Friedrich Wieck.

Clara Schumann
geb. Wieck.

Marie Wieck.

Stich u. Druck v. A. Wenzel Leipzig.

PIANO AND SINGING

DIDACTICAL AND POLEMICAL:

FOR PROFESSIONALS AND AMATEURS.

BY

FRIEDRICH WIECK.

TRANSLATED

FOR

Madame CLARA SCHUMANN and Miss MARIE WIECK

BY

H. KRUEGER.

With a Frontispiece containing Three Portraits; and a Sketch of the Life of Friedrich Wieck.

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NOTE.

THE work entitled "Clavier und Gesang" embodies the results of our father's long experience in actual teaching. The translation here presented has been executed in compliance with often-repeated solicitations from many quarters. The very favourable reception of the original work in Germany and elsewhere encourages us to hope that the English version will be a source of instruction and pleasure to not a few English speaking Teachers and Students of the piano and singing.

MARIE WIECK.
CLARA SCHUMANN *née* WIECK.

DRESDEN and BERLIN, June, 1875.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

Considering the originality of Friedrich Wieck's style, the translation of the work *Piano und Gesang* has its special difficulties. This originality the Translator has, by special desire, laboured to preserve, not unfrequently even at some cost of elegance. Otherwise, too, it has been found necessary occasionally to retain in the translation some expressions that are not absolutely unimpeachable in idiom. For these the excuse is that it was impossible to replace them by others, without sacrificing the force and spirit of the original, and that, though they may seem somewhat unusual, they convey a particular shade of meaning. The Translator hopes that, for all such occasional breaches of elegance or of idiom, there will be found ample compensation in the accompanying advantages.

The Translator takes this opportunity to express his obligations to A. F. Murison, Esq., M.A., and to Ebenezer Prout, Esq., B.A., who have given him valuable assistance and advice.

The Sketch of the Life of Friedrich Wieck is mainly drawn from a recently published volume entitled "Friedrich Wieck und seine beiden Töchter Clara Schumann und Marie Wieck," by A. Von Meichsner (Leipzig: Heinrich Matthes)—a very interesting book, containing also previously unpublished letters by Czerny, Robert Schumann, C. M. Von Weber, H. v. Bülow and others.

The Frontispiece, showing three portraits, is also transferred from Meichsner's book, with the permission of the author and with the reluctant consent of the Ladies represented. ***Thus the Translator bears the responsibility of the appearance of their portraits in this place;*** for, though some reasons might be alleged to exclude them, he nevertheless decidedly thinks that they ought not to be withheld from the English speaking public. The connection of the three is very much more than a mere family connection—it has a high significance in Art; the daughters afforded the highest practical exemplification of the theories of the father.

ABERDEEN, *June, 1875.*

SKETCH OF THE LIFE

OF

FRIEDRICH WIECK.

(1785-1873).

FRIEDRICH WIECK was born in 1785, in a small Prussian town, on the borders of Saxony, not far from Leipzig. Having gone through the full course of the Gymnasium at Torgau, he proceeded to Wittenberg to study Theology. In due course he passed the necessary examinations and received licence to preach. However, be the reasons what they may, he preached only once,—in the Schlosskirche, in Dresden. He was, and always had been, a great lover of music, and it is possible that, in those days, this tendency may have been prejudicial to his advancement as a pastor. Even when a schoolboy, he had sought intercourse with musical artists of second and third rank; he had taken part in many musical meetings and amateur performances; and he had eagerly seized the offered opportunity of receiving piano lessons from a well-known pianist of the time. On leaving Torgau Gymnasium for the University of Wittenberg, he took with him a very honourable certificate, in which, however, it was specially mentioned that he had occupied himself too much with the *arte musica*.

Whether this excessive attention to music, continuing and growing upon him, drew him from the church, or not, at all events he did not seek a pastorate. For some time he acted as tutor in several families. His next step was to establish in Leipzig a manufactory of pianofortes; and while he carried on this, he at the same time gave lessons on his favourite instrument.

It was from the experience he now gained that he created, with his keen-sighted observation, that new method, distinguished by its simple naturalness, which finally established his own and his daughters' renown.

His connections and intercourse with the most celebrated artists of those times, as well as the open house which he kept, soon caused him to become the centre of a large circle, especially of the younger artists of talent. His endeavours afterwards to apply his method of teaching the piano also to the study of Singing continued steady and persevering.

A frequent stay in Vienna brought him into acquaintance with all the celebrated musicians of that city, such as Beethoven, Czerny, etc. The

correspondence that he kept up with fellow artists and with his own family gives a most lively description of the musical condition of those times.

Among the pupils both male and female whom Friedrich Wieck trained, it was especially with his own daughters that his method was suited to show the most splendid proofs of its usefulness and geniality. His eldest daughter Clara, at the age of ten, was already so thoroughly trained that she performed not only at the "Gewandhaus Concerts" in Leipzig, but also in Dresden, in Frankfort-on-Main, Paris, Vienna, etc., always with the highest success.

One of the most cherished guests and pupils in Wieck's house was Robert Schumann, who afterwards married his daughter Clara. By this marriage there was formed a rare union of artistic gifts, a composer of the first rank wedded to the first executant of the time.

When at a later stage Wieck's second daughter Marie performed for the first time in public, a splendid proof of his method was again afforded. He accompanied her frequently, even on the later occasions, on her great concert tours, which were always attended with the acclamation both of the critics and of the public.

About the year 1844, Wieck removed with his family from Leipzig to Dresden, where he led an exceedingly musical life. He kept open house for all artists, and held frequent musical Matinées at his residence, which were attended by them all. The Minister Von Falkenstein, a fine connoisseur of music, the Austrian Ambassador Count Von Kufstein, and particularly Prince Schönburg, were standing guests. Even during summer, which he always spent at Löschwitz, a romantic spot on the banks of the Elbe, some miles from Dresden, he was the object of attraction for numberless friends, and for a large circle of pupils, who hoped to draw advantage from his celebrated method.

Great is the number of the artists that he successfully trained during his long professional career of sixty years; and many are the celebrated and well-known names, both of pianists and of singers, that are reckoned among his pupils. Among the men of musical talent that at one time addressed themselves to him, was Hans Von Bülow. A letter from this artist, dated 1863, shows how he appreciated Wieck as a teacher. We quote two sentences :—

> "Never in thought or in word have I forgotten or denied—and herein will the future continue to reflect the past,—what I owe to you, highly revered Master.
>
> "You it was who first laid a firm foundation, teaching my ear to hear and impressing my hand with rules according to law, with logical order, who raised up my talent from the twilight of unconsciousness to the clear light of consciousness," etc.

In the year 1845 Mendelssohn endeavoured to induce Friedrich Wieck to accept a Professorship at the Leipzig Conservatory, but his ideas did not agree with this sort of Institutions, and Moscheles was invited.—Countess Rossi (Henrietta Sontag) also, who called him the first Singing-Master of his age, proposed to him to establish a Singing-Conservatory; but he declined the offer.

Up to his last days and in spite of his great age, Wieck was surrounded by pupils, both for singing and for the piano, from all parts of the world, who tried to snatch a lesson from him when he was in the humour to teach. He died on the 6th October, 1873, having completed his 88th year. His last pupils, several very talented young ladies, with others, continue to study, according to his method, with his daughter Marie in Dresden.

On his 86th birthday there was established in Dresden, a foundation bearing his name (Wieck-Stiftung), the funds of which were afterwards increased by a legacy from himself. It has for its object to support poor persons of talent and such Art-Students as require assistance—an object quite in accordance with his own spirit, for he always assisted young persons of talent who were poor, and trained many without any return, merely for their sake and for the sake of Art.

Of Friedrich Wieck's compositions and works, the following new Editions have lately appeared :—

Etueden fur das Pianoforte (Studies for the Piano) Nos. 1 and 2. Leipzig : F. Whistling.

Exercises for the Piano, arranged by Marie Wieck. Leipzig : C. F. Peters.

Exercises for Singing, arranged by Marie Wieck. Leipzig : Breitkopf.

Musikalische Bauernspruechе (Musical Peasant Maxims), a collection of pointed and humorous sayings, rules and criticisms regarding the piano and singing—partly in prose, partly in verse ;

Also :

Der Wanderer, for one voice, with piano accompaniment.

Der Wanderer in der Saegemuehle,	do.	
Wiegenlied,	do.	—also for two voices.
Ein musikalischer Scherz,	do.	Leipzig : F. E. C. Leuckart.

New Editions of the following are preparing :—

Der Verfall der Gesangskunst (The Decay of the Art of Singing).

Dances, à quatre mains.

Dances for Piano, Violin, and Flute. Leipzig : C. F. Peters.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE musical world receives from me a book of a peculiar kind; not a scientific book, arranged on proper system—such a demand no reasonable man will make of an old music-master, who, during his long practice in the realm of sounds could not arrive at scientific, frequently barren, deductions. What I offer here is the experience of my life. Nature has made me susceptible to everything that is good and beautiful, a correct instinct and a tolerable understanding taught me to avoid the untrue and the hateful, aspiration to higher knowledge led me to pay attention to everything that I came across on the path of my life, and I need have no hesitation in asserting that I have striven to fulfil according to my strength my vocation on earth. This is no boasting; it is no more than the legitimate declaration of a good conscience, and this no man need conceal. For these reasons I have judged it proper to send these outpourings of my heart forth into the world. Perhaps there are some sympathetic souls that are willing to understand and comprehend me; still happier should I be if some music teacher or other were to adopt the views laid down here, and with diligence and prudence were to read between the lines many good things that could not possibly be written down in full detail. Material still in plenty lay spread out before me; indeed, while I wrote it increased under my hands. Art is so very comprehensive, and all the phenomena of life stand in the closest relations with it. Whoever loves and cultivates it sincerely finds in it every day new sources of enjoyment and new impulse to inquiry. Even the most experienced artist always remains a learner, and to teach art especially is to learn day by day.

This I have always held, and this I still hold to this day, neither have I ever omitted to impress these principles upon my pupils. I may be permitted here, with some satisfaction, to instance my daughters Clara and Marie, and along with them I name among others, with like pleasure, the

respected Messrs. Waldemar Heller of Dresden and Wenzel of Leipzig. Their attachment and gratitude has been a constant source of happiness to me, but I am proud that they teach and advocate with zeal the principles they have adopted from me.

Further, this is not the first time that I have tried my hand at authorship. Both the "Signale für Musik" and the "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik" have published under various titles various essays from my pen. The approbation that these received at the time of their appearance has acted as an encouragement to me for this greater task. Some of these former labours have been worked into this book, the form, however, being partially changed. Hence also originates a figure that frequently recurs in this book, namely, the Teacher DAS *(That)*, in explanation of which I scarcely need to add that it is intended to represent my humble self, and is to be regarded as an anagram for "Der Alte Schulmeister" *(The Old Schoolmaster)*. Whoever does not know me personally may from this figure get a clue to my character, and may further construe from it for himself, that a man of such caustic bluntness and unceremoniousness can be by no means a finished artist in style. I trust this last remark will pacify all those critics whose hair may perhaps stand on end because of the frequent want of gallantry in my way of writing. Not on any other ground will I bespeak indulgence for my style. The form of dialogue I have frequently chosen for the reason that the brevity resulting from it appeared serviceable to my delineations. Not less frequently I employ the letter-style and the personal address; they are more in my way than the form of a serious treatise.

Before long this book will be followed by "short, rhythmically finished exercises" (Kleine, rhythmisch abgeschlossene Uebungen) by myself and my pupil, W. Heller.* They will not extend beyond a few sheets. They have for their object to teach *a good technical touch without the use of notes*, and may everyone that desires to follow my experiences enlarge and supplement them, according to his judgment and his needs. For a complement I recommend the useful and suitable books of Dr Pohle "Leipzig Piano-School" (Leipziger Clavier-Schule), L. Köhler's "Popular Melodies of all Nations" (Volksmelodien aller Nationen), the works of

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* This plan was frustrated by the early death of W. Heller shortly after the appearance of 'Piano und Gesang.' The remaining part of the paragraph seems to justify us in retaining it.—*Tr.*

Kullak, Knorr, and Czerny. They serve excellently for playing by heart, for the subsequent learning of the notes, and for the further technical training.

But I undertake also to speak concerning Singing! A piano-teacher of ability and heart—no matter whether he teaches the "elements" or occupies himself with "higher culture"—to be qualified according to my ideal, must understand the art of singing, at least he must profess a high interest in it and have a warm heart for it in his bosom. When I speak of singing, I mean only "fine singing," the foundation of the finest and most complete musical representation; and again above all things, I think a "fine tone formation" to be the foundation of the finest possible touch on the piano. There are many points where singing and the piano must explain and supplement each other; they must work side by side in order to exhibit the sublime and noble in serene beauty. My book will make this plain to many; whether to all, I doubt. There will even be not a few who will put aside my book with a scornful smile, and smirk over the zeal of the man of the "times that are past." I am prepared for that too; though not in other days, now at all events it is the fashion to depreciate the old times and their representatives. I shall, however, remain conservative until the men of the future convince me by results that are superior to those of the old times, or at least equal to them.

And so go forth into the world, dear book! Teach the willing, warn the erring, vex the wicked, and chastise the sinners!

THE AUTHOR.

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CHAPTER I.

Concerning Elementary Instruction on the Piano.

DEAR SIR,—You wish to know some particulars concerning my method of teaching the piano, especially concerning my procedure in *Elementary Instruction*, which is entirely different from the ordinary way.

Here you have the main points of the case: and, if you have confidence in my forty years' experience, and are able and willing to read between the lines, then you, with your manifold experience, which you have acquired as a thinking, talented, and earnest teacher of music, will understand what I mean by giving here a dialogue between the teacher *Thou*, your humble servant *That**, and little *Trinette*.

That. Well, my dear Mr. Thou, how did you manage, then, so thoroughly to disgust little Susy with piano-playing? and how was it possible that during the three years you taught her you achieved no results whatever?

Thou. First, I taught her the keys—that was a difficult matter to begin with; then I taught her the treble staff—that was still more difficult; then I taught her the bass staff—that was the most difficult thing of all; then I took up with her the small favourite pieces that she was expected very soon to play to her parents: here she continually mistook the bass staff for the treble staff, she did not keep time, always used the wrong fingers, and learned nothing; then I tried severity—here she cried; then I tried kindness—here also she cried; then I stopped entirely with the piano teaching, and upon that she entreated me for Heaven's sake not to begin again with her.—That is the position where we are now.

That. My dear Mr. Thou, you might have managed that better. How can a child mount a ladder that wants the lowest steps, and many others besides?—Nature makes no leap, least of all with children.

Thou. Did she not then mount from the lowest steps?

* Fr. Wieck usually signed his literary articles Das—the German word for "That," but also intended as the initial letters of "Der alte Schulmeister"—the old schoolmaster (see Preface).

That. Well! at least she did not reach the top. Or, rather I must say she has fallen down from the top. To put it mildly, she has begun her ascent in the middle, and even then you have wished to urge her up, instead of letting her go up calmly, collectedly, and firmly.—Bring your youngest daughter Trinette to me; I will give her in your presence her first piano lesson.

That. Come, Trinette, repeat these letters after me: * c, d, e, f.

Trin. c, d, e, f.

That. Go on: g, a, b, c.

Trin. g, a, b, c.

That. Once more. Again and again: the first four—the other four. Right! Now all the eight together: c, d, e, f, g, a, b, c.

Trin. c, d, e, f, g, a, b, c.

That. Backward: c, b, a, g.—f, e, d, c.

Trin. c, b, a, g.—f, e, d, c.

That. *(After several repetitions).* Very good! Look, now you have learned something already. That is the *Musical Alphabet*, and these letters are the names of the *white* keys on the piano. Now you shall know immediately how to find and to name each of them. Before that, however, I must make the remark (*at the same time I run with the finger from middle C towards the highest Treble*) that this way the sounds rise—become higher, finer, and that this, the other way, (*while I run with the finger from middle C towards the lowest Bass*), the sounds fall—become lower, duller. The half to the right upwards is called the *Treble*, the other half downwards the *Bass*. Perhaps you can distinguish already with your ear the difference between the fine, high sounds and the low, dull ones? Further, the thing that you see here before you, and that you are to learn to play upon, is called the *Keyboard*: it consists of white and black Keys. The Black Keys we shall learn by and by, and the White Keys we shall call by their right names presently. You see there are upon the whole keyboard always two black keys together, and then again three black keys together, and side by side. Now, put the first finger of your right hand upon the lower of the two black keys lying side by side, and slide with it downward upon the nearest white key: then you have found the white key C over all the keyboard. Can you tell me now what the one next will be called?—Repeat the Musical Alphabet.

Trin. c, d, e, f, g, a, b, c.

That. It is d, you see.

Trin. And next comes e.

---

* In England the Notes are expressed by—
c, d, e, f, g, a, b, c.
In Germany by—c, d, e, f, g, a, h, c.

That. Yes, and then f.—The f over the whole keyboard you can find just as easily, by putting again the first finger upon the lowest of these three black keys that lie together, and sliding down to the nearest white key. In these two white keys c and f, which you will find at once in the manner I have shown you, both in the Treble and Bass, you have now the surest clue for the recognition of all the white keys. For now the one next f is called ——?

Trin. g; and then a, b, and so on.

That. Now let us repeat forward and backward the names of the keys, give the names of some of them out of the order, and continue with that for a short time. At the end of the lesson we will go over the whole once more: and thus, for the next lesson, you will at once know all the white keys both in their order and out of it; only you must give yourself a little practice in it—and you can make no mistake, for you have a hold at once in the c and in the f.—Now, let us shortly take something yet quite different, which will also please you. I told you before, that the sounds this way (*running up with the finger*) rise—become higher, and this way (*running down with the finger*) descend—become lower. Thus not one sound is like another, but either higher or lower. I suppose you can hear that already?—Well, turn round now with your back towards me. I now strike two sounds one after the other: which is the higher, the first or the second? (*I go on in this manner, and bring the sounds nearer and nearer to each other:—perhaps also, in order to perplex and to strain the attention, I give the lower sounds softly, and the higher sounds more firmly, and in this manner I go by degrees down into the Bass, according to the capabilities of the pupil*). I suppose the listening tires you somewhat? Ah, but a fine ear is requisite to play the piano. However, I will not weary you; let us pass on to something else.—Can you count as far as 3—1, 2, 3?

Trin. Yes, and further than that.

That. We will see. Count 1, 2, 3, and so on, continuously, but quite even and equal. (*I lead her to accuracy in counting, sometimes counting with her, and also striking one chord in three even crotchets*). Can you count even with certainty now? Let us see! (*Now I give the chord only to* 1, *remaining silent at* 2 *and* 3; *or only to* 2, *remaining silent at* 1 *and* 3; *and so on: but I strike the chords short and very precise. After that I may even insert a quaver, and with this lay the foundation for dividing the crotchets into two quavers. In short, I turn and wind about in every possible manner, in order to make the child count evenly with accuracy, and at the same time to fix the attention. In the same manner we proceed also with* 1, 2, *or with* 1, 2, 3, 4, *or with* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. *With this is mentioned, but only superficially and in passing, the duration of two crotchets, four crotchets, etc.*)—Trinette, you count very nicely already, and you can also already distinguish the sounds; it is not every child that learns that in

the very first lesson! You will be sure to turn out a good pianist one day. But now that your ear has rested again, let us yet try something more difficult for it.

Trin. That will be nice; I will listen as attentively as I can.

That. When several keys are struck at the same time, the combination of sounds, when agreeable, is called a *Chord.* But there are *major* and *minor* chords; the former sound joyful, cheerful—the latter, sad, dull, I might say: the former laugh, the latter weep. Mark now whether I am right. (*I strike the major chord of C, and after a short pause, the minor chord of C, and so on; and I seek to fix her attention by striking with a firmer or a lighter touch, sometimes at major chords, sometimes at minor. For the most part she distinguishes rightly. Only one must not continue too long at this, trying to extort something or other, least of all with persistent and urgent speaking and explaining*). Now I may even tell you already that the difference in the sound lies in the third tone, counting from the lowest key C, and by striking it either one note higher or lower (e or e flat). By and by, I shall make all this clearer to you, when you will get acquainted with the Tonic, Third, Fifth (Dominant), Octave, etc. (*It is of advantage, and it is psychologically proper that, on occasion and by the way, we should at an earlier stage name and slightly touch upon subjects that we intend to teach with thoroughness at a later stage. In doing this, the customary technical terms are employed from the very outset, and an explanation, in so far as is necessary, is given of them*). Well done, very well! Yet now let us repeat once more the names of the keys, and then we are done for to day.—Look now, what a number of things you have learned in this lesson!

Trin. That was very nice.

That. So you shall always find it.

Trin. When is the next lesson?

That. The day after to-morrow, for at the beginning you must get "at least three lessons" a-week.

Trin. What will you take up with me in the next lesson?

That. I shall go over everything again, but in many points I shall proceed differently, and differently over and over again, so that the subject will always have new charms for you. But in the next lesson we shall also proceed to play; first on the table, next on the piano. You will then learn to move the fingers quite independently of the arm nimbly and supplely, though but gently, and to raise them and let them fall correctly. We shall likewise have some exercises to make the wrist too more supple, which always has to be done at the very beginning, in order to get a beautiful touch, that is to say, to make the notes sound as beautifully as it is at all possible.—I will show you how to sit at the piano, and how to hold your hands; you will get acquainted with the black keys and the major

scale of C, with the semi-tones between the 3rd and 4th degrees, and between the 7th and 8th degrees, and thus with its leading note b, which is the guide to it. (This is important for my method, because the different scales develope naturally out of it). Even the chord in c you shall find in the Bass and Treble, and strike it and make it sound with both hands together. And then in the third or fourth lesson, when you have got a firmer hold of all you have learned, I will teach you to play a small piece which will please you, and then—then are you really already a piano player, a pianist.

Thou. Who then has taught you all this? Why, this goes like a mail train!

That. What is to be taught, many people can learn; how to teach it, this I have acquired only by having with my whole soul devoted myself always with great love and constant thought to the musical cultivation of my pupils, and in fact to their general intellectual development. Certainly it is also necessary to go on quickly—because the subject proceeds step by step, one thing laying the foundation of the next; because the pupil learns everything surely, calmly, thoughtfully, and accurately, without round abouts, without distracting and retarding wanderings; because I teach neither too much nor too little; because I always anticipate and endeavour, while engaged with the one matter to be learned, at the same time to lay the foundation of many other necessary matters. And, what is the chief point, because instead of wishing to cram the memory of the child with my own wisdom (as is often done in a crude and hurried manner), I at once rouse his intellect and give it something to do, allowing him to develop of his own accord, and not degrading him into a wooden machine. In a word, I do not allow the random practice of a dreary useless jingle, killing time and intellect, from which of necessity developed the very before-mentioned position of your little Susy; but I make the pupil musical, at the same time keeping strictly in view his individuality and his gradual progress. At the more advanced and higher stage of instruction, I exercise, indeed, a most decided influence over the entire culture and disposition of the pupil, and I use every opportunity to work upon his sentiment and his sense for the beautiful, and to develop it more and more in a natural manner.

Thou. But when do the notes come then?

That. Before that we have many things to do, beautiful and delightful things, almost always with a constant regard to the mechanism, which has to be well developed, yet so as not to make playing disagreeable to the child by means of strained, nonsensical, mechanical practising. Perhaps after half a-year, when they have had 60 or 80 lessons, I may teach the Treble notes, in a peculiar manner, so that the pupils have to be always intellectually active in it. In the case of my daughters, I postponed the knowledge of the notes for a year, taking up the Bass notes some months later.

Thou. And what did you do till then?

That. Really you should now be able in a very great measure to answer your own question, after listening to this lesson and to what has been said in the course of it. I have in this way trained my pupils musically, and made them almost accomplished players, before they learned a note; I have in this way taught a correct, supple, good, full, and beautiful touch of the keys with the finger-joints, and of whole chords with the wrist, and the scales in all the keys, while the latter certainly I did not allow to be played at once with both hands, but only at a later stage by degrees and by turns together.

To do this too early and continuously, as is commonly done, is wholly impracticable, because when the scales are played with both hands together, the weaker and awkward third finger is always covered and supported by the remaining better ones of the other hand, and thus the necessary attention is turned away from the sickly and weaker tones. An unequal and not beautiful scale is the consequence of that. At the same time I have cultivated in all directions the sense of time-keeping, the division of the bars, etc.; I have made the pupils perform Cadences in all the keys on the Dominant and Sub-Dominant, and even small exercises in these, which (to their great pleasure and advantage) I let them partly invent themselves, and in this I have of course been particular to see to a correct fingering. You observe, then, that in order to become practical, I begin with Theory. Thus, for instance, I make them find and practise diligently the Common chords, and the chords of the Dominant seventh, with their changes in all the different keys, and let these be used always for new figures and runs, but all this without precipitation, and without tiring the pupils too much with one and the same thing, in order that the necessary lively interest in it be not weakened. At the same time I let them play from 50 to 60 small short pieces that are rhythmically constructed, sound well, and strike the ear; pieces that are intended gradually to raise the mechanical skill, that partly already permit a certain execution, (for which end they were composed and have been collected by me), and by means of which, in the case of all pupils, memory, which is indispensable for piano-playing, is insensibly and thoroughly developed. These they have to play—"by heart, often transposed into other keys, readily, well, according to their nature often beautifully, in strict time (counting is seldom necessary), and without hesitating, slowly, quickly, slowly again, quicker, *staccato, legato, piano, forte, crescendo, diminuendo, etc.,*" which must always be successful if I do not put the cart before the horse, by commencing without technical culture and beginning instruction on the piano with the Treble and Bass notes, which are exceedingly difficult to learn. In a word, I have shown myself to be a psychologist, a thinker, a man and a teacher who strives after many-sided culture, and who also specially occupies himself much with the art of singing as a necessary foundation for beautiful and fine piano-playing, and this with some talent, at least with a fervent

and untiring love for the subject. I have never stood still, I have learned something new every day in the course of teaching, and I have tried to improve myself; if possible, I have adjusted myself to the mood for the time being of the pupils; at every lesson and with each child I have always been new, and ever again a different person, and this with a bright, cheerful spirit, and thus my method in most cases succeeded, just because it came from the heart. Moreover, I was never a man that stuck to the pattern; I have never shown myself to be a pedant who has clung fast to certain ideas and views.

I have lived with the times, have tried to understand my times and to anticipate them, I have gone and heard everything great and beautiful in music, and have urged also my pupils to go and hear it. I have also resolutely opposed all the prejudices and wrong currents of the times, and never allowed over-hasty parents to meddle with my teaching; I have known always to keep for my pupils a good and well-tuned piano, and tried to deserve the love and confidence of my pupils and their parents. Well? I was entirely and absolutely what I wished to be, a teacher that always kept in view the true, the beautiful, and the artistic, and consequently made his pupils happy.

Thou. But where are the parents who go in with your ideas, and your higher views?

That. Almost all the parents of my pupils, either at once, or by and by, when they have been present at some lessons, have gone in with my views. And as regards the few that did not go in, I went out, that is to say, I stopped away. Notwithstanding that, my times did not pass me over unnoticed. Do you not think, my friend, that such and similar things are useful for teachers that are young and inexperienced, yet striving for improvement, and quite enough for such as possess psychological and general culture, and a lively love for the thing, to enable them to continue to build and to work beautifully? I refrain, on principle, from giving a definitive plan of procedure; for would not slavish observance of it be wholly contrary to my intentions, contrary to my own method? But the others? Alas! all the others?—after all, they do not understand me, one way or another; —or they misunderstand me—which is still worse; especially the malevolent ones, the classical ones, who only cry for music, proceed at once to the notes, and are impatient for Beethoven, who talk silly twaddle about my unclassical proceedings, but who in reality only wish to hide their awkwardness, their want of culture, their disinclination for self-sacrifice, or their accustomed lagging behind the age. And to rouse, instruct, inspirit, educate such as are without talent, and such as are languid—that I cannot do at all; my method takes too much for granted, or it lies so near one's eyes that the wood cannot be seen for trees. Both these allegations are true; further on I will explain my meaning more particularly.

This letter, where it falls on good fertile soil, even so far as it goes, will indicate, in some measure, what is my way of giving more advanced instruction, and in what spirit I have imparted it to my daughters—even up to the highest proficiency without having employed with them even the very least force—to the great vexation of the ill-natured world, and also of the fine gentry, who make great exertions to account for the musical position of my daughters in the artistic world, solely on the ground of my alleged tyrannical training, by immoderate unheard-of drilling, by tortures of all kinds, and who feel no delicacy in designedly concocting and carefully keeping afloat the most absurd rumours about it, instead of examining more closely what I have already published on the subject, and comparing it with that procedure which can lead their children only to useless strumming.

CHAPTER II.

Evening Entertainment and Supper at Mr. Zach's.

PERSONS.

MR. ZACH: *has at one time been able to play the flute, and is not very well to do.*
HIS WIFE, Née Tz.: *somewhat spiteful.*
STICK, their Son: aged 17, *is making a thorough study of the pianoforte.*
BUEFFEL: Pianoforte-Master in the house, and also Stick-Master.
THAT, Teacher of the Piano: *somewhat rough.*
CÆCILIA, his Daughter: aged 13, *shy.*

Zach (to That). I am sorry I was unable to go to the Concert yesterday. I, too, was at one time musical and played the flute. They say your daughter is pretty accomplished in playing?

That. Well! may be somewhat more than accomplished. We are in earnest with art!

Née Tz. (*Envious, because Cæcilia played yesterday before a public audience*

with applause, while Bueffel has not yet been able to let his Stick appear, because of wooden suspicions that are circulating among the public;—but in one breath) : When did your daughter begin? How old is she really? Does she like to play? People say you are very severe with your daughters, and that you tie your daughters to the chair? How many hours has she to play a-day, then? Do you not tax her too much? Has she ability? Is she not delicate?

That. Does she not look healthy, Madam—tall and strong for her age?

Née Tz. (*Quickly.*) But, perhaps, she might look still more sprightly if she did not play the piano.

That. (*Bowing.*) This, Madam, I am scarcely in a position to kn——

Zach. (*Hastily interrupting, and taking hold of That by two button holes.*) I have heard it said before now that you torment and ill-treat your daughters very much. The eldest was forced to play night and day too. Well, but to-night, Sir, you shall hear my Stick play, who, if all is well, will one day occupy Thalberg's place in the world. Tell us your opinion frankly.* We should like to have it, although our dear Mr. Bueffel does not agree with your views.

(Bueffel is sitting meanwhile at the side of the music box, picking out all those studies by listening to which That is to earn his supper.)

That. (*Resigned, foreboding misfortune.*) I have heard many good things about the diligence of your son. What are you studying at present, Mr. Stick?

Stick. (*Proudly self-conscious, and somewhat hobbledehoyish.*) I play six hours a-day, Sir—two hours Scales with both hands—and four hours Studies. The first book of Clementi and four books of Cramer I am through already. Just now I am at the *Gradus ad Parnassum.* The right fingering for it I have studied already.

That. Indeed! You are going at it very earnestly; that is very nice of you, Sir, and—of Mr. Bueffel. But—what pieces do you study along with these? by Hummel, Mendelssohn, Chopin, or Schumann?

Stick. (*Contemptuously.*) As for Chopin and Schumann, Mr. Bueffel cannot endure them. One day lately Mr. Bueffel played over the "*Children's Scenes,*" by Schumann, about which there has been such a noise. Mamma, who also has a turn for music, and used to sing at the time when Papa still played the flute said: "What trivial stuff is this? Are these meant for Waltzes for children And the childish titles! Such things he may play to his wife, not to us!"

That. Yes, these children-scenes for full-grown men's hands are curious morsels! Your Mamma is right, they are too short, there should be more of them. But they are not Waltzes!

Stick. Well! and Waltzes I am not allowed to play at all. Mr. Bueffel, Sir,

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* Of course, I was expected only to praise.

goes to work in quite a solid manner: for the first thing, I have still to plough through the whole *Gradus ad Parnassum*—for not till I have done so will he take up with me a concerto of Beethoven's, and write above it the correct fingering. This I will then play in public; and then, Sir—as he and aunt have said—I shall kill everything.

Bueffel. (*Who has been listening at a distance, comes up.*) Now, Mr. That, how are you pleased with my method? You are said to have quite a different one? We may always remain good friends for all that. Yes, if anything is to come of it, one must go hard at it now-a-days—that is what I maintain! But, then, Sir, my dear Stick has rare perseverance and patience. The 96 studies by Cramer, all in a row, he has laboured down, without even a grumble. He grew quite poorly with it. But then Papa bought him a horse, on which he rides about every day for an hour, and refreshes himself in the open air.

(Mr. Zach, his wife, and an old aunt, are playing whist at some distance.)

That. Do you not unite with the practice of studies the practice of pieces, to the end that the thorough cultivation of the feeling for execution and fine representation may always go hand in hand with the practice of mechanical manipulation?

Bueffel. My dear colleague, there you are too narrow, and you are in error: that must come of itself through much playing, and through age. For instance, your Cæcilia played yesterday very nicely the two new Waltzes, the *Notturno* by Chopin, and the Trio by Beethoven. Oh, yes, but then that was beaten into her by hard study: our ear, Sir, found that out at once—mine and Stick's!

That. Did it sound in your ears unnatural, stiff, or wooden, unpleasant, dry?

Bueffel. Oh no! But that it had been studied hard—that is just the mistake. The public, it is true, applauded. They do not know about these things, but—I and Stick?—

That. Do you think it an impossibility to awaken at an early age the sense for beautiful execution, without doing violence to the pupil? Nay, do you not think it decidedly necessary to rouse the sentiment even in childhood up to a certain grade, and that neglect on this point is the very reason why we have to listen now-a-days to so many players that, so to say, have practised themselves to death, and have degraded art to a piece of manual labour—to a mere futile dexterity of the fingers!

Bueffel. Nonsense! Scales! Gradus ad Parnassum? Classical—classical! You had also the Study for the Shake, by Charles Mayer, played yesterday. That sounds far too fashionable, and pampers the ear; the more so when into the bargain it is played after so hard coaching. We stick to Clementi and Cramer, and to

Hummel's Piano school—that is the good old school. With your eldest daughter you also made such mistakes——

That. The world does not appear to agree with you on that p——

Née Tz. (*Who has been listening, and in consequence has lost her slam, steps up suddenly, spiteful.*) I beg your pardon, she would nevertheless play still better if you had had the prudence to leave her ten years at Cramer and Clementi. The tendency towards Schumann and Chopin does not please us at all. But vanity! Well, with the father of such a child one must be indulgent! With us, of course, it is a different matter. No ties of love fetter Mr. Bueffel to my Stick. He pursues his end firmly and unmoved, without sticking at anything, and without vanity, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left—always straightforward.

That. Madam, I submit. You may be right—from your own point of view. With such a sentimentalist you must really have some indulgence. But now, I suppose, Mr. Stick will play?

(Mr. Stick plays two studies of Clementi, three of Cramer, and four out of the Gradus. He did not get "warm" at them; the horse he got from his Papa had again strengthened him very much.)

They ask me: "But how did Stick play? How?"

It is not, however, my intention to write a treatise; I wish only to stimulate —to indicate. Nor do I write for Stick and Bueffel!

Afterwards we had supper. The cod (Stockfisch) was good, and the country-wine had only a slight after-flavour. My shy Cæcilia did not eat cod; but she afterwards enjoyed very much the roast and salad; she did nothing but listen both before and during supper.

While we were at table, some innocent anecdotes were told about horses, balls, dogs, and Stick's future. When we took leave, Madam said condescendingly to Cæcilia: "If you go on in that way, my dear child, you will learn one day to play very nicely."

CHAPTER III.

A Visit to Mrs. N.'s.

(MRS. N.—*Her Daughter* FATIMA, aged 18.—MISS FATIMA'S AUNT.—THAT.—Afterwards MR. SCHWACH, teacher of the piano.)

That. (*To Fatima—a little frightened.*) I must ask you to favour us with something on the piano, Miss Fatima—your aunt has spoken to me very highly of your playing.

Fatima. (*Smiling approvingly.*) Oh, pray, do not mention it, Sir. But the piano is so much out of tune—so my master says.

That. Does your master not carefully see to it that the piano is always in good tune when you play?

Fatima. Mamma thinks it so expensive, and that the piano is no sooner tuned than it begins to get out of tune again. It is an old piano, as you see, Sir, with thin legs. Mamma always says that when I get older, I shall have one of Streicher's pianos, with the touch from above. Besides, the three months have not yet expired, when the old piano-tuner comes in regular course.

That. Is your teacher satisfied with that?

Fatima. Yes, he has got accustomed to it now; it is just the same in other people's houses.

Mrs. N. Now, darling, do play something for us. Mr. That likes to hear it very much—and he is a Connoisseur. His Daughters play too.

Fatima. What shall I play then, Mamma?

Mrs. N. Why, you have whole heaps of music there! Please, Mr. That, look for something!

That. Madam, I cannot know what Miss Fatima has at present under her fingers, and can master.

Aunt. Please, Mr. That, just fetch something. They are all grand things, and it is all the same to her.

That. Can you play the whole of that heap there?

Aunt. She has played the whole of it. She has been playing, Sir, these ten years, and she has a very good teacher. He was in the house when my sister

accompanied her husband, at the time her betrothed, in the solos for the flute by Sterkel! Ah! these were fine musical evenings! And many a time did the master also accompany on the guitar—without notes. That was exactly like a concert.

That. Indeed, Madam? That must have been very nice! Well, now, Miss Fatima, allow yourself to be persuaded.

Fatima. Say, then, Mamma, what I shall play?

That. Where is your master? He will know best.

Aunt. (*Whispering to That.*) He is composing to-night Grand Brilliant Variations, which he is to dedicate to Fatima in honour of her eighteenth birthday, which is to be celebrated the day after to-morrow. You must come here then, Sir; I am sure dear Fatima will play them off at sight.

Mrs. N. Fatima, dear, do not be affected any longer. Play Thalberg's Huguenots. Oh, that is so beautiful!

That. Oh do, Miss Fatima. Besides, I have not heard it since Thalberg played it.

Aunt. (*To That.*) Do you not let your Daughters play it, too? O, the beautiful Chorale! It makes my eyes instantly run over. Only the dear child plays it always too fast, because she cannot check her fingers.

Mrs. N. Here it is. Would you please to turn over the leaves, Mr. That? You are such a celebrated teacher, that perhaps you may find something to tell her while she plays.*

That. I do not like to interrupt the flow of the playing. But I will turn over the leaves—(*shaking spasmodically*).

(Dear Fatima rattles and scrambles over the first two pages, boldly nevertheless, and not without capacity, but without touch, without fingering, without expression, without time, with raised Pedal, and in so inappreciative and indistinct a manner as to force That in despair to interrupt with the observation: "You might, I think, take the Tempi a little more quietly!" Fatima leans back astonished, stops playing, and looks scoffingly at Mamma.)

Aunt. But that is just what shows her readiness; and then consider the fiery youth and the natural expression?

Fatima. My master always makes me play that way. It is the very reason why I have learned to play so much at sight.

That. Do you, then, not study the pieces?

Fatima. The last four years I have been playing only at sight, so that I may be able to manage anything in the musical circles. Mamma likes that best.

That. Do you play no Scales or Studies at all? Do you not practice finger-exercises at all?

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* I was expected not to say anything—only to admire.

Aunt. She has not done so for the last four years. My sister's opinion was that it was waste of time, and too pedantic. The master, too, has quite seen that; and so it is intended that she should get up all the beautiful Concert pieces by Doehler, Liszt, Dreyschock, Willmer's, and Thalberg, and get expertness in doing so. Thalberg she is already through, and we have just ordered from Leipzig *Pompa di Festa*, by Willmer's.

That. You are very diligent, Miss Fatima ; only, I must say, somewhat too hasty.

(That meant to continue the conversation, to escape this unfortunate turning-over business. But——)

Mrs. N. (*Striking in.*) Begin once more, my child, from the beginning; and now we will enjoy the whole Huguenots. Mr. That likes very much to hear these things.

(Fatima does so, and scrambles over the whole of the *Potpourri*, boldly confident, however,—which brings That to the verge of despair. Aunt taps That on the shoulder, while the Chorale is playing, and in a low whisper——)

Aunt. Is not that touching? only a little too fast! You will agree with me there. But the expertness! Has not the child much talent? You can hear that at once!

"But what did That say at the termination of this performance?" He bowed in dumb silence, and what he said to himself remains a secret for ever—he only felt.

(Supper is served. Everybody that in Mrs. N.'s drawing-room listens to the daughter of the house playing on her ill-tuned piano, which moreover is a tone and a-half too low, is invited to stay for supper, and is well treated! Even the wine is clear ; only not the piano. By and by the teacher Schwach appears, glorying in the nearly finished Birthday-Bravura. He is introduced to me. Fatima whispers to him in a titter : "I have been playing the *Huguenots*—it went off well, straight-down, free and easy." Schwach simpers. We were able to talk together without being overheard.)

That. This young lady has talent, Mr. Schwach.

Schwach. (*Suddenly striking in.*) I should think so, Sir.

That. How is it, Mr. Schwach, that she does not include earnest studies in her playing?

Schwach. Indeed! Some time ago I set her to play the Exercises by A. E. Mueller, as well as instructive Studies by Czerny, and some Scales. But the child was so volatile, and did not persevere—she took in everything at once. And then her Mamma also wished soon after the commencement to hear modern pieces at birth-days, baptismal-days, etc.—and so we had to set about it early. However, the results have been good! You hear that at once, Sir—do you not?

That. But were you not able, with firmness and decision, to bring Mrs. N. to the right point of view?—further to develop mechanical dexterity, and to try to unite alternately with the sight-playing a careful, at all events a thorough, study in mechanism? The young lady, not to speak of other mistakes, has not yet any expression whatever on the piano!

Schwach. But that is what "the Pedal" is for, and when she gets older, I have no fear but she will learn to strike more firmly; she is rather too weak yet. And then it is not intended that she shall play in public for money; only before company, and because it is the fashion. Ah, my dear Sir, if I were always to come forward in such cases with Scales and Exercises, I should have few lessons in town. I have to provide for wife and children; and my old father, the late Organist, who instructed me (to this day I am grateful to him for it) is also still with me. You may do that with your children! And "what an amount of time do the exercises waste!"

(The company rises from table, and breaks up with "a very good-night!")

Fatima. (*Snappishly to That.*) Your Emma, they say, also plays very expertly? But is it not true that she has not so much talent as your eldest daughter?

That. Indeed! Who told you so?

CHAPTER IV.

Secrets.

A Lecture on the Study of the Piano, delivered to a Society of Lady-players.

Ladies!

After to-day we shall make a short pause in our musical exertions, because I shall be for some weeks from home with my Daughter. On our return, I pray you to grant anew to these meetings of ours your sympathy and your good-will. Let us then again make music together, with friendliness and friendship; and let us also at times discuss matters relating to it. Other ladies, your friends, shall also be welcome, but only such as take a real interest in a noble, although harmless, musical activity, even should they be only amateurs. So let us exclude from

our circle all malicious criticism and mere curiosity ; it is true we do require the Violin and the Cello for accompaniment, but not two powers that are so hostile.

To-day I shall start a question in reference to piano-playing, and you will be good enough to give some attention, while I answer it partially. You may be sure that the subjects I shall speak on will always be only such as are never once mentioned even in the most voluminous books on piano-playing.

The question is : " How comes it that our educated young ladies, though endowed with talent, diligence, and good will, and competently provided with needful helps, are for the most part dissatisfied with their progress and their performances in playing ? "

Our education is such a careful one, extending to all branches of knowledge. Consequently the inner intellectual cultivation in music, nourished by years of constant listening to good music, in the course of which there may have been occasionally performances of remarkable proficiency, and by the self-criticism arising out of this, is not to be compared with the acquired Technique and the purely mechanical expertness, which nevertheless is necessary for the correct and pleasing performance of a piece of music, quite apart from the consideration that compositions to be executed ought never to demand the whole of the acquired mechanical skill, unless, because of the struggle with mechanical difficulties, embarrassment, faintheartedness, nervous haste shall take the place of boldness, of self-confidence, and of mastery of music. Well, this is the business of the teacher, who has to choose studies for the furtherance of the mechanism, but only such pieces of music as are beneath the mechanical powers of the pupil, so that he may be able to work unerringly towards a fine and choice execution without interruption, and with the lively interest of the pupil. But why is it, then, that this mechanical proficiency is now, as a rule, insufficient ?

1. Because we are too late in beginning with it. In order to obtain the progress in expertness, and the pliancy of the fingers and joints that a child of six or seven acquires with an able teacher in four lessons, fingers of ten to fourteen need from 15 to 20 lessons, and often many more, according to the construction of the hands, etc. For many other reasons, too, as we may mention by the way, the purely mechanical training should in general be got over for the most part, or at least a thoroughly good foundation for it should be laid in the " marmot condition" of the human being, and not in a way that kills intellect in the years of consciousness, when our ladies ought to speak of musical representation, of tenderness and depth of feeling, of poetry, of enthusiasm in play, and when they must speak in the possession of our classical piano-music and immortal masterpieces, under the guidance of talented teachers and friends, who are moved by the highest aspirations. You reply : " How is it possible for girls at so early an age, even supposing your Letter on Elementary Instruction should actually find believing

souls and teachers, to secure lasting pleasure and intelligence so as to play exercises that are in part so severe, even when followed out upon your interesting method?" Ladies, it is only by custom that you are to do so, provided that a little after the beginning there is at all observable any talent, or, to speak more correctly, musical instinct. Lasting pleasure in it would be really *unnatural*, and wherever it should be found, the principal motive would be vanity, which rarely produces wholesome fruit. Ask whether our great scholars and artists always liked to go to school, whether they never rejoiced at the prospect of the holidays? Let the curious European question, "Do your daughters like to play?" be herewith answered. Heavens! when once they are able to play, and especially when they can play without great exertion, partly at sight, easy graceful drawing-room pieces, and perhaps also the easier compositions of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Hummel, Moscheles, and others, or when they completely master more difficult pieces with musical understanding—oh yes, then they play very often—then they play with great pleasure and enthusiasm.

2. And even when the children begin in their sixth year, as they sometimes do, you will agree with me, if you will look a little about you, that I am right in the following statement in my Letter on Elementary Instruction :—

"*That.* Well, my dear Mr. Thou, how did you manage, then, so thoroughly to disgust little Susy with piano-playing? and how was it possible that during the three years you taught her you achieved no results whatever?

"*Thou.* First, I taught her the keys—that was a difficult matter to begin with; then I taught her the treble staff—that was still more difficult; then I taught her the bass staff—that was the most difficult thing of all; then I took up with her the small favourite pieces that she was expected very soon to play to her parents: here she continually mistook the bass staff for the treble staff, she did not keep time, always used the wrong fingers, and learned nothing; then I tried severity —here she cried: then I tried kindness—here also she cried; then I stopped entirely with the piano teaching, and upon that she entreated me for Heaven's sake not to begin again with her.—That is the position where we are now.

"*That.* My dear Mr. Thou, you might have managed that better. How can a child mount a ladder that wants the lowest steps, and many others besides? —Nature makes no leap, least of all with children."

"*Thou.* Did she not then mount from the lowest steps?

"*That.* Well! at least she did not reach the top."

Enough of poor Susan, Ladies; we on our part will try to reach the top, since you have the advantage of better and wiser teachers. But I shall mention, only as a joke now, the words I have heard so often in the course of my long experience of piano teaching. "To begin with, it is abundantly sufficient to have the very cheapest of teachers, and a bad piano, with thin legs and clattering bronze orna-

ments, a piano that is forty years old, and that is tuned punctually once a-year! But as soon as the children are able to play nicely, let us at once get a better piano and a better teacher!" Ay, but that "at once" may never come, and then the most talented pupils, as a matter of course, seem suddenly in the eyes of the parents to have no talent, as well as to take no pleasure in playing, and they give it up, until they bitterly repent it in after years. But the parents console themselves, and the old piano is never tuned more! Yet, as I said, this has no reference whatever to your teachers, whom I esteem personally very highly, and who teach on playable pianos.

3. Do not be angry with me: You do not make enough use of the minutes. When scientific cultivation in other departments claims so much time in our education—when our friends cost us so many little hours—and, alas! when balls and dinners swallow up whole days—we must carefully prize the minutes that are left to us. Quick to the piano! I have still ten minutes till dinner-time: two scales, two five-finger exercises, two difficult passages from the piece I am just learning, and an exercise of my own invention on the Dominant and Sub-Dominant are yet quickly gone through—and now I shall enjoy the roast all the more!—My dear Agnes, we may go on talking ever so long about the tremendous snow; yet it will not melt for all that. How do you like this passage I am going to play to you now? It is from an admirable Notturno by Chopin, and it is so difficult that I shall have to practise it fifty times more than the others, else I shall ever and again stick at this part, and never be able to play the Notturno readily before any one. Is it not a fine passage—elegant and original? Really one has done something to speak of, when one has mastered it. I suppose the oftener I play it the more you like it—don't you? So do I.—We have got an invitation. Mother has still a good many orders to give and arrangements to make; it may be ten minutes before we go. Quick to the piano, although in an uncomfortable toilette! No opportunity is to be lost!—This evening I have to pass three hours without music: to make up for this, I shall just now, for the space of ten minutes, occupy the disobedient third finger with the driest but most suitable exercise; many a passage and scale has it spoiled for me before now with its obstinacy and weakness. All right! I have still plenty of time to put on the narrow gloves, even though the one for the left hand should have to be put on in the street! How many hours, think you, do these minutes come to in a year? I hear you say: "Why shall we anxiously pick up these minutes like pins—we have an hour and more every day for practising, if we are not detained."

"Ay, that's just it: if we are not detained!"

At this point I shall betray to you with all my heart some of my professional secrets. The first is—

"If a person wants to attain a high degree of perfection in playing—in

any art—he must do at least something for it every day in the mechanism. Illness and other unavoidable causes are ever taking days enough."

Second secret—

"Practise always with fresh strength; the result will be tenfold."

Does not the time set aside for your practising often happen to be after you have been busy for five or six hours in the study of sciences and of the languages? Is there left in you after that the necessary pleasure and strength to engage in suitable studies with perseverance for an hour and even longer with a clear mind, to study your music pieces as thoughtfully as your teacher indicated to you? And if the mind is exhausted, and the hand and fingers tired and stiff with writing, are not then the arm and the elbow only too apt to assist, which is more hurtful than not to practise at all? But, Ladies, the strength is generally fresh enough to practise rightly several times a-day for ten minutes, and endurance for it is also there, and, if any day the so-called hour for practising has to be dispensed with, still you have done at least something—have you not?—either after breakfast, or before dinner, or in the afternoon before the English lesson? Therefore, I pray you, *grant me my minutes!*

4. One secret more—

Practise often, and for the most part slowly, and *without the use of the pedal*, not only smaller and greater Studies, but even the pieces. The consequence will be a healthy playing, which is the foundation of beautiful playing. Is this what you do, Ladies, when there is neither teacher, nor father, nor mother, watching over it personally? Do not mind saying "No"—nobody hears you in this place.

5. Further, are you moving about sufficiently in the open, healthy air? Much movement in all kinds of weather gives strong, enduring piano-fingers; not so the room air, which causes sickly, nervous, overstrained, crippled playing. Alas! and our piano-playing of the present day, with the requirement of a higher mechanism on our heavy instruments requires only too imperatively healthy fingers. Accordingly, I hereby once more pray you for *the minutes*—does not walking take up hours?

6. Overstrained and overstraining needlework, and drawing or painting, cannot at all agree with earnest and practical piano-playing, not only because both these occupations take up much time, but also because they deprive the fingers of the necessary pliant flexibility and dexterity. Further, also, needlework, and especially knitting, according to the latest experience, produce an unnatural strain on the nerves, which is not favourable to healthy progress. I have at least never been able to accomplish anything great, during my long experience in piano-teaching, with ladies that knit, crochet, or embroider. My friends, you who have been born in favourable circumstances, and who have been brought up by dear parents

modestly and yet so elegantly, leave the small gain for stitching a collar as a birthday present for your Mamma or your Aunt, to the poor girls up in the mountains, who have to hide their intellectual gifts under a bushel. I assure you that Aunt and Mamma, if you surprise them with a successful piano performance instead, will look at it in the same light as if you had made the collar yourself with your body bent for days and nights, and with over-exertion of your eyesight. And now for the Art of Painting! Painting and Music, which are related so intimately in theory, do not agree in the least in practical execution, if you are in earnest with them. You say, but do not many painters play the guitar or the flute? Well, yes, these two instruments I grant you. But then your piano-playing is not to stand in that position, even if I should have in view only amateurs. The first-mentioned instruments accompany the painters to the mountains and to the woods with some sweet melodies for their amusement; your piano-playing is to accompany you through ennobled life in the high enjoyment of noble masterpieces. Do not therefore divide your beautiful powers too much. Leave this art to your friends that have not talent or opportunity for the acquisition of music. To practise thoroughly several arts at the same time, the short span of our life, as it is, does not permit. To exercise ten different things in a most mediocre manner—what is the use of it to the higher culture, to the future, to inward happiness and to humanity? And suppose you paint something which at a pinch may look like a rosebud, what good does it do, when we may admire so many rosebuds that are real?

7. Ladies, be not startled, I warn you, with few exceptions, against the so-called classical, weighty music, especially against Beethoven, if you think to learn from it first, or wish to learn from it at all aplomb, ease, readiness, elasticity, grace in playing, elegance, and a beautiful touch. Such compositions are to be played after these brilliant qualities have been already acquired up to a certain point by studies and pieces written with special regard to the mechanism of the piano. Much more foolish and impracticable is it still, when parents (Virtuosi, it may be, who have no recollection of their youth left), have the perverse idea that their children should, from the very beginning, play and practise nothing but good and classical music, in order that their ear might not suffer by sequences of fifths, and dull, unmeaning finger exercises, and easy comprehensible and Italian melodies. Why, what have my daughters, and many others whom I have formed to be Virtuosi, played and studied of pieces of this class, such as those by Huenten, Czerny, Burgmueller, Kalkbrenner, A. and J. Schmitt, Herz, and many others! Who is there that now finds any fault in their musical training, their healthy sense, and their love for classical music? What paths has a child to go through before arriving at the Studies of Cramer, Moscheles, Chopin, or at the "Temperirte Clavier" by Bach, before he is required or is able to study even the *Sonate p athétique* of Beethoven? People should not talk twaddle,

denying in vain self-delusion, quite in the spirit of the times, without having made the experiment, and from their wrong point of view, what others have successfully practised and tested for many years professionally and skilfully. By this method people may perhaps be made musical—but only rough and clumsy piano-bunglers—not fine artists, who yet are the only persons capable of giving the above-named classical music a worthy and noble representation. I desire that my daughters will never forget my well-weighed tuition, founded on many years' experience, so that, in grateful remembrance of their father and teacher, they may repay to their pupils the debt that they owe to him.

But I observe just now among my audience several Ladies intending to come out as Singers, and I may be allowed to address a word to them. As long as many of our German composers of songs think it below their dignity to study singing in the old Italian masterpieces, and with able teachers of singing, as Gluck, Naumann, Hasse, Haendel, Haydn, Mozart, Salieri, Winter, and others, have done, take care of yourselves and of your voice, which is so tender and so easy to destroy, and do not allow yourselves to be led astray by clever conception and otherwise good music, for the loss of your voice will immediately follow such German singing torture as you have abundant opportunity of seeing in all our theatres—nay, as you may yourselves experience with innumerable German airs and songs. Apply to your singing what I have just now solemnly addressed to the piano-players, and in the same manner as they have to choose such things as are adapted to the piano, choose you for your singing studies only such things as are within the capacity of the voice, under the direction of very careful and instructed teachers—not of modern voice-breakers, who make their pupils shout *that the voice may come out*. And after your Technique is good and beautiful, your intonation firm, and your skill in singing developed, to a certain extent, then try for an example a few pieces of those talented yet awkward composers of songs, who often commit in every line errors in right expression, taking breath, intonation, register of voice, pronunciation, and a hundred other things.

Look about you: who is it that sings such so-called classical songs? Singers that do not in the least know what singing means, and have not the least taste for it; in fact, cannot have it because of their training; or such as have lost their voice, and consequently sing anything, or rather recite it, because they can sing nothing. To mention only two of the most excellent composers of airs, who, with a constant intercourse with Masters versed in singing in Vienna and in Italy, have conscientiously exerted themselves to compose airs that are capable of being sung, and that are at the same time clever and masterly—I mean Fr. Schubert and Mendelssohn. Some of their songs, which are moreover charming, you yourselves should sing, but neither too many of them nor too often. The German language and syllabic singing, combined with a melody that is often heavy, absorb much

voice, and easily lead to many evils and incorrect habits. Remember Jenny Lind, with what strictness she selected the songs that she gave in her concerts from Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and others. For this reason she succeeded, even with songs that were small and short, in achieving results that were great.

To the point! Lastly—

8. One Virtuoso secret more, which weighs heavily in the scale: we must, especially if we have not commenced very early and been under good instruction, try to move our fingers much at every fitting opportunity, and especially to let them fall quite loosely on hard objects, so that in doing this the hand may be in an outstretched direction on something firm.

We have to accustom ourselves to that, so as to do it without being conscious of the action; as, for instance, while reading, while at tea, while listening, lay the hand on the table, and lift the fingers and let them fall down singly and without help from the wrist, especially often the powerless third and fourth fingers, which require a hundred times more practice than the others, if we want to obtain equality in the scales, etc. On the table, you say, it is so noticeable. Well then, do it on your lap, or by laying one hand upon the other. It is not exactly necessary, and often not practicable, to finger and to practise extensions on other people's backs. That liberty was pardoned only to the lively, original Virtuoso, Adolf Henselt, who, it is said, at the present time in St. Petersburg becomes ever and again suddenly troublesome in company after this manner in matters of finger movements—this otherwise so modest, amiable artist!

Now you have also the reason why I cannot answer the question that has been put innumerable times: "How much do your daughters practise?" The finger-movements, and those before-mentioned ten minutes, it is impossible for me to count up. But so much is certain, that they spend in practice fewer hours a-day than many thousands that learn nothing, for they never do, and never did, practise on a false method, but always correctly, and with an eye to advancement.

One thing more: in Vienna, after my searching connoisseur look had observed to my joy in tea-parties many moving fingers, as a consequence of my teaching there, a much-honoured Lady whispered to me: "But, my dear Mr. Wieck, my Amalia is not intended to be a Virtuoso; all we want is, that she should learn to perform correctly and well, and play nicely at sight some not too difficult Sonatas from Beethoven." Ladies, that is all I have in view! For a fine and beautiful Virtuosity many more requirements must combine, and in particular, the whole education from earliest youth must be planned accordingly. If such were not the case, then, especially Germany, considering her people's talents, ought to be able to produce annually thousands of lady Virtuosi.

This was too long for you to-day? I do beg your pardon. May my good intention to be able to be useful to you, excuse me if I could not master so great and rich a mass of material in a few words; nevertheless, after all, I have not by any means exhausted the subject.

CHAPTER V.

Opera Administration.

With the plan of creation one fault must be found—
Unsingable German operas abound.

The German Opera Composers are disgusted with the poor, unintellectual, superficial Italian Music—with Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti! They are wailing and lamenting at depraved humanity, which does not want to hear their erudite Operas!—at the singers, who do not want to sing their profound music!—at the wicked Managers of Theatres, who lay aside, that is, bury deep the classical German music after the second or third performance before an empty house! Yes, it is horrid: "The Daughter of the Regiment," "La Somnambula," have been running about now for so many years in all the five parts of the world, and when you might now have thought that the last hour had at length struck of that superficial, although fresh and melodious music, then there comes after a pause of a score of years, that Swedish, careless—although, it is true, very musical—Jenny Lind, and Henrietta Sontag, and they sing—alas, and sing the Maria, the Amine, Lucia, Susanna, and others. Now, Gentlemen, your mere sneering and abusing will avail you nothing here; you combine, philosophize, study, and are contrapuntal to such an extent at your music! Why, if you desire good success for your opera, do you not for once consider that there must be good reasons for the above phenomenon also? I will touch upon some of them.

First of all, I take leave modestly to remark, that Opera and Song Composers with a few exceptions understand too little—especially of Solo singing, and that until they study the art of Singing, as Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Haydn (whose teacher was Porpora), Mozart, Winter, Gluck, Weigl, and others have done, you really preach to deaf ears. I may be allowed to name here, by way of example and with acknowledgment, a few of our living directors of music that belong to the exceptions. The gentlemen I mean are these: Kuecken in all his compositions, also Reissiger, especially in his last Oratorio "David," Spohr (in Jessonda and also elsewhere), and Meyerbeer. If the last mentioned, in his latest Operas, sometimes has not had regard to the art of singing finely and according to rules, he has had too much consideration for instrumental effect and for well-known "curiously and wrongly" directed lady singers. Many others, however, have not educated their feeling and ear for the beauty of sound, beautiful tone, soaring, flowing melodies, skilful ornamental passages suited for the voice of the singer, and for the careful dividing of the text with regard to the vowels and the pronunciation generally. In one word: they write music and employ for it human voices in the same manner as they employ clarinets, flutes and bassoons; they forget how Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, and others, even in their instrumental pieces have been anxious to employ their wind-instruments in the most beautiful part of their compass.—They imagine they know enough when they know the range of the voices, and now they drive about in it just as it occurs to them, and as their so-called characteristic music from their point of view happens to bring about, without taking into consideration the higher tuning of the present day, the register of voice, the breathing, the struggle of the singers with their unskilful Cadences, the pronunciation, especially of the German, which, in comparison with the Italian language, presents ten-fold difficulties with its twenty vowels and its crowded voice-robbing and voice-destroying consonants. How then can you under such circumstances demand that a well educated, beautifully taught, fresh lady singer, who does not wish to lose her voice in two or three years, as happens almost without exception because of the quantity of German Opera music—how, I say, can you demand that she should sing your Operas with pleasure again and again, Operas wherein she cannot feel comfortable, wherein she has to fight about with crowded difficulties of all kinds, and with the pronunciation often in the highest treble, and then again in the lowest part of the voice (a syllable to each note). It is quite impossible for her to make any effect, except the very doubtful one, when she screams, rolls her eyes, wrings her hands (is it for better melodies?), and over-exerts her voice, while constant beauty of tone is a duty incumbent on her? But then this painful struggle does not touch you, if only the notes are brought out, if people only hear your (often disagreeable) crowded progressions of harmonies, your piquant modulations,

your enharmonic changes, your contrapuntal turns with a most excessive instrumentation. You, Gentlemen, want to please and to produce effect, but the poor singers are to deny themselves all earthly desires and sacrifice themselves without further question in Christian submission to your learned music, they are to adore you, profoundly admire you, and imagine that they are only the occasional means, and you—the great end. Yes, of course, sometimes we hear it said "my Opera would have pleased much more, if the Singers had not sung so indifferently, if they had had more fire and enthusiasm, and more voice."—That just shows your ignorance of song and your want of feeling for it!—You are searching in the far distance for what you could grasp with your hands!

If you considered and knew what qualities, strength, and sacrifices, what diligence, time, and opportunity, have to be united to form a voice correctly and beautifully, and to preserve it, then would you write more conscientiously, and learn to go hand-in-hand with the Singer.—A lady singer is a Virtuose, she wants to please as well as you, she does not want to destroy herself with your music, or to sacrifice herself in a few evenings, knowing well that a broken voice cannot be mended, that no such new reed can be put into it as the player uses for his Clarinet.—Study the Somnambula and the Tell, and learn therefrom what "writing for voices" means; but in doing so take the assistance of a thorough expert in Song, else you may overlook many things that you are bound to know. Yet this is the very thing that is horrifying to your erudition and your egotism!—If Haydn had not studied singing from Italian scores, he would not have been able to compose a "Creation," Winter could not have composed an "Opferfest," nor Mozart a "Figaro," and so on. Do you think, then, that—

"Ocean, thou mighty monster"—

is a fine song? It is an intellectual piece of music, but it is not a piece for singing. Are you not of opinion, then, that a good lady singer, with a cultivated feeling for beauty of sound, should wish to erase the pianoforte passages, and some other parts, from the otherwise beautiful air from Weber's "Freischütz:"

"Softly sighs the voice of evening."

Do you not think, then, that many things in the Oberon give the opposite of pleasure to the hard labouring Tenor, and that they afford little satisfaction to a mind in favour of beautiful singing?

I have intentionally mentioned one of the most talented and ablest masters, Carl Maria Von Weber, who, apart from his original music, has shown a *marvellous instinct for song* in many of his songs, cavatinas, airs, etc., which clever singers will continue to sing for a long time to come,

and after their declamatory music—I might call it their torture of singing—has long been buried. So continue then meanwhile to write for the public and for the Singers, and if you wish to write for the *Future* without singers and without the public,—well, in that case, do not torment *us* and our singers, but leave over this treasure-trove to your heirs; let *them* look to it, whether the art of singing shall be changed, whether another direction shall be given to it by your method, or whether this singing of yours shall take a secondary position,—this grand, declamatory, syllabic, recitative singing, without healthy, sustained, and thoroughly planned cantilenas, which rest on unchanging laws, being founded in the nature of man and of the voices. This art of singing, which has been for centuries the foundation of all music, will remain a guiding rule for us also, and cannot be done away with without further consideration.—"We do not at all wish to write like Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, or like Mehul, Boieldieu, etc., and we are proud of it." Strange! who wanted you to do so?—Write as you will, not however, with manufacturing power, voice-destroying,—but with true creative power, things that are singable. Then you will also have written for the *Future*, as Gluck, Mozart, Haydn have done, who also raised the public up to themselves, just as you wish to do. Is this what you think (to touch upon a declaration of opinion of a musical party of our time, which is remarkable and must not be left unnoticed): "these old forms, even strains of harmony and melody, etc., are trite and used up, and exhausted especially by these great creative spirits"? New ones must be found, must they? You are speaking there of Richard Wagner, whose rich creative genius we do not want by any means to depreciate, but whose ideals must remain impracticable as long as his miserable representatives and imitators do not even show a talent for manufacturing, and therefore remind us only too painfully of the "Present," and do not do full justice to the art of singing, which is established in the history of all nations. The dangerous, untenable, and doubtful enterprise of Wagner has already been illustrated more closely in the "Grenzboten," in the "Musical Letters," in the "Berlin Echo," and in many other periodicals. I for my own part put myself only in the position of the singer, and I repeat: as long as singers are desired to perform operas of the Present or Future, or dramatic operas, or whatever you choose to call it, these must embrace the purely singable, and neither put into the shade as a secondary consideration, nor ineffectively exhaust or inconsiderately destroy the singers (even if some singers at times should submit to it, or should have to submit to it, at theatres), whose rich materials for aid *if he is willing to study them*, open such a vast and immeasurable field to Genius. The singer must never be degraded to a mere declaimer, as Wagner and some others would make him, however clever and magni-

ficent the conception of the music for that might be in and for itself. This, with all the dazzling things it contains, is a decidedly retrograde step, an extraordinary and strange error, an unnatural position without Future and—without Present. All the fine phrases, all the flourishes about it, are in vain; the natural feeling of man will be judge over it and—that cannot be philosophized away.

Many managers of Theatres and Musical Directors, too, who either possess no knowledge of singing, or have no benevolence nor care for their singers, and thus wholly misunderstand their own position, bear a great share of the blame, that the most deeply felt want of healthy, useful, and rightly taught voices, and other accidents, bring forth, even on large stages, so many most middling and miserable opera performances. Likewise the constant change of the operas, and the hasty rehearsing of them, is death to the singer and to the whole establishment. If the operas were well and carefully studied—if there were a striving with all one's powers for an ideal representation, and if only such operas as are suitable for it were chosen: then the critical public would allow itself to be drawn and trained to visit the opera frequently, to live themselves into it, to look always for new beauties, and to feel themselves as fascinated as the singers, who only after repeated performances can move with entire freedom and in a truly artistic manner, with less sacrifice of their voice and of their health. Instead of that, the ungratified and oversatiated public wants naturally always something new, or in reality does not in the least know what it wants. The singers are tortured—one blames another—the manager has to expend more than he takes; the lady singers are hoarse and tired, have no pleasure and love for their work, and derange the performances; the musical leaders grow cold and negligent, and thus—they all unite in dragging the cart into the mud, and there you have the whole of the miserable mismanagement ot the Opera of Germany.

Opera composers! cast for once your look, which always rests so complacently on your talent without singing,—on your score. Have you not learned to write a vocal part, so that the singer may find these modulations even without the support of the orchestra? The double bass must then support the Bass-singer because he has difficulty in singing suddenly B-sharp, C-sharp, E-sharp, after first moving about in G-minor? I suppose here the double bass plays first, and the Bass-singer good-naturedly follows? A fine effect that! Or the Bass-singers (it is a Chorus in a grand five hours' Opera) can easily scramble through it, so as to sound somewhat like it? Or should you, notwithstanding, have some scruples, then you pronounce at the rehearsal the directorial command: "Again from the beginning!" But how can anything be done better, that, as it is, cannot be sung at all?—And if it were possible

for the singers to get over it at last, do you think that it is beautiful because it is characteristic? Have you seen scores by Naumann, Hasse, Haydn, Gluck, Weigl, Winter? Mark you, they are not Italians, but they have learned singing from Italians, and then they have composed in German. But as for you, you do not need to learn to sing, you merely impose on the singer the trifling duty of singing as you have composed, whereas you ought to compose as he is able to sing.

If then you wish to write Operas that shall please, which in fact, if you would but confess it, is your first aim, then above all write so that your compositions may be capable of being sung; study what is necessary for it, and do not, as the custom is, leave it to accident. Ask at least one of the few connoisseurs of singing what you are to strike out and what to change, and renounce your usual phrase: "I will not change one note of my creation." Consider that whatever the singer does not like to sing, and, as a well-trained singer, she cannot master with ease, gives no pleasure, no enjoyment to the public, and does not induce people to hear it again. Do not write operas lasting four or five hours: the public and the singers do not, as a rule, hold out so long, neither does the exhausted orchestra,—*you least of all, if it were other people's music,*—and do not demand too much expense and too many members. Also allow effects to the singers, as frequent as at all possible, and write so that lady-singers with voice and good training will desire to sing your operas, and not, as usual, that singers whose voice is gone, must sing that which after all will not permanently attract the public to your music, beautiful and clever as it may otherwise be.—Alas! and I do earnestly entreat you, do not write in the clever yet tedious fashion— make no more perorations— suppress further ideas—else your child will die immediately on its birth!— Behold!—another corpse added to the several dozens that I have helped to bury during the last forty years!

CHAPTER VI.

Concerning the Pedal.

I have just returned exhausted and annihilated from a Concert, where the piano was drummed. Two long Bravura pieces were thundered through with raised pedal, also at times all of a sudden whispered, to which the necessary foundation was unanimously given by the deepest thirteen bass notes remaining over from the Fortissimo, which continued to sound, and vibrated to the utmost. It was only with the help of the concert bill that my fatigued ears were able to reach the certainty that this confusion of sound was meant to represent two pieces by Doehler and Thalberg.

Cruel Fate! to have invented the pedal!—I mean the pedal that raises the dampers in the pianoforte. What an acquisition of modern times! Alas! our piano-virtuosi have now lost also their ear! What a confusion of sound, what a buzzing is that? It is the groaning, the pitiable piano, on which one of the many modern virtuosi that have lost their ear, is just now storming down a Bravura passage with constantly raised pedal; but with heartfelt pleasure, strong beard, flowing hair, and proud self-consciousness! Of course, time will abolish* much that is unhandsome; do you piano-grubbers think it is beautiful to raise also the pedal at each bar? Wretched misconception—European misconception!—Has cats' music, then, any business in the concert-room?

Enough of serious joke!

Hummel never used the pedal. He belonged to the old conservatives, and with his graceful, clear, elegant, neat, although not grand play, he produced fine effects, which certainly must very often have been caused by the right and prudent use of the pedal, especially with the pianos of those days by Stein, Brodmann, Conrad Graff, and others, which were all thinly leathered, and had a thin sharp tone. Especially was this the more advisable in the higher treble notes, where the change of harmony is not frequent, and always with a carefully-repeated letting-go of the pedal, because the tone of the above-mentioned instruments, while no doubt agreeable and charming, yet had little volume of sound, and the touch had less power and elasticity. But if, on our rich-toned instruments, which are very

* There is a play on words here in the original which cannot be preserved in English. The German "Aufheben" means both to "raise" and to "abolish."

strong, especially in the bass, and which are softly leathered throughout—often too softly—if, I say, you make on these instruments such a use of the pedal,—senseless, unbounded, dissolute, destroying all ear, and if, over and above that, your touch be hard and stiff, and your Technique unhealthy and incorrect, shall not people, then, cast doubt upon your ear?—How can there, in such a case, be any question of even a pretty tolerable execution? Is that art? Why, it is not even tradesmanlike handiwork—it is rubbish!

A few words to the more advanced players:—

The pedal to your right on the pianoforte raises the dampers, thus causing the tones to continue to sound and to sing, and taking from them the dryness, insufficiency, and shortness, which you well know pianos are always reproached with, especially those of earlier construction. Now it is all very well to say, "the more the sound on the pianoforte approaches the sound of singing, the more beautiful it is." But what a wise, cautious use does this pedal require, when the harmony changes quickly, especially in the middle and lower portions, in order not to mar distinctness and a clear phrased execution?—You all use the pedal too much and too often, especially on good large concert grands of the newest construction, which, with their strong set of strings, have, of themselves, a large volume, a more vibrating sound; at least you do not drop it often enough, nor at exactly the right time. Listen then yourselves to what you play! You play not merely for yourselves alone, but often before a public, which perhaps hears for the first time the piece to be played. Try (at first perhaps more strongly and—now more softly) without pedal several bars—for instance, harmonies following quickly one after another, even passages in the upper Treble, especially if they are repeated and have been played before with raised pedal; what a calming effect, what unclouded enjoyment, what refreshment that produces—to what a fine shading it leads! Try at least first to hear it out and feel it thoroughly when others play, for your habit is rooted too deep and you know no longer when and how often you use the pedal.—Chopin, this gifted, tasteful, delicately discriminating composer and Virtuoso may serve you as a pattern also in this. His scattered, far separated artistic Harmonies, which contain the boldest, often most striking syncopation, for which the deep bass is indispensable, do indeed make the frequent use of the pedal necessary for harmoniously beautiful execution But if you investigate and observe his careful and delicate notation in his compositions, you will be able to instruct yourselves fully about the right and beautiful use of the pedal.

Permit to my pedal-grief another small episode. Let us take another walk together through the terraces on a fine evening in the month of June. What do you hear almost in every house? Piano-playing certainly—but what playing? Mostly nothing else but a continual confusion of all varieties of

chords without stopping, without rest — dissolute passages, covered by the pedal, deep unintelligible Bass thunder with pedal — and again for a change a poor, stiff thin touch supported by the pedal. We flee to the next street. O heavens! what a thundering is there already yonder at a distance on a piano that is out of tune? Somebody is slashing away with a cruel Bravura and with raised pedal, while the change of harmony is of the most astonishing description, a grand *i.e.*, a long and difficult study with the most intricate passages, a production of their own, perhaps of the firm "In the Ocean," or "In Orcus," or "What occurred to me while mad." At last the strings are snapping—the pedal rattles and groans; and the end of all is—C C sharp, D D sharp continue to sound for some measures more, fatigued beside and through each other, and at last die away into the warm, sweet, blissful air!—Universal applause through open windows. Who then has just finished raging there? It was a Parisian that has just arrived, provided with letters of recommendation—or some other travelling piano-player, who composes for himself—that gave just now a small specimen of what we have to expect of him shortly in the Hall of the "Hotel de Schmerz".

CHAPTER VII.

Feeling of the Soft Pedal.

"What is that?" you exclaim; "feeling of the soft pedal, feeling as regards the soft pedal?—In these days a feeling? Perhaps even musical feeling?—Where shall that come from at the present time in music—in piano-playing? I have heard nothing of that sort in a concert hall for a long time!"

When you slide the key action with the left pedal from the left to the right, the hammer, in playing, touches only two strings, on some pianos only one. The consequence is that the tone sounds fainter, thinner, but more singing and

more tender. What happens?—Several Virtuosi, seized by the piano mania, play a grand Bravura-piece, they gesticulate in a fearful manner, they rage up and down the runs through 7 octaves with raised pedal—they strike—put out of tune the best piano with the first 20 bars; snap the strings, strike the hammers off the hoppers, and lame the leather of the hammer —they perspire — they stroke their hair out of their face — they ogle with the public and themselves—and all of a sudden they get feeling! Arriving at a *piano* or a *pianissimo*, they are no longer content with one pedal, they take in addition, in the middle of the pedal rumble, the soft pedal.—Ah! what a languishing, what a murmuring, what bell-like sounds—what soft-pedal feeling, what tender feeling! Oh me, the Ladies are swimming—in delight with the long-haired pale apostle of art.

I indicate here the "piano-mania period," which has just been thrown down from its zenith—a period that a person must have lived through, to find such aberration credible. When at the beginning of this century pianofortes were approaching visible perfection, and were widening in compass, an increased technique could not fail to be called forth. But after a few years it turned into spiritless empty readiness of the fingers, which was carried and practised up to the point of frenzy and absolute spiritual mortification. Instead of applying themselves on these pianos, which are rich in tone, and permit many and fine shadings, above all to acquire a *beautiful and full touch and tone*, on which alone really true Virtuosity can be based, people sought to develop and enlarge almost exclusively an immoderate, strong, unnatural touch, and the art of fingering and the quickness of the fingers, in order to be able to produce Passages, Roulades, Contorsions, and Writhings, which nobody had thought of until then, and which nobody had thought necessary. From that time dates the Virtuosity with its empty tinsel thoughts without pith and without music, and the abominable aberration of art, accompanied by boundless vanity and conceit, "the finger-heroism," and the sad observation of all persons that remained in their senses, that such quackery, practised by innumerable incapables, under the assistance of just as incapable teachers and composers, was exalted to be the sole end and aim.

Yes, it is sad, how much players forget, over the study of useless artifices and of a misunderstood mechanism, the study of tone and execution, and how few teachers there are who endeavour to train their pupils and themselves in this direction; else they would feel and know that on a good piano with a right and correctly schooled mechanism, which are surely to be had in these days almost everywhere, a person can and must play without any outward means of assistance *forte, fortissimo, piano, pianissimo*, in one word shaded and with—at least mechanical—expression, and that this play with a presupposed passable mechanism,

sounds much healthier, clearer, and more satisfactory than if a feeling is affected by means of an immature, awkward, and absurd use of the pedals, especially of that of the soft pedal, of which we speak at present particularly, and which presents an additional proof of our unhealthy, toneless, and unfeeling piano-youth. You good-natured public, who have been drummed together, and much pressed by persevering importunity and urgent recommendations (for such these Virtuosi have always with them, because the tormented towns cannot else get rid of them again), go you to the Concert halls and listen to a dozen piano-youths. They all, it is true, play with more or less mechanism, yet with all their beating, pressing, going hard at it, they are unable to draw from the instrument the right tone, *a broad, full-bodied, healthy, and beautiful tone, which ought to be a clear and well shaded one even with the finest pp.* But to make up for that they play with pedal-feeling, *i.e.* with hypocritical superficiality and internal nothingness.

All you meddlers, who have rendered piano-playing so disagreeable to the music-loving public, so much so that they no longer wish to listen even to the good, judicious, and feeling artist, who, as a man of honour, cannot drag the people with force to the Concert hall or fetch them in from the street: you meddlers, who have put this fine art on the pillory, quit this stage, this battle-field,—stop your wood-chopping—get some appointment on a railway or at some engineering works; there you may perhaps be able to make yourselves useful, instead of killing with your teaching (for that is what it generally comes to after they have wandered through the world), instead, I say, of killing the rising youth whose talents for beautiful piano-playing are hopeful, and bringing up successors only to yourselves, not to Art.

One thing more I must whisper to you! Apart from the consideration that there is no arguing at all with you about modest naturalness, tenderness and earnestness of feeling, pleasure-giving elegance, nor about poetry, enthusiasm, and true noble passion in playing: you ought at least to know in a few minutes, if your ears were not already too blunted, up to what point the *pianissimo* and *fortissimo* can be carried on every piano, except it be of the worst kind, or has already been beaten to pieces by you, in order to keep the tone within the limits of beauty and naturalness, and to bring a piece at least externally to a right representation without hurting an educated ear by overexerting and ill-treating the instrument and its two pedals.

Yet even such and similar doings have found in our century, which has made everything possible, their numerous representatives and admirers. This senseless, mad slaving and manipulating of the pianofortes was called "demoniacal-modern," a nice word of our piano-criticism for mad "Piano-trampling performances and soft-pedal feeling." In how close a connection what has been

said here is to our modern singing-errors also, and how far it can be applied to them, I leave to the reader and to my following chapters.

To return to my subject, let me make this further observation to sensible players, that even they use the soft pedal too much and often in the wrong place, namely in the middle of the flow of the piece, without an entering pause, in melodies that ought to be played softly, or even in quick passages in *piano.*

This is to be observed for the most part with players that are obliged to use instruments of strong tone and with a heavy and hard touch, which render doubtful distinct and fine shadings in *piano* and *forte*—as well as the entire *correct and good play.* For this reason prudent and experienced teachers, who have in view the true and the beautiful, again make a lighter—not *light*—and an elastic correct touch an indispensable condition, and the very makers of instruments with English mechanism, even in Paris and London, have been lately obliged to conform to it, and the attainment of this indeed has its especial difficulties with English mechanism. The makers of pianos with German mechanism may also take to heart the above-mentioned requirement. This, sad to say, brings me to one of the very latest phenomena, which I must not leave unrebuked, as it comes the more boldly and pretentiously forward. After then a better, healthier, and more sensible style of playing has again for some years past become more general, and the piano mistakes described by me are becoming rarer, or at least no longer call forth admiration in larger and musical towns, but rather receive the contempt they deserve: here and there appear again even well-known Virtuosi and teachers, who, with incredible infatuation and total misunderstanding of better times, make their pupils practise again on pianos of the *heaviest and stiffest touch,* and who, not content even with that, actually put springs with counter-pressure under the keys to enforce double power. I demand of all teachers and players that have still left any human ear whatever, and any sense for a right and beautiful touch, for a fine and full expression of the tone, and for musical presentation, whether there can exist anything more hateful and more senseless, than to wish to produce a strength that is utterly inapplicable to stringed instruments without bringing all the machinery into disorder within a few minutes, and making it useless. Besides, it is impossible to enforce it without the assistance of the upper and the lower arm and the whole body, and thus it must produce a still more hateful, a stiffer, and more awkward gesture than was the case even in the most flourishing time of the piano fury. And several of such monstrous exercises, such gigantic performances I have myself really been obliged to listen to and to look at. Every educated person and musician will, I hope, not deny me his silent sympathy. May humanity and every piano be preserved from such insanity, from such progressive music, from such music of the future.

It is instructive and interesting no doubt, to have to live, as I have been destined to do for fifty years, through such incredible phenomena and similar excesses, which, to be sure, are quite destitute of vitality, but nevertheless turn up always in different ways : however, it is not pleasant to discuss them. The world advances too slowly, because it is always *revolving*. I must therefore request the indulgence of my readers, if I can do so only in a rambling, and not in a logical order—also, if I have here and there to repeat certain principles and maxims in order to be able to discuss whatever new matters turn up from time to time.

But it is high time to lead my readers again back from the said Cyclopean-power of the soft pedal of the future to the *soft pedal* of our present piano.

I should like then to see the soft pedal but seldom applied, and only (without the use of the damper, or just with the most delicate treatment of it), for instance, in echoes after small pauses, and even then only in *whole periods*, because the ear has, so to say, to accustom itself first to this soft, maiden-like, sentimental tone. But before passing over again to the ordinary manly sound, with three strings, a pause ought to be possible. Besides, the soft pedal is really most effective only when it is employed in slow passages with full-toned chords, which leave time for singing, and it is precisely in this that the advantage of the touch on two strings consists.

CHAPTER VIII.

Many Learners of the Piano and no Players.

To the Father of a Young Lady that plays the Piano.

I am sorry you have not a boy—*a father's joys over boys are beautiful!* But if you had one, I quite agree with you that you should rather let him hammer stones than the piano. You say you have many friends to whose lot have fallen the above mentioned father's joys, and whose boys, big and small, stupid and clever, every one of them, have been learning the piano for three years and more—and yet are not able to do anything. Exactly so!—And they will not learn anything. Of what use is it, you say, to man or to boys—of what use is it to Art—to stumble through a Waltz, or a Polonaise, or a Mazurka, with stiff arms, dangling fingers, stupid face, and uncouth body?—Is not time worth gold, while here it brings only lead?—And the poor teachers worry themselves and the boys, worry art and the piano, and, may be, in the evening, out of desperation, their own wife, after having all day long disconsolately and vainly abused, cuffed, and lamented. All very true! I myself at one time experienced it, although not in the same degree, and although not bringing home to my own wife a dark face, merely—a great appetite. But I did not succumb to the wretchedness that is the lot of the piano teacher—I roused myself from mere mechanical proceedings: I meditated, examined, tested, and studied whether I could not go about it in a better manner, seeing that the boys did not succeed!—And I did go about it in a better manner, I have achieved better results, because I took a different method from the piano-schools, a *more natural one;* in the same manner as the singing master has to make a beautiful development of tone his first rule, in order to teach good singing, I made the development of touch the first and foremost rule, and tried without notes to make the exercises necessary for the fingers and the wrist so interesting that the pupils got more and more attentive, and, frequently after a short time, they, to their own pleasure, found themselves in the possession of *a healthy*

soft, full and connected tone — an acquisition that very many Virtuosi unfortunately do not possess. We had now made a commencement, starting from the beginning, not from the middle: we had put the horses "before the cart." The pupil was now able to rely upon something, to take pleasure in something without being tormented every lesson with dry, new subjects—the purpose of which he could not understand, and the end of which he could not see.—As there can be no question of *sounding and singing* without having learned the proper touch, how shall any interest be stirred by such tapping without tone?—Stiff, clumsy and powerless fingers at war with the notes—inability to do anything right—nothing but ever blaming and scolding—and with all this to be obliged to retain so many things in the memory, to keep time, and to use the right fingers—poor stupid boys! When, at a later stage, the notes had been learned, I did certainly not commit the common mistake of choosing *too difficult pieces, or even perhaps such as take music alone into consideration, and are not at all or not sufficiently adapted to the piano.* I always chose only easier and *shorter* pieces not bristling with difficulties, in the correct and ready execution of which they could not but take pleasure. And just for this reason the pupils studied the pieces carefully, slowly, willingly, and with sympathy (an important acquisition), because they had *a presentiment of success* and *felt the possibility of ultimate victory.*—Combat with the difficult parts embitters all pleasure, maims the talent, produces weariness, and what is the worst of all, it endangers again and again the following indispensable good attribute which may have been already acquired but is not yet firmly enough established, viz.:

To produce a good and connected tone with free and easy fingers, and a ready and moveable wrist, without the assistance of the arm.

You hold there is not only a want of good teachers, but especially a want of talented pupils, otherwise in Saxony with the great amount of piano-learning that is going on we should have at least a hundred piano-players who ought to be able to play, if not beautifully, at least with more or less finish and correctness. By no means; we have many people that show musical talent. Besides, there are, even in provincial towns, teachers that are musical and have at least so much zeal and aptness for teaching that many pupils might be able to produce a certain amount of satisfactory work. In addition to all that, the taste for music, even in small places, is far more encouraged now than formerly, by musical associations, and by public and private concerts. Finally there exist now much better helps in guides, studies and suitable pieces;—and yet—hardly anything but jingling, thumping, as you are wont to call it—no piano-playing. Let us discuss this phenomenon more closely.—First of all then *the right foundation is wanting*, whereon anything safe can be built. A knowledge of the notes, etc., can be no foundation if it cannot be made available and

exhibited. What is the use of the notes to a person if he has neither ear nor modulation of voice? What is the use of them to the piano-learner if he has no touch, no tone on the piano?—"That is exactly what he has to learn by playing the notes."—But how does he learn it? Further: what happens in schools and institutions? The children are kept there from seven to ten hours, and then, from too great a love for teaching, lessons are prescribed for them to prepare and to commit to memory during their free hours when they might take breath, and the old medical motto is adhered to: "Much helps much." Now then, when is the piano lesson to come in? After the school hours have been got over, when the children are fatigued and worn out? What cruelty! Instead of plenty of bread and butter, plenty of ham, and plenty of air—piano lessons? The piano must be studied with fresh strength, with great attention and interest, else no results are conceivable; not to mention that much writing of itself makes the fingers stiff and awkward. And then, when is the child to practise for himself, a thing that is indispensable? Say in the evening—ten o'clock—just for recreation, when papa and mamma are going to bed?—And if the children have fortunately escaped school, and if they really have red cheeks still, does not their future calling in life claim their time, and if they are girls, is there not embroidering, knitting, sewing, crocheting, dress-making, house work, coffee and tea parties, balls, alas! and many balls—and are there not sweethearts? And are you to suppose that fingers of fifteen and sixteen years of age, are able to acquire the mechanical dexterity as easily as those of nine years? To satisfy the claims of the present day in some degree only, the mechanical dexterity ought in reality to be thoroughly acquired by the age of sixteen. And again: on what kind of instruments are the children to learn the piano? The pianos are for the most part bad, out of tune, square, or a generation old, with thin legs and clattering bronze ornaments, so that no right touch is possible or can be taught on them. Under such circumstances, however, do not even the better masters get weary and fall into a mechanical style, which can lead to nothing at all?—and are they, or do they turn out, anything else, than the like of Mr. Schwach and Mr. Schäfer? At the most, there is sometimes developed a Büffel and at last a Stick.

Finally, I pray you, invite the piano teacher Mr. Strict, to whom you have entrusted your only daughter Rosina, to come to me, that I may give him the necessary information about gradual development in piano-playing up to the Sonata Op. 109 of Beethoven, and to the F minor Concerto by Chopin. But of course he is too theoretical, too much of a composer, too vain and dogmatic, not sufficiently practical to be a teacher, and to be able to teach with results, and he has himself a stiff, uneasy, clumsy touch, which works half up in the air. It is true he speaks also of Studies, Scales, and so forth. Yes, but then everything

depends on the "How?" On the contrary, the so-called practising of them without having first secured and well developed the touch, and without watching it with care and dexterity, is little more improving than pieces. But then hear him in return exclaim with proud and learned self-consciousness: "Music, music! Classical, classical! Flourish! — Expression! — Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn!" But that is the very thing: "Just take one look at his piano-boys—his pianists!!—Look how his children are murdering musically, and listen to his eldest daughter's singing of the classical air composed by him! But then every one and everything is musical!"—*Au Revoir!*

CHAPTER IX.

Singing and Singing Masters.

TO A YOUNG LADY-SINGER.

MY DEAR YOUNG LADY,

You have a beautiful, sweet singing-talent, you have flexibility as well as some maidenly attraction and timbre in your agreeable, although not *naturally* strong voice, and further you have much capability for execution.—And yet you share the fate of nearly all your sisters who in Vienna, in Paris, and in Italy were able to find only those masters that are helping thoroughly and with rapid strides to destroy the Opera in Europe, and that are making the simple, noble, chaste, true art of singing go for nothing. You suffer already from the consequences of these modern and unnatural artistic proceedings, which strain after outward effects merely, in reality consisting only in vocal affectations, which must ruin the voice in the shortest possible time, and before it can in any way reach a high development; and it would be scarcely possible

to save your talent, unless, in the conviction that you were wrongly and badly directed, you should let your voice rest for several months, and thereafter should improve your intonation by correct, quiet studies, not with a strong and *never* with a forced voice, but often with a soft one, and this with a much less and never audible consumption of breath and a correct and quiet management of a clear body of tone. You must further practise the middle parts, and strengthen it by a careful blending of the Falsettos and by a diligent Solmization ; you must equalize the Register of voice by a correct and varied employment of this same Falsetto, and you must bring back the forced register within its natural boundary, and set right many other things. Do you not think that the natural feeling of an educated and unprejudiced ear—not often, it is true, the ear of the composer and singing master—is every moment hurt by the frequent trembling of the voice, the excessive forcing of high notes (where your chest register is pressing already into the Falsetto), the coquetting with the deep chest-tones, the unnatural, disagreeable, almost inaudible pianissimos of the throat and of the nose, the motiveless jerking out of single sounds, and altogether by the whole of this unchaste execution without any connection? What is to become of the Tenor voice, when the extreme ends of it are forced so regardlessly, and when you spend as much breath for a few bars as a rightly taught singer could sing a whole air with? How long will it be till your voice, which is already strained, and which almost constantly oversteps the limits of what is beautiful, will turn into a completely hollow, dull throat sound, when the high discordant tones are lost, and there arises a discord in singing, trembling, and many an ugly and ominous thing? Is your beautiful foundation of voice, and your talent, to vanish like a meteor, as those of the others have done? or do you perhaps think that the gentle air of Italy would, when the time comes, restore the voice that has once been broken? I get into a singing-anger, and relieve my oppressed heart, before which so many beautiful voices have passed, leaving no trace, by a cursory review of many singing teachers as we have seen them work and act for the last twenty years.

The so-called singing masters, as we find them generally even in large cities, even in public musical Institutions and at theatres, I spare from a closer observation—they would certainly not understand me. They make Soprano singers sing scales at the same time on all the five vowels running into each other, they begin with C instead of with F, they make their pupils hold on for a nice long time and scream well, *that the voice may come out*, till the poor victims roll their eyes and get giddy—they speak only of beautiful chest-voice, which ought to be enticed to come out—they know nothing of the Falsetto, nay, they would never be able to learn to catch, recognise or distinguish it, and their highest principle is: "Stuff! we need none of Teschner's, Mieksch's or Wieck's

singing rubbish—sing, just as it comes out! What's the good of that whispering without breath? What have you lungs for, but to use them? Let's come to business: here's "Robert, toi que j'aime" — down on your knees—effect, effect!"

Others again, of a similar stamp, who also make their pupils scream,—the more the better,—so that the voice may get expression and power, and become useful for public singing, who may perhaps also make Solfeggi be sung, and who also chatter about an equality to be acquired, and therefore see that A, B flat and B natural in semiquavers is practised very diligently and hard, wherever kind nature will not yield at once, because she has mostly reserved for herself the careful and slow development of it. And then: that *fatal middle register?* Yes, indeed, the aspirating middle register, which is still more wayward, and which sighs and groans too much in the throat, and is always inclined merely to speak—this they refer to the future, but to make up for it they call out with musical enjoyment:

"Sing at sight!—Hit the note! Music, music!—Classical, classical!—"

I spare them also.

And the singing masters, who are to educate the voices for the *Opera of the Future?* About them I cannot write at all. In the first place, I understand nothing of the Future—of the unborn;—and in the second place, I am too much occupied with the Present.

Now I come to such as are willing to do better, and even partly do better.

These also are too pedantic, they are constantly pursuing one-sided objects with merely one-sided views, without looking about them either to the right or to the left or straight forward, and without daily learning, meditating, and anxious striving, they have stuck fast in one manner, they are riding their hobby-horse, they treat every voice in the same way, and waste their time with secondary matters—with incredible matters, while for a beautiful tone-formation, which must necessarily take its place calmly, not one minute should be lost, especially with lady singers who generally cannot and must not sing much above twenty days a month. Altogether they are the musicians that are most difficult to understand—they also treat only seven tones—but they are surrounded with a mystic darkness, with an inscrutable knowledge, and with a great number of so-called secrets, from which, it is true, never anything grand comes forth into the light of day; which, however, is not their nor their hobby-horse's fault, but only—as they say—the fault of the powers of darkness. Let us suppose for once that *three-fourths* of the measures they are wont to employ are right and proper in the treatment of the voices and individuals (something like this is the case with several teachers of the piano):

then the *remaining fourth* is always quite enough nevertheless to destroy the voice, to deprive it of a beautiful development, and therefore to obtain no very satisfactory results. Others again cannot get over the tone formation and have become in this terrestrial vale of tears the victims of an Optimism—a beautiful region, to be found nowhere but in Paradise!

Now, instead of thinking in the first instance "I wish to do only better than others," they torment and torture the poor earthly voices so much with the highest evenness and beauty of tone, that frequently everything becomes uneven and not beautiful; or they make their pupils so frightened and anxious that because of mere regard to breath, tone and accentuation, they sing their songs quite clumsily, or, may be, remain even sticking in the Optimism—and in tears, whilst a pleasant conviction of capability is required for singing. Others do the opposite, which is still worse and most frequent—*we need only look about us!* At the same time they do not acknowledge amongst themselves anything good unconditionally, but spend the time in advising each other and in communicating each other's ideas with significant and proud "Buts." They are firm in their saddle, but only when they ride continually in a circle on their hobby-horse. Straight forward they cannot go, for then the horse gets startled, and *to keep exactly in the right middle is more than they can do.* Some have everything practised only in *staccato*—others only *legato*, and mean to obtain by that who knows what grand results; some let the singing be done too loud—others too softly; some philosophize diligently about beauty—others grumble about the bad quality of the voice; some rave about extraordinary talent—others hurt the feelings and are abusive because of extraordinary want of talent; some with a noble passion wish to make all Soprano voices Alto voices—others do the opposite;—some let the singing be done only in a dull style—others only in a lively one,—in doing so both refer to celebrated screaming-masters, who have written studies. With the same justification some cultivate preferably the deep vocal Chords, because it is beautiful, they say, and produces effect, when Soprano voices suddenly sing or roar like men, and because that is the fashion in Paris; others again act on the contrary plan, and make Falsetto their business; but none of them care much about the middle register, that is too troublesome for the modern art of singing, too serious, too ticklish—here they remember of a sudden that there is such a thing as a kind *Nature* and refer to that.

Well, I shall drop this—and proceed. *The gradual and careful utilisation of all serviceable means of assistance, to expand, strengthen, equalize, beautify and preserve the voice,* have I not mentioned all that already when speaking of the piano instruction? Now I am again offending the teachers of singing, for they think themselves much more exalted and believe they occupy a much

higher position—than the poor teachers of the piano. Ah, yes, *voices* are still very much more apt to be injured than *the fingers*, and broken and stiff voices are perhaps worse than broken and stiff fingers, if the one be not as bad as the other! Well then! may they show themselves worthy of their high position, and may they no longer send voices to destruction, but establish *something that is satisfactory.* But for my own part—I, in my modest simplicity, believe—the whole thing can be settled definitively without mystic darkness, without secrecies, without quackery, without any of the most modern *anatomical assistance* by improving or killing the throat that is weary of singing, by shortening the uvula, and rendering it more flexible, by cutting out the superfluous glands, by lengthening the larynx, and many other things besides, which nature is said to have formed awkward and wrong, and for which special physicians of the voice are now appointed in London and Paris; all can be settled by the following small sentence:

"Three trifles are required to be a good teacher of the piano and of singing:

THE FINEST TASTE,
THE DEEPEST FEELING
AND
THE TENDEREST EAR,"

and in addition to this the necessary knowledge, energy, and some experience—*voilà tout!*

I cannot make throat-culture my business, I have neither skill nor time for it; and my lady-singers are so much occupied with beautiful tone-formation and careful attention to the preservation and the care of their powers of voice, that they are inclined to open their mouth only for *that*—and not for anatomical purposes. Neither do I require for the playing of the piano any cutting of the web (of the fingers), nor any hand-guide, finger-spring or extension-machine—nor the "Finger-tormentor," which a celebrated pupil of mine has invented against my will, to the just terror of his second and third fingers, and which he has applied behind my back. Madam, if nature suddenly has made a bad job of the singing-throats—let her be responsible for it, I shall not assist, and, for example, get the worn-out throat killed entirely by cauterization with lunar caustic, and then docked up again, if it is really tired—this throat—*may it not be myself and my perverse ways of doing that are to blame for it?*

Nature produces so many beautiful things, and used also to produce previous to the modern style of singing very *excellent singing-throats:* can she not, then: for once, any longer produce a single ordinary and serviceable one?

Meanwhile we return quite simply to the three trifles we pointed out, and in these we will live and act, but—

WITH OUR WHOLE SOUL,
WITH OUR WHOLE MIND
AND
With our whole understanding.

CHAPTER X.

A Rhapsody concerning Singing.

The by-ways and wrong-ways taken by our singing composers, with whom so many teachers of singing and Singing Institutions keep pace, in order as it were to banish the real art of singing from music, or at least to force it into an unnatural, mistaken, and always unbecoming bearing, and thus in the speediest way to destroy the voices even before they are developed—induce me to communicate several hints from my diary for singing, and to slip in a few things from the well-known teacher of singing, Mr. Teschner, of Berlin.

Must the German Composers be told again and again that they should not compose on Italian models, but learn to compose German music capable of being sung, before with strange blindness and ignorance they unsuccessfully wear out the powers of the opera and torment the public, without having even an idea that great and small operas can be written also with German thoroughness and character. The German opera also requires constant consideration of the voices, and correct effective singing. It permits of no murderous attack upon male and female singers and whole orchestras, it resists designed

hunting after effects, which, because of their unnaturalness must be deplored by every true friend of the opera, by every well-trained ear.

Is it then altogether too difficult to acquire the necessary knowledge concerning the human voice, and with a special regard to this to study the scores of Gluck, Haydn, Mozart, and of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti? Is then the sacrifice which our composers of singing make to their creative genius so great, when they learn what is indispensable? It is a disgrace, then, to have to consult experts in singing,—and it is so very irritating to be disturbed in one's vain over-estimation of self; but it is *no disgrace* to work for the destruction of the noblest phenomenon of art in man—*the voice*?—And when feeling, taste, and ear are and must remain the predominating factors in compositions for the masses: then I ask merely with what right they would lay claim to these three trifles, when they almost incessantly violate the same?

Composer. If Mrs. N. had sung my piece to-day with as much sympathy command, and fine quality of voice as she did yesterday the piece by Rossini: then it would have been liked at least as much, since, as to harmony and music, it is a much grander and more interesting piece, while as a dramatic composition it is more effective.

Cantatrice. You are in error, and will continue to be so, as long as the study of the voice is to you a secondary consideration or no consideration at all. The first-mentioned piece, composed with constant regard to the voice and its quality, gives me the sense of comfort and success; yours, on the other hand, gives me the sense of discomfort and failure. What is the use of the musical value—if its worth can be shown only in a doubtful manner, and if my voice must struggle, when it ought to command? You consider the free, graceful movement of the voice of much less importance than the whole unanimous public does. It is certainly not my desire to rouse compassion, but, by a fine artistic singing, with a free range for it—to please! Pray, remember what is adapted to the piano and not adapted to it—what is adapted to the violin and not adapted to it: why do you want to ignore that there is such a thing as *adapted to the voice*?

Critics have often asked, why does Jenny Lind sing so coldly? Why does she not sing great, passionate parts? Why does she not choose also parts from some of the more modern or the newest great German, and perhaps also from Italian operas? Why always only Marie, Amina, Lucia, Norma, Susanna, etc.?

Against these and similar questions I put others: "Why does she wish to remain Jenny Lind? Why does she try to retain her voice as long as possible? Why does she select operas wherein she can show the value of the entire artistic cultivation of her singing, which is subject to no mannerism, and does not challenge, which is without feigned feelings, chaste and modest, of an ideal beauty? Why operas wherein she can put, according to her individuality, the most perfect possible representation? Why operas wherein she may also allow especially to shine the rare combination of her singing powers, without straining her voice, without shouting, forcing and compromising her grand, beautiful, noble art? Why does she first of all take the singing into consideration and only after that the music?—or only both united? Here is the answer to those very questions which have been addressed likewise to Henrietta Sontag, and to all great vocalists. The fiery Schroeder-Devrient even, although she stood in dependent connection with theatres, has rarely made any exceptions.

It is these questions which ought strongly to warn our young singers not to sacrifice themselves to any unsingable shouting opera, but to preserve their voice, to watch over it and to guard it against excessive, continuous, frequently the opposite of artistic exertions, in a word, thus at the same time renouncing, as Jenny Lind and Henrietta Sontag always do, the *so-called* singing effects, and the modern stage-shouting, which have arisen among other things from the most over-loaded and the most inconsiderate instrumentation. Then they also would, as was formerly the case, remain available for the opera from ten to twenty years, and not have to lament after a few years (exceptions are few) over an infirm broken voice and lost health.

Jenny Lind and Henrietta Sontag present themselves as the most beautiful pattern to our talented and aspiring young singers. They must be regarded as marvellous phenomena, especially in our time, in which the modern singing tendency has got into such sad by-ways, having strayed for many causes, the removal of which would be a hard task, from the old schools of Pistochi, Porpora, and Bernacchi, which were so fruitful in splendid results. The high beauty of their singing, united with their noble, chaste, healthy voice, as it is perhaps at present to be found with them only—what could more impressively direct attention to the present pernicious tendency *of the opera*?

The theatres are searching for acting Tenors? Let them consider: Tenors who are still in voice, cannot *act*, and Tenors who at last are able to act, are then no longer in voice, because they have generally studied too little or

not correctly. For if the voice is not rightly and well trained, then it is exactly the German comic operas which first of all lead to the loss of the voice and especially the frail and sensitive German Tenor-voice.

Here I take the opportunity to refer to the common prejudice : " Tenors ought to force up the chest-voice as far as possible"—and that this were the best.—There are very few cases where such Tenors have not to pay for this mistake with the quickest loss of voice and of health. Besides, a shaded singing beginning from the *pianissimo*, becomes thereby an impossibility, and strained and forced sounds always will remain *unnatural*, even if great and over-exerted strength were occasionally to produce in the opera a passing effect.—Just as indispensable as the use of the Falsetto is to the Soprano, so indispensable is the development of the Falsetto and the possible leading down of it as far as the chest-register to the Tenor, who wishes to preserve his voice and not to shout it away in high notes, to whom *piano* must always be at command, and who must acquire the necessary flexibility and ease as well as elegance and refinement. The usual " But" answered here, that the Falsetto has too glaring a diversity of sound with the chest-voice, and is much inferior to it in strength—is merely the consequence of its not being developed continuously and carefully enough, and of its not being almost imperceptibly joined with the chest-voice by bringing in mixed tones.

The French, Spaniards, Portuguese, even the Russians, English, Swedes try to compose things that are adapted to the voice, and also endeavour to make on all sides concessions to the singer in smaller songs, in order that they and the public may have unalloyed pleasure. It is only our clumsy Germans who believe they possess the privilege of being allowed to compose at random, without any further consideration whatever, except that pain *howls deep* in the Minor—and pleasure *shouts high up* in the Major.

Shall we not read shortly an " *Address of young singers to several Composers of Germany*," as follows :—

" Liberty of thought—Liberty of composition—Liberty of the opera—but no destruction of the throats.—Take notice then that we hereby protest solemnly against all operas that are opposed to the singing regulations, since you can in no wise compensate us for the loss of our voices, but after the quickest possible wearing out of our talent, you are always looking for new ones, which you mean to treat in precisely the same manner. First learn to know what

singing is, or rather: learn yourselves to sing, as your predecessors have done and Italian composers are doing still—and then come back."

"What a pedantic hallooing over Germany which cannot sing?—Where do people sing most? In Germany I believe. Is not singing cultivated even in schools already? And what opportunities are not offered by the innumerable Choral Unions and Societies, and Singing Academies?"

That is the very misfortune, which ought to have full light thrown upon it. How many hopeful voices do these Institutions carry annually to the grave? Who then is it that sing in the schools? Boys and girls from 13 to 15 years of age. But boys ought to stop singing when their voices are beginning to change, and girls ought not to sing at all in these years, if it were only for physical reasons.

And *who* are the teachers that cultivate singing here? These scribbling and over-clever times of ours inundate our Ministries and Parliaments with innumerable petitions and proposals, but no philanthropist, no friend of music, no lover of singing has yet come forward to explain and prove to the Ministries of culture of the whole of Germany, that especially in the public schools, because of the singing instruction and nuisance taking place there, the most beautiful voices and gifts are one and all killed in the bud. The voices of the girls may, it is true, be artistically exercised, carefully awakened, and made flexible and musical, but only in the use of the Mezza-voce, and only until their development,—that is—up to the 13th year, or some months more or less. But since this has to be done with great experience, tact, special knowledge and circumspection—where shall the professors of singing with these qualifications come from, and who shall pay them the golden honorariums for it? Away then with the whole nuisance of making children sing,—away then with this philanthropic abortion and music-folly of our unreasonable times! Can such an immature, impure, and unsuccessful children's screaming or throat-squeaking without any artistic cultivation, superintendence, and direction, indemnify anybody for the certain loss of the voice afterwards, and hoarseness and destruction of the organ?

Who is it that presses, squeezes, shouts with throat- palate- and nose-notes over there in the Choral Unions and Academies? It is the Tenors who exert themselves and sacrifice their voice, which is entirely destitute of tone-training (which ought to have been acquired first), to many, frequently unmelodious, voice-destroying four-part songs by one or another celebrated composer.—Who is the Lady that sung the Solo yonder in the Singing Academy? This

girl only a year ago had still a beautiful, fresh sonorous voice, but she has lost much already, though she is but twenty; for she forces or presses now with the use of the chest-sounds as far as A *in alt*, nothing having been done for the equalizing of the voice-register and the use of the Falsetto, and no expert surveillance over her having been exercised by the superintendent. But he has often enough called out: "Only strong, powerful! *con espressione!*" Whilst in Italy the very street boys sing with open throats and often with great effect their singable national airs in their language, which is so well adapted for singing, our northern throat-voices, to which, in addition, the German language opposes great difficulties, are sacrificed in the schools and musical societies with the utmost cold bloodedness and self-content, because of the neglect of every artistic preparatory training, by means of which alone the voices can be preserved and cultivated.

Who is at the head of these Institutions?—Musicians to whom real training in singing is unknown—not teachers of singing, who know how to combine a correct training with practical accomplishments. Their whole teaching consists at the most in exercises in sounding the correct notes, or in time-keeping. It is true these musicians say: "Those that come to my Academy must already be able to sing." What may that mean? Where are they to learn it? And if you were by chance successful in really getting a few incautious yet pretty well trained and educated singers for your Singing Academy—does not the *preservation* of the voices already require the greatest care and attention? Do you bestow these on them? Have you the necessary acquirements to do it? Must not, for instance, these few trained voices sing by the side of singers so ill-trained that they cannot possibly have a clear and correct intonation? Then what are these Institutions—do they improve, or do they destroy the voices? "They make musical!"—A fine consolation for lost voices!—"They teach to get the notes and to sing at sight!" A sweet comfort for a well developed voicelessness!

A Singing-Master that has no firm and decided judgment, that constantly wavers on this and on that side, and consequently contradicts himself in every lesson, and allows himself to be influenced by crooked, untenable views of other people—who cannot recognise at once the capability, nature of the voice, and condition of the pupil, who cannot find the suitable means to remove from it in the shortest possible manner anything wrong or unnatural, and pursue the nearest road to a beautiful end—but without capricious and boasting theories of perfection—; who on the contrary doubts, scolds, hurts the feelings, offends, crushes instead of encouraging, acknowledges nothing instead of approving

kindly what is right, rides the high horse instead of assisting kindly, and bestows at another time as unbounded praise as he does blame, and in this and similar ways kills the time — such a one may have stored up ever so much real knowledge, yet his successes will all the same remain far behind expectation. Firmness, decision, energy, and a sharp, fine glance, the art to speak neither one word too much nor one too little, to be quite clear of one's facts, and to raise with constant considerate kindness the courage and the self-confidence of the pupil—this above all things is necessary to be a good teacher of singing and of the piano.

"My Singers are being trained for the public—for the theatre, consequently they must sing loud, study much, produce the tone with force and with much expenditure of breath—how else can they produce effect?"

Answer. What effect do they produce then? To my knowledge there is no other effect with such ones, than that at the end of one or two years they dissappear without a trace, while at the beginning they are applauded because they are young, pretty, and new, and have voice, and because the public is willing to encourage them.

"From among twenty remarkable voices the Singing-master succeeds in bringing to moderately good purpose only one. Hence the decay of the singing-art."

Answer. Keeping away accidental disorders or illness, all voices gain quality up to about the twenty-fourth year. It is the fault of the Singing-masters alone that the case is otherwise.

"Many voices get a sharpness in the tone which is the harbinger of their disappearance."

Answer. All voices are and remain more or less soft if the tone-formation is the *right* one.

"Not to sing with forced voice, but with a natural and easy intonation and *piano* and *pianissimo*—this privilege has been granted by the public only to Henrietta Sontag and to Jenny Lind, and their celebrated names are a pledge for approbation."

Answer. If it were not right, not real, not beautiful, how should they have obtained these celebrated *names?*

"Our Singers do also try *piano* and *pianissimo* and are unable to produce any effect with it, as is to be seen every day."

Answer. Indeed, I can well believe that: such a *piano* as forced voices with faulty intonation and too great a use of breath are producing, that which modestly

remains sticking in the throat and even deeper—this I certainly did not mean —but instead of that I mean *the three trifles from the Ninth Chapter.*

"Nor is *piano* given to all voices, and many of them, do what you may, are not suited for it."

Answer. What a flat, untenable excuse! There we see again the failing of our times: *the thing is sought outside one's self, not within one's self,* and in this, and only in this, the inventive power of our time is most astonishing. If the wrongly treated voices are after some time losing again, instead of gaining —then suddenly the fault lies in the malformation of the throat, and in the neglect of the London throat brushes. If voices so badly trained are no longer able to bring out *piano,* then it is because of the awkwardness of nature, and because of the malformation of the organs necessary for it. If they are able to produce only a ridiculous *piano,* then it is the fault of the ill-formed uvula, and the existence of too many glands. If the tired and worn-out voice can only grunt and groan several times a month and has no tone, then it is because of the change in the weather and other atmospheric reasons. If screeching, disagreeable sounds offend the ear—caused by a too broadly drawn position of the mouth, then the body of tone goes crooked instead of straight. If the poor forced tenor-voice is only able yet to produce, even with much breath, blunt, hollow, veiled and disagreeable sounds, then it is called a necessary crisis, several of which cruel nature requires in the course of training. If at last the chest-tones, tortured by continued and forced prolongation, turn into calves' and geese's sounds, or into street-boys' sounds, and when the instructors at last observe it—at once again a crisis! Alas, and not one of them thinks of the *three trifles!*

But what is it then that causes the failure of our singing teachers, several of whom are yet musical and possess a fine ear, feeling and training, and have studied Singing-schools, and besides show the most zealous endeavour to act correctly? It is precisely the tone-training, which cannot be learned from books nor of itself—only from *verbal tradition.* A clear body of tone, an easy, free, and natural intonation– the sending forward of the tone, the striking of it on the palate above the upper row of teeth — no waste of breath — the regulation of the speaking-sounds—the equalization of the register—the purification and equalizing of the voice—and many other things—oh yes, all that sounds very nice:—but to teach all this in the shortest manner, without wearing out the voice, without turning off from the right way, and to learn to find out with one's ear whether the young singer does it correctly *now,*

or what may be wanting still and in what manner that is to be obtained, etc.—of that oune mst be a *witness*—often, very often.

Madame Schroeder-Devrient, who, as a young singer that had already obtained renown, came from Vienna to Dresden, and who also wanted the true foundation of singing, wondered not a little when Mieksch drew her attention to this want. Thereupon she went with Mieksch through her first tone-training, and I am sure she will well remember yet the old master and the extraordinary experience he had in it. Mieksch learned it from Caselli, the pupil of Bernacchi. As a young Tenor he had just been singing with great acclamation in a Concert in the Hôtel de Pologne in Dresden, when he got himself introduced to Caselli, who had just entered, expecting to receive Caselli's homage also. The latter however did not pay hômage, but assured him frankly that the style of his singing was wrong, and that his voice, with such misuse and without undergoing the right tone-training, would succumb within a year. After a great and hard struggle, young Mieksch renounced further public acclamations and studied tone-training under Caselli, diligently and continuously after having first allowed his forced voice to rest for some time.

Should it happen, however, that some singing-masters were accidentally and with the assistance of a fine singing instinct, to find out pretty correctly the *first studies*, and if they were to meet with a voice of beautiful and rare disposition, easy to lead and to form, then these studies are continued with altogether insufficient perseverance, perhaps only a few weeks or months, instead of, according to organisation, a year or longer still. Richard Wagner feels that very well. "*Why then write operas for singing, when we have no longer any Singers, male or female?*"

Since the time that modern progress has allowed the possession of the three trifles to the past only, and instead of them proclaimed "Courage, power, spirit"—two singing-demons have been wandering over the world. They go hand in hand, destroy every voice, rend every educated ear, and let nothing remain but—the empty opera-houses. One of these demons is what I have censured often already, far too much *waste of breath*. Beautiful voices must almost always practise with full sail up to shouting, and, in addition to that, loud sobbing also, and clumsy drawing of breath, and that only just when the tone ought to be already sounding? And if with such tone-training, which must enervate the voice-ligaments in the quickest possible manner, everything else were right, and with this could be right—this one thing is quite sufficient to destroy every hope in the bud. But to make quite sure that the voice—even the male voice—

which can withstand much more ill than the female voice, which is quickly driven to cutting sharpness or pressed back into the throat—shall be quickly destroyed, and by no means come to a beautiful and natural development—there is lurking already the other demon, rejoicing over the fruitful exertions of the first one, in order to kill what remains, at the performance of singing pieces executed on such a basis. This is the most reckless forcing up of single tones to the utmost boundary, up to the highest exhaustion—the destruction of every voice foundation. The poor singer presses, blares, shakes the inmost marrow of the voice, in order that the two agents "courage and power," may be sure to come to the highest formation. But now there is still wanting the "spirit," the "execution with light and shade." But this comes of itself in a Romance. The unfortunate, misled singer, who has to seek the execution in such operations, lays himself with such a force on certain tones, and whole strophes, and this in his best tone-register (the other registers no longer allow it), that the next ones of necessity must step back powerless into the throat, and the beautiful, youthful, fresh tenor or bass voice ends in exhausted, groaning speaking-sounds.—The romance is at an end now, and certainly courage, power, and spirit worked unitedly:—the problem is solved the more beautifully, because a rough accompaniment did perhaps still support the thing strikingly, bringing it to a general effectiveness.

With such and similar proceedings, with which I must specially reckon the constant sustaining of the tones as far as the Forte, the voice is then to come out quickly, to spread, to animate, to embellish itself? What unspoilt ear can still endure this tone-training torture, such singing performance? These then are the modern singing contributions to the embellishment of art, to the ennobling of taste, and to the refinement of feeling? Away with these demons! If my weak pen were able to contribute something to bring such singing-masters to their senses and to save, were it but some of our beautiful voices, then I should hold my mission—the purpose of my book, in regard to singing, as fulfilled.

Many prejudices I have already fought against with seriousness, with jest—with success, without success. One thing is very obstinate, and has pursued me for years incessantly. A piano-player with a stiff touch, a touch proceeding from the arm, forced, and disagreeable, plays much, but in a manner decidedly ungraceful and vulgar. He feels this himself, and the playing of my pupils pleases him better. He wants me to transform his playing according to this better manner—but at the same time he wants to go on striking, pushing, forcing and making music according to his own way, only, as we said, everything shall

improve and the finish become greater. If this player is not above twenty-five years of age, something can be done for improving his touch, and also for improving his playing, but only by putting aside every one of his accustomed music-pieces, and substituting small, easy exercises, which he must play diligently, and daily quite gently with loose fingers, and without permitting to the arm the very least influence in it. Else it is a hopeless case. Where are we to begin if he does not want to lay the foundation for improvement? How am I to build a roof, when the pillars do not rest on a firm foundation? I have already treated this subject on manifold occasions orally and in writing, but the thing happens again and again, and specially also with *Lady-singers*. A girl of eighteen comes to me—she has heard of the good tone-training of my singers, and she wishes to acquire it herself also. To let me hear her voice she chooses the "Erlking" by Schubert, this dangerous piece, which can mislead even accomplished singers to horrible vagaries. Heavens, what must I hear? With the remnant of a beautiful, youthful voice, whose registers have already been torn and driven asunder, she shouts this Erlking with groaning and sobbing, with a forced chest-voice, and many of the most modern singing follies, but nevertheless with dramatic perception. This piercing voice forced to the very utmost, filled me not only with horror, but also with pity at such splendid depth of tone and such unnaturalness. At the end of it her voice succumbed to the exertion, and she only groaned and croaked still hoarsely and without tone. But by this performance she had frequently in company made effect and moved her hearers to tears—it was her favourite piece. Let us leave such company—this sad amateurism which is getting so obtrusive everywhere. The girl is only eighteen years old, would it not be possible to save her? I try by means of gentle study, from the medium register to raise the voice up again by degrees, according to my method as already described. She conceives very well, and her pliant nature already awakens hope after six lessons; the Falsetto made an appearance already, and the solmization brought out again her voice, which had been pressed back into the throat by senseless exertions, a better intonation began to develope itself, and the chest-register returned within its natural boundaries. Then she came and declared, with the support of her mother, that she did intend to continue studying in this manner, but at the same time she could not give up her Erlking, which had been so cleverly conceived by her, and which produced such effects. She came back a few times more,—*my ear found it out already*, everything was destroyed again. A few months longer, and she had sacrificed her entire voice to this single Erlking. When one is so young, *one* is already quite enough. What a price for an Erlking? The old great singing-master Mieksch of Dresden—except Rossini the last celebrated representative of the old school—has often warned me not to

express great and sure hope to such destroyed and worn out voices as already have to fight with enervated vocal cords, even if youthfulness were in their favour—for thorough help were seldom still possible. It is further an unfortunate circumstance that such an over-strained strong voice must first of all lose this dazzling strength, if there can be any question about *rightly studying*, and it is impossible to know, whether the voice, after the chest register has been once brought back to its limits, can make its appearance again as strong and at the same time as beautiful. Let no musician, be he ever so talented and well educated, make himself a teacher of singing, if he cannot unite with great firmness in character patience, perseverance, and the quality of self-sacrifice—else he may experience little pleasure and little thanks. Even if the Erlking does not interfere—every voice, not to count innumerable disturbances from without, *offers new and different difficulties.*

Teachers of singing! One word to many of you concerning your accompaniment to the studies, exercises and scales, etc., of your pupils. You accompany quite as regardlessly as if you were to enter into combat for life and death with the voices of your singers! Your Soprano singer is meant to fall in at the beginning of the lesson quite *piano* at F, on the first space of the treble stave without the use of any breath whatever, and to move herself from thence a fifth or a sixth up and back again, and guide and draw her voice forward by a gentle solmisation, and you make a noise with it, and strike upon the keys as if you had to accompany big drums and trumpets! Do you not feel then that you thereby lead your pupils to forcing, shouting, and everything that is ungraceful? And with such a din, such inappropriate exertion of power which is allied also with a sharp, pungent, restless touch, and very often with a constant tearing of the Chords, how can you possibly observe the tender operations of the singing-throat? Must I still explain what a number of disadvantages must be the result of an ungraceful rough accompaniment on the endeavour *to sing beautifully and well*? Are you not of opinion that a fine, charming, but of course at the same time decided, and firm accompaniment encourages and supports the singer, improves and possibly also excites her enthusiasm? Is it not your business generally to try and train in every way your pupils' feeling for the right, the true, and the beautiful? What is the eighteen years' old girl to think of *your* "feeling," of *your* "education," if you are drumming and striking as if you were a member of the piano-fury club? And how do you accompany the Song, the Air? If for example the singer sings softly, and wishes people to hear a fine artistic shading, you make

use of that moment *to make people hear* YOU, and to annoy the singer and the audience with a rough artistic shading in a hard and vulgar touch? A singing-master that does not sedulously endeavour to have a good and gentle touch on the piano, and does not always pay attention to himself, is wanting in the very first fundamental condition—and the want of the three trifles stands in the closest connection with this.

Strange! A well-known singing-master has just sent me as a contribution for my meditations on singing his "Confession of Faith." Since it does not take much space, and is drawn up clearly, it shall follow here, although I do not wish to be answerable for everything in it. The reader will agree with me: he should have named at least Rossini as the second living composer, and he should have given the fourth only to be guessed! Was his reason for not naming Rossini perhaps this—that the Confession might be as short as possible? Or because Rossini has occupied himself for some years exclusively with the training of the Countess Orsini, who is at present producing universal rapture in Florence with her singing, and is called a second Lind, but to whom the modern Italian, Parisian, and German singing art has remained totally unknown?

"Thousands of beautiful voices are treated, a thousand teachers of singing are at work daily in Europe, one singing-school after another makes its appearance—one hundred Solfeggi after another are printed — Conservatories for singing have been and continue to be established — great hopes are roused, splendid promises are made. Where are the results? Where are the singers, male and female? Where are the ripe fruits? I see none, and hear of none, I see only empty opera-houses and desolate concert-rooms.

"With undaunted frankness I hereby confess that, for thirty years until this day, in no town, in no country, in no singing-institution, in no conservatory, however often I have been present while instruction was given, however much I have heard singing, have I found one master or mistress that proceeded on the right basis, on which alone *sure, beautiful and lasting results can be expected.*

"What is the use of scales and solfeggi, what is the use of the five vowels, of singing scales—of sustaining sounds on A—of singing staccato, of singing legato—what is the use of the dull, of the clear display of tone,—what is the use of the stately, mysterious, braggart singing affectation — what is the use even of solmisation—what is the use of all that is right *in itself*, if one do not set out from the right basis in dealing with the tender and so easily destroyed voice, if one do not begin at the beginning? One *ought to*, and one *can* begin only

by teaching a natural, easy, free intonation of the sounds without any visible and audible use of breath whatsoever—without any exertion whatsoever. With this must be united a careful Solmization, but absolutely no sustaining of sounds yet, which far too easily makes the voice heavy, lazy, and intractable. And this is either not done, or not done long enough, continuously enough, carefully enough. What happens instead?

"The beautiful organs are cracked and destroyed at once in the first three to four months by forced breathing, by pressing out and disagreeable urging of the sound, by singing far too strongly, even by shouting and roaring with waste of breath and exertion of strength, in so nasty and frightful a manner that the cultured ear must turn away with horror.

"Every one is by this time getting ready and cutting his quill against such an unheard-of confession. Gently, Sirs! There are three exceptions to this. The *first* is the aged teacher of Jenny Lind in Stockholm, whom I know, not indeed personally, but by his deeds. All singers coming from him have the right tone-training, and have laid the right foundation for beautiful and true singing, and for the preservation of it. That everything has been and is destroyed again, when German singing-masters have managed and do manage the further training—that is not my fault. The *second* one was Mieksch of Dresden, who some years ago, as he lay on his sick bed shortly before his death, in his eightieth year, sang to me the Scale with charming elegance, clear as bells, without the least exertion and without any audible use of breath.

"And the *third* one I shall not name—that everyone of you may believe himself to be the THIRD one, and console himself with that. But do not, I beseech you, contradict me with speeches and insults, with aestheticising, with bragging fine words, but—*with deeds.*—Farewell."

CHAPTER XI.

Hans Hasty.

In order to combat common prejudices in a short and entertaining way, to correct wrong views, to chastise sloth, to oppose malicious distortions of sound and well-tested views on teaching, to scourge gainsaying stupidity, and to continue at the same time with my method :—I bring my readers again into my knocked-about music life, and I pray them to accompany me,—this time to a—

MUSICAL TEA PARTY AT HANS HASTY'S.

PERSONS.

HANS HASTY, *jovial and stupid—comes of an old musical family.*
MRS. HASTY, *forward, envious, and spiteful.*
LIZZIE, their Daughter, aged 13, *dull—but talkative.*
SCHAEFER, her Piano Teacher, *takes very much trouble; he enters at a later stage.*
THAT, Teacher of the Piano, *very very rough.*
EMMA, his Daughter, Pianist, *quiet and musical.*

Mrs. Hasty (*to That*). This then is your daughter Emma, who is to give a concert to-morrow? She is said to have less talent than your eldest daughter. *With her everything came of itself.*

That. You must ask my eldest daughter herself about that. Till now I have been of opinion that each of them played right, each of them musically, each of them perhaps beautifully, and yet each of them differently: this is the triumph of musical education. Moreover, this comparative criticism has got too stale already! Pray, madam, what else have you on your mind?

Mrs. H. Has this one here also not been sent to school by you? The eldest one, I know, could in her fourteenth year neither read nor write!

That. My daughters have always a special tutor, with whom I teach conjointly, so that even with fewer lessons a-day their *scientific* may keep equal pace with their *artistic* culture, and also time be left for walking about in open nature and for strengthening their bodies, whilst other children have to sweat nine hours a-day on the benches in the schools and institutions—and have to pay for this with the loss of their health and of a joyous youth.

Mrs. H. Oh, come now, we know it well, Sir! Your children have to *play the whole day*—

That. Not the night too? You wish, perhaps, to seek an explanation of their art by that? I really wonder, madam, that you did not also hear of the latter, seeing that you have been informed of so many other bad things about me and my daughters!

Mrs. H. (*Dismissing the point—suddenly*). How old is your Emma *really?*

That. Really she is sixteen years and seven weeks.

Mrs. H. Does she speak French?

That. Oui, elle parle français—and also in sounds—a language understood throughout the whole world.

Mrs. H. But she is so quiet;—perhaps she does not like playing?

That. You have given her no opportunity yet to speak—forward she is not. For the rest, she has very much liked to play these two years.

Mrs. H. (*Quickly*). Well, look now, before that you have forced her after all then?

That. It is true that before, in her natural development, to which vanity and other impure motives were strangers, she played, or rather engaged in more serious studies, more from obedience and custom. Does your thirteen-year-old daughter engage in earnest studies also, always unasked? Or does she go to school every day with pleasure? Or does she always knit, without being reminded of it? Or—

Mrs. H. (*Interrupting*). I see, you are enamoured with your daughters! But yet you are said to be so horribly severe and cruel in the musical training of your children—or rather, you are said to be always so.

That. Do you mean that I am so *from love?* Or have you come to that conclusion, because they are artists—or because they look so blooming and healthy—or because they can write so nice letters—or because they have not become distorted by embroidering—or because they are so harmless, natural, and modest?—Or—

Mrs. H. (*Irritably*). Let us leave that! But one good piece of advice I will

give you: do not tax the strength of your Emma too much, as, I am sorry to say, you have done with the eldest one too.

That. If that is so, madam—she has thriven at least very well with it.

Mrs. H. (*Hotly.*) But she would thrive better still—

That. If she did not play at all:—I can scarcely know that, and I have been told so already yesterday. Well, I hope you will in the meantime be content with Emma as she is!

Mrs. H. People like you are absolutely deaf to advice.

That. As a teacher, I gave my whole soul to my subject, and every day I counselled with myself upon the education of my daughters and of other pupils that I have trained to be artists—and that with some ability.

Mrs. H. (*Not heeding—turning to Emma).* Are not your fingers sore in playing so difficult things?

That. Only if I should strike her on them; but I don't do that.

(Emma looks at the parrot, which hangs in the room, and strokes the large bull-dog.)

Hans Hasty. (*Entering with his daughter Lizzie*). Mr. That, you will have the kindness then to watch our Lizzie's playing on the piano to-day and tell us whether we shall continue in that way? Ay, ay, music is an old heirloom in our family, I must say: my wife also in her youth has strummed a little, and I—I have played the violin. My teacher in the High School, it is true, told me that I had no taste, no ear, and no sense of time, and that I scraped too much.

That. Most extraordinary! He must have been mistaken!

Hans H. But I have always been dreadfully fond of music. My father and my grandfather have on our property even often played the organ in the church for the schoolmaster, and the people knew at once when they played. My father has related that to me many a time at dinner—ha, ha, that was really funny.

That. Extraordinary!

Hans H. Well, yes, to come back upon my fiddle, I left it alone after a twelvemonth, because I found it myself rather scrapy.

That. Extraordinary! Then your ear and your feeling had been further developed by this time.

Hans H. When I afterwards took a civil appointment, my wife said to me: "Husband, it is really a pity about your violin;" then I got it strung again, and took a teacher,—it is just as if it were to-day.

That. (*With eyes on the floor—the servant brings in ice*). That is very extraordinary.

Hans H. But the town-piper also said, that in duets it was impossible to get on with me.

That. Extraordinary! Then I suppose you played only solos? But as to your daughter! Would you play something to me, Miss Lizzie?

Mrs. H. (*Condescendingly and gently*). Yes, but she is a little frightened, and is ashamed before your Emma.

Emma. You need not be so, indeed.

Mrs. H. Fetch then "Les Graces" by Herz, and the "Tremolo" by Rosellen.

Lizzie. But, mamma, that by Herz *I have forgotten*, and the Tremolo *I cannot play yet.* That is always the way with me. Mr. Schaefer says I should console myself, it was the same with his other pupils—it would be sure *to break out at last!* But Mr. Schaefer is very *strict!* Are you as strict, Mr. That?

Mrs. H. You have already heard me say—Mr That is the strictest of all—(*jocosely*) but he denies it.

That. One thing you must grant me, madam: all my pupils invariably look forward with pleasure to my lessons, and that must always be so, because the progress is always visible and pleasant, and everything is developed naturally without forcing.

Mrs. H. (*Less spiteful.*) We shall not investigate that point further. How were it possible for your daughters to execute so many pieces, and that, moreover, by heart, if they had not to play the whole day, and you were not so cruel, while my Lizzie cannot get through *one without sticking?*

That. Permit me—with you it is Schaefer's f—

Mrs. H. No, no—you must excuse me, Sir, we allow no slur to be cast on our Mr. Schaefer, he is very particular and untiring—

That. This is not the only thing required, but—

Hans H. It is really monstrous, upon my honour; every talented person runs to you—so that it is easy enough to teach!—Ha! ha! Do you observe that my grandfather played the organ? Now, Lizzie, sit down and play!

(It is the Cavatina from the *Pirata* with variations. The introduction begins with E flat unisono. Lizzie takes unisono E natural, and in the bass moreover misses it, and cries out, "Mamma, did I not tell you—I have forgotten it!" Mr. Schaefer comes in—runs up to her, and puts her fingers on E flat.)

Schaefer. I beg your pardon, Mr. That, I just want to set her a-going. To play before such connoisseurs makes her a little confused; her eyes are getting quite dim. Are there not three flats marked, Lizzie?

Hans H. Only courage!—Oho, Lizzie cannot get at the pedal, the bull-dog is lying in front of it. John, take him out!

(After the removal of the bull-dog, Lizzie plays to the fourth bar, when she takes C sharp instead of C natural, and stops.)

Mrs. H. Well, begin once more; Mr. That likes to hear these things—he has experienced all that with his children already!

(Lizzie begins at the beginning, and gets as far as the eighth bar, when she stops again.)

Schaefer. Don't disgrace me! Well, begin once more, my dear Lizzie—you did it pretty well a week ago.

(Lizzie begins anew, and plays, or strums rather, as far as the eighteenth bar. But now all is at an end, and she wants to rise.)

That. Omit the introduction—it is too difficult. Begin at once with the Theme.

Mrs. H. Oh yes - the beautiful Theme!

Hans H. (*To his Wife.*) We will go and leave those gentlemen alone. We will speak further about that, gentlemen, over a cup of tea.

(Lizzie refuses to play.)

That. Mr. Schaefer, ask Lizzie to play me some scales, some chords, some fingering exercises, or an easy dance, *without notes!*

Schaefer. Such things she has not in her fingers. You see, I always take one piece after another, but I have each one played as well as possible. I also repeat the difficult parts, I write the correct fingering above it, and see strictly that she does not take a wrong one—altogether I give myself much trouble and get quite hot by doing so. Lizzie is also obedient, and practises her pieces every day for two hours—but—but!

(Lizzie retires to a distance with Emma.)

That. With the best intentions, you will not succeed, Mr. Schaefer. Even if your Lizzie is only required to play as an amateur, and there is nothing higher aimed at, for which her talents besides would not be sufficient,—you must nevertheless first of all have some care to produce a right tone, and do away with the robin redbreast tapping; you must try thereafter by mechanical exercises of all kinds, playing of scales, etc., to give her hands and fingers such readiness, firmness, and security, that she may be able to master her pieces at least tolerably with some degree of expressive tone and passable touch. You are no less mistaken in the choice of the pieces, which are by far too difficult—a mistake of most teachers, even up to the farthest advanced pupils. The pieces that are to be performed must always be below the mechanical powers of the pupil, since otherwise mere fighting with the difficulties ever deprives the child of all confidence for the execution, and produces stammering, sticking, indistinctness—nothing but unseemly results. Studies, exercises, etc., are especially to develop the mechanism, but not ordinary pieces (least of all, pieces by certain celebrated composers, who, it may be, do not even write so as to be adapted to the piano, or at least have in view first of all more the music than the player) in higher regions perhaps even of Beethoven, which is the most to be doubted. In this way lay first of all a mechanical foundation—remember the readiness and rapidity of the fingers, the strengthening of them, and the touch in some degree at least, and at the same time continue always with the learning of easy pieces by Hünten, Burgmüller, etc.; this must

always lead to some result without worrying yourself, the child, and the parents, and embittering piano-playing. If you wish to produce by means of the study of ordinary pieces, and above all without the most careful selection, the mechanical readiness, which surely is indispensable for execution, you might require much time, deprive the pupil of every pleasure and interest in it, and this young girl Lizzie might far sooner get a husband than the satisfaction of executing a piece that she and others could enjoy. It will not do without a gradual development and training, without plan, reflection, meditation, speculation—*without method.* How can it come to anything if the child while playing has to fight at one and the same time with the touch, with the time, with the division, with the fingers, with the fingering, with the perfect knowledge of the notes (mistaking the bass notes for the treble notes) ? And what a torment ? What a loss of time *without result ?*

(Schaefer has listened full of confidence, and a light seemed to have dawned on him. That and Schaefer go to tea.)

Mrs. H. Well, gentlemen, have you come to an understanding ? Is Lizzie not an obedient child ? She has to practise every day for two hours—if she is ever so tired. Are we to continue in that way, Mr. That ?

Schaefer. Mr. That has drawn my attention to several things, which I shall make use of.

That. They were a few trifles.

Hans H. I hope that after tea Miss Emma will also play us a small piece.

Emma. The piano is very much out of tune, several keys are dumb, the pitch is flat, and the instrument altogether unsuitable to execute anything on it successfully.

Hans H. Now, Miss Emma, I must beg your pardon : when we got the piano, sixteen years ago, it was praised by everybody as a capital piano. We made a good bargain at that time—for we bought it from our neighbour, who had for some years worked it nicely into playing order. Mr. Schaefer can confirm to you all I have said.

(Emma nods doubtfully, and looks at Schaefer suspiciously.)

Hans H. (*Continues.*) My violin has certainly also improved since the time I spoke of, which is now more than twenty years ago. If Lizzie were a boy, upon my honour, she would have to learn the violin, so that it might remain in the family ! Ha, ha, ha !

That. That would be extraordinary.

(That wishes to take leave with his daughter.)

Mrs. H. (*Condescendingly.*) We hope to see you soon again, and then Lizzie shall play to you the Tremolo by Rosellen ; but Miss Emma must also play a small piece then.

That. You are extraordinarily kind.

(That and his daughter make their bow.)

I have just got an invitation from Mr. Gold, the banker: we are to hear the great celebrated pianist Forte; and, alas! there is to be singing. We are quite delighted in anticipation.

CHAPTER XII.

Aphorisms concerning Piano-playing.

My daughters play compositions by all great composers, and also the better class of drawing-room music. Every one-sidedness is detrimental to art. It is just as wrong to play *only* Beethoven, as to play *nothing* by him; or *nothing but* classical or *only* drawing-room music. If the teacher chooses only the former for study, then a good technique, a tolerably sound play, intelligence, and knowledge, are sufficient to succeed in obtaining an execution that is for the most part satisfactory. The music mostly indemnifies for a style of playing that is, according to circumstances, dry, cold, and too little or not finely shaded, for an indifferent or negligent touch, and other defects. Even a pretty good player, from the interest he bestows principally upon the composition, is often drawn away from a thoroughly correct and fine execution by the endeavour to raise the composition by the most beautiful representation possible, and to give it with the best effect. And *enthusiasm* at playing of classical music, if it is not hollow affectation, but a high revelation of the artistic nature, can take place only when the *artist*, and not the *pupil*, is in question. Therefore with more advanced pupils I take in hand, for example, at the same time with a Sonata by Beethoven, a Notturno or a Waltz by Chopin, and a piece by St. Heller or Schulhoff, Henselt, Carl Mayer, etc. Elegance, smoothness, certain coquetries, neatness, purity, shadings of any and of special kinds—*the art of fine shading* one must not wish to cultivate on a Sonata by Beethoven: much better opportunity to do this is offered by

the last mentioned pieces, etc. But variety also entertains the player much more, it fixes his attention, does not tire him so easily, guards him against negligences, furthers consciousness of art, and at last it surprises him agreeably if he is able to play at one and the same time three pieces so different in kind.

" Execution cannot be taught—it must come of itself ! "

When is it to come then ?—When the stiff fingers are from fifty to sixty years old — and the execution remains fixed in them—so that nobody gets to hear anything ?—what a worn-out idea ! Just let us consider some of those with whom execution came of itself. X plays in finished and correct style, but his execution remains inartistic, cold, monotonous, he has too pedantic a care for the mechanism and the strictest time-keeping, he ventures on no *pp*, he has too little tone and shading in the *piano*, and plays the *forte* too strong without consideration for the instrument. His *crescendi* and *diminuendi* are inappropriate, rough and often introduced in unsuitable places, and — his *retardandi ?* Oh, they are very tiresome ! " But Miss Z, she plays differently and more beautifully ! " She plays differently—but whether more beautifully—? Do you like this violet-blue loveliness—this sickly paleness—this painted lie at the expense of every truth of character ? This affected and sweetly languishing manner, this *rubato* and tearing of musical phrases, this want of time-keeping,—this empty rubbish of feeling ? Talent they both have— but *the execution* was left to develop *of its own accord.* Both would have become very good players—but now they have even lost the sense for idealistic aspiration, that moves within the limits of beauty, truth and naturalness. If the pupils are left to themselves, they imitate easily and cleverly the inappropriate, the wrong things—but the appropriate, the right things, with difficulty and certainly with awkwardness. The little fellow that can scarcely speak already repeats a bad word, a slang word at once, and much more easily than a good one, that designates something noble. What teacher is there that has not already been surprised with that, and what old aunt has not already had occasion to laugh about it ! " One's own way of feeling must not be thrust upon others ! " That is not at all necessary—but one must be able to awaken the feeling of others, to guide it, and to form it without infringing upon their individual way of feeling, if it is not clearly on a wrong road, without suppressing or perhaps even destroying it. Who is there that has not already heard Virtuosi and Singers that are in other respects to

outward appearance very musical, whose manner of feeling is either ridiculous or afflicting?

It is admitted among other things that I have succeeded, more or less, with all my pupils, in producing a beautiful touch. You wish to possess the exercises necessary for that end? Thereby however not much is gained yet, what it depends on is *how* and *when* they are employed, and that, during the playing of other studies and pieces, the closest supervision must not be wanting, and that nothing must be given to be practised and played alone, that endangers again the good touch which is not yet firmly enough established, and that always destroys again what has been built up in the lessons. As has been said, it does not depend on practising, on much practising,—merely on *right* practising, and on seeing that the pupil does not turn into circuitous or into wrong ways. People ask constantly: "how many hours a-day do your daughters practise and play?" If it is the number of hours of daily practising that gives the measure to the position of a Virtuoso, then my daughters are amongst the most unimportant ones—or they do not at all belong to that class of persons.

This is the place to express myself in greater detail upon the playing with a loose wrist, in order that I may not be misunderstood. The sounds that are produced with a loose wrist, will always resound softer, more charming, and fuller, and permit of more and finer shadings, than the sharp and bodiless ones, which, with the assistance of the upper and lower arm are with unavoidable stiffness stung, tipped, or thrown out. Besides, with the rarest exception, a greater technique is far sooner and more beautifully to be learned than when the elbow works actively at the same time and the power derived from it is superadded. On the other hand, I do not wish to blame if some Virtuosi execute a rapid octave passage with a stiff wrist—they often make it very precise, in the quickest tempo, powerfully and expressively. It depends on the individuality of a pupil whether he learns it best and quickest in this manner, or with a loose wrist. The present professional Bravour-playing cannot however do without expertness in octaves—this belongs to it. I now come to the operation of the loose and independent fingers in general playing, that is, with already advanced pupils, who have mastered the elements. *The fingers must lay themselves on the keys with a certain firmness, decision, quickness, and strength, and learn to take a firm hold of the key-board,* else we

get faint, colourless, uncertain, crude playing, from which no beautiful Portamento, no piquant Staccato, no vivid accentuation can develop itself. But let every teacher look to it, meditating and striving for what is best, that this is done only *gradually*, with constant regard to the individual, and not at the expense of a beautiful style and a soft and charming touch.

It is to the confusion of a part of the critics, artists, composers, and teachers, that the great general public show for natural, chaste, and elegantly trained singing, and for elegant, noble piano-playing, much more *just judgment and appreciation*, and know much more quickly *what they are about*—than those do. Capability of feeling and sense for the beautiful on the part of the public are less prejudiced, less perverted, more susceptible, more natural, and their manner of conception is not disturbed by reflections, by eagerness for fault-finding, and many other secondary matters; their point of view is not twisted and distorted. Jenny Lind is a striking proof of this, as well as several pianists.

The new tendency proclaims also in piano-playing "a higher beauty" than has hitherto existed. Now I ask all those that have remained in their senses and the champions of this tendency: *wherein is it to consist?* Surely people cannot talk at random about a beauty that cannot be explained? Several of such men of beauty I have just heard playing—playing? no, tramping and stamping, and according to my logic I have come to the conviction that the meaning is: "a higher—quite different, quite opposite beauty"—an ugly beauty, which disagrees with every noble feeling of man. Yet our clever future age at once dismisses such a conservative point of view with Goethe: "Where ideas are wanting, a word presents itself at the right time." This piano-fury period described and lived through by me, is merely the introduction to this new work—only a gentle trial—only the first beginning to this piano of the future. Is it possible, then, that the most nonsensical raging and storming on the piano, when, during half-an hour not one musical idea became nor could possibly become clearly intelligible, and the most disagreeable and crudest treatment of a large Concert grand, continued with a frightful misuse of both the pedals, putting the surrounding persons into

discomfort, terror, staring, and astonishment, can ever be, and be called anything else than "a monstrous degeneracy without sense or understanding?" Is that meant for music, music of the future—beauty of the future? Then possibly other ears are to be made for it—other feelings to be got ready—another nervous system to be procured?! There we have the throat doctors again—they are already waiting in the back ground! What a new, grand anatomic sphere of operation is opening for them! Our times bring forth miscarriages that no intelligence of the intelligent comprehends—from which people start back shuddering and terrified. Scarcely have excesses in the world's history ended, far greater ones in music are to make up for it. But comfort yourselves, my readers: these solitary standing crazinesses—these last struggles of the musical madness—were they to be proclaimed with ever so much arrogance, they will not storm through the world. There is no longer a public for the thing, not even curious free-tickets, only a few paid needy people, would venture to endure such "Concert performances of the Future."

I am desired to express myself in regard to the *superior style of execution* in piano-playing? This problem cannot be solved in writing, at least I cannot do it, I can only solve it practically on certain individuals. Such teachers as understand me and wish to understand me, will be sure to find in these Chapters the necessary material and the necessary indications for it, and I merely tell them: "You teachers, who are endowed with the three trifles, try to excite in your pupils these same three trifles, to illustrate them and to develop them as much as you can, with devotion, with energy, with logical consequence—and everything will come with truth and beauty. Then you remain still in the Present, where there is much and infinite work to do yet. These three trifles certainly are not rooted in silliness, in want of talent, in crazy nonsense—and for this reason it is that the possessors of these qualities root in the Future and proclaim *superior*, that is, *opposite beauty*.

RULES FOR THE PIANO.

"You must not begin a second piece, till you have mastered the first.

You must not play by heart, but look to the notes, else you will not learn to play at sight.

You must not play any piece that is not properly fingered, that you may not get into a habit of wrong fingering.

You must not look to the keys at springing notes and chords, because it withdraws the attention from the music.

You must learn to count while playing, that you may always keep exact time."

To do justice for once to the spirit of the times: *such and similar things belong to the positions really gained by me.* I wish the musicians of the Future may also gain their positions as happily—not by empty fine words and phrases, and by thrashing empty straw—but, by *practical successful operation, and by striving for improvement.*

"But what is the use of your method, if we get pupils that have been playing for years many pieces from notes, but have played them badly, and who are to be brought to play better?"

This is held up to me so often. Has not my first Chapter already answered that? First and foremost let all notes that have been played be put aside for a long time, for the bad playing of the pupil is so closely associated with these pieces, that all repairs are in vain, because the shaky house wants the foundation. Improve then first of all the touch, form an improved and connected scale, let them frequently transpose the Cadence to the Dominant and Subdominant, prescribe on the diminished chords of the seventh passages of many varieties with a good, equal, and calm foundation of fingering, staccato and legato, piano and forte, and turn all your attention to loose fingers and loose wrist and—do not any longer allow playing in the air, etc. According to the capability of the pupil, do not be long in taking at the same time a piece *entirely new* to him. We cannot and must not wish entirely to transform such a pupil of a sudden, even if he were most anxious, and at the same time were most obedient. But you must choose for him a drawing-room piece quite adapted for the piano, easy for him, and short; in which he can find pleasure because of an unaccustomed improved execution, which does not tire him. But should you find, that in it he falls into his old incorrect habits, and that his improved manipulation to which he has not yet got sufficiently accustomed, is endangered—well, then, put the piece aside again,

and take instead a small suitable study, a small Praeludium by Bach, etc. If you were to choose, however, for instance, a capacious Sonata, where the music can the easier draw him off again from the improved manipulation, then you lose out of sight your chief object, you employ yourself with secondary matters, you scold and speak in vain and will not succeed. Strive, think, and speculate only, and do it psychologically. All can be done, but nothing can be gained by precipitation, by forcing, and scolding. Learn to repair spoiled and over-strained Soprano voices—by doing so, one gets careful, patient, calm, humble — altogether a good man. Alas! that is a far more thankless task and is far more rarely successful, whilst on the piano *certain results are always to be obtained.*

An often discussed subject—I must once more refer to it, in order to come again to the assistance of our Ladies in their general piano-trouble. Since a short time ago, I have again heard performances in small and large companies—on used and unused, tuned and untuned pianos—before and after dinner—at ease and ill at ease—by elder and by younger Ladies—in this or in that town—with more or with less talent : the effect on the whole was the same :

Your ear may perhaps find out, that they can get through the piece at home before the teacher and the parents, but that is not enough to save the hearer from weariness, discomfort, and all kinds of confusion. Respected Ladies! you play over and over again two Mazurkas, two Waltzes, two Notturni and the Funeral-march by Chopin, the Mazurka and other pieces by Schulhoff, the Trill-study and the Tremolo by Charles Mayer, etc.—*it is all the same.* You might perhaps master these pieces pretty well, but you do not master them, on the contrary *you* are mastered. You get confused, and the hearers still more so. At the end there are excuses of all kinds, doubtful praise, encouragement to continue thus, with an acknowledgment that the hands are so very suitable for piano-playing, with frightened, forced congratulations to the parents and the teachers, but people are glad that the fatal Soirée is at an end, and— I myself, I am still sighing the next day over the unlucky, meagrely and tediously played Funeral-march by Chopin, and over the timid B flat major Mazurka by Schulhoff, and especially over your *left hand,* which always fails you at the springing, difficult Basses now used, and at the much modulating and harmonious pieces. Your Bass-part is feeble from frightened and wrong sounds, several bass-notes do not sound at all, or the little finger remains disconcerted lying

on instead of striking courageously and boldly an elastic quaver, the chords are feeble and faulty, you do not give them their full value, you lift the hand too soon, because you are afraid you will not be able quickly enough to get at the low note again; instead of that you prefer to remain hanging in the air — one missing sound draws another after it. The right hand, being the more skilful one, wishes to play with expression, and perhaps does so, but the thing becomes the more observable because of that: the Bass note is wanting, or you mistake the key and lose yourself; in short, the thing comes to a horrible end. I have, in consequence, a restless night;—I dream, it is true, of your pretty hands, but the wrong or bad notes present themselves like haunting goblins and will-o'-the-wisps, and I rise with a head-ache instead of with pleasant recollections. Let me give you an advice: *Play and practise your Bass-parts much and frequently, slow, and then faster, for a week or a fortnight, without using the right hand,* that you may be able to turn all your attention to it for clear, correct, and sure playing. And if thereafter you are able to get through your Mazurka tolerably, do not by any means think that you must therefore at once perform it before others, as usual under *aggravating circumstances.* You must first be able to play it for yourself with facility many times, also in a *quicker tempo,* readily and clearly, before you mean to perform it more slowly before others. First, at any rate, practise frequently the difficult parts of the right hand, and especially the difficult and bold conclusion, so as not to alarm the hearers with ruggedness, rustling, timidity, and faintness. "Beginning and ending well,—makes all well:" an old rule. And the springing Bass, first practise it over and over again by yourself—else it will not do! An unclear and faulty Bass without any expression and accentuation, spoils everything—even the good humour of your audience. Another thing: you know now the Notturno in E flat by Chopin, and you have played it along with several other things. A week after, you are suddenly asked to perform. You select this Notturno, for did you not play it for four weeks almost every day? Behold! the evil genius of the piano presents itself—you again play a wrong note in the Bass, and at the point where it modulates, the little, weak finger touches too timidly; pah! the Bass-sound is a failure. You get embarrassed and your embarrassment goes on increasing, the musical aunt also gets alarmed, your teacher's blood rushes to his head, and I?—I murmur to myself: "*c'est toujours la même.*" Our present modern springing Basses require very much practice and great sureness: it is necessary that you should know the piece by heart so as to be able to direct your whole attention to the left hand — it is necessary that you acquire a good and firm touch; else you cannot finely accentuate and shade—it is necessary that you should never play *without preparation* pieces where an elegant execution is of importance, else you will

again be tripped up by the single difficulties—it is necessary that you should especially remember the foundation, the Bass, else the whole small house falls in! The one thing is surely better than the other—of two evils people choose the least. You have been playing now from six to eight years. Is it worth the trouble, if you thereby prepare for yourself and others nothing but *embarrassments?* Easy, unimportant little bits of things you do not wish to play, and—*such* pieces do require *diligence, earnestness, and perseverance.*

YOUNG LADIES!

How a man stands, walks, moves, how he talks, bows, takes off and puts on his hat, and performs his home duties—by these marks one can recognise him easily, and one is rarely mistaken. The way you sit down before the piano —from that one can almost decide beforehand *how you play, what you can do,*— You crawl to the piano slowly, almost under compulsion, bending somewhat, and shy, you sit down from embarrassment either before C^1 or C^2 instead of *F.*—You are sitting doubtfully, only in a half and half way, with the body swung either too much to the right or too much to the left, too far from or too near the instrument, maybe even somewhat too high or too low, in one word, *as if on the fatal stool you were in the wrong place.* You sit in such a way that no confidence can be inspired by it, and you show by it that you have no confidence yourself. How then could you possibly have under command a large seven octave grand piano if you do not sit exactly in the middle, with straight, erect body, and with both feet before the two Pedals? You wish to converse and to have friendly and confidential intercourse with your friend, and half turned aside you do not want to look into his face? If it even were not so detrimental and full of danger, as it really is, yet propriety itself, wisdom itself requires that by the right bodily movement, by a certain decision and determination, I should at the outset inspire the hearer with confidence in me and in my playing, and try to awaken a good opinion of me.

Now, it is true, there are some Virtuosi who, by tossing themselves carelessly, or throwing themselves with an easy air down on the chair before the piano, try to express the geniality that is wanting to their playing, or by fashionable negligence wish to indicate how much they are above a *beautiful piano performance.* But *such* manifestations of an educated mind, *such* an expression of earnestness of feeling is foreign to you—you do the like only

from faint-heartedness, from a modest distrust in your powers, which you have no need of doing. Our great, good masters, such as Field, Hummel, Moscheles, Mendelssohn, and others, did not like such inappropriateness, such displays, such explosions of genius—they went before the public on their task with earnestness, devotion, and respect.

Let us turn away from these piano-excesses—but not from the piano !

TALENTS.

Manifold and rich experience is required in order rightly to appreciate young musical talents. The first manifestation of talent, interest in melody, feeling for time and for accent, tendency to a certain, though often wrong, execution, easy power of conception, a natural turn for playing, ear, versatility of mind, quick progress, pliancy, visible pleasure,—if all this, or part of it, is already observable in *earliest youth*, do not yet on that account raise sanguine hopes, and do not deceive yourselves. Such phenomena I have often met—I have had to train such like miraculous little animals. The progress was quick—they understood everything at once, if I did not take up continuously their fickle attention. I was already dreaming about immense sensation, which this clever wonderful youth would produce, when from twelve to fourteen years old : already I saw in my mind's eye the fulfilment of my ideal !—but just then came the *Stand-still*, an awkward position, when the teacher knows neither what nor how to do. Musical nature has so to say exhausted itself, outlived itself,—the pupil feels this himself, his interest in piano-playing, in music, subsides, all at once he plays carelessly, powerlessly, thoughtlessly—with a visible slackness. Out into the air—to open nature—travel ! I allowed long rests to step in ; he was content with that, did not ask for the piano, or he merely strummed. We begin again—but we grind on without great success—yet he became "a musician," but afterwards at the most he classed among such players as can be found by the dozen, and at last he gave common-place piano-lessons. Similar stoppages, it is true, occur with all pupils and especially with girls, but they are not so lasting, so desperate, they do not announce such exhaustion. You get over it with a small pause, by relaxing serious studies, you play with them from the notes, you try theory, you make trials of composition and extemporizing, you have them hear other players, worse and better ones, you give them interesting books to read, perhaps make them acquainted with Beethoven, etc.

Such experiences, then, and the unskilful treatment that often takes place with them, explain for the most part the sudden turning up in our century and the equally quick disappearance of innumerable infant prodigies, who raised hopes, and who have almost all disappeared and hidden themselves, or have not become anything satisfactory.

A development, which went on step by step, almost clumsily, often apparently in stagnation, yet nevertheless with a certain kind of steadiness, with some sensibility and a dreamy inwardness and a musical instinct, with which also may be associated a kind of dreaminess, which went on with a slow awakening, and required for an operation demanding such patience and perseverance six years and more, and at the same time where the childlike and the childish did not permit of any mischievous speculation as to the future, this I have always liked best, and the result, unless destiny stopped or forcibly disturbed my education and training, was always with me the desired one. But what patience and perseverance are required for it! Often have I meditated over the *slow development* of my pupils, and I have discussed it earnestly—also playfully: I may be allowed to do the latter here, and to that end I descend into the animal kingdom to establish five phases, five stages of human development.

First stage. Maggot. In his first two or three years, man stands far below the animal, which knows with its splendid, very quickly developed instinct, how to distinguish the good from the bad—the useful from the hurtful. The child, without thinking anything about it, rolls down from the table and breaks his head, or poisons himself by licking poisonous herbs or arsenic.—Nevertheless let him hear many and clear sounds, music, singing, etc. He will soon learn *to listen*, together with the little black poodle. Some idea is dawning already in him that beside mamma, nurse, doll, birch, and sound of words, there is something else still, which is audible and not unpleasant to the ear.

Second stage. Marmot. From four to seven years. Now is developed that instinct which is surprising to the observer in the first fortnight of the animal's life. Here begins the mechanism, at least with a correct finger movement on the table. The child is told that those beautiful sounds which he has heard from the time of his birth will now be produced by himself, but that for this a very quick and at the same time quiet finger-movement is required, which must be acquired by daily practising. That this is in the order of things, because man's destiny is to learn. He is made to strike on the table with the outstretched thumb, with his hand laid on the table and acting independently of the arm,—then with the first, second, third fingers in an almost perpendicular position, and with the little finger again in an outstretched position;—then with the thumb and second finger together he is made to strike a Third

with the thumb and third finger a Fourth, sometimes with the right hand, sometimes with the left hand, or with both hands together, &c. Just meditate a little, Gentlemen : that is very interesting, if you are at the same time philosopher and teacher. As long as Composers do not study scores adapted to the voice—as long as the piano-teachers do not study *logic*, and the teachers of singing *voices*—how can matters improve ? I return to the animal kingdom and call the

Third Stage. Sea-calf. From seven to twelve years. The latest investigations and observations in the animal kingdom have led to the conviction that it is no longer the elephant that is the most sagacious animal, but the "Sea-calf," which already evinces some kind of human sensation, especially when it is to be killed. It tries to arouse compassion, etc. In short, this animal also pleases me better than the clumsy elephant. At this stage naughtiness begins, and at the same time begin—the notes,—but not Beethoven. That would be an unlucky musical philanthropy !—Violent displays of force, the uncouth, the running off with the table corners, a zig-zag of sturdy instinct and thoughts quick as lightning, giddy and naïve notions, disobedience, much appetite, etc., all this one must try to model and to make use of for one's end. You understand me, Gentlemen ?

Fourth stage. Man ? No, indeed, "Man" does not advance so fast. You good parents, who would like so much to see ripe fruits for your care and trouble, be patient !—Before that there is to come *human presentiment !* It is a nice point of view : youth steps from the animal kingdom into that of man and is often unable to forget the former, revels still in sweet recollections of it. Try now gently and cautiously Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, and the like. This peculiar species "one-fourth animal three-fourths man," needs stimulation, warming up, the most judicious guidance, and also fancy ;—it must be stirred and shaken, so that reflection, consciousness, feeling of the spirit, disposition, creative power, inward conditions of formative power may be preserved, and one must endeavour to bring this chaos to a distinct and beautiful appearance.

Now comes the

Fifth Stage. This is better than the third stage of our opera singers "*Man*" in his eighteenth year. The years you must modify for yourselves according to the individuals—wholly at your pleasure. But if I were further to enlarge on the four natural history stages of man, and moreover treat on *man himself*, should I not have to write a whole book, and—that could not be interesting. I have already, as it is, to request your indulgence for my jest—should I be obliged to implore it for a wearisome book ? My daughters would not thank me for that,—they are very sensitive.—But, nevertheless, I must very gently whisper to you :

"My daughters, like many other daughters, have lived through these five nice musical stages in the most careful and the most complete manner!"—I must know that best!

Here is the answer to many curious questions.

CAUTION.

I caution my piano-players—and others too—while they are playing:

1. Against every improper and overdone demeanour. Why wish to make an appearance and an impression by foppishness, grimaces of all sorts—why by the oddest and strangest Virtuoso-like affectation? Play only *beautifully and musically*, comporting yourselves modestly and becomingly, direct your whole attention to the *business in hand*, to the performance, and try to interest the public, which is so easily distracted, in your performance alone.—Fools of genius must no longer play in public.

2. Do not apply yourselves principally to artistic specialities. Why show off ever and again your Octave-play, your shakes, your expertness in jumps, enormous expansions or other self-invented piano-tricks? By this you do nothing but cause weariness, *ennui*, disgust—at least you make yourselves ridiculous.

3. Play good music, but in a musical, sensible manner. The public does not want to hear any longer the paltry hotch-potch, the tedious studies, the Transylvanian rhapsodies, the fantasias without phantasy, the monotonous piano-horror, the endless, cheap, unmeaning, absurd cadences. Learn, then, to recognise your time, and look about you in the world. Why wish always to bore on the same spot into the wall with the horn you were born with! Is that the *future* or the *past*?

4. Do not make yourselves ridiculous with new inventions in piano-playing. I mention for instance the most foolish one of these times. You want to produce a tremolo on one note, as the violinists and the cello players—more's the pity—do far too much. Do not let yourselves be laughed at by every piano-maker's apprentice. Do you, then, understand nothing whatever of the mechanism of a piano? You have been handling it and partly storming about on it for decades, and do not even obtain a superficial knowledge of the mechanism? While the tone is resounding, the hammer, which has produced the tone by touching the strings, falls off at once, and now you may afterwards fondle the touch which put the hammer in motion and push about on it and stagger about giddily as much as you like—nothing can come out of it, be shaken out of it, be tremulated out of it. Only the public tremulate, that is, smile over your harlequinade.

5. Leave alone the many and wide spans. Scattered harmonies, it is true, produce beautiful effects, but not by a too frequent and anxious application at every possible opportunity. What is most beautiful in art may become affectation, and it ever leads to onesidedness. *Art must be many-sided* and never must there be a glimmer of the intention of turning the means into the end. And further, I also give it to be considered that too frequent and too wide stretching enervates the muscles, and endangers and renders doubtful the entire power of the fingers and the hand, an even and healthy touch and the best play. Very cautiously, therefore, and only by degrees, let the teachers train the hands of their pupils, especially of young girls, to expansion and a wider spanning. To be able to learn at last to span a tenth—I should think that would be enough.

6. Ladies! you have conjured up for yourselves, beside your *want of self-confidence*, from which springs *unartistic, nervous haste*, an additional small piano demon in the latest fashion. Sleeves or cuffs almost a yard in circumference swing and flap around your beautiful arm, and coloured ribbons, too, swing and flap around your wrist, and consequently when you have to play lively figures and passages all over the keyboard up and down, you drag behind with your arms these white, tender, large laced bags, and at crossing over you have to lift your hands double the necessary height else they get into danger of burrowing into each other's bags—and instead of hearing sounds the hearers might only in the end get to see arms, though beautiful ones, without hands. But to this sensible piano-swing you add, moreover, a light shawl, which flutters about roguishly on both arms, that your fight with obstacles may be sure to get still greater and more visible. The rings, the bracelets, the curls hanging down over the face, the tight-laced body, and so forth—I will not go on to consider at all.

7. Before performing a piece, play up and down in piano and forte, in general with shading, some skilful chords and some elegant passages or scales, but no stupid stuff, as I have heard many Virtuosi do—that you may try whether the condition of the piano at the moment does not put some unexpected obstacle in your way. With those wonderful bags over your arms, and with the roguish shawl, you are at least conversant, and you have had to make yourselves conversant with them while eating and drinking, to avoid dipping them into your food—but here you certainly might have to contend with something unforeseen. And be sure to sound well the inevitable pedal! A rattling, squeaking, rumbling pedal is a frightful piano-phenomenon, and I should like to know whether the democratic piano of the future will also deal in that. The funeral march by Chopin, with the necessary accompaniment of a groaning pedal, even if you should not miss the right keys in the Bass, or omit some of them altogether—who can describe the effect of this mournful march?

8. Concerning *sitting* at the piano, I have, with your permission, prepared a separate small paragraph—and I refer you to that.

9. While studying, leave alone all exterior means of assistance—even the "silent keyboard," which, with the most cautious application, might not be without advantage. Strength, you may be sure, will come in time—do not act precipitately as regards your nature—the table is the best silent keyboard. I have treated of that already. Neither is the hand-guide necessary. The advantages are fully equalled by its disadvantages.

10. Do not allow the audience to be too close to you while you are playing. Do not play the *same* piece as an *encore*, but you may stop in the middle of your playing if there is loud and continuous speaking, etc. Do me the honour once more to attend my *soirées*. I am no dramatic poet, I confess, but I can relate to you many an interesting and comical thing, and many a thing that I have myself experienced.

CHAPTER XIII.

Quack Doctors.

We have no longer an Opera in Europe —merely opera-houses that wait in vain for the *Ensemble*, which can no longer be had. There are left only solitary singers and lady-singers, and even these are already partly ruins as regards singing. They are travelling about and assisting here and there, or they are standing solitary, and round about them is a veritable singing misery. Nowhere is to be found now the artistic ensemble which twenty-five or thirty years ago, in Vienna, Dresden, Berlin, Paris, and London, enchanted every one and made an impression never to be forgotten ; for that which is *absolutely beautiful*, be it ancient or new, will always produce the same effect. All that is now left to us is the recollection, and our sole consolation is that our young composers of the progressive party and

our music philosophers are kind enough to be indulgent with this weakness of old age—a point of view they have long ago advanced beyond—and to judge it with forbearance. This, it is true, requires a degree of resignation which we must thankfully recognise ; for they are already sufficiently above this paltry sphere, in which beautiful singing moves in *endless gradations*, and affords composers boundless scope for action, because they stir within themselves nothing but *great things* and place themselves at the fresh youthful stand-point of the present music of the future. Since, however, one step in advance brings another after it, the singing-masters, the hodmen, walk of course behind, and when they also have advanced beyond one point of view, namely that of " the old school," they furnish the stones for the new building—for the new Declaiming and Instrumental-operas. So they no longer train singers, but " screamers," who occasionally add something of their own in small quaver-melodies and many detached screaming explosions.

The new position calls this *to be dissolved in the artistic work*—we ancient ones however call it *to be dissolved without artistic work.* We obstinately refuse to budge from our position, and believe rigidly and firmly that noble, chaste singing, with its ever-enduring charm and sustained and protracted melody, must remain *true* as long as music shall exist. No doubt this standing-still of ours must be regretted by the party of *Progress.* According to the latter, this same art of singing still belongs solely to the " old ear and the old school," no longer to life and to young improved ears who have to " solve " quite other problems than to prepare for man the highest enjoyment of art by means of that beautiful singing style which has been established now for three hundred years. This they have luckily overcome, then, and also these " vexatious melodies," but there are yet left some other difficulties to overcome. In particular none of us—alas, and there are many of us who found the high, beautiful, incomparable problem " solved " in the artistic singing of Catalani, Fodor, Persiani, Grisi, Schröder-Devrient, Milder-Hauptmann, Jenny Lind, Henrietta Sontag, Rubini, Lablache, and others—none of us join in " solving the problem," nor shall we at all " resolve " to take many tickets for such performances ; for if we wish to hear instrumental music, then we go to hear symphonies, etc. Our conservative ears take no delight in those raging, furious instrumental masses, in those roaring sounds in which the hunted and tormented singer can only join with a *tortured, unnatural, disagreeable, ripieno-voice.* Although Kant has called the " Sublime " a " pleasure effected through pain," (possibly, however, he does not refer to the pain of tormented singers)—we nevertheless think on the other hand according to our mistaken judgment, that the " disagreeable " is a self-destroying lie, that it can only be transitory, and can never become " truth." I cannot refrain since we speak of the " disagreeable," to confess that I have just lying

before me a composition by a celebrated composer of the "newest progress party." It consists of a queer, bombastic, and much modulating piano-study, to which he has added here and there solitary notes with underlying text. On the top above is printed "Longing for the distant loved one!" A conservative like myself, who misjudges the newly begun Messianic period "in its essence," and who cannot banish from his ears the airs of Fr. Schubert and the "Distant loved one" by Beethoven, thinks "Longing for present singing nonsense by a man of progress" would be a much more descriptive title. But to return to the "grand disagreeable!" Those great instrumental operas by Berlioz, Halevy and others, cannot do with such glass-shade-singers as the above-mentioned—(not to make allusion to the story of the fox and the grapes),—they have nevertheless—and that is another difficulty—to look about for such as have much voice and are able and willing to scream with all their might. But since the vitality of the voices that are made to fit to these new works of art can naturally be but very limited, and since, on the other hand, dread of these gigantic tasks will prevent many singers from letting their powers be ruined in the Art of the Future, so the deficiency in good singing powers must become greater and greater the more actively the men of progress create new works of art and have them performed. This of course must in some clever manner be compensated for, and I doubt not that the inventive powers of the progress-party will also be able to solve this problem. I hear already something of several proposals; for instance, to have the text declaimed by declaimers with stentorian voices, who are much easier to find than soprano-voices, and to have the above-mentioned repieno-sounds played by several large tubas, so that the "total-effect" may not be lost. And—seriously: that will certainly not sound any longer so *nervous* but much *more natural;* and then we old ones shall also be sufficiently curious to listen to this wonderful music, and perhaps may thus be induced to follow the trail of the progress-party. But further: *what a gain, what bliss, then, for the poor tormented conductors!* No illness, no caprice, no nervousness, no disgust, no terror of the singers at such tasks, will any longer disturb the performances, and should ever such a tuba meet with an accident, a new one can easily be at once obtained for a few crowns, and *progress* then suffers no longer the least delay, the least interruption. Yet, in the meantime, singing is still to continue to be *a small part of the whole*?—Well, our times, which can boast of so many wonderful phenomena, may perhaps also assist in that, and the throat physicians of Paris, London, and other places, may probably be only gentle forerunners of special quack-doctors, who are already quietly making experiments in their subterranean laboratories, by means of animal and artificial magnetism, galvanism, electric batteries, or maybe even by means of ethereal singing-telegraphs, to assist the torn and worn throat-voices of progress and to breathe into them indestructible

life. This certainly would be the most desirable thing, since tubas are truly not so presentable as *real* nicely dressed human beings, if these no longer give out crushed, strained, squeaking, and groaning sounds, but are able with a full indestructible chest to operate in concert with trumpets, trombones, and big drums.

Till the above-mentioned experiments have come into practical use, *I myself* however shall take the liberty to come forward as "Quack-doctor," and with one bold hit at our opera-life, to give a description of

The three stages of our Lady Opera Singers.

Our Mezzo-Sopranos, who are *obliged* (because of the present high pitch and other reasons) to screw up their voices in the opera a third and perhaps even more, and in doing so make use of the modern forced manner of singing, undergo generally within the space of from one to three years—according as they possess a more or less firm, fresh, full, high voice, the following three stages : —

First Stage. By undertaking the too high, first youthful parts, or maybe even the unsingable ones in the newest progress-operas, the still fresh, vigorous life gets, indeed, boldness, expertness, security in the high notes—and yet the gain is only *in appearance.*—The medium register gets pale, rather uncertain, and meaningless, the intonation changes, wastes breath and aspirates too much, the pronunciation gets more burdensome, and the sound begins to retreat into the throat;—the voice does not feel any longer comfortable in this region, the separation of the registers becomes audible, etc. At this point help is still possible, if the singer without delay withdraws from the opera and endeavours to regain and to restore the middle register by *gentle study*, and also under the careful supervision of a skilful and experienced teacher, the clear body of air, for the production of a correct head tone and—brings back the artificially and wantonly forced up voice *with great self-command into the natural correct position.* The last two lines—I do not deny it—are written for our artistic, highly admired Johanna Wagner, who with six operas *lying within the range of her voice* would conquer the world, while honest and sensible criticism must find fault with her.

Second Stage. The high sounds become uneven, sometimes uncertain, begin to seek for the tone and to force it out, instead of drawing it out, require more exertion of strength—more breath ; they are, indeed, still powerful and possibly more dexterous, but some tones already scream or miss, and the two highest ones now emit but rarely an easy and free sound, they have

rather to be pinched, sought for and squeezed out.—Transition to a hollow, fabricated throat-tone. The body of air begins to flutter about in the mouth (from a too low intonation), or the singer comes upon the tones with too much consumption of breath (from a too high intonation)—the pronunciation gets worse, the tongue wishes to assist, and many an unseemly thing commences, although outward musical stage effects are still obtained, especially because of *improved dexterity.*—But now!—The middle register has already passed into a dull, veiled throat sound;—it is almost without pith and without body, and has no longer any colouring or energy, no sharp intonation, the pronunciation is indistinct and faulty, all expression has then vanished—there is no longer any connection with the head-voice, the broad vowels are no longer sufficient, neither is pushing and aspirating any longer of assistance —short breath and helplessness are commencing—and this middle register is in fact as good as lost already. At this point a rescue is seldom possible, unless the singer is not yet out of her teens, is of a very strong constitution, and has possessed great vocal resources and excellent fundamental training, and is *willing* and *able* to rest for a year or two. Afterwards, perhaps, with *good, careful study, united with the sharpest observation,* many things may be restored, as, strange to say, *it happened with Jenny Lind.*—Now quick to the

Third Stage. *Ruin!*—Increased dexterity, boldness, *à plomb,* passionate execution, skill in ornamental passages, stage-tricks can no longer mislead the expert, and now it is only in single notes in the high parts and in the lower parts, on which the singer throws all her energy, that she is able still to produce some kind of an opera effect.—The middle register is gone, the body of it has vanished, everything is hollow and spiritless—the coquettish *pp.* is without effect and disagreeable, the pronunciation lost—jarring and trembling set in when not wanted, and also in the high notes a most disagreeable crushed nasal tone. Here people say: "she might be a good singer, if she had a voice!"—Rest is no longer of any use here against these consequences of foolhardiness, thoughtlessness and disobedience. A piece of rare good fortune it is if health is not undermined, and if the girl of twenty-three has still left a place of refuge to weep over her pitiful fate without care for subsistence, if she does not see herself forced to give singing-lessons, and even by that to accomplish horrifying things.—Let us leave this sad picture! I mean to surprise you ladies with a more pleasant one!

Fourth Stage. Accept of my sincerest congratulation on your betrothal! The marriage I hear is to be in a month? Will your Ladyship go to your landed estate or remain in town? "That depends entirely on my beloved, dearest, artistic husband. His presence will indemnify me everywhere for

my artistic triumphs, which I have renounced because of my ardent love for him." This, your Ladyship, is a magnanimous resolution!—and art of course remains always with you still?

CHAPTER XIV.

Mrs. Grund and Four Lessons.

Mrs. Grund. How then has it come about that your daughters have been able to perform the very many pieces which we have heard them play, without the least sticking or interruption, quite healthily, clearly, with most thorough comprehension, with full expression, and with the finest shading—*with complete command?* I myself have had pretty good instruction from my youth upwards, I have also for a long time played scales and studies, and under Kalkbrenner and Hummel I have studied and diligently practised several compositions of theirs; moreover my talent has been highly praised:—and nevertheless I have never had the satisfaction of being able to perform any great important piece entirely to the satisfaction of myself or of other people. And I fear it will be the same with my daughter Amalia.

That. To enable me to give you a satisfactory answer, I must first of all request you to read my former chapters several times over, to examine them, enlarge on them, and to make them quite your own. I shall add some points, and make clearer to you what has been only hinted at there, or has been touched upon in too short a manner.—While I avail myself of this occasion to lay before you some additional principles of teaching and views of mine concerning musical education and training, mostly with regard to piano-playing, I take the liberty to put once more before you the seasonable observation contained in the Fourth Chapter: our fashionable ladies do also in regard to music and its execution make now *higher claims and pretensions* than they did formerly, and consequently their own productions on the piano generally do not satisfy sufficiently their more or less cultivated

sense of the beautiful (awakened further by their careful education in other respects) to have and to give unalloyed joy. This produces distrust in their own strength, which prejudices the boldness indispensable to the execution, which must grow up even to confidence of *infallibility*. But remember that this confidence is again based only on a healthy, rich toned, sure, beautiful and full touch, which those masters and teachers, as well as almost all who have followed them have neglected far too much, and do neglect still. On this foundation-stone alone can be laid a sound technique and its continual advancement; which, moreover, with our *softly leathered pianos which are far more difficult to play on than formerly*, requires twofold attention. It is a mistake to think that the correct touch which alone permits of a *satisfactory execution* will come of itself by playing studies and scales. I have at former times even in masters found no faultless, healthy, *grand* touch, except in Field and Moscheles, and among the most recent ones in Thalberg, Chopin, Mendelssohn, and Henselt.

And now I come to speak on the choice of the pieces. Well, our ladies are not satisfied with pieces that come easily to the fingers, and present few difficulties, to which they ought to add by degrees more difficult ones while continuing at the same time correct studies; on the contrary, they grasp eagerly at larger pieces by Beethoven, C. M. Von Weber, Mendelssohn, Chopin, and others; but, for a change, they also like the Bravura pieces by Liszt, Thalberg, Henselt, and others. Where in this case is mastery to come from, when even the first musical training with our increased requirements in the technique was not sufficient to stand close examination, and the subsequent instruction was too defective and unsystematic?

If you were now, for instance, to ask me to restore, in some degree at least, the wanting equilibrium with *you yourself*, before I undertake the further training of your daughter: then I would not begin with a Bueffel's wisdom thus: "Madam, before everything you must for two hours daily labour through scales in all major and minor tones *unisono* and in thirds and sixths—and besides, every day from three to four hours, studies by Clementi, Cramer, and Moscheles—else nothing can come of your playing!"

This, it is true, many Bueffels have said already, and say every day still—but we shall pass to the previous question on so unreasonable a suggestion. No, first of all I shall endeavour to improve and embellish your touch, which is too thin, meagre, and unhealthy, which makes too many unnecessary, restless, and inappropriate movements, does not seize the keys firmly enough, and searches for the tone too much up in the air, and I must succeed in this in a short time since I have before me feminine, young, well-formed, soft hands and dexterous fingers with good dispositions and healthy organisation. For this I employ several of the short exercises mentioned in the first chapter,

which I have you play in any desired key *without notes*, that you may be able *to turn your whole attention to your hands and fingers.* First of all you may see and hear how and with what calmness, security, and ease I try to draw from the pianoforte the most beautiful sound possible with a soft finger-movement and correct position of the hand, without any outward apparatus, without a restless, pushing, or shrugging arm. Certainly scales must be taken into the bargain, for it is necessary to bestow great care and attention on a timely and quiet passing of the fingers, and further on a correct and quiet guidance of the arm. But we shall be satisfied according to capacity with a daily quarter of an hour's practising of scales, which I shall have played, according as I may judge, *staccato, legato,* quickly, slowly, *forte, piano,* with one hand, with two hands, and so forth—because, be it observed, in your case I have not to deal with stiff fingers, nor with an unpractised or spoiled hand. In the case of youthful beginners, whose fingers are weak, etc., there can be no question *but of* piano *without any shading whatever* until the fingers are *strengthened.* This I continue for a fortnight, but every day in a different manner, and with manifold variations; and after a few lessons we go to unite with this the learning of two pieces *adapted to the piano,* the Minuet in E flat by Mozart, arranged by Schulhoff, and his *Chanson à boire,* or similar pieces;—Beethoven we shall most certainly leave alone. You are afraid I may get tedious?—I never was tedious in instruction; whether I am so at other times I cannot judge, but I have grown older—and *shorter.* I have still to remark that, when I am not present, you must in the meantime practise no pieces and no scales, until a calm improved touch has taken firmer root; you also must in the first place consign to total forgetfulness your former pieces, for these would give the best opportunity to return to the former faulty style of playing. Soon, however, I arrive at the execution of one of my teaching maxims; all my pupils must have some piece, merely intended for mechanical dexterity, that accompanies them on all their ways, and by a complete mastering of this piece they must learn to acquire a *confident boldness.* That is their friend, their lap-dog, their support. I accustom them, so that it becomes a kind of necessity to them to play this piece—I do not mind whether it is done without any mental exertion and in a purely mechanical manner—at the beginning of the lesson and before practising alone, once or twice, maybe at first slower and then quicker; for without ready and flexible fingers all talking and teaching is useless and unavailing.

Mrs. Grund. But which pieces?

That. For beginners perhaps one or two from the *Etudes mélodiques* by Hünten—for advanced pupils a study from the very suitable Op. 740 by

Czerny, and for still further advanced ones if they can already *span* far, correctly, and with ease, the latter's Toccata Op. 92.—a piece which my daughters never lay aside, though they may not play it every day. With such and similar pieces which satisfy the most necessary mechanical wants (in which for instance exercises in thirds, shakes, extensions, passages for the strengthening of the third finger and scales are specially aimed at), you change from every two to every four months, and I place you, if possible, always in close connection with the pieces, sonatas, variations, concertos, etc., you are just about to study. But also in the learning of the pieces themselves I proceed differently—and I hope *never pedantically,* but more carefully, more psychologically, more artistically than the above-mentioned masters and several others are wont to do. It is to be seen how on the one hand they, even with the best intentions, get into a sort of sauntering manner, because of too much teaching, especially to untalented pupils; a certain kind of impatience, a want of interest is often to be observed with them, especially with the teaching of their "own compositions." On the other hand they limit the range of observation of the pupil by one-sided views and capricious demands, by hair-splitting, and all sorts of eccentricities, and they diminish or destroy his interest in the task.

Mrs. Grund. Your thoughtful style of procedure is very interesting and convincing. But let me request of you an answer to some doubts and remarks, which are now and then expressed especially by teachers against you and your method.

That. I am accustomed to that. What is good and beautiful never entirely gains an undisputed approval. Never has anybody yet put up any new, improved, or beautiful thing, and spoken the truth dauntlessly, without being attacked, cried down, insulted, or totally misjudged. Our century has proved this often. Recollect Homœopathy, Magnetism, Clara Wieck in Leipzig before she had been in Paris, Marie Wieck because she does not play just exactly in the same manner as Clara, and my book here which treads pitilessly on the corns of the times, and on their incredible foolishness and pitiableness, and—I am quite prepared for all kinds of attack.

Mrs. Grund. Nevertheless I would remark to you that *other* teachers also take much trouble and are very *careful,* but have not the fortune to teach such daughters as you.

That. "Take trouble?" What does that mean? If it is not the *right trouble* in the *right place* and at the *right time*—then it is a *useless* one. What is the use of a stupid awkward diligence? If, for instance, a teacher, in order to improve the stiff fingers, wrists, in one word—the touch of his pupil, chooses a strange study or piece with great spans and arpeggios

for the *left hand* and with this take *extraordinary trouble:* then this and similar things are very remarkable, but nevertheless it remains a *comfortless trouble,* which makes matters still worse. And as regards my daughters? They have, above all, the good fortune to have, and to have had—*me* for father and teacher. Yes, certainly—talent they have, and I succeeded in *awakening and developing it.* True, the hard benevolence of people in Saxony, envy, ill-will, arrogance, offended egotism tried to contest that as long as it was possible—but it cannot be done any longer. Instead of that they say now: "That is no art, to make such talented persons good piano-players—that comes almost entirely of itself!" As commonly as this is maintained, even by thinking and educated people who do not belong to a clique, so thoroughly untrue and contrary to all experience it is. Lichtenberg in one place says: "the thing that everybody agrees in is the very thing that requires investigation." Well! I have investigated it with my three daughters and all talented pupils whom I trained to be good amateurs, and *according to circumstances* to be good Virtuosi. All these, and they are very many, may answer that, and I add further only, that it is these very persons talented in singing and in the pianoforte—(look about you at the countless number of shipwrecked talents and genius)—it is these very persons, I say, that *require the most careful, the most judicious, the most circumspect guidance,* for it is *they* who have the irresistible tendency, to be left to themselves—they prefer *ruin brought upon them by themselves* to rescue by the help of others.

Mrs. Grund. But it is further said that you have made Virtuosi of your three daughters alone—not of others.

That. Madam, you are jesting! If I were to count down to you Leporello's register, you would justly look at it as an exaggeration. But if, instead of any answer, I pray you to read my chapters frequently and after three or four years to embrace your daughter as an excellent pianist, then you must excuse me this because of my vanity and skill. Why are you just *the mother by means of whose support I can promise this?* But, further, I certainly do not possess an enchanted wand, which envy and ignorance I trust will not attribute to me as a crime. But if circumstances were not wholly unfavourable, I have everywhere, even in a short time, effected a good, at least an improved touch, and thus laid a foundation, in doing which other teachers with their method, or rather with *no method,* appear to have been less successful. But you have something more on your mind!

Mrs. Grund. You anticipate me. I was brought up in Berlin, and in the Capital of Intelligence people love opposition, denial and thorough criticism How can you form people to be Virtuosi and artists when you yourself are too little of a Virtuoso—not even a Composer and learned Contrapuntist? A

teacher of music gains, for example, much in esteem, if he himself plays concertos, composes nice things, and if he, as I have been told, is able to calculate and invent Double and Triple Fugues and Canons retrogressive and retrogressive inverted. Nay, you cannot even accompany your pupils with the violin or flute, which nevertheless is said to be of great use and advantage.

That. You are too amiable—else I should think you were malicious and cruel, and that you wished waggishly and mischievously to give me the Motto for a second part of a book, while I have not yet finished the first. No! the *I*s are rarely capable of a *self-sacrificing usefulness in teaching*—that lies in the nature of things; and even the child finds out exactly whether the teacher thinks of the child's progress alone, or pursues other interests of his own. The former practice bears good fruit—the latter very doubtful. The position of several of these teachers may be sketched thus:—Within their horizon they have drawn nothing but their own *I*, they are surrounded by nothing but *I*s, they speak of nothing but *I*s, and refer everything only to the *I*s, and with this they are perhaps even so-called Virtuosi and piano-travellers who compose their own music, or—the more learned, the more perverse—live, count and work in and make their business of Double and Triple-fugues, and think this alone is the real and correct musical foundation, and at the same time rejoice in the possession of a touch, as, for example, their brother, the teacher Strict, in the 8th Chapter, and to whom the three trifles in the 9th Chapter are all Greek, and will and *must* for ever remain so—but who *are obliged* with their fruitless doings to regard piano instruction (which lies so far from their ideas) just as a thing *by the way*, and as a milch-cow, and rob the hopeful parents of their money and the poor victims of their time—no! the numerous specimens of such positions I really cannot detail to you: do you yourself *penetrate* such agreeable personages—I could not punish you worse.

But as regards the violin and the flute,—these means of assistance I have not penetrated—I have not learned this method. There occur however to my mind a couple of interesting representatives, that I had occasion to observe in my journeys with my daughter in a not unimportant city, and because they are droll exceptions, I will here describe them somewhat minutely. The teacher with the flute-case was a mild, quiet, sweet, soft musician; he got on well with his pupil, a young lady, he did not scold—everything went off peacefully and passionlessly but *in time*. Both tripped on very calmly and agreeably, and played in honour of the birthday of an old, rather deaf aunt, a Sonatina of Kuhlau, which they could both manage. The old aunt, who of course could hear nothing of the soft flute nor of the mild, thin, modest, square piano, always enquired of me: "Does it not sound very *fine*, what

do you say to it?" I nodded and praised, because they played modest music, after *their way*, without offensive pretension.

But now I pass over to the violin-case—and because the proprietor of it was a type of pretentiousness, vulgarity, and roughness, and could impose on his pupils and their parents by his feigned good qualities. Therefore he stood in some repute, was on the whole a good musician, played the violin pretty well, and let his pupils get through the Op. 17 and 24 by Beethoven. With this counterfeit I present to you the musical violin-specimen as a *teacher of the piano.* He of course did not play the piano at all, nor did he take any interest whatever in Wieck's beauty-rubbish—only in Beethoven—and only sometimes did he try spider-like to spin out the fingering of some passages, in which however he rarely succeeded. All his pupils had the remarkable peculiarity that they also played *in time*, except when they *stuck* at the difficult parts, when he always got very rude and vulgar and spoke of "being careful," and by that means inspired respect. These pupils did not trip, however—on the contrary, they rejoiced in a curious *knocking and stumbling touch*, and at the same time writhed about among the keys with a kind of boldness and with a decided shrugging of the elbows. Tone they had none, it is true, but instead of that his violin was heard the better, and after each execution the words: "am I not the first teacher in Europe?"!

Mrs. Grund. You have painted me there two ridiculous figures.

That. Yes, but everybody must bear the blame if they make themselves ridiculous.

Mrs. Grund. I am glad that you have put me up to the necessary points, else I might have had to fear lest, in one of the early parties, perhaps at Mr. Gold the banker's, I should have to make one of your standing-figures. But since I like your answers, I shall listen when with a certain, although not numerous clique, who are totally hostile to you and your exertions, and strive to counteract you—and I shall communicate everything to you.

That. Those people, it is true, would act more wisely, if they were to study my Chapters, but they shall be enlightened if I can add anything for the sake of truth, right and beauty. Permit me now in a few lessons soundly to teach Miss Amalia, who is pretty far advanced and not quite spoiled, these not easy Variations by Herz, *Les trois graces,* No. 1, on a theme from the Pirata, without tiring her or spoiling her interest in the lesson.

I have intentionally chosen these Variations, because they claim no higher musical value, and therefore the performance, the execution must claim the chief attention. Besides they have this fault as regards teaching, that they contain *unequal difficulties*, but so much the more must the teacher know how to equalize these faults with ease and skill.

First Lesson. Miss Amalia, these are pretty, elegant Variations, which demand a particularly neat, delicate execution—above all a complete mechanical mastery of the difficulties which intermittently occur in them and which are rather *unequal.* If, however, these Variations should yet appear too easy to you, the following principle determines me to this choice : *whatever we wish to learn to play well, must on the whole be below the mechanical capabilities of the pupil.* The Italian singing theme which is the basis of the Variations is well chosen, and we must apply special care to execute it as beautifully as possible, and as it were to imitate the singer on the pianoforte. In doing this, a very careful and correct employment of the damper-pedal will *at a later stage* assist us excellently. It does not offer mechanical difficulties, but it requires a free, broad, full-bodied and yet soft touch, a good Portamento and a neat finely shaded execution, for—mark well : *a good and well-trained pupil and player can already be recognized by the performance of a simple theme !*

Amalia. But you do not begin at the beginning—there is an introduction.

That. This I may take perhaps last—I don't know yet when. Other perverse things will strike you in my teaching—the result may perhaps assist me to regain the desired credit.

Amalia. Do you always give such preliminaries, before you begin a piece with a pupil ?

That. I like to do so, because first of all I wish to interest the pupil in it, and then try to unite with it my principles and views about music and piano-playing. We shall take then first the theme and the not difficult first variation, and at the end the last bars which introduce the theme, and which must be played very neatly and connectedly. From the introduction we employ at first only the right hand, with attention to the most suitable fingering, which, however, I never write above it completely, but merely indicate now and then, not to prejudice the learner's own activity—and then for the *left hand* we take one or more parts from the finale. In doing so we observe carefully the prescribed marks of expression, and try to make the rendering of everything pure and healthy, for a negligent bass damages the best playing of the right hand.—My lesson is over, because at the beginning we have spent too much time over the scales, the correct supporting of the fingers, the various kinds of touch, and the exercises most suitable for it.—For home practice I do not yet give you the theme and the first variation with the left hand together, because you do not touch and detach precisely and equally enough the springing bass in it, and in this way you might get yourself into some bad habits, especially since your left hand is, as

usual, neglected, and is inferior to the right hand in quickness and ease. This would only detain us, for the main point is not to practise *much*, but to practise *correctly*. These passages you must first play slow, then quick, once very quick —slow again, sometimes staccato, sometimes legato, piano, and also in a moderate strength, but on no account with tired hands and fingers, therefore not too continuously, but instead of that several times a day with new strength. In the meantime be sure not to play at all fortissimo or perhaps even with raised pedal: this leads to tramping, with bad stiff touch and perpendicular fingers, and these I don't like. We are looking for the true and the beautiful in a different manipulation of the pianoforte, and first of all in a clear, natural, and healthy execution, without any forcing.

Second Lesson. Transposition of the common and of the dominant-chords in the three positions in different kinds of time: Exercises on it with careful regard to a loose wrist and a healthy touch, cadence on the Dominant and Sub-dominant; Exercise of the Springing-bass for the theme and the first and third Variations and close attention to the lifting and striking of the chords as showing the value of the notes, the touching of them in neither too weak nor in too strong a manner, with constant attention to the third and fourth fingers, which are reluctant to bring forth the sound as healthy and as full as the other fingers. Now we shall take the theme with both hands together, with a view to a quite correct execution, alike of the *piano* and of the *forte*, perhaps already also of as beautiful a *crescendo* and *diminuendo* as possible.— And now we shall take the first Variation, which is not difficult, and which you can master well, once *a tempo*, and play with it the bass-chords which are mostly to be given *staccato* with the necessary suppleness and elegance, but before that, we must practise the bass parts once more alone, that you may be able to hear distinctly whether all the tones sound *equally healthy*. —Now the Variation may be played in full—the necessary shadings will come as you master the piece more and more fully.—Your right hand is not in the least tired yet, you may therefore play to me several times over the passage from the Introduction which I asked you to practise at home—first slowly and then quicker.—I see your right hand is getting tired—take, then, the part of the left hand from the finale.— We shall also still glance at the adagio, but the part of the right hand in the third variation I must recommend particularly to you for practice. You cannot mistake if you do not take it too quick in the tempo, and if you observe carefully the fingering indicated.— Now I shall play to you the theme much in the same way as I have heard it sung by the celebrated Tenor Rubini. You see I put my fingers softly on to the keys and do not lift them too high, so as not to damage the beautiful connection of the sounds and to produce the *most beautiful singing-sound*

possible. As a farewell, play the theme after me.—You are playing it still in too reserved a manner, *not freely* enough.—Well, never mind, you will do it nicely when I shall see you again in two days, after you have practised it during that period several times slowly, and, as it were, have lived yourself into it. Besides you may practise now diligently for yourself everything that we have gone over together, also the first variation; yet it must be done with interest and not up to the point of exhaustion. All the other small exercises without notes for the touch, exercises on the cadence for the third and fourth fingers, etc., are a matter of course.

THIRD LESSON. Fresh small exercises — shakes — scales, shaded for one hand, for two hands—springing-basses, etc. To-day we begin with the bass part of the second variation. You will see you have often to play in the treble equal quavers in the first part, and the bass moves at the same time in quite equal quaver-triplets. In order to play both together well, even mechanically, the left hand must be able to move wholly *free and independent*, and to make the triplets sound quite equal with a complete command over them. Above all avoid sickly notes, and take good care not to accustom yourself to give the last triplet in each measure, and especially *the last quaver of it*, too hastily, too pointedly, and too meagrely.—Look what difficulty my *right* hand has already caused to the equal playing of the triplets!—Listen as little as possible to me, and maintain your independence. But you shall learn to play this variation well *alone* with both hands, and this is a special beauty in the execution, only we must not be in too great a hurry and leave it to time. All restlessness, all haste, the desire to force something, leads to all sorts of faults. Enough of this for to day: we now play the other variations and the whole finale consecutively, since you are not detained by the more difficult passages which you have already learned.

FOURTH LESSON. Fresh exercises for extension of the hand and the fingers, yet so *cautiously* that the healthy touch, *which must always be the principal thing*, is not prejudiced. Further, repetition of all the former things, yet everything with a certain shading and elegance.—To-day we begin at the beginning with the introduction—I mean to repair my inverted proceedings, and show that I, as well as others, can begin at the beginning—but *at the right time!* In the passages which your mechanism can already master completely, we now have *special regard to the execution and the correct use of the pedal.* And if I ask you in one place or another to play thus or thus shaded, etc., and it does not agree or does not quite agree with your feeling and your sentiment, then contradict me and ask me for the reason of my views.—You do not wish to play this passage crescendo but diminuendo? Very well, *only do it beautifully*—this also will sound well. I proposed crescendo because the feeling rises—perhaps you will find

in the next lesson that my view is the right one.—This part I would play somewhat reservedly, without too conspicuous retardation— the other one quickly, and at the same time crescendo or diminuendo ? What do you think ?—We must try to draw up small nicely and finely shaded pictures in these variations. In that part you might, I think, touch with more energy, with more decision.—This part you need play in a manner only mechanically healthy without any intentional execution—we require shade in order that the thought which follows, and which calls the theme to mind so emphatically, may stand out the brighter. Taken as a whole, however, everything must sound natural, without musical pretension, like a production of the moment; there must be nothing that appears forced, affected and distorted with any modern unnaturalness.—Miss Amalia, every piece that we shall study together (the next one will be the Notturno in E flat by Chopin, because your touch is already good and has already gained in volume) will give me opportunity to discourse much with you on execution and its innumerable shadings, elegancies, and beauties, with constant regard to beautiful singing.—This is the tyranny of execution, which I have exercised towards my daughters, and which stupidity and foolishness have reproached me with. "The execution must come of itself!"—*How cheap* this excuse of slovenliness, of incapacity, of laziness !—Let us look at, and listen to many Virtuosi, the old ones, the young, the talented ones—the untalented, the celebrated ones—those not yet celebrated ! Either their playing is purely mechanical, with a poor and faulty touch, which is the least of their evils, or *the most unbearable affectation and musical abortion rise up pretentiously.* Their execution has thrown itself like a thick, suffocating mist on the two pedals, and has taken root in the ground of every possible perversity.

However we will go on to our theme. You play it already with much intelligence, sympathy, and warmth, and without any modern empty affectation. Should there occur to you at the finale of the second part another passage which leads cleverly on to the Dominant, then try it, and perhaps you may be able to unite it with the one there. You mean to give on the four last semiquavers two passing shakes ? Very well, let them be very clear and neat, and the last one softer than the first, then it will sound very beautiful; the singer does the same. With such elegant variations it is quite suitable to apply some ornaments, if only these are chosen with *taste* and are executed beautifully. It is a different thing with pieces by Beethoven, Mozart, Weber, and others, where veneration requires us to observe stricter views, although also this may often be exaggerated, the consequence being pedantry.—Now, to the first variation. Very well ! the springing-chords in the bass you play already very precisely, even, and fresh—a language has got into the bass and a certain elegant boldness into the treble. The second variation—because it is the most

difficult you will not play with both hands before next lesson—to-day take the bass alone still. I shall play the treble to it, and after that we shall reverse it. But let us close with the fourth variation. In general I have little more to say about the piece.

Let us begin another beautiful study by Moscheles, which I cannot too strongly recommend to you for the strengthening and exercising of the third and fourth fingers;—for the next two or three months let this one remain your constant companion, your friend.

Mrs. Grund. I am convinced that, with so careful a manner of instruction, Amalia will learn to play these variations beautifully and to thoroughly master them.

That. In a week or a fortnight she will execute this piece with consciousness and conviction, to the satisfaction of herself and others, and the feeling for the beautiful which is already awakened in her, as well as the feeling of *the capability* will be able to preserve the *interest in it.*

You see how untenable is the objection: "the children lose all pleasure if readiness is to be obtained by many studies, and if a piece is to be practised until they can master it." If the teacher begins awkwardly and stupidly, and torments the pupil with a forcing down of many pieces, and in doing so insults and scolds—is that to give more pleasure to the pupil than to be able to play readily and with ease several short, well-sounding exercises, in the success of which he can have joy?—Or a little later, and along with these, to be able to perform a piece nicely, without sticking and without struggling—and when this is done, everything goes on joyfully and peacefully?

Mrs. G. But with great and long pieces—do you proceed in the same manner with them?

That. Most certainly—according to the same principles.

Mrs. G. But if you are so particular with every piece, and seek by that means to develop the touch always more and more, it will be a long time before Amalia can learn to play several large pieces well, and also before she can learn many other things.

That. Is your daughter to learn to jingle on the piano *in order to acquire proficiency in music?* Or is she to learn to play the piano well, *and to acquire proficiency while doing so?* The latter, I take it, is your wish, and also *mine,* else you might have taken any teacher you chanced to meet.—Consider, if the beginning is not made by the pupil's learning to perform *a piece* quite correctly, readily, and well, after which the succeeding ones always proceed faster and faster: then we have just the usual mechanical playing as you can observe it everywhere, and as you have sufficiently experienced in your own and in your daughter's case. To have fifty pieces played off indifferently does not justify the expectation

that the fifty-first will succeed quicker and better. But to study four or five pieces up to the highest possible mastery, gives the standard of quality to the rest. From this and from the mechanical studies, as I have gone about the matter with Miss Amalia, will then result also—but only very gradually—the best possible playing off at sight, which is indispensable for musical education, and which all my pupils, when I was enabled to continue their instruction for a tolerably long period, excelled, and in which my daughters occupy the highest place. It is necessary, however, always to continue with this, to study artistically individual pieces with diligence and great exactness, else the continual playing off at sight, which often becomes a passion, leads in the first place to piano negligence, and more or less to common music-making and note-thrashing.

Mrs. G. I am now more and more convinced that an illogical, aimless, incomplete, and superficial instruction can lead to nothing *real*, not even, or least of all, with those of extraordinary talent, and that those unhealthy and eccentric apparitions and caricatures in art, which give also to piano playing such an awkward and untoward direction, are the consequence of such instruction.

That. In addition, an attentive observer cannot but notice that especially the young, when they are not guided and directed to the *beautiful*, have a special tendency and an irresistible inclination to imitate only what is unseemly, external, striking, and ugly—the aberrations of art, and to bring to a good display the "how he clears his throat." This extends not only to artistic playing, but also to composition. I shall leave it to the "Well-known"* to illustrate more closely what a pernicious influence certain composers and virtuosi of recent times exercise on so many apostles of art, who, in imitation and adoration of them, throw themselves faithfully into their arms, and consequently with their support put the world into astonishment not only by their inartistic, unrefined and awkward performances, but also by their frightful arrogance and their immature and impudent dogmatism.

Mrs. G. Let us drop this subject.—Tell me further your views in regard to the Music of the Future.

That. You know already I am a great admirer of creative power—therefore also of Richard Wagner. But such *as stand wholly in the present*—and on what ground—my opinion of these you may guess.

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* See Chapter XVII.

CHAPTER XV.

Singing and Piano Misdoings.

MUSICAL PARTY AT MR. GOLD, THE BANKER'S.

PERSONS.

Mr. GOLD, Banker, (*is fond of music*).
Mrs. GOLD, (*sings and is ailing*).
SILVER, Book-keeper, (*formerly a Singer at Strauss's*).
SAINT, Friend of the Family, (*musical hypocrite—also otherwise a hypocrite*).
FORTE, a foreign piano Virtuoso, (*nervous*).
THAT, Teacher of the Piano.
EMMA, his Daughter.

(Mrs. Gold has just been singing, in quite modern Italian style, with forced high and deep sounds, somewhat jerky, suddenly changing by turns with an inaudible throat-pianissimo, and tremulating at every sound—one-fourth of a tone too flat, with many ornaments. And she sang "I think of thee with love," by Krebs, all the four verses.)

That. (*Ill at ease.*) Will you not go on, Mrs. Gold?—Perhaps the piano is too high, and you have first to accustom yourself to it?

Mrs. Gold. Oh no! the beautiful air has affected me too much, and I am too unwell. (*Whispering to That.*) Mr. Forte did not accompany me well either—partly he was unable to follow me and played too softly, partly, while playing, he added too much of his own composition, which drowned my somewhat nervous voice.

That. (*Aside to Emma.*) There's an evening of singing! Mercy on us!

Gold. (*Who has been talking in the next room with the deepest interest about shares, rushes in, although rather late after the conclusion, and presses his wife's hands impetuously.*) Admirable! masterly, splendid—wonderful! Child, you are in excellent voice! Oh, if Jenny Lind had heard you just now!

Saint. Charming, superb! how touching!—There is in this piece quite a religious type—something so pious.—Oh, I do pray you, just "The true happiness" by Voss; only with this is the enjoyment complete—transporting. Oh there is something divine about song!—And your execution—your feeling, Madam!—Your absorbing yourself in the composition!

(Mrs. Gold already holds in her hands "The true happiness," and can scarcely wait till Forte has played through in a curious *piano* the introduction *à la Fantaisie.*—A tear is trickling down Saint's cheek already after the introduction is finished, four bars of which this great artist has changed into eight. During this impure, shaking "happiness," he rolls his moist eyes, and at the termination of the first verse, when the fancy of the accompanist becomes again more fertile, he says: "I am silent—my emotion cannot find expression!")

That. (*Aside to Emma.*) Emma, this is called fabricated sentiment—hypocritical feeling; you can hear now, how people must *not* sing.—This sort of warmth in singing is, to an unspoiled, true musician, loathsome rubbish and empty tinsel, hollow affectation, nothing but unnaturalness. But this sort of amateur-misfortune you will meet frequently yet.

(Mrs. Gold has finished "The true happiness" with all its verses, and appears—almost wholly recovered. Gold is again in conversation with Silver in the share-room. That and Emma are standing at the background of the drawing-room rather oppressed and ill at ease.)

Forte. (*Who remains sitting at the piano, in French to Mrs. Gold.*) Madam, you are the centre of all that is beautiful in music. To exhale before such a centre my inmost feeling on the pianoforte, this I reckon among the happiest moments of my pilgrimage as an artist. What a loss it is that you in your position cannot, as a brilliant star of the first magnitude, help the German opera to rise again!

Mrs. Gold. (*Who is now quite well.*) I must confess, Jenny Lind while here in this city, has never quite satisfied me. She is and always will remain a Swede—always cold. If she had been brought up here, she would have heard warmer patterns than in Stockholm; this alone would have given her the true direction of feeling.

Forte. Quite true, you have estimated her quite correctly; and in Paris, where she might have opportunity to hear the like, she lived quite retired. I was just giving concerts there at the time—but she declined to sing in *my* concerts, and so she had no opportunity to hear *me* either.

Silver. (*To Mrs. Gold, with whom the singing fury has now commenced.*) Are you inclined now to perform with me the duet between Adam and Eve from the *Creation?*

Mrs. Gold. Here is the *Creation*—but we shall wait a little. Mr. Forte will first play us his latest composition for the left hand, and something of the romantic, deep feeling Chopin's.

Gold. (*Rushes in from the share-room.*) Yes, of course—the B-flat major Mazurka by Chopin! Messrs. Henselt, Thalberg, Dreyschock did also play it here. Oh, it is touching!

All. (*Except Silver, That and Emma.*) It is touching!

That. (*To his Daughter.*) If this man continues to play in the same style in which he accompanied the "true happiness," then you will hear how this Mazurka ought *not* to be played; it is not *touching* in the least; it merely depicts *dashingly* the Polish dancing cadences, as they are improvised by the Polish peasants, but idealized according to Chopin's manner.

(Forte makes several dangerous runs up and down, and many octave-passages *fortissimo* with raised pedal—and unites at once with it—*without pausing*—the Mazurka, which ought to begin *presto*. Nothing was to be heard of time and rhythm, but enough of a continual *rubato* and unmusical syncopations. Some notes were pretty indistinctly played *pp.* and much spun out, others were struck suddenly, very quick, too strong and hasty, so that the strings clattered, and one string had to pay with its life for the last B-flat major chord.)

Gold. Excellent, bravissimo! What a conception! Such artistic productions can make a person forget the very Exchange!

Mrs. Gold. You have shaken even my inmost nerves, penetrated *my very heart!* Now quick, let us still have the F-sharp-minor Mazurka, Op. 6.

Saint. Oh, what a musical evening Mrs. Gold has prepared again for us!—What sublime pain lies in this production!

Silver. (*Aside.*) What would Father Strauss say to this affected unmusical execution, this mockery of all good taste?

That. Mrs. Gold, I think you should send for the tuner to put a new string on B-flat. The second one will also snap immediately, it has a flaw already, and it is too flat.

Forte. (*Triumphant.*) Oh, never mind!—This often happens with me and does not matter. The piano is a battle-field, where victims must fall.

That. (*Aside to Emma.*) You see he thinks that if it does not sound it clatters at least, and that sounds out of *tune* produce more effect than *perfect ones.*

Emma. Where has that man learned to play?

That. Child, he has not learned at all.—He is a genius—with such everything comes of itself. Instruction, you see, would have fettered his genius, and he would then play clearly, correctly, naturally, and keep time—that would be far from artistic. This unbridled jumble without any time is exactly what is called "the piano-soaring of genius."

(Forte thumps through several foreign chords with the utmost quickness with the pedal up, and passes over, without a pause, to the F-sharp-minor Mazurka. He accentuates violently, this bar he extends making it a present of two crotchets, from another he takes off a crotchet, and so he continues until he finishes with great self-satisfaction, when at once and after some desperate diminished chords of the seventh he combines with the previous piece the

Serenade of Schubert (D-minor) after the transcription of Liszt.—During the playing of this, in the course of which the second string on B-flat has now snapped too, causing some clatter, there arises some whispering as to who may be the author of the piece, whether Mendelssohn, or Doehler, or Beethoven, or Proch, or Schumann, till at last Silver names the "Serenade of Schubert," and Forte finishes with—the soft pedal, which in his enthusiasm he had employed frequently before.)

That. (*To Emma.*) Never play or sing in company without first announcing the name of the piece you mean to perform.—You see when this gentleman had finished his Serenade, the company too had just finished *guessing.*

All. (*Except Silver and That.*) What a performance! Oh, what artistic enjoyment!

Mrs. Gold. What enchantment there is in this playing!

Silver. (*Requesting of Forte some piece of information.*) In the Serenade, where it changes into F-major, in your quickness you changed the two bars into only one bar—was that accidentally?

Emma. (*Aside.*) This would have been the very place for retarding.

Forte. In such beautiful things one must abandon oneself entirely to one's inspiration and feeling. At another time I may make three bars of it, just as genius and enthusiasm may at the time bid me and work within me. That is what is called "æsthetic surprise." Henselt, Moscheles, Thalberg, Clara, to be sure, do not perform thus, but then for this reason they can no longer produce any effect.

That. (*To Emma.*) I trust your sound natural sense, your musical education, will for ever preserve you from such unnaturalness.

Emma. With such playing one gets quite gloomy and uncomfortable. I suppose this is what is called "demoniacal-modern?"

That. Yes.

Emma. And have the people liked that?

That. Oh, yes—many think it to be grand and full of genius and inventive.

(Mrs. Gold has the *Creation* in her hand, and Silver leads her to the piano for the execution of the great duet between Adam and Eve. Forte is exhausted and That plays the accompaniment. Silver sings very sensibly and naturally—Mrs. Gold in her former manner, only still less in time and more out of tune, but to make up for that she adds, with her thin, sharp, cutting, forced voice very long ornamentations on the pauses in the Allegro, and rolls her black eyes frequently upwards. After having finished, Mrs. Gold, quite dissolved in feeling, is led by Silver to a large arm-chair.)

Saint. Ah yes, when Haydn is reproduced in this manner, then only does the divine art of music celebrate her real triumphs!—Mrs. Gold, were those delightful fermatas of your own invention?

Mrs. Gold. No! The excellent Viardot-Garcia inserted them as Rosina in the Barber of Seville, and I had them copied for me by a musician at the theatre. But the application of them in this duet is my property, and I have

surprised and delighted with it in many parties.—This grand chromatic scale, furiously rushing down, wherewith the artistic Garcia beats everything in the part of the visionary and fainting Amina in the Somnambula, I insert in the great Aria of the "divine Prophet," somewhat timidly, it is true, since the boldness of a Garcia is to be acquired only on the stage.

Emma. But, father, Jenny Lind did sing Eve in this duet in Vienna with Staudigl quite piously, simply, and innocently.

That. That's just the reason why Mrs. Gold says that Jenny Lind sings coldly and ought to hear warmer patterns. At home we shall speak further on this subject.

Mrs. Gold. Now, Mr. That, I hope your Emma will now also play some trifle? After that I shall perform with Mr. Silver, further, "Of Thy grace, O Lord," and some duets of Kücken's, and if the company desires it, conclude with "Robert, toi que j'aime."

That. Will you permit me first to repair the snapped strings?

(The whole company in the meantime take tea in the adjoining room and admire the untiring exertion and the culture of Mrs. Gold.—That having finished his work, Forte steps to the piano and plays his Study for the left hand, at the same time extending his right towards the company.)

That. (*At the conclusion, to Forte.*) Would it not have been easier and more suitable, if you had played it with your right hand too?

Forte. Truly that was a very pedantic observation of yours, which must be pardoned to old people. You misunderstand my position entirely! Do you not feel, then, that I already have one foot in the future?—Do you not feel that the public wish not merely to *hear*, but also to see something *extraordinary?* Do you not observe that these very *ailing looks* of mine have already produced great musical effects?

Saint. Do you not feel the quite extraordinary charm and effect which the *left hand alone* affords?—And not less the *extended right hand?*

That. Oh, indeed!—Ay, it is possible that feeling has taken a wrong direction with me. I must first live myself into the Parisian flight of feeling.

(Emma now plays the A-flat major Ballad by Chopin, after That had *named the piece before-hand.* The company was attentive.)

Forte. (*After the conclusion.*) Bravo!—a good beginning, Mr. That!—I am sorry I must take my leave: I have to visit two Parties to-night yet, and to deliver many introductions.

Silver. Miss Emma, I have just been told that you have *already* played much of Chopin, and beautifully. Pray let us hear his two latest Notturni also.

Mrs. Gold. (*To Emma.*) Have you heard the great celebrated Camilla Pleyel—and her rendering of the delicious D-minor Concerto of Kalkbrenner? Do you not also play things so beautiful and brilliant, for example, that beautiful

tender Notturno in D-flat by Döhler? Mr. Secretary X. performed it here lately in a transporting manner.

Emma. I know it—my little sister Cæcilia is playing it under me.

That. Would you in the meantime be satisfied with the two Notturni Op. 48 of Chopin?

The concluding song—"Robert, toi que j'aime," I shall not speak of.—About midnight there was an elegant supper, spiced with sweet wines and with—sour recollections of this musical evening.

CHAPTER XVI.

Artists alone have ever been to blame for the Decay of Art.

At the beginning of this century, when the old celebrated, thin, modest pianos and harpsichords of five octaves by Silbermann, on which Mozart and Haydn had to play, made room for the hammer-pianos of six octaves and for the first beginnings of our large grand-pianos, there began to develop also the so-called Bravura-play which distinguished itself by fullness of tone, quickly changing progression of harmonies, brilliancy, boldness, greater technique and totally new sound-effects. The talented Prince of Prussia Louis Ferdinand, Himmel, Dussek, Steibelt, Wölfl, and somewhat later Field, Clementi, Moscheles, Hummel, Beethoven, and others, at that time threw everybody into astonishment by their compositions and the artistic rendering of them on those new pianos which were quickly advancing to perfection. It was therefore a natural consequence that because of these new, brilliant, and full-bodied effects of sound, the compositions of Händel, Mozart, Haydn, which though classical were yet more simple and less exacting, were either neglected, or else transcribed, as Kalkbrenner and Hummel have done with Mozart's Concertos.

They were played in the modern style, that is to say, with greater brilliancy, with more bravura, in a quicker tempo, with more passionate and stronger accentuation, in one word, "in the modern concert-style," and thus the veneration due to these masterpieces was violated. Yet this new style of playing charmed people greatly, and was much appreciated. The times of simplicity were past, and it was not only in piano-playing that the impulse to produce music in fuller, more powerful sounds, manifested itself, instrumental music also had given up its accustomed trio style In the same manner as Hummel and others treated the old piano compositions, Mozart and Von Mosel acted previously in the intrumental department, when they adorned the Oratorios of Händel with a richer instrumentation. I myself also and my daughter Clara gave ourselves up with zeal to this new, brilliant style of playing. It was truly an earnest progress, no illusory one, as our most modern artists have made it, there was no foppish artistic pretentiousness about it, no distorted performance of good master-pieces, for the method, being in itself simple, did not allow of any such infatuated external flourishes as a few years later were admired by the public as manifestations of genius. My daughter Clara gained at that time much applause with piano-concertos of Mozart arranged in this style; not at home, it is true, not in Leipzig, there not till she had returned to her native town from Paris with the laurel-wreath she had obtained there. Leipzig was not the city that knew how to value, to encourage and to protect native talents, for, with international trade, interest and attention had turned to the artistic accomplishments of foreigners. With the greater part of the Leipzig experts and critics of those times—who with their accustomed rashness of judgment knew immediately what they were about—Clara passed until then for a dull, talentless girl, whose scientific education had been neglected, whom her father had with *pain and force* drummed some pieces into, which therefore she was able to play by heart. The walls of the "Gewandhaus" * and your humble servant are able to tell much more about this—and also about the *silent* acclamation which at that time the Septett of Hummel and the Concerto in E-minor of Chopin received in subscription concerts, *when she performed the latter for the first time and the second and third movement for the second time.* Leipzig, however, was not the only place that totally misconceived this Concerto and Chopin's other compositions, such as Variations, Mazurkas, Notturni, which had been published just then, and which were for the first time performed in Germany in public by Clara. Criticism in other cities said its say much in this manner: "This young girl appears to have some talent, only it is a pity that she is in the hands of such an unmusical, incapable father, who forces

* At that time the principal Concert-room in Leipzig.

her to play such rubbish." But when I say that this shy, modest, but *musical*, girl did nevertheless play well at least in Leipzig, some unprejudiced connoisseurs of those times, who are still living, can confirm me. To return to the above-mentioned "Gewandhaus" concerts, I have further to add that my daughter, when she had finished, made her bow, but before a silent public, and that the notabilities of this concert did not think it worth while to take the slightest notice of her or to speak a word of encouragement to her. She slunk away in tears from those hot boards—her father with her; both felt as if they had committed a crime against their native city.

My innocent, child-like Clara afterwards comforted herself with the thought that in such a celebrated city *native girls* never were applauded at first—only foreign boys. But on the other hand, people knew at once what to say, when the young girl returned from Paris :

"All had come of itself."

A small, detached remnant of those who were at that time so quick in their judgment, and who were joined by a few young, arrogant, and haughty imitators, tried indeed to receive my daughter Marie in the same manner, but without success and without the consent of the public, who had now become clear in their perception, for they possibly thought :—

"Surely such a thing cannot come of itself *twice !*"

Suffice it to say Clara afterwards obtained acclamation, often great acclamation, especially with the well-known Variations of Herz Op. 20 and 23, and the Concerto of Pixis, Op. 100, and similar pieces, which it is true Marie Wieck, in the spirit of the advanced musical times, exchanged for compositions of Beethoven, Chopin, Mendelssohn, &c.

But since that time, after Mendelssohn, with the meritorious and active assistance of David, had done incredible things in Leipzig, and in the service of the rarest humanity and amiability never treated young talents with contempt, but tried them without prejudice and encouraged and protected them—since that time Leipzig has totally changed, and appears, on the occasion of good performances, in holiday dress, unprejudiced and approving, nay, even enthusiastic, and verily—as if wishing to repair former wrongs—often yet more so at the appearance of natives than of strangers, whose appearances, indeed, in the present circumstances of the concert, are becoming rarer and rarer, and must soon stop entirely.

Thus, then—although the frequent piano-caricaturists (who, at that time, knew how to draw glory and money in plenty from the infatuated and confused public by rope-dancing and harlequinades of all kinds, by octave-thunder, trillings, extensions, jumps, raging, roaring, falling into fainting-fits, and the strangest, most striking outward appearances, and most ridiculous jestures, and were supported and hoisted up by venal phrase-criticism, and other wonderful arts) had

incurred my just contempt and criticism: yet I was among the better class of such as sinned against effect among the men of modern progress and almost all the superior concert-players, although I felt well that *truth and beauty* were not worthily enough represented by any of them. Here now appeared, also as an *idealistic art-virtuoso* in Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfort, London, and Leipzig, the universal, fiery Mendelssohn, who, with his exceedingly fine and intellectual feeling, and in his exemplary style of playing, and with the finest technique sustained by *the most beautiful touch*, the technique being to him merely the servant of true art, *never* an end in itself, and with the support of the authority he had already obtained, and also of his able teachers, such as L. Berger and Zelter, ventured even in public to perform the simple immortal masterpieces of Bach, Händel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven (of the first period), and others, with a simplicity, naiveté, chastity, elegance, and devotion until then unheard of. The astonished public, to whom Hummel's Septett and Chopin's Concerto had at that time appeared not brilliant enough, not suitable for concerts, not fit for producing sufficient effect to express themselves approvingly, granted at first only a reluctant *succès d'estime*, which, however, after repeated performances, soon went over to enthusiasm, which was given also to others who performed in a similar style and proved their artistic training in it. It is only natural that at the same time the piano rope-dancers with their worthless doings, with whom nothing but the titles showed inventive powers, should still draw something of an audience and continue to do so some years ago, for the history of the world advances slowly and along with it the history of art; but they could rarely venture with impunity on good piano-music—such ostentation remained without results, for in order to achieve results there is required a different *tendency* from what those sinners against Art possessed.

In the same manner now as Mendelssohn operated first and last in Leipzig, and especially in the Conservatory, Moscheles operated in London, Chopin, and to some degree St. Heller in Paris, Messer and many estimable amateurs in Frankfort on the Main, Fischhof in Vienna, able artists in Berlin, others in Dresden, in the more recent times Robert Schumann at Düsseldorf, and so forth. Thus only an impulse and intrepidity were required—and the obedient public followed again the "Superior," the true, the beautiful. To speak of the latest times, we already see with the finger quacks that still exist and their pupils and mimics, deserted Concert-rooms in Dresden, Leipzig, Vienna, even in smaller places, and now they can no longer be filled even with free tickets. Recommendations of all kinds, American melodies, Indian Negro themes, *Ne plus ultras* of jumps and extensions, charming titles at the head of fabrications without brains or invention—beside these Händel and Beethoven on the concert-bill— announcement of *only one* performance,—ailing looks, pressing recommendations, newspaper noise, clique and

claque—all is in vain : the public is this time prevented by other engagements and will admire the next time or when the *very last* performance takes place. The public are tired of harlequinades, and demand sterling musical culture, they demand an appreciative manifestation of it, they desire to hear fine sound and good music, performed with real art and grace, without excess and charlatanism, and at the same time a brilliant virtuoso production of the *superior kind.*

But criticism, too, has partly taken again a better and more gratifying direction, and has passed into learned hands capable of judging; it no longer pays homage to parties and coteries, it expresses its opinion impartially, boldly, and with dignity. There is, consequently, owing to it a well-merited share in the improved turn of art, and of the sympathy of the public. I may be permitted to name, from among several, only Carl Banck of Dresden, and Bischoff, Editor of the Rhenish Journal of Music. Also, I do not hesitate to give the correspondent signing Ker in the "Signale," Messrs. Klitzsch, Schaeffer, and T. U. in the "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik," and others, the credit of a competent and impartial judgment concerning compositions of the most various kinds.

But now one word more to our lady singers. The piano-fury takes the turn and has taken the turn, and you do not wish to take the turn? How is it possible that the musical tours of such a one as Jenny Lind, whose beautiful, only true style of singing has again found its confirmation in the singing of Henrietta Sontag and of Persiani, should have remained without visible result for *your* style of singing, and should have gone past you without leaving a trace? With older, long forced voices, especially on the stage, a change is no longer admissible and scarcely possible—they are, moreover, just on the point of dying out; but you, who are young singers, you allow yourselves to be shamed in judgment by the entire public at large, who showed for Jenny Lind everywhere *equal acknowledgment, equal delight!*

Could you, then, not endeavour, by a diligent and attentive solmization, to draw out also your voice, and by a natural and chaste singing, without a forced intonation of the sounds, to aim at the real effect—depth of feeling? Nay, not even the most sensitive conception and the most charming performance of the parts of Agatha, Amina, Maria (from the Daughter of the Regiment) etc., has stimulated you to emulation? For example, in "Softly sighs" you are still continuing to sing quite loud, joyfully, fast, and merrily, "the Nightingale and Cricket seem to enjoy the night air"—I suppose because the word *enjoy* is in it? The appearance of Amina in the Somnambula, in fact, the whole part you run through in quite a mechanical style! Do you not know that Jenny Lind, with the "Farewell" in the Daughter of the Regiment, moved the over-crowded Opera-house in Vienna eight times to tears, and not—to applause? Why, you sing and act Maria

and Amina in quite a curious and odd manner, quite the opposite way to Jenny Lind. Is it that you think to lose in originality and independence if you do not remain in your unthinking old style, but imitate Jenny Lind somewhat. You have so often heard songs of hers worthy to be remembered for ever, yet you will sing "On wings my fancy ranges," and "Gently through my mind there passes," and "O! Sunny Beam," just as thoughtlessly as ever, or with *false* pathos. And what shall people think of your antiquated adornments and Fermatas? Mendelssohn and a very few others have thrown the piano fury from its zenith, but with you art is not to be raised by artists! You say: "Our teachers do not draw our attention to it." Are the teachers, who often are the most prejudiced, to do everything then? *You must meditate and strive.* You exclaim further: "We are *obliged* to sing shouting-operas, which enslave the voice, and such things as circumstances and conductors impose on us. 'Benvenuto Cellini' was buried after its second appearance—the 'Wandering Jew' is to be the next opera, and the one after that an opera-monster of an unknown Italian of Milan, 'The mad Joanna,' which contains no pieces whatever for singing, much less melodies, and is rooting quite in the future." Just you all learn to sing again in really beautiful and true style, in the same style as Jenny Lind and others, and then you need have no hesitation in saying: We shall no longer shout singing nonsense, no longer shout trumpet and trombone sounds. Then the progress-trash will come to an end at once, and the composers will have to cultivate their feeling for beautiful and correct singing and for healthy and effective melodies, and if they, as is possibly the case, are not able to do that, they must give up their opera desires. By so doing you will promote the "everlastingly beautiful," and that is *true progress* and salvation from all errors of singing and from all artistic twaddle on the subject.

The history of Art offers you her hands, and, in the empty houses at repeated performances of such tormenting operas, every intelligent person sees already confirmed anew the proposition:

"*Artists alone have ever been to blame for the decay of Art.*"

CHAPTER XVII.

Miscellaneous.

The author signing himself, "Well known," tries to establish in his letters something like the proposition: "The work that on the first performance gives most enjoyment and pleasure to the general public, without at the same time requiring especial activity of their reason and reflection—is the right—the best one." And further: The general effect of a work of art must manifest itself immediately after the first performances. With this I shall compare experiences drawn from my life. I was with many others witness of the four first performances of the "Freischütz" in Leipzig. At the first performance the only points that pleased were the Waltz in the introduction, and the chorus of hunters and the chorus of virgins—in fact, you see, the least important parts; everything else found neither visible nor audible acclamation. Yet during the succeeding performances the interest extended by degrees to almost the whole of the rest, according as the comprehension and the enjoyment arising out of it increased after repeated hearings.

I was present in the Leipzig "Gewandhaus" at the first rehearsal of the 7th Symphony of Beethoven. Musicians, critics, connoisseurs, and people quite ignorant of music, each and all were unanimously of opinion that this Symphony could have been composed only in an unfortunate, in a drunken condition, especially the first and the last movement, *that it was poor in melody*, and so forth. We all know with how great veneration the mixed public already listen to this Symphony in Garden concerts, etc., and with how visible a pleasure they enjoy it.

The success of the 9th Symphony also is contradictory to the opinion of "Well-known." Some years ago people, it is true, were startled at the incomprehensible, unenjoyable chaos of this Symphony of Beethoven. We are already reconciled to it, and acknowledge and enjoy its magnificent beauties. The tormenting and unpleasant execution of the solos and choruses in the last movement, which are not adapted for the voice, is the only thing that never can and never will give enjoyment, just because it is *not beautiful*, and will remain so, if human voices have to struggle, and the execution stops far behind the conception. Thus to the fullness of harmonious sounds surely there must be joined also architectonic beauty

and character, if it is to satisfy our higher demands. These latter, however, are recognised only, and by degrees more and more, after repeated hearing, and when connoisseurs, and such as, without being connoisseurs, are yet well-educated, can with consciousness *feel them* out.

What the author says concerning operas, singers, composers, music of progress etc., I have also in other respects treated on from another point of view, and frequently I have come to the same results. Only he may permit me, in practical respects, here and there to defend my lady-singers. The appearance (it may be for the first time) of a *well trained and sensible lady-singer*, (who, therefore, has undertaken a task), for example, with an Aria in a concert before a criticising and well-educated public, whose attention is not drawn off with other theatrical secondary matters, as is the case on the stage, who eagerly listen for every breath, every vowel, every word, every sound—is a dangerous undertaking. She must then be allowed to choose whatever *she* wishes, something that is within her voice, that she is able to command fully in all dimensions, that puts her voice and her good qualities into the clearest light, etc. The managers of the concert can give her no special orders as to what she is to sing. Above all things the singer wishes to *please;* that the managers, too, are to please with it, is not at all necessary and a matter of indifference to the singer. Nor are the managers able or willing to indemnify her for a failure—nay, they will not even comfort her because of it, so that she has all the risk on her own side. She, consequently, chooses most likely an Italian Aria of Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini, or Mozart, etc., because in that her voice has specially good sound, attraction, and enchantment, and can show itself in its full extent—circumstances which make all unprejudiced and educated hearts favourably inclined to her. Let the classical people, or those who behave like such, lament and wail at this—it does not matter. This Aria we are speaking of is with Italian text, and is the singer not to take this original text which is evidently so much easier having been applied in so clever a manner and in a correct, artistic and singing style, by the composer, who is an expert in singing?—Instead of that, a miserable German translation?—No, Mr Well-known, that is too great a demand! You speak so openly and pointedly concerning the classical behaviour and many other glaring foolishnesses, and you mean suddenly to become so rigorous and chastising to my poor singers? The favourable circumstances, talent, voice, health, several thousand Thalers, a clever teacher capable of self-sacrifice, the fortune of being able to hear great masters, from four to five years' time, and many other things besides, must unite till she arrives at the above-mentioned Aria, (I here speak of *trained* singers, not of others *who can do everything*), and then she is not to sing of *Italian love* in the *Italian language*, but in a German, rugged, and awkward translation that is not adapted for singing?—My friend, you cannot be in earnest—why should you be so bitter? If the public wish to know thoroughly every word of

the Italian love, then surely you must be gallant enough to the singer to give them the translation of the few words—the execution will do the rest. Every Aria, every song will sound best in the language in which it was originally composed. Do not even many French artists endeavour to sing German songs in the German language? Jenny Lind spent several months in making the German text in the "Daughter of the Regiment" and in the "Somnambula" adapted to the voice. Consider, then, what difficulties a singer that wishes to sing *well* has to overcome with German words. Why, you even object to the pronunciation.

In regard to singing *in time*, especially in German vocal-music, I think you might also grant some little indulgence. Yes, if there were no taking breath, and none of those time-consuming consonants, and none of many other things! The greatest singers frequently have difficulties with these points! Consider the liberties the strict Jenny Lind, the most conscientious singer of our century, took, and had to take, so as to give satisfaction to the beauty of her voice! Moreover, a singer neither can nor ought to take as a pattern the strict time-keeping of a Waltz, etc.; here again you go too far. And the use of single sounds in recitative and with the Fermates, so as to allow tone and voice to resound beautifully? Well! Let Lind and other great singers answer you on that. Until the time great singers perish with the art, it must remain so. However we must not in this place, before the general public, open a singing and a lecturing school, in order to force from our enemies a *mocking smile.*

The Well-known wants *no more Cadences*? Well, here the opera of the future, which you contest so much, meets you very opportunely. You may in the end be a conductor yet with such singing-music of the future. Where are you to get for such productions well taught, artistically trained singers? You will not get one, no not even one, who still has a *voice*, though *no training.* If you do not frequently give to the former an opportunity of sustaining sounds, of spinning them out, and of allowing them to produce an effect, and of resounding now powerfully and then again charmingly—and this now and then with their alluring shakes (the most beautiful ornamentation for three centuries) *crescendo, decrescendo*, with the finest shadings and with the most spirited animation, then you repel that of which the singer is *proudest*, for it has taken her four or five years to learn it beautifully. In addition to that she had the rare fortune of having this faculty trained and cultivated under the direction of a teacher of the old extinct school, *who does not destroy the voice in the training.* Now you would be satisfied with the other one? No! you will not get her either—or she will run off again soon. Why, her *voice* is all she possesses, else—she has nothing, or she has learned it wrongly or badly. And you wish to take away

from her sole possession, the *voice*, which in this style can last only a short time, the opportunity of having a free range, of allowing itself to be heard, and of making impression, according to its own way though it may be in an uncouth way? Cruel man, surely you cannot be married, since you are so ungallant, impracticable —at least you have trained no singers yet. Surely Haydn, Mozart, Winter, Weigl, Rossini, C. M. von Weber, whom you can otherwise appreciate so well, did not write down their many Cadences from ignorance or from embarrassment? I have heard the cantatrice Willmann, for whom Haydn specially wrote the Soprano part in the Creation, execute at Erfurt with wonderful ability those Cadences and elegant although short ornaments which Haydn himself had taught her. Ay, ay, zeal, anger, displeasure at the innumerable contemptible things and incredible foolishnesses in our times, which are so rich in contradictions, mislead you to kill everything at once. People will in another respect also cast the same reproaches at me : "let us comfort each other together!"

I must also interpose against what you say concerning the pianoforte and the Virtuosi and so forth.

"No great Composer was ever a great Virtuoso, and no great Virtuoso becomes a great Composer?"

Why, you empty the bath with the child in it!—Mozart, Dussek, Hummel, Moscheles, Von Weber, Mendelssohn, even Beethoven, and several others belonging to the good days of the piano, were certainly *great and celebrated Virtuosi.* It takes nothing from their greatness as Virtuosi, nay, rather it is a credit to them, that they employed in a sensible manner their important powers as Virtuosi (which their successors often endeavoured in vain to reach, even with their balancing rope-dancing) merely as a means to produce good music, demanding much and fine technique. And Mozart's 24 Concertos etc., the execution of which *was smiled at by every beginner*? Well, do you really mean it? In playing and executing these in a style as beautiful, as healthy, as correct, and as finished as Mozart did (it is true, on pianos and Harpsichords, which were easier to play on), I have succeeded with but few pupils. To do so there is required an extremely well developed mechanism, a fine, a thoughtful musician, the neatest finish, and the most elegant and sweet expression of the tone. Here the beginner does not *smile* in the least, *but the connoisseur* smiles at *these* and at a whole multitude of Virtuosi besides, who are obliged, because of their weakness or their mistaken tendency, to look at such performances over their shoulders. And when *these* venture upon them, then *they are laughed at*—not Mozart.

What?—on our good, full-toned instruments, sustained and spun-out melodies, pieces adapted for singing, and good music, Concertos of Beethoven,

Mendelssohn, Chopin, etc., could not be played beautifully, feelingly, and impressively, especially not with *accompaniment?* Well, by that decision, with one single blow you upset me, my book, and my pupils!—Yours must be a pretty piano-box!—A composer you are, a teacher of composition, an expert in music, an author and a scholar, but don't you come out with your Virtuosity, for surely it suffers from manifold and sensitive infirmities;—so much I can be sensible of. I at least shall decline to make of you a good Virtuoso, and that too with your hammer-box, with your prejudices, with your hostile views as to the piano,—that would be called "carrying coals to Newcastle." In what hidden, out-of-the-way corners were you then in the Leipzig Concert-halls, when there was fine piano-playing, without piano-horror and without mortifying and endless jumble of passages, compositions of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Schumann, and others? Well I declare! You want to banish the piano-demon, yet you will not do justice to what is right, but throw my three trifles too at once after it?—

I shall not argue with you any further, for you are monstrously rough, you are an expert with the pen—though not with piano and singing-pupils: else I would pray you for further information about many things that are to be read there in print in your "Musical Letters." But—after having further suppressed *my* views concerning *your* views in regard to the third period in Beethoven—one thing further I must approach nevertheless, and I ask quite with the utmost politeness and with an entreaty for instruction:

"Were it impossible that a powerful fugue of Bach, Händel and others, even if the public were not able to recognize and to examine and cultivate singly its architectonic beauties, should of itself and as a whole, if it were executed *with sure and good appointments*, make in the church an impression of the solemn, the sublime, the eternal, the monumental?"

HINTS

FOR HONOURABLE TRAVELLING PIANO VIRTUOSI.

Speaking in general, you ought no longer to make any tours, not even to London and Paris; except you had the intention of giving lessons there. But to do that you have opportunity at home, and perhaps with more and surer results than there, assuming that you are an able teacher. Paris, it is true, fondles the pianists and gives them food and drink, but it does not pay; on the contrary, the Virtuoso has to pay—to the Journals, if he wishes only to *have his name mentioned.*—And London—pays no longer. Neither is there

any necessity for it: during the Season dozens of Virtuosi have for years been ready to play gratis, because they imprudently happen to be there, and wish to have played in London. Several of them cannot even do that if they have not many introductions, good recommendations,—luck. Such is at present the lot of what is beautiful in Virtuosodom. First to learn much with great sacrifice, then to expend money in trying to gain the criticism of the daily papers there (now almost as in Paris), all the time living very expensively; and then, after unspeakable trouble, at last to give a Concert, only at the best to recover the expenses of the concert, and then to have the English luck to be allowed to play the three little pieces that have been received favourably, either gratis or for an insignificant sum, over and over again for three months, and along with this to be *obliged* to play some silly pieces which editors of London papers are wont to fix on in the interest of certain composers. "America shall pay the London accounts, London honour?" The expectations are *distant!* The bills are to be honoured *on that side?* How many are there that have already returned from there with converted emigrants in order to take up again the teaching wantonly forsaken at home, which now is not paid one whit better than before for all one's poor living in London and America, for all the fog and soot swallowed, and for all the sacrifice of one's small inheritance. In our times, when the understanding of a beautiful masterly piano performance finds its expression with the educated public, even without so-called foreign renown, it is all the same where a person has played or where he has *not* played. Let directors of Concerts, therefore, lay aside their astonishment and their former views, if unprejudiced and experienced Virtuosi that understand their times, no longer seek for a few pounds, sufficient for the journey and the inn-keepers, to reap a doubtful glory and a suspected honour, probably even still fighting with an existing Coterie. What then shall such an honour lead to, an honour that he can make no use of anywhere, and for which the artist is perhaps even meant to beg? By that means, and by the unlimited misuse of music for every imaginable charitable object, the artist is wholly cut off from the possibility of reaping for himself and by means of concerts of his own a reward or gain which surely ought not to be grudged to a vocation of life that demands so many sacrifices? A decline of a beautiful and masterly Virtuosity, too, must result from that, or rather has already resulted since 1848. Everywhere, especially in the rising generation, we meet with the "dozen-play," that is, one plays like another, one dozen like another, their playing is neither cold nor warm, neither fine nor exactly rough, neither bungling nor masterly, neither musical nor unmusical—but brave and homespun, with the notes in time, which, to be sure, is still better than the thrashings of the future. But what is still wanting is made up according to circumstances, and quite in conformity with the spirit

of these times, when associations are so much in vogue, by the universally and fully developed clique with the claque and the criticism of the day besides. Why then, I ask, is this young generation, with all their good talent, unwilling and unable to advance? The "ideal models" are wanting, on which they might form and warm themselves and get their enthusiasm aroused.

But I return to my next subject. Our musical friends, it is true, are tired of virtuosi, but they are no longer tired of music, as during the times of political commotion; music is again asked for—also good *piano music*, if it is executed in a masterly and not in an amateur manner. And nevertheless, you ought not to make tours if you do not wish to fall into the danger of sacrificing almost everywhere your time, money, and health. Let me solve for you this problem afresh on the market of life and add some counsels to it.

1. Almost everywhere you go, they will say to you: "Ah, if you had come a month ago—now, every day for weeks to come is taken up with subscription-concerts, a charity-concert for the infant-hospital, a concert for ragged children or for unragged ones,—likewise for the Pestalozzi-union, likewise for the city poor—for the shame-faced poor—for the shameless poor—for an unknown benevolent object, or for a known one—for the pension-fund—for a monument—likewise for the benefit of an unfortunate virtuoso, who has got into trouble with his hotel-bill and now tries to dispose of his tickets *in person;* in addition to all that, the theatre is just bringing out a new opera—not to reckon innumerable Soirées of private associations. Come back in a month, we can then find a day when you also can get the concert-hall." But not to lose your time, as is likely the case, you may appear in one of the next begging-concerts to make yourself known and *appreciated.* After *Art* has begged nearly long enough for the poor—when are these to begin begging for Art?—It is questionable whether you intend to return in a month, after the public are sucked dry and have got tired of potpourri and charity, or when meanwhile a great inundation or a great conflagration has taken place, or cholera and fevers are raging there? Moreover, all sorts of unfortunate circumstances will make your best introductions come to naught. You will learn that these influential introductions are addressed to friends that are absent, sick or dead.

2. The hotel-keepers, the person that lets the hall, the local authorities, the parochial board, the persons that see to the arrangement of the concert, the people that carry the instrument, the tuner, the proprietors of newspapers for expensive advertisements, the printer, and (as is the case in some places) the person that lets seats, who consents to let for money and kind words those seats whereon will sit mostly holders of free-tickets, and further all those that are on the look-out for a tip, etc.—not one of them can forget that blessed piano-fury period,

when an entrance ticket was paid with two or three crowns. "Such a piano Virtuoso," they say, "*may* gain within a couple of hours hundreds of crowns; if he does not clear them, that is not our fault, therefore he must *pay*, pay high—we must meet him with premeditated difficulties." The word is now no longer "An open course to talent," but "Open and hidden obstacles!" The hotel-keeper, reflecting that he has to write many accounts doubly chalked before he can gain a hundred crowns *more* than he gains *already*, chalks you trebly; the proprietor of the hall, which moreover is the only one in the place, cannot get rent high enough for it, and yet the lighting up of it is of the most miserable description. The police require payment for permission, but of course they give no payment of indemnification, if the artist, as usual, has hit on an unlucky day, when the manager of the theatre suddenly appoints an opera; then the managers of the poor frequently demand a high tax for the poor, for whose benefit the Virtuoso is afterwards still to give a special performance, and they refer for it to the profits which under different circumstances Virtuosi had sometimes made,—and thus it goes on. In addition to that, the local artists and their friends, the concert and theatre establishments, etc., are hostile to you. They think their own enterprises endangered and damaged by you, since you might perhaps be received with *special* favour, and then you might give a second concert.—In short, the expenses and difficulties are altogether out of proportion to the low price of admission, which, as it is, is still too high in comparison with that paid at the subscription-concerts which are now being held in almost every town. And now the *free-tickets!* Heavens! who has an idea of their number? If you were to strew out with full hands your Californian tickets, if you were to take a special clerk for packing and delivering them, you have after all when the concert is over made for yourself enemies, who were waiting and watching in the background to see whether they would be forgotten or not! Among the innumerable cares, troubles and mortifications connected with the arranging of a concert, the complete sending out of free-tickets stands at the top. But then your hall is also filled, and people congratulate you—on the *splendid receipts.* These receipts and the sum which the ticket-seller at the entrance door (who generally stands in most amiable communication with the ticket-collector, and cherishes quite a special sympathy for him) condescends to hand over to you, may indemnify you for the next day, on which is greedily demanded payment of the terrible expenses. Then after all sometimes come the local authorities, who fix a tax in proportion to this filled hall.

3. You wish to perform a trio? But to do this, do you not also require a Violin and a Violoncello, and the best performers on these instruments? You pay your dutiful visit to the manager of the theatre, to the musical director, to the leader, and some other influential persons, and to the above-

mentioned artists. Half these people were not at home, but no matter: you go until you have been successful. They gladly consent, but there is great difficulty in finding out an hour for the rehearsal of the Trio. At last the difficulties are overcome, and now you breathe more freely, and already you shyly put an expensive preliminary announcement of your concert in the daily paper. Ah! but there is still wanting a lady-singer? The managers of the theatres must try to spare their best singing-powers, else they would be worn out regardlessly and greedily by the constant charity-concerts, and therefore they can give no permission, which is also quite natural and in order. Well? At last you take a singer whom no one wishes to hear any more, who has no longer a voice. Be thankful that the poor girl, who shares her lot with hundreds of her like, assists in making up your concert. She and the others who assist have, as it is, nothing for it in return but a few of your free-tickets, which they richly deserve. Now everything is accomplished: "To-morrow my concert takes place under the kind patronage of many friends." The publication of this programme, got up with such enormous difficulties, costs only from two to three crowns. On the morning of the day that the concert is to take place, you awaken with the determination to play over your solo pieces once at least to-day, since for a week previous it was impossible to do so because of active and passive visits. There is a knock at the door. Come in! Behold a note from the singer: "With the greatest regret I beg to inform you that, because of a sudden hoarseness and from fear of too severe criticism, I must forego the pleasure of singing at your concert to-night—another time I shall have great pleasure"—Another knock. Come in! The Violinist and the Cello-player with compliments send word that, to their greatest regret, they are unable to be at the last rehearsal at eleven o'clock, as there is a rehearsal of an opera in the theatre from ten to two, and further, that to-night their assistance is doubtful since, because of the sudden hoarseness of the first Comic, the piece "The Liar and his Son" may perhaps not be performed and "Der Freischütz" may possibly be substituted.—What is to be done now? It is impossible now to countermand the concert, the daily paper is out, and the concert-bills are published, fifty tickets are sold already, this is the only evening that the hall is free for the next fortnight, the piano is there already and is just tuning, everything else has already been arranged last night. Throw yourself at once into a cab, make your round of calls again to the above-mentioned persons, perhaps you may manage to get these artists relieved of their other duties. They will be very happy to do so, "should The Freischütz not be performed." All right! now quick again into the cab, look for deputies *without a rehearsal*, for which there now is no longer time. Nobody wants to be the stop-gap, least of all without rehearsal! At this point the following advice may be still given to you:

Get small bills printed, which are handed *politely* to the public at the entrance of the hall: "In consequence of opera and of colds, my Concert remains without the kind assistance of many friends—I shall play instead a Sonata of Beethoven, and in fact, 14 pieces, one after another." Comfort yourself, during the finger-mania-period I have often seen this happen, even to Rubinstein in Dresden when he was only fourteen years old, who, on that occasion, though I had at the rehearsal in vain drawn his attention to it, threatened to sink and vanish through a rotten board into the hollow space below.

4. Do not any longer make a tour without some kind of instrumental, or, best of all, singing-assistance. Much piano-playing without a break is a horrid fate, even if you do not break through the boards.

5. Before you deliver any introduction, go first to the Music-seller that sells your tickets for the Concert. He has to endure on your account much detention, much annoyance and many unpleasant things—maybe even your own reproaches, if the thing does not go straight! This kind tormented man, from whom *all* the ladies desire tickets for the first and second rows of seats, so as to be able to watch the hands of the player, will inform you about many things that you ought to be acquainted with before you take another step: be guided by him, and do not think you know better. The concert-instinct of such a man, who has so many dealings with this strange virtuoso race, is often amazing. After that however look for the best and most honest tuner, and try by every means to gain him for your purpose. Through his counsel and support you may perhaps get an instrument that will play, that keeps in tune, and that you may manage to perform upon; leave the instrument entirely under his control, else you will be sure to make yourself ridiculous by accidents of all kinds, and always different ones in different towns. Every Virtuoso has his instrument with him, it is only the unlucky piano-hero who is given over to the *discretion* of strange instruments to the very last note he plays. Yet do not embitter your situation still more by too fastidious fear. Be content if the touch is passable and the mechanism in good order. It is for you to remember, that among thirty so-called concert-grands there is always only *one* that is such *really*, and that the other ones have only to bear that name *in submission*.

6. Your next step is to go to the honourable reporter, referee, critic of concerts, who will make you acquainted further with quite different difficulties and with the *concert-diplomacy* to be employed in this particular town. In fact, give the concert, not according to *your own head*, but according to the *better heads*, who know the town and its inhabitants. But after that, in the choice of the concert-pieces, show *firmness*, else people would advise you so much up to the beginning of the concert that in the end you will play quite different

pieces from those mentioned in the concert-bill. This is no fiction, it is experience. From this arises the "Concert-muddle," an extraordinary mixture, which does not permit of any chemical analysis. Arrange your programme so that you endeavour to draw the public up to you, so that you play those pieces that are earnest and demand much attention in the first part, because the public are then still fresh and most susceptible. In the second part, however, pass with a skilful transition (my daughter Marie lately used to choose for this purpose *several short characteristic pieces from the different epochs of piano-music*) over to the brilliant production of any of the better class of drawing-room pieces. Who then would play only for the connoisseurs and artists, that is, for the free-tickets? Is it not the general public that pay the expenses—surely I cannot knock them on the head, else at the second concert I have nothing but kind free-tickets before me. Neither do the nice words of the criticism indemnify for the loss of nice crowns. Or shall I have to thank rather any celebrated lady-singer for the luck of a good house?—A man does not wish always to read serious things, things that strain his thoughts; he often prefers a pretty comedy without murder to a great drama with murder, and may for all that remain a gentleman.

7. Have no readings at your concert, except by the best tested and the most popular readers. An unfortunate choice and an unfortunate *reading* often go together with the result that a musical public is thereby put into the very worst humour.

8. A concert ought to last scarcely two hours—rather leave out your *own Composition.*

9. Make yourself well acquainted beforehand with the piano that is to be lent to you. Do not wax eloquent, do not brag that you can play on anything. I have experienced terrible things with others,—not with my daughters, because I sent after them, almost to all places where they performed, their own well-tested concert-grands—often at great expense. Notwithstanding all that, and with all my great caution, I have had to enrich my concert experiences for thirty years long with the oddest difficulties and in every place, again and again with different and unheard-of ones.

10. I would have many things to tell you yet—but the public must not hear them.

11. Well!—one remark more, but of course between ourselves.—If you travel for several months continuously, when you have neither time nor opportunity for quiet study—your execution does not improve; on the contrary, it grows worse and worse. You are too quick in the tempo, you begin to be indistinct, your execution gets uncertain, your use of the pedal careless, and negligences of all kinds surprise you. In short, go home at once when the season is over—

it is necessary. Come to yourself again, and lay down again the standard of a strict criticism for your playing. And how is it now with you, you wonderful young gentlemen—you wonderful misses of from sixteen to eighteen years? Where has your good genius gone to? Fetch all your musical friends, fetch your old teacher, ask him for an honest and a strict criticism—study again earnestly and carefully—for you have forgotten the three trifles! Your whole glory, it may be obtained already or not obtained yet, will else be lost—your art is lost already. The unlimited acclamation, the praises, the worshippers, the empty phrase-makers– alas! they are of no use, if we want to strive after *an ideal.* This can be done nowhere but—in the *quiet closet.*

CONCERT-HALLS.

Concert-halls are being built or are intended to be built at present in many towns for the importunate so-called Virtuosi, for singers and for subscription-concerts which are most extraordinarily on the increase;—not so much so, in the meantime at least, for respectable artists, as I have explained already.

I think it my duty, with the experience I have had, to give my views also in regard to this subject for further consideration, and I limit myself to speaking here of "Concert-halls for singers, lady-singers, piano-performances, subscription-concerts, musical-assemblies, rehearsals, etc., and perhaps also for balls."

Among all the concert-halls that I have got acquainted with and tested in Austria, Germany, France, etc., there are only three that are wholly and in every respect suitable for their purpose, and therefore I think that these before all others ought to be taken as patterns, not only as regards simple interior decoration, which cannot disturb and interrupt by anything inappropriate the unbroken transmission of the sound, but also as regards approximate length, height and breadth. After many experiments in the manufacture of pianofortes, acoustics has fixed on this principle: "that sounding-board is the best, which sounds best." Let us transfer that and say: "that Concert-hall is the best, which sounds best." These halls are the Gewandhaus Hall in Leipzig, the Hall of the Singakademie in Berlin, and, at least in regard to the main point, the Apollo-Hall in Hamburg. Each of these celebrated halls holds about from nine to twelve hundred of an audience, according as the small hall adjoining is more or less made use of. For smaller parties, lectures, quartett entertainments, rehearsals on the piano, etc., only the small hall is opened. Anything below or above that is faulty. If the hall is built larger in order to give now and

then on special occasions admittance to two or three thousand people, manifold disadvantages arise, which are detrimental to its being used much, and consequently must greatly reduce the handsome rent which a perfect hall would bring. I throw out, among others, the following considerations:

First. That in so large a hall rehearsals for orchestral-pieces, as well as for the piano and other instruments with the accompaniment of the orchestra, are almost impossible because of too great a sound, which must disturb and be prejudicial to exact harmony.

Second. That concerts in such a hall, when the audience numbers only from four to six hundred, which is most frequently the case, would be a ridiculous or a sad sight, and the artists would rather shun it than make use of it.

Third. That the performances would be called in doubt before an audience comparatively so small, just because of too great a sound, which can be deadened only when the hall is pretty well filled.

Fourth. That the expenses of lighting and heating would be very much increased, as it is almost only in winter that concerts take place; and that this, therefore, with the present position the concert is in, would be most impracticable.

Fifth. That in such a hall singers could make an impression only if they were, according to the most modern French, Italian, and I am sorry to say also German style, to scream, and not to sing. They would, therefore, instead of assisting to re-establish and to further the true chaste art of singing, as it is at present with very few exceptions yet represented only by Jenny Lind and Henrietta Sontag, they would only, I say, do the opposite and assist the unnatural, which would be a pity. Do not hold up the theatre against me. This is not the place to investigate to what degree our *large* theatres (besides too strong an instrumentation in so many German operas unadapted for singing) have contributed to the almost total decay of a noble singing style; besides, opera singing is quite a different thing from concert singing.

Large halls can be used only for industrial exhibitions, balls, and masquerades, and for large vocal performances of from five hundred to a thousand singers and powerful orchestras—not even for large subscription-concerts, as is sufficiently proved by the Central-Halle in Leipzig, the Reitbahn (Circus) Hall in Vienna, the Hôtel de Ville in Paris, etc.

In several large cities they intend at present to erect large exhibition buildings for menageries, rope-dancers and equestrian performances, and to unite concert-halls with these. However suitable in some respects this might be, I must dissuade from it, were it only for the reason that those large exhibition buildings for want of space have to be erected outside the town, whereas

the place for concert-halls is within the town. In regard to that I may also make the innocent concert remark, that Janizary-music* and lions' voices, as well as hyena howling, are of such a penetrating nature, that surely tender voices and virtuoso performances on the piano and on other instruments would at times have to endure a most superfluous accompaniment however far removed the hall might be.

TO SEVERAL YOUNG PIANO COMPOSERS !

I have just come home from a severe piano-séance. A well-known Virtuoso, who himself composes, has been trying to play to me a number of your piano compositions and this with discomfort and affliction—with enormous exertion.—Surely you do not compose the like for yourselves alone, else you would not have got it printed. Hence the question: for whom is it then, really, that you compose?

> "For well educated amateurs who can find no pleasure in the insipid, vague drawing-room and finger-music, and are desirous to have a better entertainment."

Among all those whose musical education I have completed during forty years, there is none who could play and master such tormenting, clumsy compositions, which are partly quite unadapted to the piano and over-loaded with unnatural and endless harmonies and syncopations. And if there were some who would really by diligence and perseverance wish to master your music—they are to entertain themselves with that, they are to have pleasure and enjoyment in it—are they?

> "We also write for musical Virtuosi."

If Virtuosi are inclined to play, and in a great measure to study, such difficult music, then surely it ought to be very different music—of different effect, different form, different power of invention, of different value.

> "We want to foster music and not merely the piano."

Well! I should hope that Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Chopin, Mendelssohn, and Schumann have written music, and they are reckoned by no means poor composers?—Do they perhaps need to be ashamed of their music, and at the same time of their innumerable and satisfying beauties of sound and their pianistic effects which are frequently so very striking?

Let me make for once a closer inspection of your "Spring time Raptures." Here then you have at the beginning a dry, thin, immovable little melody of four or eight bars, which of itself is of a very dull appearance, and here

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* "Janizary-music" is the name given in Germany to the percussion instruments –big drum, cymbals, &c.

you try to depress it still more by some inartistic and dull harmonies?—The next bars already indulge in a few daring chords and skips, and to these are very soon joined superhuman spans and arpeggios. Now work begins—now we are taught how to work, and that in a polyphonic manner,—you are turning everything round and round, and, alas! you enslave every little semiquaver with a learned harmonic chord. Now come passages for the left hand, and for the right hand alone, and also for both together and moving contrary to each other. But they are so stiff and intricate, and modulate in such a forced manner, that surely nobody can have pleasure in it even if he were able to play them correctly and clear and *legato* as you have prescribed. Moreover, in playing, the fingers of each hand often meet on *the same* keys. That may perhaps sound on paper or in your imagination—but never on the piano; on the contrary it disturbs the fulness of the sound, the flow of the passages, and is disagreeable. Then follows the middle theme; it moves in D sharp-minor, for the piece is in F sharp-major. Of course not a piece will do now-a-days with anything less than five or six sharps or flats. What fashionable composer would now-a-days still write in G-major, in D-major, etc.!—These vulgar keys belong to the olden times. Now you continue to grub steadily on in a loud wail over the world's sorrow, and in countless sharps and flats.—Can no pleasant ideas whatever any longer rise up in you? Are there then no longer any cheerful, bright, pleasant colours whatever—not even for "Spring-time raptures"? If you have already painted these in such a gloomy, gray, snow colour, what then will your "Spring-time sorrows" turn out to be like?—Why, that is exactly as if you wished to meditate in C sharp-major over the the desponding inscription of a tombstone.—After long torments and tortures of all kinds, once more, towards the conclusion, the ill-used melody in A sharp-minor. At first it is slow in time, then quickened; finally it goes through B flat-major to D sharp-minor, and gradually ends in *nothing*. My tormented friend got to the end with the ninth page, and I—also with my analysis of this "Spring-time rapture."—It is true this composition is by no means common or trivial, not even for the drawing-room—but it is just as little for the future or the present. I cannot suppress the remark that on these nine pages there might have been almost room for Schumann's Forest Scenes, or his Children's Scenes, or his Album for Youth!

> "Compositions which come easy to the fingers, and are at the same time effective in sound, there are plenty from Czerny to Schulhoff. These we recommend to you."

Would it be so great a misfortune then for you, if one could play your "Spring-time raptures" successfully to educated people so that all could enjoy it? Would it not then be agreeable to your publisher, whose over-sharped and flatted compositors have to sigh so much over your manuscript, if he could sell,

along with a hundred copies of the charming Idylls and the bold Tarantella of Schulhoff, and the Children's Scenes of Schumann, two or three copies of your compositions? You surely do not write for yourselves alone, and for the *publisher's own* self. Moreover I have already some just doubts as to *your* execution—but much less would I wish to hear it performed by your publisher.

> "We write for domestic musical edification, for souls that are of a similar humour, and not for you and such as are content with mere pianistic effects: we pursue higher aims, the publishers must know that best—otherwise they would not pay us for our manuscripts. And criticism has already judged many things of ours to be excellent, and has encouraged us to continue."

My criticism, at all events, has not been encouraging, nor do I envy your hopeful publishers. Besides they are said to have already had meetings wherein sighs predominate, and where they woefully discuss the now universal wailing over the world's sorrow of the young generation of composers.—It will not be long before it is found out how many *paying* souls of a similar humour, and friends of domestic musical edification, have come to buy such piano and music-sorrows, as have for some years past been coming in such numbers into the light of the world.

No, gentlemen, you are on the wrong track. In what is unnatural, in a troubled, plodding reflection—in the zeal to make everything different from others—in the hasty endeavour to be original at any price—in the proud pretentiousness to make one's theoretical studies shine everywhere—in the zeal to wish to begin where Beethoven stopped—in the eagerness only to continue Schumann's individualities—in such and similar affectations of superiority there is no *real creative power*—no progress, no future.

Little thanks have I to expect for my book—after this maybe, however, now and then a friendly pressure of the hand by a music-publisher.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Concerning Pianos.

Without giving my opinion in regard to English and German mechanism and the advantages of each over the other, I pass to the main point, to the quality of the tone, and to a correct style of touch. In this the culture of the singing-tone, the human voice, will always assist us.

First. The style of touch must never be tough, but elastic, sure, and supple. Whether more or less hard (but not so easy as at former times) does not matter; it depends on the power and the age of the pupil and the player. But he must be able to have the instrument under his command—not the instrument him. If the touch is tough and stiff and unequal, if it demands an unusual and unnatural exertion of power; and if with this it should perhaps be the case further that the drop of the keys is too deep and the measure of the octaves too far apart: then the pupil becomes the victim of the instrument and fails in his purpose.

Second. The tone must never reach its utmost limit and by that means exhaust itself; that is, if with a *correct, loose* touch I play however strong, there must remain in the hearers the feeling that *if I were to play still stronger, the sound would be stronger still.*—The same thing holds good with the singer too. A tone which is entirely exhausted, which excludes the possibility of going further, and suggests finiteness is not *beautiful.* I know well all our opera singers deride me, and the applauding public give me the lie, and the opera of the future laments over such conservative ears.—Ah yes, if there were not such a thing as the three trifles!

Third. The hammer must be neither too *soft,* too *sharp,* too *firm,* nor too *hard.* A sharp, pointed tone, with a strong touch, at once reaches its limit, becomes rough, disagreeable, and injurious; at least according to the old school, and it does not admit of sufficient shadings and misleads to a childish style of play. And a tone that is too soft, with which the player has to fight, does the same thing, it is injurious to distinctness and clearness in all respects and in all dimensions, and misleads to a bad touch.—A good and proper leathering of the hammer is the true ornament of the piano.

Fourth. The tone must have volume and inner power, energy and decision. A hollow, though apparently beautiful-sounding, soft, sweet, violet-blue tone is nothing, can lead to nothing, expresses nothing, in fact deprives the passages and the playing of all *expression*—the player is lost.—The heavy stringing of the present day, if the whole mensuration is in correct proportion to it *and the touch admits of every degree of shading,* gives to the tone something of volume, something masculine and satisfying—and is a great improvement in the construction of instruments.

Fifth. The instrument must be *equal,* all the octaves must be in the most beautiful proportion to each other. A beautifully trained voice is also in this case the standard and the pattern. If any one says: "but my grand piano has a very beautiful bass!"—well so much the worse if the treble and the middle parts are not exactly in proportion also in regard to colour and quality of the sound. If any one says: "my daughter studied in Paris, and has acquired exceedingly strong chest-tones"—so much the worse, if the other registers do not tally with them—and have been on the contrary *pressed down* and *deteriorated* by

the unnatural, presumptuous proceedings. Inequality of the piano spoils the most beautiful playing, and a player who has spirit and feeling becomes ill at ease, uncertain, faint-hearted, and despairs of his art.

Sixth. The tone must come forth at every degree of strength or weakness *easily* and instantaneously on being struck, and must continue to sound and prolong itself. This produces the *sonorous*, an infinite charm united with grace which affects the feelings of every educated, unprejudiced person, which can be replaced by nothing else in the nature of sound, and which can be talked away by no Hegelian Nomenclature. This again leads me involuntarily to the human voice.—A voice that of itself sounds or appears to sound, when you are close by, strong, soft, full and withal even youthful, but remains too long and too much in the throat, and does not come out by the nearest and shortest road, and therefore does not lie in front, and does not resound instantaneously, does not produce and prolong the sound with ease, without too much breath, and not without the necessity of putting forth too much breath upon it :—such a voice is without charm and grace, is wanting in fulness of soul, in the enchanting. It excites no lasting interest, no real sympathies ! On the contrary the interest diminishes every time it is heard. I specify here as an instance the voice of Tichatschek of Dresden, and even the less trained one of Madame Günther-Bachmann of Leipzig, which for this very reason for many years never lost their attractive power. And what better and surer proof of this position can be given than the voice of Jenny Lind, a voice not great, not strong, not imposing, in the deep notes even faulty, hoarse, at least muffled, which nevertheless produces the same effect before all men and before all nations ?—I have expressed myself in more detail on this subject before, and now I repeat only this—that for this reason such a tone lying in front and coming forth easily, though itself of no imposing quality, developes a complete capacity of range even in the largest halls and theatres ; whilst the *throat-voice*, though apparently much stronger and fuller, even if it should, or—*because it does*, exert itself ever so much, remains unsatisfactory and without effect, and makes in *piano* a childish impression. Exactly the same is it with the pianos, if the sound remains on the sounding-board and goes towards the inside (throat-sound), instead of going *to the outside* (sonorous-sound) as it ought to do. The player of the violin, who can never become a victim to a loss of ear and sound like our finger-heroes, but who on the other hand never during his life-time gets out of the violin-trouble, will understand me the easiest. He does not frequently seize upon new violins just made in Paris, or wherever it might be, strictly according to Straduarius or Guarnerius, which, close to his ears or in a small room, sound strong and apparently impressive ; he will be sure to prefer for performances in large halls

an apparently far weaker one that is older, even one of Steiner, because it has a sonorous tone, a tone that comes forth easily and carries.—Now the same quality of sound has also its justification in the choice of the piano, which however must never be measured according to age, although new ones *for a very short time* do improve, it is true, in beauty of sound, because the sounding-board becomes more pliant, more willing, and more resonant, and the hammer gets more flexible.

Seventh. Square pianos and cottage pianos, etc., are only half measures. If something whole is to be produced, every element must be whole too. These instruments have too little volume and are unable to satisfy, apart from the consideration that they do not at all admit of a real bravura play.

Eighth. What is the use of the new, good grand piano, or how long does it do its duty, if I think that all that is needed is done when I have bought it, and that it needs to be tuned only every two or four months, after it has gone down half a tone or even a whole one? The pianos are sent out from good and approved manufactories, that have dry wood, a large stock of excellent material, and good, clever workmen, *well tuned* indeed, but not tuned for good and all. Consequently new pianos must, during the first year, every week or every fortnight be treated so as to be made in tune and in unison with the tuning-fork, by good tuners who are experts in pianos and possess a fine ear. Of good tuners it may be demanded that they be able to put the tuning-hammer firmly and perpendicularly upon the tuning screws and do not press them hither and thither, and that they let down the strings from the top and do not draw them up and down until they are finally right. An instrument that is not kept at the pitch at which it has been built, loses every day, becomes more and more faulty and useless. A piano that is no longer in unison with the fork and is only at times drawn into the right pitch, will remain in it scarcely a few days, especially if the weather change frequently, however much trouble may be taken by the skilful tuner—there are however only few of such—and though he exert himself for hours with repeated drawing up. With our 7-octave strongly leathered instruments the poor man is often to be compared with Sisyphus, whose stone always rolls down the hill again after he has almost got it to the top.—It must then, from the very outset, be kept at the exact pitch of the tuning fork, and altogether the instrument must be entrusted to the care and surveillance of a tried and experienced tuner. This must now be extended also specially to the keeping in good order of the mechanism. If the instrument is used daily, and especially for virtuoso playing, the mechanism must every two or three months be carefully re-examined, cleaned, newly arranged and intoned, especially if the instrument stands in a room much exposed to dust—which however is in other

respects also advisable, especially in winter, because of the regular daily heating of the room. For dust is a dangerous enemy to all mechanism—it is only *dampness* and *direct great heat* that surpass it in sad consequences.

Ninth. In the same manner as a player with a stiff arm and wrist can never draw from the piano a beautiful and magnificent tone, he likewise with such stiff striking and senseless pushing destroys all mechanism in a short time, in however careful and masterly a style it may have been constructed. Therefore also on that account the player must strive for a good and correct touch.

I close this chapter, or better still the whole book, with a pretty common observation. If you ask the good or the bad virtuosi, the celebrated ones or the not celebrated ones, those that play much or those that play little, educated or uneducated amateurs, rich or poor musicians, creative or uncreative composers: "How are you satisfied with your instrument?" Answer: "I am very well satisfied." Well! I am not satisfied!—They are pianos of detestable quality, utterly played out, unequal pianos whose mechanism is destroyed and that do not at all admit of a healthy, much less of an artistic play;—they are more or less old or new rattle boxes in which not a hammer any longer strikes and falls off correctly, which do not keep in tune, and have a tough, sticking, obstinate, insecure touch. I cannot understand the *inner being* and the *true spirit* of these. What if they be already the pianos of the future?—My old friend, who is now proprietor of three estates, is right: "I should much like to advance with the rolling times—but it cannot be." Amen.

CHAPTER XIX.

Conclusion.

My old friend, well-read and still reading, to whom I sent my Ninth Chapter for inspection, writes to me as follows.

MOTTO: "*There are times that are unsusceptible, but what is everlasting will have its time.*"—JOH. VON MULLER.

MY OLD FRIEND,

If you are still well, I am very glad; I myself, thank God, am still quite well—and have read your Ninth Chapter.

But your three trifles appear to me rather to be very gigantic things even if you had written no more than this :

fine taste,
deep feeling,
delicate ear.

Why at once feel the pulse of one's times in the highest degree of comparison, and attack them on the tenderest spot ? And, moreover, if a person cannot sign " Well-known," or " Unknown " but gives frankly and openly his name ? Why, you are always getting ruder and more disagreeable, and you do not consider how many enemies you are thereby making for yourself of those who consider these three small positions as long since overcome ? At this time of day, when people speak so much of " spirit," of great spirit, of " inner being of the future," and have invented so beautiful phrases for it, you appear with three so inconvenient trifles exalted to the superlative degree.—Do you perhaps think our wise, spirited times will not at once perceive what is standing maliciously between your lines ? Ha, ha, I can tell you that easily : you name the teachers of singing and of the piano, and at the same time you mean the piano virtuosi and the composers ! Thus you wish to express yourself on our century something in this manner :

the three trifles,

and in addition to these the necessary knowledge and the necessary creative power—*voilà tout !* Who is there but knows Prince Louis Ferdinand, Dussek, Field, Clementi, Himmel, Hummel, C. M. Von Weber, Beethoven, etc. ?

Now comes the piano-mania-period, and in addition to that the compositions ; now the three trifles must stand as follows :

perverted taste,
hypocritical feeling,
spoilt ear,

and in addition to this the necessary mannerisms and some manufacturing power—*voilà tout !*

Thereupon people remember again the *three genuine trifles* and they become sensible ; we allow ourselves to be enraptured by Beethoven, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, and a very few more.

Thereafter appear the dry imitators—they are of little significance.

But now enters the *latest progress* with increased piano-fury.—The three trifles are now called

perverted taste,
utter want of feeling,
utter want of ear,

and in addition to these, the necessary impudence, boundless vanity, senseless

exertion of power, with bad touch or no touch on the piano, pitiable inventive power, the necessary mystic pictures on the covers, enticing title-pages—but *Spirit* (Geist). And for this is proclaimed :

higher beauty,
standpoints attained,
consuming in the artistic work,
misconception of the inner being,
genius must be free,
and so forth.

You are unmasked, my old conservative friend. Your deeds yet belong only to the olden times, and your art of singing utterly. That dates from the last century. Get away with your Jenny Lind and Henrietta Sontag. Why, they are spiritless glass-shade singers. Will you then not make yourself acquainted with the inner being of the latest magnificent *throat-voices of progress*? Can you then get positively no longer forward with the rolling times? But you will be nicely rapped on the fingers for it by the philosophical progress authors. Do you really imagine our times will grudge a few phrases? They will tell you what *Spirit* (Geist) means. In short, I should not like to be in your shoes! Conclude your book with

"*pater peccavi.*"

Even in misfortune,

Your sympathizing friend,

V. E.

PRINTED BY LESLIE AND RUSSELL, CROWN COURT, ABERDEEN.