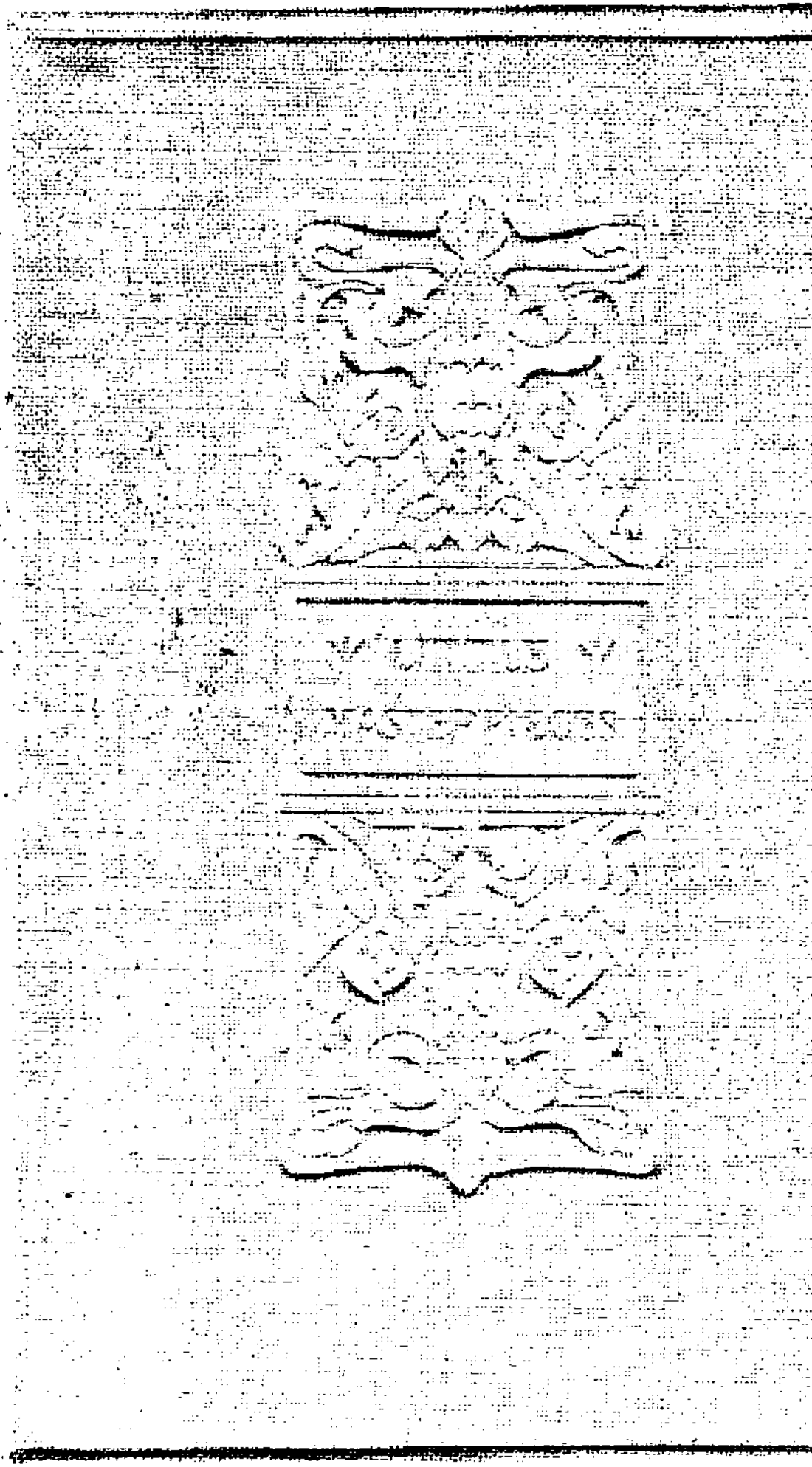

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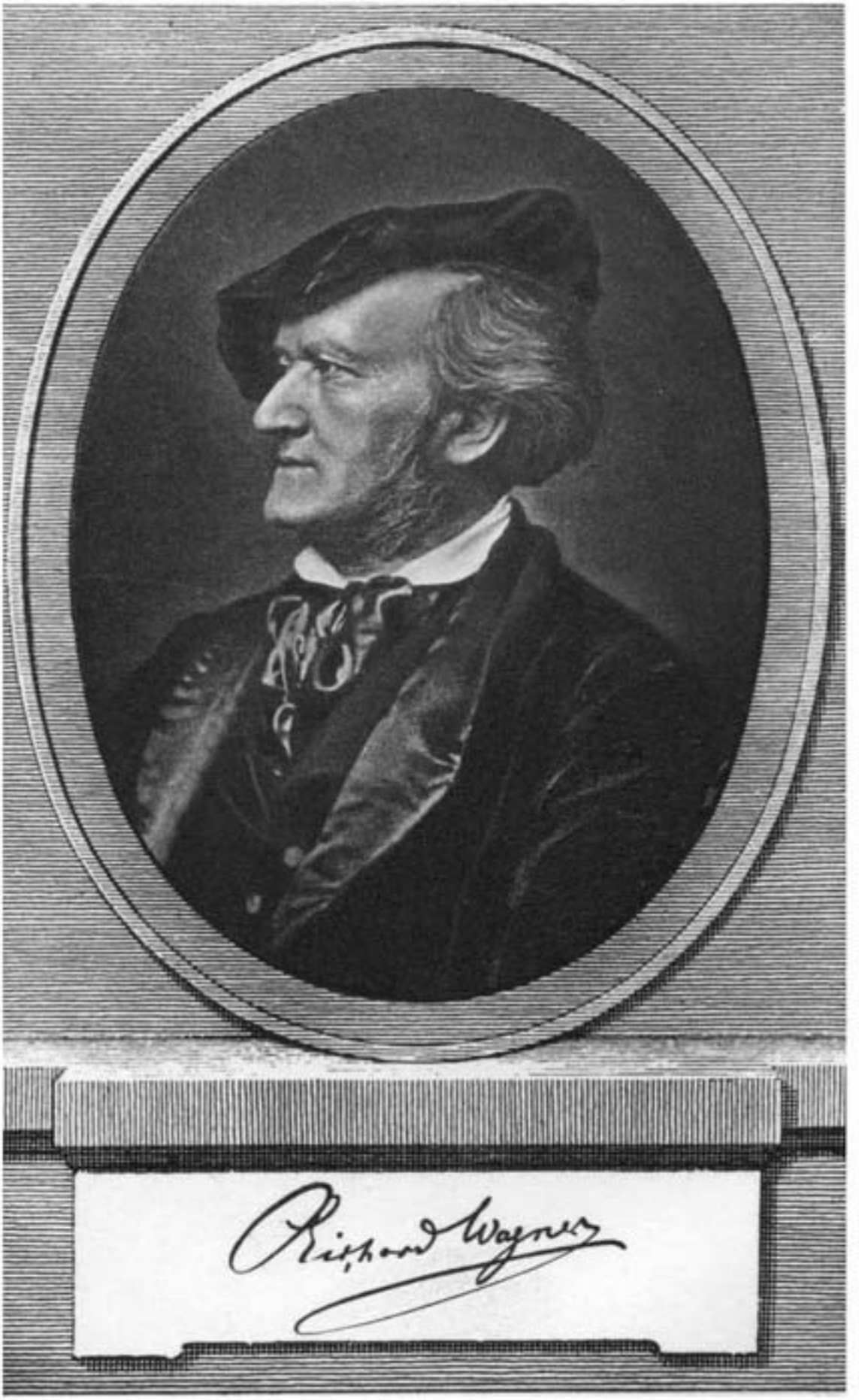
Richard Wagner

Library of

# Little Masterpieces

In Forty-four Volumes

# AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Edited by

GEORGE ILES

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# PREFACE

WITHIN their chosen spheres, modern French painters are the greatest artists the world has known. Millet at his easel in Barbizon limned the idyls and tragedies of peasant life with a sympathy which, though all too late, won for him high renown. What he here tells us of himself bears the same stamp of sincerity, and power, that speaks from his canvases of the Angelus and the Sower. Another painter equally great in his own distinct province of art is Breton, who narrates how his powers were awakened and disciplined. Next we listen to the American sculptor and poet, William Wetmore Story, who wielded with remarkable ability both the chisel and the pen. His analysis of how a great statue takes form in its creator's mind is a revelation it would be difficult to match in the literature of art. Following this we hear a counsel chiefly of worth to the young reader, or to the parents or teachers who may have the young reader in charge. It comes from Edinburgh where Alexander Nasmyth, a famous portrait painter, was an instructor who maintained that the pencil speaks a graphic language which should be mastered, as writing is, by every boy and girl. His son, James Nasmyth, a mechanical engineer of the first rank, derived golden harvests from his

father's lessons, as he here tells us. If skill in drawing, or painting, is to rise to the level of artistry then the earliest possible training should be received. On this we have insistence from William J. Stillman, an artist who deplores that his education was sadly belated.

From painters we pass to their next of kin, great tone-poets. Mendelssohn, Wagner, Liszt, Gounod, and Grieg reveal themselves as if to bosom friends. Especially striking is the correspondence between Liszt and Wagner, forming indeed, one of the noblest chapters in the history of music. How great music may grow from the hints conveyed in a simple air, is disclosed in a few concluding pages as we trace the sucessive stages of the Austrian National Hymn under the hand of Haydn.

# CONTENTS

## ARTISTS

# Contents

# Contents

# ARTISTS

# JEAN FRANÇOIS MILLET

[Jean François Millet was born in 1814, at Gruchy, near Grèville, and died in 1875 at Barbizon. He was the painter-poet of the toiler in the fields. Among his best known canvases are "The Angelus," "The Gleaners," "The Sower," and "The Man with the Hoe."

Eugene Fromentin, an artist and critic of eminent rank, gave this judgment on Millet:

"An original painter, a lofty soul, a melancholy spirit, a nature truly rustic, has said of the country and country people, of the severity, the melancholy, and the nobility of their work, things which no Dutchman would have ever dreamed of looking for. [Fromentin had elaborately criticised the great artists of Holland.] He said them in a language a little rude, and under forms where the thought has more clearness and vigour than the hand. We were deeply thankful for his tendencies; and in the French school of painting we saw in him the sensibilities of a Burns, less clever than the poet in making himself understood. After all, has he or has he not left beautiful pictures? Has his form, his language — I mean that exterior envelope without which the things of the mind cannot exist or last — has it the qualities to make him a beautiful painter, and to assure his future fame? He is a profound thinker compared with Paul Potter and de Cuyp; he is a sympathetic dreamer compared with Terburg and Metsu; he has something incontestably noble when we think of the trivialities of Steen, Ostade and Brauwer. As a man, he puts them all to the blush; as a painter, is he their equal?"

"Jean François Millet, Peasant and Painter," by Alfred Sensier, is published and copyright by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston. The following selections appear with their permission.—Ed.]

## His Earliest Recollections

I remember waking one morning in my little bed and hearing the voices of people in the room. With the voices sounded a sort of *burrr*, which stopped now and then and began again. It was the sound of the spinning-wheels, and the voices of the women spinning and carding wool. The dust of the room came and danced in the sunshine which one small, high window let in. I have often seen the sun and the dust in the same way, for the house fronted east. In the corner of the room was a big bed, covered by a counterpane with wide stripes of red and brown falling down to the floor; next to the window at the foot of the bed, against the wall, a great wardrobe, brown too. It is all like a vague dream. If I had to recall, even a little, the faces of the poor spinners, all my efforts would be in vain, for, although I grew up before they died, I remember their names only because I have heard them spoken in the family.

One was a great-aunt whose name was Jeanne. The other was a spinner by trade, who often came to the house, and whose name was Colombe Gamache. This is my earliest recollection. I must have been very young when I received that impression, for more distinct images seem to have been made after a lapse of time.

I only remember indescribable impressions, such as hearing, on waking, the coming and going in the house, the geese cackling in the court-

yard, the cock crowing, the beat of the flail on the barn floor — all sounds in my ears out of which no particular emotion came.

Here is a little clearer fact. The commune had had new bells made, two of the old ones having been carried away to make cannon and the third having been broken (as I heard afterward). My mother was curious to see the new bells, which were deposited in the church waiting to be baptised before being hung in the tower, and she took me with her. She was accompanied by a girl named Julie Lecacheux, whom I since knew very well. I remember how struck I was at finding myself in a place so terribly vast as the church, which seemed to me bigger than a barn, and also with the beauty of the great windows, with lozenge-shaped leads.

We saw the bells, all on the ground. They, too, seemed enormous, for they were much larger than I was, and, also (what probably fixed the whole scene in my mind), Julie Lecacheux, who held a very big key in her hand, probably that of the church, began to strike the largest bell, which gave out a great sound, filling me with awe. I have never forgotten that blow of the key on the bell.

## No Systematic Study in Youth

I never studied systematically. At school, when writing from dictation, my task was better written than the others, probably because I read constantly, and the words and phrases were

pictured rather in my eyes than in my mind, and I instinctively reproduced them. I never followed programmes; I never learnt a lesson by heart; all my time was spent in writing capital letters and drawing. I never could get beyond addition in mathematics, and I do not understand subtraction and the rules following. My reckoning is always in my head, and by ways that I could not explain. I came to Paris with all my ideas of art fixed, and I have never found it well to change them. I have been more or less in love with this master, or that method in art, but I have not changed anything fundamental. You have seen my first drawing, made at home without a master, without a model, without a guide. I have never done anything different since. You have never seen me paint except in a low tone. Half-light is necessary to sharpen my eyes and clear my thoughts — it has been my best teacher. If a sketch seen in the dim twilight at the end of the day have the requisite balance, it is a picture. If not, no clever arrangement of colour, no skill in drawing, or elaborate finish, can ever make it into a picture.

### The Early Masters are Best

[In describing the Museum of the Louvre, Millet wrote to Sensier:]

. . . Next to Michelangelo and Poussin, I have always loved the early masters best, and have kept my first admiration for those subjects as simple as childhood, for those uncon-

scious expressions, for those beings who say nothing, but feel themselves overburdened with life, who suffer patiently without a cry or complaint, who endure the yoke of humanity, and without even a thought of what it all means. . . .

## "Peasant Subjects Suit My Nature Best"

[Some time in the course of 1850 Millet wrote to Sensier:]

Yesterday I received the colours, the oil and canvas which you sent me, and the accompanying sketch of the picture. Three pictures destined for the sale you mention are:

(1) A woman crushing flax. (2) A peasant and his wife going to work in the fields. (3) Wood-gatherers in the forest.

As you will see there are no nude women or mythological subjects among them; not that I hold that sort of thing to be forbidden, but that I do not feel myself obliged to paint them.

To tell the truth, peasant subjects suit my nature best, for I must confess, at the risk of your taking me to be a Socialist, that the human side is what touches me most in art, and that if I could only do what I like, or at least attempt to do it, I would paint nothing that was not the result of an impression received directly from nature, whether in landscape or in figures. The joyous side never shows itself to me; I know not if it exists, but I have never seen it. The gayest thing I know is the calm, the silence,

which are so delicious, both in the forest and in the cultivated fields, whether the soil is good for culture or not. You will confess that it always gives you a very dreamy sensation, and that the dream is a sad one, though often very delicious.

You are sitting under a tree, enjoying all the comfort and quiet which it is possible to find in this life, when suddenly you see a poor creature loaded with heavy faggots coming up the narrow path. The unexpected and striking way in which this figure appears before your eyes reminds you instantly of the sad fate of humanity — its weariness.

In cultivated land sometimes, as in places where the ground is barren, you see figures digging and hoeing. From time to time, one raises himself and straightens his back, wiping his forehead with the back of his hand, reminding you that "thou shalt eat bread in the sweat of thy brow."

Is this the gay and playful kind of work that some people would have us believe? Nevertheless, for me it is true humanity and great poetry.

### Suggestions from Nature

Barbizon, December 26, 1865.

My Dear M. Gavet: We have fog effects perfectly superb, and the most fairy-like frost, beyond any imagination. The forest was wonderfully beautiful, but I am not sure that the

most modest things — the bushes and the briars, tufts of grass, and, in fine, all the little sprays of every kind — were not, in proportion, the most beautiful of all. It seems as if nature wished to give them their chance to retaliate and show that they are inferior to nothing — poor downtrodden things.

[In July, 1866, Millet took a rapid tour through Clermont, Issoire, and the mountains. To his companion, M. Chassaing, he wrote from Barbizon:]

. . . My head is full of all we saw together in Auvergne. Everything dances together in my brain; calcined ground, sharp rocks, splits, barrenness, and greeneries. The glory of God dwelling upon the heights, and other heights veiled in darkness. I hope all these things will finally arrange themselves and go each into its own pigeon-hole.

One must admit that the things one sees out-of-doors in this dull weather are very touching, and are a great compensation for the little time one has to work. I would not be deprived of it for anything, and if it were proposed to me to take me to the South for the winter, I should totally refuse. Oh, sadness of field and wood! I should miss too much in not seeing you!

[Of a picture of a shepherd in the fold, at night, a weird moonlight effect, he said to Sensier:]

Ah! if I could only make others feel as I do all the terrors and splendours of the night; if I could but make them hear the songs, the silences and murmurings of the air: one must *feel*

the presence of the infinite. Is it not terrible to think of these worlds of light which rise and set, age after age, in the same unchanging order? They shine upon us all alike, on the joys and the sorrows of men, and when this world of ours melts away, the life-giving sun will remain the pitiless witness of the universal desolation.

### Appeal to Imagination

[Sensier in 1869 wrote a series of articles on Theodore Rousseau. From a letter suggested by these articles is taken:]

Barbizon, February 1, 1870.

. . . To finish, we had a lively discussion on Thor's belief that the subject was of great moment in the elevation of a work of art. Rousseau and I were against him. I let Rousseau speak, as I did not know Thor, but I found myself caught in the net. I tried to show Thor that I thought grandeur was in the thought itself, and that everything became great that was employed in a great cause.

A prophet comes to threaten a population with a plague and fearful devastation, and this is what the God who sends him says by his mouth: I will send you grasshoppers and locusts — my great army, etc. And the prophet makes such a description of their devastation that never has a greater desolation been imagined. I asked him whether the threat would have been more terrible if, instead of locusts, the prophet had spoken of some king with his cha-

riots and war-horses; for the devastation is so great that nothing is untouched. The earth is denuded! Lament, husbandman, for the harvest of the field has perished. The wild asses and all creatures have cried out, for there is no grass. The object is accomplished and the imagination aroused. . . .

### Art Based on Nature

Barbizon, March 29, 1865.

My Dear Sensier: I am glad you have the articles on the *Salon* to do. Believe me, I will do all I can to tell you everything I can think of, either about art in general or particular things in this connection. . . . It seems to me you might show — going back somewhat — that art began to decline from the moment the artist did not lean directly and naively upon impressions made by nature; that cleverness naturally and rapidly took the place of nature, and decadence then began. Strength departs without constant relation with nature, and as example the fable of Antæus could be used, whose powers diminished when his foot did not touch the ground, and on the contrary took new vigour every time he could touch it. . . . Show that, for the same reason — the abandoning of nature — art becomes more and more weakened. Give as many examples as possible. Once again, I am sorry we cannot talk it over. I send . . . some extracts in which you can find some good quotations, or else take the

substance of them — Montaigne, Palissy, Piccolpassi, and his translator, Claudius Popelyn. I will try to find others. I will ruminate upon it, and say as best I can what comes into my head. At the bottom it always comes to this: a man must be touched himself in order to touch others, and all that is done from theory, however clever, can never attain this end, for it is impossible that it should have the breath of life. Quote the expression of Saint Paul, "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal."

## Not Surfaces, but the Heart of Things

[In 1873, Camille Lemonnier, a critic at Brussels, sent Millet his pamphlet on the Paris *Salon* of 1870. Millet acknowledged it:]

Barbizon, February 15, 1873.

I am very much flattered by your letter, and thank you for making me acquainted with your work as art critic. The most enviable reward of those who try to do their best is to excite the sympathy of intelligent men. This is equivalent to saying that I am happy to have been the occasion of your expressing certain truths of art. Only, you say of me things which I consider to be so desirable that I dare not believe myself possessed of them. It is not that I would doubt your judgment, but I distrust myself.

But let me put myself aside quickly, that I may say (without stumbling over my own toes) that I must give you great praise for considering

things from their fundamental side. It is the only true, solid side. Many people, far from taking this point of view, seem to think that art is only a sort of show of professional ability. *You* understand that the artist must have a high and definite aim. Without it, how can he make efforts to reach a point of which he does not even suspect the existence? How can a dog pursue game which he cannot scent? It depends, therefore, upon his aim, and the way in which he has reached it, that an artist is of interest.

I assure you, sir, that if it only were a question of my own will I would express strongly the type which is, in my opinion, the greatest truth. You are quite right to think that such is my intention. But I find myself started on a very difficult road, and I do not want to go any further [in writing]. If you ever come to Paris and get as far as Barbizon, we could talk about it. . . .

## Repose Means More than Action

[The late Wyatt Eaton, in the *Century Magazine* for May, 1889, gave his reminiscences of Millet:]

. . . It was late in September or early in October. Millet spoke of the great beauty of the season. He seemed to feel that it possessed the quality which he insisted upon in art — repose, expressing more than action. The man leaning upon his spade was more significant of work than one in the act of spading: showing

that he had worked and was fatigued, he was resting and would work again. In the same way he preferred to paint the middle-aged man rather than a young or an old one — the middle-aged man showing the effect of toil, his limbs crooked, and his body bent, and years of labour still before him. And in type the labourer must show that he was born to labour, that labour is his fit occupation, that his father and father's father were tillers of the soil and that his children and his children's children shall continue the work their fathers have done before them. Millet was always severe on this point — that the artist should paint the typical, and not the exceptional.

### Joseph and Mary at the Inn

. . . He spoke of the touching or sympathetic in Biblical history, and of subjects he would like to or intended to paint. The theme which most appealed to him in the New Testament was where Joseph and Mary are turned away from the door of the inn, before the birth of the child, and in his description of the scene, as he had conceived it, I saw the picture painted with all the tenderness and pathos of his art.

### "The Man with the Hoe"

[Sensier sent Millet the animadversions on his "Man with the Hoe." Millet responded:]

All this gossip about my "Man with the Hoe" seems to me very strange, and I am grateful

to you for reporting it to me. Certainly I am surprised at the ideas which people are so good as to impute to me! I wonder in what club my critics have ever seen me! They call me a Socialist, but really I might reply with the poor carrier from Auvergne. They call me a Saint Simonian. That is not true, I do not even know what it means. Is it then impossible simply to accept the ideas that come into one's mind, at the sight of the man who "eats bread by the sweat of his brow"? There are people who say that I see no charms in the country. I see much more than charms there — infinite splendours. I see, as well as they do, the little flowers of which Christ said: "I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

I see very well the aureoles of the dandelions and the sun spreading his glory in the clouds, over the distant worlds. But none the less I see down there in the plain the steaming horses leading the plough, and in a rocky corner a man quite worn out, whose toil began with dawn, and who tries to straighten himself and take breath for a moment. The drama is surrounded with splendour.

It is not my invention, and this expression — "the cry of the ground" — was heard long ago. My critics are men of taste and instruction, I suppose, but I cannot put myself in their skin, and since I have never, in all my life, known anything but the fields, I try and say, as best

I can, what I saw and felt when I worked there. . . .

## His Principles of Art

[Theodore Pelloquet published a spirited defence of "The Man with the Hoe." In acknowledging this service Millet said:]

Barbizon, June 2, 1865.

I am very much gratified by the manner in which you speak of my pictures in the Exhibition. This has given me the more pleasure because of the way in which you discourse upon art in general. You belong to the exceedingly small class of writers who believe (all the worse for those who do not) that art is a language, and that all language is intended for the expression of ideas. Say it, and say it over again! Perhaps it will make some one think a little! If more people shared your belief, there would not be so much empty painting and writing. That is called cleverness, and those who practise it are loudly praised. But, in good faith, and if it were true ability, should it not be employed to accomplish good work, and then hide its head modestly behind the work? Is cleverness to open a shop on its own account? I have read, I cannot remember where, "Woe to the artist who shows his talent more than his work." It would be very ridiculous if the hand were greater than the brain. I do not remember the exact words that Poussin uses in one of his letters about the trembling

of his hand, at the time when his head was at the height of its powers, but this is the substance of his remark: "And although the hand is weak, it must all the same be the handmaid of the brain." If there were more people who shared your belief, they would not devote themselves so resolutely to the task of flattering bad taste and evil passions for their own profit, without any thought of the right. As Montaigne says so well: "Instead of naturalising art, they make nature artificial."

. . . One may say that everything is beautiful in its own time and place, and on the other hand that nothing can be beautiful out of its right place and season. There must be no weakening of character. Let Apollo be Apollo, and let Socrates remain Socrates. Do not let us try to combine the two, they would both lose in the process. Which is the handsomer, a straight tree, or a crooked tree? The one that we find in its place. I conclude therefore that the beautiful is the accordant, the harmonious.

This principle is capable of infinite development, and might be proved by endless examples. It must, of course, be understood that I am not speaking of absolute beauty, for I do not know what that is, and it has always seemed to me the vainest of delusions. I think that people who devote themselves to that idea only do so because they have no eyes for the beauty of natural objects. They are buried in the contemplation

of the art of the past, and do not see that nature is rich enough to supply all our new needs. Good souls! they are poetic without being poets. Character, that is the real thing! Vasari tells us that Bandinelli made a figure intended to represent Eve, but that as he advanced with his work, he found his statue a little too slender for the part of Eve. Accordingly he contented himself with giving her the attributes of Ceres, and Eve was transformed into Ceres! We can no doubt admit that since Bandinelli was a clever man, his figure may have been superbly modelled and marked with great scientific knowledge. But all that could not give the statue a decided character, or prevent it from being a very contemptible work. It was neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. . . .

### What His Pictures Meant

[When three of Millet's canvases were on view at Martinet's rooms, in Paris, the artist wrote to Sensier:]

. . . In the "Woman Drawing Water" I have tried to show that she is neither a water-carrier nor yet a servant, but simply a woman drawing water for the use of her household — to make soup for her husband and children. I have tried to make her look as if she were carrying neither more nor less than the weight of the buckets full of water; and that through the kind of grimace which the load she bears forces her to make, and the blinking of her eyes in the sunlight, you should be able to see the air of

rustic kindness on her face. I have avoided, as I always do, with a sort of horror, everything that might verge on the sentimental. On the contrary, I have tried to make her do her work simply and cheerfully, without regarding as a burden this act, which, like other household duties, is part of her daily task, and the habit of her life. I have also tried to make people feel the freshness of the well, and to show by its ancient air how many generations have come there before her to draw water.

In the "Woman Feeding Her Chickens," I have tried to give the idea of a nest of birds being fed by their mother. The man in the background also works to feed *his* young.

In the "Sheep-Shearing" I have tried to express the sort of bewilderment and confusion which is felt by the newly sheared sheep, and the curiosity and surprise of those which have not yet been sheared, at the sight of those naked creatures. I tried to give the house a peaceful and rustic air, and to make people see the green enclosure behind, and the sheltering poplars; in fact, as far as possible, I have tried to give the impression of an old building full of memories. . . . Throughout I try to make things look as if they were not brought together by chance, or for the occasion, but were united by a strong and indispensable bond. I want the people I represent to look as if they belonged to their place, and as if it were impossible to imagine they could ever think of being anything

but what they are. People and things should always be there for a definite purpose. I want to say strongly and completely all that is necessary. What is feebly said had better not be said at all, for then things are, as it were, spoiled and robbed of their charm. But I have the greatest horror of useless accessories, which however brilliant they may be, can only weaken the subject and distract attention. . . .

# JULES BRETON

[S. G. W. Benjamin, in his "Contemporary Art in Europe," published by Harper & Brothers, New York, says:

"Jules Breton is at once a painter of landscape and of human nature. The two harmonised in all his works in such just proportion, and with such equal ability and care brought to the representation of each, that he occupies the rare position of excelling in two distinct branches of art; in each he shows a deep, earnest, reverential sympathy in the presence of nature; his eye for colour is almost faultless and his technical capacity is beyond question. What can be more perfect than the pearly-gray transparent shadows on the ground, or the summer afternoon atmosphere in his 'Blessing of the Grain'? While, at the same time, any one of the kneeling figures in the foreground would be sufficient to establish the reputation of any ordinary artist for its combination of so many admirable and desirable qualities. On the other hand, what a tenderly pensive and pathetic beauty he has portrayed in the face of the young peasant girl of Brittany, in his 'Evening' at the Luxembourg! The expression in her eyes seems to tell a whole idyl of rural life."

"The Life of an Artist," an autobiography by Jules Breton, was published in 1890, and copyrighted, by D. Appleton & Co., New York. They have consented to the transcriptions here offered. — ED.]

## SCHOOL AT THIRTEEN

EVEN at play-time, however, I often remained alone. The unruly city boys scorned my rustic simplicity, and, in fact, I felt myself, when among them, awkward and weighed down by a timidity that was fostered by my lonely habits.

Amid these deteriorating surroundings one passion saved me — the love of art.

To become a painter! This had been my dream ever since the time when Fremy used to paint the figures in our garden. My father allowed me to take the drawing-course, directed by an easy, good old man, whom I regarded as a great artist, because I had seen a lithograph of his representing the ruins of the Abbey of St. Bertin in the stationer's window.

The first time I entered this class I was seized with a lively emotion at the sight of the copies hanging over the desks. With what delightful thrills I penetrated, little by little, into the agitating mysteries of the stump and charcoal! What happy hours of forgetfulness I spent copying figures of Moses, of Mordecai, of Scipio, and, above all, Raphaelesque girls, wearing handkerchiefs twisted around the head like turbans, and fastened underneath the chin!

Ah, to be able to follow the delicate and graceful outlines of those foreheads, of those regular noses, those rounded cheeks, those exquisitely flexible necks!

O Raphael! O sublime genius! You consoled me for the disturbance in my uneasy mysticism.

### Returns Home and Begins Work

But how quickly all my griefs and mortifications were forgotten when, on the first morning of the vacation, a ray of country sunshine came

to waken me in my white bed, with its sheets a little stiff with the fresh starch — when I heard again all the familiar sounds of home!

How small the house appeared to me, that I had thought so large!

With what transports of affection I kissed all the beloved faces! How impatient I was to visit every corner of the house! What good bread! What delicious coffee! Even the hair-cloth tabourets in the schoolroom appeared soft to me. As soon as I had seen everything, I chose for my special retreat an unfrequented spot, a little room lighted by a single window that opened on the garden — the same window of which, some years before, I had broken the panes.

When I entered this room a strong odour greeted my nostrils — an odour composed of diverse smells, for it was in this place that our gardener kept his flower and vegetable seeds. But this mixture of smells, among which those of celery, shallot, and carrot predominated, inspired me with no repugnance.

Here I established my atelier, and amused myself by carving figures of peasants in soft stone, or by painting on wood with the juice of flowers and berries, such as the scabious and the mulberry.

One day, I received a visit from a woman named Marie, who lived in our village and who earned a livelihood by painting weeping-willows on monumental urns, crosses for the cemetery, and ornamental sign-boards for taverns.

On this occasion she had received an order for a sign-board, of which the decoration was to be of so complicated a character as to be beyond her skill, and she came to ask my assistance, which I promised her without hesitation, proud of this mark of confidence.

While I cleared a space to work in, by pushing into the corners the gardening implements and the bundles of willow and osier with which Frisè's room was encumbered, Marie went to bring the board — a large panel rounded at the top — and her brushes and colour-pots.

We placed the panel on a table, resting it against the cases of the herbal, and I soon discovered that the artist stood, indeed, in great need of assistance.

She had begun, by writing around the top of the panel the title of the subject, "The Society of Associated Friends."

As these friends were a society, it followed that they were associated. I drew her attention to this pleonasm in the first place.

In addition to this it was difficult to distinguish the friends in Marie's confused daub. One could make out a blue sky with white clouds shaped like corkscrews in it, and a column supporting a vase of flowers, flanked by two aloes, but the figures of the friends bore no likeness to anything whatever.

I rubbed out all this mess, and asked Marie to go away and leave me to my inspiration.

I was filled with emotion. These little pots

of chrome, vermilion, and Prussian blue, transported me with joy.

But how set about the composition of the picture? I thought for a long time in vain. Then I had recourse to the *Magasin Pittoresque*. My uncle had been a subscriber to it ever since its establishment, and, after the engravings in the loft, nothing had contributed more to inspire me with a love for art than this periodical, founded by Eduard Charton, to whom I have since had occasion to manifest my gratitude.

I chose a scene after Giraud, representing some jolly French Guards, and I copied the composition of it, changing the costume of the figures for that of our peasants.

Marie was satisfied with my work.

## At College in Douai

We occupied the ancient building of the Abbey d'Anchin. Like a cuckoo bringing up its fledglings in a ringdove's nest, the state had there established its college. The chapel, formerly as large as a church, had been divided. One part of it was still devoted to worship, and the other to profane uses — some of the dormitories and the hall of design being there.

This vast hall, with its thick walls and heavy pillars, was well calculated to inspire respect. I experienced a profound emotion whenever I entered it.

There, as in the seminary, were displayed eyes, noses, and mouths, small, medium-sized

and large faces; academic figures. There I beheld you again, Moses, Mordecai, and Scipio, and you also, young Raphaelesque girls, with your ravishing faces. But my ambition went further than this now — as far as the hall of casts, that could be seen beyond, smaller than this one, and silent as a sanctuary. I walked straight thither with a resolute step.

When I entered it I was seized with a sort of religious awe, and I began to tremble in every limb. I found myself in the presence of Euripides, of Solon, of Plato, of Homer; of the Laocoon, writhing forever in the serpent's folds; and of Niobe, forever sending up to heaven from her sightless eyes looks of inconsolable grief.

A moment afterward the drawing-master entered the room. He was a short, robust old man, brusque and frank in his manner. He looked at me with amazement. "What are you doing here, Baptist?" he said to me. "You are a newcomer. Go sit down yonder before the eyes and the noses."

I had been told beforehand how I must address him, and I stammered, "I beg of you, papa, to let me practise here." "Have you drawn from the cast?" "No, but I have made the portraits of some of my school-fellows." "Very well; sit down there; we shall see." And he placed before me the head of one of the sons of Laocoon. The trial resulted favourably, and I remained in the class.

This may be thought a strange specimen of conversation between pupil and professor, and yet I have given it word for word as it took place. This excellent old man addressed all his pupils in the second person, singular, called them all alike "Baptist," and all the pupils addressed him in the second person, singular, and called him "papa."

My fellow-pupils and the inhabitants of Douai of my time will remember Father Wallet.

We loved him dearly, and the familiarity of which I have given an example detracted nothing from the respect with which he inspired us. At times he pretended to be terribly angry, and dealt about blows right and left, which never hit any one.

### Calls on Drolling, a Famous Artist

When, carrying my portfolio under my arm, and accompanied by my father, I knocked timidly at the door of his studio, it was Drolling himself, his palette in his hand, who opened the door for us.

He wore a knitted woollen jacket and a red Greek cap, as he is represented in the portrait painted of him by his pupil Biennourry.

His frank and simple manners, somewhat brusque, and his long white moustache, gave him the air rather of a retired officer than of an artist.

Under this exterior I divined an excellent nature, and I gathered courage.

I opened my portfolio, which contained, along

with some drawings and still-life studies in my own style, a torso painted by one of the shining lights among the students of the Academy of Antwerp. This gaudy torso, which resembled an omelet with jam, shocked at the very beginning my future master. "Look at that! It is horrible!" he cried.

Happily I could tell him that it was not my work. I then showed him a still-life which I had painted while in the studio of De Vigne, to which I attached but little importance, and which I should never have dared to compare to the gaudy picture of the Academy of Antwerp.

His expression immediately changed. "This yours?" he said to me. "Why, it is divinely painted!"

Divinely painted! With what sweetness these words fell on the good ear of my father, who, like me now, was deaf in one ear!

My father was very ill at this time, dying within a year. He was not permitted, alas! to witness any of my successes, and of my paintings he saw only one — "St. Piat preaching to the Gauls" — my first picture, executed while I was at Ghent, and which we so proudly hung over one of the side altars of the church of Courrières.

This praise from the lips of a man whom we considered a great painter moved him profoundly.

When we again found ourselves alone on the landing, after Drolling had closed the door of the studio, my father clasped me in his arms,

repeating, "You paint divinely!" Then, as we went downstairs, he added, "Hey! what if you, too, should one day become a member of the Institute?"

Blessed be your memory, O good Drolling, for by your words you justified in the mind of a father, soon to die, his confidence in his son's future — his supreme consolation!

## Lessons from Nature, rather than Museums

But, if it be true that I had never felt more strongly than now this peace, this joy that is to be found in nature, I did not yet understand its value from an artistic point of view.

I had, in reality, never tried to paint nature. My ideal was still to be found exclusively in the museums.

And in the works of the great masters I was much more impressed by external form, imposed upon them by the circumstances of their surroundings, than by the essential qualities of their pictures, those qualities that, developed by a profound study of natural laws, constitute their eternal essence. I thought them beautiful chiefly because of their subjects, beautiful in themselves, the expression of which they had succeeded in realising, and which I believed to be no longer in existence, and to be sought for only in the history of the past.

"Happy the painters," I thought, "who had only to open their eyes to see marvels." I

never suspected that these marvels are everywhere around us.

I should never have insulted Phidias by supposing that that little gleaner bending yonder over the stubble could for a single moment attract his attention.

I did not comprehend Phidias sufficiently, or rather I knew too little of nature to be aware that the immutable laws which governed the creations of the great sculptor manifest themselves, also in the attitude and the forms of this humble peasant, with her rags floating in the breeze.

I had not yet sought inspiration in the recollections of my childhood, that mysterious world that in mature years seems clothed in light. I had not yet found (for though it be true that there is nothing new under the sun, we must discover everything anew, or else be copyists) that what is best is what we have unconsciously felt at the outset of life when we first opened our eyes to the light, and that what is most beautiful in the world is to be met with everywhere. A truth too evident to be at once accepted as such.

Ignorance admires only what is not simple, and is affected or laboured in expressing itself.

An epoch must pass through a stage of affectation, artificiality, and false refinement before it returns to a comprehension of the simple in art.

This ignorance, and the sympathy I felt for

the disinherited of fortune, turned me at first toward melodramatic subjects taken from the life of the people. I was impelled to this by my recollection, still vivid, of the scenes of the Revolution, which passed continually before my mind. I thought to attain great results by violent means.

## "The Gleaners" a Great Success

The success of my "Little Gleaner" had put me in the humour for work. I thought of a composition which should contain a number of these poor women and little girls and boys who look like flocks of sparrows as they bend over the stubble.

These moving groups that dotted the sun-burned plain, defined in dark shadow against the sky as they bent in varied attitudes over the earth gathering the ears of grain, filled me with admiration. Nothing could be more Biblical than this human flock — the sunlight clinging to their floating rags, burning their necks, lighting up the ears of wheat, luminously outlining dark profiles, tracing on the tawny gold of the earth flickering shadows shot with blue reflections from the zenith.

As I looked at this scene full of simple grandeur I thought myself transported to the times of the patriarchs. And, indeed, is not a scene like this always grand, always beautiful?

I came away feeling as if I had emerged from a bath of light, of which the splendours

still pursued me during the night in dazzling visions.

But the more sublime I felt this scene to be the more strongly did I feel my own weakness and my inability to do justice to it.

Was I not like those foolish grasshoppers, also drunk with light, and whose frantic exertions are only the heroism of weakness! Poor brains, through which, too, flash at night luminous visions.

I began, then, full of ardour, but also without illusion, my first picture of "The Gleaners."

Did I think I was attempting a new thing? Not at all. I even thought that this subject, as old as the poem of Ruth, must have already been handled by many artists.

I was greatly astonished, therefore, when I was afterward told that I had been the first to treat it. My first picture of "The Gleaners" was painted in 1854; the "Gleaners" of Millet was painted in 1857.

I also painted at this time a group of three young girls, and a scene representing men drinking ("The Day After St. Sebastian"), suggested by the customs of the Archers.

I took these three pictures to Paris, and sent them to the building in the Avenue Montagne, where the International Exhibition of 1855 took place.

I confess that I trembled at the thought of this ambitious attempt.

I can see myself standing now, nervous and

restless in the vestibule where the names of the pictures were entered.

I waited for my turn, looking furtively at my poor pictures hanging against the wall in a frightful light, and before which such resplendent pictures were being carried past by porters.

How insignificant they appeared to me, this flock of girls, of whom the guard smoking his pipe seem to be the melancholy shepherd!

A gentleman draws near, however; a gentleman wearing the ribbon of the Legion of Honour. He leans toward them, he draws back, he approaches them again. Is he interested in them, then?

He sees by my confused air that I must be the painter of the picture, comes to me and says, "Is that yours, young man?" I make an affirmative gesture.

He stretches out his hand to me and says, "It is very good."

And I look gratefully at this stranger whose frank expression makes my heart warm to him.

"And you think, monsieur, that — that my picture will be received?"

"Received! Why, it will have a success, a great success!"

Then somewhat reassured I added, "May I know, monsieur, to whom I have the honour ——"

"My name is Alfred Arago."

He was the son of the great Arago [the eminent physicist]. When we parted he already

called me "my friend," and six months later we were to say thee and thou to each other.

My uncle was exceedingly proud and delighted when, on my return to Courrieres, I related this interview to him, for he cherished a warm admiration for the name rendered illustrious by the brothers Arago in literature and science as well as in the annals of patriotism.

But at the end of a few days, having heard nothing further of my picture, my apprehensions returned, so impossible did it seem to me that I should succeed in obtaining a place in that great exhibition.

At last I received a letter from the worthy door-keeper of the Louvre, who was again attached to the Exhibition.

It contained these simple words (oh, the power of a few words!) that delighted my eyes more than a Parnassian strophe would have done: "Your pictures have been received, and have been greatly admired. The picture of "*The Gleaners*" *especially has dazzled the jury.*"

## Delight in Art

There is nothing more delightful than the sense of physical well-being and mental exhilaration which the artist feels in outdoor study; he enjoys at the same time the pleasures of art and of nature; he breathes the perfumes of the wood and of the new-mown hay; he forgets the anxieties of daily life; he has the delighted satisfaction of seeing the image of what he

admires take shape and perfect itself under his pencil. How many exquisite pleasures does he experience at once!

What rapture to penetrate little by little into the secrets of effect, to discover its infallible laws!

Is not each page of nature a visible symphony whose wonderful harmonies reveal themselves to the charmed eye that can perceive them?

And this symphony he sees gradually emerge on a simple canvas from the chaos of the first touches; formless and discordant at first, little by little it grows clear and harmonious, and the artist feels his soul exalted in a sort of delightful intoxication, and his hand works swiftly and at the same time unerringly, guided by the impulse of his clear and rapid perception.

And like flights of magical birds in the midst of this work which might be thought so absorbing a thousand delightful souvenirs cross the mind, reminiscences awakened by a tone or a harmony, that gleam with a thousand colours as they fly past, like the soap-bubbles which children send into the air.

When several painters are working together, this state of happy excitement provokes a thousand exclamations of wild gaiety and sparkling sallies of wit.

How quickly would we hurry to our room, on our return, to judge the effect of the study, for the light out of doors is even more unfavour-

able to painting than was the blue-flowered paper of the inn.

### Poetry Compared with Painting

[Breton was a poet as well as a painter.]

The art of the poet is more intoxicating than that of the painter; for the succession of the tableaux and the thoughts, the rapidity of the images, the intensity of the sentiments, and the immateriality of the process, tend to maintain in the brain and the nervous system a perpetual and pleasing excitement.

Painting, on the contrary, employs itself in the interpretation of a simple idea by palpable means.

But how many resemblances there are between the two arts! In both there are the same general laws of composition, of comparison, of rejection, of contrast, and of harmony.

Often, at the movement of the rhythm, I fancied my pen was designing forms, while at the same time the sonorousness of the sounds produced upon me almost the effect of colour.

But, precisely because it is intoxicating, the labour of the poet is excessively fatiguing. I contracted in this way a nervous affection of the brain, accompanied by vertigoes which resembled trances and lasted for hours.

Since then the physicians have absolutely prohibited me from writing poetry. It is in order to take my revenge for this that I write these memoirs.

Prose, that one can take up and lay down at will, permits periods of repose to the mind which the linking together of the verses and the continual obsession of the rhymes render restless.

## Corot, the Great Landscape Painter

[Corot was a warm friend of Breton's, and paid him a memorable visit.]

Who could be more paternal than this great painter, who never married, and who at first sight looked like a worthy farmer, with his wide trousers and his ample waistcoat buttoned to the chin? What good nature, what brilliancy also, and what intelligence in his gentle glance! What a clear, serene forehead. What love, what charity did that mobile mouth express, the lips pressed together at times, and the corners turned down slightly. For his was not the commonplace amiability which keeps the mouths of many superficially good-natured people stretched in a continual smile.

And this man, so modest in his tastes, who addressed grateful apostrophes to his dear *little pipe*, this frugal epicurean who went into raptures over the savouriness of a simple potage or a fat pullet, this man so ingenuous and so little vain, had a just appreciation of his high value as an artist.

He would have witnessed tranquilly and without astonishment the triumph he obtained at the Exposition of 1889. This does not mean

that he had ever expected it; no, he had been too long neglected by the public to have any faith in its justice. And yet his life was a continual overflow of pure joy, nourished by the spectacle of nature, which he adored.

I seem to see him now in the studio of the Rue Paradis-Poissonnière, when he showed me one of his new pictures saying: "Look at that sky, you little villain; how it shines of itself! You can see nothing else for it!" And afterward, at Douai, at the house of our fellow-artist Robaut, and at Arras, at the house of his faithful friend Dutilleux, who had also a keen and delicate feeling for nature. And that day when, making a study of the fortifications of the city, I dared to remark to the great painter that one of his *values* seemed to me a little pale, and he took his black hat, and comparing it with the corresponding value in the subject of his sketch, said to me, "See if it is too pale."

And as I objected that he was not going to paint his hat in the study, he answered, "He is right, the little fellow!"

Such was the candour of this excellent man and great artist.

## Visits Brittany

[Here Breton found inspiration for his "The Pardon," "The First Communion," and other great pictures.]

In 1865, after I had finished the "Day's Work Done," I was again seized with the desire to travel, and I set out for Brittany.

I was profoundly struck by Finistere, under all its aspects, maritime, rural, and religious.

The dreary moors, the granite crosses of the Calvaries erected at the solitary cross-roads, expressing the rude fervour of the inhabitants; the deep, dark paths where neither the light from the zenith, nor the sunbeams sifted through the leafy roof overhead, sufficed to dispel the eternal gloom in which innumerable roots twisted and interlaced themselves, like knots of vipers; the wan light of the crepuscule and of cloudy days that cast a leaden hue, like a gray tan, over the thin faces of the peasants with their fierce eyes and their long, thick hair, falling down their backs, over their stooped shoulders; the women that looked like pictures of the Virgin, with their mitre-shaped head-dresses, their ruffs, out of which rose their slender, curved necks, and their cotton petticoats trimmed with gold or silver braid — this monastic rusticity, this mystic wildness, evoked in my mind confused and far-off recollections, more remote than any I retained of my native Artois.

And I felt that I was indeed a descendant of the Bretons.

. . . The population is maritime, and of various types and customs.

Here are faces with straight profiles, the forehead and chin prominent, the lips thick, the jaws square and strong, the eyes blue and with well-opened lids, the arch of the brow wide, prolonging the eyebrows to the temples — a

Gallo-Roman type, dear to Michelangelo. Here, too, is the gazelle-like type, with flexible neck that recalls the desert, oblique eyes, the pupils sparkling like black diamonds set in brilliant white enamel, delicate and sharply chiselled features and an olive-bronze complexion.

The one brings to the mind the dolmens of Celtic forests, the other the harems of the East.

Here are none of the vanities of dress; the garments are thrown on hap-hazard — petticoats, once black, now rusty with use; blue petticoats, discoloured with the sea air, following in an unbroken line the outlines of the form, or gathered up in front and fastened back behind, revealing the graceful outlines of the legs; shawls, darned, patched, and ragged, swaying with every movement of the form — now thrown over the shoulders, like wings, now falling in graceful folds, swelling out and blowing about at the caprice of the breeze, or with the movements of the wearer.

Here and there young girls bent gracefully over the water, the head slightly raised, the bare arms extended as they wrung the linen, or rising and falling with the blows of the bats that clacked swiftly to the ceaseless accompaniment of the dashing of the waves.

Then there were groups of children, in rags of every colour, tumbling about, and rolling over one another; little half-naked fisherboys, agile as monkeys; little girls wearing their mothers' old caps hind-side foremost: round

heads covered with red, curly hair, with ruddy faces that looked at you with glorious eyes and gaping mouths.

Finally, in the midst of this scene of life, light, and clouds of humid dust, were to be seen more quiet figures — a tall girl standing in the sunshine, her weight resting on her hip, her face turned toward the sea, and lazily twisting her body and her neck, against which the breeze flapped the lappets of her cap; while farther away gloomy-looking old women, like mummies, sitting bolt upright against the rock, in which they almost seemed to be incrusted, spun their flax like the Fates; and grave matrons passed and repassed ceaselessly, with erect head and straight neck, with firm and slow step, their hands on their hips, their eyes cast down, their jugs firmly balanced on their heads. . . .

## The Power in Millet's Pictures

In the Paris *Salon* of 1853 there was an admirable picture of Daubigny, representing the margin of a cool, clear pond.

There was also a little landscape of Francais, full of poetic feeling — an Italian meadow with a straight ditch and a black cow beside it. I stood for a long time, plunged in a profound reverie, before this gem. The time of day was so well expressed in it that, as it was the hour at which I was accustomed to breakfast, I felt (and this is literally true) a sensation of hunger take possession of me, while I refreshed

my eyes with the sight of this beautiful still water, lighted by the sun shining through the reeds.

Millet made his appearance for the first time with real peasants, painted from nature, and not from the imagination, like the too solemn "Sower."

His picture represented a group of peasants in the field, whose dinner has just been brought to them. I have never again seen this picture, which was not included in the exhibition of the works of this painter.

It was wonderful. It produced a singular impression upon me.

This painting, baked in the sun, so to say, austere and earthy, expressed with marvellous effect the overpowering heat that burns the fields in the dog-days, a dull glow where breathe, stifle, and sweat horny-handed beings with knotty joints, thick lips, eyes vaguely defined in their sockets, outlines as simple as those of Egyptian art, and wearing clothes like sheaths, with baggy elbows and knees — beings of a stupid and savagely solemn aspect.

His enemies saw in it the glorification of stupidity. It was indeed a singular picture, at first view. The gray tone of the wheat seemed to diffuse itself through the red atmosphere that, growing thicker in the distance, enveloped everything in its monochromatic waves, under the livid light of the leaden sky.

Was it sublime, or was it horrible? The

public were startled by it, and waited, as usual, for the recognised critics to give the watchword. It was true they were not charmed by the picture, but they did not give way to the hilarity they had not hesitated to express before some recent disgraceful specimens of art. They felt the influence of a power, they felt themselves in the presence of a great creation, of a strange vision, of an almost prehistoric character.

This feeling of absolute oneness with the soil is not at all that of our peasants of the north, but it is occasionally to be met with among those of La Beauce.

Millet has since given us many works of a higher style of art, in which he attains character and sentiment even with ugliness. Every one knows them. He has gradually added to his pictures an element wanting in them in the beginning — depth of atmosphere.

With a plough standing in a rugged field where a few slender thistles are growing, two or three tones and an execution awkward and wooly, he can stir the depths of the soul and interpret the infinite.

A solitary, at times a sublime genius, he has made of a sheepfold lighted by the rays of the rising moon, mysterious as the eternal problem she presents, a little picture life-like and pure as a work of Phidias, unfathomable as a Rembrandt, but let others beware how they imitate it!

Because Millet has created masterpieces,

depicting man degraded by poverty even to the effacement of his individuality, we have not therefore the right to deny the exalted, the divine beauty of these masterpieces.

The wretched beings depicted by Millet touch us profoundly because he loved them profoundly, and because he has raised them to the higher regions inhabited by his genius, which has invested them with its own dignity.

But they have nothing in common with vulgar ugliness. Beauty will always remain the highest aim of art.

Admiration should not degenerate into fetichism, and those who best comprehend the genius of Millet, will take good care how they counsel others to imitate him.

In the first place, is it in truth ugliness that Millet has depicted? Is even that "Man with the Hoe" so ugly, who awakens our sympathy by something inexpressibly mysterious and venerable!

Many of his works prove that his harsh and austere ideal did not disdain the softened expression of a more serene art.

I had occasion to discuss this question with an artist with whom chance brought me into contact at the grand distribution of prizes of the International Exposition of 1867.

We spoke of the intolerance of certain short-sighted art critics who refuse the artist the right to give himself up to the inspirations of his originality, or who, judging every work of art

by one common standard, would like to make them all conform to their favourite type, as if the types of nature were not as diversified as the forms of its interpreter, art. "Why should not painters have the right to choose," said this artist, "one, the rough potato, the other, the morning-glory that twines itself among the corn?" He went on to develop this doctrine in a clearer and more forcible manner than I can do justice to.

*This artist was François Millet.*

## Thought Is even Greater than Execution

Painters should not trouble themselves too much about execution. I mean by this that they should have in view the representation of a sincere observation of nature, and shun, as they would the plague, the coquetries of the brush. Those whose aim it is to display upon canvas their skilfulness of touch can succeed in pleasing only fools.

Oh, the insipid skill of a hand which is always infallible! Oh, the delightful unskilfulness of a hand trembling with emotion!

Truly fine execution does not parade itself; it effaces itself humbly, to give place to the image it represents.

O artists! instruct yourselves, nourish your hearts, exalt your souls, extend your vision, and do not trouble yourselves about painting well. The more clearly you see into the secrets of nature, the clearer and more skilful will be

your touch; the more powerfully you are thrilled by feeling, the more expressive it will be! To see, to feel, to express — all this must take place simultaneously, spontaneously. How could one expect a cold calculation to produce the touch which should give expression to your thought, follow it unceasingly and immediately in all its inflections, in all its movements?

The excellence of the method followed is also a quality which is to be analysed after the work is completed, in regard to which it is well to consult the masters, because this study will enable you to penetrate more deeply into their spirit, but which must not be thought of while working.

### Inspiration Must Be Seized

Nothing can supply the place of spontaneity of touch, conveying, fresh and life-like, the direct expression of the feeling.

How important it is to make good use of the moments of inspiration; and how often it happens that the execution becomes heavy in seeking after a superficial and impossible perfection!

This is because fatigue is a bad counselor, and the desire for "the better" is to be distrusted which springs from too long a contemplation of one's work.

This touch, indeed, the direct expression of the feeling and the thought, must come at last, in order to avoid the necessity for retouching one's work, which would render it heavy, and deprive it of freshness and life.

A young and inexperienced painter will thoughtlessly dissipate in his sketch all the fire of his inspiration, and, when he wishes to complete his work, he will find before him an impassable gulf. The more beautiful his sketch, the heavier and more laboured will be every touch that he adds to it; and every effort which he makes to finish it will seem to remove it still further from the desired end.

The experienced artist, on the contrary, will first fix, in a life-like sketch, the emotion he wishes to interpret; then taking his canvas, he will fill in the details without haste, and will prepare all the materials of which he will have need. He will make all the necessary studies, and will outline the masses of his painting with care.

He will know how to restrain the ardour of his enthusiasm, always ready to carry him away, in order that his sketch, made with premeditation, may in no way interfere with the work which is to follow.

He knows that it is necessary to lay the foundations of his work in this way, in order to give greater firmness to the forms, greater power and solidity to the tones, as well as to aid in the distribution of the effects; but he will do it in such a way — there being nothing to distract his attention — as will leave a free field to spontaneity of feeling, so that the touch which is to interpret it may be final.

It is necessary that everything in this sketch, the general outlines, proportions, and relative

values, be rigorously predetermined. Every detail, as well as every charm of colour, must be omitted.

This sketch must have, besides, contrasts sufficiently strong, accents sufficiently pronounced, to prevent the artist from being led into weakness of execution, when he shall begin his picture.

It must not be painted in the final tone, for nothing renders a painting so heavy as to place two layers of the same colour one over the other.

Once the sketch is well laid in, and perfectly dry, let the painter attack his work boldly, and let every touch of his brush be the consequence of the feeling which animates him, and never made with the aim of producing a fine work.

### Art as an Interpretation of Nature

Those realists who reject arrangement, and refuse to admit the necessity of selection even, deny the existence of art.

They may laugh at the rustic who said to Rousseau as he was painting an oak, "Why are you making that tree, when it is already made?"

It is none the less evident, however, that if the landscape-painter had in view only the exact reproduction of the oak, the remark of the peasant would have been perfectly just.

What Rousseau aimed at, then, was an inidvidual interpretation which should be superior to the reality.

He did not paint the tree itself, but the expression which he lent it, the impression he

received from it, and this perhaps unconsciously and impelled by his passion for the Beautiful, thinking all the time that he was making an exact copy of nature.

There are certain pictures which please at first, but when they are out of sight leave only a faint impression on the mind; there are others, on the contrary, which leave an impression on the mind that grows stronger with time, engraves itself upon the memory, and is never again effaced from it.

One often finds its difficult to estimate the exact degree of merit possessed by a work while one is looking at it; but later, when the impression received from it shall have settled, so to say, and become classified, it will be easy to discern which are its really powerful qualities, and which are those that have only a superficial interest.

The effect a picture produces on the memory is the counter-proof of its direct effect.

In a painting, parts which are beautiful in themselves may constitute a bad whole.

To say of any work of art that it has beauties is to condemn it. This thought does not occur to one in contemplating a masterpiece.

If an accessory in a picture strikes the eye, so much the worse! A defect which did not attract the attention would be better.

When an artist, in exhibiting his picture, perceives that his visitors are struck by the beauty of a subordinate part, let him not hesitate for an instant to sacrifice it.

# WILLIAM WETMORE STORY

["William Wetmore Story and his Friends," from letters, diaries and recollections, by Henry James, was published in 1903, by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston. This firm also publishes Story's "Conversations in a Studio." Both works have been here drawn upon by the kind consent of their publishers.

Mr. Story's career was a singular proof that the painter, sculptor, and poet but give varying expression to the thought, emotion, and imagination of art. He wrote poems of high merit, as "Io victis," and "Cleopatra"; a capital novel, "Fiammetta"; then, passing to his studio, he created the Memorial to Key, for San Francisco; the statue of Prescott, for Bunker Hill; the monument to John Marshall, at Washington. His "Roba di Roma" depicts the Eternal City as old men still remember it — incomparably more interesting than the swept, garnished and denuded capital of to-day. — ED.]

## SKETCHES HIS CAREER

[Toward the close of his life Story thus briefly sketched his career at the request of an Italian acquaintance:]

BORN in Salem, Massachusetts, February 12th, 1819. My father was the Hon. Mr. Justice Story, of the national Supreme Court, and my mother the daughter of Judge Wetmore and granddaughter of General Waldo, a distinguished officer in the English army employed in the American colonies in the middle of the last century. He commanded at the siege of Louisburg and at its capture and at the capture of the place from the French, and received from the Crown the grant of a whole county in Maine as a

reward for his services. My father was a man of extraordinary capacity, intellect, and goodness. He was made Speaker of the House, in Massachusetts, at twenty-five years of age; then Representative to Congress, and then, at the age of thirty-two, Judge of the Supreme Court — the youngest man who ever received that dignity, which, in the United States outranks all but that of President. He wrote many and celebrated works on jurisprudence, which are known throughout Europe. His decisions are quoted in England as of highest authority. He founded the college of the law at Harvard, and there lectured for many years as professor. Under his training many of the most distinguished men of America were brought up. A noble man, a brilliant, and as good as he was great.

He left Salem when I was ten years of age, and went to Cambridge, near Boston. My life was thenceforward chiefly spent there. I entered Harvard University at fifteen and graduated at nineteen, delivering a public poem on my graduation. I then studied the law for three years under my father, entered the profession, and practised in all the courts on leaving him, and was engaged in several most important cases. I married when I was twenty-three, was appointed commissioner in bankruptcy and commissioner of the United States Courts for Massachusetts, Maine, and Pennsylvania; also reporter for the United States Circuit Courts. I practised my profession for six years; and during this time

wrote a "Treatise on the Law of Contracts," in two volumes, of about one thousand pages each, and a "Treatise on Sales of Personal Property," now in its sixth edition. Both were adopted as text-books in the law school, and I also published three volumes of reports of Law Cases, all in their third edition now. Further, I published, at twenty-two a first volume of poems. During the six years of my legal career I produced, sometimes under a feigned name, sometimes under my own, a good deal of poetry and criticism.

On the death of my father in 1846, a public monument and statue were decreed to him, and to my great surprise I was requested to make them. I had hitherto amused myself, in hours of leisure, with modelling, but more with painting, and I used to get up early in the morning to work at these before going to my office. I had begun to model and paint while in college. On receiving the commission I have mentioned I declined it, from a sense of my incapacity — I did n't think I could carry it out. But I was so strongly urged to try that I finally consented on condition that I should come abroad first and see what had been done in these ways. I accordingly, in October, 1847, sailed for Italy, and thence travelled over the Continent and England; afterward, on my return, making my sketch, which was accepted. I remained at home for eight months, working very hard all day at the law, and wrote an additional volume to

"Contracts," and a biography, in two volumes, of my father. I was haunted, however, by dreams of art and Italy, and every night fancied I was again in Rome and at work in my studio. At last I found my heart had gone over from the law to art, and I determined to go back to Rome. I came, and here modelled and executed the statue of my father, now in Cambridge, and another. I then once more returned to America and the law, but at last, after another year of them, I definitely decided to give up everything for art. My mother thought me mad and urged me to pursue my legal career, in which everything was open to me, rather than take such a leap in the dark. But I had chosen, and I came back to Italy, where I have lived nearly ever since.

[He relates further that—somewhat to anticipate—recognition and success had been far from prompt in justifying him. He worked in Rome for several years with assiduity, producing, among various things, a figure of Hero holding up her torch to Leander, and those known as his Cleopatra and his Libyan Sibyl.]

These I excuted in marble, but no one would buy them; so that, disappointed, I determined on a new rupture, a break with art and Rome, and a return to my old profession. This was in 1862. But it so happened that the London universal exhibition was to take place and that I was requested to allow these two statues to go into the Roman Court, the Roman Government taking charge of them and paying all expenses.

I gave them; I never wrote a word to any one about them; but shortly after they arrived, before the exhibition was open, I received a copy of the *Times* with a most flattering notice of them, declaring them the most remarkable and original works there, and, at the same time, by letter, an offer of £3,000 for them, by which I was quite astounded. I had offered them only two months before for their mere cost, and yet had failed to sell them. This gave me confidence; I continued to work; and since then my life has been dedicated to art. This was long ago, but, as there is no end to art, I am as hard at work as ever.

## His Bust of Browning, His Holofernes, and Libyan Siby

[To Charles Eliot Norton from Diablerets]

August 15, 1861.

. . . The last thing I did before leaving Rome was to make a bust of Browning which his wife was good enough to call "perfect." It was made for her as a present, but alas! you see the end of that. Since you were with us I have made several statues — one of Judith at the moment she makes her prayer before killing Holofernes. The right hand is thrown up to heaven, the left holds, a little behind her, her sword. In this I endeavoured to express passionate religious enthusiasm and the summoning of all one's energy to do a great patriotic act, thus

putting out of view the crime. It is not to kill Holofernes her betrayer, but Holofernes the tyrant, the oppressor of her country, that she asks the help of God in a great duty and a great sacrifice. All other representations make Judith a criminal, an assassin, and it is only *before* the act that she is poetically and artistically grand. The deed done she is a woman who has killed a man — and with Holofernes's head repulsive. The painters represent her thus, for sake of colour and contrast, but this conception of her is low. The only other time is when she holds the head up to the people, a grand subject for a grand painting. Next I made for contrast of sentiment a boy Bacchus on a panther, which is purely lyrical in treatment. Then this last winter I finished what I consider as my best work — it is so considered by all, I believe — the Libyan Sibyl. I have taken the pure Coptic head and figure, the great massive sphinx-face, full-lipped, long-eyed, low-browed and lowering, and the largely developed limbs of the African. She sits on a rock, her legs crossed, leaning forward, her elbow on her knee and her chin pressed down upon her hand. The upper part of the figure is nude, and a rich simple mantle clothes her legs. This gave me a grand opportunity for the contrast of the masses of the nude with drapery, and I studied the nude with great care. It is a very massive figure, big-shouldered, large-bosomed, with nothing of the Venus in it, but, as far as I

could make it, luxuriant and heroic. She is looking out of her black eyes into futurity and sees the terrible fate of her race. This is the theme of the figure — Slavery on the horizon, and I made her head as melancholy and severe as possible, not at all shirking the real African type. On the contrary, it is thoroughly African — Libyan Africa of course, not Congo. This I am now putting into marble, and if I can afford it shall send to the new Exhibition in London. . . . If it is returned on my hands I shall abandon sculpture, or at all events shut up my studio.

## His David and His Saul

[TO CHARLES ELIOT NORTON, FROM ROME]

March 19, 1863.

My winter ever since I returned from England has been full of hard work, and to-day, for the first time since December came in, have I an hour which is free. My Saul is finished, and the base is being turned for it, so that I am as vain and useless at my studio as a partner who has been turned out of the firm. I believe I have told you about my statue before, but cannot recollect. He is seated, and I have represented him at the moment when the evil spirit is upon him and David is called in to play to him. The action is all interior — the struggle of a half-demented soul; one hand clutching his beard and one fumbling at his dagger. I think

it my best work, but no man is judge of his own. Did we not, however, believe in the thing on which we are engaged we could never have the heart or enthusiasm to go on with it. I should like you to see it, but unless you come here you never will, for it seems that no important work of mine ever is to go to America.

### As to Monuments

[Story writes in 1886 to Mr. Wurts Dundas in response to a proposal that he should compete for the design of a monument to General Grant:]

I had never supposed I should be thought of in relation to it, knowing as I do the strong pressure which would be made in many directions to obtain it, and having in this as in all other cases no intention to offer my services or to put forward any claim. As for competition, I have always steadily refused to enter into it. It requires a great deal of knowledge and experience to be able to decide upon models for a great monument, and the judging committees are generally incompetent. [After which he enumerates, lucidly enough, the drawbacks and disasters involved in the process in question.] It is very easy to make a mistake in judging of a great monument from a small sketch. Effects are quite different in small from what they are in colossal proportions, and my own experience is that I have invariably found it necessary in the large to modify much that is fairly satisfactory in the small. . . . Various schemes have

occurred to me; a triumphal arch, a portico, a tabernacle, or a far more grandiose and effective combination of all, with a great frieze in high relief representing all the distinguished coadjutors and generals of the war, or, round the portico, a triumphal, or even a funeral, procession of the same (in relief), with a colossal statue of Grant in the centre. Otherwise a mausoleum surrounded on the outside by such a procession, surmounted by America Victrix and with a colossal figure of Grant on a platform in front. I have in my mind such a combination, which it is impossible to explain in words — in addition to which my ideas are of course as yet but first impressions, and require much further consideration. . . . The monuments at Edinburgh and at Berlin to Scott and to Fritz are, as you mention, admirable in themselves, but I think that with unlimited money something more imposing than these ought to be produced. I am now making a monument to Francis Key, in which I have embodied some such general scheme as that to Scott at Edinburgh, though it is different enough. It consists of an open loggia or tabernacle on four Corinthian columns, standing on a base and surmounted by a statue of America with the Flag. In the centre of the tabernacle is the statue of Key, and on the base a bas-relief of singers and players performing the song. I am very tired of the stale idea, so often repeated, of a monument with a portrait-statue on top and four figures at the corners of the base;

it is the resource of all commonplace sculptors. What we want in this case is grand character, real interest, poetic conception. But I thoroughly agree with you that all violent action is to be avoided. It is always unhappy, in the end, however striking, often, at first sight. The idea of victory should be indicated not by any violence or energy in the figure, but in some big symbolic way, making the man the director and inspirer, not the physical actor. Grant never went about gesticulating wildly and crowing, but was remarkably quiet and sternly calm — the soul, not the body, of the War.

[Returning to the subject in another letter to the same correspondent, he gives his reasons for disapproving of an elaborate scheme of which some detailed account had been published, criticising it mainly as a feeble and confused attempt to arrive at mere size and quantity. What becomes, he asks, in such a mere material jumble, of beauty or of lucidity?]

Such ideas did not animate the Florentines when Giotto built that exquisite campanile that gives a grace and beauty to the whole city and is the delight of the world. The Washington monument in our national capital is double its size, and we may brag of it as the tallest obelisk in the world. But we must in honesty also add that it is the ugliest, unable to compete, for anything like beauty, even with many a factory chimney. As a monument to Washington it means absolutely nothing whatever. Think of the grand Mausoleum at Halicarnassus and of that to Hadrian at Rome, and then look at our

*biggest* of all chimneys to the father of his country!

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## Just Praise Requires Knowledge

There is something better in any kind of enthusiasm than in pretentious criticism. Critics generally think it shows knowledge and ability to find fault; but they are mistaken in this. It shows much more real knowledge to be able to praise justly. Nothing that ever was made, or ever will be made, is without faults. Perfection in art is impossible, and it is safest always to find fault, since defects will always necessarily exist. Besides, one can always retreat after any severe criticism into the fastness of, "I do not like it"; and this negative position is unassailable, and exposes no one to laughter or contempt. But praise is positive. It requires knowledge, and appreciation, and feeling, to praise properly. If the praise is foolishly and ignorantly bestowed, it exposes the writer or speaker to ridicule. There was never anything written, painted, or chiselled which is not full of defects. The great question is whether, in spite of those defects, it is good. Any fool among architects can find fault with St. Peter's; but, after all, is it not a great work? What makes it a great work? Tell me, you who know. The fool will tell me its defects.

You only can tell me its merits. The petty fault-finder seeks out the blemishes in Shakespeare. The sympathetic poet thinks only of the beauty, the grandeur, the passion, and in the blaze of these all the shadows and blots are as nothing, — mere spots on the sun. The anatomical critic will tell you that the Day and Night of Michelangelo are impossible. So be it. But what is it that makes them so grand and imposing, despite their defects, — nay, perhaps, in measure because of their defects? If they were perfectly correct, would they be as impressive? I doubt it. To say of anything wherein it is right, is far more difficult than to say wherein it is wrong. Nothing is so easy as to abuse. Any ignoramus can do that. But every man has a right to be judged by his best, not by his worst; and according to what he intends to do, not according to what the critic thinks he ought to have striven to do.

### Art Must Have Disinterested Service

The moment art becomes a business it is degraded. It should be worshipped as a divinity, pursued purely from love, followed from enthusiasm, wooed with one's whole heart, desired as an end, not as a means. It is as impossible to worship art and mammon together as God and mammon. It demands all one's soul, and heart, and intellect — aye, and even that is too little. To gain entrance to the ideal regions to which

it ever points, one must surrender one's self wholly to its guidance and inspiration, strain all one's faculties, give all one's life. The best that we can give is but little, but the rewards are great. Following art in such spirit, it refines and idealises the world about us, lifts us into regions of delight above the low bases of material existence, and gives to the common daily facts of life a new interest and a transfigured beauty. To the artist, everything is picture, and poetry, and colour and feeling. To the farmer, it is so much corn and potatoes, and so many pounds in pocket. Each reaps his own harvest. Nature gives us what we seek, and reflects back to us what we are. Everything depends on the spirit with which we approach it; we can only find what we bring; the key to all secrets we must carry in ourselves.

### No Dawdling. Refreshment in Music

There is time enough to do many things, if the person is seriously concentrated in his work, and does not squander his mind and his time by half-work. Nothing is so bad as that. There are many persons who think they are working, when in truth they are only dawdling over their work, with half attention. There is time enough thrown away every day to enable any one of earnest mind to do more than many a man does with his whole day. All depends upon love of the work on which one is engaged, and

in concentration of one's faculties. It is, in my opinion, better to be utterly idle, and lie fallow to influences, than to muddle away hours in half-work. Besides, change of labour is rest, and to an active mind more rest than laziness. I have always found in music a more complete refreshment of my mind, after a hard day's work in my studio, than even sleep could give. The faculties and powers and interests are thrown in a different direction, and while one series works the other reposes. After an entire change of occupation one returns with fresh zest and vigour to the work he has left; whereas, if the thoughts are constantly treading the same path, they soon, as it were, wear a rut in the mind, out of which they cannot extricate themselves, and this begets in the end mannerism and self-repetition. Still more, the various arts are but different exercises of correlative powers. They each in turn refresh and enlarge the imaginative and motive powers, and extend their sphere. Each, as it were, is echoed and reflected into the other. The harmonies of colour and forms, and tones, and words, are closely related to each other, and but different expressions of merely the same thing. A sculptor's work will be cold if he is not sensitive to colour and music; and a painter's work will be loose and vague unless his mind has been trained to the absoluteness of form and outline: neither can compose well his lines and forms unless he possess that innate sense of balance, and har-

monious arrangement, and modulation, which is developed by music.

### Painting Akin to Music

The common use of the words "tone" and "harmony," as applied to colour, indicate that there is a subtle connection between sound and colour, however dim and intangible. Certainly some colours clash together, and produce the same mental impression as discords in music. So also harmonies of forms and lines are felt to be allied to music, though we cannot explain the relation. Proportion is harmony; symmetry is nothing but the harmonious relations of measures; and I have no doubt they have an absolute mathematical relation, as much as the pulsations of strings. It is because we do not scientifically know these relations that we are always groping in the dark; and having only an empirical knowledge, gained from practice, we are never sure of anything, and so cannot lift ourselves above imitations of what we see and feel to be agreeable; and this brings me back to what I was saying. In art, servile imitation means ignorance. Take sculpture, for instance. This, as I have said before, is at once the most positive, the most restricted in its means, and the most exacting in its end. If in this art mere imitation be not required as of necessity, it would seem to be required in no form of art. Yet it is precisely because of its literal imitation that sculpture in the modern days is

defective. It has no style. It is not nature, it is the individual model; it is Lisette or Antoine. When compared with the best antique work, though it is far more elaborate in its execution and more finished in its details, it is far inferior in character, dignity, and style. In the antique the forms are scientifically disposed, according to a certain established scale of harmony of proportion, and the details are subordinated to that distribution. The type is never lost sight of; it dominates all the parts. The Greek artist in his ideal works never suffered himself to be seduced by any accidents of the model from principles established by long study of the varying forms of nature, and reduced to system. His art has, like music, a thorough-bass, a scientific standard of proportion which is absolute. He permits himself no extravagance of gesture or form, but he seizes on the characteristic, works it boldly out, and knows what he is doing. All the ancient sculpture has a style of its own: whether the individual work be good or bad in execution, it is founded upon a distinct and scientific distribution of parts — upon a system which the artist has learned, and knows as if it were a multiplication table. Modern sculpture, on the contrary, is full of accident. It is domineered over by the model. It is founded on no system and on no scientific basis. It has no absolute standard of proportion for the human form, it is governed by no law, and seeks through imitation of the individual model

to supply this want. Part by part it is worked out, but without any understanding of the whole, and without any style. Imitation is its bane, because the imitation is carried out without principles and without selection, and what is seen in the model is copied and taken as absolute.

### How a Picture, Statue, or Poem Is Conceived

Sometimes a thought or conception comes in one way, sometimes in another. Can you give any account of how an idea comes into your head, or where it came from? There is no particular mystery in the conception of a work of art, other than there is in every other conception. Sometimes it comes upon one suddenly, unexpectedly, like a surprise — and yet, whole, sound, perfect. Sometimes it grows slowly into shape without one's will, hangs vaguely about the mind for a long time in a misty way, and finally condenses into an absolute shape and presence. Sometimes the seed or germ has been unconsciously within us for years, without our being distinctly aware of it; and after it has been developed and has assumed its final shape we find hints and presages of it cropping forth here and there in our previous life and thought, now in one shape, now in another, collaterally as it were, and in other relations, before it took to itself a distinct self-existence. It is a plant growing in our garden, unknown, unnamed, almost unobserved, which grows and grows,

and at last bursts into flower; or again, it is an instant's crystallisation of what was before invisible or dimly perceived. Courting the muse, as the cant phrase runs, is, I suppose, cultivating generally all the sentiments, feelings, and thoughts which lie on the ideal side of our nature. Sometimes a chance word or tone fires a whole train, dormant and out of sight, which we have unconsciously been laying.

I very rarely shape a subject of set purpose, and then it usually comes to nothing. My notion is that our best work is done when we are possessed by an idea, and not when we are striving after one. Inspiration is the inbreathing of an influence from without and above, that can only really live in us and become an essential part of us when the interior nature is in a condition to be fecundated. The individual mind is, as it were, the matrix which is impregnated by the universal mind, and then alone can it conceive. It cannot of itself create. When all is fit and the spirit of man is receptive, the idea suddenly comes upon us without our will and without our power to compel or resist its coming. It is received and quickened within our life and being, and takes from outward nature only its body and organism. It is what we call it in common s ch, a conception. Therefore, of course, all ssible culture and preparation are necessary, according to our interior life and nature will : the outward product of our art. If the seed ıll on stony places, there will be

no germination. The fit soil must be ready. Depend upon it that thoughts are begotten in us by an over-power, whatever we may choose to call it. No one thing in nature makes itself by itself. There is a double germ, a double action, a passive and active, an influence and an effluence, in everything. The spirit or effluence of God brooded over the water in the legend of the origin of things — over the water, the most susceptible and open element, not over the earth.

### How a Sculptor Goes to Work

It is the invariable habit of a sculptor first to make his sketch, or small model, of the figure or group. This he does solely with his own hand and from his own mind, and in making this no assistance is permissible. In this the action, the composition, the character, the general masses, the lines, the draperies, in a word the whole creative part, is achieved. The details only are left unfinished. Some sculptors carry their small models much farther on in details and execution than others; and in case a sculptor intends to intrust to others the putting up of the large model from this, he determines every particular. The small model is then placed in the hands of a workman, who enlarges it by proportional compasses, mechanically, makes a framework of iron and wire, and packs upon this the clay, following by measurement all the forms and masses, and copying it in large in all its parts. He gives the general form,

and makes what may be called a large, rude sketch of the small model. How much further he may go in his work depends upon the extent to which the small model is finished. If it be carefully thought out in all its details, his business is to imitate these as well as he can. The sculptor himself generally works with him in all these beginnings, though that is by no means necessary. The work being thus set up and put into general form and mass, after the small model, the sculptor makes what changes and deviations he deems necessary, sometimes entirely altering one action, distributing differently the masses, varying the composition of lines, and working out the details. From the time the general masses are arranged, the assistant is of little or no use, save to copy, under direction of the sculptor, bits of drapery arranged by him on a lay-figure, or from casts in plaster of fragments from nature, or to render him, in a word, any mere mechanical service. All the rest is done by the sculptor's own hands.

### The Assistant's Task

The assistant's work is purely preparation. Nothing of the arrangement, or of the finish, or of the feeling is his, and as the work approximates to completion he becomes useless, and the sculptor works alone. Practically speaking, the assistant's work, being mere rough preparation, is invariably again worked over and varied in every part, often entirely pulled down and

remodelled, so that nothing remains of it; and it not unfrequently occurs that after the first packing on of the clay, he is rather an embarrassment than a help, however clever he may be. If you pause to think for a moment, you will see that, however well he may do merely mechanical work, it is impossible, from the nature of things, that he can divine the wishes or convey the spirit and feeling of the artist himself. As to all the essential parts, they must and can be done only by the artist's own hands. He alone knows, or feels rather, what he seeks and wants, and no one can help him. How can any one aid him, for instance, in the character and expression of the face, in the arrangement of the draperies, in the pose of the figure, in the *finesse* of feeling and touch, that constitutes all the difference between a good and a bad work? These things cannot be left to any assistant; they require the artist's own mind and hand.

### Michelangelo: His Impetuosity

Michelangelo was accustomed himself to do a great deal of his own work in the marble; and he thus wasted his great powers in merely mechanical labour, which would have been better done by any competent workmen, because they would have been more careful and mechanical. Through his impatience and enthusiasm, he ruined block after block of marble by working with too great vehemence near the surface. He had a wonderful faculty as a mere workman in

marble, but his genius and impetuosity of temperament would not brook the opposition of so stubborn a material, and unfitted him for those first processes of roughing out into shape the block, which require patience and precision. Too eager to arrive at a point where his true genius would find play, he assailed the marble with such violence that he often struck off pieces which trenched into the just limits of the surface; and as they could not be replaced, he was forced to finish as he could — not as he would. Had he confined himself more to elaborating his work in clay, and then intrusting the blocking out in marble to a mechanical workman, we should have had not only a much larger number of grand works by him, but they would have been freer of great defects. For instance, the back of the head of Moses has been chiselled away until it is an impossible head. Again, the David is sacrificed to the exigencies of the marble; and the head of his famous Day was probably left unfinished because he perceived that it was turned beyond the limit permitted to nature without breaking the neck. The defect is not now so apparent as it would have been had he attempted to finish it, and certainly its very imperfection lends it a singular power and character.

### The Sistine Chapel

Michelangelo is one of those mighty geniuses that is above criticism. He impresses you in his great works so powerfully that you have no wish

to criticise him. Any sculptor can point out his defects, they are so plain and manifest; but nobody has ever managed so to wreak himself upon marble, and to stamp so tremendous an energy into any works of art. The Sistine Chapel is to me the most gigantic work that ever was accomplished in art. The intellect, the force of will, the vigour and grandeur, stamped upon these frescoes is so great that they overpower you. Everything else seems feeble after them. So, too, the Day and Night in the Medici Chapel have something terrible in their solemnity. They are all wrong, if you please, full of defects, impossible, unnatural, but they are grand thoughts and mighty in their character, and they overawe you into silence. I would counsel no artist to attempt to copy them or form his style upon them; let him rather absorb them as impressions than study them as models. They will fill him with a sense of grandeur, so taken in; but they afford no basis for a school. The works of Michelangelo's followers were characterised by wild exaggeration and intemperance of style. They strove by excess to arrive at grandeur. They imitated his defects and lost his spirit. Bernini was almost a maniac in his art. He observed no restraint, and would not limit his talent by the true boundaries of sculpture. There is no doubt that he was a man of great talent, if not of genius; but his genius all went astray and in a false direction. His attempts were beyond his powers,

and he has left us almost nothing but exaggerated and oppressive works. Sculpture owes a great debt of gratitude to Canova, who led it back into quieter fields, and taught it self-restraint, and preached again the gospel of temperance, according to the Greeks. Theirs is the true school of form and method, simple, dignified, and strong. Let us, if possible, infuse into this form the modern spirit of intensity, emotion, and passion, which they did not attempt. That, in my opinion, is the problem we should seek to solve.

## "Whose Service Is Perfect Freedom"

Goethe has given us some admirable thoughts and maxims about art, and this is one of the very best: it is so true that I pin it to my wall and keep it ever before me. "Who would be great must concentrate his powers — must work within the limits of his art; and it is Law alone can give us Freedom." There is true philosophy in this: whether there be poetry is quite another question. I constantly see artists (using the term to comprehend all forms of art) endeavouring to put into their special art what does not belong to it, and overrunning its just boundaries. One of the greatest difficulties is to know what is possible in any art, and what can be expressed through its means, and not to attempt the impossible. For instance, what we can say in poetry we cannot reproduce in painting; what music can reach, poetry cannot touch; what painting may do, sculpture must avoid.

Each has its own means, and we must accept its laws. Closely related as they are, they are each individual arts. But nowadays, in England at least, the boundaries of each art seem to be confused — or so at least the current jargon of art would seem to indicate. We have symphonies in colour, recitations in music, tone-poems, harmonies of verse, etc. Picturesque sculpture is a mistake. So is sculptural painting. Some artists endeavour to embody in their picture or statue an idea which is poetical in itself, and which might be rendered by language so as to be delightful, but which, when wrought out in form and colour, loses itself in vagueness, and needs interpretation and explanation to make it even intelligible. But no idea is fit for a picture or a statue which cannot express itself in that form. It must speak clearly for itself, and by itself, and ask no foreign assistance. Allegories are therefore for the most part too vague and unreal for pictures or statues, since they are only intelligible through the symbols with which they are surrounded. A child with a butterfly in a statue or picture is only a child with a butterfly, though a poet by words may give it a far higher and more spiritual meaning. So, too, in art we must be content with the essential, and the unnecessary is an impertinence.

### Gain to an Artist in All Round Culture

It is a common notion that no general education or high culture is necessary to the

artist, but that art is a special faculty, a handicraft, a gift requiring no education save in its practice. No mistake could, as it seems to me, be greater. It is only from the pressure of full and lofty streams that the fountain owes the exultant spring of its column. The imagination needs to be fed from high sources, and strengthened and enriched to fulness, before it can freely develop its native force. The mere drilling of hand and eye, the mere technical skill, nay, even the natural bias and faculty of the mind, are not sufficient. They are indeed necessary, but they are not all. It is from the soul and mind that the germs of thought and feeling must spring; and in proportion as these are nourished and expanded by culture do they flower forth in richer hues and forms. It is by these means that the taint of the vulgar and common is eradicated, that ideas are purified and exalted, that feeling and thought are stimulated, and taste refined. Out of the fulness of the whole being each word is spoken, and each act takes the force of the whole man. It is not alone the athlete's arm that strikes — it is his whole body. The blacksmith's arm in itself may be stronger, but his blow is far less effective.

### Will Is Commonly Lacking

It is a very common thing to hear persons say, How I wish I could do this or that thing, but nine times out of ten it is just the earnestness

of wish or will that is wanting. The desire has no real root of determination. It is a momentary feeling. Such persons would not be willing to give laborious hours and days and years to attain the end they covet; but they would like to reach out their hand and pluck the fruit at once without trouble. I can't do this means, very commonly, I don't choose to do it. I should like to have it, but I won't pay for it. If they do not succeed at the first trial they are discouraged. A true artist must make up his mind to fail a thousand times, and never be discouraged, but bravely to try again. I am always surprised to see how well most people begin, and how little way they go. They seem to think that to be an artist comes like reading and writing, as Dogberry has it, by nature.

### Art Is Art Because It Is not Nature

In considering the true principles which govern art, we must first clear our minds of the notion that the object of art is illusion. Art is art because it is not nature; and could we absolutely reproduce anything by means of form, tone, colour, or any other means, so as actually to deceive, it would at once fail to interest the mind and heart as art. However we might, on being undeceived, wonder at the skill with which it was imitated, we should not accept it as a true work of art. It is only so long as imitative skill is subordinated to creative energy and poetic sensibility that it occupies

its proper place. Otherwise, if by any process we could fix on a mirror the reflection of anything, we should have a perfect picture. Yet, perfect as the reflection is in every respect, it is not a picture, and it does not interest us as art. The most perfect imitation of nature is, therefore, not art. It must pass through the mind of the artist and be changed.

Shakespeare says we should "hold the mirror up to nature" in our art.

Aye, but what mirror? Not the senseless material mirror, in which nature is simply reproduced as fact. Art is nature reflected in the spiritual mirror, and tinged with all the sentiment, feeling, passion of the spirit that reflects it. It is nature that has "suffered a sea change into something rich and strange." It is, then, an absolute requisite of a work of art, that it should neither be real nor illusory. The moment reality or illusion comes in, art disappears. The birds that strove to peck the painted grapes of Zeuxis, the ape that ate the coloured beetles in the volume of natural history, are types of the ignorant and vulgar mind that never entered into the sacred precincts of art.

## Nature Is Only the Artist's Starting Point

In art there is no nature independent of man and his relation to it. While art should never be false to nature, it should be its master

and not its slave. Nature is the grammar and dictionary of art; but it is not until we have mastered these, so as to use them freely and almost unconsciously as a language, that we can rise to be poets or artists. A faultless grammatical sentence, or series of sentences, does not make a poem; and many are the artists who, after they have learned the language of art, have nothing to say which is worth saying. If we have nothing really to say, what is the use of learning the language? A servile imitation of nature is fatal to all the higher impulses of the spirit, and will never result in anything admirable. A sketch by a great master is better, despite all its incorrectness, not only than the most careful reproduction through mere imitation of any facts in nature, but often better than the finished work of the same master — better, because freer and fuller of the idea. Every artist will tell you that he finds it difficult in his finished work to come up to the impression of his sketch, for the former is produced in the heat of enthusiasm, and when the mind is penetrated thoroughly with the idea, while the latter is more studied and mechanical. Persons ordinarily speak of imitations of nature, as if nature were something definite, and positive, and absolute. But nature is to each one a different thing. It is what we are, and takes the colouring of the eye and the mind. It is infinite, too, in its variety, infinite in its scale, and infinite in its

combinations; while an imitation of a definite fact is limited to that fact. Yet even that one fact is Protean. It changes with every light, and is affected by every emotion of the artist. Nature is not an aggregation of facts — it is an idea in the mind derived from a long series of varying impressions and experiences. When we say a work of art is natural, it is because it answers to this idea, not because it is true to some particular fact. Many incidents true in fact are to the imagination false, unnatural, and unfit for art.

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### Giotto's Chapel at Padua

How sweet the mild retirement of this spot!
  This area, where the gladiator bled,
  With turf and flowers is softly carpeted ;
These girdling walls where later knighthood
      fought
Now draped with ivy stand, remembering not
  Their scenes of former life. But here, instead,
  The artist's steps in pilgrimage are led
To seek the shrine by Giotto's genius wrought.
Here, dedicate to art and piety,
  His simple chapel stands ; and painted here
Upon its walls a pictured life I see,
  Inspired by feeling, earnest and sincere.
What faith, what simple dignity and grace
Art since hath lost, are in this cloistered place !

# JAMES NASMYTH

[James Nasmyth, the eminent engineer who invented the steam hammer, was a son of Alexander Nasmyth, of Edinburgh, famous as an artist. James Nasymth's autobiography was published in 1885, by John Murray, London. It has already been quoted in the volume of this series entitled "Men of Science." He thus describes his father's incitement to drawing as a universal language.— ED.]

## A MASTERLY TEACHER OF DRAWING

MY FATHER increased the interest of the classes by giving little art lectures. They were familiar but practical. He never gave lectures as such, but rather demonstrations. It was only when a pupil encountered some technical difficulty, or was adopting some wrong method of proceeding, that he undertook to guide him by his words and practical illustrations. His object was to imbue the minds of the pupils with high principles of art. He would take up their brushes and show by his dexterous and effective touches how to bring out, with marvellous ease, the right effects of the landscape. The other pupils would come and stand behind him, to see and hear his clear instructions carried into actual practice on the work before him. He often illustrated his little special lessons by his stores of instructive and interesting anecdotes, which no doubt helped to rivet his practice all the deeper into their minds. Thus the Nasmyth

classes soon became the fashion. In many cases both mothers and daughters might be seen at work together in that delightful painting-room. I have occasionally met with some of them in after years, who referred to those pleasant hours as among the most delightful they had ever spent.

There was one point my father diligently impressed upon his pupils, and that was the felicity and the happiness attendant upon pencil drawing. He was a master of the pencil, and in his off-hand sketches communicated his ideas to others in a way that mere words could never have done. It was his Graphic Language. A few strokes of the pencil can convey ideas which quires of writing would fail to impart. This is one of the most valuable gifts which a man who has to do with practical subjects can possess. "The language of the pencil" is truly a universal one, especially in communicating ideas which have reference to material forms. And yet it is in a great measure neglected in our modern system of so-called education.

The language of the tongue is often used to disguise our thoughts, whereas the language of the pencil is clear and explicit. Who that possesses this language can fail to look back with pleasure on the course of a journey illustrated by pencil drawings? They bring back to you the landscapes you have seen, the old streets, the pointed gables, the entrances to the old churches, even the bits of tracery, with a vivid-

ness of association such as mere words could never convey. Thus, looking at an old sketch-book brings back to you the recollection of a tour, however varied, and you virtually make the journey over again with its picturesque and beautiful associations.

On many a fine summer's day did my sisters make a picnic excursion into the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. They were accompanied by their pupils, sketch-book and pencil in hand. As I have already said, there is no such scenery near any city that I know of. . . .

The excursionists came home laden with sketches. I have still by me a multitude of these graphic records made by my sisters. Each sketch, however slight, strikes the key-note, as it were, to many happy recollections of the circumstances, and the persons who were present at the time they were made. I know not of any such effective stimulant to the recollection of past events as these graphic memoranda. Written words may be forgotten, but these slight pencil recollections imprint themselves on the mind with a force that can never be effaced. Everything that occurred at the time rises up as fresh in the memory as if hours and not years had passed since then. They bring to the mind's eye many dear ones who have passed away, and remind us that we too must follow them.

It is much to be regretted that this valuable art of graphic memoranda is not more generally

practised. It is not merely a most valuable help to the memory, but it educates the eye and the hand, and enables us to cultivate the faculty of definite observation. This is one of the most valuable accomplishments that I know of, being the means of storing up ideas, and not mere words, in the mental recollection of both men and women.

# WILLIAM J. STILLMAN

[The late William J. Stillman wrote the "Autobiography of a Journalist," published and copyright in 1901 by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, who have granted permission for the appearance of the pages which follow.

Mr. Stillman says that as a lad he promised to develop talent as an artist. His wish, in which his father concurred, was that he should at once begin work as an art-student. A family council discussed the matter. — ED.]

## AN ARTIST SHOULD GIVE HIS HAND EARLY AND PERSISTENT PRACTICE

THE collective decision, in which my father and myself were alike overruled, was that I should go to Union College, in Schenectady, as the collegiate education was supposed to be a facilitation for whatever occupation I might afterward decide on. This was, so far as I was concerned, a fatal error, and one of a kind far too common in New England communities, where education is estimated by the extent of the ground it covers, without relation to the superstructure to be raised on it. I had always been a greedy reader of books, and especially of histories and the natural sciences — everything in the vegetable and animal world fascinated me — and I had no ambition for academic honours, nor did I ever acquire any, but I passionately desired a technical education in the arts, and the decision of the family deterred the first steps in that direction for years, and

precisely those years when facility of hand is most completely acquired and enthusiasm against difficulties is strongest — the years when, if ever, the artist is made.

. . . In art education the training of the hand should, I am persuaded, always be kept in advance of the thinking powers, so that the young student should feel that his ideal is just before him if not at his fingers' end. That this is so rarely the case with art students in our day is, I am convinced, the chief reason of the technical inferiority of modern art. The artist does not begin early enough.

. . . When I made the acquaintance of Delacroix, and I asked to be received by him as a pupil, which he in a most amiable manner refused, he seemed interested in putting me on the right way and gave me such advice as was within the range of casual conversation. I asked him what, in his mind, was the principal defect of modern art, as compared with ancient, and he replied "the execution." He had endeavoured to remedy this in his own case by extensive copying of the old masters, and he showed me many of the copies — passages of different works, apparently made with the object of catching the quality of execution.

In fact, if we consider the differences in the system of education in painting and that in music or any other art or occupation in which the highest executive ability is required, we shall see that we give insufficient opportunity

for the painter's hand to acquire the subtle skill we find in the successful violinist or pianist, and which is due to the early and incessant practice in the manual operations of his art. The fact is recognised, that the education of a violinist must begin in the early years when the will and hand are flexible, and not merely the training, but the occupation, is almost exclusive, for the specialist is made only by a special and relatively exclusive devotion to the particular faculties which are to be trained. It is useless to attempt to develop the finest qualities of the draughtsman without the same attention to the condition of training which we insist on in the musician. The theory may come later, the intellectual element may develop under many influences, and healthily, later in life, but the hand is too fine and subtly constituted an implement to be brought into its best condition and efficiency unless trained from the beginning to the definite use imposed on it.

# COMPOSERS

# MENDELSSOHN

[Sir George Grove, a critic of authority, in his "Dictionary of Music and Musicians," speaks thus of Mendelssohn:

"Few instances can be found in history of a man so amply gifted with every good quality of mind and heart as Mendelssohn; so carefully brought up amid good influences; endowed with every circumstance that would make him happy. Never perhaps could man be found in whose life there were so few things to conceal or to regret.

"Is there any drawback to this? Does his music suffer at all from what he calls his habitual cheerfulness? It seems as if there was a drawback, arising more or less directly from his happy heart, his single mind, his unfailing good spirits, his simple trust in God, his unaffected directness of purpose. Yet he had genius. No man could call up the emotions of the Midsummer Night's Dream, the wonderful pictures of the Hebrides, or the pathetic distress of lovely Melusina, without genius of the highest order. But his genius had not been subjected to those fiery trials which seem necessary to ensure its abiding possession of the depths of the human heart. . . . Mendelssohn was never more than temporarily unhappy. He did not know distress as he knew happiness. Who can wish that he had? Who can wish his bright, pure, aspiring soul to have been dulled by distress or torn by agony? It might have lent a deeper undertone to his Songs, or enabled his Adagios to have drawn tears where now they only give a saddened pleasure. But let us take the man as we have him. When we want to be made unhappy we can turn to others. It is well in these agitated modern days to be able to point to one perfectly balanced nature, in whose life, in whose letters, and whose music, all is at once manly and refined, clever and pure, brilliant and solid. For the enjoyment of such shining heights of goodness for once we may well forego the depths of misery and sorrow."

Mendelssohn's Letters from 1833 to 1847, compiled by Dr. Julius Rietz, are here drawn upon. — ED.]

### Delight in His Father's Praise

Dusseldorf, April 3, 1835.

Dear Father:

. . . You must be well aware that your presence at the Cologne festival would not only be no constraint to me, but, on the contrary, would cause me first to feel true joy and delight in my success. Allow me to take this opportunity to say to you that the approbation and enjoyment of the public, to which I am certainly very sensible, only causes me real satisfaction when I can write to tell you of it, because I know it rejoices you, and one word of praise from you is more truly precious to me, and makes me happier, than all the publics in the world applauding me in concert; and thus to see you among the audience, would be the dearest of all rewards to me for my labours.

### Wishes to be a Composer and Nothing Else

[to his brother, paul]

Leipzig, October 29, 1837.

Dear Brother:

First of all, my most cordial congratulations on the day [his birthday] when this letter will reach you; may you pass it happily, and may it prove a good harbinger of the coming year. You mention in your letter of yesterday that your quiet, settled, and untroubled position sometimes makes you almost anxious and uneasy; but I cannot think you right in this feeling; as little as if you were to complain of the very

opposite extreme. Why should it not be sufficient for a man to know how to secure and to enjoy his happiness? I cannot believe that it is at all indispensable first to earn it by trials or misfortunes; in my opinion, heartfelt grateful acknowledgment is the best Polycrates's ring; and truly in these days it is a difficult problem to acknowledge and to enjoy good fortune, and other blessings, in such a manner as to share them with others, thus rendering them cheerful and glad also, and showing, too, that the difference is equally great between this and idle arrogance. It is singular that in my position I might complain of the very reverse of what troubles you; the more I find what are termed encouragement and recognition in my vocation, the more restless and unsettled does it become in my hands, and I cannot deny that I often long for that rest of which you complain. So few traces remain of performances and musical festivals, and all that is personal; the people indeed shout and applaud, but that quickly passes away, without leaving a vestige behind, and yet it absorbs as much of one's life and strength as better things, or perhaps even more; and the evil of this is, that it is impracticable to come half out, when you are once in; you must either go on the whole way, or not at all. I dare not even attempt to withdraw, or the cause which I have undertaken will suffer, and yet I would gladly see that it was not merely my cause, but considered a good and universal one. But this

is the very point where people are wanting to pursue the same path — not an approving public (for that is a matter of indifference), but fellow-workers (and they are indispensable). So in this sense I long for a less busy life, in order to be able to devote myself fully to my peculiar province, composition of music, and leave the execution of it to others. It seems, however, that is not to be; and I should be ungrateful were I dissatisfied with my life as it is.

### His Aims as Composer

[to concertmeister ferdinand david, leipzig]

Berlin, July 30, 1838.

Dear David:

. . . I intend in a few days to begin to write out my symphony, and to complete it in a short time, probably while I am still here. I should also like to write a violin concerto for you next winter. One in E minor runs in my head, the beginning of which gives me no peace. My symphony shall certainly be as good as I can make it, but whether it will be popular and played on the barrel-organs, I cannot tell. I feel that in every fresh piece I succeed better in learning to write exactly what is in my heart, and, after all, that is the only right rule I know. If I am not adapted for popularity, I will not try to acquire it, nor seek after it; and if you think this wrong, then I ought rather to say I *cannot* seek after it, for really I *cannot*, but would not if I could. What proceeds from within,

makes me glad in its outward workings also, and therefore it would be very gratifying to me were I able to fulfil the wish you and my friends express; but I can do nothing toward it or about it. So much in my path has fallen to my share without my having even once thought of it, and without any effort on my part, that perhaps it may be the case with this also; if not, I shall not grumble on the subject, but console myself by knowing that I did what I could, according to my best powers and my best judgment. I have *your* sympathy, and *your* delight in my works, and also that of some valued friends. More could scarcely be desired. A thousand thanks, then, for your kind expressions and for all your friendship towards me.

## A Musical Education

[Professor Naumann, of Bonn, wished Mendelssohn to receive young Naumann as a pupil. The response discloses Mendelssohn's sterling integrity, and sets forth his views of a sound musical education.]

Leipzig, September 19, 1839.

Pray accept my thanks for the great proof of confidence you show me, by the purport of your esteemed letter of the 12th. Believe me, I thoroughly appreciate it, and can indeed feel how important to you must be the development and future destiny of a child so beloved and so talented. My sole wish is, like your own, that those steps should be taken, best calculated to reward his assiduity and to cultivate his talents. As an artist, I consider this to be my duty, but in

this case it would cause me peculiar pleasure, from its recalling an early and happy period of my life.

But I should unworthily respond to your confidence, did I not communicate frankly to you the many and great scruples which prevent my immediately accepting your proposal. In the first place, I am convinced, from repeated experience, that I am totally deficient in the talent requisite for a practical teacher, and for giving regular progressive instruction; whether it be that I take too little pleasure in tuition, or have not sufficient patience for it, I cannot tell, but, in short, I do not succeed in it. Occasionally, indeed, young people have stayed with me, but any improvement they have derived was solely from our studying music together, from unreserved intercourse, or casual conversation on various subjects, and also from discussions; and none of these things are compatible with actual teaching . Now the question is, whether in such early youth a consecutive, unremitting, strict course of discipline be not of more value than all the rest? It also appears to me that the estrangement of your son from the paternal roof just at his age forms a second, and not less important, objection. Where the rudiments of education are not wholly wanting (and the talents of your wife alone are a security against this), then I consider that the vicinity of his parents, and the prosecution of the usual elements of study, the acquirement of languages, and the various branches of scholarship and science, are

of more value to the boy than a one-sided, even though more perfect, cultivation of his genius. In any event such genius is sure to force its way to the light, and to shape its course accordingly, and in riper years will submit to no other permanent vocation, so that the early acquired treasures of interest, and the hours enjoyed in early youth under the roof of a parent, become doubly dear.

I speak in this strain from my own experience, for I can well remember that in my fifteenth year there was a question as to my studying with Cherubini in Paris, and I know how grateful I was to my father at the time, and often since, that he at last gave up the idea, and kept me with himself. It would of course be very different if there were no means in Bonn of obtaining good and solid instruction in thorough-bass and the piano; but this I cannot believe, and whether that instruction be rather better or more intellectual (provided it be not positively objectionable) is of less moment when compared with the advantages of a longer stay in his own home. Further, my life hitherto has been so unsettled, that no summer has passed without my taking considerable journeys, and next year I shall probably be absent from here for five or six months, this change of associations would only be prejudicial to youthful talent. The young man, therefore, must either remain here alone all summer or travel with me; and neither of these is advisable for him.

I state all these disadvantages, because I am

myself so well aware of them, and fully estimate the importance of the subject. If you do not participate in my views on mature consideration, and are still of opinion that I alone can assist your boy in the attainment of his wish, then I repeat that in any case (irrespective of this) I should esteem it my duty to be useful and serviceable, so far as my ability goes, to a youthful genius, and to contribute to his development by the exercise of my own powers; but, even in this event, a personal interview is indispensable, if only for a few hours, in order to arrange everything clearly, and until then I cannot give an unqualified consent.

Were you to bring the lad to me at Easter, I fear I should have already set off on my summer excursion. Indeed, the only period when I am certain to be in Leipzig is from autumn till Easter. I quite agree with Madame Naumann, that it is most essential to cultivate pianoforte-playing at present as much as possible, and not to fail in studying Cramer's exercises assiduously and steadily; but along with this daily training on the piano, two hours a week devoted to thorough-bass might be useful, as such a variety would be a pleasant change, rather than an interruption. The latter study indeed ought to be pursued in an easy and almost playful manner, and chiefly the practical part, that of deciphering and playing figured bass; these are the main points, and can be entirely mastered in a short time; but the sooner it is begun, the

sooner is it got quit of, and this is always a relief with such dry things. And now once more accept my thanks for the trust you have reposed in me, which I thought I could only adequately respond to by entire sincerity.

## On Libretto Writing

[Herr I. Furst, of Berlin, wrote to Mendelssohn regarding the libretto of an opera. The response was:]

Leipzig, January 4, 1840.

Dear Furst:

. . . What deters me, and has always hitherto deterred me, from the composition of a *libretto*, is neither the verse, nor the individual words, nor the mode of handling (or whatever you call it), but the course of the action, the dramatic essence, the march of events, — in short the *scenarium* [skeleton of plot]. If I do not consider this to be good and solid in itself, then my firm conviction is that the music will not be so either, nor the whole satisfy the pretensions that I must make in executing such a work, though they may indeed entirely differ from those which are usually made, and from those of the public. But I have long since given up all idea of conforming to their tastes, simply for this reason, that it is impossible; so I must follow the dictates of my own conscience, now as ever.

Planché's text can never, even with the best will on both sides, become such a work as I want; I am almost disposed to give up my

purpose as utterly hopeless. I would rather never compose an opera at all, than one which from the very commencement I considered only indifferent; moreover, I could not possibly compose for such a one, were you to give me the whole kingdom of Prussia to do so. All this, and the many annoyances, certain to occur at the completion of a text, if I should not feel disposed to undertake it, render it my duty to proceed step by step, and rather to move too slowly than too hastily; on this account I have resolved, unless we first agree about the *scenarium*, never to beguile any poet into undertaking so laborious a work, which may after all prove vain. This *scenarium* may be prolix or brief, detailed or merely sketched — on these points I do not presume to dictate, and quite as little, whether the opera should be in three, four, or five acts; if it be really good, just as it is written, then eight acts would not be too many for me, nor one too few; and I say the same as to a ballet or no ballet. The only criterion is, whether it harmonises or not with the musical and other existing feelings of my nature; and I believe that I am able to discern this quite as well from the *scenarium* as from the finished text, and that is, moreover, a point which no one can decide save myself personally.

I have thus placed the whole truth before you, and heaven grant that all these things may not deter you from writing an opera, that you may also intrust it to me for composition, and

that I may at length through you see a long-cherished wish fulfilled. I need not tell you how eagerly I shall await your decision.

### A Sympathetic Criticism

[A young composer sent an overture to Mendelssohn, who in his criticism of it refers to his own compositions. In difficult verdicts of this kind, Mendelssohn showed unfailing good will and tact.]

[To Herr X———]

Leipzig, January 22, 1841.

I beg to offer you my thanks for the confidence you have shown me by your polite letter, and the accompanying music. I have looked over your overture with much pleasure, and discovered many unmistakable traces of talent in it, so that I should rejoice to have an opportunity of seeing some more new works of yours, and thus to make your musical acquaintance in a more intimate and confidential manner. The greater part of the instrumentation, and especially the melodious passage which is in fact the principal subject, pleased me much. If I were to find any fault, it would be one with which I have often reproached myself in my own works; in the very overtures you allude to, sometimes in a greater and sometimes in a lesser degree. It is often very difficult, in such fantastical airy subjects, to hit the right medium.

If you grasp it too firmly, it is apt to become formal and prosaic; and if too delicately, it dissolves into air and melody, and does not

become a defined form. This last rock you seem to have split upon; in many passages, especially at the very beginning, but also here and there in other parts, and toward the close again, I feel the want of a musical well-defined form, the outlines of which I can recognise, however misty, and grasp and enjoy. I should like, besides the *meno allegro*, to see some other more definite idea, and to have it worked out; only then, the other rock is too apt to show itself, and modulations be seen, where there should be nothing but moonlight. In order, however, to give free course to these poetical thoughts, the spirit of entire supremacy must hover over the whole (that fact should not become too dry, nor fancy too misty); and it is only where this complete mastery over thought and arrangement exists, that the reins may be given to imagination. This is the very point which we are all obliged, more or less, to study; I hope you will not be offended, therefore, that I do not find this problem entirely solved in your work either; in your future productions, with which I hope to become acquainted, the connection will, no doubt, be closer, and my critical remarks rendered unnecessary.

### Toil Is the Price of Excellence

[Carl Eckert had sent some of his music to Mendelssohn, who said in acknowledgment:]

Berlin, January 26, 1842.

. . . Both yesterday and to-day I have looked through, and played through, your charm-

ing "Lieder" with the greatest delight; they all please me, and are thoroughly genial, earnest music. More, more, a thousand times more, in this and every other style! The overture in F sharp major, too, caused me great pleasure, and suits me almost throughout; a few passages only seem to me rather too amplified: we must not write, however, but speak on this subject when we meet again although the only really important thing I have to say with regard to your music, I have already said in this letter, — more, more! You have reached a standard that may in every relation well be called a mastership, which all musicians or friends of music must highly esteem, and beyond which nothing actually extrinsic (whether it be called erudition or recognition, facility and knowledge, or honour and fame) is any longer worth striving for; but this is, in my opinion, just the time when true work really first begins. The question is then solely what is felt and experienced within a man's own breast, and uttered from the depths of his heart, be it grave or gay, bitter or sweet — character and life are displayed here; and in order to prevent existence being dissipated and wasted when brilliant and happy, or depressed and destroyed when the reverse, there is but one safeguard, — to work, and to go on working. So, for your sake, I have only one wish, that you may bring to light what exists within you, in your nature and feelings, which none save yourself can know or possess. In your

works, go deeper into your inmost being, and let them bear a distinct stamp; let criticism and intellect rule as much as you please in all outward questions and forms, but in all inner and original thought, the heart alone, and genuine feeling. So work daily, hourly, and unremittingly — there you never can attain entire mastery or perfection; no man ever yet did, and therefore it is the highest vocation of life.

## What Does Music Mean?

[Herr Marc André Souchay asked Mendelssohn the meanings of some of his "Songs Without Words." The composer responded:]

Berlin, October 15, 1842.

. . . There is so much talk about music and yet so little really said. For my part I believe that words do not suffice for such a purpose, and if I found that they did suffice, then I certainly would have nothing more to do with music. People often complain that music is ambiguous, that their ideas on the subject always seem so vague, whereas every one understands words; with me it is exactly the reverse — not merely with regard to entire sentences, but also to individual words; these, too, seem to me so ambiguous, so vague, so unintelligible when compared with genuine music, which fills the soul with a thousand things better than words. What the music I love expresses to me, is not thought too indefinite to be put into words, but, on the contrary, too

definite. I therefore consider every effort to express such thoughts commendable; but still there is something unsatisfactory too in them all, and so it is with yours also. This, however, is not your fault, but that of the poetry, which does not enable you to do better. If you ask me what my idea is, I say — just the song as it stands; and if I have in my mind a definite term or terms with regard to one or more of these songs, I will disclose them to no one, because the words of one person assume a totally different meaning in the mind of another person, because the music of the song alone can awaken the same ideas and the same feelings in one mind as in another — a feeling which is not, however, expressed by the same words. Resignation, melancholy, the praise of God, a hunting-song — one person does not form the same conception from these that another does. Resignation is to the one what melancholy is to the other; the third can form no lively idea of either. To any man who is by nature a very keen sportsman, a hunting-song and the praise of God would come pretty much to the same thing, and to such a one the sound of the hunting-horn would really and truly be the praise of God, while we hear nothing in it but a mere hunting-song; and if we were to discuss it ever so often with him, we should get no further. Words have many meanings, and yet music we could both understand correctly. Will you allow this to serve as an answer to your ques-

tion? At all events, it is the only one I can give — although these too are nothing, after all but ambiguous words.

### Meaning Rather than Form to Be Studied

[To his nephew, Sebastian Hensel]

Leipzig, February 22, 1847.

Dear Sebastian:

I thank you very much for the drawing, which, as your own composition, pleases me extremely, especially the technical part, in which you have made great progress. If, however, you intend to adopt painting as a profession, you cannot too soon accustom yourself to study the meaning of a work of art with more earnestness and zeal than its mere form — that is, in other words (as a painter is so fortunate as to be able to select visible nature herself for his substance), to contemplate and to study nature most lovingly, most closely, most innately and inwardly, all your life long. Study very thoroughly how the outer form and the inward formation of a tree, or a mountain, or a house always must look, and how it can be made to look, if it is to be beautiful, and then produce it with sepia or oils, or on a smoked plate; it will always be of use, if only as a testimony of your love of substance.

# WAGNER

["How Music Developed" is a critical and explanatory account of the growth of modern music by William J. Henderson, of New York, an accomplished student and critic. His book is published by the Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York. In his chapter on Wagner and the Music Drama, the author tells us:

"Wagner was utterly dissatisfied with the condition of the lyric drama in his day. The opera bore no relation whatever to the national life or thought of the people. It was a mere show designed to catch the applause of the unthinking, to dazzle the ignorant by empty display. In its popular Italian form the music had no genuine connection with the text, for the words were mere pegs on which to hang pretty tunes. These tunes, too, were designed, not to convey to the hearer the emotion of the scene, but to give the singers opportunities to display their powers. The stories of the operas were unpoetic, undramatic, false to life, incoherent, and not typical. In Greece the drama, founded as it was on the great mythological legends of the nation, was almost a form of religion; and its influence on the life and thought of the people was tremendous.

"Wagner's high aim was to produce a species of German opera that should have the same relation to the Germans as the Greek drama had to the Greeks. It is only by bearing in mind this fact that one can account for such works as "Lohengrin," "Tannhäuser," and "Parsifal," on one hand and, "Der Ring des Nibelungen" on the other. The first three are Wagner's embodiment of the Christian mythology of Germany, with its whole content of the fundamental religious beliefs of the nation. "Der Ring des Nibelungen" is his presentation of the old pagan mythology of his country, with its noblest thoughts pushed to the front and its final retirement before a new order of faith strongly suggested by the last scene of "Die Götterdämmerung."

". . . It is quite impossible to estimate at a time so soon after the composer's death how deep and permanent will be his influence upon operatic art, but it is plain that every writer of to-day has yielded some allegiance to him, and every one has striven to attain dramatic fidelity. Better librettos are written for operas; and public taste, in almost every country where opera is given, demands that the lyric stage shall present for consideration a genuine music-drama. This demand for sincerity has spread into other branches of musical art, and it can fairly be said that Wagner has done more for the general advancement of musical taste in his day and immediately after it than any other composer who ever lived."

The pages which follow are from the first volume of Wagner's Prose Works, translated by W. E. Ellis.—ED.]

## BEGINS PLAYING MUSIC AS A CHILD

I WAS born at Leipzig on May the 22d, 1813. My father was a police actuary, and died six months after I was born. My stepfather, Ludwig Geyer, was a comedian and painter; he was also the author of a few stage plays, of which one, "Der Bethlehemitische Kindermord" (The Slaughter of the Innocents), had a certain success. My whole family migrated with him to Dresden. He wished me to become a painter, but I showed a very poor talent for drawing.

My stepfather also died ere long, — I was only seven years old. Shortly before his death I had learnt to play "Üb' immer Treu und Redlichkeit" (Ever true and honest) and the then newly published "Jungfernkranz" ("Bridal Wreath") upon the pianoforte; the day before his death, I was bid to play him both these

pieces in the adjoining room; I heard him then, with feeble voice, say to my mother: "Has he perchance a talent for music?". On the early morrow, as he lay dead, my mother came into the children's sleeping-room, and said to each of us some loving word. To me she said: "He hoped to make something of thee." I remember too, that for a long time I imagined that something indeed would come of me.

In my ninth year I went to the Dresden Kreuzschule. I wished to study, and music was not thought of. Two of my sisters learnt to play the piano passably; I listened to them but had no piano lessons myself. Nothing pleased me so much as "Der Freischütz"; I often saw Weber pass before our house, as he came from rehearsals; I always watched him with a reverent awe. A tutor who explained to me "Cornelius Nepos," was at last engaged to give me pianoforte instructions; hardly had I got past the earliest finger exercises, when I furtively practised, at first by ear, the overture to "Der Freischütz"; my teacher heard this once, and said nothing would come of me. He was right; in my whole life I have never learnt to play the piano properly. Thenceforward I only played for my own amusement, nothing but overtures, and with the most fearful fingering. It was impossible for me to play a passage clearly, and I therefore conceived a just dread of all scales and runs. Of Mozart, I only cared for the "Magic Flute"; "Don Juan" was distasteful

to me, on account of the Italian text beneath it: it seemed to me such rubbish.

### Begins Composing

. . . For a while I learnt English also, merely so as to gain an accurate knowledge of Shakespeare; and I made a metrical translation of Romeo's monologue. Though I soon left English on one side, yet Shakespeare remained my exemplar, and I projected a great tragedy which was almost nothing but a medley of "Hamlet" and "King Lear." The plan was gigantic in the extreme; two-and-forty human beings died in the course of this piece, and I saw myself compelled, in its working-out, to call the greater number back as ghosts, since otherwise I should have been short of characters for my last acts. This play occupied my leisure for two whole years.

. . . From Dresden and its Kreuzschule, I went to Leipzig. In the Nikolaischule of that city I was relegated to the third form, after having already attained to the second in Dresden. This circumstance embittered me so much, that thenceforward I lost all liking for philological study. I became lazy and slovenly, and my grand tragedy was the only thing left me to care about. Whilst I was finishing this I made my first acquaintance with Beethoven's music, in the Leipzig Gewandhaus concerts; its impression upon me was overpowering. I also became intimate with Mozart's works,

chiefly through his "Requiem." Beethoven's music to "Egmont" so much inspired me, that I determined — for all the world — not to allow my now completed tragedy to leave the stocks until provided with such like music. Without the slightest diffidence, I believed that I could myself write this needful music, but thought it better to first clear up a few of the general principles of thorough-bass. To get through this as swiftly as possible, I borrowed for a week Logier's "Method of Thorough-bass," and studied it in hot haste. But this study did not bear such rapid fruit as I had expected: its difficulties both provoked and fascinated me; I resolved to become a musician.

During this time my great tragedy was unearthed by my family: they were much disturbed thereat, for it was clear as day that I had woefully neglected my school lessons in favour of it, and I was forthwith admonished to continue them more diligently. Under such circumstances, I breathed no more of my secret discovery of a calling for music; but, notwithstanding, I composed in silence a sonata, a quartet, and an aria. When I felt myself sufficiently matured in my private musical studies, I ventured forth at last with their announcement. Naturally, I now had many a hard battle to wage, for my relations could only consider my penchant for music as a fleeting passion — all the more as it was unsupported by any proofs of preliminary study, and especially

by any already won dexterity in handling a musical instrument.

### In Youth

I may pass over the endless variety of impressions which exercised a lively effect upon me in my earliest youth; they were as diverse in their operation as in their source. Whether, under their influence, I ever appeared to any one an "infant prodigy," I very much doubt: mechanical dexterities were never drubbed into me, nor did I ever show the slightest bent toward them. To play-acting I felt an inclination, and indulged it in the quiet of my chamber; this was naturally aroused in me by the close connection of my family with the stage. The only remarkable thing about it all was my repugnance against going to the theatre itself; childish impressions which I had imbibed from the earnestness of classical antiquity, so far as I had made its acquaintance in the Gymnasium, may have inspired me with a certain contempt, nay, an abhorrence of the rouged and powdered ways of the comedian. But my passion for imitation threw itself with greatest zest into the making of poetry and music — perhaps because my stepfather, a portrait-painter, died betimes, and thus the pictorial element vanished early from among my nearer models; otherwise I should probably have begun to paint too, although I cannot but remember that the learning of the technique

of the pencil soon went against my grain. First I wrote plays; but the acquaintance with Beethoven's Symphonies, which I only made in my fifteenth year, eventually inflamed me with a passion for music also, albeit it had long before this exercised a powerful effect upon me, chiefly through Weber's "Freischütz." Amidst my study of music, the poetic "imitative-impulse" never quite forsook me; it subordinated itself, however, to the musical, for whose contentment I only called it in as aid. Thus I recollect that, incited by the Pastoral Symphony, I set to work on a shepherd-play, its dramatic material being prompted by Goethe's "Lovers' Fancies" ("Laune der Verliebten"). I here made no attempt at a preliminary poetic sketch, but wrote verses and music together, thus leaving the situations to take their rise from the music and the verses as I made them.

## A Music Director

In the summer of 1834, I took the post of Music Director at the Magdeburg theatre. The practical application of my musical knowledge to the functions of a conductor bore early fruit; for the vicissitudes of intercourse with singers and singeresses, behind the scenes and in front of the footlights, completely matched my bent toward many-hued distraction. The composition of my "Liebesverbot" (Forbidden Love) was now begun. I produced the overture to "Die Feen" (The Fairies) at a concert;

it had a marked success. This notwithstanding, I lost all liking for this opera, and, since I was no longer able to personally attend to my affairs at Leipzig, I soon resolved to trouble myself no more about this work, which is as much as to say that I gave it up.

### In the Midst of Hardships "Rienzi" Is Planned

. . . In the midst of all this the "earnestness of life" had knocked at my door; my outward independence, so rashly grasped at, had led me into follies of every kind, and on all sides I was plagued by penury and debts. It occurred to me to venture upon something out of the ordinary, in order not to slide into the common rut of need. Without any sort of prospect, I went to Berlin and offered the Director to produce my "Liebesverbot" at the theatre of that capital. I was received at first with the fairest promises; but, after long suspense, I had to learn that not one of them was sincerely meant. In the sorriest plight I left Berlin, and applied for the post of Musical Director at the Königsberg theatre, in Prussia — a post which I subsequently obtained. In that city I got married in the autumn of 1836, amid the most dubious outward circumstances. The year which I spent in Königsberg was completely lost to my art, by reason of the pressure of petty cares. I wrote one solitary overture: "Rule Britannia."

In the summer of 1837 I visited Dresden for a short time. There I was led back by the reading of Bulwer's "Rienzi" to an already cherished idea, viz., of turning the last of Rome's tribunes into the hero of a grand tragic opera. Hindered by outward discomforts, however, I busied myself no further with dramatic sketches. In the autumn of this year I went to Riga, to take up the position of first Musical Director at the theatre recently opened there by Holtei. I found there an assemblage of excellent material for opera, and went to its employment with the greatest liking. Many interpolated passages for individual singers in various operas, were composed by me during this period. I also wrote the libretto for a comic opera in two acts: "Die Glückliche Barenfamilie," the matter for which I took from one of the stories in the "Thousand and One Nights." I had only composed two "numbers" for this, when I was disgusted to find that I was again on the high road to music-making *à la Adam.* My spirit, my deeper feelings, were wounded by this discovery, and I laid aside the work in horror. The daily studying and conducting of Auber's, Adam's, and Bellini's music contributed its share to a speedy undoing of my frivolous delight in such an enterprise.

When, in the autumn, I began the composition of my "Rienzi," I allowed naught to influence me except the single purpose to answer to my subject. I set myself no model, but gave

myself entirely to the feeling which now consumed me, the feeling that I had already so far progressed that I might claim something significant from the development of my artistic powers, and expect some not insignificant result. The very notion of being consciously weak or trivial — even in a single bar — was appalling to me.

### Writes the "Flying Dutchman," "Lohengrin," and "Tannhauser"

My voyage to London, in a sailing vessel in the summer of 1839, I never shall forget as long as I live; it lasted three and a half weeks, and was rich in mishaps. Thrice did we endure the most violent of storms, and once the captain found himself compelled to put into a Norwegian haven. The passage among the crags of Norway made a wonderful impression on my fancy; the legends of the Flying Dutchman, as I heard them from the seamen's mouths, were clothed for me in a distinct and individual colour, borrowed from the adventures of the ocean through which I then was passing. . . .

Before I set about the actual working-out of the "Flying Dutchman," I drafted first the Ballad of Senta in the second act, and completed both its verse and melody. In this piece, I unconsciously laid the thematic germ of the whole music of the opera: it was the miniature of the whole drama, such as it stood before my soul; and when I was about to betitle the finished

work, I felt strongly tempted to call it a dramatic ballad. In the eventual composition of the music, the thematic picture, thus evoked, spread itself quite instinctively over the whole drama, as one continuous tissue; I had only, without further initiative, to take the various thematic germs included in the ballad and develop them to their legitimate conclusions, and I had all the chief moods of this poem, quite of themselves, in definite thematic shapes before me. I should have had stubbornly to follow the example of the self-willed opera composer, had I chosen to invent a fresh motive for each recurrence of one and the same mood in different scenes; a course whereto I naturally did not feel the smallest inclination, since I had only in my mind the most intelligible portrayal of the subject-matter, and not a mere conglomerate of operatic numbers.

"Tannhäuser" I treated in a similar fashion, and finally "Lohengrin," only that I here had not a finished musical piece before me in advance, such as that ballad, but from the aspect of the scenes and their organic growth out of one another I first created the picture itself on which the thematic rays should all converge, and then let them fall in changeful play wherever necessary for the understanding of the main situations. Moreover, my treatment gained a more definite artistic form, especially in "Lohengrin," through a continual remodelling of the thematic material to fit the character of the passing situation; and

thus the music won a greater variety of appearance than was the case, for instance, in the "Flying Dutchman," where the reappearance of a theme had often the mere character of an absolute reminiscence — a device that had already been employed, before myself, by other composers.

[The pages now given are from the correspondence of Wagner and Liszt, translated by Francis Hueffer.]

### Creative Power
### [to Liszt]

Creative power in music appears to me like a bell, which the larger it is is the less able to give forth its full tone, unless an adequate power has set it in motion. This power is internal, and where it does not exist internally it does not exist at all. The purely internal, however, cannot operate unless it is stimulated by something external, related to it and yet different. Creative power in music surely requires this stimulus no less than does any other great artistic power; a great incitement alone can make it effective. As I have every reason to deem your power great, I desire for it the corresponding great incitement; for nothing here can be arbitrarily substituted or added: genuine strength can only create from necessity. Whereever in the series of your pieces Goethe himself incites your strength, the bell resounds with its natural full tone, and the clapper beats in it as the heart does in the body. If you had been

able to ring the whole "Faust" bell (I know this was impossible), if the detached pieces had had reference to a great whole, then that great whole would have thrown on the single pieces a reflex which is exactly the certain something that may be gained from the great whole, but not from the single piece. In single, aphoristic things we never attain repose; only in a great whole is great power self-contained, strong, and therefore, in spite of all excitement, reposeful. Unrest in what we do is a proof that our activity is not perfectly self-contained, that not our whole power, but only a detached particle of that power, is in action. This unrest I have found in your compositions, even as you must have found it too often in mine without better cause. With this unrest I was, however, better pleased than if comfortable self-contentment had been their prominent feature. I compare it to the claw by which I recognise the lion; but now I call out to you, Show us the complete lion: in other words, write or finish soon an opera.

## Stage Directions

[In a note to Liszt we have an example of the minute directions laid down by Wagner for the production of his works:]

At the rehearsal of my "Tannhäuser" in Weimar I had occasion to point out the neglect of some scenic indications on the part of individual singers. Elizabeth, for example, during

the postlude of the duet with Tannhäuser in the second act, has to justify the re-entry of the tender theme in the clarinet in slower tempo by looking — as is indicated in the score — after Tannhäuser in the court of the castle and by beckoning to him. By neglecting this and merely standing in front, waiting for the conclusion of the music, she naturally produces an unbearable feeling of tedium. Every bar of dramatic music is justified only by the fact that it explains something in the action or in the character of the actor. That reminiscence of the clarinet theme is not there for its own sake as a purely musical effect, which Elizabeth might have to accompany by her action, but the beckoned greeting of Elizabeth is the chief thing I had in my eye, and that reminiscence I selected in order to accompany suitably this action of Elizabeth. The relations of music and action must therefore be deplorably perverted where, as in this instance, the principal thing — i. e., the dramatic motive — is left out, while the lesser thing — i. e., the accompaniment of that motive — alone remains.

### On Finishing "Siegfried"
[to liszt]

I have quite finished the poem of my "Young Siegfried." It has given me great joy; it is certainly what I was bound to do, and the best thing that I have done so far. I am really glad about it. With my violent way of working, I

am always considerably tired at the end. I must take some time to recover. I cannot just yet make up my mind to copy it out for you, for many reasons, too long to tell. I feel also some bashfulness in submitting my poem to you without further explanation — a bashfulness which has its reason in me, not in you. I therefore ask you whether there is not a chance of my seeing you soon. Some time ago you made me think so. How is it now? Can you visit me, or at least appoint a place, accessible to me, for meeting? Please answer this question at once. My longing to see you, dear, splendid friend, again after two years, during which you have been more to me than I can describe, and to spend a few days with you, is greater than I am able to express. Can you fulfil this longing? If we could meet shortly, I should keep my "Young Siegfried," in order to read it to you. This would add to my peace of mind considerably. The written word is, I fear, insufficient for my intention; but if I could read it to you *viva voce*, indicating how I want to have it interpreted, I should be quite satisfied as to the desired impression of my poem upon you. Write to me at once what my chances are. If, alas! you cannot come, I shall have a copy made at once and send it you.

### The "Nibelungen Cycle"
### [to Liszt]

In the autumn of 1848 I sketched for the first time the complete myth of the "Nibelungen,"

such as it henceforth belongs to me as my poetic property. My next attempt at dramatising the chief catastrophe of that great action for our theatre was "Siegfried's Death." After much wavering I was at last, in the autumn of 1850, on the point of sketching the musical execution of this drama, when again the obvious impossibility of having it adequately performed anywhere prevented me in the first instance from beginning the work. To get rid of this desperate mood, I wrote the book "Oper und Drama." Last spring your article on "Lohengrin" inspired me to such a degree that for your sake I resumed the execution of a drama quickly and joyously; this I wrote to you at the time: but "Siegfried's Death" — that, I knew for certain, was in the first instance impossible. I found that I should have to prepare it by another drama, and therefore took up the long-cherished idea of making the young Siegfried the subject of a poem. In it everything that in "Siegfried's Death" was either narrated or more or less taken for granted was to be shown in bold and vivid outline by means of actual representation. This poem was soon sketched and completed. When I was going to send it to you, I for the first time felt a peculiar anxiety. It seemed as if I could not possibly send it to you without explanation, as if I had many things to tell you, partly as to the manner of representation and partly as to the necessary comprehension of the poem itself. In the first instance it occurred

to me that I still had many and various things to communicate previous to my coming before my friends with this poem. It was for that reason that I wrote the long preface to my three earlier operatic poems, of which mention has already been made. After this I was going to begin the composition, and found, to my joy, that the music adapted itself to these verses quite naturally and easily, as of its own accord.

### Art Must Come from Life
[to Liszt]

How about Raff? I thought he was writing a new work, but no; he is remodelling an old one. Is there no LIFE in these people? Out of what can the artist create if he does not create out of life, and how can this life contain an artistically productive essence unless it impels the artist continually to creations which correspond to life? Is this artificial remodelling of old motives of life real artistic creativeness? How about the source of all art unless new things flow forth from it irresistibly, unless it is wholly absorbed in new creations? Oh, ye creatures of God, do not think that this making is artistic creating. It betrays no end of self-complacency, combined with poverty, if we try to prop up these earlier attempts. If Raff's opera, as you tell me, has pleased, he ought to be satisfied; in any case he had a better reward than I had for my "Feen," which was never performed at all, or for my "Liebesverbot," which had one

abominable performance, or for my "Rienzi," of the revival of which I think so little that I should not permit it if it were contemplated anywhere. About the "Dutchman," "Tannhäuser," and "Lohengrin" I trouble myself with disgust, and only for the reason that I know that, on account of imperfect representations, they have never been perfectly understood. If they had had their due anywhere, I should care devilishly little about things that I have outlived.

Good people, do something new, new and once more new. If you stick to the old, the devil of barrenness holds you in thrall, and you are the most miserable of artists.

Well, this is off my heart; he who charges me with insincerity will have to answer heaven; he who charges me with arrogance is silly.

I can write no more; do not be angry; my head is bursting. Only let me say the warmest farewell that is in my heart. Love me as before and write soon.

### To Liszt on His Productiveness

Let me express to you, best of men, my astonishment at your enormous productiveness You have a Dante symphony in your head, have you? And it is to be finished in the autumn? Do not be annoyed by my astonishment at this miracle. When I look back upon your activity in these last years, you appear superhuman to me; there is something very strange about this.

However, it is very natural that creating is our only joy, and alone makes life bearable to us We are what we are only while we create; all the other functions of life have no meaning for us, and are at bottom concessions to the vulgarity of ordinary human existence, which can give us no satisfaction. All that I still desire in this world is a favourable mood and disposition for work, and I find it difficult enough to protect these from the attack of vulgarity. It is the same thing with you. But what astonishes me and appears worthy of envy is that you can create so much.

### In the Act of Composing He Comes to New Thoughts

[to Liszt]

. . . I long for news from you. How are you, dear Franz, and does the Princess Wittgenstein keep her health? From her daughter I soon expect a letter, as we have promised to correspond with each other.

I feel so-so. I shall finish the first scene one of these days. Curiously enough, it is only during composition that the real essence of my poem is revealed to me. Everywhere I discover secrets which had been previously hidden from me, and everything in consequence grows more passionate, more impulsive. Altogether it will require a good deal of obstinacy to get all this done, and you have not really put me in the right mind for it.

However, I must think that I am doing all this for myself, in order to pass the days. Be it so.

You may believe me or not, I have no other desire than that of coming to you soon. Do not fail to let me know always what chances there are. I want music, too, and, heaven knows, you are the only one who can supply me with it. As a musician, I feel perfectly mean, while I think I have discovered that you are the greatest musician of all times. This will be something new to you. . . .

### To Liszt, Acknowledging how much He Owes to Him

Several times, dearest friend, I made an attempt to write to you on serious, and to me important, matters, but I had many things to settle in my own mind first. At last I feel sufficiently mature, and will tell you in plain words what is in my heart. Your last visit, much disturbed as was our intercourse, has left a decisive impression on me, which is this: your friendship is the most important and most significant event of my life. If I can enjoy your conversation frequently and quietly, and in my own way, I shall have all that I desire, and the rest will be of subordinate value. You cannot have a similar feeling, because your life is just the opposite of mine. You love diversion, and live in it, and your desire of self-concentration is therefore temporary. I, on the contrary, live in the most absolute solitude, and there-

fore want occasional diversion, which, however, in my meaning, is nothing but artistic stimulus. That stimulus the musical world cannot give me; you alone can. All that I lack, especially as a musician, owing to nature and insufficient education, my intercourse with you and no one else can alone give me. Without this stimulus my limited musical capacity loses its fertility; I become discontented, laborious, heavy, and producing becomes torture to me. I never had this feeling more vividly than since our last meeting.

I have therefore but one desire, that of being able to visit you when I wish, and of living with you periodically.

### First Hearing of the "Valkyrie" and "Siegfried"

Very soon I hope to resume my long-interrupted work, and I shall certainly not leave my charming refuge even for the shortest trip before Siegfried has settled everything with Brynhild. So far I have only finished the first act, but then it is quite ready, and has turned out stronger and more beautiful than anything. I am astonished myself at having achieved this, for at our last meeting I again appeared to myself a terribly blundering musician. Gradually, however, I gained self-confidence. With a local prima-donna, whom you heard in "La Juive," I studied the great final scene of the "Valkyrie." Kirchner accompanied; I hit the

notes famously, and this scene, which gave you so much trouble, realised all my expectations. We performed it three times at my house, and now I am quite satisfied. The fact is, that everything in this scene is so subtle, so deep, so subdued, that the most intellectual, the most tender, the most perfect execution in every direction is necessary to make it understood; if this, however, is achieved, the impression is beyond a doubt. But of course a thing of this kind is always on the verge of being quite misunderstood, unless all concerned approach it in the most perfect, most elevated, most intelligent mood; merely to play it through as we tried, in a hurried way, is impossible. I, at least, lose on such occasions instinctively all power and intelligence; I become perfectly stupid. But now I am quite satisfied, and if you hear the melting and hammering songs of "Siegfried" you will have a new experience of me. The abominable part of it is that I cannot have a thing of this kind played for my own benefit. Even to our next meeting I attach no real hope; I always feel as if we were in a hurry, and that is most detrimental to me. I can be what I am only in a state of perfect concentration; all disturbance is my death.

# LISZT

[The works of Liszt are discussed at length by W. Langhans in "Famous Composers and Their Works," published by the J. B. Millet Company, Boston. Mr. Langhans says in part:

"The Hungarian Rhapsodies derive their motive, with the frequent and characteristic use of the augmented second, and constantly recurring final cadence, from the gypsies. Yet in their artistic construction and elaboration they betray in every measure the independent creative musician. In his Spanish Rhapsodies the creative artist reveals himself more clearly yet, and they stand still higher as works of art, because of the insignificance of the material from which they were produced. . . . His many transcriptions of songs, especially Schubert's, are not so independent but are yet pervaded by individual creative power. . . .

"Among his orchestral works must be mentioned first his Symphonic Poems. In their conception Liszt was guided by the conviction that the symphony, as developed by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, had arrived at its highest degree of perfection. . . . Liszt took the Ninth Symphony as the starting point for the invention of a new form, especially in its last part, which was then treated contemptuously by classic composers. It represents the great free variation form, because in it all the different moods of Schiller's poem are evolved from variations on the motive: the song 'Freude schöner Gottfunken,' is presented in an ever-changing light, generally by means of rhythmic changes, as triumphal march, battle theme, or thanksgiving chorus."

The following letters from the "Correspondence of Wagner and Liszt," translated by Francis Hueffer, show how loyal and helpful a friend Liszt was to Wagner.]

## Liszt to Wagner on Hearing That He Was Planning the Nibelungen Trilogy

Your letter, my glorious friend, has given me great joy. You have reached an extraordinary

goal in your extraordinary way. The task of developing to a dramatic trilogy and of setting to music the Nibelung epic is worthy of you, and I have not the slightest doubt as to the monumental success of your work. My sincerest interest, my warmest sympathy, are so fully secured to you that no further words are needed The term of three years which you give to yourself may bring many favourable changes in your external circumstances. Perhaps, as some papers state, you will soon return to Germany; perhaps by the time you finish your "Siegfried" I shall have other resources at my disposal. Go on, then, and do your work without care. Your programme should be the same which the Chapter of Seville gave to its architect in connection with the building of the cathedral: "Build us such a temple that future generations will be obliged to say, 'The Chapter was mad to undertake so extraordinary a thing.'" And yet the cathedral is standing there at the present day.

### Liszt to Wagner on Receiving the "Nibelungen" Manuscripts

You are truly a wonderful man, and your "Nibelungen" poem is surely the most incredible thing which you have ever done. As soon as the three performances of the "Flying Dutchman," "Tannhäuser," and "Lohengrin" are over I shall lock myself in for a few days to read the four poems; as yet I have been unable to

get a free hour for it. Excuse me therefore for not saying more to-day than that I rejoice in the joy which the printed copies have given to you.

The one intended for the Grand Duchess I have presented to her, and that for the Princess of Prussia I have given to her brother, the Hereditary Grand Duke. The others also have been forwarded to their respective owners. If it is possible, send me about three copies more; I can make good use of them.

Your letter I have not put on the shelf, and hope to be able in about six weeks to give you a definite and (D. V.) a favourable answer concerning your return. I am extremely sorry that hitherto I have had to be so "reticent," but you may be sure that I have not omitted to do all that appeared to me opportune and was in my power. Unfortunately I have nothing but very timid hopes; still they are hopes, and all timidity and lukewarmness must be far from me in my endeavour to gain you back for yourself. Rely upon my warmest friendly love in this as in other matters.

The Berlin affair you have arranged in the best possible manner, and it is probable that, if henceforth you leave it entirely to me, you will be satisfied with the final result. Whether "Tannhäuser" and "Lohengrin" are given in Berlin a year sooner or later matters little to you; the chief question is how and in what manner they are given: and as long as you are not back in Germany, I believe that in our actual musical

circumstances I can offer you the only perfect security on this point. Moreover, Berlin is the most important field for your works, and on the success of those works there your whole position depends in the most decisive manner. However, the performances at Frankfort, Breslau, Schwerin, Leipzig, etc., are in themselves very desirable, because they keep the matter warm and facilitate the conquest of Berlin. They have also tended to place the artistic question which has arisen through your means in a clearer light than was previously possible.

### Liszt to Wagner on "Lohengrin"

Weymar, January 15, 1852.

Dearest Friend:

I am very late in telling you how we have all been delighted and enlivened by your splendid work. How can we thank you for it? How can I more especially express my gratitude? The sixth performance of your "Lohengrin" has been, comparatively speaking, satisfactory. What I wrote to you at once after the feeble and faulty first performance has actually happened. The comprehension and interest of the actors, together with those of the public, have increased with every performance; and I feel that the seventh performance will be even more successful. Next season with delay we shall attack your "Flying Dutchman," which for local reasons I did not propose this winter. We shall then probably be able to add and improve several

things in the way of scenery, and so on, of your "Lohengrin." You may firmly rely upon me for bringing your works at Weymar more and more up to the mark, in the same measure as our theatre in the course of time gets over divers economic considerations, and effects the necessary improvements and additions in chorus, orchestra, scenery, etc. Excuse my bad German style; I am better at doing a thing than at writing about it.

Cordial thanks for your splendid gift of "Siegfried." I took the liberty of arranging a recital of it for the Hereditary Grand Duke and his wife at Zigesar's. Zigesar, who had previously read your poem, is in a state of enthusiasm about it, and the small circle of about fifteen persons whom he assembled on that evening was selected exclusively from the most zealous Wagnerites — the real *creme de la creme*. I am very curious as to how you are going to execute the work musically, what proportions the movements will have, etc.

Go at it as soon as possible. Perhaps you will be able to complete the whole work in less than three years. As regards the performance, we shall manage to arrange it somewhere by strictly observing your orders and indications. With all the genius of your fancy, you are so eminently experienced and practical that you will of a certainty write nothing unpractical. Difficulties are necessary — in order to be overcome. If, as I do not suppose, you should

not be back in Germany by that time, I charge myself with the whole thing, and shall only trouble you to give me an exhaustive programme of all that you desire and expect in the performance of this gigantic work. To that I shall strictly adhere. Persons and things shall be provided somehow. But I look forward to the pleasure of enjoying your Nibelung trilogy more quietly from a stall or a seat in the balcony, and I invite you for four consecutive days to supper after the performance at the Hotel de Saxe, Dresden, or the Hotel de Russie, Berlin, in case you are able to eat and drink after all your exertions.

Of the conclusion of the preface to the three operatic poems I say nothing. It has hit me in my heart of hearts, and I have shed a manly tear over it.

My portrait I shall send you through H.; the medallion I must order from Paris, as there are only galvanoplastic copies in Germany.

The Princess has written a few words to you after the performance of "Lohengrin," which I enclose.

Farewell, and live as tranquilly as possible, my glorious friend. Let me soon hear something of you.

### Liszt to Wagner, in Acknowledgment of Sympathy

You have given me a delightful Easter Sunday, dearest, most unique of friends, by your

letter. By the loving *Azymen* which you offer me with so much kindness and friendship, you have given me strength, health, and total oblivion of all other leaven. Receive my most cordial thanks, and let it be a joy to you to have given me so much and such heartfelt joy. That joy shall not be disturbed by a few misprints and omissions. The essential thing is that you love me, and consider my honest efforts as a musician worthy of your sympathy. This you have said in a manner in which no one else could say it. I confess candidly that when I brought my things to you at Zurich, I did not know how you would receive and like them. I have had to hear and read so much about them, that I have really no opinion on the subject, and continue to work only from persistent inner conviction, and without any claim to recognition or approval. Several of my intimate friends — for example, Joachim, and formerly Schumann and others — have shown themselves strange, doubtful, and unfavourable toward my musical creations. I owe them no grudge on that account, and cannot retaliate, because I continue to take a sincere and comprehensive interest in their works.

### Liszt Endeavours to Console Wagner in Sadness

Weymar, April 8, 1853.

Dearest Friend:

Your letters are sad; your life is still sadder. Ycu want to go into the wide world to live, to

enjoy, to luxuriate. I should be only too glad if you could, but do you not feel that the sting and the wound you have in your own heart will leave you nowhere and can never be cured? Your greatness is your misery; both are inseparably connected, and must pain and torture you until you kneel down and let both be merged in faith!

Let yourself be converted to faith in God, there is happiness, and this is the only thing that is true and eternal. I cannot preach to you, nor explain it to you; but I will pray to God that He may powerfully illumine your heart through His faith and His love. You may scoff at this feeling as bitterly as you like. I cannot fail to see and desire in it the only salvation. Through Christ alone, through resigned suffering in God, salvation and rescue come to us. . . .

LISZT TO WAGNER ON "TRISTAN AND ISOLDE"

December 26, 1858.

DEAREST RICHARD:

Hartel has sent me a divine Christmas present. All the children in the world cannot be so delighted with their trees and the golden apples and splendid gifts suspended thereon as I, in my own person, am with your unique "Tristan." Away with all the cares and tribulations of every-day existence! Here one can weep and glow again. What blissful charm, what undivined wealth of beauty in this fiery love-potion!

What must you have felt while you created and formed this wondrous work? What can I tell you about it beyond saying that I feel with you in my heart of hearts!

I wanted to send you the Dante symphony for the new year, but the corrections have taken me longer than I expected, and the publication will not take place before January. I shall send you a respectable parcel, for the Gran Mass will also be included in it. I wish I could bring you these things personally, stay with you, accompany you in "Tristan." Let us hope that the new year will put an end to our separation, and chain us to each other in the body, as we are already in spirit and heart.

# GOUNOD

[Charles François Gounod was born in Paris June 17, 1818. He died at St. Cloud, October 16, 1893. His father, François Louis Gounod, was a painter of talent. The son, at first, thought of following the same career. His love of music. however, plainly inherited from his mother, who taught music with success, led him to a different and highly distinguished path. Gounod wrote the "Memoirs of an Artist," and broke off abruptly in the midst of a sentence on his Faust. The work is copyrighted and published by Rand, McNally & Co., Chicago, who have kindly consented to the appearance of the pages which follow.

In Grove's "Dictionary of Music," a standard of competent criticism, M. Gustave Chouquet, of Paris, says of Gounod:

"A great musician, and thorough master of the orchestra. Of too refined a nature to write really comic music, his dramatic compositions seem the work of one hovering between mysticism and voluptuousness. This contrast between two opposing principles may be traced in all his work, sacred or dramatic, and gives them an immense interest both from a musical and a psychological point of view. In the chords of his orchest a, majestic as those of a cathedral organ, we recognise the mystic — in his soft and original melodies, the man of pleasure. In a word, the lyric predominates in his work, too often at the expense of variety and dramatic truth."—ED.]

## THE SCHOOL-BOY

AT SCHOOL among the faults of which I was the most frequently guilty there was one for which I had a particular weakness. I adored music, and from this passionate fondness, which determined the choice of my career, arose the first tempests that troubled my young existence.

Whoever has been brought up in a lyceum knows the festival so dear to schoolboys — that of St. Charlemagne. It is a great banquet, in which all pupils take part who have, since the beginning of the school year, stood once in the first or twice in the second place in the class for composition. This banquet is followed by a leave of absence of two days, which allows the pupils to pass one night at home — a pleasure very rare, an indulgence greatly envied by all. The festival falls in the middle of winter. In the year 1831, I had the good fortune to be bidden to this banquet, and, as a reward, my mother promised that I might go in the evening with my brother to the *Theatre des Italiens*, to hear Rossini's "Othellö." Malibran was playing the part of Desdemona; Rubini, that of Othello; Lablache, that of the father. The anticipation of this pleasure made me wild with joy and impatience. I remember that it took away my appetite, so that at dinner my mother was obliged to say:

"See here! If you do not eat, you can not go to the *Italiens*."

### FIRST HEARING OF OPERA

I immediately set myself to eat with resignation. The dinner hour was very early, inasmuch as we could not afford tickets in advance, and it would be necessary to stand in line to get places in the parquet at 3 francs 75 centimes each, which was, even at that figure, a great outlay for

my poor, dear mother. It was bitter cold, and my brother and I waited, with frozen feet, nearly two hours for the moment so ardently wished for, and the crowd began to give way before the ticket office. We finally entered. Never shall I forget the impression received at the sight of that interior, of the curtain, of the chandeliers. It seemed to me that I was in a temple, and that something divine was to be revealed to me. The solemn moment arrived; the three customary raps were given, and the overture was about to commence. My heart was beating to burst my breast! That representation was an enchantment, a delirium. Malibran, Rubini, Lablache, Tamburini (who played Iago), the voices, the orchestra — all made me literally wild.

### BEGINS TO COMPOSE

I emerged from the theater thoroughly at variance with the prose of real life, and completely wrapped up in that dream of the ideal which had become my atmosphere, my fixed purpose. I did not close my eyes that night! I was beset, possessed! I thought of nothing but of producing — I also — an Othello! (Alas, my exercises and translations suffered severely, and soon showed the effect of this madness!) I hurried off my work without first writing it in the rough, making at once a copy on finishing paper, so as to be the more quickly rid of it, and to have my undivided time for my favourite occupa-

tion — musical composition — which seemed to me the only thing worthy of my attention or thoughts. This was the source of many tears and of great sorrows. My teacher, seeing me scribbling one day on music paper, approached me, and asked for my exercise. I handed him my finished copy.

"And your rough copy?" added he.

As I could not produce it, he took possession of my music paper and tore it into a thousand pieces. I remonstrated; he punished me; I protested, and appealed to the principal. Result — kept in after school, extra task, solitary confinement, etc.

This first persecution, far from curing me, only inflamed more violently my musical ardour, and I resolved henceforth to be careful to secure the enjoyment of my pleasures by the regular fulfilment of my duties as a student. At this juncture I determined to address to my mother a sort of profession of faith, formally declaring my positive wish to be an artist. I had, at one time, hesitated between painting and music; but finally feeling more inclination to express my ideas in music, I settled upon the latter choice.

### HIS MOTHER'S FEARS

My mother was completely overcome, as may well be understood. She had known from experience the hardships and uncertainty of the life of an artist, and probably dreaded for me a second edition of the scarcely fortunate existence

she had shared with my father. Therefore, she came, greatly excited, to tell her troubles to the principal, M. Poirson. He reassured her, saying:

"Do not fear; your son will not be a musician; he is a good little pupil; he works hard; his teachers are pleased with him. I will see to it that he is pushed forward to the Normal School. Rest assured, Madame Gounod, he will not be a musician."

My mother went away very much comforted. The principal called me into his office.

"Well," said he to me, "how is this? You wish to be a musician?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ah, but you do not think what that means! To be a musician amounts to nothing in the world."

"What, monsieur! It is nothing to be Mozart? Rossini?"

And I felt while replying to him that my little head of thirteen or fourteen years threw itself backward. Instantly the face of my interlocutor changed expression.

"Ah!" said he, "that is what you think about it. Very well, we will see if you are able to make a musician. I have had a box at the *Italiens* for ten years, and I am a good judge."

### A TEST SUCCESSFULLY MET

He then opened a drawer and, taking out a paper, began to write some verses. This being finished, he handed me the paper, saying:

"Take this away and set it to music."

I was delighted. I left him and went back to my studies. On the way to the class-room I looked over with feverish anxiety the written lines. They were the song of Joseph, "*A peine au sortir de l'enfance . . .*" I knew nothing of Joseph, nor of Méhul. I was neither hindered nor intimidated by any remembrance. It may easily be imagined how little interest I felt for my Latin exercise in this moment of musical intoxication. My song was written during the following recreation hour. I ran in haste with it to the principal.

"What is it, my child?"

"My song is finished."

"What, already?"

"Yes, sir."

"Let us see; sing it to me."

"But, sir, I need a piano for my accompaniment."

Monsieur Poirson had a daughter studying the piano, and I knew there was one in the adjoining room.

"No, no," said he, "that is unnecessary. I do not need a piano."

"But I do, sir, for my chords."

"And where are they, your chords?"

Here, sir," said I, pointing to my forehead.

"Ah! very well; but it makes no difference to me; sing all the same. I shall understand very well without the chords."

I saw that I had to do without accompaniment,

and began; but I was scarcely in the middle of the first part when I perceived the face of my judge softening. This encouraged me, and I commenced to feel that victory was on my side. I went on with confidence, and, when the song was finished, the principal said:

"Now, then; come to the piano."

I triumphed at once; I had all my weapons in my hands. I recommenced my little exercise, and at the end poor Monsieur Poirson, completely vanquished, with tears in his eyes, took my head in his two hands and embracing me, said:

"Go on, my child, with your music."

### As Choirmaster and Organist

During my absence my mother had left the rue de l'Eperon, and was living in the rue Vaneau, in the parish of the Missions Ètrangères, the church of which stood at the corner of the rue de Bac and the rue de Babylone, and in which the new position that I was to occupy for several years awaited me.

The curé of the said parish, Abbé Dumarsais, was formerly my chaplain at the Lycée St. Louis. He succeeded Abbé Lecourtier in the vicarage of the Missions. During my stay at the Academy of France at Rome Abbé Dumarsais wrote to me, offering me the position of organist and chapel master of the parish upon my return to Paris. I accepted, but on certain conditions. I did not wish to receive advice, and much less

orders, either from the curé, the vestry, or anyone else whomsoever. I had my ideas, my sentiments, my convictions; in short, I wished to be the "curé of music"; otherwise, not at all. This was radical, but my conditions had been accepted, there was no objection to them. Habits are, however, tenacious. The musical *régime* to which my predecessor had accustomed the good parishioners was quite opposite to the tastes and tendencies that I brought back from Rome and Germany. Palestrina and Bach were my gods, and I was going to burn what the people had until then worshipped.

The resources at my disposal were almost nothing. Besides the organ, which was very mediocre and limited, I had a body of singers composed of two basses, one tenor, a choir-boy, and myself, who filled at the same time the functions of chapel master, organist, singer, and composer. I endeavoured to direct the music to the best advantage with this meagre force, and the necessity in which I was placed, of making the most of such limited means, proved beneficial to me.

Things went very well at first, but I finally surmised, from a certain coldness and reserve on the part of the parishioners, that I was not entirely in the good graces of my audience. I was not mistaken. Toward the end of the first year my curé called me to him and confessed that he had to suffer complaints and fault-finding from the members of the congregation. Mon-

sieur So-and-So and Madame So-and-So did not find the musical service in the least degree gay or entertaining. The curé then asked me to "modify my style," and to make concessions.

"*Monsieur le Curé*," replied I, "you know our agreement. I am here, not to consult your parishioners; I am here to elevate them. If 'my style' does not please them the case is very plain. I will resign; you may recall my predecessor and everybody will be satisfied. Take it as it is or leave it alone."

RESIGNS

"Very well, then," said the curé, "that is all right; it is understood; I accept your resignation."

And thereupon we separated, the best friends in the world.

I had not been half an hour at home when his servant rang at my door.

"Well, Jean, what is the matter?"

"*Monsieur le Curé* would like to speak with you."

"Ah, very well, Jean; tell him I will be there at once."

Arrived in his presence, he resumed the conversation, saying:

"Come, come, my dear fellow, you threw the helve after the hatchet a while ago. Is there no way of arranging the matter? Let us consider the question calmly. You went off like gunpowder."

"*Monsieur le Curé*, it is useless to begin anew this discussion. I persist in all that I have said. If I must listen to everybody's objections there will be no way of getting along; either I remain entirely independent, or I go. This was our understanding, as you know, and I will abate nothing from it."

"*Ah, mon Dieu*," said he; "what a dreadful man you are!"

Then, after a pause:

"Well, come then, stay."

## Victory

And from that day he never spoke to me again on this subject, allowing me the most perfect liberty of action. After that, my most determined opponents became, little by little, my warmest supporters, and the small additions successively made to my salary indicated the progress made in the sympathies of my hearers. I began with twelve hundred francs a year; this was not much. The second year they granted me an increase of three hundred francs, the third year I had eighteen hundred francs, and the fourth two thousand.

## "Faust," His Best Opera

"Faust" was first produced on the 19th of March, 1859. At first it did not create a remarkable impression; it is, however, at this time, my greatest theatrical success. Can it be said to be my best work? Positively I do not know

At any rate, I see in it a confirmation of my belief upon the subject of success, namely, that success is rather the result of a certain combination of fortuitous circumstances and favourable conditions, than a proof or measure of the intrinsic value of the work itself. It is by the surface that the favour of the public is first gained; it is by the depth that it is maintained and strengthened. It requires a certain length of time to seize and take to one's self the expression and the meaning of the infinite number of details of which a drama is composed.

The dramatic art is a kind of portrait painting. It should interpret characters as a painter reproduces a face or an attitude; it should gather up and fix all the features, all the inflections, so variable and fleeting, which, taken together, form the individuality of physiognomy that is called a personage. Such are the immortal characters of Hamlet, of Richard III., of Othello and of Lady Macbeth, in Shakespeare; impersonations having such a resemblance to the type of which they are the expression, that they remain in the memory like a living reality; therefore, they are justly called creations. Dramatic music is subject to this same law, outside of which it has no existence; its object is to specialise physiognomies. Now, that which painting represents simultaneously to the mind, music can only say successively; this is why it escapes so easily from first impressions.

None of my works before "Faust" gave any

reason to expect a score of this kind. Nothing had prepared the public for it. In this respect, then, it was a surprise, as it was also with regard to the admirable interpretation by Madame Carvalho of Marguerite, M. Barbot of Faust, and M. Balanqué of Mephistopheles. . . .

# GRIEG

[Lawrence Gilman, a leading critic of music, in "Phases of Modern Music," published in 1904 by Harper & Brothers, New York, says:

". . . Grieg is not merely gracious and fragrant, piquant and fragilely lovely; he is all this, and very much more. He is also a poet of the tragic, of the largely passionate and elemental. . . . Consider, for a moment, that work in which he reached, perhaps, the highest point to which his power of creative genius can take him — the sonata for violin and piano in C minor, Op. 45. Here, in my view, is a work built greatly on great lines. The mood, the emotion, are heroic; here are virility, breadth, a passionate urge and ardour. . . .

"Then again, there is the 'Aase's Tod,' from the first Peer Gynt Suite — a threnody of sombre and obsessing beauty, large in conception, noble and profound in feeling, the product of a temperament rich in capacity and resource. I might allege, too, many of his songs — 'Friendship,' for example; or the magnificent G minor Ballade, Op. 24; or the 'Bergliot' music, or portions of 'Olav Trygvason.' . . . Here is no dainty romanticist, no frail and lovely dreamer; the voice is the voice of a master of emotional utterance — here are passion and pathos, and heroic ectasy and despair: here, in short, is a music-maker whose place is not, indeed, upon the summit, but certainly upon the upper slopes."

"Edvard Grieg," a biography by Henry T. Finck, with a portrait and illustrations, was published by John Lane, New York, 1904.

In the *Contemporary Review*, London and New York, July, 1905, appeared the article in large part here reproduced. Grieg died in Bergen, Norway, September 4, 1907. — Ed.]

## My First Success

When I rummage in my brain-chests for the memories of days long vanished, I find myself all at once in the days of my childhood, when life, with all its possibilities, lay before me, as a unique and great success. And it swarms, as in a veritable labyrinth, with young shoots which all press to the light. Half-forgotten memories of childhood stretch out their arms to me. Dreams of my youth which never came to pass, thoughts which I should have deemed extinct arraign me, like the "clues" in "Peer Gynt." I recollect also obscure presentiments of happiness which I dared not trust, but which came to fulfilment. Shapes, dreams and hopes press forward in a many-coloured confusion and whisper, "Here am I — and I — and I." All insist on being present; all want to help to shape out my early successes. Not the noisy outward successes — and indeed there were not many of those; but the quiet, inward successes which wrought within me confidence in myself. And if I try to bring out one success at the expense of others, there come to me, like the distant sobbing of a child, the voices, "And wilt thou then disown me — and me — and me? Thou canst not find it in thy heart." What am I to do? Draw a thick stroke through them all as not worth considering? No; I neither will nor can. For all these little recognitions and happy feelings have had their part in helping to develop

my personality. They may not to-day pass muster as successes, but from the naïve point of view of those days they were events of the greatest importance. So I will set down at random whatever remains in my memory from those distant times. Others may, like myself, find in these recollections, if not successes, yet the materials of success.

I could go very far back, back to the earliest years of my childhood. For who could have so fine an ear for reminiscences as a child? The parsons, indeed, describe this delicacy of feeling as the "old Adam"; I would rather call it the intense longing for sunshine and gentleness in life, instead of gloom and severity. It is according as this impulse in the child is satisfied that his artistic nature is later shaped. I could recount many little triumphs of those years which had a distinct influence on my imagination. As, for instance, when as a little boy I got leave to attend a funeral or go to an auction in order, be it observed, that I might afterward be able to recount my impressions. If I had been forbidden to obey these childish instincts, who knows that my imagination might not have been shut down, or driven in another direction remote from its true nature. What peace of mind it brings to trace those reminiscences back to their first gray dawn! Why should I not go right back? What should hinder me from recalling the wonderful mysterious satisfaction with which my arms stretched out to the piano to discover

— not a melody, that was far off — no; it must be a harmony. First a third, then a chord of three notes, then a full chord of four; ending at last, with both hands, oh, joy, a combination of five, the chord of the ninth. When I found that out my happiness knew no bounds. That was indeed a success! No later success ever stirred me like that. I was about five years old.

## Lessons From His Mother

One year later my mother began to teach me the piano. Little did I suspect that there already disillusion awaited me. Only too soon did it become clear to me that I had to practise just what was unpleasant. And my mother was severe, inexorably severe. If her mother's heart surely rejoiced that I persevered and tried to find out everything, because that revealed a natural artist, at all events she betrayed no such satisfaction. On the contrary, there was no trifling with her if I spent the time in dreaming at the piano instead of busying myself with the lesson set. And if I went back to my finger exercises and scales and all the rest of the technical work, which to my childish longings offered stones for bread, she still controlled me, even when she was not in the room. One day there came a threatening cry from the kitchen, where she was busy getting the dinner ready, "But fie, Edward: F sharp, F sharp, not F." I was quite overpowered by her masterfulness. If I had been more diligent and followed more

willingly her strong lead I should in many points have been the better for it. But my unpardonable tendency to dreaming was already beginning to bring me the same difficulties which have accompanied me long enough throughout my life. Had I not inherited my mother's irrepressible energy as well as her musical capacity, I should never in any respect have succeeded in passing from dreams to deeds.

### Nicknamed "Mozart"

At school one morning in my lesson-book occurred the word "Requiem"; and the teacher asked if any one of us could tell what great composer had written a piece of church music with that title. No one offered an answer, till I gently ventured the name "Mozart." The whole class stared at me as an incomprehensibly strange creature. That I took as a success. But I suspected that it carried something sinister in its lap, and only too soon I found it was so. Naturally the class disliked, as is so often the case, having such a being in their midst, and ever after pursued me in the street with the insult, "There goes 'Mozak,'" and if I escaped down a side street, "Mozak," "Mozak," sounded after me from a long way off. I felt this abuse to be unjust, and considered myself a martyr. I came very near to hating my schoolfellows, and one thing is certain: I shunned nearly all of them.

It is clear that my school successes were not

as a rule happy. But there were exceptions, which shone like sunbeams on my life. For example, in the singing class all went well. One day we were examined in our scales. Not one of the thirty children in the class was up in them; but I had them at my fingers' ends. The teacher — a worthy old Czech, named Schediwy — said, "I will give no marks; but Grieg is the best." I was the lion of the moment, and thoroughly enjoyed the situation.

### Begins to Compose in Boyhood

One day — I must have been at the time twelve or thirteen — I brought with me to school a music-book on which I had written in large letters: "Variations on a German melody for the Piano, by Edward Grieg: Opus I." I wanted to show it to a schoolfellow who had taken some interest in me. But what happened? In the middle of the German lesson this same schoolfellow began to murmur some unintelligible words which made the teacher call out, half unwillingly: "What is the matter; what are you saying there?" Again a confused murmur; again a call from the teacher; and then he whispered, "Grieg has got something." "What does that mean, Grieg has got something?" "Grieg has composed something." The teacher was not very partial to me; so he stood up, came to me, looked at the music-book, and said in a peculiar, ironical tone, "So the lad is musical, the lad composes: remarkable!" Then

he opened the door into the next class-room, fetched the teacher in from there and said to him: "Here is something to look at: this little urchin is a composer." Both teachers turned over the leaves of the music-book with interest. Every one stood up in both classes. I felt sure of a grand success: but that is what one should never feel too quickly. For the other teacher had no sooner gone away again than my master suddenly changed his tactics, seized me by the hair till my eyes were black, and said gruffly, "Another time he will bring the German dictionary with him, as is proper, and leave this stupid stuff at home." Alas! To be so near the summit of fortune and then all at once to see oneself plunged into the depths! How often has that happened to me later in life! And I have always been driven to remember that first time.

Opposite the school house there lived a young lieutenant, who was a passionate lover of music and a skilful performer on the piano. With him I took refuge, and brought to him my attempts at composition, in which he took so much interest that I always had to copy them out for him. That was a success of which I was not a little proud. It fortunately happened later on that I was able to get the copies back from him,so as to consign them to the wastepaper basket, to which they properly belonged. I have often thought with gratitude of my friend, the lieutenant, who afterward was promoted to be a general, and of the encouraging recognition which he accorded

to my first productions in art. To my juvenile feelings that was a pleasant offset to all the cuffs and scoldings which I had to undergo at school.

In these times it never occurred to me for a moment that I might become an artist. And if the thought struck me at any time I put it aside as something altogether too high and unattainable. If any one asked me what I wanted to be, I answered unhesitatingly, "A pastor." My fancy painted the black-coated shepherd of souls as the most attractive of characters. To be able to preach or speak before a listening crowd seemed to me something very lofty. To be a prophet, a herald, that was what I liked. And what did I not declaim to my unfortunate parents and sisters! I knew all the poems in the reading-book by heart. And when my father, after dinner, wanted to take his little siesta in the armchair, I would not leave him in peace, but got behind a chair, which represented my pulpit, and declaimed away without any consideration. All the time I would watch him, apparently in a light sleep, but now and then he laughed a little, and then I was happy; it meant a recognition. And how I could torment him without end, "Ah! one more little poem." "No; that is enough." "Only one!" What childish ambition! He knows well enough already the excitement of success.

## A Visit From Ole Bull, the Great Violinist

The end of my schooldays, and at the same

time my departure from home, came sooner than I expected. I was nearly fifteen, but had not been long in the top class. But it befell that one summer's day a rider at full gallop dashed up from the road to Landas. He drew up, reined in his fiery Arab, and leaped off. It was he, the fairy god whom I had dreamed of but never seen; it was Ole Bull. It did not quite please me that this god simply got off and behaved like a man, came into the room and smilingly greeted us all. I remember well that I felt something like an electric current pass through me when his hand touched mine. But when this divine being let himself go so far as to make jokes, it was clear to me, to my silent sorrow, that he was only a man after all. Unfortunately he had not his violin with him, but talk he could and talk he diligently did. We all listened speechless to his astounding stories of his journeys in America. That was indeed something for my childish imagination. But when he heard I had composed music, I had to go to the piano; all my entreaties were in vain. I cannot now understand what Ole Bull could find at that time in my juvenile pieces. But he was quite serious and talked quietly to my parents. The matter of their discussion was by no means disagreeable to me. For suddenly Ole Bull came to me, shook me in his own way, and said, "You are to go to Leipzig and become a musician." Everybody looked at me affectionately, and I understood just one thing, that

a good fairy was stroking my cheek and that I was happy. And my good parents! Not one moment's opposition or hesitation, everything was arranged, and it seemed to me the most natural thing in the world. What thanks I owed to them — plus Ole Bull — I only saw clearly at a later time. I was under a magic spell, and there was no room for other influences. But stop, ambition was also there, that I can scarcely deny. And ambition is apparently one of the chief ingredients which go to make that very mixed salad which is called an "artist." For unconsciously something whispered in me, "A success." But what says my reader to that? Am I permitted to claim a success? At all events I do so, with or without leave. And here I close the list of the more or less honourable successes of my childish days. But as I have undertaken the task of finding out my first success, an inward voice bids me go a little further in my search.

### Goes to the Conservatorium at Leipzig

And now my path leads me to the Leipzig Conservatorium, to which I was sent a few months after Ole Bull's visit to Landas. It is not by chance that the word "sent" comes to the end of my pen. I felt like a parcel, stuffed with dreams. I was placed under the care of an old friend of my father's. I crossed the North Sea to Hamburg, and after one day's breathing time went on by train southwards to mediæval

Leipzig, where the dark, tall, uncanny houses and narrow streets almost took my breath. I was deposited in a boarding-house; my father's old friend said good-bye — the last Norwegian word which I heard for a long time — and then I stood alone, a lad of fifteen in a strange land, alone among strangers. I was very homesick. I went to my room and cried without stopping till I was sent for by my host to dinner. The husband, a superior employee in the Post Office, tried to comfort me: "Look here, my dear Herr Grieg, here there are the same sun, the same moon and the same good God that you have at home." It was very well meant, but neither sun nor moon nor the good God could replace that old friend of my father who was gone, the last link which bound me to my home. But young people quickly change their moods. I soon got over my homesickness, and although I had not the slightest idea what it meant to study music, I was dead certain that the miracle would happen, and that in three years, when my course of studies came to an end, I should go back home a wizard-master in the kingdom of sound. That is the last proof that childish naïvetè was the strongest thing in me. And I should not like to be taken as having been anything but a child-student of the Conservatorium. Such, indeed, I was, even in my dress. I used to go in a short blouse with a belt, such as the boys wore at my own home. My comrades at first measured me up with looks of astonish-

ment. Indeed, there was one violinist who got some fun out of it, and took me on his lap, which naturally drove me to despair. But all that was soon over.

### Rebels Against His Teacher

I had now been admitted into the sanctuary of the Leipzig Conservatorium, and had thus received a confirmation of the hope that I was possessed of musical talent, which, according to the statutes, was the condition of admission; and this, for a young beginner like me, who dreaded nothing so much as to be rejected, was a colossal victory. And now to win the first artist-heart among my comrades! What a conquest! And then the sympathy of the professors; to get a word of praise from one of them in my lesson. These were joys which excited my youthful spirits quite otherwise than did the applause of thousands in my later life. Such joys did not fall to my lot all at once. I was anything but a prize-Conservatorist. Quite the contrary. In my first days I was profoundly lazy. I still remember how Louis Plaidy, my first — and very unsympathetic — teacher of the piano, one day in my lesson, when I was bungling over a repulsive sonata of Clementi which he had forced upon me, suddenly snatched the book from the instrument and pitched it with a great curve through the air into the farthest corner of the great music-room. As he could not very well try the same experiment

with me, he thundered at me, "Go home and practise!" I must say he had a good right to be furious; but the punishment was terribly disgraceful for me, because there were so many scholars in the room. To speak mildly, I must describe this episode as a very doubtful success. Meanwhile, it was useful to me. For my pride revolted against Plaidy's brutal treatment. As he never let me play anything but Czerny, Kuhlau and Clementi, all of whom I hated like the plague, I soon took my resolve. I went to the director of the Conservatorium and asked to be released from Plaidy's lessons. My request was granted, and I was proud of this result. It took away some of my excessive timidity and I became more courageous. It has often been said that Plaidy was a good technical man and knew how to bring his pupils on in their technique. But whether the reason is to be sought in my stupidity, in my idleness, or in my antipathy to Plaidy, it is certain that he taught me no technique at all. His method of teaching was one of the least intelligent possible. How he sat there during the lesson, — a little fat, bald man planted straight up by the piano, his left forefinger behind his ear, while the pupil played on in the deadliest weariness, admonishing in the ever repeated words, "Slowly, always slowly, firm; lift your fingers; slow, firm; life your fingers!" It was simply maddening. Besides, it sometimes happened that when the pupil got up from the piano, he took his

place; but this was only in certain circumstances which I will describe presently. When this happened we scholars had a private joke of our own. We knew beforehand, to a hair, when Plaidy was going to exhibit. It happened when a scholar brought with him Mendelssohn's Scherzo Capriccioso in E or his Capriccio in B minor. In either case Plaidy spread himself out as well as possible at the piano in the slow introduction. It has been said that Bulow in his performances brought out too much of the pedagogue. But if so, what shall one say of Plaidy? His playing was a living illustration of his theories: "Slow, strong; lift the fingers." And besides there was his everlasting "punctuation," if I may so express it, his perpetual separating out of the smallest phrases. Eternal commas, semicolons, notes of exclamation, dashes, and between these — absolutely nothing. Not a trace of contents! A Philistine bill-of-fare show! But then came the glorious moment. The slow introduction was over; the allegro was to follow on. And now we knew exactly what would happen. As sure as two and two make four, so certain was it that Plaidy would get up from the piano and with an assumed quiet, as if casually, remark "And so on." Just think: to be a teacher of the Leipzig Conservatorium, with a great reputation for capacity, and just to be able to play the slow movements of two Mendelssohn capriccios! With all that the poor man imagined seriously

that we did not see through him: it was most comical.

### Studies Under Moscheles

Later on I was ordained to have lessons from the famous Ignaz Moscheles. Under the influence of these two teachers all my idleness passed away. Many hard things have been said about old Moscheles as a teacher. I stand up for him with the greatest warmth. It is true that he was naïve enough to believe that he imposed on us by seizing every opportunity to run down Chopin and Schumann, whom I secretly adored; but he could play beautifully: and he did; often taking up the whole lesson. Especially his interpretations of Beethoven, whom he worshipped, were splendid. They were conscientious, full of character, and noble, without any straining after effect. I studied Beethoven's Sonatas with him by the dozen. Often I could not play four bars together without his laying his hands on mine, pushing me gently from my seat, and saying, "Now listen how I do that." In this way I learned many a little technical secret, and came to value his expressive interpretations at the very highest. It was told of him at the Conservatorium — though, fortunately, I cannot bear witness to it from my own experience — that he had given his pupils this advice: "Play diligently the old masters, Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn and — me." I dare not vouch for this anecdote. But I allude to it because I myself,

at his suggestion, took in hand his twenty-four Studies (Op. 70), all of which I studied with him without exception, and do not at all regret it. They pleased me, and so I did my best to satisfy both him and myself. That he must have noticed; for he became more and more kind to me; and though a simple it was yet a very important success for me when, one day, after I had played one of his studies, without his interrupting me once, he turned to the other students and said, "Look here, gentlemen, that I call musicianly playing." How glad I was! That day the whole world lay before me bathed in light.

### Lessons in Harmony

On the other hand, my successes in the harmony lessons were not such as I could boast of. Under E. F. Richter at first I always wrote, to the bass which was set, harmonies which pleased myself, instead of those prescribed by the rules of thorough bass. Afterward I could find many a useful theme for a fugue; but to arrange the theme so that it would do under the fixed rules, that was not for me. I started off from the faulty subject, and if my work sounded well, that was the main thing so far as I was concerned. For Richter, on the contrary, the chief matter was that the problem should be properly solved. And if only the solving of musical problems, and not music, were in the first order of importance, from his point of view he would have been right. But at that time

his point of view never became clear to me. I defied him obstinately, and stuck to my own opinion. I did not conceive that in that matter I ought to be a learner and confine myself within limits, to obey, and, as it says in the preface to his "Harmony," not to ask why. Luckily we never quarreled. He only smiled indulgently at my stupidities, and with a "No! wrong!" he corrected them with a thick pencil-mark, which did not make me much more careful. But there were a great many in the class, and Richter could not stop for every single one.

Dr. Robert Papperitz, from whom I took harmony lessons at the same time, gave me a freer rein. The consequence was that I went so far out of the beaten path in my choral work as to introduce chromatic passages in the voice parts wherever I could. One day be broke out, "No, this chromatic work won't do; you are becoming a second Spohr!" And as Spohr, in my opinion, was an academic pedant of the first rank, I did not at all enjoy that criticism. Finally I had lessons from Moritz Hauptmann; and I shall ever be grateful to that amiable old man for all that he taught me by his intelligent and discriminating comments. In spite of all his learning, he represented to me everything that was not scholastic. For him rules in themselves meant nothing; they were simply the essential laws of nature. I will here bring in an episode, which in a weak moment I might call

a success. Before I knew Hauptmann (I was not yet sixteen and wore a boy's blouse) I received the honour, in a private examination — a sort of half-yearly examination in which all the pupils without exception were obliged to take part — of being allowed to play a piece of my own composition. When I had finished, and was leaving the piano, to my amazement I saw an old gentleman rise from the professors' table and come toward me. He laid his hand on my shoulder and said, "Good day, my lad, we must become friends." That was Hauptmann; and naturally I loved him from that moment. In his last years he was an invalid, and gave lessons in his own house, the Thomasschule, Sebastian Bach's old home. Here I was fortunate enough to come to know him better. I well remember him sitting on his sofa, in dressing-gown and cap, with a big silk handkerchief in his hand, his spectacles buried deep in my exercise book.

### Studies Composition

In the last year of my course I had lessons in composition from Carl Reinecke, who had then just entered upon his duties as director of the Gewandhaus concerts and professor at the Conservatorium, in succession to Julius Rietz, who had been transferred to Dresden. I will give one illustration of the way things went on in these lessons. I went in as one who had not the faintest notion of form nor of the technicali-

ties of stringed instruments, and was at once required to write a string quartette. I felt as if the porter had proposed the task to me; so absurd it seemed. I was reminded of my old nurse, who when she wanted me to do something I could not manage, and I said, "I cannot," used to say, "Put the 'can' down and take it with both hands." This old joke, which had so often put courage into me, did so once more; and what Reinecke failed to teach me I tried to get out of Mozart and Beethoven, whose quartettes I diligently studied on my own account. So I did the piece of work in my own way. The parts were written out and played in a general class of my comrades. The director of the Conservatorium wanted to have the quartette played in one of the public performances of the best sort of the school; but Ferdinand David, the celebrated violinist and teacher, who was present at the trial of the piece was of a different opinion. He took me aside and gave me the advice, as wise as it was well meant, not to have it brought out. He thought people would say it was "music of the future." He was wrong in that; there was not a trace of the future in it; it went on the lines of Schumann, Gade, and Mendelssohn; but I soon perceived that it was an utterly mediocre piece of work and was very grateful to David for having prevented its performance. I could wish that this quartette and a good deal else of that period had been given to the flames: but, unfortunately,

I did not succeed in so destroying it; it exists somewhere, but I do not know where. A fellow-student, who admired my creative efforts, one day led me into temptation. He possessed a complete score of Schumann's pianoforte concerto which he had written out himself and which at that time had only been published with the pianoforte part and the separate orchestral parts, and he offered me this score in exchange for my quartette. I could not resist the offer, and I still think with secret terror that this early failure of mine very likely still exists in some southern country of Europe. After this negative success of my first string quartette, Reinecke said to me, "Now set to, and write an overture." I, who had no notion of orchestration or of orchestral instruments! I was to write an overture! Again I thought of the porter, — and of my nurse. However, I set to work with a youthful contempt of death. But this time I jumped short; I literally stuck in the middle of the overture, and could get no further. It seems incredible: but there was no class in the Conservatorium in which one could get a grounding in these things. No wonder that I can point to nothing like a success in connection with these lessons. It was fortunate for me that in Leipzig I got to hear so much good music, especially orchestral and chamber music. That made up to me for the lack of teaching in the technicalities of composition. It developed my mind and my musical judgment in the highest

degree; but it introduced great confusion into the relations between my desires and my ability to carry them out, and I must, alas! say that this confusion was the result of my stay in Leipzig.

### Sullivan and Other Fellow-students

It may seem difficult to find, in what I have related, materials for success. But to me it appears otherwise. I observed that not everything goes right. I withdrew into myself, because I was aiming at something which was other than what they taught in the classes and which they left out of all their teaching. But this very feeling that I wanted something different had a stimulating effect on me, because it pointed to the future and gave me courage to work on for my own hand. But at first it brought me much disillusionment. It cannot be denied that it touched me closely when I was distanced by my fellow-students, who made immense strides forward, and were able to manage the tasks set them. I especially remember some young Englishmen who, partly by resolute industry, partly by facility in acquiring knowledge, accomplished things in presence of which I felt my own incapacity overwhelming. Among these were Arthur Sullivan, afterward so celebrated as the composer of the "Mikado," the pianists Franklin Taylor and Walter Bache, and Edward Dannreuther — too early taken from us, so gifted and so unwearied as the champion of Liszt, and who also was one of the

first to enter the lists on behalf of Wagner in England. He was an exceedingly able man, and an eminent player. Lastly there was the fine musician, John Francis Barnett, whom I have mentioned above, and who passed his life as a teacher in London. Sullivan at once distinguished himself by his talent for composition and for the advanced knowledge of instrumentation which he had acquired before he came to the Conservatorium. While still a student he wrote the music to Shakespeare's "Tempest," a few bars of which he once wrote in my album, and which displays the practised hand of an old master. Although I did not come across him much, I once had the pleasure of passing an hour with him, which I shall not forget. It was during a performance of Mendelssohn's "St. Paul." We sat and followed the music with the score, and what a score! It was Mendelssohn's own manuscript, which Sullivan had succeeded in borrowing for the occasion from the director of the Conservatorium, Conrad Schleinitz, who was, as is well-known, an intimate friend of Mendelssohn's. With what reverence we turned from one page to another! We were amazed at the clear, firm notes which so well expressed the ideas of the writer. . . .

### In Denmark the Veil Falls, His Talent Appears

At the Conservatorium I should have understood it quite well, if neither the director nor the

professors had taken any interest in me. For in the whole of the three years I never succeeded in producing anything which gave promise for the future. So if in the course of these sketches I have had to blame either certain persons or different things in the institution, I hasten to add as a preliminary remark that it was mainly owing to my own nature that I came very near to leaving the Conservatorium as stupid as I went. I was a dreamer, without any talent for the battle of life. I was clumsy, with little power of sympathy, and anything but teachable. We Norwegians, especially, usually develop too slowly to show in the least at the age of eighteen what we are good for. But however that may be, I at least was quite in the dark about myself. The atmosphere of Leipzig was as a veil over my eyes. A year later, when I went to Denmark, the veil fell, and there appeared to my amazed glance a world of beauty, which the joys of Leipzig had held concealed. I had found myself and with the greatest facility I overcame all the difficulties which in Leipzig had seemed unsurmountable. With liberated fancy I quickly composed one large work after another. That at first my music was criticised as laboured and odd no longer misled me; I know what I wanted, and steered courageously for the goal which I longed to reach.

But before I close let me go back once more to my Leipzig days. It will be admitted that I have drawn my portrait as a Conservatorium

student in no flattering colours. But I do not want to make myself out worse than I was, and before I bring this paper to an end I want to add one thing which will tend to rehabilitate me in the eyes of the many readers who will certainly think that most of my "successes" have been dragged in by the hair of their head.

So I hasten to give one instance of what must be called a real success. It was Easter time, 1862, before I left the Conservatorium, when I enjoyed the honour of being among the students who were selected to appear at the public performance in the Hall of the Gewandhaus. I played some pianoforte pieces of my own; they were lame productions enough; and I still blush to-day that they appeared in print and figure as Opus I.; but it is a fact that I had an immense success and was called for several times. There was no doubt about that success. Yet it meant nothing for me. The public consisted of invited friends and relations, professors and students. In these circumstances it was the easiest thing in the world for the fair-haired lad from the north to make a hit.

## Success in Self-discovery

And now I ask myself: where, in all that I have related, is the first success to be found? Every one will have read between the lines that for myself and my development no one event gives the answer to that question. I cannot point to my first success and say, There

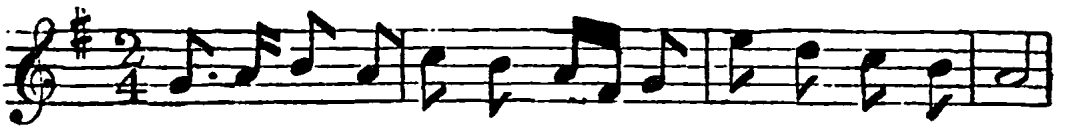
it is? And why? Because the question is somewhat abstract. Any one who considers the collection of things I have written down will, if he is observant, soon see what I was aiming at. As I indicated at the beginning, it was my intention to bring the reader to answer the question for himself. But perhaps I overestimated my powers. I may therefore as well give him the key, by saying it all over again in a few words. The husk of these experiences conceals the kernel of the problem. That I had in myself sufficient power to shake the yoke off afterward, to throw away all the superfluous rubbish with which I had been encumbered by my poverty-stricken education both at home and abroad — an education lumbering and one-sided, and tending to drive my natural talents into a totally wrong course: that power was my salvation and my good fortune. And as soon as I became conscious of that power, as soon as I clearly beheld myself, then I realised what I may call my only success. But that decided my life. The joys and sorrows of my childhood and my early student years, disillusionments and triumphs, all contributed to this great success. Yes: without them I should never have attained.

# HAYDN

[The following has been taken from "A Croatian Composer: Notes Toward the Study of Joseph Haydn," by W. H. Hadow, who acknowledges his indebtedness to the works of Dr. Trantisek S. Kulac. Mr. Hadow's book is published by Seeley & Co., London.—ED.]

## How Haydn Wrote Music for the Austrian National Anthem

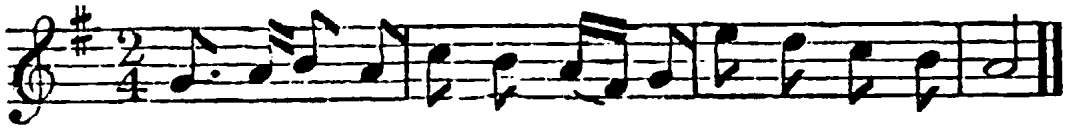
When Haydn, in 1797, was commissioned to set to music the Austrian National Anthem, he must have had before his eye a Croatian folk-tune; and have determined to use it as his ground work:



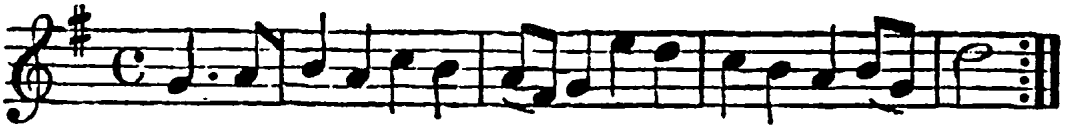


His great tune was no momentary inspiration, no sudden inspiration that came into existence at full growth. Like most of Beethoven's music it was made carefully, and by deliberate weighing of alternatives. By a piece of singular good fortune, we are for once admitted to the master's workshop, and allowed to take our lesson in melody by the observation of his practice.

Now the strain of the folk-tune is too short to fit the second line of the poem; accordingly, Haydn began by extending the cadence, and instead of —

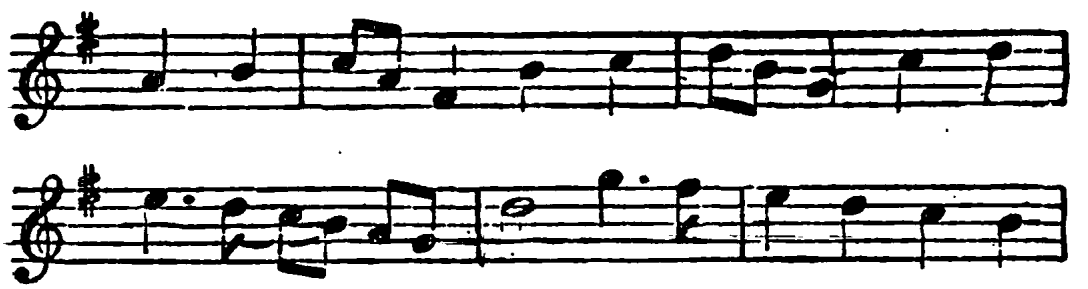


wrote —



following it with repeat-marks, after the common method of primary form. Two other changes explain themselves. The measure is dignified by the broader time-signature, and the accent shifted by rearranging the bars. Otherwise, in the first half of the stanza the folk-tune remains unaltered.

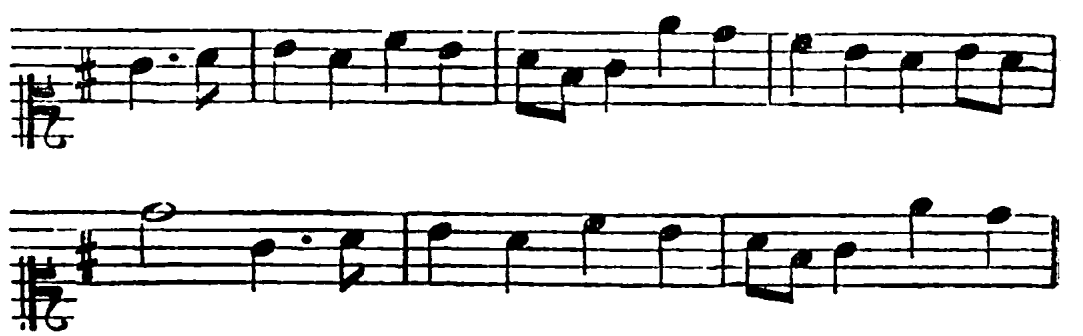
But for the second half it was manifestly insufficient. Both the possible variants are too trivial, and one too brief, to afford the requisite climax. As a natural consequence, Haydn discarded both, and proceeded to supply their place with two original strains, which in the autograph sketch run as follows: —

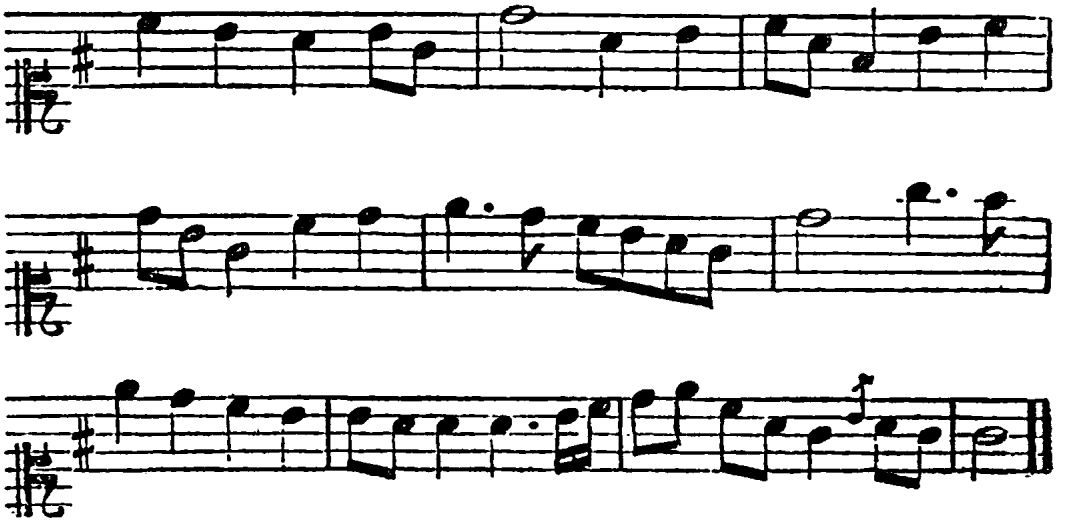


Still, he was dissatisfied with the result, and it is easy to suggest the reason. In the former of these two strains there is a passage which carries tonic harmony — out of place at this stage of the tune — and its cadence, moreover, rhymes awkwardly with that of the half-stanza. The latter of the two comes down from its point of stress with a fine sweeping movement, but, three bars from the end, breaks its melodic curve into two distinct pieces, and so loses continuity of line. Both were accordingly corrected, one on the same page, the bottom stave of which bears, in hasty manuscript, the amended form —

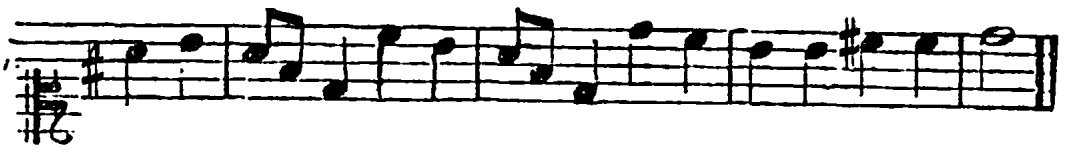
the other, with a few more minute alterations, at a later period of the work.

Haydn's autograph sketch is in the Museum of the Gesellschaft Library at Vienna. It contains, first, the complete sketch of the melody —

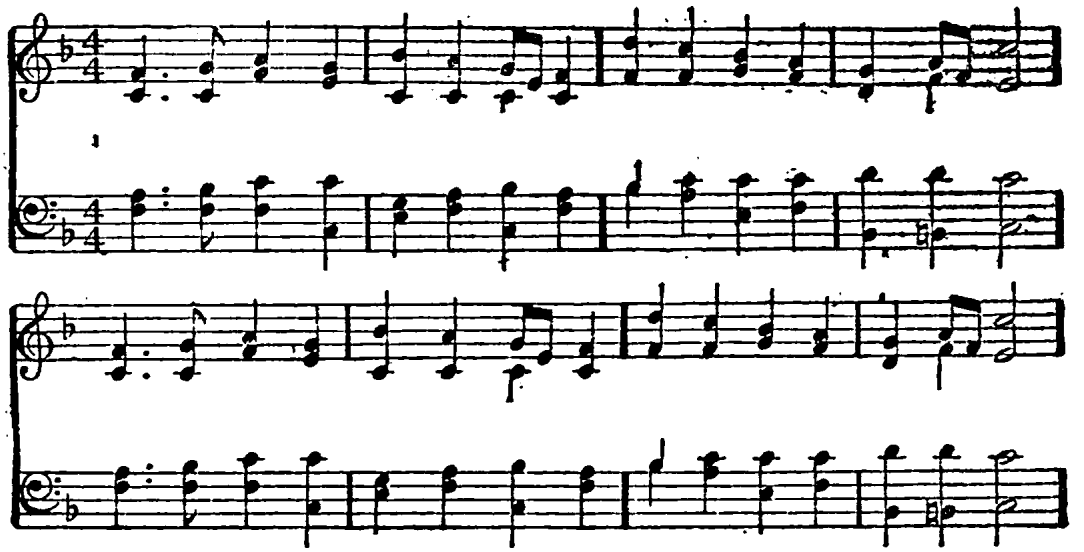


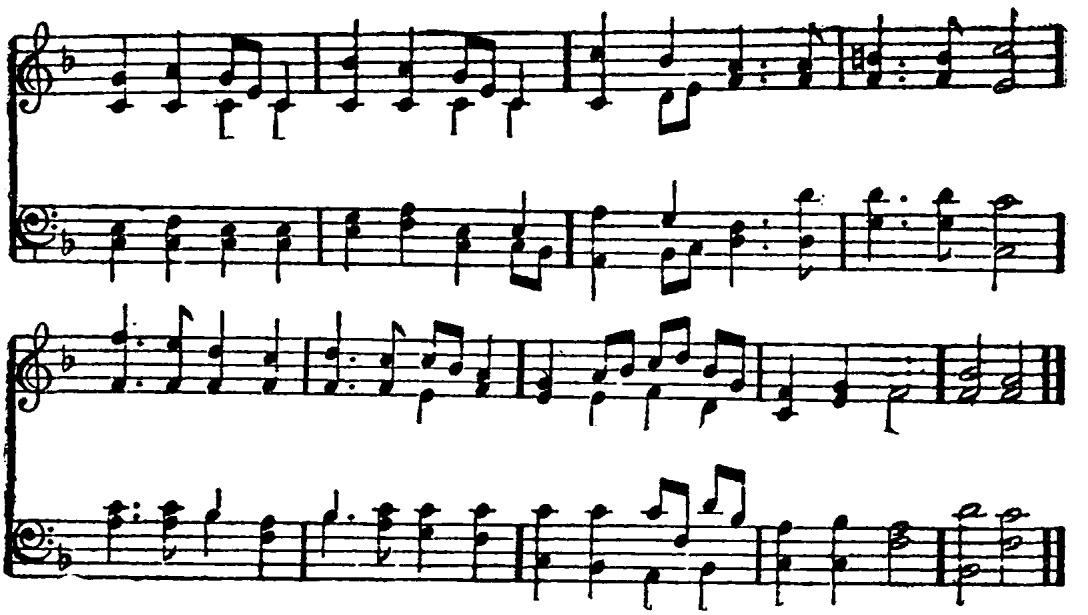


and below it the third strain amended —



The improved version of the fourth strain is not there, but Pohl (in the second volume of his Haydn) notes an anticipation of it in the Mariazeller Mass.





FINAL FORM OF THE MUSIC

## ON MUSIC

### By Walter Savage Landor

Many love music but for music's sake;
Many because her touches can awake
Thoughts that repose within the breast half dead,
And rise to follow where she loves to lead.
What various feelings come from days gone by!
What tears from far-off sources dim the eye!
Few, when light fingers with sweet voices play,
And melodies swell, pause, and melt away,
Mind how at every touch, at every tone,
A spark of life hath glistened and hath gone.