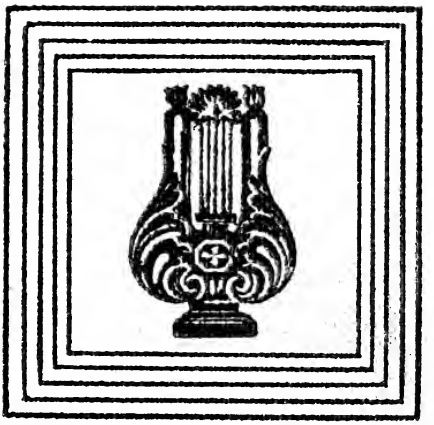


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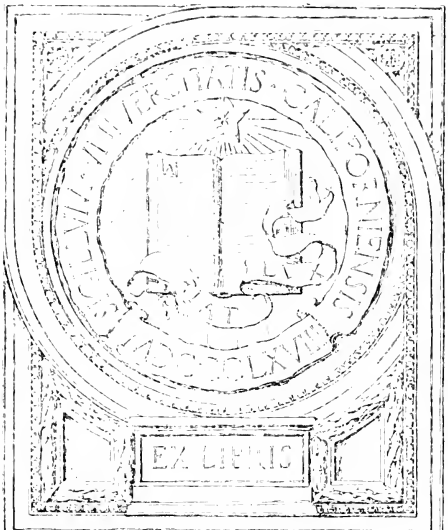

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Confessions of a Violinist

Realities and Romance

By

Dr. T. Lamb Phipson

Formerly President and Violin Solo to the
Bohemian Orchestral Society

Author of "Voice and Violin," etc.

London

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1902

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IN FOND REMEMBRANCE OF

EMMA ELLEN ELIZABETH PHIPSON

Only child of the late CAPTAIN SAMUEL LAMB, *of the Herefordshire Regiment, first Cousin of* WILLIAM LAMB, LORD MELBOURNE, *for many years Prime Minister*

BORN *2nd June*, 1813. DIED *13th March* 1899

"*Addio carissima Madre mia! L'imagine tua, cara e bella, e per sempre intagliata sul mio cuore.*"

PREFACE

THE present little work, as indicated in the title, consists of two parts, Realities and Romance. It contains biographical sketches, reminiscences, studies, and episodes, with some short romantic stories interspersed, which are all drawn from real life.

It may be considered as a continuation of my "Voice and Violin," which has been so indulgently received by all classes of readers that I have been induced to give here a number of notes and sketches which have not yet appeared in any of my other books. I hope they will be found instructive and amusing, and so help to foster the love of music, from which most people derive so much pleasure and profit.

CASA MIA, PUTNEY, LONDON,
Sept. 1902.

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Confessions of a Violinist

I

LOOKING BACK

On looking calmly over the events of the last century, I feel fortunate in having been born an Englishman, and having lived throughout the whole glorious reign of Queen Victoria, the contemporary of my dear mother. I came into this wonderful world at the dawn of the railway and the Reform Bill, and when music was exerting its most powerful influence upon society in the form of Italian opera and the violin of Paganini. My mother had left school in Kensington, and been married five years, when our late beloved Sovereign succeeded to the throne in 1837.

The Queen was the only child of the Duke of Kent; my mother was the only child of Captain Lamb, first cousin of Lord Melbourne, Home Secretary under William IV., and for many years Prime Minister under Victoria. He was the young Queen's favourite Minister; he gave

her the first lessons in diplomacy and government, with what excellent results every year of her long and spotless life bears testimony.

The Queen was eighteen when she succeeded to the throne, and my mother was barely nineteen when she married my father. They were two of the most beautiful and most lovable women in the whole world.

My mother retained the delicate outlines of her lovely features to the last. I possess her miniature, painted by Teisserenc de Bort (late Minister of Agriculture in France), a friend of my father, and a most accomplished amateur artist, who spent some time with us at Ladywood, near Birmingham, when he was deputed by his government to visit England.

William Lamb, Viscount Melbourne, died without children, and his brother Frederick succeeded to the title; he, also, left no heirs, but my grandfather, Captain Samuel Lamb, had already died before his cousin, Lord Melbourne, the Prime Minister, leaving an only child, Emma Ellen Elizabeth, my mother.

Once I thought of petitioning Queen Victoria to allow me to take up the title of Viscount Melbourne—her generosity and keen sense of justice would have granted it—but I never did so; I reflected that a man will always be judged by his works rather than by his titles or social position.

I have devoted much of my life to my violin; and I have found that music is one of the antidotes to the virulent poisons of our period. Music and moral philosophy must go hand in hand to extirpate the morbid microbes of vice in all its forms and manifestations.

At the time of his marriage my father, Samuel Ryland Phipson, was twenty-eight years of age, and my mother had just left school. He must have been considered a handsome man; for, tradesmen and others who did not know him, invariably addressed him, both at home and abroad, as "Colonel" Phipson. Between them, my parents were possessed of a considerable fortune. Ladywood, near Edgbaston, where my younger days were passed, was a delightful residence—now, alas! entirely destroyed; the ancient elms and beeches have disappeared, and streets full of houses take the place of the flowery meadows and beautiful gardens!

As a young boy my father was educated at a well-known school in Hereford, and at sixteen years of age he entered the University of Jena, in Germany, where he remained till he was twenty-one. It was in the year 1819 that he sailed from Harwich to Rotterdam for that purpose, a voyage of three days; and, according to his diary, which I possess, he must have spent

a very delightful time abroad. He had one interview, at Weimar, with the poet Goethe, then an old man, and returned to England in 1824 with a violin and a little book of student songs—a most beautiful collection of all the best part-songs sung by the students of the German universities.

Shortly after his return to England he purchased a Stradivari violin, valued in those days at one hundred guineas, which he afterwards gave to me. This is the violin upon which I have played in all my concerts and *soirées musicales*, and which has accompanied me on all my journeys. He never played much himself, but was a pleasing singer and a most excellent judge of style.

Those who can look back into the past without regret live double lives.

My mother, also, made me numerous presents on every possible occasion ; on my birthday, at Christmas, and at other times ; and whenever my eyes rest upon one of these objects, I live over again the happy moments in which it was given. Indeed, the sight of these gifts is not really needful, for the thoughts of those days of happiness and indulgence recur without it. Often, of late years, this remembrance of past events has proved a good guide to present actions, and a faithful warning for the future.

All who knew him acknowledge that my excellent father was not only one of the most enlightened men of the nineteenth century, but one of the most generous and benevolent. At Ladywood he kept open house, and his stables were always at the disposal of any friends who might wish to ride over and put up their horses whilst they stayed a fortnight or more with us. In early life he kept hunters, but after meeting with a bad accident on riding through a wood, my mother persuaded him to give up following the hounds. He had a very large number of friends, and if he had one fault, it was that of confiding in them too thoroughly. His liberality knew no bounds ; and one consequence of this was that his estate suffered, so that his ample income was after a while considerably reduced. In order to economise, and to give his children a good education, he abandoned his beautiful residence, which I have described in the first pages of my "Famous Violinists," and went to live in Brussels.

The distressing state of mind in which I was forced to make this journey from England on St. Valentine's Day, 1849, may be imagined when I state that I left a sweetheart, a beautiful girl of fifteen, whom I never expected to see again. It was my first great grief, and tears flowed freely during the whole journey. I carried my violin with me, though I had my left arm in a sling, on

account of a gun-shot wound in the hand, which only got well many months afterwards. On the steamer this precious instrument was stowed away in the captain's private cabin for safety.

The arrival in Brussels was like going back 300 years in history. The blue blouses of the school-boys and the peasants, the wooden shoes of the latter, the little carts drawn by dogs, the trees in the streets, and the coarse porphyry pavement over which carts and carriages rattled, the fine houses with their luxurious balconies and the spy-glass mirrors outside the windows, enabling the inmates to see who was coming along the street; the very common appearance of many of the ladies, and rough aspect of the men, the dirty habits of the children, the big, cheap cigars and curious Flemish pipes, the dishonest servants, the ancient Roman Catholic observances, the Carnival folk dressed up in the streets, the splendid architecture of the cathedrals, the untruthful trades-people, the peculiar odour of the atmosphere, the splendid *Galleries de St. Hubert*, the cafés and estaminets with their billiard-tables, the stoves in place of open fires, and the fine marble chimney-pieces, the curious signs over the shops, the queer tools of the carpenters and artisans, the steep and narrow streets, the Park and the fine monuments in the central parts of the city, the old *Hotel de Ville*, the garbs of the priests and soldiers, and a thou-

sand odd, antiquated customs, all caused me the greatest amazement. In many respects it was like going back to the days of Charles Quint!

I entered as a student at the University in 1849, and took my doctor's degree in 1855, at the age of twenty-two years.

II

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

To give some slight idea of the generous disposition of my worthy father, I will relate a little anecdote of what occurred one night at Ostend, where we used to pass a month or two every summer. He and Mr. Saint-Amour, the Ostend manager of the London Steam Navigation Company, were strolling up and down the pier, chatting and smoking their cigars, as the 9 P.M. boat for London was about to leave, when a tall, fair-haired Dutchman, about forty years of age, rushed up in great tribulation to Mr. Saint-Amour. He said he had just arrived from Cologne, and had left his purse behind at the hotel, or lost it in the train, so he had not any money at all, and yet he must get to London by that boat, as he had important business to transact there which would occupy him for two or three days. He did not know a soul in Ostend, and the Company's manager did not appear inclined to trust him.

"What would be the sum you require?" asked my father, who, of course, had heard all he had said.

"About five pounds would pay my travelling expenses and keep me for two or three days in London," replied the stranger; "when I get there I can write to my wife, in Holland, to send me what I may require beyond that."

"I will lend you five pounds," said my father, taking out his card-case and a Bank of England note.

"What!" exclaimed the stranger, "you, who never saw me before!—you will trust me with five pounds!"

"Certainly; give me your card, and here is mine."

"It is marvellous!" said the other, tears of joy flowing down his cheeks.

In about a fortnight's time, a letter of thanks arrived containing the five pounds; and for several years afterwards this Dutch gentleman, with his wife and three young children, spent a few weeks during the season at Ostend, and made our acquaintance.

He was not the first nor the last person that my father thus saved from distress and anxiety at a moment's notice.

On another occasion we were travelling together in Germany, and at Giessen an amiable and chatty gentleman from Dusseldorf got into our carriage. As usual, at such times, my father and he exchanged cigars from their respective cases.

"This is a very fine cigar of yours," said the new-comer; "may I ask where you get them?"

"They are Golden Eagles, bought in Brussels," replied my father.

"Ah! you must have paid a high price for them; a good Havana cigar is very expensive in Brussels. I ought to know, for I am a cigar-dealer myself," he added, smiling.

"I was just thinking how good your cigar is," rejoined my father.

"Oh! but they are not Golden Eagles," said the cigar-merchant.

"Nevertheless, they are excellent. How could I get a box or two?"

"Well, I cannot tell you exactly; they are only to be had at certain places, and I have not my trade-list in my pocket. But I could send you a couple of boxes on my return home, if you would wait till then. I shall be away some time; I am going my annual rounds to all the principal towns, to clear up accounts and take new orders, so I shall not be back at Dusseldorf before a whole month from this time."

He then handed his card to my father, who gave him his address and four gold pieces for the two boxes of cigars to be forwarded in a month's time. When the stranger got out at one of the next stations, I was rather vexed at what my father had done.

"You will never receive those cigars!" I exclaimed, in a bitter, sarcastic tone; and I repeated that remark on various subsequent occasions.

"We shall see," was the calm retort every time that I made the observation.

In exactly one month and two days the two boxes of cigars arrived safely at our house!

I was agreeably surprised, and congratulated my excellent father on his "good-luck," as I smoked one of the first of them.

"My dear boy," he said, "it did not require much knowledge of the world to feel certain I was dealing with a thoroughly honourable man; there is no 'good-luck' at all in the matter."

"Ah! but he might, accidentally, have lost your address," I remarked, backing out as well as I could.

Before he left England, Samuel Ryland Phipson had been instrumental in introducing the asphalte pavement (in 1836), now so popular with us; he also subscribed to the funds required for experimenting with the first Archimedean screw for steam vessels. With his friend, Captain Richard Claridge, he succeeded in establishing hydropathy in England, and in founding two large hydropathic establishments, one at Sudbrook Park near Richmond, and another at Malvern. By means of an expensive lawsuit he destroyed a monopoly in the

art of gilding, which was detrimental to a poor friend of his. He lent Thomas Carlyle all the books he required to write his first work, and advised him to visit Germany. He patronised many artists and musicians, and gave excellent advice on several occasions to his friend Macready, already a great actor.

We had not been long in Brussels before my father called the attention of the English people (in a letter to the *Times*) to the absolute necessity of forming corps of Volunteer Riflemen: it was the first hint ever given on this subject, since become so important, and taken up later by his friend Lord Ranelagh and others. Among his friends at this period were P. H. Muntz, M.P., W. Scholefield (afterwards M.P.), T. Attwood, M.P., and his son, T. A. Attwood, Esq., Dr. Kennedy, Professor of Greek at Cambridge University, Dr. Percy, F.R.S., Thomas Carlyle, Macready, Baron Rosenberg, Sir Henry Bulwer, Dr. Prince Lee (afterwards Bishop of Manchester), Irving Van Wart (nephew of Washington Irving, the author), George and Robert Stephenson, engineers, Charles Henfrey, railway contractor, who lent his house in Italy to Queen Victoria, on the occasion of her first spring visit to that country—Mrs. Henfrey (Miss Gibbs) was one of my mother's most esteemed friends—Dr. Hodgson, F.R.S., Dr. Chevasse, the Lloyds, Chances, Pem-

bertons, and many others, far too numerous to mention here.

Except that the change of climate, at first, caused severe illness to several of us, our life in Brussels was, on the whole, very happy. Many of our English friends came, at various times, on a visit to us, and we enjoyed very good society, both Belgian and English.

After I had gone through my first course of philosophy, my father took me a walking tour along the Rhine, and into Westphalia, where he purchased the coal concessions at Bochum, the site of the celebrated *Hibernia*, and other mines. (The outbreak of the Crimean War obliged him to sell these valuable concessions, which were purchased by some wealthy Irishmen; hence the name "Hibernia," given to the first mine in that rich locality.)

In September 1851, he took me to England to see the first Great International Exhibition. We crossed from Ostend, in company with our friend, Captain Algernon Greville, in a fearful gale. We were all that night, and all the next day, at sea in a perfect hurricane, with thunder and lightning; but the roar of the waves was so great that we could not hear the thunder of the skies. It was a frightful experience.

Leaving my father in London, I returned alone

to Brussels in October. It was as memorable a voyage as the last, but of quite a different character. I crossed with a number of Roman Catholic students from Ireland, on their first trip abroad. They courted my society to obtain information on Continental matters, and invited me to dine with them on the boat. We left the St. Katherine Docks, London, at 10 in the morning, and at about 9 at night I was asked by the captain of the ship whether I knew the Ostend light (I had made his acquaintance previously, when I asked him to be so kind as to take charge of my violin during the voyage).

"Yes," I replied; "it is a fixed light, and you will see the two lights at the pier-head, just below it."

"Oh! they are still under water," he said, meaning that we were too far off to see them. "We have sighted the Dunkirk light," he continued; "it is a revolving light, but I cannot make out whether that is the Ostend light," pointing to a speck of light on the horizon—"it is a fixed light."

"Oh!" I exclaimed, "but there is another fixed light between Dunkirk and Ostend—there is the Nieuport light, which is also a fixed light."

"What!" he cried, "there is another fixed light! Are you quite sure?"

"Yes, certainly," I replied; "there is the

Nieuport light, about half-way between Ostend and Dunkirk."

Without saying another word, he immediately altered the course of the ship. He had been making for Nieuport instead of Ostend, and at the former place there is not enough water to hold a steamer. We should have been wrecked on the sandbanks in the course of another hour!

It transpired later that the captain of our ship having been taken suddenly ill in London, his place was occupied that day by Lieutenant Parker, an officer on one of the boats that ran from London to Boulogne. That is why he was not aware of the Nieuport light.

In consequence of this, we did not enter the port of Ostend till after 12 o'clock at night. My violin, as already stated, had travelled safely in the captain's cabin. I took it, and my Irish friends, eight in all, to the little hotel, *La Maison Blanche*, close to the port. The old landlady was very glad to see such a numerous company, and served us well. After supper, my new friends would not go to bed until I had played them the first solo of De Bériot's Seventh Concerto. It was then 2 o'clock in the morning!

In the Preface to my "Famous Violinists," I have described under what circumstances my father gave me my first violin, and taught me my first

piece of music, when I was six years of age, and in bed, recovering from an attack of scarlet fever. The very first success I ever witnessed in a concert-room was that of the "Infant Sappho" (Louisa Vinning, afterwards Mrs. Hayward). She was a remarkably beautiful and gifted child of eight summers, and all the boys in Birmingham were madly in love with her. The applause which followed her songs—simple, plaintive ditties with beautiful words—was loud and prolonged. The manner in which she echoed passages played *impromptu* on the piano by her father, was really wonderful. Her jet-black hair, large, dark, melancholy eyes, and lovely features, together with a most luscious quality of voice, created a great impression wherever she appeared.

She spent a day with us, one summer, at Ladywood, and danced with some of us on the lawn to the wretched music of a street-organ which happened to be passing along the road at the time, and was brought in by one of our friends. About twenty-five years afterwards, I met her again, accidentally, in London, and renewed our acquaintance.

The next musical event that created a lasting impression upon me was the beautiful singing of Miss Rainforth in *The Tempest*, at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham. Since then, I have often

heard Dr. Arne's lovely song, "Where the Bee sucks," but never so exquisitely sung as on that occasion. About the same period my mother took me to hear Madame Castellan in Bellini's opera of *Norma* and in *La Sonnambula*, and to see the celebrated Carlotta Grisi dance; but neither of these great artists caused me to forget Miss Rainforth, and, ever afterwards, that song in Shakespeare's *Tempest* has haunted me, and haunts me still, after I have heard, with few exceptions, all the finest singers of the nineteenth century.

My next great lesson in music was the singing of Maria Alboni in Rossini's *Barbiere di Siviglia* at Brussels, and in Verdi's *Trovatore*.[1]

[1] See "Voice and Violin," p. 135 *et seq.*, where I have given an account of her wonderful talent.

III

AT THE CHÂTEAU DE MORTEBECK

On returning from one of his many visits to England, my father heard that the little Château de Mortebeck, near Brussels, was for sale. We all went to see it, and liked it so much that he agreed to take it for a year or two on trial, with the option of purchase. It was in a lovely rustic spot, surrounded by great trees, with a little coppice-wood behind, where the nightingales sang every spring.

The house, built in the old French style, was only one storey high, and had a wide, handsomely carved oak staircase, one of the finest I ever saw. There was a pretty lawn, with a small fountain in the centre, and lovely trumpet honeysuckles among the shrubs. This lawn, with its little flower-beds and shrubs, was surrounded on three sides by a large pond full of gold-fish and frogs. The château was situated just off the main road to Dilbeck, about three miles from Brussels; and at night, in summer, travellers along this *chaussée* could hear our frogs croaking

for about a mile, when the wind was in the right direction.

During summer, also, a small black mosquito and swarms of gnats were very troublesome. We had mosquito-curtains to every bedroom window —without which there would be no hope of sleep at night. The unexpected death, in London, of a gentleman who had recently paid us a visit, was attributed partly to the swellings and discomfiture caused by the bites of these dreadful mosquitoes!

Here, I had to rise every morning before six, in order to walk to town and be at the University by eight o'clock, when the lectures began. Here, also, we had several delightful musical afternoons; but my dear mother soon suffered from severe illness. She was attended, at first, by the King's doctor (Dr. Chantrin), but he could not cure her. Finally, our old and esteemed friend, Dr. de Saive, the founder of the Veterinary School at Liège, and author of a valuable work on "Domestic Animals," told us that the place was too damp for my mother's constitution, and that she would never be well unless we returned to town. So we moved to a new house on the sands of Schaerbeck, a suburb of Brussels, where she recovered after a few months of careful attention.

It was during our residence at this little Château de Mortebeck that my father took me a rapid tour

through several Belgian towns: Antwerp, Bruges, Malines, Mons, Tournay, Maffles, and Ath. Near the latter we visited the château of the Prince de Chimay, where the celebrated singer, Madame Malibran-Garcia, first met De Bériot, the violinist, whom she afterwards married. I was at school for about a year with her only child, Charles Vincent de Bériot, who afterwards became a distinguished pianist.

At Maffles we visited the splendid quarries of "mountain limestone," then managed by our friend, M. Rivière, whose wife was a niece of an old Waterloo veteran, a Prussian sergeant-major named De Kayser, who lived in the little village of Mortebeck, a short distance from our château. The old soldier was at that time in great tribulation: he wore the Waterloo ribbon upon his coat, but this "decoration," of which he was extremely proud, was old and soiled, and he could not procure any such ribbon in Brussels.

When my good mother heard of this, she determined to give the old man a surprise. She wrote to one of her friends in England to procure some ribbon of that kind, and, within a fortnight, she had the pleasure of presenting to the veteran sergeant-major about *three yards* of Waterloo ribbon—enough to last him all his life, even if he should live to the age of Methuselah. He was so

delighted that he found out the date of my dear mother's birthday (2nd June), and early on the morning of that day she was awakened by an *aubade* of brass instruments playing upon our lawn beneath her bedroom windows! It was old De Kayser, who had got together a few military friends of his, musicians in a Belgian regiment, and made them perform in honour of my mother's birthday. This occurrence also emptied all our wine decanters, for, after the music, they must, of course, drink my mother's health.

Another curious incident occurred that summer. One morning about five o'clock, as the early sunlight streamed through the mosquito-curtains into the bedrooms, my parents were awakened by a singular buzzing sound, and found a swarm of bees clinging to a corner of the window, *inside* the room. The window had been left open all night, as usual, and there was a slight aperture at the top, between the wooden frame of the mosquito-blind and the sash. Through this narrow opening the queen-bee had crawled, and all the others, hundreds in number, had followed.

The whole household was aroused, and came into the bedroom to witness this curious sight. At last, a neighbour, a farmer named Paats van der Groten, came with some of his servants to our assistance, and, after a while, succeeded in getting

the whole swarm of bees into an empty hive, and carried them away.

One July afternoon, after an exceptionally heavy thunderstorm, and rain which lasted upwards of four hours, our pond overflowed into an adjacent field, the water carrying with it hundreds of small gold-fish. As soon as the rain ceased, these fish were descried flapping about in the inundated field as the water sank into the soil; and the peasants from the neighbouring village—men, women, and children in blue blouses and wooden shoes, or *sabots*—rushed down the lane, carrying basins, tureens, and buckets to collect the fish, which they sold, next day, in the market-place at Dilbeck, a small town about a couple of miles farther on.

IV

LIFE IN BRUSSELS

THE lectures at the University occupied all the morning, from eight o'clock to one o'clock on four days a week, and from ten to one on other days; sometimes, again, from three to four in the afternoon. But three times a week I had violin lessons at home, of two hours each, for several years.

My master was Henri Standish, first *répétiteur* of De Bériot's class at the Royal Conservatoire. De Bériot gave no private lessons, and to attend his classes was impossible for me. We began by Spohr's School, with its numerous excellent exercises; then Rode's Seventh Concerto, and exercises by Nicholas Wéry, violin solo to H.M. the King of the Netherlands (before 1830), and Professor of the Conservatoire of Brussels (after 1830), under Leopold I. Finally, we studied De Bériot's *Airs Variés* and *Concertos*, Ernst's *Carnaval*, and Artot's *Souvenirs de Bellini*, &c.

As Standish had no objection to a family dinner or a piece of English plumcake at tea, he some-

times stayed the evening with us. On these occasions several of my fellow-students at the University would join us, and, with my mother at the piano, we had many delightful musical evenings, especially in the autumn.

Often, also, we went to the opera, both the French and the Italian—the latter was excellent at that time. The violins at both were among the very best in Europe.

In two or three years' time I began to play some solo pieces, with piano accompaniment, by De Bériot; his Italian melodies, his fantasia on Auber's *La Muette de Portici*, his Schubert arrangements, and, afterwards, his splendid duets on *Guillaume Tell* and *La Gazza Ladra* of Rossini.

A singular musical incident occurred about this time. A neighbour and friend of ours, M. Turlot, who was engaged for many years at the *Ministère des Finances*, and was then about to retire with a pension, gave a *soirée musicale*. This was a most unusual thing for him; but he was anxious to introduce his friend M. Lemmens, the celebrated organist, and a new instrument he had adopted, called a "Harmonium." My master and I were asked to assist. Turlot was an old widower, with one son, and one daughter who was a good pianist.

Some time previously, my mother had insisted

that Standish should teach me two of De Bériot's Concertos, the Seventh and the Sixth, with which request he most kindly complied, and from that time forward I made very rapid progress, and could play tolerably the Sixth Concerto and a Fantasia Duet for violin and piano on *La Muette de Portici*.

At M. Turlot's *soirée* Standish and I were expected to play each one piece ; and, the day before, my master came and asked me what piece I would play? I replied that I would take the easiest, *La Muette*. Thereupon he said that, as he had some lessons to give rather late in the afternoon, he would not be able to be at M. Turlot's house before nine o'clock, and perhaps not at all ; he requested me, nevertheless, to take the Sixth Concerto for him, in case he should not come, which I promised to do.

It was more than half-past nine when I was asked to play my piece, and Standish had not arrived. Neither my mother nor myself thought he would come ; and she persuaded me to play the Sixth Concerto, as being the finest piece of the two I had brought. I did so, and, it being a very effective composition, it gained a good deal of applause. In the midst of all this noise, in walked Standish !

I shall never forget the expression of surprise on my dear mother's face as he entered the room,

and I had to blurt out some apologies for having played the piece he had chosen for himself. He took it all in a most good-natured way, and a little later in the evening he played my piece, *La Muette*, which went very well.

The great M. Lemmens complimented me that evening. He was a rather tall, fair-haired man, with very quiet, retiring manners. His playing upon the new instrument, the harmonium, astonished every one present; but he played rather too often, and I fancy this gave the violin music an advantage which otherwise it might not have had. He afterwards married Mlle. Sherrington, who was then studying at the *Conservatoire de Musique* at Brussels.

From that time forward I was invited to a number of musical evenings at the houses of M. Stass, a well-known lawyer, M. Corr van der Maeren, President of the Chamber of Commerce, M. Eeckhout, a celebrated portrait-painter, and many others.

At this period, Alexandre Dumas, the author of "The Three Musketeers," was residing in Brussels. I met him one evening at the house of M. Kindt, the Professor of Mathematics at the University, who had a very pretty daughter. Dumas, like every one else, admired this young lady, and when

she told him that she was anxiously waiting for the second volume of his "Ange Pitou," he most kindly sent her the MS., that she might read it before it was printed.

He was then a stout, powerfully built man, with a round face, dark, sparkling eyes, thick lips, and a thick crop of short, dark curly hair. Like his celebrated namesake, Alexandre von Humboldt, he was extremely conceited, and very fond of jokes. On one occasion he purchased a candle at a tallow-chandler's shop in the Rue de Namur, at Brussels, putting down about twopence to pay for it, and inquired if it were a *bougie*—a stearine candle—then somewhat of a novelty. The man replied that it was.

"Then, if you cut it in two, it will form two candles, will it not?" asked the author of "Monte Cristo."

"Oui, Monsieur."

"Then, please, be so good," said Dumas. And, after the shopkeeper had cut it into two pieces, he begged him to repeat the operation on each half. When the four short pieces of candle were thus obtained, he induced the man to point each of them with his knife, and to light them, in order to see that they would burn properly. As soon as this was done, Dumas raised his hat politely, saluted the shopkeeper, and walked out, leaving the four little candles burning on the counter.

Before entering the place he had told a friend who accompanied him that he was going to cause the shopkeeper "to illuminate in honour of his birthday."

After I had become somewhat of a mathematician—though not enough to "go to Heaven in a right perpendicular line," as a certain geometrician once said of himself—I made the calculation that I must have played Rode's Seventh Concerto (with accompaniment of a second violin) at least 624 times, before I was eighteen years of age.

If I were now to calculate how many times I have performed pieces of other celebrated composers in public, and in the drawing-room, during my long career, the sum would amount to a good many thousands. Yet, with all this music, Providence has permitted me to do a very considerable amount of scientific and literary work, to which I need not here refer.

It is sad to feel, at present, that day by day my strength is failing as regards my violin. It is no longer possible to play exercises for more than a short half-hour; and for the first time in my life I have experienced the effects of advancing years upon a naturally strong constitution.

But I must not complain. In this world joy and sorrow are bound to go hand in hand: I have

had my full share of both. My violin can say much, when I am able to make it talk—much that I could not confide to these pages ; for Music, like Nature, has a language of its own, which mere words have no power of expressing.

V

SOME INCIDENTS AT MY CONCERTS

On referring to my voluminous collection of concert programmes from 1865 (the year of my marriage), to the end of 1898, when I retired from the public platform, I find that my wife and I have realised about £4000 for charities, poor artists, church funds, cricket-clubs, orphanages, &c., and this does not include various sums she has obtained by balls given for the same purposes.

My first public appearances were at the Kursaal, at Ostend, with my mother, and at a cathedral service there, in presence of the Belgian Royal Family; after which I played at Brussels and Paris at various private concerts, or *soirées musicales*, but at no public concerts.

The first public concert at which my violin was heard in England was in 1861 or '62. It was a small concert given at Putney by Miss Sewell, a niece of Horn, the composer, at which his *cantata*, "The Christmas Bells," was performed by my sister Miss Phipson (Mrs. Henry Rutter), Miss Cooper (Mrs. Longden), my brother, W. W.

Phipson, M.Inst.C.E., and Mr. H. Rutter, LL.B. On this occasion I played a solo, with my mother's accompaniment, and the *Gazza Ladra* duet, for violin and piano, by De Bériot and Osborn, with Van den Abeelen, a well-known Flemish pianist and composer, who was for some years professor at Leamington. He afterwards played a *Fantasia for left hand alone* on "The Blue Bells of Scotland." It was a wonderful performance, and many of the audience stood up to see that he was really playing with one hand only.

Shortly after this, I played De Bériot's Concerto in D at Collard's Rooms, in London, at a concert given by some foreign artists, and with Francesco Berger as accompanist. Then in 1865, whilst on my wedding tour, my wife and I played at a concert at Halesowen, for the band fund of the 6th Worcestershire Rifle Corps, and, as years rolled on, at Barnes, Richmond, Putney, Kensington, Wandsworth, Fulham, Chelsea, Brixton, Paddington, Hammersmith, Southsea, Bournemouth, Southampton, Beethoven Rooms (London), Epsom Town Hall, Twickenham, Carlisle, Glasgow, Birmingham, Purbrook (Hampshire), Marylebone, &c.—thirty-three years of constant success.

The late Madame Lehfeldt, an English lady, an excellent teacher of the piano in Putney, and

latterly professor at the Guildhall School of Music, whose youngest son, Dr. Lehfeldt, is now a distinguished Professor of Physical Science, gave many concerts at our Assembly Rooms, at which her playing of Beethoven's *Sonatas*, Salaman's *Saltarello*, and Chopin's *Nocturnes*, were particularly admired. At almost all these concerts my wife sang, and I played. I only disappointed her once, when confined to bed with illness, and my place was taken, at very short notice, by that charming violinist, Miss Rose Lynton, a pupil of the late Professor Schneider. I also played several times for Mr. Harry Dancey, Mus. Bac., F.C.O., and many other artists, in London and elsewhere.

Before the "New" Town Hall at Wandsworth was built, Madame Lehfeldt gave one or two concerts at the Spread Eagle Hotel there, with Miss Ferrari, music-mistress to some members of our Royal Family. On one of these occasions Miss Ferrari sang Mozart's "*Voi che sapete che cosa è amor*" more beautifully than I ever heard it sung before or since. I noticed, also, that there was a vile hole in the platform, quite large enough for a lady's foot to pass through, and it was fortunate that no serious accident occurred that evening.

My wife gave the first concert, and the first dance, ever given at the Assembly Rooms, Putney, and the New Town Hall, Wandsworth.

Colonel and Mrs. Chambers, of Putney House,[1] friends of Garibaldi, once gave, with my mother's assistance, a *soirée musicale* in aid of General Garibaldi's Italian School Fund. I played on that occasion a concerto of De Bériot's to the accompaniment of Tito Mattei.

Mrs. Chambers had caused a distinguished artist, an Italian, to play a piano solo and to aid generally in this concert, *free of charge*, as it was for an Italian charity. A ludicrous scene occurred when we left: as my wife and I crossed the large ill-lit hall on our way out, we saw two individuals gesticulating and loudly expostulating in a dark corner. They were this artist and one of his friends. The former was showing the latter how some one had torn a great hole in his new umbrella, as he took it from the stand. "*. . . Corpo di Bacco! è dopo avere sonato per niente!*"—". . . This is what I get for playing for nothing!!" We did not stay to hear any more.

I performed that same concerto at an afternoon concert at Collard's Rooms, Grosvenor Street, W., to the excellent accompaniment of Francesco Berger, with whom I had rehearsed it the day before. This concert was given by the two sisters

[1] Another old mansion which has now disappeared to make room for modern buildings of a smaller type.

Sidonia and Virginia Van der Beck, of the Italian Operas, Paris, Madrid, and Milan, then on a visit to London. Franceschi, the charming tenor, and Rossi, the well-known pianist, assisted; and Madame Déméric Lablache sang. In playing my accompaniment, Mr. Francesco Berger nearly got one of the legs of the music-stool over the edge of the little platform, and it is a marvel that he was not precipitated into the laps of the ladies sitting along the side of the room. This catastrophe was only prevented by one of these ladies calling his attention to the very dangerous position he was in.

On this occasion, the audience was chiefly composed of ladies; very few men were present. And, to charm these said ladies, Signor Rossi thumped away upon one of Collard's best instruments as if he had been a blacksmith using a sledge-hammer. I glanced at one of the Messrs. Collard, who happened to be standing near the door of the artists' room; I saw a dismal expression come over his placid features, and I distinctly heard him remark to a friend: "This fellow is taking twenty years' work out of that instrument!"

In the early sixties my wife sang and I played, for the second time, at a charity concert at Halesowen, and at the conclusion of one of her songs she was presented by some young ladies with a magnificent bouquet of moss-roses. At this con-

cert I heard, for the first time, a difficult tenor song by Handel. It was admirably sung by a young man named Walters, an amateur.

The introduction of a good comic reciter, or a buffo artist, generally forms a very pleasing feature in a concert. An amateur, named Hazard, was the most amusing buffo artist I ever met ; I liked his performance better than Corney Grain's whimsicalities. Hazard had not much voice, but his cock-crow was the most perfect ever heard outside a farmyard. In a song of his, entitled "One more polka," he created roars of laughter by dancing a few comic polka steps whilst the piano played the *ritournelle* between the verses of the song. Another very clever amateur reciter was Mr. Macphail, who, though an Englishman, had the most complete command of the Scotch brogue, and told the most funny stories imaginable. The late Thomas Moore, F.R.C.S., whose wife and one of his daughters were admirable singers, the latter having sung on more than one occasion, by command, before her late Majesty Queen Victoria, was another excellent amateur buffo.

Corney Grain began as an amateur at Putney and elsewhere ; he was a barrister, but adopted the comic branch of the musical profession. His piano accompaniments to his own compositions were very clever. No one would ever forget hearing his song called "The Roast Beef of Old

England," in which you could imagine a father and his children all singing together.

The brothers Montague and Herbert Watts were also very clever amateurs ; it was a great treat to hear and see them perform, in character, "The Blind Beggars" of Offenbach, as they did at several of our concert halls. Occasionally they sang sentimental songs also.

Two of the best singers who assisted at Madame Lehfeldt's concerts were Miss Ferrari, already mentioned, and Mr. John Williams, of Barnes, formerly tenor of the Foundling Chapel, and an exquisite singer of English ballads. Mr. Harry Dancey, as pianist and conductor, was always very kind in aiding his fellow-artists on such occasions, and so was Mr. Thomas Eeles, pupil and friend of the late Sir Sterndale Bennett. I have passed many pleasant evenings in their society, and remember the great success which greeted young Dancey as a pianist at his first concert, at the Assembly Rooms, Putney, when he was about eighteen years of age. It was a long time ago ; but a triumph, such as this was, is never forgotten.

Two medical men in this district have distinguished themselves as clever musicians—Dr. Stanley Murray, of Putney, and Dr. Marshall, of Barnes, for both of whom I have played on several occasions.

A former resident in Putney, Mr. John Franklin Adams, once devoted much time to organising "Popular Concerts" in this locality. He thus helped to bring out Corney Grain, Fanny Holland, Arthur Cecil (Blunt), Mr. Drake, a flautist, and many others, then quite unknown to fame. I played for him very often; until, one year, I fancied that I would like a rest. It was when his "Monday Popular Concerts" were about to be merged into the *Putney Philharmonic Society*, to which I acted as violin solo for about seventeen years. To a pressing letter from Adams, asking me to play as usual, I sent the following reply—I wrote it in Italian, so that I might be gone before he could get it translated:—

"CARO ED ILLUSTRISSIMO SIGNORE,—Vi ringrazio infinitamente della vostra lettera; è mi duole fino all' anima chè non m'è possible quest'iverno de venire ai Concerti della *Società Filarmonica di Putney*. Son obbligato per qualchi giorni andare alla campagna del mio fratello, dove sarò probabilmente trè o quattro settimane. Così il vostro gentile invito non mi sia dato d'accetarlo questa volta, e vi prego, caro ed illustrissimo Signore, di non aspettarmi.

"Credete sempre alli sensi della mia stima.

"il vostro, T. L. PHIPSON."

That letter gave me a respite of about three months, which was quite requisite to enable me to work up some new pieces.

One of the largest audiences I ever had numbered over 1200; it was the evening concert on the 3rd September 1892, at Southsea, of which I have given an account in my "Voice and Violin."

I had another concert at the Town Hall, Kensington, when there were almost as many present, and at which the programme was so intolerably long that I was obliged to request permission to play my second piece *during the interval*, in order to catch a train to return home.

Once I was placed in a rather awkward position at a large concert in the Chelsea Town Hall, where the celebrated clarionet player, Lazarus, also performed, and I was the victim of punctuality. The audience numbered over 500, and by eight o'clock no musicians had arrived but my wife and myself. At a quarter past eight the audience became very impatient and noisy, and the givers of the concert begged me to go on, though my solo was only fourth or fifth on the programme. The concert was to have opened with a trio; as it was, it opened with a violin solo, without any speech having been made to explain the reason of this singular proceeding. The others came in about three-quarters of an hour late.

At this concert my wife sang Robaudi's *Non ti scordar di me*, with immense success, and gave, as her *encore*, Braga's *Serenata*, also with *violino obbligato*.

At a concert given in the Greyhound Hotel, Richmond, by an able pianist, Mr. Frank Figg, I only played in the second part, and so did not arrive till about nine o'clock, during the interval. The room was then so crammed that it was with the greatest difficulty my wife and I could enter it and find our way to the platform.

On another occasion, at the Assembly Rooms, Putney, the late Mr. Holland, of Gayton Lodge, Wimbledon Common, an admirable Shakespearean reader, and myself, were the only entertainers. He read a scene from one of Shakespeare's plays, and then I played a solo on the violin to my wife's accompaniment. The room was also crammed to such an extent that some thirty or forty persons could get no seats, and stood at the entrance doors.

I have also played at recitals given by the late celebrated Mr. Samuel Brandram, M.A., which were usually very crowded.

The eminent professor of the piano, Carlo Albanesi, much patronised by royalty and the nobility of England, came to London, from Naples, with a letter of introduction to my sister, Mrs. Henry Rutter. We gave him his first concert in

England at the Putney Assembly Rooms on the 8th December 1882, at very short notice, and thus enabled him to earn the first £10-note he ever made in this country.

His playing was most effective ; by its delicacy and expressive *cantabile* it was, and probably is still, unsurpassable. Besides this, he was a young man of most prepossessing appearance and manners. He told me that, in Naples, his father had so many pupils that he could only attend to him (Carlo) in the morning, whilst he was being shaved. At this concert he had a little mute piano in the artists' room, on which he exercised his fingers. He also used it when travelling in a railway carriage. At present he is professor at the London Royal Academy. After my first solo (on an air of Pacini, "*Il soave e bel contento*") he was kind enough to say, in French, "*Comme vous chantez bien !*" This concert brought round him a good number of admirers.

I should like to give a complete list of the principal artists who have appeared with me in public concerts, but I have only space for the following few names. Those of some very distinguished amateurs are given in brackets :—

Miss Hilda Coward, soprano ; Miss Orridge, soprano ; Madame Agnes Larkcom, mezzo-soprano, Professor at the Guildhall School of Music ; Mr.

W. H. Cummins, tenor, Principal of the Guildhall School of Music; Miss Fanny Holland, mezzo-soprano; Mr. Henry Pope, basso; Mr. Corney Grain, buffo; Mr. Arthur Cecil, baritone; Mr. J. G. Callcott, pianist and conductor; Madame Lehfeldt, pianist, Professor at the Guildhall School of Music; Mr. Harry Dancey, Mus. Bac., pianist and organist; Mr. Thomas Eeles, pianist; Mr. John Radcliff, flute solo, Royal Italian Opera; Mr. Lazarus, clarionet solo; Miss Patti Winter, soprano; Mr. Van Lennep, tenor and composer; Mr. John Williams, tenor, formerly of the Foundling Chapel; Mr. W. G. Forington, basso, Westminster Abbey; Mr. Drake, flautist; [Miss Alice Edwards, pianist]; Miss Kate Griffiths, pianist, Professor at the London Academy of Music; Mr. Ley, basso; Mrs. Ley, pianist; [Miss B. Longden, pianist]; Madame Worrell, mezzo-soprano; Madame Thayer, soprano; Señor Mahnes, tenor; Signor Tito Mattei, pianist and composer; [Miss Winifred Smith, mezzo-soprano]; Mr. Claude Trevor, accompanist; Mr. Frank Figg, pianist; Mr. Marcellus Higgs, conductor and composer; Mr. R. H. Gould, conductor; [Lady Folkestone (Countess Winchelsea), soprano]; M. Van den Abeelen, pianist; [Mrs. Lubbock, soprano]; Señora Isidora Martinez, mezzo-soprano, Italian Opera, London, Berlin, and New York; Mlles. Sidonia and Virginia Van der Beck, Italian Opera, Paris, Madrid, and Milan;

Madame Déméric Lablache, contralto; Signor Franceschi, tenor: Signor Rossi, pianist; Miss Alice Rosselli, soprano; Mr. C. S. Jekyll, organist H.M. Chapels Royal; Miss Cheyne, pianist; Mr. Garratt, tenor; [Mr. R. Hazard, buffo]; Miss Emily Christie, pianist; Mr. Harper Kearton, tenor; Miss Louisa Pyne, pianist; Miss Carrie Lewis, L.R.A.M. (Mrs. Llewellyn), pianist; Mr. Fewlass Llewellyn, reciter; Mr. W. T. Barker, R.A.M., harpist; Mr. Flavell, pianist; Mr. Hirwin Jones, baritone; Mr. Samuel Brandram, M.A., reciter; Miss Meredith Elliott, contralto; Signor Carlo Albanesi, pianist; [Mr. Walter Allen, tenor]; Miss Harker, mezzo-soprano; Miss Nina Quatremaine, pianist; [Mrs. Bramwell Davis, contralto]; Miss Lilian Greville, soprano; Miss Fusselle, mezzo-soprano; [Mrs. H. Rutter, soprano]; Miss Barnard, mezzo-soprano; Miss Hooper, soprano; [Miss Bowra, reciter]; Miss Etherington, soprano; Miss Aylward, soprano; [Mr. Ch. Haigh, baritone]; Mr. Law, baritone; Mrs. Percivall, pianist; ["Mr. Kensington," basso, real name—Dundas Gardiner, barrister]; Mr. Liebich, pianist; Rev. W. Mann, baritone, Winchester Cathedral; [Mr. Gowlland, F.R.C.S., reciter]; Miss Maude Cooke, soprano; Miss Minnie Cullis, mezzo-soprano; [Mr. "Hubert de Winter," tenor, real name—Baron May, a young, handsome, and charming singer, holding a Dutch title, who died at a very early age, deeply

regretted]; Mrs. W. Tidmarsh, pianist; Mr. John Probert, tenor; [Mr. Ch. Smith, tenor]; Miss Sinclair, contralto; Miss Bertha Colnaghi, mezzo-soprano; [Messrs. M. and H. Watts, singers and reciters]; [Miss M'Laren, reciter]; [Mr. Robert Broadley, cornet solo]; Mr. Sydney Adams, basso; Miss Jessie Hudson, violinist; [Miss A. F. Vernet, L.R.A.M., violoncellist]; [Miss D. Vernet, violinist]; [Miss Blanche Lee (Lady Swinfen Eady), violinist]; [Mrs. George Adams, soprano]; Mr. Ernest Bawtree, buffo; Mrs. Strickland, soprano; Miss Watson, mezzo-soprano; [Mr. Frank Rutter, B.A., banjoist]; Mr. W. C. Pepper, banjoist; [Mrs. Mackintosh (Miss Williams), contralto; Mrs. Williams (Miss Daisy Williams), mezzo-soprano]; Miss Ortner, pianist; Miss Theodora Cruttenden, mandolinist; [Miss Amy Ray, violinist]; [Mr. P. Macphail, buffo]; Miss Rosalie Watkins, mezzo-soprano; Mr. Selwyn Summers, pianist and conductor: Mr. Carsten Damian, baritone; Mr. H. Roberts, baritone; Mr. Charles Chilley, tenor; Miss F. Hipwell, mezzo-soprano; Mr. Sidney Perks, organist; Miss Marian Davis, pianist; [Mr. John Adams, cornet solo]; Mr. Jabez West (blind), baritone; Mrs. West, soprano; Mr. Frank Adams, tenor; Mrs. Scott Gatty, mezzo-soprano; Mr. John Court, L.R.A.M., pianist; Mr. H. M. Weston, Mus. Bac., organist; Miss Whitman, soprano; Mr. Martin

Frost, baritone, of St. Andrew's, Well Street ; Mr. Harry Grace, buffo ; Miss Hart, mezzo-soprano ; [Mrs. Kennard Bliss, pianist] ; Mr. Tom Powley, basso ; Mrs. Charles Marshall, pianist ; Miss Nellie Mathews, soprano ; Mr. W. Palmer, banjoist ; Miss Leuchars, mezzo-soprano ; Mr. F. Burgiss, pianist ; Madame Nora, mezzo-soprano ; Mr. R. Grice, baritone, of St. Paul's Cathedral ; Miss Berrie Stephens, mezzo-soprano ; Dr. Rooke, baritone ; [Miss Edith Pink, pianist] ; Miss Florence Cooper, soprano ; Mr. A. C. Hunter, tenor ; Mr. Randulph Coward, baritone ; [Mr. H. C. Archer, violinist] ; Mrs. Burkinyoung, soprano ; Mr. Frank May, R.A.M., baritone ; Mr. Jules Bellingham, buffo ; [Rev. C. Scholefield, pianist] ; Miss Edith Blair, soprano ; Miss K. Barnett, soprano ; Miss Jean Richards, pianist ; Madame Buxton, soprano ; Mr. C. B. Barr, basso ; Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Chapman, baritone and soprano ; [Miss Hickman, violinist] ; Mr. H. Prenton, baritone, of Holy Trinity Church ; Miss K. Vaughan, pianist ; Mr. W. G. Alcock, organist ; Miss Constance C. Todd, mezzo-soprano ; Miss Alice Scoones, L.A.M., soprano ; [Miss Sarah Braham, contralto][1] ; Miss R. Dunne, R.A.M.,

[1] Miss Sarah Braham and Mrs. Bramwell Davis (sister of Norman Salmon) were two of the finest contralto voices ever heard in England ; both were amateurs, and had frequent offers of lucrative engagements. Pauline Lucca had a voice of a similar quality, which gained her celebrity.

pianist; [Mrs. Tom Moore, soprano], &c. I have some hundreds of other names on my programmes; but the above list must suffice to show that my wife and I have been in good company, and have had plenty of talent wherewith to compete for the favour of the public. It comprises only the principal artists with whom we have appeared on frequent occasions.

At a concert in Fulham, organised by the Rev. Mr. Early, a good many years ago, whilst a charming young lady was singing a very expressive ballad in the first part, one of the audience, who was standing near the end of the room, fell down, with a loud shriek, in a fit, and was eventually carried out, but only with great difficulty. It was a very trying moment for the young lady who was singing, and, of course, spoilt the effect of her first song.

This was a charity concert, and the back seats were crowded with noisy schoolboys, who joined so uproariously in the applause after my violin solo (*Scène de Ballet*, De Bériot) that Mr. Early, perfectly terrified, sprang on to the platform and raised both his hands to stop the noise, which was distinctly heard in the street. The policeman at the door came in, thinking there was a free fight going on inside.

I went one morning to the New Town Hall, Wandsworth, where I had to play that evening, and was horrified to find upon the platform of the concert-room an immense trap-door wide open. It occupied the place where the grand piano usually stands, and, looking through the opening, I saw a chasm some forty feet deep, having for its foundation the stone pavement of a courtyard.

In an instant I realised what a frightful catastrophe would occur if this trap-door were by any oversight or accident not properly secured. Fancy a grand piano, an accompanist, and two or three singers suddenly precipitated forty feet on to the hard pavement below! It is too horrible to contemplate. Whether it still exists I know not; but, ever after I made that discovery, I warned many musicians of it, and I always took care that the piano and my wife should be well in front of this death-trap whenever we happened to play there. And I recollect one *choral concert*, conducted by Dr. Stanley Murray, when there was a very large number of ladies and gentlemen on this platform at the same time.

Besides our usual concerts for orphanages, &c., my wife organised latterly several very successful *café-concerts*, at which tea, coffee, and cakes were distributed, and a small bell was rung before each

performance to ensure silence. At one of these, Señora Isidora Martinez electrified the audience by singing the laughing song from the opera of *Manon*, and the celebrated *valse* song of Venzano.

She also sang a very pretty ballad, called "Come in and shut the door." The words of the title of this song are almost spoken; and a young man, who had arrived late, and did not know it, thought they were addressed to him as he entered. The public, noticing his astonishment at being addressed from the platform, burst into loud laughter.

A short time ago, my sister said to me: "I saw Mr. B—— (who was at your musical evening) in Regent Street, and he told me something that may interest you. A few minutes previously he had met Mrs. E—— (Miss B——), who now lives in Wales, and who had been to a concert; she said to him, '*I have just heard Kubelik, the new violinist, and I have often heard Joachim; but many years ago there used to be an amateur, a Dr. Phipson, who lived at Putney, who was better than either of them!*' He told her that Dr. Phipson still lived at Putney, and that he had heard you play a week ago."

At various times I have received, directly and indirectly, many similarly indulgent appreciations of my music, but I need not refer to them. If I mention this case, it is simply to show that no

amateur who has thoroughly mastered his instrument need ever despair of holding his own with the greatest of artists, provided he does as Paganini invariably did, *i.e.* choose for his public performances only such music as suits his own style and his own powers.

I was never more surprised in my life than when I saw the first press notices on my playing. Though I often played in concerts, given for themselves by artists, as well as in charity concerts, I never expected that the critics would take any notice of a "mere amateur." But when these kind and indulgent gentlemen began to speak of "the lion of the evening," "the cream of the concert," "the *facile princeps*," &c. &c., I began to be interested—and, perhaps, conceited—and I collected, henceforth, all my programmes and all the notices in the papers. But I never realised, until it was too late, that if one half of what was said were true, I had only to make a promenade through Europe with my violin to ensure for myself a very large fortune.

Happily, I have not required it; fortunately, I am naturally imbued with "*il soave e bel contento*."

VI

THE TARANTELLA

Of all brilliant and effective music for the violin, the tarantella is, perhaps, the most popular. There are few composers who have not written at least one tarantella for their own particular instrument. Bottesini wrote one for the double-bass ; Rossini wrote a very effective one for the voice (*La Danza*), as several Neapolitan composers had done before his time.

One of the very best pieces of this kind is Sydney Smith's well-known tarantella for piano, which is more effective and more poetical than that of Heller for the same instrument. A few have been written for the piccolo, or little flute, which are brilliant enough with orchestral accompaniment.

Tarantella music for the violin, with piano accompaniment, is rather abundant ; but all the pieces do not come up to the same level of perfection. Few among them have the real Italian character. Some are a mere collection of triplets of a very paltry kind, with a poor melody, often

consisting of simple scales in triplets, without any attempt at all at melody, interspersed with a few bars of crotchets, simple or dotted, as some excuse for a song. The *tempo* is also variously indicated. Sometimes a composer writes simply the word "presto," or "quasi-presto," or "allegro giocoso," or, again, "allegro vivace"; others indicate the beat by the words, "*tempo di tarantella.*"

My talented friend, Señora Isidora Martinez, late of the Royal Italian Opera, who is almost as great a pianist as she is a singer and a linguist, once told me that you cannot play a tarantella too fast; but Guido Papini, who is a great authority, is not precisely of that opinion, and I lean rather towards his view.

In violin playing, especially, there is a great difference between "presto" and "quasi-presto," and, to produce the best effect, the "quasi-presto" should be adopted in the tarantella; otherwise, there is a loss of tone and power, and a hurried expression which is not at all agreeable, except as applied to the last few bars of the piece. I am referring to the tarantella as a concert piece, not as a dance.

The *cantabile*, which is introduced once, and often twice, between the other two portions of the piece, should be of a luscious melodic quality, and taken slightly slower, to be made as effective as possible. I need scarcely add that for the dance

itself the *tempo* and rhythm must be as rigorously kept as if the violin were a piece of machinery. In no other class of music is there so great a tendency to hurry the beat ; and though it may, for the sake of effect, be slightly accelerated towards the end, it should be extremely regular throughout.

The ancient legend upon which this dance and its music are claimed to have originated may be characterised by the old saying, "*Se non è vero è ben trovato.*" It appears to have originated in Taranto and its neighbourhood, and derived its name from that place.

There is in all the southern parts of Italy, more especially in Apulia and near Taranto, a rather large reddish-brown spider, called a *tarantula.* It is, like many other spiders, rather unpleasant to look upon as it crawls quickly over the hot sand in summer and autumn ; but, as far as human beings are concerned, it appears to be quite harmless. This was first proved by a professor of natural history at Naples, about the year 1693, who, wishing to test the strength of its venom, bared his arm and placed it in a linen bag containing a number of these tarantula spiders. His arm was not bitten at all, only slightly tickled by the said spiders running over it.

The legend which is current among the lower classes in Italy—a land abounding in all kinds of

superstitions—is, that a person bitten by the spider in question can only be saved by music and dancing—by dancing until profuse perspiration breaks out, and the dancer falls exhausted by the effort. Then sleep ensues, from which he, or she, arises refreshed and cured. Hence the spirited nature of the music to which this dance is performed. This legend has been kept alive by all the southern Italians, especially by the women who dance in the street for money, as a means of inducing the public to throw coin into their aprons.

The errors regarding the tarantula spider which were propagated by the scientific men of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although they survive to some extent to the present day, were strenuously denied by many of their contemporaries. They were promulgated more especially by Father Kircher and Sir Thomas Brown, two celebrities of their day, and also by Dr. Baglivi, a young physician, who died prematurely in 1706, a native of Apulia, the province of Italy where this spider is most abundant. Sir Thomas Brown goes so far as to say that the spider itself dances to the music!

Even now, there are thousands of people who believe, or profess to believe, that the bite of the tarantula spider produces sickness which music alone can cure. For people affected with this

kind of hysteria, an old writer informs us that "a musician is brought who tries a variety of airs, until at last he hits upon one that induces the patient to dance, the violence of which exercise produces a proportionate agitation of the vital spirits, attendant with a corresponding degree of perspiration, the certain consequence of which is a cure."

The Hon. Robert Boyle, founder of the *Royal Society* of London, although he, at first, doubted the truth of the legend about the tarantula spider and its bite, ends by saying that he had convinced himself that, in the main, the facts were true! But another old writer cleverly traces back the tarantella dance to the times of the Bacchanalian routs of ancient Greece.

The *tarantella* is not confined to Naples and Southern Italy, where (at least, as we now know it) it appears to have originated; a very similar kind of dance, called *forlana*, may be seen at Venice, where it is indulged in by the gondoliers. The *saltarello* and *lavandarina*, danced in the Roman states, are much the same.

Let us examine this curious question a little more closely. It is well known that spiders differ considerably in colour at various times and in various places; the same species in my cellar, for instance, is greyer or blacker than in that of a friend two miles distant. The tarantula also varies, more or less, in appearance, according to

the season, the age, and the sex. Hence the descriptions of this interesting spider do not always tally. An old writer says: "Its body and legs are ash-coloured, with blackish rings on the under part; the fangs are red on the inner side, the rest being blackish. Two of its eight eyes are red, and larger than the others. It lives in the bare fields, and has an antipathy to damp and shade; its dwelling is a hole about four inches deep in the loose soil, and half an inch wide, with a net at the mouth of the hole. The female lays about 700 eggs, which are hatched in the spring."

These spiders, like many others, frequently devour one another. Its Linnean name is *Lycosa Tarantula*, and modern naturalists describe it as having the upper part of the body red, with a black band across. It belongs to the class of "vagabond spiders," which spin no web; it runs very fast, and is remarkably voracious and courageous.

The old authors of the seventeenth century say that the bite of the tarantula causes "a local inflammation, followed by sickness and a difficulty of breathing, which, in its turn, is followed by delirium, or deep melancholy; and these symptoms return annually, in some cases, for several years. Music is supposed to be the only cure."

The most voluminous writer of that period,

Kircher, in his "Musurgia," gives a particular account of these effects of the tarantula. He mentions a girl who, after being bitten by the spider, could be cured only by the music of a drum!

He also relates that a Spaniard who, "trusting to the efficacy of music in the cure of the frenzy occasioned by the bite of the tarantula, submitted to be bitten on the hand by two of these spiders, of different colours and of different qualities. The venom was no sooner diffused about his body than the symptoms of the disorder began to appear, upon which harpists, pipers, and other musicians were sent for, who, by various kinds of music, endeavoured to rouse him from the stupor into which he had fallen; but here it was observed that the bites of the two spiders had produced contrary effects, for by the one he was incited to dance, and by the other restrained therefrom; and in this conflict of nature the patient expired."

This quotation is a good specimen of the absurd state of medical science in the seventeenth century.

The same story is given in this author's "Phonurgia Nova," with a drawing representing the spider in two positions, the patient in the act of dancing, and the musical notes of the air by which, in one case, a cure was effected. Kircher

was a Jesuit, born in 1601. He taught philosophy and mathematics in Germany, and afterwards at Rome, and died in 1680, leaving an immense number of works, full of curiosities.

Dr. Baglivi, whom I mentioned above, has left us a little treatise in the Latin of the seventeenth century, *De Anatomia, morsu, et effectibus tarantulæ*, in which he describes the regions of Apulia where the tarantula abounds, with an account of the anatomy, and a figure of the spider and its eggs. He also describes the symptoms which follow its bite, and their cure by music, with some instances of cases thus cured.

Ludovicus Valetta, a monk of Apulia, published at Naples, in 1706, a treatise on the tarantula spider in which he endeavours to refute those who deny its effects, and gives, apparently from his own knowledge, several instances of persons who have suffered in this way. An English physician, Dr. Mead, has reproduced these accounts in his treatise on "Poisons," and appears to believe in them—which is more than others do.

After looking carefully into this subject, I have come to the conclusion that *hysteria*, in various forms, was probably as common in Southern Italy two hundred years ago as it now is in many parts of Europe, and that music and dancing are an excellent cure for it.

Those who imagine that they have been bitten by a tarantula are, according to an old Italian writer, "young, wanton girls, whom we call *dolce di sale*, who, by some particular indisposition [hysteria], falling into this melancholy madness, persuade themselves, according to vulgar prejudice, that they have been bitten by a tarantula."

Professor Dominico Cirillo, of Naples, commenting, in 1770, on a book published by Dr. Serao, another Italian physician who had attempted to explode the popular error about the tarantula spider, confirms that author's opinion, that the whole thing is a mistake. Having had an opportunity of testing its effects at Taranto, he found that the surprising cure by music of the bite of the tarantula has not the least truth in it, and that "it is only an invention of the people who want to get a little money by dancing."

To this he adds: "I have no doubt that sometimes the heat of the climate contributes to warm their imagination, and to throw them into a delirium, which may in some measure be cured by music; but several experiments have been tried with the tarantula, and neither men nor animals, *after the bite*, have had any other complaint than a very trifling inflammation upon the part, like that produced by the sting of the scorpion, and this effect goes off by itself, without any danger at all."

It will be noticed that this writer admits the bite. He also says that in Sicily, where the summer is still warmer than at Naples, the tarantula is never dangerous, and music is never employed there for the cure of the pretended *tarantism*.

The persons who dance the tarantella are known in Italy as *tarantati;* I must say a few words about them. At the end of the eighteenth century an Englishman, named Swinburn, made an excursion into Southern Italy, being desirous of investigating minutely every particular relating to this subject. But on his arrival there the season was not far enough advanced and no *tarantati*—that is, persons bitten, or pretending to have been bitten—were then to be met with. He prevailed, however, upon a woman who had, he says, formerly been bitten, "to act the part," and dance the tarantella before him. A great many musicians were summoned, and she performed the dance, as all present assured him, to perfection.

At first, she lolled stupidly on a chair, whilst the instruments were playing some dull music. "They touched, at length, the chord supposed to vibrate to her heart, and she sprang up with a most hideous yell, staggered about the room like a drunken person, holding a handkerchief in both hands, raising them alternately, and moving in very true time. As the music grew brisker, her

motion quickened, and she skipped about with great vigour and variety of steps, every now and then shrieking very loud."

The scene, he tells us, was far from pleasant, and at his desire an end was put to it before the woman was tired.

The same author says that wherever the *tarantati* are to dance, a place is prepared for them, hung round with bunches of grapes and ribbons. The "patients" are dressed in white, with red, green, or yellow ribbons, for those, he says, are their favourite colours. "Over their shoulders they cast a white scarf, let their hair fall loose about their ears, and throw their heads back as far as they can bear it."

I must quote one more paragraph :—

"These *tarantati*," he says, "are exact copies of the ancient priestesses of Bacchus. The orgies of that god, whose worship, under various symbols, was more widely spread over the globe than that of any other divinity, were no doubt performed with energy and enthusiasm by the lively inhabitants of Southern Italy. The introduction of Christianity abolished all public exhibitions of these heathenish rites, and the women durst no longer act a frantic part in the character of *bacchantes*. But, unwilling to give up so darling an amusement, they devised other pretences. Accident may have led them to the discovery

of the tarantula, and, upon the strength of its poison, the Puglian dames still enjoy their old dance, though time has effaced the memory of its ancient name and institution."

The tarantella dance is thus traced back to ancient Grecian times. If at any time the dancers are really and involuntarily affected, it is suggested, it can be nothing more than an attack upon the nerves, a species of "St. Vitus's Dance," and it is remarkable that there are numerous churches and places throughout these provinces, dedicated to that saint.

I should not omit to state that many sensible Italian people differ in opinion from those who have ridiculed the pretended disorder termed *tarantism*. The Brindisians say that the spiders sent to Naples for experiment were not of the right sort, or that the length of the journey and want of food had weakened their powers so much as to allow persons to place their arm in a bag where they were kept, without experiencing any disagreeable effects. They quote many cases of persons, bitten whilst they slept out in the fields during the hot months, who grew languid and morose, till the sound of some favourite tune roused them to dance, and caused them thus "to throw off the poison." But the old writer I have just quoted thinks these arguments of little weight.

A friend of mine, who stayed recently for a few days at a little place near Brindisi, which is described in her letter as "a wild little place, in which the fields and commons abound with scorpions, vipers, and tarantula spiders, which are daily killed by scores, but still multiply to the terror of the inhabitants—because, whatever the sceptics may say, the bite of the tarantula *does* cause that terrible dance, or series of jumps, screams, and contortions, which has given rise to the lovely and graceful dance called the tarantella."

This lady met with a *tarantata*, or dancing woman, some few years ago in the Puglie province. Her eyes were staring wildly, as if she saw the dreadful spider still before her. Every second she would stretch forth her hands and clasp them hurriedly together, as if in the act of crushing the horrible tarantula. She was a handsome peasant girl ; her hair, which was magnificent, fell over her shoulders like a tippet. She was sitting on a chair in front of a house, surrounded by a crowd of relatives and neighbours. When inquiry was made as to what was the matter, the reply received was, "She is a *tarantata*."

The girl's head was moving from side to side, as if listening to something. In fact, there was a street-organ playing in the distance. When it

came near, she rose from her seat and began to dance wildly. When her strength was exhausted, she gave a long, loud cry, and fell, as if dead, into her mother's arms.

The following day she danced again for twelve hours without ceasing, except for short intervals. The musicians engaged to keep the girl company were paid for the day ten *lire* each; and when the father of the girl was asked how he possibly could afford this, he replied that it must be done, otherwise his child would die of the tarantula poison—he and the others might starve afterwards, but the girl must have music to help her to dance.

This account makes one inclined to believe that my English friend was being imposed upon, with the hope of extorting money from her; but my readers will see by this, which happened only a very short time ago, that, as regards *tarantism*, things are just the same now in Southern Italy as they were more than two hundred years ago.

Tarantism is only another word for hysteria. Violent exercise may, in many cases, have proved a perfect cure; and a natural passion for dancing, coupled with the desire of raising contributions from the spectators, are the real motives that inspire the *tarantati*.

About thirty-six miles from Brindisi there is a sacred well, dedicated to St. Paul, the protector

of victims of the tarantula, and every year these poor creatures make a pilgrimage there on that saint's day, which occurs at the end of June. The water of the well is supposed to cure the bite of the spider. During the journey these hysterical patients are a prey to violent convulsions. Those who cannot undertake the journey perform the ceremony at home, in a room hung with coloured handkerchiefs, or bits of coloured rags, and they dance, jump, and scream, as long as their strength lasts. Sometimes it takes several days to cure them.[1]

[1] It is not surprising that a subject so much discussed for upwards of two centuries should have attracted many composers of music for the violin, and given rise to a great number of pieces of the *tarantella* and *saltarello* class. I am only acquainted with a few of them by Sivori, Papini, Dancla, Jansa, Bottesini (originally written for double-bass), Wieniawski, Vieuxtemps, German, &c. That by Jansa is very beautiful and effective, but Dancla's is of a larger style, and has a very effective passage of harmonics and double notes combined, twice repeated. Sivori's has rather an elaborate piano accompaniment, which is a drawback. Vieuxtemps' and Wieniawski's are brilliant, but lack somewhat of the real Italian character. Papini has written several which are beautiful, and of various grades of difficulty. Besides these, we have similar compositions by Basil Althans, Harold Henry, René Ortmans, G. A. Proust, Buziau, Fowler, Henkel, Raff, Poznanski, &c., compositions in which courageous attempts at originality are occasionally apparent. But in characteristic music such as this, attempts in that direction are apt to deceive both the composer and the performer. A good tarantella always begins in the minor key, and generally ends in that key, with a luscious major cantabile in between; but some of the best terminate in the major key. The rondo of De Bériot's Tenth Concerto, *tempo di tarantella*, is one of the finest compositions of this kind ever written for the violin, but it is not every violinist that can play it.

VII

A STORY OF STORIONI

LORENZO STORIONI is considered to be one of the latest, if not the very last, of the great Italian and Tyrolean schools of violin makers, which began with Andrea Amati of Cremona, and his contemporary Gasparo da Salò of Brescia, and was continued by the celebrated Nicolo Amati, Antonio Stradivari, Stainer, Sebastian Kloz, Guadagnini, Rugeri, Guarneri, Geronimo Amati the younger, and Bergonzi, down to the days of Storioni, who died at the extreme end of the eighteenth century —at least, he is not heard of after 1798.

I have seen two of his violins in London, one of which belonged to a violinist of the Bohemian Orchestral Society in 1882, which the owner held in great esteem, and I can vouch for its having a firm, round tone of considerable sweetness and brilliancy. The other, which is of a rather smaller pattern, belongs to a lady.

Storioni, we are told, was born in Cremona in 1751, and left off working, or died, in 1798; but absolutely accurate dates are rarely to be obtained

concerning these old masters. His workshop was in the Via di Coltellai, near the Piazza San Dominico (now called Piazza di Roma), and consequently not far from the celebrated workshop of Stradivari, which was, so to say, just round the corner.

But Stradivari had gone to his long rest many years before Storioni was born, and the latter did not begin to work for more than a quarter of a century after the sons of Stradivari—Omobono and Francesco—had followed their father on his last journey.

Some writers singularly enough assert that Lorenzo Storioni copied the violins of the elder Joseph Guarnerius, whose workshop was in another street of the old city, at the sign of "Santa Teresa"; but the said Joseph Guarnerius was then quite unknown to fame, and there seems to have been no reason whatever why he should have copied him rather than Stradivari—who was already a celebrity even in those early days—unless he was originally an assistant workman of the said Joseph Guarnerius.

Anyhow, Storioni made good violins. I used to remark that my late friend Henri Vieuxtemps's first concert instrument, said to be by this maker, was apt to jar on the fourth string, particularly in his variation on an air of Bellini's *Norma*, which he performed on that string alone. But this may

be attributed, perhaps, more to the excitement and energy of the player, or to an indifferent quality of string, than to any fault in this fine Cremona instrument—for it really was a fine violin.

But I am forgetting that I have to relate a story of Storioni.

It was one bright evening in September 1789, when the eyes and thoughts of all Europe were beginning to be concentrated on the horrors of the French Revolution, that a *lutiaro* of Cremona, one of those German artisans of whom a considerable number were then employed in the workshops of the violin makers, but who was now working on his own account, had just finished a violin.

His name was Pfretzschner—Johann Pfretzschner — but his Italian friends called him Giovanni, from his Christian name, as the other was rather too much for them.

He sat in his little workshop with the newly-made instrument before him, contemplating his handiwork, thinking how he could sell it, and what he would get for it. Against the wall leaned the table of a Stradivari bass, and upon a little shelf near was a reduced copy of it, which had served him as a model in cutting out the pattern of his own instrument.

Below the little shelf stood a trestle, upon which was the "sacred vessel" of the violin maker

—the glue-pot—just cooling after its last use; for, since the violin was finished, Giovanni had done some slight repairs to other instruments. In another corner of the room stood two basses and a *viola d'amore*, just shaded from the setting sun as its rays streamed through the little window and lighted up myriads of motes which floated in the calm air. At the end of the workshop-table were scattered a few tools, now about to lie idle throughout the night; here and there upon the walls were hung parts of violins, several *arpi*, or C screws, of various sizes, and near the entrance was a little cupboard with some drawers, in which were a few boxes of strings, pegs, rosin, bridges, and tail-pieces—in a word, all the ordinary *cose di lutiaro* which one usually meets with in such places.

On the window-sill was a vase, an old varnish vessel, full of water, in which was a beautiful bunch of roses and reseda, tied with a piece of blue ribbon, and evidently awaiting an expected visitor; for, between that vase of flowers and a real varnish jar, was a little box of chocolate lozenges with an elegant gilt lid.

The association of flowers and sugar-plums generally tells the same old tale.

Giovanni must then have been about twenty-five years of age; he was rather tall, fair, and delicate; his flaxen hair and greyish blue eyes denoted his Saxon origin, but his bronzed features were thin

and drawn, and his sunken cheeks showed that he was either consumptive or underfed, whilst there was an anxious expression of countenance which indicated some trouble or mental affliction. The Pfretzschner family had lived many years in Cremona, but he was the only member of it now remaining.

His face brightened as a handsome girl suddenly entered the workshop and exclaimed—

"*Caro mio!* it is then finished!"

"It is finished, Luigia," replied the luthist calmly. "See, what do you think of it?"

"*Ah! è bello!* it is really very beautiful," said the girl, and her dark eyes flashed with joy at the sight of as splendid a violin as any artist need wish for.

"And the tone is wonderfully good," added the young man, taking up a bow and playing a few bars of Bach's *Ciaconna*, for he was somewhat of a virtuoso also.

"I think it is the best you ever made, Giovanni *mio*, and it will certainly pay the expenses of our wedding!" cried Luigia, laying down the violin and coming up to kiss him.

"Ah! *cara* Luigia, I hope it may," said Giovanni; "but Storioni's violins alone find a ready sale at present. I cannot place mine at all."

"Yes, I hear that he parted with no less than four last week," said the pretty brunette with a

deep sigh. "But," she added, after a slight pause, "I think I can sell it for you."

"*You!* dearest Luigia, how can you imagine such a thing—you who know nothing but mulberry trees and silk-worms, and perhaps a little cooking!"

"Give me another kiss, Giovanni, and I will tell you something," said Luigia.

The young workman did not require to be asked twice, and, after a fond embrace, the two lovers sat down and conversed in a serious manner.

"It appears that the old Jew, Carlo Polli, is buying up the violins of Storioni as fast as he can make them," said Luigia. "My idea is to take this one to him, and let him think it is made by Storioni."

"But how can you make him think such a thing, Luigia?"

"Oh! that is easy enough; we will put inside one of Storioni's labels, and I — who know nothing at all about violins, you see—I will take this one to Carlo Polli and ask him if he will buy it."

There was a good deal more conversation on this subject that history has not preserved, after which the roses and bon-bons were admired almost as much as the new violin.

It was rather late when the two young people

separated ; finally, the little workshop was locked up for the night.

The new violin *was* bought by the old Jew dealer whose name we have just mentioned, and realised a good price—about fifty shillings of our English money—which was more than sufficient to defray the expenses incident to *le nozze*, or wedding festivities of Giovanni and Luigia.

But, not very long after the marriage, they had a terrible fright. It was a warm day in the following month of May that Pfretzschner and his young wife perceived Lorenzo Storioni coming along the street in the direction of their workshop. In less than two minutes he had passed the threshold and entered the room.

"*Buon giorno, amici.* I have come about a little matter that concerns you and me," he said, turning to Giovanni.

"What may that be?" inquired the latter, putting on as good an expression of surprise and innocence as was possible under the circumstances.

"The old dealer, Carlo Polli, has bought a violin with my label in it, and this instrument has been traced to you," said Storioni.

"Well," exclaimed Giovanni, turning very pale, "I will admit everything. You come, doubtless, to claim damages. Do not be too hard upon us ;

it was done under great pressure; we were obliged to sell the violin—it enabled us to get married."

"Ah! Signor Storioni," said Luigia with her sweetest smile, "you will take pity on us—you will not molest us!"

"*Corpo di Bacco!* no indeed!" exclaimed Storioni. "That was not my intention in coming here. I have come to thank you for what you have done! I am extremely obliged to Signor Giovanni. *I never made a violin half so good;* and the consequence of this little trick of yours is that I have more orders for violins than I alone can possibly attend to, so I come to ask whether you will help me to execute all these new orders?"

"*Santa Maria Carissima!*" exclaimed the young couple in one voice.

"Well, come and take a bottle of wine with me at the café yonder, and we will have a talk about it," said the last of the great Cremona makers.

This little episode, which has lain so many years in oblivion, is probably the very first instance on record of the label of one maker being placed in the violin of another. It must be confessed that the consequences were very surprising—as they have often been since, in more modern times and other places.

VIII

RAMEAU

RAMEAU is generally recognised in France and elsewhere as the greatest musician that country has ever produced, with the sole exception of Lulli. But Lulli, though he lived the greater part of his life in Paris and its neighbourhood, was of Italian origin, and, when he arrived in France as a youth of about eighteen years of age, he was already an accomplished violinist for that epoch (seventeenth century). Indeed, his violin playing ultimately led to his becoming one of the historical features of his time, ranking on a par with his illustrious contemporary, Molière.

The immortal Rameau, who came forward some years later, also began life as a violinist, a fact of which few writers seem to be aware. I have shown in former works that the same thing occurred for two other celebrated composers of more modern times, Auber and Balfe.

Rameau was two years older than his great German contemporary, Johann Sebastian Bach, and lived fourteen years longer. He was also

the contemporary of Tartini, who was nine years his junior. His knowledge of the violin was probably not equal to that of Bach and Tartini; but, maybe, he was superior, or at least on a par, in this respect, with his other illustrious contemporary, Handel.

In the seventeenth century violin playing was not developed to the extent it was in the eighteenth, which claims, among others, the celebrated Viotti; or the nineteenth, which counts Paganini, De Bériot, Ernst, and a host of others equally great in their respective styles.

In the days of Corelli, and those of his immediate successors, Veracini and Tartini, violinists played mostly in the "first position," and rarely rose beyond the open octave E on the first string in the "third." The orchestras at the opera were very small in comparison with what they now are, and, even in the time of Mozart, few instruments were employed, and a great deal of the music of the first violin part was set down in the first position.

In order to realise what beautiful and effective music can be penned even now without going beyond this "first position," we have only to look at some of the recent works by Guido Papini—his Op. 59 "Six Temas with variations," his Op. 95 "Hope March" (for one, two, or three violins, with piano accompaniment), and his Op. 108

"Second Tarantella," more especially. It would be difficult to surpass these works in beauty and brilliancy, even if a whole octave more were added to the extent of the scale.

In France, during the performance of the operas by Monsigny, a very favourite French composer of the eighteenth century, the first violin played in unison with the voice, in order to keep the singer in time and in tune! We have reasons for believing that many of Rameau's original melodies were composed on his violin; and the fingering of the violin passages in his operas is noted as being easy and effective, such as could only be written by a good violinist.

Jean Philippe Rameau was born at Dijon in 1683, just one year before the great violin maker of Cremona, Nicolo Amati, died. His father was a professor of music, and taught him the first elements of his art. At seven years of age he could read music at sight—a very rare thing in those days—and could improvise with remarkable facility on the clavecin. His brother Claude, who became a talented organist, was intended by his parents to be made a musician, but Jean Philippe was intended for the legal profession.

When at school, however, it was found that his copy-books and text-books were all covered with scrawls of music; and one of his biographers says that he "soon left the College of Jesuits, knowing

very little Latin, still less Greek, and no French at all!" He learnt the violin, studied harmony instead of the discords of history, and went about among his friends, the organists, begging for a few lessons in musical composition.

At seventeen years of age, Jean Philippe Rameau was a tall, good-looking young fellow, and thought proper to fall in love with a young widow, a neighbour, who was one of the beauties of the little old town of Dijon. For a whole year he laid aside all his studies in order to pay his addresses to this charming young person. She seems to have liked him, and kindly undertook to correct the dreadful spelling and grammatical errors which found their way into his love letters.

Seeing how things were going, his worthy father then allowed him to take up music as a profession, and sent him off to Italy, thinking thus to cure him of his dangerous passion. But Jean Philippe never got farther than Milan, where, in order to work his way back to France, he took an engagement as first violin in an orchestral company that was going on a long tour through Marseilles, Nimes, Montpellier, and other towns, which tour extended over a considerable number of years.

With the violin Rameau found that he could only make a precarious livelihood, whilst his talent as an organist promised to raise him much higher in the social scale. He played the organ so

divinely that on his return to Dijon in 1717, without any money in his pocket, he was at once offered the post of organist to a church in his native town. But he refused this offer, and decided to make himself heard in Paris, where he arrived that same year.

He was then thirty-four years of age. The first thing he did was to seek the protection of the well-known organist, Marchand, who held a high and very lucrative position in the capital. But, when the latter heard him play, he was so utterly astonished that he was seized with a morbid fit of jealousy, and did everything he could to hinder Rameau's advancement, and induce, or rather, compel him to seek an engagement in the provinces. So poor Rameau (with the exception of J. S. Bach, perhaps, the greatest organist the world has ever known) was thus absolutely obliged to accept the little place of organist at St. Stephen's Church, at Lille. Shortly afterwards, however, he took that at Clermont, which had been given up by his brother Claude.

Here, at Clermont, where he remained for four years, Rameau wrote his celebrated "Treatise on Harmony," and a great deal of music for clavecin and for the organ, all of which was remarkable for its richness and originality. At the end of these four years he was able to return to Paris, where he published his pieces and his "Treatise,"

which works drew attention to him and procured him many admirers. He now sought to secure a footing for his compositions on the operatic stage, in doing which he was much aided by M. de la Poplinière, a rich financier and great amateur of music.

Late in life, when considerably over fifty years of age, Rameau was at the zenith of his celebrity. He is described as being at this time very tall and very thin, with an honest, benevolent, but wrinkled and wizened cast of countenance. I cannot here follow his career as a composer of operas, but I may state that he was a great admirer of Lulli's fine recitatives. He was even accused of copying them ; to which he replied that he "endeavoured to imitate them, but without becoming a servile copyist."

The fact is that Rameau's works are particularly noticeable for their originality and their wonderful modulations. In this respect he has never been surpassed.

His opera "Castor and Pollux" is perhaps the best known of his theatrical works ; but he composed a considerable number of operas, many of which met with much success. He died at the age of eighty-one, after a life of musical adventure and romance that is second in interest to that of no other great artist.

Those who may wish to judge of Rameau as a

violinist must consult the scores of his operas, where it will be seen, by reading the violin parts, that he was a great master in the art of fingering; many players have praised his compositions in this respect. Where the fingering of his great contemporary, J. S. Bach, is difficult, and somewhat unsuited to the instrument, that of Rameau is easy and natural.

A solo for the violin by Rameau is, of course, a rarity not to be heard every day. One edited by Papini, with piano accompaniment, was published some years ago by F. W. Chanot (No. 56 of his catalogue). This most effective little piece is well within the reach of a good amateur; but in the hands of an artist it will, with the introduction of a few double notes, *pizzicati*, and harmonics, which readily suggest themselves, produce an extraordinary effect. I played it thus, for the first time, one evening about twenty years ago in a crowded concert-room in the West End of London, having announced it on the programme as "a dance that was composed in 1724, and still played at vintage-time in the South of France." The success of the piece was astonishing. There is also a "Chaconne and Musette" by Rameau, published by Augener & Co., for violin and piano. Though not quite so effective as the other, it is highly original. The celebrated Gavotte from this composer's opera, *Le Temple de la Gloire*,

arranged for violin and piano by Borowski, has recently been published in London by Messrs. Laudy & Co.

One of the most distinguished composers of that period, Campra, on speaking to some critics of Rameau's opera "Hippolyte," is reported to have said: "Do not deceive yourselves, my dear friends; there is more music in that opera than in all our works put together."

IX

A GUARNERI VIOLIN AT ROME

In the late autumn of 1856 my excellent friend Sgambatoldi, of Milan, was at Rome. The weather was dull and damp, but still rather warm. In front of an old house in one of the poorest quarters of the city, his attention was called by a public crier, or *banditore*, to a pile of old clothes and dusty furniture spread out on the pavement for sale.

It was the house of a poor artist—a painter—who had just died of consumption, leaving a young widow and three small children. The latter were, at that moment, seated at one side of the doorway; the youngest child, a little boy, in the lap of his mother; the two others, girls of six and eight years respectively, were tressing their hair and smiling at the mistakes they made. The mother's face was calm, and sadness gleamed from her large dark eyes.

By the side of the *banditore* was a little man in a blue coat and spectacles, who walked to and fro, flourishing a cane, and was, apparently, in a bad humour.

"You do not shout half loud enough!" he exclaimed to the *banditore;* "you are drawing no purchasers at all!"

"Well, Signor Basinetto," replied the other, "it does not matter much; you will never get enough money out of these wretched things to liquidate the half of your account. The whole lot will not fetch two gold pieces."

"That would be a fine thing for me!" expostulated the first speaker. "Rafaele Barmi owed me three hundred *lire* when he died; and I always sold him my colours, my brushes, and my varnish, at the very lowest prices! a nice thing indeed!"

The poor widow heard these words, but said nothing.

After awhile, a few passers stopped, looked at the miserable collection of articles exposed for sale, and walked on. Then came by a stout man of Jewish appearance, with keen, brilliant eyes. He stopped also. He had seen an old dilapidated violin lying on one of the chairs. There were no strings, nor bridge, nor tail-piece, no bow nor case. He glanced at it for a few minutes and, whilst he did so, a few other people stopped to see what he was looking at.

By-and-by quite a little crowd had collected, and Sgambatoldi saw approaching, among others, two French gentlemen who were at the same hotel

as himself. They were Count Sabloneux and M. Mortier, a deputy.

"What is going on here?" inquired the first of his companion.

"Oh! perhaps some artisan beating his wife," replied the other.

But when the crier's voice shouted: "Attention to the *banditore!* buy! buy! good gentlemen!" they approached nearer and looked at the things.

"By Heaven! what a fine collection for your drawing-room!" said the deputy facetiously to the Count, when he got a glimpse of the poor furniture, and proceeded to pass on.

"Stop! stop a moment!" cried Sabloneux. "There is a violin; it might be good for my cabinet—this is just the place to find a valuable old instrument fit for a collector like me."

Then turning to the little man in the blue coat, who was still shuffling about, and flourishing his cane to the danger of all around him, he inquired:

"What do you think is the value of all this stuff?"

"I cannot say," replied the other; "but I hope it may fetch more than three hundred francs, as that is what the deceased artist owed me at the time of his death."

And he explained that the goods belonged to the poor widow, and that he was distraining upon them.

The Frenchman's heart was not at all moved

by this declaration ; he merely smiled. His sole attention was centred, at present, on the violin, which some one in the crowd had called a Guarneri. It was then being looked at alternately by the stout Jew and by a connoisseur of musical instruments, named Papucci, who had accidentally found his way into the small group of curious persons standing around.

Papucci had overheard the conversation between the Frenchmen, for he understood and spoke French fluently.

In the course of a little time the Jew offered ten *lire* (francs) for the violin.

"Fifty *lire !*" cried Papucci, immediately.

The Jew stared at his competitor ; he fancied, no doubt, that he must be a clever connoisseur, and that, as he had bid so high, it was really a very valuable violin.

"Sixty *lire !*" said the first bidder, with a singular twinkle in his small eyes.

"One hundred !" roared forth another voice, which was that of Count Sabloneux.

"Two hundred," said Papucci calmly.

"Five hundred *lire !*" said the Count, "and let us be done with it."

"Six hundred !" shouted Papucci, almost immediately, whilst the first bidder, the stout Jew, looked on in amazement, and uttered not a syllable.

A wrathful expression flashed across the ruddy

features of the French count ; but he seemed determined to get the instrument, in spite of his Italian opponent.

"*One thousand lire !*" he shouted, after a pause of a few moments.

This was equal to about forty pounds in English money. Every one appeared to be struck dumb by so magnificent a bid.

Sgambatoldi watched the crowd with interest. No one stirred, no one spoke.

At last the salesman inquired "if no one would bid higher than one thousand *lire ?*"

There was no response.

"Then it is yours, signor," he said, turning to Count Sabloneux, who at once proceeded to pay for his purchase with a few bank-notes, and, turning to his companion, said :

"That is wonderfully cheap for a Guarneri violin."

"Monsieur is, then, a connoisseur ?" asked Papucci, in a respectful tone of voice, and speaking in French, with a very good accent.

"Yes, I know something about violins," replied the Count. "I have spent some thousands of ducats upon them in my time, and I have a rather fine collection."

When the poor widow saw the money paid, and the violin handed over to its new owner, her eyes glistened with joy. She would thus save the sale

of all her other things, and have abundance of money for the winter—perhaps for a whole year besides.

"You are a dealer, are you not?" asked the Count, addressing himself to Papucci.

"Yes," replied the latter; "at Milan, but not here."

"I thought so, from your active bidding," added the Frenchman; "and I have no doubt you consider this a very fine Guarneri."

"Oh! dear no!" replied Papucci, smiling; "it is not a Guarneri at all; it is a very common violin indeed, and considerably cracked also—it may have cost, originally, about thirty francs."

"Then why, in the name of Heaven, did you bid so warmly for it?"

"For the sake of the poor widow and her three young children," replied Papucci, with great calmness; "for her sake I would have bought it at any of the bids I made, and, if you like, I will now give you my highest bid for that violin—but I could not go beyond your bid of a thousand francs. You may think I was forcing your hand; but, you see, you were forcing mine."

Count Sabloneux was exceedingly surprised at the dealer's generosity; but he would not hear of parting with his violin at a loss of four hundred francs; so he walked away with it under his arm, still believing, according to Sgambatoldi, that it

really was a genuine Guarneri. But my friend says that Pietro Papucci is too well known at Milan for anybody not to place implicit confidence in his opinion ; and he has, moreover, the reputation of being a thoroughly good man.

X

THE HISTORY OF THE HURDY-GURDY

In the course of a tolerably long life I have only seen a hurdy-gurdy some half-dozen times, as far as I can remember. I have a distinct recollection of meeting, more than sixty years ago, a little Savoyard in the woody lanes of Warwickshire, with his viol and marmot, who found his way into the stable-yard of my father's residence, and amused my nursemaid and the other servants by his antics. Even as a child I was surprised by the curious sound of the instrument, and its jerky character, as much as by the aspect of the queer little animal—the marmot, not the boy.

On rare occasions a similar sight has been seen by me in Paris and in Germany; and I once asked myself: "Who was the Stradivarius of the hurdy-gurdy?" For, after all, it is a kind of violin—a "stringed instrument played with a (circular) bow."

Did Amati, or Gasparo da Salò, ever make a hurdy-gurdy? I once put that question to my

music-master in Brussels, and he replied that he did not know.

Alas! no professor knows everything.

No book in my library gives much information on the subject; and Lavignac, Professor of Harmony in the Paris Conservatoire, never once mentions the hurdy-gurdy in his recent work on Music, where he describes so many instruments.

Our old English word "fiddle" is evidently a corruption of the French word "*vielle*" (hurdy-gurdy), and a few words on this latter instrument in connection with the violin (the name of which is derived from the Italian "*viola*") may not prove uninteresting.

The *vielle* or hurdy-gurdy, which old English writers term "viol," is admitted to have derived its origin from the lyre or lute. Lutes were of different shapes and sizes, and date back no less than 700 years before the commencement of the Christian era. Yet a print I possess shows that the lute was still used in the drawing-room in place of the harpsichord, as an accompaniment to the voice, at the time of the French Revolution, 1789 to 1798.

The Greeks called the hurdy-gurdy *sambuke;* the Latins called it *sambucus*, or *sambuca;* old French writers term it *sambuque*, whilst more modern writers have adopted the word *vielle;* and

English authors speak of it as "viol," "rote," and "hurdy-gurdy."

Towards the beginning of the eleventh century, the hurdy-gurdy began to be studied with great care in Northern Italy (Piedmont and Savoy) and in the South of France. During the whole of the twelfth century it was used in the châteaux of princes and the nobility, not only for dance music, but as an accompaniment to the voice, in the songs and recitations of the troubadours.

It may be as well to state here that the hurdy-gurdy is a small viol played with a wheel, or circular bow, and having a set of keys, like those of the harpsichord, for the fingers of the left hand.

When a troubadour could not sing or play, he employed "violars" (*vielleurs*) to sing his poems. The Provençal language was used by these poets during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. "At this period," says an old writer, "'violars,' or performers on the *vielle* or viol, 'juglars,' or flute-players, 'musars,' or players on other instruments, and 'comics,' or comedians, abounded all over Europe. This swarm of poet-musicians, styled by the French *jongleurs*, travelled from province to province, singing their verses at the courts of princes, who rewarded them with clothes, money, horses, and arms; they were often employed to sing the verses of troubadours who were deficient in voice or ignorant of music."

As the *lute* was the favourite instrument used to accompany Grecian poetry, so the *harp* was held in the same esteem by the poets of mediæval times. "The instrument which frequently accompanied, and, indeed, disputed the pre-eminence with the harp," says the writer above quoted, "was the viol. The viol was played with a bow, and differed entirely from the *vielle*, the tones of which were produced by the friction of a wheel, the wheel performed the part of a bow."

It appears, therefore, quite evident that both the hurdy-gurdy, or viol played with a wheel (or circular bow), and the viol played with a straight bow, were in use by the *troubadours* in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and by the *trovères*, or northern poets, in the thirteenth century.

An engraving in my possession, in which the costumes of the men and the forms of their instruments are taken by the artist from specimens preserved in the museums, represents some *trovères* of the thirteenth century singing or reciting before a large audience in a château—a scene corresponding to our modern concert-room. Of the viols depicted, some are wide, flat, pear-shaped instruments (like our ancient English fiddles), played with a bow whilst the instrument is held to the neck. They have a very wide bridge, for five or more strings, a quadrangular sound-hole on each side of the tail-piece, no centre-bouts,

and a short neck. Others have four oval-shaped sound-holes, two in the upper and two in the lower parts of the table, with ornaments on each side of the tail-piece, and, in place of the centre-bouts of the modern violin, there is a slight curve in the model. The bow used is straight and arched outwards, like that used in the times of Corelli and Tartini (1700 to 1740).

Referring again to the thirteenth century, in the reign of the French king, Louis IX. (Saint Louis), the *jongleurs* and buffoons attached to the Court used the hurdy-gurdy for singing and for dance music ; and persons of quality did not disdain to cultivate it as a fashionable accomplishment. But towards the fourteenth century, poor people and blind beggars, finding out how much the sound of this instrument was appreciated by the higher classes, adopted it as a means of earning their livelihood in the streets. It then became a very popular instrument ; but as it was constantly to be heard on the pavement, like the piano-organ of our day, it soon lost vogue in the houses of the aristocracy.

After falling into discredit in this manner, the hurdy-gurdy came again into favour towards the end of the sixteenth century, when it was heard even in the palaces of the French kings.

In 1671, when operas were first introduced into France, two notable performers on the hurdy-

gurdy, named La Rose and Janot, made themselves a great reputation, and, by the applause they gained at the Court of Louis XIV., they re-established a taste for this particular instrument.

But the violin (*supposed* to have been invented in the fifteenth century) soon displaced the *vielle* or hurdy-gurdy, as it did the small viol (*viola d'amore*), played with a straight bow instead of a wheel. Nevertheless, the hurdy-gurdy once more figures in French history: it came prominently forward in Paris about 1709, at a time when Stradivari of Cremona was making some of his finest violins.

At that period, when the violin was rising to a degree of perfection which has never been surpassed, a young girl from Savoy, fifteen years of age, came to the French capital to earn her living. She had nothing to rely upon but "her youth, her beauty, and her viol."

She was called Fanchon, or Fanchonette, and she so intoxicated the Parisian people by her amiable manners, her good looks, her playing and singing in the streets, that she made a considerable fortune.

So celebrated a character did this Savoyard maiden become by her moral life, and the generosity with which she bestowed her earnings upon the poor, that, in the winter of 1804, a lyrical drama in three acts appeared at the Vaudeville Theatre, giving a sketch of her life and specimens

of her songs. It had an immense success, and, for many years afterwards, the line of one of these songs, in which occur the words—

"Quinze ans, ma vielle, et l'espérance,"

was heard everywhere, in the streets, the clubs, the drawing-rooms, all over the country.

Some years later a well-known composer, Clapisson, wrote his opera called *Fanchonette* upon the same subject. This opera was again much in vogue at Paris about 1857 or 1858, when Mlle. Marimon took the part of Fanchon of the hurdy-gurdy.

Mlle. Marimon was then really a lovely girl of eighteen summers, a favourite pupil of the celebrated Duprez, and a bosom companion of Sidonia Van der Beck, *prima-donna* of the Italian Opera, who introduced me to her one afternoon in the class-room at Duprez's residence. On this occasion, Mlle. Marimon sang the variations on the *Carnaval de Venise*, in Victor Massé's opera, *La Reine Topaze*, one of the most effective vocal displays I ever heard. Even old Duprez himself applauded till his hands smarted. At this time Mlle. Marimon went regularly for her lesson to M. Duprez whilst she was singing in opera at the *Théâtre Lyrique*, unless she happened to be wanted for rehearsals at the theatre.

Many years later, in London, I heard her again

—in the days of Mlle. Titiens—it was as "Rosina" in *Il Barbiere*. She was so changed I could scarcely recognise her. Her "Fanchonette" was sublime, and her singing like the warbling of a bird; she had a very high soprano voice at that time, executing a shake on the high C or D, as clear as that of a violin. . . .

The hurdy-gurdy may, as we have already seen, have been known to the ancient Greeks; and there is some evidence that the small viol played with a straight bow, or even the violin itself, equalled and, perhaps, surpassed it in the times of the Crusades.

This is established by inspecting the miniatures which ornament the old MS. poems and songs of the King of Navarre—Thibault, Comte de Champagne—a *trovère* whose talents rivalled those of our own troubadour king, Richard *Cœur de Lion*, or James I. of Scotland, and whose impassioned verses were mostly written in praise of Blanche of Castille (the Queen of Louis VIII. of France), of whom he was successively the vassal, lover, and rebel.

Thibault, Comte de Champagne, succeeded his uncle as King of Navarre in 1234—a date very easy to remember. His poetry was admired by Dante and Petrarch in Italy; but he had several admirers among his contemporaries, for instance,

De Lorris, who wrote the first part of the *Roman de la Rose*, in 1235, and others whom I might mention. Anyhow, Thibault is generally considered to have been one of the most famous troubadours, or, rather, *trovères* of the thirteenth century. When Louis VIII. died, at the siege of Avignon, where an epidemic had broken out among the troops, Thibault was suspected of having poisoned him (1226). This French monarch left a son, Louis IX. (Saint Louis), eleven years of age at the time of his father's death, who was placed under the tutelage of Blanche. But, afterwards, Thibault seems to have repented of his licentious life, for he proceeded on a crusade with Saint Louis in 1248, and, on his return, wrote nothing but religious poems.

Blanche of Castille died in 1250, partly from grief at her son's capture by the infidels, and just as he had regained his liberty.

Now the miniature drawings on the MSS. songs left by Thibault, King of Navarre, represent the violin *in the thirteenth century* pretty much as we know it nowadays, in general shape and manner of playing.

Previous to the sixteenth century, we are told, the violin had five or more strings; afterwards the number of strings was reduced to three. Thus Fétis mentions a violin with three strings, made by Andrea Amati, the most ancient maker

of that family in Cremona, which is dated 1546; and it is said that Leonardo da Vinci, the great painter and philosopher, who died in 1523, was a very clever performer on the violin with three strings. His instrument had a silver neck, with a scroll representing a horse's head. Some say he made it himself.

Most of the ancient violins with five strings bear the arms of Charles IX. of France upon them. Brantôme relates that a man called Bathazar (or Balthazarini), surnamed "Le Beau Joyeux," who came from Piedmont (the country of the hurdy-gurdy) in the year 1577, with several other "violars," to play ballet music at the court of the young King Charles IX. and his wicked mother, Catherine de Medicis, was a very prominent character, much admired by the ladies of the French Court.[1]

The performances of these instrumentalists made the violin quite fashionable; it enjoyed great vogue, becoming the popular instrument of

[1] I am under the impression that Baltzar, the early violinist who died in 1663, and who had come from Lubeck to lead the twenty-four violins of our Charles II., in which capacity he was succeeded by John Bannister, adopted the name of his famous predecessor, Bathazar, alluded to above. The latter is said to have been more of a buffoon than a musician, and the Lubeck man was given to drink. John Bannister, on the contrary, stands forth in history as an eminently respectable man and a very capable musician. It is to him that we owe the origin of public concerts in England, as I have explained in my "Famous Violinists," pp. 32 to 37.

the day ; it might be heard played by the lacqueys in the antechamber, and, after a while, in the streets of Paris, where the hurdy-gurdy had before been heard in the same circumstances.

It results from all this that the *troubadours* and the *jongleurs* were the first violinists of note. Many of them were knights, or squires, educated men, capable of writing poetry, which has been since admired by the greatest poets of Italy. They sang or recited their own poems, accompanying themselves upon some instrument, which was a kind of *lute* (guitar or harp), or a *viol;* the latter was *played with a bow*, the former was strummed with the fingers. When the *troubadours* were not players, they employed *jongleurs* to play for them. These men were of a lower grade, and often used a very ancient instrument, called a *vielle*, *rote*, or *hurdy-gurdy*, in which the bow was represented by a wheel that acted on the strings by friction. The viol played with a straight bow generally had five or six strings. Sometimes the *jongleurs*, a class which included buffoons and jesters, imitated the *troubadours*, taking their songs and accompanying themselves upon their instruments.

The *troubadours* were, as we all know, the poets of Provence (in the south of France) during the eleventh and twelfth centuries ; they used the *langue d'oc;* whereas the *trovères*, a century later,

who were the poets of Northern France, used the *langue d'oil*, but the difference between these two idioms is not very great.

Though mostly refined and honourable men, some of these old poets were licentious and brutal. The very first troubadour of note, Guillaume, Comte de Poitiers and Duke of Acquitaine, was one of the greatest rascals that ever lived, and Rambaud d'Orange was even worse. So also some of the poems of those early days are full of grossness and obscenity, but others, on the contrary, are very beautiful.

Persons who are acquainted with modern Italian and Spanish, as well as French, can read the old Provençal poetry without much difficulty, which a modern Frenchman, who is not a linguist, cannot do.

XI

THE SON OF A VIOLINIST

In a tiny German town, which is rarely or never visited by tourists, there was born, in the year 1719, a child whose parents destined him for the law, but whose poetical nature and romantic ideas led him into the profession of music.

It was the violin which he adopted as his instrument, just at the period when the names of Amati, Stradivari, and Stainer had become famous as makers of that "king of instruments."

Of course, our violinist was not rich ; so he was glad to accept the kind patronage of a wealthy Count residing in his district, who gave him some sort of a musical appointment in his family, until a more suitable position could be obtained for him ; this happened when the young violinist was twenty-four years of age, by a vacancy occurring in the Chapel Orchestra of a noted Bishop—or Prince Bishop, as such dignitaries were then styled—where he took the post of first violin.

By this time he would probably have been acquainted with some of the music of Haydn,

his contemporary, and of the older music of Johann Sebastian Bach, that surprising man who had eleven sons and nine daughters (so that among his ancestors and descendants we find no less than 120 musicians of the name Bach, who have all filled more or less honourable posts as organists, choir-masters, singers, and composers). And so our violinist was possibly influenced, likewise, by the works of another contemporary of his, Philip Emmanuel Bach (who is credited with having originated the *Sonata*, soon after perfected by his successors), and also by the works of Handel, and perhaps Johann Christian Bach (1735–1782), both of whom wrote numerous operas for the lyric stage.

Then our violinist began to publish some compositions of his own, which did him much credit; and in 1756, when he was thirty-seven years of age, he brought out a "Violin Method," which was at that time considered the best work of its kind, and is equal to, if not better than several such works which have since made their appearance.

But by this time he was married, and his family was increasing rapidly. So were also increasing his cares and anxieties. After a while, he found himself the father of seven children; but all died early, very early in life, *except a son*, and a daughter, upon whom he lavished his musical instruction

and his love. They both gave great promise, and their father devoted to them most of the time he could snatch from his duties at the Chapel, and the hours devoted to his compositions.

When he could obtain leave of absence from the Bishop, he travelled far and wide with his two children, who, wherever they appeared, created astonishment by their proficiency upon the violin and clavecin, or harpsichord. But from these journeys our worthy violinist often returned utterly impoverished by the expenses of travelling; the hotels and post-horses ate up all the profits, and labour and anxiety began anew.

Before the good man died, in 1787, he had the satisfaction of seeing his excellent "Violin Method" go through three editions.

The daughter, a frail, talented girl, from circumstances to which I need not refer, never realised the promise given by her in early life; but with the *son of the violinist* it was different. He was an excellent player upon the violin, like his father; so much so, that some of his father's compositions for that instrument have been, erroneously, attributed to him.

To give some idea of the natural talent of this son, it may be stated that at the age of four years, he improvised some little minuets, which his parent noted down as he played them.

The father, in his few moments of recreation,

amused himself by performing trios in his own house with two of his friends, one of whom played second violin. The little boy violinist enjoyed these trios immensely, and more than once expressed the ardent desire to join in them; but, of course, that could not be allowed.

"Good morning," the child once said to this second violin; "how goes it with your *buttergeige* to-day?"—in allusion to the soft, *greasy* tone of the instrument. "Do you know," he added, "that it is tuned nearly a quarter of a tone below mine?"

This was found to be perfectly true!

He was very proud of the little violin his father had given him.

One day, on which the worthy violinist happened to be at liberty, he was trying over a new trio with these same friends, when the lad placed himself by the side of the second violin, and begged hard to be allowed to play the part also. When refused, he burst into tears; at which his father relented, and said, "Well, sit down, then, and scrape your strings, since you are so set upon it; but, mind, you must do it so softly that no one can hear you."

At the conclusion of the piece, the gentleman who was playing second violin expressed his opinion that the boy was quite capable of playing the part alone. This was found to be perfectly

correct a few minutes later ; and when they all gave utterance to their intense surprise the little boy coolly remarked, "For that matter, I could play the first part just as well!"

When from six to ten years old the lad went on tour with his clever father into Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and England. He was everywhere received with admiration.

But this admiration of the boy musician manifested itself, unfortunately, in kisses from the ladies (for he was a very pretty boy, with a remarkably intelligent countenance), little nicknacks and pretty toys from the gentlemen, instead of the hard cash so needed by his poor parent.

Then they visited the large cities of Italy, and returned to Paris in 1778, where the lad was applauded for his violin playing and for his skill on the clavecin, and even on the organ, and where he composed some sonatas, some religious pieces, and even entire operas, at the request of certain high-born persons, to whom he dedicated them, and who paid him mighty little money for them.

So that, in 1779, this son of the old German violinist, when he was twenty-three years of age, found himself obliged to return to his native country, and, in order to gain his daily bread, compelled to accept the modest appointment of organist in the little town where he was born.

However, by 1780, just seven years before his good and talented father died, he had composed an opera, which was produced at Munich with enormous success, and at once made his name popular.

Then followed in due course, and with remarkable rapidity, six other operas, some of which were applauded to the skies, and remain popular to the present day—what am I writing?—which have become immortal! And from the same talented pen flowed about a dozen symphonies, some twenty concertos for the piano and orchestra, several concertos for violin, sonatas, variations, and fantasies for piano, some religious pieces, notably an "Ave Verum" for four voices, and a "Requiem" which have become celebrated.

"In all these styles," says a modern author, alluding to this son of a violinist, "he has risen above everything that had been composed before his time."

I find from a recent catalogue that he has left in all 626 works; and a modern French professor at the Conservatoire of Paris says of him, "*He was the most perfect and most comprehensive of all the great geniuses of the musical art.*"

Well, this gifted son of our worthy violinist, sad to relate, died at the early age of thirty-six, and was interred in a pauper's grave at Vienna. It was a stormy day in December; the few admirers

who followed were forced to take shelter from the wind and the rain ; and when, next day, his disconsolate widow came to weep over his tomb, of course it could not be found !

. . . . . .

Wolfgang Mozart had two violins, one by Jacobus Stainer of Absom, dated 1659, and the other on which he learned to play, by A. F. Maier, of Salzburg (his native town), dated 1754. This was a three-quarter instrument given to him by his father, Leopold Mozart.

XII

AN EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF ANTONIO LOLLI

A VIOLINIST of some eminence, named Antonio Lolli,[1] was born in the ancient little city of Bergamo, about twenty-eight miles north-east of Milan, in the year 1728—nearly sixty years before the birth of Paganini.

Bergamo, which dates back to ancient Roman times, was also the birthplace of the celebrated Donizetti (a man said to be of Scotch extraction), the composer of *L'Elisire d'Amore*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La Figlia del Reggimento*, and a hundred other beautiful works. The great cantatrice, Brigitta Banti, a sketch of whose wonderful career I have given in my little volume, "Voice and Violin," published in 1898, was also born in the same neighbourhood.

[1] So little is known of Antonio Lolli, an eminent violinist of the eighteenth century, that some writers have confused him with Giovanni Battista Lulli, a more distinguished musician of the seventeenth century (also an accomplished violinist), the friend of Molière and Louis XIV., and founder of Italian Opera in France—also, with Lotti, Organist and Chapel-Master at St. Mark's in Venice, who died in 1740, and who wrote the well-known song, *Pur dicesti*, and many other noted compositions.

In the person of Antonio Lolli, we may credit the old city of Bergamo with having produced a violinist of no small note, more particularly as a *virtuoso*, but not much of a composer. It is not known under whom he studied—perhaps, under Somis, one of Corelli's best pupils ; in fact, little appears to be known of his early life ; but when he was thirty-four years of age (in 1762) he obtained the appointment of Concert Director to the Duke of Wurtemberg, which post he held for ten or eleven years ; and in the prime of manhood, about 1773, he went to Russia. In that country he obtained a signal token of admiration from the Empress Catherine II., in the shape of a violin bow, made especially for him by her order, and bearing the inscription : "Bow made by order of Catherine II. for the incomparable Lolli."

Whether Lolli was one of the numerous paramours of this unprincipled princess, who is supposed to have connived at the murder of her poor, silly husband, the Czar Peter III., who, besides being too fond of Burgundy wine and card-playing, was a good amateur violinist, history has not yet recorded ; so that it is impossible to say whether it was the man or his music that this wilful and licentious woman most admired. The episode of the bow, however, makes us inclined to accept the latter alternative, but perhaps both are true.

It has been placed on record that, in playing, Antonio Lolli excelled more in rapid movements and effects than in the slow, telling adagio, which distinguished his contemporary Nardini — the favourite pupil of Tartini. When he entered on his duties at Stuttgart, in 1762, Nardini was there, and Lolli soon recognised his superiority. He therefore requested permission of the Duke of Wurtemberg to travel for one year. During that time, it is said, instead of travelling, he retired to a secluded village not far distant, and worked assiduously at his instrument; so that when the time of his absence had elapsed, he returned a much greater musician than before.

Lolli was about ten years in Russia, where he appears to have enjoyed the title of "Concert-Master to the Empress." It is impossible here to enter into the private life of that despotic German princess, whose real name was Sophia Augusta, the name of Catherine being assumed when she entered the Greek Church and married the Grand Duke, afterwards Peter III. In spite of her vices, Russia owes much to her, for she was a singular mixture of brutality and kindness. But Lolli would certainly not have remained all those ten years in the land of the Muscovites unless he had enjoyed great favour and patronage from the Empress Catherine II.

He must, therefore, have been wonderfully surprised when one morning he found the house in which he resided surrounded by soldiers, and the Chief of the Police, Reliewsky, demanding immediate admittance.

On entering his apartment, this stern officer addressed the favourite court violinist somewhat in the following terms :—

"Signor Lolli, it is with much grief that I find myself commanded by my august sovereign to execute an order, the severity of which afflicts and horrifies me ; and I cannot imagine what you can have done to have brought upon yourself such fearful resentment on the part of her Majesty."

"I, sir !" exclaimed Lolli ; "I cannot imagine it any more than you can ; the Empress and myself are on the best of terms—my surprise at this visit is greater than yours—what is the nature of your errand ?"

"Indeed, I have scarcely the courage to tell you," replied Reliewsky hesitatingly.

"It cannot be that I have lost the confidence of the Empress ?" continued the violinist.

"Oh, if it were nothing more than that, I should be in less despair," rejoined the Chief of Police ; "confidence might return ; a lost place in her Majesty's favour might be regained."

"Am I, then, ordered to quit the country ?" asked Lolli.

"That, also, might be got over," replied the other; "with your talent on the violin you might live anywhere in the world where civilisation and liberty exist."

"Surely I am not to be sent to Siberia?" ejaculated the artist.

"No, alas! It is possible to return, even from Siberia," replied the police officer phlegmatically.

"Then, am I to be thrown into prison?" timidly inquired Lolli, becoming more and more alarmed, "and, pray, for what crime?"

"If it were only that," coolly rejoined Reliewsky, "it would not be so very dreadful—men mostly come out of prison after a time."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed the violinist, "you do not mean that I am to be submitted to the indignity of the knout?"

"Such an indignity is frightful, no doubt," said the officer, "but it does not kill——"

"What?" screamed the virtuoso, "it is my life that is in jeopardy!—It is impossible! I do not believe it—there must be some frightful mistake—the Empress has always been so good to me—only two days ago she gave me the most striking proof of her affection, of her love for my music, of her passionate admiration. Tell me the worst—this suspense will kill me —what are your orders?"

"Well, my talented friend," said the cool-headed Chief of Police, in a lachrymose tone of voice, "it almost brings the tears to my eyes when I think that we shall be charmed no more by your brilliant violin playing; but, much as I am grieved to say it, the irrefragable commands from my gracious sovereign are that you must be stuffed and put into a glass case."

"Stuffed, and put into a glass case!" cried the violinist, echoing the last words of the officer. "Are you demented? or has the Empress suddenly lost her reasoning powers?—you cannot have received such an order without remonstrating upon its extravagance and barbarity!"

"Alas! my poor friend," replied Reliewsky, "I did what scarcely any of us dare to do—I did make an humble remonstrance; but my august sovereign only frowned upon me, commanded me to quit her presence forthwith, and to execute her orders without the slightest delay; her words still echo in my ears: 'Go,' she said, 'and do not forget that your duty is to execute without the least murmuring whatever commissions I may think proper to charge you with!'"

He then added, "I will give you half-an-hour to prepare for death, and to arrange your worldly affairs."

The scene which followed this declaration would be very difficult to describe. The poor virtuoso violinist was at his wits' end to imagine some means of extricating himself from the effects of the frantic order he had just heard, and which, he felt convinced, must be due to some serious misunderstanding that placed his life in immediate jeopardy.

At last, after many supplications, entreaties, and bribes (especially the latter), it was agreed between them that Lolli should be permitted to write a note to the Empress imploring her pity. The Chief of Police so far gave way to the supplications of the despairing artist, whose talent he really admired, and he consented to forward the note to the palace before taking any further steps.

But not daring to present himself before the Empress, Reliewsky hurried to her private secretary, Count Brusky, and explained the whole matter to him.

The Count thought that the Chief of Police must have gone out of his mind ; nevertheless, he took the note, and shortly afterwards found his way to the private apartments of her Majesty.

When the Empress learnt what had happened, she threw up her hands and exclaimed, "Great powers of Heaven ! what a horrid business ! Go at once, Count, and relieve the poor violinist from

his useless terrors; send away the guards and return to me, when I will explain how all this has happened."

Count Brusky did as he was commanded. As rapidly as possible he set Signor Lolli at liberty, and returned forthwith to the Empress to assure her that her orders had been promptly and scrupulously executed. She then explained to the Count that her favourite little spaniel, which she had called "Lolli," having unfortunately died, she had ordered M. Reliewsky to have its body stuffed and put into a glass case.

Soon after this extraordinary adventure Antonio Lolli left Russia; it must have preyed strongly upon his mind. In 1785 he paid a visit to England, whence he proceeded to Spain, and then to Paris for concert engagements.

In 1788 he at last returned to his native Italy, where he styled himself "Violin Solo to the Empress of Russia." A few years later, upon playing at Vienna, he added, "and to the King of Naples." He died at Naples in 1802, at the age of seventy-four, after a lingering illness. Catherine II. had died suddenly of apoplexy in 1796, aged sixty-seven years.

Perhaps I should state here that it was *not* from the life of Catherine II. (wife of the Czar Peter III.) that Meyerbeer's opera, *La Stella del*

Norte is taken, but from that of Catherine I., wife of Peter I. (Peter the Great). The career of the latter was far the more romantic. Catherine I. was of peasant extraction, a girl whose remarkable beauty and amiable manners raised her from the lowest ranks to be crowned Empress of Russia; but Catherine II. was born a Princess (Sophia Augusta of Anhalt, Germany), and of these two women she was the most despotic and licentious.

A writer in an English encyclopædia (1790) says: "The celebrated performer on the violin, Lolle (*sic*), came to England in 1785. Such was his caprice that he was seldom heard, and so eccentric were his style and composition that by many he was regarded as a madman. He was, however, during his lucid intervals, a very great and expressive performer in the serious style."

The words, "during his lucid intervals," would, nowadays, render the writer liable to an action for libel.

With regard to his compositions, it has been said that Lolli never wrote more than the violin part, obtaining the bass parts from other hands—which is, perhaps, another libel. He has left, besides several solos and some duets for two violins, a "Treatise on the Art of Violin Playing." And it is curious to note that this artist, who

was born nearly sixty years before Paganini, has written some of his solo passages of considerable compass *to be played upon the fourth string alone.*

So true it is that "*there is nothing new, except what is forgotten,*" as the milliner of Marie Antoinette once observed to her royal mistress.

XIII

A REMINISCENCE OF VUILLAUME

IN the month of April 1856, my good father had agreed to meet the Russian Count Gerebsoff in Paris on a matter of business concerning some railway concessions in which one of our friends was deeply interested, and, fortunately for me, he decided to take me with him. I was then quite a young man, with a doctor's diploma about one year old, not knowing exactly what to do with myself, and already engaged to be married!

We left Brussels by an early train, and drove through Paris rather late in the evening of the same day. The fine streets and wide boulevards were brilliantly lighted, and I shall never forget the vivid impression made upon me by this dazzling sight on the occasion of my first visit to a city in which I was destined to reside so long. We found the famous Hôtel Maurice in the Rue de Rivoli rather too full; no comfortable rooms were to be had, so we drove to the more modest but more comfortable Hôtel de Tours, in the Place de la Bourse, not far from the Rue

Croix des Petits Champs, where Vuillaume, the greatest violin-maker of modern times, had his shop, over which his magic name appeared in rather bold characters, considering the small size of the establishment.

Having devoted two or three days to the Russian Count and to making calls upon some other friends, we next turned our steps to the little shop in the Rue Croix des Petits Champs. A whole fortnight was before us, to wait for the arrival of certain documents, before we could return home to Brussels.

At that period, I devoted some time every day regularly to my violin, but I had not brought it with me to Paris ; and I thought that a fortnight devoted to idleness would not be very judicious, so it was decided to purchase a bow from Vuillaume, and to borrow a violin from him for that time, if possible.

Jean Baptiste Vuillaume, whose name is now celebrated in the violin world, was born in 1799, and died in 1875. He is credited with having made upwards of 2500 violins, not to mention tenors and basses. There are two others of the same name who are known to have distinguished themselves, either as makers or dealers in violins. There was Jean Vuillaume of Mirecourt, 1700 to 1740, who is said to have learnt his art under the great Stradivari of Cremona ; and there was

N. F. Vuillaume of the Gallérie St. Hubert, Brussels (where the clever *luthier*, Darche, also had his shop), said to have been a "brother" of Jean Baptiste Vuillaume, though, I fancy, he once told me he was his "cousin."

But I do not intend to inquire more minutely here into the pedigree or family tree of Jean Baptiste Vuillaume of Paris. I am only going to say a few words of this remarkable man as I knew him. I need scarcely inform my readers how he became celebrated. Every one knows how his industry and perseverance raised him from next to nothing to the very highest rank of violin-makers and experts; how he was one of the cleverest imitators of the old Italian instruments; how he became acquainted with that marvellous dealer, the pedlar violinist, Luigi Tarisio, whose stock of instruments he purchased after the latter's decease, including, we are told, some of the finest violins the world has ever known.

When I first saw Vuillaume, he and George Chanot were the two greatest makers and experts that France, or, indeed, any other country, knew at that time.

As my father and I strolled into the Rue Croix des Petits Champs, we found Monsieur Vuillaume standing at his shop door; it was about ten o'clock in the morning. He was a tall, well-dressed, dark man, with black whiskers, and clean-shaved upper

lip and chin, rather more like an Englishman than a Frenchman, except as regarded his exceedingly polished manners. He was very affable. From his dark eyes there came a bright gleam that lit up an open, honest countenance; but, at the same time, I remarked a shrewd expression that denoted a clever man of business.

I asked him if he would sell me a violin bow, one of his own make—one that would not "whistle," and that would do the *staccato* easily.

In those days I fondly imagined that the "stiff *staccato*," which is so great an ornament in solo playing, depended almost entirely on the bow. In after years I found that, like everything else in art, it came only by long and steady practice.

Vuillaume gave way to my weakness and inexperience with that courteous diplomacy which was characteristic of him. He gravely informed me, in slow and distinct terms, that to perform the *staccato* well, I should choose "a bow that is not too light, and rather stiff" (I never thought of asking him whether he played the violin himself). I replied that I should rely entirely upon his judgment to choose for me a bow for that particular purpose; and it was agreed that I should give him twenty-five francs for it, which was five francs more than I had given for a very good bow in Brussels seven years previously.

In the course of a few minutes Vuillaume was

kind enough to choose for me a very excellent bow, which I still possess, and use almost daily, and which has served me in many a concert. Meanwhile my father entered into conversation with him, and we passed a very agreeable half-hour together.

Vuillaume was evidently pleased at my father insisting that he should stamp his well-known name on the bow, which he did at once. Then I handed him my card, and told him where we were staying, intimating that I had no violin with me, and asking if he would let me *hire* one for the fortnight.

"No," he said, "I will send one round to your hotel; you can bring it back to me when you leave."

"Then how much shall I deposit as a security?" asked my father, thrusting his hand into his pocket.

"Nothing," said Vuillaume, smiling.

As we were perfect strangers to him, this generous conduct surprised me not a little. But his manners, as well as his appearance, were those of a thorough gentleman.

The shop was rather small, but excessively neat, and it was crammed with violins, violin bows, cases, boxes of strings, pegs, &c., &c. My good-natured father paid for the purchase, and we took our departure. But, on leaving rather too

abruptly, I caused my new bow to strike the side of the narrow doorway, and so broke off the fine ivory point.

I re-entered the shop and showed Vuillaume what I had done.

He appeared very much vexed, more so than I was; for I considered it a very slight accident; but, of course, it destroyed the fine finish of the extremity.

As I handed him the bow he made that well-known clicking sound of discontent, caused by successively sticking the tongue to the back of the front teeth, and sucking it away again. He then took up a sharp knife from his desk at the counter, and neatly shaved off the broken point. When this little operation was finished, he handed the bow back to me, with a look of disappointment almost amounting to anguish.

I felt extremely sorry for my clumsiness, and told him so, but I was too much elated with the idea of possessing *a new bow that would do the staccato easily*, to say very much.

On arriving at our hotel some hours later we found that Vuillaume had kept his promise, and had sent round a very nice violin. To my surprise and delight, he had had the forethought to place a box of rosin in the case.

Yes! Vuillaume was an admirable man!

I was thus enabled to devote about half-an-

hour in the morning, and another half-hour in the evening, to my music.

There had been some humorous conversation in the little shop about this violin. I told Vuillaume playfully that "it need not be a Stradivari nor a Guarneri, but one that I could play upon." He replied, "I will send one with which you will be well satisfied."

It was a violin of a yellowish-brown colour, and somewhat raised pattern, of an old appearance, was in perfect condition, easy to play, and had a very fair quality of tone.

Before leaving Paris I returned him the violin, with many cordial thanks for his kind attentions, and purchased a supply of strings and some rosin, with which to return home.

In our second conversation I learnt from him that to avoid the production of "whistling" sounds from the bow "the strings must be good, and that it is well to use always the same rosin." But some bows will "whistle" in spite of everything—especially if there is much scent flying about in the air of the concert room. Those of our great English makers, Tubbs and Dodd, never do.

Then, as to the *staccato* bowing, of course it did not come all at once. It was conquered, not by the sole use of Vuillaume's bow, but by discarding delusions and laziness. I will do him this

stroke of justice, however, with regard to the excellent bow he sold me; after many years' practice, and when sixteen to twenty-four notes of stiff *staccato* had become child's play to me, I found, and still find, that Vuillaume's is really the best bow in this respect of all that I have tried.

I have now related what I saw of this remarkable man in April 1856. In the following June I went to live in Paris, and occasionally purchased strings at the little shop in the Rue Croix des Petits Champs, but I never saw him again; he was always away on business or at his villa in the suburbs.

Forty years ago Vuillaume's violins were selling in London for £14, *with a bow and case*. Recently a friend of mine, a professional violinist, gave £94 for one—*without a bow and case*. Camillo Sivori played upon a Vuillaume violin during the whole of his brilliant career, and a finer tone was never heard.

XIV

THE YOUTH OF AUBER

HEARING recently (for the first time for many years) the brilliant ballet-music of *Masaniello*, as arranged for the military band of the Royal Marine Artillery at Southsea, set me thinking of one of the greatest of all French composers, and of the visit I paid him when he was at the head of the Paris Conservatoire de Musique.

Like Cherubini, to whom he succeeded in that position, Auber in early life was a violinist; and, as occurred with our own charming composer, Balfe, it seemed, at first, that the violin was to claim him as a devotee for life. The delicious melodies dispersed throughout the operas of these two last-named celebrities are certainly due in great measure to the violin training of the musicians. The elegant opening passage of the overture to the *Crown Diamonds*, some of the songs in *Fra Diavolo*, the charming tenor air in *La Sirène* (of which the great violinist, De Bériot, has actually

reproduced some bars into the *rondo* of his Ninth Concerto), all point to the influence of the violin upon the writings of Auber, and nothing more so, perhaps, than the delicious ballet-music of his opera, *La Muette de Portici* (*Masaniello*), which has never been surpassed and seldom, if ever, equalled.

It is, perhaps, fortunate for the great world of *dilettanti* that Auber abandoned his violin playing and took to composition ; but his early life was full of disappointments and failures.

He was born at Caen, in Normandy, on the 29th January 1784, about a fortnight before the birth of Paganini at Genoa. The event occurred while his mother, the wife of a Parisian print-seller, was on a visit there. The family was of Norman origin, but Auber's grandfather quitted the province in 1775 to seek his fortune in Paris as a carriage-painter and decorator. He must have been very clever in his business, for he was appointed to attend to the Royal equipages of King Louis XVI., and lived at the Court Coach Houses (*Les Petites Écuries*) of that unfortunate monarch.[1]

This seems to have been a very lucrative appointment, for it is said that the carriage-painter and decorator amassed a fortune equiva-

[1] This Royal edifice was afterwards destroyed, but it gave its name to the street (Rue des Petites Écuries) which still exists.

lent to about £1000 a year, English money, which was truly marvellous at that period. But the great Revolution which broke out in 1789 ruined him; and his son, the father of the composer, seeing, about 1795, that he would never inherit much money, started in business as a print-seller in the Rue St. Lazare, and thus laid the foundation of a new fortune.

The house next door was the residence of a friend of mine, where, during four consecutive years, I passed many pleasant hours collecting material for my "Scenes from the Reign of Louis XVI.," on a new edition of which I am now occupied in my leisure moments.

The child born at Caen was christened Daniel François Esprit. His father was an amiable and clever man, very fond of music and painting; his business was successful, and he had many artistic friends who often spent pleasant musical evenings at his house. But, like all persons connected, however distantly, with the Court, the revolutionists did all they could to harm him. The honest and successful print-seller and picture-dealer was obliged to hide himself from the vile madmen who argued with the aid of the axe of the guillotine, and governed their country with their feet in pools of blood.

It was only when the Revolution was on the decline, during the Directory, that Auber's father

could return to his business; he then called his artistic friends again around him, and began to look seriously into the education of his son.

From early childhood young Auber had manifested a very decided taste for music. His father provided him with several masters, but his principal early instructor was the violinist Lamare of Caen; and the lad soon became a capital player upon the violin, as Mozart had been before him; at the same time, however, he studied the violoncello and the piano under Ladurner.

At eleven years of age the future author of *Masaniello* and *Fra Diavolo* composed several little songs, some of which were sung, between the dances, by the young beauties who frequented the evening parties of that period. One of these songs, called *Bonjour*, had a wonderful amount of success, and became quite the rage.

But Auber was a youth of so timid a nature that these early successes appeared rather to alarm him than to incite him to advance. He was afraid of becoming a successful artist: he shunned notoriety, and actually begged his father to put him into some commercial house or business.

In a very short time, however, book-keeping proved distasteful to him.

Not daring to displease his father by suddenly throwing up his employment, he consented to leave Paris for London with a young friend, a banker's clerk, nominally to study commerce and perfect himself as a man of business, but in reality to accept invitations to musical parties, where his songs were much appreciated.

Here, in London, he composed some quartets for harp, violin, violoncello, and piano. This was during the peace which had been signed at Amiens (28th March 1802) and was not destined to last long.

Auber was then eighteen years of age, not bad-looking, of very amiable manners, and a soft heart as regarded the ladies. Soon, however, the rupture of the Treaty of Amiens put a stop to all this music and love-making, and, after having resided here sixteen months, the youth returned to Paris, more unfit than ever for commercial occupations.

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed his father, on his son's return to the print-shop, "you will make a splendid man of business! Why, you know no more now than when you left Paris."

"*Que veux-tu, père?*—I only care for music," replied the other.

"Ah! villainous vagabond that you are!" continued the good-natured father. "Well, play away, compose music, and become a distinguished

amateur, if you will not take it up as a profession —anyhow, you are no good for business."

Auber consented willingly to his kind father's suggestion. All the quartets he had composed in London were performed in Paris towards the end of 1804, by some of the pupils of the Conservatoire, and met with much applause. A violinist induced him to write some pieces for the violin, which appear to have attracted attention, and Mazas, a well-known violinist, asked young Auber to write a Concerto for the violin, which was pronounced "superb" by all who heard it. When his father began to realise the facility with which such successful music was produced, he beseeched him to try his hand at something for the Opera.

The very idea of such a thing appears to have alarmed the young man very much at first, but after considerable pressure from some friends he finally consented to write some new music to an old opera called *Julie* for a society of amateurs.

Once begun, the music in question was written off without delay, and in about a week the parts were all copied and distributed. The young lady who took the part of "Julie" was exceedingly beautiful, and among the violinists in this orchestra of amateurs was a man who afterwards became a great celebrity.

Whilst this little opera *Julie* was being rehearsed, Auber, who conducted, noticed one of the violinists, whose bow seemed rather uncertain, and whose eyes were fixed upon the beautiful *prima donna*, instead of upon his music. This musician not only forgot his "repeats," but played right through his "silences," and actually lost his place! As this man was playing the part of first violin, Auber was obliged to stop the orchestra and demand a repetition. At the same time he approached the violinist who was in fault, and timidly remarked—

"My dear sir, be so kind as to pay the greatest attention to your part—everything depends upon it——"

He would probably have said more; but he was interrupted by the violinist, who rapidly exclaimed—

"Very likely!—I do not deny it!—but please look at 'Julie'! Did you ever see such an exquisite figure or a more lovely face? What do you think of it? Have you noticed the delicious contour of her arms and shoulders? the wonderful expression of her eyes? the sublime arching——"

"Permit me, sir," interrupted Auber, in his turn.

"No! pardon me," continued the stout little man, letting his violin fall into his lap—"pardon me, I am more of a painter than a violinist, so

that when such a lovely model is placed before me I am quite lost in admiration, and the music must take its chance!"

That is how Auber first made the acquaintance of Ingres (in 1805), who afterwards became one of the most celebrated of French painters; and the intimacy lasted more than half a century. Paul Delaroche was another very celebrated painter with whom Auber was intimate.

To return to the little opera: the orchestral music was written for first and second violins, first and second altos, violoncello, and contrabass—in all, six parts. We are assured by those who heard it that "the effect was delicious," and that some of the pieces would have done credit to the greatest composers.

Among the distinguished men who were to be met with occasionally at the musical gatherings in the Rue St. Lazare was Cherubini. To give some idea of the great popularity he enjoyed in the minds of the musical public in Paris at this time, I may relate a little anecdote which was told of him whilst he was at the head of the Conservatoire de Musique.

The son of a bass singer at the Opera, a young student who had had the good fortune to be admitted to the classes, happened to meet Cherubini in the great corridor, and said to him—

"Monsieur, I am extremely obliged to you for having granted me permission to enter the classes of the Conservatoire as a pupil; and, now, please permit me to ask of you another great favour—please, Monsieur, be so good as to let me have a bass voice like my papa."

What Cherubini answered to this I do not know.

It was then arranged that young Auber should become the pupil of the great Cherubini, provided he would pass a sponge over all his little successes and commence his musical studies again from the very beginning. This was consented to on the advice of his father.

Cherubini may have had some partiality for Auber, seeing that both of them had laboured to a certain extent at the violin. Anyhow, he took him to the Netherlands in 1808, and introduced him to the Prince de Chimay, a great patron of art, at his château, near Ath, to which I have before referred. There Cherubini went for a holiday, devoting himself to the study of botany, and to playing billiards. Nevertheless, he wrote his celebrated "Mass in F" for the little chapel of the château, where it was performed on St. Cecilia's day 1808, for the first time.

On a second visit there in September 1812, Auber made his second attempt at operatic composition, producing a little piece of which all the

airs have been introduced into some of his subsequent compositions. Though this château of the Prince de Chimay has been described as an Eldorado of art and artists, the house and grounds are not comparable with those of many country gentlemen of moderate means in England. In the fountain of the garden, I found there, for the first time, a plant which would have delighted Cherubini had he known it—a wonderful water plant of the genus *Chara*, in which the circulation of the sap may be seen, under the microscope, like the circulation of the blood in the fine membrane of a frog's foot.

At the time of Auber's visit, Caraman de Chimay had recently espoused Madame Tallien, a celebrated woman, whose first husband died during the French Revolution. On account of her political influence she was rigorously excluded from the court of Napoleon I., but this talented lady continued her remarkable career in another sphere, as the Princess de Chimay, to whom De Bériot has dedicated one of his finest compositions.

The following year, 1813, Auber attempted a piece for the Opera Comique. It was entitled *Le Séjour Militaire*, and was performed with so little success that for many years no author would offer him a *libretto*.

Cherubini, who felt certain of the ultimate success of his pupil, finally induced Planard,

the author of the *Séjour Militaire*, to write another poem for him. This was a little opera called *Le Testament et les Billets Doux*. It was brought out in 1820, but with no greater success than the first; evidently, the poem did not inspire the musician. His old professor came once more to the rescue, and Planard, under considerable pressure from the Italian *maestro*, wrote *La Bergère Chatelaine*, an opera in three acts. This obtained a marvellous success, and for the first time Auber's name became thoroughly popular.

Three months after the production of *La Bergère Chatelaine*, Auber's good father died.

He died, thanking Heaven that he had been allowed to live long enough to feel certain of the future eminence of his talented son.

Fortunately for the musical world, Auber did not inherit much wealth; otherwise, his natural timidity would, probably, have prevented him producing any more works. As it was, he was not a good enough violinist to travel as a soloist, neither was his knowledge of the piano and the violoncello that of a *virtuoso*. So he had to rely chiefly upon his very decided talent as a composer.

In 1821 came out "Emma; or, the Imprudent Promise," which is said to have been as successful as the above-named opera; and better was still

to come when he had the advantage of meeting with Scribe, whose name in the world of lyric art has long been linked with his. Their acquaintance was made in the following singular manner.

One morning a letter from a writer of vaudevilles, Eugène Scribe, was handed to Auber. In this letter Scribe requested permission to borrow one of the songs in *La Bergère Chatelaine*, for the Gymnase Theatre. The permission was granted. Then followed a visit from Scribe to Auber to thank him personally for this kindness, and from that moment these two celebrated men were inseparable — it was the case of Bellini and Romani—the musician had found a poet whose subjects and words inspired him to write some of the most elegant and brilliant music of our time. Besides the *libretti* of *Lestocq*, "The Crown Diamonds," *La Sirène, Masaniello, Fra Diavolo*, there flowed from the pens of Scribe and Auber *Haydée on le Secret, Le Maçon, L'Ambassadrice, Le Domino Noir, Le Dieu et la Bayadère, Le Cheval de Bronze, Manon Lescaut, Le Lac des Fées, La Part du Diable, La Fiancée, Marco Spada, Gustavus III.*, and some other works, the names of which escape me at this moment, all more or less successful operas, and some that created a sensation throughout the world.

Of the latter, perhaps, *La Muette de Portici* (*Masaniello*) is the most noteworthy, and the

circumstances in which it originated are certainly curious.

A singer, named Madame Desbrosses, had a benefit night at the Opera Comique. Scribe and Auber went in together to see what was going on. It was a tiny opera called *Deux Mots dans la Forêt.* For some reason Madame Desbrosses had induced a friend of hers, Signora Bigotini, an Italian mimic and dancer of great talent, to play a part in this little work. At the conclusion of the piece Scribe touched Auber on the shoulder, and said—

"My dear fellow, I've got an idea!"

"Really!" exclaimed Auber, smiling sarcastically.

"Yes, really! Listen to me. We have no great singer at the Opera just at present, and if we could make our *prima donna* a dancer—a mimic—I think we should produce a great effect. What do you think?"

"Perhaps so," replied Auber.

That is how *La Muette de Portici* originated, based on the story of the revolution at Naples led by the fisherman, Masaniello, and a greater success was never achieved on any stage. In the *libretto* of this "Dumb Girl of Portici" Scribe had the assistance of his clever friend, Germaine Delavigne. The music was rehearsed during the month of December 1827, and the opera was

brought out early in the following year—just a year before the appearance of Rossini's *Guillaume Tell.*

I have now terminated what I had to say on the youth of Auber, and will conclude this chapter with a short account of my visit to him, when he was an old man and enjoying a dignified repose from his labours as an operatic composer. He had succeeded Cherubini as director of the Conservatoire de Musique, as I have already stated.

March 1858, in Paris, had been very cold and disagreeable; but in April the sun shone out gloriously, and the weather was quite hot as I strolled along the Boulevard des Italiens, about midday, in the direction of the Conservatoire. Auber was then at the zenith of his fame, but was already about seventy-three years of age. I had made an appointment with him a few days previously; I wished to ask if he would give me a few words of advice with regard to musical composition, and more especially if it would be possible for me to succeed, alone, without the help of a master, in the study of harmony.

I was then twenty-five years of age, and was reckoned by my friends as a successful violinist, but I had little knowledge of the "science" of music. It was under the vivid impression pro-

duced upon me by the works of Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, and the new opera by Verdi, *Il Trovatore*, which I had just heard at Paris, with Frezzolini, Alboni, Mario, and Graziani, for whom it was written, that I decided upon making this visit to Auber.

I found him, in spite of the warm weather, seated in his armchair before an immense log of elm blazing upon the hearth. He was alone, looking over some scores, several of which lay upon the table in the centre of his large, dingy room at the Conservatoire. He received me most courteously, and we spent some time chatting together.

Auber was then a man of medium height, neatly dressed, wearing the ribbon of "grand officer" of the Legion of Honour, still straight in stature, and active. His features were intelligent and agreeable rather than handsome, and had a marked benevolent expression.

Having heard what I had to say on musical subjects, he expressed his opinion that it would not be impossible for a person accustomed to study as I was to conquer the secrets of harmony, unguided by a professor; but if I could secure the services of a competent master it would save a great deal of time and shorten the road considerably. If, however, I should adopt the former plan, he advised me to use the work of Bazin

(the composer of the beautiful little opera *Madelon*, and many other works), which was the class-book of the Conservatoire, and he offered to show it to me.

To this effect, he rang his bell, and a man-servant entered, by whom he sent a message to one of the masters, requesting the loan, for a few minutes, of Bazin's "Treatise on Harmony." In a short time the reply came that it was then being used in the class, but that Monsieur Auber could have it in the course of half-an-hour.

I thanked him, and intimated that it would be quite sufficient for me to take down the name of the book. Auber most kindly wrote it upon a slip of paper which he handed to me, and which is yet among my collection of curiosities, though I have a still more valuable autograph of his. After some further conversation he shook me heartily by the hand and I took my departure.

In after years I often thought of this interview; and it came most vividly to my mind when the distinguished composer of *La Muette* and *Fra Diavolo* succumbed to the effects of the siege of Paris at eighty-six years of age.

Throughout his youth Auber had to compete with the beautiful and brilliant music of the Italian school, beside which most other compositions seemed pale and vapid. When *Guillaume*

Tell came out in Paris, in 1829, nothing could live beside it on the operatic stage. The *Muette de Portici* (*Masaniello*) of Auber and the *Robert le Diable* of Meyerbeer could alone attempt to vie with it. During the greater part of his long career Auber had as French rivals, Hérold, Meyerbeer, Halevy, Adolph Adam, Bazin, and a large number of other eminent musicians ; nevertheless, by the aid of his natural talent and great perseverance, he succeeded in carving for himself on the tablets of the marvellous nineteenth century an immortal name.

XV

THE "DANCING FROG"

It may be that few of my readers ever heard of a *ballerino* who was known as the "Dancing Frog." Nevertheless, until quite recently such a man was in existence, and was a celebrity in his day. But, unlike the ballet-master, Arthur St. Léon,[1] who was a greater violinist than he was a dancer, the "Dancing Frog" was a much better mimic and dancer than he was a violinist. Some, indeed, do not believe that he could play the violin at all, or not much better than the poor old fellow who scrapes out certain popular airs at the doors of public-houses on Saturday nights.

I have lately received a letter from an old friend in Paris who has occupied the position of first violin at the Opera for, I dare not say, how many years—he is on the retired list now; the very mention of dates makes us feel very much older than we naturally are.

[1] "Voice and Violin," pp. 142–150.

Let us remember that the earth turns quicker on its axis than it used to do in former times, as Euler, the great German philosopher, once pointed out very clearly. The earth is gradually getting nearer to the sun, he said, hence its rotation must be more and more accelerated as time advances. The days and nights are shorter, the months and years are shorter, and life is quicker, to make up for it all. We perceive nothing of this, as our clocks and dates are regulated on the earth's movements; but as a consequence, men and women now live to about one hundred years, whilst they merely lived to forty or fifty some few centuries ago. But to return to my friend, the violinist. He writes:—

"You may remember old Perrot, the *ballerino*, with whom I used to have some trouble at times, when he could not manage to get his *entrechats* exactly with the leader's beat; but you will not remember Marie Taglioni, that exquisite dancer who brought him out; you must have been a mere schoolboy when she retired after a glorious career. Dear me! how it takes one back to the good old times, to the days of Malibran-Garcia, De Bériot, Paganini, and the great Lablache, with the voice of a bass nightingale! . . .

"But I am forgetting old Perrot, the 'Dancing

Frog,' as we always called him since he appeared in that extraordinary character in one of Taglioni's most successful ballets. Well, my good friend, he is just dead! We all mourn his loss intensely, and it makes me think of those happy days when I, who had never got more than a second prize at that vile old Conservatoire, managed, somehow, to get to the desks of the first violins at the Opera, and the 'Dancing Frog' used to come and learn his music off by ear at my rooms, and scold me about the 'accent' or 'rhythm,' which is everything, you know, in ballet music, and my old landlady often threatened to expel me because I played in the morning to oblige him. But I should never cease if I went on talking about the 'Dancing Frog.'

"Yes; he is dead! but he has left a fortune which some say amounts to about £20,000 of your English money, but I think it must be less. His wife was Carlotta Grisi, the celebrated dancer, no relation whatever to Giulia Grisi, the no less celebrated singer, and wife of Mario de Candia. And to whom do you think he has left his fortune? To Marie Taglioni Desvoisins (the grand-daughter of our divine Marie Taglioni), that tall, fair girl, with large, blue eyes, who has figured here in the ballet since I retired."

The writer goes on to inform me that the great dancer Taglioni married Desvoisins, a handsome fop, who behaved very ill to her, and she took her son, her only child, to England, where she resided to be away from her husband.

But the lad would not become a naturalised Englishman, and so, in time, he was drawn into the French army. He was at Metz, in the army of Marshal Bazaine, where he was mortally wounded.

Marie Taglioni and Madame Lebœuf (a cousin by marriage of Marshal Lebœuf), who had also a wounded son at Metz, found their way there with the greatest difficulty, and just in time to see the poor young man before he died. On his death-bed he confided to his mother that he had left a young infant in Paris, a few months old, whose mother was dying of consumption.

Taglioni took this orphan grandchild in hand; she educated her with great care as a dancer; for she knew that she would have little fortune to leave her.

Perrot owed everything to Taglioni, and when he came out as the "Dancing Frog" he established his reputation and the basis of his fortune. Being a prudent man, who had seen great hardships, he amassed money, and took

care of it. That money, according to my correspondent, has now fallen to the lot of this grandchild (to whom the very modest fortune left by the great Maria Taglioni could not have been a sufficient resource), in remembrance of the kindness he had received from her in the days of her prosperity and his poverty.

I have only a few more words to add in order to complete this interesting little episode.

About 1844–46, Jules Joseph Perrot, the "Dancing Frog" and the "Monkey" (in the ballet of *Sapajou*), though no violinist to speak of, but a clever composer of ballets, was one of the very greatest male dancers that France ever produced. He was born at Lyons, the son of the chief machinist of the theatre in that city, on the 18th August 1810. He was educated as a dancer, and whilst quite a child appeared in various ballets in his native city.

In 1823 he went to Paris and played the part of the "Monkey" in *Sapajou* with wonderful success. After fulfilling his engagements at the French Opera, he accepted others in various parts of Europe; and at Naples he met the dancer, Carlotta Grisi, who became his pupil and afterwards his wife. But he owed his first great success to Maria Taglioni.

He appeared with his wife, Carlotta Grisi, in England about 1844, at a time when she was at the zenith of her fame; that is when I saw her dance, as mentioned in Chapter II. of the present volume. Her performance was exceedingly graceful and powerful; and I do not remember having seen any *première danseuse* to equal her, with the exception of Mlle. Plunkett; but the latter had quite a different style, excelling more in slow movements and graceful attitudes. Carlotta Grisi excelled especially in the valse movement, and there is a little piece for violin and piano, by Herz and Lafont, called after her, which gives some idea of her beautiful style of dancing.

XVI

THE MUSIC OF DE BÉRIOT

ABOUT the year 1850, my violin-master in Brussels, who, being the *répétiteur* in the class of De Bériot at the *Conservatoire Royal de Musique*, and a personal friend of his, was well acquainted with all the peculiarities of this great violinist's compositions, once said to me: "If you play the music of De Bériot you will never care to play any other."

There was an immense amount of truth in that remark; and it held true with me for many long years. But though I cannot *now* say that I have played more of De Bériot's than of any other composer's music, still I consider him the greatest writer for the violin that ever lived.

The reasons why many have done less with his music than might otherwise have been the case is, firstly, because much of it is difficult; and secondly, because it is not easy to find pianists capable of playing the accompaniments to his concertos as they should be played. Many of our English violinists can play Tartini's old-

fashioned *Trillo del Diavolo*, Wieniawski's *Airs Russes*, or Beethoven's and Mendelssohn's *Concertos* (compositions written more or less in the orchestral style by pianists), and several have performed the *Moto Perpetuo* of Paganini, and even the *Souvenirs de Bellini* of Artot, and the *Ronde des Lutins* of Bazzini with tolerable success. But it requires a much greater artiste to play a concerto by De Bériot. Few violinists of any country in our day have either the necessary style, nor can they produce sufficient tone and expression in the *cantabile* passages of these fine compositions.

When, some years later, I went to live in Paris, accompanists formed a distinct profession. These men were scholars of the *Conservatoire* who had no fixed appointments and few pupils; they managed to make an income of about £200 a year by accompanying instrumental soloists and singers at receptions and in the concert-rooms, and by rehearsing in the morning the songs and scenes of the various operas with the great tenors and *prime donne* of the hour. This was between 1850 and 1860, and two hundred pounds a year was a very comfortable income in those days for gentlemen of that description.

We have in England in the persons of Mr. Francesco Berger, Mr. Claude Trevor, and Mr. Bird, to mention only a few, some of the very finest accompanists ever known; and I have

met with some ladies, notably the late Mrs. George Meredith (sister of the admirable amateur pianist, the Rev. Clement Scholefield, whose father was member for Birmingham), and Miss Cox (daughter of the well-known picture dealer), who could play the accompaniments to De Bériot's Concertos and his duets with Osborn most effectively. The *tuttis* of these compositions really form beautiful piano pieces.

It is so many years since I have heard a violin Concerto by De Bériot in the concert-room, that I cannot say how it would be received nowadays as played by our modern artistes in comparison with other compositions more suited to them; but in my younger days nothing could equal the enthusiasm with which these Concertos were applauded when played by the pupils of De Bériot; and the successful performance of any one of them at once stamped a violinist as a *virtuoso* of the very first rank.

I can specially recommend to the reader's attention, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 9th, and 10th, as being exceedingly fine and effective. Some of his *Airs Variés*, the 2nd, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 11th, are equally original and brilliant. His duets (with piano by Osborn) on Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, *Barbier de Seville*, and *Gazza Ladra* are superb, as every musician knows. There are some other duets of a more elementary

character, but also very beautiful and effective, notably *La Muette de Portici* (with Labarre), his Schubert duets, and the *Opera sans Paroles* by De Bériot and his son. There is a fantastic or comic duet, also with his son, which is more curious than beautiful. Then there are certain showy fantasias, namely, *Deux Fantaisies sur des Airs Russes*, an *Andante Varié*, a *Nocturne*, a *Réveuse*, a *Sérénade*, a *Fantaisie Lyrique* (dedicated to Léonard, and in imitation of the latter's style), to which I must add some difficult *Etudes Caractéristiques* — *Tourbillon*, *Angélus*, *Sauterelle*, and his *Sylphide*, *Le Basque*, *Tristesse*, &c., all short pieces, but extremely original. Besides these we have his two *Scènes de Ballet* (No. 1 and No. 2) and his Thirty-six *Etudes Mélodiques*, full of originality and of excellent style. His *Elégie*, a posthumous work taken from De Bériot's *Ecole Transcendante*, is an exceedingly fine composition in B minor, and his "Violin Method" is known to most professors.

His *Valse de Concert* is very clever, brilliant, and effective; but the theme is poor, and as a composition is not equal to his little *Valse Duo*, written for amateurs. The valse movement is De Bériot's weak point; it is always in the old Tyrolean style, very pretty and elegant, but tame. His *Souvenir de Weber* is also rather a failure—what we should term a "pot-boiler"; but such a

remark applies to very few of De Bériot's compositions.

Of his *Airs Variés*, the 2nd and 9th are, perhaps, the most effective; but, like the Concertos, they are difficult, and we seldom see them on concert programmes. They require perfect mastery of the fourth string, double stopping in 3rds, 6ths, 10ths, and octaves, besides a fine tone and much expression. The favourite Concertos are the 1st and 7th, which are, perhaps, rather easier than the others, except the 9th (which is taken from his "Violin Method." The Sixth Concerto is exceedingly brilliant, and was written expressly for the competition of the pupils of the Brussels Conservatoire in 1849. The Second Concerto is the most beautiful of all, but is rather too long; it is generally played in part, as the *Andante et Rondo Russe*. This is the piece which De Bériot once played at the house of the Prince de Chimay, and which, as we are told by the Countess Merlan, gained him the affection of the young, beautiful, and talented Madame Malibran-Garcia, already a celebrity, whom he afterwards married.

De Bériot's *Tremolo*, on an air of Beethoven, when well played is highly effective. The late Mr. Carrodus was among the few violinists capable of performing it. De Bériot is considered the inventor of the *tremolo* bowing; but it is a kind of performance which requires much practice to

bring it to perfection, and also the possession of a violin of brilliant quality. Many other composers, especially Artot, Léonard, Papini, &c., have since introduced this kind of bowing occasionally into their compositions; but it seldom succeeds as it did with De Bériot himself and some of his favourite pupils.

For *Cantabile* with fine tone, we have *Les Trois Bouquets*, three small concert pieces, which require a great power of bow and much expression; they have some rich double stopping also.

For young players he has written his *Mélodies Italiennes*, in three books, and a great number of elementary duets for violin and piano, on some of the finest operatic airs of his day.

In these multifarious compositions De Bériot's knowledge of all the resources of the violin is constantly manifest. His treatment of *harmonic* passages, chords, and double notes, is finer than in the works of any other composer. In his melodies we can sometimes trace reminiscences of the finest operatic works of Bellini, Auber, Mercadante, Verdi, and others; and when it is not so, they are essentially Tyrolean in character, for instance, his poetical *Air Montagnard*, and the delicious theme of his *Neuvième Air Varié*.

Although De Bériot never wrote a tarantella as a solo piece, the rondo of his Tenth Concerto (*tempo di tarantella*) is one of the most beautiful

and effective pieces of this kind that has yet been written.

Another piece of his which I have omitted to mention is, *Les Echos*, which was written expressly to show the effects of the *chin-mute*, an invention of the ingenious M. Vuillaume. Many years ago I played this piece at a concert in London, *without making use of the appliance in question*, and it proved most successful. The melody and the echoes are very effective, and the double stopping remarkably fine.

The compositions above named, which are all I happen to know of this composer, to say nothing of his own magnificent playing, not only placed De Bériot in the very highest rank of violinists, but we may safely look upon him as the greatest violinist (in every sense) that the world has ever known.

XVII

THE 'CELLO PLAYER OF SWARTZFELD

DURING my travels in the Rhenish provinces and Waldeck I heard many a curious story, but few better than that of the 'cello player of Swartzfeld.

It was about the middle of June 1865 that we had just arrived from Frankfort, my father and I; and whilst he went to make some inquiries at the railway office with regard to the tariff for carrying ironstone and copper ore from some of the mines on the twenty-eight miles of concessions which he had recently purchased in Waldeck from the German Government, I sat chatting with Herr Kratz, the notary, in a comfortable little tavern at Zimmersrode, smoking one of the best cigars I could procure at Frankfort, while Kratz caused large curls of blue smoke to issue from his long pipe, and from time to time tossed off a glass of full-flavoured Moselle.

After various topics had been discussed with my new acquaintance, he suddenly turned to me and said :—

"Your father tells me you are a violinist; I thought you were a mining engineer!"

"I am a little of both," I replied, smiling.

"Well, I also am a musician," said Herr Kratz, "but my instrument is the violoncello. Did you ever hear the story of 'the 'cello player of Swartzfeld?'"

On my replying that I never did, he proceeded to relate the following curious history, which I give as nearly as possible in his own words:—

"Ludwig Holbein was a man of forty-five years of age, who was born in December 1760, the greater part of whose life was spent in playing the violoncello, giving lessons in music, and in endeavouring to find out whether his instrument was made by Gasparo da Salò, Kloz, Matteo Bente, or Matteo Albani—all four celebrated makers, highly appreciated in their day.

"Anyhow, it was a splendid 'cello, with a tone like a human voice; full, sweet, and powerful, which he knew well how to manage.

"His broad shoulders were bent rather forward from long habit of playing; and his small grey eyes peered from beneath his bushy eyebrows with a direct, searching glance, that had been acquired by reading the faint and small characters of the manuscript music he generally used.

many of them, indeed, would go into ecstasies of delight on hearing Ludwig play a solo, and would offer to pay glasses of beer all round to induce him to play it once again.

"At home there was scolding from morning to night—and sometimes also from night to morning! The two women had made a perfect slave of the poor, good-natured 'cellist ever since he was married, twenty years before. He was obliged to do everything—milk the cow, feed the fowls, chop the wood for burning, light the fire in the morning, sweep out the parlour, heat the oven to bake the bread, go to the butcher's every week, carry home the flour, the meat, the lard, the grocery, the oil for the lamp, the vinegar for the salad, dig up the potatoes for dinner, help in washing the plates, the pots, and the linen, 'besides a lot of other things which I have forgotten,' said Kratz, 'and all this had been going on for no less than twenty years!'

"In order that there should be no mistake about it, his tyrannical and peevish wife had made out a list of all these things which she considered it his duty to perform, and if Ludwig happened to forget any of them a torrent of abuse and vituperation poured forth from the two women which almost drove him out of his sober senses. He would be chased up and down

stairs, or out on to the road, pursued by these dames, armed with a thick stick and a hatchet. Once the poor man locked himself up for nearly three hours in a kind of closet, fearing that his wife or his mother-in-law would chop off his head!

"At last things had come to such a pass that he solemnly declared that he would do nothing that was not down on the list, and that all the rest of his time should be devoted exclusively to music. This, after a good deal of argument, was finally agreed to by the two ladies.

"It was not very likely he had much time to practise his violoncello; and how he managed to go through his musical duties it is impossible to conceive. Nevertheless, Holbein had a pupil, a sweet girl of eighteen, who was a naturally gifted songstress, and of whom he was already very proud. She was the daughter of the burgomaster of Swartzfeld, an honest farm-bailiff; but, whilst quite young, she had lost both father and mother, and now lived with two maiden aunts.

"Clara Halse, for that was her name, was a high-spirited young woman with large, blue eyes, a bewitching smile, splendid fair hair, which, tied with blue ribbon, hung down in two thick plaits far beyond her waist. Her features were regular and expressive—she was

almost a beauty, and under Holbein's tuition she had become a really fine singer.

"One day Ludwig Holbein was in the act of transposing a song to suit the rich contralto voice of his fair pupil, when the angry tones of his mother-in-law called him to help her in wringing out the linen and hanging it up to dry. His wife had gone to the other end of the village to buy some cheese.

"He was bound to obey. It was down on the list.

"Some of the linen lay in a heap on the meadow. The washing-tub, made of planks of beech nearly three feet wide, was very large and deep. Frau Hoppheimer, the mother-in-law, was a little woman, and as she bent over the edge of the great tub to seize some linen that was beyond her reach, she fell, head foremost, into the water. With much difficulty she managed to raise her head, and shrieked to Holbein to pull her out.

"'Oh! dear no!' he exclaimed, 'that is *not* down on my list!'

"'You brute!' screamed Frau Hoppheimer, 'pull me out at once!'

"'Wait a little,' said Ludwig, 'I may be mistaken—but I do not think it is on my list—I will go and see. If not, I will play you a solo on the violoncello till Frau Holbein returns.'

"He ran into the house, fetched the list and his 'cello, and began to read all the items of his multifarious duties ; he read them out aloud ; his mother-in-law screaming abuse at him the whole time. Finally, he took up his 'cello and began to play a gavotte by Bach. Whilst he was thus occupied Frau Holbein returned with the cheese.

"The scene which ensued is more easy to imagine than to describe. In a word, Holbein had to fly from his home, for it seemed as if his life were in danger.

"He took refuge for a few days in the house of the two old maids where his pupil lived. At the end of that time, when he summoned courage to return, he found his house deserted. Frau Holbein and her mother had gone to Botzen, or Innsbruck, taking with them everything they could carry in the miller's cart with two horses, borrowed for the occasion, and were never seen again.

"Ludwig Holbein said nothing, but he felt himself now a free man. He gave up his house to the village doctor, and went to reside elsewhere. His pupil Clara Halse, under his daily guidance, made very rapid progress in the art of music.

"Two years later this gifted girl made her first appearance in the Opera House at Trieste ; her

master being engaged as first violoncello in the orchestra of that establishment. It was a great success, and it was shortly afterwards followed by another, at a concert in the same town, on which occasion Holbein brought out a new piece of his own composition, called *Die Waschwanne* (The Wash-tub), which was written in remembrance of the singular accident above related.

"At first this piece, like all descriptive music, was not quite understood; but when the story which inspired it got known, it became very popular, and was called for wherever he played. The first part was quiet and melancholy, depicting his former wretched condition; the second part, on the contrary, was exceedingly sprightly, and the wonderfully effective *double arpeggio* chord, with which it concludes, was understood to represent the tipping over of the old lady into the monstrous wash-tub!

"There is a report," said Kratz, as he concluded, "that the manuscript of this remarkable work is still preserved, with some unpublished pieces by Johann Sebastian Bach, in the old library at Botzen; but I have sought for it without success in the 'Catalogue of Manuscripts' contained in that venerable institution."

XVIII

THE THEORY OF TONE

A GREAT deal has been said and written about the tone of musical instruments in general, and of the violin in particular. Yet it is evident that a great deal of obscurity still surrounds this important question which affects makers of instruments as well as players.

I may, perhaps, be able to write a few words here which will explain to some extent what is, at present, so little understood by the greater number of musicians and musical instrument makers.

In my article on "The Third Sound of Tartini," which appeared in *The Strad* for August 1898, I have endeavoured to explain the theories of Tartini and Rameau, on the production of a "third sound" when *two* notes are produced together on the violin or the violoncello.

It is now known that when a *single note* is sounded by any instrument, or sung by the voice, other vibrations of the air are produced which reach the ear simultaneously as "harmonics" to the primitive sound.

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It is now known that when a *single note* is sounded by any instrument, or sung by the voice, other vibrations of the air are produced which reach the ear simultaneously as "harmonics" to the primitive sound.

Now, it depends upon the production of these ("harmonics"), their number, and their intensity, whether the note in question is what we term *rich* or *poor*.

If this were not the case, all human voices would possess equal charm and power, and the same would occur with all other instruments. With the violin it may happen—in fact, it does happen far too frequently—that certain notes are full and fine in quality whilst others are thin and weak. The G in the medium, or the D (second string) are often fine, full-toned notes, whilst the C (second string) and F (first string) are wretchedly thin, dull, and poor in quality. The reason of this is that when the bow produces the two first notes mentioned, *the greater portion*, or, maybe, *the whole of the harmonics of those notes* are produced at the same moment, and with more or less intensity according to the sonorous quality of the wood; whereas in the second series of notes mentioned most of those "harmonics" are wanting.

In the same way the tone of the human voice passing through the telephone or phonograph loses to a great extent the "harmonics" of the note uttered; so that a tenor or soprano voice worth, let us say, £5 or £10 a night, thus becomes by the loss of its "harmonics" worth perhaps a shilling or eighteen-pence—if anything at all.

Thus, in a word, in ordinary violins we may have a very fine quality of tone *on certain given notes*, whilst others, being produced without their corresponding "harmonics," are consequently poor. In a first-rate instrument, the quality of tone consists in a round, sweet sound, which is soft without being muffled, and brilliant without being coarse, in which *every note without exception is produced with the whole of its "harmonics."*

This effect cannot be entirely obtained by the use of supplementary strings, as in the *viola d'amore*, but only by the proper construction of the instrument ; and (whether by chance or study, it is hard to say) Stradivari, of Cremona, and his contemporaries, have been able to produce this result in its fullest measure ; though a few makers before his time, notably Nicolo Amati and Stainer, approached very nearly to as great a degree of perfection.

I should not omit, also, the name of Sebastian Kloz, of Mittenwald, whose extremely rare instruments have come up in this respect to those of his contemporary, Stradivari.

The perfection of tone in a violin resides, then, in the construction of the instrument being such that every note is produced with *the whole* of its "harmonics"—all those vibrations of different wave-lengths occurring simultaneously, produce upon the ear that roundness, fulness, and rich-

ness of quality which when once heard is scarcely ever forgotten and is always appreciated, even by the most uncultivated ears.

In 1782, a celebrated maker of violins at Padua, Antonio Bagatella, made known the art of constructing a first-rate instrument without having recourse to any model, but simply by means of the compass and the ruler. An extract of this Italian work is given (with illustrations) by Mangin and Maigne in their *Manuel du Luthier* (Paris: Roret), page 120; and one of these writers says that he saw, in Germany, two violins and a violoncello, by Bagatella, which, to use his own expression, "left nothing to be desired either as regarded tone or beauty of appearance." Some others, however, have asserted that this mathematical work has not produced the results expected from it; but perhaps it has not been sufficiently studied.

Certain modern makers of violins have professed to have discovered all the secrets of construction of the violin, with mathematical precision, instruments having all the wished for quality even when quite new.

I cannot yet say from personal experience how far this has been realised; but judging from a number of very excellent violins which have come under my notice of late years by Vuillaume, Chanot, Withers, Perry, Trapani, Eberle, Panormo,

Maucotel, Tononi, and a few others, it has rarely been completely attained.

However well the above theory may satisfy the mind as regards the nature of a perfect tone, it is difficult to apply it practically in the construction of a violin. The actual work, probably, will be like medical practice—mostly empirical—for many years to come. It is evident, however, that *attention to the minutest details* is a most potent factor in this respect; and it was by giving that attention to the sonorous quality of the wood, its form or model, and its precise thickness at various points, which has been found, by long experience, to answer best, that the greater makers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have outdone their rivals.

The construction of a violin of perfect tone is one of the most arduous and difficult undertakings, and one which, requiring as it does great practical knowledge combined with skilful handicraft and patience, is very rarely attained. It is, therefore, not at all surprising to those whose lives are devoted to the musical art, that when a violin perfect in this respect happens to be met with, its value is expressed in large sums of money, whoever may have been the maker.

XIX

HENRI WIENIAWSKI

I WAS a very young man when I met Wieniawski at Ostend in 1855, and he must have then been only twenty years of age, if it be true that he was born at Lublin in Poland on 10th July 1835; but he looked at least ten years older than that. He had a younger brother, Joseph, who was a very clever pianist.

My attention was called to Wieniawski's violin-playing by my friend Victor Eeckhout, son of a celebrated Flemish painter, and a very promising artist himself. He, like all the young men of that day, raved about Wieniawski's playing, speaking of him as "*un diable sur le violon*," or as a "second Paganini." We have had a good many "second Paganini's" since then!

I had recently heard Camillo Sivori, Vieuxtemps, Kontski, and Signorina Milanollo, besides others less known to the general public, but scarcely less eminent violinists; therefore I doubted the value of my friend's enthusiastic praise. Nevertheless, time has proved that he

was right, for all the world has since been as fascinated as he was with this great violinist, and the compositions the latter has left us show that he was one of the chosen few in the world of music.

Wieniawski heard my violin long before I heard his. At the time just mentioned, Vieuxtemps and Kontski were also at Ostend. They both gave a concert, at about a fortnight's interval, and I was at each of these performances. But Wieniawski only played at *ecarté;* he was at the Kursaal playing cards all day long.

One morning I met there by appointment Madame Dreyfuss (the talented sister of the late Sir Julius Benedict), in order to play some violin *obbligati* to her songs; and I afterwards played the *Andante and Rondo* of De Bériot's Second Concerto to the excellent accompaniment of my mother. (Eight or ten years afterwards I played that same piece at a crowded concert at Hammersmith, also with my mother's accompaniment, and it had a wonderful success.) Wieniawski asked who I was, and when told I was an Englishman, he would not believe it. One of his companions joined our circle (as a bet appears to have been made upon the subject), to discover the truth, and my friend Eeckhout was called upon to decide.

That is the only time I ever came in actual

contact with Henri Wieniawski ; he was not a personal friend of mine as Vieuxtemps was, but I have heard much of his music. I have studied many of his pieces, and, like every one else, I admire his talent.

At that time he was a man of barely medium height, rather stout, dark, and with a pale oval face and regular features ; he looked at least eight and twenty years of age.

Like many other great artistes, Wieniawski owed his success to his natural musical gifts, the excellent instruction he received in Paris, and his indefatigable perseverance. When only eight years of age he took lessons there from a clever professor named Clavel, and in the course of about a year he was able to enter the Conservatoire, in the class of the well-known Flemish professor, the late M. Massart. Under this able instructor he remained for two years, after which, as a young boy, he set out on a concert tour in Russia. Though after his two years' training with Massart he had gained the first prize of the Conservatoire under Alard (as Sarasate did ten years later), this premature concert tour taught Wieniawski's friends that he had yet much to learn ; and he returned to Paris to complete his musical education. He then took lessons in Harmony from Colet.

It has been stated that at this early age

Wieniawski could play the twenty-four *Capricci* of Paganini, which was considered a *tour de force* on the part of Ole Bull when in his prime. But, after all, music does not consist in *tours de force;* and if any one asked me which of Wieniawski's compositions best indicate his musical talent and his poetic feeling, I should say his *Chanson Polonaise*, Op. 12, and his *Légende*, Op. 17. With regard to his celebrated *Polonaise in D*, which first brought him into notice, it is, undoubtedly, a very clever and effective work which can only be performed by the greatest artistes; but the opening melody, which runs through the piece, reminds me of a Redova which was played by Sacré, the dancing-master, who came to Ostend every season to give dancing lessons and children's balls. He played the violin, not the piano, and at the balls led a string quartette which played such excellent dance music that many, who did not dance, went to hear it. This Redova so often heard at the children's balls afterwards found its way into Wieniawski's *Polonaise in D!*

At about sixteen years of age, the young violinist began to travel through Europe as a *virtuoso*, meeting with great success wherever he played. In 1860 he settled in St. Petersburg for twelve years, during which time he made several concert tours through Europe. In 1872 he sailed for

the United States, where he accomplished a very successful tour with Rubinstein, the pianist. On his return to Europe in 1875 he replaced Vieuxtemps for two years as the head of the Conservatoire at Brussels, the latter being obliged to relinquish this high position on account of rheumatic paralysis of the arm.

When Vieuxtemps returned, Wieniawski set out again on his travels ; but, unfortunately, his health gave way, and his medical adviser found that he was suffering from disease of the heart. He played at Paris for the last time in 1878 ; being unable then to stand during the performance he played seated. Sad to relate, whilst his health broke down his fortune was also being undermined by his insatiable love of gambling and his dissipated, irregular habits. He finally succumbed to heart disease at Moscow, in 1880, where he had been living for some time, teaching, but not playing in public.

It has been stated that he gambled away all his money as fast as he made it by his concerts, and died a pauper. But he had insured his life for about £4000, and it is to be hoped his poor widow had the advantage of that. He had married an English lady, Isabella Hampton, to whom he has dedicated his *Légende;* and I am told that she still resides in Brussels.

Wieniawski has left a good deal of violin music

of the highest quality. His *Airs Russes* are a certain success in clever hands, and his several *Mazurkas*, his *Concerto*, his *Légende*, *Polonaise in D*, *Souvenirs de Moscow*, and *Tarantella*, are all wonderfully clever and effective compositions. His chords and double-stopping are bold, brilliant, and natural, and he had a clever command of the artificial harmonies, which he introduces in many of his pieces in a very effective manner, though, it must be confessed, the effect is more surprising than beautiful. Among his pupils are mentioned Ysaye, Willy Hess, Gregoriwitsch, and Lichtenberg.

During his brilliant career as a *virtuoso* the only serious rivals of Wieniawski were Sivori, Vieuxtemps, and Joachim; among these he held his own with comparative ease. As a player and a composer he rose to a level with the greatest violinists of our time, and had he studied the works of De Bériot and Ernst as much as those of Paganini, whom he copied, he might have risen still higher. Unfortunately, he also imitated Paganini, who was a man of low birth and no education, in his taste for dissipation and gambling, which, naturally enough, proved ruinous.

It is rather curious that Vieuxtemps and Wieniawski should both have died the same year (1880).

Hubay, a distinguished violinist at Buda-Pesth, the executor and last friend of Vieuxtemps, is

the possessor of Wieniawski's violin, a beautiful Amati, which I have been informed Hubay purchased of Madame Wieniawski, after the death of her husband, for the sum of 16,000 francs, or £640 in English money. And I see it stated in *The Strad* for April 1901, that Herr Zajic, another Hungarian violinist, gave £800 for his instrument. Evidently Hungary is the country in which to sell a violin at a tip-top price.

XX

A DUET WITH A THIRD PART

THERE are some grand duets for violin and piano; for instance, the well-known *Guillaume Tell* duet by De Bériot and Osborn; and I even prefer to this the *Gazza Ladra* duet by the same composers. Their *Barbier de Seville* is also very fine indeed. But these all require artists, both for violin and piano; they are as much beyond the reach of ordinary amateurs as are the *concertos* of De Bériot beyond that of ordinary artists.

But that great violinist has written many very beautiful compositions on operatic subjects in which both violin and piano parts are intended for students and amateurs. They form a progressive series, the earliest numbers being quite elementary, and they can be recommended as very charming compositions for young persons and excellent studies for accompaniment.

It was one of these, if I remember rightly, based on a lovely theme from Donizetti's *L'Elisire d'Amore*, that was being performed by young

Enrico Valledori and his aunt, Signora Bertoldi, at a *soirée musicale* in Florence, one fine autumn evening of the year 18—. The boy-violinist had received some lessons from the renowned Guido Papini, and was already beginning to give proof of decided talent. His aunt, being a good pianist, was anxious to show off his budding accomplishments to her numerous friends.

So, in September 18—, just before the schools were about to reopen after the holidays, she invited her young nephew to pay a visit to the Villa Vistari, and, after a week's practice, when he could play his *L'Elisire d'Amore* in a tasteful and expressive manner, she intimated to her husband that she would like to give a musical evening. This was soon arranged.

About a hundred persons belonging to the best families in the neighbourhood were duly invited; and almost every one of them accepted the invitation.

The Bertoldis were rich and influential people. Signora Bertoldi and her husband had resided for many years at the Villa Vistari, a charming residence on the banks of the Arno, and they were blessed with everything this world can bestow, except offspring. Hence they had taken considerable interest in their young musical nephew, Enrico Valledori, son and only child of a brother who had failed in business, and was

now employed in a minor post at the Custom-House.

Every one looked upon this schoolboy nephew, who played so nicely on the violin, as likely to inherit the ample fortune of his Uncle and Aunt Bertoldi ; and, indeed, they had almost promised as much, provided the boy behaved himself properly.

He was then nearly sixteen years of age, and very fond of his aunt, who made him little presents of chocolate or cigarettes, and sometimes, by way of encouraging his musical studies, a new duet for violin and piano.

On the evening mentioned the guests began to arrive soon after sunset, and numbers of elegant equipages drove up to the gates of the Villa Vistari, until, in the course of a short time, a numerous company of gaily-dressed people had assembled in the large drawing-room, which was beautifully decorated for the occasion.

Young Valledori had got his violin well in tune to the grand piano before the company arrived ; and he had rehearsed his piece that same day with his aunt. Nevertheless, he felt rather nervous as his eye wandered among all those fashionable people, many of whom were good musicians themselves ; and he blushed and trembled alternately as he thought of the part he was going to take in the evening performances.

Shortly after all the guests had arrived, a young servant girl, about twenty years of age, remarkably good-looking and very neatly dressed, entered the hall of the villa, carrying a brown paper parcel. Addressing herself to one of the servants, she told him that Count and Countess Alari, who were among the guests in the drawing-room, had forgotten to have the overcoat of the Count and certain wraps of the Countess put into their carriage, and that, as the old Count was very subject to take rheumatism if exposed to the night air, she had hastened to bring these things, and would be glad if he would put them in the anteroom with the Count's name upon them. The manservant said it would be all right.

"And be sure," added the girl, "that you do not place anything on the parcel, as Madame's cloak is trimmed with very delicate feathers, which must not be crushed."

"All right," again replied the footman, and the girl withdrew.

After awhile the loud buzz of conversation in the drawing-room was hushed, and the music began.

It is impossible here to give a detailed account of the programme, which had been carefully constructed and written out on gilt-edged cardboard by Signora Bertoldi herself. After a brilliant performance on the piano came a song by an amateur

basso, who gave the audience the benefit of his interpretation of Mozart's *Non più andrai*. This produced a rather extraordinary effect, but nothing to what was about to follow.

The young violinist and his aunt then began their duet for violin and piano on Donizetti's *L'Elisire d'Amore*. The opening bars were very well played, and everything gave promise of an exceedingly pretty performance, when, in the middle of the exquisite *Cantabile* that followed, a most extraordinary "third sound" was heard, and heard very distinctly.

At first it appeared as if the boy-violinist was playing his part in double notes, some of which were decidedly out of tune. It was certainly not the mysterious and luscious "third sound" of Tartini, about which so much has been said and written. Altogether, the effect was so surprising that the guests looked at one another in astonishment. And, as this effect increased rather than diminished, the astonishment became more and more intense, bordering, in fact, upon alarm.

It was not believed that such an extraordinary effect could be naturally produced upon a violin —unless the evil spirit had something to do with it—even in the hands of a "youthful Paganini," as Aunt Bertoldi fondly called her young nephew. A duet with a third part in it, such as this, had

never been heard before, even by the fastest and most fashionable of the Florentines.

At last Signora Bertoldi and some of her more intimate friends thought it necessary to inquire what was the cause of this singular effect. She stopped playing, and looked up into her nephew's face. It was an inquisitive glance, as much as to say, "What on earth are you doing?" But his blank countenance merely replied, "I am not doing anything at all, dear Aunt"—and this was perfectly true, for he had then also ceased playing.

And yet this extraordinary *third part* in the duet continued to be heard all by itself!

It could only be compared to the squealing of an infant, and evidently it did not come from the violin after all! It proceeded from the adjoining ante-room where the cloaks and hats of the guests had been deposited. Finally it was traced to the brown paper parcel left by the pretty servant girl for the Count and Countess Alari; and upon its being carefully opened it was found to contain a charming little cherub of a child about five months old. As the Count and Countess Alari, when appealed to, most decidedly declined to own it, and solemnly declared before all present that they knew nothing whatever about it, the good-natured Signora Bertoldi, having no children of her own, at once decided to adopt it herself, and handed

over the new discovery to her maid, to be looked after until she was at liberty to attend to it herself.

How this newly-discovered element of humanity, which was not "found under a gooseberry bush," will eventually affect the inheritance of the young violinist remains to be seen, as the Bertoldis are still living, and, we all trust, are likely to live many long years yet. But one thing is certain, namely, that not one of the guests present at that famous *soirée musicale* will ever forget the wonderful duet for violin and piano, with a third part in it.

In the foregoing account I have, of course, been careful to disguise the real names of the actors of this little comedy in real life; and if any of my readers who have spent more than the usual three or four days in Florence should recognise the persons, I trust to their honour not to divulge the fact.

Young Enrico Valledori is at present a promising engineer, and still plays the violin as an ardent amateur whenever opportunity occurs.

With regard to the little child who formed accidentally the third part in the duet, she is now just twelve years of age, a pretty blonde, with large blue eyes and round, rosy cheeks. Under Signora Bertoldi's motherly care she has already developed a taste for music, and has begun her

violin studies under a distinguished pupil of Giovacchino Giovacchini; and some day, perhaps, she may play a *real* third part with her adopted mother and the young gentleman who now passes as her cousin.

XXI

ARTISTS AND AMATEURS

I HAVE met with a small pamphlet, printed in England in 1756, which treats of some "Ancient Writings dug out of the Ruins of the old City of Herculaneum," from which I extract the following curious particulars as given in the language of that day, and remembering that Herculaneum was destroyed 79 A.D. :—

"In the chamber of an ancient villa in the middle of a garden has been found a number of rolls about a palm long, and round, which appeared like roots of wood, all black, and seeming to be only of one piece. One of them falling to the ground, it broke in the middle, and many letters were observed, which proved that the rolls were of papyrus. There were about 150 of them of different sizes. They were in wooden cases, much burnt, and the rolls so hard that they appeared one solid piece. It was sought to split them asunder, but that was found impossible. At length a writer at the Vatican, Padre Antonio, was mentioned to the King of Naples as the

only man in the world who could undertake this difficult matter. . . . By great patience the good Padre succeeded in unrolling a pretty large piece of the papyrus. It was found to be the work of a Greek writer, and is a small philosophical tract, in Plutarch's manner, on MUSIC, blaming it as pernicious to society, and productive of softness and effeminacy. It does not discourse on the Art of Music."

No! not very likely; and little did this ancient scribe imagine what wonders the Art of Music was to perform in the world during the next eighteen hundred years or so, until at last, towards the end of the nineteenth century, a prime minister of Great Britain declared that the violin had done as much for civilisation as the steam-engine!

When Charles Vincent de Bériot, only son of the celebrated Malibran-Garcia de Bériot, was at school with me in Brussels, he was allowed two hours every afternoon to practise the piano by himself in a small apartment which looked on to our playground. One of these hours was taken from his attendance at classes, and the other from the time allowed for recreation.

So, when we looked up at his window as we issued into the playground, he must have felt his imprisonment rather keenly; for, as he caught sight of us, he would make grimaces and grin at us as we passed by.

In the course of years he became a remarkably fine pianist ; but as the fortune of his celebrated mother was tied down upon him, an only child, his ultimate position was secured, and he did not require to work hard at his music, like those who have nothing but their art to rely upon. When he first appeared in public concerts people did not know whether he ought to be considered as an artist or as an amateur. Not that this was a matter of much importance, for he was a great favourite with his audiences wherever he appeared. But before the death of his talented father, he adopted the musical profession and finally became professor of the piano at the Paris Conservatoire, a position which I believe he still holds.

He has near him, at Paris, his celebrated aunt, Pauline Viardot Garcia, now well on in years (her brother, Manuel Garcia, resident in London, is well over ninety years), yet her sister Malibran died, as every one knows, at the early age of twenty-eight, as the result, partly of an accident whilst riding on horseback in Hyde Park, and partly of the pernicious practice of bleeding for inflammation, which was not yet extinct in those days.

After my six years of university life in Brussels I completely lost sight of my old school-fellow, Charles Vincent de Bériot, although I was at

Paris at the time he came and settled there; and one day I received from him a very kind invitation to attend his musical evenings, which took place once a week; but unfortunately I was never able to go, having other engagements of the same kind which occupied all my spare moments.

Long before the time just alluded to, there was in Paris a young Portuguese, by name Orfila, who was one of the finest tenor singers ever heard; but he could never be induced to adopt music as a profession, and he has left a name as the author of a great work on Poisons. His life was about equally divided between music and science, and that has been exactly my own case, with the addition of a little literature.

Thalberg, Hans von Bulow, Ole Bull, Mario (De Candia), Hauman (the Belgian violinist), Norman Salmon (our noted baritone), and many other eminent musicians, have all drifted from the ranks of the amateur into those of the profession by force of accidental circumstances; so that there is really no hard and sharp line between the *dilettante* and the artist, as so many persons appear to think. It all depends upon the time that can be devoted to the study of music and the gifts which nature has bestowed upon those who undertake such study.

The violin is often spoken of as the most difficult

of instruments; but, when mastered, it is that which gives the greatest pleasure; and when an amateur can hold his own in public with a favourite *prima donna* (especially when he appears where he is a stranger and *supposed* to belong to the musical profession) he may be entitled to rank as an artist.

That has also been my case on several occasions, and I heartily thank Providence for the many enjoyments thus caused me.

The chief obstacle to the success of the amateur as a soloist is that he or she is too often tempted to come forward with pieces that are far beyond the performer's powers; many artists make the same mistake. The simplest compositions, if good, will prove most effective, if they are played in a thoroughly artistic style.

I remember one evening in a crowded concert hall obtaining a very great success with that exquisite little piece by Papini, entitled "Solitude." It was composed while his wife was absent for a time from home, and he was left "to deplore his solitude," as he expressed it in a letter to me. When I played it I imagined my dear wife was also absent, though she was really at the piano!

Many solo pieces are too long; they fatigue not only the player, but the audience also, unless they are very beautifully played. This is especially the case with the old-fashioned Air with Variations.

In playing in public Bazzini's fine solo, *Le Carillon d'Arras*, I give the introduction, the air, the two first variations, and the last (which forms the finale to the piece), omitting the two others which are difficult and not very effective.

I heard not very long ago some variations on the clarionet by the celebrated Mr. Egerton (the worthy successor of my old acquaintance, Lazarus). After the second and third the audience was in an ecstasy of enthusiasm, but when he gave two more his hearers began to look upon him as a machine, and cooled down accordingly, although at the finale there was, of course, quite an ovation.

Ah! you artists! you never know when to stop, and you take each other's pieces, just to show that you *can* play them, until the public is sick of hearing the same compositions over and over again, when a little striking novelty would be so much more welcome!

Imitation is the bane of the artist and the amateur.

I must confess that from early youth to quite late in life one of my greatest ambitions has been to appear in public concerts with pieces that none but an artist could possibly perform. It was a weakness—very inherent to human nature—but a weakness which has caused me to work till I be-

came strong as an artist, and to discover delights in music which remain hidden to the greater number of *dilettanti*. Now that my powers are beginning to fail, and I look back upon the perseverance which I devoted to this self-imposed task, there is such pleasure in the recollection of past triumphs that I cannot say I regret such a dangerous ambition once took possession of my thoughts.

It was not solely upon mechanical execution that I counted for success, though that had something to do with it. My first thought was always to attempt to charm, and the next to astonish, if possible.

To charm an audience by the beauty of the music and the expressive style with which it is performed is more difficult than to astonish by brilliant execution. Never shall I forget one evening after a rehearsal of our Bohemian Orchestral Society, when, as often happened, I was requested to play a solo before the company separated (and for whom I once played *Le Streghe* of Paganini). Two of our best violinists stood by me and looked over the music. After the indulgent applause which followed the performance of a very simple little composition, I heard one of these gentlemen say to the other, "It's not the music, it's the way it is played."

Nor shall I readily forget another little speech

which I overheard as it issued from the rosy lips of a beautiful girl of twelve summers, at whose request I once played a "Romance," by my friend Guido Papini. At the conclusion of the piece she turned to her father and said, "The violin talks, papa!"

To charm requires a large style, a fine tone, great length of bow and perfect finish, excessive neatness in ornaments, and complete absence of bad taste or vulgarity. With regard to bad taste in performance and in the choice of music, it is a frequent pitfall for young players. It can only be corrected by being strictly pointed out by the professor, and by hearing great singers or great violinists as often as possible. In many cases it is exceedingly difficult to correct, and a student should be very grateful to the master who pays particular attention to this subject.

"When an artist has succeeded in raising a little whiff of jealousy," says a friend of mine, "he may claim to have really achieved an enviable position!" But I never knew a really great artist who ever displayed anything approaching to jealousy.

Besides my numerous concerts I have all my life had much music at home. My mother gave many brilliant musical evenings during

her residence at The Cedars, Putney,[1] in the sixties and seventies; and for the last ten years of my excellent father's life I used to play to him very frequently in the afternoon, whilst he smoked his cigarettes and sipped his coffee. As my house was not far distant I generally managed to be with him from about four to six every afternoon. On these occasions my accompaniments were played either by my wife or by my mother, who was still as good a pianist as ever.

I kept one of my violins at The Cedars for that purpose. The pieces he most delighted in were the "Second Concerto" and "Eighth Air Varié" of De Bériot, the *Carnaval de Venise* of Paganini, the *Souvenirs de Bellini* of Artot, some "Romances" of Papini, the *Souvenir de Cauterets* of Dancla, the *Muette de Portici* by De Bériot and Labarre, &c.; and if my wife happened to be present she would sing some Italian songs with *violino obbligato*.

So we had a little private concert almost every afternoon, and a considerable number of pieces in our *répertoire*.

[1] This fine property on the river bank near Putney Bridge, with Ranelagh House and its magnificent old trees on the opposite bank, was utterly destroyed by the railway coming across the river and through the garden. The London and South-Western Railway Company bought my father's house soon after his death, and afterwards pulled it down, with all the adjacent houses, in order to build smaller ones that would let more easily.

Later, when his dining-room on the ground floor, looking over the garden and river, was transformed into his bedroom, because he was too weak to go up and down stairs, the music ceased, and the piano in the large drawing-room above lay silent. . . . There he slept away on the 31st October 1887, in his eighty-fourth year, loved, respected, and admired by all who knew him.

XXII

THE WAITS OF NEUSATZ

"HANS KLOSSEN, my good friend, do you really love Gretchen?" said Fritz, as we trudged through the snow on our way to Neusatz for the three days' *Kermes* of Christmas week.

"What a question!" said I, swinging my violin-case from one arm to the other, and blowing into my left hand to warm my tingling fingers.

The snow kept falling in large, soft flakes, the fields and roads were one immense sheet of white, the sky was of a leaden hue, and a large flight of rooks, making for their roosting-place at three o'clock in the afternoon, were the only living creatures visible above the vast, dreary horizon of the Black Forest country that lay before us.

My companion, Fritz Durken, with his 'cello in a green baize bag slung from his narrow shoulders, the peak of his little cap flattened upon his nose, and his long, thin legs stretching out over what he supposed to be the path, had

not lost his spirits after a course of seven long miles, and two more left to be done.

"Every flake of snow will be a florin in our pockets, Hans!" he exclaimed; "this weather will drive everybody into the taverns, and the Golden Swan will be crammed."

"I hope so, indeed," I rejoined, "but the snow gets deeper, and I doubt whether my boots will hold good to the end of the journey."

"If the worst comes to the worst," said Fritz, "there is the old cobbler at the corner of the Altstrasse, who would let you have a new pair very cheap. He says he knows no lad of eighteen who plays the violin like you."

"You mean Carl Geigerein, who wants to buy my old violin?"

"Yes," said Fritz, "did he not call it a Cremona, or an Amati? I don't know which. However, he would do anything to please you."

Now, I never could conceive what induced that crazy old man, who played a little, to imagine that he could do anything he liked with my violin; and I said as much to Fritz.

"You see, my dear Hans," replied the latter, "people think it all depends upon the instrument! Out in the world one gets no credit for all the hard work at the music school. Look what you had to go through before you could play leading violin in our Society; and look at

the exercises I have done on my 'cello since I was nine years of age."

"Well," I added, "old Geigerein will have to get on without my violin; for I made a vow to Gretchen that I would never part with it—it was that day, you know, that she danced with the burgomaster's son, who is in that Hussar regiment. She also fancies that it is the violin that does all the business!"

As the truth must be told I would never have made this long journey through the snow had it not been for the pleasure of seeing Gretchen. I adored that girl, and I fancied she cared for me more than she did for the burgomaster's son. To see her attending to the numerous customers at the Golden Swan, with her brilliant red skirt falling just to her ankles, and black velvet bodice, her long, fair hair in a thick plait reaching to her comely waist, her rosy cheeks, and laughing blue eyes, her pretty embroidered apron, and neatly-laced shoes—any one in his sober senses would have fallen in love with her in five minutes—at least, I did, in less time than that. She came from my village, and we had always treated each other at Neusatz as brother and sister, which I imagined was a very good beginning.

The whole of our Society was to be there, but the others had gone by another road the

day before. There was old Dreichen, the contra-bass, and his two sons, Rupert and Carl, excellent second violins, Pratten, the clarionet, and two other violins besides myself as leader. The money gained was to be equally divided among us, and for Fritz and myself a little room in the attic at the Golden Swan had been secured for four kreutzers a night.

We reached Neusatz after dark, and found that the good-natured little Gretchen had lit a fire of beech logs in the stove of our room, at which we hastened to dry our clothes, and roasted some chestnuts.

In a short time Gretchen herself came running upstairs and knocked at our door. We let her in.

"Hans, my dear Hans!" she cried, "I am so glad to see you again! Mother says you are both to come down and have some supper with us."

Fritz said he would like nothing better; and I must confess that the cold wind and long walk had given me a keen appetite.

So we really enjoyed our plate of ham, with some brown bread and cheese; and a delightful sensation flowed through my veins when Gretchen laid her soft hand upon my shoulder as she placed a jug of beer upon the table by my side, and whispered in my ear that she had

something to say to me when we should be alone.

Several customers came in to pass the evening, a rather rough-looking lot of men, and soon the large room was filled with chatter, rude laughter, and clouds of tobacco smoke.

Fritz entertained Frau Frappen, the landlady, with an account of our dreary journey, whilst Gretchen, having served all the new-comers, came round to where I was warming my feet at the fire, and said :—

"Dear Hans, I must tell you that old Geigerein, my uncle, wants to have another look at your violin. I promised him you should let him see it this evening. You know how mad he is on violins and music. You will do it Hans, to oblige me ?"

"Certainly," I replied at once, "I would do anything in the world to please you, dear Gretchen. I will go now and see him."

After a warm squeeze of the hand, and a sweet glance from her lovely eyes, I sallied forth again in the snow with my violin under my arm, to the corner of the Altstrasse. Geigerein, whom I had known for some time, took me into his confidence, and told me he had discovered a manner of making all violins equally good. He wished to compare his own instrument very carefully with mine, and finally

asked me to lend him my violin till next morning. He pressed very hard, and, thinking it would please Gretchen, I at last consented.

When I returned to the Golden Swan, Gretchen seemed very much pleased at what I had done, and as Fritz and I retired for the night she allowed me to steal a kiss from her behind the cellar door.

Next day, immediately after breakfast, the whole of our Society went to play before the burgomaster, in honour of his daughter's betrothal. We hastened to the open space before the Court House, where we placed our music-stands. Geigerein had brought back my violin early in the morning.

Just as we were about to begin I opened my case and took out the instrument upon which my livelihood depended ; but I started back with surprise ! It was not my violin, but a most superb instrument, inlaid with pearl and ivory, with long handsome corners, green designs, and a golden coat of arms, with a motto on the back.

For the moment there was nothing to be done but to play ; and we did play—better, perhaps, than we had ever played before.

Herr Gustav Kleinich, the burgomaster, rewarded us with a little linen bag filled with silbergroschen, and his lovely daughter smiled

graciously upon us as we received it. We then hastened away to other parts of the little town, where we again played for smaller rewards; and finally we got back to the Golden Swan at dusk to consult about a ball that was to be given on the following day, at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Whilst I was enjoying a sweet *tête-à-tête* with Gretchen, and felt exceedingly happy, three police officers entered the tavern, and, quick as lightning, ordered all the doors to be closed and no one to move.

We were much frightened, and my thoughts naturally centred on the costly violin upon which I had been playing all day, but which none of my companions had noticed, as I had not drawn their attention to it.

"Frau Frappen," cried the first officer, "we have come to examine the papers of the musicians staying at your house."

The worthy landlady trembled from head to foot.

"The Graf von Elberfeld," he continued, "has been robbed of a very valuable old violin, stolen from Schloss Elberfeld on the evening of the 20th instant, and we have traced the steps of the thief in the snow from the said castle all the way to Neusatz, and along the Altstrasse to this tavern."

All the members of our Society were struck dumb with astonishment and fright. I myself must have turned very pale, for I could not help believing that must be the violin then in my possession.

Our papers were found to be all in order; and whilst old Dreichen and his two sons were having theirs examined, Gretchen pulled me by the arm and thrust me quickly behind the cellar door, so that I was out of sight, but could hear all that was going on.

"The papers, so far, are certainly all right," said one of the police officers, "let us now examine the instruments—there are five violins here. Now, you fellows, open all the cases."

Every one opened his box. Mine lay under a bench near the stove; I hoped it might escape notice. No such luck!

"Whose box is this?" inquired the officer.

"That is Hans Klossen's," said several voices.

"Where is he?"

"He was here just now," said some one.

Thinking it would be safest to come out of my hiding-place and explain everything to the police, I stepped forward; and whilst I opened my violin-box I tried, with all the experience of my eighteen years, to convince the officers of my complete innocence.

It was to no purpose. I was not believed—

my oath was of no value. The violin was there —that was quite enough for the police. I was curtly informed that I must be locked up all night in the guard-house, and taken before the authorities in the morning!

Gretchen burst into tears. Trembling violently with indignation, I was walked off between two of the officers, and shut up with a hard crust of brown bread and a flask of water, to pass the night the best way I could.

There was no ball the next day.

The theft of the Count's violin, which was valued at more than ten thousand florins, was the talk of the whole place.

Eventually it was proved that old Geigerein had visited the Schloss Elberfeld and taken with him a pair of Hessian boots for the Count to try on; and that he must have carried away the violin under his coat as he left that nobleman's apartment. The footsteps in the snow corresponded exactly in size and shape with the great flat feet of the crazy cobbler, and there was no doubt whatever left upon the subject. When he found that the theft had been discovered, and that the police were on his track, he attempted to place the guilt upon the shoulders of one of the Waits of Neusatz.

When I was set at liberty, and had my own violin restored to me, I made my way

straight back to my father's house in the Black Forest.

As for the cobbler, he narrowly escaped being confined for life in the Asylum for Idiots at Strassfurt, but the Graf von Elberfeld was so rejoiced at recovering his valuable Amati violin, that he would not prosecute the crazy old man, and actually ordered him to make another pair of Hessian boots!

However, the Waits of Neusatz were broken up by this unfortunate occurrence, and the members of our Society found employment elsewhere. I have not seen Gretchen since, but I have heard it said that she hopes to marry the burgomaster's son, who is in that Hussar regiment—a young man who, I feel convinced, will be the ruin of his family.

XXIII

GIRARD AND ROBBERECHTS

THE two eminent violinists, Girard and Robberechts, were born the same year and died the same year; they were both born in 1797 and both died in 1860, in Paris, at the age of sixty-three years.

But there was a slight difference in age; Girard saw the light in February and Robberechts in December, so that the latter was nearly a year younger than the other.

Considering the great reputations these two distinguished men have left behind them, this is a curious and interesting circumstance; the more so, that their respective careers were very different. Each had his own path in life marked out by a different route, yet both became famous.

The exact birthday of Narcisse Girard is not known, but it occurred in February 1797, at Mantes in France. His parents were not rich; they kept a café in the Place du Marché, or Market Place, of that old provincial town. On

the death of his mother, who probably had the chief management of the establishment, it was obliged to be sold. Death almost always makes great and often unexpected changes in families, and in this case, as a consequence of the sad occurrence, one of the effects of the breaking up of the café was the sending of young Girard to Paris, where an elder brother had some employment. His brother received him very kindly, and after awhile was able to procure for him some appointment in the establishment of Prince Murat.

Of what nature that appointment was I am not aware; but it is evident that the youth must have made himself remarkable for his love of music, and his budding talent as a player upon the violin. It is also evident that Prince Murat must have liked the lad, for when he proceeded to Naples he took him there, and Girard was entered as a student in the celebrated *Conservatorio* of that city, in which institution Zingarelli, Mercadante, Bellini, the late Sir Michael Costa, and many other eminent musicians derived their education.

In that most memorable year 1815, young Girard, then eighteen years of age, returned to France, and entered himself at the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied for three years longer, at the end of which time he took the first prize in the violin class.

His career after that was something similar to what befel Charles Dancla, and Singelée. He was soon recognised as one of the best musicians in France, and he held successively the post of conductor of the orchestra at the Opera Comique, at the Grand Opera, and at the *Société des Concerts*. He next became professor of the violin at the "National School of Music," as the Conservatoire was then styled, about which time he obtained the cross of the Legion of Honour, which is equivalent to knighthood in Great Britain.

Finally, when the Emperor Napoleon III. re-established the Imperial Chapel and made Auber the director of it, Girard, who was now well on in years, was chosen as conductor of that orchestra.

This able and clever musician has left two little operas in one act each. The first of these, called *Les Voleurs*, was very successful, and enjoyed a long run. The other, called *Les Dix*, was bound to be a failure, because it required ten female vocalists to perform it, and it was very difficult in those days to engage ten lady singers for one piece. He also left some fragments of a comic opera, which Madame Eugénie Garcia afterwards put together under the title of *Nina, ou la Folle par Amour*.

Girard was an honest, loyal man, in spite of his frank and abrupt manner of speaking,

which appeared rude to those who did not know him. He left a widow, for whom a splendid benefit concert was given by the Conservatoire, and which brought in a good round sum of money.

André Robberechts was born in Brussels on the 13th December 1797, and made rapid progress on the violin under Planken, a Flemish professor. In 1814, one year before Girard, he entered as a student at the Paris Conservatoire ; but when the English and their allies entered the capital, that school of music was closed for a time, and Robberechts went for lessons to the renowned Baillot.

It was then that Viotti happened to hear him play, and was utterly surprised at the magnificent tone which the young musician drew from his instrument. Indeed, he was so much struck by this, that he immediately offered to give him some instruction. The young Fleming accepted this kind offer with gratitude, after having obtained the consent of Baillot. The latter not only gave his consent most willingly, but cordially thanked Viotti for his great generosity in this respect.

So it happened that Robberechts spent several years under the eminent Viotti, and travelled to London with him, where these two great players were occasionally heard together. Viotti always

considered Robberechts the finest of all his pupils, though some give that honour to Rode.

In 1820 Robberechts returned to Brussels, where he obtained the appointment of first violin solo to the King of the Netherlands, William I. Then it was that he had as a pupil the afterwards celebrated Charles August de Bériot, to whom he transmitted the immortal principles of Viotti.

After the Belgian Revolution of September 1830, Robberechts went and settled in Paris, and was often heard in concerts in that city and in the provincial towns. He died suddenly, at Paris, in May 1860, being taken in less than an hour from a widowed mother eighty-four years of age, whom he adored and for whom alone he lived.

The modest funeral service took place on the 24th of May 1860, at the Church of Notre Dame de Lorette, in presence of a small number of devoted friends; and immediately afterwards, his aristocratic friend, Count Doria, published a notice of the great violinist.

XXIV

THE STEP-MOTHER VIOLINIST

It is not every day that we hear of a step-mother violinist; and many will declare that they never heard of such a person. Well, "such things have happened," to use a phrase employed by Plutarch.

The art of playing the violin, so prominent in England since the days of Charles II., is now cultivated, more or less enthusiastically, in all parts of the world, if we except a few islands in the Pacific Ocean and the frozen Polar regions, where Nature has a peculiar music of her own, which some of our modern composers have endeavoured to imitate.

It is, therefore, not surprising to meet with romantic episodes which have occurred in unexpected places at various times, and have had the violin as the origin of very remarkable results. Yes! there was a step-mother violinist in the amateur orchestra of Prince Lovski, at Warsaw.

It is barely seven years ago since Prince

Lovski, who had lost his first wife many years previously, married for a second time a very beautiful girl, Stefanetta Verawitsch, who played divinely on the violin. And, strange to say, the Prince's only son, Stanislas, a handsome young fellow of four-and-twenty, played equally well upon "the king of instruments."

Princess Stefanetta was just four years younger than her step-son; and their musical talent soon resulted in the formation of a very aristocratic amateur orchestra, which met, once a week, at the Château of the Prince, and gave some truly delightful entertainments.

This orchestra was a queer mixture of Polish and Russian *dilettanti*, among whom several of the former claimed to be direct heirs to the old throne of Poland. The leader or conductor, a clever musician enough, was a sallow, dirty-complexioned, middle-aged man, Count Konaski, whose name an English coachman in the service of the Prince persisted in pronouncing "Go-nasty."

Another remarkable personage was Mouvaboutski, the secretary, a fussy little man who played the clarionet, and was always fidgeting up and down the room during the practices. Jumbeleggski was a tall, yellow-faced individual who played the alto, whilst Skrapagutski was a capital contrabasso, and two Russian gentlemen,

Boromiwatschsky and Bakaloafsky, proved excellent second violins.

Another Russian, named Spionallsky, who was not much liked by the Poles, was nevertheless tolerated as a first violin, and there were a few ladies, besides the Princess, the most clever of whom, perhaps, was a gay little woman, the Countess Chemisoff, a cousin of Madame Orloff, both of whom played among the first violins.

But I cannot stay here to describe this motley group of amateurs, nor the music with which they appeared to delight one another, except to mention that, on the occasions of these meetings, some duets for two violins with orchestral accompaniments attracted a certain amount of attention, and drew many visitors to the little concerts at the Château. The performers of these duets were Princess Stefanetta and her step-son, Prince Stanislas.

This state of things had continued for about two years, when it was noticed that the young Prince, who had been in delicate health for some time past, became very seriously ill. There was an expression of pain upon his handsome features, a dark circle around his large, expressive eyes, an unnatural pallor upon his sunken cheeks, which betokened nothing good. His appetite and his strength were rapidly declining, and his violin playing suffered likewise. Nevertheless,

music seemed the only thing in the whole world that he cared for.

Prince Lovski, the fond father, who doted upon his only child, was much alarmed, and decided to obtain the opinions of all the best-known physicians in Warsaw. But the state of the young man puzzled every one of them; and, what was worse, they all gave the father the most contradictory opinions—not one agreed with the other.

Now, Prince Lovski, in his student days, had known, at the university of Vienna, a clever young fellow who, later in life, had settled down as a medical practitioner at Mudandert, a kind of suburb of Warsaw. This man had the reputation of having made some very remarkable cures. He had a wife, a pretty woman, who was a good pianist, and he himself played very beautifully upon the flute.

The Prince talked seriously to him about the malady of the young Stanislas, and finally induced him to join the amateur orchestra, that he might keep the young man under his careful observation.

It should be stated that this doctor, whose name was Seelipski, owed everything to the Prince; the latter it was who helped him to complete his studies at Vienna, and who eventually established at Warsaw, as a physician, this

poor struggling student, who was a man of very humble parentage.

But Seelipski was one of the very few practitioners who possess the real *occulus medeci*—the "eye of the physician"—a man who saw at a glance all that was going on in the head, the heart, the lungs, the kidneys, the liver, &c., without even feeling the pulse, or taking the temperature of his patient. In less than half-an-hour he had found out the nature of the ailment from which the young Prince Stanislas was suffering, and that had puzzled all the great doctors of the capital—he was in love.

But there remained another important part of the problem to be solved—who was the young person who had captivated his imagination, and upon whom his whole thoughts were centred?

"Prince Stanislas," said the doctor one day to the young man, "you have told me that the object of your affections is beyond your reach—let me see what can be done—who is she?"

"Alas!" said Prince Stanislas, with a long-drawn sigh, "I cannot tell you that; it is a secret that will die with me, like the double harmonics of Paganini!" and a sickly smile stole over the delicate features of the heir to the estate of Lovski.

"Then I must find it out, for I am determined

to save you," replied the doctor, "if only for your good father's sake."

He did find it out by dint of that keen instinct for observation with which he was endowed by nature from his earliest childhood.

As the ladies and gentlemen entered the large room of the Château for their weekly practice, the doctor kept his vigilant eyes on the young Prince.

Nothing occurred until Stefanetta entered.

At this moment a marked change took place. Over the pale, sunken cheeks of Prince Stanislas there came a bright, crimson flush, his eyes flashed with unnatural fire, and his glance followed the steps of the Princess wherever she went.

Next day the doctor said quietly to the young man: "It is Princess Stefanetta!"

"Gracious Heaven!" cried Stanislas, "how can you say such a thing!"

"Because I know it," calmly replied the doctor.

A short time afterwards Dr. Seelipski had an interview with his old protector and friend, Prince Lovski.

"Your son's malady, my Prince," he began, "is generally considered to be incurable; he is dying of love, and the woman he adores is beyond his reach."

"My dear doctor!" exclaimed the Prince, "what woman in the whole kingdom can be beyond the reach of my son! It is ridiculous——"

"It is my wife," said the doctor, interrupting him sharply.

There was a long pause, after which the Prince raised his eyes from the ground and said:—

"Well, surely, Dr. Seelipski, when you consider calmly what you owe to me, would you hesitate to save the life of my only son?"

"Put yourself for a moment in my place, Prince," answered the doctor. "Suppose it was the Princess Stefanetta, is it very likely you would give up your beautiful wife, even to save your dear son's life?"

"I would not hesitate one single minute," exclaimed the Prince energetically.

"Well, it *is* Princess Stefanetta," retorted the doctor, fixing his eyes firmly upon those of his former patron.

. . . . .

Shortly after this interview there was a great stir in the Château.

Learned lawyers and learned divines were engaged and set to work for the benefit of the father, as the learned physicians had been engaged for the son. Couriers were despatched all over the country; all the relatives of Prince

Lovski and those of the Princess were summoned to a special family meeting. The Prince's immense influence was exerted to its fullest extent with priests and justices. There were no actual divorce proceedings, but "legal separation of body and goods," according to the civil law of Poland, and various other measures too long to notice here were duly enacted, which, taken all together, are equivalent to a "decree *nisi*" in Great Britain; the motives set forth being the strong attachment of the two young people, and certain flirtations which had taken place between Prince Lovski and the Countess Chemisoff.

But these pleadings and counter-pleadings were so cleverly managed that the outside world got very little real information, and understood very little of what it did get.

The final result of all this was, that in about six weeks from the remarkable interview above mentioned, the elder Prince Lovski had married again (this time the Countess Chemisoff), so that the young Prince had, as it were, two step-mothers, both violinists, one of whom was his wife!

The amateur orchestra is now broken up, but the health of Prince Stanislas is no longer broken down. The doctor, besides his honorarium, received from Prince Lovski a most magnificent flute, upon which he plays almost as well as my

talented friend John Radcliff ; and at some of the cafés in Warsaw you may occasionally hear one person ask another if he ever heard "the step-mother violinist," a *sobriquet* which is still applied to the beautiful Princess Stefanetta.

XXV

JOSEPH ARTOT

In his interesting *Notes et Souvenirs*, recently published, the veteran violinist, Charles Dancla, has said nothing of Artot, one of the finest violinists of his period, nor does he make mention of any of the compositions of that distinguished artist. Other writers have also neglected him far too much.

This makes me believe that the great Flemish violinist, second only to his countryman, Charles de Bériot, is not so well known as he should be. Like Rode and Dancla himself, Artot belongs directly to the school of the great Viotti, having had some instruction from his favourite pupil, Robberechts, who taught De Bériot to play Viotti's concertos.

It has been asserted by Dubourg that "after eighteen months' study" the young Joseph Artot was able to play one of Viotti's concertos at the theatre in Brussels. This appears almost incredible; but it may mean that he played in the orchestra merely, for the exact words are, "he

was able to play, at the theatre, in a concerto of Viotti."

Joseph Artot was born in Brussels in 1815, the year that the great battle of Waterloo was fought, and he would have been, of course, too young to notice the red coats of the British troops quartered in and around that city, or to appreciate the stirring times in which he first saw the light of day. The fall of the "Corsican robber," Napoleon Buonaparte, and the birth of one of the most accomplished of modern violinists were, in fact, almost simultaneous events.

Artot's father was *first horn* at one of the theatres in Brussels, and began to teach his son music when the latter was quite a young child. Like most children born of musical parents, the little Joseph Artot showed a marked disposition, a real gift for the art; and when no more than five and a half years of age, he would sing his *solfeggio* lessons with considerable ability.

This facility, derived from nature, drew some attention to the child, and Mr. Snel, who was at that time first violin solo at the theatre in which Artot's father was a member of the orchestra, undertook to give him some instruction on the violin. No doubt the child's father thought that the violin might prove a more lucrative instrument than the horn.

The boy did not long remain under Mr. Snel, however, but was sent to Paris, where a position was obtained for him as choir-boy in the Chapel Royal; and when he had attained his ninth year, he was placed under the direction of Rudolph Kreutzer (the favourite violinist of Marie Antoinette, and author of the celebrated "Forty Studies"), for the study of the violin. This distinguished musician became fond of the lad, and often gave him lessons out of the class at the Conservatoire.

On the retirement of Rudolph Kreutzer in 1826, his brother Augustus, who succeeded him as a teacher, evinced also great kindness towards young Artot, and when the latter had completed his twelfth year, he was awarded the second prize of the Conservatoire. The year following he obtained the first prize.

He then quitted Paris to return to his native city; and at Brussels, he had some finishing lessons from Robberechts—the last direct representative of the immortal Viotti. He played in public several times at Brussels, and with marked success, after which he paid a visit to London, where he was also well received.

Shortly after this, Artot accepted the position of violinist in the orchestra of one of the Paris theatres, and subsequently played in other theatres. But he was ambitious to make a name

as a soloist. So he gave up his orchestral appointments and travelled in the South of France, Germany, Russia, &c. Wherever he appeared he was successful, and was invariably received with rapturous applause.

Meanwhile he made progress in composition. He wrote some quartets for strings, and a quintet for piano and strings ; and finally, he brought out those brilliant solos on airs from the Italian operas, by which he is best known in this country.

Before mentioning these works more particularly, I may state that about 1850, when thirty-five years of age, Artot resided in a small cottage situated in the fields or market gardens, near the Rue de Palais, in the suburb of Scharbeck, at Brussels, only a pistol shot from the first house my father inhabited there. As a youth of seventeen years, who had already made acquaintance with the music of De Bériot and Ernst, that little cottage was a spot of great interest to me. Often, as some of us strolled along under the poplar trees of the Rue de Palais on a bright summer morning, musical sounds might be heard emanating from it. But they were not those of a violin— never but once did I hear the splendid tone of Artot's violin — they were the notes of a fine soprano voice, accompanied by the piano, and

were the *fioritura* and exercises of Mlle. Artot, who, many years afterwards, came out, rather late in life, as an opera-singer of the very highest rank.

Joseph Artot shone like a bright meteor above the musical horizon during the time of his travels as a *virtuoso;* and he has left us some brilliant compositions which will cause his name to remain for many long years familiar to all who cultivate the real art of the violinist. Perhaps the best known in this country is his fantasia entitled *Souvenirs de Bellini,* a brilliant concert piece on some celebrated airs of Bellini, which has often been successfully performed in England by Charles Fletcher, and other eminent musicians. Another composition of a similar kind, played many years ago with wonderful effect by Mlle. Ferny, a pupil of Artot's, is his fantasia on *Norma,* dedicated to the Empress of Russia. This is one of the finest pieces of the kind ever composed, containing the magnificent cavatina *Casta Diva,* which has never been surpassed.

Other of his compositions, called *Le Rêve,* and *Grande Fantaisie de Concert,* are well worthy the attention of all violinists.

The great Italian tenor, Mario de Candia, used to introduce a song into Donizetti's opera of *Lucretia Borgia,* and Artot took it as a violin

solo, with piano accompaniment. It forms a most charming piece, with which I have reaped many a success in my younger days. His arrangement of a well-known *Nocturne* of Field, his *Sérénade*, and his *Concerto in A minor* are known to many artists, and I should not omit his grand duo for voice and violin, with piano accompaniment, entitled *Variations Concertantes* on a theme of Pacini, a magnificent composition, more difficult, perhaps, for the vocalist than for the violinist.

The influence of the grand old Italian school is manifest everywhere in Artot's music. It requires, in general, a fine tone, and a considerable knowledge of chords, staccato bowing, double stopping and harmonics, whilst it abounds in effective phrasing.

It will be seen by this that Joseph Artot was a musician to whom neither his contemporaries nor his successors have done sufficient justice, though he is well entitled to rank among the greatest, both as a violinist and a composer. He forms a remarkable link in that brilliant chain of Flemish musicians, several of whom distinguished themselves in France and Italy as early as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and which numbers among the moderns such fine violinists as Robberechts, De Bériot, Artot, Léonard, Standish, Vieuxtemps, Wéry, Meerts,

Beumer, Monasterio, Singelée, Colyns, Steveniers, Snel, Prume, Massart, Cæsar Thomson, Lalo, Ysaye, and many others.

Artot was the possessor of a magnificent red Stradivari violin, one of the finest ever heard. I am told that it is now the property of an amateur in Edinburgh.

XXVI

A LESSON IN MODESTY

I NEED not tell you who Monsieur Jacquinot is, probably you all know him as well as I do. Maybe you have met him on the Boulevards in the sunshine of an April morning, when the flowers are beginning to bloom on the balconies, looking as fresh as a newly-plucked primrose, in spite of some hard work in the opera orchestra the previous night, or the fatigues of a symphonic concert at the Salle Pleyel.

Probably you may know in Paris many violinists of the same category leading the same kind of life ; tolerably contented with themselves and their surroundings ; enjoying the possession of a first or second prize of the Conservatoire, a fixed orchestral appointment, a few lessons, a little copying of music, an occasional concert, and at the end of the quarter five or six francs to spare at the bottom of their pockets.

But none of these, you will find, were ever

so mad on one particular point as our friend Monsieur Jacquinot — that of acquiring popularity. It was his one absorbing ambition, and I will tell you presently how he was cured of it.

What was he like? Well, like hundreds of other trotters on the gay Boulevards; medium height, dark, thin, neatly dressed, twenty-six years of age, fond of a cup of coffee or a cigarette, believing everything that was told to him or that he read in the newspapers—though he read but very little—and his mouth always full of the most utter rubbish and nonsense that a human being is capable of expressing.

With all this Jacquinot was not a bad violinist; he played Papini's *Capriccio alla Calabrese* almost as well as Anna Lang or Pattie Upton, and could produce great effect with the same composer's "Fantasia on Scotch Airs," which difficult and brilliant work brought him to the fore on a visit to Edinburgh with some members of the late Lamouroux's company, when the applause after his performance of it was truly frantic.

Of course, such an event could not fail to increase his ambitious mania; but he was still very young, and so long as he could earn enough to buy the lady of his choice a grand new hat for Easter Sunday, and could afford

a few francs occasionally to treat a poor friend at the Café, he was perfectly happy—content with his dreams of popularity, which were bound to be realised, he thought, in the near future.

One day, not many months ago, Jacquinot was induced to accept an engagement to play at a little concert at Melun, a short distance by rail to the south-east of Paris. There was not much pay attached; but it was a little variety, and might help to bring him forward. He started in high spirits, taking his best violin and some of his newest pieces.

The concert was successful—the busy people of the little town do not get too much in that way—and the audience was warm and enthusiastic, so that when Monsieur Jacquinot played the *Bolero* of San Fiorenzo and the Barcarola, *Notte d'Amor* of Menardi, he was awarded a perfect ovation; everything short of bouquets of flowers was showered upon him in the way of applause and enthusiastic shouts of "*bravo*," and "*bis, bis.*"

Surely now, thought he, popularity cannot be far distant; what is this if not popularity?

Next morning at an early hour, feeling very proud and contented, he strolled to the outskirts of the little park at Melun and, at the recommendation of his hotel-keeper, took a seat

upon a bench in the sunshine, whence he could scrutinize at his ease the busy townspeople proceeding to their daily occupations.

Many groups of well-dressed persons passed him, and a good number of them respectfully raised their hats as they did so. Jacquinot raised his hat in return, saluting each passer decorously and politely, as he himself was saluted. Some of the young women merely smiled or slightly curtseyed, whilst most of the men saluted as if he had been a prince or a president.

"Fancy all this after only one concert!" he inwardly exclaimed. "What would it be after half-a-dozen?" But, alas! he must return to Paris that evening to take his place at the desk of the second violins in the opera orchestra.

At last an old woman came along who not only curtseyed before him, but actually dropped down upon her knees, muttering some words that Jacquinot did not quite understand.

"Oh, dear! this is too much!" exclaimed the proud violinist, "please rise, my good woman —you are mistaken—perhaps you take me for somebody else—I am not a very great violinist —only one of the second violins at the opera— I am only just beginning to appear, now and then, as a soloist—believe me, you do me too much honour—rise, I beg of you."

But the old woman steadfastly remained on her knees, and continued to move her thin, parched lips, uttering words which Jacquinot could not exactly make out.

He bent down his head, as he held out his hand to assist her in rising, and, listening intently, he found that she was muttering a prayer in Latin—an "Ave Maria."

On looking up, he discovered that upon the branch of a tree behind the bench on which he had seated himself was a little glass chapel with an image of the Virgin Mary, and, as every one knows who has lived more than a month abroad, it is customary for persons to raise their hats, or to mutter a prayer as they approach these tiny shrines, which are often seen at the entrances of small towns and villages.

The effect of this discovery upon Jacquinot was little short of marvellous.

"Ah!" he muttered to himself, with a deep sigh, as the old woman took her departure and proceeded along the road, "that is enough to take the conceit out of the greatest violinist that ever lived! We imagine that all the people in the world are thinking of us, when they are thinking of something quite different! It was that rascally hotel-keeper at the *Cheval de Bronze* who recommended me to take a seat

on that particular bench—*Sacré grédin*, if I see him when I get back, I shall feel inclined to strangle him!"

He did not see him, however; and the hotel-keeper, a man who had had a good deal of conversation with Jacquinot after the concert, and probably knew his customer, is not strangled yet.

Our violinist took the train back to Paris that afternoon, and a friend of mine informs me that he returned a much wiser man than when he left.

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