the music to my father, who, glancing at the cover, bought it for 1000 francs, and sent it to the engravers without opening it, secure in the sale which 'Selections from Meyerbeer's "L'Africaine," written for the piano by Rossini,' would have. But when it came back printed ready for the market, and its contents were really looked into, the trick came to light. There were no melodies by Meyerbeer - nothing but a foolish scrawl of hideous dissonances, as unworthy of Rossini as the trick it represented.

"It is said that Meyerbeer went to Italy to become Italianized. Perhaps he did, but the fact remains that when he started on that journey he brought a trunk of compositions to our house and asked permission to leave them in our keeping. While he was gone, Donizetti produced his 'Lucia di Lammermoor,' which created a great furor. When Meyerbeer came back to Paris he opened the trunk in the presence of my father, and, sitting down at the piano, began playing over some of the half-completed scores which it contained, and there, almost note for note, was the famous septuor in 'Lucia!' Thus once more deep minds ran in the same channel.



a Montieur Jeanny Branders pour le Meyerbee ...

"Meyerbeer's real name was Beer. The Meyer he added in recognition of his affection for his old music-master Meyer, who bequeathed him his name. Michael Beer, his brother, the author of 'Struensée,' and his nephew Jules, alluded to in the present correspondence, retained their original patronymic.

"The composer was of medium height, with a very prominent forehead bordered with thick curls. His manner was marked by extreme courtesy and consideration for others. When rehearsing his operas, unlike most maestri, he was never known to lose his temper. 'My dear Maître,' he would say to some humble member of the orchestra, with the utmost gentleness, 'will you forgive me, but I think you were a little in error in the phrasing of the last page.' In fact, he was much too gentle to make the best conductor of his own operas, although he was never weary of rehearsing them.

"Meyerbeer died in 1864, at a hotel in the Champs-Elysées, which, after his death, took the name of Hotel Meyerbeer, which it still bears. He died at five o'clock in the morning in the arms of my uncle Louis. My father, Doctor Nelaton, and his nephew, Jules Beer, were present. The funeral cortège, passing through rue Lafayette on its way to the Gare du Nord, was escorted by the music of the Garde Impériale, which played the composer's own 'Marche aux Flambeaux' and the 'Marche du Sacre,' while military honors were rendered, he being a Commander of the Legion of Honor. My uncle, who was the executor of the will, took the body in a special funeral train to Berlin, where Meyerbeer held the position of Director-General of Music to his Majesty the King of Prussia.

"It was in virtue of this latter position that Meyerbeer came into relations with Wieprecht, mentioned in these letters. Wieprecht, by his individual exertions, had carried out the reform of Prussian military music, including the improvement of the instruments used. These great reforms, which Meyerbeer interested himself to forward, exactly as Berlioz befriended the similar career of Sax in France, led to the composition of the military music which remains an ornament to his name.

"Meyerbeer left a widow and two daughters, one of the latter being the wife of Baron

von Korff, a colonel in the German army, and the other the wife of Richter, the celebrated German painter."

The earlier of the present group of letters indicates the composer's Parisian habits. He excuses himself for missing a call on the ground that the beautiful weather tempted him to walk in the Champs-Elysées. He buys two dozen "gants Jouvain," which his wife



ROGER IN "LE PROPHÈTE."

in Baden-Baden wishes to present to a friend, and forwards them to her. He applies to his friends to purchase wood and similar housekeeping necessities for his bachelor life. He invites them to dine with him at his favorite haunts (at six o'clock) at the "Café Voisin, rue Luxembourg, corner of rue St. Gouve"; or to share his box (No. 22 torcheuse de face), which he declares to be his favorite. "Perhaps M. Gemmy Brandus has recovered from his illness," he writes, "and may like to hear for himself whether the rehearsals in his home have produced satisfactory results. If I feel well enough I may come, too; if not I shall stay at home."

He is also composing and re-composing, and requests M. Brandus to obtain a reader to go over his music so that he can get the effect of his changes from practical audition. His method of securing him is characteristic. He is in the habit of taking his siesta after dinner at M. Brandus's house. He makes an appointment on this neutral ground. He is

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From the collection of Edward Brandus.

charmed with the reader's voice, one M. Calabert, and they haggle over the terms. The price is finally made and the hour set, which the singer ignores, whereupon the injured composer speaks his mind:

"If the bass [Calabert] will bind himself to the engagement of coming to me every day at eight o'clock as he promised me yesterday (but which promise he failed to keep to-day), and if he will agree to remain until six P.M., and will discontinue the monstrous practice of losing an hour and a half over his déjeuner, I will (to avoid further complications) consider him still engaged to me for fifteen francs a day, dear though it is. But he must give you his word to keep the conditions faithfully. I beg you to preach him an emphatic sermon."

Meyerbeer is full of interest in everything pertaining to art. He goes to hear Ristori, and buys the words of her tragedy, "Giuditta," next day, to go over them privately. He calls on Patti, who is to sing in one of his operas, and presses forward his rehearsals and composing. All the world is at his feet, and his favorite opera, the "Pardon de Ploërmel" is to be brought out. Then the scene changes. He is away in Berlin, or at the baths, and the care of the great rôles of his operas, which is never forgotten for a moment, finds expression in letters. He has the capacity of every singer in Europe inventoried in his memory, and from behind the scenes arranges for the adequate presentation of his compositions all over the world.

"I take this opportunity of thanking you most warmly for sending me news of my dear friend Gouin's health; you would greatly oblige me by sending me word now and then how he is. I see that Herr Crosnier has given up his appointment, and that Herr Alphonse Royer has been chosen in his place; I read it in to-day's 'Revue et Gazette de Théâtres' and should like to know if it is true."

"I read in a German paper that the poet Heine's widow had given Herr Duisberg the order to correct and publish his memoirs. It would interest me greatly to know if this is really the case. I want to ask you to find it out from him (not in my name, but as though you wanted to know).

"Is it true that the editor of the feuilletons in 'L'Assemblée Nationale,' who signs himself Ch. de Ville, is Henri Blaze?

"I am curious to see whether Herr Alphonse Royer is going to let Madame Borghi-Mamo sing again in 'Le Prophète' as he told you. I wish very much that this work could be produced again with this great artist for the chief character. If this is really the case, please let me know what impression she made upon the audience as Fidès."

The three following letters show the usual order of events in Meyerbeer's diplomacy. The suggestion that Madame Lauters sing



CAROLINE DUPREZ IN "L'ÉTOILE DU NORD."

in the "Huguenots" is made to Meyerbeer through M. Brandus, and also to M. Royer through the same channel.

"Herr Formes is shortly to sing the part of the *Prophète* for the first time, which I consider is most beneficent to the opera, as until now it has always been sung by an inferior tenor. Now Herr Formes is most anxious to sing the 'Prière' in the third act, which, however, is only in the piano score and not in the grand score. It is No. 19 in the Italian piano score, and the first few words are 'Eternel Dieu Sauveur,' etc. Herr Formes heard Mario sing this prayer in London. I do not know if you have my original

manuscript still in your possession. If so, please get the opera copyist Lenorne to copy it at once; if not, the copyist of the Italian Opera in Covent Garden must do it. In any case, it is most urgent and immediate. This 'Prière' is very short, only from page 217 to page 220 in the Italian piano score. If you should be obliged to have it sent from London, but only in this event, please have the coda copied too, which Costa added for Mario in the third act of the 'Couplets Bachiques.' I have not yet been able to make the corrections of the French words of the choral song 'Das Vaterland'; neither have I yet been able to correct the cavatine from the 'Crociato.' But I will do this to-morrow.

"I have quite lately composed another German chorus for men's voices, which I will send you soon, but I must first have another verse written to it, as the original has only one. I have found a third chorus among my manuscripts, so it would be best for them all to appear together, under the title of 'Drei Chorlieder für Männerstimmen ohne Begleitung.'

"Kindly send a piano score as well as the grand score of the 'Schiller Cantate' to Herr Guidi in Florence. I would also ask you to be so kind as to send one more piano score to me here in Berlin, as well as the libretto of the 'Ballo in Maschera.'

"You write that Madame Lauters is to sing the part of Valentine in the Grand Opera. I think it would be well if you could remind Herr Royer of the fact (he does not seem willing to pay any attention to what I say). Is it true that Madame Tedesco was nearly suffocated by opening the door of a stove too soon after it had been lighted? I should be most grateful to you if you would send me the most detailed particulars regarding the success of Auber's 'Circassienne.'

"In reply to your letter of July 21, I beg to say that you misunderstood me in thinking that I did not wish Madame Lauters to sing the part of *Valentine*; on the contrary, I most earnestly desire her to do so. I only meant that if she refused to take this part in the event of Niemann's singing the part of *Raoul* later on, in which case I should propose Sachs.

"Second, I do not wish you by any means to try and persuade Niemann to sing one of my parts; only if you should hear casually that he intends taking one, then I would ask you to advise his taking Raoul in the 'Huguenots.'

"Third, I will not allow my prayer from 'Le Prophète' to be orchestrated by Costa, so please don't have it copied.

"Lastly, thank you very much for your kind promise to send me full particulars of 'Tannhäuser's' third performance; it will interest me greatly to hear all about it."

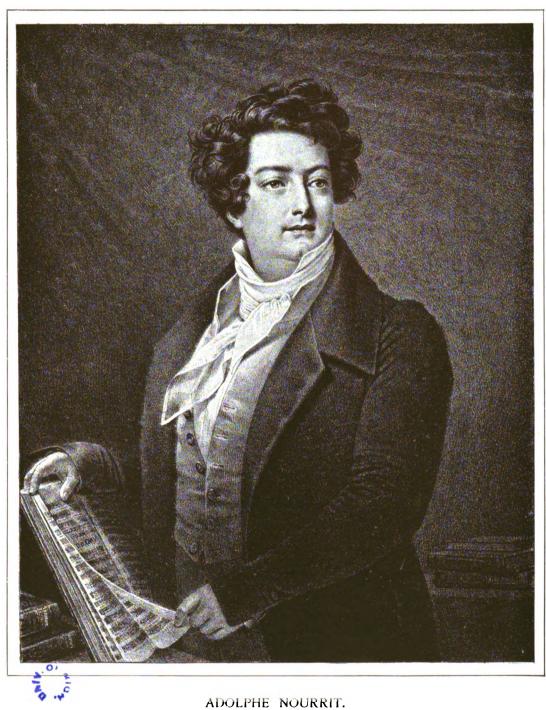
In another letter he writes:

"With regard to what Herr Royer told you about Scribe's having mentioned my intention to the Minister of State, Walewsky, to produce 'L'Africaine' for a certainty next winter: please tell Herr Royer that as I have not seen Scribe for the last year or more, he cannot possibly know my intention for 'L'Africaine,' and consequently I look upon this as only the result of his fertile imagination."

"BERLIN, October 26, 1860.

"You would do me a great favor by seeing Herr Carré as soon as possible and asking him not to send me merely the second and third acts of his libretto, but to wait and send it all at the same time, when it is quite finished, as I can only judge it properly by reading the whole thing through. I am sending you by to-morrow's post the Romance of the fourth act of the 'Huguenots' for Madame Lauters. The latter writes to tell me that everybody at the Opera is talking of my bringing out 'L'Africaine' for certain next season, with Herr Niemann as the principal tenor. Now this must hurt Guymard most deeply as he has sung all my operas for so many years with such faithful love and with such great success. I do not wish to send Madame Lauters a written answer to this, but I should be exceedingly obliged if you would take her the Romance yourself, and tell her, at the same time, that I cannot possibly be responsible for all the canards which appear in the papers about me. Tell her, please, that I have as yet settled nothing with regard to the different characters, and also that I have not the faintest notion when my 'L'Africaine' is to be produced; but at any rate it will not be for a long time to come. Besides this, will you kindly tell Madame Lauters that if she finds, during the rehearsals of the 'Huguenots,' that anything seems





HE CREATED THE PARTS OF "ROBERT" AND "RAOUL."

unsuitable to her voice, I shall have great pleasure in altering whatever places she likes. Please ask her when she thinks of singing Valentine. Will you also tell Herr Weyll for me that I have found out the title of the book for him? It is 'The Opera of the Future,' and can be had at the Franco-German bookstore of either Avenarius or Franke. Let me have the article from the paper regarding which the inclosed notice reads:

"'The "Journal Amusant" gives Halévy as the composer of the "Huguenots." I wonder whether Meyerbeer agrees to this or not."

In the meantime the "Pardon de Ploërmel" was produced (1859), and, having been fairly well received, was almost immediately sought as a novelty for the United States.

The story is laid in Brittany, where pilgrimages (pardons) are still made to favorite shrines. The story is developed in a haunted valley; *Hoël*, *Dinorah*, the *Chevrière* (goatherd), and the *Faucheur* (mower) make up the principal cast.

"SPA, August 12, 1859.

"I authorize you to give the grand score of 'Pardon' to Herr Strakovitz¹ [Strakosch] as he requested for NewYork, solely on condition that he pledges to you his word to give the part of *Hoël* to the very best barytone in his company, and also promises not to give the four smaller parts to so-called stop-gap singers, but to first-class artists, as was the case in London."

"September 11, 1859.

"I should be greatly obliged if, as soon as Herr Parent has corrected the mistakes in the third act, you would send a copy to Lard with the request that it may be bound in red morocco at once, with gilt-edged leaves, and, if possible, the Würtemberg coat of arms embossed in gold on the cover. And I would be glad if he would let me know directly this score is bound.

"I am here and, unhappily, ill in bed. I do not know how long it will be necessary for me to stay here to recover. But please let me know every detail concerning the reprise

¹The Editors have thought best to leave unaltered Meyerbeer's version of the proper names in his letters.

of 'Le Pardon de Ploërmel,' so that the game may not be played on me of performing this during my absence; for the same reason I beg you not to tell anybody of my illness, as this Roqueplan would be quite capable of performing my opera secretly, thinking that because I am away from home and ill I should not find it out.



HERMAN LÉON IN "L'ÉTOILE DU NORD."

"How does Musard play the overture to 'Pardon,' and does it seem to please the public?"

A year later the adverse criticism of Meyerbeer's enemies still vexed him.

"BERLIN, March 19, 1860.

"In my previous letter I requested you to speak to Herr Le Roy. After earnest consideration I have come to the conclusion that it is better for you not to do so. By the inclosed article you will see with what malicious animosity R. is filled. One must not do him the honor of speaking to him. Unfortunately it is too late for us to withdraw the work, so we must simply leave it to its fate.

"Please be kind enough to ascertain in what month the Marchisio sisters intend making their début in the French Opera, and also if they would be willing, as I have once heard, to sing in London first in Italian."

The accompanying extract is from "Le Figaro":



LE CHÂTEAU DE CHENONCEAU.

Decoration of second act of "Les Huguenots." From "Album de l'Opéra."

"A propos de théâtre on prête un joli mot de plus à M. Nestor Roqueplan. M. Meyerbeer, dit-on, se plaignait de ce que le spirituel Directeur semblait se refroidir beaucoup à son égard. 'Le Pardon de Ploërmel' était négligé, on ne le jouait plus assez souvent. Soyez tranquille; je la jouerai toujours, votre pièce, je la jouerai continuellement, impitoyablement jusqu'à ce qu'il n'y ait plus dans la salle qu'un unique spectateur."

The following letter, dated May 20, 1860, shows the solicitude which Meyerbeer showed for the success of all his musical offspring. One of his biographers quotes Heine as saying that he could not rest while one soul remained unconverted to his music, and the amount of importance which he attached to minutiæ usually disregarded by successful composers is unparalleled.

"As I see by the papers that the festival in the Grand Opera has been postponed for

a week, I should be very grateful to you if you would kindly ask Royer not to put the 'Schiller Marsch' quite as near the end of the program as he has done, as by that time the audience is quite exhausted from having heard so much music. I should prefer most of all for it to come immediately after the aria 'Pietà Signor,' by Stradella, which Michant is to sing, but on no account after an important ensemble piece.

"From your brother's letter I learn that the Opéra Comique has a new Director in the person of Herr de Beaumont. I trust that he will prove more sensible than Roqueplan.

"Be kind enough to attract Herr de Beaumont's attention to the great success which Mademoiselle Boulard is having in Brussels with 'Pardon.' Please ask him to engage her for the month of June, when the Brussels theater is closed, to sing 'Pardon' at the Opéra Comique.

"You did quite right to allow Musard to play my 'Schiller Marsch,' but you certainly

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ought to have seen that he did not put it in such a disadvantageous part of the program. He played it at each concert as the first piece on the program, when, as you know, there is never an audience. And now I find that after playing it just a few times, he has crossed it out of his repertoire altogether, thereby doing the work more harm than good. You told me that you had allowed him to compose a fantaisie from themes in 'Pardon'; then how is it that he has not once played it?

"You can understand how doubly trying this eye trouble is to me in cutting me off from all activity in music, and this happens just when I am in the midst of a new composition to which I so earnestly wished to devote my whole love and energy.

"Has nothing yet been done to engage Madame Miolan for the next season in St. Petersburg?"

"SCHWALBACH, August 25, 1860.

"Herr Wollheim writes me from Wiesbaden that Mademoiselle Panatrat has studied and intends singing the part of Dinorah in the Opéra Comique. And from your letter it appears that Mons. de Beaumont told Mons. Monnais that he intended taking up 'Dinorah' again. We know that Demoiselle Montrose is angry with me because I would not allow her to sing Dinorah at her first début. But now it would be an actual calamity for 'Dinorah' (after the long rest that this opera has had) to be revived again with an absolutely unknown singer like the Demoiselle Panatrat; indeed it would be breaking the neck of this opera forever. It would be far better for 'Dinorah' not to be given at all this season than for it to be given with Demoiselle Panatrat. So please find out immediately whether what Herr Wollheim says is really true. (Your brother who knows Victor so intimately could ascertain it better than anybody else.) And if it really is the case, you must please go to Fiorentino and beg him to help us in this matter. Tell him, I beg you, how everything stands, and get him to use every means in his power to prevent Demoiselle Panatrat from taking this part. Then beg him to get De Beaumont to give the part to Demoiselle Montrose and to persuade her to begin it immediately. Fiorentino must hear from you why Demoiselle Montrose is angry with me, and she must by no means be allowed to think that Herr de Beaumont feels any particular sympathy for me. The matter is by no means easy to arrange, but Fiorentino has such a mighty and influential position that when he really wants to do a thing, however difficult, he can usually carry it out. As we have to act in great haste, I think it is best that you tell him candidly that you come to him in my name with this request, and that I beg him to take the matter in hand and do what he can to get my wishes fulfilled. You can add, as though from yourself, that you are certain that I shall be very grateful to him for his trouble.

"I trust you will soon let me hear all about Demoiselle Duprez's début in 'Les Huguenots.'"

The plan for producing "Pardon" is more fully developed, and the next three letters relate to the filling of the other parts, all of which is managed from a distance with the aid of Meyerbeer's friends, and, as the last



BATAILLE IN "L'ÉTOILE DU NORD."

letter suggests, a slight tax on his private influence if not his purse. He finally succeeds in fitting out the following cast, but not without sleepless nights:

Hoël Mademoiselle Wertheimer. Dinorah . . . Mademoiselle Montrose. The Chevrière . Mademoiselle Darcier. "September 14, 1860.

"HONORED SIR:

"I forgot to tell you in my letter yesterday that I give Charlot carte blanche to make any modifications he considers necessary to Mademoiselle Wertheimer's voice with regard to compass in the part of Hoël. The difficulties concerning Madame Ugalde in the part of the Chevrière might possibly be overcome in the manner suggested yesterday.

"BERLIN, September 17, 1860.

"I have just received your letter of the fourteenth, and beg you tell Herr Beaumont that of course I will gladly give up my rights of authorship for a performance connected with a charitable purpose. You know that I always do this for every charitable benefit. You might tell him at the same time that as he is taking so very much trouble with re-

Venike, dy seer llevelieur-l'expelien ile mar levelieur les plur distriquer de la faire le plur empréller à l'Hartre Hevelieur. Huber

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AUTOGRAPH OF MEYERBEER. Closing paragraph of a letter to Auber.

"Be kind enough to submit the idea to F.'s judgment as soon as possible. He has overcome so many great difficulties already for the Theater Directors and Composers which were caused by the vanity of the singers that perhaps he will now be able to conquer these difficulties in the way I suggested, which will be greatly to our advantage in executing this work."

It would appear from the following note that Meyerbeer did intend to compose an opera on "La Jeunesse de Goethe."

gard to choosing good singers it would be most advisable to let Varot take the part of the Faucheur, which he sang so admirably, again. It would be well to let him know, as if quite casually, that I am working at 'Mignon.' I am very glad indeed that Herr Beaumont has agreed to the idea of getting Madame Ugalde for the Chevrière. Do try and strengthen him in this idea. If the canzonetta which I wrote for Mademoiselle Nantier Didier should be either too high or too low for Madame Ugalde, she can have it transposed as she likes."

"BERLIN, September 26, 1860.

"I told you in one of my former letters that if Madame Ugalde could not sing the 'Arie des Chevrières' nobody must sing it, as the Opéra Comique would then probably give the part to some inferior singer, and thus make its success an impossibility. But now I read in the 'Entr'acte' of the 25th of this month that Demoiselle Darcier is to sing the Chevrière, and of course I gave my consent to it most willingly, as Demoiselle Darcier was a first-class artist whose place has not yet been filled.

"Only I cannot understand how it is that such a celebrated artist is willing to make her reappearance in such an insignificant part in the theater in which she won such a brilliant success. Or is this, perhaps, another singer with the same name? I believe that Carvalho once told me that the chansonette singer Darcier (male) had a daughter who was going on the stage; perhaps this is she. Please be kind enough to find out from Charlot (who no doubt knows it) whether she is the celebrated Darcier-Mamignard, or the daughter of the singer Darcier. And if this latter is the case, whether she has voice and talent enough to do the Arie justice, in which case she may sing it. If, however, Charlot should not consider her good enough, it would then be better to leave out the whole of the scene and (as previously) only have the scene with two peasants."

"September 29, 1860.

"I received your letter of the 25th, and beg to say in reply that if Charlot considers Demoiselle Darcier good, and that if the air, which was really written for a mezzo-soprano, suits her voice, I am willing that she should sing it. Only I make the condition that it must be carried out exactly as it was in London, viz.: Demoiselle Darcier must sing the preceding recitative, as otherwise the canzonetta would sound short and poor.

"P.S. I am very glad that Mademoiselle Wertheimer will study her part with Herr Royer; the latter is a clever, earnest, and talented musician. At the same time please advise her (though not in my name) to go through her part with Charlot also, as he, through having been present at so many re-

hearsals, knows my wishes and ideas so thoroughly."

"BERLIN, October 31, 1860.

- "I hope you received my last letter, and to-day I want to ask you the following questions:
- "1. In the last number of the 'Revue Musicale' I read that a certain person had paid anonymously to the Director of the Théâtre Lyrique 50,000 francs as security for the mise en scène of the new opera by Berlioz. Can you find out for me who this person is, or at least who he is supposed to be, as it is a matter of the keenest interest to me.
- "2. In the last number of the 'Presse Théâtrale' I read that an article had been published in the 'Figaro' about Richard Wagner signed Guy d'Estrée, but believed to be



MOCKER IN "L'ÉTOILE DU NORD."

by Blaze de Bury. I should so much like to read this article if you would kindly send it to me.

- "3. I should be very much interested to hear from you whether you think that the 'Pardon de Ploërmel' has gained or lost in musical conception since its first performance (especially on Montrose's part).
- "4. I hear that the Teutonia is organizing a musical festival to honor the anniversary of Schiller's birthday. Are they going to have an orchestra, and are my 'Schiller Marsch' and 'Schiller Cantata' going to be

performed? 'Dinorah' has been brought out lately in both Bremen and Linz, and (from what the papers say) has had great success.

"P. S. I see in the last number of your 'Revue Musicale' that the Editor Legouix has just published Schubert's 'Roi des Aunes' (Erlking), orchestrated by Berlioz. You would do me the greatest favor by buying this for me (but without the separate parts) and sending it to me by 'bandes croisées.'

"I saw from your letter that Faure was not engaged by Mirelli. The latter has been in Berlin since then, and, after hearing from me that I considered it advisable to engage Faure for the Italian representation of 'Dinorah' in Vienna, he consented to engage him (of course on condition that they can come to terms from a financial point of view, and also on condition that Faure can be ready to arrive in Vienna at the latest on the 18th of February, and remain until the 20th or 25th of April). Mirelli says he knows that Faure is engaged by Gay and that such engagements begin as a rule in the early part of April, but as Gay, who had also engaged Demoiselle Patti for the 1st of April, easily arranged to have her free until the 25th of April, although Patti was to have sung an important part in each performance, Mirelli hopes that Faure may also be relieved until the 25th of April. Will you have the great kindness to ask Faure from Mirelli (but by no means in my name) whether he would be willing to accept an engagement for the above-mentioned time, and, if so, what his conditions would be. You can tell him this: that Mirelli is most anxious that he should take the part of Hoël with Patti in Vienna. And please write your answer in a way that I can read it to Mirelli.

"Your brother wrote to me about Musard's coming to Berlin in connection with my London Exhibition Overture.'

"Should Faure absolutely decline coming to Vienna, I would ask you to be kind enough (through a third person—for instance through Duncan Davidson) to ask the barytone Santley in London whether he would be free, or could make himself free, from the 15th of February until the 25th of April in order to take an engagement in a large German city. He must neither guess that this question comes from me, nor that it is for Mirelli, as I do not wish to speak of it to Mirelli (who

as yet knows nothing about this idea of mine until he has Faure's answer)."

"Pardon," thanks to the anxious care of its composer and publisher, becomes a success for the public, if not for the critics. Meyerbeer is presently able to write to Louis Brandus:

"'Pardon' is being rapidly produced in all the large cities in Germany, and always with success. During the past week alone it has been given in the following towns for the first time: Darmstadt, Lubeck, Munich, Leipsic, and Breslau. Altogether it has been performed in twenty-one German theaters. I think this will interest you for the 'Revue.'"

He has no sooner settled the question of Paris and "Pardon" than he is busy with those of Fidès and "L'Etoile." Until the day of his death he resolutely worked up the adequate presentation of his rôles in London, Vienna, St. Petersburg, Italy, and Paris, and the success crowned his efforts that common sense and business tact command. The present correspondence has, in fact, exposed the basis of the charge of wire-pulling to which Meyerbeer's enemies loved to impute his success. It is all reduced to the reasonable activity of good business methods.

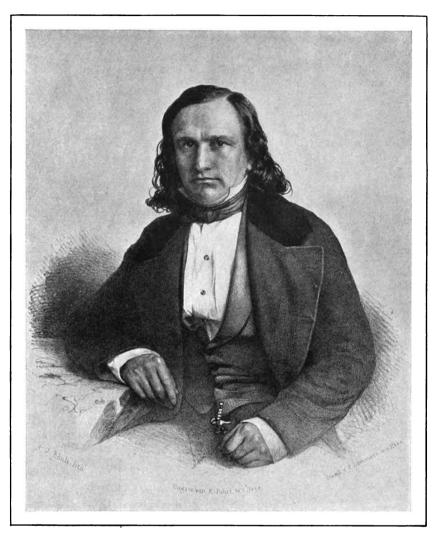
"NICE, September 11.

"Henzel has written me in Carvalho's name asking me if he had no chance of getting my new comic opera for his theater. He wished to come at once to Nice to hear my conditions. I cannot answer your brother's letter to-day, as I am busy finishing a little cantata which is to be privately performed by amateurs at the birthday celebration of a lady here. I shall probably publish it by and by."

The following group of letters gives an insight into Meyerbeer's relations toward his brother musicians. They are a sample of his habitual attitude:

"Allow me through these lines to present to you Mr. Guglielmi, who has a beautiful barytone voice. This gentleman has transposed my song 'Guide au bord ma nacelle' for barytone, and sings it with great success. If you can give him any help in his musical career in Paris I shall be grateful to you, for he is a good, amiable man, and at the same time a fellow countryman (for notwithstanding his Italian name he is a German)." I must begin to prepare another piece to take its place on the program.

"I am anxious to hear from you how Madame Ugalde's voice sounded at her re-



CARL FORMES.

Lithographed from a daguerreotype.

"BERLIN, September 25, 1861.
"Highly Honored Sir:

"I had hoped to hear from you yesterday whether Gounod could or could not let you have the orchestral parts of his 'Ave Maria' in order to perform the same in the Königsberg Court concert. We are much pressed for time in this matter, as it must all be copied and the parts well studied, and the concert is to take place on the 15th of October.

"If, on the other hand, we cannot have it,

appearance in 'L'Etoile' after her confinement, and what was your general impression of the performance.

"Receive, dear M. Brandus, the assurance of my most complete esteem.

"Your very devoted,

"MEYERBEER." 1

"February 2, 1861.

"Rossini has written me a kind and friendly letter about the performance in his house of 'This is Meyerbeer's habitual formula.



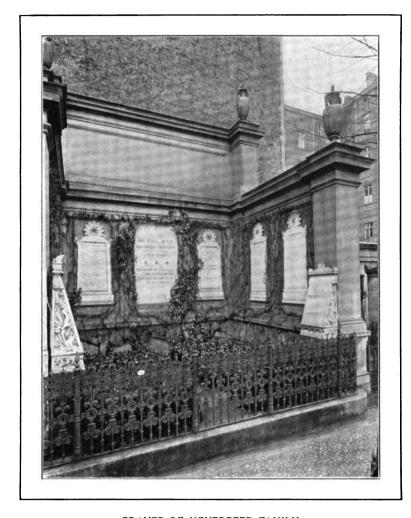
JENNY LIND-GOLDSCHMIDT.

SHE CREATED THE PART OF ' VIELKA" IN "EIN FELDLAGER IN SCHLESIEN."

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the operetta by my nephew Julius. As I wish my answer to reach him as soon as possible, but unfortunately forget the number of his house, I am taking the liberty of sending you my letter to him, and beg you to have the great kindness to take it to him yourself

brated pianist and composer Kullak (whose works you have yourself brought out). This young man is worthily treading in the footprints of his celebrated father, and is already an excellent pianist. But he wishes to perfect himself in music in all its branches, and



GRAVES OF MEYERBEER FAMILY.

In the Schönhaus Allée Cemetery, Berlin.

To the right of the spectator is the composer's grave.

the same day that you receive it. Please tell him yourself 'what intense pleasure his letter has given me, and how enraptured I am with his kind attention.'

"Please, dear M. Brandus, forgive me for troubling you with this commission."

"DEAR SIR: "BERLIN, October 28, 1862.

"Allow me with these lines to introduce to you Herr Franz Kullak, son of the celehas therefore come to Paris to study and to hear all that can be heard in the way of music. You would oblige me greatly by helping and advising him in this matter.

"I must also take advantage of your kindness and ask you to help him in regard to his new home, and also get him introduced to some German families, for he is very young, and this is the first time he has left the home of his parents." "BERLIN, May 8, 1863.

"This letter is accompanied by the chorus from 'Struensée' for men's voices, in four parts, which you expressed the wish to publish. I composed this chorus for the Männer-Gesangverein (men's choral club). Please put on the title-page 'Chant guerrier (de Struensée) chœur pour voix d'hommes.' Then you must have a pianoforte accompaniment written to this, which, however, must contain nothing but the exact notes of the voices, and in exactly the same position on the piano as in the vocal parts. And add that the accompaniment is solely to assist at rehearsal. Please put also on the title-page

'SCHOTT IN BRUSSELS.'

"Wieprecht told me that he was to send you in the next few days the score of 'The Torchlight Dances.' He has written the title quite wrong. Consequently I must remind you to have it printed as follows:

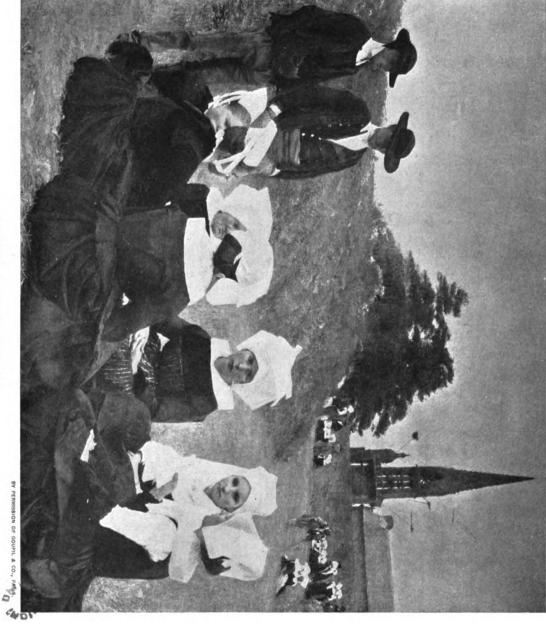
"'Première Marche aux Flambeaux composée pour Musique Militaire par G. Meyerbeer et arrangée pour orchestre ordinaire par W. Wieprecht.'

"Please let me know soon after the performance of the 'Vêpres Siciliennes' exactly how Villaret sang and acted, and whether he can be intrusted with a very large and important work.

"P. S. Have you heard how long Verdi is to stay in Paris, and whether he intends to go to London?"



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BRETONS AT A PARDON.

FROM THE PAINTING BY DACNAN-BOUVERET.
ILLUSTRATING THE RELIGIOUS PILGRIMAGE ON WHICH MEYERBEER'S "PARDON DE PLOÉRMEL" WAS FOUNDED.

91



THE METHODS OF THE MASTERS OF PIANO-TEACHING IN EUROPE

SYMPOSIUM ON THE TRAINING OF THE THUMBS AND FOURTH AND FIFTH FINGERS

Present Messrs. Falcke, Schwartz, Ruthardt, Delaborde, Marmontel, Schmitt, Scholtz, Jedlitzka, Philipp, Pugno and Germer, and Frau Stepanoff.

BOEKELMAN: Have you, gentlemen, a special exercise for the thumb?

FALCKE: Many passages where the thumb goes under the fingers combined with a lateral movement of the wrist. Exercises in arpeggio and in the arpeggio form.

SCHWARTZ: I use the skip of an octave.

RUTHARDT: 1212, &c., makes a preparation for the scale. Likewise 1231, &c.

DELABORDE: In my opinion the scale of C major comprises everything.

MARMONTEL: It is a good thing to work the passage of the thumb with each finger.

SCHMITT: Very stiff thumbs become softer if one practises carefully for months in shutting them inside the hand, which doubles over them in a fist (out of practice hours of course). The stiffest thumb may be bent by this method.

SCHOLTZ: I teach in this way:



SCHMITT: These exercises in all the keys are superior:



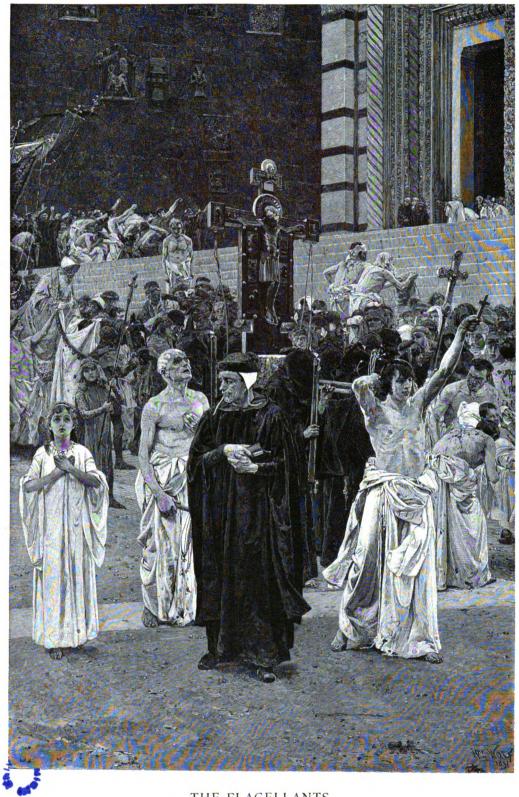


The following is of special merit in the practice of scales and great divisions of chords:



JEDLITZKA: I hold down the first second, third and fourth fingers and carry the thumb under through intervals increasingly great.

92



THE FLAGELLANTS.

(DETAIL) BY CARL MARR. ENGRAVED BY HENRY WOLF.
A TYPE OF A EUROPEAN PILGRIMAGE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

PHILIPP: I should like to show you my exercises for velocity [published by Huegel].

STEPANOFF: Rhythm should always be observed, but accent very rarely, in preparatory





THE VIOLIN PLAYER, BY MATHIAS SCHEIETS.

BOEKELMAN: They are the only ones I know which provide for the pivotal (hinge-like) motion of the thumb ascending and descending.



I make them rhythmic like this. It gives a lightness to the motion.

F. M. S.: With a stationary fore-arm they are as undesirable as are all others.

BOEKELMAN: What is the best way to strengthen the fourth and fifth fingers?

PHILIPP: Practise them slowly and accent them strongly.

exercises. Accent is always produced with a movement of the wrist or arm, and should therefore be avoided in exercises intended to strengthen the fingers.

BOEKELMAN: That seems a cardinal point with the Leschetitzky method. But accent can be produced by raising the finger to a greater height, and increasing the velocity of its descent.

PUGNO: In the first place, give weak fingers more work than the others. I give them a greater attack. It is useful to stop on the weak finger in the scale and also in figures where it is employed.

RUTHARDT: Exercises with supporting fingers and skips with the fifth finger are helpful.

DELABORDE: I advocate trills, rather slow, on all the keys with the same fingers.

STEPANOFF: Exercises in trills and mordents with the wrist lowered.

MARMONTEL: I depend on rhythmic exercises in which the accent is placed successively on each finger, insisting on the fourth and fifth finger particularly.

SCHMITT: I use my exercises, Op. 4.

JEDLITZKA: First, make the third and then the fifth finger rest lightly on the keys and perform hammer exercises with the fourth at the same time.

SCHOLTZ: Two-finger exercises throughout all the scales are my prescription.



GERMER: When training the fourth and fifth finger it is practical to raise the elbow and at the same time turn the fore-arm slightly outward; because thus the motion of these fingers in the knuckle joint becomes freer.

F. M. S.: These à la Brahms are sovereign for the fifth finger, run through all scales and arpeggios legatissimo.



BOEKELMAN: Do you exercise one finger by itself with the others extended on the neighboring keys?

PHILIPP: That is certainly one of the best ways to gain strength and independence. I have a series of exercises of the kind [published by Schirmer] on chords of the diminished 7th, like this:



GERMER: Exercises with supported fingers are indispensable because with them one obtains an easy position of the hand in the shortest possible time, besides making each finger independent of its neighbor.



SCHOLTZ: I am afraid to make my pupils hold down the keys in the beginning; a cramped condition of the hand might easily result.

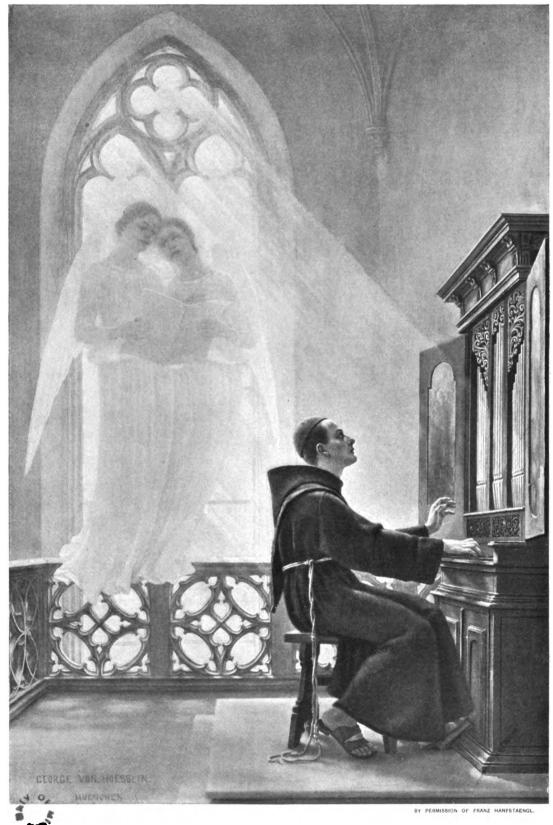
JEDLITZKA: Decidedly let the fingers lie on their keys at first.

BOEKELMAN: There is a difference between allowing the weight of the hand to be supported by one or more fingers the muscles of which are not contracted, and using exercises in which the muscles of the fingers pressing the keys are purposely contracted. All the muscular conditions are reversed in the latter case.

SCHMITT: I believe in practising the fingers separately. But the fingers not in exercise should not cling to the keys as if cramped, as in exercises for fettered fingers. They should be suspended free in the air. I have a particular apparatus for teaching this.



A GREEK RELIGIOUS PROCESSION.



AN ORGAN FANTASIA.

FROM THE PAINTING BY GEORGE VON HOESSLIN.



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THE RETURN OF SPRING.

FROM THE PAINTING BY E. BISSON.

PAPILLONS























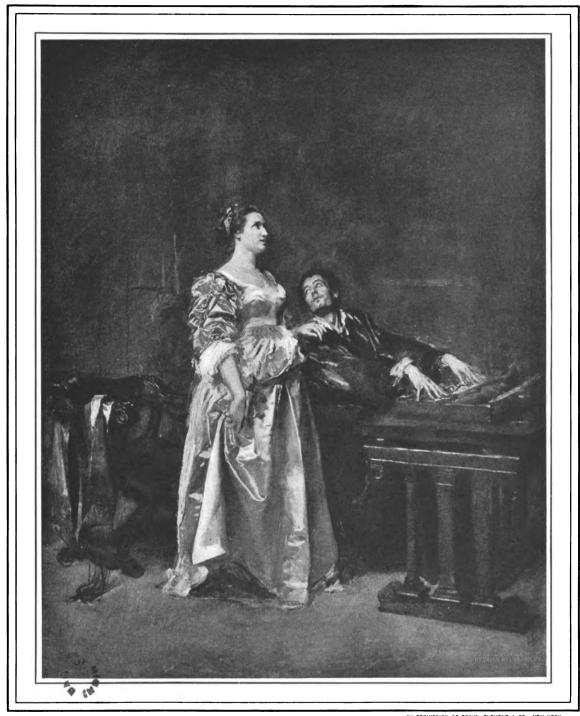












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YOUNG WOMAN SINGING.

FROM A STUDY BY J. L. E. MEISSONIER.

BALLADE

G MINOR



























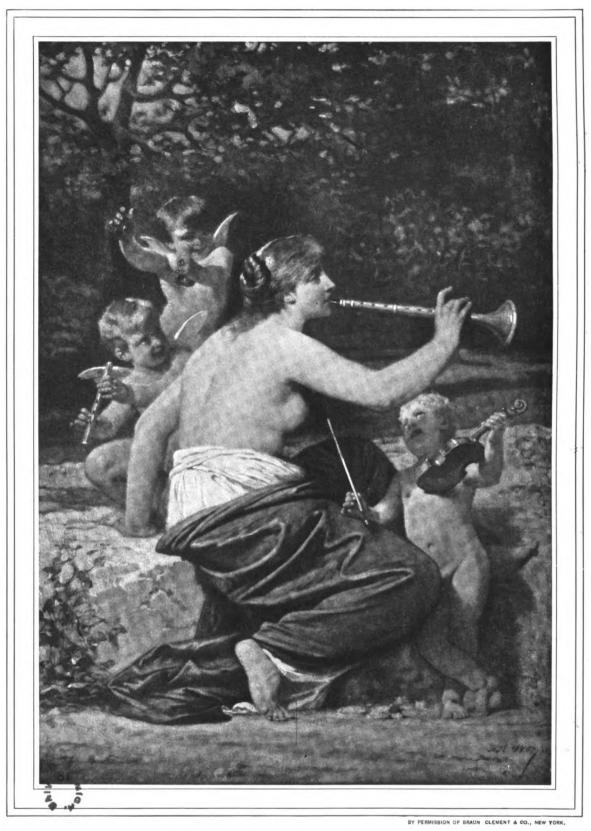




MAZURKA

B MINOR





MUSIC.

FROM THE PAINTING BY ADOLPHE YVON.















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MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES.

CEILING DECORATION OF THE HÔTEL DE VILLE, PARIS. PAINTED BY H. GERVEX.

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