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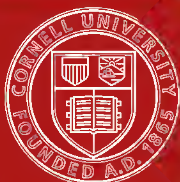

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# FRANCOIS LISZT

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# FRANCOIS LISZT

*RECOLLECTIONS OF A COMPATRIOT*

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

JANKA WOHL

BY

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London
WARD & DOWNEY
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1887

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# FRANÇOIS LISZT:

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A FELLOW-COUNTRYWOMAN.

'ONE ought not to weep for the dead, but rejoice with the living,' said Liszt, when, in my presence, he heard of the unexpected death of a friend. The lesson will be of use to me; I will no longer mourn the wonderful man who has just been taken from us. He will ever remain living to me. He filled my intellectual life with inexhaustible treasures. He opened to me a boundless horizon; he bequeathed to me a moral legacy, which henceforth secures a future to my soul and

my heart. He is dead ; but I have not lost him—to such an extent is my existence impregnated with his affection, and merged in his genius. His image shall keep me company now that his body is gone. As in the past, I will seek guidance from that vast spirit to whom work was the first title to nobility; from that tender and generous heart; from that proud and grand soul, in which every persecuted truth, every unknown genius, found a champion capable of making it triumph. He will ever be one of the Penates of my hearth; always present, and always surrounded by my grateful affection.

## CHAPTER I.

We are old friends. I was ten years old when I saw Liszt for the first time at one of his orchestral concerts. He had been the Sindbad, the hero of my childish dreams, and my one ambition, my one desire, had been to gain his intimacy.

I succeeded. He praised my playing (they wished me to become a pianist); he sat down at the piano and gave me the treat of playing for me all my little *répertoire,* viz. S. Bach's 'Fugue,' Chopin's 'Berceuse,' a sonata of Scarlatti's. Then he gave me a lot of bon-bons, and kissed my thick brown plaits of hair; they were my mother's pride, and I

wore them hanging down my back in the Hungarian fashion. I was very little, and my hair was very long; Liszt noticed this. He had fairly turned my head. A girl friend has just sent me a letter written about this time. I was surprised to find in these infantile effusions one more proof of the ascendency exercised over everybody by the extraordinary personality of this man. He used to, himself, conduct his mass 'de Gran,' solemnised at the parish church of Buda-Pesth. I was in the choir facing him, and the play of his wonderful features so struck my childish soul, that it inspired me with the following lines:—

'I cannot keep my eyes off his sublime face. There is nothing more interesting than to see Liszt conducting. His features always reflect the nature of the music he hears. Enthusiasm, beatitude, spiritual fervour, all can be read in his eyes. I could always tell

beforehand what would be the dominant idea in any passage just begun; Liszt's features told me.'

Full of enthusiasm, I praised God in French and German verses, which were afterwards reproduced in Hungarian in our newspapers. To thank me he told us he would come and visit us.

He came, a tall and elegant figure, up our two stories, four steps at a time, his beautiful iron-grey hair streaming over his shoulders, and wrapped in a large cloak, which, with a turn of the wrist, he could throw over his body as cleverly as any Roman did his toga.

When he kissed my hand as he would 'a grown up young lady's,' my little heart was ready to burst with emotion.

'Well! what a pretty head!' he kept on saying as he stroked my brown tresses.

Then he told me how his father had had 'a fixed idea to see him become somebody';

how you must be serious and industrious to achieve that, and how you must take pains to do things well; and when my mother complained that while I was playing my scales I composed verses, he shook his head in an anxious manner. 'I am afraid,' said he, 'that, in that way, both scales and verses run the risk of being indifferent.' And I, I am afraid that the remark may have been a prophetic one of the master's.

Liszt had the memory of kings. No—he had what is better—he had the memory of the heart. He never forgot me after that visit. I, child though I was, was capable of awakening in him a lasting interest. At intervals he gave me proof of this by sending me little presents through fellow-country-women whom he came across abroad. Such as the collection of his Hungarian Rhapsodies, a book, a photograph—in short, something showing 'a constant affection, a faithful and

grateful friendship,' as he wrote in a little note-case which, thinking of me at the last minute, he entrusted to one of our most distinguished musicians, to be given to me, when he was seeing him off at the station at Weimar. It was not an empty compliment. Liszt was profoundly grateful for any sincere sentiment, and this peculiarity of his character explains to us the fanatical attachments which he inspired, and which followed him to the grave.

Some years after, Liszt came back to Buda-Pesth. He spent an evening with us. I was ill, but they got me up at ten o'clock to see the master. I had improved ; I played him one of his own compositions, 'The Nightingale,' but, unnerved by my illness, as well as by my emotion, my strength deserted me ; I broke down, and, putting my arms on the music-stand, I burst into tears. You should have seen the delightful man do everything

'to coax the child to smile.' I was even then able to understand the divine and captivating music I heard that blessed evening. 'Evenings in Vienna,' Chopin's 'Waltzes and Mazurkas,' musical trifles—I had them all. It was fairyland to me, and my old music-master, a friend of Liszt's, declared he had never heard him play with so much spirit. His little audience was in the seventh heaven. I was delirious that night, and the archangel Liszt beamed on me incessantly, and mingled with algebraical problems which my over-wrought brain tried in vain to solve.

I still remember a comic little incident which worried my poor mother dreadfully. She was one of the cleverest women of her day; but she was also a cook of no mean order, and very proud of her skill in the culinary art.

Liszt had promised to sup with us at eight o'clock. He did not turn up until eleven.

Our Hungarian supper naturally suffered in consequence; and mother could never forget the sly smile with which our illustrious guest said, 'Madam, you really have excellent cigars.' During this same visit of Liszt's I once more heard him play, without his knowing it, hidden in a little cupboard with my mother. My music-master, Mr. Breuer, had invited him to a man party. All the musical Bohemians of the town were there, as well as all the swells. Liszt, in his shirt-sleeves, played Beethoven's Grand Sonata Op. 47, dedicated to Kreutzer, with one of our virtuosos, a violinist whose name I have forgotten. Then, with one of his pupils, Mr. Winterberger, who travelled with him, they performed on two pianos his grand symphony 'Tasso.' He was so delighted with his pupil that he embraced him with effusion. Child though I was, the extraordinary likeness between pupil and master struck me—the

same head, the same flowing locks, the same prominent nose, and the same easy manners. I mentioned this to my mother, but she made no reply.

I have often heard 'Tasso' played by the master since. I even played it myself with him only last year; but it was not the same thing. I learnt, alas! that even the gods can grow old!

. . . . .

The individuality of Liszt was certainly most complicated, made up as it was, to a degree rarely found, of lights and shades. His nature consisted of uneven proportions of demon and angel. Uneven, because the angelic part of him always got the better of the diabolical. To attempt to give an epitome of Liszt would be to try and get a reflection of the universe in a drop of water. I dare not attempt anything so impossible.

This work has no pretension to add to the

more or less surpassing and voluminous studies written on Liszt, on his works, and the part he has played in the history of the development of music, and of the artistic life of the century. That is not my mission. I shall even try to be as temperate as is possible in the portrayal of my own impressions, which, in any case, are only of moderate interest compared with the greatness of the subject. Much has already been written about this great artist, without however telling us 'What Liszt himself thought, what Liszt himself said.' Therefore, it is Liszt, and only Liszt, who will appear in these pages, just as real, just as living, as I see him now before my eyes. It was my privilege to surprise the secret of the perfume of the flower, to seize the subtle emanation of the soul, which is missed by the world; and I wish, by saving from oblivion those impulses of the heart, more rare than the impulses of genius,

to preserve the sublime essence which brings before our eyes the affinity of human beings to the Creator. By searching my memoirs, I will try to teach you to know this phenomenal man as I knew him myself. I will give you accurately his own words, and endeavour to depict, as in a photograph, those spontaneous and transitory impulses which, though apparently insignificant, help to bring into bold relief all complex and strong characters.

Unfortunately, I must make a scrupulous suppression (a large portion of my treasure must for the present be kept from the public)—I must leave out for a time nearly everything which refers to the most interesting period of the life of the master, viz. the fourteen years, from 1847 to 1861, which he spent at Weimar. This epoch is one of the richest in his life, and these years should count double in his existence, as well as in the annals of art.

Under his banner, Weimar became the

Mecca, towards which all turned who belonged to the grand creed of Art, whether adept or neophyte.

The presence of a superior woman, haughty, it is true, but who, to quote the master, 'knew how to be gracious—if she wished,' gave additional lustre to the grand life they led at the residence of Liszt at Altenburg.

The Duke of Weimar, as well as his family, had the greatest respect for Liszt. From the very day of the master's *début* at Weimar, a close friendship sprang up between them. The Duke congratulated himself on having been able to fix this comet, whose glory henceforth would shed lustre on his court, and which would revive the brilliant era when Goethe had made of Weimar the Olympus of Germany. The death of the master has not killed this lively friendship. And the Duke has given proof of it by the

grand 'Liszt Institution,' to continue the system of teaching of his great friend, which he is taking steps to inaugurate. Only last winter—it was on the 12th of February—Liszt passed the evening with us, and speaking of Weimar, he said: 'There is one thing I am proud of, and that is the remark of my old Duke—"I have known Liszt very nearly forty years, but I can truly say that during the whole of that time he never gave me either bad or interested advice."'

Such proofs of esteem were always very touching to the master, for he placed honesty above every other quality. And if a long life had made him indulgent when judging others, this indulgence was only skin deep as soon as it came to a question of character.

Still, as in all complicated individualities, the defects of his good qualities were pre-eminently conspicuous. If proofs of esteem were particularly agreeable to him, he was

for all that not in the least *blasé* in the matter of flattery. Quite the contrary, and I was, at times, surprised at the pleasure with which he accepted the most commonplace compliments and the most exaggerated praises. I have just said he was not *blasé* to flattery, and I may add that he was not *blasé* about anything, and still delighted with quite a childish freshness in the pleasures of this best of worlds. And it is all the more odd, because no man has ever had adulation poured upon him in such a ceaseless stream. Literally speaking, his path has been one of roses all his life.

During a concert tour, while travelling, he often found at a station, where the train stopped for a quarter of an hour, a dozen young women dressed in white and carrying bouquets, waiting to lead him, whilst they strewed his path with flowers, to an open and flower-bedecked piano which they had got

ready for him in the hope of hearing him play something. . . .

A certain Polish countess used regularly to receive him in a boudoir ankle deep in rose leaves, wishing in that way to symbolise her affection for him—an affection without a thorn, and full of humility. On his feast-day and on his birthday, the offerings of flowers accumulated to such an extent that several rooms had to be used to find place for them. I saw this more than once in Rome and at Buda-Pesth. About forty years ago, four celebrated beauties of the Court of the King of Prussia had their portraits painted as Caryatides supporting the bust of Liszt, who had then reached the zenith of his art and his renown. When they illuminated Berlin in his honour, the king and queen went out in an open carriage to be present at the ovations heaped on this favourite of the gods. . . .

Thirty years later, the ladies of the Hun-

garian aristocracy, together with his lady friends, decorated his apartments in Buda-Pesth with masterpieces made by their own fair hands, and smothered them in magnificent embroideries. Events of this sort, only a few of which I have spoken of haphazard, had made of Liszt, even when alive, an heroic person. His name was as well known in cottage as in castle, and acted on the populace like an electric spark. Both rich and poor felt the charm of that absorbing magnetism which seems to flow from the elect of this world.

I have often seen Liszt applauded by a perfectly fanatical audience, who covered him with flowers and laurels. But that was nothing when compared with the ovation, unique in the annals of the fetishism of Art, which he received in 1867 at Buda-Pesth at the coronation of our reigning sovereign. I was present at it when quite a little girl. It

was after the terrible years of stagnation which followed the revolution of 1848—a stagnation steeped in the blood of our martyr-patriots. Deàk, of blessed memory, had begun to unravel the tangled skein of our politics, and was filling up the abyss which must ever remain when a sovereign forces the allegiance of his people. At this time the feuds had been quelled by this peaceful and far-seeing man, and the coronation of the monarch was meant to ratify the new treaty of mutual loyalty.

Liszt was desired to compose the coronation service. This work continued his triumphal progress in the new era of Church music, and the mass 'de Gran' is its foundation-stone. It has been happily said of the masses of Liszt: 'They are prayers rather than compositions'—that is to say, they have the effect of supreme invocations, and not of laboured compositions worked up on the

recognised lines. The 'Benedictus' of the coronation service has a beauty so sweet and so immaterial that it makes one think of the angels of Botticelli. The airs seem to embrace each other, and float in space, then dissolve like the blue smoke of incense and lose themselves in the infinite. . . .

The master came on purpose to conduct the execution of his great work himself. To understand the never-to-be-forgotten scene which followed, you ought to imagine the surroundings. You must have before your eyes the majestic river—the blue waters of the Danube; the suspension bridge, that striking link which joins Buda to Pesth. You must picture the fortress of Buda and the royal palace with its girdle of gardens; you must see the smiling and picturesque landscape stretching along the right bank facing the long row of palaces on the other side of the river. And, above all, you must see them

wreathed in flowers, dressed in their best, and bathed in the spring sunshine.

Here an immense crowd of eager sight-seers was waiting—on stands, in windows, on the roofs, and in flag-bedecked boats—to see the royal procession which was soon to cross the bridge. The Emperor of Austria, after being crowned King of Hungary at the church of St. Matthias, was to go and take the traditional oath on a hillock, formed of a heap of earth collected from all the different states of Hungary, which had been built up opposite the bridge on the left bank of the river.

When the feverish suspense grew intense, the tall figure of a priest, in a long black cassock studded with decorations, was seen to descend the broad white road leading to the Danube, which had been kept clear for the royal procession. As he walked bareheaded, his snow-white hair floated on the breeze, and his

features seemed cast in brass. At his appearance a murmur arose, which swelled and deepened as he advanced and was recognised by the people. The name of Liszt flew down the serried ranks from mouth to mouth, swift as a flash of lightning. Soon a hundred thousand men and women were frantically applauding him, wild with the excitement of this whirlwind of voices. The crowd on the other side of the river naturally thought it must be the king, who was being hailed with the spontaneous acclamations of a reconciled people. It was not *the* king, but it was *a* king, to whom were addressed the sympathies of a grateful nation proud of the possession of such a son. . . .

Three years later, in 1870, Liszt began his annual visits to Buda-Pesth. His intimate friend Augusz conveyed, through a second person, to Count Andrassy, then Prime Minister, that the master would be glad to give a

portion of his time to his country, if he could get some appointment which would admit of his coming regularly to Hungary to propagate his art. His advocate was clever enough to get him the appointment before the institution of which he was made an official actually existed. And it was in this way that our present Academy of Music was founded, of which Liszt afterwards became the president.

His arrival was always an event in Buda-Pesth. He made a stir in the more or less apathetic monotony which is a characteristic of our capital. It was hoped that his presence would be sufficient to create an artistic life in Hungary, would help to put literary and musical interests on an equal and higher footing, and would attract foreign artists, who might be expected by their talent to embellish our intellectual life. Alas! it was but a dream! The first years of his stay among

us seemed indeed to give hopes that this might come about; but, little by little, indifference got the upper hand. He, however, gave us of his best: he freely gave his talent, his heart, and his inexhaustible kindliness. He lent himself to anything, he never spared himself, he played no less than fourteen times in public in the space of nine years,[1] and he left us recollections which can never be forgotten.

What a delight it was to see him go on the platform, and sit at a piano covered with flowers, and then evoke the soul of Beethoven by playing his incomparable concertos! Drawn by such heavenly song, could his soul help returning to earth to hear, in raptures, the expressions of his immortal essence, in which a thousand new beauties must have been revealed to him by the creative genius of his interpreter? On other occasions, Liszt,

[1] This does not seem so very often.—B. P. W.

at the entreaty of his admirers, conducted himself one of his grand orchestral compositions, as he did when the entire nation celebrated in 1873 his Jubilee, the fiftieth year of his artistic career. They played his magnificent oratorio 'Christ,' which he called his 'musical will and testament,' the words of which, drawn from the Bible and from the Catholic Liturgy, were also composed by the master. Flowers, artistic offerings, and distinctions of all kinds rained on him. Count Andrassy and the Diplomatic Corps came from Vienna on purpose to congratulate the master. It was a frenzy, a universal joy, which brought to the recollection of the grey beards the glorious days of 1839, and the burning enthusiasm whose flames made the world tremble in 1848. And then, later on, when Liszt and Wagner, the two veterans of art, were applauded to the echo by a brilliant audience, and overcome by emotion

embraced each other. . . . Again, when the master, in the presence of the whole court, played the sonata of Beethoven which is called the 'Moonlight Sonata,' and when the assembled multitude, fascinated and delighted, remained fixed as in a trance of ecstasy—what rapture it was!

But how can I hope to tell you of all those times, which can never be forgotten, during which the soul tasted of the purest and most intense of pleasures—pleasures which music alone can give.

At this time we saw a great deal of Liszt at our own house and in society, but not in such an intimate way as in later years. You see, he was accustomed to absolute worship, and was always surrounded by growing or waning passions, and we, my younger sister and I, were in the first place absorbed in a mother we were devoted to, and who was a great invalid; then there were the calls

of society, of our literary career, and the struggles which literature ever has in store for her votaries. The enthusiasm which I felt for Liszt in my childhood had changed with time into a deeper admiration, founded as it was on a riper esteem, and an affection which nothing could shake. But life swept me along on its tumultuous billows, and the appearance of the master from year to year was to me like a flower which bloomed in my path in its season. I was too young for him to treat me as a friend. It was his pride to respect the illusions of youth and the innocence of young thoughts, a proof of which is shown in the following anecdote.

One day, when the master was evidently in a good humour, I took it into my head to make a diplomatic little speech to him.

'You know, my dear master, with what ease I write about things I have seen or heard; but you have no idea how difficult I

find it to invent. Now you can do me a real service. Just turn over the leaves of the book of your life, and pick out a few of the thousands of more or less romantic episodes in it which have helped to gladden or sadden it. Will you?'

He leant back in his chair, and gave me an indescribable look, half sly and half serious: 'And so you think that my life is one out of which romances are woven,' said he, after a moment's silence.

I have often teased him since about this evasive answer, which was certainly worth its weight in gold, and he always laughed gaily at it. For all that, he did not forget what I had said, and, ten years afterwards, he readily took advantage of times when we were just a family party, and granted my request without appearing to have remembered it.

In this way, he little by little began to

talk openly. As he knew what use I meant to make of what he told me, he nearly always spoke as if he had my object in view.

Therefore, it is now my sacred duty to do my best to rectify, in many respects, certain errors which have been circulated by the newspapers and by the biographies of Liszt. Three years ago M. Trifonof published in the 'International Review' some biographical sketches on François Liszt, and the master, who in his latter years often spoke of his own death, brought us his 'Sketches' scribbled all over with corrections. On the first page we found:—

Annotations pour mon Nécrologe de J. et H. Wohl.

and he made me promise to use them when the proper time came. But I am not now going to give you his 'necrology,' written ere this by a thousand pens. I shall, to a certain extent, use these notes in order to give to my 'Recollections' the rare merit of being authentic.

## CHAPTER II.

Liszt used to attract all who thirsted for knowledge, just as flowers draw the bees. Pupils came from all parts of the world to drink at the heavenly spring, which was ever ready to quench the thirst of even those whose talent was not of an order to warrant such eagerness. From the very first year during which the master spent some of the winter months in Buda-Pesth, as President of the Academy of Music, he was followed by a swarm of young people whose chief object appeared to be to worship and adore him in a manner which would have seemed immoderate, had he not been in every respect fully worthy

of it. Then we Pesth folks were treated to a novelty. We saw the master raised on a throne in the midst of pupils of both sexes, all vying with each other to get into his good graces. They studded his days with evanescent flowers by filling his life with the outlines of little romances.

His was a strong character. He himself had never felt the rough edges in the tortuous road which leads to glory. But for that very reason he was the more indulgent to those who strove to rise; and whenever he had an opportunity he helped as much as he could. His esteem for work was so great that he sympathised with all serious aspirations; and even if these aspirations were little supported by talent, they ever received from him his help and his encouragement. He treated all these nobodies who swarmed round him in a fatherly and irresistibly wheedling manner. Jupiter condescended to

patronise the young people, and his good nature was so inexhaustible that it allowed him to come down to the level of these more or less empty-headed muses. I have seen charming young girls prostrating themselves before him and crying bitterly at his annual departure, and even sobbing aloud if he but frowned at them. It stands to reason that such idolatry as this sometimes led to exhibitions of weakness. However, he was so accustomed to them that he no longer took any notice of them.

Still, I must remember my mission to refute, as categorically as circumstances will at present allow, certain misstatements. I shall now have to give a sketch of one of these passing adventures—not that the story is in itself interesting, but because the concluding chapters were rather unpleasant for the master. Also, because it was taken up in print, and because Liszt felt very hurt to find

that the credulous public allowed themselves to be taken in by what tickled their curiosity, without in the least taking into consideration how improbable were the things they were asked to believe. One of his pupils, a Cossack lady, had followed him, amongst others, when he left Rome. She was a countess, still fairly young, but painfully thin. She had a pale intelligent face, large black eyes, pleasing manners, and was altogether very *comme il faut.*

She read Kant and Schopenhauer, and, to amuse herself, had studied the microscope and vivisection, and now she wanted, at any price, to become a pianist. We found out afterwards that she had had relations with the master for several years. It was at this time that Liszt began having those charming musical 'at homes' of his, which will ever be remembered in the annals of artistic life in Buda-Pesth, and which is still in its infancy

in that city. Liszt was then living at the house of his friend, the curé Schwendtner, now dead. He had at his disposal a fine suite of rooms, among which was a large hall well suited for concerts, and he lived there several years. Every Sunday afternoon a select company used to meet there. The entire aristocracy flocked to his room, in the hope of hearing not only his best pupils and the artists who, with the object of visiting the master, happened to be passing through Buda-Pesth, but Liszt himself, who, like a popular prince, poured out with a lavish hand his unique talent.

All Pesth used to go. The brilliant Count Andrassy, the Prime Minister, the handsome and clever Cardinal Haynald, Count Lonyay, the charming Minister of Finance, Count Emeric Széchényi, the distinguished musician and composer—in fact, all those diplomatists

of the first water who had been the creators of the 'New Hungary.'

Then there was a *parterre* of animated flowers, composed of ladies vying with each other for the crown of beauty and grace. Then there were writers and artists who had never been to such an entertainment. In a word, it was the quintessence of the intellect of the capital.

Ah! how charming it was to be in the house of so delightful an Amphitryon! How well he knew how to receive his guests! How he used to press dainties on his particular friends! how he used to put in the liqueurs an elixir strangely intoxicating, and into the sweetmeats a doubly distilled sweetness, with his wit, and never-to-be-forgotten flattery, which was so cleverly wrapped up that it was accepted as if it were the most natural thing in the world!

As a rule, he, first of all, got his pupils,

or some foreign or native artists, all of whom were only too proud to oblige him, to play several pieces. Then, he often played a four-handed piece with a pupil or an artist, or with the Russian countess, who was a good pianist without being a musician. If he asked any one to sing, he used to do the accompanying himself. Then, to finish up with, he completed the entertainment by playing something grand of his own. The wonderful enthusiasm which this used to produce often carried him away himself.

At one of these *matinées* the Russian countess played Chopin's 'Grand Ballad' in G minor, and she played it with such *bravura* and fire that the master publicly congratulated her.

She had promised to help at a charity concert which was to take place shortly, and we all advised her to play this ballad which she played so admirably. But we none of

us knew that we were giving her the worst kind of advice.

On the evening of the concert a brilliant audience assembled. The countess arrived, on the arm of Liszt, wearing a violet velvet dress buttoned up to the throat. He got her a seat in the little drawing-room, with open colonnades facing the audience, which was reserved for the artists.

When her turn came she was very graciously received, and she commenced her ballad, of course playing by heart. All went well until the sixth page, when she hesitates and gets confused. In desperation she begins again, encouraged by indulgent applause. But at the very same passage her overwrought nerves betray her again. Pale as a sheet she rises. Then the master, thoroughly irritated, stamps his foot and calls out from where he is sitting: 'Stop where you are!' She sits down again, and, in the midst of a sickening

silence, she begins the wretched piece for the third time. Again her obstinate memory deserts her. She makes a desperate effort to remember the final passages, and at last finishes the fatal piece with a clatter of awful discords.

I was never present at a more painful scene. Going out, the master upbraided her more than angrily, as she clung to his arm. He had been severely tried, and he at last lost all patience with the freaks of his pupil. And, this breakdown confirming, as it did, his oft-expressed opinion that she was not of the stuff that artists are made of, he no longer spared her.

The countess went home, took a dose of laudanum, and slept for forty-eight hours. They thought she was dead, but she woke up again. After letters had passed between them, the master insisted on her leaving Pesth immediately. They say she went to

Liszt's apartments one morning with a revolver. She deliberately took aim at him. 'Fire!' said Liszt, advancing towards her. The unhappy woman dropped her hand, and threw herself at his feet; but all her entreaties were in vain. Liszt was inexorable, and she was obliged to leave Buda-Pesth.

Then, to revenge herself on the master for his harshness, the countess, who was as clever as she was unscrupulous, brought out a book called 'The Memoirs of a Cossack,' under the pseudonym of Robert Franz. This work was shortly after followed by another called 'The Memoirs of a Pianist,' in which the same author answered the first book, but designed to make the world believe that Liszt himself had taken the trouble to correct 'The Memoirs of a Cossack' in defence of his honour. Liszt was openly named in both books.

Allow me to pass over these books

in silence. They never would have been mentioned at all, had it not been for the fact that there were, and there still are, people credulous enough to be taken in by this infamous trick, and stupid enough to believe that Liszt could have been the author of 'The Memoirs of a Pianist.' The master was furiously angry at the publication of these books, in which he saw first of all a vulgar money speculation, and then an unsuccessful imitation of the novels 'Elle et Lui' and 'Lui et Elle.' Even years afterwards, he used to lose his temper when reminded of this unfortunate affair. But the world loves spicy things, and we always have friends who are ever ready to believe the worst about us. And I was dreadfully hurt, when our great fellow-countryman died, to read in several French and German papers, not even excepting a serious publication like the 'Kœlnische Zeitung,' the revival of the

wicked story which makes Liszt the author of 'The Memoirs of a Pianist.'

It is evident that those who spread this false report, and who were capable of ascribing to Liszt so mean a work, have never read a line of his prose. They certainly have never studied the mechanism of his refined style, which was at once pompous, rich, and playful. Above all, they knew nothing of that lofty soul which breathes in every page of the 'Letters of a Bachelor of Music.' They knew nothing of the daring and sublime flights of that spirit which gave to the world those clever philippics, by means of which the artist was able to gain for his colleagues the enviable position they now occupy in the world, and obtain for the new musical religion, of which he was the apostle and Wagner the creator, first attentive and then fanatical worshippers.

When speaking of Liszt's pupils, I ought

to mention two of them who were particularly dear to him, and who now enjoy European reputations. First of all, Madame Sophie Menter, whom he called 'the first pianist of his time,' and the only one 'whom I was able to teach what cannot be learnt.' 'She has a singing hand,' he used to say when speaking of her. He went to see her regularly every year at her fine castle in the Tyrol, and he followed her career, which became more and more brilliant, with a quite paternal satisfaction. He loved to see the beautiful fruit of his own artistic grafting grow ripe. This new school of pianists, which he had created, absorbed and seriously occupied all his attention. He did not fail to notice that the majority of his pupils understood the 'letter' of his teaching without grasping the 'spirit' of it. Whenever he found a soil favourable for the immaterial and divine seed, how lovingly he

followed and watched its growth and development![1]

The other pupil, whom Liszt loved like a son, is Count Géza Zichy. He lost his right arm, as you know, through a shooting accident when he was only fifteen years old. The young nobleman had given himself a year to learn to take pleasure in life again, after being thus mutilated. If he succeeded during that time in planning for himself an existence capable of making him forget his misfortune, he consented to continue living. But if he failed he determined to blow out his brains.

This young hero, who was a born poet, and gifted with great talent, as well as an iron will, succeeded in becoming an artist,

[1] Madame Jaell is one of the master's favourite pupils. He called her Ossiana. The originality of her playing is striking. Her odd compositions, which are full of the unexpected, and stamped with strangeness, cause us to await with interest the announcement of her concert, for which Liszt had good reasons to predict a grand success.

and an artist of merit, and really unique in his style. He is a distinguished composer, and never plays anything but his own compositions. In this way he is compiling a musical collection exclusively intended for execution with the left hand. He does not shirk difficulties, and with his five fingers performs *tours de force* which drew from Liszt the exclamation: 'Well, none of us could do anything like that!'

Zichy's playing at times acts powerfully on his audience; he brings down the house, and one can believe neither one's ears nor one's eyes. Last year, in Paris, his audience surged in a body to the piano like a rising tide, to convince themselves that they were not the dupes of a clever trickster. Count Zichy adored the master. He always gave him the credit of his triumphs; and if, after some particularly striking success, telegrams

came congratulating the illustrious master on the triumphs of his brilliant pupil, now a master in his turn, Liszt was greatly moved, and brought us these testimonials of an almost filial gratitude, which did honour to both of them. The master loved to be at Count Zichy's house. The children of the young artist are the only ones I ever heard him speak of. Their pretty heads seemed to remind him of the long ago, when the fair curls of little Blandine, the eldest daughter, inspired her father with the first song he ever wrote, 'Angiolin del biondo crin.'

Liszt sometimes showed kindnesses which savoured of the courtier, but which at the same time proved the unparalleled goodness of his heart. One evening, when we had a crowd of guests, Madame de Bl——, one of the most charming women of our aristocracy, went to the piano to play

some Hungarian airs with her usual *entrain*, when the master, 'jealous of her success,' as he said, asked her to let him take her place. He also played a Hungarian fantasy, which none of us knew, and we noticed that Count Zichy went up to the piano with a puzzled look, his face showing that he was thoroughly surprised. The rendering, which was as brilliant as it was captivating, completely electrified the audience, and the piece was hardly finished before Zichy threw himself on the master's breast.

'Are you satisfied?' asked Liszt. 'Have I done it well?'

Then Zichy told us how he had shown his new composition that very morning to Liszt, not wishing to write the score until he obtained his opinion of it. This was the very piece the master had just given us the treat of hearing. It was a won-

derful feat of memory, and a most charming proof of that delicacy of heart which made him so irresistible.

I could give a thousand similar cases corroborating this thoughtfulness, whose subtle charm will ever make the memory of Liszt dear to those who knew him really well. When we were in Rome in 1881, we had the good fortune of being received in private by the Pope. The audience was further remarkable, in that it lasted an hour. We thus had the opportunity of knowing more fully this venerable and exceptionally gifted man, whose eyes flashed fire, and whose speech was full of persuasive eloquence. Liszt was unwell at the time, and was being nursed by his granddaughter, Daniela de Bülow. He seldom went out or received anybody; and in the evenings we used to find him seated at a round table with his granddaughter. He would be reading, and

she would be bending her beautiful Muse-like head over some embroidery.

The master was always very much interested in everything we told him about the Vatican, which at that time he was seldom able to visit. I fancy the audience—of which we gave him every detail—impressed him more than he at the time admitted. For, to our unspeakable astonishment, four years afterwards, Liszt sent us a handsome volume of Latin and Italian sonnets recently published, the author being no less a personage than Leo XIII. The book bore the following dedication :

'In memory of the august audience granted by His Holiness Leo XIII. Rome, October 1881.'

Thus after four years the master remembered this brilliant hour which had shed its lustre over our life.

During this stay in Rome we saw the love

and veneration with which Liszt was received wherever he went. His birthday, October 22, was celebrated by the inauguration of the 'Quintett Society,' which on that day gave a brilliant *matinée* at the German Embassy. The ambassador, M. de Kendell, was very much attached to the master, who reciprocated the attachment. The concert was delightful. The splendid pianist, Sgambati, a pupil of the master's, played for the first time a quintett dedicated to Liszt of his own composition. Another novelty was Liszt's symphonic poem, 'From the cradle to the grave,' composed from a sketch of our distinguished fellow-countryman, Michael de Zichy. (The original sketch is at the museum in Buda-Pesth.)

It was in Rome that I first heard the name of Antocholskii, the famous Russian sculptor. Liszt pointed out to us one of his masterpieces, the tomb of the young Princess

Obolenska,[1] who seems to live again in the marble chiselled by the artist.

Liszt showed a marked preference for everything that was Russian.[2] He followed with sustained interest the musical, artistic, and literary progress of young Russia. He maintained 'that in Russia they had not yet begun to say anything on all those subjects which Western nations have nearly exhausted already. Russia has more intellectual horizons still to discover than lands to explore. From there will come innovations in every branch of science, of the fine arts, and of literature.' Afterwards, when Antocholskii, was

[1] The tomb of the Princess Obolenska is one of the most beautiful monuments in the cemetery of Mount Testorio at Rome.

[2] He had often met at our house the brother of the painter Vereschagine, Mr. Alexander Vereschagine, a clever writer who has just published his recollections of the Turco-Russian war. This original character attracted him so much that he received him with exceptional amiability, played Russian airs to him, and invited him to his house.

kind enough to send us photographs of his statues, Liszt got perfectly infatuated, so to speak, with this magnificent collection. He had seen in Paris the original of the 'Christ' which was in the collection sent to us. And every time he gazed on it he declared that our great Munkàcsy had borrowed the first idea of his 'Christ,' 'more human than divine,' from the 'Christ' of Antocholskii, which is purely realistic.

## CHAPTER III.

So much has been written, and written so openly, about the intercourse between Liszt and the Countess d'Agoult, known in literature as 'Daniel Stern,' that there will be no indiscretion in my telling you the truth on the subject. The heart of Liszt had nothing to do with this affair, serious though it was in its consequences. It was passion, and never love. And, after the terrible storms which must have naturally arisen from the conflict of two natures so dissimilar, the young man, who loved his liberty, and felt sacrificed to the false ambition of this disordered soul, must very often have cruelly suffered under

this slavery. 'His *liaison* with the Countess d'Agoult,' says L. Ramann, Liszt's biographer, 'was not the result of reciprocal attachment, developed little by little until it reached the acme of passion; it was in no way the fruit of intellectual sympathy or a moral understanding; it was an accident, a caprice, a misfortune!'

The master often spoke of Madame d'Agoult during our long intimate conversations, but always with a touch of irony. He judged her coldly, and without a shadow of that tenderness which one's heart nearly always feels if one is really in love. These two natures had nothing in common. He was noble and generous, but (and I shall venture to say it) too large-hearted and too full of imagination to be ever able to fix his affections on one person.

She was passionately fond of him, it is true, but vain and proud, and entirely wrapped

up in herself. Liszt was not intended for a domestic life. His family hearth was the world, and he found his home in the altars which were raised to him wherever he went. The incense which was burned around him rendered him incapable of appreciating for long the sweet pleasures of a home, the monotony of which would soon have bored him. He bowed to necessity when he spent ten years in the company of the woman who had chosen him, and who had subjected him to her caprice, whether he liked it or not. Nor had she taken into account his untamable nature, which refused to admit the existence of those links of roses which too often seemed like chains of iron. But he was great in everything he did, and he acted grandly on this occasion also, for he forced even the husband of the woman who had followed him to say of him, 'He was a perfect gentleman.' The Countess d'Agoult, *née* Viscountess of

Flavigny, had known and pampered Liszt at the time when he was still the 'little Litz,' as they used to call him in Paris when he was the spoilt child of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and the grand ladies used to stuff him with bonbons and smother him in caresses. When the countess saw him next, he was two-and-twenty, and she was twenty-nine. However, she was in the full splendour of her beauty, and permeated with ideas of romanticism and of its subtle and false sophisms. George Sand preached its gospel in her works, and its chief and only aim appeared to be the adoration of what they called in those days *une grande passion.* Passion was allowed every privilege, and the most improper things were considered heroism in the cause, provided they were done in the name of sentiment.

L. Ramann, Liszt's only serious and truthful biographer, describes every event in this page of the master's life, and, with the

exception of a few mistakes, he describes them truthfully.

The great work, 'François Liszt: his Life from 1811 to 1840,' was written from notes, letters, and Liszt's personal explanations, who regularly corresponded with his biographer until the very last. This work not only gives a minute account of the intellectual development of Liszt, but at the same time it is a biography of his works up to the year 1840.

'The Countess d'Agoult,' says Ramann, 'was just the woman to fire the imagination of a lively and passionate young man. But whilst he was dreaming of the ideal, as foreseen in the precocious love of his youth for Mademoiselle de Saint-Cricq, "chaste and pure as the alabaster of a divinely made cup," the mad caprice and the disordered vanity of the countess became excited at the thought of "the influence of women over the fate and life of celebrated men." Still Liszt

had an austere mother, whose influence he felt, and he had not yet become "the Lovelace pianist and fine gentleman," as M. de Blaze Bury describes him to us later on.

'All that was noble and honest in him rebelled against this ever-increasing folly and against the countess's hypocritical airs, who now began to pose as a martyr to her passion. On those occasions when he realised what he was doing he did not spare himself any more than the woman who was throwing in his eyes the golden dust of her sophisms. He castigated himself with bitter irony without calculating the effect of what he did. He put 'Léone Léonie' into the hands of the syren.

'The unhappy woman, blinded by her one idea of daring everything to attach his growing renown to her chariot, took the young man's irony for serious speaking, and his reticence for an appeal to her strength of mind.

'She herself was the victim of her education, of the worship which was always paid to her, and of the pernicious current which drew clever people into a fatal stream. And she drew tighter and tighter the strings of this intrigue, and made it into an inextricable net, when an unexpected and painful event took place, and interrupted this burning idyl.

'The countess's favourite child, little Louise, only six years old, died of a painful disease. Face to face with death the vanities of the world disappear. The sacred sorrow of a mother placed on the countess a halo so ideal and so pure that the young artist, who had taken his share of the family grief, experienced a sort of awakening. He had long been the prey of doubts, and was dissatisfied with himself. He now investigated his heart, and looked into his soul. He pointed out to the countess the pitfalls towards which

their fatal love was leading them, without giving them either happiness or peace; and, hoping to be encouraged in doing what was right by this woman, who, because she was a woman, was doubly his elder, he left Paris.

'But he had not taken into consideration the labyrinth full of pitfalls which is called a woman's heart. The countess, hopelessly entangled in the net of her own heated and perverted imagination, had the courage to leave husband, child, and position, but she had not the strength of mind to leave the man by whose help she hoped to reach the giddy heights of a *grande passion.* She left everything and followed Liszt. This step settled the future lot of the young man, . . . a drop of poison had fallen into the cup of his life; he had to drink of this cup, . . . and he drank of it.'

Here is the place to correct an error

which has slipped into all the biographies of Liszt. It is asserted that the question of marriage having arisen between them, Madame d'Agoult is credited with having cynically replied: 'The Countess d'Agoult will never consent to become Madame Liszt.' This is absolutely untrue. I have often spoken of this to Liszt, and he has always given me the same reply: 'It is a smart saying, which she is given credit for, but which she never uttered, for the good reason *that she never had the chance!* Even my most trustworthy biographer, Madame Ramann, repeats it. I assure you it is false. There never was a question of marriage between us.'

He ironically called it 'a smart saying.' He was a gentleman in the broadest acceptation of the word, and, having an innate sense of his own dignity, he could not, while he lived, give a public denial to this remark, insulting to him both as a man and as an

artist. Still, the fact of his speaking of it so often proves how much this untruthful story must have wounded his pride, and how anxious he was to have it refuted after his death.

Monsieur Trifonof also, and as a matter of course, reproduces the old story, and he even adds that 'Liszt had proposed to the countess that they should become Protestants, which would considerably simplify the matter of divorce.' At this part of the work the master has placed in the margin a 'No!' vigorously underlined, repeating in writing what he had told us verbally: 'This is not true. The question of marriage was never considered during either our happy or unhappy days.'

All the biographers of Liszt, in imitation of Monsieur Trifonof, join in praising the 'perfect and unequalled beauty' of Madame d'Agoult. This is another mistake. Liszt has

scratched out these words, and put in their place: '*She was good-looking*,'[1] and added: 'One of the frequenters of her house said of

[1] 'To be good-looking' and 'to be a beauty' were very different things in the opinion of Liszt. 'A beauty,' said he, 'ought to be perfect, and perfection is one of the rarest things in this world.' It was precisely *à propos* of Madame d'Agoult that he gave us examples 'of that beauty without a flaw,' which he had come across in his journey through life. First of all, there is the Princess Esterhàzy, the exquisitely beautiful ambassadress who had to leave England in consequence of her much too realistic behaviour. Liszt said of Prince Esterhàzy 'that he had a genius for display.' He was very intimate with him, and there was always a place for him at his table, where he met all the best people. He again saw the handsome princess at Hietzing, at the court of the King of Hanover. 'She walked on crutches, but she was still majestic, every inch a princess, and admired as much as in the past.'

The second beauty, 'who besides was gifted with an irresistible charm,' was the Princess Mary of Hatzfeld-Trachenberg, the great friend of Wagner and of Liszt, whom the latter called 'the most amiable of princesses.' And really when, last year in Venice, we saw her advancing towards us, in her crimson-furnished drawing-rooms, wrapped in long mourning robes (her son-in-law, Count de Schleinitz, had recently died), we were struck by the incomparable grace of her royal presence. Time had had no effect on her magnificent carriage, on the subtle charm of her beautiful velvety eyes, or on her sweet and captivating smile.

her: Her look is German, and her smile French.'

With the exception of her complexion, which was a little doubtful, she had all the attractions of a blonde, and a magnificent head of hair of a marvellous colour (which she afterwards lost). Liszt used to relate, with a certain air of complacency, how the countess loved to go out and amuse herself, and how he took her one evening to the Hall of Apollo at Venice. An Italian, at the sight of this stream of gold, exclaimed with admiration: 'Ecco là una capigliatura da Apollo!'

Still, the inordinate vanity of Madame d'Agoult must often have irritated him; and the absence of all greatness in her selfish and despotic soul could never harmonise with the Olympian nature of Liszt. He had, it is true, the weaknesses of the Olympian gods, but he also possessed their good qualities in the same

proportion as themselves. For all that, she had succeeded in taking possession of so large a part of his life that, in spite of the coldness and the artificiality which must have existed between them (which is shown by the bantering and mocking tones in the reminiscences of the master), he sometimes became quite eloquent when evoking her memory.

'She was a very idle woman,' the master told us. 'This singularly worldly woman had made her life a void by breaking with her family and with society. She wished to be my muse, my Egeria, and obstinately stuck to a task for which she was never meant. Besides, I was never, in the long run, able to put up with her artifices; she concealed her designs too badly. At times she irritated me excessively, and one day, when she compared herself to the Beatrice of Dante, supplementing the comparison by a tirade on the ennobling influence of woman, I answered her pretty

roughly: "You are wrong; it is the Dantes who create the Beatrices, and the *real* Beatrices die at the age of eighteen—that's all!" Louis de Ronchaud was present at the time. "There's the man," said I, "who would have pleased you!" But let us come back to what I wanted to tell you. She was very lazy, and passed her days yawning. Whilst I was away and very busy, she used to get bored to death.

'"Try and write something," I said to her one day, when I came home and found her hysterically complaining of the weary length of the dragging hours. "You are more than clever enough to do it, you have seen a great deal, and you ought to be able to write. Try, it will amuse you."

'And in this way I got her to make a start. She beat her wings, and actually discovered she knew how to fly. Little by little she got used to the work, and I found, strange to say,

that she began to really take an interest in it.

'One day she showed me a little note-book, and with the look of an inspired muse she said to me: "I have followed your advice. I have written my memoirs; but I have not been able to hit on a name for them. Help me! Baptise them for me!"

'"Read them first!" said I.

'She then read me her first efforts. They were fairly good, with plenty of wit in them, and well written. "So, you must have a title for your 'Souvenirs,' must you? Well, here's one: 'Swagger and Lies;'"' and Liszt smiled one of his wicked smiles at the recollection of this more than interesting little scene. 'But be sure and keep this little adventure to yourself, my dear child,' he said to me afterwards, feeling guilty perhaps for taking so much premature pleasure in the scheme of his little revenge.

On another occasion we were talking of Balzac, a man he greatly appreciated, and whom he had known pretty well.

'He was a charming fellow,' said Liszt to us, 'and a tremendous talker, and I loved to get him to talk. They once tried to make us quarrel, but I wasn't going to allow that. You must have read his novel, "Beatrice, or Compulsory Love." I maintain that I do not figure in it in any way; but Madame d'Agoult was not of my opinion. Shortly after the appearance of the said novel, up gets Madame d'Agoult and goes for me in a flood of weeping.

'"You can flatter yourself that you have nice friends," said she to me. "Here's Balzac writing a novel about me. He traduces me, and makes me ridiculous in the eyes of the world. It's a shame, an infamous shame; you must go and demand satisfaction. Your honour is at stake as much as mine!"

'I was stunned at this sudden outburst. She cried with rage, she stamped her foot, and was altogether beside herself. But I—I didn't see the least necessity to go and fight with Balzac about a novel, and make myself responsible for Madame d'Agoult's conduct. What was the good of picking a quarrel with the author for an imaginary thing which in no way concerned me? It was pure Kecskemèt[1] to go and scold a novelist for having personified this or that fanciful idea.

'"Is your name in it?" I asked the weeping woman. "Did you find your address in it, or the number of your house?"

'"No!"

'"Well, then, what are you crying about? What right have you to feel yourself attacked? Let him whom the cap fits wear

[1] Kecskemèt is a provincial town in Hungary, which Liszt visited thirty years ago, when it still was only a large village. It remained in his eyes the embodiment of all that is vulgar.

it! If you can show me your name, your address, and the exact number of your house, I will go and call Balzac out; otherwise, I will do nothing of the sort!"

'"Well, read the infamous book, then! Just see how he treats me! See what an insulting portrait of me he paints, and what a cruel story of my life he gives!"

'"I can only repeat, 'Let him whom the cap fits wear it.' What business have you to recognise yourself in Beatrice? By wishing to revenge yourself on the picture and make the writer responsible, you only proclaim its accuracy to the world. Take no notice, and nobody will think anything about it; nobody, not even your women friends—if you still have any. What an insane idea it is to wish to draw public attention on yourself by picking a quarrel with Balzac! On the contrary, I will introduce him to you, and that will set your mind at rest."

'She was very fond of dining at the fashionable restaurants, of going to the little theatres, and afterwards to the little supper-rooms. One evening I invited Balzac to make a third. He was more charming than usual, talked the whole time for two or three hours, and Madame d'Agoult's anger vanished in the presence of our delightful guest. She forgave him for taking his subjects where he found them.

'I seldom read novels,' continued Liszt, 'but I made a point of secretly glancing over the pages of the much-abused work. I could not but admire the intuitive genius of Balzac. Madame de Rochefide is a portrait drawn by a master-hand; it is so accurate a photograph that I, who thought I thoroughly knew this woman, with her way of courting notoriety as much as other women shun it, was amazed, and actually understood her better after reading the book.

'Madame d'Agoult was the cleverest woman I ever met in matters of dress, and Balzac made excellent use of this striking characteristic. She was anxious to be taken *au sérieux* in her aspirations, and to be regarded as a free-thinker, and this was what particularly wounded her. But, as soon as she became acquainted with Balzac, she softened to the extent of feeling flattered at being taken as a model for such a masterpiece.'

The years passed with Madame d'Agoult, marred as they were by many vexations, could well be counted, like years of war, as double in the life of Liszt. The great responsibility which he found unexpectedly thrown on him brought him suddenly to maturity, and acted wonderfully on his development as an artist and as a man. Irresistibly drawn towards everything scientific and towards clever people, he had surrounded himself in

Geneva with a circle of friends consisting, in spite of his youth, principally of learned men, who, though they consistently paid court to Madame d'Agoult, at the same time put something of seriousness into her intellectual and moral surroundings. The countess was passionately fond of argument; her penetrating mind, although warped in many respects, was full of the unexpected and the whimsical. She thirsted for glory and renown, and clung to everything capable of bringing her into notice and enhancing her *rôle* of guiding star. So she set herself to turn the heads of these old gentlemen, and made herself the centre of a brilliant constellation of celebrities.

'She was an enchantress to those who were not in the secret,' said the master. 'How well she fenced with those grey-heads, how skilfully she threw dust in their eyes with her paradoxes, her tirades, and all the

battery of her feminine eloquence! It was in Geneva amongst these serious men that she unconsciously accumulated a portion of those thoughts which one day "Daniel Stern" was to make use of. Old Sismonde—you know whom I mean, Sismonde de Sismondi, the historian, who had the heart of a boy of twenty beneath his garb of old gentleman—doted on the countess; and he was the first to tell her that she was made to take a part in politics. This started her! She began by interesting herself in all fallen greatness, and Geneva was full at that time with that sort of thing. There were refugees from every country; dethroned monarchs, disgraced ministers, and unsuccessful generals could be found in any of the streets. The countess took it into her head to mix herself up with all this sort of political scum, the secret agents of which are not always gentlemen with the cleanest of hands. Things went their way without my

suspecting anything very much, until, one day, she came to me with a very red face, and clearly very much agitated.

'"Why didn't you tell me what sort of people these refugees are?" said she to me.

'"Why," replied I, "they are delightful folks!"

'"Yes, so I find!"

'"Then it's your own fault. You ought to know how to tell the chaff from the wheat. What have you done? come, tell me."

'Then she told me the wretched story of her first steps in politics. A certain Pole, called Jablowszky, or Hrablowszky—I don't quite remember the name—got her to take an interest in the fate of a prisoner of very high degree who was head of the party of liberty, and on whom depended a would-be movement of great political import. You know, I never mixed myself up with that sort of

thing, having already very fixed ideas as to the position of artists in all matters of politics. And, in all this business, I only understood one thing, and that is that she managed the affair, and that the individual in question had been able to make such good use of the general tendency, that he worked on the credulous charity of several of the best people. Further, that he bolted, taking with him a pretty large sum of money which had been entrusted to him to be conveyed to its destination and serve in the noble cause of freedom. The plot had been so admirably conceived, and the rascal had so accurately gauged the character of the people he had chosen, that after all he was not pursued, everybody being thoroughly ashamed at allowing themselves to be so easily duped. At Prince Belgiojoso's suggestion, the affair was hushed up. The countess lost some hundreds of francs in the business, and at the

same time all taste for this sort of contraband politics.

'Still, when some years afterwards her "Souvenirs" were published, I was curious enough to want to see if the "abortive deliverance" was mentioned by way of a first performance. But she left the incident wrapped in oblivion, and, like many other experiences, she disdained to remember it.'

## CHAPTER IV.

Liszt's eyes had become very weak, and I acted as his secretary and used to read to him. He was a perfect courtier, and knew how to flatter.

'You read so well,' he said, 'that your emphasis explains things to me; for, as you know, I am shockingly ignorant' (?). I read to him the article on Tourguénief, by Melchior de Vogüé, which had appeared in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes.' He particularly admired this writer's style, and recommended me to study him, while making a note to call upon M. de Vogüé if ever he went again to France. I know not whether he ever

carried out his intention. Alas! after his return from Paris I never saw the dear man again. He always took a deep interest in our literary èfforts. I had to read to him everything we wrote in French, as we got on with our work; and I was amazed at his rapt attention, as well as at the ever-watchful criticism of his vast and trenchant intellect. While I was reading a study of my sister's on our great patriot and innovator, Count Széchényi, he stopped me, sat down at my writing-table, and hurriedly wrote the following lines on a sheet of paper: 'To be introduced when the article appears in book form:'—

'*Between Széchényi and Kossuth there existed a political duel which lasted for fifteen years. Both were deeply wounded. Széchényi was beaten, but Kossuth's triumph was short-lived. He had to hide the crown of Hungary,*

*and all his eloquence, moving though it was, in his own country achieved no lasting or serious effect abroad.*

'F. LISZT.'

On another occasion I was reading to him an article on Vereschagine, the Russian painter. Liszt, who had seen so much, and seen it so well, was particularly interested in everything which soared above the commonplace and avoided all beaten tracks. He remembered so distinctly certain poetical pictures of Vereschagine which he had seen at the first Exhibition in 1884, that he was delighted to renew his acquaintance with them 'living and moving' at the call of my pen.

He was very fond of expressions nicely put, and of 'clever word-painting.' His musical ear was as pleased with the harmony of language as with some sweet melody;

and we often spent hours searching for the exact word which would round off a sentence musically without altering the sense of it. In order to spur me on and keep this before me, he often quoted his favourite saying: 'Writings only live on account of the style;' and if even then I sometimes lost my patience, he called to my recollection Flaubert, 'the Benvenuto Cellini of prose,' who was capable of spending a whole night working at a sentence which refused to take a form pleasing to his fastidious taste. The rich collection of little notes written by himself which I possess shows how keen he was to make his sentences complete and concise, and also as full of meaning as possible.

These miniature masterpieces would furnish a curious handbook to the thousand ways in which a few words can be cleverly put. He never lost an opportunity, however trivial, to put into action the marvellous me-

chanism of his mind. He never used the same phrase twice, and on every occasion you will find a happy thought in his little notes of ten or twenty lines.

The master had got into the habit of sending me in the morning one of these little notes to say he was coming in the evening, and asking whether we had any engagements. Then he used to come *sans cérémonie*, on purpose to have a few hours' chat, and he always used to bring me the latest publications which were sent to him from every country, any newspaper article which had struck him, or a book of music.

Sometimes, the Secretary of the Hungarian Academy, Monseigneur Fraknoï, the eminent historian, Cardinal Haynald,[1] who was

[1] Cardinal Haynald met Liszt for the last time towards the end of July, at the house of Munkàcsy, at Kolpach, the painter's country house in Luxembourg. They passed a delightful evening together, although Liszt had missed his train, and only arrived after the grand dinner was over, for which he was

bound to the master by ties of the warmest friendship, Count Zichy, or one or two lively ladies, were of the party; and, while they played whist, they enjoyed with us the intellectual fireworks with which this inexhaustible mind of a thousand reflections loved to dazzle us.

We talked of everything at these friendly meetings. There is nothing in art or science, not to mention abstract questions, upon which we didn't touch; and I was often amazed at his colossal memory, embellished as it was by profound knowledge, which seemed ever to be growing more varied. But, in spite of

expected, with no end of ovations at the station, &c. The Cardinal had to leave very early in the morning, and begged Liszt not to put himself out to see him off. But he had forgotten that the master got up regularly at three o'clock, did his work, and went to the first mass. Now, no sooner was the Cardinal up next morning than he was greeted with strains of heavenly music. Liszt was saying good-bye to him by playing a march of Schubert's of which he was very fond. It was the last time the master ever touched the piano.

this mass of information, Liszt was always regretting that he had not gone through regular and consecutive studies. He maintained that he always felt the want of that rudimentary teaching which they had neglected to give him. 'I scribbled notes before having written a letter of the alphabet, and I plunged into mystical and philosophical books before being quite certain about my grammar. Oh! that confounded grammar has given me lots of trouble at times.' Still, Liszt was possessed of wonderful erudition, which was all the more remarkable in that it comprised several literatures.

During a winter course, M. Rogeard (the author of 'Propos de Labienus,' a pamphlet which, under the second empire, got him expelled from French territory) held very interesting conferences in Buda-Pesth in the drawing-room of Madame de Gérando, *née* Countess Teleky, the great friend of Michelet

and of Reclus. M. Rogeard had found friends amongst the members of the Gérando family, which was ever ready to lend a helping hand to the oppressed, and which besides was enthusiastic about everything scientific and literary, as well as devoted to all 'prophets of the Truth,' in whatever form they preached its gospel. These *soirées* were very select, and seasoned with delightful conversation. When the master was in Buda-Pesth he never missed being present at these evenings, following with the liveliest interest the elaboration of those questions which he understood so well himself. There was no set programme. Rogeard used to sit at a little table and talk with his audience after giving a sort of outline of his lecture: 'The philosophers and writers of the seventeenth century;' 'The *salons* of the eighteenth century;' 'The champions of the literature of the sixteenth century,' &c. I several times had the pleasure

of sitting next to Liszt, and then he used to whisper to me beforehand the names, the dates, the facts, &c., which Rogeard would speak of.

It was very amusing, for often he used to find fault with the lecturer—not aloud, of course, but loud enough for him to hear, if he had quick ears. Nor had German philosophy any secrets for Liszt; and I could never understand how the same brain could be on such good terms with all the great atheists, and enjoy their arguments as if he were a judge, and a *gourmet* in such matters, and, at the same time, have a faith so lively and so *naïve* as to be like that of a peasant who does not even know how to read.

The idea of God had been rooted in his mind from his childhood. His soul seemed like a diamond which the rust of doubt could never tarnish. The sacred fire which animated him brought him so near to his divine

origin; that no philosophy could alter the intuition which drew him towards the Eternal. Therefore, when he took orders for purely worldly reasons, of which I must not speak, he felt a deep contentment. He knew himself to be from henceforth sheltered from all vain pretensions, and he took refuge in the bosom of that same Church whose mysticism had such attractions for him in his youth that his father always feared he would take orders in a moment of exaltation.

The feeling of security which his cloth gave him was shown by his cutting words, the retrospective effect of which he did not perhaps always realise. One day when he was playing whist at our house, they began joking about the emancipation of the clergy in the matter of celibacy. 'What do you think of it, dear master?' said I to Liszt. 'Would you vote for the new movement?'

'Gregory VII. was a great philanthropist,'

replied he, after a moment's silence, and with a professional gravity which laid great stress on what he said. His true piety, become part of his nature, was in no way connected with outward forms. His prayer-book, his breviary, and a collection of old Bibles were always on his table. In the very midst of the most intoxicating triumphs, an irresistible need of collecting his thoughts dragged him to the foot of the altar. Then he eclipsed himself, he fought bravely with the demons attacking him, and, striving to recover his inward peace, he reappeared after a time more impetuous and more brilliant than ever. He explained to me one day his retreats, when I was complaining of the power of the distractions of the world, and uttered on this subject the following memorable words:

'One ought never to allow oneself to be carried away by the stream. The soul of an artist ought to be like a lonely rock,

surrounded, and often buried, beneath the waves, but, in spite of that, immovable. It is only in this way that he can preserve his originality, and save from the intemperances of life the ideal he seeks to realise.'

On another occasion he said to me:

'The moment I am alone I pick up the threads of my thoughts and of my interrupted work. One should never "muse." It is an enervating habit, wastes an awful lot of time, and never leads to anything.'

What excellent teaching! . . . . These words explain to us how Liszt was able to complete the immense work represented by his life. And he was conscious of it too.

'Have you written the history of your life?' I asked him one day.

'It is enough to have lived such a life as mine,' he replied in a grave voice.

As I have told you, we talked of everything; still, there were subjects which, as a

rule, he preferred to avoid. But if one could once start him on them he was inexhaustible. One evening I read a clever little thing to him of my sister Stephanie's.

'And what is it called?' asked Liszt.

'"Eve," dear master, a subject which you must thoroughly understand.'

'Not at all, not at all,' replied he, shaking his head. 'I have not sufficiently eaten of the apple!'

Of course a discussion on love and on women followed.

He hated everything 'vulgar,' and I am very much afraid that virtue in woman, not as an abstract idea, but as an existing fact, struck him as being more vulgar than moral. He could never understand that an individuality as extraordinary as his own was not capable of really judging women.

Unconsciously, he always brought into existence exceptional cases, and such was

his ascendency that one felt inclined to call it sorcery. So many celebrated women had fastened themselves to the wheels of his chariot, delighting in a slavery the chains of which they themselves had willingly forged, that it is not surprising he should have retained until quite late in life the arch-romantic and widely broad views with which the author of 'Lélia, Léone Léoni,' &c., had impregnated the line of thought of his times.

In this respect Liszt had remained a disciple of George Sand. Sovereign love, quite irrespective of the worth of the individual, was the only love which Liszt recognised. And it was women who kept him in this opinion.

The saying of a woman, who was as clever as she was pretty, makes us understand better than anything else the nature of Liszt's relations with women in general. He very much admired a certain Countess Rev——, to whom,

by the way, he dedicated several of his compositions. She said to a friend that Liszt could not 'wait about' and love 'one' woman, but that he would continue his triumphal march, offering the charity of his affection on all sides to the crowd of women who threw themselves at him.

'To have been loved by Liszt, if only for one day, would be joy enough for life,' said the infatuated woman who had long and warmly loved him.

Still, he was wont to use expressions, inspired no doubt by experience, whose sarcastic meaning proved how little he knew of 'discreet happiness:'

'Women always make a boast of the love they feel, and particularly of the passion they inspired.'

'Women do not believe in a passion which avoids notoriety.'

'Misunderstood women are generally

women who have been too well understood.'[1]

This Titan must have had his heart as strongly as was his body not to have lost his balance under the attack of these continual adulations. I believe he treated his heart as he treated his body, that is, with supreme contempt, whilst his soul ruled over both. He would still be living had he shown pity on the covering of that soul of fire whose wings bore him up when his feet refused to do their office.

And he obeyed but his soul when body and soul could no longer keep pace with each other—a sad truth which he refused to admit.

[1] Elisabeth of Roumelia has written, among other epigrams, one which is word for word the same. When I first saw it some years ago I took the liberty of putting it into English doggerel. May I take a further liberty and quote it?—

'Sweet lady, when you ceased to please,
You dubbed yourself "femme incomprise."
Now, let me tell you for your good,
'Twas *you* who were *too* understood.'

B. P. W.

If from anxiety or politeness he was asked: 'How do you feel, dear master?' he invariably replied, 'Oh! *I* am *always* well! I don't take any notice of François Liszt!'

No, it is true! he took no notice of him! He let him die!

## CHAPTER V.

ALTHOUGH Liszt prided himself on being a stoic, his health was so visibly impaired that he was obliged to yield to the force of circumstances and sometimes keep his room. He was very pleased on these occasions if we devoted a little of our time to him. So he tried to attract us by offering us what he knew we should like best, as will be seen by the following letter :—

Très chères bienveillantes

Je crains de sortir
aujourd'hui, à cause
d'un refroidissement
attrapé hier.
Si vous n'êtes pas
engagées ailleurs,
vous me feriez grand
plaisir de venir

continuer nos jaseries
biographiques et
autres, ce soir, de bonne heure chez
votre très affectionné
serviteur F. Liszt

Mercredi

L'automédon Paul
vous porte ce mot et
vous ramènera ici,
où vous trouverez

un régal très appetillant envoyé par Madame Follwary. Comme hors d'Oeuvre veuillez apporter l'article biographique sur F. L. que nous avons comencé hier

*Translation of Letter.*

'VERY DEAR KIND ONES,—I dare not go out to-day, as I caught cold yesterday. If you have no other engagement, you will give me great pleasure by coming to continue our chats, biographical and otherwise. Come this evening early to the house of

'Your very affectionate servant,

'Wednesday. 'FRANÇOIS LISZT.

'The automedon Paul takes this note to you, and will bring

I was very fond of these 'biographical chats,' and I appreciated them all the more when they led the master on to say what he really thought, a thing which happened rarely.

Having lived all his life in contact with the world, and having seen society in every form, he had contracted the habit of exhibiting a certain surface amiability which differed greatly from his manner amongst tried friends. The courtier and the artist fine-gentleman disappeared then, and he astonished us by a captivating simplicity which, for all that, was not wanting in grandeur. He gave to his conversation a less sarcastic, though a deeper turn, and brilliant thoughts followed each other with such rapidity that, when I was alone, I found to my sorrow,

you here, where you will find a very appetising feast, sent by Madame Foldvary. As a *hors-d'œuvre* be good enough to bring the biographical article (Trifonof's) on F. L., which we began yesterday.'

while correcting my notes, that I did not remember one-half of the sayings of Liszt.

During the evening of the invitation by letter, we talked music, and, as usual, he told us many most interesting things.

The opposite of Wagner—who in the matter of art only recognised dancing (mimic), poetry, and music, and disowned architecture, sculpture, and painting, making an exception in favour of landscape-painting, to which he gave a very small position in what he called living art—Liszt, whose universal nature led him to seek varied impressions, felt a strong leaning towards every branch of art. He maintained that music and painting mingled and completed each other. One of the dreams of his youth, which he never succeeded in realising, had been to give a concert among the pictures at the Louvre. This taste of Liszt's for painting is to be found in several of his compositions, conceived under the impression

produced by some masterpiece. For instance, 'The Battle of the Huns,' composed from the justly celebrated canvas of Kaulbach; then the oratorio, 'St. Elisabeth,' suggested originally by the pictures of M. de Schwind at the Wartburg, representing scenes from the life of St. Elisabeth. Two magnificent drawings from the hand of Gustave Doré furnish one more proof in support of Liszt's opinion, but in an inverse sense. There the picture gave the musical idea, here the music inspired the painter. The first of Doré's drawings represents Dante with Virgil at the entrance to the infernal regions; the other depicts the legend of 'St. François de Paule walking on the waves.'

Doré spent an evening with the master, and heard the symphony of Dante; and the master also played his 'Legend of St. François de Paule,' which so inspired Doré's pencil that he immortalised the impression he had re-

ceived. He gave the two drawings to the composer, not only as a pledge of friendship, but at the same time to prove the affinity between music and painting.[1]

Another composition of Liszt's, 'The Sermon to the Birds,' has been delightfully rendered by the English painter, Smallfield.[2]

When Munkàcsy conceived the idea of showing his picture 'The Death of Mozart' to his friends, while the 'Requiem of Mozart' was being played as a sort of accompaniment, the innovation was much discussed by the press, but it received the master's full approbation.

Last year, when I was present at a con-

[1] These drawings were in the Liszt room at the Academy of Music, and now belong to the Museum.

[2] One of Liszt's favourite pupils, Mr. Walter Bache, first wrote to him about Mr. Smallfield's picture. The master was very fond of Mr. Bache, and thoroughly appreciated the work he did, and continues to do, in England. Liszt often showed us letters from him, and told us how persevering he was in his endeavours to make Liszt's music popular in London.

cert in the hall of San Rocco, at Venice, the walls of which are covered with Tintoretto's masterpieces, the impression produced by these pictures in conjunction with the musical delight, vividly brought back to me his ideas on this subject.

Liszt repeated to us with singular persistence that music was neglected by governments. 'The opera, the only musical institution seriously and efficaciously subsidised, in no way gives composers of other kinds the necessary emulation. So their works, together with their genius—if they have any—remain in their portfolios, in the face of the difficulties, often insurmountable, they meet with in getting themselves heard. "And without emulation there is no art," says Schumann,' continued the master. 'The philharmonic societies are insufficient, for they must in their own interests cater to public taste. From time to time they timidly

risk a novelty, and they never have the courage to repeat it, if, at the first representation, it does not succeed in taking the audience.

'Schumann used to get furious if it was said, "This was a success; this was not." "Just as if the only important thing was to please people!" said he. And he was perfectly right. I have struggled all my life to educate the public taste in music. People generally forget that many works, and often the best, have to be thoroughly understood to be appreciated. That is why, when I hear a first performance, I always feel I am witnessing a trial at the criminal court. If governments, and the people who are in a position to form them, encouraged the fine arts without prejudice, if they distributed their favours with more justice, they ought to establish orchestral concerts, to lend a helping hand to young talent, in the same

way as they purchase pictures and statues for the museums and galleries. Of course, scores cannot be bought, and shut up like objects of art, for they do not appeal to the eye; but they can be made to speak, and they can be given the opportunity of developing in life and sunshine. In this respect, music is the art which is worst treated of all. The academies of music only help to ripen a mass of talented people, more or less conspicuous, who are destined to an existence of struggle, of vexation, and often of misery.

'I did my best at Weimar,' said Liszt, 'as long as I had an orchestra at my command, to give a start to novelties; but the efforts of an individual cannot naturally be sufficient for a world of strugglers, all eager for glory.

'A subsidised musical society ought to be founded in every country, whose object should be to make it easy for composers, not yet known, to have their works played. This

society could get recruits from the orchestra of the opera (which would very much simplify the thing), and the orchestra being salaried by the munificence of the king or the government, a portion of the receipts could be given to the composers; and this could all the more easily be done if they used the picture galleries for concert halls. For instance, sacred music is scarcely cultivated at all, and it would take very little to make it die of inanition. This is natural. With the exception of a few well-known great works, nothing is played, for no one dares to celebrate a new mass by an unknown author. The questions of money, of clique, and of small professional jealousies, lie in wait for rising talent, like so many wild beasts, ready to annihilate it at a blow, and stifle its aspirations by the hopelessness of a struggle against discouraging indifference.' I only give here but an epitome of a long conversation.

The master's idea is not so new as it appears to be. It had been in Liszt's mind all his life. As he did not succeed in realising it, he leaves it to us as a legacy, and one worthy of the testator. He was anxious to make the path easy for the neophyte in art, and he was full of pity and sympathy for those who struggled and swam bravely against the stream. So he hoped that the future would become the executor of this intellectual legacy, of which the meaning would not be understood until after it (the future) had plucked the fruit which an emulation like this had ripened.

## CHAPTER VI.

Liszt, as we know, was as happy as he was quick in repartee, and was even cutting, when he thought it necessary. Chivalrous though he was, and in spite of his courteous manners, the artist in him always predominated over the man the moment he felt that the dignity of the artist was attacked. A want of respect or a sign of inattention wounded him deeply; nor could he bear anyone to speak while he was playing. He told us the following anecdotes on this subject: During a *soirée* at the court of St. Petersburg, where he was always very well received, it happened that the Czar Nicolas,

who did not care much for music, began talking with a lady, and, caring little for Liszt's playing, talked very loud. All of a sudden Liszt stopped dead, and went away from the piano. The Czar was puzzled, and approaching the master said to him:

'Why have you stopped playing?'

'When the Emperor speaks, one ought to be silent,' was the Machiavellian answer of the wounded artist. He did the same thing at the royal fêtes on the occasion of the inauguration of the statue of Beethoven at Bonn. Liszt was, so to speak, the actual creator of this monument, having erected it almost at his own expense, as he gave more than 30,000 francs towards it.

The whole court assembled at the château of X—— (I forget the name), not far from Bonn; there were also a great number of illustrious guests; and Liszt, together with several celebrated artists, had promised to

help at the concert to be given in the evening. The Queen of England, with her husband, Prince Albert, was also at the castle; but, from what the courtiers said, 'the most sympathetic sovereign in Europe,' as the master called her, was not at all in a pleasant temper. It is well known how passionately she loved her husband, and how she never could get used to the inferior rank of her adored consort, when the inflexibility of court etiquette compelled her to notice it. She suffered dreadfully at it, and, being young and passionate, she was quite unable to hide her grievance. On this occasion, also, fate had played her a sorry trick when it brought on to the scenes an Austrian archduke. Of course he took precedence of Prince Albert, and this irritated the young woman to such an extent that it spoilt the whole entertainment for her. She abused the ladies in waiting, she got an 'attack of nerves,' and took a gloomy view

of everything. The evening came, and the concert began. Queen Victoria arrived rather late, and did not appear to be herself at all. Liszt was to play an 'Introduction,' but he had scarcely seated himself at the piano before the Queen complained of the heat, at which a chamberlain ran to open a window. In two minutes the Queen found the draught insupportable. Then the chamberlain hurried off again and shut the window. This produced a bustle and a going to and fro capable of ruining the effect of the finest performance in the world. When the 'Introduction' was finished, the master, instead of playing the piece itself, got up, made a bow, and went out into the park to smoke a cigar. When, half an hour afterwards, he came back to the hall, King Frederick William got up from his place and said to him:

'You ran away just now; what was the matter?'

'I was afraid,' replied Liszt, 'of disturbing her Majesty Queen Victoria, while she was giving her orders.'

The king laughed heartily, and begged him to continue his programme, which he did in the midst of respectful silence, Queen Victoria having left the hall shortly after his disappearance. Even at the most brilliant period of his career circumstances occasionally compelled Liszt to recognise that the position of artists in society, for whom he had so much and so nobly fought, was in a certain sense at the mercy of the public. Even he himself fell foul of the ignorance and the haughtiness of great people. The friend of kings and princes sometimes found himself treated like an ordinary musician. Thus, Princess Metternich, the wife of the celebrated Metternich, asked him one day in Vienna, in a drawing-room full of people: 'Is business pretty good, doctor?' 'It is only bankers

and diplomatists who do good business,' replied he.

Princess Metternich cordially disliked him, out of spite, they say, because she never could succeed in captivating him. The master denied this, but with a sly smile, and he readily related how they never met without sparring, although there was always a seat for him at the Prince's table, whom he saw a great deal of, and always on a footing of friendship. He happened to meet her once out walking, when she received him with a volley of insults.

'I never could put up with that sort of thing,' said Liszt, becoming serious at the recollection of her. 'I did not turn a deaf ear to her, I can tell you, and, while we conversed, we used to say awful things to each other. Shortly after this I went one day to one of her receptions, and, as usual, went to pay my respects to the mistress of the house, who was queening it, surrounded by a brilliant

circle. She was rude enough not to acknowledge my bow, and to ignore me as if I did not exist. And more, she got up, took her husband on one side, and asked him to have me turned out. Everybody noticed this, but of course nothing was done.'

Whilst Liszt was passing through Florence, five or six years ago, he was invited to a grand soirée, where they expected Lady O——, a lady of very high rank, who was as well known for her eccentricity as for her wit.

She only received in the evening, slept all day, and poured her affection on a dozen dogs who were always with her. She pretended to be very curious to know Liszt. But the hours passed, and Lady O—— did not come. They decided to send and say that they were only waiting for her ladyship. At last she appeared, and first of all she devoted all her attention to a parrot, teasing it to her heart's

content. Liszt was introduced to her, but she did not take the slightest notice of him. At supper she had a seat opposite to him; she looked him up and down several times, and then went on talking with her neighbours. All of a sudden, taking advantage of a pause in the conversation, she questioned her *vis-à-vis* in a clear and strident voice:

'Can you tell me, Mr. Canon, what were the names of the sons and daughters of Job?'

At these words a painful surprise could be seen on the faces of all. But the master, in no way embarrassed, drew himself up and said:

'Madame, do you wish me to skate? I assure you I am not a skater.'

History does not describe the lady's abashed look, nor the covert smiles of the guests. But we can well picture the situation. On another occasion, not long ago, Liszt went to Goerz to pay a visit to the

family of his old friend Baron A——. He was attached to Baron A—— by the ties of an old friendship dating from his best days; he had spent months at his house in Hungary with pupils, and sometimes without them. After the baron's death he kept up his friendly relations with the family, and never lost an opportunity of showing his unalterable affection for them. In the evening, the news of Liszt's arrival having got about, several people came to the A——s', anxious to take advantage of the windfall. Among others came a certain Count C——, an oldish man of a very good Austrian family. Whilst tea was being served, Count C——, who had not yet spoken to Liszt, asked him this sublime question:

'Who was your music-master, Mr. Canon?'

Liszt looked at his questioner with patriarchal good-humour.

'I don't remember, sir,' he replied. 'However, you are losing nothing, it is a matter of

little importance now;' and he went on talking with his neighbours.

What a pity that Flaubert, while struggling against human stupidity in general, and the stupidity of the *bourgeois* in particular, had not the opportunity of recording this wonderful reply—a reply which would have proved to him, once more, that at times the heir to a great name can very well compete in stupidity with his much-persecuted *bourgeois!*

Liszt was very well received by the imperial family of Russia. For more than forty years, his stay in St. Petersburg was nothing but a series of delights. He was fêted and worshipped on all sides, and people quarrelled over his favours. His first concert at St. Petersburg brought him in 10,000 roubles, which was considered a fabulous sum in those days. When he went to the opera the crowd was so great that the police

had to be employed to make room for his carriage.

'I was very happy at St. Petersburg,' said the master. 'It was a season of carelessness and ease, such as I have rarely known since. Everything went well. I was favourably looked upon by the court, until I spoilt everything.'

In what way he had succeeded in 'spoiling everything' is a page in his life which now I dare not open.

For all that, he left a pleasant recollection of himself on the banks of the Neva. And the proof of it is given by a letter from the Grand Duke Constantin which he received last winter. For a long time, nothing had given the master so much pleasure. He himself brought me a copy of it, which is as follows:—

'DEAR MASTER,—The pleasant news,

brought to us by Madame Menter, that you may possibly come to St. Petersburg, has filled me with joy. I take the liberty, therefore, of engaging you to be good enough to be present at the musical fête proposed to be given during this winter in your honour, and in aid of our Academy of Music.

'I hope that you yourself will feel some pleasure in revisiting our capital, after an absence of more than forty years.

'It would be unnecessary to add that the presence of the eminent musical genius who is revered by all would add powerfully to the brilliancy of the proposed fête as well as to the satisfaction of

'Your zealous admirer,

'CONSTANTIN.

'St. Petersburg, 4th Dec., 1885.'

*A propos* of the princes of the Romanof family, of these magnificent men of a rare

type of perfection, I asked him one day what sort of people they were. We happened to be at a grand dinner, and Liszt was sitting next to me. At first he did not reply, but, a quarter of an hour after, he took my hand in that affectionate and amiable way of his, and said:

'Do you know, dear child, there is the white, there is the black, there is the good, there is the bad, and then—*there are the princes!*'

## CHAPTER VII.

One evening the master brought me an article on George Eliot which had just been published in the 'Journal des Débats.' I read it to him, and the article was fortunate enough to start him on his reminiscences.

'I knew George Eliot and her husband very well,' said he; 'and they were a remarkably ugly couple. Mr. Lewis, the author of "The Life of Goethe," called on me first, alone, telling me, in the course of conversation, that he was at Weimar, with Miss Evans, the translator of "The Life of Jesus," by Strauss; but that he did not know whether he could present himself with her, as they were living

together in a manner inadmissible in society. I gave him to understand that I cared very little whether people's relations were regular or not, and though people said "shocking" in Weimar, as they did elsewhere, I gave them a hearty welcome and invited them to come and dine with me. Princess de Wittgenstein, who had long preferred to interest herself in religious and philosophical questions, took a great interest in Miss Evans, and got on capitally with her. Ugly though she was, Miss Evans had a charm, and knew how to captivate those around her. At times her way of listening reminded me of Madame Sand. She seemed to absorb like a sponge everything she saw and heard. Her long, ill-favoured face put on an expression of attention so rapt that it became positively interesting. But Madame Sand was composed while listening, and she made one more eloquent; Miss Evans, on the other hand, seemed

to be jealous of what one said, and put one on one's guard. I have always noticed that the men, in these sort of "irregular positions," are the more uncomfortable. Mr. Lewis visibly suffered under it, especially when he had to introduce Miss Evans; she, on the contrary, walked with her head erect. She had plenty of ease of manner, and, in fact, was not too English in her views and opinions. Mr. Lewis was a very able man. One day when I came in I found Mr. Lewis's card, and those of three other Englishmen. When I met him shortly afterwards, I said to him:

'"There are some of your countrymen here, I see."

'"Mine? Not that I know of!"

'"But I found your card at my house together with three others with English names on them." Mr. Lewis laughed. "They are all myself, only myself," said he. "Those are my three *noms de plume* under which I work

at different branches of literature. It is a little plan by means of which, in my opinion, I secure to myself the attention of four different groups of the public. It suits me very well, and it appears to suit the public also."'

After her departure from Weimar, the master never saw George Eliot again, who afterwards became justly celebrated. But I had the pleasure of procuring him a moment of satisfaction by making known to him the upshot of his kind treatment of this 'irregular couple.' While reading the 'Life of George Eliot,' compiled from her letters, and diaries by her second husband, Mr. Cross, I came across the following pages, which put into relief, so to speak, the master's reminiscences of her. I read them to him, and he was delighted to find himself so well spoken of by the celebrated writer. George Eliot writes thus:

'Weimar, August–October, 1854.

'Towards the middle of September, at the commencement of the theatre season, we went to see "Hernani." Liszt was splendid as conductor of the orchestra. The fine lines of his profile and his flowing hair stood out in a marvellous way against the foot-lights.'

Further on she says:

'Liszt's conversation is delightful. I know nobody who can tell a story so well. The evening before last, when he came to see us, he expressed to us the pleasure which an article written about him by Lewis had given him. He talked charmingly while relating to us an anecdote about Spontini and Berlioz. Spontini came to Paris while the master was there, and he used to greatly frequent the opera. He was a stiff, self-sufficient person, who was always visibly swelling with impor-

tance. Liszt pulled up his collar and carried his head high in order to give us as graphic an idea of the man as possible. Everybody was glad to be able to avoid Spontini. Elsewhere "people pretended to think he was dead," said Liszt, "but in Paris, as he was a member of the Institute, one could not help admitting his existence." Liszt met him often at Erard's. Once, by chance, Liszt pointed out to him that Berlioz very much admired his talent, whereupon Spontini angrily attacked Berlioz, and maintained that he and those like him were working the ruin of art. Shortly afterwards "The Vestal" was produced, and Berlioz wrote an enthusiastic article on the music of Spontini.

'The next time Liszt met "the man with the collar," he said to him, "You see I was right when I told you that Berlioz was a fervent admirer of your Muse."

'Spontini puffed himself out more than

usual even with him, and replied in a tone of conviction, "M. Berlioz has talent as a critic!"

'Liszt's replies were always characteristic, and were never wanting in point. Speaking of Madame d'Agoult, he told us how, when her novel "Nélida" appeared, in which Liszt himself is put in the pillory, as if no better than a thief, he asked her:

'"Why have you been so hard on that poor Lehmann?"

'The first time we were invited to breakfast with him at the "Altenburg," we were ushered into a garden, where, in a leafy hall made by interlacing trees, breakfast was served.

'We met there Hoffman de Fallersleben, the lyric poet, Dr. Schade, a scholar, and Cornélius. Later on came a German musician, Mr. Raff, who has just published a volume on "Wagnerfrage." Shortly after, Liszt himself

came with Princess Mary, a charming young girl of sixteen. Then came Princess Caroline of Sayn-Wittgenstein [1] with her nephew Prince Eugène, and finally a young French artist, a pupil of Scheffer.

'The princess, dressed in perfect taste, wore an indoor costume made of some white material, slightly transparent, with a long train, and lined with orange-coloured silk to match the cuffs. A black lace mantle and little coquettish hat on the top of her head completed her graceful *toilette.* When the cigars had gone round, Hoffman was asked to read some verses, and he recited a bacchanalian poem to us with much spirit. I was sitting near Liszt, and, to my great delight, I

[1] The Princess of Wittgenstein had abandoned her home to establish herself with Liszt at Weimar. It was then that the Duke of Weimar placed the 'Altenburg' at the disposition of the master. This exceptional woman, who was neither handsome nor good-looking, but who had a superior intellect, exercised a wonderful influence over the development and the direction taken by the creative genius of Liszt.

was able to watch the play of his features. I saw reflected on that face, lit as it was by a ray from on high, gentleness, genius, tenderness, and benevolence ; an expression in perfect harmony with his ways. At last came the time when my secret wishes would be granted. Liszt played. *For the first time in my life I witnessed a real inspiration!* For the first time I heard the real voice of the piano. He played one of his own compositions, a religious *fantasie.* There was nothing strange or immoderate in his attitude. He handled the instrument with ease and quietness. His lips were closed, his head a little thrown back, and his face looked simply sublime. When the music expressed rapture, a sweet smile wandered over his lips, like a sunbeam on the water. When triumph was the key-note, his nostrils distended and a heavenly light seemed to play on his features. Nothing small or artificial came to spoil the

picture. Why didn't Ary Scheffer paint him at such a time, instead of representing him in the form of one of the three magi? And yet Scheffer's picture is a grand conception.

'In this picture we see the two old men who have passed their life in trying to read in the skies the destiny of the world, and who are gazing at it, seeking the star which will herald the coming of the Saviour! Their young servant, with the fresh inspiration which is the privilege of youth in its flower, is the first to see the predestined star, and his rapture reveals its approach to his companions. Scheffer has given in this young magus a portrait of Liszt; but here even, where he could have unreservedly idealised, he has in no way done justice to the original. Another odd thing is that one comes across Liszt's type in all Scheffer's pictures.

'In a little room which leads to the end of the apartments of the "Altenburg," there is

still a portrait of Liszt by Scheffer, the one of which the engravings are so well known. This little room is full of *souvenirs* which recall the triumphs with which this divine talent was ever greeted. The Princess of Wittgenstein, assisted by the d'Arnims, organised this museum in honour of the anniversary of the master's birthday.[1]

'There are there a medallion by Schwanthaler, another by Rietschl (this is a very

[1] Since the recent death of the Princess of Wittgenstein the Duke of Weimar has taken the initiative in founding a Liszt museum in his apartments at Weimar; and we hear it is nearly ready. It contains a collection of letters and autographs of rare interest, and the greater part of the valuable presents given to Liszt during his long and brilliant life. The master's study and bedroom are reverently left untouched, and the dining-room has been converted into a museum. A donation, at Liszt's particular request, of an interesting portion of these trophies has been made to the National Museum of Buda-Pesth. These objects, many of which are of historical interest, were for years in the keeping of the Princess at Rome; among others, the sword of honour presented to Liszt at Buda-Pesth by the Hungarian nobles in 1871, and which was satirised with so much humour and malignity by Heine in one of his poems.

beautiful one[1]), and a bust by an Italian artist. The walls are studded with cabinets

[1] I add the names of several other artists who have immortalised 'that profile of ivory.' They are, first of all, Ingres, who was a friend of Liszt, and of whom he always had a tender recollection; in his best days it was Kaulbach and Lenbach. William de Kaulbach's portrait is celebrated for the grand look; the chivalrous and fine-gentleman character of the artist is expressed in it in a masterly way. Not less remarkable is a marble bust by the famous Bartolini, souvenir of the master's visit to Florence in 1838. The painter Leyraud shows us Liszt at the time when he took orders. He depicts him as a thin, thoughtful man, leaning against a piano, his arms crossed, and looking at the world from the height of his wisdom. Angers has made a very fine medallion of him. We have several portraits by Kriehuber, one, among others—'Liszt, in a travelling cloak'*—drawn hurriedly while Liszt, surrounded by friends seeing him off, was shaking hands all round. Tilgner sculptured a bust of him two years ago at Vienna; and Baron Joukovszky (of whom we will speak anon) painted his portrait five years ago. This year our great Munkàcsy, who beautified the last moments of the master's life, painted him seated at the piano. Boehm, the celebrated Hungarian sculptor, has just made his bust in London. Then we have at Pesth, at the entrance to the Opera House, a splendid statue, chiselled by our young artist Strobl. It wants finish, but on the other hand admirably renders Liszt's features and expression. And lastly, we have

* This picture reminds one of the celebrated portrait of young Goethe skating, wrapped in his mother's large red velvet cloak.

containing jewels and precious gifts from the great ones of this earth.

'In the music-room are the pianos of Beethoven and Mozart.'

These reunions at the Altenburg have left never-to-be-forgotten recollections on the minds of all who had the happiness to be invited. Liszt's hospitality was princely. Breakfasts, dinners, *soirées* followed each other daily, and every celebrity in Europe flocked there.

Mr. George Lichtenstein, a talented pianist and composer, and a fellow-countryman of the master, visited Weimar on the occasion of the *fêtes* in commemoration of Goethe and Schiller, and being an old acquaintance of Liszt's was often invited to the Altenburg. Many years afterwards, he never tired of

a joke, a portrait, painted from memory, by the witty Russian artist, Wolkof, on the stove of a friend of Liszt's, the pretty and charming young widow, Mrs. A——, a clever portrait which amused Liszt immensely.

describing to us this luxurious home where simplicity of manners and general freedom created a truly artistic surrounding, and where every individuality could be sure of unfettered expansion.

What has never been sufficiently recognised and admired is the universal character of Liszt's mind. This made Rubinstein say of him: 'Let us never put anybody on a parallel with Liszt, either as pianist or as musician, and least of all as man, for Liszt is more than all that—*Liszt is an Idea!*' This 'universality' was the powerful magnet which, during sixty years, drew towards him all those who gravitated towards intellectual centres.

One evening (Mr. Lichtenstein told us) Herbeck, the famous organist of Vienna, came, with a quatuor manuscript for piano and violins, a composition of his own, which he had promised to have performed. But he excused himself by showing the work, which

was almost illegible from corrections and erasures. Liszt took the portfolio and looked over it.

'If you'll allow me, I'll try it,' said he to Herbeck, seating himself at the piano. He played it with as much fire and accuracy of execution as if he himself had been the author of this complicated and almost unreadable work, which he then saw for the first time. There were a hundred people in the two rooms—European musical celebrities, literary men, diplomatists, Prince Pückler-Muskau among others—and everybody was amazed at this surprising feat.

At this time Taussig was Liszt's favourite pupil. He loved to praise and show off this boy of sixteen, who positively frightened his audience by his excessive impetuosity and his unpardonable abuse of the pedal.

'And do you really call that grand playing?' said Lichtenstein to Liszt.

'Yes, yes,' replied the maestro. 'You can take my word for it. He does not know himself yet, and is carried away by the force of his inspirations; but when the chaos clears, and he is master of his strength, he will be great!'

Taussig brilliantly fulfilled Liszt's prophecy, and he never ceased regretting his premature decease. He saw in the talent of Taussig a spark of that 'elementary force' which had made of Paganini a unique artist, and which gave to his own playing an intensity whose fascinating power never grew less.

## CHAPTER VIII.

In reading over Flaubert's letters, I came across the one in which the author offered some thousands of francs to George Sand, to enable her to take a trip to the South of France in order to get rid of an illness she was suffering from. I told Liszt of this, and expressed my surprise that, after such a hard-working life as hers, the author of 'Mauprat' should be reduced to live from hand to mouth, as indeed she states openly enough in her correspondence.

'All the same she would never have accepted Flaubert's offer,' said the master, in a tone of conviction. 'She was much too inde-

pendent for that. She made lots of money, but then there were many heavy calls on her purse. She was not careful in choosing her society, and there were lots of rogues who could boast of having got the best of her. Madame Sand gave lavishly, and accepted nothing. In this respect, as in many others, she was more manly than "her male friends" whom it pleased her to fleece in other ways.

'Madame Sand,' he continued, 'caught her butterfly and tamed it in her box by giving it grass and flowers—this was the love period. Then she stuck her pin into it when it struggled—this was the *congé*, and it always came from her. Afterwards she vivisected it, stuffed it, and added it to her collection of heroes for novels. It was this traffic of souls which had given themselves up unreservedly to her which, eventually, disgusted me with her friendship. Madame d'Agoult used strong expressions when speaking of George Sand's

heroes, and when she had the chance she did the same thing. For all that, George Sand was really very good company; and if one forgot she was a woman—a thing I rarely care to do—and if one closed one's eyes to her "maternal" proclivities—a funny term, coined to express her own disenchantment—one could admire her, and even passionately attach oneself to her. Formerly I had reason to be satisfied with her, and I owe her much. . . . From an artistic point of view, the halting-places at Nohant were highly interesting, but *there I only played second fiddle!*

'George Sand's glory,' added Liszt, 'caused Madame d'Agoult many tears. She couldn't sleep at the thought of it, and Daniel Stern would never have existed if George Sand had not been . . . . and it would have been a pity!'[1]

[1] It will be noticed by the abrupt style of my diction that I am leaving out those things which I believe to be of a nature better left unpublished at present. I would rather not substitute my style for Liszt's, so I prefer to leave inartistic gaps.

Liszt particularly admired the facility with which George Sand worked. The manuscripts of even her most philosophical works show hardly any trace of corrections.

'Her pen ran over her paper with a continuous buzz, which has often thrown me into curious reveries,' said the master. 'She made use of everything to find copy. I have found in her pages a number of our discussions of which she was able to make use better than anybody else. Subjects crowded each other so thickly in her fertile brain that, if she happened to finish a novel at two in the morning, she began another without a break, as she would work until three, which was her usual hour. At different times the conversation of the evening, or the music she had heard, suggested an idea to her, and the next morning she read to us what she had written that night right off without stopping.'

On another occasion Liszt amused us by

relating to us the exploits of the 'Muse'—a name given at one time by young romantic France to Madame Louise Collet—exploits which Arsène Houssaye has just pitilessly published in his 'Memoirs,' with all their serio-comic surroundings.

I will not repeat things well known, but I will hurry on to an incident, designated by the master as the only one of its kind he had ever come across in his life. It is about the French Byron, about Alfred de Musset. Liszt and Musset were, within a year, the same age. They formerly knew each other very well, at the time when the French romantic school, supported by immortal names, was in full bloom. But the stream of life, so impetuous and so rapid for Liszt, had separated them, and they were both getting grey, when by accident they found themselves face to face.

'It was ages since I had seen Alfred de

Musset,' said the master to us, 'when one day, as I was passing through Paris, I ran against him in the Boulevard des Capucines. They spoke of his election to the Academy. The "immortal" in expectation scarcely recognised me, though my features were not so much changed. I took his arm, and saw with pain how much the charming fellow had aged. His eyes were dull, his walk feeble, and he only answered me in monosyllables. I took him to my house, where he let himself fall heavily on a couch.

'"Give me something to drink!" said he.

'I poured him out a glass of claret.

'"You are still satisfied with milk, it appears," he remarked, and I saw in his eyes a glimmer of understanding. I poured him out a second glass, and, little by little, the generous juice of the grape worked in him a transformation.

'"Play something to me," was his next

remark; "it is a long time since I heard you play."

'I went to the piano. I was heart-broken. To think I had known this butterfly intoxicated with the very joy of living, this handsome and refined young man who was petted by duchesses and spoilt by all Paris—and then to find him in such a condition! You know I am not sentimental, but I too was once young, and . . . Well, I played; I let my impressions take possession of me. I almost forgot my audience in the rush of conflicting visions which came over me. . . . I don't know what awoke me from my reveries. There was a deadly silence. I looked round, and saw Musset on his back, as pale as death, in a dead faint. I sent for my mother, and with her help I brought him back to life again. Then when he opened his eyes a terrible crisis must have taken place within him. He strode up and down the room. Forgetting the past

years, he implored me to reconcile him with his fickle Circe, in no way remembering that Madame d'Agoult had succeeded in estranging me from George Sand. The fire of his voluptuous reminiscences revealed an amazing vitality of memory; he again became young, handsome, and fascinating; and the eloquence and passionate accents he employed to make me understand what a void and ruin this woman had made of his life were the most heart-rending things I ever heard. You would say I was melodramatic were I to be capable of repeating what he did and said, yet I assure you that the contemplation of these spectres of love made one feel uncomfortable. He ended by throwing his arms round me, complaining of the persecutions of Louise Collet, confusing the true with the false, the past with the present, in so lifelike and even terrible a manner that I scarcely knew what to think. He gave vent to expressions full of

a fire I have never seen in his works; he declared he dreamt them while I played. Eventually I decided to go to the piano again, thinking in that way to calm down his feverish excitement; but it was no use. The more I played, the more he went over the old ground, cursing his weakness in not leaving this world in his spring-time.

'"I shall get old, and I detest old age," he repeated. "To die, and to die young—what happiness!"

'I do not think he was wrong,' continued Liszt. 'He was not meant for the shade or the realities of life. I sent for a cab, and asked him where he would like to be taken to. Then he got confused for a minute, and asked me to drop him in the Rue Bac, which I did.

'After he got out of the cab, I told the driver where to go, and shortly afterwards, at a corner of a neighbouring street, I saw him

just when he was furtively stealing into a low public-house.

'You may be sure I did not brag about this adventure. It seemed like sacrilege to me when I thought of the genius of the unhappy poet!'

## CHAPTER IX.

At times, especially during the last years of his life, a certain note of melancholy found its way into the reminiscences of the master. He loved to lay stress on the chances he had missed, on the grand opportunities which he had spoilt for himself. He accentuated this idea with wonderful frankness and candour one evening when he was speaking of Madame Duplessis.

In 1849 Liszt went to Paris on business. He wished to see Jules Janin, and going to his house one evening they told him he was at the Ambigu Theatre at a first night. Liszt went there, and during an *entr'acte*, while he

was walking with him in the *foyer*, a very conspicuous young woman passed and stared at him a good deal, upon which Janin said to him:

'She has taken a fancy to you. Do you know her?'

'No. Who is she?' said Liszt.

'That's Madame Duplessis. You'll see she will take possession of you.'

'What an idea!' replied the young artist, who all the same was rather puzzled at the young woman's attention.

The next day a friend of Madame Duplessis came and offered to take Liszt to the house of the 'fashionable beauty.' She was not yet the 'Dame aux Camélias.' This episode did not occur till later. Liszt found himself in very good company, and all the best people of Paris were there—the Duke of Ossuna, authors, the first artists, &c. He went there often after this. She wanted to go to Weimar with him; 'but I pointed out that

there would be certain inconveniences,' said Liszt, 'and gave her to understand she would not like it.' She thought otherwise, as she had never had time to get bored, since she never got up till two, took two or three hours' drive in the Bois, and then went to the théatre. That was her life. They ended by making arrangements to meet the following year at Pesth, whence they would go together to Constantinople. Liszt departed, and sixteen months after he heard of Marie Duplessis' death. She was consumptive at the time of their friendship. Liszt found her very taking, very witty, and full of childish *abandon.*

'I am not partial as a rule to Marions de Lorme or Manons Lescaut,' said the master.

'That's because you never knew that sort,' slyly interpolated my sister.

'But Marie Duplessis was an exception,' continued Liszt, without getting the least disconcerted. 'She had a good heart, per-

fectly ideal good spirits, and I maintain that she was unique in her kind. Dumas thoroughly understood her, and he had little trouble in creating her again. It was certainly the most perfect incarnation of woman which has ever existed. The trip to Constantinople, the prospect of which delighted her, is one of those halting-places which I have always regretted.'

If Marie Duplessis had gone, as she wished to do, to Weimar with the master, we should perhaps have lost a masterpiece, viz. 'La Dame aux Camélias.' Liszt only met Dumas once at Madame Duplessis'. It was only in the sequel that Dumas became the real Duval, which besides is a well-known fact.

But what really is curious is the fact that several people claim this doubtful and sepulchral honour. Among others, Count Kosztyelszky did so. He was a charming and clever man, who had led a wild life, and

was better known under the name of Sefer Pacha, friend of the ex-Khedive Ismail. He also claims to have been the hero of the 'Dame aux Camélias,' and I dare not affirm that he has not as much right to the title as Dumas. In any case (and I can speak of this with authority, having seen it with my own eyes), at his splendid castle of Bertholdstein, near Gleichenberg, there is a collection of delightful portraits, all representing the same ideally pretty woman, whom the happy possessor calls Marie Duplessis.

The same touch of melancholy runs through the following little story, but it has a sweeter and more transcendent fragrance, and its mingled impressions produce the effect of a half-effaced pastel. I ought to mention here that Liszt was impenetrable, and discretion itself, in all matters connected with women who had not with their own hands torn away the veil from their heart and

offered it to the world's inspection. The story in question is the only one of its kind he ever related to me, and even then it would never have been revealed to me were it not that the heroine had, for many years, been beyond the reach of earthly harm.

From 1857 to 1859 the situation at Weimar changed greatly. At the theatre the drama had got the upper hand of the opera; the school of painting was the petted child of the court; and, little by little, a hostile camp was formed, which thwarted everything inaugurated by Liszt. When an opera, 'The Barber of Seville,' the work of Peter Cornelius, a pupil of the master's, proved a failure, in consequence of plots formed principally against Liszt, he thought the time had come for sending in his resignation.

'Cornelius had committed the imprudence of hoisting my colours as composer,' said the master, 'and it was an act of untimely

boldness.[1] I warned him of this beforehand, and if his "Barber" had discovered the secret of making hair grow on bald heads, he would have succeeded better than by singing his initiatory song *à la Liszt.* I have never been good for anything but to mark out the way for others, and even at that I was no longer successful.'

The master, therefore, was not exactly in the best of tempers, so he went off to Paris 'to strengthen himself' at his mother's, whom he loved above everything, and whom he visited almost every year. From Paris he went to Silesia, to Prince Hohenzollern-Hechingen, where he stayed nearly a year. Liszt loved to evoke the visions of the past, and to look back on the sumptuous surroundings in the midst of which he had lived.

[1] I will come back to the pessimist opinion of Liszt, and to what was said of the popularity of his works, of his school, and of his tendencies.

Then he used to dazzle us with descriptions which a novel-writer might have envied.

How well he put before us the fashionable coming and going at Trachenberg, the abode of the Princes of Hatzfeld, with its guests counted by the hundreds, with its stables of sixty English horses, its five cooks at work night and day, its *fêtes*, its promenades, and its continuaal concerts! this sunlit and perfumed atmosphere, where art and wit impregnated the air, and made hearts and nerves tingle with excitement and pleasure.

The time he passed at Loewenberg with Prince Hohenzollern-Hechingen had also left charming recollections; more serious ones these, perhaps, on account of the direction more and more marked which his mind began to take—a direction which led him first to the solitude of Monte Mario, and from there into the arms of the Church. They lived in great style at Loewenberg, and the stars

came there, as elsewhere, in search of their sun. Naturally also romance came to start him again; that romance which clung to him like a shadow, and gave to him that fantastic renown which he could not get rid of, even by taking orders.

We were talking of women, and Liszt declared they were a curious study—a study to begin step by step, without any possible progress; and in which experience gained by anterior studies only helps to warp the judgment. Women are the ones for doing things on the spur of the moment. Man, born as he is to battle with life, will never have that supreme contempt for danger which you will find in a young woman in love.

'I was at work one morning at Loewenberg,' continued Liszt, 'when a card was brought to me, with a man's name on it which conveyed nothing to me. Then I saw

a handsome young Englishman come in, whom I seemed to recognise. The young man came nearer, as I tried to remember who he was; then he spoke, and I at once recognised that voice with its unmistakable tone. . . . My arms dropped with amazement.

'"What are you doing here? Have you run away? Have you left your husband?" I asked, distressed at seeing her, and wondering what it meant.

'She had thrown herself on a couch in a fit of laughter.

'"This is a nice reception, I must confess. It is well worth the risk I am running," she said.

'"But you will ruin yourself!" I cried, fearing at every moment to see somebody come in. She ran to the piano and played a *ritournelle*.

'"I am your pupil, am I not? It's as plain as a pikestaff."

'Then she dashed off a roulade, which seemed to raise the roof, to such an extent did she fill the room with sound.

'"For God's sake, stop! The house is full of guests. Somebody will come, and you will be recognised!"

'"What! Henri d'Anglay," replied she, twisting up an imaginary moustache. "Well! I congratulate them if they recognise him. They must have seen worse-looking fellows than I!"

'"Come, now, a truce to this childishness," replied I, thoroughly alarmed, "and tell me what brings you here?"

'She was,' continued Liszt, 'a singer of European celebrity and spotless reputation.'

'Malibran!' cried I, curious to know who she was.

'What an idea! she was already dead then!' replied the master.

'Jenny Lind, then?'

'More dead still, since I never had the happiness of her particular favours,' replied the master in an irritated voice which cut short my interruption.

'My particular heroine was watched not only by a jealous husband who in no way deserved to own such a star, but also by a mad lunatic admirer, the laughingstock of the whole world, who watched her like a demon in the hope of profiting by a fault which he could succeed in proving. This was so well known that I trembled for her. I had met her from time to time in society; I admired her immensely; but, as you know, I have never cried for the moon! In short, I was amazed to see her there in boy's clothes, calm and quiet as if it were nothing but an ordinary visit. I learnt at last that, being at the waters in Bohemia, she had taken advantage of the proximity to come and see me again. I gave her to understand that her

disguise was no good whatever, that on the contrary it compromised her a great deal more than if she had come openly, especially since, beginning with my host, she was too well known by all not to be recognised. I was so far successful that she went away as she had come, after a *tête-à-tête* breakfast, the like of which under similar circumstances would be hard to find. I promised to go and see her; but I did nothing of the kind. I have always avoided fusses and troubles of this kind, and I hate melodramas, especially in private life. For all that, she came again in the same way two years afterwards. I was then living in retreat at Monte Mario. . . She had a child's soul in the body of a woman, and she was angelically candid and frank. I made her sing my "Ave Maria." She sang well enough to damn a saint! It will never be sung like that again!'

'Well, what became of her afterwards?' I asked.

'She died!'

Then I saw in the master's face an emotion such as I had never seen before.

How many charming shadows must he have seen pass away, just touching his life with their airy wings like swallows in their flight! What a magical kaleidoscope must have been the souvenirs of this favoured man, souvenirs which brought to him the perfume of perennial springs, of flowers in abundance, and of the reality of things dreamt!

## CHAPTER X.

Liszt's life, agitated and full of variety as it was to the end, was no more than a reflection of his individuality. This strange man's uneasy soul was ever in quest of the ideal which we ordinary people call happiness. He searched everywhere for the 'unfindable;' he looked for it in the heart of woman, amongst the altitudes of art, and in the mystic shadows of churches. He hoped to reach it in the bosom of peace, by creating for himself a temporary retreat filled with incessant hard work and encouraged by a true inspiration. But what storms preceded these calms! What struggles there were before he found

himself suddenly hidden away in some monastery! Was he flying from himself, or did he seek to escape others? . . . Those years of meditation (from 1861 to 1868) which Liszt spent in Rome were those during which the dissensions were most bitter between Italy and the Holy See. So, when Liszt took orders, Italian satire naturally assailed the Church and the prodigal son, just as weeds will grow on the most venerable walls.

'What luck for the Church,' it was said, 'to have been able to catch Liszt! He will soften the discords and restore harmony.'

Again: 'What a pity it is Liszt is not an Italian! He has played so well in every key, that the keys of St. Peter could not be in better hands.'

'He has added to his bunch of keys the keys of Paradise,' &c.

Pius IX. was passionately fond of music. He was in regular correspondence with musi-

cians of celebrity, and Rossini, for instance, left quite a collection of the letters of the Mæcenas Pope. It is said that he sometimes sang, getting Liszt to accompany him. The master has never spoken of this. I quote it as an *on-dit*, so universally repeated that one of our canons himself, very fond of music, contemplated having an historical picture painted: Pope Pius IX. singing as he stood near a piano on which Liszt in canonicals was playing, and the group surrounded in the background by the principal personages of the papal court of that period. The death of the canon prevented the idea from being carried out. Pius IX. used to pass whole hours listening to good music without moving or speaking, in an ecstasy too deep for outward expression. He admired and loved Liszt, and called him 'his dear son,' 'his Palestrina.' Liszt, on his side, had a grateful recollection of him, and the only order

he ever spoke of before us was the one which the Pope had added to his collection. One day Pius IX. came to see the master in his solitude at Monte Mario, where he was living in an old Dominican monastery. The Holy Father was sad, and directly he arrived he gave Liszt to understand that he had come on purpose to be cheered up by his talent. He begged him to improvise. He also was particularly fond of this kind of music, maintaining that the originality and the individuality of the artist was more clearly marked when nothing fettered the inspiration of the soul. 'I played, therefore,' said the master, 'as the spirit moved me. Perhaps my sympathetic hearer inspired me; but, without wishing to praise my "strumming," I must tell you that the Holy Father was deeply affected, and when I had finished he said rather a curious thing to me:

'"The law, my dear Palestrina, ought to

employ your music, if, however, she could get it otherwise than in this spot, in order to lead hardened criminals to repentance. Not one could resist it, I am sure; and the day is not far distant, in these times of humanitarian ideas, when similar psychological methods will be used to soften the hearts of the vicious." '

## CHAPTER XI.

LISZT rarely spoke of Wagner; this subject was scarcely touched upon before he cut short the conversation, often in an irritated way, and talked of something else. But I, knowing how complicated and interesting must have been his relations with this exceptional man, who was so hard to get on with—I came back to him, pretending not to notice his evident aversion to the name.

Was it discretion or temper? I cannot say. The little I was able to gather is comprised in what I will now relate.

A contemporary[1] writer attributes the

[1] Léonie Bernardini, *Richard Wagner: his Life, his Operatic Poems, his Dramatic and Musical Method*—a pamphlet which

friendship between Liszt and Wagner 'to the fact that the same wild and hopeless aspirations towards the impossible and the unknown moved at times both their souls: that was their bond of union.'

I know Liszt too well to allow myself to accept this bold and unjust definition. Liszt, forgetting his own plans, recognised the innovating genius of Wagner, and had an ardent faith in him. Wagner, on his side, felt the immense advantage of having such powerful support, and knew how to make use of it. Liszt's friendship was made up of self-denial, courage, and personal effacement. The mere fact of seeing Wagner, this modern St. George, persecuted and wandering from place to place without respite, was sufficient to make Liszt stand up in favour of the exile.

Liszt brought to me when it came out, with comments and underlinings done by himself in the most curious way. The passage quoted above has in the margin a large note of interrogation.

Even if the ideas of the new prophet had not influenced him, he would all the same have tried everything to get him to triumph over his persecutors. It was in Liszt's blood, in that Magyar blood, ever ready to defend whomsoever has need of defending. By becoming the champion of so unpopular a cause, Liszt declared war on the whole of Germany, not to say on France, both of which countries opposed this spirit of innovation with all their strength. It was an innovation, the invading and over-exciting nature of which they seemed to have foreseen.

Liszt's prestige, together with his indefatigable ardour in this work of musical conversion, was alone sufficient to perform a positive miracle. With his pen and his conductor's *bâton*, he succeeded in giving a new faith to sceptics, and, by sheer force of perseverance, he turned those same sceptics into fanatical believers.

In order to understand the entire compass of Liszt's work, one should turn to the words spoken by Wagner, at the banquet of farewell given by him at Bayreuth in 1882, after the grand performances of 'Parsifal.' When giving the toast 'Liszt,' Wagner offered striking proof of his gratitude, and of the inestimable services Liszt had rendered to his cause. 'To-day,' said he, 'when, thanks to the eminent artists now present, I can contemplate with pleasure and satisfaction my work completed, I feel called upon to point out to you the influence of this unique and exceptional man over my whole artistic career. When I was discredited, banished, and repudiated by Germany, Liszt came to meet me—Liszt, who had in the bottom of his soul a thorough knowledge of my being and my work. He said to me: "Artist, I have faith in you!" and he became the bond of union, the bridge which led me from one

world to another, from that inner world in the depths of which I had definitely retired, to that outer world on whose judgment the creative artist must unquestionably depend, and in which at that time every hand and every voice was against me. *It was he who set me up, supported me, and proclaimed me as no one else ever did.* I ask you to drink to the health of François Liszt.'

'You know,' said Liszt to me one day, 'I was the first to get "Lohengrin" performed at Weimar. One never knows how difficult it is to persuade those who do not wish to be persuaded. And I should never have succeeded without the assistance of the duchess. She was the best-hearted woman I ever knew.

'There are few more painful situations,' added he, 'than was Wagner's during the ten years when Germany resounded with his triumph, and when "Lohengrin" passed from stage to stage without the author having ever

heard it. This period must have been more trying to Wagner than even deafness was to Beethoven. How rebel against God and against nature? But, in this case, it was man who inflicted the torture, and Wagner from head to foot was nothing but rebellion! He wrote to me once: "Soon there will not be a German who has not heard 'Lohengrin,' except myself!"

'But all this is ancient history, . . . it is a long time since people thought that; but the point of all this you will never guess.

'*The Wagnerites are in no way my friends*, and never lose an opportunity of letting me know it. I have never been able to understand the reason of their hostility. It is a case for saying of the Wagnerites that they are more royalist than the king, for Wagner himself is not of their opinion!

'The worshipped Wagner, the friend of the King of Bavaria, in no way resembles,'

said Liszt, 'the Wagner who knocked at my door at Weimar. Then he was a man in despair, a Christopher Columbus in extremities, who had seen and touched this new world which nobody would believe existed. He carried the treasures of it in his brain, and he was looked upon as a madman. His inspirations were catching, and he had a power of making fanatics possessed by few. He was a born reformer, and neither blood nor fire would have daunted him. Still, there never was a man who worked against his own chances like Wagner did. His genius triumphed, so to speak, in spite of him, for nobody put so many spokes in his wheels as Richard Wagner. In Paris, in 1861, this was obvious. Everybody was at his command. Princess Metternich had worked miracles to get "Tannhäuser" performed, but he spoilt the whole thing. He was not accommodating, it must be said. . . . Perhaps he was

quite right; . . . his guiding star proved it—afterwards.'

Speaking of the eccentricities of Wagner, Liszt explained them to us in a few words: 'In the matter of glory Wagner had fasted almost continuously for thirty years. Now fasting weakens, and when glory at last did come to him, not drop by drop like to other mortals, but in a flood, he was not able to receive it with calmness.'

With regard to Wagner's influence on modern music, he said: 'Wagner has spoilt the ground terribly for composers of the future, just as Rubinstein is spoiling it for pianists. You must be a poet and composer of Wagner's calibre to be able to create a world of your own; and you must be a composer and artist like Rubinstein to be able to interpret the works of others as he does. That is the principal difference between Rubinstein and Bülow. . . . Bülow is pro-

digious—amazing; but Rubinstein has the rare gift of creation.'

'You thus make a valuable distinction,' said I to the master; 'but it has only a real value for those who have had the happiness of *not* having heard *you*. . . .'

'Ianka is in a complimentary humour,' said Liszt, turning towards my sister.

'I repeat it,' I said. 'For those whom your playing has so often raised to the reality—who have heard your soul sing through the medium of your fingers—for them there never will be another pianist. The others, Rubinstein included, play pieces beautifully, I admit; but you—you always play the soul, the thoughts, and the sentiments of Liszt. You transport us into a world which will die with you, and of which we shall have nothing left but the paradise of recollection—a paradise out of which, as the poets say, we cannot be driven.'

'Come, come, it is you who are the poet, dear child; but perhaps there is some truth in what you say. In this respect you ought to have heard Taussig; he was possessed of that independent originality whose stamp alters the appearance of things. He was the pianist of the future. I sincerely regret him. What dash, what power there was in his soul! I used to find new beauties in this or that work of Scarlatti's or Schumann's, so powerfully did his interpretation bring them into relief. . . . Taussig was my best pupil.'

One day I took courage and ventured to ask him this question: 'They say that Wagner had a fatal influence over the King of Bavaria; is that also your opinion?'

'Yes, "*they say*," but is there anything they do *not* say?' replied Liszt. 'It is impossible to judge lightly of a thing which is without precedent in the history of art. When Wagner described to us the kind of

man he required to realise his projects and give life to his ideas, people laughed, as they laugh at a Utopia more or less as inaccessible as the moon. Yes, there are lots of stories current about Wagner, all wanting in authenticity. When the turning-point in his fate was made manifest by *the* striking event, and when the King of Bavaria sent for him, Wagner must have felt he was being mocked by a dream. Cinderella's godmother had been revived in his interests. . . . If he had created a Mæcenas to suit him he could not have succeeded better. I believe that the fatal influence was reciprocal. On the one side the fantastical tastes of Wagner would have drained the treasures of Golconda, on the other the whimsicalities of the king egged on the schemes of Wagner. They spurred each other on, and they worked miracles. It is not the least surprising that envy should have been roused. They say that the king began

by giving Wagner a villa at Staremberg, together with a house in town and a surprisingly large annuity. The villa is pure invention, and the annuity was most moderate. People love to exaggerate. The same thing occurred in the case of Madame Moukhanof; when she paid the deficit of ten thousand francs which was the result of the concerts which Wagner gave in Paris in 1860, the most absurd stories got about.

'"The mad ingratitude" of Wagner is another favourite theme. What does anybody know about it? People make out that he owed all his success to Meyerbeer. What did he owe him? that's what I want to know. *We ought one and all to help each other*, and Meyerbeer did his duty—with good grace, I am ready to admit, but that was all.

'Again, the character of Wagner is beyond analysis. We artists, we are a convenient prey to writers hard up for copy. They go

for us, and they write anything that comes into their heads about us. . . . Like that penny-a-liner, some years ago, who wrote delightful things in a French paper about the life of Chopin and your humble servant at Nohant. They were very ingenious—told with plenty of cleverness and go; but they were simply fiction. As far as I am concerned, I don't remember a single incident in which I am made to take a part. . . . Then there was Madame Bernardini, who, and so far she was right, calls me the intimate friend of Berlioz, *to whom I owe all that I have since become!*

'Now where did she get that information from? Can you tell me? You see that is the way history is written; and the worst of it is that you must let people have their say and hold your tongue.'

## CHAPTER XII.

How hard Liszt worked is pretty well known. We possess nearly seven hundred compositions of his of all kinds, without counting quantities of works of his young days lost or mislaid. It was his custom to reconstruct, polish, and repolish his great works, and he often spent ten and even fifteen years embellishing them, before he was satisfied and had them performed. After his death, among other works, the complete score of an oratorio was found, the oratorio of 'St. Stanislas,' which was mentioned as long ago as 1873 in a letter written from Rome by the Princess Wittgenstein to a friend of ours.

'He has established himself,' said she, 'at the Villa d'Este, and is really working. To get himself into training, he has composed a tiny little poem which I had arranged for him. . . . It is virile and full of energy, and has given me great hopes for the "St. Stanislas." As he appears to me to be in a good humour, I imagine he is in fine fettle for work. *Deo gratias!*'

Princess de Wittgenstein was just the person to spur him on to work. She was possessed of a vast understanding and a rare amount of learning; she was occupied during her last thirty years with a philosophical work, of which she published 'the twenty-second volume' two years before her death

I have elsewhere pointed out what a pessimist view Liszt took of the popularity of his own school of music. I remember a key-word given on this subject, *à propos* of an article against him which had appeared in

some German paper. He was attacked most impudently, he was asked to give an account of the society he frequented, and even of the compositions he had paraphrased. From good-nature and kindness, he had paraphrased a melody of a certain M. Goldschmidt, who was passionately fond of music, and who was richer in gold, so it appears, than in talent.[1] In short Liszt could not be forgiven for his condescension, and they told him what they thought of him straight out. But there was some one to take up the gauntlet. A reply

[1] Liszt was not, as a rule, very partial to moneyed men, and had in no way that profound respect for gold which is one of the striking characteristics of our times. He was of my opinion when I said that a pocket too full had a tendency to deaden the intellect. He loathed those wealthy people whose riches were of no use to anybody but themselves. One evening we were talking of one of our rich bankers whom a French literary woman had, with some exaggeration, called the 'Rothschild of Buda-Pesth.' Somebody scoffingly said, 'No, he is not the Rothschild, but the Monte-Cristo of Buda-Pesth!'

'Not a bit of it!' struck in Liszt; 'he is the Mount Sion of Buda-Pesth.'

appeared which was as cutting as it was full of generosity.

'Like all mortals,' says M. Hengster, among others, 'Liszt has naturally his weaknesses; but one could wish that all human weaknesses were as amiable and as inoffensive as those of Liszt. Then we could really say that we are on the way to the best of worlds.'

Liszt brought us the articles, and I was commissioned to write a few lines of thanks to M. Hengster on behalf of the master.

'Yes,' said he to us then, 'there is no more to be said; I am not favourably looked upon as a composer! But I am making way. Ten years ago M. Hengster would not have dared to write the article he has just published; . . . and M. Goldschmidt—well, the fact is, he is caballed against, and I wanted to please him!'

The master had a mania for scattering his manuscript compositions by giving them to

his pupils to copy. At times his pupils went off and took the manuscripts with them. The story of a score lost in this way is very odd. Liszt brought me a charming letter one day from M. Saint-Saëns, that great artist, of whom he was particularly fond, and whom he appreciated in every way.

'Saint-Saëns has written to me again. He accuses me of a fault of which I have not the slightest recollection. But read what he says.' And I read what follows:—

Paris, Feb. 25, 1884.

'DEAR AND REVERED MASTER,—You will receive at the same time as this letter a score which you will be very surprised to see, as I was to find it at the back of a bookshelf in my library, in the worst possible company, among a lot of manuscripts of my own which I thought I had lost. By waking up my memory, I remembered that, long ago,

M. de B——, whom I have entirely lost sight of, brought it to me to show it to me. He must have accidentally left it at my house, and things must have been put in order, as they frequently do get put at my place, without in the least knowing what is put in order and why it is done, and so the score was lost sight of. I suppose you gave the piece to M. de B—— to get a copy made of it, for it is not a sketch. It is a score complete in the smallest details, and it seems to me it is not one of your least interesting productions. For, though it is constructed on a Polish subject which offers few opportunities, you, who have the gift of turning everything you touch into musical gold, have found the way to make of this work something powerfully original, in which your admirable qualities are allowed full scope. Forgive me if I take the great liberty of paying you compliments as I would to an ordinary mortal.

I love you so well, that I am sure you will not take offence at it.

'I have been on the point of leaving this world for the last year, and I cannot think without pain of the risk this manuscript ran of being lost. Would that I could find one like it in every corner of my room! &c. &c.

'Your respectful pupil and friend,

'C. SAINT-SAËNS.'

Speaking of this letter, the master told us the following anecdote:—

'I was busy with my "St. Elisabeth," and, contrary to my usual way, I had mixed up and scribbled over one of my songs to such an extent that it wanted recopying. By chance Taussig happened to be by me, and he undertook to do it. I was just off on a trip, and I was glad to accept his offer. When I came back, I went to work again. I made some

alterations, and I went on without remembering the work done for me, or it may be that I wanted to do without it. Some months afterwards, I played several passages out of my "St. Elisabeth" at a *matinée.* That rascal Taussig blushed, and in his turn seated himself at the piano. He also played a religious song, but there! in a most masterly way. I thought I was dreaming! what in the world was he playing? thought I.

'He was surrounded and questioned, and at last he confessed. It was my hymn, which he had deciphered in spite of the corrections, but instead of copying it he had paraphrased it in his own way, and treated us to the result, treated me first of all, since I did not remember a word of it. . . . Taussig had something better to do than copying hymns!' finally said Liszt, with a smile.

*A propos* of M. Saint-Saëns, I remember one more incident.

When the celebrated author of the 'Danse Macabre'—of which Liszt said: 'This "Danse Macabre" carries one away so that one would wish to be in it'—was in Buda-Pesth, this grand master of the organ expressed a desire to try the best organs of the capital. We have only one organ that is at all remarkable, and that is at the synagogue. A renowned journalist, M. Agai, therefore arranged a kind of *matinée* at the synagogue, where M. Saint-Saëns was to try the instrument in the presence of a little select circle invited to enjoy the extraordinary talent of the French artist.

They sent to invite Liszt to the entertainment, but his valet would let no one come into the house, as the master was sitting for his portrait. After a great deal of discussion, they fortunately succeeded in getting in. Once in, Liszt was discovered sitting on a high platform surrounded by all sorts of pianos and harmoniums, and in full view of six or eight

ladies, several of whom were busy fixing his striking features on canvas.[1]

The master was peacefully slumbering amidst the silence of conscientious work. He awoke with a start at the sound of footsteps, and recognising his visitor he smiled.

'You have discovered me,' said he to him, 'in the attitude of St. Sebastian; the arrows, in this case, are the paint-brushes!'

Speaking of portraits, I ought to mention one which was particularly attractive to Liszt, first of all because he was fond of the artist, and especially because he recognised himself in other ways than in the likeness.

This portrait seems destined to have an adventurous existence. The painter of it, Baron Joukowskii,[2] had surpassed himself in this work, executed with as much love for his

[1] One of these portraits, painted by the Countess Nemes, *née* de Ransonnet, a really talented painter, is a most successful one.

[2] Son of M. Joukowskii, the translator of Homer (into Russian), the tutor and friend of the Czar Alexander III.

subject as talent for his art. It is the same Baron Joukowskii who left his studio at Naples, and came and established himself at Bayreuth in order to paint the justly celebrated scenes in 'Parsifal.' The artist worked under the inspiration of Wagner, and he had great difficulty in satisfying that imagination, haunted as it was by the supernatural.

What a wealth of beauty! Wagner wished the flowers to be as big as women, and the women to be exactly like flowers. It was not an easy thing to do, but it was done.

Now, M. Risch, a German pianist, and the Erard of Canada, having succeeded in interesting Liszt in his career, and not wishing to return to Toronto without the guardian angel which he desired for the future to place over his piano manufactory, was looking for a good portrait of Liszt. But he wanted a portrait painted by a master-hand. Liszt thought of Baron Joukowskii, and M. Risch sent word,

in a letter dated from Langen-Schwalbach, to the master what a wonderful effect his few lines of introduction had had, and at the same time declared he was the happiest of mortals in that he possessed the wonderful portrait.

Three months afterwards he sent some English verses from Toronto, as well as an accurate account of the way the image of the master was received.

I quote M. Risch's own words:

'For weeks Toronto society came in their thousands to our hall, with their hats off and as serious as if they were in church. Men come and gaze on those well-known, admired, and venerated features. There is not a house in Toronto, in which there is not a piano, and where the name and works of Liszt are not loved and admired.

'The Princess Louise and the Marquis of Lorne and suite came also to pay their tribute of admiration for genius, before leaving

for England. This portrait, so strikingly natural, establishes the talent of the artist, and makes us all feel that you, dear master, are in our midst; and Canada feels richer and happier at the thought of possessing you. One of our poets was so inspired by that splendid and almost speaking head, that he wrote some verses on it, which I have the honour of herewith enclosing to you.'

We, who have met, while travelling, Americans who were as enthusiastic about Liszt as if they had known and heard him—we found nothing astonishing in these orations from Toronto.

'If Liszt cared to come to America,' said Mr. Louth, a rich American merchant from Boston, who was showing his daughters the Continent, 'he could make millions by just playing one piece at each concert. I would willingly give a hundred dollars just to see and hear the old lion! . . . .'

## CHAPTER XIII.

A CLEVER woman asked Liszt one day whether the quality of the human voice had deteriorated in recent times, or whether it was that the ear of the audiences was *blasé*, for, with few exceptions, we have lost ground in the matter of singing.

'The quality of voices has deteriorated,' replied the master; 'or rather, talent is not so conscientiously trained and cultivated as formerly. The arts have also their season for blooming—the season for exceptional voices seems to me to be on the wane—not so much, perhaps, in opera as in private life. I often think that in Rome and in Weimar the arts,

by becoming general, lose much of their intensity. The whole method of playing has changed—the go of the old days has disappeared, people are interested in too many things. That "certain poetry of aristocratic drawing-rooms," as Chopin called the manner of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, no longer exists. It was the amateurs who were the finest ornaments of the drawing-rooms, the forcing-houses of art. What numbers of amateurs there were, between the years 1830 and 1850, whose talent could well be matched with that of the artists of the very first order! What music we heard in Paris, Geneva, and Milan! music of *dilettanti*, it is true, but against which we "in the profession" had little chance. And particularly the ladies: Countess Samoyloff, Potocka, Jamaglio, and many others of more recent date, whose magnificent voices, cultivated solely for pleasure, would at the present moment make fortunes. Julia

Samoyloff was a nightingale. I have never in any voice found that peerless tone. I am told that at the present moment there are in Paris several ladies who are not only artists, but are gifted with splendid voices. The finest of all, they say, is that of Countess de Mailly. I am sorry I do not know her, for she could help me to prove what I have just said. . . .'

Liszt had known all the artists of his day, with the exception of Bottesini, the soloist, and, besides, interested himself in growing artistic greatness; and he always kept himself *au courant* of musical and literary publications of every description. Manuscript works were sent to him by the hundred, and he was obliged to, at least, look through some of them. As a rule his opinion was quite independent of the approbation or blame with which a work of art was received. But—and this was what gave his enemies an opportunity of accusing him of partiality—the innate

respect he felt for work as such, and his wonderful forbearance, which, by the way, can be noticed in many great characters, led him at times to give his patronage to works which scarcely deserved such an honour. His axiom, 'There is nothing so unjust as ignorance and mediocrity,' used to lead him too far on the path of good-nature. Still, he says in his book 'On Bohemians:' 'To work at art, and even to work at it well, is after all in no way the same thing as possessing the supreme gift of creating, and that makes the difference between talent and genius. The one handles sentiments and forms already known, the other sings in virtue of a personal inspiration in the manner which that inspiration dictates and teaches.' And so he treated composers whom he really looked upon as serious, with more severity than the artists who perform.

Thus he followed with constant attention the development of Russian music, and wel-

comed the musical novelties which came to him from the banks of the Neva, not only with kindly good-will, but also with the eye of a critic; for he was ever on the look-out in these compositions for that exotic aroma which he considered essential if ever the hopes of this flower of a new sun were to be realised. And how delighted he was when he detected the looked-for spark of genius! how pleased he was to read over 'Islamey,' 'that charming Oriental rattle' of Balakireff's!

Some years ago, at a *soirée*, he did the honours to a curious and original Russian composition. It was an 'arrangement of a popular subject, dedicated to young pianists, who could very well play the piece with one finger of each hand.' The master played the valses, polkas, and marches with marvellous go, and got the guests to play the piece each in turn. He was delighted with this work

'It is,' said he, 'as ingenious as a Chinese puzzle—a plaything if you will—but a very precious one for all that.'

He played Borodine's little polka and Liadoff's valse several times; and he gave to Rimsky-Korsakoff's peal of bells a never-to-be-forgotten rendering.

While showing me, one day, the work of one of his Russian pupils, he said to me: 'Properly speaking, there is as yet no Russian music, but there are some first-rate composers. The Russian mind, which is in continual activity on the one side and comatose on the other, will have to do an immense amount of work in order to properly direct its natural tendencies; and this is the result of the climate of the country and of the Sclav character in general. Just as the long months of their winters are followed by short summers full of rapid expansion, so Russian music has long monotonous intervals in be-

tween the bursts of melody; but these melodies ought to be brimful of the sap of their short summer. . . . Besides, there is yet too much of the vague, of the undecided, too much of dreaminess in this music, destined nevertheless, I believe, to have a great future. One feels that the Russian composers go to work under a more or less sentimental inspiration, and not under the all-powerful impression of a master-idea. The idea is the sentiment, the body, the impalpable. You understand what happens. . . . If Russian music had the resolute vigour and the originality of Antocholskii's chisel it would create a new era in music.'

On another occasion, when speaking of a *quatuor* by M. Hasounof, a young musician then only seventeen, which the young composer had sent to him, the master said:

'For a boy of his age this work is simply prodigious; it is full of promise; . . . but

he also has failed to find new strings on the old lyre. The Russians have not yet sufficiently fathomed the secret of working on the salient points of their musical nationality and of their character. Their originality is deep rooted in the soil; it is an emanation of the land, and is inseparable from its snows, its steppes, and from the way its sons look upon life and death. It is this which some day will give to their music that stamp of individuality without which it will ever remain nothing more than a variation of the music of other countries. . . . With their dash, their faith, and their talent, they are sure to discover what will be the national music. *Their art is young*, you see, *and*, *in art*, *youth is rarely an advantage.* They have already done wonders, and they will go on doing them.'

## CHAPTER XIV.

I DO not think I have ever spent an hour in the master's company without his saying something clever or striking.

One evening last winter, whilst he was playing whist, which had become quite a passion with him (I was looking on at the game), his partner played a king when he should have played any other card.

'What shall we do with that king?' I asked him.

'Oh, nothing. In these days kings are no longer troublesome.'

He did not realise how prophetic his saying was; for the events of a few months later

verified the prophecy, through the tragic ending of the King of Bavaria and the downfall of the Prince of Bulgaria.

Another time they were speaking in his presence of a minister of finance who had just died, and who, having passed his life in working to make a fortune, left his affairs so involved that his heirs barely inherited as much as the financier had originally commenced with.

'Yes,' said Liszt, 'he was believed to be a great financier; he is like the doctors who never know how to cure themselves.'

No matter what chord was touched, one was sure to hear him vibrate.

This life with its thousands of facets left a storehouse of impressions and reminiscences, the echo of which was ever being awakened. I am sure I am right when I say that the shadows of the past came crowding into the thoughts of Liszt in numbers which increased

in proportion as his powers weakened and caused him to become more of a dreamer. The hour-glass was imperceptibly running out, and the emptier it grew the more his emotional soul turned towards the days of struggles and enjoyments.

I had a proof of this one day, when seeing the 'Greville Memoirs' on my table the master gave himself up to serious reflections on the danger 'of opening your heart and pouring out your spleen' on paper. He admitted having been very much amused with this excessively clever and malicious book. He remembered having known the author; but he declared that the past, which we love to idealise, would lose all its fascination if the number of works of the 'Greville Memoirs' were to increase.

'At one time,' he said to us, 'when I was being carried swiftly down the stream of life without a spare moment for reflection, I took

it into my head never to retire at night without hastily noting down, as shortly as possible, the essence as it were of my day and my thoughts.

'This went on for eight or ten days, then something interrupted the idea, and I thought no more about it. Years afterwards, while rummaging among a lot of old papers, I came across a note-book, which I opened at random. I was amazed; I could not believe my eyes, my handwriting alone could convince me that I had really written those unpardonable lines. The blows fell thick under my pen, and the oddest thing is that these notes in no way expressed my opinion of men and things, nor did they coincide with my character. They were nothing but flashes of humour, of irony, of temper, or of enthusiasm, mad and ill-natured ideas which did not spare even my friends—in fact, a collection of stuff and nonsense, the importance of which at the

time I had exaggerated. . . . Memoirs written from day to day will always give a more or less false idea of their author and of the times they are supposed to describe. After this experience of my own I distrust these sorts of books; they are as a rule not nearly so true as they would have us believe.

'Greville was bilious, fond of eating, and vindictive, and every time he got an attack of indigestion the world appeared to him under a false and ugly aspect. I myself was passionate and cutting—a passionate man ought always to distrust his first impulses. I have done some rare stupid things under the influence of these first impulses! You know about the year 1845 or 1846 "mnemonics" was the fashionable science; it teaches you to have a memory. I did not require one myself! My terrible memory has made me suffer enough during my life. I should have preferred to have studied the

science of forgetfulness; unfortunately it is one which cannot be learnt!'

This 'terrible memory' of Liszt's was shown even in the most trivial things. One was amazed to hear him give minute details about things which took place fifty years ago; it was a faculty which could not fail to give an exceptional charm to the stories the master told us. As for forgetting a promise, that was what Liszt had never been known to do. If, for instance, he said 'I will come,' he came, no matter what obstacles were put in his way. The master had as a rule an excessive regard for his duty to society. It was one of his most striking characteristics. He was inexorable on this point, and hated society fault-finders. He never gave himself airs, he was courteously grateful for every kindness and for every pleasant thing said to him.

He carefully avoided disappointing any one,

no matter who, so long as he saw disinterested intention, and that the regard was for him personally, and with no idea of making use of the artist. I never remember having heard of Liszt missing an invitation after he had accepted it. For this reason nothing annoyed him more than to see others take liberties which he did not allow himself. In these cases he would admit of no excuse, no matter how valid it might be, as the following anecdote will show.

The master very much liked little entertainments got up in his honour. We had asked him to dinner one day, together with one of his favourite pupils who had come from Paris on purpose to see him. After dinner a number of musical people had been invited to admire the wonderful talent of Madame Jaell.

But in the morning of the same day a terrible piece of news spread in the town.

The supreme judge of Hungary, M. de Maïlath, had been found murdered in his study. The crime was all the more striking on account of the irony involved, the victim being the chief of that supreme authority whose duty it was to punish crimes of this kind. The whole town was in a ferment, people got nervous in their own house, they distrusted their servants—and with reason, for the suspicions against the judge's valet were found to be only too correct. Naturally our Hungarian guests did not come. However, one of them, a relation of the Maïlaths, had sent no excuses, and the master, who was particularly anxious to see him, waited for him without stirring. I tried in vain to make him understand that it was impossible to imagine that this person could desert the family under such circumstances.

'Has he been murdered?' asked the master.

'No.'

'Has he sent his regrets?'

'No.'

'Well, then, let us wait. He will come.'

So we were obliged to let our dinner get spoilt. We waited in this way for an hour and a half, Liszt refusing to admit that any personal matter whatever could allow of such a want of good manners. He was in anything but a pleasing humour during dinner, and he was with difficulty persuaded to be pleasant later on. At ten o'clock we at last got the solution to the problem. The gentleman in question had hurried off to the scene directly he heard of the terrible crime. He had with his own hands cut the rope with which the murdered man had been strangled, and in the distress caused by such a horror he made a mistake in addressing his excuses, which were sent to a mutual friend of ours, who happened to be out when they arrived,

and forwarded them to us as soon as possible. But even that was no good. The master was put out, and his resentment lasted for a long time after that.

## CHAPTER XV.

One day Liszt finished one of our conversations with these words:

'There is nothing so sublime as true independence of character unsupported by pecuniary independence.' This expression explains many of his characteristics. He himself had never known the cruel sting of poverty; he had only caught glimpses of it at a distance; for all that, he never forgot the impression of it. This expression also explains to us his proverbial benevolence, and at the same time his passionate admiration for characters which, like Berlioz and Wagner, go on fighting without intermission

against the stream, in order to remain true to the ideal whose divine form they have had the happiness to foresee. Liszt, it is true, did as they did, but always under the most favourable circumstances. Still it is pleasant to note that, the more he was favoured by a providence infatuated with its spoilt darling, the better he understood the moral sufferings engendered by poverty, this scourge which wounds great intellects much more severely than ordinary men. Ah! how well he knew the secret sorrow and the painful pride of those beginners in art, sprung at times from the most humble clay, who stuck to their work, fasting and numbed with cold, but supported in this desperate struggle by the consoling thought of being able perhaps one day to feed their aged parents—a consolation which is only an additional burden, but the prospect of which centuples their strength and helps them to do wonders!

When only fifteen years of age, Liszt gave striking proofs of the delicacy and proud independence of his character in matters connected with money. His father died suddenly at Boulogne; the child, accustomed hitherto to see only the smiling side of life, found himself all of a sudden alone, and burdened with a number of liabilities contracted during his father's illness, and increased by the expenses of his funeral. Instead of drawing on the few thousands of florins placed in the keeping of Prince Eszterhàzy for the support of his mother, or of seeking a loan from one of his many friends, he sold his precious Erard for a mere song, in order to at once discharge his obligations. From this moment, even in the midst of his despair, he felt himself to be responsible for his mother's happiness. He got her to come to Paris, and established himself there with her. He constituted himself her pro-

tector and her support; surrounding her with chivalrous regard, and a tenderness the depth of which is shown in the following fact. If he happened to come home late, I mean unreasonably late, when he knew his mother was asleep, he used to lie down on the stairs, where he would be found tired and stiff in the morning, but happy in that he had not disturbed the sleep of his adored mother.

Following his father's views, he began by giving lessons, and it was at this time that was enacted the idyl of his youth—an idyl which nearly cost him his life. His precocious love for one of his pupils—the young Countess de Saint-Cricq—love which was shared and encouraged by the mother of the young girl, is too well known for me to give here any of its details. Suffice it to say that the downfall of his hopes threw him into a decline which would have proved fatal had not the thought of his duty to his mother succeeded in rousing

him from his lethargy. It was at this time that he wrote the following lines:—

'Poverty, that old go-between, joining man with every evil, dragged me from my darling solitude, and placed me face to face with the public, on whom depended not only my existence, but also that of my mother. I was young and passionate, and I suffered cruelly from the contact with outward things to which my vocation of musician exposed me, whilst my heart was entirely handed over to the mystic sentiments of love and religion.'

This period of struggles with the realities of life left indelible marks on this proud, as well as charitable, soul. I again call attention to his benevolent actions, which were as carefully concealed as if they were crimes. His great donations, of which at the time the whole of Europe spoke, and which represented a princely fortune, cannot be measured with the thousand ingenious actions in which the

heart of Christ is shown in its most sublime form.

I have elsewhere mentioned that I acted as his secretary for some years. Letters came to him from all parts of the world,[1] the contents of which were various in one sense and monotonous in another.

Always and invariably the same idolatry—he must have been sick of it; and he was always asked for something. If he had wished to look through the manuscripts of music and literature which were sent to him asking for help and advice, he would have passed his life at it, and then he would not have been able to satisfy everybody. Then the autograph hunters—those nuisances to every man of

[1] Nothing amused me so much as the invitations, of unheard-of *naïveté*, which came from the other side of the Atlantic. One Chicago lady used to send him a card for her 'at home;' another sent him word to say that he was always at the head of her list of guests. A lady of Omaha invited him to come to 'her day,' promising to have seversl of his compositions played, &c.

renown! He found himself obliged to put a paragraph in the papers to the effect that in future François Liszt must refuse to grant all requests of this nature. The same paragraph was printed in the form of a letter and sent in reply to the thousands of requests he received. And finally, last but not least, the calls on his purse. The Bank of England would not have been enough for him if he had always followed his first impulses. To this generous man, who had scattered gold by the million without ever thinking of his own wants, to this royal nature who placed his talent at the service of charity whenever it was solicited, it was a mortification to say No and refuse to give the alms asked for. His goodness was inexhaustible—it could not be worn out; and I admired the simple-minded man who never even tried to discover whether the hands held out towards him were worthy of receiving his benefits. He did good because he felt an

imperious desire to do it, and his heart, like a church, was open to all humanity.

Nevertheless, the ingratitude often shown to him in return for his noble disinterestedness used to wound him deeply. He himself was a man who boasted of all favours received, and nothing was so distasteful to him as ingratitude, which he called 'poverty of heart.' On the other hand, he did not like any one to get the credit of munificence which they had never practised. M. Trifonof, for instance, relates that Liszt was at the age of nine loaded with presents by Prince Nicolas Eszterhàzy. Liszt has scratched out all this passage, putting in its place: 'N.B.—Prince Nicolas Eszterhàzy, brother of Prince Paul, who was for many years ambassador to London, *never gave me a single present.* But from the year '40 the ambassador always showed me great kindness.'

To return to the master's correspondence.

He sent me one day a perfectly fresh batch of letters, all unopened, and just as he received them from the post office. It was my duty to read them through first, and to pick out those which required an answer. I came across a letter very badly written in a shaky hand, and spelt abominably, containing the bill for a man's complete suit of clothes, the amount of which came to a good deal. It was a mother giving an enthusiastic account of her son's first concert, and adding, in accordance with the master's wishes, that the young man had not the least idea where his fine clothes had come from, and was under the impression that his mother had paid for them out of her savings. Knowing whom I was dealing with, I put on an indifferent manner while communicating the contents of this letter; but no sooner had I mentioned the name of his correspondent than Liszt took the letter out of my hand, put it

in his pocket, and said: 'Let's get on to something else.'

Unfortunately this day was destined to be a disastrous one for his modesty, for another of his pupils of growing celebrity wrote that on arriving at his destination he had seen with gratitude how ingeniously the master had paved the way for him; how, thanks to him, pecuniary difficulties no longer hindered him in the execution of his projected concerts, and, having made a success, he sent the printed programme of his first performance. A third sent him word of the kind reception he had met with from several families in Paris in consequence of his invaluable aid. 'Your letters of introduction, dear master, have been like marvellous "open sesames." Instead of living like a hermit in the modern Babylon, as I did last year, I find myself unexpectedly among the happy butterflies fluttering in the sunshine. . . .'

On another occasion we had made an engagement to go to the picture exhibition. By chance, and contrary to the ways of ladies, we arrived too soon, and being ushered in by his valet, I was very much surprised to find the master sitting at a table heaped up with a pile of bank notes and letters with addresses on them in his handwriting. When he saw my sister and myself he looked annoyed, almost embarrassed, but he almost immediately recovered himself; he rang the bell, ordered sherry and cake to be brought as usual, and begged us to make ourselves at home.

'You find me hard at work on a tough job,' said he to us. 'I am playing at Providence. It is a thankless part, but still I have to go through it twice a year. However, I am accustomed to the exigencies of life; but who will take the part when I am gone? That is what at times gives me food for thought.'

'Nobody will ever be able to replace you in this part, nor in any other,' replied I. I had taken off my gloves and had settled myself in my old place on the little couch facing him. 'I will help you—will you let me?'

'Very well; here you are.' And he pushed the bundle of notes towards me. 'Be good enough to put in the envelopes the sums written on them,' said he.

'Would it not be simpler to send these amounts by postal orders?' asked I.

'No, my dear child, one must gild the pill with an affectionate line or two. It is sad enough to have to receive such messages. . . .'

'But sadder still not to receive them at all, when one is in want,' replied I, moved to tears by the goodness of his noble heart; and I admired, while I was apportioning the money, with what careful punctuality, a thing most dear to Germans, he gave to each the sum

each was entitled to—to the retired officer, to the widow of such and such a member of the orchestra, &c. He was very particular about these little considerations, knowing how much the poor man, who has passed his life in incessant toil in order to reach a certain degree of esteem, clings to these small results, which are often more imaginary than real. And he, who soared so high, showed a delicate indulgence to all these little human weaknesses, which are really a moral support to the less fortunate of this world.

It is unnecessary for me to say that at parting he pressed my hand, saying:

'We understand each other, do we not? What took place this morning is a secret between us.'

But I cannot attempt to enumerate the sufferings which were alleviated by the foresight of his good heart. His hand was truly that blessed hand in which the five

loaves of the Gospel fed five thousand! A portion of the letters he received during the time I was his unsalaried secretary has remained in my possession. I consider them a testimony a thousand times more precious of the grandeur of Liszt, than the crowns of laurels with which he was covered at his concerts, the leaves of which we used to vie with one another to possess.

## CHAPTER XVI.

In the midst of a great discussion on fanaticism some one asked Lord Beaconsfield, 'How would you describe a true patriot?'

'As a man who is an honour to his country,' replied the celebrated Premier.

'What, even if he is far away, and cares nothing for his country?'

'In that case, I care not how great he may be, he is no longer an honour to his country. But one can be far from one's country, and yet be useful to it. The essential is that *one should be useful to it.*'

These words of the great English patriot always come back to me when I hear

Liszt reproached for little sins of omission which were mentioned against him as if they were high treason. He could not speak our language. Alas! how many old men there are in Hungary, born at the beginning of the century, who cannot speak Hungarian either! Even the province where Liszt was born is precisely the only one in all Hungary where the German element continues to predominate. Still Liszt was so anxious to assimilate himself to his nation that on several occasions he made an effort to learn Hungarian. But he did not succeed. This beautiful and sonorous language, so musical and so powerful, will not lend itself to a superficial study such as is enough for the Latin languages. Being in no way connected with any European idiom, it presents to strangers the same difficulties as are found in Turkish or Persian. Liszt, therefore, finding himself unable to *speak* Hungarian, was obliged to be contented with

*feeling himself* to be Magyar, and acting as such. All those who, at the time of his death, reproached him with being a 'bad patriot' would have done better not to have forgotten that, *if deeds speak more eloquently than words*, Liszt was a greater patriot than many of our brilliant orators. What was his crime? He lived abroad! But, great God! what would have become of him if he had been left in Hungary at a time when, with the exception of a few aristocratic families, nobody took any interest in the fine arts, when there was neither an academy nor a school of music in the country? Seventy years later, at the present time, our painters and musicians do come back to us—for a time—from the foreign country where they became great. But even now they go abroad in order to become great!

Liszt hardly knew his native land at all, and yet the time came when the sacred fire

of patriotism took possession of his soul, and pointed out the course which he ought to take. He had left his country at the age of nine, and had by his tastes and his inclinations become assimilated to the nation which had supported him during the sixteen years of his intellectual and moral development. All those things which form the most lasting ties between a man and the land he lives in, his struggles, his triumphs, his joys, and his loves—*all attached Liszt to France.* To France! that great home of intellect, that centre of art and knowledge, ever ready to welcome genius and shower her favours on it. Still, such was the mysterious power of the first impressions of his childhood, that, at the news of the terrible calamity to his country caused by the inundation of 1838, the Magyar in him awoke unimpaired, noble and generous. He was in Venice when the cry of Hungary's distress reached him; he

describes the impression produced by it in a letter to Lambert Massard.

'The news of this terrible disaster,' said he, 'has so strongly impressed me that my heart will never know rest, my eyes will never know sleep, until I have found a way to contribute my mite towards the relief of the sufferings of my country. . . .

'By means of these tumultuous and hitherto unknown sentiments, the meaning of the words "native land" was revealed to me. I saw myself suddenly carried back into the past, and I found again in my heart, pure and intact, the treasures of my youthful memories. Nature in her grandeur spread herself out before my eyes; I saw the Danube dashing over the rocks; I saw vast grassy plains on which thousands of sheep were peacefully browsing! It was Hungary, that generous and fertile land which had reared a noble race! It was my native land! And I also,

I exclaimed, in a burst of patriotism at which, perhaps, you will smile, I also am a son of this brave and indomitable nation which yet will see more happy days! . . . .

'This race has ever been great and heroic. In these breasts of athletes none but noble sentiments can have place. These haughty brows were never made for slavery. Their minds, more powerful than those of other nations, have never allowed them to be dazzled by deceptive splendours; their feet have never wandered in evil ways; their ears have never listened to the words of false prophets. . . . It has never been said to them, "Christ is here—Christ is there." But let a powerful voice come and rouse them from their slumberings. . . . Ah! how they will take hold on the truth! what a sure refuge will they prepare for her in their hearts! with what glorious might will they defend her! For they are brave and strong. . . .

Nothing has yet bent their will, nothing has deceived their hopes! . . . Oh, my far away and wild native land! My beloved and unknown friends! Oh, my great, my noble family! Thy cry of distress has called me back to thee, and, cut to the heart by thy voice, I bow my head in all humility, ashamed of having been able so long to forget thee!'

In fact, Liszt left Venice and hurried to Vienna in order to give two concerts there in aid of the sufferers from the inundations in Hungary. The original two concerts were increased to ten, and even then the unprecedented enthusiasm of the people of Vienna was not satisfied.

The magnificent receipts from these performances all went to Hungary, accompanied by the sincerest sympathy of the generous artist. This gift was only the beginning of a long series of similar offerings. From that time Liszt never again lost sight of his

country. He not only gave with lavish hands each time he visited Hungary, or when some calamity afflicted our country; but he succeeded besides in interesting foreign countries in us, which greatly multiplied charitable contributions. He proved his patriotism by opening his door, his arms, and his purse to all fellow-countrymen. I could name numbers of artists of Hungarian birth who achieved renown abroad through the generous assistance of Liszt, who, if he thought it necessary, used his influence on their behalf just because they were Hungarians.

Does not this refute the ungrateful and ill-natured insinuations of certain fault-finding factions?

Why do they not rather remember the year 1839, when the first artist of the world, who was looked upon by his fellow-countrymen as the representative of their intellectual interests, the embodiment of their ideal, and

the hope of their dawning aspirations—when he was received with enthusiasm by a people intoxicated by their own excitement, which led them on to intellectual heights hitherto unexplored?

These are recollections which do us more credit than those of recent years, and more worthy of him who was the first to make the word 'Magyar' resound throughout the world, and spread the germ of that sympathy which is now felt for us among foreign countries. At a time when Hungary was less known by civilised Europe than China, Liszt called himself with pride Magyar, and thus threw on his country the brilliancy of his glory, and won all hearts to us with his 'Hungarian Rhapsodies.' I discovered what we owe to these rhapsodies through chance meetings—in Florence from a Russian family; in the train from Americans.

People in general have still very vague

ideas about Hungary. Five years ago, at a *table d'hôte*, my sister having spoken to me in Hungarian, a party of English people began to talk about our country. One of them amused his friends with a very witty description of Buda-Pesth as it is, where, according to him, 'society still speaks Latin, where the men wear the national costume all covered with embroideries, where the women walk about in *décolleté* dresses, having as a head-dress a coquettish little cap covered with gold lace, while the Hungarian horses gallop at liberty on the *corso* of the Danube in the midst of a more picturesque than clean crowd.' The rest was in the same style. 'It is only in politics that Hungary is on a par with European nations,' continued the romancer, while his audience religiously listened; 'but, with the exception of politics, Hungary is still, in the matter of civilisation, in its infancy.'

Out of fifty people present not one of them contradicted him!

On the other hand, I have known people who saw in Liszt a representative of Hungary, and judged the rest of the nation by him. This is an opinion just as extreme as was that of my English friend, only in an inverse sense.

The 'Hungarian Rhapsodies' show us Hungary in its lyrical and martial aspect. We see its sufferings, its hopes, its impetuous ardour, its battles, and its triumphs, and that basis of character, half indifferent, half strange, which defies analysis. They found an echo in every heart. In Russia, in England, in Scotland, they have been played, and are played, with zeal. But those who have not heard them played by Liszt himself can have no idea of their worth or of the magical effect they are capable of producing. I shall never forget one of his *matinées*, always brilliant

and run after, when he played the second of these Rhapsodies, dedicated to Count Ladislas Téléky, of tragic memory. It was a revelation! For the first time, I felt that the artist was truly blood of our blood, and that, if his lips could not speak our language, his soul spoke it all the better. One could feel the fire and sweetness of Tokay in those languorous 'melopœias,' in those daring rhythms, and in the electric fluid which seemed to be generated. The saying, 'The Hungarian amuses himself in tears,' which describes so concisely the Magyar disposition, was never better expressed—and that, too, from the very first notes, grave and pompous, majestic and slow, which recall the commencement of the polonaise, when the two dancers, holding each other's hands, let themselves be lulled in their sadness to finally and gradually give themselves up to the more marked movements of the *lassù*. The melodies collected

haphazard from the national lyre unfold the whole gamut of sentiment, resignation, love's sorrows, the joy of shared misfortune, desire and self-denial, mourning of the patriot, despair which is nothing else but home-sickness for liberty rooted in the heart of this people, which has bled for centuries in slavery. There is nothing more strange and more melancholy. Then, little by little, the rhythm grows more animated, it is abrupt, brusque, checked by starts, but always full of intoxicating melody. Mirth gets the upper hand; a catching fire takes possession of the couples; they seek each other, they try to escape each other, they clasp each other, then leave each other. The delirium of intoxication takes hold on their fevered souls, and they are carried away by the flaming whirlwind of this striking music, which grows madder every moment. It culminates in a savage cry, paroxysm of fury and joy, which escapes

from the lips of the dancer, be he prince or peasant, and whose sharp note, full of passion and excitement, electrifies the crowd like the sound of the clarion. . . . Ah! how he threw back his lion head, how his face beamed at this sublime inspiration, of which we all felt the irresistible sway! . . .

Shall we ever again hear music like that? Will this soul of fire ever come back to us in any form? It is a useless question. I shall never have it answered. . . .

## CHAPTER XVII.

Ah! what a sad sight it is to see an eagle out of his element, and forced to drag along the ground instead of soaring in the heavens!

I firmly believe that Liszt's stay in Buda-Pesth strengthened his resolve to visit the scenes of his past triumphs. Accustomed from his youth to be surrounded by everything which is highest in intellect, he found himself annually reduced for several months to leading the dull life of a bourgeois. He felt then an irresistible longing to forget the uninteresting experiences forced upon him, by seeking elsewhere that atmosphere which he could

not do without for long, and which our climate could not offer to him.

It is true that if he showed himself in public, or if one of his compositions were played, he was always frantically applauded. It is part of the Hungarian character to love ovations and noisy enthusiasm; but, on the other hand, people, especially in private life, very soon get tired of idols, and the sustained interest of the public is rarely accorded to any but great politicians, and not always to them. In other countries, society is principally modelled on the example given by the court. It insensibly loses its original character in order to adopt the tastes and antipathies of the circle which gives the *ton*. Among us, this is not the case. It is a curious and perhaps a unique instance in the history of manners that Hungarian society does not adopt the customs of the court except when they coincide with its own tastes. Even the courtiers

do not, in any way, feel obliged to follow the lines laid down by the sovereign if they do not agree with their own inclinations. One knows how fashionable sport of every kind is at our court. Riding, shooting, and racing are the order of the day. The emulation which this produces has not been without results. The whole country, headed by the aristocracy, delight in horses and all pleasures connected with them. For all that, the Royal family is very literary. The Crown Prince takes a serious interest in science and literature; he is the author of several works of merit, and is a member of the Academy of Sciences of Buda-Pesth. The Crown Princess Stéphanie, young and beautiful though she is, is not exclusively occupied with futile pleasures. On the contrary, she is devoted to literature and the fine arts. She is an excellent musician, besides drawing beautifully. She has just decorated with several drawings

the monumental work, 'The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy,' which appears under the protection of Prince Rudolph. There is a charming anecdote in connection with these drawings. According to the scheme designed for this vast enterprise, the emolument of the contributors was fixed beforehand. Consequently, when the committee accepted the sketches of the Crown Princess, they also adjudged to her the sum she was entitled to. But how were they to get the money to her? They did not know how to go about it. Then the Crown Prince hit upon the ingenious device of offering it to her registered in a savings bank book. The savings bank book bore the name of the little Archduchess Elisabeth, the daughter of the artist mother. The Archduchess Marie Valeria has amused herself from her childhood by composing poetry, which she publishes in different German papers, as well as by writing little plays,

two of which have been privately acted at court.

The Arch-duchess took a real pleasure in everything intellectual, and gave a touching proof of it two years ago. She did not know Liszt, having neither seen nor heard him, but she wished to enrich her young life with an indelible souvenir. Without announcing her visit, she went with her cousin, Princess Amelia of Bavaria, to see the master. Liszt was ill—it was the morning of the very day when he wrote the little note of which we have given a facsimile. These graceful and sprightly ladies arrived, and were amazed to find the great man, whom they had pictured to themselves as formidable and serious, so good-natured and kind. He felt himself grow young again under the influence of the bright sunshine shed over that charming hour by their simple enthusiasm.

They got him to explain the pictures

hanging on the walls of his rooms, they admired the elaborate furniture, and everything in that quiet, but artistic home. At last Liszt went to the piano, and gave them a splendid musical entertainment, foreseeing, perhaps, that his hearers would take away a souvenir, destined beforehand to be an only one. When they left, Liszt, of course, wished to see his distinguished visitors to the door; but the Arch-duchess Marie Valeria would not allow him to leave his sitting-room, and with her own hands 'shut the door in his face.'

A few days afterwards they sent large photographs of themselves to Liszt, in lovely frames, and signed at foot.

The old maestro was deeply touched by this visit and the present of the photographs. The homage of youth has singular charms for old age—it is saddening and gratifying at the same time; but it is the melancholy note which predominates!

At the last, surprises of this kind became rarer and rarer during the months which Liszt spent in our capital.

Elsewhere people fight to secure the society of literary and artistic lions; with us they are avoided. They disturb the Oriental *dolce far niente*, and that delightful mental idleness, out of which one dislikes to be uselessly roused. Politics alone absorb men. . . .

Again, we Hungarians are not in the least curious. The effect is sufficient for us. So long as the effect is agreeable we never seek the cause. If the plaything amuses us we care little about its mechanism, or the man who invented it. One begins, for instance, to have a taste for painting. One goes to see the picture-shows with the most praiseworthy zeal. One even buys pictures; but nobody cares about the painters; nobody takes the slightest interest in them. In the same way one listens to music, the concert-halls are full,

but nobody struggles to take possession of the artists. They are given ample leisure to rest on their laurels.

Things were not like this, they say, thirty years ago, at least among the aristocracy, which had acquired abroad more elevated intellectual tastes. We are passing through a transition stage; but alas! it is a case of repeating the celebrated *mot* of Liszt's in reply to the remark of King Louis Philippe.

'Do you remember the time,' said the king to him, 'when you played at my house as a little boy, when I was yet Duke of Orleans? Things have greatly changed since then!'

'Yes, sire; but not for the better,' replied Liszt, dryly.

The reply cost Liszt the Legion of Honour, but it will ever remain as a further proof of his noble independence of character.

With us, too, things have not changed for

the better. People do not even imitate the court which does occupy itself with artists and men of talent.

Whenever Liszt came to us as a guest for a little while, he was *fêted* and sought after; then people got used to seeing him—*he was at home*—and that was all. . . . Then he roused himself.

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THE END.

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